



Grass Identification Workshop

Tim Michael

On August 25 at the Leonora Curtain Wetland Preserve south of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Botanical Garden presented a half-day workshop on How to Identify Grasses. For some of us, this was an eye-opening introduction to the large and diverse grass family (*Poaceae*).

Bob Sivinski of the New Mexico Forestry Division and Linda Churchill of the Botanical Garden guided us through the Preserve's wetland, transitional, and dry upland biological communities. Bob and Linda pointed out more than 15 of the 30 or so grass species that have been identified at the Preserve. Bob also pointed out sedges, rushes, and reminded us that cattails are not grasses (they are monocotyledonous flowering plants). We learned the difference between a culm and glume, and that a 10-power hand lens is a handy tool to have if you are serious about identifying grasses.

Many of the grasses found at the Preserve can be beautiful in our gardens, and most are well adapted to local soil and water conditions. For those who are really interested in New Mexico grasses, the most complete book is "*A Field Guide to the Grasses of New Mexico*" by Dr. Kelly Allred of NMSU, available from NMSU at <http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/sale/welcome.html>.

More information about the Santa Fe Botanical Garden and the Leonora Curtain Preserve is available at <http://www.santafebotanicalgarden.org/>. The Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve is open on Saturday mornings 9 a.m. to noon, and Sunday afternoons 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. from May 5 until October 28.

