

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

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Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 35, No. 3

March 2017

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, March 2nd, 7:00 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno

Hybridizing Rare Succulents: Methods and Results

Presenter: Russell Wagner



Othonna hybrids

This month our speaker will be Russell Wagner, former editor of *Cactus and Succulent Journal*, and member of the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society. Russell grows rare succulents and bulbs from seed in his greenhouse in Oakland, and has been working on hybrids and selection across several groups of plants. This month Russell will bring samples of his work, to show and sell, in a dynamic, impromptu presentation.

Though a mesembs specialist, Russell has always maintained a select group of succulent euphorbias, especially the smaller medusoids and from these emerged a project involving the creation of new, sphaeroid euphorbias. This work began by crossing the leafy pinecone spurge, *E. bupleurifolia*, with *symmetrica* and other compact species, to produce new forms with bold stripes, tubercles, and spiraled stems. Because euphorbias produce so few seed, the results have taken years, and Russell will show us a few of the successes and failures of this breeding line.

In the mesembs, Russell's has been breeding one of the tiniest species, *Neohenricia sibbettii*, with neighboring members of the family (*Stomatium*, *Rhinephyllum*, *Mossia*), in order to amplify *Neohenricia*'s tiny leaves and expand its ornate leaf markings. The progeny are varied, compact, and have produced some surprises in flower color and size, in addition to the leaf forms Russell was hoping to find.

Russell has also been active in a third avenue of research hybridizing *Adromischus*, working with material from Fred Gaumer, Steven Hammer, as well as his own field collections from the marianae group of slow, bumpy-leaved species, to produce new variations of pattern, texture, and color. Adros are notoriously difficult from seed, and Russell hopes to share some recent successes and demo his growing technique in hopes that others will be inspired to take up similar projects.

Methods of plant selection, pollination, seed collection, and sowing will be discussed as Russell talks in an extended show and tell, mixed with opportunities to buy some of the plants that will be on display. Come out and enjoy this atypical, fun, fun, and dynamic presentation!



Neohenricia sibbettii x
Stomatium sp.

(Continued on following page)

Let's give Russell a warm welcome back to our club.

PLANTS: Russell will be bringing a nice selection of plants for purchase.

~ DINNER ~

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

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

Contact Rosanna by Wednesday
March 1st, to make reservations.
Phone: (559) 999-0017
Email: rfrosjas96@gmail.com

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, all,

Now that it's March we are starting some of our major club activities, beginning with the Fresno Home & Garden Show. We always like to have as many members as possible to participate in events like these. There is more information below as to how you can help.

Woody Minnich presented a great program last month on the flora of South Africa, complete with his excellent photography. The large audience enjoyed it thoroughly. We have an outstanding roster of speakers upcoming, and we like to think there will be something that will catch the interest of each member. That's why we hope you will renew your membership, if you have not already done so.

Rosanna Rojas addressed the new board of directors of the Discovery Center of Fresno two weeks ago, recounting our club's long association with the Center. She reported that the board members were very interested to hear the details. Don't forget that our October meeting will be held at the Discovery Center. Dominick Ortiz will be our host that evening. A lot has been going on at the Center; if you haven't been there for a long time, you will be surprised.

Volunteer opportunity: we've been asked by Georgia Porcella of the Clovis Botanical Garden if one of our members would be interested in regularly tending the cactus garden that has been in place there for several years and working with or supervising other volunteers. They would really be interested in having the assistance of someone who is knowledgeable about these plants. I announced this at the last meeting, but got the request too late for the newsletter, so am listing it now. If you are interested in more information, call Georgia 559-287-2320. Several people could even team up to help.

Isn't this winter rain one for the books? How much is too much?

See you at the meeting, *Sue*

Club access: President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu ; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, rfrosjas96@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 .

Cactus Club Board Meeting Minutes from February 6, 2017

Called to order by President Sue Haffner at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Rosanna Rojas, Vice-President; Secretary, Karen Willoughby; Fred Gaumer, CSSA representative; Board members Dennis Anderson, Michele & Craig Roberts, Mary Drumheller, Don Winton. Absent were Treasurer Robert Scott and board member Ann Bierbower. Visitors, James Rojas and Dominic Ortiz.

Officer reports: Robert was not present but Sue had an email statement he wanted to suggest that vendors sign stating they would not start cleaning up at the Home & Garden Show until after 6:00 p.m. or they would be fined \$50 by the club. This is because our contract with the Home & Garden show states that no breakdown or removing of items will occur prior to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday and the club could be fined if this occurred. No vote was taken on this suggestion at this time. Sue discussed the request she had received and shared with us via email from the Clovis Botanical garden who is seeking a club member to oversee and supervise the cactus/succulent collection in their garden. As yet, no volunteers have come forward to take on this job. Sue said she would mention in the next newsletter to the general membership. Sue also reported that Tony Sharp is willing to make the officer gift pots for this year again.

Vice-President: Rosanna reported that the speaker for the March meeting would be Russell Wagner. She was still attempting to contact Joseph Hildago to see about him doing a presentation in the future.

Treasurer: Sue reported that Polly had informed her that not all members have renewed their memberships. Robert was not present but Sue reported that he had not yet obtained a contract for rental of the room at DHHSC for the 11 months in 2017 we would need the room. She did feel that the club insurance had been paid because proof of our liability insurance needed to be presented to the Home & Garden show prior to the show in March.

Secretary: I had nothing to report at this time.

Old Business: Volunteers are still needed to work at the Home and Garden show. Neither Ann nor Robert were at the meeting for further information but Robert reported that he would not be available Thursday for set-up but that Ann would be there. Badges from last year can be used at this year's show also. Sue reported that a new person would be supervising the plant society shows and booths but that Jennifer Waite would be present to help. She will not be in charge of the show as in the past.

Spring into your Garden Festival is Saturday March 25th at the Clovis Botanical Garden and Rosanna Rojas and Ann Bierbower would be representing the club at the at this event. The table is provided with two chairs but a pop up sun shade would need to be obtained from Tom Meyer prior to the event.

Spring Garden Tour with a theme of "Coffee in the Garden" was discussed and Fred Gaumer was going to be speaking to members to see who might be willing to host such an event. This would involve just one garden at a time with coffee and light refreshments to be offered to those who attended. A firm date needs to be obtained from Patty Miller and Mark Muradian for the club picnic at their home in May. This would either be the 6th, 13th or 20th of May.

Bus trip information was provided by Michele Roberts who has contacted the bus company for availability and pricing for a trip on May 27th to the show and sale in San Luis Obispo of the Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society. The show and sale is open from 10-5. Pricing and size of bus was discussed along with times to leave and possible places to eat for this trip which would be much shorter than trips further north or south. No determination has been made yet to obtain a firm contract with the bus company.

(Continued on next page)

Annual show and sale location at this point will remain at Sierra Vista Mall although members are investigating other possible locations for this event and will report back to the board with their findings. Methods to more quickly check out customers was also discussed and Craig Roberts stated that he has pads and squares that the club could use to better facilitate shorter wait times at the sale.

New Business: The venue for the monthly club workshops was also discussed and we will have the March workshop at the Betty Rodriguez Library conference room as a trial to see if the venue is acceptable for further workshops.

Dominic Ortiz passed around pictures for last year's Egg Fest at the Discovery Center showing kids making dish gardens in abalone shells with cuttings provided by the club. He requests that we provide cuttings again the event which is scheduled for April 8th at the Discovery Center. More information will be provided at a later date regarding this request.

No further new business was presented and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Willoughby, Secretary

**BOARD MEETING: March 13th, Monday, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista.
Any members are welcome to attend; board members should attend.**

SPRING HOME AND GARDEN SHOW

The Spring Home and Garden Show is coming up March 3-5 at the Fresno Fairgrounds. It's a huge event with thousands of attendees. It provides great exposure for any organization or business. The garden clubs will again be located in the Junior Exhibits Building, at the south end of the grounds, just to your right as you enter the Butler Avenue gate. Robert Scott (960-3665) and Ann Bierbower (907-6861) will be in charge of the sale/exhibit this year; they can answer any of your questions.

Setup is Thursday, March 2nd. Get in touch with Rob or Ann to find out how you can help. Vendors, please show up in the late morning to help set up tables and move in your plants. If you cannot set up until after work, the building will be open until 9 p.m.

The show opens on Friday, March 3rd, at 11 a.m. Hours are: Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Vendors note: we are required by our contract to remain set up until 6 p.m. Sunday evening, even if there are no customers in the building. Also, we need to take down and stack the tables and clean up our area before vacating it. The garden building will be under the direct supervision this year of Julie Geistlinger, co-owner of the Home & Garden Show, so we need to be observant of the rules.

Parking will be in the lot at the SE corner of Maple and Butler. You need a badge or a pass to park free. As at Fair time, there will be a shuttle to take you to the entry gate at the Fairgrounds.

We hope to have passes at this meeting. If you have your Home & Garden Show badge from last year or previous years, that will work to get you onto the grounds. Otherwise, wear you club name badge and say that you are working at the flower show and that should be good enough to get you in.

We need members to help pull tags and box plants; also, to spell the cashiers. Set up and clean up can also use willing hands.

There will be more information at the meeting. *Sue*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

*Chuck Thew, Michele Roberts,
Anthony Huerta (3rd);
Paula Singer (6th);
Christy Conanan (8th);
Larry Carlberg, Paul Flores*

*(15th); Cheyne Lopez (21st); Veone Gale,
Claudia Carlson, Roy Luga (22nd);
Janet Brummel (28th); Cori Auger (29th). And
Belated Happy Birthday to Brenda Anderson
(Feb. 1st).*

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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Kevin Ruth Mahoney, Fresno;  
Valita Robison, Selma;  
Debbie Nielsen, Visalia

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RENEWALS: This newsletter goes out to current members plus those who haven't yet renewed for 2017—at least, according to the information we have so far. If you are not sure you've paid, get in touch with Robert Scott.

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**NEW IN THE CLUB LIBRARY:** "Succulents: The Ultimate Guide to Choosing, Designing, and Growing 200 Easy-care Plants" by Robin Stockwell. This is a brand-new publication, filled with colored illustrations and a lot of good tips. It will be available for check-out this month.

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OVERDUES: Be sure to get in touch with Madeleine Mitchell if you have questions regarding books you may have charged out. She recently tried to contact several members who have had books out for some time. Several of these folks still haven't renewed their memberships for this year.

We have an excellent club library which we are fortunate to be able to keep at our meeting place (many clubs would envy us that ability.) It's a great asset for our members.

COMING EVENTS

"Spring into your Garden Festival", Clovis Botanical Garden, Saturday, March 25th, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Our club will have an information table at this event. There will be talks by landscapers and garden experts, garden tours, plant sales, etc. Rain or shine!

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Saturday, April 22, Madera Glorious Garden Tour

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Saturday, April 29, Fresno Master Gardeners Garden Tour

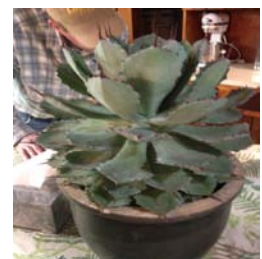
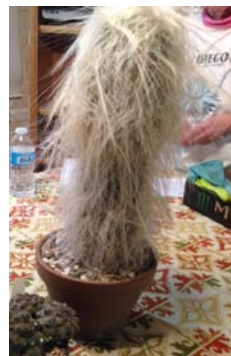
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Saturday & Sunday, April 29-30, San Jose C&S Society Spring Show & Sale, Peterson Middle School, 1380 Rosalia Ave, Sunnyvale; hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4.

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WORKSHOP NEWS: Those bringing plants to the February workshop were, Dan Gale, Sue Haffner, Veone Gale, Tom Meyer, Bill Gale, Dennis Anderson, Jack Fleming and Mary Drumheller. Dan also brought small plants of *Aloe* "Quicksilver" and citrus fruit to give away. Thanks, Dan!

New venue for March workshop: The March workshop will be Wednesday, March 15th, in the meeting room of the Betty Rodriguez Regional Library, 3040 N. Cedar; the library is in the SE corner of the intersection of Cedar and Shields (near the Baskin Robbins store.) We have reserved the larger meeting room from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thanks to Roz Tampone for making the arrangements.



Photos by: Cindy Duwe

THE BRAG TABLE

I have wanted to write something about the Brag Table for a while. I usually forget about it or I realize that I don't know enough about it to write something. I wasn't sure if there were any rules in the society's packet that new members get when they join; or if my packet was up to date. Turns out it wasn't.

After I got a new member's packet I found that there was only one mention of the Brag Table without any elaboration. Over the years, I heard that there was a limit of one plant per person and some other things that I do not recall at this time. I have been asked several times to mention to the members not to pull the plant labels out of the pots. We have to move along because of time limitations. But other than that, it seems like it is a pretty open field to do what suits us best at this particular time. We have had, very infrequently, plants that were in no way having any succulence at all. That is mostly for asking for identification or advice from our horticulturally knowledgeable members. I heard a little mumbling about that.

I recently read a small piece in the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society's newsletter, *Espinas y Flores*, about their Brag Table. Their answer to "What is the Brag Table" is: "It's a place to show off your most beautiful and interesting plants—the one that is finally in bloom, showing seasonal colors, growing well because of your skill (or good luck) or the one that is simply your favorite."

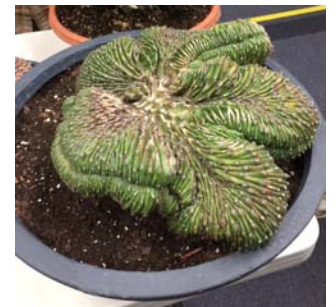
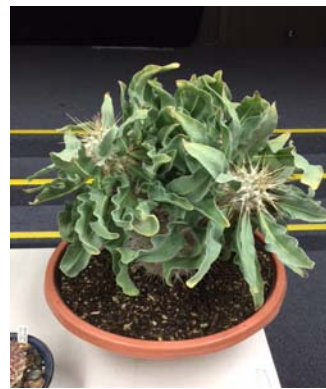
"Bring your plants to any general meeting. Make sure your plants are dry, clean and free of pests and diseases."

The piece goes on describing how they operate their Brag Table.

I would like to invite plants with problems or identification questions but if your plants are suffering from pests or disease, please quarantine them from the other plants on display.

There are many fantastic plants grown by experienced and novice members in the Fresno Cactus Society, so keep on bringing them in and go up to the table and get a closer look.

Fred G.



**Photos by
Karen Willoughby**

AND HOW ABOUT SOME OF THOSE BRAG TABLE PLANTS

Some of the very interesting Brag Table plants are featured below:



Photo from "Succulents"
by Terry Hewitt

(Photo from "Succulents"
by Terry Hewitt)

Euphorbia horrida: "African Milk Barrel"; this is a hardy species native to the Karoo region of South Africa. Its specific name "*horrida*" derives from the prominent spines, which are actually dried remnants of flower stalks. Individual plants are variable, with different forms commonly found, some of them perhaps natural hybrids. In appearance, it is very similar to *E. polygona*. *E. horrida* is fairly common in commerce; Lowe's had some nice specimens for sale recently. It's one of the hardier euphorbias, with mature specimens tolerating a small degree of frost. It forms attractive clumps with time. Offsets are easily detached. Cultivation is not difficult, but—as usual with euphorbias—you need to take care not to get the sap on your skin.



MAMMILLARIA BOMBYCINA is a species well known in cultivation and is a popular show plant. It forms large clusters of stems, nicely spined and with beautiful lilac-colored flowers. It is not difficult to grow and with regular repotting it can produce a specimen plant that may require several strong men to lift. The species is native to the high winter-cold mountains of the Sierra Fria in the states of Aguascalientes and Jalisco, Mexico.

(Photo from "500 cacti" by Ken Preston-Mafham)



ALOE "PAPA WOODY": Madeleine brought this Kelly Griffin hybrid for the Brag Table in honor of its namesake, our February speaker Woody Minnich. The photo, taken from a Pinterest site, doesn't do justice to the true coloration of the leaves and their toothy edges. Kelly Griffin is foremost among the hybridizers who are producing more and more gorgeous aloes every year. *Sue*

LOOKING FOR BULBS IN SOUTH AFRICA: In the Fall 2016 issue of *The Bulb Garden*, the newsletter of the Pacific Bulb Society, Michael Mace, of San Jose, describes a trip he and his wife took to South Africa last fall, their first trip to that country. They rented an SUV and drove from place to place, guided by a lot of research and advice. They planned the trip far in advance, reserving self-catering cottages along the route. "Renting a car is easy, as long as you can get comfortable driving on the left side of the road. Be very cautious on busy two-lane highways near the cities, as some South Africans have a habit of passing on blind curves. You'll come around a corner to find a car in your lane, driving toward you at high speed. As long as you're alert, this is survivable—you duck quickly to the left into the emergency parking lane. But it's scary the first time it happens. And every other time." He describes the routes they took and the plants they found. Some of the roads were rather sketchy, but on the whole, they were fine, even though many of them are unpaved.

There are a lot of mountain passes in South Africa. Michael recommends a wonderful website with maps, descriptions and videos: <http://www.mountainpassessouthafrica.co.za>. It's a great site for armchair travelers. He also has some general suggestions: "Be a generous tipper ... there are a lot of people in marginal service jobs: standing guard over parked cars, pumping gas, etc. Most of them are friendly and give very good service, and it's just plain polite to give them 10 rand (about 70 cents) as a thank you. You'll help them make ends meet, and you're saving a bundle on the low prices for everything else. Think of it as a tourism fee. Here's my summary: friendly people, beautiful scenery, very clean, safe if you're careful and crazy drivers. It's also dirt cheap at the moment because the rand is so low. Despite the long plane flight, this trip was much cheaper for us Californians than going to someplace like Europe or Australia." *Sue*

Sue

The above quotes were used with Michael Mace's permission. I would also recommend the Pacific Bulb Society, www.pacificbulbsociety.org. It's a wonderful resource.