

NEW MEXICO'S VOICE FOR NATIVE PLANTS



# NEWSLETTER

*of the*  
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
OF NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2024

VOL. XLIX NO. 4



In the dark of night, a small white female moth visits a yucca flower. But is she a yucca moth, a bogus yucca moth, or someone else entirely? And is the yucca fooled?

*Yucca glauca*, soapweed yucca is a host plant for bogus yucca moths. These moths do not pollinate yuccas.

Image: Sylvan Kaufman, Santa Fe Chapter

### The Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico

October–December 2024, Vol. 45 No. 4. 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 native plant enthusiasts and advocates, from home gardeners to resource managers and botanists, who have 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. Articles and high-resolution artwork supporting NPSNM's mission are welcomed and can be sent to the editor, Margaret Ménache, [newsletter \[at\] npsnm.org](mailto:newsletter[at]npsnm.org).

**The next submission deadline is November 25, 2024.**

**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.

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### *Legacy: What we leave behind, we give to the future*

NPSNM encourages members to consider including NPSNM in their wills.

For further information,  
contact us at [ask.npsnm \[at\] npsnm.org](mailto:ask.npsnm[at]npsnm.org)

NPSNM is a 501(c3) tax-exempt organization

**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, to conserve water, and as a part of the regional ecosystem in support of native pollinators and other fauna. Members benefit from chapter presentations, field trips, plant and seed exchanges/sales, discounts on publications, a statewide conference, and a network of knowledgeable plant enthusiasts.



Joining is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: [www.npsnm.org](http://www.npsnm.org). You may also snail mail your contact information, local chapter preference (if any), and dues to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176). Yearly dues [\$30 regular individual, \$45 household, \$60 friend of the Society, and \$20 for youth (through 26 years) or PK-12 teacher] and donations are tax deductible. Higher supporting levels can be found on our website. ❖

### Don't Miss a Newsletter Issue or an Important Society Email!

- ☞ Has your email address changed?
- ☞ Has your physical address changed?
- ☞ Would you prefer to receive *only* an online copy of the newsletter?

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Send us your most current information at:  
[npsnmmembership \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:npsnmmembership[at]gmail.com)

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## From the Presidents

By Wendy and Don Graves



Greetings to all! We've spent the late spring and the summer seeing some very special places throughout New Mexico.

### DeHaven Preserve: Roy, New Mexico

This past spring we were invited to spend a few days at what has been described as a “little slice of heaven” in far Northeastern New Mexico. We met up with Harpo Faust, UNM Herbarium Collections Manager; Tom Stewart, NPSNM Treasurer; and Peggy, the swimming dog, for a plant collecting foray in an amazingly rich grassland ecosystem.

Five generations of family have raised cattle on this land, which has now evolved into the DeHaven Preserve. With only six head of cattle remaining on the preserve, DeHaven is a place of beauty, supporting pronghorn, wild turkeys, and an impressive bird list. The property

boasts a rich assemblage of native grasses, forbs, trees and aquatic vegetation, not to mention an impressive ancient Native American presence, rock-lined bedding areas for sheep and their shepherds, now long gone, and small playa lakes which develop with each rain.

Why collect here? The UNM Herbarium is always on the lookout for under-collected areas of the state and this corner of New Mexico fits the bill, although former NM state botanist Bob Sivinski, a good friend and past president of NPSNM, collected here at DeHaven some years ago. Harpo tells us that forty-eight additional species of plants were collected on this excursion.

A 2020 NPSNM Carter Conservation Fund supported a DeHaven wetlands restoration workshop held in 2021. You can read about it, and learn more about the Preserve, in the January 2022 NPSNM Newsletter (pp. 8-9).

Stephanie Brock and her cousin Les Swindle were our hosts for this amazing botanical and natural history foray. We wish to thank them for their hospitality and for sharing their love of the land with us, a land that has been very well cared for. Their enthusiasm for this special place is ever-present and we congratulate them for leaving a legacy for future generations to enjoy, explore, and learn from.



Wendy Graves, Tom Stewart, Harpo Faust and Peggy, the swimming dog at DeHaven Preserve. Image: Don Graves

### Native Bees are all the Buzz



Cliff Gibbons and Kim Davis on Sandia Crest after collecting bees. Image: Don Graves

New Mexico has over 1100 species of native bees, most of which actively collect pollen to provide provisions for developing larvae. Over 75% of native bees are solitary, with individual females constructing a nest, usually in the ground, collecting pollen, forming it into a ball and laying an egg on top of this provision. Obviously, native plants are a major source of this pollen. Some genera of native bees will only collect pollen from a particular genus or family of native plants. For example, some members of the native bee genus *Diadasia* will only gather pollen from globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea*), others in this genus only visit cacti (*Opuntia*) and others only take pollen from members of Family Asteraceae. Clearly, there is a very close relationship between many species of native bees and our native plants.

For five days in mid-July, twenty budding melittologists (those who study bees) from the NPSNM chapters Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Taos, Las Cruces and Gila, along with others representing the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the Santa Fe Botanical Garden went on field trips to learn how to collect native bees and how to document the bees collected. Each individual bee collected is associated with the species of plant that it was on at the time of collection, a date, a GPS location and any notes that might be important at a later date. This information is gathered in the field using iNaturalist and then uploaded. The bees are then returned to the classroom for pinning and initial identification.

The class visited a very diverse array of collecting sites, as some bee species prefer a hotter, drier habitat, such as the space outside the extension office at the county fairgrounds in Santa Fe, while others may prefer a more alpine environment. A major highlight was collecting native bees at over 10,400 feet at Sandia Ridge near Albuquerque!

Afternoons were spent learning about the specifics of each of the six native bee families, native bee conservation and landscaping for native bees. In this workshop, special emphasis was placed on learning protocols developed by the folks at Oregon State University Extension's Master Melittologist program, an effort to train volunteers how to collect, prepare specimens and document the native bees in a given area, state or region. This program is now being brought to New Mexico and will be led by bee expert, and our workshop facilitator, Olivia Messinger ➤

➤ Carril. While enrollment in the Master Melittologist program was not a requirement of the workshop, several of the participants in the workshop are currently enrolled in this program. The goal of the New Mexico cohort is to advance our understanding of native bees, their relationships with native plants and to continue building a more accurate native bee atlas for the state.

This year's native bee workshop met at the Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, complete with lodging and the use of Professor Tom Antonio's stellar science lab for lectures and for learning about and identifying our specimens. We planned and organized the workshop on behalf of NPSNM in order to help chapter members understand the amazing evolutionary relationships between our native plants and native bees. It is hoped that each of the participants in the workshop will share some of the things that they have learned with their chapters and their communities. We are excited at the prospects of NPSNM bringing the native bee workshop south to Silver City next summer!

### The Mountains Really Were Calling

Congratulations to the Taos Chapter for putting on this year's NPSNM Annual Conference! Although it takes a village to put together such a conference, special thanks go out to Taos President Mary Adams and Taos NPSNM Board Representative Jan Martenson for dreaming big! With several field trip/workshop choices, designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and ability levels, all participants had the chance to participate. The lodging and banquet venues were special places, with beautiful views of the surrounding landscape, and the food was terrific. Thanks, again to all of the Taos chapter volunteers for making this year's conference one to remember!

Next year the conference moves south to Las Cruces and is set for October 2-5. One of the conference organizers, Mary Steigman, gave us all a taste of what we can expect in 2025. It is not too early to get it on your calendar! ❖



Gila chapter member Betsy Kaido and her husband, John Pecoroni, enjoy the views on the terrace at the Taos Country Club, where the annual conference banquet was held.

Image: Don Graves

## NPSNM Board Election

### NPSNM Nominating Committee



Every two years our Society holds an election for the board officers. It is that time. Normally, this issue of the newsletter would include the ballot, a list of the candidates, and brief descriptions of some of their accomplishments. Apparently, this year is not normal. As the newsletter goes to press (early September), there are no candidates for either the president or the vice president positions.

The members of the Nominating Committee (Don and Wendy Graves, Sylvan Kaufman, and Margaret Ménache) have turned to our Chapter Representatives and Presidents for help to identify people who might be interested in spending two years engaged in this critical work that furthers the mission of the NPSNM. Perhaps someone in your Chapter has contacted you already.

Don and Wendy, our current co-presidents, have devoted space in their articles in the previous newsletters to describe their experiences as co-presidents. They have described being new board officers and relatively new transplants to New Mexico. "The opportunities for learning and engagement," they report, "have been amazing." If you have questions about what being president entails, please read their articles or contact them directly.

In contrast to some non-profit organizations, much of the day-to-day work in the NPSNM happens at the Chapter level: talks, outreach, and hikes are selected and organized locally. Our NPSNM Board serves primarily as an opportunity for the Chapter representatives to share ideas about what

they've been doing and brainstorm about ways to collaborate and further advance the mission of our Society. The Board also evaluates the Carter Conservation Fund grant submissions and makes the awards. The Board meets twice annually: once during the annual conference and once at Sevilleta for a January meeting.

It is, of course, a highly political year with a significant election coming up this fall. Our election is not really political — we are all agreed that native plants need a voice and that voice is the NPSNM — but it is important, too. Please consider running for a Board position. **We must know by 15 October 2024 if you wish to run for an office.**

All voting will be online this year. You will receive an email with more information when the voting opens (shortly after 15 October). Voting will close on 30 November.

Be sure to vote. ❖



**HIKE!**

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**NEW MEXICO WILD**  
HIKING GUIDE

<http://hike.nmwild.org>

## Conservation Corner

*Sylvan Kaufman,*  
NPSNM Conservation Committee Chair

### Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Management Comments

The Native Plant Society submitted comments on the proposed management options for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. The Forest Service proposed four options. The Society favored an option that promotes more plant conservation by putting sensitive areas off limits to livestock grazing and off-road vehicle use. The letter can be viewed at <https://www.npsnm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NPSNM-BLM-Organ-Mts-comments.pdf>



A majestic oak in the Organ Mountains

Image: Sylvan Kaufman

### Support for Mimbres Peaks National Monument

The Las Cruces chapter and the State NPSNM have written letters of support for creation of the Mimbres Peaks National Monument. Mimbres Peaks include many rare plant and animal species and culturally important sites that deserve special protection. You can learn more about efforts to protect this important resource at <https://protectmimbrespeaks.org/>

### Weakening the Wilderness Act

Utah Senator Mike Lee has proposed a bill that would open Wilderness Areas to mountain bikers, strollers and game carts. The International Mountain Bicyclers Association is opposed to the bill, although there is much disagreement among the mountain biking community. The Senator says that because bikes were not expressly prohibited in the Wilderness Act, they should be allowed even though the Act states that “There shall be...no other form of mechanical transport...”. Opponents of the bill feel this could open Wilderness Areas to a whole host of other uses or, even if limited to mountain bikes, could lead to further degradation along trails and creation of new trails.

### Forest Service Prescribed Burn Plans

At the request of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez (3rd District, NM), The Government Accounting Office (GAO) investigated the Forest Service Prescribed Burn protocols and released its report recently (<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106239>). The report found that some escaped prescribed burns did not use weather forecasts specific to the sites, had insufficient trained staff and resources available, and the plan sometimes used the wrong type of vegetation or did not consider drought impacts. The Forest Service has started implementing improvements as it foresees the need for continued prescribed burns in the face of climate change and human impacts on landscapes.

### Native Plant Day and Native Plant Month

Many thanks to Santa Fe chapter member Carol Johnson for again requesting successfully that New Mexico declare the third Saturday in August Native Plant Day. Native Plant Month has been declared in New Mexico in April as part of a broader effort to have a Native Plant month nationwide. The last couple years, the Santa Fe Garden Club has requested the declaration. Consider using Native Plant Day and Native Plant Month to host a field trip or other activity or to write an editorial on the importance of native plants for your local newspaper. ❖

**Plant Natives, Reduce Pesticides, and Transform Your Community!**

**BEE CITY USA**  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE XERCES SOCIETY

The Carroll Petrie Foundation announces a new grant program for municipalities, counties, colleges, and universities located in New Mexico interested in becoming Bee City USA or Bee Campus USA affiliates.

For more information on the grant opportunity visit: [carrollpetrie.org](http://carrollpetrie.org)  
To learn about Bee City and Bee Campus USA visit: [beecityusa.org](http://beecityusa.org)

*The Carroll Petrie Foundation is a private family foundation based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Alongside its partners, the Foundation invests in the care and protection of animals and the natural world.*



## The Taos Mountains Were Calling...and you Came!

Mary Adams, Taos Chapter President

Over 160 people registered for the 2024 state conference in Taos. Along with speakers, activity leaders, poster presenters, volunteers, and walk-in community members on Saturday, we tallied 240 adults, two babies and four dogs (in the building). This was a far larger conference than we've had in Taos in the past because the Sagebrush Inn and Conference Center was able to accommodate a larger crowd. We were also very pleased by the extent of the community engagement and encourage all NPSNM members to find ways to include your communities in your activities.

After our Meet-and-Greet on the Sagebrush patio Thursday evening, conference-goers got ready for early starts for hikes and field trips on Friday. We warned participants on our six hikes that they needed to start very early to get off the mountains before mid-day thunderstorms. The Williams Lake group still got heavy rain at the very end, while Gavilan hikers had rain and some hail near the trailhead. Bee- and seed-collecting trips were basking in the warmth next to the Rio Grande while a large group drove to three unique gardens in Taos. Three other groups stayed in the Sagebrush air-conditioning and learned to design a native garden, identify conifers or make cyanotypes — later hung on the conference room wall.

Friday's reception at the chapter greenhouse was a magical atmosphere, created by the greenhouse crew with white tablecloths, great food, sailcloth over the tables, and a free plant — which then gave people the idea that they needed more plants from our greenhouse and vendors!



The Conservation Hero award was given to George Miller posthumously. Tom Stewart (right) accepts the award from Jan Martenson (left).

Image: Margaret Ménache



Taos Chapter members prepared an amazing gourmet reception at the Friday night reception. Image: Julien Spalding

Georges, Joseph Kleinkopf, Rachel Jankowitz, Judith Phillips, and Melanie Gisler.

The banquet at the Taos Country Club Saturday night featured Olivia Carril as the after-dinner speaker. Her knowledge and enthusiasm about bees charmed and educated everyone. Two recorded poems by Taos poet laureate Miguel Santistevan were the “benediction” of the evening.

The Taos Chapter awarded the Conservation Champion award and prize posthumously to George Oxford Miller. George became an advocate for the NPSNM as soon as he moved to New Mexico. He helped promote interest in, and conservation of, native flora in so many ways with his writings and public presentations. In the last year of his life he continued by helping the Taos Chapter republish our *Native Gardening in Northern New Mexico* which had been delayed by the lack of original copies of text and, more importantly, photos of the plants. George was able to send us all the photographs we needed

and helped bring our project to fruition. For that heroic effort we presented him posthumously the Conservation Hero award for 2024. His wife Carole Price was presented the award which was accepted by Tom Stewart as she was unable to attend the conference in Taos.



Sunday botanizing in the Tusas mountains.

Image: Jan Martenson

William deBuys got a standing ovation as our keynote speaker on Saturday in return for giving us Hope that we can make a difference with climate change. Remember his admonition to vote this fall to encourage infrastructure and wholesale changes to curb climate change.

Our other ten speakers and panelists talked further about climate change, restoration, alpine flora, water scarcity, and the impact of these factors on native plants. There was something for everyone. Special thanks to all our speakers and panelists: William deBuys, Dean Swift, Jan-Willem Jansens, Erin Berkowitz, Paul Cross, Cameron Martinez, Sam Des-

Sunday saw participants either going their own way or participating in final activities that included a bird walk, wetlands field trip, roadside botanizing in the Tusas Mountains, hiking to Gold Hill, and visiting the historic gardens of the Couse-Sharp Garden and Studio.

Thanks to all members, non-members, volunteers, hike leaders, workshop and field trip leaders, speakers, and sponsors who made the 2024 state NPSNM Conference in Taos a huge success! We couldn't have done it without the help of every volunteer, the community, and of course, your attendance! We'll see you all next year in Las Cruces to carry on the discussions. ❖

# Las Cruces or Bust!

*Ken Steigman, Las Cruces Chapter*

It's been about nine years since we've had you all down here for the annual NPSNM conference and we're excited to welcome you back. We've been brainstorming ideas for the past year. So far, we have the date (2–5 October 2025), a theme (responsible beauty), a keynote speaker (see below), and lots of ideas for a reception, the banquet, and field trips we love and know you will, too.

We wanted to take this opportunity to remind everyone that Las Cruces is beautiful. Despite our reputation for being in the Chihuahuan Desert, which everyone knows is hot and dry and short on plants, we beg to differ.



Yes, roses, oleanders, and crepe myrtles are beautiful, but is it responsible to spend time, water, money, and energy growing non-native plants from Africa, the Mediterranean, Paraguay, Brazil, the other side of the planet?

Beautiful native plants belong in our landscapes and public places.

Embrace what remains of our natural world: wet marshes, creeks, rivers, dry deserts and mountains. Value native vegetation as food and habitat for other living creatures around us. Each of us has the right and responsibility to leave our land in better condition than we found it and to assist with healing the planet by planting native seeds that will rebuild the function of our native ecosystems.

Our keynote speaker, Bill Neiman; program presenters; workshops; garden tours; and field trips will guide us in establishing our individual definitions of **Responsible Beauty**.



Bill Neiman. Image: Callie Richmond

Some of us, if we are lucky, have a handful of people who will heap praises on us after we've left this Earth. But precious few of us will be celebrated in life. Bill Neiman, the keynote speaker for the NPSNM 2025 State Conference, is such a rare person. And for good reason: Bill is a pioneer. And one way to define a pioneer is someone who is on the leading edge of expanding consciousness, sees it clearly, and articulates that new awareness to the rest of us.

Bill Neiman, co-founder and co-owner of Native American Seed, has popularized a land ethic that was lost when European Americans began settling the west. Whereas most yeomen have sought to manhandle the land to match the requirements of a limited number of foreign and domesticated seeds, Bill has recognized the wisdom of preserving and matching the great diversity of wild, native seed to the local conditions set forth by the land. The millennia-long geological history of climate, droughts, glacial retreats and advances, wildfires, browsers and grazers, and other ecosystem engineers and calamities are folded into the genomes of native plants. Native insects — and the food webs they support — have slowly carved niches for themselves by specializing on one or a few varieties of native plants, and the result is a harmonic, bustling community of interdependent wild-life. For the past 36 years, Bill Neiman has harnessed that power of native plants and shared it with others. We are pleased that he will be speaking to us at the NPSNM annual meeting in Las Cruces in October 2025. ❖



Fillmore Canyon Falls, Dripping Springs Natural Area, an example of the diverse ecosystems of Las Cruces. Image: Ken Steigman



With the Organ Mountains in the background and a wide range of wildflowers and native grasses in the foreground, Las Cruces demonstrates that the Chihuahuan desert might be hot but it definitely isn't short on plants (or mountains). Image: Gordon Berman

## Chapter Activities & Events

For further information on upcoming events, email or call the contact person listed, or visit the chapter's web page at [www.npsnm.org](http://www.npsnm.org). Click on "Chapters" to select the chapter. **Hikers** should always bring plenty of water, hat, sun protection, lunch and/or snacks, field guides. Wear sturdy shoes, suitable for rough, uneven ground. **Check with your chapter for any fees or restrictions they or the event venues might require. Please check with the hosting chapter to be sure you know the current status of any event listed here.** ❖

**Albuquerque** Monthly meetings are normally the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Blvd NE. For more information contact Sara Keeney at [abq\[at\]npsnm.org](mailto:abq[at]npsnm.org) or 505-379-3392. For questions, future field trip ideas or to volunteer as a leader or co-leader, contact our Field Trip Coordinator: Sharon Miles, Sharon[at]seniorcareoptions.net, 505-604-6307. You must register at least 24 hours before the start with the field trip leader. Please let us know if you need to cancel.

**Oct 2 Meeting.** "Garden Prep for Native Plants." Mike Halverson, manager of Santa Ana Native Plant and Tree Nursery, will share his expertise from providing low-water natives for wholesale landscaping sales. He will bring an array of plants to look at as he discusses plant characteristics, needs, and placement. Supporting pollinators by planning for bloom throughout the season will be part of the presentation. Mike will invite open discussion to share plant propagation techniques among participants. He says he may learn something from others who have successfully propagated plants for their gardens.

**Nov 6 Meeting.** "Reforestation in NM: Getting to Scale." Matthew Hurteau of UNM will tell us about efforts to reforest New Mexico after devastating wildfires. Challenges include: growing the necessary quantities of seedlings, planting in locations for maximum impact, and helping the seedling trees stay alive.

**Dec 14 11:00 am.** Potluck and Annual Meeting, We will gather for a potluck and celebration of the year at the Open Space Center, 6500 Coors Blvd NW. Along with officer elections, we look forward to welcoming your friends who might be interested in more participation with NPSNM-Albuquerque.

*Continued page 15*

**El Paso** The El Paso Chapter has combined meetings with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club. The meetings will be the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 am and will take place at the Garden Center at Memorial Park (3105 Grant Ave, El Paso, TX 79930). All events are free unless a fee is specified. Nonmembers welcome. Info: Kevin Floyd, 915-747-6665; [kwfloyd\[at\]utep.edu](mailto:kwfloyd@utep.edu); <https://www.facebook.com/Native-Plant-Society-of-New-Mexico-El-Paso-Chapter-191913520833180>

**Oct 5 Meeting.** "Freeze-tolerant cacti." Dr. Gertrud Koning's presentation will distinguish between cacti that are living in a warm climate, but can become exposed to a freeze and those that live in colder climates and are regularly exposed to freezes. The physiology and strategies of freeze tolerance will be discussed.



A living rock cactus, *Ariocarpus fissuratus* in the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens. This is native to the Big Bend region of the Chihuahuan Desert, so is cold hardy. It flowers in late September or early October.

Image: Kevin Floyd

**Oct 12** Opening reception of *Cultivating Your Home: Embracing Chihuahuan*

**Desert Diversity:** 1-3 pm at the Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens, UTEP. Come celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens! Showcasing native plants from various habitats within the Chihuahuan Desert, the Gardens ignite a deeper connection between people and their desert home while fostering a sense of stewardship for its

*Continued page 15*

**Gila (Silver City)** Upcoming evening programs will be hybrid whenever possible. To attend in person, come to Room 111 in Harlan Hall on the WNMU campus at 7:00 pm. Gila Chapter members will receive an email with the Zoom link; all others are welcome and can request a link from [gilanative\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:gilanative[at]gmail.com). Check the website for the latest field trip information: <https://gilanps.org/events/field-trips/>

**Oct 12 Tour.** "A Walk on the Wild Side." Join Don & Wendy Graves at their Brewer Hill home landscape, with over one hundred native plants, five native vines, affordable deer fencing options, pond making 101, water harvesting and distribution, all with a focus on wildlife (larval host plants, pollinator plants, a night-time pollinator accent and habitat for skunks, squirrels and birds)!

**Oct 18 Meeting.** "Exploring the Flora of Silver City (2022-Present): Adventure, Discovery and Fun." The Silver City Flora team members, introduced by William Norris, Professor of Biology at WNMU, will discuss an ongoing plant inventory in Silver City, NM. Team members will present the project goals, methods, results to date, and interesting discoveries.

**Oct 26 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.** Open House with guided tours of the Habitat Thicket in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, North Virginia Street at State Street, Silver City.

**October Field Trips** where the plants dictate.

**Early Nov:** Gila Chapter volunteer appreciation potluck. Venue and date TBD.

**Nov 15 Meeting.** "Gila Flora: Observations from the Field." Donna Stevens and Jim McGrath, seasonal botanists with the Gila National Forest, will present a program about their 2024 fieldwork and current projects. Topics will include invasive plant status and removal strategies, invasive plant problems in the wilderness, inventory and monitoring of the Gila's rare plant populations, and the history and current status of the Cherry Creek restoration project.

**Dec 8 12:30 to 2:30 pm.** Annual Holiday Potluck at the Women's Club, 411 Silver Heights Blvd in Silver City.

In **August**, our native plant sale was pretty much a sell-out for our five native plant growers. Field trips were organized to the Fort Bayard Preserve to observe what was blooming and to the Lordsburg Playa to identify desert flora that emerged during the monsoon. Education Committee volunteers Susan Malter, Cathleen Norman, and Steve Blake led native plant activities and answered questions from students and community members at WNMU's Welcome Back Bash. We hope to get a few new student members due to their efforts.

In early **September**, the Gila Chapter again partnered with Bat Conservation International to plant native agaves in support of the Lesser Long-nosed Bat on five GNPS member properties—some 250 agaves this time! On **Sep 14** the community was invited to a dedication event for the Children's Butterfly Garden at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, with live music, an interactive butterfly activity for all ages, a puppet show, and cake.



**Las Cruces** Our hybrid meetings are held on the NMSU campus in the Biology Annex, Herbarium Building, 3080 Williams Avenue, Room 101 on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Zoom link available from LC [at] npsnm.org. Check the NPSNM website, the LC Chapter's Facebook page, and recent email for updates, changes, additional news and other events and activities of interest.

- The Las Cruces Chapter maintained its membership count and welcomed newly installed Vice President Matthew Becker, State Board Representative Jackye Meinecke, Communications Council Co-Chair Mary Selfridge, and 2025 State Conference Co-Chair Jamie Blair. Many thanks to outgoing Vice President Ken Steigman, State Board Representative Joan Woodward, and Communications Council Co-Chair Lyn Hoffman for their lasting and wonderful service to the Society.
- As an Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument stakeholder, we endorsed the BLM's proposed Resource Management Plan Option B which favors ecological concerns and natural preservation over BLM's historically favored grazing and commercial development of public lands. We will continue to participate in this ongoing process and its long term environmental impact.
- We have informally strengthened ties with green-minded groups and the State Land Office to remediate a badly degraded naturally occurring spring, one of the few local sources of surface water.
- We enthusiastically supported a groundswell effort to have the Mimbres Peaks declared a National Monument.
- We continue to maintain and expand the gardens surrounding the Dripping Springs Natural Area Cox Visitor Center.
- We exceeded our \$1,500 funding goal for the Student Grant program which aids graduate and undergraduate students in botanically related pursuits.
- We held a pot luck luncheon at the Aguirre Springs eastern slope of the Organ Mountains. Mary and Ken Steigman hosted a monthly meeting showcasing native plants in their yard. Ably assisted by Jamie and Robert Blair, they not only catered the event but also provided late afternoon cloud covering shade and early evening mosquito-munching nighthawk flybys.
- Though dusty and dry in Dona Ana County, hearty populations of *Mammillaria grahamii*, *Ferocactus wislizeni*, *Coryphantha macromeris*, and *Echinocactus horizontalonius* wave banners of red, pink, orange, and yellow.
- Reminding us what water and greenery look like, Ken and Mary organized a field trip in July to Little Cherry Creek in the Gila. Eager for more, we invited US Forest Service specialists Spencer Johnson and Adam McCullough to present a slide show of the Lincoln National Forest. A few days later they expertly guided our field trip to Bluff Springs, an alpine oasis between Cloudcroft and the Sunspot Observatory.



Eagle claw, blue barrel, *Echinocactus horizontalonius*. Organ Mountains in background  
Image: Gordon Berman

**Otero** Most events are free, and everyone, including non-members, is welcome to attend. For more event and/or chapter information, and to contact us, please visit our chapter section of the NPSNM website.

For our latest happenings, please visit our Facebook group.

**Santa Fe** In-person meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May at 6:30 pm at Christ Lutheran Church, 1201 Arroyo Chamiso. Speakers are announced to the Santa Fe listserv. To sign up to receive emails, email [santafe\[at\]npsnm.org](mailto:santafe[at]npsnm.org). We will post speakers on the NPSNM website when we have advance information. Meetings and talks are free and open to all.



Santa Fe Chapter members took notes as they visited two local gardens this summer.  
Image: Jill Bals

- This summer the chapter held a small garden tour organized by volunteer Donna Eagles. We visited the Greer's garden in Santa Fe designed for birds and other wildlife as well as for the owner's to enjoy their backyard retreat. We then visited the Anderson garden in Lamy, a large rural garden transitioning to more native plants.
- Plants of the Southwest hosted our annual member's Summer Social in August.
- The chapter continues to support restoration work at the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve done by the Institute for Applied Ecology. Volunteer Barbara Fix worked both there and along the Acequia Trail in downtown Santa Fe.

**Taos** Videos of past meetings are at <https://tinyurl.com/TaosNPSvideos>. For updates, check the Taos page on the NPSNM website, our Facebook page, the Taos News Calendar, email [TaosNPS\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:TaosNPS[at]gmail.com), or contact Mary Adams, president, at [mary\\_adams\\_co\[at\]msn.com](mailto:mary_adams_co[at]msn.com). Meetings will be held on the FIRST Wednesday of the month in the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta Road at 6:00 pm.

For our October–December schedule, please check the NPSNM website Taos page, our Facebook page, the Taos News Calendar, email [TaosNPS\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:TaosNPS[at]gmail.com), or contact Mary Adams, president, at [mary\\_adams\\_co\[at\]msn.com](mailto:mary_adams_co[at]msn.com).

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## On Renaming Plants and the Task of Separating the Wheat from the Chaff

Brandon Moore, Albuquerque Chapter

The XX International Botanical Congress (Madrid 2024) recently voted for the first time ever to rename more than 300 species of plants, fungi, and algae whose scientific names include the words *caffra* or *cafra* (Brainard 2024). *Caffra* is from the Arabic word *kafir* which originally meant infidel or unbeliever, but has since become very offensive hate speech against Black people (Wikipedia 2024). The Botanical Congress decided to change *caffra* to *affra*, which will now refer instead to the organism having an African origin. A proposed committee will evaluate other possible name changes and submit their recommendations at the next meeting of the Botanical Congress.

While this word change of *caffra* seems straightforward, languages do evolve through time. Therefore, word use also changes through time and that makes these issues far from simple to resolve. For example (as described by Burns 2023): "At one time *blow* meant to produce flowers or to be in flower — Shakespeare wrote 'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows.'" Now the word *blow* "... has other meanings, including a sudden strike, a shock, or to send forth a current of air." In recent years, though, the word *blow* even can refer to cocaine. Unfortunately, many words such as *caffra* or *blow* are too often corrupted and acquire bad connotations.

Even if a rose, indeed, can smell sweet no matter its name (see William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*), plant scientific names are rich sources of taxon features and often convey the historical and human context in which they were first identified. The nine different categories of plant names include one that describes different plant features, another that commemorates or honors a person, and ones that describe a plant's geographical location or its habitat (Allred 2024).

The practice of naming plants is inherent to the human condition and remains a fluid situation for recognized common names as well as ascribed scientific names. The starting point for modern



*Erythrina affra* is a legume tree that has clusters of warm red to scarlet flowers which are up to 8 inches across. The tree is native to the Southeastern coastal area of South Africa and has been widely planted in Southern California since 1908.

This photo is courtesy of David Grees, with permission from Santa Barbara Beautiful, Inc. (info [at] sbbeautiful.org).

botanical nomenclature is Linnaeus' *Species Plantarum* of 1753, with later adjustments as ruled by the International Botanical Congress and contained in *The International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*.

There is a broad controversy in the use of eponyms in naming organisms (e.g., the proposed change of all eponymous English common names of American birds by the American Ornithological Society). In a strict sense, an eponym refers to a person after whom a discovery, invention, or place is named. Linnaeus is thought to be the first taxonomist that honored a person by ascribing to them a plant name. In a general sense, an eponym can be a noun that is created from a discovery or even a product. For example, the word Band-aid™ is a proprietary eponym which is commonly (but

incorrectly) used to describe any adhesive bandage.

One might view the occurrence of eponyms in English or other languages as often being just a transitional stage in the evolution of modern languages. However, the controversy for scientific names is that a number of those names honor people or cultural elements of dubious nature. Among botanists (Guedes et al. 2023), some have suggested that eponyms have no place in modern taxonomy. They argue that the rules that govern taxonomic nomenclature should be reformed to prevent their further use, including for existing species. Other botanists have suggested that a more measured approach should be considered. These arguments in part recognize that "people-inspired names remain valuable" to retain (Antonelli et al. 2023). As Allred (2024) notes in this regard, "eponymous names always carry a story, often fascinating, usually informative, and frequently obscure."

In the future, hopefully, scientists on the advisory committee of the International Botanical Congress will agree to be cautious and discriminating in evaluating the appropriateness of eponyms in bo-



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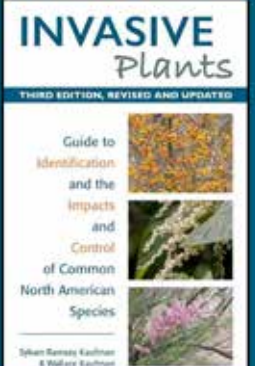
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tanical scientific nomenclature. In my view, the prior use of people's names as an honorific in scientific nomenclature is a different situation than the corruption of words such as caffra, and generally should be respected as the choice that was made by the person's peers and not as a choice made through historic revisions. Meanwhile, perhaps someone should mention the caffra word change to the city officials of Los Angeles, whose official tree consists of all seventeen species of Coral Tree, including *Erythrina affra*. ❖

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- Wikipedia (2024), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaffir\\_\(racial\\_term\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaffir_(racial_term))

#### Acknowledgements

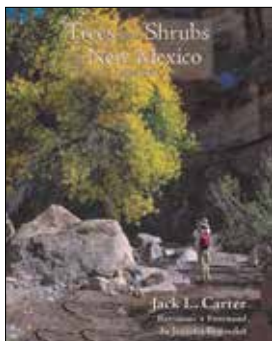
I want to thank Tom Stewart and Margaret Ménache for their useful discussions and very helpful suggestions with this article.

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## The Dance of Pollination

By Sylvan Kaufman, Santa Fe Chapter

In the dark of night, a small white female moth visits a yucca flower. She seeks out yucca pollen, gathers a mass of it with her specially modified mouthparts, and flies to a flower on a different yucca plant. She sniffs the flower for pheromones to make sure that other female moths have not already visited the flower. If the flower hasn't been pollinated yet, she carefully packs the pollen into the stigma ensuring that that flower's ovules will be fertilized. In that flower the female moth lays her eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae that feed on the developing seeds. Since the flower was so carefully pollinat-



*Yucca baccata*, commonly known as banana yucca, is pollinated by the yucca moth, *Tegeticula yuccasella*.  
Image: Margaret Ménache

ed, most flowers have plenty of seeds to both feed their moth pollinators and to reproduce themselves. But the yucca plant might abort the flower if too many larvae are present. After a few weeks of feeding on seeds, the larvae drop to the ground and form a cocoon where they will spend the rest of the year. Some will spend multiple years in a cocoon ensuring that even if a yucca doesn't bloom in a particular year, there are still moths around to pollinate it.

Yucca moths belong to the genus *Tegeticula* or *Parategeticula*. About two thirds of yucca moth species specialize in pollinating a single species of yucca and the yucca plants often have specialized scents to attract their moth species. Yucca moths emerge from their cocoons in the ground just as their species of yucca plant is flowering. Males and females mate, and the male's life cycle is complete. The

female adult moth lives only long enough to lay her eggs.

You may find several other insects on or in yucca flowers. The bogus yucca moth, *Prodoxus* sp., lays eggs in the flowering stems, non-seed producing parts of the fruits, and sometimes the leaves of yucca plants. If the flowers are not pollinated, the flowering stem will wither killing the bogus yucca moth larvae in stems or fruit. You may also see



Looking metallic here, the yucca weevil (*Scyphophorus yuccae*) is actually black and very destructive.

Source: <https://www.insectimages.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5460601>

aphids, yucca plant bugs, and yucca beetles. Yucca beetles (*Caplothorax* spp.) feed on flower buds and their larvae mine the base of the flowers, often damaging the floral parts. Yucca plant bugs (*Halticotoma valida*) feed mainly on the leaves and stems. They look a little like a tiny stink bug. ❖

## Membership Recognition

The NPSNM would like to thank all members who have made monetary contributions above their regular dues. This list, which covers August 16, 2023 through August 15, 2024, includes those who sent in extra contributions with their memberships.

During this same period ten organizations and members contributed over \$7500 in unrestricted donations.

We would also like to recognize the contributions of cooperation and energy from the wonderful members of this volunteer organization. The NPSNM thanks all of you for your support, whatever form it takes.

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## Tribute Gifts

Some of the support we receive from our members is made in the form of a recognition for those who have died or to commemorate an individual. When provided, we have included additional information.

Allen Anderson

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Martha Carter (1932-2024)

Donald Heinze (1937-2023)

George Oxford Miller (1943-2024)

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## Carter Conservation Fund Donors

The NPSNM would like to thank all who have contributed to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund from August 16, 2023 through August 15, 2024. This fund was created to assist the NPSNM in maintaining a balanced budget while continuing to increase the funds available for conservation research and educational grants to individuals and organizations. It is a long-term endowment fund and your contributions enable the NPSNM to expand its support of programs, research, and education for those involved in the study of native plants. Every dollar we receive is important and we deeply appreciate your support. Information on how to make a donation may be found on p. 15, including a QR code for quick access to our online donation page.

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## Interested in Applying for a Grant?

Applicants may send in their proposals any time of the year until November 30. Guidelines for applying and an application form may be found on the website: <https://www.npsnm.org/nps-sponsored-grants-donations/>

The proposals are reviewed by the statewide NPSNM Board and voted on at the winter Board Meeting, usually at the end of January. The awards for grants are sent in February, while gifts in support of the regional herbaria are sent later in spring or early summer. The Carter Fund also finances an award for a Teacher of the Year and to a Conservation Champion, chosen by the chapter hosting the statewide annual conference and presented to the individual at the conference banquet.

The NPSNM Policies identify criteria for awarding grants, management of the fund, and responsibilities for the awardees: <https://www.npsnm.org/about/chapters/statewide-organization/> ❖

## Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve Restoration Update

Yvonne Hickerson



Restoration work at the LCWP slowly but surely restores this cienega to its former state. IAE restoration ecologist Yvonne Hickerson has been guiding this project forward for several years now. Image: Margaret Ménache

The Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve (LCWP) is a 35-acre privately owned nature preserve located southwest of Santa Fe. This rare natural *cienega*, or “marsh” in Spanish, is a unique desert wetland that hosts a bountiful diversity of plants and wildlife. The Santa Fe Chapter of NPSNM has been participating in activities and programs at LCWP since the 1980s in conjunction with Santa Fe Botanical Garden management. Bob Sivinski, an active, long-time NPSNM member who has served as a technical advisor to the management of LCWP, encouraged the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) to get involved with restoration efforts in 2016.

IAE quickly partnered with the NPSNM, Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District, the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, RCS Southwest, Southwest Resource Associates, and Forest Fitness to procure grant funding from the State of New Mexico’s Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s Forestry Division to treat Russian olive and other populations of noxious weeds at the Preserve.

A large part of restoring the wetland character has been to remove six acres of dense Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) groves. Ground disturbance promoted other non-native weeds, but the aggressiveness of the spread of new invasives was not anticipated in some areas.

New Mexico State Forestry continued to fund restoration efforts for several years and additional areas of Russian olives were treated. During this time, under IAE’s stewardship with assistance and care from NPSNM, Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), and El Rancho de las Golondrinas (RDLG) volunteers, native vegetation made a remarkable recovery in many areas.

State Forestry funding was lost in 2022 when its grant procurement policies changed; however, the NPSNM has provided funding, equipment, and volunteer time to continue maintenance efforts. The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District provided additional funding for ongoing maintenance work in 2023 and 2024.

IAE has been planting native pollinator plants grown by the Penitentiary of New Mexico (via the Conservation in Prisons program) and the Pueblo of Santa Ana at LCWP

during 2024. Looking ahead into 2025, IAE and the owners, RDLG, are working on securing funding to develop a comprehensive restoration plan. About one acre of Russian olive remains and Russian knapweed (*Rhaponticum repens*) must be eliminated from the site. Continued funding will be required to continue weed treatments, rehabilitate disturbed ground, and initiate hydrological improvements.

Through partner support and dedicated work, significant progress has been achieved. Large portions of the disturbed areas on the site have bounced back with vigorous native vegetation. Dramatic changes since 2016 have been documented with Bob Sivinski’s photo points. Russian olive, Russian knapweed and kochia, teasel, bull thistle, houndstongue, and other aggressive weeds have been limited to more manageable areas across the property.

Through all the successes, challenges, partnerships, and sweat, the Santa Fe Chapter of the NPSNM has demonstrated dedication and played a critical role in restoration efforts at LCWP. Thank you for your support. ❖



Suzan Schaaf of Rancho de Las Golondrinas and Yvonne Hickerson discuss the restoration work on the LCWP.

Image: Barbara Fix

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Chapter Activities, Continued from page 8

### More from Albuquerque

- Early summer rains afforded us many productive field trips. For example, ten members could not help but enjoy a long, cool walk along the East Fork of the Jemez River in beautiful Las Conchas Canyon. As well as scenic rock formations, the river banks were grassy green and there were at least fifty species of wildflowers along the trail. That included a most awesome display of Dark-throat Shooting Stars (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*).
- Our field trips are enhanced often these days by the geology highlights of New Mexico Tech professor emeritus Dr. Kent Condie. Thanks Kent!
- Pam McBride and Lee Regan responded to an invitation from Manzanita Mountains residents to floristically survey Sunflower Meadow Park, a county property that is locally managed. Tom Stewart and Elliott Gordon followed up at SMP with a plants and insects walk and talk for local volunteers.
- Plans are developing between the Albuquerque Chapter and Petroglyph National Monument to revamp the garden at the visitors center.
- Other outreach events this quarter included tabling at the Albuquerque Biopark on World Migratory Bird Day, the Garden Festival at the Rio Grande Nature Center, and “Summer Wings” also at the RGNC.



Albuquerque members on a recent gall discovery walk. Image: Tom Stewart

### More from El Paso

preservation. This exhibit is a celebration of the vibrant diversity of plants and animals of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem. Discover the fascinating history of the Gardens and see how they have grown over the years. Come learn about the challenges facing this incredible biodiversity and find out how you can make a difference by cultivating native plants in your yard.

**Nov 2** Event. Cactus Appreciation Month. There will be some presentations, cacti for sale, and experts available to answer all questions. More details will be posted on the social media accounts.

**Dec 7** Holiday Potluck and elections. Bring a dish to share and the desire to help run our two organizations. Many officer positions are available, and we need people to help with committees or as at-large board members. For the continued survival of these organizations we need people to step up to help run them!

### Contribute to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

The generous financial support from so many NPSNM members and friends of the flora of New Mexico makes it possible for the Board to approve funding for workshops throughout the state, basic research on a variety of critical plant taxa, continued support for the state’s major herbaria, and for the development and support of more early education programs from K–12 in New Mexico schools.

Contributing is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: [www.npsnm.org](http://www.npsnm.org). You may also snail mail your contact information with a check payable to NPSNM—Carter Conservation Fund to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176).



*Every contributed dollar is being used to protect the flora of New Mexico well into the future.*

~Jack & Martha Carter

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## From Taos to Las Cruces, the past and future conferences are not to be missed!



Our Texas travellers take some time out at the Taos conference meet-and-greet reception. Read more about the good times conference attendees had on p. 6.

Image: Stan Stack



Turpentine bushes in early October (when next year's conference in Las Cruces is scheduled – see more on p. 7) are magnets for butterflies and other bugs.

Image: Gordon Berman



Williams Lake hike. Joseph Kleinkopf UNM PhD candidate, botanizing in the subalpine forest with the group. The field trips on offer at the Taos conference were many and varied.

Image: Joan Woodward



Nipple beehive cactus, flabby pincushion, *Coryphantha macromeris*. These are just a few of the plants you can expect to see at the Las Cruces conference 2-5 October 2025. Keep an eye on the Las Cruces Chapter Activities to see what they're looking at as they prepare for us in 2025.

Image: Gordon Berman