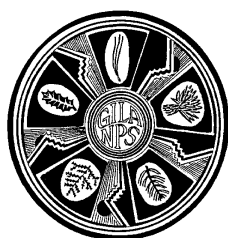


GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO



BULLETIN

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2014

Editor: Charles Holmes

PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are usually the third Friday of the month at 7:00 pm at WNMU's Harlan Hall, with refreshments following the program.

Activity updates and further details will be posted on our website www.gilanps.org. You will also receive an email reminder before the date of each program.

Friday, January 17th at 7:00 pm, room 110 of Harlan Hall, George Farmer will present a program about "Seed Matters: We Reap What We Sow."

In this presentation you will learn about the Greatest Story Never Told. To understand why seed matters, you have to know the epic journey of seed – 12,000 years of relationship between people and plants that transformed the world. You will also learn why plant diversity is a critical component of human life and the current perils that are diminishing that diversity. Challenges are opportunities and the challenges we face in the human food

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supply have solutions. We hold the key to those solutions. Come to this presentation and receive your copy of that key.

George Farmer was reared on a family ranch in central Texas where the family garden was a major source of daily food. In 2006 George and his partner, Linda Zatopek, moved to Axle Canyon Preserve, an ecological preserve that offers solitude and sanctuary for all living things, complete with a sustainable food garden with fruit trees, a greenhouse for winter season fresh food, an erosion mitigation structure along Mulberry Canyon and the re-introduction of native flora, some of which have been propagated in the greenhouse.

In light of the change in climate that is well underway in the arid southwest, the availability of healthy food will become a critical issue in the very near future. George is passionate about food sustainability and empowering communities to take control of their own seed sources. This can be accomplished through the establishment of family/neighborhood gardens, growing open-pollinated vegetables for food and seed, seed saving year-to-year, community seed exchange activities and sharing knowledge, experience and produce.

On Friday, February 21st, at 7:00 pm, room 110 of Harlan Hall, Renee West, the current president of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, will tell us about Climate Change in Southern New Mexico.

The presentation is in two parts. In the first part, she will share her observations from Carlsbad Caverns related to weather changes that could be caused by the effects of climate change. In the second part, she will give her interpretation of where we should go from here into the future. We need to recognize the good and bad decisions that could be made.

Renee has spent 24 years in the National Park Service and one year in the U.S. Forest Service, working in areas as diverse as the beaches of the Arctic Ocean in Alaska and the tropical

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rain forests of Puerto Rico. Most of her time has been spent working in the North American deserts, with a stint in Death Valley NP. She has spent the last 15 years as Chief of Biology at Carlsbad Caverns NP. She has a Master of Science in Botany and a Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Anthropology, both from Arizona State University.

On Friday, March 21st at 7:00 pm at Harlan Hall, we will have a program presented by a speaker who is yet to be determined. But, you will receive the information about this program well in advance. Just keep checking your email from the GNPS.

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

5th Natural History of the Gila Symposium Feb. 27-28, 2014 -- W N M U

The Gila region is recognized as a unique and dynamic landscape. The waterways, forests and wildlife that come together to form this region are the subject of the upcoming 5th Natural History of the Gila Symposium. Come join us on the campus of WNMU in the Global Resource Center on Thursday, Feb. 27 (1:00 pm–5:00 pm) and Friday, Feb 28 (9:00 am-12:00 pm and 1:00 pm-5:00 pm).

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Julio Betancourt, a national expert in paleoecology and paleoclimatology of the Southwest. Concurrent sessions during the symposium will offer presentations on topics ranging from anthropology, botany, environmental education, ethnobotany, fish ecology, fire management, geology, herpetology, hydrology, invasive species, ornithology, paleontology, land management and zoology. A highlight of the symposium will be the “Creative Voices” session, featuring non-fiction readings about the Gila region by regional writers.

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The public is encouraged to attend any or all of the many symposium sessions free of charge. Optional field trips highlighting the local flora and fauna will be held Saturday morning, March 1, 2014.

Plan Your Dream Garden with Native Plants!

Gila Native Plant Society 2014 Native Plant Sale – March 22, 2014

Mark your calendar now! Come to the GNPS Plant Pre-Sale Order Day and Educational Fair at the Museum Annex on West Broadway. Check with the GNPS website (www.gilanps.org/) for a list and information of the plants for sale and online ordering details.

Then, come to the Plant Pick-up and Sale on Friday, April 18th, in the parking lot across from Gough Park. Also, celebrate Earth Day on Saturday, April 19th, at Gough Park where you can buy any unsold plants at our GNPS display table. As always, your purchases and volunteer efforts make this sale an exciting and successful event. Members of the public are welcome!

R E P O R T S

On Friday, October 18th, Patrick Alexander told us a great deal about Gypsophylla: An Introduction to Gypsum and the Plants That Call It Home.

The term gypsophylla, as you probably know, means that which likes/loves gypsum, a very soft sulfate mineral, composed of calcium sulfate dihydrate. It is the main component of many forms of plaster. However, we are more interested in which of our New Mexico plants will tolerate, and even like, this medium. Patrick told us that about 280 million years ago this gypsum formed during the Permian period near the boundary of the ocean that was nearby

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at that time.

Gradually some of this “rock-like” substance was transformed into either sand or clay. As you may know, there are large areas of these gypsum sand dunes not too far away from us in the White Sands Monument region. Fairly close to that area is a location of large amounts of gypseous clay in some of the foothills close to the White Sands.

Most plants cannot tolerate gypsum, but some rare, endemic species, which we call gypsophyles, have adapted well over vast amounts of time. Patrick told us that there are about thirty species in this category. He alerted us to a very new species found in this area: *Nerisyrenia hypercorax*. It is not yet on the “accepted” list. Also, twelve of the thirty are on the rare plant list. Much more long-term investigation is continuing in this area of interest.

On Friday, November 15th, Donna Stevens told us about a major project she and colleagues undertook to survey/inventory the extent of Alien Plant Invasion in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness over three years (2011-2013).

At the beginning, they made a list of nearly 50 plants that they expected to find. Ultimately, they found only a few of those on the list but they did discover over 15 plants that were not on the original list. Eventually, the total number of non-native species was 24.

The weather conditions during the first two years were quite disappointing. It was dry with sparse vegetation. However, 2013 brought rain and flourishing plants. Another factor which probably affected the outcome was their inability to return to each survey area a second or third time to compare findings.

All in all, however, this was a very valuable effort. She hopes it may be repeated by others in the future.