



# DESERT BREEZE

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

July 2012

July 5, 2012 at 7:00 PM

## “Travels in Africa and Arabia 8: The Hunt for Sansevieria in East Africa”

Presented by Bob Webb



*Sansevieria bhitatae*,  
“A home run awaits”

Traveling in East Africa is an interesting experience, to say the least. Most Americans seem to believe it is too dangerous to go there, but in our travels, we find it mostly to be filled with inconveniences, bribes, friendship, treachery, wild animals, and non-stop entertainment. Our recent trip, dedicated to hunting down species of *Sansevieria*, is representative of our travels in Africa and Arabia. We met three dedicated *Sansevieria* hunters with vastly different agendas, but all three are fascinated -- even consumed -- by this outstanding genus, which is far more than that Mother-in-Law's Tongue you see everywhere.

Taxonomically, the genus *Sansevieria* is a mess. This morphologically diverse genus spans the region from South Africa to southeast Asia, but the biodiversity hotspot is Kenya and Tanzania. We are working with Professor Len Newton of Kenyatta University in Nairobi to try and unravel the Gordian knot. We also are working with a molecular chemist to see if DNA can help solve some of the riddles this genus offers, but molecular data, while compelling, offers few answers and many more questions. Exciting new species are part of the norm with this genus as we travel into some of the most interesting parts of East Africa.

Bob has worked on land-use issues, landscape ecology and conservation concerns of the southwestern United States and Baja California for more than 35 years. For the past 17 years, he has worked with Mexican government

scientists on plant conservation issues in Baja California centering on cirio, cardon, and other charismatic species that are iconic to the peninsula. He has a Ph.D from the University of Arizona in Geosciences (1985) and has worked for the National Research Program of the U.S. Geological Survey for nearly 25 years.

Bob Webb has collected succulent plants for over 29 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 35 years. He's been traveling to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa since the mid-1990s and has visited Oman, Kenya, Socotra, Yemen and South Africa in search of succulent plants.

Bob has produced around 200 publications, including 12 books, with many more on the way. Several of these books are benchmark volumes on environmental change in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts. Bob Webb and Toni Yocum are owners of Arid Lands Greenhouses at 3560 W. Bilby Road Tucson AZ 85746 Phone: (520) 883-9404.

Bob's programs are always a must see for everyone. Please bring your friends and anyone interested in an inside look at these amazing plants that are seldom given the attention they deserve.

## We're looking for a new Education Outreach Chairperson

Are you interested in the education outreach aspect of the TCSS activities? Then we have an opportunity for you! John is running out of steam and it's time for some new ideas to fill out the TCSS education outreach efforts. The Education Outreach Chair doesn't do all of the education activities; they just function as a central point of contact and a coordinator. Also, we have scaled back our education activities particularly the Cactus Model workshop exercise to a “Teach the Teacher” approach wherein we provide the model kits and training support for the teachers so that they conduct the actual workshop exercise with their students. If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested please e-mail me at [funfest@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:funfest@tucsoncactus.org) or talk to me at the monthly meeting.

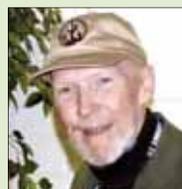
John Swarbrick  
Education Outreach Chair

## TCSS Program Presentation

August 2, 2012

“A Survey of the Genus *Mammillaria*”

Presented by **Scott McMahon, Cactaceae Collections Manager**  
Desert Botanical Garden



Larry Miller passed away on June 22, 2012. He was born in 1942 and received his MFA at the University of South Florida concentrating on sculpture and photography. Larry taught fine arts at the high school and college levels in Florida for many years before he and Angela moved to Tucson about six years ago. They became very active in TCSS helping wherever needed, including cactus rescues, sales, and Pima Prickly Park activities. They were awarded the President's Award last December. There will not be a memorial service in Tucson. Angela asked that friends who wish to give a memorial direct them to TCSS for Pima Prickly Park.



## President's Message

I have embarked on a new project. "The Cactus Capital Chatter" was the first newsletter produced by the then Tucson Cactus and Botanical Society. Our name officially changed in the mid 1990's to the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. There were 14 years of quarterly issues produced from 1965 to 1978. Each page is being scanned and every issue will be available on our website. These were the days of typed newsletters and black and

white photos. On occasion there were some color photos pasted into each copy of the newsletter. I thought that it would be appropriate to have our history and some very interesting stories and ideas preserved and available for everyone to read. I want to give you a taste of just two items that I think are interesting.

From Volume I 4th Quarter 1965 No. 4, Hugh Copenhaver, President wrote about "CONSERVATION". With an organization our size, field trips are getting harder and harder to plan in confirmation with the rules and regulations of the state of Arizona. Only through the cooperation of a few land owners have we been able to legally gather plants of the desert and take all we want to add to our collections.

I know that many of us have collected in the past with rather a dim view of boundaries and regulations, including myself. Let's all turn over a new leaf and live by the rules. I am sure we all know what they are. It really makes me feel rather bad when I hear some member say 'I found 50 of this or that all in one area and collected most of them.' Of course, if it's in an area where a rancher wants them removed or they will be destroyed because of new subdivisions, then

I think anything we remove could surely come under the heading of 'Conservation'."

About 59,000 plants have been legally rescued since 1999 which tells you how much we have learned and embraced conservation.

Pima Prickly Park is not the first garden TCSS has been involved with. In 1965 the Haag Memorial Cactus Garden was established at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The 1st issue of 1966 addresses this.

"The Tucson Cactus and Botanical Society created and sponsors a cactus garden in memory of its founder 'Cactus John Haag.' The Haag Memorial Cactus Garden overlooks the desert valley. This Garden is not ours. We gave it to the Museum on May 8 1965, for the enjoyment of all who visit there. Our Society as a whole will always be greatly interested in its future, and in materially advancing the goal of the Garden: constantly extending it."

We are similarly motivated but have a 15 year agreement with Pima County for planning and development of Pima Prickly Park. We hope we will also be able to provide a garden for the enjoyment of all who visit.

I hope to be able to scan 2 or 3 issues a week until all are on our website.

A final note:

**We are all saddened by the loss of Larry Miller. Larry along with his wife Angela were enthusiastic supporters of Pima Prickly Park. Our heart felt condolences go out to the Miller family.**

Dick Wiedhopf, President

## Cholla Rescue

by Jessie Byrd

The TCSS Rescue Crew got a good workout moving cacti from a future LA Fitness site to Pima Prickly Park. The crew met near Oracle Road and Hardy Road in Oro Valley on Saturday, June 23 early enough to still be in the shadow of Pusch Ridge. We dug mostly larger-sized chollas to test Joe's new cholla-hanging rack on the trailer. We also rescued *Opuntia engelmannii* (Prickly Pear), *Echinocereus engelmannii* (Hedgehog), *Mammillaria grahamii* (Pincushion) and *Jatropha cardiophylla* (Limberbush). The trailer filled up as the sun heated up.

Sunday morning, many of the same crew met at Pima Prickly Park to exercise our planting muscles on the new rescues. Three species of cholla are now planted in the future Cholla Forest Maze area. These species are *Cylindropuntia fulgida* (Chainfruit Cholla), *Cylindropuntia leptocaulis* (Christmas Cholla) and *Cylindropuntia versicolor* (Staghorn Cholla), including a couple of very interesting, green-colored individuals. Even though it was hot for the crew, the cactus love this time of year with increased temperatures and humidity, so our transplant success rate should be high! Thanks to everyone who participated for your sweaty work!



Cholla clothesline to transport them without breaking canes.



Planting one of the larger chollas in the Pima Prickly Park Cholla Forest.



Jessie Byrd compares a large barrel that was seen at the Rescue location.

# Growing in the Desert Series: *Thelocactus bicolor*: Again and Again and Again

by Mark Dimmitt

The majority of cactus species have distinct and rather short flowering seasons, usually less than a month per year. *Thelocactus bicolor* (glory of Texas, Texas pride, Figure 1) is a sterling exception. The three-inch wide brilliant pink-with-red-center flowers appear in response to watering, as often as every ten days or so throughout the hot season. In southern Arizona that's April through October. Each flower lasts two or three days. That adds up to a lot of bloom time.

The plants are quite attractive too, and there is considerable variation in body size and spine color and density (Figures 2, 3). Add to that the

variation in flower shade (Figures 4, 5) and one could easily fill a bench with a collection of different forms.

The solitary to sparsely-branched plants are small enough to fit several in a 12-inch pot, or 20 or more in a larger pot. If they're watered well after a couple of dry weeks, they will flower synchronously (Figure 6), often with three to five flowers per stem (Figures 1, 4).

Glory of Texas can be adapted to full sun in Tucson, in which case the stems will be compact with very dense spines. They are also fully winter hardy here.



Figure 1. *Thelocactus bicolor*, glory of Texas. This is the most common stem and spine form.



Figure 2. *Thelocactus bicolor*, a tall-stemmed form with long, bristly spines.



Figure 3. *Thelocactus bicolor*, a thick-stemmed form with comparatively few, stout spines.



Figure 4. *Thelocactus bicolor* with flowers of a lighter pink than average.



Figure 5. *Thelocactus bicolor* with large, dark flowers.



Figure 6. Several plants of *Thelocactus bicolor* in a community pot flowering simultaneously.

## June Pima Prickly Park Update

- Hoop House plant benches design completed and 12 benches are being constructed, each 4 ft. by 8 ft. surface and 20 inches off the ground. Construction is cement block bases and wood frames with a wire grid covering for the tops. Cost is \$32 each.
- The concrete bench design has been completed. Plans are to construct three of the 44 inch long, 18 inches high and 16 inches deep benches under the large ramada. They will be a light earth tone color, formed and poured in place. Cost is \$55 each.
- Three to five large saguaros to be relocated from a Pima County road widening project for the parking lot islands then smaller plants can move in.
- Entrance Garden and the Agave Garden designs are progressing. Ideas welcomed.
- The first forty chollas were planted in the Cholla Forest area of the park.
- A watering crew has been organized and regular watering schedules have been implemented for both propagation plants in the hoop house and newcomers planted in the park.
- Plans continue for the "Grand Opening" event for the park, Saturday, September 22, 2012 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Lots of events being planned. Ideas welcomed.
- You Can Help! Park Supporters are being encouraged to plant special cactus cuttings in one gallon containers, especially purple prickly pear, for eventual donation to the park. Please do not bring them until they are well established.
- Want to participate and help with park decisions? Please send an email to us (Park@TucsonCactus.org) to be added to our committee list to be notified of meetings, decisions to be made, work in progress, etc.

## TCSS BOARD

### Officers

**President:** Richard Wiedhopf [opuntia@comcast.net](mailto:opuntia@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** Vonn Watkins  
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### (Ending Dec. 31, 2013)

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Bill Holcombe (2013)

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**Cactus Rescue:** Chris Monrad/Joe Frannea

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

**Deadline for copy: Thursday, June 21, 2012**

### TCSS Web Page:

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

**Webmaster:** Keimpe Bronkhorst

**For additional information call: (520) 256-2447**

**Everyone is Welcome!**

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

### July Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with E, F, G, H, I, J,  
and K please bring your choice of refreshments to  
the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly  
appreciated and enjoyed!



## Cacti Rescued 290 Rescues Accomplished

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**

### July 2012

**Thursday, July 5, 2012 7:00pm**

Monthly Meeting, "Travels in Africa and Arabia 8: The Hunt for  
Sansevieria in East Africa" presented by Bob Web

**Tuesday, July 10, 2012 7:00pm - 9:00pm**

Board meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy

## Acknowledgement of Contributions

The names below represent the Tucson Cactus & Succulent  
Society members and friends whose donations helped make  
this year a success. We extend our sincere thanks for your support.

### General Fund

Jane & Chris Harris

### Florilegium Program

Linda & Perry Burbach • Jan Bell

### Pima Prickly Park

Lorenzo Zavala

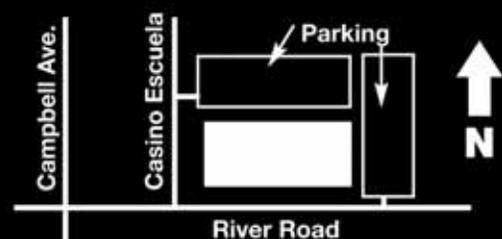
### In Memory of Larry Miller

Pat & Dick Wiedhopf • Perry & Lisa Everett

## Free Plants

**A selection of Ferocactus pilosus  
and Ferocactus latispinus.**

**Meetings are held on the first  
Thursday of each month.**



**Junior League of Tucson, Kiva Bldg.  
2099 E. River Road**