

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO



BULLETIN

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 2010

EDITOR: CHARLES HOLMES

PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are usually the third Fridays at 7:00 pm at WNMU's Harlan Hall, with refreshments following the program. Activity updates and further details will be posted on our new website www.gilanps.org.

Friday, October 15, 7:00 pm, Room 100, Harlan Hall, WNMU Campus.

Kiva Rose, an herbalist and curandera from the Reserve area, will talk about "Herbalism in the Southwest." Kiva teaches and practices down-to-earth herbalism, nutrition and healing based on the same principals our ancestors followed within an adaptive and contemporary context. She is the author of the forthcoming "The Medicine Woman's Herbal," an in-depth guide to common nourishing herbs, traditional and wild foods, and healing the Medicine Woman way.

Friday, November 19, 7:00 pm, Room 100, Harlan Hall, WNMU Campus.

Manda Jost, of the Department of Natural Sciences at WNMU, will talk about an insect infestation in the Sacramento Mountains and how it was controlled.

In addition to teaching biology and invertebrate zoology, Manda is restoring and expanding the existing entomology collection at Western. Her current research projects include ongoing systematic studies of Orthoptera.

2.

Sunday, December 12, at the home of Allison and Jeff Boyd we will celebrate our annual Holiday Party.

As you remember this is a cooperative effort that is arranged by our social committee. You will be notified within the next six weeks or so of what you might contribute, the times of the party and the directions to the home.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHANGING THE GNPS LOGO

Look at the logo near the upper left corner of page 1. We are considering changing this so that it is less "busy" and more readable. Please send your ideas for this change to President Elroy Limmer, at elroy.limmer@gmail.com, or 9 Maplewood Circle, Silver City, 88061-9296.

MEMBERS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee is still looking for new Board Members. If you would be willing to serve or would like more information, please contact Angela Flanders aoflanders@gmail.com or Betsy Kaido elizabethKaido2@hotmail.com .

THE 2011 GNPS CALENDAR

The 2011 GNPS Calendar is well underway and should be available by mid-October. Selling for \$10 each, this lovely parade of native flowering plant photographs (with common, Latin and family names) and listings of monthly events for GNPS, the Audubon Society and the Rolling Stones Gem & Mineral Society will make wonderful holiday gifts. Soon you will be notified about where to obtain these calendars.

R E P O R T S

On Sunday, July, 18 a group of about 12 headed up the Sheep Corral Road.

We were looking for summer blooming plants. There was lots of diversity because the rains had started. There were plenty of Asteraceae (composites, or NYC's as some of you would say). We also encountered *Holodiscus dumosus* (Rock Spirea), *Penstemon virgatus* (Wandbloom Penstemon), *Penstemon barbatus* (Scarlet Penstemon) and *Hedeoma hyssopifolium* (Aromatic False Pennyroyal). (See photos below).

3.



Penstemon barbatus



Hedeoma hyssopifolium



Holodiscus dumosus



Penstemon virgatus

On Sunday, September 12, about 20 of us went with our experts, Dr. Richard Felger and Dr. Russ Kleinman, to Ft. Bayard to view some of the huge trees with which Dr. Felger is so well acquainted.

Some of the great trees are rather rare in this part of the world. Among them are the Coulter Pine (*pinus coulteri*), native to northern Baja California and bearer of the largest cone in the "pine world." We also found some *Cupressus arizonica* (Arizona Cypress), native to our region but not wide spread. We were delighted to see that the ample rains had caused many new members of this beautiful species. We were also introduced to 2 species of *Pectis*, a genus which is spread around the world. Both of these are very low growing ground covers. Somewhat surprising was the discovery of some cattails (*Typha latifolia*) growing in the wet margins of a paved street. Also, in a damper area of a small woodland, were a number of one of the only two willows that grows to tree size, the Gooding's Willow (*Salix goodingii*).



Pectis angustifolia

On Friday, September 10th, Gabe and Leroy Holguin of the Fire Management Division of the Gila National Forest presented a survey of the recent policy changes in the management of fires in the National Forest and Wilderness.

This presentation, in Harlan Hall, reminded us that fire management no longer means just fire suppression as rapidly as possible but now fire management includes prescribed burns. These policies are now based on a set of principles that help determine the impact of any given fire on human life, property damage, ecological determinations, economic impact, risk and resource management (especially danger to the fire fighters), public health and the best available science.

For instance, if actual fires are not achieving the objectives that have been determined for them, prescribed burns may be a better solution or necessary, if conditions will allow them. However, we should not have been surprised to hear that prescribed burns are not allowed in the Wilderness, nor are certain vehicles. Fires in that area are much harder to manage. The Gila National Forest is now nationally praised as engaged in better practices (with better policies) that many other national forests.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

This meeting was held in Silver City and hosted by the Gila Native Plant Society under the banner "Gateway to the Gila" from August 12th through August 15th at the Global Resource Center on the WNMU campus. Over 150 native plant experts, educators, writers, researchers, and native plant enthusiasts attended this conference, not only from New Mexico but many other states as well.

Thirteen expert presentations and workshops were held during the first day and a half. The topics included permaculture, a cactus workshop, a pine needle basket making session and native plant photography. Additionally, on Saturday and Sunday, fifteen field trips were conducted, some by renowned experts, to sites as far west as the Mogollons, as far south as Spring Canyon and as far east as Railroad Canyon in the Black Range.

A new feature, introduced at this conference, was a native plant photo contest. Fifty-three photos by 17 photographers were judged by three local professional photographers. It was a huge success. This is likely to become an ongoing feature of future state annual meetings. (Continued on next page)

Concurrent with the other activities was a silent auction (which filled our coffers with over \$2,000) and a room full of hundreds of books to buy about native plants, ecology and garden management.

Curt Meine, an Aldo Leopold biographer and conservation biologist, was the keynote speaker at Saturday night's "Cowboy Dinner" banquet at the Copper Creek Ranch. He talked about New Mexico's deep influence on the continuing evolution of land ethics and biodiversity conservation. He was great!

Kelly Allred, a botanist recently retired from teaching at New Mexico State University, was presented a lifetime achievement award. He is an expert on grasses and works with ranchers, farmers, and home-owners to solve problems related to range plants. He is also the co-author of the newly printed *Flora Neomexicana III: An Illustrated Identification Manual*, this being a systematic key to identifying almost all the native plants found in New Mexico. Hooray!

To say the least, our chapter made a tremendously good impression on those attending from all of the other chapters in the organization and even those outside the NPSNM. Great work GNPS!

THIRD NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GILA SYMPOSIUM

This symposium will be held on October 14-15, 2010, in the WNMU Besse-Forward Global Resource Center on the Western New Mexico University campus in Silver City. Keynote speakers will be Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra of the Univ. of California at Riverside, Dr. Benjamin Tuggle of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Corbin Newman of the U.S. Forest Service. At least 20 talks are currently scheduled by experts including Josh Baldwin (geography), Jim Brooks (fish), Van Clothier (stream restoration), Mary Dowse (geology), Richard Felger (ethnobotany), Ed Gilbert (vascular plant database), Randy Jennings (narrow-headed garter snake), George Farmer (stream restoration), Gene Jercinovic (flora of the Floridas), Kelly Kindscher (ethnobotany), Russ Kleinman (ferns of the Gila region), Dave Menzie (watershed restoration), Jim O'Hara (tachinid flies), Dave Propst (fish), Ronald Shook (southwestern willow flycatcher), Matt Schultz (watershed restoration), Bob Sivinski (rare plants), and Rebecca Summer (geomorphology). This event is geared towards a broad audience including the general public, students, scientists and natural resource managers. For more information, please visit the symposium's website at (<http://www.gilasymposium.org>).

The BOOKS and POSTERS FOR SALE List is now available on the website at www.gilanps.org. The new book seller will be Ronald Groves at 575-313-9910 or orangegroves42@gmail.com.

SPECIAL FEATURE

SILVA CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN COMPLEX

Located near the northern end of Virginia Street, this historical site displays flowering plants, shrubs, trees and cacti, most of which are native to Grant County. By native, we mean those plants that have developed and adjusted their processes and life styles to this region for hundreds of years or even millennia. We currently have over 100 species of native plants on display.

The majority of the individual gardens have been established on themes that serve special functions, like Cactus Garden, Hummingbird Garden, Butterfly Garden and Grasses Garden, to demonstrate to landscapers which plants might be employed in their individual garden complexes to fit those themes.

A little beyond the entrance to the complex are two large catchment basins that were designed by a local water harvesting expert to catch rain runoff from nearby streets. The water was then naturally either allowed to spread out over a large area of the garden complex and soak in, or was naturally stored under the catchments almost like an aquifer. Among other effects, this process converted large central areas of the complex from barren, hard clay flats into prolific grassy areas that can now be more readily converted into gardens for more native plants.

There is a raised series of paths that meander through the complex to allow you to easily navigate among all of the separate planted areas. As you move along the paths you will notice that seven of the planted areas are raised several feet off the original flat surface. This is necessary because the original surface was a parking area for large trucks and a storage area for materials used in road maintenance. The original ground is packed clay with construction materials, including asphalt, mixed in – not an acceptable medium for growing native plants that prefer sandy (or even rocky), light soils.

The first of those raised gardens is the cactus garden. The next two raised gardens do not, as yet, have designations. The fourth garden, which has two raised sections and a dip in between, is called the Hummingbird Garden. If you recognize some of the plants there, you will realize that they are big hummingbird attractors. The fifth garden is a Butterfly Garden, including a few plants that are not native but are necessary for butterfly attraction. The sixth and seventh slightly raised gardens are not yet designated, but do have some of the most attractive low-growing native plants, mostly perennials.

We think we can safely say that in the near future, this beautiful garden complex will be connected to the Jose Barrios School and the Waterworks complex by a new, wide footbridge over the Silva Creek that will connect these features into a historical complex well worth visiting often.

For more information, contact Charles Holmes at iskander321@hotmail.com.

NATIVE PLANTS IN THE SILVA CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN



Artemisia frigida



Ferocactus wislizeni



Agastache cana



Penstemon pseudospectabilis



Oenothera (Calylophus) hartwegii



Penstemon strictus