

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

April 2019

Vol 9 No 2

Helen Shoup, Editor

Bulletin 2019: Quarter 2

This quarterly Bulletin of the Gila Native Plant Society of Silver City, New Mexico, provides the latest communications between the society and the members.

It is delivered via your email unless you request otherwise. The online version allows color photos and for a lower cost (essentially free for GNPS). The Bulletin will continue to be available on the [GNPS website](#).

Meetings for This Quarter

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 from September through May, unless otherwise specified. Refreshments follow the program.

Activity updates and further details are posted on the [website](#). You will also receive an email reminder before the date of each meeting.

April Meeting

When: Friday, April 19, 2019, at 7:00 pm

Where: WNMU's Harlan Hall (on 12th Street), Room 222

Topic: I Bought Native Plants. Now What?

Presenter: Hanna Blood

Field Trips for This Quarter

All field trip participants meet in the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theater on E Street at 8:00 am for carpooling. The field trips are April through September and are nearly always held on the third Sunday, unless otherwise specified. The leader is Hanna Blood. The trips are free and open to the public. The destination may change, depending on the weather and the state of the plants.

Activity updates and further details are posted on the [website](#). You will also receive an email reminder before the date of each meeting/field trip.

April Field Trip

When: Sunday, April 21

Topic: Low Desert Wildflower Wander

Where: Meet at the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theater on E Street at 8:00 am for carpooling.

May Meeting

When: Friday, May 17, 2019, at 7:00 pm

Where: WNMU's Harlan Hall (on 12th Street), Room 222

Topic: MESQUITE: the Tree of life, the Tree of future

Presenter: Richard Felger

May Field Trip

When: Sunday, May 19

Topic: A Mosey around the Burro Mountains

Where: Meet at the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theater on E Street at 8:00 am for carpooling.

June Field Trip

When: Sunday, June 16

Topic: The Black Range in Bloom

Where: Meet at the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts Center Theater on E Street at 8:00 am for carpooling.

Plant Pickup Coming Soon

It isn't too late to order your native plants from the Gila Native Plant Society. You can order plants online ([ordering](#)) and pick them up on Wednesday, April 17th, between 9 and 11 am, at the parking lot across from Gough Park, at 12th and Pope Streets. Order your plants now!

Important Note: If you are ordering from the online page, be aware that your cart won't be saved when you close the website. If you are ready to order your plants, it is best to complete payment before leaving the site.

Plant of the Quarter: Desert or Canyon Beardtongue (*Penstemon pseudospectabilis*)

By Keller Suberkropp

Description

Canyon beardtongues are perennial wildflowers. As with all *Penstemon* species, they are in the Plantaginaceae or snapdragon family.

The flowers are long lasting and attract butterflies, bees, other insects, and hummingbirds.

Locations

They grow in sandy, gravelly washes in the southwestern US. They do well in Silver City.



Stem of flowers



Closeup of the flowers

The Flowers

Canyon beardtongues bloom from spring through early summer. The flowers are pink to rose purple and are produced on long spikes, up to 3 ft tall (left above). Like all species of *Penstemon*, the flowers are tube-shaped with five petals usually two at the top and three at the bottom (right above).

The flowers look like an open mouth with a “fuzzy protruding tongue” (really an enlarged hairy nonfunctional stamen). This appearance has given them the

common name of beardtongue.

Care

Canyon beardtongues are quite hardy and thrive in poor soil. However, good drainage is essential. They will fail if they are over watered and over fertilized. The plants are drought tolerant, easy to grow, and deer resistant. They grow in full sun to partial shade.



Beardstongue Foliage

Foliage

Canyon beardtongues form a woody base from which multi- branched stems and the flower stalks grow. The leaves are oval, arranged oppositely and many pairs are completely fused at the base around the stem. Leaves and stems are green to red.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Report

By Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman

Silva Creek Botanical Garden is beginning to wake up after a little longer than usual winter. On March first we had 16 energetic, eager gardeners that made short order of dead-heading most of the plants that had given-up their seed to the winter birds.

There is more winter die-back than expected, as we had our first freeze the 3rd week of November, when it got down to 20 degrees, and we had not had any frost. Not all plants took the sudden freeze well and a few died. Then in early February, we had another hard freeze and many things that were looking good up until that time died or at least died back to the ground.

We are still looking for a great season; some plants will have to be replaced and others will need some judicious pruning. We are planning to put in a short wall on the right side of the walkway when you first walk into the garden's main entrance. Hopefully this will keep folks on the pathway and out of the beds.

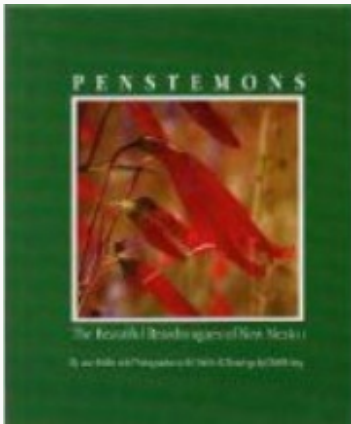
The other big project for this spring is painting the perimeter fence. Denise Friedrich did a great job building and with the assistance of husband Bill got the fence installed on the North end of the Garden. This went in just at the end of the year; It looks great, and thanks for all your hard work. Now we just need to get it painted along with repainting the rest of the fence.

I will be calling for help in the near future. Be watching your email as more workdays will be coming up soon.

Thanks as always for all of the wonderful work that our volunteers do to make Silver City a wonderful place to live. (See the [website](#) for some great pictures.)

Hope to see you in the Garden!

Book of the Quarter: Penstemons: The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico



Penstemons: The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico Jean (Author) and Bill (Photographer) Heflin compiled and photographed all 47 species of penstemon found in New Mexico, with excellent botanical drawings by Robert deWitt Ivey, 1997, Hardcover, 50 pages

Availability: It is available on the GNPS website. It is \$10 plus \$3.23 shipping, for a total of **\$13.23**.

1. Click the [website](#), scroll down to the book, and click **Add to Cart**.
2. Scroll back up the top right of the page, and click **View Cart**.
Result: The Cart page appears.
3. Click **Paypal** button at the bottom left.
Result: The Paypal login page appears.
4. Log into Paypal and pay \$13.23 for the book through Paypal.

Programs from Last Quarter

A description of the programs from last quarter follows:

January Meeting

On Friday, January 18, 2019, at 7:00 pm, Richard Felger and William (Bill) Norris presented a talk on Know the Trees II: Twigs, Cones, and Fruit, a program to help

participants identify our native trees in the winter. It was a follow-up to the previous meeting when the presenters explained identifying our native trees via leaves (not during the winter).

February Meeting

Tricia Hurley gave a talk about Seed Gathering and Propagation of Native Plants on Friday, February 16, 2019, at 7:00 pm. Tricia Hurley and her husband have had lots of knowledge and experience as owners of the Lone Mountain Native Nursery for many years.

March Meeting

Ron Parry talked about [Moths of the Gila National Forest and Vicinity](#) on Friday, March 16, 2019, 7:00 pm. He spoke about the Lepidoptera, an order of insects that includes both butterflies and moths. Many people are familiar with butterflies because of their beauty and their presence during daylight hours. In comparison to butterflies, moths are little appreciated since they are largely nocturnal. This is unfortunate since many moths are beautiful and their biology is equally interesting. Most of the larger moths found within the Gila region fall into 1 of 8 moth families. This talk summarized the characteristics of moths in each of these families and provided examples of local moths from each group.



Ectypia clio (male), photo by Parry

Near the end of the meeting, Parry gave some good references (available on the website, given to us by Betty Spence):

<http://mothphotographersgroup.msstate.edu/>

<https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

<https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/>

<http://nitro.biosci.arizona.edu/zeeb/butterflies/mothlist.html>

<http://www.fiveacresofmoths.org/>

Books:

Basic Techniques for Observing and Studying Moths and Butterflies

by William D. Winter, Jr., 2000 (Available from The Lepidopterists Society)

Moths of Western North America by Jerry A. Powell and Paul A. Opler, University of California Press, 2009.



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