

ft, dominant in *Salix* thicket along creek, 27 Jun 1986, *G. W. and J. N. Argus* 12258, 12263 (CAN). Luna, on US 180, 3.4 km w. of town at crossing of San Francisco River, 33°50'N, 109°01'W, 7500 ft, *Populus angustifolia* thicket on creek margin, 2 Jul 1986, *G. W. and J. N. Argus* 12394 (CAN). Luna, on US 180, 2 km w. of town, 33°50'N, 108°59'W, 7100 ft, *Salix irrorata* dominated thicket in wet meadow, 2 Jul 1986, *G. W. and J. N. Argus* 12398 (CAN).

*Previous knowledge.* Occurs in the Rocky Mountains from southern British Columbia to Colorado and in California with disjunct localities in western Nebraska and the White Mountains of Arizona.

*Significance.* New to the flora of New Mexico. This occurrence in the Mogollon Mts. parallels the disjunction in the White Mts. of Arizona.—GEORGE W. ARGUS, National Herbarium, Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa, ON K1A 0M8, Canada.

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FESTUCA MINUTIFLORA Rydb. (POACEAE).—Rio Arriba Co., Pecos Wilderness Area, North Truchas Peak, w. slope of mountain, 35°59'N, 105°37'W, 12,000 ft, alpine vegetation on talus slope, 4 Jul 1986, *G. W. and J. N. Argus* 12404 (CAN) (identified by Susan Aiken).

*Previous knowledge.* Scattered throughout the w. states (AZ, CA, CO, OR, UT, WY) at elevations between 3000–4000 m. It is relatively common in Colorado, but poorly known elsewhere (Frederiksen, Bot. Notiser 132:315–318, 1979).

*Significance.* New to the flora of New Mexico.—GEORGE W. ARGUS and SUSAN G. AIKEN, National Herbarium, Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa, ON K1A 0M8, Canada.

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## REVIEWS

*Xántus, The Letters of John Xántus to Spencer Fullerton Baird from San Francisco and Cabo San Lucas, 1854–1861.* Introduction, Notes and Illustrations by ANN H. ZWINGER. 442 pp. Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles. 1986. \$69.00.

Any biologist concerned with natural history in Baja California, Mexico, is familiar with the specific epithets *xanti* or *xantusii*. John Xántus de Vesey sailed from San Francisco in March 1859 during our spring and arrived to Cabo San Lucas in early April, at the height of the dry season there. It is small wonder that in his first letter he said, "There is not a drop of water for a distance of 28 miles (San Jose) only Mr. Ritchie has a well, of very indifferent brackish water, and there is not a tree for many miles, if we except the Cactuses, of which there is infinite variety. . . ." Xántus installed a tidal gauge, which was the reason for the U.S. Coastal Survey having sent him to the tip of Baja California, and began to collect natural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institution. This was a field of endeavor in which he excelled and one that he much preferred to that of recording tidal data.

These letters to Mr. Baird, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary to Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, show the difficulties under which Xántus carried on his work. He had to take all scientific equipment with him; mail sometimes took six months or more to reach him. Shipment of his scientific specimens depended upon unscheduled arrival of whalers or ships that were bound for San Francisco or eastern seaboard ports. His letters contain meticulous reports on the contents of each shipment



and of collecting conditions, but the most that they say of the people in the little pueblo of Cabo San Lucas is that boys sometimes brought him specimens. That there were people there is brought out by Professor Emeritus Herbert Mason's story about his brief time ashore at Cabo San Lucas in 1925, when the California Academy of Sciences' expedition stopped there during its return trip from the Revillagigedos Islands. An elderly *paisano* who was watching while specimens were being put into a plant press remarked, "Mi papá tenía uno de estos." "Who was your papa?" "Xántus." The man couldn't have been much more than a baby at the time Xántus went from Cabo San Lucas on very short notice; so Xántus must have left more than collecting equipment behind! In 1940 when Steinbeck and Ricketts touched at Cabo San Lucas (cf. Zwinger footnote, p. 324) the manager of the cannery, pointing to three little Indian children said, "Those are Xanthuses great-grandchildren," and "in the town there is a large family of Xanthuses."

The paucity of detail about life of the people is undoubtedly due to the fact that Xántus' letters to Baird were business letters detailing progress of his work and difficulties encountered. In one letter, however, Xántus includes a list of 14 donors of scientific material. Typical of these is item No. 8, "Donnas Juana & Pachita Doderó, 10 nests, with 34 eggs, & several bottles of insects." In contrast to his usual letters is that of 28 December 1860 in which he says, "The Christmas day I spent in San Jose, amongst bullfights, cockfights, & dancing. There was a great concourse [sic] of people. . . . The whole fiesta [sic] went off however very decently & with great order, more so than a 4th of July in a small American village." His letters to his mother in Hungary were replete with exciting accounts of his expeditions and adventures—many of them undoubtedly more fancy than fact.

Ann Zwinger's introductory chapter (36 pp.) provides a biographical background for Xántus and brings out the important role that Spencer Fullerton Baird played in building up natural history collections at Smithsonian. Zwinger's copious footnotes to the letters contribute important historical data as to the identity of people mentioned in the letters as well as clarification of some of the scientific names that Xántus cited in his lists. These footnotes not only add to the interest of the book, but also make it historically valuable. An extensive bibliography of the works cited and an unusually full index add to the usefulness of this volume. Because of her long interest in and association with the Cape Region of Baja California, as evidenced by her book *A Desert Country Near the Sea*, Ann Zwinger is especially well-fitted to present this treatment of Xántus.

The Castle Press is to be complimented on a good job of printing the difficult material. This is a worthy addition to Glen Dawson's series on Baja California.—ANNETTA CARTER, Dept. of Botany, Univ. of California, Berkeley 94720.

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*Flora Fanerogamica del Valle de Mexico. Volumen II. Dicotyledonae (Euphorbiaceae—Compositae).* Edited by JERZY RZEDOWSKI and GRACIELA C. DE RZEDOWSKI. Instituto de Ecología, Apartado Postal 18-845, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, 11800 Mexico, D.F., Mexico. ISBN 968-7213-02-7. 1985. 674 pp. \$35? (cloth).

The valley of Mexico is thought of as an area full of people (one of the world's largest metropolitan regions) and, therefore, quite denuded of vegetation. In reality, there is a lot of plant life in the region. The Rzedowskis are in the process of producing an excellent three volume flora of this valley: Vol. I (1979) Gymnosperms and dicots up to Polygalaceae; Vol. II (1985), the remainder of the dicots, Euphorbiaceae through Compositae (here reviewed with about 1040 species treated); Vol. III, to be published, monocots.

The format is clear and very easy to use with the families arranged in an order that seems to be of the editors' design with similarities to some modern systematic treat-



Carter, Annetta. 1987. "Xántus, The Letters of John Xántus to Spencer Fullerton Baird from San Francisco and Cabo San Lucas, 1854-1861 by Ann H. Zwinger." *Madroño; a West American journal of botany* 34, 269–270.

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