

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

newsletter

JULY-AUGUST 1983

VOLUME VIII NO.4

- JULY/AUGUST Southeast Chapter has no set meeting time. For information, call Nina Eppley at 622-7180.
- JULY/AUGUST Glenn Niner Chapter will meet with the Albuquerque Chapter.
- JULY/AUGUST Santa Fe Chapter: no evening meetings during the summer. Field trips will be substituted. For information, call Iris David at 988-1709.
- JULY 10 Albuquerque Chapter Field trip to the Jemez Mountains to view flowers of a high altitude region. Bring a picnic lunch. For information on time and place, call Ted at 243-3053 or Jackie at 294-2178.
- JULY 10 Las Cruces Chapter Field trip to Kingston, NM. Bring a hat, water, a snack or lunch. For information on time and place, call 526-3771.
- JULY 13 Las Cruces Chapter meets(2nd Wednesdays): Informal meeting -- Identification of plant material brought in by those attending. Room 156, Agriculture Building, NMSU. 7:30 pm.
- JULY 31 Otero-Lincoln Chapter meets(last Sundays): The topic is Edible Natives(Bring recipes to trade) at the home of Toad & Lucille Wilson. Follow the paved road north out of La Luz. Stay on the paved road until you reach a dead end and the sign for the Wilsons. 2:00 pm. For more information, call Jean (434-3041) or Madeline(378-4117).
- AUGUST 3 Albuquerque Chapter meets(1st Wednesdays): Work session to prepare an exhibit for the NM State Fair. Speaker to be announced. The Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd NW. 7:30 pm.
- AUGUST 7 Las Cruces Chapter Field trip to Blue Mesa, Las Uvas and Magdalena Peak area. Bring a hat, water and a snack or lunch. For information on time and place, call 526-3771.
- AUGUST 10 Las Cruces Chapter meets: Informal plant identification session. Bring any plants you'd like to have identified. Room 156 Agriculture Building, NMSU. 7:30 pm.
- AUGUST 14 Otero-Lincoln Chapter meets: Pot luck at the Wilsons (for directions, see July 31). Everyone bring a dish using at least some native ingredients. 2:00 pm.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'd like to begin with a thank you to the past years' board members who had some difficult problems to deal with. Hopefully during the next year we can make even greater progress as our organization grows. I intend to serve you to the best of my abilities and I welcome your comments and suggestions. We need the members' input if we are to continue as a healthy, vital organization.

As with me, many of you are very fond of penstemons. The American Penstemon Society is an organization of people nationwide with an interest in the genus. They publish a bulletin twice a year, an extensive seed exchange list (a real bargain at \$.20 a packet), and a cuttings exchange. Dues are \$5.00 per year, their mailing address is American Penstemon Society, Orville M. Steward, Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 33, Plymouth VT 05056.

-T.H.



FROM THE EDITORS

WANTED: Volunteer(s) to assume the editorship of the Native Plant Society Newsletter as of January 1984. The major requirement is enthusiasm for all aspects of native plants, although some experience with "cut and paste" helps. The editor(s) is responsible for soliciting news and feature articles from any likely source (both member and non-member) and putting it all together. The benefits are many -- you have access to people around the state, you get to meet many of the members through correspondence, and you are at the hub of NPS activity. If you're interested or know someone who might be, please write to us: NPS Newsletter Editors, P.O. Box 934, Los Lunas NM 87031.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

"Dear Lisa & Judith,

Last Sunday I was the guest of the Santa Fe chapter of NPS-NM on their field trip to Los Alamos Canyon. About 12 people participated in a very enjoyable day of walking and plant identification.

Although still early for the altitude, there were many things in flower, including a white violet, a clematis and a valerian. We counted a total of 37 different plant species for our entire trek. Some species the trip leader had not seen before in Los Alamos Canyon.

The grand finale for the day was a surprise visit to a local native plant garden in Los Alamos. The flower display in the home garden was tremendous and was the climax of the day.

Special thanks to Iris David for extending the invitation and to the Santa Fe Chapter for a great field trip and for their hospitality."

-John Gibson
Gallup, NM

-All NPS members are always welcome on any chapter field trip. It's a great way to learn about the area and to meet other NPS members.

-The ED.

Contributors to this issue:

J.M. - Judith Machen
J.Lz. - Jean Lozier
T.W. - Tom Wagers
J.Mc. - Jean McElroy
J.D. - Jean Dodd
J.P. - Judith Phillips
T.H. - Ted Hodoba

Editors: Lisa Johnston
Judith Phillips

Las Cruces

For the May meeting, we prevailed upon Glenn Staton to bring his slides of desert plants. There was a large gathering that enjoyed the program. We were all disappointed when it had to end. The May field trip was to Aguirre Springs where a group from the Otero-Lincoln chapter & also a group from the El Paso NPS joined us. Many people completed the four and one-half mile Pine Tree Trail Hike which changes a total of 1100 feet in elevation. Vegetation ranges from yucca to Ponderosa Pine, stinging nettle and littleleaf sumac.

The June meeting enticed several new faces. Before the meeting started, we had a mini field trip to Aggie Pond. Aggie Pond has recently been replanted with aquatic plants, including waterlillies which were just beginning to bloom. Returning to the meeting room, we examined plant specimens brought in by several members and learned how some of the families were named.

-J.Lz.

Otero-Lincoln

In May a joint field trip to Aguirre Springs of our chapter, Las Cruces, and the new El Paso chapter took us on a winding path for a 5 mile hike through vegetation quite different from our own areas. Aguirre Springs is a large area on the eastern slopes of the

NPS-NM OFFICERS

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 Otero-Lincoln - Jean Dodd, 1302 Canyon Rd, Alamogordo NM 88310 (434-3041)
 Madeline Murray, PO Drawer 368, Ruidoso Downs NM 88346 (378-4117)
 Southeast - Nina Eppley, 807 W 3rd St, Roswell NM 88201 (622-8170)

Southeast

FROM FROM

On April 24th, fifteen members of the Southeast Chapter toured the Washington Ranch south of Carlsbad. This 20,000 acre ranch is being turned into a hunting and fishing retreat of considerable luxury. Members spent several hours on the Ranch viewing the many wildflowers and grass species as well as the stocked fishing ponds, waterfowl, deer and other wildlife.

The Native Plant Society display at the Craft & Hobby show, held in the Memorial Recreation Center in Roswell on May 5-6, was judged "most artistic". The Society's name will be engraved on a trophy which may be viewed at the MRC. A very spectacular collection of 40+ blooming wildflower species gathered by George and Myrtle Finley was the highpoint of the display. A second viewing of the display was at the Pecos Valley Hobby Show at the Roswell Airbase on May 28th.

-J.Mc.



Organ Mountains and includes a fantastic view of the Tularosa Basin. On the drive in to the area, one of the most noticeable plants was the turpentine bush (Aplopappus laricifolius). A beautiful green, mannerly small shrub, it should be useful in landscaping.

-J.D.



MORE HERBARIA

Eastern New Mexico University

The Herbarium at the Natural History Museum of Eastern New Mexico University houses approximately 5000 curated specimens. Recently reorganized and expanded with the addition of 14 new cases, the herbarium's organizational process is the BYU system with nomenclature as in Kartesz & Kartesz, a synonymized checklist of the vascular flora of the United States, Canada and Greenland.

The herbarium is serving as a repository for several voucher species of plants collected during funded research on the Waste isolation pilot plant (WIPP) east of Carlsbad, Capulin Mountain National Monument and other areas.

At the present time, the entire collection is being computerized and the addition of 500 curated specimens per year is anticipated.

-Courtesy of A.L. Gennaro, Director
Natural History Museum

Western New Mexico University

Western New Mexico University's herbarium was begun by and is curated by Biology Department Chairman Dale Zimmerman. The collection now contains about 9000 specimens, mostly from southwestern New Mexico and adjacent Arizona. Ornithologist Zimmerman's second career in botany includes studies of Cactaceae and of the Guadalupe Canyon flora.



St. John's College

Although small in size, the herbarium at St. John's College is the repository for specimens of several projects. Currently, two NPS members from the Santa Fe Chapter, Iris David and Dr. Roger Peterson, are studying the flora and vegetation of Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge. The specimens from their study can be found at St. John's.

CLASS NOTES

If you have more than a casual interest in native plants and plenty of free time, you might be interested in a course being offered this fall by the UNM biology department.

Biology 363, "Flora of New Mexico", deals with the identification and classification of native vascular plants. The course is taught by Professor William C. Martin, co-author of the recently published two volume work of the same name. In addition to twice-weekly lectures, there will be a 3-hour lab each week and three field trips during the semester. A good understanding of basic botany is a must for anyone considering signing up, as the course is fairly fast-paced.

The class will meet from 9:30 to 10:45 am Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning August 23 and continuing through the second week of December. Lab sections are offered either Tuesday or Thursday from 12:30 to 3:20 pm. Successful completion of the course will earn you 4 semester hours of college credit. For further information regarding registration, tuition and fees, contact the UNM Admissions Office, Scholes Hall room 156, telephone 277-2446.

-T.W.

VALUES OF COLLECTING AND PRESSING PLANTS

One of the very best ways to learn plants is to collect and press them. Otherwise when many plants are identified the later ones tend to crowd out the earlier ones in your mind. But if you save a specimen you can refer to it constantly.

The plant looks different in the field as it grows but consulting your specimen is an excellent way to recall to memory its appearance. If you have pressed the plant yourself you know what happens in the process. Many botanists can look at their specimens and recall to mind the exact appearance of almost every one as it looked when collected.

Collecting and pressing allows for securing large numbers of plants when the opportunity occurs, and identifying them later when more time is available. Many botanists spend all summer collecting specimens during daylight hours, putting them in presses during the evenings, then identifying and mounting them during the winter. With such a procedure it is surprising how many plants can be dealt with in a season.



PLANT PRESSES

Plant presses can be made or purchased. One model made of latticed oak is available from a source in Idaho (price \$10.00). For the exact address, contact the Idaho Native Plant Society, Pahove Chapter c/o Harold M. Tucker Herbarium, College of Idaho, Caldwell ID 83605.



A set of named specimens will often prove useful to aid in checking the identity of later collections by comparison. It is seldom possible to actually identify a plant from the beginning by leafing over a collection since so many species are involved. But it does allow for checking your determination or helping decide between possibilities. Be certain your pressed plant is correctly named and remember that two individuals of a species may not look exactly alike. It is possible that the individual plant you are checking may actually resemble more closely in general appearance a specimen of the wrong species than it does of the correct one!

A collection of plant specimens provides an authentic record of the species of an area. Every printed list of plants ought to be backed up in this concrete fashion. If anyone doubts your identification of a particular plant you can always refer him to your specimen.

Adapted from:
How to Identify Plants
by Harrington & Durrell

WEEKEND OF NATIVE PLANTS

Mark your calendars now for the weekend of native plants, this year to be held in Capitan on Sept 23-25. Activities will include lots of field trips, a propagation discussion panel, a photography demonstration, and a tour of historic Lincoln. It's also a great chance to meet the members from all over the state and share your experiences.

So that you aren't disappointed, make your reservations early. Write to the Newsletter Editors for a list of accommodations in the areas. Hope to see you there.

PROPAGATION NOTES

Midsummer is an appropriate time to access our spring gardening experiences and to define our expectations for the coming rainy season growth cycle.

This spring, Ted Hodoba, newly elected NPS-NM state president, indulged his *Penstemon*ia. To expand his collection, Ted germinated ten species of *Penstemon*. All seeds were stratified in damp potting soil in the refrigerator, in recycled plastic margarine tubs, for approximately two months. Some seed sprouted in the refrigerator, the germinants were then sown in flats for further growth and finally transplanted outdoors in the garden. "Actually, pretty easy", says Ted.

Of the ten species, *P. glaber*, *kunthii*, *lanceolatus* and *discolor* seed were purchased from Southwest Native Seeds in Tucson; *P. strictus* seed was collected from a plant established in Ted's Albuquerque garden; *P. linarioides* seed was collected at Water Canyon during the annual state NPS-NM meeting last October and the *P. superbus* was a gift from a fellow *Penstemon*ophile and NPS member. *P. ambiguus* and *P. angustifolius*, sown in heavier potting soil, were lost to damping off. As a result, Ted recommends using a sandy potting mix.

Carefully kept germination test records of Jack Hawley (Wildland & Native Seeds Foundation) yield good news for those of us interested in growing Blackfoot Daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*). Jack documented a 65% germination rate on freshly collected seed within 7 days of sowing. The seed was germinated between folds of damp paper towel at temperatures fluctuating between 60 & 90°F. Seed was selected for large size and dark color, which Jack feels is key to viability. Since I have been experiencing a 0-10% germination rate on stored seed (scarified and/or stratified before planting); germinating freshly collected, high quality seed as soon

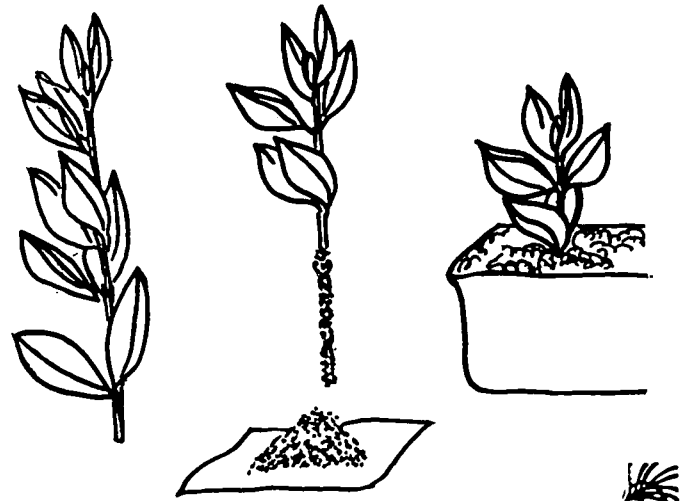
as the seed ripens may be the simple solution to the Blackfoot Daisy blues.

The coming monsoon season coupled with the optimum maturity of cutting material makes August an ideal time for vegetative propagation of many natives. Success depends upon the quality and treatment of the cutting material. Four to six inch tips of healthy stock, ideally young plants under cultivation, should be cut and transferred to porous, well-drained, nutrient enriched medium. The portion of the stem inserted in the medium is stripped of foliage while the exposed growing tip should remain leafy and turgid. Use of rooting hormone varies with the species. I prefer .3% IBA talc for easily rooted plants like Desert Willow and *Baccharis*; and .8% IBA talc for *Forestiera*, *Atriplex*, *Rhus* and *Penstemon*. Medium or Coarse grade Perlite top-dressed with a tablespoon of 18-6-12 Osmocote per square foot of flat area, provides the best rooting medium I've found to date. A picnic cooler lined with a damp towel maintains cutting quality from the field to the flat. I keep my cutting flats in the cool shade of a north wall, misting new cuttings several times daily for a few days. Once the cuttings begin absorbing moisture through the stems, I maintain an evenly moist medium until the cuttings are well rooted, usually within two or three weeks.

In September, I transplant the rooted cuttings to prepared open beds in full sun. Watering varies with the weather and soil texture. Transplanting during State Fair time usually insures several good downpours anywhere within a hundred mile radius of Albuquerque. Soil should be kept moist, never soggy. Although vegetative propagation requires a bit more attention than seedling production, it is an ideal way to select for valuable characteristics and decrease production time.

Cultivating native plants gives the grower many insights; whether the objective is to beautify, reduce water use, attract wildlife, control erosion or preserve rare and endangered species. (Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for information to Rare & Endangered Plant Exchange c/o NY Botanical Garden, Bronx NY 10458.) We appreciate hearing from NPS members regarding their Plant Propagation Projects.

-J.P.



FIELD STUDY TRIPS

NPS members may be interested in the field study trips offered by Cloud Ridge Naturalists, a non-profit organization based in Colorado that offers field discovery seminars on a variety of subjects of interest to plant, bird and animal lovers.

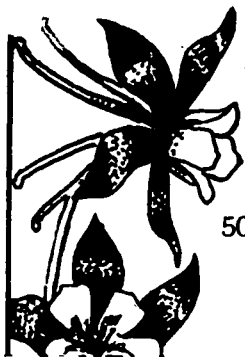
The philosophy at Cloud Ridge emphasizes field work and the special types of skills that are useful in interpreting natural environments, and its course offerings range from field trips of several days to a week, to one-day workshops. For example, this March Dr. Freeman Hall, a meteorologist with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder and an outstanding field ornithologist (who for the past five years has led the highly successful National Audubon Society field tour to Colima, Mexico), led a one-day field trip on birds of prey. The workshop began with refreshments and a slide lecture on raptor ecology at the Hall's, the evening before, followed by a full day in the field. Coming up in July is a 4-day alpine tundra ecology trip to the Mount Zirkel Wilderness area where, from timberline base camps, the class will master the use of plant keys for the identification of alpine plants, observe and discuss the physiological and ecological adaptations of high altitude

plants, and consider the geological processes that have shaped and patterned the landscape. Because this trip is not an athletic outing but a field seminar, the participants' gear and fresh (not freeze-dried) food will be packed in on llamas.

Other courses offered for this year cover Rocky Mountain plants, birds of the Colorado chaparral, amphibians and reptiles of the Colorado plains, big game ecology and behavior, and several courses in drawing, painting and botanical illustration, plus a week's class at Mesa Verde National Park on native dye and basketry plants of the Southwest. There are plans to expand the field seminars to northern New Mexico in 1984.

The director of Cloud Ridge Naturalists is Audrey Benedict, who has presented numerous field and lecture programs in mountain ecology and botany for Rocky Mountain National Park, the University of Colorado, and the National Audubon Society. She has had extensive field experience in tundra areas of Nepal, New Zealand, Alaska, and the Canadian Arctic, and she is currently writing a book on the natural history of the Southern Rockies for the Sierra Club.

For more information about Cloud Ridge Naturalists, write directly to Audrey: Overland Star Route, Ward CO 80481; or Call her day or evening at (303) 459-3248.



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