



Native Plant Society of New Mexico

NEWSLETTER

July, August, September 2008 Volume XXXIII Number 3

The results are in

NPSNM members and readers speak out

By Sandra D. Lynn

To the best of my knowledge, the survey that appeared on the NPSNM website in November 2007 and was included in the winter 2008 issue of the newsletter was a first. I've been involved with the society since 1988, and I don't recall anything like it. But whether or not it was a first, it seemed important to get feedback from the membership before proceeding with new or revived projects. In a campaign year-and-a-half in which voters are constantly being polled about their political preferences, I was inspired to poll our members about their organizational preferences. And the members participated vigorously: 245 responses came back from the paper and electronic versions of the survey.

But it wasn't just members who replied. The survey was open to anyone, and almost 15% of the respondents identified themselves as non-members. Of the members, the largest number (43%) said they had been members for two to five years.

What we learned and how we can use it

When asked how they would rank the benefits of membership, members said they most appreciated opportunities to learn about wild native plants (56%), opportunities to learn about gardening with native plants (39%), and field trips (30%). These answers came as no surprise, but what did turn out to be a surprise was that participation in

conservation efforts ranked a low 6th, and attending meetings, both local and state level, ranked 7th, dead last. So if you ever wonder in your chapter meetings why more people aren't there, this ranking may help explain it. This finding may also encourage chapter planners to teach their members about native plants by means of field trips and hands-on activities and not always by speakers in meetings. But it is somewhat disconcerting to see the disconnect between members' most valued benefits and conservation. Survey respondents didn't seem to recognize that conservation of native plants is directly related to having the opportunity to learn about them. We won't be out learning to

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From the President

Chick Keller

Where has the time gone? At the beginning of my term I had many grand plans, but only a few of them have been worked on. I've also had lots of great help from many of you, and I'm grateful. Much has happened, and we think change has been for the good of the society.

Yet much more could be done. I had hoped for chapter presidents to communicate with each other more on common efforts and problems, but everyone is busy so that has not happened (although they did have a good exchange at last summer's meeting, and we've scheduled a similar get-together for this coming meeting.) Also we're looking into having a joint meeting with our sister societies in Arizona and Colorado. Ken Heil's upcoming book, *Flora of the Four Corners Region*, is an example of how plants cross state boundaries.

Sandra Lynn, our new administrative assistant, is making a big difference in society activities. She is currently setting up the logistics of our upcoming grass identification workshop in Los Alamos. Already people are registering from state and federal agencies, which shows how NPSNM can be of assistance to these important governmental groups. Perhaps NPSNM ought to discuss other venues to broaden its effectiveness.

The upcoming state meeting will be hosted by the Las Cruces Chapter in late September (partly to avoid summer's heat). It looks like an excellent program, and I urge you all to consider attending.

News—The reprinting of the northern NM booklet (*Southern Rocky Mountain Gardens*) is finished and distributed to Taos, Los Alamos, Albuquerque (thanks to Gary Runyan for picking up the reprints and storing them till I could get them from him), and Santa Fe. With its new title—*Native Gardening in Northern New Mexico: Taos, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and other NM Highlands*—we are hoping for good sales this spring. (It can be purchased on the web and at the Santa Fe and Taos chapter meetings.) We hope this excellent book and its cousins to the south (*Central New Mexico*

Gardens and *Chihuahuan Desert Gardens*) will continue to broaden the number of gardeners wanting to plant natives in our gardens.

Let me once again stress that a major effort of the society is to aid in documenting what and where the plants are. While there has been much work in this area over the years, new plants and new locations/range extensions are being found all the time. With the increased warming over the past few decades it is likely that plants will be moving north, and this needs to be documented. The chapters can enhance this effort simply by being aware of the plants in their areas and looking for changes. Having many eyes on the ground is our strength, because the seasons change too fast, and there are too many locations to be checked for the professionals to cover adequately.

So I urge chapters to discuss efforts that would increase their ability to document what's growing in their regions. For example, the Taos Chapter has (with NPSNM funding) established a modest herbarium into which new collections can go and be available for all to see. From such collections come verifiable plant lists that can be contributed to Kelly Allred and others who are compiling the state list. Besides being satisfying as a contribution, plant study and collection are fun. Every time I go on a plant walk, I find something I'd missed before. All of you can do this too. Plant identification classes can help beginners learn and intermediates to sharpen their skills.

Let us know if the state organization could assist by setting up regional plant ID workshops like the one on grasses mentioned above. It's a good time to get out into the wonderful New Mexico land and enjoy its flora.

For gardening books:

<http://npsnm.unm.edu/books.html>

At The Crossroads
the NPSNM statewide meeting
September 25-28, 2008, in Las Cruces

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, Renée West at:

keywestern@hotmail.com OR:

1105 Ocotillo Canyon Dr., Carlsbad NM 88220

Next Deadline is Sept. 1, 2008

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 cactus poster designed by Lisa Mandelkern. These can be ordered from our Poster Chair or Book Sales representative.

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NPSNM Membership Application

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I (we) wish to affiliate with the checked chapter:

- Albuquerque
- El Paso, TX
- Gila (Silver City)
- Las Cruces
- Otero
- 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, 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

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Survey Results

identify sedges or grasses or cacti if they and their habitats have disappeared.

Another surprising discovery was that more respondents are not using the website than are (54.4% to 45.6%). Several people wrote on their survey forms that they didn't even know we had a website! So I suggested that our capable web editor, Lolly Jones, write an article for the newsletter about the website, and it appeared in the spring issue. I hope it encouraged some members who hadn't explored the website yet to do so. Those who said they are benefiting from the website said they used it most for information about native plants (75.7%).

Similarly, the survey indicated that only a third of the respondents are making use of the email discussion listserv (<http://npsnm.unm.edu/discussion.htm>). Of those who are, however, 61.6% are finding it helpful and/or interesting.

One benefit of the society that almost everyone takes advantage of—91.2%—is the newsletter. All parts of it are used, but articles are the most popular at 87.8%, with schedules of events coming in second at 71.7%. A couple of things we can learn from this result are that:

- if you have something you'd like to say, send Renee West, our hard-working editor, an article. Readers are clamoring for them.
- chapters really need to be sure to send Renee their schedules before the deadline for each issue. Readers do rely on those.

When asked how most respondents would identify themselves, more said "Gardener" than anything else, 73.1%. Just behind that, at 68.3%, was the label "Hiker." Of the survey-takers, 17.2% are professionals: botanists, foresters, ecologists, range scientists, landscapers, and horticulturists.

Numerous suggestions were made for workshops. When I tallied those, I found that the two most often requested were workshops on plant families and identification and on landscaping and gardening with natives. Of the plant families requested, the grass family, Poaceae, was most often listed. I will be working on fulfilling those requests. Many more people were in favor of a one-day, rather than a two-day, workshop. When asked what kinds of programs and presentations people

were interested in, plant identification and taxonomy won out with 75.6%. But almost as many people, 72.9 %, requested presentations on gardening and landscaping with natives or creating backyard habitats. Chapter program planners, take note.

A members-only question on the survey asked for reasons the respondent had ever considered not renewing his/her membership. Comments indicated a variety of concerns: living at too great a distance from meetings and activities to be able to attend easily, being disappointed that advertised activities did not live up to their billing, believing that the organization is not undertaking needed conservation efforts. These were just some of the more frequently mentioned dissatisfactions.

All the graphs and text comments from the survey can be made available to anyone who wants to see them in full detail. The survey was anonymous, so no personal information is revealed in the computer-compiled results. I will certainly be making use of the information gained from the survey, and I hope that the state board of directors and committee chairs, as well as all chapter officers and committee chairs, as well as all chapter officers will follow up on what our members and interested non-members have told us about who they are, why they're paying attention to the Native Plant Society, and what they hope our mutual efforts can provide.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out the survey!

2008 Grants Awarded by Board

The NPSNM Board of Directors awarded \$6,850 in grants for 2008 to the following projects:

- Greenhouse Project at Smokey Bear Historical Park: \$500
- K-12 Science Education Programs for Disadvantaged Students: \$600
- Floristic Survey of Vermejo Park Ranch: \$750
- Interpretive Signs for Wetlands, Santa Fe Botanical Garden: \$1000
- Mapping Upgrade to the NM Biodiversity Collections Consortium Database: \$1,000
- Travel Planning on the Gila National Forest: \$1,000
- Floristic inventory of riparian habitats, Gila River: \$1,000
- Digitalization of Ivey's Illustrations: \$1,000

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

Another reason to abandon lawns...

Ontario to ban lawn pesticide use, Home Depot stops sales

Ontario, Canada, is moving to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals by banning the sale and cosmetic use of pesticides. Legislation introduced on April 23, 2008, would make Ontario's pesticide rules among the toughest in North America. It also replaces a variety of municipal by-laws in place across the province. Studies by public health experts are showing growing evidence of the potential health risk of pesticides, particularly for children.

The ban, which would not affect pesticides used for farming or forestry, would likely take effect next spring. Golf courses would still be able to use pesticides, under certain conditions.

"Our generation is becoming more and more aware of the potential risks in our environment, not only to our health, but to our children's health. That's why we're taking action on behalf of the next generation of Ontarians, and reducing their exposure to chemicals," said Premier Dalton McGuinty.

Groups such as the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Cancer Society have been calling for a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. This new legislation comes after years of petitions from local grassroots movements and health groups to ban all cosmetic use of pesticides across the province because of growing concern about the potential harmful effects of these products on human health. The law would prohibit 80 chemicals and 300 products that experts say pose a potential health risk, including the widely used herbicide, 2,4-D. Similar bans have gone into effect in Toronto and Quebec, and 55 municipalities have also banned cosmetic pesticide use. In the wake of these bans, the Canadian division of Home Depot announced in April that it will stop selling lawn pesticides in its stores by the end of 2008.

—Reprinted with permission from *Pesticides and You*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Spring 2008.

Honorable Mention

NPSNM in the Media

Sivinski featured in *The New Mexican*

NPSNM’s Bob Sivinski was featured in early June in an article by Staci Matlock in *The New Mexican*. Sivinski was recently honored with the 2007 National Recovery Champion Award at the American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference in Phoenix. The award usually goes to people working to preserve the more charismatic vertebrate fauna, not plants.

“Plants really contribute to biodiversity more than vertebrates,” said Sivinski in the article. “There’s five times more plant species, but vertebrates get all the attention.”

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall cited Sivinski’s research and recovery efforts on New Mexico’s 13 federally listed threatened and endangered plants, particularly the Pecos sunflower and the Holy Ghost ipomopsis, in giving him the conservation award.

Sivinski, New Mexico State Forestry botanist, is working to recover and promote the state’s endangered plants and their stories, “like Knowlton’s cactus, named after the bulldozer operator and amateur plant collector who discovered it in San Juan County decades ago.”

This prestigious award recognizes exceptional individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the recovery of native plants and animals federally listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Plant salvage covered in *Wildflower*

NPSNM’s plant salvage efforts along Highway 62/180 south of Carlsbad are featured in the Summer 2008 issue of *Wildflower*, the magazine of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. An article titled “Rooted in Place, Roadside Plant Rescue Honors Desert Plants” by our own Sandra D. Lynn highlights the society’s volunteer effort, supplemented by \$10,000 in funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

“Thanks to the work of volunteers from across the state and from several organizations, 2,430 plants were saved from the bulldozers along the highway corridor,” the article states.

The article highlights work by our conservation chair Jim Nellesen to coordinate the various agencies and chapters participating, and the genetic diversity that the project helped preserve. It states that a few of the plants have been stored for replanting along the right-of-way, but most have gone to public gardens and spaces or sold in public permitted plant sales. It also mentions the Rio Grande Botanic Garden (Dave Ferguson) and New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science (Gary Runyan), both recipients of salvaged plants.

“Besides the obvious value of saving individual plants and their potential genetic contributions, perhaps the most significant result of such a rescue is public education,” the article states.



'Dozers Are Here...

Major construction activities to widen U.S. Hwy. 62/180 are under way south of Carlsbad. But at least we know there are 2,430 plants that were not destroyed in the process, thanks to NPSNM’s salvage efforts last year.

Photo by Renée West

Native Plant Society of New Mexico Annual Meeting

September 25-28, 2008
Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, NM

Register now!

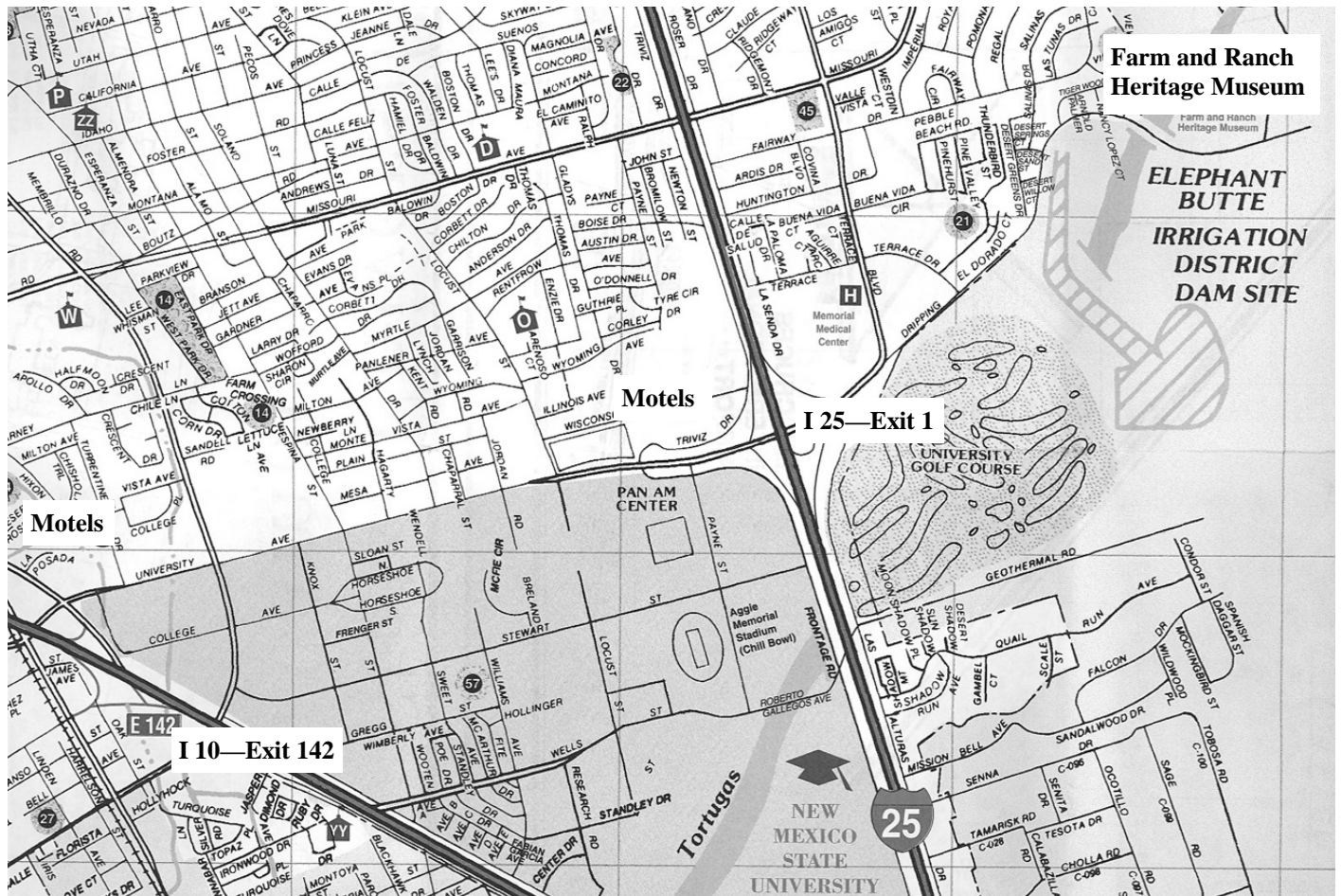
Early registration prices end August 15.
Special conference rates are available at
select hotels must be reserved by July 31.
(Be sure to tell them that you are with the
Native Plant Society.)

If you haven't already made reservations
for the meeting, don't delay! For details,
see the previous issue of this newsletter or
the NPSNM website (click on State
Meetings).

At The Crossroads



Map of Southern Las Cruces



Chapter Activities & Events

Albuquerque

All meetings are first Wednesdays at 7 pm in the multi-purpose room of the Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW. For further information contact Pam McBride, 343-9472, ebotpam@msn.com; or Jim McGrath, 286-8745, sedges@swcp.com.

July 19 walk—Tour of Charlie and Connie McDonald Garden. Meet at 9:30 am in parking lot of shopping center on the SE corner of Tramway and San Rafael NE. (San Rafael is between San Antonio and Paseo Del Norte.)

July 26 walk—to San Gregorio Lakes north of Cuba, NM. Bill Dodson, leader. Meet at SW corner of shopping center parking lot (contains Wild Oats) at the NW corner of San Mateo and Academy, to leave by 9 am.

August 9 walk—Don Heinze leads field trip to the Belen Highline Canal. Meet on north side of Walmart parking lot on east side of Coors Blvd about 0.25 mi. north of I-40.

August 23—Native Plant Society Garden Fair and Plant Sale, Albuquerque Garden Center (10120 Lomas Blvd., between Wyoming and Eubank in Los Altos Park). Jim Brooks from Soilutions will speak on Water Conserving Permaculture and Composting in Your Landscape and Getting Away from Toxic Chemical Use at 1:30 pm.

August 24-30—Open Gardens. The garden of one Albuquerque chapter member will be available for touring each day 8:30 am to noon. List of gardens and day each is available for touring will be available at plant sale Aug. 23.

September 3 talk—Flora of Stewart Meadows. Jim McGrath will discuss the botanical inventory and vegetation map he produced for this site of a riparian restoration project on the floodplain of the Rio San Antonio. The 333-acre site is three miles west of San Antonio Mountain.

September 6 walk—to Stewart Meadows. Jim McGrath, leader. Meet in Smith's parking lot at Carlisle and Menaul at 8 am. 3-3.5 hrs one way. Trip is designed as both a long day trip and as an overnight. Primitive camping is available at Laguna Larga or motel accommodations in Taos or Antonito, CO. Contact Jim McGrath (286-8745) for

additional information.

September 13—Annual monitoring of the Pecos Sunflower population at the Blue Hole Cienega in Santa Rosa. Meet on the west side of the Smith's parking lot at Tramway and Central, to leave by 9 am.

El Paso

All programs are second Thursdays at 7 pm at El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant. All society events are free unless otherwise noted. Non-members are always welcome.

Gila (Silver City)

All programs and hikes are free and open to the public. Meetings are third Fridays at 7 pm at WNMU's Harlan Hall, with refreshments following the program. Hikers meet at 8 am in south parking lot of WNMU Fine Arts Theatre the morning of the hike to arrange carpooling. Participants must sign a release-of-liability form at that time, and will receive a list of native plants in the hiking area For more information, call Deming Gustafson, 575-388-5192. For hikes, bring water, food, hat, sunscreen, hiking shoes.

July 20 walk—Hike up Railroad Canyon, roughly 8 miles east of San Lorenzo on Hwy. 152. (The left turn to parking is abrupt, but is well marked by a big sign.) This hike will give a midsummer insight into the flora of the Black Range, as well as a cooler environment. Expect to see higher-altitude species as well as riparian species of plants. The hike is rated moderate, with some stream crossing.

August 17 walk—to the hills above the Gila Bird Area. Travel northwest on Hwy. 180 about 25 miles, taking the left turnoff to Bill Evans Lake. The Gila Riparian Zone will demand some stops along the way to Pancho Canyon, the actual arroyo ascent into the hills above the river. If the forecast for a good monsoon in the area pans out, this could be one of the more unusual areas of discovery. The hike is rated easy.

September 19 talk—"A Beginner's Guide to Ferns in the Gila Wilderness" by Dr. Russ

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Chapter Activities & Events

Kleinman, a local surgeon and an accomplished botanist with a contagious enthusiasm for plants and a special passion for ferns. In recent years he has studied the flora of the Burro Mountains, put together an outstanding website featuring our local flora (www.gilaflorea.com), and co-led a workshop on the Asteraceae.

September 21 walk—to Spirit Canyon to wrap up the season's field trips. Travel north on Hwy. 35 that runs through Mimbres. Parking is a couple miles northwest of the Continental Divide and not well marked, on the left (south) side of highway. In addition to late-summer plants and foliage, this hike offers an extra: prehistoric pictographs on canyon walls not far up from the parking area. The hike is rated easy to moderate, with arroyo-bottom negotiations subject to seasonal changes.

Las Cruces

Meetings and programs are Wednesdays at 7 pm in the conference room of the Social Center at the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las Cruces. (On the right, while traveling east on Buena Vida from Telshor.) Field trips are Saturdays. Where and when vary; check each listing. Most field trips extend into the afternoon. Bring lunch, water, sun protection, plant field guides, and wear good walking shoes. Participants must sign a release of liability form. Children must be accompanied by their parents. Programs and field trips are free, and non-members are always welcome. Contacts: president Ray Bowers 575-541-1877; vice-president Carolyn Gressitt 575-523-8413; state rep. Al Krueger 575-532-1036.

July 9 talk—"Butterflies" by Greg Forbs.

July 12 walk—to the Sacramento Mountains to study butterflies and plants with Greg Forbs. Meet at 8 am at K-mart parking lot on Hwy 70 to carpool.

August 13 talk—"Plant Families II." Ray Bowers will lead a series of talks on a new set of plant families. Call Ray if you would like to give a 15-minute presentation on a plant family.

August 16—Assist with Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park plant project. Meet at park at 8 am.

September 26-28—We will be hosting the NPSNM state meeting.

October 8 talk—Dr. Lou Bender will be talking about what plants deer eat.

October 11 walk— We will be going to the Organ Mountains to see what deer eat, as well as other plants. Meet at east end of Rio Grande Bank parking lot at the corner of University and Telshor at 8 am to carpool.

Otero (Alamogordo)

For field trip information, contact Eric Metzler, metzler@msu.edu, 575-443-6250; or William Herndon, laluzlobo@gmail.com, 575-437-2555. Information should be available by the beginning of each month.

June 21 walk—Field trip to Atkinson Canyon led by William Herndon. Meet at 8:30 am at intersection of N. Florida and Hwy 82.

July 12 walk—Otero Chapter will join Las Cruces Chapter for a field trip to the Sacramento Mountains to look at butterflies. If the national forest is still closed at that time, an alternative venue will be announced. Details about meeting time will be sent out to members, or call for information, as above.

August 13-16. Booth at the Otero County Fair. Volunteers are needed to help.

August 30—New Mexico Native Plant Day. We will have native plant talks and refreshments at the group shelter at Oliver Lee State Park in Dog Canyon starting at 9 am.

September 26-28—New Mexico Native Plant Society annual meeting in Las Cruces.

San Juan (Farmington)

Meetings are third Thursdays at 7 pm at San Juan Community College. For more information call Les Lundquist at 505-326-7194.

Santa Fe

'Native Plant Summer' is offered by the Santa Fe Botanical Garden & Santa Fe Chapter of NPSNM. Workshops individually are \$12 for SFBG or NPSNM members, \$15 for non-members. Workshop series is \$30 for SFBG or NPSNM members, \$40 for non-members. Nature walks are no charge. Call the Santa Fe

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Chapter Activities & Events

Botanical Garden office to register 505-428-1684, or email bot_gardens@sfcnm.edu

June 28 walk—Summer Nature Walk with naturalist Nancy Daniel, 9:30 am to noon at Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve.

July 19 walk—Native Plant walk at Holy Ghost Trail in the Pecos Wilderness. For details, directions, or car pooling, call Tom Antonio 505-690-5105 or Carol Johnson 505-466-1303.

July 26—“Aquatics, Exotics, and Comps: Plant identification and much more.” Identify invasive exotics in your garden, learn about the largest plant family, the composites and get to know plants that thrive in a wetland. Featuring Chick Keller & George Cox, 9 am to noon.

August 9—“Pressing, Sketching and Picture Taking.” Morning session 9 am-noon at College of Santa Fe: Creating herbarium specimens with Dr. Thomas Antonio; botanical drawing with Dorothy Hoard: Landscape photography with Andrew Neighbour. Afternoon session 1:30-3 pm at Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve: In the field; plant pressing, drawing and photography.

August 30— Take a walk on New Mexico Native Plant Day. Morning walk at Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve, afternoon at Santa Fe Ski Basin.

Taos

Meetings are second Wednesdays at 7 pm at San Geronimo Lodge. For more information on field

trips and other activities, contact David Witt, 575-758-0619, or davidlwitt@cybermesa.com. NOTE: We have an exciting roster of field trips planned; dates are pending. Check web link for this chapter to get updates. Chapter members will get e-mail or USPS mail notification.

July 9 talk—“Architecture and Plants: An Arranged Marriage” by Judith Phillips, acclaimed author and landscape designer.

July 12—Baca Park Habitat Restoration Project 9 am-noon. Potluck picnic to follow. Contact Judy Lister, glister@newmex.com or 776-1183.

July 13 walk—Field trip to Ft. Burgwin, the SMU campus in Taos. Dr. John Ubelaker will lead this popular hike to study the native ecology and restoration of this rich landscape. Contact John, ubelaker@mail.smu.edu or 758-8322.

August 3 walk—Italianos Canyon field trip with Dr. John Ubelaker. A hike of moderate difficulty to observe and discuss the native plants of the Canadian zone. Contact John, ubelaker@mail.smu.edu or 758-8322.

August 14-17—The Mycological Society's Annual Foray is in Taos this year. People can get information at their web site: <http://mycowest.org>.

August 23-24—Community outreach at the Taos County Fair. NPSNM-Taos members man an informational booth, distribute chapter literature, and are available to answer questions about native plants. Contact Sallie Hoops, taos800@aol.com or 776-0860.

September 10 talk—“Native Bugs Love Native Plants” by Carol Sutherland, PhD., Colorado state entomologist.

Rare opportunity to camp at Valles Caldera! See the uncommon Bog Birch!

Restoration project August 15-17 in beautiful Valles Caldera

See the earth shake underfoot as you walk across the bog (hydrosol). Smell the fumes of Purgatory (sulphur gas bubbling up through opal-colored acidic pools). See bears, elk, deer, and wild turkey. Work hard. Feel good.

Help build 3 exclosures to keep elk from browsing bog birch (*Betula glandulosa*). Arrive in camp August 15, work August 16-17. Space is limited; advance signup required. Contact Gene Tatum at 505-255-1960 or gtatum3@msn.com

Sponsored by Albuquerque Wildlife Federation, Bill Zeedyk,
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance & Native Plant Society of New Mexico,
with support from New Mexico Environment Department & Los Amigos de Valles Caldera.

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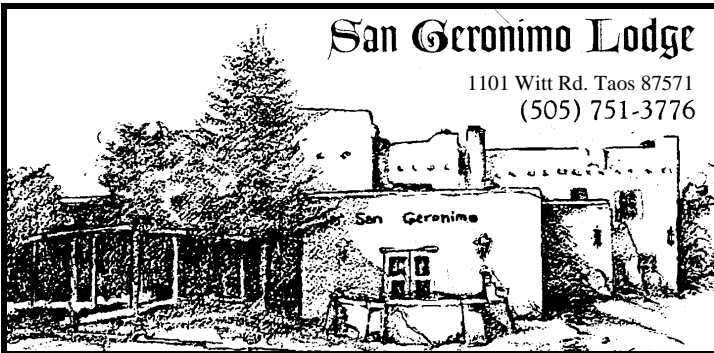
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Reviewed by Virginia Burris

Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens

Book by Douglas Tallamy
Timber Press, 2007

“[This] is a grassroots solution to the extinction crisis...success is up to each one of us individually. ...we have never been so empowered—and the ecological stakes have never been so high.”

I love this book. As soon as I opened *Bringing Nature Home*, I started learning about my passion—habitat landscaping. As I read, I highlighted the most important messages and soon realized more than a fifth of every page was being covered in florescent yellow highlighter!

Habitat landscaping, alien plants, native plants, biodiversity, landscape styles, extinction of species plant and animal, change in what is acceptable in landscape styles, native insects, alien insects, a new role gardens can take, what is acceptable as a beautiful garden, a sense of place, holes chewed in garden plants—these all come together in this book on how native plants can sustain wildlife in our gardens and why this is so critically important.

Tallamy’s many important points add up to a “common theme: we humans have disrupted natural habitats in so many ways and in so many places that the future of our biodiversity is dim unless we start to share the places in which we live—our cities and, to an even greater extent, our suburbs—with the plants and animals that evolved there; that insects are the most important herbivores in our suburban ecosystem in terms of passing energy from plants to other animals; and that if we use plants that evolved with our local animal communities as a foundation of our landscapes, we may be able to save much of our biodiversity from extinction.”

All is not lost. Tallamy is optimistic about several areas. First, it is not too late if we act now to save the plants and animals of the ecosystems humans

(Continued on page 13)




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(Continued from page 12)

Book Review

depend on. Second, restoring native plants to most of the human-dominated landscapes by changing the way we landscape is easy to do. Tallamy uses this book to make the case for liberal use of native plants in a landscape. He does this in a very interesting, clear style with no holds barred. After reading this book, I understand why he does not soften his message. It is too serious and too important. And he presents a solution. It is a solution that the Native Plant Society can easily and successfully focus on. We members of the society have a head start in understanding why and how to use native plants since we are already interested in native plants.

To start with, he describes the huge problem of invasive alien plants, many which have been brought to our country as ornamentals to be used in our home gardens. This is well known, but did you realize that woody vines like bittersweet, trumpet vine, and even the native woodbine, are overgrowing and destroying our eastern forests? The forests have been broken into smaller sections, tiny habitat islands, that create many more edges of light than what was natural. This allows more woody vines to germinate, grow, and outcompete native trees simply by covering young trees and breaking them with their weight.

He points out that little attention has been drawn to how we have destroyed well over 70 percent of our own temperate forests on the eastern seaboard. Compare this to the destruction of the Amazon basin, where 15 percent, not 70, has been logged. Our enormous land mass that had harbored such rich biodiversity has been cut into tiny habitat islands.

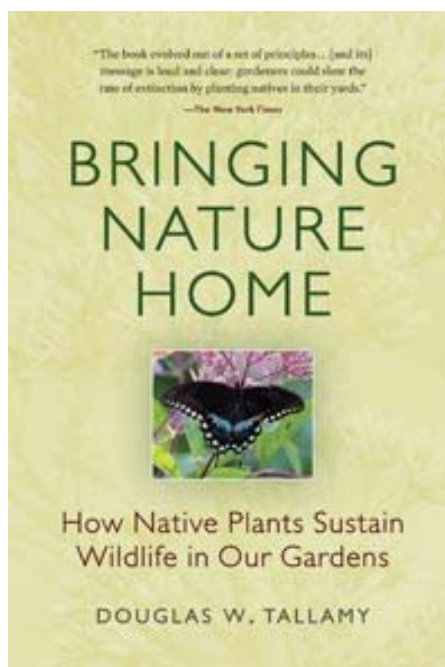
Alien plants are destructive in another often unrecognized way. Many alien plants produce chemicals in their leaves that cannot be digested by our native chewing insects. Alien plants do not provide food for them. The native chewing insects die from lack of food. And these native insects are an invaluable food source for nesting birds.

Tallamy points out that birds need insect fats and proteins when they are nesting and feeding their young. Non-native plants often supply nectar in the spring and fruits and seeds in the fall. But most significant is that they may supply only a fourth of

the insect biomass so critical to successful nesting.

Appendix 3 contains Tallamy's unpublished research showing that "native plants produce over four times more insect biomass than alien plants produce. This difference resulted entirely from the inability of insects with chewing mouthparts to eat alien plants." He also found when "comparing Lepidoptera [moth and butterfly] larvae produced on native and alien woody plants, native plants supported 35 times more caterpillar biomass, the preferred source of protein for most bird nestlings, than alien plants supported."

Tallamy underscores the importance of transitioning to the use of native plants. "There are simply not enough native plants left in the 'wild' to



support the diversity of wildlife most of us would like to see survive into the distant future."

My idea of a beautiful garden has slowly evolved to that of an exciting garden that includes wildlife as well as plants. This book has given me support that I am on the right

track. 'Perfect,' bug-free gardens are no longer a place of beauty but of boredom and a waste of space. Not only that, but I now realize I can contribute to the preservation of biodiversity.

In Tallamy's more far-reaching terms, this is "a new concept of 'reconciliation ecology' or redesigning human habitats for the accommodation of other species. A central role in its success is the use of native plants in the landscapes in which we live."

Using native plants instead of aliens is a win/win idea. We in New Mexico keep saying that we want a "sense of place." Tallamy gives us the perfect solution—use our native plants! At the same time, we will be providing habitat that local native wildlife can use to survive. How can we beat that!

Reviewed by Jack Carter

The World Without Us

Book by Alan Weisman

Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, 2007

Back in my teaching days I always found the answers I would receive from the students to my “what if” questions most exciting. What if all the monocots disappeared from the earth tomorrow? What if the blue-green bacteria were destroyed and disappeared from the oceans tomorrow? The answers to these questions demanded considerable thought, some reasoning, and their answers could not be regurgitated from the textbook or the lecture.

On about page four of his new book Alan Weisman asked the toughest “what if” question I could imagine: What if tomorrow all the *Homo sapiens* disappeared from the planet? I can't say I have not imagined what it might be like to reduce the human population to a half or a third of today's 6.3 billion, or to have been the first person to ever hike into the Gila National Forest long before it was identified as such. In driving through Albuquerque I have many times wished to be confronted by half as many vehicles. But what if all of us disappeared in the blink of an eye? Would any of the remaining plants, animals, or microbes miss us? Certainly our domesticated friends would be left between a rock and a hard place.

If we want structures to last, does it make good sense to build homes and public buildings based on the lowest bid? How long would your home last without perpetual upkeep? What would be in the place where you live if you were not there? Would some aspects of the earth miss us just a little if we were not around?

Not only does the author raise these questions, but he traveled to the far corners of the earth seeking answers to his “what if” questions. Most of the first 16 short chapters take us to locations where interviews and objective descriptions answer some questions, and to where I personally would like to

have been along for the ride.

The results of his findings leave us asking a much larger question. What has humankind ever done to improve the quality of life for other organisms and for planet earth? Or have we always assumed all other living organisms and living systems exist strictly for *Homo sapiens*? In reading these several chapters, it almost appears that if humans actually did improve the quality of life for other species, it occurred by mistake, or in so doing we had ulterior motives. In many situations we jumped into an activity without knowing the long-term answer to the “what if” questions.

One fascinating story addresses how establishing the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea has left us with an area 151 miles long and 2.5 miles wide where few if any people dare to travel. Consequently, since 1953, as a result of a questionable war, we have by sheer accident established an extensive wildlife refuge that another war will only destroy. Razor wire and landmines protect what has become a natural area for thousands of wild species that might have been destroyed had the DMZ not been established.

The chapter on polymers tells a deadly story of how the “throwaway society” simply cannot throwaway most of the plastic products produced since 1945. Here we are including polystyrene (Styrofoam), acrylic textiles, Plexiglas, polyethylene bottles, self-clinging wrappers, and the list goes on. We simply never asked the “what if” question before we started the production of many of these products that are destroying the phytoplankton of our oceans which feed much of the pyramid of marine life. Plastics will be around long after we and many of the other large mammals

(Continued on page 14)



Native Plant Society of New Mexico Election of Officers

The election for Officers of the Society takes place July 1-Aug. 15, 2008. Results will be announced Sept. 25 at the Board of Directors meeting held in conjunction with the annual state meeting. The two-year terms begin then. The Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors has nominated these candidates:

President: Thomas Antonio

Santa Fe Chapter. Currently state Vice President and chapter President. Associate Professor of Botany at the College of Santa Fe.

Vice President: Renee West

Currently state Newsletter Editor. Chief biologist at Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Recording Secretary: Pam McBride

Albuquerque Chapter. Currently chapter President and an NPSNM member for 8 years. A paleoethnobotanist.

Membership Secretary: Lolly Jones

Albuquerque Chapter. Currently NPSNM Website Editor. NPSNM member for over 10 years.

Treasurer: Stephen Robertson

Taos Chapter. Currently State Treasurer. Long experience with accounting and investments.

Election ballot on next page

(Continued from page 13)

The World Without Us

are in the fossil records.

The story of Chernobyl, the destruction of two Japanese cities to close out World War II, and Denver's Rocky Flat Arsenal brings up the questions of the hazards in the storing of the residues of uranium and plutonium that have a half-life of 24,000 years. Practically every country in the world is making plans to bury these substances in some type of a landfill, either in their country or in another nation. At the same time, protecting humans from coming in contact with this radioactive material requires continuous safeguards, with thousands of trained employees standing guard in perpetuity. "What if" humans suddenly departed?

Weisman makes clear that the earth has the ability to self-heal, with or without us, but it becomes obvious that in most situations living conditions for most other organisms would improve more rapidly without humankind.

The book has been described in several other

reviews as narrative nonfiction at its very best and I fully agree. The multitude of descriptions of real earth examples results in the reader wanting to study the next example and consider the outcome.

Like all other species, our time is limited on earth, but we do have time to ask another set of "what if" questions. What if for the next several years we all planted one, two, or more native plant species on our property or in our public lands? What if every young married couple decided to produce only one child? What if each of us contributed 10 percent of our income to those organizations that promote a higher quality of life for all living things, including the earth's flora?

This is a must-read book for people of all ages who have ever considered the future of our small planet. It belongs along side *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold; *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson; *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection* by Charles Darwin; *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* by E. F. Schumacher; *Living Within Limits* by Garrett Hardin; and *On Human Nature* by Edward O. Wilson.

NPSNM BALLOT -- Election of Officers 2008

(Candidate information on previous page)

This ballot may be duplicated for use by any NPSNM member. Only one ballot per member. All ballots must be signed or enclosed in a signed envelope by the voting member. Only one vote for each position is allowed.

President: Committee Nominee, Thomas Antonio _____
Write-in _____

Vice President: Committee Nominee, Renee West _____
Write-in _____

Recording Secretary: Committee Nominee, Pam McBride _____
Write-in _____

Membership Secretary: Committee Nominee, Lolly Jones _____
Write-in _____

Treasurer: Committee Nominee, Stephen Robertson _____
Write-in _____

Voter eligibility certification: I am a current member of NPSNM. Signed _____

Ballots must be returned by August 15 to:

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