

# COMMUNIQUE

## SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc.  
Meetings are held at **7:30 PM** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month  
in the Palm Room, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia  
**May 2008 Volume 41 Number 5**

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**Monthly Meeting:** Join us **Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 pm. Our speaker for May is Guillermo Rivera. He is a PHD botanist from Argentina and has become one of the leading experts on South American cacti. He owns South American Cactus Expeditions and takes guided plant tours throughout South America. Guillermo will speak to us on the Cacti from Central Brazil, Minas Gerais and Central State. It should be an excellent show as have his previous shows.

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**Plants of the Month:** (see attached write ups)

**CACTI – Opuntiaceae**

**SUCCULENT – Stem Succulent Euphorbias**

Bring your specimens in for our monthly mini-show. It will help you prepare for the real shows and give you an additional opportunity to show others your pride and joy. If you don't have any of this type of plant you can learn about them at the meeting

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**Study Group: Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>; Topic – Vegetative Propagation**

Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Palm Room at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Join us to learn how to take cuttings from your plants as members share their successes.

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**New Members:** SGVCSS wishes to extend a warm welcome to its newest members: **Jennifer Duke and Albert Cohen**. Be sure to take a look at the Club's website <http://www.sgvcss.com>. If you wish to receive your COMMUNIQUE on-line please notify the editor at [sgv\\_css@prodigy.net](mailto:sgv_css@prodigy.net).

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**Refreshments:** The following club members have signed up to bring refreshments for the May meeting: **Barbara Nolan, William Molina and Pat Swain**. Remember the first three people to sign up and bring refreshments will receive a plant.

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**Postage Rate Increase:** Effective May 12, 2008, first-class postage will be 42 cents. If you are not receiving your COMMUNIQUE via e-mail now is the time to start. See Evelyn Stevens at the meeting or send an e-mail to [sgv\\_css@prodigy.net](mailto:sgv_css@prodigy.net).

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**April-08 Plant-of-the-Month Mini Show Results**

<b>Cacti- Coryphantha &amp; Escobaria</b>			<b>Succulent- Miniature Agaves</b>		
<b>Beginner</b>					
1st	Pat Swain	E. sp (sneedii ? )	1st	William Molina	A. "Mini Belle"
2nd	Pat Swain	C. sulcata	1st	Calvin Arakaki	A .potatorum
3rd	Pat Swain	E. vivipara	2nd	Calvin Arakaki	A. polianthiflora
3rd	Cindy Arakaki	E. emskoetteriana	2nd	Calvin Arakaki	A. titanota
			3rd	Oscar Flores	A. stricta nana
<b>Intermediate</b>					
1st	Barbara Nolan	E. minima	1st	John Matthews	A. lophantha
2nd			2nd	John Matthews	A. stricta nana
3rd			3rd	Barbara Nolan	A. stricta nana
			3rd	Phil Skonieczki	A. geminflora
<b>Advanced</b>					
1st	Manny Rivera	C. recurvata	1st	Buck & Yvonne Hemenway	A. "Mini-Belle"
2nd	Manny Rivera	E. sneedii orcuttii	2nd	Alan Hooker	A. titanota
2nd	Frank Nudge	E. minima	2nd	Rita Gerlach	A. sp
3rd	Manny Rivera	E. laredoi	3rd	Manny Rivera	A. stricta nana
<b>Master</b>					
1st	Tom Glavich	C. sulcata	1st		
2nd	Peter Walkowiak	C. nickelsee	2nd		
3rd	Peter Walkowiak	C. baruama	3rd		
3rd	Peter Walkowiak	C. macromeris			

**CACTUS AND SUCCULENT  
CALENDAR OF UP COMING EVENTS FOR 2008**

- MAY 4<sup>th</sup>** SOUTH BAY EPIPHYLLIUM SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
SOUTH COAST BONTANICAL GARDENS INFO. CALL-310-833-6823
- MAY 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>** SUNSET CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER, GARDEN ROOM  
4117 OVERLAND AVE. CULVER CITY, CA. INFO. #310-822-1783
- MAY 18<sup>th</sup>** HUNTINGTON PLANT SALE 10 TO 5 HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL  
GARDEN 1151 OXFORD ROAD, SAN MARINO, CA 626-405-2160
- MAY 18<sup>th</sup>** EPIPHYLLIUM SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM, ARCADIA, CA 310-670-8148
- JUNE 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>** SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY -SHOW AND SALE  
BALBOA PARK, ROOM 101, SAN DIEGO, CA. INFO.--#619-477-4779
- JUNE 14<sup>th</sup>** GATES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY 29<sup>th</sup> SHOW AND SALE----SAT. 9 TO 4  
JURUPA MOUNTAINS CULTURAL CENTER, 7621 GRANITE HILL DRIVE, GLEN AVON, CA  
INFO. 909-360-8802

# San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

## Cactus of the Month May 2008 – *Opuntioideae*



Opuntia flower

The Cactus family is divided into a number of subfamilies. The *Opuntioideae* is one of these subfamilies. The *Opuntioideae* covers the largest geographical range of any of the subfamilies, stretching from Southern Argentina to Canada, and covers all of the Caribbean islands and Pacific Islands from the Galapagos to the Catalinas. It is naturalized on every continent except Antarctica. It is a pest and a noxious weed in many places, and is displacing native vegetation in parts of Africa, Asia, Madagascar and Australia.

The first plants that come to mind when one thinks of *Opuntia* are the flat pads, seen everywhere, or the spiny cylindrical *Cholla* common to the local hillsides and deserts. The *Opuntioideae* family offers much more, and some unusual as well as common forms are described below.

Propagation of all *Opuntias* is most easily accomplished by cuttings. All cuttings root easily. Seed propagation requires patience, with seed scarification and sometimes artificial wintering by keeping the seed damp and cold in the refrigerator required. Seed germination can be erratic, with seeds from the same plant sometimes germinating in days, and sometimes not for months or years.

Handling of *Opuntias* is somewhat of a problem. They are notorious for their well placed sharp spines, and nearly invisible glochids. Handling with steel tools is the best bet. Gloves get covered with glochids, which invariably end up in your hands when the gloves come off. Glochids can often be removed by washing with a strong hose stream. Plucking with tweezers is effective and brushing works sometimes. Duct tape is a help, and as a last resort, so is rubber cement.

### Plants worth knowing

*Opuntia*. the most widespread of the genera, has a number of great species for the collector.

***Opuntia basilaris***, a local native, can hold its own with any of the more exotic plants listed below.

***Opuntia burrageana***, native to Baja California, forms low mounds of sharply spined cylindrical stems. It's beautiful in the field, but a hazard to the careless hiker.

***Opuntia compressa*** grows as a native plant as far north as the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. It's a native of well drained soils of the Eastern United States.

***Opuntia erinacea***, another California native, gets long white spines that resemble hair.

***Opuntia microdasys***, particularly the very common small white form is really a spectacular plant. If this were hard to grow, it would be in every collection and in every show.

***Opuntia pachypus***, a native of Peru, is the only columnar *Opuntia*. It's rarely seen, and hard to grow.

**Opuntia ramosissima** gets long slender shoots, each about the width of a pencil, covered with wicked spines.

**Opuntia violacea v. santa rita**, gets a beautiful purple, offset with black spines.

**Pereskiopsis** looks like a *Pereskia*, and more like a tropical shrub than a cactus, with long leaves and thick stems. It's native to the tropical regions of Southern Mexico and Guatemala; there are about 12 species.

**Pereskiopsis porterii** is often used as a grafting stock for small seedlings. It is not cold tolerant, and tends to get scabby and lose its leaves in the winter in Southern California.

**Pterocactus** is a Argentine geophytic genus, with deciduous brown stems coming from a convoluted and interesting tuberous root. The stems are easily rooted, which is fortunate, since they are even more easily detached, whenever the plant is moved. The roots grow quickly, and can be raised every year or two to make a spectacular plant.

**Pterocactus tuberosa** is the most commonly seen species, but others have recently become available.



*Puna bonnieae*

*Puna* is another mostly Argentine geophytic genus, related to both *Pterocactus* and *Tephrocactus*. Large subterranean roots are

topped by small usually globular heads. **Puna bonnieae**, discovered in 1990, is still rare.

**Quiabentia zehntneri** is bushy shrub that looks like a cross between an *Opuntia* and a *Pereskia*. It is native to Brazil, and has stems, and oval leaves. It requires humidity and warmth, and is rarely seen in cultivation

*Tephrocactus*, again Argentine, is a genus of very variable cacti. Species vary considerably, from the very spiny **Tephrocactus stramria** to the paper spined **Tephrocactus articulata** to the nearly spineless **Tephrocactus inermis**. *Tephrocactus* are probably the most collected of the *Opuntioideae*, and there is even a *Tephrocactus* study group for the true fanatics. They make small, neat plants, and a good collection can be kept in a reasonable area.

Tom Glavich April 2008

# San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

## Succulent of the Month May 2008 - *Stem Succulent Euphorbias*

Stem succulent *Euphorbias* are exactly what they seem. These are *Euphorbias* where the main food and water storage organ is the stem. They are a perfect example of convergent evolution, often resembling *cacti* in almost every aspect except flowers.



***Euphorbia stellaspina***

In the S.C. Botanical Garden

Stem succulent *Euphorbias* can be found throughout Africa, in the Mediterranean, on Madagascar and the other offshore islands, in India, on the Canary Islands, in South America, and even in Mexico. Some have persistent leaves, some don't. Those from tropical climates (Uganda, Madagascar, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen) tend to be frost sensitive. Those from Mediterranean climates (South Africa, Canary Islands, Mexico) tend to be tolerant of some frost. There are exceptions in both cases.

In general all of these are easy to grow. Good, fast draining potting mixes, protection from excessive winter water and cold, are really all they ask. They benefit from relatively frequent repotting, and fairly frequent applications of fertilizer when they are growing.

Seed of most *Euphorbia* is hard to come by. The seed is short lived, and should be planted as soon as available. Once germinated, the seedlings are similar to cacti seeds, growing slowly at first, and then accelerating in the second and third years. A more common method of propagation is vegetative propagation. Cuttings can be taken when in active growth. The latex is often an irritant, and sometimes a severe one, so care must be taken to keep it off your skin and cloths. Eye protection should be used when cutting *Euphorbias*.

*Euphorbias* will bleed a milky latex when cut. This can be stopped by spraying with cold water. The cuttings are then left to dry for a few days, replanted, and watered lightly until roots form and new growth starts. For large cuttings, new growth may not appear for six months.

### ***Exceptional Euphorbias***

***Euphorbia confinalis*** is a tree eventually, but as a seedling, it has stunning patterns of light and dark green on the stems. Every plant is different.



*Euphorbia gymnocalycioides*

***Euphorbia gymnocalycioides*** from Ethiopia looks almost exactly like a *Gymnocalycium*.

***Euphorbia horrida***, from South Africa with many different cultivars, all worth growing.

***Euphorbia millotii*** has thick white, succulent stems, crowned with a head of leaves green on top, purple to red below. From Madagascar, it is cold sensitive.

***Euphorbia milli***, another Madagascar species is common as a houseplant everywhere. It has a spiny stem, and small green leaves. It is grown for its flowers. Recent Thai hybrids, with other *Euphorbia* species have resulted in very large colorful flowers.

***Euphorbia monteiri***, is a wonderful species from Botswana to Namibia, with several similar subspecies available.

***Euphorbia obesa***, the classic baseball plant, is common in almost every collection.

***Euphorbia rossii*** another Madagascar plant, related to *E. milli* has beautiful, densely spined stems, with deciduous leaves. More cold tolerant than might be expected, it does well in Southern California.



***Euphorbia suzannae***

***Euphorbia suzannae***, another classic found in almost every collection. Easy to grow, bright green stems, that quickly clump to form an impressive specimen. Easy to grow, but it needs very bright light to keep its true form.

***Euphorbia valida***, another cactus look alike is a nicely patterned *Euphorbia* with a body shape much like an *Astrophytum*.

#### References

M. Sajeve and M. Costanzo, **Succulents, The Illustrated Dictionary**  
**The Euphorbia Journal** (all volumes)

Tom Glavich April 2008

## Judging Cactus and Succulent Shows

By Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich, 2008

After 37 years of judging cactus and succulent shows, it has become more and more apparent that one needs a great deal of knowledge to be a good show judge. Learning about judging is a never-ending process and there is always more to learn about the psychology and philosophy of this important responsibility.

C&S shows differ in many ways, from small to very large and from competitive to noncompetitive, from educational to commercial displays and from winter, spring, summer and fall events. Participants in shows also vary from children to adults and from novice to advanced and professional growers. The venues vary from schools to auditoriums, shopping malls to colleges, zoos and botanical gardens, and who knows where else. But one thing is always consistent and never changes, and that is how important the showing of our plants is to our hobby and each of us as individuals. For this reason, the process of judging should be taken as a serious and important responsibility. The health and vibrance of our clubs and the proper education of our members, as well as the general public, are all at stake. If asked to judge, one should take this honor seriously, because the decisions we make can have far-reaching affects on the individual showers and the sponsoring clubs.

What does a judge need to know before taking on the task of judging other people's plants? A great deal! ! ! Knowing your plants (nomenclature,) and how they grow (horticulture,) is first and foremost. Secondly, a judge must understand the philosophy of an individual show and the values given to various aspects of the presentation of a particular plant or display. The judge must also be aware of the physiological impact of their rational or reasons as to how plants are selected from best (1st, 2nd and 3rd) to worst (or least best. ) The judges must be able to verbalize their pros and cons regarding the decisions they make. This helps to insure that the judging process is objective and educational. Often show clerks volunteer just to listen and learn from the judge's comments as the judging process takes place. Judges must also be able to work with other judges, clerks, show committees and interested participants. A good judge should also know the ins and outs of being a participant (shower,) and all that it entails to bring, enter and return your plants to and from the show. Judges should also understand, in full, all aspects of being a contributing cactus club member and show participant.

Knowing the plants' nomenclature and its horticultural needs are paramount to being a qualified judge. There are hundreds of cacti and other succulents that are commonly grown and often shown. If the judge has spent the years necessary to encounter many or most of these plants, and has learned their common or scientific names, they should better understand the characteristics that a particular species would possess. Recognizing the true character of a species is of the utmost importance in being able to evaluate one plant verses another. True character is often a combination of how the plant would grow in its natural habitat and how we might produce the same species in the ideal cultivated condition. Unlike habitat, we can grow plants that have not been beat up by their environment, animalized or munched on by insects. A species, that in habitat normally produces heavy dense spines, should reflect this characteristic as a cultivated plant. A species that is normally sub-globose should not be columnar. There are many other specific characteristics that a plant may have that must be evaluated as to its show correctness. Knowing what a species embodies in its natural habitat conditions requires that a judge be either well read or has traveled to where the plant grows. In final, a good judge should:

- know where the plant comes from and conditions in which it grows
- have grown and experienced the plant in cultivation
- understand a plant's degree of difficulty to cultivate
- know a plant's rate of growth in comparison to other related species.
- have an artistic and mature eye for presentation

Each cactus and succulent club that has a competitive show generally sets up the criteria by which a plant is to be judged. This is a comparison of an individual plant to other specimens in the same category. The general criteria usually includes: the condition of plant, its size and degree of maturity, its difficulty of cultivation, the proper name (nomenclature) and its staging or presentation. Different values are set to each of these criteria depending on the individual club's philosophy. Values are usually a slight variation on a 100 point scale, often similar to the following:

- Condition of plant (clean, healthy and true to type) 70 points
- Size and degree of maturity 10 points
- Degree of difficulty of cultivation 10 points
- Proper or correct name (nomenclature) 5 points
- Staging or presentation (pot and topdressing or props) 5 points

A good judge will take the criteria presented by the host club and apply it objectively to each plant in a class. The plant that gets the greatest number of points is considered the best (1st place.) Sometimes two or more plants will get the same number of points, and then tiebreaking factors are considered. Often-used tiebreaking criteria include: a plant in flower or fruit, rarity, overall artistic beauty and a judge's personal favorite. Keep in mind that applying all the criteria requires a strong, sound working knowledge of all the plants in competition. It is also important that judges follow the club's criteria as given and do not over ride the wishes of the club to enhance their own personal philosophy. In some cases staging is considered to have a greater value than prescribed. We all love a well-presented plant but we must not be overwhelmed by staging verses horticultural expertise. After all, this is a show, and presentation should be important. However, this is a plant show, not a pot, rock or topdressing show. These materials are additions to the plant, like a frame to a painting. They should compliment the plant but not overwhelm it.

Competitive shows are in their nature controversial. Each person showing or viewing a show will often have a personal opinion, and thus the judge's results are not always agreed upon. When judges make their final decisions, sometimes show philosophy and psychology will help to dictate their decisions. Some shows have a philosophy of spreading the trophies around, even when one plant may well be the best candidate for numerous trophy categories. At other times judges are told to be more forgiving of novice (beginner) entries and sometimes to be stricter on the advanced or experienced participants. At some shows the judges are told to judge what is in front of them and to ignore their knowledge of better plants elsewhere. On the other hand, sometimes judges are told to judge a class against perceived perfection. Often shows will have different levels of competition from novice (beginner) to advanced (moderate experience) to open (professionals or very experienced.) Sometimes these various levels are judged slightly different because the psychological impact is unique from group to group. The novice participant often needs success to ensure their future participation; thus a more lenient, positive and supportive approach is preferred for this level. Professionals often expect to

see critical judging because they themselves are knowledgeable and they recognize subjective or lenient decisions. For a judge to say, "I just like the plant," is not rational enough for a plant to be the best! Objective criteria must be used to avoid hurt feelings or the thoughts of prejudice as to ownership or personal preference.

A judge needs to keep up-to-date with the showing process. As shows are dynamic and always growing and changing, a judge should also keep involved in the roll of being a participant. This will help keep the judge educated as to new or changing thoughts regarding criteria values and club philosophies. If a judge shows often~ he or she will then not forget about all the work and effort that goes into preparing for the show. Basically, a good judge should not expect more from a participant than he or she can do themselves. Being positive and supportive rather than critical is very , very important in making a good show environment and ensuring that club members return year after year. After all, success promotes more success!

The interaction between judges and all the people involved at a show is very important. A judge becomes a leader and educator. This in itself promotes energy and enthusiasm. The eventual results of this energy are a cohesive, hard working and cooperative group of people. Everyone benefits: the show chairmen, clerks, participants and the general public. The judge needs to be a person who has:

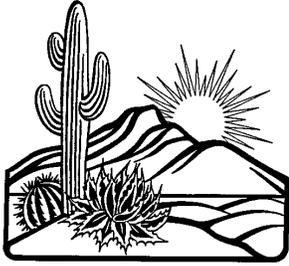
- knowledge of plants and their cultivation
- knowledge of the people and their rolls
- knowledge of the club's philosophies
- knowledge of different growing conditions, city to city, state to state, country to country and environment to environment
- knowledge of show rules
- knowledge of the need to share and educate about our hobby

The selection of judges should be carefully done. A person selected to be a judge should embody all the aspects and knowledge as previously mentioned. Judges should not be selected just because they're popular or well liked. Judges should not be selected because they can write, speak publicly or prepare botanical papers. They should be selected because they model how to grow and show plants! Judges should be chosen because they have the necessary horticultural and showing skills to make wise and well educated decisions. These decisions will best promote the growing of our plants, and our hobby.

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If you have a cactus or succulent related event that you would like to have announced in the **COMMUNIQUE**, please forward the information to the address given below. Please verify event dates - sometimes events are rescheduled or canceled without adequate advance notice. Articles, Notices and Corrections can be sent via E-mail to: **sgv\_css@prodigy.net** or via post to: **San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter Editor, c/o Evelynn Stevens, 10119 1/2 East Olive Street, Temple City, CA 91780-3345**. Material must be received by the last Thursday of the month to be considered for publication in the next issue of the **COMMUNIQUE**.

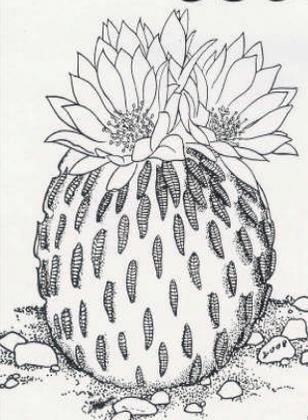
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COMMUNIQUE  
Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus and Succulent Society  
C/o Evelyn Stevens  
10119 1/2 E Olive Street  
Temple City, CA 91780

FIRST CLASS MAIL

**CACTUS & SUCCULENT SHOW & SALE**



**MAY 3 - 4**  
... free admission ...

**PLANT SALE:** SATURDAY 10 - 5  
SUNDAY 10 - 4

**SHOW:** SATURDAY 12 - 5  
SUNDAY 10 - 4

**SPECIAL: LA BALLONA BROMELIAD SOCIETY SHOW & SALE**  
(Auditorium) Same location/date

Information: 310/822-1783



**Club Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month  
(except July & August) at 7:30 PM  
Burton W. Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way  
Marina Del Rey

**garden room, veteran's memorial bldg.  
4117 overland (at culver), culver city**

**Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale**

*Presented by The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society*

**JUNE 7th & 8th  
2008**

At The Casa Del Prado, Room 101 And  
Patio, Balboa Park

**Strange and exotic plants from the far  
corners of the world gathered together  
for your viewing amazement!!**

Courtyard sale of choice specimen plants  
for the novice and collector as well as  
handmade stoneware planters and pots!!

Potting service will be available along with  
cultural information

**SHOW HOURS:**  
Saturday, June 7: 10am to 3pm  
Sunday, June 8: 10am to 4pm  
(Judging will be after 3pm Saturday)

**SALE HOURS:**  
Saturday, June 7: 9am to 5pm  
Sunday, June 8: 10am to 4pm

