

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

www.fresnocss.com

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 34, no. 1

~ HAPPY NEW YEAR ~

January 2016

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 7, 7:00 pm. (Doors open 6:30 pm.)
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno

PROGRAM:

"A DREAM COME TRUE"

PRESENTER:

PETRA CRIST

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 22 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 6 ½ years with acquiring a 4-acre piece of land in Rainbow, California (Northern San Diego County). From removing boring palm trees to building greenhouses and establishing plantings to moving some big plants to Rainbow and finally moving there after remodeling one half of a duplex. A very exhausting and time-consuming dream but well worth it for me. I will have pictures of the "Farm" from when we bought it to pretty much what it is now.

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

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.



Petra answering questions at her last visit to our club.

~ Dinner ~

Sal's Mexican Restaurant
7476 North Fresno Street
Fresno, (559) 438-3030
[General menu](#)

Begins promptly at 5:00pm.
Reservations under Fresno Cactus Club
Members are invited to attend.

Contact Rosanna by Wednesday
January 6 to make reservations.
Phone: (559) 999-0017
Email: rfrojas96@gmail.com

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

Well, that went by fast, didn't it? 2015, I mean. Zip—and gone. We have another year ahead of us now, with new programs and activities. We have a lot to look forward to and I hope you will all stay with us. If you haven't already renewed your membership, the renewal form has been included with this newsletter. You can bring your dues to the meeting or mail your form to the membership chairman whose address is listed there. We don't want to lose you!

As I type this, the day outside is dark. A light rain is coming down, yet it's supposed to get down to freezing tonight. December weather this year has been nothing if not tumultuous. We've had plenty of rain and cold temperatures, but it appears that colder temps are ahead of us. I've dragged plants onto the covered patio, into the house and the garage. Others, though, I have to cover where they stand. It's worrisome to think of what may befall plants that are already wet yet need to be protected from freezing. We generally believe that cold and wet is a lethal combination for a lot of succulents. Well, we can only do so much. Sometimes cold damage doesn't show up on the plant for awhile. Be cautious about cutting back what appears to be freeze-damaged tissue; wait until the weather warms up. Yes, the plant will look bad for awhile, but pruning too soon can do even more damage. You may even find that plants frozen flat to the ground will re-grow from the roots. No matter how long you've been in the hobby, each winter is a learning experience.

We had a fun Christmas party last month. We have to thank Mary Drumheller and her crew for the wonderful table decorations—they get better every year. Fred Gaumer brought his very festive steel Christmas tree. The food was delicious, as attested by the empty serving dishes. Thanks, all you great cooks! Peter Beiersdorfer and Jaan Lepson get the medal for those who came the farthest, as they drove down from Livermore (143 miles). Tony Sharp created the imaginative pots that were distributed to the outgoing officers, and to some other dedicated members. Thanks to Paul Mitchell for serving as emcee. The silent auction was well-attended and brought in \$406—better than last year, which was better than the year before. Thanks so much to Marian Orvis and Polly Dunklin who organized it, and to all the donors and bidders. We had asked the DHHSC to set up the tables for us, but it was incumbent upon us to clear the room, so we need to thank all those who took down the tables and folded the chairs. You're the best.

Let's hope the spirit of the Holidays will carry over into 2016 and infuse all our activities throughout the year.

See you at the meeting,

Sue



Lots of nice items on the silent auction table.



Enjoying the delicious food.

Photographs
by
Gail Blank



Beautiful pots created by our club member, Tony Sharp.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY: *Elton Roberts (5th); Sherlock Holmes (6th); Val McCullough, Elk Kurpiers (9th); Dennis Shamlian (13th); Theresa Flemming (15th); Mark Muradian, Ed Myhro (20th); Tony Sharp (25th); Carole Grosch (31st).*

~~~~~

*A notable birthday: Ruth Bancroft, founder of the garden that bears her name, turned 107 on December 15<sup>th</sup>.*

~~~~~

WELCOME

SAY HELLO TO THIS NEW MEMBER:

Michael C. Dolan, Clovis

~~~~~

Our sympathies go out to Tony Sharp, whose father passed away December 8<sup>th</sup>.



~~~~~

Lest we think that botanists have easy jobs: a survey has found that more than half of the world's plants "are wrongly named." An article in *Current biology* recounts how scientists from Oxford University and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh surveyed herbarium specimens from just one genus, *Aframomum*, an African ginger. Using a recent monograph on the genus, they investigated 40 collections in 21 countries. They were surprised to find that 58% of specimens were either "misidentified, given an outdated or redundant name, or only identified by genus or family." They also surveyed *Ipomea* and found a similar disarray with regard to herbarium specimens. For more information: <http://phys.org/news/2015-11-world-natural-history-specimens-wrong.html>

~~~~~

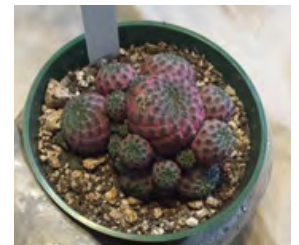
**NEW IN THE CLUB LIBRARY:** "Garden aloes: growing and breeding cultivars and hybrids" (2015) by G.F. Smith and E. Figueiredo; "Brazil and its columnar cacti" (2003) by P. Braun and E. Esteves Pereira (*Kaktusy* special issue #1); "Genus Ariocarpus" (2002) by L. Kunte and V. Sedevy (*Kaktusy* special issue #2). Actually, the second and third items were in the library already but were temporarily "lost." Check your library books to see if they're due this month; we have a lot of items currently in circulation. The library will be available, as usual, this month.

**BIG EVENT THIS MONTH:** Huntington Desert Forum, Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. See information elsewhere in the newsletter.

~~~~~

CLUB WORKSHOP: The January workshop will be held Wednesday, January 20th; 6:00 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista. All members are welcome to attend. Plants: those genera U through Z (cacti: *Uebelmannia*, *Weberbauerocereus*, *Weberocereus*, *Yungasocereus*; succulents: *Umbilicus*, *Uncarina*, *Urginia*, *Vanheerdea*, *Villadia*, *wooleya*, *Xenia*, *Xerosicyos*, *Yucca*, *Zaleya*.) Discussion topics: favorite potting methods—clay or plastic? Why or why not? What are your favorite tools—brushes, sifters, tweezers, etc. Do you have any tips on starting and/or maintaining your collection?

We had fun at the December workshop. Thanks to Dan Gale, who brought pizza and beverages, we had a bit of a party. Among the plants we looked at were *Rebutia*, *Sansevieria*, *Thelocactus*, *Turbincarpus* and *Tylecodon*. Of course, other plants that were looking good made an appearance, as well. We talked about growing plants on windowsills. It was generally agreed that light is the critical factor—making sure that plants that require intense light be provided with it. On the other hand, there are a number of succulents that do well in low light situations: some haworthias, gasterias, sedums, crassulas, rhipsalis, schlumbergera, etc.



Photographs by
Gail Blank

THOUGHTS FOR 2016 GARDENING

I never liked the thought of making resolutions for the New Year. It seemed like a perfect way to set yourself up for failure. After all, who wants to be tied to a long list of must-do chores?

So I've decided to come up with feel good ideas that are just plain fun. Then maybe, by some miracle, I'll actually get around to the should-do, put-it-off-until- later, critical stuff.



Share the wonders of growing

Whether it's with a friend, a child or a parent, growing successes cry out to be celebrated. Watch the process unfold and appreciate each step along the way.

Take more risks

Try growing something that seems difficult. Failure is a teacher; so is success.

Thin the herd

It's always fun to share excess plants, plus it makes room for new victims.

Plan for spring

The best laid plans.....Making a good decision will limit suffering with a bad decision later.....and it's fun to dream.

Over planning for spring

I can think of few things better than optimism. If not this year, maybe it'll work out for next year.

Appreciate and enjoy just being in the garden, among plants.

It's wonderful therapy and a great way to de-stress.

~ Carole Grosch

HOW THE "OLD MAN" FOUND A NEW HOME

What do you do when you purchase a piece of property that includes a 10' saguaro cactus standing right by the sidewalk up to the front door? Marsha Wernick of Fresno was confronted with this conundrum in November. She had bought the house as a rental. Would that big cactus present a liability issue? The homes on North Tenth Street were built 50 years ago, and the neighbors said the plant had been there "forever." What to do?

Her landscaper thought it was easy: he could cut it down with little effort. No, she didn't really want that fate for the "Old Man", as she was starting to call the saguaro. "I want this handsome guy to live to his full life span of 200!!" Instead, she contacted our club by email to ask our opinion. I received the email, which included a picture of the plant, and forwarded it to several club members whom I thought might be interested. Marsha was still undecided as to whether sell it, donate it, or possibly move it to her yard—even though she doubted her ability to keep it alive.

I took the photo to our November workshop where several members, including Tom Meyer, expressed an interest. Opinion was mixed: some thought it should be left there and appropriate plants be placed around it. Others speculated on the mechanics of moving such a big specimen. When I reported back to Marsha I suggested that she contact the Clovis Botanical Garden or the Discovery Center. She had already spoken with a landscaper at Belmont Nursery and had discussed the plant with the head of the Fresno State Plant Science Department.

(Continued on following page.)

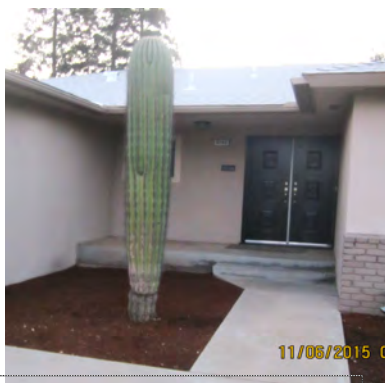
The CBG was sort of interested but hedged at the prospect of the move—but didn't say no. Our member Dominic Ortiz, who volunteers at the Discovery Center, wanted to drop by and take a look at the plant. In an odd coincidence, he and Marsha had met before when he did some work for her years ago. Dominic told me, though, that "wheels grind too slow" at the Discovery Center. Marsha wanted a decision made about the plant as soon as possible, as escrow was closing on the house.

Well, as options seemed to be evaporating, Marsha decided that anyone who would move the saguaro could have it. I called Tom and gave him the directions to the house. Once he looked at the plant he knew he wanted it. Never one to quail at a big project he started planning for the move. The first stage would be to construct a container to protect and brace the plant while it was in transit. Neighbors said there had originally been two saguaros there, but that one had frozen many years ago. Tom noticed that the present plant had frozen, too, but had put up an offset—which is what the 10' plant was.

Rainy weather kept delaying the move. I drove by the house on December 15th and saw the box surrounding the saguaro. As we were in a stretch of sunny days, I figured the move would be soon. Yes, on December 16th, after Tom and a friend had dug out the plant, a crane from A&A Crane Co. lifted the "Old Man" in its padded box onto a truck where it was transported to 3733 N. Sierra Vista, the home of Tom and his mother, Doris Hooton.

Marsha wrote, "As Mr Saguaro left my driveway, I wished him a bon voyage—with my apologies that he was unable to stay but assuring him that a wonderful home was awaiting his arrival. I feel that this cactus, having been on this planet for such a long time and with more years to come, has a life force within that has been rightfully respected by all." The next time you visit Tom and Doris you will see the "Old Man" standing in the front yard.

Sue



Original home. Photo by Marsha Wernick



Boxed on Tom's truck ready to go to his home



Crane backing up through trees



Placing into permanent planting hole



Tom proudly admiring his beautiful Saguaro. Well worth his hard work!



Photos by Mary Ann Villegas

PTERODISCUS

Pterodiscus is a genus of caudiciform succulents that is becoming increasingly available in the nursery trade. At least 18 species are native to southern Africa and farther north into the more tropical parts of the continent.

Belonging to the sesame family (Pedaliaceae), they are characterized by a pungent scent from leaf glands and a soap-like substance when the leaves are rubbed. Some species have subterranean caudexes while others have quite a large above-ground caudex resembling a mini baobab. Leaves of most are bright green with wavy margins. Species from dry regions, such as the Great Karoo, have serrated leaves with a geometrical pattern.

The annual stems grow from the caudex in the fall (in the Northern Hemisphere) and develop sets of alternate leaves. At the base of the leaves are two distinct glands, known as extrafloral nectaries, as well as a flower bud. These glands emit a nectar-like substance that attracts large ants, which have been observed pollinating the flowers.

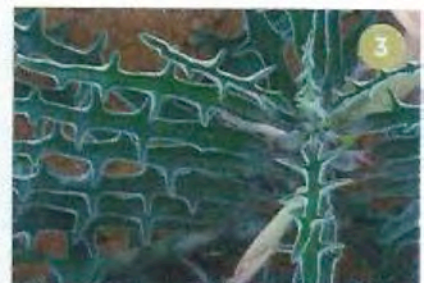
The funnel-shaped blooms of *Pterodiscus* are bisexual, very colorful, in shades of purple, red, orange, yellow or white, 1-4 cm. long. The fruits are four-chambered green capsules with one to two seeds in each chamber and with 4 longitudinal papery wings.

When the plants are growing strongly, continuous sets of flowers develop along each stem right through to spring when the plants become dormant. In habitat, the 4-winged seed capsules mature sequentially and, while still green, fall to the soil where they dry. Wind blows them to suitable niches to germinate, but only when conditions are perfect. If freshly dried capsules are plant, almost no seeds germinate. It's possible that the tough capsule inhibits germination until conditions are ideal. Storage can improve germination rate. Seedlings grow rapidly and plants can flower and set seed after the first year. *Pterodiscus* species appear to hybridize readily, both in habitat and in the nursery.

Culture should be as for other tender winter-growing caudiciforms.

Pictures below (from *Veld and flora*, June 2015):

- 1) Swollen caudex of *Pterodiscus luridus*;
- 2) Thickened caudex of *Pterodiscus ngamicus*;
- 3) Leaf shape and orientation of *P. luridus*;
- 4) *P. luridus* leaf shape and flowers;
- 5) A striking red *Pterodiscus sp nova* from Tzaneen;
- 6) *P. speciosus*.





ACHARAGMA

Acharagma is a small genus of cacti, native to Coahuila and Nuevo Leon states of Mexico. The name comes from Greek meaning “without a groove.” Plant bodies are small, simple or clustering, globose to short-cylindric, tubercles conic without grooves. Flowers are small and funnel-shaped.

Botanists have been confused by the plant, as it has been variously published as *Echinocactus*, *Gymnocactus*, *Acharagma* or *Escobaria*. They had been settled on the last genus until DNA studies showed it to be unrelated to it. Instead, it shows an affinity to *Lophophora* and *Obregonia*.

There are only two species and one subspecies: *A. aguirreanum*, *A. roseanum* and *roseanum ssp galeanese* (pictured above.)

Culture is uncomplicated. I’ve had a plant of *A. roseanum* for years. It grows slowly—under my conditions, anyway—and seems frost hardy. Sue

(photo from *Cactus world*, December 2015)

WINTER GROWING MESEMBS

(I’m not sure of the author of this; I found it in my files)

Seed growing mix: 1 part coir, 2 parts perlite.

Keep covered for a week; mist daily. I use fluorescent lights, on for 13 hours a day. Pots are 4 or 5 inches below the light tubes. Remove from lights after three or four weeks. Keep in bright light, but not full sun. Water frequently; never let the pots go completely dry. Surface of the soil may dry between waterings. Do not allow to go dormant during first year. After first year, pot up in the mix below and treat as adults.

Soil mix: 1 part pumice; 1 part granite grit; 1 part topsoil (dirt! Not potting soil, very little organic material); 1-2 parts sand.

Watering in general: Main growing period is late summer or early fall through winter and often into early spring. Frequent light watering is usually better than heavy drenching. Avoid watering in cloudy weather. Occasional light misting for most of the summer.

Light: bright light all year; a little extra shade in very hot summer.

Temperature: most will tolerate a mild frost.

Some specifics:

Gibbaeum: all are active in winter; lots of water when in bud, a little water in summer; lots of light at all times.

Phyllobolus: plenty of water in winter; caudexed ones—water now and then in winter, none at all after leaves die back.

Mitrophyllum: keep semi-shaded, most grow mid-autumn to mid-winter, need large pots.

Argyroderma: water frequently, but lightly, will survive dry summers, but do better if watered.

Monilaria: water early autumn to late winter, LOTS of water to start, bright light.

Antimima: have diverse needs, keep dwarfs dry in summer, water others year round, but infrequently in summer.

Cheiridopsis & Ihlenfeldtia: start watering at end of summer: frequently and lightly for small species, drenching for large; keep dry during summer; lots of light at all times. Sue



BOARD MEETING: Monday, January 11th, 6:00 p.m., 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno.
Any member may attend; board members should attend.



THE HUNTINGTON

LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California 91108 (626) 405-2100

BOTANICAL GARDEN

DESERT FORUM

Saturday, 16 January 2016

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 9:00 – 10:00 **Registration – in front of new visitor entry area**
Please bring your CSSA or affiliated club badge or membership card for admission
- 9:00 – 11:00 **Desert Garden**
Knowledgeable staff and docents will be stationed throughout the Desert Garden and Desert Conservatory
Aloes will be flowering
- 11:00 – 1:00 **Plant Sales**
Gate opens by the Teaching Greenhouse at 11:00 for plant sales - *please, no early bird shopping*
Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted
- 1:00 – 4:30 **Free Time**
Attendees are welcome to tour the gardens and galleries as of 10:30

Lunch:

The Café in the new visitor center features a variety of sandwiches and grilled items

The tea room at Liu Fang Yuan is a lovely option for fresh Chinese food

Club access: President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, rfrojas96@gmail.com; Treasurer, Robert Scott, 960-3665, Rob_scott85@yahoo.com; Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.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

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 \$7.00 per member for each name badge as follows:

Single Membership \$15.00 plus one name badge \$7.00: Total = \$22.00

Family Membership \$25.00 plus two name badges \$14.00: Total = \$39.00

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

Mail to: Polly Dunklin, 415 West Home Avenue, CA Fresno 93728

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*

By signing the form below, you give your permission for photographs for use in the club newsletter and/or to be used for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web and presentations. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.

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

Signature _____ Date _____