

Moisture and light trigger blooming

Blk Mt News 10 May 1984

There are six species of *Echinocereus triglochidiatus* identified in Arizona, with up to 30 species found from California to South Dakota and southward as far as Mexico City. The hedgehog bloom is anywhere from a deep-red to a pink or lavender color, depending upon the variety.

Springtime is cactus-blooming time, with the hedgehog usually starting the desert's annual flower show. The timetable for budding and flowering is dependent upon just the right temperature and moisture combinations.

Since we've had a very dry spring this year, the blooms of the desert cacti are not quite as bountiful as last year. But the few blooms I've seen on the hedgehogs so far are just as beautiful as ever!

It's quite a visual reward to spot a solitary floral tube bursting from a seemingly parched group of hedgehogs. Red- or red-and-yellow-flowered hedgehogs do not close at night. They stay open for two or three days, until the end of their flowering period.

However, lavender-shaded varieties close their blooms at night and reopen the next morning. Sometimes these lavender flowers wither at the end of a single day in very hot weather.

• The illustration shows a

melanacanthus hedgehog variety in bloom. The flower is approximately 1- to 1½-inches in diameter and 1¼-inches to 2½-inches long. Spines are nearly straight, measure up to 2½-inches long, and are either grey, black, pink, tan or straw-colored. This hedgehog is particularly stunning when found in clusters.

Enjoy the blooms this spring! More articles will follow in the coming weeks covering staghorn, prickly pear, barrel and saguaro cacti.

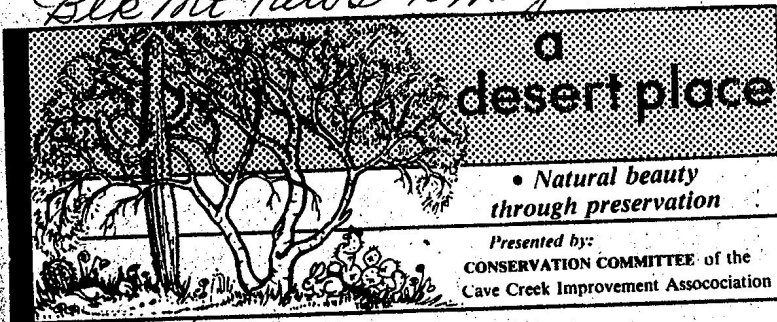
On April 28, at 10 a.m., a male western tanager was spotted in the area near School House Road and Arroyo. He was sitting on the top-most branch of a blooming palo verde tree eating insects from the flowers.

For those of you who don't know a tanager, he is a gorgeous bright-yellow color — like a hooded oriole — has black wings with white wing bars and a scarlet red head.

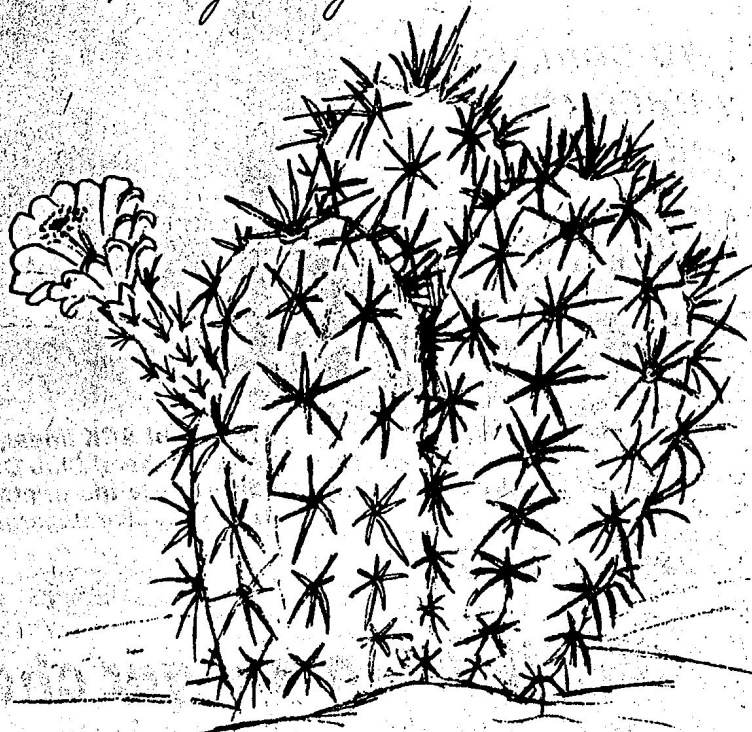
Tanagers are not residents in our area but are common in Douglas fir, spruce, pine and aspen forests. At this time of year they are migrating from south of here to as far north as Canada.

Because it was snowing in Prescott and raining in Cave Creek on April 28, this bird probably decided to postpone his long journey until the weather cleared.

Questions and comments should be sent to: Conservation Committee, P.O. Box 4212, Cave Creek, AZ 85331.



Hedgehog



The hedgehog