

A digital journal documenting the search for truth, beauty and goodness in God's lovely creation throughout the diocese of Fort Worth.

## I wonder . . . .

Where do bees live in Texas? I see bees in my yard, but I don't see a hive anywhere. Evidently, there are hundreds of species of [native bees](#), in addition to the European honeybees we all know and recognize. Honeybees and bumblebees live in colonies, although Texas bumblebees have much smaller hive sizes than honeybees. You can find bee colonies in live oak trees. But most other native Texas bees are solitary. That means that the female gathers pollen, creates small nests in bare ground, lays eggs in the nest, fills it with pollen, and seals it up. The young bees are left to fend for themselves.

You can attract ground bees to your yard by providing nectar plants and bare patches of ground facing the south. Or you can get really creative and create special [bee hotels](#). Just be aware that these need to be changed out every couple of years to keep the bees from getting sick.

These extraordinary bee photos were taken by our own Dr. Hubbard. She is inspiring me to work on my photography skills during the quarantine. I love how you can see the bee's proboscis as she approaches the bluebonnet!





Bee pollen photograph by Dr. Hubbard's friend

## I notice. . . .

Exploring nature is even more fun with a friend! I know social distancing limits that to family members at the moment, but I had a fantastic phone call with Dr. Hubbard this morning, and learned so much about bees! I had no idea pollen came in [different colors](#) until she mentioned that a friend of hers taught her about pollen colors. You can actually tell which flowers a bee has visited by the different colors. Researching that led me to an [article](#) about a beekeeper who has even tasted pollen to better understand bees. Please note that I don't advocate using the sense of taste in your nature explorations, ever. But her article is fascinating.



And another of Dr. Hubbard's gorgeous bee photographs.



## Outdoor Adventures

A couple of weeks ago, we planted some flowers and groundcover. We have a neighbor who loves feeding all the cats, which means we're constantly looking for kind ways to keep our flower beds from becoming public cat restrooms. We asked the lady at the garden center for recommendations, and she told us to put pine cones in the flower beds, because cats don't like walking on prickly things. We surrounded our new plants with pinecones. As we've been watering and tending the plants, my daughter noticed that the pine cones close up on rainy days, and open up on sunny days. We did a little research, and learned that [pine cones](#) do that to increase the chances that their seeds will disperse and survive. If you have pine cones in your yard, you can do this [simple experiment](#) to watch them open and close.



So, did we take this picture on a rainy or sunny day?

### Where to find Mrs. Breclaw next week

Exploring nature and beauty from home. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have, and stay tuned for daily "10 minute nature breaks" to help you through your distance learning adventures!

### Nolan Outdoor Learning Headquarters

In the office immediately to the left of the teacher boxes in room D22.

Please come by anytime! Let's chat about how we can work outdoor learning into your lesson plans!

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