

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

October 1 2021

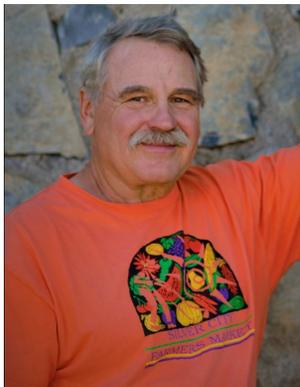
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Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2021: Quarter 4

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



We have Been Busy!

This past quarter has seen several very successful events, involving a large number of GNPS members and volunteers. Thanks to all of you who participated.

It is estimated that over 110 friends and family gathered at the Gomez Peak Pavilion on **August 31** to celebrate the life of Richard Felger. Along with a strong contingent of local members, over half of the participants traveled from Tucson to remember the life of our beloved botanist. There was laughter, sadness, great food and plenty of opportunities to

pay tribute.

August 19 through the 22 brought members from across the state to the annual conference of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. Several of our Gila Chapter members made the trek to Alamogordo for the fine lectures, a dizzying array of field trips, great food and the most amazing sunset reception at White Sands National Park. We made new friends, got reacquainted with others and left with a better understanding of the wonderfully diverse Tularosa Basin.

Our **September 11** native plant field trip attracted over 25 participants, no doubt feeling a pent-up desire to get out and explore. Russ Kleinman and I led the trip and concentrated on a stretch of Highway 15 from the Ben Lilly parking area to the lower meadows of Signal Peak.



Highlights included a large number of basketflowers (*Plectocephalus rothrockii*), taperleaf (*Pericome caudata*) and a wide variety of native grasses. Our field trip checklist included close to 100 species!



On **September 18** we held our hugely successful native plant sale. With over 150 customers and five vendors, our monsoon sale was a resounding success and reminded us that fall is a great time to plant! Vendors left with empty trucks and our customers left with full trunks.

Vendors have expressed interest in doing it again in 2022!

During the Gila River Festival, **September 16 - 19**, GNPS offered three workshops at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Naava Koenigsberg led two separate sessions of **Medicinal Plants of the Gila**, and Elroy Limmer, Wendy Graves and I team-led a field trip titled **Silva Creek Botanical Garden: An Oasis of Hope**. All of these sessions were very well attended.

GNPS was a major sponsor of the Gila River Festival

this year. On the final evening of the festival, **September 19**, I was honored to represent GNPS by moderating Doug Tallamy's excellent presentation, ***Nature's Best Hope***. Tallamy is the T.A. Baker Professor of Agriculture in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and a best-selling author. He discussed re-imagining our relationship to our yards, and offered this proposal:



"What if each American landowner converted half of his or her yard to productive native plant communities?" His presentation can be found here:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/17thannualgilariverfestival>.

--- Don Graves

Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume this fall. Because of the inroads of the Delta variant, we will have to depend on Zoom for a while longer. Gila Chapter members will receive a Zoom link by email; any others interested may request a link from gilanative@gmail.com. All are welcome. We will, however, have an in-person field trip on October 16 (see below). For more information check our website at www.gilanps.org/events/programs and www.gilanps.org/events/field-trips/.



Friday, October 15, 2021, 6:00 pm via Zoom – Agave Restoration Projects for Bat Conservation

Join Bat Conservation International's Dan Taylor for a program describing efforts to restore *Agave palmeri* and *Agave parryi* in southwestern New Mexico to support nectivorous bat populations.

This subject will attract flora and fauna lovers alike and therefore will be a joint program of GNPS and Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society. Dan Taylor is a Senior Restoration Specialist with Bat Conservation International's Habitat Protection and Restoration (HP&R) Program and has more than 30 years of experience working on a wide range of wildlife and conservation issues in the U.S., Central America, and Africa.

Saturday, October 16, 2021, 9:00 am – Field Trip to City of Rocks State Park – Led by William Norris

William ("Bill") Norris, Professor of Biology at Western New Mexico University, will lead us in an exploration of the botany of

this fascinating Chihuahuan Desert landscape. Bill will point out the major vegetation types found in City of Rocks State Park.



He will describe the floristic study of the park he is conducting with the help of Tim Geddes. The field trip will include a visit to the botanical garden, and there will be an option to walk the two-mile Cienega Trail at the conclusion of the field trip. Meet at 9:00 am at City of Rocks State Park (east on Hwy 180 and left on route 61) in the parking lot by the Cienega Trail (on the left shortly after entering the Park).



Top photo by Bill Norris; bottom by Russ Kleinman



Friday, November 19, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom – Post-fire Status of Goodding's Onion (*Allium gooddingii*) in New Mexico

Daniela Roth, New Mexico State Botanist, will discuss the status of *Allium gooddingii* in New Mexico following the large wildfires that have occurred in the Gila and Lincoln National Forests since 2006. Goodding's onion (*Allium gooddingii*) is a rare plant species only found in Arizona and New Mexico. The majority of populations occur on the Gila National Forest and the adjacent Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona. Since 2006 over 95% of known locations in AZ and NM have burned in seven different wildfires. Post-fire studies have shown that although plants largely survive the direct impacts of the fires, long term survival is questionable due to drastic changes in habitat, post-fire floods, and post-fire rehabilitation efforts.

Daniela Roth is the New Mexico State Botanist and Program Manager for the Endangered Plant Program located within the Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department.

Sunday, December 12, 2021 – Holiday Party. Time and location TBA.

Thank You, GNPS, for Sponsoring Richard's Celebration of Life!



It was a truly remarkable event in a perfect setting with so many friends and colleagues to celebrate Richard's life.

Thank you to our committee, Don and Wendy Graves, Betty Spence, Elroy Limmer, Adrienne Booth and Ann Hedlund, and everyone else.

Sincerely,
Silke Schneider

Silva Creek Botanical Garden

The Garden has never looked better, thanks to the great crew of volunteers that came back time and time again, and fought the weeds and Siberian elm seedlings. Timely rains kept everything looking great, so very little watering was needed.



The big news is that the roof over the amphitheater, after many delays and setbacks, is finally completed. On Labor Day the last of the roofing was installed. Later, after the steel beams rust, they will be clear-coated to match the bridge. Several hours after completion, folks were already taking advantage of the shade. A class on native

plant gardening enjoyed the shade during the Gila River Festival. I am sure many more will enjoy the comfort the roof brings. The kiosk has been improved by making it double-sided so we can add more information. Thanks to Denise Friedrich for welding the frames and

installing the glass.

We had three disturbing break-ins in to the storage sheds, over a period of a few days. A mower, two weed eaters, wheel barrow, many hand tools, ladder, and pruning saw were taken. We reinforced the doors and have installed a security camera. Thanks again to Denise Friedrich for her welding and installation skills, thus making any more intrusions very difficult.

It's not just pretty flowers and trees.



The garden supports many species of insects that are pollinators, and a number of species of birds that may or may not be pollinators. We have a pair of Phainopepla that love the fruit on the New Mexico elder (*Sambucus mexicana*). I have seen them nearly every time I come to the garden.

I've also seen Lesser Goldfinches feeding on the seeds of the apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), and several species of hummingbirds feeding on and pollinating many plants. These are just a few of the birds that visit the garden all year long.



We often think of bees and butterflies when thinking of garden pollinators and they are important, but wasps, flies and beetles are just as important. I counted seven species of wasp feeding on the flowers of the soapberry tree (*Sapindus drummondii*). Moths of many species, both night-flying and day-flying, feed on flowers of many plants. Sphinx moths, often called hummingbird moths, are unusual in that they feed both night and day, whereas most moth species choose one or the other.

We also have had an abundance of monarch butterflies this year and they have taken advantage of the milkweed growing in the garden. If you look closely, you may see a larva or chrysalis on or near the milkweeds.



birds feed on the seeds of the plants, and the grasses, in particular, provide shelter for overwintering insects.



These are just a few of the many species that utilize the garden.

Some folks wonder why we don't "clean up the garden" in the fall. It's because many



- All photos and text by Elroy Limmer, Garden Manager

Traditional Medicine Garden

The Traditional Medicine Garden is finally starting to feel established! Some plants are flourishing; the hops and clematis have already reached the top of the pergola. There are currently 41 plant species represented. We did lose a few since our original plantings, most likely due to all the rain and the heavy soils. We are letting the plants sort themselves out and we are discovering which will need to be kept in check, and what spaces we have available to add new ones next year.

August saw a number of caterpillars take up residence in our milkweed plants, a welcome relief after the dearth of insects this past spring. And we hosted our first formal set of classes as part of the Gila River Festival in September.

The most exciting news is that we finally got the main sign installed! Thank you to the angelic patience of Veronica Hill at Terrazas Granite and Marble, and to Alexandra Gonzalez and Gabe and Nick Farley, who muscled the heavy stone into position.

In October or November, we will be removing the shade material for the winter and making



some further adjustments to the pergola structure. The winter will be spent adding information to the plant database on the website. It is still pretty bare, but if you are interested, please visit <https://www.silvercitygardens.org/home>. We would love any help we can muster to add to the information (medicinal uses, landscaping tips, etc.) on that site.

-- Photo and text by Naava Koenigsberg

Plant of the Quarter

Sweet Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis longiflora*)



Sweet four o'clock, also called angel's trumpet, is a shrub-like tuberous perennial (2-3 feet wide; 2-3 feet tall) in the four o'clock family (*Nyctaginaceae*). It is a tender perennial, and is sometimes called an annual since it frequently dies back in winter. *Mirabilis longiflora* is heat and drought tolerant. It grows in full sun to partial shade in well drained soils at elevations from 3,900 to 8,200 feet in brushy canyons and on banks in the southwest U.S., particularly Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

The leaves are sticky, bright green and ovate to heart-shaped. Plants have a long blooming season, from summer to fall. Flowers are trumpet like, long (4-6 inches), white with magenta centers and produce a sweet orange blossom fragrance. They open in the evening and stay open all night, attracting night flying insects including hummingbird moths. Flowers produce long magenta stamens with red anthers that protrude out of the corolla. The genus name, *Mirabilis*, means marvelous in Latin, presumably for the spectacular flowers that are produced by the species. Thomas Jefferson received seeds and grew these plants at Monticello.



These plants have no serious diseases or pests. They are resistant to deer, rabbits and snails. Both the leaves and seeds are poisonous.

-- Text by Keller Suberkropp; bottom photo by Russ Kleinman

Art Works

Jackie Blurton painted these coatimundis, inspired by a hike to the Lower Box of the Gila.



Richard Felger penned this poem influencing us to think of many native plants as food crops.

Fitting agriculture
to the Land is the easiest
Your world has 30,000 species
of food crops
Choose yours
for food resiliency
From deserts to tropics
to match dreams of the Land



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.

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