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Outgoing President’s Message

George Miller

After almost a decade of holding the office of president of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, I gladly hand over the role to the able hands of Diane Stevenson. Being president, and all of the other offices, takes time, energy and commitment. Our chapter operates at a high level because we have many dedicated members willing to express their love of plants and nature by devoting hours of service to protect and preserve, and importantly enjoy and learn about, the native plants that are the basic foundation to life on the planet.

The four pillars of our local organization are the monthly programs, field trips, conservation initiatives, and education outreach. The dedicated work by Jim McGrath, Carol Conoboy, Sue Small, and Bettie Hines in those areas, and all the supporting volunteers, have kept the membership informed and increased the profile and influence of the NPS locally and state wide, and all the way to our representatives in Washington.

In the past year, we have personally met Mayor Tim Keller and U.S. Representative Deb Haaland, worked with the field representative of Senator Martin Heinrich, and coordinated programs with the City Open Space and Rio Grande Nature Center, the Valle De Oro National Wildlife Refuge, and the national forests. We presented tables at Earth Day events, schools, Festival of Cranes at Bosque de Apache NWR, and the city’s popular RailYard Market. And best of all, we got close and personal with wildflowers on fifteen field trips throughout the state.

All our achievements are only possible because of our members’ dedication. We’re here because we all love plants and are concerned about our environment. That’s the glue that binds us together and enables us to work together in unity of purpose. The work, and the fun, and the mystery and magic of nature never ends.

Cover Photo:
Maroon Gunnison Mariposa Lily, *Calochortus gunnisonii*, found in Valles Caldera. The lily is usually white.
Cover by George Miller

George Miller, master photographer at work!
Mt. Taylor summit hike 8/10/2019.
George really gets down there to get marvelous photos!
Center photo— subjects of George’s photos
Photos by Diane Stevenson
New President’s Message

Diane Stevenson

Welcome to the second decade of the 21st century!

Thank you for being a member of NPSNM. We have an exciting start to the new year. Saturday, February 15, 2020, the Albuquerque Chapter NPSNM is hosting the Backyard Refuge Design Workshop. We are supporting the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge’s ABQ Backyard Refuge Program and native plant habitat by hosting this workshop.

The Backyard Refuge Design Workshop will be held at the University of New Mexico (UNM) Continuing Education Conference Center, 1634 University Blvd. NE in Albuquerque. The one-day Backyard Refuge Design Workshop costs $35 per attendee, and the optional Home Landscape Design Lab Workshop costs an additional $20 per attendee. Go to our website at www.NPSNM.org to register. The Friends of Valle de Oro NWR have offered scholarships to the workshop using this link: http://bit.ly/ABQBYRScholarship

Mailed entries must be postmarked by February 1, and the online deadline is February 7. There will be exhibitors at this one-day event you won’t want to miss, so consider bringing your lunch and enjoy discussing native plants in your landscape! We’ll also have a list of area lunch spots.

Judith Phillips, Landscape Designer, Writer and Educator, will speak at the January 8 meeting “Design for Wildlife: How to Create Your Backyard Refuge”. The February 5 meeting features Ariel Elliott, the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge’s first biologist. There are several great programs already on the calendar, with more to come. We’re hoping to have an overnight field trip in March if all works out. I’m really looking forward to the spring cool season grass & wildflower walk in May.

Members, keep an eye on your e-mails, the www.NPSNM.org website, the ABQ Chapter quarterly newsletter, and the NPSNM State quarterly newsletter for updates to our field trip schedule. It doesn’t look full yet, but it will by early April. Hey, if you’re not a member, this is a great opportunity to join us!

Please take a look at Sue Small’s Conservation news article and support the Botany Bill. So far, Representative Deb Haaland is the only sponsor of the Botany Bill in New Mexico. This is a great place for us as NPSNM members to support legislation supporting native plants and botany in New Mexico and across the United States.

Best wishes for a healthy winter!

Diane
Conservation News

Sue Small

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico joined others to recognize and thank Congresswoman Deb Haaland at Boca Negra Canyon in Albuquerque on December 13, 2019, for her legislative conservation work. She has championed fully funding the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) which advanced through committees in both the House and the Senate with bipartisan support. The Senate bill is S. 1081, and the House companion bill is H.R. 3195.

The LWCF was created in 1964 using revenues from offshore oil & gas drilling. Parks, wildlife refuges, forests, open spaces, trails, wildlife habitat are examples of projects funded by the LWCF. To add your thanks to the Congresswoman see: https://haaland.house.gov/

While there to celebrate at this LWCF funded open space, Tom Stewart, Sue Small, Jim McGrath, and George Miller made special effort to acknowledge the Congresswoman's co-sponsorship of the Botany Bill, H.R. 1572. This bill, Botanical Sciences and Native Plant Materials Research, Restoration and Promotion is an exciting opportunity to further native plant use and study. The Bureau of Land Management would be authorized to hire twenty additional botanical science personnel. Educational loan forgiveness for Botanical Studies, habitat restoration, producing and using locally adapted native plants are some of the elements of this bill. For more information see: https://botanybill.weebly.com/
Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico Presents
Backyard Refuge Design Workshop
Saturday, February 15, 2020

Judith Phillips
As the transformation from farm fields to wildlife habitat at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge begins to take shape in Albuquerque’s South Valley, the Friends of Valle de Oro launched the ABQ Backyard Refuge Program. With the support of 38 partner organizations including the Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, this is an initiative to bring the richness of our public lands and open spaces to the backyards of the Albuquerque Metro area. The goal is to spin a web of habitat patches, create and improve linkages between undeveloped spaces that currently host wildlife, making the Metro area a checkerboard extension of Valle de Oro.

To support the habitat initiative, the Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico is hosting the Backyard Refuge Design Workshop with optional Design Lab on February 15th, 2020.

- The one-day workshop will open with Aryn LaBrake, Executive Director of the Friends of Valle de Oro, outlining the criteria for certification as an ABQ Backyard Refuge. Certification opportunities vary in scale from large connecting and core habitats to small backyards, even patios and balconies. Everyone is invited to participate in any way they are able.
- George Miller, ABQ NPSNM Chapter President Emeritus, will describe the value of building wildlife habitat illustrated with his gorgeous photos and insight.
- Maria Thomas, Curator of Plants at the Rio Grande BioPark and Alissa Freeman, Assistant Curator, BioPark Horticulture, will describe the often deeply reciprocal connections between native plants and wildlife.
- Judith Phillips, Garden Designer and Writer, will follow with how-to advice on the exercise of reconciliation ecology—deliberately sharing our landscapes with other species.
A two-hour design lab will follow the workshop for people ready to take the plunge and create shared spaces for wildlife in their home landscapes. Seven design coaches: Wes Brittenham, landscape manager at Los Poblanos Inn and Organic Farm; Tess Houle, landscape designer at MRWM Landscape Architects; Hunter TenBroeck, owner/landscape designer at WaterWise Landscapes; Aaron Lamb, wildlife biologist and retail nursery manager at Santa Ana Nursery; Diane Stevenson, NPSNM-ABQ newsletter editor and Landscape for Life™ trainer, Margaret Menache, NPS-NM state newsletter editor and master gardener, and Judith Phillips, designer, writer and UNM adjunct faculty on climate-adapted plants, will work with small groups in a two hour design lab.

The Design Lab is offered to those who register for the day long workshop and bring a plot of the space they want to work on and photos of the space.

Design Lab participants have HOMEWORK:

To make the best use of lab time, bring a base plan drawn to scale of the space you wish to work on with you:

1-inch gridded paper is available at office supply stores. If your area is a backyard that measures 70' by 50' or similar dimensions, use a scale of 1” =5’0” (so a single darker square on the gridded paper is 5’ x 5’ and a group of 4 darker squares on the grid equals 100sqft). If your space is smaller, you might use the scale as 1” =1’0” (so each darker square on the grid equals 10sqft). If your area is fairly large use the grid on the sheet as 1” =10’0” (so each darker square of the grid equals 100sqft). Note that in the 2 hours of design time in the lab, you will only have time to design a small portion of the site and 1” =10’0 makes it difficult to label details legibly.

Determining the scale is important as you can then draw in plants at their mature sizes and other features at their actual sizes to avoid overplanting/crowding:

• Measure the outer perimeter of the space you are designing and plot it on the gridded sheet.

• Measure the positions of any features that will be part of the pollinator garden: existing trees and shrubs; the walls and windows and doors of the house that face the space; existing patios and walkways etc. and plot them on your base plan.

• Make note of any features that may be removed to accommodate the new design.

• Although you may eventually want to turn your whole garden into habitat, for the workshop, only plot the space you will be working on.

• Bring photos of the site shot from several angles (including the view into the garden from adjacent windows) to use as a reference for yourself and your coach during the workshop. This helps put the space into context and will remind you of existing features you’re working around.
Backyard Refuge Design Workshop participants will be provided with the ABQ Backyard Refuge Plant List of best adapted, wildlife-favorite plants to assist in creating plant groupings in the garden. The plant list is a spreadsheet with categories of scientific name, common name, approximate mature size to help with placement and spacing, light and water needs, seasons when flowering and fruiting, what wildlife is served, native status and other notes. You can also download the plant list from the website below. This will give you an easy reference to draw from in designing the plant groupings in your garden so you will have an ongoing food source for pollinators through the growing season without overwhelming your space as plants mature. You may want to make your own list of the plants you want to include so your coach can help you combine the plants where they will grow best.

You can find more information on the ABQ Backyard Refuge Program at

https://friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/.

This is a no brainer for native plant advocates since diverse plantings of homegrown and nursery grown native plants are the most direct path to attracting the pollinators, songbirds and other species that rely on natives for food and shelter. If you are already gardening for wildlife, you are invited to share photos of your refuge at https://www.facebook.com/friendsofvalledeoro

ABQ Backyard Refuge Program Scholarship web link:

The Albuquerque Chapter of the
Native Plant Society of New Mexico Presents

BACKYARD REFUGE DESIGN WORKSHOP

A COMPREHENSIVE WORKSHOP FOR ATTRACTING
BIRDS, BEES, AND BUTTERFLIES TO YOUR YARD
* plus *
OPTIONAL HANDS-ON DESIGN LAB WITH DESIGN EXPERTS

SESSIONS:
1. Valle de Oro’s “ABQ Backyard Refuge Program”
   by Aryn LaBrake, Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge
2. “Backyard Habitat Essentials”
   by George Miller, author “Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest”
3. “Plants that Attract Birds, Bees, Butterflies,”
   by Maria Thomas, Alicia Freeman—Rio Grande BioPark Gardens
4. “Basic Steps to Design Your Backyard Refuge”
   by Judith Phillips, author and landscape designer
5. Backyard Habitat Design Lab: One-on-one design tips with landscape coaches

BACKYARD REFUGE HABITAT DESIGN WORKSHOP
Saturday, February 15, 2020, 8:15 am–2 pm  Cost: $35

* HOME LANDSCAPE DESIGN LAB
Saturday, February 15, 2020, 2:15–5 pm
Cost: $20 (for workshop participants only)
Limited to 30 participants (5 per design coach)

Location: University of New Mexico Continuing Education Conference Center
1634 University Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131 (ample parking)

Registration Form

Name:__________________________________________
Address:_____________________________________
Phone:_________________________ Email:_________________________
Workshop: $________ Design Lab $________ Total enclosed: $_____

Complete form, make checks payable to: Native Plant Society of New Mexico and mail to
NPSNM, 5409 9th St. NW, Albq, NM 87107 (Postmark by Feb. 1)
Or register online at www.npsnm.org/education/workshops/ (Deadline Feb. 7)
Questions? Email to goxfordm1844@yahoo.com
Valles Caldera National Preserve
Through the Seasons

by George Miller

Formed by a super volcano 125 million years ago, the caldera (upper middle light-colored area) is surrounded by steep ridges and deep canyons.

A blanket of snow covers the caldera in the winter.

Spring brings a burst of life.
In the summer, clouds in the morning often mean monsoon rains in the afternoon.

In the Fall, the brown shades of autumn dominate the landscape.
Mesquite: An Arboreal Love Affair

By Gary Paul Nabhan
Chelsea Green Publishing, 2018
$22.50

Book Review
Diane Stevenson, 11/29/19

Even if you are only interested in native plant habitat and ecological inter-relationships, you’ll enjoy reading this book. It is much more. Ethnobotany, sustainable harvesting of food and wood products allowing for regrowth of mesquite forests, paleoecology, and resilience are cussed and discussed in the framework of mesquite species in Sonoran Desert context. With humor. Mesquite, ubiquitous in the southwest and south-central plains (Oklahoma and Texas) and into the Chihuahuan Desert that is much of Mexico. The author explores mesquite’s wide distribution, drought-, bulldozer-, and herbicide-resistance. . . Just how did it spread all over?

Mesquite serves as nurse trees, keystone species in its ecosystems. A nitrogen-fixing legume, mesquite is called a resource island and shelters smaller native plants from cattle grazing with its thorny growth habit. Mesquite blooms provide pollinators and other beneficial insects, including native bees and honeybees with life. Birds and other insect predators are supported by mesquite. And so it goes up the food web.

I write this in anticipation of the second and third fall/winter storms set to blanket the mountain west during Thanksgiving weekend. A great time to read such a fun science (yes, ecology is important science) book with cultural- and bio-diversity. Pick it up before our next snow and ice visit this winter. Give yourself a chance to experiment with mesquite flour waffles. Why not?

A couple of fascinating hummingbird facts from the National Audubon Society:

⇒ A hummingbird can remember every flower it visits—and knows how long it will take that flower to refill

⇒ Hummingbirds can see ultraviolet light
21st Century Winter Native Pruning
Diane Stevenson

We are in the middle of the short winter pruning season, mostly January and February in zone 7. I was motivated to write about this by a tv & internet provider who-shall-remain-nameless-in-print. The technician installed a box on my property easement, ripping branches off my Chamisa and generally making a mess of the landscape when installing the box.

I looked for good articles about pruning native shrubs, specifically Apache Plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) and was horrified to read online articles telling me to fertilize and shear the shrub. I stopped reading and looked for one representing our arid climate. Natives generally don’t need fertilization or shearing. I don’t water mine often even though they are fairly new.

I found a couple articles by a local landscape contractor discussing hand pruning or “native pruning” and why it’s the best choice. I cannot endorse any landscape contractors in the area because I do my own maintenance. An Arizona State University Urban Horticulturist provided reasons in the link below. I'll prune my *Fallugia paradoxa* and Chamisa/Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*) while they are dormant this winter using the recommendations below.

Basically, don’t prune native shrubs like you did back where you grew up - unless you grew up here. Selective branch removal at the base works well for many shrubs. It’s also the best method for pruning standard *Nandina domestica*, an inherited part of my landscape covering a wall. I’ve seen their tops sheared. Not a pretty site. It reminds me of my old landscape maintenance boss who wondered why folks didn’t just put a green box in the landscape. But I digress.

When pruning native and arid-adapted plants in your landscape, do some research first. When I needed to prune a leaning eastern white pine in Oklahoma, my research reminded me that once lower branches of pines are removed, they do not regrow. I noticed this tree had previously been pruned this way while I was deciding which branches to remove. To keep low branches on pines, prune off smaller branches because of injury, crossing, rubbing, or being a hazard. Once a branch is removed at the trunk on pines, it’s GONE!

Happy pruning!

Here’s the link for pruning shrubs:
https://www.highdesertliving.net/highdesertliving/page.html?page_id=129

High Desert Residential Owners Association, Inc.
New Mexico Plant List – Office of the State Engineer
http://wuc.ose.state.nm.us/Plants/home.jsp

This site has nice photos and a listing of appropriate plants for dry climates. I would definitely not recommend Norway Maple (Acer platanoides), Tree of heaven (Ailanthus altissima), nor Mimosa/Silk tree (Albizia julibrissin) ever be planted because of their invasive qualities alone. There are plenty of good native and native-adapted alternatives to lower water use trees.

Bermuda Grass (Cynodon dactylon) is an exotic invasive grass that will ruin any attempts to garden around it.

Have some fun and rate your favorite trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, cacti & succulents, turf, groundcovers, and vines. There is no place for comments, such as why the plants I mentioned above are poor choices.

A great website to visit!
Scheduled monthly meetings are the first Wednesday of every month at 7pm in the New Mexico Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW. For more info on programs, contact Jim McGrath at 697-1287 or sedges “at” swcp.com. Meeting places for field trips (codes A through H) are described in detail at the end of the schedule. Field trip participants should bring water, hat, sunscreen, snacks or lunch, rain gear and appropriate clothing to deal with poor weather conditions.

Some field trips may be announced with only 1 week to a month notice. Spring field trips depend upon good winter and spring precipitation; therefore, such field trips may be scheduled when we know wildflowers will be present. Please be aware that all field trip participants must sign the NPSNM liability release form before departure. Leaders should have forms available on site for those who have not signed one previously this year.

How do you design spaces that are appealing to both wildlife and the people who live there? Landscape Designer and writer Judith Phillips describes the basic steps in creating habitat either from a blank slate/no landscape or within existing gardens. Rainwater harvesting, layering plants for diversity: choosing the right plants for the site and combining them into attractive habitat hot spots, and managing the space through the seasons will be discussed.

February 5. Meeting: “Our Yards as Mini Refuges.” Wildlife Biologist, Ariel Elliott, who is the first biologist of Valle de Oro NWR, will provide an overview of the importance of National Wildlife Refuges in creating and conserving habitat for our native and local animals and plants through highlighting what is happening at Valle de Oro NWR. They will also dive into the benefits and challenges of how we can make our yards – front yards or backyards – into important stopover habitats or “mini refuges” for our wild neighbors.

March 4. Meeting: “The Use of Native Grasses for Evapotranspirative Landfill Covers at Sandia National Laboratories:” Denise Bleakly, a geospatial analyst at Sandia National Laboratories, will give a brief presentation on the use of native grasses and plants as part of an engineering solution for long term stewardship of three landfills at Sandia National Laboratories. Sandia has successfully been using evapotranspirative covers for the past 15 years, and these types of covers are now being studied for use at other DOE sites in the arid west. This talk will discuss how the covers were designed to use native grasses and plants, how the covers were built, the maintenance of the covers and the future use of this technology in the arid west.


April 1. Meeting: “Build it and They Will come: Attracting Wildlife to the Garden.” Wes Brittenham, Farm and Landscape Manager at Los Poblanos Historic Inn and Organic Farm, describes how native plants can be utilized to create a functioning habitat and pollinator garden or landscape regardless of size. Using his practice at Los Poblanos as well as his own backyard and other gardens he has designed as models, Wes will offer plant suggestions as well as other details that will attract and support a wide variety of wildlife- bird species, turtles, toads, lizards, and the all-important insects who are part of a healthy ecosystem. Learn some easily doable practices that will encourage wildlife to share your space with you.
May 6. Meeting: TBA

May 23. Saturday Field Trip. Cool Season Grasses and Other Spring Wildflowers. 9:00-11:00+ Leader: Jim McGrath. We will hike the Three Gun Spring Trail in the Sandia Mountains for about 0.5 mile to the wilderness boundary talking about grasses and wildflowers. For those interested we may continue Jim’s loop hike of about 3 miles with return via the wash. Bring water, hat, snacks and sunscreen. Meet at 9:00 am at “A” (SW corner of Smith’s parking lot on Tramway at Central).

June 3. Meeting: TBA

July 1. Meeting: TBA

August 5. Meeting. “Saving Beauty: The Story of an Endangered Sunflower.” Christina Selby will share the conservation film Saving Beauty: The Story of an Endangered Sunflower. “Saving Beauty” tells the story of New Mexico’s state botanist working together with the community of Santa Rosa to preserve the endangered Pecos sunflower in its disappearing wetland habitat. The film follows botanist Daniela Roth and her partners through a field season illuminating the mysteries of native plant conservation and the challenges of helping an endangered species to thrive in the face of human development and climate change. The film shows how the people of Santa Rosa, working together with scientists, are learning to see the beauty of this endangered wildflower in their backyard and value the role it plays in saving multitudes of wildlife and native plants that share the rare and unique aridland wetlands the Pecos sunflower calls home. Widespread conservation of native plants and wetlands only succeeds with public support and participation. As a successful example of native plant conservation, this film was created to inspire other communities to support native plant and wetland conservation in their own backyards.

September 2: Meeting: TBA

October 7. Meeting: TBA

November 4. Meeting: TBA

December 5 or 12, Annual holiday potluck and officers election. Saturday, 11am-2 pm. Pam McBride’s House, 5409 9th St. NW. Pam will provide some vegetarian posole. Everyone bring a dish to share. From I-25 going north, take the Comanche/Griegos exit. Go west to 4th street, turn right, go to the next traffic light at Douglas MacArthur and turn left. Go to 9th street and turn north. Our driveway is just past a small dirt road, Juanita Lane, on the left. The house is straight back. Park on 9th street and walk in.
FIELD TRIP MEETING PLACES

A. SW corner of Smith’s parking lot at Tramway and Central.

B. NE corner of Wal-Mart parking lot on the east side of Coors about 0.25 miles north of I-40.

C. Albertson’s parking lot at Tramway and Academy. Park along east wall.

D. Far North Shopping Center at San Mateo and Academy. Park near Wienerschnitzel.

E. Placitas. Parking lot of grocery store in Homesteads Village Shopping Center. Directions: I-25 north from ABQ to exit 242 (second exit at Bernalillo). Turn right and go east on Hwy 165 for approx. 5 miles to shopping center in Placitas on left. To car pool to Placitas, meet at “D” (Far North Shopping Center site).

F. Michael Emery Trailhead Parking Lot. Go east to the end of Spain Road (east of Tramway). At “T” intersection turn right and go 0.1 mile and turn left into parking lot.

G. Saver’s parking lot on Carlisle on NE side of Carlisle/Menaul intersection. Park behind Mattress Firm in SW corner of lot.

H. Los Lunas. SW corner of Home Depot parking lot by the tool sheds. Directions: From ABQ drive south on I-25 to Exit 203. Head east through 2 traffic lights. Home Depot is on left.

Articles, photos, and news submissions for the Albuquerque chapter NPSNM Spring Newsletter should be submitted via e-mail to Diane Stevenson by March 21, 2020 to (distevenson331 “at” hotmail.com). Any mistakes you see in this newsletter are mine. Thank you!

Become an NPSNM Member:

Join at http://www.npsnm.org/membership/

NPSNM is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the conservation of native New Mexico flora. The Society, and its local chapters, work to educate its members and promote the conservation of our native flora so future generations may enjoy our valuable resource.

Membership Benefits

Members benefit from regional chapter meetings, field trips, an annual meeting, and four issues of the state newsletter each year. Some chapters also hold plant sales and annual seed exchanges and offer discounts on a variety of books providing information on native plant identification and gardening with New Mexico native plants.

Additional benefits to members include discounts on New Mexico Wildflower and Cactus posters.

Albuquerque Chapter Benefits

Members who show a valid NPSNM membership card

Qualify for Plant World discounts without having to purchase a Plant World membership
Receive a 10% discount at Plants of the Southwest
Receive a 10% discount at Santa Ana Garden Center

NPSNM Albuquerque Chapter

Current Board of Directors – 2020

President: Diane Stevenson
Vice President: Tom Stewart
Program: Jim McGrath
Secretary: Dara Saville
Treasurer: Pam McBride
Field Trip Coordinator: Carol Conoboy
State Board Rep.: Judith Phillips
Membership: Ann-Marie Yaroslaski
Newsletter Editor: Diane Stevenson
Outreach Event Coordinator: Bettie Hines

Core Group (essential volunteers)

Conservation: Sue Small
Books: Lee Regan
Communications: Gary Hoe
Hospitality: vacant
Invasive Weeds Rep.: Don Heinze
Publicity: Irene Wanner
Refreshments: Penny Hoe