

## Native Plant Society of New Mexico

# NEWSLETTER

January, February, March 2003 Volume XXVIII Number 1

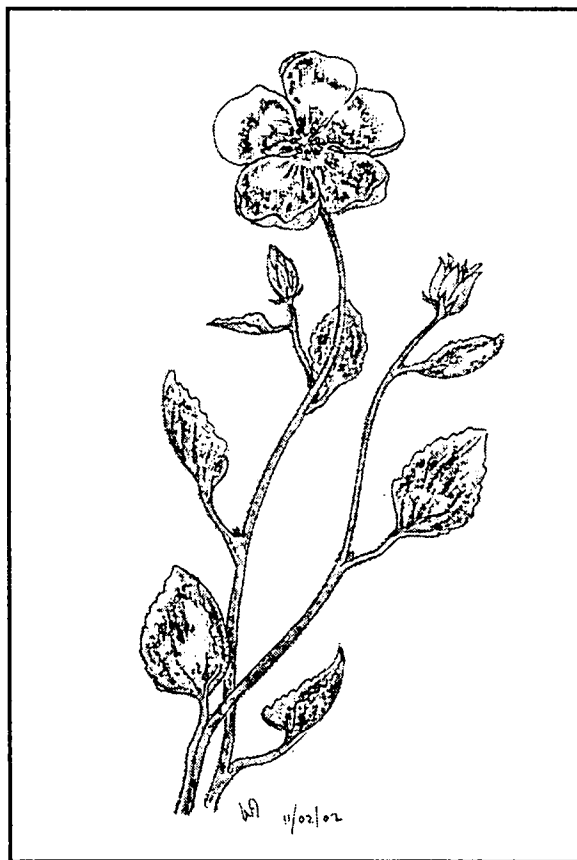
## Desert Dwelling Hibiscus An Oxymoron?

by Wynn Anderson  
Illustrations by the author

Say the word "Hibiscus" and almost everyone envisions swaying palms on tropical isles and long-haired beauties with lovely blossoms tucked behind their ears. That vision hardly seems compatible with the desert and, even I, having grown up in temperate South Texas, confess to having difficulty considering a "desert Hibiscus" as anything other than an oxymoron.

That's why stereotypes are dangerous; the truth of the matter is that both the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts have long-haired beauties as well as lovely flowering members of the genus *Hibiscus*. And these plants belong in our landscapes.

Of course, don't start thinking of verdant leafy shrubs rising overhead, sporting brightly-hued flowers the size of salad plates. Our natives are diminutive in stature, rather sparsely foliated and the flowers are more comparable in size to a demitasse saucer. All of which are attributes quite befitting desert adapted, drought tolerant plants that, once established, can survive on rainfall alone and will take high heat, harsh sun, unexpected frost and drying winds. *Cont'd on Page 7*



*Hibiscus denudatus*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was attracted to the Native Vegetation Quiz in the Oct-/Dec. Newsletter. When I checked the answer to the second question, I expected to see Tumble Mustard, *Sisymbrium altissimum*, mentioned because it is a widespread introduced plant in Northern New Mexico. I have often seen it blown into great piles along fence lines. That led me to see if there were other tumbling plants in New Mexico, and I found that there are at least two native tumblers: Tumble Pigweed, *Amaranthus albus*, and Tumble Ringwing, *Cycloloma atriplicifolium*. So I guess it is partially true that tumbleweeds are native to the American West.

*Paul E. Fehlau  
Santa Fe Chapter*

Dear Editor,

The last Native Plant Newsletter was wonderful! Every article was interesting and informative from conservation, poetry, profile, Lisa's book reviews, native vegetation quiz, and the joke! It is so good to keep in touch with NPSNM during the winters while basking in the Gold Canyon, Arizona sunshine. One of the best issues of the Newsletter ever!

*Jean and Charles Whitmer  
Sacramento Chapter*

## Design Workshop!

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## VOLUNTEER PROFILES



**Sandra D. Lynn  
Carlsbad Chapter**

My friendship with Sandra started with a feature story I wrote for the *Carlsbad Current-Argus* to promote her book, *Windows on the Past: Historic Lodgings of New Mexico*, UNM Press 1999, and another story to promote a talk she was giving on native sunflowers that will eventually lead to another book.

Sandra is definitely the glue that keeps the Carlsbad Chapter of NPSNM together and active. The chapter and our local environmental group, the Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance, often combine field trips. (Ed: see page 11)

She is very knowledgeable about and focused on plants, and writes wonderful "plant-of-the-month" articles for the CDCA monthly newsletter. Sandra is always ready to hike into the Guadalupe. On a recent hike to find the national record-holding Texas Madrone — despite the heat, the terrain, and the difficulty in locating that tree — her bubbly personality made it fun for all. She also showed that she was not afraid to fight her way through cactus and catclaw.

*Valerie Cranston*

**Who in your chapter deserves recognition for his or her work on behalf of NPSNM? Send a short description and a photo to Editor, PO Box 607, Arroyo Seco, NM 87514.**

**Are You Logging On  
to the NPSNM Web Site?  
<http://npsnm.unm.edu>**

**Native Plant Articles, Chapter News,  
NPSNM Business (budget, by-laws, etc),  
and Botanical Links.  
It's always being updated, so  
check it out regularly.**

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, a nonprofit organization, and is free to members. The NPSNM is composed of professional and amateur botanists and others with an interest in the flora of New Mexico. Original articles from the Newsletter may be reprinted if attributed to the author and to this Newsletter. Views expressed are the opinions of the individual authors and not necessarily those of NPSNM. Manuscripts and artwork are welcome and should be submitted to the editor:

**POBox 607, Arroyo Seco NM 87514  
andrzej@laplaza.org**

**Deadline for next issue is Mar. 1st 2003**

Membership in the NPSNM is open to anyone supporting our goals, i.e., promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment and the preservation of endangered species. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve our State's unique character and as a water conservation measure. Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges, and educational forums. In addition, a wide selection of books dealing with plants, landscaping, and other environmental issues are available at discount prices. The Society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld which can be ordered by contacting our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

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# DRAWING SPRING BLOSSOMS at CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK

Article and drawing by Donald Davidson

Tourists, locals and out-of-towners alike flock to Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE) year-round to walk through and see the awesome beauty of the caves. Scientists frequently come for several days at a time to study the many miniscule organisms that grow in the cold, dark, wet spaces underground. Bat lovers and birders come during the warmer months to experience the crazed bursts of flight that occur at both dawn and dusk. What few visitors spend time on, let alone seem to be aware of, is that the over 46,000 acres of CAVE *above ground* serve as a vital habitat for approximately one thousand species of flowering vegetation.

With so many native plants present, I was rewarded with ample opportunities to study wildflowers in bloom during a two-week artist residency this past April at CAVE despite the general drought conditions of early 2002. In fact, many incredible wildflowers could be found right along the road that leads into and out of the park.

On day one, before I even arrived at the CAVE Visitor Center to check in, I discovered, amid the dry rock rubble directly across from the exit from Walnut Canyon Desert Drive (also known as the "Scenic Loop"), the large yellow-flowered cactus *Echinocereus pectinatus* var. *neomexicanus* or "Texas Rainbow" as well as the similar small crimson flowered *E. viridiflorus* var. *viridiflorus* or "Pitaya." I immediately returned to my car to get out my watercolors.

Later at the Visitor Center, I found Lavender Evening-Primrose *Calylophus lavandulifolius*, along the edges of the parking lot as well as Arizona Prickly Poppy *Argemone pleiacantha*. The "Nature Trail" leading away from the east end of the lot has clumps of Claret-Cup *Echinocereus triglochidatus*, some right in the middle of the path.

Ocotillo *Fouquieria splendens* is everywhere at CAVE as it is throughout the Chihuahuan Desert. I spent three hours with one of the shorter specimens in Slaughter Canyon so that I might witness its florets go from bud to full flower. This exciting



Lavender Evening Primrose *Calylophus lavandulifolius*

experience, something which would have required even greater patience had I not been engaged in drawing, allowed me to depict the Ocotillo at all stages of flowering within a single illustration

All along the upper reaches of Walnut Canyon Desert Drive the red, trilobed *Castilleja lanata* is found. With its hairy leaves, it should be no surprise that it is commonly known as Woolly Paintbrush. Even from a moving vehicle it is easy to spot the low growing Threadleaf Phlox *Phlox mesoleuca*, aka White-Eyed Phlox.

Further along, in the dry stream bed behind Marker Post #14, the pale blue-violet flowered Mescal-Bean *Sophora secundiflora*, Blackfoot Daisy *Melampodium leucanthum*, Cliff Fendler-Bush *Fendlera rupicola*, and the Western Honeysuckle *Lonicera albiflora* all thrive. This proved to be the habitat that I would visit most often for the rest of my stay.

It was also there that I first spied a community of the rare pink-flowered Summa Sage *Salvia summa* up along a steep, rock-walled bank. It was the same species I was also to encounter growing out of a crevice along the trail to Slaughter Canyon Cave. Finding and keeping just the right perch so that I could draw a specimen up close without tumbling off the cliff-like bank was a wearying challenge.

Continued on Page 9

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## What's In A Name?

**Botany from A to Z:** Can you name a genus of plants found in New Mexico for every letter of the alphabet? The list begins with *Abies* and ends with *Zygophyllum*.

The letter with the most names seems to be C, with 120 genera (or thereabouts) beginning with this letter. The fewest are Q and Y represented by *Quercus* and *Yucca*. The shortest names are *Iva*, *Poa*, and *Zea*. The longest name is *Krascheninnikovia*, which might also be the hardest to spell.

What does all this mean? Simply that someone has too much time on his hands and we're in desperate need for some of you to contribute articles or material to this newsletter.

*Reprinted with Kelly Allred's permission from  
The New Mexico Botanist, Oct. 1, 2002.*

## NEW MEXICO'S IVEY

by Gene Jercinovic

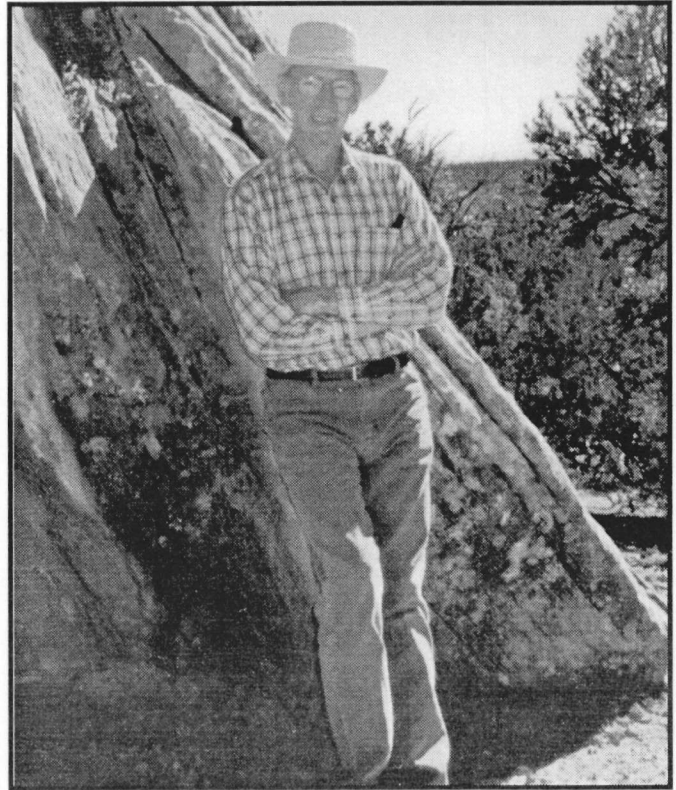
On wildflower hikes all over the State you are bound to hear, "Anyone have an Ivey?" For thousands of New Mexicans interested in wildflowers, the principle reference for identification is *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* by Robert DeWitt Ivey. In fact, New Mexico is unique among states in its use of the noun "Ivey." But just who is this artist and botanist?

Robert DeWitt Ivey was born in Tampa, Florida. Prophetically, he spent his first year in nearby Plant City, but was actually raised in Jacksonville. A naturalist even as a child, he kept and bred flying squirrels in his bedroom. He used an empty pigeon pen (fortunately outdoors) to house his pet alligator. In 1941 he entered the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Rejected by the military at the beginning of World War II because of his height (6-foot 7-inches) and foot size (13), he continued his studies, majoring in English with an art minor. One day during his senior year, he answered a knock at his dorm door. "Are you the Robert DeWitt Ivey who does nature drawings?" a student asked. This knock led to a meeting with the noted zoologist, Dr. Harley Sherman.

Dr. Sherman wanted him to draw the hoatzin, a curious bird of South America whose young have wing claws for climbing. The two became friends when the English major shared his secrets for finding golden mouse nests in Spanish moss and beachmouse burrows along the seashore. Sherman persuaded Ivey to become his graduate assistant. Under Sherman's mentorship, Ivey pursued graduate study at Florida, earning a Master's Degree in mammology in 1947.

In that same year, he began what would eventually become a permanent association with New Mexico, joining the faculty at the University of New Mexico. Then, beginning in 1949, he spent two summers and one academic year in graduate study at the University of Michigan. During 1950-51 he taught at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1951, he returned to New Mexico and became a biology teacher at the old Albuquerque High School.



During his time there, he developed the curriculum for Albuquerque's first Biology II course which included a six-week unit in plant awareness. This started his long association with drawing plants.

Transferring to Sandia High in 1959, he continued his lifelong effort to bring biology and ecology to thousands of students. Ivey continued to explore the State and draw its plants, at first for his students — and ultimately for everyone interested in plants — publishing the first edition of *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* (green cover) in 1983. The second edition (yellow cover) appeared in 1986 and the third (white cover) in 1995.

Tales of Ivey are endless. He built his own dugout canoe to travel to the Barrier Islands of Florida doing research for his Master's. He taught ballroom dancing. He donated his extensive and valuable mammal collection to UNM. He reads Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in the original Spanish and actually eats holiday fruitcake. Now, just after his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday, he is putting the final touches on the fourth edition of *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* which will be available early in 2003. Ivey lives in Albuquerque with his wife, Vivian.

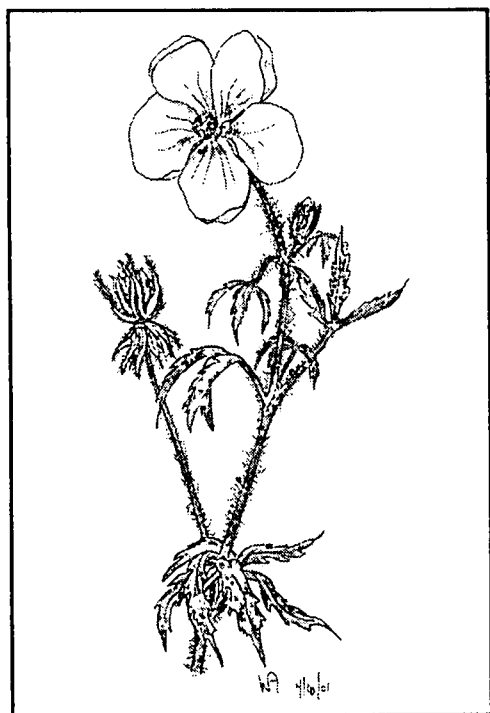
*Gene Jercinovic, a retired school teacher, lives and botanizes in the Manzano Mts. with his wife Betty. They have recently completed Wildflowers of the Manzanos.*

### *Hibiscus cont'd from front page*

My favorite is *Hibiscus denudatus* with dark-centered, cuplike, lavender-to-pale rose flowers that are 1½ inches across. Commonly known as "Paleface Rosemallow," this perennial sub-shrubby plant reaches 2 feet from a woody base with gray or yellow-green oval leaves scattered sparsely along thin herbaceous stems. The velvety soft texture of the stems and leaves is derived from a dense covering of tiny star-shaped hairs that provide a grayish or yellowish cast to the foliage that contrasts well with the pastel hues of the flowers.

The term "denudatus" alludes to the plant's tendency to be drought deciduous, as well as winter deciduous; a condition avoided by occasional supplemental irrigation during the hottest summer months, but which otherwise adds to the mystery of the plant as it springs from seemingly nowhere into foliage and flower in late spring and again with arrival of summer monsoon rains into the fall. This is not a border plant. It's not tall enough for background service and it does not mass well. It is what I like to call a "surprise" plant — one that goes largely unnoticed until its bare stems burst into flower.

Plant *Hibiscus denudatus* in harsh, dry places in full sun, to soften and naturalize masses of boulders, the upslope margins of wash gravels and cobbles, and dry rock gardens. It is a natural compan-



*Hibiscus coulteri*

ion to cacti and agaves and mixes well with scattered clumps of dryland grasses such as Three-awns and Fluff Grass. It requires only well draining soil, appreciates occasional supplemental irrigation and is hardy to below 10°F which is important to high desert gardeners. *Hibiscus denudatus* can be found in the wild from southeastern California across the desert Southwest to western Texas and in northern Mexico from Baja California to Coahuila. In New Mexico, it occurs in the southernmost tier of counties, from Hidalgo to Eddy.

The other Hibiscus choice for xeric landscapes is *Hibiscus coulteri* or "Desert mallow," a yellow flowering species with vividly deep green, often deeply cleft foliage, on a rather sprawling perennial sub-shrub that can grow to 3 x 3 feet. The lower leaves are generally oval and coarsely toothed while the upper ones are noticeably divided, usually into 3-toothed segments. All leaves and stems display scattered stiff hairs, as do the bractlets and sepals under the 2-inch cup-like flower. The pastel lemon yellow flowers, sometimes tinged with purple or bleached to almost white, often display a reddish spot or spots at the base of each of the 5 rounded petals.

This species of Hibiscus is generally not as cold hardy as the Paleface Mallow although it shares much the same geographic range in west Texas, southwestern New Mexico, southern Arizona and northern Mexico. It is at its best in full sun with some supplemental irrigation, occasional selective pruning to keep the rich foliage dense, and winter temperatures above 20° unless protected on warm slopes adjacent to heat retaining rocks or structures.

Desert Mallow's dark green, even sometimes reddish tinged, foliage almost looks too lush for desert settings, but I find it useful in providing transitions in a xeriscape. Singly or massed, the green shrubby character sets off silver-foliaged material and is a good foil to variegated accents. The bright yellow flowers, found from late spring to early fall, are a lovely added benefit and may even fit well behind an ear of any longhaired beauties found in your garden.

***Wynn Anderson is Vice President of NPSNM and Curator of the Chihuahuan Desert Garden at UTEP in El Paso.***

# WILD PLANTS AND WILD PLACES: WILL THEY BE HERE FOR OUR CHILDREN?

*Excerpted from a flyer produced by  
The California Native Plant Society and  
The Center for Biological Diversity*

Native plants are the most visible elements of ecosystems. Up and down our coasts, plains, and mountains, thousands of wildflowers, trees, flowering shrubs and other native plants perfume the air and delight the eye throughout the year.

Native plants are habitats for wildlife. Native ecosystems are also economic powerhouses. Studies show that quality of life is of enormous economic value. Clean air, clean water, and beautiful, healthy wildlands attract both businesses and tourists. Valuable commodities, including foods and medicines, flow from native species. The life-saving cancer drug, taxol, was developed from the pacific yew. Insects and birds that live in native wildlands pollinate billions of dollars of crops each year.

## **Native Plants are Disappearing**

Unfortunately, these irreplaceable native species and ecosystems are increasingly at risk. Accelerating sprawl is consuming our native plant communities. Between 1960 and 1990, sprawl consumed an area about the size of West Virginia as urbanized areas in the U.S. doubled to 51,000 square miles. Approximately 80 percent of the nation's coastal ecosystems have been damaged or destroyed by development. Invasive nonnative species, excessive and poorly planned logging, mining, and other activities also besiege native plants. Less than 5 percent of our ancient forests remain intact. More than 50 percent of the nation's wetlands have been destroyed. In the process we have lost 117 million acres of irreplaceable flood control and water purification capacity, as well as habitat for thousands of species.



*The primary reason for declining songbird populations, says The Audubon Society, is loss of habitats.*

This habitat destruction is taking its toll. Plants are full participants in the extinction crisis that has sparked outcry from the world's scientists. The World Conservation Union reports that 29 percent of plant species in the U.S. are at risk of extinction and that one plant species in 8 (12.5 percent) is at risk worldwide. According to the U.S. Forest Service, *extinction of a single plant species may result in the disappearance of up to 30 other plant and wildlife species.*

## **Plants are 2nd Class Citizens**

Few people realize that in almost every area of law, policy, and planning, plants receive inferior protection, attention, and funding.

The Federal Endangered Species Act is the single most powerful legal tool available to protect imperiled ecosystems. But, although the Act protects imperiled animals wherever they live, it allows nearly unlimited destruction of most imperiled plants and their habitats outside of Federal lands. Without real protection for plants under the Federal Act, its promise of conservation is only half-fulfilled.

To find out how you can join forces with The Center for Biological Diversity and the California Native Plant Society in their Native Plant Conservation Network, call 415.970.0394 or check their web sites: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) or [www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org).





The "Sevilleta Synantherologist Association" is what the participants in the Native Plant Society's Asteraceae Workshop dubbed themselves. Synantherologists specialize in the study of flowers in which the anthers are fused — but you knew that. The workshop, taught by Dr. Tim Lowrey, the curator of the University of New Mexico Herbarium, took place September 6th through 8th and attracted approximately 25 people eager to learn about the large, complex, and important Asteraceae or Compositae family. The workshop included plenty of hands-on time with dissecting scopes in the lab at the Sevilleta Research Station and field identification in the Manzanos, where this photo was taken by Bob Sivinski.

#### Carlsbad Cont'd from page 4

When I began to draw *S. summa*, I focused on my eye-to-hand coordination. But what to draw first? When no answer seemed obvious, I started from as far down its slightly hairy stem as I could still fit on the page and then worked up and out. Much of the plant should form itself. My eyes traced from where each section emerged and then to what it evolved. Each section should not stand out on its own so much as demarcate the important growth events of the whole. Drawing the contours of each plant, hence delineating its volume, its presence, was much like carefully running my fingers along the edges while testing the suppleness in-between.

It amazes me still, how sitting down and drawing desert blooms brings both the thrill of adventure and a certain peace of mind at the same time. Under the piercing sun, in quiet and solitude, the spring wind tossing my subjects about remind-

ed me of my art school days when our models often refused to keep completely still in their poses. Could it be that those adventurers wished to dance like flowers in a breeze?

So, if you want a "road less traveled" experience while visiting Carlsbad Caverns National Park, or just some quality time with native plants, grab a camera, a sketch pad, or notebook (*Don't forget your hat, lots of water and sunscreen!*) and pick a trail. *Any trail.*

*An NPSNM 2002 Grant Recipient, Donald Davidson is the botanical illustrator for the Traveling Artist Wildflowers Project < [www.nps.gov/plants/cw/watercolor/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/cw/watercolor/index.htm) > and the Chihuahuan Desert Network. A solo exhibition of his watercolors of the native plants of the Chihuahuan Desert will be held in early 2003 at the Centennial Museum at the University of Texas at El Paso, TX.*



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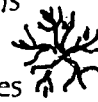
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## ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas NE, 7 PM.

**Jan. 9th** "Workshop on Growing Penstemons from Seed and Division." Peggy Wells, Albuquerque chapter member and wholesale nursery owner. A small charge of 50 cents per prepared plot will be charged to defray expenses.

**Feb. 6th** "Plant Uses: Edible, Medicinal, Practical." Anne Ruhnka, Naturalist and self-taught expert on native plants.

**Mar. 6th** "Field Characteristics of Common New Mexico Plant Families." Troy Maddux, UNM Department of Biology: LTER Database Administrator, and Jane Mygatt, UNM Herbarium Collections Manager.

## CARLSBAD

See below

## EL PASO (Texas)

2nd Thursdays at the Centennial Museum on the UTEP campus, 7 PM.

**Jan. 9th** "Franklin Mountains State Park" Daniel Contreras, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

**Feb 13th** "Ethnobotany in the Southwest." Dr. Richard Worthington, UTEP.

**Mar 13th** "Indio Mountains. Research Station" (Hudspeth Co. TX). Dr. Jerry Johnson, UTEP.

## GILA (Silver City)

Harlan Hall, WNMU Campus, 7 PM.

**Jan. 17th** "The Flora of the Pinos Altos Mountains," Dr. Dale Zimmerman.

**Feb. 21st** "Medicinal Uses of Native Plants Found in Silver City Area," Erika Rowntree.

**Mar. 21st** "The Spread of Alien Plant Species: A Growing People Problem," Jack L. Carter.

## SAN JUAN (Farmington)

3rd Thursdays at 7 PM. Locations will be announced.

**Jan. 16th** Program TBA. Chapter elections will be held during this meeting.

**Feb. 20th** Botanical illustrations workshop given by artist and science teacher, Linda Reeves.

**Mar. 20th** "Invasive Weeds of the Southwest," given by Fran-nie Decker, a weeds specialist at NMSU.

## SANTA FE

3rd Wednesdays at Evans Science Bldg, Rm 122, St John's College, 7:30 PM.

**Jan. 15th** "Flowers and Lions in the Foothills of the Texas Hill Country." Dr. Roger Peterson.

**Feb. 19th** "Slides and Photographs of Southwest Native Plants." Dr. Norman Hunter.

**Mar. 19th** "Plant Identification via Computerized Interactive Keys." Dr. Una Smith.

## TAOS

2nd Wednesdays at San Geronimo Lodge, 7 PM.

**Jan. 8th** "The Pine Beetle War." Kurt Swearingen, Forest Management expert, and Mark Schuetz, local environmental activist who helped found Taos Land Trust.

**Feb. 12th** "Encouraging Native Herbs." Dr. Charles Martin at NMSU Co-op Extension Service.

**Mar. 12th** "Microclimates in Home Gardens." Debbie Graves at Native Trees & Landscapes near Tres Piedras.

**Ed: Other Chapters have not reported or have nothing scheduled for January, February and March.**



On October 20, the Carlsbad Madrone Chapter and the Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance co-sponsored a field trip to learn about plants and animals of the sand dunes east of Carlsbad, especially shinnery and playa ecology. Steve West, fourth from the left in this photo, led the trip and seventeen people took part. The group is seen standing in front of a stand of shinnery oak.

Photo credit: John D'Mura.

## Meadow-in-a-Can? Or Trouble-in-a-Can?

From a Press Release prepared by  
The University of Washington

The seed packets have labels with romantic-sounding names such as “meadow mixture” and “wedding wildflowers,” while others tout backyard biodiversity and make reference to Earth Day. But watch out!

When growing 19 such packets of wildflower mixes, University of Washington researchers found that each contained from three to 13 invasive species and eight had seeds for plants considered noxious weeds in at least one U.S. state or Canadian province.

And what makes it nearly impossible for conscientious gardeners is that a third of the packets had no content listing and a little more than another third had inaccurate lists. Only five out of 19 correctly itemized all seeds.

“I can’t recommend using any wildflower seed mixes,” says Lorraine Brooks, who did the work at the UW’s Center for Urban Horticulture while earning her bachelor’s degree.

The seed mixes used in this experiment were produced at or distributed from a variety of U.S. and Canadian locations, not just the Pacific Northwest. Firms with catalog or web site sales could be selling wildflower mixes to gardeners all across North America and not just to gardeners in the area where the mix is produced.

Brooks found the least unruly of the wildflower mixes was a packet from which 30 of the 106 plants that sprouted and produced flowers were invasive — that’s 28 percent of what grew.

From another packet, all identified species were invasive in at least one part of the country and, although the three species in the packet labeled “native” are native to North America, they are certainly not native to all regions. For example: only one species is believed to be native to the Pacific Northwest and it represented one percent of what grew. Among the worst mixes were two that each contained two noxious weed species.



Gardeners might be surprised at the flowers and seeds that are readily available for sale that are considered invasive or noxious. For instance, the wildflower most commonly observed as part of the mixes was bachelor’s button *Centaurea cyanus*, germinating in beautiful hues of pink and blue from three-quarters of the packets tested. Bachelor’s button is invasive when it gets into native grasslands and prairies. It hasn’t been named a noxious weed but it is on Washington State’s “education list” in the hope that property owners will become knowledgeable about the risks of growing it.

Yellow toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*, on the other hand, is listed as a noxious weed in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and 11 other states and provinces. Colorado, for example, classifies it among the top-10 prioritized noxious-weed species, those that are most widespread and cause the greatest impact. Yet toadflax was found in four of the wildflower mixes and only one listed it.

Even labels that refer to wildflowers as native should be avoided because everything, after all, is native to some place, but that place may not be where you live.

## OOPS!

Ed: It's no good saying that even the prestigious *New York Times* makes mistakes now and then. And we can't blame this one on our dedicated proofreaders; this goof is mine and mine alone. And it's a doozy!

In the last issue of this newsletter, I ran a poem by Sandra Lynn — one she had read at the annual meeting in Silver City. I liked it so much I wanted to share it with the rest of you. But somehow the last and all-important stanza got left out! Needless to say, I am chagrined, embarrassed and appalled in equal measures. But running just the last stanza now wouldn't be fair to the poem or the poet— so here is the complete poem:

### Snag on the Rim of Juniper Canyon

by Sandra D. Lynn

We have given them an ugly name,  
typical of our disregard  
for that which is not alive and well  
and running on Central Standard Time.  
We call them snags  
and they do.  
They snag the starred sky  
and chill it for a moment.  
They snag the sunset  
and hold the alpenglow  
along their dry veins,  
a red memory of sap.

Yes, it is true  
they are no longer alive,  
and the only timekeeping they know  
is the weather—  
the sandpaper wind,  
the squeeze of desert heat.  
But "well"? That is another matter.  
The snag is well.  
It remains where it was in life,  
transformed, sculpted  
by death  
into a silent, ecstatic dance.

It is clean now, smooth,  
pared down to the tight whorls,  
to perfect extravagance of form,  
nothing wasted on softness  
or solidity.

It is devoted to severe beauty,  
flung against the sky in that  
sternest of disciplines—  
praise.

We segregate our dead,  
call them departed,  
hide them away from us  
in the earth, where they rot  
in the backs of our minds,  
their eyes going empty  
behind ours. Or we  
burn away  
their given form.

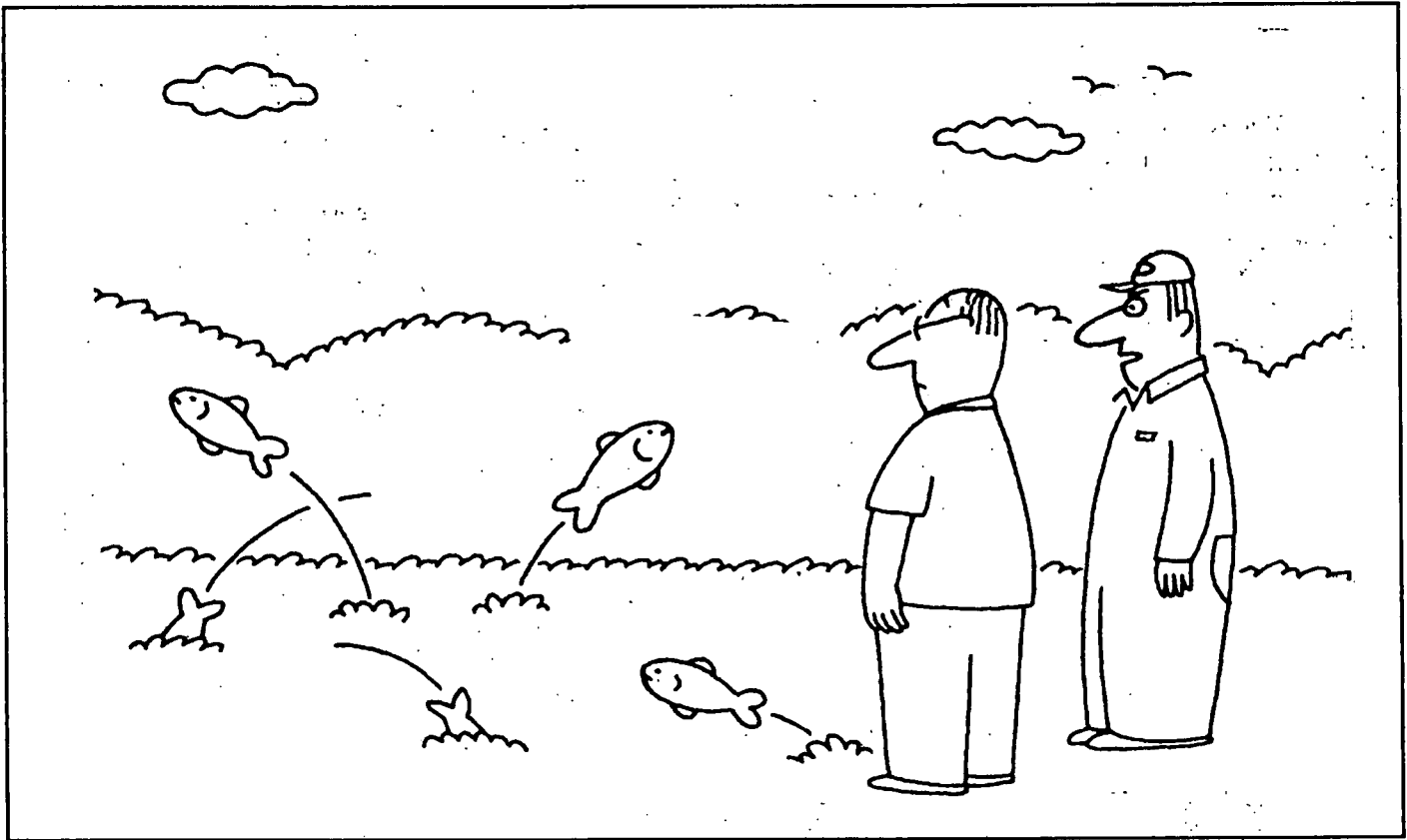
The forest keeps its snags  
for awhile as companions,  
vigilant, frozen dreams,  
reminders of the thinness  
of the boundary  
between the living and the dead.

From *Where Rainbows Wait for Rain, the Big Bend Country* (Tangram Press, 1989) © Sandra D. Lynn. Copies available from author.

### Classic Wetlands Book Back in Print

Blackburn Press of Caldwell, N.J. announces the return of a classic botanical text: *Aquatic and Wetland Plants of the Southwest United States*, by Donovan S. and Helen B. Correll. First published in 1972, this reference resulted from a 9-year government-sponsored environmental project. This book enables the identification of fern and flowering plants in polluted and nonpolluted aquatic and wetland habitats in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, although many of the plants listed extend beyond that region.

ISBN 1-930665-52-0, paperback in two volumes, 1,236 pages, \$124.95. Contact Blackburn Press at 973-228-7077 or AHerbert@BlackburnPress.com.



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## Book Reviews

### *Tending the Earth: A Gardener's Manifesto*

Lorraine Johnson

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, Toronto, 2002

Hardcover 240 pages

ISBN 0-670-05001-6

Can be ordered on internet at [indigo.ca](http://indigo.ca)

The photo of Lorraine Johnson on the back jacket shows a person impossibly young to be so wise and insightful. *Tending the Earth* is a beautiful and thoughtful walk in human gardens, gathering in ecological issues of water, soil, air, and biodiversity, cultural issues of food and community, and the deep personal issues of mental health and feeling connected to the earth.

This book speaks directly to all of us. It starts off: "When I think of gardening, my mind turns to solitary pleasures: how deadheading is pure rhythmic focus, a distillation of energy in fast fingers." And it is realistic: "Perhaps the strongest lesson the garden teaches us is that we are decidedly not in control, however much we may think we are."

And I love this sentence: "There's no way around it; gardens take time to develop. We put in our groundcovers with dreams of green carpets and tomorrow there's still bare soil."

Lorraine lives in Toronto and many of her illustrations are Canadian. But her ideas are universal and apply to all of us. If soil erosion in Canada "currently releases approximately 2.8 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year, contributing to global warming," soil erosion in the U.S. is surely doing far worse.

Many of her sources are from U.S. universities, such as the information that "detectable levels" of pesticides and herbicides have found their way into our soil and groundwater and thence into our own bodies. "They've been found in breast milk...even in the amniotic fluid of pregnant women."

Lorraine offers common sense observations. In a chapter in which she reviews North America's approach to endangered species, she writes, "Adding the monarch butterfly to the at-risk species list (as was done in 1997) will get us nowhere if we still



include the monarch's only known larval food source — milkweeds — on provincial noxious weed lists."

Many books on environmental woes make us feel helpless, but throughout *Tending the Earth* there are suggestions of action to take.

Daylighting" is the term for returning channelized streams to functioning habitats. Her facts and figures on retention capacity, water quality, property values, and wildlife habitats could help those of us who want to save a creek from being piped underground. The European movement to legislate rooftop gardens to save energy costs and improve air quality is fascinating, as is her chapter on community vegetable gardens as an antidote to hunger and prejudice.

At the end of her book is a chapter entitled, "An Action Alphabet." Under the heading "Allergies" there is a reminder that if we refuse to line our streets with female trees because they drop "litter," then we are doubling up on the male trees that blanket us with pollen instead. Under "Guerilla Gardeners" one reads, "I know people who cast seed along back alleys, and they haven't been arrested."

Always modest and witty, Lorraine gives us hope that we can still make the world a better place.

Sally Wasowski

## WOMAN THROWN IN JAIL FOR NOT GROWING GRASS!

*For those of you who think that oppressive weed ordinances are strictly an American phenomenon, read the following item that came to us via the Reuters news service dated April 9, 2002:*

“A housewife in Chile was sentenced to seven days in jail for refusing to keep a grassy patch in front of her house. But she was absolved by a judge after spending two days behind bars in a case that sparked a public outcry. Gloria Cisternas was convicted after refusing to pay a fine for violating a Providencia municipality bylaw requiring residents of private property to keep a grassy patch outside on their front yards.”

## 2003 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual state meeting of NMNPS will be hosted by the Santa Fe Chapter at Los Alamos from Thursday, August 7 through Sunday August 10. The Jemez Mountains have seen considerable ecosystem change from the Cerro Grande Fire to establishment of the Valles Caldera National Preserve, leading us to select a theme of *Recovery and Restoration*. We are planning hikes, talks, and workshops around this theme including visits to sites undergoing both active and passive recovery--from tree planting and study of how the native flora are doing in the burned and grazed areas, to landscaping with native plants in areas disturbed by humans. As part of this we hope that we will be able to offer an extensive tour of the Valles Caldera.

**“Gardens grow by inches,  
but are destroyed by feet.”**

*Anonymous*

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