

# GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

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## Bulletin 2020: 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 also available on the GNPS website (<http://www.gilanps.org>).

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### Activities for This Quarter

In view of official restrictions due to the COVID-19 threat, the Gila Native Plant Society has canceled its April meeting and field trip, and the May meeting. We will review the situation as May approaches and let you know by email of any further cancellations.

### April Earth Day Event April 22

Due to COVID-19 cancellation of the Silver City Gila Earth Day festivities in Gough Park, GNPS will be participating, along with other groups, in a virtual Gila Earth Day celebration on April 22nd, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. GNPS Members will be notified of the specifics concerning this special on-line event at a later date.

## Give Grandly May 9

GNPS is also registered to participate in the annual Give Grandly non-profit fund-raising fair, scheduled this year for Saturday, May 9th. In view of the COVID-19 restrictions, the organizers are contemplating a virtual on-line event. We will let you know the details as soon as we have them.

## GNPS Field Trips May 17 and June 21

These field trips are still in the planning stages. We will email you details when they become available.

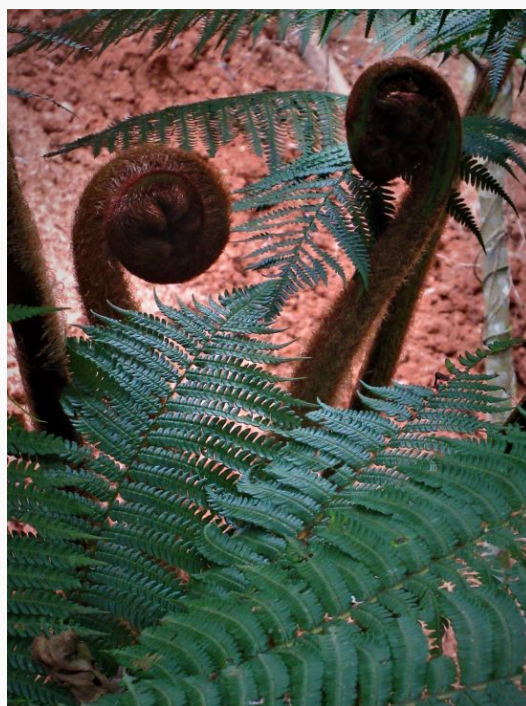
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## President's Message

**By Don Graves**

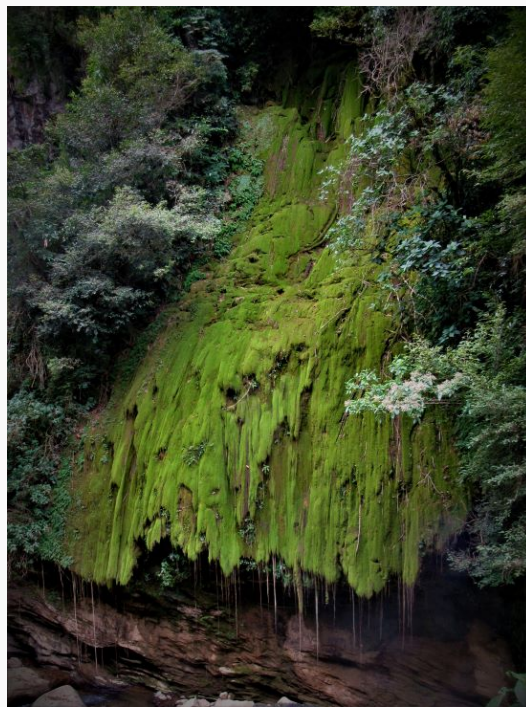
I am writing this from Oaxaca de Juarez, the Mexican state of Oaxaca's largest city. After a month and a half of touring around the state, we have seen some amazing country and the diversity of plants and animals is quite astounding. Indeed, the state of Oaxaca has the richest biodiversity of plant and animal species in all of Mexico. There are almost 700 species of ferns alone in Oaxaca and almost 750 species of birds. Oaxaca also has the greatest cultural diversity in all of Mexico. Of the estimated 73 languages that are commonly spoken in Mexico, 68 of these languages are spoken in Oaxaca state alone. These are pre-Hispanic languages, bearing no resemblance to Spanish!

This great species diversity stems from an incredible variety of ecological zones. From 11,000 feet to the Pacific coast, Oaxaca boasts oak/pine forest, valley scrub vegetation, tropical deciduous forest, tropical evergreen forest and tropical rain forest. In the south of Oaxaca state, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is a very narrow stretch of land that separates the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. This area has acted as a funnel for plant and animal species from the north and from the south, resulting in great biodiversity. Perhaps there is a GNPS tour of the flora of Oaxaca in our future?



GNPS board member Emily Pollum, birder Megan Ruehmann & GNPS Treasurer Wendy Graves at Botanical Garden in Oaxaca City

Baseball-sized fiddleheads of a tree fern near Huatla de Jimenez, Oaxaca



Note: Since writing this, Don has returned safely to Silver City.

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## Plant of the Quarter: Pointleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pungens*)

By Keller Suberkropp



Pointleaf manzanita is a handsome evergreen shrub that can form dense thickets. It is a member of the heath family (Ericaceae). The genus name is from the Greek: Arktos referring to bear and staphyle referring to a cluster of grapes. The common name, manzanita, in Spanish means “little apple” referring to the appearance of the fruits. Pointleaf manzanita is drought tolerant and grows in dry shallow acidic soils containing gravel, sand, and decomposed granite at elevations of 3000-8000 ft. They are slow growing and do not grow well in clay soils. These shrubs grow in partial shade or full sun and can reach 3-10 ft high by 3 ft across. Pointleaf manzanita forms stems that are red to brown. Stems often have a twisted appearance. The leaves are simple, alternate and leathery. The leaves are green, elliptical and sharp pointed at the tip.



photo by Elroy Limmer

Pointleaf manzanita blooms early in the year (Jan-Feb.). Flowers are pink to white, small and bell like. The flowers attract early arriving hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies.



photo by Russ Kleinman

The fruits are spherical, reddish to dark brown drupes, and are eaten by birds, small mammals and possibly bears. Fruits have been used to make a cider-like drink. Infusions from the leaves have been used to treat poison ivy as well as a number of other maladies.

Plants can be propagated by seeds but they must first be scarified by fire. They can also reproduce by “layering” i.e. when a branch comes in contact with the soil, it can form roots and eventually be separated from the parent plant. Roots of pointleaf manzanita form mycorrhizae. As with all plants in the Ericaceae, they form mycorrhizal associations with fungi that are different from those in mycorrhizae of other plants.

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## Silva Creek Botanical Garden Report

**By Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman**



On our workday February 7<sup>th</sup> thanks to a small but loyal crew we dead-headed and trimmed back many of the perennials in the Garden. It's looking great and awaiting Spring. Hopefully the weather prognosticators are wrong and we will receive timely spring rains.

We are looking forward to the medical garden that Naava Koenigsberg and her group of plant specialists are developing. Anyone who heard Naava speak at the January meeting walked away with a great deal of information on how native plants helped folks deal with illness and disease in the past and even now. We are looking forward to this garden with great anticipation.

We are hoping to establish many more plants that not only attract insects but put on a great show for our human visitors. Most of these are from seed that have been started and others that have been broadcast. A few of the plants include Giant Hyssop (*Agastache pallidiflora*), Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*), Beautiful Fleabane (*Erigeron formosissimus*), Orange Mountain Daisy (*Hymenoxys hoopesii*).

Watch for the next workday and join in the fun, or just stop by and see how things are progressing and enjoy.

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**Native Plant Sale Now August 22**



**Expect to see these vendors there, and possibly more:**

Country Girls Nursery  
Silver City, NM

Honeyhawk Homestead  
Mimbres, NM

Lone Mountain Natives Nursery  
Silver City, NM

Plants of the Southwest  
Santa Fe and Albuquerque, NM

Spadefoot Nursery  
Bisbee and Tucson, AZ

**Summer sessions leading up to the plant sale. Mark your calendar for these exciting and informative events. Cost is \$10 per event.**

- **Sunday, July 26, 1:00 – 2:30 pm.** Learn about native plants for local landscapes. Presented by GNPS at the Silver City Museum Annex.
- **Sunday, August 2, 1-2:30 pm.** Learn the basics of landscape design. Presented by GNPS at the Silver City Museum Annex.
- **Saturday, August 8, 9 - 11:30 am.** Learn how to plant, prune, and care for your native plants at this workshop. This workshop includes a tour of native plants being offered at the GNPS Plant Sale which will be held on August 22. Presented by GNPS at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden on Virginia Street.
- **Sunday, August 16, 1-2:30pm.** Tour landscaped yards in our local area. Led by Karen Danhauer, local landscape designer.

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## Activities Last Quarter

## January

### Friday, January 17, 2020 Meeting



**“Medicinal Plants of the Silva Creek Garden,”** presenter Naava Koenigsberg. Naava’s talk focused on some of the native plants that will be included in the new medicinal plant bed at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, to be put in this spring. She discussed the habitats and medicinal properties of several plants, as well as how to use them.

## February

### Friday, February 21, 2020 Meeting



**“Madagascar: The Red Island ... A Naturalist’s Paradise”,** presenter Zachary Rogers. New Mexico State University plant scientist, Zachary Rogers, guided us on a virtual tour of the island of Madagascar, surveying its “mega-biodiversity” while showcasing recent taxonomic plant research and new conservation efforts aimed at protecting the rarest, most threatened species.

**Eighth Natural History of the Gila Symposium February 27-29, 2020  
at the Western New Mexico University Campus**

The symposium was attended by about 150 people, including researchers, land managers, educators, and students (including eight university students and dozens of students from Aldo Leopold Charter School).

Keynote talks by fish biologist Dr. Tom Turner (UNM) and regional forest ecologist Dr. Karl Malcolm (USFS) were both outstanding. Forty other talks touched on topics ranging from light pollution, military flyovers, moths of the Gila Region, climate change, globe mallow taxonomy, invasive woody plant removal, conservation status of jumping mice in NM, nest site preferences of cliff swallow on the WNMU campus, packrat-juniper interactions, narrow-headed garter snake biology, impact of cattle grazing on vegetation, archaeology, the flora of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument .. the list goes on. A Creative Voice session on Thursday night provided a forum for eight local and regional writers/performers to give their non-fiction perspectives on the "Gila region", including a "rap"!

Four awards were presented on Friday morning: to Joe Saenz (Conservation Award), Nick Smith (Conservation Award), Ron Parry (Citizen Scientist Award) and Arthur ("Art") C. Telles, Jr. (Lifetime Achievement Award).

Saturday morning field trips focused on ethnobotany of WNMU campus trees (led by Richard Felger) and winter birds of City of Rocks State Park (led by Karen Beckenbach and William ("Bill") Norris) allowed participants to experience the Gila Region first-hand.

Organizers of the 8th Natural History of the Gila Symposium greatly appreciate a monetary donation to help with symposium expenses. The 9th Natural History of the Gila Symposium is only two years away!"



The Gila Native Plant Society, one of the sponsors, had a table in the lobby. Seated are Betty Spence and Emily Pollom. The wonderful painting of the Gila was loaned by Les Brandt. The photo was taken by Mary Ann Kressig, who helped throughout the symposium.

**Gila Native Plant Society member Ron Perry wins the Citizen Scientist Award**



The Citizen Science Award recognizes an individual or organization that shows a dedication to science in support of natural resource conservation by collecting and making available data that provide better understanding of the resource. Ron received this award for his volunteer work on moths.

A biochemist by profession, Ron Parry has always been a naturalist at heart. Upon retirement in 2012 he initiated a project to document the diversity of moths that occur in the Gila National Forest and vicinity. As Ron explains his decision to focus on moths, "The planet is in the midst of a human-caused mass extinction. It is important to increase public awareness of the complex and beautiful biodiversity that is being threatened. Unlike butterflies, moths are relatively neglected by amateur naturalists, since they are largely nocturnal."

The results are shown on his website, [www.southwesternmoths.com](http://www.southwesternmoths.com), which currently displays photographs of some 550 moth species, accompanied by data on identification, family, sex, wingspan, collection location and larval food plant. During the Symposium, Ron gave a presentation on how to use his website most effectively in combination with other resources to identify local moths.

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### **Sorry that you missed this year's Natural History of the Gila Symposium and the seven previous ones?**

Proceedings of symposia 1 - 7 are available on the *New Mexico Botanist* (<https://floraneomexicana.org/the-new-mexico-botanist-newsletter/>) (scroll down to "Special Issues"), and the Gila Symposium ([http://gilasymposium.org/?page\\_id=39](http://gilasymposium.org/?page_id=39)) websites. Proceedings of the just completed 8th Natural History of the Gila Symposium will be posted on the above websites by mid/late 2021.

The 9th Natural History of the Gila Symposium is scheduled for late February 2022. Details about this upcoming event will appear on the symposium website as they are available.

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## 2020 Annual Conference of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico in Alamogordo August 28-30, 2020

The Otero Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico will host the annual conference on August 28-30 in Alamogordo. The folks of the Otero Chapter have assembled an impressive program of speakers and tours that will provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about their diverse region. You can find the complete program and registration information in the latest *Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico*, available on-line at <https://www.npsnm.org/newsletters/>. Registration will open when the meeting restrictions related to the coronavirus are lifted.



**Our mailing address is:**

PO Box 457  
Silver City, NM 88062

The Gila Native Plant Society is committed

- To promoting education, research, and appreciation of the native flora of the Southwest
- To encouraging the preservation of rare and endangered plant species
- To supporting the use of suitable native plants in landscaping.