

# GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

---

April 2017

Vol 7 No 2

Helen Shoup, Editor

---

## Bulletin 2017: 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](#).

---

### Programs/Field Trips 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. Field Trips are set for April through August.

All field trip participants meet in the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts

Center Theater on E Street at 8:00 a.m. for carpooling. The field trips are April through September and are nearly always held on the third Sunday, unless otherwise specified. The leader is Kevin Keith. The trips are also 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.

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](http://www.gilanps.org).

## April Meeting

**When:** Friday, April 21, 2017

**Program:** Characteristics of Oklahoma's Induced Earthquakes

**Presenter:** Corrie Neighbors, PhD, Assistant Professor of Geology at WNMU

**Description:** Dr. Neighbors will speak on recent research regarding the characteristics of earthquakes induced by oil and gas activities in Oklahoma. Numerical modeling of the 2011 M5.7 aftershock sequence shows lower than average stress releases for these induced earthquakes compared to typical tectonic events that occur in this region. These results have implications for the seismic risk and intensity of ground shaking from these man-made events.

## April Field Trip

**When:** Sunday, April 16, 2017

**Location:** Ira Canyon in the Big Burro Mountains

**Description:** This field trip involves a moderate hike up the canyon. There is no trail and there are some minor uneven surfaces, but the terrain is flat and open. The elevation is 4400 feet. The one-way travel time is 1 hour.

**Plants to see:** Piñon/juniper/live oak are in the woodland. The canyon bottom terraces support some deciduous trees: walnut, ash, hackberry, soapberry. Expect to see composites, mustards, and mints in bloom.

## May Picnic

**When:** Sunday, May 14, 2017, at Noon

**Location:** The National Forest shelter on Little Walnut Road

**Description:** The club's annual picnic will be a potluck, so please bring your own plates, silverware, and cups, and a dish to share. Our club will provide iced tea, lemonade, and hotdogs. If you would like another beverage, you are free to bring it. We will have a short plant outing before lunch.

**Joint club event:** The picnic will be held jointly with Southwest New Mexico Audubon like last year.

## May Meeting

**When:** Friday, May 19, 2017

**Program:** STEM, Citizen Science, and the Safford BLM Rare Plant Program: How a Two-Year Community College Provides Critical Information and Support to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

**Presenter:** Joneen (Jony) Cockman, PhD, BLM Biologist

**Description:** Dr. Jony Cockman has been working with New Mexico and Arizona flora since 1984. She is currently immersed in riparian habit ecological assessment and restoration work in Eastern Arizona with BLM and is assisted by interns from Eastern Arizona College (EAC).

She will discuss:

- The grass roots relationship between EAC and BLM and the role of Citizen Science
- The plant communities and stressors on the resources
- The joy of hiking and kayaking into wilderness areas with 20-year-olds

## May Field Trip

**When:** Sunday, May 21, 2017

**Location:** Skates Canyon in the Pinos Altos Range

**Description:** The hike follows FS Rd 88 through the canyon. The elevation is 6300 feet. The one-way travel time (36 miles) via San Lorenzo is approximately 1 hour.

**Plants to see:** Riparian, ponderosa forest, piñon/juniper are in the woodland. A perennial flow supports willows, alders, and large-diameter Rocky Mountain junipers. Cliffs on the south side provide conditions for shade-tolerant species: *Draba*, *Corydalis*, *Valeriana*, and ferns.

## June Field Trip

**When:** Sunday, June 18, 2017

**Location:** Signal Peak in the Pinos Altos Range

**Description:** After two years of road closures, Signal Peak is again open, giving us

an opportunity to investigate the effects of the fire on the composition and density of the vegetation. The elevation is 9000 feet. One-way travel time is approximately 45 minutes.

**Plants to see:** Mixed conifer

**Note:** No meeting until September

---

## Plant of the Month: Golden Spurred Columbine

**By Keller Suberkropp**

### **General description**

Golden spurred columbine plants are native to canyons in the southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado). They are hardy perennials that prefer part shade but can grow in full sun. Plants bloom from late spring (May) into early summer.



### **Flowers**

Golden spurred columbine produces showy yellow flowers with long graceful spurs. The flowers have 5 pointed yellow sepals and 5 yellow petals with long spurs projecting backwards. Flower spikes can reach 30-36 inches tall.

*Photo by Elroy Limmer*



Another species of *Aquilegia* (*A. caerulea*), the Colorado blue columbine, produces blue flowers. It is the state flower of Colorado.

*Photo from [www.statesymbolsusa.org](http://www.statesymbolsusa.org)*

### **Foliage**

Golden spurred columbines produce tightly clumped foliage that is green to blue green. The leaves are somewhat fernlike.

*Photo by Keller Suberkropp*



### **Origin of names**

They are members of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). The genus name *Aquilegia* is the Latin word for *eagle*, referring to the petals that were thought to look like eagle talons. The common name columbine is the Latin word for *dove* since Romans thought the inverted flowers looked like 5 doves.

### **Attraction**

Columbine plants can serve as food for some species of moth caterpillars but are deer- and rabbit-resistant. The flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies as well as certain bumblebee species. However, the seeds and parts of the plant (especially roots) are poisonous to humans if ingested.

---

**Website of the Month**

One of the best websites for this time of year is:

[Attract Migrating Birds with Native Plants](#)

Nothing quite says spring like sprouting plants and migrating birds. By growing native plants, you will give birds the food and shelter they need, help fight climate change, conserve precious water resources—and see more birds in the process!

This web address takes you to the migrating birds going through our area (Silver City) and the native plants that would attract them!

---

## Silva Creek Botanical Garden Report

By Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman

Spring has arrived, and the Garden is waking up. With all the moisture this winter, things are looking good, but some of the newly planted specimens in 2016 will be needing a drink in the near future if we don't get moisture soon. The same is true for plants that you installed in your yard last year. By the end of this season, most plants will be able to be on their own unless we have a severe drought. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

As with any garden, there is always work that needs to be done, and we will be asking for assistance. Shortly after the plant sale, we will need help with new and replacement plantings plus dealing with weeds, path work extension, moving gravel, and finish painting the fence. These are just some of the tasks that need to be done this spring, so if you are willing and can help, please show up for the work days. If you can't make a scheduled work day, you can always call me and see how you can participate. My phone number is 538-5513. Notices of work dates will be posted in the near future.

The GNPS board just met with the out-reach coordinator Sara Digby for the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. She was very impressed with what we have accomplished at the Garden, and she asked me to thank everyone involved. She said we should be very proud, and it looks great.

Keller Suberkropp just completed a brochure that tells folks about the Garden and how to get there. We will be placing them at the Visitor Center and other locations around the area. Also, Jackie Blurton just developed a children's activity booklet for the Chapter which features the Garden; we will be handing them out on Earth Day. Thanks to Keller and Jackie and everyone who helped get them printed. Stop by our booth at the Earth Day Celebration in Gough Park on April 22 from 10 and 2. Say hello and see everything the members are doing.

---

## "Give Grandly - Give Local" Coming Up Soon

The Gila Native Plant Society will participate in "Give Grandly - Give Local" again this year. "Give Grandly" is part of an annual fundraising event that focuses donations to local non-profits in one 24-hour window. However, some differences are occurring this year; people can give online beginning shortly, providing more time to make the minimum \$250 to qualify for the matching funds provided by the Sponsors.

**Note:** You will receive more information shortly.

Giving can be online or by mail, as long as it is before/by May 6. To give in person and see other members, you can come to the GNPS booth next to the Silver City Farmers' Market on May 6, 2017, from 8:30 am to 2 pm.

---

## Programs from Last Quarter

A description of the programs from last quarter follow:

### January Meeting

The GNPS meeting was **canceled** due to the potential icy roads and bad walking conditions. It was better to ere on the side of caution, considering the possible weather conditions in the forecast.

### February Meeting

On Friday, February 17, 2017, the Gila Native Plant Society had their meeting in Harlan Hall. They enjoyed a program by Kathy Whiteman, Director of the WNMU Outdoor Program, about “**We Need a Bigger Boat.**” She discussed:

- \* The state of environmental literacy among college students
- \* Opportunities for learning
- \* Potential impacts on sustainability
- \* How we "members of the choir" can expand the conversation to promote conservation



Kathleen Whiteman, PhD, teaches in the Natural Science Department at Western New Mexico University and is the Director of the WNMU Outdoor Program, which operates under a Special Use Permit with the USDA Forest Service in the Gila National Forest. To learn more about the Program, check out the University website at <http://outdoor.wnmu.edu>.

## March Meeting

Richard Felger shared what they have learned through hands-on experience about farming native food crops: in agriculture, in community gardens, or in their own yards.

**Examples:** Fields of Giant Sacaton (*Sporobolus wrightii*) and Apache redgrass can be grown enclosed in multi-species food-plant hedge rows.

Dr. Felger explained, "...Giant Sacaton, the 'grass as tall as a horse's belly,' can be a major economic crop, right here, right now, as we set the model for sustainable food resiliency."



Following the program, the presenters offered samples of the tasty foods that can be made from native food crops. Chelsea Rittchen and Adrienne Booth have worked with recipes using sacaton flour. Two really big favorites included a cornbread and sacaton sweet cake created by Chelsea Rittchen (see the recipe below).

### **Sacaton Sweet Cake**

#### **Ingredients**

2 cups whole grain Sacaton, soaked overnight and rinsed until water runs clear  
1 medium/small Buttercup squash, steamed and pureed (about 1 cup)

1/2 cup coconut oil, melted

1/2 cup arrowroot

1/3 cup coconut sugar

1/4 cup Mesquite flour

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/2 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp sea salt

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp ground ginger

1/4 tsp ground cloves

pinch of nutmeg

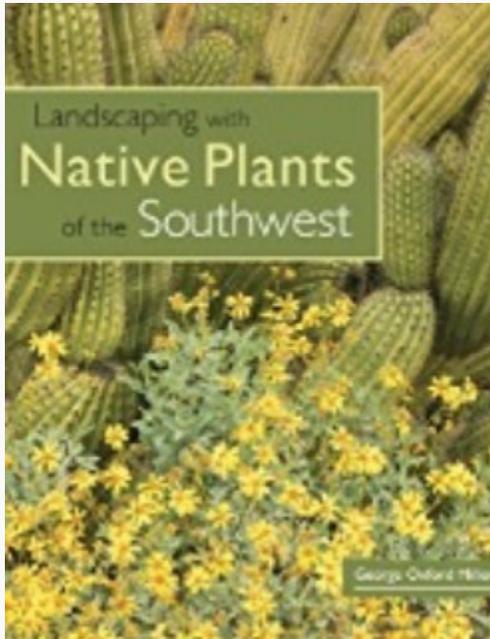
pinch of cardamom

#### **Directions**

Mix all ingredients well, pour into a greased 9"x12" pan, and bake at 350 degrees F for 30-40 minutes. Let cool. Enjoy!

---

## Book of the Month: *Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest*



In *Landscaping with Native Plants of the Southwest*, George Oxford Miller, the author, offers the definitive guide to choosing the best of the best among the native plants of Arizona and New Mexico. Covering wildflowers, shrubs, trees, vines, cacti, and groundcovers, this comprehensive, richly illustrated book selects the species that combine ornamental qualities, growth habit, adaptability, low maintenance, and beauty for the highest landscape value.

The illustrations, maps, and charts provide guidelines for species selection and planting, on-going maintenance, landscape design, and water and energy conservation. In-depth plant profiles describe the habitat requirements for more than 350 native plant species, sub-species, and varieties, with stunning photographs illustrating how each plant looks and responds to landscape conditions.\*

\* *From the back cover of the book*

---



**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

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)