



DESERT BREEZE

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

September 2012

Thursday, September 6, 2012 at 7:00pm

“Agaves”

Presented by Greg Starr

Author of: “Agaves: Living sculptures for landscapes and containers”



Agave shawii 8 miles north of Colonet



Agave ovatifolia



Agave bovicornuta near KM 254 east of Hermosillo

Greg will discuss the history, interesting tidbits and show some of his favorite plants from his new book which is titled “Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers.”

Greg was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona, has grown to love the desert and its flora and fauna. He graduated from the University of Arizona in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, and after working in the landscape industry he went back to the University to study Botany and further his education in horticulture. Greg worked for Warren Jones (co-author of *Plants for Dry Climates and Landscape Plants for Dry Regions*) and Dr. Charles Mason at the University of Arizona herbarium. Greg made his first foray into the world of collecting in 1979 when he traveled with Warren and Bill Kinneson to Texas where he saw firsthand, in habitat, the many plants he had only experienced in the nursery or landscapes. He emerged from the University in 1985 with a Master of Science in Horticulture with a special emphasis on botany.

He opened Starr Nursery in the summer of 1985, and has specialized in low water use plants for landscaping in southern Arizona. Greg has traveled extensively in Mexico and the southwestern United States to study the plants for their potential landscape use in desert regions of the world. He has also traveled to South Africa in search of potential landscape plants for southern Arizona.

Greg has written several horticultural articles for the journal *Desert Plants*. Topics have covered various groups of plants as well as botanizing in South Africa. He has also described a new species of *Agave*, two new species and a subspecies of *Hesperaloe*, and revised the genus *Hesperaloe* in a monograph published in the journal *Madroño*. Greg worked with Dr. Jose Angel Villarreal in describing *Agave ovatifolia* which has been dubbed Whale’s Tongue *Agave*, a reflection of the incredibly wide leaves that sometimes double as

water harvesting vessels. Greg’s book, *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*, was released at the end of April 2009. His second book, titled *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers*, was released in early May of 2012. He has taught Plant Biology and Plant Materials classes at The Art Center Design College in Tucson for their program on Landscape Architecture.

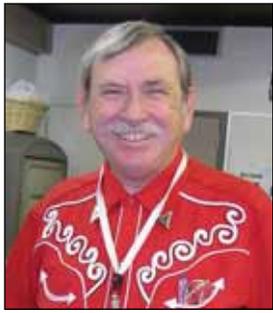
Greg spends most of his days tapping at the computer hoping another book will take shape, preparing PowerPoint presentations and tending to Starr Nursery, specializing in *Agaves* and related plants as well as other succulents and new introductions of perennials, flowering shrubs, and small trees from arid and semi-arid regions around the world. He and his four legged pal Nikki spend many hours in the nursery potting up *Agaves* and other cool plants, chasing rabbits, and napping on the soil pile.

Please join us and invite your friends to this excellent program. Enjoy some great food, free plants, and join the multitude of others who love to talk about cactus and succulents.

TCSS Program Presentation
Thursday, October 4, 2012
“Peru – Land of the Inca, Land of Cacti”
Presented by Mark Muradian

Free Plants

This month we will have an assortment of various agaves and the raffle & door prize table will include an expanded selection of excellent agave specimens.



President's Message

We have officially past the 1,000 member mark again this year. Congratulations! It is your work, attitude, interests and accomplishments that keep attracting new members and friends to our society. Thank you. On a personal note my daughter and son-in-law, Jen and Dale Whitt have added another member, Abigail Sagan Whitt on August 23.

The Good Time Silent Auction is September 16 and as always we need volunteers from set-up to clean-up. This is the perfect event since you can get rid of extra plants, acquire new ones, eat ice cream and all the toppings, visit with friends and make new friends, support the society (profits are going to Pima Prickly Park this year) and just have a "Good Time". You can read more details about this in this newsletter.

On September 22, along with Pima County, we will officially open Pima Prickly Park (PPP). We have 9.4 acres to develop and landscape with our favorite plants and already you can see the wonderful potential

for this Park. Our member Jesse Byrd, both professionally and as a volunteer, deserves our thanks for the huge number of hours she has dedicated to this project. There is a large group of volunteers who regularly contribute to the development of PPP along with wonderful cooperation from Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation (PCNRPR). I want to thank Joe Frannea (PPP Operations Manager) who has put this September event together, Linda Heisley (Volunteer Coordinator) and Ed Bartlett our "Park Steward". On a day to day basis they really have made a difference. There are many more members to thank and over the next few months they will be recognized for their contribution to PPP. The event will be an opportunity for me to publicly thank the County Administrator, Chuck Huckleberry, the Director of PCNRPR, Rafael Payan and their staffs for making this Public/Private partnership a success.

Throw in a couple of rescues, our regular meeting on September 6, Board and committee meetings and September is a busy month. I know you will participate in as many events as you can and it's appreciated.

Thank you for your support
Dick Wiedhopf, President

Annual Blooming Barrel Sale - Fun As Always



Although we did not have a cloud cover to sell under early Sunday morning on August 19th. to help cut the heat, all else went very smoothly for our 11th Annual Blooming Barrel Sale where customers can pick barrel cacti with flower colors of their choice. The sale, held at our cactus holding site near First Ave. and Wetmore, was attended by about 150 customers and managed by 36 dedicated volunteers. We also had five of our member businesses selling some great cactus and other plants under the mesquite trees, a nice compliment to the rescued cactus.

We sold 145 Barrels, 65 Hedgehogs, 35 potted Ocotillo, about 400 Mammalaria and a few other cacti. This brought in \$4,300 and after expenses for the Native Plant tags, advertising expenses and a few other expenses, we netted \$2,450 in profit. Twenty-five percent of this is earmarked for our Education Outreach program for grants to K-12

Arizona schools and other educational activities such as supplies to build cactus models. A big thanks to our customers for supporting our Cactus Rescue Program and to all the TCSS volunteers who rescue the plants and those who sell them.

Our next sale will be at Pima Prickly Park, 3500 W. River Road, Saturday, September 22, 2012 at the Grand Opening of the park event. The event is from 9 AM to 2 PM and the cactus sale part is from 10 AM to Noon. We will have Saguaros up to 40 inches tall, large Ocotillo, Golden Hedgehogs, some Barrels and Mammalaria. Come early to get an entrance number for best selections. More details will be emailed to members and to our customer email list about a week before the event.

Joe Frannea (photo by John Durham)

Sonoran Desert Florilegium Happenings

EH Estill Watercolors Preserved

Ella Howard Estill (1860-1941), a floral and botanic painter, from Columbus, Ohio created numerous paintings of cacti and desert flowers during her eighteen years residence in Oracle and Tucson, Arizona. Over 500 of these paintings came to be at the U of A Herbarium. These painting are not 'scientific illustrations,' but because they have historical value and give accurate representations of the plants the Steering Committee and Herbarium staff decided to include them in the Herbarium collection. Over the past several months the watercolors were archived by James Thomas. Nancy Reid and Connie Engard are nearly finished accessioning them into the Herbarium collection.

Legumes of Arizona Project

In the past year pen and ink illustrations created by Arizona botanical artists for the Legumes of Arizona: An Illustrated Flora and Reference have been exhibited at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, U of A Science and Engineering Library and U of A Student Union. These exhibits were the joint effort of the Legumes of Arizona Project and the Sonoran Desert Florilegium Program. Publication of the book is projected to be at the end of 2013.

Other News

The Florilegium Program and the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum Art Institute are jointly sponsoring the exhibit, Botanical Art of the Sonoran Desert: Past and Present, September 14 through October 27, 2013. Botanical artists in the Desert Museum Art Institute class, Drawing Plants for a Florilegium, are working on plant drawings and paintings to submit to the exhibit. Look for more about this exhibit in future editions of The Desert Breeze. To assist in raising funds for the exhibit there is a matching donation of up to \$500. Contributions of any amount will be matched and very much appreciated.

We have a new website domain name, sonorandesertflorilegium.org. Our webmaster, Cindy Hartwell, has been very busy putting up information and photos of exhibits and herbarium work. Particularly interesting is information on 'How to Create a Botanical Plate.' The website is also linked through the TCSS website. Please visit the site to see more of what we have been doing.

Margaret Pope



Nancy Reid and Connie Engard at the U of A Herbarium accessioning the EH Estill paintings



Opuntia versicolor, watercolor by EH Estill



Opuntia tetracantha, watercolor by EH Estill



Boyce Thompson Arboretum Legume Exhibit March 2012



Boyce Thompson Arboretum Legume Exhibit March 2012



Kim Ratelle-Collins working on legume illustration



Kim Ratelle-Collins discussing illustration with visitors to Boyce Thompson Arboretum Legume Exhibit May 2011



Cindy Hartwell observing plant specimen under microscope before beginning to draw



Anna Hewings working on preliminary drawings of the Desert Milkweed

Growing in the Desert Series: Time to pay attention to winter-growing bulbs.

by Mark Dimmitt

Whether or not bulbs are true succulents, people who collect succulent plants tend to be attracted to bulbs too. If you have a collection of winter-growing bulbs, you probably put the barren pots away at the end of spring, out of sight and sheltered from summer rains. September is the time to remember where you stashed them and prepare them for their coming growing season. It's also time to order any new ones you want to try. Most winter bulbs are activated by cooling nights and soil moisture. They may not show above ground until late October or November, but the roots began to grow a month before you see green. The following task list applies to the great majority of winter bulbs:

1. If the bulbs have multiplied and become crowded, future flower spikes will be stunted. Unpot and divide the clusters, replanting the largest bulbs. Space them to allow two or three years of growth before they become crowded again.

2. Because cooling temperature is necessary to break dormancy, bulbs in clay pots or pots located in the shade will sprout before those in plastic pots in the sun. Plastic pots can be wrapped in aluminum foil or painted white with spray paint to keep them cooler. (You may notice that the bulbs on the south side of the pot will sprout last, and are often smaller than those on the north side. Many winter bulbs are marginally adapted to the desert's warm winters.)

3. In late September or October when nights begin to drop into the 60s F, soak the pots once. Then keep the medium barely moist until you see green sprouts. Some bulbs such as *Ferraria* will sprout at much higher temperatures. Move the pots of sprouted plants into a sunny location if they aren't there already. Full desert sun is a bit too much for most species, especially in spring. So most potted bulbs should be shielded from full afternoon sun. High temperatures can trigger premature dormancy. This is a major reason why those from the coolest habitats do not perform well here.

4. When growth is well under way, water and fertilize generously. Be prepared to cover the tender species on frosty nights. Most species will tolerate nights in the upper 20s in partial shade, while mid to low 20s will damage many if they're exposed to the night sky.

Some of the winter bulbs that do well in Tucson include:

-*Boophane species* (Figure 1): Fan-shaped foliage tops large above-ground bulbs that are covered with papery layers, but have succulent interiors and fleshy roots. Hardy to at least the low 20s under a cover. Dull flowers appear in fall before leaves. (*B. disticha* is summer-active and bears red flowers.)



Figure 1. Most *Boophane species* flower in late summer, then produce a fan of leaves in fall and winter.



Figure 2. *Ferraria crisper*: curls, spots, and a honey-sweet fragrance. What else could you wish for?



Figure 3. A collection of Cape hyacinths. Clockwise from upper left: *Lachenalia aloides quadricolor*, same, *L. aloides*, *L. viridiflora*, *L. bulbifera*, same, *L. unknown lavender*



Figure 4. *Ornithogalum dubium* is one of the few species of this genus with nonwhite flowers.



Figure 5. Hurricane lilies flowering in August. The bloom season lasts less than two weeks, but what a show!



Figure 6. A collection of *Sparaxis* hybrids.

- *Ferraria crisper* (Figure 2): The flowers are star-shaped with very undulate petal margins, weirdly spotted on a greenish background, and deliciously fragrant. Hardy to the mid 20s.

- *Freesia*: Very easy to grow. Bell-shaped flowers in several colors are lightly fragrant. Hardy to at least the low 20s.

- *Ipheion uniflorum*: A tiny plant no taller than 6 inches. One-inch flowers in shades of blue are borne one at a time in spring. Seems to be completely hardy in Tucson.

- *Lachenalia* (Cape hyacinth, Figure 3): Numerous species, some of which have attractively spotted foliage. Flowers range from inconspicuous to large and colorful.

- *Leucocoryne*: Grasslike foliage and inch-wide star flowers of lavender to purple on tall stems; lightly fragrant. Likes lots of water; hardy to mid 20s.

- *Moraea polystachya*: A small iris with two-inch bluish flowers over a two-month period, usually in spring. Will sprout as early as August with good rains and be in flower by late September. Very easy to grow. In fact, it will volunteer freely in any watered site; keep it away from other bulb pots or you will soon have nothing but moraea. Other species have more beautiful flowers, but most are difficult to grow in the desert. Completely hardy in most of Tucson.

- *Ornithogalum dubium* (Figure 4): Most species in this genus have white flowers with black eyes. But this one has bright orange flowers, or sometimes lemon yellow. Easy to grow; hardy to mid 20s under cover.

Oxalis species

- *Rhodophiala bifida* (hurricane lily, Figure 5): This bulb flowers in August while dormant after a heavy rain, hence the name. Leaves sprout in the fall and die in spring. Bulbs multiply freely, but never set seed. This species needs to be in the ground; for reasons I don't understand, it rarely flowers in pots. Hardy to at least 20. There is also a pink-flowered form.

- *Sparaxis* (Figure 6): These miniature irises bear several one-inch flowers in a wide range of bright color combinations. The flowering season is very short in the desert, only about a week for each bulb, spread over a two-week period. Hardy to mid 20s.

Good Time Silent Auction

Sunday, September 16, 2012 • Junior League Building • 2099 E. River Rd • 3:00pm to 5pm

Good bye to the summer heat and great monsoon and hello to a wonderful fall planting time. This event has been a Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society tradition for more than 50 years. All proceeds will help our Pima Prickly Park development.

This is a celebration: silent auctions, Free Plants, \$2, \$5, \$10 sale tables and Ice Cream with all the toppings. Bring your excess plants for the free plant table. All we ask is that your plants are free of disease and insects. Better plants will go on the \$2.00, \$5.00 and \$10.00 tables and special plants for the silent auctions.

Bid sheets and price stickers will be available at the September meeting, at the event and on our website for your convenience. The Board has adopted the same policy as we had at Sonoran IX with a high value special silent auction plants. These items will have an opening minimum bid of \$20.00 or more set by the donor. If the item sells for at least the opening bid the donor receives the opening bid price and any amount above that goes to the society. We will have a number of special plants and books from friends and past members

of the Society. Some are large, some are old and some are rare. Be sure you don't miss out.

We will have at least 3 separate silent auctions during the afternoon. Pots, plants, special cuttings, books, tools etc are welcome donations for these silent auctions. Free Plants will be available starting a 3:30pm in order to give everyone an opportunity to take some home. We will start the set-up at 1:00pm and the party will start at 3:00pm with the first silent auction ending at about 3:15pm and then about every 25 minutes there after. All you have to do is sign-in, get a bid number and then keep bidding until you hear "PENCILS DOWN".

We need volunteers for set-up, sales, and clean-up. Come help and have fun, ask questions, talk with friends, etc., etc., Please feel free to bring your family and friends to this event. You don't have to be a member or bring plants or buy them, just come and enjoy the event. More information will be available at www.tucsoncactus.org or call (520) 256-2447.

September Pima Prickly Park Update

- Grand Opening Event plans, September 22nd, 9 AM to 2 PM, being finalized which include a ribbon cutting ceremony, live music, about 15 exhibitors, a few hands on activities for children, a few live animals, a rescued cactus sale. A park brochure is being developed and will be available on the 22nd. Plant ID signs have been designed and many will be in place for the opening event.
- A concrete picnic table has been placed under the large ramada to see how this will work in place of installing the concrete benches, thanks to parks and recreation.
- Cactus Rescue Crew members dug lots of cactus from a new development site in Marana and planted many of them at PPP. This included 7 Prickly Pear, 17 Cholla, 87 Hedgehogs, and over 200 Mammillaria. A three headed crested barrel cactus is being relocated from our holding site to the park.
- Six large mounds of dirt were placed in the Agave garden this past week, about 100 tons of dirt. Over 100 Agaves from 6 to 30 inches of various types were planted on the mounds and surrounding areas. We will make of list of Agaves that we could use to compliment what we have to see if members have some of these to contribute.
- Agave Garden design pretty much complete and work progressing in the Cholla Forest area. Inner loop paths are being designed for many of the park areas and some will be installed prior to the Grand Opening. The compacted gravel surface on these will be more wheelchair and walker friendly.
- Rain gauge and temperature data was dumped from the weather station (5/16/12 to 8/4/14). The rain data is available on the www.rainlog.org web site (you can also find hundreds of other weather station data from citizens for southern Arizona on this site). The monsoon has delivered over 4.5 inches of rain to the park. The raw temperature and rain pulses (0.01 increments) data will be put on the PPP web site for use by anyone that wants to access the history of these readings taken every 15 minutes

Pima Prickly Park Logo Ideas?

Got an Idea? You don't have to be an artist, just creative.

We are soliciting ideas for a logo, needs to be unique, simple and represent a cactus and succulent plant garden.

You have until November 15th to submit your idea, design etc. Email to Park@TucsonCactus.org or mail it to our PO Box 64759, Tucson AZ 85728-4759.

Pima Prickly Park Grand Opening

Saturday, September 22, 2012

9:00 AM to 2:00 PM • Open to the Public • Free

Come join us for a Grand Opening Celebration to inaugurate Pima Prickly Park. Cactus gardens and features have been developed over the past few years and will continue for many more. Walk the paths, look for wildlife and enjoy the initial plantings that will be expanded and mature in the years to come. Visit the many exhibitors and hands on activities and educational opportunities set up, all related to the Sonoran Desert plants, wildlife and preservation efforts.

Events Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 9:00-2:00 | Park Opens, self-guided tours Exhibits and hands on activities open and available to guests. |
| 9:00-9:25 | Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held at park entrance
Song by Ted Ramirez, Pledge of Allegiance, Boy Scouts
Dick Wiedhopf, President, Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society
Rafael Payan, Director, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Chuck Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator
Hand out of native seed mix for guests to sow in Pima Prickly Park
Closing Song by Ted Ramirez |
| 9:30-10:00 | Music and songs by Ted Ramirez at office complex entrance area. |
| 10:00-12:00 | Cactus Sale by the TCSS Cactus Rescue Crew in the Visitor Parking Lot. Cactus includes Saguaros, Ocotillo and Golden Hedgehogs |
| 11:00 AM, Noon, & 1:00 PM | Brief Presentation about Pima Prickly Park in Conference Room
Guided Park tour by TCSS member after each Presentation |
| 2:00 PM | Event Closes |

TCSS BOARD

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www.tucsoncactus.org

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For additional information call: (520) 256-2447

Everyone is Welcome!

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

September Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with S, T, U, V, W, X,
and Y please bring your choice of refreshments to
the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly
appreciated and enjoyed!



Cacti Rescued 291 Rescues Accomplished

Please see our Website Calendar for the next
rescued cactus sale. They are scheduled at various
times during the year based on our inventory.

TCSS Club Members receive a 10% discount

September 2012

Thursday, September 6, 2012 7:00pm

Monthly Meeting, "Agaves" presented by Greg Starr, Author
of: "Agaves: Living sculptures for landscapes and containers"

Tuesday, September 11, 2012 7:00pm

Board meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy

Sunday, September 16, 2012 3:00pm to 5:00pm

Good Time Silent Auction, Junior League Building
2099 E. River Rd Tucson, AZ. Set-up at 1pm

Saturday, September 22, 2012 9:00am to 2:00pm

Pima Prickly Park Grand Opening, 3500 W. River Road.

Acknowledgement of Contributions

The names below represent the Tucson Cactus & Succulent
Society members and friends whose donations helped make
this year a success. We extend our sincere thanks for your support.

Pima Prickly Park

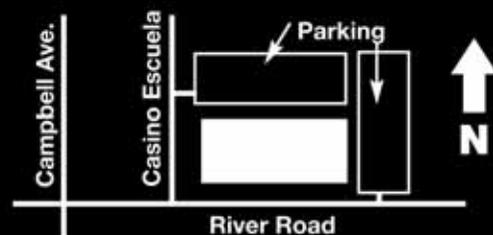
(In Memory of Larry Miller)

Melinda & John Patterson III

(In honor of Angela Miller)

J.C. McCamy

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



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