

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 1 2022

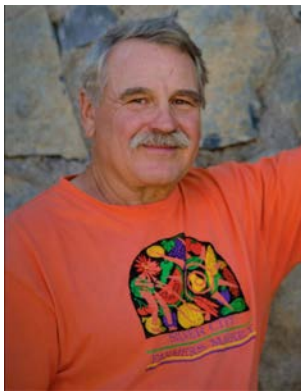
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Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2022: 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 also available on the GNPS website <http://www.gilanps.org>.

President's Message



I would like to acknowledge and thank the four GNPS Board members who have chosen to step down from the GNPS Board. All told, they represent many, many years of service in the day-to-day operations of the Gila Chapter. Many thanks to **Keller Suberkropp**, **Joan Limmer**, **Les Brandt** and **Emily Pollom**

Let me introduce you to our newly elected at-large board members who will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the GNPS Board.

Mary Barrett: Retired Certified Nurse Practitioner; recently moved to Silver City; engaged in the Landscaping with Native Plants course; regular volunteer at Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

Margie Gibson: Retired conservationist and graphic designer; deputy manager on the Operations Team of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden and regular volunteer there; actively

engaged in supporting biodiversity with native plants.

Rick Lass: Certified seed saving instructor through the Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance; has a small farm in the Mimbres where he grows fruits and vegetables; actively planting natives as pollinator attractors and to rehabilitate land that was formerly used for grazing.

Beth Leuck: Biologist with a broad interest in nature; maintains an ongoing research project on the cactus *Peniocereus greggii* in the Bootheel of New Mexico; works with invasive plant species during the summertime on an island in Lake Michigan; actively involved with the Natural History of the Gila Symposium and the Education Committee for WILL. Beth was elected to a second term on the GNPS Board.

Susan Thompson: Retired grower of native thorn forest plants in deep, south Texas; member of operations team for Silva Creek Botanical Garden and active volunteer there.

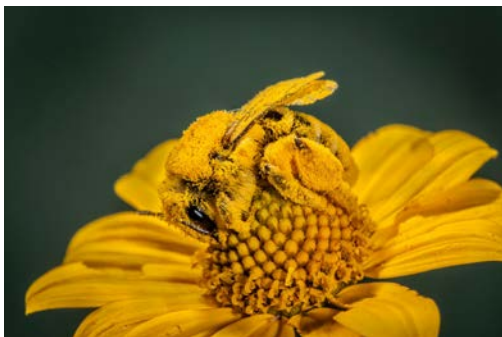
Thanks to all former and new Gila Native Plant Society officers, board members and volunteers!

--- Don Graves

Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume in January on the third Friday of the month at 7 pm. Because of Covid inroads, 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. For more information check our website at www.gilanps.org/events/programs.

Thursday, January 13, 2022, 5:30 pm via Zoom – “Birds and Brews” – presented by Elroy Limmer and Don Graves



Using the beautiful photography of Elroy Limmer, this joint SWNM Audubon/Gila Native Plant Society program will explore the lives of local pollinators from native bees to long-nosed bats. Presenters Elroy Limmer and Don Graves of the Gila Native Plant Society will discuss the variety of native plants necessary to attract pollinators and that act as host plants for the caterpillars that provide the majority of nutrition for our spring/summer fledgling birds. You will come away with a whole new perspective on the world of life in your own back yard and learn how you can help promote the diversity of pollinators, native plants and birds right here at home.

Elroy Limmer, past president of GNPS, has been photographing wildlife since he was eight years old, specializing in close up nature. Don Graves, current president of GNPS, has been an

educator for as long as he can remember. This includes thirty years teaching biology with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Friday, January 21, 2022, 7:00 pm via Zoom – "The Fabulous Flora of City of Rocks State Park" – Presented by William (Bill) Norris, Professor of Biology at Western New Mexico University



photo by Bill Norris

Bill will provide a summary of the diverse plant life (> 300 species) of City of Rocks State Park, which he has studied with several collaborators (especially Timothy H. Geddes) since the early 2000s. In addition to presenting a brief history of the park, he will discuss the goals, methodology and significance of basic plant inventory work.

Bill Norris is Professor of Biology at Western New Mexico University (since 2001), where he teaches Ecology, Ornithology, and numerous Botany classes. He has enjoyed working with collaborators on botanical inventories of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, the Gila River in New Mexico, and City of Rocks State Park.

Saturday, January 22, 2022, 10 am – noon, Field Trip – "Winter Botany Hike at City of Rocks State Park" – Led by Ed Leuck, Russ Kleinman and Bill Norris. The primary focus of this hike will be cacti and other succulents, with Ed taking the lead. Participants should meet at the Park Visitor Center at 10 am. Co-sponsored by Friends of the City of Rocks State Park. This is your chance to see in person some of the plants you heard about at the previous evening's presentation by Bill Norris.

Friday, February 18, 2022, 7:00 pm via Zoom – "Spring Blooms in the Southwest: Not Just Creosote Bush" – presented by Donna Stevens



Photos courtesy of the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU

One of the best things about early spring is the anticipation of wildflowers in bloom. These species are among the first to emerge early in the year in southwest New Mexico: Golden Smoke (*Corydalis aurea*); two small wild mustards, *Draba cuneifolia* and *Draba mogollonica*; the lovely Desert Anemone (*Anemone tuberosa*); and Stemless Townsend Daisy (*Townsendia exscapa*). A short time later, if we receive any rain, we'll see the gorgeous Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus ambiguus*) and Arizona Onion (*Allium macropetalum*). In a good year, entire hillsides turn yellow and orange with the yellow mustard Gordon's Bladderpod (*Physaria gordonii*) and the sunny Mexican Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* subsp. *mexicana*).

This presentation features some of the lovely wildflowers of spring in the Gila region, a few early-flowering trees and shrubs, and an invitation to get outside to renew your spirit with beauty.

Donna Stevens is a co-author, with Jack L. and Martha Carter, of *Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide*, now in its third edition. She is the Executive Director of the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, a watershed protection nonprofit, and a big fan of our beautiful native flora.

Friday, March 18, 2022, 7:00 pm via Zoom – “Moths of the Gila National Forest – Update” – presented by Ronald Parry



Moths are little appreciated since they are largely nocturnal. Yet many moths are beautiful, and they play an important role in all terrestrial ecosystems. Many moth species are now endangered by climate change, habitat destruction, and the overuse of pesticides. Greater public awareness of the importance and beauty of these insects is needed if we expect to save them. Ron will give us an update on his talk three years ago and discuss the functional roles played by the scales found on moths and butterflies.

Ron Parry earned a B.S in Chemistry from Occidental College and a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Brandeis University. He did postdoctoral research in plant biochemistry in the United Kingdom and at Stanford University. After retiring from a university teaching career, he returned to his interests in natural history and began to study moths.

More information on the moths of the Gila region can be found at Ron's website:

<https://southwesternmoths.com/>.

February 23 and 24, 2022 – Ninth Natural History of the Gila Symposium – presented face-to-face in the WNMU Global Resource Center, and on-line via Zoom.

Plan to attend the Ninth Natural History of the Gila Symposium on Wednesday, February 23 (pm) and Thursday, February 24 (all day). This hybrid event, co-sponsored by GNPS, features presentations focused on scientific research, management projects, education initiatives, and



policy discussions focused on the Gila Region of southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona. It also features a Creative Voice session showcasing creative works (writing, photography, performance, etc.) focused on this region by local and regional artists.

The symposium is **FREE** to all participants and attendees. For more information about this event, visit the symposium website at <https://wnmu.edu/gilasymposium>.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden



First, I want to again thank all of you who help keep the Silva Creek Botanical Garden (SCBG) going and who kept it looking great this past year. From my discussions with the city manager Alex Brown, I know he realizes that the SCBG is a great asset for Silver City. Without naming names, I know the community is very appreciative of our efforts. All of you who have participated in the development through the years should be very proud of your accomplishments.

Many of you have heard me say that it is time for new blood to take over the management of the SCBG. The garden's steering committee proposed that an operations team be established to coordinate and learn the different tasks that need to be done, and to improve on what has been accomplished over the last six years. I will still be heading up the operations team for the near term. The team held its first meeting on November 20. The members are myself, Margie Gibson as deputy, Naava Koenigsberg, and Susan Thompson. We had a lively discussion about what we would like to see happen in the near future, but most of our time was spent talking about the garden's kiosk and what it needs to say. The team is looking for volunteers to write text on the following topics, which will be posted at the kiosk. Some of these will be updated from time to time. The text needs to be short, easy to read, and direct folks to the website (gilanps.org) if they need more details:



- About the Gila Native Plant Society (volunteers, website, how to donate and/or join)
- Activities for kids
- Plant of the month
- Insect/wildlife features and their connection to native plants
- What's going on in the SCBG
- Upcoming Gila Native Plant Society activities
- Siberian elms
- Waterworks Building

If you are interested in volunteering to write any of these, please send us an email at gilanative@gmail.com.

Plans are also in the works to do more advertising of the SCBG and how to find it. The operations team is looking forward to a great 2022, and with all of your help it will be the number one stop for both home folks and visitors. Wishing everyone a great 2022.

-- Elroy Limmer, Garden Chairman, and the SCBG Operations Team

Native Plants Harvested for Daily Consumption

Which native plants do you eat daily or regularly throughout the week? These are some of my favorites – honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*), peppermint (*Mentha piperita*), and yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*).



Mesquite (*Prosopis*) is considered the “gateway species” among native food foraging enthusiasts in the Southwest. The colorful, tasty and nutritious pods of this leguminous, nitrogen-fixing tree are typically the first native plant food a new arrival to the Southwest learns about. At Silver City’s 5th Annual Autumn Abundance Festival at the Commons in November, mesquite pods were ground into flour with the community hammermill. Participants then enjoyed a potluck brunch featuring gluten-free mesquite meal pancakes, prickly pear syrup, mesquite-infused coffee, and other wild and local food delicacies!

I attended my first mesquite milling festival in Cascabel, Arizona back in 2007 and have been hooked on mesquite ever since! I grind my coffee with mesquite flour, cardamom, cinnamon and ginger. I get a micro-dose of mesquite every morning with my daily cup of coffee. Antonia and I also use the flour periodically in pancakes, tortillas, cornbread, cookies, pie crusts, smoothies, and sprinkle it on popcorn.



Lamb's quarters is a native plant that grows abundantly in well-watered disturbed earth – an ubiquitous vegetable garden volunteer. The young tender leaves are a highly nutritious native substitute for spinach. We utilize the volunteer plants in the garden to nurse along young starts with their shade and as a sacrificial lure for garden pests. When the vegetable starts no longer need the protection, we harvest the lamb's quarters plants, dehydrate the leaves, and process them into powder. We use the green powder as a superfood additive for home-made energy bars or sprinkle it on popcorn.



Two other native plants that we harvest annually make daily appearances throughout the winter months in my loose-leaf tea. While I've abandoned the South American traditional tea "yerba mate," I use my bombilla (tea-straining straw) to drink my hot infusions. Most of the herbs that go into the infusions are harvested from the wild or the garden. Dried peppermint harvested from along the Gila and Mimbres Rivers serves as the base for most mixtures. It tastes great and subdues the stronger and sometimes bitter flavors of other medicinal herbs -- including the dried leaf and root of yerba mansa -- that are great for warding off seasonal cold and flu infections.

-- Asher Gelbart

Photos courtesy of the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU

Plant of the Quarter

Winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*)



Winterfat is a perennial evergreen shrub, 2-3 feet tall and wide, in the Goosefoot family (Chenopodiaceae). The genus is named in honor of a Russian botanist, Stefan Krascheninnikov. It is fast growing and requires little water once established. It requires full sun and is intolerant of shade, and grows in well drained calcareous soil. Typical habitats are rolling plains, rocky mesas, and scrubby flats. Winterfat has an extensive fibrous root system plus a deep penetrating taproot and has been planted to control soil erosion. It is an important pioneer species and establishes fairly easily on poor soils such as are found on mine spoils. It grows at

elevations from 2,000 to 9,000 feet in New Mexico; it also occurs from west Texas to California, and north to Canada.



Winterfat produces numerous erect branches growing from a woody base. Shrubs have a striking appearance due to their silvery white woolly hairiness. In fact, the species name *lanata* means wooly. Branches have been used in dried flower arrangements due to their appearance. The leaves are narrow, blueish green, and covered with woolly hairs. They are alternate on the stems. Leaves remain on the stems throughout the winter and are shed the following spring as new leaves are

formed. Flowers are inconspicuous, have no petals, are clustered in leaf axils, and are wooly and white. Both female and male flowers are produced. On monoecious plants, male flowers are at the upper portion of the inflorescences while the female flowers are arranged below. In some regions, plants are dioecious with male and female flowers on separate plants. From September to December female plants produce plumes of fluffy white seeds.

As the name Winterfat implies, although this species is used as forage by deer, elk, rabbits, ground squirrels, cattle and sheep during the year, it is particularly important during the winter when other plants are not available.

-- Keller Suberkropp

Free Seedlings

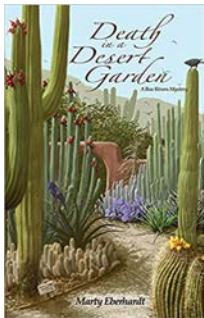


The New Mexico Forestry Division of the NM State Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department is holding its annual spring Conservation Seedling Program (<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/seedlings/>) from now through April 15. Seedlings are only sold in lots of 49 for \$80; UPS shipping is an additional \$10, unless you want to pick up your plants in Santa Fe. Those with larger acreage may be interested, or you may choose to split an order amongst other individuals. If interested in splitting an order, you can email us at gilanative@gmail.com and we can get you in touch with like-minded members who are also interested in splitting. Please remember, however, that not all of the plants on this list are natives, and the Gila Native Plant Society does not recommend buying non-native plants. Check with us if you're in doubt about your choices. Native plants greatly enhance species biodiversity and act as host plants that are responsible for the greatest share of spring/summer fledgling nutrition! If you're at all interested, order soon since many of the plants have already sold out. There will be an annual fall sale if you miss out on this one.

Works By Members



Monarch on Rabbit brush. Pastel by Les Brandt from a photo by Elroy Limmer.



“Back to roses and tulips.

Well, there’s nothing to say, really. Except that it’s not worth killing somebody because a person wants to tear out her dead husband’s rose and tulip garden. I mean, a lot of us care about saving more water, but not *that* much, Marcia.

Well, somebody is obsessed with roses and tulips, I’d say. And they want us to know it.”

From *Death in a Desert Garden* by Marty Eberhardt



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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