

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2021: 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>.

President's Message



The Otero Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico had to cancel the annual conference last year because of the COVID pandemic. But things are opening up now, and the conference is on in person! Most presentations will also be available virtually, so you can take advantage of parts of the conference from home. Go to [NPSNM Otero Conference Schedule](#) for the complete schedule. Here's more about the conference:

**2021 Annual Conference of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, Otero Chapter,
Alamogordo, New Mexico, August 20-22nd**



This year's annual conference will take a look at both the people and plants of the Tularosa basin and the surrounding mountain ranges. Of special interest is that the conference will take a chronological perspective, discussing the people and their use of plants from the archaic period to the present day. The conference will tell the story of people and native plants in and around the Chihuahua desert.

The annual conference is a wonderful opportunity to see old friends, meet new ones from across the Southwest and see what is in bloom in mid-August in this beautiful part of the state. The various presentations will take place in the Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center in Alamogordo, but will also be available virtually. A welcome reception will take place on Friday evening at White Sands National Park and Saturday's evening banquet will include the presentation of the Jack and Martha Carter Native Plant Conservation Award Recipient. Limited space in the scores of field trips offered will fill up quickly, so be sure to use the online or mail-in registration at the NPSNM website (<https://www.npsnm.org/conference-2021-status/>) and get registered soon! All CDC guidelines and state mandates will be observed at the conference. We hope to see you there!

-- Don Graves

Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume in October. Meanwhile, videos of our spring programs are available on the chapter website. Click [here](#) and scroll down for the links to these recordings, which include presentations on liverworts and the night-blooming cactus *Peniocereus greggii*.

We hope to organize field trips this summer when Covid restrictions are lifted.

Saturday, September 18, 2021, 10 am to 2 pm — Native Plant Sale. Look for the article below for more details.

Celebrating the Lives of Richard Felger and Jack Carter

In 2020 we lost two great friends—both wonderful botanists and vigorous champions of the cause of native plants—Jack Carter in March and Richard Felger in October. At that time, the pandemic kept us from getting together to acknowledge how much they meant to us.

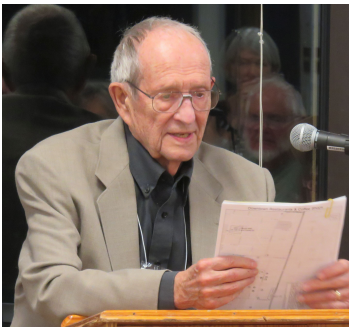
But things are better now, and two different events are being organized to celebrate the importance of their lives.



Richard Felger—July 31, 2021

We are planning a catered outdoor picnic on July 31, 2021, to celebrate Richard's life and amazing accomplishments. Silke Schneider, Richard's wife, has reserved the Gomez Pavilion (just north of Silver City) on July 31st, starting at 11 am and extending into the afternoon.

All GNPS members are welcome, as well as Richard's family, friends, colleagues and fans - locally, from Tucson, and far beyond. We hope some of you will bring a brief story or memory to share. When the time comes closer, we'll send more details and directions and ask you to RSVP, but for now - please save the date!



Jack Carter—September 18, 2021

Jack's daughter Diane has informed us that the family will be hosting a celebration of Jack's life on September 18, 2021, via Zoom at 1:00 pm Mountain Time. Family and friends will be sharing memories of his life and commitment to plant sciences education.

They have decided to host it on Zoom because so many of Jack's family members and friends live all across the country. Diane asks people to RSVP to her email (dianecarterlrc@gmail.com) so that she can send them a link when the time gets closer (and we will remind you, too).

Come Celebrate the Monsoon As GNPS Presents Its 2021 Native Plant Sale

Saturday, September 18 from 10:00am - 2:00pm at Gough Park parking lot, corner of 12th and Pope Streets.

The monsoon season is a great time to plant, and some say it is the best time to plant! If you want to improve your success rate with native plants, monsoon offers cooler temperatures and ground that has been soaking up rain. Your new transplants will get a great start as they head into winter.

You'll be able to meet and buy directly from five native plant growers.

Native Plant Sale

Fall is the best time to plant

Saturday, September 18th

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Gough Park parking lot at 12th and Pope

Native plants are beautiful, hardy, need less water and provide habitat for wildlife.



Canyon Penstemon *Penstemon pseudospectabilis*

Meet and buy directly from native plant growers:

- Lone Mountain Natives, Silver City
- Country Girls Nursery, Silver City
- Plants of the Southwest, Albuquerque
- Spadefoot Nursery, Tucson
- Robledo Vista Nursery, Las Cruces

Sponsored by:



Many thanks to this year's GNPS Native Plant Sale Committee members for organizing this event: Curtis Schimp, Mary Ann Kressig, Ed Leuck, Tricia Hurley, Peter Gorman and Don Graves. And thanks to Margie Ann Gibson for agreeing to help design this advertising poster for the native plant sale.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden



In spite of no rain, the Silva Creek Botanical Garden looks pretty good. I have been getting a lot of compliments on how nice it looks. To keep it that way requires constant watering. The heat in June shortened the bloom time of many plants but hopefully we will get some rain and some will re-bloom.



One of the interesting events occurring in the garden this year is that the two native species of agave are blooming next to each other, *Agave palmeri* and *A. parryi*. Many folks have stopped to compare and follow their development. If you have not seen them, there is still time to see how different the seed-heads look.

Thanks to all who make the garden look great:

- Betsy Kaido, who monitors for weeds and nips them in the bud with help from Shirley Parotti. You will have a hard time finding many weeds this year.
- John Pecoroni, who mows the grass.
- Trish Kirchhoff, who made short work of planting 30 perennials in early May. Many of them are now blooming.

- Don Graves, who painted the new fence, organized the storage shed so we don't have to trip over things when trying to pick up tools, and who provided help and encouragement where and when needed.
- Curtis Shimp, who used his mechanical skills to get our two weed eaters running again.

The roof over the amphitheater is progressing slowly, but hopefully it will be finished in July.

Painting needs to be done and we will be calling for help with that in the near future. If it ever rains, I'll be calling a work day for weeding.

As always, I urge you to stop and enjoy the garden, and see the seasonal changes. Bring your friends.

- All photos and text by Elroy Limmer, Garden Manager

(Editor's Note: Elroy has spent endless hours watering the garden. Hopefully monsoon rains will give him a break.)

Traditional Medicine Garden

Thanks to the hard work of many, many, volunteers, funding from the State of New Mexico Department of Tourism and private donors, and donations of materials from local businesses, the Traditional Medicine Garden is finally taking shape! Plants that were put in last year are getting bigger and new ones have been added this spring. At this point there are about 73 specimens of 37 species, and more will be planted in July. Still to come this summer is the installation of the main sign and several interpretive signs. The benches will wait until after the fence is replaced.

Interested in learning more about some of these plants and their medicinal uses? Keep an eye out for announcements of tours/classes for GNPS members! If you would like to get on the list for volunteer opportunities, please send an email to silvercitygardens@gmail.com.

In the meantime, take a look at the first batch of new individual plant signs. These signs include the names of the plants in Apache and Spanish. The QR code can be scanned with a smart phone to send the user to an evolving web page with more information on the traditional uses of the plant.



The pergola is up and providing lovely shade. There are already hops and clematis starting to climb up the cattle panel. There are some structural issues, (hence the flying buttresses of 2x4s) but they should all be fixed by the end of the summer.

We buried a plastic pond liner to provide for plants that like to stay wet. The outline of the pond is the undulating black line in the photo. This “cienga” (bog) area includes: *Equisetum hymenale*, *Mentha arvensis*, *Anemopsis californica*, and *Iris missouriensis*. *Prunus vulgaris* is in right foreground.



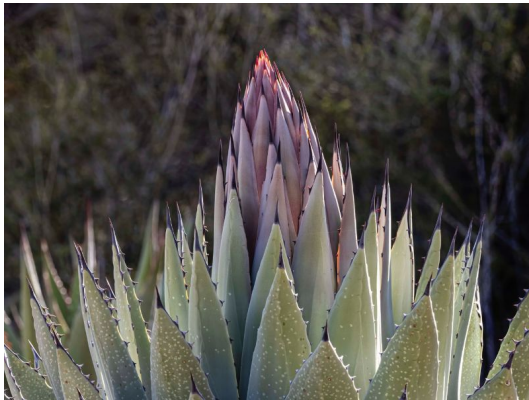
-- All photos and text by Naava Koenigsberg

Plant of the Quarter

Parry's agave (*Agave parryi*)

As mentioned above in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden article, *Agave parryi* is blooming despite the lack of rain. Here's more information about this plant:

Parry's agave, also called mescal or century plant, is in the family Asparagaceae in the class Monocotyledoneae (monocots). They grow in sandy, gravelly soils that are well-drained in the southwest U.S. (New Mexico and Arizona), and northern Mexico at altitudes of 4,000 – 8,000 feet. Parry's agave grows slowly, prefers full sun, and is drought tolerant. It is also winter hardy, withstanding temperatures of -20° F.



Plants form a symmetrical rosette of succulent leaves that is typically 2-3 feet wide and tall. Leaves are evergreen and can vary in color from gray-green to blue-green. They have spines on the margins and a sword-like thorn at the tip.

Even though agaves are sometimes called century plants, they do not live for 100 years. Parry's agaves generally live 8-20 years. After that time, they send up a flower stalk and die. Parry's agave is flowering in Silver City currently in several places. Flower stalks can be quite tall (13 feet) and produce 20-30 side branches, each containing a cluster of creamy yellow flowers.



After being pollinated, flowers produce capsules containing seeds. Parry's agave also reproduces vegetatively by producing suckers at the base of the rosette, thereby forming a colony of plants.

Native Americans used Parry's agave as a source of food, fiber, soap, and medicine.

Liquids from agaves in general have been fermented to form an alcoholic beverage called pulque, which can then be distilled to form mescal or tequila depending on the agave species.

-- Text by Keller Suberkropp; photos by Elroy Limmer

Russ Kleinman and Karen Blisard Profiled in National Parks Magazine

The summer 2021 issue of *National Parks*, the magazine of the National Parks Conservation Association, contains an article profiling Russ' and Karen's work as bryologists. Bryologists study bryophytes, which are mosses, liverworts and hornworts. Russ and Karen have both given GNPS presentations about their plant world passions, Karen most recently on her specialty, liverworts.

The couple developed their bryophyte expertise after retirement through intensive study with botanists like Kelly Allred, New Mexico's pre-eminent botanist, and through their extensive specimen collecting field trips. They devoted years to identifying and cataloging their collections. Identification requires using a microscope to examine the plants' cell structures. Russ, a retired general surgeon, and Karen, a retired pathologist, were not strangers to this tool.



The sheer volume of their collecting (over 1200 specimens in El Malpais National Monument alone) is staggering, and the quality of their work is no less impressive. In addition to documenting hundreds of different species, they've identified several not previously seen in New Mexico. And their work has been published in peer reviewed botanical journals. How fitting that a publication with a national readership has recognized Russ' and Karen's work.

The photo by Stacey Anderson, a bryologist from Colorado, captures Russ and Karen at the Fruita Paleontological Area near Grand Junction, CO.

Give Grandly! 2021 Beats Its Own Record



Despite the pandemic, the Give Grandly! Give Local! 2021 annual fundraiser on May 8th beat its own record with the highest level of donations yet — \$264,685 received in all for the 59 participating nonprofits! And thanks to our generous supporters, the Gila Native Plant Society raised \$3,160, more than in any other year we've taken part in Give Grandly!

Art Works By GNPS Members

Les Brandt created this painting of a *Datura wrightii* that he found growing in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.



Ann Lane Hedlund wrote this poem, which is accompanied by Elroy Limmer's photographs.

Five-Stamened Beardtongues*

Ann Lane Hedlund [& Russ Kleinman]
April 15, 2021

From the plantain family of plants
Emerge the Penstemons, beardtongues,
A sublime litany of Gila/Mimbres natives:

P. ambiguus
White corolla, pinkish throat
Plains and rocky slopes

P. rostriflorus
Beaked beardtongue
Bright red, reflexed lips
(Prepared to be kissed?)

P. barbatus



Scarlet and Southwestern
Bright red and dependent
Roadsides, canyons, rocks

P. fendleri

Lilac and ascending
Dry mesas and meadows

P. linarioides

Toadflax beardtongue
Linear leaves, lilac corollas
Dry hillsides, roadsides

P. metcalfei

Pink corolla, blue lobes
Clasping three-veined leaves
A narrow moist canyon in shade

P. palmeri

Showy at four to six feet tall



White to pink to purple
with red guidelines (to: areas
In town where seeded?)

P. pinifolius

Pine Needle Beardtongue
Red red red red red
Isolated rocky crags and
Ponderosa pine forests

Middle elevations

P. strictus

Rocky Mountain beardtongue



Blue, purple, hints of pink
Rocky or sandy roadsides

P. superbus

Red with orbicular lobes



(Where is that dictionary?)
Just above creekbeds

P. thurberi

Pink but weedy, brushy, filiform
On roadsides

P. virgatus

Wandbloom penstemon
Light purple, deeper guidelines
(To lead on whom?) Where:
In moist meadows

P. whippleanus

Dusky and dark beardtongue
Deep purple
Moist mixed conifer forest

And none to be confounded with:

P. pseudospectabilis



(Whither *P. spectabilis*?)

Hot pink

Around flowing water

Salvia of many species
White to pink to red to purple

or

Gilia lyndana

Rose-pink

Dry creekbeds, hillside rocks

or

Stachys coccinea

Scarlet hedge nettle

A pinkish red mint

Among rocks and rocky creekbeds.

This Gila/Mimbres genus offers
Striking stamina, the most species,
Annual arrivals, favored perennials.
Yes! Penstemons surely stand tall.

*WITH HUGE THANKS (or apologies) to www.GilaFlora.com & Russ Kleinman!



Our mailing address is:

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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.

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