



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
January 2005 Volume 38 Number 1

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, January 13th. Our program this month will be presented by one of our own, past president, current Inter City Show co-chairman, board member of the CSSA, and author of our Plants of the Month research articles, none other than Tom Glavich. The title is "Gasterias." It will be a look at the species and cultivars in the genus, as well as cultivation and propagation. One of the first succulent plants he ever purchased, at the 3rd Intercity Show was a Gasteria, and it is featured in his talk.

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

CACTI – Straight-spined *Mammillaria* clusters SUCCULENT – *Gasteria*

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. If you don't have any of this type of plant you can learn about them at the meeting. Remember that at the beginning of the year, it is customary for each member to review his/her ribbon accumulation and step up to the next higher category of competition in both the POM and Club shows when they have exceeded 40 blue ribbons in their current category.

Study Group: Join us on Wednesday, January 19th, when our topic will be Digital Photography. We'll learn just what it's all about from Club experts who have some of the latest and greatest equipment. As usual, the meeting will be held in the Grapevine room of the San Gabriel Adult Center, 324 South Mission Dr. (between the San Gabriel Mission and Civic Auditorium) at 7:30 pm. For those who have not attended a Study Group meeting here's a brief description of what goes on. Members are encouraged to bring in materials that relate to the topic of discussion. Club President Joe Clements or another member will often present a brief slide show and preside over a discussion on the day's topic. Also, we usually have a large selection of cuttings and other plants donated by members that are given away by lottery at meeting's end.

Personnel Notices: Carmen Ponce passed away on November 2 due to a pulmonary embolism. She was a friend of Manuel Rivera for more than fifteen years, and was an enthusiastic club member for about seven years.

Notice! A crystal candy dish was left behind at the Holiday Party! The owner should contact Susan Weststeyn at 626-287-4524 to arrange for its return.

10 years ago: (Data unavailable).

20 years ago: Ed and Betty Gay gave a talk on Chile.

30 years ago: Dr. Leroy Phelps, CSSA Board Member gave a program on "Succulent Plants as Bonsais". Lee Phelps was one of the first to grow succulents as Bonsai, and this was a very early talk on the subject.

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

2005 Dues! Its that time of year again! Club membership dues are due! Send your check to:

SGVC&SS Membership
719 S. Albertson
Covina, CA 91723-3302

Membership is \$12.00 for individuals or \$15.00 for a family (at the same address). Your membership status is printed on the address label, above your name. Your prompt renewals allow us to publish the Roster in a timely manner.

Refreshments: No one is signed up to bring refreshments for January so we could use a few volunteers. We have openings for refreshment sign-ups throughout the coming year. The sign up sheet will be at the refreshment table. Thanks to everyone who generously brought things during 2004.

Holiday Plant Info: The plant given to all paid up members at our Holiday Party was *Lithops dortheae*. Recipients should rear their plants carefully and bring the result to next year's Party. The best surviving *dortheae* will be awarded a prize. Don't forget that the plants given at *all* of the Club's previous Holiday Parties should also be brought in and shown off. So few members contributed to this year's competition that no prize was given. Congratulations do go to Patty Caro, Rene Caro, Lorraine Lutz and Barbara Nolan for bringing in their plants from years gone by. Apparently every one else mismanaged (killed???) their club gifts!

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 sgvcss@adelphia.net. <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 - 2005

- February 12th** San Diego C&SS Winter Show, Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.
- April 9th-10th** South Coast C&SS Show and Sale, South Coast Botanical Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd, Palos Verdes, CA (310-832-2262).
- April 24th** South Bay Epiphyllum Society Show and Sale, South Coast Botanical Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd, Palos Verdes, CA (310-831-1209).
- April 23rd-24th** Green Scene Plant Sale, Fullerton Arboretum.
- April 30th-May 1st** Sunset C&SS Show and Sale, Veterans Memorial Center, Garden Room, 4117 Overland Ave, Culver City, CA (310-822-1783)
- May 15th** Huntington Botanical Gardens Plant Sale, 10-5, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.
- May 15th** Epiphyllum Society Show and Sale, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA. (310-831-1209).
- May 21st-22nd** Gates C&SS Show (1-4 Sat, 9-4 Sun) and Sale (9-4 Sat and Sun), Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hill Dr, Glen Avon, CA (909-360-8802).

- June 4th-5th** San Diego C&SS Show and Sale, Balboa Park, Room 101 Casa del Prado, San Diego, CA (619-477-4779).
- July 1st-3rd** CSSA Show (2nd-3rd) and Sale (1st-3rd), Huntington Botanical Garden, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA (626-405-2160 or 2277).
- August 20th-21th** 18th Annual Intercity Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA (626-798-2430 or 818-998-9306).
- September 3rd** 22nd Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.
- September 25th** Long Beach C&SS Annual Auction, Dominguez Adobe, 18127 So. Alameda St, Compton (Dominguez Hills) CA.
- October 15th-16th** SGVC&SS Winter Show and Sale, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia CA.

Last Year's Plant-Of-the-Month Mini-Show Cumulative Results:

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|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Barbara Nolan | 12. Vince Basta | 21. Tom Glavich, Tracey Kolb |
| 2. Karen Oster | 13. Oscar Flores | 22. Alex Abrahamian, Bill Hagblom, Yvonne Hemenway, Permpoon Kamchanasti, Mike Romero, Hilde Rosenbluth, M.L. Totten |
| 3. Rita Gerlach | 14. Rene Caro | 23. John Matthews |
| 4. Frank Nudge | 15. Frank Depew | 24. Jeanette Elser, Evelyn Maxwell, Phil Skonieczki |
| 5. Alan Hooker | 16. Jim Schlegel | |
| 6. Jim Hanna, Carol and Paul Maker | 17. Dick Hulett, Antoinette Koltaj, Lorraine Lutz, Ron Young | |
| 7. Horace Birgh and Roy Dodson | 18. Gene and Laura Oster | |
| 8. Manny Rivera | 19. Joanne and Bernie Wilner, Jean Mullens | |
| 9. Dick Tatman | 20. Camille Rutkowski | |
| 10. Sokhara Tan | | |
| 11. Tom Vermillion | | |

Note that all of the above got to choose a plant from a selection that was brought in for this purpose. Order of choice was based upon the number of points scored last year.

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: sgvcss@adelphia.net or via post to: Paul Maker, 1245 San Pablo Drive, San Marcos, CA 92078-4816. 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

Cacti of the Month January 2005 - *Straight Spined Mammillaria Clusters*

Mammillaria is one of the larger genera in the *Cactus* family, and one of the most variable, with some members remaining as solitary columns for their entire lives, some remaining as fingernail size solitary globulars, some clumped and heavily spined with hooks. However, some of the most attractive are the straight spined clusters.



Mammillaria humboldtii entered in the 2001 Intercity Show by Bill Munkacsy

Although most *Mammillaria* are native to Mexico, some species in the genus can be found from Columbia to Kansas and California. With this wide distribution, the cultivation requirements obviously vary considerably. The species from the tropics and warmer areas are rarely tolerant of cold and damp. Those from the drier desert regions are also intolerant of continued damp, but can take considerable cold. With these restrictions aside, most *Mammillaria* are easy to grow.

The secrets to good growth are a continued supply of fertilizer during the growing season, strong light, and maintenance of a clean and insect free growing environment. The appearance of white mealy bug egg cases (*Mammillaria's* worst enemy) on the

tips of the spines or the appearance of ants means that mealy bugs are sucking the sap and life of the plant. Immediate treatment is required, with a thorough washing, and spraying with an insecticide.

Propagation of *Mammillaria* clusters is easy. Cuttings can be taken at any time during the growing season (April to early November), left to dry for a few days and replanted in a clean potting mix. Rooting is rapid, with short white roots generally appearing after a couple of weeks. *Mammillaria* are one of the easiest species to grow from seed. The seeds are simply placed on top of a damp potting mix, covered with a light coating of gravel, placed in a plastic bag in bright light, but out of direct sun and allowed to germinate. Germination usually occurs in a week or 10 days. The seedlings can stay in the plastic bag for several weeks until they get large enough to survive unprotected, and should then be removed to a still shaded, but brighter and drier environment. Most will survive, and grow quickly. Show quality plants can sometimes be grown in just 4 or 5 years, and entries can be ready for seedling classes in as little as 6 months.

Classic Straight Spined *Mammillaria*

Mammillaria decipiens subsp. *campotricha* from Queretaro, long known as the birds nest, has a dark green body and long twisting spines that can vary from white to yellow (most common) to red, depending on the clone.

Mammillaria crucigera produces clumps by splitting dichotomously (each head splitting into two). The body ranges from green to almost brown to almost purple. This species is a slow grower.

Mammillaria elongata, one of the first cacti that everyone grows is easy, and extraordinarily tolerant of abuse. It has the odd characteristic of being very popular and also unfairly neglected, since advanced growers ignore this easy grower, even though there are a variety of forms and colors, many of which can make a spectacular plant.

Mammillaria geminispina, is a variable species with some varieties having short white spines, while others have long flexible centrals.

Mammillaria herrerae is a spectacular small white species, with very dense interlacing spines, shown at the right. It comes from Queretaro Mexico.

Mammillaria lenta, from Coahuila forms mounds of off-white to white. Slower growing than the somewhat similar *M. plumosa*, described below, it is often a show winner.

Mammillaria luethyi from Coahuila, and discovered in 1996 is now available in cultivation. A breathtaking miniature, it has very short white spines on a dark green body.

Mammillaria nivosa generally has a dark green body, offset with woolly areoles, and open yellow spines.

Mammillaria plumosa is a relatively quick grower, forming mounds of white heads. The heads are covered with white feathery spines, which must be kept dry if the color is to be maintained.



Mammillaria herrerae entered in the 2000 Intercity Show by Woody Minnich

Mammillaria viperiana from Puebla Mexico, is generally a white spined species, that clumps from the body, particularly as the main body elongates.

Mammillaria voburnensis v. eichlamii from Guatemala is a quick and dense clumper, with areoles covered with yellow wool.

References:

- E. Anderson, **The Cactus Family**
- J. Pilbeam, **Cactus for the Connoisseur**
- R. Craig, **The Mammillaria Handbook**
- C. Innes & C. Glass **Cacti**

Tom Glavich December 2004
Pictures T. Nomer

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Succulent of the Month January 2005 – *Gasteria*

Gasteria is a popular and easily grown genus of plants that has been collected and kept as house plants since the 17th century. *Gasteria* are readily distinguished from *Aloe* and *Haworthia* (both very close relatives) by the shape of their flowers. *Gasteria* flowers are carried on a long scape (leafless flower stalk). They generally hang down as they open, and have a swollen (gasteriform) portion at the base of the flower. The word *Gasteria* comes from the Greek “gaster” meaning stomach or belly.

dependent on the soil type and amount of sunlight.

Typical natural habitats are humus rich, sandy soils. They grow on dry rocky hillsides and generally grow under larger shrubs particularly when young. They also can be found in rock fissures or in the shade of large rocks. The roots are shallow and thick which helps the plants obtain moisture from barely wet soils, and nourishment from decaying leaves and debris from larger shrubs.



Gasteria ellaphieae

Gasteria vary in size from about an inch to several feet in diameter. Almost all plants start out with the leaves in two rows (distichous), although most eventually begin to spiral, either remaining in a distichous spiral, or changing into a rosette form. *Gasteria* are very variable in appearance. They have definite juvenile and adult forms, have local variations in appearance, and have form and growth habits that are



Gasteria armstrongii a Burks Nursery Clone

Gasteria cultivation is easy. They are mostly winter and spring growers, but exhibit some growth all year except for the hottest part of the summer. They are tolerant of almost any growing mix, although they do best with high organic content mixes, similar to their natural growing conditions. They prefer partial shade, particularly in the afternoon; however the best color is

obtained by giving them as much light and sun, short of sunburn, as possible.

Gasteria are generally free from most pests. The one difficulty is 'black spot', a fungus that attacks many *Gasteria*. The fungus is rarely fatal, but causes large unsightly black spots on the leaves. There is no way to remove the spots, and since the leaves remain on the plants for several years, the fungus can quickly ruin show plants. The fungus can be minimized by keeping the leaves dry, and particularly keeping dew off the leaves. It can be prevented by regular application of systemic fungicides, but vigilance is required. Funginex is a popular rose fungicide that gives some protection.



Gasteria carinata from Sheilam Nursery in South Africa

Gasterias are readily propagated from offsets at the base, which can be simply pulled off and planted. Leaf cuttings will also root easily. *Gasterias* left in the open in California will be rapidly pollinated by hummingbirds, although the resulting seed is then an uncontrolled and unknown hybrid. Controlled pollination is easily accomplished with a small brush, or toothpick. Seed can be collected as soon as the fruits start to dry.

Gasteria hybridize easily, and cross pollination can produce interesting plants. Many hybrids are available, as are several variegated cultivars. Intergeneric hybrids with *Aloes* and *Haworthia* are also available.

Great *Gasterias*:

Gasteria armstrongii (newly restored from *Gasteria nitida armstrongii*) This is a small plant, with distichous leaves only a few inches long. The leaves are dark green (almost black in some cases), and are tuberculate (covered with small bumps).

Gasteria batesiana is another of the dark green tuberculate species. The leaves spiral with age to form rosettes. The plant is much larger than *Gasteria armstrongii*, and the tubercles are often a lighter green than the main body, giving the plant a speckled appearance.

Gasteria carinata var. *verrucosa* (often found as *G. verrucosa*) is a lighter colored species. It is larger than *G. batesiana*, with thinner leaves, The tubercles are much larger, and often merge into large areas of glaucous green on a dark green background.

Gasteria ellaphieae is a relatively new species. It has a great grey texture, and is a slow grower.

References

E. J. van Jaarsveld, **Gasterias of South Africa**

E. Sajeve and M. Costanzo, **Succulents, The Illustrated Dictionary**

Tom Glavich December 2004