

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.org>

Vol.23, No. 6

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

June 2014

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, June 5, 7:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30 P.M.)
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

PROGRAM

Aloes of Southern Africa

By Duke Benadom

This presentation covers Aloe species for all of the southern African countries.



Duke has been involved with several cactus & succulent clubs and is a life member of three. He became a Director for the Cactus & Succulent Society of America (CSSA) in 1990, served as the CSSA's Show Chairman for more than a decade, and as Convention Chairman for six conventions. He served as Vice President and then President for a total of almost ten years, and as Editor of the Cactus & Succulent Journal for just over a year. He has been the author of the long-running CSJ column, *Superb Succulents*, since its inception; that column remains popular today.

Duke's first book, on *Superb Succulents*, was published on September 25, 2013. His second book, *Echinocereus*, is scheduled to go to print at the end of March. Three more books are in process. Updates may be seen at www.SuperbSucculents.com. He enjoys flora and fauna, traveling (returning from Africa on June 2), photography, and sharing these experiences with others of similar interests.

~ Please give Duke a warm welcome back to Fresno! ~

PLANTS: Duke will bring plants for purchase.

Sal's Mexican Restaurant
7476 North Fresno Street, Fresno
(559) 438-3030
Menu:
<http://salsmexicanrestaurants.com/menu/>

DINNER
Begins at 5:00pm

Members are invited to attend.

**Contact Rosanna Rojas by
Wednesday, June 4, to make
reservations.**
Phone: (559) 999-0017
Email: rfrojas96@gmail.com

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

Well, here we are, gang: it's June and Show and Sale time. Can you believe it? Where did the year go? This is our biggest event of the year, our major fund-raiser. Profits we make go to support our programs, meeting room rental, library books, newsletters, and all manner of other club expenses. So it's really important that we have a successful event. You can help by getting out the word to the public and also by spending at least a bit of time helping with the show. Schedule and volunteer information is on page 9 and the Show & Sale Poster is on the last page.

Earlier in May I participated in two events related to water-wise gardening. There is a lot of interest in this subject, which was obvious as more people turned out for these events than the organizers had anticipated. I had brought a carload of plants and cuttings to give away at the May 3rd plant give and take and they were all gone in an hour. (I'll be better prepared next year!) Also helping at this event were Marian Orvis, Larry Carlberg, Ruth Saludes and Madeleine Mitchell. Roz Tampone gave a presentation on dish gardens that I wish I could have attended, but I was too busy at our club table. Carolyn Unruh led a workshop on growing vegetables in the drought, which I'm sure was very interesting, as well. Quite a few of our club members came by to check out the plant giveaways. Afterwards, I toured the CSUF greenhouses to see what they're propagating these days.

The evening before, the Friends of the Madden Library had a program on sustainable landscaping which attracted a lot of people, including a number of our club members. Landscapers John Valentino and Susan Stiltz presented slide programs on low-water yards.

Anyway—bottom line—the interest shown by the public in these two events, as well as the Clovis Botanical Garden "Spring into your garden" in March, leads me to think that we will get a good turnout for our show and sale.

Next month is our July picnic, July 3rd, at Doris Hooton's and Tom Meyer's home, 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno. The club supplies the meat; members bring the rest. Rosanna will have a signup sheet at this meeting. We also have a silent auction.

See you at the meeting—and at the Show and Sale! **Sue**

**Submitted by Joyce Quinn:**

A friend posted this on Facebook. I thought it was a great idea, but I would recommend sealing the cinderblocks with something because they dry out extremely fast.

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**May 5, 2014****President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.**

Members present: Rosanna Rojas, Vice President; Robert Scott, Treasurer; Cindy Duwe, Secretary; Fred Gaumer, CSSA Affiliate Rep; Tom Meyer, Board Member; Nell Lemke, Board Member; Rudy Rulloda, Board Member; Carole Grosch, Board Member, Dan Gale, Board Member. **Members absent:** Larry Homan, Board Member.

Visitors: Mary Drumheller, Susan Cook, Polly Dunklin, Doris Hooton.

Officer Reports:

Sue Haffner reported that there will be two Water Wise events at CSUFresno Friday, May 9, 2014. There will be a plant exchange on Saturday, May 10, 2014.

Robert Scott reported that the club does have money. Anyone wanting to know numbers see him.

Rosanna Rojas reported that Duke Benedom will be the guest speaker for the June meeting.

Old Business:

Cindy Duwe reported on the progress of the upcoming June Show & Sale. She reported on the sign-up sheets passed around at the last meeting. Peter Biersdorfer will be a first time vendor. Show & Sale will take place Saturday, May 7, 2014 from 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 8, 2014 from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Rosanna Rojas requested three tables from the club for the kitchen on June 6, 2014, an extra \$25.00 for food, and two ice chests.

Carole Grosch is doing the Publicity for the Show & Sale.

Polly Dunklin will have 360 postcards printed and will label, stamp and mail them before the Show & Sale.

Sue Haffner will have posters printed announcing the Show & Sale. She will hand them out to members at the Work Shop, May 21, 2014. They will put them in businesses.

Mary Drumheller suggested putting up sandwich boards at the entrance to the mall and to the Show & Sale room.

Robert Scott volunteered to get new signs printed for the sandwich boards. He is also looking into purchasing an I Pad for the club.

Sue Haffner announced the annual Summer Picnic will be held on July 3, 2014, at the home of Tom Meyer and Doris Hooton.

New Business:

Sue reported that the club insurance CGCI renewal is due.

She also reported that she is looking into getting a new business to print the I.D. badges.

Sue asked the Board if they wished to purchase the book, Sedums. Robert Scott moved and Carole Grosch seconded. The motion passed unanimously to purchase the book.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Duwe, Secretary

NO BOARD MEETING THIS MONTH



HAPPY BIRTHDAY—*Charlene Stebles (12th); Frank Orvis, Carolyn Unruh (13th); Larry Homan (21st); Joy Anema (23rd); Steven Westenrider (28th); Sue Loucks (29th); Susan Gardiner (30th).*

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**SAY HELLO TO THIS NEW MEMBER:**

Jim Brummel.

*WELCOME*

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CONGRATULATIONS! Janet and Jason welcomed their new addition, Greyson Hobbes Kabearny, on April 30th; 8 lbs., 11 oz.; 20.5" long; born at Clovis Community Hospital; a new succulent-o-phile, for sure!

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**JUNE REFRESHMENTS:** Heather Bogosian-Franks and Susan Gardiner. *Thank you!*

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CLUB LIBRARY: new in the library is "The Plant Lover's Guide to Sedums" by Brent Horvath.

Check your library books, as Librarian Madeleine Mitchell says that 4 books are currently overdue; 11 are due at this meeting; 6 more are out and due in August, as we don't have access to the library in July, because of the picnic. She would like to remind everyone that 2 books per member can be checked out at any one time and that books can be kept for 2 months as long as no one has requested one of them. Thanks for your consideration.

Looking for books? The Tucson C&S Society is dispersing the inventory of Rainbow Gardens Bookshop. Prices have been slashed by 75%: www.tucsoncactus.org/html/book_bonanza.html

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**Bug spray:** Marian Orvis sent us a note that Listerine is useful as a spray for mosquitoes. At the same time, I noticed a squib in *Mother Earth News* that a good bug deterrent can be made from 2 Tbs. of Listerine and 2 Tbs. of dishwashing detergent in a liter of water. The person sending in the tip says he/she sprays a small wooden branch with this stuff, puts the branch on the picnic table and that it keeps the bugs away from your food. Let us know if it works.

**COMING EVENTS**

**May 31-June 1, Sunset Celebration Weekend Festival**, 80 Willow Rd, Menlo Park; admission, \$20.00; features presentations on succulents, food, travel, etc., by Robin Stockwell, Debra Lee Baldwin and many others.

**\*\*\* June 7-8, OUR SHOW AND SALE \*\*\***

**June 14-15, Los Angeles C&S Society Show & Sale**, Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino; info: [www.lacss-show.com](http://www.lacss-show.com)

**CLUB WORKSHOP; Wed. June 18<sup>th</sup>**, 3733 N. Sierra Vista; 6 p.m. This is an "open" meeting, bring any plants you wish to display, bring any questions you want to discuss.

**June 21-22, San Francisco Succulent & Cactus Society Show & Sale**, San Francisco County Fair Bldg., Golden Gate Park, 1199 9<sup>th</sup> Ave at Lincoln Way; info: [www.sfsucculent.org](http://www.sfsucculent.org)

**June 27-29, CSSA Annual Show & Sale, Huntington Botanic Garden;** plant sale opens Friday, June 27; show opens Saturday, June 28; info: [www.cssainc.org](http://www.cssainc.org)

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The Sacramento C&S Society is inviting us to a special meeting, Monday, June 23rd, 7 p.m. The speaker will be Greg Starr, "Agaves: living sculptures". Greg is an Arizona nurseryman and agave expert. He will be bringing plants and books for sale; Sacramento Garden Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd.

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**FRESNO FAIR:** the Fair schedules are online at [www.fresnofair.com](http://www.fresnofair.com) Hard copies will be in the mail soon.

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Hard copies of additions and corrections to the club roster will be available at this meeting. Be sure to check your entry and let us know of anything we need to fix.

Several name badges for new members will also be available.

Getting to Know You . . .

Jack Loughmiller



Water wise plants have been a favorite of Jack's for many years; In fact, he wants to eliminate the heavy water users in his yard, including grass, in favor of a more sustainable landscape. "I have been using drip irrigation for a long time," he says. "It makes sense to me.

"I like the dangerous cactus," he says. "The more dangerous, the better I like them. I don't like to baby plants and I find cactus take less care than succulents. The plants that survive give me good flowers." Some of his favorites are ferocactus, yucca and mammillaria; the latter because of its many different varieties.

As far as houseplants, "I like what my wife likes," he says.

Jack has been a member of the club for 2-1/2 years. He helps out at the Clovis Botanical Garden when he has the chance and helped to plant Herb Thorne's donated plants in the Garden's dedicated cactus and succulent area.

Another activity was at the Discovery Center. "Tom certainly didn't need help with the Deutsch Garden," he remembers. "During that time, I worked at the Discovery Center for two years."

Jack was born in Oklahoma and raised in Pueblo, Colorado. After finishing school, he spent twenty years in the Seabee Navy Construction Battalion. For a while he lived in New Orleans, "can't beat the restaurants there," he says, until he took a trip to California and Oregon and found Fresno was the best place for jobs. For the next seventeen years, he worked at Foster Farms.

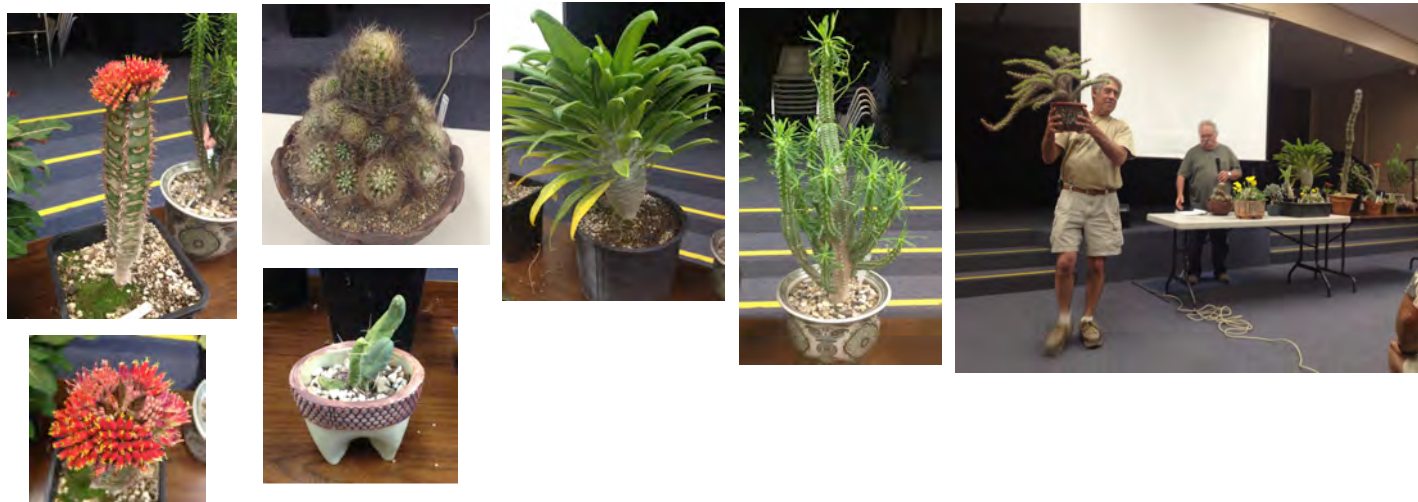
Reading mysteries and historical novels is a favorite pastime. Another activity he enjoys is playing the French game of Petanque (pronounced petak), a rather relaxed game somewhat similar to boules or lawn bowling. Hollow metal balls are thrown as close as possible to a small wooden ball; it is hard to win but easy to play. For a time the Fresno club had over 80 members and was the largest in the U.S.



Now about 40 players meet at Cary Park, south of Macy's, on Wednesday and Sunday mornings at 9:30 to take part in the game. Anyone interested is welcome to come out and join in the fun.

Carole Grosch

MAY BRAG TABLE: Mark Muradian brought *Alluaudia montagnacii*, *Didieria trollii* and *Pachypodium brevicaule x densiflorum*. Bruce Hargreaves displayed *Alluaudia procera* and *Euphorbia heptagona*. Joyce Quinn brought *Didieria madagascariensis*. Bill Gale exhibited *Euphorbia neohumbertii*, *E. milotii*, *Pachypodium baronii windsorii*, *P. densiflorum x brevicaule* and *P. ihosy lamerei*. Frank and Marian Orvis showed an unidentified plant in a pot by Larry Homan. Fred Gaumer brought *Mammillaria parkinsonii*, *Neoporteria senilis*, *Adromischus marianiae*, A. 'Little Sphaeroid' and *Senecio fulgens*. Madeleine Mitchell showed two forms of *Aloe descoingsii* and a *Weingartia lanata* that is 20 years old. Thanks to all who participated.



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### SOILS FOR SUCCULENTS—A NURSERYMAN'S VIEW— By Dan Bach

(The Jan.-Feb. 1998 issue of the *Cactus and Succulent Journal* contains several articles on growing media. This one, by longtime Tucson nurseryman Dan Bach, elucidates what he has learned on this subject.)

A successful medium should provide good physical support for the plant, a reservoir for nutrients and water, plus sufficient drainage and aeration. It must also be consistently reproducible. Commercial growers in particular must consider these things—but they also have additional requirements. It is my intention in this article to explain how, and why, we have evolved our own present medium in the hope that amateur growers may be able to glean some new insights for their own experiments with growing media, for—make no mistake about it—ongoing experimentation is essential in obtaining optimum growth from your plants.

We use a soilless medium because our native soil (the “loam” constituent of the traditional soil mix) may contain pathogens and is variable from source to source ... Following are the points we consider when selecting components for our medium:

- The ingredients must be inexpensive;
- The mix must be reproducible and consistent. Ingredients must be readily available and of the same quality every time;
- It must hold sufficient water and nutrients. Our summer weather is very hot and dry ... irrigation frequency is a significant cost consideration;
- The roots need to be able to penetrate the medium easily;
- The medium should rewet easily—it should not shrink away from the walls of the container as it dries;
- Finally the medium must be lightweight, so that potted plants are easy to lift and transport.

With the above considerations in mind, we have chosen the following ingredients for our medium:

(Continued on following page)

Pumice: A naturally occurring, lightweight, volcanic rock. It is light in color—and weight—and although it resembles perlite it doesn't float on the soil surface during watering. After a California grower reported that pumice from a local source was high in boron content and caused problems, we had a chemical analysis performed on the pumice we use. We recommend this procedure for first-time use—and whenever the source changes—to avoid problems. Pumice evidently varies chemically, depending on the source. This ingredient has proven to be very important for us and has allowed us to eliminate sand and perlite from our medium. Our supplier claims a cation exchange capacity (CEC) for his pumice—this is a fancy term for the ability of a medium or soil to hold nutrients. It has been reported that pumice may indeed have a small CEC potential but that it definitely has micro-pores that do hold moisture and dissolved nutrients.

Peat: We use a high quality Canadian sphagnum peat and it comprises about 20% of our mix. We consider it essential for water and nutrient solution retention. I think of the medium as a battery that stores ingredients for plant growth, and we want to properly and efficiently recharge it every time we irrigate. In addition, we believe that peat may enhance the thermal capacity of the medium and buffers the roots from air temperature extremes.

Mulch: The material we use is a sawmill byproduct and is described by the supplier as a composted forest mulch. We think this means it has simply been allowed to sit long enough for the aromatic compounds to dissipate. Our experience shows it is not good to use mulch which smells like freshly cut pine trees. There has been some interesting research which indicates that mulch of this nature has natural fungicidal properties.

Amendments: 1) Osmocote. This is a slow-release encapsulated fertilizer. We use NPK 18-6-12 which is designed to release over a 8-9 month period. In our heat it may not last that long, but it does make nutrient-dense areas that are available to root-hairs as they expand through the medium. We transplant very large numbers of small seedlings with limited root systems and believe this type of fertilization is important for re-establishment. Our experience indicates that liquid feeding immediately after transplant is inefficient due to the lack of root-hairs. Using Osmocote allows us to go a month or more before we have to liquid feed. 2) Lime. This is agricultural lime ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ), not the lime used to make mortar. The product we use is ground-up dolomite limestone rock pelletized to make it dissolve slowly. Without lime the pH of our medium is 5.5. Adding lime adjusts pH to 7.0 which reduces the virility of the pathogen *Fusarium oxysporum*. Plant growth for us is excellent within the range 5.5 to 7.0, and I do not recommend adjusting the pH unless there is a *Fusarium* problem. Lime is also a rich source of calcium, which has been shown to increase disease resistance. 3) Phosphorus. The solubility of this nutrient is a concern, especially above pH 7.0. We incorporate granular NPK 0-45-0 (triple super phosphate) into the medium so that it is readily available for root absorption. We don't want the medium to become deficient in this nutrient, because it is responsible for strong root systems. It also significantly increases flowering. 4) Potassium. We add granular potassium which has been repeatedly associated with disease resistance.

This, then, represented our current growing medium. It is the result of much experimentation and is producing excellent results for us ... Even though we have been growing cacti and succulents for many years, we feel that we are still at the low end of the learning curve, and we know that further experimentation will lead to better growing media. If you are a beginning grower, don't be afraid to experiment also—there is much to be learned from reading, use of the Internet and drawing on the experiences of others ... Just remember: if you are going to find the medium that best meets your needs, there is no substitute for investigation and experimentation.



## SHOW & SALE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



**Yes, we need you club members to volunteer even just a bit of your time to help with the Show and Sale. Don't think of it as work; think of it as a way to contribute to the club, to get better acquainted with other members. Here's how you can help:**

Room set-up, Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.—to whenever the vendors get all situated. Cindy Duwe, Show Chairman, has a floor plan, so we just need to arrange the tables and cover them. Then we help the vendors bring in their plants. We usually allow those who help to do some early shopping. Bring boxes for the public; beer and soda flats or other small boxes; those with high sides are useful for tall plants.

Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8: we need members to serve as cashiers, cashier's assistants, greeters, security, helping customers out with their plants, information table, etc.

Club sales table: these are plants and other items donated to the club (pots, books, misc. items). We need at least a few members who will staff the table, help with pricing, talk to visitors, etc. Mostly, we need your donations!

Food: we have a back room for food for vendors and workers. Feel free to bring snacks and other finger foods. We will have meat from our caterer, plus cold drinks. Make sure the food you bring does not require refrigeration, but can sit at room temperature all day. (Or bring a cooler.)

Sunday clean-up: help vendors out with their plants; collect table covers; fold and stack tables and chairs; vacuum. We have one shop vacuum promised, could use another. Cindy would like members to commit to taking several of the table covers to launder, fold and return.

*Many hands make light work* – Old English proverb



**CSSA ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE:** Website: <http://cssashow.com>

The Huntington has issued an updated admission policy to the June 27-29 Show and Sale. This event will no longer be free to the public without paying the general admission fee. However, all CSSA members, affiliate club members, vendors and show participants/volunteers will have free entrance as follows: club name badges **MUST** be worn. The HBG has issued special CSSA passes, good for 3 days, to all Affiliate Representatives in each club. Fred Gaumer is our Rep and he says he has about 20 passes, so see him at this meeting. If you plan to be there for more than one day, pin the pass to your shirt. If you will be there just the one day, peel off the back paper and stick it on your shirt. This is our annual national show and sale, and the show plants are amazing. Any other questions, see Fred.



# Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale



Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> - 10am – 6pm

Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup> - 11am – 5pm

## Sierra Vista Mall

Southeast corner at Shaw & Clovis Avenues

Exhibition of unusual plants  
Vendors offering quality cactus and succulents for sale  
Experts on hand to answer your questions

[www.fresnocss.org](http://www.fresnocss.org) or Visit us on Facebook