THE PENSTEMANIAC

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY
Volume No. 9, Issue No. 2—http://apsdev.org—Spring 2015

From the President

Despite the continuing news of drought in California, recent spring rains have prompted a bonanza of annual flowers in the foothills of Northern California. Val Myrick told me the foothills near her in Sonoma are covered with a flush of Clarkia and other annuals. A visit to the Plumas County wildflower website shows wildflowers like checker bloom, spotted coralroot, camas, lupines, violets, Hartweg's iris, mule's ear, orchard morning glory, mountain lady slippers in bloom. Sure, these are not penstemons, but it does indicate a good possibility of penstemons in bloom, as well as other later-flowering perennials and annuals. I also saw that one of the highways leading to Lassen Peak was closed in mid-May because of snowfall. Another indication that we will see flowers in July.

As a reminder, the meeting will be held in Chico CA, July 10-13, 2015. Outings to the Weaverville and Feather River areas into the Sierra foothills will have trips running simultaneously on Saturday and Sunday. Further details The Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is planning the post-meeting trip on Monday, which will take us into Lassen National Park. The registration form is posted on the APS website (click on "here" at the bottom of the page to print a PDF form) and payment can be made either online by PayPal or by check to the registrar, Val Myrick.

Friday's schedule at the Dorothy Johnson Center in Chico will begin with the Board Meeting at 2:00 pm (all members are welcome to attend); general check-in is at 4:00 pm; and dinner is at 6:00 pm. Following dinner, presentations will be 7:00 pm to 8:45 pm. Saturday dinner also will be at 6:00 pm at the Center. Both Friday and Saturday dinners are included in the registration. Sunday dinner is on your own.

We have had 12 new members since the posting of the February newsletter. Again, I think the growth of our society is because of members promoting our society wherever plant people gather – at garden centers, at master gardener meetings, and at various plant society meetings.

Hope to see all of you in Chico.

Randy Tatroe

President, APS

Bumpass-hell-from-entrance (credit National Park Service Lassen Volcanic National Park)

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A Note From Marjorie McNairn Guide, California Native Plant Society Monday Field Trip July 13, 2015

I can tell you that Lassen Park is a unique area with much to offer. This month the Park is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the last eruption of Mt. Lassen in 1915. All four types of volcanos found in the world are represented in Lassen Park. Three of those can be seen from Lassen Park Hwy. The Park contains a mini-Yellowstone Park with hot sulfur springs, mud pots, and fumaroles. The elevation of the highway rises from about 5000 feet at the northern entrance to 8512 feet at the highest point below Mt. Lassen, which makes it the highest road in the Cascade Mountains. There are about 700 species of plants in the Park, of which 23 are rare, and 10 are penstemons. Each trail is unique in its wildflower display, and I will be previewing the flora prior to your meeting to see which trails would be best at that time for wildflower viewing.

Some options are:

1. Brokeoff Mountain trail to Forest Lake and back (3 miles round trip)
2. Bumpass Hell and back (3 miles round trip) Or 4 miles one way to Kings Creek Picnic area with car shuttle (website currently lists this one as closed due to snow)
3. Kings Creek meadows and Kings Creek Falls (2 miles round trip)
4. Terrace, Shadow and Cliff Lakes (3.4 miles round trip)

Participants will need to bring boots or sturdy shoes, lunch and water. Whether or not they will need to bring their lunch on the trail with a backpack will depend on the particular trail. Keep in mind it is the highest mountain in the area, and weather can be unpredictable at times.

From the Editor: Members can find a complete list of the penstemons growing in the park, plus ALL the flora and fauna there by going to Lassen Volcanic National Park website. From the column on the left, ("Explore This Park") choose "Learn about the Park", then Nature where many plant and animal choices are offered. To find the ten penstemon species, choose "Native Plants", then scroll down through the plant families alphabetically to *Scrophulariaceae* and then Genus *Penstemon*. There will be a complete list of possible species handed out on Friday night.

Terrace, Shadow, & Cliff Lakes Trails (credit National Park Service website)

P. rydbergii v oreocharis, purple, Dead Man'sPass (Maffitt)

Chico—A College Town With A Romantic Past

Val Myrick, Sonora, California

Even as a Northern Californian, I knew little about this Sacramento Valley town four hours north of us. I had noticed that it is a popular place for our local students to finish their four year degrees, though not as popular as the coastal universities. Our students found there a bit of their hometown's advantage of being able to access the wild-lands for fishing and hiking. So, I figured, this must be a pretty nice place to be.

Although Chico is a small city of 100,000, Chico State's 17,000 students bring many cultural, shopping, and dining opportunities to town. There are quite a few muse-ums, galleries, and historical homes to visit. The National Yo-Yo Museum can even be found downtown. The famous Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, with tours available, is a short walk from out meeting location. Vineyards seem to abound – no surprise there, this being California! If you are in town Thursday night, you might choose to attend the downtown's Farmer's Market and Street Festival, 6 to 9 p.m. on Broadway from 2nd to 5th Street including City Plaza.

The town's Big Chi-co Creek is the demar-cation line between the Cascades to the north and the Sierra Nevadas to the south.

Chico's Bidwell Park, a 3,670 acre pre-serve, brings the foothills right into town. One can hike, bike, ride, or drive it. Many swimming holes help relieve the summer's heat.

During the past twenty years, Chico has won many best awards: Best Place to Retire, Best Green Place to Live, Best Bike Town, one of the Best Small Art Towns, to name a few.

Although we come to see the penstemons, having a nice town to return to each evening adds to our enjoyment. Come and see if Chico makes it onto one of your "Best Place to..." lists.

Chico Lodging

Several members have asked about places to stay in Chico. There are many motels to choose from as well as a few B &Bs. Our meeting location, the Dorothy Johnson Center, 775 E. 16th Street, is downtown. However, the motels on Business 99 are only a couple of miles away.

Member Dave Bentzin checked out some of the motels for us. Here are a few to consider as well as their prices last time he looked:

On Business 99

Holiday Inn Chico	$340/3 nights
Courtyard by Marriott Chico	$321 / 3 nights

Neither has breakfast included but both have restau-rants and are located in an area with many fast food places.

Downtown

Quality Inn Near Chico State	$105 per night + tax

Continental breakfast included.

P. deustus var suffrutescens, pink stripes (Maffitt)

Smoke, Seed Germination, and Penstemons

Paula J. Fornwalt, Research Ecologist.
USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Recent research has shown that exposing seeds to smoke stimulates germination for hundreds of plant species, representing many families, genera, and ecosystems from around the world (Jefferson and others, 2014). Germination of smoke-stimulated species is cued by chemical compounds that are created during the combustion of all plant-based material (Flematti and others 2004, 2011). Smoke-stimulated germination is particularly common for species from ecosystems where fire was a frequent historical disturbance, but species from ecosystems where this was not the case have been shown to be stimulated as well (Brown and others 1994; Pierce and others 1995; Moreira and others 2010).

Interestingly, seeds of several penstemon species have responded favorably to smoke in laboratory settings. For example, Abella (2009), working with seeds of 8 species native to dry conifer forests of Arizona, found that smoke enhanced germination for 5 of them: *P. barbatus (beardlip penstemon), P. pachyphyllus* (thickleaf beardtongue), *P. palmeri* (Palmer's penstemon), *P. rostriflorus* (Bridge penstemon), and *P. virgatus* (upright blue beardtongue). Likewise, smoke has been shown to stimulate seed germination in *P. centranthifolius* (scarlet bugler), a California chaparral species, and in *P. cobaea* (cobaea beardtongue), a species native to Texas (Keeley and Fotheringham 1998; Schwilk and Zavala 2012).

Seed germination for other penstemon species also may be enhanced by smoke, yet they have not been examined. Therefore, I evaluated whether smoke exposure influenced germination for 10 penstemon species native to the Interior West of North America (Table 1). Because germination for many penstemon species is improved by cold-moist stratification treatments, and because smoke has the potential to act as a substitute for stratification (Schwilk and Zavala 2012), I evaluated smoke influenced germination for both stratified and non-stratified seeds. The American Penstemon Society greatly contributed to this work, by providing funding as well as seeds for many of the species examined.

Two methods are commonly used to treat seeds with smoke—exposing seeds to gaseous smoke, and soaking seeds in a smokewater solution. I employed the latter method by diluting Regen 2000 ®, a commercially available smokewater concentrate, with water to make a 2% smokewater solution, and soaking seeds in this solution for 12 hours.

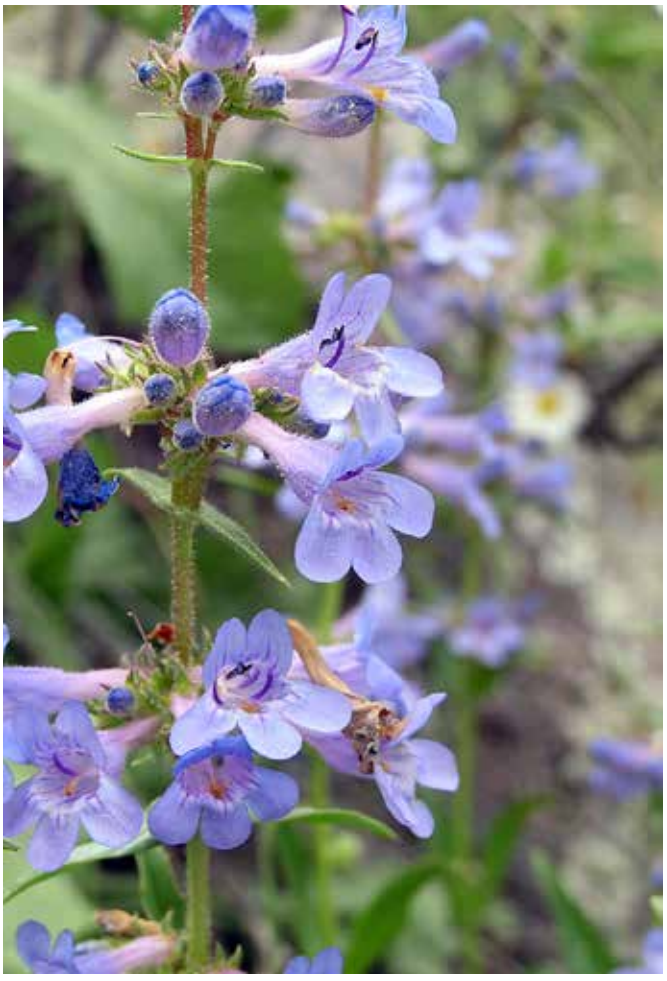
P. whippleanus (Fornwalt)

Percent germination for 4 of the 10 species had a statistically significant response to smoke treatments. *P. secundiflorus*, *P. strictus*, and *P. unilateralis* germination was stimulated by smoke. *P. secundiflorus* and *P. strictus* germination was **2- and 3-fold greater** for smoked than for non-smoked seeds, respectively, regardless of whether seeds had been stratified. For *P. unilateralis*, the response to smoke depended on whether or not the seeds had been stratified; smoke did not impact germination for *P. unilateralis* seeds that were not stratified, but it **stimulated germination 2-fold** for stratified seeds. *P. rydbergii* germination was inhibited by smoke for all stratification treatments, with germination of smoked seeds **slightly lower (20% lower)** than that of non-smoked seeds.

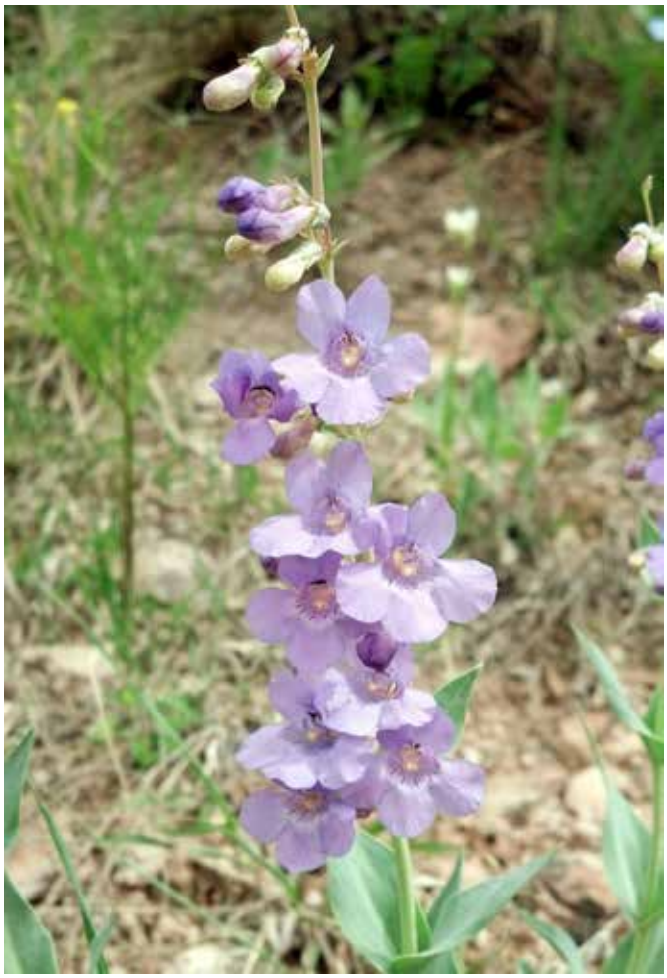
These findings contribute to a small but growing body of evidence that penstemon seed germination is often benefitted by exposure to smoke. Of the 18 penstemon

species which have now been tested for germination responses to smoke, 10 responded positively (Keeley and Fotheringham 1998; Abella 2009; Schwilk and Zavala 2012). While the smoke-stimulated increase in germination for some of these species was small and likely to be of only modest ecological or horticultural significance (such as for the three smoke-stimulated species in my study), for others, the increase was marked (such as *P. barbatus*, which increased **8-fold from 8 to 61%** following smoke treatments; Abella 2009).

While the focus of my experiment was to examine smoke's role in impacting germination, stratification more often produced a statistically significant effect. Percent germination for 6 species, *P. auriberbis*, P. *eriantherus*, *P. glaber*, *P. rydbergii*, *P. secundiflorus*, and *P. strictus*, was influenced by 10 weeks of stratification. Each of these species exhibiting higher germination rates for stratified than for non-stratified seeds. *P. auriberbis*, *P. eriantherus* and *P. secundiflorus* were the most responsive to stratification treatments; these species exhibited **63-, 11-, and 10-fold increases** in percent germination following stratification, respectively. Germination percentages of *P. glaber*, *P. rydbergii*, and *P. strictus* were approximately **2- to 3-fold greater** following stratification.



P. virens (Fornwalt)

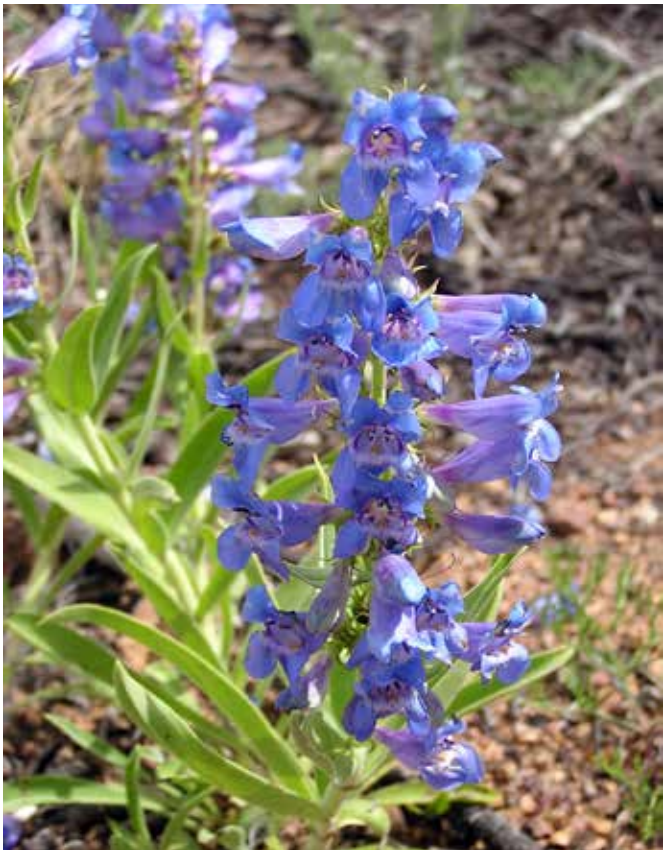


P. secundiflorus blue sky trail (Fornwalt)

Taken as a whole, my results improve our understanding of smoke's role, and stratification's role, in penstemon germination ecology, and should be of use to those who wish to propagate penstemon species for restoration, horticultural and other purposes.

Acknowledgements

I thank Marin Chambers, John Frank, and members of the American Penstemon Society for help with seed collection; Nancy Shaw and Scott Abella for advice on germination procedures; Kristen Doyle for laboratory assistance; and Scott Baggett for statistical advice. I also thank the Rocky Mountain Research Station and the American Penstemon Society for funding this work. This article was adapted from Fornwalt (2015), which can be accessed at http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/48003.



P. glaber (Fornwalt)

P. cobaea (Maffitt; found responsive to smoke treatment by Schwilk and Zavala study)

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Table 1. The 10 penstemon species evaluated here. Habitat descriptions within the Inerior West were taken from Nold (1999) and Lindgren and Wilde (2003).

Species	Habitat
P. albidus (white penstemon)	Dry, open places of the western Great Plains.
P. auriberbis (Colorado beardtongue)	Dry slopes and plains of Colorado's Arkansas River Valley.
P. eriantherus (fuzzytongue penstemon)	Dry grasslands and shrublands of the Interior West.
P. glaber (sawsepal penstemon)	Dry, open montane and subalpine slopes of the central and southern Rockies.
P. rydbergii (Rydberg's penstemon)	Widespread throughout the Interior West, in moist montane and subalpine forests and meadows.
P. secundiflorus (sidebells penstemon)	Eastern slope of the southern Rockies, in dry montane grasslands, shrublands, and forests.
P. strictus (Rocky Mountain penstemon)	Distributed throughout a wide range of southern Rocky Mountain and Southwestern forest and meadow habitats.
P. unilateralis (oneside penstemon)	Montane/subalpine forests and meadows of the southern Rockies.
P. virens (Front Range beardtongue)	Eastern slope of the southern Rockies, on open montane and subalpine slopes.
P. whippleanus (Whipple's penstemon)	Widespread throughout the Interior West, on open subalpine and alpine slopes.

*Dr. Fornwalt's research proposal, Smoke-induced seed germination of Colorado penstemon species, was partially funded by APS in 2011. The project took Paula considerably longer than she had originally anticipated, but is now finished and published (*Native Plants Journal *16: 5-12)! APS members will find her research both interesting and practical. Our money helped purchase seeds and hire a student assistant for the project. —Dorothy Tuthill*

Memories of Robin Lodewick

Sadly, we previously reported that long-time American Penstemon Society (APS) member and widely-published penstemon writer Robin Lodewick passed away in October of 2014 at the age of 91. In 1961 Robin met Ken Lodewick on an Obsidians (an Oregon mountaineering and hiking group) wildflower hike. They shared 50 years of marriage, great mountaineering and hiking energy, and a partnership of keen study and great love for penstemons. APS continues to offer the Lodewick penstemon publications for sale. Robin also willed her penstemon materials to APS, including notes, drawings, books, specimens, etc. Robin was a librarian at the University of Oregon. Not surprisingly, the Lodewick collection is well-organized.

Brilliant reds of winter-blooming *Cyclamen persicum* will always remind me of Robin and her diverse interests. One winter day in her advanced years, she called me and wanted to know how to keep a tender cyclamen alive through dormancy. Vividly she remembered that I had grown a nice lot from North American Rock Garden Society seed. Her call became a fine excuse to visit. We chatted at her kitchen table about an amazing array of subjects, including politics, cats, birds (owls and hummingbirds were favorites for us both)—and of course penstemons.

It was bright reds and hummingbirds that initially attracted me to penstemons. I first met the Lodewicks at a meeting of the Emerald Chapter of North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS). On the occasion of either a hike or meeting, Robin especially reached out to beginners. It was the lively hikes, conversations with Ken and Robin, and the Lodewick penstemon publications that deepened a fascination for this challenging genus for many of us.

Ken had been the active founder of two "Emeralds" in Eugene—chapters of both the Rock Garden and Native Plant Societies. The couple very seldom missed meetings or events with either group. Ken and Robin led an impressive number of hikes and annual meetings for the American Penstemon Society. In 1966 they organized a meeting centered in Bend, Oregon, with hikes into various surrounding mountains. In 1973 their sleuthing brought APS to the Mt. Shasta and Castle Lakes area of Northern California. In 1987, their APS weekend featured garden and arboretum tours, including their own Eugene, Oregon garden with about 150 species of penstemons. Ken had built their home on a quiet Eugene street near the Masonic Cemetery. Incidentally, they even created a plant list for the cemetery.

1998 was another banner wildflower year, as Ken and Robin helped to plan a large annual meeting of NARGS that included hikes to numerous premier wildflower locales such as on Bohemia and Iron Mountains. The APS annual meeting that year immediately followed NARGS with an Oregon penstemon loop of incredible species diversity. Robin also led 25 trips for the Obsidians, most of which featured wildflowers. She participated in over one hundred Obsidians hikes and climbs. On at least one occasion, they climbed the high Cascades volcanos such as the Three Sisters back to back. This esteemed hiking and mountaineering group honored the Lodewicks for their devoted participation. Robin gave generously to the Oregon Flora Project (go to Oregonflora.org for an explanation), various plant societies, and seed-saving groups among many wonderful causes.

When she found out that my husband and I were surveying the wilderness boundary on Gearhart Mountain in south-central Oregon, Robin provided me with near-photographic details of the location of endemic *Penstemon glaucinus*. It was a thrill to find the glittering blue blooms in a seemingly unlikely spot for penstemons. It grew in the rocky habitat so favored by the genus, but in some shade among pines.

Although they were serious researchers and writers, the Lodewicks also both had a wonderful sense of fun. Once they hoisted a Jolly Roger flag over their deck railing uphill from neighbor Bruce Newhouse's house. They called Bruce to look at it, which he described as "huge—and hilarious!" This was long before "Talk Like a Pirate" day in Eugene became popular.

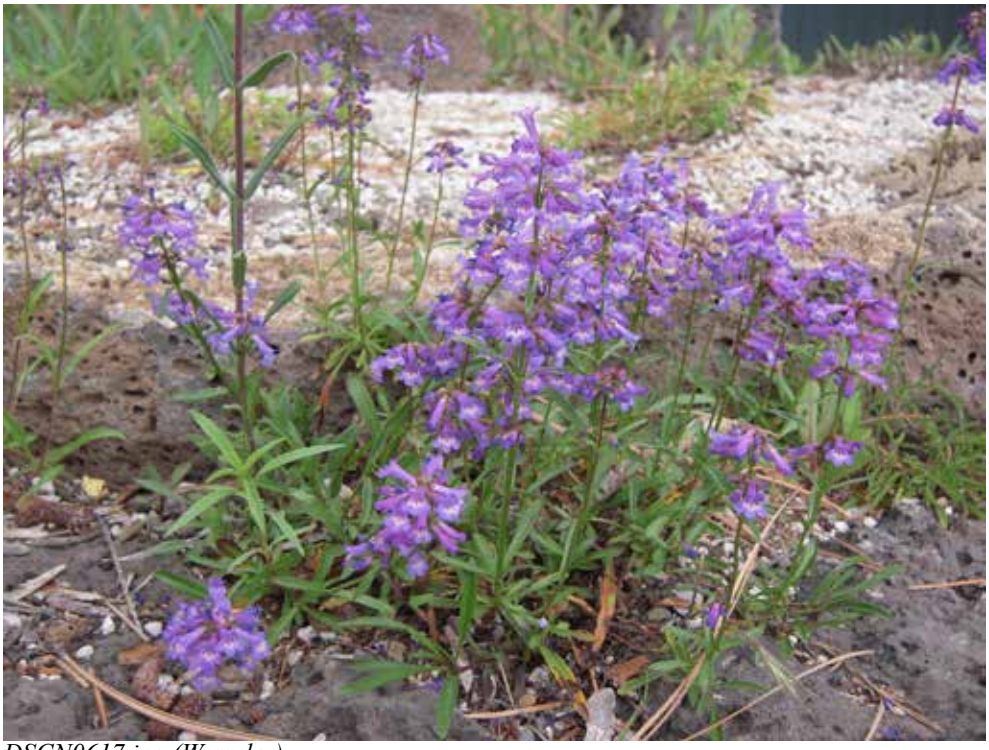
One of my favorite quotes from Robin accompanies a separate key for Oregon penstemons that was published in the Native Plant Society/Oregon 1994 annual journal "Kalmiopsis": And remember Murphy's Law for Botanists: Any plant you choose to examine is probably abnormal—simply because the human eye notices the unusual. "

Robin's large collection of charming drawings (as seen in the "Key to the Genus Penstemon" handbook) display her amazing eye for penstemon details—both usual and unusual. —*Louise Parsons*

Penstemon Garden Makeover

By Lupita Wesseler

My interest in penstemons began when I worked as a college student on the Jemez Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest in New Mexico. *P. eatonii* was an exciting introduction then. At that time cultivating wildflowers had never entered my mind. It wasn't until we moved to Bend, Oregon in late 1989 that increasing encounters with penstemon species in the wild led to a greater appreciation of the genus. My husband, Rick, had put in a rock garden in our backyard and they seemed to be a perfect fit. At that time besides field observations, we were not familiar with the soil requirements for successful growing.



DSCN0617.jpg (Wesseler)

Our gardening experience has been one of trial and error. Bend sits in Central Oregon on the eastern edge of the Deschutes National Forest in the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountains and on the edge of the high desert. The elevation is 3400 feet with an average precipitation of 12 inches per year. Nights are cold and the growing season is a short 60 days. Shallow, rocky soils poor in organics, and lava flows underneath create challenging gardening. On our city lot, we have 18 to 20 inches of what is referred to as "soil" before hitting a solid layer of lava flow. Most houses in our neighborhood have grass lawns as did we in both our front and back yard. We wanted a more diverse landscaping and little by little started converting sections of our yard to rock gardens.

The idea of converting our lot into a penstemon/alpine garden began when my husband brought home Robert Nold's book "Penstemons". It eventually led us to APS and other resources like Ellen Wilde's "Cultivating Penstmons" and Dee Strickler's book "Northwest Penstemons" which inspired us into exploring them in the wild in variety of environments. For years we had spent time digging up sections, shifting rocks and amending the soil to create a good growing environment for plants, trees and shrubs. Now we were looking at a recipe requiring more rock to develop a well-drained soil as a growing media for penstemons.

The first to go was our front lawn. Within a raised 30 inch wooden barrier on the street side, we mixed local sources of river bed gravel, sand, soil, and pumice to create two sloping planting beds. Through trial and error,

DSCN1449.jpg (Wesseler)

DSCN1448.jpg (Wesseler)

we began to determine which species would grow best in our garden. The sources of our stock have been from local nursery stock and native plant nurseries in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. Some plants from gathered on the Deschutes National Forest under personal use permit, plus plants grown from seed, and garden recruits(??). It has been a learning experience with some disappointments. Winter and summer temperature extremes in Bend resulted in losses. We have had good luck with a number of native species such as *P. davidsoni, P. deustus, P. euglaucus, P. fruiticosus, P. humilis, P. procerus, P. richardsonii, P.rupicola,* and garden varieties of *P. barrettiae x rupicola* hybrids, plus non-native *P. barbatus, P. eatoni*. *P. strictus,* and *P. pinifolius*. We grow a number of other beautiful species that add interest and color variety, but the above species provide color through most of the summer.

DSCN0616.jpg (Wesseler)

Several years later, with our two daughters grown and no real need for a lawn in the backyard, we converted that area to mounded planting bed. In this bed we grow replacement plants among other penstemons. Being on the west side of our house, it is first bed to bloom in the spring. *P. procerus* is blooming now (mid-April). It is beautiful, but much earlier this year due to our mild winter.

Over the years, the front garden has not only provided us with enjoyment but has also been an attraction in our neighborhood. It inspires others to explore their landscaping options. Penstemon gardening can be very exciting. It creates habitats for local bee pollinators which are fun to watch and hear their buzzing activity. Humming birds and occasional butterflies are other pleasing visitors we might not see otherwise. There is an element of surprise when we stumble across a hybrid or new color variety, like last year when we found a purple (not coral) *P. barbatus*. Rick and I are not penstemon experts, but you don't have to be to grow these beautiful and hardy wildflowers. A little determination, patience and a love for the species go a long way.

DSCN0611.jpg (Wesseler)

Time to Scope Out for Penstemon Seeds

Louise Parsons

It may seem like early days to be thinking about seed gathering. Now is the time to begin to scope things out. With the onset of summer heat, most penstemon blooms will fade quickly, especially in lower elevation gardens. Flowers will be slowly be replaced with distinctive seed capsules with "tails" on their pointed ends. Seed capsules ripen slowly into late summer and early fall. The coming weeks are the best time to plan for seed-collection. Bloom-time is your opportunity to confirm identity and good locations, both in the garden and the wild. If you are having identity challenges, collecting and sharing stems and blooms can help. This year's annual meeting is a fine opportunity to share these challenges with fellow penstemaniacs, as Ginny will be leading a workshop to help folks develop their skill at keying-out species. Even with experience our keying skills need a nice re-boot from time to time.

(Ed. note: If you'd like to bring pressed samples of 'no-name' species to the annual meeting, they would make for an interesting discussion. Try to have the oldest flowers present to be sure and have fully opened anthers to investigate. If your camera will focus on those opened anthers, please send those photos to me to put on my laptop for show and tell as well. Many experts will be there to help. Thank you, Ginny)

NEW APS MEMBERS SINCE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Richard Grazzini, Bellefonte, PA
Michael Weber, Denver, CO
Lois Versaw, Bennet, NE
Jennifer Neale, Denver, CO
Wilnelia Recart Gonzalez, Irvine, CA
Barbara de Oddone, Healdsburg, CA
Edith Trimmer, Big Pine, CA
Patti Petersen-Keys, Granger, IA
Diane Huneke, Rocheport, MO
Kristin Haskins, Flagstaff, AZ
Bashira Chowdhury, Bountiful, UT
Janett Warner, Joseph, UT
John M. Egger, Seattle, WA
Scott Ellis, Laporte, CO

LIFE MEMBERS

Randy Tatroe, Centennial, CO
Gianna Ranuzzi, Berkeley, CA
Kari Wang, Hosle, Norway
Gianna Ranuzzi, Berkeley, CA

Membership Renewal

The American Penstemon Society involves almost 300 penstemon aficionados world-wide, many of whom will enjoy meeting other APS members and traveling to Northern California for our annual meeting July 10–13, 2015. Dues entitle members to have access to the APS Newsletter (with a notice sent to our members electronically and posted on our website), to receive the annual APS bulletin by regular mail and the opportunity to obtain penstemon seed through the annual APS seed exchange. Dues run on a calendar basis, renewed at the first of each year. Because the American Penstemon Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, all donations and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law. Unless otherwise specified, no goods or services were received for this donation. The receipt of a Newsletter or Bulletin is not considered as "goods".

US and Canadian annual dues are $15 US; Elsewhere $20 US. Annual dues for students are $5. Life Membership is $150. In addition, members may pay two years in advance and receive the third year free. Please do not send cash.

There are two methods to pay the dues, by PayPal on our website at www.apsdev.org. or by check payable to American Penstemon Society and mailed to:

Dale Lindgren/Phoebe McFarlane, Membership Secretaries

9202 Maloney Drive, North Platte, NE 69101

If you wish to contact Dale Lindgren and/or Phoebe McFarlane with questions about your membership they can be reached at aps.membership@yahoo.com. Please update any current information with new phone numbers or e-mail address. Thanks for your enthusiastic support of the Society.

Name-_____

Address-_____

_____

Phone #-_____

E-Mail-_____

We do not sell, share or distribute member data in any manner.

If you have changed your e-mail address lately, please send this information to the Membership Chairmen at aps.membership@yahoo.com. Thank you.

APS Officers

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