



*San Gabriel Valley
Cactus & Succulent Society*

COMMUNIQUE

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

March 2010 - Volume 43, Number 3

**March Meeting:
Thursday,
March 11 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 —
Cactus from Oaxaca

SUCCULENT—
Medusoid Euphorbia

Study Group:

Study group will meet on Wednesday,
March 17th in the Palm Room,
Los Angeles County Arboretum at
7:30 pm. The topic will be:

Agave

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President's Message

Spring is almost here. The days are warming up and plants are really growing. This year's El Nino is being very kind to our plants. A lot of rain, but warm sunny days in between so the soil can begin to dry out.

Our day trip to San Diego was great. We picked a beautiful day. The weather could not have been more perfect. There were plenty of plants to buy at the SDCSS Show and Sale and we all enjoyed the visit to the San Diego Botanic Gardens (Quail BG).

Two of our member couples are having events this month. Patty and Rene Caro will host a Potters and Staging event on March 20. Of course there will be plenty of plants to buy. Yvonne and I will host our 10th Annual Open Gardens and Sale on March 27 and 28. Hope to see many of you at both events.

(continued on page 3)

This Month's Program

Our speaker for this month will be Guillermo Rivera. His subject will be "An Exploratory Trip to Northwestern Argentina". This is a brand new program for Guillermo who is from Argentina. He is a PhD in Botany, but has fallen victim to our obsession with cacti and other succulents. His talks are always full of important information on the plants that he shows. This talk will be focused on *Gymnocalycium*s among a number of other cacti and succulents that grow in that area of Argentina.

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February Mini-Show Results

Book Review -

Yvonne Hemenway

Cacti - Rebutia

Beginner

- 1st Hannah Nguyen R. narvaecensis
- 2nd William Molina R. krainziana
- 3rd William Molina R. (Sulcorebutia) santiaginifasis

Intermediate

- 1st Barbara Hall R. hierzii
- 2nd Rita Gerlach R. (Weingartia) sp.
- 3rd Cindy/Calvin Arakaki Rebutia sp.
- 3rd Rita Gerlach R. krainziana

Advanced

- 1st Frank Nudge R. heliosa
- 2nd Karen Ostler R. mentosa ssp mentosa
- 3rd Karen Ostler R. altissima

Succulents - Crassulaceae

Beginner

- 1st Hannah Nguyen Crassula cv “Cameo”
- 2nd Hannah Nguyen Crassula pubescens
- 2nd Hannah Nguyen Aeonium sedifolia
- 3rd Oscar Flores Crassula “Devil’s Horn”

Intermediate

- 1st Pat Swain Echeveria agavoides ‘Ebony’
- 2nd Barbara Hall Crassula capensis
- 3rd Dodson-Birgh Crassula columnaris
- 3rd Barbara Hall Tylecodon

Advanced

- 1st Manny Rivera Tylecodon reticulatus
- 2nd Manny Rivera Tylecodon paniculatus
- 3rd Frank Nudge Tylecodon pearsonii

Be sure to take a look at the Club’s website at 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.

SUCCULENT CONTAINER GARDENS

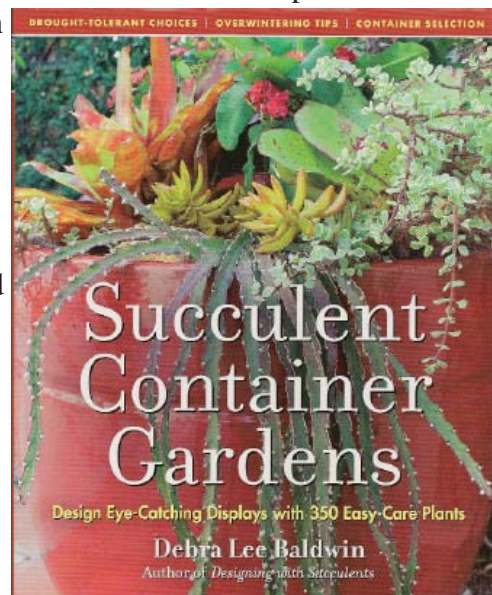
Debra Lee Baldwin

Timber Press, 2010; hardcover; 248 pages

If you have ever wished you could recreate some of the beautiful container gardens designed by the experts, this new book by Debra Lee Baldwin, author of *Designing with Succulents*, will give you plenty of inspiration to get started. Buck and I were honored to be invited to the book-launching event at Quail Botanic Gardens and hear Debra Lee talk about many of the 300 beautiful container gardens featured in her book. We were in the company of many of the people in the succulent hobby that we know and respect.

The “Sunset” quality photos offer beautiful examples of container gardens that were planted using the advice offered by many contributors. Part One: Pairing Plants with Pots gets you started with design basics, pot types, embellishments, and top dressing. Part Two: Plant Palette suggests the best succulents for containers as well as companion plants. Part Three: Creative Designs and Displays shows the amazing variety of container gardens for any garden style or function. Part Four: Planting, Care, and Propagation deals with the many cultivation issues all gardeners face, such as soil and fertilizer, pests and diseases, repotting, grooming, etc. At the end of the book Debra Lee has included an extensive list of plants in useful categories such as Succulents for Height; Colorful Leaves; Textural Features, Brilliant Flowers, etc.

Succulent Container Gardens is as practical as it is beautiful, with several step-by-step guides to creating unusual containers such as wreaths and tube gardens. This book would make a useful addition to any library, especially one focused on the topic of succulents.



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

Guillermo Rivera promises a great new program. Woody is his escort and will have plants for sale at the meeting.

The March Study Group should be interesting. We'll talk all about *Agaves* and compare notes and plants.

Our next Board of Directors meeting will be on April 21 at Cocos prior to Study Group.

We want to thank Laurel Woodley for her extraordinary talk in February. Laurel's Succulent Plant Families talk was highly educational and extremely interesting. See you at the meeting

Buck Hemenway

Study Group

Wednesday, March 17th • Agave

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.

Bus Tour

to San Diego CSS Show & Sale and San Diego Botanic Gardens



Undersea Garden topiary and fabulous sculpture in the SD Botanical Gardens.



Friends enjoying the day. (Photo Judi Romine)
L to R: Rebecca Mallonee, Mary Brumbaugh, Laura Brannon, Joanne Gram

SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2010

Buck Hemenway, President
Horace Birgh, Vice President
Ana Wisnev, Treasurer
Irma Juarez, Secretary
Phil Skonieczki, Board Member
Karen Ostler, Board Member

Ralph Massey, Board Member
Bill Gerlach, Board Member
Patty Caro, Board Member
Judi Romine, Board Member
Manny Rivera, Winter Show Chair
Tom Glavich, Intercity Show Chair

Jim Hanna, CSSA Affiliate Representative and Plant Sales Chair
Woody Minnich, Program Chair
Bill Gerlach, Membership Chair
Liz Alba, Library Chair
Gunnar Eisel, Website Chair

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 —

Cacti from Oaxaca

Oaxaca is a State in Southern Mexico, with a coastline that faces almost completely south. As with most of Mexico it is mountainous with some high altitude areas and many canyons. It is the intersection of two mountain ranges, providing a wealth of habitats for many plant families, Cacti being only one of them. The coastal regions are hot and dry, the central plateau temperate, and mountain areas can be relatively cool, but all in all this is a tropical climate, with most of the rainfall in warmer months.

The cactus that defines Oaxaca to many is *Ortegocactus macdougallii*,

a monotypic green wonder. This plant is relatively easy to grow, with excellent drainage, and protection from simultaneous cold and wet. This is a high altitude plant, and exposure to near freezing temperatures won't do it harm, as long as it is dry.



Ortegocactus macdougallii

An incomplete list of Oaxacan cacti is below. Some of these species are more common in adjacent states, with ranges that just cross into the state of Oaxaca. With such an enormous range of genera and climates there is little general information that can be given. They all want good drainage, water in the summer, protection in the winter, and fertilizer when they are growing. Many are surprisingly easy. Some are not.

- Acanthocereus subinermis
- Cephalocereus apicephalium
- Cephalocereus totolapensis

- Coryphantha melleospina
- Coryphantha pallida
- Coryphantha pycnacantha
- Coryphantha reduncispina
- Coryphantha retusa
- Coryphantha sulcolanata
- Mammillaria albilanata ssp oaxacana
- Mammillaria beneckeii
- Mammillaria crucigera
- Mammillaria deherdtiana
- Mammillaria discolor
- Mammillaria dixanthocentra
- Mammillaria duoformis
- Mammillaria flavicentra
- Mammillaria haageana
- Mammillaria halbingeri
- Mammillaria hernandezii
- Mammillaria huitzilopochtlii
- Mammillaria karwinskiana
- Mammillaria kraehenbuelii
- Mammillaria mystax
- Mammillaria nejapensis
- Mammillaria oteroi
- Mammillaria polyhedra
- Mammillaria rekoii
- Mammillaria supertexta
- Mammillaria tonalensis
- Mammillaria topexicensis
- Mammillaria uncinata
- Mammillaria vobournensis
- Mammillaria zephyranthoides
- Opuntia streptacantha
- Opuntia tehuatepecana
- Ortegocactus macdougallii
- Pachycereus marginatus
- Pachycereus pecten-aboriginum
- Peniocereus fosterianus
- Peniocereus macdougallii
- Peniocereus oaxacensis
- Peniocereus occidentalis
- Peniocereus serpentinus
- Pilosocereus chrysacanthus
- Pilosocereus quadricentralis
- Polaskia chichipe
- Stenocereus chacalapensis



Mammillaria rekoii v
leptacantha

Mammillaria solisoides

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

Medusoid Euphorbia

The myth of Medusa is very old, and predates Greek Mythology. Medusa's character changes with culture, social conditions and time. The best known story comes from late Greek Mythology; where Medusa was a mortal woman, descended from the gods, whose beauty was so renowned that she fancied herself more beautiful than the god Athena. As punishment (or in revenge), Athena turned Medusa's hair to snakes, and placed a curse on her so that any living being looking at her was turned to stone. The origin of the myth is from North Central Africa, and the plants we grow and exhibit come from much further south. These are some of the best of all the *Euphorbias*, and demonstrate a variation on parallel evolution with cacti that is hard to match. Although no one turns to stone, the first sight of *Medusoid Euphorbias* often stops viewers at our shows. The medusoids are among the most unusual of the *Euphorbias*, and have no close parallel in other genera. On the other hand, they look a lot like extreme cacti!

The *Medusoid Euphorbias* are easily identified. A (usually) large body is covered with arms. The arms may be stubby and widely spaced (*Euphorbia decepta*), or they may be long, snake-like and closely spaced (*Euphorbia caput-medusae*). For all of the *Medusoid Euphorbias*, the central thickened stem is equivalent to a caudex. It is the central storage organ, and acts as a reservoir for nutrients and moisture in times of stress. Many of the medusoids will shed their arms (branches) during extended droughts, growing new ones when the rains return.

Medusoid Euphorbias come from a wide range of habitats, with Cape Province, South Africa being *Medusoid* central; but all go through extended periods of low moisture. Cultivation for many is relatively easy; as long as attention is paid to not watering during periods of dormancy. There are generally two periods of dormancy, a long one during the late fall and winter (mid November through the end of February) and a shorter one during the peak of the summer heat (a few weeks in August and September). The arrival of the summer one is harder to predict, and over-watering in late summer can result in root rot. In spite of the sensitivity, most of the *Medusoid Euphorbias* do well as unprotected pot plants outdoors in Southern California during the winter.

It's nearly impossible to find seed for most of the *Medusoid Euphorbias*, and in general, the seed is short lived (months). Vegetative propagation is easier. Most *Medusoid Euphorbias* can be propagated from arm cuttings, although a year or two will be required before the plant is worth showing.

Species of Note:

Euphorbia caput-medusae is the classic species. It is from Cape Province, with a caudex of up to 8 inches in diameter. The branches are long and serpentine. It's the most snake-like of all the species.

Euphorbia decepta is from Cape Province South Africa. The caudex is 2 to 4 inches thick, and the branches generally less than an inch long. In habitat, the branches are deciduous, but in cultivation they stay on the plant all year. Seedlings of this plant look like World War II floating mines.

Euphorbia flanaganii is one of the most common and easily grown of the medusoids. The central caudex is generally two or three inches across. It grows quickly, offsets readily, and can rapidly fill a large bowl with medusoid plants.

Euphorbia fortuita comes from Ladismith in Cape Province. It has a tuberous main root that merges into the main caudex, and stiff cylindrical branches usually about 4 inches long, but occasionally one will be twice as long.

Euphorbia fusca, will produce secondary heads quickly. These can be removed to start new plants. There is one in the photo.

Euphorbia gorgonis - another species from Cape Province near Grahamstown. The caudex is mostly subterranean. It has tuberculate branches that turn red in strong light. The name of this species is an extension of the medusa myth. Medusa was one of the three Gorgon sisters. In an earlier version of the myth all three had snake-like hair and wings. When Perseus beheaded Medusa, the two remaining Gorgon sisters chased after him as he flew across Africa.

Euphorbia woodii is from Natal, but similar to *Euphorbia flanagani* in appearance. Most of the caudex and a large turnip like root are subterranean.



Euphorbia gamkensis



Euphorbia fusca



Euphorbia gorgonis

Tom Glavich February 2010



Thank you to Tom Glavich for putting together the Plant of the Month article. If you would like to participate by submitting a plant of the month write up for the **Communique**, please contact Tom Glavich at tglavich@sbcglobal.net.



Welcome New Members



Please welcome these new members and make them feel welcome at our functions.

Ann Malmlund
Duck Jai Shinn

Kiyoko McNamee
Bob Taylor
Roberta Armijo

Russell O'Brien
Greg Fulmer

Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 20, 9:00 am to 5:30 pm — Staging Workshop, Plant and Potters Sale at the Caro Desert Nursery, 9607 East Avenue S12, Littlerock, CA 93543. Staging Workshops at 10:00, 1:00, and 3:30, call 661-456-0787 for reservations, \$35 fee. Stay for the barbeque after the last workshop.

March 27 and 28, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — The Prickly Palace Garden Tour and Plant Sale in the Hemenway gardens, 5890 Grinnell Drive, Riverside, 92509. Call 951-360-8802 for more information.

April 10 and 11, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society 2009 Show and Sale at the South Coast Botanical Gardens, 263 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verde Peninsula. (See enclosed flyer.)

April 17 and 18 — Green Scene Plant Sale at the Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Road, Fullerton.

May 1 and 2 — Sunset Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale, Veterans Memorial Center, Garden Room, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City. For information call 310-822-1783.

May 2, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — South Bay Epiphyllum Society Show and Sale at the South Coast Botanical Gardens. For information call 310-833-6823.

Refreshment Signup

These club members have signed up to provide refreshments at our March meeting.

William Molina
Rene Hernandez
Yvonne Hemenway

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

2010 Plant-of-the-Month and Study Group Topics

| | Cacti of the Month | Succulent of the Month | Study Group |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Mar. | Cacti from Oaxaca | Medusoid Euphorbia | Agave |
| Apr. | Melocactus | Dudleya | Spring Seed Workshop |
| May | Ferocactus | Miniatures | Vegetative Propagation Workshop |
| June | Epiphyte | Lithops | Lithops |
| July | Thelocactus, Stenocactus | Pachypodiums from Madagascar | Staging |
| Aug. | Favorite Cactus | Favorite Succulent | Copiapoa |
| Sept. | Astrophytum | Bursera, Commiphora | Mammillaria |
| Oct. | Ariocarpus | Sansevieria | Tips and Tricks for Successful Growing |
| Nov. | Opuntia | Asclepiad | Winter Seed Workshop |