

El Paso Chapter – Native Plant Society of New Mexico

2024 Annual report

2024 Chapter officers

President:

Dr. Kevin Floyd

kwfloyd@utep.edu

Vice President:

Vacant

Secretary:

Julia Bailey

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Treasurer:

Marianela Milner

MarianelaMMilner@gmail.com

Standing committees

Programs:

Kevin Floyd

Publicity and Social Media:

vacant

Field Trips:

vacant

State Representative:

Kevin Floyd

Chapter activities

January 6th, 10:00-11:30 at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Potluck and elections

Bring a dish to share, and consider stepping up to help in a leadership role! Open positions include vice-president, chapter representative, conservation chair, and field trip chair.

February 3rd, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Temporal changes in dryland plant-microbe interactions in response to drought and nitrogen addition

In dryland ecosystems, the community of tiny organisms in the soil greatly influences plant life and the entire ecosystem. These microorganisms impact vital processes like storing carbon, recycling nitrogen, and affecting water availability. They form a close-knit relationship with plants, especially in areas around roots. Understanding these connections is key because they affect how plants absorb nutrients and cope with environmental changes.

Pari's study delves into the soil microbial communities of different dryland plants. It aims to uncover how these communities change when plants face global change pressures like drought and changes in nutrient availability. By investigating these relationships, she aims to grasp how plants and soil microbes adapt to environmental changes in dryland areas. This understanding is vital for predicting how these ecosystems might respond to future global changes.

Parikrama Sapkota (Pari) is a PhD candidate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Texas at El Paso, advised by Dr. Kelly Ramirez. She is also Jornada-LTER Fellow. Her research focuses on understanding the impact of global changes on the interaction between plants and microbes in dryland systems and aims to grasp their role in the restoration process. To explore these questions, she employs various approaches, such as fieldwork, molecular lab techniques, and coding.

March 2nd, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Member photo share

As we transition into spring, let's celebrate with your favorite pictures of native plants, cacti, and landscapes. This is a chance to show and tell us about the plants in your yard, ones you've seen on hikes, and the landscapes that you find breathtaking!

April 6th, 10:00-11:30 at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Ariocarpus and *Turbinicarpus* in their natural habitat

Juan Miguel Artigas has extensively visited cactus habitats in the Chihuahuan Desert, especially in Mexico, and has photographed most species in their natural settings. Most of these species are very rare, tiny, and extremely difficult to find.

(Programmed by the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club "EPCRC")

May – No meeting

June 1st, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

The Spirit of Agaves

Gertrud Konings will show us the process of making tequila from agaves and also talk about agaves in general. These long-lived plants could be desirable plants for your yard.

(Programmed by EPCRC)

July 6, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Potluck and cactus raffle

Bring a dish or snack to share, and leave with at least one new cactus! All members in good standing will receive raffle tickets, and get to select a small cactus when their number is called. Experts from the Cactus and Rock Club will be able to advise on how to care for the new plant. There are often more cacti than members, so each person receives multiple plants!

August 3, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Growing cacti and native plants from seed

Paul Hyder and Ad Konings explain how they grow their plants from seed and will bring out some soil and seeds to give a hands-on demonstration. Seeds will be available for anyone who wants to try growing their own plants from seed.

(Programmed by EPCRC)

September 7, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Fall Tasks for a Wildlife-Friendly Garden

Fall often has gardeners reaching for rakes and loppers, but what are the best approaches for a wildlife-friendly garden? Dr. Kevin Floyd, Botanical Curator at UTEP's Chihuahuan Desert Gardens, will share about what to do, and more importantly, what not to do. Lazy gardeners, come for validation!

October 5, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Freeze-tolerant cacti

Dr. Gertrud Konings' presentation will distinguish between cacti that are living in a warm climate, but can become exposed to a freeze and those that live in colder climates and are regularly exposed to freezes. The physiology and strategies of freeze tolerance will be discussed.

(Programmed by EPCRC)

November 2, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Cactus Appreciation Month

There will be some presentations, cacti for sale, and experts available to answer all questions. Presentations by Rob Romero, Paul Hyder, and Ad Konings.

(Programmed by EPCRC)

December 7, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Holiday Potluck and elections

Bring a dish to share and the desire to help run our two organizations. Many officer positions are available, but we are happy to have people help with committees or as at-large board members. These organizations will not survive if we cannot find people to step up to help run them!

Special events for 2024:

Members volunteered at the spring and fall FloraFest Native Plant Sales at the University of Texas at El Paso. These two one-day events are an opportunity for the El Paso Community to buy and learn about the Chihuahuan Desert Plants.

Other news:

The El Paso Chapter continued with combined meetings with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club. The meetings will be the first Saturday of the month at 10 am, and will take place at the Garden Center at Memorial Park (3105 Grant Ave, El Paso, TX 79930).