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TCSS Club Members receive a 10% discount

October 2018

The Tropical Deciduous Forest: Where cacti became succulent, and other biological explorations in Sonora

Presented by Robert A. Villa

Robert is a proud Tucsonan deeply in love with the Sonoran region. He has been studying, exploring, and documenting it’s biological and cultural diversity (often with violin in tow) most of his 32 years. He specializes in amphibians, reptiles, plants, ethno-ecology, and regional gastronomy. He has consulted for and assisted in the production of national and international broadcast television episodes, the 2nd edition of Natural History of the Sonoran Desert, Arizona’s Amphibians & Reptiles: A Natural History and Field Guide, and published his findings in academic and popular outlets. He currently presides Tucson Herpetological Society, assists with ongoing developments at the Desert Laboratory on Tumamoc Hill, is a member of NextGen Sonoran Desert Researchers, and grows plants. He considers himself a follower in the footsteps of Sonoran naturalist explorers such as Howard Scott Gentry, Paul Martin, Charles Lowe, Tom Van Devender, and others, documenting and espousing the land where north and south embrace.

Thursday, October 4, 2018 at 7:00pm
The Tropical Deciduous Forest: Where cacti became succulent, and other biological explorations in Sonora
Presented by Robert A. Villa

Please be sure to come and enjoy Robert’s very special program. Have an excellent evening with friends, fun, books, raffle plants, free plants and lots of great refreshments.

Sunday, October 7, 2018 at 2:00pm
The Texas Sonoran Desert: A dry place in a wet time 2011
Presented by Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich

Please consider bringing a book to exchange or trade with others.

Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 7:00pm
A dry place in a wet time 2011
Presented by Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich

Those with family names beginning with A J please bring your choice of refreshments to the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly appreciated and enjoyed!
**PIMM PRICKLY PARK**

Program, 2120 E. Allen(722,298) Allen Road, Tucson, AZ 55791, (520-647-2503) Matt has traveled extensively around the world to study and collect seeds. He informed me that there are other seed banks with international locations. He shared an interesting fact that the ICARDA seed bank in Aleppo, Syria was not destroyed when ISIS captured the city. ICARDA was able to resume operations at new facilities in Lebanon and Morocco utilizing seeds that had been placed in backup storage at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (www.art-botanical.org).

In the late 19th century, the British Museum (Natural History) produced several sets of black and white prints from Banks' paintings. The images of New Zealand's spear grasses reproduced here, courtesy of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, is one of those prints.

The process of producing the long-awaited 1989 publication of the magnificently illustrated Florilegium will be detailed in the November "Desert Breeze". Additional information about celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the Endeavour's voyage can be found through the Florilegium Program's home page (www.art-botanical.org).

FROM THE FLORILEGIUM

August of 1828 marked the 250th anniversary of the sailing of the HMS Endeavour, the first occasion to plant a dedicated solely to scientific discovery. The expedition, which departed England in 1768, returned 3 years later with some 3,000 plant specimens, including more than 1,000 new species, seeds for Kew Gardens, and 11,000 botanically significant specimens. Perhaps the Endeavour's most remarkable contribution to science is the Banks' Florilegium, the world's most famous—and expensive—florilegium, published 200 years after the ship's return to England.

In late August of 1768, Lieutenant James Cook (1728–1779) sailed from Plymouth to Tahiti with a naval crew of 84 plus a small group of scientists and artists to record the transit of Venus that would occur on June 3, 1769. Cook, a skilled astronomer as well as navigator, was joined in the observation by Joseph Banks (1743–1820), a wealthy naturalist and Charles Green (1733–1771), an astronomer, and Daniel Solander (1733–1782), a naturalist and student of Carl Linnaeus. Astronomers from several countries had also dispersed across the globe in a cooperative international effort to record the event.

A second objective of the voyage began after the ship left Tahiti. Cook's orders were to sail southwest in the Pacific in search of Terra Australis Incognita, "the unknown land of the south". While Dutch sailors had already traveled to New Zealand, Australia was still unknown to Europeans, and Cook was to claim the land, if it existed, for Britain.

The Endeavour reached New Zealand in October 1769 and set about mapping its entire coastline and collecting specimens. The following April, the ship landed on the east coast of Australia. For 70 days, the scientists and artists found themselves overwhelmed with the bounty of unfamiliar plants and animals, and Cook appropriately named the location Botany Bay.

Of the three artists on board, only Sydney Parkinson (1745–1771) was a botanical artist, with the others specializing in landscape, ethnographic, and zoological drawing. When sketching the plant specimens, Banks and Banks for would study the plants, ask the ship's doctor, and its carpenter. Cook anchored the ship in Cape Town for a month to allow the sick to recover and to make repairs to the ship, and on July 12, they reached Dover.

Upon returning to England, Joseph Banks hired five artists to complete Parkinson's unfinished drawings for a planned publication of the expedition's scientific discoveries. By 1784, 750 watercolors had been completed and copper plate engravings made. Yet, because of other demands on his time and Britain's economic downturn following the American Revolution, Banks was never able to publish the works.

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Born in Chicago, Matt and his family eventually moved to the Southwest and eventually moved to Tucson where he began first grade...and he has lived here ever since. Matt's passion for desert plants began as a child. He said that he was curious and "grabbed hold of a cactus...with predictable results...and it has been downhill ever since!"

What a wonderful experience to speak with Matt and see the collections first hand. It is amazing to learn that right here in Tucson the DELEP program is instrumental in preserving seed species for future generations.

Cari Wright

From Linda Heisley/Pima Prickly Park:

Many thanks to those of you who have worked tirelessly on Pima Prickly Park during my absence. Your dedication and hard work are so appreciated.

Contact Information regarding seed requests is as follows:

Matthew Johnson, mjohnson@ag.arizona.edu, Desert Legume Program, 2120 E. Allen Road, Tucson, AZ 55791, (520-647-2503)

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President's Message

Another fun Good Time Silent Auction. Thanks to everyone who donated plants etc., volunteered and especially bidders and buyers. Of course the ice cream and all the toppings were the highlight of the afternoon.

Results of the Good Time Silent Auction

126 items in silent auction, 92 bidders signed up, 6 items did not receive bids, 119.55 average price, Silent Auction Sales 12,346 Total All Sales $3,596.95

Great article in the current CSSA Journal written by Bill Thornton about our rescue of Pericenoebergi greggii and the "Queen of the Queens", Jessie Byrd. It puts a spotlight on our rescue program, Pima Prickly Park and the Pima County Native Plant Nursery. We have a lot to be proud of.

Everyone needs to stop by Pima Prickly Park and see the rescue of our garden. We are so grateful for everyone's support.

Matthew Johnson, mjohnson@ag.arizona.edu, Desert Legume Program
A. DICK & PAT

Dick caught the gardening bug as a young boy while riding his bike in Beverly Hills on garbage day. Retrieving a large prickly pear pad from the street and planting it at home was the beginning of a lifelong passion for cacti and succulents.

Begun in 1980, this is a classic collector's garden. The goal of a plant collector is to expand the available planting area and add more plants. Once Dick discovers a new plant he acquires as many species and hybrids of it as he can. Another passion is to discover how many plants he can fit in the space he has, while maintaining accessibility and visual interest. Then he may be on to a new garden focus. For Dick the ultimate enjoyment is the freedom to change his interest and learn about new species. His current focus is Cycads. Look for the handsome collection on the back porch.

Dick’s appealing walking paths meander to reveal hidden areas, unexpected ensembles, and a pond. Desert trees create filtered shade to encourage optimal plant health. Judiciously placed metal folk sculptures add humor and whimsey. Greenhouses shelter vulnerable species. He also uses frost cloth as needed in the winter.

Note the climbing milkweed growing up the saguaros on the west side of driveway. A few of the noteworthy plants are whales tongue agave, sharkskin agave, blue glow agave, agave salmania var. ferox, Yucca faxoniana, adeniums, native grasses, fat mammillarias, variegated Echinopsis, and a hanging Queen of the Night.

LOT SIZE: .4 acre

SOIL MIX: Tank’s Cactus Mix with more pumice and regular cactus soil

WATERING: Waters with hoses and tripod sprinklers as necessary. The timer on his phone frees his mind to enjoy the plants.

PESTS: Keeps a watchful eye out for pests and uses traps and other means when necessary.

TIP: Eliminate dead or sad looking plants. You will look like a great grower! Check out Shady Way Nursery in Apache Junction when you can.
B. BILL & LU

This garden is, in some small degree, the result of luck. The previous owner was an artist and cactus fancier, the lot is large, and the views are nothing short of splendid. But it’s the maximizing of that luck you’ll view today. This ridgetop garden has a full southern exposure and is a thermal belt, a foothills zone where freezing temperatures are less likely to occur than they do at either higher or lower elevations. This garden is all about variety, gardening wisdom, and passion.

VARIETY

Mounding, swales and boulder-placement mimic a desert landscape. There are 45 saguaros ranging from 12” to 5' and more than 150 native barrels, soap tree yucca, Indian fig, Joshua tree and blue yucca. Three seating areas of various heights plus a screened-in-porch, which you may visit today, makes for relaxed socializing. Extensive art work in the form of metal sculptures, over 360 pots, and a waterfall and pond create visual and auditory appeal. Tree variety is impressive providing shade, accent, fruit and bird cover. Among the trees are Mesquite, Texas Ebony, lemon, grapefruit and one of the largest Oleander trees you are likely to see.

GARDENING WISDOM

This a desert we live in, and the owners pay tribute to this fact with plantings that are 80% desert or desert-adapted. Just as important is scale: So often plants become woody and overgrown; they can overwhelm even the house. Over the 19 years of ownership, Bill Salisbury has not so much designed a garden, as he's refined it. In order to preserve the magnificent view, he has whacked out overgrown pyracantha, oleanders and Texas rangers, largely to replace them with beloved rescued cactus.

PASSION

In addition to refining and maintaining this garden without a designer or landscape crew, Bill is a Board member of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. The Salisbury garden is a testimony to the fact that a Chicago transplant cannot only create a lovely garden but also contribute to the beauty and ecology of our community. It just takes passion.

PESTS: Ground squirrels continue to be a problem in pots

WATERING: Waters as needed, daily for flowers in pots.

SOIL MIX: For pots uses 2/3 Miracle-Gro cactus mix and 1/3 perlite.
C. BETTY & ED

In a mere 15 months Betty and Ed have transformed their previously almost bare yard into a pleasing desert oasis. The gorgeous view to the southwest from their backyard competes with the vibrant landscape they have created.

Betty caught the gardening bug while growing up in Brooklyn where for five years she took the trolley to work her vegetable plot at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Growing succulents on a windowsill in her childhood home and visits to the southwest encouraged her interest in cacti and succulents. As president of the North American Rock Garden society, Betty promotes the study and cultivation of wild plants in their native environments.

Inspired by the wash behind the yard, Betty has created a model of a young landscape populated with Sonoran Desert plants, cacti and succulents, and other low-water drought-adapted plantings. She especially enjoys combining climate-appropriate shrubs and wildflowers with cacti, succulents and rocks in harmonious ways. Berms provide visual interest and the flow of crushed rock unifies the space.

LOT SIZE: 1/3 acre purchased in 2016
SOIL: Tank’s cactus mix with native soil
WATERING: In summer newly planted plant material is watered every other day for an hour with an irrigation system and a hand-held hose as needed. After establishment these drought tolerant plants will require less water.

PESTS: Soapy water; no insecticides as Betty grows butterfly plants.

TIPS: Betty builds her collection with plants which volunteer in her yard, plants received from others as gifts or from TCSS meetings and rescues, and plants destined for brush and bulky pickup which receive a second life in her yard. Do not be dismayed by the inevitable loss of some plants usually due to cultural conditions. Learning about southwestern natives is challenging for Betty, but her progress is rewarding and soothing to soul.

Noteworthy: Exceptional view; Emily Mann solar light sculptures; Mangaves, hybrid of Agave and Manfreda; Arizona Wild Cotton bush; White Orchid Tree; Bursera.
Keith and Helga became interested in cactus and succulents more than 30 years ago after many of their traditional plants, trees and shrubs died due to Texas root rot, a fungal disease found in some southwestern soils that is next to impossible to eliminate.

Paths around their property wander through robust natural desert which has been augmented by rescued plants, especially large barrel cacti, cholla, saguaros, and ocotillos. Varieties of terracing are demonstrated on the lot, designed to manage slopes, rainfall and erosion, and fabricated mostly with on-site materials.

The interior yard is enclosed by a block fence topped with expanded metal allowing a view of the surrounding desert while restraining some wildlife. The collection of Keith’s spiny cacti and Helga’s succulent and leafy plants grow in profusion, lightly sheltered by shade cloth and desert trees. A rock lined basin and stream catch rainwater overflow which reduces backyard flooding during rainfall. An enormous senita, *Pachycereus schotti*, grows from stems rescued with TCSS years ago. Many of these stems were damaged in 2011’s 18 degree freeze, but no other damage has been noted down to 25 degrees.

Since the natural soil is mostly rocks, caliche and expansive clay, Helga and Keith have developed raised planters, terraced hills and containers with their preferred soil mix. Ceramic and clay creatures are scattered about the backyard in addition to several three-dimensional animals Keith has created by bending and welding steel sheets and wires.

One of two grow houses shelters more than 40 different species or subspecies of *Gymnocalycium* in the “Gymno house”. The other one is used to root plants in pumice or care for ailing plants.

LOT SIZE: 1.3 acres on irregularly shaped lot. House built here 42 years ago.

SOIL MIX: 50% Nature’s Way Top Soil from Home Depot mixed with coarse sand sifted from a nearby wash. Coarse sand is anything passing through ¼" mesh but retained by normal screen door mesh, approximately 1/16” mesh.

WATERING: Harvest rainwater with three 55-gallon barrels by collecting roof runoff with gutters and downspouts. Rainfall of 0.10” fills all three barrels. Water every week in summer and for potted succulents every two weeks in winter if insufficient rainfall. Pool backwash is also used to water desert plants and trees.

PESTS: Smash cactus beetles which are seen especially in the mornings after summer rains. Cut out and discard opuntia with black fungi spots. Organic spray for mealybugs.
E. BARRY & CARYL

Barry’s first memory of cacti was from Roy Rodgers and Gene Autry movies followed by visits to the cactus house at Missouri Botanical Gardens. Living in several areas of California provided access to Mohave Desert. Switching his focus to the Sonoran Desert came after 10 years as a volunteer at ASDM working with Mark Dimmitt.

Starting in 2000, Barry developed the north patio oasis with a water feature and turf. He also constructed an orchid and succulent greenhouse and began to develop pathways through the natural desert on the south. The natural desert areas have been enriched with rescue cacti. Desert trees provide filtered sun for some plants. Caryl Jones, a longtime Tucson resident and plant enthusiast, has recently influenced a neater and more orderly landscape, while retaining an authentic Sonoran feel.

The most recent development in their six-year energy savings plan has been the introduction of active rainwater harvesting which dramatically reduced their water usage and bill. Three 55-gallon barrels are in the north patio, two 55-gallon barrels are with the greenhouse, and 1000-gallon cistern is attached to the irrigation system. They still water with reverse osmosis for the greenhouse and tap water for all else. Sprinklers are used as needed for some of the desert cactus and trees.

LOT SIZE: 1 acre

PESTS: Packrats continue to be a challenge.

SOIL MIX: For containers, 50–50 mix of Miracle Gro potting soil and pumice

TIPS: Consistent water and fertilizer

WATERING: Water as little as possible and use rainwater. Patio areas and oleanders are irrigated.
Endeavour's August of 1988 marked the 250th anniversary of the sailing of the HMS Endeavour, the first of Cook's expeditions. Perhaps the Endeavour's most remarkable contribution to science is the Banks' Florilegium, the world's most famous—and expensive—florilegium, published 200 years after the ship's return to England.

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Of the three artists on board, only Sydney Parkinson (1745–1771) was a botanical artist, with the others specializing in landscape, ethnographic, and zoological drawing. When sketching the plant specimens, Banks and Solander would make outline drawings of the plants with color notations. He managed to complete 674 outline drawings and 269 finished paintings, all accompanied by Banks' and Solander’s notes.

When Parkinson saw that DELEP is instrumental in preserving seed collections first hand. It is amazing to learn that right here in Tucson where he began first grade…and he has lived here ever since. Parkinson was able to sketch and reproduce drawings from the "Florilegium," the British Museum's collection of botanical illustrations. The image of New Zealand's speargrass was reproduced here, courtesy of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, one of those prints.

The process of producing the long-awaited 1989 publication of the magnificent Global Florilegium will be detailed in the November "Desert Breeze". Additional information about celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the Endeavour’s voyage can be found through the Florilegium Program's home page (www.art-botanical.org).


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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.

October 2018

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Presented by Robert A. Villa

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