

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

fresnocss.com

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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February 2017

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 2nd, 7:00 pm.) (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), Fresno, 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno

South Africa, Namaqualand, Land of the Halfmens

Presented by Wendell S. Woody Minnich 2016



South Africa is considered by many to be the richest region in the world for flowering plants. Within South Africa's many environments, there is no more enchanted and succulent rich area than that of the Richtersveld. From the coastal fog fed regions to the higher mountains, one can find an amazing diversity of geophytic, miniature and giant species. The areas we will be exploring are from the south near Springbok up to the Richtersveld and the Orange River, and then slightly north into the deserts of Namibia, Namaqualand.

This northern portion of South Africa is also sometimes referred to as the Namaqualand. The original peoples from this general landscape were referred to as the Nama. Their homeland environments were quite variable ranging from the very arid

inland hills and mountains to the cooler foggy coastal sand dunes. The Nama were a rather nomadic people and thus lived in almost all of these different geologic settings. Rumors have it that the Nama people, when at war with neighboring tribes, would dress the *Pachypodium namaquanum*'s with hats and robes thus making it appear as if their armies were of greater number. These dressed up plants were referred to as the Halfmens. From a distance, *Pachypodium namaquanum* is often sparsely branched, thus it can undoubtedly resemble a human figure.

From the south, in the region of Springbok, the succulents are very numerous. These areas are generally of granitic substrate. This granite often takes the form of giant domed inselbergs and is then transformed into scenic sandy valleys and washes. In this region, the Aloes are not as common as some of the Mesembs and Crassulas, but when you do find them, they are very handsome. *Aloe melanocantha* is often found on mountain tops where it can become deep burgundy red with beautiful black marginal teeth. The spiny *Aloe erinacea* is also found on the mountain tops where it occasionally forms giant six foot in diameter clusters.



(Continued on the following page)

The other succulents range from the many species of Pelargoniums, Crassulas, Othonnas, Conophytums, Tylecodons, Avonias, Euphorbias, Lithops and other shrubby Mesembs. Also, bulbs can surely keep one occupied while looking for our prized succulents.

Into the north, the environments become more and more arid. It is here in the Richtersveld that one begins to find many of our most prized succulents, from the statuesque *Aloe pillansii* to the highly sought *Aloe pearsonii*. Here, the Monsonias (Sarcocaulons) and the Tylecodons have evolved into some of their most exotic forms. *Monsonia paniculina* and *multifida* take center stage and the bonsai forms of *Tylecodon pearsonii* run a close second. The other Aloes, Conophytums, Crassulas, Larryleachias and Lithops are just a few of the well represented genera to be found in this magical territory.



Come travel with me to the Richtersveld to see its numerous plants and animals as well as its endless beautiful vistas. From the lizards to the Baboons, there is never a dull moment and the iconic *Aloe pillansii* and *dichotoma* will leave you with an everlasting memory of this most fascinating landscape.



Woody, as he is commonly called, has been in the cactus hobby for some 45 years and has become well known for his participation in many of the cactus and succulent clubs. He is an honorary life member of nine clubs as well as a life member and Friend of the CSSA (Cactus & Succulent Society of America.) He has served in almost all positions of leadership from president, to newsletter editor, to show chairman and so on. He is also known for his extensive field work studying primarily the cactus family. He has traveled throughout Africa, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, Socotra, the United States and Yemen. From these trips and his nursery experience, he has developed an extensive knowledge of the cactus family as well as many of the other succulent genera.

He is also known for his cactus and succulent nursery, Cactus Data Plants. CDP was started in 1975 and is still in operation today. Cactus Data Plants specializes in show specimens and rare cacti and other succulents with particular emphasis in *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Mammillaria*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Turbinicarpus*, *Melocactus*, *Copiapoa*, *Fouquieria*, *Pachypodium*, *Euphorbia*, *Cyphostemma*, *Adenium* and *Adenia*.

His nursery, Cactus Data Plants. CDP was started in 1975 and is still in operation today. Woody and his wife Kathy live in the beautiful mountains south of Santa Fe New Mexico, in a region called Cedar Grove.

Let's give Woody a warm welcome back!

Woody will be bringing plants for purchase.

~ DINNER ~

BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse
715 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA (559) 570-1900
bjrestaurant.com/menu

Begins promptly at 5:00 p.m.
Reservation under Fresno Cactus Club
Members are invited to attend.

Contact Rosanna Rojas by
Wednesday, February 2nd,
to make reservations.
Phone: (559) 999-0017
Email: rfrosjas96@gmail.com

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

Have you floated away yet? All this rain is terrific, of course (though I wish it would keep to the dark hours and let the sun shine in the day time). Succulents in planters that are too heavy for me to move are saturated but look fine but I've had to drag a few of them under the eaves. A few stems of San Pedro and Trichocereus have been undermined and fallen over. If this has happened to you, and you don't have a use for the casualties, haul them in to the meeting and someone will be sure to take them. I have to admit that I haven't had to unlimber the frost covers for more than a few times so far this winter. Still, we need to keep an eye on the forecast low temperatures. As they say, spring is just around the corner.

Spring means the **Fresno Home & Garden Show is on our event horizon: March 3rd, 4th and 5th**. All of you who would like to sell plants during the show need to sign up this month with Rob Scott, who is in charge of our club's big plant sale. This event always draws big crowds and it's important that we show our growers at their best. We will be asking some of you to volunteer to help: cashiering, packing plants, helping customers, answering questions, etc. If you commit to helping for a few hours, we can get you a badge that gets you through the entry gate. After you've finished your shift you are free to visit the rest of the Home & Garden Show.

The minutes of the January board meeting are found elsewhere in this newsletter. Note the list of committees and their chairpersons; if you are interested in helping with any of these functions, please talk to the chairperson listed. This is a great way to get involved in the club—and we welcome your involvement.

I wanted to take the time to remind you of our club's Facebook page. Just go to our website, www.fresnocss.com and click on "Facebook." You will see the photos that Karen Willoughby posts, information notes, reactions from visitors, etc. If you have questions or pictures you would like to post, get in touch with Karen.

Another reminder: we have a sign-in book by the door at the back of the room. We really wish all our members would sign in when they arrive; it's a way of keeping track of how many people attend our meetings. The club is growing; around 70 were in attendance in November and January—a number were people that I didn't recognize. Some were visitors, of course, and we need to work harder at following up with them. After all, they were inspired to come out to our meeting, so they must have an interest in succulents. Tom Meyer is in charge of the sign-in table, and he needs to stay with the table while people are milling around. But Mary Drumheller and Polly Dunklin have volunteered to circulate in the room and talk to the visitors and get their contact information. We always send a newsletter the following month to all visitors for whom we have an email address or mailing address. We want them to know that we appreciate their attendance and would like to see them return (and join!)

Well, the year has really begun and we have a number of activities ahead of us—so much to keep us busy.

See you at the meeting, *Sue*

BOARD MEETING

The board will meet Monday, Feb. 6th, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista. Board members should attend; all club members are welcome, also. We will be discussing the Home & Garden Show, among other issues.

FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING**JANUARY 9, 2017****President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.**

Attendance: Robert Scott, Treasurer; Rosanna Rojas, Vice-President; Secretary, Karen Willoughby; Fred Graumer, CSSA representative; Ann Bierbower, board member; Dennis Anderson, board member; Michelle & Craig Roberts, board members; Mary Drumheller, board member. Absent was Don Winton. Visitor, James Rojas.

Officer reports: Sue reported the receipt of a check for \$125 received from friends of the late Herb Thorne's daughter. Use of these funds were discussed and it was agreed that the money would be used to buy books for the library. Members were going to check sources for the best prices, available books of interest and report back to the board in the future.

Rosanna reported that our speaker in February will be Woody Minnich who will be speaking on the second half of his Mexican trip, the first half was presented last February. Russel Wagner will speak in March.

Robert reported the club has \$7,823.18 in funds. Robert reported that only half of membership renewals have been received so far. Club insurance had not been paid yet pending receipt of information from the Home&Garden show. CSSA membership has been paid for the year. We have not received a bill for the room rental yet and Robert will check with DHHSC staff because they do not send a bill. Sue reminded that we will be renting the facility for 11 not 12 months because October meeting is to be held at the Discovery Center.

Memberships in the Clovis Botanical Garden and Native Plant Society had not been paid yet. The Discovery Center is given a \$100 donation yearly. Mary requested that a Treasurer's written report be presented monthly.

New Business: Spring Home & Garden Show is March 3-5 this year and Robert will chair with Ann to assist.

Chairmanships:

Annual Show & Sale: Robert Scott and Ann Bierbower

Facebook: Karen Willoughby

Fair Display Coordinator: Rudy Rulloda

Hospitality Table: Tom Meyer

Library Committee: Madeleine Mitchel, Don Winton and Marilyn Carter.

Membership: Polly Dunklin

Photographer: Karen Willoughby

Publications: Sue Haffner, Mary Ann Villegas, Carole Grosch.

Publicity: Ann Bierbower, Carole Grosch

Refreshments: Marian Orvis

Rules & Parliamentarian: Sue Haffner

Sunshine: Carole Grosch

Webmaster: Vickie Veen

Workshop: Mary Drumheller

Brag Table: Fred Graumer

(Continued on next page)

A larger venue for the workshops was discussed as it often is too crowded in Doris' kitchen when attendance is high. Other locations will be investigated but will remain the same for the time being.

Ann also asked new board members if they are interested in serving on any of the above-mentioned committees.

Spring into Your Garden Festival, Clovis Botanical Garden, March 25th. Sue and Ann usually man the club table answering questions and providing membership information. Table costs the club \$10.

Our club **Spring Garden Tour** was discussed with various ideas discussed about possible new ways to do this. More discussion in the future.

May picnic at Mark Muradian and Patty Miller's home is tentatively scheduled again this year.

Annual Show & Sale venue was discussed and the present location at Sierra Vista Mall will remain but other locations are still being investigated.

Bus Trip: This event was discussed with various destinations being suggested with further decisions to be made in the future. Michelle Roberts voiced her interest in chairing this event.

Mentoring with visitors and new members was discussed. Dinner prior to the meetings was also a topic of discussion for better locations and ease and timeliness of getting speakers and their sale plants set up was also discussed.

Officer's gift pots in the future was discussed. Sue to check with Tony Sharp to see if he is willing to make for this year.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. Next board meeting is February 6, 2017 at the same location.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Willoughby, Secretary

HOW TOXIC ARE EUPHORBIAS, REALLY?

The Euphorbiaceae is one of the largest plant families and includes many thousands of species, a small fraction of which have found their way into cultivation.

Euphorbias typically produce a white, milky sap called latex that is relatively irritating to us humans. It is, however, quite useful to the plants themselves. The saps have some degree of antifungal and antibacterial activity, which probably keep them from getting infected easily in cases of injury. And the saps act as excellent wound sealants. Cuttings of these plants can often be put down to root right away, thanks to their latex healing the cut site almost immediately. And of course, the latex presumably repels would-be predators that are looking for a plant meal, from insects to large herbivores. So, from the plant's point of view this sap is a good thing.

A few euphorbias are legendarily toxic—*E. abdelkuri*, *E. poissonii*—but, in a way, they are not nearly as toxic as oleander, a truly deadly toxic plant that you find everywhere in our area. All parts of the plant are poisonous. Plumeria sap is also a major irritant that you never hear about. We ooh and ah over the lovely flowers, but plumerias should always be handled with gloves and never, ever get any of their sap in your eyes.

Well, the gloves and safety glasses are a good idea when handling any euphorbias, even when you're pulling one of the tiniest ones, Spotted Spurge, out of your flowerbeds. Forewarned is forearmed.

Sue



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
 Mary Drum Heller (8th);
 Gloria Johnson (9th);
 Lola Sutherland (10th);
 Salina Estrada (13th);
 Rose Rowe (17th);
 Jean Richter (22nd);
 Alice Rodriguez (25th);
 Jim Brummel (26th).

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### SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:

Roy Luga, Fresno  
 Christy Conanan, Fresno  
 Russal McLachlin, Madera  
 Terri Figgs, Fresno  
 Ed and Jan Armbruster, Madera  
 Katina LeBerge-Smith, Fresno

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Get well cards have been sent to Gail Blank, Madeleine Mitchell and Ed Myhro. A sympathy card has been sent to Susan Cook on the passing of her brother-in-law.

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Last month we saw an interesting program on the Chihuahuan Desert biome, one of the great North American desert regions. If you want to know more about it, you can visit the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, Fort Davis, Texas: [www.cdri.org](http://www.cdri.org).

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Another interesting site is Friends of Saguaro, an auxiliary group devoted to supporting the Saguaro National Park which is in the Tucson, Arizona region: www.friendsofsaguaro.org. For \$35 you can adopt a particular saguaro.

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Tucson's pro baseball team is the Saguaros. Their logo is a saguaro holding a baseball bat: [www.saguarosbaseball.com](http://www.saguarosbaseball.com).

**Belmont Nursery** is having a "Road closure sale" through January 31<sup>st</sup>, due to construction-caused road closures on Belmont Ave. between Temperance and De Wolf Aves, as the City of Fresno completes a water pipeline project. Twenty percent off all regularly marked items. Customers are considered local traffic, so can pass through the barricades. For more information: 559-255-6645; questions about detours, 844-373-7664; about the pipeline project: [www.RechargeFresno.com](http://www.RechargeFresno.com).

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Q. How do I get a plant out of an "Ali Baba" pot (a pot with shoulders that flare out below a smaller opening.)?



A. The shouldered pots are nice to look at but might not be the best planters to use. Try washing some of the potting mix out: use a hand fork to loosen the soil surface, then wash away that layer with a hose. Repeat until you can work the plant out of the pot. (Of course, you could always break the pot ... )

**BRAG TABLE:** Some very nice plants were displayed on the January Brag Table. Fred Gaumer showed a varied selection that included *Ariocarpus retusus*, *Strombocactus disciformis*, *Tylecodon buchholzianus*, *T. dinteri*, *Sarcocaulon Paniculinum*, *Pelecypora asseliformis*, *Cheiridopsis namaguensis* and *Obregonia denegrii*; Karl Church showed *Euphorbia trigona* 'Rubra'; Thien-Vo displayed an *Adenia*; Ann Bierbower brought a *Mammillaria*; Bill Gale displayed *Euphorbia obese*, *E. suzannae*, *Sinningia cardinalis* and *S. bullata*, both in full bloom; Eddie Etheridge showed *Eulichnea castanea monstrose*; Dennis Anderson brought *Mammillaria fraileana* and *Ferocactus fordii*; Mark Muradian, showed *Tylecodon pearsonii*; Bruce Hargreaves contributed *Aloe elegans*; Alyssa Ortega brought a nice planting in a vintage milk glass dish. Thanks to all of them for their participation.



Photos:  
Mary Ann  
Villegas



**JANUARY WORKSHOP:** a hardy band of 14 braved the wild weather to show up at the workshop. We looked at A & B plants: Agave, Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Aloe, Anacampseros, Adromischus, Arrojadoda, Brisiliopuntia and Buiningia (now transferred to Coleocephalocereus.) Those displaying plants were: Sue Haffner, Eddie Etheridge, Dennis Anderson, Ann Bierbower, Mary Drumheller, Dan Gale and Bill Gale. Dan brought a tray of *Ariocarpus bravoanus* plants to give away, plus citrus fruit. Thanks, Dan. It was noted that club member Tori D'Ambrosi will be opening a plant business, Propagation Station, in Clovis soon. Look for it on Facebook.

The February workshop will be Wednesday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno. All club members are welcome. Genera under discussion, C & D; discussion topic: getting ready for spring.

**Club access:** President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu) ; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, [rfrojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfrojas96@gmail.com) ; Treasurer, Robert Scott, 960-3665, [Rob\\_scott85@yahoo.com](mailto:Rob_scott85@yahoo.com); Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu) ; Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 226-0145, [mforvet@comcast.net](mailto:mforvet@comcast.net) ; Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, [madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net) ; Webmaster, Vickie Veen, [vickieveen@gmail.com](mailto:vickieveen@gmail.com) ; Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, [cgg266@comcast.net](mailto:cgg266@comcast.net) .



### ARROJADOA DINAE By Elton Roberts

*Arrojadoa dinae* comes from Brazil and so does not like too much cold. So keep it above freezing in the winter. I am not sure why but I have always liked this plant. If it is the flowers, the spine color or what, I do not know but I just like the plant.

Like all Arrojadoas the plants bloom from the end of a stem. The plant grows a small cephalium at the end of the stem. The flower buds emerge from the cephalium and bloom. When the flowers are through blooming the plant will grow through the cephalium and grow another joint and then another cephalium. This goes on and on for the life of the plant.

The joints are from 8 to 20 cm long. The longer stems are close to the plant base. The flowers are 12 mm in diameter and to 20 mm long. They are red to pinkish red on the outside and creamy yellow on the inside. The "New Cactus Lexicon" says that the flowers open in the late afternoon. I guess my plants do not know that, as they open quite early in the day.

The photos below were taken about 9:45 a.m. I know that some of the

Arrojadoa flowers only open late in the day. I give my regular soil and keep the plants dry over the winter. The plants want an acidic soil so if you have hard water try the 1 Tbs of vinegar to 5 gallons of water trick and your plants will love you.



Above photo  
from *Bradleya* 34  
(2016)



*Titanopsis calcarea* is a small plant, with compact rosettes of leaves measuring up to 2 inches in diameter. In time, it forms a compact clump to 4 inches wide or more. The spoon-shaped leaves are often blue-green or grayish, but they can take on tinges of purple, orange or tan in strong light. Their texture is truly remarkable, with rounded warty bumps covering both surfaces of the upper portion of the leaves. This species is winter flowering, and like many other kinds of ice plants, its flowers don't open until the middle of the day. The flowers are yellow and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch across.

The genus name comes from a combination of the Greek words *titanos* (chalk) and *opsis* (appearance), alluding to the raised calcium-filled warts on the leaf surfaces. The six or so recognized species are found in three main areas of southern Africa: southern Namibia, a range that straddles the Orange River in a broad north-south belt extending into the northern Cape Province, and Central South Africa, from the northern Cape into the Free State.

*Titanopsis calcarea* is by far the best-known species of the genus. It has several indigenous names: *Kalk(veld) vygie* (chalk field mesemb), *skilpadvoetjies* (little tortoise feet) or Sheep's Tongue. It is not uncommon to find the plant for sale in local garden shops. Steven Hammer, writing in "Mesembs: the Titanopsis group", states, "In habitat *Titanopsis calcarea* eats, sleeps, and dreams hyper-alkaline chalk. Nonetheless, in the confines of a pot it can digest acidified fir bark, peat moss, coconut hulls, and probably crunchy granola. It is very tough and adaptable, which is unsurprising in view of its liberal natural distribution ... Give your plants as much light and water as you dare in summer; cut back on water in winter. I still tend old clusters raised from collected seed sown in 1982. Their natural life span, which I'd estimate at 10-20 years, has greatly been exceeded, and the plants have lost vigor, velocity, and fecundity as they've aged. The center dies out; repotting doesn't help much, and cuttings never quite convince anyone. In other words, it would be better to renew one's sample from seed after a decade or so." **Sue**

(Photo from *Ruth Bancroft Garden newsletter*, Feb. 3, 2016)