

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
June 2005 Volume 38 Number 6

Monthly Meeting: June 9th. This month's presentation will be given by Kelly Griffin. He will tell us about his recent trip to the Mexican Sonora, highlighting its agaves.

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

CACTI – *Discocactus and Melocactus* SUCCULENT – *African Pachypodiums*

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 and joy. If you don't have any of this type of plant you can learn about them at the meeting.

Study Group: There will be **NO** study group in June. Our meeting room has been pre-empted by the San Gabriel Recreation Department. The schedule will return to normal in July when we will meet as usual on the third Wednesday.

Roster Corrections: (Direct any roster corrections to the attention of Bill Gerlach).

Please change Woody Minnich's phone to read 661-944-2784, **not** 661-994-2784.

Remove 'Emma' from the listing for Michael Green.

10 years ago: Victor Turecek presented a program on "Gymnocalyciums"

20 years ago: The program was given by Dr. Seymour Linden on the plants of Zimbabwe and Kenya.

30 years ago: Chet and Margaret Emery presented "The Noble Agaves." A bus trip to the Tegelberg Nursery was held.

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

Refreshments: Thanks to everyone who brought refreshments to the May meeting! We need lots of you to help provision the coffee break table this month! There are openings on the refreshment sign-up sheet throughout the coming year. The sign up sheet will be at the refreshment table.

Calendar of Events - 2005

- Jun 4th-5th** San Diego C&SS Show and Sale, Balboa Park, Room 101 Casa del Prado, San Diego, CA (619-477-4779).
- Jul 1st-3rd** CSSA Show (2nd-3rd) and Sale (1st-3rd), Huntington Botanical Garden, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA (626-405-2160 or 2277).
- Aug 5th-11th** 31st Biennial CSSA Convention, Scottsdale, AZ. For complete details, visit <http://www.cssainc.org/convent.html>
- Aug 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).
- Sep 3rd** 22nd Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.
- Sep 25th** Long Beach C&SS Annual Auction, Dominguez Adobe, 18127 So. Alameda St, Compton (Dominguez Hills) CA.
- Oct 15th-16th** SGVC&SS Winter Show and Sale, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia CA.

May Plant-of-the-Month Mini Show Results:

Cacti – *Ferocactus and Leuchtenbergia*

Succulent – *Adenium*

Beginner

1 st	Jim Schlegel	F. latispinus	1 st	Jim Schlegel	A. obesum v arabicum
2 nd	Jim Schlegel	L. principis	2 nd	Mari Johnson	A. obesum v arabicum
3 rd	Jamie & Gary Mancuso	F. pottsii v. alamosanus	3 rd	Linda Walpus	A. sp

Intermediate

1 st	Alan Hooker	N. sp.
2 nd	Ron Young	N. turecekianus
3 rd	Dick Tatman	N. uebelmanianus

Advanced

1 st	Carol Maker	F. glaucesens v. nuda		
2 nd	Carol Maker	F. covillei		
2 nd	Rita Gerlach	F. hamatacanthus	3 rd	Rita Gerlach
3 rd	Tom Vermilion	L. principis	3 rd	Rita Gerlach
				A. obesum
				A. obesum

Master

1 st	Charles & Joann Spotts	F. pottsii v. alamosanus
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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

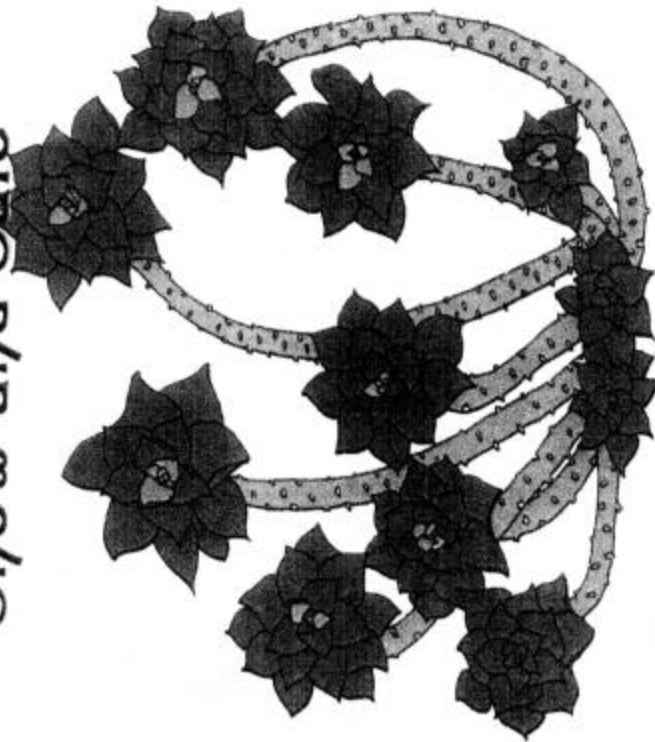
sgvcss@adelphia.net. <http://www.desertsong.com/sgvcss/> is the Club's web site. If you or someone you know has internet access be sure to have a look. The pages were authored and are maintained by Gunnar Eisel who has done a great job in creating an informative and classy site. From either of the above sites you can view, and download, a full-color version of the **COMMUNIQUE!**

If you have a cactus or succulent related event that you'd like to have announced in the **COMMUNIQUE**, please forward the information to the address given 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: San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter Editor, c/o 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 SGVCSS **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.

20th Annual Inter-City
Cactus and Succulent

Show and Sale



August 20 & 21, 2005

Los Angeles County Arboretum

301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia

For information

Tom Glavich 626-798-2430, Harry Fletcher 310-538-4078,

Gene Oster 818-998-9306 Jim Hanna 562-920-3046

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Cacti of the Month June 2005 - *Melocactus* and *Discocactus*

A *Melocactus* was very likely the first cactus seen by a European explorer, and certainly one of the first to be brought back and successfully grown. They were known in English collections by the late 16th century, less than 60 years after Columbus' first voyage.



Melocactus azureus entered by Rosemarie Sauer in the 2003 CSSA Show

Melocactus are immediately recognizable by the large cephalium that develops on mature plants. *Melocactus* are flowerless, globular cacti until they reach maturity. This can take from 6 to 15 years in cultivation, with a greater range in habitat. Once they reach maturity, the body stops growing vigorously (it still grows slowly). Most of the plant energy goes into producing a

cylindrical flowering and fruiting structure known as a cephalium. This is usually white, with short hairs of yellow, orange or red. As the years go by, the cephalium becomes cylindrical, with the bottom compressing and showing enhanced color. The flowers are usually a red-purple, and the fruits are almost always a bright red, to attract birds. With age, the cephalium can grow to 18 inches or more in height, occasionally bifurcating or trifurcating.

Melocactus are native to a large region, Brazil to Southern Mexico, including a good part of the Caribbean. As might be expected, cacti from the tropical regions, particularly coastal regions are sensitive to cold and wet. Cold and wet conditions can cause scarring of the body, which usually appears as brown or tan lesions on the skin. A few of these are unavoidable, but a badly scarred plant quickly becomes unsightly. At the same time, almost all of the *Melocactus* expect high humidity and a higher moisture level than might be expected. Many grow within sight of the ocean, or in some of the more tropical and humid regions of Brazil. They like water, but demand good drainage.

Melocactus are generally solitary, so the only means of propagation is through seeds. Fortunately they produce plenty of seed, and these germinate readily, particularly when the weather is warm. Keep the seedlings protected from direct sun, and moist until fairly large. Although it is several years from seed to a flowering plant, most of the *Melocactus* have magnificent

spination and vividly colored bodies, which make growing them rewarding from seedlings on.

Discocactus are heavily ribbed Brazilian cacti. The genus is quite old, first described in 1837. The name comes from the shape of the body, which tends to be much flatter than tall, at least compared to the other ball like genera (*Parodias* etc.) that share its habitat. *Discocactus* can be found inland in the state of Minas Gerais, and further South in the states of Sao Paulo, Parana, Mato Grosso, and crossing into Paraguay, and even into the Southeastern most state of Bolivia, Santa Cruz. Although very popular in cultivation, many of the species are endangered in the wild.

The beautiful spination, the flat bodies, and the pleasantly fragranced flowers have made this a popular genus, and there are far more names in cultivation than there are true species. The number of species has varied from more than 60 down to 24 in recent publications (1990s), to the currently recognized 7. This is unlikely to be the last word on this attractive genus, so keep your old labels, they may soon be good again. In our shows, most of the generic names are accepted.

As with *Melocactus* they grow in rocky quartzite soil, often protected by nurse shrubs. The soil contains the decaying remains of bromeliads, lichen, and other organic matter, and is acid. The humidity is high, particularly during the growing season.



Discocactus horstii entered by Duke and Kaz Benadom in the 2003 CSSA Show
(Photo T. Nomer)

The distinguishing characteristics of *Discocacti* are their globular to flattened globular shape, a cephalium, and fragrant night blooming flowers. Unlike *Melocactus*, the cephalia stay relatively small, are almost always white, have long wool, and a few dark spines. An important difference between the two is that the onset of a cephalium in *Melocactus* terminates or at least slows vegetative growth. The body no longer gets larger. *Discocacti* have ring-meristems (a ring of growth cells) that surround the cephalium, which allow the body to continue to grow after the cephalium forms.

References

- Cullman, Gotz and Groner, **The Encyclopedia of Cacti**
E. Haustein, **The Cactus Handbook**
J. Pilbeam, **Cacti for the Connoisseur**
Tom Glavich May 2005

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Succulent of the Month June 2005 - *African Pachypodiums*

There are only a few species of *Pachypodium* native to Southern Africa, but they are all wonderful plants. They are among the most collectable of all of the *Pachypodiums*, are readily available, and are easily grown.



All of the species of African *Pachypodium* can be grown out of doors, year around in Southern California, requiring protection only from severe frost and freezing weather. If given good drainage, they can survive the winter in pots, with some species even showing some growth throughout the winter months.

All are easy to grow from seed, with seed usually available either at the April Seed growing Study group, or through the CSSA, or any of the better known seed

houses. They are best planted in warm weather, (May is ideal) one seed to a pot. Germination is quick, and small plants are ready for transplantation before the end of the summer.

Pachypodium bispinosum comes from the southern tip of South Africa. In habitat, most of the caudex of this plant is wedged between and beneath rocks, giving it protection from the sun and predators. Only the relatively small and easily replaced branches stick out. This makes this species easy to bonsai, and dwarf. It can develop an impressive caudex even in cultivation.

Pachypodium lealii is the most tropical of the African species growing into Namibia and Southern Angola on the west coast and in South Africa and southern Zimbabwe on the east coast. It grows at the same latitudes on both sides of the continent, with the east and west side generally being treated as separate subspecies. The east coast species are *Pachypodium lealii ssp. lealii*, and were the first discovered in 1859. They are easy to grow, but require very good drainage to avoid root rot. They form large trees in habitat, to 30 feet tall, but remain small and easy to handle in pots. The west coast subspecies is *Pachypodium lealii ssp. saundersii*. These tend to be smaller, and in habitat, to have a more spherical caudex than a tree form. It is easier to grow than its east coast cousin.

Pachypodium namaquanum is perhaps the most spectacular of all of the African species. Its common name is 'half man', which is what it appears to be on the hillsides of Namaqualand. It can grow to 6 feet or more. It is the defining plant of portions of Namaqualand, just as the *saguaro* is to parts of the Sonoran desert. These often go dormant in the early summer, sometimes losing all their leaves, sometimes keeping some, but showing no growth. They leaf out again in late July, and grow through the winter.



Pachypodium succulentum about 8 years from seed

Pachypodium succulentum is similar in appearance to *Pachypodium bispinosum*. It is a dwarf species that grows at the Southern tip of South Africa, with a habitat that is larger than and encompasses that of *Pachypodium bispinosum*. The flowers and flowering times are different,

and the two do not hybridize in habitat. This species is easy to root from root cuttings. A piece of root is removed, and immediately replanted, with about a quarter inch sticking out above the top dressing. Within a few days to a few months, new leaves will start to form at the tip, shortly followed by new branches and a new caudex. Stem cuttings can also be rooted, though with more difficulty.



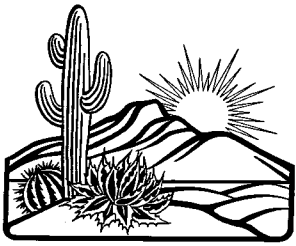
Pachypodium bispinosum

This species is easy to grow from seed, and like *Pachypodium bispinosum* easy to keep small. The *Pachypodium succulentum* shown in the accompanying figure is about 6 years old from seed, and has been in a 1½ inch pot since it was a little over a year old. The entire plant is about 4 inches tall.

References

G. Rowley, *Pachypodium & Adenium*

Tom Glavich April 2005



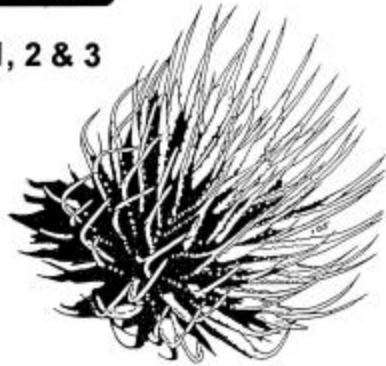
COMMUNIQUE

Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley
Cactus & Succulent Society
c/o Paul & Carol Maker
1245 San Pablo Drive
San Marcos, CA 92078-4816

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America

Cactus and Succulent SHOW & SALE

JULY 1, 2 & 3



SALE: Friday, Saturday & Sunday 10:30 am
SHOW: Saturday & Sunday 10:30am

Free Admission to Show & Sale

Huntington Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Rd. San Marino
For Information Call - (626) 405-2100



Saturday, July 30 &
Sunday July 31, 2005

CACTUS & SUCCULENT SHOW & SALE

Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society



Agave merriamensis variegata 'Joe Hoak'

Saturday 9:00 – 5:00

Sunday 9:00 – 4:00

Free Admission

Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino Calif

For Show Information call Artie (818) 363-3432
Bar-B-Que and Auction at 5:00 July 30th at the
Garden Center. Reservations must be made by July 21st