



*San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus & Succulent Society*

**COMMUNIQUE**

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

January 2009 - Volume 42, Number 1

**January Meeting:  
Thursday,  
January 8 at 7:30 pm**

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

**Mini-Show Plants:**

**CACTUS:**  
Mammillaria Clusters

**SUCCULENT:**  
Othonna & Senecio

**Study Group:**

Study group will meet on Wednesday,  
January 21st in the Palm Room,  
Los Angeles County Arboretum at  
7:30 pm. The topic will be:

**Haworthias**

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**President's Message**

Well here it is, 2009 already. Do you remember Y2K? How weird any date sounded when you said it out loud? Well, look out because it's almost the Teens!

I have been given the honor to serve as the President of the San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society. I'm very hopeful that we can continue the rapid growth of the club along with the great quality of programs and activities that we all enjoy. I look forward to interesting speakers on subjects dear to all of us. Tim Jackson's hands-on presentation on Mesembs this month will be very educational. Study Group is already starting an interesting new trend with the Haworthia Hoe Down (Jan. 21). We're booking reservations at Lotus Land in the summer.

(continued on page 3)

**This Month's Program**

Our speaker for January is Tim Jackson. Tim is a former President of the Club and is a very active grower of those little succulent plants from Southern Africa known as Mesembs. He will give a workshop presentation on the Aizoaceae family of plants with emphasis on conophytums. This should be an extremely interesting program. With any kind of luck, Tim can teach us all how to keep these little beauties alive.

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## Study Group

### Wednesday, January 21st • Genus Haworthia

The study group is an informal, hands-on learning experience that is fun for expert and novice alike. Come and learn from the experience of others. We are always happy to share our knowledge.

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Palm Room at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

If you are interested in joining some fellow members for dinner prior to the Study Group, see Camille for details.

## 2008 Mini-Show Points Winners

Here are the Top Ten –

Barbara Nolan	257 Points
Rita Gerlach	232
Frank Nudge	165
Horace Birgh & Tommy Dodson	141
Calvin Arakaki	138
Cindy Arakaki	130
Jim Hanna	124
Tom Glavich	114
Buck & Yvonne Hemenway	104
Alan Hooker	100

## Refreshment Signup

These club members have signed up to provide refreshments at our January meeting.

**Una Yeh**  
**Norma Soto**  
**Alan Hooker**

The first three club members who sign up and bring refreshments each month will receive a **FREE** plant as thanks.

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Be sure to take a look at the Club's website [www.sgvcss.com](http://www.sgvcss.com). If you wish to receive your **COMMUNIQUE** on-line please notify the editor at [yvonne@pricklypalace.com](mailto:yvonne@pricklypalace.com).

## Book Review

### *High and Dry: Gardening with Cold Hardy Dryland Plants*

Reviewed by: Karen Ostler

Rob't Nold, Ill. by Cindy Nelson-Nold  
 Timber Press 2008 420pgs.

This book is concerned primarily with plants; including cacti and succulents; native to North America, west of the Mississippi River, north into Canada and south into Mexico, with the focus on those climates that provide, as the sub-title implies, cold hardy plants.

Gardening in Denver, Colorado, Mr. Nold has an intimate knowledge of the requirements needed for such plants. His selections are not only cold hardy, but truly drought tolerant as well, since he does not as a rule provide supplemental water and his plants must not only survive but thrive on what nature provides.

This book is broken into four sections: Rock Garden Plants, Cacti, Yuccas and their Kin, and Shrubs.

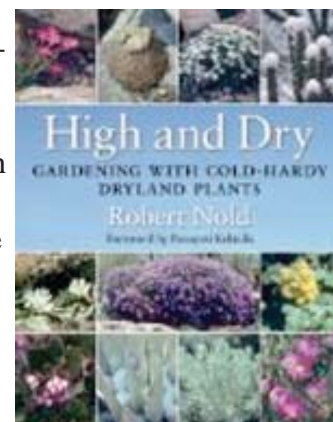
Although geared to rock garden plants, or for those slightly disdainful, "belly plants", his descriptions of these diminutive jewels are delightful and he writes with a dry, disparaging wit.

The sections on cacti and yuccas are good; he has an acknowledged passion for opuntias. The section on shrubs gives a good selection of nice plants suitable for a native garden.

There are color photos throughout, never enough, and quite fine illustrations.

The only complaint is that there is no list of sources for some of the more exotic tiny charmers he describes.

This book is a good resource for those who live at higher elevations and are attempting to garden using water wisely, providing both information and entertainment.



**President's Message**

(continued from page 1)

Our Holiday Dinner and Auction were a great success. Thanks to Mike Buckner and Peter Walkowiak for helping. Tommy Dodson did a great job coordinating the dinner and all of the gift exchange plants that changed hands are being enjoyed by their new owners. The food was over the top delicious as

usual.

Don't forget two important additional Saturday dates in January. January 17 is the Desert Forum at the Huntington Botanical Gardens. Free if you wear your badge or present your CSSA membership card. January 31 is the Aloe Walk at the Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center. Both events start at 9:30 AM.

See you at the meeting!

**Buck Hemenway**

**2008 Holiday Party and Auction**



Thanks to Tommy Dodson for putting on a great party.



I wonder what our auctioneers Peter Walkowiak and Mike Buckner are discussing?



Our 2008 President Tom Vermillion with some important announcements.



Plenty of delicious food for all.

**SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2009**

Buck Hemenway, President  
Horace Birgh, Vice President  
Rita Gerlach, Treasurer  
Anne Keegan, Secretary  
Manny Rivera, Board Member and Winter Show Chair

Cindy Arakaki, Board Member  
John Matthews, Board Member  
Phil Skonieczki, Board Member  
Karen Ostler, Board Member  
Ralph Massey, Board Member  
Tom Glavich, Intercity Show Chair

Jim Hanna, CSSA Affiliate Representative and Plant Sales Chair  
Wood Minnich, Program Chair  
Bill Gerlach, Membership Chair  
Liz Alba, Library Chair  
Yvonne Hemenway, Newsletter Editor



## 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. If you don't have any of these species of plants you can learn about them at the meeting.

### CACTUS OF THE MONTH — 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, straight sharp spines, or feathery soft spines.

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 white and densely spined species want full sun, and do best on a table unprotected (except from pro-longed heavy rain) all year long. 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 (pure pumice is even better). 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. Show quality plants can often be grown in just 4 or 5 years, and entries can be ready for seedling classes in as little as 6 months. Best results are obtained when the seeds are started in late March to late May.

#### Clumping Mammillaria



*Mammillaria baumii* is a densely spined species with wonderful large yellow flowers. It is easy to grow, and makes an impressive specimen in a modest size pot. It comes from Tamaulipas, Mexico

*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 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 spin-est. It comes from Queretaro Mexico.

*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 duwei*, shown above, is from central Mexico. At first it is slow to pup, but persistence and patience pays off.

*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 tend to ignore this easy grower, even though there are a variety of forms and colors, many of which can make a spectacular plant.



*Mammillaria standleyii*

*Mammillaria standleyii* can be found as either a single or clumping species. In cultivation, clumping forms are much more common. It is a rapid grower.

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

*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 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**

Tom Glavich December 2008

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH — *OTHONNA* and *SENECIO*

*Othonna* and *Senecio* are two genera in the Asteraceae (Compositae) family, a distinction that they share with such common plants as sunflowers, asters and dandelions. *Othonna* are confined to Southern Africa, with most all species native to South Africa, while *Senecio* is a very large and cosmopolitan genus, with species in most of the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. Both genera have succulent and non-succulent members.

All of the Asteraceae are distinguished by a flower head that appears to be a single large flower, but is really a cluster of many smaller flowers (florets) protected (and advertised to passing pollinators) by colorful bracts. The flowers of both *Othonna* and *Senecio* show obvious resemblance to dandelions and sunflowers. The seeds are held in loose clusters, and scattered by the wind, just as with dandelions.

Both genera are relatively easy to grow, requiring only modest attention to growing periods, and tolerant of some out of season watering, with-in reason. Most species are winter growers, losing their leaves in the heat of summer, and leafing out again in early fall.

Seed is occasionally available, and germinates readily. It's best planted in mid fall, to allow maximum growth and development of water storage tissue before the first summer. Propagation from cuttings is also easy, particularly for *Senecio*. Production of a typical caudex for species with long, thin branches is best done by burying and rooting a branch while still attached to the mother plant.

Outstanding *Othonnas*

*Othonna euphorbioides* has leaves the shape and color of *Euphorbia bupleurifolia*, and a body shape that is also similar. It is one of several *Othonna* that have species names identifying the genus that they most closely resemble.

*Othonna herrei* is probably the best of the species, with the caudex covered with knobby protrusions resulting from persistent leaf bases.

*Othonna retrorsa* comes from Cape Province, SA. It is a small species, with caudex two to three inches in tall and an inch in diameter. It can reach half that size in a year from seed.

Show-worthy *Senecios*

*Senecio fulgens* makes a magnificent caudex, slowly filling whatever pot it is put in. It needs at least yearly pruning to keep the growth compact. Old leaves can

be ugly, and should be removed.

*Senecio cedrorum* is a species from Madagascar. It has vertical leaves, looking somewhat like the pads of a small *Opuntia*. The leaves are a glabrous blue, with darker green veins.

*Senecio rowleyanus* has the common name, “String of Pearls”, and is a well known house plant. The leaves are globose, hanging on long prostrate stems. The blooms have a wonderful spicy (clove-like) scent. It’s often used as a hanging plant.

*Senecio saginata* is one of several *Senecio* that were once in the genus *Kleinia*, which has since been absorbed into *Senecio*. This species shows convergent evolution, with a body form similar to some of the cylindrical *Opuntia*. The body is a medium green, with darker green patterns that look as if they were spines drawn on with ink. *Senecio saginata* is native to Oman. Most of the similar species (*S. pendulus*, *S. desfliersii*) are native to Western Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

*Senecio nykiensis v. hildebrandtii* is a similar species with tuberous roots that can be raised for display, at least for awhile.

It goes into a hard dormancy in the summer, losing all leaves. Above ground roots will get desiccated, and should be covered. The flower is spectacular, and the leaves are nearly as interesting, thick and well patterned.



## References:

Gordon Rowley, **Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents**  
Hermann Jacobsen, **A Handbook of Succulent Plants**

Tom Glavich December 2008





Thank you to Tom Glavich for putting together the Plant of the Month article. If you would like to participate by submitting a plant of the month write up for the **Communique**, please contact Tom Glavich at [tglavich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tglavich@sbcglobal.net).



**\*\* Note \*\* Membership Dues are Due!** Your Club membership renewal can be paid at the next meeting or mailed direct to Bill Gerlach, 719 S. Albertson, Covina, CA 91723. \$15 regular membership or \$20 if you request the Communique by mail. Checks to **SGVCSS**.

## *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

**January 17**, 9:30 am to 4:40 pm — DESERT FORUM at the Huntington Botanical Gardens. CSSA members and affiliate clubs are invited to a free day at the Desert Garden including a tour with knowledgeable staff, plant sale, and forum led by Director of the Gardens, Jim Folsom. Wear your name badge!

**January 21**, 7:30 pm — Study Group, HAWORTHIA HOEDOWN and TRADING POST. Come with your favorite plants to show off, trade or to donate to those who want to start collecting them. Palm Room of the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

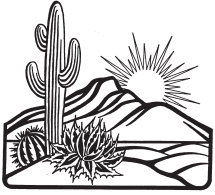
**January 31**, 9:30 am - 11:00 am — 9th Annual ALOE WALK at the Jurupa Mountain Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hill Drive, Glen Avon, CA. Phone 951-685-5818 for directions. The 6 acre succulent gardens at the Center are the result of planting done in the late 1960's and early 1970's. We will tour among the many specimens of blooming aloes and discuss their wide ranging natural habitats and how they survive in our Inland Empire climate. This event is Free.

**February 14**, 9:0 am to 4:00 pm — San Diego Winter Show and Sale, Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.

**March 7 and 8**, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society 2009 Show and Sale at the South Coast Botanical Gardens, 263 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verde Peninsula. For more information contact Vendor Coordinator Jim Hanna at 562-920-3046 or Show Chair Jim Gardner at 310-378-1953.

## 2009 Plant-of-the Month and Study Group Topics

	Cacti of the Month	Succulent of the Month	Study Group
Jan.	Clustering Mammillaria	Othonna & Senecio	Haworthias
Feb.	Ceroids	Gasteria	Gasteria
Mar.	U.S. Native Cacti	U.S. Native Succulents	Mexico Road Trip with Vince & Rene
Apr.	Echinocereus	Haworthia	Spring Seed Workshop
May	Echinopsis	Echeveria	Vegetative Propagation Workshop
June	Cephalium bearing Cacti	Adenium	Astrophytum
July	Eriosyce	Cyphostemma	Staging
Aug.	Favorite	Favorite	Sansevieria
Sept.	Gymnocalycium	Euphorbia (caudiciform type)	Photo Tour
Oct.	Parodia & Notocactus	Stemless Mesembs - No Lithops	Ariocarpus
Nov.	Frailea & Blossfeldia	Tylecodon	Winter Seed Workshop



***COMMUNIQUE***

Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus and Succulent Society  
c/o Yvonne Hemenway  
5890 Grinnell Drive  
Riverside, CA 92509

**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***.