

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO
January 1979 Newsletter

January meeting David Sabo of Albuquerque, and former graduate student in the Department of Biology at UNM, will share his research of the seed dormancies and germination requirements of some native New Mexico plants. The meeting will be Wednesday, January 17th, in Lab 119 of the Laboratory Building, St. John's College, Santa Fe, 7:30 p.m. Don't miss it.

Thank yous Bob and Philip Pennington for an informative presentation at our December meeting. We learned from your first-hand experience propagating and landscaping with northern New Mexico species.

RARE II proposals released Angry environmentalists led by the Sierra Club are already attacking the Department of Agriculture's decision to open up 36.2 million acres of national forests to logging and other non-wilderness uses. Only 15.1 million acres of the 62 million acres in question will be preserved as wilderness, doubling the total wilderness area in national forests to more than 30 million acres. The remaining 10.8 million acres has been designated for future study, to be decided upon by 1985.

The proposals would extend wilderness protection from its typical domain in the West to small areas in Louisiana, West Virginia and Tennessee. But wilderness spokesmen don't believe enough has been done, citing these examples:

" - An earlier Forest Service study concluded the 200,000-acre Cougar Lakes region near Mt. Rainier in Washington should be wilderness, but RARE II recommended preserving only about 20,000 acres of the region.

- Only about half of the 50,000-acre Bull-of-the-Woods region near Salem, Oregon, was proposed as wilderness. There, environmentalists said, a typical Forest Service tactic was used: recommending the "rocks and ice" in the higher elevations for protection, while opening lower areas to logging.

- In Colorado, public comment was strongly in favor of preserving 70 selected areas, but most of them are planned for multiple uses.

- Of 20 grassland areas, only three, including Willow Creek near Fort Collins, Colorado, were proposed for wilderness. One remains under study."

In New Mexico 124,000 acres of roadless areas in the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests are proposed as wilderness. But a greater number of acres, 235,040 in both forests, will be made available to commercial interests such as logging, mining, grazing and development of recreational areas. In the Santa Fe National Forest, most of the proposed new wilderness areas are located in the Pecos Wilderness and Dome Contingency Band, with small areas near the Chama Wilderness and San Pedro Parks Wilderness and near Tesuque and Peralta. In the Carson National Forest, areas proposed for wilderness are located in the Columbine Hondo area, Wheeler Park Wilderness, Comales Canyon, Cruces Basin, Bull Canyon, Canijilon Mountain and Sierra Negra. Another 98,330 roadless acres in both forests are still in limbo, set aside for further study. Throughout the state, the new total wilderness areas include 500,000 acres. From "The New Mexican" 1-4-79 and 1-5-79

Growing natives from seed

by Missy Deardorff

Everyone is familiar with the concept that plants are adapted to their environment, but did you know that seeds themselves have adaptations? Often a period of dormancy occurs before a seed can germinate. Seed dormancy is a state of physiological inactivity or "rest" in which growth is temporarily suspended. Chemical, mechanical and biological "triggers" break dormancy and allow growth to occur. The triggers which break dormancy are responding to environmental cues, and plant species show great variation in the environmental conditions which will break dormancy. There is also great variation in the duration of the dormant period. The time lag between maturation and germination provided by dormancy allows a seedling to begin growth at an appropriate time and place.

Some plant species have seeds, for example, borne in fleshy fruits (e.g. berries) which are eaten by birds. It has been shown that the seeds

of these plants are often unable to imbibe water and germinate until they pass through the gut of a bird where the grinding of the seedcoat in the bird's gizzard and etching of it with hydrochloric acid makes the seedcoat porous enough for water to enter and germination to begin.

Desert annual plants fall into three general categories: winter annuals, summer annuals, and an intermediate group. All three groups need some rainfall for germination, but it is actually temperature which controls germination of the seed. Summer annuals will germinate at 26 to 30 degrees C. while winter annuals are dormant at those higher temperatures and germinate at a low 10 degrees C.

In nature all these varying requirements and dormant periods have evolved for one reason - to insure survival of the seedling. Growers can simulate these events by seedcoat scarification with a file, acid baths, storage of the seed in a refrigerator and other tricks which David Sabo may share with us on January 17th. (See meeting announcement.)

Membership Join the Native Plant Society of New Mexico by writing Carol Dimeff, Rt. 4, Puesta del Sol, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. Dues are \$6.00 per person or \$8 for family memberships, a tax-deductible contribution to a non-profit organization (if you itemize). Membership entitles you to receive our monthly newsletters and to learn about our meetings, field trips and plant sales. One third of your dues is forwarded to the chapter you want to be affiliated with.

Booklets Our revised publication, "Native Plants for Landscaping in Northern New Mexico", including the 8-page supplement, is 75¢ plus 40¢ postage per copy. The southern version, "Native Plants for Landscaping in Southern New Mexico" is also available at the same price by writing to the editors at Rt. 4, Puesta del Sol, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

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