

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.org>

Vol.23, No. 2

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

February 2014

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

PROGRAM: "BAJA CALIFORNIA AND THREE GENERATIONS OF DOGS"

PRESENTER: PETRA CRIST

"Please do not be fooled by the title, as it is about plants in Baja. I named it that, because it is about several trips to Baja over a long, long time and Rusty is the Third Generation of dogs that is accompanying us to Baja."



Photo by Jason Kabeary

A little bio: Still in Germany, I always had some cacti and succulents, but little did I know about them, except that they fascinated me somehow. When I moved to California, almost 20 years ago, I almost immediately started collecting and at the same time started learning a bit more about these plants. My first exposure was at the Intercity show in 1994. I will never forget when I opened the door and saw all these plants. When we left, my husband made "the biggest mistake of his life" – he took me to the Huntington Botanical Garden. At first collecting started out gradually but after a while, it took on a life of its own. One day I was at a show – not yet showing – and talked to a lady in the sales area whom I proudly told that I had about a hundred plants. The Lady just laughed at me and told me to wait till it was a thousand and more. At this point I laughed and later on told my husband about this "crazy" woman. Well, I am not laughing any longer and have exceeded the thousand quite a while ago – I am the crazy one now, I guess. The Lady, by the way, was Norma Lewis.

Things got "worse" when I became a member of the San Gabriel Cactus and Succulent Society. I immediately "fell" into the hands of some very serious collectors whose knowledge and experience I still greatly profit from today. They got me into showing my plants. Today I am a member of several clubs and I started a business buying and selling succulents, and my business name is Rare Succulents. www.rare-succulents.com. I collect and grow mainly Succulents and here mainly caudiciforms and pachycauls. These plants changed my life quite a bit. For more than 40 years I was a horse person, riding dressage, showing, breeding, brokering and importing dressage horses. Now I am living a dream come true for the past 4 ½ years with acquiring a 4-acre piece of land in Rainbow, California (Northern San Diego County). A very exhausting and time-consuming dream but well worth it for me. If you go to my website and click on the big picture on my home page, you will see a blog my husband maintains and updates from the beginning till almost now and you can see the property developing to what it is now. I was also fortunate enough to travel to Africa with my husband several times and saw some of the plants that so fascinate me in their natural environment.

~ Let's give Petra a warm welcome back to Fresno! ~

PLANTS: Petra will be bringing a nice selection of plants for purchase. If there are any specific plants you want, please contact her at www.rare-succulents.com prior to the meeting.

BJs Brewery
715 East Shaw, Fresno
(559) 570-1900

Menu:

<http://www.bjsrestaurants.com/menu>

DINNER

Begins at 5:00pm

Members are invited to attend.

Contact Rosanna Rojas by
Wednesday, February 5, to
make reservations.

Phone: (559) 999-0017

Email: rfrojas96@gmail.com

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

I hope that most of you have escaped the ravages of the flu, so far, as well as that other nasty bug that has been going around. Please take care of yourselves.

As if the flu weren't enough, we have the bad air that has been a result of the high pressure keeping rain and wind out of the Valley. The warm weather tempts us to get out and work in the yard, but if you have allergies and/or breathing problems that might not be a good idea. And everything is so dry! I've watered my potted plants a bit, but not a lot. Some others in the club have been watering, too. What are we going to do: the plants want to grow!

We had a good meeting last month, even though it was really still part of the holiday season. I want to thank Charlene Stebles and Mark Muradian for handling the plant raffle (Paul had to be somewhere else that evening.) A few months ago, Larry Homan acquired some succulent books that had belonged to the late Sylvia Hardaway. These have been donated to the club and will be on the raffle table each month.

Refreshments: again, we need someone to take over the task of coordinator from Marian Orvis. Marian told me that a husband and wife spoke to her about the job a couple of months ago, but she didn't catch their names. I hope you good folks will come forward again. And, thanks, to all of you who, unprompted, bring goodies each month.

Our next big event is the Fresno Home & Garden Show, March 7-9 at the Fresno Fairgrounds. We will be selling plants, pots and related items, as well as having a display of specimen plants. Dan Gale is in charge; if you would like to be a vendor, get in touch with him: 787-2415. In addition, we will need members to help out during the three days: clerking, cashiering, set up and clean up. Dan will have signup sheets at this meeting. I would like to put out a call for any members who have experience with a cash register, or who are willing to learn, to step forward. The cashiers last year worked long hours; they need people who can give them a break. We need to put some emphasis on the show aspect of the event, as Jennifer Waite, the Chairman, asked me to write some text for the H&G Show Book (handed out at the gate) extolling the wonders of cacti and succulents. Visitors will expect to see some nice plants.

The plant societies will be in the Junior Exhibits Bldg., where we were last year. The layout is almost the same: when you come in the west door, the Orchid Society will be first on your right; then the African Violet Society; the Cactus and Succulent Society; the Bonsai Society; then the Butterfly Adventure exhibit at the end. The left side has been revised, with the speakers' platform and chairs moved up to the front by the office, followed by the Native Plant Society, the Master Gardeners, the Clovis Botanical Garden. The Rose and Iris Societies will be in back, across from the butterfly exhibit. The miniature landscapes from the schools will be on tables near the center aisle.

This is a very heavily attended event, and all participants get a lot of exposure. We should be getting some complimentary tickets for those of you willing to put in a few hours at the event.

I just want to remind you again about renewals. If you're not sure whether you've paid for this year, get in touch with me or Robert Scott. It would be helpful if you could fill out the membership form so that we can be sure to have your correct information for the club roster.

See you at the meeting,

Sue

Club access: President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@csufresno.edu; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, rfrojas96@gmail.com ; Treasurer, Robert Scott, 960-3665, Rob_scott85@yahoo.com ; Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@csufresno.edu; Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 226-0145, mforvet@comcast.net; Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, madeleine43@comcast.net; Webmaster, Vickie Veen, vickieveen@gmail.com; Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, cgg266@comcast.net .

FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING**JANUARY 6, 2014****President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.****Members Present:** Cindy Duwe, Secretary; Robert Scott, Treasurer; Nell Lemke, Board Member; Rudy Rulloda, Board Member; Tom Meyer, Board Member; Dan Gale, Board Member; Larry Homan, Board Member; Fred Gaumer, Affiliate Rep.**Members Absent:** Rosanna Rojas, Vice President; Carole Grosch, Board Member, Larry Homan, Board Member.**Visitors:** Doris Hooton**Old Business:**

- ★ Sue thanked everyone for their work for the club during 2013.
- ★ Sue announced that there is still a need for a person or persons to take over the position of Refreshment Chairperson for 2014.

New Business:

- ★ Dan Gale reported he is asking members to help with the Home and Garden Show in March.
- ★ Cindy Duwe reported on the Bus Trip. She is securing the places to visit, the bus rental, etc.
- ★ Cindy Duwe reported on the annual Show and Sale. It will take place June 7-8, 2014 at the Sierra Vista Mall in Clovis, CA, in Room E115. She is securing the rental space, vendors, food, etc.
- ★ Rudy Rulloda will be in charge of the Floriculture entrants for the club at the 2014 Big Fresno Fair.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Duwe
Secretary

2014 Chairmanships

Annual Show & Sale: Cindy Duwe
 Fair Display: Rudy Rulloda
 Facebook: Janet Moos/Mary Ann Villegas
 Historian: open
 Membership & Hospitality: Tom Meyer, Sue Haffner
 Photographer: Mary Ann Villegas
 Publicity: Carole Grosch
 Publications: Sue Haffner, Carole Grosch, Mary Ann Villegas
 Raffle: Paul Mitchell
 Refreshments: open
 Rules & Parliamentarian: Sue Haffner
 Sunshine: Carole Grosch
 Webmaster: Vickie Veen
 Workshop: Mary Drumheller

BOARD MEETING

Monday, Feb. 10th; 6 p.m.,
 3733 North Sierra Vista Ave.
 Any members are welcome. Board
 members should make a point to
 attend.

RENEWALS

About half of the members have
 renewed for 2014, so far. Please
 renew as soon as possible—we
 don't want to lose you!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: *Nick Wilkinson (7th);*



Mary Drumheller (8th); Lola Sutherland (10th); Paulette Rapisura (14th); Pat La Mont (19th); Nick Deinhart; Alice Rodriguez, Dale Kitchen (25th).

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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Jennifer Meadows, Fresno  
Dale John Kitchen, Fresno

*WELCOME*

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Joyce Quinn (who is planning to move to Tucson early this spring) is ready to start selling plants in the ground in her yard. Call her at 270-5520. Then bring your money and your shovel!

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**HISTORY LAST MONTH:** In the January newsletter I featured a question regarding a 1939 photo of some ladies in Fresno standing in front of a saguaro. The person who submitted it wanted to know where the photo had been taken. I thought it might have been at the Fred Deutsch home on Van Ness Avenue. Then I received an additional photo which clearly showed a greenhouse in the background, so it wasn't the Deutsch home. Later, it was revealed that the lady in the photo had visited Henderson Experimental Gardens on her 1939 visit to Fresno. Could that cactus garden been there? Questions, questions ...

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NEW IN THE CLUB LIBRARY: "Superb Succulents" by Duke Benadom. It has great photography and very informative text. Thanks to Vickie Veen, who helped Madeleine with the library last month.

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**Other lit:** Pacific Horticulture, Winter 2014, has an article on Madame Ganna Walska, the creator of Lotusland. She was a very unique character.

[www.lotusland.org](http://www.lotusland.org) It also has an article on J.C. Forkner: "Fig Gardens: Fresno's Fig King."

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Heirloom Gardener, Winter 2013-2014, has an article on the beobab: "Superfruit: the beobab." It emphasizes uses of the tree and its fruit. A company, Powbab, sustainably harvests beobab fruit in Senegal and sells various beobab products:

www.powbab.com

COMING EVENTS

CLUB WORKSHOP: Wednesday, Feb. 19th; 6 p.m., 3733 N. Sierra Vista; subject Caudiciforms.

We had a well-attended, lively workshop in January. Bill Gale demonstrated his grafting technique. We looked at various grafted plants and discussed issues of current concern (such as the freeze follow-up.) Plan to join us! (Photographs on page 6.)

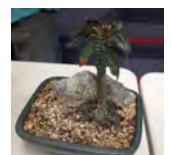
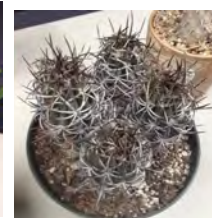
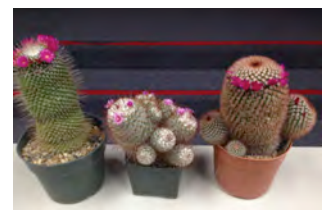
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**BIG EVENT THIS MONTH:** 2014 UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners Smart Gardening Conference, Saturday, Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ramada Hotel, 550 E. Shaw Ave, Fresno. For more information, call 559-241-7515, or see <http://ucanr.org/sgc> Several of our club members are among the speakers: Carolyn Unruh, Russ Lindquist, Ruth Saludes and Beth Teviotdale. This is an all day event, with door prizes, and vendor and exhibit booths. Lunch is included with your registration.

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JANUARY BRAG TABLE: Fred Gaumer brought Copiapoa dura, C. hypogea, C. barquitisensis, Neochilenia occulta, N. senilis, N. maleolata v. lanata, and Pelargonium carnosum. Mark Muradian brought Copiapoa cinerea and a nice limestone rock. Bill Gale showed 3 mammillarias. Anthony Thomas brought Euphorbia inermis and Dorstenia gigas. Bruce Hargreaves showed Euphorbia heptagona. Charlene Stebles brought Euphorbia unispina. Thanks to all of them.

If you have a plant that needs to be identified or on which you have other questions, don't hesitate to bring it to a meeting or a workshop. Other members will be glad to help you.



Getting to Know You...

Madeleine Mitchell

Madeleine has been a member of FC&SS since about 1982, after attending the club's Annual Show and Sale for the first time. She loved the experience; both she and her mother, Bonnie Staley, enjoyed growing succulents on their front porches, so it made sense to want to learn more about them. "I was overwhelmed at the first meeting because the speaker used all Latin names for the plants," she remembers. "I believe that Bruce Hargreaves was the speaker. This was when the club still met at the Best By Far building on Clovis Avenue."

Madeleine has held several positions within the club. She has been a Board member at large, two or three times, secretary for about ten years in the 1980's, President for four years in the 1990's, and held her current position, Librarian, for about four years. She has also been active in the Clovis Botanical Garden Spring Event and helped out with club publicity.

Her favorite cactus is *Astrophytum*; she has a special fondness for succulents, especially *Echeverrias*, *Euphorbias* and *Adeniums*.

Madeleine grew up in Southern California, first living in Van Nuys, then moving to Chatsworth, after marriage and three children. Upon moving to Fresno in 1972, following a divorce, she had a variety of jobs; part-time at Seland Arena, full-time with the IRS, then permanent employment with California Department of Fish and Game in 1973. "This is where I first met Paul Mitchell," she says. "I was the receptionist and had many other clerical duties for two years. Paul was the only person who would come into the office to pick up films. During the summers he was employed thru YCC (Youth Conservation Corp.). He was the environmental educator for the Minarets District of the Sierra National Forest and used some Fish and Game films for his classes. All the other people who used the films just sent me a list of film requests, dates needed, and I mailed them."

Next, she worked for Fresno County Welfare Department as a case worker. In 1978, she enrolled in night classes at Fresno City College, the same time her oldest son began at CSUF.

In the spring of 1984, a group was taking a wildflower walk in the hills just beyond Coalinga, led by Madeleine's biology professor, Bob Winters. The members car-pooled and were able to get better acquainted. "On the hike I noticed that another man knew all the names of the flowers, and many were "belly flowers," so tiny you had to really get close to the ground to see them," says Madeleine. "So, we started to get ahead of the group, just the two of us and 'got acquainted'. We discovered that our paths had crossed through Fish and Game. And the rest is evident; we've been married since 1987. We each have a small greenhouse and collect different plants. After meeting so many great people, we really enjoy the CSSA Conventions, and are looking forward to June 2015 convention in Claremont.

Carole Grosch



FCSS Holiday Dinner, 2004



Madeleine describing plants at the our 'Show & Tell' table.

DORSTENIA

Dorstenias always cast their fascination over succulent growers, both beginners as well as veterans. Their appearance is so strange that I'll quote Fred Dortort from his book, "Timber Press guide to succulent plants of the world": "The first dorstenia I saw looked more like a sculpture of some alien plant form from a science fiction movie than anything that actually existed. With its nearly spherical base, short upright branches that seemed made of shiny, brown plastic, and its apparent flowers—small stars with irregular rays radiating out from a central disc filled with sparkling grains the size of beach sand—it seemed like nothing from Earth, but it was, from Somalia."



There are about 200 species of *Dorstenia* in the fig family (Moraceae), found in the New and Old World tropics, usually in the rain forest understory. The succulent species are the ones most grown by hobbyists, and most of these are native to tropical east Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. These have had to adapt to an increasingly arid environment by developing underground tubers with rosettes of annual leaves or by becoming stem succulents, resembling small 'bottle trees' with greatly enlarged main trunks.

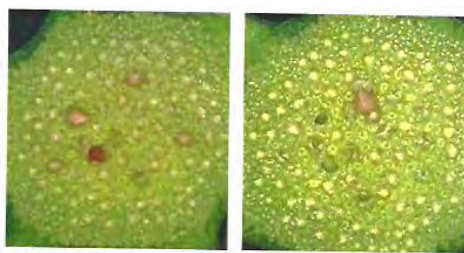
As if dorstenias were not already unique enough, their flowering structure—called a hypanthodium—makes them seem even stranger. This is a fleshy, flat or concave, typically disc-shaped structure filled with tiny simplified flowers. Here's Fred Dortort again: "Think of a fig turned inside out and carved into a child's drawing of the sun with its rays and you will get the general picture. Although in some dorstenias the hypanthodium can be triangular or even almost linear, the star shape is the rule for most species."

When seed has been set in the hypanthodium, on ripening it will be ejected some distance from the parent plant, very like the action of euphorbia seeds. It is a good idea to put some sort of bag on the plant when the seeds appear to be getting ready to explode, or keep the entire plant in some sort of enclosed propagator. Seed germination can be unpredictable. Some growers just leave the seeds where they're ejected, finding that they get better results that way.

The most common dorstenia found in collections is *D. foetida*, (opposite) found over a wide area which includes Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Oman. It appears in a number of different forms, varying in size, branching or leaf shape. Some of these forms are of fairly easy culture; others are difficult. It is closely related to another species, *D. crista*, with which it is often confused. Several unusual dorstenias were discovered in the last botanical expeditions to Somalia, in 1985 and 1986. Follow-up exploration has not been possible, due to the dangerous political situation in the area. Members of the 1986 group had a number of scary encounters with armed men and came close to being thrown into a Somali prison.

All dorstenias need warmth, with some being very intolerant of any cool temperatures. They prefer not to be subject to drying out, either, so need to be watered more frequently than most of your other succulents. A well-draining potting mix is required; otherwise they're not particular about soil.

Below is a close-up of a dorstenia hypanthodium with seeds (from *New Zealand Cactus & Succulent Journal*): Sue



In the first close up photo of the flower look closely and you can see the seeds ready to eject. The second close up photo was taken 4 hours later You can still see the holes were the seeds got ejected. One seed is left to explode at any moment.

References:

- Dortort, Fred. 2011. Timber Press Guide to Succulent Plants of the World. Portland, OR. : Timber Press.
 Jenkins, Tom. 1992. The Genus *Dorstenia*. *The cactus File*, Southampton [U.K.] : Cirio Publishing.
 Lenz, Jurgen. 2013. *Dorstenia foetida*. Ohau, N.Z. : New Zealand Cactus & Succulent Journal.

THE ARTICHOKE CACTUS



The "Artichoke Cactus" is *Obregonia denegrii*, so-called for its superficial resemblance to that notable vegetable. (Actually, I've never heard anyone call it that, but authors of books like to put vernacular names to plants. Hey, if it helps you remember the plant, it makes the practice worth doing, I suppose.)

Obregonia is a monotypic genus, which means that there is only one species. The generic name honors General Alvaro Obregon Salido, President of Mexico from 1920 to 1924, who was in office when the plant was discovered in 1923.

The specific name is for Senor Denegri, Minister of Agriculture during the same period. Some early plant writers classed this plant with *Strombocactus* or *Ariocarpus*. Edward Anderson, in 1967, compared *Obregonia* with *Ariocarpus* and *Lophophora* and determined that it deserved to be ranked as a separate genus.

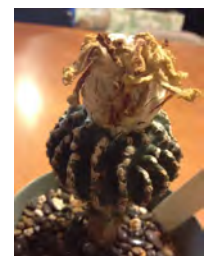
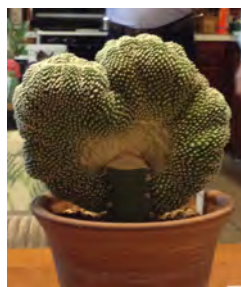
Obregonia is native to a small area in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, in the Valley of Juamave near Ciudad Victoria. Tamaulipas begins at the Texas border and runs south from Brownsville and the Rio Grande Valley, then along the Gulf of Mexico for a few hundred miles. Most of the state is classified as dry or semi-dry, although it does get 23+ inches of rain annually, most of it falling between May and September. The plant grows at an elevation of 2000 feet in relatively flat scrubland and rocky limestone derived soils. It is found low to the ground, often hard to detect. Major threats to it include over-collecting, road building, and land clearing for agriculture and grazing.

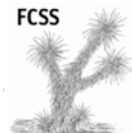
The plant is light green to gray-green in color. Usually it is found as a single head atop a large tuberous tap root. Concentric spiraling triangular flat tubercles lend it a look similar to *Ariocarpus fissuratus*, though in a smaller and more compact arrangement. Tubercles have a small amount of wool at the apex with 3-5 curly short and soft spines at the tip coming from the areole. In habitat plants are small, 3-4 inches tall, but plants in cultivation can be coaxed to grow larger.

Obregonia needs to be kept fairly dry and warm. In habitat it gets plenty of rainfall per year but most of it is in the hot growing season. The winter is much drier. Water accordingly. It will tolerate cold temperatures but not for extended periods. It wants strong light but can be sunburned in direct hot sun in our area. It's perhaps not a plant for beginners, but if you are careful with watering, give it a chance if you see one on the sale table. **Sue**



Bill Gale's grafting presentation at our club workshop





Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

Membership Application / Renewal

Annual Membership Renewal Due January 1st

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 _____

Birthday(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*

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

Signature _____ **Date** _____