

# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER /OCTOBER 1989

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 5

## CALENDAR

### All Members

#### September 16 and 17.

Native Plant Society of New Mexico Annual Get-together at Bosque del Apache. Come ye, come ye! We had such a good time and such nice facilities at the Bosque on our spring work weekend that we decided to repeat and see how all the seeding we did is faring. Saturday a tour of the Fort Craig area on BLM land has been arranged. Saturday evening we will have a program, plant auction and visiting time. Sunday morning we will do some planting on the grounds. Dinner and breakfast will be provided for the mere sum of \$10.00 payable at dinnertime. You can bring your lunches or we can go the the Owl Cafe for delectable green chile burgers. Call the Bosque to reserve a bed or place for your camper. Drop a postcard to Lisa Johnston 831 W. 19th St., Portales 88130 or call 356-3942 so she will know how many dinners to plan for. Bring: camera and binoculars, slides to share, money to purchase goodies (books, notecards. plants T and sweatshirts, etc.) shovels and sprinkling cans, working shoes, sheets, blankets and towels if you are going to stay in the bunk house, walking shoes, water bottle for Saturday trip, plants for the auction. Arrive by 9:00 Saturday morning or the evening before so the trip can begin at 9:30. The Bosque number is 835-1828, Mon- Fri. 9-4.

#### September 28, 29, 30.

Wilderness Conference at Western New Mexico University. Call Dr. Andrew Gulliford at 538-6386 for additional information on the conference. Saturday will be a day of celebration with music and dancing at the confluence of Sapillo Creek and Terry Canyon, N.M. Highway 35. Michael Martin Murphy performs. Call Gila National Forest 388-8211 for more information.

September 30 and October 1. 4th Annual Endangered Species Fair at the Museum of Natural History, Albuquerque, 9 - 5 both days. David Brown, author of books on wolves and grizzlies, Steve Johnson and Ted Hodoba will be among the speakers. Also attending will be a wolf, birds of prey and other wildlife. Art, storytellers, displays, music and food will make it a gala event for your family. More information from Sierra Club, Albuquerque office 265-5506

October 27 and 28. Second State Xeriscape Conference at Albuquerque Garden Center 10120 Lomas N. E. Conference fee \$50.00 includes lunches. Call Lynn Daxon at 285-5231 or Patricia Sussman 268-7738.

#### OTERO CHAPTER

- September 9. Meet at 9:00 AM at Circle K in San Ysidro. Charley Pase will lead an exploration of the Rio Puerco drainage area where there are gypsum ridges with specialized plants and some rare and endangered species. Overnight camping in campground nearby.
- October 6,7,8. Meet at 9:00 AM at entrance to Davis Mountain Park on Saturday. The park is 4 miles west of of Fort Davis on Texas 118.
- November 4. Pot luck and Meeting at 12:00 Noon at home of Carles and Shirley Pase, 300 Encino, Tularosa; east side of Highway just after Catholic Church.

Jean Dodd 434-3041

#### SANTA FE CHAPTER

- September 9. Otero has invited us to join them. Call Mimi for arrangements.
- September 20. 7:30 PM St. John's College Lab Building Rm 122 Bill Isaacs will speak on Interesting New Plants for the Native Plant Garden.
- October 11. Field trip to Fourth of July Canyon with stop at Balloon Fiesta in the morning and return late afternoon by route 14. Call Ellen for details and confirmation in case of weather problem 982-1406.
- October 18 7:30 PM St. John's. Donna House, Tribal Lands Protection Planner and Botanist for the Nature Conservancy will speak on Rare and Endangered Species on Tribal Lands.

Mimi Hubby 983-1658

#### ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER

- November 1. Marie Torren will give instruction on wreath making and basket decorating using native plant materials. Be gathering your pods, grasses, and favorite non-shattering materials, along with a wreath made from vines, rabbitbrush, etc. Marie is well known in the Albuquerque area for her unique and creative pieces and she will share her expertise in this hands-on meeting. Call Lorraine at 268-2869 if you have questions.

#### LAS CRUCES CHAPTER

- September 10. Field Trip to Salt Flats, Texas. Meet at 7:00 AM, NMSU Pan Am Center, North Parking Lot. Bring lunch, water and hat.
- September 13. 7:30 PM Room 190 Gerald Thomas Hall NMSU Jan Meissner Design with Native Plants .
- October 8. Field trip to Box Canyon Meet at 8:00 AM NMSU Pan Am Center North Parking Lot. Bring lunch, water and hat.
- October 11. 7:30 PM Room 190 Gerald Thomas Hall NMSU Thomas Wootten on The Family Scrophulariaceae .

Please have all material for the next Newsletter in by October 16.  
Ellen Wilde 110 Calle Pinonero Santa Fe, N. M. 87505

- September 10 Field trip to Little Cherry Creek and Tadpole Ridge Meet at Fine Arts Parking Lot 9:30 AM.
- September 23 ½ day field trip McMillan Campground
- September 27 7:30 PM Dutch Salmon Life Zones in Southwestern New Mexico
- October 8 Joint field trip with Las Cruces to Box Canyon
- October 14 Field trip to McKnight Rd.. All day
- October 25 Potluck - slides.

Becky Smith 538- 5850



## NATIVES AND XERISCAPE

by Judith Phillips

Whether due to this year's local weather or the ongoing press coverage of global warming, Xeriscape is finally making headlines in New Mexico!

According to the National Xeriscape Council Inc. brochure, the fundamentals of Xeriscape, i. e. water conservation through creative landscaping, are:

1. environmentally sound designing
2. limiting turf areas
3. irrigating efficiently
4. improving soil where shallowly rooted plants will be grown
5. using mulches
6. using lower water demand plants
7. Maintaining the landscape appropriately.

Each of the seven concepts demands further discussion, but in this issue I would like to focus on #6.

In the process of making a list of locally adapted xeric plants for the New Mexico Xeriscape Conference to be held in Albuquerque October 27 & 28, I made a shocking discovery. Included in the list of 200 plus plants, 114 are native but 97 are emigres from similar (or sometimes surprisingly dissimilar) climates. Horrors! Almost half the list is imported! Treason you say? Practicality I say.

Besides superior adaptability, there are other criteria for a spot in the Xeriscape Hall of Fame. First of all, having gotten past the notion that all natives are weeds, we shouldn't leap toward an equally gross miscarriage of common sense and horticulture that no native plants are weeds. Snakeweed is a weed. Some of the grasses and fewer of the wildflowers and shrubs that I included are so well adapted that they can get out of hand if not used with discretion. Some native plants have been used so much, for so long that they are beginning to fall from grace as the selection of other drought-tolerant plants available expands. Chamisa is one example.

The siting of any plant is critical to it's individual success and the success of the landscape as a whole. Recently my new neighbor, Ted Hodoba, and I had a long visit to hash over plans for the Demonstration Garden that the Xeriscape Design Team is planning with Albuquerque City Parks. Ted, a Penstemoniac, was adamantly opposed to a penstemon garden. Since I favor integrating the penstemon into other plantings rather than massing them separately, I took great pleasure in Ted's vehemence. Sure, penstemons are gorgeous plants, but too many species flower concurrently and in colors that beg to be separated by space or color foils. I enjoy penstemons as seasonal color accents with plants of similar cultural needs Penstemon strictus

massed with Artemisia frigida provide semi-evergreen groundcover with strong textural contrast that may be mowed seasonally at cleanup; Penstemon ambiguus and Chocolate Flower yield a summer of pastel color. Penstemon pseudospectabilis on the lee side of Artemisia filifolia is protected from winter burn by the sage. (I do go on, but so does the ornamental value of such mixtures....)

In a way, Ted's objection has to do with aesthetics also. Dead plants tend to be much less attractive than their live counterparts. Apparently Ted waged a noble battle with disease in his Albuquerque penstemon bed. (Luckily even fungi and bacteria are more difficult to cultivate in the wilds of Veguita.) With few immune companion species to confuse the enemy, many good penstemons met an untimely death by wilt. While aesthetics are debatable, building a disease management problem into your garden isn't going to make life (yours or the penstemon's) any easier.

Meanwhile, back at the Xeriscape hall of fame, we arrive at the problem of availability. How actively do we endorse plants of limited availability? The selection of garden worthy drought tolerant plants increases every year, but the plants are still not as accessible as they might be. Sometimes seed isn't available, sometimes it doesn't germinate, but the real problem is how available do we make plants of limited endorsement? Does a grower produce 5000 chamisa that will sell themselves or a few hundred chamisa and thousands of lesser known native shrubs that he or she may have to eat at the end of the season?

Xeriscape is more an evolutionary approach than a revolutionary one. It has staying power, striking a balance between immediate gratification and ultimate survival. If greening the planet is part of the solution to global warming, then Xeriscaping is the most practical means to that end regionally.

OSHA (Ligusticum porteri)

Ruby Buckner

Osha is rather a stout plant reaching a height of three feet. It grows in moist, fertile soil almost to timberline and is a palatable forage plant. It is known as chuchupate by the Mexicans and osha by the Spanish-speaking people and the Indians. It is prized highly for its medicinal qualities. The roots, prepared in various ways, are used to treat disorders such as colds, flu, rheumatism, cuts, upset stomach, indigestion and snakebite. The osha is a wonder plant to the curanderos and to shepherders who consider it a medicine kit in itself. They chew the dry roots for headaches, tooth aches and indigestion and make it into a tea to treat a cold. They drink it to prevent hangovers and believe that its very presence keeps snakes away.

It has an odor similar to celery and is used like celery for seasoning soups and other dishes. The dry, hollow stems were smoked like cigarettes by the Apaches and later by the Spanish-speaking people. The roots are also chewed in an effort to break the tobacco habit.

Osha is a member of the parsley family, which contains many useful plants: carrots, parsley, celery, dill and anise. It may be confused with two of the most poisonous plants in New Mexico, Water Hemlock and Poison Hemlock, which are very similar. Poison Hemlock has a very similar leaf to osha but has purple dots on the stem. Water Hemlock's leaf is somewhat different but all grow to 3 feet or more in damp habitats and have umbels of tiny, white flowers.



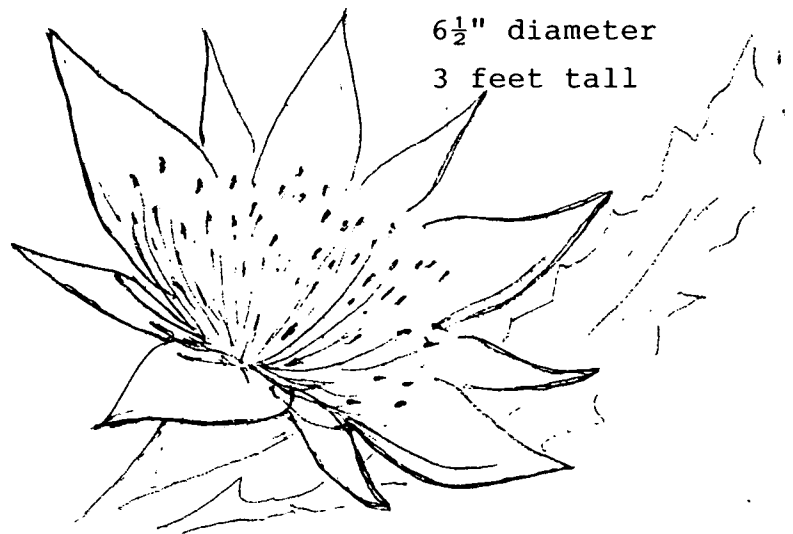
WE'LL MISS HIM HERE!

Sheila Doucette

Dr. William Martin retired from the University of New Mexico at the end of the spring 1989 semester and we join all his friends in wishing him and Mrs. Martin the very best in their new endeavors.

In addition to his teaching role, he has been Curator of the Herbarium at the University since 1958. During that time, the specimen collection has grown to over 75,000 plants. He has supervised 67 graduate students and encouraged countless others to pursue their interest in botany. As a member of the UNM Speaker's Bureau, he has carried his enthusiasm for native plants to groups all over the state. He has also served for many years in an advisory capacity to the Poison Control Center and is presently Chairman of the Advisory Board for the future Botanical Garden in Albuquerque. Those who have not been privileged to know him in person may know him as the "Martin" of Martin and Hutchins' A Flora of New Mexico.

Dr. and Mrs. Martin will remain in Albuquerque for about a year while their new home is being built near Silver City. Dr. Martin will maintain an office at UNM and can be reached there at 277-2604.



6½" diameter

3 feet tall

Have you ever seen this beauty? It is so outstanding that you would expect that it would be well-known and widely photographed, but its common name gives us a clue as to why it is not. Blazing Star or Mentzelia decapetala only opens after dark and closes again before the sun is out.

It grows on a 3-foot stem with many branches and several flowers will be open on any late summer night. The plants are easy to spot even when the petals are furled during the day in the volcanic gravel road cuts along I-25 as you approach Raton and go up the pass to Colorado. Martin and Hutchins' A Flora of New Mexico shows it only occurring in the three most northwesterly counties, but the range is given as Southwestern Canada thru Iowa, Texas, Colorado and Mexico.

#### PRAISE IS WONDERFUL

Does your town have public landscapes using Xeriscape concepts that reduce water waste while beautifying your community?

In Albuquerque, City Parks people are much more likely to hear from irate, uninformed citizens ("when are you going to get rid of the weeds along tramway!?!") than they are to hear from native plant enthusiasts praising Osuna, Urban Forest or Supper Rock Parks or the Harper Street median. When

you notice a well designed, ecologically appropriate public landscape, run to the nearest phone and offer your congratulations to those responsible. They need all the public support they can get. (Editor's note - a permanent sign should be erected inconspicuously in the planting giving the name of the designer, especially if it is a commercial designer, so that the public will know whom to contact for their own landscape work.)

## Views from the South

The big news from here now is the recent publication of a booklet by our very own member, Greg Magee, entitled "El Paisaje de Soledad", The Landscape of Solitude, a hiking guide to Dona Ana County. Such a well-written and informative book, written by such a caring person. The book is available in Las Cruces for \$5.23, including tax. Add \$1.00 for postage and write to Nature-scapes, Box 3574, Las Cruces, N. M. 88003. Greg and wife Julie have left us for Washington, D. C. We miss them already but feel we must grant them this temporary leave.

There has been much in the news lately about the Mexican Spotted Owl and the proposed timber cuts in the Reserve area. Little has been said about Gooding's onion, a candidate for federal protection under the endangered species act, reportedly also likely in jeopardy from these same timbering operations. Can someone help with information?

Some months ago, I was distraught with the way a particular subdivision in Las Cruces had ignored a small arroyo that emptied into the housing area. Every time we had a shower of substance, the streets were inundated with sand. I was taking pictures after one shower as evidence to show the proper authorities when two sets of neighbors came out to see what I was doing and started complaining about the situation. I offered the name of the proper city councilman and asked them to contact him.

Folks, we cannot continue this way. If we are displeased with something our government is doing or is responsible for, we must act to improve the situation. We have a listening post and a coordinator who is trying to tie all of our chapters together in an information network so that each of us can be aware and act upon others' concerns when we feel it is appropriate. Ted Hodoba is

our conservation chairman and this coordinator. Las Cruces and Silver City have designated contact persons to share concerns with Ted. Have other chapters done likewise?

A very good friend of mine recently told me of a time when he was told, "as you grow older, you become more and more obligated to be radical in your actions". In this case, radical means you stand up for your principles and are willing to act upon them. This is an important message for all of us. I am getting older, aren't you?

Tom Wootten



## IN APPRECIATION

During lunch in the yard of an old, abandoned schoolhouse in the Jicarilla Mountains, the Otero chapter of NM-NPS presented Paul Gordon with a life membership in the Society and a certificate of appreciation for all he has done and is doing for our group. The trips he leads are always informative and just plain wonderful.

We look at individual grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees up close. He takes us to high points to look in wonder at the awesome sight of miles and miles of nearby mountain ranges. He has done this in the Peloncillos, Jicarilla and Capitan mountains so far. He also has a wealth of information about the history of the area and the people who have and are living there.

All this storehouse of information comes from his years of working in the Fish and Wildlife Service and then in the Forest Service. He has been stationed in California at Tahoe and Sequoia, The Kaibab and Apache Forests in Arizona and the Lincoln and Cibola Forests in N. M. and finished up with 6 years at the Smoky Bear Ranger District in Ruidoso. We surely do appreciate him!

## OTERO CHAPTER REPORT

Otero met in Capitan the end of July and visited Smokey Bear Historical State Park. It is now mostly all grasses with a few flowers here and there. We saw purple coneflower, Echinacea purpurea (Ed. Note- Martin and Hutchins lists only Echinacea angustifolia for N.M. and doesn't show it anywhere but Union County. Was it seeded in there by the park planners?), black-eyed susan, Rudbeckia hirta, purple vetch, an interesting gaillardia with yellow petals and a red center, quite diminutive, pink clover, red cinquefoil Potentilla thurberi, common toadflax and a single tall yucca in bloom. From there we went on to the western edge of the High Plains where the most common roadside flower was Zinnia grandiflora. Around one bend was a beautiful stand of Monarda menthaefolia. In the Jicarilla Mountains we went through Jicarilla, pop. 5, had lunch at an old school house, looked at a small cemetery and then went up to the Iron Mine at 7600 feet. There are also a number of gold mines in the area, mostly abandoned. As usual we saw almost no other people until we got to White Oaks on the way back.

Jean Dodd

## ALBUQUERQUE

Our July meeting at the Albuquerque Museum was not well attended. This was unfortunate because we had a really stimulating and thought provoking presentation by Bob Sivinski, a specialist in land reclamation. He is well known to some of us from his days as Dr. Martin's teaching assistant. Bob showed many slides illustrating the processes involved in strip mining coal in the west and the problems in restoration. MINE OWNERS HAVE TO POST SUBSTANTIAL BONDS WITH THE STATE TO INSURE THAT RECLAMATION WORK IS PROPERLY DONE. IT CAME AS QUITE A SHOCK TO MOST OF US TO LEARN THAT THIS APPLIES ONLY TO COAL MINING. OTHERS CAN TEAR UP THE LAND AND LEAVE IT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO CLEAN UP!

What a contrast to this grim picture was our August meeting. Our guest speaker was Phyllis Hughes, who made the trip from Santa Fe just to enlighten and entertain us. She is a well-known author, ethno-botanist and student of our Indian and Hispanic traditions. We were treated to a delightful collection of slides of native plants, accompanied by Phyllis' comments and explanations on their histories, uses and medicinal properties. Who could have guessed that our yuccas can be used to make ropes, mats, sandals, paintbrushes, soap and food for man and livestock, that snakeweed got its name because Navajos used it to treat snakebite in their sheep or that liatris roots are a much sought-after protection from the evil eye? Walter Graf

## LAS CRUCES

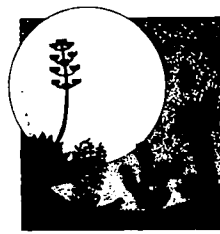
Our field trip to the Black Range on July 9 was a bit disappointing because everything was dry. All three streams visited are normally dependable water sources, but were dry except for infrequent puddles. Everything herbaceous was wilted to the point of not being identifiable. We did go up to the Douglas Fir zone where we had a chance to look at some nice specimens of Gambel Oak, Silverleaf Oak and Arizona Walnut. We noticed that around Kingston Tree of Heaven, Ailanthus altissima, is really taking over. We also enjoyed the cactus garden at City of Rocks State Park.

Our guest speaker at the August 9 meeting was Mike Howard from the Caballo Resource Area of the BLM. He spoke to us about ACEC planning. This stands for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and is a designation given only after a lengthy process of evaluation to protect a significant historic, cultural or scenic value, resource or system. An example of an ACEC is the Organ Mountains. It is a scenic area protected from any activities that would cause damage to scenic value. An ACEC can include private or state land within it. M. Florence

SANTA FE

We had six outings and one work day over the summer. Highlights of our Jemez trip were Iris missouriensis, Besseyia alpina, Happlopappus newberryi and Clematis pseudoalpina. At Cactus Hill there were marvelous displays of Bush morning glory, Ipomoea leptophylla, Penstemon ambiguus and magenta Cholla cactus, Opuntia imbricata. We transplanted Ipomopsis sancti-spiritus, a sensitive species, from Holy Ghost Canyon where it was endangered by road work for the Forest Service. We explored meadows full of wildflowers in the Cow Creek area of the Pecos and did a systematic survey for Lilium umbellatum, but found none. Rain showers accompanied us to Canjilon Lakes and the Raton area, but they did not stop us from enjoying the lush displays of Aconitum, Helenium, Senecio, Macheranthera, Erigerons, Solidago, Delphinium, Ipomopsis aggregata var. candida and Mentzelia decapetala and fantastic scenery. Many thanks to leaders Phyllis Hughes, Ellen Wilde and Diane Macfarlane and to those who provided extra transportation, Phil Pennington, Gene Loring and Steve Ruggles.

Mimi Hubby



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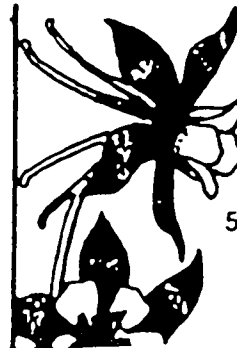
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