# Native Plant Society of New Mexico newsletter

VOLUME VI NO. 5

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1981

CALENDAR

| | |
|---|---|
| September 16 | Albuquerque Chapter - David Whittaker of the City Parks Department, Design and Planning, will discuss the use of native plants in the city parks; successes and failures, problems and solutions design considerations, and future projects. Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd. NE, 7:30 pm. |
| Spetember 16 | Santa Fe Chapter - Sharon Yarborough, wildflower photographer, will present "The Joy of Wildflowers," a slide show of New Mexico native plants from a variety of plant communitites. St. John's College, Laboratory Bldg., Room 122, 7:30 pm. |
| September 19 | Field trip to see plants of interest between Santa Fe and Lamy. Led by Bill Isaacs of the New Mexico State Heritage Program, this will be a chance to see roadside species which are less well known than the common plants and, therefore, easily overlooked. Meet at Furr's parking lot(Coronado Center at St. Francis and Cordova), at 9 am. |
| September 29 | This date has been tentatively set aside by the Southeast Chapter for a field trip led by Col. William Harris to look at grasses of the Roswell area. Contact Nine Eppley for further information (622-1226). |
| October 6, 7 | Fire Symposium at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Presentations of studies on fire, soils, archeology, plants and animals. Field trip to the La Mesa fire site on October 6. Registration fee $15.00, deadline September 15. Call Terry Foxx (672-9056) for further information. |
| October 21 | Albuquerque Chapter - Craig Campbell, landscape architect, will discuss the use of native plants from a design perspective. Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd., NE, 7:30 pm. |
| October 21 | Santa Fe Chapter meets at St. John's College, Laboratory Bldg., Romm 122, 7:30 pm. |
| late October or early November | Southeast Chapter will go to the Guadalupe Mountains. Call Nina Eppley for further information(622-1226). |

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although the year is not yet over, it our membership an assessment of the state of the Native Plant Society.

This has been an exciting and expansive 6 months. Dorothy DeWitt, our membership secretary, reports that we now have 289 members, an increase of about 70 since January. This is partly due to the tremendous work done by Bill Mayfield, Nina Epplev and Jerry Ainsworth in organizing the Southeast and Otero chapters, and by Mary Wohlers and Lisa Johnston in forming the Lee Niner chapter. We have a Taos group beginning to form. By the end of the year, we probably will have welcomed 4 new chapters.

The influx of new energies, and the diversity of interests and expertise that our new members bring with them, is having a big effect on the society. We are finally reaching the critical size needed for effective committee work, and participation at many levels of our organization is on the upswing. We can now look forward to having a bigger voice in the conservation of our state's flora, and a greater impact on local current events. At the same time, our ability to satisfy the interests of our members and contribute to our mutual enjoyment of native flora is increasing dramatically as our numbers grow.

One of the major jobs of the society is performed by Anna Deardorff, the Newsletter editor, who reliably puts together an interesting, informative and accurate mailing. The newsletter continues to be the major contact between members. With the increase in membership, we anticipate more contributions from around the state, particularly gardening tips and news of local floral displays. We are always eager for book reviews, sketches, and news of conservation issues of local concern.

On a wider scale, we are slowly forming stronger bonds with a regional group, the Association of Western Native Plant Societies, and will participate again in this year's Rocky Mountain Rare Plant Conference. We will probably have representatives at their meetings this fall. We aim to increase our awareness of political and commercial events that could impact the flora of New Mexico. Hopefully, we can encourage each other to speak out on issues, and influence the conservation and rehabilitation of native plant species.

Finally, the Board of Directors will have an annual mmeting late this year (to be announced in the next newsletter) at which time we will discuss new goals and directions. We need to hear <u>your</u> ideas and concerns in time for that meeting -- a phone call or postcard to any officer will ensure that you continue to have a say in the future of the society.

Fairley Barnes, President.


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Pinnate

## THIRD ROCKY MOUNTAIN RARE PLANT CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the Colorado Native Plant Society and almost all other western native plant societies (including us) the conference promises to be very interesting, and has as its topic, <u>Energy development and rare plants: planning for the future.</u> It is open to all who are interested, regardless of your previous level of participation in this field.

Date: November 5 and 6, 1981
Location: Denver Botanical Garden (Main Hall), 909 York St. Denver, CO
Registration: CONPS, Rare Plant Conference, P.O. Box 200, Fort Collins, CO 80522.
Registration Fee: $10 general
$5 Native Plant Society members, students.

Make checks payable to CONPS, and contact the CONPS for additional information (address above).

The Program will include presentations by various government agencies, several state Heritage Programs, and Native Plant Societies .

## NEW VARIETY OF GALLETA

The Soil Conservation Service and Colorado and New Mexico State Universities have released "Viva" as the first named variety of Galleta Grass (Hilaria jamesii) for commercial production.

The historical abundance of galleta (pronounced guy-etta) and its ability to persist on dry native rangeland of the southwest make it a very important species for erosion control, mine site reclamation and range revegetation.

Viva was originally collected near Newkirk, New Mexico, in 1944 at 4085 feet elevation in an area of 14.0 inch annual precipitation. After 20 years of breeding to improve its performance (at the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center), Viva now produces an average of 221 pounds per acre of bulk seed when grown under irrigation. It is one of a very few grasses adapted to the heavier, moderately saline soils of southwestern desert areas. One commercial source of Viva galleta seed is Plants of the Southwest in Santa Fe.

*Galleta*

## THE NEW NEW MEXICO MANUAL

A review of W.C. Martin and C.R. Hutchins, A Flora of New Mexico, J. Cramer, 1980, 2 volumes, 2591 pages. List price $160.00.

Other technical floras of New Mexico have long been out of print, and rightly so; "M & H" now becomes our standard reference.

It keys and describes some 3700 species and subspecies in 941 genera, maps their distributions by county, illustrates many with line drawings, and lists many detailed articles on plant groups. A big advantage over Kearney & Peebles' Arizona Flora (which we have been using for western New Mexico) is that each species has a fairly full description. But don't throw away your "K & P" nor Correll and Johnston's Texas flora nor Harrington's Colorado manual: these books more consistently use two or more characteristics at each key step; the latter two give more complete descriptions; they give more nomenclatural discussion; and in tough families like Compositae(Asteraceae) they give helpful artificial keys whereas Martin and Hutchins tend to use formal one-character tribal keys. "M & H" was slow in the press and is already a hundred or more species out of date, and it fails to reflect much taxonomic research of recent years. Inevitably there are many errors of detail.

But enough of that. This is our new mainstay, and we're thankful for it.

- Roger Peterson and Iris David

Ed. Note: Commentaries on M & H's treatment of particular plant groups would be welcomed and published by the Newsletter.

## ILLUSTRATION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The two species of Parthenocissus are from R.A. Vines; Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest; University of Texas Press, 1960.

Galleta grass and Rocky Mountain penstemon, by Niki Threlkeld, were copied from the 1981 Catalog of Plants of the Southwest, Inc.

The small pictures are from the glossary of Weber's Rocky Mountain Flora, Colorado Associated University Press, 1976.

## GLENN NINER, BOTANIST OF NEW MEXICO

Glenn C. Niner was born November 20, 1910, in Kersey, a small farming community outside Greeley, Colorado. During his early years, Glenn and his family moved many times. After completing the first year of school in a rural area, the family moved to Tiger, a mining town near Breckenridge, Colorado. The next year, the family moved again, this time to Breckenridge. The log cabin where the Niners lived is now fenced off as a Historical Site. Glenn attended high school in Denver, as well as in Holyoak and Lyons, Colorado. During vacations, Glenn would spend his time climbing in the mountains and acting as a guide to such places as Pikes Peak.

He studied Forestry at Colorado State University at Fort Collins, Colorado, leaving in 1933 to work with a Forest Service CCC camp as a technical supervisor. He returned to CSU in 1934 where he met and married Elizabeth Schrader. After graduation, he was hired as a Plant Materials Technician in Halsey, Nebraska.

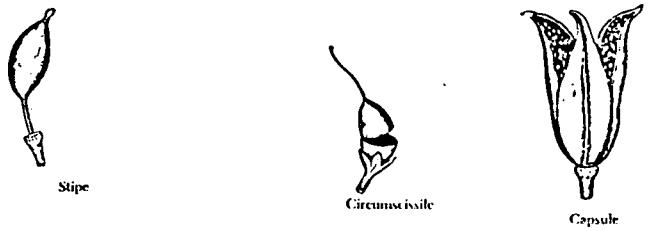
In 1935, Glenn was transferred by the Soil Conservation Service to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to work with Joe Downs in establishing a shelterbelt nursery on the Sandia Indian Reservation. Nursery operations began in December of that year and continued until 1952 when the program was phased out. From there, he worked with the SCS in Taos and Chama, and in 1957 he was transferred to the Albuquerque office. From there he went to the newly established Los Lunas Plant Materials Center which is operated in cooperation with New Mexico State University Middle Rio Grande Experiment Station. In his capacity as Plant Materials Advisor, he was instrumental in making seed collections. Glenn was later promoted to Plant Materials Specialist for Colorado and New Mexico. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1969 after 36 years of government service.

Among Glenn's many accomplishments was a pilot program of vegetative plantings along State-Federal highway systems throughout New Mexico. He also devoted considerable time collecting seed from native browse and grass species; many were used in the highway right-of-way program both in New Mexico and in Colorado at the Environmental Plant Center at Meeker. Glenn was personally responsible for making some 500 collections comprising 231 different species at the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center. The following released varieties were all originally collected by Glenn Niner:

| variety | plant species |
|---|---|
| Bandera | Rocky Mountain Penstemon |
| Bonita | Soaptree Yucca |
| Hachita | Blue Grama |
| Nogal | Black Grama |
| Patura | Little Bluestem |
| El Vado | Spike Muhly |

Glenn was an excellent botanist who had an abundant knowledge of plants and their communities. His death in 1980 was a great loss, but his work will live on for many years.
-Lisa Johnston,
Jim Anderson
Los Lunas

*Rocky Mt. Penstemon*




MX DEVELOPMENTS

Prospects appear to be brightening for over 200 species of Great Basin plants and animals possibly at risk in connection with landbased deployment of theMX missile. Opposition to basing the missiles in Utah and Nevada in 'race track' configurations has continued to grow. The Morman Church in early May declared its opposition to basing in Utah and Nevada, Influential Republican senators Paul Laxalt (NV) and Jake Garn (UT), reflecting concerns of their constituents over the likely enormous disruption of life and environment, in late June proposed use of existing Minuteman silos.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the racetrack scheme came in for heavy criticism at hearings in March before the House Public Lands Subcommittee. A subsequent staff report called the deployment plan 'a wasteful investment of land, money, & resources.' The quantity of public comments upon the DEIS apparently has delayed issuance of the final EIS.

In Congress two attempts to restrict funding for continued development of the MX failed, one by a very close vote. But a move easily passed to restrict spending money until after choice of a basing mode and a 60-day period for congressional review of the decision. Similar versions of such a restriction passed both House and Senate.

The Townes committee, appointed earlier this year by the Defense Secretary to conduct an overall evaluation of the MX concept, apparently could not agree upon any any single recommendation. Its report will remain secret unless released by Secretary Weinberger, but various sources indicated in late June that one recommendation was to cut the number of missiles from 200 to 100 and to base them in Nevada "where local opposition is somewhat weaker." Congressional sources apparently feel that the original (racetrack) deployment scheme could not now win approval in either House or Senate.

Taken from Network,August 1981.

HEAVY RAINS BRING OUT MUSHROOMS

This summer has been marked by a resurgence of heavy rains, after several years of less than normal mid-summer precipitation. The result has been an extraordinarily good mushroom season. Notable features of this season have been a very early fruiting of the king mushroom, Boletus edulis; good populations of the chantrel, Cantharellus cibarius; and pig's knuckles, Gomphus clavatus; as well as lower than usual numbers of the champignon, the genus Agaricus; and the appearance of at least one rare mushroom, Polyozellus multiplex.

The best mushrooming has been at higher elevations, i.e. spruce-fir forests. However, more nearly normal fruitings have occurred in the mixed conifer and ponderosa pine forests. At elevation levels below ponderosa pine, mushroom season has been average; i.e. poor. Based upon past experience, it generally takes several years of above average summer rains to bring the pinyon-juniper woodland mushrooms out in large numbers.

Virtually any of the higher elevation areas have been good for collecting. The Santa Fe Ski Basin, the Pecos area, Brazos area, Jemez Mountains, the Sandias and the Gila area have all been remarkably good. There have been few cases of mushroom poisonings this season, with most reports due to ingesting edible mushrooms that resulted in stomach upset. This is common in seasons where people who do not normally eat mushrooms try them out. It should be stressed that novices should not eat wild mushrooms unless they have had their collections checked by an expert. I have had reports this summer of stomach upset from the giant puffball, the king mushroom and the waxy laccaria, Laccaria laccata. All of these mushrooms are known to be edible. If one tries a mushroom for the first time, it should be eaten in a small quantity. Different mushroom species should not be cooked in the same pot.

-Bill Isaacs

## VEGETATION MAPS ARE AVAILABLE

The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology at Socorro has a list of publications including good maps at a nominal price, and one of several useful ones for native plant students is a Satellite Photomap of the entire state. This is Resource Map No. 12 and costs $3.00. It is 24" x 27" and belongs on a wall.

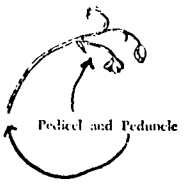
Resource Map No. 8 has been developed from RM No. 12. It is titled Vegetation and Land Use in New Mexico and is multicolored with keys indicating the kinds of areas in which towns are located, for example, Forests and Woodlands, Grasslands and Steppes, Cultivated, and so on, each with several narrower subdivisions such as Pinyon/Juniper, or Cottonwood/Willow/ Tamarisk.

For $1.75 you can buy superb local maps in color done by the U.S. Geological Survey, with contours as well as color keys to geological formations, and if you don't understand the technical terms, one option is to go see, map in hand, what the formations look like and what grows there.

We are all familiar with wise advice to give our garden natives conditions which approximate those found in the wild for the species. This may please the writer more than it helps the plant since few people can have any idea at all what growing conditions prevail in the numberless corners of a state of this size. Most of us do well to manage our nearby natives under garden conditions, bearing in mind that soil is nowhere uniform, not even on a single city lot, let alone on a section of land or throughout a county. Add in the list of climatic and genetic variables plus kinds and amounts of water and you have a great game going. These maps are a major hlep to anyone studying such complex problems.

Here are directions to the Institute from Highway 25. It is possible to find the old City Plaza west of the arterial and from there a street called Mines leads northwest to the campus several blocks distant. Make no turns entering the compus from Mines and you will arrive at a parking lot with convenient visitor parking. You will find in the immediate building more information than you knew you needed. Not the least interesting is the Museum of Minerals which is a 9 to 5 freebie on weekdays. As with schools anywhere, don't go on weekends or holidays, but do make time somehow. It's you tax dollar being properly spent and worth stroking.

Mary Wohlers
Los Lunas

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TO JOIN THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY:

Dues are $6 per year per individual, or $8 per family, or $4 for students and seniors. Send your dues to Dorothy DeWitt, 1414 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. Check the Native Plant Society addresses on page 6 to find a chapter near you, or to call locally for more information about meetings and programs.

THICKET CREEPER
*Parthenocissus inserta*, (Knerr) A. S. Hitchc.

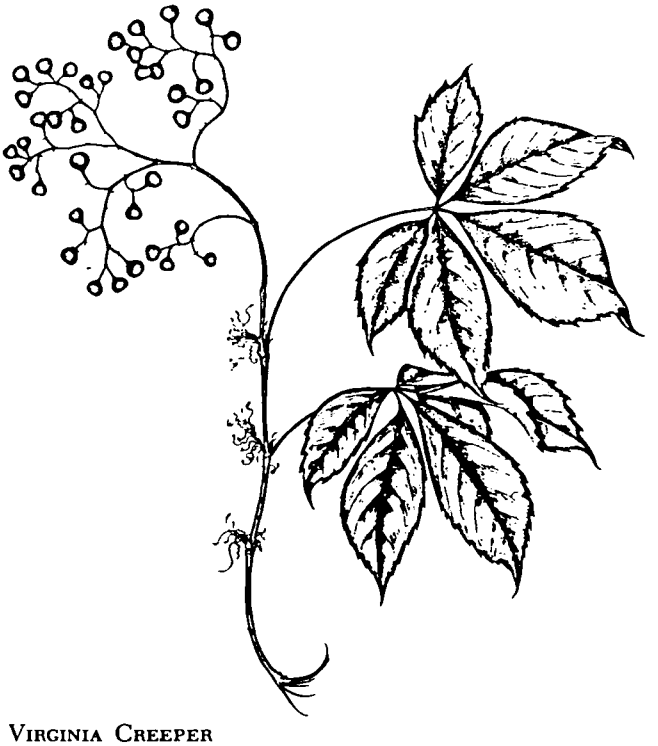
GARDNER'S CORNER

Parthenocissus inserta (Kerner) K. Fritsch, or Western five-leaved ivy, is a common native vine which ranges from Canada to the Mexican border. A mass of it a quarter mile long near Peralta in Valencia County provide me with a couple of handfuls of cuttings in March 1980. My garden, which was no such thing yet, was in need of fast shade. In July, 1981, the cuttings are 10 feet high and more. They frame both sides of the carport and have set sail across the top which is a 16 foot span likely to be well covered well before the leaves turn red. Since the green phase is such a handsome affair, I've gone all the way around the property with it on tall poles connected by wire mesh. This makes a satisfying backdrop, effective windbreak and dust filter, and tells me where the shade will be at any hour. It does so with much grace, closing off unwanted views and visually borrowing tops of distant trees into my own landscape.

Recently the trailer has got enough mesh around it to take the vine up and over the roof. It is worth noting that the west end receives its first sun at the hottest time of day and the vine easily handles the abrupt rise im temperature. I keep a heavy manure mulch at the base, and a light framework of 2x4's to keep the vine off the hot metal roof (which won't get hot once the leaves are in place). Already there is no longer any roof rattle on windy days.

In October, it will be a blaze of red. Then the leaves will fall and winter sun will be the new game. Mesh threaded with stems greatly reduces wind speed in winter storms. Next year the maintenance will be near zero. If it becomes too huge, there are always chain saws, but better a humidifying jungle than unfettered New Mexico sun beating down on an antique plant doodler. Up with microclimates!

Mary Wohlers, July 1981.



VIRGINIA CREEPER
*Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (L.) Planch.

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