



Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

April 2009

Thursday, April 2, 2009 at 7PM

"The golden spine Ferocactus Wislizenii"

Presented by Chris Monrad



Chris Monrad has been a TCSS member for nearly 20 years (now a paid life member) and was a co-founder of the Cactus Rescue program in 1999. During the numerous cactus rescues that he assisted with, he began noticing and marveling at the wide variety of spination patterns (black, brown, maroon, short, long, skinny, fat, nearly straight, highly recurved, etc) present in our local barrel cactus, *Ferocactus wislizenii*. (This interest in spination also spilled over into the Ocotillo / *Fouquieria* but that is another story.)

This fascination led to a keen interest in the entire genus *Ferocactus* and also the genus *Echinocactus*. His collection of these plants now includes several plants of nearly every species in each genus and he is now dedicated to the pollination and seed collection for many of these species as well. During an early cactus rescue project at Saddlebrooke near Catalina, Chris noticed a barrel cactus specimen with bright and pure yellow flowers as well as spines with a strong golden yellow cast. This plant would be the first of only five such specimens that would be collected by the Chris over the next five years of rescue projects, with sites ranging from Saddlebrooke Ranch north of Oracle Junction to a new school site in Corona de Tucson, over 45 miles away from

Saddlebrooke. Chris estimates this yellow spined/yellow flowered variety to occur in something like one in every 5,000 or 10,000 barrel cacti, based upon his numerous plant surveys and rescue activities.

Soon after acquiring the first two specimens, Chris wondered about the possibility of performing selective pollination between those two plants to develop a purpose-bred *Ferocactus* cultivar and began to consult with other noted *Ferocactus* propagators in the area. Some of the early results from the first efforts were encouraging and there are approximately 15 six year old yellows spined plants that may bloom this summer.

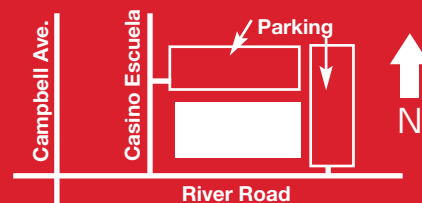
The summer of 2005 seed crop benefited from the presence of four available seed parents and the first crop of over one thousand seeds was planted in early 2006 with outstanding germination results and the ultimate reward of having numerous never-before-available plants to be given to attendees of the 2009 CSSA Convention at La Paloma and the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of the TCSS.

This month's presentation will follow the production of this highly successful and exciting crop of plants from March 2006 thru today, with an eye toward the future landscape applications of the plant and the long term availability of this hardy, robust, and showy native Tucson cultivar.

Thursday May 7, 2009 7pm "Cactus and Succulent Shows, Showing and Judging"

Presented by Woody Mininnich

**Meetings are held on the first
Thursday of each month.**



**Junior League of Tucson, Kiva Bldg.
2099 E. River Road**

President's Message



What should we do now?

It's hard to believe that the Convention time is here. It seems that we have been talking about it forever and now it's April 2009. There is still time for all of you to take part. Don't miss this opportunity to help, meet, see, hear and buy.

Everyone is welcome to participate but many of the events require registration and fees. The enclosed brochure will help you make a decision.

There are also opportunities to volunteer and in return receive admission to regular programs. Please contact the names on the committee list for volunteering.

We have experienced a serious problem with our web site that has caused us to send the newsletter to everyone. Our new hosting site requires that you pre-approve being on the list serve to get email messages from us. This will take time to get everyone signed up. Please be patient and aware of the new requirements.

June will be the fifty year anniversary of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. My wife Pat and I joined the society in 1969-70 and have been able to serve the society over the last 40 years. We will tell the convention about the first fifty years but our society needs to have its own celebration. I will ask the Board to plan activities in the fall for this special anniversary.

Thank you for this opportunity to represent you to the rest of the Cactus and Succulent World.

Richard Wiedhopf, President

TCSS MONTHLY MEETING FREE PLANT GIVEAWAY

This month's free plants are robust three-year-old seedlings (red-spined versions) from the TCSS sponsored propagation of the Golden Fishhook cultivar of our native *Ferocactus wislizenii*. The four yellow-spined and pure yellow-flowered seed parents were found over several years during various cactus rescues ranging from north of Oracle Junction all way to Corona de Tucson. Hand pollination amongst the seed parents during the summer of 2005 resulted in an outstanding crop of fruit and seed that was sown in March 2006. Nearly 75% of the now three-year old seedlings have retained the yellow spination of the parents, but only approximately 25% of the seedlings have more typical red spines. Some of these rare red-spined specimens have been designated as the free plants for attendees of the April 2nd meeting. While the yellow spines of the parents did not carry through to these selected plants, it is possible that the yellow flowers will do so. In the interest of following the outcome of the offspring from this

grand experiment, we encourage all members that acquire this plant to join an on-line registry to post the results from the future flowering of these plants.

PLEASE KEEP THESE PLANTS IDENTIFIED AND WATCH FUTURE TCSS NEWSLETTERS TO REGISTER YOUR PLANTS VIA THE WEB.

NOTE : All paid registrants to the CSSA Biennial Convention April 10-15 at La Paloma will receive a free potted 4" Golden Fishhook (with Yellow Spines).

~Sign up today~

Silver Bell Mine Beauty Takes "Best Regional Expression"



Mix some talent, a good eye for what goes together, some cactus rescue crew experience, a beautiful golden hedgehog, some great rocks all in a beautiful container and a winner results. Jessie Byrd had the idea to enter one of our rescued cacti in the Phoenix Flower and Garden Show. The Arizona Nursery Association and the Arizona chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects held a container design competition open to landscape designers. The containers were judged, and her hedgehog arrangement won "Best Regional Design Expression." It sold for \$250 to a woman in Peoria, all the proceeds go to the Arizona Nursery Association scholarship fund. Jessie received three of their scholarships when she was attending Landscape Architecture grad school at the University of Arizona.

This incredible specimen *Echinocereus nicholii* was delicately picked from the rocky terrain by volunteers, planted in on-site soil, and accented with warm, red rocks collected from the rescue site. It radiates the natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert every time the golden spines of this hedgehog are backlit by the sun. The blooms can be quite spectacular as well. Jessie, with Desert Green Design, put the arrangement together in a container donated by John Sargent, Desert to Mountain Products.

Joe Frannea

Science Students Love Cactus Projects



The annual Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) yielded many great science projects involving Cactus and Succulents. It is always tough for our Special Category judges to select those top three projects and decide on the Honorable Mention projects as well. It is fun to start the process early in the morning walking through the Tucson Convention Center Hall looking at over 1,300 projects to find those possible candidates. Our judges found eleven very worthy projects ranging from students in 2nd grade to High School. The High School students are required to be with their projects in the afternoon so judges can learn more about their projects, and evaluate the student's understanding and thought process. The SARSEF judges will select projects to compete at State level and some of these will go on to the National competition.

Our First Place winner was Juliana, 5th grade, from Manzanita Elementary School. Her "Baffling Barrels" project explored why some barrel cactus had odd growths and deformities. She explored the possibilities of cold, disease and animal damage. Our Second Place award went to Ruby, 4th grade, from Tanque Verde Elementary. Her study

of Stomata on cacti versus leafy plants showed the cacti have smaller stomata and about half the stomata than leafy desert plants. Our Third Place Award was for a very unique project by Ebaa, 10th grade, from Canyon del Oro. She experimented with different cacti and berry juices to be used to create Solar Cell Solutions for high temperature regions. She is planning to continue her research in biomimetic solar cells with other substances and aiming to double the energy output from traditional silicon base photovoltaic systems. Go Ebaa!

Our top three winners receive cash awards of \$100, \$75, and \$50, the Honorable Mention awards are \$25. Each winner also receives an Award Certificate and honorary family TCSS membership. The Honorable mention projects were also very interesting and covered several topics. Our purpose in giving these Special Award Category awards is to give all the encouragement we possibly can to our budding scientists who pursue studying cacti and other succulents.

Continued on Page 4

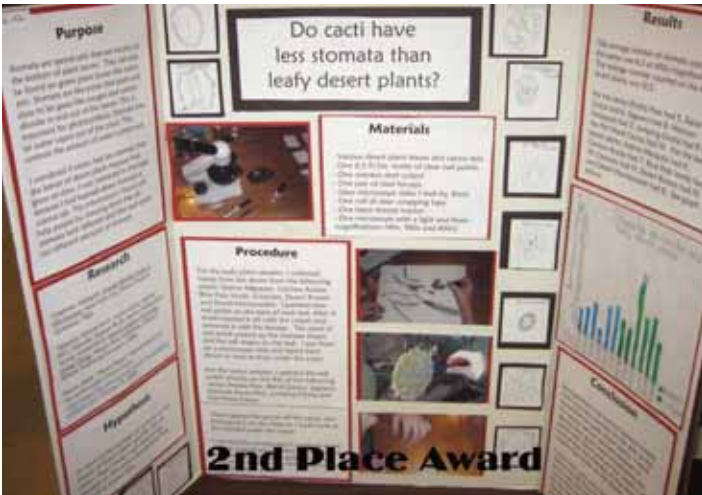
Continued from Page 3

Honorable mentions were given to the following students, in no particular order. Schilpa, 8th grade at Doolen Middle School, "Prickly Medicine" to study antibacterial properties of prickly pear fruit and roots. Dreyra, 5th grade at Wrights Town Elementary, "Bow to the Sun", studying why barrels tend to lean to the south. Tammi, 5th Grade Home Schooled, "Navajo Rug Dyes" discovering how Navajo's made such colorful fabrics, she produced some nice colorful samples. Carrie, 6th Grade St. Michaels Parish, "Home Sweet Saguaro" investigating where bird nests are located on saguaro cacti. Ellie, 2nd Grade Agua Calliente, "Prickly Pear Pop" wanted to know if there is enough sugar in prickly pear juice to make carbonated soda. Debra's 2nd Grade class project, "Where Does the Water Go" compared water retention in cactus vs. tropical plants. Suphakit, Vail

High School, "Board from Cactus" using cactus skin to make fiber cardboard. Chase, 6th Grade at Discovery Plus Academy, "Terra Forming Mars" looking into how cacti might be able to change the atmosphere on Mars.

It is so rewarding to review these projects and to understand some of the inquisitive minds of our young scientists and we often learn something new from these projects about our desert. Please encourage any K through 12 student to do a project involving cacti and other succulents, "it pays". TCSS also gave a \$1,000 grant to SARSEF from our Education Outreach fund to support the SARSEF mission. We are already looking forward to next year and participating in the "Fun Fest" come November for hands on student experiences building model cacti.

Joe Frannea



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



We are hosting the Biennial Convention of The Cactus and Succulent Society of America from April 10-15 at La Paloma Resort and Spa. Please check our web site for details.

I'm sure those of you who have attended conventions know they can't succeed without a lot of volunteers. Sally Krusing has agreed to head up our Volunteer Committee. She will need a total of 51 volunteers throughout the convention. Are you willing to help? If so, please contact her starting Friday, March 27 at sallykrusing@gmail.com

Lectures/Discussions and plant sales are the events that need volunteers. The convention will run all day and into some evening hours.

If you work the morning, you get admission free that afternoon or another half day of your choosing to attend lectures. If you work the afternoon, you get admission free that morning or a half day of your choosing to attend lectures.

If you work an evening you get admission for a morning or afternoon to attend lectures. There will be a wonderful lunch buffet each day for \$15 that includes a lunch lecture; unfortunately, no one gets a free lunch. There will be a Volunteer training session at La Paloma Resort and Spa on Sunday afternoon, April 5.

Sally is looking forward to hearing from you.

Library Update

The four volumes of the 2008 Cactus & Co. have been added to the library. Each volume is written in both English and Italian. There are numerous photos to accompany each article.

Volume 1 has articles on Hoyas, Aztekium hintoni & Geohintonia mexicana and Medicinal cactaceae.

Volume 2 has Gymnocalycium castellanosii, Lophophora alberto-vojtechii and Sedum.

Volume 3 articles are Agave victoriae-reginae, Oroya borchersii and Aloe pillansii.

Volume 4 contains Succulent plants – recent researches, Sulcorebutia and a new species of Adromischus.

IMPORTANT NEW Cactus Rescue Crew Mail List

We lost our Cactus Rescue Crew Mail List due to our old web provider deleting the List. Our new web provider requires that after we add a name to a Mail List that the email recipient confirm that they want to be on the List. We can not send you any emails using the List until you click on the confirmation link which activates your name on the list.

I created a new cactus Rescue Crew List on March 24th which includes all TCSS Members. Those who want to get the weekly Cactus Rescue Crew notices must click on the link you received in an email. The message will be from "mailing list manager" and the subject will be "Request for confirmation of subscription to the mailing list [cactus-rescue-list@tucsoncactus.org].

Sorry for the inconvenience but we had to create a new hosting site quickly. The new host provider is 1and1.com. If you did not get the confirmation notice email or deleted it and want to be on the list, send an email to cactusrescue@tucsoncactus.org.

Thanks, Joe Frannea

TCSS Spring Cactus Sale a Winner



Mix over 400 rescued native cactus, 180 great customers and 34 TCSS volunteers and voila, a win-win. Our sale had over 300 saguaros, 60 hedgehogs (many being the golden nicholii), about 20 barrels and a few ocotillo, prickly pear, cholla and lots of mammillaria. Many of the hedgehogs were just starting to bud so customers will be able to enjoy their spectacular magenta flowers in the weeks to come. We were joined by Catalina Magnet High School Agriculture FFA Education Program students who had grown agaves and prickly pear plants for the experience and to raise money for their program. Their teacher, Nicole, is one of our TCSS Members and a School Grant recipient.

We had our normal booming start of the sale at 9 AM with most of the plants gone by 10 AM, almost everything was sold by our closing time at 1 PM. Our TCSS volunteers did a super job getting everything set-up and assisting customers. The Amphitheater holding

Continue on the page 6

TCSS BOARD

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885-6367

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Joie Giunta

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CSSA Affiliate Rep:

Helen Barber (2009)

Cactus Rescue

cactusrescue@tucsoncactus.org

Cactus Rescue: Chris Monrad

Educational: Joe Frannea

Free Plants: Chris Monrad

Librarian: Joie Giunta

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Editor: Karen Keller

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Deadline for copy: 15th of each month

TCSS Web Page:

www.tucsoncactus.org

Webmaster: Keimpe Bronkhorst

April Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with P to Z please bring your choice of refreshment to the meeting.

Everyone is Welcome!

Bring your friends, join in the fun, and meet the cactus and succulent community.



TCSS Rescue Cacti for Sale

Barrels - from 2" to 14" diameter (about \$1 per inch)

Hedgehogs - from 1 to 20 heads (about \$1 per head)

TCSS Club Members receive a 10% discount

April 2009	
Thursday, April 2, 2009	7:00 pm Monthly meeting: "The golden spine Ferocactus Wislizenii". Presented by Chris Monrad
Friday, Saturday, April 3 - 4, 2009	Tucson Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale. April 3 (members only) 12pm - 6pm, April 4 (public sale) 9am - 4pm.
Tuesday, April 7, 2009	7:00pm Board Meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy
Friday, April 10 - Wednesday April 15, 2009	CSSA Biennial Convention at the Westin La Paloma Resort.

Continue from page 5

site near First Ave. and Wetmore Road works so well for us being under the shaded structure and plenty of parking for all with drive through lanes for easy loading. We took in just over \$10,000 and after expenses for tags and subtracting glove sales (28 pair) and memberships (12) we netted about \$7,000. Our Educational Outreach Fund will receive 25% of the profit for School grants and other Educational projects.

A special thanks to the ASARCO Silver Bell Mine management for allowing us to rescue plants on their expansion areas, almost all of the sale plants came from

their mine property. Our next sale will be announced on our web site and by postcards and emails to customers and by email to TCSS Members. The sale date will be determined by new inventory that will be accumulated over the next several months. The CSSA conference at the Westin La Paloma Resort will have over twenty-five vendors selling plants, pottery, art and books. This is open to the public on April 11, 12, 14, and 15 from 8 AM to 5 PM. Come by to shop, treat yourself to one of our \$15 buffet lunches which also gives you admittance to hear a great speaker. We will not be selling any rescued cactus at the conference.

Joe Frannea photo Ed Bartlett