

# GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

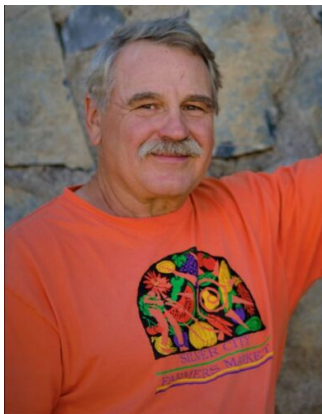
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## Bulletin 2022: Quarter 4

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>.

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### President's Message



Not long ago, Native Plant Society of NM (NPSNM) President, Tom Stewart, sent all members a short newsletter that he wrote called Tendrils. In it, he expressed dismay that no one in the state chapters had stepped forward to replace him as President at the end of his third term on December 31st, nor had anyone stepped up to run as Treasurer of the organization. The NPSNM provides vital services and help to the various chapters around New Mexico and for our chapter in El Paso, Texas. A break in the continuity of leadership would not be good for any of us.

NPSNM membership is at an all-time high, as are the financial resources of the organization. To answer the call to service, Wendy and I have stepped forward to run as co-Presidents of the NPSNM, currently running unopposed, and it is our intention to serve for one, two-year term only, if elected. It is not that we are necessarily ambitious, but we realize that maintaining constancy in the various leadership positions is fundamental and necessary if the organization is to continue to grow and serve our

chapters. Tom Stewart has agreed to help maintain leadership by running for NPSNM Treasurer for one term, as well. There are candidates for each of the two remaining positions -- Vice President and Secretary.

Our main goal in running as co-Presidents, is to find and nurture members who are willing to serve in future leadership positions and to maintain that constancy necessary to move the NPSNM into the future. Another goal is to work closely with the chapters to see if there are ways to better serve our members, share resources and foster the development of new ideas, all in an attempt to make the NPSNM the best that it can possibly be. We know that we can count on you for support as the organization moves forward! Thanks!

As many of you know, Wendy and I will be stepping down at the end of the year from our roles as Treasurer and President, respectively, of the Gila Native Plant Society. We have greatly enjoyed our tenure in these leadership roles. Our chapter is fortunate that four members have already stepped forward as candidates for the GNPS positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. More details to follow on this later.

**--- Don and Wendy Graves**

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## Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume in October and November via Zoom. Gila Native Plant Society members will receive a Zoom link by email about 10 days prior to the program; any others interested may request a link from [gilanative@gmail.com](mailto:gilanative@gmail.com).

For field trips, a hat, water and sturdy shoes are recommended. Bring your hand lens, if you have one. Participants will be expected to sign a waiver before the field trip. All are welcome to presentations and field trips. For more information check our website at [www.gilanps.org/events/programs](http://www.gilanps.org/events/programs).



**Saturday, October 8, 8:00 am to noon — Field Trip: Learn Your Trees and Shrubs II (and more!) at Ira Canyon. Meet at 8:00 am at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden on North Virginia Street (two blocks north of Route 180) for carpooling and departure by 8:00am. Don Graves, GNPS President, leads this trip for those new to the Gila area, new to native plants, or wanting to brush up on tree and shrub identification. You need not have participated in our first trees and shrubs field trip.**

We will travel to Ira Canyon near the Bird Area, past Bill Evans Lake. Vehicles should be medium to high clearance. You'll learn some botany basics, how plants are named and how to use a botanical key to identify some local native trees and shrubs.

The butterflies can be pretty good in this area, so bring binoculars, if interested. We'll have some guides for identifying them. We'll be walking up a sandy, rocky arroyo, so a hiking stick is recommend.

(Snoutnose on chamisa photo by Betty Spence)



**Saturday, October 15, 9:00 am to 11:00 am — Field Trip to City of Rocks State Park. Meet at 9:00 am at the parking lot by the Cienega Trail near the entrance to the park off Route 61. Russ Kleinman, Ed Leuck and Bill Norris will lead.** This trip is co-sponsored by The Friends of the City of Rocks and the Gila Native Plant Society. We'll see what the monsoon season has brought out.

(*Sanvitalia abertii* photo courtesy of Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU)



**Friday, October 28, 7:00 pm via Zoom — "Wildflowers of Colorado" — presentation by Mary O. and Jeff Parker of Explore in Focus.** The San Juan Mountains of Colorado near Silverton and Ouray host thousands of wildflowers each July. Jeff and Mary O. Parker will share images and tidbits about these beauties during their presentation. They'll also talk about why the flowers grow so prolifically in those mountain basins and high meadows.

Jeff is equal parts nature photographer, adventurer, and conservationist. His work has garnered him numerous awards. Mary O. is an award-winning writer. The Parkers are a dynamic husband-wife team who enjoy sharing their passion for the natural world through their photo tour and photography workshop business, Explore in Focus.

(*Frasera speciosa* photo courtesy of the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU)

**Friday, November 18, 7:00 pm via Zoom — "*Cirsium grahamii*: A Rare Purple Jewel in the Gila Wilderness" — presentation by John Gorey.** In 2021, John was doing invasive plant surveys in the Gila Wilderness when he came across an unusual purple thistle, *Cirsium grahamii*. Since then, he has scoured the wilderness for the thistle and worked to unlock some of its secrets. Join us to learn his findings.

Since graduating from Murray State University John has worked as a wildlife biologist studying birds, insects, plants, and habitats across the US from Alaska to Maine. Since moving to New Mexico, he has focused his research efforts in Southwestern New Mexico.

(photo by John Gorey)

**Sunday, December 11, noon to 3:00 pm – Holiday Gathering at The Commons. GNPS**



members and friends will celebrate the holidays together with a pot luck at The Commons at 501 East 13th Street.

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## Silva Creek Botanical Garden

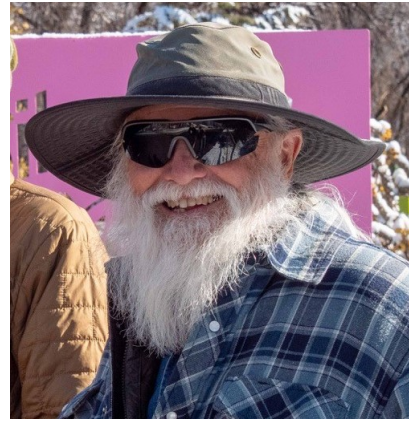
As many of you know, our garden manager, Elroy Limmer, has wanted to retire for many years. He began leading efforts in the garden in 2013. Hardscape was put in in the fall of 2014, and a few months later, 90 yards of soil was delivered. In February 2015, the soil was moved around, and in April and May, major planting took place along with rock removal.



Elroy has managed the improvements and maintenance ever since. When it became apparent that no one was going to step up to fill his shoes, a new plan was proposed – an Operations Team. Last November, he and Naava Konigsberg started putting this team together to manage the garden.

Currently, there are four of us on the Ops Team. While we don't have Elroy's experience, we're learning. Now, approaching a year later, I think we have a handle on the work that needs doing – and how much there is. I know I will count on him when I have questions, a shortage of good stories, or need a great photograph. So, let's all raise our glasses to toast Elroy and say thanks!

(photo by Val Weston)



You might not know who was camouflaged by all that protective gear, but we also owe special thanks to John Pecoroni for mowing and trimming the grass and weeds for the last five years. His work was a significant part of keeping the garden looking its best. He will retire at the end of the year, so that's another pair of shoes we're looking to fill. Please email [teamscbg@gmail.com](mailto:teamscbg@gmail.com) if you would like to help.

Hats off to those who came to our garden work parties (it's great to see each other) and those who weeded independently. It takes many hands to keep the garden looking its best. These volunteer efforts make Silva Creek Botanical Garden a beautiful asset to our community. Many thanks to all of you!

**-- Margie Gibson**

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## Traditional Medicine Garden

We have had a bountiful season, with many plants growing beyond the size one would ever see in nature. The copious rains have helped some plants flourish, while some of the more dryland plants have been lost to an overabundance of water in the heavy clay soil. It has been challenging to make this habitat suitable for some plants. We have tried twice to establish *Arctostaphylos pungens* (Manzanita) without success. We have collected soil from around wild plants to provide associated microbes, and we know it is often an understory plant growing among conifers. If you have any experience growing this and would like to share your wisdom with us, send us an email at [silvercitygardens@gmail.com](mailto:silvercitygardens@gmail.com).

We have been slowly working on the new corner bed (thank you to Peter and Mary Therese, who spent the better part of a morning digging out grass and morning glories). Since we don't yet have plants to put in that spot, we will let the grass come up again, re-dig, and then cover it with cardboard for the season.

Once the hops and clematis go dormant in the next month or so, we will put some more work into the pergola, re-staining the wood and installing the final cattle panel supports. Please email [teamscbg@gmail.com](mailto:teamscbg@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer to help with either of these projects. We will also continue to work on adding more plant signs, and refining the website.

I would like to introduce any of you who don't already know her to Monica Rude, a long-term member of our herbal community, an almost magically expert gardener, the founder of

Desert Woman Botanicals, and my “partner in crime” in the creation of the Traditional Medicine Garden.

Read on to see Monica’s article about garden giants.

-- **Naava Koenigsberg**

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## Giants in Your Garden?

We’ve all heard about the advantages of landscaping with native plants – drought tolerance, attracting pollinators, etc. However, a word to the wise: “Know before you plant.” Specifically, educate yourself on the cultivation requirements of plants, including the expected size. Here are two examples from the Traditional Medicine beds at Silva Creek Botanical Garden.



We have a beautiful *Mirabilis longiflora*, commonly known as Sweet Four O’clock. This member of the Nyctaginaceae (4 O’clock) family sports long white floral tubes. It emits a sweet fragrance in the evening and attracts those pollinators with a long enough proboscis to reach the nectar at the far end. The root of this plant is reputed to decrease the appetite by numbing the stomach lining (caution, it also causes lots of side effects). It is also used topically to reduce inflamed joints and tendons. But it can easily reach six feet in diameter, so use it to fill a big space on the periphery of your yard. It also makes a k-jillion seeds, which all will sprout, giving you a multitude of seedlings. Several of you volunteers may have received pots with babies from this plant at the annual GNPS plant sale, so take note.

Another big plant is *Grindelia squarosa*. It is a short-lived perennial member of the Asteraceae (Daisy) family; ray florets may be absent. Its common name of Gumweed refers to the sticky white goo that oozes from the flowers in August and can be used as chewing gum. The flowering aerial parts are traditionally used as an expectorant for dry, hacking, spasmodic coughs, and the bitter tea or tincture is employed for bladder infections. Topically it has a history of being used for poison oak inflammation. It can get to be three feet tall and six feet in diameter, and produce many seeds, so plan ahead! While this species is native to all of New Mexico except (for some inexplicable reason) Luna County, a more delicate member of this genus, *Grindelia arizonica* var. *neomexicana* is endemic to the Gila.



(photos courtesy of the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU)

-- **Monica Rude**

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# Plant of the Quarter

## *Sphaeralcea coccinea* -- Scarlet Globemallow



Globemallow is an upright perennial with lacy-edged foliage and small, brightly-colored blooms. There are more than fifty or so species of *Sphaeralcea*, most of them in North America. The flowers are arranged in short racemes - each flower cluster with separate flowers attached by short equal stalks at equal distances along a central stem. The lower portions of the filaments are joined together into a tube, characteristic of the Malvaceae (Mallow) family.

Flowers provide a steady source of pollen and nectar to many pollinators, such as hummingbirds, native bees, honeybees, butterflies, moths and the specialized globemallow bee, *Diadasia diminuta*.

Scarlet Globemallow is the most common in our region. It grows to 12-16" height. The five-petaled flower is about 1-1.5" wide. The cup-shaped blossom's color ranges from apricot to sunset-scarlet. The plant's lacy leaves are 1" to 2" long and deeply lobed or cut into smaller segments. Desert Globemallow (*S. Ambigua*) also may be found in the lower, warmer and drier locations in our region. These are taller, reaching 40" in height, with larger blooms.



Globemallow are among the toughest of hardy wildflowers that thrive in arid New Mexico. This plant flourishes in disturbed earth, growing in open fields, arroyos and piñon-juniper grasslands.

In the garden, the plant is deer and rabbit resistant. Its blossoms mature into seedpods with an aggressive spread, but deadheading will prevent them from reseeding. The plant also spreads by underground stems that extend up to three-feet long, so they may colonize in your yard unless you pull judiciously.

Globemallow has a slimy viscous sap that can stick to skin or mucous membranes thus providing a protective coating. This high mucilage content encouraged early use by native peoples for coughs, colds, and the flu. Globemallow can also be applied as a poultice to cuts, burns and snake bites. However, the leaves are covered in minute bristles that irritate the skin, so handle only with gloved hands.

Suggestions, comments or corrections can be emailed to [norman.cathleen@gmail.com](mailto:norman.cathleen@gmail.com).

*-- photos and text by Cathleen Norman*

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## Butterfly/ Pollinator and Monarch Workshop at Silva Creek Botanical Garden



On September 22, Heart Of The Gila (HOTG) held a butterfly field day at Silva Creek Botanical Garden with Jose Barrios Elementary School 3rd graders. They learned about pollinators of all kinds, how to capture, study, and release butterflies, beetles, moths, etc. They learned about Monarch butterflies, examined milkweeds in the Children's Butterfly Garden, and found more than seven Monarch caterpillars, which they tagged and released.



*-- photos and text by Patrice Muchnik*

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## Works By Members

Here's a poem by Marty Eberhardt accompanied by Susan Coe Brown's painting.

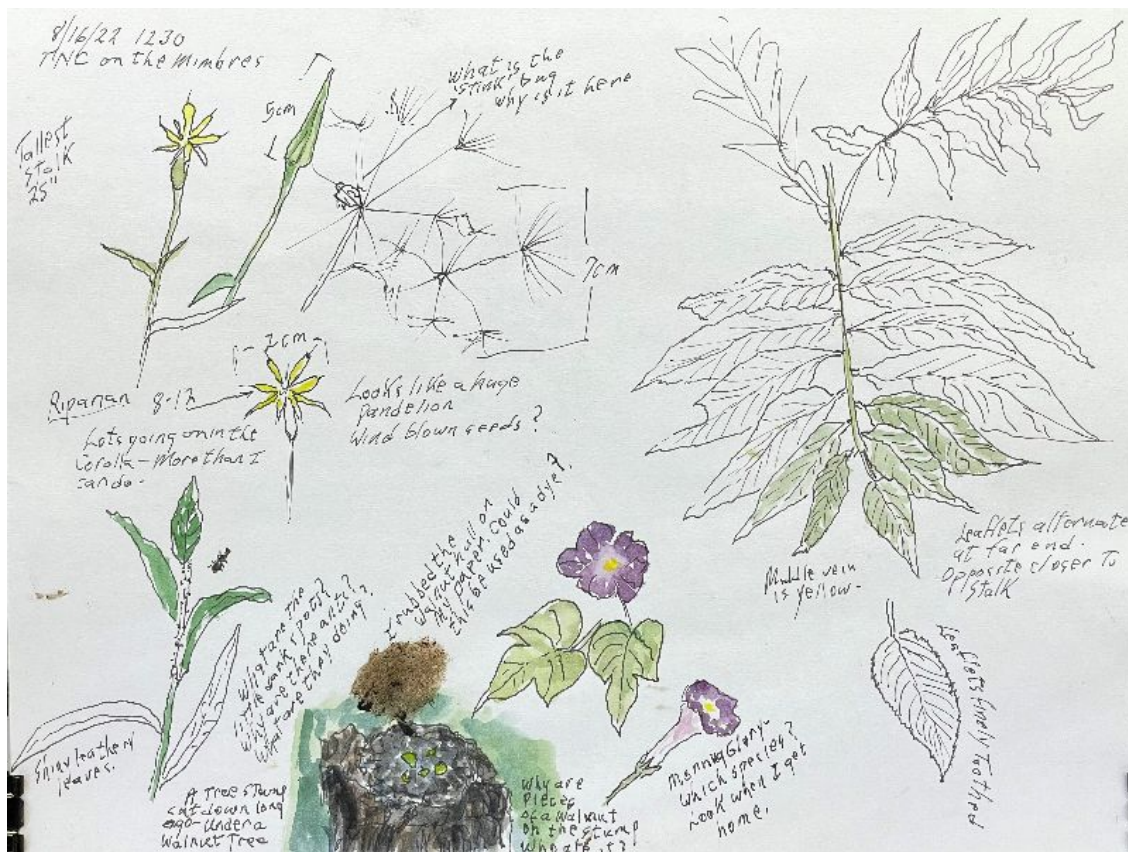
### To a Sunflower

You imagined perfect tomatoes,  
Purple-flowered sages,  
Waist-high native grasses,  
A glass bottle tree  
Reflecting the shadows of monsoon clouds.  
Most of us saw only concrete and pigweed.  
You envisioned neighbors sharing garden plots  
And basil for lettuce, chiles for squash. . .  
Whole potlucks from your backyard.  
You opened your gates,  
And it came to pass.  
I visit at summer's end  
To find all this, and sunflowers.  
Standing ten feet tall,  
Flowers six to a side shoot,  
Sunflowers between the arugala and the chard,  
The pear tree and the grapes;  
Yellow everywhere,  
A jubilation of color,  
A golden current blowing through the gardens  
Into the street  
Beyond fences.



Last season's sunflowers,  
A little shorter than these,  
Cast their seeds on fertile ground,  
Yielding this bright forest.  
The very first seedlings  
Came from your hands, my friend,  
The sower of resplendence  
The neighborhood's most golden bloom.

Les Brandt provides a delightful and instructive piece. Click on it to see a larger version.



Don provided this California desert Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) painted by his Dad's Aunt Elsie in 1951, and given to Don's parents as a Christmas gift.





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**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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