

**For more Information:
Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. (928) 282-4938**



The Grand Canyon – Stories of its Green Heart

KSB Virtual Speaker Series on Wednesday, May 12

Join Keep Sedona Beautiful on Wednesday, May 12 for its monthly *Preserving the Wonder™* Speaker Series webinar at **5:00 p.m.** This month's "virtual" guest is Wendy Hodgson, Herbarium Curator Emerita and Senior Research Botanist at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix.

A resident of the Sonoran Desert for more than 50 years, she began working at the Desert Botanical Garden in 1974 as an assistant to famed Agave guru Dr. Howard S. Gentry. For the past 20 years she has been studying and documenting the flora of the Grand Canyon region.

According to Hodgson, "It is a safe bet that the vast majority of the millions of people who stare over the edge into the abyss of the Grand Canyon is not wondering what kind of plants are down there. However, the Canyon is ... home to over 1800 plant species, representing several diverse vegetation zones and nearly half of Arizona's total flora, an impressive detail considering Arizona ranks fourth in the country with number of plant species."

Wendy will share reasons for the great diversity in the Canyon and discuss a few of its intriguing botanists that braved wild white water and steep cliffs to gather specimens. She will spotlight some of these likewise charismatic plants. Further, she will share work that she and colleagues are pursuing to try and answer such intriguing questions as to how certain plants evolved and dispersed in the Grand Canyon and how Native Americans influenced plant evolution and distribution.

Wendy's areas of interest include Southwest U.S. and northern Mexico floristics, rare and endemic plants, and taxonomy and systematics of Agave and Yucca, including the study of pre-Columbian agave domesticates. She is also studying and documenting Southwest U.S. cacti, was the coordinator for the Cactus family treatment for Intermountain Flora and is the co-coordinator for the Cactus Family of Arizona project by Garden research staff and research associates. Wendy is also documenting the plants along the 800-mile Arizona National Scenic Trail. She is an avid plant collector, having collected over 32,000 herbarium specimens. She strives toward making high quality specimens in difficult groups like Agavaceae and Cactaceae.

Wendy is an ethnobotanist and has published *Food Plants of the Sonoran Desert* (University of Arizona Press) in 2001, winner of the Klinger Book Award presented by the Society for Economic Botany. She is a believer in citizen science and the involvement of Native Americans in the study of plants and their habitat.

Wendy received her B.S. in Wildlife Biology and her M.S. in Botany under the mentorship of Dr. Donald Pinkava in 1982 at Arizona State University.

Keep Sedona Beautiful's monthly *Preserving the Wonder™* Speaker Series focuses on presenting a diversity of programs relevant to the unique environment of our region. A nonprofit since 1972, Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. is committed to protecting and sustaining the unique scenic beauty and natural environment of the Greater Sedona Area, now and in the future. KSB activities range from education and advocacy to hands-on tasks such as litter lifting, as well as preserving the quality of Oak Creek and maintaining Sedona's dark, star-studded night skies. For more information about Keep Sedona Beautiful, please visit <http://www.keepsedonabeautiful.org/>.