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Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. (928) 282-4938



Ethnobotanist on Domesticated Agaves at

KSB Virtual Speaker Series on Wednesday January 12, 2022

Keep Sedona Beautiful will host Desert Botanical Garden's Wendy Hodgson, on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at **5:00 p.m.** for its monthly *Preserving the Wonder™* Speaker Series. This event will be held via Zoom. Please visit the KSB website, www.keepersedonabeautiful.org for details.

The evening's topic is titled "*Agaves in the Southwestern United States: Discovering Lost Crops Among the Hohokam and Other Pre-Contact Arizona Cultures.*"

Ms. Hodgson is the Herbarium Curator Emerita and Senior Research Botanist at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix and has extensively researched Sedona's rare domesticated Agave species.

According to Ms. Hodgson, "Researchers have long recognized the importance of Agaves to MesoAmerica and its cultures. However, their significance to these cultures has overshadowed and distorted the plants' role for indigenous peoples in the Borderland region, which includes Arizona. Pre-European contact farmers grew no less than six and possibly as many as eight or more domesticated Agaves in Arizona dating to at least A.D. 600.

"DNA sequence data, in addition to plant morphology, suggest that at least three may have originated in Arizona, suggesting the state as a secondary center of domestication."

Ms. Hodgson has lived in the Sonoran Desert for more than 50 years. She holds a B.S. in Wildlife Biology and an M.S. in Botany. She began working at the Desert Botanical Garden as an Assistant to famed Agave expert, Dr. Howard S. Gentry. She is also an ethnobotanist, and believes in citizen science and the involvement of Native Americans in the study of plants and their habitat.

KSB's next Speaker Series presentation will be at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday February 9, 2022, by Garry Neil on the subject of lichens.

Keep Sedona Beautiful's monthly *Preserving the Wonder™* Speaker Series focuses on presenting a diversity of programs relevant to the unique environment of our region. In 1972, Keep Sedona Beautiful was founded in a Sedona living room by people who were concerned about keeping litter and "honky tonk" signs off the roadsides - before the City of Sedona was incorporated in 1988. Once established, and in an effort to counterbalance the effect of a city that straddled two counties and

lacked local city guidelines for building homes and landscaping, KSB advocated for landscaping with native plants and sponsored Residential Design Guidelines for Sedona and the Surrounding Red Rock Area home designs.

For the past fifty years, the nonprofit organization has been dedicated to conserving the area's beauty by opposing ill-considered growth and disregard for maintaining precious resources such as clean water, dark skies, and native plants, as well as noise pollution, etc. To launch KSB's Fiftieth Anniversary, the Board of Directors has updated its mission statement: To *protect and enhance the scenic beauty and natural environment of Sedona and the Verde Valley*. For more information about Keep Sedona Beautiful, please visit <http://www.keepsedonabeautiful.org/>.