Date: November 12, 2007 11:12:54 AM PST
Subject: RE: Progress Report on Eriastrum project

Here is a brief report on how the *Eriastrum* project, funded by a DeDecker Botanical Grant, is going:

$92.10 was used to cover travel costs for two trips to the Hackberry Burn area of Mojave National Preserve. Ten populations of *Eriastrum* were sampled on these trips, including a population of *E. harwoodii* (Craig) D. Gowen (mss submitted; =*E. sparsiflorum* subsp. *harwoodii*), and several forms of *E. eremicum* and *E. diffusum*, which exhibited some striking morphological differences. These populations will be extremely valuable is assessing the geographic distribution of morphological variants (e.g. is the eastern Mojave Desert a transition zone between typical *E. eremicum* and var. *zionis*?), and also for evaluating the amount of phenotypic plasticity that may occur within a species (some of these populations were highly varied).

To date, 200 populations of *Eriastrum* have been sampled. Almost all described species are included, with the notable exception of *E. abramsii*, which is targeted for collection in Spring of 2008. Sites are distributed throughout the geographic range of each taxon, and in many cases include the type localities.

Laboratory analysis has not been able to keep pace with field sampling, due to time constraints associated with coursework and research assistantships. However, during the next few months, a selected number of populations will be analyzed as a pilot study. This information will be used to inform further sampling in the spring and summer of 2008, as well as refine methodology.

Preliminary assessment of the genus shows that there are several undescribed taxa, and quantitative data will be used to determine where these should be placed.

Thank you for your support of my research!

Sincerely,

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"I want to know God's thoughts... the rest are details." --Albert Einstein