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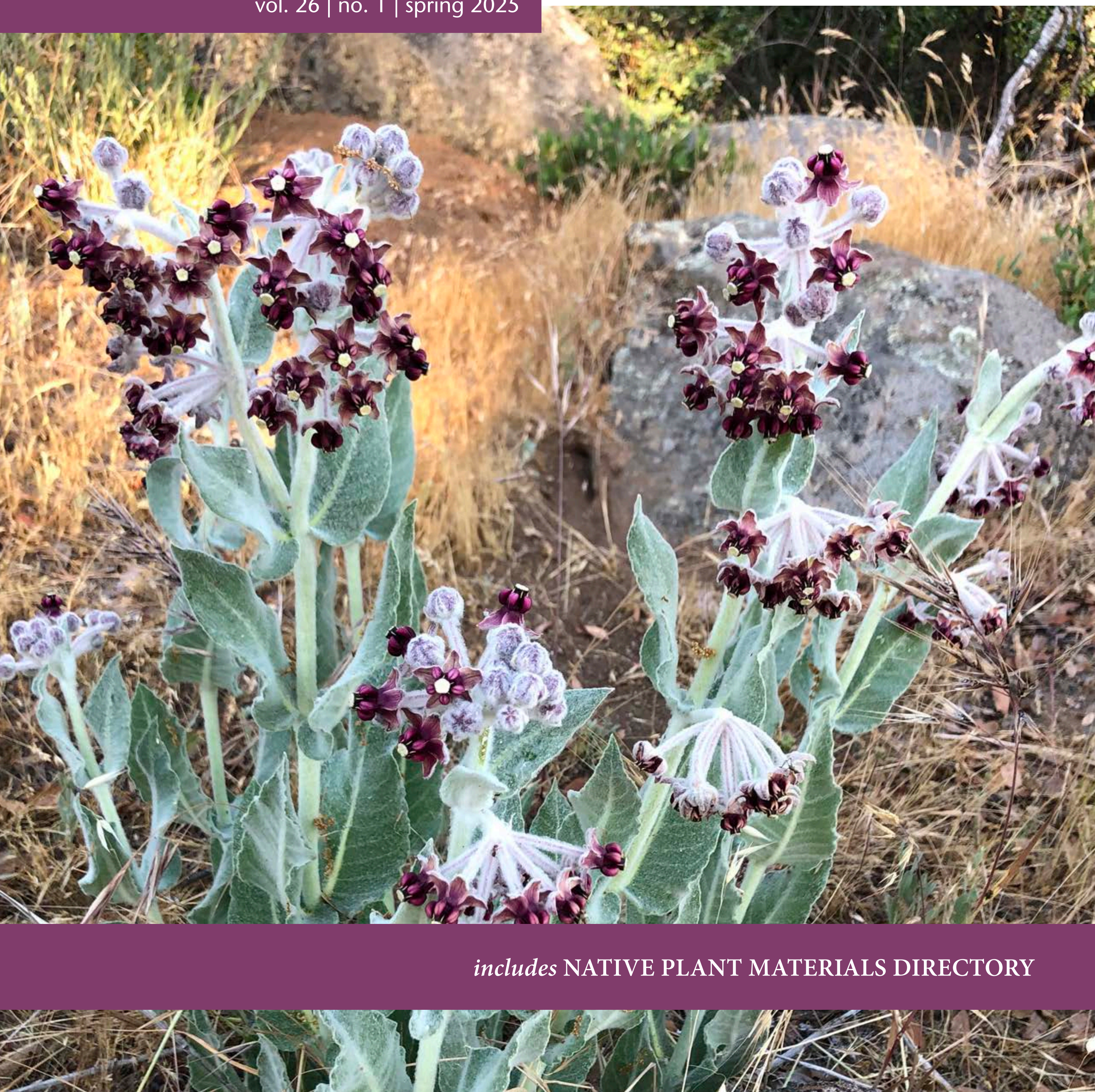

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NATIVEPLANTS
JOURNAL

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



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## Breadth and Depth in Native Plant Research

One of the pleasures of editing *Native Plants Journal* is seeing the incredible variety of ways to understand and improve outcomes for native plant restoration, conservation, and stewardship. Our authors and readers bring many perspectives, and their work reflects a wide range of questions, goals, and approaches. Among the recurring challenges in this field is how we strike a balance between going deep and going broad. Both approaches offer distinct and necessary contributions to the science and practice of native plant work.

Some studies focus on a single species, offering a deep examination that supports both scientific inquiry and applied outcomes in conservation, restoration, or propagation. In this issue, Kendall and colleagues present a collaborative study of *Anthoxanthum nitens* (sweetgrass), combining germination trials and cultivation research with Mi'kmaq community knowledge. Their work integrates empirical methods with community-informed approaches to explore germination, growth traits, seed viability, and scent. The result is a compelling contribution that advances both scientific understanding and practical stewardship of sweetgrass.

Other studies take a broader view, examining traits or responses among multiple species. These efforts opt for breadth over depth, and in doing so, they reveal patterns and variations that are not evident in single species work alone. This kind of comparative insight can sharpen restoration planning, guide seed sourcing decisions, and inform efforts in conservation and stewardship. A recent example is the 2025 study titled "Investigating seed dormancy and germination of important Wyoming forbs" by Demler, Eshleman, and Kildisheva in the *Native Plants Journal* (volume 25, issue 3). By applying a consistent experimental approach to many species, the authors identified both shared patterns and species-specific requirements. Studies such as this build the comparative framework we need to strengthen native seed systems and support restoration across diverse landscapes.

Both approaches, those that go deep into a single species and those that take a broader view across many, make essential contributions to native plant work. The field depends on this diversity of inquiry. Each perspective offers meaningful insight, and it is in their combination that we find a deeper and more connected understanding. The strength of native plant work lies in how we strike the balance between going deep and going broad, allowing these approaches to inform and enrich one another. At *Native Plants Journal*, we are proud to share research that spans this spectrum and brings together knowledge from researchers, growers, and land stewards. Each contribution builds a more practical and enduring body of science, one that supports the understanding, care, and recovery of native plants.

**Lora Perkins**
**Professor, South Dakota State University**
**Editor-in-Chief, Native Plants Journal**

**On the cover:** California milkweed (*Asclepias californica* Greene [Asclepiadaceae]). Photo by Mary Duffy


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**Photo credits:** (*top*) heartleaf milkweed (*Asclepias cordifolia* Benth. [Asclepiadaceae]), photo by Tanya Harvey; (*middle*) maturing follicles in organza bags to prevent seed loss, photo by Mary Duffy; (*bottom left*) late instar caterpillars feeding on heartleaf milkweed in April, photo by Rick Staub; (*lower middle*) close-up of sweetgrass florets (*Anthoxanthum nitens* (Weber) Y. Schouten & Veldkamp [Poaceae]), photo by Rachel A Kendall; (*bottom right*) making a sweetgrass braid, photo by Rachel A Kendall

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