

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

## Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

Vol.30 No. 1

[www.fresnocss.org](http://www.fresnocss.org)

January 2013

**Next Meeting: Thursday, January 3, 2013, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 P.M.)  
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

## PROGRAM: "How to Tufa"

## SPEAKERS: Janet & Jason

Jason Kabeary and Janet Moos have been making succulent dish gardens for themselves and eventually for family and friends since 2009. Sometimes Janet would post pictures of the dish gardens that they created on her online gardening journal, My Folia.

Their interest in succulent dish gardens is what sparked the idea of some day having their own shop that featured a potting bar. They would often research dish gardens online for different ideas and this is when they came across the hypertufa pots. They studied the different recipes for

hypertufa and finally came up with one that they were satisfied with and started making their own hypertufa planters as a hobby.

After a fellow My Folia member noticed their large succulent collection, she suggested they join a local cactus and succulent club. They then joined the Fresno Cactus and Succulent Society in early 2012. In late October of 2012, they opened their shop, The Succulent Shack. They put a few of their homemade hypertufa pots on their tables and found that they were very popular with the community.

That leads to the present time where they continue to make, give, and sell hypertufa pots. They mentioned that they are by far not experts at hypertufa pot creation, as they are still experimenting, learning, and teaching others along the way.



**Don't miss this meeting, as we will have fun learning how to make hypertufa pots for our plants.**

**Janet and Jason will be bringing plants for purchase.**

~ DINNER ~

The Thai House Restaurant  
1069 East Shaw Avenue  
(Southeast corner of First & Shaw)  
Fresno, (559) 221-7245  
[www.ljn.com/thaihouse/menu.html](http://www.ljn.com/thaihouse/menu.html)  
Dinner begins at 5:15 p.m.

Contact Charlene Stebles  
January 2<sup>nd</sup> to make reservations.  
Phone/message (559) 299-1039  
Email: [ronandcharlene@comcast.net](mailto:ronandcharlene@comcast.net)  
Members are welcomed

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER –

Hi, all,

Well, here we are, starting another year. On behalf of the officers and board of directors I want to wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year. **Just a reminder: not all of you have renewed your membership yet; February 2<sup>nd</sup> is the deadline.** Surely, you don't want to miss out on the fun! And we don't want to lose you, either. (As of the end of December we had 106 members, which may be a record for us.) The renewal form is included in this newsletter.

But, back to last month: we had a great Christmas party, didn't we? A large crowd showed up and we nearly ran out of table space. The food was delicious and plentiful; the silent auction raised \$287.00; and it appeared that everybody had a great time. Many thanks to Nell Lemke and her helpers for the nicely decorated tables and to everyone who helped clean up. You all pitched in to make the event work for everyone. I have to say a special word for Tony Sharp's pots that were presented to the outgoing officers. They are really nice, fine examples of craftsmanship and utility. Thanks, Tony.

This month's program will be presented by two of our newer members, Janet and Jason, on a subject that has always been of interest to me—hypertufa pots, how to create and plant them. I'm looking forward to it. Even though they haven't been members for very long, both have demonstrated their interest by attending board meetings, setting up our club Facebook page and helping at the June show and sale. They make an effort to get to our meetings, despite running a business, the Succulent Shack. I hope you all have dropped by the Shack to see the available plants and pots. We need to support their efforts, and wish them every success.

I want to personally thank you all for your support and enthusiasm for the past year and hope we can all join together again for a successful 2013.

See you at the meeting, *Sue*

### Holiday Party Pics



Two of the many beautiful pots that Tony Sharp made for the 2012 outgoing officers.



Silent auction items: Anthony Thomas's handmade planters in left photo.

Rudy, Paulette and Syreena



Elton Roberts (5<sup>th</sup>); Val McCullough, Elke Kurpiers (9<sup>th</sup>);  
Dennis Shamlian (13<sup>th</sup>); Mark Muradian (20<sup>th</sup>);  
Tony Sharp (25<sup>th</sup>); Carole Grosch (31<sup>st</sup>).

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**SAY HELLO TO THIS NEW MEMBER:** Leighton Gould, Hanford.

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Our sympathies go out to Larry Homan, whose mother, Violet Homan, passed away November 21<sup>st</sup>.



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The January 2013 issue of *Central Valley Magazine*, distributed with the December 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of the *Fresno Bee*, has an article featuring the work of glass artist (and club member) Bob Kliss (“Sealed with a Kliss”). Some of us are familiar with the amazing botanical glass works that he creates.

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If you looked up at the right time, you caught **Ron Stebles** on the Channel 24 news, December 19<sup>th</sup>, as he assisted the Marines with their Toys for Tots program.

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**THE SUCCULENT SHACK:** the December 10<sup>th</sup> *Fresno Bee*, in its “Word on the Street” column had an article on Janet Moos’ and Jason Kabearny’s new business. The grand opening was on the 15<sup>th</sup> and drew a nice crowd. You can read about it and see photos on Facebook (accessible via the club Facebook page.)

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**Wanted/Donation:** If you have any extra sedums, echeverias, sempervivums, graptosedums, aeoniums, haworthias or other similar succulents, Robert Scott is looking for donations to the Cen-Val Turtle & Tortoise Club. Will also take spineless opuntia pads for tortoise food, to disperse to the membership. Thank you!

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### BIG EVENT THIS MONTH

**HUNTINGTON DESERT FORUM**, Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Huntington Botanic Garden; free to members of CSSA affiliate clubs (be sure to wear your name badge.) Registration, 9:30 a.m. Tour the Desert Garden (aloes will be in bloom); shop in the nursery; bring a sack lunch.

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**TEN YEARS AGO:** The club met in the Senior Center at Manchester Center. Mark Muradian presented a slide program on the Anza Borrego area of the California desert. Officers in 2003: President, Don La Mont; Vice President, Marlene Myatt; Treasurer, Charlene Stebles; Secretary, Rudy Rulloda; Affiliate Rep., Sue Haffner; board members, Veone Gale, Joyce Quinn, Mark Muradian, Susan Cook, Jack Fleming, Paul Mitchell. Notice a few familiar names?

**BOARD MEETING: Sunday, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>; 1 p.m., Sunnyside Branch Library meeting room, SW corner of Clovis and Kings Canyon Avenues.**

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**WORKSHOP:** Wednesday, Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>; 6 p.m., Succulent Shack, 1322 Wishon Ave. Subject: ‘winter growers’; but you can bring anything that’s looking good, or anything you would like the group to discuss.

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**Interesting blog:** [www.itsnotworkitsgardening.com](http://www.itsnotworkitsgardening.com) has articles and photos on all sorts of plant-related subjects.

[www.explorelifeonearth.org](http://www.explorelifeonearth.org) is a bilingual English-Spanish web site from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Click on “Images of the dry tropics” to see photos of Africa, including views of Somalia taken by the late plant hunter Frank Horwood. Click on “Plants” and see the list of specialty pages, such as: ‘Pedilanthus Page’, ‘Tropical Cactus Page’, ‘Wild Poinsettia Page’, etc.

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**RENEWALS ARE STILL DUE. IF YOU HAVEN’T DONE SO ALREADY, BRING YOUR RENEWAL TO THIS MEETING.**

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**LIBRARY:** The *Cactus and Succulent Journal* is a treasure trove of plant information. The club library contains all issues from the beginning to the present (v. 1-35, 1929-1993, on DVD; v. 31- , 1959- in paper issues). The July-August 1995 issue, for instance, contains Steven Hammer’s extensive article “Mastering the art of growing mesemb” — must reading for anyone interested in these plants. Check it out from the club library.

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**News I’d rather not report:** High Country Gardens, a specialty nursery devoted to drought-tolerant perennials and cold hardy cacti and succulents, headquartered in New Mexico, has gone out of business.

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**Newsletter submittal deadline: January 18, 2013**



This is a ponytail palm that did bust out of its pot. Belongs to Marian Orvis’s brother in Los Angeles

## Getting to Know You...

### DON & DOLORES MARTIN

As Fresno natives, Don and Dolores Martin have seen a lot of changes in their hometown.

“I remember when we used to walk down what is now Blackstone,” says Dolores. “It has changed a lot since then... amazing the businesses that have come and gone over the years.”

They went to Fresno High School, then attended Fresno State.

After graduation, Don became a teacher in the Fresno School District. He taught grades 1-6; 4<sup>th</sup> grade was his favorite. After 37 years as an educator, he retired in 1985.



Photo taken on July 26, 2012 on their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary at their home.

Dolores was employed at Fresno Electrical Appliances besides working at other businesses in the area. She retired in 1998.

Both have been members of the FCSS since at least 1996 and appreciate the convenient location of the meetings now, as it is near their home. They enjoy the camaraderie of the club, hearing the various speakers and taking advantage of plant sales. One of the club events in which they have repeatedly participated is looking after FCSS exhibits on display at the Fresno Fair. Another is the Home Tour - their home was highlighted on the 2007 Tour.

In May 2009, Don and Dolores' church honored Don with a party on his 85th birthday. Among the photos on display was a snapshot of Don and his younger brother posing in front of a huge opuntia in Roeding Park, close to 80 years ago. So Don has been attracted to cacti for a long time!

Aloes are a favorite in the Martin landscape – different varieties are planted in the ground that attract hummingbirds with their bright tubular flowers. Hen and Chicks (*sempervivum globiferum*) act as ground cover for portions of the yard and succulents that need weather protection are housed on the large patio including one that has served several times as a dove nest. A large barrel cactus (*Echinocactus*) makes its home under a blood orange tree.

A birdbath and goldfish pond are focal points of the large backyard, along with camellias, now starting to bloom with winter color. Dolores and Don are fond of flowers and have been members of the Rose Society and Camellia Club.

They raised two children and the family enjoyed travelling. They frequented the redwoods, had a cabin at Huntington Lake, and did some snowmobiling. “Snowmobiles were different then,” Dolores remembers. “They did not have reverse; instead, you had to pick up the snowmobile and turn it around. Backing up is a lot easier today.”

*Carole Grosch*

## SHOULD WE WATER MORE?

By Leo A. Martin

When I began growing cacti, I read and was told to let cacti dry out between watering in the summer, and that most dead cacti in captivity got that way from too much to drink. So, I tried to comply. Living in Phoenix, lots of my smaller cacti didn't seem to grow very much, and I seldom saw flowers. I didn't lose any, though

Notice I said I tried to comply. Some plants were closer to the hose bib and just too easy to water. My hose bib is against the house and shaded by shrubs. The cacti underneath the shrubs were small things like gymnocalyciums, *Borzicactus samaipatanus*, and a small *Carnegia gigantea* that couldn't take full Arizona sun. I also have a *Trichocereus pachanoi* I acquired as a seedling which is in a small pot that I keep wet to damp. They all got lots of water and grew rapidly. The gymnos bloomed faithfully each spring, the borzi each summer, and the *T. pachanoi* often grows a foot a year. I often noticed algae growing on the outsides of their pots and felt grateful that they didn't rot despite my overwatering. I chalked this up to luck.

In July 1997 I attended the CSSA Convention. Professor James Mauseth of the University of Texas spoke about botanizing in South America. He showed slides of *Neocardenasia herzogii*, a very large Argentinian columnar cactus. I have one of these but was unsure of how best to care for it. After the talk I approached him and asked about the climate where it grows. He said, "Water and fertilize the hell out of the columnar South American cacti." *Neocardenasia* comes from a warm moist river valley and lives on the bottomlands. He also showed habitat photographs of *Echinopsis*, *Soherensia*, and *Matucana* up to their eyebrows in moss. I started thinking. I have never seen a *Trichocereus* or *Echinopsis* die from overwatering. Have you?

I read a recent article about roots by Roger Brown in [*To the Point*, the CSSA newsletter]. It refreshed my memory about root growth. The parts of the roots that absorb water and nutrients are called root hairs, and they must keep growing. When the root dries out, the root hairs die back to the fibrous, non-absorptive, structural part of the root ... A cactus in completely dry soil cannot absorb any water until it re-grows its root hairs, which may take more than a day, and is significant energy expenditure for the plant. When we let our plants dry out completely between waterings, we make the plants have to re-grow a new set of root hairs each time they dry out. If we plant in clay pots small for the plant, use a porous soil mixture, and let them dry out completely, it is no surprise to find they are bone dry in a couple of days in the summer.

I thought about my wet gymnos, what Dr. Mauseth said, and what I had read about root hairs. I decided to try watering some of my plants more. Specifically, during summer 1997 I gave a lot more water to my South American columnars (such as *Austrocephalocereus Cleistocactus*, *Epostoa*, *Pilocereus*) and to my small globular cacti generally native to grasslands (such as *Echinopsis*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Lobivia*, *Matucana*, *Notocactus* ...). Most of these plants never dried out completely.

My results were unquestionable. All of the above grew much faster than they had on my previous watering regimen ... Notice that *Mammillaria* is not included in the wet list. These generally come from rocky areas with mineral soil and little rain. Most of us have verified that mammillarias die quickly from overwatering. *Rebutia* and *Copiapoa* like a dry rest during the heat. And larger carnegias will split if overwatered.

I now aim to pot my cacti using a combination of pot size and soil such that they will not dry out completely for about a week after watering. I keep the plants on my wet list at least moist. I let my mammillarias get almost dry between watering except for those such as *M. carmenae* that really need to dry out ... Aim to keep the plants moist for no less than a week before they dry out. And, many cacti don't need to dry out between watering.

(From the newsletter of the Henry Shaw Cactus Society (St. Louis, MO), June 1998; reprinted with permission.)

This originally ran in our July 1998 newsletter, and I thought it would be of interest, in that we have a number of new members. Now, a lot of growers might take exception to some of the above; you need to experiment, taking your own conditions into consideration. I have left some gymnos out all winter in the rain for several years and they look pretty good (they're in clay pots.) Yes, while telling beginning growers to keep their cacti dry in cold weather is good general advice, you will find, over time, that there are exceptions to every "rule" of plant culture. (I even have a few mammillarias out in the winter rain and they are still alive.) Some plants do better for me planted in the ground, rather than in pots—cleistocacti, for instance. Leo has said that he never lets his *Cleistocactus strausii* dry out at all. These plants can react to dryness with tip die-back--an unattractive but natural phenomenon. My *strausii* experienced it this past summer. Well, they'll outgrow it. (I always tell myself that.)

Leo Martin is a Phoenix anesthesiologist, a long-time member of the Central Arizona C&S Society, and a former CSSA board member and Convention Program Chairman.

## ORTEGOCACTUS MACDOUGALLII

*Ortegocactus* is a monotypic genus, meaning that *macdougalii* is the only species. It's an interesting and distinctive-looking little plant, with a finely-pitted, milky-green tuberculate body. Spines are at first red but soon become glossy black, providing a real contrast to the epidermis. With age, the spines fade to chalky gray with black tips. In its juvenile stage the tubercles are solid but in maturity are cleft by a groove along the upper surface, joining the spine-bearing and flower-bearing portions of the areole. The presence of this groove indicates a close relationship to *Coryphantha*. (Some older books refer the species to *Escobaria*.) It is considered by some to represent an evolutionary link between *Mammillaria* with its solid tubercles and *Coryphantha* with



its grooved tubercles.

*Ortegocactus* is native to a small area of the state of Oaxaca, near the village of San Jose Lacheguirí. It is named for the Ortega family who resided there. Plant hunter Tom McDougall records in his notes that Francisco Ortega collected the plant in February 1938. McDougall, apparently in the 1950s, sent plants to the New York Botanical Garden, but it was not named until 1961, after it had bloomed and set seed. The flower resembles one for a *Coryphantha*, with yellow petals and emerald-green stigma lobes.



It isn't the easiest plant to cultivate, as it's a slow grower, taking years to form small clumps. The reference books describe the plant as 3-4 cm in habitat, but Elton Roberts has a plant 6 cm in diameter and 6 cm. tall. He writes, "I have the plant in my regular soil mix and I keep it powder dry over the winter. Also it is best to keep the plant at or above about 40 degrees F. over the winter. For good color and spine growth I give the plant lots of light but still a bit of shading so as

to not burn it. Where the plant comes from it seldom if ever gets to 100 F., much less the 130 F. that it can get in my hot houses. The high temperatures are why I give it some shading." The plant also reacts badly to alkaline water.

I have several plants from seed, still very small after at least a dozen years. Some growers report that *Ortegocactus* can exhibit rusty discolorations on the epidermis. I wonder if this might be a reaction to cold temperatures. I have seen this on my plants in the past, but they have not shown this in recent

years. Sue

Photos: Elton Roberts



## ALOE KARASBERGENSIS



(Photo: Court, Doreen. Succulent flora of Southern Africa. rev. ed.)

Now considered to be a subspecies of *Aloe striata*, *A. karasbergensis* is a distinctive and beautiful plant. Depending on light and climatic conditions, the wide, curved blue-green leaves are marked with numerous dark, longitudinal lines and may take on a pink cast in full sun. The leaf margins have no teeth and a whitish cartilaginous edge. Plants are stemless or short-stemmed, usually solitary but may branch from the base with age.

*Aloe striata* ssp *karasbergensis* extends from the Northern Cape westward to the Richtersveld and north into Namibia, growing in arid areas, on rocky outcrops and mountains and on flat places in red, sandy soils. Summer temperatures are high and winters are cold. Rain occurs mainly in winter and ranges from 5 to 10 inches, depending on location. In habitat, the plants bloom from December into March, but may bloom periodically throughout the year when in cultivation in southern California. The inflorescence is a branched and re-branched panicle; flower color varies from pink to coral-red and strawberry-red. The plant should be hardy in our area, providing that care is taken to avoid overwatering. Sue



# Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

## Membership Application / Renewal

Annual Membership Renewal Due January 1<sup>st</sup>

Single Membership renewal... \$15.00    Family Membership renewal... \$25.00

**New Memberships** include a one time fee of \$9.00 per member for each name badge as follows:

Single Membership... \$15.00 plus one name badge \$9.00 = ..... \$24.00

Family Membership.... \$25.00 plus two name badges \$18.00 = ..... \$43.00

**Checks payable to: Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society (FC&SS)**

**Mail to: FC&SS – 4847 East Harvard Avenue – Fresno, CA 93703**

### INFORMATION FOR CLUB USE ONLY:

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Birth(s) Optional – Month/Day \_\_\_\_\_

*The club publishes an annual Roster containing all current members' information as shown above and distributes it to club members. If you do not wish to have some of your information printed in the Roster place an  at the end of any line you wish to have omitted. If you wish to change the information enter the change in the line to the right.*

**I am interested in helping out in the following areas. Please contact me.**     Show & Sale     Programs  
 Library     Publicity     Technology     Refreshments     Hospitality     Sunshine     Special Events

Do you wish to receive the club's newsletter '**Cactus Corner News**' by email?  OR mail?

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~ Please read and complete ~

Newsletter: ~ *Cactus Corner News* ~

*By signing the form below, you give your permission for photographs for use in the club newsletter and/or to be used for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web and presentations. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.*

No Thanks.     Yes, I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions noted below:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_