

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

newsletter

VOLUME VI NO. 6

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1981

- November 5 Glenn Niner Chapter meets (first Thursday of each month) at the Middle Rio Grande Branch Station, Los Lunas. 7 pm. We will have a workshop on how to identify plants.
- November 5-6 Third Rocky Mountain Rare Plant Conference. Denver Botanical Garden (Main Hall), 909 York St. Denver, Colorado (phone 303 866-5887). The program will include presentations by federal and state government agencies, several state Heritage Programs, and Native Plant Societies. \$5.00 registration fee.
- November 14 Second Annual All Species Day, Santa Fe. All day. Come in costume ~~of~~ your favorite critter or plant, and you can even speak about your choice if you want to. Hear Native American speakers, scientists, poets, rangers, music, and more. Activities for children, booths, food. NPS hopes to have a booth.
- November 18 Santa Fe Chapter meets at St. John's College, Laboratory Bldg., Room 122, 7:30 pm.
- November 18 Albuquerque Chapter meets at Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd., NE, 7:30 pm.
- December 3 Glenn Niner Chapter will host a Native Plant Food Party, 7 pm, Middle Rio Grande Branch Station, 1036 Miller St. SW, Los Lunas. A variety of foods prepared from selected native plants will be featured. All NPS members are invited to attend.
- December 16 Santa Fe Chapter meets at ST. John's College, Laboratory Bldg., Room 122, 7:30 pm.
- December 16 Albuquerque Chapter meets at Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd., NE, 7:30 pm.
- January 7 Glenn Niner Chapter will meet at 7pm, Middle Rio Grande Branch Station.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The NPS will have a Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, 5 December in Santa Fe. The agenda will include the following items: (1) Election and appointment of state officers for 1982. State officers are elected by the Board from a slate put forward by the general membership, or by individual or group petition. This year we're asking members either to submit their nominations to their chapter president, or to directly contact another member of the Board with their nominations (see list of Board members below). Nominations should be in writing, and it is essential that each nominee be willing to serve! The required officers are: president, vice-president, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, membership secretary, treasurer. In addition we currently have two appointed officers, newsletter editor and conservation committee chairman. The state officers at present all belong to the Santa Fe Chapter. The Board is eager to have state office holders from other regions of the state so that we can have a wider spread of representation.

(2) Official vote on any petitions for chapter recognition. All new chapters should submit a formal petition for recognition as outlined in the By-laws. These can be mailed in before the meeting, or brought to the meeting by the chapter president.

(3) Other business submitted by the general membership. For example, the Board is empowered to set up additional committees to conduct the Society's business. If you or your chapter has a strong interest in education, rare plants, reclamation of public lands, etc., it would be very appropriate to send a letter to the Board detailing a potential committee or its chairman and possible areas of work and interests. All such items will be placed on the agenda and considered at the meeting. Any chairmen so appointed will become members of the Board and serve at the discretion of the Board.

Finally, official notice of the meeting (with times and location) will be sent to each Board member at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Fairley Barnes, President.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following people constitute the Board of Directors for 1981. Members at Large are elected by the general membership, and have four year terms. Half are elected every two years, and this year is an "off" year, hence no elections for at-large members at this time. Ex officio members are chapter presidents. Notice that the state officers come from all categories - elected, ex officio, and appointed.

President - Fairley Barnes
Vice-president - vacant
Corresponding Secretary - Iris David
Recording Secretary - Carol Dimeff
Membership Secretary - Dorothy DeWitt
Treasurer - Frances Silverman
Newsletter Editor - Anna Deardorff
Conservation Committee Chairman -
Roger Peterson

Members-at-large:

Fairley Barnes
David Deardorff
Carol Dimeff
William Martin
Bill Isaacs
Roger Peterson
Melissa Savage

Ex Officio Members:

Anna Deardorff (Santa Fe)
Judith Phillips (Albuquerque)
Bob Reeves (Las Cruces)
Jerry Ainsworth (Southeast)
Mary Wohlers (Glenn Niner)
Bill Mayfield (Otero)

NPS HAS STATE FAIR DISPLAY

The Glenn Niner and Albuquerque Chapters cooperated with the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center and the NMSU Middle Rio Grande Branch Station to provide an information display in the Flower Building at the State Fair. Examples of landscape plants, grasses and the fall-blooming wildflowers were displayed along with information on the Native Plant Society. Volunteers were at the booth to answer questions. Response was good, and we hope to add several new members to the Society as a result of the booth. Thanks to all of the volunteers who staffed the booth.

FREMONTIA = SARCOBATUS

Some of you may recall that Lt. A.W. Whipple found a shrub he called "Fremontia vermicularis" while journeying through the Santa Fe - Galisteo area. We could not find a reference to tell us the current name of the genus. Well, R. Mitchell Beauchamp, a California botanist and member of the California Native Plant Society has come to the rescue.

"Fremontia vermicularis (Hook.) Torr. in Frem. Rep. 91.1843 is now a synonym for Sarcobatus vermiculatus (Hook.) Torr. in Emory, Notes Mil. Rec. 150.1848." The common name for the shrub is black greasewood; and, ours though it may be, it is no match in beauty for the California Native Plant Society Newsletter's namesake which was recently known as Fremontia (and is now Fremontodendron). The correct family for that beautiful tree is the Sterculiaceae, not Guttiferae, as we erroneously reported. Thanks, Mitch!



BLACK GREASEWOOD
Sarcobatus vermiculatus (Hook.) Torr.

EXTIRPATION OF A POPULATION OF DESERT
MISTLETOE

by John P. Hubbard

On 22 June 1977, I located several plants of desert mistletoe (Phoradendron californicum) growing on whitethorn (Acacia constricta) in Granite Pass, Peloncillo Mountains, in Hidalgo County, New Mexico. In past years, I had seen the species in the state only in Guadalupe Canyon, some 45 miles to the south in the county. Searches elsewhere have proved negative, including in the Virden area along the Gila Valley, about 40 miles north of Granite Pass.

Subsequent to 1977, I looked for the P. californicum population in Granite Pass as I drove by; however, I did not note it there. Finally, on 15 April 1981, I made a search for the plant on the east side of U.S. 80, between mileposts 20 and 21. I discovered several dead clumps of the species in legumes there, but I could find no living plants.

In December 1978, a severe freeze extended southward in southwestern New Mexico and adjacent Arizona. For example, temperatures dropped to zero and lower in the Animas Valley and vicinity (Steve Dobrott, pers. comm.). Many plants suffered as a result, including Arizona sycamore (Platanus wrightii), mesquite (Prosopis glandulosa), and others. I suspect this freeze killed the Granite Pass population of P. californicum, thus extirpating the species there. It still persists in Guadalupe Canyon, but the plants---mainly on mesquites---are few and generally in less than the best of condition.

Desert mistletoe is typically a species parasitic on legumes in the Sonoran Desert and its vicinity. It is common in parts of Arizona, California, Sonora, and adjacent areas. In New Mexico, it is clearly limited in range, and this obviously fluctuates over time. The fruit is eaten by such birds as phainopeplas (Phainopepla nitens), and the seeds are dispersed in their droppings. Perhaps this will allow reoccupancy of the Granite Pass, but survival of the species at this eastern limit will probably continue to be subject to termination as in 1978.

ALBUQUERQUE'S INCREASING USE OF NATIVES

David Whittaker spoke at the September meeting of the Albuquerque chapter, the first in a three part series of landscape oriented fall programs. Whittaker, Urban Forester for the city, discussed the use of native plants in Albuquerque parks and pointed out the highlights as well as the sore spots. His presentation was well documented with slides.

In an attempt to reduce maintenance and water consumption, the Parks Department is increasing its use of native and adaptable, drought tolerant plant material. Planning, suitability of the plants to the site, and phases of development toward design goals were emphasized. Chrysothamnus nauseosus (rabbitbrush or chamisa) on dry slopes, Rhus trilobata (oakleaf sumac) mass planted for visual impact, fall color and as a soil binder; Forestiera neomexicana (desert olive or New Mexico mountain ash) as a small specimen or screening material; Potentilla fruticosa (shrubby cinquefoil) of appropriate size for planting in highway medians; and the use of unmowed, "soft" grass areas for textural contrast and border effect were cited as native plantings already put out by the city.

One of the major problems in establishing native vegetation has been weed control; education of weeding crews and local residents in "when is a native plant not a weed" judgments is an ongoing task (did anyone else notice how the "Albuquerque-Weed-Problem grumbling stopped when the asters began to bloom?). Drip irrigation and heavy mulching have been most effective in weed prevention efforts, but they are obviously not the entire solution.

Accompanied by landscape layouts and elevation drawings of a proposed Arboretum/Botanical Garden in Albuquerque, Mr. Whittaker outlined ideas for converting an area east of Arroyo del Oso Golf Course into an aesthetic and educational landmark.

The Native Plant Society supports these municipal efforts to "go native" through our educational programs. Individual members wishing to support the Arboretum/Botanical Garden concept are encouraged to write to the following public leaders:

The Mayor of Albuquerque
City of Albuquerque
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Orlando D. Sedillo, Director
City of Albuquerque
Parks and Recreation Department
121 Tijeras NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Ralph Loken, Chairman
Environmental Planning Commission
c/o City Planning Division
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Ms. Connie Goodell, Chairman
Metropolitan Parks and Recreation
Advisory Board
1311 Ridgecrest Drive SE
Albuquerque, NM 87116

-Judith Phillips



GLENN NINER AND ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTERS
RENOVATING THE CASTETTER GARDEN

Work is progressing on the renovation of the Castetter Garden in Albuquerque. Two clean-up days have been held to remove the dead debris and to prune the plants. Further information on this project can be obtained Lisa Johnston (Glenn Niner), Mary Wohlers (Glenn Niner), or Judith Phillips (Albuquerque).

Picking pinon nuts is not hard to do, providing you have some spare time and don't mind physical labor. First, find a tree full of nuts. With that accomplished, all you have to do is shake the tree or hit it with a stick and then collect the nuts that fall.

Snakes can be a hazard, and the dark, sticky sap secreted by the pinon tree also can be a hazard. Pickers often return home covered with sap from head to toe. The sap will come off if rubbed with lard.

They say that the Chinese pinon nut used by local candy makers isn't as sweet as its Southwestern counterpart, but it's definitely cheaper.

Pinon nuts processed commercially in the United States are first soaked in water to loosen their shells and then run through cracking machines. Because water seeps into the meat of the nuts, they must be frozen immediately to keep them from turning rancid.

The pinon crop is reported to be at near-bumper levels in the Tres Piedras and Questa areas. A healthy-sized crop, with large, luscious nuts, also is the rule in the Ojo Caliente and El Rito areas in Rio Arriba County and near Cuba in Sandoval County.

The pickings are poor on North Mesa, but better along N.M. 4, especially further back from the road where not as many people have ventured.

Closer to Santa Fe, the best locations appear to be Buckman Mesa northwest of the city and the Pecos area, but neither are up to par this year.

The pinon crop is meager around Espanola in the Jicarilla area, the Caja del Rio west of Santa Fe and most points south of Santa Fe.

Certain private lands may be the best picking, but you will have to make arrangements with the owner or be prepared to run fast."

GIVE AN NPS MEMBERSHIP FOR CHRISTMAS

You can give a special gift to your special friends by signing them up for the Native Plant Society of New Mexico for 1982.

Just send the membership dues and the recipient's name and address to our membership secretary, Dorothy Dewitt, and she will then mail to your friend a Christmas note announcing your gift.

It's a nice idea, and the bi-monthly newsletter will remind them of you every time it comes.

NATIONAL PLANT RECOVERY SYMPOSIUM IN THE WORKS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife botanists met with The Nature Conservancy, Missouri Botanic Garden and other conservation groups to plan a National Plant Recovery Symposium for sometime in 1982. We will be writing more about this in the coming year.

* . * . * . * . * . *

PICKERS PINE FOR PINON NUTS

(Excerpts from The New Mexican, October 21, 1981)

"...From all accounts, 1981 is not shaping up as a prime year for pinon.

Bountiful harvests are being reported in some areas, including Tres Piedras and Questa in northern Taos County and El Rito and Ojo Caliente in Rio Arriba County.

RANGE EXTENSIONS REPORTED FOR RARE PLANTS

In September of this year, Rex Wahl of the Heritage Program collected a low-growing, perennial shrub in east Red Canyon of the San Mateo Mountains. The plant was growing in association with mock orange (Philadelphus), mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus), hackberry (Celtis), Apache plume (Fallugia paradoxa), wild buckwheat (Eriogonum), cholla (Opuntia), and pine-leaf penstemon (Penstemon pinifolius). The plants were growing out of rock cracks on the north- and south-facing walls of a very narrow canyon on rhyolite, an acid volcanic rock.

Upon bringing pressed specimens back to Santa Fe, we engaged in a lively effort to determine the correct classification of this plant. For a while we were completely stumped. The plant was woody, low growing, spreading, with spinescent branchlets. The leaves were narrowly oblanceolate to trifid, stipulate, and on short shoots. The flowers were very small, with four sepals and four petals, the latter being ochroleucous in color. Both the petals and the eight stamens originated on a perigynous disk. The fruits were in fours, separate to the base, and opening interiorly along a longitudinal slit. They were dry and follicular. Both the Rocaseae and Saxifragaceae seemed like possible families, but neither contained any genera of high probability. It became increasingly obvious that we had a rare plant and none of us was acquainted with it at all.

Finally, after great frustration, we decided to look up Dr. Charles Mason's paper on Apacheria chiricahuensis, an aberrant member of the family Crossosomataceae. The description and drawing provided by Dr. Mason (Madroño 23(3):105-108, 1975) exactly fit the specimens at hand! This is therefore the first report of this rare plant outside of the Chiricahua National Monument since it was described. This is also the first report of the family in New Mexico. Subsequent trips by Rex, Paul Knight, and Reggie Fletcher of the Forest Service have confirmed adjacent populations as well.

Silene wrightii, a member of the Caryophyllaceae or pink family which is a federally nominated endangered species also occurs in the Red Canyon area as well. This plant was also located by Rex and is the first report of this catchfly outside of the Mogollon Mountains, Cooke Range area. Paul Knight's recent survey work in the Mogollon Mountains has shown that this plant is by no means as rare as we believed. Paul also found a cactus in the San Mateos, apparently a Neolloydia species, that has defied identification to date. Doubtless, we'll be hearing more about rare plants from the San Mateo Mountains in the future.

Any NPS people who go into the San Mateo's be on the look-out for these plants or any other unusual ones. Report all occurrences to us.

- The Heritage Program
Santa Fe, 827-5531

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ADDRESSES

State Coordinator: Fairley Barnes
P.O. Box 5917
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87502
662-5910(home)
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Santa Fe, NM
827-5531

Albuquerque: Judith Phillips
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Box 145
Veguita, NM 87062

Las Cruces: Bob Reeves
475 La Colonia
Las Cruces, NM 88001
646-1799

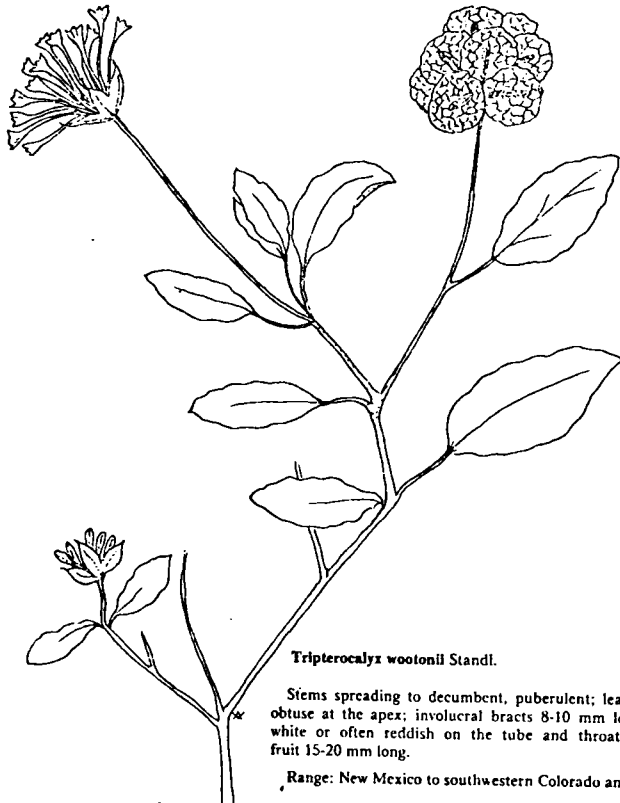
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869-6744

Otero: Bill Mayfield
Star Route
Bent, NM 88314
671-4617

TO JOIN THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY:

Dues are \$6 per year per individual, or \$8 per family, or \$4 for students and seniors. Send your dues to Dorothy DeWitt, 1414 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. Check the Native Plant Society addresses on page 6 to find a chapter near you, or to call locally for more information about meetings and programs.



Tripterocalyx wootonii Standl.

Stems spreading to decumbent, puberulent; leaves oval or elliptic, rounded or obtuse at the apex; involueral bracts 8-10 mm long, ovate, acuminate; perianth white or often reddish on the tube and throat, 25-30 mm long, puberulent; fruit 15-20 mm long.

Range: New Mexico to southwestern Colorado and northeastern Arizona.

From Betty Meador, Santa Fe:

"Enjoyed the article regarding the field trips and other activities. Especially so since I have this summer become aware of some of the tremendous variety in the local native flora. Due to this, I have learned that I have a quite rare specimen which grew volunteer in my yard this summer. Believe its name is Tripterocalyx wootonii which is known as sand begonia. It is a fantastic and striking specimen which has bloomed since June.

Bill Isaacs has told me that it normally appears in the southern part of the state. I would be glad to show it, or cuttings, to anyone who is interested. Will also have several seeds for contribution to interested parties." Write Betty Meador, Rt. 8, Box 331-Z, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501.

GARDENER'S CORNER

This has been a good year for gall midges! Perhaps you've noticed a profusion of bead-like galls on Atriplex canescens, four-wing saltbush. When the quantities on my plants passed from novel curiosity to alarming infestation, I took samples to the UNM Biology Department where, courtesy of Dr. Crawford, I discovered the cause of the problem. The adult midges, of the order Diptera, in appearance similar to fungus gnats, deposit eggs on the Atriplex stems. Galls develop enclosing the larva. I had proposed removing affected stems and was told that I have a population of parasitic wasps, evidenced by small puncture holes in the galls, and that removal of the galls would effectively remove this handy biological control. The midges do not seem to harm the plant, other than cosmetically. Conclusion: do nothing. What could be easier? - Judith Phillips

The New England Wild Flower Society is offering this year on a trial basis seeds and spores of over 100 native plants. Non-members wishing to receive the Seed Sales List should mail a stamped, self-addressed business (#10 size) envelope to: SEED SALES, New England Wild Flower Society, Garden in the Woods, Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01701. Look for your list in January, 1982.

Have you had any experience making wine using any of the native fruits? Do you have Grandma's recipe? If so, the Glenn Niner Chapter would like to hear from you. Just drop us a note at our address: P.O. Box 934, Los Lunas, N.M. 87031.

ILLUSTRATION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The black greasewood is from Vines, R.A.; Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest; University of Texas Press, 1960.

The sand begonia is from Martin, W.C. and C.R. Hutchins; A Flora of New Mexico; 1980.

The Indian pink is from Arngerger, L.P.; Flowers of the Southwest Mountains; Southwestern Monuments Association; 1962.

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mistletoe on host plant

detail of flowers

