

January 18, 2023

Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil

The Rio Grande Do Sul is the most southern state in the country of Brazil. It is bordered by the Atlantic to the east and the countries of Uruguay and Argentina (Paraguay) to its north and west. This seldom seen region of Brazil is rich in Cacti, Bromeliads, succulents and other unusual plants and animals. Because of its very moderate climate, rolling hills and deep barrancas, the RGDS is also full of fascinating birds and some of the most iconic of the cactaceae. Many a fascinating explorer, such as Uebelmann, Horst and Ritter, roamed this secret place, where many of our most well known cactus are to be found. This



Notocactus ottonis— Courtesy: Woody Minnich

region is the center of the distribution of the Parodias (*Notocactus*, *Brasilicactus*, *Brasiliparodia*, *Malacocarpus*, and *Eriocactus*) and *Fraileas* as well as some of the *Gymnocalyciums* and *Echinopsis*.

An interesting parallel to South Africa, this primarily winter rainfall region has a wealth of fascinating plants from bulbs to cacti. We will walk in the footsteps of some of the most dedicated field explores and see much of what they

experienced over the past 100 years from this wonderful region, the Rio Grande Do Sul.

-Woody (Wendell S. Minnich)

Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich

Woody, as he is commonly known, grew up in the Mojave Desert and has had an attraction to desert plants and animals since the early 1950's. He has been involved with the cactus and succulent world for over 52 years, as a grower, field explorer, club and organization leader, writer, photographer, lecturer and presenter.



*Woody with Tuatara—
Courtesy: Woody
Minnich*

Having been a speaker all over the world, Woody is most often associated with giving presentations on his field work from the places he has traveled, such as: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, Socotra, South Africa, the United States and Yemen. To date, this makes 128 major trips. He is also recognized for having operated the nursery Cactus Data Plants since 1975. Woody's show quality plants were often considered one of the standards for staging and horticultural achievement. His favorite genera include: Adenium, Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Copiapoa, Cyphostemma, Fouquieria, Gymnocalsium, Lithops, Mammillaria, Melocactus, Pachypodium, Turbinocarpus, Uebelmannia, and Pachycauls in general.

He has published numerous articles and reviews in various journals (CSSA) and his photography is featured in many books including: "The Copiapoa" by Schulz, "The Mammillaria Handbook" by Pilbeam, "The Cactus Lexicon" by Hunt and Charles, as well as many others. As of November 2017, he is featured as the primary photographer in the sold out book "The Xerophile." This book specializes in what the authors call, The Obsessed Field workers from around the world. He is also featured in electronic articles about conservation from "MNN Mother Nature Network" and "the Guardian Newspaper."

Woody and his wife, Kathy, live in Cedar Grove, New Mexico. He is a retired secondary school teacher of 32 years where he taught Graphics, Art and Architecture. In the cactus and succulent hobby, Woody is recognized for his high energy and creative spirit. As an educator, he has become an important part of the hobby and thus is an honorary life member of thirteen C&S societies across the country. He has been president, show and sale chair, newsletter editor,

program chair, and plant of the month coordinator. Woody has also served on the CSSA board and numerous societies in many other leadership positions. He is a co-creator, and currently the president of the Santa Fe Cactus and Succulent Club. With 52 years in the hobby and 64 years in the field (old fart), he has many experiences to share and thousands photos to show.



Frailea asterioides (castanea)— Courtesy: Woody Minnich



Notocactus leninghausii— Courtesy:
Woody Minnich