

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

*Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society*

*[fresnocss.com](http://fresnocss.com)*

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

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**IN-PERSON MEETING: Thursday, January 6, 2022, 7:00 p.m.** (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)  
REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, 1084 WEST BULLARD, FRESNO  
(near the Northwest corner of Palm and Bullard)

## Northwest Argentina – Places and Plants

by: **Gary Duke**

Gary will show 26 cacti genera and 14 succulent genera, to include many species of *Gymnocalycium*, *Lobivia*, *Echinopsis* and *Tillandsia*. He also will show some very interesting geological sites, churches and markets. A short drone video of a site with the rare *Neoporteriaumadeave* is included.



Gary Duke has been collecting cacti and succulents since he was 10 years old. 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 Club in the southern California area.

He was recently elected to the Board of Directors to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Following his military career, he worked as a program manager for Boeing for 16 years. He's an avid collector of cacti and also collects *Tylecodons* and *Dudleyas*. He has over 1,000 different species in his private collection and enjoys propagating them. He frequently gives slide presentation throughout southern California



## FROM THE PREZ . . .

**Hi Members,**

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday, where you got to safely be around your friends and family! It sure hasn't seemed like winter, let alone the holidays to me. Even as I write this article, I can't believe that the New Year is only a few days away. I'm not sure where the time went.

Now that the holidays are over, we can focus on the Winter Silent Auction. If you recall from the December newsletter, the Winter Silent Auction will be taking place January 10-14<sup>th</sup>. The auction is completely online and simple to use! On January 10<sup>th</sup> you will receive an email with a link to the auction, from there you will see all the items, each with a photo and description. There will be starting bid and if you want the item you need to bid at least that amount or higher. At 7pm each day the auction totals are collected, and each item will be updated with the current bid. To stay as the highest bidder on an item you will need to bid higher than the current bid. We will do this each day till the last day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. As we get close to 7pm on the 14<sup>th</sup>, bids will be updated as fast I can go so you can see what an item is going for. If you really want an item its best to bid high and keep watch, we get some good bidding wars going! The day after the auction ends you will receive an email with the items you won and total. It sounds complicated but its actually very easy. Item pickup and payment will be on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 6pm at the Lowes in Riverpark.

We usually have a wide array of items up for auction, and those items come from you! We are looking for more donations for auction items. These items can be anything from extra items you have around the house to even purchasing new items for donation. We are looking for plants, cuttings, seeds, pots, yard decorations, home decoration, garden tools, books, rocks, holiday items and anything else you could think of! Every item can be used, and everything goes back to supporting the club.

There are a few ways to donate items. You could take a photo of the item and send that to me with a description. Then bring that item to the auction pick up on January 17<sup>th</sup>. You can also bring your items to the January 6<sup>th</sup> club meeting. You don't even need to stay for the meeting, just let me know you're coming, and I will meet you in the parking lot. The last option is if you're purchasing an item online, you can have it sent directly to me. Any way you choose to donate, I need all items or photos to me by January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Now this auction is all done through email and internet. If you don't have these and would like to participate in the auction, I recommend asking a friend or family member to show you the items or place bids for you. You may contact me at (559) 960-3665, or email photos to [rob\\_scott85@yahoo.com](mailto:rob_scott85@yahoo.com). Texting is best and you can even text photos as well. The last few silent auctions were a lot of fun and I hope you participate in this one.

**FOR THE JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup> MEETING, WE WILL BE IN-PERSON. THE RESERVATION SYSTEMS OPENS JANUARY 2<sup>ND</sup>, AND YOU CAN RESERVE A SPOT BY CONTACTING KAREN AT (559) 304-9219. MASKING IS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED, AND THE MASK NEEDS TO BE SNUG AND FORM FITTING. IF YOUR CLOTH MASK IS LOOSE, PLEASE SWITCH TO A SNUG MASK. SITTING WILL BE SPACED OUT. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE THAT ONLY FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE ATTEND THE MEETING FOR YOUR PROTECTION AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF EVERYONE ELSE ATTENDING.**

Take care and Happy New Year!

**Robert**

## JANUARY 2022 BIRTHDAYS:

*Alisha Peña (1<sup>st</sup>);*  
*Dominic Ortiz (4<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Elton Roberts (5<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Val McCullough (9<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Dennis Shamlian (13<sup>th</sup>);*



*Christeen Abbott-Heam (16<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Mark Muradian (20<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Ed Myhro (20<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Tony Sharp (25<sup>th</sup>);*  
*Carole Grosch (31<sup>st</sup>).*

**WEBINAR:** The next CSSA webinar will be Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. Dan Mahr will discuss “Succulent Trees.” To register, go to the CSSA website: <http://cactusandsucculentsociety.org>.

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**The winter 2021 issue of The Cactus and Succulent Journal** contains several especially interesting articles. Mark Dimmit and Taylor Edwards write about adenium taxonomy, which they admit is a mess. It includes a number of color photos of the plants and flowers. One problem is that species which require closer study grow in areas that are currently too dangerous to enter.

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**Rob Skillin presents** an “Illustrated Guide to Pollinating Pachypodium and Adenium.” He makes it sound easy!

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**The Mojave Desert Land Trust Seed Bank** has collected seeds and spores from more than 500 desert species to provide an insurance policy against the plants’ extinction. They have already deployed seeds in restoration projects. [www.mdlt.org](http://www.mdlt.org).

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**“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”** Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882)

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**The Lithops Research and Conservation Foundation** has been established in South Africa dedicated to enhance our knowledge of the biology of these unique plants and with the goal of furthering their conservation. [www.lithopsfoundation.com](http://www.lithopsfoundation.com).

So many words ... Hysteranthous refers to plants in which the flowers appear before the foliage, such as our “Naked Ladies” as well as other bulbs.

**xGraptopoveria ‘Fred Ives’** is an intergeneric hybrid (*Graptopetalum paraguayense* x *Echeveria gibbosa*) is a pretty, hardy evergreen succulent that does well in pots, group plantings or in the ground. It features a spreading clump of large (up to 12” in dia.), colorful rosettes on robust stems. The fleshy leaves display colors from bronze, lavender, blue or pink depending on the light. It’s easy to propagate from cuttings or leaves, but keep on the lookout for mealybugs.

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#### IN A PINCH ...

We all know that the last several winters have not been as cold as usual. Some of us may have become rather casual about protecting our outdoor potted plants. If a near-freezing forecast catches you by surprise and you have to tear around at the last minute to engage in plant protection here are a few things you can do.

- \* Pull the pots in close to a wall. Maybe there will be enough eaves to help. Or drag them under a tree or bush. These may seem trivial but they can make the difference of a degree or two.
- \* Toss towels, sheets or old clothes over the pots. One grower saved some plants from freezing by throwing an old bathrobe over them. The plants won’t be embarrassed.
- \* Hanging plants can be especially vulnerable. Lower them to the ground, if you can.

Don’t be in a hurry to cut back what appears to be cold-related plant damage. Just observe the plant and wait for the damage, if any, to become evident.

### **WHAT ARE SUCCULENTS?**

**By Fred Gaumer**

**Jeopardy!** had a new championship series for university professors in December. In the semi-finals on December 14, they had a category called Succulents. Three women, including a botany professor, were trying for a chance to be included in the final rounds and win the top prize of \$100,000 and a spot in their 'Tournament of Champions'. Here's how it went:

For \$200: The Vera or "True" type of this succulent is pretty and medicinal.

*Question: "What is Aloe?"*

For \$400: This succulent that gives us tequila also provides a syrup for a natural sweetener.

*Question: "What is Agave?"*

For \$600: Nopales are the edible leaf pads of this alliterative cactus.

*Question: "What is Prickly Pear?"*

Difficulty escalates for the \$800 answer: This desert tree was named for its resemblance to a Biblical Leader pointing to the Promised Land.

*Question: "What is the Joshua Tree?"*

And finally, for \$1,000: Belying their names these succulents often used as ground cover are native to Africa?

*Question: "What are Ice plants?"*

They all responded correctly and seemed very pleased with themselves!



### **CINNAMON VS. ANTS: IT REALLY WORKS**

Cinnamon, which we all have in the spice cabinet, has proven to be a handy poison for plant growers. I found the following article in *Hortideas*, an old publication that was full of interesting bits:

"Two years ago we published the following extract of an article from the Lane County Extension Office in Eugene, Oregon: Cinnamon added to water to make a paste or cinnamon oil on an ant trail will stop the ants from using the trail, according to a backyard experiment in the Ozarks, who also says that about one teaspoon of powdered cinnamon poured into the top of an ant hill and stirred around will cause the ants to abandon the hill."

"We recently reviewed the following from our friends at Springtree Community, Scottsville, Virginia: Wanted to let you know we have been completely delighted with success of cinnamon oil against ants at Springtree. I recommend it to everyone!"

Cinnamon is now recognized for its anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.

Earlier this year my Agave parry in the driveway bed bloomed and died. Linda Lopez helped me dig out the carcass. In doing so, we liberated the Agave stricta that had been growing between the now-dead and a rosemary bush. But the stricta looked wobbly. Turns out, it had been sitting in a depression where moisture had been collecting, which led to stem rot. We pulled out the plant, stripped off the dried lower leaves, and scraped as much rot off the stem as we could. Then we plastered the stem with cinnamon and left it to dry for a week. After that re-planted the agave in a different location and it appears to be well-rooted and thriving. So, keep a jar of cinnamon on hand for use on plants suffering wounds or rot. And it smells good, too! **Sue**

## EUPHORBIA ABDELKURI

*Euphorbia abdelkuri* is a most unusual looking plant, one that can't be mistaken for any other. Its lumpy stems are gray with a touch of pink, resembling melted wax covering a wrinkled candle. It is found in a single location on Abd-al-Kuri, a small island about 80 miles east of the Horn of Africa, not far from Socotra. The island is very dry and rocky, supporting a small population. *Euphorbia abdelkuri* is found at 1500' altitude on Qarad Saleh, the limestone spine of the island.

The plant was first published in 1903 in a flora of Socotra and Abd-al-Kuri, but was re-discovered by a major scientific expedition to the islands in 1967. Plant explorer John Lavranos was part of this group. He wrote about it in v.9 of the *Euphorbia* journal. While the explorers found evidence that the plant had been widespread in the past, in 1967 there were only four clumps of it. The reason for the decline was not evident, as cattle avoid it due to its highly toxic latex. They took several cuttings and a few young plants. All the plants now in cultivation are derived from this collection.



Photo: Wikipedia

*Euphorbia abdelkuri* has turned out to be surprisingly easy to grow, though it is slow. It was thought at first that it would need to be grafted but it does fine on its own roots. The aforementioned toxic latex is bright yellow, not white, the only euphorbia species known to have this characteristic. Just how toxic it is can be illustrated by a story that Mark Fryer, general manager of C&J Cactus in Vista, told some of us years ago. He had making abdelkuri cuttings and was unaware that a drop of sap had splashed on his shirt. Driving home that evening, in rush hour traffic on Hwy 15, he felt a burn near his ribs. The sap had burned through his shirt, then through his tee shirt and was going after his skin. Needless to say, he got off the freeway as soon as he could. Socotra and Abd-al-Kuri (and two small adjacent islands) have been administered by Yemen for years and travelers were required to fly from Sana'a, Yemen to get to Socotra. The civil war that has been raging in Yemen since 2014, however, has made such trips all but impossible. In addition, Somalia claimed Abd-al-Kuri in 2010, complicating the political situation considerably.

Despite its threatened status, *Euphorbia abdelkuri* is available in the trade. You also see some very nice specimens in plant shows. *Sue*



## Christmas Cactus

These plants belong to my neighbor. They are much more dazzling in person. I have never been able to keep them in such good condition for them to flower or maybe even to stay alive.

*Fred Gaumer*

