



## News Release

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### Workshop to Highlight Native Plant Benefits

In the foreground of the awe-inspiring view of spires, buttes and mesas of Sedona's red rocks and forest are native plants often overlooked by tourists and first-time visitors. A goal of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Native Plant Workshop sponsored by Keep Sedona Beautiful ("KSB") set for Saturday, March 28 is to cast a spotlight on the integral role of native plants in sustaining the natural environment of the Sedona area.

Topics of the daylong workshop, to be held at the West Sedona School, 570 Posse Ground Road, include ways for home gardeners to preserve natural features on their properties with emphasis on native plants and different "zones" to consider when landscaping, low-water landscape techniques and landscape design with drought tolerant plants as well as a native plant walking tour that will feature local American Indian Culture's uses of plants in support of medicine, tools and food.

Keynote speakers are Prescott College professor and naturalist Walt Anderson and Janie Agyagos, Red Rock Ranger District wildlife biologist. Professor Anderson will discuss plant reproductive strategies and how evolution shapes them. Agyagos will address climate change in the southwest, how it is affecting the area's wildlife and plant species and summarize scientists' predictions of further southwestern effects as a result of climate change.

Interest in native plants has been increasing since the first Native Plant Workshop in 1979 and at a faster pace as climate change and drought conditions have gained the public's attention. Shaun Symonds of Verde River Growers in Cottonwood says there is growing awareness of the importance of native plants and the subject is "walking its way into our culture."

Symonds attributes much of the awareness and endorsement of native plants to the actions of community and home owner associations suggesting or requiring landscaping to include native plants. The combined actions have increased public awareness of the benefits of native plants and has aided in addressing the stringent water issues facing Northern Arizona.

Looking at the Verde Valley and Sedona native plant pallet and the ideal northern Arizona climate conditions, the more the public realizes what is possible with native plants, the better for the environment, says Symonds, the recipient of Norman B. Herkenham award at the 2014 Native Plant Workshop.

KSB's Herkenham award is given to people, businesses, or organizations that further the education and implementation of native plant landscaping. While the Native Plant Workshop was originally created in 1979 by the late Maleese Black, one of the founders of Keep Sedona Beautiful, Norm Herkenham ran the workshops over the next 20 years. He served as President of Keep Sedona Beautiful from 1984-85, and worked with Friends of the Forest when they first organized. He is known as the "Father of the Sedona Trail System" and was the first recipient of the Award. The 2015 Herkenham recipient will be announced at the March 28th Native Plant Workshop.

For further information and to register, go to [keepsedonabeautiful.org](http://keepsedonabeautiful.org) or call KSB at 282-4938.