Holiday Party Potluck

Thursday, December 1st

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center
5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno

Setup: 5:30 – 6:30 pm
Appetizers & Socialization 6:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Dinner: 7:00 pm

Tri-tip, chicken, coffee and water, and table service will be supplied by the club. You provide your favorite recipe: appetizer, salad, main dish, vegetable or dessert. (Non-alcoholic beverages only).

Silent Auction: Please bring plants and/or plant-related items; pots, books, gardening magazines, jewelry or whatever you think our members might bid on.

INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS:
President: (re-elected) Sue Haffner
Vice-President: (re-elected) Rosanna Rojas
Treasurer: (re-elected) Robert Scott
Secretary: Karen Willoughby (new)

Board members: Ann Bierbower (continuing) Craig Roberts (new), Dennis Anderson (new), Don Winton (new), Michelle Roberts (new), Mary Drumheller (continuing).

Your officers and board members wish you
A Merry Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!
FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

Here we are in December—the end of another year. I find it hard to believe, but the calendar doesn’t lie. I am so far behind in my plant work that I will need to spend my few days off from court trying to get things under control. I hope you are better organized than I am!

Our program this month is our annual Holiday Party Potluck. We always have a lot of delicious food and fun at this event, so I hope you all can attend. We had signup sheets at the November meeting, but if you were not able to attend, just bring your favorite potluck dish—it will be very welcome! (Don’t forget a serving spoon or other appropriate implement.) We will begin to set up the room around 5:30. As usual, we will have a silent auction. Donations are welcome—plant-related, generally: plants, pots, books, decorative items, etc. Come prepared to bid on the donations, as well. It’s always fun to see what’s there to tempt you. Last year we only had a couple of tables for the auction, so if you might have a folding table you could loan and have room to bring it, we can use it.

Now that we’re at the end of another year, it’s time to thank our officers and chairpersons for all their efforts. The club could not operate without these generous folks. Special thanks to Cindy Duwe, who is closing out a multi-year stint as Secretary (not to mention Show Chairman and bus trip organizer)—it’s not an easy job; a tip of the hat, also, to Rosanna Rojas, Robert Scott and Fred Gaumer. We have some new officers and board members taking office for 2017. We face some challenges in finding a new show and sale venue and trying to pivot to having a judged show, so they will not lack for something to do.

As always, we owe an enormous debt to Doris Hooton and Tom Meyer for hosting the board meetings and workshop. We are so lucky to have them as such a generous resource. Thanks to Mark Muradian and Patty Miller, also, for the great spring picnic and garden tour. We are fortunate to have access to the great meeting room at the DHHSC; many thanks to them and to our contact person, Susan Coulter, Educational Services Director. Lastly, I want to thank all of you for your enthusiasm and support. You are a great group. See you at the party, Sue

RON STEBLES

We lost Ron Stebles to a sudden and shocking accident on November 19th. He was struck and killed by a car as he crossed the road from his and Charlene’s mailbox. It is hard to accept that such a vital person should die when doing something so ordinary. I have always thought of Ron as a man of action. A Marine, he was a businessman, interested in travel, fishing, cars and racing. He and Charlene were scheduled to leave on a trip to Hawaii after Thanksgiving.

In 1998 Paul and Madeleine Mitchell invited the Stebles to attend one of our meetings. They did, and joined the club that year, quickly becoming active members. Back in the day when we used to buy plants for resale, Ron and Charlene warehoused the plants on various occasions and we would have plant pricing “parties” at their home. Ron hauled our plants to the show venues in his big car trailer.

I am reminded of Ron every day when I drive downtown to jury duty: I pass a billboard advertising the Marines’ Toys for Tots program, in which Ron was active for years. We will miss seeing him at our events. Our sincere sympathies go out to Charlene and their family. Services will be Tuesday, December 6th, 10:00 a.m., at the Clovis Memorial Hall. Sue
FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 3, 2016     -        Attendance: 70

President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Visitors: Dolores Avila, Kate Piccoletti, Diana Rutherford  
Secretary’s Report: Cindy Duwe read the minutes of the October meeting  
Treasurer’s Report: None  

Announcements:  
Sue told the club that she had received 2 tickets for the Home and Garden Show which she placed on the Opportunity Table.

She informed the club that the sign-up sheets for food for the Christmas dinner in December were on the back table. There will be a Silent Auction that night also.

Sue asked for nominations from the floor for the election. There were 4 vacancies to be filled for the 2017 Board. Dennis Anderson, Craig Roberts, Don Winton and Michelle Roberts agreed to run for the 2017 Board. There being no nominations from the floor Susan Cook moved to accept the slate as written. Second by Charlene Stebles. The vote was unanimous.

Brag Table:  
Fred Gaumer urged everyone to join the CSSA. Membership is $50.00. Members also receive the Cactus Journal. Fred described and discussed 20 plants brought by members of the club.

Board Meeting:  
There will be no Board Meeting in December.

Work Shop:  
The Work Shop will be held December 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Doris Hooton and Tom Meyer. The address is 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno, CA. The topics for the meeting are plants beginning with letters U, V, W and putting plants to bed for winter.

Program:  
Rosanna Rojas introduced Robert Scott to the club. He gave a presentation on “Preparing Your Plants for Winter”.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Duwe, Secretary

NO BOARD MEETING IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER.

Club access: President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, rfrrojas96@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.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

Alyssa Ortega (3rd); Doris Hooton (8th); Doris Gravelle (22nd).

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NEW IN THE CLUB LIBRARY: The club library will not be available this month, so hang onto your books until January.

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BIG EVENT IN JANUARY: Huntington Desert Forum, Saturday, January 14th; Huntington Botanic Gardens, 1150 Oxford Rd., San Marino CA. More information will be found in the next newsletter.

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Lost key: last month a key was left on the table where Ann Bierbower was selling shirts. It’s a single key with a square fob. If it’s yours, get in touch with Ann.

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NEWS OF THE CACTUS & SUCCULENT WORLD:

Mesa Garden, long the go-to source for seeds of many varieties of cacti and succulents, now has new owners. After 40 years of running the business, Steven and Linda Brack have retired and the new owners are a young couple, Aaron and Tarah Morerod. We wish them all possible success, as they’ve taken on a big job. Mesa Garden has a new email address, too: mesagarden@swcp.com. (Thanks to Vickie Veen for alerting us to this news.)

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Vickie also brought this to my attention: hydrogen peroxide has uses in the garden. Mix it 4 part water to 1 part hydrogen peroxide 3% to use as a spray for mealy bugs or as a drench for fungus gnats. www.using-hydrogen-peroxide.com/peroxide-garden.html. Be sure you look at the chart.

NOVEMBER BRAG TABLE: Fred Gaumer brought Monsonia crassicaule, Othonna herrei and Phyllobolus resurgens; Ann Bierbower displayed a Matucana species and Mammillaria carmenae; Eddie Etheridge brought a gorgeous Adenium obesum; Charlene Stebles showed a very nice Obregonia denegrii; Mark Muradian displayed Tylecodon paniculata; Bill Gale showed an Echinopsis cultivar, Puna claveroides and a bulb, Ferreria crispa; Val McCullough brought Mammillaria gracilis and Aloe ferox; Jan Brummel displayed an attention grabbing squash planter, “Autumnus Pumpkinata”; Alyssa Ortega brought a crassula that she’d shaped as a palm tree. Thanks to all of the and to Fred, who does such a great job, handling the Brag Table with knowledge and humor.

Photos by Karen Willoughby
NOVEMBER WORKSHOP: We had a lively workshop on Nov. 16th. We looked at plants in the genera Tylecodon, Turbinicarpus, Tephrocactus, Thelocactus and Urginia. Bringing plants were Bill Gale, Jack Fleming, Sue Haffner, Tom Meyer, Dennis Anderson, Ann Bierbower, Mary Drumheller, Vickie Veen, Dan Gale and Eddie Etheridge. Of course, some non-conformists brought other plants to show off, as well. Bill brought an interesting euphorbia, *E. itiermensis*; Jack showed a *Pachypodium succulentum* that he had grown from seed and trained around a rock; Dan brought a flat of blooming ariocarpus plants; Eddie brought a *Cyphostemma uter* with purple-tinged leaves. Dan gave away small plants of *Dasylirion longissimum*. He also brought some samples of the shade cloth sold by Green-tek in Dinuba, “Horti-fabrics”. They are wholesale but do a bit of retail (www.green-tek-com.)

The discussion topic was “Putting plants to bed for the winter”. Members are bringing plants indoors; wrapping their patio plant shelves in plastic; adeniums are indoors. Several members are adding extensions to their greenhouses; Ann Bierbower is putting up a second 6’ x 8’ greenhouse; Bill Gale has an additional greenhouse, the size of a 2-car garage. Various members let their cyphostemmas go dormant before they bring them in. Larry Homan doesn’t water his stored plants for 3 months. He reminded those present that it’s critical to keep your plants dry. Your plants are harder than you think as long as they are dry. Some members do not supply any supplemental heat to their plants over the winter. Air circulation is important (Tom’s greenhouse fan runs all year ‘round).

December workshop will be Wednesday, Dec. 21st; 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno. Genera under discussion will be those beginning with W-X-Y-Z; discussion topic will be open. We also plan to have a “snack potluck.”

Photos by
Mary Ann Villegas
FINISHING TOUCHES

By Bob Smoley

It is surprising and at times amazing how much beauty and value ten cents worth of top-dressing can add to a plant. Believe it or not, this ten cents could even be the tie-breaker in a show plant (even though it shouldn’t be).

Top-dressing a plant with a color-coordinated stone that picks up or contrasts the color of the show plant tells the viewer, who could be the judge, that the grower of this plant is putting forth an added effort in showing and displaying his or her prized specimen. As a grower, I find than an attractive top-dressing also increases the value of the plant. If two identical plants were side by side, I could easily receive an extra dollar for the plant this is attractively top-dressed. But where does one get all of these rocks and pebbles? I will try to point everyone in the right direction, and as you will see, a strange direction at times it will be.

Two of the most unlikely places to find top-dressings are your local feed store and sandblasting supply houses. Others that are more recognizable would be pet and tropical fish stores, and of course, your local garden centers and nurseries. At the feed store you can find what is called chicken grit. This is crushed granite that is fed to chickens to harden their egg shells. It comes in two or three sizes, the smallest size working just fine to dress 2-3 inch pots for lithops. It also works well to top-dress freshly sown seed, but be sure to use only a thin layer up to an eighth inch. The larger size of grit is okay for pots up to six inches or so. Since it is granite, the rock is grayish silver color with a bit of a sparkle to it.

(Continued on next page)
Moving on to the sandblasting supply yard, we found a number of choice toppings available. Q rock, which comes in 4 grades or sizes, is great for smaller pots and is inexpensive at seven to eight dollars for a hundred-pound bag. Number 2 Q rock is also great for covering newly sown seeds. Another sandblasting rock, black beauty, is a byproduct of the steel industry and is a shiny jet black glass. Black beauty is really sharp looking when used to top-dress small pots of lithops and mimic plants, and provides a striking contrast color for echeverias and other succulents. Finally, some sandblasting supply yards sell small graded river gravel that is about an eighth inch in diameter with nice earth-tone colors that look great on any pot and shades of dark red. The heavier grades are very good for pot sizes of six inches and larger.

Let’s travel next to a good nice-sized pet supply or tropical fish store. Here you can find some really fantastic looking aquarium gravels in almost any size or color. Some that are especially nice looking are the epoxy stones that have a nice clean shine to them. You can also find crushed quartz that is very natural and clean looking. Also available is volcanic rock, which usually comes in only a few sizes and in black, brown and shades of dark red. The heavier grades are very good for pot sizes of six inches and larger.

Well, what’s left for the garden center or nursery to sell? Well-stocked garden centers should stock many of the tropical fish gravels and small pea gravel. They might also have pumice, which can be used as a great soil additive for cacti and succulents and a top-dressing as well. A more recent product that is good for large pots is expanded clay, which is small pieces of clay that have been heated and popped, much like popcorn. Also, available for larger pots are various grades of crushed marble.

If you want to get really exotics and a bit expensive, travel now to your local gem and mineral store. Here you might find crushed chips of amethyst, quartz, rose quartz, citrine, agate and many others for those extra special plants on which you need to spend that dollar in the back of your wallet. Larger pieces of gems and minerals also make really nice accent pieces in mixed plantings. Try an all succulent planting of echeverias, crassulas, kalanchoes, or any other succulents in a low, natural clay bowl top-dressed with a clean, which aquarium gravel and accented with a few pieces of amethyst crystals and iron pyrite (fool’s gold) and you have an exquisite planting.

There are some practical reasons for top-dressing your plants: first, as a fine topping over newly-sown seed. Since seedlings should be kept moist at all times (in most cases), the top-dressing helps keep moisture in so you don’t need to water as much. Best of all, the pots that have been top-dressed will show a lighter color as they dropout on the surface compared to the darker color of ones still moist, making it easy to tell when to water. In larger pots, the top-dressing helps hold down the germination of weed seed, which makes for a lot less work later.

One final comment: wash the top-dressing material and let dry before use. This removes any impurities and finer dust particles that may be present. And please don’t add any of that glue, cement, or whatever it is that the mass producer use to hold the top-dressing in place for shipment—it’s not good for the plants and is really tacky.

Happy growing!!

(The late Bob Smoley originally wrote this article for Prickly pages, the newsletter of the Greater Pittsburgh C&S Society, and it has been widely reprinted. Bob was a major seller of sansevierias and other succulents. He relocated to Florida not long after writing this article. He passed away recently. Sue)
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 $5.00 per member for each name badge as follows:

Single Membership…$15.00 plus one name badge $5.00 = $20.00
Family Membership…$25.00 plus two name badges $10.00 = $35.00

Checks payable to: Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society (FCSS)
Mail to: FCSS – 415 W. Home Ave., Fresno, CA 93728

INFORMATION FOR CLUB USE ONLY:

Name(s)____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Address____________________________________________________________________________
City___________________________________State________________ZipCode________________
Contact Phone____________________________________________________________________________________
Email_______________________________________________________________________________
Birthday(s) Optional – Month & Day__________________________________________________

The club publishes an annual Roster containing all current members’ information as shown above and distributes it to club members. If you do not want some of your information published in the Roster let us know.

I am interested in helping out in the following areas. Please contact me.

☐ Show & Sale  ☐ Programs  ☐ Library  ☐ Publicity  ☐ Technology
☐ Refreshments  ☐ Hospitality  ☐ Sunshine  ☐ Special Events

How do you wish to receive your Newsletter, “Cactus Corner”?  ☐ E-mail  or  ☐ US Mail

Please read and complete for the Newsletter, Cactus Corner

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UPDATED 8/31/2015