



CACTUS CHRONICLE

July 2014

Meeting Time

7:00 pm

Plant of the Month

Escobaria, Corypantha
Cucurbitaceae

Refreshments

S-T

June

New Members

Denise Brandon
Zahava Dembowich
Carol Gasper
Renee Gates
Kim Hahn
Norman Jacobs
Richard Kitagawa
Tarry Kong
Ben Morowitz
Mark Muradian
Monalisa Palmer
Jack Reynolds
Sophie Rosenberg
Kate Schultz
Carole Scott
Robbie Stern
Shalimar Tomaneng

Editor

Phyllis Frieze
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Visit Us on the web
<http://www.lacss.com>.
OR contact us at
lacss.contact@gmail.com

Mission Statement:

The Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society (LACSS) cultivates the study and enjoyment of cacti and succulent plants through educational programs and activities that promote the hobby within a community of fellow enthusiasts and among the greater public.

“The Wild World of Succulents, Out of the Wild and into the Gardens” by Kelly Griffin

He is manager of Succulent Plant Development for Altman Plants, the largest producer of succulents in the country. His inclination has been towards agaves, aloes and echeverias, but there are many more plants that have garnered his attention. As part of his life’s work, he has introduced more than 100 succulents and created many cultivars that have been nudging their way into gardens and patios.



Kelly holds a degree in applied physics, but his love of plants continued to steer him towards horticulture as a career. Prior to his current position with Altman Plants he was curator of Xerophytes at Rancho Soledad Nursery where he was responsible for finding and creating new and different plants that could be utilized in garden settings. He has travelled extensively worldwide documenting plants and collecting seeds for propagation.

Kelly Griffin is most recognized with finding and creating new and different plants that can be utilized in garden settings. Some of Kelly’s hybrid aloes are well known in the industry and are collected by enthusiasts. Griffin presents some of the strange, beautiful and wonderful plants (mostly succulent) that he has had the good fortune to see in his travels, sharing his passion to observe plants in the wild in order to understand how they grow, and under what conditions. He will share insights into the plants and habitats that are not well known.

2014 Officers

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Joyce Schumann

1st VP, Programs

Marquita Elias

2nd VP, Plant of the Month

Manny Rivera

3rd VP, Special Events

John Martinez

Secretary

Cheryl White

LACSS.contact@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kathryn Boorer

Director 1 Odd Years

Membership 1st VP, Programs

Danielle Duboff

Director 2, Even Years

David Le

Past President

Roxie Esterle

LACSS Show Chair

Artie Chavez

Show Committee

Joyce Schumann

Kim Thorpe

Rosemary Polito

Webmaster

Kim Thorpe

Librarian

Sandy Chase

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Nils Schirmmacher

Cactus Chronicle Editor

Phyllis Frieze

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CSSA Representative

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Education Chair

Kyle Williams

Drawing & Plant Procurement

Richard Roosman

Mentor Program Chair

John Succi

Member at Large

Kathleen Misko

CGCI Liaison

Natalie Welsh

Cactus Garden Chair

Chris Rogers

Cactus Chronicle Distribution

Richard Roosman

John Matthews

Holiday Party Chairperson

Barbara Hall

Holiday Party Awards Procurement

Gerald Reichert

Cactus Garden

Chris Rogers

Meeting Refreshments

John Noster

Steve Rudolf

Publicity

Kim Thorpe

Monthly Drawing

Leah Imamura

Juana Williams

President's Message

July, 2014

Vintage Magnet School STEM night

On the last Friday of May, Sandy Chase and I represented the Cactus and Succulent world at the Vintage Magnet Elementary School's STEM event. I would like to say that the highlight of the evening was to see the keynote speaker, Josh Rubenstein, Chief Meteorologist of CBS and KCAL 9, but actually it was to interact with the inquiring minds of the kids. You might be wondering what STEM means – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. If you want to know more, contact Diane and/ or Eric Miller.

Festival

Our Festival was exciting, high energy, multi-activity, filled with visitors who always expressed their appreciation and amazement at the variety of plants and activities.

The Festival Committee started in January to plan and coordinate activities. Their stay-on-point approach to anticipating & taking care of details allowed our Festival to proceed with few glitches. We have at least twelve major activities. All were well supported by our visitors. For example, each speaker had at least 30 attendees. There was standing room only. Kid's day brings a higher level of energy with most kids not wanting to leave the "Korral." The Educational Displays encouraged the visitors to take a close look at the displays and evaluate them. And so on....

At this time, I would like to thank our Festival Chair, Artie Chavez, for his guidance and vision for another fantastic event. I also thank our Co-Chairs, Cheryl White, David Le, Roxie Esterle, Kathleen Misko, and Kim Thorpe, for taking ownership of their new responsibilities and dedication to bring it to a smashing success.

What a great weekend!!

CGCI

The CGCI held their annual Convention in Glendale the first weekend of June with the San Fernando Valley District hosting the event. Due to our own upcoming Festival, we were unable to participate at the level that we would have liked to but did have representation with member attendance and gift baskets for their silent auction. We received a beautiful "Thank You" letter for our gift baskets. In addition, the CGCI awarded LACSS a "Blue Ribbon Certificate of Achievement" based mainly on our highly rated Festival. We are pleased and proud that our efforts have been recognized by this prestigious organization. These two documents will be on display at the front table for all to view.

T-shirts

Some like them earth-toned and some don't. We tried a brighter color this year with mixed reviews. From my perspective, when I needed to find someone at the Festival, the bright orange shirts made it MUCH easier to locate a Club member who otherwise would have just blended in with the crowd. And as a show of support to your Club, just wear the shirt! You can't see the color when you are wearing it! They will be on sale at the vendors table at the next meeting.

See all of you in a few days.

Joyce

Interior Show Displays at the 2014 June Festival By David Le

It was truly an honor and a bit frightening to be given the opportunity to co-chair the interior show at his year's June Festival! Artie, Joyce and the entire Board provided exceptional guidance and support for a highly successful show. The goal to educate the general public on the beauty of succulents was greatly achieved by the many remarkable displays.

The interior show featured educational theme displays; plant collections from the April raffle; Plants of the Month; book sales (chaired by Rose Polito); and displays from the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad and Sansui-Kai Bonsai Societies.

The quality of the member's educational theme displays was exceptional. A tremendous thank you goes out to all of the members who poured extraordinary effort in creating such outstanding and enlightening displays for the interior show. There was a new element of public voting that was implemented this year. Each public attendee who entered the interior show had received three cacti voting patches. The public voted their favorite educational theme displays by placing their votes into pots located by each display. Congratulations to Karen Ostler for winning the public vote for the Best Educational Theme Display! She will be awarded an engraved CSSA plaque while other winning members will be awarded pottery. The creators of the other displays found at the show may be found at the conclusion of this report.



Staging Display by Karen Ostler

Educational Theme Display - Final Result of Public Votes

- 1st Karen Ostler – Staging Plants for Shows
- 2nd Cheryl and Frank White – Agaves and Their Many Uses
- 3rd Barbara Hall and Manny Rivera – Pelargoniums
- HM Marquita Elias – Aeoniums from the Canary Islands

The lucky winners of the plant collections from the April raffle were asked to bring their plants back for display. Members Eric, Kathleen, Greg, Sylvia and Sonia exceeded all expectations by not only keeping their plants in great shape but providing beautiful staging. Special thanks go to one of our youngest member, Eric Miller, for creating a highly detailed poster board of his *Gymnocalycium* collection.



Gymnocalyciums by Eric Miller

I was fortunate to have been able to sit next to the lovable Rose Polito as she commanded the sale of the cactus and succulent book collections. Her funny commentary and infectious laughter kept me entertained through those long but seemingly enjoyable 12 hour days that weekend.

And lastly, I'd like to thank our affiliate clubs from the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad and Sansui-Kai Bonsai Societies for joining us in our special event. Their displays helped to enhance the depth and diversity of our fantastic show.

It was an extraordinary amount of work but it was definitely a rewarding experience. I look forward to building upon the experience from this year's Festival and making a more spectacular show for next year!

Educational Theme Displays

Sandy Chase	Convergent Evolution
Marquita Elias	Aeoniums from the Canary Islands
Marquita Elias	Crested and Monstrose Plants
Roxie & Jim Esterle	Adaptive Radiation in the Genus Dudleyas
Barbara Hall	Pelargoniums (combined display with Manny)
John Martinez	Aloe Hybrids
John Matthews	Haworthias
Nancy Neymark	About Spines
Karen Ostler	Staging Plants for Shows
Manny Rivera	Pelargoniums (combined display with Barbara)
Cheryl & Frank White	Agaves and Their Many Uses

Raffle Collection Displays

Eric Miller	Gymnocalyciums
Kathleen Misko	Kelly Griffin Aloe Hybrids
Greg Nash	Haworthias
Sylvia Strehlo	Bulbs
Sonia Villarroel	Mammillarias

The Festival included a special competition for members who are eligible to show in the Rookie and Novice divisions. The plants that were selected to be shown included Aloes and Haworthias (succulent category) and Rebutias and Mammillarias (cactus category). Many members decided to participate and they showcased some beautiful plants. Below are a list of winners for the Festival Competition.

Succulent – Aloe

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Aloe sp. 'Twilight'
Second	David Le	Aloe hybrid 'Coral Edge'
Third	David Le	Aloe pearsonii

Succulent – Haworthia

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Haworthia coarctata
Second	David Le	Haworthia pumila variegata
Third	Natalie Welsh	Haworthia sp.

Novice

First	Phyllis Frieze	Haworthia emelyae splendens
Second	Phyllis Frieze	Haworthia truncata
Third	Phyllis Frieze	Haworthia sempervirens

Cactus -- Rebutia

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Sulcorebutia rauschii
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Novice

First	Phyllis Frieze	Rebutia sp.
Second	Sylvia Strehlo	Sulcorebutia polymorpha
Third	Phyllis Frieze	Rebutia sp.

Cactus -- Mammillaria

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Mammillaria zeilmanniana crest
Second	Kathryn Boorer	Mammillaria spinosissima
Third	David Le	Mammillaria eichlamii

Novice

First	Sylvia Strehlo	Mammillaria sp.
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Thanks to all the volunteers!!!

All successful events stand on the shoulders of the people who make it possible.

So many members came to the aid of their Cactus and Succulent Club that success was inevitable. Each of you gave of your time, expertise, and energy with good humor and willingness to do whatever needed to be done.

In no particular order, our special thanks this month goes to:

John Martinez, Roger Cohen, Chris Rogers, Barbara Hall, Rosemary Ecker, John Suciu, Bryan Chan, Steve Veenstra, Joan Citron, Nancy Neymark, Randy Hill, Craig Nash, Robert Feldman, Jim Esterle, Mary K, Jim Esterle, Kyle Williams, Mark Dubrow, Danielle Duboff, Merkie Rowen, Lee Hirsch, Rosemary Polito, Reatha Hirsch, Bob and Phyllis Thille, Ilona Burratti, Mary Chan, Matt Maggio, Sandy Chase, Kathleen Boorer, Manny Rivera, Marquita Elias, Sylvia Strehlo, Richard Just, Sonia Villaroel, Kim Jacobi, Linda Holub, Carol Martin, Mike McMurray, Gerald Richert, Elizabeth Nicely, Natalie Welsh, Lisa Gailey, Kristen Dmitruk, Anita Russell, Richard Roosman, Bob Coleman, Phyllis Polakow, Eric Miller, Diane Miller, Jay Kapac, Pat Byrne.

Many of you filled more than one need (such as, vendor/speaker, exhibit/floater). In spite of the long days and hard labor, we all enjoyed sharing the good results of our efforts. The Festival Committee thanks all of you for your dedication to the mission of LACSS and of our Festival.

Our sincerest apologies if your name has been omitted.

Until next year.....

Thank you again,

Joyce Schumann, Volunteer Coordinator

INTER-CITY SHOW AUGUST 9-10, 2014 THEME: EXOTICA

Now that our own very successful LACSS Drought Tolerant Plant Festival is over and the work for the CSSA show is done, it is time to start planning for the Inter-City Show and Sale. It will be held on August 9-10, 2014 at the Los Angeles County Arboretum. This is the 29th annual show and the theme is 'Exotica'. There is a link to the show newsletter on the LACSS website (www.lacactus.com). Check out the Agave utahensis v. eborispina by Tom Glavich on the show T-shirt. They will be for sale at our upcoming meetings. And we've got women's shirts this year. Get your shirt early, I know they will sell out quickly (especially the women's sizes) The T-shirt acts like a walking advertisement for the show so wear yours often.

The Inter-City show is billed as the greatest cactus and succulent show in the country. Visitors from all over the world attend this show and sale. Pictures from prior shows are ubiquitous in online media. The Walks and Talks programs will feature several speakers from LACSS. And don't forget the dinner (\$30) and auction on Saturday night at Coco's. Dinner is carved beef, chicken, salad drinks and dessert at Coco's. Sign up early for this opportunity to shmooze with fellow collectors and bid on some fantastic plants. Many of these auction plants end up on the trophy table in coming years. Contact Evelyn Stevens at (626) 303-1239 for the dinner - it is always a sellout.

Since the LACSS is one of the three clubs sponsoring this show, your show plants are very much needed to maintain the show's caliber. You should be selecting and grooming your plants now. Those plants you entered in the CSSA show, the LACSS show, and the LACSS June POM favorites are a good start. The number of show entries has been dropping in recent years so please enter your favorite plants. The show is easy to enter with novice, advanced, and open sections. Don't forget the Golden Sweeps. If you win 1st, 2nd and 3rd in a single class you win a special pot. These are easiest to win in the novice category. Show schedules and entry tags will be available at our meetings and online at www.sqvcss.com.

Your volunteer help is also very much needed to setup, takedown, and keep the show and sale humming along. Signup sheets will be at our July and August meetings along with all show details. Help is especially needed Saturday morning when the sales are busiest and more volunteer assistance on Wednesday morning for setup. I have kept the time commitments during the show to approximately one hour so you won't get stuck anywhere too long. If you can't commit to a specific time, at least signup and we'll find an opportunity for you when you attend the show. Volunteering is also a great way to meet people from the other clubs and presents unique learning opportunities. Our club profits greatly from this show so your participation is essential.

Tom Glavich is looking for IC show help in the following areas - videographer, show publicist, show newsletter creator. Task descriptions for these opportunities will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions regarding the show or sale please call me at (661) 714-1052.

John Matthews, Inter-City Co-chair

INTER CITY HELP NEEDED

Tom Glavich needs someone to take over publicity for the Inter-City Show and Sale. Job description follows. Please contact Tom at 626-798-2430 if you can take over these very important tasks.

Inter-City Publicist

Send notices of the Inter City Show to:

1. Sunset Magazine
2. AAA Magazine
3. Pacific Horticulture
4. Cactus and Succulent Society of America
5. All local clubs (San Francisco to San Diego, Sunset to New Mexico and Nevada)
6. Arcadia Patch
7. Pasadena Patch
8. Yelp
9. Craig's List
10. Cactus-etc
11. Fat Plants
12. Facebook
13. Any other you can think of.

Place paid ads in (we will show you how to do this and set price limitations)

1. Tribune Group (and write advertorial)
2. LA Times
3. Thai newspaper
4. (If funding allows, Chinese American News)
5. Facebook

Distribute flyers to

1. California Cactus
2. San Gabriel Nursery
3. Huntington Library
4. LA Arboretum

Keep show chairs and treasurer informed on status and challenges bi-weekly.

Videographer Needed for Inter-City Show

Tom Glavich needs someone to do videography for the Inter-City Show and Sale. Job description follows. Please contact Tom at 626-798-2430 if you can take over these very important tasks.

Job Description follows:

Make a video of the Inter-City Show, emphasizing plants and in particular, blue ribbon and trophy table plants. Also pictures of the sales area and show area, but not focusing on anyone without permission. Some simple editing capabilities will be required, along with a steady hand. Add low key legal musical background, and upload to YouTube. Can attend judging, set-up etc as able. Quietest time is Sunday Morning before the show opens. Steadiness is the key and ability to edit out extraneous background noise. No video during auction or dinner.

Clay and Cactus: The Creative Life of Erika Van Auker

Nils Schirmmacher

PART ONE

“I like things big,” claims lifetime LACSS member Erika Van Auker, “even though I’m a small person.”

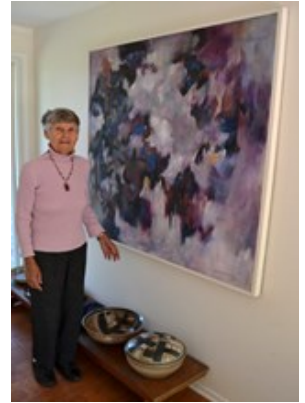
For over thirty years, Mrs. Van Auker has created stoneware containers for trophy-winning plants: *big*, expressive pots, loaded with the gusto of their maker. Erika’s bold approach to clay revolutionized the staging of cacti and succulents, elevating the presentation of desert flora to a decorative art. Her story links the evolution of these competitive displays to the history of ceramic sculpture.

Recently, Erika’s creativity has been rekindled through a partnership with fellow potter—and LACSS member—Gerald Richert, sharing an art studio in Woodland Hills, the two sling clay with freedom and ingenuity.

YOUNG AMERICAN

Mrs. Van Auker immigrated to the United States in 1956, seeking to escape the constraints of a career dictated by her parents. Traveling from the German town of Lorsch, she first landed in Reseda, where she resided with her host family. “I’ve always been a bit of a rebel,” she says. “I spoke English so I came here.”

In 1962, Erika began taking art classes at Pierce College in Woodland Hills. These introductory courses opened a wellspring of creativity; talent that Erika was unaware she possessed. In short time, she demonstrated her competence with biomorphic shapes carved from wood and stone and abstract paintings composed of moody patchworks of color. Describing the process of these canvases, Erika says, “I’d begin the composition upside down, then turn the painting while I worked.” She’d turn and paint, and turn and paint, until the piece’s final orientation revealed itself.



Erika next to one of her abstract paintings



Early sculpture of carved marble

Her work on canvas culminated in 1972, with an exhibition at the Pierce College Gallery. Exhibited alongside her paintings was the work of her husband Al, who was a professor in Pierce’s art department.

SLAB VS. WHEEL

Erika eventually made her way into a ceramics class. Initially, she had trouble with clay, finding it difficult to transfer her intuitive painting methods to the new medium. And her instructor didn’t help. A traditional potter, he insisted she begin by throwing pots on the wheel, a method that limited Erika to small, circular vessels. Seeking greater scale and diversity of form, she ignored her professor, and began hand-building vessels from clay slabs.

This dispute between Erika and her instructor echoed tensions that flared in the ceramic arts several decades earlier. After WWII, young artists working in clay sought methods that would bring the language of Abstract Expressionist painting into ceramics. Influenced by the work of Jackson Pollock, Willem deKooning, and others, they wanted to exploit clay’s malleability in the same way these painters made use of gestural brushstrokes. Like Erika, they also felt limited by the wheel; constrained not only by the shapes it produced, but its connection to the making of functional ceramics (tea pots, plates, cups, etc.). This desire to create objects that would exist solely as artworks led to a new artistic medium dubbed “ceramic sculpture”.

Peter Voulkos was a leading figure in ceramic sculpture. Known for sculpting his works in front of an audience while shirtless and grunting, Voulkos’ performances personified the physicality associated with Abstract Expressionism. As a university instructor, he pioneered ceramic sculpture departments in two California schools: L.A.’s Otis Art Institute in 1954, and University of California Berkeley in 1959.

In spite of Voulkos' efforts, Erika Van Auken's instructor at Pierce remained a member of the old guard. Fortunately, by the mid-seventies, ceramic sculpture and its methods were familiar to art students. Erika needed only to insist on using them. And she did.

The slab roller—a press that rolls lumps of clay into flat sheets—was the tool that allowed Erika to transition away from the wheel. Once rolled out, the sheets are aired and stiffened. After they have firmed, they can be cut and assembled, using wet clay as an adhesive. Wet slabs can also be stretched over, or pressed into, an existing form, maintaining its shape once dry. Using these construction methods, Erika began making sculptures that evoked organic forms carved by time and the elements.

Erika's affinity for the outdoors also found expression in the textures and finishes she applied to her pieces. Coarse stones and bark were pressed into wet slabs, encrusting her vessels with an earthbound surface. Although she occasionally used traditional glazes, she preferred the earthy, matte surface of an iron oxide stain. When first applied, the stain is a uniform crimson, but after it is fired in a gas kiln, it displays a range of rich chocolate browns, rusty reds, and smoky grays. Erika also experimented with mixing different colored bodies of clay, producing a striated medium that mimicked mineral combinations found in stone.

These techniques developed by Erika in the late 1970s remain staples in her studio today. A comparison of early pots with current pieces reveals how much her application of these methods has grown.

For more photos of my visit with Erika, see the album posted on LACSS's Facebook page. NEXT MONTH: Erika hits the Cactus and Succulent scene!



Staining bench has acquired an iron oxide patina



Early vessel made from mixed clays



Getting ready for a show: Gas kiln filled with pots

Are You Participating in the Plant of the Month?

The Plant of the Month competition started the year in January with a record-setting 49 entries. All of you who participated in the June Plant of the Month will be pleased to know that you are part of a **new record of 67 entries!!!** Way to go!!!

Manny Rivera (Vice-President for Plant of the Month) and those club members selected to help him judge were challenged to select winners from among many exceptional entries. It is very exciting to see the POM counter so full of plants.

We encourage **all** of you to bring plants to challenge the new record.

Raffle Plants July, 2014

We have an exceptional selection of plants for our Raffle this month! Our Plant Procurement Chair, Richard Roosman, secured the donation of plants from our Festival vendors. They are always very generous to us and we extend our thanks to all of them.

We have at least 17 plants for you to choose from.

A sampling of the offering includes *Fokea edulis*, *Synadenium grantii*, *Euphorbia medusa* hybrid, *Epiphyllum* surprise, *Aloe glauca*, *Ceraria fruitcosa*, *Agave* “sharkskin”, *Agave desomettiana* variegata, *Aloe* “Rooikappie” and *Aloe dorotheae*. I knew that would pique your interest! You know what to do – step right up and buy a ticket (or more).

Cactus & Succulent - Calendar Of Upcoming Events For 2014

- July 25-27** Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Summer Show & Sale **Info** (949) 212-8417
Friday July 25 9am-5pm, Saturday July 26 9am-5pm, Sunday 27 12-4pm
1000 S. State College Bl., (Anaheim United Methodist Church) Anaheim
- August 9-10** 29th Annual Intercity Show & Sale-LA County Arboretum, 9am-5pm Daily
301 No. Baldwin Ave **Info** Tom Glavich (626) 798-2430 or John Matthews (661) 714-1052
- August 30** Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium **All Day at the Huntington**
- September 7** Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction -12-5
Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach 90615 **Info:** (310) 922-6090
- November 4-5** San Gabriel Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale 9-4 Both Days
LA County Arboretum 301 No. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

Updated 2-17-2014

**Plant of the Month
2014**

July

Escobaria, Corypantha
Cucurbitaceae

August

Obregonia, Strombo-
cactus, Echinomastus
Fockea, Raphionacme,
Brachystelma

September

Thelocactus
Fouqueria

October

Ariocarpus
Euphorbia
(Madagascar)

November

Miniatures

December

Holiday Party

2015

January

Discocactus
Anacampseros, Avonia,
Ceraria

February

Mammillaria Clusters
Sarcocaulon

March

Pediocactus,
Sclerocactus
Sedum

April

Variiegates

May

Astekium
Geohnintonia

June

Favorite

July

Ecinocactus,
Ferrocactus
Pachypodium-
Madagascar

June Plant of the Month

Succulent -- Favorites

Rookie

First	David Le	Sesothmothamus lugardii
Second	Kim Jacobi	Euphorbia kibwezensis crest
Second	Kathryn Boorer	Pachypodium lamerei Crest
Third	David le	Ficus palmeri

Novice

First	Jim Esterle	Pelecyphora aselliformis
Second	Robert and Carol Feldman	Pachypodium succulentum crest
Third	Jim Esterle	Dudleya pachyphytum
Third	John Martinez	Aloe pearsonii

Advanced

First	Sandy Chase	Senecio abyssinicus
Second	Barbara Hall	Tylecodon pearsonii
Third	Sandy Chase	Ipomola holubii*

Open

First	??	
Second	Bryan Chan	Dyckia 'Heaven and Hell'
Third	Manny Rivera	Bursera

Cactus -- Favorites

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Echinopsis crest
Second	Kathryn Boorer	Mammillaria zeilmanniana crest
Third	Kathryn Boorer	Sulcorebutia crest
Third	Kathleen Misko	Neochilenia hauseusis hausco-chile

Novice

First	Robert and Carol Feldman	Commiphora Monstose
Second	John Martinez	Astrophytum caput-medusae
Second	John Martinez	Opuntia
Third	John Martinez	Ortegocactus macedougallii

Advanced

First	Kim Thorpe	Puna clavaroides
Second	Sandy Chase	Mammillaria zeo;,ammiana crest
Third	Barbara Hall	Stenocactus ochoterenamus**

Open

First	John Matthews	Gymnocalycium matoense
Second	John Matthews	Astrophytum caput-medusae
Third	Rio Cernik	Astrophytum onzuka

The result for first place in Open Succulents was missing following the June meeting. Please contact Cheryl White if your plant was awarded first place.

Plant of the Month: *Coryphantha* & *Escobaria*



Coryphantha alversonii

Coryphantha and *Escobaria* are two moderate sized genera (57 and 23 species respectively) of small North American cacti similar in appearance to *Mammillaria* and were originally included in that genus. They share in common a small, mostly globular, stature and an incredible level of cold tolerance, at least in some species. *Escobaria vivipara* and *E. missouriensis* are particularly widespread species covering most of western and midwestern North America. In fact, the native range of *E. vivipara* extends all the way into Canada, a feat matched only by a few species of *Opuntia*. This cold tolerance allows people in even the coldest climates to grow these species outdoors.

While all plants in this group are relatively small, many can form good sized clumps in time (much like *Mammillaria*). Some of the variation between species include having globular plants and more cylindrical, upright plants. Flowers vary from yellow to pink. Some species are covered in dense white spines while others are more sparsely covered, allowing the green body of the plant to shine through. A large number of species produce tap roots. Cultivation is similar to *Mammillaria* and other small cacti. While some members of these genera are renowned for their cold tolerance, keep in mind many species come from warm climates. Of course that isn't much of an issue for us in California, but anyone growing them in cold climates needs to make sure they pick the cold tolerant species.



Coryphantha erecta

Coryphantha and *Escobaria* are two closely related genera that are in turn closely related to *Mammillaria*. In fact many botanists feel that *Escobaria* should not be recognized as a genus, instead lumping all the species in *Coryphantha* itself. This is what the authors of "The Flora of North America", the field guide to all the plants of the USA and Canada, chose to do. To make it even more complicated, there is evidence to suggest that *Coryphantha* shouldn't be a genus either and should all be considered species of *Mammillaria*! *Coryphantha* and *Escobaria* differ from *Mammillaria* largely in flowering on new growth while *Mammillaria* blooms primarily on previous year's growth. *Coryphantha* and *Escobaria* differ from each other only by details of the seeds. Confused yet? Unless you are a botanist it doesn't really matter. The important thing is to learn about these plants and just call them a name you are comfortable with until the botanists sort out the relationship issues. Don't be shocked, however, if one day we are calling all of them *Mammillaria* once again.



Escobaria vivipara

Kyle Williams

Plant of the month: Cucurbitaceae

The Cucurbitaceae is the scientific name of the Cucumber family. It is a moderately large plant family with 125 genera and nearly 1000 species. With such well known vegetables (technically fruit!) such as cucumbers, squash, zucchini, and melons you may wonder what it is doing as plant of the month. Turns out some of the most interesting caudiciforms belong to this family! Nearly every member of the family (caudiciform or not) is a vine that scrambles along the ground, over shrubs, and even climbs trees. Most have tendrils, which grab onto the branches of other plants to help it climb. A large number of species are xeric in nature, though not all xeric species form caudices or large tubers. Obviously, the plants of interest to us are the succulent species.



Cephalopentandra ecirrhosa



Ibervillea sonora

Most of the succulent species form a caudex or large woody tuber with vines growing out of it. The difference between the two is simply whether the fattened base is naturally above the soil surface (caudex) or below it (tuber). In cultivation the tubers are almost always raised, so the difference between a caudiciform and a tuberous species is rather blurred and we'll refer to all of them as caudices here. Cucurbitaceae caudices can be round or disc shaped, though quite often they start forming unusual, even downright bizarre, asymmetrical shapes that are truly unique to that individual. The vines in these caudiciform species are usually at least a few feet long but can reach 30 feet or more in some species. It should be noted that we in coastal California have a very interesting tuberous species that is rarely cultivated but can be found growing all over our hillsides, *Marah*. This genus is found only in the western US, primarily in California. It forms vines that grow during the rainy season before disappearing back to its underground tuber

during the dry season. What is remarkable is that the tuber can be absolutely enormous, with some reaching 200 pounds, hence the common name "Manroot" to reflect this large size. The reason it is not grown as often as more exotic species is the tuber seems not to do well when raised above ground level and therefore doesn't "show" as well as more tolerant species

Some of the most desirable succulent members of the Cucurbitaceae aren't caudiciform at all. *Xerosicyos* is a small genus of shrubs with round fleshy leaves, making it one of the only Cucurbitaceae with succulent leaves. It is quite popular among connoisseurs as a landscape plant because no other succulent shrubs have quite the same look. The most unusual species in the entire family has to be *Dendrosicyos socotranus*, a rare species from Socotra off the coast of Yemen. The latin name literally means "Tree cucumber" (that is the common name too) as it is one and only tree in the Cucurbitaceae. It has a rough white trunk, rough, almost spiny leaves and can reach 10 feet or more in nature. Unfortunately, it is one of the more difficult species to grow as it requires warm days and nights of at least 60 degrees year round.



Dendrosicyos socotranus

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General Meeting July 3

Program Speaker: Kelly Griffin “The Wild World of Succulents, Out of the Wild and into the Gardens”

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