



NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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SOCIETY NEWS

NORTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

October 5 – Rare Plants in Real Life: Case studies from a mine, a water pipeline, and a highway presented by Kris Kuyper, Biology Program Manager for EM Strategies.

November 2 – Janel Johnson, NNPS President, will provide us with an overview of iNaturalist.org, a website to share your natural history observations and help others identify their contributions.

SOUTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

October 2 – TBA

November 6 – Friends in Low Places: Plant Facilitation in Nevada's Harsh Ecosystems by Nicole Hupp, ecologist with the National Park Service Inventory & Monitoring Program, 6:30-7:30 PM. Meet at the U.S. Geological Survey office at 160 North Stephanie Street in Henderson. This was originally scheduled in September.

If you would like email updates for Southern Nevada events, please email Lesley DeFalco at defalco@usgs.gov.

Events subject to change.
Visit nvnp.org for updates.

AGAVES, YUCCAS AND THEIR KIN

SEVEN GENERA OF THE SOUTHWEST

Jon L. Hawker. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2016. Paperback, 430 pp.
ISBN 978-0-896-72939-1, \$49.95
Available at from Texas Tech University Press and on Amazon

Book review by Ann Pinzl



Last October, my husband and I drove through the American Southwest. No flowers were prominent so it was mostly drive-by perennial viewing. The larger succulents caught my eye and while I knew some of them, others were unfamiliar. Clearly, I needed a guide book.

I lucked out when we arrived at the Chiricahua National Monument east of Tucson in the southeast corner of Arizona. The visitor center's book store had a botany section with several of the standard and familiar offerings. Then I spotted a new contribution: **Agaves, Yuccas and Their Kin - Seven Genera of the Southwest** by Jon L. Hawker. The states included are: Arizona, California, Nevada(!), New Mexico, and Utah, so the book is pertinent for us, especially the southern part of our state.

One aspect of likely interest is that Hawker has made the effort to be average-citizen friendly. The six page introduction makes good reading and explains the author's approach, for example:

- English rather than metric units are used, except for elevations, where metric units are appended. He also utilizes a novel measurement in some of his photos – the Kelly Unit, the length of the author's dog, Kelly, or approximately 24 inches. There are numerous photos, not only of Kelly the dog, but also of aspects of the plants.
- Common names take precedence, although technical names are provided with each discussion. Be aware that you cannot easily use a scientific name to look up plants in the index.
- Range maps are included for each species (or subspecies/variety which get separate entries). The maps are based on several sources (including apparent exhaustive field work by the author), but are not to be taken as precise statements of occurrence as most are admittedly "overdrawn."
- A brief discussion of taxonomic "confusion" among the genera covered in the introduction with more coverage in group discussions.

Groups covered in the book are:

- Agaves - *Agave*
- Sotols - *Dasyllirion*
- False Agaves - *Hechtia* (the only genus/group not in the asparagus family, *Asparagaceae* - most are found in Mexico)
- False Yuccas - *Hesperaloe* (related to *Hesperoyucca*)
- Chaparral Yuccas - *Hesperoyucca*
- Beargrasses - *Nolina*
- Yuccas - *Yucca*

As for Nevada, it is represented with:

- Three Agaves:
Ivory-spined Agave - *Agave utahensis* ssp. *eborispina*; **Clark Mountain Agave** - *Agave utahensis* ssp. *nevadensis*; and **Utah Agave** - *Agave utahensis* ssp. *utahensis*.
- One *Nolina*:
Bigelow Beargrass - *Nolina bigelovii*.
- Six Yuccas:
Banana Yucca - *Yucca baccata* var. *baccata*; **Miniature Joshua Tree** - *Yucca brevifolia* var. *jaegeriana*; **Joshua Tree** - *Yucca brevifolia* var. *brevifolia*; **Harriman's Yucca** - *Yucca harrimaniae*; **Mohave Yucca** - *Yucca schidigera*; and **Utah Yucca** - *Yucca utahensis*.

By the way, these are the same plants recognized for Nevada by Stephen Ingram (who spoke at a northern NNPS meeting in September 2008, as some might remember) in his 2008 book, **Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada**, except that he didn't count the two varieties of *Yucca brevifolia* as separate entries.

While the overall content of the book is excellent, the page layout is inconsistent and written descriptions may be placed alongside maps or photos of different species, requiring one to place close attention to captions. Nevertheless, I still recommend this book as a guide to take along on your next trip through the Southwest.



▲ *Yucca brevifolia* var. *brevifolia* near Railroad Pass in the Montezuma Range - R. Tietje



▲ *Yucca harrimaniae* - J. Johnson



◀ *Nolina bigelovii* - CK Kelly
(inaturalist.org/observations/7512233 - creativecommons.org)

▼ *Agave utahensis* ssp. *nevadensis* - slothiker
(inaturalist.org/observations/5573475 - creativecommons.org)



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