

## Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico Report for Year 2025

This year the Albuquerque chapter held ten public meetings with presentations, five board meetings, and enjoyed a few atypical events. All public meetings were held at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Ave NE, Albuquerque.

### Meetings open to the public:

January 8 Meeting (Second Wednesday of January): “Wandering Around Central New Mexico Looking at Cacti” Rob Romero took us on a trip around central NM to see the interesting cacti that are found there.

Feb 5 Meeting: “Native Plant Gardens for Beauty and Resiliency.” Judith Phillips spoke about her work developing native plant landscapes over the years.

March 5 Meeting: “Yes! New Mexico Has Native Ferns.” Harpo Faust shared images and information from her recent work researching ferns in New Mexico. Harpo is a Carter Conservation Fund grant recipient.

April 2 Meeting: “The Latest on New Mexico Rare Plants” with Martin Purdy. Martin is an Assistant State Botanist and he updated us on the status of rare plants in our state and the project that he works with.

May 7 Meeting: “Flora of Bosque del Apache — A tour of the Desert Arboretum and the Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Project.” Cari Powell with Friends of Bosque del Apache provided a visual tour of the Desert Arboretum and explained the Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Project at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

June 4 Meeting: “Playa Restoration near Lordsburg.” Mike Gaglio, owner of High Desert Native Plants in El Paso, Texas, told the story of the fascinating and innovative, multi-agency partnership to restore the degraded Lordsburg Playa, the source of infamous dust storms and deadly hazards along Interstate 10.

July 2 Meeting: “Invasive Plants in New Mexico” with Sylvan Kaufman, co-author of Invasive Plants, a comprehensive guide now in its third edition. Her talk included definitions, history, and identification of some common NM invasive plants, the changes they have caused, and species to look out for.

September 3 Meeting: “Wildflowers and Geology — My Favorite Hikes in Albuquerque Area Ecosystems.” Kent Condie, emeritus professor of geochemistry at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology took us on a tour of favorite New Mexico trails and areas with interesting geology as well as diverse plant species.

October 1 Meeting: “Rewilding the City one Alley at a Time,” with Candace Stoughton. We learn how one Native Plant Society member is planting native and xeric plants in neglected landscapes of northeast Albuquerque to benefit wildlife and bring nature into our urban environment.

November 5 Meeting: “Medicinal Plants, People and Environmental Change in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.” Dara Saville, community herbalist and founder of The Yerba Mansa Project, shared what she is learning through a PhD research project, working with local herbalist/plant medicine practitioners, about our relationships with plants and the land and the human health and spiritual insights it reveals.

### Other Events in 2025

- September 14 (Sunday) — A chapter potluck picnic and wildflower walk at Oak Flat, Cibola National Forest, in the Manzanita Mountains.
- Beginning in June — we began fund raising for the George Oxford Miller Native Plant Education Grant Program. Through this program, we will offer small grants to teachers, non-profit organizations, Tribal groups and high school or college students for projects that develop interest and knowledge about native plants and plant ecology. This program honors the life and contributions of our former chapter president, George Miller (1943-2024), who devoted his life to sharing knowledge about native plants, creating beautiful photos, writing books, giving presentations and gardening.
- In 2025 the Albuquerque chapter awarded a total of \$2500 among four worthy recipients of George Miller grants. Funds were largely from donors but were supplemented with chapter money as approved by our board and proceeds from the sale of books donated by George himself.
- Four members worked to install two permanent displays that illustrate and advocate gardening for pollinators at the Oso Grande Pollinator Habitat in

northeast Albuquerque. The displays themselves were donated by the Xerces Society.

- A Facebook page was established to publicize our group and its activities, while a Facebook group was established for members only for sharing experiences, photos and ideas.
- Several members assisted at the UNM Herbarium in identifying plant specimens collect in forays conducted in the past two years, including ones to the Brokeoff Mountains, supported by NPSNM's Carter Conservation Fund.
- Field trips were too numerous to list individually, but they included outings in the Sandia, Manzano, and Magdalena Mountains, to Petroglyph National Monument on the outskirts of Albuquerque, the Quebradas Back Country Byway, and Valles Calder National Preserve.
- We participated in outreach by tabling at the Rio Grande Nature Center, the Hubbell House (a Build Your Backyard Refuge event), and a Public Library event.
- Instead of a public meeting and presentation, our December membership meeting was a potluck lunch at Albuquerque's Open Space Visitors Center. In addition to seeing "Pollinators (insects, bats, birds) and Their Plants," a slideshow created by George Miller, we accepted the new and continuing officers. Yasmeen Najmi was elected to be our new president for 2026, replacing Tom Stewart who will take the role of Program Coordinator. All other officers will continue as they were at the end of 2025.