

# Albuquerque Chapter Newsletter

## Native Plant Society of New Mexico

Volume 2, Number 4

October–December 2010

### Landscape Design Course with Natives Now a Reality!

by Frances Robertson

In our last issue I told the story of the hummingbird who, though he knew he couldn't put out the raging blaze destroying his home in the forest, continued to "do all he could do to save his home and environment" by carrying droplets of water from the river to the blaze." Now it's our turn to follow his example by sponsoring a Landscape Design Course with Native Plants in order to educate our community about ways to incorporate native plants into our urban world. Doing so will help to save water—a precious resource here in the arid Southwest, increase biodiversity and the health of our environment, and support our pollinators.

So please take time now to mark your calendars for **February 11-12 and February 18-19, 2011** when the Albuquerque Chapter of the NM Native Plant Society (NPS) will present a Landscape Design Course at Albuquerque Academy. We have arranged for some of New Mexico's most respected authorities on landscape design to teach the course. They include *George Miller, Beth Herschman, Judith Phillips, Wes Brittenham, Jim Brooks, George Radnovich, Carolyn Dodson, and Virginia Burris*. All have agreed to share their special knowledge with us.

The course will include presentations, field trips, homework, and time to work on landscape design plans with instructors and facilitators from the NPS. There will be space in the course for 70-100 people, some of whom will be students from Albuquerque Academy. So, we'll have a chance to influence the thinking of present and future homeowners about the importance of creating landscapes that look beautiful, as well as conserve the natural environment.

We'll need the help of every one of you to make this course flow smoothly. Eight committees will afford you the opportunity to serve where you think your talents fit best. And even if you feel you can only direct traffic or help with refreshments, we'll need you to do that. Eight chapter members have agreed to chair key committees. So don't wait to be asked to help. Find a committee now that you'd like to work on and volunteer to help the chair of that committee. (See the list below.)

Committee volunteers will be able to attend the lectures, do the homework, and join the field trips, so there is a pay-off for your time beyond knowing you had a hand in educating our community about the many ways and reasons to use native plants in our landscapes.

The course takes place on two Friday nights (February 11 and 18) from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and on two Saturdays (February 12 and 19) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunches will be catered and part of the Saturday activities will include time working with the instructors and facilitators.

The goal of the course is to take students from the nuts and bolts of landscape planning to using hardscapes, finding solutions for problem soils and problem areas, choosing trees, shrubs, and perennials, designing for habitat, selecting irrigation techniques, designing companion plantings, planting for pollinators, and deciding whether to use mulch, gravel, or grass. In other words, the course will contain all of the essential elements of landscape design.

### Please Volunteer for One of the Committees Below

Eight members of our chapter have agreed to chair key committees for the Landscape Design Course. Please read through these committee descriptions and find one you think is a good fit for you. Then let the Chair know you will help him or her with those responsibilities.

#### ADVERTISING/MEDIA OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**Sandra Lynn, Chair**

**505-256-2594, [sandra.d.lynn@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.d.lynn@gmail.com)**

This committee is responsible for getting the word out about the course through key media, organizations, and listservs.

#### REGISTRATION

**Lolly Jones, Chair**

**505-771-8020, [ljones20@comcast.net](mailto:ljones20@comcast.net)**

This committee will design the registration process (by mail and computer). This will also include determining payment method, keeping track of registrants and their meal choices, preparing a list of registrants for the instructors and the Food Committee, and sending pertinent information to registrants.. This committee will coordinate with several other committees.

### PHYSICAL PLANT OMBUDSMEN

**Hubert Davis, Bill Dodson, Co-chairs**  
505-352-6887 and 505-294-2143

Responsibilities include set up, take down, some technology, on-site trouble shooting, lights, pointer, microphone, lectern, seating issues, running the projector of Educational File photos at all breaks and lunches, and anything else that comes up.

### CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS

**Tom Stewart, Chair**  
505-881-6296, [tstewart@newmexico.com](mailto:tstewart@newmexico.com)

Prepare materials for registration packet and print any materials needed by instructors. Examples of materials the Curriculum Specialists will collect include plant lists, order forms for the plants the NPS will sell, resource lists (nurseries, landscape architects, arborists, plant sources, books), a Garden Calendar, speakers' bio sheets, class schedules, maps, NPS Newsletters, nametags, homework. This committee also works with the Hospitality Committee to set up a table to distribute packets at the first meeting.

### FOOD COMMITTEE—ANNE GALER, CHAIR

505-856-5033, 202-531-7032 (cell),  
[a.galer001@gmail.com](mailto:a.galer001@gmail.com)

Find and hire a caterer early on. Organize food for two lunches and mid-morning snacks for both weekends, prepare the choices for the registration form, be on site to distribute lunches and drinks, and make things look attractive.

### HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

**Lisa Driscoll, Chair**  
505-266-6404, [zaradric@yahoo.com](mailto:zaradric@yahoo.com)

Issue nametags, hand out registration packets, assist with refreshments, assist food committee, problem solve, and make participants feel welcome.

### BOOK COMMITTEE

**Lisa Alvarez, Carolyn Dodson, Chairs**  
505-220-9880, [premochevrn@aol.com](mailto:premochevrn@aol.com) and  
505-268-7889, [cdodson@unm.edu](mailto:cdodson@unm.edu)

Set up book table and sell publications at start and end of each session, and during breaks and lunch.

### EDUCATIONAL FILE COMMITTEE

**George Miller**  
505-352-9019, [gomiller@travelsdujour.com](mailto:gomiller@travelsdujour.com)

Maintain the online Education File and create a Master Catalog of the Educational File.

### FACILITATOR COMMITTEE

**Beth Herschman, Chair**  
505-450-2078, [herschman9@aol.com](mailto:herschman9@aol.com)

Sign up folks who will serve as facilitators during working lunches, breaks, field trips, and/or activities of the course. Assign them a task and responsibility after the exact activities are determined by our instructors.

### PLANT COMMITTEE

**Beth Herschman, Peggy Wells, Co-Chairs**  
505-450-2078, [herschman9@aol.com](mailto:herschman9@aol.com) and 505-256-1920, [pegasa@earthlink.net](mailto:pegasa@earthlink.net)

Work with Curriculum Specialist Committee to create the plant list we will use for our order form for plants. Responsibilities include determining what plants we will sell, preparing an instruction sheet for ordering plants (for the registration packet), ordering plants for April or May distribution based on orders from course participants, and designing the delivery and pick-up process. Committee members will be on hand to take orders for plants, answer questions about them, and in April or May distribute plants to those who have ordered them.

As you can see, we have a whale of work to do, so come lend a hand. Contact one or more of our chairs today and offer to help them out. *Be part of something BIG!*

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**Frances Robertson** is president of the Albuquerque Chapter, NPSNM.

### New Newsletter Editor Needed

In early 2009 I volunteered to coordinate putting out a newsletter for our chapter—despite the fact I already did this type of work for a living—because no one else seemed willing or able to do this. I felt having a quality communication vehicle was extremely important for the chapter in order to increase our visibility, share information, generate excitement about NM native plants and all we do to protect them, and increase our membership.

It's now time for someone else to take over the job, and this will allow me to help the chapter in some other way. We now have a Word template that can be used for future newsletters, numerous ideas and contacts for new articles, and I'm willing to train whoever volunteers.

This will be the last issue I prepare, so if you'd like to continue to see the Albuquerque Chapter produce a quarterly newsletter, please contact me ASAP at [bobhass9@gmail.com](mailto:bobhass9@gmail.com) or 266-6136. Thanks.

**Bob Hass**

## Landscaping With Natives: Autumn Landscape Colors

by George Oxford Miller

One of the joys of living in a climate with a long fall season is that many perennial flowers bloom from spring until the first frost nips them back. Others patiently wait out the blazing summer and burst into bloom after the reviving monsoon rains. Then they paint the deserts, meadows, and slopes with a vibrant palette of autumn colors. In a landscape, fall bloomers add visual variety and an accent that can transform the fading glory of summer into a kaleidoscope of beauty.

### Goldenrods (*Solidago* sp.)



When spikes of gold wave in the breeze along country roadsides, you know that autumn is rapidly approaching. The stately standard bearers of fall burst into bloom along creeks, meadows, and forest openings. Since they favor moist sites, consider a planting below your roof pour-off where the soil holds a bank of moisture long after the rest of the yard dries out. Or for decoration, create a border along a fence or concrete wall. Goldenrods spread by rhizomes and will create their own mass planting within a few years. Best of all, you can choose your size. Among the numerous species, the robust tall goldenrod (*S. altissima*), and showy goldenrod (*S. speciosa*) will look you in the eye, while narrow goldenrod (*S. simplex*), and velvet goldenrod (*S. mollis*) top out under two feet.

### Snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*)



By the time Labor Day slips by, this two-foot subshrub looks like a basketball dipped in yellow paint. A bouquet of hundreds of tiny, buttery flowers covers the plant into November. A mat of thread-like leaves hides the bundle of stems that sprout from the root crown. Snakeweed accents a landscape garden with a splash of color long after other perennials have faded. This well-behaved plant requires well-draining soil and must have full sun.

### Gayfeather (*Liatris punctata*)



Not all fall bloomers are yellow. Clusters of small, lavender flowers crown the two-foot, arching stems of this striking perennial. The feathery flowers and thread-like leaves add color and texture from August through October. The unbranched stems usually grow in clusters for added drama. This hardy flower requires well-draining soil and full to partial shade. The long stems may sprawl on the ground if given too much water or shade.

**George Oxford Miller** is the author of several books, including *Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest*. (All photos by the author.)

## Q&A With Judith Phillips, Landscape Designer

by Bob Hass

[Editor's Note: Judith Phillips is widely known both in the Albuquerque area and throughout New Mexico as a leading landscape designer who uses native and adaptive plants that thrive in our hot, dry environment. She also helps her husband propagate plants for Bernardo Beach Native Plant Farm, is the author of four gardening books, and is a lecturer at UNM.]

**Q: Weren't you one of the people originally involved in helping to start the Albuquerque Chapter of NPSNM?**

**A:** The Native Plant Society in New Mexico started in Santa Fe. Lisa Johnston and I co-edited the newsletter. We tried to start a Central Valley chapter in Los Lunas, but there were more folks interested in Albuquerque than spread out in the whole valley. So Albuquerque became the logical place for the chapter. I may have been the first chapter president, but that was a long time ago. Originally I became involved in the NPS through field trips. I was interested in plants and felt that it was important to get other people interested in the plants that are native to this area. The early focus on individual plants grew; the more I learned about them and about ecosystems, the more I realized their importance to wildlife. Learning about natural systems brought the realization that locally native plants are valuable because they will thrive on the available rainfall. If gardening here is an extreme sport, then growing natives is all gain, no pain.

**Q: Did you start off as a landscape designer, before also becoming a nursery grower and owner?**

**A:** I have always looked at plants as components of a picture, or parts of a garden. Even when I was a kid and young adult growing up in western New York, any time I was hiking I noticed the plants. A hodgepodge of individual plants doesn't please me as much as plants organized as some kind of a pattern. To me, some of the most beautiful patterns are those that nature makes.

I started out learning how to grow plants in a nursery in Indiana. I used to go out to see the seasonal progression of plants in the wild. As long as I can remember, I've thought, "How would that work in a garden?" That's definitely a part of the way I view plants.



Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), Mexican blue sage (*Salvia chamaedryoides*) and Engelmann prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*) are an interesting mix of shapes, textures, and colors. All photos by Judith Phillips.

**Q: I believe you are the author of four gardening books, and coauthor of a fifth. Did anyone encourage you to consider writing your first book, or did you already have the courage to do that? What motivated you?**

**A:** I don't think of it as brave. I've always written, including long letters, and I love playing with words. When I was working at the Ag Science Center in Los Lunas with Lisa, one of things she was doing was building a database for them. At that time I was propagating plants for reclamation. I started keeping notes for myself, such as what germinated under what conditions, what pre-germination treatment was needed, etc. The Center's seed locker contained seeds back from the 1940s. I got permission to take samples of seeds from every five years and used them to test germination differences. Of course I also recorded all that information. Then for my own amusement it started becoming more of a narrative. Lisa data processed all of this information and when she printed it out, it looked like a manuscript. I threw it in a desk drawer and didn't think too much about it.

At one of the NPS board meetings, another board member, Phyllis Hughes (an anthropologist and writer, among other things) asked to read the manuscript. Shortly thereafter, she asked if I would mind if she took it to the Museum of New Mexico Press. I said sure and she replied, "Well I already have, and they are interested." That's how my first book, *Southwestern Landscaping with Native Plants*, came into being.



**This small front garden is bursting with color, fragrance, visiting songbirds, and pollinators (and a few cottontails from the park down the street).**

**Q: In addition to doing all of this, you also teach at the university. What types of classes are they, and why do you teach?**

**A:** I just teach one class titled “Plant Materials II”—the second of two plant classes required in the graduate program in landscape architecture. I was asked to teach it because the department wanted to focus on plants that are adapted to our climate that won’t bankrupt water budgets. Many are natives. What we’re trying to do is teach people who are going to be making decisions regarding plant choices for all kinds of landscaping situations to make sustainable choices.

It has always amazed me that many landscape architects know little about plants and are often not particularly interested in them. Landscape architecture is about outdoor spaces and their structure, and plants are only one component, but as a landscape designer, I am convinced that the best gardens are those where the constructed part of the landscape and the plants are in sync with each other. The hardscape serves the plants, and the plants buffer the hard edges, mitigate the heat, capture and use the runoff. Green spaces nurture life on many levels.

**Q: At what point in your career did you start learning about native plants?**

**A:** I started learning about southwestern native plants during college in anthropology classes and in outside study of ethnobotany. When I moved to the Southwest, I was already in love with a whole suite of plants. But the plants I saw in local nurseries were the same ones we were selling in Indiana. When I first started

growing the local native plants I found they didn’t transplant well from the wild, nor did I feel this was a good idea, because it was putting too much pressure on native plant communities.

**Q: You seem equally at home with what are called “adaptive” plants, that is, plants native to other areas of the world that seem to adapt easily to New Mexico’s growing conditions.**

**A:** With adaptive plants, there is always the issue of them becoming invasive. However, I think it takes long enough to get a plant in small scale cultivation that we usually have some idea of how invasive it’s going to be. From a design perspective, there are some gaps in the native plant palette, and adaptive plants often fill that void. As an example, two Mediterranean shrubs—rosemary and rockrose—are often used because there are so few evergreen, medium-sized native shrubs.

Certain adaptive plants also have culinary value as herbs such as sage, thyme, and lavender, or produce food, such as the jujube, which is a useful barrier plant and smells great when blooming. You can eat the fruit fresh or dried. Quail love it!

The amount of water that’s going to be used in a landscape should correspond with how many benefits we get from each plant. If it’s just for looking at, it’s probably not worth using unless it only needs rainwater. I’m always trying to nudge people toward lower water use and more human and wildlife habitat in landscapes. I’m lucky in that some of my clients have read my books and already share the same values. But the average homeowner is often not thinking along these lines. That’s hard for me to understand since that’s just about all I think about.



**Purple threeawn (*Artistida purpurea*) and Fleabane daisy (*Erigeron* sp.) are a soft looking groundcover for planting in rainwater swales.**

**Q: Do you feel native plants and adaptive plants are equally appropriate for the home garden? Do natives provide any additional benefits that adaptives do not?**

**A:** When it comes to pollinators, both native and adaptive plants are useful. Wildlife is opportunistic. If pollinators don't find what they prefer, they use what they find. The context also makes a difference. I focus on residential landscapes of all scales and don't often design large public/open space landscapes, but in open space areas where you're within or running right up against fairly intact native landscapes, I think you want to be careful to use plants that grow naturally locally. For instance, at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, I designed an area around the visitor's center and only used plants native to the Refuge.

But when it comes to city parks, residential landscapes, or apartment complexes in urban areas, I think you plant what will grow best on the site and that serves the purposes the space requires. My plant choices are at least 50% native in most cases. Even native plants can become invasive if overwatered and some will self sow too much in a small space.

The choice of individual plants also depends on who is going to maintain them, how skilled they are, and what people are comfortable with and find attractive. I always ask clients what their preferences are in terms of color and fragrance. Part of my goal is to design gardens that will get people to spend more time outside, to help them slow down and experience things outside their day-to-day routine.

**Q: You are obviously extremely passionate about growing plants and gardening. What do you hope to accomplish by the work that you have done and continue to do?**

**A:** Something that happened recently made me feel that if I died now, I'd feel my life had been complete. U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and others from the Obama administration have been holding town hall meetings across the country called America's Great Outdoors. The purpose of these meetings has been to talk about how wild places are used and how they could be better used, and how to get young people outdoors more so they become the future stewards of the land.

I attended the meeting in Albuquerque intending to advocate for native plants as an important part of the cultivated landscape palette. Before I had a chance to speak, two master gardeners got up and said they thought it was really important that people become more knowledgeable about native plants, how beautiful the

plants are, how valuable as habitat. Apparently natives are on the verge of becoming mainstream!

I became a master gardener a long time ago, but was disheartened by views of many in the program who seemed to feel I was advocating a substandard way of gardening by using native plants. At that time the predominant view seemed to be that in order to be valuable, a plant needed to be a challenge to grow. But today there are just too many people in the world for us to be wasting water and other resources. We've exceeded our limit in making poor choices.

For many years now I've been asked to give a design class for the Master Gardeners program in Albuquerque and have seen, over time, a change in the attitudes of people. It's been most pronounced in the last five years or so. Increasingly, people who consider themselves avid gardeners find native and xeric plants at least as valuable a part of the plant palette as roses and other ornamental plants that require more substantial amounts of water.

A transformation occurred on the grounds of a local library branch in the early nineties. The facility had a rose garden there which was being renovated. In the hotter, dryer spots, low-water use natives including cliff rose, Apache plume, mountain mahogany, and fernbush (native to the Southwest although not to New Mexico) were planted. Whoever designed the renovation included the native roses, which I was really pleased to see.

**Q: How might the Albuquerque Chapter of NPSNM support the work you are doing, and how might you support the work it is doing?**

**A:** I usually give at least one talk each year to a NPS chapter. Maybe periodically I should write newsletter articles. I'm going to participate in the landscape design workshop next spring at Albuquerque Academy, as I have previously for other NPS-sponsored workshops.

As far as what NPS can do for me, I think it can continue encouraging people to plant natives in their gardens. This is an easy way individual people can impact their surroundings. I get so disgusted listening to some of what passes for news in this country, all adrenaline pumped hyperbole and very little substance. The only way things are going to change is if all of us do what we can to the best of our ability.

There are so many ways that native plants can engage people. Plants are a medium, like watercolor or oil, for creating art. I design landscapes in my sleep. Beauty is what motivates me.

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**Bob Hass** is outgoing editor of the Albuquerque Chapter newsletter.

## The Heat Island Effect in Albuquerque and What Can Be Done About It

by Joran Viers

If you were to walk into my old office down the hall from my current digs and look at the poster-sized USDA plant hardiness zone map on the wall, one thing might jump out at you. In the center of New Mexico, right where Albuquerque sits, is a little pocket of Zone 8, surrounded on all sides by Zone 7. What these zones tell us is the average low temperature; the lower the zone number, the lower that average.

So why is Albuquerque in a warm pocket? Or, consider Phoenix, AZ. If you're like me, you'll want to consider it from a safe distance. During the hot summer months, the city is still baking at 90° F at midnight. If you've been in the desert long you know the nights can get downright cold. So what keeps Phoenix so warm when the surrounding open lands are cooler by at least 10 degrees?

The answer, my friends, is blowin' in the (hot) winds of the urban heat island effect. This is not necessarily a new phenomenon, and was in fact noted in London as far back as about 1810 by the Englishman Luke Howard. However, in recent years it has gained attention as people contemplate the effects of global warming and the need to use appropriate landscape plants and hardscapes (paved areas) to conserve water. Some of our efforts to address the latter can actually add to the heat island effect, inadvertently of course, but real nonetheless. With just a little foresight, however, we can avoid adding to the problem and achieve the results we want.

Put simply, the urban heat island effect refers to the greater temperatures in urban areas than in the surrounding countrysides. This effect, which is most noted at night, is mainly caused by the huge amount of heat-absorbing mass in the cities. All the asphalt, concrete, stone, steel, and similar mineral materials effectively convert sunlight into stored heat, which is then slowly released back into the environment. Tall buildings have more surface area of heat-absorbing materials and so they contribute more than single-level structures—the so-called canyon effect.

In Phoenix, an additional factor is the increased humidity from evaporation of swimming pools and man-made lakes all over the metro area. These bodies of water slow the daytime heating, but the total amount of solar gain overwhelms this evaporative cooling, which is pumping water vapor into the air in the city. With



**Gravel is a great conductor of heat. The increased temperatures in this front garden are stressing the two trees. A better solution is to plant native grasses or a combination of native trees, shrubs, and perennials, and then cover the soil with mulch which will cool the area.**

increased air humidity comes decreased cooling at night.

Some additional heat is generated as waste from energy usage. For instance, the air conditioners that cool our homes and offices pump heat into the outdoor environment. Add in heat from combustion engines and other non-solar sources, and the total waste heat addition may be up to one-third of the heat generated by the sun.<sup>1</sup>

Increased heating of urban areas can cause positive feedback loops. As temperature increases, demand for energy use to cool buildings increases, and the waste heat is added to the mix. According to a report put out by the EPA, "In cities with populations over 100,000, peak utility loads increase 1.5-2.0% for every 1°F increase in summertime temperature. Steadily increasing downtown temperatures over the last several decades mean that 3-8% of community-wide demand for electricity is used to compensate for the heat island effect."

So what can be done to lessen the severity of the urban heat island? There are a number of things, ranging from painting rooftops a reflective, cooling white color, to replacing those rooftops with green roofs (think rooftop lawn), and replacing impervious black asphalt pavement with lighter-colored permeable pavers. Those infrastructure approaches work well, but can be costly and typically must be designed at the beginning of a project, or retrofitted at considerable expense. Even the green roof has its drawbacks in our arid climate; it's likely to need irrigation during establishment and even periodically throughout the year, just to keep it alive

<sup>1</sup>EPA, *Reducing Urban Heat Islands: Compendium of Strategies* (2008).

enough to provide the cooling benefit. So what else can we do here in Albuquerque?

One of the best and simplest approaches is to plant trees to shade buildings and parking lots, and to plant vegetation in and around our landscapes that will reduce solar gain to the mineral surfaces, and add some amount of evaporative cooling through transpirational water loss via the stomata of plant leaves and stems. Now, however, we run into the increasing concern over water conservation in many of our hot, dry cities. We all know how much water it takes to keep that cool, green Kentucky bluegrass lawn growing well throughout the year, and how much water it takes to keep that tall, full catalpa tree casting its wonderful shade down onto our house. Well, we may not know exactly how much water it takes, but it takes a lot. In an effort to conserve water, then, the well-meaning homeowner takes a turf cutter to the lawn, and replaces it with a pretty gravel mulch. Now all is well.

Except it isn't. Gravel is rock, rock turns sunlight into heat. Now the heat load on the home and landscape goes way up. And the majestic catalpa tree? Well, it's fine root system was likely heavily damaged during the turf removal, and its water source has dried up (never mind the tree drip emitters at its trunk—they do nothing useful for the tree). It's also trying to deal with increased heat, and the only way a tree like that can manage excess heat, to the degree it can at all, is to let additional water pass through its leaf surfaces for some evaporative cooling.



**An example of a low-water use Albuquerque native plant garden that provides varied habitat for pollinators, insects, birds, and other wildlife—including a resident road-runner—and uses no gravel. Note how mulch is used as an attractive groundcover rather than gravel, and adds to the natural look of this gently terraced garden. Photo by Bob Hass.**

So, the tree declines over several years, with the end result that the home is using less landscape water. But nobody wants to go outside because it's hot and too sunny; better to plop down on the couch in the air conditioned living room, in front of the big screen TV while watching somebody else have a real life. And the meter turns, and the electricity flows, and the heat piles on.

How about a compromise? If you want some turf area, plant a buffalo grass/blue grama mix and enjoy a native lawn for a fraction of the water cost. Plant trees that will actually do OK on low water, maybe not native but at least adapted—such as Chinese pistache and golden rain tree, bur oak (native to the open prairie of the Midwest), and big tooth maple (ah, a native at last!). Maybe an Italian stone pine, which in my experience seems to thrive on the driest of Albuquerque sites, while providing a broad, shady canopy.

Or skip the lawn altogether and plant a diverse mix of native flowering shrubs and perennials, bunch grasses, and trees, and mulch them. Mulch them deeply—just not with rock! Use chipped-up trees and scrap wood, decomposed plant material, or even bark. These organic mulches don't turn sunlight into heat, and over time they slowly decay into the soil, adding critically needed organic matter, which then increases the soil's microbial vitality and it's ability to hold moisture. The roots, now growing in a cooler soil, function better and the plants thrive. Yes, over time you have to replace the mulch, but the surface's loss is the soil's gain.

What about the aesthetics, you may ask—that gravel “mulch” is much more attractive than old wood chips. My only response to that is, if the mulch is the aesthetic high point of your landscape, then you need to start over. Besides, let's see a count of hands—how many people have seen a gravel mulch turn into a weed-infested mess within just a few years after installation? Most of us have, and yet the landscape architects, landscape installers, and homeowners continue to hope—against experience and reality—for a different result.

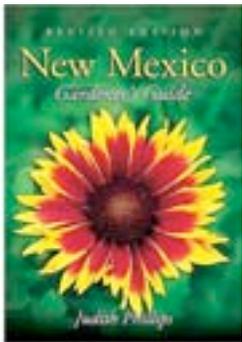
So, choose your plants well, site them well, plant them well, mulch them well—and bask in the knowledge that your landscape is fighting back against the urban heat island.

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**Joran Viers** is the county program director and agriculture agent for the Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension Service, and has been active in horticulture and agriculture in the Albuquerque Area since 1996.

## The Book Corner

**New Mexico Gardener's Guide, rev. ed., by Judith Phillips. Cool Springs Press, 2005, 240 pages, \$24.99 (\$20.00 for NPS members).**



*The New Mexico Gardener's Guide* is an authoritative manual on plants for New Mexico gardens, with advice on landscape design, plant selection, and plant care by a leading landscape designer and gardening expert.

Having moved to New Mexico from Indiana 30 years ago, the author was surprised to find the same ornamentals used in gardens here as there, albeit requiring more care due to the climatic differences. From her extensive experience with New Mexico gardening, Phillips has compiled a selection of 150 native and non-native adaptive plants that thrive in our hot dry climate with comparatively little maintenance once established.

Individual plants in her book are arranged by category: annuals and biennials; bulbs; cacti and succulents; groundcovers; lawns; ornamental grasses; perennials; roses; shrubs; trees; and vines. Each category is prefaced with general information, such as why you should not remove cacti from the wild, or how to prune shrubs. The treatment devoted to each plant includes a photograph, description, its hardiness zone, growing tips and care, information on companion plants, as well as instructions on planting and growing, and how it fits into a landscape design.

A feature not found in many gardening guides are the "added benefits" of each plant. Symbols on each page indicate whether a plant has fragrance or fall color, is drought resistant, suitable for cut flowers, or produces edible fruit. Members of the Native Plant Society will especially appreciate the symbols noting whether the plant produces food and shelter for birds and wildlife, and which pollinators it attracts.

For a beginner with an empty space to fill in one's yard, this book will start you on the right track to plan and execute a beautiful, easy to manage garden. More experienced gardeners will find this a valuable resource for refining one's garden design and becoming familiar with a wide assortment of plants. And all gardeners will want to refer to Phillip's book for tips on gardening maintenance.

**Carolyn Dodson  
Book Sales Coordinator**

## Take Advantage of Member Discounts

The following local nurseries have agreed to give members of NPSNM a 10% discount on plants when you show your membership card:

### Coati Natives Nursery

320 Frost Road  
Sandia Park, NM 87047  
505-934-5396  
[www.coatinativenursery.com](http://www.coatinativenursery.com)

### Great Outdoors Native Plant Nursery

10408 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW (n. of Alameda)  
Albuquerque, NM 87114  
505-890-5311  
[greatoutdoorsabq.com/home.htm](http://greatoutdoorsabq.com/home.htm)

### Plants of the Southwest

6680 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW (n. of Osuna)  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
505-344-8830  
[www.plantsofthesouthwest.com/](http://www.plantsofthesouthwest.com/)

### Santa Ana Garden Center

The Pueblo of Santa Ana  
157 Jemez Dam Road  
Bernalillo, NM 87004  
505-867-1322  
(I-25 N., exit 550 W. to Jemez Dam Rd.)  
[www.santaana.org/garden.htm](http://www.santaana.org/garden.htm)

Please support these nurseries and take advantage of the discount being offered to NPS members!

## Albuquerque Chapter Board of Directors

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