

**San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus & Succulent Society**

**COMMUNIQUE**

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

March 2012 - Volume 45, Number 3

**MARCH MEETING:  
Thursday,  
March 8 at 7:30 pm**

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

**Mini-Show Plants:**

**CACTUS:**  
**Turbinocarpus, Pediocactus,  
Sclerocactus**

**SUCCULENT:**  
**Pelargonium, Monsonia**

**Study Group:**

Study group will meet on Wednesday,  
March 21st in the Palm Room,  
Los Angeles County Arboretum at  
7:30 pm. The topic will be:

**Aloe**

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**President's Message**

**AYERS HALL - AYERS HALL.** Do I have your attention? We will begin meeting in Ayers Hall from now on. For those who don't know the names, that's where we have the Show & Sale. It will be a wonderful change for the club. The much larger venue will afford everyone a better opportunity to take in the education and opportunities that each meeting presents.

We need your help! Several of us will gather at 5:30, before the meeting to get the room set up. About 4 men will be needed to push the library up from its current location. We will leave it in the room where the chairs and table live in Ayers Hall.

We need a person with some artistic talent. What we'd like to do is paint our logo in large form on both sides of the library, to try to make sure that other people using Ayers Hall know that the library does not belong to them.

One of our members, Cody Howard, is the recipient of a CSSA grant to research *Ledebouria* species in the northern part of Namibia. It is really not enough money to take the trip, so he is doing some alternate fund raising. Xeric Growers (where Kelly Griffin makes his hybrids) has donated some plants that Cody will have for sale at the meeting, so please help him out. I am also suggesting to the Board of

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**January Mini-Show Results**

***Ferocactus, Echinocactus***

**Novice**

- 1st Peter Claridge      Ferocactus glaucescens
- 2nd Peter Claridge      Ferocactus chrysacanthus
- 3rd Daniel Veelik      Echinocactus grusonii

**Intermediate**

- 1st Rita Gerlach      Echinocactus grusonii
- 2nd Barbara Hall      Ferocactus chrysacanthus
- 3rd C & C Arakaki      Ferocactus viscaianensis

**Open**

- 1st John Matthews      Echinocactus horizontalonius

***Winter-growing Mesembs***

**Novice**

- 1st John Martinez      Titanopsis schwantesii x calcarea
- 2nd Efren Flores      Phyllobolus prasinus
- 3rd John Martinez      Aloinopsis malherbii

**Intermediate**

- 1st Tom Vermilion      Ihlenfelotia vanzsliei
- 2nd Tom Vermilion      Conophytum uviformae
- 2nd Barbara Hall      Conophytum obscurum ssp. sponsaliosum
- 3rd Barbara Hall      Conophytum reconditum ssp. reconditum

**Open**

- 1st John Matthews      Sceletium
- 2nd John Matthews      Conophytum mimimum “Wittbergense”
- 3rd Tom Glavich      Conophytum obcordellum “Unsprung”



*Aloinopsis schooneesii*  
in Hemenway backyard habitat

**President’s Message** (cont’d. from page 1)

Directors that the club help him out financially.

We had our first Board of Directors meeting of 2012 and I am happy to report that the club is sound fiscally and that we are looking forward to a great year.

See you at the meeting!

Buck Hemenway

**This Month’s Program**

**NAMIBIA**

A dry place in a wet time 2011

Presented by: Woody Minnich

Namibia is one of the driest regions in the world. Some of these areas are only sustained by the seasonal nightly fogs. Due to these unique conditions, many of the world’s most unique plants and animals can be found here.

Namibia had an extreme summer rain fall this last January thru April 2011. Our objectives were to visit this amazing country in this unusually wet time when the plants and scenery may be different than might normally be experienced. From Windhoek we took a giant clockwise loop to the south and then did the same from Windhoek to the North.

I took over 10,000 photos, and a few have found their way into this presentation. Be prepared to see the trip of a life time and the total of Namibia, edited of course!



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).



## 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 —

#### *Turbinicarpus, Pediocactus, Sclerocactus*

*Turbinicarpus* is a small (but growing) genus of small plants from Northeastern and Central Mexico. It is one of several closely related genera, *Neolloydia*, *Gymnocactus*, and *Strombocactus* being the ones most frequently mentioned. In many books, some of the plants listed below will appear as either *Neolloydia* or *Gymnocactus*. The exact relation of these genera is still being worked out and the disagreements between botanists are substantial. New species have been discovered and named in the past decade; seeds and plants of these are just becoming available.



*Pediocactus simpsoni* in habitat at the Quilomene/Whisky Dick Wilderness Area in Eastern Washington State

*Pediocactus* is a small genus of cacti confined to the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains. They are mostly high altitude plants, and are intolerant of warm nights. They are difficult to grow in Southern California. All the species are endangered due to over collection.

*Sclerocactus* is another small genus of cacti confined to the Western United States and Northern Mexico. They are all hard to propagate and hard to keep alive in cultivation. All the species are endangered due to over-collection.

*Pediocactus* and *Sclerocactus* are sometimes available as grafted plants. In Southern California, this is the easiest way to keep them alive, but they never will get the appearance they will in habitat.

All of the *Turbinicarpus* species are worth growing. They are all small, most full sized in collections at an inch or two. A few will clump readily, and make impressive show specimens, as shown below, but still

remain manageable. A collection of all the species and varieties could easily fit on a table top.

*Turbinicarpus* have large tuberous roots, which are their primary food and water storage source in times of drought. Over much of their habitat, rain falls during the summer, and growth is most rapid during this period. They can take lots of heat.



*Turbinicarpus beguinii* ssp *zaragozae*

*Turbinicarpus* are fairly easy to grow as long as attention is paid to their life cycle. They are dormant in winter from November through mid March. As they exit dormancy water should be given sparingly. If too much water and fertilizer are given early in the growth cycle it is easy to split the skin of the plant. Once growth is established (April and after) water freely. During very hot weather in the summer, the plants sometimes go dormant again for a short period.



*Turbinicarpus pseudomacrochele* ssp *pseudomacrochele*

Tom Glavich, March 2012

### SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

#### *Pelargonium and Monsonia*

*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 appearing as far away as Kenya, Yemen and Turkey. Almost all the succulent species come from South Africa or Namibia.

*Pelargoniums* are mostly winter growing succulents. They are dormant in the summer, and at

that time some look like dead sticks. Most species are very easy to grow as long as 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. All *Sarcocaulon* have been moved into *Monsonia*, although it is still not clear if they will stay there. Growing conditions for *Sarcocaulon* are identical to those for *Pelargonium*.

The potting mix for *Pelargoniums* and *Sarcocaulons* 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. Many growers use straight pumice with good results. 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 droopy. 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 produced 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.

Favorite species include:

*Pelargonium alternans* gets thick grey-green branched stems quickly. The leaves are scented, with the scent varying from clone to clone, varying from apple to soap to various indescribable and unpleasant odors. The oils that give the scent keep most grazing animals from eating the leaves.

*Pelargonium auritum* v. *carneum* is a geophytic species, disappearing entirely when dormant.

*Pelargonium crithmifolium* is a species that gets fat and shrubby. It's a fast grower.

*Pelargonium echinatum* has leaves that look like and are scented like the common geranium. It has small flowers that rise above the leaves on a long branched peduncle. Flower colors vary from white to purple, with dark centers and appear over several months.

*Pelargonium ellaphiae* is a geophytic species, with most of its storage underground. If the top is removed by a grazing animal, the tuber below will resprout to form new plants.



*Pelargonium ellaphiae* flower



*Pelargonium ellaphiae* tuber

*Pelargonium laxum* has leaves similar in appearance to carrot leaves. During active growth they are a dark green, with a narrow white edge that glows in early morning and evening light.

*Pelargonium xerophyllum* is a stem succulent, with thinner stems than the caudiciform types described above. The leaves stay close to the stem. It makes a nice bonsai even as a young plant.

*Sarcocaulon multifolium*. All of the *Sarcocaulons* are wonderful plants. This is just one of the many varieties available. Notice the flower of the *Sarcocaulon* is much rounder than its *Pelargonium* natives.



*Sarcocaulon multifolium*

Tom Glavich, March 2012

**Book Review** By: Buck Hemenway

***Aloes The Definitive Guide***

Authors: Susan Carter, John Lavranos, Len Newton, Colin Walker

Published by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and British Cactus & Succulent Society

We've been waiting for 50 years for a revision of Reynolds wonderful monograph on this iconic succulent genus. The waiting is over as we now have this new volume describing the entire genus as we know it. The authors are among the most respected world succulent explorers and this combined effort is a testament to the skills that they possess.

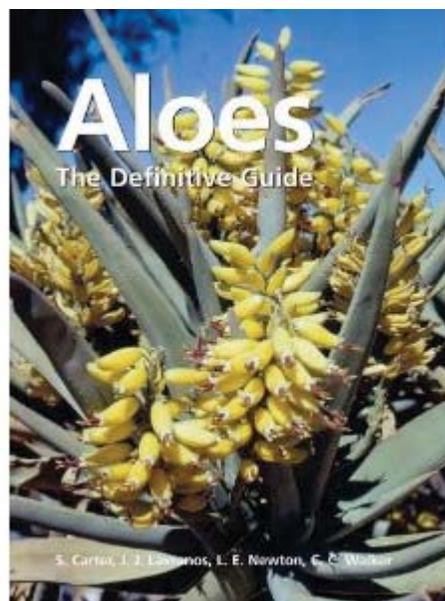
The book groups the species according to growth habit as has become the norm in *Aloe* book publications. While there is some discussion about other possible groupings, such as by habitat region or others, the habit of the plants makes for easy identification by the reader.

There is a wonderful history section covering *Aloes* from the earliest recorded periods in Western Civilization more than 1,500 years ago to the present. A key to the groups makes the organization of the book understandable. Each chapter begins with a detailed breakdown of characteristics of the plants in that group. Illustrations of plant parts, shapes and

definitions in the inside front and back cover makes a visual interpretation of the meanings of those terms understandable.

The authors made no effort to re-organize the genus, using accepted published works as their guide to classification. For example the controversial inclusion of all *Lomatophyllum* species in *Aloe* continues. In addition, there was no effort made to further delineate the classification of the genus with regards to its relationships with other plant families and genera.

The book is a beautiful work that gives students and lovers of the genus an authoritative reference for the foreseeable future.



***One in a Million!***

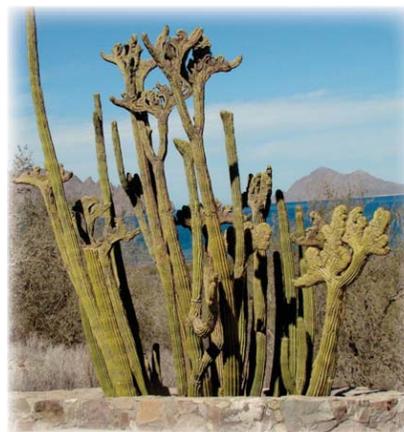
Yvonne Hemenway

On our recent trip to Loreto, Mexico (Baja Mexico Sur) Buck and I saw this unbelievable crested *Stenocereus thurberi*. Crests are a rare phenomenon in nature and are an aberration of the apical meristem, or growing tip of a branch. Instead of growing in one direction vertically, the cells get confused and grow horizontally, creating strange and wonderful shapes. Nobody knows why this happens.

This cactus was in the way during construction of an access road to a new resort south of Loreto. Instead of bulldozing or moving this huge old specimen, the resort



owners, at the urging of their local environmentally friendly staff, moved the road and raised it 12 feet to avoid disturbing this plant. Sometimes nature trumps money. Kudos to the construction team at Villa del Palmar!



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**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. The bus trip is full and we have a waiting list. Cancellations can be made up to and including the March meeting with a full refund. Cancellations after that date should be coordinated with Bill Gerlach at 626-332-8008. A refund will be made if anybody is still on the waiting list.



**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 or Lori Cox at 562-587-3357.

**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.

**April 7 and 8** — South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale, South Coast Botanic Gardens. For information go to [www.southcoastcss.org](http://www.southcoastcss.org).

**May 5 and 6** — Sunset Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale, 13650 Mindinao Way, Marina del Ray, CA. For information go to [www.sunsetsucculentsociety.org](http://www.sunsetsucculentsociety.org).

**May 6**, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm — Santa Barbara Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Show and Sale. McKenzie Park in Santa Barbara. Directions at [www.sbcactus.org](http://www.sbcactus.org).

## Refreshment Signup

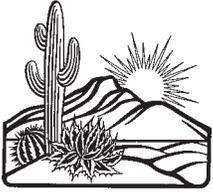
**Yvonne Hemenway**  
**Richard Roosman**  
**Susan Malinowski**



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>
Mar.	Turbinocarpus, Pediocactus, 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  
c/o Yvonne Hemenway  
5890 Grinnell Drive  
Riverside, CA 92509

**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***.