

The Great American Southwest

No where in the world is there a more dynamic and picturesque region than that of the American southwest. This romantic and historical part of the USA is marked with drama from its indigenous peoples and landscapes, to its grandest plants and creatures. For the purpose of this title we are including the seven most cactus and succulent rich states; Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Utah.

In these seven states there is a wealth of endemic plants and animals. Along with these plants and animals, one will often encounter some amazing and beautiful scenery. Due to the fact that many of our cacti and succulents are found in these unique environments, their special characteristics are frequently developed for adaptation and survival in these harsh places. The geology in this general region is very often tortured and dramatic, and thus the plants, animals and scenery are frequently nothing short of breath taking!

Each state will be addressed with the cacti and succulents that are primarily found in that state. A fair number of the taxa inhabit more than one state, but many species are often found in a geographically small area located only within a single state. These genera include some of the rarest and most difficult to cultivate cacti and succulents to be found in the trade today. Their environments range from extreme cold regions with blazing sun, to high elevations with meters of snow, and from very arid low deserts with furnace like temperatures to Mediterranean-like coastal niches.

We will not show all the recorded species of each genus but will focus on the most unique and classic representatives of the Cactaceae and the many other succulent genera. These genera will include; *Agave*, *Ancistrocactus*, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Carnegia*, *Coryphantha*, *Dasyilirion*, *Dudleya*, *Echeveria*, *Echinocereus*, *Echinomastus*, *Epithelantha*, *Escobaria*, *Ferocactus*, *Graptopetalum*, *Lophocereus*, *Lophophora*, *Mammillaria*, *Neobesseya*, *Neolloydia*, *Nolina*, *Opuntia*, *Pediocactus*, *Sclerocactus*, *Stenocereus*, *Thelocactus*, and *Yucca*. We will also take a look at some of the old plant names and their places, and stories in history.

Adding to the mystique of the Great American Southwest is a wealth of information, from the places where these plants were found to the people who found them. Names like *Coloradoa*, *Navajoa*, *Toumeya*, and *Utahia* are just a few of the romantic and descriptive epithets used for some of these prized genera. There are many famous explorers and botanists who spent their entire lives to find these unique plants. These people include such prominent names as; Britton, Rose, Engelmann, Benson, Earle, Gentry and Weniger, just to mention a few.

This presentation, The Great American Southwest, is an epic story and view of this magic land. Many people from all over the world have been attracted this special region, and for me, I will be sharing over 40 years of my field work in this most incredible part of our country.

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