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Monthly
Meet Our Makers Newsletter

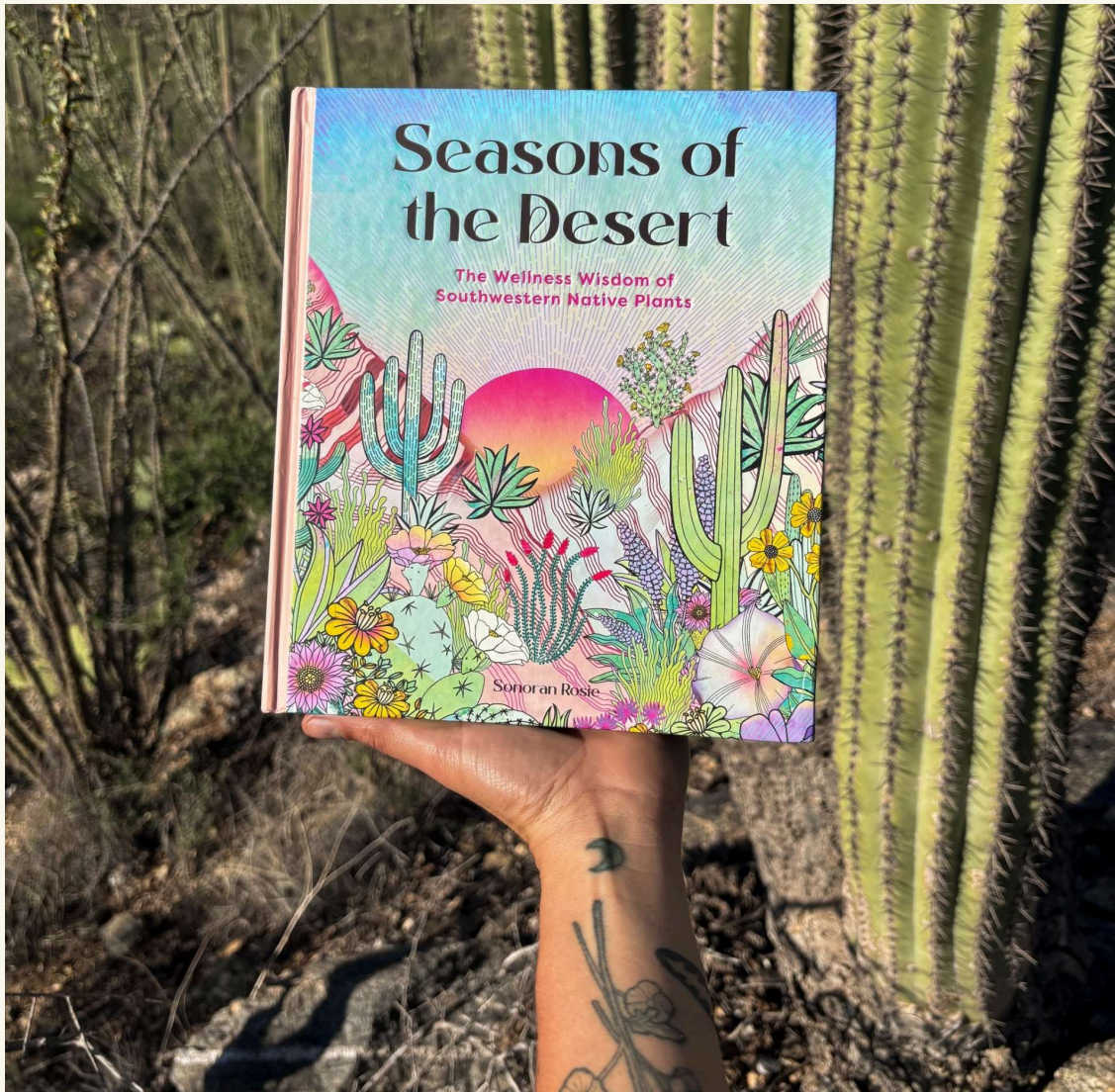


Meet Rosie Crocker

We're excited to spotlight Tucson herbalist and entrepreneur Rosie Crocker once again: this time in celebration of her debut as a published author. This fall, Rosie released *Seasons of the Desert*, a deeply personal and beautifully illustrated guide to 75 desert plants. Drawing from her own experiences in the Sonoran Desert, she shares when and how to forage each plant, along with their medicinal and skincare benefits. To mark the occasion, we're revisiting her original Meet Our Makers feature

from April 2023, which has been updated to reflect recent changes in her life and business. Keep reading to learn more about Rosie or click on the link below to discover what's new in Tucson.

What's New



There's something about the Sonoran Desert's flora and fauna that enlivens Rosie Crocker's soul.

She talks about creosote, jojoba and prickly pear with such fervor you would think she's referring to the love of her life.

And in some ways, perhaps she is.

"The Sonoran Desert has given me a reason to find joy in little things," Crocker said. "The desert is so different and unique, and there are such distinct plants you start to

notice the difference in each season. Times like spring, when all the flowers come out of nowhere, and all the wildlife along with – it's become a continual adventure."

Today, Rosie's dedication to the desert is on full display – in her shop, Arizona Poppy, and on her Sonoran Rosie website. It's here that she channels her natural aptitude for extracting oils from the Sonoran Desert's healing plant life for her line of skincare and selfcare products.

Best sellers include the Monsoon Diffuser Scent, Natural Vetiver Incense, and Prickly Pear Cactus Fruit Lip Balm, she says.

And of course, you can't forget the Creosote Bush Dried Shower Hanging Bundle, a top pick among Tucsonans who have transplanted elsewhere and long for the smell of "desert rain."

"My goal with my business was to take my herbal desert knowledge and inject it into sustainable products for everyday use," Crocker said. "I felt the herbalism world has a lot of niche products, but the vast majority of people don't know how to use those products. I take pride in the fact that my products are easily approachable and work far better than their pharmaceutical counterparts."



Though Crocker has almost always lived in proximity to the Sonoran Desert, she didn't begin to develop a deep appreciation for it until 10 years ago, during a time when she was searching for purpose in her life. The more time she spent in nature, the more grounded she felt.

"If you don't have a connection to the natural world, everything is out of sync," she said.

She began reading and researching about desert plants before having an enlightening moment that her life's work should coincide with her source of happiness. So, at the age of 30, she took a leap of faith and began apprenticing with a woman who she calls her mentor, Tucson Herbalist Becki Garza of La Yerberia Botanicals.

At the time, part of Garza's business revolved around extracting creosote and putting it into healing salves, a process that Crocker was unfamiliar with, but eager to learn.

Crocker soon mastered the creosote extraction process and began experimenting with other desert plants such as prickly pear and jojoba. The more she worked with the plants and used them on herself, the more enamored she became.

"Creosote is the No. 1 skin care healer. Minor cuts, sunburn, acne, eczema, even radiation burns – it heals. I call it nature's antibiotic ointment. Then there's jojoba oil, which offers more moisture for your skin than a lot of other plants, because it mimics your skin's natural oils and absorbs more quickly. Then, there's prickly pear, which I call nature's Gatorade," Crocker said excitedly, before cutting herself off. "You can probably tell I'm passionate about this subject. In truth, all desert plants have a ton of antibiotic, antifungal, and moisturizing properties. It's because of the extreme environment they're derived from."



Today, Crocker has transformed her passion for desert plants into a product line that she initially sold online and from a room in her house, before opening the brick-and-mortar Arizona Poppy in 2022.

The shop, with overt '70s psychedelic vibes, is stocked with not only her product line, but those of other Arizona, mostly Tucson-based, makers.

In total there are more than 75 local makers' products featured, including those of JosPar, who creates Tucson centric graphic artwork on T-shirts and stickers. Her shop also features the ever-popular Sigfus Designs jewelry, featuring handmade charms.

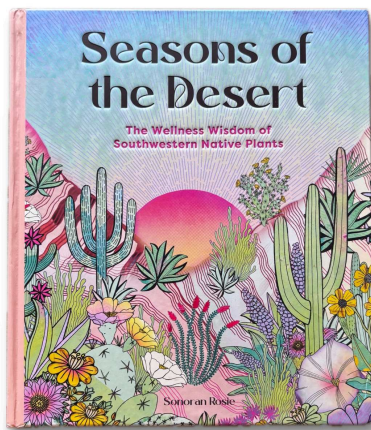
Crocker's commitment to supporting local, independent businesses people of color, queer folx, and women cannot be overstated.

During the uncertainty of the pandemic, Crocker founded a twice annual outdoor marketplace called Desert Air Market that she now runs with the aid of other local creatives so that Arizona makers can sell their products directly to the public.

Today, the once fledgling marketplace has grown tremendously, and during the next one, taking place on Nov. 15 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., the team anticipates more than 4,000 shoppers.

Desert Air Market has shifted Crocker's focus from exclusively crafting products to developing a business acumen she admits she didn't have in the early days of her career. Today, she considers herself a mentor of sorts to other local business owners, who come to her for advice and support as they look to launch or grow.

"I realize that when money is going to people in the community that makes our community flourish," Crocker said. "That's a very worthwhile endeavor in my opinion."



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