



# Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

December 2023



## Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society Holiday Party, Annual Meeting, Awards & Gift Exchange

**Sunday, December 10, 2023 • Celebrations Party Spot!**

**2823 N Stone Ave, Tucson, AZ**

(Plenty of paved and dirt lot Parking at Glenn and Stone)

Set-up starts at 12pm • Bring food at 1:30pm • Dinner and Program---2pm till 4pm • Clean-up 4pm till 5pm  
The Society will provide Turkey, Ham, Shrimp, Condiments, Tableware and Drinks (coffee, punch and water)

You will bring your favorite dish to share (enough for 10+ servings)

### Hot or Cold

Salads – Starches – Vegetables – Desserts  
(Please bring serving dish and serving utensils)

This has been another great year; let's make it special for others.

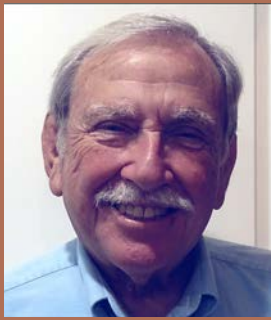
Please bring \$ donations for the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona  
TCSS will match up to \$1,500 donated.

### Gift Exchange

Everyone can participate by wrapping a plant or plant related gift of at least \$10.00 value.  
If you bring a gift, you get a gift. We have a fun way of exchanging gifts.

**Masks and Social distancing are not required but will be respected.**  
**Vaccinations and booster shots will make it healthier for everyone.**





## President's Message

1919! No, that's not the year I was born, it's the incredible number of members in the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society for 2023. This is a new record.

There is a leadership team of officers, Board of Directors, committee chairs and members who give of their time and energy to support our Mission of KNOWING, GROWING, SHOWING AND CONSERVING relating to cacti and succulent plants and their environment.

Our focus remains fixed on providing all members the opportunity to support the activities of our Mission. We try to make every event a learning and fun experience.

Pima Prickly Park continues to grow and has been enhanced by our Urban Rescue Program which enables us to save specimen plants no longer wanted by individual homeowners and businesses. There is now a Labyrinth, almost completed, which adds a new dimension to the park. It was planned and completed by our members with additional support from Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation. What a great partnership!

Our rescue program is strong and recognized for its success in saving more than 135,000 cacti and succulent plants from destruction and finding new homes for these plants. Thank you to everyone who participates in the planning, rescuing, sales and replanting. It's all important to the success of the program.

Our new propagation activities continue to "grow". We had so much fun planting saguaro seeds and seeing them germinate in a few days. Next step is to grow them on to be a source for Saguaros for the future especially as a source of plants to reforest area destroyed by climate or fire. I want my grandchildren's grandchildren to be thrilled by Saguaro in bloom. There is a lot more activities in the new propagation area at Pima Prickly Park. Check out activities on our website.

Our future requires us to change with the times. We will do this but we will not leave any members behind.

The question is always, how can we best serve your interests and how can we best serve our community? Please help us with the answers.

Please renew your membership.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy New Year.

Thank you for your support,  
Dick Wiedhopf, President

## TCSS Urban Rescue Program

The Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's Urban Rescue Program is a unique activity that is dedicated to saving our native desert cacti in urban areas. Homeowners can make a request for us to consider their cactus for removal, and with a "scout" visit, we assess the survivability of relocation and distribution to determine if the request should be scheduled. There are times we have to decline a rescue for various reasons, but we make every effort to save our native plants.

Once the rescue is authorized, we will then arrange a crew to go dig up the cacti. We then work with other TCSS committees to determine distribution of the newly acquired cacti. This may include replanting them at Pima Prickly Park, donating them to the Propagation Program, or holding them for an upcoming sale. Often, but not always, there are plants available for crew members to take home. The program's goal is to protect our native cacti and succulents that might otherwise end up in a landfill as well as educate the homeowner on our program. Occasionally, after a discussion about the cactus, the homeowner decides to keep the cactus where it is.

This program has been highly successful due to the dedication and hard work of the team of volunteers. They are passionate about the environment and about preserving the beauty of the Sonoran desert. In addition, we have many team members who are skilled and knowledgeable about cacti, which enables them to identify and remove them safely and effectively. It's a win-win for the homeowner and our club.

The Urban Rescue Program is not only beneficial for the environment, but it also promotes awareness and appreciation of these unique plants in our desert. TCSS continues to make a positive impact in our community and the Urban Rescue Program is just one of the reasons.

If you are interested in being a part of this dedicated team of rescuers, frequently check the Activities page on our website or email [urbanrescue@tucsoncactus.com](mailto:urbanrescue@tucsoncactus.com) and you will be placed on the list to be notified of upcoming rescues. We'd love to have you!!

Julie Shulick  
Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society  
Urban Rescue Coordinator  
[urbanrescue@tucsoncactus.com](mailto:urbanrescue@tucsoncactus.com)



From left to right: Argentine saguaro fallen (before), Argentine saguaro planted at PPP (after), Many crew helped with this rescue of about 15 ocotillo, Golden barrel (before), Golden barrel happily replanted (after)]

## A Birds-eye View of South Africa – Part 2

Greg Starr, Carol Starr, Thomas Staudt, and Maria Voris

In part 1 we covered the eastern segment of our trip to South Africa, which was dominated by birds and mammals, followed by a smattering of plants. In part 2, we will highlight the plants first, followed by birds and mammals.

For our transition from the eastern South Africa portion of our trip to the Western Cape, we flew from Durban to Cape Town where we rented a car which gave us the freedom to set our own itinerary. We spent three nights in Cape Town at a wonderful apartment called Hout and About near Hout Bay. Our first excursion from Cape Town was to first visit Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, a sprawling 1,300-acre garden devoted to indigenous plants and their cultivation and preservation. We spent about three hours in the gardens but needed three weeks. There is an amazing array of plant life including flowering *Erythrina* species with flowers being visited by the Southern Double-collared Sunbird (Fig. 1), flowering *Romulea* species, a cute little pink-flowered bulb growing in the lawn (Fig. 2), and a *Protea* species being pollinated by the Southern Double-collared Sunbird (Fig. 3). In any case, we had plans to drive to Cape of Good Hope, the southwestern-most point on the African continent and had to move on. Here we were rewarded with blooming wildflowers including *Pelargonium capitatum*, and ostriches, baboons, and Bontebok roaming the land (Figs. 4–8).

The next day we headed to the southern coast and fynbos vegetation in search of more wildflowers along with a colony of African Penguins. We stopped for the penguins and saw the geophyte *Chasmanthe aethiopica* with bright orange-red flowers (Figs. 9–11). We then made our way to the Harold Porter Botanical Garden where we saw shrubs in the genus *Erica*, one *Erica discolor* with bright red flowers and pale tips (Fig. 12), and *Erica vestita* with its tubular pink flowers being visited by an Orange-breasted Sunbird (Fig. 13) and flowering shrubs of *Salvia africana-coerulea* (Fig. 14).

The third day out found us driving to West Coast National Park which was loaded with flowers, birds, and zebras! First up as we entered the park was *Salvia africana-lutea* with its unusual yellowish-brown flowers (Fig. 15), and shortly after we spotted a bulb called *Lachenalia pustulata* (Fig. 16). As we drove through the park we made several unplanned stops when there was something of interest. At one of these stops, the soil was very sandy and plant life was abundant. Among the variety of plant life, we encountered a root-parasite called *Hyobanche sanguinea* and its bright carmine-red flowers (Fig. 17), *Crassula dichotoma* (Fig. 18), a bulbous plant called *Albuca*, and the deadly Cape Cobra (Fig. 19). Continuing north through the rest of the West Coast National Park we spotted a small group of Cape Mountain Zebra (not the best common name for these coastal dwellers) standing in a field of purple flowered Ice Plant (possibly *Delosperma asperulum*) (Fig. 20). Cape Mountain Zebra normally inhabit mountainous regions up to 2000 m elevation, but will move to lower elevation in winter. Satisfied with our jaunt through the park, we turned inland heading for our accommodations in the town of Ceres. We arrived at our accommodations under cover of darkness only to find there had

been a lack of communication between the person who took our reservations and the staff. However, our gracious host was able to get our rooms set up and suggest a couple places that might still be open for dinner. The night was chilly, remember September in the southern hemisphere is coming out of winter and days could be pleasant but nights could get cold.

The next morning, we headed for Tankwa Karoo National Park which Greg envisioned to have fields of wildflowers. On the way there we stopped for some succulents and flowers including two plants with thick succulent trunks, *Tylecodon wallichii* (Fig. 21) and *Tylecodon paniculatus* (Fig. 22), the elusive *Aloe variegata* (Fig. 23), and a yellow flowered member of the *Mesembryanthemaceae* (Fig. 24). Within Tankwa Karoo National Park itself we came across more interesting plants including magenta-purple flowered shrublets of what Greg believes was *Drosanthemum latipetalum* (Fig. 25), and a couple belly plants, those plants that require you to lie on your belly to photograph. One was a cute leafless bulb, probably *Albuca suaveolens* (Fig. 26) and the other an unidentified *Euphorbia* species (Fig. 27). We spotted Springbok off in the distance and watched them spring away after ascertaining that we were not really a threat. After having too much fun there, we headed back out of the park to find our accommodations for the night. We were scheduled to stay at Hartnekskloof, a place used by birding groups and located near a mountain pass we were hoping to travel through the next day. As we drove to Hartnekskloof, we spotted large bright red flowered shrubs that Greg still has not been able to identify (Fig. 28) and a UFO crash-landing site (Fig. 29). We arrived at Hartnekskloof (Fig. 30) and made our way to the free-standing rooms (Fig. 31), which from the outside looked quite rustic and unfinished, but were really finished nicely once you got inside! (Fig. 32). Those of you who know Greg's sense of humor will understand, and if you don't, feel free to ask him about it at the next gathering! At Hartnekskloof, the rooms were all given authentic western U.S. names, and Carol and Greg were in the Sheriff's Office while Thomas and Maria got the Bordello. Our hosts, Susan and Jean were very gracious and generous, putting out enough food and drink for a party of 12 although there were just the four of us.

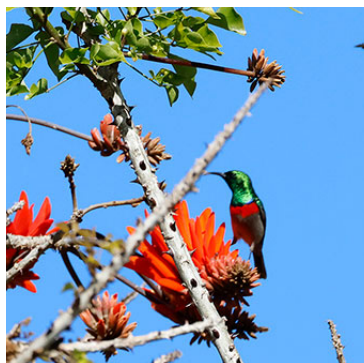


Figure 1



Figure 2



## A Birds-eye View of South Africa – Part 2

The morning of our penultimate day in South Africa we spent some time exploring around the area and found a treasure trove of plants. Among them were the yellow-flowered *Bulbine praemorsa* (Fig. 33), tall trunked *Aloe comosa* (Fig. 34), the cool succulent *Hoodia pilifera* (Fig. 35), and more thick-trunked *Tylecodon paniculate* growing in the rocks much like we had seen the day before on our way to Tankwa Karoo National Park (Fig. 22). We bid fair thee well to Susan and Jean and set off for Cape Town. Instead of taking the shortest most direct route back to Cape Town, Greg convinced the others (he had the keys and was driving) we ought to explore a little further north in hopes of encountering more flowering plants. And flowers we did see! Long stretches of the shrubby purple-flowered *Delosperma asperulum* and an unidentified Ice Plant with yellowish leaves with the occasional *Hoodia pilifera* mixed in (Fig. 36). Farther along our journey we stopped for photos

a shrubby *Pelargonium* species (Fig. 37) and a mostly orange-flowered *Gazania*, possibly *G. krebsiana* (Fig. 38). Finally, to finish of the day and the trip, a photo of one of Greg's favorite birds, a Southern Red Bishop (Fig. 39). We finish the trip with one day left, but that day was devoted to seeing water birds at a wastewater treatment facility and no plants of interest. Our last night in Cape Town was at the luxurious and exquisite Fernwood Manor.

We hope you have enjoyed reading about our trip to South Africa as much as we have enjoyed presenting the travelogue for you. Someday, Greg would like to return to the Western Cape for another chance to see more wildflowers, bulbs, and succulents, and even travel up to Namibia to see all the intriguing and interesting plants up there.



Figure 3



Figure 7

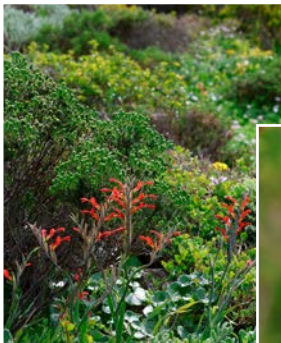


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 4



Figure 8



Figure 13



Figure 14

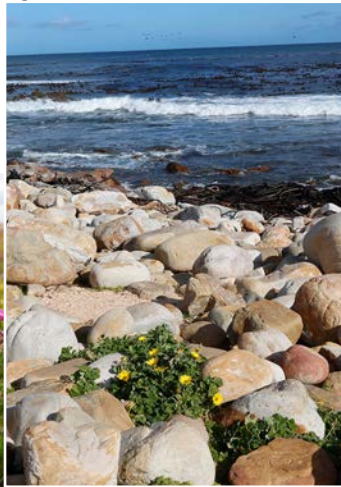


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 9

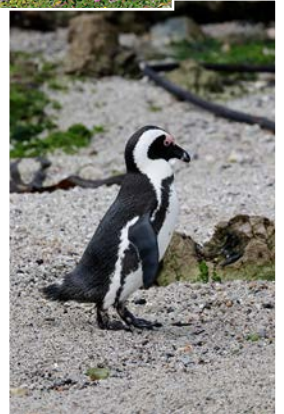


Figure 10



Figure 15





Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 23



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 28



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31

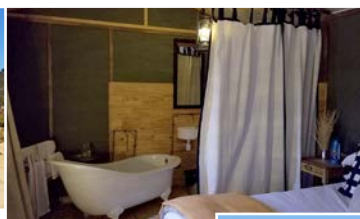


Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 36

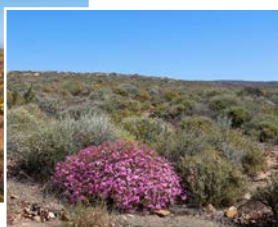


Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 35



## Phase One of Labyrinth Completed

At noon on Wednesday, November 16, TCSS members working on the labyrinth at Pima Prickly Park quietly celebrated the completion of the labyrinth and the path leading to it. The planning and approval process for this project began October 2022.

A few pieces of sea glass were added to the center of the labyrinth to commemorate its completion and pause for a moment of personal expression of gratitude. 20 TCSS members devoted over 500 hours during a three-week period to finish the first phase of the labyrinth.

96 tons of decomposed granite were wheelbarrowed into place and compacted, 3,700 pavers were positioned, and 4,320 pounds of concrete mix was used to stabilize the edges of the path and the labyrinth.

The Chartres-style medieval labyrinth is 75 feet in diameter and takes 15 to 25 minutes to walk. One simply follows the labyrinth's path to the center. Unlike a maze, there are no tricks nor deadends.

Sauntering from the parking lot following the crosswalks to the curb cut that introduces the ramp of concrete at the mouth of the path that flows 150 feet, one glides down a gentle slope to the mouth of the labyrinth. The loops lead a person on a circuitous journey to the center. Subconsciously, the sounds and vibrations of the River Road traffic and the Union Pacific's mile-long freight trains ease into a blur of bliss as one gets deeper into the labyrinth's flow. The long hours of measuring, shoveling decomposed granite, spreading and raking, digging, hauling wheelbarrow loads of materials, mixing and troweling concrete, wetting, and compacting make Phase One of this project worth the effort and the wait.

Phase Two of this project will begin soon and will include the installation of shade trees, seating, signage, dry streams that lead to basins, groupings of plants, boulders, and gravel.

The labyrinth, located to the north of the driveway at 3800 West River Road, is ready for park visitors to walk.



*Photo by Eliseu Cavalcante*



*Photos 02-08 credit Kermie Hodge*

## TCSS Celebrates its 63rd Birthday, November 12, 2023

On a beautiful sunny Sunday around 120 members gathered to celebrate the 63rd birthday of TCSS at Pima Prickly Park. Dick Wiedhopf started the program with a presentation on the history of TCSS including the background details on how our rescue program was created. After some mingling in the park, attention shifted when cake, ice cream and free plants became available.

Joel Fontaine, Eli Cavalcante, Patsy Frannea and Cathy Robson deserve our thanks for putting together an excellent event. And a special nod to Joel for coordinating the event.



*Photo credit: John Durham*

## Meet Pima Prickly Park Volunteer Paul Scott



I had been a lifelong resident of Rochester, New York, when 14 years ago I bought a vacation condo in Tucson. Then eight years ago I decided to put down more permanent roots here and bought a home with about an acre of land situated in a mesquite bosque.

I wanted to create a Desert Garden and spent most of the first year removing lawns and non-desert plants. That left

me with a blank canvas to create the garden of my dreams. I researched local garden sites and nurseries, and then came up on TCSS, which provided me with monthly instructional meetings and the opportunity to learn by doing.

My first hands on experience as a volunteer was watering at Pima Prickly Park under Linda Heisley's direction. She gave me a cart and 100 feet of hose, and I set off to learn how to be a desert gardener. I learned that water was life for a rescued cactus, trying to get established in the park. I learned a great deal from the other more experienced volunteers and from watching the progress of the Hoop House plants and transplanted cactus throughout the park.

I eventually graduated from watering and learned to haul dirt and rocks, instead of hoses, to create planting berms for new featured gardens. As I became more experienced, my partner also joined as a park volunteer and we participated in cactus rescues, helped setup for sales, and worked at the sales as shoppers in loaders.

Between the rescues and the sales, more plants found their way into our gardens. With the expert advice from club members her gardens began to take shape.

Some friends from the club encouraged us to volunteer for a pop-up tour at our home. It was a very enjoyable experience opening the garden to the membership. Patsy and her team were very organized and provided plenty of direction and support.

Over time I found other volunteer opportunities, making stone sculptures for the park, teaching a course on ocotillo fences, making refreshments for monthly TCSS's meetings. I would highly recommend that anyone interested in Desert Garden consider volunteering for TCSS.

The best of all, I've made many very good friends through the club. When I started as a hose hauler years ago, I had an expected to find such a rewarding experience. It has been a real highlight of my retirement, and I expect it will be for years to come.

## Meet Sales Volunteer Michael Shipman



While visiting with Dan Bach of Bach's Cactus Nursery one day, he gave my brothers and me a book, Field Guide to Cacti and other Succulents of Arizona, published by TCSS. He told us many great things about the society, especially its rescue program, and encouraged us to join. The rest is history. In addition to going on rescues, I help with Urban Rescues and volunteer at Sales.

Through this, I have learned a lot about cacti. I have made lots of friends and met many interesting people in the club. In my spare time, I am an artist, a sculptor, and a beekeeper. I currently have 11 colonies of bees – three were rescued from TCSS member's gardens. I look forward to showing my yard and how I harvest water one day soon.

## Arizona Public School Tax Credit: Sky Islands High School

The Arizona State Public School Tax Credit program allows you (family friends and neighbors) to make a donation to Sky Islands High School and receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against Arizona state owed taxes.

As most of you know, we have been partners with Sky Islands High School for many years and share their facilities for our meetings and other activities. Please consider making a tax donation to them. It will cost you nothing and will support a wonderful program and students and show our gratitude to our long-time community partner.

All instructions as to how to donate are on the Donation page at their website. That link is below.

<https://skyislands.org/school-donations-sponsorship-at-sky-islands-donate/>

Thank you for your consideration of this donation.



# 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.

Anonymous -Donors preference

Arch Ahern

Bob Ashley

Jan R. Bell & Salvador Navarrete

Kristin Benson & Giuseppe Minichino

Liz Bianco & Karla Ronquillo

Martha Brumfield

Cheryl Bullard

Michael & Nanette Burnett

Jean Butler

Jack J & Tena Byrne

Andrew Chen

Sarah Combs

Mike & Darcy Connor

John & Dawn Daniel

David Davies

Adrienne Delgardokeller

Andrew Denman & Guy Combes

Robert V & Donna L Ellis

Connie Engard

Shanan Giegerich & Eric Blomskog

George A & Emojean B Girard

Kim Girard

Martha & Steve Goode

Mary & Chuck Graf

Jim & Annie Harbison

Henry Hoffman & Shirin Mearthur

Jeanie & Dick Honn

Lisa Howells & Mary Reynolds

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Leo M Jacques

Berni Jilka & Gary Maskarinec

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Claudia Luevano & Doug Trinder

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Steven & Caroline Schmidt

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Greg & Carol L Starr

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Holli H Strand

Kris Thompson

John & Ann Tundermann

Lilo & Rick Van Hasslet

Vonn Watkins

Linda R Waugh & Ronald L Breiger

Doug Wells

Richard Wiedhopf

Douglas Williams

Esther Ann Wilson





## TCSS BOARD

**Officers (ending December 31, 2024)**

**President:** Richard Wiedhopf • [president@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:president@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Vice President:** Vonn Watkins • [vp@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:vp@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Secretary:** Monica Wnuk  
[secretary@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:secretary@tucsoncactus.org)

**Treasurer:** Cathy Robson  
[treasurer@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:treasurer@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Board of Directors:**  
(terms expire December 31 of year indicated)

Donna Ellis (2023)  
Janice Johnson (2023)  
Kris Thompson (2023)  
Eli Cavalcante (2023)  
Crystal Cannon (2024)  
Linda Heisley (2024)  
Kermie Hodge (2024)  
Robert Villa (2024)  
Brian Vandervoet (2025)  
Brad Haeckel (2025)  
Joel Fontaine (2025)  
Steve Watts (2025))

**CSSA Affiliate Rep:**  
Bill Holcombe (2023)

**Cactus Rescue:** Donna Ellis, Steve Watts  
[Tucsoncactus.org](http://Tucsoncactus.org)

**Urban Rescues:** Julie Shulick  
[desertrat@shulick.com](mailto:desertrat@shulick.com)

**Education:** Kris Thompson • [education@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:education@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Free Plants:** Donna Ellis • [plants@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:plants@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Florilegium:** Joyce Peters • [art@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:art@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Garden Tours:** Patsy Frannea • [tours@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:tours@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Librarian:** Brad Haeckel • [librarian@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:librarian@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Prickly Park:** • [park@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:park@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Programs:** Vonn Watkins • [programs@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:programs@Tucsoncactus.org)

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**Research:** Doug Rowsell • [research@Tucsoncactus.org](mailto:research@Tucsoncactus.org)

**Field Trips/tours:** Open

**Vendor Coordinator:** Dale Johnson • [vendors@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:vendors@tucsoncactus.org)

**Plant Sales:** Crystal Cannon • [sales@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:sales@tucsoncactus.org)

**Field Guide Sales:** Susan Durham & John Durham  
[books@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:books@tucsoncactus.org)

**Conservation:** Thomas Staudt  
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**Newsletter Editor:** Karen Keller • [newsletter@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:newsletter@tucsoncactus.org)

**Deadline for newsletter text or photos:**  
**Thursday, December 21 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.

# 130,655

## Cacti Rescued - Since 1999

669 Rescues - 49,623 Volunteer Hours (updated 01-01-23)

Please see our under Activities 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.

## December, 2023

**Sunday, December 10, 2023 from 2:00-4:00pm**  
Holiday Party and Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 7:00pm**  
Teleconference Board Meeting

Thursday, January 4, at 7:00pm  
**Ferocactus of Baja, California**  
Presented by Greg Starr

## K-12 Education Outreach December 2023 newsletter

The K-12 Education Team reached over 500 students during November. They worked with budding plant scientists during STEM nights at Erickson Elementary, Maxwell K-8 and Mansfeld Middle School and at SARSEF's STEM Adventure at Pima Community College, NW campus.

Special thanks to instructors Janine Bernat, Edie Campbell, Donna Gonzalez, Adora-Marie Higgins, Louise and Ross Neu and Beth Van Blaricom. You presented so much information about the TCSS and our desert to the children and left them with a greater appreciation for our Sonoran Desert. Thank you!

If you would like to be part of the K-12 Education Outreach activities, please contact [Education@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:Education@tucsoncactus.org).

