



GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Helen Shoup, Editor

Bulletin 2016: Quarter 1

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 more color photos but for a lower cost (essentially free for GNPS). The Bulletin will continue to be available on the GNPS website.

Programs 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, 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 program.

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

For information on programs, publications, and membership, please visit www.gilanps.org.

Friday, January 15, 2016

Dr. Keller Suberkropp will speak to us on **Adaptations in Photosynthesis Occurring in Many of our Native Plants.**

Arid environments such as we have in New Mexico create problems for plants in carrying out photosynthesis. Many of our native plants have adaptations (C-4 and CAM) to overcome this problem. Dr. Suberkropp will examine the process of photosynthesis, the difficulty that arid environments pose, and look at the adaptations that many native plants have to solve this.

Presenter: Dr. Suberkropp taught freshman biology, mycology, and microbial ecology at New Mexico State University and University of Alabama for 28 years. His research examined the ecology of the fungi that live in freshwater streams. Since moving to Silver City, he has been active in the Gila Native Plant Society and is a past president of the Society.

Friday, February 19, 2016

Van Clothier, Owner/Director of Stream Dynamics, Inc., will present **Take Back the Rain! - Stream Dynamics & Urban Water-harvesting in Silver City, NM.**

Urbanization has changed how water naturally drains from the landscape in our cities and towns and, in effect, has created a new sub-set of the natural watershed: the urban sub-watershed. In a sub-watershed, the streets, roofs, parking lots, and sewer systems collect stormwater. As a result, this collection alters water flow, transports contaminants, and impacts the health of our waterways.

Stream Dynamics is a local business that hopes to guide our community on how to take back the rain and how to work with nature through rainwater harvesting to beautify our neighborhoods and improve watershed health.

Stream Dynamics, Inc. has been awarded \$138,220 by NMED as part of its River Stewardship Program. This funding will be used for the San Vicente Creek Urban Watershed Restoration project and will address stormwater management, water quality, and the overall health for the San Vicente Creek watershed. Thus, with urban water, the urban ecosystems can see positive changes in water quality, shallow water table levels, and groundwater recharge.

By restoring the San Vicente's watershed, Stream Dynamics will integrate the constraints of the modern-day *built* environment with the natural watershed system's needs. This project can then serve as a practical model for other urban streams in New Mexico and throughout the southwest.

Friday, March 18, 2016

The program topic and details will be determined at a later date.

Featured Plant: Chocolate Flower

Everyone should have a chocolate flower plant in the garden.

Growing them

These flowers are easy to grow and quite hardy; they

- Thrive in most of our soils
- Like full sun
- Smell good
- Require little water once established
- Bloom from spring through frost



Description

Chocolate flowers are members of the sunflower family (Asteraceae). As a result, the flower has yellow ray petals similar to sunflowers with a maroon disc in the center. The petals have striking red striped undersides.

- They are called chocolate flowers because they smell like chocolate and stamens have a chocolate flavor.
- The flowers are about 1 1/4 inch across and are open only 8 to 10 hours, but the plant has 6 to 12 flowers each day.
- The plants can reach 2 feet across and 18 inches high.

They are unusual in that, as the temperature rises in mid-morning, the petals close or drop off, leaving a set of green bracts cupped around the flower head (see right). Because of this change in appearance, they are sometimes called Green Eyes, and if left alone, seeds will develop.



Uses of the plant

These plants have many uses:

- The flowers impress your out-of-state guests, as they smell so wonderful in the morning, releasing the beautiful chocolate scent.
- The flowers attract many beneficial insects including hover flies and bees.
- If seed heads are left alone into the fall, Dark-eyed Juncos and White-crowned Sparrows can feed on the seeds.
- Native Americans reportedly used the plants to alleviate stomach problems and also burned the dried root to treat nervous conditions or to inspire courage.

Propagation

The plant is a perennial in that it dies back to the ground in winter and returns the next spring. It grows well in a pot, but you need to let it die back in the winter and water it when it is dry.

Seeds: The plants can also spread by seed.

- If you leave them alone, oftentimes they come up from seed with no special care.
- If you want to propagate them, you can collect the seeds before they drop from the seed head and keep them moist. They will germinate easily.

Caution

In certain conditions, this plant can spread quickly and easily, so you may need to confine its spread.

Availability

And, of course, if you would rather just grow the plant, they will be available at the GNPS spring plant sale.

Loss of Elizabeth Simon

On December 1, 2015, Elisabeth Howe Simon, 95, died in her Faywood, NM, home. Elisabeth was a lifetime member of the Gila Native Plant Society and she will be greatly missed.

Elisabeth and her husband retired to New Mexico from Pennsylvania in the late 1970s and established a cattle ranch in Faywood. Elisabeth created an oasis in the desert. Her knowledge and skill in horticulture were well known in Pennsylvania and New Mexico. She planted native plants and studied the biota and soils of the Southwest for her gardens. She was active in local garden clubs including the Gila Native Plant Society.

More information: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/triblive-valley-news-dispatch/obituary.aspx?pid=176773184#sthash.6wocMehV.dpuf>

Programs from Last Quarter

A description of the programs from last quarter follow:

October Meeting

On Friday, October 16, 2015, Dr. Richard Felger from the University of Arizona Herbarium and Sky Island Alliance presented **Native Plants for Food, Fun, and Beauty - For Today and a Global Dry Future**.

Dr. Felger helped us appreciate our wealth of local/native plants for home gardens, urban landscaping, food resiliency, farming, and education. Those plants support native insects, birds, and our own species. The presentation explored promising examples for intermediate use of native plants and what we learned this year.

Presenter: Dr. Felger resides in Silver City where he studies native food plants in southern New Mexico. He has conducted crop research in arid lands worldwide and has written or co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications in addition to books and popular writings on topics including new food crops, botany, and ethnobiology.

November Meeting

The meeting on November 20 covered the **Butterflies of the Gila** with Dale Zimmerman, Professor Emeritus of WNMU, and the **Butterfly Way Project** update with Patrice Mutchnick, Botanist.

Dr. Zimmerman presented many beautiful photos of the most common butterflies in southern New Mexico, usually perched on their plants of choice. It was amazing how many butterflies live in the immediate area in colder weather.



Ms. Mutchnick then presented a program on the native plant restoration project along the Gila River, including the progress up to this time and forecast plans for the immediate future. Members bought booklets of beautiful photos of local butterflies after the meeting.

The Butterfly Way Project is funded entirely by donation and was begun in honor and memory of Ella Kirk, Ella Myers, and Michael Mahl, young naturalists and student scientists.

December Meeting



On Sunday, December 13, 2015, the Gila Native Plant Society celebrated the annual Holiday Party at the Commons/Volunteer Center on 13th Street in Silver City. It was a delicious potluck dinner with a variety of enjoyable dishes available for all attendees.



Everyone visited and had pleasant discussions for more than an hour. At the end, members folded up tables and chairs and delivered them to the store room. Others worked to leave the kitchen and serving area ready for the next use.

All enjoyed their dinner and visiting for the holidays.

Charles Holmes Honored

Background

Charles Holmes has been the editor of the GPNS newsletter for about five years but life is insisting that he give up the work.

He was born in Oklahoma and lived there all the way through the University of Oklahoma. He began his master's in Latin American History at the university, then joined the Navy for four years. When he returned, he finished his master's degree.

Then he moved to Boston and completed a PhD in African History at Boston University. He lived several years in East Africa and in Tanzania. When he returned to the States, he began teaching at Middlebury College, then Union College, and then St. John's University.

He took some training in computers, early in the computer age, and began working in computer support jobs, eventually working for GE in Washington, DC. He retired from GE and moved to Florida, where he lived for 7-8 years.

Gardens and native plants

It was in Florida where his great interest in gardens and native plants grew. He participated in several conservancies, learning everything he needed at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples and at Manatee Park in Fort Myers. He developed gardens with these groups.

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He moved to Silver City, bringing his expertise in developing gardens with him. He worked in the Silver City Botanical Garden early on with the Aldo Leopold students, but as others drifted away after the hard labor was done, Charles maintained the garden on his own. Then GNPS became interested in the project and took responsibility for it about 1 1/2 years ago. He welcomed the help!

Honoree

At the December celebration, Ron Groves, President, honored Charles for all his service to the Gila Native Plant Society. He spent those five years editing the GNPS Bulletin and provided much work for the botanical garden, not to mention his maintaining the garden alone until GNPS became involved.



GNPS appreciates his contributions to the society and honors him as a valued member.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden



Front entrance into the garden with the cactus garden at the front

Overview

This year 2015 was a big year at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Starting in the fall of 2014, contractors installed the amphitheater, art pad, and kiosk.



The amphitheater, often used by students from Jose Barrios Elementary

During 2015, members of the GNPS provided most of the work, manual labor. Few if any of the projects were easy, all requiring a lot of physical labor. The society owes a big thanks to all who worked so hard to make the Garden a treasure for our community.

Completed projects

These projects were completed:

- Moved 80 yards of topsoil into place
- Developed a new walkway
- Installed and painted artwork designed and constructed by member Denise Friedrich
- Developed 2 raised beds
- Set out over 280 plants
- Designed and installed a memorial butterfly garden, all by Aldo Leopold School



Working on the sunflower garden, planting tall sunflowers

Planned projects

These projects are planned for 2016:

- Install a new decorative fence in front of the garden
- Set out more plants to finish the beds in this phase

As needed: A call for volunteers will be sent to members when assistance is needed.

A big thank you

The society again thanks members for making the Garden a show place for Silver City, contributing over 500 hours of service.



The Memorial garden for Aldo Leopold students

Announcements

Dues changes

Because of a recurring deficit in the operating expenses, the NPSNM State Board voted that an increase in membership fees is necessary.

Effective January 2016, new memberships and renewal dues will be:

Individual	\$ 30, an increase from \$25
Family	45, an increase from \$30
Friends of the Society	60, an increase from \$50
Sponsor	125, an increase from \$100
Patron	250, no change
Life Member	1000, no change
Students, Teachers, Seniors, and Limited Income	15, no change

Note: This category has added teachers.

Awards

Gila Symposium: This fall the Gila Native Plant Society awarded a Grant to fund the production of the "Proceedings of the 5th Natural History of the Gila Symposium (Feb. 25-27, 2014)." It is anticipated that the Proceedings will thus be available at the upcoming 6th Natural History of the Gila Symposium taking place on the campus of Western New Mexico University in Silver City, NM, on February 25-26, 2016.

The Natural History of the Gila Symposium series, offered bi-annually since 2006 on the WNMU campus, provides a forum for presentation of scientific research and management projects focused on the Gila region of southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona.

Participants in the first five symposia have included scientists, natural resource managers from both the public and private sectors, government policy makers, and public school and university students. These events have also offered a very popular "Creative Voice" session (organized by WNMU Emeritus Professor Sharman Russell) during which regional writers and artists present their non-fiction creative works that feature the Gila region.

More information: <http://gilasymposium.org/>.

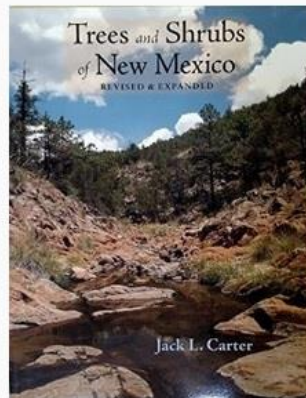
Butterfly Way Project: The Gila Native Plant Society awarded a Grant to the Butterfly Way Project, a native plant restoration project along the corridor of the Gila River. The mission is to promote an increase in the diversity of plant hosts for butterflies, birds, bees, and other pollinators. The project is a tribute to the passion and dedication of Ella Jaz Kirk, Michael Mahl, and Ella Sala Myers.

More information: If you want to learn more about the project or volunteer to help, contact Carol Fugagli, project manager, at cfugagli@gmail.com or go to butterflywayproject.org.

Featured Book

Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico was originally written and published by Jack L. Carter in 1997, and then he revised and expanded it in 2012. It isn't readily available at a reasonable cost - except here in Silver City.

Designed to assist the educated layperson interested in identifying the New Mexico flora, this edition features:



- Over 500 full-color photos
- Over 450 finely detailed illustrations
- 496 species described
- Colorful county maps
- Updated nomenclature and taxonomic information
- Biographical sketches of noted botanists for historical context
- Landscaping tips for using native species

Cost: \$20.00 plus shipping and handling

To purchase the book, go to the [website](#).



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