

*The following is an excerpt from the Arizona Civil Engineer publication.*

## APRIL 2003 TUCSON CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

The sun will not break over the Catalina Mountains for another two hours, but a group of sixteen people are gathered in their shadows at the Robson Saddlebrooke development near the Pima/ Pinal County line in the cool early morning. A diverse assembly consisting of health care professionals, university students and staff, retirees, a teacher, a graphic artist and engineers of various persuasions, they are armed with picks, shovels, wheelbarrows, heavy gloves, a trailer with a 5000 pound carrying capacity, and plenty of water. Who are these people and why are they there?

They are members of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society Cactus Rescue Crew, ready to dig up and haul off as many of the desirable and manageable cacti possible before the mass grading starts. The developer has already removed many ocotillo, large barrel cacti, and boxed trees for future replanting throughout the development, but a plethora of smaller barrels, hedgehogs, pincushions and ocotillo remain. Their future is but that of mulch if they are not transported from the site.

Over the next year and many weekends, over 4000 plants will be rescued by TCSS members during various phases of this new 800 acre development. Over forty different individuals will be involved in this project and others like it throughout new developments in the areas surrounding Tucson.



You have just been introduced to one component of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS). With our origins dating back to 1960, we are an insured, educational non-profit 501-(c) 3 corporation that endeavors, through our Rescue Committee, to safely relocate cacti and other native plants above and beyond those legally required to be protected during the development of Arizona real estate.



In association with design professionals, institutions, municipalities, and developers, the society seeks to minimize the loss of native plants that would otherwise succumb to site preparation activities. They understand that the economics and logistics of the land development process rarely lend themselves to the targeted rescue operations that they can perform with their knowledgeable volunteer labor. They are

able to salvage selected native plants that are not designated by NPPO requirements for on-site retention or other uses that may be prescribed by local jurisdictions or landscape architects. School sites have been one of their more rewarding types of projects. Through their efforts over the last three years, over ten thousand native plants have been recovered and provided with new homes throughout Southern Arizona via donations to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and the Tucson Botanical Gardens as well as sales to our club members, nurseries and other friends of the TCSS. Their sales help recover the costs of Arizona Department of Agriculture permit fees and also help to fund their ongoing educational efforts, including a new scholastic grant program to assist teachers in educational programs relating to native plants. No costs relating to their efforts are ever borne by the owner or developer and they are able to act quickly to work within the time available prior to clearing of the property. Please consider a partnership with TCSS on current and future projects as they may arise. Such a partnership could additionally provide significant positive press coverage and recognition by the staff of various municipalities. Project leads are always needed and welcome. Additional information may be obtained from Chris Monrad (Monrad Engineering, Inc.) at 520-884-0045, email to [ferowiz@comcast.net](mailto:ferowiz@comcast.net), or the TCSS website, [www.TucsonCactus.org](http://www.TucsonCactus.org).

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