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## Ravens Way

nature sanctuaries raise environmental awareness

Tue, 07/24/2012 - 11:40pm



At Raven's Nest they compost all their food scraps along with other organic matter and former plant parts such as small branches, dry grass clippings, and leaves. Composting is the basis for growing the healthiest, most nutritious, and disease-resistant edible plants. Photos courtesy www.ravensnatureschool.com.

(CLICK on photo above, to see even more photos from this story)

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Information from Vincent Pinto, Ravens Way

Naturalist, wildlife biologist and outdoor instructor Vincent Pinto has been teaching people of all ages, interests, and backgrounds about the natural world since 1987. He has led individuals and groups throughout the country on trips of discovery on a myriad of topics — bird-watching, ethnobotany, tracking, stone-age skills, wilderness survival skills, astronomy, wildlife habitat restoration, sustainable living practices and more.

Vince has learned his unique skills through countless hours of experimentation, via profound experiences in nature throughout North America and the world, and from some of the field's leading teachers. He believes in providing detailed one-on-one



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instruction to each student, carefully guiding them through various experiences to maximize their enjoyment

He will be a featured speaker and instructor at this year's Southwest Wings Birding and Nature Festival coming up the first week of August in Sierra Vista.

Vincent and his wife, Claudia, run Ravens-Way Wild Journeys, which is dedicated to raising environmental awareness through hands-on, experiential and affordable nature programs. Together they own two nature sanctuaries — 42 acres at Raven's Nest near Lake Patagonia and 50-plus acres at Raven's Mountain in the foothills of the Chiricahua Mountains. Vince and Claudia, passionate conservationists and environmental stewards, tirelessly protect these special unspoiled habitats. They hope to inspire all to embark upon journeys of nature adventure and earth stewardship.

The topic to be addressed in this article is the sustainable living practices practices workshops that they offer and promote.

## Organic Gardening & Composting

Using Earth-friendly techniques, they guide paticipants step by step to create their own organic gardens of nutritious and delicious edibles. They discuss specific design and planning considerations and constraints, including benefits from passive waterharvesting techniques. They'll teach you the importance of composting, soil testing and preparation, seed propagation and transplanting, companion planting, efficient watering, using local varieties of edible plants, creating useful garden structures, and how to overall nurture healthy edible crops. Participants can learn and practice these time-honored techniques and enjoy their own locally produced, healthy, organic food.

As composting is the basis for growing the healthiest, most nutritious, and most disease-resistant plants, they'll also teach how to build your own productive compost pile.

At Ravens-Way, they feel that it's vital for more people to be growing, sharing, trading and selling local, organic produce for the sake of better human and environmental health. In a world of increasingly hungry people with little or no access to healthy fruits, vegetables and herbs it's essential for all to participate with bio-regional organic gardens.

At Raven's Nest they compost all their food scraps along with other organic matter and former plant parts such as small branches, dry grass clippings, and leaves. When added to the soil it retains water, adds valuable nutrients and neutralizes the alkalinity of our sky islands soils.

There are many other steps they take in stewardship such as xeriscaping, invasive plant removal, land conservation, habitat management which all come before the next step — rainwater harvesting. To find out about all of these check out their website at www.ravensnatureschool.com.

### Rainwater Harvesting

The American Southwest is renowned for its brevity of precipitation and its resultant aridity. Thus, there's no greater incentive for capturing, storing, and wisely using the little rainwater that makes it to our region.

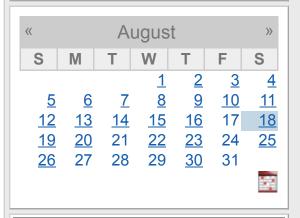
At Raven's Nest they've implemented a variety of water-harvesting techniques all aimed at maximizing the benefits of our precipitation. Through a combination of passive harvesting structures, such as berms, small check dams, and gavians we've begun to "plant the water" in the ground.

These structures pause the water long enough for it to soak more completely into the ground, thus benefiting a diversity of native plants.

As the plants increase and prosper, so too do a great variety of native wildlife species.

Additionally, they actively harvest rainwater off of both their school and abode. At the

- and learning.





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Sierra Vista Herald **Staff Tweets** 

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Sierra Vista Herald Staff Tweets school the rainwater pipes into a pond where some of it is pumped into their 20,000 gallon rain water holding tanks that in turn provide water for both organic gardens and native plant landscaping.

The pond itself is a mecca for wildlife seeking to drink, bath or feed.

They invite those interested to take a rainwater-harvesting workshop with them and learn how to transform your landscape into a wildlife haven, while decreasing harmful erosion.

They would love to visit your land (however large or small) and to act as consultants, devising an affordable and workable harvesting regime for your site.

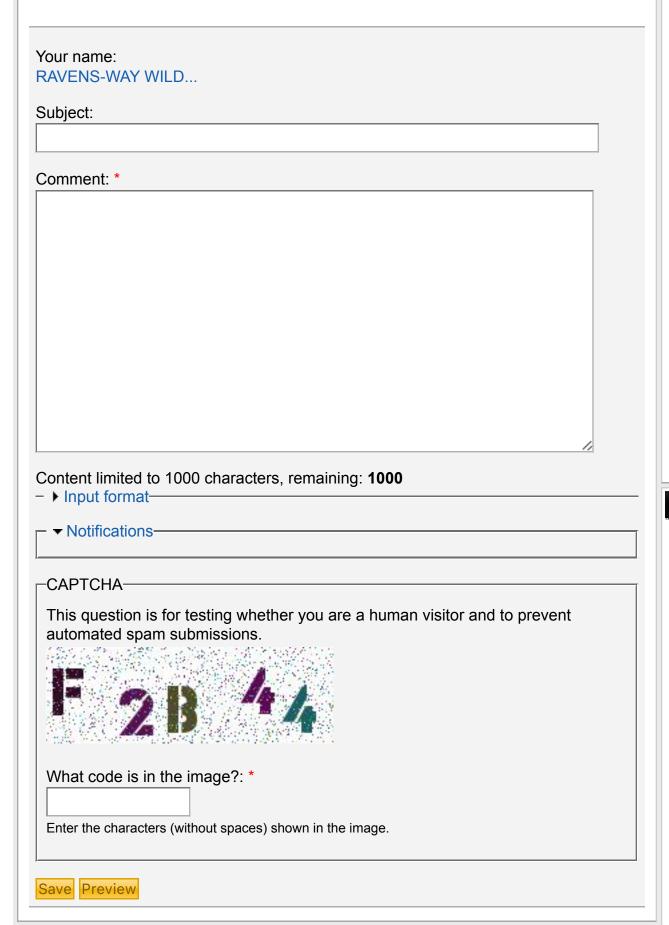
They have many other programs, camps, classes and adventures available. They can be contacted at Vincent Pinto, nature-journeys@hotmail.com or (520) 425-6425, or Claudia Campos-Pinto at claudia campos@post.harvard.edu or (520)519-9966.

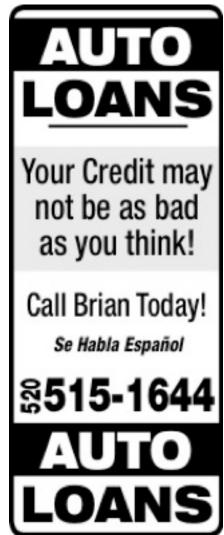
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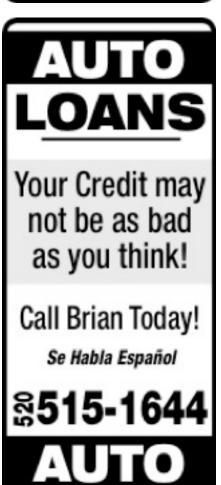


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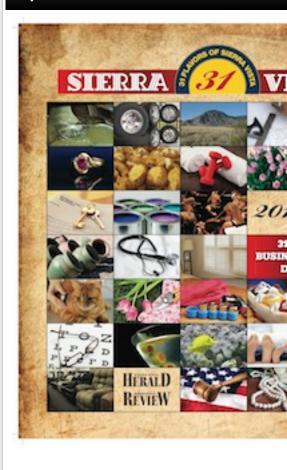
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