

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

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**IN-PERSON MEETING:** THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)  
REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH  
1084 West Bullard, Fresno (Near NW Corner of Palm and Bullard)

## Winter Growing Succulents

Presenter: Tom Glavich

### Introduction:

Winter Growing succulents are among the easiest to grow in Southern California. The southern California environment is similar to much of South Africa, Southern Europe and Northern Africa. Plants that do well there are often easy to grow in California. This talk will look at a few favorites and then do a geographical tour to see and talk about some of the species that make up a good part of our collections.



**Biography:** Tom Glavich is a long-time grower of succulent plants and a frequent contributor to Cactus and Succulent Society Publications. He is one of the co-chairs of the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent show held every year at the Los Angeles County Arboretum.

\*\*\* Tom will be bringing a nice selection of plants for purchase \*\*\*



**FROM THE PREZ:**

**Hi Members,**

Autumn is just around the corner! Most of my winter growers are showing signs of life with these cooler nights. Its nice to see them waking up from a hot long summer.

Last month we had our Annual Member's Sale Night. It was wonderful to have this event again after the pandemic break. We had 17 member's selling, the most we have ever had! Everyone brought amazing plants and the public loved it. Every vendor sold at least half of the items they had for sale. It was a really fun event! Thank you to everyone who came and help setup. Was a big help!

With the end of the year approaching, we have so many things that need to happen in the club. The first that comes to mind is membership renewals. We always renew everyone's membership at the end of the year, makes things so much simpler. Starting at our October meeting, we will have renewal forms ready for you to fill out. We like to get everyone's renewal in by the end of the year. This year we have changed the form to include an Emergency Contact area. In the event of an emergency where you might not be able to speak or stay conscious, we need a way to contact someone to inform them of your condition. Just like your other personal information on the form, your emergency contact information is also kept private and not given to other groups. The Board thought this was a great way to contact someone you know who could give Emergency Personnel your information, deal with your car and possessions, and come to be with you. As with all renewals, we need you to fill out the membership form but its especially important this year with the addition of the Emergency Contact.

With the winter growing plants starting to wake up we have the perfect presentation planned for our October meeting. Tom Glavich is coming up from southern California to give a talk called "Winter Growing Succulents". This is the time to learn what plants start to get water as our temperature cools off and the days become shorter. Hope everyone can attend to learn from this information packed presentation.

We are also working on updating our monthly raffle. Adding unique plants that will hopefully catch your eye. Starting at our next meeting, tickets will be 1 for a \$1, or 6 for \$5. If you wear your name badge or are a new guest at the meeting, you will receive one free ticket with your ticket purchase.

The end of the year also means the holidays are coming and well we should do something. We will be having a Winter Silent Auction to get into the holiday spirit. The holiday spirit of buying things! What's nice about this auction, is its buying things for yourself. That's fun! The auction will be online, so that everyone can see the items and have lots of time to bid. The auction will take place November 15-18. Giving us the October and November meeting to bring items for donations. If you haven't participated in an online silent auction before with the club, they are really fun! The auction is full of items that people donate and all the funds go back to the club. All sorts of items can be donated like, plants, cuttings, pots, books, top dressings, knickknacks, garden decorations, home decorations, holiday decorations, food, and gift cards. The sky is really the limit, and everything is greatly appreciated. Items can be dropped off at the October and November meeting. You could also

(Continued on next page.)

take photos of the items and send them to me but then bring the items to the auction pick up. We have even had people donate items off Amazon and had them sent right to me. We need items or photos by November 3, our meeting night. Last time we did this there was over 100 items, we can make this auction even bigger! The club will also be bringing in some unusual plants to spice up the auction. The item pick up will be at our December meeting, giving everyone plenty of time to plan to be there if they bid.

Speaking of our December meeting, the Board is working on doing something fun and festive for you to celebrate the holiday season. Plans are in the works, and we will have more information in our November newsletter.

**Thank you,**

***Robert***



**Sue:** As I type this on the first day of fall, it's been a time of triage for my poor plants, beaten down by this horrible summer. Is this one dead? Pull it from the pot and check the roots. If they're rotten or so dry they just fall off, it's probably "curtains" for this one—unless there is a bit of green showing somewhere. Can it be saved? Is it worth it?

I have a small pot of *Sansevieria parva marginata*. It's always been a wimpy grower and it looks dead. But, unpotting it, I see two tiny offshoots coming up from the rhizome. So it's back on the table (after the dead parts are removed.)

What was it about this summer that was so brutal? I had many plants showing stress, many more than in the past. I had to throw shade cloth over *Agave victoriae-reginae*, which has been in the same location for 25 years, at least, as it was starting to turn yellow. Is it the sun's intensity? Plants were showing stress even before our record-breaking heat wave. I wish I knew the answer.

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**Have you ever found a rotted jade plant?** A plant that has been growing just fine for years had wizened up to nothing. Though we think of these as tough plants that can put up with anything, they really do need some care. Jades (*Crassula ovata* and cultivars) tend to develop a covering of fine roots on the soil surface. This can become so dense that water cannot penetrate it so that when you water it runs off to the side of the pot and quickly out the drain hole, leaving the roots dry. The plant begins to wither. When you see signs of this, it's time to turn the plant out of the pot, break up those tangled roots and repot in fresh soil. The usual recommendation is to let a newly repotted plant rest in the shade for a few days, but some growers immediately water in their resettled plants and generally have good results. Take the opportunity to prune the jade a bit at the same time, removing twiggy growths.

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**Last month I wrote about *Euphorbia bupleurifolia*.** This week I got to see a local grower's plant, a beautiful specimen, in bloom, with many offsets. The grower has had the plant for at least 20 years. It gets watered just about every day, even though it does lose its leaves now and then it never really goes dormant.

Apologies to last month's birthday members listed under the wrong month. So here is a corrected list for the month of September and this month's birthdays.

Mary Ann Villegas

### SEPTEMBER

*Ed Armbruster (9<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Jack Fleming (11<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Susan Cook (12<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Polly Dunklin (20<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Claudia Carlson (23<sup>rd</sup>)*  
*Linda Olivas (24<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Craig Roberts (27<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Roz Tampone (28<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Polly Hargreaves (29<sup>th</sup>)*



### OCTOBER

*Jan Armbruster (1<sup>st</sup>)*  
*Karl Church (2<sup>nd</sup>)*  
*Jaan Lepson (6<sup>th</sup>)*  
*Marian Orvis (20<sup>th</sup>)*

### COMING EVENTS



**Oct. 5-16<sup>th</sup>**  
 "On With the Show"

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Fall Plant Sale  
 Oct, 14<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon to 4 p.m.  
 Oct, 15<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### STYROFOAM ANCHORS:

When potting rootless offsets of cacti or succulents, use pieces of Styrofoam to hold them in place in an upright position.

- Place your plant in your soil-filled pot and place pieces of Styrofoam around the base of the plant—maybe 3 pieces about 1" square.
- Secure the Styrofoam in place using kitchen skewers. Push the skewers through the Styrofoam and deep into the growing medium.
- Angle the skewers with the tops away from the plant.

This will hold the plant securely until it takes root, at which time you can remove the foam and skewers. The skewers will last for about a year before decomposing, while Styrofoam, as we know, lasts forever.

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**Desert Plants is a magazine** published by the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Superior, Arizona. The current issue, v. 38, no. 1 (August 2022) features a 21-page article on adeniums by Mark Dimmit. He summarizes current research on adenium culture and hybridizing and includes numerous color illustrations.

Mark Dimmit was "there at the beginning" when adeniums first came into the market in the 1990s and is an expert on the genus. If you're really interested in these plants, you should try to get your own copy. For inquiries, email [Desert.Plants@btarboretum.org](mailto:Desert.Plants@btarboretum.org). **Sue**

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## HAEMANTHUS



Only a few of the 22, or so, species of the South African bulb *Haemanthus* are often seen in cultivation, which is unfortunate as some have very attractive leaves and make good additions to any plant collection. The most common is *H. albiflos*, one of the evergreen species (the others are *deformis* and *paucifolius*). Most are deciduous and grow in the winter rainfall region of South Africa. *H. albiflos* has leaves to 12" to 18" which sometimes lie flat on the ground. In late fall to early winter, it puts up stalks of white "shaving brush" type flowers which, if pollinated, are followed by attractive red fruits.

In addition to pot specimens, this bulb makes an attractive garden plant in shady or semi-shady areas (some morning sun is okay.) It can tolerate temperatures down close to freezing. A freeze may top-kill the foliage, but it will grow back.

*Sue*

(Illus. from the San Marcos Growers website)



## CULTURE TIPS FOR WINTER-GROWING SOUTH AFRICAN BULBS

1. For containers, plant bulbs to a depth of 2-3 times their height in a well-drained sandy mix. A good potting mix is 3 parts sand, 2 parts sphagnum peat, 1 part perlite, 1 part redwood compost. Best growth is achieved under 50% shade cloth, in full sun. In the garden, plant in a sunny position, preferably one that gets moderate irrigation. Most of the bulbs are naturally small and produce little foliage. Nearly all make good container plants for sunny patios.
2. Bulbs can be planted as early as mid-September. Their signal for growth is a drop in temperatures together with the advent of rain. If planted in September do not water until the weather gets cool in mid-October. All bulbs should be planted before Thanksgiving. Soft bulbs should be planted soonest as they can dehydrate. If your bulbs sprout leaves or roots ahead of schedule before planting, go ahead and plant them.
3. Feed after sprouting with a low nitrogen fertilizer. Avoid organic products and use a 100% soluble fertilizer. Do not use bonemeal. Stop feeding after flowering and before they start to go dormant.
4. Most of the bulbs flower between February and April depending on your local conditions. Summer dormant bulbs should be kept dry and in the pots. Onset of dormancy can be seen by the progressive yellowing of the leaves after flowering. Most bulbs are sensitive to summer watering and you may lose them to rot if watered during dormancy. An exception is *Homeria flaccida*. Store the dry pots in a shady position. Bring them out and water them again the following November. Bulbs can stay in the same pots for many years and need only be lifted after they appear overcrowded.

(This culture sheet was distributed years ago by the Friends of the UC Irvine Arboretum. The garden specialized in South African bulbs and had amassed a considerable collection. When reading the above, remember that it was written for growers in a slightly more moderate climate than ours. Eventually the university decided they needed the space occupied by the arboretum for a building, so the garden had to go. I heard that some people were able to rescue some of the bulbs, but I believe it's correct to say that the bulk of the collection was lost.). *Sue*

## FRAILEA



For those who treasure the small-to-miniature cacti, consider adding some fraileas to your collection. This genus of South American cacti contains some interesting and beautiful plants that are not difficult to grow. The plants were originally included in *Echinocactus* until 1922 when Britton and Rose erected the genus and named it in honor of Manuel Fraile, the longtime caretaker of the cactus collection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C.

Initially, eight species were recognized. Various authors, over the years, added many more, up to fifty. No modern study of the genus has been done and *Frailea* has been poorly studied in the wild. For years it was assumed to have a close relationship with parodias and notocacti, but contemporary DNA work has shown that it has no relationship with any other South American genus. It's an orphan. Currently, 17 species and 6 subspecies are recognized.

Fraileas are small cacti, usually up to 1 ¼" in diameter and 2 to 3" in height. They are mostly compressed globular cacti, but a few are elongated or columnar. In cultivation, the columnar forms are somewhat weak and tend eventually to lean over against other plants. They are native to a wide area that ranges from Southern Brazil and Uruguay through north and southeast Argentina and Paraguay and Bolivia. The flowers, when they open, are always yellow. But you will not usually see them, as fraileas exhibit a trait called *cleistogamy*. That means that the plant will set seed without the flowers ever opening for pollinators. Almost all *Frailea* seed is produced in this fashion. The seeds have a fairly short shelf life, compared with those of most other cacti. With cleistogamy, little exchange of genetic material occurs in habitat and, over time, isolated groups form their own consistent characteristics. This may have resulted in the disputes over the number of valid forms.

Fraileas are very rewarding to grow from seed. Even very young plants will produce their own seed pods. They can be grown in tiny pots or in dish gardens. They are quite variable in spine and epidermal color, ranging from brown to nearly black, several shades of green and yellowish red. *Frailea uhligiana* is grayish white and looks like a miniature *Copiapoa cinerascens*. *Frailea castanea* looks like a tiny *Astrophytum asterias*.

The plant in the picture is *Frailea fulviseta*, photo by Paul Laney, who has a very informative website, "Frailea—Hidden Treasures," [www.frailea.com](http://www.frailea.com). It features an extensive photo gallery and other information. Give it a look. **Sue**

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## RHYTIDOCAULON



*Rhytidocaulon* is a genus of Arabian stapeliads not often seen in cultivation or offered in the commercial trade. You can occasionally find them available from online sources. There are around 15 species growing in hot, dry, rocky country, in tufts of grass or the shade of rocks in company with other stapeliads.

The plant in the picture is *R. macrolobum*. Like the others in the genus, it's a small-growing plant with grayish wrinkled stems (that's what the name means, "wrinkled stem".) Their form and color no doubt provide camouflage in shrubby, rocky desert country. *Rhytidocaulon* flowers are tiny and are better appreciated under a magnifying glass. They're fleshy, usually starfish-shaped, 5-lobed with tiny cilia at the points which vibrate in the slightest breeze. Those of *R. macrolobum* vary from brownish-green to black or maroon with contrasting cross-bands. If you can grow other stapeliads, you can grow these. But it is a small plant and a slow grower so considerable care must be taken with watering. Kept dry in winter, it can survive cold temperatures, but not down to freezing. (Illus: [www.gardeninglimited.com](http://www.gardeninglimited.com)) **Sue**