

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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October 2018

**Next meeting: Thursday, October 4th, 7:00 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

Program: Exploring Euphorbias

Presenter: Tom Glavich

We look at Euphorbias from Africa, Madagascar and Mexico, exploring their similarities and differences. Cultivation and propagation of Euphorbias is discussed, and a look at Euphorbias in habitat and in gardens is presented.



Tom Glavich is a long-time grower of succulent plants. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and one of the co-chairs of the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show held every August at the LA County Arboretum. He is the author of many articles in the CSSA Journal and the Beginner's Guide articles and book.

Let's give Tom a warm welcome!

Tom will bring sale plants from his nursery, Skyview Plants.

~~ DINNER ~~

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

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

Contact Rosanna by
Wednesday, October 3rd,
to make reservations:
Phone: (559) 999-0017

FROM THE PREZ ...**Hi, All,**

I hope you all made it to Members' Sale Night. We had great participation, on both sides of the sale tables. It looked like everyone was having a great time. Thanks so much to the participants—and a special thank you to those who helped set up the room and those who helped clean up.

We should have a very interesting program this month. Tom Glavich is a very knowledgeable speaker, presenting a program on euphorbias. Just about all of us have a euphorbia or two in our collections. Tom will also bring sale plants from his nursery, Skyview Plants. Let's bring our euphorbias for the Brag Table.

A number of events are coming up this month: the Fresno Fair, the club bus trip and the Clovis Botanical Garden Water Wise Plant Sale & Fair (on the same day as the bus trip, unfortunately.)

Rosanna Rojas and Dominic Ortiz offered to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2019 officers. If you are interested in service on the board of directors or in one of the other offices, make your interest know to them.

I'm looking forward to this meeting. Hope to see you there *Sue*

BUS TRIP ITINERARY

The club is planning a bus trip for Saturday, October 20th. Our destination is the University of California Davis Botanical Conservatory, Ernesto Sandoval, Director. This is a very interesting place, with various greenhouses holding all manner of plants, some of them quite exotic. They usually have some plants for sale, too.

Along the way there will be a nursery stop where you can shop for plants.

There will be a breakfast stop and dinner stop. You should probably plan on bringing a lunch.

Seats are \$40.00; checks should be payable to FCSS; bring them to this meeting or mail to: FCSS, 12307 Gleason Drive, Madera, CA 93636. There should be enough room for a guest, or two. We won't know for sure until this upcoming meeting.

Depart: 6:00 a.m., Walmart, 3680 West Shaw, Fresno

Break: 7:00-7:30 a.m., McDonald's, Livingston

Stop: 8:30-10:00 a.m., Poot's House of Cactus, 17229 Hwy 120 Ripon

Destination: 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., UC Davis Botanical Conservatory

Dinner Stop: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Espana's, Los Banos

FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING – SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

Called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Sue Haffner. Present were Rob Scott, Cindy Duwe, Bill Gale, Dominic Ortiz, Michele & Craig Roberts, Jim Brummel, Fred Gaumer, Mary Drumheller, Rosanna Rojas and myself, Karen Willoughby. Marilyn Carter was absent.

OFFICE REPORTS

President: Sue had received the bill for web hosting.

Vice-President: Tom Glavich will be our speaker in October and Nicki Bradford in November.

Treasurer: Michele presented our current financial statement and balance.

Affiliate Rep: No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Member's Sale Night: Was successful except for the issue of temperature in the building.

Bus Trip: Still scheduled for 10/20. We will be using Best Tours this year per Cindy.

Vacuum: Purchase and alternatives were discussed.

By-laws revision: Sue has added the necessary wording for our 501(c)(3) status. We will see if these can be posted on the website.

Nominating committee: Rosanna and Dominic volunteered to do this.

NEW BUSINESS

Standing rules update. It was discussed that the standing rules need to be updated since the last update was in 2010. Copies were provided for input from all to be discussed at next month's board meeting.

Clovis Botanical Garden: Clovis Botanical Garden has an event on 10/20 which is the same date as our bus trip. Sue wondered about the club selling at this function since all the other participating societies do so.

Club Roster: Various forms of this were discussed with Craig being in charge since he is handling membership.

Next board meeting will be October 8th which is our annual budget meeting. There being no further business to discuss, meeting was adjourned at 6:50.

Further details regarding any of these subjects can be discussed with any board member if desired.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Willoughby, Secretary

BOARD MEETING

Monday, October 8th, 6:00 p.m., 3733 North Sierra Vista, Fresno

This is our annual budget meeting where we discuss activities for next year.

Any member is welcome to attend.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**Jan Armbruster (1st);
Karl Church (2nd);
Jaan Lepson (6th);
Nicholas Wise (18th);
Marian Orvis (20th).**

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### SAY HELLO TO THIS NEW MEMBER

Annie Wolf, Sunnyvale *Welcome!*

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CONGRATULATIONS to Cindy Duwe, who married Monte Tackett on September 21st. They've known each other since elementary school, Cindy says.

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### COMING EVENTS

#### **Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society**

Show and Sale, October 13-14 St Paul's Church,  
2216 17<sup>th</sup> St (corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and "B" Street)

Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 11-3.

[www.bakersfieldcactus.org](http://www.bakersfieldcactus.org)

(Their show poster is also on our club's  
Facebook page)

#### **Water Wise Plant Sale & Fair**

Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Clovis Botanical Garden, 945 Clovis Ave

[www.clovisbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.clovisbotanicalgarden.org)

#### **Big Fresno Fair, October 3-14**

[www.fresnofair.com](http://www.fresnofair.com)

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New web address for Cactus & Succulent Society of
America:

<http://cactusandsucculentsociety.org>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to get involved in club activities, here are ways you can help – and have fun, too!

Fresno Fair: If you haven't done so already, sign up to spend a couple of hours as a monitor at the cactus & succulent display in the Floriculture Building. You get a free pass into the Fair, plus a parking pass.

Clovis Botanical Garden Water Wise Plant Sale & Fair: we have a club informational table at this event. We have a table and two chairs—it would be nice to have 2 people to fill them. Let Sue know if you are interested.

Christmas Party: we need someone (or several people) to volunteer to be in charge, as Rosanna, who usually manages the food, will be unavailable. Talk to Rosanna to find out what all is involved.

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**SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP:** An enthusiastic group showed up on September 19<sup>th</sup>, to share plants and growing experiences with each other. Bringing plants for discussion were Sue Haffner, Eddie Etheridge, Dennis Anderson, Jack Fleming, Tom Meyer, Dan Gale, Mary Drumheller and Bill Gale. We looked at plants in the following genera: *Rebutia*, *Sarcocaulon*, *Seyregia*, *Stenocactus*, *Euphorbia*, *Cereus*, *Aloe*, *Huernia*, *Lithops* and *Pachypodium*. Dan brought seed flats of *Ariocarpus* and *Astrophytum ornatum* (10,000 tiny plantlets, he said.) He also brought mandarins for everyone. Tom showed a fertilizer he recommends: Peters Professional 10-20-30.

The October workshop will be Wednesday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m, at 3733 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno. We'll be looking at genera that start with S – T. Discussion topic: What is that one plant that you just can't grow?

All members are welcome to attend.

## EUPHORBIAS

The euphorbia family, also called the “Milkweed” or “Spurge” family, comprises thousands of species divided into many genera. They range from tiny weeds like “Spotted Spurge”, which we all know and love, to large trees, herbaceous garden plants, and others. They are mainly tropical in origin and are found all over the world.

Of course, the euphorbias that we’re interested in are the succulent species. These are mainly native to South Africa and Madagascar, extending into Arabia, Morocco, the Canary Islands and India.

The most prominent characteristic of these plants—and which contributes to one of their common names—is the milky white latex-like sap that oozes from any injury to the stem. This can range from just annoyingly sticky to extremely toxic. In any case, it’s advisable to avoid getting any on your skin.

There is a society devoted to the study of euphorbias: [www.euphorbia-international.org](http://www.euphorbia-international.org). It issues a journal, *Euphorbia World*.

The illustration opposite (from “At home with succulents” by Ken Altman, c2016), shows some euphorbias commonly found in nurseries and garden shops.

*Euphorbia flanaganii* is one of the medusoid euphorbias, named for their fancied resemblance to Medusa of classic mythology. Arms of varying length radiate out from the central caudex of the plant. Most medusoid euphorbias are of easy culture, are tolerant of light frost. It’s been my experience that the crested form of *E. flanaganii* is more common in nurseries than the normal plant. It is native to the Cape Province of South Africa.

*Euphorbia milii* and similar species, the “Crown of Thorns”, are native to Madagascar. I used to kill them until I figured out that they should be treated as tropical plants, rather than as succulents. Their stems are woody, not succulent. They respond to drying out by throwing off their flowers and leaves.

A number of different hybrids and cultivars are on the market, including several with variegated foliage. Years ago, the “Thai Hybrids” appeared in the trade. These are plants with large stems and large, multi-colored flowers.

*Euphorbia polygona* is widespread across its South African habitat. It has spiny, gray-green stems that branch from the base. The stems can reach 5 feet in habitat. The cultivar ‘Snowflake’ is an especially white form that occurs in nature and has been collected and propagated for its distinctive coloration. *E. polygona* is of easy culture and tolerant of neglect.

*Euphorbia trigona* is one of the commonest euphorbias. Native to central Africa, its stems can reach considerable height, sometimes branching along its length, until it becomes top-heavy and needs support (or you can cut off the top part and propagate it.) It isn’t known to bloom outside of the tropics. I’ve had this one freeze on my patio, so I bring it in when low temperatures are forecast. **Sue**



Medusa Plant  
*Euphorbia flanaganii*  
Grows to 5" tall x 10"+ wide.  
Clusters of yellow flowers in spring.



Green Coral  
*Euphorbia flanaganii cristata*  
Grows to 5" tall x 10" wide.  
The growing point is an undulating fan called a "crest."



Crown of Thorns  
*Euphorbia milii*  
Blooms almost nonstop.



African Snowflake  
*Euphorbia polygona* 'Snowflake'  
Grows to 18" tall x 8" wide.  
Silver-white stems slowly grow into clusters.



Royal Red  
*Euphorbia trigona* 'Royal Red'  
Grows to 6' tall x 3' wide in time.  
Red version of the green form.



Good Luck Plant  
*Euphorbia trigona*  
Grows to 6' tall x 3' wide in time.  
Good house plant.



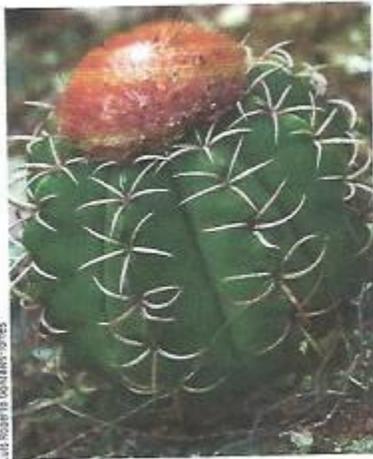
### COPIAPOA LAUI

The specific name honors Dr. Alfred Lau, who first reported finding the plant around 1980. (Actually, he intimated that he had seen the plant on previous expeditions but, thinking it was something else, ignored it.) You sometimes see it listed as a variety of *Copiapoa hypogaea*.

*Copiapoa laui* forms clumps of small grayish heads that display a varying amount of wool. Elton Roberts reports that it grows best with acidic water and protection from the direct sun in our area. Each head in a pot will form its own tap root. You can take a clump apart and pot up the individual heads if you wish. He writes: "When potting or up-potting make sure that you do not have a pot that is too deep. You want one that will give you about ½ to ¾ of an inch of soil below the roots. In the heat of summer give good filtered shade in the heat of the day. If you want your plant to have sunshine, give it only morning sunshine. With acidic water you could have a nice clump in only a couple of years from a single head ... The plants bloom, for me, in the spring till it gets hot and fall after the summer cools off. If we get some cool days in midsummer the plants will bloom then, also." **Sue**



Photos by Elton Roberts



The only known wild population of *Melocactus actinacanthus* contains just four plants

### THE RAREST MELOCACTUS?

*Melocactus actinacanthus* is a small-growing Cuban species native to a very restricted area. It is localized on a formation of mineral-bearing rocks low in calcium but rich in magnesium. A survey in 2014 showed only four plants extant, one mature plant and three juveniles.

The Conservation Committee of the British Cactus & Succulent Society and other organizations, as part of a project to document and preserve cactus species indigenous to Cuba, has begun a program of reintroduction by means of seed-grown plants. They are also searching for any other populations as yet unrecorded. A local "Save the Melocactus" group has been formed in the town closest to the known site. This situation illustrates the fragility of some species' environments. It makes you wonder how many plants have lived—and died—unknown to us.

(Illus. from *Cactus World*, June 2014)

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**EUPHORBIAS FROM LEAF CUTTINGS:** Some Madagascan euphorbias can be propagated from leaves (*E. francoisii*, *cylindrifolia*, *pachypodioides*, *ankarensis*, *millotii*.)

Gently pull leaves from plants (not cut) and put each leaf into a cube of rock wool and place on a tray of coarse sand. The surface of the sand should be kept covered with water. Hormone rooting powder and/or a fungicide can assist with rooting. Cover the tray with plastic to increase humidity or use gentle bottom heat.

Not all of the leafy Madagascan species can be so propagated. *E. decaryi*, *primulifolia*, *moratii*, *cremersii* and *decidua* will apparently strike roots but will not produce plants. Some of these, such as *decaryi*, are easy to grow from cuttings, though you could always try the leaves, just as an experiment.

Sue



### **CACTUS OR SUCCULENT? We get asked all the time: Is this plant a cactus or a succulent?**

Our offhand answer always is: All cacti are succulent, but not all succulents are cacti. Is this really true?

Well, no. There are certain genera of what are called “primitive” cacti, such as *Pereskia* or *Pereskiaopsis*, for example, which are not succulent. Their stems are woody and thorny; they’re xerophytic but not succulent. They drop their leaves in a drought and don’t leaf out again until it rains.

But this is probably more than the questioner wants or needs to know. Most people aren’t looking for a lecture.

If someone should approach you with the above question, first ascertain just what plant they’re talking about. A lot of people use the term “cactus” for any plant with thorns or spines. I’ve had people ask me about a “cactus” when it turns out they’re referring to an agave or a yucca.

Fortunately, these days most people can show you a picture on their phone. Always ask if they have a photo if you get asked about a plant. Don’t count on their verbal descriptions, which can be all over the map. Those who are not “into” plants usually lack the vocabulary to describe a plant adequately.

Do your best. If you’re wearing the club tee shirt or your club name badge, you’re the expert!

Sue



Nice crowd at last month’s Members’ Sale.

Photo: Henry Coggan