

Sego Lily

Newsletter of the Utah Native Plant Society

Fall 2025 Volume 48 Number 4



<i>Phacelia alba</i> , pollinator's response.....	2
Invasive species committee	4
Exciting Utah state records	6
Berniece A. Andersen award.....	10
Book review: Cactus Flora of Utah	11

Annual meeting report.....	13
Utah Plant Fest 2025	14
Ty Harrison Service Award	16
Grow native: Penstemon palmeri.....	17

Phacelia alba: A native plant and its pollinators' response post-fire

by Heather Vielstich and Tucker Hastings, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners. Photos by Tucker Hastings.

Extending across nearly 1.9 million acres across southern Utah's Colorado Plateau, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is a trove of biological, geological, and recreational possibilities. Dramatic contrasts in elevation and geology across the reaches of the Monument give way to a plethora of diverse ecosystems and landscapes, rife with many native and endemic flora and fauna; from scarcely vegetated Tropic shale escarpments, to lush, ponderosa capped mesas, and everything in between. With its designation as a monument in 1996, the significant floral diversity was recognized officially, and ongoing study has identified over 1,000 taxa. As the last region within the lower 48 to be mapped, this vast landscape beckons a botanically minded surveyor.

Our work with Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners, a non-profit founded in 2004, took us across this array of desert terrain as we scouted out viable populations of native plants for seed collection efforts. One of these scouting trips took us to Skutumpah Terrace, including an area that was affected by the Deer Springs fire last year. Walking the area with Marc Coles-Ritchie, GSENM Head Ecologist, and Jackie Grant, Director of Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners, we noticed huge numbers of a strange looking *Phacelia*. With its dramatically pinnatifid leaves distinguishing it from the more common phacelia species, none of us were quite sure what we were looking at. A little time with *A Utah Flora*, and it was clear we saw a massive recruitment of *Phacelia alba* following the wildfire.

Phacelia alba is a species primarily known for its occurrence in the Colorado front range, New Mexican Rockies and Highlands of Arizona. It's known to range into Utah, primarily from herbarium records across mountain areas in the southern half of the state. There are a few records within Grand Staircase-Escalante national monument, especially along the Skutumpah terrace, the most recent being a collection by Walter Fertig in June of 2003. Given this region's higher elevation, it provides a unique source of diversity in the Monument. Despite its presence in the area, it's been rarely observed in recent years, and a quick look at iNaturalist observations shows

only one observation in Utah before this year, and none in the Monument's boundaries.

Much less abundant than other members of the genus, it's no surprise there's little known about the plant's life history or ecology. Herbarium records can also clue us into why this plant has been so rarely seen in Utah. Stan Welsh's 1998 collection noted its presence in a previous year's burn area, and our observations contribute to this habit of *P. alba*.

Over the season, we returned to monitor what seems to be an important ruderal in the succession of the Skutumpah Terrace. The seedlings first emerged almost immediately after the fire, in August of 2024. The rosettes were well established by early May of 2025, well before many other species began their growing season, especially *Salsola*. The plant began blooming quickly after, in early June, providing resources for many native pollinators. By the end of their season, many of the plants had reached nearly two feet in height, and a broad three to four foot diameter. In late June, we began a series of pollinator surveys to begin describing the natural history of this infrequently seen plant. In the process, we found a few other important roles the species plays in the ecology of the area.

Our first pollinator survey was near the end of June, when *P. alba* and other nearby wildflowers were in bloom. Our second and third surveys were in early and middle July, respectively. During our pollinator surveys, we found ourselves sitting amongst these behemoth *Phacelia*, waiting for visitors to these plants. Feeling immersed in this ecological web, we began to notice some interesting interactions. For one, these plants were popular amongst the arthropods. Within the burn area, there were a few members of the genera *Verbesina*, *Solanum*, and *Nicotiana* blooming as well, but nothing seemed to compare to the pollination activity within these patches of *P. alba*. Hymenoptera of various sizes and colors flitted about the curling flowers and feather-like leaves of *P. alba*. Gnat-sized sweat bees (*Lasioglossum* spp.) moved almost imperceptively from flower to flower while the

characteristic buzz of the burly carpenter bee (*Xylocopa* sp.) signaled their presence at this hub of pollination. Our second notable observation was that these plants were popular with arthropods beyond pollination. The first day out, we noticed leafcutter bees (*Megachilidae* spp.) nesting in hollow stems. These *P. alba* grew large, and quickly, and within a month of growth, there were large hollow stems that bees had already begun moving into. We saw crab spiders hunting on *P. alba* blooms, lying in wait for unsuspecting visitors, and mites embedded in inflorescences. We also saw male wool carder bees (*Anthidium* spp.) seeming to lek on and around these phacelias. Male bees would chase each other off, landing and hanging out on the ground or the stem near their own plants. These same bees also seemed interested in us, dashing around us before losing interest.



A *Megachile* sp. visits a flower, 6/26/2025. The fine hairs on the underside of its abdomen are packed with the lavender-colored pollen from the *Phacelia* flowers despite the apparent loss of the tibia and tarsal segments of the visible second and third legs.

Towards the end of July, *Cleome serrulata* came into flower and we conducted pollination surveys on these plants. Our surveys found some overlap in the pollinators visiting *P. alba* and *C. serrulata*, though each hosted a handful of unique genera that were not observed on the other. For one, *C. serrulata* was visited frequently by Western honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), a non-native species that we did not observe visiting *P. alba*. We did, however, notice a significant rate of visitation by *Anthidium* spp. on *P. alba*. *Anthidium* is a genus with some species known to specialize on *Phacelia*. Given the early stages of our study of these plants and their associated pollinators, it's hard to say if this difference is due to the seasonality of pollinators, pollinator preference, or some other factor. Further study could fill out a clearer picture of these pollinator interactions and help us understand *P. alba*'s role as successional species and host to native pollinators

and arthropods. In the end, we identified six different genera of bees pollinating *Phacelia alba*.

Across the growing season, we also noticed that the areas this plant grows, lower sandy areas receiving more water from nearby hills, seemed to compete well against the *Salsola tragus* and *Bromus tectorum* that were coming to dominate the burn area. This year, the plant had senesced by the end of August, though a few scattered rains in this dry season triggered some resprouting and new blooms as late as the end of September.

While our observations and surveys only offer a brief snapshot into the successional role of *P. alba* in burned areas, we believe these efforts open the door for various avenues of further research. In our experience in the monument this year, we've found many odd plants, and a changing landscape. For anyone interested, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument hosts huge opportunities to cut your teeth on botanical and ecological discovery. Contact Dr. Jackie Grant (jackie@gsenm.org) to learn more about our native plant program.

We thank the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who partnered with us through their Seeds of Success program and Colorado Plateau Native Plant Program. We also thank the staff at the BLM-administered Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Kanab Field Office.



Invasive Species Committee 2025

by Cathy King with Dave Wallace

Dave Wallace, Chairman of the UNPS Invasive Species Committee, has been organizing and conducting weed control efforts in Cache County for several years, with an emphasis on trail weeds in the Cache National Forest. Starting in 2012, Dave has done manual weed control under the Logan Ranger District's Adopt-A-Trail program. In 2018, Dave organized the "1st Annual Weed Day," sponsored by the Logan Ranger District, Bridgerland Audubon Society and Utah Native Plant Society. Under direction of the Forest Service Botanist, Dave began to conduct limited chemical weed control in 2019.

Logan Canyon "Weed Day" events have been repeated each year, with additional sponsorship by Logan City, Stokes Nature Center and the Cache Trails Alliance, and in 2025, a weed event was held at the Murray Farm Trailhead near Wellsville. Dave's trail weeding activity has continued, but at a somewhat reduced level.



At the trailhead, getting ready to go weeding.

1st Annual Murray Farm Trailhead Weed Day, April 26, 2025

This first-time event was planned to coincide with the Cache County Conservation District's "Bag O' Woad" program. About 30 volunteers met at this Forest Service Trailhead, recently built near Wellsville on land donated by the Murray family. Half of the participants were Scouts hoping to earn "Bag O' Woad" money for summer camp, but unfortunately, they came up short as the cool spring weather of 2025 delayed the growth of dyer's woad. Volunteers also dug white bryony roots, mullein,



Equestrians helped haul out weed bags.

houndstongue, burdock, poison hemlock and teasel, and they cut dog rose bushes and hauled out bags of weeds.



Hauling dyer's woad to the dumpster.

Other 2025 weed activity

Dave also treated two infestations of Japanese knotweed in lower Logan Canyon. The State of Utah has designated this difficult-to-control invasive as a [Class 1B: Early Detection Rapid Response \(EDRR\) Noxious Weed](#). The patch growing near Red Bridge appears to be eradicated after chemical



The “President’s Volunteer Service Award”

(Certificates were supposed to be signed by the President, but this did not happen before he left office)



Bagging myrtle spurge for the landfill.

treatment in October 2024 and June 2025. The larger patch near 3rd Dam was treated chemically and manually in 2025, but more effort is expected before it can be eradicated.

As with previous years, Dave also has done a lot of work controlling trail weeds. This includes 128 hours on the Logan Ranger District while treating weeds on more than 10 miles of trails in Logan Canyon, and 21 hours treating more than 2 miles of Logan City trails.

Anyone willing to join this effort is urged to get in touch with someone on the UNPS Board.



Japanese knotweed at Red Bridge, Oct 2024 (top) and Nov 2025 (bottom).

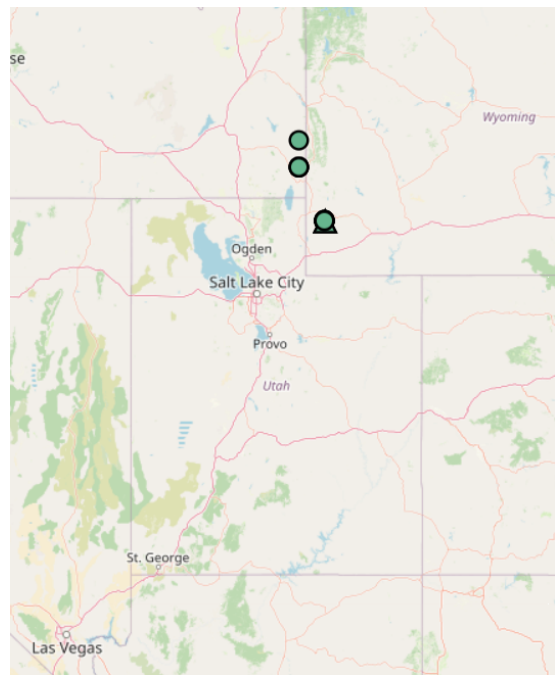
Exciting Utah State Records Over the Past Year

by Zach Coury and Kenzie Anderson-Bell
Utah Rare Plant Program

The Utah Rare Plant Program (URPP) is based out of Utah State University in partnership with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. We collaborate with state and federal partners conducting research and developing conservation strategies to safeguard the state's unique flora and habitats. The URPP covers a lot of ground in Utah and takes on a diversity of projects. Some examples include ongoing monitoring of the *Astragalus sabulosus* complex near Moab, vegetation mapping at Utah Lake, and river trips down Desolation Canyon to map populations of several rare plants along the river corridor. Some of the most exciting work we do is to try and track down novel finds and expand the known range of rare species in a meaningful way. These efforts are often unsuccessful, but when it works out, it is extremely satisfying! One such example was a state record population of Winward's Goldenbush (*Ericameria*

winwardii) found by Kenzie and I this August in northern Utah.

Ericameria winwardii is an extremely rare member of the sunflower family (Asteraceae), that was previously known from three localities; two in Idaho and one in Wyoming, near the northeastern corner of Utah where the three states meet. It was originally described in 2005 as a variety of *Ericameria discoidea* by influential Wyoming botanists Rob Dorn and Charmaine Delmatier and elevated to species status later that year in the *Flora of North America* treatment by Roberts & Urbatsch. This species behaves like a true edaphic endemic, and is restricted at all populations to powdery, calcareous soils



derived from limestones. It is also morphologically distinct from most *Ericameria*, with a very small habit and densely canescent leaves.

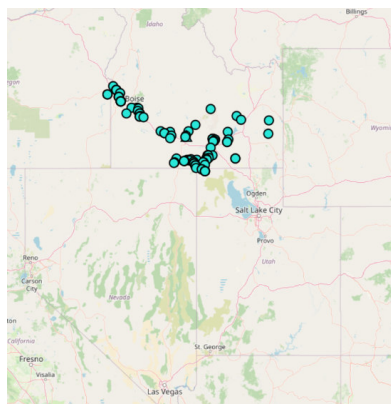
When I learned of this species about a year ago, it became apparent that there was a strong possibility of the plant occurring in Utah since the known populations seemed to straddle our state. An occurrence in Utah made sense logically and would make the total distribution of the plant more continuous. After a bit of scanning of aerial and geologic maps, I found a few spots that seemed promising and met the many criteria required for such a picky and rare plant. In mid-August the team had a couple free days, and we seized the opportunity. After driving many miles of sketchy dirt roads and passing through several rickety gates,

Kenzie and I camped at our trailhead and set off at sunrise for a big, hot hike. The first few exposures of limestone we passed through were disappointingly rocky, but the best candidate for success, a small and rapidly eroding knob, was a success. There were hundreds of plants in a very small area, and although we were too late to catch the plants flowering this year, they seemed to have had a productive season despite the major lack of precipitation. For such a rare plant, any new population is very exciting and increases the chances of survival into the future. Hopefully more populations of this unique Goldenbush can be found in coming years.

In preparation for this article, we realized that it would make a good opportunity to round up the unusual number of state records that have been found in the last couple years. Kenzie will summarize these important finds in the following paragraphs.

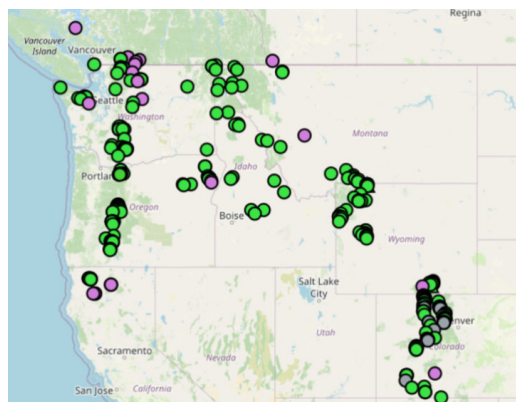
It's 2025, but the botanical discoveries for Utah are rolling in like it's 1925! We already read in the August [Summer 2025](#) edition of the *Sego Lily* about Ava Brinkley's state record of Hairy Owl's Clover (*Castilleja tenuis*) as well as Will Pearce's Henderson's Gooseberry (*Ribes oxycanthoides* var. *hendersonii*) observation in July this year. However, we have four additional notable observations that have taken place across the last year or so.

Let's start in the north and work our way south through the state of Utah. Minidoka beardtongue (*Penstemon perpulcher*) is a showy violet to blue/purple penstemon found in sandy soils of sagebrush habitat and rolling hills of the Snake River Plains between 600-2000m elevation. It looks similar to



Penstemon cyananthus var. *subglaber*, which also can be found nearby, but *P. perpulcher* is distinguished by the lack of, or nearly complete lack of hairs on the anthers as well as a deeper blue blossom (Mikel

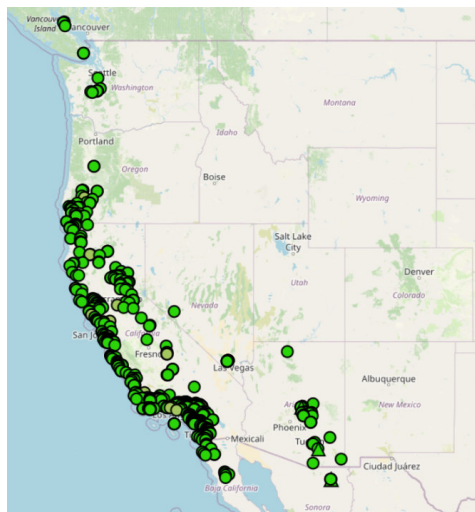
Stevens, *personal communication*). Formerly, this plant was known only to Southwestern Idaho and adjacent counties in Oregon with a national rank of G3, vulnerable. It has not been ranked in Idaho, but is considered S1, critically imperiled, in Oregon. Over the past summers a handful of individuals have been documenting its presence in the Grouse Creek drainage of Box Elder County, Utah including BYU Professor- Robert Johnson, BYU Professor Emeritus- Mikel Stevens, Steven Love with University of Idaho, and local botanist and incredible photographer - Andrey Zharkikh.



Working south, we turn our attention to a record in the beloved Uinta mountains, Duchesne County specifically. Matt Berger, rare plant botanist and long-distance trekker, perhaps known to many of us by his internet handle "Sheriff_Woody_pct," observed Mountain Hairgrass (*Vahlodea atropurpurea*) in the

late summer along a popular trail in the Uintas. *Vahlodea atropurpurea* is a monotypic genus grass with a discontinuous circumboreal distribution across the Northern Hemisphere, growing in moist to wet open woods, forest edges, streamsides, snowbeds and meadows in montane to alpine and subarctic habitats. While it has a national ranking of secure (G5), it is considered vulnerable (S3) in California and Colorado, and records are slim to none in Utah until this year when Matt Berger stumbled across it. According to Matt, he presumes it's likely to be found in more places around the Uintas in the future. For more technical descriptions of this grass see *Grasses of the Intermountain Region* (2009) by Lauren K. Anderton and Mary E. Barkworth or *Flora of North America*.

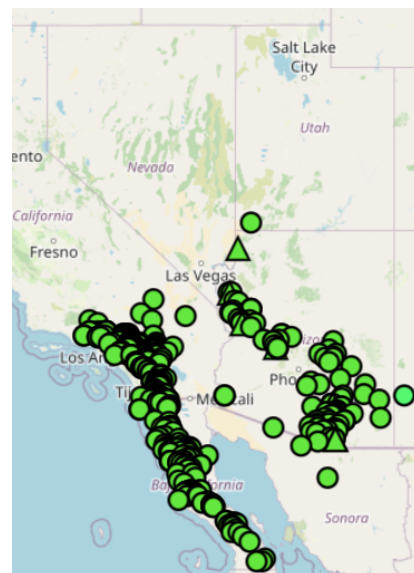
The last two observations take place in Washington County, Utah. In September of 2024, Darrin Gobble, Vegetation Program Manager and Botanist for Zion National Park, was out visiting a hanging garden in the park, when he noticed a striking fern that he had



not seen before. This fern turned out to be Giant Chainfern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*), and wasn't just a

park record, but also a state record! *W. fimbriata* is a large fern with stout rhizomes, forming a short ascending caudex, usually unbranched, the scales 10-30 mm long, lanceolate, acuminate at the tip, monomorphic, light brown, somewhat shiny, the margins entire or nearly so. Leaves are densely clustered at the rhizome apex and can range from 40-170 cm long. *W. fimbriata* has a national rank of secure (G5) with an interesting distribution as it is predominantly found within the redwood forests of California. However, disjunct populations are located in Arizona, Nevada (S1, critically imperiled), and the Pacific Northwest (Washington: S2, imperiled and British Columbia: S3, vulnerable) typically among mesic canyon bottoms near boulders and streams. Looks like that spore found the perfect spot!

Braydon Lake is a board member of UNPS and volunteered at Zion National Park under Darrin



Gobble. He is a rare plant enthusiast with a knack for buckwheats and their varieties around Utah, especially southern Utah. This meant he was the perfect person to make the state record of Thurber's buckwheat (*Eriogonum thurberi*), this past spring in Washington County. *Eriogonum thurberi* is an annual buckwheat that grows up to 30cm tall with 1-several stems branching diffusely from the base. The leaves are all basal, ovate-oblong up to 3cm long, glabrate above, but densely white-wooly beneath. The distinguishing features of this buckwheat are the glandular pubescence on the hemispherical involucre, peduncles, and bracts; the small 1-2mm pink or white perianth lobes that are fan-shaped and somewhat hooded and abruptly narrowed to a claw-like base; and wooly tufts on the bases of the stems. *E. thurberi* is found in sandy soils below 1220 m and typically flowers March-June. While *E. thurberi* is generally common (G4, Secure) around northwest Mexico, southern California, and southern Arizona, it just barely enters New Mexico and was not documented in Utah until Braydon reported it in April. Since that first observation, Braydon has submitted a [herbarium specimen](#) to Intermountain Herbarium as well as 8 additional iNaturalist observations of *E. thurberi* around southern Utah.

At the time this article is published, it is shoulder season for prime plant viewing - especially to those of us in northern Utah. As the last glimmers of rabbitbrush and asters fade and we slide into crisper longer evenings, one can't help but feel that longing to return to the excitement that follows winter dormancy - when growth and flowers abound. We hope this article inspires you in the upcoming botany season to get out there with an ignited sense of wonder for new plants you may discover within our wonderful state of Utah.

A final announcement - [Utah Rare Plant Program](#) is on iNaturalist! We have many awesome partners such as USFS, BLM, NPS, and the state of Utah with which we already connect. However, we recognize there are botanists out there doing great work that may not necessarily be affiliated with these organizations and we'd love to hear from you! If you have interesting Utah finds and/or rare plant observations that you'd like to share with our team, consider following us and sharing your observations with us. You can also contact us via email mindywheeler@utah.gov.

Resources

Anderton, L.K. and Barkworth, M.E. (2009) *Grasses of the Intermountain region*. Utah State University Press.

NatureServe Explorer 2.0:

https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.777388/Ericameria_winwardii

https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.160596/Penstemon_perpulcher

https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.139293/Vahlodea_atropurpurea

https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.145723/Woodwardia_fimbriata

Flora of North America:

https://floranorthamerica.org/Eriogonum_thurberi

https://floranorthamerica.org/Penstemon_perpulcher

https://floranorthamerica.org/Vahlodea_atropurpurea

https://floranorthamerica.org/Woodwardia_fimbriata

SEINet:

<https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?taxon=Eriogonum+thurberi>

<https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?tid=94521>

<https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?tid=57542>

<https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?tid=1685>

USDA Plants:

<https://plants.usda.gov/plant-profile/ERTH3>

<https://plants.usda.gov/plant-profile/VAAT2>

<https://plants.usda.gov/plant-profile/WOFI>

Announcing the Utah Native Plant Society *Annual Berniece A. Andersen Award*

During her lifetime, Berniece A. Andersen significantly contributed to the study of native plants in Utah and to the experiential education of students at Utah State University where she was Assistant Curator of the Intermountain Herbarium. Because many of her goals closely align with those of the [Utah Native Plant Society](#) (UNPS), her family has chosen to honor her with an Annual Berniece A. Andersen Award through the Society.

- The family will fund the *Annual Berniece A. Andersen Award* at the Utah Native Plant Society for students demonstrating commitment to conservation of Utah native plants, especially in ecologically significant botany, edible and pesticide free landscape, native plant illustration, using native plants in planned landscapes, and landscape architecture complementary to native habitat.
- Preference will be given to graduate students, especially doctoral candidates, who fit the profile above and demonstrate a need for funds in order to continue their studies.
- Funds for this award will be paid directly to the student.
- Apply through [Utah Native Plant Society](#).

Berniece Ashdown Andersen was a Utah native, descended from early pioneers including Patty Sessions, a midwife and plant nurserywoman, who brought seeds and small trees wrapped in canvas to Utah in 1847, starting a plant nursery soon after she arrived in Salt Lake City. Berniece's parents also grew nursery stock and maintained a small arboretum. As a small child, Berniece roamed the foothills of Davis County with her naturalist grandfather, who pointed out the details and inspired Berniece to learn more.

She attended Stoker School in Bountiful, and then, for its pre-engineering classes, went to West High School in Salt Lake City. At age 15, she designed a major remodel of the family home, providing complete floor plans, engineering and construction details, specifications, and a scale model to the astonished builder.

In an age when few women attended college and most who did attend college majored in subjects like teaching, nursing, or home economics, Berniece triple majored in botany, architecture, and landscape architecture at Utah State Agricultural College (USAC), which later became Utah State University. By June 1936, she had completed her junior year and had taken all the classes that the college offered in her three fields of study.

She was accepted at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkely) to continue her studies, but before classes began that fall, she was introduced to architect/landscape architect Mark Roy Daniels, who at that time headed the largest architectural firm in California. He was impressed by her. Asserting that he could teach her more than Berkeley could, he offered to mentor her and give her opportunities to participate in his personal design projects.

She realized that this was a better job offer than she could hope for even when she finished a bachelor's degree. Women were simply not being hired in these male-dominated fields, and it

was beyond her wildest dreams to think she might be hired by a firm as prestigious as his. She dropped out of Berkeley to accept a position as personal assistant to the legendary Mark Daniels.

Mr. Daniels was true to his word on the mentorship and chances to practice, especially in landscape architecture. She appreciated the years she spent working there, and the opportunities and experiences it gave her.

She later moved to Hollywood, where she worked at *California Arts and Architecture*, was a contributing editor with a byline at *Landscape Magazine*, and she freelanced. It was here that she pioneered a practice that is commonplace now—staging large homes for sale by elevating the interior design, making key changes to the architecture, and markedly improving the curb appeal with a new landscape design and plantings.

Berniece left this career path to marry a young graduate student at Cornell University whom she had met at USAC. When he completed his PhD, they lived in New York, Florida, and Rhode Island, and moved to Logan, Utah when her husband accepted a position as a professor and researcher in the field of horticulture. After her husband became incapacitated, she raised six children as a single parent. Eventually, she was hired as Assistant Curator of the Intermountain Herbarium and made major contributions in that role.

She moved to Canada with her second husband, and after his death, moved to the Oregon Coast, where, among other things, she wrote a popular monthly byline on enjoying the plants and natural history of the region.

She is author and illustrator of popular field guides: *A Beginner's Guide to Mountain Flowers*, *Mountain Plants of Northeastern Utah*, *Desert Plants of Utah*, and *Weeds of Utah*. The guides are still found online, some in updated versions. Print versions are available by mail from many libraries.

Book Review

by Bill and Cathy King

The Cactus Flora of Utah Taxonomy and Distribution

Authors: A. Dean Stock, Blake Wellard, Kipp Lee, Patricia Spallone and Zach Coury with Jared Higgs

Paperback, 328 pages, 6-1/2" x 9"

\$40.00

All photos, except those noted on page 321, copyrighted by Zach Coury.

Illustrations by Zach Nielsen and Elaine Hultgren.

Cartography: Zach Coury, Ben Gibbons and Jason Baker

The Cactus Flora of Utah

Taxonomy and Distribution



A. Dean Stock • Blake Wellard •
Kipp Lee • Patricia Spallone • Zach Coury

The long anticipated book, *The Cactus Flora of Utah: Taxonomy and Distribution* (details above), has been printed and will be ready for purchase by the end of November. We were given an advance copy of the manuscript to review and our first reaction is that it has been well worth the wait.

In the interest of full disclosure, the Utah Native Plant Society awarded a \$2,000 grant to the authors of the book to assist in the publishing process. Many of those who contributed to this book are members of UNPS.

It is clear there has been a need for a comprehensive cactus flora for Utah, which is the reason that UNPS helped fund it. The Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society also provided a research grant. Prior to this book, information about Utah cactus was fragmented and incomplete and for the most part based on morphological observations and did not include genetic information. This book helps fill this void in many ways.

The Cactus Flora of Utah has been written and compiled by a group of authors listed above, many of whom are recognized as experts on Utah cactus. The lead author, Dr. Albert Dean Stock, is a retired cytogeneticist, who earned his doctorate in biology/ zoology from the University of Oklahoma. He spent many years in chromosome and cancer research in medical laboratories around the country. He has continued his genetic research on cacti in his retirement. The supporting authors have spent many hours working on field research and other aspects of bringing this book to market. The acknowledgment section of the book is enlightening about the relationships between the authors and their collaborative support network.

With more than 350 images, main photographer Zach Coury, has produced consistently superior photographs of fine specimens to represent the species in the book. He was not only responsible for the photographs but also the graphic design and layout, with the end result of an especially visually appealing book. And the botanical illustrations by Zach Nielsen and Elaine Hultgren also add excellent and important detail.

A well-deserved "Memoriam" is dedicated to Dorothea "Dorde" Woodruff, who spent a lifetime researching Utah cactus and was recognized as an expert on the genus *Sclerocactus* in Utah. Lyman Benson used references on research from Dorde Woodruff in his *Cacti of the United States and Canada* (1982). She was an early inspiration for the *Cactus Flora of Utah*. Dorde passed away in 2018 at the age of 90.

Ten genera of cacti with 44 taxa (species and varieties) are represented in the book.

This greatly expands the number of taxa that have been recognized in the past. The 1988 *Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Utah* by Beverly J. Albee, et al. listed 28 species of cactus which were based on herbarium specimens.

The discussion of each species includes morphology, distribution and habitat, comments, and a distribution map. Some of the species have detailed discussions about nomenclature and taxonomy based on new genetic studies. A selection of photographs of the cactus in flower and in habitat is included with each entry. This information would be helpful for any trained botanist or amateur botanist to identify and locate cactus species across the state of Utah.

The book even includes a section of 8 cactus species that are expected to be in Utah near the borders of Utah with Arizona or Nevada, but as of yet have not been found or documented in Utah. This is an unusual but thought provoking feature.

In addition to the excellent cactus descriptions, there are other chapters that are highly useful. A checklist of cactus

for the national parks and monuments of Utah is included. A visually pleasing photographed section on "Cactus Seed Morphology" is helpful to some degree in determining the seeds of different cactus species. The section on "Conservation" draws attention to the ever present threats to the continued existence of cacti in Utah, particularly the most rare species. There are also chapters on hybridization, cytogeography and methodology.

While this book on the cactus of Utah represents a new overall organization of the family, we are sure that there will be botanists or other professionals who do not totally agree with the new organization, methods or nomenclature. But this book represents a big step forward from the tangled mess of the past.

This is a beautifully presented, informative and well organized book. Anyone with an interest in cactus who loves to hike the hillsides and deserts of Utah will want *The Cactus Flora of Utah* in their backpack.

Those interested can visit cactusfloraofutah.com to join a newsletter to be informed of its release, and to purchase the book when it is available.

As the year draws to a close...

Consider making a donation to the Utah Native Plant Society Small Grant-in-Aid Program. Here is one way to do do this and save on your taxes too:

Tax-Deductible Giving Method for Seniors: Individuals aged 73 or older can make a 100% tax-deductible donation to the Utah Native Plant Society through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from a retirement account.

- **QCDs and Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs):** If you have an IRA, you must start taking an RMD annually in the year you turn 73. A QCD counts as part of your annual RMD.

- **Tax Benefit:** The amount of the QCD is tax-deductible and reduces your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). This is beneficial because the standard deduction is often so large that regular charitable contributions do not result in a direct tax reduction.

- **QCD Mechanics:**

- QCDs are taken before the full RMD for the year is withdrawn. Once the full RMD is taken, you cannot make a QCD for that year.

- The annual maximum for QCDs in 2024 was \$105,000.

- **Non-IRA Retirement Accounts:** Accounts like 401(k), 403(b), and 457 do not directly allow QCDs. The solution is to roll over funds from these accounts into a Traditional IRA, from which QCDs can then be made.

- **Recommendation:** Speak to a financial advisor or tax consultant for more information and consider starting or continuing QCD contributions to UNPS.

UNPS Annual Meeting Report October 25, 2025

by Cathy King

The Annual Members Meeting of the Utah Native Plant Society was held on Saturday, October 25, 2025 from 1:00-4:00 pm at the Jordan River Conservation Garden Park in West Jordan. About 30 UNPS members attended in person and another 18 attended via Zoom.

There was a short social and hospitality period with refreshments for those who were there in person. The business meeting was called to order about 1:15 pm by past-president Cathy King who welcomed everyone. She thanked Parker Lloyd and Zach Earl for the amazing Utah Plant Fest that had been held at Conservation Garden Park just one week earlier. Treasurer Franci DeLong gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation of the financial status of UNPS.

The primary purpose of the UNPS Annual Members Meeting is to elect a new board of directors for the upcoming year of 2025-2026. Cathy King announced the list of nominees and asked for any other nominees from the floor. Sarah Hinnners from Red Butte Garden added herself to the list of nominees. The following slate was offered and approved unanimously by all members present and on Zoom as the new UNPS board of directors for 2025-2026:

Nominees for the UNPS Board of Directors 2025-2026:

Parker Lloyd –West Valley City	Braydon Lake–Salt Lake City	Tony Stireman–West Valley City
Andrey Zharkikh–Cottonwood Heights	Lydia Joukowsky–Salt Lake City	Timothy Remkes–Salt Lake City
Franci DeLong–Olympus Hills	Diane Ackerman–Castle Valley	Zach Earl–Bountiful
Kipp Lee–Salt Lake City	Jared Higgs–Price	Rose Torres–Taylorsville
Ron Bolander–Sandy	Dave Wallace–Logan	Kajsa Hendrickson–Salt Lake City
Cathy King–Salt Lake City	Jackie Grant–Cedar City	Sarah Hinnners–Salt Lake City
Bill King–Salt Lake City	Elaine Hultgren–Cottonwood Heights	

There was a drawing for a free copy of the new book *The Cactus Flora of Utah: Taxonomy and Distribution* by Dean Stock, et al.

Dave Wallace presented the Ty Harrison Service Award to Bill and Cathy King for their many years of leadership and dedication to the Utah Native Plant Society.

Cathy announced that the business meeting was adjourned. She then introduced the speaker Kipp Lee who gave a presentation on the new book *The Cactus Flora of Utah: Taxonomy and Distribution*, which was followed by a question and answer session.

The Utah Native Plant Society is a Volunteer Organization *A note from volunteer Cathy King*

It's true. The Utah Native Plant Society is made up of about 700 members and it is administered and operated entirely by volunteers, people just like you and me. There is an amazing collection of talented, skilled, and dedicated native plant enthusiasts who have something to contribute to the organization. Because we are entirely volunteer, the overhead costs of running UNPS are minimal, leaving the funds raised through membership, donations, and poster sales for programs like the research grants, the rare plant meeting, and education.

You might consider volunteering for a position on the board of directors or a particular committee. Your input will be welcomed and valued. For more information, contact any board member at unps@unps.org, check out the unps.org website, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and the UNPS YouTube Channel.

Utah Plant Fest 2025

by Zach Earl

PlantFest 2025 was a huge success! Planned by Parker Lloyd and Zach Earl: We want to thank everyone who came to PlantFest, especially our volunteers, nonprofits, community partners, and local businesses. Extra thanks to Conservation Garden Park for partnering with us on this adventure! We couldn't have done this without you!

By the numbers:

- Over 400 attendees
- 35 local businesses, nonprofits, gov depts, and educational orgs
- 4 panels with 14 total local experts
- 9 incredible classes
- 100s of live native plants
- 1000s of free native seed packets



1000s of free native seed packets.

Fun Stats

96% of participants feel more motivated to grow native plants and plan to incorporate native plants in their garden.

98% of people had fun! 40% brought seeds to share, and 95% got free seeds from the swap!

95% of people definitely want to come to PlantFest next year!

85% of participants learned about local businesses and organizations they plan to get involved with!

100% of our partner organizations want to come to PlantFest next year and said it was worth their time!



Quotes:

"The seeds! When trying to go native, cost and access have been huge barrier, so having so much access to not just natives, but free natives was so impactful!"

"[I loved] getting to hear from the other panelists about their experiences and hearing from folks afterwards that they were stoked to transition into the field of plants!"



"Seeing others in the workshop - seeing the collaboration and community. Warmed my frigid heart."

"It was very meaningful to me see other people who are interested in Utah's native plants. I brought my young kids and they had a wonderful time talking with the people at the booths and learning about plants. They

are excited to plant the seeds with me, it will be a great family activity."

"It was so lovely to talk with people who easily connected with my work. At most events, there are usually a few people who instantly connect, but to have almost everyone at PlantFest connect was amazing! I gained a lot of valuable contacts, not just of customers, but also of organizations that would potentially want to commission my work."

Our data comes from a survey we sent out to attendees and partner organizations. We had over 80 responses!



Ty Harrison Service Award 2025

by Dave Wallace

Bill and Cathy King were honored with the Ty Harrison Service Award at the annual UNPS “Members Meeting” on October 25, 2025.

Bill and Cathy joined the Utah Native Plant Society in 1993, and the UNPS Board of Directors in 1998. Members of the Board have come to appreciate how much they have done to help the UNPS. If something needed to be done, a letter written, if someone was needed to fill an office, if a project needed volunteers, then Bill and Cathy were likely to chip in. They are like a “glue” that helps to hold our organization together and an “oil” that helps to keep it running smoothly.

Bill and Cathy have been interested in native plants for a long time. Visitors to their home on Salt Lake City’s east bench will immediately notice a front yard filled with native plants. They have been active with the American Penstemon Society, the Wasatch Rock Garden Society and its parent organization, the North American Rock Garden Society, where Bill has served as President and Vice President and organized an international meeting in Salt Lake City.

Bill and Cathy have been instrumental in the continued success of the annual Rare Plant Meetings. They stepped in after the Federal agencies stopped organizing the meetings. Bill basically organized and ran the meetings for a couple of years at the Sugarhouse Garden Center, Red Butte Gardens and now, the Natural History Museum of Utah.

Bill helped reincorporate UNPS after the papers had been allowed to lapse. Bill and Cathy helped organize and staff some of the plant sales that were held at REI, and volunteered at the UNPS Heritage Gardens designed by Susan Meyer and Bitzi Schultz.

Bill has been President, Vice President, Chairman of the Board, occasional Secretary, interim Treasurer, Chairman of the Conservation Committee and Small Grants Committee. He has written many articles and book reviews for the *Sego Lily*.

Bill and Cathy have led many field trips. Among the most memorable was the 2007 trip to Stansbury Island with Red Butte Garden and the Wasatch Rock Garden Society where 50 people showed up, and the 2002 excursion to Great Basin National Park co-sponsored with the Wasatch Rock Garden Society (you can read about these trips in the *Sego Lily* archive at <https://www.unps.org/PAGES/saltlake/SLApril2007.pdf> and <https://www.unps.org/segolily.new/Sego2002.25.6.NovDec.pdf>.



Cathy has been President, Secretary, *Sego Lily* Co-Editor, she fills and delivers UNPS poster orders for local businesses, and if needed, ships posters to people who order them through [unps.org](https://www.unps.org). She is chairman of Newsletters and Publications Committee, Rare Plant Meeting Committee, President of the Salt Lake Chapter, Hospitality Committee, and is involved in organizing field trips, speakers, and meetings, and written articles for the *Sego Lily*. She responds to online questions and worked on the redesign of the UNPS website with the committee and Andrey Zharkikh.

Bill and Cathy have actively recruited new members for the board, especially after several key board members moved away. Before COVID, they hosted monthly UNPS Board of Directors meetings at their home, with informal pot-luck dinners before getting down to business.

Bill and Cathy have served as liaison between UNPS and other organizations and agencies. They supported the nomination of Bears Ears National Monument and have written letters and official comments on behalf of UNPS. They have written the UNPS Annual Reports and chaired the Nominating Committee.

And until this year, they organized the Awards Committee. Fortunately, Tony Stireman stepped in and took over the committee so we could finally recognize Bill and Cathy for this well-deserved award!

Grow Native

The Sweet Palmer's Penstemon

by Cathy King



A group of *Penstemon palmeri* in natural habitat. Photo by iNaturalist observer Cory Lange.

One of the largest of the genus *Penstemon*, Palmer's penstemon, *Penstemon palmeri*, makes an impressive addition to the water-wise native garden, growing as tall as 5 or 6 feet. This is an easily recognized penstemon, quite often seen growing along roadsides, in national parks, and in private and botanic gardens. It is showy and moderately easy to grow if it isn't over-watered or coddled. This is a plant that grows wonderfully in hot, dry natural environments.

First described in 1898 by Asa Gray, *Penstemon palmeri* has been used in gardens for just about as long. It is in the family Plantaginaceae, formerly Scrophulariaceae, before genetic tests moved it into the plantain family. One of its common names is wild snapdragon because of the resemblance to that flower. The snapdragons have also been reassigned to the plantain family.

According to the "Heart of Penstemon Country" by Mikel Stevens, et al, Palmer's penstemon can be found in all six southwestern states and pretty much across the state of Utah, largely due to its use in reseeding projects and roadside planting. It is cold hardy and can tolerate cold temperatures to about fifteen to twenty degrees below zero, or Zone 5.

Palmer's penstemon mixes nicely in the native plant garden, with its toothed bluish-green leaves clasping "wand-like" tall stems that bear clusters of chubby, snapdragon style flowers in lovely shades of pink, striped in darker guidelines of rose. It can be used in a mixed border, on a dry strip



Penstemon palmeri has a 'bearded tongue,' the sterile fifth stamen, a characteristic common to most *Penstemon* species. Photo by iNaturalist observer once-ler.

planting or in an open native meadow. It also is one of the few penstemons that is scented, with a sweet rosy or fruity smell. It is a perennial penstemon but is rather short-lived, perhaps lasting for several years. However, it readily produces volunteers.

A neighboring gardener this year planted a double row of Palmer's penstemon on either side of the sidewalk leading to the front door of their house; it was really quite stunning in full flower. And walking by on a warm summer evening, the air was filled with its sweet scent. The rest of the front yard is full of native shrubs and flowers, including some of the most spectacular desert four o'clock, *Mirabilis multiflora*, that I have seen in a local garden.

Most gardeners are interested in supporting pollinators and *Penstemon palmeri* is a bee magnet, and it is not unusual to find a variety of bees busily entering and exiting the wide opening of the flowers, sometimes a large bumblebee's bottom sticking out or a much smaller bee totally lost within. Because the plant is so readily pollinated, there is a chance of hybrids occurring in the garden if you grow other species of



The flowers of *Penstemon palmeri* are large, easily accommodating bumble bees. Photo by iNaturalist observer Wendy McCrady.



The stem leaves of *Penstemon palmeri* are clasping, catching and holding rain water. Photo by Andrey Zharkikh, taken in Parley's Canyon.

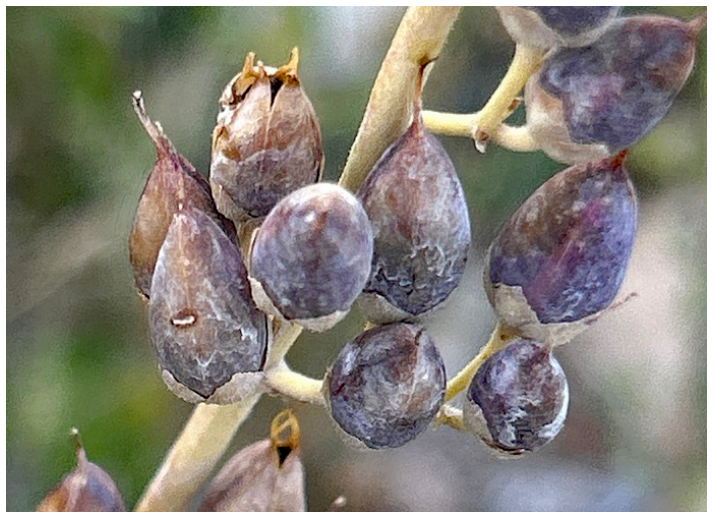
penstemons. It sets abundant seed which can be collected and started in pots or directly sown to the garden, which is the method I prefer. And, yes, hummingbirds and butterflies also love it for its nectar.

I neglected to take photos of this plant in my garden, so it was necessary to resort to finding examples on both Flickr and iNaturalist, where there are many. On iNaturalist alone, there were 4,847 observations by 3,021 observers from across the Intermountain West, just to give an idea of the popularity and common occurrence of Palmer's penstemon. Included here are a selection of photos of *Penstemon palmeri* taken by a variety of photographers.

Palmer's penstemon is quite easily acquired from native plant nurseries or from the native plant section from local nurseries and the seed is also usually available, sometimes by the pound. If you haven't grown this plant yet, you should give it a try.



Smaller bees disappear into the cavernous flowers. Photo by iNaturalist observer Zach Earl.



Ripened seed capsules, ready to sow seeds. Photo by iNaturalist observer Todd Black.

Your Membership

Your membership is vital to the Utah Native Plant Society. It is important that your information is correct and up to date for notifications and the delivery of The Sego Lily newsletter.

Any questions about your membership, Contact Tony Stireman, tstireman@gmail.com.

It is always time to consider the next issue of the Utah Native Plant Society *Sego Lily* which relies almost entirely upon articles from the society's membership. Please submit articles of your native plant stories and photos from hikes and field trips, conservation activities... whatever might be informative and interesting to fellow members.

The *Sego Lily* editors can use most any text format for articles (**PDFs can be troublesome**). Photos are always best submitted in original resolution and as individual files **separate** from text. You can indicate desired positioning within a document. We are looking forward to hearing from you. For submissions and/or questions: newsletter@unps.org or cathy.king@gmail.com



Utah Native Plant Society

Utah Native Plant Society

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To contact an officer or committee chair write to: **Webmaster:** unps@unps.org

Officers of the UNPS board:

President: Jackie Grant (Iron Co.)

Vice President: Parker Lloyd (Salt Lake Co.)

Secretary: Diane Ackerman (Grand Co.)

Treasurer: Franci DeLong

(Salt Lake Co.)

Board Chair: Bill & Cathy King (Salt Lake Co.)

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Rose Torres (Salt Lake Co.)

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Andrey Zharkikh (Salt Lake Co.)

Committees:

Conservation:

Education and Outreach: Zach Earl, Parker

Lloyd, Timothy Remkes, and Jared Higgs

Horticulture:

Timothy Remkes, Tony Stireman, and

Cathy King

Invasive Species:

David Wallace and Timothy Remkes

Newsletters and Publications:

Cathy King, John Stireman

Rare Plant List/Rare Plants:

Sarah Hinnners, Braydon Lake, Jared Higgs,

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Small UNPS Grants:

Bill King, Ron Bolander, Parker Lloyd, Cathy

King, and Jackie Grant

Website: Andrey Zharkikh, Cathy King, and John Stireman

Membership: Tony Stireman and Parker Lloyd

Annual Report:

Bill King, Cathy King

Nominating Committee: Jackie Grant

Arts and Photography:

Lifetime Achievement Award:

Cathy King

50th Anniversary Planning:

Zach Earl and Cathy King

Publicity, Communications, and Meetings:

Chapters and Chapter Presidents

Canyonlands: Diane Ackerman

Salt Lake: Cathy King

Website: For late-breaking news, the UNPS store (posters, etc.), the *Sego Lily* archives, Chapter events, sources of native plants, the digital Utah Rare Plant Field Guide at unps.org. Webmaster inquiries at unps@unps.org

Many thanks to Xmission.com for sponsoring our web-site.

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UNPS Chapter Map *Inactive

