

Sego Lily

Newsletter of the Utah Native Plant Society

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Board Members Slay Dragons in St. George

Words and Pictures by Terri Williams



The elusive and beautiful Dwarf Bearclaw Poppy



Chairman Dave Wallace gathers the group

The UNPS Board of Directors hiked, drove, and examined much of the landscape around St. George at the April Board Meeting and associated tours and activities. The day began with breakfast at the Bear Paw Cafe, and soon the intrepid Board, local Chapter members and officers, and other interested folks were off to find the elusive Dwarf Bearclaw Poppy (*Arctomecon humilis*), an endangered plant found only within a few miles of St. George. UNPS members and several government agencies have been keeping an eye on the poppy for years, but development, OHV traffic and other factors have reduced the local populations dramatically.

At lunchtime, several Board members and guests visited a nearby petroglyph site. After all the excitement of the morning tour, the Board meeting served as a pleasant and entertaining rest break. Local chapter business and issues took center stage in the discussions. Our UNPS members and officers of local chapters make our organization happen!



July August 2005

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Endangered Species Act Reconsidered

Excerpted from *Discover Magazine*, January 2005

In its 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of many endangered plant and animal species. But a report by the Tuscon based Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) last May stirred a debate among biologists, environmentalists and policymakers about whether the act is due for an overhaul.

"If extinction is the ultimate criterion by which to judge agency implementation of the Endangered Species Act, the failure has been spectacular," the report says.

Echoing other environmental studies, the Center concluded that low funding, political interests, and mismanagement at the Department of the Interior led to the disappearance of more than 80 under-protected U.S. species that never made it onto the endangered list.

Among other things, says the CBD report, environmental litigation severely hampers efforts to list more species by siphoning off money for legal costs.

"What you have is the Endangered Species Act being run by lawyers and judges rather than professional biologists," says Hugh Vickery, an Interior Department spokesman, "I don't think this is very effective,"

Kieran Suckling, a coauthor of the CBD report, contended that the number of protected species should be increased from 1,270 to

School Gardens

Re-produced with permission of NMPS

How out of touch with nature are today's youngsters? A few years ago a fourth grade class in Dallas visited a demonstration vegetable garden. Half of these kids were amazed to see that *carrots actually grew in the ground.*

Most youngsters view a garden or a meadow as an alien place. Nature is something they experience vicariously, if at all. And that's scary, because these kids are the ones who will have to solve all the environmental problems our generation is handing them.

Katy Moss Warner, the Horticulture Manager at Walt Disney World, put it this way, "The future of the environment depends on involving children as early as possible in growing and appreciating plants, *yet the worst landscaped institutions in this country are the public schools,*"

But there *is* hope. Around the country, some schools are installing gardens where kids can see nature up-close. They get to observe firsthand how plants and wildlife interact harmoniously. And they learn that pollination is not just an abstract concept in a textbook, but a living process vital to all of us.

In Encinitas, California, science teacher Jerry Trust involved his high school students in the design, installation and maintenance of a landscape full of plants indigenous to the region, and incorporated all this into the curriculum. And in Odessa, Texas, biology teachers Glenda McDowell and Barbara Starnes and their students turned the courtyard of Permian High into a regular desert garden.

But, it's not just teachers who are involved in these gardens. In many cases, it's parents and even concerned neighbors. And organizations such as the Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation have instituted school gardening programs to lend a hand, with the whole community getting involved.

In Elmhurst, Illinois, ecologist Patricia Armstrong and a crew of students installed a prairie garden at the Lincoln Elementary School. And in Milwaukee, Lorrie Otto installed a splendid prairie and woodland garden at the Bayside School – at her own expense!

By the way...how do the schools in your community measure up? Is this a worthwhile project for your chapter?

Although not mentioned in this article Utah has a large number of heritage gardens dotted throughout the state, many in schools such as Wasatch Elementary School, Provo & Ensign Elementary School, Salt Lake City. For more information on Utah's Heritage Garden Programs go to www.unps.org and click on the programs link.

Seeds of Growth

Reproduced from "The Trooper" Winter 2005 Edition

OUTREACH GIRLS PLANT COMMUNITY GARDEN



Green space along the Jordan River received a new look this fall. Local outreach girls had the opportunity to become Girl Scouts while learning more about Utah's environment through an environment program made possible through an EarthPACT grant, which Girl Scouts of Utah received earlier in the year.

From April-October more than 100 girls from under represented population areas and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the Greater Salt Lake Area were brought together to learn about the environment and nature in fun and interactive ways. "It is critical that our youth learn about the myriad connections between their lives and the planet we all share," says Elaine M. Gause, Chief Executive Officer for Girl Scouts of Utah. The grant along with the generous support from the University of Utah Bennion Center, Wild Bird Center, Utah Native Plant Society and Tree Utah allowed these girls to have hands-on training while experiencing the fun of Girl Scouting. The girls learned about watersheds and water conservation, reduction of pesticide use, landscaping, local native plants, wildlife and birds by attending program sessions at Girl Scouts of Utah camps in the scenic Wasatch Mountains.

On October 9, the program concluded with the girls planting a native, drought-tolerant garden in their own community along the Jordan River. By applying the knowledge and skills they acquired, the girls planted 500 flowers that they started from seed earlier in the year, put up three nesting boxes to attract native birds, and planted a tree donated by Tree Utah.



Putting their knowledge into practice - 2 local outreach girls planting drought tolerant plants along the Jordan River

As the girls play and live in their community, they will witness the garden grow and thrive, as well as observe the birds that inhabit the area.

And as new Girl Scouts, these girls will find fun and adventure, opportunities for growth and something for themselves in a safe and accepting environment

Natives in the News

These articles are re-produced with permission from the authors, thank you to Deseret Morning News columnist Larry Sagers and Agricultural Research Magazine. Thanks also to Kelly McNulty for her research

Beneficial Beetles Take a Bite Out of Saltcedar

Excerpted from April 2005 Agricultural Research Magazine

Can a tiny beetle spell doom for a rugged, aggressive weed that's already invaded streambanks and river channels throughout the American West?

Yes!

That's what [ARS](#) scientists and their colleagues have found in their investigations of a leafbeetle, *Diorhabda elongata*, that they've brought to sites infested with saltcedar, also known as tamarisk.

This salt-tolerant, fire-resistant, drought-hardy water guzzler was imported in the 1800s to help hold stream and river banks in place. Today, saltcedar's range extends from the Great Plains to the Pacific and from Canada to northern Mexico. It has crowded out native plants such as cottonwoods and willows, disrupting the natural surroundings needed by these plants as well as by birds, fish, and other forms of life.

Saltcedar resprouts vigorously even after the hottest blazes. It blocks river and stream access—by river rafters or thirsty wildlife and livestock—by forming dense, often impenetrable thickets, first as bushy shrubs and, later, as pink-blossomed trees that grow to 30 feet.

But the jaunty beetle, imported from China, Kazakhstan, other parts of Asia, and the Mediterranean region—all lands where the troublesome tree is native—has taken an impressive bite out of saltcedar in several study sites in the West. To this insect, America's vast stands of saltcedar are just one enormous, seemingly endless banquet. The plant's scale-like leaves offer a nutritious treat for the insects, whether they're in their caterpillar-like larval stage or have matured into quarter-inch-long adult beetles.

Besides thriving on emerging leaves and shoots, the beetles also nibble on the bark of small twigs, all the while posing no hazard to people, pets, or crops. That's according to ARS entomologists C. Jack DeLoach (Grassland Protection Research Unit in Temple, Texas) and ARS ecologist Raymond I. Carruthers. (San Francisco Bay area at the ARS Exotic and Invasive Weeds Research Unit.)

Scoring Big in Lovelock, Nevada

The beetles' greatest success since first being turned loose in saltcedar stands in 2001 has been along the Humboldt River in Lovelock, Nevada, about 80 miles northeast of Reno. Here, an original colony of some 1,400 laboratory-reared beetles has "expanded exponentially and has



Adult *Diorhabda elongata* leafbeetle on Saltcedar flower buds

now defoliated about 5,000 acres of saltcedar," says Carruthers.

Today, the helpful insects number in the millions. What's more, they've extended their range, spreading at least 100 miles along the Humboldt River—defoliating and stunting saltcedar. Some of those trees are beginning to die.

"We've seen a similar impact in some other study sites in Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, with hundreds of acres of trees hit hard by the beetles," notes Carruthers. He and DeLoach expect that figure to climb to thousands of acres by summer's end. Experts like Carruthers and DeLoach view biological control agents such as the *D. elongata* leafbeetle as perhaps the best long-term solution to getting tough with tamarisk.

Of course, the insects represent a considerable investment. Initially, they have to be collected abroad. Then they have to be extensively studied to make sure they don't inadvertently damage other plants. Finally, they have to be put to work outdoors and carefully monitored. Ideally, the beetles will provide an impressive return on these investments.

These studies represent the first time—in the more than 170 years during which tamarisk has run rampant in the United States—that any natural organism had been lined up to challenge this pest. But much more remains to be done. Though the beetles have established many flourishing colonies, they originally failed to reproduce at southerly test sites, such as those in Texas.

Mistaking the region's shorter days as a signal of winter's approach, the beetles went into hibernation, called diapause, in July—2 months too early. The mistake was fatal. The following year, they never woke up to complete their life cycle. Without enough fat reserves in their bodies to tide them over until saltcedar leafed out in spring, they starved to death.

To help solve this problem, ARS scientists and collaborators collected *D. elongata* from Uzbekistan through Greece to Tunisia, where daylengths better align with those of the American Southwest.

"These southern-adapted beetles," says DeLoach, "are now defoliating saltcedars in California, Texas, and New Mexico," where ARS and university scientists are monitoring their progress.

Native plants flourish — beautifully

By Larry A. Sagers
Deseret Morning News

When we consider the thousands of plants that will grow in our landscapes, we sometimes overlook native plants that thrive on their own. They have survived many millennia and are adapted to our soils, our rainfall, our climate and even our pests.

I recently spent a day with one of Utah's top experts on native plants. For the past 40 years, Dr. Jim Bowns has been teaching about Utah plants and their ecology. The state's deserts and mountains are literally his teaching laboratory.

Over the course of his career, thousands of students, ranchers, professors and other interested individuals have tramped his outdoor laboratories to learn about the plants that he has spent his life studying.

I visited with him to learn more about native plants that can be used in home landscapes. Bowns grew up in the small, eastern Utah town of Castle Gate. He

received a bachelor of science degree in forest range management and a Ph.D. in range ecology at Utah State

University. He holds a joint appointment with USU and Southern Utah University in Cedar City in a historic collaboration. "I came to SUU back when it was part of Utah State Agricultural College. I thought I would come down here and work two or three years at the branch campus and then move back to Logan." He fell in love with the area and the move back never happened. He is now practically a legend among educators, government officials, students and ranchers in southern Utah.

Bowns loves the area's ecological diversity. The Mojave Desert in the Beaver Dam area southwest of St. George is just over 2,000 feet in elevation. Peaks above Brian Head are near 12,000 feet.

"To understand native plants and where they grow, you have to understand their needs," he said. "I like to point out to people about the geology, the climate and the plants, because they are all interrelated. Looking at these, you can tell where a plant is going to succeed."

All plants are native, but the ecology means you need to ask, "Native to what?" he said. Look at where they thrive naturally and then see how they adapt. Bowns said you need to "understand what the plant means." When you try to grow a plant in your yard, you need to provide conditions similar to native conditions. Natives never thrive in landscapes if you don't understand what the plant means, he said.

To this end, Bowns shares some favorite natives that will thrive in northern Utah landscapes. "Cliff rose (see below) is an excellent shrub. It requires no (extra) water after it is established and is a real show stopper when it is in bloom. It is covered with yellow and white blossoms that resemble small roses. It gets 3-10 feet tall depending on moisture and other conditions," he said.



Mountain mahogany is another favorite. "There are three different types of mountain mahogany. Curly leaf is the parent plant that grows in high mountains. "The alder leaf mountain mahogany also grows at high elevations and is deciduous. The little leaf mountain mahogany grows at low elevations and is evergreen and provides good browse for elk and deer, so it is a good plant for areas where these animals graze."

Serviceberry is another plant Bowns recommends.



Dr Jim Bowns shows a mountain mahogany, which has three varieties

Larry Sagers

"In southern Utah, *Amelanchier utahensis* is our most common plant and it grows on dry hillsides.

The fruit is somewhat dry and pulpy. "In northern Utah, *Amelanchier alnifolia* is common in the canyons and grows as a small tree that gets about 20 feet tall. Their fruit is dark purple when ripe and is seedy and bland but edible. Native Americans made bows out of serviceberry.



"Oakleaf sumac is another excellent native. Native Americans used the berries for food, and they used the flexible straight branches for weaving baskets. Pioneers used seeds like popcorn. Throw a bunch in the pan and heat them to pop them," he explains. Among other shrubs Bowns likes are fern bush and blue elderberry (right). Both are drought tolerant.

False indigo has a long taproot and loves dry soil. Manzanita is another native plant that is on his list as a good landscape possibility.

Buffalo berry also works well in landscapes. There are two species. Silver buffalo berry is a larger plant that has gray textured leaves and edible berries. The round-leaf buffalo berry is a smaller compact evergreen shrub that is an excellent choice for landscaping. Neither of these tolerates excess water, so place them carefully in the landscape.

Bowns grows many native plants in his own yard. "One of my favorites is the pinyon pine *Pinus edulis* that flourishes on the Colorado plateau. It is not great for nuts — they are very small. The single-leaf pinyon has very nice pine nuts, and I have one of those in my landscape.

"I also grow rabbit brush and sagebrush. I have several cactus including a cholla cactus and pretty good-sized barrel cactus," he said.

Indian rice grass *Oryzopsis hymenoides* is a native grass that has good landscape potential. Bowns adds that although most people don't realize it, this is the official state grass as designated by the state Legislature. It grows well without water and has an attractive seed head so it makes a nice ornamental.

Jim Bowns is a man who truly wants to know what plants mean. He lets the plants tell their story and then he knows where they will grow. He wants plants that flourish and survive without constant watering, pest controls and other inputs. The right native plants can do all of this and be beautiful and functional, as well.

Events for July & August

Summer Field Trips - Tatow Knob, House Range and Bald Mountain Trailhead, Uinta Mountains

Robert Fitts of the Utah Valley Chapter will lead two field trips in July and August. All UNPS members, family and friends are invited. We are also inviting the Wasatch Rock Garden Club. Please call Robert at **801-796-8631** to be included on the contact list for additional details.

The first trip will be the weekend of July 8th and 9th. We will camp overnight near Tatow Knob in the House Range of Western Utah, near Robber's Roost. We will climb Tatow's knob the next day. The camping will be primitive and the hike *will be difficult, only for those in good physical condition with adequate boots, there are no established trails.* Robert will provide a map to those who contact him.

The other trip will be a hike in the Uintas on the weekend of August 5th and 6th. We will camp Friday night (call for details) and begin the hike at 9.30am Saturday at the Bald Mountain Trail parking lot at the top of the Mirror Lake Highway. Robert will take us behind Bald Mountain and visit some bogs. Both trips promise an interesting array of plants. More details will be available later to those who indicate an interest

Notice of UNPS Board of Directors meeting

There will be a UNPS Board of Directors meeting and wildflower walk in the mountains near Logan, August 6, 2005. Meet 10:00 at the Tony Grove parking lot for a wildflower walk around the lake, and bring your lunch so we can enjoy a picnic afterward. The Board of Directors meeting will start 2:00 at Tony Grove Campground, campsite 19.

UNPS members and other interested persons are invited. Expect a \$3 parking fee at Tony Grove, so carpool if you can. Tony Grove Lake has been partially drained for maintenance on the dam, but the wildflowers should be great!

UNPS LIFETIME MEMBER UPDATE

By Tony Frates

UNPS would like to thank Tami Coleman of Richmond, Utah for becoming our 23rd lifetime member! Tami is a driving force for native plants in Northern Utah. She is such an advocate and so knowledgeable about Utah native plants. Plus she is also working on her MS at USU which is no small task!

We need you!

Teacher Packet Project Needs Your Help!

Anyone interested in helping to develop a teacher curriculum packet about Utah's native plants, please contact Terri Williams at: artemisial2@msn.com or (801) 794-0316

We need folks who teach, who work with computers, or just love natives and kids! If you know of other teaching resources available, that would be very helpful, too.



Volunteers Needed!

To lead Wildflower Walks during the Wasatch Wildflower Festival



- What:** Wasatch Wildflower Festival
Where: Alta, Snowbird and Solitude
When: July 29 -31st
Who: You! 20 volunteer guides are needed, training is provided
How: Lead tours in Wildflower Festival

Description:

Enthusiastic, people friendly volunteers are needed to lead wildflower walks during the Wasatch Wildflower Festival. Volunteers will lead easy to moderate walks with up to 12 participants at various locations during the festival. **Basic training is provided; training July 16th at Alta.**

For MORE INFORMATION OR TO RSVP call (801) 947-8263

www.wasatchwildflowerfestival.org

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Or write to: unps@unps.org

Many thanks to Xmission for
sponsoring the Utah Native
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Please direct all suggestions,
articles and events for the
newsletter to Paula Longhurst
at plonghur@xmission.com.
**The deadline for next issue
is 8th August**

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