Executive Director’s Report

Desert Survivors begins Spring of 2015 with changes and challenges in front of us. (Some of us have personal challenges, too.) I have recently been working to rehabilitate a newly resurfaced hip joint. It’s not the years, it’s the miles. I am looking forward to being more active with no pain.)

For Desert Survivors, I want to thank everyone who donated funds over the holiday season, and all year for that matter, but winter is a rough month financially due to low plant sales, so holiday gifts give us a lift. Desert Survivors members who participated in the Tax Credit Campaign this year infused $12,000 into the agency! These members will get their money back by reducing their State taxes dollar for dollar. Please call me to find out more about the tax credit campaign. We want to see that members get back every penny they donate to us through this campaign.

As you will read in Karen’s report, after 30 years of providing early intervention services to families with children with developmental disabilities, our Children’s Services Program has come to an end. I believe Desert Survivors provided extraordinary early intervention services and we regret that we cannot continue to do so. The most important variable in quality of life for people with disabilities is the service a family receives in a child’s earliest years of life. Be sure to read let’s report. Jim took on the task of completely updating our web site—desertsurvivors.org. (Please take a minute or two to check it out. It is remarkable!) Among other improvements, the new web site offers a Pay Pal option for memberships and donations. Jim did a hell of a great job on this project.

We are in our 34th year of service to our community and proud of it. Although we've had many challenges, I wouldn’t think of doing anything else. What keeps me going at Desert Survivors is that we pride solely to serve our workers and our community. 'We don’t deal with profit margins, shareholders, or other corporate motivations. We provide the best jobs for our workers and the best plants for our customers, and that’s it.'

We need to see all of you at the Spring Plant Sale. Purchasing plants to beautify your home and business is one of the best ways to support Desert Survivors. Please feel free to call me about any issue you wish to discuss. I am at your service (520-609-8333).

Richard M. Bechtold
Executive Director
In many tropical locations, this plant has become a noxious weed but it does not seem to pose the same threat here in our arid climate. It may be a good idea to avoid this introduction though, if you live on the edge of a lush wild area. Additional studies have found the foliage is high in anti-oxidants and can be useful in topical healing wounds. The fragrant marigold is a great butterfly plant for any pollinator garden.

**Sphaeralcea commutata**
(Asteraceae - sunflower family)

This ornamental fall bloomer is native to the Galapagos, Chihuahua, and Haussa Mountains, as well as the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and San Rafael State Natural Area. Plants spread by underground runners and seed, and tend to form small colonies. Once established, this plant is extremely tough and has surprisingly low water needs. An abundance of attractive flowers occurs in spring, monsoon season, and fall. The white ray flowers and yellow disk flowers complement the low green, basal foliage. White prairie aster is a small plant that typically doesn’t get much higher than a foot and a half, with clones often a few feet wide. It is a great pollinator plant, and is presumably used by generalized caterpillars that enjoy plants in the composite family. It is very easy to establish and maintain. S. falcatum var. commutata is highly recommended.

**Gaillardia aristata**
(Asteraceae - sunflower family)

This perennial wildflower has a broad distribution across the country and is common in northern Arizona and New Mexico. Gaillardia aristata has large, droopy, red and yellow flowers to 3 inches or more. These plants produce a profusion of blooms in the spring and monsoon season, and provide an excellent nectar source for pollinators. The subsequent seeds also are a great food source for wildlife. Like other blanketflowers, this species can naturalize in your garden in the right conditions. They like sun or partial shade, and use relatively little water once established. Like several other species in the sunflower family, this plant is used as a larval food plant, and will attract butterflies. Blanket flower creates a huge splash of color in any Southwest garden. Like several other species in the sunflower family, this plant is used as a larval food plant, and will attract butterflies.

**San Diego barrel cactus**
(Echinocereus viridescens)

This species can handle full or partial shade, but like good drainage. It can handle temperatures into the mid to high 20’s. This barrel cactus is unusual in cultivation; it is an S2 listed rare plant in California (S2 means that it occurs in less than 10 locations within the state).

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