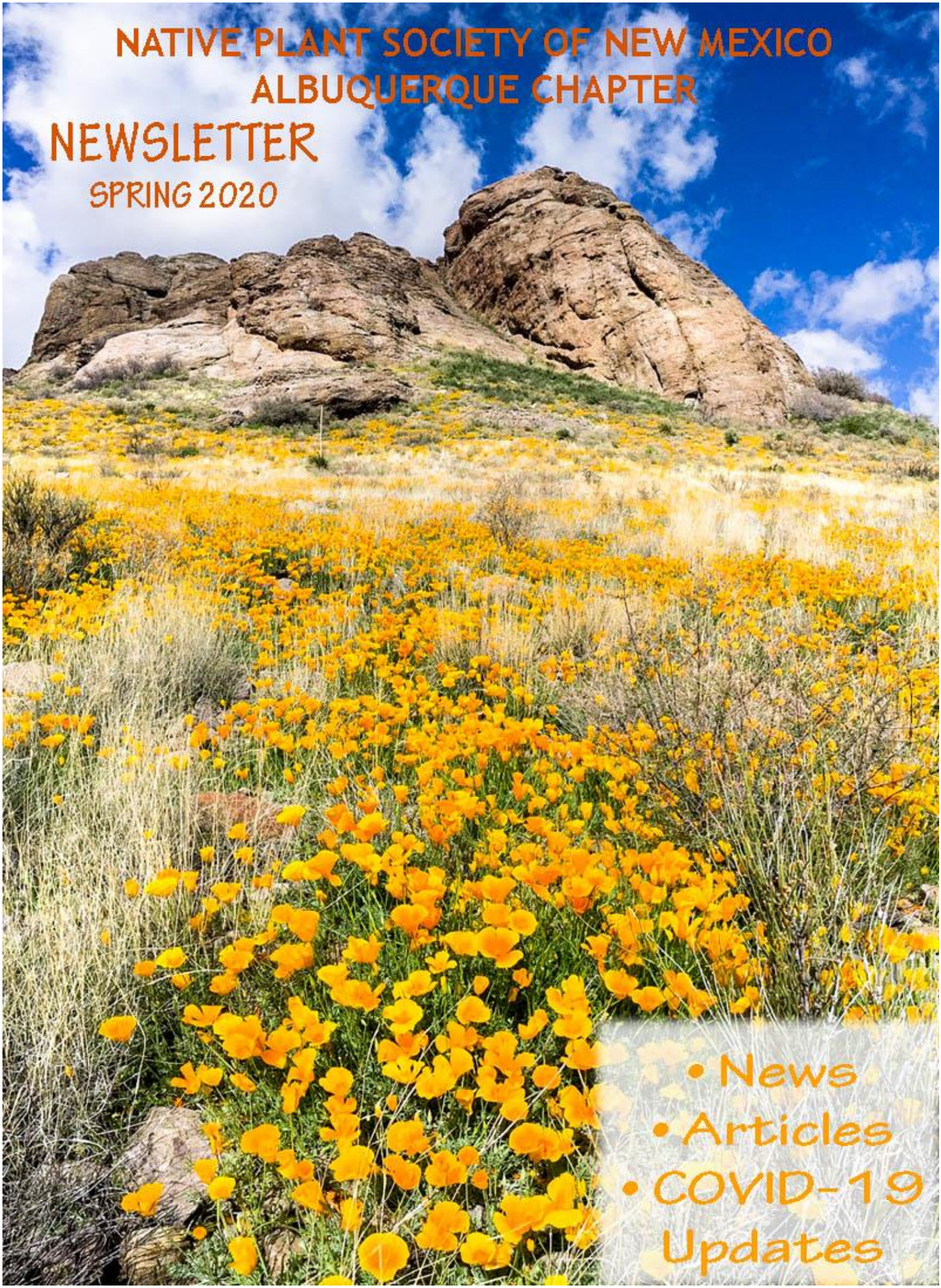
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020



- News
- Articles
- COVID-19 Updates

Cover Photo

Mexican gold poppies,

Eschschotzia californica ssp. *Mexicana*

Florida Mountains

near Deming, NM

Photo © George Miller

2020 Annual NPSNM State Conference

People and Native Plants: A Journey through Time

Registration will open after lifting of statewide restrictions on gatherings

Have you seen these little eyes looking up?
Whitemargin Sandmat or Rattlesnake Weed
Euphorbia (*Chamaesyce*) *albomarginata*
photo by Lee Regan, at Arroyo de los Piños
Quebradas Back Country, east of Socorro, NM, March 16, 2020

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the world-wide pandemic and local restrictions, there are no field trips or in-person meetings listed in this spring edition.

We are working to host the May (and beyond) Albuquerque Chapter meetings online.

President's Message Spring 2020
Diane Stevenson, 4/8/2020

As I read George Miller's statement from the Winter 2020 Albuquerque Chapter Newsletter for the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, I have to laugh – hey, it's better than crying. Covid 19, the new virus has affected all four pillars of our local chapter in some way: monthly programs, field trips, conservation initiatives, and education outreach. I hope our annual conference in Alamogordo will not be cancelled and am keeping my fingers crossed. Be sure to keep your NPSNM membership current so we can send you an e-mail or postcard if we can put a field trip or two back on the agenda.

We are trying new approaches. While field trips, festivals, and educational programs we usually participate in have been cancelled this year, including the Bosque del Apache's November Festival of the Cranes, we can support conservation and education in different ways. Our local board is considering hosting our first "virtual" speaker presentation, hopefully for the May meeting. Stay tuned.

Children have been active with sidewalk chalk, posting positive messages in my neighborhood and probably yours if you have sidewalks. I just added sidewalk chalk to my grocery list - for next week. We need to find ways to reach out to others as individuals. Phone calls and e-mails are great! I would love to hear your stories about reaching out to others supporting native plants and habitat conservation in the summer issue. I'm very thankful we are at home in the spring, when nature is in its renewal stage. I just saw my first black-chinned hummingbird at home today!

My front native habitat garden brings me daily joy and educates my neighbors. I've cleaned out last year's growth (mostly), pleased to see a lot of blue grama seed, as well as *Ratibida columnifera*, *Gaillardia aristata,* scorpion flower (*Phacelia integrifolia*) and blue flax (*Linum lewisii*). Of course I collected the seed to share and sow. My mulch solution for my Canada Red chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) was to sow plenty of native perennial seed in the "watering terrace" surrounding the transplanted tree two seasons ago. I added 3" pots including several different *Penstemon* spp. and golden columbine (*Aquilegia chrysantha)*. I also sowed Indian paintbrush seed, which comes with blue grama but has yet to show itself. Below the watering terrace/tree well, there is a thickly-seeded a blue grama and buffalograss turf area with several 1 gallon pots of Blackfoot daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum)* and fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*).

Maybe you have an area at home or close by with native plants that you can get healthier by walking. Maybe you can help care for natives in a local park or teach someone else how. Get outside and enjoy spring this year while keeping your social distance.

Celebrate life! *Diane*

In 2009, the sign at the Coronado Historic Site Gravel-Mulch Gardens read:

"These gravel-mulched garden plots demonstrate a farming technique developed some 800 years ago by ancestors of New Mexico's Pueblo people.

The gardens are designed to harvest and store water that falls as rain or snow. Stones outline squares that are filled with two to three inches of small rocks.

The sun-warmed stones retain warmth past sundown and when they eventually cool, moisture in the night air condenses on them and sinks into the soil.

These gardens are usually found at elevations over 6,000 feet where this simple technology made farming possible."

Editors Note: Now you know why gravel mulch doesn't work to exclude weeds.
No more gravel yards!

Gravel-Mulch Gardens
Coronado Historic Site with ancient Kuaua Pueblo
Hwy 550, Bernalillo, New Mexico
Photo © Diane Stevenson 2009

Florida Mountains Bucket List

ON THE WEEKEND of March 19, nine (fool)-hardy members of the Albuquerque Chapter of the NPS journeyed south to explore the early blooming wildflowers of the Florida Mountains. We were rewarded beyond expectations.

Seeing the Floridas blanketed with Mexican gold poppies *(Eschscholtzia californica* ssp. *mexicana*) had been high on my botany bucket list for the last three years. The chapter's first attempt was scrubbed for lack of flowers due to extreme drought.

Last year the leader cancelled due to the leader's health issues. This year the area received ample rain for a normal bloom, but unforeseen cosmic issues threatened to cancel more than our field trip. Fortunately the global Covid-19 pandemic had not penetrated southern New Mexico, so we decided to venture ahead.

We met under heavy clouds and threats of a repeat of the previous day's gale-force winds, but as we wandered through our first field of poppies, the sun broke through and began to burn away the clouds. Within an hour, the sun had warmed the poppies enough for them unfurl their petals and fully open.

We made five major stops, each with a variety of other gorgeous wildflowers mixed in with stunning scenic views of golden hills and rugged mountain peaks. In all, we saw 48 species of blooming flowers.

George Miller, trip leader & photographer

Fendler's penstemon, *Penstemon fendleri*

Parish's desert-parsley, *Lomatium nevadense*

Arizona jewel flower, *Streptanthus carinatus*

Gold and white poppies, *Eschscholtzia californica*

A SYSTEM OF NATURAL AREAS IN NEW MEXICO

By Jim McGrath

Cholla fruit (Cylindropuntia imbricata) (Opuntia)
© George Miller

At our last monthly meeting I gave a talk about Little Water Canyon, a unique natural area in the Zuni Mountains. During the talk I briefly mentioned my summertime experience exploring a natural area in Wisconsin. I mentioned that the state of Wisconsin has a highly developed system of state natural areas or SNAs. I emphasized the need for such a system in New Mexico. Apparently my raising this point caught the attention of several people in the audience.

Lee Regan, our Books chairperson, has been especially interested in this concept as he is very interested in outdoor recreation in New Mexico. Lee has suggested that we approach the new Outdoor Recreation Division of the State Economic Development Department with a proposal to establish a system of State Natural Areas in New Mexico. Lee, Sue Small and I have been involved with the Mount Taylor Zuni Mountain Collaborative for at least 2 years. We have found the Mount Taylor and Zuni Mountains area to be an economically depressed area that used to thrive on mining and logging. But the area is looking for a new economic driver and some parties in the collaborative think that an outdoor recreation economy is the ticket for economic improvement in the Grants – Mount Taylor - Zuni Mountains area.

During my talk I emphasized that New Mexico has numerous wilderness areas, which are very large areas and we have developed state and local parks and recreation areas within our national forests. We also have well developed trail systems that are in those parks and recreation areas. But I said there is a need in New Mexico for wilderness-like areas that are smaller in size than a wilderness. Such areas would have unusual, unique or rare biotic communities as their focus.

Little Water Canyon is a classic example of a natural area with a Colorado Blue Spruce Forest with near record size trees sunk into a shaded canyon adjacent to a stream created by a rare prolific spring in the upper end of the canyon. The site is remote and its wilderness-like character should be maintained to protect the biotic community and associated wildlife that depend on the steady water flow.

The bigtooth maple woods that is a popular Fall attraction in 4th of July Canyon in the Manzano Mountains would also qualify as a state natural area. However, this area would be managed differently as it is a popular recreation attraction and has been for many years.

The Blue Hole Cienega Nature Preserve is near the community of Santa Rosa in eastern New Mexico. The preserve is a very large alkaline wetland plant community that contains unique and rare plant species that include the Federally threatened Pecos sunflower and Wright's marsh thistle. Advocates for the Preserve have worked with the community of Santa Rosa and Santa Rosa public schools to enhance the appreciation of this preserve.

Continued on next page

continued:

The state ought to have an organized system of these natural areas. The state should inventory potential natural areas. The sites selected would involve multiple agencies and even private property. Management strategies would involve very high levels of protection for sites like Little Water Canyon and the Blue Hole Cienega, while other sites may be more accessible to larger numbers of people. Sites would be both large and small (acreage).

As outdoor recreation continues becomes more a part of our economy, there will be many outdoor users of existing trails and roads within the national forests and elsewhere. There will be different levels of outdoor aptitude, interest and physical skill. A system of natural areas would provide destinations for outdoor users that would increase their knowledge and appreciation of the natural world in New Mexico. These natural areas would encourage users to assist in the protection of these natural heritage sites. In short, a system of natural areas would be another addition to an outdoor recreation economy.

Chimaja Harvest Time
By Sue Small

Finding *Cymopteris acaulis*, variety *Fendleri* in my yard is better than an Easter egg hunt. This pretty little perennial herb has shiny lobed leaves whose taste reminds me of very spicy celery or parsley. The low lying leaves surround the umbel of tiny golden compound flowers and merges into the long tap root which is acaulescent. This tap root is deep into the soil and when dug out can be dried for later uses. While the fresh leaves are a delightful addition to pinto beans and salads, they can easily be dried and stored for flavor surprises later in the season. Because I have over an acre of sandy soil, I have upwards of 50 separate Chimaja plants to harvest before the Easter bunny joins the foraging search.

Jewels in the Desert

One color isn't enough for the Lyre-leaf Jewelfower

George Miller

Walking down a desert wash in the Florida Mountains, we were surrounded by hills blanketed by golden poppies. This was the first field trip (and last?) of the year for the Albuquerque chapter and we were ecstatic to see the bounty of poppies. Then we discovered another jewel right at home in the dry, sandy wash.

Though not covering the hills in profusion, the two plants of lyre-leaf jewelflower need not to be ashamed of their diminutive number. For me, they are always a showstopper. These were pearly white (*Streptanthus carinatus* ssp*. carinatus*).

Last year, on the Quebradas Backcountry Byway near Socorro, another favorite early-spring field trip, we saw white and lemon-yellow jewelflowers (the same subspecies) growing side by side. I've also found reddish-purple and pink-tinted colors (*Streptanthus carinatus* ssp*. arizonicus*), the other subspecies of this variable flower found in New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas.

Besides their color variety, the jewelflower is an anomaly in the mustard family. Unlike Gordon's bladderpods and the ubiquitous London rockets that compete with the poppies to cover vast acres, or the other mustards we saw with their four symmetrical petals, jewelflowers have urn-shaped, specialized flowers. The sepals are the showy part with the white petals marked with nectar guidelines barely protruding and curling backwards.

Photos on this page are

Streptanthus carinatus ssp. *Carinatus*

Their pollination strategy, protandry, is also an anomaly for the mustards. In protandrous flowers, the male parts (anthers with pollen) mature before the female parts (ovary and stigma). This prohibits self-pollination. In jewelflowers, the flowers are almost an inch apart on the stalk with one maturing at a time, another protection against self-fertilization. The anthers mature and develop pollen and block the narrow flower throat, with the stigma at the bottom. Though no nectar is available, the flower emits a sweet odor to attract pollinators to gather pollen. When the anthers dry up, the flower throat is accessible and the ovary and stigma develop. Only then does the flower begin to produce nectar to attract and reward small pollinators.

Photos on this page are

Streptanthus carinatus ssp. *Arizonica*

Photos © George O. Miller

Foraging In Your Backyard or Elsewhere

By Pam McBride

Since we are all sequestered, I thought I would write about what you can do with those pesky mustard plants (*Descurainia* spp.; *Sisymbrium* spp.) popping up everywhere. Unfortunately, the young leaves and shoots turn out to be pretty darn bitter and have been poisonous to livestock when eaten in quantity. However, you could gather the very young leaves, steam them, and see what you think. If you don't want to try that, gather the fruits, place them in a paper bag to dry, and grind the seeds into a meal to flavor soups or other foods. The seeds are tiny, one of the smallest seeds I find in archaeobotanical samples, so you'll need a lot of fruits. Of course, allowing them to fruit means you might be creating a massive seed bank that will happily germinate next spring, but it's all in the spirit of fun and experimentation and you'll probably have lots of plants appearing next spring anyway.

Curly dock (*Rumex crispus*)

Collect the young leaves and boil for 10 minutes or so like spinach. If you take a taste and you find them to be bitter, change the cooking water once or twice during the process. H. D. Harrington (1967:90-92) says in his book *Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mountains,* that he puts salt, pepper, and vinegar or lemon juice on the cooked leaves, but most sources say because the plant contains oxalates, or oxalic acid, it has a built in lemony taste. One cautionary note: if eaten in quantity, it can act as a laxative in some people.

Curly dock (*Rumex crispus*)
© Max Licher, SEINet Portal Network.
http//:swbiodiversity.org/seinet/index.php
Accessed 04/09/2020

Cholla (*Opuntia imbricata*) buds

So, we're talking about BEFORE the cholla flowers, gather the young buds carefully with tongs since there are those nasty glochids to contend with and you don't want them getting under your skin. Use a stick, wooden paddle, or thick gloves to rough up the buds and roll them around to try to remove most of the glochids. Then put them on a baking sheet and painstakingly remove any remaining glochids that you see. Alternatively, you can try burning them off.

Cholla (Opuntia imbricata)
© JRMondt savorthesouthwest.blog.
Accessed 04/10/2020.

Traditionally, the buds are pit roasted with hot rocks. If you want to try that, email me (ebotpam [at] msn.com) and I will send you a copy of an ethnoarchaeology article. If you would rather not have to dig a pit in your backyard, one online source (honest-food.net/cholla-buds-edible/) says that she first blanches the buds in salty water for about a minute and then quickly plunges them in a container of ice water and then she dehydrates them at 105 degrees or you can dry them in the oven at the lowest setting. She does not indicate how long the dehydration process is. This website has information on how to reconstitute your dried buds and some preparation suggestions: flordemayoarts.com/pages/cholla.html

Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) © Max Licher, SEINet Portal Network. Accessed 04/10/2020

The very young leaves can be eaten in salads or boiled as a potherb, but you will probably have to change the cooking water two or three times because like mustard, they can be bitter. You can also make dandelion fritters by dipping the flowers in batter, cornmeal and egg, and frying them or drop a flower on top of pancakes as you cook them on the griddle. The flowers also make great wine and Harrington provides a sample recipe in his book. Again, if you want a copy, email me. If you want to read a wonderful short story by Ray Bradbury, search for the book entitled *Dandelion Wine*. It's one of the stories in the book. It's a really lovely tale featuring a twelve year old boy in a magical small town in the summer of 1928.

Quelites; **Lamb's Quarter** (*Chenopodium* spp.)

Lamb's Quarter (Chenopodium album) Photo © George Miller

In the same family as cultivated spinach, these appear everywhere in early summer and beyond, especially volunteering in vegetable gardens and again, contain oxalates, so everything in moderation. Pick the young leaves and steam like you would spinach. If you are a meat eater, one traditional way of eating them is to sauté them with onions and lard or with bacon. I prefer to steam them and splash a little vinegar on the cooked leaves. Here's a recipe that I got out of the book, *Eating Wild Plants* by Kim Williams:

Lamb's Quarter Cheese Bake
Serves 4

1 ½ C cooked rice; 2 T butter; ¼ C chopped onion;
2 C tender lamb's quarter leaves, chopped; 1 T flour; 1 T prepared mustard;
1 ½ C milk; ½ tsp salt; 3 eggs; 1 C shredded cheddar cheese

Oil a 9" pie pan. Cover bottom with cooked rice. Melt 1 T butter in skillet. Add onion and lamb's quarter. Sauté 3 minutes. Place onion and greens in a bowl. Add other T butter to skillet. Add flour and whisk. Add mustard, milk, and salt. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in lamb's quarters and onion mixture.

Beat eggs. Add eggs and cheese to hot mixture. Blend. Pour on top of rice in pie pan. Bake at 350 for about 30 minutes or until golden brown and firm.

Happy Gathering Everyone!

ABQ Backyard Refuge Program

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

The ABQ Backyard Refuge Program has been official launched!

Interested in learning more?

You can now download our ABQ Backyard Refuge Program INTRODUCTORY GUIDE and FULL PLANT LIST. Also, be sure to join our network to be the first to access the full Education Guide, to learn about upcoming ABQ Backyard Refuge workshops and events, and the opportunity to certify your yard as an ABQ Backyard Refuge.

WOW! There are plenty of links to check out here too!

New Book on Southwest Wildflowers

Pocket-sized book describes wildflowers of Arizona and New Mexico

Adventure Press just released the latest wildflower identification book in its Quick Guide series, Wildflowers of Arizona and New Mexico, by George Miller. The spiral-bound, 4 1/2 x 8 inch book is sized to easily fit into a pocket or pack. The photos and succinct descriptions describe 248 of the most common and showy, as well as rare, wildflowers and cacti in the Southwest from deserts to alpine meadows. A photograph illustrates each species and a short description lists the plant's size and unique flower and leaf characteristics. For more detailed descriptions and photos of the flowers, visit the website www.WildflowersNM.com

Something to keep you busy sprucing up your yard and helping the Earth

CABQ Solid Waste Management Department 2020 Green Waste Pickup dates:

May 4 to May 15 on your regular trash and recycling day

The Albuquerque Chapter of NPSNM
Is seeking members to chair the following:

Outreach Event Coordinator
Hospitality

Gardening as Panacea

Nature Does Not Have a Halt Button

Janet Herbst, March 23, 2020

Taking a few hours away from the news sounded like a really good plan. Complying with Coronavirus personal responsibility requested by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention meant that choices for what to do for those hours needed thought. Okay: only take-out food so no meeting a friend for lunch. Go to the grocery store? Firstly, not fun. Secondly, go only when necessary. There is food in the house. Take a walk? Yes. Wish there was more tree canopy and shrubs to look at in the neighborhood. Gravel is so boring and heat reflective. Tree shade, green bushes would be much more pleasant. What about a walk in the yard? Very doable. Recommendable for so many reasons. In a meta-analysis of the topic published in Preventive Medicine Reports (March 2017), Masashi Soga, Kevin J. Gaston, and Yuichi Yamaura conclude:

> Overall, the results suggest that participating in gardening activities has a significant positive impact on health. Indeed, the positive association with gardening was observed for a wide range of health outcomes, such as reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, stress, mood disturbance, and BMI, as well as increases in quality of life, sense of community, physical activity levels, and cognitive function.

That walk in the yard resulted in over three miles of steps (who doesn't carry a smart phone in their pocket when in the yard?) From the shed to the garage and back again rearranging, cleaning, doing visual inventory, making mental list for a foray to the plant nursery. Guess what? Turns out local nurseries are open! A good portion of those stores is outside: there is plenty of space between shoppers! Nature does not have a halt button and neither do I. Now I have a plan and a purpose when I need a sanity break.

Happy gardening!

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335516301401

Photos this page
Pasque flower
(*Pulsatilla patens* ssp. *multifida*)
Pine Flats picnic area
Manzano Mountains
© Doris Eng 2020

Good news link:

ABQ journal New Mexico Chile pioneer, Fabian Garcia
September 30, 2019
20 Years of Mud, Sweat and Tears
Chile Pioneer Honored
https://www.abqjournal.com/1372808/chile-pioneer-honored.html

Adventures of a Backyard Refugee

Tom Stewart, 04/08/2020

I snapped these photos in my backyard after noticing this bee hesitatingly eyeballing flowers of the golden currant shrub (*Ribes aureum*) I planted a few years ago. Why didn't she just go for it, diving into the sweetly clove-scented flowers for nectar and pollen? Then I noticed that most of the flowers now had red centers instead of the greenish yellow that was prevalent days before, and I recollected hearing that they turn red once they have been well pollinated. Sure enough, the bee was mostly dipping into the flowers that remained all yellow.

Maybe I have become easily amused, or a little stir-crazy? Under the current directive for us to stay at home if at all possible, I am finding new sources of fascination around my own house. I have planted native species for several years, but the wonderful Backyard Refuge Design Workshop we held in February changed my whole perspective on how my landscape served not only me but other living things as well. A case in point: the bee was not a honeybee, though similar in size and shape. It was a native long-tongued or digger bee (*Anthophora* spp.), guaranteeing me a big crop of currants that will in turn be a treat for some birds and for my box turtles.

I don't want to diminish the hardships suffered by true refugees in any way, but now that we have been made into homebodies, those of us lucky enough to have yards can take refuge there, enjoying and learning about the plants as well as the other creatures taking refuge, not from a virus but from civilization. And I am looking forward to the progression of the season, the claret cup and other cactus fruits that roadrunners and thrashers like to steal, the stemless and the golden Organ Mountain evening primroses (*Oenothera caespitosa* and *O. organensis*) attracting pollinating moths at night, red and pink penstemons bringing in hummingbirds, and chocolate flowers (*Berlandiera lyrata*) scenting the morning air and producing seeds the goldfinches seem to crave.

So if we have to stay home, there is more to life than Netflix and Facebook. Even when the pandemic is over, my advice will remain, "do it, plant it, watch it change and grow." You will be glad you did.

Photos this page:
Native long-tongued or digger bee
Anthophora spp.

Professional Grower at Home

Starting Veg

©Diane Stevenson, 04/06/2020

Sowing seed with homemade wood dibble
Photo © Diane Stevenson

I love growing plants. It's the pesticide and chemical applications I can't stand in conventional growing. A number of years ago, I worked as part of a crew of 6 responsible for maintaining a 6-acre greenhouse range. Weekend watering tasks were split so there were two of us each day which meant that we had to walk very fast to assure no plant wilted to the PWP (permanent wilting point), I lost inches and weight. The propagation house had hundreds of 1020 (dimensions in inches) flats with *tiny* cells like the 512's, or 512 cells per plug tray, were always the biggest challenge since you could fit a dozen plants in a shot glass, about the size of a cell in a 72 plug tray. The tiny plugs were destined to finish in 1020 flats with 36 plants per flat.

I perfected the clear plastic egg carton growing system about a decade ago. It's a great way for the home gardener to start their own veggies and annuals early for transplanting after frost. I've tried this system with native plants, but with less success because they have much different evolutionary strategies than tomatoes and zinnias. Some natives need vernalization, or cold/winter treatment, to germinate and grow, so that takes planning and labeling longer term.

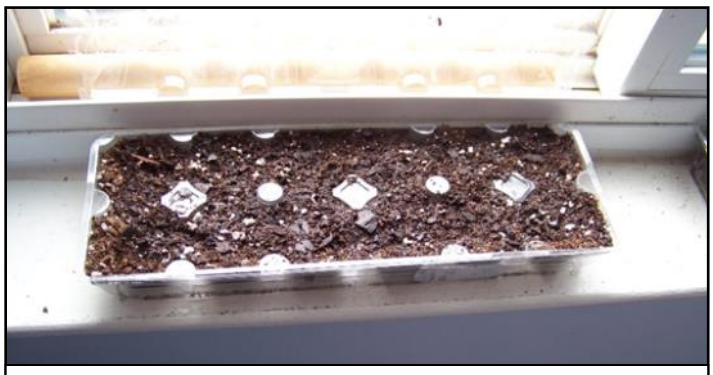
Labeled & bottom-watered trays in window
Photo © Diane Stevenson

The key points to starting your windowsill transplants are to use a high-quality sterile growing media or mix without added fertilizer, preferably a seed starting mix, because it is usually finer. Most of these are peat moss-based, with no actual soil. If you don't have a seed starting mix, screen the big chunks out in case the seed needs covering. A large clean shaker jar that once contained your favorite spice will work as a screen .

Label each tray with plant name, date, seed source & age – I've used cut up yogurt tubs as tags with a permanent marker, though pencil withstands our sun better. Record the same information in your growing journal and leave a place to write dates and notes on germination and what happened later. You'll be glad you took notes.

Cut the three parts of the egg carton apart. Use the clear top as the tray; punch 3-5 drain holes in the bottom of the larger egg cell with an ice pick for soil and the seeds; use the other egg-shaped tray to be the greenhouse covering. Fill each cell with your growing mix, sow seeds & cover lightly with media

(unless the seed need light to germinate), and place in egg tray filled about 1/3 full of tepid water. Spray top with tepid water in a spray bottle to help wet the growing media. Allow time for the water to move throughout the media by capillary action before draining excess water off carefully. Set on a sunny windowsill or growing mat if you have one, making sure your cat or dog does not have access.



Media looks darker (wet) after watering from below
Photo © Diane Stevenson

Once sown and watered, germination requires that the soil mix/media does not dry out. Ever. I usually keep the trays covered 24-hours for the first 3-4 days, then remove the top in early evening so water molds don't kill the germinating seeds and replace the cover during the day. Keeping seeds moist to germinate and then grow big enough to transplant will be a once- or twice-daily task.

Condensation on "greenhouse"
Photo © Diane Stevenson

Once most seeds have germinated, permanently remove the top cover. I fill the tray with water on my morning watering check if the tray feels light, especially if it will be sunny. It is amazing how quickly this small volume of media will dry out if you forget. Of course, on cloudy or cold days, you may not need to water. Move the seed trays out of the windowsill on nights that outside temperatures get near or below freezing. Even the best windows will be a cold spot and could slow germination or kill small seedlings.

If you're lucky, you get about 10 plants in each tray, depending on germination percentage and your experience. As in a greenhouse, you can grow as many trays as you have space and desire to grow. The heirloom tomato varieties I am starting are Cherokee Purple, one of my favorites, and Moskvich, an early red variety I'm trying.

Growing plants from seed is a life-affirming task I enjoy. Pretty important these days.

Editor's note: large seed, such as beans, squash, & sunflowers are better sown in pots at least 3" deep and wide. Try sowing whole seed from your pantry.

Eleven days after sowing, 83% germination
Photo © Diane Stevenson

People and Native Plants, A Journey Through Time

2020 Native Plant Society of New Mexico Conference,
hosted by NPSNM – Otero Chapter

Location: Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center in Alamogordo, NM
Field trips in Tularosa, La Luz, Cloudcroft and surrounding areas throughout the Tularosa Basin

Field trips and workshops over the three-day conference will reveal the rich history of both the people and the native plants throughout the Tularosa Basin and surrounding ranges.

Presentations, field trips and workshops over the three-day conference will support our theme of "A Journey Through Time" by highlighting the rich history of both the people and the native plants throughout the Tularosa Basin and surrounding ranges. We expect 200 + attendees from all over the state as well as students in botany, conservation and related fields.

Keynote speaker will be Pam McBride, Paleoethnobotanist at Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of NM - Overview of Tularosa Basin and sites that she and others have worked on with a focus on the Paleo/Mogollon period. Additional speakers, workshops and fieldtrips will focus on:

- History and native plants of the Tularosa Basin and surrounding ranges
- Utilization of native plants throughout of the southwest (prehistoric, traditional and current uses.)
- Utilization of native plants, including the element of ethical harvest and alternative sources.
- Water conservation and utilization specific to the area of the Tularosa Basin and surrounding range.
- Appropriate use of native plants for soil conservation, wildlife
- Invasive plant and animal species that affect our native plant environment

For more information or to participate as a speaker or to volunteer for a committee please contact Jen Gruger, President of the NPSNM Otero Chapter at jengruger@gmail.com or (505) 710-2924.

Students Create First-Ever Pollinator Protection License Plate in New Mexico!

New Mexico's first Pollinator Protection License Plate, featuring student artwork, is now available! Sales of the license plate will fund pollinator-friendly planting on state roads

Albuquerque, NM, April 1, 2020– New Mexico's first-ever pollinator protection license plate is now available! New Mexicans can celebrate spring and support native plants and pollinators through their purchase of the new Pollinator Protection License Plate. Proceeds from the license plate will fund pollinator-protection activities by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, including increasing habitat by seeding roadsides with native plants and creating educational gardens.

The license plate project enhances existing efforts by the Department of Transportation to implement habitat-friendly practices on New Mexico roadsides, including reducing mowing and spraying of herbicides.

The license plate features artwork by Jazlyn Smith, a sixth grade student at Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. Jazlyn, a lifelong artist, illustrated a blanketflower and green sweat bee to portray the relationship between native flowers and pollinators.

"I think the license plate will help people understand that it's important to try to protect plants and pollinators in any way we can," said Jazlyn Smith.

Jazlyn's art was chosen by a panel of esteemed judges, including a bee scientist and botanist, from entries submitted by Wild Friends students from around New Mexico. Wild Friends is a civics education program for grades 4 -12 based at the UNM School of Law. Students studied pollinators and their critical role in sustaining both food systems and natural ecosystems, and helped pass a bill to create the license plate at the 2019 Legislature.

The license plate costs $25 for the initial purchase and $15 for yearly renewal. Plates may be purchased online at mvd.newmexico.gov

"We are thrilled with the beautiful license plate that students worked hard to create to protect pollinators, and appreciate the partnership with MVD and DOT to bring it to life," said Sue George, Wild Friends Director.

For more information about this project, please contact
Sue George, Director at 505-277-5089 or email at Sgeorge2 [at] unm.edu

Note: Chapter Field trips have been suspended until local restrictions have been lifted. We are attempting to offer the May meeting online. Check your e-mail for updates to participate.

May 6. Virtual Meeting: "The Use of Soil Seed Banks in Ecological Restoration." Akasha Faist is an Assistant Professor of Rangeland Restoration Ecology in the department of Animal and Range Sciences at New Mexico State University. Her research lab examines a variety of different restoration actions focused on identifying and overcoming barriers to restoration success. For this presentation Dr. Faist will discuss the ecology of soil seed banks and illustrate how they may be effectively used in ecological restoration efforts.

June 3. Tentative Virtual Meeting: "Forest Changes in Northern New Mexico Mountains: Past, Present, & Climate-Driven Future" USGS research ecologist Craig Allen highlights the dynamic ecological history and recent trends of our forests in the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains, drawing from abundant and diverse local ecological research studies to document forest responses to changes in climate, fire, and human land uses through time. Past forest changes, from 500,000 years ago to ~40 years ago, are reconstructed from paleo-environmental evidence including pollen & charcoal in lake and bog sediments, packrat middens, soils, tree-rings, and historical photographs & records. Recent and presently occurring forest changes are well-documented by extraordinary amounts of long-term local ecological research in recent decades, illustrating historically unprecedented increases in the extent and severity of multiple forest disturbance processes (drought & heat stress, insect outbreaks, fire, post-fire floods & debris flows) in response to hotter drought conditions over the past 20 years. Finally, current research will be presented on the anticipated effects of ongoing and projected climate changes on forests in New Mexico (and globally),

Articles, photos, and news submissions for the Albuquerque chapter NPSNM Summer (July) Newsletter should be submitted via e-mail to Diane Stevenson by June 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

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