

Albuquerque Chapter Newsletter

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

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Albuquerque Chapter is Growing: Choose a Job and Set Your Own Hours!

by Frances Robertson

Hey! Good News! We're growing...and we need to expand our board to accommodate that growth. Five officers can no longer handle everything we do, so if you've been dying to get your voice heard, now's the time to join us and help us steer the right course. We need new voices and new ideas. We've got lots of balls in the air, so if you can catch one, we'd like to throw it to you. The idea is to break down the responsibilities so that we can *each* do *one* thing well. Here's what we need:

A Computer "Expert:" This is someone individuals can call if they run into computer glitches when carrying out chapter work (primarily with email, electronic files, or common software programs). This is an "as needed" job, but if you know computers, you could *really* help us out.

Central New Mexico Gardens Book Sales Chair: This job, which was a bear in the past, has become a sweet and easy deal since our chapter now gets to keep all of the money we make from the sale of this book, and we can now sell it for less. The Chair sells only to bookstores or museums, or any place where there is a market. You do not sell copies to individuals or mail copies. I have some great ideas about how we can sell this book, and I'd like to work with whoever takes this job. Let's empty the boxes and turn this book into "money in the bank."

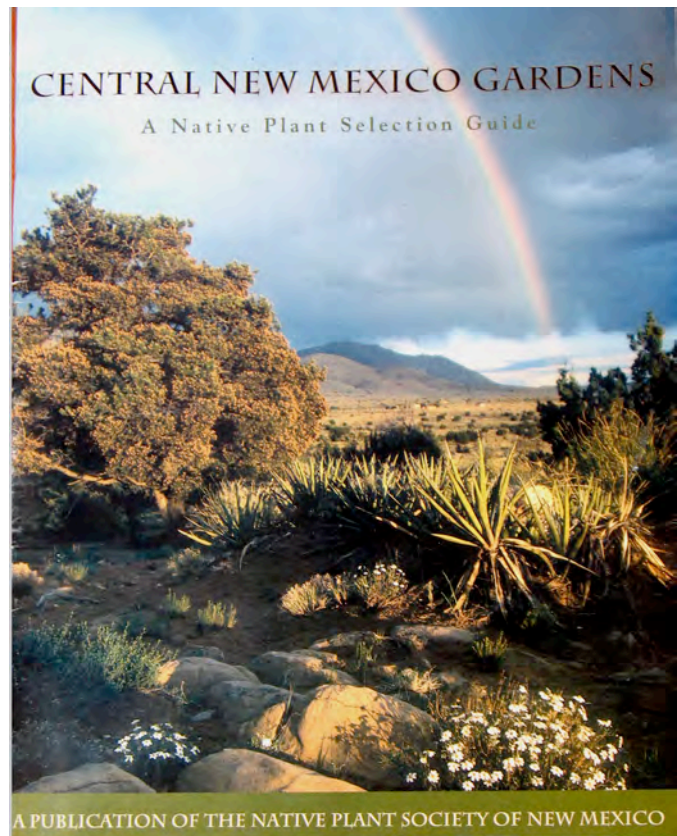
Garden Center Volunteers: If you love gardening and wouldn't mind helping with the Native Plant Society garden at the Albuquerque Garden Center (Lomas near Eubank), this job is for you. You would assist the Garden Center Chairs by cleaning up the garden twice a year. You could tweak it, add some native plants, and be creative.

Member Benefits Chair: If you like people and like promoting NPS, this job is for you. You simply find businesses that will agree to give NPS members a discount. What they get in return is free advertising as a discount retailer in each of our chapter newsletters, their name on our webpage, and our undying loyalty.

Field Trip Coordinator: This outdoorsy person is responsible for arranging several field trips for our Chapter. You could schedule as few as two or as many as you like. You can be as creative as you want. Do it your way, but we need someone to get us "in the field." The good news about this job is that you'd have lots of people helping you come up with ideas if you needed them.

None of these jobs is overwhelming; all are necessary. Add your energy to our board and make a difference. Catch the ball and run with it. If interested (or you know someone who might be), or if you have questions about any of the jobs listed above, please call me at 828-4775.

Frances Robertson
Chapter Co-President



Someone is needed to help us sell this book to bookstores and museums. It's an extremely practical guide to landscaping plants native to central New Mexico

From Your Co-Presidents: Moving Forward

by Pam McBride

Looking back on my first two years as president of the Albuquerque Chapter and this third year as co-president with Frances Robertson, our chapter has accomplished a lot. In 2007, in addition to producing some great monthly meetings (Kelly Allred on New Mexico grasses, Patrick Alexander on New Mexico's ferns, and Bob Sivinski on botanizing projects in the state), we had six field trips, including one to the Valles Caldera that 30 members attended.

We also put on an excellent two-day workshop titled "Landscaping for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies" that was attended by 100 people who heard presentations by experts and got to tour several gardens that embraced the principles of habitat gardening.

In 2008 our programs included memorable talks by Carolyn Dodson on the book she coauthored with Bill Dunmire, *Mountain Wildflowers of the Southern Rockies, Revealing Their Natural History*; Ken Heil on the soon-to-be-published *Flora of the Four Corners Region*; Jim McGrath on his botanical work identifying wetland plants at Stewart Meadows in northern New Mexico; and Gary Runyan on tips for maintaining your garden that included an extensive discussion of the proper tools for weeding. We also expanded the number of chapter field trips to ten, and offered a tour of five native plant gardens to celebrate Native Plant Day.



Over the past three years, Pam McBride's enthusiasm and leadership have been invaluable to our chapter. Above was taken at the Millcreek Parkway Trail in Moab, Utah. Photo: Philip Clark.

This year, 2009, has been equally ambitious. We initiated a series of 25 "field forums" (the concept was the brainchild of Jim McGrath, chapter vice president).

We selected several trails in the Albuquerque area that we decided to revisit throughout the year. This allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the native plants growing at each location during the growing season and learn identification skills. In addition, we also scheduled eight field trips, two of which were overnight and proved both successful and informative.

Frances Robertson and Nancy Hudson led six very effective invasive plant control workdays to remove *Ailanthus* trees and saplings from the area along Bear Canyon trail in northeast Albuquerque. Speakers for our monthly public programs included George Miller on landscaping with native plants, John Rembetski on using *Salvia* in New Mexico gardens, and Becky Schnelker on a riparian recovery project in the east mountains.

Our chapter made three major decisions during the past three years that I believe will continue to help us in the future. First, we moved our meetings from the Albuquerque Garden Center to a more centrally located venue, the Museum of Natural History and Science. By doing so, we not only saved money, but increased the possibility of our reaching a wider audience. Second, by deciding not to continue to hold plant sales, we are now better able to focus our energy on educational and community outreach projects, and to come up with new, creative ways of raising money for our chapter without competing with native plant nurseries. Third, because the quality of Albuquerque science fair projects involving plants was declining, rather than continuing to support science fair awards we decided to concentrate our efforts on educating children and the community about native plants and the importance of preserving them.

None of this would have been possible without the countless hours of time and hard work our volunteers have devoted to planning the year's events, leading field trips and forums, staffing information booths at various events, and holding plant sales. Frances Robertson will be a great president for the Albuquerque Chapter in 2010 and for as long as she fills that role.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your chapter president. And remember, the Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico depends on your participation for its success. Please do consider helping out in some way, whether small or large. In the words of a popular radio show host when he signs off, "Tag, you're it!"

Pam McBride
Co-President

Musings of a Habitat Gardener: How Garden “Flow” Experiences Nurture Us

by Virginia Burris

I stepped out onto the back deck to make a quick trip to the compost pile located in my habitat garden. *One hour later* I returned to the deck, having been caught up in the many happenings in the garden: the various flight patterns of different species of butterflies, a variety of birds perching on dead, unpruned horizontal branches, and numerous species of bees visiting Palmers penstemons. Upon my return, a psychologist friend waiting on the deck remarked, “Did you realize that your garden visit is a flow experience for you?”



New Mexico's state butterfly, the Sandia hairstreak (*Callophrys Mcfarlandi*), was first discovered in 1960. Photo: NatureNM.

“Flow? What do you mean by flow?” I asked. He explained that the concept comes from the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced “cheek sent me hi”), a psychologist known for his study of happiness and creativity. In his book, *Finding Flow, the Psychology of Engagement With Everyday Life*, he describes the conditions that lead to flow: a person “in flow” is completely focused. Flow is a state of mind in which time is distorted, and the hours pass by like minutes.

Thinking back in time, I realized I'd had many such “flow” experiences before. My yearning to be out-of-doors often meant a hike in the spectacular mountains of Montana—the high jagged peaks accentuated by the dark, rugged granite outcrops cutting through the white snow; the sudden disappearance of the dark green of the evergreen trees; the air so clear I lost my perception of depth and reached out as though I could touch the distant end of the glaciated valley; the brisk wind blowing off the glacier sharpening my senses. A timeless moment.

I relive walking along Santa Monica beach among piles of long, branched, dark-brown seaweed, the waves softly lapping at my toes while pulling the sand from underneath my feet; my toes dropping into the holes that were left as the sand was pulled from underneath my feet; the cooling, gentle, off-shore breeze; the fading sun slowly dropping down behind the ocean. Darkness creeps over the beach. I take a deep breath, lost in the moment.

A voice inside me insists, “But these were not habitat gardening experiences!” I realize, however, that what all of these experiences have in common is that indefinable “pull” I feel when surrounded by the natural world. I easily lose myself in the wind, the smells, the surprise movements, the sounds that delight and stimulate my mind, the artful patterns that make seasons surprisingly rich and satisfying, even without the colorful presence of flowers. Habitat gardens can provide enough of this natural richness to facilitate my achieving “flow.” Realizing I am in a flow experience awakens me and reminds me to savor the moment.

As I visit my garden, there are so many areas I want to explore and understand more deeply, especially the interactions between things. First, there are the interactions between plants. They compete with one another for shade or water or light, yet sometimes they also help each other, as for example when seeds from one plant get caught at the base of another plant and are then able to germinate.

In my habitat garden, in addition to observing plants, I have the opportunity to observe interactions between plants and animals, and between animals and animals. Some butterflies lay only one egg per plant and some lay only one egg per branch. I noticed the black swallowtail followed this rule when it laid mustard yellow eggs the size of a pinhead on our eight-foot tall fennel plant. It carefully flew around and around the fennel plant, stopping here and there. What appeared to be a wasteful route I later realized made good sense, as the swallowtail was carefully depositing one egg per branch. As I made these observations, I was in flow.

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Our Ever-Changing Botanical Plant Names

by Carolyn Dodson

Every known plant carries a unique Latin name that is understood by all botanists in all parts of the world. This botanical, or scientific, or Latin name is a *binomial*, that is, it is composed of two parts. The first word is the genus, a group of closely related plants; the second part is the specific epithet, a word that distinguishes this species from others in the genus. The binomials are Latinized although they may be derived from words in other languages. They are written in the Latin alphabet, adhere to Latin grammar, and are always italicized.

Plant Names Throughout History

From earliest times people named plants, usually according to their uses. Among the first written accounts are ancient Greek herbals compiled by and for physicians. These plants were classified by their growth habit and medicinal properties. Subsequently Romans used these herbals, and added their own native plants along with their local names to the lists. In the Middle Ages, as the herbals were carried to all parts of Europe, more plants were added to the system, whether they contained healing properties or not.

Then during the Age of Discovery, ships explored all corners of the world, flooding European museums with unnamed exotic plants. With the influx of so many new plants, the 2,000-year-old Greek classification system proved inadequate. Dozens of new systems were proposed, but none was an improvement, until finally in 1753 Carl Linnaeus the “Father of Botany” published his cataloging scheme. He classified flowering plants into families based on the number of stamens and pistils, and then gave each species a two-part name. His binomials are still in use, and every new plant that is discovered is given a name following the Linnaean system.

How Do New Names Become Accepted by Botanists?

The privilege of naming a new plant goes to the discoverer, who publishes the name along with a detailed description of the plant in the language of the author as well as in a Latin translation. There follows an explanation of how the plant differs from closely related plants, along with information on where and when the specimen was collected and the institution where the preserved specimen is deposited. This is the “type” specimen.

Members of the botanical community will study the evidence, and perhaps examine the type specimen. In time a consensus will form as to whether the plant is indeed new and warrants the new name. The first name attached to a newly discovered species is never changed (well, hardly ever).



Carl Linnaeus of Sweden, who established a system for naming plants and animals that is still in use today.

Today plant classification is more than just a convenient means of classifying plants. Now that Darwin’s theory of evolution has shown that all plants evolved from an ancient common ancestor, the objective of plant classification is to represent the natural relationships of plants. Therefore a species includes all individuals that have evolved from a common ancestor. Similarly, all members of a genus share a common ancestor, as do all members of a family.

Why Do Plant Names Change?

Ideally, once a plant name is given, it is never changed. But we know all too well that names do change.

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Plant Names

(from page 4)

And until we have a classification system that includes every plant on earth and precisely represents the evolutionary relationship of every plant, we will have to accept changes. For example, if genetic sequencing shows that not all members of a genus share a common ancestor, the genus must be revised.

If two botanists name the same plant, the name published earlier is accepted. This situation was more common in former times when communication between botanists was much slower than today. Once a new name is accepted, the earlier name is termed a *synonym*, meaning that it has been superseded. These synonyms of course remain in older books.

The good news is that an eminent botanist in our state, Kelly W. Allred, has published *Flora Neomexicana I: The Vascular Plants of New Mexico*, an annotated checklist of the names of vascular plants (2009, available as an ebook, paperback, or hardcover at www.lulu.com). Here you can find the accepted name of every New Mexican plant and all synonyms, as well as references to further information about the names of each plant.

Carolyn Dodson is coauthor of *Mountain Wildflowers of the Southern Rockies: Revealing Their Natural History* and is associate professor emeritus at UNM University libraries. She has an M.A. in botany and is an active member of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico.

Membership Cards Pilot Program

This summer the Albuquerque Chapter of NPSNM began a membership card pilot program that is being tested to determine the efficacy of implementing it statewide. With the help of Jane Mygatt, our state website editor, membership cards were designed and sent by the state membership chair, Lolly Jones, to renewing and new members of our chapter.

Nancy Hudson and I solicited local native plant nurseries to offer members a 10% discount on plants. The following nurseries have agreed to participate: **Santa Ana Garden Center, Plants of the Southwest, and Great Outdoors Nursery**. For future updates, check the state website. Jane will post a link there for membership card benefits in the near future.

Fall is the best time to plant natives, so take advantage of the discounts, support our nurseries, and make a bird or a bee happy!

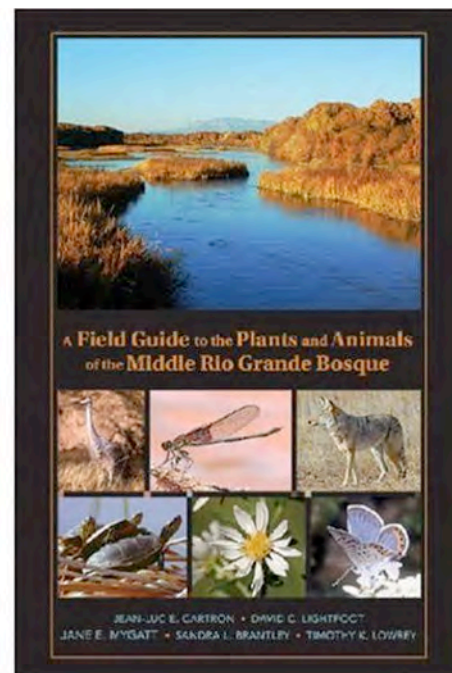
The Book Corner: Field Guide to the Bosque

At the next Albuquerque Chapter meeting, take a look at the newest addition to the book table, *A Field Guide to the Plants and Animals of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque*.

This hefty volume is an identification guide for birds and plants, as well as life forms you might otherwise overlook, including reptiles, amphibians, insects, spiders, snails, and fungi. It covers the area along the Rio Grande River from Cochiti Dam to Elephant Butte Lake. Moreover, the introduction discusses the physical setting and environmental history of this stretch of the Rio Grande. One of the five authors, Tim Lowrey, is a NPSNM member and wrote the section on vascular plants.

The guide contains individual sections on nonvascular plants, vascular plants, invertebrate animals, and vertebrate animals. Each is prefaced by information on taxonomy, morphology, reproduction, and other interesting aspects of the biology. The text is well illustrated with helpful diagrams by NPSNM member Jane Mygatt. In addition, for every species there is a high-quality photograph accompanied by a full description, and notes on its natural history.

Carolyn Dodson
Book Sales Coordinator



Native Plant Society of New Mexico: 2009 Annual Meeting

by Frances Robertson

The 2009 NPSNM Annual Meeting, held August 6-9 in Taos, New Mexico, focused on the impact of changing environmental conditions on plant communities from arctic and alpine vegetation to the invasion of tamarisk (salt cedar) in riparian areas. Appropriately, the theme “From Mountain Peaks to River Valleys” allowed presenters to cover the impact of global warming and other environmental changes responsible for the flourishing of tamarisk and the demise of our western forest’s aspen groves. The news was sobering indeed.

The Sad News About Aspen Decline

Sudden Aspen Decline (SAD) researcher, Kendall Clark, forest supervisor of Carson National Forest, detailed the effects of SAD in Grand Mesa, including the Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests in Colorado, and in the Gila and Carson National Forests in



Grove of trees with Sudden Aspen Decline. Photo: Linnea Hanson.

New Mexico. The news was not good. Her photos illustrated the severe damage to aspen groves at lower elevations throughout the western forests. The most severe cases of SAD apparently occur at low elevations on south and southwest slopes, which suggests that drought might be a player in the demise of our aspen forests but is not the cause. At this point, scientists still have much to learn about SAD.

Aerial surveys in Colorado show an exponential increase in SAD from 30,000 acres in 2005 to 138,000 acres in 2006 and 338,000 acres in 2007. On thing is clear: SAD is not due to normal succession or the natural replacement of one generation of aspen by another. Its symptoms include early fall coloring and the deaths of trees in groups or waves. Symptoms often begin at the edge of stands and spread inward. Tree mortality occurs quickly, over a one-to-two-year period. Woodborers and cytospora canker are associated with the dead aspen and are probably contributing factors, but researchers feel confident they are not the source of SAD. Because so many colonies of aspens are affected by SAD, U.S. Forest Service agents now practice triage in determining rescue locations—only the slightly damaged acreage is targeted. To date, approximately 13% of our aspen forest is dead, but even more disheartening is that rescue efforts often fail and there is no solution in sight.

The Good News about Tamarisk

Probably the most controversial presentation was the one given by Edward Glenn who holds joint appointments in the Departments of Soil, Water, and Environmental Science and Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Arizona. As an active research investigator with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, he is well known for his research on the ecohydrology of riparian vegetation in arid zones. His message was that tamarisk has become an important riparian plant that now contributes to the ecosystem. Since we basically have no naturally flowing rivers which flood and flash periodically, we have created a saline soil condition in riparian areas in which few plants thrive. Tamarisk, which prospers in saline conditions, has now replaced species that thrived in different riparian conditions. Without it, many plants and animals could not now survive.

My Favorite Plant

In this talk, six well-known botanists presented and defended their “favorite plant” by revealing all of its attributes in “plant vignettes.” Would you guess that sagebrush, evening primrose, columbine, and bee plant headed the list?

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Annual Meeting *(from page 6)*



Sagebrush, one of the “favorite plants” of a botanist at the NPSNM’s annual meeting in Taos. Photo courtesy of It’sNature.org.

Couse Foundation Reception

Although the following comments came from visitors featured on the website of the Couse Foundation, www.cousefoundation.org, they could have come from any of the attendees of the annual meeting during the reception held at the lovely and historic E. Irving Couse house: “It was absolutely magical to step through your portal door into the world of another century,...of artistic flourishing, of community artistic endeavor, of beauty and love of family and friends.” “The opportunity to tour Couse’s studio was a glorious surprise.”

E. Irving Couse came to Taos in 1902 at the invitation of Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert Phillips who had discovered (1898) the magical light of New Mexico. Their dream was an art colony in Taos. Couse was the first to join them in 1902. Seven years later, in 1909, he and his wife bought the Couse home and studio. The home has been in the family ever since, only recently being transferred to the Couse Foundation. It is rarely opened to the public. Thanks go to the Taos chapter for making it possible for NPSNM members to share the charm of New Mexico’s artistic past for the evening.

Field Trips

The Taos Chapter arranged a broad assortment of field trips for attendees. Offerings included a tour of the Aldo Leopold House, a visit to Santa Barbara Canyon in the Pecos Wilderness, a trip to the Rio Grande or

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Photos (from top to bottom): Exterior and interior of the Couse House; “The Wedding,” 1924, by E.I. Couse, a founding member of the Taos Society of Artists. NPSNM members got to tour the facilities. Photos courtesy of The Couse Foundation, Taos, NM.

Annual Meeting (from page 7)

Williams Lake, tips on taking photographs of native plants with a digital camera, and the chance to learn the basics of seed collection, preparation, and propagation among others. Members of the Taos Chapter did a terrific job in organizing the annual meeting, and our thanks go out to all of them.

Frances Robertson is co-president of the Abq. Chapter of NPSNM, and represents it on the state board. An educator of 37 years (retired), she is a Master Gardener with a passion for wildflower identification.

Musings (from page 3)

On another day I recall watching a pair of black-chinned hummingbirds, which return to my yard year after year. Communicating using a variety of squeaks and twitters, they suddenly soared upward, flying in exquisite and precise dual formation between the wide, heart-shaped leaves of the redbud tree. How do they communicate so they both turn at exactly the same time and in the same direction, avoiding collision both with the leaves and with each other?



Photo: Jerry Goffe

An area not usually discussed in garden articles and books, habitat gardens can provide a deeper understanding of the intricacies of the natural world, and perhaps bring us the greatest benefit of all—peace of mind. As Csikszentmihalyi reminds us, the more often a person experiences flow, the more their quality of life benefits.

Virginia Burris is a past president of the Albuquerque Chapter, NPSNM, and consults on habitat landscape design.



Fendler's hedgehog (*Echinocereus fendleri*), Pino Canyon. Photo: Nancy Hudson.

-President

Tabling Volunteers Needed

Penny and Gary Hoe, Bob Hass, Hubert Davis, and Carolyn Dodson have all agreed to staff a NPSNM table at the Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache in November. If you'd like to help them, or are available to help at other upcoming events, please contact Frances Robertson at 828-4775 or frobertson45@comcast.net.

Albuquerque Chapter Core Group

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State Board Representative: Frances Robertson, 828-4775, frobertson45@comcast.net

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Computer Expert: Open

Field Trip Coordinator: Open

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