

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

## Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.org>

Vol.23, No. 1

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

January 2014

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January, 2, 7:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30 P.M.)  
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

## PROGRAM:

### The Exotic Cacti of Chile

Presented by  
**Steve Frieze**

The journey my wife and I took to Chile almost five years ago has left an indelible impression on us. We had the extraordinary opportunity to spend almost a month in Chile traveling from Santiago to Taltal, a mining village in the heart of the Atacama Desert. Along the way we located and photographed many of the cacti that are endemic to Chile. We were especially gratified to find many species of Copiapos and Eriosyces. We took an assortment of side trips that included a visit to an island that is inhabited by Penguins and Sea Lions. We look forward to sharing our odyssey with you that included a stay in a mansion that is owned by one of the wealthiest men in Chile.

Steve Frieze is a past president of the Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society and has served the club in numerous other capacities during the past 25 years he has been a member. He is a retired as a university administrator and is currently teaching psychology courses at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Steve is a partner in Desert Creations, a plant store that sells unusual cacti and succulents. He has traveled to numerous locations throughout the world that house exotic plants including Costa Rica, Chile, Africa, Brazil, and Oaxaca Mexico from which he just returned.



*Steve at our FCSS Cactus Show & Sale, May, 2010.  
Photo by Ruth Saludes.*

**Plants: Steve will have plants available for purchase.**

**Toledo's Mexican Restaurant**  
367 East Shaw, Fresno  
(559) 224-0975  
Menu:  
<http://toledosmexicanfood.com/menu/>

**DINNER**  
Begins at 5:00pm

Members are invited to attend.

Contact Rosanna Rojas by  
Wednesday, January 1, to  
make reservations.  
Phone: (559) 999-0017  
Email: [rfrojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfrojas96@gmail.com)

**FROM THE PREZ ...**

Hi, all,

Here we are at the start of another year. I believe I speak for all your officers and board members when I say we wish you all a happy and healthy New Year. We have new programs, new activities and other events ahead of us. That's why I hope you all will renew your memberships. I know you all have your own reasons for joining the club: interest in learning more about cacti and succulents, having the chance to obtain more plants, socializing with others with similar interests, etc. We hope we can fulfill your expectations. I welcome your suggestions regarding club issues.

At this time of year we appoint various chairpersons and committee members. It's a sign of a healthy organization when members step forward and take an active role in the operation of the club. I hope you will say yes if you are asked to help.

Well, did the freezing weather early in December do a number on your plants? A lot of my leaf succulents have been whacked—top-killed but probably otherwise still alive. After several milder winters, I had gotten out of the habit of covering flower beds and outside planters. So now I'm probably overdoing it. Remember that some plants, such as aloes, can be killed down to the ground and still grow back from the roots. A lot of jade plants have their heads drooping, but I figure they will just come through with more interesting shapes. It's important not to cut back damaged plants too early; wait to prune out dead growth until all chance of frost is past or when new growth appears in spring. And it could have been worse: it got much colder over on the coast, I hear, doing some real damage to nurseries and landscaping.

We had a great Christmas party last month, with wonderful food and good company. Thanks to Nell Lemke and her committee for the nicely decorated tables, and to all the members who helped with setup and cleanup. The silent auction brought in \$228; thanks to Joyce Quinn for helping with several credit card payments. Outgoing officers received gifts of Tony Sharp's pots. We didn't get around to a formal installation of the new officers—everybody was having too much fun—but, officers, rest assured that you are in office as of this month!

**I want to thank all of you for your support and enthusiasm during this past year. Welcome to 2014!**

See you at the meeting.

*Sue*



**Club access:** President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu); Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, [rfojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfojas96@gmail.com); Treasurer, Robert Scott, 960-3665, [Rob\\_scott85@yahoo.com](mailto:Rob_scott85@yahoo.com); 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).



**Elton Roberts (5<sup>th</sup>); Val McCullough, Elke Kurpiers (9<sup>th</sup>); Dennis Shamlian (13<sup>th</sup>); Theresa Flemming (15<sup>th</sup>); Mark Muradian (20<sup>th</sup>); Tony Sharp, Tami McColl (25<sup>th</sup>); Carole Grosch (31<sup>st</sup>).**

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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Richard and Barbara Stafford, Selma

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**Sympathies:** Carole Grosch and Russ Lindquist both lost their fathers last month. Our best wishes go out to them and their families.



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**Get well:** Madeleine Mitchell is recovering from injuries suffered in a fall.

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**Larry Grammer**, famous plant stager, passed away several weeks ago in southern California. His work was internationally known and very influential. He did a program for us around ten years, or so, ago. Like a lot of artists, he really couldn't tell

you how to stage a plant, he would just do it. It was amazing to watch him at work.

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**BATTERIES:** The DHHSC can take your dead batteries for recycling. There is a container on the front counter in the lobby.

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**SOME SANSEVIERIA RESOURCES**

There is a new, free online journal on Sansevierias – in German: [www.sansevieria-online.de/lib/fetch.php?media=hefte:SO\\_2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.sansevieria-online.de/lib/fetch.php?media=hefte:SO_2013_1.pdf)

“Common diseases and disorders of sansevieria and yucca”:

[www.plantfinder.com/services/ARChase/yucca.asp](http://www.plantfinder.com/services/ARChase/yucca.asp)

**COMING EVENTS**

**Monday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, club board meeting**

**Wednesday, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>, club workshop**

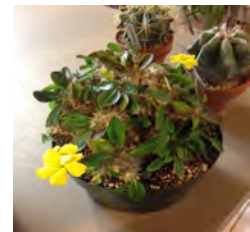
**Saturday, Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, Desert Forum, Huntington Botanical Gardens;** 9:30-4:30. CSSA members and affiliate club members should wear their name badges for free admission; tour the Desert Garden, buy plants at the nursery. We expect to receive updated information about the event.

**Tuesday, Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>, Squirrel Appreciation Day—** everywhere!

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**CLUB WORKSHOP:** Wednesday, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., 3733 N. Sierra Vista. Bill Gale will do a grafting demonstration, and we'll also discuss what has worked with protecting your plants from frost.

At the December workshop we talked about frost protection and looked at some winter growers: *Sarcocaulon vanderietae*, *Othonna*, *Dioscorea*, *Pachypodium namaquanum*.



**H & E Nursery is giving the membership 10% off** their entire purchase! Just show your name badge at either the Fresno store (Blackstone & Nees) or the Clovis store (Shaw & Locan) for the discount. I will be keeping a large selection of succulents available at the Clovis store, and even during the winter. Come check us out!

**Robert Scott**

### JANUARY BOARD MEETING:

Monday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno (Doris Hooton's and Tom Meyer's home). All members are welcome to attend; board members should attend. If anyone has agenda items, they should forward them to Sue Haffner.



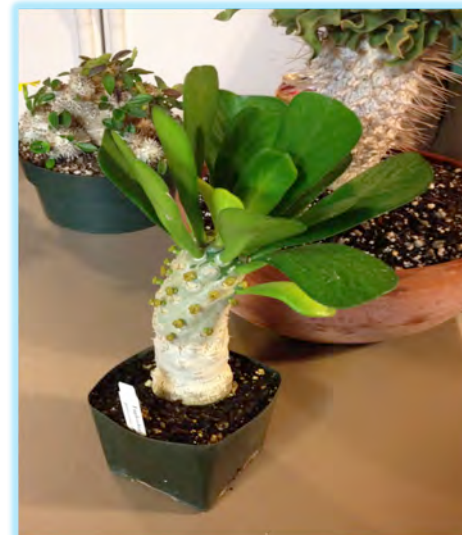
**REMEMBER THAT EVERYONE'S DUES ARE NOW DUE. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY RENEWED, BRING YOUR PAYMENT TO THE MEETING OR USE THE RENEWAL FORM IN THE NEWSLETTER.**

### REFRESHMENTS CHAIR POSITION VACANCY

Here is an opportunity for another member (or members) to step in to perform a service for the club. The refreshments person brings the supplies for the refreshments table: paper plates, hot/cold cups, eating utensils, napkins, etc. In cold weather, heat water in the coffee urn (kept in storage at DHHSC) and provide instant coffee, tea, cocoa. In hot weather, provide sodas of choice. Encourage members to provide refreshments; cleans up the area after or close to the end of the meeting. Any expense receipts should be submitted to the Treasurer for reimbursement. Talk to Marian or Sue if you are interested.

### EUPHORBIA POISSONI

This species is one of several closely related euphorbias found in dry areas of tropical West Africa. Similar species include *unispina*, *venenifera*, *sapini* and *darbandensis*. It can be difficult to distinguish one from another, as they have the same growth form and all except *poissoni* have spines. All are stout bushes or small trees, 6-12 ft. in height, and are branched in candelabra form. The stems and branches are covered by a thin silver-gray mantle of cork. Presumably light can pass through this sufficiently to allow photosynthesis to take place even while the plants are leafless during the dry season. All are deciduous; leaves fall at the onset of the dry season, leaving large roundish or diamond shaped leaf scars. Leaves are fleshy and succulent; only *poissoni* leaves have distinct petioles. In *poissoni* the leaves are up to 5" long, obovate, deeply notched at the apex. *E. poissoni* is described as spineless, but that is true only for adult plants. Seedlings show well developed spines in pairs beyond the leaves. All the species flower in the dry season when they're leafless.



Botanists conclude that these species constitute an isolated group specialized to ecologically dry localities scattered over wide areas of quite different climates. This suggests that they are relict plants of a former much drier period.

Cultivation: *poissoni* requires high temperatures and high humidity during the growth period; they must be kept dry during the leafless period. Propagation is by cuttings.

## CACTUS/HISTORY QUESTION

*Early in December, Madeleine received this question via email:*

**Hello, Ms Mitchell,**

I am writing you from Paris, France where research is being done for a photographic family book. One of the photos I would like to use is attached. It was labeled 'Taken in Fresno in 1939' and features my mother, great grandmother and grandmother.

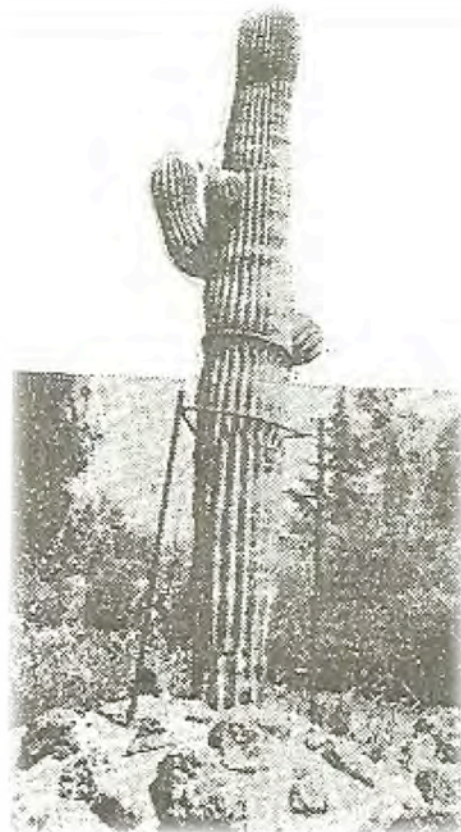
My question for you is, do you know what kind of cactus it is? And perhaps where in Fresno it might be? I am striving for accurate details in the text. Any help you could give would be most appreciated.

Sincerely, Jane Garnes

**Madeleine responded** with the information that the plant as a saguaro, *Carnegia gigantea*, then forwarded the email to me. I thought at once of the old Deutsch estate on north Van Ness Avenue, which, by the 1970s, when I first saw it, featured a huge saguaro in a circular raised bed in the front driveway. I compared the photo to a 1940 *Fresno Bee* article on Fred and Perle Deutsch's unique desert garden, and they look very similar.

Jane Garnes is an artist and author. She writes books that combine haiku and photography. To see a sample of her work: <http://japanvisitor.blogspot.fr/2012/02/patterns-by-jane-garnes-inspiration-of.html>  
If any of you can help with this, perhaps by providing an alternate identification of the location of the plant, please let us hear from you.

*Sue*



## SEED GROWING WITH RED CUPS

By Doug Dawson



Put 7 or 8 holes in the bottom of red plastic cup (a sturdy leather needle will do it).

Pour in about 1" depth of sand.

Next, partly fill with your normal soil mix. (Often I use about 2 parts of gravel-sand, 1 part desert dirt—not clay, 2 parts pumice, and sometimes  $\frac{1}{4}$  part of fine mulch or leaf mould—be careful, most cacti and succulents do not like much organic material.) Leave about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of room at top surface. Carefully wash down the interior upper sides so that no dust is present.

Fill top with about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of sterilized finer soil mix. (I usually wet the sterile mix a bit BEFORE I add it since it may not wet well in the water bath (see below). I sterilize soil in a toaster oven.

Distribute the seeds – methods vary slightly depending on size, shape, and type.

Sometimes scatter a dusting of sterile fine sand on surface.

Set the cup in a water bath about 2" to 3" deep. Leave in the bath for at least an hour. You may wish to leave it there overnight for some seeds.

Place 2-liter plastic soda bottle top dome on and screw on the cap.

Place in appropriate filtered light and temperature and wait ...

Rehydration: if after an appropriate amount of time, none come up, mist the surface, being careful not to dislodge the seeds.

**Caution:** your red cup with 2-liter bottle top is a closed system; therefore, no direct sunlight—Don't cook them. After a few weeks, eliminate the screw-on cap. Sprinkle some fine gravel, mist, and place clear dome back on minus the cap. In a few months remove the dome completely. Keep seedlings moist, not soggy. 9/13/13

*Phoenix Home and Garden* magazine ran an article on Doug's method applied to growing *Lithops*. You can read it online and see his plants growing in red cups: [www.phgmag.com/garden/desert/201211/living-stones](http://www.phgmag.com/garden/desert/201211/living-stones)



**DON'T THROW AWAY THOSE BROKEN CLAY POTS:** You can use the broken bits for a "Fairy Garden", as illustrated in the figure opposite. These are whimsical little creations which can incorporate plants, miniatures of various sorts, rocks, shells, twigs, bark, natural or manufactured items. Succulents are especially useful in these arrangements, due to their many forms, colors and growth patterns, not to mention their drought tolerance (though the smaller the pot the more closely it needs to be monitored for watering.) These "Fairy Gardens" are becoming quite popular these days.

## CONTROLLED RELEASE FERTILIZERS

By Leo Martin

(Leo was responding to a comment on the **Cacti\_etc** online discussion list regarding the use of Osmocote™ controlled release fertilizer and its several formulations with cactus seedlings. He has given his permission for us to use what follows. Leo is a Phoenix anesthesiologist and long-time grower and member of the Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society. If you are not familiar with Osmocote™, it is sold as small pellets that release their contents over time. Sometimes you encounter these pellets when you're repotting store-bought plants out of their original growing media.)



Two issues here. Yes, cactus seedlings grow best with LOTS of fertilizer, especially in a medium with absolutely no nutrients like most people use for their plants. Don't pay attention to books and people telling you to avoid nitrogen with cacti of any age. Weak and spindly growth is caused by insufficient light, not by too much nitrogen. If you can't provide your plants with enough light, they are going to look weak and spindly. If you fertilize them under low-light conditions you will have weak and spindly plants that grow faster. The problem is not the fertilizer.

Osmocote is great for people who don't have the time to mix up their own liquid fertilizer solutions and use them regularly. It will be more expensive in the long run but for small-scale hobbyists the extra cost is minimal, and the fact that your plants will still get their fertilizer even if you're working lots of overtime is a blessing.

Nitrogen fertilizers are less stable as temperatures rise. Bacteria in the soil convert nitrogen products into nitrogen gas, and they become more active higher temperatures. And nitrogen compounds break down spontaneously into nitrogen gas, as well, faster at higher temperatures.

I heard a lecture from a soil scientist here in Phoenix. He said: Most Osmocote preparations decompose rapidly once temperatures reach 90 degrees F / 32 C and are useful for little more than a week. Osmocote is great for house plants because most of us keep our houses cooler than 90 F. Osmocote does not last forever, so if you want to depend on it for your fertilizer you must repot at least annually.

Osmocote must be incorporated into the soil and not sprinkled on the surface. The nutrients leach from the surface of the spheres into the soil. Spheres lying on the soil surface have only a tiny area in contact with the soil, so most of the nutrients will not get into the soil.

Plants in commercial growing media don't get any nutrients at all from the medium. If you use media such as perlite—compost, you must use a fertilizer with all the major and minor nutrients. Most commercial "potting soil" nowadays is blackened sawdust, and not even well-composted, at that. This is why people think they have trouble with houseplants.

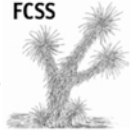
Plants in real soil from planet Earth generally have most major and minor nutrients readily available if they are maintained at a reasonable pH (6.5—7.5), lacking only nitrogen. Check with your local country agricultural education office to see whether your soil lacks any nutrients. Plants in potting media with local soil generally do fine with nothing more than ammonium sulfate as fertilizer since they get other nutrients from the soil. Ammonium sulfate is a lot cheaper than "balanced" fertilizers.

Ammonium sulfate must be broken down by bacteria into the nitrates and nitrites plants can assimilate. What the bacteria don't convert will decompose to nitrogen gas and not get to the plants. The bacteria are temperature-dependent and hardly function during cool weather. So ammonium sulfate is only useful during warm weather and it is the best lawn grass fertilizer during the summer.

Ammonium sulfate solutions watered into the soil decompose to nitrogen gas in less than an hour during Phoenix summers, so there is little chance of burning plants with reasonable amounts of it during hot weather. During cooler weather calcium nitrite is a better nitrogen fertilizer because the nitrogen is immediately available to the plants. During warm weather it decomposes to nitrogen gas so fast it is a waste of money. It is the best lawn grass fertilizer during cool weather.

*Sue*

FCSS



# 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:      Total = \$24.00

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

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

**Mail to: FC&SS 3015 Timmy Avenue, Clovis, CA 93612-4849**

### INFORMATION FOR CLUB USE ONLY:

*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.*

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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?**

**\*\*\* Due to increasing mailing costs, we encourage members to receive their newsletters electronically. For those members who do not have access to the Internet the newsletter will be sent by postal mail.**

~ 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:

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