

CACTUS CORNER NEWS
Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society
www.fresnocss.com (new website)

Vol. 33, no. 9

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

September 2015

NEXT MEETING (See Below):

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE . . .
FRESNO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEMBERS' SALE NIGHT

Thursday, September 3rd, 6:30 PM
(Vendors set up at 5:30 PM)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno

Pots, plants, plant cuttings, books, garden decorations and other hobby related items will be available for purchase from our club members at very reasonable prices.



Generous club members will contribute delicious refreshments.

Join us for an enjoyable evening!

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

September ushers in a busy season for us. This month is our Members' Sale Night, and it appears we may have a record number of vendors. There will be all nature of cacti and succulents for sale, as well as pottery, books, etc. Here is your opportunity to pick up some real bargains, so I hope you all can attend—and bring your friends and neighbors! Our club sale table will hold plants and other items donated for benefit of the club. If you would like to donate a plant or two that you think someone might buy, please do; we'll appreciate it.

We will use the tables at the DHHSC as well as our own tables; some vendors will bring their own, but we might be short. If you have a folding table, why not bring it with you—a vendor might be able to use it.

Refreshments: we intended to have a signup sheet last month so that volunteers could indicate their willingness to bring refreshments, but everybody forgot. So, please bring something to help feed the vendors and customers. Thanks!

Vendors should remember to bring small change, as well as boxes. We hope everyone has a profitable evening.

The Big Fresno Fair is on the horizon. It's not too late to get a premium book or to check the exhibits schedules online. See Rudy Rulloda's article elsewhere in the newsletter. We need to encourage members to enter plants, as it's a good advertisement for our hobby and our club. If you can't do that, you can spend a couple of hours monitoring the cactus and succulent exhibit area, meeting the public, answering questions, etc. For that, you can get a gate pass from Rudy that will get you in free. He will have a signup sheet at his table.

Our annual bus trip will be later this month, Saturday, Sept. 19th. The itinerary is elsewhere in the newsletter. Many thanks to Cindy Duwe and Polly Dunklin for taking care of the details involved in this. There are still seats on the bus, so if you want to go get your checks to Cindy.

Thanks very much to Karl Church and Charlene Stebles for standing in for Paul and Madeleine Mitchell last month. The Plant Opportunity Table and the club library are two big jobs. We hope Paul and Madeleine had a relaxing time on their cruise.

In this newsletter, I included an article on potting mixes by Dr. Roger Brown. Now, there is hardly a more contentious issue among succulent growers than their potting mixes. Get a dozen growers together and they'll come up with a dozen different "recipes." As you read the article, remember that Dr. Brown grows his plants in the Midwest, in an area with much different temperature and natural light than we have here. Still, there are always interesting points to be found in any such article. Dr. Brown has been a speaker at CSSA Conventions at times in the past. He has a confident and persuasive demeanor. I recall a past Convention where he had described his growing regimen and seemed to be prescribing it generally. A day or so later, I was on a bus to a field trip seated next to a fellow who spent the entire trip disputing everything Dr. Brown had said.

So, read books and articles; talk to other growers; try and see what works for you. As they say, "Your mileage may vary."

See you at the sale,

Sue

BOARD MEETING

**Tuesday, September 8th, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista.
All members are welcome to attend. Board members
should let Sue know if they cannot be there.**



FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING MINUTES 10 AUGUST, 2015

President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Robert Scott, treasurer; Cindy Duwe, Secretary; Rosanna Rojas, Vice President; Fred Gaumer, CSAA Affiliate; Tom Meyer, Board Member; Mary Drumheller, Board Member; Rudy Rulloda, Board Member; Polly Dunklin, Board Member; Carole Grosch, Board Member, Ann Bierbower, Board Member

Absent: None

Officer Reports:

President: Sue Haffner told the board that the website domain expired August 8, 2015. The new domain is FresnoCCS.com. **Vice President:** Rosanna Rojas announced the speaker for the November, 2015 meeting is Robert Scott. Petra Crist is the tentative speaker for January, 2016. Peter Walkoviak is scheduled to be the speaker August, 2016.

Treasurer: Robert Scott announced the club has \$11,825.22 in the account as of August 1, 2015

Old Business:

Polly Dunklin printed 400 postcards for the upcoming Members' Night Sale. She will mail them approximately one week before the Sale. The Board decided that it is permissible to sell plants besides cactus and succulents.

Cindy Duwe reported that the bus trip on September 19, 2015 has 25 members signed up so far. The dead line for refunds is September 12, 2015. Emergency information will be obtained before the trip.

Sue reminded everyone that the club needs someone to design a logo for t-shirts.

Ann Bierbower has received some photos from members of their yards to be included in the portfolio of drought tolerant plants.

New Business: Rudy Rulloda announced that deadline for submitting forms for entering plants in the Fresno Fair is September 14, 2015.

Sue announced a Nominating Committee is needed in September to nominate officers for next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Duwe, Secretary



For those planning to enter their plants in the Fresno Fair the entry deadline is September 12th (hard copy) and September 14th (online).

Fair will receive your plants on Oct 3th (Saturday) and 4th (Sunday). Fair will be open on the October 7 (Wednesday) through October 18 (Sunday). We will need volunteers to watch our plants and provide information on our club and about caring about cacti and succulents. A two-hour watch is required in order to receive a free parking and admission tickets. At least two volunteers on a two-hour watch. The time schedule for volunteering will be available at the September meeting.

Rudy Rulloda, Chair

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: *Janet Moos (4th); Cheryl Berman (9th); Karen Wood (10th); Jack Fleming (11th); Susan Cook (12th); Polly Dunklin (20th); Jo Ann Caulfield (21st); Rebekah Carlson (23rd); Linda Olivas (24th); Roz Tampone (28th); Polly Hargreaves (29th); Sean Glitch (30th).*



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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Eddie Etheridge, Fresno  
 Craig Roberts, Madera  
 Karen and Drew Wood, Sanger  
 Janet Brummel, Fresno  
 Marce Ramirez and Patricia Miller, Fresno

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Visitors last month: Patty Miller, Elizabeth Ortiz, Eddie Etheridge, Carlos Maciel, Robin Locktov, Dixie Lopez, Craig Roberts, Marth Mejia, Lisa Orbeta.

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**Just a reminder:** if you bring a friend to the meeting, be sure to have them sign the visitor's book. If you are talking to a visitor, be sure to ask if they've signed our book (and we like to have contact info, also, email or mailing address, so we can send them flyers, etc.)

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Condolences go out to Ani Chamichian, whose mother passed away on August 13th.



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**CLUB WORKSHOP:** Wednesday, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno. All members are welcome; subjects: genera starting with I-J-K-L. We've also had a request from a newer member that we discuss potting mixes. We had a good turnout last month, looking at haworthias, gasterias, gymnocalyciums, etc.



**BIG EVENTS THIS MONTH**

September 25-26, 5<sup>th</sup> **Annual Succulent Extravaganza, Succulent Gardens**, 2133 Elkhorn Rd, Castroville; for more information: 831/632-0483; <http://sgplants.com>

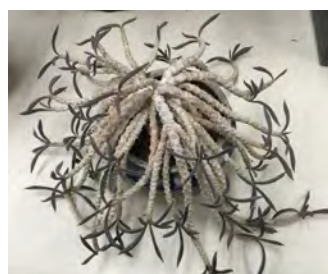
September 26-27, Fall Show & Sale, **Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society**; San Juan Bautista Community Hall, 10 San Jose St., San Juan Bautista; hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 9-4.

Looking ahead: **Clovis Botanical Garden** will hold their fall water-wise plant sale and fair, Saturday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be more information later.

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"Hot August Night": Brag Table; Fred Gaumer displayed *Mammillaria napina*, *Neochilenia molleolata v. lanata*, *Pyrrhocactus bulbocalyx*, *Neowerdermanniana vorwerkii* and *Mammillaria pectinifera*; Bill Gale brought *Euphorbia cremersii*, a mammillaria and an astrophytum; Mary Ann Villegas exhibited *Thelocactus buekii* and *Echinofossulocactus phyllacanthus*; Eddie Etheridge brought *Ariocarpus retusus*; Sue Haffner showed *Epithelantha micromeris*; Bruce Hargreaves displayed *Leuchtenbergia principis*; Mark Muradian brought a yellow flowered adenium; and Charlene Stebles brought a leuchtenbergia and two euphorbias. We thank them all for sharing.

(Photos: Mary Ann Villegas)



ORNAMENTAL AND DROUGHT TOLERANT GRASSES

Enough has been written about the current drought that I won't belabor the point here. However, an upside to all this might be the way we look at lawns and landscaping. High maintenance green turf has given way to wiser options.

Once established, ornamental grasses work well with our climate and are pretty much low maintenance. They can be used in conjunction with other plants and hardscapes, plus they add interest and can delineate or decorate a space. And - you guessed it - they're not thirsty. Here are just a few:



Maiden Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus')

Zones 4-9 With its coppery orange plumes in the fall and clumping narrow green blades other times of the year, Maiden Grass wants full sun, average soil and grows to 6 feet tall and clumps to 8 feet wide. Hardy to -10 degrees.

Photo: Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Plantfinder

Blue Oatgrass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*)

Zones 5-9 Blue-gray narrow leaves form a fountain-like clump and looks a bit like blue fescue. In spring, stems 2 feet or taller with yellow flower clusters, rise above the foliage. Likes full sun, rich, well-drained soil and can grow to 4 feet tall. Hardy to -20 degrees.

Photo: Courtesy Magnolia Gardens Nursery



Blue Panic Grass (*Panicum virgatum*)

Zones 5-9 Deep green or gray-green foliage form clumps of up to 4 feet wide. In summer, narrow pink flower clusters rise above the foliage. Grow in full sun or light shade. Hardy to -10 degrees.

Photo: GAP Photos/Richard Bloom

Zebra Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus')

Zones 4-9 Broadly arching leaves with a yellow band, leaves tend to flop when silky spikes form in late summer. Often grow to 6 feet. Plant in full sun or light shade with well-drained soil. Hardy to -10 degrees.

Photo: Nancy Andrews. Drought resistant ornamental grasses



SAVING SPECIES:

For those of us who like to ponder such things, the number of plant species in the world has been reduced by more than half, and practically overnight. No, not by any great cataclysm, but by edict of scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

A huge number of plants, it seems, have been discovered and named several times. Weeding out duplications has been a tremendous task, but now the earth's plant populations are whittled down to approximately 400,000 species.

More than 20% of these are threatened by extinction, according to the latest study at Kew. The major cause is habitat destruction by human activities. Greater awareness of the problem of loss of biodiversity is vital. *Sue*

JUST ANOTHER HEDGEHOG?

Echinocereus arizonicus is described as clustering, with stems to 20" tall and 3.2 to 4" wide, with 6-11 ribs; up to 8 round, straight central spines that are yellow to brown or black, turning gray with age; the flowers are brilliant orange to red with a green stigma and yellow throat.

It is distinguished only with difficulty from *E. coccineus*, which generally has smaller stems and weaker spination. It is also so close to *E. triglochidiatus* that you see it listed as *E. t. var arizonicus*. There is a lot of inter-gradation between all these hedgehogs, including *E. t. var neomexicanus*, and *E. melanacanthus*, except that *E. arizonicus* is a larger, more robust plant.

The habitat is from Arizona in the north, ranging east through New Mexico and south into the Mexican state of Chihuahua. The specific name is from the original discovery near the borders of Pima and Gila Counties Arizona.

This is a cactus that would likely be hardy in our outdoor gardens.

Sue

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GROWING CACTI AND SUCCULENTS FOR THE AMATEUR: PLANT DESSERTS

By Roger Brown

Water quality, frequency of watering, environmental temperature, humidity, and pot type all influence the type of soil media you should use. There is no mix that is ideal for everyone, so this means that you must discover a mix that is designed for your own unique growing conditions. Once you design a mix that works for you, put all your plants in it.

After years of trial and error I am convinced that the backbone of every grower's media should be a high quality premium soilless mix. Container grown plants are kept in an artificial environment; therefore, they need artificial soil. Their potted prison subjects them to stresses unknown in the wild. Wild soil is for wild plants, and artificial soil is for container tamed plants.

Most soilless media contains seasoned Canadian peat moss but others may replace it with substances such as rock wool, coir, pine bark, composted peanut hulls, and other exotic substances. Perlite and vermiculite are added to increase water and air holding space. Premium mixes are generally completed by adding a starter charge of fertilizer, trace elements, and in some cases a wetting agent to increase the water holding capacity.

Growing mixes can change drastically during storage. This means you should only buy enough to last three or four months, and be sure to find a supplier that sells large quantities of soilless mix. Smaller suppliers may let the bags of soil media lay around in their storage sheds for a year or more. There are many reasons to insist on fresh soil media. I will try to point out a few of them for you.

Most soilless mixes contain at least 40% moisture. Even though they may be packaged in plastic, mixes dry out during storage. Dry powdery soilless mixes have serious problems taking up and holding water after undergoing desiccation. Commercial mixes are not sterilized and have a fairly large population of nonpathogenic organisms that will consume most of the nitrogen in the starter charge of fertilizer during prolonged storage. This is particularly true for bark mixes, even when thoroughly composted bark is used. Even the pH will change during long periods of storage.

It is very important to remember that the pH of mix tested right from the bag will not necessarily be the same as it will be three or four days after using it as potting media. Most mixes will test as low as 4.5 before being used. The first watering of these products starts to dissolve lime that is added to trigger a necessary pH increase after the first watering. If you are going to test the pH of unused soil media remember to let the sample soak in water for 48 hours before testing. Otherwise the result you will obtain will be in error and worthless.

My soil media consists of the following: two parts commercial soilless mix (Metro-Mix 360), 1 part hydroponic clay, 1 part pumice. All the plants in my collection are placed in the same mix, and all new plants are repotted as soon as they arrive at their new home. Mentally, however, I find that I must add something to the soil as a treat for my plants, and believe me, finding a substance that was scientifically justifiable was not easy. The lowly earthworm supplied me with my crying need for a plant dessert.

(Continued on following page.)

Earthworms digest organic material in soil, and release from it the primal elements from which it is composed. Dirt that goes into an earthworm's mouth emerges from its other end enriched with five times more nitrogen, seven times more phosphorus, and eleven times more potassium. These are the major ingredients in chemical fertilizers, and are the major elements plants need in the greatest abundance. Earthworm feces are known as earthworm castings and are available at most well stocked garden centers. They may be either used as a top dressing or mixed into your potting mix.

Earthworm castings are called vermicompost when used as a media component. It is aged and composted into a finely divided material, which, by the way, does not resemble the original waste. It has been proven to enhance seed germination, and will add increased porosity, aeration, drainage, and moisture holding capacity to your potting media.

Ohio State University spearheaded a research project to measure growth enhancement of plants growing in vermicompost treated soil media. Their results were as follows: 1) the hormone-like activity associated with vermicompost may enhance germination in seeds that have a low germination rate and have been degraded by improper storage or again; 2) growth of seedlings in vermicompost-amended soil was increased. Dry shoot weight and leaf area was increased up to 40% in media amended with 10% vermicompost. Mixtures greater than 20% vermicompost inhibited plant growth.

There is much speculation about the mechanism of influence on plant growth. It may be that microorganisms associated with earthworms are producing substances with plant hormone-like properties. It is also an additional source of nutrients that may create optimal nutritional conditions.

Vermicompost can be a useful tool for any serious grower to have in their toolbox; however it is important to remember to never use it at a rate greater than 20% of your soil media volume.

(Roger Brown, DVM, lives in the Omaha, Nebraska area and for years wrote a column for beginners in *To The Point*, the newsletter of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. This column is from the Sept-Oct. 1999 issue.)

Fred, describing the plants on the Brag table.

(Photo by Mary Ann Villegas)



Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

Annual Bus Trip

September 19, 2015

Itinerary

(All times are dependent on traffic and promptness of boarding)

- Departure Location:** Walmart Shopping Center
3680 W. Shaw Ave (Shaw & Brawley)
- Departure Time:** **5:30AM** Please arrive no later than 5:15 AM to allow for ample loading time.
- Stop 1:** **6:35AM - 7:00AM**
Break – Livingston McDonald’s
- Stop 2:** **8:00AM – 9:00AM**
Shopping Opportunity
- Stop 3:** **10:30AM – 12:30PM**
UC Davis Botanical Conservatory
(admission fee is included in your original fee)
- Stop 4:** **1:00PM – 2:30PM**
Morning Sun Herb Garden - Vacaville
Bring a bag lunch to enjoy in the garden.
- Stop 5:** **5:00PM – 6:30PM**
Dinner – (no host) Los Banos
Espana’s Canal House
- Return:** **8:00PM - 8:30PM**

- Wear your name badge so you may be recognized by our hosts and fellow members.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes; wear your club t-shirt if you wish.
- Breakfast is not provided. Bring your own drinks also.
- It’s a good idea to bring 1 or 2 *reasonably* sized boxes for your plant purchases.

Member cost \$40.00 (this includes admission fee to US Davis Botanical Conservatory)

Mail or hand deliver the completed form with payment to:

Cindy Duwe
2167 E Turnberry
Fresno, CA 93730

Make checks payable to FCSS – Bus Trip

Name _____
Address _____
Email _____
Phone _____

In Case of Emergency Contact:
Name _____
Relationship _____
Phone _____
Cell Phone _____

Please fill out form completely so we will be prepared for any event. Thank You!
In case you have already paid complete this form and give to Cindy during boarding.

If you have any questions contact: Cindy Duwe (559) 433-3304 or (559) 285-4622
cindyduwe@yahoo.com