

An eclectic forum for dispersing practical information
about planting and growing native plants.

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During early summer I spent a few days exploring the Spring Mountain area near Las Vegas, Nevada, in search of new plant materials to infuse into my research program at the University of Idaho. For those of you unfamiliar with my work, I manage a native plant domestication program designed to develop nursery products that are able to conserve water and support pollinators in urban settings. Although the trip was successful, the number of species in an appropriate state to provide usable material was very limited. The reason—dry conditions resulting from what is now termed the “mega-drought.” Most collections that were obtained consisted of cuttings from shrubs and trees. The herbaceous plants were notable for their absence. Plenty of rocks and dust, minimal wildflowers.

I am sure that many NPJ readers working in the western US or Canada are being affected by these unusually dry conditions. We ask: Are our current drought conditions due to global warming or are they a product of short-term weather patterns? Likely the circumstances are created by a combination of both climate and weather. But, regardless of cause, the results create disruption for those of us whose work is associated with drought-stressed habitats. Under these extreme conditions, conservation becomes uncertain, restoration is ineffectual, and research less than optimal. So, how do we respond? Well, we learn. We figure out ways to succeed in our work regardless of the nature of our personal challenges. Then we use venues such as the Native Plants Journal to share our successes and help our fellow conservationists improve their practices.

I hope these conditions do not last for anything that could be termed an extended period. Regardless, we will move forward and give our best to improving our natural world.



Stephen L Love
Editor-in-Chief

On the cover: Bigtooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum* Nutt. (syn. *Acer saccharum* Marsh. ssp. *grandidentatum* (Nutt.) Desmarais) [Aceraceae]) fall color as seen in Parowan Canyon, Utah. Photo by Larry A Rupp