



**NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER**

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

Editor's Note

You will notice that the memories of George Oxford Miller are the same stories as in the state newsletter. Margaret Menache, the state newsletter editor and I discussed this extensively before we decided to put the stories in both newsletters this quarter. I have added more color photos than she has the space for. I hope you enjoy learning a little more about George.

As I was creating the newsletter, I was amazed at just how many stories about George that I recalled. Maybe you have another one for a future newsletter. A fantastic friend and newsletter mentor, he could quickly write articles that were virtually perfect and imaginative! He was also really quick taking pictures; I had to act really fast to get photos of him photographing plants. Usually he beat me and I had to hustle for the next one.

Enjoy!

Diane Stevenson

If
we could see
the miracle
of a single
flower clearly,
our whole life
would change.
-Buddha

Tabling Opportunities for Spring 2024 Carol Conoboy

Third Annual Garden Expo

Saturday, April 6, 10am-2:00pm,
Loma Colorado Main Public Library Auditorium
755 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Spring Garden Fiesta

Saturday, May 11, 10am-noon
Rio Grande Nature State Park
2901 Candelaria Rd. NW, Albuquerque NW, NM 87107

World Bird Migration Day

Saturday, May 11, details to be determined (TBD)
Albuquerque Biological Park
2601 Central NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge 51st Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, May 18, details TBD
Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge
40 Refuge Rd., San Acacia, NM 87831

Please contact carolconoboy [at] gmail [dot] com or 505 518-2171 to sign up for tabling at these events.

Cover Photo

View from Sandia Crest Spur trail looking southeast, June 11, 2019 Photo © Diane Stevenson

March Oso Grande Pollinator Habitat Update Story and photo by Tom Stewart

Ten years back it was a burned and neglected section of El Oso Grande city park. The pollinator habitat we have established there illustrates what a citified group of nature lovers can accomplish close to home. Making oases of our yards and container gardens to support native plants and their animal partners is beneficial and fun. Coming together to restore a bigger chunk of habitat in our community is rewarding in additional ways.

Two years ago, the popularity of the habitat with coyotes became a problem. They seemed to know when the automatic watering came on and were happy to nip off emitters (“drippers”), creating little geysers as they refreshed themselves. We learned to better secure the emitters and the city relocated the canids. Last year, with no large predators, we’ve had an increase in hungry rabbits and an impact on our vegetation. My personal grief was seeing much of a prized cluster of rainbow hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus viridiflorus*) chewed away.

Diverse visitors enjoy walking the stone-bordered footpaths every day; they are full of thanks when they see us attending the pollinator habitat. I have had just one less pleasant, but educational encounter. A tall man wearing a weathered cowboy hat was off trail, hunched over an ant mound with a can of insecticide pellets. I asked him to stop what he was doing because we want this place to be free of poisons. I explained that birds and lizards eat ants and do not deserve a dose of poison for their trouble.

The outlook for 2024 is encouraging; the reclaimed water source is turned on for the season; familiar plants and volunteer seedlings are sprouting; bees, birds, butterflies, and rabbits are visible. We need human volunteers this year also! Two members of our NPS chapter have been spending time on maintenance and two local residents spruce up the paths and pick up trash.

We don’t need a gang; even two new people would be a boon to the crew. None of the work is laborious if done before it gets hot. A great benefit would come simply from organizing a more frequent presence on the site to keep tabs on conditions, spot plants under stress, pull the rare weeds, and to notice watering malfunctions. Talking with the appreciative visitors is its own reward! Once in a while, have the joy of adding new plants. We learn so much and we are ready to make big improvements for the sake of appearance and ecology.

If you have an interest in helping to whatever degree you can, please contact me at tomstewart [at] swcp [dot] com.



In Memoriam: George Oxford Miller (April 5, 1943 - January 10, 2024)

By Judith Phillips

Margaret Menache, editor

We all knew and appreciated George as that amiable fellow, usually with a camera in hand, who'd identify plants and describe their assets as readily as he would photograph them, usually for the latest book or article he needed to illustrate. Past-president of the NPSNM Albuquerque Chapter, emcee of chapter meetings, field trip guide, and author of books about native plants, George's presentations on pollination were a revelation, not only because of the photos but also because of the descriptions of intricate relationships between plants and pollinators.



Top: George on Sandia Crest
Bottom: George at the Grand Canyon
Photos this page © Carole Price

Archived NPSNM and Albuquerque Chapter newsletters are a source of some of George's thoughts, often with a spark of fun that belies the serious underlying message. In "How to Keep Elephants Out of Your Yard," informing us that elephants are afraid of bees, George described the use of bee hives attached to fences of farms in Africa and Asia as an elephant deterrent. And we think cottontails are a garden menace... Following that article in the 2019 Autumn issue of the Albuquerque Chapter newsletter, for the Winter issue George offered a plant profile of Birdbill Dayflower (*Commelina dianthifolia*) subtitled "Con Artists in the Plant World" in which he detailed the Dayflower's deceptive means of assuring pollination with the least energy expended by the plant. The photos and description are comprehensive yet concise.

Having grown up in the family's nursery propagating Texas native plants, George went on to earn an MS in botany and zoology from the University of Texas. His curiosity about the natural world and desire to share his love of nature led him to multiple careers, sometimes consecutively but often overlapping and inextricably linked.

George worked at the Austin Nature Center, while also leading tours of national parks and writing. His fairly local tours in Texas and the Ozarks matured into journeys to Alaska, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. I assume those treks included more detours into local ecology than you'd expect with Rick Steves! He also wrote a weekly newspaper column and articles about the travels, with the places and inhabitants described in vivid detail and a twist of good humor. From there, he expanded to writing and illustrating book length works. Most of his twenty- plus books, beginning with Texas Photo Safaris in



George photographing on Mt. Taylor on the way up the mountain, 08/10/2019
Photo © Judith Phillips

1986 and culminating with *Native Plant Gardening for Birds, Bees and Butterflies: Rocky Mountains* to be posthumously released in 2024, are still available in print, some digitally. In his forty years as a book author George produced beautifully illustrated volumes, field guides, and gardening books on plants ranging from New Mexico and Arizona to the Texas Hill Country, California, and the southern Rockies. He emphasized using native plants for birds, bees, and butterflies.

In 2008 George and his wife Carole “retired” to New Mexico to be closer to his children and growing number of grandchildren. He developed a pollinator garden of native New Mexico plants at his home in the sand and basalt of Albuquerque’s west mesa, and as one might expect, took a deep dive into learning the flora and fauna of New Mexico. By 2012 George was president of the NPSNM Albuquerque Chapter, a position he executed with enthusiasm and energy through 2019, leading field trips, helping organize workshops, and tabling at events where he could spread his love of nature in his low-key, good-humored way. Also in 2019, deep into his “retirement” (did the man ever sleep?), George launched www.wildflowersnm.com a treasure trove of images of 500+ native species with botanical descriptions, range maps, and key characteristics noted to aid in identification. The breadth of plants photographed and the detail and clarity of the images posted is amazing. Approaching the end of his life, George asked that NPSNM keep this body of work available. Plans are underway to ensure that the content of this site remains accessible.

Additionally, there is discussion of honoring George and his life’s work with a George Oxford Miller Education Fund similar to the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund, an enduring way to support the education about and propagation of native plants in New Mexico. I can’t think of a better way to thank this incredibly generous man for all he has contributed to NPSNM.

NPSNM Members Remember George Oxford Miller *Compiled by Judith Phillips, Albuquerque Chapter*

I would like to thank all those who responded to the request for your memories of George. Some of the material has been edited for clarity. The newsletter editor, Margaret Menache, has assured me she will accept responsibility for any faults you might find with her changes.

Field botanist **Jim McGrath** was one of George's first Native Plant Society colleagues and shared these memories.

"Back in 2009 or so, George came on my rare plant field trip. Cloudcroft scorpion-weed (*Phacelia cloudcroftensis*) had been recently described, but Bob Sivinski had been unable to find any plants when he searched for it in the Cloudcroft area. I did research on the new species and knew that one of the places the plant had previously been collected was on a roadcut along the paved highway between Cloudcroft and Alamogordo. I made a rare plant field trip stop there with low expectations, thinking Bob had already been there and I had checked it out before the field trip without finding the plant. While the field trip participants were standing at the roadcut, George beckoned to me. I came to see what he was seeing and there it was – the Cloudcroft scorpion-weed! We took pictures and it was with incredible delight that I later was able to send the photos to Bob Sivinski and Tim Lowrey and tell them that our rare plant field trip had found what Bob could not.

My fondest memory of George is the trip he and I made to the Lagunitas Lakes area of northern NM in 2010 perhaps. It was a dry year and George just did not see the wildflowers he wanted to photograph in the areas I took him to. I remember that on the way back, we stopped at Stewart Meadows, where I had conducted a botanical inventory in 2006. We finally found some wildflowers along a fence line in the upland where George could take photos. The flowers were all yellow – sort of like miniature suns.

However, this trip was mostly memorable because it demonstrated to me George's character. I took George to a wetland at the base of the Brazos Ridge. We parked at an overlook with spectacular views of the Cruces Basin Wilderness. Another vehicle was parked there and I began to chat with the driver. He was a hunter. He told us about the time he spotted a mountain lion sprawled out in the sun soaking up the warmth of the sun. The hunter proudly announced how he pulled out his rifle, shot, and killed the mountain lion. George and I said nothing, but my instinctive reaction was to get away from this jerk, so we quietly excused ourselves as quickly as possible. I did not want to get into it with the thoughtless hunter. That night at our campsite, George got emotional as he brought up the incident with the hunter. He was passionate in describing his distaste for this hunter failing to appreciate the life and beauty of another creature. George was always pretty low key, so this was an unusual expression of emotion. However, this is my fondest memory of George because it demonstrated to me his character."



Jim McGrath describing a plant on the Aquatic & Riparian Habitat field trip near Ft. Davis, TX, at the 2023 NPSNM state conference.
Photo © Diane Stevenson

Deep empathy for the natural world seemed to fuel George's generosity in sharing that world. **Mary Adams**, NPSNM Taos Chapter president related that "Despite his cancer treatments, George was gracious enough to recently share his photos with our Chapter for the reprint of a 2003 booklet. We are so grateful for his generosity sharing his photography and plant knowledge. What an amazing man!"

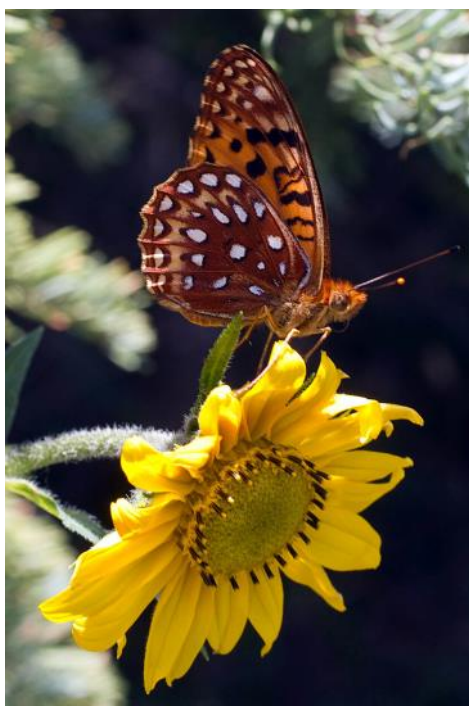
Left: George taking photo of Tulip Gentian (*Eustoma russellianum*) on Rio Grande near Bosque School, 07/15/18
Right: Discoverers of Tulip Gentian, Doris Eng and Lenore Goodell, flanked by Judith Phillips and Carol Conoboy on this impromptu field trip, 07/15/18,
Photos © Diane Stevenson



Similar sentiments were voiced by **Al Schneider**, friend and colleague: "George always had that calm, cool, yet deeply knowledgeable and excited way about him."

And from **John Sawyers**: "I'll speak on behalf of fellow Texans and thank George for his writing. I've found his information about plants that are found and cultivated in Texas to be accurate and useful."

Closer to home, Albuquerque member **Janet Herbst** offered, "George shared his knowledge of the natural world, the amazing plants within it matched to their specific pollinators, with a youthful fascination that was irresistible and memorable. On field trips he'd stop, hop out of the car to capture the life of a flower in real time using his camera, and later share his images with all. I'm grateful for him, to have learned from him. He left an impressive footprint on this world."



Left: *Helianthella quinquenervis* with butterfly on 10K trail, Sandia Mtns,
© George O. Miller
Right: George taking plant photo on Mt. Taylor NPS hike, 08/10/19
© Diane Stevenson

Diane Stevenson recalled an alpine hike with friends.

"June 11, 2019. A sunny day trip looking for blooming wildflowers on Sandia Crest. We were scouting the July field trip, excellent respite from my recent experience caring for my late father. A beautiful experience in nature with fellow native plant geeks was as perfect as it gets. We identified flowers as we slowly drove up to the Crest. At the Capulin snow play area we enjoyed blooming Rocky Mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*) and blue flax (*Linum lewisii*) among others. George reminded us that we had to get photos of flax in the morning since they would close their flowers by our afternoon descent. We drove to the top: I checked off bloomers we passed along the road on the list George had provided. The Sandia Crest plant list George provided had eighty-five species listed, flowering July through September. Wow! George's website (www.wildflowersnm.com) is a great learning tool for wildflower identification. When down below in the city, it's much better than iNaturalist.



Right: George Miller at work photographing Yellow Sky Pilot (*Polemonium brandegei*), Ivey, 5th ed p. 357
Left: Doris' photo of this aptly named cliff dweller, 06/11/19, on Sandia Crest Spur Trail Photos © Doris Eng

The first section of the south crest trail adventure had moderate slopes where a tumble down the hill would probably be stopped eventually by trees. Doris climbed down the slope and found a stick I could use as a walking stick. I packed my camera early along the south-heading face since the narrowing trail required my undivided attention lest I wanted this hike to be my last. George had his monopod with camera atop balanced comfortably on his shoulder; Doris had her metal walking stick. George walked comfortably, as if on flat ground; Doris seemed equally comfortable, her humor distracting me from my fear of falling. On this unforgiving trail, George and Doris were mountain goats; I was a wobbly newborn fawn wishing I was a kid goat.

We hiked around to the east side of the mountain top, where we were treated to vultures riding the air currents at our elevation. Awesome! A sack lunch along the trail is the best. Once we got to the dense conifer woods on the east side of the mountain, where any wildflower seed lay dormant due to the lack of sunlight, I relaxed. The final ascent was on the human-slicked light gray rock back to the crest; bonsai conifers at the top sculpted by wind and weather. George's iPhone recorded 12,094 steps, 4.4 miles. A great day followed by the sleep of physical exhaustion and an adventure I will never forget!"

Field trips that George led were always occasions for learning. Among his favorite destinations with the Albuquerque Chapter included Timber Ridge in the Magdalena Mountains; Mount Taylor; Petroglyph National Monument; San Lorenzo Canyon; and further afield, in the Florida Mountains of Rockhound State Park. **Lee Regan** especially remembered scouting closer to home for the annual conference in 2022. As a typical experience with George, he pointed out two flowers that Lee had never seen before, both having marvelous names: Spreading Moonpod (*Acleisanthes diffusa*) and Coulter's Winklefruit (*Clerodendrum coulteri*).



During the pandemic, **Doris Eng**, a frequent field trip aider-and-abetter, remembered directing George by phone to specimens of Nodding Beggarticks (*Bidens cernua*) at the Oxbow along the Rio Grande, George in hot pursuit of photos he needed for a book or article he was working on. Doesn't the image of George, camera and monopod in one hand, cell phone in the other, looking for the plantmarks (landmarks of plant nerds) described by Doris as he walked, give you a warm feeling of botanists in their element?

Pam McBride recounted one of her many experiences hiking with George. "One time when George was leading a field trip on the Timber Peak trail, I tripped over a root while

gazing out at the view along the trail. As I lay face down on the side of the trail, I heard George ask me if I had found an interesting plant to look at. I was never sure if he had missed my fall and was actually thinking I was looking VERY closely at a plant or if he was joking. But it certainly made me laugh. George was a kind and generous person who shared his knowledge of plants with anyone who asked and left us with a legacy of vigorous attention to detail and a wonderful plant identification website."

While he managed the Albuquerque location of Plant of the Southwest, **Wes Brittenham** would visit with George when he dropped off a book order and lingered to browse the plants. "George spoke of the mountains and deserts like they were old friends because they were. Polite and unassuming, he didn't tell me half of what he had done or seen, but we enjoyed each other's company through our love of the natural world. Goodbye George and thank you for your passion and commitment to the natural world and to education, and for being a force of curiosity and goodness that has inspired many with your words and your photographs. Thank you to his family for sharing him with us."

Top Right: La Mosca Lookout at Mt. Taylor with thunderheads building, noon, 8/10/19 © George O. Miller
Bottom Right: Monument plant (*Frasera speciosa*) rosettes on Sandia Crest, 06/11/19, © Diane Stevenson
Center Left: Mt. Taylor group just before we hot-footed it down the mountain due to impending thunderstorms, 08/10/19, © Dara Saville



Our Friend George

By Tom Stewart

Margaret Menache, Editor

In May 2009, the Albuquerque chapter of NPSNM was treated to a campout and a White Sands Missile Range field experience as guests of Range Ecologist Dave Anderson. Of course, people from other New Mexico chapters joined us in this rare opportunity. So the unfamiliar but easy-going man with a gentle East Texas accent in the next tent could have been from anywhere. But over the fourteen years that followed, George Oxford Miller and I became good friends.

George and his wife, Carole Price, had settled in Albuquerque three years before. A nature and plant enthusiast who grew up in a family of nursery operators near Beaumont, he joined NPSNM in 2007 but kept a low profile for some time. Little did we know, industrious George was writing books and articles and traveling the world, often with Carole, as a nature photojournalist. His involvement with our organization expanded gradually, writing articles for the newsletter by 2010 and in 2012 he took on the chapter presidency.

Serving as “perma-prez” for eight years did not impede his professional career or end his travels. A few times a year he would call me about two weeks before heading off to Africa, the Philippines, or who knows where to ask if I would fill in for him as his perma-veep at our monthly chapter meeting. Despite his outside endeavors, he lost no time in picking up the reins to organize a successful state meeting in 2013 and two habitat gardening workshops with a hundred attendees each in later years. He restarted the lapsed chapter newsletter by recruiting Diane Stevenson as editor, revived our conservation outreach, and supported the Oso Grande Pollinator Habitat project. George frequently gave presentations about native plants and gardening to outside groups: he lent our support to Albuquerque’s joining Bee City USA and to the startup of the Friends of Valle de Oro’s (NWR) Backyard Refuge program.

George claimed to have originated the term “rewilding” of despoiled areas, and he is the first person I remember to describe our landscapes as “iconic.” One of his habits was to sprinkle his public speaking with a few harmless mispronunciations. We kind of looked forward to them as part of his unique charm. The early 2020 field trip to the Florida Mountains (near Deming) was the last of many excursions with George before Covid 19 broke our stride. He had scouted the area on his own the week before to ensure we would be treated to acres of Mexican gold poppies and other diverse species. It hit us like a stone in the gut in December of 2022 when he disclosed his diagnosis of stage-3 cancer. Yet he persevered in finishing his last book, adding *The Rocky Mountain Plant Guide* to the roughly twenty-five already under his belt. So unassuming and accomplished, a friend and example for us all, George Miller is a leader and naturalist we will never forget. His niece wrote a beautiful obituary that quotes a reportedly Cherokee saying that applies perfectly. “When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.”



Hiking in White Sands Missile Range with Dave Anderson and George Miller, 2009.
Photo © Tom Stewart

How I Started Gardening with Native Plants Story and Photos by Elliott Gordon

I moved to New Mexico in 2018 and I knew almost nothing about the flora and fauna of this great state. When I bought a house in the Northeast Heights with a gravel front yard and a grove of Russian Olive trees in the back, I had no idea what lay ahead. I started off with a few basic plants, including rosemary in the front and bee balm in the back. Over time, I learned more about native and xeric plants and made larger investments in the landscaping, such as removing Russian olives and replacing them with Bigtooth maples.



The front yard is almost entirely unshaded and without irrigation. Initially, bare gravel over weed fabric with no curb appeal except the roses near the front porch and an ash tree by the driveway. As I worked in different sections, I pulled up the weed fabric and loosened compacted rocky soil, allowing volunteer colonization of wildflowers and grasses. I'm always happy to see a new sprout of Ivy-leaved groundcherry (*Physalis fendleri*), Narrowleaf globemallow (*Sphaeralcea angustifolia*), or spiny cocklebur (*Xanthisma spinulosum*) in a previously empty spot.

With more time at home during the pandemic, I enjoyed the garden like never before and noticed all kinds of wildlife. A key to my newfound experience was the book The Bees in Your Backyard: A Guide to North America's Bees by Joseph S. Wilson and Olivia Messinger Carril. New Mexico is home to more than 1,000 species of native bees. Since 2020, I observed 90 bee species in my garden and hope to find many more.



Top - Prairie sunflower (*Helianthus petiolaris*) thrive in my xeriscape garden
Center - Jumping spider (*Habronattus klauseri*) on volunteer plains zinnia (*Zinnia grandiflora*)
Left - Female globemallow goblin bees (*Macrotera latior*) only collect pollen from globemallow (*Sphaeralcea*)

My initial introduction to native plants was walking around the open space near my house and shopping at Plants of the Southwest. I have tried many species to fill different areas and garden niches, scattering grama grass seed, planting milkweed and beardtongue plugs, and planting 5-gallon oak and serviceberry trees. I admit I've spent thousands of dollars so far on plants, soil, and professional landscaping services (to add a retaining wall and fix irrigation in the backyard), plus hundreds of hours digging, weeding, and photographing bees.

I'll leave you with a summary of my native plant list. Currently, I count 123 native plants and 1 green algae. 36 taxonomic families of flowering plants are represented, plus 1 more for Ephedra, more closely related to Gymnosperms and Angiosperms. 85 were planted by me or previous owners and the rest are volunteers. The majority of the planted natives fall into Aspara-

gaceae (5 Agave, 4 *Yucca*, and 1 *Nolina* species), Asteraceae (sunflower family) and Cactaceae (cactus family). Most wild volunteers are Asteraceae and Poaceae (grass family). Currently, I'm growing several new-to-me cactus species from seed, focusing on heat-tolerant southern New Mexico plants in a warming climate.



My web resources for enhancing your gardens: the New Mexico Native Plant Society, 505 Outside Xeriscape guide, ABQ Backyard Refuge Program website, and www.Xerces.org

Top: Native fairy bees, (*Perdita chamaesarachae*), only collect pollen from the Solanaceae family; on green-leaf five-eyes (*Chamaesaracha coronopus*)

Left: Club cholla (*Grusonia clavata*) rescued from a local construction site

Note: Macro photography is not a requirement to appreciate invertebrates. I use iNaturalist to help identify and track anything new or interesting. - Elliott Gordon

<https://yerbamansaproject.org/events/>

Yerba Mansa Project Events: Our Next Bosque Restoration Field Day

Saturday May 11, 2024 (9am to 12 noon), In-Person and Outdoors**

Help us restore Bosque habitat, Yerba Mansa, and other native plants. Our restoration work includes the removal of invasive non-native Ravenna Grass from the understory along with the replanting and reseed-ing of native grasses, herbs, and shrubs. These events are open to all members of the community so bring your family and friends. Work takes place at our Albuquerque restoration site located along Tingley Drive, south of Central. Park in the lot at the south end of all the fishing ponds, which is 0.8 miles south of Central. Wear protective long sleeve clothing and bring plenty of water as well as work gloves and a shovel, if you have them. City of Albuquerque Open Space will be there to train our work crew and provide gloves and tools for anyone who needs them.

****Please Note:** Depending on the number of volunteers and restoration tasks taking place, we will divide our crew into smaller groups with staggered arrival times. Your arrival time could be between 8:30 and 9:30am. Details will be emailed to all participants 5-7 days prior to the event.

Please RSVP with the number in your group so we know how many volunteers to expect. Let us know if you are attending with children or if you have mobility issues so we can assign you to an appropriate work group. Thank you.

RSVP Here! <https://yerbamansaproject.org/contact-us/>

*Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance,
order, rhythm and harmony -Thomas Merton*



Above: Plant geeks Doris & George taking photos early in the day on the Crest Spur trail.

Right: George Miller & Dors Eng at Sandia Crest after the June 11, 2019 hike on the Crest Spur trail

Photos © Diane Stevenson



ABQ Backyard Refuge Program news

Diane Stevenson recently gave a presentation at the **Build Your Backyard Refuge Day, March 23, 2024**

“Enjoying my Front Yard Habitat: Six Years Building a Budget-Friendly Native Landscape”

Related Albuquerque Chapter newsletter articles below are available for download here:

<https://www.npsnm.org/about/chapters/albuquerque/>

Scroll down the webpage to see the link to Chapter Newsletter, then Previous Issues for the link entitled ‘Click here!’

‘Rain Barrel Math’ Autumn 2023 issue, p. 6

‘Supporting Wildlife with Native Plant Species’ Spring 2023, p. 4-5

‘Meet Rosette’ (identifying young plants) Spring 2023, p. 11-12

‘My ABQ (Front) Backyard Refuge 2022’ Autumn 2023, p. 9-10

‘Preserving a Ponderosa’ Autumn 2023, p. 17-18

‘Ongoing NM Drought, Water Your Trees!’ Winter 2022, p. 9-10

(water conservation & drought information)

‘Micropollinators Save the Day’ Summer 2021, p4

By George O. Miller

‘Bee Nests in Your Backyard’ Spring 2021, p. 8-10

By George O. Miller

‘Fall Hummingbird Plants’ Autumn 2020, p. 3-5

By George O. Miller

‘Spread the Wealth – Share with Wildlife’ Autumn 2020, p. 6

(ABQ Backyard Refuge Program) By Judith Phillips

‘Celebrating Pollinators Every Day’ Summer 2020, p. 10

‘Insect Consumption 101’ Summer 2018, p. 14

(Birds as pest control)

NPSNM’s ‘Central New Mexico Gardens; A Plant Selection Guide’

(this downloadable pdf has pollinator information)

<https://www.npsnm.org/plants-for-central-new-mexico-gardens/>

Book Review of the above guide Winter 2018, p. 2-3

‘Spring Pollinator Welcome Mat’ Spring 2017, p. 6-7

By George O. Miller

Also, there are pollinator web links Winter Pollinator issue 2017, p. 10-12

Questions? Comments?

Contact Diane Stevenson distevenson331 [at] hotmail [dot] com or 918-207-5335

April - June 2024 Meetings

Scheduled monthly meetings are normally held the first Wednesday of each month (except August and December) at 7:00 pm at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM. Meetings and presentations are free and open to the public.

Meetings start at 7 pm. Please come early for socializing and browsing our native plant books for sale.

For more information, contact Sara Keeney at abq [at] npsnm [dot] org or 505-379-3392.

April 3 Meeting: All About the University of New Mexico Herbarium & More

Harpo Faust, Collections Manager of the University of New Mexico Herbarium, will give a talk on the importance of herbaria and on active research and work occurring at the UNM Herbarium. What is the role of herbaria in contemporary botany research? What are current opportunities for community participation in our UNM Herbarium? The talk will cover some background on herbaria, the history of plant collecting, projects happening at the herbarium now, and the future of botanical research in New Mexico.

May 1 Meeting: A Snapshot into the Vascular Flora of the Brokeoff Mountains, Otero County, NM

Bryana Olmeda will discuss the importance of collection-based research as it relates to conservation and documenting biodiversity. They will present on plant collections made during their first field season conducting a vascular flora of the Brokeoff Mountains in southeastern New Mexico, just west of the Guadalupe Mountains. This remote and rugged mountain range represents several habitats within the Chihuahuan Desert ecoregion, including desert playas and grasslands. Join us in learning what is a flora, the importance of floristic inventories, and the beauty of Chihuahuan Desert flora.

June 5 Meeting: Pollinators and Plants - Building Mutual Relationships in your Garden

Kaitlin Haase of the Xerces Society will share with us the complex relationships between native plants and pollinators. In exchange for food in the form of nectar and pollen, pollinators help plants reproduce by moving pollen from flower to flower - a classic example of mutualism between species. While some plant species are attractive to many generalist pollinator species, the diversity of our native flowering plants is in part driven by the co-evolution between groups of plants and pollinators. In this program, Kaitlin will discuss the invertebrate conservation work of the Xerces Society, basic pollinator biology and habitat needs, the interdependence between our native plants and pollinators. Participants will learn ways to observe and encourage these plant-pollinator interactions in gardens and increase diversity among all species.

Save the Dates:

July 3 Meeting: Speaker To Be Determined (TBD)

August: No Meeting

September 4 Meeting: Lenore Goodell and Pam McBride: Native Plants of the Ojito Area

October 2 Meeting: TBD

November 6 Meeting (tentative:) Matt Hurteau, NM Reforestation Progress - finding enough seeds and growing enough seedlings for extensive reforestation in our state.

Early December Potluck & Officer Election: date & location TBD



Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), Embudito Trail, late May

Photo © D K Stevenson

2024 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER FIELD TRIP CALENDAR, p 1 of 2

Field trip participants should bring water, hat, sunscreen, snacks and lunch, rain gear and appropriate clothing to deal with poor weather conditions. Some field trips may be announced by e-mail with only 1 week to 1 month notice. Field trips depend upon good precipitation so they are scheduled when we know wildflowers will be present. Please be aware that all field trip participants must sign the NPS liability release form before departure. If you haven't printed and signed the liability form or photographed it with your phone, please download it at <https://www.npsnm.org/fieldtrip-documents/>, sign and turn it in to the trip leader. Leaders will have forms available on site. REGISTRATION is REQUIRED with the field trip leader no later than 24 hours before the event. (*Sometimes dates and/or locations change.*) Field trip leaders will share details about the field trip. Please let us know when you need to cancel.

For future field trips or to volunteer as leader or co-leader, contact Field Trip Coordinator Sharon Miles: sharon [at] seniorcareoptions [dot] net, 505-604-6307.

CANCELLED until further notice. April 6 (Sat.): Pine Flats and Sabino Canyon (Manzanita Mtns)

Leader: Doris Eng, 505-321-3220 text or phone. **We went. We searched. We saw no Pasque flowers at Pine Flats. The emergence of all other vegetation also appeared to be behind schedule. If and when we find Pasque flowers, we may announce a "pop up" hike for those interested. Stay tuned. Doris Eng has taken the lead on this field trip (when & if it happens).** Traditionally our first field trip of the season, Pine Flats is along the transition zone between piñon-juniper to ponderosa pine forests. The early blooming pasque flower (*Pulsatilla patens*) is a highlight, but we also may find spring parsley (*Vesper constancei*), dwarf lousewort (*Pedicularis centranthera*) and other early blooms. Travel time is 35 minutes from our car-pool location in ABQ. The hike is 1-2 miles on woodland trails and rocky hillsides depending on where the pasque flowers are blooming. The optional hike to Sabino Canyon after lunch is located nearby and features a more open, grassy microclimate.

April 13 (Sat.): Otero Canyon / Cedro Creek Nature Trail, (Manzanita Mtns)

Leader: Lee Regan, 505-792-1479; Text 505-377-5183; or Lnbregan2 [at] gmail [dot] com
South of Tijeras the hike of about 3 miles includes small meadows, piñon woods and rock cliffs along a fairly secluded stream drainage that parallels the highway. It is mostly level, with short, minor elevation changes. Besides any flowers, we may see early shrubs blooming such as Currant, Fendler Bush, and Hoptree. The travel time to the trailhead from the Albuquerque meeting place is 30 minutes; expect to finish by noon. Depending on seasonal conditions, an alternate local site may be substituted.

April 20 (Sat.): Tour NMSU Agriculture Science Center at Los Lunas

Leader: Carol Conoboy, carolconoboy [at] gmail [dot] com, 505-518-2171
Since 1957, New Mexico State University's Agricultural Science Center in Los Lunas has been researching crop varieties and native plant species for agriculture, home gardens and habitat restoration in the Middle Rio Grande. Marisa Thompson will lead us on a walking tour of the facilities, gardens and orchard. Rating: Easy walking on flat terrain. We will drive about 60 minutes from Albuquerque and return mid-afternoon.

April 25 (Thur.) & April 27 (Sat.): Easy plant/wildflower walks in Sandia foothills

Leader: Tom Stewart, tomstewart [at] swcp [dot] com, 505-373-8779
Easy plant/wildflower walks in foothills open space, for folks who are not experts, are new to Albuquerque, or just plain curious. **RSVP** to abq [at] npsnm [dot] org with your chosen date and to get details. We'll be out for 2-3 hours at the most.

April 28 (Sun.): Three Gun Springs Trail, Tijeras Canyon

Leader: Pam McBride, ebotpam [at] swcp [dot] com, 505-343-9472
We start in Carnuel. If possible we will visit the spring (it might be overgrown.) Just off the trail in May 2021, four *Echinocereus* cactus species were in bloom (*E. coccineus*, *E. fendleri*, *E. triglochidiatus*, and *E. viridiflorus*) and a fendlerbush in full bloom, with 30+ taxa in flower. A moderate hike with slight elevation gain and is about 3 miles roundtrip. We'll meet at the carpooling location, a 15-minute drive to the trailhead. We should finish by 2:00 - 3:00 pm.

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May 4 (Sat.): Quebradas Backcountry Byway, east of Socorro

Leader: Lee Regan, 505-792-1479; Text to 505-377-5183; e-mail, Lnbregan2 at gmail dot com
We will carpool from the Albuquerque meeting place, driving approximately 90 minutes (including a rest area stop on I-25). The Byway is a well-maintained gravel road: we will make a couple of stops along the road and walk along a dry arroyo or side-track, which may entail moderate elevation changes. We hope to see Havard's Buckwheat; Chocolate Flowers; Bi-color Fan Mustard; Dwarf (Sand) Gilia; and Ocotillo. Return to Albuquerque by mid-afternoon.

May 11 (Sat.): Mesa Prieta Unit, Petroglyph National Monument

Leader: Lee Regan, 505-792-1479; text to 505-377-5183; or Lnbregan2 [at] gmail [dot] com
We will meet at the south end of the monument and traverse a hilly gravel track to the lava escarpment, returning via a sandy arroyo at the base of the escarpment. Total walking distance is approximately 3 miles, including moderate elevation changes. Expect to finish around noon (but bring water and a snack). Depending on seasonal conditions, an alternate local site in the Petroglyph Monument may be substituted.

May 18 (Sat.): Golden Open Space, North of Cedar Crest

Leader: Kent Condie, kentcondie1[at] gmail [dot] com
Bring your lunch. Hike is a moderate 3-4 miles, we will be on trails, arroyos and sometimes on bedrock. In addition to viewing early spring wildflowers, we will discuss the geology of spectacular Permian red beds. Difficulty moderate to easy; about 45 min drive from Tramway/I-40

May 19 (Sun.): McBride Native Garden Home Tour

Leader: Pam McBride, ebotpam [at] swcp [dot] com, or (505) 343-9472
The garden is a changing environment that was started in 2009 or so, with berms & a swale to catch roof runoff, native grasses and other natives. Now, over 30 species of native plants and shrubs in a small space plus a vegetable garden. Refreshments will be available on the patio. We might go for a walk to the Griegos lateral ditch and see what's growing.

May 25 (Sat.): Juan Tabo Canyon, North Sandia Foothills

Leaders: Lee Regan and Sharon Miles sharon [at] seniorcareoptions [dot] net
Easy hike, gentle grade on old road to explore a broad sandy arroyo which is surprisingly lush for this desert environment. 1-2 miles. As we descend into the canyon, we will go from pinon/juniper and scrub to riparian habitat cottonwoods, willows, hops trees, wild grapes and plenty of blooming native plants. Carpool required. Finish midafternoon.

June 1 (Sat.): Las Huertas Canyon, via Placitas

Leader: Lenore Goodell 505-867-5877(home) 505-717-6078 (cel), fisheye-of-placitas [at] comcast [dot] net
Las Huertas Canyon is at the north end of the Sandia Mountains. Las Huertas Creek is the only perennial stream in the Sandias. At 7100ft. elevation, redosier dogwood, hawthorn, chokecherry, butterfly milkweed, inflated penstemon, Bigelow's leather flower may be among the many trees, shrubs and herbs at the water's edge and in the adjacent grassy meadow that we find flowering. Walking is easy (no trail), 1 mile total. **Take care to avoid stepping on plants.** Bring insect repellent. If time and curiosity permit, we might visit Las Huertas Picnic Area or Sandia Cave Trail. Carpool from Placitas due to rough road and lack of parking for 7-10 miles. Finish midafternoon.

SAVE THE DATE:

June 7 (Fri.) Santa Fe Canyon Nature Conservancy Preserve with Kaitlin Haase, our June speaker.

Etcetera

CABQ Solid Waste Green Waste pickup dates (still not on their website yet): Regular trash pickup dates from April 29, 2024 through May 10, 2024. See their website for specifics.

Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico Spring Show and Plant Sale

<https://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org/> Sat., April 13, 10 am to 4 pm, and Sun., April 14, 10 am to 3 pm
Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112 See several hundred plants including some of the finest specimens from different regional private collections, including our society's members. Vendors come from various places; a wide variety of cacti and other succulent plants are available for purchase. Free admission.

City Nature Challenge ABQ 2024 <https://abqcitynature.org/> We invite everyone in Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties to explore nature in and around your community and share your observations on the iNaturalist app or website from April 26 - 29, 2024

Xeric Garden Club of Albuquerque's Annual Spring Garden Fair & Plant Sale

<http://xericgardenclub.org/calendar.html> Fri., April 26, 1- 6 pm & Sat., April 27, 8am - Noon
Albuquerque Garden Center, Kitchen patio, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112 The Xeric Garden Club's only fundraiser of the year; members volunteer & sell locally grown xeric plants. This event helps support the Albuquerque Garden Center and demonstration gardens. Free Parking & Admission

Friends of Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

<https://friendsofwhitfield.org/>

Feedback, articles, photos, book reviews, and news submissions for the Albuquerque chapter NPSNM Summer Newsletter should be sent via e-mail to Diane Stevenson distevenson331 [at] hotmail [dot] com by June 20, 2024.

Thank you! - Diane

Become an NPSNM Member:

Join at <http://www.npsnm.org/membership/>

NPSNM is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the conservation of native New Mexico flora. The Society, and its local chapters, work to educate its members and promote the conservation of our native flora so future generations may enjoy our valuable resource.

Membership Benefits

Members benefit from regional chapter meetings, field trips, an annual meeting, and four issues of the state newsletter each year. Some chapters also hold plant sales and annual seed exchanges and offer discounts on a variety of books providing information on native plant identification and gardening with New Mexico native plants.

Albuquerque Chapter Benefits

Members who show a valid NPSNM membership card

Qualify for Plant World membership

Receive a 10% discount at Plants of the Southwest

NPSNM Albuquerque Chapter

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Books: Lee Regan

Communications: Carmen Alexander

Field Trip Coordinator: Sharon Miles

Publicity: Vacant