

❖ DESERT BREEZE ❖

NEWSLETTER OF TUCSON CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

JANUARY 1995

JANUARY JUNCTURE

note special meeting day & place...

DOUBLETREE HOTEL, 445 S Alvernon

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13 at 7:30 pm

Dr Gerald Barad, past president of CSSA, will speak to us on 'Namaqualand in Flower'.

CSSA invites you to observe their board meeting

9 am Saturday.

OUR HOLIDAY POTLUCK included LOTS of good food. A grand time was had by all!

CONVENTION UPDATE:

Borderland Tours reports that reservations for both pre- and post-convention tours are closed and waiting lists are nearly full!!

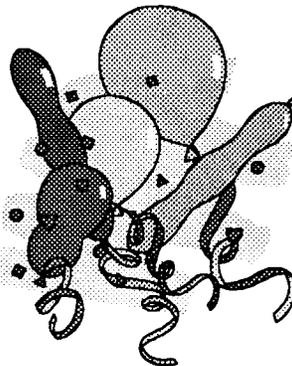
The Doubletree has already received 100 room reservations!!

The Convention is coming...

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HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!!!



NEIGHBORS

by LES SLOAN

This month's neighbor is the horned lizard. Some folks call it a horned toad, but it's a reptile, not an amphibian. Southeast Arizona is home to four different species of horned lizard, all in the genus phrynosoma. While we think of "horny toads" as desert species, one species, the short-horned lizard, even ranges as far north as extreme southern Canada, and can be found at altitudes of over 11,000 feet in parts of its range.

The horned lizard's horns, while used defensively, also aid in camouflage, since they break up the critter's outline and blend well with the rough textures of desert terrain. If you do find one, it may well just "sit tight" and hope to remain invisible. Pick one up, and it may inhale gulps of air to inflate its body and make it as ominous as possible.

A good reason to invite them into your garden is they eat ants - lots of ants. Those great big harvester ants that make themselves such garden pests can become a feast if a horned lizard "adopts" your yard. A little loose, sandy soil where he can dig in, a colony of harvester ants, and he's in "lizard heaven". For that same reason, though, it's best not to make a captive pet of one of these little dragons. You probably could never supply ants in the quantity they require. The Texas Horned lizard lays up to 37



TUCSON '95
a taste of the
Sonoran Desert
and more...
JUNE 19-23

JERI's GEMS

TO ALL MEMBERS: Please be assured a new roster will be part of a DESERT BREEZE future issue.....as soon as everyone renews their membership dues so I have something to print! (Don't be left out!!)

FLASH!! No time to redo committee list on cover. THANK YOUs to LES SLOAN for his NEIGHBORS column & to SARA PERPER for newsletter mailing!!

We need a vice president A.S.A.P!! The VP's main function is program chair. Please see Dick.

DUES...

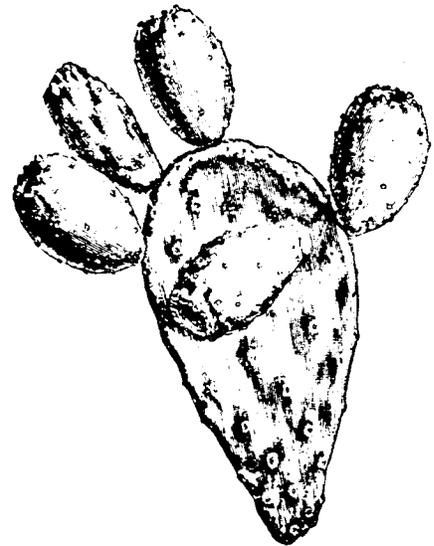
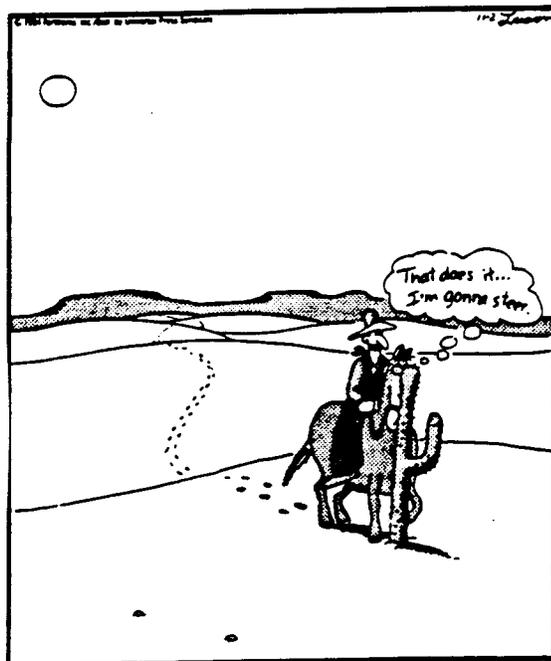
DUES...

.....DUES...

BRAG TABLE -

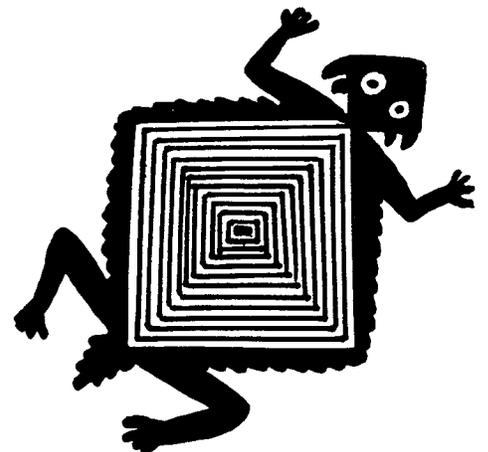
What have YOU got?

THE FAR SIDE



NEIGHBORS
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eggs, while the short-horned lizard has a litter of up to 31 born alive. Either way, a baby "horny toad" gives new meaning to the word "cute". Watch for them. And invite these neighbors into your garden.



WATER ON THE BRAIN - BY RON BURNIGHT

When I ever joined the cactus club I watering plants was easy. Shoot, all I was to stick 'em in the ground and stand back. I didn't have the slightest idea that it was in the same league as raising pigs, but I guess it is. I knew raising pigs was hard because of Rufus, the singing pig. Rufus used to drive my Aunt Effie nearly crazy. Aunt Effie liked to listen to the oldies-but-goodies station on the radio, and every time she'd turn it on, Rufus would start to sing. He had a hell of a range, but he couldn't carry a tune in a trough. Now the reason Effie was so good at raising pigs was that she treated them like humans. So instead of hurting Rufus's feelings by telling him he couldn't sing, she got him his own Walkman. Now Rufus sings to a different drummer - Sid Catlett to be precise. It turned out that Rufus was partial to Louis Armstrong, and now he trots around the yard, his cute little Walkman on, a smile on his snout, scatting Blueberry Hill - leastways I think it's Blueberry Hill.

I found out that raising cactus is about as hard as raising pigs when I took my Star Cactus to show and tell. The first guy I showed it to told me - he was a tall skinny guy with a bow tie right over his Adam's apple. Every time he swallowed that tie bobbed up and down like a cork on a fishing line. He took one look at my plant, looked down his nose, bobbed his tie, and said, "Its got spots!" Your top watering!"

I was pretty embarrassed to have everybody know that I'd been doing such a dumb thing as watering from the top, but on the other hand, I couldn't figure out how not to top water. Well, there wasn't much going on in the meeting - the guy up front was talking about taxis - so I leaned over to a woman in a purple blouse and asked her. She whispered, "You've got to water from the bottom." I sat there dumbfounded. I had this weird picture in my mind of me with a plastic syringe jamming water up through the bottom hole of the pot - a sort of plant enema. I had never much liked enemas, and I couldn't believe that plants would either.

By the time we broke for coffee everybody in the place knew I was top watering, and people kept drifting by and

offering advice. A lady wearing Navajo jewelry came up, winked, and whispered in my ear, "Full of the moon." I wasn't too sure if she was talking about me or my plants. A serious little man with half glasses peered at me and said, "Have your water pH tested. "I was about to ask how many PH's it was supposed to have when a large woman with a heaving chest came up and said, "Use rain water."

"But we're in a drought," I replied.

She gave me a scathing look. "You have to plan ahead."

Her husband, a paunchy guy with four hairs combed over his bald spot, shrugged, "You can use distilled water."

As I was trying to figure out where I could buy 20 gallons of distilled water at a whack, Chester Taube, our resident scientist came over. He scribbled something that looked like an Egyptian zip code on a piece of paper and handed it to me. I must have looked startled. He said, "It's a wetting agent."

"What's it do?"

"It makes water wet."

"I thought it already was."

"It makes it wetter."

"A wetter water?" I must have winced.

"Why a wetter water? A wetter water works wonders!"

"How often?"

"Once a week -- on Wednesday."

I was getting woozy. "Let me see if I've got this straight. I water once a week on Wednesdays with a wetter water works wonders."

He smiled wryly.

As I was leaving that night, I got a final piece of advice. "Only water when it rains in the desert." That sounded like great advice until I tried to put it into effect. First of all I didn't know which desert to watch, and secondly the Orlando Sentinel didn't report the weather for any desert anyway.

It's amazing how complicated watering is. The desert would probably have a lot more plants if Mother Nature just knew some of this stuff.

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