



*San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus & Succulent Society*

# **COMMUNIQUE**

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc.

February 2012 - Volume 45, Number 2

**February Meeting:  
Thursday,  
February 9 at 7:30 pm**

Meetings are held on the  
2nd Thursday of the month  
at **7:30 pm** in the Palm Room,  
Los Angeles County Arboretum,  
Arcadia.

**Mini-Show Plants:**

**CACTUS:**

*Ferocactus, Echinocactus*

**SUCCULENT:**

**Winter-growing Mesembs**

**Study Group:**

Study group will meet on Wednesday,  
February 15th in the Palm Room,  
Los Angeles County Arboretum at  
7:30 pm. The topic will be:

***Monsonia (Sarcocaulon)***

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***President's Message***

***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

First thing First - we will have a Board of Director's meeting on Wednesday, February 15 at Coco's on Michillinda and Colorado Blvd. at 6:00 PM.

Our bus trip to nurseries in San Diego County is well along in the planning process. The trip is on Saturday, March 17, leaving at 8:00 AM from the Arboretum parking lot. We'll go to three nurseries. First to Rancho Soledad (that's where Kelly Griffin works), then to Peter Walkowiak's nursery and finally to Petra Crist's wonderful new facility. We'll stop for lunch in San Marcos at a shopping center that has about 20 restaurants in it. We will be back at the Arboretum by 5:00 at the latest.

The bus trip should be a lot of fun, Bill and Donn will have the sign-up sheet at the meeting, first come first served. You will need to pay a \$10 deposit to hold your seat, and then get the money back when you board the bus.

We will be moving our meetings to Ayres Hall, beginning in March. We'll have more in the March Newsletter, but this is a permanent move and we will meet there for the foreseeable future. The

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## January Mini-Show Results

### Single-Headed Mammillaria

#### Novice

1st Brian Le M. candida

#### Intermediate

1st Rita Gerlach M. megiana  
 2nd C & C Arakaki M. huizilopochtli  
 2nd Louise Stack M. rhodantha  
 3rd Rita Gerlach M. movensis  
 3rd C & C Arakaki M. zephranthoides

#### Open

1st John Matthews M. formosa ssp.  
 pseudocruciigera  
 2nd John Matthews Mamm. supertexta

#### BEST CACTUS IN SHOW:

**M. megiana, congrats to Rita Gerlach!**

### Aloe - Species Only

#### Novice

1st J. Martinez Aloe somaliensis  
 2nd J. Martinez Aloe albiflora  
 2nd Pete Kimbrell Aloe aristata  
 3rd Minh Au Aloe aristata  
 3rd Mark Darby Aloe pearsonii

#### Intermediate

1st J & B Wilner Aloe suprafoliata  
 2nd C & C Arakaki Aloe haworthiodes v.  
 aurantiacus  
 2nd C & C Arakaki Aloe bellatula  
 3rd Tom Vermilion Aloe descoingsii  
 3rd Rita Gerlach Aloe descoingsii

#### Open

1st John Matthews Aloe alooides  
 2nd John Matthews Aloe framesii

#### BEST SUCCULENT IN SHOW:

**A. suprafoliata, congrats to Joanne & Bernie Wilner!**

Be sure to take a look at the Club's website at [www.sgvcss.com](http://www.sgvcss.com). Thanks to Gunnar Eisel for managing our website. If you wish to receive your **COMMUNIQUE** on-line please notify the editor at [yvonne@pricklypalace.com](mailto:yvonne@pricklypalace.com).

## President's Message (cont'd. from page 1)

month of June is not available to us, so we will need to either meet in the Palm Room in June, or find something else.

I want to thank the Huntington and their terrific staff for a fabulous day in their gardens in January. The weather was just perfect and the gardens hardly showed any sign of the devastating storm in late November.

Thanks also to Tom Glavich for his wonderful talk on Monsters in January, I'm sure that everyone in the room learned something new.

Yvonne and I will miss the February meeting. See you all in March (or at the BoD meeting later this month).

Buck Hemenway

## This Month's Program

Our presenter for February is Greg DeChirico. Greg has recently moved to Santa Barbara from the Bay Area where he has long been known as a master grower of succulent plants. He operates Greg's Greenhouse and is becoming a regular at Southern California sales. Greg serves on the Board of Directors of the CSSA and is active with the Santa Barbara Cactus & Succulent Society.

He will give us a presentation on the **Succulent Plants of Peru**.

Greg's talk will be excellent, don't miss it!

## Study Group

**Wednesday, February 15th • Monsonia (Sarcocaulon)**

The study group is an informal, hands-on learning experience that is fun for expert and novice alike. Come and learn from the experience of others. We are always happy to share our knowledge.

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Palm Room at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.



## Plants Of The Month

Enter your specimen plants in 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 these species of plants you can learn about them at the meeting.

### CACTUS OF THE MONTH —

#### *Ferocactus*, *Echinocactus*

These two genera are closely related and many of the botanists who have categorized them over time have included them in the same genus. Today we recognize the two separate genera due mainly to a distinct difference in flower and seed structure. All of them are called "barrel" cacti.

Generally speaking the *Echinocacti* are located more easterly of the two, in West Texas, New Mexico and then south into Mexico. The main exception to that is *E. polycephalus* which grows in the Mojave Desert. This is a small genus with 6 species and one subspecies. *Ferocacti* are primarily located in the Sonoran Desert from Arizona to the Pacific and south into Mexico, and include about 40 species.

With age both genera get to be very large plants particularly when grown in the ground; fortunately they are fairly slow growers. When grown in pots they will stay at a comfortable size for many years. Many of them are variable, with widely varying spine lengths, shapes, textures and colors, depending on the specific locality.



*Ferocactus chrysacanthus*

These plants are easily grown with most are perfectly happy outdoors without protection year round in Southern California. A normal well draining potting mix will do well. They need lots of sun to bring out the colors and textures of the spines. They should be repotted frequently, moving the pot size up steadily an inch or two at a time until they get so big you need help.

*Ferocactus* and *Echinocactus* are easily grown from seed, although the larger seeds, (e.g. *Echinocactus polycephalus*) will germinate better with some scarification. Germination is most successful when done in April or May. The seedlings grow slowly for the first few months, but soon take off. They can be transplanted to pure pumice as soon as they are big enough to handle. At this point a steady diet of neutral pH water and fertilizer will get them growing quickly. There are several advantages to growing *Ferocactus* and *Echinocactus* from seed. The first is that the selection of type localities and spine variations is far greater than you will ever see at a plant show or sale. The second and most important is that you get to grow the plant through its awkward juvenile growth. During the second year the spines grow completely out of proportion to the plant's body. A *Ferocactus* that will eventually be a foot in diameter, and 4 feet tall with 3 or four inch spines, will have as a seedling a body less than an inch in diameter, with spines an inch or more long.

#### Favorite Species

*Ferocactus chrysacanthus* from Baja California has dense golden spines, and becomes a spectacular species when about 8 inches in diameter. It will grow to 3 feet, eventually.

*Ferocactus emoryi*, from Arizona and Sonora, has long red spines that can vary from straight to hooked.

*Ferocactus latispinus*, from central Mexico, has flat reddish spines, with distinct grooves running cross-wise, particularly on the bottom. A variety, *Ferocactus latispinus v spiralis* has the spines forming a spiral pattern up the stem. A spectacular plant when it gets to be about 18 inches tall.

*Ferocactus rectispinus* closely related to *F. emoryi* has bright red spines.

*Ferocactus stainesii*, from San Luis Potosi, has red to carmine spines, clusters quickly, and can grow to 9 feet, given enough time.



*Ferocactus cylindraceus*

*Ferocactus wislizenii*, another Baja species has flat spines. It grows more in the winter than the summer.

*Echinocactus texensis* has a wide distribution, from southeastern New Mexico, throughout central Texas, and into the northeastern Mexican states. It has a short, depressed body with robust spines and is well worth growing for its large pink flowers.



*Echinocactus texensis*

*Echinocactus grusonii* is the iconic species of the genus. Common names include 'Golden Barrel' and 'Mother-in-law's Cushion' and are descriptive of the golden spines and large size this cactus can attain with age. It is very easy to grow from seed and does very well in our local conditions if grown in well-draining soil.



*Echinocactus grusonii*

Tom Glavich, January 2012

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

### *Winter-growing Mesembs*

The *Aizoaceae* is the largest family of succulent plants in the world. The plants of this family take on an extraordinary number of shapes and colors in their struggle to survive in a very unforgiving environment. The most collectable of the *Aizoaceae* are the *Mesembryanthemaceae*, generally shortened to the more pronounceable and spellable Mesembs.

Cultivation requirements of Mesembs are particular to the genus, and sometimes the species. The family is divided into winter growers, growing where most rain falls in winter, summer growers, where just

the opposite occurs; and opportunistic growers which generally grow in regions where rainfall is sparse, but can occur at any time. Some of the winter growers do not want any summer water, and will easily rot if watered too often. It is much hotter and dryer sitting in a pot in a Southern California valley than it ever is in their habitat. For the winter dormant species, it is best to provide some summer shade (50% shade cloth is fine) and an occasional light misting. (Once every week or so, and just a flick with the hose will do.)

All Mesembs grow well in a potting mix that contains very little organic matter. A classic potting mix consists of 3 parts pumice, 3 parts plaster sand and one part potting soil. This will produce plants that are closer to their natural appearance, will require less water, and will be easier to maintain. Many growers use straight pumice as a potting mix. With a completely inorganic potting mix, some light fertilization is required. A few times during the growing season is sufficient, with the fertilizer dilute. Exposure to rain makes a great difference.

With such an enormous family, there isn't room to even list all the genera worth growing. Almost all the *Cheirodopsis* are worth growing. The colors on the leaves of these plants are wonderful, changing throughout the year. Many species have two leaf forms, one appearing at the beginning of the growing season, the second after the winter has past and spring warmth returns.

*Antegibbaeum fissoides* is a rarely seen monotypic genus (one species) with great leaves, and fantastic purple flowers. *Titanopsis* have leaves that look like thin concrete or dried mud. *Aloinopsis*, are miniature caudiciforms with flowers that change shape from day to night (when they fully open). *Aloinopsis* and many other Mesembs are night fragrant. It is worth visiting your collection after dark.



*Aloinopsis schooneessii*

*Conophytum* is the largest of the genera and is the home of many spectacular species with wonderful body shapes and flowers unparalleled by any in the plant world. Everyone should grow a few hundred.



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**February 11**, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — San Diego Winter Show and Sale, Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.

**February 15**, 7:30 pm — Study Group, MONSONIA (SARCOCAULON). Palm Room of the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

**March 17**, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm — San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Bus Trip will take us to three growers in San Diego County. Bus will leave from the LA Arboretum at 8:00 am sharp. Reservations \$10.00 per seat. The reservation cost will be returned to you upon boarding the bus. See Bill Gerlach at the meeting or call him at 626-332-8008 to reserve a seat.



**March 23 and 24**, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm — Orange County Cactus and Succulent Society Spring Show & Sale at Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA. For more information contact Vince Basta at 714-267-4329.

**March 31 and April 1**, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — The Prickly Palace Garden Tour and Plant Sale in the Hemenway gardens, 5890 Grinnell Drive, Riverside, 92509.

## Refreshment Signup

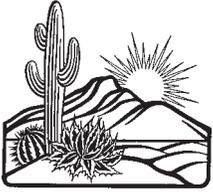
**Dick Tatman**  
**Anna Cavanaugh**  
**Louise Guerin**



The first three club members who sign up and bring refreshments each month will receive a **FREE** plant as thanks.

### 2012 Plant-of-the-Month and Study Group Topics

	<b>Cacti of the Month</b>	<b>Succulent of the Month</b>	<b>Study Group</b>
Feb.	Ferocactus, Echinocactus	Winter-growing Mesembs	Monsonia (Sarcocaulon)
Mar.	Turbinocarpus, Pedioactus, Sclerocactus	Pelargonium, Monsonia	Aloe
Apr.	South American Opuntia	Senecio, Othonna	Spring Seed Workshop
May	Echinocereus	African Pachypodiums	Vegetative Propagation Workshop
June	Gymnocalycium	Agave, Yucca, Nolina	Gymnocalycium
July	Discocactus, Melocactus, Uebelmannia	Gasteria	Staging
Aug.	Favorite Cactus	Favorite Succulent	Astrophytum
Sept.	Hybrids & Cultivars	Hybrids & Cultivars	Photo Tour
Oct.	Ariocarpus	African Euphorbia	Loreto, Mexico Tour
Nov.	Monsters	Monsters	Winter Seed Workshop



***COMMUNIQUE***

Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus and Succulent Society  
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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

If you have a cactus or succulent related event that you would like to have announced in the ***COMMUNIQUE***, forward the information to the address below. Please verify the event date. Articles, Notices and Corrections can be sent via email to: [yvonne@pricklypalace.com](mailto:yvonne@pricklypalace.com) or via mail to: San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter Editor, c/o Yvonne Hemenway, 5890 Grinnell Drive, Riverside, CA 92509. Material must be received by the last Thursday of the month to be considered for publication in the next issue of the ***COMMUNIQUE***.