



*San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus & Succulent Society*

**COMMUNIQUE**

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

September 2009 - Volume 42, Number 9

**September Meeting:  
Thursday,  
September 10 at 7:30 pm**

This month's meeting will be held in **AYERS HALL** on the 2nd Thursday at **7:30 pm**, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia.

**Mini-Show Plants:**

**CACTUS:**

**Gymnocalycium**

**SUCCULENT:**

**Euphorbia**

**(caudiciform type)**

**Study Group:**

Study group will meet on Wednesday, September 16th in the Palm Room, Los Angeles County Arboretum at 7:30 pm. The topic will be:

**Photo Tour**

Material in the **COMMUNIQUE** publication may be reprinted by nonprofit organizations (unless such permission is expressly denied in a note accompanying the material) provided proper credit is given to the SGVCCS and the author, and that one copy of the publication containing the reprinted material is sent to the editor. Reproduction in whole or part by any other organization or publication without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

**President's Message**

Our meeting for September will be in Ayers Hall. The AC still doesn't work in the Palm Room.

Thanks to Rob Skillin for his thorough talk on Chile last month.

We had a very lively Board of Directors meeting at the Inter-City Show and have started to plan 2010. It looks like we'll take a bus trip in February to San Diego for the SD Winter Show & Sale plus a stop at Quail Gardens.

We'd like to have a tour of members' gardens. We'll start a sign-up process in October whereby we can be ready to hold this fun event in April. We would like to do two garden tours per year, visiting three gardens each time. Your Board was very excited about this activity.

We'll have a new category of awards for the Winter Show. It is always difficult to coax our new members to begin showing plants. So here's the deal. If you are a First Time Shower, you will automatically be put into a drawing pool. Three First Time Showers will win beautiful show pots on a blind drawing basis. So, First Timers, pay attention to the mini-shows and get your plants ready for our Winter Show, which is coming right up in November. There are pots for sale at every meeting along with other staging materials – everything you need to make your beautiful plants show-worthy. First Time Shower

Continued on Page 2

**In This Issue**

President's Message . . . . .	1
August Mini-Show Results . . . . .	2
This Month's Program . . . . .	2
Study Group. . . . .	3
Plants Of The Month . . . . .	3
Calendar of Upcoming Events . . . . .	7
Welcome New Members . . . . .	7
Refreshment Signup . . . . .	7

## August Mini-Show Results

### Cacti - Favorites

#### Beginner

1st	Anne Keegan	Mammillaria plumosa
2nd	Louise Stack	Ariocarpus plumosa
3rd	Anne Keegan	Turbinicarpus valdezianus

#### Intermediate

1st	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Mammillaria saboae
2nd	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Astrophytum asterias
3rd	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Gymnocalycium bruchii

#### Advanced

1st	John Matthews	Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus
2nd	Rita Gerlach	Weingartia species
2ns	Tom Vermilion	Mammillaria karwinskiana ssp collinsii
3rd	Rita Gerlach	Mammillaria species

#### Masters

1st	Rene Caro	Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus
-----	-----------	----------------------------

### Succulents - Favorites

#### Beginner

1st	Tricia Kangrga	Aloe 'Medium Well Done'
2nd	Tricia Kangrga	Gasteria gracilis variegata
2nd	Kim Lingo	Huernia species
3rd	Louise Stack	Lithops otzenian
3rd	Anne Keegan	Agave stricta nana

#### Intermediate

1st	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Pseudolithos eyelensis
2nd	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Duvalia parviflora
3rd	Cindy/Calvin Arakaki	Baynesia lophophora

#### Advanced

1st	John Matthews	Haworthia magnifica v. splendens
2nd	John Matthews	Conophytum pellucidum v. terricolor
2nd	Manny Rivera	Bursera simplicifolia
3rd	Jean Mullens	Adenium obesum
3rd	Tom Vermilion	Mangave 'Bloodspot'

#### Masters

1st	Patty Caro	Lithops dorotheae
-----	------------	-------------------

## President's Message — Cont'd. from Page 1

means just that. Never before having shown in the SGVCCS Winter Show.

For all others showing plants, remember the 6 Month Rule. You must have owned a plant for at least 6 months before it is eligible to be shown.

Our Board Secretary, Anne Keegan, will begin a new sign-up list. We have a number of members who would bring more plants to shows if they could receive a little physical help. We'll start a list that will show people who need help in transporting their plants to the show and those who might be willing to provide the help. No promises, but maybe we can get more plants to the Show this way.

I hope everyone enjoys the September meeting, Vince has a terrific show.

See you soon at a meeting! Buck Hemenway

## This Month's Program

Our Speaker for September is Vince Basta. Vince is a past President of San Gabriel C&SS and is currently President of Orange County C&SS. His wonderful show plants are the very best.

Vince will give us "A Look Back at Northern Mexico". It is a compilation of two trips taken with Woody Minnich, Rene and Patty Caro, Kelly Griffin and Dave DeLuca. It is an exciting presentation of the habitat and plants that we all cherish from Northern Mexico, including *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Aztekium*, *Ferocactus*, *Geohintonia*, *Leuchtenbergia*, *Lophophora*, *Obregonia*, *Thelocactus*, *Agave*, *Bombax*, *Bursera*, *Calibanus*, *Dioon*, *Echeveria*, *Yucca* and others.

Don't miss this great program.

---

Be sure to take a look at the Club's website at [www.sgvccs.com](http://www.sgvccs.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).

## Study Group

### Wednesday, Sept. 16th • Photo Tour

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.

### CACTI OF THE MONTH —

#### *Gymnocalycium*

*Gymnocalycium* are among the most popular of cacti, from the novice through the advanced grower. They are easy to grow; flower readily; come in a large number of distinguishable species; look great in flower, in bud, and even when dormant. A well grown plant will often flower several times during the year.

*Gymnocalycium* is an old genus, first named in 1845. The genus is named for the naked (spineless) calyx (the outermost covering of the bud and lower flower). Most cacti have spines on the calyx. Many *Gymnocalycium* are also readily identified by their 'chins' beneath the areoles.

The heart of the genus *Gymnocalycium* is in Argentina, although the genus stretches into Southeastern Bolivia, Western Paraguay, Uruguay, and into the southernmost part of Brazil. For the most part *Gymnocalycium* are grassland plants, growing and shaded in the grass of the Pampa and Chaco (dry forest) that covers much of Argentina. As a result, most like some protection from full afternoon sun, but need bright light during the day.

*Gymnocalycium* cultivation is easy. They need a dry rest during the winter; they can take Southern California climate without winter heat, as long as they are dry. *Gymnocalycium* will shrink noticeably in the fall as they go dormant. When this happens watering should stop, and the plants given some protection from rain. They should be fed regularly with a weak general purpose fertilizer when growing. They are tolerant of any well drained soil, but constant wet will cause the roots to rot. Fortunately, they are easy to re-root, with roots generally re-growing in a just few months. Watering should start slowly in the spring, with no fertilizer until the plant is again turgid and growing. Over fertilization and too much water early in the growing season can cause the stems to split.

*Gymnocalycium* are easy to grow from seed, started in a well drained, damp potting mix in a plastic bag covered pot. Germination is fairly rapid, but growth during the first year is slow compared to most *Mammillaria* and many other genera. Vegetative propagation is also easy. Offsets from clumps can be removed, left to dry for a few days and potted. They generally root within a few weeks.

All the species and all the varieties and forms of *Gymnocalycium* are worth growing.

### Great Gymnos:



#### SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2009

Buck Hemenway, President  
Horace Birgh, Vice President  
Rita Gerlach, Treasurer  
Anne Keegan, Secretary  
Manny Rivera, Board Member and  
Winter Show Chair

Cindy Arakaki, Board Member  
John Matthews, Board Member  
Phil Skonieczki, Board Member  
Karen Ostler, Board Member  
Ralph Massey, Board Member  
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

*Gymnocalycium baldianum*, shown below, has few spines, clumps readily and grows quickly.



*Gymnocalycium baldianum*

*Gymnocalycium buenekeri* has great flowers, and good, colorful spines. It clumps and is quick to grow.

*Gymnocalycium damsii* is small clustering species. The stems are brownish green, and heavily marked, with the *Gymnocalycium* chin very evident. It produces bright pink flowers almost continuously during the year.

*Gymnocalycium erinaceum* is a dark green clustering species. It has short, dense spines, which are dark brown as they leave the gray-white areole, and then fade near the end to the same color as the areole wool. It makes for a very handsome appearance.

*Gymnocalycium friedrichii* is sometimes combined with *G. mihanovichii*, and sometimes kept as a separate species. It is an extremely popular species, and easily grown. The ribs are very prominent, and sharp. The body is a dark reddish brown, banded when young. There are a number of readily distinguished varieties and cultivars available. *G. mihanovichii* tends to be greener. *G. mihanovichii* is the source of the “red caps” seen in many garden centers and plant sales. These are chlorophyll-less and variegated forms, that must be grafted onto a green stock plant.

*Gymnocalycium pflanzii*, shown below in flower, has short spines. The body color varies from green (in the spring) to shades of purple and brown (during the summer and winter)



*Gymnocalycium pflanzii*

*Gymnocalycium pungens* is a spectacular species that becomes columnar with age. There are various forms, some with excellent spination. It pays to look for a good specimen.

Reference:

Pilbeam, J., *Gymnocalycium*, A Collector's Guide

Tom Glavich August 2009

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

### *Euphorbia* (caudiciform type)

*Euphorbias* are among the most successful of the plant families, covering an amazing geographical and environmental range. In horticulture, they span the range from English Garden plants to trees, stem succulents, geophytic miniatures, to medusoid globulars to caudiciforms.

Almost all of the collectable caudiciform *Euphorbias* come from Africa and Madagascar. These plants use a swollen base or root to store water and nutrients through dry periods that may be from several months to several years long. When the rains finally arrive, the stored water and energy give them a head start over the surrounding vegetation.

Although many caudiciform *Euphorbias* are very easy to grow, with the swollen root making them very

tolerant of under watering, some are very difficult, turning immediately to mush when over watered, or watered out of season. Care must be given in watering, keeping them warm and wet while growing, and cooler and dry when dormant. *Euphorbias* from tropical areas (Madagascar, and central Africa) are particularly prone to rot if left cold and damp while dormant. Protection in a greenhouse, or even a garage for a month or two in the middle of the winter will greatly increase the survival rate.

Most caudiciform *Euphorbias* are easy to propagate. The green stems can be removed, left to dry for at least week or even a bit more, and then replanted. The newly planted stems take a few weeks to establish, and then start growing.

Some cuttings will not form caudexes unless double cut. Once growth is strong, the top of the green shoot needs to be cut off again to force the plant to start a caudex. Some species form a perfectly symmetrical caudex when grown from seed, but form distorted (but often more interesting) caudexes when grown from cuttings.

### Excellent Euphorbias:

*Euphorbia cylindrifolia* v. *tuberifera* forms a nearly spherical caudex. It is relatively easy to grow, a bit harder to grow as a show-quality specimen. This species is native to Madagascar.

*Euphorbia decaryi* has similar branches, and is often in flower. The caudex of this species is more a collection of tuberous roots. These intertwine, swell and form great patterns. This species is native to Madagascar.

*Euphorbia decidua* is a wonderful miniature, with a base that goes from conical to spherical, and only a small showing of deciduous green spiny stems. It is a hard species to keep, but well worth it.

*Euphorbia inornata* from Cape Province South Africa has a thick tuberous root, often raised and shown as a caudex. Multiple heads (or single) of cylindrical branches grow during the summer months, and remain during the winter. An easy grower from an environment much like Southern California.

*Euphorbia persistens* from Mozambique and Northern South Africa has spectacular pat-terned

stems from a well developed caudex. More tropical and more difficult than some, it makes a wonderful specimen with age.



*Euphorbia persistens*



*Euphorbia Squarossa*

*Euphorbia squarrosa* is one of the classic caudiciform species. Easily grown from double cut cuttings, it rapidly forms a great caudex. It tolerates being outdoors in Southern California without much protection even during the rainy season. It is

native to South Africa.

*Euphorbia stellata* is another South African species, similar in appearance and nearly as easy to grow. It too makes a caudex quickly.

*Euphorbia trichadenia* from Angola, into South Africa has a great root like caudex, with grass like leaves sprouting from the top. Although easy to grown it is rarely seen.

### References

Gordon Rowley Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents

Herman Schwartz, The Euphorbia Journals

Tom Glavich August 2009

### Photos from the Club Picnic

Our Club Picnic event was held on August 1st at Pitzer College in Claremont. There was plenty of fun, food and games!



Hank Warzybok showing great form in the Opuntia Toss event.



Joe Clements leading a large group of club members on a tour of the Pitzer grounds. The gardens look fabulous!



There was plenty of delicious food for all.



**Opuntia Toss Winners:** (L to R)  
Rita Gerlach, Frank Nudge, and Pete Kimbrell



**Water Balloon Toss Winners:** (L to R)  
Martin & Karen Ostler, Buck & Yvonne Hemenway, and Rene and Patty Caro

## *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

**September 5** — Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium. All day at the Huntington. Fee: \$75.00 with an additional charge of \$25.00 for the dinner.

**September 27, 12 pm** — Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction, 18127 South Alameda Street, Rancho Dominguez, CA.

**November 7 and 8** — San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA. For information call Manny Rivera at 626-793-6917.

**December 5 and 6** — Orange County Winter Show and Sale at the Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Road, Fullerton. Show and Sale open Friday, December 4th, noon to 4pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm. For information call 714-870-4887.



### *Welcome New Members*

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

**Paul Bowles**

**Angela Crenshaw**

**Cindy Cordes**

**Milton Douglas & Mary Oatman**

**Ronald Harris**

**John Martinez**

**Joel & Teresa Glen**

### *Refreshment Signup*

These club members have signed up to provide refreshments at this month's meeting.

**Roberta Eisel**

**Richard Roosman**

**Una Yeh**

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

### 2009 Plant-of-the Month and Study Group Topics

	Cacti of the Month	Succulent of the Month	Study Group
Sept.	Gymnocalycium	Euphorbia (caudiciform type)	Photo Tour
Oct.	Parodia & Notocactus	Stemless Mesembs - No Lithops	Ariocarpus
Nov.	Frailea & Blossfeldia	Tylecodon	Winter Seed Workshop