



# Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

May 2021

Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society • Zoom Program Presentation • Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:00pm

## Exploring the Evolutionary History of the Chollas and Prickly Pears of western North America and beyond

Presented by Lucas C. Majure, Ph.D.

Lucas will focus on some of their recent work to determine the relationships among the chollas commonly found across the Chihuahuan, Mojave and Sonoran deserts, but with a focus on the Sonoran Desert, which is the most diverse region for the chollas. He will discuss the distribution of those taxa and speciation processes that have led to the current diversity that we see in the group. He will also touch on the recent and updated work on the prickly pears of the region, with a special focus on members of the *Opuntia macrorhiza* complex, indeed a complicated group of plants with a very wide distribution.

Lucas C. Majure, Ph.D., is the Assistant Curator and Keeper of the University of Florida Herbarium (FLAS). Department of Natural History at the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

Please join us and welcome Lucas back again. This time he will focus on an excellent Zoom program. Please enjoy this special educational and informational presentation. Also be sure to log in to win a \$25.00 gift certificate from TCSS or choose a copy of the new 3rd edition of the Field Guide to Cacti & Other Succulents of Arizona.







### President's Message

It has been more than a year since we have had the opportunity to be together, but I am happy that so many of you continue to support TCSS. We have had limited opportunities for you to participate such as rescues, sales, Pima Pricky Park and recently Earth Day. That is all changing as we defeat Covid-19 and become fully

vaccinated. We are planning for the future and expanding existing activities and creating new programs that I know will be of interest to you. We would also like to hear ideas from you as to what kinds of programs and activities you want. Please email me at [president@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:president@tucsoncactus.org).

Our current plan is to kick off our in-person monthly meetings in September. Our program will feature Greg Starr and will deal with growing Agaves. He is an expert and will be great fun to hear him speak. It will also be on Zoom and recorded to watch at your conveniences. We will continue giving gift certificates to our Zoom participants. It would be great if everyone who comes to the meeting has completed their vaccination process.

Following the September 2, 2021 meeting (remember it is always the 1st Thursday at 7:00pm) we will start our pop-up Home Tours. More information on the tours will be available in the near future.

On Sunday, September 19, 2021 will be our GOOD TIME SILENT AUCTION. This afternoon program consists of a large silent auction of your donated quality plants and plant related items, pre-priced plants at \$2, \$5 and \$10, free plants and item and of course ICE CREAM and all the topping. The September silent auction has been part of this society since its beginning.

On December 12, 2021 we will gather for our traditional Holiday Party luncheon, Awards, Annual Meeting and Election Winners announcement. This year 3 Board Member positions and the CSSA Representative position will be on the ballot. The tradition is we supply the main course (Turkey, Ham and Shrimp) and you bring your favorite side dish or dessert for about 10-12 people. What can be better than this.

April 2022 will be the time we resume our Sonoran Conference which had to be postponed due to Covid-19. I know you will want to participate in the planning, arrangements, and participation in this event. This will be Sonoran XIII. More information coming soon.

Finally, our new website is up and running. Comment and question are appreciated.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Dick Wiedhopf, President

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## Instructions To Join The TCSS Zoom Meeting on May 6, 2021

If you have a laptop or other device where you can enter a web site address enter

**<https://bit.ly/tcssmm>**

Copy this into your browser address line or just click on it.

If this does not work and for all other types of devices see our Zoom Meeting Instructions page on our web site. It is

**[https://www.tucsoncactus.org/pdf\\_files/Zoom-Instructions.pdf](https://www.tucsoncactus.org/pdf_files/Zoom-Instructions.pdf)**

You can also find a link to it by going to our March Meeting notice information on the web.

If you can not get connected at the last minute, you can email us at **[HELP@TucsonCactus.org](mailto:HELP@TucsonCactus.org)** and someone will get right back to you.

## FROM THE FLORILEGIUM

In last October's *Desert Breeze*, in an account of the life of artist Marianne North, I omitted a link to the one and only piece she painted during her travels through Arizona. "Vegetation of the Desert of Arizona", dated 1875, portrays a landscape that includes saguaros, ocotillos, and several smaller plants on the desert floor. A graceful blooming ocotillo stem frames a distant view of mountains. Note that North's saguaros, like many others by nineteenth century artists (John Mix Stanley comes to mind), are not drawn in a particularly accurate way. Here is a link to North's painting: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/vegetation-of-the-desert-of-arizona-88429>. If the image is missing at that site, the painting can also be seen on Kew Garden's site, although its small size makes it difficult to see the painting's details: [www.kew.org/mnng/gallery/185.html](http://www.kew.org/mnng/gallery/185.html)

California has long provided an abundance of subjects for botanical artists, with its wildflowers having an irresistible allure. The state's first guide to wildflowers, published in 1897, included many highly detailed black and white drawings by Margaret Warriner Buck (*Desert Breeze*, May 2017). From 1908 to 1918, the prolific A. R. Valentin painted hundreds of portraits of California's flowers (*Desert Breeze*, March 2015). Margaret Armstrong, an artist from the East Coast, painted many of the state's flowers for her 1915 "Field Book of Western Wildflowers" (*Desert Breeze*, June 2016), and Mary Vaux Walcott, another traveling artist from the East, included many of the state's flowers in her 5-volume "North American Wildflowers" (*Desert Breeze*, May 2014). All of these artists produced realistic and detailed portrayals of the state's spectacular flowers.

One California artist, a transplant from Pennsylvania, created a unique style of painting that displayed a graceful, elegant Art Nouveau design style while retaining the precision and detail of more traditional botanical art. Elizabeth Hollowell Saunders (1861–1910) lived in California for only four years before her death, and sadly her output of these remarkable paintings was limited.

Elizabeth Hollowell studied art in Philadelphia where she became an ardent naturalist as well as an accomplished painter. To pursue her interest in nature, she joined a walking club where she met Charles Francis Saunders (1859–1941). Saunders had little interest in botany when they met until he attended a lecture by botanist Joseph Rothrock, noted forester and author of the botanical report for the U.S.G.S. Wheeler Survey (DB July 2015). Saunders attended several more of the botanist's lectures and later wrote to Rothrock that "the pursuit of botany has ever since been one of my keenest pleasures."

In 1902, Hollowell and Saunders married and traveled to California, in part to improve Elizabeth's health. One of their first outings was an exploration of the desert around Palm Springs. A friend wrote that their trip must have been "one grand fiesta, a kind of wildflower intoxication without the effects of bootlegging or headache."

Two books followed their trip to California. Saunders published his first book, "In a Poppy Garden", in 1903. It was a small volume of poetry with each poem preceded by a small illustration by Elizabeth. Two years later, twelve of her watercolor sketches of wildflowers were published as a portfolio with descriptions of the plants written by Charles.

The couple left Philadelphia and moved permanently to Santa Barbara, in 1906. They both developed a keen interest in photography, traveling throughout the state to photograph its botanical bounty.

After Elizabeth's death, in 1910, Saunders devoted himself to writing, mostly about California and the Southwest. The man who previously had no use for botany wrote seven books about plants, the first of which was "With the Flowers and Trees in California" (1914). The book is dedicated to Elizabeth and includes several of her watercolor sketches of wildflowers. Also illustrating the book are many of their photographs of plants, including two color plates showing fields of orange poppies and pink sand verbena. Saunders even includes a photograph of the Chilean monkey puzzle tree (*Desert Breeze*, February 2020) and devotes two pages to discussing the Araucarias that had been planted in California

In the book's preface, Saunders describes California as " ... the State which, of all our Commonwealths, is to Flora the most hospitable and by her the most favored ...".

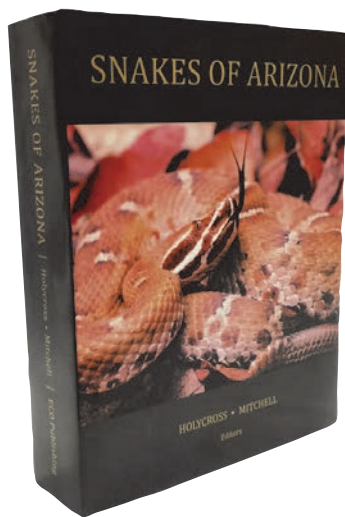
All twelve wildflower watercolors by Elizabeth Hollowell Saunders can be seen on the Florilegium Program's website ([art-botanical.org](http://art-botanical.org)). A link is on the home page.





## A Book Review by Rob Romero **Snakes of Arizona**

At 860 pages this is a beast of a book not only in size but content. As I went through it, it is apparent that this is likely THE book to have on our native snakes. A herpetologist friend made the same comment. Fifty-nine peer reviewed species are covered. There are over 390 figures and photos and the descriptions of each species are very informative. It has a field guide type feel to it with extensive distribution and habitat information along with detailed maps.



The individual accounts are quite well arranged. One species has always fascinated me here in

Arizona so we will take a look at that, the Arizona Mountain Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis pyromelana woodini*). The account starts with taxonomy and is exhaustive in its information. For the casual observer, it is probably too scientific but you do get a good idea of how the species is described. You get a full set

of all aspects of the species from basic distribution and diet to more specifics, predators, parasites, reproduction. One part I did not like was that the maps for each account were in a separate section and not within each species account. A minor detail but just something I would want to see.

All in all, this is a great body of work and from what I understand the editors, Andrew Holycross and Joseph Mitchell put many years into it's making. I will say that if you only have a casual interest in the snakes of Arizona this may be too much book for you. However, if you have a deeper interest, it is certainly worth the money. Highly recommended.

Snakes of Arizona is available on the Chiricahua Desert Museum website: [ecouniverse.com](http://ecouniverse.com). The cost is \$59.95.

Or even better, you can visit the Museum in Rodeo, NM. and purchase a copy there while touring their extensive snake display.

The TCSS library has one copy available for member checkout.



# Jarilla Mountains and Anthony Gap, New Mexico, a followup visit from recent presentations

By Thomas Staudt and Maria Voris



Having received our covid vaccinations and eager to see the world again Maria Voris and I set out in late March to several New Mexico cactus locations. Our first destination was the Jarilla Mountains located between Alamogordo, NM and El Paso, TX just west off Highway 54. This location was featured in the September 2019 TCSS monthly meeting presented by Jerry Arp. Our second destination was Anthony Gap, 50 miles south. Root Gorelick had just made a presentation on that location during the March 2021 TCSS meeting. In addition to the invaluable information from the presentations, Rob Romero and Ad Konings from the El Paso cactus club provided gps locations and suggestions on timing to catch the plants in flower. The reality of flowering is always tricky depending on recent rains and temperature but since my birthday falls in late March we figured we'd try our luck then. We were not disappointed.

Our destination in the Jarilla's was a cautiously climbable hill a little more than a three mile drive from our turn off of Highway 54. Fortunately for us we spotted some large *Echinocereus stramineus* about two miles in on a relatively flat area. We stopped to take a close look at these and were immediately amazed with the uncountable number of cacti and the variety of species around us. Standing in one spot and looking to a space our car could occupy we could see 8-10 *Echinocactus horzonthalonius*, numerous *Echinocereus dasyacantha* and *E. coccineus* var. *rosei* and their hybrids. In short order as we spread out, one or both of us would be calling out "Come over here, see these flowers", and a response, "No, come over here and see these". Unquestionably a pretty exciting time. While we may not have seen every color variant on these plants you can see from these photos that we probably didn't miss much. We did eventually move over to the hill site with again an exhausting number of cacti, none of the *Echinocereus* here were in flower. We were fortunate on top of the hill to catch one *Mammillaria lasiacantha* flowering.

In about an hour's drive from the Jarilla's we were parked at the Sierra Vista trailhead in Anthony Gap. We opted to walk south on the trail towards and into Texas. Once again it was an overload of cactus species. And amazingly, all these plants are within about 25 feet of the trail. We walked into Texas and

beyond to the first pass, about a mile total. While we were nearly knocked over by the strong winds at the pass we persisted long enough to find *Epithelantha micromeris* in flower, a number of *Glandulicactus uncinatus* var. *wrightii*, *Escobaria sneedii* and *tuberculosa* at that spot. Other species were abundant along the way and many were flowering. We recorded 18 species on our short walk. Some of the additional species were: *Echinocactus horzonthalonius*, *Echinocereus coccineus* var. *rosei*, *E. dasyacantha*,

*E. viridiflorus* var. *chloranthus*, *Escobaria dasyacantha*, *Echinomastus intertextus*, the latter three in flower.

Videos of the two presentations mentioned with much more detail than I can cover are available through the TCSS website. A highly recommended trip and while you're out that way don't miss White Sands National Park.

The vaccinations were a comfort for our overnight stays, there were no people at the two cactus sites.

## Rescue Sales

We started 2021 off with a sale in January, February and March. So far this year we have sold 1265 plants and 185 bundles of ocotillo canes. Amazing isn't it! In the above photo, during their down time Steve Watts keeps the personal shoppers and loaders busy preparing rope to use at rescues. This is a nice break and good time for socializing. If you would like to help at future sales, email your name and email address to [sales@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:sales@tucsoncactus.org). See you at a future sale – Crystal Cannon TCSS Sales Coordinator.





## TCSS BOARD

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(terms expire December 31 of year indicated)

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**Newsletter Editor:** Karen Keller • [runbunny@cox.net](mailto:runbunny@cox.net)

**Deadline for newsletter text or photos:**

**Thursday, May 20 by 4:00pm**

### TCSS Web Page:

[www.tucsoncactus.org](http://www.tucsoncactus.org)

**Webmaster:** Joe Frannea • [webmaster@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:webmaster@Tucsoncactus.org)

For general information and questions related to

TCSS, email [TCSS@TucsonCactus.org](mailto:TCSS@TucsonCactus.org)

or call (520) 256-2447 during business hours.

**Everyone is Welcome!**

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



**Cacti Rescued - Since 1999**

**516 Rescues - 39,643 Volunteer Hours** (updated 01-01-21)

**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.

## May 2021

**Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:00pm (ZOOM MEETING)**

Exploring the Evolutionary History of the Chollas and Prickly Pears of western North America and beyond

Presented by Lucas C. Majure, Ph.D.

**Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:00pm**

Teleconference Board Meeting

### TCSS Zoom Presentation

**Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 7:00pm**

What You Need to Know About Ocotillos Before You Die

Presented by James W. Cornett

Desert Ecologist and Professional Naturalist

## Acknowledgement Of Contributions

The Names Below Represent The Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society Members And Friends Whose Donations Helped Make This Year A Success. We Extend Our Sincere Thanks For Your Support.

MARGARET POPE  
ANNE & BOB SMITH  
CHRIS HACK

