



# DESERT BREEZE

NEWSLETTER OF THE TUCSON CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

## MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM BUILDING A BETTER SOIL

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### PRESENTED BY: MARCUS WHITE

Healthy, thriving, long-lived cacti and succulents owe much of their success to where they place their feet. You can provide water, nutrients, light, and the right temperatures, but if your plant's roots sit in poor soil, it won't flourish.

After forty years of growing everything from Easter lilies, poinsettias, and pansies to ironwoods, mesquites, and brittlebush—and now, cacti and succulents—I might fall into the category some people would call an expert. But I'll never claim to be an expert in anything, especially when it comes to growing plants. As any seasoned grower knows, the moment you say, 'You can't grow that here,' or 'That method won't work,' someone will inevitably prove you wrong.

Still, one truth remains constant: understanding soils—or container mediums—is the foundation of success with plants."

In tonight's presentation, we'll be talking about soil—what it is, what goes into a good container mix, and some basic, successful blending strategies. My hope is that we'll have an active, in-house discussion about soil, and that each of us walks away with a clearer understanding of growing mediums—maybe even a new idea or insight that helps us improve the health of the plants we love."



## IMPORTANT

### Temporary Meeting Site

Our monthly August meeting will be held at the Murphey Gallery at St. Philip's in the Hills Church, 4440 North Campbell. Located at the northeast corner of River and Campbell, it's just a stone's throw from our former meeting space at the Junior League.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday August 7<sup>th</sup>  
at 7:00PM

## MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Please share and socialize with your fellow members at our monthly meetings by bringing some type of finger food for the refreshment table. For the **AUGUST MEETING** we are asking members whose last names begin with **"H" through "N"** to bring something that would serve 10-12 people.

**INTERESTED IN THIS  
PROGRAM?**

For more information on attending this program  
(in person or through zoom) please refer to pages 23-24.

# MEET THE PRESENTER

## MEET MARCUS – HORTICULTURIST & GROWER

I started my adventures with plants as a kid growing up on the west side of Albuquerque where the upper Chihuahuan Desert meets the Rio Grande river. Roaming the sand hills of the desert and the banks of the river opened my eyes to the natural world and sparked my interests in all things wild. I migrated south to Study Horticulture at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. There I received a bachelor's degree in Horticulture (1987) then decided to hang around and get my Master's Degree in Horticulture (1990). In graduate school, I worked with native plants, soil water relations and water stress physiology. This was pure luck; I got to work with the plants I loved at a university where most of my colleagues spent their time with peppers, pine trees and onions. An early student and promoter of native and desert-adapted plant use in landscaping (way before it became cool) enforced my passion of desert plants that began as a kid chasing lizards on Albuquerque's west mesa.

My career in horticulture started in southern New Mexico working in greenhouse production of flowering seasonal plants and nursery woody ornamentals. I moved to Tucson in 1992 and involved myself in many aspects of the trade including: education, sales, landscape design, construction, maintenance, and nursery production. My favorite, and where I have spent most my time in the plant world, is production. Nothing beats sowing a seed and watching it grow. Currently, I am the owner of two plant-related businesses, Casa Blanca Horticultural Services and Desert Natives, both providing me with enough plant-related challenges to last two life times. I will be sharing with you my experiences in production horticulture and how I have used my skills to grow quality succulents and cacti. My hope is that we all will leave with at least one piece of information that helps us have more success with the plants we love.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Guess what? I have been fascinated by cacti and succulents for the last 75 years. I was looking at my plants in the yard and the greenhouses and was overtaken by their beauty, resilience, strength and sheer determination to survive. Except for the beauty, they're me. I am excited about all the things we are doing and the members that are making them happen.

**August 17** is our annual Blooming Barrel Sale. One of our early rescue leaders coined the phrase and what a great idea it is to have an opportunity to purchase a barrel by flower color! Rescue crew members have made an effort to legally collect a great selection of outstanding *Ferocactus wislizeni*. We have added *Yucca Sp*, *Mammillaria grahamii*, a few outstanding Saguaros and hundreds of special cacti and succulents from a member's nursery gift.



**September 21** is the Good Time Silent Auction. It is a combination of free stuff, Silent Auction Plants, pre-priced plants, perhaps rescued plants and most important ICE CREAM and all the TOPPINGS. This is your chance to get rid of plants and garden related items in the "free stuff" area. Members bring 1 or more quality plant or item for the silent auctions and other nice plants for the sale. As I have always stated, this is an opportunity to get rid of all that "old stuff" so you can acquire new "old stuff". This is really the most fun event of the year. We have been doing this Silent Auction event for more than 50 years.

A **65<sup>th</sup> TCSS Birthday** gathering is being planned at Pima Prickly Park for **November 9** (the Society started on November 10, 1960). Birthday cake and more will be part of the activities.

We are looking forward to hosting the Cactus and Succulent Society of America convention in 2027. Information on how you can participate is on our website.

All these activities have one thing in common-**YOU. YOU** make the difference, **YOU** make things happen, **YOU** are the engine that drives the train. When **YOU** have the opportunity to participate, take advantage and get involved.

I promise that **YOU** will be as excited as I am about the wonderful world of cacti and succulents.

Thank you for all your support,

Dick Wiedhopf, President  
Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society, Inc.



# REMEMBERING DAN BACH

## Remembrances of Tucson's Cactus and Succulent Godfather

By: Greg Starr

I first graduated from the University of Arizona with a BS in Horticulture in the winter of 1979, worked in the landscape industry for one summer and quickly went back to college in pursuit of an MS in Botany. While there, I met Ron Gass, then owner of Mountain States Wholesale Nursery in Phoenix and a contemporary of the esteemed Dan Bach. You are going to hear words of praise that Dan never sought but they fit him, his life, and his influence. While studying for my MS degree, I ventured to Bach's Cactus Nursery and bought a few plants where I met, Jana Sweets working in the retail section. Jana would go on to have her own nursery called Sticky Situation. She eventually closed up shop a couple years back, but she was one of the many nursery owners who got their feet wet working for Dan.

I opened my small nursery in July 1985 focusing on "leafy" plants, leaving the growing of cacti and succulents to those well-established businesses, of which Bach's Cactus Nursery was one of the most important and influential. Don't get me wrong, I liked cactus and other succulents enough to try starting a collection, but my passion was to find and grow leafy plants not in the nursery trade. It was this passion that led me to have a close association with Ron Gass; through Ron, I was able to meet and get to know Dan. Although I never worked at Bach's, I started growing cacti and succulents in my nursery in the mid-1990's, and I would visit Dan more frequently where he would impart tidbits of wisdom along with an avalanche of jokes. I took what I could remember, jokes notwithstanding, and tried to apply it to my little operation.

Many nursery owners in Tucson cut their teeth working for Dan, and although I do not have a timeline, I have offered up their names the best I could. If Dan were a succulent plant, I would have pegged him as an *Adansonia digitata*, or Baobab Tree. He sometimes presented a rough exterior to those who did not know him well, but he was actually soft and spongy on the inside. His roots ran deep in Tucson, and his branches were widespread throughout the cactus and succulent industry touching growers and retailers from coast to coast and fostering many in the industry in Tucson as witnessed by the following: Gene Joseph, originator of Plants for the Southwest worked at the nursery and worked for Dan at the Pecan Farm; Roger Salzgeber started at Bach's and went on to open Pima Valley Greenhouses and broker cacti and succulents, trucking them from coast to coast; Jana Sweets started at Bach's and eventually opened up Sticky Situation finally retiring a couple years ago; Miles Anderson may be the longest tenured employee at Bach's, having worked there for about 13 years, before striking out to start up Miles 2 Go Nursery, which is still in operation today; Daniel Tassone worked at Bach's for 11 years before snagging some investors to open up Tucson Cactus and Koi nursery in Tucson; Kim Joyiens ventured out on his own before teaming up with Jana Sweets at Sticky Situation; Jason Rochester also worked at Bach's and continued Plantas del Sol with Marilyn Bernzott, another Bach's alum, after the passing of John and Dorothy Pasek; finally, Pete Kadrich met his future wife while both worked at Bach's, and Pete went on to open Sonoran Desert Nursery which operated for many years before Pete retired, closing the nursery.

As I said earlier, Dan may have presented a rough exterior at times, but inside he was a big softie and was quick to help out a fellow cactiphile. My friend Tristan Davis relayed a story about the close relationship Dan had with James Pickering who lived in Tucson and specialized in Brazilian rarities – a group of plants that Tristan is passionate about to this day. By the time Tristan met James, he was fairly old and could not take care of his extensive collection. Dan let James keep his entire Brazilian collection at Bach's. Tristan would frequently pick up James and the two of them would drive to Bach's to spend time with James' plants at the nursery. As Dan and Tristan got to know each other, Dan found out that Tristan's sister loved orchids and took him to where he was growing a really cool one that he picked out for Tristan to send to his sister. She still has the plant to this day.



Every time I visited Dan, he talked about plants, regaled me with jokes, and then sought jokes from me. I was quick to tell him that he should let me tell my jokes first, otherwise I would forget the punch line! His generosity was legendary; I would pick up some small plants to grow at my nursery, and Dan would always find a plant that he would send home with me for my wife. He would say, "Carol has to have one of these" or "Carol will like this one". As I said, I would leave with plants, a head full of jokes jumbled together, and tidbits of information on growing cacti and succulents. Much of what I gleaned from Dan ended up in my book titled Cool Cacti and Succulents for Hot Gardens, and when he found out about the book, Dan ordered a case to give away to folks even though he was no longer running the nursery. I was honored and a bit self-conscious when he called because he gushed about my book and influence in the community. I would immediately reply that he deserves all the accolades because he was Tucson's Cactus and Succulent Godfather. However, Dan would have none of that, he simply saw himself as doing what he loved to do. Dan, from one cactus crazy to another, thank you for your friendship, your generosity, and your love of plants; you will be missed immensely!



**DAN BACH**  
1944-2025



# HELLO MY NAME IS...

Here in Tucson, we're proud of our unique contributions to the world of cacti, and one of our shining stars is a special cultivar of our native *Ferocactus wislizeni*, the fishhook barrel cactus. Its existence is a testament to keen observation, dedicated cultivation, and a passion for preserving our unique desert flora.

The story begins with Chris Monrad, a long-standing member of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS). In the early to mid-2000s, while participating in the vital TCSS Cactus Rescue Program – an initiative that saves native cacti from areas slated for development – Chris made a remarkable discovery. Among the typical *Ferocactus wislizeni* specimens with their characteristic grayish-red spines, he found a few rare individuals exhibiting striking yellow spines and yellow flowers.

Recognizing the beauty and uniqueness of these plants, Chris carefully cross-bred them, controlling pollination to ensure the desired yellowish traits were passed down. The success of his efforts led to the propagation of thousands of cultivar seedlings, creating a truly distinctive plant.





We had the distinct pleasure of sharing this local treasure with the broader cactus and succulent community in 2009, when Tucson hosted the Biannual Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) Convention. As a special gift, every attendee received a potted yellow spined fishhook seedling. It was a proud moment for our society and a wonderful way to showcase the unique flora of our region.

With the 2027 CSSA convention in mind the latest generation of cultivar are being grown at Bach's and B & B Cactus for the next giveaway. This generation maintains the yellow spine color even longer as the plants age.



With that in mind, we've come to the question, what common name should apply to this cultivar? Some suggestions are included below, please share your ideas at: [newsletter@tucsoncactus.org](mailto:newsletter@tucsoncactus.org)

Gee Wiz  
TucSun barrel  
mellow yellow  
butter barrel  
butterball barrel  
sunny  
high noon  
blonde barrel  
El amarillo



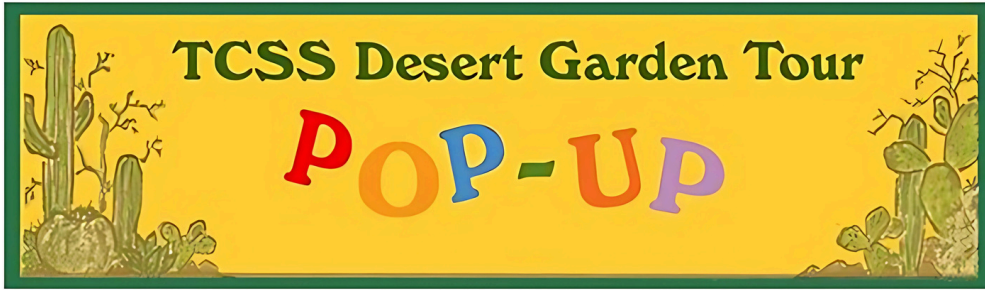
# K-12 EDUCATION

**The K-12 Education Outreach:** We were invited to present classes at three summer camps in July. Two of the classes were through SARSEF, and held at Tohono Chul Park. The other camp was sponsored by Marshall Elementary School. TUSD's school year starts on August 4th and we're beginning to receive requests for upcoming STEM Nights.

On Saturday, August 23rd, we'll join community organizations for a Celebration of All Things S-cuk Son/Tucson - The 250+ Anniversary. Everyone is invited to attend this family-fun event "honoring over 4,000 years of history, heritage and culture in Tucson and Pima County." Join us from 6:00-10:00 downtown at Presidio San Agustin del Tucson.



# GARDEN TOURS



If you would like to share what you've created in your desert garden with TCSS members please consider being on a TCSS Desert Garden Pop-Up Tour. These tours are usually held on Saturday mornings for about 4 hours. Our Garden Tour Committee will help arrange all of the planning and publicity so that members can take a leisurely tour of your landscape. The tour date is up to you, but we do need at least 4 weeks lead time in order to take photos and get all of the details into our monthly newsletter.

If you would like to consider having your garden on tour, please fill out the application on our website by clicking on this link [popup\\_tour\\_application.pdf](#)

**QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

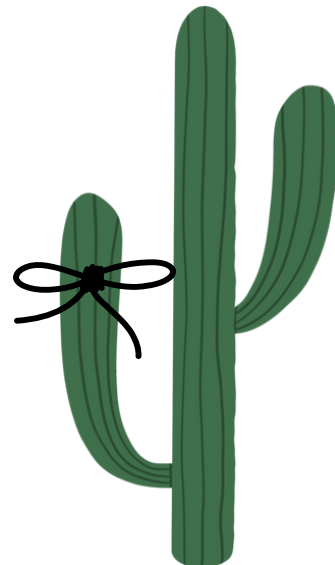


GARDEN TOURS  
[GARDENTOURS@TUCSONCACTUS.ORG](mailto:GARDENTOURS@TUCSONCACTUS.ORG)



A happy bee pollinating a *Cochemiea* (*Mammillaria*) *grahamii*  
Photo By: Brian Vandervoet

## DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR BEST PLANT PICTURES!





# BLOOMING BARREL SALE

DATE: AUG 17

TIME: 8:00AM (SALE STARTS)

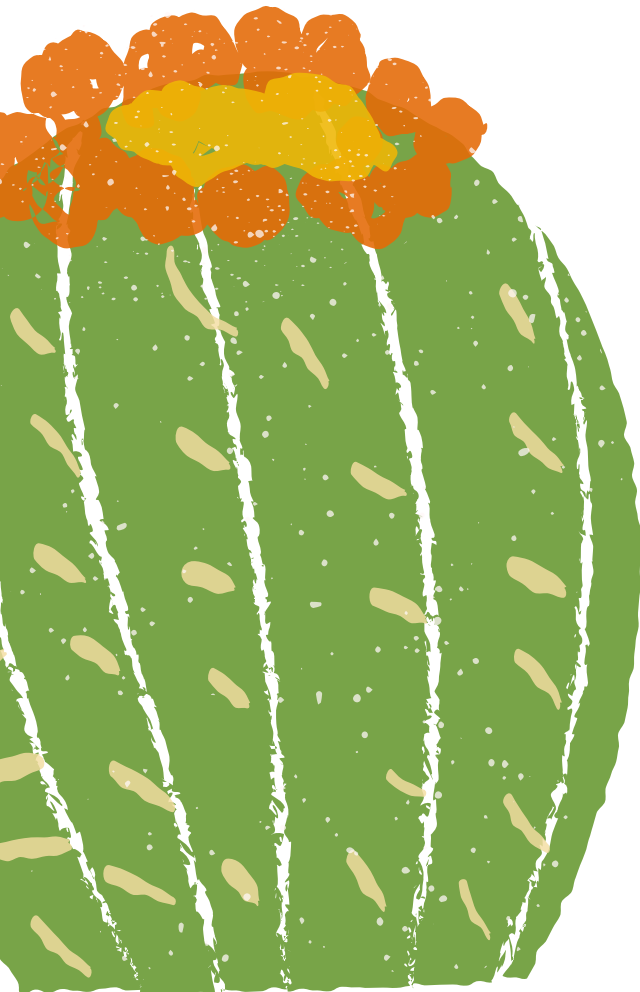
(SALE OPENS [at] 7:00AM FOR CUSTOMERS TO RECEIVE THEIR BUYER NUMBER)



PLEASE SCAN FOR INFORMATION

LOCATION: 4342 N. 4TH AVE.

(BETWEEN WETMORE AND LIMBERLOST)



- MORE THAN 110 BARREL CACTUS  
(FEROCACTUS WISLIZENI)
- 15 FLATS OF COCHEMIEA (MAMMILLARIA) GRAHAMII
- 36 YUCCAS
- 18 HEDGE HOGS (ECHINOCEREUS SP)
- A FEW VERY NICE SAGUAROS
- 100S OF SEED GROWN CACTI AND SUCCULENTS  
FROM 2" TO 10" CONTAINERS

## AND MORE

- OTHER CACTI AND SUCCULENTS
- SEVERAL VENDORS SELLING PLANTS, POTS ETC. WILL BE PRESENT

ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED FOR SALES AND LOADING OF PLANTS.  
SALE ENDS WHEN RESCUED PLANTS ARE GONE.

COME EARLY FOR BEST SELECTIONS!



# CSSA CONVENTION 1995

## "A TASTE OF THE SONORAN DESERT AND A LOT MORE" FEATURED IN THE DESERT BREEZE 1995

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BY: DICK WIEDHOPF (PRESIDENT: TUCSON CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY)

Over 4 years ago Chuck Hanson, Board member of CSSA and then President of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS) put in place the plans that would make this a memorable Convention. This will be known as the Convention of 1st's. Chuck was convinced that a theme was necessary to tie attendees to the locality. We all embraced the ethnobotany of the Sonoran Desert as a great idea to mold this Convention around. After approval at the San Antonio Convention in '91, we went to work on development for Tucson'95. Many of you saw our poster at San Francisco in '93 as the invitation to the Sonoran Desert and activities as the Saguaro Fruit Harvest. Over the last two years the planning process was almost consuming. The TCSS was dedicated to making this the biggest and best Convention ever. Every member contributed and this was a team effort. As I said many times at the Convention the word team isn't spelled with an "i". This was the first Convention to have special pre and post tours available to registrants. Both tours were sold out and the participants had a wonderful experience. This was the first Convention to use barcodes for the plant sales. The Host Convention Coordinator convinced the CSSA to purchase two barcode reading cash registers. The TCSS provided the barcode labels to all plant vendors several weeks before the start of the Convention. This type of labeling made sales easy for the vendors and the buyers. This was a good investment in technology. This was the first Convention to have a real handbook. It contained both local and CSSA information, biographies of all the speakers, ads from local and national businesses, and a lot more. It was a TCSS concept that was put together by local society members. There are still a few copies available. This was the first Convention to have over 600 registrants. This is the goal that all future Conventions will shoot for. Fortunately, the Doubletree Hotel and its staff were well prepared to easily accommodate all activities of the attendees. Especially for meetings and food service. They were great. This was the first Convention to have special recipes that took advantage of cacti, succulents and other native plants. The Chef of the Doubletree introduced his recipes prior to dinner and this was a real treat for everyone. At our farewell banquet the caterer for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum used the southwest influence in all their recipes. This was the first Convention to be opened with a special Convention gavel, made from native mesquite, copper and turquoise, and presented to the Convention as a gift from the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. At the closing ceremony the gavel was passed to the San Diego Society who will use it for the next Convention. This new tradition will continue.

This was the first Convention to raise \$12,000+ for the research fund at the rare plant auction. This was the first Convention to have an author book signing Party. Thirteen authors were available to autograph their books and the book vendors graciously stayed open so that many of us could purchase books to be autographed. This was an extraordinary experience for many of the attendees. This was the first Convention to introduce the World Wide Web, Cacti, etc. and the whole computer Internet experience. Live and in living color from KEW to Huntington and a lot more. The interest in computer communication between members, affiliates and the CSSA was enthusiastically endorsed. This was the first Convention to take attendees to a live ethnobotanical experience. Tohono O'odham (native Americans) provided an opportunity for a limited number of conventioners to participate in the Saguaro Fruit Harvest. No one knows how much longer this ancient tradition will continue. How fortunate it was that the peak harvest time coincided with the Convention. This was the Convention of firsts but it also had all the traditional Convention activities and especially quality speakers of local, national and international prominence. There was a great selection of new and used books and the plant vendors made Tucson, 'THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT CAPITAL OF THE WORLD' (for at least a week). Most of all, The Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society wants to thank all who attended. You were wonderful guests, appreciative of our effort, and we enjoyed every minute as your hosts. Finally, I want to publicly thank all the members of the Tucson Society for their dedicated efforts to this Convention.

## **Great Job!!**

## **FREE CSSA PRESENTATIONS**

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) organizes monthly webinars featuring cactus and succulent experts from around the world. These webinars usually take place on the third Saturday of the month at 10 AM Pacific Time.

Past webinars can be viewed here: [CLICK HERE](#)

Click on any webinar to find a link to be added to the mailing list.

Upcoming webinars:

- August: Ricardo Ramirez – rare Mexican cacti in habitat
- September: Barbara Goettsch – TBD (likely related to conservation)
- October: Dave Ferguson – TBD (likely related to prickly pears)
- November: Wendy Hodgson – Agave

# TCSS DIRECTORY

## TCSS OFFICERS

Terms expire December 31, 2026

<b>PRESIDENT:</b> Dick Wiedhopf	• <a href="mailto:president@Tucsoncactus.org">president@Tucsoncactus.org</a>
<b>VICE PRESIDENT:</b> Vonn Watkins	• <a href="mailto:vp@Tucsoncactus.org">vp@Tucsoncactus.org</a>
<b>SECRETARY:</b> Barbara Watts	• <a href="mailto:secretary@Tucsoncactus.org">secretary@Tucsoncactus.org</a>
<b>TREASURER:</b>	• <a href="mailto:treasurer@Tucsoncactus.org">treasurer@Tucsoncactus.org</a>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terms expire December 31 of year indicated

RAY FISHER (2027)	DONNA ELLIS (2026)	BRIAN VANDERVOET (2025)
RANDY HELLWIG (2027)	KRIS THOMPSON (2026)	BRAD HAECKEL (2025)
AMY PEARSE (2027)	EDIE CAMPBELL (2026)	JOEL FONTAINE (2025)
CLARKE STEPHENS (2027)	JULIE SHULICK (2026)	STEVE WATTS (2025)
CSSA AFFILIATE REP: MICHIEL PILLET (2025)		



*Echinopsis Hybrid*  
Photo By: Dick Wiedhopf



*Echinopsis Hybrid*  
Photo By: Dick Wiedhopf



# PROGRAM CONTACTS

**Cactus Rescue:** Donna Ellis & Steve Watts • cactus@tucsoncactus.org

**Urban Rescues:** Julie Shulick • desertrat@shulick.com

**Education:** Kris Thompson • education@tucsoncactus.org

**Free Plants:** Mark Stubbs • plants@tucsoncactus.org

**Florilegium:** Joyce Peters • art@tucsoncactus.org

**Garden Tours:** Patsy Frannea • tours@tucsoncactus.org

**Librarian:** Brad Haeckel • librarian@tucsoncactus.org

**Prickly Park:** Linda Heisley • park@tucsoncactus.org

**Programs:** Vonn Watkins • programs@tucsoncactus.org

**Publicity:** Patrick Cavanaugh • publicity@tucsoncactus.org

**Refreshments:** Patsy Frannea • refreshments@tucsoncactus.org

**Technology:** technology@tucsoncactus.org

**Research:** Doug Rowsell • research@tucsoncactus.org

**Field Trips/Tours:** Open

**Vendor Coordinator:** Dale Johnson • vendors@tucsoncactus.org

**Plant Sales:** Open

**Field Guide Sales:** Susan Durham & John Durham • books@tucsoncactus.org

**Conservation:** Michiel Pillet • conservation@tucsoncactus.org

**Newsletter Layout Editor:** Cathy Cabezas • newsletter@tucsoncactus.org

**Newsletter Reviewers:** Thomas Staudt, Maria Voris & Jon Oravec •  
newsletter@tucsoncactus.org

**Webmaster:** Julie Schulick • webmaster@tucsoncactus.org

**Deadline for newsletters articles or photos:** Third Thursday of the Month

TCSS Web Page: [www.tucsoncactus.org](http://www.tucsoncactus.org)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS 2025

DONATIONS AS OF JULY  
25<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

PAMELA BIRD & MAT FARMER

KELLY & DAMIAN MCFARLAND

ESTABLISHING A TCSS BUILDING FUND  
TUCSON STREET ROD ASSOCIATION

IN MEMORY OF DAN BACH  
RICHARD & PATRICIA WIEDHOPF

IN MEMORY OF ED BARTLETT  
RICHARD & PATRICIA WIEDHOPF



*Ferocactus Pottsii*

Photo By: Dick Wiedhopf

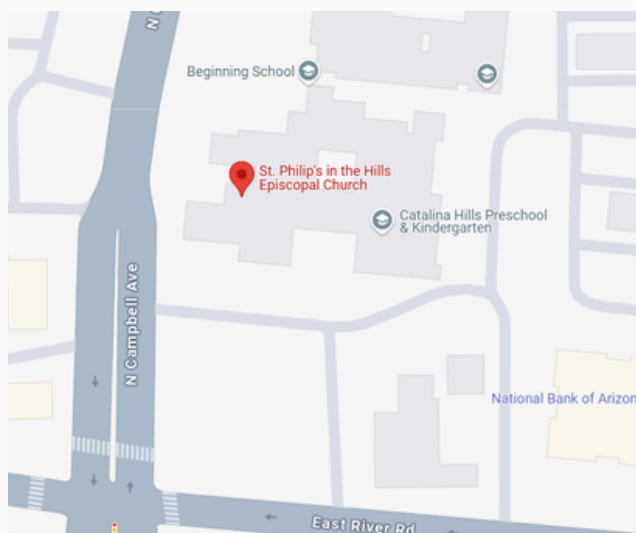
# AUGUST

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Monthly Meeting 7:00pm	8	9
10	11	12 Board Meeting 7:00pm	13	14	15	16
17 Blooming Barrel Sale 8:00am	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	27	28	29	30	31

## MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM INFORMATION

### LOCATION



### FRIENDLY REMINDERS

- If you are not feeling well, **PLEASE** stay home and join us on Zoom.
- Plant Giveaways (only in person, not shown on Zoom).
- Refreshments provided by TCSS Volunteers
- Free Plants offered by TCSS

### ZOOM

[Click Here](#) or scan to join the Meeting



### BOARD MEETING

[Click Here](#) or scan to join the Meeting



Having trouble logging on?  
[Click Here](#) for some helpful tips



# MEETING LOCATION

## Temporary Meeting Site

Our monthly July meeting will be held at the Murphey Gallery at St. Philip's in the Hills Church, 4440 North Campbell. Located at the northeast corner of River and Campbell, it's just a stone's throw from our former meeting space at the Junior League.

The property can be accessed from westbound River Road by turning onto Camino Escuela or the next driveway before the light at Campbell. Watch for St. Philip's signs.

Going north on Campbell, take an immediate right onto the property after you go through the intersection and the road narrows.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM



Reminder

## MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Please share and socialize with your fellow members at our monthly meetings by bringing some type of finger food for the refreshment table. For the **AUGUST MEETING** we are asking members whose last names begin with "**H**" through "**N**" to bring something that would serve 10-12 people.