

NEW MEXICO'S VOICE FOR NATIVE PLANTS



NEWSLETTER

of the

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
OF NEW MEXICO

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2015

VOL. XXXX NO. 1



Gaillardia aristata, great blanket flower:
a great one for attracting wildlife to your yard.

Read more about planting with natives, pages 10–11.

Photo: WNMU Dept. of Natural Sciences & Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium

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From the President

by *Barbara Fix*

Continuity, change, and challenges—these are all constants in our lives and our communities and our world. Scientists predict continuing and, with the rise of temperatures, deepening drought for our region, though some of us may get respite occasionally with an El Niño. Other human threats to our native plants and their habitats include the decision of the NM Interstate Stream Commission to commit to the billion-dollar diversion of the Gila River rather than engage in conservation projects to protect that last major free-flowing river in our state. And after a court upheld the NM State Engineer's rejection of the speculative transfer of billions of gallons of groundwater out of the San Augustin basin, the Italian developer has, with no substantial changes, made another application for that water. Statewide, massive flooding has followed unprecedented wildfires.

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico has an important role to play. As a relative newcomer to the state organization, I marvel at how much NPSNM has done. The state board, composed of representatives from the eight chapters and three officers, has been active and engaged. (Two board positions remain unfilled—vice president and membership secretary; please contact me if interested!) The board's goal is to have a stable, well-oiled administrative structure that provides the necessary backup for the many volunteer projects of the state and chapters. Our bookkeeping functions have been consolidated, with Deb Farson taking over bookkeeping from Kym Anderson, for whose many hours of volunteer work we owe a debt of gratitude. John White has done, and continues to do, yeoman service as our treasurer.



Bob Sivinski has once again stepped up to the plate by taking over moderating the NPSNM discussion group. The chapters have been active in projects such as Albuquerque's booth at the STEM conference, Otero's grant program, Santa Fe's rare cholla planting, Taos's native plant greenhouse, and more.

Our challenge is in magnifying the efforts of our volunteers to the greatest extent possible. Collaboration has become a byword that can have real meaning. Most of us belong to other nonprofits that share NPSNM's conservation and education interests. Let's think about how we can help each other. And let's think about how to make volunteering for NPSNM an enjoyable part of life. A good place to have that conversation will be at our winter board meeting—Saturday, February 7, at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge north of Socorro. Read more about that below. ❖

BYOT (Bring Your Own Telescope)

by *Barbara Fix*

Actually, you don't have to, but by all means bring one if you've got it. Please join us Friday evening, February 6, for a potluck dinner and star party at beautiful Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. This is the site of our annual board meeting—to which you are welcome as well—to be held the next day, with Sunday reserved if we don't finish up in one day. A Sevilleta tradition is that many folks go to a Socorro restaurant for Saturday dinner. For Friday we're trying something new. Bring your own drinks and a dish to share. Sevilleta's telescope will be available to us that evening, and with a little luck we'll have crystal-clear skies.

Staying at Sevilleta is always a treat. The accommodations are comfortable and it's beautiful there. It's a very large wildlife refuge that ranges from wetlands to foothills, with hiking trails and much botanical interest. Housing arrangements need to be confirmed, but likely to be available are 17 single rooms, which can serve 34 people doubled up. Please let me know as soon as possible if you want a single or are willing to share a room. Housing priority goes to board members, committee chairs, and chapter officers.

Come enjoy Sevilleta with us. See your NPSNM board in action. Share your thoughts with us. And have a good time. You can contact me at baafix@earthlink.net or 505/989-8654.

Hope to see you there! ❖

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to consider including
NPSNM in their wills.

For further information,
call Barbara Fix at 505/989-8654.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Issues Worth Watching

by Rachel Jankowitz, NPSNM Conservation Committee Chair

Santa Rosa Update

The Blue Hole Cienega in Santa Rosa was the subject of a 2011 Conservation Corner article by Jim McGrath (www.npsnm.org/pdfs/Newsletter_Oct11.pdf), in which he described the role of former NPSNM president Bob Sivinski in recognizing the wetlands' botanical value, particularly as habitat for the endangered Pecos sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*). Sivinski's efforts were instrumental in obtaining title to the property for the state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. The update below, provided by Daniela Roth, NPSNM member and Endangered Plant Program Coordinator for EMNRD, lets us know about recent conservation activity at the Santa Rosa wetlands. In ad-

dition, readers may wish to look up an article in the *Santa Rosa Communicator* newspaper, dated September 8, 2014, about participation by the City of Santa Rosa in conserving the wetlands. The article explains that protecting a second location in the same general area would complete the last step in the Pecos sunflower's federal recovery plan, and possibly lead to its delisting as an endangered species.

with herbicides to prevent resprouting. The 20-acre parcel is fully fenced and a locked gate was installed to prevent unauthorized entry. The City Cienega is one of New Mexico's last natural cienega wetlands, supporting a great diversity of uniquely adapted native wetland plant species. Located below the Santa Rosa rodeo grounds, it is host to one of a few remaining stands of the Pecos sunflower, which is listed as threatened with extinction under the Endangered Species Act and is also a state endangered plant. In addition, the City Cienega provides habitat for two other state endangered plant species—the Wright's marsh thistle (*Cirsium wrightii*) and the Great Plains ladies tresses (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*). The project was made possible by a grant from the US



Pecos sunflowers doing well in 2014 at the Blue Hole Cienega Preserve in Santa Rosa, NM.



Pecos sunflower encroached by Russian olives at the City Cienega in Santa Rosa, NM.

Daniela writes:

In 2014 the New Mexico State Forestry Division's Rare and Endangered Plant Program has worked in cooperation with the City of Santa Rosa to remove invasive Russian olives and salt cedar from approximately 20 acres of city-owned property to protect and restore habitat of the endangered Pecos sunflower. The Forestry Division partnered with the City to remove invasive plants from the site during the last two weeks of September. Inmate work crews provided by the Forestry Division cut the trees and spot-treated the stumps

Fish and Wildlife Service for the restoration and recovery of the Pecos sunflower. The Forestry Division looks forward to continuing to work with the community and the City of Santa Rosa to help protect the unique wetlands in the Santa Rosa area and to maintain and enhance Pecos sunflowers and their habitat.

Pecos sunflowers also grow on a 116-acre tract of state-owned land directly south of Blue Hole Park. The land was purchased in 2005 by New Mexico State Forestry from a private land owner in order to preserve the wetland and the endangered plant species that grow there. The Forestry Division subsequently removed large stands of Russian olives and salt cedars from Blue Hole Cienega using prescribed fires as well as cutting and spot-treating stumps with herbicides. In 2013 and 2014 the preserve was again treated for resprouting invasive Russian olives and salt cedars. In June

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The Newsletter of the NPSNM

January–March 2015. Vol. 40 No. 1. This newsletter is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico (PO Box 35388, Albuquerque, NM 87176) and is free to members. The NPSNM, a nonprofit organization, 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.

Next deadline is March 1, 2015. Articles and high-resolution artwork supporting the NPSNM's mission are welcomed and can be sent to the editor, Sarah Johnson, at sarita@gilnet.com, or PO Box 53, Gila, NM 88038.

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and would prefer a hard-copy, please notify
Deb Farson at nativeplantsNM@gmail.com.**

Mission The Native Plant Society of New Mexico (NPSNM) is a non-profit organization that strives to educate the public about native plants by promoting knowledge of plant identification, ecology, and uses; fostering plant conservation and the preservation of natural habitats; supporting botanical research; and encouraging the appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land, and wildlife.

Conservation Corner *(continued from p. 3)*

of 2013 a large hailstorm substantially reduced the population of sunflowers on Blue Hole Cienega. In response to this decline the Endangered Plant Program established a monitoring program that aims to document population trends over time. In 2014 the population rebounded, producing vigorous stands of sunflowers throughout the preserve.

Citizen Science

Here is an opportunity to help the environment from the comfort of your home computer! The Playa Lakes Joint Venture is seeking participants for a citizen science project. The mission of the PLJV is to conserve the playas, prairies, and landscapes of the western Great Plains through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people. The Playa Modifications Assessment is a citizen science project that uses publicly available data to collect vital information about the ecological condition of playas throughout the western Great Plains. Scientists will use this information to better understand how playa habitats support wildlife populations, and resource managers can use it to design more effective conservation programs that meet the needs of both people and wildlife. With 80,000 potential playa basins to evaluate, PLJV has decided to crowd-source the effort.

Playas are shallow ephemeral lakes and occur over approximately a 36.2-million-acre region that stretches from southwestern Kansas to the Llano Estacado of eastern New Mexico and the Texas panhandle. Playa watersheds are closed drainages, with the playa bottom the lowest point in the watershed. They are filled by precipitation rather than a groundwater connection. Hence, due to the infrequent and localized nature of rain on the prairies, their hydroperiod (temporal pattern of flooding and dryness) is highly variable. Playa bottoms are covered with a hydric clay soil that swells and holds water when wetted. As they dry, these soils develop cracks, which become channels for aquifer recharge. They are especially significant because much of the surrounding

environment is underlain by impermeable caliche, a layer of calcium carbonate cement leached out of the soil. Playas are the most important source of recharge for the Ogallala aquifer. The Ogallala yields about 30% of the groundwater used for irrigation in the United States. Agricultural withdrawals from the Ogallala exceed recharge and aquifer depletion has been accelerating.

Much of what is known about playa ecology comes from the work of David A. Haukos, currently a professor at Kansas State University. Dr. Haukos studied playa vegetation ecology for his dissertation at Texas Tech University. Along with L. M. Smith, he authored a lovely book called



Rorippa sinuata, a common member of the playa plant community.
Photo: WNMU Dept. of Natural Sciences & Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium

Common Flora of the Playa Lakes (1997, TTU Press). The book is in print, readily available, and features a color photo guide and detailed descriptions of 72 plant species most frequently associated with playas. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has a nice page of playa ecology information. If you are interested and can't manage to navigate to the right page, contact me at NPSNMconservation@gmail.com and I'll send the link (it's a very long URL).

The region was originally short- and mid-grass prairie, but is now one of the most agriculturally impacted areas of the United States. Because the playas are relatively isolated from one another, seed dispersal is limited (wind and birds are possible dispersal mechanisms); therefore, the composition of the vegetation that responds to intermittent wetting depends mostly on what is present in the seed bank. The seed bank is



An aerial photo shows playas in grassland in Lea County, New Mexico.

Photo: Playa Lakes Joint Venture

Continued page 12

NPSNM DOLLARS AT WORK

Thank You from the Taos Chapter

by Claudia Bianca, Taos Chapter

In 2014 the Taos chapter received a donation from the NPSNM for a greenhouse cover redesign to better adapt for native plant propagation.

This is an update on what we did with our donation.

We wish to thank the Board for this donation. The new cover will allow us many more years of putting native plants out into our community. ❖



We took the old top off our greenhouse . . .



. . . cut some vents into the peak for even more airflow . . . wrapped the pipe frame of the greenhouse in yellow baseball fence tubing to keep it from rubbing.



Notice the slit midway down the length. It allows us to roll up the bottom five feet of the cover for even more airflow, which will harden up our seedlings.



Quite a change, don't you think?

NPSNM DOLLARS AT WORK

Plant It! Cactus Adoption and Native Plant Day

by Rink Somerday, Program Coordinator, Asombro Institute for Science Education

What do you get when you combine a brisk March morning, a drive into the desert, a grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, and a trailer full of rescued cactus ready to be adopted? The answer is a fun, educational event held by the Asombro Institute for Science Education at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park in Las Cruces.

"We've wanted to host a public event focused on native plants for years," said Asombro's executive director, Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer. "When I saw all the people out learning and enjoying the desert that day, it was clear that this event fit perfectly with our mission of increasing scientific literacy."

"Plant It! Cactus Adoption and Native Plant Day," held March 1, 2014, was attended by more than 80 people, who participated in seven activity stations. These stations included a booth hosted by NPSNM Las Cruces chapter members, who answered questions, handed out information, and invited visitors to join their group.

Jack and Martha Carter were in attendance to chat with and teach people all about native New Mexico plants. Visitors also had an opportunity to purchase the Carters' book *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*.

Other activity booths included Plant Bingo, where kids of all ages got to play a bingo game while learning how to identify some of the most common desert plants. At the Dichotomous Key Booth, visitors learned how to use a dichotomous key (a tool scientists use to identify a plant or animal) by using plastic lizards. They then examined real dichotomous keys (including the Carters' book) to help identify desert plants.

The youngest participants enjoyed making a simple book with samples of creosote bush and honey mesquite as well as drawings of fishhook barrel cactus and ocotillo. In addition, Doña Ana County Master Gardeners helped visitors with their gardening questions.

While everyone en-

joyed the activity booths, the cactus adoption was the highlight of the event. Participants could "adopt" a rescued cactus, either to plant at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park or in their own yards. In December 2013, Asombro board president and El Paso Cactus and Rock Club member Justin Van Zee helped rescue 100 cacti from an area slated for development in El Paso. We provided adopters with extensive care sheets for each species as well as a brochure developed by the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club on laws about cactus harvesting on public lands. Visitors who chose to have their adopted cactus placed at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park received a photo and GPS coordinates of "their" cactus. We encouraged them to return to the Nature Park often to visit it.

Ann Matson, a participant at the event, said, "It was a fun day. I always enjoy visiting the Nature Park. And to get a cactus that is a local and to learn how to care for it was wonderful. My adopted cacti are doing great, and I can't wait for them to bloom next summer."

In July 2014, Asombro hosted a teacher workshop (funded by the National Science Foundation) for 15 teachers from Las Cruces, Deming, and El Paso. Asombro staff shared information and resources that had been developed for the Plant It! day. Teachers also learned they could borrow class sets of the Carters' book, donated to Asombro for this purpose. Two teachers borrowed books during the fall semester.

The Asombro Institute for Science Education is grateful to the NPSNM for their ongoing support of science education. We are proud to partner with such a dedicated, knowledgeable group of people. ❖



Justin Van Zee plants one of the adopted cacti at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park.



A visitor plays Plant Bingo.

Chapter Activities & Events

For further information on the following events, notify the contact person listed, or visit the chapter's web page: First go to www.npsnm.org; click on Local Chapters; then

Albuquerque

All scheduled monthly meetings are normally the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the NM Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW. For more info on programs contact Jim McGrath at 505/286-8745 or sedges@swcp.com.

Jan 7 Meeting. Landscaping with Native Plants Adapted to the Three Eco-Regions of Albuquerque. George Miller, author of *Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest* and chapter president.

Feb 4 Meeting. Flora of the Four Corners Region. Ken Heil, botanist, author, *Flora of the Four Corners Region*.

Mar 4 Meeting. The Disappearing Trees of Albuquerque: A Gruesome Tale of Woe Told in Words and Pictures. Joran Viers, Albuquerque city forester.

El Paso

All programs are second Thursdays at 7 p.m. (coffee social at 6:30) at El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant Ave. unless otherwise noted. All events free unless a fee is specified. Nonmembers always welcome. Info: Jim Hastings, 915/240-7414.

Jan 8 Meeting. The Texas Wildscapes Program. Lois Balin, Urban Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, El Paso.

Feb 12 Meeting. Botanizing in Winter. Russ Kleinman, Gila chapter NPSNM.

Mar 12 Meeting. Plants for Attracting Wildlife. Scott Cutler, Curator of Collections and Exhibits, Centennial Museum, University of Texas at El Paso.

Gila (Silver City)

All programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are third Fridays at 7 p.m. at WNMU's Harlan Hall, with refreshments following the program. Updates posted on www.gilanps.org.

Jan 16 Meeting. Speaker TBD.

Feb 20 Meeting. Speaker TBD.

Mar 20 Meeting. Speaker TBD.

Las Cruces

Meetings and workshops are second Wednesdays (unless otherwise noted) at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the

select the chapter. **Hikers** should always bring plenty of water, hat, sun protection, lunch and/or snacks, field guides, and wear sturdy shoes, suitable for rough, uneven ground.

Social Center at the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las Cruces. Field trips are Saturdays; most last into the afternoon. Participants must sign a release-of-liability form. Children must be accompanied by their parents. Programs and field trips are free; nonmembers always welcome. Contacts: Carolyn Gressitt, 575/523-8413; Tom Packard, 575/202-3708.

Jan 14 Meeting. Insectivorous Plants. Jeanne Tenorio.

Feb 11 Meeting. *Selenia/Leavenworthia* (Brassicaceae). Lillis Urban, curator, NMSU Herbarium.

Feb 14 Workshop. Collecting and Processing a Plant Specimen. Lillis Urban, curator, NMSU Herbarium. Meet 9 a.m. in the parking lot between the Biology Annex and the Astronomy building. If you have a plant press, bring it.

Mar 11 Meeting. Garden Types in Las Cruces. Rolston St. Hilaire, professor, environmental sciences.

Mar 14 Field Trip. Box Canyon/Picacho Peak area. Meet 9 a.m. at the US Post Office in Fairacres.

Otero (Alamogordo)

For field trip information, contact William Herndon, laluzlobo@gmail.com, 575/437-2555; or Elva Osterreich, echoofthedesert@yahoo.com, 575/443-4408; or Helgi Osterreich, hkasak@netmdc.com, 575/585-3315 or 575/443-3928. More info should be available by the beginning of each month.

Jan 31 Talk. A Botanical Transect Across Northern California. Donovan Bailey. Meet 1 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1010 16th St., Alamogordo.

Feb 21 Talk. A Wildflower Spring in Sweden. Helgi Osterreich. 2 p.m., U-U Fellowship, 1010 16th St., Alamogordo.



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Mar 21 Field Trip. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the old Wal-Mart at Hwys 54/70. If possible, we will also visit the NMSU Herbarium. Bring water and lunch (unless you want to buy lunch in Mesilla or Las Cruces).

San Juan (Northwest NM & Southwest CO)

Lectures start at 6:30 p.m. in the Lyceum at the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College. For more information, see the chapter's web page on the Four Corners Flora website, www.swcoloradowildflowers.com.

Feb 11 Desert Dust to Mountain Snow to Desert Plants. Michael Remke.

Mar 11 Climbing with the Wildflowers in Ecuador. John Bregar.

Santa Fe

Meetings are third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church, 1701 Arroyo Chamiso (in the triangle of Old Pecos Trail, St Michael's Dr., and Arroyo Chamiso; across street from fire station). For more information, contact Tom Antonio, tom@thomasantonio.org, 505/690-5105. Meetings and talks are free and open to all.

Jan 21 Meeting. Impacts of Wildfire on Rare Plants in the Gila and Lincoln National Forests. Daniela Roth, Botany Program Coordinator, NM Forestry Division.

Feb 18 Meeting. The Plight of Aridland Springs in NM. Bob Sivinski, former New Mexico State Forestry Division Botanist.

Mar 18 Meeting. Native Sacred and Religious Plants of the Southwest. Richard Ford, professor emeritus of anthropology and botany, University of Michigan.

Taos

Meetings are third Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in El Taoseno Room at the Taos Convention Center, 120 Civic Plaza Dr. Please check the NPSNM website for updates and additional information on activities, or contact Jan at TaosNPS@gmail.com or 575/751-0511. Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Native-Plant-Society-New-Mexico-Taos-Chapter/453033774707876.

Jan No activities scheduled.

Feb No activities scheduled.

Mar 18 Meeting. Talk TBA.

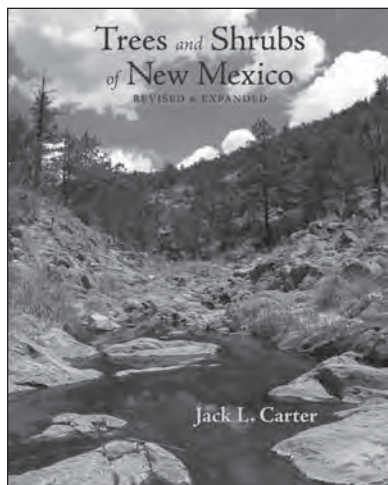
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Planting Native: Some New Year's Ruminations

Editor's note: What follows is a brief roundup of ideas from several native plant nursery and landscaping specialists in the state. Here are their responses to this basic question: Looking ahead to a new year and new growing season, what ideas or trends would you like to call attention to?

There seems to be some increase in interest in “native” plants, driven by either of two reasons. On the one hand, people are thinking about native plants because they believe them to be more drought tolerant, which may or may not be true. On the other hand, some folks are looking for pollinator plants, and believe the natives are better pollen sources. If the droughts continue, and butterfly and bee concerns continue, no doubt the trend of requesting native plants will continue to grow.

Santa Fe already is a fairly well-educated market when it comes to chemical issues, but the public needs to better understand that sprays and supplements will not alleviate problems primarily caused by drought stress. At the same time, a drip system is not a cure-all, especially if one doesn't comprehend how it works and how much water is actually being delivered to one's plants.

The argument that there is nothing new under the sun may be appropriate, but new uses for old technologies are very exciting. I look forward to seeing increased understanding and use of microbial inoculants and better understanding of the value of insects both for predation and pollination.

Bob Pennington
Agua Fria Nursery, Santa Fe

New Mexico has always been a place of extremes, and the diversity of our native plants is the resilient result. Increasing swings between hot and cold and intense periods of drought broken by torrential rain that runs off without soaking into the soil—these have me reconsidering the plants we grow, how we use them, and how to make the limited supply of water stretch as far as possible.

There are several factors that shade the concept of efficient and effective watering. A blanket recommendation like watering every two weeks or monthly can't address a complex of situations that include soil type, exposure to sun and wind, temperature range, and plant species. Unirrigated soil is much drier now than it has been for decades—even if you haven't been digging in the earth, the die-off of shade

trees in gardens and of conifers in the forests and foothills where they once dominated is evidence of the change. In many cases plants are living from irrigation to irrigation or rainfall to rainfall, having used up any buffer that once existed when rainfall was atypically abundant and consistent (in the 30 years prior to the mid-1990s). Factors contributing to the decline include these: mature trees not having access to water where their roots can absorb it (out at and beyond the edge of the branch canopy, not near the trunk); the soil being so compacted it's impermeable to moisture or roots; and the species being less heat tolerant than it needs to be for the location.

One of many reasons to grow locally native plants has always been that the better adapted the plants are to the site, the less supplemental water they will need. To me, living comfortably in the desert means living in the shade in summer. Unfortunately, there are few native shade trees and they are limited to higher elevations or along perennial streams, but if you contour your soil to divert water from your roof, driveway, and patios, you may be able to capture enough rainwater to provide a substantial amount of the water needed for a few shade trees. It is estimated that large trees may need ± 3000 gallons of water per year depending on species, soil, and exposure. 2000 square feet of roof area can harvest 1000 gallons of water per inch of rain.

How often, how much, and where to apply water varies with the type of tree, how well rooted it is, the type of soil, and whether there's any opportunity to capture rainwater. Water to a depth of 24–36 inches; drip-irrigated with multiple 2-gallon-per-hour emitters, that may take 1.5 hours to penetrate in sand and three times that long in clay. Watering slowly all night wastes water, putting it deeper than most absorbing roots will grow.

Locally native plants, once they are well established, can usually be watered monthly during the growing season and half as often while they are cold dormant. Plants that are native to cooler microclimates of the Southwest (e.g., foothills) when planted at lower elevations may need water every two weeks from May through mid-September and monthly or less in winter. In comparison, fruit trees only root to a depth of about 18 inches and need water more often when they are forming and ripening fruit—sometimes once a week when temps are in the mid- to high-90s. Evergreens may need water monthly in winter because they have leaves and are still transpiring moisture, but arid-adapted species such as

desert willow and mesquite don't need water while they are dormant (typically October through March). Native shrubs and long-lived perennials should be watered as deeply as the trees. Given the warmer winter daytime temperatures, and as long as the soil is adequately hydrated, you can forego watering early January through early March; this keeps plants dormant and less vulnerable to polar blasts.

The above is a vast oversimplification and should be adjusted based on site conditions and the response of the plants. Given the extremes, it takes longer for most new plants to become well established even when being watered adequately, because they're transpiring more. Poorly adapted species never quite establish, because they're losing more than they can absorb even when the soil is moist—a waste of time and water when natives can cover more ground using less water, cooling and providing habitat as they mature.

Judith Phillips
Judith Phillips' Design Oasis, Albuquerque

Using native plants for your landscape and yard is not a new concept. As other green technologies struggle to make a “landslide” impact, native plants are slowly but surely becoming more popular, with the general public ever more aware of their beauty and their great attributes of being adapted to our environment and using less water.

Here in New Mexico, people seem to take one of two sides. There are those who are adamant about using natives. Maybe these people are from the Southwest and have a connection with the land and the plants, or they just want to stick with what has done well for them. On the other side, there are those people who have moved from other areas of the country and are used to having green everywhere—and dark green, for that matter—and can't quite appreciate all the different shades of greens and grays, tans and browns that make up much of the landscape of our beautiful state.

There are great advantages to sticking to native, lower-water-use plants (and there are many to choose from). Many species of birds, mammals, insects, and other organisms have evolved alongside them. There are insects that have co-evolved as pollinators with specific plants (for example, yucca moth, *Tegeticula yuccasella*, and the soapweed yucca, *Yucca glauca*). Other native plants have berries that are a great seasonal food source for birds—for example, New Mexico desert olive, *Forestiera pubescens* (syn. *F. neomexicana*); algerita, *Berberis haematocarpa*; and threelobe sumac, *Rhus trilobata*, just to name a few. Birds such as the lesser goldfinch can be seen very readily in the late summer and

fall on the native annual sunflowers, *Helianthus annuus*, that line our state's roadways. These birds will also take advantage of chocolate flower, *Berlandiera lyrata*; blanket flower, *Gaillardia* sp.; and many others. If you want to create a natural ecosystem in your yard, using natives is a must!

As we head into the unknown future we must take advantage of the resources that are right here among us and use them wisely, plants included. Planting native, low-water species goes beyond having a xeric yard. It is what is needed for environmental consciousness that expands well beyond the generations of time.

Aaron Lamb
Santa Ana Garden Center, Bernalillo

Every once in a while a new customer really makes our day by asking for advice on native plants that will attract wildlife, for that is one of our specialties at Robledo Vista Nursery. Especially popular are flowering plants for hummingbirds, and we're excited now to announce the culmination of an intensive project that Marcy has been working on for the past decade: *Hummingbird Plants of the Southwest* by Marcy Scott, with photographs by Wynn Anderson, Dale and Marian Zimmerman, and others, is due to be released this spring, and will feature 120 comprehensive profiles of the most important nectar plants to southwestern hummingbirds. While the heart of the range covered is Arizona and New Mexico, the book includes plants from southern California through west Texas, northward through southern Nevada, Utah, and Colorado, and southward through northern Mexico as well. Also included are a discussion of pollination biology, in-depth hummingbird life history information, and plant-centric profiles describing habitat needs of each of the 14 regularly occurring southwestern hummingbird species.

Marcy Scott
Robledo Vista Nursery, Radium Springs



Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Photo: Bill Stripling

Conservation Corner (continued from p. 5)

dominated by annuals. The Natural Resource Conservation Service says that a playa plant community may have 30% turnover of species during the course of a season. Dominant plants may include *Persicaria* (smartweed) species, *Echinochloa crus-galli* (an introduced weedy species called barnyardgrass), *Rumex crispus* (curly dock), *Amaranthus* (pigweed) species, *Rorippa sinuata* (yellowcress), and others. Only one plant with special conservation status is known to occur in the playa habitat. That would be *Ambrosia linearis*, an annual ragweed, endemic to playas on the high plains of Colorado.

The dense flush of annuals, as well as high invertebrate productivity and the presence of surface water itself, attracts large numbers of migrant cranes, waterfowl, and shore birds traveling the Central Flyway. The flooded playas also provide breeding habitat for aridland amphibians. And all this concentrated biomass draws in a suite of avian and mammalian predators.

Okay, now here comes the fun part. The PLJV Playa Modifications Assessment is online at <http://www.pljv.org/citizen-science>. I had no trouble using the interface from a standard laptop computer with Windows 7. After a short introduction, the visitor is invited to take some brief online training. Processing the data takes the form of looking at aerial photos of playas, with the mapped playa outline drawn in, and deciding which agricultural impacts have occurred. The process is simple, but

very engaging because each photo is different, no two playas the same. Spend a few hours over the holidays for this good cause, and enjoy!

News Flash

On Monday of Thanksgiving week, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission approved the Gila River water diversion and storage project. Technical details and cost estimation are still in the formative stages for the project, which could have substantial negative impact on one of the southwest's last remaining free-flowing streams. This fight is not over. Stay tuned for future updates. ❖



The threatened upper Gila River, which supports multi-aged riparian forests of cottonwood, willow, and other native trees and shrubs.

Photo: Russ Kleinman (www.gilaflora.com)

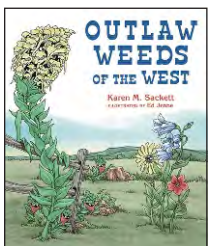
New and Recent Books

Outlaw Weeds of the West

By Karen M. Sackett; Illustrated by Ed Jenne

Mountain Press, 2014, 48 pages, \$14.00.

Color illustrations and photographs, glossary, index. For ages 8–12.



From the publisher: The Wild West has a whole new brand of outlaw—noxious weeds. They steal space from native plants, poison livestock, and blatantly trespass where they're not wanted. Author Karen Sackett informs readers of all ages of the wily ways of weeds, including the creepy trickster Dalmatian toadflax,

which looks like a garden snapdragon but spreads long dis-

tances underground, and the hitchhiking outlaw houndstongue, whose Velcro-like burrs cling to fur and clothes. You'll learn how "special agents" in weed control—insects and goats—are reining in these outlaws, and you'll find out what you can do to help. Aliases, mug shots, and hangouts of the West's ten worst outlaw weeds are described in the Most Not Wanted section of the book. Hilarious cartoons, detailed botanical drawings, and colorful photographs will help budding weed vigilantes track down their quarry. ❖

NPSNM at STEM Conference

by *Bettie Hines, Albuquerque Chapter*

“Great! Wow! Excellent! Fantastic! Will use it for sure! Appreciate it! Awesome! Perfect! This is the table I’ve heard about! Really nice! Very cool! Teachers at Desert Ridge say thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

These are some of the comments the Albuquerque chapter of the Native Plant Society received at the November 15 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) conference, where we had a table set up and were giving away Jack Carter’s book *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*. Teachers from across New Mexico were pleased to get a free copy of the book. Several of them said they had a previous edition but were glad to get the latest one.

Many more teachers took a copy of Jack’s article “Attention: Biology and Botany Teachers” (NPSNM newsletter, April–June 2014), which contained information on how to obtain 20 *Trees and Shrubs* for their classroom.

We all give special thanks to Barbara Fix and Deming Gustafson for delivering the books to us. We had an excellent location at the Natural History Museum and our exhibit looked great, with our new banner, designed by Albuquerque chapter president George Miller; a new brochure, soon to be available to all chapters, created by George and Pam

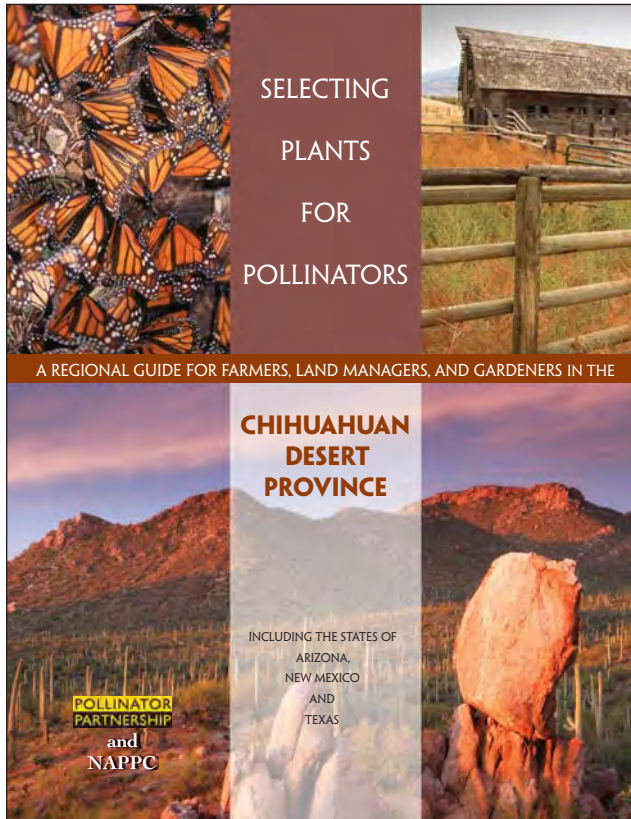
McBride; our beautifully displayed posters and books (we sold several); and the stack of Jack’s books.

The folks in charge of the conference were very appreciative that we were there and said that our giving away Jack’s book was one of the highlights for the teachers.

Pam McBride and I, co-chairs, appreciate our helpers who spent time with the table: Gary Runyon, Carolyn Dodson, Virginia Burris, and Sara Keeney. We all felt our exhibit went well. Next year the conference will be in Hobbs and in 2016 will be back in Albuquerque. ❖



Bettie Hines and Gary Runyon at the NPSNM table with copies of Jack Carter’s donated books, and the beautiful new banner.



Free Ecoregional Planting Guides

The Pollinator Partnership has a great resource to help you keep pollinators a part of your landscaping and gardening choices:

<http://www.pollinator.org/guides.htm>

Type in your Zip code to find your ecoregion and download a free guide. (The sample shown at left is what’s offered when Silver City’s Zip code is entered.) In it, you’ll find a wealth of information in easy-to-read checklists of pollinator-friendly plants, featuring such useful data as flowering times, characteristics best suiting each plant to particular pollinators, growing needs with respect to sun and soil, and much more. There’s also loads of information both general and specific on pollinators of the region.

The Pollinator Partnership’s mission is “to promote the health of pollinators, critical to food and ecosystems, through conservation, education, and research. Signature initiatives include the NAPP (North American Pollinator Protection Campaign), National Pollinator Week, and the Ecoregional Planting Guides.” ❖

Make Your 2015 Annual Meeting Motel Reservation Now

by Al Schneider, San Juan Chapter

NPSNM's 2015 Annual Conference in Durango is July 17–19, one of Durango's high seasons. Some motels are already filled and prices are high. It would be a good idea to find accommodations suited to your interests and budgets *now*, even if you are not positive that you will be coming. You can always cancel your room reservation. Ask motels about cancellation policies, which in most cases are very liberal: the day of the reservation.

Four websites do a nice job of listing most accommodations and giving you the flexibility of prioritizing according to your needs: Trivago, Priceline, Hotelguides, and Expedia.

Most motels run \$120–250, with a few on the north end of Main Street slightly cheaper. By far, the very best (actually incredible) deal in town is the Mears Apartments. These

nice two-bedroom apartments with kitchen, perfectly located on the Fort Lewis College campus, are only \$58. Call Greg Weiss, 970/247-7372, to reserve your apartment. See www.fortlewis.edu/housing/HousingOptions/MearsComplex.aspx.

There is much to see and do in Durango, so you may want to make reservations for more than the three days of the NPSNM Conference. The Mears Apartments are available for the two nights of the conference and the whole week before it.

For a look at what the 2015 conference will be like, see www.npsnm.org/events/2015-annual-conference/.

If you have any questions, feel free to call Al Schneider: 970/882-4647. ❖

Contributions to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

The generous financial support from so many NPSNM members and friends of the flora of New Mexico will make it possible for the Board to approve more funding for workshops throughout the state, additional basic research on a variety of critical plant taxa, continued support for the state's major herbaria, and hopefully for the development and sup-

port of more early education programs from K–12 in New Mexico schools.

Use the form provided below, or contribute through PayPal on the website, www.npsnm.org. Every contributed dollar is being used to protect the flora of New Mexico well into the future.
~Jack & Martha Carter

JACK & MARTHA CARTER CONSERVATION FUND DONATION FORM

Yes! I would like to help New Mexico's flora!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____

Name(s) _____

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All contributions are tax-deductible as provided under the law.

Make your check payable to: **NPSNM—Carter Endowment Fund**

and send to: Administrative Coordinator
PO Box 35388 Albuquerque, NM 87176-5388

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. Members also qualify for membership in New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union. Books dealing with plants, landscaping, and 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 (contact information listed on page 4).



New Mexico wildflower posters: \$8 (nonmembers, \$10)
Cactus poster: \$5 (nonmembers, \$8)

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NPSNM Membership Application

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E-Mail/Fax _____

*I (we) wish to affiliate with the checked chapter:
 (Please check only one)*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Albuquerque | <input type="checkbox"/> Otero (Alamogordo) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Paso, TX | <input type="checkbox"/> San Juan (Northwest NM and Southwest CO) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gila (Silver City) | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Fe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Las Cruces | <input type="checkbox"/> Taos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No affiliation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I am interested in forming a new chapter in</i> | |

Annual Dues:

Individual	\$	25
Family		30
Friend of the Society		50
Sponsor		100
Patron		250
Life Member		1,000
Limited Income, Seniors (65+)	Students, and	15

Total: \$ _____

Remember that 25% of contributions are returned annually to the individual chapters!



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Download PDFs of this and
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Native Plant Society of New Mexico 2015 Annual Meeting

July 17–19, 2015

DURANGO

COLORADO WILDFLOWERS

The San Juan Chapter is working diligently to provide everyone with a mind-expanding 2015 Annual Meeting in Durango July 17–19. Whether you are spry or weary, we have trips for you. Whether you want a deep-botanizing, snail-paced trip; a car tour; a drive right to the alpine flowers; a stroll through flower fields; a look at Durango plants; or an air-gasping, jaw-dropping alpine 8-mile hike, we'll more than surpass your expectations. Plan to be there for fabulous wildflowers on 35 field trips.

For details, visit <http://www.npsnm.org/events/2015-annual-conference/>. Complete details will be available online by early January and these details and the registration form will be printed in the April–June edition of the newsletter. Registration will be open April 1–July 1.

If you haven't experienced Colorado wildflowers, especially alpine Colorado wildflowers, or you long to see them again, come to Durango.

Questions? Call Al at 970/882-4647.

Full Details and Registration in the April Newsletter