

**Breakout Session**  
**Education and Public Outreach: Efforts to Increase Awareness and Use of Edible Trees in Arizona**

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**GOAL:**

Discuss ideas on the purpose, role, functions, and possible organizational structure of a network comprised of tree-based edible landscapes in Arizona and the people who create and utilize these landscapes.

Examples: arboreta, public or private orchards or food forests, edible urban tree-based landscapes, native edible trees on public lands, among others.

Potential Target Audiences: general public, gleaning networks, scientific researchers, plant conservationists, plant propagators, educators, business enterprises, tourists, tourism bureaus, etc.

**QUESTIONS ADDRESSED:**

1. What role(s) do sites that have edible trees play in engaging and educating the public?
  - Sites are locations where “free” harvesting takes place
  - Sites serve as examples for the public, allowing people to get a sense of what things look like (how it might look in their landscape), and how to conduct the harvesting techniques (trimming or not trimming up tree limbs, etc.)
  - Sites also serve as an example of potential garden layout and structure; whether to plant certain species close to walls; how to avoid the loss of a tree due to frost, etc.
  - Existing sites serve as the class locations for many NGOs offering educational activities; public (county) lands are only available for public (county) classes; other public lands (BLM, Forest Service) may only require permission be obtained prior to using the space; but even other public lands (city, NPS, state parks, etc.) are off-limits to classes and harvesting
  - NGOs that offer classes and educational workshops could partner with the county and/or other public entity to use their space for the classes; perhaps this could be done through collaborative grants or projects... need to explore more (or share these sorts of concepts through a network?)

- It would be helpful for some educators to have a REASON available as to why they are not allowed to harvest from public lands; would like something written as an explanation that they can provide to their students/program participants that would prevent them from collecting in sensitive areas.
- **\*\*Development of a Harvesting Code of Ethics would be an important tangible product from the Network\*\***

2. What role(s) do groups who use sites with edible trees play in engaging and educating the public?

- NGOs and other educational groups develop and host educational workshops
- Groups identify locations for workshop activities (harvesting, preparation, etc.)
- Groups typically host events – mostly on private property
- Groups develop and disseminate educational materials – guides, cookbooks, recipes, basic identification (when the tree is ready to harvest), etc.
- Groups recruit and coordinate (and manage) volunteers and groups that do the harvesting or gleaning
- Groups are creative and do a lot of networking amongst themselves to develop new projects and harvesting opportunities
- Groups currently do a lot of fundraising, grant writing (concept development), grant management, and project implementation
- Some groups have loaner materials for individuals to conduct harvesting (or grinding) activities; they equip individuals so they can be more self-sufficient in harvesting what is available
- Groups have experience and know-how (identification, harvesting, preparation and consumption) – full-circle knowledge – to share with others
- Groups target specific audiences: youth, high school students, children, retirees, refugees, tourists, etc.

3. What role(s) could the statewide Network play in engaging and educating the public?

- Coordination of annual event/conference for networking (similar to this meeting) – there are many more stories and examples to share
- Capitalizing on annual events that pertain to tree products (“Year of the Apple”, or Specific Harvest Festivals, etc.)
- Clearinghouse of resources available (webpage, links to other websites; guides; development of “heritage maps”, members, volunteer groups, etc.);

Dissemination of information that all the “member” organizations have available

- Providing opportunities for “members” to network and collaborate; development of partnerships and collaborations
- Provide models for organizational structure (NGO to NGO) or for programs
- Outreach to a broader audience
- Speaking with a louder voice because they represent many – thus, increasing influence the groups may have on policy development and statewide issues; over-arching promotional needs for the broader group; political weight; issue influence
- Allow for the sharing of information between and among “member” groups; help to identify other experts that can be called upon for events and activities
- Volunteer sharing
- Email lists for event notifications
- Gleaning alerts – notification of when specific trees are ready for harvest; or special needs that have been identified
- Group momentum on issues; professional development for people/professionals in this arena (encouraging young professionals to get involved)
- **\*\*Development and maintenance of a Calendar of Events for tree-based projects\*\***; cross-promotion of events to prevent conflicting events

4. Given the plethora of educational materials available on this subject, what gaps or voids in educational topics could a statewide Network cover? Would it be useful for the Network to develop additional public outreach programs and materials?

- Natural history (broad sense: biology, ecological, environmental connections including pollinators, sustainability)
- Historical or traditional values and uses (including recipes)
- Nutritional value
- Food safety; harvesting safety
- Benefits of trees (broad sense: property values, C sequestration, energy savings, habitats, shade)
- How To: plant, care for, harvest, prepare, store, use, and preserve
- What do with excess (where can you take it? How can it be saved?)
- Water harvesting; tree water use
- What to do about litter – seen as a resource that can be used as mulch, water savings, and composting

- Appropriateness of a particular tree in a specific area of the state... what works? What is indigenous? If you plant a non-indigenous, what sort of special care is required?
- Where to purchase or obtain the tree (specifically heritage)
- Basic tree identification (is this already sufficiently available?)
- Site design – what to plant, where to plant it, and what to plant it near (other plants)
- Why should I care? Economic value of the products.
- Tree value – economic benefits of historic restoration... tourism, property values, etc.
- Sharing content with other public entities/agencies within the public sector; educational groups sharing info with agency transportation departments and those groups that use DOC crews for cleanup efforts
- Networking with other groups within the membership of the Network
- Increase awareness of resources available.
- \*\*Development of a Speakers Bureau (experts in the field) who could be trained volunteers who provide outreach upon request; various “speakers kits” could be developed that cover many topics developed for a variety of audiences that could be deployed upon request/scheduling\*\* The requests for speakers could come through the Network.
- Market development for gleaned products – researching and providing economic benefits
- \*\*Development of an economic value listing of products for people to use for their taxes (write-off value, tax deduction value, etc.)\*\*
- Promoting the development of statewide incentives for planting edible trees.
- Promoting the collaboration for grants and future funding
- Development of a mobile app for identifying heritage trees or a map of heritage sites in Arizona; development of QR codes for attachment at designated harvesting sites or even on trees in nurseries

5. How can the Network further destination-based tourism for sites with edible trees?

- Engage tourism groups (Chambers of Commerce, State Tourism Board, etc.)
- Sponsor an annual event/promotion
- Promote events through network members and their groups/volunteers
- Develop package trips that visit heritage sites
- Develop a heritage map to direct tourists to specific sites; have brochures made up that are available through tourist sites (visitor bureaus, hotels, etc.)

- Identify links to existing events that we can tap into (narrow the focus to edible tree products if the event is broader-scaled...like a harvest festival – specifically promote the heritage or edible trees in the area of the harvest festival)
- Promote and encourage statewide connections
- \*\*Develop and arrange a press tour for people providing tourist guidance (hotel concierges, etc.) to spread the word about the destinations\*\*
- Begin to develop opportunities for Faith-based Tourism (Father Kino, traditional cultures, etc.)
- Develop marketing opportunities
- Promote local and statewide connections to increase participation in statewide events (existing tree events: apples, citrus, date, palm, etc.)
- Develop new statewide events focused on specific trees and their products (ex. pine) or a combination of all trees... a general celebration of trees (perhaps around Arbor Day – annually the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday in April)

EXAMPLE MODELS provided for developing the Network:

\*Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center – good example of a combination of member organizations that allows it to leverage group for marketing, outreach, and fundraising (grants mostly).