



The Agave Garden

In 2006, to honor world-renowned botanist Howard S. Gentry, arboretum volunteers planted a garden under the shade of trees on the south side of the Physics and Atmospheric Sciences building. The garden was marked by a small interpretive sign indicating its purpose. Over time, however, some specimens multiplied and thrived while others in the garden gradually completed their lifespan or succumbed to environmental stress. In 2024, we invited other volunteers to assist in collecting and planting replacements. We then installed a larger, bronze interpretive sign that will stand the test of time and anchor this location as a more lasting tribute to such a botanist and the striking and versatile agave species we love.

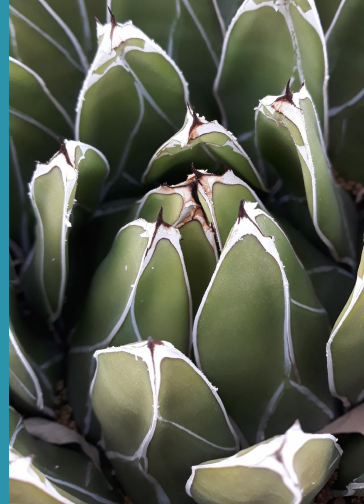
To learn more about this project, visit this project page
<https://arboretum.arizona.edu/howard-gentry-agave-collection>



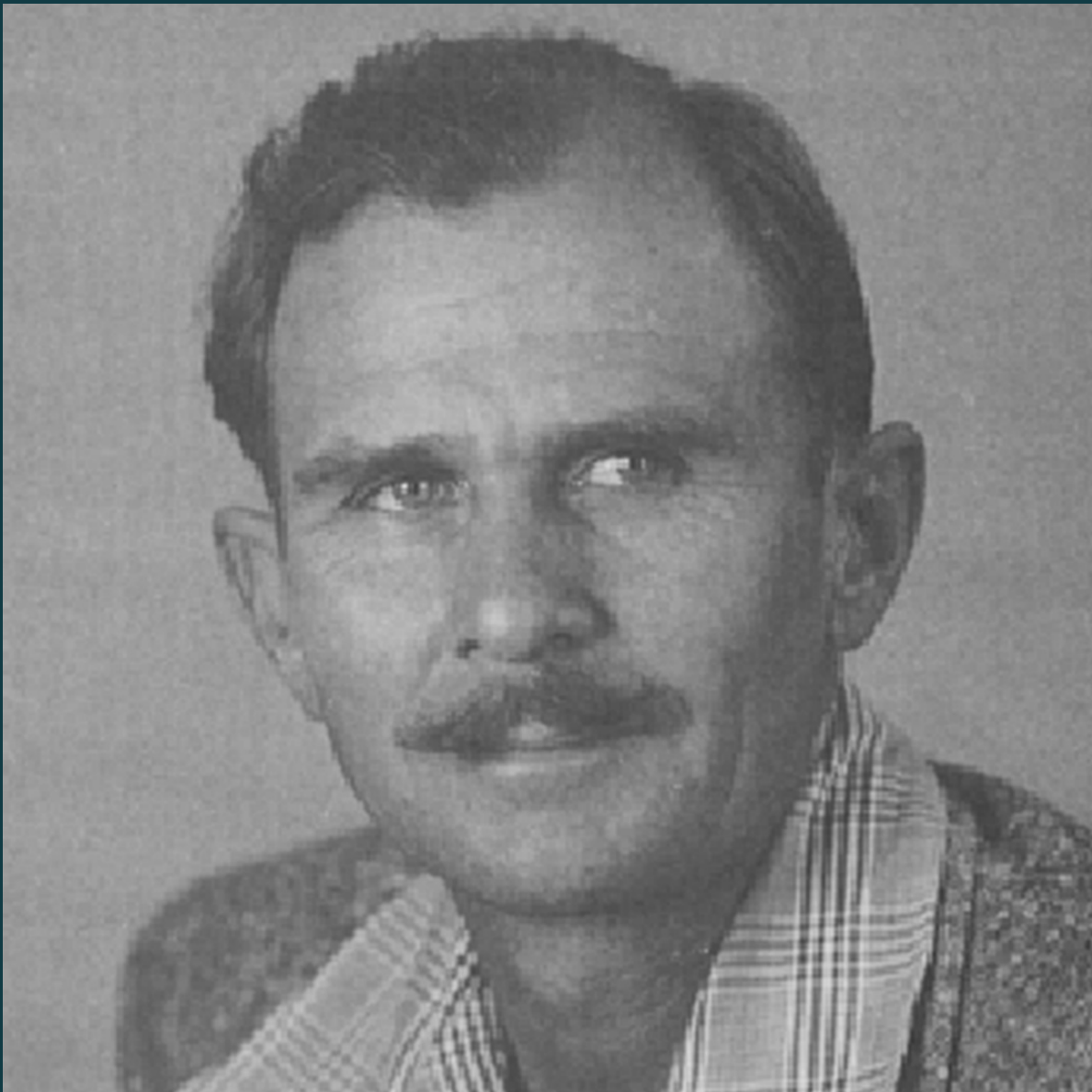
cows horn agave



Parry's agave



Queen Victoria agave



Celebrating Howard Gentry

Born 121 years ago, in December 1903, Howard Scott Gentry was an American botanist, eventually becoming recognized as the world's leading authority on the agaves. Educated at the University of California, Berkeley and at the University of

Michigan, Gentry later became a USDA agricultural explorer. Travelling throughout his career to 24 countries, Gentry dedicated his career to learning about and writing about plants. His favorites eventually emerged as members of the wild yam family which had potential medicinal properties and the agaves. He was a man after my own heart based on his determination to focus purely on the plants throughout his career :) He is reported to have said

"I refused several times to become a desk man for USDA. [There was a chance of cutting out all the travel], but I told them, 'No, not me. I want to work with plants, not people. People are problems.'"

Gentry won the Guggenheim Fellowship for Natural Sciences in US and Canada and authored many books - most famously the "Agaves of Continental North America". To learn more about Dr. Gentry, [visit this page](#).

Campus Arboretum Tours



For more than a century the campus landscape has served as a living laboratory to test what plants do well in the Arizona desert. As a result of this work, the Campus Arboretum has a wonderful collection of unusual and delightful specimens.

Join the Pima Co. Master Gardeners on campus
for a guided tour of the campus arboretum trees.
These tours are free, scheduled throughout the year from August to
April, and require advance registration.

To view the schedule or for information on tours and
registration [click here](#).

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