

**San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus & Succulent Society**

**COMMUNIQUE**

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

September 2014 - Volume 47, Number 9

**September Meeting:  
Thursday,  
Sept. 11 at 7:30 pm**

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

**Mini-Show Plants:**

**CACTUS:**  
***Cephaliated Cacti***

**SUCCULENT:**  
***Monadenium***

**C&S Workshop:**

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

***Succulent Orchids***

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**President's Message**

The 2014 Inter-city show was truly spectacular. The quality of the show plants was superb and the competition was tough. Congratulations to all of you who entered the show, especially to all of the novice entrants. There is no way to fully show our appreciation to Inter-city show chairs Tom Glavich, John Matthews, and Peter Walkowiak, sales chair Jim Hanna, show treasurer Evelyn Stevens and all of the hard-working volunteers that make this show such a success. Kudos!

Each year, the Long Beach Cactus Club holds its annual plant auction. The event is being held at Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Rd, Long Beach. Sandwiches, salad, chips, soda, water, beer and wine will be provided. The auction is open to everyone. It is a great opportunity for buyers and sellers looking for specimen plants. The date is September 7th. Lunch and setup begin at 11:30 pm. The auction starts at 1:00 pm.

Thinking ahead bit, the last show and sale of the year is the SGVCSS Winter Show, November 1st and 2nd. Set up will be on October 30th and 31st. Manny Rivera is show chair, and Buck Hemenway will be in charge of the sales area. This show is for SGVCSS members only. It is OUR show. If you did not compete in the Intercity show because you thought it was too daunting, here is your chance! As always, we will need lots of volunteers.

See you at the meeting.

Gunnar Eisel

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## August Mini-Show Results

### Cactus - Favorite

#### Novice

1st	Shaun Adams	Mammillaria plumosa
2nd	David Johnson	Echinocereus engelmannii
3rd	Minh Au	Melocactus sp.

#### Intermediate

1st	David Hawks	Ariocarpus retusus
2nd	Barb Hall	Sulcorebutia swoboda
3rd	David Hawks	Melocactus monstrose

#### Masters

No entries

### Succulent - Favorite

#### Novice

1st	Pete Kimbrell	Portulacaria afra
2nd	Nilda Howard	Aloe variegata
3rd	Sharn Adams	Haworthia cymbiformis

#### Intermediate

1st	David Hawks	Cussonia natalensis
2nd	David Hawks	Ficus microcarpa
3rd	David Hawks	Agave gypsophila varieg.

#### Masters

1st	John Matthews	Luckhoffia buckmanii crest
2nd	John Matthews	Echeveria "Topsy Turvy"
3rd	Tony Marino	Euphorbia pseudocactus

## Mini-Show Judges Signup

Bob Danks and Dianne Danks signed up to assist Head Judge Manny Rivera in judging the entries for this month's Mini-Show.

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).

## This Month's Program

### "Astrophytum: From Seed Tray to Show Table"

#### Gunnar Eisel

How does a genus like *Astrophytum*, consisting of six species, remain such a perennial favorite and source of joy, headaches, and frequent disappointment? Clearly, a major attraction is the stunning beauty of these plants' exquisite symmetry and often intricately detailed body patterns. However, successful growing of these plants can pose problems and pitfalls even to some experienced growers.

Gunnar Eisel's presentation will focus on primarily two species; *A. myriostigma* and *A. asterias* and the multitude of cultivars that have made these plants so popular. Starting with identification and sorting out the myriad of variations sought by *Astrophytum* collectors, he will share a few tips based on his successes as well as point out some colossal failures in his attempt to master cultivation of these species.

When not teaching music history and music theory, Mr. Eisel serves as General Manager of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and president of the SGVCSS.



## Club Member Plant Sale

Evelyn Maxwell is holding a private-collection Plant Sale on September 6th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 337 N Sixth St., Montebello. Call Evelyn for more information at 213-505-2577. There will be a good selection of succulents available.



## 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.

### CACTUS OF THE MONTH —

#### *Cephaliated Cacti*

Few families of plants show more dramatic adaptations to harsh, desolate and unforgiving environments than the Cactus family. Leaves that have morphed into spines or scales, stems that have become reservoirs of water, an epidermis that photosynthesizes—these are only a few of the mechanisms cacti have evolved in order to survive.

But the strangest—by far—is the cephalium. A cephalium [from Greek *kephalē* head] is a woolly, bristly, often highly colored “head” or crown on certain cacti. Cephalia take two forms: apical (i.e., covering the top of a cactus stem) and lateral (originating at or near the top but growing down several ribs). The most common example of an apical cephalium is found in the genus *Melocactus* (fig. 1), but other genera produce a similar apical cephalium: *Arrojada*, *Stephanocereus* (ring cephalium) and *Discocactus*, to name a few. Lateral cephalia are produced in genera such as *Espostoa* (fig. 2), *Pilosocereus*, *Espostopsis*, *Buiningia* (fig. 3) and more.



Fig. 1 *Melocactus azureus*

So why a cephalium? When certain cacti reach maturity, they undergo a dramatic metamorphosis. The stem becomes narrower, woolly areoles begin to grow closely packed, a vast number of shorter, straighter spines develops, and the whole of the cephalium becomes a nearly impenetrable mass of spines. This “barrier” protects the adult tissue from animals, UV light, fungi, bacteria . . . and even botanists!

It is from this modified tissue that the flowers arise. Once a cephalium has begun to form, the green body of the immature cactus ceases growing in

height. The cephalium then continues to grow vertically and may do so for some years. Cephalia as tall as 1.5 meters have been found in the wild! And lateral cephalia may grow to several meters in length and can be found on columnar cacti as much as 18 meters in height (*Backebergia* sp.). A bit of trivia: if you turn a laterally cephaliated columnar cactus around by 180°, the plant will cease growing a cephalium on that side, and will start a new one on the opposite side.



Fig. 2 *Espostoa lanata*

Where are these cephaliated cacti found? The hotbed for *Melocactus* is central Brazil, generally around Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais, growing alongside *Discocactus* as well as *Micranthocereus*. Melos are also found growing in Jamaica, and near the ocean’s edge in Cuba. A few other cephaliated cacti can be found in Peru and Ecuador (e.g., *Espostoa*). Mexico has a species or two, also (e.g., *Backebergia*).

How do you care for your cephaliated cacti in your own collection? *Melocactus* comes from high rain regions and warm places, and in your collection will enjoy temperatures from the low 60s in a well-drained medium with compost. Because most melos are from the Caribbean Sea areas and environs, they like full sun, heat and moderate water. Keep them a bit drier when it is cool. All cephaliated cacti should



Fig. 3 *Buiningia brevicylindrica*

be kept at least 10° to 20° above freezing at all times.

We began this discussion with “evolutionary adaptations,” which we always deem beneficial. Not all experts are in agreement that cephalia represent an adapta-

tion which benefits the cacti that produce them. To the contrary, Dr. Root Gorelick, who has been studying cephaliated cacti in depth, sees no evolutionary advantage at all to this extravagant growth form. It is his opinion that a cephalium, which is devoid of chlorophyllous photosynthetic cells and, thus, unable to make nutrients for the plant, may well be an evolutionary “detour” for cephaliated cacti. Only time—and further research—will tell . . . .

Horace Birgh, September 2014

Photos courtesy Edge of Eden/Tommy Dodson

#### References:

The Cactus Handbook, Erik Haustein, 1988  
Dr. Root Gorelick, The cactus cephalium (the platypus of plants) may not be adaptive. Huntington Succulent Plant Symposium, August 2013

The Cactus Family, Edward F. Anderson, 2001

CactiGuide.com, Genus: *Espositoopsis*  
Cephalia: Juvenile/Adult Phase Change in Cacti, Mauseth, J. D

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

### *Monadenium*

Following the discovery of a plant in German East Africa (now Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Mozambique) by an explorer named G. A. Fischer, Professor F. Pax created the genus *MONADENIUM*, in the family *Euphorbiaceae*, and published it in *Botanische Jahrbücher für Systematik* (a German yearbook for systematical botany) in 1894. The new discovery was named *Monadenium coccineum*.

The name “*Monadenium*” means “single gland,” referring to the strange floral structure, or cyathium, unique to the *Euphorbia* family. A cyathium appears to be a single flower, but in reality consists of several male flowers (usually 5) surrounding a single female, and which hang downward, often with colorful bracts.

More recently, the genus *Monadenium* has been “demoted” to become a Section under the genus *Euphorbia*, and all *monadeniums* have, accordingly,

been moved into the genus *Euphorbia*, Section *Monadenium*.

By 1934 only five species had been described. In 1961 Peter Bally wrote his book “The Genus *Monadenium*,” describing 64 species and/or varieties. Now there are 73 species, plus some varieties, forms and subspecies.

The genus *Monadenium* is confined mainly to Tropical East Africa, with a few species in West Africa and north into Somalia, and on into Zimbabwe and the Transvaal area. *Monadeniums* are not known to exist in the Cape area of South Africa--so rich in other *Euphorbias*—nor in Madagascar or Arabia.

The genus comprises perennial herbs, shrubs,



*Monadenium magnificum*

small trees and some attractive geophytic species. The roots are often thick and fleshy and may be tuberous; the stems are usually succulent. On many species big, fleshy and beautiful leaves are borne at the end of the stems. The leaves are deciduous, leaving scars on the stems after they fall. Flowering may occur during spring, summer or autumn.

The genus *Monadenium* can be divided into four groups:

(1) tree-like species:

*M. arborescens* (Tanzania) — a robust-growing, semi-woody (succulent), lightly branched tree to 14 feet tall. The five-angled, slightly spirally twisted stems can grow to 4 inches.

*M. spinescens* (Tanzania) — this beautiful species is a favorite, growing close to 20 feet tall, with yellowish-brown stems and fleshy green leaves growing at the tips of the main stem and branches.

(2) Shrub-like species:

*M. ellenbeckii* (Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia) —

this species is a spreading, branched shrub, with rhizomatous roots and pale green stems, which can grow erect or prostrate, 20 to 60 inches long. Fleshy, small leaves grow spirally along the stems.

*M. magnificum* (Tanzania) — a succulent, sparsely branched, shrub with a large, tuberous root. Stems may be upright or spreading and can grow to 60 inches. Leaves are obovate and fleshy, growing at the ends of the angled stems. Flowers are produced on bright red cyathia.

### (3) Succulent species:

*M. guntheri* (Kenya) — a species with a thick, fleshy root, and stems that branch from the base, growing erect or decumbent. When erect, they can reach 6 inches; when decumbent, they can grow up to 3 feet. The stems bear tubercles in spiral rows and leaf scars on the tubercles.



*Monadenium ritchiei*

*M. ritchiei* (Kenya) — a tuberous-rooted plant, with stems growing up to 16 inches long and covered with large tubercles with 3-5 spines each. The leaves are dark green above and light green on the underside. Cyathia are pink. There are 3 subspecies: *ritchiei*, *marsabitense*, *nyambense*.

### (4) Geophytic species:

*M. catenatum* (Tanzania) — a geophytic, tuberous root which can be cylindrical or sub-spherical, less than an inch in size. This species produces 1 or 2 annual stems 8 inches long. If grown above soil level, these stems are purple. The lightly tomentose leaves are lanceolate with margins minutely toothed. The cyathia are pink.

*M. rubellum* (Kenya) — a species with fleshy roots and which forms clumps of rounded tubers. The succulent stems may be either erect or prostrate, to 10 inches in length, with purple stripes. Its beautiful leaves are green with purple, and the cyathia, red- to

rose-pink.

Cultivation is not difficult. They grow well in most types of soil, but a cactus/ succulent soil mix is recommended. In the growing season, plants should be watered freely; in winter, they must be kept dry. Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

As with all *Euphorbias*, *Monadeniums* produce a white, toxic latex that can be a skin irritant. Care should be taken when handling these plants.

Manny Rivera, September 2014

Reference:

Albert Pritchard, **Monadenium**.

Photos courtesy of **Monadenium** by Albert Pritchard



*Monadenium catenatum*

## Welcome New Members



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

**Mike Nealon, North Hollywood**  
**Drake Jasso, Duarte**  
**Sandy & Earl Bres, Arcadia**  
**Colby Calvert, Covina**  
**Daniel Hofstad & Ana Wrsblasky, Pasadena**  
**Miguel & Ilse Barajas, Fallbrook**  
**Gina Solomon, Sherman Village**  
**Michael Pearson, Altadena**  
**Nick Renteria, Los Angeles**  
**Sheldon Lisker, Sun City**  
**Margaret Waye, Pomona**

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**September 7**, 12 noon to 5:00 pm — Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction at Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, CA. For information call 310-922-6090.

**November 1 and 2**, 9:00 am to 4:00 PM — San Gabriel Cactus and Succulent Society Winter Show and Sale at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

**December 7th**, 5:00 pm — San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society *Annual Holiday Party* at Ayers Hall, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

## 2014 INTER-CITY SHOW AND SALE – HIGH POINTS WINNERS

### NOVICE

#### High Points - Cactus

Kathryn Boorer	55
Rio	50
Loralei Dewe	35

#### High Points - Succulent

Rebecca Malonee	65
Kathryn Boorer	65
Qui Nguyen	49
Phyllis Frieze	37

#### Overall High Points - Novice

Kathryn Boorer	120
Rebecca Malonee	92
Phyllis Frieze	62

### ADVANCED

#### High Points - Cactus

Kim Thorpe	108
Barbara Hall	64
Gunnar Eisel	45
Peter Claridge	45

#### High Points - Succulent

Kim Thorpe	109
Gunnar Eisel	59
Roger Lane	41

#### Overall High Points - Advanced

Kim Thorpe	217
Barbara Hall	109
Gunnar Eisel	104

### OPEN

#### High Points - Cactus

Tony Marino	128
Charles and Joann	
Spotts	62
Peter Walkowiak	44

#### High Points - Succulent

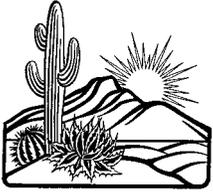
Peter Walkowiak	68
Tom Glavich	54
Petra Crist	50

#### Overall High Points - Open

Tony Marino	142
Peter Walkowiak	112

## 2014 Plant-of-the-Month and Study Group Topics

	Cacti of the Month	Succulent of the Month	Workshops
Jan.	Mammillaria Clusters	Succulent Bulbs	Landscaping with Succulents
Feb.	California Native Cacti	California Native Succulents	Plant Identification
Mar.	Rebutia, Sulcorebutia, Weingartia	Echeverias	California Natives
Apr.	Variegated Cacti	Variegated Succulents	Spring Seed Workshop
May	Gymnocalycium	Stem Euphorbias	Vegetative Propagation
June	Notocactus and Parodia	Bursera & Commiphora	Stem Euphorbias
July	Crested and Monstrose	Crested and Monstrose	Staging Workshop
Aug.	Favorite Cactus	Favorite Succulent	Crests and Monstrose
Sept.	Cephaliated Cacti	Monadenium	Succulent Orchids
Oct.	Ariocarpus	Sedums	Sansevierias
Nov.	Grafted Cacti	Grafted Succulents	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**.