

Native Plant Society of New Mexico 2023 conference

Presentation speaker biographies

Flora of West Texas - an overview highlighting selected habitats and the flora within

Michael Eason is a botanist, native landscape designer, and prolific photographer. He joined the San Antonio Botanical Garden in 2017 as the Center for Plant Conservation representative guiding the South Texas rare plant conservation efforts. In 2022 he moved to full time to continue to develop their rare plant conservation program and curate the living collections, focusing on native plants of Texas and northern Mexico. Michael brings over twenty years of experience as a conservation botanist, with extensive knowledge of the flora and ecology of the southwest region of the U.S. Previously, Michael worked for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, where he managed their conservation and field survey programs. Through his consulting business, Texas Flora, he designs and installs native plant gardens, as well as performs plant inventories, wetland delineations, and rare plant surveys on public and private lands. In 2018, he published *Wildflowers of Texas* and is currently working on several other book projects, including "Wildflowers and other Plants of the Chihuahuan Desert - A Field Guide", "The Fabaceae of Texas", and "Naturalized and Invasive Plants of Texas". Additionally, he has served on the State Executive Board for the Native Plant Society of Texas and is currently the State Botanist for the organization.

The Cacti of Texas in Their Natural Habitat

Ad Konings is a biologist by profession and specializes in underwater observation and photography of cichlids (tropical freshwater fish) and has authored more than 20 books relating to these fishes. Cacti have fascinated him since he moved to El Paso, Texas, in 1996. He and his wife Gertrud have traveled extensively throughout the state in order to locate and photograph each and every cactus species in its natural setting. They are some of the very few people who have seen and photographed each of the 136 Texas species in the wild, almost all of them while in bloom; not a minor achievement when one considers that many species flower for just a single afternoon per year, if at all.

Rare plants of Big Bend National Park

Dr. Carolyn Whiting moved to Big Bend National Park to join the National Park Service as a botanist in 2021. Before moving to west Texas, she was a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin working on rare plants in Big Bend, invasive grasses in central Texas, and fire ecology with Dr. Norma Fowler. She is originally from New Jersey and got her undergraduate degree from Smith College in western Massachusetts. Carolyn enjoys growing vegetables in her backyard in Big Bend and is on the lookout for varieties that will tolerate the tough desert growing conditions.

Aquatic Plants of West Texas

Casey Williams has worked as an aquatic plant ecologist for 10 years with BIO-WEST based in Round Rock, Texas. He has worked on multiple aquatic restoration projects in Texas and Utah which include removal or management of nuisance invasive aquatic plants and restoring native aquatic plant communities in reservoirs, springs, rivers and constructed wetlands. Some of these projects include Comal Springs submerged habitat restoration for the endangered Fountain darter; Provo River delta restoration for the threatened June sucker; Sandia wetlands created habitat for migrating waterfowl and Coletto Creek Reservoir game fish habitat improvement project. He is also active in collecting aquatic plants across Texas to update the herbarium collection of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. Casey is Secretary of the Texas Aquatic Plant Management Society as well as a member of the Texas Society for Ecological Restoration. He is also active in the Aquatic Plant Management Society. He is a graduate of Texas State University with a B.S. in Aquatic Biology and an M.S. in Aquatic Resources.

Growing native plants of West Texas

Patricia Manning, a native of Dallas Texas, has lived and worked in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas since 1991. Her formal education is in art and biology, with Masters degrees in both disciplines. For 18 years, Ms. Manning was employed in the Biology Department at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, TX, managing the greenhouses, propagating regional native plants, designing and maintaining native demonstration gardens, and doing extensive exploration of the native flora in various habitats around the region. She provided enumerable seed collections for the greenhouse, and plant voucher specimens for the Sul Ross herbarium (SRSC). Since retiring in 2014, Ms. Manning has worked as a contract botanist with various organizations, participating in vegetation mapping projects, vegetation monitoring, consultation, and seed collection. With her spouse, Cyndi Wimberly, she continues to propagate regional native plants at their home in Alpine, TX.