

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

NEWSLETTER

July, August, Sept 2005 Volume XXX Number 3

TAOS CHAPTER HELPS LANDSCAPE MILLICENT ROGERS MUSEUM

By Shelby Tisdale

Reprinted with permission from the
Millicent Rogers publication, *Las Palabras*.

Over the past year a group came together to plan an extraordinary exhibit of native plants in the Joan Palmer Hughston Courtyard Garden at the Museum. The goal was to bring together plants native to the Southwest and northern New Mexico that relate to the collections and the cultural traditions of the Native American and Hispanic peoples who have lived in the region for centuries. The courtyard garden provided a perfect microclimate for this type of garden which is a new educational component for the Museum. The goal of the garden is two-fold. One goal is to provide interpretive information about how some plants are used as basket weaving materials, for dyes, and for pottery designs, while others are used for medicine and food. The second goal is to educate our visitors and community members about the importance of water conservation in this extremely arid climate through the use of xeriscaping, drip systems and the beauty of native plants.

Members of the Taos Chapter came to the MRM last fall and transplanted the shrubs from the courtyard garden to the East lawn and garden. Then this Spring these hearty volunteers came back and transplanted the irises and other flowering plants to the East garden. We then trenched around the walls of the courtyard and water sealed the walls to prevent

Continued on Page 2



Ty Minton and other Taos Chapter volunteers install plants at Millicent Rogers Museum using landscape architect Steven Domigan's landscape plan.

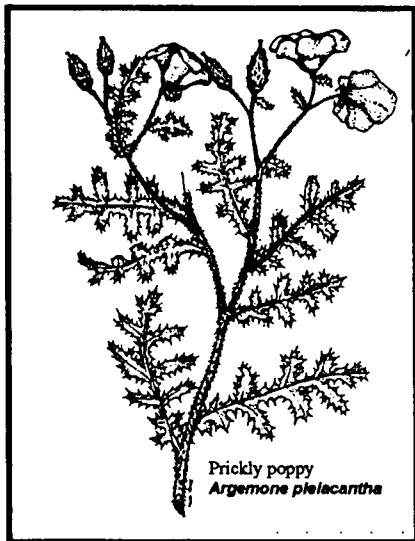
INSIDE

- Prickly Poppy Rescue...pg 2
- New Editor...pg 3
- Greenhouse Project...pg 4
- Climate Change & Wildfires...pg 6
- Rosaceae...pg 7
- What's in a Name?...pg 8
- Plant Portraits...pg 10
- Prez Sez...pg 11
- Activities & Events...pg 13
- Sacramento Garden Project...pg 15

Otero Chapter plays Gunga Din to Thirsty Prickly Poppies

Linda M. Barker, Forest Botanist

The Sacramento prickly poppy (*Argemone pleiacantha* ssp. *pinnatisecta*), a federally endangered plant, grows only on the west face of the Sacramento Mountains near Alamogordo. In the late 1980s, 18 years into an extended wetter-than-average climate regime, some 1300 prickly poppy plants were found growing in seven canyon systems between the Fresno/La Luz drainage on the north and Escondido Canyon to the south. As of 2004, some six years into a period of below average rainfall, only about 460 plants could be located on the Lincoln National Forest. Alamo Canyon supports the largest group of plants.



Prickly poppy
Argemone pleiacantha

Reproduction for this plant is sporadic, with seedlings being found infrequently. In March of 2001, some 210 seedlings were found in lower Alamo Canyon. The seedlings were estimated to be one-month-old, based on comparisons with photos of seedlings of known age. These seedlings were monitored regularly through our normal spring drought, and by July only two seedlings were left, and these were yellowing and showing drought stress. This essentially represented 100 percent mortality and zero recruitment of new individuals into the population in that area. Successful seedling recruitment depends upon sufficient soil moisture being present to allow establishment.

In the summer of 2004, a fungal or viral infection was found on adult plants in Alamo Canyon. The infection caused plants to wither and go dormant earlier in the summer than they normally do. Observations in November showed that growth had proliferated from lateral buds and, in March, the plants had begun greening up again from the perennial root. The decline in numbers of plants since the late '80s, low seedling establishment rates, drought conditions, and the recent infection caused concern for the survival of this attractive native plant.

cont'd Page 5

Millicent Rogers, Cont'd from Front Page

further erosion of the foundation of the building. After this part of the project was completed we converted the old sprinkler system to a drip system. On June 11th the garden was transformed when the NPS volunteers returned to plant the first grouping of native plants. More plants were added as they came available.

We want to thank Ty Minton for coming to the Museum with this idea and for his input on the Native Garden Planning Committee. He also has been a faithful volunteer in organizing NPS club members during the transplanting and planting process. We also want to thank the other members of the planning committee including Sally Wasowski for her assistance in identifying the plants that would be appropriate for the MRM garden, Steve Domigan for providing the landscape design, and David Farmer who assisted in identifying sources for some of the plants. We also want to thank all the volunteers who have assisted in transforming the courtyard garden: Carol and David Farmer, Marsha Fawns, Karen Epperson, Honore Maloney, Gael and Ty Minton, Kathryn Peel, Ann Smith, Steve and Betsy Robertson, and Jean Balliet of Stone Madre who rearranged the rocks.

This project would not have been possible without the generous sponsorship of Los Jardineros Garden Club who provided the funding for seed money for the plants and to trench along the wall. Funds from the Joan Hughston Palmer Memorial Fund also were used toward the completion of this project. We plan to continue with improvements this coming year and will hold a garden party in August to celebrate this new exhibition. #

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR ANNOUNCED

On May 7th, Wynn Anderson, Jack Carter and Andy Wasowski interviewed two applicants for newsletter editor. "Both are very well qualified," said Wynn, "so the decision was tough." Renee West of the Carlsbad Chapter was picked to replace outgoing editor Andy Wasowski. She will introduce herself to readers in the Oct-Dec issue.

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, a nonprofit organization, and is free to members. The NPSNM 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 to this Newsletter. Views expressed are the opinions of the individual authors and not necessarily those of NPSNM. Manuscripts and artwork are welcome and should be submitted to the editor:

POBox 607, Arroyo Seco NM 87514
andrzej@laplaza.org

Next Deadline is Sept 1, 2005

Membership in the NPSNM is open to anyone supporting our goals of promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment and the preservation of endangered species. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve our 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 dealing with plants, landscaping, and other environmental issues are available at discount prices. The Society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld and a cacti poster designed by Lisa Mandelkern. These can be ordered from our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

Proofreaders: Jane Mygatt, Donna Stevens,
Sally Wasowski, Jackie Tamas and Ann Ellen Tuomey.
Mailing: Carolyn Gressitt

Web site: <http://npsnm.unm.edu/>



*Wholesale/Retail
Quality
Hardy Cacti
of the Southwest*

505-835-0687
2188 NM Hwy 1
Socorro, NM 87801

Visit our website at:
www.riogrande-cacti.com

NPSNM Membership Application

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail/Fax _____

I (we) wish to affiliate with the checked chapter

- Albuquerque
- Carlsbad
- El Paso, TX
- Gila (Silver City)
- Las Cruces
- Otero
- Sacramento Mts (Ruidoso)
- San Juan (Farmington)
- Santa Fe
- Taos

I am interested in forming a new chapter in

Annual Dues:

Individual or Family	\$20
Friend of Society.....	\$30
Supporting Member.....	\$50
Sponsor.....	\$100
Patron	\$250
Benefactor.....	\$500
Life Member.....	\$1,000
Limited Income, Family, Students & Seniors (65+).....	\$12

Endowment contribution \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Make your check payable to
NPSNM
and send to
Membership Secretary
P.O.Box 2364, Las Cruces NM 88004

GREENHOUSE PROJECT

The Taos Chapter of NPSNM has always promoted the appreciation and use of native plants through speakers and field trips. Also, a field botany committee develops selected field trip plant lists and is creating a reference herbarium.

Now the Taos chapter has gone a giant step further by encouraging and educating locals about native plants. During the last three years volunteers have gathered seeds, propagated them in donated greenhouse space, and sold the plants at the local Farmers' Market. Planting is done in February and the plants are sold in June. Between 300-450 plants have been sold each year. Plant information, books and educational materials also are sold at the annual plant sale. A chief informational item concerns invasive plants that should be avoided.

The proceeds from plant sales have gone towards purchasing over 130 volumes for a special collection of books on native plants at the Taos

Public Library. Also, plants have been used to provide an educational garden at the Millicent Rogers Museum that shows examples of native plants that were used by Native American peoples in making their arts and crafts.

The 2005 season begins a new and grander endeavor for the Greenhouse Project. Several members of the Chapter attended a class on building a hoop greenhouse at the Juan O. Gonzales County Extension Agricultural Center led by Rey Torres, the Taos County extension agent. In February, the greenhouse was prepared for the planting of over 1300 plants representing nearly 40 species and varieties of native plants.

The greenhouse project provides a hands-on experience for members to learn the techniques of growing natives. The process is carefully documented and the data are used to further improve techniques. It has been both a unifying opportunity for the local chapter and a successful outreach program for the community.



Diane Reichwein tends native "babies" that will soon be available to the public at the Chapter's annual plant sale.

BOARD of DIRECTORS

President	Wynn Anderson 915-533-6072 wanderson@utep.edu
Vice-President	Chick Keller 662-7915 alfanso@cybermesa.com
Recording Sec'y	Sandra Lynn 234-1772 slynn@cavern.nmsu.edu
Membership Sec'y	John Freyermuth 523-8413 jfreyerm@lib.nmsu.edu
Treasurer	Donna Stevens 388-5296 dstevens@gilanet.com

DIRECTORS at LARGE

Albuquerque	Phillip Melnick philm@pmelnick.com
Carlsbad	Sandra Lynn sdlynn@zianet.com 234-1772
El Paso	Jack Makepeace jackm26551@aol.com 585-2149
Gila	Janet Gilchrist jlgnm@yahoo.com 388-7832
Las Cruces	Al Krueger abkrueg@earthlink.net 532-1035
Otero	Chris Baker ravensnest@direcway.com 434-9291
Sacramento Mts.	Dave Lincoln lincolndk@hotmail.com 258-2143
San Juan	Nancy Rominger-Abe plantsscapes@gobrainstorm.net 320-0567
Santa Fe	Tom Antonio tantonio@csf.edu 473-6465
Taos	Judy Lister glister@newmex.com 776-1183

CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Albuquerque	Tiana Scott tiana.scott@documentum.com
El Paso	Kathy Reynolds AgustusMc@aol.com 915-592-1705
Gila	Donna Stevens dstevens@gilanet.com 388-5296
Las Cruces	Al Krueger abkrueg@earthlink.net 532-1036
Otero	Helgi Osterrekh hkasak@netmdc.com 585-3315
Sacramento	Dave Lincoln lincolndk@hotmail.com 258-2143
San Juan	Les Lundquist lslundquist89@students.sanjuancollege.com 326-7194
Santa Fe	Thomas Antonio tantonio@csf.edu 473-6465
Taos	Linda Malm lxyz@kitcarson.net 758-8753

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Book Sales	Lisa Johnston 748-1046 nps_nmbooks@hotmail.com
Poster Chair	Gary Runyan 242-9758
T-Shirt Sales	Lisa Mandelkern 526-0917 lisamand@zianet.com
Website Editor	Lolly Jones 771-8020 ljones20@comcast.net
Newaletter Ed.	Andy Wasowski 776-1498 andrzej@laplaza.org
Conservation	Jim Nellessen 867-7905 jnellessen1@taschek.net
Finance	Jack Carter 388-9221 jmcarter@zianet.com

**Send Membership Dues & Changes of Address to:
Membership Secretary,
P.O.Box 2364, Las Cruces NM 88004**

Otero, cont'd from page 2

In November of 2004, a first-ever recorded fall flush of some 380 seedlings was found in Alamo Canyon. Most of the seedlings have survived the winter and are continuing to grow. Monitoring in May unfortunately has shown some yellowing and drought-stress in the seedlings. In order to determine whether the survival of seedlings can be enhanced, the Prickly Poppy Working Group of Botanists in New Mexico has suggested a controlled experiment whereby selected groups of seedlings would be watered through the spring drought until monsoonal rains begin. These watered seedlings would be compared for survival rates and rosette dimensions against those in nearby control plots that are not watered. Permission was granted by the City of Alamogordo to conduct this experimental watering on city land in a portion of the population with the best access.

Otero to the Rescue

Members of the Otero Chapter have generously volunteered to water and monitor the prickly poppy seedling plots at the mouth of Alamo Canyon. This means carrying water in back-pack pumps to the study plots each week. Watering has been underway since March. The Native Plant Society volunteers involved with this project are dedicated to the care and survival of this plant.

The Lincoln National Forest and Linda Barker, Forest Botanist, have expressed their sincere appreciation for the cooperation of all involved parties, most especially to the volunteers of the Otero Chapter of the NPSNM for their efforts and contributions in support of the survival of this seriously endangered native plant that grows only in a very limited area of Otero County. #

**Feelings that morality has
nothing to do with the way
you use the resources of
the world is an idea that
can't persist much longer.
If it does, then we won't.**

Barbara Kingsolver

Plant Portraits: Ponderosa Pines, Climate Change, and Wildfires

by Sandra D. Lynn

When Anglo-Europeans first saw the ponderosa pines of the American West, they found open forests:

The trees are large and noble in aspect and stand widely apart.... Instead of dense thickets where we are shut in by impenetrable foliage, we can look far beyond and see the tree trunks vanishing away like an infinite colonnade. C.E. Dutton, 1887, quoted in *Graced by Pines* by Alexandra Murphy

Such forests were maintained by frequent but low-severity fires that cleaned out the spindly trees and dry tinder on the ground. Such fires were ignited by lightning and, intentionally, by Native Americans who knew that they left the mature trees scarred but still healthy while encouraging new growth below them of useful plants and forage grasses for wildlife.

In recent years, however, the well-intentioned but misguided wildfire prevention policies of the past have led to forest conditions that, when combined with drought, can produce what is known as stand-replacing fires. These are huge, raging wildfires that literally burn down a ponderosa forest from tree crowns to seared soil, as did the Cerro Grande fire near Los Alamos in 2000. Such catastrophic fires are often considered a new phenomenon caused by fire suppression and other human activities. So, policy makers try to find ways to restore ponderosa forests to their pre-settlement condition through prescribed fires and thinning.

However, the results of research published in a recent issue of the respected journal *Nature* suggest that climate and not just human policies and actions influence the types and effects of wildfires in ponderosa forests. Two of the researchers who published their work were from the University of New Mexico: Jennifer Pierce and Grant Meyer. The third researcher, A. J. Timothy Jull, is at the University of Arizona. Their article is entitled "Fire-induced erosion and millennial-scale climate change in northern ponderosa pine forests" (November 4, 2004).

The researchers aimed for a longer view. Instead of basing their studies of fire history on tree scars, which limits the information to the last 500 years and to low-severity fires, they examined fire-related sedimentation. These are the accumulations of rock, soil, and burned wood known as debris-flow

deposits. This method allowed them to establish a much longer chronology—8000 years. Here's how the authors summarized their findings:

Colder periods experienced frequent low-severity fires, probably fueled by increased understory growth. Warmer periods experienced severe droughts, stand-replacing fires and large debris-flow events that comprise a large component of long-term erosion. Our results suggest that, given the powerful influence of climate, restoration of processes typical of pre-settlement times may be difficult in a warmer future that promotes severe fires.

The last 1000 years offer an example of how this apparently works. One of the warm, dry periods the researchers referred to is known by the interesting name, Medieval Climate Anomaly (approximately AD 950-1350). During this period grass cover was sparse, and young trees did not have to compete with grass. They then filled in the spaces between mature trees, and destructive fires, like the ones in Western forests in the last decade, roared through stands of ponderosas. After such a fire the soil surface seals and does not allow water to soak in, resulting in landslides and debris-flows. Immediately following the Medieval Climate Anomaly, from 1350 to 1900, a period known as the Little Ice Age brought cooler temperatures and more precipitation to ponderosa forests. This climate change stimulated the growth of grasses that would support more frequent, less devastating fires and thus less erosion.

What does all this mean for fire policy in our ponderosa forests? Jennifer Pierce told an Associated Press reporter, in a story in the *Current Argus* (Nov. 26), that "Western fire management strategies generally haven't added the potential effects of global warming into firefighting plans." She went on to say that "the administration doesn't necessarily acknowledge that a global warming is going on." The Bush administration's Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 purports to be an effort to recreate open forest conditions that would be less likely to produce catastrophic fires. But in the light of this new research, the future of fires in ponderosa forests may depend more on climate change than on the Forest Service under George W. Bush.

Reprinted from *Desert Voices*, newsletter of Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance.

THE PEACE OF THE ROSES

by Donna Stevens

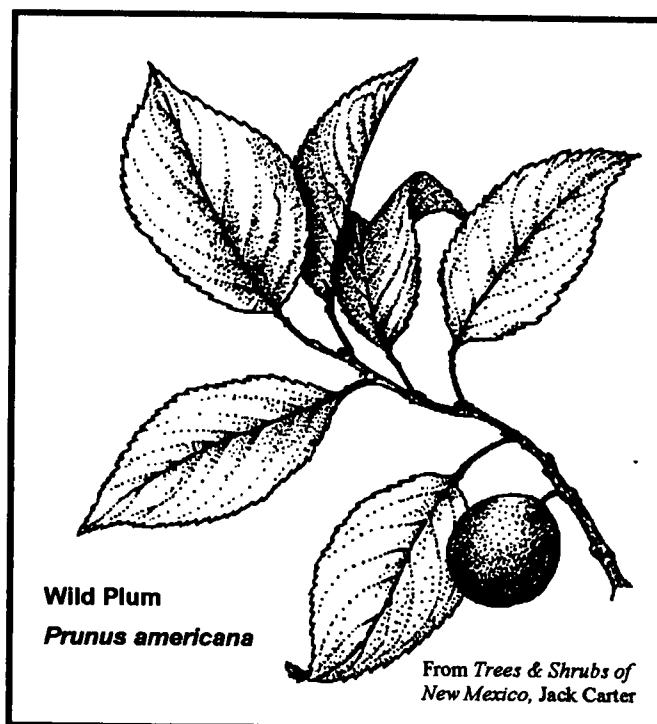
This is the eighth in a series of articles about flowering plant families.

Rosaceae, the rose family, is well known to most people not only for its ornamentals, but for its edible plants as well. Some of our favorite fruits – plums, apricots, apples, cherries, pears, peaches, strawberries, raspberries and others – belong to this large, diverse and widespread family.

The rose family is comprised of herbs, shrubs and trees. They can be recognized by their (usually) showy flowers, which have five petals, five sepals, and more stamens than you can easily count. (Horticultural roses have been bred to have many more than five petals). Most of the flowers are perfect, i.e., they have both male and female parts.



Most plants in the rose family have alternate, compound leaves, although there are many examples of plants with simple leaves. Most of the leaves have stipules: small, leaf-like appendages borne in pairs at the leaf bases. The fruits are variable, ranging from pomes (apples), to drupes (peaches, cherries), to achenes (Mountain Mahogany). Thorns can be found on some rose family trees and shrubs, including Hawthorne (genus *Crataegus*), raspberries (genus *Rubus*) and, of course, roses.



There are many beautiful, native New Mexico shrubs in the rose family that are used in landscaping, including wild roses (genus *Rosa*), Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Pentaphylloides floribunda*), Mountain Spray (*Holodiscus dumosus*), Apache Plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), Cliffrose (*Purshia stansburiana*), and Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*). A popular perennial wildflower, distinctive with its deep red flowers, is Red Cinquefoil, *Potentilla thurberi*.

Whether you plant native roses in your yard, or visit them in their wild habitat, you're sure to enjoy their beautiful, colorful presence. And, if you're eating your lunch in the forest and are especially lucky, you'll find ripe, luscious wild strawberries for dessert. #

"For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment; but the surrounding atmosphere brings it to life — the light and the air which vary continually. For me, it is only the surrounding atmosphere which gives subjects their true value."

Claude Monet

ALL THE PRETTY FLOWERS

by Emily Green

Los Angeles Times Magazine, Nov. 28, 2004.

Excerpted by Sally Wasowski

Ask a philosopher why we name things and the reply will be: human nature. It's how we distinguish a chair from a couch, a pond from an ocean, them from us. First among the things we learned to name were plants. Our long evolution would have been a very short one had we not found ways to, say, differentiate hemlock from basil.

Yet while all people in all places name plants that they use, it took the discovery of the New World to inspire the idea that one could or should classify *all* plants. For 233 years, generation after generation of botanists has been trying to know North America root and branch. What began as an epic quest for knowledge's sake is now seen as an urgent bid to record our "biological heritage."

As scientists, they are assaulting the mystery of mysteries – the search to understand the origins of life. As environmentalists, they are in a race against the boundless forces that built this country: bulldozers and ploughs. To those taking part, it could not be more important: These plants provide the air we breathe, food, shelter – life itself. Recording their ranges means that if they retreat to higher altitudes and ever more northerly parallels, it will be the clincher to *demonstrate to a disbelieving government the reality of global warming*.

Since 1983, a vast modern effort has gathered up more than 850 botanists now working on the "Flora of North America" project. The study takes in the U.S., Canada, Greenland, St. Pierre and Miquelon. To cover it, each botanist is assigned a plant group. From recorded sightings going back centuries, they establish a range where this plant is known to occur. Then they add their lifetimes to the trawl. Learned studies will be written, maps rendered, and everything will be reviewed and reviewed again. The slowly accumulating load of detail is then sent to the Missouri Botanical Garden.

The continent is not proving easy to doctor. The project is four years overdue and less than half-

finished, and government funding has all but dried up. The country that spent \$260 million on the "Genesis" probe for solar dust, whose capsule crashed in the Utah Salt Flats last September, has in the last decade put less than \$1 million of government funds in the Flora of North America project.

As the odds of success worsen, the sense of urgency has redoubled. A wilderness once too vast to comprehend is being eroded at a furious pace. Two years ago, in a last-ditch effort to save the project, the organizers brought in Peter Stevens, a former star of the Harvard University Botany Department.

It is hard to think of a more unlikely savior than Peter Stevens. At Harvard, he is known as the professor who wore shorts in February. "He's very difficult to talk to," says one project contributor. "The problem with Peter is he can't speak fast enough to keep up with what he's thinking." But not just anyone could get hundreds of already underpaid botanists to work for free. Even dissenting phylogenists (those from the rival arm of botany called "phylogenetics" that could trace the flow of a plant's genes back to continental drift) would surely react to his tap on their shoulder. If anyone could retrieve the Internet rights – naively sold to Oxford University Press – it was Stevens. However, when the editorial board of the Flora of North America project agreed to an interview on a sleeting St. Louis day in the Missouri Botanical Garden, it never occurred to them that his particular brilliance might embarrass them. It was all very civilized until the question came up: Why do it?

"You want to identify the plants," said Stevens.

"To preserve what is rare," declared Luc Brouillet, the French Canadian coordinator for the project.

"Because of sprawl," said project managing editor James Zarucchi.

This was too much for Stevens to bear. "I find this a very confusing conversation to have," he exclaimed, gulping. "You can't social engineer through a flora. If you put dollar signs on plants, then conservation, etcetera, etcetera, depends on the size of the dollar sign, and then it's a question of balancing one dollar sign against another dollar sign. And the problem here is that neither the dollar sign that's fixed to your plant, nor the dollar sign

that's attached to some other thing that your plant is being balanced against, is fixed. So basically I don't think that is a stable proposition."

Silence.

"To me, to try and preserve things simply based on economic value is basically buying into the system that's causing all the problems."

More silence.

Stevens continued. "If what you mean to say is that you need to know the organisms in your environment if it is to keep on functioning, as it has to do for you to survive, then that is a perfectly reasonable argument."

Money. As a rule, funding for studies of wild flora comes from nonprofits or the government, more specifically, from the National Science Foundation (NSF). James Rodman, program director in the foundation's division of environmental biology, takes pains to emphasize a single point: Scientists don't control how the federal government funds science. Politicians do. If we are bothered by this, says Rodman, then we should write our congressperson. All the project needs to survive, says Stevens, is about half a million a year, or "the cost of one military Humvee."

Frustration among U.S. botanists is so high that if one cracks the lid of their box of woes, a storm blows out. The most common misconception is the conviction that the study has already been done, that it was part of the U.S. Geological mapping surveys.

Then there is the "only" problem: The U.S. and Canada are regarded as so well picked over that, based on a rate of 50 new discoveries a year, a going estimate for the number of undiscovered species in North America is "only" 5% of the flora, or 8,000 new species.

For plant collectors, there's nothing "only" about it. In a Mexican ravine, Travis Columbus saw *Schaffnerella gracilis*, a grass that hadn't been recorded since the 19th century and thought to have been grazed and flooded out of existence. Columbus works on grass genetics at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, California. Focusing on this rarest of plugs, he photographed it, charted its position with GPS technology, measured it, plucked a sample and brought that back to Claremont. Here he managed to match it to the last recorded sample – from 1877. He preserved it, propagated seed for more, and extracted DNA.

Barbara Ertter, the collection's manager at UC Berkeley's Jepson Herbarium, is worried about the bigger things, the 95% of discovered plants. In a recent study of Mt. Diablo, she witnessed a steep decline in Western clover. These once "abundant" species, manna to grizzly bears, are "still present," she says, "but I don't call them common anymore." She doesn't know where decline will become extinction. "When you fall off a cliff, everything seems to be fine until you hit the bottom."

Back at the NSF in Arlington, Va., Rodman is aware of these botanists' dedication, their loves, their fears. In 2002, \$300,000 went to the make-or-break phase of the project.

This coincided with a \$3 million grant from the Chanticleer Foundation in Pennsylvania. There was only one condition: the Flora of North America project had to deliver two volumes a year.

The man who could set the pace was Ted Barkley. He would do it with the sunflower family. Equipped with just over half a million dollars, Barkley moved a team to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Ft. Worth. The sunflower family has 2,438 species. It would take 80 botanists, 30 regional reviewers, 4000 plant specimens, and three years. Each plant would be depicted in an immaculate line-drawing; it "focuses the eye in a way that color doesn't," Stevens says.

Entries would be edited to ensure consistent terms and style. They were then sent to Harvard for a name check. In what might seem a conundrum, North America has four times more scientific names for plants than plants themselves. Plants have a way of being discovered repeatedly. The job of nomenclature editor, Kanchi Gandhi, is to decide which name is legitimate, and to demote the others to synonyms. He and the other 130 scientists on the sunflowers worked for free.

Last July, already suffering from cancer, Barkley was in the lab examining specimens two days before the heart attack that killed him. The shock in Ft. Worth is still tangible. But since then, the team has completed one of the three volumes, which will go to press in December. The other two are on target for publication next year.

That will take the project to 12 volumes, and, they hope, restore their credibility with the National Science Foundation. They plan to have the series of 30 finished by 2011. #

Plant Portraits: Gorgeous Spring Blossoms by Sandra D. Lynn

I expect some readers are bothered by the use of scientific nomenclature here. Since I really like those mellifluous botanical names from Latin and Greek, I'm always surprised when folks tell me how much they don't. The problem is, common names are often so inaccurate.

Consider two gorgeous shrubs/small trees. The first is Texas mountain laurel. It is not restricted to Texas and is not a laurel. Or Mexican or Texas buckeye, though it also is not restricted to Texas (why does Texas get to claim so many plants?) or Mexico, and is not a buckeye. The "mountain laurel" is also called "mescal bean," though the seeds were not used to make mescal; the name has been a source of confusion about that. Its scientific name is *Sophora secundiflora*, and if you'll allow me, I'll just call it *Sophora* here. The "buckeye" is *Ungnadia speciosa*, and I'll use its genus name as well. To me the scientific names are almost as lovely as the plants.

Both these plants are extraordinarily attractive; often grow on steep, rocky terrain in canyons; are highly recommended for home landscapes; and yet are also poisonous.

After I had written the first paragraphs of this column, I heard the little ding by which the computer announces an email message. I checked the message, a press release from Bridget Litten at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and here's how it began: "If you haven't had the sensory treat of a mescal bean tree in full bloom, you should definitely visit Carlsbad Caverns National Park this spring. The elegant drooping blue flower clusters of mescal bean are an olfactory delight as well as a visual one." I smiled at the coincidence of my writing and her press release and remembered how much I enjoyed seeing the trees in bloom last spring in Walnut Canyon.

Sophora remains green all year, with lustrous leaves that don't look as if they belong in the desert: they have the nonchalant lushness of a tropical plant. Neither do the flowers look blue to me, but flower color seems to be in the eye of the beholder. To me they are clusters of purple, reminiscent of wisteria. They fill the air with a grape-like fragrance to match the color. *Sophora* is in the Legume family, so the flowers give way to plump, velvety, taupe seed pods.

The seeds inside are red and were reportedly used by Native Americans to make jewelry. As a child, my son collected a clay bowl full of them and scratched them on the sidewalk. The seed coats are so hard that they would heat up from the friction; he called them "burn beans."

Sophora can be grown from seed gathered from late summer into fall. Those hard seed coats have to be scarified with a knife or file before they will germinate and should be planted in deep containers because the initial root is long. *Sophora* grows slowly the first couple of years while establishing a sturdy root system, an adaptation that helps the tree survive in its rugged limestone habitat. The shrub/tree makes a fine garden ornamental, but gardeners should be aware that it contains toxic alkaloids. Native Americans crushed the seeds and mixed presumably small amounts of the powder with mescal (hence the name mescal bean) to produce intoxication and delirium.

A smaller, endemic relative of *Sophora secundiflora* grows wild only on the northwest slopes of the Guadalupe Mountains: *Sophora gypsophila* var. *guadalupeensis*. It has silvery fuzzy leaflets and small purple flowers. At least one shrub flourishes in the parking lot at Living Desert State Park, thanks to Dean Ricer.

As lovely as *Sophora* is, it is rivaled by *Ungnadia*, the only species in its genus and a member of the Soapberry family. In my permanent mental image, it is covered with pink blossoms and bees. The flowers appear before the leaves. Like *Sophora*'s the leaves are green and shiny, but they turn yellow in the fall. While *Sophora* somewhat resembles wisteria, *Ungnadia* resembles redbud and would be an even better choice than redbud in a desert garden.

Its hard, black seeds can be gathered from late summer into fall and germinate without any treatment. Like *Sophora* seeds, plant them in deep containers. According to a couple of sources, the seeds are poisonous, yet Steve West points out in *Northern Chihuahuan Desert Wildflowers* that rock squirrels feed on them.

After all the rain we've enjoyed this past year, this promises to be a spring full of flowers. Some of the loveliest will be on these two shrubs or small trees that grace our canyons and mountain slopes. Reprinted from *Desert Voices*, Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance.



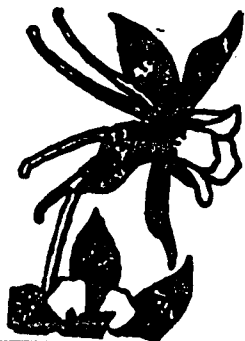
Enchanted
GARDENS LLC

For the Finest Garden Products

Native flowers	413 W. Griggs Ave
Native trees & shrubs	Las Cruces NM 88005
Herbs & perennials	505-524-1886
The LC nature store	Tues-Sat 10 am to 6 pm

The Place for Avid Gardeners to Meet!

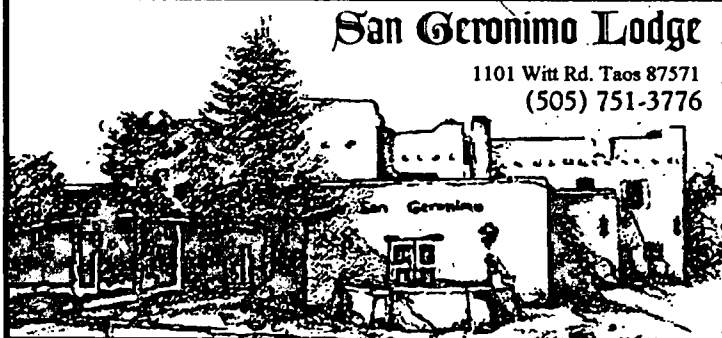
AGUA FRIA NURSERY
Specializing in Native Plants



1409 Agua Fria
Santa Fe 87505-0907
505-983-4831
FAX 505-983-3593
aguafriann@aol.com

San Geronimo Lodge

1101 Witt Rd. Taos 87571
(505) 751-3776



SANTA ANA
GARDEN CENTER
NATIVE PLANTS

Retail

157 Jemez Dam Rd.
Bernalillo NM 87004
(505) 867-1322

Wholesale

2 Dove Rd
Bernalillo NM 87004
(505) 867-1323

**Locally grown perennials, shrubs,
trees, and seasonal vegetables**

The Prez Sez

**Saying goodbye also means saying
hello to new faces**

It is the nature of volunteer organizations that good people in leadership roles eventually grow weary of their tasks and others pick up the responsibility. This process reinvigorates an organization with new ideas and methods.

Such is the recent case of Taos Chapter members **Andy and Sally Wasowski** and that of dear **Mary Whitmore**, former NPSNM President and long active member of the Santa Fe Chapter.

Sally stepped down as chair of our Publications Committee after successfully supervising production of the two most recent NPSNM native plant gardening guides: the Rocky Mountain and Central New Mexico booklets. An experienced and knowledgeable horticultural writer herself, Sally's efforts produced these two beautiful, informative publications that promote the use of New Mexico's native plants in landscaping. Both have proven to be not only popular educational tools but great income producers for the Society and the chapters which are marketing them. We are grateful for Sally's time, knowledge, and creative talent.

After some five years as editor of the NPSNM newsletter, Andy announced that he, too, wished to step down. A talented professional photographer and seasoned editor, he turned our newsletter into an excellent, professionally finished and informative product.

The Wasowskis came to Taos from Dallas where they were active in the Native Plant Society of Texas; Sally was a founding member and served a term as State President, and Andy helped get six new chapters started. Soon after arriving in Taos, they got the Taos Chapter off the ground.

After countless years of service to our organization, Mary Whitmore is also stepping down as Poster Committee Chair. I first met Mary in 1996 when she helped organize a very successful joint meeting of the New Mexico and Texas Native Plant Societies. She inspired me then and continues to do so today with gentle mentoring and a selfless willingness to be of help with any task. If anyone deserves a rest, and our gratitude, it is Mary.

Continued on Page 14



WaterWise Landscapes, Inc.

Drought Tolerant Perennials, Herbs, and Natives
Design, Installation, and Maintenance

J. Hunter Ten Broeck Albuquerque, N.M. 87107
505-344-7508



The Best Selection of
Organic & Gourmet Foods in Taos
Serving our community since 1986

623 Paseo del Pueblo Norte * 758-1148

MOUNTAIN STATES WHOLESAL NURSERY

Serving New Mexico Since 1969

We specialize in:

- New Plant Introductions
- Native Plants
- Contract-growing
- Deliveries throughout New Mexico



P.O. Box 2500
Litchfield Park, AZ
800.840.8509 • 623.247.8509
www.msnw.com



**"Nature is not a place to visit,
it is home."**

Gary Snyder

Check out the
NPSNM Plant Resources
webpage:

[Http://npsnm.unm.edu/merchandise/plant_resources.htm](http://npsnm.unm.edu/merchandise/plant_resources.htm)

PLANTS OF THE SOUTHWEST



Blue grama grass

Native Plants & Seeds

Wildflowers
Drought Tolerant Grasses
Shrubs & Trees
Open-pollinated Vegetables & Chiles
Great Book Selection
Color Catalog

Albuquerque

6680 4th Street, NW
505-344-8830

Santa Fe

3095 Agua Fria
505-438-8888

www.plantsofthesouthwest.com



Blossoms GARDEN CENTER

Native & Xeric Plants & Grasses
*to help you meet the challenges of
High Desert Gardening*

758-1330

Ranchos de Taos, N.M.



BERNARDO BEACH

native and climate-adapted plants

for beautiful easy care gardens

that attract songbirds,
hummingbirds, and butterflies

from our backyard to yours

3729 Arno Street NE

in Albuquerque

open daily March through October

winter hours by appointment

345-6248



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Albuquerque

Meetings at 7 PM in the Pinon Room of Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd, between Eubank & Wyoming in Los Altos Park.

July 7. "Monitoring Rare Plants." Phil Tonne.

August 11-13. NPS State Meeting at the Albuquerque Garden Center

September 1. No formal meeting — Plant Monitoring trips instead.

September 10. Field Trip/Hike through the Blue Hole Cienega. Meet at Blue Hole Spring in Santa Rosa, at 11 AM. To carpool, meet at the Wells Fargo parking lot on the NE corner of Juan Tabo and Central Ave, at 8:30 AM. Call Tiana at 323-1697 before September 7th for up-to-date information.

El Paso, TX

Programs are held every second Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Centennial Museum on the UTEP campus.

July 14. "Local Native and Desert Trees," Oscar Mestas, Texas Forest Service Regional Urban Forester.

September 8. "The Changing Face of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park," John Sproul, Program Coordinator/Manager, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. For more information, call Kathy Reynolds at (915) 592-1705 or e-mail at agustusmc@aol.com.

Gila (Silver City)

Harlan Hall on WNMU Campus.

September 15. 7:00 PM. "Threatened riparian ecosystems along the Gila River and the effect of Salt Cedar on those ecosystems," Kathy Whiteman, who received a grant of \$1,000 from NPSNM.

Santa Fe

July 2. "Cooking with Native Plants," Nancy Daniel and Bob Pennington at Lenora Curtin Wetland Preserve. Call Santa Fe Botanical Garden for directions & info at 505-428-1684 or 505-988-9141. Cost \$7/person, food samples from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

July 31. Field Trip to the Santa Fe Ski Basin Area- Meet at 9:00 AM in main parking lot near the chair lift entrance, easy hike. Call George Cox 505-983-1607 for additional information. Bring plenty of drinking water, snacks and lunch, a hat, sunscreen and good walking shoes.

August 10. Native Plant Day in New Mexico

Otero

July 23. Oshá Trail hike, Hwy 82. Moderate difficulty, less than 2 miles. Meet at trailhead on Hwy 82, across from Mexican Trestle at 8:30 AM. For more info, call Helgi Osterreich, 585-3315.

August 6. Benson Ridge hike. Moderate difficulty, 4 miles. Meet at Sacramento District Ranger Station, Cloudcroft, at 8:30 AM. For more info, call John Stockert at 585-2546.

August 18-21. Otero County Fair. Help man (person?) our booth. Call Debbie Gurnari at 437-0313.

September 3-5. Cottonwood Festival. We may have booth and need your help. Call Helgi Osterreich at 585-3315.

September 24. Railroad Trestle Trail, Cloudcroft. Hike from the restored RR depot to the Mexican Trestle, and back. Meet at depot at 9 AM. For more info, call Helgi at 585-3315.

Farmington Chapter Represented in D.C.

Donna Thatcher will be demonstrating some of the traditional uses of our native plants (dye colors as well as uses for yucca, pinon, juniper and coyote willow) this summer at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., June 23 to July 4th. Donna is an education specialist with the Farmington Museum and director of the Riverside Nature Center. She is also a member of the San Juan Chapter.

Letter to the Editor

On May 25th, I and a friend drove to Bisti-De-Na-Zin Wilderness. The BLM Office said the roads were in good condition and provided me with a map. We saw many colors of *Penstemon angustifolius*, several plants of *P. brevicaulus* in full bloom, some blue-flowered *delphinium*, many *calochortus*, a small orange-flowered flax and many belly-flowers. Pinyon and juniper were quite sparse, but there were many shrubs, including *Purshia tridentata*, which was just coming to the end of its bloom period. I was disappointed that it did not have the fragrance of its relative, *Purshia stansburiana*, which I enjoy in my garden.

There were *opuntia* cacti in bloom, hundreds of small shrub-like plants with creamy-white flowers which I tentatively identified as *Frankenia jamesii*, more *Penstemon angustifolius*, several species of *Eriogonum* not yet in bloom, yucca, and a very puzzling plant, which at first glance looked like a yucca. Feeling the leaves, I knew that was not right. They were thin, without fibers, tapered to a narrow point, and had a very distinctive white edge and ruffling of the edge on some leaves. Then we came to a plant with a tall stem with no leaves that branched several times and had tiny buds at the apex of each branch, much as many *Eriogonums* do.

I assumed it was a Buckwheat until I consulted Ivey's *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* and found there were no such leaves in the *Eriogonum* Family! After much page turning, I realized that it was Utah Elkweed, or *Frasera paniculata*, a plant I will want to see in bloom. Farmington members, I'd like to hear from you more about the Wilderness and if I am wrong about my tentative identifications!

Ellen Wilde ellenw@swcp.com

Prez Sez, cont'd from page 11

Board members were asked to announce the committee vacancies at their Chapter meetings and the newsletter editorship vacancy was duly advertised in the next issue. Frankly, I was dubious of our prospects of finding selfless, hard-working, resourceful people to do these important but, too often, thankless jobs. To my happy surprise, the other half of this equation was revealed: Good people do step forward when needed and the organization moves on.

Gary Runyan, treasurer of the Albuquerque Chapter, volunteered for the Poster Chair position and in doing so will help achieve our goal of centralizing the storage and distribution of NPSNM Wildflower and Cactus posters. He accepted an interim appointment pending official approval by the Board and he and Mary have already initiated the transition.

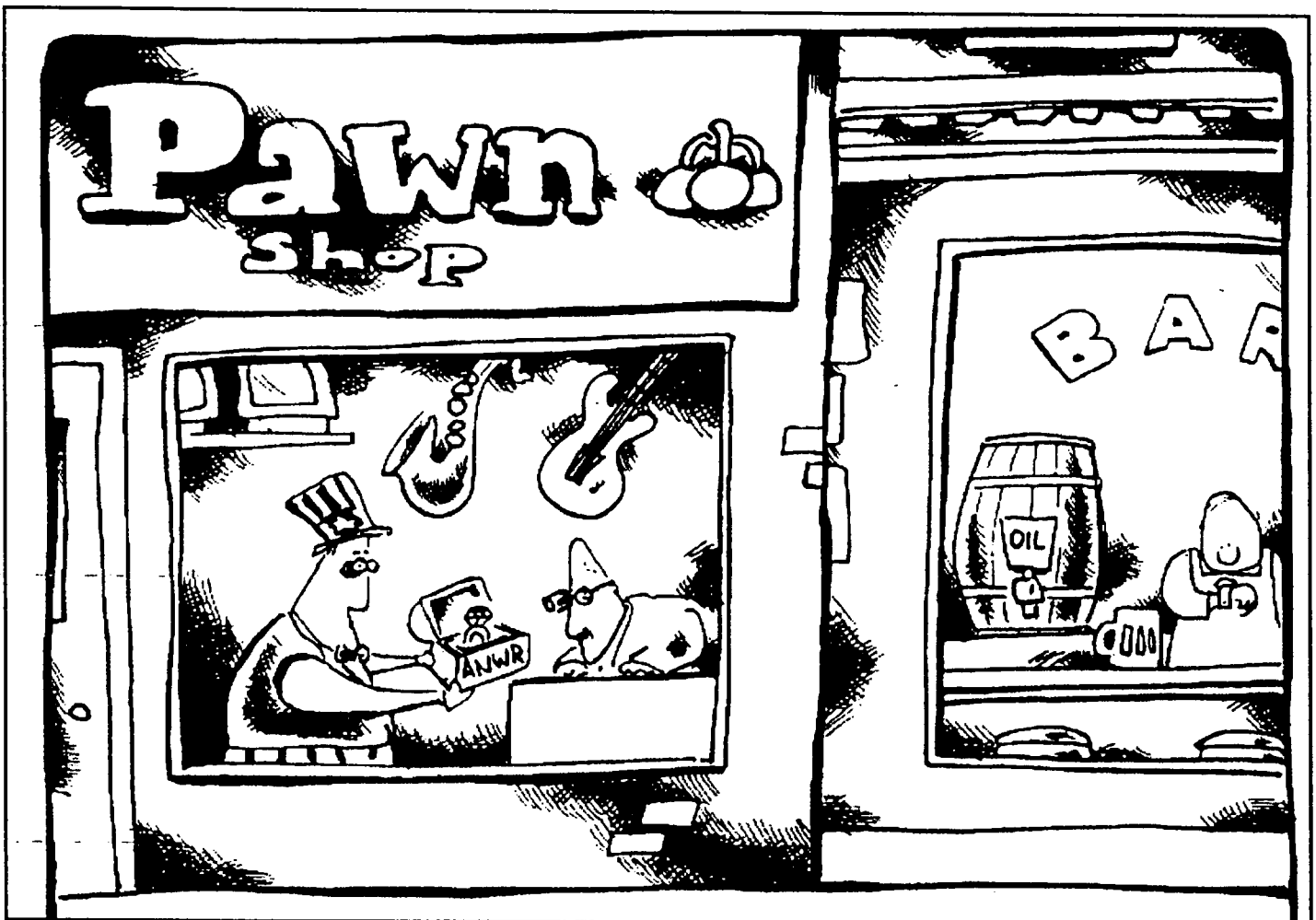
Just as quickly following the newsletter announcement, we received *three* fine applicants for the newsletter editor's position. I was pleasantly

surprised at the quality, experience and enthusiasm these volunteers represented. After difficult deliberations, our final choice was **Renee West**, supervising Biologist with the National Park Service at Carlsbad Caverns and member of the Carlsbad chapter.

But we still need a **Publication Chair** to oversee production of NPSNM educational materials to further our Society's goals of stimulating knowledge of and appreciation for native plants and to preserve and protect native plant communities in our beautiful state.

We also are looking for volunteers with **marketing experience** for an ad hoc committee to advise and assist with new strategies for NPSNM publications and products, and for someone with writing skills to serve as a "public information officer" to prepare and place announcements and articles about Society activities, and to publicize issues important to the health and well being of native plants in New Mexico. **Interested? Call me.**

Wynn Anderson



Sacramento Chapter Native Plant Garden Project

Ruidoso has a beautiful Native Plant Demonstration Garden thanks to members of the Sacramento Chapter. The garden is located at the Nob Hill Early Childhood Education Center.

The Sacramento Chapter began this garden several years ago with generous grants from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico and the Ruidoso School District. Additional 2004 grants from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico and the Parent's Organization of Nob Hill School allowed the Chapter to seed and plant untended areas of the plot. Maintenance will be ongoing, as will filling out and seeding in garden beds as needed.

Several members of the Nob Hill School staff have shown interest in apprenticing in the garden and including student involvement. Signage in the garden and brochures are planned for this year. The community has been invited to view the garden as it develops, promoting an appreciation for local native flora which can be incorporated into the landscapes of private and public spaces.

The Garden Committee was ready for the pre-monsoon Garden Work Day in June 2004 with nursery stock, native seeds, and aspen bark matting on hand.

Nursery stock was purchased from the Otero Chapter, NPSNM, April plant sale and supplied from Mountain States Wholesale Nursery. Native grass and wildflower seed was ordered to supplement that donated by a committee member from his local collections in 2003. All species are native to the Sacramento Mountains.

Nursery stock:

Cercocarpus ledifolius, curl-leaf mountain-mahogany

Fallugia paradoxa, Apache plume

Penstemon barbatus, scarlet penstemon

Penstemon cardinalis, cardinal penstemon

Penstemon pseudospectabilis, perfoliate penstemon

Rhus trilobata, three-leaf sumac

Rosa woodsii, Wood's rose

Salix exigua, sandbar willow

Seed mixes:

Grasses:

Agropyron smithii, western wheatgrass

Bouteloua gracilis, blue grama

Buchloe dactyloides, buffalo grass

Festuca arizonica, Arizona fescue

Koeleria cristata, junegrass

Andropogon scoparius, little bluestem

Andropogon gerardii, big bluestem

Bromus anomalus, nodding brome

Blepharoneuron tricholepis, pine dropseed

Wildflowers, a broad selection, including:

Penstemon neomexicana, New Mexico penstemon

Castilleja sp., Indian paintbrush

Gilia sp.

Iris missouriensis, iris

Asclepias tuberosa, butterfly weed

Gaillardia pulchella, blanket flower

Engelmannia pinnatifida, Engelmann daisy



On The Garden Work Day Chapter volunteers seeded remaining garden beds and planted nursery stock. A plan was ready for placement of nursery stock, and the seeds were mixed on site according to each specific bed. The overall plan of the garden is based on representative vegetation found from lower to higher elevations in Lincoln County. An outline of activities:

Garden Beds

1. Rake and prepare soil in several unplanted beds for seeding with native grass/wildflower seeds. Top seed several established beds to help fill in empty spaces.
2. Sow and rake in seeds.
3. Cover beds with aspen bark matting, cut with heavy scissors to the shape of each bed. Cut matting in each bed to fit around existing shrubs as needed.
4. Secure matting with large nails threaded onto washers, and pound into dirt. Place rocks on top of the matting also were used. #

Have You Registered For The 2005 Annual Meeting?

"Native Plants -- Urban Interaction"

August 11th thru 14th!

Check the April-June Newsletter for full details.
Or contact Beth Herschman at 505-892-2230 or Herschman9@aol.com.

See Ya' in Albuquerque!

**The Native Plant Society of New Mexico
734 North Reymond St
Las Cruces NM 88005
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #946
Las Cruces, NM

***Be sure to check your membership
renewal date on your address label***