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Newsletter of the Utah Native Plant Society

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UNPS Honors Dick Hildreth

Words and Photo Tony Frates



UNPS'S Bill King presents Dick with his lifetime achievement award

At the conclusion of a lecture co-sponsored by UNPS on March 3, 2005 at Red Butte Garden at which he was the featured speaker, UNPS awarded Dick Hildreth with a lifetime service and achievement award.

Dick was the co-founder of UNPS and tirelessly supported and helped to lead us for over two decades.

Dick came to Utah in 1977 and became the director for the State Arboretum of Utah after studying horticulture at Ohio State; by the following year UNPS was born. He was the founding director of Red Butte Garden and remained with the garden until he retired in 1999.

We wish him well as he continues his retirement gardening and hiking in the Sonoran desert.



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Habitat for critically endangered plants in southern Utah

Words and photo by Bill Gray

Close to St. George is an area that has long been of urgent concern to UNPS and others fighting to preserve some of our rarest plants. The most glamorous of those is probably the Dwarf Bearclaw Poppy (*Arctomecon humilis*) which inhabits an area that is being heavily impacted by ORVs. A broad-based effort by The Nature Conservancy, UNPS and other groups is trying to get better protection for the plant and its unusual habitat. This effort was initiated about 20 years ago when the fledgling UNPS awarded a research grant of \$4000 for study of this threatened system. We think this has been money well spent. The effort hasn't achieved all we would like, but it has enormously raised the level of awareness.

While visiting the area last year, several members of the UNPS Board of Directors were taken to see a few plants of the extremely rare Paradox or Holmgren Milkvetch (*Astragalus holmgreniorum*). This lives just across the street from the Dwarf Bearclaw Poppy, less than a mile away, though the habitat is quite different — gravely washes rather than gypsum soils. It appears to be in much greater peril of extinction than the poppy, because the land is slated for development and/or highway construction. Later in the year we took a highly unusual step for us, and joined in a lawsuit to force the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to create a recovery plan for the species and set aside critical habitat.

In the last few days of March the FWS announced that they were applying for funds to purchase some of that land, and invited UNPS and The Nature Conservancy to join them in their efforts. Those UNPS board members who were able to respond on very short notice agreed that UNPS would commit \$4000 to this project. If FWS is successful in obtaining a Federal grant for their portion, we would have a year to come up with our share. To this end we shall be setting up a special fund to receive donations, and will be contacting many of you individually. We hope this new venture will broaden the impact that small groups can have in prodding the vast bureaucracy that is the culprit in many life-or-death situations for wildlife.

About *Astragalus holmgreniorum*

(based on information in "A Utah Flora", Welsh et al. 2003; and "Intermountain Flora" Vol 3B, R. Barneby, 1989).

This small plant is one of an enormous array (more than 3000 species) of Milkvetch (*Astragalus*) species, of which well over a hundred are found in Utah. This one occurs only in a small area near St. George, and just over the border in Arizona. Probably it was first collected by Marcus Jones, but not treated by him as a new species. In 1941 it was collected again by Marvin Ogden; in 1961 his specimen was sent to Rupert Barneby, generally regarded as the foremost expert on the genus, for identification. Barneby decided it should be investigated further, and in 1979 he went back to St. George with Drs Noel and Patricia Holmgren of the New York Botanical Garden, editors of the "Intermountain Flora". They found the plant, and agreed it was different from any other known species.

Barneby published their findings the following year, naming it after the Holmgrens. Where did the vernacular name "Paradox Milkvetch" come from? Barneby based it on a pun about the "Pair o' Docs". The species has been on the Federally Endangered list since 1997.

The original plants collected in 1979 are in the herbarium at the New York Botanical Garden, and photographs of some of them can be seen at their web site: <http://207.156.243.8/emu/vh/specimen.php?irn=418138>. Click on the small image near bottom left to see the full sized picture.

Photographs of living plants found on our trip to the area last year are shown below. This trip was led by Dr Renee van Buren of the FWS, whose ongoing work with the species has been responsible for much of our knowledge about its population and prospects. It is through her efforts that the proposal to obtain critical habitat was initiated.



UNPS LIFETIME MEMBER UPDATE

By Tony Frates

Earlier this year, W. Richard ("Dick") Hildreth became the 19th lifetime member. As a co-founder of the society and the primary force behind UNPS for almost two decades, Dick already was an honorary member and if we had a hall of fame, he would be the first inductee. (see lead article on P1 Ed.) Dick included this note :

"I'm so pleased and proud of the growth of UNPS from a dream in 1977. Thanks to all [for] your dedicated work."

A long time member who requested to remain anonymous because our 20th lifetime member in March of 2005 (you know who you are - thank you!) and in early April, Jeffrey Mitchell of Orem, Utah became our 21st lifetime member. Thanks for your support!

UNPS Announcements by E-mail

You are invited to join the new UNPS e-mail list!

List subscribers get e-mail reminders of upcoming events, notices of changes or cancellations, and other important UNPS news. To join, go to <http://lists.usu.edu/mailman/listinfo/unps>. Then follow the simple instructions, click "subscribe" and you're ready to go. This is an "announce only" list, so expect only a few messages each week. The subscriber list is private. Any postings to the site will be sent to our moderators to keep it a spam-free zone.

Longtime members may recall "blue cards" announcing UNPS events, like this example from 1986 (see right). It was always good to see the cards arrive in the mail! "Blue card parties" were fun, too, as we met at someone's house to cut up card-stock and stick on address labels and stamps.

The Utah Native Plant Society has long outgrown the "blue card" era, but we still need to keep members informed. We hope this email list fills the need!

UTAH NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY salt lake chapter meeting

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 7:30 PM - A DOUBLE HEADER !!!!
Keith Wallentine will talk about Orchids of Utah PLESS "Show and Tell" - bring a slide of your favorite flower/plant and info on its location.
ROOM 323, Olpin Student Union Bldg, U of Utah

SATURDAY, MAY 31 - Wasatch Foothills FIELD TRIP
with Ty Harrison. Meet 1:00 in front of the ski info sign in Little Cottonwood Canyon.

URGENT!!!! URGENT!!!! Volunteers needed to investigate the terrain of the Primula Maguieri in Logan Canyon ASAP. Help with a discovery!
For information call Dave Wallace 466-2719 or Wayne Padgett (Logan) 753-3854 or 752-1311 (days).

Natives in the News

These articles are re-produced with permission from the authors, thank you to SLC tribune columnist and UNPS Member Maggie Wolf, Murray Journal's editor, Sallie Young and Deseret News columnist Rodger Hardy

Fernbush: a native shrub for Utah landscapes

By Maggie Wolf

Fernbush, *Chamaebatiaria millefolium*, is a member of the rose family, and native to Utah. This attractive, fine-textured plant can grow four feet tall, but may also be pruned annually to keep a smaller habit. White flowers (see right) cluster at erect branch tips, lasting several weeks in midsummer. As one of Utah's Choice shrub selections, Fernbush is destined to become a more popular landscape favorite in future years.



Dick Hildreth, past Director of Red Butte Gardens and recent recipient of the Utah Native Plant Society's (UNPS) Lifetime Service and Achievement Award, calls Fernbush one of his favorites. While living in Sandy, Utah, Dick grew Fernbush in his landscape. "It blew me away how fast it grew!" He also noted that Fernbush responds well to pruning, so it can be kept sturdy and small enough for an urban landscape. "And I really love the fragrance", he noted.



I grew a Fernbush from seed at the 2001 Utah Native Plant Society's Plant Propagation annual workshop. At that workshop, I planted several Fernbush seed along with several other native Utah plants. Today, my one surviving Fernbush (left) is about 3 feet tall, beautifully branched and healthy. According to Dick Hildreth, my plant will really "take off" this season, growing much faster during its third year.

Fernbush flowers at the terminal tips of branches. Spires of creamy white, three-quarter inch diameter flowers last many weeks. After deadheading the flower spikes last summer, my Fernbush flowered a second time before frost. The rose-like flowers attract many insects, and although I'm not an entomologist, I suppose Fernbush provides a food source for native Utah insects. Promoting native insects is a good way to practice Integrated Pest Management, encouraging beneficial insects to control garden pests.

Described as a "semi-evergreen", Fernbush retains its ferny green leaves far into early winter. After several hard freezes, the leaves fall off. But in early spring, (see right) they bud out again. To catch the plant while it's dormant, prune in mid to late winter, before any new growth starts to emerge. Pruning helps keep Fernbush sturdy and relatively small, with many branches to bear flower spikes.



An extremely drought-tolerant plant, Fernbush is happy with no irrigation. However, some water must be provided until the root systems are well established; this will take at least one year. Fernbush cannot tolerate poorly drained soils. In areas with high clay content, amend the soil

Fernbush cont

with composted organic material and elevate the entire bed to assure drainage away from the roots. Coarse mulch applied around the plant will maintain a good soil-to-atmosphere interface.

Still uncommon to landscapes, Fernbush is available from many garden centers participating in the Utah's Choice native plant program. You can find a list of participating nurseries at www.utahschoice.org. Or, participate in one of the upcoming Utah Native Plant Propagation Workshops in Salt Lake, Davis, or Utah counties. UNPS and Utah State University Extension Master Gardeners cooperate to bring these workshops to the public. This year, seed for many species are offered at the workshops, including Fernbush, Palmer Penstemon, Great Basin Wildrye, Littleleaf Mountain Mahogany, Firechalice, and more. Call your USU Extension office for more information.

Utah declares war on Tamarisk!

Thirsty trees get heave-ho

If left unchecked, prolific tamarisk could squeeze out native vegetation

By Rodger L. Hardy, photo courtesy of Keith Johnson
Deseret Morning News

LAKE SHORE — There was some serious weed-whacking going on Saturday near the shore of Utah Lake.

Some 50 people hacked away at bunches of non-native plants that consume so much water that, if left unchecked, could suck dry an aquifer and effectively eliminate native cottonwood and willow trees.

The tamarisk plants are now an inch in diameter but would grow into massive plants several feet thick if allowed to mature, according to state wildlife officials.

Tamarisk, a plant native to Asia, makes poor habitat for wildlife, said David Lee of the state Division of Wildlife.

Tamarisk plants were brought to the western United States to control erosion and serve as windbreaks, but they spread rapidly and populate more than 1 million acres, Lee said.

Poisoning the stumps of young trees was the first project of the season for Lee, who conducts several weed control projects a month during the spring, summer and fall.

"The roots go 100 feet down," he said of the sturdy tree. "If you pluck them they look like a carrot."

While native plants will use 100 gallons of water a day, the tamarisk sucks up twice as much and absorbs the salts and other minerals from the water into its leaves. The leaves fall off in winter and the salts are excreted into the soil. As a result, nothing will grow under the trees.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that 2 million to 4.5 million acre feet of water are consumed each year on the 1 million acres in the western United States infested with tamarisk. That's enough water for 20 million people or to irrigate 1 million acres of cropland, Lee said.

While native cottonwoods and willows do well with water having a salt content of 1,500 parts



Scott Root of the Division of Wildlife Resources cuts down a thicket of tamarisk near Utah Lake.

per million, tamarisk trees thrive on a salt content of 41,000 parts per million, or 31 times the tolerance of native plants, Lee said.

Many of the trees eliminated Saturday and placed into large piles, however, were entwined in greasewood bushes, which the hackers and cutters spared.

The trees spread their seeds from their first year of life, and by the time they reach full growth they can cast off some 500,000 seeds a year. The young trees that met their fate Saturday came from tamarisk trees a former landowner planted along a dike. Wind and water spread their seeds to the field.

"It's pretty important to spend the energy and money to get rid of (the tamarisk tree)," said American Fork's Susan Garvin, a Forest Service employee.

Tree work along Jordan River Trail stumps visitors

By Sallie Young



Murray City workers removed many Russian olive and tamarisk trees along the Jordan River Parkway this year

Not all trees are welcome in Murray.

"Russian olive trees are very invasive, and if left alone they will take over an area quickly," said Kim Sorensen, Murray Parks and Rec superintendent. "Birds don't even nest in them,"

Because these and other noxious trees can starve other plant life and suck up moisture from the ground during dry months, city workers have been removing them from along the Jordan River Trail.

"We've been removing Russian olive trees a few weeks each winter for the last three years," Sorensen reports, "We've also been removing tamarisk trees every fall for the last seven years. The tamarisks are 99 percent removed.

But the Murray City Forestry and Parks division are giving back where they take away, "We've been planting native trees along the trail for the past five years in preparation for removing the non-native trash trees," Sorensen told us.

City workers have been planting cottonwoods, willows and native shrubs, "In the spring and fall, we'll plant more," he said.

More than 300 trees were cut down over a two-week period this winter on the Murray Jordan River Parkway between 6400 South and the I-215 undercrossing, leaving a lot of stumps.

"We'll come back and remove those stumps," Sorensen assured us. This year's removal created a lot of questions because of the amount of removal, according to Sorensen. "Murray has been the leader in development along the Jordan River corridor," he said. "Hopefully, other cities will also implement tree removal efforts," he added.

"The Provo Jordan River Parkway Foundation and Jordan River Natural Areas Forum support our efforts and encourage all Jordan River property owners to remove non-native trash trees," Sorensen said



Parks and Rec workers planted trees and plants along the Jordan River trail to replace invasive growth that had been cut away

Calendar of Events

Please note that some of the April events listed *may have already taken place*. For the most up-to-date events lists go to our website www.unps.org and click on the "calendar" link.

April

April 14 : Escalante Chapter meeting at 7 PM, contact Kathy Munthe (jandkcool@yahoo.com) for location details. The speaker will be Dr. Susan Meyer. The title of her talk is "Native Plant Treasures of the Escalante Region - How to Grow Them from Seed and Keep Them Happy in Your Garden". Potluck supper at 6 pm, the talk starts at 7 pm.

April 23 : Earth Day activities at Zion Canyon Visitor Center in Zion National Park. Our Southern Utah Chapter will have a table at the Earth Day celebration in Zion and some of the chapter's members are involved with walks and talks . Schedules will be posted at the visitor center. 11am to 4pm (interpretive walks begin at 8am). Contact <http://www.zionpark.org/>

April 30 : UNPS board meeting, open to members and other interested parties, e-mail us for location details (will be in St. George area). unps@unps.org This board meeting will emphasize Southern Utah issues. There will also be an optional Endangered Plant fieldtrip before the meeting, beginning at 8.45. If you would like to attend e-mail us for the location and then bring yourself, plenty of water and a picnic lunch.

May

May 2 : Manzanita chapter monthly meeting. Denise Louie, botanist/ecologist for Zion National Park will describe plant revegetation efforts in the park. Meeting starts at 7pm.

May 14 : Manzanita chapter field trip. John Spence, ecologist for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will lead a field trip for early spring wildflowers in the Glen Canyon Area. Start time is still to be determined (contact walt@xpressweb.com if you are interested in attending) but they will meet at the Glen Canyon NRA headquarters in Page, AZ

Also May 14 : Juncus workshop. Geology Rm. 301, USU, 10am. Join Dr Sherel Goodrich and learn how to recognize and identify these grass-like plants. Cost is \$20 (\$15 for UNPS members and includes lunch. To register (registration must be completed by May 9) e-mail Michael Piep fungi@biology.usu.edu. A limited number of copies of the "The Field Guide to Intermountain Rushes" will be available for those attending the workshop.

May 19 : UNPS board meeting, open to members, e-mail us for location details unps@unps.org (will be in Provo area). 6pm-8pm

Note: there will be no board meeting in either June nor July.

May 20 & 21 : Spring Mushroom identification. Learn the rudiments of mushroom identification, starting in the laboratory and then taking to the field to view spring fungi with Michael Piep. When: Friday May 20 (6:30 p.m.) and Saturday May 21 (9:00 a.m.) Where: Intermountain Herbarium. Cost: \$30 (\$25 for BMS, MSU, or UNPS members) - includes local identification keys, and fieldtrip transportation and lunch on Saturday. Registration must be completed by Friday May 13.

Round-up of Recent Events

Feb 26th : “Waterwise Gardening, Landscaping with Natives.

Orem Library

Speaker, Celeste Kennard

Gardening with Natives has apparently caught on in Utah County. There were 37 people in attendance at this presentation and they were hungry for information. Valerie Clark at the Orem Library has done an excellent job adding to the library's collection of books on western gardens, waterwise gardening and native plant keys. Celeste came with the Power Point Presentation artwork of Lyle Jenkins and all kinds of goodies and tidbits of wisdom from Susan Meyer to share with the group.

March 30th : USU Extension Plant Propagation Workshop in Provo

There were about 8 in attendance and we had a great time with Julia Tuck as an instructor and Celeste Kennard Jennie Lin Strong helping out. Paul Ames (Ames Utah Native Seed) was also in attendance and shared all sorts of hints for growing plants and told us about great places to see some of the plants in their natural habitats.

The Utah Valley Chapter recently hosted Terri Williams, local landscape designer, for a lecture and discussion on “Native Plant Landscaping”. Terri started designing landscapes over ten years ago, and worked for a landscape installation and maintenance company last year. Terri presented her evolving “Rules of Landscape Design”:

Rules are made to be broken - but learn the rules first.

Like painting or other artistic work, the rules train the hand and mind to respond on command – then the mind is free to create

Anything is better than nothing!

Don't be afraid to do, for fear you don't know enough or something won't turn out “right”. Any landscape improvement is better than an empty blank space. And you'll learn from trying.

Curves more interesting and natural-looking than straight lines

And make the curves bold and brave – nothing is wimpier than a weak wiggly line!

Rule of threes: Odd numbers

Use plants in groupings, usually in groups of odd number – three, five, seven or a bunch. Never place the plants perfectly equidistant from each other – it looks contrived. (Only break the “Rule of Threes” when you place a plant with very distinctive and unique characteristics – a “focal point” plant. Then lead the eye to that plant with the other elements of the landscape.)

Arranging knickknacks on a shelf

You can think of placing plants in the landscape like arranging knickknacks on a shelf – taller ones to the back, offset the objects to make more interesting arrangements, leave empty spaces to avoid a “cluttered” look, etc.



Weed Warrior Volunteers Needed!

To identify and remove invasive weed populations in the Cottonwood Canyons

- Where:** Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons
When: May 2005- August 2005
Who: You! Training is provided
How: Hike, identify and map invasive weed populations!

Description:

Dedicated volunteers are needed to get out and hike the Cottonwood Canyons, identify noxious/invasive weed populations, map and pull them where applicable.

Training is May 14th; 10AM – 3PM, program starts thereafter. We need volunteers to hike to target areas through mid-August. Volunteers are needed to hike at least 4 areas per month.

Ideal Candidates:

YOU are an ideal candidate if you like to hike and care about the health of Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. Experienced and beginner hikers alike are welcome. Please remember that summer weather in the Cottonwoods can be quite variable, so please be prepared to work outside under adverse conditions! Training is provided in plant identification, GPS work and data collection.

Benefits:

- Training in Weed identification, mapping techniques
- Learn how to use a GPS unit
- What better reason than to have an excuse to get outdoors?
- Meet great people!

Phone: (801) 947-8263 | **Online:** www.cottonwoodcanyons.org

