

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

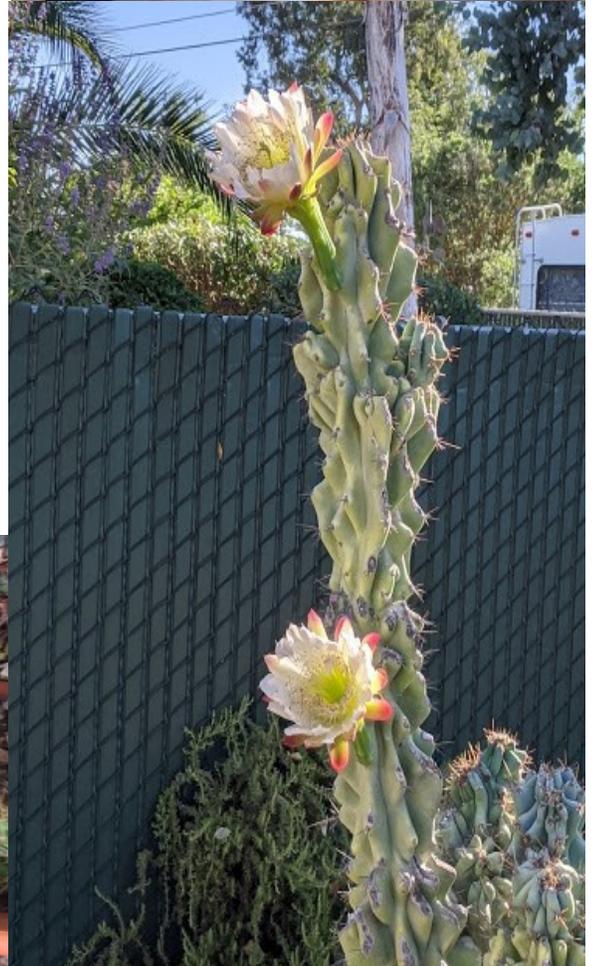
Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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Our Physical Meetings are still on hold as we continue to stay safe. You will be notified of Zoom Meeting July 16th



FROM THE PREZ...

Dear FCSS Membership,

As we head into July, we find ourselves half way through with 2020. That's a great thing as this year has been emotionally draining and sometimes crazy for many of us. All we can do is move forward and work with what we have in order to make the best of things.



With the months flying by and not being able to attend club meetings we are missing out on a lot of normal activities. We are trying to bring a little normal back with our new digital Zoom meetings. Online presentations that you can participate in through any smart device like a cell phone, iPad/tablet or computer. The Zoom meeting we had last month with Gunnar Eisel turned out really well. For July we are having one of the clubs extra special speakers, Ernesto Sandoval with the UC Davis Botanical Conservancy. Ernesto has spoken to our club many times in the past and always gives a wonderful presentation. This time will be no different other than missing out on purchasing his amazing plants.

Please mark your calendars for July 16, 6:30 pm. A separate email will be sent before the Zoom meeting with how to log in and meeting code. If you are unsure how to join or having issues please contact a board member for help.

Now to the biggest mystery the club currently has, will we have an Annual Show & Sale this year?

The answer right now is, we simply don't know.

We had planned to have our event September 5 and 6. Unfortunately with Fresno's current infection numbers, we aren't sure if we will be able to. I've been working with the Fairgrounds on how our event would work and more importantly when we will know if we can actually have the event. We worked out that I will receive the official decision at the end of July. This is as far out of a notice that the Fairgrounds will allow. As soon as I hear, an email will be sent to let the membership know what is happening with the Show & Sale. Whatever happens we will do whatever is needed to keep our members and vendors safe.

We hope that everyone can start attending our Zoom meetings, as they might need to become the new normal for a while. After this month's meeting we hope to be getting our Zoom meetings back to the first Thursday of each month. It's good to get back to some type of routine. For now I hope all of you are healthy and staying safe.

Take care,
Robert Scott
President

The Speaker for the July Meeting will be Erenesto Sandoval talking about Growing Succulents in the Ground. Below is a short Bio on our Returning Speaker.

The **July Zoom meeting** will be on **Thursday July 16th. 6:30 PM**, There will be an invitation link sent out prior to the meeting.

This month's Zoom Speaker...

Ernesto Sandoval

Ernesto Sandoval has been wondering and seeking questions to why plants grow and look the way that they do for a long time. Now he explains and interprets the world of plants to a variety of ages and experiences from K-12 to professionals as well as Master Gardeners. He regularly lectures to a variety of western Garden Clubs throughout the year and particularly to Succulent Clubs throughout California. Desert plants are his particular passion within his general passion for plants. He describes himself as a "Jose of All Plants, Master of None." Ernesto thoroughly enjoys helping others, and gardeners in particular, to understand why and how plants do what they do. Biography: When he was about 13 he asked his dad why one tree was pruned a particular way and another tree another way. His dad answered bluntly "because that's the way you do it." Since then he's been learning and teaching himself the answers to those and many other questions by getting a degree at UC Davis in Botany and working from student weedier/waterer to Director over the last 25 years at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory. He's long left the "mow blow and go" monoculture landscape gardening world and has immersed himself in the world of polyculture and biodiversity by growing several thousand types of plants at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory, many of them succulents. Several of his favorite garden projects involved converting lawns and or water loving landscapes to drought tolerant and diversity filled gardens! He likes to promote plant liberation by encouraging gardeners of all sorts to grow more plants in the ground when possible. He loves the technical language of Botany but prefers to relate information in more understandable methods of communication! By helping people to understand the workings of plants he hopes to help us better understand how to and why our plants do what they do and how we can maximize their growth with less effort.

Can Water Drops Burn Your Plants?

By Sue Haffner

Can water drops left on your plants in direct sunlight burn the plants? You sometimes hear people say this, or even read it in books. The water supposedly acts as a magnifying glass, focusing sunlight into a damaging ray that will burn plant tissue. A well-meaning comment awhile back on an online discussion list led to a heated debate on the subject, and inspired this interesting contribution from Mark Dimmit, nurseryman and Adenium hybridizer: "It is a MYTH that watering in the day can burn plants. To demonstrate this, an experiment was recently performed in Phoenix, Arizona (by the Ag Extension Office, I think) on an afternoon when the temperature was in excess of 110 F. A variety of plants were watered overhead; not one was burned. Most of us who live in the desert already know this from experience. When I find a plant that is dry, I water it immediately regardless of time of day. Some people here spray their more heat-sensitive plants in midday to cool them off. I've done it, but I can't say I notice any improvement in the plants (it makes me feel better!) However, there are other reasons for not watering during the heat of the day. One is that the hot soil dries out much faster; more water is lost to evaporation and roots have less time to absorb water before the soil dries. Watering during the evening cools by evaporation and increases the day-night temperature differential which is important to CAM plants. Don't know if it's enough to help, though. On the other hand, watering at night in humid weather encourages disease. It's important that the plants dry off in a couple of hours so fungus spores can't sprout and invade.

BUGGING OUT

By Roger Brown

It seems foolish, and perhaps even wicked of me to imply that you can maintain a healthy, well-grown collection of cactus and succulents without the use of chemical poisons. I nearly fainted with joy when I first discovered I could buy natural predators for biological control. After much careful research I bought all the right predatory bugs, and placed them in the right places at exactly the right times. After a few weeks they had eaten the spider mites, mealy bugs, and whiteflies and had run out of food. They now either starved to death or escaped through the roof vent looking for a new source of food. Within a few months I was dealing with the same problems I started with, and not a predator in sight to make a meal on a mealy.

If you are going to use biological controls, you must remember that they are only one of the tools to be used in an integrated pest management program. You will also have to accept the expense of buying a new batch every few months. The good bugs starve to death as soon as they have eaten all the bad bugs. And who wants to go out looking for bad bugs to turn loose in your plants to feed the good bugs! Gads, this is confusing, isn't it?

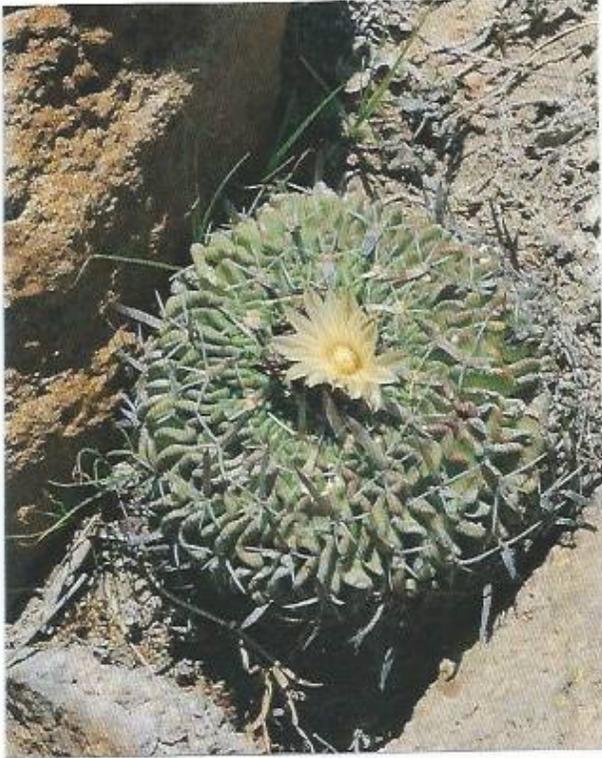
There are many surprises that constantly keep the serious plantsman or plantswoman amazed through the years. A recent research paper on the value of ladybugs was certainly a disappointing surprise, and brings me to the point of explaining the title of my column. I have enjoyed watching ladybugs since I was a small child. I'm sure many of you also used to position one of these lovely little spotted creatures on your index finger and recite the child's poem, "Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home, your" It upset me to see their reputation besmirched. But you can't argue with the facts, and there it was in black and white. I am stubborn at times and can be resistant to change without good reason. Changing my mind about ladybugs evoked some of my most stubborn emotions.

Ladybugs are certainly some of the most loved beetles in North America, and lately beetlemania has been affecting many gardeners. Ladybugs have been shipped all over the world to be used as biological predators. The use of the friendly ladybug, alias *Hippodamia convergens*, for pest control may be a waste of money. Well-documented studies by the California Department of Food and Agriculture indicate that the ladybugs generally do not feed in the area they are released. They must first fly away and eat someone else's insect pests. You must be familiar with their life cycle to understand this phenomenon. Ladybugs migrate to the mountains and spend nine months of the year hibernating in huge clumps. Biological predator collectors scoop them up by the ton in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. In the spring, as the weather warms and the snow melts, ladybugs fly from their mountain retreat to begin feeding. Some of them fly great distances during their spring migration. Ladybugs will consume 300 to 400 aphids during their feeding cycle. After feeding they mate, lay eggs, and a new generation of lady beetles is borne.

Scientists have tried all sorts of pre-treatments to discover a way to get the lady beetles to stay after release, to feed before flying away. Investigative treatments include refrigeration just before releasing, allowing them to fly in a screened tent for a week before release, feeding with honey water and aphids one week before release, and spraying their wings with sticky flat soda. The results were always the same. The ladybugs leave the release area within the first few days regardless of the pre-treatment they have been given. Entomologists concluded that lady beetles have an obligatory migratory flight response that must be satisfied before they will feed.

The convergent lady beetle has four seasons just as we do. They hibernate, migrate, feed and reproduce. Their brains are pre-programmed to go through the seasons in order, and cannot be manipulated to do otherwise. The scientific community will not endorse the use of ladybugs as a means of biological pest control because they simply cannot be enticed to eat insect pests where they are released. Their urge for migratory dispersal is much greater than their hunger. I am convinced that my puzzlement with the art of growing cactus and succulents increases with each passing year. Ladybugs bugging out of my greenhouses serve as just one example of mysteries that must be solved. Periodically other things happen to my collection that show me how little I know, and a great modesty sets in as I try to unravel the mystery of the humbling event.

(From *To the point*, Jan-Feb 2000. Roger Brown, a Nebraska cactus and succulent grower and small animal veterinarian, wrote a column, "Growing cacti and succulents for the beginner", for many years in the CSSA newsletter.)



ECHINOFOSSULOCACTUS PHYLLACANTHUS

This small plant with the very long name is a nice addition to any general collection. The genus *Echinofossulocactus* is endemic across north and central Mexico, most of the species immediately recognizable by their many narrow, wavy ribs. They are low growing, globose plants, usually solitary, with numerous ribs (up to 120), few widely spaced areoles. The small flowers appear at the apex of the stems, ranging in color from whitish through shades of purple-pink. They are pollinated by bees, the seeds probably distributed by ants. They are found in various habitats, usually shaded by grass or other foliage in altitudes from 600 to 2800 meters.

Echinofossulocactus phyllacanthus is distinguished from the other wavy-ribbed species by the small yellowish flowers and the few radial spines. Older plants sometimes become corky at the base. It is quite variable in appearance, which has led to a lot of confusion as to its identification. There are pink flowered forms, which has challenged taxonomists even further.

Culture is not difficult. Elton Roberts recommends acidic water, well-draining mix and as much heat and light as possible during the growing season. That way you get good spine growth and the plants retain a compact appearance. They should be kept dry in winter and are hardy to low temperatures.

Sue

CACTUS SALAD

4-5 cactus pads, steamed until tender and spines removed
1 green pepper, thinly sliced
1 hot pepper, chopped
3 green onions, chopped fine
Vinegar and oil dressing

1. Cut cactus pads into strips
2. Toss with pepper and onions
3. Pour dressing over mixed vegetables and marinate at least 30 minutes.

We hope these Newsletters Are finding you Well. Until we have access back in to our meeting place we will continue to have Zoom meetings.

Please Remember we are a Society so should you need help or anything we are only a phone call or an email away and happy to help.

If you have any submissions for the Newsletter send them to myself:
robertshowse@gmail.com or to sue: sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu



THE VARIOUS FORMS OF ADROMISCHUS CRISTATUS (CRINKLE-LEAF PLANT)

Adromischus cristatus is a plant long in cultivation, having been first described and published early in the 19th century. It is native to the eastern Cape Region of South Africa.

This species is immediately distinguishable by its leaf-ends, undulating like finger-crimped pie crust, and its conspicuous amount of ginger colored aerial roots. It exhibits a variety of leaf forms, as well, which caused early explorers to describe these variants as separate species. You might still find old listings for *A. poellnitzianus*, *A. nussbaumerianus* or *A. kesselringianus*. But these are just forms of *cristatus*. These sub-species are recognized: *ssp cristatus*, *ssp clavifolius*, *ssp schoenlandii* and *ssp zeyheri*.

Description: stems 2-4 cm long, often branched, with dense aerial roots. Leaves are broadly triangular, green to gray-green, wider at the apex, with a usually undulating, hard, raised margin at the apex, narrowing at the base where it joins the stem. The epidermis is fuzzy from tiny, somewhat sticky hairs. The flowers are held on stalks about 8 inches tall, tubular, green tipped with reddish-white.

Cultivation is not difficult. Use a gritty soil mix and water moderately during the growing season. These are generally small plants and are not fast growing. It may take several seasons for a plant to fill a pot. Propagation is easy, as any leaf will ultimately form a new plant. In fact, some adromischus are delicate enough that leaves are easily detached by any disturbance. If you order an adromischus through the mail you will likely find a bare stem and a bunch of loose leaves. (Ask me how I know.)

Plants are hardy to around 40 degrees. My plants are outside on the patio and in an unheated plant house. I've never had one freeze.

- (top) *Adromischus cristatus*
- (2) *A. cristatus* showing a whitish coloration of the leaves
- (3) *A. cristatus ssp clavifolius*
- (4) *A. cristatus ssp clavifolius* long-leaved form

(Ill. From *Kakteen und andere Sukkulente* 2014 (65:4)

Sue

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