

# THIS WEEK ON THE LLANO ESTACADO

March 8-12, 2010



Woody shelf fungi are a micro (small) habitat. They provide a unique place for animals to live. Spiders, mites, and insects live in large shelves. A few of the insects are specialized and only found in shelf fungi. Some beetles are very slim so they can fit inside a pore. They hide in a pore and eat spores. There are enough insects and other animals that a food web is created. The spiders and some insects are predators that feed on other insects. Their prey include fly larvae and small insects.

They are mainly found on trees, and resemble mushrooms. Most are perennial and grow larger year after year. Bracket fungi are typically tough and sturdy and produce their spores, called basidiospores, within the pores that typically make up the undersurface.

## **TEACHER AND STUDENT CHALLENGE;**

Survey as many trees as possible and record what percentage of trees have shelf fungi. Record the type of trees that have the shelf fungus, and try to determine if certain species of trees are more likely to have shelf fungus. Record any insects you find in the shelf fungi. Email your results to — [bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org](mailto:bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org) (along with any digital photos you and your class may photograph.) “Take recess back! Take science walks!”