THINGS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN COLLECTING PLANTS

There are four categories of protected Arizona Native Plants. Lists of these species are viewable at http://ag.arizona.edu/herbarium/links.html. In order to obey the laws concerning these plants, recognition of the different species is needed. Toward this end, in the UA Herbarium, and also in the TBG library, there is ARIZONA RARE PLANT FIELD GUIDE, a very helpful volume compiled by a Collaboration of Agencies and Organizations.

Whatever your political or ethical point of view:

-Remember that all land in Arizona, even ditches and roadsides, belongs to someone.

-The way the legal, and the traditional system of ownership, go, you technically need permission from the landowner when you do anything on a piece of land not your own.

-There’s no such thing as a plant or animal that does not belong to someone; usually the owner of the land is their owner.

-Public or other commonly owned lands are not an exception to the rule. You must obtain permission from the public agency responsible for the land in order to do things on it.

-The best permission is written permission, but in practice, verbal, “Gentleman’s Agreement,” permissions are often used.

-My personal advice about collecting is as follows:

1. Never collect the last of anything; no trophy hunting.
2. Collect very discreetly, unless you want to talk with irate passersby.
3. Collect in such a way as not to harm the area or the plants left behind; use clippers, trowels, watch where you step.
4. For extensive collections, get the permits; for the occasional weed by the side of the road, be inconspicuous and take your chances.
5. Never collect in National Parks or Monuments or Public Gardens without a permit.
6. Avoid picking pretty flowers beside roads or trails. Other people want to enjoy them, too.
7. By the way, it’s prohibited to collect on the UA Campus.
8. Because so many of them are on the protected plant list, avoid collecting Orchidaceae, Cactaceae, Liliaceae, Agavaceae. If you lust after these plants, patronize greenhouses, and/or become a serious researcher, obtain the permits and accept the responsibilities researchers have.
9. Southern Arizona is an unsafe area for persons or vehicles due to border issues.

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