

## Native Plant Society of New Mexico

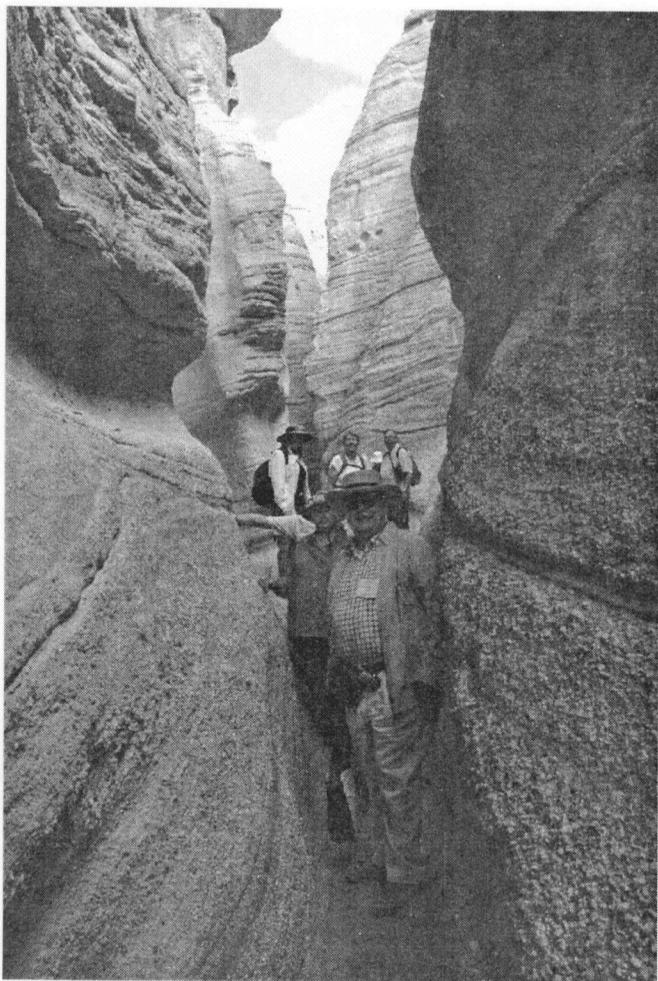
# NEWSLETTER

October, November, December 2005 Volume XXX Number 4

### 2005 Annual Meeting!

Among the 2005 field trips was a hike in a slot canyon in the new Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. Pictured below are Eric Metzler, Judy Lister, the arm of Gordon Lister, Andrea Cassidy, Margo Murdock, and Ray Chevalier. Photo by Grant Luckhardt.

—More from the meeting on pages 8 & 16



### Yerba de la Gente: Oshà

by Linda La Grange

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when Spanish colonists moved into the area that is now the southwestern part of the United States, the Native Americans introduced them to a vast array of medicinal and edible plants. One plant in particular was quickly adopted by the Spanish colonists and has since become a mainstay of their descendants' herbal pharmacopoeia.

The plant is *Ligusticum porteri* and is known in northern New Mexico as oshà and in southern New Mexico as chuchupate. Both names derive from Native American words. During a devastating drought in 1601, the Pueblo Indians directed the Spanish colonists to the foods and herbs found at high elevations (over 7,000 feet). Many of the mountain plants, although of

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## Note from the (New) Editor

I love plants and wildlife, and I love words and language. So I thought I could make a contribution (and have some fun) as your editor. Now I'm deep into putting together my first issue – wrapped up in learning new software and figuring out just-how much space there really is to fill [lots!] – all the while watching the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on television. It's a busy and emotional time.

In this first week after the storm, I end up in tears during every newscast. The stories of human suffering are too numerous and too desperate. I'm sure we'll be helping the survivors for months, years. Everyone – in service clubs, offices, churches, schools – is looking for ways to help.

And experts are again talking about the swamp, that all-important cauldron of life that used to provide some buffer against storms. Of course, a huge hurricane is going to cause damage anyway. But a good coastal swamp can mitigate it, acting as a sponge and a shock absorber. That buffer has been largely wiped out by rampant development along the coast. The normal processes of sediment deposition in the delta have also been mostly disrupted. I remember similar discussions last winter about the tsunami in Banda Ache and Thailand and Sri Lanka. So many people didn't have to die.

Those swamps were stunning wildlife habitat, too, even in a degraded state. I've traveled in Louisiana many times, sometimes to visit friends and listen to music, often to watch wildlife. I loved New Orleans, and I loved the swamps and forest and the Mississippi-Alabama gulf coast beaches. My husband Steve and I visited Louisiana's Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in 2000, right after there were reports of an ivory-billed woodpecker sighting there. We didn't see one of course, but we did see the magnificent swallow-tailed kite, another declining species.

It's hard to escape the feeling right now that it's all gone. But you can't really predict that from the TV coverage. Friends of ours drove from Carlsbad to Mississippi right after the storm to get their parents out of Gulfport. They said there were no birds in Mississippi. Certainly no ivory-bills. Fall migration is right around the corner, and migrating birds need food and roosts along the way. It's going to be a rough winter for them too. And for any surviving snakes, snails, alligators... .

I guess my point is that protecting native vegetation isn't just about pretty flowers. It's critical for the survival of all living species everywhere, including us. I'm proud to be a member of a dedicated organization that's working to preserve and restore native vegetation. It is a most important mission.

I hope you'll stay in touch with me over the coming months and years. Your contributions of writings, art, and ideas will make this a much more valuable newsletter than any editor could create alone.

Respectfully submitted,  
Renée West

For me, the disappointing aspect of American environmental values is that a majority of us value clean water and clean air, but little else. A recurring Gallup poll from 1990 to 2004 illustrates how unconcerned Americans are for loss of natural habitat and species, and also shows an erosion of concern for all environmental values over this short period of time.

In 1990, 51% of adults were very worried about loss of habitat and species, but that concern has steadily waned to only 36% in 2004 – taking its largest plunge in just the last few years.

—Bob Sivinski  
excerpted from the Banquet Address,  
NPSNM annual meeting, Albuquerque,  
August 13, 2005

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, Renée West at:  
*keywestern@hotmail.com* OR

*1105 Ocotillo Canyon Dr., Carlsbad NM 88220*

**Next Deadline is Dec. 1, 2005**

Membership in the NPSNM is open to anyone supporting our goals of 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. 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 and a cactus poster designed by Lisa Mandelkern. These can be ordered from our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

Many thanks to the proofreaders:  
Jane Mygatt, Donna Stevens, Sandra Lynn, and Steve West.

Mailing: Carolyn Gressitt

Web site: <http://npsnm.unm.edu/>

**Editorial Policy** — Articles submitted will occasionally be edited for spelling, length, or clarity. Most, however, will be printed as submitted. These are your thoughts.



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# Letter to the Members

Dear fellow Native Plant Society members,

Every community in New Mexico has a different palette of plants that suits the range of exposures, temperature extremes, soils, available precipitation and microclimates of the place. Carlsbad's best choices may be only slightly different compared with Artesia, or vastly different, as Taos compared with Las Cruces. Nonetheless, it's no surprise that locally native plants could make up many if not most of the best adapted landscape plants for each community. When I started teaching the plant selection class in the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of New Mexico, I started wishing I had a more comprehensive list for each community to give my students as a statewide reference.

Wishing is so much easier than doing. Years have passed, and I've made little progress on that project. Many of my students have already entered the ranks of landscape professionals working in diverse capacities. One of my former students now works in the Office of the State Engineer facilitating water conservation programs throughout New Mexico. She has encouraged me to get moving so she can provide recommended lists of water-efficient landscape plants as part of conservation efforts, especially in smaller communities statewide.

Since I live, work and grow plants primarily in central New Mexico within a hundred miles or so of Albuquerque, part of the delay in making specific recommendations for areas further afield is the realization that I really don't have a clue as to what grows best anywhere else. Well, maybe I have a few clues, but certainly no experience-based knowledge, and I confess, I am undertaking this effort in part out of sheer curiosity. It is one thing to generalize about which plants might be used for various landscape purposes and quite another to have the collaborative data from observant insiders with dirt under their fingernails.

So, I have a modest proposal for fellow NPS members who would like to share their experience gardening with native and locally adapted plants. I

will develop lists of plants for communities from Farmington to Clayton, Gallup to Tucumcari, Silver City to Alamogordo, and other communities in between and beyond. I'd like to give the basic list for each place to volunteers in that community to add to and delete from with abandon. Any and all comments will be appreciated. I am especially interested in ongoing changes you have been making in plant selections given the warmer, drier conditions that we are experiencing.

Over time, maybe together we can develop semi-comprehensive lists of recommended plants that will increase the numbers of locally native plants used well in our communities, avoid the introduction of potentially invasive exotics, give the communities we live in a real sense of place, and enrich habitat for wildlife.

Anyone interested in participating can contact me at [judphil@nmia.com](mailto:judphil@nmia.com). I hope to enlist the aid of several people in each community for a better representation of each place. I'll develop the lists to amend based on who I hear from first. This is potentially a long-term, at least five-year, project, so any and all responses now or later are appreciated.

A rose is an Apache plume, is a mountain mahogany, is a fernbush, is a rose...

With no apologies to Gertrude Stein, I hope to hear from many of you soon,

Judith Phillips

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**The universe is composed of subjects  
to be communed with, not objects to  
be exploited.**

**—Thomas Berry**

**in: *Listening to the Land*  
by Derrick Jensen**

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**\*\*all area codes are 505 unless otherwise stated.**

**Send Membership Dues & Changes of Address to:  
Membership Secretary,  
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## NPSNM Grant Applications Due Soon

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico awards grants and makes donations to projects and organizations that further the goals of the society. The goals of the society are "to promote the conservation of our native flora and plant habitats and to encourage the appropriate use of native plants in New Mexico." Previously funded projects have been education, art, landscaping and special plantings, signage, training, research and conservation.

Grants are awarded to individual projects with a goal that can be completed within a stated time period and within a specified budget. For example, request a grant to pay the cost of a specific workshop or to buy the materials needed for a specific restoration project. The applicant may be an organization or individual.

Donations are given to non-profit organizations to support on-going work that meets the objectives and goals of the Native Plant Society.

Grants and donations are limited to a maximum of \$1,000. Grant payments may be given over time or in a lump sum. This is decided on a case-by-case basis. Donations are given as a lump sum.

Requests are reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors. Organizations will be notified as to the acceptance or denial of their proposal. If the proposal is unsuccessful, the society will provide reasons for the denial.

Requests for grants or donations must be submitted to the society by January 15 of the year preceding the distribution of funds. See the website under 'Grants' for more information:

<http://npsnm.unm.edu/grants.html>

(Continued from page 1)

different species, were members of plant families recognized by the colonists as similar to some of the European plants with which they were familiar.

Oshà was one of those familiar plants. It is related to European lovage (*Angelica* spp.) and was used by Native Americans in much the same way that the Europeans used *Angelica*. Evidence for the use of *Ligusticum* by Native Americans dates back at least 600 years. In 1988, two hikers found a worn leather-wrapped bundle tucked under a rock ledge in the Book Cliffs of Utah. The Bureau of Land Management carbon dated the leather wrapping at approximately 600 years. The bundle, known as the Patterson bundle, contained a variety of roots known to have been valued by Native Americans for their medicinal properties. Among the roots was a well-preserved section of oshà root.

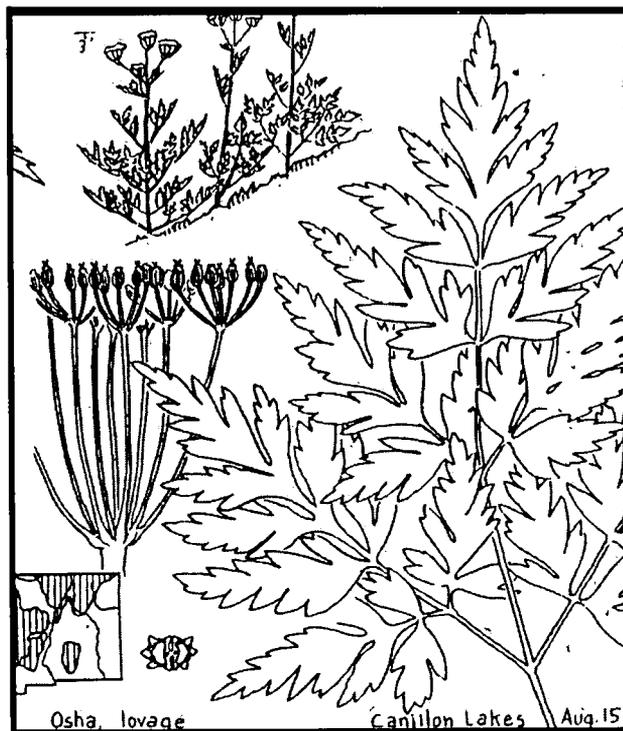
Oshà is a member of the parsley family and has hollow stems, flat-topped umbels of white flowers, and finely divided deep green leaves. The above-ground portion of the plant can reach a height of six feet. When the stem or leaves are crushed, an intense odor similar to that of celery is released. The hairy brown roots also release the same scent of celery when the yellow inner pith is exposed.

The ripened seeds look like fennel seeds and are used by New Mexicans as a seasoning in soups. Usually the roots are collected in September after the plant goes to seed. The large tangled root can be sun-dried within a few days and is not likely to rot because it contains oil that retards bacterial and mold growth. The individual seeds are cup-shaped and retain droplets of water, thus remaining moist until germination.

According to Shawn Sigstedt, an ethnobotanist, the oshà root was considered a valuable medicine by every Native American tribe that lived in areas near the plant's natural habitat. In Navajo folklore there is a story told of the brown bear's affinity for the oshà roots. The bear would eat the roots and then rub some of the masticated roots over its fur. The Navajo, who credit the bear with leading them to this powerful medicine, chew and ingest the root for relief from stomach aches and infections.

Contemporary Cochiti Pueblo Indians ingest the masticated oshà root, then drink a cup of warm water with a pinch of salt to alleviate a chronic cough. The Zuni Indians also use oshà to treat a chronic cough. In addition, the Zuni medicine men

and the patients chew the root during a variety of healing ceremonies. The Apaches smoked the hollow stems as tobacco substitutes. A number of tribes burned the root as cleansing incense and carried the root in a medicine pouch as a good luck charm. Members of almost all of the tribes inhabiting the Rocky Mountain region of the United States, when visiting a tribal elder, presented the elder with a gift of oshà root.



Today, however, the descendants of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Spanish colonists constitute the largest group of people who have extensive knowledge about and experience with the medical applications of oshà. Early Hispanic uses of the root paralleled those of the Native Americans.

A favorite remedy for treating the common cold was a mixture of powdered oshà root, sugar, whiskey, and hot water. According to the Southwestern herbalist Michael Moore, oshà is one of the best available herbal treatments for viral infection. When suffering from a dry fever, people then as now would ingest a tincture of oshà root in order to induce sweating. A contemporary use of the tincture is as an added ingredient to commercially purchased cough syrup.

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The resulting mixture is said to soothe the throat and promote expectoration. Some people drink the tea as a stomach bitter that enhances digestion or chew the root to relieve stomach gas.

Because oshà is an antibacterial agent, it can also be used to treat external cuts and abrasions – a use of great value to the Hermanos Penitentes. This brotherhood dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and flourished in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Although associated with Catholicism, the rituals practiced by the Hermanos were never officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church. The members were expected to atone for their sins by self-flagellation, carrying heavy crosses, tying their bodies on the crosses, and tightly binding their limbs to restrict blood flow. To treat the flagellation wounds, the Penitentes made a salve that contained powdered oshà root. To make the salve, mutton tallow was washed, melted, and strained. Melted candle wax and turpentine were added to the hot fat. Finally, powdered chamomile, oshà root, and Arizona poppy were sprinkled into the mixture. Powdered oshà root was also, on occasion, added to olive oil and used as a liniment to relieve the aches and pains associated with rheumatism.

### **The uses and applications of the herb have survived for hundreds of years in the hands**

The Spanish colonists kept herds of sheep that ranged over remote areas of the southwestern United States. The shepherds who tended these herds carried an ample supply of powdered oshà root. The powder was sprinkled around their bedrolls to ward off venomous snakes or mixed with water to form a paste that, according to folklore, would absorb the venom when applied to the bitten area. The knowledge of oshà and its uses has been passed along from the 17<sup>th</sup> century settlers to present-day northern New Mexicans. Hispanic families still trek up into the mountains in the early autumn to collect oshà roots, just as they did over 200 years ago. Among the items sold at northern New Mexico flea markets, shoppers can find dried oshà roots, tincture of oshà, and salves that contain oshà. The increased visibility of the herb coupled with Americans' resurgent interest in alternative medicine has resulted in more widespread use of oshà among the newcomers to the American

Southwest. Yet the use of oshà is so strongly associated with the Hispanos of northern New Mexico the herb is now identified as an integral part of the local Hispanic culture.

As with many other traditional herbal remedies, scientific investigations of the oshà plant have demonstrated the validity of some of the medicinal applications of the root. A high-performance liquid chromatography analysis of *Ligusticum* spp. established the presence of five constituents: 1) ferrulic acid, 2) scopoletin, 3) 3-butyl-phthalide, 4) ligustilide, and 5) diligustide. It is thought that ligustilide is the primary active constituent.

Researchers have reported that ligustilide has weak antiviral properties and weak antimicrobial activity against gram-positive, gram-negative, and yeast microorganisms. However, most herbalists would argue that the use of the isolated active constituent is not as therapeutic as the synergistic impact achieved when all of the biochemical components are kept intact. Thus, if a person were searching for a natural remedy that acts as a diaphoretic, a diuretic, an immunostimulant, and that has antiviral properties, oshà certainly fits the description. There are no known toxic side effects. There are, however, two circumstances under which the use of oshà is discouraged: during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

The valued herb has now found its way into the modern pharmacopoeia of natural remedies. Health food stores now carry oshà in a variety of preparations ranging from the entire dried root to tinctures. Type in the word "oshà" on any online search engine and a surprisingly large number of hits will be recorded.

The uses and applications of the herb have survived for hundreds of years in the hands of vastly diverse cultures. This continued use lends a degree of credibility to its medicinal value that is not shared by many of the other popular remedies.

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Dr. Linda La Grange is on the faculty of New Mexico Highlands University.

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**Editor's Note:** Consumption of plants collected in the wild can be dangerous. Many plant families have edible members as well as lethal species. In this case, poison hemlock and water hemlock look similar to oshà.

## 2005 Statewide Annual Meeting: Native Plants — Urban Interaction

Neither rain, nor road construction, nor heavy traffic deterred NPSNM members from the activities at the annual state meeting in Albuquerque August 11-14.

The theme of the meeting was well served with numerous talks, workshops, and field trips, many about restoring and creating habitats for wildlife, whether people were interested in all

wildlife, or specific groups such as reptiles and amphibians, birds, butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Field trips visited a variety of fascinating backyard habitats. These yards did not look at all alike, but they all were beautiful — serving both wildlife and the humans who created and tend them. No matter their level of experience, all attendees learned something.

Bob Sivinski's Saturday night banquet address, "Inspiration from the Natural World," did inspire us, while bringing home some of the truths we face in our efforts to advance the cause of native plants. (See excerpts on pages 2 and 9.)

Chris Martin's Friday night keynote address was on "The Ecology of Desert Cities: How Sociocultural and Technological Factors Influence use of Native Vegetation in Phoenix, Arizona." Martin injected humor into this overview of a complicated city with a unique history.

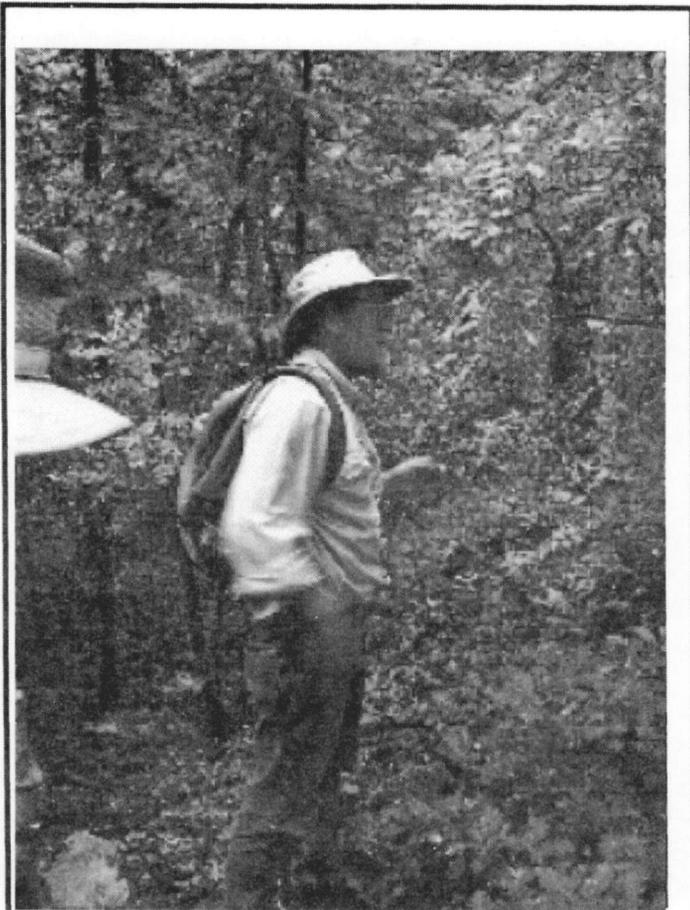
Saturday field trips also visited the pollinator garden at Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, the African exhibit landscape at the Albuquerque Zoo, and the landscape at the New Mexico Natural History Museum. On Sunday, trips ventured to the Manzano Mountains, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, Malpais Volcanic Area, and Sandia Crest Trail.

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**Here's hoping we see you at the 2006 Statewide Meeting in El Paso, Texas... just over the state line and always in our hearts!**

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Pictures of the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument field trip appear on the front and back pages.



Gene Jercinovic led a field trip to the Manzano Mountains during the 2005 annual meeting. Gene is author of the *Flora of the Manzanos*. Photo by Tom Antonio.

Excerpts from

## Inspiration from the Natural World

by Robert C. Sivinski

August 13, 2005 address to the Native Plant Society  
of New Mexico

'Native Plant Society' is a wonderful name. It distinguishes us from exotic plant societies that fascinate over tropical orchids, African violets and other plants from far away. *The word 'native' anchors us to the place we inhabit* and makes us an organization that appreciates local nature. We are more than a garden club and have our roots in the natural world.

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*Americans are becoming less concerned with their natural environment because they see it less often* and participate in fewer outdoor activities. Let's face it, the Baby Boomers are less active and the younger generation is tuned-in to the Internet, video games and cable TV, rather than the real world. The 2001 to 2003 Roper Survey of outdoor recreation shows our gradual shift away from nature. While the category of 'Driving for pleasure' experienced a 7% increase, the categories of 'Hiking', 'Wildlife viewing' and 'Bird watching' each dropped from 2 to 4 percentage points in participation.

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It is our mutual appreciation of wild, native plants that brings us together in the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. All valuing of nature begins with individual experience, but those values are validated and reinforced by sharing those experiences with others. Inspired people created NPSNM as a place to share experiences, and it takes the actions of inspired members to accomplish the organizational tasks that maintain our fellowship – like our board of directors, chapter volunteers, and the hard-working people who made this annual meeting possible. The fact that we have grown as an organization in the last 28 years from a

few dozen to several hundred members is the fulfillment of many personal efforts.

For many of us, however, fellowship with other like-minded people is not our primary motive to seek contact with nature. *We are seeking a unity, or communion, with nature that is entirely a personal and spiritual experience.* A sense of belonging to the natural world arises from our physical and psychological awareness of it. Watching a sunrise while feeling a cool breeze, listening to birds calling, and knowing that the evening-primrose flowers will soon be closing for the day unifies us with our surroundings.

Such experiences inspire us again and again to seek proximity and participation as the natural world unfolds around us. This desire for proximity leads some of us to cultivate native plants at our doorsteps to share our living space. We are doubly delighted when these plants bring us the companionship of hummingbirds, butterflies and other native animals.

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Our environment is a public good available to everyone and, as such, it is a commons. Unfortunately, all commons are eventually destroyed by the forces of capitalism and individualism, unless those forces are restrained by rules of public policy.

In setting environmental policy we must mutually agree to a system of mutual coercion. It is a credit to our country that we have agreed upon such a system in the form of our environmental laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, Clean Air and Clean Water acts, and many others.

*We cannot, however, expect these laws to be enforced, or continue to exist, in the absence of public vigilance.* Those of us who are inspired by, and place great value in, the natural world must make our values known to the political and spiritual leaders of our society. And since we are a democratic society of majority rule, we must also try to elect sympathetic leaders and instill environmental values and ethics in the general public. Nature organizations, such as NPSNM, are especially important in accomplishing the latter.

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## Book Review

### *Yard Full of Sun: The Story of a Gardener's Obsession That Got a Little Out of Hand*

by Scott Calhoun

Rio Nuevo Publishers, Tucson AZ, 2005  
192 pages, \$22.95

What do Noah Webster, Peter O'Toole and Wile E. Coyote have in common? Each has contributed to society's misguided notions about deserts. In his dictionary, Webster defined a desert as "a desolate or forbidding area." This scary image would later be "confirmed" in countless movies, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and all those Roadrunner

cartoons.

No wonder many folks who migrate to desert communities in Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California quickly install back-east-style lawns and thirsty tropical plants. Or, trying to fit in, they surround their homes with tons of pastel gravel, lava rocks, and a few yuccas – a caricature of a true desert landscape!

In fact, the deserts of the Southwest are alive with a variety of vibrant colors, textures and forms, and over the years a number of books have attempted to counter all that unfriendly propaganda. Among the very best is Scott Calhoun's *Yard Full of Sun*.

Calhoun is a professional nurseryman living in Tucson. Besides being an exceptional gardener, he is also a gifted writer; he tells the story of his (and his family's) horticultural odyssey with wit and a delightful earthiness – qualities all too rare in gardening literature. His book reads like a chatty letter from a friend.

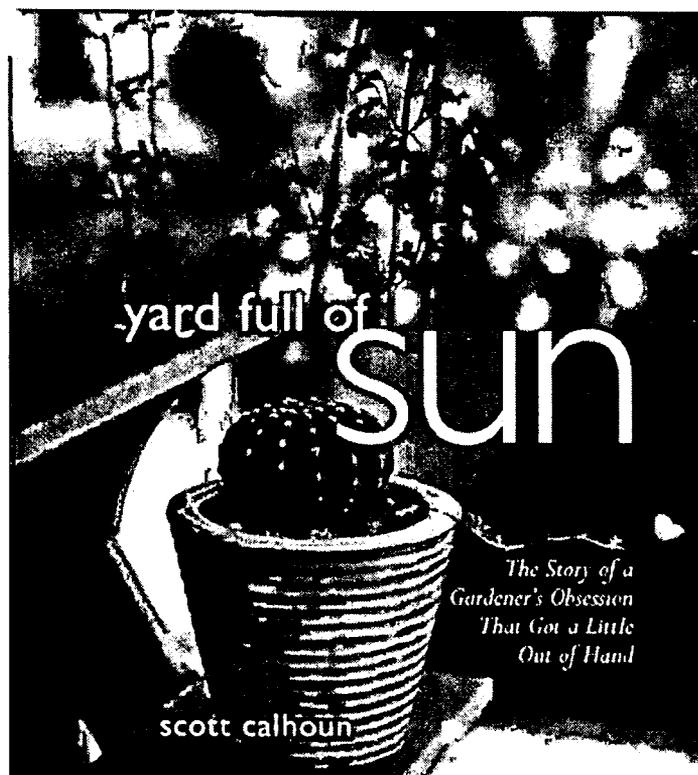
"Where Phoenix had largely rejected the Sonoran Desert," Scott observes, "Tucson embraced it." So did the Calhouns. Scott details the building of his resource-conserving "green" home, and the designing of his Sonoran garden. His plant profiles are full of solid info as well as personal anecdotes – including a thwarted prairie zinnia raid at a local library.

One of the requisites of a good gardening book is good photography, and we are not disappointed here. The pictures of plants and gardens are first-rate, thanks to the combined camera skills of Scott, his wife Deirdre, and W. Ross Humphreys. The photo of an ocotillo fence is pure art.

Scott also provides useful plant lists, rainfall charts, and lists of public gardens and native nurseries in all the Southwestern states. He even throws in some prickly pear recipes.

If you live in New Jersey or Iowa, you'll find this book a delightful read. If you live in the Southwest, it'll be a valuable and inspiring resource.

—Reviewed by Andy Wasowski



Written for *American Gardener* magazine, official publication of the American Horticultural Society.



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## National Park Service Iowa Site Converting from Lawn to Native Grass

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, a National Park Service site in Iowa, is converting an area of mowed lawn into a transitional zone of native grasses and forbs. The area lies between the Gravesite Trail and an existing tallgrass prairie that was restored in 1971. Native cover will replace the cool-season grass within the nut tree grove and along the trail east of the Gravesite.

The park site already had 81 acres of reconstructed prairie and wanted to convert three acres of lawn. The plan was to plant mid-height grasses and wildflowers up to about thigh-level, according to park biologist Sherry Middlemis-Brown last April.

“This will soften the transition from manicured turf to six-foot-high tall grasses. It will also revitalize the edge of the prairie which has had some disturbance in the last few years,” she said.

Middlemis-Brown reports that by fall the project has been going very well, despite drought conditions in Iowa this year. The Kentucky bluegrass was effectively killed, and some of the native plants are germinating.

This conversion will bring the prairie down to visitors who may not be able to walk the steep incline to the current edge of the prairie.

The park is also converting an area of roadside Kentucky bluegrass turf to a “low-mow” grass to reduce staff time needed for mowing.

Much of the work is being funded through a special project grant from the National Park Service.



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Next issue:

Among your holiday preparations, don't forget to submit articles, pictures, and activities to the newsletter editor by December 1. The next issue will cover January through March, 2006.



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# Activities & Events

(Chapters listed in reverse alphabetical order)

## Taos

All programs held at the San Geronimo Lodge the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.

October 12 meeting: "Identifying Native and Non-Native Conifers in Our Landscape" by Stephanie Sandoval, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service.

October field trip: To be announced.

November 9 meeting: "Using Cold-Hardy Cactus in Your Garden" by David Salman, horticulturist and president of Santa Fe Greenhouses/High Country Gardens.

## Santa Fe

Meetings are at 7 p.m. at College of Santa Fe, 1600 St. Michael's Dr., Luke Hall, Room 303.

October 19 meeting: "Apples, Coriander and Watermelons: Spanish Plantways to New Mexico" by William W. Dunmire, retired National Park Service naturalist and writer-photographer. He will also sign copies of his most recent book "Gardens of New Spain: How Mediterranean Plants and Foods Changed America."

November 16 meeting: "Native Butterflies/Native Plants" by Steven J. Cary, chief naturalist for New Mexico State Parks. **NOTE: SF chapter will be holding a native plant seed exchange at this meeting. Members are encouraged to collect native seeds and bring them to this meeting.**

November 18-20: Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Volunteers needed to help staff the Native Plant Society booth during the festival. Call Tom Antonio 505-473-6465 for details.

December 11 party: Members' Holiday Potluck, 4 p.m. at the home of Carol & Gary Johnson. For information call 505-466-1303.

## San Juan (Farmington)

October 20 meeting: 6:30 p.m. at Farmington Nature Center. Tour of herb garden and future native plant garden at the Center by Donna Thatcher, naturalist at the Center.

November 17 meeting: 7 p.m. at San Juan College. Program about preparing prickly pears for eating, and other edible native plants, as well as a business meeting.

No December meeting. See you in January!

## Las Cruces

October 12 talk: "Common Desert Grasses in Dona Aña County" by Dr. Kelly Allred of NMSU's Dept. of Animal and Range Sciences. He will also discuss the working list of all taxa of NM's flora.

October 15 walk: "A" Mountain. Carolyn Gressitt will lead us to an area close to town and rich in plant species. Meet at 9 a.m. at Bank of Rio Grande parking lot, corner of University and Telshor.

November 5 walk: Greg Magee will lead a hike. Meet at 9 a.m. at Holiday Inn parking lot, Main and University Ave.

November 19 walk: Sierra Vista Trail hike with Tom Packard. Meet at 9 a.m. at Holiday Inn, Main and University.

December 7: Annual planning meeting. 5 p.m., location TBA.

## Otero (Alamogordo)

October 22 field trip: Hike along Rails to Trails, exact location TBA. Meet at 9 a.m. at the High Rolls General Store. Call Helgi Osterreich for further information at 585-3315.

November 5: Annual Meeting and Potluck, 12 noon at the home of Beth Anne and John Gordon, 131 Lower Cottonwood Tr. in Laborcita Canyon. For information, call Helgi Osterreich at 585-3315.

## Gila (Silver City)

October 21 meeting: 7 p.m. A program about chile peppers including wild species by Denise Coon, Chile Pepper Institute.

November 18 meeting: 7 p.m. Steve Blake of the Gila Conservation Education Center will present a program on conservation education.

December: Annual Holiday Potluck, date and location TBA.

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

## Activities & Events

### El Paso

All programs are second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Centennial Museum on the UTEP campus.

October 13 meeting: "Garden Uses of Succulent Plants" by Jack Makepeace, vice president, EPNPS, and "Salvaging Native Plants in the El Paso Area" by Peter Beste, field trip chairman, EPNPS.

October 15 field trip: Hike in the Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft to view the changing leaves and flowers around the railroad depot replica, led by Peter Beste, field trip chairman (meet at the NE Walmart in El Paso at 8:30 a.m.). For more information, call Beste at 915- 755-3558.

### Albuquerque

Meetings are Thursdays at 7 p.m., at The Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd (between Eubank & Wyoming Blvd.), in Los Altos Park.

October 6 meeting: Presentation about Tent Rocks park by Kathy Walter from BLM.

November 3: Speaker TBA.

December 3: Holiday Potluck Party!! -- 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Beth Herschman and Jim Brown's house. Contact Tiana (323-1697 or tiana5729@yahoo.com) or Beth and Jim (892-2230 or herschman9@aol.com) for details and directions.

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*Check out the new  
NPSNM Plant Resources  
webpage:*

<http://npsnm.unm.edu/links.html>

## Scientists Warn of Genetically Modified Superweed Risk

by Paul Brown, *The Guardian*

Scientists have identified 15 weed species that are resistant to a herbicide widely used on GM [genetically modified] crops and are warning farmers they may become a serious problem unless a strategy for dealing with them is developed.

Some of the most common weed species, including types of ryegrass, bindweed and goosegrass either have some strains with a natural resistance to the widely used GM herbicide glyphosate\* or have developed one.

Writing in the journal *Outlooks on Pest Management*, four scientists argue there is a danger that by ignoring the threat these weeds pose, farmers may be giving them a huge advantage over other plants which are killed by glyphosate.

Even where they did not previously thrive on farmland or were in a minority of weeds, farmers may be creating a new niche for them among arable crops which would allow them to multiply rapidly.

Glyphosate has been used by farmers to kill off weeds for 30 years but since the 1990s, when GM crops were modified to resist glyphosate, its use has mushroomed.

The paper says that worldwide use has increased from 5,000 tonnes a year in 1995 to more than 30,000 tonnes in 2002, and has increased since.

However, intensive use of the herbicide combined with the non-rotation of glyphosate-resistant GM crops is expected to increase the problem and it will develop on "a global scale," the paper says.

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Excerpted [with original British spellings] from Organic Consumers Association ([www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)) newsletter August, 2005

Originally from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/gmdebate/Story/0,2763,1551238,00.html>

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\*glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup and similar herbicides.

## A Tribute

### Sara Stein, 1935-2005

*Perhaps we have forgotten how exotic this land is to others. Fireflies don't light the sky in England... Europeans have no skunks, chipmunks, raccoons or possums... Our milkweeds are unique. So are the monarch butterflies that milkweeds feed across the kaleidoscopic landscapes of this amazing land of sand shore and rock mountain, grass plain, fir forest, cactus desert. The bluebird lives only in America's back yard.*

Sara Stein, on gardening with natives,  
in *Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of our Own Back Yards*

My copies of Sara Stein books are loaded with little sticky notes and bent page corners; the bindings are beginning to wear from so much use. When I discovered them, I was already beginning to convert lawn to native plants. I fell in love with the titles, especially *Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of our Own Back Yards* (1993) and later *Planting Noah's Garden: Further Adventures in Backyard Ecology* (1997). The books have inspired and enriched my project, and helped me see even more in the resulting habitat than I had ever imagined could be there. Now she is gone, died last February. I miss her. I had always imagined there would be another delicious book.

But we will always have these books, full of many insightful gems: "Once a garden comes alive ecologically, it displays a humor and richness of meaning that have been missed by the narrow views of horticulture. Significance expands. Meanings multiply. Each plant or planting becomes much more than what nurseries believe they sell, or gardeners suppose they grow, or visitors would notice." (*Noah's Garden*)

Stein came to gardening with natives the way many of us do — self-taught and with lots of trial and error. She didn't just write about what she's learned, she shared the journey. She wrote about how she, along with husband Marty, came to see that gardening without natives creates artificial and lifeless places.

"We had done so much — so wrong. We had planted trees and shrubs whose sterile blooms produced no berries. It never occurred to us to plant hazelnuts in hedges. We didn't consider, when we cut down a stand of milkweed, how many

butterflies it fed."

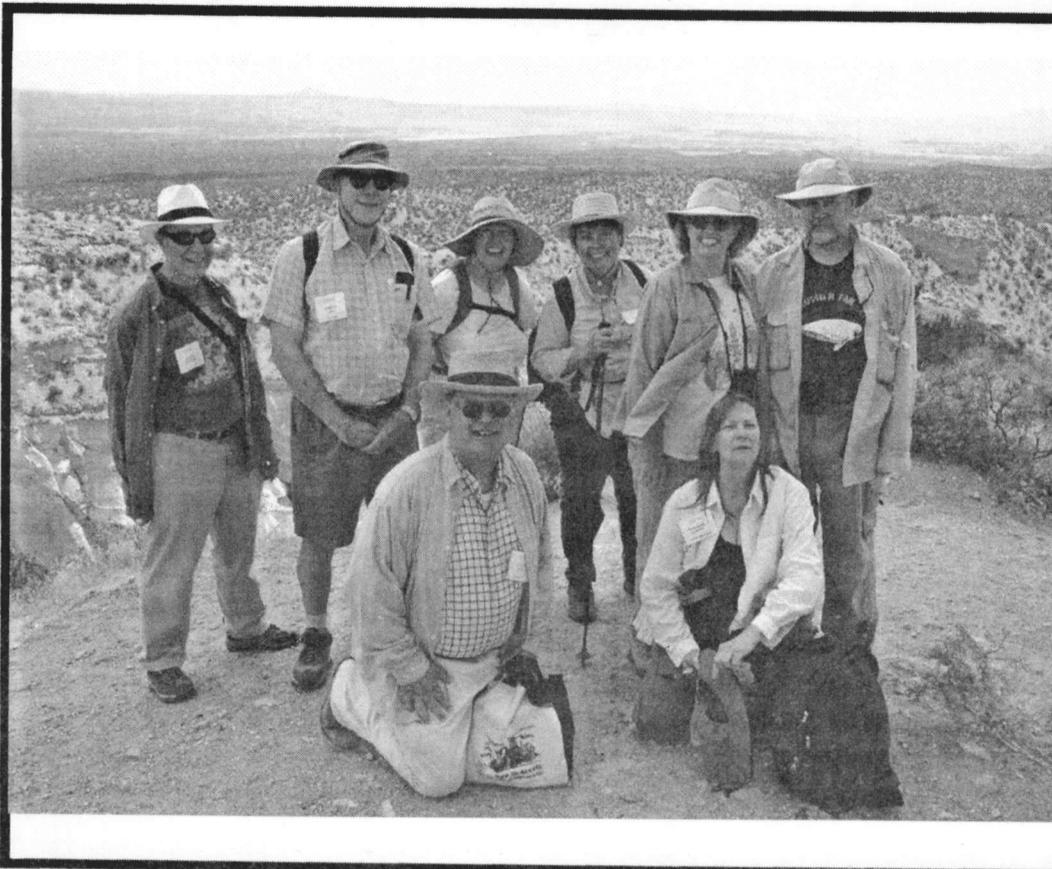
They worked for many years — she with plants, he with rocks — to create thriving habitats on their land in New York and Maine. She did the research: reading what little was available on the depleted native flora of the Northeast, talking to gardeners and extension specialists, tromping through remnant habitat fragments, searching nationwide for seeds of appropriate species, and contemplating... ruminating... mulling. Her land may be distant from our desert, but her insights transcend the gap.

She was constantly surprised and delighted — either by failures or successes, or by the redefinition of those ideas by the wildlife. And she relished every revelation, as near the end of *Planting Noah's Garden*, "Isn't this the point of restoration? That we should be surprised, fooled, teased, tested in our limitations until the one blunt truth gets through to us: we really don't know very much."

But I believe that we see and understand much more than we used to, thanks to Sara Stein.

—Renée West





At the top!

The Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument field trip.

Front row: Eric Metzler, Andrea Cassidy.

Back row: Jack Makepeace, Gordon Lister, Margo Murdock, Arabelle Luckhardt, Carol Johnson, Gary Johnson.

Photo by Grant Luckhardt.

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