



# Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

August 2008

## Thursday, August 7, 2008 at 7PM Exploring and Knowing the Plants of the Rio Grande Area of Texas

Presented by Matthew B. Johnson



This presentation will focus on Matt's recent nine-day trip from Brownsville to El Paso where he identified cacti, trees, and other plants for some of his photographer friends. His program will include such species as *Astrophytum asterias*, *Acanthocereus tetragonus*, *Echinocereus chisosensis* and *Grusonia densispina*. Matt is very familiar with this fantastic area of the country and knows the plants very well.

Matthew has a BS in Agriculture and a MS in Horticulture from the University of Arizona. He is currently a Research Specialist at the University of Arizona, Program Manager and Curator of the Desert Legume Program (1989-present). The Desert Legume Program (DELEP) is a joint project of the UA College of Agriculture Life Sciences and the Boyce Thompson Arboretum. DELEP was established in 1988 to develop a comprehensive seed bank of wild species of legumes (Fabaceae) that are native to or adapted to arid and semi-arid regions, to preserve their seeds long-term, to provide seeds and information to individuals and organizations around the world, and to investigate potential uses for these plants. He has made extensive travels to study and photograph plants and plant habitats in southwestern United States and in arid regions of Mexico, Argentina, Australia and South Africa. His international travel has involved visits to 14 countries on six continents.

For those interested in cacti and other plants of the Texas Rio Grande area this will be a very special program you will not want to miss. We are really looking forward to having Matt as our special guest. Be sure to invite a friend and join us for this excellent program.

Thursday, September 4, 2008 at 7:00PM

"A Summer Succulent Sabbatical  
to South Africa and Namibia"

Presented Ernesto Sandoval  
from the University of California, Davis

## FREE PLANTS *Ferocactus hamatacanthus* Turk's Head Barrel/ Texas Barrel

The *Ferocactus* is a popular group of cacti to grow either in pots or as landscape plants. The genus *Ferocactus*, being derived from *Ferus*, meaning wild or fierce and *cactus* referring to the very spiny character of the plants.

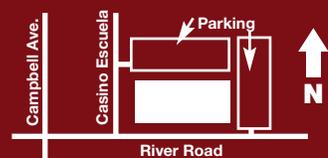
The genus is distributed widely from southern Mexico, north to the Southwestern US and continuing westward to southern California and into Baja California.

This species lends itself well as a landscape cactus for southern Arizona. It is both frost hardy and able to be acclimated to full sun. In the next year or so, your specimen will be large enough to flower. The Turk's Head Barrel will usually flower in July with large yellow flowers, they are diurnal and attract bees as pollinators. In about two months you will find a large ripe fruit containing hundreds of seed suitable for germinating next year. Plants will attain mature size at about 12"-14" wide and about 24" tall and are capable of flower each year. Some individuals will offset with multiple heads capable of also flowering. This species has a very dramatic long central spine which is curved at the end, so be careful when planting not to damage the beautiful long spines. The native range for the Turk's Head Barrel is southern New Mexico, west Texas bordering Mexico south to Brownsville and south into northeastern Mexico's Chihuahuan Desert and Tamaulipan Thorn Scrub.

Enjoy your plants!

Mark Sitter

Meetings are held on the first  
Thursday of each month.



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

## President's Message



The 33rd Biennial Convention of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America hosted by the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society is only 8 months away. Just thought I would remind you. Remember this opportunity comes around only once every decade or two; 1965, 1977, 1995 and now 2009. I don't want you to miss out on this event.

Coming up in the near future are four exciting activities other than regular monthly meeting. August 17th is our blooming barrel sale. Rescued barrels in bud and bloom will be featured. This material sells very quickly and usually within the first 2 hours most material is sold. The sale will be held at our Fourth Ave holding site at 4342 N 4th ave. You will receive a postcard or email with all the details soon.

The 25th Annual Succulent Symposium at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, in San Marino, Ca will be held on Saturday, August 30, 2008. The title is "A New Century of Succulent Plants" and features 6 speakers, lunch, optional dinner, silent auction and an opportunity to visit the behind the scene areas and purchase plants. There are many other wonderful things to see at the Huntington either the day before or after the symposium. The CSSA Board of Directors meets on Sunday August 31, at the Huntington. A complete schedule and registration form will be available September 1, 2008. See our website for CSSA convention links.

Coming up on September 21 is the Good Time Silent Auction. This event features several overlapping silent auction, a limited live auction of special plants, plus free plant cuttings and giveaways, and \$2.00 plant sale tables. This is always a lot of fun, an opportunity to unburden your garden of excess material and

fill it back up again with new material. There will be ICE CREAM and all the TOPPINGS to really make this a good time. Full details will be in the September newsletter so start getting your plants ready.

The Board of directors has authorized a trial period for another monthly meeting to start in September. We are calling it "The Round Table." It will be informal and will focus on a popular subject with one or more host experts. This will be an opportunity to ask questions, get advice and share successes and failures. Other cactus and succulent societies have been doing this and it has been very successful. If you have a topic (plant genus, technique, structures etc.) for The Round Table please let me know. I hope these meetings will be a success.



Finally, Kevin Barber and I had the opportunity to visit our member Jan Emming at his Destination Forever Ranch outside of Yucca, AZ. The scenery and plants are spectacular in this area where the Mohave Desert plants meeting the Sonoran Desert plants. Any scene with both Joshua Trees and Saguaros is dramatic. Here is just one picture to give you the flavor.

Thanks for your support.

*Dick Wiedhopf, President*

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## Cactus Rescue Crew Carefully Removes Habitat



While surveying a twenty acre parcel for potential cactus to be removed prior to clearing the land for a new middle school to be built in the Vail area, a large rattler was discovered enjoying his

native territory. The area did have a lot of pack rat middens so it probably is a good snake habitat. During spring and summer months we always have the rattlesnake reminder high on our "working safely" priority list. During the cactus rescue which took place a few days after the survey, the snake was discovered under a prickly pear cactus just having had breakfast. Its two inch diameter body was now about four inches in the center of the snake, obviously digesting a rodent of some type that it had just swallowed. He was not active during this digestive period so it was good for us as we knew exactly where he was for several hours, not that there couldn't have been others in the area. There is lots of neighboring state land so hopefully he will be able to exist on the hundreds of remaining acres.

The crew had a heavy lifting day as most of the viable cactus were large and heavy, very hydrated barrel cactus (*Ferocactus wislizeni*) from the recent monsoon rains. We left anything over two feet tall for the club inventory as they are very heavy for us to handle and too large for most customers to deal with. One crew member took a few larger ones as he has built specially equipped dollies and ramps to load the large barrels into his truck. The crew removed over a hundred barrels weighing in at

about 5 tons. We had worked part of this site a year and a half ago for the construction of an elementary school which is just being finished on the adjacent parcel. We removed most of the smaller cactus, pincushions, peniocereus and hedge hogs, on both parcels at that time. Some of the eagle-eyed crew did find a few more Queen of the Night (*Peniocereus greggii*), one prize being five feet tall with a huge 6 by 12 inch tuber. It does take a special eye to find what looks like a dead stick coming out of the ground and is often at the base of a mesquite tree with lots of other dead sticks around the area. There were also lots of small devils claw plants with large tubers that were easy digging in the soft loamy soil, thanks to all the recent rain.

Some of the rescued barrels went home with crew members but most were taken to our holding site for our Blooming Barrel Sale to be held on Sunday, August 17th, from 9 am to 1 pm or until all cactus are sold which can be as early as 10:30 am. See our web site for more details, [www.TucsonCactus.org](http://www.TucsonCactus.org). A special thanks to the Vail School District Facilities Manager for making this property available as they have prepared many other sites as well over the past ten years.

*Joe Frannea*

## Library Update

At the board's suggestion we are adding children's books to the library so that your children and grandchildren can learn about Arizona and the desert. The following books are for 4-8 year olds.

**Cactus Hotel** by Brenda Z. Guiberson is a story of the Saguaro from a seed to a 200-year-old fallen plant. The book tells how the Saguaro got its start and the creatures that make use of it during its lifetime and beyond.

**Don't Call Me Pig!** A Javelina Story by Conrad J. Storar. This is an informative

and interesting story about the javelina and why you shouldn't call them pigs. At the back of the book are a couple of pages teaching the adults why you don't call them pigs. Colorfully illustrated.

For the adults there is **Cacti of Texas** A Field Guide. *Opuntia*, *Echinocereus*, *Ferocactus*, *Coryphantha* and more are discussed. Each species covers distribution, vegetative characters, flowers, fruits, the latin name and other common names.

*Joie Giunta*

## TCSS Financial Report - First Half 2008

This is the financial report for the first six months of 2008. The \$10,000 set-aside for Rescue Crew Operations is to ensure working monies are available for large tag purchases and other rescue expenses. Education, Research, Conservation, and Botanical Art Preservation funds are designated monies specifically earmarked for these programs. The Rescue Crew Program expenses include \$3,560 donated to the Educational Outreach Fund which is 25% of the Rescue Program profits for the first half of 2008.

Major Categories	Income	Expenses	Net
Dues, Newsletters, Meetings, misc.:	\$ 7,898	\$ 8,755	(\$857)
Cactus Rescue, misc sales:	\$31,122	\$15,663	\$15,459
Sonoran VII, commissions:	\$46,339	\$54,903	(\$8,564)
Donations, grants:	\$1,914	\$8,332	(\$6,418)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$87,273</b>	<b>\$87,653</b>	<b>(\$379)</b>

Assets by Funds:	Balance
General Fund:	\$17,668
Cactus Rescue Operations:	\$10,000
Educational Outreach Fund:	\$13,627 (\$2,333 awarded this period)
Research Fund:	\$11,917 (\$4,999 awarded this period)
Conservation Fund:	\$745 (\$1,000 awarded this period)
Botanical Art Preservation:	\$501 (new fund, no monies awarded)

**Total Monetary Assets: \$54,458**  
Physical Assets, approx: \$20,000 (Library collection and equipment)

For comments or questions regarding this report, please contact Joe Frannea, Treasurer, email: [joe@TucsonCactus.org](mailto:joe@TucsonCactus.org)

## TCSS BOARD

### Officers

**President: Richard Wiedhopf**  
885-6367

**Vice President: Vonn Watkins**

**Secretary: Nancy Reid**

**Treasurer: Joe Frannea**

### Board of Directors:

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Keimpe Bronkhorst (2008)

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Dan Birt (2009)

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**Free Plants: Norma Beckman**

**Librarian: Joie Giunta**

**Programs: Vonn Watkins**

**Refreshments: Patsy Frannea**

**Sales: Jack Ramsey**

**Technology: Kevin Barber**

**Research Grants: Gerald Pine**

**Editor: Karen Keller**

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**Deadline for copy:**

15th of each month

**TCSS Web Page:**

[www.tucsoncactus.org](http://www.tucsoncactus.org)

**Webmaster: Keimpe Bronkhorst**

### August Refreshments

**Those with family names beginning with U to D 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.**

**4 0 5 9 4**  
**3**  
**Cacti Rescued**  
**202 Rescues Accomplished**

**TCSS Rescue Cacti for Sale**

**Visit our next Sale for selections**

**(See the Calender below)**

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

<b>August 2008</b>	
<b>Thursday, August 7, 2008</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b> <b>"Exploring and Knowing the Plants of the Rio Grande Area of Texas"</b> <i>Presented by Matthew B. Johnson</i>
<b>Tuesday, August 12, 2008</b>	<b>Board meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy</b>
<b>Sunday, August 17, 2008</b>	<b>Blooming Barrel Sale</b>
<b>Saturday, August 30, 2008</b>	<b>The 25th Succulent Symposium at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA</b>



Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society  
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