

Hello this is Ranger James, welcome to another Grand Canyon National Park Podcast for Sunday, October 12, 2008.

This is our autumn podcast from Indian garden. This green and lush oasis 4.5 miles below the South Rim began as a tourist camp in the 1890's and continues today as a popular destination for day hikers and thru hikers heading to Phantom Ranch or the North or South Rims.

The weather has been perfect. It could not be better for our canyon hikers and rim to rimmers. The average highs have been in the 80's and the lows at night in the 50's; perfect sleeping temperatures. You can feel and smell the autumn in the air. The local flora and fauna are preparing themselves for the winter ahead too. The squirrels are fattening up eating the hack berries and parts of the silver leaf nightshade so please don't feed them. They may look cute begging for food but they have plenty here and don't need to depend on food from humans.

Soon our local trees will turn their vibrant autumn colors. Some of our wildflowers are blooming and the prickly pear cactus has given up its fruits to the tanagers, sparrows and rock squirrels. We have seen quite a few Grand Canyon pink rattlesnakes and as long as you give them their space they usually are not aggressive and won't bother you. September is the time of year that they give birth to live young, so be on the lookout. You may know of the endangered California Condors as well, that call Grand Canyon home. We have been very lucky to have two successful nests this year. There are two young birds in the park that are just waiting to take that first step and fledge from the nest. They are expected to fledge or fly - any day now. The beautiful swallowtail butterflies are flittering around showing off their beautiful yellow and black coloring. Just last night we found a fantastic male tarantula in the ranger station. We very carefully collected it and put it outside.

There are a lot of exciting things going on down here. And I have been very busy doing whatever I can to get things up and running for our visitors. We are offering daily programs and we will be opening up our Visitor Information Station in late October. The new station will be open daily for hiking information, maps a library to borrow books and a little bit of shelter, shade and comfort. You can come on in and chat with a ranger and plan your day or just relax in this Garden oasis.

I hope to see you down here soon, stop by the Ranger station to say hi and remember no matter what time of year please hike smart by drinking plenty of fluids, electrolyte drinks and eating lots of salty foods. Hiking here in the canyon is not a good time to be on a diet. Take your time, rest in the shade. Enjoy the view and don't forget to breathe.

Thank you for visiting your national parks and until next time this is Ranger James with another podcast from Indian garden.