



Geraea canescens - Dennis Ghiglieri

NORTHERN NEVADA NEWS

April 7 - Lea Condon, a 2013 recipient of NNPS' Margaret Williams Research Grant, will give a talk entitled *Biological Soil Crusts of the Great Basin: An Examination of their Distribution, Recovery and Influences on Native Plant Communities Following Fire*.

Join Lea and Jan, our program chair, before the meeting for dinner at 5:30 at

Great Full Gardens, 555 South Virginia Street.

The meeting will be in room 300G of the Fleischman Agriculture Building on the UNR campus, north of 9th Street and Evans Avenue. Park in the lot on the southeast corner of Evans and Record Way.

Enter the building under the breezeway on the west side near the street. There's an elevator at the east end of the building. Meet on the third floor and down the hall from the UNR herbarium.

Social time starts at 7:00 PM and the program starts at 7:30. The outside door will be automatically locked at 7:30.

April 9 - Join us for the second annual Great Monkey-flower Hunt. It's been a good year for monkey-flowers and they are already starting to bloom in late March. This year's monkey-flower search will be at Jack's Valley at 10 AM in the area south of the elementary school. Park in the dirt lot on the west side of the Jack's Valley Elementary School on Jack's Valley Road (south end of Carson City). We will walk east and south from the parking area toward the city wells (large concrete boxes.) If the weather forecast predicts rain, snow, or high winds, we will reschedule for April 16. Check the website for updates.

April 24 - Earth Day at Idlewild Park, Reno, 10 AM to 6 PM. Join us to spread the word about native plants. If you would like to volunteer to help at the booth, please email Janel at president@nvnps.org to let her know when you can be there.

May 5 - Picnic at the Pollinator Garden at UNR, 5:30 PM. Bring a hand lens, folding chair or lawn blanket, finger food to share, and your own beverage.

Meet in the pollinator garden behind the Fleischman Ag building at UNR. If you haven't been there before, follow the usual directions to the herbarium, but instead of turning to enter the building,

pass through the breezeway and turn right to enter the garden area.

If the weather turns unpleasant we will retreat to our usual meeting location in the herbarium classroom.

May 5 - NNPS members are invited to attend the May 5th meeting of the Orchid Society of Northern Nevada where Curtis Green will present a program on Native Orchids of the Sierra Nevada. The OSNN meets at the Moana Nursery Landscape Center, 1100 W. Moana Lane, Reno at 7 PM. Please note that this meeting overlaps with the NNPS picnic at the UNR Herbarium.

SOUTHERN NEVADA NEWS

Southern Nevada Meetings are held in Henderson the first Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 PM at the U.S. Geological Survey office at 160 North Stephanie Street.

The Southern Nevada program coordinators are Gary Reese (GReese@logansimpson.com) and Jennifer Brickey (jennybe2@hotmail.com) If you would like email updates for southern Nevada events, please email Gary and ask to be added to the list.

BAKER'S CEANOTHUS REDISCOVERED

C*eanothus x bakeri* was originally collected in Kings Canyon above Carson City in 1902, but hadn't been reported since. Jeffrey Bisbee of Gardnerville set out relocate the plants and made several field trips to Kings Canyon without finding the ceanothus. Finally, Jeffrey discovered a group of



about 20 plants a short distance from the east shore of Lake Tahoe near Chimney Beach, approximately 8 km west of Kings Canyon.

Comparisons of the leaves of these plants match those of the original collection, and the low, spreading habit of the specimens differentiates them from *Ceanothus cuneatus* (which has similar leaves) and *C. pauciflorus*. While there are some low growing forms of *C. cuneatus*, they are only found on ultramafic soils that are not present at this site. Fruits were not noted in the original collection, but the newly found plants have wrinkled, green fruits with thick, stubby horns near the apex.



If you happen across Baker's ceanothus during your travels, please note its location and let either Jeffery (bispanal@gmail.com) or the Nevada Natural Heritage Program (heritage.nv.gov/submit) know.

THE GREAT 2016 DESERT WILDFLOWER BLOOM!

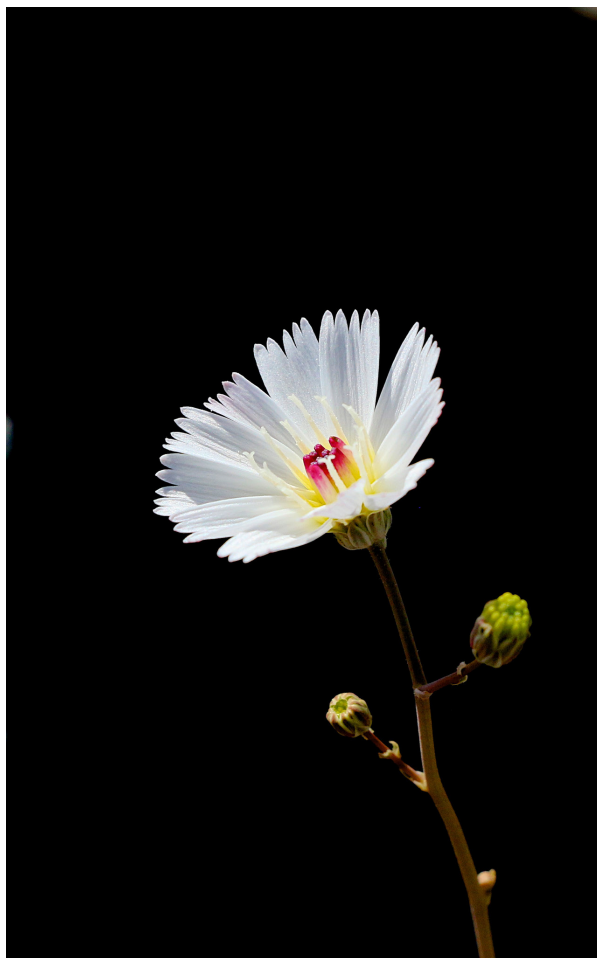


▲ *Geraea canescens* (desert gold)

▼ *Eremalche rotundifolia* (desert five-spot mallow)

As visitors to Death Valley National Park and Mojave Desert areas in southern Nevada, we were treated to extravagant displays of desert wildflowers in February and March this year. Entire bajadas such as Copper Canyon in the Park were brilliant yellow from millions of *Geraea canescens* (desert gold) all the way from southern end of the park north to the Beatty cutoff road to Daylight Pass. *Camissonia brevipes* (golden evening primrose) added to the yellow palette to the north. We were lucky to see displays of this plant on the first of our two trips as herds of tomato hornworms had defoliated the primrose along the Beatty cutoff road on our later trip in March.





▲ *Atrichoseris platyphylla* (gravel ghost)

▼ *Xylorhiza tortifolia* var. *tortifolia* (Mojave aster)



Mixed in with the yellows were white *Atrichoseris platyphylla* (gravel ghost), purple phacelias (notch leaf and calthaleaf) and pink/purple *Nama demissum* (purple mat), pink *Eremalche rotundifolia* (desert five-spot) and *Abronia villosa* (desert verbena). A stroll through the desert washes revealed some of the smaller flowers, such as two dainty white daisies (*Monoptilon bellioides* and *Perityle emoryi*), two primroses - *Camissonia boothii* ssp. *condensata* (shredding evening primrose) and brown-eyed evening primrose (*Camissonia claviformis*) and brilliant pink *Mimulus bigelovii* (Bigelow monkey-flower). Hiking up canyons into the higher elevations brought discoveries of Death Valley endemics, such as rock monkey flower (*Mimulus rupicola*) which grows in cracks on limestone cliffs, as well as light violet *Phacelia fremontii* and delicate white *Cryptantha utahensis* (scented cryptantha) which perfumed the area. Near Daylight Pass we found an endemic ephedra (*Ephedra funerea*) sheltering the weak-stemmed white sunflower, *Rafinesquia neomexicana* (desert chicory).

Wondering what other spots in the Mojave Desert might be exploding into bloom, we spent a couple of days exploring the flora of Cottonwood Cove, Davis Dam, and Grapevine Canyon south of Las Vegas and east and south of Searchlight. *Anemone tuberosa* (desert windflower), purple *Salvia columbariae* (chia), and white and pink *Eriogonum fasciculatum* (Eastern Mojave buckwheat) were blooming in Grapevine Canyon. Elegant pink *Palafoxia arida* (Spanish needles) and purple and white Arizona lupine graced the sandy hills of Cottonwood Cove, along with a mix of



▲ *Mimulus bigelovii* var. *bigelovii* (Bigelow's monkey-flower)

white *Rafinesquia neomaxicana* (desert chicory), shrubs, and sand verbenas.

While many of the earlier blooms were fading out in all of these desert areas in mid-March, there were many more wildflowers still budding, especially in the higher elevations, including the huge white blooms of the three desert yucca. Visitors to the Mojave Desert may still find some of this year's rainbows of remarkable wildflowers into April.

Visitors should look up the weather forecast to plan a trip in order to avoid the higher temperatures (90 degrees plus) or the occasional desert storms and wind. We've found that timing a visit during the week usually results in our finding

an available campsite before noon as well as thinner crowds of flower admirers and photographers. Alternatively, one can make reservations at some park campgrounds and at other park lodging or simply car-camp along unpaved roads at least a mile from highways or find less expensive indoor lodging east of Death Valley.

As we left Death Valley, we wondered if it would be another ten years before the next spectacular Mojave desert wildflower show.

*Story by Rose Strickland
Photos by Dennis Ghiglieri*

More of Dennis' photographs can be seen here:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/99804080@N00/sets/72157665264266102>



▲ *Psathyrotes ramosissima* (desert turtleback)

▼ *Castilleja chromosa* (Desert paintbrush)



Nevada Native Plant Society
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