

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 39 No. 1

January 2021

Merry Christmas HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 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 weeder/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.

Sights and Scenes and Strange Succulents

In his years of travels near and far Ernesto Sandoval has seen some beautiful scenes filled with succulents and still others with strange succulents. He'll take you near and far, inside and outside to explore some of the more memorable succulents he has seen in the Sonoran desert and South west deserts, South Africa, and gardens and Conservatories throughout the world. Some time soon we should all be able to travel again and of course see and search for the sights of succulents!



FROM THE PREZ...

Hi Members,

I hope everyone had a happy and restful holiday; all circumstances considered. This was a hard holiday season and not what anyone had expected. Thankfully, we have technologies to keep us connected with family and friends. It's not the same, but we do what's needed to keep our loved ones safe so that we may continue seeing them in the future. The New Year is only a few days away and we can all look forward to better times.

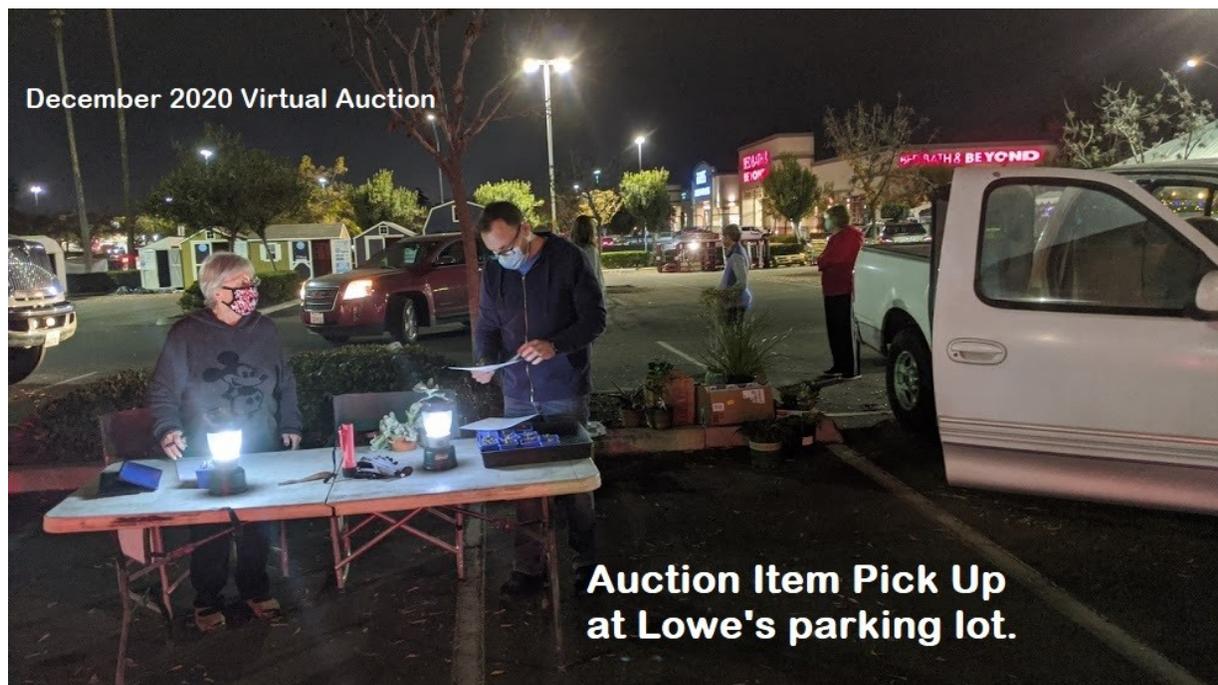
As most of you may already know, the Winter Silent Auction was a huge success! The auction brought in \$1009.00! This is something we didn't expect to happen, and it only worked because we had such wonderful auction items donated by our members. Thank you so much to everyone who donated! The bidding was a lot of fun and a few people even got into "bidding wars" on items. Thank you to everyone who participated, your generosity is overwhelming and greatly appreciated. This was our first online event, and it was a major success. Events of any type are always a lot of work to put on and it's great when members step forward to help.

Our January Zoom meeting is going to be fantastic. Ernesto Sandoval is coming back to give another wonderful presentation. Everyone that has heard Ernesto speak before knows he brings fun and his great personality to the presentations. I hope that in the new year we can get more members to join us on Zoom. The club is doing what it can to provide something for the members to enjoy during this time, so please take advantage of it. Any smart device, from your phone, tablet, or computer can join to a Zoom meeting. You don't need a camera or microphone to join, you can sit back and just listen. Ask friends if they may have a device you can borrow. If you are having problems joining and would like some help, please reach out to any of the Board Members. We will do everything we can to get you connected. A link for the Zoom meeting with Ernesto will be emailed out a few days before the meeting.

I hope you and your family members are doing well and staying healthy. We have had members come down with COVID and who have lost family members. Please do everything you can to keep yourself and others safe and healthy.

Happy New Year!

Robert



HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH

- Dominic Ortiz (2nd)
- Elton Roberts (5th)
- Sandy Yates (8th)
- Val McCullough (9th)
- Dennis Shamlian (13th)
- Christeen Abbott-Hearn (16th)
- Mark Muradian, Ed Myhro (20th)
- Tony Sharp (25th)
- Carole Grosch (31st)

We send our sympathies to Vickie Veen on the deaths of her father, Dr. Paul Laygo, and her brother, Charles.

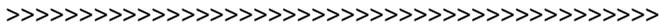


CSSA WEBINAR

The next webinar will be Saturday, January 9th, 10:00 a.m. Graham Charles will present a program on the genus *Matucana*. He has been at work on a monograph about these South American cacti for several years.

Graham Charles is a well-known British plantsman and author. To see photos of his extensive greenhouses, Google "Graham Charles cactus" and scroll down to "View in Graham Charles' Garden."

To register for the program, check the CSSA website, www.cactusandsucculentsociety.org.



WHAT IS THE ISI?

Sometimes you see or hear a reference to an "ISI plant." This is a plant that has been distributed via the International Succulent Introductions program of the Huntington Botanical Gardens. The aim of the program is to make new or rare succulents available to collectors, nurseries and institutions. All the plants are propagated in the Huntington greenhouses and are sold on an annual mail-order offering published in the *Cactus and succulent journal* and on its website: www.media.huntington/ISI.

IT MEANS WHAT?

Aculeata = "prickly, pointed." For example, *Aloe aculeata*, a plant with prickles on its leaves.

THE (UNWRITTEN) RULES OF CACTUS GROWING
By Al Thumbs

We grow our plants following rules (when to water, what growing conditions are needed, etc.). There are other rules—the unwritten rules. These are the rules that no matter how hard we try, will always haunt us:

- There is always one "easy to grow" plant that you cannot grow no matter how hard you try and how easy others say it is;
- If you only have one weed in your plants, it will be in the center of a clump of long or hooked spined cacti;
- If your cat knocks over a plant, it will be one of your "prize" ones;
- Rot ignores ugly plants;
- Your "prize" plant will be moved by the show committee so that the worst side shows;
- When you finally find the perfect pot for a show plant, the plant will quickly outgrow it or die;
- No crest remains one for long;
- If you chip or crack a pot, it will be your best one;
- Weeds always sprout just before guests arrive;
- Flowering plants always finish the day before the show;
- And, no matter how maddening the plants are, we will continue to love them.

(From a Long Beach club newsletter —many years ago.)



The Monkey Tail

There were a lot of fisticuffs over the identity of this plant when it was first published: *Winterocereus*, *Cleistocactus*, *Hildewinteria*? By now there is pretty much agreement that it's *Cleistocactus winteri* ssp *colademonis*. The specific name means "monkey's tail," which is obvious when

you see its hairy, pendulous branches. It is native to Bolivia.



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The Last Lithops Flowers

(Peter Beiersdorfer)

In the October Cactus Corner News I wrote about the first flowering lithops, *L. pseudotruncatella*, which started flowering for me on August 7. My various species of lithops have continued to flower ever since. By now almost all of the 36 lithops species in my collection have flowered. The most recent one starting to bloom is *L. olivacea*.

I have several large plants of *L. olivacea*, and the biggest, with more than 20 heads, opened its first flowers on November 16. The pot is now a beautiful sight to behold. I am attaching a picture taken in the afternoon when the flowers are open. I am also showing another picture taken in the morning before the flowers open so that it is easier to see the faces of the multiple heads of the plant. *Lithops olivacea* grows just south of the Orange River that separates Namibia from South Africa near the towns of Aggenys and Poffader.

A neighboring pot has a few buds that seem to open soon. The heads of this plant are brownish, while the heads of the first plant are greenish blue. The color difference is not simply due to bright sunlight because I keep the pots next to each other all year round. The color difference indicates that the plant is *L. olivacea* v. *nebrownii*, which is distinguished from *olivacea* v. *olivacea* by its brownish color.

Only two *Lithops* species are holding out in my collection. The plants of one species, *L. hermetica*, might be too young to flower; I sowed those on May 19, 2018. But more importantly, the heads of these plants got chewed on by caterpillars or grubs from the bottom up, though sparing the roots. By the time I noticed, I could save only the stumps of four surviving plants. The look terrible, but they are still alive. (None of the grubby worms I found on top of the soil surrounding the plants survived my ire!).

The other species that hasn't flowered yet is *L. viridis*. One of my plants flowered last year, but I did not write down the dates. None of my plants so far shows any sign of producing a flower.

Lithops viridis comes from the winter rainfall area of South Africa near Loeriesfontein. But I am more or less done with watering my lithops for the season. A few plants have already started to show signs of new heads popping in the cleft between the lobes of the old heads. Once that process is complete, I will resume my watering regimen.



Pictures from
Peter's Article.



Thank You!

Very Nice!

