

DRY FORESUMMER...ENDURANCE

HOT, HOT, HOT......with triple digit temperatures and single digit humidity levels, the desert bakes in May and June. Rooted in place, plants have to be tough to survive. In the case of the saguaro, a waxy coating on the plant's skin restricts water loss, and spines shade its surfaces from the sun. Like all cacti, saguaros are succulents, their stems swelling or shrinking with the intake or loss of water collected by roots — some just below the surface — spread as far or farther than the plant is tall. Other plants conserve water with smaller leaves, or no leaves at all. Limberbush, for example, is drought-deciduous, shedding its leaves when it is too dry.

Elder Brother, l'itoy, planted beads of sweat from his brow and from them grew the first saguaro.

IN JUNE, THEIR POLLINATING DUTIES DONE, bats and white-winged doves gorge on ripening saguaro fruit and the Tohono O'odham mark the beginning of their calendar year by "singing down the rain" with sacred saguaro wine.



THE PARCHED DESERT IS NOT WITHOUT COLOR. On frost-protected hillsides and flats, ironwood trees are an explosion of pale pink and lavender, leafless southwestern coral bean is a slash of scarlet, and the radiant white of saguaro flowers guides nectar-feeding bats to their reward.

A keystone species of the Sonoran Desert, the microhabitat beneath an ironwood's canopy can be 15° cooler in summer and 5° +/- warmer in winter.

IN THE HEAT OF MIDDAY, "Chi-ca-go-go" can be heard from high in a mesquite tree as a male Gambel's Quail calls to his family. Normally found in gregarious coveys, the quail paired up in late spring and are now proudly showing off newly hatched, precocious chicks.



These chicks are fully feathered upon hatching

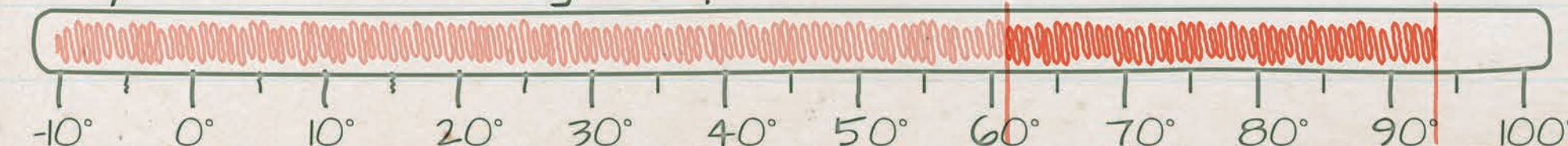


ONE NIGHT STAND

Looking like so many dead sticks, the cryptic *Peniocereus greggii* shelters within the branches of a creosote. Waiting for its moment in the moonlight, perfumed flowers will bloom for just one night, proclaiming itself "Queen of the Night."

This brings forth this once a year!

Dry Foresummer Avg. Temperature - 61°F (16°C) to 94°F (34°C)



Average Precipitation
0.43"
(10.9 mm)

