

# Sego Lily

*Newsletter of the Utah Native Plant Society*

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## Wasatch Flower Festival 2005

Words and Photos by Patrick Nelson

For the third year running, the nonprofit Cottonwood Canyons Foundation has partnered with Alta Community Enrichment, Alta, Snowbird, Solitude and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest to highlight the biodiversity of Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons through the 2005 Wasatch Wildflower Festival.

While you can not TiVo or control a wildflower bloom with a remote control, we were able to pick the date with success this year- the bloom was great! The festival takes place each year the last weekend in July and has three different locations so as to maximize the number of wildflowers participants see. This year, the festival (July 29<sup>th</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>) took place at Solitude on Friday, Alta on Saturday and Snowbird on Sunday.

In 2004, over 323 festival goers learned about the wildflowers while this year (2005) we had over 538 participants! To achieve success, we rely heavily upon enthusiastic volunteers who lead tours. As the festival attendance keeps growing, more volunteers will be needed! I bet readers of a certain newsletter would be GREAT volunteers...

Volunteer training took place earlier in the month at Silver Lake with Wayne Padgett, the ecologist for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and in Albion Basin with resident expert Annie Crawley. With volunteers ranging from beginner to expert, these turned into roving parties while people discussed the finer points anything from pollinator flower selection to why the Jacobs Ladder smells different than the Western Wallflower. Everyone learned quite a bit and we more than had a lot of fun this year, including moose watching during both trainings!



A group of festival goers enjoying the wildflowers

During the hikes at the festival, common names of the plants and their ecological relationships were emphasized to introduce beginners to the ecology and watersheds of the Wasatch Mountains. While the flowers' scientific names are by far the most practical once you get into it, speaking a defunct foreign language in front of wildflower beginners just does not work! Shuttles, trams and ski lifts were used to get participants up into the flowers followed by a walk down. Other festival events included photography workshops, live music, a geology hike and children's activities.

Media coverage of the event was great this year as well, with mentions and articles in the Salt Lake Tribune, the Deseret News, Sky West Magazine, Sunset Magazine, Newsweek, Budget Traveler, the Park Record, etc. and TV coverage by Park City TV and Fox 13.

All in all, the point of the festival is not to promote recreation in the mountains, but to educate those already inclined to head up about the existing biodiversity and how to take care of it. What better way than to talk about the flowers? More information about the festival can be found online at [www.wasatchwildflowerfestival.org](http://www.wasatchwildflowerfestival.org). See you next year!



Richard Middleton and cub scouts

The Cottonwood Canyons Foundation is a nonprofit organization with mission of "Working to maintain and improve the environmental health of Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons through public education and stewardship." Working with the US Forest Service, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities, Alta, Brighton, Snowbird, Solitude etc, the nonprofit has many different projects. Aside from the Wasatch Wildflower Festival, it also maps noxious weeds and does other educational efforts such as winter snowshoe fieldtrips. Donations are welcome! Online at [www.cottonwoodcanyons.org](http://www.cottonwoodcanyons.org)

## WRIGHT FISHHOOK CACTUS IN WESTERN UTAH TO REMAIN AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced on August 3, 2005 that the Wright fishhook cactus remains listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

When first listed in 1979, five scattered cactus populations were known. Since then, large scale surveys have shown increased range and distribution of the species. However, overall the species is experiencing a population decline with fewer offspring surviving until they reach full maturity and reproductive age. Such factors as cactus borer beetle predation, cattle trampling and crushing by off-road vehicles contribute to the loss of the plant.

The Service was petitioned by the National Wilderness Institute in 1997 to de-list the Wright cactus due to "original data error." However, no data or new information was provided with this petition, as required, as rationale for a request to remove a species from the ESA list. Present data available to the Service at this time indicates further decline of the Wright fishhook cactus.

A 60-day comment period, which closes October 3, 2005 is open for the public to provide any information they may have on the cactus. Data, information, written comments and materials, or questions concerning this petition and finding should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Utah Ecological Services Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2369 West Orton Circle, Suite 50, West Valley City, UT 84119, Attention: Wright's Fishhook Cactus.

To read the full release go to <http://www.unps.org> click on the news link and then click more information

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit their home page at <http://www.fws.gov>



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# Natives in the News

These articles are re-produced with permission from the authors, thank you to Geoffrey Fattah, and Jeremy Twitchell of the Deseret News and Brett Prettyman of the Salt Lake Tribune. Research by Kelly McNulty

## Bees under seige: Mites munch on Utah insects

By [Geoffrey Fattah](#)  
Deseret Morning News

LOGAN — The honeybee is not only Utah's official insect, admired for its inspiring knack for hard work, but its home, the hive, is emblazoned as the state's symbol.

But now, Utah's beloved honeybee is under siege by an enemy that is threatening to wipe out beehives from not only Utah but from across the country.

The critter in question is officially known as *Varroa jacobsoni* Oudemans, or commonly known as the Varroa mite.

The tiny bloodsucking insect was first discovered in Java, an island in the Indian Ocean, more than 100 years ago. Since that time, it has infected beehives throughout Asia and hit the United States in the '80s via import of honeybee queens.

For years, beekeepers have controlled Varroa infestations using certain pesticides that do not harm bees. But scientists say new strains of mites, resistant to pesticides, have spread since winter — and with disastrous results. Reports by entomologists nationwide show that over the past six months an estimated 50 percent of beehives in the United States were wiped out, spelling potential disaster for fruit and nut growers. In California, which is responsible for more than 80 percent of almond production worldwide, they are predicting a global almond shortage due to the bee loss.

"The bee industry is estimating as many as 50 percent of the hives were lost," of the some 2.6 million hives in the United States, said lead USDA bee entomologist Rosalind James at Utah State University. "Local beekeepers have reported between 35 percent to 70 percent hive loss" over the winter. James and those involved in Utah's honey and fruit industries say the impact won't be felt until next spring, but they predict it could have a serious impact on Utah's agriculture, especially those farmers who depend on honeybees to pollinate crops. Because without pollination, fruits, melons and other crops simply don't grow.

The mite, a small cousin to the tick, is about the size of a pinhead. But for a bee, it's a huge parasite. "It's like having a tick the size of a squirrel on you," James said. The mite lays its eggs in the hive chamber where the honeybee larva is and feeds off the young bee until it hatches. The adult mite then attaches itself to the already weakened bee. James said the mite can spread to many other hives within a season via male drones, who lack the hive loyalty of their sisters and will wander between different hives.

Darren Cox's family has tended bees and harvested honey for four generations. To put the last winter into perspective, Cox said he has lost about 50 percent of his bees to the Varroa mite over the past 10 years. "Last winter, we've lost another 50 percent," Cox said. He knows of another out-

of-state beekeeper who used to tend more than 6,000 hives. "They ended up with only 250 hives," he said. Cox said beekeepers have tried to rebuild their hives by splitting existing hives to start new ones. However, this leaves hives that produce less honey. Cox said his company, Cox Honey, faces a financial strain. "I'm planning on a 30 percent loss between now and January," he said. "I'm not going to be able to break even with the price of fuel this year." Cox said state agriculture officials have helped by their willingness to approve any new treatments for Varroa mite, but he has seen no emergency assistance for beekeepers.

More and more, Cox said, beekeepers find the pollination business more lucrative than farming honey, renting out their hives to fruit and nut farmers. With the growing shortage of hives, Cox said hives that used to lease for \$50 to \$60 per season, per hive, went for \$125 to \$150 per hive last year. With the 50 percent loss, Cox said beekeepers estimate that the price will break \$200 per hive next year. It's a trend that could prove devastating to Utah fruit growers as farmers in California and other states vie to have Utah hives transported to their orchards, leaving Utah farmers in the lurch. "I've had calls from Arizona, Washington and even Wisconsin, from farmers looking for hives," Cox said.

This worries farmers like sweet-cherry grower Sheldon Ercanbrack of Orem. Like almonds, cherries pollinate best with honeybees. "Honeybees are very crucial for cherries," said Ercanbrack, also a board member of the Utah Horticulture Society. He has noticed honeybees seem weaker as of late. "It's almost as if they're burned out. Over the years, the bees don't seem to work as hard," he said. Ercanbrack said his orchard relies on having about 30 hives for pollination. News of the winter fatalities worries him as a farmer and as a Utahn.

"I guess we could say that it is a concern for us all. It's kind of like if we lost the seagull, our state bird. We all kind of take the bees for granted, that they'll be around. I don't think a lot of people understand that bees are an important factor in growing fruit, and if we didn't have them, that would be quite damaging," Ercanbrack said.

James said she knows the mite won't go down without a fight. Her team of entomologists at the USU Bee Lab have been finding alternatives to honeybees as pollinators, while at the same time, finding new ways to kill the Varroa mite.

Other bee species, such as the Alfalfa Leaf-cutting Bee and the Blue Orchard Bee, have shown some promise as effective pollinators. However, both species are social, yet solitary, insects who don't live together in hives but rather tubes — and they don't produce honey. USU researches have also found that a type of green fungus has proven fatal to Varroa mite, but it has no adverse effect on bees. James said they are currently doing biogenetic tests to find a strain of green fungus that can be marketed as a treatment for mite infestation.

Cox said he is working with USU on several test hives and the results look promising. He doubts, however, that any product using the fungus will be on the market before next fall. James said untreated hives have a 75 percent to 100 percent fatality rate but only one out of six hives treated with the fungus has died. Because a pathogen instead of a pesticide is being used, the bees are less likely to develop a resistance to the treatment, he added. "I think beekeepers are proud to have the symbol of the beehive on the state flag," Cox said, but he added beekeepers will need help to keep the honeybee buzzing in Utah.

## Endangered Utah flower gets its very own lawsuit

By Jeremy Twitchell  
Deseret Morning News

**BIRDSEYE, Utah County** — A resident of this small town recently became the subject of a national lawsuit.

The target is not a militiaman or a polygamist, or any of the other usual controversial figures that frequent rural Utah. It's a shrubby, endangered flower with a strange name, the Deseret milk-vetch. The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. by the Utah Native Plant Society, the Center for Native Ecosystems and Forest Guardians. The suit requests that the Department of the Interior make the Utah Fish and Wildlife Service designate a critical habitat to protect the flower and develop a recovery plan to help it proliferate.



The Deseret milk-vetch, or *Astragalus desereticus*, grows only in an area near Birdseye, Utah County.  
Tony Frates, UNPS

"What's basically prompting this lawsuit is that no recovery plan has been adopted and we're basically running out of time," said Tony Frates, of the Utah Native Plant Society. The Deseret milk-vetch, or *Astragalus desereticus*, is known to grow in only one place in the world, an area of slightly less than 300 acres near U.S. 89 between Birdseye and Thistle. The groups who filed the lawsuit say urban sprawl in the area and the possible expansion of the highway pose a critical threat to the survival of the species and action must be taken.

And while officials from wildlife services agree that the flower needs to be protected, they say the situation is not as urgent as the lawsuit indicates. "It's all just potential," said Larry England, a botanist for the agency. "Our concern for this species has been superseded by concerns for other species that are in greater danger. We do not see a great urgency (in this case)."

When the Deseret milk-vetch was placed on the endangered list in 1999, England said wildlife services decided not to designate the area as a critical habitat for the flower (as the lawsuit requests) because doing so would offer no real additional protection. "When the flower was listed, we considered a critical habitat was not necessary for the conservation of the species," he said. "We're working on a recovery plan for the flower, and we'd like to have it done sooner than later."

Frates said he doesn't believe the agency has been criminally negligent in its treatment of the flower, but it should have done a better job by establishing a critical habitat. "(The Deseret milk-vetch) has definitely suffered some neglect, but it's not willful or wanton neglect," he said. Frates said the problem is that state agencies receive very little funding to protect endangered species, and some species slip through the cracks as priorities are made. However, he said Congress has an additional fund set aside for instances where a court forces state agencies to protect additional species. "The sad thing is that these lawsuits are almost like grant applications," Frates said. "But over the long run, the actions we take now will save taxpayers money."

Erin Robertson is a staff biologist for the Center for Native Ecosystems, a Denver-based conservation group. She said one of the additional purposes of the lawsuit is to raise awareness concerning the Deseret milk-vetch. "Just getting people to sit down and think about how to save this flower would be helpful," she said.

The Deseret milk-vetch was first collected and identified in 1893, then again in 1981. According to the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources, the flower grows on sandy-gravelly terrains, usually on west- or south-facing mountain slopes. Robertson said not much else is known about the flower, including why it thrives in that limited area or if it could be transplanted to another habitat. She said if the lawsuit is successful, the recovery plan would provide more information about the flower and how to save it.

When the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1975, the Smithsonian Institution included the Deseret milk-vetch on its list of plants that should be protected, but it was left off the official list because it was believed to be extinct. Botanists rediscovered the flower in 1981, and in 1999 it was added to the endangered list.

"We've almost lost it once before, and now that we have a good fight with public land involved, we need to do all we can to save it," Robertson said.

This next event has already taken place but it's not too late to get up into the mountains and see the spectacular wildflower display. Brett also gives you some good locations to go to. See Patrick Nelson's review of the festival on the front page.

## Call of the wildflower Enjoy the high-country blooms alone or hike with others at the festival

**By Brett Prettyman**  
The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah's high-elevation wildflower explosion is on schedule for the first week of August. Some folks expect this to be the best wildflower season in years due to excellent snowpack over the winter. Wayne Padgett, forest ecologist for the U.S. Forest Service's Wasatch-Cache National Forest, says there is no doubt the extra water is helping, but he thinks the drought also may have played a role.

"It will be an incredible year and moisture is what did it, but I believe the drought may have had something to do with it as well," he said. "We had six years of drought and plants under stress do everything they can to survive and place more energy into reproducing. This is speculation on my part, but I think it helps create a better bloom than if we had several years of good moisture."



Fireweed and Aspen in Mineral Fork Canyon. (Al Hartmann/The Salt Lake Tribune )

**Wildflower conservation and etiquette**  
Like all natural treasures on public lands, wildflowers should be protected for all to enjoy. The Forest Service offers these tips when visiting its lands or land managed by its sister agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.

Take only photographs and memories when you leave.  
Please, don't pick the flowers.  
Tread lightly and stay on the trail.  
Don't be afraid to ask for information on wildflowers.  
Get Involved by exploring volunteer opportunities on public lands.



Blue Columbine in blossom in Albion Basin. (Al Hartmann/The Salt Lake Tribune )

**Where to see high country wildflowers**

- Alta's Albion Basin in Little Cottonwood Canyon
- Silver Lake boardwalk near Brighton in Big Cottonwood Canyon
  - Meadows at the top of Farmington Canyon
  - Tony Grove Reservoir in Logan Canyon
    - Mount Timpanogos
    - Bald Mountain in the Uinta Mountains
    - Nebo Loop
- Ski resorts across the state (many offer summer lift service)
  - Mineral Basin area of American Fork Canyon

## Last Board Meeting for Terri Williams



The board are very sorry to lose Terri Williams, who has been the Secretary for UNPS and makes taking the minutes look easy! Terri is moving out of State for personal reasons and we all wish her well. She will be missed!

This photo was taken in Logan Canyon at our most recent board meeting. From L-R Celeste Kennard, Gene Schupp, Terri Williams, Mary Barkworth, Bill Gray and Dave Wallace.

Photo courtesy of Jackie Freshwater.

## Calendar of Events

Please note that some of the August events listed *may have already taken place*. For the most up-to-date events lists go to our website [www.unps.org](http://www.unps.org) and click on the "calendar" link.

### August

- August 26th : Mushroom Society of Utah Annual Fall foray.  
The Foray runs from Friday August 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday August 29<sup>th</sup> and will include a presentation by Dr. Orson K Miller Followed by field trips with Dr. Miller along the Mirror Lake Highway.

Camping at Pine Valley A Group campsite has been reserved in the Pine Valley Campground, this year it's Group Site B. Pine Valley is at mile marker 10 on highway 150.

Kids Contest : Prizes for the smallest, most colorful and most unique. Awards to be made after dinner Saturday evening which will be followed by a slide show

Informal review and discussion on Sunday

For the full Foray Schedule e-mail me at [plonghur@xmission.com](mailto:plonghur@xmission.com) or contact

Ardean Watts at 801-581-1931 or Don Johnston at 801-942-0637

## September

- September 10th : Jordan Valley Water Conservation District Garden Fair, 8am - 2pm at the Demonstration Gardens (in the car park at the front of the building). Lots of displays and experts will be on hand for those of you wishing to “slow the flow”, learn more about irrigation methods or visit the UNPS booth to learn more about the native plants of Utah.
- September 17 : Utah Valley will be holding their fall plant sale from 9am to noon. The sale locations will be 1194 Grand Avenue in Provo. Plants and seeds will be available for a wide range of native Utah species, provided by chapter members and co-operating native plant growers. Fall is a great time to establish potted plants and sow native seeds.
- September 27th : All UNPS members are invited to a lecture on global warming entitled **“Alpine Vegetation in a Changing World: Looking Down from Alaska”**  
The lecture will take place at Red Butte Gardens at 7.30pm and is free to all UNPS members. The speaker will be Steven MacLean Ph.D., emeritus professor of Biology and Ecology at the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Dr MacLean will focus on the effects of global warming as are now occurring in Alaska and the Arctic and question what can be expected to occur in the future in Utah's Alpine/Sub-alpine mountain areas. This event is co-sponsored by Marie Griffiths and the Salt Lake Chapter of UNPS

## FYI

### Native Plants on TV

Tune in! The National Wildlife Federation has teamed up with Animal Planet to create BACKYARD HABITAT, a new television series that makes the planet a better place for animals, one backyard at a time. Hosted by David Mizejewski of the National Wildlife Federation and TV personality Molly Pesce, each episode presents fun and simple ways to attract wildlife to your property, whether it's a balcony in the city or a large backyard. From butterfly gardens to turtle ponds to bird feeders, learn how to build, landscape and create a certified habitat at home where you can enjoy the simple pleasures nature has to offer every day. Premieres August 15 and airs weekdays at 11:00 AM E/P (that's 9.00 AM AM Utah time) through September.

### Salt Lake Chapter Wildflower Walks with Bill Gray

We have had a number of informal wildflower walks, and plan to continue them about once a week into the Fall. The aim is just to get out there, enjoy this spectacular year, and learn more about the natives. Venues have included the various foothills, Mill Creek Canyon, Big Cottonwood (Mill D) and Killyon's Canyon off of Emigration.

Most recently 10 of us rode the Snowbird tram and hiked across to the summit of Mt. Baldy at 11,000 ft to see some of the alpine plants. Although it looks so bare at first, little gems keep showing up among the rocks - Mountain Death Camas (*Zigadenus elegans*), Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*), Cushion Phlox (*Phlox pulvinata*), Red Sandwort (*Arenaria rubella*) and many others. We looked for, but couldn't locate the endemic *Ivesia gordonii*. Stealing the show, and not at all shy, were the Old Man of the Mountains (*Hymenoxys grandiflora*) and Silvery Lupine (*Lupinus argenteus*). They seemed to like each other's company. If you would like to be included, please contact Bill at [cyberflora@xmission.com](mailto:cyberflora@xmission.com). e-mail is essential, as that is the only way I can contact a lot of people on short notice.

## Autumn Buttercup Reintroduction Project

On August 11, the Department of the Interior announced various cost share grants awarded by the US Fish & Wildlife Service under four grant programs.

In Utah, under the Private Stewardship Grants Program, a project was approved for Autumn Buttercup Reintroduction in Sevier River Valley (Garfield County) by The Nature Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy, working with the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, The Arboretum at Flagstaff, and Utah Valley State College, will help to prevent extinction of the endangered autumn buttercup by re-introducing plants grown in captivity through a public-private partnership.

Our congratulations go to Elaine York of The Nature Conservancy and Dr. Renee Van Buren at UVSC for making this happen!

For more information about the grants, see <http://www.fws.gov/>.

For more information about the autumn buttercup, go to

[http://www.utahrareplants.org/rpg\\_species.html](http://www.utahrareplants.org/rpg_species.html) and click on the link for *Ranunculus aestivalis*.

## Wipe Your Feet!

Excerpted from article by Ellen Jacquart, TNC Indiana Chapter, inpaws journal Summer '05

Most of you are aware of what invasive species are doing to natural areas around Utah. Many of you are actively fighting back in various ways from pulling noxious weeds to planting only non-invasive plants in your garden.

Want to know one more very simple thing you can do to help? *Wipe your feet!*

Invasive plants move around in many ways – fruits that are carried away by birds, seeds that catch on animals' fur, seeds designed to be spread by wind or water. Some of our invasive plants, though, are moved primarily by - you.

Invasive plants that have small seeds can be picked up and carried in boot treads, bike or car tires, and horses hooves. It is no secret that the first places we find invasives are by parking lots and trail heads. From there, the invasives use unwitting visitors to move their progeny further and further into the area.

To make sure you are not spreading these species, use a stiff brush to get the dirt off your boots before and after hiking in a natural area. Preferably, do this brushing in an area nowhere near the natural area, but if you're going to brush your boots at the site, try to do it over a parking lot where plants have less chance of establishing. Anything that sprouts around the parking lot will be seen and removed by the natural area manager before it can spread.

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Utah Ladyfinger  
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For latest UNPS and Utah native plant news go to:  
[www.unps.org](http://www.unps.org)  
and click on News

## Utah Native Plant Society Membership and Information

New Member    Renewal    Gift

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check membership category desired:

- Student            \$9.00
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- Corporate            \$500.00
- Lifetime              \$250.00
- Please send a complimentary copy of the Segó Lily to the above individual.

Please enclose a check, payable to Utah Native Plant Society and send it to:

Membership ,  
Utah Native Plant Society  
P.O.Box 520041,  
Salt Lake City,  
Utah 84152-0041

### UTAH NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

President: Susan Garvin  
President Elect: Mindy Wheeler  
Chairmen: Larry Meyer/Dave Wallace  
Treasurer: Celeste Kennard  
Secretary: Terri Williams  
Newsletter Editor: Paula Longhurst

For more information about the Utah Native Plant Society call:

Bill King: 582-0432  
Susan Garvin: 356-5108  
Or write to: [unps@unps.org](mailto:unps@unps.org)

Many thanks to Xmission for sponsoring the Utah Native Plant Society website.

Please direct all suggestions, articles and events for the newsletter to Paula Longhurst at [plonghur@xmission.com](mailto:plonghur@xmission.com).  
**The deadline for next issue is 8th October**

### CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

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