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THIS ISSUE: Featured Member: All Season Wholesale Growers
SHADE Celebrates Five Years of Excellence
Another Successful ACNP Course

Desierto Verde Founder Passes Away

by Noel Hebets

William Philip “Phil” Hebets, age 62, died August 16, 2009 in his Scottsdale residence of complications following a recent heart surgery. Like the rest of his large family, Phil was an Arizona native, and very proud of it.

Where Phil deserves his place in Arizona history is recognition as one of its true environmental pioneers. Just over 30 years ago, he took his 10 year savings from work as an industrial engineer at Garrett Airesearch, and put them into a landscaping hobby that was rapidly becoming a business, where he wanted to go beyond the then-common fake desert yards with turquoise gravel and palm trees, and instead create a real natural desert landscape with true native plants. This led to the formation of Sonoran Desert Designs, Inc., which he has since operated as a landscape contractor with his brother, Loren Hebets.

Soon thereafter, frustrated by the absence of large native trees in local plant nurseries, Phil joined with his life-long friend, Donnie Fedock of Ajo, Arizona, and pioneered the now-common practice of salvaging the native thorn forest trees growing

in the wild but directly in the path of the bulldozer. Otherwise said, they were the first to dig up, box and save Arizona’s palo verde, mesquite, ironwood and acacia trees. That led to Phil joining with another old friend Al Dunstan to form Desierto Verde, Inc., which operated from then on as a tree salvage and wholesale nursery business, leading the industry in that area for the next two decades.

Phil also went on to pioneer other salvage and revegetation processes for the wide palette of native desert plants. Many Arizonans from both science and industry will also remember his personal efforts and contributions in 1989 towards a badly needed revision of the Arizona native plant statutes, then 50 years out of date.

It can truly be said that with Phil’s parting he can look back at tens of thousands of native desert trees that were saved and countless square miles of natural desert ground that were then developed in harmony with the surrounding habitat, helping many thousands of Arizonans to live within the awesome desert.

Tribute to Phil Hebets

Phil Hebets fought for, and created, landscapes reflecting his passion for the beauty, diversity and uniqueness of desert plant and land forms. They are the legacy of his life work.

Phil himself was formed by his experiences with the beloved Arizona desert in which he grew up. In my mind he embodied many of the traits of desert life forms. He was durable. He was adaptable. He was tough on the outside, but tender underneath. He established his “space and place” and held on to it tenaciously. He was prickly when needed, yet sheltered and nurtured others, taking the brunt of harsh conditions so that they could develop and grow. He was undaunted by rocky situations and surely our desiccating desert winds produced his dry sense of humor.

I was honored to have known and worked with Phil and I consider him one of the legacies of my Arizona desert experience.

Susan Chase, President
Desierto Verde

Lifetime Environmental Awareness Award Presented to John A. Thomson

Earlier this summer, ANA member John A. Thomson, Ph.D., D.A., of Vitamin Institute and SUPERthrive® originator, received a surprise visit from America’s Natural Master Gardener, Nick Federoff, on behalf of Sustainable Environmental Education (SEE), to award him their highest recognition, the Lifetime Environmental Awareness Award.

In keeping as “green” as possible, SEE opted for a simple presentation at Dr. Thomson’s SUPERthrive Vitamin Institute facilities in North Hollywood.

“Whenever I speak with Dr. Thomson, it’s an honor,” Federoff said. “To formally recognize someone who has been working for nearly a century for the good of the environment is humbling and will be etched in my mind and heart forever.”

Dr. Thomson’s best known environmental contribution is his worldwide-used product SUPERthrive® and its outstanding effects: reforestation; increased volume, grade, and speed of crops; overcoming adverse growing conditions; providing mental and

physical health helps; eliminating interior toxicity; reviving trees and other plants; normalizing and perfecting plants; improving recreation (including satisfaction) of gardening for children, handicapped, committed persons.

Thomson’s commitment to the environment began as early as childhood. “My grandfather was an orchardist, and my parents supported the protection of wildlife and national parks advocated by President Theodore Roosevelt and naturalist John Muir,” Thomson

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