

SPRING 2014 GARDEN TOUR



Photos by Ed Bartlett

TCSS 2014 SPRING DESERT GARDEN TOUR
SATURDAY - APRIL 12th - 9am to 3pm
For TCSS Members and their Guests
No Charge - Just Sign in at each house

This Spring we will be offering a special tour of member desert gardens on the northwest side of town. We are fortunate to have a group of landscapes that showcases each owner's creative use of cactus and succulents that will be sure to give you lots of ideas and inspiration for your own gardens. There are four homes, a nursery and a park on tour, starting with an eclectic artists' retreat surrounded by a natural desert landscape (with paths), framing a colorful secluded courtyard for their special plant collection and a separate impressive rock garden patio. From there you will be treated to a hilltop home with sweeping views of the Catalinas that has been transformed in only 3 years from a large barren dirt lot, to a landscape with an extensive cactus and succulent collection surrounded by native trees, creosote, and desert wildflowers. As you drive further north your next stop will surprise and delight you when you discover the hidden oasis they call their "Outback" Garden. Wandering paths take you through mature native trees, animal friendly plants, fountains, sculpture and an interesting variety of native and non-native specimens.

In-between the third and fourth home on tour you won't want to miss this special opportunity to visit Bach's Cactus Nursery. If you have never been there, be prepared to be overwhelmed by this cactus lover's wonderland. Huge greenhouses are surrounded by planted areas of mature, very special plant specimens. After being overwhelmed at Bach's, continue on to the fourth home where you will be simply amazed at just how many plants can thrive in one small back yard area. The birds lucky enough to visit this garden have found their utopia, and you will find interesting specimens and ideas everywhere you look.

If you go south on Thornydale, past Orange Grove where it turns into River Road, you will come to our Society's newest project. Pima Prickly Park was formalized in 2011 as a joint educational venture with Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation. At the base of their office building is a 7 acre area where we are creating special landscapes and demonstration gardens for public enjoyment, education and wildlife habitat. To date we have enhanced an existing ring of Saguaros called "Saguarohenge", planted hundreds of specimens including many rescued native plants, created a Hummingbird Garden, Agave Garden, Cristate area, Ocotillo Forest, and started a Cholla Maze. On one end of the park we have a large Hoop House where club volunteers are nurturing a multitude of potted plants that will someday find their home in the park. We hope that you will take time to stop by the park, get a map and see the results the time and efforts of our dedicated volunteers. There have been so many enhancements since our grand opening in 2012.

REBECCA & KEIMPE



**PHOTOS by ED BARTLETT
and HOMEOWNER**



PLANTS of INTEREST:
Cylindropuntia leptocaulis
Stetsonia coryne
Platyopuntia aciculata
Echinocactus grusonii crest
Aloe hybrid
Cylindropuntia kleiniae
Yucca baccata ssp. thornberi
Lophocereus schottii
f. monstrosus

REBECCA & KEIMPE

In 2005 Rebecca and Keimpe moved to this artists' retreat that is surrounded by natural desert habitat that frames a colorful front courtyard and a striking rock garden patio at the rear of the house. Located on 1.5 acres in a neighborhood founded in 1949 by Greek immigrant Nicholas Genematas, the house was built in 1953 and the 2 story addition with arches/dome was added in 2000.

Having always been interested in plants of all kinds, of course they became more interested in desert plants when they moved to Tucson. Over the years they have added many rescued cacti such as barrels, cholla, hedgehogs, ocotillos and some saguaros to restore areas in the natural habitat that were lacking. Native trees and shrubs have also been added. Almost everything that is small or not a mature tree has been planted since they moved in. They hand water everything. There is no drip system, so plants have to be tough.

They like their landscape to look natural for the most part and purposefully leave dead trees for birds, and some bushes & trees untrimmed at the base to provide cover for wildlife. They encourage all wildlife including snakes and Gila monsters. They have been inspired by the natural habitats of Tohono Chul and Arizona Sonora Desert Museum.

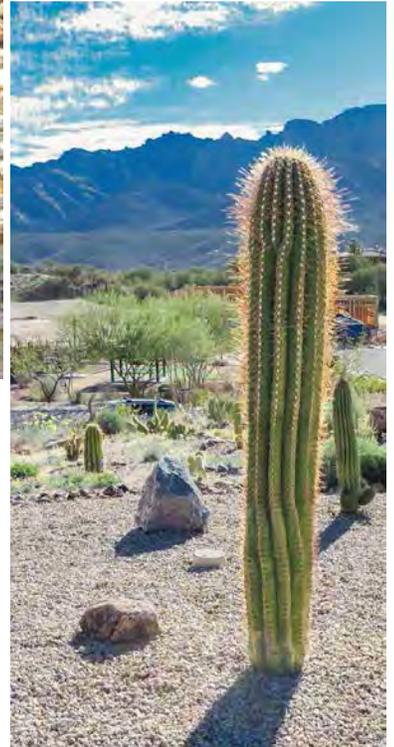
About 20 mature saguaros on the property as well as a barrel grove enhance the natural landscape and huge rocks, flagstone slabs and sculpture add to the creative appeal of the patio area.

In the front courtyard they have a collection of Sansevieria species that expands the variety of those that they keep inside of their home. In the rear patio they have some prize agaves and trichocereus that are protected with wire cages to deter ever present desert pests.

**Rebecca and Keimpe believe that
COLORFUL ART IS ALWAYS WELCOME IN A DESERT LANDSCAPE**



STEVE & CAROLINE



PLANTS of INTEREST:

- Ferocactus rectispinus
- Platyopuntia pycnantha
- Consoulea rubescens
- Platyopuntia sulfurea
- Aloe "Blue Elf"
- Cleistocactus strausii
- Echinocereus brandegeei
- Dasyliirion longissimum



STEVE & CAROLINE

We bought a home in Oro Valley in 2006. Across the street was a large area of undisturbed Sonoran Desert. It was not super lush but had lots of Mesquites, Palo Verde, scattered Az barrels, Engelmannii prickly pear, Fasciculatus hedge hogs and pin-cushion Mammillaria. We walked our dog up this area many times. This was during the housing boom and when we returned from the summer in the Northwest, the entire area was denuded and being prepared for housing. This was of course disturbing to us, but Oro Valley exists because of housing and we weren't living out in the country to begin with. What was even worse was that the developer went broke in the summer of 2008 and when we returned that year there was nothing but dirt. You could see this glaring 140 acre bare scar from Oracle as you came down the hill into Oro Valley. Bummer!

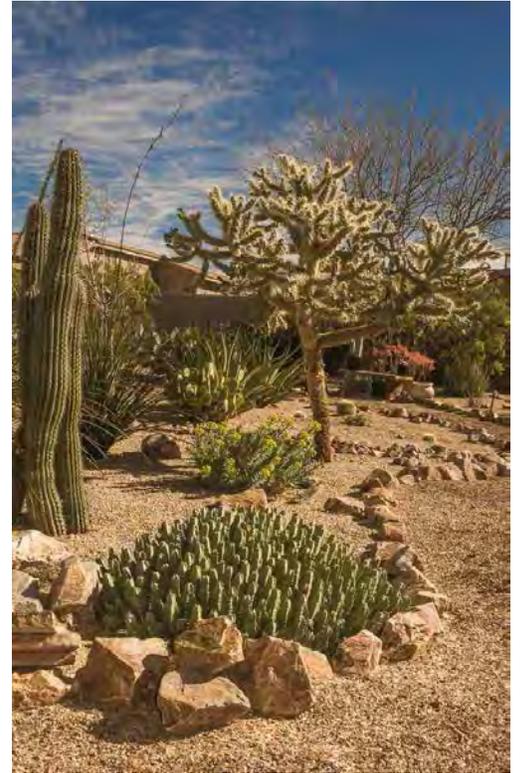
We were driving down from Idaho in the fall of 2009 thinking we would shop for a larger home as we had sold our home in Spokane, Washington and thought that there should be some good deals at the depth of the housing bust. The development had sat vacant for two years, but in late 2009 another developer bought it from the bank and proceeded to redesign the whole development. The views of the Catalinas from many of the lots were spectacular and we loved the area. We bought a lot in the development, now named "Catalina Ridge" and built a new home in 2010. The good news was that the lot was large and gave lots of separation from the street. The bad news was that it was all dirt. While most all of the other owners opted for expanses of gravel, I was determined to restore almost one acre to native desert.

I had been fascinated by desert plants and their unique evolution of survival in our harsh climate in the Sonoran Desert. What you see today is three full summers and one spring of growth. I did all of the work myself. Before I got started the whole hillside was Hydro Seeded with Oro Valley mix in early 2010 before any construction took place. This yielded all of the brittle bush, marigolds, Globe mallows, white thorn Acacias, creosote and a couple of foothills Palo Verde. The rest was started in the winter/spring of 2009-2010. All of the prickly pear and cholla were grown from cuttings. All of the barrel cactus were very small \$4 to \$8 nursery plants with the exception of the AZ barrels. Most of those came from TCSS sales as did numerous hedge hogs. The large Saguaros on the north hilltop were commercial transplants. Most of the others came from TCSS sales.

I often wonder, when the smaller Saguaros are majestic giants in 125 years or so, what the house and Oro Valley will look like.



CATHY & JON



PLANTS of NOTE

Dasyliirion wheeleri
Agave murpheyi
Yucca elata
Cylindropuntia arbuscula
Mammillaria geminispina
Yucca schottii
Euphorbia antisyphilitica
Cylindropuntia imbricata



“OUTBACK” GARDEN

We moved to Oro Valley in 2002 and purchased a lot and home in a new development. The lot is approximately one-half acre and we asked the developer to leave the native vegetation. We are lucky to have a number of large native trees: velvet mesquite, palo verde, and a multi-armed saguaro. My surprise came when I discovered that about a quarter of an acre was without native shrub vegetation. We call this area our Outback because it is outside of our block wall and open to the animals.

We went to Oro Valley inquiring as to the previous use of the land and were provided aerial photos from the 1980's. It shows a large ranch house and the Outback was a maintenance/ stable/parking area; that explained the lack of vegetation. In the four years it took to create our Outback, the soil was our nemesis. The soil is compacted, full of oil, pea gravel, and an asphalt area (20x40) runs on the west side of the property. In this area, down about 4 inches is pure asphalt.

In 2003 I transplanted eight Cholla from the front yard and four Chilean Mesquites in an attempt to get shade in the Outback. Four of the Cholla remain; all the mesquites died. One Argentinean Mesquite was planted, but has problems. We decided on a Tucson Basin native area and contacted Gardening Insights for a landscape design. Working a large section of dirt was mind-boggling for me, but enlightening to Greg Corman. This design provided me with the infrastructure needed, a great animal-friendly plant list, and many ideas to ponder. Over time the Tucson Basin pallet changed to accommodate numerous plants provided by friends.

Over the next two years we installed plumbing, electricity, irrigation, brought in top soil, and rocks. We joined the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society and went on a few digs to collect small saguaro, hedgehog, and barrel cactus. This proved to be an inexpensive way to obtain native plants legally. My first plant purchases were rooted, Creosote (14), Golden Flowered Agave (21), and Ocotillo (7). I suddenly realized the quantity of plants necessary to fill this space! Friends came forward with plants and cuttings and the area began to fill. Four trees were purchased: velvet mesquite, sweet acacia, blue palo verde, and a screw-bean mesquite. I bought a few plants at a time and once I had 20 or so I had helpers come to dig the holes with a jack-hammer. I did the planting, irrigation, and upkeep.

In 2008 the fountain and ocotillo fencing were installed. This custom made TouchStone water sculpture fits nicely in the Outback, provides a nice relaxing sound and water for birds and bunnies. The ocotillo fencing sits on our property line and provides a visual 'containment' for the Outback. Yellow Tombstone Roses are planted near the fence and someday will spread along the top. A bench was added along with potted plants.

Also in 2008 we removed 40 feet of the back wall and installed wrought iron to enjoy the view. With wrought iron, I needed wire to keep small animals out of the walled back yard. I had heard about an invisible netting used at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum for enclosures and contacted a company in Vail. We bought 48 feet of stainless steel zoo mesh and had it installed on the wrought iron. Depending on the light, it is 'invisible' and the inside yard protected. Once the wall was converted, I planted the area near the wrought iron.

We installed low-voltage lighting, planted the last few plants, and did a good cleanup in preparation for the gravel. This is a huge job because there is no way to get a truck into the area; the gravel is dumped in front of the house and wheel barrowed to the back. We ordered 20 tons of the lighter rock (Tuscany Gold) and 11 tons for the walkways (Apache Red). My husband filled the wheel barrows, a hired friend wheeled them to the Outback, and I spread the rock. These were hard, exhausting days, but the finished product looks wonderful.

Since the area is open to bunnies and javelina, we cage all plants in the beginning; now only a few are caged. The animals have won many battles -- if determined to eat a particular plant, I replace it with something they won't touch. Most plants were irrigated; now most trees and native plants do not receive supplemental water. Irrigation is removed in the winter and summer watering is by hose, if required.

In 2010, we lost our 25-foot; 25-arm saguaro which we believed was 175 to 200 years old. She was my friend as I worked in the dirt for many years -- lots of bird activity, noise, baby birds, and I felt safe with her watching over me. To honor her passing, we installed a metal and glass Shaman to keep her spirit alive. The Shaman depicts cutouts of the animals that visit our Outback along with leaves to represent plants.

Within the walled yard is an urn fountain that was created with the help of a friend and updated landscape plants. Last year we had a pool and spa installed which took over the space previously occupied by octopus agave, compost bins, a small greenhouse, work bench, and a 10 x 15 vegetable garden. The greenhouse remains and is used to keep many of our succulents warm in the winter. It is heated with a heat lamp on a thermostat which goes on and off to maintain the temperature selected. Although I miss growing vegetables, the pool comes in handy after a long day of working in the Outback.

I hope you enjoyed visiting our yard. As you can tell from the before and after pictures of the Outback, anything is possible! I can hardly wait to sit on the bench, enjoy the animals, and watch her grow!

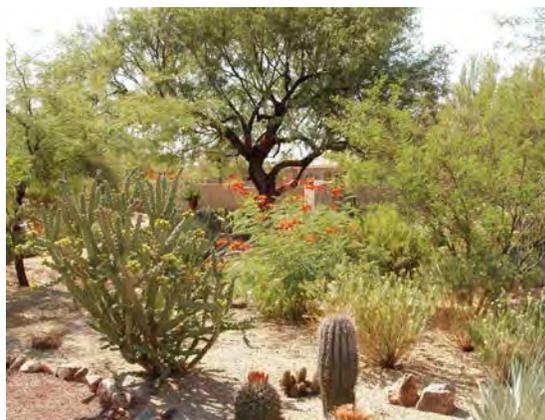
My advice is simple:

- (1) Decide what kind of area you want – xeriscape, Mediterranean, lush, tropical, animal friendly, pool friendly.
- (2) Observe professionally landscaped areas – hotels, resorts, historic, rocky, water features. Go to classes and talks; obtain gardening books from libraries and/or purchases.
- (3) Get a professional landscape plan – then modify it to your taste; be flexible.
- (4) Trench once; keep records and drawings of everything underground.
- (5) Research the plants and plant in the right location (sun, partial shade, shade).

**Most important – know what you want, take your time, spread out the cost.
Don't give up, do it right!**



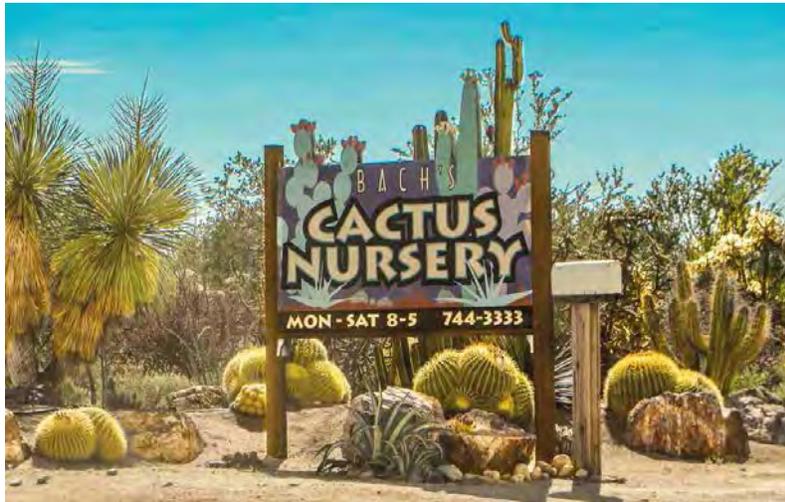
BEFORE



AFTER



BACH'S CACTUS NURSERY
8602 N. Thornydale Road



PHOTOS BY ED BARTLETT

BACH'S CACTUS NURSERY
8602 N. Thornydale Road



From its humble beginnings as a chicken ranch, Bach's Cactus Nursery has been supplying the Tucson community with popular cacti and succulents for over 40 years. The nursery's owners, Dan and Diane Bach have a passion for cacti and succulents and have both a retail and wholesale business. Along with dedicated employees, of which Diane states, "We have great employees and wouldn't be where we are today without them!", Bach's Cactus Nursery provides tailored customer service, insight to the different stages of growing cacti and inspiration for creative landscaping.

"We want our customers to be happy, so we help them pick out the right plants for their situation and then give them information on how to care for the plants" Diane states as her commitment to her customers. Understanding water conservation, best planting seasons, and varying blooming seasons, the nursery supplies a cacti and succulent care sheet with every purchase. Through the years, the Bach's have learned what plants are most popular with their customers: golden barrel, saguaro, hedgehog, prickly pear, and pincushion.

While mentioning pincushions, a visit to the Pincushion Exhibition is highly recommended. The fantastic shapes and growth patterns will fire your imagination!

Bach's Cactus Nursery also deals in wholesale, providing cacti and other types of succulents to nurseries, botanical gardens, and landscapers both locally and outside of Tucson. Dan has been a leader in this part of the business of growing cacti through seeds, cuttings, and grafting. His success with propagation rests on very thorough knowledge and an inclination to experiment.

We are eager for your visit and want to share our knowledge of cacti and succulents with you.

ED & LINDA
PHOTOS by ED BARTLETT



ED & LINDA

In 2005 Ed and Linda moved to Tucson and into a home and yard that had very few plants. The only cactus they had was a Christmas cactus that they had inherited 25 years ago. They came to a TCSS meeting and were instantly hooked. They started going on rescues and filled their car with plants at every opportunity. On every shopping trip they seemed to find more succulents of all types to bring home and add to their rapidly expanding collection.

Now every room in their home has cacti and succulents from all over the world. Many Haworthia, Sansevieria and Gasteria. Their yard has a variety of barrel cacti, agave, mammillaria, hedge hogs and many, many more. The Bartlett collection is extensive and even though the yard is small they have managed to create special vignettes for each and every one.

You will simply be amazed at just how many plants can fit and thrive creatively in such a small landscape area. The birds and wildlife lucky enough to discover this garden must surely feel like they are in Utopia. A multitude of interesting specimens have been carefully arranged everywhere you look. Enjoy!

PLANTS of NOTE *Peniocereus greggii*

Agave titanopsis

Adenium species

Grusonia invicta

Cleistocactus aureispinus

Thelocactus rinconensis

Echinocereus rigidissimus

Fouquieria burragei

Blossfeldia minima

Echinopsis calochlora crest

Sansevieria pinguacula

Modadenium magnificum and other unusual *Monadeniums*

Coleocephalocereus aureus v. *longispinus* *Tephrocactus*

alexanderi

Ephorbia aeuginosa minor

Euphorbia tescorum (very rare form)



PIMA PRICKLY PARK
3500 W. River Road - Tucson, AZ 85741
www.PimaPricklyPark.org



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Pima Prickly Park became an official Pima County Park in 2011. It is a joint educational venture between TCSS and Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation. At the base of their office building is a 7 acre area where we are creating special planting areas and gardens for public enjoyment, education and wildlife habitat too. It is open to the public from sunrise to sunset every day and is free. The ramadas can be reserved.

To date we have enhanced an existing ring of Saguaros called “Saguarohege”, planted hundreds of specimens including many rescued native plants, created a Hummingbird Garden, Agave Garden, Cristate area, Ocotillo Forest, and started a Cholla Maze. On the far end of the park we have installed a large Hoop House where society volunteers are nurturing a multitude of potted plants that will someday find their home in the park.

We hope that you will take time to stop by the park, get a map and see the results of the countless time and efforts of our dedicated TCSS volunteers, we can always use more! There have been so many enhancements since our grand opening in 2012 and we’re hoping that the Cholla Maze just might be in bloom in time for the tour.

