



GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

October 2019

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Helen Shoup, Editor

Bulletin 2019: Quarter 4

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](#).

Activities for This Quarter

Programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are the third Friday of the month at 7:00 pm at WNMU's Harlan Hall from October 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.

October

Friday, October 18, 2019, 7:00 pm

Meeting

Harlan Hall, Room 219, corner of 12th and Alabama Streets

The program will feature a talk by Melanie Gisler of the Institute for Applied Ecology in Santa Fe on "State-wide Conservation Initiatives for New Mexico's Native Plants." The Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) opened an office in Santa Fe in 2015 and has since initiated several new programs for native plants of New Mexico. This presentation will provide an overview these conservation initiatives, including the IAE's Gila-based work, and invite feedback on a vision for future native plant projects in New Mexico.

Saturday, October 26, 2019, 1:00 pm

Pollinator Mural Dedication

Corner of Broadway and Texas

GNPS is participating with Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society, Grant County Beekeepers and Grant County Archaeological Society on a mural celebrating pollinators and native plants and addressing the issue of climate change. The dedication of this mural will include a plant give-away. Aldo Leopold High School students are producing the mural under the direction of art instructor Allison Phillips.

November

Sunday, November 3, 2019, 5:00- 7:00 pm

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Ann Hedlund's home at 503 West Spring Street (one block west of Broadway and three blocks up from Bullard)

All members are invited to celebrate this year's accomplishments and activities and to thank the volunteers who make it all possible! Bring your favorite dish to share and learn about current and future initiatives of our chapter, while honoring our very important volunteers.

Friday, November 15, 2019, 7:00 pm

Meeting

Harlan Hall, Room 219, corner of 12th and Broadway

The program will feature a talk by Patrice Mutchnick, "Gila Wilderness Canyon Flora: Natives and the Riparian Invasion." This summer, with help from a grant from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, the Heart of the Gila organization held four canyon stewardship days and executed a five-day field trip to inventory canyon natives and identify and remove non-native species from riparian corridors. Patrice will report on what they did and what they found.

December

Sunday, December 15, 2019, noon to 2:00 pm

Holiday Potluck

The Commons, 501 East 13th Street

Come celebrate the holidays together. Elroy will provide the usual pork loin roast. Bring your best dish, your plates and utensils.

President's Message

By Don Graves

Here are some things that GNPS has been working on:

- GNPS is working with the Art and Science teachers at G.W. Stout Elementary School to help students learn about native plants, add to their native plant school garden, and produce native plant art.
- Member Naava Keonigsburg from Bear Creek Herbs has begun the planning process to add an herbal/medicinal plot at Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Several GNPS members are participating, including ethnobotanist Kelly Kindscher.
- GNPS has organized a workshop on the Asteraceae on Tuesday evenings (6 to 8 pm) in October, led by Richard Felger, Russ Kleinman and Bill Norris. The workshop consists of a combination of lectures, local field trips, and training sessions in the use of dichotomous keys to identify unknown plants in the composite family.
- We also have a wonderful slate of speakers lined up for next year (thanks to Bill Norris, our VP) – in the winter and spring of 2020 we'll have Naava Koenigsberg on ethnobotany, Zach Rogers on the flora of Madagascar, Donna Stevens on plant identification, Manda Jost on insect conservation and Ed Leuck on cacti.

Plant of the Quarter: Mexican Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*)

By Keller Suberkropp, PhD

Description

Mexican Hats are members of the Aster family (Asteraceae), herbaceous perennials that are easy to grow. They are also called prairie coneflowers. They are typically 18-24 inches tall and spread 12-18 inches.

The Flowers

Mexican hats typically flower over a long summer season. Their inflorescences contain both ray and disk flowers. The ray flowers have yellow, maroon, or yellow and maroon petals that droop slightly. The disk flowers are small and arranged in a column, hence the specific epithet, *columnifera*. Taken together, the inflorescences resemble a sombrero, giving these flowers their common name. Disk flowers produce seeds that serve to spread the plants.



Uses

The flowers produce nectar that attract bees, butterflies, and other insects. After

the flowers have matured, the seeds attract a variety of small birds. Plants are deer-resistant as the foliage has an odor that repels deer.

Tea made from the leaves has been used to relieve stomach aches and tea made from the flowers has been used for headaches.

Foliage & Soil

The leaves are bright green, finely divided, and narrow. Plants produce a long taproot and prefer well drained soil but will tolerate poor soil. They prefer full sun and are drought tolerant. Plants are short-lived (2-3 years) but are readily established from the seeds that they produce. The plants grow aggressively and may push out other weaker species. Once established, Mexican hats may spread and increase in numbers through following years.



Silva Creek Botanical Garden Report

By Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman

The Garden survived quite nicely even though the monsoon was sparse at best. We did lose a few things this spring, but we also had a few surprises, a couple of plants waited until the monsoons in August to leaf. Thanks to our great staff of volunteers, the weeds were kept under control, and thanks to Betsy & John Kaido, the grass was always mowed in a timely fashion.

To be good neighbors, we had the Siberian Elm trees removed on the south end of the Garden. They were growing in the fence line and were causing some problems with limbs growing over the neighbor's house causing a safety hazard. In talking with the neighbor, it was decided that all should come down. To save money, the contractor left all of the logs for us to deal with. Thanks to all of the men with strong backs who made short work of hauling the logs to the street during our last work day. Anyone wanting them for fire wood can pick them up, on the State Street side.

We have another group of new plant society members who are working with us to develop a medicinal garden bed in place of the elm trees. Soil preparation is underway with planting scheduled for next spring and summer. This should be a great addition to the Garden; we are really looking forward to learning about our native medicinals.

Patrice Mutchnick is currently installing a seating bench in the butterfly garden. You can see photos of it in the next Bulletin.

This month the Gila River Festival thought that the Garden was special enough that they featured it in their festival. Thanks to Betsy Kaido for leading the tour; there is no one more qualified: she puts in more hours than anyone and knows it well. Wendy Graves also helped and took photos of the event.



The Gila River Festival tour of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Betsy Kaido and Wendy led the tour for GNPS for ten participants.

We get compliments all the time on how nice the Garden looks, and we are quick to point out that it is all of the great volunteers who make the Garden special. Thanks to all of you, it has become a must stop for visitors to Silver City.

Hope to see you in the Garden!

Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman

Another Photo from Gila River Festival

The Gila Native Plant Society also participated in the Gila Extravaganza.



GNPS member Les Brandt painted a canvas of the Gila River (in the photo) and led an art activity with children and adults. Participants at the GNPS booth painted native wildflowers and the pollinator.

Native Plant Sale Changes

The GNPS plant sale is about educating our members and the public about native

plants and to encourage and support gardening with native plants. GNPS will have one plant sale in 2020 that will take place around the third Saturday of August (New Mexico Native Plant Day).

There will no longer be a plant pre-sale, and GNPS will no longer be taking orders for plants. The idea is to let native plant producers (local or otherwise) sell their native plants to the public at an event sponsored by GNPS. A new committee will be established to plan, organize, and oversee the event. Anyone wishing to be on this committee, please contact Don Graves at wdgraves@frontier.com.

Book of the Quarter: Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest

Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest New Mexico and Surrounding Areas by Dale A. Zimmerman and Cynthia M. Hunter. Fold-out pocket guide, photos. Back in stock and available on the Gila Native Plant Society website.



Programs from Last Quarter

A description of the programs from last quarter follows:

July Field Trip

When: Sunday, July 21, 2019

Where: Hanna Blood led the group to the Piños Altos Range, up a spur off Signal Peak Road. They headed out the dirt track, traveling up an incline through the Ponderosa and Gamble Oak forest and found a wet meadow.

Photos by Betty Spence and Hanna Blood



August Field Trip

When: Sunday, August 18, 2019

Where: Hanna Blood took the group to Axle Canyon Preserve in the Big Burros, to the confluence of Axle and Mulberry canyons located on an 83-acre in-holding in the Gila National Forest. Axle Canyon Preserve has been a special place well cared for by its owners. It was a moderate/easy hike in sandy, open washes.

Photos by Betty Spence and Mary Ann Kressig



Axle Canyon Preserve



September Field Trip

When: Sunday, September 15, 2019

Where: Hanna Blood took the group to E. Stephens Creek in the Fort Bayard Preserve to see what plants the rains brought out. It was a relatively flat hike, with some uneven ground in the wash.

Photos by Betty Spence and Elroy Limmer





Our mailing address is:

PO Box 457
Silver City, NM 88062

The Gila Native Plant Society is committed

- To promote education, research, and appreciation of the native flora of the Southwest
- To encourage the preservation of rare and endangered plant species
- To support the use of suitable native plants in landscaping