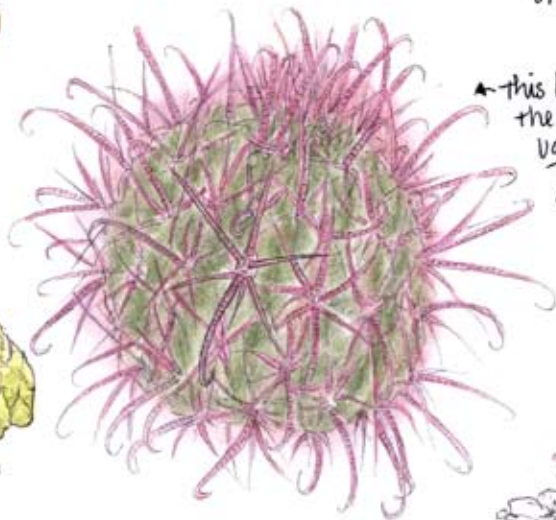


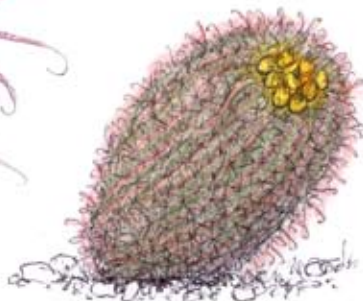
December 24, 2012, 9:15 a.m., 54° overcast/variable. light breeze (also December 25)

## Fishhook Barrel Cactus

This wonderful cactus is sometimes called the Compass Cactus because it always leans toward the Southwest. I found one that was five feet tall and leaning - soon it will topple, a common hazard to these cacti. This is a late bloomer, so it still has fruit in December. Birds and mice and woodrats dig into their lemony acid yellow (they're yellow and taste like an acidic lemon) fruits, digging out the little black seeds inside. Then the ants come for leftovers. The O'odham Indians used the tough hooks as fish hooks - and they are really tough, pretty much unbreakable.



← this baby is about the size of a volleyball. They can get 6' tall



the fruits ripen in a cluster at the top, a brilliant touch of color against the winter gray-green and purple (the cacti, some of them, turn purple in cold weather).