



DESERT BREEZE

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

July 2017

Thursday, July 6, 2017 at 7:00 pm

Agave Distribution from Coast to Coast and Deserts to Mountains

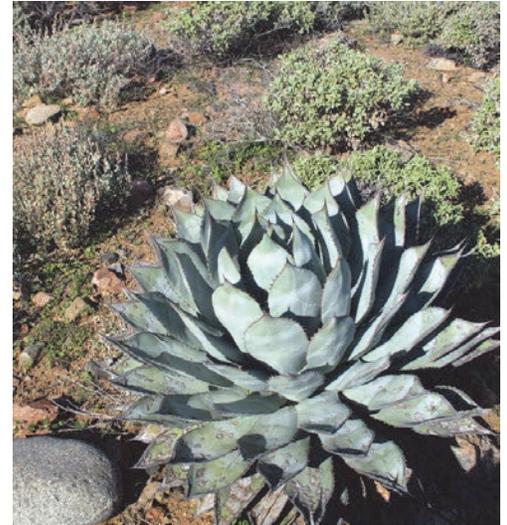
Presented by Greg Starr



Agave montana on Cerro Pena Nevada in southern Tamaulipas



Agave azurea in the Picachos de Santa Clara in the Vizcaino Desert



Agave sebastiana on Isla de Cedros in Baja California.

Have you ever wondered where the epicenter of agave distribution is or where the greatest diversity of species occurs? Are there more species in the tropics, deserts, coasts or mountains? Greg has wondered the same thing and decided it was about time to dive into the subject matter and find some answers. He found some answers and wants to share the results with you. Come out on a hot July night and be prepared to be blown away by what he has found out. Okay, maybe mildly shocked is more likely. Agaves are wholly New World plants, being found in the southern U.S. throughout Mexico, Central America, northern South America, and even the Caribbean. They grow along the coasts of Mexico; in hot, hyper-arid desert regions; moist, steamy subtropics; semi-arid grasslands; and cool, high mountains. They grow in sandy soils, rich volcanic soils, limestone rocks, granitic rocks, gentle slopes, and steep, vertical cliffs. Greg will show examples from the major centers of diversity as well as from all the varied and diverse habitats in which agaves can be found. If you have even a mild interest in plant distribution, or if you just want a 45 minute nap, join your friends and colleagues for an evening of agaves, snacks and conversation. The presentation will not only focus on agave distribution, but will also include some of the best species for landscape use in the desert southwest. Greg has spent many years traveling throughout the desert southwest, and much of Mexico studying and photographing agaves along with other interesting desert adapted plants, and he will most likely show the cream of the crop in this brand spanking new presentation for which the members of TCSS are the lucky recipients.

Greg Starr was born and raised in the Sonoran Desert although he did not become a true plant-o-phile until his college days. His fascination with desert plants for landscaping led to his first book, *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*, which went viral and is now out of print. His second book, *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers*, is a direct result of his long standing interest in those amazing plants. He recently co-authored the *Field Guide to Cacti and Other Succulents of Arizona*, funded by the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society and private donors. He travels throughout Mexico with many recent trips to Baja California researching a proposed book on the Agaves of Baja California. Greg is an advocate of mixing flowering plants with cacti and other succulents and promotes this idea whenever possible. Greg has presented talks on agaves, cacti and other succulents, and desert plants in general throughout the United States and will be going worldwide at Australia's Succulenticon 2018.

Please join us only a few days after July 4th for an excellent program that should be a great summer treat. There will be some wonderful plants to win as well as lots of snacks and treats assembled by all our refreshment volunteers, for everyone to enjoy. The TCSS will also give everyone a free plant when leaving for the night. Come and enjoy our July program presentation!

Thursday, August 3, 2017 at 7:00pm
Shoestring Travels: Botanical Discoveries in Chile
Presented by Jan Emming



President's Message

Happy July 4th, 2017

Last year we were celebrating an historic rain event for July 1. We really need a repeat. Our plants are really getting stressed and so are we. Everyone needs to work smart on these very hot and dry days.

We had a wonderful rescue sale on Sunday, June 25 and I want to thank

all the volunteer for their special dedication to what we do. The sale was from 8am to 10am but by 9am it was essentially done and the sale grossed over \$4,000 and 11 new members. Not bad for an hour of work. Two of our member vendors sold plants under the Mesquite trees and I want thank them for their support.

Our next sale, mid-August, will be our Blooming Barrel Sale to coincide with *Ferocactus wislizenii* blooming. This is always fun to pick out the color blossoms for your garden.

They range from yellow to orange to red and every shade in between. There will be a couple of rescues (we hope) prior to the sale. If you want to participate in rescues you can send an email to us (Cactus@TucsonCactus.org) requesting your email be placed on our Cactus Rescue Crew list.

The Good Time Silent Auction will be coming up in September. We have several silent auctions on a Sunday afternoon, Ice Cream and all the trimmings, free stuff (plants, pots, gardening related items that you want to give away) making this a don't miss event. There will be more information about this event in the August and September Desert Breeze. Start getting special plants ready to donate for the silent auction.

Don't forget the CSSA Convention in Tempe on July 26-30, 2017. Check it out on the web.

We will be working on Sonoran XII for April 2018 and we always need your help.

Thank you for your support.

Dick Wiedhopf, President

PIMA PRICKLY PARK



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that saguaros can become sunburned! Amazing to learn that our beloved saguaros....strong, majestic symbols of the desert southwest...can also be quite "tender."

Although well-established plants are tough survivors of the desert environment, newly re-located/transplanted saguaros benefit from protection. Shade cloth or netting can provide a needed "sunblock" for those that are not yet firmly established....especially for those we may have purchased from a nursery where they were inside or sheltered. This preventative measure can apply to other cacti as well.

With the nuclear heat we are experiencing, it is especially important for us to be alert for heat stress on all of our cacti and succulents. Unfortunately, we may inadvertently overwater our saguaros, which can result in rot. I understand that saguaros will contract their pleats if they need a drink. If the pleats are "open" and "full" one must resist the urge to give them lots more water. Overwatering can also lead to "cracks" in the cactus.

Note: The longer that I live in the desert, the more I learn that "appearances can be deceiving".....TLC is for even our most "prickly" of plants! ---- Cari Wright

WHAT'S NEW ?

A heartfelt thanks to Wendy and Stu Bengson for their ongoing, generous donations of interesting plants to Pima Prickly Park.

The most recent acquisition occurred on May 27th when Bill Thornton, Dick Wiedhopf, Roger Salzgeber, Tom Ganser, and Linda Heisley met at Wendy and Stu's place and removed a large Fence Post cactus. They moved it to Prickly Park, just north of the big ramada at the Hummingbird Garden.

Earlier this month Bill moved two beautiful barrel cactus that will soon have a new location at the park.

Six large agaves have found themselves a new home in the park thanks to a TCSS member's generous donation.

Another TCSS member has donated rocks----with more to come. They will be used in the ongoing landscape design in the ferocactus area.

We greatly appreciate each of you !!!!

A special SHOUT OUT of GRATITUDE to the "Drought Busters" crew...volunteers who are bravely watering in the park and working in the Hoop House!

Note: As we are protecting our beloved cacti and succulents during this heinous heat, we must be vigilant in protecting ourselves while outdoors. For those of you newly transplanted to Tucson, be especially mindful!



FROM THE FLORILEGIUM

Plant collecting in the 19th century was a treacherous occupation, one that required considerable physical stamina, but one that was not particularly lucrative. So what motivated these intrepid collectors? Scientific recognition? The thrill of exploration? Wanderlust? Obsession? Edward Palmer is considered the most prolific collector of his day, with a collection of more than 100,000 plant specimens residing in herbaria and institutions throughout the world. Judging from the extent of his never-ending travels throughout the western U.S. and Mexico, his perseverance in spite of recurring illnesses and injuries, as well as the sheer volume of his collections, he was likely motivated by all of those things.

Edward Palmer (1831–1911) was born in Norfolk, England. His father's profession as a horticulturist and florist undoubtedly influenced his son's eventual choice of occupation. At the age of 18, Palmer emigrated to the U.S. and settled in Cleveland, Ohio, where he became a protégé of Dr. Jared Kirtland, a noted physician and naturalist. Here he was exposed to Kirtland's herbarium and learned how to prepare both botanical and zoological specimens.

In 1853, upon Kirtland's recommendation, Palmer was appointed to serve as naturalist and hospital steward aboard the USS *Water Witch* with the La Plata Expedition to Paraguay, one of the first expeditions to collect specimens from this region of South America. By 1855, Palmer had made extensive collections in spite of having contracted malaria. In January of 1855, the ship was fired on by Paraguayan forces (an action that caused the U.S. in 1858 to send a large military expedition to Paraguay to demand recompense and apology for the earlier incident). Soon after the attack on the ship, an ailing Palmer requested permission to leave the expedition. He returned to Cleveland, his specimens in tow, and then traveled to England where he married.

Upon his return to the U.S., he obtained additional medical training in Cleveland and settled briefly in Kansas to practice medicine. While Palmer's biographers note that the fate of the new Mrs. Palmer is unknown, legal registers in Kansas record that the Palmers were divorced in 1860. From this point onward, Palmer traveled unimpeded by domestic responsibility.

After spending time collecting in Colorado and California, Palmer applied for a medical position with the Union Army in 1861. With the expectation of an eventual appointment, he traveled back to Colorado but had to serve initially without pay. He found time for some collecting, but as the conflict intensified, his time was dedicated solely to caring for soldiers. A formal appointment finally materialized in 1864 along with two years' back pay. Near the end of the war, his health began to fail, and he was discharged from the Army. He was hospitalized in Kansas City, and, after his recovery, he worked as a contract surgeon in the area.

In 1865, enticed by the collecting prospects in the new western territories—and perhaps tiring of medical practice—Palmer began making plans to travel to Arizona. His experiences there and his developing interest in archaeology and ethnobotany will be explored in the August Desert Breeze.

One of the new plant species collected by Palmer was *Abutilon*

palmeri (Indian mallow). It was first described by Asa Gray in 1870 from a specimen collected by Palmer in 1869 on the Yaqui River in Sonora, Mexico. This Sonoran Desert native can be found on rocky slopes from southern California into Arizona, Baja California, and northwestern Mexico

Indian mallow has become a popular plant for desert gardens. While the plant's intense yellow-orange flowers are striking, the most memorable feature of the plant is its light green, velvety heart-shaped leaf that just begs to be touched. Despite those soft leaves, this is a tough plant that thrives in the desert heat with little water. The plant's stems and fruit, as well as its leaves, are all covered with tiny hairs, an adaptation for reflecting sunlight and reducing water loss.

This illustration of *Abutilon palmeri* is by botanical artist Cherie Ann Gossett. As a freelance botanical artist, Cherie paints detailed portraits of plants, usually working in watercolor or graphite and colored pencil. Cherie's love for plants began with floral design, leading to gardening, then horticulture, and finally botanical art. Her professional design background includes architecture, landscape design, and city and campus planning.

As a landscape designer, she is particularly fond of portraying plant subjects that can be planted successfully in ornamental landscapes, with an emphasis on plants native to western North America. As a horticulture enthusiast, her paintings often convey the plant from bud to flower to fruit, with as great accuracy as possible. And as a gardening teacher, she hopes to share her appreciation of plants through her paintings.

More of Cherie's work can be seen in the members' gallery on the American Society of Botanical Artists website (<http://asba-art.org/member-gallery/cherie-ann-gossett>).



Abutilon palmeri, Indian mallow
Colored pencil and graphite
© 2009 Cherie Ann Gossett.
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Cacti Rescued - Since 1999
376 Rescues - 28,256 Volunteer Hours

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

We need your "Eyes and Ears" to help us find new Cactus Rescue sites. Please email us as much information as you can from new project signs or from other sources to **Site@TucsonCactus.org**. Attach a photo of the sign if you can. Note, we do not remove plants from residences.

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BOARD MEETING TIME CHANGE

Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 7:30 pm

Board meeting, Ward 6 City Council office at 3202 E First St, Tucson

TCSS BOARD

Officers

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cactus@Tucsoncactus.org

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Free Plants: Donna Ellis • plants@Tucsoncactus.org

Floilegium: Margaret Pope • art@Tucsoncactus.org

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Field Trips/tours Rob Romero/Joie Giunta
trips@Tucsoncactus.org

Newsletter Editor: Karen Keller • runbunny@cox.net

Deadline for newsletter text or photos:
Thursday, July 27, 2017

TCSS Web Page:

www.tucsoncactus.org

Webmaster: Keimpe Bronkhorst • webmaster@Tucsoncactus.org

For additional information call: (520) 256-2447

Everyone is Welcome!

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



Sky Islands Public High School • 6000 E. 14th St.

July Meeting Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with A - H, please bring your choice of refreshments to the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly appreciated and enjoyed!