

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

newsletter

VOLUME VII

NO.4

JULY-AUGUST

1982

- July/August Southeastern Chapter has no set meeting date. For information on these months, call Nina Eppley at 622-1226.
- July/August Glenn Niner Chapter will not meet these months. Have a Happy 4th!
- July 7 Albuquerque Chapter meets(1st Wednesdays): Dan Perlman will speak on Edible Landscaping. 7:30, Museum of Albuquerque, 2000 Mountain Rd.
- July 10 Board of Directors Meeting at Bill Mayfield's in Bent. Lunch at 12:00, meeting starts at 1:00. Come early and leave late!
- July 10 Las Cruces Field Trip with the Audobon Society. For more info, call Jean Lozier at 526-3771 or 526-4106.
- July 14 Las Cruces Chapter meets(2nd Wednesdays): Informal Plant Identifications. Bring in your unknown plants. 7:30 pm, NMSU Ag Building Room 156. NOTE: NEW MEETING DAY.
- July 21 Santa Fe Chapter meets(3rd Wednesdays): Paul Knight of the New Mexico Heritage Program will speak on "Edaphic Specialization of Native Plants." 7:30 pm, St. John's College, Lab Building, Room 118.
- July 25 Otero-Lincoln Chapter meets(last Sundays): Jerry Longbotham of Capitan will be our guide. His topic is Water Conservation and Native Plant Landscaping. Call Jean Dodd (434-3041) for details.
- August 4 Albuquerque Chapter meets: John Liebedorffer will talk on Building a Solar Greenhouse. 7:30 pm, Museum of Albuquerque.
- August 7 Las Cruces Field Trip. Call Jean Lozier for details at 526-3771.
- August 11 Las Cruces Chapter meets: Informal Plant Identification. 7:30 pm NMSU Ag Building, Room 156.
- August 18 Santa Fe Chapter meets: Chuck Chirieleison from Mountain Southwest will speak on Drip Irrigation Products for Landscape Uses. 7:30 pm St. John's College, Lab Building, Room 118.
- August 19 NMSU Field Day at Los Lunas. The Center will be open for tours and there will be many different exhibits. 8am-3pm. 1036 Miller St SW Los Lunas.
- August 29 Otero-Lincoln Chapter meets: Wildflowers in High Rolls at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Callaway. Mrs. Callaway has been a wildflower enthusiast for years. She has a book of wildflowers in the public library-one flower to a page, done in watercolor, with identification and description below each painting. Call Jean for details(434-3041).

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

According to ancient platitude the longest journey starts with a single step. The NPS has taken such a step but is hardly eligible yet to stand back to admire its advance. New subject matter steps on old.

The May 23rd field trip to Dog Canyon (Oliver Lee State Park), south of Alamo-gordo, was governed by a plant list of well over 200 species, some rare indeed, a few common to most of the state, all of them significant to the web of living things. In or out of NPS chapters we have our work cut out to learn the local plants, along with pounding on legislators to save them. There is no such thing as keeping too many records of items seen, where, date in bloom, numbers, associated plants, weediness or poisonous nature, soil type, sun or shade, probable available moisture, height, age, annual, biennial, perennial, and other details such as use by honey bees, birds, and competing survivalists.

Nobody sees it all. Each member has a good chance of noticing a common plant in an unexpected place, as well as perhaps finding a rare species. Between ourselves as interested amateurs, and professional botanists, what needs identifying will be identified. It's sad to be asked by an eight-year-old to name the tree, if you can't, but worse if she can. She'll journey more steps than we, most likely. It's called education and there's a tour leaving every day.

-M.W.

PLEASE AND THANK YOU

Enclosed you will find copies of the letter and survey which has been sent to nurseries etc., throughout the state. The final product will be a source list of native plants for New Mexico. Ask your local nurseries if they received a survey. If not, show them a copy. We need your help in letting the nurseries know of people's interest in native plants.

We hope you enjoy the samples of solar dyed fiber. Many thanks to Frances Szeman for providing them.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

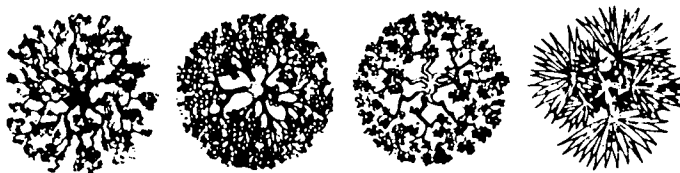
"I have been referred to you for information concerning nursery sources of native plants in the Lovington, Hobbs, Carlsbad, Roswell or Clovis area- all of which I consider in my shopping area. As the county extension agent pointed out to me, there are no evergreens native to Lea County. However, I am not that localized in my interpretation of "native".

I have a new house built on virgin prairie land. My native plants consist of a small variety of yucca, mesquite, prickly pear and bullhead cacti. I'd like a bit more than that. Particularly, I wonder if there are any evergreens that would be practical as foundation plantings? I moved to New Mexico from Maryland last year, so I do not have a basic or ingrained knowledge of the plants here. I've done some reading but I need some help."

Sincerely,
Mary C. Dingle
Rt. 1, Box 54
Lovington, NM 88260

At this point a few of the nurseries in the Albuquerque and Santa Fe areas seem to be the most known sources of natives. Perhaps our readers can help. In the September-October newsletter we will include a source guide for native plants throughout the state. We are sending a short survey to nurseries statewide with a twofold purpose-to find out which nurseries grow and or sell natives, and to increase their awareness of the growing demand for drought tolerant ornamentals. We would appreciate any input our readers have. The best way to increase the availability of well-grown native nursery stock is to let your local nurseries know that there is consumer demand for such material. Please write in and share your sources, and comment on the variety offered, seasonal availability and quality of stock.

-The Editors



Since I am new to the position of Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, I would like to introduce myself. I am a graduate student in botany and plant ecology with Dr. William Martin at the University of New Mexico. I already have the names of some members who might be interested in working on conservation issues. I look forward to hearing from others who have specific or general interests in the conservation of native plants.

I want to thank people who called Senator Pete Domenici just before the Endangered Species Act Reauthorization Bill went before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. It came out of the committee on May 11 a good bill, passed for a three year reauthorization with virtually no weakening amendments. Now it must face the full Senate and House. I hope to be able to keep you informed on this important issue. (Note-The House passed a similar bill on 6-8-82 and the Senate passed its bill on 6-9-82.)

The preservation of native flora has several important components: the protection of populations of threatened and endangered species; the preservation of unique or pristine plant communities, and the prevention of the needless destruction of native vegetation.

The protection of populations of rare and endangered species should be of fundamental concern to people who care about native plants. These endangered species such as the grama grass cactus, *Pediocactus papyracanthus*, are rapidly declining in numbers due to overgrazing, development and collecting. It is important to identify areas where endangered plants occur and then to protect these areas.

It is important to identify the different kinds of native vegetation in New Mexico and preserve examples of these types for their unique flora and fauna. What is widespread today may become unique or lost tomorrow. As an example, soon it may be impossible to find a piece of pinyon-juniper woodland which retains its natural understory vegetation and is not seriously overgrazed and/or overharvested for fuelwood.

There are and will be many conservation issues occurring in New Mexico, such as the proposed damming of the Gila River near Cliff, and the resultant destruction of riparian vegetation, a very limited and important vegetation type in the Southwest. The strip mining of coal will alter a very significant portion of our landscape in the future. Besides the prevention of unnecessary, short-term exploitation of New Mexico's landscape, an important avenue for the protection of native plants lies in the establishment of wilderness areas.

In New Mexico much of our land is under federal or state jurisdiction. Ultimately it is our land and we have some responsibility to see that it is managed properly. Good management means protecting our soil and vegetation resources for future generations.

I have written at some length to give you a general idea of what I consider important in the area of conservation. I would appreciate hearing any comments that you have on these thoughts, including other issues of importance and specific concerns which come to your attention.

-T.A.



The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has received over \$250,000 from income tax refund check-offs. Many thanks to everyone who "checked for the chipmunk".

RARE PLANT CONFERENCE

The Rocky Mountain Regional Rare Plant Conference will be held in Albuquerque in the summer of 1983. Anyone (Albuquerque members especially) who wishes to help organize the conference should contact: Anna Deardorff, PO Box 5917, Santa Fe, NM 87502. Delegates from all over the west will attend, so this is a good opportunity to show that New Mexico is involved!

DYEING FOR SOME NATIVE COLOR

Frances Szeman, our Albuquerque Chapter president, is a weaver and as such has an eye for color and an alchemist's soul. Dotting her backyard garden are gallon jars with liquids of various hues, soaking up the sun. The jars contain combinations of water, wool, mordant and plant parts--sun tea of another sort.

Colors have always fascinated man and he has tried to reproduce them in paint and dye. Much has been discovered by accident. Solar dyeing is an example of a process that works, but no one knows quite how. Dyeing is a time consuming process made more carefree using solar dyeing techniques. Time spent over the dyepot is reduced, while the color intensity seems to bloom in the sunlight.

Getting the colors you want is a fine balance between the components. Water and mordant can both affect the type of color you finally get. Rainwater is the preferred water source (the pH and mineral content can affect the color). Mordants are metallic salts and/or acids and alkalis; they include alum, chrome, tin, iron, acetic, tannic & tartanic acids, ammonia, blue vitriol (copper sulfate), caustic soda and lime. Mordanting agents are added to 'fix' the color, this is essential for the dye to take properly and remain permanent, sometimes enriching the color. For example, tin often 'brightens' while iron 'saddens' or darkens the hue. Different mordants can produce different colors from the same plant material; juniper needles produce an orange-gold with alum, but a dark gray-green with iron.

Many different plants can be used as dye plants. Both fresh and dried materials can be used, often producing very different colors. Often a plant seems to have no worthwhile value, but the dyer discovers that it produces a particular hue. Such is the case of bindweed. In the dyepot, (probably the only place it won't take root), bindweed and various mordants produce shades of chartreuse, gold, gray-green, green and yellow-green. A gardener's dener's pest is a weaver's delight.



SOUTHWEST RABBIT-BRUSH
Chrysothamnus pulchellus (Gray) Greene



FIVE MOUNTAIN MAHOGANY
Cercocarpus montanus Raf.

Cochineal, a traditional red dye, is produced by an insect parasite of the prickly pear cactus. In New Mexico, the Cochids which coat the pad, resemble cotton and 'bleed' a deep magenta when crushed. They can be found on many *Opuntia* species, especially those having large soft surface areas, like *O. engelmannii* and *O. phaeacantha*.

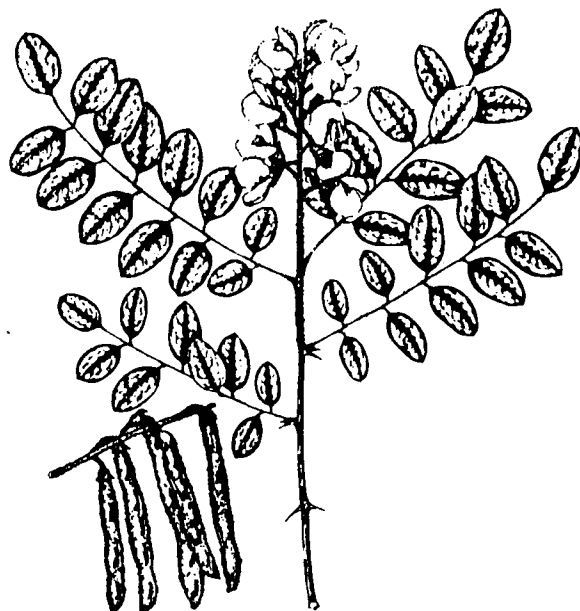
Since varying the 'recipe' and temperature can cause considerable changes in color, it is advisable to dye enough fiber to complete a project in the same dye lot. However, this variation in shading between dye lots can be a plus, giving you a wide series of hues. This can add depth to textile projects not possible with commercially dyed fibers.

Collecting plants for dyeing requires the same care and consideration as for other projects. Never use a rare plant when a common one will give the same color, and always select a few plants from a large population. This insures that the surrounding habitat won't suffer as a result of your collecting.

Albuquerque is home to Las Aranas, a spinners and weavers guild. They do the 'sheep to shawl' exhibit at the New Mexico State Fair each year and also host workshops and demonstrations throughout the year. Las Aranas publishes an informative booklet

entitled 'Dyeing with Natural Materials' that gives general dyeing instructions, recipes, a list of useful books and a source list for non-native materials. The booklet is available for \$2.50 from Las Aranas c/o Rose Holte, 2317 Ada Place NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

The enclosed card has samples of three solar dyed colors from Frances. You can write to her at: 1858 Calle Los Vecinos NW Albuquerque NM 87107.



NEW MEXICO LOCUST
Robinia neomexicana Gray

The following native plants in combination with various mordants yield these colors:

Aspen bark & twigs	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	gold yellow, dark brown
Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus</i> sp.	chartreuse, gold, gray-green, green, yellow-green
Cheese Weed	<i>Hymenoclea mongyra</i>	moss green
Canaigre	<i>Rumex</i> sp.	tan, gold, reddish-tan
Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus</i> sp.	bright yellow, brownish-gold
Fourwing Saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	bright yellow, mustard
*Cochineal	found on <i>Opuntia</i>	red, purple, pinks, orange
Cottonwood blossoms	<i>Populus</i> sp.	yellow-green, gray-green
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago sparsiflora</i>	old gold
Juniper	<i>Juniperus</i> sp.	orange-gold, dark gold, gray-green
NM Locust pods	<i>Robinia neomexicana</i>	rose tan
Mt. Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus</i> sp.	medium tan
Big Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>	greenish-yellow, mustard

*not a plant but listed because of its host plant *Opuntia*

ALBUQUERQUE

If you haven't seen Zane Dohner's film of the Sandias by all means don't miss it if you hear it's being shown somewhere near. The Albuquerque Chapter was very lucky to have Zane speak at our May meeting and show his film. It is available on free loan from either the Forest Service or the Albuquerque Public Schools and would be an excellent program for a meeting anywhere in our state. Much of the footage was shot on the Elena Gallegos Land Grant, which the City of Albuquerque is purchasing through the passage of an extra ¼ % sales tax.

In June Dan Scurlock presented a slide program and lecture on the medicinal uses of native plants; with emphasis on the traditional Hispanic uses of the herbs. His talk included the preparation of the various plants for use in teas for stomach disorders. Many of us learned a new appreciation and use of our native plants from Dan. The next time we go walking we'll be looking at the wild pharmacy in our landscape.

We took a field trip to the newly constructed visitors' center of the Rio Grande Nature Center in May. There will be exhibits of the Bosque flora and fauna, a small lecture area, a library, and meeting areas. Adjacent to the building is a large waterfowl pond and beyond that will be several marshes. Throughout the Bosque area there will be hiking trails which will be closed to horseback riding, bicycling, and picnicing, due to the purpose of the preserve. It's exciting to have such an area for those of us living in Albuquerque.

- T.H.

GLENN NINER

The Glenn Niner Chapter toured the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center in May. The Center tests many different plants both native and introduced for conservation purposes, like erosion control. They also look for plants that could have a secondary use as an ornamental.

In June there was a workshop on propagation. Several methods were demonstrated from softwood cuttings to seed treatments. Knowing what works well should help us in growing native plants.

-L.J.

SANTA FE

The Santa Fe Chapter held its annual spring plant sale on Saturday, May 22nd. Traditionally held on the grounds of the American Indian Institute, the event was moved this year to the College of Santa Fe campus. In appreciation for the use of college grounds, chapter members Anna Deardorff and Irene Mitchell planted a mixture of flowering species in raised beds outside the campus snack bar.

Cloudy, windy weather and afternoon rains curtailed activity early, but the chapter earned a total of \$264.83 through donations from vendors. Our thanks to Plants of the Southwest, Agua Fria Nursery, Evergreen Nursery and Phyllis Hughes.

Anna Deardorff is organizing an educational workshop and letter writing campaign in June for the Endangered Species Act reauthorization. The event is to be co-sponsored by the Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, New Mexico Environmental Coordinating Council, and other conservation groups.

-C.D.

OTERO-LINCOLN

Jim Sais, NMSU Urban Horticulturalist presented a slide show on the Native Plants of New Mexico at our April Meeting. We also had a representative from Magic Gardens nursery. Tom Wootten (a Las Cruces member) is starting a nursery and shared his plans with us.

Our field trip on May 23rd, to Oliver Lee State Park was led by Darrell Warren. There are three main communities here; the wet areas, low desert and steep hillsides. It was impressive to see a fern growing in the middle of a rock and just a few feet away was desert. The orchids and ferns occur throughout the wet areas. Pictures of many of the plants are on display at the Visitors Center.

-J.D.

LAS CRUCES

We have changed our meeting time to the 2nd Wednesday of the month. For the summer, we will be holding informal meetings to identify whatever plant material is brought in. Field trips are planned for the Saturday before the meeting.

- J.L.

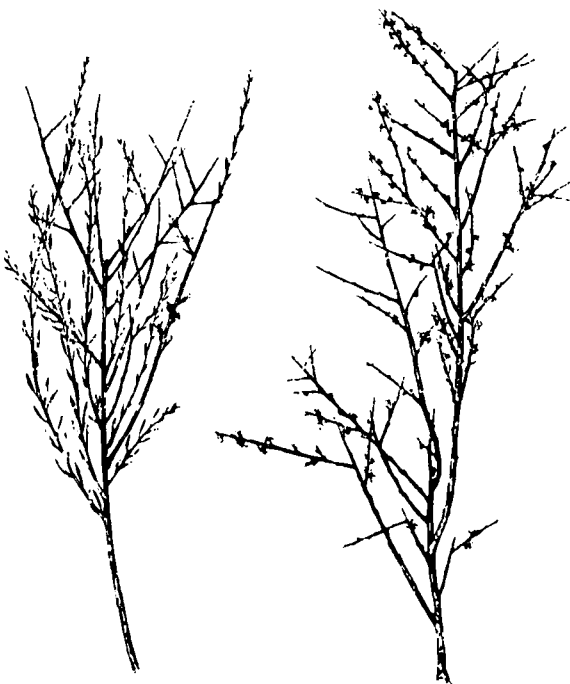
FOR CROSSOMATACEOLOGISTS

Rex Wahl's exciting find of *Apacheria chiricahuensis* in the San Mateo Mountains added that little-known shrub to our flora and greatly increased its known range, previously limited to Chiricahua National Monument.

The *Apacheria* report in the November 1981 issue also recorded this as New Mexico's first member of the Crossomataceae. But an easier way to add the family to our list was to be persuaded by Thorne and Scogin, "Biochemical profile of Crossomataceae," Aliso 9:185-188, 1978. They conclude that *Forsellesia* (= *Glossopetalon*), usually placed in Crassulaceae, belongs in Crossomataceae. Cronquist (An Intergrated System of Classification of Flowering Plants, 1981) accepts their judgment. The family thus enlarges to three genera, all small, small-leaved xerophytic shrubs of the Southwest and adjacent Mexico.

Spiny greasebush, *Forsellesia spinescens*, is in southern and eastern New Mexico, mostly (entirely?) on rocky limestone slopes. It occurs, for instance, in a favorite NPS locale, Dog Canyon (Otero County), where it blooms in early March before it leafs out.

-R.S.P



SPINY GREASE-BUSH
Forsellesia spinescens (Gray) Greene

A TOUCH OF CLASS

Jim Lewis is teaching a UNM Community College course: 'Gardening without work-Wild gardens.' Gardening methods which involve little work will be discussed and demonstrated. The design of natural gardens and the use of native plants will be emphasized. However, all techniques discussed can also be used on vegetable and non-native ornamental gardens. Field trips will be made to collect wildflower seeds. The 8 week course is scheduled for Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00pm, Sept. 8 through Oct.27. Registration fee is \$30.00.

Dan Scurlock is teaching a class 'Historical Use of Wild Plants of Northern New Mexico' at the UNM Community College. The 7 week class meets on Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 pm, Sept.14-Oct.26 with additional field trips. Registration fee is \$50.00.

For more information on these or other classes, call UNM Community College at 277-6542 or 277-2931.

WE WANT YOUR SLIDES OF NATIVE PLANTS


The Education Committee continues to gather slides illustrating the New Mexico flora. We look forward to being able to send out slide shows to any chapter of the Society - shows on the endangered and rare plants of New Mexico, on the limestone canyons and their unique floras, on plants of the high mountains, on cacti of New Mexico, on landscaping and revegetation projects using native plants, - the possibilities are endless, and the number of fine, amateur photographers (and professionals!) in the Society is significant.

You can contribute your slides (identified or identifiable) or loan them for duplicating by sending them to : Anna Deardorff, NPS Education Committee, P.O. Box 5917, Santa Fe, NM 87502.

-A.D.

BITS AND PIECES

We have copies of the current NPS membership roster. Anyone who would like a copy, send a Self-addressed, stamped, envelope to the Newsletter Editors.



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