



NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

September/October 1996

Volume XXI Number 5

FOURWING SALTBUUSH

Goosefoot family (*Atriplex canescens*)

reprinted with permission from *Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province: Exploring Ancient and Enduring Uses*. 1995. by Bill Dunmire and Gail Tierney, Museum of New Mexico Press.

Saltbush is an irregularly branched, sometimes spiny shrub with gray-green, thick canoc-shaped leaves. This shrub is dioecious; that is, the male and female plant parts appear on separate plants. Male flowers are arranged in small glomerules - rounded dense clusters - on spikes along the branchlets; female flowers produce a tiny, oblong seed with four obvious, paperlike wings.

Saltbush is undoubtedly one of the most valuable forage shrubs in arid regions of the Southwest. Able to exist on lands heavily impregnated with white alkali, it still may be found under almost any conditions at mid-to-lower elevations in New Mexico, including gravelly washes, on mesa tops, ridges and hillsides. It's therefore common along virtually all of the trails covered in this book.

Though saltbush does well on deep sandy soils and occasionally grows on sand dunes, it is not considered to be an indicator of any particular set of substrate conditions. Yet, it does seem to have an affinity for the prehistoric sites of the Pajarito Plateau, an affinity so marked that some scientists have deemed saltbush to be an indicator plant for ruins. Saltbush Ruin at Banelier is an excellent place to view this phenomenon, as are the cliff dwellings throughout the Pajarito Plateau.

Like almost every common shrub growing in the area covered in *Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province*, saltbush has proven useful to native peoples of past and present. Many years ago the nutritious seeds were ground and cooked as a cereal; the leaves of the plant were also eaten cooked, sometimes raw, as a vegetable or were dried and mixed with other ingredients to form a flour for breads and cakes. Ashes of burned saltbush are used as leavening for breads, as



a food coloring, and in the making of lye to soften the hulls of corn. All of these uses are, incidentally, an effective way of making the niacin in the inner grain available, thus enhancing the amino acid content of potentially digestible proteins in corn. In societies that traditionally process maize with alkali in this way, there's little evidence of the dietary-deficiency disease pellagra.

Many other uses of saltbush are known. The ashes of burned saltbush

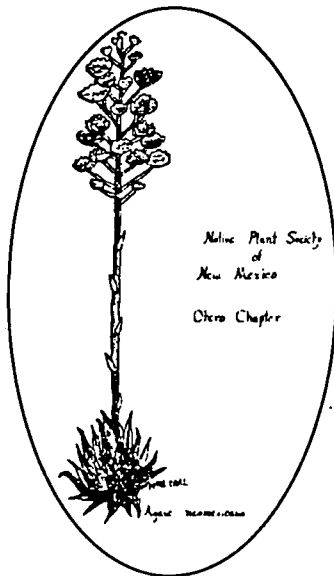
are still used in Hopi country to impart a greenish hue to the finely ground blue cornmeal of "piki" bread. Also, because of the ubiquity of the shrub, it is not surprising that saltbush has been used whole to calk or cover the roofs of adobe dwellings. The shape of the main stems has also suggested many uses as tools and kitchen utensils. Having many tines protruding from the central stalk, a peeled branch from a browsed shrub makes a good whisk for stirring large pots of cereal or cornmeal mush; use of such an impromptu whisk has the dividend of imparting a mildly salty taste to the otherwise bland ingredients of a campfire meal.

The hard twig ends of saltbushes, tending to be spiny or pointed, were further shaped by carving and used for arrow heads that were inserted into the hollow ends of reedgrass or other shaft material. This type of point was used for the swift or war arrow and was also considered poisonous or infectious by the people of Isleta. Arrows with stone points were used for game.

At Zuni handfuls of blossoms (probably male) are crushed and mixed with a little water and the mixture is used like a hand soap. This suggests that fourwing saltbush contains saponins. Crushed flowers, either dried or fresh, are also used topically for ant bites, and the roots of another species of saltbush, *Atriplex argentea*, are used for skin sores and rashes.

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T-Shirts for Sale

The Otero Chapter of the NPSNM is selling t-shirts with a drawing of New Mexico Agave (*Agave Neomexicana*) by Mame Carl. To order send \$15 for each t-shirt plus shipping charges of \$4 for one shirt and \$2 more for each additional shirt. Specify medium, large, extra large or XX large. Orders to Pat Hendzel, 58 Rodeo Drive, LaLuz, NM 88337

The Annual Meeting at a Glance

Thurs. Oct. 17 * Field trips to the Guadalupe Mtns. (all day)

Friday: * Five native plant workshops to choose from (1-3 p.m.)
* Six Self Guided Tours (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
* Symposium Papers (2-5 p.m.)
* Reception, Silent Auction, Book Sale (5:30 - 7:30 p.m.)
* Landscaping Seminar with J. Phillips, S. Wasowski, and J. Meilke (7:30 - 9 p.m.)

Sat. * "Chihuahuan Desert Seminar" (9 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.)
* Book Sale, Silent Auction ends, lunch (11:30 - 1)
* Symposium Papers (1 - 4 p.m.)
* State Board Meetings (4 - 5 p.m.)
* Buses to Dinner (5:30 - 6 p.m.)
* "Viva El Paso" Show, Reception (6 - 7 p.m.)
* Dinner, guest speaker Susan Tweit (7 - 9 p.m.)

Sun. * Six field trips to various locations around El Paso and Las Cruces (8 a.m. - afternoon)

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. Original 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. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve the state's unique character and as a water conservation measure. Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges, and educational forums. A wide selection of books is available at discount. The society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld. Contact our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative for more information. Call chapter contacts for local information.

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, NPSNM, POB 5917, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5917

Newsletter Contributions

Please direct all contributions for the newsletter to Tim McKimmie, editor. See address below or email to tmckimmie@lib.nmsu.edu

Deadline for the next newsletter is October 1.

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SOCIETY CORRESPONDENCE: Our main address is: NPSNM, POB 5917, Santa Fe NM 87502-5917. See above for membership and newsletter correspondence.

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From the editors desk.

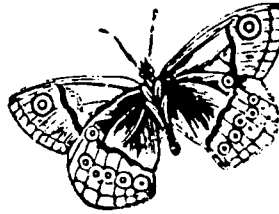
Short of begging, I wish I knew what the trick is to soliciting articles for the *Newsletter*. Somehow, the process just seems to ride along, and articles trickle in here and there and another issue appears. Special thanks to those of you who have contributed articles over the years. I know from comments and letters I've received that we've managed to published some fine articles on native plants. This is also evident when I see our articles being reprinted in other newsletters.

Speaking of reprinting, you may have noticed that I reprint quite a lot of articles from other publications. I don't mind doing this, and it's great to share good material from other states but some of our readers have noted that they'd like to see more stuff about New Mexico. Which gets me to the point of this message. I'm getting pretty low on publishable stuff. I've even gotten desperate enough to write some articles myself. A few times I thought I'd have to cut the page length but was saved at the last minute by a contribution or reprint I'd found. So here's my spiel.

If you fit any of the following: have creative ability; like to tell stories; have noticed peculiarities in nature; have a curiosity about what's going on in the landscape; have written articles before; have ideas our readers might like to hear and would like to put them in writing, please read on for tips to make your job easier.

Need some ideas? How about:

- * backyard experiments, successes, failures
- * ecological issues
- * "how to" problems and solutions
- * landscaping
- * local interest stories
- * propagation
- * special places
- * species reports
- * taxonomy
- * travel



For other ideas and samples of how others have done it, take a look at some old *Newsletters*. Have an idea but don't quite have enough for an article? Visit your local library for some background and supporting material. Don't have time right now? Jot down your ideas and finish up later. If all else fails, feel free to mail me your idea(s) and maybe we can find someone else to write something. If you're interested in a topic, chances are someone else is interested as well.

Guidelines for Submissions

Articles may be submitted on diskette (any format), typed (high quality), laser printer or equivalent, or email. Articles may be of any length. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and quality. Please note if you wish to review any editing before publication. Unacceptable manuscripts will be returned with clarification. Articles should be original and neither published nor currently submitted to other sources for publication. Articles previously published will be considered for reprinting with citation to the original source.


Deadlines for submissions are noted on page 2 of the *Newsletter*. Mailing address as well as email are also included on page 2. Your participation is encouraged. Interest in native plants, wildflowers, and landscaping with natives has never been greater.

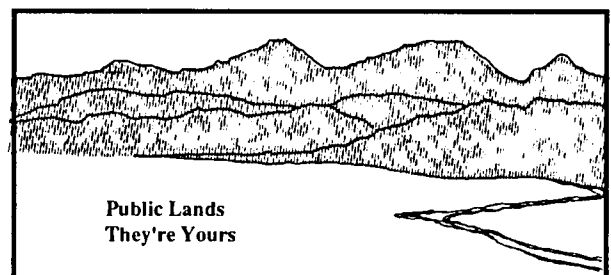
Tim

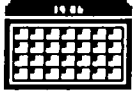
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CALENDAR

ALBUQUERQUE

- Sept. 5 "Pueblo Ethnobotany" by Carol Brandt. 7:30 Albuquerque Garden Center. 10120 Lomas.
 Sept. 7 Field trip to Albuquerque Herb Garden.
 Oct. 3 "Growing Desert Plants" by Ted Hodoba. 7:30 Albuquerque Garden Center.
 Oct. 18-20 Annual Meeting in El Paso.

GILA

- Sept. 21-22 Chiricahua Mtns. Camping Trip.
 Oct. 13 Bearwallow Mtn. trip. 8 am WNMU Fine Arts Bldg.
 Oct. 18-20 Annual Meeting in El Paso.

OTERO

- Sept. 7 "Rails to Trails". Meet at High Rolls Grocery store at 9 am.
 Sept. 28 Potluck. Claypool's 24040 HWY 70. east of Tularosa.
 Native Plant dishes suggested.
 Oct. 18-20 Annual Meeting in El Paso.

LAS CRUCES

- Sept. 11 "Restoration of the Rio Grande" by Kevin Bixby, Director, SW Environmental Center. 7:30. 1494 S. Solano.
 Sept. 15 Field Trip to Dona Ana Mtns. 8 am. KMart - Hwy 70. Herb 527-2116
 Sept. 21 Highway Cleanup. 8 am St. James Church, Main and University.
 Sept. 28 (Saturday) Hiking and Potluck Picnic. 4 pm, Dripping Springs Visitor Center.
 Oct. 9 "West Texas Preserves" by John Karges. 7:30 pm SW Environmental Center. 1494 S. Solano.
 Oct. 18-20 Annual Meeting in El Paso.

SANTA FE

- Sept. 15 Tour of Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Call (505) 438-1684 or your chapter representative.
 Sept. 21 Field trip to Montana Ranch on the Pecos R. Meet at PERA lot near State Capitol Bldg at 8:30 ar Rowe Exit #30, s. side of I25 at 9 am. call Mary Whitmore 454-0683.
 Oct. 18-20 Annual Meeting in El Paso.

Why El Paso in October?

by Wynn Anderson
 excerpted from *Native Plant Society of Texas NEWS*, 14(4), July/August 1996

In addition to great hospitality, Mexican food that hasn't been Texas hyphenated, a fantastically informative Symposium and the chance to make new friends among New Mexico's most active native plant enthusiasts at the first ever, two state convention, here are some other good reasons:

- * *Opuntia arenaria* — Sand Prickly Pear is an endemic found in the sandy soils along the breaks of the Rio Grande Valley in El Paso County;
- * *Coryphantha sneedii* — Sneeds Pincushion is a federally protected endangered species confined to specific limestone formations in the Franklins and a few other nearby ranges;
- * *Perityle huecoensis* — the Hueco Rockdaisy is found only on limestone cliffs near Hueco Tanks State Park;
- * *Rafinesquia neomexicana* - the Plume Seed finds the eastern limits of its range in El Paso County;
- * *Lithospermum parksii* — a rare species, Parks Groomwell is found in a few limestone canyon bottoms in the Franklins;
- * *Ipomoea barbatisepala* — Canyon Morning Glory is found on the rocky slopes of the eastern Franklin Mountains and nowhere else in Texas;
- * *Lotus humistratus* — the only Texas occurrence is in granite alluvium in eastside arroyos of the Franklin Mountains;
- * *Philadelphus mearnsii* — this beautiful Mockorange can only be found in the mountain heights between the Franklins and the Guadalupe;

- * *Agastache cana* — Coyote or Bubblegum Mint is a rare sweet-smelling herb found at Hueco Tanks State Park in El Paso; single collection on the west side of the Franklin Mountains;
- * *Silene plankii* — Plank's Campion is found only in high igneous cliffs in mountains between El Paso and Albuquerque;
- * *Brickellia baccharidea* — Resinleaf Brickelbush's only known occurrence in Texas is on the limestone outcrops in El Paso.

Now, if these reasons aren't enough, how about *Nolina microcarpa*, *Dasyliion wheeleri*, *Agave neomexicana*, *Arabis perennans*, *Tecoma stans*, *Agastache micrantha*, *Mortonia scabrella*, *Eschscholtzia mexicana*, *Quercus arizonica* and the hundreds of other members of the magnificent flora of El Paso County that await those participating in the NPSOT/NPSNM Convention's October field trips to Hueco Tanks State Parks and the Franklin Mountains State Park. And then there is also the trip into the Nature Conservancy's Dripping Springs Natural Area in the scenic Organ Mountains of New Mexico.



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CHAPTER REPORTS

Otero-Jean Dodd

Eleven members led by cave cartographers Chris and Jolie Lee and their daughter Beth of Tularosa met at the Wortly Hotel in historic Lincoln on Saturday, July 13. The group caravanned the seven miles to Fort Stanton Cave. The caving trip took four hours and included eating a sack lunch in one of the caverns. The Lees had presented a slide program on caving at group leaders Jim and Betty Claypools' home in Bent in June. A potluck and barbecue preceeded the program. The Lees have 16 years experience in caving and have caved worldwide. As it happened a group of geologists were also there to study the cave. In addition a group of birders were camped at the cave identifying birds in the area. The hillsides surrounding the area were verdant from a recent rain and over 50 flowering plants in full bloom were identified. A king snake was observed pursuing a green Timber rattler. A varied and delightful experience was enjoyed by the group.

By Betty Claypool

Albuquerque - Lu Bennett

Dr. Richard Lee, Extension Weed Specialist at New Mexico State University, made a presentation at our June meeting about the need for noxious weed management in New Mexico. For discussion purposes he defines a weed as "any plant that interferes with what you want to do on your land." Some noxious weeds that have overtaken land in other Western states are coming into New Mexico by various means. The weeds are invasive and will outcompete natives, thus making the land unusable. There are no controls as yet for some of the noxious weeds.

Dr. Lee identified some of the weeds that have become a serious problem in other areas and have been found in New Mexico. Spotted knapweed has infested Montana. Currently, people will not buy land in La Plata County in Southern Colorado if spotted knapweed is present. Purple loosestrife will outcompete cattails and take over wetlands. Other noxious weeds that he identified as making a presence in New Mexico are scotch thistle, camelthorn, canadian thistle, Dalmation toadflax, diffuse knapweed, musk thistle, leafy spurge, Russian knapweed, yellow starthistle and yellow toadflax.

Members should note there is a correction on the calendar for December. The annual potluck is on December 12, 1996, at 6:30. This is an hour earlier than the usual time. Please bring a dish to share. We will have dinner, elect officers, and George Duda with New Mexico State Forestry, Bernalillo District, will speak on "Forelands and Fire: Past, Present, and Future."

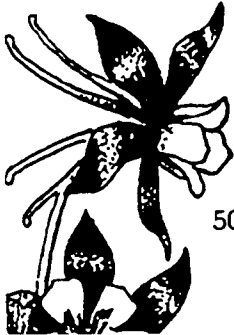
Many thanks to Robert Dewitt Ivey for permission to use the wonderful drawings from his book *Flowering Plants of New Mexico*, in our *Newsletter*.

Las Cruces-Paul & Betty Shelford

At our meeting of June 12th, Dr. Rafael Corral, a botanist charged with protection of rare and endangered species on the Ft. Bliss military reservation, talked on the subject of "Flora of the Chihuahuan Borderlands." Dr. Corral showed a striking collection of slides depicting the Samalayuca Dunes. This is an area of approximately one hundred square miles which starts on the border of southern New Mexico at Santa Teresa and extends down into northern Chihuahua. Vegetation is sparse in this area, characterized by plants with roots that grow quickly to anchor in the sand.

On June 16th, Tim McKimmie led a group of 12 members on an exploration of weeds in the City of Las Cruces. They began at the Fabian Chavez Park where native plants are cultivated by the agronomy department of NMSU. Then they walked along one of the larger irrigation ditch laterals running through Las Cruces where the plants grow wild. Some call them weeds, but John Freyermuth recorded a fine selection of native plants including Lippia, Salsify, Plantago, White Morning Glory, White and Yellow Melilotus, Texas Blue Weed (with yellow flowers), Yerba Mansa, Tumbleweed, two kinds of Globe Mallow, Sonchus (with little yellow flowers), Rice Grass, *Cerex escaienta*, Silverleaf Nighthshade, Lizard Tail, Mexican Devilweed, Mexican Evening Primrose, Amaranth, Chilean Lovegrass, and Hog Potato.

Alice Anderson coordinated a Show and Tell meeting on July 10th. Christine Ruetzel and Lisa Mandelkern brought samples of many native plants they have been cultivating in their gardens. Terry Peterson demonstrated his method of propagating Firewheel plants from seed. He also brought a number of seedlings in individual pots which were given to any members interested in growing their own. On July 14th, Lisa Mandelkern led a group of nine members on a field trip to Three Rivers Canyon near the Three Rivers Petroglyph State Park. They drove some fifteen miles up the canyon and parked on the south slope of Sierra Blanca Mountain. It was an excellent area to seek out native plants, but after they had walked about ten minutes they were caught in a cloudburst. By the time they got back to the cars they were soaked to the skin and that ended that adventure. Everyone agreed it was such a beautiful spot that they would return next April before the rainy season.



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Information and Registration Sheet

1996 Texas and New Mexico Native Plant Society

Joint Meeting and Symposium

October 17 - 20, 1996

El Paso, Texas

Joint 1996 State Meetings of the Native Plant Societies of Texas and New Mexico and a Symposium on the Flora of the Chihuahuan Desert and Its Many Ecosystems will be held in El Paso, Texas on October 17-20, 1996. In addition to seminars by invited experts, papers will be presented on all aspects of the flora and plant ecology of the Chihuahuan Desert. Informative workshops, field trips, self-guided tours and exhibits, as well as special social events will also be provided for registrants.

The headquarters hotel for the meeting is the **Holiday Inn Airport** at Interstate 10 and Airport Blvd. in El Paso. A block of rooms has been set aside for attendees at the special rate of \$51/night, single or double occupancy. These rates are valid from Thursday, October 17 through Sunday, October 20. **Please call the hotel directly to make your room reservations: telephone 1/800/882-6411 weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, or 915/778-6411, after hours.** To be assured of these quoted rates, be sure to tell them that you are attending the Native Plant Society meeting and make your hotel reservations by **September 26, 1996**. Reservations received after that date will be provided on a space available basis.

Send your registration form for the Symposium and weekend activities promptly to take advantage of early registration rates and to ensure your participation in the workshop and field trip of your choice (some of which can accommodate only a limited number of participants). Depending on enrollment, transportation for some field trips may be by buses rather than private vehicles to minimize our impact and a transportation fee, not to exceed \$5, may be assessed at the time of departure.

A full schedule of activities is planned from Friday through Sunday. Pre- and post- field trips are also planned. Registration will begin on Thursday evening at the Holiday Inn for those who want to get an early start on seeing El Paso.

In order to minimize expenses, the Texas Society with its professional office staff has graciously agreed to process all registrations for the meeting, including those from New Mexico and El Paso Society members.

Complete the registration form below and send it, with your payment, to: **NPSOT, P.O. Box 891, Georgetown, TX 78627.** Call the NPSOT office at 512/863-9685 if you have any questions or contact Wynn Anderson, 303 Administration, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968 915/747-5113, for information on local arrangements.

Schedule of Activities

Thursday, October 17

Field Trips

(See Field Trip Descriptions)

Friday, October 18

1 pm - 3 pm

(Choose one Workshop to Attend)

Workshop #1

"Drip Irrigation, Installation and Maintenance"

Leader: Rainbird Representative

Workshop #2

"Flower and Garden Photography"

Leaders: Scott Cutler & Hal Blake

Workshop #3

"Cactus Care & Propagation"

Leaders: Ed Searl & John Green

Workshop #4

"Cooking Wild - From Soup to Nuts"

Leader: Betty Claypool

Workshop #5

"Native Grasses in the Xeric Landscape"

Leader: Pat McNeal

2 pm - 5 pm

Symposium Paper Sessions

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Reception

Book Sale, Autograph Party and Silent Auction

Cash Bar with Cocktail Snacks

Native Plant Society Registration Form

Name: _____ Check Affiliation: _____
 Address: _____ NPSOT
 Telephone: _____ NMNPS
 Names for Badges: _____ El Paso NPS

Fee: \$50/each if before 10/1 \$ _____
 \$55/each if after 10/1 \$ _____
 \$90/couple if before 10/1 \$ _____
 (Fee includes Symposium, Friday reception, Saturday dinner, 1996 Proceedings, choice of workshop and field trip)

Friday Workshops: Select One

- #1 - Drip Irrigation
- #2 - Photography
- #3 - Cactus
- #4 - Cooking
- #5 - Grasses

T-Shirt: Texas Commemorative T-Shirt
 \$12.50/each \$ _____
 Indicate size: M L XL XXL

TOTAL PAID \$ _____

Thursday Field Trips: Select One

- Field Trip #1 - McKittrick Canyon
- Field Trip #2 - Hunter Peak
- Field Trip #3 - Gyp Dunes

Sunday Field Trips: Select One

- Field Trip #1 - Hucco Tanks
- Field Trip #2 - Franklin Mts. - UPPER
- Field Trip #3 - Franklin Mts. - LOWER
- Field Trip #4 - Dripping Springs
- Field Trip #5 - El Paso Landscapes
- Field Trip #6 - Indio Mts. Research Station*

*May be taken in addition to one of above trips

Transportation Needed for Workshops and Field Trips? YES NO

Friday, October 18 (continued)

7:30 pm - 9 pm

Seminar - "Landscaping with Chihuahuan Native Plants"
 Leaders: Judith Phillips with Sally Wasowski and Judy Mielke

Self-Guided Site Visits Available
 During the Day from 10 am - 4 pm
 Texas DOT Highway Landscaping Tour
 A&M Extension Center Demonstration Garden
 UTEP Centennial Museum Demonstration Garden
 NMSU Demonstration Garden
 Sierra Vista Growers Demonstration Garden
 Selected Home Gardens

Saturday, October 19

7 am - 9 am

Chapter Meetings

9 am - 11:15 am

Seminar - "Mountain Islands/Desert Seas, An Overview of the
 Chihuahuan Desert"

"Geography and Geology" - Dr. Robert Schmidt

"Plant Communities" - Dr. A.M. Powell

"Biotic History and Plants of El Paso" - Dr. Richard Worthington

"Horticultural Contributions" - Dr. Jimmy Tipton

11:15 am - Noon

Poster Sessions, Book Sale & Silent Auction

Noon - 1 pm

Lunch On Your Own - Buffet in the Hotel Lobby

Silent Auction Ends

1 pm - 4 pm

Symposium Paper Sessions

4 pm - 5 pm

State Meetings

5:30 pm - 6 pm

Board Buses for Dinner

6 pm - 7 pm

Reception/ Viva El Paso Show at McKelligon Canyon

7 pm - 9 pm

Dinner/Fireside Talk with Susan Twiet, Naturalist

9 pm - 9:15 pm

Board Buses to Return to Hotel

Sunday, October 20

Field Trips

(See Field Trip Descriptions)

Workshop Descriptions

#1 - **Drip Irrigation, Installation and Maintenance** - Led by a Rain Bird Corp. representative, the workshop will focus on the design, installation, operation and maintenance of drip irrigation systems, including retrofitting the residential garden.

#2 - **Flower and Garden Photography** - Leaders Hal Blake, a professional photographer and Scott Cutler, Museum Curator and Naturalist, will review basic techniques, discuss lighting, composition and importance of field notes, demonstrate different subject viewpoints with emphasis on visual appeal and conveyance of significant botanical characteristics. Actual photo sessions in the UTEP Museum Desert Garden so bring camera and film.

#3 - **Cactus Care and Propagation** - Horticulturists John Green and Ed Searl will offer expert advice on all aspects of the growing of cactus, both indoors and out, in the UTEP Greenhouse. This includes propagation by cuttings or seed, discussion of soil mixes, insect control and other prickly maintenance problems.

#4 - **Cooking Wild, From Soup to Nuts** - An adventurous group from New Mexico's Otero Chapter, led by Betty Claypool, will discuss collection and preparation of wild plant foods in the A&M Extension Center demonstration kitchen. Recipes will be offered and cooking techniques revealed so bring your favorites to share. The end results will be "enjoyed" by all.

#5 - **Native Grasses in the Xeric Landscape** - Texas expert Pat McNeal will share his knowledge and experience in the selection and maintenance of native drought tolerant grasses in the landscape setting.

Thursday Field Trips

Guadalupe Mountains and the Gypsum Sand Dunes - Meet at Pine Springs Canyon Visitor Center, Guadalupe National Park in Culberson County, Texas. Terry Tate and others will lead several field trips to include:

#1 - **McKittrick Canyon** - 8 am - noon; 5 mile hike with moderate difficulty

#2 - **Hunter Peak** - 8 am - 4 pm; 8.5 mile hike; strenuous

#3 - **Gyp Dunes** - 8 am - noon (limit of 20)

Accommodations for Wednesday night are available in El Paso (2 hours); Van Horn (1 hour); Carlsbad (1 hour); White City (30 min.); A group campsite is available at Pine Springs for those who want to camp. RV sites are also available.

Sunday Field Trips

All field trips will depart around 8 am and return at various times from 1 pm to 5 pm. The Indio Mountains Research Station Field Trip may be taken in addition to one of the field trips #1-#5.

#1 - **Hueco Tanks State Park** - A massive jumble of igneous boulders rising out of the desert 32 miles east of El Paso, this nationally noted prehistoric pictograph site and world renowned rock climbing location is a sacred ceremonial ground to native Americans and once served as a major watering stop for travelers, from pre-Columbian Pueblo Indians to Butterfield Stage Line passengers. Now it serves as a major botanical resource with over 350 species of plants marking the mid-continent confluence of eastern and western flora. Side trips to typical desert short grass prairie and active sand dune habitats included if time permits. Sponsored by UTEP.

#2 and #3 - **Franklin Mountains State Park, Upper and Lower** - Two trips planned. One, a moderate hiking trip into the upper canyons of the mountains to visit hidden springs and take in spectacular vistas of 2 countries and 3 states separated by the historic Rio Grande River Valley. The other, a less strenuous drive and stop tour of the lower flanks of the Franklins. Both offer observation of a wide and complex representation of Chihuahuan Desert flora. Choose either the UPPER or LOWER trip. Sponsored by the El Paso Native Plant Society.

#4 - **Dripping Springs Natural Area** - A stellar 1989 Nature Conservancy acquisition nestled in the majestic Organ Mountains, 45 miles north of El Paso and just east of Las Cruces, New Mexico, this BLM managed area contains several rare plants, including at least 4 endemic species, in a desert oasis amid spectacular scenery. Sponsored by the New Mexico Native Plant Society.

#5 - **El Paso Landscapes** - A drive and stop tour of several native plant landscapes and demonstration gardens in the city of El Paso.

#6 - **Indio Mountains Research Station** - A rare opportunity to visit the University's unique Chihuahuan Desert research and instructional center, 20 miles south of Van Horn, Texas, with UTEP faculty and students as guides. The 38,000 acres of classic desert scrubland is located in a northwestern extension of Big Bend flora up the Rio Grande River corridor. A three hour drive from El Paso, high clearance vehicles are suggested to make the last 20 miles of dirt road more comfortable and less anxious. Overnight at the Station (primitive camping) or return to Van Horn (make motel reservations).

Friday Seminar

Landscaping with Chihuahuan Native Plants - A very special presentation by three of the Southwest's leading native plant author/designers: Judith Phillips of Veguita, NM, grower, designer and author of the 1995 southwestern gardening due: *Natural by Design* and *Plants for Natural Gardens*; Sally Wasowski, late of Dallas and now from Taos, NM, widely published writer, designer and gardening consultant whose latest book with husband, Andy, is *Native Gardens for Dry Climates*, and Judy Mielke, landscape designer and instructor of Scottsdale, AZ, whose 1993 publication of *Native Plants for Southwestern Landscapes* continues to be a practical mainstay for desert gardeners. They will discuss the design and use of native Chihuahuan plants in landscape settings.

Saturday Seminar

Mountain Islands and Desert Seas, An Overview of the Chihuahuan Desert - Invited presentations by four outstanding University scholars and teachers to introduce the Symposium topic. UTEP's Dr. Robert Schmidt, the leading geographer of the region, will discuss climate, geography and geological landforms of the Chihuahuan Desert; Dr. A.M. Powell, Chairman of Biology at Sul Ross State University and author of the definitive books *Trees and Shrubs of Trans-Pecos Texas* and *Grasses of the Trans-Pecos and Adjacent Areas*, will address the Desert's plant communities; area plant expert, Dr. Richard Worthington, with the Department of Biological Sciences at UTEP, will present the flora of El Paso County; and Dr. Jimmy Tipton, horticulturist with the Dept. of Plant Sciences at the University of Arizona will review horticultural contributions to the landscape trade from the region.

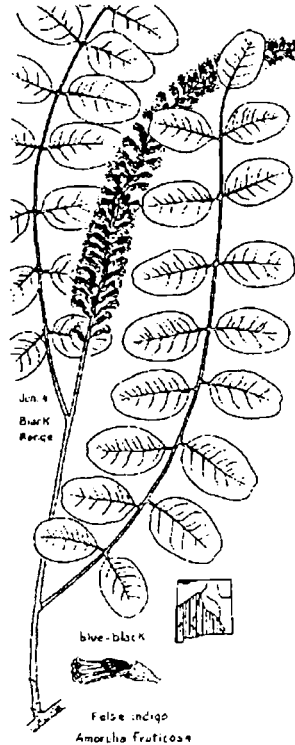
False Indigo

by Don Bozeman

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Although False Indigo or Indigobush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) is often found bordering stream banks, I am surprised to find that it requires as little supplemental watering as it does. The soil where I live, a very short distance from the rim of Timbercreek Canyon, is quite sandy with either a layer of caliche or limestone below. Watering the shrub once or twice a week during a drought keeps it looking nice. If the drought occurs in the high heat of midsummer, it may need to be watered two or three times in a week to ten days. Of course, this advice refers to the Panhandle with cool summer nights. With the warmer nights of southern areas it may require more frequent watering in times of severe drought.

False Indigo, a deciduous shrub, is an interesting landscape subject. According to Hatch, Gandhi, and Brown in *Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Texas*, the shrub is found in all ten vegetational areas of Texas. Therefore, growing it in most areas of Texas should not be a problem. I find the loose form of False Indigo attractive both in winter when the branches are bare and in summer when it looks open and airy with leaves fluttering in the breeze. Its leaves resemble a locust tree probably prompting another common name, River Locust. They turn beautifully golden in autumn; in late spring to early summer the shrub is clothed in rich purple and orange. The flower spikes are up to six inches long and are purple with orange anthers. To fully appreciate the beauty of the bloom, close scrutiny is required. Only then can we truly appraise the striking quality of deep purple in contrast to the orange anthers.



The height of the shrub varies. I have not noticed it being taller than six feet anywhere in the Panhandle. It is approximately six feet along White Deer Creek. I usually find the shrub to be around five feet. With the longer growing season in eastern and southern areas, it might be taller.

The landscape uses of *Amorpha fruticosa* show its versatility. The shrub is large enough and sufficiently appealing to be planted as a single shrub in the central portion of a front lawn, back lawn or meadow. It might be used in place of a wide hedge for a screen that is loose and airy. It also could be valuable for erosion control in areas that catch some run off water or temporarily stand in shallow water. I have had good luck both planting it from seed and buying it in containers from nurseries. Robert A Vmes in *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the*

Southwest states, "Germination is hastened by stratification in moist sand for 20 days at 86 degrees F." He mentions, "The cleaned commercial seed has a purity of 97 percent and a soundness of 73 percent." Vmes tells us, "The genus name, *Amorpha*, means "without form" and refers to the solitary petal instead of the normal five. The species name *fruticosa*, is for the shrubby character of the plant." In addition to the beauty of the shrub and its bloom, the fact that it is rarely attacked by insects or disease makes it even more appealing.

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