



COMMUNIQUE

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc.
Meetings are held at **7:30 PM** on the 2nd Thursday of the month
in the Lecture Hall, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia
July 2004 Volume 37 Number 7

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, July 8th. The program for July will be given by Tom Knapic. The title of his presentation is "Brazil".

Plants of the Month: (see the attached write ups)

CACTUS – *Gymnocalycium*
SUCCULENTS – *Pterodiscus, Sesamothamnus, Uncarina*

Bring your specimens in for our monthly mini-show. It will help you prepare for the real shows and give you an additional opportunity to show others your pride & joy.

Study Group: Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 7:30 pm. in the Grapevine room, San Gabriel Adult Center, 324 South Mission Drive. These exciting events feature expert group leaders and mentors, free giveaways (some of the best plants you'll ever get!), and lively discussion. Everybody learns something! Join us on Wednesday, July 21st. This month's topic is ***Pests and Disease***. You'll learn exactly what it is that's killing your precious babies, and how to prevent it from ever happening again!

Refreshments: Only Gwen Hill has volunteered to bring in refreshments this month. Help is needed! We continue to seek volunteers for coming months, so don't forget to sign up on the sheet located at the refreshment table. Our thanks go to Dick Tatman and everyone else who brought things for the June meeting.

Annual Club Picnic: Our annual picnic will be held on Saturday July 10th, once again at the home of Pat & Jean Mullens. Featuring:

Picnic - Bring your own utensils and a dish to share with others. The Club will provide beverages and charcoal for barbecuing. We hope to have everyone eating by Noon so we can begin the games by about 1:00. Those arriving early can help set up if they like.

Games - There will be the usual games, including the infamous Opuntia Toss, so dress comfortably and get ready to join the fun.

Auction - A great way to add to your collection or sell extra specimens. Rules for auction: Must be a club member to sell. Limit 10 plants or items total (bring nice plants, something you'd like to take home with you.) Club gets 25%; seller gets 75%. Cards will be available at the auction for each item to be sold. Write your name and the minimum acceptable bid on the card and place it with the item. If you want to bid on an item, write your name (no prices) on the card for each

item you are interested in. All items that members have expressed an interest in will then be auctioned off.

Directions - Take Interstate 10 to Grand Ave. in Covina. Go south on Grand to Lorencita and turn left. Take Lorencita to Buenos Aries Dr. and turn right. Buenos Aries will wind around and eventually you will come to Santiago St. Turn left onto Santiago St. The address is 2124 E. Santiago St., Covina. (See map, below.)

This is a great activity with a bunch of fun people. Bring your family and have some fun! Special thanks to Pat & Jean Mullens for allowing us to use their home and yard.

Personnel Notices: The SCGCSS wishes to extend a warm welcome to its new member Rick Carron! Rick, carefully review the COMMUNIQUE and the **Roster** in order to learn about all the many benefits of membership in our warm and friendly club!

10 years ago: (Issue unavailable. If *you* have the info, please forward it to Tom Glavich).
20 years ago: The program committee gave a program consisting of members slides.
30 years ago: “The Family Mesembryanthemaceae” was presented by Mrs. Mildred Stern of Santa Monica. The CSSA held their 9th annual show at the Los Angeles Arboretum July 4 – 7. New Members included Gordon and Sylvia McTavish. (Although both have passed on, and most members never met them, there are plants in many collections and at every show that started from their collection.)

(Thanks go to Tom Glavich for providing this interesting feature)

Get Your COMMUNIQUE Online: If you would be content to view the COMMUNIQUE on-line and not receive a copy by regular mail, thus saving the Club treasury about one dollar per copy, send the information via E-mail to sgv_css@verizon.net.

SGVC&SS Online: <http://www.desertsong.com/sgvcss/> is the Club’s web site. If you or someone you know has internet access be sure to have a look. The pages were authored and are maintained by Gunnar Eisel who has done a great job in creating an informative and classy site. You can also download a version of the COMMUNIQUE complete with color photos. Look for the COMMUNIQUE link at the site’s main page.

Calendar of Events - 2004

July 1st-3rd CSSA Show and Sale. Opens 10:30. Huntington Botanical Garden, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA. (626) 405-2160 or 2277. Plant sales are on the 1st – 3rd. The Show opens to the public on the 2nd. Free Admission to Show and Sale. Thursday July 1st is a free day for the public to enter the rest of the Huntington.

July 10th **The Club Picnic**, to be hosted again by Jean Mullens at her home. Put the date on your calendar!

- August 14th-15th** 17th Annual Intercity Show and Sale. LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. Call Tom Glavich at (626) 798-2430, Harry Fletcher at (310) 538-4078, or Gene Oster at (818) 998-9306.
- September 4th** Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.
- September 26th** Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Auction. Dominguez Adobe, 18127 So. Alameda, Compton (Dominguez Hills), CA.
- October 9th-10th** SGVC&SS Winter Show. LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA.
- December 18th** The Club Christmas Party! Put this date on your calendar too!

June Plant-Of-the-Month Mini Show Results:

Cacti – Epiphytic

Succulents- Epiphytic

Beginner

1 st	Hilde Rosenbluth	<i>Rapsalis baccifera ssp maunitania</i>
2 nd	Barbara Nolan	<i>Raphis</i>
3 rd	Barbara Nolan	<i>Raphis mesembranchemoids</i>

1 st	Permpoon	<i>Hoya</i>
	Kanchanastia	
T-2 nd	Duck Tatman	<i>Ae. "Aztec Gold"</i>
T-2 nd	Lorraine Lutz	<i>Hoya curtsii</i>
3 rd	Barbara Nolan	<i>Abrimeitiella brerifolia</i>

Intermediate

(no entries)

1 st	Joanne & Bernie Wilner	<i>Tillandsia sp.</i>
-----------------	------------------------	-----------------------

Advanced

1 st	Rita Gerlach	<i>Ripsalis capilliformis</i>
-----------------	--------------	-------------------------------

1 st	Rita Gerlach	<i>Hoya "Rope"</i>
2 nd	Rita Gerlach	<i>Hoya Carnosa tri-color</i>

Master

(no entries)

(no entries)

If you have a cactus- or succulent-related event that you'd like to have announced in the COMMUNIQUE, please forward the info to me at the address below. Please verify event dates - sometimes events are rescheduled or canceled without adequate advance notice.

Articles, Notices and Corrections can be sent via e-mail to: sgv_css@verizon.net or via post to: Paul Maker, 2235 Canyon Road, Arcadia, CA 91006. Material must be received by the last Thursday of the month to be considered for publication in the next issue of the COMMUNIQUE. Material in the San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society COMMUNIQUE 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 SGVCSS and the author and that one copy of the publication containing the reprinted material be sent to the editor. Reproduction in whole or part by any other organization or publication without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Cactus of the Month July 2004 – *Gymnocalycium*



Gymnocalycium pflanzii

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 *Gymnocalycium* are also readily identified by their 'chins' beneath the areoles.

The heart of the genus *Gymnocalycium* is 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 baldianum

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. 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.

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*:

Gymnocalycium baldianum, shown on the previous page, has few spines, clumps readily and grows quickly.



Gymnocalycium buenekeri

Gymnocalycium buenekeri shown above 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 that 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 on the previous page has short spines. The body color varies from green (in the spring) to shades of purple and brown (during the summer and winter)

Gymnocalycium ragonesi is a well known and readily available species. It stays small, and varies in color from brick red to gray to greenish brown. It is very flat, and in the wild would grow almost completely buried.

References:

Britton and Rose, **The Cactaceae**

Cullman, Gotz and Groner, **The**

Encyclopedia of Cacti

Pilbeam, J., **Gymnocalycium, A**

Collector’s Guide

Preston-Mafham, **Cacti, The Illustrated**

Dictionary

Innes, C. and Glass, C., **Cacti**

Tom Glavich June 2004

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Succulents of the Month July 2004

Pterodiscus, Sesamothamnus, Uncarina

Pterodiscus, *Sesamothamnus*, and *Uncarina* are all members of the *Pedaliaceae* or Sesame family. They are all still relatively uncommon succulents, in spite of the relative ease of growing many of them.



Pterodiscus speciosus

Pterodiscus is a strictly African genus of relatively small caudiciform succulents. Although most of the collected species come from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, the genus stretches through a good portion of central and eastern Africa. In habitat, the caudex is generally half above ground and half below. A single stem is produced every year. The stem produces non-succulent leaves and small, unusual flowers.

In cultivation, the nearly entire caudex is generally put above the soil line.

Sesamothamnus is another strictly African genus of shrubby plants. This genus is found in only two locations, in Ethiopia and Somalia, where the species are only marginally succulent, and in Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana and northern South

Africa, where the trunks are very soft and very thick. In habitat, the plants would prefer growing into small trees or large shrubs, 15 to 20 feet tall, but frequent grazing of the succulent stems by every passing herbivore produces very short beautifully bonsai like plants. The same is done in cultivation, with pruning shears replacing the teeth of herbivores. These are wonderful succulents, looking very much like miniature *Adansonia*. They are relatively easy to grow, needing only protection from frost and excessive winter moisture.

Uncarina, a Madagascan endemic is the most popular of the three genera. All of the species have underground, and sometimes aboveground swollen roots. There are about 15 species, with a few more likely to be discovered in the more isolated regions of Northern Madagascar. They are easy to grow, liking lots of water when in growth, but needing some protection from wet and cold in the winter.



Uncarina grandieri entered in the 2003 Show by Naomi and Frank Bloss

Photo T. Nomer

Tom Glavich June 2004