



VOLUME 29 , ISSUE 2

March/April 2006

Native Plant Propagation Workshops 2006

UNPS has partnered with USU extension once again to bring you these native plant propagation workshops which are taking place throughout Utah during February March and April. Learn to plant and grow Utah native plants. Participants will plant a selection of Utah native seeds to take home. Space is limited so register now!

Salt Lake County

Workshop includes media-filled container, seeds, pot labels, and reference booklet. Price is \$25

This year Salt Lake County will be offering the following seeds: Showy Sandwort (*Arenaria macradenia*), Indian Ricegrass (*Stipa hymenoides*), Green Mormon Tea (*Ephedra viridis*), Apache Plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), Gooseberryleaf Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea grossularifolia*), Palmer Penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*), Rocky Mountain Penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*), Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*).

March 21st (Tue), 22nd (Wed), 23rd (Thurs), each 6 to 9pm at USU Extension Salt Lake, 2100 S State St., Rm S-1007/8 Register through USU Extension, 801-468-3179.

March 25th (Sat) 10am to 1pm, at Red Butte Garden Greenhouses. For more information and to register call Red Butte Garden at 801-581-8454.

March 28th (Tue), 30th (Thurs), each 6 to 9pm SU Extension Salt Lake, 2100 S State St., Rm S-1007/8 (Register through USU Extension, 801-468-3179.)

April 1st (Sat) 9am to 12pm, at Liberty Park Greenhouses For more information and to register call USU Extension, 801-468-3179.

Cache County

Mar. 5th, 9 to 11 am or 1 to 3 pm or Mar. 9th, 6 to 8 pm
USU Teaching Greenhouse, 1389 North 800 East, Logan, UT
Cost \$20 for non-members \$15 for UNPS members and Master Gardeners
Pre-register by calling (435) 752-6263

Propagation Workshops continued..

Davis County

March 18th (Sat). For more information and to register call Davis Co USU Extension office (801-451-3403) .

Utah County

March 16th beginning at 2.30pm at Utah Country Extension Office, 100 E. Center Street, Lower Level, Room 600. Cost \$20 for non-members \$15 for UNPS members and Master Gardeners Pre-register by calling Julia Tuck 377-8084.

Southern Utah

February 25th (Sat). Washington County extension agent Rick Heflebower will be filling in for Susan Meyer this year. The workshop will be at Zion NP, with materials provided by the park to keep costs to a very economical \$15.

Space is limited, so Contact Zion Canyon Field Institute for additional details. www.zionpark.org or call the Zion Canyon Field Institute at 435-772-3264 or 1-800-635-3959).

Lifetime Member Update

By Tony Frates

Robert Fitts became our 24th lifetime member in December, 2005. Thank you Robert!
 And in January, Karen Creswick became our 25th lifetime member. Thanks much Karen!



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The Claret Cup Cactus – *Echinocereus triglochidiatus*

Words & Photos by Jeff Mitchell

Echinocereus triglochidiatus is a low clustering cactus ranging from a couple stems to clusters of hundreds several feet in diameter. It is also commonly called a hedgehog cactus. This cactus is a relatively common cactus and is found all over Utah in rocky situations where it likes to take hold in the cracks between rocks.

As always, common names can cause confusion. The name “Claret Cup” also applies to *Echinocereus coccineus* which looks almost identical in shape and flowers. “Hedgehog” applies to those two and a number of the members of genus *Echinocereus* like our own native *Echinocereus engelmannii*. It is also sometimes referred to as “hummingbird cactus”.

In some places, as in Utah County, it is very common in spots. In others it is only occasionally seen. In Emery County on the north plateau overlooking the San Rafael River, you might only see three in two miles of hiking, being outnumbered 100 to 1 by *Pediocacti despainii*, or *Sclerocactus parviflorus* (fishhook) cactus at a ratio of 20 to 1. In areas in the west desert you can see it in equal quantities with *Coryphantha vivipara* or *Echinocereus engelmannii*. Populations vary widely from spot to spot.

In eastern Utah there is a spineless form in the La Sal Mountains which used to be classified as an Endangered species until they figured it was just an odd form of the Claret Cup.

The Claret Cup flowers in late April and early May, and blooms last for three to four days over a period of two to three weeks. During wet years, the blossoms are especially abundant and spectacular. With bright red flowers these cacti attract hummingbirds and sphinx moths which are major pollinators. For some reason, I’ve never seen very many seed pods in the wild. When I was first getting started raising cacti, I went out looking for seeds in an area in southwest Utah County, and found eight pods after examining around 200 plants. Over the intervening years, I’ve not seen much difference. Most flowers drop off without being pollinated. Whether this is due to early spring (before the hummingbirds arrive) or to drought or some other factor, I cannot tell.



Claret Cup in Bloom

The fleshy fruits are green turning to reddish when ripe. The seeds are very small relative to *Pediocacti* or *Sclerocacti* and are about the size of a small grain of sand. The seeds germinate over a period of time from a few days to several months. I did a flat of seeds during the winter 04/05 with a couple thousand seeds and got several hundred seedlings over the whole winter, several with every watering. Propagation may also be done with cuttings. Cut a branch off and allow the cut to callous over for a few days, apply rooting hormone to the cut and plant an inch deep.

This cactus is one of the few on which I’ve seen insects that feed on it. Shield bugs like to suck the juices out of them, and on occasion, will kill a plant. Handling insects on cacti should be done with care as oil based insecticides will remove the waxy waterproof coating that allow cacti to keep their water from evaporating. Orthene wettable powder is said to work well, but I’ve never used it.



For xeriscapes, this cactus works well because it grows larger than *Pediocacti*, *Sclerocacti* and *Coryphanthas* and is more visible to passersby. Its flowers are such a striking blood red they are really hard to miss. In it's tight clustering habit, the Claret Cup chokes weeds out as the cluster spreads.



If a large cluster is dug up from the desert, it doesn't look as good as one grown in place. The stems tend to splay out and it loses the nice symmetry and compactness of one that has never been moved. Grown from an already rooted plant this cactus will provide years of enjoyment.

Natives in the News

These articles are re-produced with permission from the authors, thank you to UNPS member and Salt Lake Tribune columnist Maggie Wolf and Joe Baird also of the Salt Lake Tribune,
Research by Kelly McNulty

Catalyze your wildflower memories. UNPS website offers tools for plant identification and appreciation

By Maggie Wolf, USU Extension Horticulture Agent
Salt Lake Tribune

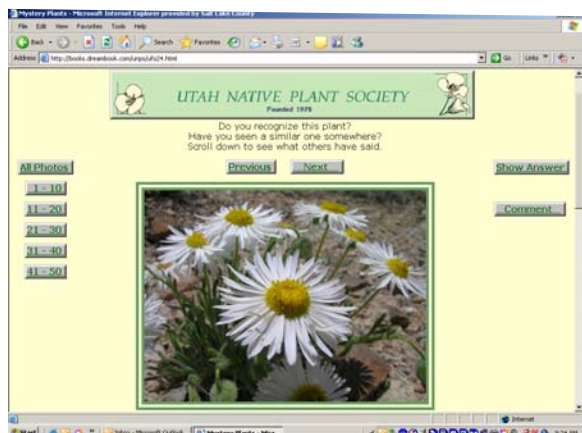
Learning wildflower names is one of life's simple pleasures; like finding a penny and putting it in your pocket. Unfortunately, some of us have holey pockets, and next summer as you greet your old friend "purple flowers on a stalk", the name may be beyond your reach. Try a couple of new tools provided by the Utah Native Plant Society to review or learn wildflower names. Plant identification CDs published by Bill Gray plus a new "Mystery Plants" feature at the UNPS website (www.unps.org) help even the most inexperienced botanist match plant names to plant faces.

As a retired biochemist and biology professor, UNPS member Bill Gray (pictured right) relates the steep learning curve of plant taxonomy to a chemical reaction's high energy barrier. Intimidated by the awe-inspiring diversity of Utah's native plants, novice botanists may soon give up trying to learn names. But Gray has faith that if people become familiar with Utah's wildflowers and plants, they will come to love and protect them. And so, ten years ago, Gray set out to break down the energy barrier, smooth out the learning curve, and create a way to identify native plants more easily.



Realizing that beginning botanists understand pictures better than written descriptions, Gray began photographing wildflowers and storing the images in a database. As of now, he has published two CDs on plant identification. "Plants of the Central Wasatch Front" is based on the book Flora of the Central Wasatch Front by Lois Arnow et al. Considered the quintessential key for Wasatch Front wildflowers, Arnow's book is now out of print and in process of revision. Gray's CD contains all the text from Arnow's book, as well as a technical key, a library of 2600 color photographs, and several other features.

Rather than trying to relate botanical terminology to an unidentified flower at your feet, Gray's CD allows you to select for flower shape, petal number, color, plant type, elevation, and flowering time. Returning with a list of possible matches, you can then click through photos until you see a similar flower, and your UFO (unidentified flowering object) is identified. Should you wish to learn botanical terms (bravo for you), click to see the text version as written in Arnow's book. Gray's other published CD is "Penstemons: an interactive guide with photos". Both are available from the UNPS website.



Ten-plus years of gathering photos and identifying native plants make Gray a good man to ask, "What's this flower?" Ever the teacher, he'd rather you figure it out yourself (because you'll remember it better that way). UNPS now offers an interesting photographic bulletin board, authored by UNPS member Sandra Bray. Anyone can send in good quality digital photos of UFO's, Sandra posts them to the website, and Gray will (after allowing visitors to post speculations) identify them. A quiz site for experts and a learning tool for beginners, www.rootcellar.us/unps is the place to catalyze your wildflower journey.

Settlement buys time for rare wildflower.

In Utah County: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must develop a recovery plan for the Deseret milkvetch

By Joe Baird

The Salt Lake Tribune

The Deseret milkvetch grows on a 300-acre patch of ground between the towns of Thistle and Birdseye - and no place else on Earth.

An endangered wildflower and its tiny habitat in southern Utah County are getting a second chance. As part of a lawsuit settlement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to further review the status of the Deseret milkvetch.



Deseret Milkvetch

The suit was filed by a pair of environmental groups last summer because the initial six-year review period for the plant was about to expire without the federal agency having a recovery plan in place. Under the terms of the settlement, finalized last month, the Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to a follow-up study of the milkvetch to determine if it qualifies for critical habitat designation.

Such a finding could lead to prohibition on development around where the wildflower grows, just off an increasingly busy stretch of U.S. Highway 89.

Also implicit in the deal : that the Fish and Wildlife Service will create a recovery plan for the species, which has been delayed by what one agency official called financial constraints.

“This isn’t a parade-like victory, but everyone agrees it ought to be looked at again. And because of the lawsuit, the Fish and Wildlife Service will now do that,” said Tony Frates, conservation co-chair of the Utah Native Plant Society, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

The plight of the milkvetch has been complicated. The plant grows on three parcels of land, two of which are privately owned; the other is owned by the state’s Division of Wildlife Resources.

Also creating challenges is the tiny size of the plant’s habitat, which is just off the highway in a location neither the Fish and Wildlife Service, nor conservation groups will disclose.

“The plant’s whole habitat is on this one little hillside near the Utah-Sanpete county line,” said Fish and Wildlife botanist Larry England.

Frates says the Native Plant Society and the Center for Native Ecosystems pursued legal action against the Fish and Wildlife Service because the six-year review period for several endangered southern Utah plants, including the Bearclaw poppy, elapsed without review.

Growth and development there now preclude any type of critical habitat designation, which is central to the survival of a plant species.

“Hindsight has taught us that if we don’t get critical habitat, as development occurs, it becomes impossible to attain it,” said Frates. “This [milkvetch] issue didn’t come up because of the bulldozer, but because the deadline was coming up. If we let it pass, we wouldn’t be able to take this action again. And things in that area could really change in the next decade or two.”

Influencing the Fish and Wildlife Service, England said, was previous litigation that dictated the agency follow through on recovery plans and critical habitat designations once a plant or animal species has been listed.

The milkvetch, he noted, was listed in 1999.

“We determined it was not prudent then to do critical habitat. But the situation has changed. The thing we need now is to develop a recovery plan,”

Calendar of Events

Please note that some of the 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.

February

- February 17 (Fri) : The Utah Valley Chapter will hold its first meeting of the year, at the Federal Building, 88 W. 100 North in downtown Provo. We will have a potluck meal at 6pm. The program will be presented at 7 pm by Bill King, president of the North American Rock Garden Society. It is entitled *Alpines in All Directions* and is a primer of alpine native plants in Utah and surrounding areas.
- February 23 : Salt Lake Chapter are hosting a tour of Garrett Hebarium at 6pm. For more information go to the Salt Lake Chapter Page at www.unps.org
- March 25 : Join members of the Utah Valley Chapter on a field trip to look at *Viola beckwithii*. Meet at 9 am at the parking area across from the gravel pit at Moark Junction. All are welcome. It is an easy hike across the old gravel pit to see Viola. Those wishing to stay and look for more *Viola* plants on State Land should bring your outdoor gear, cameras, a packed lunch and water. Moark Junction is the intersection of Hwy 89 (The main road south through Springville), and Hwy 6 (the road through Spanish Fork Canyon to Price). Landmarks are the red buildings of the explosives plant east of the junction, and the power substation in the old gravel pits just to the north of the junction. Those coming from the north can take the I-15 Price exit, go east through Spanish Fork, and turn left toward Mapleton and Springville. Contact Robert Fitts at 796-8631 for further information.

For March and April events please see next page.

March

- March 7: Salt Lake Chapter meeting, Bill King, longtime member of UNPS, a former president, and now president of the North American Rock Garden Society. Bill has organized an international conference for NARGS at Snowbird next year, titled Alpines in All Directions. Bill's talk of the same name deals with our amazing range of wonderfully tough little perennials, found not only up high, but everywhere the conditions are extreme. (This talk was postponed from December) Meetings are held at the Sweet Library (9th Ave and 'F' St, SLC) at 7:00 pm, first Tuesday of each month. Reports and Meeting run from 7-7.30pm, featured speaker from 7.30 onwards. SL Chapter will also be hunting *Viola beckwithii* at Red Butte Gardens this month - go to www.unps.org for more details.
- March 7 - 9 : The 17th biennial HAR (High Altitude REvegetation Conference) will be held in Fort Collins Colorado - for more information and to sign up go to http://www.highaltitudereveg.com/schedule_of_events.htm
- March 9 : The Escalante Chapter will host a presentation by Angie Evenden (Vegetation Program Manager for the NPS-No. Colorado Plateau Inventory and Monitoring Network) entitled "Vegetation Research in the National Parks of Utah" the event starts at 7 pm, contact Kathy Munthe jandkcool@yahoo.com or (435) 826-4755 for location details.
- March 9, 10 & 11 : The Xeriscape Council of New Mexico, Inc presents the 11th Xeriscape Conference and Expo. Conference will be held March 9 and 10 (cost \$150) the 11th is a free "open day" with 15 free seminars and nearly 200 exhibits. The conference will be held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, NM. For more information and to register go to www.xeriscapenm.com or e-mail scott@xeriscapenm.com or call (505) 468-1021 (24hrs)
- March 18 : Zion Canyon Field Institute Class "Basic botany for gardeners". This course will be taught by Dr Doug Reynolds. For more information and to sign up go to www.zionpark.org

April

- April 4th: From 7pm Salt Lake Chapter Meeting. At 7.30pm Robert Fitts, will talk about "Tracking Utah's Rare Plants." His talk will show how the Utah Natural Heritage Program makes maps of rare flora. Many kinds of plants live only in our state, and knowing where they make their home is important to their survival. Information about rare species is the role of Nature Serve in Washington D.C., and Utah is part of this program. Learn how to contribute rare plant sightings to the Utah Heritage database.
- April 14 : Zion Canyon Field Institute Class "Life zones I, Mojave to Zion,". This course will also be taught by Dr Doug Reynolds. For more information and to sign up go to www.zionpark.org

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For more information about
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call:

Bill King: 582-0432
Susan Garvin: 356-5108
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 April, 2006**

For latest UNPS and
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www.unps.org
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