

Title: The Desert Grocery Store
by: Rebecca Stoneman-Washee

Topic: Exploring Indigenous uses of desert plants, primarily cacti and succulents, of the past and present

For thousands of years, Native peoples of the Southwest have been creatively utilizing the resources found in their environments. Many plants that we know today are the result of selective pollination and other adaptive methods of managing plant populations. What strategies were employed to be able to successfully survive in a harsh region with scarce and inconsistent precipitation and often extreme temperature fluctuations? What could be eaten and where can it be found? How can it be stored for future consumption? How has this knowledge been passed on to contemporary generations?

In this program we will explore Indigenous relationships with plants and some of the industrious ways in which cacti and succulents enhanced the lives of the Southwest's earliest inhabitants. You are invited to visit the Desert Grocery Store and discover the taste of the desert!



Yucca bacata



Agave murpheyi



Opuntia engelmannii

What do these three plants have in common?

Join us at the Desert Grocery Store to find out!

Rebecca is passionate about sharing the goodness of the Desert Grocery Store. She fell in love with cacti at age four and the Southwest at age nine. She has worked on the Cibola National Forest as an archaeologist, a state park ranger and interpreter, a museum curator, and currently a Navajo Language media designer for a school district. She and her husband Ernie are now living the red rock dream with their plants and animals in Blanding, Utah.