

CENTRAL SPINE

September, 2010

Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America **On the Web at**

www.centralarizonacactus.org

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From the editor ...

Special thanks to Sue Hakala for her two articles about the LA trip. (See below).

California Trip Photos: Cheryl Brown picked the best photos from trip members and consolidated them into one file. Access it on photobucket.com.

Enter the username "cacss" and the password "succulent." There are two albums.

Select the one named "CACSS 2010 Calif Trip" and start the slide show (button in upper right hand corner).

October Newsletter Deadline: October 16.

September Presentation: Explorations of the Northern Cape in South Africa – Part II

Speaker: Doug Dawson, CACSS member

When: Sunday, September 26, 2 pm

Where: Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

At our July, 2009 General Meeting, Doug Dawson gave a PowerPoint talk entitled "Explorations of the Northern Cape in South Africa - Part I."

At this meeting, Doug will present Part II. He will talk about plants in the Richtersveld, Bushmanland, and other areas of Namaqualand.

Genera will include: Euphorbia, Cheiridopsis, Lithops, Conophytum, Stapeliads, Crassula, Tylecodon, and many more.

Become acquainted with that area of Africa where over 40% of the world's succulent species grow.

What do we need to do here in Phoenix to enable them to survive?

Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

Plant-of-the-Month Selection - a.k.a. Mini Show

Cacti: Copiapoa

Succulents: Stapeliad group (Stapelia, Carraluma, Orbea, Hoodia, etc.,)

OR any plant that looks especially good right now.

October Meeting—Plant sale—Desert Botanical Garden's Wildflower Pavilion

Sunday, October 31—Happy HALLOWEEN!

Bring potted plants to sell and plan to buy some to take home.

President's Letter from Steve Martinez

Hi, everyone,

We're on the downhill slope now, having made it through one of the hottest summers yet. I don't mean that we had that we had more, or hotter days, but our average temperature was higher than

normal. This is because we had higher low temperatures- it just did not cool down as much at night. I don't know about you, but I can live with hot days if there is some respite during early mornings and after sundown, I just don't appreciate upper 90 degree temps well toward midnight. Our plants agree, I'm sure. One thing I've discovered is that depending on drainage

and placement (amount of strong sunlight) many plants can take much more water than I thought, and grow better or at least get through the summer in better shape. With the joyous end to the blazing heat comes the awareness that in a few months I have to figure out how to protect my ever-growing collection from frost damage. We have been lucky in that the last few winters have been mild, but I know many of you remember the cold snap of 2007. All in all however, we have some pretty awesome growing conditions and those of us with this of 2007. All in all however, we have some pretty awesome growing conditions and those of us with this 'collector gene' will continue to acquire and propagate new and amazing specimens.

The Club will continue to organize nursery tours, and look for a Tucson 'caravan trip' soon. We will also continue workshops, and I have a new location for them that I will announce soon. In other business topics, we have elections on the horizon, and our October silent auction coming up. Accordingly, if you or someone you know is interested in helping guide the course of the Club as an Officer or Director please bring it to the attention of me or the election committee. Also, now is a good time to start thinking about plants you might want to donate to the silent auction, which will be on October 31 in the Wildflower Pavilion, and, as always, will serve as our October meeting. This event is a big fund raiser for the CACSS so your help is greatly appreciated. It is open to the public with Garden admission, so if you know cactophiles and succulentophiles (I made that up) that are not members, you might let them know. See you at the meeting!

Steve M.

There's Still Room—October 2 Seminar: Winter-Rainfall Bulb Sprouting

Bulbs from southwestern Africa's winter-rainfall region grow and bloom beautifully in metro Phoenix all winter, when our succulents are sleeping in the cold. Some sport bright flowers, others beautiful fragrances, and a few have intricate miniature blooms best seen with a magnifying glass. Some of the easiest genera for us are *Albuca*, *Babiana*, *Ferraria*, *Freesia*, *Daubenya*, *Gladiolus*, *Lachenalia*, *Massonia* and *Oxalis*. These bulbs are dormant in the summer so they can be packed into boxes and stored until late fall. At our meetings, members Cliff Fielding, Celeste Gornick and Leo Martin have displayed a number of these plants in bloom, and now you, too, can learn how to grow and bloom these wonderful plants.

Leo will show how to sprout these plants from seed or bulbs and grow them to bloom. The seminar is limited to 20 people and will be held at Lee Brownson's home in north Scottsdale beginning at 2 pm Saturday, October 2.

The \$20 materials fee will pay for containers, growing medium, seed and bulbs, and printing a syllabus. If the cost is less than \$20 per person, the extra will be refunded to you. Each participant will take home at least 10 containers, a different species in each.

We will have seed from Silverhill Seed in Cape Town, South Africa. The website is www.silverhillseeds.co.za (yes, this is spelled correctly). We will also have *Oxalis* bulbs from Telos Rare Bulbs in Oregon, www.telosrarebulbs.com. If you want to order some of your own seed or bulbs to plant at the seminar, you are welcome to do so. Be advised that importing seed from other countries requires a US Department of Agriculture permit.

Contact Steve Martinez to reserve a spot (602-688-4339; altrigo2@aol.com).

Club Bus Trip August 2010

By Sue Hakala

At precisely 6 a.m. the bus pulled out of the Desert Botanical Garden's parking lot, with 43 excited club members on board all with cash burning in their pockets. Visions of plants we hoped to buy and those we grow were enthusiastically discussed, and snack bags organized by Gard Roper were distributed. Our ride to our first stop at California Cactus Center in Pasadena, California

was peppered with non-stop talk as members got to know each other on the bus, at rest stops and over lunch. Wayne Whipple had a chance to ask Gard Roper where he got his name. Gard said he was christened as Arthur Gardom Roper, but as he didn't like his name he changed it when he was young to Gard. Gard said, "It's okay to call me Arthur Gardom, just don't call me Gardenia!"

Jack Meharian liked California Cactus Center best as it had, "too much of everything. It was so hard to decide." Delia Neal, on her first trip with the club, thought this nursery had the best staging and plant arrangements, but not the friendliest pricing. I'll say. I found an *Puna clavariodes* that I've been lusting for, to discover it was \$160 for a small plant. Leo Martin provided succor by assuring me that he would give me a cutting of his. After plenty of time to make our selections, we then checked into our hotel and headed over to Steve Frieze's home, site of Desert Creations Nursery. Steve's entire backyard has been turned into a shade house and is packed with choice plants many members coveted.

Steve Frieze and his family helped us with selections, answered endless questions, opened their entire home to us, served us pizza and subs complete with drinks, and were the most gracious hosts imaginable. Everyone was surprised and pleased at the feast put on for us. Steve was growing the largest *Mammillaria matudae* I have ever seen with over 12 arms most easily 24 inches long. Mike Gallagher liked this stop as, "It had good variety and a chance to talk to the actual grower, and a 30% discount." Delia Neal bought a crooked *Monvillea spegazzini* as, "I've never seen one before, it was surprisingly cheap, and looked like something I could successfully grow."

I had a chance to talk to Wayne Whipple and found out that he had been sitting at his desk on the 44th floor of the first tower that was hit at the World Trade Center. The impact rolled his chair back from his desk. He made his way down the smoky stairwell along with hundreds of others. He was not two blocks away when the tower collapsed. Wayne was retired at that moment, and moved to Arizona. Aren't we lucky to have him as our treasurer.

Saturday morning dawned clear and cool with promise of a special and unforgettable day at the Inner-City Show and Sale at the L.A. County Arboretum. This is known as THE cactus and succulent show in the U.S. Many of our club members raced to the sales area selecting unique pots and plants, others hit the show first. It was hard to decide where to go first. Chris and Paula Ginkel enjoyed the plant sale area here the best, whereas Jack Meharian was disappointed in the lack of *Sansevierias*.

Growing cactus and succulent plants in California provides a growing climate unlike any other, and the plants reflect that. Placed on the "these are the absolute best in the show" trophy table included a jaw-dropping *Mammillaria humboldtii* v. *xilo* with hundreds of perfect white heads, a *Tephrocactus alexandre* form *geometricus* with spectacular lime green balls expertly staged, and a *Crassula marnieriana* luscious in lime green and magenta. Wendy Barrett described the show, "as succulents on steroids." Not an exaggeration.

Steve Plath, member and past president of our club, was one of the judges for the "cactus open" category part of the show. I asked Steve to walk the show with me and explain some of the choices, learning a lot along the way.

If you love cactus and succulent plants, put seeing this show high on your to-do list. The plants presented are truly spectacular and beautifully staged. In fact, my impression was if your plant wasn't perfectly staged, you didn't have a chance at winning an award as the competition is so fierce. Steve Plath said, "In judging, we sometimes try to find even one bent spine as a way to eliminate a plant as it's so hard to choose."

Steve Martinez, bus trip organizer along with Gard Roper, spent at least an hour of his time at this stop arranging and rearranging the plants in the bus compartments so that we could stuff more in.

Thanks to Steve's hard sweaty work, all the purchases somehow fit with room to spare. We piled in the bus, and were off to Solano Beach inching along the Southern California Saturday afternoon traffic on the freeway, with a snack and a rest along the way.

Jeff Moore owner of Solano Succulents happily greeted us upon our arrival. This small but interesting nursery has many plants in small pots, one gallon pots and many larger. Members didn't let the size stop them, as many large and tall plants found their way cautiously into storage on the bus under Steve's organizational eye. After checking into our hotel in Solano Beach we were free for dinner and a walk on the beach in the cool, foggy air, a real treat for desert folks.

Sunday morning we were off to the Huntington Botanical Gardens where we were greeted and given a tour by Director Jim Folsom and Curator Gary Lyons. After a general introduction to the Gardens, we had a behind-the-scenes tour of the greenhouses where propagation is done and collection material is grown. Beth Kirkpatrick said, "I loved Jim's enthusiasm and passion. It was wonderful to be in his presence."

The Huntington graciously provided lunch and drinks for us, hosted a tour of the desert garden, and then opened up the behind-the-scenes sales area with many unique just-introduced-to-horticulture plants. Chips, salsa, beer and champagne flowed as club members scattered to make their selections. Wendy Barrett and Delores Grotts enjoyed the sales area best of all the stops finding some great plants. Laurie Eppard said, "My favorite experience on the trip was seeing the amazing plant specimen quality and variety as well as the application of plants in the landscape at the Huntington." I purchased a *Hildewintera colademononis*, and watched in amazement as Leo Martin took box after box of plants to the bus. Steve found a way to get all the purchased plants in.

Plants were everywhere in the overhead compartment, under seats, in the aisle, and held for the eight-hour ride home on Robert Brown's lap. Everyone purred with contentment. Steve Martinez and Leo Martin estimated that the value of the all the plants purchased was around \$10,000.

Arriving at the DBG about 11 p.m., Steve held us all back as he gingerly took all the plants out so that rightful owners could be found and no plants damaged. My husband Terry said: "If you've ever been to the circus and seen 15 clowns get out of a tiny car, that's what the unloading looked like." A great car organizer himself, Terry was impressed by Steve's elan and ability to keep it all straight. We all thank you Steve.

We also all thank the Desert Botanical Garden for allowing us to park our cars, overseeing them in their lot all weekend, and for having their ranger greet us upon arrival late Sunday night. "A special thank you goes to all participants who were so positive and cooperative throughout the trip. You made my job easy," said Steve Martinez. Thanks go also to the Huntington for the great tours, food, drinks and general hospitality, to the Frieze family for their graciousness, and to everyone who helped to make this such a fun and fabulous experience.

Steve and Gard made it so easy for all of us not just in handling the plants, but in picking great places to visit and eat at, good hotels, quick and easy hotel key distribution, ice cream stops, restroom breaks, etc. He and Gard did a fabulous job. I think Laurie Eppard sums it up best, "It was a life expanding experience."

(Authors note: If you were on the trip and not quoted, it's just because I ran out of space.)

Steve Plath: Inner-City Show Judge

By Sue Hakala

Club member and past President Steve Plath first participated as an exhibitor in the Inner-City Show about 24 years ago when he was living in San Jose, California. The next year he was invited to be a judge for the "novice cactus category" at the show. The Inner-City Show held this

August at the L.A. County Arboretum is considered the premier judged cactus and succulent show in the United States. Steve has been invited to be a judge for this prestigious show eight times, and has been a judge for other shows around the country as well.

How does one come to be a judge of this show? "By exhibiting premium plants in advanced categories at your own club, by possessing in-depth knowledge of cactus and succulent plants, and by time spent in the trenches learning about these amazing plants," Steve said.

There are basically six categories in this show: cactus and succulent sections in novice, advanced and open (open meaning open to anyone including vendors/dealers who get plants not readily available to the rest of us). The show has 12 judges, two for each category. This year Steve and Gene Joseph judged the "open cactus" category featuring hundreds of plants. Judging took about 2.5 hours, and then about 2 more hours for all the 12 judges to agree on which plants would be awarded the trophies.

Each judge then gets to award 2 special rosette ribbons to any 2 plants in the whole show that they want to. "It's a way for a judge to give a particular plant that they like special recognition," Steve said. "I used to be most pleased with these, over a trophy, when I was an exhibitor." One of the plants Steve awarded a judges ribbon to was a gigantic *Mammillaria candensis*. "Of all the plants in the show, this is the one I'd like to take home," Steve said.

"It's a blessing and a curse to be a judge," Steve said, as it can be very hard to select those that get awards. Judges may have to justify their decisions to others and stand by their choices. "Many novice growers come to the show and see these amazing plants, and feel that they could never grow a plant like the one that they are looking at. People should not be intimidated. The purpose of the show is to educate the public and fellow growers. It's a chance to join in friendly competition, and to praise those who grow common plants well as well as those who grow plants that are difficult in cultivation."

"Being a judge is fun. Getting a chance to share knowledge, develop friendships and just socialize is great. Sharing unbridled joy at seeing a plant with someone else who loves it too is fulfilling. I realize that I'm not so alone in my craziness for these plants, and not the only weirdo who likes this." Amen.

Christmas Potluck

Sunday, December 12, 1 to 4:30 pm, Mountain View Park Community Center, 8625 E. Mountain View Road, Scottsdale, AZ

Bring your holiday spirit and a plant to exchange and join us for a memorable time. If you bring a plant, you may take a plant. Please bring an appetizer, a main course or dessert, with utensils for serving it. You'll also need to bring your own plates, silverware and napkins. As always, Gard and Loren make a great punch and serve coffee.

IT'S VERY, VERY IMPORTANT TO RSVP to Jo Davis by phone, 480-839-3792. The room will hold only 75 people, according to the fire marshal, so get your reservation in now. If you leave a message for Jo, be sure to include your phone number, so she can call you back. **The reservation deadline is Thursday, December 2.**

Want to know more about CACSS member Leo Martin's experience as a plant collector?

Read the Saturday, Sept. 11 Arizona Republic article, "Like plants? Collect some? You're not alone." It's in the Home Improvement section's "Know Your Desert Garden" column, written by DBG Assistant Director of Horticulture Cathy Babcock.

(online, look for it in the list of articles on <http://www.azcentral.com/style/hfe/>)

Members welcome at the CACSS Board Meeting, 7 pm Tuesday, Sept. 21, at Steve Martinez' home. Call or email Steve to let him know you'll be there.

2010 CACSS Officers

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PLANT QUESTIONS??? WHOM TO CONTACT!!!

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list (Just call or e-mail Bob Torrest—480-994-3868; robertst9114@msn.com). For now the list is simply alphabetical with principal interests.

When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

DOUG DAWSON

480-893-1207

dawsonlithops@hotmail.com

Specializations include Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs, and Melocactus.

MIKE GALLAGHER

602-942-8580

mgallagher26@cox.net

Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and *Turbinicarpus*.

STEVE PLATH

623-915-7615

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Specializations include *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Cyphostemma*, *Echinocereus*, *Fouquieria*, *Thelocactus*,

General Propagation, and Desert Revegetation.

BOB TORREST

480-994-3868

robertst9114@msn.com

Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, *Trichocereus*, and *Opuntia*.