

Manzanita

Newsletter of The Kane County chapter of the Utah
Native Plant Society

August-September 2006 News

August Field Trip: Monday, 7 August

– Coral Pink Sand Dunes: 7 PM. Our August outing will be to the Coral Pink Sand Dunes northwest of Kanab. We can expect to see many rare and unusual plants, not the least of which is the federally Threatened Welsh's milkweed (*Asclepias welshii*). Plan to meet at the junction of the Coral Pink Sand Dunes Scenic Backway Road (a.k.a. Hancock Road) and the Sand Spring Road at 7 PM. From the traffic light in Kanab, proceed north about 8 miles on US Highway 89 past both entrances to best Friends. After passing the north entrance (the one to the clinic and village) get into the left hand lane as the highway widens to 3 lanes and prepare to take a left turn onto the Coral Pink Scenic Backway Road (located just 1/10 mile beyond). Proceed on this road for about 5 miles to a broad Y on the left hand side and a large gravel parking area where we will meet (there are several minor sandy roads before this, but ignore them). If you reach the Ponderosa Campground you have gone too far. If time permits we will continue down the Sand Spring Road to Sand Spring and see the bracken ferns. Be prepared to get fine orange sand in your shoes.

September Field Trip: Monday, 11

September, 7 PM – By popular demand, we will finish the summer outdoor season with a hike up Pugh Canyon to the waterfall. We will see some late summer species (hopefully abetted by the recent rainfall) including the rare glandular phase of Blueleaf aster (*Aster glaucodes* var. *pulcher*). Plan to meet at the parking lot of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument visitor center (between Walker's truck stop and the Holiday Inn on US 89 east of downtown Kanab) at 7 PM. The hike is about 2 miles roundtrip and mostly flat until the very last segment.

October Meeting: We will head back indoors in October to reconvene our fall/winter schedule of meetings and speakers. First up, GSENM botanist Amber Hughes will discuss efforts by Grand Staircase to contain pesky weeds.



Above: Silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*).
Photo by Steve Dahl.

Weed Watch: Silverleaf Nightshade This handsome member of the potato family grows to 3 feet tall and produces numerous purplish-blue flowers that offset the smoky gray foliage. It occurs infrequently in Kane County, occasionally popping up along Highway 89 east of Kanab and in the vicinity of The Cockscomb. You may have also seen this species in great abundance in the bottom of Zion Canyon near the new visitor center. Although probably native to Texas and the southwest (some think it may be from South America), Silverleaf nightshade has developed into a potent invasive and should be avoided as a garden plant, despite its attractive appearance. Once established, this species is extremely difficult to control by herbicide or hand-pulling, as its deep rhizomes break easily and readily resprout. The plant also has small, sharp spines and the yellow berries and foliage are considered poisonous. While it is not listed as an official noxious weed in Utah, it is banned in many other western states. Enjoy Silverleaf nightshade in photos or on a trip to Mexico, but this one is better off not in the home garden.

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This edition of the Kane County Native Plant Society news was written by Walter Fertig with photo by Steve Dahl. Reader submissions are welcome. For more information about upcoming events, contact Walt Fertig at 689-0224 or walt@kanab.net.