

# Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

## August Meeting

August 3, 2006

Greg Starr

## "A 13 Day Journey Through Mexico"

### Part 1



Greg's program will cover his last trip to Mexico. He traveled with 7 other people for 13 days and covered over 5000 kilometers throughout much of northern, central, eastern, and western Mexico. During his presentation he will show pictures and add descriptions and comments along the way. The pictures will be of a variety of cactus, both large and small, many succulents and some surprising Agaves, with many in bloom. The pictures will all be fantastic! Brian Kemble, curator at the Ruth Bancroft Gardens in Walnut Creek, CA traveled along on this trip as he and Greg were looking to study as many Agave species taxonomically as they could while others were interested in various other types of plants.

Greg was initially interested in trees, shrubs, and perennials, but he had a peripheral interest in Agaves that continued to grow. Agaves as horticultural plants have always been his favorites for the past 23 years. More recently he has become more interested in Agaves taxonomically. "I've had a passing interest in cacti and other succulents for a number of years, and have just recently started to delve a little more deeply into these wonders of the world." He has written a monograph on the genus *Hesperaloe*, describing two new species and a new subspecies, and was a coauthor for the description of *Agave ovatifolia*, the Whale's Tongue Agave. Greg is also the owner of Starr Nursery, a Tucson based mail order nursery specializing in the families Agavaceae, Liliaceae, and Nolinaceae.

Please join us for a great opportunity to hear Greg's recent travel adventures throughout the succulent habitats of Mexico!

# Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

## September Meeting

September 7, 2006

Greg Starr

## "A 13 Day Journey Through Mexico"

### Part 2



Come and resume the trip we started in August. Greg will take us deeper into eastern and southern Mexico where we'll check out some newly described Agaves and various cool cacti and weird succulents. The climate down there should be warm and dry, and the roads dusty and bumpy so dress appropriately. There will be plenty of photo ops for the shutterbugs. So gas up the car and get ready for some travel time!

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# Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

## October Meeting

October 5, 2006 at 7 pm

Jon Weeks

### "*Salicornia*, The Sonoran Desert Succulent That Could"



Jon will open the eyes of succulent lovers and introduce a plant that manages to withstand almost anything. You must attend to get the real picture.

Nearly one third of the arable land on earth has a significant salinity problem. Not only does this reduce crop yields for a hungry planet, but the situation is most critical in the poorest countries which often experience poor harvests. The consequences of this are not only hunger but also include profound social and political consequences as hungry people migrate to other regions. From 1980 to 1992, Jon worked on the Halophyte Project at the Environmental Research Laboratory of the University of Arizona. There are approximately 400,000 species of plants in the world of which about 10,000 are believed to have some degree of salt tolerance. The objective of this research was to investigate as many as possible of the estimated 10,000 species of halophytes which occur mostly in coastal habitats worldwide to determine if any of the species possessed the features required to be a successful crop plant that could be irrigated with low quality brackish water or seawater. After reviewing several hundred species of halophytes, the Lab settled on a widespread western hemisphere halophyte, *Salicornia bigelovii*. This species occurs intermittently along the coastlines of the United States and Mexico as isolated ecotypes. These ecotypes have features which make them attractive candidates for a halophytic crop as well as numerous features which are barriers to becoming a crop plant. This research focused on condensing the required characteristics of a crop plant into a bred selection while simultaneously breeding out the characteristics which would prevent the type from being successful as a seawater irrigated crop. The research also included developing the farming techniques for a species which had never before been farmed. As is often the case in research, Jon started out with some ideas that appeared to make sense at the beginning but during the course of the work got an education from the plants which he claims are a lot smarter than he will ever be. The research also included traveling extensively throughout Mexico

Jon was born and raised in Stratford, Connecticut. He received a B.A. from Gettysburg College in 1971 and in 1975 started Landscape Cacti, a desert nursery devoted to growing cacti and agaves from seed for landscape use. In 1986 he received a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and worked as a research Scientist for the University from 1986 to 1992 while living along the coast of Sonora, Mexico. Jon collected halophytes and was farming them in Kino Bay at Puerto Penasco, Sonora. Since 1992 to the present Jon has operated Landscape Cacti where he grows landscape cacti and agaves. Be sure to join us for Jon's experience in growing landscape cacti and his talk on the *Salicornia*.

# Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

## November Meeting

November 2, 2006 at 7 pm

Bob Webb of Arid Lands Greenhouses

"Travels in Africa and Arabia IV: Euphorbias"



Mark Sitter next to a *Euphorbia horrida* ssp. *horrida* in South Africa and Toni Yocum entering a forest of *Euphorbia magnicapsula* near Lake Naivasha, Kenya. Photos taken by Bob Webb.

Bob Webb and Toni Yocum will open the eyes of Euphorbia lovers with their excellent views and photography. Bob will show the genus Euphorbia in various countries ranging from Yemen down to South Africa. Trees to tiny things.

Bob Webb has collected succulent plants for about 20 years. For his day job he is a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Tucson; however, he has worked as a plant ecologist in the southwestern United States and Baja California for nearly 30 years. He's been traveling to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa since the mid-1990s and has visited Yemen, Oman, Kenya, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana in search of succulent plants.

Please join us for our last presentation of 2006. We started in January 2006 with Bob's presentation on Aloes and we finish with his look at the remarkable genus Euphorbia. Don't miss this program from a really excellent speaker and someone who really knows, grows and loves these plants.