

ing juveniles from the first nest while females begin building the second nest. Birds face many obstacles while nesting, and the chick's survival rate is about 10 percent.

Once the chicks fledge, they will stay near the nest for several weeks but are completely independent. As fall approaches, large flocks form and feed on high energy fruits to build up fat in preparation for seasonal changes and migration.

Lifespan

A goldfinch's average lifespan is three to four years, but in captivity they have been known to live for 10 years. It isn't a threatened species but its numbers have declined, thought in part due to habitat loss and

roaming house and feral cats.

Attracting goldfinches

Water and food attract birds. I have two types of finch feeders that I fill with niger thistle, but they will eat any seed. I plant zinnias and sunflowers because I enjoy watching them dangle from branches and use their feet to dislodge seeds. It's important to keep feeders clean and use seed that isn't moldy to protect birds from diseases. Water is as important as food, and in winter I use a heater in my birdbath so they have a year-round source.

State bird

The goldfinch is the state bird of New Jersey, Iowa, and Washington. Colorado's state bird is the lark bun-

ting, which is a black and white bird and, according to *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*, it summers in Colorado. However, I've never seen it here, only once observed it in eastern Colorado, but commonly find it in southern New Mexico. Rumor has it that it was selected because it was black and white and easily copied on the state's stationery. It would seem, with the advent of color copiers, Colorado could rethink its choice and might choose a more colorful native bird like the lesser goldfinch. It may be a little smaller than the American goldfinch, but I think it's even more beautiful.

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High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Indigenous science, ponderosa, and local gardening

By Janet Sellers

"When I was a boy we used to eat ponderosa pine for pleasure ... called it 'slivers.' In the spring, the bark is really gorged with starches and sugars and tastes quite sweet. It's also high in vitamins."—Euell Gibbons

In Tri-Lakes, we all moved here to live in the ponderosa forest, and we benefit in myriad ways. While gardening here years ago was a conundrum for me at best, I am now seeing the wisdom of the ponderosa and the Indigenous/Indian science wisdom for itself—and our good health.

Ponderosa secrets: pollen is good for guys, anti-aging, more

Ponderosa's yellow dusting powder gets all over everything outside in May. Annoying? Maybe not if you know that pine pollen boosts testosterone and the hormone DHEA and helps balance hormones. Pine pollen is one of the few plants that naturally contains human bio-available testosterone essentially right out of the flower.

People may think of allergies first, but pine pollen has medicinal value. Used in Indigenous and Chinese medicines for restoring vigor, energy, and function, especially in males as they age, pine pollen is easily absorbed and used by the body. Other benefits include stimulating the immune system, boosting brain health, promoting weight loss, reducing inflammation, promoting muscle mass, and more. It's like an ideal human species dream potion tree.

Pine pollen under the tongue keeps the digestive system from destroying it. Studies showed its main



Above: The ponderosa pine catkin, or male flower, is the part of the tree system that releases the yellow pollen to the female cone which later creates the pine seeds. The yellow powder is a powerful food supplement that people, especially knowledgeable Native Americans, have consumed for health benefits since ancient times, and is currently widely used and sold worldwide to benefit age-related issues. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

active ingredient is androstenedione, an adrenal hormone produced in humans just one molecule shy of testosterone, which both healthy men and women have in balance. Those that consumed the pollen showed effects lasted about a day. Native Americans

used it for extra energy when needed. I guess you could say it is the original grab and go energy fix. Pine pollen also has been found to have beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system.

I won't tell you to lick the hood of your car, but you can collect the pollen by putting a bag over the pine flower (microsporangiate strobili or pollen cones) and shake it, similarly to collecting the high protein, nutrition-filled cattail catkin pollen that I wrote about a while back. If I told you where the word "pine" comes from, you might never look at a pine tree or its flower the same again (and I am much too modest to explain it here) but accessing the valuable healing power pines offer is grounded in age-old Indian/Indigenous science. We live in the middle of pine forests and can collect it here for free, and as its popularity grows for muscle building and more, people can buy it at health food stores.

May garden tips

Wait until Mother's Day, pine-straw blanket your seeds, and you'll still get greens and flowers for June. My sunny windowsills, laden with seedling planters, await Monument Community Garden beds. We've a bed for Tri-Lakes Cares and my demonstration raised bed garden, but there are still a few spots left if you'd like to share growing space for some garden chores and watering duty. First come, first dibs. As usual, we'll surround the garden with beautiful, protective sunflowers.

Janet Sellers is an avid lazy gardening (nature focused), ethnoecologist in the ponderosa forested Tri Lakes area. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Art: Secret knowledge as poetry, flower power

By Janet Sellers

"A picture is a poem without words"—Horace

Perhaps we could say with Horace also that viewing nature's beauty is a poem without words but with great feeling. I am continually amazed at the variety of creative things to see in our area. My recent visit to La Foret in the Black Forest area inspired me to make more paintings of forests and trees, and of course, delight in being near the Native American history within many of the culturally modified trees we are so fortunate to have near us locally. I wonder if the culturally modified trees make the area special, or if the area is special and these amazing trees are the visual poems telling us about the place. Either way, amid the forest, it's a grand delight to all the senses.

Our forest flowers are just starting to bloom, and we found our first pasque flowers peeking out between snowy days and sunny days. They look like fuzzy purple tulips, and this year I'll do some paintings of them, forest in view. May is a weather gamble for us plein air outdoor painters, but my classes will be going out into Fox Run Park this month to paint watercolors and oils as well. By the time we lug out all our gear, we stay put in one spot to paint, all the while drinking in the sights, smells, sounds. I like to think all that sensuousness goes right into our paintings!

Art Hop starts May 16

Our annual Art Hop starts up again from 5 to 8 p.m. **May 16** in the town center of Historic Monument. It's an early evening of artists and their art, musicians and their music, and it seems every venue has convivial pursuits to share. We can stroll the town and see art in the galleries, and art and artists will be there for the day at some places, so you can enjoy the walk all over town meeting new artists and new friends.

Southwinds Fine Art Gallery celebrates moms with flowers

Free. Bring Mom to Southwinds Fine Art Gallery, enjoy art filled with flowers! A free mother's corsage Friday, **May 10** from 4 to 9 p.m., and Saturday, **May 11** from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., enjoy the tea party downstairs and upstairs browse for art and gifts amid the paintings, wearable art, and sculptures of resident and guest artists. You can also learn about the amazing history of nearby Fox Run Park and the new Friends of Fox Run Park helper group, currently headquartered at the gallery at 16575 Rollercoaster Rd.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and teacher, offering local art and photo classes and Bucket List world



Above; Local artists Margaret Seagraves, left, and Anita Seagraves show off their art in flowers. They will be two of the guest artists at the May Flowers art show at Southwinds Fine Art Gallery the second weekend of May. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

travels. 2019: Bordeaux and the earliest art in the world, the caves near the village of Montignac in Southwestern France. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

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