

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

Vol. 42 No. 2

February 2023

**IN-PERSON MEETING: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2<sup>nd</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)**

## GYMNOCALYCIUMS, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL & URUGUAY

By Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich



Gymnocalycium is one of the most popular of all of the South American genera. Most everybody during the development of their cactus and succulent collections has eventually ended up with a sizable assortment of this wonderful genus. The genus is named for its naked, spineless floral calyx, thus; Gymno (naked) calycium (calyx). Their large flowers are often very beautiful in form and color, ranging from white to yellow to red and pink. When the flowers are fertilized, the naked calyx normally develops into a large colorful fruit which becomes very attractive to the various little creatures (mice, birds, lizards, etc.) who love to eat these succulent morsels. These little creatures also play a big part in the seed dispersal for many of the Gymno species.

Most of the species are not really large and thus they make perfect pot culture specimens. Their colors, shapes and unique spine arrangements often make them outstanding geometric treasures. Because many of the species live in harsh conditions, they have often evolved as geophytes, with colors that match their soils and surroundings. Generally, their shapes are globose to sub-globose and flat to depressed, thus allowing them to survive in regularly arid and usually bright environments. When it comes to spines, many of the Gymnos are very heavily armed to thus protect them from numerous herbivores. Some of the flat, tap rooted species, have the most attractive pectinate spine arrangements, often looking like spiders or fingers clinging to their bodies. Probably the most desired aspect of the Gymnos is that they almost all make ideal and easy plants for cultivation. For the serious collector, who often wants every species of a particular genus, Gymnos are textbook. A complete assortment, of all of the Gymno species and forms, can be grown in a relatively small greenhouse or in an appropriately sized outdoor setting.

All of the Gymnocalyciums come from South America. Although, the great majority of the species are found in central to northern Argentina. In the surrounding countries of Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, one can find many of the more subtropical species. These species generally like a higher degree of humidity and slightly lower day time temperatures. Over the years, many serious field explorers, each with their own perspectives, have roamed all of these adjacent



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countries. Thus, the taxonomy is slightly confused, and often many synonyms for the same species are offered in the trade. A few of the numerous pioneers who have searched for and discovered many of the taxa include; Frederick Ritter, Leopold Horst, Roberto Kiesling, Ferrari, Backeberg, and Schuetz.



If you like the *Gymnocalycium*s, hopefully this presentation will give you a good feel for how and where they grow, as well as, much of the variation within the genus.

### **Brief Biography of Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich 2021**



Woody, as he is commonly known, grew up in the Mojave Desert and has had an attraction to desert plants and animals since the early 1950's. He has been involved with the cactus and succulent world for over 52 years, as a grower, field explorer, club and organization leader, writer, photographer, lecturer and presenter.

Having been a speaker all over the world, Woody is most often associated with giving presentations on his field work from the places he has traveled, such as: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, Socotra, South Africa, the United States and Yemen. To date, this makes 128 major trips. He is also recognized for having operated the nursery Cactus Data Plants since 1975. Woody's show quality plants were often considered one of the standards for staging and horticultural achievement. His favorite genera include: *Adenium*, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Copiapoa*, *Cyphostemma*, *Fouquieria*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Lithops*, *Mammillaria*, *Melocactus*, *Pachypodium*, *Turbinicarpus*, *Uebelmannia*, and *Pachycauls* in general.

He has published numerous articles and reviews in various journals (CSSA) and his photography is featured in many books including; "The Copiapoa" by Schulz, "The Mammillaria Handbook" by Pilbeam, "The Cactus Lexicon" By Hunt and Charles, as well as many others. As of November 2017, he is featured as the primary photographer in the sold out book "The Xerophile." This book specializes in what the authors call, The Obsessed Field workers from around the world. He is also featured in electronic articles about conservation from "MNN Mother Nature Network" and "The Guardian Newspaper."

Woody and his wife, Kathy, live in Cedar Grove, New Mexico. He is a retired secondary school teacher of 32 years where he taught Graphics, Art and Architecture. In the cactus and succulent hobby, Woody is recognized for his high energy and creative spirit. As an educator, he has become an important part of the hobby and thus is an honorary life member of thirteen C&S societies across the country. He has been president, show and sale chair, newsletter editor, program chair, and plant of the month coordinator. Woody has also served on the CSSA board and numerous societies in many other leadership positions. He is a co-creator, and currently the president, of the Santa Fe Cactus and Succulent Club. With 52 years in the hobby and 64 years in the field (old fart), he has many experiences to share and thousands of photos to show.

**FROM THE PREZ:****Hi Members,**

We might be a little waterlogged, but we sure needed that rain! What a crazy amount of rain for us so far this winter. I hope you haven't lost too many plants because of the weather. Usually, plants can survive a lot of water if the drainage is good but with storms one right after the other, it can be hard on them. Having these sunny days has been a nice reprieve and our plants sure do appreciate it. Unless a plant is completely mush, leave it alone as you never know if it will grow back in the spring.

**Fresno Home & Garden Show**

March 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, is the Fresno Home & Garden Show at the Fresno Fairgrounds. Every year we participate in this fun event, where our local vendors sell their plants and pottery. We also get the word out about our club, letting the public know about our meetings and amazing speakers. It's a great chance to start off the spring season with some new plants.

We do need volunteers to help work at this event. We get a lot of people purchasing items at this event and need help in packaging plants, registers, and talking to the public. For volunteering you get into the Home Show for free and get free parking. Before or after your shift you can walk around and enjoy the whole event. We will also be giving out Club Bucks to volunteers, these are coupons worth money that you can apply to a purchase. Please think about volunteering some of your time, it's simple and fun, and we could use the help.

**Membership Renewals**

There is still plenty of time to renew your membership for 2023. **Christeen Abbott-Hearn is our new Membership Chair** and membership forms can be sent to her at: 1890 Nelson Way, Kingsburg, CA 93631. You will find a membership form with the new address attached to this newsletter.

**February Meeting: No Hybrid ZOOM Meeting**

I will not be at our February meeting; I have some job training I will be away for. Due to my absence, there won't be a Zoom online portion to the meeting. If you would like to see Woody's presentation you will need to come to the meeting in-person.

Hope everyone can make it to the meeting to see Woody's presentation. He always shows us amazing photographs of his trips around the world, and he will be bringing plants for sale. I won't see everyone till March but have a great meeting. The Board will do an excellent job running the meeting.

*Thank you, Robert*

**Club Access: President**, Robert Scott, (559) 960-3665, [rob\\_scott85@yahoo.com](mailto:rob_scott85@yahoo.com); **Vice-President**, Rosanna Rojas, [rfrojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfrojas96@gmail.com); **Treasurer**, Michele Roberts, (559) 645-5257, [robertshowse@comcast.net](mailto:robertshowse@comcast.net); **Secretary**, Karen Willoughby, [pkatwillabee@gmail.com](mailto:pkatwillabee@gmail.com); **Editor/Sunshine**, Sue Haffner, (559) 292-5624, [sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu); **Publisher**, Mary Ann Villegas, [maryann@maracast.com](mailto:maryann@maracast.com); **Webmaster**, Vickie Veen, [vickieveen@gmail.com](mailto:vickieveen@gmail.com); **Refreshments**, Nancy Jobin.

## February Birthdays



**Brenda Anderson (1<sup>st</sup>); Mary Drumheller (8<sup>th</sup>)  
Lola Sutherland (16<sup>th</sup>); Alice Rodriguez (25<sup>th</sup>)  
Peter Beiersdorfer (25<sup>th</sup>); Edie Chaney (29<sup>th</sup>)**

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**The next CSSA Saturday webinar will be February, 4<sup>th</sup>:** “What Does Paradise Look Like?” It will feature Attila Kapitany presenting a program on the fantastic garden he has created in Australia. Attila Kapitany is one of the most interesting and entertaining presenters in the field of succulents. You will be able to register via the CSSA website: <https://cactusandsucculentsociety.org>

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**A friend alerted me to an article in *The Guardian*** about beobab trees in Kenya being chopped down and exported to the country of Georgia to be re-established. Environmentalists decried this, but the trees, some probably centuries old, were on private property and the owners sold them for much-needed money. The photos of the chopped-up beobabs will make you gasp. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/oct/24/kenya-baobab-trees-uprooting-export-environmental-groups>  
My question is, will these trees actually re-establish?

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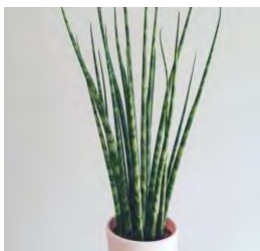
**On one of the sunny days after the rain,** I went out to survey the winter damage so far. I was greeted by a fat, happy glottiphyllum and its cheerful yellow blooms. It is on the ground, nestled between the end of a brick-and-board plant shelf. All the winter growers are putting on a show, yet I know I will have plenty of candidates for the green bin. (Photo from Wikipedia)

In the front flowerbed the *Oxalis gigantea* has its four-foot stems clothed with bright little leaves. The yellow flowers should soon follow. We may have tired of the weeks of rain, but some of our plants loved it.

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**Sansevieria cv ‘Fernwood’** is a hybrid between *S. parva* and *S. suffruticosa*, created by the late Rogers Weld at his Fernwood Nursery in Malibu. Both parents are small growers, so this is a plant that will not get out of control. The narrow leaves, 5 to 10 per growth, are conspicuously marked with dark and light bands. I found a plant a few years ago at Fresno Ag (the label was mis-printed “Frenwood”). This plant is also sold as ‘Mikado.’ (Photo from Plantophiles.com)

Many years ago, some of us took off to visit Fernwood Nursery. We had a hand-drawn map, as I recall. It was quite an adventure navigating the narrow, twisty roads of Malibu, but we eventually found it. The only parking space that day was so slanted that people on the passenger side nearly fell out of the car. My chief recollection of the greenhouse was the sansevierias growing in hanging baskets, something that had never occurred to me before.





## DORIS HOOTON (1932-2022)

We were notified December 31<sup>st</sup> by her granddaughter, Jalien Watson, that Doris had passed away December 17<sup>th</sup>, just a few days after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Since leaving Fresno, Doris had been living with her daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer and John Flores, up in northern California.

Our newer club members probably did not know Doris Hooton and her son, Tom Meyer, but they were both outstanding members who contributed enormously to the club.

Doris and Tom joined FC&SS in 2004. They immediately became active members, helping out with club activities. Doris offered her large backyard for our spring picnic, and we held many picnics and other events there. Her dining room, as well, was the scene of club board meetings and workshop sessions. Tom did a lot of heavy work, hauling club properties in his truck, for which we were very grateful.



Both Doris and Tom were real plant people. Doris grew succulents and other plants both indoors and out. She had a room full of sansvierias in the house. Tom established cactus gardens at various locations on the property. (We also used the cactus-filled front yard as a backdrop for a few TV spots advertising our annual show and sale.)

Originally from southern California, Doris' work with the California Animal Welfare and Health Department brought her to Fresno. She inspected animals over 15 counties—dog kennels, catteries and individuals registered to hold exotic animals. She was amazed at how many people had mountain lions, for instance. She later held a similar position for the federal government.

Doris and Tom's yard and home featured a menagerie of critters: dogs, parrots, guinea pigs and a tortoise. A story illustrates Doris' love of animals. One day, on south Peach Avenue, Doris saw a dog lying by the road. It was a female pit bulldog, so weak, so starved that she couldn't even stand. Doris picked her up and brought her home. She and Tom worked for weeks to bring her back to health and to overcome the fears she had acquired because of the abuse she had suffered. Doris called her Peaches because she found her on Peach Avenue. To see that dog react to Doris, you had to believe that Peaches *just knew* that Doris had saved her life.



After retirement, Doris became involved in the American Cancer Society program of giving patients who had no transportation rides to their treatments. She did this for several years until macular degeneration forced her to quit driving.

Despite her vision problems, Doris continued to care for her plants and animals until March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, when Tom suddenly died. He had been in the hospital awaiting a procedure when this happened. The shock ricocheted throughout the club.

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Doris felt she could continue to live in her home, but the other family members didn't think so and, in the end, they were persuasive. She moved up to the Shasta Lake area with Jennifer and John. Her and Tom's animals were re-homed, all but Basil, Doris' beloved African gray parrot. He went north with Doris. Tom's potted plants were sold at the club sale that year—with Doris receiving the vendor's percentage (even though she intended them as a donation.)



Those of us who knew Doris and Tom have to be content with our memories. Their property no longer looks the way it did when Tom was in charge. The new owners, who lived in the house for a year, moved back out of the area and had most of the specimen cacti and succulents packed up and sent with them. There's only a small desert garden remaining. They sold the house last fall. *Sue*

### THREE SMALL GENERA OF SOUTH AMERICAN CACTI



***Setiechinopsis mirabilis***. This monotypic genus is found in Argentina, growing in unusual saline or brackish areas. Its purple-brown stems rarely exceed 6" in height, but its showy white blossoms tower over it. The blossoms produce large dehiscent fruits and large quantities of seeds. This may be because the plants, themselves, are short-lived (3 to 5 years). (Photo from Etsy)

You can find these for sale now and then, but no nurseryman is going to tell you that it only lives for a few years—but it does produce all those seeds, so you can soon go into production yourself.



***Arthroocereus***. This is a genus of solitary or low shrubby plants with cylindrical stems. The large nocturnal flowers, white to pinkish, have long, funnel-shaped floral tubes. (Photo from Llife.net)

The genus is close to *Echinopsis* but differs in pollen and fruits. Four species are recognized: *glazovii*; *melanurus*; *rondonianus* (pictured); and *spinosissimus*. All are endemic to the Minas Gerais area of Brazil, with the exception of the latter, which is native to the Mato Grosso. They grow in dry savannas and rocky areas, in the shade of shrubs, near streams.

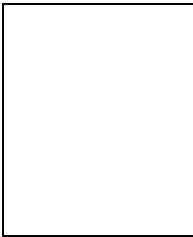


***Oroya***. This genus is named for the area in which it was first found, La Oroya, Peru. The plants are low, subglobose with the apex frequently depressed. They sometimes become elongated with age; they're usually solitary, with tuberous roots. The epidermis is fresh green to olive green; the flowers diurnal, self-sterile, with a short floral tube. The outer petals are yellow to greenish or pink to red with an intense yellow heart. It is pollinated by hummingbirds, bees, butterflies and ants. (Photo from Wikipedia)

Two species are currently recognized: *borchersii* and *peruviana* (pictured). In the past, as many as 20 species have been noted, but this was the result of the variability of the two species in habitat. The plants are found in the high valleys of the Peruvian Andes, in full sun, among rocks and grasses. They are frost tolerant and are often covered in snow in winter. *Sue*

2023

# Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society



Membership Application: New  or Renewal

Annual Membership Renewals Due by January 1<sup>st</sup>

Single Membership with email newsletter \_\_\_ X \$20.00 = \_\_\_

Single Membership with paper newsletter \_\_\_ X \$30.00 = \_\_\_

Family Membership with email newsletter \_\_\_ X \$30.00 = \_\_\_

Family Membership with paper newsletter \_\_\_ X \$40.00 = \_\_\_

New / Replacement Name Badges \$5.00 EA. # of Badges \_\_\_ X \$5 = \_\_\_  
(Make sure name/s are printed legibly below)

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to: Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society (FCSS)

Mail to: FCSS – 1890 Nelson Way, Kingsburg, CA 93631

INFORMATION FOR CLUB USE ONLY: No personal information will be given out to other parties

Please write legibly

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Check if changes

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday(s) Optional – Month & Day \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of a medical emergency at a club function, please list someone we can notify and get personal information from for medical services.

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

VERY IMPORTANT: PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL MEMBERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION ON ALL APPLICATIONS AND RENEWALS. THIS INFORMATION IS USED FOR THE CLUB NEWSLETTER AND FOR THE CLUB WEBSITE. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND LEGIBLY. THANK YOU.

### Please read and complete for the Cactus Corner Newsletter

By signing the form below, you give your permission for the use of photographs in the club newsletter and/or to be used for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, club website and presentations. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.

No Thank You  Yes, I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions noted below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_