

Manzanita

Newsletter of the Kane County Chapter
of the Utah Native Plant Society

March 2007 News



The Manzanitas are Blooming! Can spring be far behind once the manzanitas begin to flower in late February and early March in Kane County? We actually have two species of shrubby manzanita that grow naturally in our area. Our most common species (shown above) is the Greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), which occurs across the Colorado Plateau in the Ponderosa pine zone on sandy soils or slickrock knolls. It can be recognized by its broadly egg-shaped leaves and sticky flower stalks (covered with minute glands). Mexican manzanita (*A. pungens*) is far less frequent in southern Utah, but can be found growing in similar habitats as its Greenleaf cousin. *A. pungens* differs in having narrower leaves that taper to a sharper point and flower stalks coated in short white hairs, giving the stem a velvety appearance. Both species have urn-shaped whitish-pinkish flowers that typically form dense, drooping clusters. Like many other members of the heath family (Ericaceae), manzanitas keep their pollen-producing anthers concealed within their floral urn. Carefully peeling back the corolla will expose the pair of long, tail-like appendages topping each anther. These superficially resemble the horns of a goat or the ears of a jackrabbit. Look for manzanitas in bloom right now near Diana's Throne, the slopes above Hog Canyon, or the Navajo Sandstone cliffs up Johnson Canyon.

March Meeting: Monday, 12 March: Botanical Nature Journaling.

What is the color of air? Can you sketch flowers and seed pods and leaves? Through the marvel of a bee's knees to a hawk in flight and spring wildflowers, we observe and enjoy nature. Learn to sketch and color pages that create a meaningful record of your outdoor experiences. Join Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Interpretive Specialist Carolyn Shelton for this evening "hands-on" workshop. This workshop is designed for never-before artists or trained hands seeking renewal. Bring art materials if you wish: journal, pencils, watercolors; basic materials provided for use in class. Some supplies will be provided for your use.

The March meeting will commence at 7 PM in the meeting room of the Grand Staircase-Escalante NM Visitor Center, located on US Hwy 89 between Walker's truck stop and the Holiday Inn in the scenic east end of Kanab. As always, desserts will be plentiful.

February Meeting Recap: By one count, 47 Manzanita chapter members and guests participated in the chapter's first plant propagation workshop. Cheryl Decker traveled from Zion National Park to co-lead the workshop with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument botanist Holly Beck. Cheryl and Holly regaled the group with tips and pointers on growing native plants from seed for home garden use. A wide variety of seeds were available, including a mix of shrubs (fourwing saltbush) and showy wildflowers (*Datura*, evening-primrose, spiderwort, and blanketflower).

For those interested in purchasing containers used in the workshop, Cheryl reports the website is: <http://stuewe.com>.

For anyone who might have missed the soil formula used in Zion, Peggy Stone reports it as:

| Material | Amount | Ratio |
|-------------|---------|-------|
| Osmocote | 32 oz | 1 |
| Terface | 2.5 gal | 10 |
| Sand | 5 gal | 20 |
| Vermiculite | 7.5 gal | 30 |
| Peat moss | 10 gal | 40 |

March *Sego Lily* hot off the presses: The latest issue of the Utah Native Plant Society's statewide publication the *Sego Lily* has just been released (edited by yours anonymously). Read about how two endangered Utah plants are actually receiving less protection from the federal government after the US Fish and Wildlife Service lost two lawsuits, a new cactus species for Utah discovered near Cedar City, tips on overcoming seed dormancy in growing native plants, the discovery of nearly 70 new plant species in Arches and Bryce Canyon national parks last summer by the park service's vegetation mapping crew, efforts to promote native plant seeds for commercial and reclamation use, plans to update the Utah Rare Plant Field Guide, and more. If you aren't already a member of UNPS, find out what all the hub-bub is about!

This edition of Manzanita was written by Walter Fertig and Carolyn Shelton. Reader submissions are always welcome. For more information on upcoming events, contact Walt Fertig at 689-0224 or walt@kanab.net. Chapter events and an archive of past Manzanita newsletters are also posted on the Utah Native Plant Society website at www.unps.org