

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

NEWSLETTER

July-September 2000

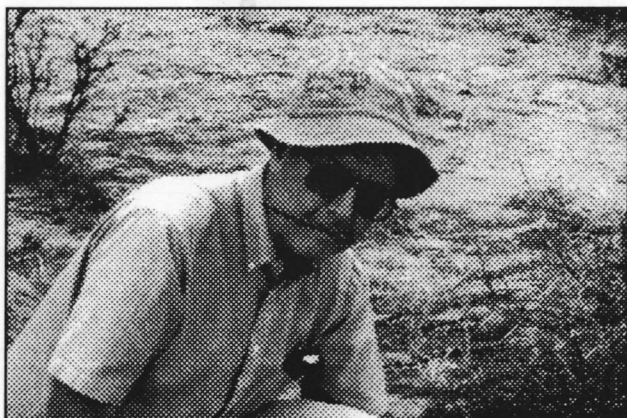
Volume XXV Number 3

ANNUAL STATE MEETING IN LAS CRUCES SEPT 29TH THRU OCT 1ST

Details and Registration on insert pages A1-4

Richard Spellenberg to be Keynoter at Annual Meeting

Professor of biology at New Mexico State University, author, and renowned taxonomist, Richard Spellenberg will present the keynote address at the NPSNM Annual Meeting in Las Cruces. The intriguing title of his talk is "Charles Wright and the Native Plant Society of New Mexico." Wright, the famous 19th century botanist whose name is associated with numerous native plants (e.g., *Atriplex wrightii*) and NPSNM are separated by a full century, says Spellenberg, making the structure of the talk "a challenge." Not to mention entertaining, enlightening, and edifying. The keynote is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 30th.



Los Alamos Fire Destroys Home of NPSNM Members

Chick and Yvonne Keller returned from vacation to find their home threatened by the recent fire in Los Alamos. Members of the Santa Fe Chapter, the Kellers rescued "very few things" before evacuating the area as homes began to burn. "Unfortunately," says Chick, "ours was one of them. There is nothing much left." Avid gardeners, the Kellers were able to save most of their plant collections and notes, but their erigeron collection was lost. "We will recover as a community and go on," say the Kellers.

INSIDE

Annual Meeting Details
A History of Suburbia
Our Easy Going Media
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The Prez Sez:

Revised Dues Structure

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico is generally in good financial condition, as we work very hard through course offerings, workshops, research support and new publications to reach a much wider audience, and return a larger portion of your state membership dues to local chapters. In the past several years, as a result of income from our limited savings, plus the sales of posters and books, we have provided support at the \$1,000.00 level each year to three or four worthy programs. We plan to increase this number in the next several years as additional funds become available. At the same time a review of our recent income vs. expenses reveals that costs for basic activities such as the newsletter and other forms of outreach (e.g., printing, paper and postage) continue to rise.

The Board of Directors is convinced that the changes that have been made are extending our outreach to many more people. These changes have allowed us to develop new programs that are encouraging greater conservation of the flora of New Mexico in a variety of ways. In fact, reports from these programs have all been extremely positive and have suggested the need for similar programs throughout the state.

At the February meeting of the Board it was decided that our dues structure has not kept pace with native plant societies in surrounding states. *Our current dues range from one-half to one-third the dues of most other states.* The \$12.00 annual dues, with \$2.00 returned to the individual chapters, will not allow our organization to reach our long-term objectives. Current individual and family dues are barely enough to support the newsletter and carry on the regular activities of the Board. Faced with the desire to improve our newsletter, strengthen our web page, and provide the kinds of activities you, our members, deserve, the Board has approved a revised dues structure. At the same time, the Board was insistent that any increases in the dues *would not result in those living on fixed or limited incomes discontinuing their membership.*

With these factors in mind, the following dues structure was approved by your Board of Directors, to take effect January 1, 2001:

- Individual/Family — \$20.00**
- Friend — \$30.00**
- Conservationist — \$50.00**
- Sponsor — \$100.00**
- Patron — \$250.00**
- Benefactor — \$500.00**
- Life Member — \$1,000.00**
- Students, Seniors (over 65) & Families with limited resources will remain at the \$12.00 level.**

At the \$12.00 level, \$10.00 will continue to be retained by the state and \$2.00 will be returned to the chapters. At all higher levels, 25 percent of the dues will be returned to the individual chapters. Within the established guidelines for chapters, a chapter may still elect an outstanding member of their chapter to Life Membership at 10 times the basic membership of \$20.00, i.e., \$200.00.

You will note the increased possibilities for making contributions to the NPSNM. The Board encourages all those who can give to the best of their ability.

Finally, we want all of our members to know how important your participation is at both the local chapter and at the state level as we work together to promote and encourage the conservation and the appropriate use of our native New Mexico flora.

Jack Carter, President

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A FUN, "NO ATTITUDE" GALLERY

Pati Hagan
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BOTANICAL QUIZ

R.I.P.

Due to apparent lack of interest, this feature is being discontinued. The first quiz had just one respondent, this last one got zero, zip, nada!

The answer to "What is Ben and Jerry's favorite plant?" is... The Coneflower!

POINT...COUNTER POINT

“Environmentalists care more about squirrels than they do people.”

Michael Reagan
Radio Talk Show Host

“We may be on some sort of... journey toward understanding the world, and ourselves within it, as one system.”

Thomas J. Lyon
This Incomperable Lande

Dr. Allred to Teach Grass Identification Workshop

Grasses comprise 12 percent of the total plant taxa in the New Mexico flora. These fascinating plants have profound ecological and economic importance and are increasingly popular as ornamentals. Grass identification is fairly straight forward when you know what to look for — and now you can learn.

The NPSNM and the Cooperative Extension Service are sponsoring a 3-day workshop on the identification and taxonomy of New Mexico grasses on August 16-18, at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, and will be taught by our state's own expert agrostologist, Dr. Kelly Allred. No previous experience with plant taxonomy is required.

Classroom instruction will focus on grass morphology and using taxonomic keys for identification. A local field trip will introduce you to the grasses of the Las Cruces area and another day-long field trip will sample the plant communities of the Sacramento Mountains. Two evening classes will introduce participants to the types of grasslands in New Mexico, grass classification, grass collection techniques, and the Range Science Herbarium.

Applications can be obtained from Bob Sivinski. Contact him at bsivinski@state.nm.us or 505-438-9690. Application forms contain additional information on where to stay, how to get there, what to bring, and what is provided. The registration fee is \$40 for complete workshop materials (\$25 if you already have a copy of "A Field Guide to the Grasses of New Mexico" by Dr. Allred.) **Deadline for enrollment is August 2, 2000.**

Book Review

The Landscaping Revolution

by Andy Wasowski
with Sally Wasowski
Contemporary Books,
Chicago, 166 pages, \$27.95



A clenched fist dominating the cover of a garden landscape book? When you open the pages, perhaps solely out of curiosity to see what this call to arms is about, you are rewarded with a provocative, informative, even humorous treatment of “the gardening trend for the new century.” The Wasowskis, nationally recognized writers on native plant landscaping, show the flaws of traditional landscaping along with common sense approaches to native friendly gardening.

Americans are passionate about their “manicured lawns, geometrically clipped box hedges, and rows of exotic posies lined up like cadets on parade.” But few are aware of the shortcomings of our reliance on turf grass and exotic plants: water scarcity, pesticides, invasive exotics such as Russian olive and kudzu “the vine that ate the South,” the contribution of lawnmower exhaust to global climate change, and noise pollution from power garden tools.

These are compelling reasons for changing our approach to gardening. But the Wasowskis bring up yet another reason that touches us all: the time, work, and money that go into a traditional lawn. At this point, *The Landscaping Revolution* becomes a manual for converting an unimaginative, water-guzzling, high-upkeep lot into a friendly native landscape. The detailed information in “The Natives Are Friendly” chapter presents alternatives: ground covers, shade and ornamental trees, perennials, and ornamental grasses. With these descriptions and photographs of native plants, anyone can have a natural garden appropriate to their part of the country.

The public needs to understand the relationship between landscaping practices and environmental problems. *The Landscaping Revolution* fills the bill. Readable, interesting writing, and stunning photos, convey the serious message painlessly. This is one native plant book that is actually humorous. Have you ever laughed at a photo of a lawn? You will here.

The Landscaping Revolution is a powerful inspiration to all gardeners to at least add more naturalness to the landscape, if not plunge entirely into native plant gardening.

Carolyn Dodson, Albuquerque Chapter

PRESS PASSES

by Carl Pope

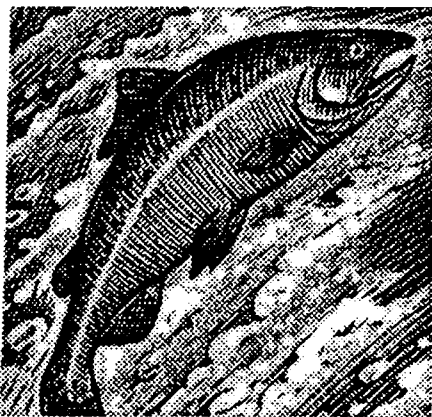
Excerpted from Sierra Magazine, May/June 2000

Environmentally, the presidential primary season wasn't very illuminating, and the pundits will doubtless soon conclude that the environment really wasn't part of the national debate.

But was it because the voters don't care about the environment or because the national press corps doesn't think it's worth pursuing? The candidates themselves are skilled at bobbing and weaving in response to pointed questions, but the media regularly oblige them by neglecting to ask the critical follow-up.

When asked, for example, why the air in Houston is now dirtier than in Los Angeles, George W. Bush blamed inadequate federal regulations of cars and fuels. No one ever asked the obvious follow-ups: "So why were your own state lobbyists working to reduce the EPA's authority to clean up the air?" or "Will you now support raising corporate average fuel economy standards?"

Bush got points for conceding (unlike his supporters in the Senate) that global-warming is a real problem. But when he joined the know-nothings in opposing the Kyoto treaty, which obligates the industrial nations to do something about it, no one in the press asked, "If you don't like Kyoto, what would you put in its place?"



Ever since *Earth in the Balance*, Vice President Al Gore's major environmental issue has been global warming. This was one issue, Gore told reporters, where he was going to push for action even if he thought the public might not be ready to hear his message. No reporter responded, "But in the

1992 Rio Treaty, the Bush administration committed the United States to reducing greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels. Why haven't you followed through with mandatory measures to meet our treaty obligations?" And when the debate turned to tearing down the salmon-killing Snake River dams in the Pacific Northwest, the press let Gore slip away without taking a position.

It's hard to blame the candidates here. Politicians, after all, want to offend as few voters as possible. The problem is the press, which insists on framing politics as a horse race and not as a choice about how we are to be governed. We can have a national debate on environmental issues — but only if the press does its job.

Rare New Mexico Native Plants On The Internet

The New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council (RPTC) is constructing a web site that will cover over 190 rare plants that occur in our state. Eventually each plant will have its own page that will include a status report, line drawing, distribution map, and color photographs of the plant and its habitat. County lists of rare plants, legal status of each species, collection information, and useful links to other botanical web sites also can be found here.

While this is a huge project and will not be fully completed for quite some time, many of the plant reports and photos are ready now and can be accessed at <http://nmrareplants.unm.edu>.

The RPTC is a group of 36 volunteers who have donated their time, money and skills to this worthwhile project. They need additional help to finish this project, and would welcome your financial or personal assistance. Contact Charlie McDonald at charlie_mcdonald@fws.gov or call him at (505) 761-4525 ext. 112. The list of needed photos is presently on the web site.

NPSNM has contributed to this effort by donating the excellent slide scanner currently being used. RPTC has returned the favor by giving us space for our web site on its server computer.

Jane Mygatt has devoted lots of effort to building and maintaining the NPSNM web site and would welcome your comments and contributions. Check us out at <http://npsnm.unm.edu>.

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Membership Dues should be sent to:
Membership Secretary NPSNM
P.O.Box 2364
Las Cruces NM 88004

Arizona Nursery Donates Native Plants to Silver City Community Park

When Mountain States Wholesale Nursery in Glendale, Arizona, ran an ad in this newsletter stating that they "grow New Mexico natives," Gila Chapter member Kathy Whiteman contacted them immediately. Kathy is planting coordinator for a chapter project — establishing two entrance gardens at the new Community Park in downtown Silver City.

Using suggestions from Sally Wasowski (Taos Chapter) and the park designer, Kathy sent a "wish list" of native plants to the nursery, asked which ones they could supply, and what would it cost. Within two weeks, Mountain States called to say most of the listed plants would be delivered *at no cost*, except for a \$100.00 shipping charge. Eighty containers have subsequently been planted and are attracting positive attention from Silver City residents. Plans are to label the plants with both common and scientific names.

Designed for the young people of the community, the park is being constructed in phases with funds raised by school children and organizations, and materials and labor donated by individuals and businesses. Chapter member Neil Thorne has worked at least five days a week, seven hours a day, to make this dream come true.

The Gila Chapter is extremely grateful for Mountain States' generosity, and also wishes to thank all those who contributed their time and labor.



Blossoms
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Dan 'Vish' & Claudia 'Uma' Miller

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Chapter Activities & Events

ALBUQUERQUE

Meetings held at 7:30 PM at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE

July 15: Potluck picnic in Elena Gallegos Open Space. Kids welcome. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 323-1697 for details.

Aug 3: Evening program, "Introduction to Mushrooms" Ruth Bronson, New Mexico Mycological Society.

Aug 6: Potluck lunch at San Pedro home of John Jaques and Stuart Sotman. Tour of their gardens, and hike along San Pedro Creek. Call 268-7889 for details.

Aug 13: Field trip along east fork of the Jemez led by David Conklin. Call 243-7806 for details.

Aug 19: Native plant sale, exhibit, talks at Albuquerque Garden Center. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mid Aug. Date TBA: Botanical tour of Sevilleta area and La Joya Wildlife Refuge led by Mindy Mayfield. Call 268-7889 for details.

Late Aug. Date TBA: Mushroom hunting led by Ruth Bronson. Call 268-7889 for details.

Sept 7: Evening program, "Native Grasses" Ty Curtis, purveyor of native grasses.

Mid-Sept. Date TBA: Field trip: Grass identification in the Sandias. Led by Ty Curtis. Call 268-7889 for details.

GILA

All field trips meet at WNMU Fine Arts Building, south parking lot 8:00 a.m.

July 16: Hillsboro Peak. Leaders: Gerry Niva and Alex Ricciardelli.

Aug 20: Mule Creek area. Leaders: Bill and Shirley Davis.

Sept 23-24: Overnight camping to Cave Creek, Chiricahua Mtns., Southwest Arizona. Jack Carter, leader.

LAS CRUCES

Meetings at 7 PM on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Southwest Environment Center, 1494 S. Solano Dr.

July 12: "Show and Tell" Members present short programs, including audio/visual intro to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

July 15: Field trip to Railroad Canyon in the Black Range. Leaders John Freyermuth and Carolyn Gressitt (523-8413). Meet at K-Mart Hwy 70, 7 a.m.

August 9: "Scanographs" Terry Peterson. How to create plant images with scanner and computer.

August 12: Field trip to Texas Canyon. Led by Dave Anderson. Meet at K-Mart, 7 a.m.

Las Cruces cont'd

Sept. 13: "How Plants Survive the Desert" Rolston St. Hilaire, Dept. of Agronomy and Horticulture, NMSU.

Sept. 16: Field trip to Dog Canyon, Sacramento Mts. Led by John Freyermuth and Carolyn Gressitt. K-Mart 8 a.m.

OTERO

July 29: Field Trip, hike the 3.2 mile Chippaway Trail on Lincoln National Forest with John Stockert. Call 585-2546 for details.

Sept 9: Field Trip, annual White Sands Missile Range trip with botanist Dave Anderson. Sign up well in advance. Call 585-2546 for details and registration.

SACRAMENTO MTS (Ruidoso)

July 8: Field Trip, old growth forest and spotted owl habitat near Cloudcroft, commentary by Ranger Ward. Meet at Cloudcroft Ranger Station at 8 a.m.

Aug 4-5-6: Chapter Booth at Lincoln County Fair. Need volunteers. Call Cynthia at 378-1902.

Aug 19: Field Trip hike on Monjeau Peak Trail, led by Cap Naegle. Len Hendzel will talk about area native grasses. Meet at Nob Hill Elementary at 8:30 a.m.

Sept 9: Field Trip to San Andreas National Wildlife HQ, led by Dave Anderson. Reserve your place by calling 585-2546.

Sept 16: Seed gathering with Bill Hornsby. Meet at Nob Hill Elementary at 10 a.m.

SAN JUAN (Farmington area)

A committee has been formed to help plant natives and weed out invasives at the Aztec Ruins National Monument.

SANTA FE

Meetings third Wednesday of the month at the Evans Science Laboratory Building, Rm 122, Saint John's College, 7:30 PM

July 1: Field Trip. Holy Ghost Trail in Pecos Wilderness. Meet George Cox and Art Montana at small parking lot east of Holy Ghost Campground. For details, directions or car-pooling, call Mimi Hubby 983-1658 or Barbara Fix 989-8654.

Cont'd on page 13

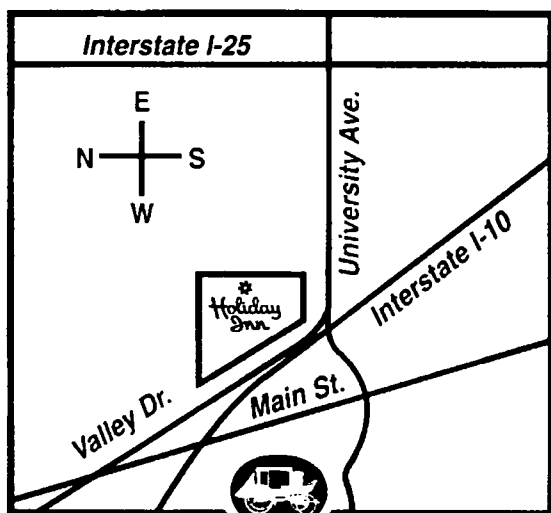
NPS/NM Annual Meeting 2000

"Working for a growing understanding of the Chihuahuan Desert"



Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 1 at the Holiday Inn in Las Cruces, NM, 201 E. University Ave. (505) 526 4411

Participants should make their own accommodation arrangements



■ I-10 Exit Main Street ■ I-25 Exit University

Schedule of Events:

Friday, September 29:

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Board Meeting
 9:00 AM - 12:00 noon Registration, Set up of Exhibits, Silent Auction, Raffle and Book Table
 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Presentations
 6:00 PM Informal Gathering at Marlene and Terry Peterson's home

Saturday, September 30:

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Registration
 9:00 AM - 12:00 noon Presentations
 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM Presentations and Landscaping Panel Discussion
 4:30 PM Silent Auction and Raffle closes
 6:30 PM Keynote Speaker Mexican Buffet and Mariachi

Sunday, October 1:

10:00 AM
Field Trip 1: Anthony's Nose area in the Northern Franklin Mountains
Field Trip 2: Organ Mountains, Dripping Springs
Field Trip 3: Centennial Gardens at UTEP, El Paso

We have a great program in store for you! Please see the following pages. As is usual with NPS/NM Annual Meetings, there will be a lot of fun, a chance to learn, meeting new native plant enthusiasts and renewing friendships. Late September is one of the best times to visit Las Cruces, the temperatures are mild during the day as well as at night. You will find a growing community that is friendly, relaxed and inviting. Area attractions include art galleries and museums, historical sites, state parks, Old Mesilla and many places for family fun and outdoor recreation. Plan to attend the Annual Meeting 2000 of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico in Las Cruces!



Registration Form

(Please print)

Name

Address

City

State

ZIP

Phone

e-mail

Advance registration fee: \$ 30.00

After Aug. 15, the registration fee is: \$ 40.00
 To register, fill out the form on the left and send with your payment to:

NPS/NM Annual Meeting 2000
c/o Lisa Mandelkern
5259 Singer Road
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Please make your check payable to NPS/NM

Presentations

The following is a selection, more presentations will be announced in the next NPS/NM newsletter

Why creosotebush, *Larrea tridentata*, is "El Gubenador" in the Chihuahuan Desert

Walter G. Whitford, NMSU and USDA-ARS
Jornada Experimental Range

There are a number of morphological and physiological adaptations that contribute to the success of creosotebush, *Larrea tridentata*, in North American hot deserts. The abundance of creosotebush in many desert regions confers a governing effect of this species on numerous other species of plants, animals and ecosystem processes, earning this species the title "El Gubenador". Canopy morphology adaptations include orientation of foliage that maximizes light interception in the early morning, variable stem angles (with respect to the soil surface) that affect stem flow, throughfall and below canopy litter accumulations. Creosotebush requires both nitrogen and water for optimal growth and carbon gain. Root growth occurs later in the season than stem and leaf production. Root channelization of stemflow water enhances the resistance of creosotebush to prolonged drought. The predictable phenology of creosotebush makes this plant an essential resource for some charismatic animal species such as carpenter bees. Canopy morphology and use of sub-canopy soils by burrowing animals affect both the diversity and density of ephemeral plants and perennial herbs.



Here is one of many Chihuahuan Desert plant communities. The main plants are: *Opuntia spp.*, *Dasyllirion wheeleri*, *Rhus virens*, *Parthenium incanum* and *Fouquieria splendens*

Lincoln County's Changing Faces A photographic documentation of historic vegetation changes

E. Hollis Fuchs

Lincoln County has diverse landscapes and vegetation, ranging from Chihuahuan Desert at less than 4,500 feet elevation, to New Mexico's southern mountains at 11,600

feet. Present-day Lincoln County is less than 50 miles from the Rio Grande, but its history is dramatically different and much more recent. Thanks to the Mescalero Apache, unlike the Rio Grande corridor's near 400 years of European impacts, Lincoln County has experienced European influences for about 125 to 150 years. The author has collected more than 150 old landscape photographs of Lincoln County dating from the 1870s. After years of searching, many of the old photo sites have been found. More than one hundred of the old photographs have been painstakingly re-taken to show precisely the same scene. More recent photos have also been collected for some sites, from the 1930s to the 1950s, to examine changes that may have occurred more recently on the same sites. A detailed history of grazing, fire, and other influences on many of the sites has been researched. A generous sampling of these photo sets will be examined, vegetation changes will be noted, and possible causes will be explored.

Landscape Processes and the Recovery of Desert Grasslands

Debra Peters, USDA-ARS, Jornada Experimental Range

Much of the Chihuahuan Desert in central and southern New Mexico was dominated for several thousands of years by perennial grasses until the last century. Large-scale shrub invasion over the past 50 to 120 years has resulted in landscapes that consist of a mosaic of plant communities dominated by creosotebush, honey mesquite, or tarbush with scattered remnant populations dominated by native grasses. Large-scale recovery of grasses is not expected to occur naturally in this region, for various reasons, although small-scale recovery within patches is possible and even likely. One of our research goals is to determine the environmental conditions where grass recovery may occur, and to examine the key processes limiting this recovery. In this talk, we will discuss the importance of landscape context, or the location of sites relative to remnant grass populations, to the ability of grasses to recover on areas currently dominated by shrubs. Specific research-based examples of these principles will be shown from the Jornada Experimental Range near Las Cruces and the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge north of Socorro.

The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park: K-12 Environmental Science Education on the US-Mexico Border

Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park
Las Cruces

Environmental conflicts on the US-Mexican border are increasing as populations grow, resources (especially water) become more limiting, and waste disposal concerns mount. The ability of the local population to evaluate potential options is limited by generally low literacy rates, including

NPS/NM Annual Meeting 2000

low scientific literacy. To combat this problem, the nonprofit Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park is focused on providing interactive educational programs designed to increase understanding of desert ecosystems and to promote the application of critical thinking skills to local and global environmental issues. We currently serve over 3,000 K-12 students per year in cooperation with the USDA-ARS Jornada Experimental Range. We bring the desert to the students through classroom presentations by staff scientists and volunteers. We bring the students to the desert through day-long field trips to the Nature Park (960 acres of botanically and topographically diverse land) and to the adjacent Jornada Experimental Range near Las Cruces.

Integrating Land Cover Mapping, Animal Distribution Prediction, and Stewardship Analysis for Conservation Planning in the Southwestern Landscape

Bruce C. Thompson, USGS-Biological Resources Division

New Mexico is currently engaged in Southwestern Regional Gap Analysis, a 5-state (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah) endeavor to enhance planning capabilities for conserving biological diversity across jurisdictional boundaries in the Southwest. This process involves mapping natural land cover to the Alliance level in the National Vegetation Classification System developed by The Nature Conservancy. The 5 state projects will cooperate to prepare a seamless land cover map for the region at 0.1 to 2.0 hectare resolution depending on cover class. That mapping will form the basis for detailed estimation of vertebrate species distribution as a surrogate for animal diversity on the landscape. Classification and analysis of landscape stewardship that promotes long-term conservation of biological diversity will identify gaps in conservation for future management planning at all levels of private, public, and tribal stewardship. This endeavor will dramatically improve resolution of previous gap analysis activities in the southwest by applying new computing technology and by eliminating state boundary edge-matching difficulties. We will discuss opportunities for Native Plant Society members to be involved with land cover mapping, subsequent accuracy assessment of the completed map, and other project components.

New Mexico's First Botanist: TDA Cockerell

Carolyn Dodson and David L. Bleakly

At the end of the 19th century the arrival of the railroad connected the remote Territory of New Mexico with the "civilized" East. This reliable transportation system made possible the establishment of the New Mexico Agricultural College in Las Cruces. There, Theodore Dru Alison Cockerell was one of the first professional biologists to teach and carry out research in New Mexico. He came as a trained entomologist interested in scale insects and bees, organisms living and feeding on plants. Soon he developed an interest

in the plants themselves and subsequently published in both entomology and botany. He established the college herbarium and made the first collections for it. During his decade in New Mexico he named 32 species of plants.

SWEC proposes Mesilla Valley Bosque Park

Beth Bardwell, Southwest Environmental Center
Las Cruces

Urbanization, flood control projects and agriculture have resulted in the disappearance of upwards of 75% or more of the native riparian and riverine habitat along the Rio Grande from Elephant Butte Dam to Ft. Quitman, Texas. To begin to reverse this century long trend, the Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC) is proposing to establish a regional river park along 3 miles of the Rio Grande near Las Cruces. In addition to restoring riparian and riverine habitat, the park would benefit the region by providing a destination for ecotourism and recreational opportunities such as walking, bicycling and wildlife viewing. As envisioned, the regional river park would be home to a mosaic of habitats similar to those historically located along the riparian corridor including an oxbow lake, marshes, wet meadows, cottonwood and black willow bosques and screwbean mesquite bosques. The park would be comprised of both public and privately owned lands and could be managed by a partnership between state and local governments.



Echinocereus stramineus is a magnificent plant. Some specimens form huge mounds. Dense golden spines cover the stems. Alas, it is not the most prolific bloomer – but the silky pink flowers, which appear in May, are huge and lovely

Birds of the Chihuahuan Desert

Mary Alice Root, NM Museum
of Natural History and Science, Albuquerque
Dale and Marian Zimmerman, NMWU

We shall show which birds are commonly seen in the Chihuahuan Desert and how they have adapted to the conditions present during the year. Some birds are resident all year long, such as the Verdin, Cactus Wren, and Gila Woodpecker. Others migrate through, usually twice a year,

and every spring the tiny Black-chinned Hummingbird pauses on its way north to pollinate the ocotillo. Some species, such as the Green-tailed Towhee, spend most of the winter in the Chihuahuan Desert, leaving early in the spring to breed in more northerly areas. The ones that do stay to breed have developed interesting ways of using the plant life to provide safety and comfort. The Curve-billed Thrasher often builds its nest in cholla, and manages to fly in and out with ease. You'll often see this bird on the top-most point of a cholla singing merrily. How the birds interact with other plants will also be discussed.



Natural hybrids of agaves occur in the Northern part of the Franklin Mountains. These three plants show characteristics of both parents: the narrow leaf of *Agave lechuguilla* and the frosted blue leaf of *Agave neomexicana*

National Park Service's new Chihuahuan Desert/Southern Shortgrass Prairie Exotic Plant Management Team

Renée West, Carlsbad Caverns National Park

The Chihuahuan Desert/Southern Shortgrass Prairie Exotic Plant Management Team has begun a five-year, 11-park project to remove invasive exotic plants and begin to restore native ecosystem functioning. The team of weed-killing experts is working in: **Texas:** Guadalupe Mountains NP, Big Bend NP, Fort Davis NHS, Amistad NRA, Lake Meredith NRA, Alibates Flint Quarries NMT; **New Mexico:** Carlsbad Caverns NP, White Sands NM, Capulin Volcano NM; **Colorado:** Bent's Old Fort NHS; and **Oklahoma:** Washita Battlefield NHS. The EPMT, one of four teams nationally, is funded under the National Park Service's Natural Resource Challenge and has its home base in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Exotic plants invade native ecosystems, disrupt ecological balances, disrupt natural fire regimes, reduce diversity, and destroy natural succession. Parks are losing native plant species and the wildlife dependant on them. The invasion of exotic plants in the deserts is especially of concern in highly productive riparian areas. Many species occur only at riparian areas and springs, and these areas display the highest species diversity. All eradication efforts will be combined with re-vegetation of treated areas to enhance natural restoration and prevent re-invasion of exotic species.

Panel Discussion

"Deserving a Place in the Sun" Landscaping with Native Plants in the Las Cruces Area (free to the public!)

Gardening is the favorite leisure activity in the United States. At the same time, water conservation is becoming more and more a necessity in the Southwest. Is it possible to have an attractive home landscape, while trying to conserve water? This panel discussion will give the audience an opportunity to become more familiar with the concept of water efficient landscapes (also called xeriscapes). Water-wise gardens also require less maintenance and they can have the "lush" look of traditional gardens; they also help preserve New Mexico's unique regional character. The panelists are **Greg Magee**, landscape designer; **Jackye Meinecke**, author and nursery owner; **Sally Wasowski**, author; **Terry Peterson**, homeowner and xeriscape gardener; **Wynn Anderson**, curator of the Centennial Gardens at UTEP; **Judith Phillips**, author; and **John White**, Dona Ana County Extension Service Agent. **Rolston St. Hilaire**, NMSU, will give a short demonstration of computer aided landscape design.

Field Trips

The Chihuahuan Desert is home to an incredible species variety of flora and fauna, (although it might not be obvious to the casual observer.) In the spring of 2000 for example, the Las Cruces area received less than half an inch of rain! How do plants manage to grow here at all? One obvious answer is, nothing grows tall here – but plants do have many more strategies to deal with arid conditions. All field trips will be held concurrently on Sunday, Oct. 1, 2000 and should be a lot of fun for people who want to warm up to the desert! **Field trip 1** (Anthony's Nose Area) and **field trip 2** (Organ Mountains) will illustrate some of the adaptations that plants have made to survive in arid lands. Both destinations are easily reached by car. Some walking on trails and some easy off trail hiking is involved. **Field trip 3** (Centennial Gardens at UTEP) will introduce the participants to a garden, that consists solely of plants from the Chihuahuan Desert. It is truly breathtaking - well worth a trip to El Paso! Wynn Anderson, curator of the Centennial Gardens, will explain the concepts of the gardens.

Silent Auction

We encourage chapter members to donate items to the Silent Auction. This is the only fund-raising event at the Annual Meeting and will help to cover some of the costs. Bring your items to the Annual Meeting or send them to Lisa Mandelkern. Our raffle prize is a beautiful, original watercolor painting of the Gila Cliff Dwellings. It is framed and measures 30" by 37".



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A History of Suburbia.

Suburbia and the lawn-centered landscape are, for the most part, inseparable. Today, one can travel from one coast to the other, from Canada down into Texas or Florida and see virtually the same landscape replicated block after block, neighborhood after neighborhood: a well-manicured lawn, carefully clipped hedges and shrubs, and rows of annuals lined up like cadets on parade.

For many of us in the native plant movement, this is the antithesis of what we preach and strive for — that is, a more natural, native landscape that conserves water, eliminates toxic chemicals, reduces labor, and provides sanctuary for many critters who have lost their natural habitats to housing developments, shopping centers, and office complexes.

A famous (and successful) Chinese general once wrote: “Know your enemy, know yourself. A thousand battles, a thousand victories.” Since we hope one day in the not too distant future to achieve victory over the lawn-centered suburban landscape, we might take the general’s advice and look at the origins of suburbia and that typical suburban front and backyard.

It Started Earlier Than You Think

A couple once wrote to a friend about their life in “suburbia.” They didn’t actually use the term, but read this excerpt and see if it doesn’t sound like the ideal of suburban living.

“Our property seems to me the most beautiful in the world. It is so close to (the city) that we enjoy all the advantages of the city, and yet when we come home we are away from all the noise and dust.”

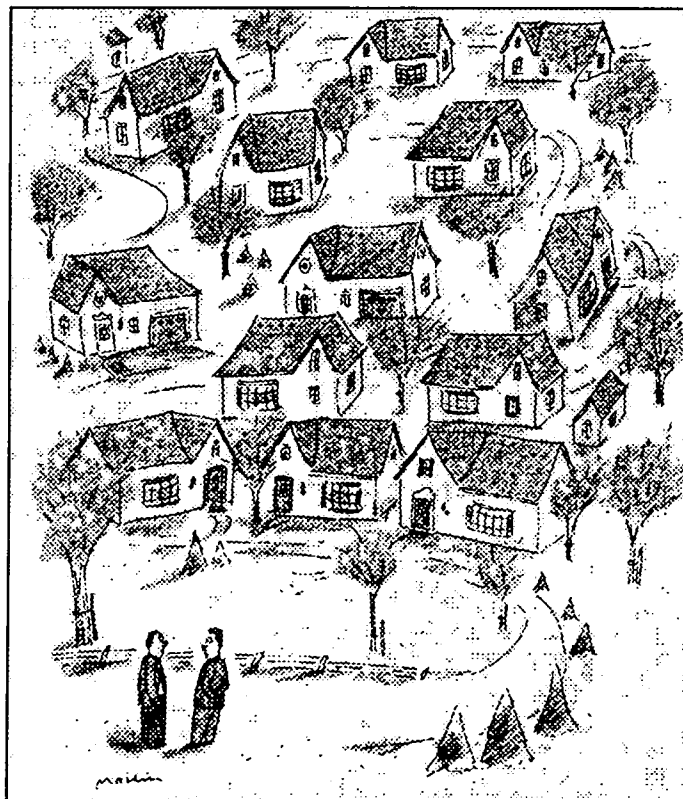
This letter was written on a clay tablet in 539 B.C. and the city is Babylon!

The word *suburbis* was used by John Wycliffe as early as 1380, and Chaucer introduced the term in a dialogue in *The Canterbury Tales* a few years later. By 1500 extramural parishes were designated as London suburbs, and by the seventeenth century the adjective *suburban* was being used to mean both the place and the resident.

Here in America, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York had established suburbs well before the Revolutionary War. In fact, in 1719, one John Staniford advertised a new real estate development at Barton’s Point, Massachusetts, as “*laid out in House Lotts with two Streets Cross, that have a very fine prospect upon the River and Charlestown and a great part of Boston.*”

Enter Frank J. Scott

Often the yards of these early suburban homes were left bare, or were filled with English style flower gardens — usually very formal and using imported exotics from the Old World. It wasn’t until 1870 that America’s suburbanites got the word as to how they should landscape these properties. Cincinnati landscape architect Frank J. Scott wrote a book titled, *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds*, and it became a big best-seller. In it, Scott (no relation to the seed company) told readers that “A smooth, closely shaven surface of grass is by far the most essential element of beauty on the grounds of a suburban home.” American homeowners readily accepted his decree, and we’ve been stuck with mowing and edging and all those other chores ever since.



“I came, I bought, I subdivided.”

The Lawn Mower

By the time Scott's book came out, we already had the tool we needed to follow his advice. In 1830, an English textile engineer named Edward Budding invented the lawn mower after observing a rotary shear used to trim the nap on carpet. The first American patent was issued in 1868, and by the end of the nineteenth century we had the first power mowers. The year after Scott's book appeared, the first U.S. patent was issued for the lawn sprinkler.

"Fore" The Lawn?

Interestingly, the spread of lawns was closely tied to the growing popularity of golf. The "perfect lawn" concept arose when amateur golfers noticed the well-maintained greens they played on, and began to develop higher standards for their own home turf. Naturally, they turned, not to professional landscapers or gardeners, but to the golf course managers. A 1926 ad for Toro lawn mowers advised readers to "ask the Greenskeeper at your own course what he thinks of Toro equipment." Other lawn care ads promoted the "golf course look" as the ideal for suburban homes, and PGA stars such as Sam Snead and Bobby Jones (and later Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus) touted lawn-care products in magazines and on TV.

During the Second World War, Americans were deprived of much of the help they'd become used to from the lawn care industry. Lawn mower manufacturers were making equipment for the armed forces, fertilizer companies were making munitions, and the makers of lawn chemicals were making poison gas! But they didn't want us to forget their products, so they continued to advertise. One ad proclaimed, "Your 1943 Coldwell mower is riding the convoy lanes somewhere on the high seas." But they added, "The new ideas and methods we are learning every day assure you of the finest lawn mowers obtainable in the future."

After the war, suburbia really took off as millions of servicemen and women returned to find the good life, and developers such as William Levitt began mass-producing suburban cookie-cutter homes, each with its "picture perfect" lawn.

And not a moment too soon, according to an article in *Home and Garden* magazine. In it, they expressed the rather bizarre notion that "The lawn is one of the saddest wartime casualties."

Andy Wasowski

Activities & Events Cont'd

SANTA FE

July 5: Butterfly slide orientation prior to butterfly count on Saturday the 8th. Lodge at Hyde Park, 8:30 p.m.

July 8: Butterfly count. Meet at Hyde Park 8:15 a.m.

July 15: SMU-in-Taos Workshop, see Taos listing.

July 30: Leonora Curtin area morning walk with Santa Fe Botanical Garden docents. 8:30 a.m. Call Mimi Hubby at 983-1658 for details.

Aug 12: End of Summer Picnic and hike NW of Las Vegas. Bring lunch, hat, water, and a copy of Ivey. Call Mary Whitmore for details at 454-0683.

TAOS

Meetings are held second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM, San Geronimo Lodge, 1101 Witt Rd.

July 8: Field trip to Williams Lake led by David Witt. 8 am to noon. Limited to Taos members only. Call 776-8896 to sign up.

July 12: "Designing & Maintaining a Fire-Resistant Landscape" A very timely program given by Charles Ferguson, registered Professional Forester.

July 15: "From Penstemon to Paintbrush" Full day workshop (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) on the *Scrophulariaceae* given by SMU's John Ubelaker at Fort Burgwin. Fee \$30, free to Taos members. To register call SMU-in-Taos at 758-8322.

July 23: Butterfly field trip, 9-11 am. Led by Komalam & Nirmalan Mayura. Call 751-4909 for details.

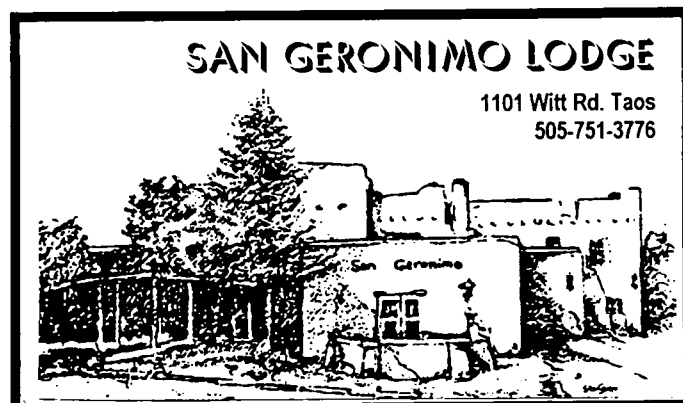
Aug 13: Botany field trip at Ft. Burgwin led by John Ubelaker. 10 am to noon. Call 776-8896 to sign up.

Aug 20: Field trip to Yerba Canyon from 9 am to noon, led by Sally Wasowski. Call 776-1497 for details.

Sept 10: Photography field trip to Hawk Ranch in San Cristobal led by Andy Wasowski. Call 776-1498 for specifics.

Sept 13: "The Universal Landscape" given by Sally Wasowski. A fascinating look at the interconnectedness of the global plant palette.

Sept 17: Potluck supper at Bluebird Herb Farm, 4 pm to sunset. Call 776-8896 for directions and details.



A Transplanted Texas Landscape Designer Discovers a New Plant Palette and a Few Surprises

by Wanda Jones

Gardening in New Mexico is different from anywhere else I've ever lived. I learned the hard way!

I arrived late last September to search for a new home in the mountains of Sandia Park east of Albuquerque. The area was in full bloom and I got so excited seeing all the native plants that were so beautiful here that I couldn't wait to get my own garden going.

It took until March to find that new home, but as soon as I was moved in I got to work on that landscape. I decided to plant only a small area around the house, and leave the rest of my two acres natural.

Where I moved from — about fifty miles north of Houston, Texas — early March is prime gardening time. But I forgot that I was now at 6500 feet; my old home was no more than 200 feet above sea level. As a result, the wind and cold froze back the first \$200.00 worth of plants I installed. My approach would have to change.

First, the soil: No digging in these rocks! Instead, I built up a raised bed near the back deck. Compost, manure, and gypsum were tilled into the native soil. I bordered my bed with boulders that were found in the existing landscape. Purple aster, littleleaf mockorange, and wooly lamb's ear now tumble over the rocks. I made a path with cedar chips that I recovered from the local recycling center (free!), and then I lined it with creeping germander, perky Sue, some pussy toes, and various penstemons.

The wind is more than a breeze up here, so I had to design some type of wind barrier. Piñons and threeleaf sumac were already established, so I added a hoptree and fernbush for texture and color. This was where my private garden was to be created — a combination of xeriscapic native and adaptive plants. A local nursery — Mountain Gardens in Cedar Crest — informed me on plant materials and installation that I might use to enjoy my garden, and

I am very grateful to them for their expert advice and friendship.

Running water had to be a part of my garden, so I built a shallow stream for the birds to drink and bathe in. The small waterfall creates just enough sound to satisfy my longing for a creek.

The ground covers here are plentiful, and include mat daisy, mat penstemon, thymes, and the wonderful Rocky Mountain penstemon. The veronicas are also growing enthusiastically. I cannot wait until the chives bloom and spread under my piñon. I am trying the German chamomile for myself, and the Russian tarragon for the butterflies, and the chocolate flower's scent helps relieve my craving for chocolate. I had to plant a purpleleaf rose for the striking purple stems, and the native Wood's rose just because roses are my favorite flowers.

Rainwater from the roof collects in a barrel to help give my garden that God given vitamin boost. And, although I was at first scornful of gravel mulch, I wound up spreading a bit of it to protect tiny roots and to keep the organic mulch from blowing away.

In the natural portion of my property, I saw what I had at first thought were weeds. Much to my surprise, they produced beautiful flowers, and I discovered that I already had bought some more of those "weeds" and planted them in my garden.

The biggest lesson a transplanted gardener can learn is to respect and appreciate the plants that are native to where you live and the growing conditions they require. Every place is special, and offers a wonderful plant palette and exciting gardening opportunities.

Wanda Jones is a landscape designer and can be reached at www.wbjlandscapedesigns.com. Call 505-281-2356 or wbjones2@earthlink.net



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Meet The Candidates

The following are nominees for positions as Executive Officers of NPSNM. The ballot below is your way to endorse these candidates. You may also vote via our web-site <http://npsnm.unm.edu>

President: Bob Sivinski, Santa Fe. A botanist with the New Mexico Forestry Division. Currently Vice President of NPSNM, he has been a member of NPSNM since 1990, and served as president of the Santa Fe chapter. He is Curatorial Associate of the UNM herbarium.

Vice President: Joe Duft, Otero. Retired from the Dept. of Interior's Bureau of Land Management, Joe has been a member of the Idaho, Oregon and now New Mexico Native Plant Societies. He is a past president of the Idaho NPS.

Recording Secretary: Robert Hilton, Taos. Retired horticulturist for the City of Garland, Texas, Robert currently serves as President of the Taos Chapter. He is also NPSNM Recording Secretary and on the advisory board to the State Forester for the Re-Leaf Tree Planting Program.

Membership Secretary: John Freyermuth, Las Cruces. A member since 1994, John was Las Cruces chapter president 1997-98. He wrote the shrub profiles for *Chihuahuan Desert Gardens*. John and his wife, Carolyn Gressit, do a great job mailing out the newsletter each quarter.

Treasurer: Don Tribble, Otero. A retired Air Force officer, Don has been a member of NPSNM since 1984. He has been treasurer of the Otero chapter for 9 years. Don is interested in native plant landscaping and water conservation issues.

BALLOT

Please mark your ballot and return **BY SEPTEMBER 1ST** to:
Robert Hilton, Rt. Box 30-C, Vadito NM 87579

- () Bob Sivinski, President
- () Joe Duft, Vice President
- () Robert Hilton, Recording Secretary
- () John Freyermuth, Membership Secretary
- () Don Tribble, Treasurer

Member (print name) _____

Member signature _____

The **NEWSLETTER** is published quarterly 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 attributed to the author and this 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. In addition, a wide selection of books dealing with plants, landscaping, and other environmental issues is available at discount prices. The Society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld which can be ordered by contacting our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

See page 5 for all Society Contacts.

Membership Fees

Dues are \$12 annually for individuals or families.

Organizations, businesses and individuals who wish to support the Society's activities and long range goals may contribute \$25 annually as "Friends of the Society."

To join us, please send your dues to:

Membership Secretary NPSNM
P.O.Box 2364
Las Cruces NM 88004

Newsletter Contributions

Please direct all articles, letters-to-the-editor, as well as suggestions for articles and writers, to:

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P.O.Box 607

Arroyo Seco NM 87514

Or e-mail at andrzej@laplaza.org

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