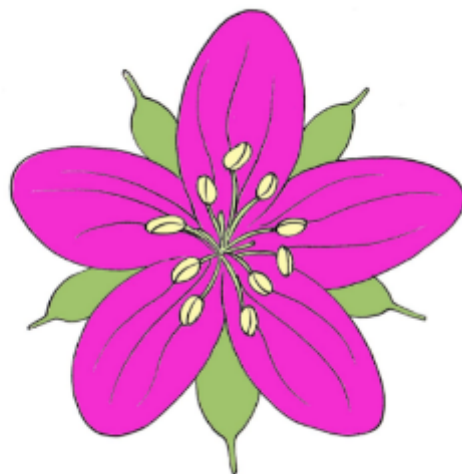




# **GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

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April 1, 2026

Vol 16 No 2

Margaret Madsen, Editor

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## **Bulletin 2026: 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**

**SPRING IN THE SOUTHWEST**



“Tulips, hyacinths, trilliums, crocuses: in the eastern US, these are some of the beauties that herald the start of spring. Here in the Southwest, we’re treated to juniper pollen, high winds, and dust.”

The quote above is how I originally began this short message about spring in the Gila. I had compiled a list of the few spring wildflowers that bloom in a dry year like this one. After completing my inventory, however, I walked around outside at the home of two friends. Even though their home is just two miles from mine, the wildflowers were different than at my place, and much more abundant. I scrapped my list and concluded that emergence of spring wildflowers is highly variable and dependent upon micro-climates (and, on a personal level,

that I need to get out more!).

Alas! I was forced to admit that the article I’d started was simply not going to work. No matter how many plants I mentioned, it was inevitable that readers would notice the ones I’d left out. What follows is my second attempt at a spring message, one that focuses less on the “plant” word of Gila Native Plant Society and more on the “society.”

Some of us tend to hunker down during the winter, and become more outgoing when it warms up, not unlike spring plants emerging. Fortunately, GNPS is here to accommodate our needs to socialize with plant people. Keep an eye on your email for information about an April field trip to the Chiricahuas; as of this writing, we’re still deciding on a date. Also in April, we’ll host our last program until the fall; you can read about that in the “Activities” section. On May 10, join us for a potluck picnic at Gomez Peak pavilion (aka group picnic site).

One more important April event to consider: the Gila Native Plant Society is participating in Give Grandly, the annual event that raises funds for southern New Mexico nonprofits. Please visit our table at **Give Grandly on Saturday, April 18, from 10am to 2pm at Gough Park**. All donations help us to educate the community about the importance of native plants and to advocate for their protection. As an added incentive, we’ll give donors at the \$20 level a laminated pocket guide to *Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest*. Donors at the \$50 (and above) level will receive a copy of Jack L. Carter’s definitive *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*.

One other way you can contribute to our society: if you’re out hiking and you encounter a bunch of wildflowers, even if you don’t know what they are, please let me know. One of our field trip leaders will check out the site to see if it merits a field trip. You can reach me, Donna Stevens, at [gnpspresident@gmail.com](mailto:gnpspresident@gmail.com)

-- Donna Stevens

[email: gnpspresident@gmail.com](mailto:gnpspresident@gmail.com)

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## PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES For This Quarter

## FIELD TRIP :

Early April field trip to the Chiricahuas: Date and time TBD. Watch for an email about this.

## EVENT: GIVE GRANDLY

Saturday, April 18, 10am to 2pm at Gough Park, Silver City

Please stop by the GNPS table to say hi, and consider contributing to our work on plant education and protection. Donations of \$20: receive a guide to *Conspicuous Butterflies of the Gila National Forest*. Donations of \$50: receive a copy of Jack L. Carter's *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*.



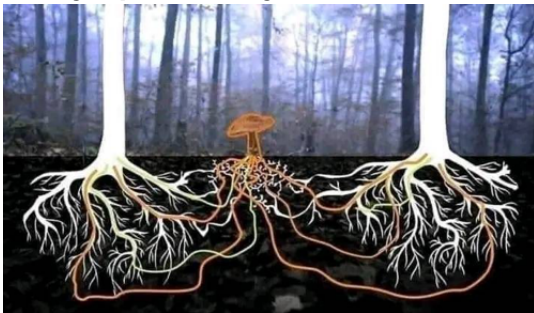
## EVENT: POTLUCK

Sunday, May 10, noon. GNPS potluck picnic at Gomez Peak Pavilion (group picnic site). Please bring a dish to share with fellow plant lovers, and your own plate, cup, and utensils. GNPS will provide water and iced tea.

## PROGRAMS :

Program meetings begin at **7:00 pm**, are open to the public, and will be hybrid when possible. Attend live in **Room 111 of WNMU's Harlan Hall**. We'll automatically **email a Zoom link** to Gila Chapter members, and others can request it from [gilanative@gmail.com](mailto:gilanative@gmail.com). Volunteer signups are always appreciated for refreshments, so contact us if you are willing!

**Friday April 17, "Mycorrhizae: what are they?"** presented by Jonathan Titus.



Mycorrhizae are the mutualistic relationship between soil fungi and most plant species. The fungi obtain nutrients, especially phosphorus, for plants, enhance water uptake and help defend against pathogenic fungi. In addition, mycorrhizae are a communication network between plants via fungal hyphae. Resources are also transferred from one plant to another via

the fungi. Most plants cannot survive without the mycorrhizal relationship and donate 20-50% of the carbon they produce in photosynthesis to the fungi. In this talk we will explore the fascinating world of the world's most important relationship.

Jon is a retired professor of biology who specialized in plant communities and succession. His research encompasses a wide variety of projects from primary succession at Mount St. Helens to reintroduction of an endangered wetland plant in Arizona to forest change in western New York. He has contributed to international ecological research including the flora of castle walls in Albania, a demographic study of tree aloes in Botswana, and successional meadows in the Czech Republic. As an avid volunteer, Jonathan is an active member of the Silver City Flora group, and several non-profits. When he is not busy with volunteer adventures, he is likely to be found out exploring the many trails of the Gila National Forest.

Graphic: Mycorrhizal network by Uchechukwu Onyebuchi.

**NOTE:** Jon's presentation will wrap up our spring program meetings.  
They will begin again in October.

### **SAVE THE DATES :**

July 11. Family Day at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden

July 18 and 25 and August 1. Docent training 8:00-9:30 am

August 8. Native plant sale. Gough Park parking lot.

September 10-13. Native Plant Society of New Mexico Annual Conference. Silver City.

**-- Cara Staab, Donna Stevens**

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## **The Garden welcomes a Volunteer Coordinator! ... and Other News**

The Silva Creek Botanical Garden is delighted to welcome Dana Baskett to the garden



family. The volunteer coordinator position is a brand new part-time contract position. Dana has lots of experience in customer service, has done volunteer coordination, and she's an herbalist and plant lover. Please welcome her. She says, "I'm happy for the opportunity to help the botanical garden grow. I look forward to meeting more volunteers and to helping bring new faces into the garden."

She's looking for volunteers for watering, in particular. People can volunteer for once a week, or even once a month. We also always need folks to join our work parties. We need a couple of people who can help deal with fix-it issues.

For those interested in educational volunteer opportunities, we'll be starting a docent class in July. This will be a commitment to learn about the garden in three 1.5-hour Saturday morning classes. You'll be getting more details later, but please mark your calendars for Saturday morning training sessions from 8:00-9:30 on July 18 and 25 and August 1. Docents will initially do adult tours. If we get a group who's interested, we may be able to move on to children's tours!

Also, Dana would be happy to hear from you if you have an activity you'd like to present at Family Day on July 11. This will be a free, delightful way to spend a summer morning, for all ages.

Finally, work continues on the Front Yard Garden, which we hope to have ready to show our annual conference attendees in September. You can let Dana know if you want to join this team, as well.

Please contact Dana at [garden@gilanps.org](mailto:garden@gilanps.org) if you are able and willing to help with any of these activities.

-- Marty Eberhardt, Garden Steering Committee

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## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS and DONATIONS

### Help Ground-Nesting Bees

The Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability has a global community science initiative called Project Ground-Nesting Bee (GNBee). Ground-nesting bees are understudied, and community observations are important. This will support conservation efforts and help protect these pollinators. The project is ongoing, with observations taking place from early Spring through late Summer. You can learn more and join this effort here:

<https://www.gnbee.org/>

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### Become a Bumble Bee Atlas Volunteer

New Mexico's bumble bees need your help! This summer, the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is launching its newest Bumble Bee Atlas project in the Land of Enchantment! We are seeking volunteers to help track and conserve the state's native bumble bees. This project relies on volunteers like you to collect data across the state. Atlas volunteers are trained to conduct standardized catch-photograph-release surveys of bumble bees. The data collected by volunteers helps researchers assess conservation status, identify threats, and develop native plant guides and habitat management recommendations to support bumble bees. Anyone is welcome to join the Bumble Bee Atlas and free training is provided. No previous experience is necessary.

To get started or learn more about the project, visit [BumbleBeeAtlas.org](https://BumbleBeeAtlas.org) and register for the training webinar on **April 16**.

Feel free to reach out to Amy Dolan, the NM Bumble Bee Atlas coordinator with any questions: [amy.dolan@xerces.org](mailto:amy.dolan@xerces.org). We hope you'll join us!





Photo credits:

BBA Field Training/ Sageland Collaborative/ (c) Sierra Hastings

BBA Field Training/ Xerces Society/ Amy Dolan

## Conference Volunteers

The annual NPSNM conference is being held in Silver City, September 10-13. Plans are well underway, with speakers and field trips lined up, and now the Gila chapter's planning committee is working on conference logistics. We need volunteers to help with the following tasks. If you'd like to help, or to ask a question about volunteering, please email us at [gilanative@gmail.com](mailto:gilanative@gmail.com).

Volunteer categories:

- Catering logistics
- Conference Center set-up, takedown, clean-up
- Conference Center decorations

- Field trip logistics
  - GNPS merchandise table
  - Registration
  - Publicity
  - Silent auction
  - Speaker moderation
  - Sponsorships
  - Student posters
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## Donations for Conference Silent Auction

Please consider donating goods or experiences to the silent auction to be held at the NPSNM conference, September 10-13, Silver City. Silent auctions raise significant funds at annual conferences, and in 2026, all money raised stays in the Gila chapter. Suggestions include: jewelry, pottery, glassware, artwork, weavings, art photos, small antiques, native plants and seed sets, gems and minerals. Special local experiences (e.g., casita for two; natural history, native plant, birding, or cultural experiences. Use your imagination!)

If you'd like to donate, please let us know at [gilanative@gmail.com](mailto:gilanative@gmail.com).

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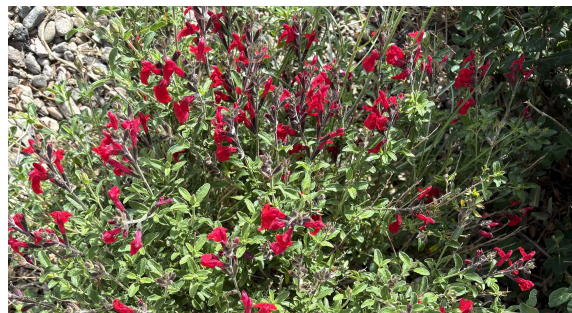
## Silva Creek Garden Volunteers

- Fix-It Projects
- Work Parties (weeding, general clean-up, etc)
- Docents (training in July and August)

Please contact Dana at [garden@gilanps.org](mailto:garden@gilanps.org) if you are able and willing to help with any of these activities.

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## Plant of the Quarter: *Salvia greggii*





*Photos of Salvia greggii provided by Cathleen Norman.*

A hardy one- to two-feet tall subshrub, *Salvia greggii* is a member of the mint family (Lamiaceae). Its common names include Lipstick Salvia and Furman's Red Texas Sage. *Salvia greggii* prefers well-drained, rocky soils, including limestone and sandy soil. Its scarlet flowers bloom from spring to frost. Originally a native plant of west and south Texas and Chihuahua, Mexico - where it grows mostly on 5,000-9,000' rocky slopes - it has been widely cultivated as an ornamental in southern New Mexico and elsewhere.

My first summer in Silver City I visited a friend who advised me that instead of hanging out hummingbird feeders, she was growing this small tough shrub with its bright-red blooms. I went right out and bought several flowering plants. Within hours after I put them in the ground, the first hummingbird visited. Since then, this has been a go-to for me, especially in my sun-scorched west-facing backyard. It grows in full sun, but flourishes with a bit of shade.

Blooms consists of separate flowers attached by short equal stalks at equal distances along a central stem. Half-inch-long leaves are elliptic (a length-to-width ratio of about 2:1 with sides that are parallel or slightly curved) arranged opposing each other on thin branches. Its slightly mint-scented leaves stay evergreen in warmer climates.

The well-behaved perennial is deer resistant and typically tolerates drought, cold and heat. *Salvia greggii* produces its scarlet blossoms during monsoon rains, and periodic watering during summer's heat encourages flowers to continue blooming.

The short woody shrub benefits from pruning in late winter or early spring. Cutting one-third to halfway back produces thicker, more compact foliage and a shorter flowering plant. As with many *Salvia* species, leaves can be used fresh or dried for seasonings and teas, and the flowers are edible.

According to the University of Texas Austin website, the plant was documented in 1870 by botanist Asa Gray who named the species "*greggii*" in honor of Josiah Gregg (1806-1850). This Tennessee native traveled extensively in the 1830s on the Santa Fe Trail, as well as through Texas and into Mexico. He organized his travel notes on geology, trees, prevalent attitudes, and politics into a readable manuscript in 1844. The two-volume *Commerce of the Prairies* became an immediate success. Soon after, Gregg joined a botanical expedition and sent plant specimens to eminent botanist George Engelmann in

St. Louis. Subsequently, the American Botanical Society added the Latin name "greggii" in his honor to 23 plants.

Suggestions, comments or corrections can be emailed to [catnorman33@gmail.com](mailto:catnorman33@gmail.com).

**-- Cathleen Norman**

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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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