



October 2026

Echoes from the Canyon is a regular publication of the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists. A printable PDF version is available for download on the website's [Echoes From the Canyon Archive page](#).

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Note: Click on photos to enlarge them. Click the View in Browser link above to translate.

Fall Fun Things to Do

Here are the activities from October 15 to November 15. For more information on any event or presentation check out our [Event Calendar](#).

Meet at the Visitor Center unless otherwise noted.

- **Sabino Canyon Bird and Nature Walk:** 1st and 3rd Sundays 8:00–10:30 a.m.
- **Desert Giant: The Saguaro:** Sundays starting November 1, 10:00–11:00 a.m.
- **Plant and Bird Walk:** Tuesdays starting November 3, 8:30–11:30 a.m.
- **Mt. Lemmon Nature Hike:** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays except October 28, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. See Event Calendar for meetup location.
- **Panning for Garnets:** Thursdays 9:00–11:00 a.m. See Event Calendar for location.
- **Nature Journaling:** Thursdays starting November 5, 2:00–4:00 p.m.
- **Discovering Sabino Canyon Geology:** Thursdays except November 26, 8:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m., starting October 29. Meet at the Visitor Center. See Event Calendar for specifics.
- **Friday Trail Hike:** 1st and 3rd Fridays 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. See Event Calendar for specifics.
- **Hydrogeology Hike:** 1st and 3rd Saturdays 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Educational Presentations

All presentations are located in the plaza outside the Visitor Center unless otherwise noted.

- **Birds of Sabino Canyon Table:** 2nd and 4th Sundays 9:00–11:00 a.m.
 - **Saguaro Table:** 3rd Sunday starting November 15, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
 - **Skulls and Pelts, Wildlife of Sabino Table:** Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.
 - **Geology Table:** Wednesdays except November 25, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., starting November 4.
 - **Ancient Cultures Table:** Fridays 9:00–11:00 a.m.
 - **The Wild Cats of Sabino Canyon:** Saturday October 17 and 31, and November 14 and 28, 8:00–10:00 a.m.
 - **Ask a Naturalist Table:** Saturdays 10:00–11:00 a.m., starting November 7.
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Tucson Organic Gardeners Fall Fair



The Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists will be at the Tucson Organic Gardeners Fall Fair November 7, from 8:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m at Rillito Park. Stop by our table to learn about native plants and Hohokum agriculture. For more information go to Tucson Organic Gardeners [website](#).

Desert Color

Naturalist Kathy



If I had to pick a desert color of the month for October it would be yellow.

Burroweed, *Isocoma tenuisecta*, is the native plant providing most of the yellow seen along the road and trails at Sabino Canyon. Upon close inspection, the tiny leaves are gray-green in color, which pairs nicely with the color of the flower heads.

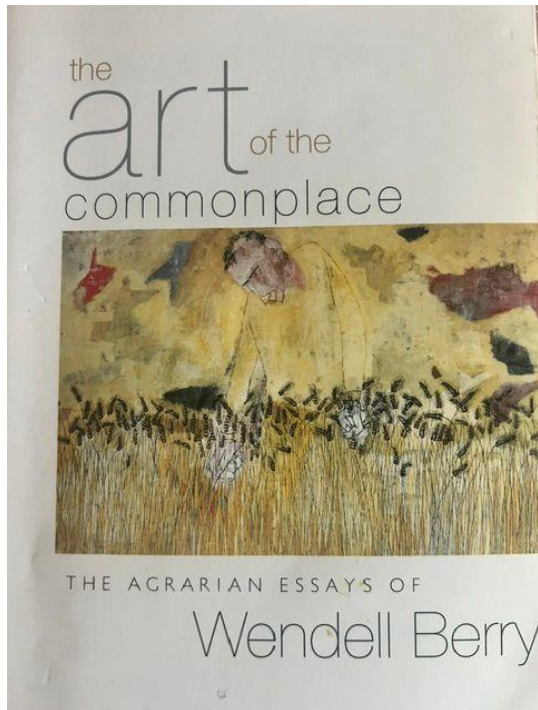
Burroweed blooms from August to October and is an important food source for local pollinators, when not much else is blooming.

Burroweed has a very small range and can be found at elevations from 2,000-5,500 feet in Arizona, New Mexico, and Sonora, Mexico. It likes to grow in open sunny areas, mesas, dry washes, and disturbed areas. On rangeland, burroweed is an indicator of overgrazing.

It's a mystery to me why it's named burroweed, because it's toxic to burros and all other mammals. The toxin in burroweed is tremetol and it causes tremors in animals that eat a large quantity. The toxin can even be passed on to humans in cow's milk.

If burroweed's toxicity isn't of concern, it would make a great drought tolerant addition to a landscape, providing erosion control and seasonal color.

Book Review: *The Art of the Commonplace*
by Wendell Berry
Reviewed by Naturalist Barb



Due to a summer of wonderful adventures and poor planning, I arrived in late September with no book identified, much less read, for the October book review. I had just learned of Wendell Berry's death. Knowing that Berry was a touchstone for many of my favorite authors (Kingsolver, Stegner, Williams, to name a few), I decided I would read the Berry book I had picked up at Bookmans a few months ago: *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Berry is a prolific writer with multiple published books of fiction, poetry, and essays. This book is a collection of essays from both magazines and his previous essay books.

The first essay, "The Native Hill," describes the Kentucky farm area where Berry grew up and where he returned to live in his 30s, never to leave. The land, its people, the plants and animals that lived there, and the communities they formed are the basis for all of his writings.

Most of these essays were written in the 1980s and 1990s and can seem a bit out of date. But much of his criticism of our current society also rings true. He laments the role big money and big industry play in our government. He rues our disconnection from the land and hence knowledge of where our food comes from. Consumerism has become our religion, ignoring the continual consumption of our natural world with no thought to how those resources can be replenished. Industrialization, while aiming to make work easier, has also deprived us of the sense of purpose that true work can provide. All of these forces have pulled apart the community that could be found in marriage, neighbors, and local organizations. Rushing for the latest has left us scattered and unable to focus.

His answer to all of this is to return to the agrarian model that our country was founded upon. The farmer knows his land and how to keep it healthy. He knows where his food comes from. He knows his neighbors and can lend a hand when needed. His marriage is founded on a partnership that requires both partners to work together toward the same ends. The farmer holds all life sacred and remains in awe of the natural world. That awe requires him to conserve and protect our remaining wilderness.

Berry knows that we cannot all return to our small plot of land and carry on. When asked about solutions, he frequently says he does not know. But he does believe that each of us can

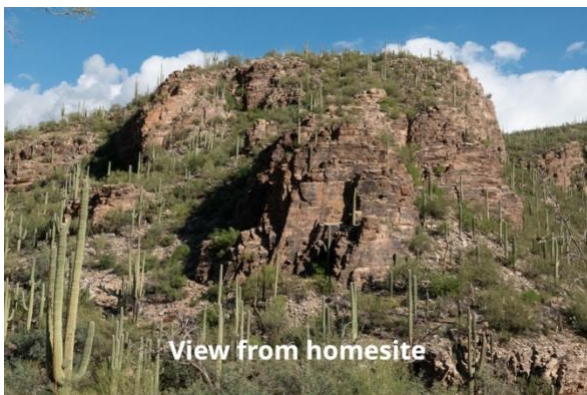
take small individual steps to stem some of this destruction in our local areas (he himself engaged in many civil disobedience actions, including a four-day sit in at the governor's office to protest mountain top strip mining when he was in his 80s.). We can all learn and treasure and protect the area where we ourselves are planted.

This book is not available in the Pima County Library System, but check your local bookstores or online.

Sabino Canyon Seek and Find



This month's Seek and Find is an easy walk up the paved road. It's a location you may have walked by many times before but never noticed. The stairs in the photo used to lead to a Sabino Canyon caretaker's house.



View from homesite

An interesting article was featured in *Arizona Hiways* regarding some of the early history of Sabino Canyon. Scroll down the linked article below to read Patti Lewis's account of what it was like for her husband, Bert Lewis, to live in the house as a child. It may make you

cringe. <https://www.arizonahighways.com/article/oasis-desert>

This month's clue: The trek to this site is paved. When you get to the location you can have a sit or get some water at the available spout. The walk is a little over a mile.

A note on last month's Seek and Find: After *Echoes* went to print, the trail leading to the site was closed! So the site will be featured again when the trail is open again. Sorry!

Indigenous People Acknowledgement Statement

We all know that people of the Hohokam culture, and many indigenous people before and after the Hohokam, lived in the Sabino Canyon area. But did you know that SCVN has an Indigenous Peoples Acknowledgement Statement? It's on the "About Us" section of our public web site and read before every board meeting. Here it is:

The members of the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists respectfully acknowledge our presence on the ancestral homelands in Sabino Canyon and southern Arizona of indigenous peoples who historically have lived, farmed, gathered, and hunted in the Santa Cruz River Valley for at least 13,000 years. We are grateful for what we have learned of their rich history and what we can continue to learn from their customs and practices. We dedicate ourselves to convey, through training and on-going education of SCVN members and the public who visit Sabino Canyon, this rich history, and the importance of caring for this land and respecting those who came before us.

Help Bring Kids to the Canyon

Would you like to help SCVN fulfill its mission to educate and inspire people of all ages to explore the wonders of Sabino Canyon and the Sonoran Desert?

Please consider making a donation!

Our greatest need is support for our School Bus Fund, which helps Title I schools cover the cost of transportation to our educational programs. Your generosity helps ensure that transportation costs don't prevent students from experiencing the wonders of Sabino Canyon firsthand.

SCVN is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.





Echoes from the Canyon is published monthly except July and August by members of the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists. If you are interested in learning about the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalist program or about educating the public and/or children in learning about the flora and fauna of this unique riparian environment of the Sonoran Desert, please visit the Become a Naturalist page on our website.



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SABINO CANYON
VOLUNTEER NATURALISTS

Explore, Discover, Inspire

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Our mailing address is:
Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists
5700 N Sabino Canyon Road
Tucson, AZ 85750