



# San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society **COMMUNIQUE**

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America  
January 2016—Volume 49, Number 1

January Meeting:

Thursday,  
January 14 at 7:00 pm

Meetings are held on the  
2nd Thursday of the month  
at 7:00 pm in Ayers Hall,  
at the Los Angeles  
Arboretum, Arcadia

### Mini-Show Plants:

Cactus:

Hooked Spine Mammillarias

Succulent:

Pelargonium, Sarcocaulon

### C&S Workshop

The C&S Workshop will meet on  
Wednesday, January 20th in  
Ayers Hall, at the Los Angeles  
Arboretum at 7:00 pm to topic  
will be: Pelargoniums

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### President’s Message

Happy Holidays! I hope you are having a joyous holiday season.

Looking ahead -- This is transformative moment in our hobby. Some would say this is the time everyone has been waiting for: mass acceptance of the plants we all love. More folks than ever are interested in cacti and succulents. People are re-landscaping and doing turf removal. Most stores and supermarkets sell succulents. With this surge of popularity come new opportunities and challenges.

How shall we respond? First, let's welcome newcomers with open arms. Many of you have large collections and years of experience. Take a moment to share your insights. We have the perfect opportunity to engage, support, and educate. Also, let's encourage newcomers to support smaller C&S specialty growers. If Big Box stores drive smaller growers out of business, our hobby will suffer. Most importantly, our challenge is to transform the newcomer into a lifelong hobbyist.

See you at the January 14th meeting!  
Gunnar Eisel

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## This Month's Program

### *The Canary Islands – They're Out Of This World!*

Marquita Ellias will take the audience to space and then return to the Canary Islands to witness the adaptive radiation first hand. The program will include indigenous plants including Aeoniums, Euphorbia, Cerropegia, Caralluma, and other Canary natives. The presentation will include six of the seven major islands in this archipelago and will demonstrate the climatic diversity of these islands. Included in this presentation are pirates, Christopher Columbus, and mealy bugs.

Marquita is a member of CSSA. She has been a member of LACSS for four years and has been scheduling programs for three of those years. As a California native, born in Anaheim, she received her degree in Civil Engineering from Loyola Marymount University. She has also attended Scripps Institute of Oceanography. She worked as a registered civil engineer for over twenty years, with a portion of that time spent underwater as a hardhat diver. She spends her time helping with her family construction business, hiking, mountain biking, and tending to her collection of aeoniums and adeniums.



Marquita Ellias

## Plant of the Month - Succulent: *Pelargonium and Sarcocaulon*

*Pelargonium* and *Sarcocaulon* are two succulent genera of the *Geraniaceae* family. *Sarcocaulon* is native to South Africa and Namibia, and *Pelargonium* is centered there, but with outlier species appear as far away as Kenya and Yemen. Most of the succulent species come from South Africa or Namibia.



### **Pelargonium gibbosum**

*Pelargoniums* are mostly winter growing succulents. They are dormant in the summer, and at this time some look like dead sticks. Most species are very easy to grow, if attention is paid to providing an environment very similar to their South African home. Some species, such as *P. echinatum* and *P. triste* are tolerant enough to be naturalized in the ground in Southern California when given good drainage and protected from summer watering. Many species will not go dormant if watered all summer, but the plant health and appearance both suffer.

*Sarcocaulon* is a small genus of about 14 species. Growing conditions for *Sarcocaulon* are identical to those for *Pelargonium*, however most require a drier summer environment for best growth.

The potting mix for *Pelargoniums* and *Sarcocaulon* should be well drained, with only small amounts of organic matter. Fertilizer should be applied sparingly, and only during good (bright and warm) growing weather. A potting mix recommended by Michael Vassar is 50% pumice, 35% washed builders sand and 15% leaf mold

based planter mix. Plants growing under these conditions will stay compact, have thick leaves, and a healthy appearance. A well grown *Pelargonium* will have leaves that appear to float near thick, rugged stems. If given too much water and fertilizer, they will grow leggy, and the leaves will become soft, large and droop. Plants grown hard will be healthier, and better able to survive hot summers undamaged. All *Pelargoniums* need pruning to maintain size and shape. Pinching new growth will make the plants bushy, and develop good trunk structure.

Many are self fertile, and seed is easily collected after flowering. Most are promiscuous, and garden hybrids are easily set if more than one species is in flower at a time. Seed collected in the spring and planted in late September to November germinates quickly, and will have an entire winter to grow before going dormant during the summer.

### References

J. J. A. van der Walt, **Pelargoniums of Southern Africa (3 vols.)**

D. Miller, **Pelargoniums**

Tom Glavich



The Huntington Botanical Gardens, in continuing cooperation with the CSSA and their affiliate clubs, once again offers the Desert Forum, a Free Day for CSSA members and members of affiliate clubs on January 16, 2016. Arrive at 9:00AM for a full day of the Huntington.

## Plant of the Month - Cactus: *Hook Spined Mammillaria*

*Mammillaria bombycina*



A *Mammillaria* is often one of the first cacti that a beginning grower buys. They were available for 29 cents in Woolworths (remember Woolworths?) and are still available often for less than a dollar in discount stores, and for just a bit more at local home centers and discount stores. A credit to the toughness of these plants, is that many survive for years in spite of all sorts of abuse and neglect. Many inexpensive purchases at local chain stores have been grown on to become show plants, the quality of the plant maturing with the skill and experience of the grower. In part because they are so generous with flowers and seeds, and the seeds germinate so readily, many rare species end up in unlikely places like home centers, supermarkets, and hardware stores. It's worth keeping an eye out for unusual specimens, but beware of names found on discount store plants.

*Mammillaria* is one of the larger genera in the Cactus family, and one of the most variable, with some members remaining as solitary columns for their entire lives, some remaining as fingernail size solitary globulars, some straight spined, and some clumped and heavily spined with hooks. Although the hooked spined species give the genus one of its common names, "fishhook cactus", they are not as often grown as the straight spined species. They are not as friendly either, with the hooks catching on skin and clothes, and pieces of stem coming off, when least expected.

Although most *Mammillaria* are native to Mexico, some species in the genus can be found from Columbia to Kansas and California. With this wide distribution, the cultivation requirements obviously vary considerably. The species from the tropics and warmer areas are rarely tolerant of cold and damp. Those from the drier desert regions are also intolerant of continued damp, but can take considerable cold. With these restrictions aside, most *Mammillaria* are easy to grow.

The secrets to good growth are a continued supply of fertilizer during the growing season, strong light, and maintenance of a clean and insect free growing environment. The appearance of white mealy bug egg cases (*Mammillaria*'s worst enemy) on the tips of the spines or the appearance of ants means that mealy bugs are sucking the sap and life of the plant. Immediate treatment is required, with a thorough washing, and spraying with an insecticide. A less toxic solution is to soak the entire plant in soapy water overnight.

Propagation of Hooked Spined *Mammillaria* is easy. Cuttings can be taken at any time during the growing season (April to early November), left to dry for a few days and replanted in a clean potting mix. Rooting is rapid, with short white roots generally appearing after a couple of weeks. *Mammillaria* are one of the easiest species to grow from seed. The seeds are simply placed on top of a damp potting mix, covered with a light coating of gravel, placed in a plastic bag in bright light, but out of direct sun and allowed to germinate. Germination usually occurs in a week or 10 days. The seedlings can stay in the plastic bag for several weeks until they get large enough to survive unprotected, and should then be removed to a still shaded, but brighter and drier environment. Most will survive, and grow quickly.

*Mammillaria* to get hooked on:



*Mammillaria aurichamata*

## Hook Spined Mammillaria, continued

*Mammillaria aurihamata*, shown on the previous page has golden hooked spines on a glossy green body. From San Luis Potosi, Mexico

*Mammillaria bombycina* is the classic hooked spined Mam. Beautiful dark spines are set off by the white wool. From Jalisco, Mexico. It is easy to grow, and clumps quickly forming an impressive plant in just a few years.

*Mammillaria guelzowiana* has light brown spines on a loosely tuberclad, and very woolly body. It has large lavender flowers, and is a rapid clumper. From Durango, Mexico.

*Mammillaria occidentalis* from central Mexico, has a dark brown body with dark brown to black spination. It forms dense sprawling clumps of finger thick stems.

*Mammillaria perrezdelarosae*, is a small plant discovered only in 1985. It is a beautiful species.

*Mammillaria senilis* has dense white spines, giving an impression of a white haired body, and thus its name. This is one of the *Mammillaria* with large red flowers, different than the small cups of most others.

*Mammillaria thornberi* is another of the dark spined, dark stemmed species. It forms dense clumps. Stems are easily detached from the main body, hooking easily on clothes, and skin; this is probably one of its principal means of propagation in habitat. From Sonora, Mexico.

### References:

E. Anderson, *The Cactus Family*  
 J. Pilbeam, *Cactus for the Connoisseur*  
 R. Craig, *The Mammillaria Handbook*  
 A. Innes & C. Glass *Cacti*

Tom Glavich



## SGVCCS Holiday Party 2015



The jazz combo added a nice touch to the night's festivities. Dinner was followed by a smoothly-run auction due to our very capable auctioneers, Woody Minnich and Peter Walkowiak.



Special thanks to everyone who made our holiday party such a wonderful event. As usual, the food was delicious and plentiful, and the time shared with our friends made for a delightful evening. Mary Brumbaugh and Rebecca Mallonee organization and coordinating such a large, successful event is much appreciated. Thank you!

## **DESERT FORUM, HUNTINGTON LIBRARY**

Saturday, January 16, 2016

### Schedule of Events

**9:00 am to 10:00 am Registration**

Bring your CSSA or affiliated club badge or membership card for admission

**9:00 am to 11:00 am Desert Gardens**

Knowledgeable staff and docents will be stationed throughout the Desert Garden and Desert Conservatory . Aloes will be flowering.

**11:00 am to 1:00 pm Plant Sales**

Gates by the Teaching Greenhouse will be open for plant sales. Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted. Please: No Early Bird shopping.

### **Lunch**

The café in the new visitor center features a variety of sandwiches and grilled items.

The tea room at Liu Fang Yuan is a lovely option for fresh Chinese food.

**1:00 pm to 4:30 pm Free Time**

Attendees are welcome to tour the gardens and galleries beginning at 10:30 am



## Refreshment Sign Up for the January 14th meeting:

Gunnar Eisel  
Fred Parrales  
Elana De La Rosa

## Cactus and Succulent Workshop

Wednesday, January 20th

Topic: Pelargoniums

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

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p, in Ayers Hall of the Arboretum, Arcadia



## SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2016

Gunnar Eisel, President  
Buck Hemenway, Past President  
Horace Birgh, Vice President  
Louise Guerin, Secretary  
Margie Wilson, Treasurer  
Rebecca Mallonee, Director  
Mary Brumbaugh, Director  
Jean Mullens, Director  
Shaun Adams, Director  
Dean Elzinga, Director  
Tom Vermilion, Director  
Manny Rivera, Winter Show Chair  
John Matthews, Winter Sales Chair  
Tom Glavich, Inter-City Show Chair  
Jim Hanna, CSSA Affiliate Rep  
Gunnar Eisel, Website Chair  
Woody Minnich, Program Chair  
Mary Brumbaugh, Membership Chair  
Cindy Arakaki, Librarian  
Richard Roosman, Newsletter Editor

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**\*\* Note \*\*** Membership Dues are Due! Your 2016 Club membership renewal can be paid at the next meeting or mailed direct to Mary Brumbaugh, 2123 Pinehurst St., Glendora, CA 91741. \$20 regular membership or \$30 if you request the Communique by mail. Checks to SGVCSS.

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events.

**February 13, 2016** — San Diego Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale. Saturday. Balboa Park, room 101, San Diego. Information: 858-392-1797

**March 17, 18, & 19** — Orange County Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale. Thursday from 6 pm to 8 pm; Friday from 9 am to 7 pm; and Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 S. State College Blvd, Anaheim. Information: 562-587-3357

**April 9 & 10** — South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale. Saturday and Sunday, South Coast Botanic Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes,. Information: 310-378-1953 or [www.southcoastcss.org](http://www.southcoastcss.org)

**April 24** — Huntington Plant Sale. Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm. Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino. Information: 626-406-3504

**April 30 & May 1** — Sunset Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale. Saturday and Sunday. Veterans' Memorial Center, Garden Room, 4117 Overland Ave, Culver City. Information: 310-822-1783

**May 1** -- South Bay Epiphyllum Society Show and Sale, Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm. South Coast Botanical Gardens. Information: 310-833-6823

**May 13 & 14** — Gates Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale. Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 4:30 pm at Land Scapes Southern California Style, 450 East Alessandro Blvd., Riverside. Information: 951-360-8802

**May 21 & 22** — Long Beach Cactus Club Plant Show and Sale. Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach. Information 562-631-5876

**May 28 & 29** — Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Annual Show and Sale. Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm. Ludwick Center, 864 Santa Rosa, San Luis Obispo. Information: 805-237-2064 or [www.centralcoastcactus.org](http://www.centralcoastcactus.org)

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events (continued)

**June 4 & 5** — San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale. Balboa Park, room 101, San Diego. Information 858-382-1797

**June 9, 10, 11, & 12** — Mid States Cactus and Succulent Conference — Hosted by the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society. For information go to internet: 15th Biennial Mid States Cactus and Succulent Conference

**June 11 & 12** — Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale. Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday from 9 am to 3:30 pm. Sepulveda Gardens, 16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino. Information [www.lacss-show.com](http://www.lacss-show.com)

**July 1, 2 & 3** — CSSA Show and Sale. Plant sale Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Show Saturday and Sunday. Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino

**July 22 & 23** — Orange County Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale. Thursday from 6 pm to 8 pm, Friday from 9 am to 7 pm, and Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 South State College Blvd., Anaheim. Information 949-212-8417

**August 13 & 14** — Intercity Show and Sale. Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm. Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Information Tom Glavich 626-798-2430 or Artie Chavez 818-482-8795

**September 3** — Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium. All day Saturday at the Huntington. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino.

**September 10** — Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction. Saturday from noon to 5 pm. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach,. Information 562-631-5876