

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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Next Meeting Thursday March 5th

Our speaker this month is J.D. Wikert.
He will present the topic "How about Haworthia".



J.D. is a fisheries biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service working on restoration of habitat for salmon in California's Central Valley and lives in Lodi California. Previously, he worked in Florida sampling fish and doing lake restoration. He is a self-trained succulent hobbyist and usually has more than 100 flats of plants in his back (and side) yards. J.D. has been actively propagating succulent plants for around 15 years and has figured out how to kill most succulent species over that time. He is a member of both the Sacramento and Stockton Cactus and Succulent Societies, and is currently president of the Stockton Club. Last year he sold plants at both the Sacramento and San Francisco succulent show/sales.

J.D. will provide a broad overview of the genus *Haworthia*. The presentation will include information regarding taxonomy, distribution, cultivation, and propagation as well as providing pictures of many of the more readily available species and many that will inspire plant envy. Be ready to answer when J.D. asks where in the world do you find *Haworthia* in their natural habitat. Feel free to bring some of your own *Haworthia* specimens for the club to view.

J.D. has a number of presentations on succulent plants that he has given in the past, so if you like the current talk but would like more detail on a smaller group of plants, feel free to request any of the talks from this list: *Adromischus*, *Aloe*, *Dudleya*, *Gasteria*, *Sedum*, *Senecio*, and *Stapeliads*. J.D. has developed these talks to teach himself more about these cool groups of plants, but by no means considers himself an expert. J.D. also spends way too much time on Facebook in various succulent plant groups.

**We Meet at the Redeemer Lutheran Church 1084 W Bullard Fresno CA
Meetings Start at 7 PM in the Multipurpose Building**

FROM THE PREZ...

March is almost here and that means the Fresno Home and Garden Show is right around the corner. Every year, the first weekend of March the club participates in this event with our club members selling their plants. This year the event will be March 6-8, at the Fresno Fairgrounds. This 3 day event draws in thousands of people and it's a fun experience for everyone.

We always need volunteers to help run the event and everyone is welcome to come help. Volunteers get free parking and admission for helping the club. Come work at our booth for a few hours and then enjoy the rest of the Home and Garden Show. Volunteers are needed to scan and package plants, as well as talk to the public about our club. It's very simple and a lot of fun.

Our next meeting, March 5 is the day before the event. If you're interested in helping, please come see me at the next meeting. I will get you signed up for a time slot and give you a badge to get in.

Our vendors will have lots of wonderful plants for sale. I encourage everyone to at least stop by and support our local vendors.

If you have any boxes that can be used as plant trays please bring them to the next meeting.

Reminder if you have not paid your dues yet please see Craig at the next meeting. He will have a list of members who have paid for the year.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting!



At the Skillin Ranch in Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo Co.
Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

- Greenhouse tours
 - "Terry's Famous" complimentary taco bar
 - Complimentary refreshments
 - Sales Plants- everything from starters to show stoppers
 - Free raffle at Noon – three plants - free ticket to each attendee
- Sorry, no credit cards
no purchase necessary must be present



Adenium somalense
23" tall

Dioscorea hemicrypta
2 gallon pot

Cyphostemma juttae
15" tall

Call Rob or Terry at 805-709-3033 for information and directions

WINTER IN THE GREENHOUSE

By Elton Roberts

I see that my *Mammillaria insularis* plants have been growing all winter and have outgrown the 2" pots they're in. I need to up-pot them when I get back to potting. A lot of other plants have also been slowly growing over the winter when I thought they would be resting. I now see that they are not resting but slowly growing. The ariocarpus are also growing over the winter; not the large plants, but the small ones are putting on new growth and have been all winter so far. They got 3" of rain when the wind blew the plastic off the house near the end of November this last fall. These are the plants from a few years ago when the plastic blew off the big house after Christmas and they got 9" of rain that time. I could call them seedlings but I don't see the need to call a 2" to 3" diameter plant a seedling anymore. We are having daytime temps in the upper 60s and low 70s, which I'm sure is moving them along, also. So far most of February has been warm days which is unusual, for February is always our coldest month. I have been seeing that quite a few plants were growing in January, which seemed strange.

Other plants that have grown over the winter includes *Turbincarpus pseudopectinatus* SB 1469. It has for years looked like death warmed over come springtime. This year I have watered them several times and they have never looked better. Instead of looking like a plant the size of your little finger, they are nice and round and most are the size of golf balls or a bit larger. They are also loaded with buds, unlike years before when they tried to make buds in the spring. All the *Turbincarpus valdezianus* plants have also been growing over the winter with a couple or maybe 3 waterings. These waterings are not flood but fairly light. I don't think the water flowed out the bottom of the pot but sure made a difference in the looks of the plants. Would you believe that even *Epithelantha micromeris* and some other epithelanthas got a kick of water and are looking so much better than they have after being starved for water all winter. I think I'm onto something new here again. In the desert a lot of the plants get some winter rain besides the monsoon rains. We need to keep in mind that after the monsoons, the desert is not dry as a keg of gunpowder, but there is moisture there that lasts most if not all winter.

I just went out to see what plants were growing over the winter and I would have to say it includes over half the cacti: the oreocereus, a lot of different echinocereus, echinofossulocactus, rebutia and sulcorebutia. Most, if not all the Baja California plants have been growing. The only plants I'm not sure about are the old mature plants that only grow a tiny bit as they make spring buds. I have taken the hose to most of the plants in the sale house several times this winter and they're looking ever so much better. Now I know that a lot of the plants can use a drink or two in the winter. We have been brainwashed in meetings and books that you're supposed to keep plants powder dry over the winter, keep them dry, dry or they will rot away.

In some cases you have problem with high humidity and the soil not drying out. This is why I say you need a *blower fan blowing 24/7, for that mimics the desert winds. The air moving all the time also helps the top of the soil to dry faster and reducing the chance of rot at the bases of the plants. The reason seedlings damp off is that growers keep them in plastic or under glass where there is no air movement. The soil stays too damp and it rots the seedlings at the base. I had damping off till I put a fan over the seedlings; that stopped the problem. No plants in habitat stay in a damp plastic bag for months or a year.

In the desert most seeds germinate in fall after the rains and cool temps so the seedlings don't burn in the summer heat. Why do we get better seedling growth when the seed is spread around the parent plants? It's because the soil surface stays damp long enough for the seed to crack open and, as the soil dries, the seedlings sink a root/s down for some moisture. When we water the parent plant the seedlings benefit from it also. As we only water the larger plants now and then, the seedlings don't stay on soggy soil and don't damp off.

In the artificial habitat of our greenhouses or hothouses, it's very important to keep a fan moving the air all the time. It may seem foreign to run a fan all the time but the plants will be much healthier because of it; if not a fan, then windows open to fresh breezes. One thing to keep in mind is that at night it's important to have air movement, as the temperature drops at night and evaporation goes down to almost nothing; hit the dew point and it stops. This is the time when wet soil starts working on the plant and rot can start. You probably recall the advice to water in the cool of the morning or the cool of the evening. How many people can water in the "cool of the morning"? Most have to water after work. Water "in the cool evening" and the soil stays damp or even wet. Some people say that can only grow a small clump of this or that plant and then it rots. That's mainly because the soil has been too wet too long and there was no moving air to help. Air movement in hothouses is very important, especially for cacti and succulents.

A blower fan will also help keep your plants from burning on very hot days. That bit of air moving helps keep the heat from burning or scorching the plants. Air movement is a must if you are using a dark color top dressing, for it absorbs the heat and gets very hot, burning the plants it surrounds.

*A blower fan will put out much more air than a blade fan for the size of motor. A blower fan has many blades where a blade fan has usually only 3 blades. A blade fan will move air but nothing like a blower fan.



BRAG TABLE: We had some amazing plants on the Brag Table in February. Dan Gale brought a box of agaves (utahensis v. nevadensis 'High Sierra', vilmoriniana variegated; utahensis v. eborispinus, victoria reginae 'White Rhino', lophantha quadricolor, ferox variegated, 'Desert Diamond' variegated, miniature parryi, parryi variegated, 'Sharkskin' variegated, a Japanese hybrid, 'Blue Glow'); Nancy Jobin showed Agave paryii truncata 'Excelsior' and A. utahensis v. kaibabensis; Brian Nagles exhibited Rhipsalis baccifera; Dennis Anderson brought Cephalocereus senilis; Henry Coggan showed Astrophytum ornatum 'HaNaYa'; Jack Fleming brought Euphorbia millii 'Cherry Cobbler', Mammillaria leuthyi, Echeveria purpusorum and Monadenium echinulatum; JoAnn Caufield exhibited some fantastic astrophytums. We thank them all.



Photos by Karen Willoughby



If you have a great plant that isn't otherwise portable, but which you would like to show, send a pic to your editor and we'll put it in the newsletter. We'd all love to see it!

FCSS board meeting minutes 2/10/20

Called to order at 6:00 by President Rob Scott. Attending were Bill Gale, Michele & Craig Roberts, Dominic Ortiz, Christeen Abbott, Sue Haffner, Cindy & Monte Duwe, Mary Drumheller, and myself, Karen Willoughby.

Officer Reports:

President: Discussion in old & new business..

Vice-President: Speaker in March will be J.D. Wikert who will be speaking on Haworthias per Rosanna as reported to Rob.

Treasurer: Michele reported on the current financial status of the club.

Membership: Craig reports that only 61% of members have renewed at this point.

Affiliate Rep: We discussed and answered questions on a survey sent to Sue by CSSA.

Old Business:

Sale check out: Rob reported on the progress of instituting a barcode system to be used at the Home & Garden show in March and the 2020 Show & Sale in May. Rob is working on getting the labels ready for the vendors.

Fresno Home & Garden Show: Set up will begin on Thursday, March 5th at 11:00. Hours for the show are Friday, March 6th, 11-6. Saturday, March 7th 10-6 and Sunday, March 8th, 10-6. Vendors were also discussed.

New Business:

Clovis Botanical Garden: "Spring into your Garden" event is March 21 from 9-1. Michele will be in charge and I volunteered to help her.

Brag Table: Rob suggested that people who bring in brag table plants should make tags that would be placed with the plant identifying the plant for the membership. This would make identifying easier for Fred Gaumer as well as providing the info for the members attending. Suggestions on how to tag the plants were offered including 3 x 5 cards. This would be the responsibility of the person bringing plants to create when they presented plants.. Club would provide cards.

Annual sale: Progress was discussed concerning the May Show & Sale. Karen and Christeen will work to change and/or update the schedule.

Materials: Rob had new post cards for the May Show & Sale to be handed out at the Home & Garden Show and also a new supply of club business cards.

Club Picnic/BBQ: Location and time yet to be decided.

Bus Trip: This was briefly discussed but no decision was made at this time as to whether or not to try and organize one for this year.

Other: It was decided that all raffle plants bought and brought in by speakers will be photographed for inventory control.

If you would like additional information on any of these topics, please speak to a board member.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Willoughby, Secretary.

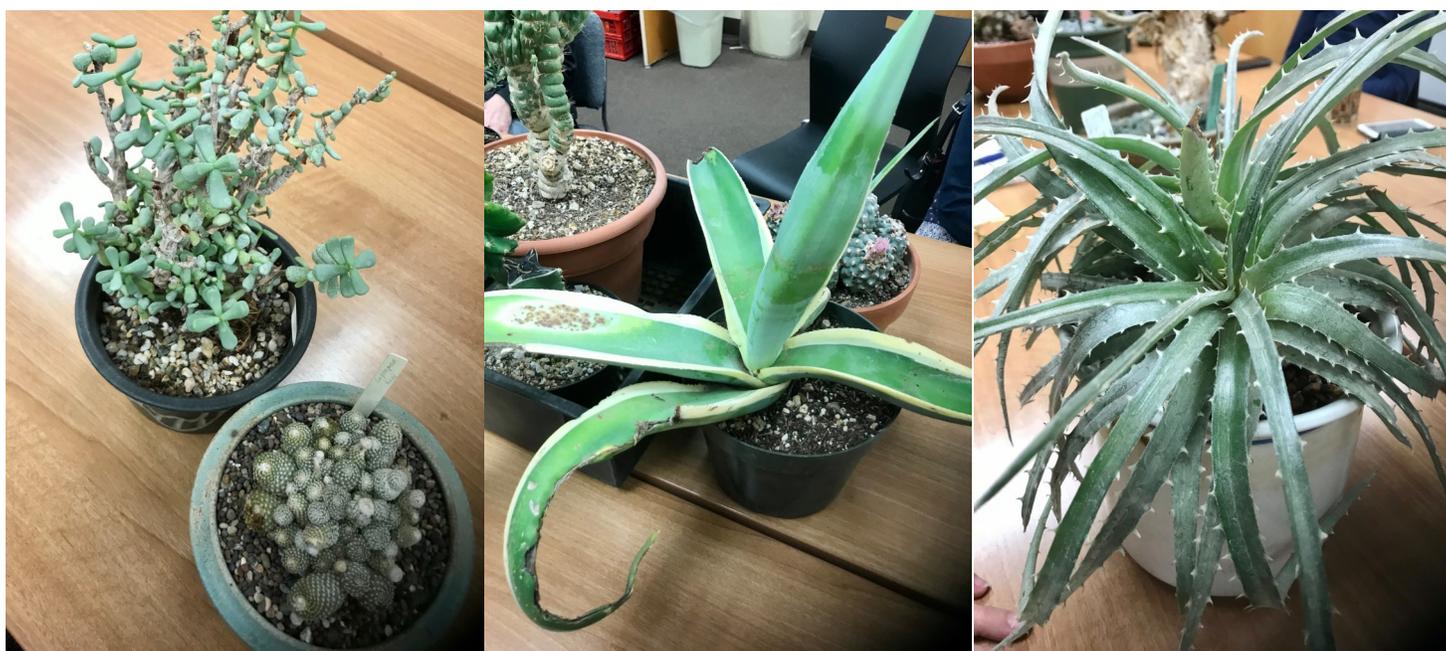
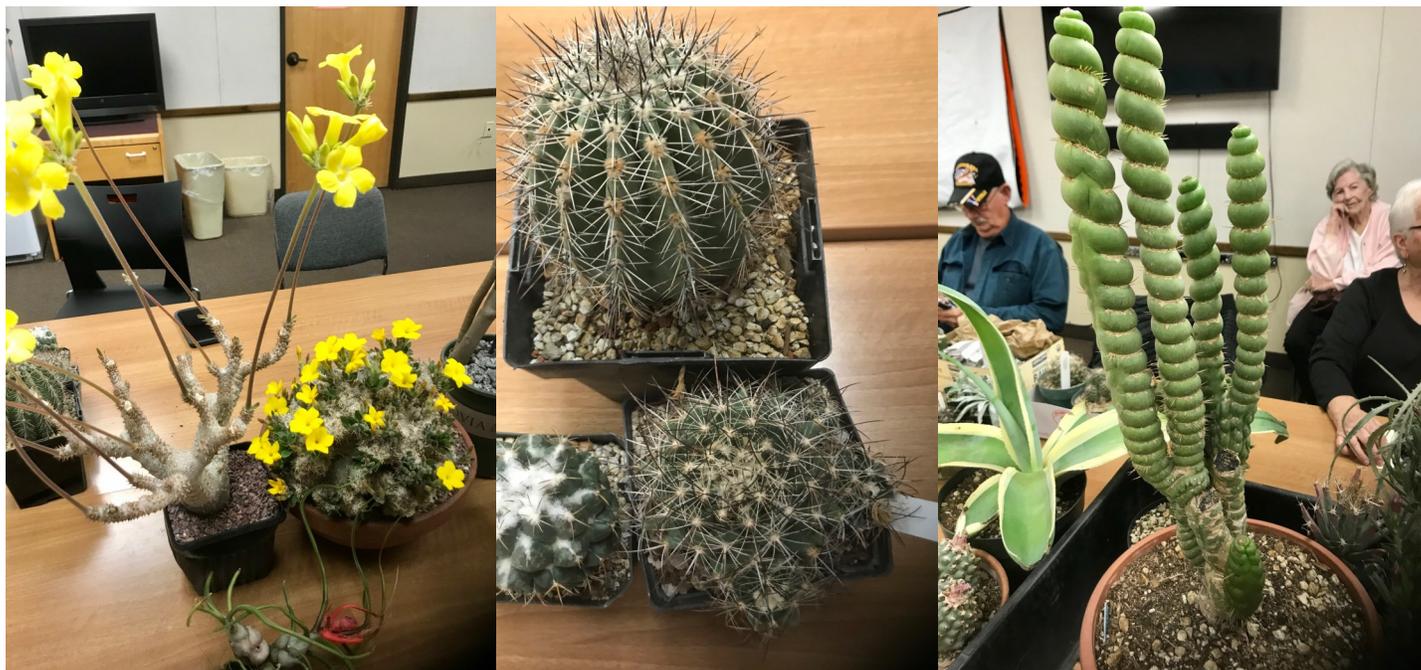
This month's Dinner will be at **Sal's Mexican Restaurant** - N E Cor Fresno & Alluvial
5 PM Sharpe Please RSVP to Rosanna @ 559-999-0017 by Thursday noon.

Club access:

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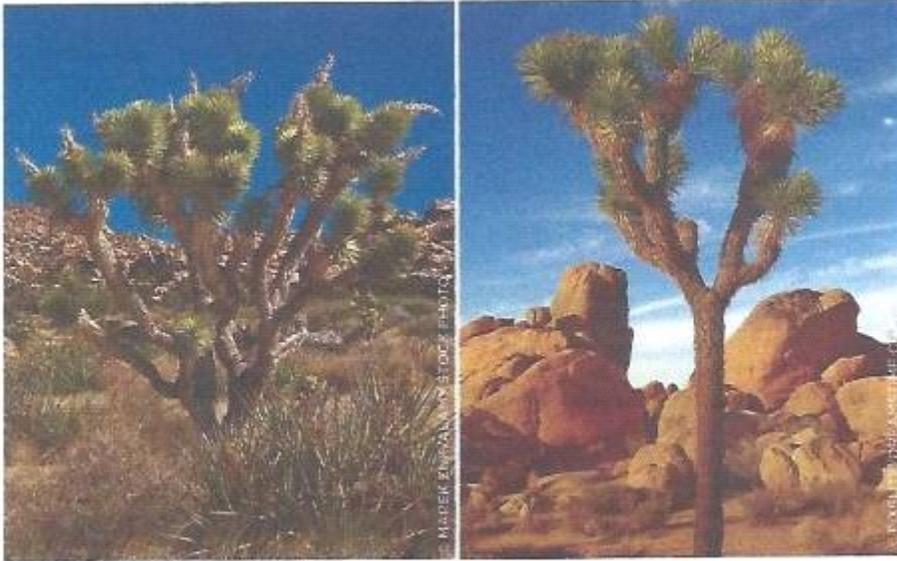
Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, cgg266@comcast.net .Librarian, Marilyn Carter, 977-6611, mkc3253@gmail.com;



At the **February workshop** we looked at plants B-C-D in the alphabet: *Bursera*, *Crassula*, *Carnegiea*, *Chamaecereus*, *Coryphantha*, *Copiapoia*, *Ceraria*, *Dioscorea*, *Dudleya* and *Dyckia*. We also looked at numerous other plants. Bringing show-and-tell plants were Jack Fleming, Dennis Anderson, Bill Gale, Sue Haffner, Cindy Duwe, Mary Drumheller and Dan Gale. Dan also brought coffee, citrus fruit and seedlings of *Aloe striata* to give away. Thanks, Dan!

The March workshop is tentatively scheduled for TUESDAY, March 17th, 6:00 p.m., at the Sunny-side Branch Library meeting room. Alphabet: E and F.

THE JOSHUA TREES



AN ODD PAIR? The Fish and Wildlife Service now says there are two species of Joshua trees — the bushlike *Yucca jaegeriana* (left, at Mojave National Preserve) and the treelike *Yucca*

overlapping distributions and the fact that hybrids between the two Joshua Trees do not reproduce well are potential indicators of separate species. DNA sequencing has shown that the two Joshua Trees are “moderately to greatly” different from one another.

Still, this isn’t the last word. The science has to be vetted and the species published and defended before it becomes official.

(Photo: *National parks*, Winter 2020)

Scientists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have concluded that there are two species of Joshua Tree: *Yucca brevifolia* and *Y. jaegeriana*. The latter has long been considered a variety of *brevifolia*.

Y. jaegeriana tends to be smaller, more bush-like, with branches radiating close to the ground. *Y. brevifolia*’s trunk is typically longer, looking more like a tree. Both species depend on separate yucca moth species for pollination. The flowers of each Joshua Tree are shaped differently to fit the egg-laying organ of their respective moth.

The Tikaboo Valley of central Nevada is the only place where the ranges of *Y. brevifolia* and *Y. jaegeriana* overlap. Scientists have identified a few hybrids in this location.

The distinct pollinator species, the barely

ACHARAGMA



When growers think of cactus genera that begin with A, *Acharagma* is probably not the first one to come to mind.

It is a genus of small, solitary or clumping plants, globose to shortly cylindrical; tubercles having neither nectar glands or areolar groove. Dense spines cover the epidermis. The flowers are apical, self-sterile, funnel-shaped, creamy yellow, tinged pinkish to reddish.

Taxonomists have kicked *Acharagma* around into various genera, most recently in *Escobaria*. But closer study has shown that these plants are something different. Three species are currently recognized: *aguirreanum*, *huasteca* and *roseanum*.

Acharagma has a very restricted distribution, in NE Mexico (Coahuila, Nuevo Leon), in semi-desert, among shrubs or full sun, near rivers on rocky limestone, sandstone or gypsum soils. Their chief hazard is grazing by goats.

(Photo: Lodé, J. (2015) *Taxonomy of the Cactaceae*, v. 1)