

Newsletter

Native Plant Society of New Mexico



November/December, 1985

Volume X, No. 6

Calendar

- Nov. -- Albuquerque Chapter will enjoy a discussion by Ted Hodoba about growing penstemons. He will also show slides of his extensive penstemon collection. There is a possibility of additional information from American Penstemon Society.
- Nov. -- Las Cruces Chapter is having a potluck supper at St. James Episcopal Church parish hall at 6:30 p.m. Bring table service and a casserole, salad or dessert.
- Nov. 20 Santa Fe Chapter will meet at 7:30 in the Lab Bldg. at St Johns College. Charles Mann will talk on Native Plant Propagation.
- Nov. 26 Lea County Chapter (to be) is organizing and invites everyone interested in native plants to come to their meetings which will be held the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Will Rogers Community Center in Hobbs at 7:30 p.m. For additional information, call Linda Owen at 392-5024.
- Dec. -- Albuquerque's Chapter meeting will feature the annual covered dish Christmas party, gift exchange and election of new officers.
- Dec.-- Chaves County Chapter members will participate in a Christmas potluck supper. Exact date will be announced.

From The Editor(s)

President's Message

This is my last message as president of your society. I have really enjoyed myself and would urge everyone to get involved by running for office some time. I'd like to thank the various board members, newsletter editors, chapter presidents and all the others I have been privileged to work with during the past few years.

The use of native plants in landscaping is a growing practice here in New Mexico. We must, however, be on our guard against the ignorance of many people who perceive everything beyond water-thirsty non-natives as weeds. This has happened in the Midwest and Northeast, where homeowners have tried to landscape their homes with native plants only to be arrested in violation of local ordinances. Education is vitally important, and you can do much good for native plants by talking to your neighbors about the Society and its activities.

Conservation of native plants and native plant habitats is of vital importance as we approach a world of decreasing natural resources. We must be vigilant in seeking the protection of rare and endemic native plants.

Once again let me say how much I've enjoyed being your president, and hope that we will continue to advance the use and appreciation of native plants throughout New Mexico.

Ted

Roget of thesaurus fame is to lexicology as I am to botany: lump it all together, ignore all the differences you can.

Usually Roget is my boy but this Thanksgiving season I'm with the precise Barnharts. "Thankful is feeling or expressing thanks. Grateful is feeling kindly because of a favor received; wanting to do a favor in return".

While feeling thankful for our native plant heritage is a good time to consider the many and changing ways we can demonstrate our gratitude besides giving lip service.

Have a happy Christmas and New Year. That's only a wish but if I were a bureaucrat it would be a directive.

George



My bit today is a "Don't Forget" column:

Don't forget that the Newsletter needs new adoptive parents--to receive it in early January.

Don't forget to mail in your ballot for the 1986 elections. You will receive it within a short time. Election results will be in the next Newsletter.

Don't forget that the books that NPSNM is selling have a good discount and make very welcome gifts.

Don't forget to be generous with submissions to your new editor(s).

Don't forget to visit other Chapters' meetings when you have the opportunity.

And don't forget to have a thoughtful Thanksgiving, a jolly Christmas and a healthy New Year!

Myrtle

Chapter Reports

Albuquerque Chapter: Our September meeting consisted of a very interesting and informative talk by Rex Funk of the Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department, Open Space Division. He discussed the various projects of the division and how they are used by the citizens of the state. He talked specifically about the Elena Gallegos Land Grant and the volcanoes. Mr. Funk also discussed possible future acquisitions for open space.

On October 6, the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center held an open house and invited our membership to attend. It was announced that bird banding sessions were occasionally held from 10:00--12:00 on Sunday mornings and that the Friends were always looking for volunteers.

The major portion of the evening was given to a slide presentation and talk by Frances Szeman of her trip to Peru. It was a wonderful visual experience: scenic views, terraced mountains, native plants, woools, weavings, people, llamas, etc.

Suzy Sultemeier

Las Cruces Chapter: Our August meeting was devoted to specimen identification and a slide presentation by Bob Reeves.

Our September field trip was to Ropes Springs on White Sands Missile Range. Apparently this used to be a resort area, but we know little of the history. The drive in presented an opportunity to see a wide variety of plant life, but the highlight for most of us was our first opportunity to see growing in the wild, Lobelia cardinalis, Rhus choriophylla and Rhus copallina lanceolata. The first is as beautiful a flower as one could ever see. They do grow in the water so obviously are big water users. I have subsequently learned this plant is found in

profusion in Dog Canyon blooming in August and September. Surely Otero Chapter knows this but if not, a trip is in order next year. Rhus choriophylla and copallina are delightful shrubs or small trees. The former is evergreen and the small blooms were attractive. The latter should turn flame red in the Fall.

Dr. Vincent Gutschick presented a very interesting program on the flora of Western Australia for our September meeting. Vincent has a very large collection of beautiful slides, many of which he shared with us. He and his wife are welcome newcomers to Las Cruces.

Our October field trip was to Leesburg State Park where we observed many late blooming flowers.

Our October meeting featured a slide show by Paul Richmond. A surprise addition was a presentation of LYC's. This is a good reminder of why sometimes in desperation we identify a flower as a little yellow composite.

Tom Wootten

Lea County Chapter (to be): A group of persons interested in organizing a chapter met in September at the Will Rogers Community Center in Hobbs. Those attending discussed the possibilities and goals for the chapter. Some suggestions were: 1) field trips to identify plants inside and outside Lea County; 2) demonstrations at meetings to familiarize the members with methods to identify and use of plants in our unique environment; 3) guest lecturers at meetings who have special skills related to native plants, such as natural dyers, photographers, herbalists, and craftspersons; and 4) a part of each meeting devoted to trying to identify plants members bring in.

(continued)

Chapter Reports, continued

During the second part of the meeting, Deborah Bengé of the NM Agricultural Extension program presented some pointers on drying specimens, as well as some introductory explanations of plant identification. The attendees expressed hope that although most were just beginners, becoming chapter members would help them learn more about native plants of the area.

Carol Levine

Otero Chapter: We made our last field trip of the season to the home of C.J. and Joy Carter in the Sacramento mountains near Mayhill on September 28. It was the season for asters to be in full bloom along with the beautiful blue chicory. We saw basket flowers, gilia, ground cherry, coneflowers, yellow primroses---Hookeri, spike verbena, nodding onion; several varieties of geraniums, blue gentian, woolly mullein and water smartweed. After wandering around the meadow where the Carters keep their horses, we enjoyed a lunch before the rain, which had fallen through the night, continued.

Otero will have their annual business meeting to set up the program for '86 and then shut down until February of next year. Happy Holidays!

Jean Dodd

Santa Fe Chapter: For our September meeting Phyllis Hughes presented an interesting and unique program on "Culinary Native Plants". She first told us of a program called Talavaya Center underway at the San Juan Pueblo. An eight to 10-acre demonstration garden is under the direction of an agricultural research group there experimenting with "Native Seeds" for growing in Africa and other drought stricken countries. Seeds include amaranth, lamb's-quarter, corn, bean, chile, high-yield blue corn, squash and other ancient organic plant seeds.

Slides taken of edible native plants in the wild were helpful in identification of the many plants that may be gathered for culinary purposes. It was suggested a seasonal calendar be made of plants available in the wilderness and also to take note, on those winter botany walks, of dry stalks of edible plants in order to return to the area in the spring when tender shoots are showing. The New Mexico Poison Center has a chart available of poisonous plants. Beware of these three poisonous plants in particular: A plant with carrot-top foliage (poison hemlock has hollow stems and white flowers), water hemlock next to streams and Bayne berry/bright red and white berries.

Recipes were distributed for Yucca Flower Soup, Mustard Greens Salad, Dandelion Flower Fritters, Rose Hip Jelly, etc., along with instructions for "Basic Cookery of Native Plants." Also discussed in the recipes was toasting and grinding sunflower seeds into a flour which may be used in making biscuits, pancakes, cookies and cakes; blanching greens such as Rocky Mountain dew plants (Indian spinach) and gathering young cattails as an asparagus-like dish. Chicory can be blanched and cooked like spinach or sun dry the roots for about three weeks and you will have genuine Cajun New Orleans coffee. Burdock, nodding onion, broadleaf milkweed with green pods similar to okra are delicious. Purslane is excellent in soups and salads; their stems are like bean sprouts. The Japanese stir fry them. Mustard heads are good cooked like broccoli and mustard can be used in salads or cooked.

Phyllis Hughes and Ellen Wilde surprised us with tasty samplings of amaranth cookies and a pinon dessert they had prepared. For more information on recipes call Phyllis Hughes at 983-4875.

Dovie Thomas

Science Center Solves Problems

Finding plants that thrive in New Mexico is a challenge to researchers at New Mexico State University Agricultural Science Center at Las Lunas.

The 200-acre science center is unique in that it has one of 24 USDA Soil Conservation Service Centers located on site. Agricultural Experiment Station and USDA scientists jointly test plant seed and vegetable material from world-wide sources for landscape and conservation use in Colorado, Texas and Arizona, as well as New Mexico.

According to Dr. Ron Hooks, science center superintendent and horticulturist, the partnership is a productive one. Since 1957, researchers have developed and released more than 30 new plant materials.

"We have successfully tested and released more varieties here than has any other Plant Materials Center in the country," he said.

New grasses, forbs and trees released from the program are used for beautification and erosion control on highway rights-of-way, rangeland improvements, revegetation of mine spoils and dumpsites, rehabilitation of wild game habitats for better food and cover, and landscaping on public and private lands.

But before they are released, the plants undergo rigorous greenhouse and field tests. These

tests will show whether a species is adaptable to the area, what production potential it has and the kind of management it requires, Hooks said.

Plant Materials Center manager Wendell Oaks said of the center's mission, "We're trying to solve some of the conservation and landscape problems in our four-state area by developing new native and introduced plants. Testing and proving the plant material is a critical step in the process of solving these problems."

Some of the most widely used plants released from the Los Lunas Science Center include Jose tall wheatgrass, Arriba western wheatgrass, Lovington blue grama and Bandera Rocky Mountain penstemon. More recent popular releases include King Red Russian-olive, Viva galleta, Barranco desert willow and Hachita blue grama.

Released this year were Cedar Palmer penstemon, a soil conservation plant and Hatch winterfat, a range shrub and the first commercial winterfat released anywhere. These releases were made jointly with other state Experiment Stations and government agencies which participated in testing programs for the varieties.

From a news release from the Cooperative Extension Service, NMSU



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The American Horticultural Society is again offering an Endangered Wildflowers Calendar. Funds raised from sales will be used to support conservation projects around the country. To order your 1986 calendar, send \$6.95 (includes postage and handling) for each calendar to Jeanne Eggeman, American Horticultural Society, P.O. Box 0105, Mt. Vernon, VA 22121.

Winter Gardening? No Sweat!

By Judith Phillips

For the past few years the nursery industry has invested a lot of time and money to promote fall planting. Ever on the leading edge of horticulture trends, wildflower enthusiasts are out tilling and sowing seeds for next season's flower display. Taking our lead from Mother Nature, we know that fall and early winter sowing improves germination. But what about transplanting during fall and winter? Is it nature's way or advertising hype? On the plus side, lower evaporation rates make cool weather a less stressful time for establishing new plantings. On the other hand, freezing and thawing can heave new transplants out of the soil, exposing roots to cold, dry air. So the question is do I plant now or wait, and the answer is yes. To both.

In a recent newsletter from Little Valley Wholesale Nursery, Brighton, Colorado, Larry Watson surveyed the hazards of fall planting. In east central Colorado, his main concern is cold. He recommended P. P. Pirone's Tree Maintenance (Oxford University Press) as a place to explore the roots of the problem, including these facts about roots:

- Uprooting an established plant often results in the loss of up to 98% of the active root system.

- Roots of most deciduous trees continue to grow until soil temperatures near 40° F.

- Low soil temperatures also limit moisture and nutrient absorption even in established plants.

- Since root production is more rapid when there is foliage to chemically stimulate and fuel such growth, dormant deciduous plants rely on stored energy to support new root growth.

The conclusions drawn from this

information are straightforward. The more root system the transplant retains, the less it will have to replace. Large container grown plants are a safe bet. A healthy plant will have the reserves to continue root development while the top growth is dormant. Transplant while the soil temperature remains above 40° F and/or mulch heavily to encourage fast rooting.

I'd like to add a bit of local insight to this sage advice. In addition to winter cold, we have winter warmth to consider. In many parts of New Mexico, the soil six to 12 inches below the surface and deeper remains above 40° F most, if not all, of the winter. During warm winter days evergreens, both new transplants and established specimens, use and lose moisture through their foliage. Broadleaf evergreens, such as Baccharis emoryii are drought deciduous, and will drop their leaves if moisture is not available. They will leaf out again in the spring, no harm done. Needled evergreens (pines, spruce and fir) and scale leaved evergreens (junipers and Arizona cypress) will not leaf out again from growth that has defoliated. They need regular watering during winter. Small transplants from two or four inch pots or seedflats occupy the surface six inches of soil that constantly freezes and thaws, and will need more care, moisture and mulch than deeper rooted specimens. Cold weather transplants should be acclimated to on site conditions. Greenhouse grown plants or plants shipped from warmer climates should be planted when temperatures moderate in the spring, and given the benefit of a season's growth before they are subjected to cold winter temperatures. (continued)

One last caution to winter gardeners living in rural or new suburban areas. Winter can be a desperate time for wildlife. They may presume your new seeding or transplants are a kind of philanthropic salad bar for their benefit. A little chicken wire goes a long way in preserving both your plants/seeds and your sweet disposition.

With these reservations fall and winter can be a very active gardening season. Plantings established now, with relatively little moisture, meet the challenge of spring winds and summer heat with greater resilience. I do all my pleasure gardening now. During spring and summer I'm too busy growing everyone else's plants to give much thought to my own landscape. It thrives on good intentions and winter attention. So, if you thought I was going to advise you to curl up with your seed catalogs until February, I'm sorry. Don't go dormant with the first frost! It's prime time for garden cleanups; meadow making and tree and shrub planting.

Much interest was shown in the two classes "Gardening With Native Plants" taught by Ellen Wilde in Santa Fe on September 25 and 29. 16 participants in each class spent two hours working outside the Folk Art Museum and one hour working inside with plant catalogs. Much has been accomplished in landscaping the area in front of the museum with a variety of native plants and a path is being constructed around the side. Classes will continue until mid-November. Anyone interested in learning by experience, bring a spade, garden trowel and garden gloves. More information, call Ellen Wilde at 982-1406. A new class will start in March.

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Publications

FLOWERS OF THE SOUTHWEST
FORESTS AND WOODLANDS. By
Teralene S. Foxx, illustrated by
Dorothy Hoard, cover illustrations
by Niki Threlkeld. Los Alamos
Historical Society. 210 Pages.
\$12.95.

The title suggests a work covering a broad area. In fact the research area is limited: The Jemez Mountains and Pajarito Plateau, north central New Mexico. This book includes not only flowers but also trees, shrubs and grasses, a chosen "representative" 450 plants illustrated by 900 line drawings; keys based on characteristics obvious to the novice; plant lore; derivation of botanical names; glossary; cross index of names and other usual accessory material.

Wide distribution of the "representative" flora may justify the not exactly accurate title. Certainly there isn't need for this title as a grabber for book browsers--the beautiful cover illustrations in color are all that's needed.

As in a novel that opens with climax and then bogs down in flashback, text and drawings are a letdown from the cover's promise. This is not to fault the book's excellent black and white interior. It's to point out the necessity of targeting a flora to a specific group of readers, in this instance "...the beginner, the person who wants to do a systematic study of plants beyond the simple picture book but does not have the technical knowledge to use botanical floras."

From her considerable teaching experience the author has developed keys that may be used by the untrained, nontechnical person. The author expresses her hope the keys may be used as "...stepping stones to use of more advanced texts."

Although the cover may have almost universal appeal, the text may not. But consider this: The book is well written, has good though small illustrations. It should be interesting, even informative and useful to readers much more advanced than those focused on.

George Finley

Santa Fe member, Irene Mitchell, has written an article entitled "Western Shrubs" for the October 1985 issue of American Horticulturist. The article describes several of our western shrubs and their use as ornamentals.

The long awaited publication, Native Plants for New Mexico Landscapes, is now available. It features 30 plant descriptions with color photographs of each plant. Copies can be obtained from your local County Extension Office. Ask for Native Plants for New Mexico Landscapes, NMSU Cooperative Extension Circular.

The publication was co-authored by Dr. R. F. Hooks, superintendent and horticulturist, NMSU Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas; Lisa C. Johnston, research assistant, NMSU Agricultural Science Center and USDA-SC Plant Materials Center at Los Lunas; W. R. Oaks, manager, USDA-SCS Plant Materials Center at Los Lunas; Judith M. Phillips, nursery owner, Bernardo Beach Native Plant Farm, Veguita, N.M.; and J. R. Sais, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service urban horticulturist at Albuquerque.

Now is a good time to collect materials for dried native plant holiday wreaths. The datura, all species, have very interesting cones. Desert holly works nicely and if glycernized remains more supple. A walk down your favorite nature paths should yield some real treasures.

The name Salvia (sage) is derived from the Latin word salvo, meaning I save, and refers to medicinal qualities.

The name Zephyranthes (Zephyr lily, flower of the west wind), comes from the Greek words zephyr, the west wind and anthos, flower.

The name Iris is from Greek mythology: Iris, goddess of the rainbow and refers to the varied colors of the flowers.

The name Hepatica is derived from the Greek hepaticus, relating to the liver and refers to the lobed leaves.



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To better serve our membership, please check areas of particular interest.

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___ Organize new chapter
___ Membership drive
___ Other (please specify)

How would you describe your level of expertise? What areas would you be willing to help with?

Are you a member of an organization with related purposes (Garden Club, NM Wildflower Association, etc.)?

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