

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2023: Quarter 2

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

There are two exciting new developments here at the Gila Native Plant Society. One is completing a Master Plan for the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. The second is the resumption of Spring field trips.



The sixty-four-page Master Plan proposes themes for the garden, including interpretive signs. Some are expansions of existing features, such as the Medicinal Garden becoming an Ethnobotany Garden to showcase the use of native plants not only as medicine but also for other uses such as food and fiber. Another feature, the Front Yard Garden along the main path, will display native plants ideal for home landscaping rather than having them scattered throughout the garden. The plan also proposes new themes, such as a Chihuahuah Desert Grasslands.

This is a long-range plan with implementation undertaken in

phases. The first stage, the Bird Thicket, is underway (see the botanical garden report below). We'll be covering other phases as they develop.

The last GNPS Bulletin introduced Ashley Pedersen. The Master Plan includes many details required by her graduate program. Here on the ground, details will evolve as each phase is implemented. Many hours went into this project, a collaboration between Ashley and Steering Committee members Susan Campbell, Marty Eberhardt, Angela Flanders, Wendy Graves, Elroy Limmer, and Naava Konigsberg. Our GNPS board is impressed by and grateful for their hard work.

The other new development is in our spring field trips. Don Graves started a new field trip committee with the idea of offering a variety of experiences, some focusing on learning details about native plants, others involving a hike among them, and some a combination. Elroy Limmer and Andrew Tree have agreed to join in this endeavor. Some of these trips we're calling "pop-ups," as they involve short notice to try and catch wildflowers at the height of their blooming.

Our first Spring field trip, led by Andrew the day after his excellent program, was a



combination. We walked several miles to view and learn about plants flowering on Boston Hill on a day that included bombardment by tiny icy particles in a fierce wind. The second, a pop-up trip, featured Mexican Poppies, *Eschscholtzia californica* spp. *mexicana*, and was led by Don in the Little Florida Mountains near Deming. In addition to the poppies, we could learn about other wildflowers in bloom, wander among them, or both. It was likewise windy but much warmer.

I hope you look forward to these new efforts as much as I do, and that you share my appreciation for all the work they take.

-- **Margie Gibson**

Email: gilanative@gmail.com

Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs through June will be on the third Friday of the month at 7 pm. Some programs will be hybrid and some via Zoom only – see below. For updates check our website at www.gilanps.org/events/programs. Gila Chapter members will automatically receive a Zoom link by email, and all others interested can request a Zoom link from GNPS at gilanative@gmail.com. All are welcome.

April 21: “Tales of Three Rivers,” by Dr. Mary Harner, University of Nebraska, Kearney – online only. Dr. Harner will describe approaches to documenting riverine



landscape change and biodiversity. Her presentation features multi-media examples from the Platte, Middle Rio Grande and Gila Rivers. She will share science and stories about rivers that connect us and encourage conversations about human relationships with rivers.

Dr. Harner has spent a lifetime living along, exploring, and studying rivers and floodplains.

She is an ecosystem ecologist, with a doctorate in Biology from the University of New Mexico.

(photo courtesy of Betty Spence)



Saturday, April 22, 9 am to noon. Gila Earth Day Celebration in Gough Park. GNPS will have a booth and activities for kids.

(photo courtesy of Don Graves)

Saturday, May 13, noon. Annual Picnic at the Gomez Peak Picnic Pavilion.

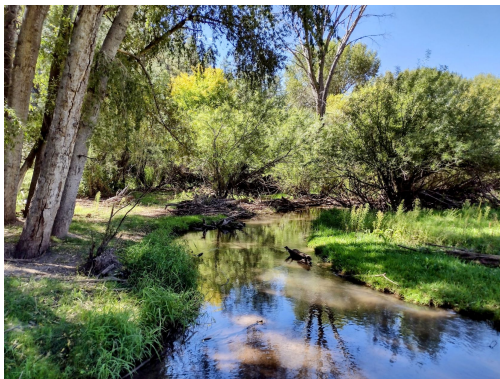
Please bring your best potluck offering to share and your own plate, glass, and utensils. Beverages and hot dogs with their fixings will be provided.



May 19: "Updates on the floristic diversity of alpine ecosystems in the southern Rocky Mountains", by Dr. Hannah Marx, Assistant Professor Dr. Marx will share progress in her research program focused on understanding the floristic diversity of alpine flora in western North America.

Dr. Marx completed her PhD at the University of Idaho, and went on to post-doctoral research at the University of Arizona and the University of Michigan before joining the University of New Mexico.

(photo courtesy of Hannah Marx)



June 16: "Wetland Jewels of the Gila", Steven Fry, Amigos Bravos Policy and Project Specialist – online only. Fry will discuss the Amigos Bravo's Wetland Jewels project in the Gila, which combines local watershed users' input with high-detailed mapping analysis to identify keystone wetlands for restoration and protection. Amigos Bravos then works to implement wetland restoration projects that foster

resilient, interconnected, landscape-scale ecological and community systems in New Mexico.

Prior to joining the Amigos team, Fry worked on the management of stormwater flows and on the protection of nearshore ecosystems in the Seattle area. He has a Bachelor's in Economics from Santa Clara University and a Master's in Applied International Relations from the University of Washington.

(photo courtesy of Steven Fry)

Field trips will resume this spring as opportunities arise.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden

Thanks to all of you who helped get the garden cleaned up for spring – it was great seeing all of you. Our first work party was chilly, reminding us that winter wasn't quite over, but the second was on a sunny day with no wind. There was plenty of work for both events, and your participation was much appreciated.



Here's a sample of the clean-up crew working high, medium and low removing high branches, pruning and raking.

(All photos courtesy of Val Weston)

Have you been by the garden recently and seen a pile of elm logs? We had some Siberian Elms trimmed to provide more sun for our future Bird Thicket. The thicket will demonstrate how to create effective bird habitat and use street stormwater. As the name suggests, plants are spaced closer together to provide dense cover. Water from State Street will be directed through basins that include two kinds of native grasses. The grasses help retain

water, while their roots help water infiltrate the soil; they need a sunny location. Better soil moisture and more sun support greater biodiversity for this new feature.

We usually have the elms hauled away, but this year we asked to keep some logs as part of the new Garden Master Plan. Eventually, these logs will become a climbing play area for kids between the fenced work area and the amphitheater.

-- **Margie Gibson**

Volunteer Needed to Mow in the Garden



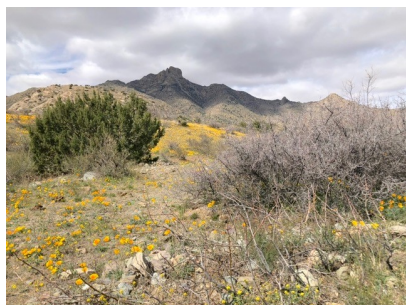
Give Grandly

GNPS will be participating again in Give Grandly 2023, the big annual fundraiser for local nonprofits sponsored by the Grant County Community Foundation. This year Give Grandly will be a live event on Saturday, May 6th, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, with tables for the participating nonprofits next to the Makers' Market at Main Street Plaza in downtown Silver City. We'll be there, along with many of your other favorite organizations. Come say hello and donate if the spirit moves. You can also donate online anytime between April 22 and May 22 at www.givegrandly.org. We'll be sending more details as the event approaches.



Plant of the Quarter

Spring equinox was the perfect time for the Poppy Promenade GNPS field trip led by Don and Wendy Graves.



The desert plains, arroyos and scrublands at the base of the Florida Mountains were cloaked in Mexican Gold poppies. The small, self-sowing annual grows to a six to eight-inch height in this arid desert environment not far from the Mexican border. Its native distribution spreads from southern Nevada and southeastern California east to Trans-Pecos Texas and south into Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico, and it grows on plains and mesas at

4,500 feet or lower.

The Mexican Gold Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* ssp. *mexicana*) has lacy, deeply dissected foliage with orange-yellow, cup-shaped flowers borne singly on stalks. The vivid two- to three-inch wide satiny flowers mature into a thin needle-like seed pod that “explodes” after the blooming cycle. The poppies blossom in response to moisture, temperature and sunlight -- typically mid-March at the base of the Floridas. Abundant spring rains fell in the desert this year, giving the GNPS members and guests a supreme opportunity to experience this beautiful botanical wonder.



The Spanish name, Amopalo del Campo, means “poppy of the countryside.” The plant grows profusely, filling gravelly outwash fans, arroyos and arid flats with its golden carpet. The blooms open in warm, dry, sunny weather, and they close on cloudy and wet days and at night.

Once considered a separate species, Mexican Gold Poppy is now recognized as a desert-inhabiting subspecies of California Poppy (*E. californica*). The genus is named after Dr. J.F. Eschscholtz (1793-1831), who documented it in present-day California while performing duties as a surgeon and naturalist with Russian expeditions to the Pacific coast from 1815 to 1818.

The two subspecies are exceedingly similar. The Mexican Gold is distinguished from *E. californica* by the wider outer rim below flowers. Its center is a deep orange-red hue.

You can cultivate the Mexican Gold Poppy in your yard by sowing seeds in the fall on banks and slopes and in beds and borders. The drought-tolerant plants thrive in well-drained loams, sands and limestone soil. Seeds usually needs a big cool-season rain to germinate. The poppy flowers attract pollinators including native bees and bumble bees. Its



roots were used as a traditional Native American remedy for headache, anxiety and insomnia. The flower petals are edible and a beautiful addition to a salad.

-- Cathleen Norman

(Photos courtesy of Cathleen Norman). For comments, corrections or suggestions contact Cathleen Norman at catnorman@earthlink.net.

Thanks to Ron Groves, Long-Time Bookstore Manager

In a stealth move, Ron Groves retired as GNPS online bookstore manager in April of 2022. We say stealth because if you want to skip recognition at the yearly December holiday gathering, you can quietly retire early in the year and occasionally, if the transition goes really smoothly, people will forget that the transition has occurred and you will be spared the retirement speech. This was indeed a smooth transition, because as soon as we knew that Ron wanted to retire, GNPS Board member Rick Lass volunteered to take over. Whew!

Ron had been a professional in the book business long before his first retirement and move to Silver City, so he seamlessly stepped into selling books for GNPS. For several years, he lugged books to the GNPS meetings to sell after the speakers' presentations. When GNPS moved to online sales, Ron was the original manager, setting up the online store with the technical help of Jeff Boyd. In addition, Ron served as GNPS President and volunteered for countless other duties. Over the years, the bookstore offerings have been narrowed to only include books published by GNPS or those of specific interest to the Gila Region or our members. Ron worked with Rick to pass on his understanding of book sales and our online bookstore continues at gilanps.org/books. Many thanks, Ron for your years of service to the Gila Native Plant Society. Your gold watch is in the mail!

-- Don and Wendy Graves

Education Committee Back in Business

GNPS is so fortunate to have a group of dedicated volunteers heading up our Education Committee. The committee is comprised of Steve Blake (Chair), Les Brandt, Kathryn Hasse, Karen Valentine, and Ed Valentine.

Covid put outreach to the youth in our communities to a near standstill. The committee is

back, however, with an impressive line-up of school and community initiatives and activities ready to roll this spring, summer, and fall. Look for activities for kids on native plants, pollinators, and larval host plants at these community events: Gila Earth Day, Mimbres Hummingbird Festival, Aldo Leopold Kids Fishing Derby, GRIP Summer Camp, and the Mimbres Harvest Festival. The committee is also working on educational outreach to our extended communities' elementary schools in Silver City, the Mining District, Mimbres, and Cliff. We applaud these very special educators for stepping up!

-- Don Graves

Native Plant Sale -- August 12



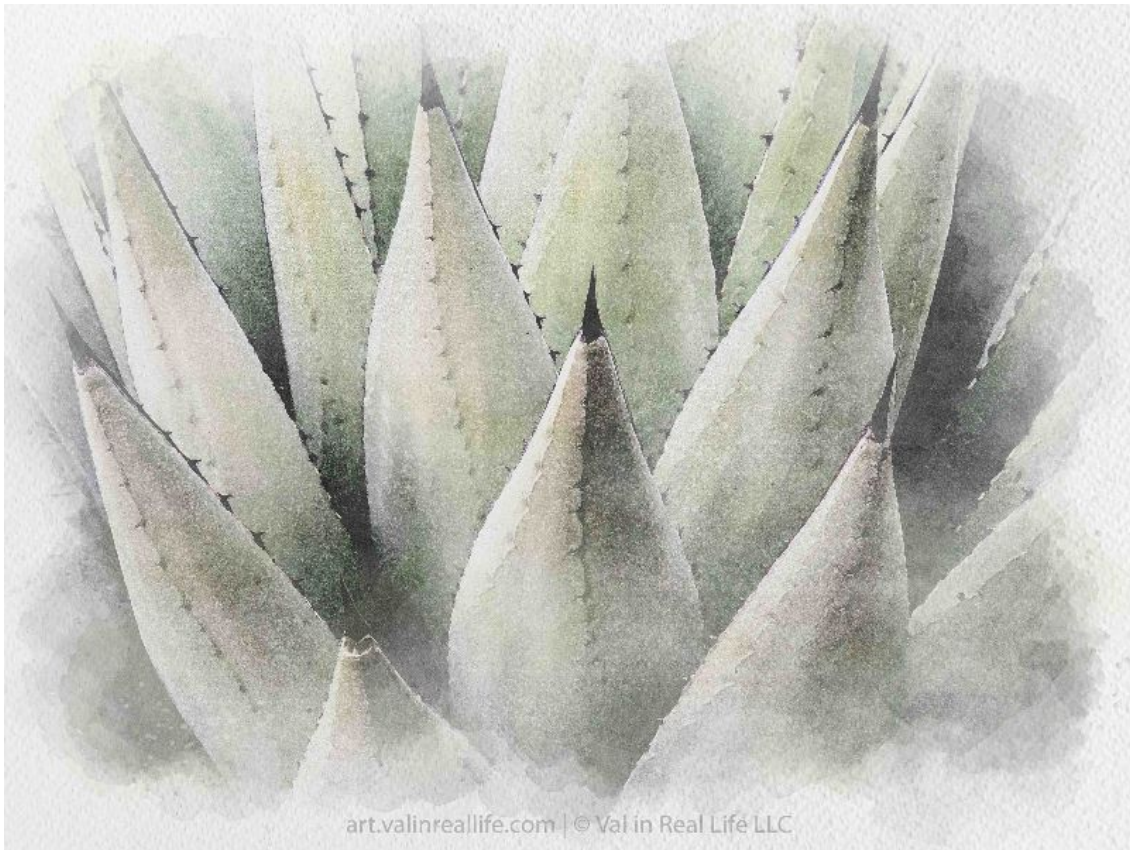
Canyon Penstemon, *Penstemon pseudospectabilis* by Jackie Blurton

Save the date

**GNPS NATIVE
PLANT SALE**

Saturday, August 12th
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Gough Park parking lot
at 12th and Pope in Silver City

Works By Members



Val Weston created this digitally painted watercolor of a shot she took at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.

The Trees of Buenos Aires

Jeff and Allison Boyd visited Buenos Aires in February and were immediately struck by the large number of beautiful shade trees lining the streets, and the large and numerous parks. Here, Jeff describes the trees, their history, and treats us to lovely photos of them.

There were trees, which on the smaller side streets formed a canopy above the street, shading the street and sidewalk. At least two types of trees were in bloom in February: yellows and reds. In a word, they were gorgeous. In November, there are blue trees in profusion.

How did it come to pass that this city was landscaped with so many mature trees? In 1891, French Landscape Architect Carlos Thays was appointed the Director of Parks and Walkways. He created the Botanical Garden, opened in 1898, and many of the parks in the city.

At right is the Ecoparque de Buenos Aires.



He used many of the local native trees in his designs. So, the parks and streets are planted with such trees as the blue-blooming Jacaranda, (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), at left, and two other colorful trees, shown below.



Red blooming Palo Borracho
(*Celba speciose*)



Yellow Jacaranda (*Tipuana tipu*)

The ubiquitous Plane Tree (*Platanus sp.*) is also common in Buenos Aires; after all, Carlos was French and plane trees are everywhere in France, especially Provence.

Blue Jacaranda photo by Alamy; text and remaining photos by Jeff Boyd

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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