

ARCADIA NEWS

ARCADIA Home & design



WAKE UP THOSE WALLS: *Page 9*

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EDITOR'S NOTE

A couple years ago, a friend of mine mentioned that she was going to put wallpaper up in her daughter's bedroom, and I remember thinking, 'Wallpaper?! I thought that trend was dead?' Turns out, I was wrong.

Wallpaper is enjoying a well-deserved renaissance, and local installer Decker Williams explained how today's wallpaper choices add texture, personality, and warmth through bold murals, warm neutrals, and unexpected placements that transform everyday spaces into design statements. By the way, if you want to know how Saylor and Eisley's room turned out, find a photo of it on page 8.

Art takes center stage as Scottsdale Art Week returns to WestWorld, bringing global galleries, museum-quality works, and automotive design together for an immersive experience. The event highlights Scottsdale's growing presence in the international art world while offering an approachable environment for seasoned collectors and first-time buyers alike.

Together, these topics reflect a shared theme: creating environments that feel personal, inspiring, and functional. Whether through art, interior design, or outdoor living, this issue celebrates the ways thoughtful choices can transform both homes and communities across the Valley.

Stories and feedback are always welcome. Until we meet again, thank you for reading Arcadia News and Arcadia Home & Design!

mallory

— Mallory

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FreePower is changing the way families charge devices by embedding wireless power directly into countertops, desks, and tables, letting Qi-enabled gadgets charge without visible plugs or pads.

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Power, Unplugged

FreePower embeds wireless charging beneath everyday surfaces

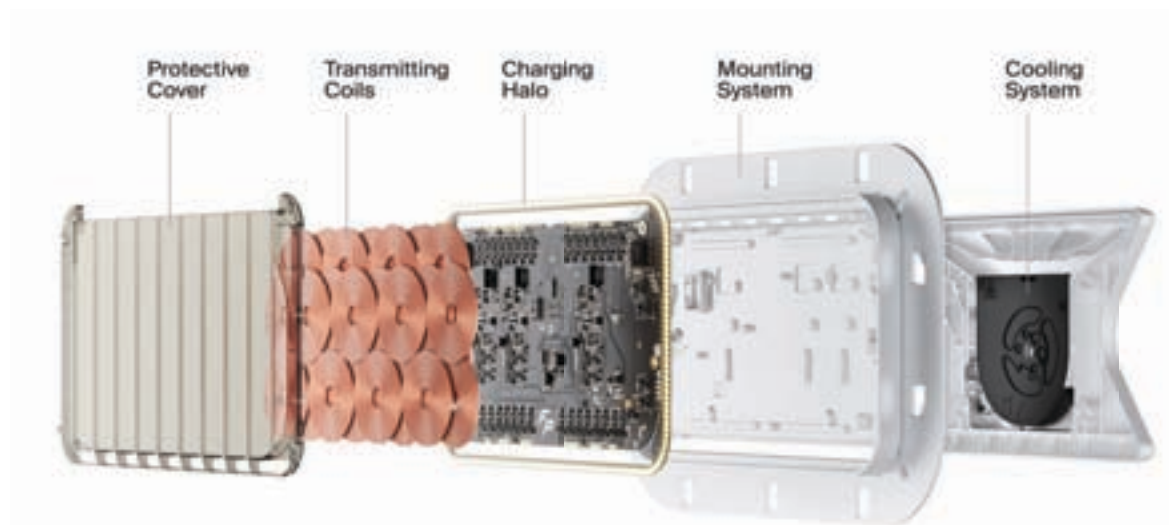
If you've ever paced a kitchen looking for an outlet, draped charging cords across a nightstand, tripped over several cords hooked to one outlet, or hovered awkwardly near a wall waiting for your phone to power up, you're not alone. A Phoenix-based tech company called FreePower is working to change that by embedding wireless charging directly into our home's surfaces.

FreePower allows countertops, vanities, desks, nightstands, tables, and more to charge devices without visible hardware or cords. Instead of plugging in, users place their phone or earbuds on a surface, and charging begins automatically.

"Our mission is to eliminate friction between people and power by making charging effortless, intuitive, and invisible in the spaces where people already live and work," Founder and Owner Jake Slatnick said.

Slatnick, who attended Arizona State University to study technology entrepreneurship and management, said he's always been interested in the industry.

"Honestly, since as long as I can remember," he said. "My earliest inspiration was Steve Jobs and Apple, but I never thought I'd be at the forefront of a technology like this. We started by chasing a very specific problem, not trying to reinvent an industry. Getting to push a category forward like this is rare, and we are excited about it every day."



When the technology finally clicked, it became clear the team was building something bigger.

Founded in 2017, FreePower grew from a simple observation: people spend a surprising amount of time hunting for outlets and managing charging clutter. Slatnick noticed this especially in kitchens, shared workspaces, and communal environments where cords tend to multiply.

"FreePower was founded on the belief that power shouldn't interrupt design or daily life," he said. The idea was to integrate power into the environment

itself, so naturally that users stop thinking about it altogether.

The technology officially debuted in 2020 through early partnerships with brands like Nomad and Tesla. But it was FreePower for Countertops, introduced commercially in 2024, that put the company on the radar of designers and builders. The debut earned major recognition, including KBIS Best in Show, KBB Kitchen Product of the Year, multiple CES Innovation Awards, and a spot on Fast Company's list of the World's Most Innovative Companies.

HOW IT WORKS

FreePower is installed underneath a surface during fabrication, leaving the top completely uncluttered. There are no plugs, pads, or charging hardware. Users place their device on the surface above the charging zone, and energy is delivered wirelessly through solid materials.

It uses advanced wireless power transfer technology compatible with the Qi wireless charging standard, making it compatible with both Apple and Android devices. Smartphones, wireless earbuds, and other Qi-enabled devices can all charge on the same surface. Users can charge up to three larger devices at once or mix and match with smaller accessories.

One of the few visible elements of the system is the Charging Halo – an optional visual indicator that shows where charging is active. Rather than interrupting the design of a countertop or table, the halo provides a subtle cue to help users intuitively place their devices.

The halo can be customized through the mobile app, which allows users to adjust brightness, color, and interaction features like Wave-to-Wake. The app also supports updates, multi-charger control for commercial spaces, and customer support access.

For designers and homeowners focused on clean aesthetics, the ability to fine-tune how technology appears – or doesn't appear – has become a major selling point.

FreePower can be embedded into a wide range of materials, including quartz, granite, marble, porcelain, wood, and solid surfaces. Installations can be customized based on surface size, number of charging zones, halo placement, and application.

FROM KITCHENS TO CONFERENCE ROOMS

"It's about creating a surface experience throughout the home. Think of FreePower as the evolution of the outlet, like going from Ethernet to Wi-Fi," Slatnick said. "If power is embedded throughout your home, where you work, and also where you socialize, the user interacts with the space like they naturally would, and stops thinking about how to charge."

While residential kitchens and bathrooms are popular applications, FreePower has gained traction in commercial environments where shared power access is essential. Offices, hotels, restaurants, airport lounges, healthcare facilities, and new developments have all implemented the technology.

Anywhere people naturally gather, embedded charging reduces the need for visible outlets and extension cords. In hospitality settings, it also removes the guesswork for guests who no longer need to ask where to plug in.

"Designers appreciate the clean aesthetics, builders value the differentiation, and users love the convenience of charging without thinking about it," Slatnick said.

AN EVOLUTION

Rather than positioning FreePower as a replacement, Slatnick describes it as an evolution. The idea is not to eliminate power access, but to distribute it more naturally throughout a space.

For homeowners increasingly focused on thoughtful, tech-forward design, this shift aligns with a broader trend toward invisible functionality: technology that works quietly in the background.

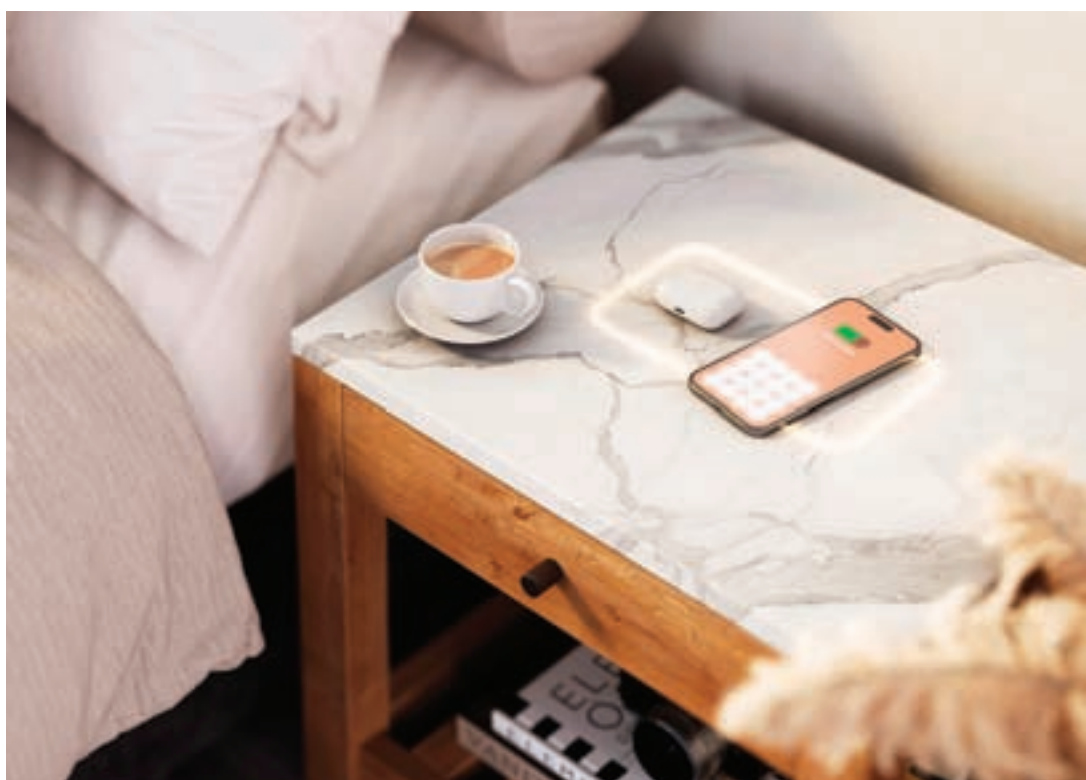
Slatnick and his team continue to expand into new surface types and commercial applications while advancing software and power delivery capabilities. The company is also exploring larger-scale deployments and global partnerships.

For those watching the intersection of design and technology, FreePower represents a growing movement toward homes and public spaces that feel smarter and calmer – where innovation enhances daily life without announcing itself.

freepower.io



FreePower allows phones, earbuds, and other compatible devices to charge without visible cords or outlets.



Seasonal events, plant sales, and educational programs give visitors hands-on opportunities to learn about desert gardening, conservation, and the region's unique ecosystem.

Desert in full bloom

Catch the newest experiences at Desert Botanical Garden

If you think of a garden as just a patch of green, the Desert Botanical Garden in Papago Park will definitely give you pause. What started in 1939 as a small, community-driven experiment to “save the desert” has grown into a world-class cultural and scientific institution celebrating desert life in all its spiny, colorful glory.

Back then, a few Phoenix-area residents – including social figure Gertrude Divine Webster – wanted to preserve the unique plants of the Sonoran Desert. More than 80 years later, the garden remains grounded in that same mission while expanding into research, education, and programs that help people live better in desert environments.

“Desert Botanical Garden started as a small, visionary experiment in preservation. Today, it’s far larger in scale, reach, and impact... but still grounded in the same core idea: celebrating and protecting desert life,” said President and CEO Chris Kline, who took the helm in October 2025 and is leading the garden into its second century with a focus on resilience, access, and community impact.

But let’s talk about the plants – because that’s what gardeners and flower lovers are really here for. According to DBG’s Public Horticulturalist Angelica Eliot, the garden is home to a dazzling array of flora from the Sonoran Desert and beyond.

Guests will spot cactus and agaves everywhere (the garden is designated as the National Collection of Cactus and Agaves), plus trees like palo verdes and ironwood, wildflowers such as poppies and lupine, and even a collection





of aloes. Most of it was planted by hand, with volunteers helping some plants reseed naturally.

Spring is especially spectacular at DBG. From March 12-15, gardeners can dive into the 50th anniversary Spring Plant Sale, picking up plants, succulents, and cactus while getting pro tips for their own yards.

That’s not the only way to enjoy the garden this season, as March and April bring back the Dog Days at the Garden event, letting visitors explore the trails with their canine companions. The Desert Studio: Emerging Artists Series takes place on March 27 and April 17, featuring live music and creative showcases.

March also hosts Spaces of Opportunity Day on March 10, a daytime farmers market celebrating area produce, and the festive Fund the Farm Celebration on March 20 that supports urban farming programs.

The garden doesn’t just look beautiful – it’s also a space built for science and conservation. At the Hazel Hare Center for Plant Science, researchers protect rare and endangered species and study how desert plants handle heat and water challenges, turning that research into practical solutions for the region.

“The garden has the credibility, talent, and platform to help solve real-world challenges around heat, water, and growth while remaining an inspiring place for the community to host events and memorable life moments,” Kline said.

And for those who want to see the desert in a whole new way, the Framerate: Desert Pulse exhibit runs through May 10, 2026, offering an immersive, multi-sensory experience that highlights beauty in ways you might never have imagined.

Later in the spring, events like the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale (March 27-29), Bottles & Bites with SanTan Distilling on March 25, the 40th annual Dinner on the Desert on April 25, and a Mother’s Day celebration on May 10 add fun, food, and community spirit to the desert backdrop.

Whether you’re a longtime gardener, a weekend explorer, or just someone looking for a colorful escape this spring, DBG proves that desert life is anything but dull. With prickly cacti, blooming wildflowers, and a calendar full of events, there’s always a reason to wander, learn, and plant a few ideas of your own.

dbg.org

GARDENING TIPS

Spring is the perfect time to bring a little desert magic into your own garden. Here’s what DBG experts suggest:

GO NATIVE

Focus on plants that thrive in the Sonoran Desert climate. Cactus and agaves are the garden’s stars, and they’re low maintenance while offering a bold, architectural look. Add a palo verde or ironwood tree for shade and structure.

COLOR POPS

Spring wildflowers like poppies and lupine are perfect for adding radiant color. Plant them in clusters for a natural desert-meadow effect.

MIX TEXTURES AND HEIGHTS

Combine spiky cactus, succulent rosettes, and flowering shrubs like chuparosa to create visual interest and mimic the desert’s natural diversity.

THINK GLOBALLY, PLANT LOCALLY

DBG also grows plants from other parts of the world, like aloes, which do well in warm, dry climates. Consider adding a few for variety but stick with desert-adapted species to conserve water.

LET NATURE HELP

Many desert plants reseed naturally. Leave some areas “wild” to encourage volunteer plants – nature does a lot of the work!

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Plant new cacti and succulents in early spring when temperatures are moderate. This gives roots time to settle before the summer heat arrives.





Make a statement

Wallpaper's revival is making rooms interesting again

Once dismissed as a relic of your grandparents' home, wallpaper has quietly – and now not so quietly – staked its claim as a go-to design element in modern interiors. If you've been scrolling Instagram or Pinterest lately, it's easy to see why: textured neutrals, bold murals, and vintage florals are making walls feel like a work of art. In the Valley, Williams Wallcovering is helping homeowners embrace this trend with style and precision.

"People are craving warmth and personality," Owner Decker Williams said. "For a long time, everything was white walls and minimal finishes, which can feel beautiful but also a bit sterile. Wallpaper adds texture, depth, and emotion to a space in a way paint can't. Social media and design inspiration have played a big role."

Williams' journey in the trade spans nearly a decade, though Williams Wallcovering officially launched in 2023. Growing up in Central Phoenix, he started out in California helping with installations, learning the craft by pulling paper and assisting on jobs.

"I moved into large-scale commercial projects like hotels and ground-up builds, which taught me precision, efficiency, and craftsmanship at a high level," Williams said. "I transitioned into residential work and fell in love with the creativity and personal

connection that comes with transforming someone's home. Starting my own business felt like the natural next step."

Now, he combines technical skills with design, helping clients bring personality and character into their spaces. For those who still picture wallpaper as floral prints from the 1970s, today's wallcoverings are a revelation.

"Materials are higher quality and more durable. There are grasscloths, linens, vinyls, murals, and textured finishes that feel elevated and architectural rather than dated," Williams said. "Installation has evolved, too – it's much more precise and cleaner. When done professionally, seams disappear and the result feels smooth and modern."

Williams sees a mix of bold statements and subtle textures dominating today's wallpaper trends. Large-scale murals and organic patterns are making a strong comeback, along with vintage-inspired florals and textured neutrals. Color drenching (where entire rooms are enveloped in rich, saturated tones) is also gaining popularity.

"Clients are going all-in with richer tones across entire rooms instead of playing it safe, which I'm loving," Williams said.

The trend isn't just for first-time homeowners;

designers and long-time residents renovating their spaces are taking risks and exploring wallpaper as a key design feature. Wallpaper isn't just for one feature wall anymore. Williams notes installations on ceilings, offices, pantries, laundry rooms, guest houses, and especially powder room and pool bathrooms.

Continued on page 10



Decker Williams, founder of Williams Wallcovering.



Large-scale murals are among today's most popular wallpaper trends.

Make a statement

Continued from page 9

“Those smaller spaces are perfect for going bold and having fun. People treat wallpaper more like an experience, something that surprises you when you walk into a room,” he said.

Arizona’s climate also influences wallpaper choices. Earthy tones, warm neutrals, and natural textures like sand, clay, stone, and linen reflect the desert landscape.

“Durability matters, especially in high-heat or high-traffic areas, so we often use vinyl or performance materials that hold up well. It’s about balancing style with practicality for the climate,” Williams said.

One misconception Williams frequently hears is that wallpaper is old-fashioned or unpredictable.

“The key is installation. When it’s done right, the finish looks tailored, and the room feels instantly elevated and intentional,” he said.

Williams predicts that wallpaper’s resurgence isn’t a passing fad. Immersive designs across entire rooms, ceilings, and layered textures will continue to gain popularity as homeowners treat their spaces like personal stories.

“Demand has only grown. Every year it gets busier. Clients want more design detail in their homes, and wallpaper is one of the easiest ways to achieve that,” he said. “I don’t see wallcovering slowing down.”

For those hesitant to commit, Williams recommends beginning small:

“Powder bathrooms are my favorite place to start. They’re small, low-commitment spaces where you can go bold and make a big impact. It’s the perfect way for clients to experiment and have fun without overwhelming the whole house,” he said.

Wallpaper is back, and thanks to professionals like Decker Williams, it’s more modern, accessible, and desert-friendly than ever. From bold murals to understated textures, it’s a simple way to infuse personality and warmth into any home.

williamswallcovering.com



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Fine art for all

Scottsdale Art Week takes over iconic WestWorld in March



If your idea of a perfect day involves strolling through gallery spaces, discovering a piece that stops you in your tracks...maybe even spotting a sleek Italian sports car parked beside museum-quality artwork, Scottsdale has an event that blends all three. Scottsdale Art Week is one of the region's most anticipated cultural gatherings, offering an approachable way to experience high-caliber art without needing to board a plane to New York or Europe.

Designed to welcome seasoned collectors and curious first timers, the four-day fair celebrates creativity and the Valley's growing role in the art world. Scottsdale Art Week made its debut in March 2025, drawing strong attendance and attention right out of the gate. In 2026, the event will feature more than 120 galleries.

"This is a world-class fair that brings together leading galleries from around the world for a four-day celebration," Director and Co-Owner Amy Gause said. "The event showcases museum-quality works across a wide range of styles and periods, creating an accessible yet elevated experience for collectors, designers, and art lovers."

Long known for its Western heritage and gallery district, Scottsdale has become a destination for serious collectors and design professionals searching for unique, statement-making pieces. Visitors can expect to see a range of artistic styles, mediums and price points under one roof. While some pieces reach into six-figure territory, others are accessible for new collectors hoping to purchase their first original artwork.

"Attendees can explore thousands of original works of art, including paintings, sculpture, photography, and mixed media," Gause said. "The fair

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMY GAUSE



Art collectors and first-time buyers explore thousands of original works displayed inside WestWorld of Scottsdale.

features blue-chip art, contemporary and historical works, Western art, and contemporary Indigenous artists, offering something for collectors and first-time buyers.”

From monumental sculptures to historically significant pieces, the event creates an environment where visitors can engage in a way that feels educational and approachable. Works range from traditional materials like oil and bronze to experimental and mixed-media creations that push artistic boundaries. While the event proudly highlights Arizona talent, Scottsdale Art Week casts a wider net.

“This year we have 14 countries with galleries exhibiting,” Gause said.

That global presence allows attendees to experience art and design perspectives from around the world while still celebrating the Southwest’s distinctive voice.

The fair will partner with Scottsdale Ferrari for the second installment. While the name may suggest a hybrid car and art event, the collaboration is more about celebrating design as an art form.

“Scottsdale Art Week is an art fair, not a car show,” Gause said. “The Ferraris on display are integrated into the space as works of art in their own right, adding a unique visual and experiential element.”

The combination has proven popular. Several Ferraris displayed during the inaugural event were even purchased, underscoring how automotive craftsmanship can share the spotlight alongside fine art. For Gause, the event represents a long-standing passion for expanding the region’s artistic influence.

“I’ve spent the last 25 years of my career in the art world, both nationally and regionally, and have traveled extensively to art fairs,” she said. “During that time, it became clear to me that Scottsdale was ready for an event of this caliber.”

Her enthusiasm for the project stems from personal experience and a broader vision for the city’s cultural identity.

“We have a sophisticated collector base, a distinct cultural identity, and a continued influx of wealth. We were the only major city in America without an international art fair,” Gause said. “I’m passionate about promoting the arts of our region and city on both a national and international level, so we can continue building the credibility Scottsdale deserves.”

While the paintings and sculptures draw visitors through the doors, Gause said the most meaningful moments often happen through conversation and discovery.

“Seeing the connections that happen on the gallery floor, whether it’s with collectors discovering artists for the first time, artists connecting with new audiences, and the energy that comes from bringing so many creative voices together in one place... it’s truly energizing,” she said.

That interaction is part of what makes this event unique. Visitors can speak directly with gallery representatives, learn about artists’ creative processes and gain insight into collecting and displaying art in their own homes.

“Scottsdale Art Week is about accessibility, discovery, and quality,” Gause said. “Whether you’re a serious collector, a design professional, or simply curious, the fair offers an opportunity to experience world-class artwork in a dynamic, welcoming environment.”

Scottsdale Art Week returns March 19-22 at WestWorld of Scottsdale, located in the North Hall. Tickets begin at \$40 for adults and \$20 for students, with free admission for 12 and under.

scottsdaleartweek.com

BEGINNER-FRIENDLY COLLECTION TIPS:

- The most important rule of collecting is choosing artwork that resonates with you. If a piece makes you pause, sparks emotion or complements your home’s design style, it’s worth considering.
- Not every purchase needs to be a statement piece. Works on paper, photography and smaller original pieces are often more affordable and can be just as impactful.
- Gallery representatives and artists are typically happy to share insight about materials, inspiration and care. Learning the story behind a piece often makes it more meaningful.
- Consider where artwork will live in your home. Large statement pieces can anchor living rooms or entryways, while smaller works can create gallery walls or add personality to unexpected spaces like hallways or kitchens.
- Combining paintings, sculpture, photography and mixed media can add depth and interest to a collection over time.
- Art collecting should feel exciting, not stressful. Decide what you’re comfortable spending and remember that collections grow gradually.

The working farm showcases a closed-loop system where food scraps, composting, and small-scale agriculture work together to support vegetable production and environmentally conscious gardening.

Got worms?

The Arizona Worm Farm helps grow greener gardens

Have you ever wondered what happens to your kitchen scraps after they leave your countertop? Or, on a different note, dreamed about growing a thriving garden in Arizona's famously stubborn soil? Well, there's a place in the Valley where both of those questions get answered with a healthy dose of sunshine, science and worms.

Tucked into 10 acres of working farmland near South Mountain, the Arizona Worm Farm blends sustainability, education, a little bit of charm and a whole lot of worms into helping desert gardeners grow stronger, healthier plants from the ground up.

The farm is built around a simple – but maybe not so well known – concept: nature already knows how to recycle, and worms might just be the hardest workers in the system.

"We have a goal of turning sunshine, rainwater, and other people's waste into food, shelter, and entertainment," Owner Zach Brooks said. "Worms are at the heart of all our processes to use food waste to create microbially active, super productive soil."

The farm's journey began less than a decade ago but has grown at an impressive pace. Brooks purchased the land in 2017, launching operations shortly after in 2018. What started as a sustainability-focused experiment evolved into a thriving agricultural and educational center.

The numbers alone tell a story. In its first year, the farm bred and sold 310,000 worms. Fast-forward to 2025, and that number has soared past four million. That growth reflects a rising demand among home gardeners eager to improve soil health and grow food sustainably.

Brooks' path to farming wasn't traditional. After a career consulting on computer systems for hospitals and health insurance companies, he found himself drawn toward

environmental stewardship. While pursuing a second master's degree in sustainability at Arizona State University, Brooks pivoted toward a hands-on approach.

"I wanted to see if I could build a sustainable 'Garden of Eden' for my family and teach our community how to live more eco-friendly," he said.

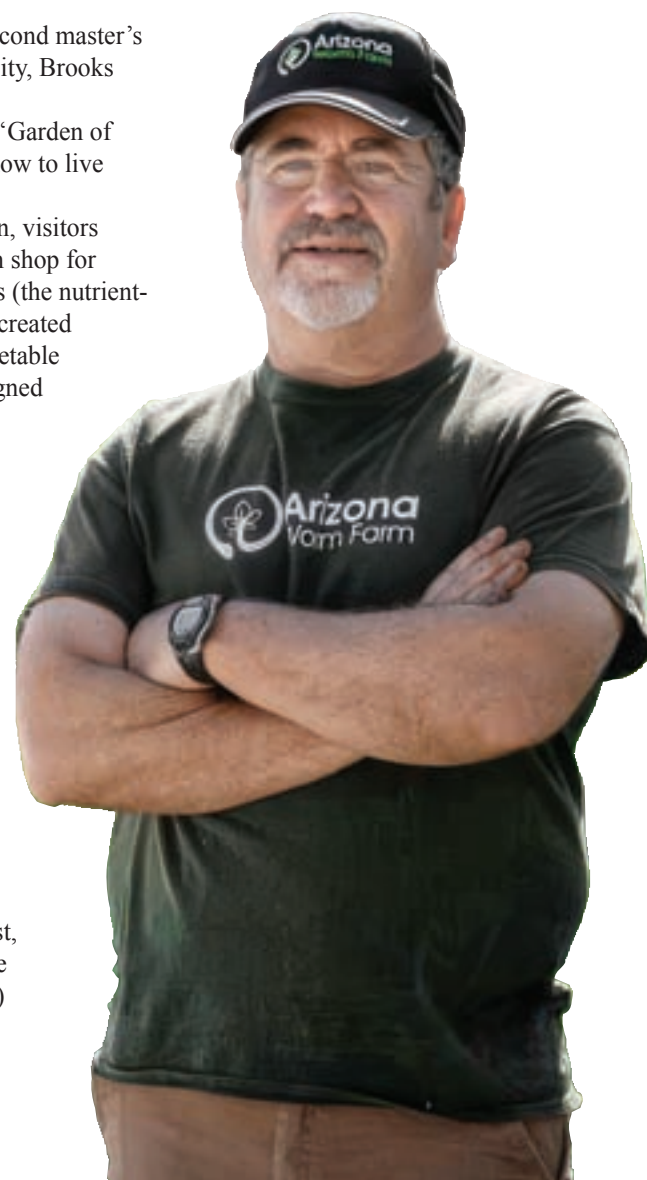
While worms remain the heart of the operation, visitors to the farm will discover so much more. You can shop for worms, of course, but there's also worm castings (the nutrient-rich material produced by worms) and compost created on-site. The farm sells specialty soil blends, vegetable and flower starters, and gardening supplies designed specifically for Arizona growing conditions. Among its most popular products is the farm's raised bed soil.

"Most come for worms or castings, but our top seller is our 'growing in the garden' raised bed and container mix," Brooks said.

That mix was created in collaboration with gardening expert Angela Judd, founder of the Growing in The Garden blog, and is tailored to help plants survive and thrive in the desert.

Brooks said he and the AWF team bring in tons of green food waste, horse manure, and ground landscape waste every week.

"We put it together using our own recipe and compost it for over six months," he said. "The finished product combines organic compost, worm castings to introduce microbial life, perlite for aeration, Coco Coir (a coconut fiber product) for moisture retention and basalt dust to add



Zach Brooks founded the Arizona Worm Farm in 2018.



Visitors can explore raised garden beds, starter plants, and hands-on educational displays.

minerals, all crucial elements for building productive soil in Arizona's dry climate."

As spring planting season arrives, the farm becomes especially busy. For many Valley gardeners, it serves as a reliable destination for everything needed to kick-start a successful growing season.

"We are a one-stop, good source for all gardening needs, including compost and castings and worms," Brooks said. "Most critically, we only sell vegetable starts we grow with our special mix that ensures a healthy start. We only sell what is in season right then, so you can be confident that anything on our shelves can be planted and will thrive."

The farm does grow vegetables on-site, though visitors may find the selection limited...and for a good reason.

"We have limited veggies for sale because we eat most of our produce ourselves," Brooks said with a laugh. "One of the benefits of working at our farm is that every employee gets to take home eggs and veggies every day, so we don't often have a lot for sale."

Beyond products, the farm has become a popular educational destination. Nearly every weekend, visitors can attend classes designed for gardeners and DIY enthusiasts of all experience levels.

"We have four or five classes every Saturday and one or two most Fridays," Brooks said. "They cover lots of topics, from using worms in your garden to basic and advanced gardening. We

have specialized classes in things like making pickles or making soap using luffa (loofah - like the sponge) that's grown on our farm."

Classes are open to the public but are filled quickly. The farm releases its class schedule monthly through its website and email newsletter.

Visitors often discover the farm is a living example of closed-loop sustainability, where little goes to waste. Chickens roam the property, helping convert food scraps into fresh eggs while playing a role in the farm's recycling ecosystem.

"We have about 50 hens," Brooks said. "Guests can feed them black soldier fly larvae we raise here on the farm. It is part of our sustainability program where we turn garbage into food. We get about three dozen eggs a day and occasionally have them for sale."

It's a full-circle system that demonstrates how thoughtful agriculture can minimize waste while maximizing productivity.

Perhaps the farm's biggest success isn't measured in worms or vegetables, but in the community it's helping cultivate. Families, hobby gardeners and sustainability enthusiasts visit to learn skills that extend well beyond their backyards. Through classes, soil products and hands-on experiences, Brooks and his team hope to inspire Valley residents to reconnect with their food, their soil and the environment around them.

arizonawormfarm.com

ZACH'S GARDENING TIPS

1. Get your soil right first! Great soil makes gardening so much easier. Use fresh, active compost and organic matter with worms or worm castings. Never use pesticides or chemical fertilizer, and don't till your soil.
2. Grow seasonally appropriate vegetables using guides from local experts. Our favorite guide can be found at growinginthegarden.com.
3. Water correctly...most Arizona gardeners water too much. Use your finger to the second knuckle to check for moisture, and don't water if the tip of your finger comes back wet.
4. Take a class! Knowledge is power. Learning to garden from a pro will save you many seasons of learning by making mistakes.
5. For your first gardens, plant easy stuff. Grow zucchini before you try heirloom tomatoes!



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