

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.org>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

October 2014

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

Pediocactus and Sclerocactus; A Tour of the Colorado Plateau

Presenter: Rob Skillin

This month's program will feature two little known genera of American cacti: *Pediocactus* and *Sclerocactus*. Presented by the Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society's Rob Skillin, the program highlights the best of 25 years of field study during which Rob photographed all species of the two groups, as well as the magnificent landscapes of the Southwestern US. He will explain

what these plants are, where they are found, the often very specialized environmental conditions they have adapted to, and why they are so seldom grown in plant collections. Come to this month's meeting and learn about the smallest US cactus, the rarest US cactus, and the most widespread genus you've never heard of.

I have been growing cacti and succulents for approximately 36 years, and have been involved in various local societies for most of that time. The first office I held was Show and Sale Chairman for the Santa Barbara C&SS, during the late 1980's. After moving to California's Central Valley, I became a founding member, and later, President of the Bakersfield C&SS. In 2005, after another move, I was a founder the Central Coast C&SS and became its first President. This society now boasts 250 enthusiastic members, and held its very successful eighth annual show and sale in May of 2014. I have also been involved with the CSSA as a member of its Board of Directors.

My first interest, which continues today, was cacti of the Chihuahuan desert, especially those unique genera such as *Ariocarpus*, *Aztekium*, and *Strombocactus*, etc. Gradually, I diversified my collection to include Mesembs, *Haworthias*, and other succulents, particularly caudiciforms. I've spent many years studying the cacti of the US, particularly *Sclerocacti* and *Pediocacti*. I am an avid grower of plants from seed, and now have a number of seed-grown specimens in my collection dating back to 1982. As an acknowledgment my expertise with these plants, I have been asked to judge numerous shows throughout California, including the CSSA, Intercity, NORCAL, LA, and San Diego shows.

Along with my interest in cacti and succulents, I enjoy photography and travel. These interests have come together in a wonderful way during my botanical explorations of the western US and Mexico, and portions of South America, Africa, Madagascar and the Middle East. I have several programs based on these trips, and I speak regularly to clubs in northern and southern California. Many of my photographs have been published as illustrations for articles in the *Journal*, as well as on its cover, and that of *Haseltonia*.

Let's give Rob a warm welcome back to our club!

PLANTS: Rob will be bringing a great selection plants for you to purchase.

~ DINNER ~

Toledo's Mexican Restaurant
367 E Shaw Avenue, Fresno
(559) 438-3030. Menu:
<http://toledosmexicanfood.com/menu/>

Begins at 5 pm
Members are invited
to attend.

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



Photo of *Pediocactus bradyi* by Rob Skillin.

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

October is a busy month for us, mostly because of the Big Fresno Fair. As you know, our members are major exhibitors of succulent plants in the Greenhouse Building. We always like to have a nice show, as it is, in a way, an advertisement for our club and hobby. Our members can sign up for a session or sessions of keeping watch on the plants. You can engage with the public, answering questions and handing out club information. (It's really more fun than it might sound.) For exhibitors: note that the Fair ends on a Monday this year, so the following Tuesday and Wednesday are for picking up your entries. If you have any questions about the Fair, be sure to talk to Rudy Rulloda.

Our Members' Sale Night in September seemed to go well. Customers were coming in even before the announced 6:30 starting time. (Our advertised time for the sale was 6:30 to 9 p.m. As most of the customers were gone by 8:30, we started packing up, but we need to consider observing our announced hours, just to be fair to all vendors.) The club table brought in over \$560, so many thanks to all who donated plants and related items, as well as to those who worked the table (Sue, Madeleine, Fred, Rob, Polly, Mary Ann, and others.) This month's speaker is one of our favorites, Rob Skillin. He always brings great sale plants, too. Hope to see you at the meeting, *Sue*



Club member bus trip participants. Photos by Roz Tampone and Dennis Anderson.

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SUMMARY OF BOARD MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 8, 2014

Called to order at 6:00 p.m., at the home of Doris Hooton and Tom Meyer. Present: Sue Haffner, Fred Gaumer, Rudy Rulloda, Tom Meyer, Cindy Duwe, Dan Gale, Rob Scott, Nell Lemke. Absent: Rosanna Rojas, Carole Grosch, Larry Homan. Visitors: Mary Drumheller, Susan Cook, Polly Dunklin.

President's report: our web-hosting bill needs to be paid, plus our memberships in Tree Fresno and the Clovis Botanical Garden.

Programs: the Vice President was absent due to an issue at work. Discussed was the book collection that Jo Ann Caufield wishes to donate to the club for us to sell. This will occur at one of the monthly meetings. More information will be forthcoming.

Treasurer's report: Treasurer Rob Scott reported that the club table at Members' Sale Night took in \$562.00.

Old business:

Members' Sale Night recap: a lot of plant questions were asked by the public. We should probably have some sort of information table next time. It was noted that customers were coming in at 6 p.m. (early). Mary Drumheller noted that our publicity stated that the sale hours were 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., yet most of the vendors were packing up by 8:30. We should observe our published hours.

Bus trip: Cindy Duwe said 35 had signed up for the trip and that she needed a check for the bus company.

Fair: We need to have people sign up to volunteer in the floriculture building. Rudy will have signup sheets at the Oct. meeting.

Nominating Committee: Susan Cook, Mary Ann Villegas and Fred Gaumer were working on a slate of officers.

Christmas party: Nell Lemke will have signup sheets starting at the Oct. meeting.

New business:

The President noted that we have for a long time had an informal practice of regarding those who pay dues late in the year—October and later—to be paid for the upcoming year. Yet we have not noted this policy anywhere. We need to update our membership form to show this. It would also involve revising our Standing Rules regarding membership. This will be presented for a vote at the October meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50. Sue Haffner (for Cindy Duwe)

BUSINESS THIS MONTH

There are several items of business to be brought to the members this month:

1. Officer nominations: the Nominating Committee (Mary Ann Villegas, Susan Cook and Fred Gaumer) will present a slate of 2015 officers. The list will be published in the November newsletter and voting will take place at the November meeting.
2. Date for 2015 club picnic: It has been proposed to hold next year's picnic in May (first Thursday, May 7th.) A vote will be taken on this.
3. Change to Standing Rules: For some years our informal practice has been to allow those who join and pay dues late in the year (October-December) to have their dues be good for the upcoming year. But we have never put this in writing. We need to add a sentence to the Rules under Membership: "Annual dues shall be \$15.00 per year for individual membership or \$25.00 per year for the family membership. Dues are payable January 1 of each year. **Dues paid late in the year, October-December, will be considered payment for the upcoming year.** Dues will be delinquent if unpaid by the time of the February membership meeting. Delinquent members will be dropped from membership, but may be reinstated at any time by the full payment of the annual dues and any unpaid debts to the Society." A vote will be taken on this, as well.

BOARD MEETING



Monday, October 6th, 6 p.m., 3733 North Sierra Vista, Fresno. This is our annual budget meeting. We will set our budget for 2015. Any member is welcome to attend.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

Karl Church, Jason Kabeary,
Mary Westenrider (2nd);
Paul Mitchell (9th); Rudy Rapisura
(17th); Marian Orvis (20th).

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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Daniel and Mary Fabela, Clovis.

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COMING EVENTS

Oct. 1-13, Big Fresno Fair.

Oct. 11-12, Bakersfield C&S Society show & sale,
East Hills Mapp, 3201 F St., Bakersfield
www.bakersfieldcactus.org

Oct. 18, Water Wise Plant Sale, Clovis Botanical
Garden, hours: 8 a.m. to noon.

Oct. 25, UC Davis Fall Plant Sale; hours,
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. www.arboretum.ucdavis.edu

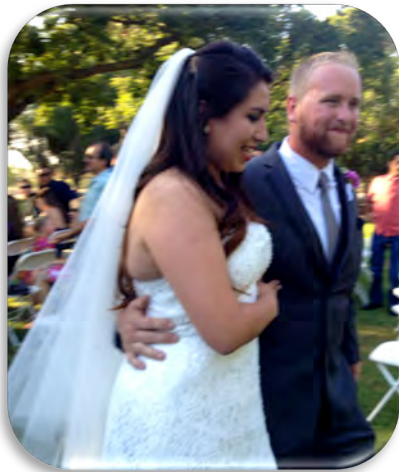
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**CLUB WORKSHOP:** The workshop will be Wed.,  
Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista; topic is  
“Your Favorite Plant”. Of course, you can bring  
any plant you want to show off, or ask any  
question you have.

Last month Mary Ann asked when was the best  
time to water: early or late in the day. Comments  
varied. Some people have to water when they have  
the opportunity. Fred suggested watering in the  
evening to lessen the probability of water spotting.  
He cited Steven Hammer as the authority for this.

Jack Fleming brought a couple of pots of  
*Albuca* bulbs, a winter-grower for us. His plants  
were all leafed out because he'd been watering  
them. A lot of us have seen pots of *Albuca spiralis*  
for sale, with its corkscrew-like foliage. We bring  
them back here and the leaves lose their twisty  
characteristic. Jack says that's because these  
plants need full sun but that the full sun in Fresno  
is too hot for them. (One of the first things we  
succulent-o-philes learn here is that plants grown  
in southern California or over on the coast will  
eventually change in some way, once they're  
exposed to our hot, arid climate.)

If you want to “get down in the weeds” about  
plants, make it a point to drop by the workshop.



**CONGRATULATIONS:**

Billy Gale and  
Vanessa Gayton  
were married  
Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> in a  
ceremony at  
Woodward Park,  
with family and friends  
in attendance. Our  
best wishes go out  
to Mr. and Mrs. Gale.

Photo by Mary Ann Villegas.

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MORE CONGRATS: our youngest member,
Sean Glitch, won a bunch of ribbons at the Madera Fair
this year. Four of the awards were in the Junior Division;
the rest were in the Open Division. One of his entries
was a succulent wreath. The floriculture chairman was
so impressed that she asked him to do a demonstration
next year on how to construct one of these wreathes.
Sean, who celebrates his 10th birthday on Sept. 30th,
showed off his awards at the Sept. workshop.



Photo by Mary Ann Villegas.

For Sale: specimen *Monadenium elegans x torrei* (wild
x), in a Jim Stephenson pot. Call Jack: 559-227-9915.



Photos by Mary Ann Villegas.

BUS TRIP TO THE BAY AREA

We had an enjoyable trip up to the UC Berkeley Botanical Garden on Sept. 20th, with 29 members and friends on the bus. Several who had signed up had to drop out at the last minute; their fares will be refunded. As we left, the driver asked if we would revise our itinerary to take Hwy 99 up to Hwy 120, instead of cutting over to Los Banos, as it's a faster route to the East Bay. We just stopped at a different McDonald's, is all. People were not deprived of their Egg McMuffins.

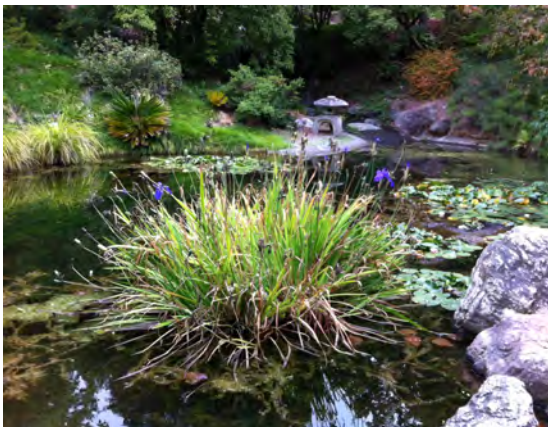
The fog crept in as we approached the Bay, and turning off into the narrow, leafy streets of Berkeley, it felt to me as though we were entering a different planet—one that was green, cool and overcast. Strawberry Canyon, site of the Botanical Garden, is accessed via a narrow road up behind the football stadium. We were divided into four groups and different docents took us off on a gallop through the gardens. We were especially interested in the Arid House, which contains an extensive cactus and succulent collection. Now, these are not show plants; some have been in the collection for decades and have a rather beaten-down look, but they are excellent for reference purposes. In the lobby of the greenhouse you can get close views of specimen plants, some of them quite amazing. After the tours, some of us had our lunches while others ravaged the plant sales area.

Then the bus took us along a circuitous route to Annie's Annuals and Perennials Nursery in Richmond. (I don't know if there was another way to go, but some of the hairpin turns had me hiding my eyes. I admit I've always been too chicken to drive in Berkeley, have only ever gone there as someone's passenger. Even being a pedestrian there can be a challenge, as if you stand still too long someone will probably park on you.) Our driver deserves high marks for Urban Driving 101—and not being shy about using the horn.

The fog burned off as we approached Richmond, a city that could use some TLC. Annie's is a bright spot of color in a light industrial area. The planting beds in and around the nursery are ablaze with creative landscaping and the nursery is laid out in such a way as to provide easy access to the plants. Most of us were interested in the succulents and drought tolerant areas, but many interesting varieties are available. It would be nice to go there and browse; the place is not far from a freeway 80 exit.

On the way home we stopped for dinner at Espana's in Los Banos. If you haven't been there in awhile, you'll see that they've expanded the parking lot, having taken out the trees that used to line the east side of the entrance. The restaurant is still a busy, bustling place.

All in all, I think everyone had a good time on the trip, and have their new plant purchases as souvenirs. Thanks to Cindy Duwe for handling the details—and to Roz Tampone for guiding the driver through the streets. *Sue*



Japanese Garden originally donated to the USA in 1933 by Japan. Brought here for World's Fair and Japan chose to donate it instead of shipping it home.



Photos and information provided by Polly Dunklin



Puya raimondii – This is the largest bromeliad in the world. Stalk can be up to 30ft and have over ten thousand flowers and set 8 – 12 million seeds!

Getting to Know You . . .

Carole Bailey

A lifelong resident of Fresno, Carole Bailey was the kitchen manager and head cook at a Fresno State sorority for twenty-four years. Not only did she provide her culinary skills for the sorority sisters, she was a trusted friend and confidant.

"I loved it," she says. "I met a lot of wonderful ladies over the years...it was a big part of my life." It was a bond that lasted - over time, she has kept in contact with several of those ladies.

Another interest is the Red Hat Society that she has belonged to for the past thirteen years. Members dress up in purple with red hats and to have fun and plan special events throughout the year.

Carole has been a member of FCS&S for over 1-1/2 years. This year she helped at the Show and Sale providing boxes and enjoyed talking to people at the information table. She was interested in joining the club earlier, but belonged to the Turtle Club; their meetings were also the first Thursday of each month. Once their schedule changed to the second Thursday of the month, she able to attend the FC&SS meetings on the first Thursday.

"I like going to the club meetings, listening to the speakers and seeing unusual plants," she says. "I've had plants for years and years, but didn't know what they were. The members are here friendly - my questions have always been answered.

"Oh, I like succulents, there's such a variety," Carole says. "A lot of them, you don't want to touch, they're so pretty." Tiger jaws or *Faucaria tigrina* she finds particularly interesting as well as other unusual looking specimens.

"Don't overwater," she cautions, as advice for healthy plants. "I find I mist more than water."

Carole has lived in her home thirty years, and describes her yard as having a "natural landscape." Along with plants, she cares for different types of turtles, box and pond turtles, among them, as well as bullfrogs.

"I enjoy going to the club meetings, seeing friends and listening to the speakers," she says. "There are always unusual plants to see."

Carole Grosch



Carole sitting with Madeleine at our Show & Sale last month. (Photo by Mary Ann Villegas.)



Photos from our Member's Sale last month by Mary Ann Villegas.



SUCCULENT PUMPKINS

Submitted by Roz Tampone

Have you ever thought of tantalizing your succulent whimsy? With Halloween and Thanksgiving just around the corner, I think you might like this craft. If you enjoy creating succulent containers, you'll enjoy making this pumpkin succulent.

Materials:

- Clean 8-12 " pumpkin with a concave top, remove stem (the more unusual the better)
- Sphagnum moss
- Spray adhesive
- Clear gel glue-hot glue gun
- Woody seedpods, acorns, rosehips, nuts in shells
- Few clusters of red berries, pyracantha, red pepper, cottoneaster
- Assortment of small, colorful succulents
- Scissors

Succulents: Aeoniums, crassula, echeveria, graptosedum, haworthia, kalanchoe, assorted sedums

Directions:

1. Coat the pumpkins bowl shape top with spray glue.
2. Press dry moss onto the glue to form a ½' thick bed.
3. Using the hot glue gun, glue the bottoms of the succulent rosettes atop the moss, beginning with the largest succulents, a little off center and adding smaller ones as you work outward.
4. Intermingle with the other dried berries, nuts, cones and acorns.
5. Surround the center rosettes with smaller succulents like sedums.
6. As you add more cuttings, and dry items, aim for balance and variety.
7. You want to have an abundant look with no moss showing. Plus, an eclectic mixture of colors and textures.
8. Using scissors trim the excess moss.

Once or twice a week, spritz the arrangement with water to refresh the leaves and moss. Do not let water pool in the top of the pumpkin. A cool, dry location is best. If you leave it outside, place it on a trivet, not on concrete, where air can circulate. Protect the pumpkin from frost. To salvage the succulents, take cuttings. Or, just set the pumpkin in the garden, You can even slice the top off and plant it.





OXALIS GIGANTEA

Hard as it may be to believe—especially if you are constantly pulling the weedy ones out of your yard—the oxalis family contains many species grown as ornamentals in various parts of the world. Some are delicate succulents for greenhouse culture; others are suitable for the flowerbed. There are about twenty succulent species. Most of these are found in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, from near sea level to over 10,000 feet in altitude.

Perhaps the most outstanding and unique member of the genus is *O. gigantea*. It comes from Chile, with a wide distribution along coastal desert cliffs in the provinces of Antofagasta, Atacama and Coquimbo. It is a branching shrub up to 6 feet tall, with woody bark-covered stems. The leaves appear in sheaves along the stems; the large flowers are yellow.

All groups in the genus *Oxalis* exhibit turgor or “sleep” movements caused by the loss of water pressure in leaf cushions at the bases of the leaves whenever photosynthesis halts. At night or in heavy shade the leaflets close together and the plant appears wilted. (If this occurs in sunshine, the plant is wilted!)

Oxalis gigantea has been grown in California for years. If you recall the former Abbey Gardens Nursery in Carpinteria, they had a huge one growing by the front door to the place. In mild climates it grows and blooms the year round. But it will become almost leafless at the beginning of summer if not kept well watered. It needs full sun to grow and bloom well and is not particular about soil, though it should have good drainage, either in a pot or in the ground.

CYCADS: CELEBRATING 12 MILLION YEARS ON EARTH!

A lot of succulent growers have a cycad or two in their collections. The so-called “Sago Palm”, *Cycas revoluta*, is the most common. Modern forms of the cycads have existed for 12 million years; their ancestors date back to the Permian period, 280 million years ago. They even predate the dinosaurs!

Of the eleven genera of cycads, five are native to the Western Hemisphere: *Ceratozamia*, *Chigua*, *Dioon*, *Microcycas*, and *Zamia*. Six genera are found in the Eastern Hemisphere: *Bowenia*, *Cycas*, *Encephalartos*, *Lepidozamia*, *Macrozamia*, and *Stangeria*. They grow in tropical and subtropical regions, and are monoecious, meaning they produce separate “male” pollen producing and “female” seed producing plants. Like the pines, they are gymnosperms, or “naked seed” plants.

To reproduce sexually, cycads produce cones like the pines. The pollinator is usually a beetle—as these plants evolved long before bees were around. The beetles will consume much of the male cone, which is not toxic to them. In the process they become covered with pollen. At night the female cone, which has opened her cone scales, can raise her temperature 10 degrees Celsius above the ambient air, providing a nice warm place for the beetles to spend the night. The insects do not damage the female cone because it is highly toxic. However, by spending the night, they do transfer the pollen they’ve brought with them. The pollen grain will stick to a small nectar droplet at the tip of the seed that is called the micropyle. This is drawn into the seed and a pollen tube begins to grow. Several months pass before the sperm can finally “swim” up the pollen tube and fertilize the female’s egg sac, an amazingly complex process.

At the San Diego Botanic Garden they lack the requisite beetles, so pollinate their cycads by hand. They keep harvested pollen at 0 degrees F. When a female cone of that species is receptive, they mix a small amount of the pollen in water and use a syringe to inject the pollen/water solution into the female cone. Then they wait 3-6 months for the cone to disintegrate so they can harvest the seed. More waiting: 6-8 months later they check the seeds for viability by flotation. The sinkers are probably fertile; the floaters are not.

(From: *Quail Tracks* (Oct-Dec 2014), the newsletter of the San Diego Botanic Garden)

