

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

## Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

Vol.30, No. 4

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

April, 2013

**Next Meeting: Thursday, April 4, 2013, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 P.M.)  
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

### PROGRAM

## Baobabs, the Biggest Succulents

**Presenter: Bruce Hargreaves**

Adansonia, or the typical common names, baobab, boab, boaboa, tabaldi, bottle tree, upside-down tree, and monkey bread tree, is a genus of eight species of tree, six native to Madagascar, one native to mainland Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, some in India and some in Australia.

These 'Giants of the Succulent World' reach heights of 16 to 98 feet and have trunk diameters of 23 to 36 feet. Some baobabs are reputed to be many thousands of years old, which are difficult to verify, as the wood does not produce annual growth rings.

Some of the wide uses of these trees include storing up to 32,000 gallons of water to endure the harsh drought conditions particular to each region. Boaboa are among the most useful plants for both humans and animals. Food uses include leaves which are eaten fresh or used in soups, seeds cooked with sugar and sold as snacks, and the fruit tastes 'somewhere between grapefruit, pear, and vanilla'. Some of the animals that eat from these trees include antelope, elephants, and baboons. (Reference: Wikipedia)

Dr. Bruce Hargreaves and his wife, Polly, joined the Peace Corps in 1965 and were sent to Malawi in Southern Africa. Dr. Hargreaves taught botany for several years before returning to the United States. After receiving a MS in Public Health and a PhD in Parasitology, they returned to Africa and Bruce spent the next 30 years teaching in Malawi, Botswana and Lesotho. Bruce was also in charge of the national herbarium and botanical gardens of Lesotho in southern Africa. They currently live in Bakersfield. Bruce has authored numerous articles in the Cactus & Succulent Journal, Euphorbia World Journal, and Xeric World Forums, among many others. More information of his publications can be found on page 5 of this newsletter where he and his wife are profiled.

**Please join us as we learn from this interesting program from our very own club member.**

**PLANTS: Bruce will be bringing plants for you to purchase.**



Baobabs Avenue near Morondava, Madagascar. Photo: wikipedia

**The Thai House Restaurant**  
1069 East Shaw Avenue  
Fresno, (559) 221-7245  
[www.1jn.com/thaihouse/menu.html](http://www.1jn.com/thaihouse/menu.html)  
Dinner begins at 5:15 p.m.

~ DINNER ~

**Contact Charlene Stebles by  
April 3<sup>rd</sup> to make reservations.  
Phone/message (559) 299-1039  
Email: [ronandcharlene@comcast.net](mailto:ronandcharlene@comcast.net)  
Members are invited to attend.**

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER –

Hi, all,

We need to extend a big “thank you” to all who helped out at the Fresno Spring Home & Garden Show, March 1-3. We had a number of club members as vendors and an awful lot of plants went home with members of the public. The club realized about \$1,800 in profits. While a number of you helped with various aspects of the event, we do need more assistance with clean-up; only two people were left at the end to pack up club properties.

But, never fear—you will have more opportunities to help! Our Annual Show and Sale is coming up June 1-2 at Sierra Vista Mall. Here are areas where you can assist:

Publicity: place posters and handouts in appropriate areas (nurseries, for example); get the word out in general;

Set-up: assist in setting up and arranging tables according to floor plan; arrange table covers and distribute chairs where needed;

Breakdown: remove table covers, shake out and fold and place in boxes; knock down tables and stack; fold tables and chairs; vacuum, sweep, and clean as necessary to leave the area as we found it;

Customer assistance: help customers to car with plants; keep supply of boxes at door and hand out to customers;

Boxes: collect boxes; solicit members for boxes; deliver boxes to show site;

Security: keep watch over show plants and vendor plants; assist in keeping the area tidy;

Cashier: if you can run a cash register, see Joyce Quinn;

Show plants display: receive plants and artistically arrange them on show tables; check with vendors for their promised show plants; prepare name labels for all show plants and place label with each plant;

Club sales table: receive plants at show and arrange on table; name and price donated items as necessary;

Refreshments: receive food and drinks and arrange in food area; check inventory for supplies; purchase as needed; budget for meat and related items, \$100 (Rosanna Rojas is in charge of this.)

As you can see, none of the above (except for cashiering) requires any special knowledge or abilities. There has to be an area in which you can help.

Show Chair Cindy Duwe will have signup sheets at this meeting for the above jobs.

The 2013 club rosters will be available at this meeting, one to a household. Your name will be checked off a list as you pick up your copy. Many thanks to Joyce Quinn, who prepared them (and got the job done at a discount, too!)

See you at the meeting,

*Sue*



## FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING

MARCH 10, 2013

**President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.**

**Members present:** Joyce Quinn, Treasurer; Charlene Stebles, Vice President; Cindy Duwe, Secretary; Madeleine Mitchell, Board member; Carol Grosch, Board member; Dan Gale, Board member; Nell Lemke, Board member; Rudy Rulloda, Board member; Fred Gaumer, Brag table. **Members absent:** Rosanna Rojas. **Visitors:** Susan Cook.

### Officer reports:

- \* Joyce reported that the club netted \$1,800 at the Home and Garden Show. She suggested that there be more help for the set-up and take down next year.
- \* Charlene reported that April's speaker will be Bruce Hargraves. He will speak on Bayobabs in Africa and Boabs in Australia. He is planning to bring plants for sale.

### New business:

- \* The Clovis Botanical Garden will hold an event on March 23, 2013. Flyers will need to be printed for this event.
- \* In order to make Membership a separate committee a change will be required to the Standing Rules.
- \* Janet Moos is the chair for the Facebook committee.
- \* Cindy Duwe reported that the contract had been signed and returned to Fashion Fair for the rental of the room for the Show and Sale to be held on June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The fee has been paid for the 3-day rental. Vendors are being invited. Signup sheets will be ready for the members at the April meeting. Joyce will print the postcards for this event. Members will be encouraged to bring plants, etc. for the club sale table. There will also be a signup sheet for volunteers to bring food for the vendors.
- \* Charlene is checking into homes to visit for the Home Tour.
- \* Several places were discussed for the Bus Trip.
- \* Sue announced that Doris Hooton and Tom Meyer have offered their yard for the July picnic.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Duwe  
Secretary

### Proposed change to Standing Rules

As noted above in the March board meeting minutes, two new committees have been proposed—

~ **Facebook Committee and Membership Committee.** The Facebook Committee Chair will be responsible for setting up and monitoring the club Facebook page. While this committee hasn't yet been approved, Janet Moos is effectively carrying out the job already. The exact parameters of the Membership Committee haven't been agreed to yet, but the club is getting large enough that we need someone to handle just that.

~ **"Sunshine"**, also, is a job that has been carried out for many years but which has never been listed and described anywhere. We have various other practices that need to be codified and not just casually be handed down from one person to another. The board will be working on this.

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**Club picnic:** this year the first Thursday in July (traditional date for our picnic) is July 4<sup>th</sup>. Will this present a problem for members who would like to attend? We have had our picnic on the 4<sup>th</sup> at various times in the past.

**Upcoming programs:** May, Petra Crist; June, Ernesto Sandoval; July, club picnic; August, Duke Benadom; September, members' sale night.

**Club access:** President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu); Programs, Charlene Stebles, 299-1039, [ronandcharlene@comcast.net](mailto:ronandcharlene@comcast.net); Treasurer, Joyce Quinn, 270-5520, [j\\_quinn@att.net](mailto:j_quinn@att.net); Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu); Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 226-0145, [mforvet@comcast.net](mailto:mforvet@comcast.net); Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, [madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net); Webmaster, Vickie Veen,, [vickieveen@gmail.com](mailto:vickieveen@gmail.com); Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, [cgg266@comcast.net](mailto:cgg266@comcast.net).



*Clemencia Belmontes (7<sup>th</sup>); Robert Scott (11<sup>th</sup>);  
Viv Shinkawa (13<sup>th</sup>); Bruce Hargreaves (18<sup>th</sup>);  
Anthony Thomas (24<sup>th</sup>).*

*(We don't have everyone's birthday; if you would  
like yours listed, get in touch with me ... Sue)*

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**Visitors last month:** Allison Reilly, Rod & Cindy Parichan;  
Chuck Sirirathasuk; Carole Bailey; Dennis Shamlian.

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**Don La Mont** is recovering from successful  
surgery, and he and Pat would like to thank  
the members for their good wishes.



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**Paul and Madeleine Mitchell** have returned from a  
Hawaiian cruise, and we trust they had a great time.

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**Sue Haffner, Carole Grosch** and **Fred Gaumer** staffed  
the club table at the Clovis Botanical Garden's "Spring into  
Your Garden" event on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thanks to **Tom Meyer**  
for the loan of a shade pop-up.

Other club members who worked the event: **Marian Orvis**  
was there for the California Native Plant Society; **Howard  
and Carol McLachlin** for Fresno Wildlife Rehabilitation;  
and, next to us, **David Cook** represented Rosenbalm  
Rockery.

It was a nice day—chilly in the morning, but sunny and  
breezy. The garden has big plans for a cactus and succulent  
landscape feature which club members may wish to assist.  
More information will be forthcoming.

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**New in the club library:** "Mesembs: the *Titanopsis* group",  
the first volume in a series of monographs by noted author  
and mesemb expert Steven Hammer. It covers the following  
genera: *Aloinopsis*, *Deilanthus*, *didymaotus*, *Ilhenfeldtia*, *Nananthus*,  
*Prepodesma*, *Tanquana*, *titanopsis* and *Vanheerdea*.

Our club is listed in the back among the subscribers, as we  
helped underwrite the book's production. It's a worthy  
project on the part of Steven Hammer and associates.

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**Google "California for beginners"** and get a funny map  
of the state.

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**BOARD MEETING: MONDAY, APRIL 8TH, 6 PM.**  
**HOME OF JOYCE QUINN. ADDRESS IN CLUB ROSTER.**

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**NEWSLETTER SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: APRIL 19**

## COMING EVENTS

April 13-14, South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society  
Show & Sale, South Coast Botanic Garden,  
26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes;  
9-4, both days; free admission.

April 14<sup>th</sup>, Fresno Earth Day; Unitarian Universalist  
Church, 2672 E. Alluvial; 11-4; garden tours, workshops.

April 20-21, Cactus & Succulent Society of San Jose,  
Spring Show & Sale, Buchser Middle School,  
1111 Bellomy St., Santa Clara; Sat., 9-5; Sun. 10-4.

April 27-28, Monterey Bay Cactus & Succulent Society,  
Show and Sale, Jardines Restaurant Garden,  
San Juan Bautista; Sat., 9-5; Sun, 9-4.

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**April workshop:** Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at the  
Succulent Shack, 1302 Wishon. For the "Oh, those great  
plants" feature, bring plants in genera starting with A or B.  
(Of course, you can bring anything that looks good.)

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### Dear FC&SS Members, (from Ruth Saludes)

Thank you so much for your donations to Kids Day at the  
Clovis Botanical Garden on March 16th. The event was a  
tremendous success and the succulent dish gardens would  
not have been possible without your donations of cuttings  
and spare parts! The children ranged in ages and all were  
very excited to plant their own succulent gardens. The  
two hours went by like minutes and great fun was had by  
all. Let's hope we have started a little peoples succulent  
revolution. They loved the plants and the activity.  
Here are some pictures of their final creations...



## Getting to Know You . . .

### Polly and Bruce Hargreaves

The Hargreaves have been fortunate enough to spend several years in Africa, certainly one of the most succulent rich continents on earth. Members of FC&SS for many years, they returned stateside in 2007.

Polly was born in Chicago and lived there until the age of four, when the family relocated to California. “We all flew out, the whole family,” she remembers. “That was unusual for the time.” While growing up, she got to experience different parts of the country as her father was transferred to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Olympia, Washington, in between stints in California.

Bruce grew up in Stockton and has memories of being interested in plants as far back as kindergarten. When the family moved to Bakersfield, he met Polly. They both attended Bakersfield High School and Bakersfield College, where they sang in the choir and were in the same zoology class.

After college, Polly was employed by Shell Oil. “I had a job and a car – we could get married,” she says. This August, they will be celebrating their 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 1965, they joined the Peace Corps, which had been in existence for only four years at that time. It was a new adventure; off they went to Malawi, Africa.

“It was the first place we were really on our own, where we had no family support,” says Polly. “The language was different. I learned some of the local dialects and drove an off-road Land Rover.”

Bruce did a lot of research while in the Peace Corps. Later, this would be helpful when working on his Masters Degree on Public Health at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. His research on controlling Bilharzia (a human disease caused by the parasitic worm, *Schistosomes* when swimming in infested tropical waters), helped him earn the degree in one year instead of the usual two. His knowledge and research would be helpful again when working towards his PhD.

One of Bruce’s positions was as Head of the Protection and Preservation of Plants and Animals. The spiral aloe (*aloe polyphylla*), was one of the most protected plants of Lesotho. “It was protected by law,” he says. “Selling it by seed was tried, but no one was interested; it sold in South Africa as a garden plant. One thing about the plant, when it splits, the plant spirals the opposite way. Here, it would grow better on the coast. It is a high mountain plant; heat is a problem, not frost.

Bruce also kept the Botanic Garden in Botswana planted with local species and was the head of the Lesotho Garden. It is interesting to note that succulents of Lesotho are all cold hardy.

Euphorbia have been a favorite of Bruce’s since high school, though, he adds, “I’ll never turn a good succulent down. “I can go off for years at a time and still have a garden [when I return.] They travel well and I can give cuttings away.”

For three years the couple lived in the Chitipa District, Malawi, which gave them the opportunity to observe succulents that grow in a non-arid environment. As Bruce explains, “These plants must be able to not only be able to survive the periods of drought but must be tolerant of the heavy rains.” (As a growing tip, Bruce warns against heavy watering here in the Central Valley.)

Bruce does all the growing, according to Polly. “I am his driver and can spot a foot high Euphorbia at 45 mph,” she says. “I edit his books but Bruce is the grower.” And, if the computer is uncooperative, his wife can often solve the problem.

Bruce is a prolific author- a few of his works:

*Succulent Spurges of Malawi*

*Succulents of Botswana*

*Succulents of Chitipa – The Muddy Place*

*Succulent Euphorbiaceae of Malawi*

*Useful Plants of Tsodilo*

In addition, he authors an entertaining column called “A Letter from Bruce,” for the Bakersfield C&SS, newsletter, *The Cactus Patch*.

Polly and Bruce have two sons and often travel to visit family. They reside in Bakersfield, with Alice, Bruce’s mother, who will turn 96 in April.

**Carole Grosch**



**MARCH BRAG TABLE:** Dan Gale brought *Pachypodium namaquanum* (2); *P. lamerei* (2); *brevicaule* (3); *P. saundersii* 'Compacta'; Larry Carlberg displayed *Haworthia herbacea*; Fred Gaumer brought *Euphorbia ramiglans*, *Graptopetalum bellum*, *Pediocactus knowltoni*; Bruce Hargreaves showed *Aloe lutescens*, *Indria columnaris*; Mary Ann Villegas brought a yellow flowering *Jatropha podagrica*; Mark Muradian brought a board with moss on it which Bruce described as "not a rolling stone"; Charlene Stebles showed *Aloe variegata*. "... and I recall when holding up a plant someone saying it was theirs but they were not signed up. How do they expect to win the Caribbean cruise or use the club's helicopter if they don't sign up?" fg



**MARCH WORKSHOP:** We had a lively workshop on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Succulent Shack, exchanging tips on plants and gardening. Tom Meyer says that, if you have cacti growing in the ground, you need to water them now, as we haven't had much in the way of rain. You can also cut back frost-blasted succulents and commence the melancholy job of tossing out those that didn't make it through the winter.

Mary Ann Villegas brought a *Gymnocalycium vatteri* which was doing something odd—it appears to be either cresting or showing dichotomous splitting. Fred Gaumer, when asked about this, wrote: "G. vatteri is one of my favorites and I have about 10 of them. I also have many small plants. Some individuals dichotomize. Most will remain solitary and some will produce offsets. I have a crested one. It's like a fan and gets bigger every year. Elton has one also. They are most beautiful when small plants, a few years old; no two alike."



Jack Barkley brought a mini landscape that he had created, and said that there will be a workshop at Evergreen Nursery on making these "fairy gardens" and that the nursery has a lot of miniatures suitable for dish gardens, etc. Drop by the nursery for more information.

April workshop will be Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at Succulent Shack, 1302 Wishon; subject: genera A-B.

### BRACHYCHITON, THE AUSTRALIAN BOTTLE TREE

There are about 40 species of *Brachychiton*, all but one or two native to the Queensland region of Australia. The "Sunset Western garden book" lists several species worthy of planting, mostly for the red flowers that can make an amazing spectacle when in full bloom. They want to be large trees, up to 60 feet tall. Some are evergreen; others are deciduous or semi-deciduous.

Not all of the species produce the characteristic bottle shaped trunks. One that does, and one that is most commonly cultivated, is *Brachychiton rupestris*, a fairly hardy species that, when kept potted, produces twisty, gnarled roots that can be raised for interesting effect. I've had a plant for years, growing in a large pot. I've cut it down several times, as it puts up just a single stem with a tuft of leaves at the end. Last fall, I chopped it off just above where the trunk was fattening and now I see that it is going to sprout at several locations. I even put the cut top down to root in perlite and it's still alive, so perhaps it has some roots. Tough customer!

I had lost the label for the plant, so tried to identify it from pictures, which was just confusing because the leaf shapes didn't seem to match any species I could find. Then I read a new publication, "Australian bottle trees and boabs" by Attila Kapitany. It turns out that *B. rupestris* displays leaves of various shapes, depending on the maturity of the plant, from blade-shaped, to tri-partite, to palmate.

The photo on the right, from the Kapitany book, shows a *Brachychiton* tree providing shade for cattle. Farmers value the trees for this as well as for the food they provide. Livestock readily eat the leaves as well as the soft interiors of freshly fallen branches. It's not unusual to find that these trees have been retained when most other forest has been cleared.

Sue

