



# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

May/June 1994

Volume XIX Number 3

## A Journey Through Time: Chronicles of a Past and Present Invasion

by Karl Urban, Umatilla NF Botanist  
reprinted from the Bulletin of the NPS of Oregon April 1994

The organizational meeting of the Pacific Northwest Exotic Plant Pest Council, PNW-EPPC, held in Pendleton, Oregon, on December 10-11, 1993, was really an eye opener for me. After growing what was probably Umatilla County's first plant of velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrastii*) from seed that contaminated either a bag of commercial potting soil or from the nursery plant I planted in that soil (I guess I'll never know which), I was really looking forward to



the meeting. I wasn't disappointed! A few days after the meeting, I traveled to Heppner, Oregon. Because of a recent rash of winter-time accidents on I-84, I decided to take the back roads. The combination of the EPPC meetings and the journey over the oh-so-familiar terrain caused me to think back over the changes in the green mantle of the land that I have witnessed since moving to Pendleton some 26 years ago.

I used to spot small bushes of purple ball sage (*Salvia dorrii*) which bloomed each May just southwest of Pilot Rock on the north side of Highway 395. Now that hillside is obscured by a thicket of teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*) and just beyond the teasel patch is a gigantic crop of Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*). After turning west from Highway 395, I came to the site where I had found a sensitive plant population some 18 years ago. Laurent's milkvetch (*Astragalus collinus laurentii*) still grows there but now it's losing ground to Klamath weed or St. John's-wort or goat weed (whatever you want to call *Hypericum perforatum*). In that same area the roadcuts are starting to support sheets of field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*).

The sad message of the passing years was becoming crystal clear to me on this particular trip. The landscape had changed dramatically right under my own eyes. The gorgeous native wildflowers I used to enthusiastically share with my students at Blue Mountain Community College (I taught there for 23 years — until 1991) were no longer abundant. Where they had once ushered in spring with a profusion of colors, now stood the tall, dried stalks of flannel mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) and the rust-colored tufts of Klamath weed.

In the dryland canyon country between Pilot Rock and Heppner I remembered climbing through rattlesnake dens to get to the rocky slopes that supported vast golden fields of the first serratedleaved balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza serrata*) I had ever seen. That was in 1969. How surprised I was to see those same rocky slopes now covered with the remains of diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) and Medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*). I approached the bridge where I had first found black henbane (*Hoscyamus niger*) in Umatilla County, some 22 years ago. I fully expected to find that the hillsides were covered with the strange skeletons of this poisonous plant. Instead I found that teasel had won out. Only a few dried henbane plants were present.

By the time I got to Heppner I was really depressed over the demise of native plants evidenced in this short trip. Although my memories of the beautiful wildflowers that used to occur along that route are indelible, those plants are no longer there. Now, aggressive, introduced plant species (and some aggressive natives, too) have

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found very comfortable niches in recently-disturbed habitats. They appear to be so "happy" (i.e., well-adapted) that they are spreading all over the place.

I could not bear the thought of returning to Pendleton over that same route, so I reluctantly drove north from Heppner toward Interstate 84. Several hawks were hunting in the irrigated circles of corn near Echo. I stopped to watch them. As I stepped out of the car my memory again reminded me that here, some 24 years ago, grew the beautiful pink Umatilla milk-vetch (*Astragalus succumbens*). Now the sandy soil supports a matrix of Russian thistle or tumbleweed (formerly known as *Salsola kali tenuifolia* and soon to be correctly named either *Salsola tragus* or perhaps *Salsola pestifer*) plus the remains of yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), puncture vine or goat heads (*Tribulus terrestris*), and sandbur (*Cenchrus longispinus*).

Everywhere, everywhere, were reminders that we are changing the face of the land. The land, despite its apparent permanence

and resiliency, is recording those changes by producing a tapestry of altered habitats filled with exotic vegetation.

The hawks continued their hunting antics as I climbed back into my car and headed home. As the afternoon fog settled into the Columbia basin; I crossed an irrigation canal now choked with false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*). I remember the time when there was a single tree of false indigo in Umatilla County.

All evening and all night I thought about the dramatic changes I had witnessed in a quarter of a century in the arid lands of northeastern Oregon. The EPPC meeting had opened my eyes to reality and the next day was to be no different!

The next morning I opened the blinds and looked out at the winter-kissed plants in our yard and garden. Hoarfrost clung to the red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) I had planted. The frost was particularly attractive on the almost-invisible, long stringy hairs of the soapwort (*Yucca filamentosa*) plants I had put into our home

The Newsletter is published six times per year by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. The Society is composed of professional and amateur botanists and others with an interest in the flora of New Mexico. Articles from the Newsletter may be reprinted if fully cited to author and attributed to the Newsletter. Membership in the Native Plant Society of New Mexico is open to anyone supporting our goals. We are dedicated to promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment, and to the preservation of endangered species.

Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges and a wide selection of books available at discount.

We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve the state's unique character and as a water conservation measure.

We maintain a register of business and professional people who are members and can supply information and services related to native plants. To be added to this roster or to request information, contact the Membership Secretary.

**Advertising Schedule**

Approved advertisements will cost \$40 per year.

**Schedule of Membership Fees**

Dues are \$10.00 annually for individuals or families. "Friends of the Society" include organizations, businesses, and individuals, whose dues of \$25.00 or more provide support for long range goals. To join us, send your dues to Membership Secretary, 443 Live Oak Loop NE, Albuquerque, NM 87122

**Newsletter Contributions**

Please direct all contributions for the newsletter to Tim McKimmie, editor. See address below or email to [tmckimmi@lib.nmsu.edu](mailto:tmckimmi@lib.nmsu.edu) **Deadline for the next newsletter is June 1.**

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landscaping effort. The Kenilworth ivy (*Cymbalaria muralis*), although frozen in wads, still clung to the garden gate. The brown, dried stalks of St. John's -wort (*Hypericum calycinum*) threateningly encircled the small hornbeam (*Carpinus*) sapling I had purchased and transplanted three years ago. I noticed that the periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) was threatening to crowd out the peonies I had so carefully transplanted from my father's garden years ago. The silvery, woolly leaves of lamb's tongue (*Stachys lanata*) and red campion (*Lychnis coronaria*) poked through the English ivy (*Hedera helix*) we inherited with our purchase of the property in 1979. Beyond the garden boardwalk, I could see the leafless stems of the Siberian pea (*Caragana arborescens*) I had transplanted in 1982. I had chosen that species because of its drought resistance. In my early days in Pendleton I found a grove of Siberian pea growing at the old Pendleton Airbase. It was perfectly happy — a veritable green oasis on an otherwise "cheat-grass brown" hillside, and it hadn't received any domestic irrigation water since World War II!

As I gazed out over my "creation," I felt an urgency to begin re-landscaping immediately. My greenest of green thumbs had turned many of those exotic plants into uncontrollable pests. I had planted them with good intention and cause — immediate access to splendid materials for use in the botany classes and laboratories I used to teach. I realized that as a result of my own shortsightedness I had contributed to the problem of introduced, aggressive, plant species.

The EPPC meeting provided me with a rude awakening and a new perspective. As I pull the gray-green campion and *Nigella* plants from my vegetable garden each summer, a homespun definition of "aggressive" — minus the profanity — grows closer to exact wording. Perhaps the "knapweeds" of tomorrow are lurking somewhere in my garden today!

## Views from the South (One Member's Opinion)

by Tom Wooten

Last month I attended the New Mexico Plant Recovery Team meeting and frankly was I favorably impressed !!! This is a dedicated group of botanists, especially interested in protection of rare and threatened plants. The "team" is made up of representatives of federal agencies, the New Mexico Forestry division, academia, New Mexico Heritage Program, the Navajo Heritage Program and others. The first part of the meeting, to which I was invited, consisted of general reports on certain species by land managers and researchers, and was quite interesting and informative. It also provided an opportunity for me to present a concern on behalf of the Las Cruces Chapter of Native Plant Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society. Officially, I expressed our concern for Griffith's salt bush and asked that the status of this plant be changed from C-3 (not threatened) to C-2 (a candidate species that needed further study to determine its status).

Griffith's salt bush, *Atriplex griffithsii*, is a small shrubby member of the Chenopodiaceae family, currently only known to exist in the Lordsburg Playas of southwestern New Mexico and the Wilcox Playa of Arizona. The plant seems to grow only in a thin band around these playas, but seems to be doing well in this thin range. The Wilcox Playa is officially a bombing range (currently inactive but providing no planned protection for this plant) and the Lordsburg Playas are mostly public land or New Mexico State Trust lands. The Lordsburg Playas are largely in an allotment managed intensively for livestock and are also subject to disturbance from wind surfing each spring. A Resource Natural Area has been designated for part of the habitat by Bureau of Land Management, but to date no actual monitoring or study of this plant and the associated cryptogamic crust community have been undertaken. The concern here of course is the apparent extremely limited range of this plant. I hope we can learn more about its biology now and avoid a potential emergency later.

This writer frequently gets very discouraged with the battles on the conservation front, but this meeting definitely was an upper. We do need to keep in mind our responsibility to report sightings of T & E plants when we are on our field trips, and we need to recognize that plant protection often suffers as we strive to protect the more "cuddly" animal species. I was particularly pleased for this reason to have the support of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society in our request for the above status change. We can not ignore the individual species, but we all need to keep in mind that birds, and other animals (including humans), and plants are dependent on overall environmental protection.

Many thanks to Robert Dewitt Ivey for permission to use his wonderful drawings from *Flowering Plants of New Mexico*, second edition, in our Newsletter.

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## CALENDAR

### OTERO

May 14 Plant Sale. Garden Center, 10th and Oregon, Alamogordo,  
9 am to 1 pm.

May 21 Field trip to Cottonwood Canyon. 9 am John Gordon's home  
434-5481 or Jean Dodd, 434-3041.

June 24-26 Glenwood NM. 8:30 am Otero Fairgrounds or Catwalk lot  
later in the day.

### LAS CRUCES

May 11 "Chihuahuan Desert Readings" by Susan Tweit. 7:30 pm,  
Rm 200 NMSU Ag. Building.

May 15 Field trip to Baylor Pass. 8:00 am. Chris Reutzel.

June 8 "Gap Analysis" by Patrick Christ. 7:30 pm  
Rm 200 NMSU Ag Bldg.

June 10-12 Field trip to Rocky Canyon, Gila NF. Camp out or leave  
Pan Am lot at 7 am June 12. Dave 527-1188.

### ALBUQUERQUE

May 5 "Wildlife West" by Linda Maloney. 7:30 Albuquerque Garden  
Center, 10120 Lomas.

June 2 "Butterflies" by Steve Cary. 7:30 Albuquerque Garden Center.

### GILA

May 15 Field trip to San Francisco River Box. 9:00 am WNMU Fine  
Arts lot.

June 12 "Big Tree" trip n. of Bayard. 9:00 am WNMU Fine Arts lot.

### SANTA FE

May 14 Field trip to Tent Rocks. 8:30 am PERA lot or 9 am I-25  
Cochiti exit.

May 18 "N. New Mexico Butterflies" by Steve Cary. 7:30 pm. St.  
Johns College, Evens Science Bldg. Rm 122.

June 5 Field trip to Doolittle ranch. 8 am PERA lot or 9 am corner of  
Grand & Mills, Las Vegas.

June 18 Orchid Field trip to Holy Ghost. 8:30 am PERA or 9:30 Holy  
Ghost campground.

June 25 Los Alamos Butterfly Count. 7:30 am PERA or 8:30 am  
Sunrise Park, Los Alamos.



## CHAPTER REPORTS

### Otero-Jean Dodd

Otero's 2-19-94 program was three videos that were given to the Middle and High Schools of Tularosa, Cloudcroft, and Alamogordo on the subject of saving the gene diversity of native plants. This was done to introduce the students to finding and storing seeds, and possible careers. The videos show searching for native food plants and one man's accomplishments in altering soybean genes to suit different circumstances. A map showed all of the different countries his work affected. A look at the Ft. Collins Seed Bank showed changes in seed storage methods over time. All of the videos emphasized the worldwide scope of this work in an effort to save as much gene diversity as possible before it is lost forever. The NPS State Board donated money to NATIVE SEEDS/SEARCH which saves southwestern seeds. see Sunset Magazine, March '94. For more see "National Geographic" April '91 and June '93.

"Smithsonian" had an excellent article. "National Geographic" says "Ask any American schoolchild where the country's most valuable national treasure is stored....the greatest wealth may be tucked away at the USDA facility on the campus of Colorado State University at Ft. Collins, Colorado." For information on video sources for schools, write Jean Dodd.

3-24-94 "Sense and Nonsense about Natives" by Lisa Johnston is an interesting and fun slide show about uses, possibilities, and oddities of native plants. What plant provides fuzzies to dry out your shoes? What plant can change sex if the need arises? Did you

ever think of some of the common natives where you live being a possible source for solving medical problems? Hopefully you know the poisonous ones and the hallucinogenic ones to avoid especially if there are children there. Don't want to spoil the program for you if your chapter hasn't invited Lisa to present it. She has started a collection of these bits of information and invites everyone to add to the collection. Address is in the *Newsletter*. Thanks Lisa!

Otero's first field trip of '94 (March 20) reminded everywhere we looked in Fresnal Canyon of the difference between plants at our plant sale and old plants in the wild-especially the little leaf sumac-they are huge!! Desert willow, lemonade bush, whitethorn acacias, and ocotillos all seemed unusually large to the point of questioning what they were. This is on the edge or in a very large wash. Washed away trunks collecting debris on the way to becoming their own island. Not much in bloom. Just a few yellow bladderpods.

### Las Cruces-Paul & Betty Shelford

3/9/94 Bob Reeves' presentation "Cactus". The cactus family is native only to the Americas; various species are found in all of the United States except for Alaska, Maine, and New Hampshire. Perennial dicots, cacti have two seed leaves to distinguish them from monocots such as yuccas and agaves. There are some 3000 different species of cacti, and the striking selection of slides portrayed many of those found in our region.

# THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO FIELD ETHICS

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico recognizes the importance of collecting plants for educational and scientific purposes. The primary justification is that it contributes to an increased knowledge of and appreciation for the native flora.

Collecting is also necessary for introducing new species into horticulture. Even for species already available from commercial sources, additional collections provide new genetic material which can be used to improve cultivated strains.

Incidental collecting for purposes of plant identification, teaching, nature demonstrations, and like purposes enhances individual knowledge, promotes public education, and increases environmental awareness.

If done with proper care and consideration of the impact on plant populations, most plant collecting is not detrimental. Rarely is it necessary to take an entire plant. For most perennials, a small portion of a plant is sufficient to make an herbarium specimen, and the roots are usually left undisturbed. Annuals are almost always present in large numbers. Seeds and cuttings are the preferred propagules for bringing wild plants into cultivation, and their taking rarely causes any impact.

**THE FIELD CODE OF CONDUCT:** Two important questions should be considered before taking specimens. 1. Will the collection of this plant (or part thereof) contribute to educational or scientific advancement? 2. What will be the effect of this collection on the population of this species? The following guideline should be used to answer these questions and minimize impact on the environment.

- a. Collecting should be done inconspicuously. Chance observers may not understand the reasons for such activity and conclude that they may do likewise. Remember that simple picking of wildflowers has decimated a number of species. If someone appears while you are collecting, take the time to explain what you are doing, and that you are being careful not to deplete the populations.
- b. Collect only common species except for serious study. Instructors in particular are encouraged to use common species for demonstrating collecting techniques and plant structures.
- c. Collectors should obey all national, state, local, and tribal laws, and should obtain all necessary permits before collecting.

**FIELD TRIPS:** In order to minimize the impacts of our field trips and make them as enjoyable as possible, all field trip participants are required to comply with the code of conduct. It is the responsibility of each chapter president or field trip coordinator to see that field trip leaders are aware of their responsibilities. It is the responsibility of field trip leaders to make sure that all participants are informed of the rules and expectations for their behavior before beginning the trip. Leaders must know the rules and regulations of land owners and land management agencies before beginning a field trip, and must obtain any necessary collecting permits if collecting is intended. In addition to the rules in the code of conduct, leaders shall determine which of the following rules will be in effect on a given trip.

- a. In many habitats trampling causes more damage than collecting. Drive only on established roads. Don't park on vegetated shoulders. Walk carefully, and keep to existing trails as much as possible. Do not take groups of people into fragile habitats or populations of rare species. Do not create new disturbances.
- b. Most field trips are to locations where plants are protected by law. Casual, indiscriminate collecting is prohibited on most trips. If a participant finds an interesting plant, the leader's attention should be called to it, and he/she will determine whether it may be picked without causing undue decline in the population. Field trip leaders may waive this rule in certain situations, such as in large fields of abundant or weedy plants, or for specific surveys.
- c. Many people go on field trips to enjoy fresh, unpolluted air. If you must smoke, be conscientious about staying downwind from the rest of the group. Be aware of fire hazards, and carry out the butts (they are deadly to wildlife).
- d. Take out all your trash. This includes biodegradables and toilet paper, which decompose slowly in arid environments. Deeply bury solid personal waste and never defecate near bodies of water.
- e. No animal, wild or domestic, is to be disturbed unnecessarily. Educational demonstrations with captured reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals (except endangered species) are acceptable; handle them carefully and release them exactly where they were captured. Rocks, logs, etc. moved to look for wildlife should be replaced as precisely as possible. Don't knowingly approach birds on nests. Be as quiet as possible.
- f. Leave gates as you find them.
- g. Gathering of firewood is usually not allowed. Most field trip sites are too heavily visited to sustain such harvest.
- h. In summary, use common sense. Endeavor to leave a natural site exactly as you found it.

## SOURCES OF NATIVE PLANT MATERIAL

Agua Fria Nursery  
1409 Agua Fria St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 983-4831  
Native and other plants, Penstemons

Applewood Seed Co.  
5380 Vivian Street  
Arvada, CO 80002  
(303) 431-7333  
Wildflower seeds, Wholesale catalog

Bar V 3 Enterprises  
P.O. Box 306  
Alamogordo, NM 88311  
(505) 434-5210  
Desert willow, native and  
drought tolerant plants

Bernardo Beach Native Plants  
520 Montano, N.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
(505) 345-6248  
Native and adaptive plants,  
design; no mail order

Colorado Alpines, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2708  
Avon, Colorado, 81620  
(303) 949-6464  
Rocky Mtn. natives; seeds,  
mixes, plants, catalog

Curtis and Curtis, Inc.  
Star Route, Box 8A  
Clovis, NM 88101  
(505) 762-4759  
Seeds for reclamation, grasses,  
shrubs, wildflowers; catalog

Desert Fioralscapes  
105 Lindbergh  
El Paso, TX 79936  
(915) 584-0433  
Native plants

Desert Moon Nursery  
Ted and Candy Hodoba  
Box 600  
Veguita, NM 87062  
(505) 864-0614  
Yucca, agave, other plants

Edge of the Rockies  
133 Hunna Rd.  
Bayfield, CO 81122  
Mountain natives and seeds,  
mixes; catalog

Gunsight Mtn. Ranch & Nursery  
Williams Creek Rd., Box 86  
Tarpley, TX 78883  
(210) 562-3225  
Container grown natives;  
retail, wholesale, design

Mesa Gardens  
P.O. Box 72  
Belen, NM 87002  
(505) 864-3131  
Cactus and succulents, plants,  
seeds; catalog

Native Seeds/SEARCH  
2509 N. Campbell #325  
Tucson, AZ 85719  
Native seeds of grains, beans,  
vegetables. catalog

Nature's Way Wholesale Nursery  
8905 Edith Blvd., N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87113  
(505) 898-9258  
Wholesale only; natives,  
groundcovers, xeriscape

New Mexico Cactus Research  
P.O. Box 787  
Belen, NM 87002  
Cactus and succulents

Pearson's Tree Place  
P.O. Box 1175  
Canutillo, TX 79835  
(915) 877-3808  
Native trees, shrubs

Plants of the Southwest  
Rt. 6, Box 11A  
Agua Fria near Siler  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 438-8888  
Plants and seeds; catalog

Rocky Mountain Rare Plants  
P.O. Box 200483  
Denver, CO 80220  
Seeds of cushion, xeric plants;  
catalog; sales from Nov.- March

Rowland Nursery  
540 Telshor Blvd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
(505) 522-4227  
Native trees, shrubs, plants

Santa Ana Pueblo Native Plant Nursery  
Hwy 44 & Jemez Dam Rd.  
Bernalillo, NM 87004  
(505) 867-1322  
Native perennials and shrubs

Santa Fe Greenhouses  
2904 Rufina St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 473-2700  
Native plants, seeds, cacti and  
succulents from seed, Penstemons

Seeds Trust  
High Altitude Gardens  
P.O.B. 1048  
Hailey, Idaho 83333  
(208) 788-4363  
Veg., flowers, grasses; catalogs

Sierra Vista Growers  
P.O. Box 225  
Chamberino, NM 88027  
(505) 874-2415  
Native trees, shrubs, plants

Southwestern Native Seeds  
Box 50503  
Tucson, AZ 85703  
Seeds only; western natives; exten-  
sive, informative list

Wildland and Native Seed Foundation  
2402 Hoffman Drive, N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Wholesale only, seeds

Wildroot Horticultural  
2705 Cottonwood Lane, S.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87105  
(505) 873-©2565  
Wholesale only; drought tol.,  
perennials, Penstemon, shrubs

Plants of the Southwest  
6670 4th Street, N. W.  
Albuquerque, NM  
(505) 344-8830  
Plants and seeds

## AUGUST NPSNM ANNUAL MEETING PREVIEW ACTIVITY

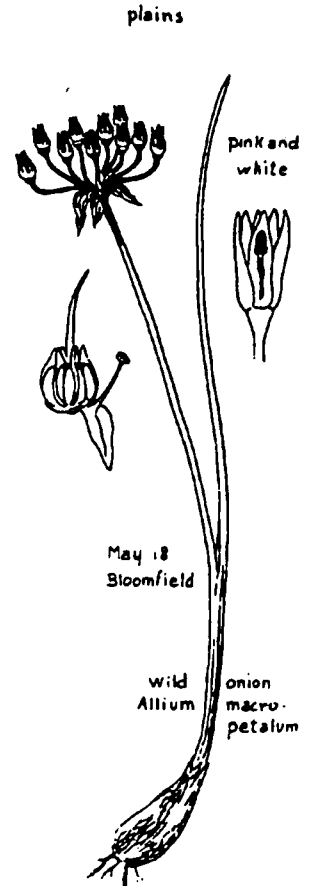
In the mid-afternoon of August 26, 1994, while driving to the annual meeting of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, you will be offered a unique opportunity to both stretch your legs and enjoy some of New Mexico's rarer plant habitats. The Santa Fe Botanic Garden is inviting all NPSNM members to a private tour of our Lenore Curtin Natural History Site.

The Santa Fe Botanical Garden is a young organization but filled with realistic dreams and ambitions. One of its first goals was to secure and protect the area above referred to as the Lenore Curtin Natural History Site, (LCNHS). The LCNHS is a very special and botanically valuable site. What makes the site special is water. Located on a high and dry mesa, an impermeable basaltic intrusion forces the ground water to the surface, causing seeps and springs, and affording us a site with year round water. Historically the water has been impounded by the Rancho de Los Golondrinas for their agricultural-historical living museum. This use will continue, but the LCNHS will provide a more secure sanctuary for the native flora and fauna. The variety and number of both plants and animals, birds in particular, already on the site is quite impressive, but we believe that with the fencing completed and rudimentary recovery efforts put into action, the numbers will be even more impressive.

In August, when you are here, the burros will no longer be able to lunch on the tender green plants in the pools and trickles, the red tail hawks will have pretty much finished with child rearing chores, and the rails will be as secretive as ever. Your guide on tour is a well known fixture in native plant circles, our LCNHS curator, Bill Isaacs. While walking the 35 acres of our site with Bill, you may get glimpses of what the La Cienega area was like when Onate first set eyes on it way back when. Also you will be afforded the opportunity to view an Eden in the making. Next summer all the trails and interpretive sites envisioned will not yet be in place, but we hope that you will be able to take the time to get off the highway and join us for a walk.

Further information concerning the time scheduled for your visit will be included in the registration material for the annual meeting. We trust that your visit on our site will be one of many highlights of this year's meeting. The Santa Fe Botanical Garden would also welcome your inquiries and solicits your membership. Our address is 505 Camino de los Marquez, P.O. Box 23343, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502.

LILIACEAE - Lily family




### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The election of officers for 1995 for the Native Plant Society of New Mexico will be held in August 1994. This is a formal call for nominations for all of the offices listed on page 2 of this *Newsletter*. Nominations may be forwarded to any board member. The ballot will appear in the next (July-August) issue of the *Newsletter*.

### El Paso Member Dies

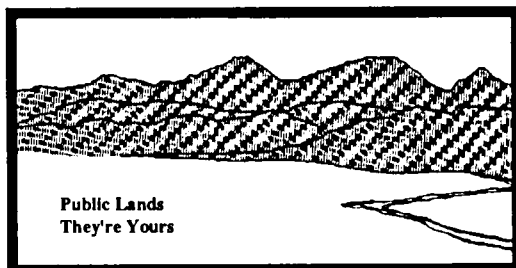
NPSNM member Bidez Moore, partner in Desert Floralscapes Nursery, died recently. Bidez attended the annual meeting in Las Cruces in 1993 and it was a pleasure for us to get to know her.




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## Wildflower Focus

by F.M. Oxley

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Most of us take our native flora for granted, assuming that the plants will always be there. We all agree that native plants are ecologically and environmentally important. After all, plants form the very foundation for all life on earth. They provide food and shelter for native wildlife and are important economically, medically, and socially. Why then, are native plants in North America in crisis?

The statistics are staggering. Within the next ten years, hundreds of North American native species are in danger of disappearing from the face of the Earth, never to be seen again. Several studies and surveys done in the last five years estimate that more than 600 species of native plants may become extinct in the United States by the year 2000. Furthermore, scientists have estimated that approximately 3,000 native plant species—more than 10 percent of the 25,000 North American native species—are threatened or in danger of extinction.

A number of factors contribute to our flora's precarious situation. Urban development and road construction, agriculture, and pollution contribute daily to a loss of the habitat necessary to sustain native plant populations. Aggressive and invasive non-native species compete for, and often take over, space, food, and water resources that native plants would normally occupy and use, forcing native species out. And irresponsible collection of seed and entire plants from the wild by gardeners, collectors, and retail companies decimates entire populations.

What can we, as gardeners, landscapers, and wildflower lovers, do to save and protect this increasingly precious natural resource?

• **Educate ourselves.** Learn what plants in your area are on the threatened and endangered species list. Sources of information

on your state's endangered plants include state natural heritage programs and departments of agriculture.

• **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** Be on the lookout for threatened and endangered species for sale locally. Question the staff about the nurseries' sources for native plant stock. Is the stock propagated from seeds and cuttings? What are the sources of cuttings and seeds used to propagate their native plants? What does "container grown" really mean? These are important questions, and ethical nurserymen will be able and willing to answer them honestly.

• **Be vocal.** The squeaky wheel gets the oil. The Federal Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization this year. Support this program by writing to your representatives and senators. Talk to your local native plant nurserymen and let them know about your concerns.

• **Set an example.** Don't collect or use threatened or endangered native plants in your own garden. Don't patronize nurseries that irresponsibly collect from the wild or sell endangered and threatened species that have been provided by such collectors. Tell the owners why you won't spend your money there.

• **Get involved.** Support groups and organizations that protect natural areas. Support the suppliers who do ethically propagate and supply native species for landscape use—they need to have a growing market to enable them to expand their commercial production. Participate in plant conservation programs sponsored by botanical gardens, arboreta, native plant societies, and local and state garden clubs. Help local schools design, install, and maintain native plant habitat gardens for use in school science programs. Add native species to your own landscape.

It is imperative that we dedicate ourselves to the preservation and conservation of our native flora. As John Cairns, Jr., a noted restoration ecologist in Virginia, has said, "By saving endangered species, we will be inadvertently saving ourselves!" After all, extinction is forever.

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