

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO



BULLETIN

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2012

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 a reminder before the date of the program.

Friday, October 19th - Dr. Kelly Allred will present "How to Get a Job at a Major University, Feed Your Family for Thirty-Two Years, While Producing Nothing of any Economic Value."

Kelly will discuss his long career studying the flora of New Mexico. Dr. Allred is professor emeritus from the Range Department and current director of the Range Herbarium at NMSU. He has published extensively on the plants of New Mexico. Dr. Allred's most recent, soon-to-be-released work is "Flora Neomexicana: An Illustrated Identification Manual," which should be included in every NPSNM member's library.

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Friday, November 16th. Elroy Limmer will present a program on "Insects and Their Relationship with Native Plants."

Past president of the Gila Native Plant Society and former city arborist for Peoria, Illinois, Limmer will discuss the interactions of insects with plants.

A nature photographer for over 50 years, he will accompany his talk with photos--all promising to be excellent--including some of especially interesting insects not often seen and which have no apparent effect on plants.

2012 Gila Native Plant Society Christmas Party will be held in mid-December (Date to be announced).

This event will bring together nearly half of our membership to enjoy great food, provided by the members and the society, and to delight in the companionship of lots of people who share interests in preserving and learning about native plants, especially in southwestern New Mexico. We hope to see you there.

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

2013 CALENDAR AVAILABLE

This year the Gila Native Plant Society along with Grant County Rolling Stones Gem and Mineral Society and Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society joined together to produce a very lovely calendar. It is filled with beautiful images of the natural wonders of SW New Mexico contributed by some of the great photographers in our organizations. Meeting dates and field trips are included each month for easy reference.

Please help support GNPS by purchasing this beautiful calendar. They are available for a \$10.00 donation at our meetings or by calling Elroy Limmer at 575-538-5513.

SEE THE CALENDAR'S COVER ON PAGE 6

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REPORTS

On Sunday, July 15th, a group of about 15 headed to Lake Roberts to see what was growing and blooming there.

We didn't expect to find too much because the rains had mostly failed up to this point. It is always nice, and somewhat refreshing, to see water just lying around in such large quantities, especially if it is in lakes and not in your back yard.

As usual we saw many willows, especially the common *Salix goodingii* (Gooding's Willow) and *Salix exigua* (Coyote Willow). We continued along the south shore where one can see *Mentha arvensis* (Field Mint) in the water at the shoreline. Also in the water, and still near the shore, there was an abundance of *Typha latifolia* (Broad-leaf Cattail). Farther along we discovered some *Linum lewisii* (Blue Flax) which had been missing in other places we had hiked because of the lack of rain. Finally, we discovered *Lithospermum incisum* (Fringed Gromwell) not far from the shore.

Since we were a little disappointed by how little we had seen, we continued to the north side of the lake which is a somewhat different environment. We were thrilled with our decision because we came upon some real finds! Growing close to each other in an open area, we discovered a patch of *Rudbeckia laciniata* (Cutleaf Coneflower) and a collection of one of our favorites—*Plectocephalus rothrockii* (Rothrock's Basketflower). Some of the plants were nearly 5 feet high!

On Sunday, August 19th, a group of about 15 set out for Pancho Canyon, west of Silver City and near Bill Evans Lake.

First, we went to a location near the shoreline of the Gila River near Pancho Canyon. This area seemed to be drier than expected even after some recent rains in the SC area. We were not completely disappointed because we discovered some rather rare members of the *Helianthus* genus (Sunflowers). This one was *Helianthis ciliaris* (Blueweed). When it is found, it often occurs

in large collections.

We also discovered a large number of *Anisacanthus thurberi* (Desert Honeysuckle), many of them clinging to the side of a rather sheer cliff just below the main road through the area. These discoveries definitely made the trip worthwhile.

We then proceeded a little farther to Pancho Canyon which turned out to be bone dry. This condition prevented us from finding most of the items we had hoped to find. However, we did unexpectedly come across some examples of *Juniperus coahuilensis* var. *arizonica* (Roseberry Juniper), which is fairly rare in our region. This juniper is easily confused with *Juniperus monosperma* (One-seeded Juniper) which is very common.

Later we saw a couple of examples of *Ptelea trifoliata* (Hop Tree).

Pray for more rain!

On Sunday, September 16th, a group of us traveled to Cherry Creek Campground for the last hike of this season.

It was wet! Can you believe it? Even with what you might expect as good conditions, we did not find many herbs blooming though there were some spectacular exceptions. We encountered many very large and tall *Oenothera elata* (Hooker's Evening Primrose). We also saw one of our favorite *Crataegus wootoniana* (Wooton's Hawthorn), which is an endemic species of concern. We rarely see them, but we usually know where to look.

We also found several *Rhamnus betulifolia* (Birchleaf Buckthorn) amongst the vast collection of trees, including an apple tree that was bearing fruit. Further on we came upon a single example of *Agastache pallidiflora* (New Mexico Giant Hyssop). Then we discovered what many of us consider the find of the day: a Mountain Thelypody (*Pennelia micrantha*) of the Brassicaceae family. It has very distinct cauline linear leaves and very tiny purple sepals and obscure pink petals. Finally, I should not forget our discovery of a Bur Cucumber (*Sicyos ampelophyllus*). It was the only one we saw that day.

On Friday, September 21st, Dr. Richard Felger presented a program on "Desert Trees of the World."

He began by reminding us that the majority of the world's people do not think that trees grow in deserts. Then he presented the facts that there are many species of trees in desert environments around the world. They have made special adaptations to the rather "harsh" conditions to be able to persist. Some of them reach great heights and live very long times, as long as humans do not interrupt them.

How do you become a tree in the desert? There are at least eight factors that might make that possible. The first, as you can probably guess, is access to water. The second is adaptation to salt tolerance. A third would be to grow in a place that gets adequate fog, if not rain. Becoming hairy and able to block the sun would be a fifth. A sixth is to be able to store water, like cacti or a Giant Sahuaro. If a tree can develop tiny leaves or leaflets that are deciduous, it might have a chance (seventh possibility). Finally, if it can reduce its surface to volume ratio, it may succeed.

Do you know that desert trees originally evolved from non-arborescent species?

An extensive part of his presentation provided us with very valuable information on a genus which is quite important in our area and may become much more valuable in the future as a food source: the *Prosopis* genus, which we commonly call Mesquite.

The final part of his program offered many great photos of desert species. Of special interest were those photos of rather weird looking trees that were displaying the strange ways that allowed them to

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2013 CALENDAR COVER

