

SACXS Legacy Project



Cacti and succulents are central in dry ecosystems.

Cacti and succulents store water in their tissues, provide nesting areas and food for wildlife, photosynthesize, store carbon, and even provide a place for some insects to lay eggs until they develop into adults. These plants play an essential role in dryland ecosystems and must be protected.



Wild populations of cactus and succulents can be significantly reduced by field collecting and poaching. For example, in 2015, 3500 *Ariocarpus fissuratus* were removed from Big Bend National Park and the surrounding area. For collectors in Europe and Asia, the squat, spineless and cushiony cactus is a living jewel.

Large scale harvest of slow-growing wild cactus can decimate habitat populations by removing mature reproductive plants. This makes it less likely that seeds of the remaining plants will germinate and grow into mature specimens. The diversity of plants in that population is greatly reduced.



Poached *A. fissuratus*



Greenhouse grown *A. fissuratus*

If you take a wild specimen from its habitat you deprive everyone else of the joy of seeing it as well. You also change its climate and growing conditions when you try to cultivate it - most likely causing its death.

Field collected desirable succulents are sold globally, often unestablished, and to the highest bidder who will likely kill the plants within less than a year because these plants have stressed and completely disconnected from their growing natural rhythm and cultural needs.



Many succulents including Pachypodium, Dudleya, and Dioscorea are also at risk for extinction especially from the horticultural trade.



With the immediate need for conservation of cactus and succulents, the San Antonio Cactus & Xerophyte Society has initiated The SACXS Legacy Project.

The Purpose of the SACXS Legacy Project will be to update the goals of the original mission through education and promotion of native and nonnative xerophyte species. The term "Legacy" signifies our inheritance of the original intent of the founding members, the responsibility of conveying this intent to current and future members and to promote the conservation of threatened and endangered species.



Core Goal # 1 Conduct research about the current status of the native species of Texas Xerophytes and Chihuahuan Desert plants.

The committee is currently conducting data-gathering to address this goal. The following list includes organizations that might be able to help with this research:

- ❖ CSSA
(cactusandsucculentsociety.org)



- ❖ Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute
(lgordon@cdri.org)

- ❖ Texas Parks and Wildlife
(tpwd.Texas.gov)



- ❖ Texas Universities



Core Goal # 2 Encourage the Ethical Propagation of all Xerophyte species.

The following list includes SACXS activities that meet this Core Goal.

- ❖ Hands-On Propagation from Seed programs.
- ❖ Creation of a club seed bank. Members are encouraged to save seed from their own plants or provide seed from other ethical sources to be shared with other SACXS members. Seed packets will be made available at monthly club meetings.



Core Goal #3 Educate SACXS members and the general public regarding the conservation status of xerophytic plants, desert habitats, and other dry-land environments.

- ❖ Mini-programs preceding the main program at monthly meetings.
- ❖ Weekly information about Texas native cacti posted on both SACXS Facebook groups: SACXS - San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society and SACXS - Discussion Group.
- ❖ Link on SACXS website www.sacxs.org to access data-base on Texas native succulents. (upcoming)
- ❖ Educational displays & Kid Zone activities at April Show and Sale.
- ❖ Notification of relative on-line programs such as CSSA webinars, YouTube videos, and affiliate club events. Notifications will be posted on SACXS Facebook pages.
- ❖ Locate or develop relative curriculum for area schools.



Core Goal #4 Participate in club-sanctioned conservation activities.

The following list includes activities that may meet this Core Goal.

- ❖ SACXS Show and Sale - educational displays and Kid Zone activities.
- ❖ SACXS Field Trips - SA Botanical Gardens & trips to state and national conservation areas.
- ❖ Participation in local special events.
- ❖ Rescue of native cacti from areas being developed for residential and business areas.



Core Goal #5 Designate individuals, businesses, organizations, and club activities as having met the core goals of the Legacy Project.



Nominees must have focused in one of the following areas:

- ❖ Made a specific achievement in advancing conservation of our natural habitat (conservation project, advanced research, project that had significant conservation impact).
- ❖ Conservation achievement recognized by peer group, government agency or another society.
- ❖ Ongoing commitment to education with focus on conservation and habitat awareness.
- ❖ Nomination forms are available on www.sacxs.org.