

# So Much To Do, So Little Time...

Have you ever had one of those moments when you *want* to do something but there's so many choices to make that you end up doing nothing? Perhaps it was choosing from the 31 flavors and despite all the exotic choices you went with chocolate (again)? Or you visit a new restaurant but you still end up ordering the chicken-fried steak?

Spring is a lot like that.

There are so many choices, so many things to see, things to do—and so little time to do them—that you can easily get into a rut. You end up visiting the same places year after year and see the same things you saw last year (and the year before). The naturalist's dilemma is “should I go somewhere where I *know* I'll see something (even though I've seen it before) or try someplace new on the chance that I'll see *something*?”

Now, I'll be the first to admit that, when it comes to dining out, I'm a steak-and-potatoes kind of guy, and I always seem to order some variation on chocolate when it comes to ice cream. Some—we won't mention any names—would say I'm in a rut (though I prefer to think of it as “comfortable-within-culinary-peccadilloes”).



*Given a decent amount of rain these Southern Dewberry, Rubus trivialis, blooms will become delicious Dewberry Cobbler.*

But this spring, with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight, I can see that I

have been in a naturalist's rut. You see, I've started a project that will

culminate, over the next two or three years, with a series of field guides to the 1) butterflies, 2) wildflowers and 3) trees, shrubs and vines of “East and South Central Texas.” And preparing for the project has forced me to climb out of my rut!

Over the past several weeks I've been to places I had not thought of visiting before, and seen some wonderful and unusual wildflowers, butterflies and other sights. Of course, I've also been confronted by the growing realization, as I wrote last week, that the affinity between the Lost Pines and the east Texas Piney Woods is easily seen in the floral elements we share.

I'd never thought of it much before but it seems that a good, swift kick in the pants can be a marvelous gift! I fear also that this public confession of the value of a forced change may become “shut up and eat what's in front of you!” I may have to kiss my “comfortable cuisine” goodbye.

At any rate, all of this talk about food has me eyeing the local flora with anticipation and glee. I can almost taste the Dewberry Cobbler already...