

# Rabbitproof? Or a Tribute to the Chicken

Recently moved outside the Tucson city limits and immediately ran into some much talked about, yet unrealized problems. I was warned about these furry, fourlegged creatures that liked to nibble on newly planted trees and shrubs. Confidently, I went out and started planting assorted trees and shrubs. I carefully placed wire screening with 2" holes around each plant that was more than 15' from my front door.

My Western Sweet Acacias and True Chilean Mesquites were growing quite well for the time of year (September and October, 1983). After a couple weeks I noticed that the smaller ones were not getting any taller than the 2' high wire screening. Upon closer inspection, I noticed the typical angled cut that I learned was usually made by jackrabbits. I mentioned this to Carol, and she said she had seen a rabbit leaning on the wire screening to get at the main trunk of the trees. Well, I went out and put three supports in a triangle just inside the screening so the rabbits could not lean in and reach the main trunk. Even then some of the smaller rabbits were climbing through the 2" holes in the screen. I finally decided on using screen with 1" holes and the three stakes for support. This seems to work reasonably well in the Tucson Mountains area. Following, is a partial list and some casual observations of the plants that I have planted within the last two years.

## Trees

*Acacia minuta* - Western Sweet Acacia. Young stems are quite susceptible to rabbit damage. Trees need to be screened and staked until main trunks are 2-3" in diameter.

*Caesalpinia mexicana* - Mexican Bird Of Paradise. Wire screens were removed from my plants after the first growing season, and no damage has been incurred.

*Cordia boissieri* - Anacahuite. I have four plants that are less than 1' tall and are still screened. My other plant is now nearly 3' high and unscreened. I removed the

screening this last summer and even young side branches within reach have not been eaten.

*Prosopis chilensis* - True Chilean Mesquite. Young trunks and stems are eaten quite readily. Plants need to be staked and screened until main trunks are 2'3" in diameter.

## Groundcovers

*Dalea greggii* - Prostrate Dalea. I have planted quite a few of these and have never had any trouble with rabbit damage. However, I have been told that in some parts of the Tucson area plants will be eaten. I usually put a 2' by 2' piece of wire screen over newly planted plants, and let the stems grow through it. The stems usually are vigorous enough by the time they grow through the screen to be unaffected by rabbits.

*Lantana montevidensis* - Trailing Lantana. I have planted some of these for friends in the Catalina foothills and have not had to screen any of them.

*Verbena peruviana*. A friend of mine tried this plant in the Catalina foothills and found that the rabbits usually had a fest on this species.

I will comment on some of the shrubs and accent plants next time. In general though, I put a large enough circle of screening (usually 4-5' in diameter) to allow enough room for good, healthy development of each plant. I wait for new growth to poke through the screen, then check for any signs of rabbit damage. If there are none for a month or so, I remove the screen. If the new growth is readily eaten, I put a larger circle of screen so the plant can develop more woody growth which is usually less likely to be eaten. If a plant that I really like is still eaten after that, I simply leave the wire screening around the plant and praise the chicken, for without them poultry netting (chicken wire) would not have been developed.

Contributed by  
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Tucson Native Plant Society

The  
Arizona  
Native  
Plant  
Society

Flagstaff  
Phoenix  
Prescott  
South Central  
Tucson  
Yuma



The  
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# Chapter Events

## Tucson

FEBRUARY 20-23. A camping trip to the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge located in western Pima and southeastern Yuma counties. This trip will be a joint effort of the Tucson and Phoenix chapters. The rallying point will be the Alamo campground in the Organpipe National Monument, Thursday, Feb. 20 evening. The meeting point for departure thenext morning will be from the service station at the junction of State highways 85 & 86 in Why (just south of Ajo) at 9:00 A.M. So be there before 9:00 if you do not choose to overnight at Alamo. Four wheel vehicles are advised. Cabeza Prieta was recommended for wilderness status in 1976 and is considered critical habitat for some 80 to 100 endangered Sonoran pronghorn antelope along with desert bighorn sheep. And, of course, many plants will be seen that one does not encounter in the Tucson area. Rodney Engard, Director of the Tucson Botanical Garden will lead the trip. Those interested should call Stephanie Meyer (296-4385-H) or Dan James in Chandler (899-2564-H) for details.

MARCH 12. Karen Adams, ethnobotanist and ecologist discusses barley.

APRIL 9. Dr. Joseph R. McAuliffe of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department at UA will discuss ecological aspects of Creosote communities.

MARCH 1 and 2. A work weekend at the Muleshoe Preserve of the Arizona Nature Conservancy. The work project will consist of salvaging cacti and other plants in the path of an impending pipeline trenching operation. This is a camping trip; no facilities. We will have a barbeque on Saturday evening. For details and directions, call Stephanie Meyer (296-4385).

MARCH 8. Plant identification walk. Meet at Denny's parking lot at St. Mary's Road and I-10 at 8:30 A.M.

MARCH 15. Dave Palzkill, Asst. Professor of plant sciences at U.A. will lead a hike into the Rincon mountains. It will be a rigorous all-day trip covering about 7 miles. Dave assures us, however, that we will return before dark. Bring lunch and meet at the visitors' center of Saguaro Monument East at 8 A.M. for carpooling.

MARCH 20-23. Gene Joseph will lead a four day camping trip to the Pinacate lava field in northwest Sonora, Mexico. The first night, Thursday, March 20, will be spent in the Alamo Campground in the Organpipe National Mounument. Departure to the Pinacates next morning will be at 9 A.M. from the visitor's center, so be there before 9:00 A.M. if you choose not to camp at Alamo. For more information call Cindy Baker (621-1230-W) or Gene Joseph (624-7389-H).

Chapter meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. at the Tucson Botanical Garden.

## Flagstaff

Chapter meets on third Thursday of the month at Flagstaff Adult Center, 7:30 p.m. For information call Dave Haygs 635-9234.

## Prescott

The Prescott Chapter is a new edition to our organization. Lets give them our full support by offering our ideas and programs. For information call Robert Mason (w) 778-7202, (h) 778-7592.

## South Central

FEBRUARY 22. Trip to Papago Indian Reservation.

MARCH 1. Chapter meeting. Dr. Charles Sacamano of the University of Tucson will speak on Native Landscape Plant Clinic, specializing in native plant problems in a landscape environment and water requirements for desert plants. The public will be invited to this meeting.

MARCH 15. Field trip to tour of C.A.C. grounds with Bill Kinnison conducting. The public will be invited with the intention of making this tour a annual event for those new to this area. All chapters are invited.

Chapter meets the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at the Central Arizona College. For more information contact Bill Kinnison 836-8562 or Mary Lou Durbin 836-2430.

## Yuma

Chapter meets on the first Monday, 7:30 p.m. at the Yuma Extension Service Office. For information call Pat Callahan at 627-2773.

## Phoenix

FEBRUARY 20-23. Field trip with Tucson Chapter to Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge. Very few people have had the opportunity to visit this region of the Sonoran Desert which borders Mexico. It is a federally protected wildlife refuge and U.S. Air Force gunnery range. Many of the plants and animals are unique to this area. The wildflower display should be excellent. If you plan to attend please let us know in advance. This trip will be rugged camping. Four wheel drive vehicles are needed and high clearance pick-up trucks are a minimum. Carpooling will be necessary. Call Dan James (899-2564). Rendevous at Alamo Campground, Organ Pipe National Monument, 9:00 A.M., Friday, Feb. 21.

MARCH 1-2. (Sat-Sun) This field trip/workshop to Muleshoe Ranch is open to all state members. Its is sponsored by the Tucson Chapter and the Arizona Nature Conservancy. Salvageable plants, particularly cacti will be planted on an area disturbed by pipeline. For details contact Stephanie Meyer (296-4385).

MARCH 8. (Sat) 10:00 A.M. Half day field trip to Desert Tree Farm, 2744 E. Utopia, Phoenix. East of Cave Creek Rd., north of Union Hills. John Augustine will give us a tour of his nursery which specilizes in arid land plants. See a very nice display garden. Call Dan James (899-2564) or John Augustine (992-0402).

MARCH 10. (Mon) Chapter meeting. 7:30 P.M., Webster Auditorium, Desert Botanical Garden. If you are interested in how the experts save and salvage our native desert plants, be sure and attend this meeting. Professional tree mover Phil Heberts of Desierto Verde Nursery will show how they do it.

MARCH 15. (Sat) 7:00 A.M.) All day field trip to Joshua Tree Parkway. Meet and carpool at NW corner of Northern and I-17 (shopping center parking lot). This unusual desert area is literally a forest of Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*). Bring hiking boots and lunch and plan on a late return. It will be approximately 2 hours drive from Phoenix via Wickenburg. For more information call Dan James. (899-2564).

Chapter meets the second Monday, 7:30 P.M. in Webster Auditorium of Desert Botanical Garden.



## NATIVE WILDFLOWER NOOK

### Amaranth Family

#### *Amaranthaceae*

The amaranth family consists of about 475 species, widely distributed, but most abundant in the Tropics. From the love-lies-bleeding to the princes-feather, the Josephs-coat and the tumble-weed, all the species bear a close structural resemblance to the common amaranth or pigweed, the representative of the family illustrated.



**Common Amaranth**  
*Amaranthus hybridus* L.

The common amaranth, like the black-eyed susan, seems to offer a reversal of the usual course of weeds, for it appears to have come eastward instead of going westward. It gets its name from a Greek term meaning "unfading," in recognition of the fact that its flowers retain their color when dry. It blossoms from July to October, and is abundant in both cultivated and abandoned ground. A native of the Southwest, it not only has pushed its way eastward, but has also spread northward and has become a widely dispersed weed, with a vast territory under colonization. Its most familiar name to laymen is probably pigweed. One variety of this species is cultivated as a flower in many gardens.

Reprinted from *The Book of Wildflowers*. Published by The National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1933.

## Conservation Efforts Growing

McFarland State Park in Florence, Az. has quickly become the nucleus of the newly inspired Conservation Committee of the ANPS. Members from Tucson, Phoenix and South Central chapters met in early December to address and evaluate the complex National Forest Plans for the Coconino and Prescott Forests, and BLM Resource Management Plans. It was apparent that many of the concerns that we have for the protection and conservation of our native plants were not being adequately responded to in these plans. This was partly due to our serious lack of input in the planning process when we had the opportunities and the fact that no policy guidelines exist for the society in regards to rangeland management, wildlife habitat, rare plants and revegetation with natives. Other areas where guidelines or at least a code of ethics would be desirable are chapter policies on field trips, plant sales and shows, and the collection of native plants for educational and scientific purposes (this one places many of our sensitive species at greater risk, especially the cacti on state lands.)

The first meeting was more a discussion on where we should be heading, what areas were being overlooked, and which of the plans required our immediate attention. We needed to prioritize our time and energy on those plans that were still receiving public input or were still in the planning stages. Public comment for the Coconino and Prescott Forests will be accepted until March 29 and April 4 respectively. Public comment will be heard or accepted until March 28, 1986 for the Resource Management Plan of the BLM. The management of 920,000 acres of federally owned land in eight Arizona counties is being prepared. We need to respond to this RMP and address the issues that are of concern to us as native plant enthusiasts.

The issues are complex, the planning documents are overwhelming, and in order for us to respond in a timely and cohesive manner we need your individual support as well as your support as members of the society. It is the goal of this committee to keep you informed of our actions through this newsletter and through your chapter presidents and board of directors. We may in the future ask you to write to your legislators both locally and federally to support native plant legislation and conserve rare species wherever they occur as prescribed under the Endangered Species Act.

Provided for your convenience is a list of Plant Conservation Contacts, and Congressional delegates from Arizona.

The next meeting of the Arizona Native Plant Society Conservation Committee will be February 18, at 5:30 pm at McFarland State Park, Florence. All are welcome.

Marc Mittleman, Editor

# More Protection for Pincushions

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved a recovery plan for the Brady Pincushion Cactus (*Pediocactus bradyi*) a rare cactus known from only a few sites within Coconino County in Northern Arizona. Since its discovery in 1958 this cactus has declined markedly because of collecting pressures and habitat destruction. Out of a potential habitat of 17,000 acres which includes private lands, BLM administered land, National Park Service lands and Navajo Indian Reservation, the species has been found on only 10-20 percent of searched areas.

This cactus is in high demand by certain collectors because of its rarity and removal from its native habitat by cactus enthusiasts and commercial suppliers have been documented. Because of the difficulty of growing this plant in cultivation there is a continuing demand for replacement root stock. The short lived nature of this plant makes seed collection harmful as well.

Some habitat within its range has already been destroyed by ORV's and Uranium exploration and mining represent further potential threats. Grazing has also been suggested as a threat to this species because it has traditionally occurred between November and May when the cactus is emergent and most vulnerable to trampling.

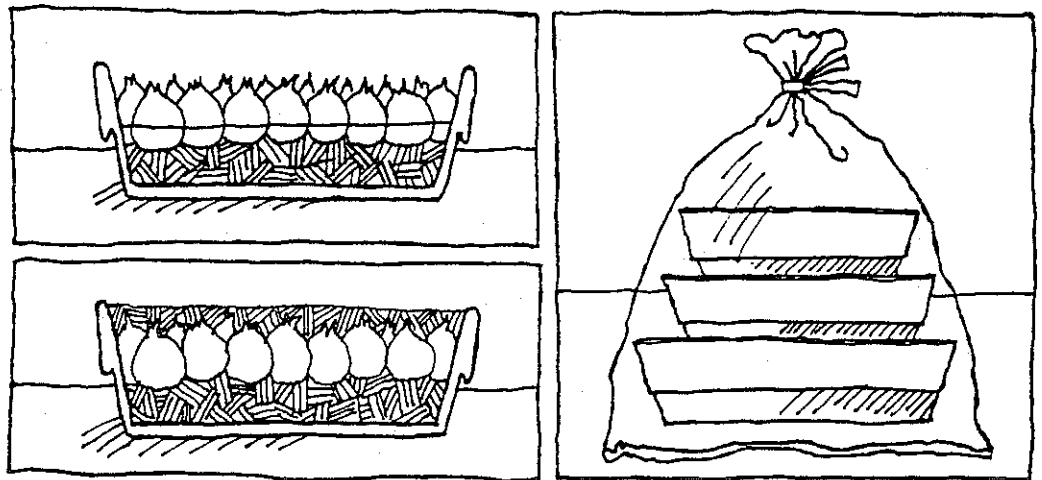
The *Brady Pincushion Cactus Recovery Plan* hopes to reduce the drain on wild populations by carefully managing its habitat and enforcing existing conservation laws. Other management actions suggested are signs informing people of the protected status of cacti, relocation of a roadside gravel dump that still provides parking opportunities, and to control ORV damage.

An HMP (Habitat Management Plan), has been drafted and addresses the impacts of grazing, ORV's and mining. New procedures for monitoring existing populations will ultimately provide more information on its ecology and reproductive activity. No plans exist at the present time for reestablishing populations with cultivated plants. However, the FWS is considering the possibility of encouraging the trade in cultivated plants of listed cacti as a means of reducing demand for illegally obtained plants from the wild. (The Editor would like your comments and reaction to this proposition.)

Reference -  
Endangered Species Technical Bulletin Vol.X No. 12  
Marc Mittleman, Editor

## Forcing Saucers of Tiny Bulbs

Bulbs that have been precooled can be forced indoors. Try some smaller bulbs or corms such as crocuses and grape hyacinths. Using 4, 5 and 6 in. clay saucers, fill the 1/2 full of potting mixture made up of equal parts soil, coarse sand, and sphagnum moss. Place bulbs point side up, if you can find it. If not, place sideways. They seem to come up regardless. Crowd a lot together in each dish and cover with soil mixture, patting down firmly. Soak them in water and drain overnight. Stack on top of each other, placing them first in plastic bag secured by a twist tie and then in paper bag. Store in refrigerator for 3 mos. and then bring into light. Arrange containers on inverted saucers.



## The Plant Press

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Marc S. Mittleman . . . . . Editor  
Rosalind V. Bentley . . . . . Graphic Designer

# Write a better letter

So you're upset and frustrated and you don't know what to do?

Below are the addresses of people who can do something and believe in the same causes you do. They can direct your letter to the right people and can get the ball rolling. Don't wait any longer. That beautiful native plant might not be there tomorrow.

Bureau of Land Management  
Phoenix District Office  
2015 W. Deer Valley  
Phoenix, AZ 85027  
602/863-4474  
Contact: Don Ducote, Planning  
Ted Cordery, Wildlife Biologist  
Rich Hanson, Wilderness Coordinator

Arizona Nature Conservancy  
30 North Tucson Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85716  
602/323-1857  
Contact: Andy Laurenzi

Environmental Defense Fund  
1525 15th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/387-3500  
Contact: Bruce S. Manheim, Staff Scientist

National Alliance for Plants  
6415 Regent Street  
Oakland, California 94618

United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
Office of Endangered Species  
P.O. Box 1306  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
505/766-3972  
Contact: Peggy Otwell

Arizona State Parks  
Natural Areas Dept.  
1688 W. Adams, Room 219  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
255-4174  
Contact: Tanna Baldwin

United States Forest Service  
Regional Office  
Federal Building, 6th floor  
517 Gold Ave. SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Contact: Reggie A. Fletcher

Arizona Dept. of Game & Fish  
Non-Game Branch  
2222 W. Greenway Rd.  
Phoenix, AZ  
942-3000  
Terry Johnston & Bruce Palmer

Natural Resources Defense Council  
1350 New York Avenue, NW  
Suite 300  
Washington DC 20005  
202/783-7800  
Contact: Faith Campbell

Kingman Resource Area  
2475 Beverly Avenue  
Kingman, AZ 86401  
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Bob Hall & Rebecca Peck  
Wildlife Biologists

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Dennis DeConcini (D)  
328 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
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700 E. Jefferson, Suite 200  
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261-6756

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629-6404

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Tucson, AZ 85712

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Phoenix, AZ  
271-8672  
Contact: Editor

Metro Phoenix Magazine  
4707 N. 12th St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
248-8900  
Contact: Editor

## Annual Cactus Show and Sale

39th annual show presents more than 1,000 cacti, succulents and planters for show and sale. Free admission. 941-1225.

Feb. 15-23  
Desert Botanical  
Garden

1201 N. Galvin Pkwy.  
9 A.M.-5 P.M.

