

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

newsletter

March/April, 1984

Volume IX, No. 2

Calendar

- Mar/Apr Glenn Niners will meet with the Albuquerque Chapter.
- March 7 Albuquerque Chapter will meet at the Museum of Albuquerque. Roger Peterson of Santa Fe will present the program "Alpine Plants of Northern New Mexico".
- March 15 Southeast Chapter meets at the Memorial Recreation Center, 807 North Missouri, Roswell at 7:30 p.m. Roger Peterson will discuss the research he and Iris David have conducted at Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. On Saturday, March 17, Roger will take all interested persons on a field trip to Bitter Lakes.
- March 18 Otero/Lincoln Chapter meets for an edible pot luck at Toad and Lucille Wilsons' at 2:00 p.m. Take the road going north out of La Luz and go about seven miles. Stay on the paved road. You will come to an apparent dead end--a cattle guard and a sign listing the people who live beyond the cattle guard. Wilsons' is the first place on the left.
- March 21 Santa Fe Chapter meets in Room 122, St. John's College. The program will be "Drought-enduring Plants for Four Corners Landscaping" by Robert Cox of White Rock.
- March 22 Las Cruces Chapter meets in Room 156 of the Agriculture Building, NMSU campus. Pat Penfield will present a slide show and discussion on "Fall Color and How Plants Adapt to Winter".
- March 25 Santa Fe Chapter will have a Spring walk down the Rio Grande, starting from Buchman Wells area.
- April 4 Albuquerque Chapter will meet at the Museum of Albuquerque. John V. Brown will present the program "Photography of Native Plants".
- April 14
and
April 21 Native Plant Sales at Albuquerque and Alamogordo. Please read details on next page.

- April Otero/Lincoln Chapter: Mid-April, John Morton, 437-4552, will call those people interested in the cacti at Orogrande. Dee Umberson will lead the trip. Date will depend on the weather. Let John know if you want to go and he will call you.
- April 18 Santa Fe Chapter meets at St. John's College, Room 122. Roger Peterson and Iris David will present the program "Gypsum-tolerant and other Spring Flowers of Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge".
- April 19 Southeast Chapter meets at Memorial Recreation Center, 807 North Missouri, Roswell. Yvonne Jones of Capitan will give a program on spinning, weaving and dyeing wool using natural native dyes and man-made dyes.
- April 29 Otero/Lincoln Chapter meets at Nancy Hutto's at 2:00 p.m. for a tour of native plants in the Tularosa area. Turn west at Tastee Freeze on the highway in Tularosa and go about one and one-half miles down that road until it dead-ends. Turn right. Nancy's house is the first one on the left.

NATIVE PLANT SALE, April 14, by Albuquerque Chapter members at Albuquerque Garden Center, from 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

NATIVE PLANT SALE, April 21, by Alamogordo Chapter members at Alamogordo Garden Center, across from the Library on Tenth Street, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tom Wooten of Dry Country Plant Farm of Las Cruces and Judith Phillips of Bernardo Beach Native Plant Farm will bring plants to sell. Any plants you want to pot for sale will be fine. Lucille Wilson says ten per member would be a good start. There will be a booth with membership applications and with Nancy Hutto selling books. This sale is Alamogordo's chapter annual fund raiser beginning this year. For more information and to volunteer your services, call Lucille Wilson at 434-1506.

CHAPTERS

Albuquerque

Jackie Farr, 725-18 Tramway Vista Drive NE, Albuquerque, N.M. 87122

Glenn Niner

Lisa Johnston, P.O. Box 934, Los Lunas, NM 87031 (865-5608)

Las Cruces

Jean Lozier, 1934 Highland Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88001 (526-3771)

Otero/Lincoln

Jean Dodd, 1302 Canyon Road, Alamogordo NM 88310 (434-3041)

Madeline Murray, P.O. Drawer 368, Ruidoso Downs NM 88346 (378-4117)

Santa Fe

Iris David, P.O. Box 5917, Santa Fe NM 87502 (988-1709)

Southeast

Nina Eppley, 807 West Third, Roswell NM 88201 (623-4885)

Chapter Reports

President's Message

I recently attended a public meeting of the Goals for Albuquerque Committee. I'm glad to report that several of the committee's goals, such as streetscaping, parks, etc., promoted the use of native plants wherever possible. Hopefully, the City of Albuquerque will adopt the committee's recommendations, and other cities and towns throughout New Mexico will follow their example.

On a personal note, I am very concerned with the proposed flights over the Gila area by the U.S. Air Force. Up to twelve sonic booms per day are projected over an area which contains twenty breeding pairs of peregrine falcons as well as other wildlife. If you are as concerned as I am about this matter, please write and express your feelings to

Senator Pete Domenici
Room SD434
Dirkson Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Ted Hodoba

Hello,

Lisa Johnston and Judith Phillips have worked to make the Newsletter editorial transition smooth and the files neat. We regret any errors of omission or commission in this issue. Your comments and submissions are always welcome but because the Newsletter space is limited, we may sometime be unable to publish every thing we would like to.

That space limitation is why we have jammed paragraphs and edited our happy, long-winded introduction down to: Thank you, Lisa and Judith. And to all members, Hi! Keep those cards and letters coming.

George and Myrtle Finley

Albuquerque Chapter: At our January meeting, John Egbert, State Director of the Nature Conservancy, presented a lovely and informative slide program on the wildflowers of the Gila area, 65% of the plant species found in New Mexico occur in this area which is influenced by the Sonoran, Chihuahuan, Rocky Mountains, Great Basin and Great Plains regions of the country.

In February, Judith Phillips gave an excellent presentation on seed propagation. This always-popular program drew a record crowd of 52 people to our meeting. Judith has written a book which should be released by the end of the year, and which will be an excellent source for native plant enthusiasts.

Southeast Chapter: In November, Ann Ramage, an archeologist with BLM assisted by Terry Keim gave a slide show and discussion of archeology in this area. Ann, in addition to the interesting program explained some of BLM's work and concern with archeology. It seems typical with BLM's people that they are both informed and involved with the Bureau's work.

For December, our guest was biologist Jesse Juen of BLM from Carlsbad who showed slides of his recent study of endangered plants in SE New Mexico. He explained areas of interest and responsibilities of BLM and other agencies, such as Fish and Wildlife Service, with rare and endangered native plants.

In January, Jerry Ainsworth stirred up interest in the members by guiding them in keying blooming plants, with the use of slides and microscope.

February, Vera Heffley gave an interesting slide and talk show about birds you might see when out searching for native plants.

Story of the Yellow Penstemon

By Gussie Schooley

In the U.S. there is little chance of finding a new species of plant. The next best experience is to find a color break within a species. In late July of 1965 I'd gone from our home near Montezuma, N.M., up the Gallinas Canyon on state road 65 to its ending at Evergreen Valley. Here a forest road follows the Gallinas River. By the road among the vivid reds of Penstemon barbatus a yellow barbatus' wand was extremely noticeable.

Years of wild flower growing had taught me that for any chance of success with moving a blooming plant, the bloom must be cut off. I was teaching at Highlands U. that summer and was pressed for time so decided to mark the plant and get seed later. I was fortunate that nobody picked the wand of yellow bloom and in the fall I gathered the seed.

Montezuma is at 7000' altitude and we lived in a pine forest so had cool and shady summers. On perennial seedlings I seldom got blooming plants the first year but in 1966 did get a few blooming plants, all red, from the seed of the yellow flowered penstemon.

Despite wind, hail, racoons, dog and cat damage I had three plants with yellow bloom in '67. I enclosed them against animals and hand pollinated them.

Word of my success went out via the American Penstemon Society. Glen Viehmeyer at the North Platte, Nebraska Station of the University of Nebraska wrote and asked for seeds or plants.

My husband and I were headed for the Black Hills so we went via North Platte. The Viehmeyers took us on a daylong bird-watch of the thousands of cranes, ducks and geese. We saw both the sage grouse and lesser prairie chicken booming.

The Viehmeyers were two of the wonderful people we met as a result of finding a genetic break within a species. At that time Glen called it penstemon barbatus forma flaviflorus. He could grow a generation a year in a greenhouse.

After two years work with the yellow penstemon, Glen decided it had a gene for 'self destruct'. I was finding the same thing. Early, I had found I could rogue the plants and save those that would be yellow flowered as they would have no trace of red in the green seedling. I was getting some unattractive pinks rather like an unripe tomato and strangely enough, some very attractive cerise and purples. However, I was growing 50 kinds of penstemon so there was undoubtedly accidental hybridization.

I had been in correspondence with Josephine de Henry of the de Henry Botanical Research Center. In the 30's Dr. Pennell, THE "Scroph" man of United States, collected a yellow flowered barbatus in Chihuahua, Mexico which was placed in the National Herbarium of the Smithsonian. He had given Josephine de Henry's mother some seed off the herbarium sheet and she'd grown it for a few years before the strain ran out.

When I heard that Glen Viehmeyer had died, I had a sense of great personal loss of a close friend. I thought that would be the end of the research.

Dale Lindgren has continued the hybridizing and with success. Now 19 years of my work and others' work has resulted in a really stunning yellow cultivar with many, many stems packed with bloom.

You can imagine our pleasure to have had this cultivar named "Schooley's Yellow". Professor Lindgren said they are continuing their research and though they have found several cream and white flowered selections in progeny of yellow crosses, they have not been very attractive or hearty.

Editor's note: Gussie now lives in Roswell. She is a fine botanist.

FWling High

By Roger Peterson

Hawkmoths (sphinx moths, hummingbird moths) are exempt from New Mexico's tough new Flying While Intoxicated law, but they'd better mind their Pints and Quarts anyway. Sacred datura--Datura meteloides or, better, D. wrightii--is apparently a "hawkmoth flower," though bees also visit the huge white blossoms. The attraction may be a high, rather than nourishment, according to Verno and Karen Grant (1983, Botanical Gazette 144: 280-284). Observations in New Mexico and elsewhere suggest that the nectar is spiced with the sacred alkaloids, a suggestion strengthened by records of children dying after sucking corollas of the related Jimson weed (D. stramonium). "The hawkmoths seem to become intoxicated on it. They seem to like it and come back for more," according to the Grants. All parts of datura plants are deadly poisons for humans.

Manduca and Hyles species are the hawkmoth visitors to datura. The five-spot Manduca has a proboscis 11 to 12 cm. long, to match datura's corolla tube of 10-11 cm.

In another article (Bot. Gaz. 144: 439-449) the Grants survey hawkmoth flowers. In the Southwest, species of Onagraceae (evening primroses) and Nyctaginaceae (four-o'clocks) predominate, they report. (My own observations near Santa Fe find the familiar Hyles lineatus overwhelmingly on members of the phlox family, perhaps the fourth most important group in the Grants' continent-wide survey.) Other hawkmoth flowers recorded for New Mexico are columbines, cacti, menodora (olive family), rock trumpet (dogbane family), Nicotiana as well as Datura in the potato family, zephyr lily (amaryllis family) and

sand lily. The Grants report no hawkmoth flowers in temperate North America in several major animal-pollinated families: composites, legumes, mints, borages, and hydrophylls. Hawkmoth records for these groups, or moth deaths due to drunkenness, would be of interest.

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Drought Tolerant & Native
Landscape Ornamentals
Bernardo Beach Native Plant Farm
Star Route 7, Box 145
Veguita, New Mexico 87062

Flowers that bloom in the spring deserve better than being photographed with color film that has been so long in the camera that the color balance has gone bad.

Now is a good time to finish shooting that roll you put in months ago. Available subjects include family pets and skyscapes.

Carefully blow out dust and film chips after unloading the camera. Don't touch the mirror or shutter curtains on single lens reflex cameras. Gently clean the lens with a soft brush or lens tissue. Never use eyeglass cleaning products.

Shop for film with an expiration date at least a year away, film that is fast but not too fast for your camera. Many cameras can not correctly expose the new fast film such as Kodacolor VR 1000 in bright light without a suitable neutral density filter. Store film in the refrigerator if not to be used soon.

George Finley

Germination Recipe

By Judith Phillips

For gardeners who prefer seeding directly in beds or prepared plots outdoors, spring winds and other climatic vagaries can delay germination while cool soil temperatures give soil borne diseases the upper hand. Many arid land plants have seed coats that repel moisture until successive leaching removes germination barriers.

Presprouting seed can solve the problem of erratic germination in the field, but transferring germinants to the cold cruel world may be fatal. A pregermination technique described in Horticulture March 1983 (Sowing Seeds with Fluid Gel by Elizabeth Daniels, pp. 12-15) may provide a solution.

Seeds are sprouted much like mung bean or alfalfa salad sprouts, either on damp toweling or in screened-lid glass jars. Roger Kline, extension associate at Cornell University, developed a recipe for a cornstarch medium that is simple and readily available. The aim is to produce a gel the consistency of shampoo that comes in a tube, flowable but not watery, using three level tablespoons of cornstarch, give or take a teaspoon or two, per pint of water. "To prepare the gel, put the cornstarch and cold water into a pan and stir thoroughly. Bring to a full boil, stirring constantly. Continue stirring while you cool it quickly to lukewarm by setting the pan in cold water. Stirring is important because it prevents lumping, a disaster at the planting stage.

Put a sandwich-size plastic bag in a cup, one corner down, with the edges of the bag draped

over the rim. Pour in about four ounces of cooled gel. Drop the newly germinated seeds in and stir gently, but thoroughly. The seeds must be uniformly suspended. Twist the top of the bag.

Take bag and scissors to your waiting furrow. Holding the twisted top, invert the bag so that the corner that was filled is up. Snip off the corner, making a hole just a bit bigger than the seeds. Hold the bag up until you are ready to go.

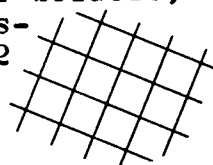
To plant the seeds, walk along the row, extruding the gel into the furrow as evenly as possible. It's like squeezing toothpaste, though gravity does most of the work. Cover the gel with a little less (soil) than you would use for dry seeds. Water immediately, just enough to moisten the soil. The water helps roots establish contact with the soil and perhaps washes away excess gel."

Kline recommends getting a feel for the procedure using sandwich-size bags, but once you have the hang of it, you can graduate to bigger bags with more gel and seed.

The method is proving useful in foiling "the frustrations of bad weather" on vegetable crops.

For less formal plantings than row crops or flower borders, the area could be cross-hatched at 10 or 12 inch intervals for a mass, non-geometric appearance, then scratch raked or perhaps top dressed with a mulch.

Spring is the season of possibilities. This one may net you a summer and fall full of flowers.



Dear Editor,

Let me tell you about a new book I picked up recently at our local library. It fills a need and might be of interest to members of the NPS. It is: "Where Have All the Wildflowers Gone?" A region-by region guide to threatened and endangered U.S. wildflowers by Robert H. Mohlenbrock, Macmillan Publishing Co. The price is \$15.95.

This charming little book is not a dry technical affair but it gives amusing stories about the people who first discovered these plants, the author's adventures looking for them, where they grow, why they are endangered and what is being done to save them.

It treats 120 species in depth, including all that are on the official U.S. Endangered Species List. Very attractive is the fact that all plants have a picture with them, either a color photo or a beautiful line drawing.

The book also contains a sad and lengthy list of plants that have not been seen in years and are presumed extinct. This does not contain the many Hawaiian species--but that is another story...

Walter Graf

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

Other interested family members: _____

Please enclose your check payable to:

Native Plant Society of New Mexico
P.O. Box 5917
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Annual Dues:

____ Individual & Family \$8.00
____ Friend of the Society \$25.00

Please send a gift membership and card to:

To better serve our membership, please check areas of particular interest.

Conservation:


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- Restoring abused areas
- Water conservation
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- Photography Field Trips
- Ethnobotany Paleobotany
- Growing for resale
- Informal classes
- Newsletter Youth projects
- Organize new chapter
- Membership drive
- Other (please specify)

How would you describe your level of expertise? What areas would you be willing to help with?

Are you a member of an organization with related purposes (Garden Club, NM Wildflower Association, etc.)?



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The Las Cruces Chapter needs someone who will type the program and have it duplicated, plan programs with other members, put a notice in the Sun News announcing the month's program and write a short note for the state newsletter. Time involved is about two hours every three months. For more information or to volunteer, please call 526-3771.

Organizations and interested groups within the state may contact biologist Jesse Juen through the Carlsbad N.M. Bureau of Land Management office for a program and discussion of his recent study of endangered plant specimens in Southeast New Mexico.

Albuquerque Chapter is planning a field trip to Myra McCormick's Bear Mountain Guest Ranch in Silver City June 1-3. Myra is a naturalist who's sure to provide her guests with memorable adventures. Last year's field trip included a one-day excursion to Tres Hermanas and Florida Mountains and a half-day trip to two regions of the Gila area. The cost of the trip will be \$46.50 plus tax, and includes dinner Friday night, three meals on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday and two nights lodging. If you'd like to join us, contact Jackie Farr, 725-18 Tramway Vista Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87122, phone 294-2178. The deadline for registration is April 15.
 Candy Kroft

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Nancy Hutto is handling some books that were bought for sale by NPS:

- Woody Plants of the Southwest.....\$12.95
- Roadside Plants of Northern New Mexico..... 9.95
- Trees and Shrubs of the Southwest Uplands..... 6.00
- Grasses of the Southwestern United States..... 5.95
- Roadside Wildflowers of New Mexico..... 4.95
- New Mexico Range Plants..... 3.00
- Audubon Field Guide to Wildflowers.....12.95

Nancy will mail the books to you if you enclose \$2.00 for postage with your order. Her address is Box 44, Tularosa, NM 88352. Nancy will also have the books at the Native Plant sale in Alamogordo, April 21.

Send change of address or any Newsletter articles to:

Native Plant Society of New Mexico
 Newsletter
 1001 Kings Drive
 Roswell, NM 88201

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