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**October 2017**



# CAMPUS ARBORETUM

*The University of Arizona Campus Arboretum is a living laboratory promoting stewardship and conservation of urban trees.*

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Dear Tanya,

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## Related Resources

## Events and Tours

For details, see the [calendar of events page online.](#)

- **September 30, 1:30 pm**
  - [Sonoran Native Plants Tour](#)
- **October 7, 3:00 pm-4:30 pm\***
  - [Poetry: Alberto Rios, Poet Laureate of AZ, Bard of the Borderlands](#)
- **October 10, 1:30 pm**
  - [Arboretum History Tour](#)
- **October 15, 1:30 pm**
  - [Landscape Horticulture](#)
- **October 31, 12:00 pm**
  - [Edible Landscapes Tour](#)

To participate in a tree tour, please send RSVP by **Email to: [infoarboretum@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:infoarboretum@ag.arizona.edu)**  
Indicate a name and contact #, the tour(s) and dates you would like to participate and your group size. We'll reply to confirm your reservation. **\*No RSVP required for Poetry events**


Thanks to  
The Pima Co. Master Gardener Program  
for leading the guided tree tours and to  
the University of Arizona Poetry Center  
for Po-e-tree Events!

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Campus Arboretum

[View the full story here](#)

## University of Arizona Boojum History



As we enter the first few days of fall and the cool season finally approaches, so does the optimal growing season for one of the most extraordinary plants on the University of Arizona campus, the Boojum (*Fouquieria columnaris*). In fact, some refer to this as one of the most unusual plants in the world. Native to Baja California, *Fouquieria columnaris* is a relative of the ocotillo. The columnar form grows up to eighty feet tall and live over seven hundred years. The Seri people, an indigenous Mexican tribe, believe that boojums were once giants who, while attempting to escape a flood, got trapped and turned into trees by the rising water. To them, the boojum hold great power, such that harming one brings a destructive wind upon the land. Its common, English name is attributed to Godfrey Sykes, a well-read and well-traveled Englishman, who was quoting "The Hunting of the Snark" by Lewis Carroll. Upon seeing one for the first time, he said, "Ho, ho, a boojum, definitely a boojum," and the name has stuck.

The boojum were first planted in 1929 by President Homer Shantz, who commissioned reserachers from the Desert Lab to bring back a collection that

adorned the historic cactus garden for almost 100 years. The plant, which looks as weird as its name, amazed campus community and visitors alike and served to create reason to reflection. Sadly, the last of Shantz's original specimens was destroyed in 2014. While small off-spring from the originals continue to grow at the base of the original parents, The Campus Arboretum is eager to perpetuate the tradition.

Most recently, a 3-foot-tall boojum was planted on campus near the site of the Shantz collection in the Joseph Wood Krutch Garden. This sprite botanical addition was donated by Tucson resident and Campus Arboretum Board Member, Bob Baker, who grew the specimen in a pot for decades. This allowed us to transplant the plant with an intact root ball. So far, it appears to have negotiated the process of being transplanted into the campus grounds (in 2016) much better than previous attempts. In 2015, for example, a magnificent 8-foot-tall specimen obtained and transplanted on campus (with support from ISA arborist and Campus Arboretum Board Member Juan Barba, in partnership with Arizona Cactus and funded by Dick Weidhopf) died after a very wet, warm summer. We believe the stress of being shipped bare root, and transplanted into warm, wet conditions predisposed the plant to fungal infection that led to its demise.

We continue to learn and proudly continue the campus tradition of raising and tending these wonderfully unique plants.

[View the full story here](#)

Enjoy!  
Tanya Quist, Director  
University of Arizona Campus Arboretum

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