

El Paso Chapter – Native Plant Society of New Mexico

2025 Annual report

2025 Chapter officers

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Standing committees

Programs:

Kevin Floyd

Publicity and Social Media:

vacant

Field Trips:

vacant

State Representative:

Julia Bailey

Conservation:

Ann Falknor

Outreach:

Yosune Casana

Chapter activities

January 4th, 10:00-11:30 at the Garden Center at Memorial Park**Growing plants with winter sowing**

Many plant species have seeds that require special treatments like cold stratification and scarification to help to break dormancy. Winter sowing is an approach that mimics natural conditions for improving germination without requiring a lot of work. Kevin Floyd will lead this workshop to teach the principles of winter sowing. Participants will leave with a container sown with native plant seeds to try winter sowing for themselves!

February 1st, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park**Agave Restoration Initiative by Bat Conservation International**

To support the recovery of the Mexican long-nosed bat, the continued conservation of all pollinating bats and the agave landscape upon which these bats rely, BCI has launched an Agave Restoration Initiative across Mexico and the Southwestern U.S. Rachel Burke, Agave Restoration Coordinator for Bat Conservation International, will give an overview of this program, talk about how it relates to her previous research on agave distribution and landscape health, and discuss why healthy underlying native plant communities can support the persistence of agave populations in the southwestern U.S.

March 1st, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Sex in succulents

The sexual propagation of succulents has a varied strategy that involves wind, insects, bats, or birds. In this presentation the principle of sexual presentation is explained using various examples including cacti and yuccas that need a specific moth to produce seed. Dr. Ad Konings is an accomplished photographer, cactus and succulent enthusiast, and author.

(Programmed by El Paso Cactus and Rock Club)

April 5th, 10:00-11:30 at the UTEP Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens

Tour of “Cultivating Your Home: Embracing Chihuahuan Desert Diversity” and the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens at UTEP

“Cultivating Your Home” is an exhibit in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens and the diversity of the region. Dr. Kevin Floyd, Botanical Curator and lead curator of the exhibit, will give a brief introduction to the exhibit, followed by time for everyone to visit it. There will also be a tour of the gardens, with a focus on the plants that will be available at the spring FloraFest Native Plant Sale on April 12th.

May 7th, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Desert degradation

This presentation will examine some of the historical, and current, attitudes and conservation efforts within the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Dr. Paul Hyder has been working in the Chihuahuan Desert for many years, studying rattlesnakes, creosote, and many other parts of the local ecosystems.

(Programmed by El Paso Cactus and Rock Club)

June 7th, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Dust Mitigation on the Lordsburg Playa

Dust storms are the hot topic this year! Dust causes bad air quality and zero-visibility conditions on roads. These storms have resulted in numerous highway closures, accidents, and fatalities on I-10 through the Lordsburg Playa - a dry lakebed in southwest New Mexico.

Can water harvesting actually reduce dust?! El Paso Cactus and Rock Club's own Mike Gaglio thinks the answer is yes. Come learn about the project that he and a group of colleagues is working on to harvest water, grow grass, and improve air quality in the Desert Southwest.

July 5th, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Potluck and cactus raffle

Bring a dish or snack to share, and leave with at least one new cactus! All members in good standing will receive raffle tickets, and get to select a small cactus when their number is called. Experts from the Cactus and Rock Club will be able to advise on how to care for the new plant. There are often more cacti than members, so each person receives multiple plants!

August 2nd, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

The Plight of the Monarch Butterfly by Dr. Gertrud Konings

The incredible life history of the Monarch Butterfly still baffles the mind. Its yearly 2500+ miles spring migration from Mexico to Canada and again in reverse in the fall spans four generations of butterflies

who mysteriously all end up in the same group of trees in central Mexico to spend the winter. Gertrud has visited the overwintering site of millions and millions of Monarchs and will show some of the incredible photos.

(Programmed by El Paso Cactus and Rock Club)

September 6th, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Evolution of the Milkwort genus *Hebecarpa* (Polygalaceae)

Advances in molecular methods have made it easier to acquire plant DNA from herbarium specimens with genetic material that has been heavily deteriorated over time. The largely Mexican genus *Hebecarpa* has evaded comprehensive genetic study, in part, because much of its species are only found in remote parts of Mexico. Preliminary genomic work by UTEP Ph.D. student Christopher Muñoz has revealed that hidden, or 'cryptic' species, not yet known to science, may be found within two described *Hebecarpa* species, *H. obscura* and *H. barbeyana*.

October-No meeting

Members encouraged to attend the NPS-NM conference in Las Cruces

November 1st, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Cactus appreciation month

9:30 AM – Improve Growing Your Cacti by Evaluation Field Observations by Lucas Bucholtz and Alessandra Norman. Through both aesthetic and ecological lenses, they will share how observing plants in their natural habitats has shaped their growing practices-from the Big Apple to the cold gray skies of the Windy City.

10:30 AM – Cacti of Chile by Steven Brack. One of the driest places on Earth-less than 0.25" of rain a year! Yet fogs from fall through spring bring just enough moisture for life to thrive. Here slow-growing cacti like Copiapos and Neoporterias, and delicate amaryllid bulbs, defy the odds.

11:30 AM – Cactus 101 by Ad Konings. In Texas, we're lucky to have a wide variety of native cacti. It's not the spines that make a plant a cactus. Next time you see a spiny plant, take a closer look... it might not be a cactus after all!

(Programmed by El Paso Cactus and Rock Club)

December 6th, 10:00-11:30 am at the Garden Center at Memorial Park

Holiday Potluck and elections

Bring a dish to share and the desire to help run our two organizations. Many officer positions are available, but we are happy to have people help with committees or as at-large board members. These organizations will not survive if we cannot find people to step up to help run them!

[Special events for 2025:](#)

Members volunteered at the spring and fall FloraFest Native Plant Sales at the University of Texas at El Paso. These two one-day events are an opportunity for the El Paso Community to buy and learn about the Chihuahuan Desert Plants.

Other news:

The El Paso Chapter partnered with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club to participate in several outreach events throughout the year. Our outreach coordinator, Yosune Casana, went to 12 events, ranging from the Party for the Planet at the El Paso Zoo to an environmental fair at the Vista Del Sol Elementary School.

We also partnered to perform several cactus rescues, mostly around the Franklin Mountains. Over 2000 cacti were salvaged from the Wyler Tramway site alone as the work to build a new tramway and visitor center picked up.