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Braun Reaps Herkenham Award

Hattie Braun was recognized as an individual distinguished in the education and implementation of native plant landscaping, April 7, 2018, by Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB) at its 39th annual Native Plant Workshop. The Norman B. Herkenham Award was presented to Braun by unanimous vote of the committee for Braun's indefatigable dedication to learning and teaching about flowers, bushes and trees that our Northern Arizona arid and windy environment embraces rather than scorns.

"Unleash Your Garden's Wild Side: Garden Design Using Native Plants" was the morning keynote at the Native Plant Workshop, addressing Sedona homeowners' number one landscaping question: "How do we use native plants without making our front yard look like a weed patch?" Braun discussed using native plants that are attractive even in the most urban of settings, provide a haven for appropriate wildlife and work in harmony with our ecosystem(s). Even with an M.S. in Horticulture from Pennsylvania State University, relocating to Flagstaff she signed up for the Coconino Master Gardener program to learn about gardening in a dry environment, eventually coordinating the Master Gardener program for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension in 2003. In 2016, she accepted the role of Director for Coconino Cooperative Extension.

Braun's presentation emphasized planning, including some basics of landscape design and choosing native plants that grow well in one's neighborhood. A beautiful and wildlife-supporting landscape can easily begin with what you have, gradually weeding out invasive species, noxious species and non-locals and replacing them with the height and color natives you want to see when your landscape's transition is complete.

The annual award, begun in 2007, was named for Norm Herkenham who ran the Native Plant Workshop for 20 years. Herkenham, before retiring to Sedona, worked for the National Park Service. In the Red Rock Ranger District area he catalogued all the native plants in four park and wilderness areas, a champion of befriending the local flora by calling them by name. He has also rightly been called the "Father of the Sedona Trail System."

Though he died in 2010, he was alive when he became the first living person to have a trail named after him in the modern Sedona era. The Herkenham Trail is about two miles long, running between the upper parking lot at Sedona Red Rock High School and Old Post Trailhead (near Chavez Ranch Road).

Braun similarly pioneered education in native flora by helping to found the Master Gardeners' Association in 2009, to support the University of Arizona by providing to the public researched-based information on environmentally responsible gardening and landscaping. The Program creates a corps of well-informed volunteers, and the Association provides support, continuing education, and opportunities to increase participation in the Master Gardener Program.

Over 120 people attended the 39th Annual Native Plant Workshop, learning about attracting birds and butterflies and repelling pests. Xeriscaping and the native plant walkabout workshops were full and appreciating lichens rounded out the six breakout sessions.

Next year marks the 40th Annual Native Plant Workshop and planning is afoot. The date is Saturday, April 6, 2019. The 40th anniversary event is sure to surpass anything offered to date. To submit a topic, suggested keynote speaker or breakout session presenter, please contact KSB. Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc., is committed to protecting and sustaining the unique scenic beauty and natural environment of the Greater Sedona area. For more information about KSB, please call 928.282.4938, or visit www.keepsedonabeautiful.org.