

**GILA
NATIVE
PLANT
SOCIETY**

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Betsy Kaido, Editor

Bulletin 2023: Quarter 3

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

by Margie Gibson

Have you been by the Silva Creek Botanical Garden not only to enjoy what's blooming but to see the progress being made on the Habitat Thicket?

The Habitat Thicket is the first phase of the garden Master Plan. Susan Campbell leads this project with help and advice from other garden volunteers and supporters; she is a long-time advocate for creating habitat with native plants and is putting her experience to good use in implementing this project.

The Habitat Thicket also demonstrates water harvesting. At the corner of Virginia and State Streets, a Zuni bowl collects water that flows into a channel along State Street, next to the garden's north fence. Water from the channel fills catchment basins in the Habitat Thicket before eventually emptying into Silva Creek. Boulders installed beside the channel keep it safe from cars and provide attractive planting spaces for seasonal riparian natives.



The Town of Silver City initially roughed out the water channel on State Street, with additional fine-tuning work by Stream Dynamics to ensure efficient water flow to the creek. A Youth Conservation Corps crew (pictured at left in a photo courtesy of Susan Campbell) spent two weeks doing a variety of hands-on work, supervised by Martha Egnal of Stream Dynamics. Their work included moving dirt and placing rocks to ensure the basins fill and drain correctly,

and they started the path that will eventually be a loop through the thicket.

A mix of native plants for the Habitat Thicket have been purchased from the Gila

Watershed Partnership, including trees, shrubs, and vines, as well as milkweeds for butterflies, with the goal of providing structural diversity and contiguous shelter from the ground to the treetops. The loop trail through the Habitat Thicket will include quiet places for sitting. Planting will begin in stages when it starts to rain. The Habitat Thicket will be a unique and valuable addition to our botanical garden and provide inspiration to visitors for projects in their own yards.

Although we've used the term "Bird Habitat" to describe this project in the past, we know there's no habitat for birds without the insects and other organisms that are vital to any habitat. The Habitat Thicket will include features and practices—such as creating log piles and allowing leaves and twigs to remain in place on the ground—to provide safe shelter for wildlife up and down the food chain.

Treasurer Needed

TREASURER NEEDED

Regretfully, our current treasurer is leaving for personal reasons, so we are seeking a volunteer. This position is vital to GNPS, and the term runs until December 31, 2024.

If you are interested and want to learn more, please contact us at: gilanative@gmail.com.

Activities for This Quarter

Monthly evening programs will resume in October on the third Friday of the month at 7 pm. For information check our website at www.gilanps.org/events/programs. Field trips will be scheduled this summer as opportunities arise. Check www.gilanps.org/events/field-trips/.



Friday, July 28, 7:00 – 8:00 pm. The Upper Gila Watershed Alliance has invited GNPS members to attend a book presentation and signing of Melissa L. Sevigny's *Brave the Wild River: The Untold Story of Two Women Who Mapped the Botany of the Grand Canyon*. It's at the Murray Ballroom. Suggested donation is \$5 at the door. For more information, call 575-590-5698.

Saturday and Sunday, July 29 – 30, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. Hummingbird Festival at the



Mimbres Culture Heritage Site, (12 Sage Drive, just before mile marker 4 on NM highway 35). Admission is free and open to the public. GNPS will have a booth and activities for children.



Saturday, August 5, 8:30 – 11:30 am. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden Steering Committee will host an open house for the Master Plan at Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Learn about different elements of the future garden at staffed stations throughout SCBG. The garden is on Virginia Street, two blocks north of US

180, between Hill and State Streets. Everyone is welcome – invite your friends!



Saturday, August 12, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Native Plant Sale at the Gough Park parking lot, 12th St. and Pope in Silver City. We have five local native plant growers lined up to sell their plants to the public. Read the details in the following article.



Friday through Sunday, September 22 – 24. Native Plant Society of New Mexico's Annual Conference, *Exploring the Trans-Pecos: Texas's Wild West*, Alpine Texas. Spots are still available for the conference. Early bird pricing ends July 15. Conference planners are available to help with any registration issues. Go to <https://www.npsnm.org/> and click on Events for details and registration link.

Native Plant Sale August 12

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

Native plants are beautiful, hardy, need less water and provide habitat for wildlife.



Canyon Penstemon, *Penstemon pseudospectabilis* by Jackie Blurton

Meet and buy directly from native plant growers:

- Gila Watershed Partnership, Safford
- Honey Hawk Homestead, Mimbres
- Lone Mountain Natives, Silver City
- Spadefoot Nursery, Cochise County
- Whiskey Creek Zócalo, Arenas Valley

Sales with cash or checks only

Sponsored by:



<https://gilanps.org>

Stay tuned for special events and field trips leading up to the August 12th GNPS Native Plant Sale. This year's sale will have more plants, and a greater diversity of natives, than in previous years. We will need some help with set up/take down during the sale and a few volunteers to staff our GNPS booth during the sale. Those interested in volunteering should contact Don Graves, GNPS Native Plant Sale Committee Chair, at gilanative@gmail.com.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden

by Margie Gibson



One of the pleasures of working in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden is the compliments from visitors. It takes many hands to keep the garden looking its best. Despite the lack of rain and the 90-degree days in June, it looks good. It's taken a lot of watering, and the Garden Management Team could use some help. If you're willing, please email teamscbg@gmail.com. Many thanks to Mary Barrett for her help.

Keeping the garden looking its best also takes mowing, and we are fortunate that Christopher Kunz responded to our appeal in the last Bulletin. I'd also like to thank our garden volunteers who helped weed and do general cleanup at our garden work party, one in May and the other in June.

The SCGB Steering Committee invited all our garden volunteers to a special preview of the Master Plan on May 20. A presentation of the plan for all GNPS members and the general public is set for August 2 (see Activities).

(photo courtesy of Margie Gibson)

Field Trips This Summer

The visit to learn about one household's efforts at landscaping with native plants in the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) was so popular that we're planning some similar excursions. On field trips like this, you can learn about successes and failures.



At left a prickly poppy (*Argemone pleiacantha*) flourishes in a gravel driveway while hosting native bees. Some of those little black specs can be seen more clearly in the photo below.



(poppy photo courtesy of Steve Blake; bees, courtesy of Elroy Limmer)

Firewise and waterwise landscaping in the WUI doesn't mean "zeroscaping".



Although we haven't tied down the dates yet, we have some great ideas for field trips in July, August and September. We'll have a local field trip to San Vicente Creek, starting at the new Camino de Sueño trailhead from Brewer Hill, to examine riparian vegetation and the native plant restoration efforts in the Chinese gardens area. Ann Audrey, who gave us a presentation in February on using native trees to prepare for a changing climate, is interested in coming back to do a field trip to explore local options. And as the monsoon rains begin, many other native plant field trip opportunities will arise, so be ready to explore some familiar (and some not-so-familiar) areas to experience some of the best that the Gila region has to offer!

Education Committee Busy at Two Spring Events

Lake Roberts Fishing Derby June 4



Steve Blake talks about plants with Aldo Leopold students at the Lake Roberts kids' fishing derby, June 4.

(photo courtesy of Denise Blake)

Observing and Remembering Nature Using Journaling by Les Brandt

I was asked by Silver City Watershed Keepers to host a 90-minute session each of the three weeks that the Nature Discovery Summer Camp would be running this past June. Well, at the first session I got through almost a third of a page of the eight of my carefully scripted program, when chaos broke out. I had never tried to teach or even been around 16 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, so I didn't know they wouldn't care how much time I'd spent preparing so they would learn all the valuable things I had to say. Luckily it was about that time that Indy Blake, Watershed Keepers Coordinator, said, "They are really excited about learning to draw plants." I took the hint and skipped to my three prompts:

1. I Notice (Seeing)
2. I Wonder (Asking questions)
3. It Reminds Me Of (Relating it to something I know.) INIWIRMO for short.

To help the participants remember I told them to use:

1. Pictures (To help remember...not about being pretty)
2. Words (To describe if that comes easier than drawing)
3. Numbers (How many petals? How tall?)

It turns out that these 16 people all had different interests and attention spans so I scurried about, working with individuals to observe and draw whatever caught their interest, be it



leaf, plant, flower or ant. By the end of the session, I knew I had reached some but questioned my effectiveness. When I got home I collapsed into my chair and told my wife Mary Ann, “I think I may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.”

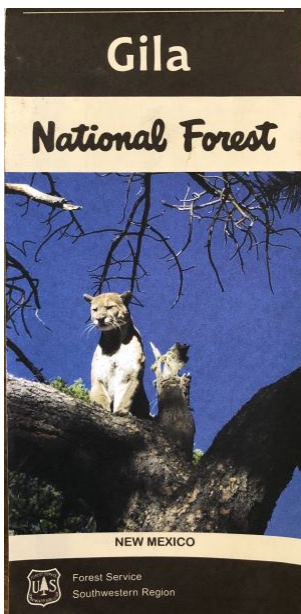
Then I smiled, remembering all those pages filled with drawings, and said, “But I got nine hugs at the end so it was worthwhile.”

(photos courtesy of Indi Blake)



Citizen Science, Gila-style

by Donna Stevens, Executive Director
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance



When I first turned my attention to plants, I had the good fortune of working with smart, fun, and observant botanists under the employ of the late Jack L. Carter. While driving, they’d call out scientific plant names, when all I saw was a yellow blur. I recommended they write a book called *Botany at 60. MPH*, that is.

As lovers of the nature surrounding us, you’re out in the Gila National Forest a lot. You may not identify as citizen scientists, but you’re a mere questionnaire away from it.

Citizen scientists are volunteers learning about – and protecting – a place close to home. Suppose you’re in the Gila and you observe something that the Forest Service should know about? A rutted road sending sediment into a nearby stream. Livestock or off-road vehicles in a stream. A rare bird.

The Upper Gila Watershed Alliance (UGWA) and Forest Service are collaborating on a program for volunteers to record their Gila observations. We'll upload free Gila NF maps and a data form onto your smartphone or tablet. This short form with simple questions provides a checklist; you'll log your location and take a few photos. You can borrow UGWA's tablet that's ready to go, or, using the traditional map-paper-pencil method, complete our paper form and return it to us.

For any of these options – tablet, smartphone, or paper – UGWA will record volunteers' data, upload it to the Forest Service, and follow through with them. You'll get to do what you love – botanize and hike in the Gila – while knowing that your observations, data, and photos are being put to good use.

Interested? Please email Donna Stevens at director@ugwa.org.

Thank you to the Maki Foundation and our anonymous Major Donor for funding this project.

Plant of the Quarter

Potentilla (Cinquefoil, Five-Fingered Grass)

by Cathleen Norman

Potentilla, a genus of the Rose family, is a hardy five-leafed plant with blossoms that attract butterflies and bees. The leaves also provide a food source for some butterfly larvae. There are 24 species plus varieties that grow in New Mexico; here are several species found in our region.



Woolly Cinquefoil (*P. hippiana*) reaches 20 inches in height and has pinnate leaflets. It supports multiple flowers on each stem and has no stolons. This species inhabits a wide range of elevations, habitats and geographical locations, including woodland, grassland, sagebrush and meadows.

(photo from www.americansouthwest.net)



Thurber's Cinquefoil (*P. thurberi*) has deep red flowers with a "velvety" appearance. The pale anthers (the part of the stamen that contains the pollen) stand out against the darker central portion of the petals.

The relatively large and heavily veined serrate leaves are palmately divided. It is found along higher elevation roadsides, moist creek beds and meadows in New Mexico, Arizona and northern Mexico.

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





Silverweed Cinquefoil (*P. anserina*) is a low-growing herb that spreads through stolons, also known as runners, which creep over the ground. Rather than the five-fingered arrangement, its leaves are pinnate compound spaced along midrib. The five-petaled, yellow flowers grow on slender stems above basal tufts of pinnate, silvery foliage. Silverweed flourishes at elevations of 5,000-9,000 feet. It prefers moist, boggy soils and stream banks, but also thrives in dry meadows, disturbed areas, ponderosa woodlands and mixed conifer woodlands.

(photo from www.wildflower.org)



You can plant cinquefoil in your yard. A good choice is Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa*). It's a compact woody bush with the typical five-fingered leaves and five-petaled yellow flowers that bloom throughout the summer. It grows to three feet in height. The plant's native habitat ranges from wet to dry, including open sites and grasslands; it prefers limey soil and sunny exposure but tolerates partial shade. Shrubby Cinquefoil can be massed along a slope or planted in a mixed border, rock garden or in containers. It is deer resistant and an excellent option for firescaping and erosion control.

(photo from gardenia.net)

Cinquefoil was used by American Indian tribes for many medicinal purposes. For additional information go to <https://nativememoryproject.org/plant/five-finger-cinquefoil/>.

For comments, corrections or suggestions contact catnorman33@gmail.com.

Works By Members



Cyanotype print by Kathleen Koopman from her series *Home: A Silver City Florilegium*. All prints in the series are of plants from her garden in Silver City.



Our mailing address is:

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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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