



# Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

September 2021

Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society • In Person and Zoom Program Presentation • Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 7:00pm  
**Sky Islands Public High School, 6000 East 14th Street, Tucson, Arizona 85711**

## The ABC's of Growing Agaves

Presented by Greg Starr



*Agave parryi* past Bagdad in northern Arizona

In this presentation, Greg will open with general background information about agaves, discussing distribution, the inflorescence types, offsetting/solitary types, and leaf types. He will then get to the heart of the matter and discuss various pests and problems and what to do about them. Then tackling topics such as cold hardiness, sun exposure, soil type, watering, and propagation. The second half of the presentation is devoted to a look at some of the agaves that will grow well either in containers or in the ground in much of the desert southwest. This is where the pictures of pretty plants will be.

Greg has both a BS in Plant Science and an MS in Botany/Plant Science from the University of Arizona. While working on his MS degree, Greg worked at the University herbarium under the tutelage of Dr. Charles T. Mason. It was there he learned the details of taxonomy and nomenclature and honing his skills at plant identification using botanical keys. For his MS, Greg blended his love of both horticulture and botany to produce a thesis covering the species of *Salvia* that had

been in cultivation since 1900. Greg opened a small, native or near-native plant nursery in July 1985 and although he had an interest in cacti and succulents, it took several years for that interest to become an infection causing him to produce his book, *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers*, and to be a co-author on the *Field Guide to Cacti & Succulents of Arizona*. Currently, Greg spends the heat of summer days in the relatively cool environment of his house sitting in front of the computer hoping that a random assault of his hands on the keyboard will result in articles for the CSSA journal or another book.

**If you have been fully vaccinated for Covid-19 you are welcome to come and join us for this excellent in person presentation (masks will be required by all). This meeting will also be a Zoom program and will be an important educational and informational event you must see. Also, if using Zoom, 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*. Plant give aways will also be happening at the in person meeting as well. When leaving the live in person meeting, everyone can get a free plant offered to you by the TCSS.**

*Continued on next page*



**TCSS In Person and Zoom Program Presentation**

**Thursday, October 7, 2019 at 7:00pm**

Nature's Geometry: Succulents

Presented by Russel Ray

Fibonacci Geometry and Photography Expert

Winter Gardens, California

**At this time no refreshments will be served at the September meeting.**

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



*Agave parryi in the Dragoon Mountains*



*Agave parrasana in the Sierra Patagallana in Coahuila Mexico*



### President's Message

We are starting a new tradition this month. A Hybrid monthly meeting. That means we are LIVE and in person at Sky Island Public High School and also on ZOOM. Anyone who is completely vaccinated and wearing a mask will be welcome to attend the live meeting. No Exceptions! There will be a great

program by Greg Starr, free plants, raffles and door prizes. The only thing we will not have is food and drink. If you prefer to watch it on ZOOM we will be giving away gift certificates or our Field Guides to a number of lucky winners who sign up in the chat room with their full name and email. I will contact you by email if you are a winner. The meeting will also be recorded and available for viewing through our website as usual.

We do care greatly about your health and safety and that is why the in-person meeting is open to only those who are fully vaccinated and wearing a mask.

Our Blooming Barrel Sale was very successful with gross receipts over \$17,000 and a complimentary sale last Saturday will add to this total.

The Good Time Silent Auction and More will be held September 19 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm outside at Sky Island Public High School. It will be under 70% shade cover and we will have access to restrooms inside the school. A full description of the event is enclosed in this newsletter. This is a great opportunity to get rid of your excess plants, pots etc and get new ones! Donate special plants for the Silent Auction. It's great fun to bid and win something new and really special.

This event is available to every member. Please be safe.

Finally, the podcast celebrating the TEP Go Green award that we received is available at: <https://www.mrsgreensworld.com/podcast/celebrating-partners-in-sustainability-2020-spotlight-series-episode-2/>. I asked to have it on our website and Facebook. Listen to it.

Thanks for your support.

Dick Wiedhopf, President

### Personal Meeting Note

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### Instructions To Join The TCSS Zoom Meeting on September 2, 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 August 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.



# Good Time Silent Auction Sunday, September 19, 2021

Sky Islands Public High School • 6000 E 14th Street  
3:00pm to 5:00pm

The new location outside will be easy to access. Go west on 14th st past the normal entrance and follow 14th as it ends and turns left into S Del Valle Ave; then turn left on E Wilshire Terrace through the chain link gate (we will have it clearly marked) which is the back of the school and you are there. This will make it easy to drop off plants etc.

This event has been a Tucson Cactus Succulent Society tradition for almost 60 years.

This is a celebration: silent auctions, Free Plants, \$2, \$5, \$10 sale tables and assorted Ice Cream bars. Bring your excess plants, pots etc for the free item tables. All we ask is that your plants are free of disease and insects. Better plants will go on the \$2.00, \$5.00 and \$10.00 tables and special plants for the silent auctions, your choice. There will be no discount pricing at the end of the event for the \$2.00, \$5.00, and \$10.00 plants.

Bid sheets and price stickers will be available at the event. The Board has adopted the same policy as we had at Sonoran XII with a high value special silent auction plants. These items will have an opening minimum bid of \$20.00 or more set by the donor. At the discretion of the donor, If the item sells for at least the opening bid the donor receives the opening bid price and any amount above that goes to the society. There are always special and or rare plant that will peak you interest.

In the past, we have had at least 3 separate silent auctions during the afternoon. Pots, plants, special cuttings, books, tools etc. are welcome donations for these silent auctions. Free Plants etc. will be available starting a 3:30pm in order to give everyone an opportunity to take some home. We will start the set-up at 1:00pm and the party will start at 3:00pm with the first silent auction ending at about 3:15pm and then about every 25 minutes there after. All you have to do is sign-in, get a bid number and then keep bidding until you hear "PENCILS DOWN STEP AWAY FROM THE TABLE".

We need volunteers for set-up, sales, and clean-up. Come help and have fun, ask questions, talk with friends, etc., etc., Please feel free to bring your family and friends to this event. You don't have to be a member or bring plants or buy them, just come and enjoy the event. Everyone is welcome. Making wearing and social distancing is encouraged as much as possible. More information call (520) 256-2447.

Please bring your plants and other items between 1:00pm and 2:30pm for inclusion in this event. There are 4 bid sheets on-line or included in mailed newsletters for your convenience. Just cut, fill out the name of the item and your name only and leave the rest blank. We will finish the process when you bring the items for the auction tables.

Thank you

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The following article has been approved for reprinting by the Tucson Audubon Society.

Additionally, these boxes can be purchased at this TAS site:

<https://tucsonaudubonnatureshop.com/collections/outdoor-accessories/products/habitat-at-home-bee-habitats>



# Desert Native Bees

There are ~4,000 native bee species in the United States; almost 1,300 species in Arizona.

Very few native desert bee species sting!

Native bees are better pollinators than honeybees due to their abundant body hairs, aggressive feeding style, long foraging times, and ability to “buzz pollinate.”

## Challenges for Desert Native Bees:

- Phenological mismatch
- Habitat erosion and degradation
- Pesticide and herbicide use

## How to help:

- Provide flowers throughout the year
- Plant foraging sites near nesting opportunities
- Plant purple, blue, yellow, or white flowers
- Preferred flower shape: flat, non-tubular
- Provide plants that have overlapping bloom times and that have varying heights

## Desert Native Bee Species:

Mason Bee, Leafcutter Bee, Yellow Face Bee, Mining Bee, Green Sweat Bee, Squash Bee, Cactus Bee, Cuckoo Bee, Carpenter Bee, Bumble Bee



Mason



Carpenter



Leafcutter

## How to Make a Solitary Bee Nest

Unlike the honeybee, most of our native bees are solitary and non-aggressive. Leafcutter, Mason, and other small bees will nest in these wooden blocks from late spring through fall.



## Materials needed:

- 4"x6" or 6"x6" untreated dried pine or fir post
- Drill and drill bits in a variety of diameters ranging from 1/4" to 3/8"
- A warm location protected from rain and predators

## Instructions:

- Cut the wood posts into blocks 8–12" long.
- Drill holes into the wood blocks using a variety of hole diameters. The holes should be 3–5" deep and at least 3/4" apart. Make sure the holes dead end! (do not drill all the way through the piece of wood)
- Smooth ragged edges around the holes and remove any saw dust from holes.
- Mount your new bee nest on a post or attach to the side of a building so that the tunnels are horizontal. Make sure they are in a warm location with south/east exposure and protected from the rain.

## Notes:

- Don't worry about cleaning out the tunnels, the bees will take care of that and reuse their nest sites.
- Your nest will not attract honeybees or killer bees and is safe to have near walkways, patios, and play areas.

Pollinator Partnership, [pollinator.org](http://pollinator.org)



TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY  
HABITAT *at* HOME

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[tucsonaudubon.org/habitat](http://tucsonaudubon.org/habitat)

# Good Times Silent Auction

ITEM # A\_\_\_\_\_

**Item Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Donor

[illegible]

# Good Times Silent Auction

**ITEM # A**

**Item Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Donor \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

**ITEM # A**

Item Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]



## FROM THE FLORILEGIUM

In the June 2015 “Desert Breeze”, we presented a brief account of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Division of Pomology with emphasis on the illustrations produced by 21 of the Division’s artists from 1886 to 1942 when it was disbanded. The USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection contains more than 7,000 superb watercolors that are held in the Rare and Special Collections at the National Agricultural Library.

In 2011, the entire collection of watercolors was made available for viewing on the internet. The collection can be searched by artist, common or scientific name of the fruit, and country of origin, and, if you find a particularly luscious cluster of grapes, you can download a high resolution image, ready for printing and hanging. <https://usdawatercolors.nal.usda.gov/pom/home.xhtml>

Two books published in the past year celebrate this stunning collection of paintings. **Heirloom Fruits of America – Selections from the USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection** presents 200 of the paintings with an introduction by Yale historian Daniel J. Kevles that details the history of the Division of Pomology and its artists. The quality of the reproductions is excellent, but they are of a more modest size than those collected in the second book.

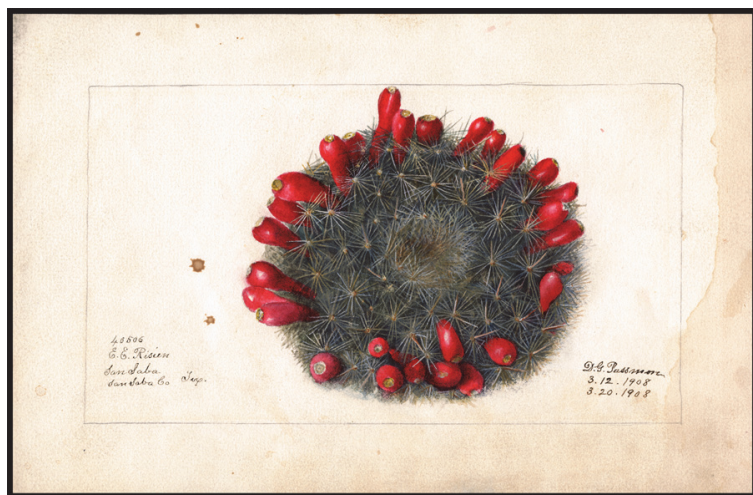
**An Illustrated Catalog of American Fruits and Nuts – The US Department of Agriculture Pomological Watercolor Collection** includes 300 of the paintings but offers much more than beautiful botanical art. A fascinating introduction, written by Adam Leith Gollner, author of “The Fruit Hunters: A Story of Nature, Adventure, Commerce, and Obsession”, begins with a brief history of the Division of Pomology and an account of the experimental breeding of the blueberry. He describes several of his fruit encounters around the world and pays tribute to three of the Division’s most notable plant hunters, David Fairchild, Frank Meyer, and Wilson Popenoe. A listing of all of the artists who worked in the Division of Pomology is followed by a biographical sketch of the nine most prominent and productive

artists. A few of these artists can be seen in a 1914 photograph of the Division’s employees. For Meyer lemon lovers, there is a impressive photograph of USDA plant collector Frank Meyer in China where he found the fruit (“**Desert Breeze**” **December 2018**). The book ends with two brief literary tributes to fruit—“The Apple”, from Michael Pollan’s “The Botany of Desire”, and “Oranges”, an excerpt from the book of the same name by the extraordinary John McPhee.

It is notable that 50 percent of the watercolors in the Collection were painted by three of the Division’s female artists. The most prolific of the three was Deborah Griscom Passmore (“**Desert Breeze**” **June 2015** where you can see her beautiful painting of the fruit of *Opuntia hyptiacantha*), who painted more than 1,500 of the Collection’s watercolors. Shown here is her painting of a mammillaria with its vibrantly colored, edible fruit. It may seem odd to find this in the USDA collection, but in addition to thousands of illustrations of well-known fruits, there were many lesser known fruits that were investigated, including the fruit of the prickly pear. Three rather sad illustrations of *Opuntia fruit* are in the collection and are mysteriously grouped with this beautiful mammillaria, which is even more mysteriously titled “Prickly Pear” in the Collection’s data base.

The second illustration is by Royal Charles Steadman, who painted some 900 of the Collection’s watercolors. Before joining the Division of Pomology, Steadman was a jewelry designer and taught at the Rhode Island School of Design. In addition to his pomological watercolors, he developed a technique for modeling fruit from wax and plaster. Wikipedia has a wonderful photograph of Steadman at work with his wax models.

Additional pomological watercolors by Passmore, Steadman, and other USDA artists can be seen on the Florilegium Program’s website ([art-botanical.org](http://art-botanical.org)). A link is on the home page.



Mammillaria species  
Watercolor by Deborah Griscom Passmore, 1908



Oldenburg apple  
Watercolor by Royal Charles Steadman, 1919

## 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, September 23 by 4:00pm**

**TCSS Web Page:**

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

**Webmaster:** Barb Watts • [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.**

# 112,182

## Cacti Rescued - Since 1999

551 Rescues - 42,742 Volunteer Hours (updated 05-28-21)

**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.

## September 2021

**Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 7:00pm**

In Person and Zoom Program Presentation

The ABC's of Growing Agaves

Presented by Greg Starr

**Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7:00pm**

Teleconference Board Meeting

**Sunday, September 19, 2021 at 3:00- 5:00pm**

Good Time Silent Auction

## 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.

### Donors

David Williams

Mary Belford

Darcy Anderson

William Thornton

Several Anonymous Donors

