

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

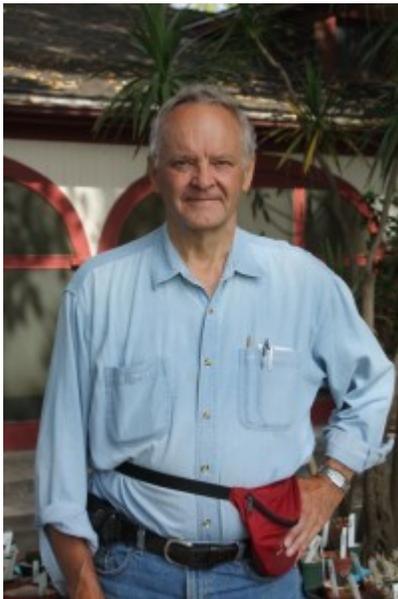
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Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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January 2020

Just so you know...The newsletter is now being put together by myself (Craig Roberts). It may be a little different for awhile, until I get a flow going. Comments (good ones I hope) or suggestions and certainly anything to be included should be directed to me at robertshowse@gmail.com.



Come to the next FCSS Meeting (Thursday Jan 2nd) and Meet our Speaker Gary Duke.

*Come to our Pre Meeting dinner and
meet him earlier, info on P3*

Gary Duke is an incumbent on the Board of Directors to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. He currently assists with auditing the CSSA finances each year and also is a member of the Honors Committee. He has been collecting cacti and succulents for over 50 years. He's an avid collector of cacti and also collects Tylecodons and Dudleyas. He is a retired Air Force officer with a doctoral degree in physics. During his military career, he moved his original and ever expanding collection of less than about 30 plants from Illinois, where he grew up, to Omaha, NE, Dayton, OH (where he started their first C&S Society, which is now defunct), San Pedro, CA, Montgomery, AL and Albuquerque, NM where he had been show chairman. He has also been President of the South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society and the Long Beach Cactus Society. Following his military career, he worked as a program manager for Boeing for 16 years. He has over 1000 different species in his private collection and enjoys propagating them. He frequently gives slide presentations throughout southern California, including being invited to speak at the Huntington Botanical Gardens and at the Denver Cactus and Succulent Society. He has traveled to Aruba, Peru, Baja Mexico and Bolivia twice and just recently returned from Argentina and Chile to see cacti and succulents in habitat.

—-))) Gary will also have a selection of plants for sale at the meeting (((—

FROM THE (New) PREZ...

It's hard to believe that 2020 is only a few days away. A brand new decade is upon us. The start of the new year also marks the start of my journey as the club's new President.



I am honored to have been selected for this role, and appreciate the trust that has been placed in my abilities by both the Board, and the general membership. The shoes I have been chosen to fill may be intimidatingly large, but I eagerly look forward to putting my all into it.

I would first like to give my most sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Sue Haffner for her many years of excellent service to our club. It takes someone truly special to spend so many years and countless hours doing all they can for us. Sue will be staying with us as a board member and I am grateful for her continued dedication. When you see Sue, please thank her for everything she has done for us.

The club is here to provide a friendly welcoming community for everyone who has an interest in cacti and succulents. We do this by sharing information and our experiences with each other. Our club has members of all skill levels, from brand new to the hobby to reciting botanical names, we are all here to learn and have fun. I hope everyone can gain the knowledge, support, and friendships that I have received from this wonderful membership. As the new President, I look forward to helping to nourish our membership community, and foster even greater future growth.

With gratitude,
Robert Scott

Robert Scott joined our club six years ago. He didn't let any grass grow under his feet. Since joining he has been the club treasurer, and is currently on the Board. He has also chaired our Club Sale which is our biggest event of the year. He was instrumental in moving our Show and Sale to the Fresno Fairgrounds. He also oversees our sale at the Fresno Home and Garden Show, and our Member Sales night. His interest in growing cacti and succulents started as a food source for his pet tortoises. When his best friend, Nick Dynehart, introduced him to hybridizing aloes, he caught the cactus and succulent bug! Aloes are now his favorite and he has over 160 pure species and hybrids. Rob works full time for the Fresno County Ag department. He has his degree from CSUF and is very knowledgeable in identifying plants. His plants, tortoises and work make him a very busy man, but he is always willing to help a member with a question on plant care etc. On the horizon, he would love to have his own nursery. The Club welcomes him as our new President.

DECEMBER WORKSHOP: A small but lively group met at Dennis and Sylvia Anderson's home for the monthly workshop. As has become traditional, the December workshop is a potluck Christmas party, with the "workshop" aspect of the gathering being somewhat secondary. Everyone had a nice time eating and visiting. We were to examine plant genera at the end of the alphabet. Offering plants for display were Dennis Anderson, Karl Church, Pat Schreyer and Sue Haffner. We want to thank everyone who brought food and drink, as well as Dennis, Sylvia and Brenda for their hospitality.

The January workshop will be Wednesday, January 15th, 6 p.m., at the Betty Rodriguez Library. All members are welcome. Let's bring aloes to study



Photos by
Dennis Anderson

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**Pre Meeting Dinner will be at High Sierra Grill SW cor Bullard/West
5 PM sharp All Members Welcome—RSVP w/Rosanna 559-999-0017 by Wed Jan 1st**

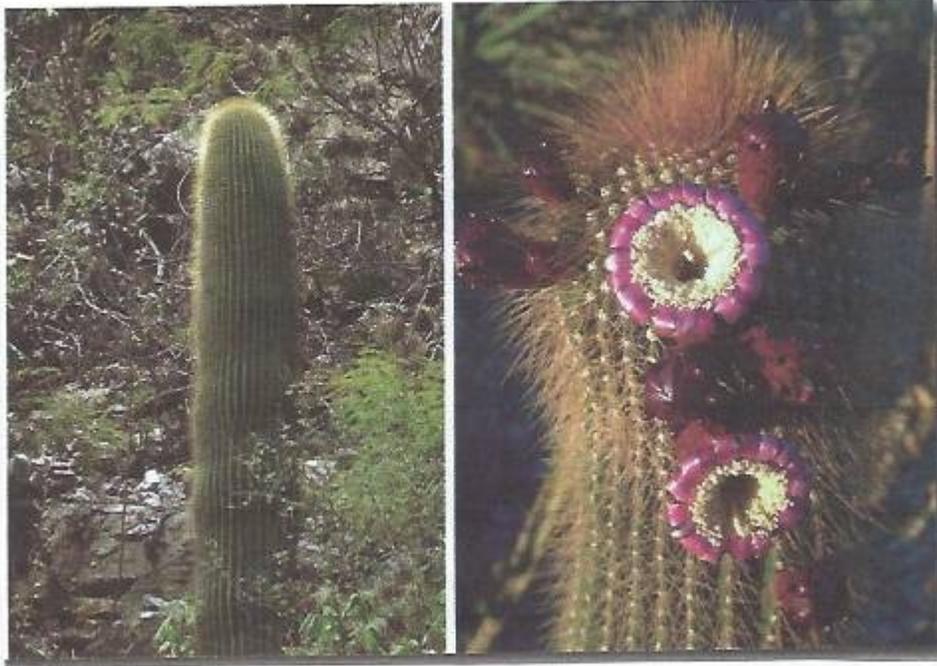
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Enjoy some pictures from our Christmas Fiesta!



Photos by
Karen Willoughby



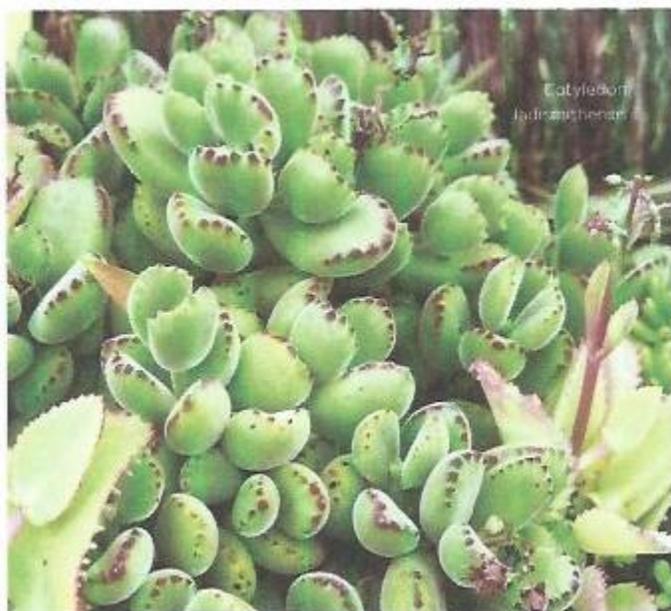
NEOBUXBAUMIA POLYLOPHA is a familiar landscape plant in our area. It's a massive, tree-like species that is native to the states of San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo, Queretaro and Guanajuato, Mexico. It grows among bushes and shrubs, often on very steep hills, between cliffs, in mostly limestone soils rich in humus.

N. polylopha is mostly a single-stemmed plant which can reach up to 50' tall in habitat. The interesting flowers open at night but stay open into the morning. My plant sets a lot of seeds.

There are 8 species in the genus, which honors the Austrian botanist Franz Buxbaum (1900-1979).

Sue

THE BEAR PAW PLANT



Cotyledon tomentosa ssp tomentosa is a small plant that is popular with succulent growers. Pat Schreyer brought a nice one to the December workshop.

Its specific name, *tomentosa*, says it all: hairy. In fact, *C. tomentosa* and its subspecies differ from other cotyledons in having hairy leaves and small stature. Its common name, "Bear Paw Plant", is due to its fat, succulent leaves which have reddish-brown teeth along the margins, resembling a bear's paw. The pendulous to erect flowers are yellow to orange-red. The branches are woody with brown, peeling bark. There is a variegated form sometimes seen in the garden shops, with yellow streaks in the foliage.

The habitat for *C. tomentosa ssp tomentosa* is shale or sandstone rocky ridges to cliff faces of the foothills of both the western and eastern Cape Region of South Africa. Rainfall occurs in both winter and summer (8-12 inches per year.) Winter temperatures are mild.

Best grown in a pot, as it's not entirely frost hardy. Treat as a winter grower.

FUNGUS GNATS: Also called Black Flies or Sciarid Flies, fungus gnats are small non-biting flies that can appear in growing areas that are kept moist, such as seed flats. The immature fungus gnat is a small white maggot that lives in moist areas high in decaying organic matter and can damage a flat of seedlings. The life cycle of a fungus gnat lasts about 3 months but during that period a female can lay in excess of 250-300 eggs.

The issue was discussed recently on the Pacific Bulb Society discussion list. One post: "I keep a 30 gallon plastic trash can as a water supply in my greenhouse and refill it when necessary. I put a Mosquito Dunk™ or donut in it to control mosquitoes, but I use this water to water my plants. May I also have been controlling the gnats in my potting soil this way? I found I could use dollar store knee-high stockings as cheap net bags to put the donut in and tie it off, so when it comes apart, as it will, it is contained in the stocking bag and easily removed. The packet says it is effective for 30 days." Another person recommended Mosquito Bits™: "Mix 1 Tbs of Mosquito Bits in a gallon of water, let it set for an hour or more; agitate the mix thoroughly. The *bacillus thuringiensis* tends to settle to the bottom. Water seedlings and plants with this. The BT only affects the larval stage and it takes several generations to be fully effective. Also, the gnats will return, so you'll need to repeat."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

Dominic Ortiz (4th); Elton Roberts (5th); Sandy Yates (8th); Val McCullough (9th); Naomi Bloss (10th); Sherlock Holmes (12th); Dennis Shamlan (13th); Lisa Bloss (14th); Christeen Abbott-Hearn (16th); Barbara Brown (28th); Mark Muradian, Ed Myhro (20th); Tony Sharp (25th); Ferrin Scheidt (28th); Carole Grosch (31st).

SAY HELLO TO THIS NEW MEMBER:

Bonnie Lind, Clovis

SYMPATHIES

Our condolences go out to Mary Drumheller and her family. Her son, Joe, passed away in December. Keep the family in your thoughts.

Club member Antoinette “Toni” Phillips passed away suddenly on December 3rd. We remember her as a cheerful person, helping with club events, and commenting on posts to our Facebook page. Our condolences go out to her family.

LIBRARY: Librarian Marilyn Carter would like all outstanding library books returned at this meeting. If you have any questions or concerns, get in touch with her: 559-977-6611, mkc3253@gmail.com.

BIG EVENT THIS MONTH: HUNTINGTON DESERT FORUM

Saturday, January 18th
Schedule of events:

9:00-9:45 registration (bring your CSSA or affiliate club badge or membership card. In order to receive free admission you must arrive by 9:45; later, you will have to pay admission)

9:00-11:00, Desert Garden (coffee and donuts available, 9:00 to 10:00; staff and docents in garden; aloes in bloom)

11:00-1:00, plant sales in the nursery; gate opens at 11:00 (no early birds); no shopping after 1:00
Cash, checks and credit cards accepted.

1:00-5:00, free time; you can go back to the Desert Garden or visit the other gardens; you can also check out the various galleries (Library Exhibit Hall, Huntington Art Gallery, Scott Galleries of American Art, Boone Gallery)

There are several dining places on the grounds.

The Huntington is in San Marino; Allen Avenue, Pasadena, goes directly to the Huntington main entry gate.

Weather report from South Africa,

Where a lot of our favorite plants come from: Christiaan van Schalwyk contributed these comments to the Pacific Bulb Society discussion list:

“Southern Africa is experiencing one of the worst droughts ever. We are used to droughts but this one is massive. Some parts of the country started to receive some rain, especially towards the eastern side, while the Northern Cape is still very dry. Some scattered showers did occur, often dumping large amounts of water in a short space of time over a limited range

“One such shower happened over Upington on December 5th, my home town, officially 65 mm (about 2 and a half inches), in less than three hours. (Just for context: 65 mm is more than a third of our annual rainfall in a good year).

“Some other info: it is summer here. And hot. The hottest temperature in South Africa was recorded recently at Vioolsdrift (some 350 km away) at 53.2 C (127.8 F) on 29 November. We did not have any follow up rains yet.”

A use for your old sponges: A reader contributed this idea to *Garden Gate* magazine: cut up your old sponges and put them in the bottom of plant pots. It might help with water retention. I wouldn't do this in a small pot for a cactus, but it might work in a planter or other large pot.

CACTUS AND SUCCULENT JOURNAL

A chief advantage of membership in the Cactus & Succulent Society of America is the quarterly journal. The latest issue (winter 2019) has now been published and has a number of interesting articles:

“Some succulents of South Africa’s northeast corner s,” by Fred Dortort, relates the adventures of a group of Americans exploring the summer rainfall region of the country—aloes, euphorbias, stapeliads, bulbs, etc. This is an extensive article with many illustrations.

“A handful of mesembs,” by Brian Kemble, discusses and illustrates plants in such genera as *Hartmanthus*, *Ruschia*, *Cephalophyllum*, *Didymaotus* and *Gibbaeum*.

“A greenhouse in Iowa,” by Dick Schreiber tells of his crazy notion of growing succulents in a climate not predisposed for them and all the considerations required for establishing a greenhouse that works.

“Those yellow-flowered mammillaria,” by Elton Roberts discusses and illustrates these plants in his usual thorough manner.

For more information: www.cactusandsucculentsociety.org or see Sue Haffner. The journal is available in the club library.



Photos by Craig Roberts

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America
Fred Gaumer club rep.

I've been a member of the CSSA since I was a wee lad of thirty years old. Long enough that the cost of a life membership of a few hundred dollars would have really paid off. When I became interested in cactus and other succulent plants I heard of and joined the San Jose Cactus and Succulent Society and remained a member until I moved out of the area. At that time it was mandatory to also be a member of CSSA. After a couple of years a vote was taken in San Jose to drop the requirement of being included in the roster of the national club. I remember being surprised by the people who voted to drop the requirement. Most were hard core hobbyists and one was the former U.S. Journal editor. I'm sure that the people who I was surprised about did still continue to be members. After getting the Journal and learning of other benefits for several years I wasn't going to let go. As I recall the costs per year in the late 1970's was \$35, not much different than the \$50 today.

When I moved to the Central Valley I immediately joined the Fresno club. My interest in the plants never declined and I wanted to try to help out with the club and eventually became a BOD member as a member at large. There became an opportunity to be the affiliate representative to the CSSA and I jumped at it. I had often dreamed of the lofty position. Well, before I go any further I should clear a couple of things up. There is no salary, which I really did not expect. There is no "company car". I was hoping. No limo service, although at the Austin, Texas convention, I heard that someone would pick you up at the airport if you flew in. It turns out that if you were a presenter a local club member would do that. I didn't know. I called. A nice doctor came and gave me a ride to the venue. There is no American Express card that goes with the job. There is no 10 passenger aircraft with a saguaro on the tail. And since there is no aircraft how could there be a pilot named Jorge who will remind you if you refer to him as, "Captain Jorge" that he was a colonel in the Argentinian Air Force. And no truth whatsoever that he would flip it on auto-pilot and speak to you about Gymnocalcium for hours. Also, just a rumor, no official CSSA tattoo. I have seen some pretty nice cactus tattoos but nothing sanctioned. What would the secret hand shake be? Maybe, a hand buzzer with glochids?

The position has been passed on but I would like to remind everybody about the benefits of belonging to the CSSA. The U.S. Journal is a respected botanical publication but also contains articles that are interesting to the hobbyist grower. There are often new species described and pieces on how to care for and propagate unusual succulent plants. I keep track of time by when it arrives in my mail box. The CSSA also puts on one of the greatest shows and sales in the world. Held at the Huntington, it is not so far away from us that it couldn't be possible. Most of the entries in the show are the best of the best examples of that kind of captive plant. Sale plants run from very pricey to only a few bucks. Which equates to very exotic to nice and maybe in time very exotic.

They sponsor a convention every other year with speakers and attendees from all over the world. The theme of the convention last summer was the conservation of succulent plants. This is something every plant and nature lover should be concerned with. The last convention's presentations were video recorded and the presentations will be available for viewing by affiliated cactus and succulent clubs. One was my all-time favorite! The sales area has something special for you. The convention is a good place to meet a life-long friend or two.

The CSSA also makes funds available for research and botanical exploration regarding the plants we like. Many times findings are published in the Journal. Many times new plants for our collections are found by someone who would not be able to go to where they are found in the wild on their own.

A man at the convention said that the CSSA is the glue that hold together the clubs in the nation. It also promotes knowledge and experience. Every day the world we humans live in changes so rapidly and increases momentum at a pace the natural world can't keep up with. The CSSA seems to provide some stability for us.



ALOE ARENICOLA

This South African species is one of the creeping aloes. The illustration shows a mature plant, while the smaller drawing at the left shows the juvenile form of the plant. This is very distinctive, with thin, creeping stems with small, very succulent, almost triangular leaves. The internodes between the leaves are much longer and more obvious in the young plants. The species forms dense, medium-sized shrubs consisting of many creeping stems. The leaves are bluish green with many white spots on both surfaces.

The name *arenicola* means “inhabiting sandy places”, as it is found in the arid coastal strip along the northwestern Cape coastal belt from Lambert’s Bay in the south to the mouth of the Orange River to the north. The species is vulnerable, due to mining activities and grazing.

(Illus.: Jeppe, “South African Aloes”)

ARIOCARPUS (NEOGOMESIA) AGAVOIDES

This unusual little plant was only discovered in 1941, near Tula, Taumalipas, Mexico, growing in soft soil in the shade of mesquites. The discoverer, M. Casteneda, considered it to be a new genus, and named it in honor of Marte Gomez, governor of the state. It was noted at the time that the plant resembled *Ariocarpus trigonus*, except that the tubercles are much longer and narrower, and the prominent areoles are set back from the apex. Also, its long-tubed flower and large red fruit set it off from the other known species of *Ariocarpus*. Nevertheless, subsequent botanical investigations have placed it in *Ariocarpus* (though you may still see it referred to as *Neogomesia* in some of the older cactus books.)

The plant is low-growing with a simple form. The 7 or 8 tubercles which form the crown, each about 1 ¼ to 2 ½” long, grow in a rosette pattern which reminds one of *Leuchtenbergia*. The specific name, *agvoides*, suggests a resemblance to a small agave. Plants in habitat display a leathery, greenish-gray skin, while nursery-grown plants may have a darker color. The stem is built up by the dried bases of the withered tubercles.

The bright pink flowers are produced late in the year, into December, arising from the bases of the areoles. Even very tiny plants will bloom (as suggested by the illustration), even just a few years from seed. The flowers are followed by striking red fruits.

Culture is the same as for other plants in the genus.

(Illus: H. Hecht, “BLV Handbuch der Kakteen”)

Sue

