

Mammillaria Thornberi Rescued!



Twenty seven anxious Cactus Rescue Crew members showed up just south of the Tucson Mall to rescue a large collection of Mammillaria Thornberi on a rare plot of undisturbed desert right in the center of Tucson. These cacti are typically found on the West side of the Tucson Mountains, this location is the most Eastern location that we know about.

There were a lot of small single headed plants and several nice clumps or families. About 180 Thornberi were rescued. Many went home with Rescue Crew members (one of the benefits of being a crew member), and several were saved for TBG and other public cactus gardens. Since these cacti are a little difficult to transplant and the survival rate is probably 50/50, the balance will be sold to TCSS members at our April 1st meeting.

Thornberi have slender stems and seem to like to cluster. They have small fish hook spines and bloom in mid-summer with light pink blooms on the outside and a deeper pink center. They give a red and white star shape appearance from a distance due to the contrast of colors.

Rescue Crew members could not reach a consensus regarding the secret for a successful transplant, but it was noted that most of the Thornberi were growing under a Velvet Mesquite tree in sandy soil. This property was on the outer banks of the Rillito River not too many years ago before the river was re-channeled and banked.

The Rescue Crew also saved a huge and very plump Hedge Hog with about 32 stems that has been donated to The Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG).

The special canvas cactus carrier made by Twink Monrad was a must to keep this beauty in tact. This property also had several varieties of nice Cholla for our Opuntia collectors. Two night blooming cereus (*Peniocereus Greggii*) were rescued that will be given to the land owners along with a couple of the Thornberi cacti.

Joe Frannea

TCSS Selects SARSEF Winners!

As you enter the huge Tucson Convention Center exhibit hall with rows and rows of school children's display boards and models lined up, you can't help but be impressed with all of the talent and brain power radiating from these 1,300 Southern Arizona Region Science and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) Projects.

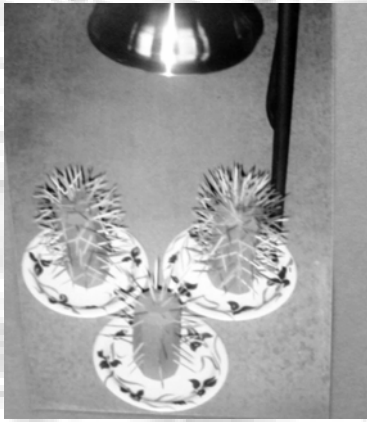
This year TCSS followed the lead of many other companies and societies in Southern Arizona by creating its own Special Awards Category: "Cactus & Succulents" and granting awards for deserving projects from grades K through 12. We did our own judging and awarded TCSS award certificates, created by Vonn Watkins, cash, gift certificates, and TCSS memberships. We gave \$100, \$50, and \$25 cash prizes and two of our member nurseries, B&B Cactus Farm, and Plants for the Southwest, donated \$20 gift certificates.

Our judges, Marty Harow, George Virtes, Patsy and Joe Frannea, searched all the aisles for Cactus and Succulent projects. We were pleased to find eight great projects to consider. We judged overall display appeal, topic, clarity of the project, inventiveness and originality, project data and log books, and how conclusions were derived. After considerable deliberation, we decided to expand our awards from six to eight, since they all were very deserving projects.

The eight TCSS winners have been invited to bring their projects to our Sonoran V Conference to share them with all of us.

The Science Fair organizers were very appreciative of TCSS setting up this Special Awards Category, judging the projects, and giving so many Special Awards. Encourage students you know to select Cactus and Succulents for their science project next year and offer to be a mentor or find a mentor for them. This is truly a Win/Win/Win situation!

Adaptive Advantages of Cactus Spines -- First



Place (\$100) went to Hannah, Basis Charter School, grade seven. Question: *What are the specific advantages of spines to a cactus' life?* See photo showing her creative toothpick models used to collect data.

The Unknown Cochineal – Honorable Mention (\$20 B&B gift certificate) went to Joe, Doolen Middle School, Seventh Grade. He had four different questions: *What is that white matter on my cactus? Will it kill my cactus? Will the cactus pads containing the white substance still produce fruit? Will the white substance grow/spread?"*

Desert Dyes -- Honorable Mention (\$20 B&B gift certificate) went to Andrea, Old Vail School, Seventh Grade. Question: *Do natural desert plants produce a colorful dye when put through a dye making process?* She did many tests on various fabric samples and a painting using yucca, ocotillo, cochineal and wild flower dyes.

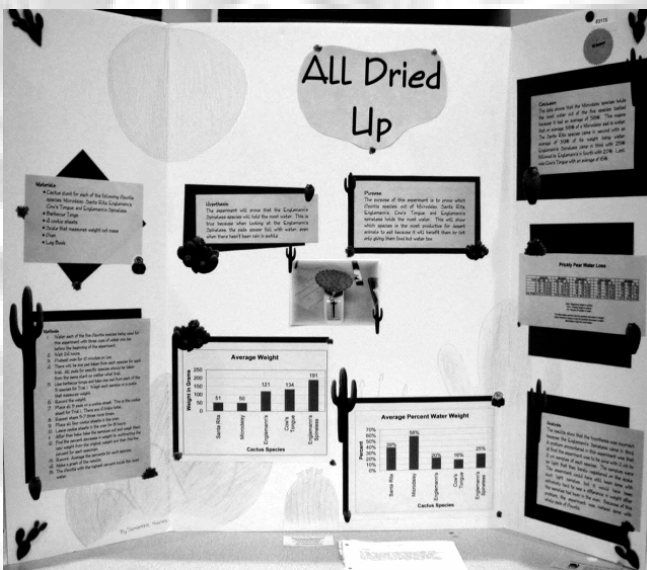
Sonoran Desert Plants -- Second Place (\$50) went to Diane Cribbs' Third Grade Class, Indian Oasis Primary. Question: *Are Sonoran Desert Plants helpful to people?* Their notebook contained data sheets of interviews of their parents and elders, a wonderful collection of information with publication potential.



Dye in the Desert -- Honorable Mention (\$20 Plants for the SW gift certificate) went to John, Pusch Ridge Christian Academy, Seventh Grade. Questions: *Can prickly pear fruit juice be used as a dye? Which material can prickly pear fruit juice dye the best?* His idea came to him from his class selling Prickly Pear cactus jelly last year as a fund raiser.

Plant Growth in Sabino Canyon -- Honorable Mention (\$20 Plants for the SW gift certificate) went to Seamus, Davis Bilingual School, Second Grade. Question: *Are there more plants for birds and animals in Sabino Canyon today than 100 years ago?"* Photos of then and now were used to make the comparisons.

All Dried Up" -- Third Place (\$25) went to Samantha, Dodge Middle School, eighth grade. Question: *Which of five Opuntia species holds the most water and is the most productive for desert animals to eat?* A very nice overall exhibit with 3-D cacti glued on the display.



The Race is On! -- Honorable Mention (\$20 B&B gift certificate) went to Sofia, St. Michaels Parish Day School, Fourth Grade. Question: *Will a cactus grow better in sand or cactus soil?* She was surprised by her results.

Joe & Patsy Frannea

Fiesta de las Flores

Our display and sales at Fiesta de las Flores grossed over \$900.00 for the two days. We had a nice display of a dozen or so plants and had a free raffle to increase our mailing list. B&B Cactus donated a nice Mammillaria senilis for the raffle.



Jack Ramsey