

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 37, No. 10

October 2019

Next meeting: Thursday, October 3rd, 2019; 7:00 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)
Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1084 West Bullard, Fresno 93711

October Program: The Dynamic Duo

**This month we are tapping the knowledge and expertise of our own Club Members,
Larry Homan and Rob Scott**



Larry Homan is a "long" time member of the club! He has collected Cactus and Succulents over the years and has built up an extensive collection. He also has the artistic eye and has designed and sold pottery to exhibit his plants. Larry is a great resource on identifying plants and also on tips of the trade! Larry will give an overview on common pests and infestations of Cacti and Succulents and will share some techniques and products that help get rid of them



Robert Scott is a newer member that hasn't let any grass (Cactus) grow under his feet. He has extensive plant knowledge along with his degree from Fresno State. Rob's specialty is Aloes and he gave a very informative presentation to our club in April. He currently is on the Board and oversees our Annual Show and Sale, Member's sale and Home and Garden show. Robert first got into growing cacti and succulents as a food source for his pet tortoises. The two hobbies worked well together, especially when you have to feed a lot of turtles and tortoises. Rob will give an Overview of preparing plants for the Fresno Winter, what not to water, and what to water and how often.

We encourage members to bring plants for identification, diagnosis and we will have Q and A interactions to expand our plant knowledge and "pick the brains" of this Dynamic Duo!

Plants: **Larry and Rob will be bringing a nice selection of plants for purchase.**



~~ DINNER ~~

**Pico de Gallo Cafe
5789 North Palm Avenue
Fresno, (559) 412-4327**

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

**Contact Rosanna by
Wednesday, October 2nd
to make reservations:
Phone: (559) 999-0017**

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, All,

I'm writing this on the first day of fall, the season of changes. The past few months have seen a number of changes for the club. First, in July, we canceled the meeting because it fell on the Fourth. Then in August we had to switch our meeting night because of a conflict with a church event. These were unsettling enough. Then we were required to find a new venue for our board meetings and workshops. Fortunately, we have the Betty Rodriguez Library as a fallback location. The workshops are no longer on Wednesdays, as that's reserved for a yoga class, so we will hold it on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th Thursday, depending on whether the library might be holding an event, such as Art Hop, in the meeting room.

We had announced that our meeting this month would be at the Discovery Center. This scheduling decision had been made last year, when we were still meeting at DHHSC (where they had doubled our rent) and we hadn't even looked for a new meeting place. Since then, we hadn't much thought about this until I happened to note that, by October, it would be dark by meeting time—not a favorable time to tour the Deutsch Cactus Garden and other Discovery Center features. So we put together a program at the church. Thanks to Rosanna for getting it organized.

For myself, personally, it's been a challenging time. After suffering a broken leg August 7th, spending a week in the hospital and another week at a rehab place, I've been home for a month. I'm told I'm doing well, though still clomping around with a walker. I haven't seen all of my backyard since early August, which is very frustrating. Thank heavens for Linda Lopez, who is doing a better job of watering than I ever did. At least I can drive, which gives me some mobility. Patience ... patience.

I missed the Member's Sale Night last month, but I hear that things went well. Thanks to those who organized and worked to keep things moving.

The Nominations Committee will present a slate of 2020 officers at this meeting. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the November meeting, after which voting will occur.

If you are looking for drought tolerant plants for your yard, be sure to come by the Clovis Botanical Garden on Saturday, October 18th for the big plant sale, which includes California natives. Our club, and other organizations, will have information tables at this event, also.

Hope to see you all at the meeting, **Sue**



The Big Fresno Fair is finally here. It opens on Wed Oct 2 - Mon Oct 14. We hope club members will volunteer as plant monitors during Mon-Fri 11am-9pm, Sat & Sun 10am-8pm for a shift of two hours. You'll be providing information on cacti and succulents, your experiences in caring, cultivating, and maintaining your plants, club activities, and events to the public. For a two hours shift, you'll receive a parking pass and an admission ticket. I'll be accepting volunteers for plant monitors and providing the parking passes and admission tickets at our October club meeting.

Rudy Rulloda, Fresno Fair Coordinator

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society Board Meeting, September 9, 2019

Meeting called to order at 6:02 by President Sue Haffner. Present were Fred Gaumer, Jim Brummel, Rob Scott, Cindy Duwe, Bill Gale, Rosanna Rojas, Craig & Michele Roberts, Dominic Ortiz and myself, Karen Willoughby. Absent was Marilyn Carter.

Officer reports:

President: Sue presented to the Treasurer, the bill for yearly web hosting.

Vice-President: The October meeting was discussed since the meeting will be held at our regular meeting location and not the Discovery Center. Rosanna is working on the program for that night.

Peter Beiersdorfer will be our speaker in November.

Treasurer: Michele presented the financial statement showing our current balances including the income from the member's sale.

Affiliate Rep: No report.

Old Business:

Member's Sale Night: It was a successful sale. Attendance may have been down a bit because of the extreme weather.

Noise during programs: This was discussed with suggestions for solving this ongoing problem.

Other: None.

New Business:

Clovis Botanical Garden event, Oct.19th: Michele will be manning our table and others are encouraged to come out and help too.

Rescued large Pachypodium: A motion was made and seconded to let Larry Homan keep the plant since it is impossible to move due and sell due to size.

Back up tech person for sound system: Discussed the problems we have been having. Craig to look into solutions and requests a volunteer to learn the system in the case of his absence.

2020 Nominations Committee: Karen will be chairing this committee. Dominic Ortiz volunteered to help and I will ask one other member to help too. The slate will be presented at the October meeting.

Other: None.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50. The October board meeting is our annual budget meeting and will be held on October 7th.

As always, if you would like further information on any of these items, please speak with a board member.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Willoughby, Secretary

Club access: President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu; Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, rfrojas96@gmail.com; Treasurer, Michele Roberts, 645-5257, robertshowse@comcast.net; Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu; Refreshments, Nancy Jobin; Librarian, Marilyn Carter, 977-6611, mkc3253@gmail.com; Webmaster, Vickie Veen, vickieveen@gmail.com; Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, cgg266@comcast.net.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: *Jan Armbruster (1st);*



Karl Church (2nd);

Jaan Lepson (6th);

Alex Gonzales (14th);

Nicholas Wise (18th);

Marian Orvis (20th);

Ronnie Ochoa (30th).

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**Visitors last month:** Susan Brunkhorst,  
Elaine Bredfeldt, Toby Pardo.

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**A get well card was sent to
Polly Dunklin.** She's recovering
from surgery. If you are aware of
any member who needs a
sunshine card, let Sue know.

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## COMING EVENTS

**CORRECTED DATE: October 5-6, Monterey Bay**

**Area C&S Society Fall Show & Sale,**

San Juan Bautista Community Hall,

10 San Jose St, San Juan Bautista;

Sat., 9-5; Sun. 9-4.

**October 12-13, Bakersfield C&S Society Show &**

**Sale,** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2216 17<sup>th</sup> St.

(17<sup>th</sup> and B Streets); Sat., 10-5; Sun., 11-3.

**October 18<sup>th</sup>, Water-Wise Plant Sale,**

Clovis Botanical Garden

(information elsewhere in this issue)

## OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

The board will meet Monday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m.,  
at the Betty Rodriguez Library, 3040 N. Cedar.

This is the annual budget meeting.

Any member is welcome to attend.

**Librarian Marilyn Carter would like members  
to return their library books this month.**

**ALL LIBRARY BOOKS ARE NOW DUE.**

**THE SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP** featured genera starting with O, P and Q. We looked at plants in Operculacaria, Oreocereus, Opuntia, Othonna, Oroya and Ortegocactus; Pachypodium, Puna, Pelargonium, Parodia and Pterodiscus. Bringing plants for show and tell were Eddie Etheridge, Bill Gale, Dan Gale, Dennis Anderson and Jack Fleming. Thanks to them for their contributions.

We discussed what we should be doing now in the greenhouse and the yard. Jan Brummel reported that one of the neighbors had removed some trees which had a sudden effect on her garden. (Yes, I've had several experiences with that very thing.)

After holding the workshops on Wednesday, we now have to change to Thursdays, the second or third, depending on the schedule at the library.

The October workshop will be Thursday, Oct. 24th, 6 p.m., at the Betty Rodriguez Library. The letters for plant genera will be R and S. Discussion topic will be winter growers.

All members are welcome to attend. *Sue*



Photos by  
*Cindy Duwe*

## WHAT IS A CEPHALIUM?



The word cephalium means a head from which flowers appear. A cephalium is a sometimes brightly colored structure of wool and bristle at the growing tip of certain cacti such as *Melocactus* and *Discocactus*.

A cephalium will only begin growing after a cactus has reached maturity. The plant has finished growing after the cephalium begins to form. After that, flower buds will begin to form from the cephalium, which continues to grow.

Plants that grow a true terminal cephalium include *Melocactus* and *Discocactus*. Many genera, however, have what is called a pseudocephalium which forms on the side of the stems.



The actual structure of the pseudocephalium can vary considerably from species to species. In some cases the flowering areoles develop a lot of wool (such as oreocerei), so that they appear to join together as one

dense mass. In other cases longer, often finer spines appear on one side of the stem nearer the top, along with a little long wool or hair. The very woolly formation is almost always on the sides of the stems. For plants grown from seed, the formation of pseudocephaliums can take many years.

**Now that we're getting to the end of summer** you may have noticed that some of your succulents and cacti are putting on a flush of growth. Certainly the winter growers are waking up.

But if you have an outdoor succulent bed, it may be time to see if it needs some renovation. Leggy succulents should be cut back, or even pulled out and cuttings taken. Rework the soil in that bed, removing old roots. Then place the cuttings where you want them.

Check any plants in pots that have been sitting on the ground. Uh oh, they may have rooted through into the soil. What to do? If it's a large plant and firmly rooted, you'll likely have to dig it up and (sob!) break the pot away from the base of the plant. If it's in plastic, just cut it. Then either repot the plant or figure out where it would look best in the yard. (Better yet, don't let this happen in the first place.)

It's also time to figure out where you're going to stash all those potted plants for the winter. Before bringing any into the house, be sure to check them for bugs. While the plants are still outside, water them to expel any ants that might have taken up residence in the soil.

When you bring plants indoors, they're coming into a low-light situation, even if you place them on windowsills. So be careful not to overwater, as this will produce weak, spindly growth.



**Thought for the day:** If the earth were really flat, the cats would have pushed everything over the edge already.

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CHEIRIDOPSIS BY TOM GLAVICH



*Cheiridopsis* is a member of the *Mesembryanthemaceae* (usually shortened to the more pronounceable ‘Mesemb’) family. The common name of this family is the ice-plant family. Ice-plant comes from the ice crystal-like speckles that appear on many of the annual species of this family. *Cheiridopsis* are relatives of the more commonly grown *Lithops* and *Conophytum*. They are amazing plants on their own, and although they have their own small group of enthusiasts, they deserve much wider appreciation. The pleasures of *Cheiridopsis* are far more subtle than the flashier genera of this family.

They are easily grown, as long as you follow a routine imposed by eons of evolution in their natural habitat. They are ‘winter’ growers, but really start growth in October, continue through much of December, stop for January and part of February, and then pick up again for most of the spring, going dormant with the first heat of the summer, regardless of whether the heat arrives in April or July. As with many winter growers, they are tolerant of warm days at almost any period of growth, but need cool nights. When night time temperatures are regularly reaching the high 50s F (mid teens C), dormancy is not far behind. The Mesemb family has many genera that are winter growers, and intolerant of summer watering. *Cheiridopsis* is one of the more forgiving genera; however if you insist on watering during dormancy, they will insist on rotting. Most species will get flabby, elongated, and generally unhappy before rotting, but some of the best go right to mush. The occasional mistake will do no harm, and a *slight* bit of water every few weeks during the summer for those who live in drier climates is likely to do more good than harm.

*Cheiridopsis* are creeping or mounding plants, growing out from a center seedling and continually re-rooting from branches. This makes them very easy to propagate. A single leaf pair can be removed with a small section of stem, re-potted and re-rooted. If this is done at the beginning to middle of the growing season, rooting is almost certain. Even if a rescue is done late in season, rooting is likely.

*Cheiridopsis* will grow in almost anything. They can occasionally be found in nursery, garden center and even home center succulent displays. More often than not they are grown for quick sale in a wood or bark based compost with a some peat and lots of water, the exact opposite of what they really want (at least as far as we know), but they still thrive. In the long term this rich mixture will result in weak growth, thin skins, insect problems and rot.

Many of the better growers use a low organic mix; three parts plaster sand, three parts pumice, and one part potting soil works well, as do many variants of this. This low nutrient mix combined with low fertilization and strong light produces small tight plants with tough skins. They look much better and are much healthier than large lush specimens, can withstand drought better, are more resistant to sucking insects, and require much less care. The plants will be smaller, but have a more natural color, reddening in the sun, and showing off the intricate patterns of the epidermis. The mineral mix described above becomes wet instantly, even if bone dry, making watering easier.

Most of the more unusual species are hard to come by, and can only be purchased from a few specialist nurseries, found at the best plant sales, or are available from collectors as excess plants. They are available as seeds, and *Cheiridopsis* are one of the easiest and best mesembs for growing from seed. Their relatively large size means they grow quickly, and as a result don’t suffer from many of the early growth problems that some of the smaller mesemb genera have. They are winter growers, and can be started anytime from September through January with good success. They will start well in any good seedling mix, but they do well in the same low organic mix that they will eventually grow in.

They are not particularly sensitive to insects, particularly if grown hard. Mealybugs like to grow in the drying sheaths and narrow cracks between new leaves and softer species are an attraction to spider mites, but they are no more difficult than any other mesemb.

The name *Cheiridopsis* (with the Ch pronounced as 'k') comes from the Greek 'Cheris' from 'sleeve' or 'sheath' and 'opsis' from like. The picture showing *Cheiridopsis cigarettifera* shows the remnants of the sheaf formed from last season's dried leaves covering the base of the new leaves. *Cheiridopsis cigarettifera* is one of the classic species, with species name referring to the appearance of the leaves just before they start to separate for the new year's growth.



*Cheiridopsis derenbergiana* is a smaller species with some of the best leaf speckle patterns. It is one of the easiest to grow, and clumps quickly. When given strong light and a low nutrient potting mix, the leaf tips turn a beautiful red during the summer. They are a healthy green during the fall and spring periods with maximum growth.

*Cheiridopsis denticulata* (including *Cheiridopsis candissima*, which is still sometimes seen as a separate species) can have simple leaves as shown here, or have leaves with a few relatively large, dull teeth. This species can get quite large, easily filling a ten inch pot, with leaves 5 inches long or more.



*Cheiridopsis purpurea* is another robust, fast growing species. The stems are stiff pushing the leafing bodies well above the soil line. The ornate epidermal spotting of this species is one principal reasons for cultivating it.

*Cheiridopsis* are enormously variable in growth habitat, with some species barely distinguishable from the extreme succulents like *Lithops*, *Argyromera* and *Gibbaeum*, while others have two extremely different leaf pairs, each optimized for the different sunlight of early winter and late spring. Others form great mats and mounds. Flowers are variable from yellow to yellow orange, to magenta. Most in cultivation seem to be on the yellow to yellow orange end of the spectrum. Every species is worth growing and propagating. This one of the best genera of the mesemb family to experiment with. The winter growth and strong summer dormancy, and their tolerance for errors, and willingness to restart from single leaf pairs makes this a good genera to learn from before tackling some of the less forgiving members of the family.



### AERIAL ROOTS

Sometimes you see little roots sprouting on the stems of some of your succulents. The purpose of these aerial roots is to extract moisture from the air and convey it to those parts of the plant in greatest need. As the branches hang or lean, these roots come into contact with suitable compost and take on the function of ordinary roots and new plants are formed. Some plants are more prone than others to do this, echeverias, for instance.

Years ago, there was a member of the San Francisco club, Gary Ware, who grew enormous, show-stopping echeverias. He would lop off the head of a plant and just set it in an empty clay pot to dry. Eventually a mass of aerial roots would form around the cut stump. Then he would plant the head, figuring that he got a head start that way, with the aerial roots.

*The Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society's*  
*20th Annual*

# Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale

St. Paul's Church, 2216 17th Street  
(17th and B Street) Bakersfield, CA

**Saturday, October 12th, 10:00am - 5:00pm**

**Sunday, October 13th, 11:00am - 3:00pm**

Something for everyone. From the novice to the collector.

**Plant Dealers:**

Nick Wilkerson from "GROW" in Cambria, CA  
John Matthews of "Somis Succulent Specialties"  
Rob McGregor of Rob-Roy Plants  
Peter G Walkowiak of PW Plants

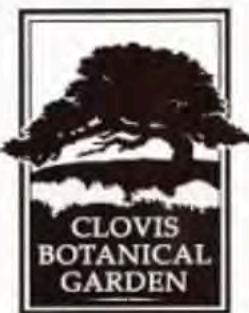
**Potters:**

Marlene Tatsuno  
Lopez Gonzalez of "PeetyPots"

Bring a box  
to carry your  
goodies!



## Water-Wise Plant Sale



# Latest From The Garden

### California Native Plants and More

Enjoy a stroll through the Garden and choose from California native plants and water-wise plants from other places.

Friday, October 18, 2019  
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

and

Saturday, October 19, 2019  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Free Admission!

Clovis Botanical Garden  
945 N. Clovis Ave.  
Clovis, CA  
(north of Alluvial at Dry Creek Park)

Co-sponsored by  
**Clovis Botanical Garden**

<https://clovisbotanicalgarden.org/event/fall-plant-sale-and-fair-3/>  
and

**Sequoia Chapter of the California Native Plant Society**  
[cnps-sequoia.org](http://cnps-sequoia.org)

10% plant purchase discount for CBG and CNPS members