

# William Pearce

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**Botanist** driven by passion for the taxonomy, cultivation, conservation, and photography of native plants, with a particular interest in systematics and floral trait evolution of *Ribes* (Grossulariaceae).

## Experience

JANUARY 2024 – PRESENT

**Undergraduate Researcher | Science Research Initiative at the University of Utah | Salt Lake City, Utah**

- Won multiple travel grants for collecting trips aiming to make collections of a poorly understood species complex of *Ribes*
- Developed a plant DNA barcoding workflow that was used to generate gene sequence data from *Ribes* leaf samples
- Synthesized the above morphological and molecular data to reevaluate the species boundaries of that complex, with a manuscript in preparation

MAY 2022 – OCTOBER 2024

**Gardener | Sego Lily Gardens | Sandy, Utah**

- Performed basic garden maintenance and plant care
- Leveraged my native plant expertise to help create a “Utah Native Pollinators” section at the garden
  - Specifically, donated over 50 species of native seeds that I independently collected from sites across Utah
- Assisted in outreach by taking photos and creating writeups for the garden’s “Plant of the Week” social media series

SEPTEMBER 2022 – DECEMBER 2022

**Botany Intern | Garrett Herbarium at the Natural History Museum of Utah | Salt Lake City, Utah**

- Learned all the steps in the process of herbarium specimen curation, including applying for permits, collecting the plant, pressing, mounting, identification, label creation, and digitization/data entry
- Assisted in sorting, identification, mounting, and digitization of existing specimens

## Skills

- Proficient at identifying plants of western North America
  - Contributed over 35,000 plant identifications on iNaturalist, of which 27,000 were of *Ribes*
- Extensive field experience with plants
  - Personally observed/photographed over 1000 plant species on iNaturalist
  - Donated over 200 herbarium specimens to the Intermountain and Garrett herbaria
- Familiar with herbarium specimen collection, curation, and loaning protocol
- Capable of taking professional macro photographs of plants, showing minute diagnostic features in high detail

## Outreach/Volunteer Work

- Helped in restoration efforts to replant the threatened *Opuntia macrorhiza* (twistspine prickly pear) across the Wasatch front
- Have extensively contributed to community science platforms, by contributing over 35,000 identifications and 5,000 observations to iNaturalist, including highly detailed macro photos
- Volunteered to educate the public about plant drought adaptations at the Natural History Museum of Utah's Behind the Scenes event
- Volunteered to talk to elementary school students about the importance of native insects and science at the STEAMfest at Eastwood Elementary
- Volunteered as a Wildflower Walk guide during the Wasatch Wildflower Festival, teaching the public about the diversity and importance of native plants
- Collected seeds of over 50 species of native plants, which were planted in a public garden; with excess being shared with the public during a 2024 seed swap

## Education

MAY 2026 (ONGOING)

**Double Major in Earth & Environmental Sciences, Geography; Certificate in GIS | University of Utah | Salt Lake City, Utah**

4.0 GPA

## Awards/Grants

- Recipient of the 2025 Botanical Society of America Undergraduate Student Research Award
- Recipient of 2025 Utah Native Plant Society Grant-in-Aid funding
- Recipient of the 2023 Natural History Museum of Utah's Ann Kelsey Research Fund
- 2x Recipient of Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program funding at the University of Utah

## Presentations & Articles

- Natural History Museum of Utah *Scientist in the Spotlight* presentation to the general public. "A Taxonomic Review of the Yellow Desert Gooseberries." October 4th, 2024, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research Oral Talk, "A Taxonomic Review of the Yellow Desert Gooseberries." March 1st, 2025, Cedar City, UT.
- Botanical Society of America Conference Oral Talk, "Species Boundaries and Intraspecific Variation of the Desert Gooseberries (*Ribes* series *Microphylla*).". July 30th, 2025, Palm Springs, CA.
- Utah Native Plant Society Newsletter Article "[Ribes oddities of Utah](#)". August 2025

## Activities

Member of the following groups/societies:

- Utah Native Plant Society
- Botanical Society of America
- International Society of Plant Taxonomists
- American Society of Plant Taxonomists

3x participant of the Intermountain Botany Foray, where I collaborated with various other botanists to make collections and document plant life in understudied areas.