

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
September 2005 Volume 38 Number 9

Monthly Meeting: September 8th. This month's presentation will be given by one of the club's well-known members, **Karen Ostler**. "Mammillarias", especially the white spined ones, are one of her special interests, and she will describe many of the plants from her collection of over 100 species.

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

CACTI – *Turbinicarpus*

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.

SUCCULENT – *Asclepiads*

Study Group: Meetings are held 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, September 21st. This month's subject: *Echeveria* and Mexican *Sedum*.

Personnel Notices:

Kitty Sabo was voted in as a lifetime member of the SGVCSS at a board meeting held during the Inter-City Show & Sale. Many of the older members said that they were unaware that she wasn't already a member and wanted to correct the situation. A profile of Kitty can be found at www.desertsong.com/sgvcss/sabo1.html or simply go to our website at www.desertsong.com/sgvcss and click on the archives and then on Kitty Sabo. The only change from the profile written several years ago is that Kitty now lives in Templeton, California.

The SGVCSS wishes to extend a warm welcome to its newest members, **Suchada Sataman, Jerry & Ginny Wall and Joseph & Elisa Johnson**. Carefully review the **COMMUNIQUE** and the **Roster** in order to learn about all the many benefits of membership in our club!

Report on the Intercity Show:

The 20th Annual Intercity Show was a great success. We had 29 novice entrants, the highest number in several years. The Open Class entrants, although fewer in number, entered the largest number of plants. The quality of the plants shown was extremely high, and the quality of the plants ending up on the Trophy Table was almost overwhelming. We had about 1400 plants in the show, down a bit from the last two years. The

number of cacti, compared to the number of succulents is beginning to increase. It has been going the other way for several years. It was a thrill to see some of the cacti classes full again.

The Sale was great, with many plants offered and sold. Our sales volume was the highest on record. Everyone attending the Saturday night Dinner and Auction had a great time. The auction plants were truly wonderful, and I'm sure we'll get to see them in future years on the show tables.

The show committee would like to thank everyone who helped set up, those who displayed, and those who volunteered for all of the activities required to produce a great show like this. Putting on a large plant show like the Intercity Show requires the cooperation and work of over 100 people. We're all lucky to have these people supporting the club.

Mark Wourms, the CEO of the Arboretum, attended, and was extremely impressed. He brought his children to see and buy plants. He expressed his desire to have the show return, to a *renovated* Ayres Hall! The Arboretum staff has been very supportive over the years, and they regard this show as one of the highlights of the year.

Huntington Symposium Winners: The club annually selects two club members to attend, free of charge, the Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Plants Symposium, to be held this year on September 3rd. This years' winners, determined by raffle at the last meeting, are Victor Turecek and Lorraine Lutz. They will report on the symposium during the October meeting.

Refreshments: Thanks to everyone who brought refreshments to the August meeting! Everyone else is encouraged to bring in provisions for this month's meeting. Lets keep up our tradition of provisioning a tasty and tasteful refreshment table!

10 years ago: Michael Vassar presented "Pelargoniums and Oxalis." New Members included Frank and Jan Depew.

20 years ago: The monthly presentation was by Victor Turecek.

30 years ago: The monthly meeting was the "Annual Symposium" where four members discussed everything you always wanted to know about fungus, damping off, gardening, etc.. Sick and questionable plants along with those whose ancestry was in doubt were invited.

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

The Club Winter Cactus Show and Sale: Our 12th ANNUAL WINTER SHOW is just six weeks away and now is the time to get your plants ready! This is our last major event of the year to raise money for field trips, books and other events so be sure and promote the show by passing out flyers and telling friends and neighbors. The show dates are October 15th and 16th and it will be held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia. See below for the show schedule. Entry tags will be available at the next meeting and at the September study group.

Set-up: We will need **plenty of helpers** on Thursday morning (8:30 am) October 13th to set up tables and get the show & sales area ready by noon! Show and sale plants can then start coming in on Thursday from noon till 9:00 pm. Remember...all show plants must be in by Friday October 14th at 4:00 pm.

Clerks and helpers will be needed Friday evening, October 14th during judging. This is a great opportunity to hear what the judges are saying and to learn more about the show. If you would like to be part of the judging process, be sure and sign up at the next meeting! Can't make the next meeting but want to sign up? Give Vince a call at (714) 738-1422 or email cactoholic@sbcglobal.net.

The Show Dinner will be Saturday evening, October 15th at 6:00 pm at Ayers Hall in the show area. Dinner will be a special meal, prepared by Richard Jones Pit BBQ Catering. The menu will include two meats; Beef Brisket (cooked for 16 hours) and Pork Spare Ribs. It will be accompanied by 4 side dishes including BBQ beans, Green Beans & Almonds, Mixed Green Salad and Seasonal Vegetable Medley. Also included are Rolls, Butter, BBQ Sauce, Beverage, and Apple and Peach Cobbler for dessert. Total cost is \$17.50 per person. There will be an awards presentation, auction and lots of fun! Please be sure to sign up at the next meeting! All reservations and payments must be in by Thursday, October 13th so the caterer will know how many people to prepare for. Please reserve your seat with Amber Jones at the next meeting!

2004 Trophy Winners... reminder, if you won a trophy at last years show, please be sure and have your name engraved on it before the show, and return it to the show for presentation to this year's winner.

Our club mini shows have been outstanding and I want to encourage everyone to show plants, especially our new members! See you next meeting...

Vince Basta, Show Chairman

Calendar of Events - 2005

- 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.

Plant-of-the-Month Mini Show Results for August

Cacti – Your Favorite

Beginner

1 st	John Matthews	Ariocarpus Fissuratus
2 nd	Lorraine Lutz	Melocactus azureus
3 rd	Evelyn Maxwell	Cephalocereus senilis
3 rd	Raquel Castellanos	Mammillaria species

Succulent – Your Favorite

1 st	Alex Abrahamian	Bursera simplicifolia
2 nd	Alex Abrahamian	Jatropha podagrica
3 rd	Evelyn Stevens	Hoya "Rope"

Intermediate

1 st	Phil Skonieczki	Astrophytum Myriostigma
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1 st	Jean Mullens	Alluaudia madagascariensis
1 st	Alan Hooker	Operculicarya decaryi

2 nd	Alan Hooker	Pachypodium bispinosum
3 rd	Dick Tatman	Euphorbia francosii
3 rd	Dick Tatman	Sansevieria pinguicula

Advanced

1 st	Bill Gerlach	Ferocactus stainesii	1 st	Tom Vermilion	Lithpos fulviceps
2 nd	Carol Maker	Escobaria zilziana	2 nd	Rita Gerlach	Hoya carnosa tricolor
3 rd	Carol Maker	Notocactus schlosseri	3 rd	Rita Gerlach	Dyckia species
			3 rd	Rita Gerlach	Haworthia cymbiformis

Master

1 st	Vince Basta	Echinocereus baileyi	1 st	Vince Basta	Cyphostemma betiformis
2 nd	Vince Basta	Ariocarpus scapharostus	2 nd	Vince Basta	Euphorbia gymnocalyciodes
3 rd	Vince Basta	Mammillaria crucigera	2 nd	Vince Basta	Pachypodium succulentum

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. Note that <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 full of helpful links. A full-color version of the **COMMUNIQUE** can be viewed, and downloaded, from the site.

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.

The San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society

presents

The Twelfth Annual Winter Show

October 15th & 16th, 2005

At the Los Angeles County Arboretum

301 N. Baldwin Avenue Arcadia, CA (across from Santa Anita Race Track)

SHOW SCHEDULE

Set-up: Thursday October 13th from 8:30 am till noon (set-up tables, show & sales area) Exhibitors & sellers may bring in plants on Thursday from noon till 9:00 pm.

Set-up: Friday October 14th from 9:00 am till 4:00 pm.

Judging: Friday October 14th from 5:00 pm till 10:00 pm.

Take-down: Sunday, October 16th from 5:00 pm till close

Pre-sale: the sales area will be open for workers and participants from 3:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m. on Friday the 14th. Plants bought during pre-sale must be paid for and removed from the show no later than 9:00 p.m. Friday the 14th or they will be placed back in the sales area.

Horticultural Classifications

Competitive entries shall be as follows:

NOVICE: Exhibitor has won no more than 40 blue ribbons total in recognized C&S shows.

ADVANCED: Exhibitor has won 41 or more blue ribbons. No commercial sellers.

OPEN: Exhibitor must have won 80 or more blue ribbons or be a commercial seller of C&S plants.

All entrants must register their total entries in the show registrar prior to placement on tables.

DIVISION 1 INDIVIDUAL POTTED SPECIMENS, CACTI

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 1 | <i>Ariocarpus</i> up to 5" | 21 | <i>Mammillaria</i> hooked up to 6" |
| 2 | <i>Ariocarpus</i> single over 5" | 22 | <i>Mammillaria</i> hooked over 6" |
| 3 | <i>Ariocarpus</i> cluster over 5" | 23 | <i>Mammillaria</i> w/o hooks single up to 6" |
| 4 | <i>Astrophytum</i> | 24 | <i>Mammillaria</i> w/o hooks single over 6" |
| 5 | <i>Aztekium, Pelecyphora, Epithelantha</i> | 25 | <i>Mammillaria</i> w/o hooks cluster up to 5" |
| 6 | <i>Borzicatus, Matucana, Submatucana, Oroya</i> | 26 | <i>Mammillaria</i> w/o hooks cluster 5 to 10" |
| 7 | <i>Blossfeldia, Frailea</i> | 27 | <i>Mammillaria</i> w/o hooks cluster over 10" |
| 8 | <i>Buiningia, Uebelmannia</i> | 28 | <i>Melocactus</i> |
| 9 | Columnar - Ceroid types (N or S American) | 29 | <i>Notocactus, Parodia, Weingartia</i> |
| 10 | <i>Obregonia, Strombocactus, Encephalocarpus</i> | 30 | <i>Opuntia</i> (all <i>Opuntioideae</i>) |
| 11 | <i>Copiapoa</i> | 31 | <i>Pediocactus, Sclerocactus, Turbinicarpus</i> |
| 12 | <i>Coryphantha, Escobaria, Gymnocactus, Neobesseya, Neolloydia, Ortegocactus</i> | 32 | <i>Rebutia, Medioblobivia</i> |
| 13 | <i>Discocactus</i> | 33 | <i>Sulcorebutia</i> |
| 14 | <i>Echinocereus</i> up to 5" | 34 | <i>Stenocactus (Echinofossulocactus)</i> |
| 15 | <i>Echinocereus</i> over 5" | 35 | <i>Thelocactus</i> |
| 16 | <i>Echinopsis, Lobivia, Acanthocalycium</i> | 36 | Epiphytic Cacti (<i>Aporocactus, Hatiora</i> , etc.) |
| 17 | <i>Echiocactus, Ferocactus, Hamatocactus</i> | 37 | Any other genus |
| 18 | <i>Eriosyce (Neoporteria, Neochilenia, Pyrrhocactus, Horridocactus)</i> | 38 | Variegated Cacti |
| 19 | <i>Gymnocalycium</i> up to 5" | 39 | Crested Cacti (fan-shaped growth) |
| 20 | <i>Gymnocalycium</i> over 5" | 40 | Montrose (multiple, irregular, growth centers) |
| | | 41 | Seed grown by exhibitors up to 5 years |
| | | 42 | Miniature Cacti (3" maximum pot size) |
| | | 43 | Cacti Collections of 5 - 12 plants |

DIVISION 2 INDIVIDUAL POTTED SPECIMENS, SUCCULENTS

***Aizoaceae (Mesembrianthemaceae)* family**

- 44 *Lithops*
- 45 *Conophytum*
- 46 Other genera - with prominent stems/roots:
Aloinopsis, Faucaria, Mestoklema, etc.
- 47 Other genera - without prominent stems/roots:
Dinteranthus, Lapidaria, etc.

***Asphodelaceae* family**

- 48 *Aloe* under 6"
- 49 *Aloe* 6" and over
- 50 *Gasteria*
- 51 *Haworthia & Astroloba* under 5"
- 52 *Haworthia & Astroloba* 5" and over

***Apocynaceae* family**

- 67 *Adenium & Plumeria*
- 68 *Pachypodium* - African
- 69 *Pachypodium* - Madagascan

***Asclepiadaceae* family**

- 70 *Fockea, Raphionacme, Brachystelma*
- 71 *Caralluma, Hoodia, Huernia, Pseudolithos, Stapelia, Trichocaulon*, etc.
- 72 Other *Asclepiadaceae*: *Ceropegia, Sarcostemma, Hoya*, etc.

Succulents in Other Families

- 73 ***Agavaceae***: *Agave, Nolina, Yucca*
- 74 ***Asteraceae***: *Senecio, Othonna*

Crassulaceae family

- 53 *Adromischus*
- 54 *Cotyledon, Tylecodon*

- 55 *Crassula, Kalanchoe*
- 56 *Dudleya*
- 57 *Echeveria*

- 58 Other *Crassulaceae*: *Aeonium, Pachyphytum*
Graptopetalum, Monanthes, Sedum,
Tacitus, Orostachys, etc.

Euphorbiaceae Family

- Euphorbia* - species endemic to Madagascar
- 59 Caudiciform or Geophyte (*capsaintmariensis, cylindrifolia* v. *tubifera*, etc.)
 - 60 Other Madagascan (*decaryi, milli*, etc.)
- Euphorbia* - species not endemic to Madagascar
- 61 Caudiciform (*knuthii, squarrosa*, etc.)
 - 62 Medusa type (*esculenta, gorgonis*, etc.)
 - 63 Stem type (*abdelkuri, obesa, suzannae*, etc.)
- Other genera of *Euphorbiaceae*:
- 64 *Jatropha, Monadenium, Pedilanthus*, etc.

Geraniaceae family

- 65 *Pelargonium*
- 66 *Sarcocaulon*

- 75 **Bromeliaceae**: *Abromeitiella, Dyckia*, etc.
- 76 **Burseraceae**: *Bursera, Commiphora*
- 77 **Didiereaceae**: *Alluaudia, Decarya, Didierea*
- 78 **Dracaenaceae**: *Sansevieria* (may include variegates)
- 79 **Moraceae**: *Dorstenia* (enter *Ficus* in 83 or 84)
- 80 **Passifloraceae**: *Adenia*
- 81 **Portulacaceae**: *Anacampseros, Avonia, Ceraria*
- 82 **Vitaceae**: *Cissus, Cyphostemma*

Pachycauls, Caudiciforms & Geophytes

- Adansonia, Bombax, Chorisia, Cucurbitaceae, Dioscorea, Fouquieria Pachycormus*, etc.
- 83 Pot size under 8"
 - 84 Pot size 8" and over

 - 85 Any other genus
 - 86 Variegated Succulents
 - 87 Crested Succulents (fan-shaped growth)
 - 88 Monstrose (multiple, irregular, growth centers)
 - 89 Seed grown by exhibitors up to 5 years
 - 90 Miniature (3" maximum pot size)
 - 91 Collection of 5 - 12 plants

DIVISION 3 ARRANGEMENTS

- 92 Dish gardens (miniature scene)
- 93 Planters (group of the same or assorted plants)
- 94 Bonsai (Succulent Media of Living Art)

DIVISION 4 DISPLAYS

- 95 Individual display
- 96 Commercial display
- 97 Educational display

DIVISION 5 ALLIED INTERESTS

- 98 Photography
- 99 Art Work & Handicrafts

SHOW RULES

- 1) Showers must be members of the SGVC&SS
- 2) Entries must be in the possession of the exhibitor for at least 6 months. Artificially propagated plant entries are encouraged. They must be clean (no weeds and debris), healthy (no insects, disease, and pesticide odor) and dry (to keep tables and table coverings from being ruined). Plant labels should be removed. Exhibitors are responsible for placing entry cards with exhibits prior to judging. The show committee may remove any entry which detracts from the show or jeopardizes the health of other entries.
- 3) Plants in Division I & II must be individually potted specimens. **Pot size** refers to the inside diameter of the pot at soil level (Irregular pots; the average diameter). **Cristate & Monstrose** plants should appear only in

their specific classes. **Miniature** refers to the intrinsic characteristic of the species; ie., a small, mature plant; not an immature, or stunted plant. A collection should be of individually potted, identified plants of one genus or some unifying theme.

4) Depending on the number of entries, prior to the judging, the Show Committee may combine or divide categories and rearrange entries. The Show Room is open to authorized people only during judging. Entries must remain until the end of the show.

5) Entries are judged on: Condition, Size & Maturity & Difficulty of Culture (70%); Staging (25%); and Nomenclature (5%). Entries are judged against **perfection**; awards are given only if the judges, whose decisions are final, believe they are merited.

6) The Society and Show Committee will take due care to safeguard entries but cannot be held responsible for damage to, or loss of, plants or other property.

AWARDS

First, second and third place ribbons may be awarded in each class in Divisions 1 through 5. In addition 18 rosettes will be awarded for outstanding entries in both Divisions 1 & 2. For Sweepstakes calculations 1st place = 6 pts, 2nd place = 3 pts and 3rd place = 1 pt. Rosettes will be tie-breakers.

TROPHIES

Best Cactus (all categories), donated by *Cactus Data Plants*

Best Succulent (all categories), donated by *Steve Crider*

Sweepstakes overall; **High Points Cacti** (all categories); **High Points Succulents** (all categories).

Other trophies awarded as perpetuals include:

Best Agave donated by *Darlene Osborn*, **Best Ariocarpus**, **Best Collection**, The VIRGINIA

SHAMBEAU trophy for **Best Crassulaceae** donated by the *SGVC&SS*, **Best Dorstenia** donated by *Tom &*

Carol Loehman, **Best Epiphytic Cacti** donated by *Rainbow Gardens*, **Best Euphorbia**, **Best**

Gymnocalycium, **Best Haworthia**, **Best Mammillaria** donated by *Woody & Kathy Minnich*, **Best Mutant**

- includes variegates, crests or monstrose donated by *Ken Felton*, **Best Opuntia** donated by *Jean Mullens*,

Best Pelargonium-Sarcocaulon donated by *Arid Lands Greenhouses*, **Best Rebutia-Sulcorebutia**, **Best**

Winter Growing Succulent donated by *David & Eileen Tufenkian* and **Best Pachypodium** donated by *Bill*

Hagblom and *Vince Basta*.

Show Chairman: Vince Basta (714) 738-1422 **Sales Chairman:** Jim Hanna (562) 920-3046

Treasurer: Amber Jones (951) 827-5220 **Publicity:** Bill Gerlach (626) 332-8008

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Cacti of the Month September 2005 - *Turbinicarpus*



Turbinicarpus valdezianus flower entered in the 2003 CSSA Show by Bill Hagblom

Photo T. Nomer

Turbinicarpus is a small (but growing) genus of small plants from Northeastern and Central Mexico. It is one of several closely related genera, *Neolloydia*, and *Gymnocactus*, and *Strombocactus* being the ones most frequently mentioned. In many books, some of the plants listed below will appear as either *Neolloydia* or *Gymnocactus*. The exact relation of these genera is still being worked out and the disagreements between botanists are substantial. New species have been discovered and named in the past decade; seeds and plants of these are just becoming available.

All of the *Turbinicarpus* species are worth growing. They are all small, most full sized in collections at an inch or two. A few will clump readily, and make impressive show specimens, as shown below, but still remain manageable. A collection of all the species and varieties could easily fit on a table top.

In habitat, *Turbinicarpus* usually grow under nurse plants, generally shrubs that offer some protection from the worst of the mid day sun. *Turbinicarpus* have large tuberous roots, which are their primary food and water storage source in times of drought. Over much of their habitat, rain falls during the summer, and growth is most rapid during this period. They can take lots of heat.

Turbinicarpus are fairly easy to grow, if attention is paid to their life cycle. They are dormant in winter, from November through mid March. As they begin growth, watering has to start slowly. If too much water and fertilizer is given at once, it's possible to burst the skin of the plant. Once growth is going (April and after) water freely. During very hot weather in the summer, the plants sometimes go dormant again for a short period. Attention has to be paid to watering again.

If a head splits, all is not lost. The entire head can be removed, and the top of the tuberous root left half an inch above the soil. It will usually start two or three new heads. Removing a head is also a great way for vegetative propagation. *Turbinicarpus* can be raised from seed. They are slow for the first year, but reasonable size plants can be grown in a year or two, and flowers the size of the plant will appear by the second year. Producing clumps as shown above will take quite a bit longer.

Terrific Turbs :

Turbinicarpus krainzianus (a.k.a. *Turbinicarpus pseudomacrochele* v. *krainzianus*) is almost always clumping, as shown above. From Queretaro, it has white flowers with yellow centers.

Turbinicarpus laui stays small, rarely more than an inch and a half. It has woolly areoles and a wool crown. From San Luis Potosi it has pinkish flowers.



Turbinicarpus lophophoroides

Turbinicarpus lophophoroides sometimes remains solitary, but generally clusters with age. It resembles the genus *Lophophora*. Careful watering away from the body of the plant will allow the areoles to keep their wool. The white crown will offset the white flowers. From San Luis Potosi.

Turbinicarpus pseudopectinatus has small sets of comb like spikes at each areole. It usually remains solitary, and grows to two inches or so high and an inch in diameter. From Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon it has large pink flowers.

Turbinicarpus schmiedickeanus is a very variable species, with at least half a dozen named varieties. This species has the largest spines of any of the *Turbinicarpus*, with the spines often as large as the body of the plant. The named variations differ in the width, color and length of the spines. The spines of this species are hollow with narrow cracks. Water condensing on the spines runs though the spines and is used by the growing plant. This is a widespread species from Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosi, and Nuevo Leon.



Turbinicarpus valdezianus flower entered in the 2003 CSSA Show by Bill Hagblom
Photo T. Nomer

Turbinicarpus valdezianus is another small bodied pectinate species with red and white striped flowers. In this species, the pectinate spines are not in the two neat rows as in *T. pseudopectinatus*, but are more spherical, and almost mashed.

References

- Cullman, Gotz & Groner **The Encyclopedia of Cacti**
Preston-Mafham, Rod & Ken **Cacti, The Illustrated Dictionary**
Tom Glavich August 2005

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

Succulent of the Month September 2005 - *Asclepiads*

Principal Genera

Brachystelma
Caralluma
Ceropegia
Cynanchum
Duvalia
Echinopsis
Edithcolea
Fockea
Hoodia
Hoya
Huernia
Huerniopsis
Karimbolea
Orbea
Orbeanthus
Orbeopsis
Pachycymbium
Piaranthus
Pseudolithos
Pseudopectinaria
Raphionacme
Sarcostemma
Seyrigia
Stapelia
Stapeliopsis
Stapelianthus
Tavaresia
Trichocaulon
Whitesloania

The *Asclepiadaceae* or Milkweed Family is a large family of succulent and non succulent plants. The family has a wealth of growth forms, rivaling and possibly exceeding that found in the *Cactaceae*, *Crassulaceae* and *Euphorbiaceae* families. Forms run from trailing vines, to weak stemmed sprawlers, to cactus like succulents, to caudiciforms. New species are still being discovered in South and Tropical Africa, and the family will continue to grow. The flowers of all of the *Asclepiadaceae* are five sided, and complex, with most suited to the activities of a single pollinator, usually a fly.



Hoodia macrantha

The cactus like forms include *Hoodia* and *Trichocaulon*. Most of the *Hoodia* have a similar appearance, with soft spines. Their flowers are simple, open, and moderately odoriferous. The most outstanding quality is their resemblance to pink, purple, gray or brown radar dishes. They are easy to grow, but need heat, and protection from excess moisture in the winter. They can be propagated from cuttings fairly easily. *Hoodia gordonii* and *Hoodia bainii* are often available, and are strong growers.

The weak stemmed sprawlers such as *Caralluma*, *Huernia*, *Orbea*, and *Stapelia* are all grown for their spectacular flowers. The flowers of these



Stapelia glanduliflora

genera are all very complex, with a central raised zone, and very complex color patterns. They generally have an odor of rotting meat, and many have small hairs that move in wind, simulating the hairs that grow on rotting meat. All of the weak stemmed species are easy to propagate from cuttings. A cutting is taken, allowed to dry, and simply placed on top of damp potting soil. Cuttings root in just a few days. All of these species are also the victim of a black rot that can reduce a plant from a show quality specimen to a pot of black slime in just a few days. The fungus

causing this black rot travels through the plant extremely quickly, and the plant is usually

doomed by the time the problem is noticed. Many growers propagate two or three cuttings of every species, so they will have a spare, when the inevitable happens. There are literally dozens of great species in this group, and you can hardly go wrong, regardless of what you grow. Favorite species are *Stapelia glanduliflora*, shown above. *Caralluma socotrana*, while a challenge to grow is particularly beautiful. *Huernia pendula* has dark purple flowers, and is a rapid grower.



Fockea edulis

The caudiciform genera, *Fockea*, *Brachystelma*, some of the *Ceropegia*, and *Raphionacme* are all really vines. The caudex is generally below ground in habitat. *Fockea edulis*, shown at left is one of the most popular. Easily raised from seed, an impressive caudex can be grown in just a few years, if it is left below soil level in the pot. The *Fockea* are all easy to grow, perfectly happy outdoors, even with temperatures near freezing. *Raphionacme* are a bit more temperamental, and rot more quickly, but as long as they are kept from being cold and wet, will do fine outdoors. *Brachystelma* and *Ceropegia* on the other hand are much harder to keep. *Brachystelma* rot easily and quickly when either too cold or too wet. *Brachystelma* have the worst smelling flowers of all the Asclepiads. *Ceropegia* have the most complex, with the petals forming a small enclosure that limits access to only a few pollinators.

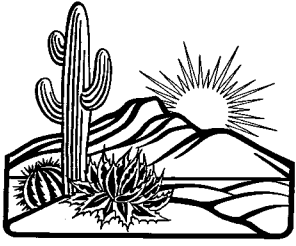


Pseudolithos migiurtinus

Pseudolithos and *Whitesloania* are two rare genera. *Pseudolithos* is brain-like in appearance, as shown at left. *Whitesloania* resembles in shape an *Astrophytum*. These are wonderful, complex plants, with small flowers coming directly from the body. *Pseudolithos* is generally available, *Whitesloania*, rarely so. *Pseudolithos migiurtinus*, shown at left is actually fairly forgiving and grows well in a greenhouse. It needs protection from cold and damp, but doesn't like to get bone dry, even in winter.

Photos by T. Nomer at the 1999 Intercity Show

Tom Glavich August 2005



COMMUNIQUE

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