

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

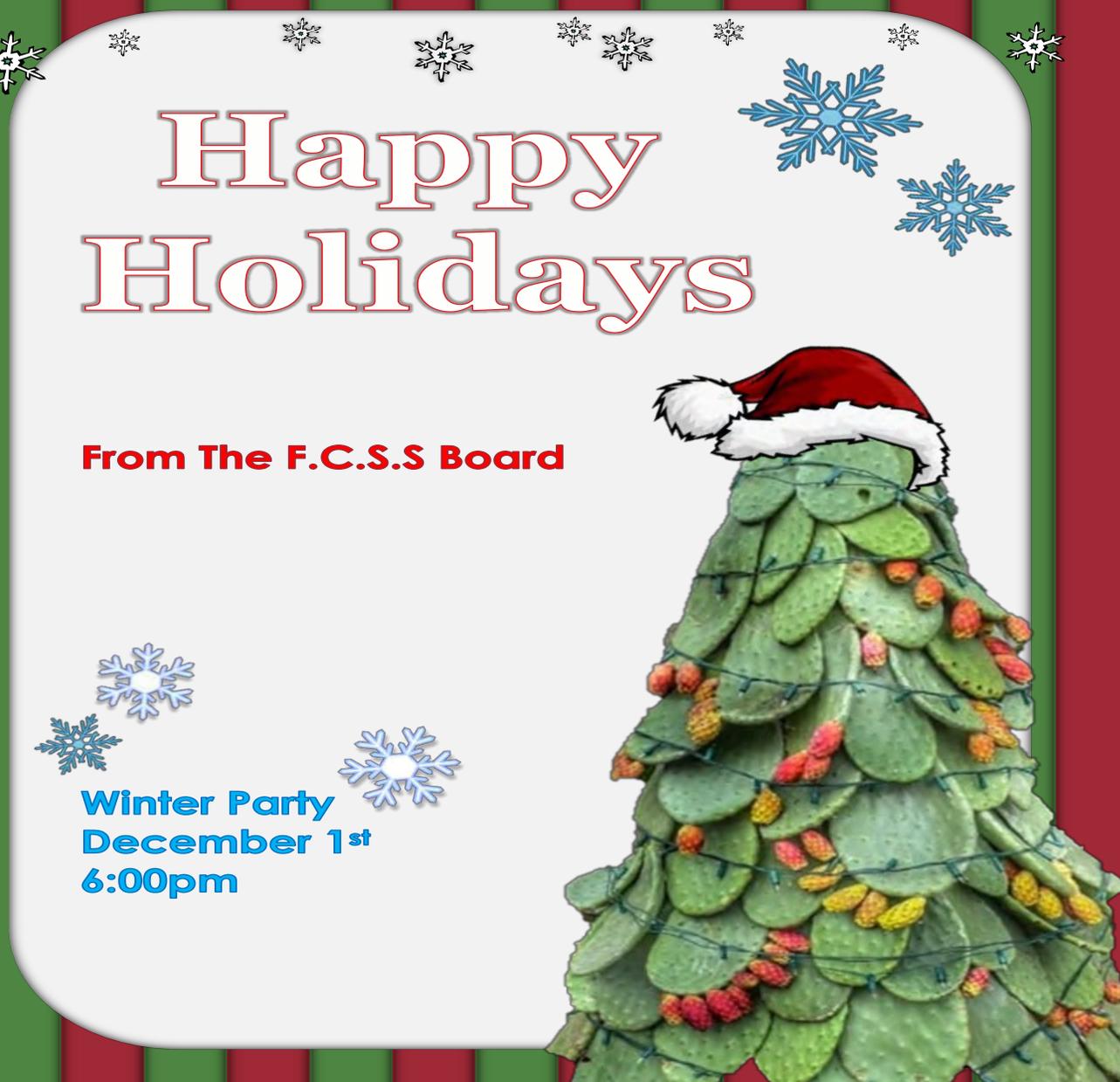
Vol. 41 No. 12

December 2022

WINTER PARTY: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 6:00 P.M.

REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH

1084 West Bullard, Fresno (Near NW Corner of Palm and Bullard)



**Happy
Holidays**

From The F.C.S.S Board

**Winter Party
December 1st
6:00pm**

FROM THE PREZ:**Hi Members,**

Our Winter Silent Auction has ended, and wow it was amazing! We had 176 items of all different types, with the majority donated by our members. It was through this generosity of donating and bidding that the auction brought in \$1,931.00! Thank you everyone who donated and bid on items.

On December 1st, we will be having our Winter Party! This is a time when all our members and their families can come together to celebrate the holidays, the end of the year, and all the work we do protecting our plants for the winter. This year we have a catered meal planned of chicken and tri-tip, rice pilaf, side salad, roll, drink and of course pie. Meals will be individually packaged by the caterer so members can take home to enjoy or stick around to eat together. The Winter Party will take place at the Lutheran Church in our normal meeting room and there is no regular meeting for the night. **Dinner will start at 6pm**, come to the door and your meal order will be gathered for you. If you haven't paid yet, please bring cash or check. If you haven't placed an order for a meal, we will not be able to accommodate you as we have ordered just enough needed. Even if you won't be getting a meal for the party, all members and their families are welcome. Along with dinner we will be giving our Board and Committee members a gift for their year of service. This is a fun event and will be nice to see everyone coming together again.

We will also be having our Winter Silent Auction pick up on December 1st at the party. Come see me to get your items so I can check them off. Please bring cash or check for payment. Emails have been sent out to the people who won items and the amount owed. Pick up will start at 6pm.

Reminder that membership renewals are also due, and you can renew at the Winter Party. We will have forms for you to fill out.

We have a lot going on at our Winter Party but that's just part of the holiday season. Will be wonderful to see everyone there, we hope you can join us!

From the Board and I, we wish you all a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

See you there! Thank you,

Robert



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

**Monte Tackett, Eddie Etheridge (6th);
Doris Hooton (8th)**

NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome

Leslie Feathers

Ed Rodrigues

Rhonda Fike

Tina Rodrigues

Nancy Godwin

Pat Pertram

Our speaker last month, Peter Walkowiak, presented a potting demonstration that I know everyone found fascinating. It was especially interesting to watch how he worked the components of his preferred potting mix (perlite, compost and decomposed granite) into an integrated mass before it was ready to be used.

He transferred plants from the training pots in which they had been growing for years into show pots without, basically, disturbing the rootball. He could do that because those plants had been growing in his mix and under his conditions.



Peter is a master grower. No one can argue with his results, as his specimens win top prizes at all the big cactus and succulent shows. He has come by his methods over many years of work.

But that doesn't mean that you should stop what you're doing and adopt all his methods. If your plants are growing well and pleasing you, keep on what you're doing. It's only when your plants seem not to thrive should you change something.

One thing you should do is to repot any new plant you get into your own potting mix. Be sure to remove as much of the old mix as you can. With the new plant in your mix, it won't be over or under—watered whenever you water. (At least you hope so!)

And what's the best potting mix? Ask 12 different growers and you'll get 12 different "recipes." Most of us are still looking for the "perfect" one. *Sue*



CAN I USE A COMMERCIAL POTTING MIX?

Yes, you can use commercial potting mixes that are formulated for growing cacti and succulents. To be on the safe side, lighten up the mix by adding perlite or pumice, just to make sure that it drains well. A good mix will also be "chunky" enough to allow for an air exchange for the roots.

If you're trying a new mix, repot a few plants that need it, rather than repotting everything. Watch to see how your plants adapt to the new mix and also to see how well it drains.

Be aware that sometimes the producers of commercial mixes fiddle around with their products perhaps in an effort to "improve" them. A major distributor of perlite added a fertilizer to their product a few years ago. (Why?) Such a step was totally unnecessary. If the packaging of a product changes, be aware that there might be other changes, as well.

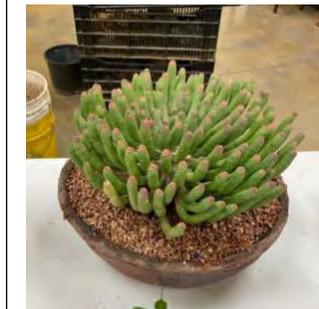
For a consistent potting mix, you will need to do what Peter Walkowiak has done, and construct one out of the basic elements. *Sue*

NOVEMBER BRAG TABLE: We had a very interesting Brag Table last month. There were a lot of euphorbias, in honor of our speaker, Peter Walkowiak, who specializes in hybridizing them. Mark Muradian stood in for Fred Gaumer and was ably assisted by Peter.

Bringing plants were Bill Gale, Dan Gale, Jack Fleming, Bryan Nagles, Eddie Etheridge, Bruce Hargreaves and Joe Nishimoto. Many thanks to all of them. *Sue*



*Photos by
Karen Willoughby*



CACTUS NAMES

By Bruce J. Hargreaves

I enjoyed Sue's note regarding simplifying cactus names. In general I am a lumper; that is, I believe the fewer names the better. There are limits, however. A *Pereskia* is not a saguaro!

In fact, the *Pereskias* are so unlike most cacti that I once called one a member of the rose family on a practical exam in a taxonomy course at UC Santa Barbara. (I was told if I had lifted the leaf I would have seen the spines which are unlike rose thorns.)

At any rate the name *Cactus cactus* would not be allowed as the genus and species may not be the same in plants! (Unlike animals where *Bison bison* and *Gorilla gorilla* are legal.)

Furthermore there is a *Euphorbia cactus* which would make it all the more confusing.

Incidentally, I have had some experience of the difficulties of naming plants. The first plant I named was *Monadenium mafingensis*. After publication I was told by Kew that it should have been *M. mafingense* as *Monadenium* is neuter. (I have never studied Latin. In my defense I said I had sent the description to Kew for the necessary Latin translation, and no one corrected my species name!) I asked if I should republish it and was told that grammatical errors were considered automatically corrected. Then *Monadenium* was subsumed under *Euphorbia* so the name became *Euphorbia mafingensis*! And the game goes on!



YUCCA

Yuccas are perennial shrubs and trees native to hot and dry areas of the Americas. They were an early part of the Columbian Exchange, making their way to the Old World in the 1500s. The Columbian Exchange refers to the exchange of ideas, food, crops, populations and diseases between the New World (the Americas) and the Old World (Europe) following the first voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492. In Europe, the plant was caught up in early botanical confusion, due partially to the existence of a different plant, the yuca, native to Latin America and the Caribbean. Also known as cassava, the yuca has a starchy, edible root.

Eventually *yuccas* were classified into the *Asparagaceae* family which also includes agave, dracaena and asparagus. There are more than forty species of *yucca*. They are generally characterized by sturdy, sword-shaped evergreen leaves and by large terminal clusters of creamy white flowers called panicles. *Yucca* flowers and seeds are eaten in some cultures, and the leaves of some species contain strong fibers that traditionally were used for rope, thread and baskets. Its roots produce a natural red dye.

Many *yuccas* bloom in late spring and summer. In some species the flower stalk is erect, growing to six feet; in some the panicles are pendant, hanging down. The pollination of the *yucca* flower is called "a classic example of insect-plant coevolutionary relationship." *Yuccas* are pollinated by specific moths matched to each unique species. Gathering pollen from its designated plant, the female moth forms pollen into a small ball and stuffs it into the stigmas of flowers on another plant while laying an egg. Larva feed on some of the seeds that are produced. Where these moths are absent, *yuccas* must be hand pollinated. Sue

(Pictured: *Yucca filamentosa*, 'Spanish Bayonet', courtesy of Wikipedia)

SUCCULENT PINE CONES

Last year Roz Tampone saw some large pine cones at the Garden of the Sun in Fresno. They were cones of the Foothill Pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), also called Towani Pine, Gray Pine, Bull Pine or Digger Pine. The species is endemic to California.

Roz knew she wanted to use the cones to make something, but wasn't sure what. Since she had been decorating succulent pumpkins, she decided to use those same techniques with pine cones.

She collected holly berries, nandina berries, small red and black peppers and Blue Spruce sedum she found at the Garden of the Sun. Using Loctite spray glue, she coated the front of the pine cones and inserted pieces of Spanish moss into the spaces of the cone. Into the large spaces she placed a sedum cutting. Next, alternating berries, peppers and small pine cones, she decorated the front and top of the Foothill Pine cone, and -- voila! -- a new craft for the holidays: succulent pine cones! *Sue*



POINSETTIA CULTURE

Light: Poinsettias prefer bright, indirect light to full sun. If placed in low light areas, such as the interior of a room, the bract color will last up to 4 to 6 weeks, yet the overall health of the plant will decline.

Moisture: Poinsettias should be watered thoroughly until water runs out through the drainage holes. Remove all water from the saucer so it will not be absorbed back into the soil. This practice keeps the plant from becoming wet and a prime candidate for root rot. In order to tell if your plant is dry enough to be watered, it is best to pinch some soil (from as deep in the pot as you can get) between your forefinger and thumb, squeeze, then let go. If soil clings to your finger, it is moist enough to leave awhile longer. If not, water again. If your poinsettia is allowed to wilt, its lower leaves may turn yellow and drop off.

Fertilizer: While in bloom, poinsettias do not require fertilizer. After flowers fade, fertilize with a balanced houseplant fertilizer.

Temperature: Temperatures found in most homes are acceptable, but a warm location will greatly improve the lasting quality. Ideally, 68 to 75 degrees at night are best.

Special notes: In response to the allegation that the poinsettia is a poisonous plant, the Society of American Florists in conjunction with Ohio State University conducted a research project in 1971: the results gave the poinsettia a clean bill of health. There was no evidence that it is poisonous.

To induce flowering: Poinsettias require an eight-week period of 14 hours of darkness per day. They need high light the remaining 10 hours per day. The "shading" and bright periods induce flower buds to form. This may be accomplished in the home by placing the plant in a dark closet at a specific time at night and removing it 14 hours later. This schedule should be started the first few weeks in September for color by Christmas.

With proper care, poinsettias will remain in color long after Christmas. Once the bracts begin to fade, usually in March or April, cut the plants back to 4 or 6 inches above the soil level. Continue to keep them in bright light, then place them outdoors after all danger of frost has passed and night temperatures are above 50 degrees. In mid-July cut off the top 3-4 inches which should produce a shorter, bushier plant. Bring the poinsettia indoors when it's time to put it on its blooming schedule. *Sue*



A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Cylindropuntia leptocaulis is also known as Christmas Cactus, Christmas Cholla, Pencil Cactus, and other names. It is native to Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas in the U.S. and in a number of states of Mexico. It forms 2-5' upright shrubs with slender, cylindrical joints. New growth is dark green, later aging to a scaly, pale tan. Old plants can form almost impenetrable thickets.

The flowers are greenish, yellow or bronze, followed by attractive fruits, red or purple, rounded, edible. The fruits cling to the stems into winter when it lends much-needed color to the desert.

There is a plant of this in the Deutsch Cactus Garden at the Discovery Center in Fresno.

Sue

(Photo credit: [www. Wildflower.org](http://www.Wildflower.org))



CISSUS TUBEROSA

This plant is one of the succulents grapes, popular with fans of caudiciforms. There are over 300 species of Cissus, most found in Africa, but this plant is native to Mexico.

Cissus tuberosa forms a round succulent caudex with long, fast-growing dediduous stems. It produces fleshy grapgreen joints which, in turn, form aerial roots. These roots can plant themselves in their pot-or in neighboring pots. The joints can also be detached and rooted separately.

Photo Credit: Wikipedia

The vine features digitate (finger-like) leaves with 3-5 leaflets; also produces tendrils which help the plant climb. The caudex may be upright or prostrate.

Culture: it requires warm temperatures, good light and adequate moisture. Keep it drier and cooler in winter to encourage dormancy. *Sue*

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