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MAY SPEAKER
Brazil: The Rio Grande do Sul
Featuring: **Woody Minnich**
When: Sunday, May 23rd, 2 pm
Where: Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

Woody Minnich returns to the CACSS meeting this month to present his newest program, "Brazil: The Rio Grande do Sul." Internationally known throughout the cactus and succulent world, Woody is an interesting and informative speaker who never lets his audience down.

You will not want to miss his newest travelogue through an area not well known to US collectors. Despite being home to the world’s largest river and rain forest, Brazil has some of the most interesting and unusual succulents you will find anywhere.

The following information about Woody is quoted from the newsletter of the Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society:

“Woody, as he is commonly known, has been a cactus hobbyist for some 40 years and is well known for his participation in many of the cactus and succulent clubs. He is also known for his extensive field work primarily studying the cactus family. He has traveled throughout the US, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Africa, Yemen and Socotra. His trips have afforded him the ability to gain extensive knowledge of the cactus family as well as many other succulent genera.

Woody is also known for his trip presentations, photography, and his entertaining commentary. He is a recognized international speaker and has spoken at plant conventions all over the US as well as in England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and Mexico.”

Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society
Plant-of-the-Month Selection - a.k.a. Mini Show
Any cactus or succulent beginning with D, E, or R
or any plant you think looks great and want to show off.

ON THE COVER
An amazing floral display west of Tucson. The large cholla in the foreground is a natural hybrid of *Cylindropuntia spinosior* x *versicolor,* a common occurrence where their habitat overlaps in the Tucson area.

Photo taken May 2010 © Michael Newberry
Hi everyone, ... I hope all of you are enjoying your wonderful plants as much as I am enjoying mine. I started collecting many, many years ago on Long Island, in New York State. I was in the music business then, and would travel to different cities, often finding a plant shop with a few goodies to bring back with me. I quickly had to build a small, heated greenhouse to keep my growing collection in. I used to marvel at the idea that all these plants were native to different parts of the world, but were growing happily (for the most part) in my little “community”. I now have a little larger community, maybe four thousand plants in containers. I think one of the keys to being successful with so many plants (besides some basic knowledge of how and when they grow and rest) is observation; spending time with them. I start each morning having coffee outside and checking out the various areas where I have them. I end each day doing the same thing but with a Chai tea latte. If I see any bugs, I take care of it immediately, but otherwise I make mental notes of what needs pruning, repotting, etc., and actually do it when I have the time. Sometimes I just look at them and watch them grow. For me it is a very relaxing way to begin and end the day, kind of therapeutic - I also don't miss any flowers that way! Many of my plants are growing outside of my greenhouse and I always remind myself how fortunate we are here in Phoenix to be able to do that. Now about the heat that's coming, ...... be sure to enjoy the cooler nights and mornings while they're here!!

See you there ... Steve

From the editor ...

This is my last issue as editor of the Central Spine. A huge thank you to all who contributed articles over the last two years including John Alcock, Peter Breslin, Robert and Cheryl Brown, R.P. Brown, Monte Crawford, Tim Cullison, Doug Dawson, Jim Elliott, Cliff Fielding, Laurence Garvie, Tom Gatz, Chris Ginkel, Celeste Gornick, Sue Hakala, Lin Leivian, Michael Newberry, Steve Plath, Paul Schueneman, Bob Torrest, Susan Tyrrel, Tom Walters - hopefully I have not forgotten anyone. Also, thank you to all who have sent photos. I would also like to thank the previous editor Cynthia Robinson for her help in getting me started and Paul Schueneman for helping as the assistant editor. It has been an amazing experience and I now have a greater appreciation for the work involved in putting together even the simplest publication. I wish all the best to future editors and encourage CACSS members to continue to send in contributions (but not to me).

Laurence Garvie
That is a bumper sticker greeting you will find in All About Saguaros, the title of a fairly new Arizona Highways book by Leo W. Banks published in 2008 and available in the Desert Botanical Garden gift shop. I’m always looking for facts and analogies to share with visitors on my Sunday morning docent tours at the Garden and I found a bunch of them in this little book packed with beautiful photos and information. Here is just a sampling:

- Human beings lived in Arizona before saguaros did. Saguaros only colonized our warming landscape about 10,000 years ago.
- Sagaro roots extend out to a distance about equal to the height of the plant and, in some cases, two times beyond.
- Saguaros can split from too much water and can literally explode if directly hit by lightning.
- A month after the first summer rains, the diameter of the saguaro can increase by 50 percent.
- Spines on a young saguaro are thicker than on mature cactus and keep it as much as 70 percent in the shade.
- Many saguaros start “thinking” about reproduction at about the age that most humans start to think about retirement (50-60 years old).
- Sagaro flowers have more stamens (the yellow male filaments with pollen) than any other desert cactus flower.
- Sagaro flowers produce nectar in two waves; the first peaks about 10 pm to attract nectar-feeding bats, if any are within its range. After dropping off by midnight, it picks up again just before dawn to attract insects and birds. The efficient bees usually remove all of the remaining pollen by 10 am.
- For a saguaro forest to maintain a consistent population size over time, on average only one of the millions of seeds produced by each saguaro in its lifetime will need to survive to maturity.
- A saguaro seed will last only a few months in the soil bank (mesquite seeds, in comparison, survive for years).
- In the cooler parts of their range, dark rocks that hold heat actually provide better shelter for seedling saguaros than do desert trees.
- Sagaro cavities are the only known nesting habitat of the desert race of the purple martin, a species of swallow.
- Urban saguaros become pockmarked with cavities when woodpeckers are forced to re-nest over and over again due to their cavities being usurped by the aggressive European starling. Too many cavities can allow frost to invade and significantly damage the center of the stem.
- Fire carried by contiguous stands of non-native buffelgrass poses the greatest threat to the future of our saguaro forests.

The author also mentions that the tallest species of cactus in the world may not be the saguaro (53 feet) nor the cardon (65 feet) but is possibly the up to 82-foot tall *Pachycereus grandis*, a close relative of the cardon found in central Mexico. However, several columnar cactus authorities have questioned whether *P. grandis* actually gets this tall, so I will leave it out of my tour unless it is confirmed.

And the next time my wife Barbara asks me if I’m asleep, I’ll reply “No I’m just Sonoran.”

Thanks to Dr. Joe McAuliffe, Judi Irons, Matt Johnson and Tina Wilson for reviewing earlier drafts of this article.

Photo Caption: In addition to pollinating saguaro flowers, the white-winged dove also does most of the saguaro seed-spreading work. Photo by Javan Larson

*Reprinted with permission from The Gatherings, the volunteer newsletter of the Desert Botanical Garden.*
MEMBERS’ PHOTOS

Top Left: Tacinga (syn. Opuntia) palmadora Photo © Scott McMahon. Top Right: Oreocereus hendriksenianus Photo © Denis Menard
Bottom: Opuntia megasperma v. orientalis Photo © Scott McMahon.
Top: *Echinopsis* hybrid, Southern Belle. Photo © Carol Clapp. Bottom Left: *Cleistocactus* sp. Photo © Laurence Garvie
Bottom Right: *Echinocereus rigidissimus* Photo © Laurence Garvie
I am frequently asked for the names of good sources of cactus and succulents. Listed below are some excellent year round places to purchase cactus and succulents. You might also want to consider the Desert Botanical Garden Spring & Fall Sale, the CACSS Show and Sale, or the sale put on by CACSS member Bob Torrest. Please contact Bob directly for information on his sale.

This list is by no means complete and my apologies to anyone not included. My goal is to merely list some great sources of cactus and succulents. Please feel free to add to this list in future newsletters.

Arizona Cactus Sales
1619 S. Arizona Ave
Chandler, AZ 85286
(480) 963-1061
www.arizonacactussales.com

Bach's Cactus Nursery Inc.
8602 N. Thornydale Rd
Tucson, AZ 85742-9658
(520) 744-3333

B & B Cactus Farm
11550 E. Speedway
Tucson AZ 85748
(520) 721-4687

Baker International Nursery Inc.
3414 N. 40th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85018
(602) 955-4500
www.bakernurseryaz.com

Cold Hardy Cactus
www.coldhardycactus.com

Desert Botanical Garden Gift Shop
1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix, AZ 85008
(480) 481-8113

Intermountain Cactus
1478 North 750 E
Kaysville, UT 84037
(801) 546 2006
www.intermountaincactus.com

Miles' To Go
P.O. Box 6 - Cortaro, AZ 85652
(520) 682-7272
www.miles2go.com

Plantasia Cactus Gardens
867 Filer Ave W
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301
(208) 734-7959
www.plantasiacactusgardens.com

Plants for the Southwest
50 E. Blacklidge
Tucson, Arizona 85705
(520) 628-8773
www.lithops.net

Other sources
www.ebay.com

Home Depot & Lowes, Selection varies by location.
I have found many uncommon plants at their stores.

Last but not least:
CACSS meetings. Come to a meeting and see the great plants you are missing out on.
A visit to a small cactus
Tim Cullison

Recently, my wife and I visited the Vermilion Cliffs in Northern Arizona to see condors. The owner of the Lees Ferry Lodge, where we stayed, told us that about 1/8 of a mile down the highway there was an unmarked gate leading to a plot of *Pediocactus bradyi*. This cactus was listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1979. Attempts to block access in the past have been circumvented by vandals who have torn out locked gates and fences.

After traversing a short, bumpy dirt road, we arrived at a narrow ridge of Marble Canyon overlooking the Colorado River. Across the canyon we could see the trailhead for the Jackass Trail which winds down to the River. We had to look sharp not to step on the 3-centimeters-in-diameter cacti, with an average of only 1 ½ centimeters peeping above ground. There were a total of no more than 60 plants and after moving about we noticed that some were labeled with aluminum tags. That made them easier to find. Monitoring is apparently conducted by the Bureau of Land Management.

*P. bradyi* is one fussy cactus. It will grow only on a mixture of Moenkopi shale and Kaibab limestone and likes to live only in the Great Basin Desertsclrub Community. This habitat is found only on the Colorado Plateau at about 1200 m elevation on the east and west rims of Marble Canyon in Coconino County, Arizona. It is apparently possible to grow the plant away from its habitat only by grafting. Since its discovery in 1958, *P. bradyi* has experienced a serious decline because of collecting, drought, insects, vehicle traffic and livestock trampling.

Did you ever feel sorry for a cactus? I experienced the emotion after viewing the pitifully few remaining specimens of *P. bradyi*. They were . . . just cute! But so fragile. Who was the comedian who said that his life was like having one foot on a precipice and the other on a banana peel?

If you decide to visit, Maggie, the owner of Lees Ferry Lodge, can direct you to the cactus site as well as to condor roosting sites.
PLANT QUESTIONS???

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list (just call or e-mail Bob Torrest). For now the list is simply alphabetical with principal interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

**DOUG DAWSON**  
480-893-1207  
dawsonlithops@hotmail.com  
Specializations include Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs, and Melocactus.

**MIKE GALLAGHER**  
602-942-8580  
mgallagher26@cox.net  
Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and Turbinicarpus.

**STEVE PLATH**  
623-915-7615  
revgdude1@juno.com  
Specializations include Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, Thelocactus, General Propagation, and Desert Revegetation.

**CYNTHIA ROBINSON**  
602-615-2261  
crobin500@msn.com  
Specializations include Flora of Madagascar, Growing from Seed, Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents, Aloes, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fouquieriaceae, and Succulent Bonsai.

**BOB TORREST**  
480-994-3868  
robertst9114@msn.com  
Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, Trichocereus, and Opuntia.