

# GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

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## Bulletin 2020: Quarter 3

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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### President's Message

It was very disappointing to have to cancel our August 22nd Native Plant Sale. This would have been our first Native Plant Sale held during the monsoon, a big change from years past. Please support the native plant vendors (listed later in this bulletin) who were planning on being with us. With the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation here in New Mexico and the rising numbers of cases in both Arizona and Texas, the Plant Sale Committee just could not guarantee the safety of our customers and vendors. We'll try again in 2021.

We have reconstituted the Silva Creek Botanical Garden Committee, with Angela Flanders, Elroy Limmer, Les Brandt, Naava Koenigsberg and Susan Campbell. Wendy Graves has agreed to facilitate this committee as a non-voting member. This group will be working toward a ten-year strategic plan for the garden. Thanks to all who have agreed to serve!

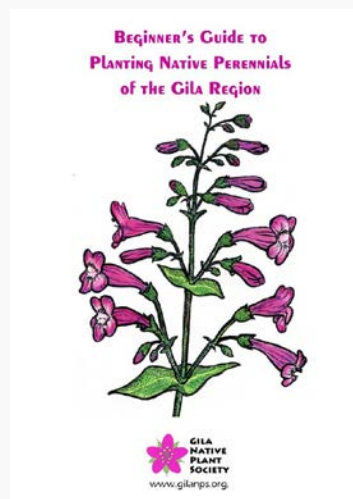
Our June virtual wildflower walk by Russ Kleinman was a ramble around town, concentrating on those species that can be seen right out our back door. Highlights included a closer look at two of our early native thistles and a new *Penstemon* for Gila

Flora! Visit <http://gilanps.org/events/field-trips/> to view the series of short videos of the walk. In July, Dr. Kleinman will lead another virtual wildflower walk. Where will he go this time? Check our website and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Gila-Native-Plant-Society-100534821449667/> for the latest on our field trips and where interesting plants may be found.

Sunday, September 13th is the date for our 2020 joint pot-luck picnic with the Gila Native Plant Society and SWNM Audubon Society. Come celebrate the great working relationship that our two organizations enjoy! Bring a favorite dish to share, along with your own plates and utensils. Grilled dogs, brats (some vegetarian), buns and drinks will be provided. We will meet at Gomez Peak picnic area beginning at 11:00 and will eat at noon. Come visit with friends and meet some new ones! In the event that COVID-19 is still rearing its ugly head, we may have to rethink these plans, so stay healthy and stay tuned! -- **Don Graves**

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## New Beginner's Guide

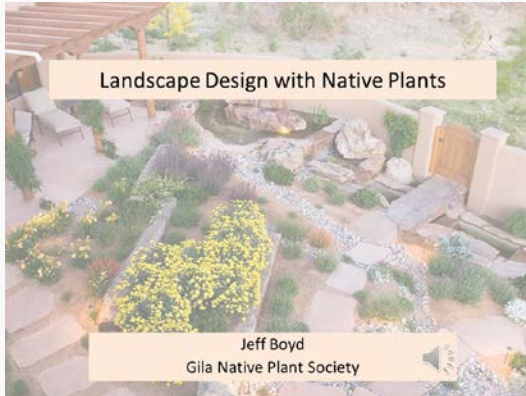


The Gila Chapter has produced a new 60-page booklet entitled *Beginner's Guide to Planting Native Perennials of the Gila Region*, with text by Hanna Blood and black-and-white illustrations by Jackie Blurton. The idea is to encourage newcomers to the region, or those who have never cultivated native plants before, to bring some wild beauty into their gardens. The guide presents 26 native flowering herbaceous perennials from the Gila National Forest region that are well adapted for natural gardening in the Silver City area. The plants profiled are not only easily cultivated, reliable and tough, but have an integral role in the Pinyon-Juniper ecosystem. For each plant the guide provides a brief description, cultivation requirements, pollinator associations and notes on

ethnobotanical uses. It will be available for \$5.00 from Tricia Hurley of Lone Mountain Natives at the Silver City Farmers' Market on Saturdays, the Country Girls' Nursery on 180, the Grant County Art Guild store on Bullard, or by mail order through the GNPS website [www.gilanps.org/books/](http://www.gilanps.org/books/).

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## Online Course - Landscaping with Native Plants July 15 - September 15



This four-part course will utilize Western New Mexico University's online teaching platform, Canvas. Course cost will be \$25, including a copy of our new *Beginner's Guide to Planting Native Perennials of the Gila Region*. Students will be able to access the four modules at any times convenient to them from July 15 to September 15, 2020. There is also provision for questions and discussion among the students and instructors on the teaching platform.

The four modules:

1. Students will learn about the variety of plants (trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous perennials, cacti, etc...) that can be used to create a landscaped garden or space. Native plants highlighted will include those in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. (Instructor: Betsy Kaido)
2. Students will be introduced to basic principles of landscape design. (Instructor: Jeff Boyd).
3. Students will learn how to plant, prune and care for their native plants. (Instructor: Elroy Limmer).
4. Students will take a virtual tour of local environments landscaped with native plants.

Depending on COVID-19 conditions, students may or may not be offered a face-to-face tour of local landscaped gardens, in addition to the virtual tour.

There are two ways to register:

Send a request and a check for \$25 made out to the Gila Native Plant Society to GNPS, PO Box 457, Silver City, NM 88062. (If you wish, you may reserve your registration first via [gilanative@gmail.com](mailto:gilanative@gmail.com)). Or go online to <http://gilanps.org/education/classes/> and pay by PayPal. The information needed in either case: first and last names, email address and mailing address (to receive the *Beginner's Guide*). Please verify that PayPal has your current email and mailing address.

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## Silva Creek Botanical Garden Report

We have been getting a lot of compliments on the looks of SCBG. I think it's looking great. In addition to some anonymous weeders who stop by on occasion, Betsy Kaido has been weeding, mulching and generally dressing-up the garden. We can't overlook John Pecoroni our faithful mower and trimmer. Curtis Shimp, resident mechanic, got our walk-behind string trimmer back to running better than when we bought it. He also tuned-up the pole chain saw. I have been keeping things watered and putting in some new plants. When the YCC young folks were working establishing the great looking walks and walls in the medicinal beds, they sometimes assisted with hand watering.

If you haven't been by the garden lately, it is worth a stop. The late spring-early summer show was the best ever. We are hoping for a great monsoon season and a spectacular late summer-fall show. The photos here may inspire you to visit soon.



I know many would like to help but because of COVID-19 we have had limited work days. Hopefully things will improve later this fall. -- **Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman**

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## Traditional Healing Garden

Despite the delay caused by COVID-19, good progress is being made on the Traditional



Healing Garden to be installed in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, thanks to the generous contributions of several local hardware stores and donations by many members of our community. YCC students from Aldo Leopold Charter School were able to get back to work and spent four days in the hot sun installing retaining wall blocks, moving soil and laying down pathway foundations. Planting will start in July when the monsoon season begins. The new beds will highlight local native plants traditionally and currently used for healing.



## August 22 Native Plant Sale Cancelled

Sadly, due to the uncertainties of the COVID-19 situation in the coming months, the Gila Native Plant Society Plant Sale, scheduled for August 22nd, has been cancelled out of concerns for the safety of our potential customers, our vendors and our GNPS volunteers. We will work hard at making the 2021 Plant Sale a huge success.

In the meantime, here is the contact information for the vendors that were going to bring their offerings to our plant sale. We're sure they would appreciate your business to the extent pandemic conditions allow.

Tricia Hurley  
Lone Mountain Natives  
Silver City, New Mexico  
[lonemtn@q.com](mailto:lonemtn@q.com)  
575-538-4345  
(Or check with her at the Silver City Farmers' Market on Saturday.)

Country Girls Nursery  
1950 Hwy 180 East  
Silver City, New Mexico  
[Facebook@CountrygirlsNursery](https://www.facebook.com/CountrygirlsNursery)

575-313-1507

Gabriel Feldman  
Honey Hawk Homestead  
<https://www.Honeyhawkhomestead.com>  
575-519-9986

Marcy Scott  
Robledo Vista Nursery  
Las Cruces, New Mexico  
575-541-8083  
<http://www.robledovista.com/>  
[Robledovista@gmail.com](mailto:Robledovista@gmail.com)

Peter Gierlach  
Spadefoot Nursery  
2831 East Broadway Boulevard  
Tucson, Arizona 85716  
[sales@spadefootnursery.com](mailto:sales@spadefootnursery.com)  
520-909-3619

Plants of the Southwest  
<https://plantsofthesouthwest.com/>  
3095 Agua Fria  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507  
505-438-8888  
and  
6680 Fourth Street NW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107  
505-344-8830

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## Plants of the Quarter

Because most of you have probably been unable to get out and see the springtime bounty of our region as much as you'd like, I thought you might enjoy reading about two plants, instead of just one.

## New Mexico Elderberry (*Sambucus caerulea*)



NM elderberry grows as a spreading shrub with many branches or as a small tree (13-20 ft. tall). It is in the muskroot family (Adoxaceae) and is native in a long strip of the west from Canada to Mexico. NM elderberry typically grows along stream sides or arroyos at 4500-9200 ft. It grows in full sun to partial shade and can tolerate long periods of drought. Plants are typically fast growing and if planted in a landscape need pruning to maintain their shape. The mature trunks produce furrowed bark that is brown to gray. The wood is typically brittle. The foliage is bright green. Leaves are opposite, pinnately compound (5-9 leaflets/leaf), and the leaflets are oblong to lanceolate with serrate margins.



In the spring these plants produce small cream-colored flowers in flat topped clusters. The flowers attract pollinators (butterflies, hummingbirds), and develop into dark purple fruits (drupes) that attract birds. I have had a pair of *Phainopepla* harvesting the fruit off my tree for the last several years. If you can beat these birds to the fruit, you can make jelly or wine from the cooked or fermented ripe berries. However, other parts of the plant contain sambunigrin a cyanogenic glycoside and should not be consumed (remember Arsenic and Old Lace).



photo by Russ Kleinman

## Rain Lily (*Zephyranthes longifolia*)



Rain lilies (also called fairy lilies) appear when water is available. Angela Flanders and Jane Spinti have both had their rain lilies come up and flower this season after they were watered. Rain lilies are small delicate plants with slender green leaves, and disappear shortly after they come up. They're in the Amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae). There are 70 species in this genus, some of which have different colored flowers. They prefer full sun but can take light shade in hot climates. They grow from small bulbs and also produce seeds after flowering. Photo at left by Angela Flanders. - **Keller Suberkropp**



## 2020 Annual Conference of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico in Alamogordo - Cancelled

The annual conference is another casualty of the Covid pandemic and has been cancelled for this year. It is now planned for 2021.

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### Activities Last Quarter

#### Friday, April 17, 2020 Virtual Meeting

**“Lichens for Beginners”, Presenter Dr. Russ Kleinman on Zoom**



One of our favorite researchers, Russ Kleinman, gave a basic introduction to lichens – what they are, how they have been used, their biology and some of the most common lichens in our area.

The presentation was much appreciated, and the Zoom experiment was a success. All those who participated were enthusiastic, so we decided to hold meetings via Zoom at 7:00 pm on third Friday evenings in May and June. Dr. Edwin Leuck, emeritus Professor of Biology at Centenary College of Louisiana, now residing in Silver City, agreed to give us a two-part presentation on cacti.

#### Friday, May 15, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

**“The Cactaceae. Diversity of Form, Function, and Habitat”**



Ed presented the characteristics that make a cactus a cactus. These included bits of internal anatomy, external morphology, and some physiology. He discussed the major groups of cacti and the diversity contained within, and the economic importance of some members of the family.

## June 19, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

### “The Cacti of New Mexico”

Ed’s June presentation covered most of the native cacti present in New Mexico, their distributions, habitat specificities, and salient (hopefully diagnostic) characteristics, illustrated with photos. Included were 13 genera and 40+ species.

A video of Russ Kleinman’s presentation on lichens and a pdf of the slides of Ed Leuck’s May presentation are available on the GNPS website [gilanps.org/events/programs/](https://gilanps.org/events/programs/).



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#### **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.