

Gillespie Creek Journal

In the photo of the Saguaro Cactus you will notice more than one species of bees intent on getting its fill of the annual life sustaining pollen produced by Arizona's state flower in bloom. Thursday I had a wonderful chat with my friend Cathy who so wisely rescued this downed Saguaro top a few years ago. Then only about 4' tall, Cathy carefully nurtured the stump. Today this Saguaro beautifully presents it's prolific blossoms at eye level in May following a moist Sun City monsoon season. 2023 it is spectacular!



Saguaro Cactus Top in Bloom May 18, 2023



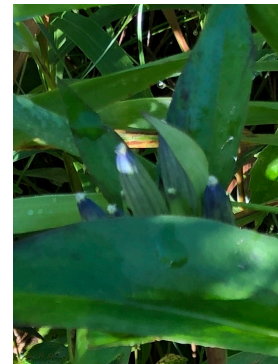
Bedroll in a Kenyan Acacia Tree?

Farmers in Kenya, East Africa are known to nurture bees, hand harvest and process Acacia Honey. The "bedroll" in my photo is actually a hollowed out log prepared and hung from the branches of the Acacia, Black Locust tree. Acacia honey is low in sucrose and high in the flavonoids and phenolic chemicals that provide natural antioxidants to the human body.

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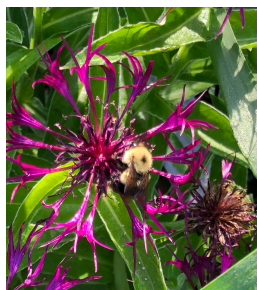
**"April showers bring May flowers"
May flowers bring bees!**

Everyone has memories of bee experiences, some good, some frightening. I recall my dad and step mother frantically looking for a beekeeper to move a hive that had suddenly swarmed around their Sun City backyard Palo Verde tree. Neither animal control or the police were helpful, instead recommending a beekeeper. Dad paid him \$100. The bees dispersed but returned to the flowering tree the next day! Spring time it seems it is best to just let the bee community complete its pollination tasks and find a safe place to watch it all take place!



Bumble Bee entering a Gentian Bottle Flower

Only a Bumble Bee has the strength to penetrate the tightly held petals of the Bottle Gentian flower. The silvery tips of the bee's wings are visible in the upper left photo of the flower cluster. The bee spent only a fraction of a second within the flower before thrusting himself back out and flying away.



Gillespie Creek Bachelor Button With Pollinating Bee

This week's photos are all mine taken over the past four years throughout the seasons. The Acacia in early April 2019, the Bachelor Button in July 2021, the Bottle Gentian in September 2022 and the Saguaro May 18, 2023.

Good Bee Reads

- The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd
- The Life of the Bee: Nobel prize in Literature Winner** by Maurice Maeterlinck
- Mad Honey** by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan
- The Music of Bees** by Eileen Marvin
- Queen Bee** by Dorothea Benton Frank