

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 1 2023

Vol 13 No 1

Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2023: 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



As we begin a new year, I'd like to thank the Graves, Don as President and Wendy as Treasurer. Their enthusiasm and hard work are inspiring to me. Fortunately, as past president, Don stays on our Board, and I am pleased to say that Wendy is as well, filling an at-large vacancy.

I'd also like to express my appreciation to all of our volunteers. We have a great chapter, thanks to you.

If you haven't considered volunteering, or you are already a volunteer with a bit more time to spare, there are a variety of things where we need help. Bring snacks to a program? Contribute to our Facebook page? Join the field trip, conservation, or program committees? There are many other opportunities. Please get in touch with me for more information. If you have an idea you'd like to pursue, let's talk about it.

As a newcomer to Silver City, I began volunteering for our chapter in response to an appeal from Don for someone with “a knack for layout and design.” Then I joined work parties at the botanical garden, where I’d been many times to get ideas for my own yard. I felt welcomed, as I am sure you will if you are new to our group.

-- Margie Gibson

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Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume in January on the third Friday of the month at 7 pm. Programs will be hybrid – in person and via Zoom. To come in person, check our website (www.gilanps.org/events/programs) for the venue. Gila Chapter members will automatically receive a Zoom link by email about 10 days in advance, in case they prefer participating online. Any others may request a Zoom link from GNPS at gilanative@gmail.com.



Friday, January 20, 2023, 7:00 pm — Presentation by Richard Spellenberg, Professor Emeritus, New Mexico State University, “Knowing the Sunflower Family in New Mexico”. Author of *The Sunflower Family: A Guide to the Family Asteraceae in the Contiguous United States*, Spellenberg will cover what makes this family so difficult to grasp, the structure of the sunflower head, the features valuable in identification, and the value of learning taxonomic tribes in the family. Anyone with at least a beginning knowledge in botany will find this talk enjoyable.

(*Perityle cernua* /Richard Spellenberg)

Richard taught in the Biology Department at New Mexico State University from 1968 to 2000. He also studied the diversity of plants in the southwestern North America. Naida Zucker, also a career faculty member at NMSU, will assist.

Saturday, January 21, 2023, 9:00-11:00 am. Harlan Hall. Richard Spellenberg will give a workshop on Asteraceae identification. We will send out an email later in January with details.



Friday, February 17, 2023, 7:00 pm — Presentation by Ann Audrey, Environmental Consultant, “Native Trees for Silver City: Ten Best Practices for Using Native Trees in Urban Environments to Improve Climate Change Resilience”. As average temperatures trend upward and weather events become more extreme, incorporating more native southwest trees into urban areas will help secure a shady future. This presentation addresses ten best practices to help select, plant, water and care for native trees to support their health and longevity in urban environments.

(AZ cypress shading sidewalk, Silver City/Ann Audrey)

Ann Audrey is an environmental consultant working in the fields of urban tree management, rainwater harvesting and sustainable design. She is currently working on a guide for responses to insect and disease threats in the urban forests of Arizona and New Mexico.



Friday, March 17, 2023, 7:00 pm.— Presentation by Andrew Tree, GNPS Member and Wildflower Photographer, “Boston Hill Wildflowers: A Different Lens”. Boston Hill, the historic Silver City mining district, is now an open space of more than 500 acres. Andrew, a recent newcomer to Silver City, will present a selection of his photographs taken between February and November 2022, as part of a mission to share widely the beauty of those wildflowers that are so often overlooked.

(*Acemisson wrightii* /Andrew Tree)

Andrew is an amateur wildflower photographer and avid hiker. Professionally, he works virtually as an Executive Coach.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden -- Professional Landscape Designer to Develop Master Plan

Who Is Ashley Pedersen You Ask?

Well, please sit down and I will tell you the story of how we found Ashley. It all started when Elroy Limmer expressed his wish to retire from his Silva Creek Botanical Garden (SCBG) Management position. Our solution to this problem was to create a structure that uses shared decision-making by group consensus: the SCBG Steering Committee. This has allowed us to develop policies for the garden, to assist as the Healing Garden

essentials were planned and implemented, and to rough out a plan for both mitigation of water problems and development of a habitat thicket on the north end of the garden, an area that has not previously been developed. More recently, we added a Garden Management Team consisting, alphabetically, of Susan Campbell, Margie Gibson, Naava Koenigsberg, and Susan Thompson, all working with Elroy this past year.

What was missing before now was a comprehensive plan for the garden, including interpretation. We are lucky that a past Executive Director of the Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG) and present member of the Gila Native Plant Society, Marty Eberhardt, agreed to join the steering committee over a year ago, and when the group agreed to seek a landscape design expert to produce a master plan for the garden, she volunteered to use her connections and help find that person. Marty's friend and present-day Executive Director of the TBG, Michelle Conklin, gave Marty a short list of professionals in the business of landscape design, but she was most eloquent about a past Director of Education at TBG (2013-2019), Ms. Ashley Pedersen. Ashley, among other relevant professional experience, had been instrumental in the design of the children's garden at TBG, and had been responsible for the interpretation in that same garden. She is currently in the second year of a three-year graduate program at Rhode Island School of Design in the Landscape Architect program, so we were not immediately sure that she would be available or interested.



After following up with all of the names provided, Ashley continued to stand out, appearing to be an excellent match to the needs of the SCBG. Ashley proposed that she could write a master plan for the garden and a master plan for interpretation as a project for her condensed winter term (January 5 – February 8, 2023), a part of her degree program. This presented an excellent opportunity for the SCBG, as Ashley, who is already a very promising and talented landscape design professional, will be working on this project with guidance from a faculty advisor, who is an established landscape design professional. In this way, SCBG serves as a learning tool for Ashley, furthering our educational mission, while we are guaranteed a quality, professional design.

Ashley visited Silver City and the SCBG over the weekend of November 12-13, 2022. The weekend was packed with time for Ashley to visit with garden volunteers and friends of the garden, the steering committee, the Garden Management Team, and of course, lots of time spent in the garden. All members of the GNPS, as well as many other local organizations, will have received an email with a link to participate in a survey for Ashley's continued collection of input regarding the garden. This survey closed on December 16 and the results will be tallied and used by Ashley during her winter term work on the design for the garden and the interpretation. During the winter term the steering committee will be in close contact with Ashley as she works. Once the steering committee approves a plan, the discussion will go to the GNPS board and I imagine we will all gather again, maybe for another potluck, to share and discuss the plan.

Marty has agreed to transition to be the steering committee facilitator starting in 2023, and I am stepping down as facilitator to join Don as the co-president of the Native Plant Society

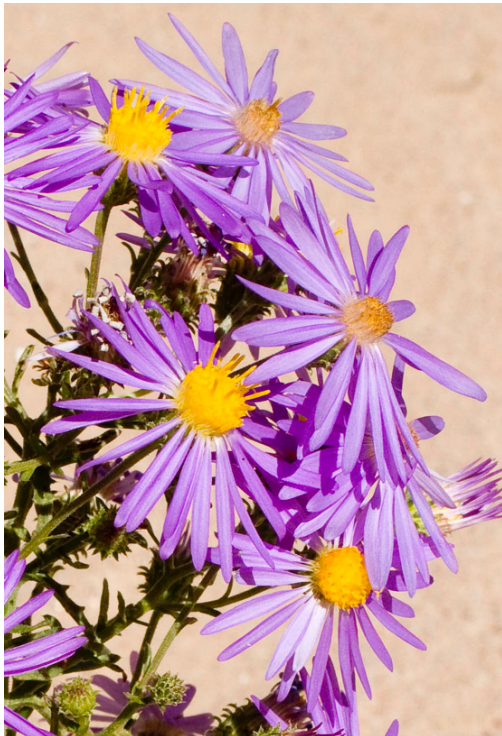
of NM. The SCBG steering committee is well situated to work forward on finalizing a plan and to begin implementation of the coming plan, possibly with a bit of fund raising – stay tuned!

-- **Wendy Graves, Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee Facilitator**
(2020 – 2022)

Plant of the Quarter

Purple Aster -- ***Dieteria canescens* and *Dieteria bigelovii***

The Aster family has an array of hardy, colorfully blooming species that flourish in this region, and these include the Blanketflower and Black-eyed Susan. The Purple Aster (*Dieteria canescens*) is a native species growing in regions 3,400 feet or higher. Another native Aster species is the Bigelow Aster/Sticky Aster (*Dieteria bigelovii*), which grows at 4,800 feet or higher. They share similar characteristics, and both flourish in gravelly soils, so we see them along roadsides and trails, in disturbed areas, and also in desert grasslands and piñon-juniper and ponderosa woodlands.



The Purple Aster is a two- to four-foot tall bushy plant. Its flower has 30 or so slender purple rays around its yellow disc. The plant typically blooms from August through November. The leaves are alternate, linear to lance-shaped and 3/8 to 4 inches long, and 1/6 to 1/4 inches wide (Bigelow Aster possesses spiny or divided leaves). The teeth on the glandular leaves are small and widely spaced.

Bigelow Aster/Sticky Aster is also distinguished by its sticky glandular phyllaries (reduced leaf-



like structures that form one or more whorls immediately below a flower head).

The Purple Aster and Bigelow Aster are excellent for pollinator conservation because of the prolific purple blooms late in the season, and they host a variety of generalist bees, such as honey and leaf-cutter bees. The US Forest Service uses Bigelow's Aster for soil conservation and to reclaim disturbed areas.

Domesticated variations of Purple Aster are sold in nurseries in hues of indigo, violet and lavender, but you might find this hardy native growing in gravelly soil in your yard.



It can be a good choice for border edging, container gardening, and rock gardens. However, the plant must be carefully managed. If it goes to seed, the Purple Aster enthusiastically reseeds and spreads. They showed up in my yard, and I pulled or deadheaded them before they went to seed. I then scattered a few of the fuzzy seed heads at the edge of my backyard

where it merges into the cholla/piñon/juniper area. So, I'm looking forward to a splash of purple late next summer.

-- Cathleen Norman

For comments, corrections or suggestions contact Cathleen Norman at catnorman@earthlink.net.

(The two photos of *Dieteria canescens* are from www.wildflowersNM.com, courtesy of George Oxford Miller.

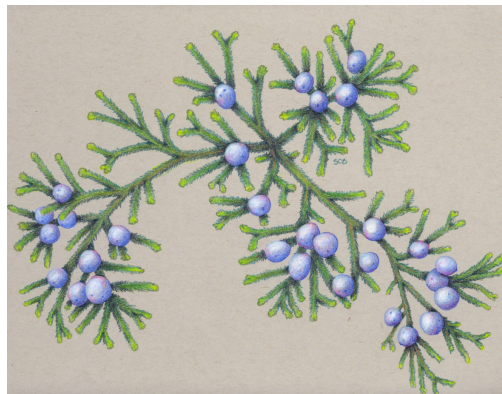
The photo of *Dieteria bigelovii* is courtesy of the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, WNMU)

Works By Members

Susan Coe Brown's juniper painting illustrates Marty Eberhardt's **Bluestorm** poem. Of her painting, Susie says, "The juniper leans over my wall in the back from my neighbor's yard. Some years it is loaded with berries and is host to a multitude of yellow-rumped warblers and cedar waxwings. Occasionally a mob of robins shows up and the little birds scatter to wait their turn. I am happy to report that this is one of those years!"

Bluestorm

It's not rain, it's
Hail
Pummeling the junipers,
And now the berries
Fly across my path.
Icy-blue berries and
Hailstones;
Which is which?
Both make me stumble.
Both glow
In the thunderous light
Of late summer gone rogue.



The balls land loud
On my nylon hood,
Bounce off my ungloved hands
Seed cones and ice, together:
They catch a little light
From the sun
As it jockeys for space
With the clouds
Racing together
To capture the sky.

A berry under a pinyon
Is bluest of all;
Impossibly blue.
It's plastic.
I pocket it.

I could
Bemoan the desecration
Of this wild and chilly moment;
Denounce the oil
That beckons a child
With bright blue beads
That do not melt
Or grow into fine old trees.

I could
Despair
That my grandchildren
Will find more beads than berries
In their wild walks.
I could
And I've a good mind to.

Or I could
Feel thunder rumble my feet
Smell the sharp crack
Of lightning closer
Than I expected.
I will
Run through the blue seedstorm,
The hailwind.
Through the shaking shrubs,
The spinning leaves.
A moment ago,
I pondered
With oh-so-human logic.
Now, like a bird
Diving for the deep branches,
Like a leaf carried
Rock to rock
Down the arroyo,
I am
Routed by rain.

Les Brandt gives us a whimsical view of a Christmas tree providing sustenance to our beloved creatures, even after December 25.



Our mailing address is:
PO Box 457
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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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