

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 42 No. 4

APRIL 2023

IN-PERSON MEETING: THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)
REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH
1084 West Bullard, Fresno (Near NW Corner of Palm and Bullard)

Practical Propagation Revisited: Techniques from Seeds and Cuttings By Ernesto Sandoval

Several years ago, Ernesto gave two separate lectures to the club on plant propagation. He'll be updating us on the techniques they've been using at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory to better propagate plants both from seeds and cuttings.



Ernesto Sandoval has been wondering and seeking questions and answers to why plants grow and look the way that they do for nearly 40 years. Now he explains and interprets the world of plants to a variety of ages and from amateur to professional gardeners. He regularly lectures to a variety of western Garden Clubs throughout the year and particularly to Succulent Clubs throughout California.

Although desert plants are his particular passion within his general passion for plants, he describes himself as a "Jose of All Plants, Master of None" and loves learning from the experiences of others as well as his own. Ernesto thoroughly enjoys helping others and gardeners in particular, to understand why and how plants do what they do.



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 questions by getting a degree at UC Davis in Botany and working from student weeder/waterer to Manager/Curator over the last 30 years at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory.

(Continued on following page.)

He's long left the "mow blow and go" monoculture landscape gardening world and has immersed himself in the world of horticultural biodiversity by growing several thousand types of plants at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory! 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, including hormones, he hopes to help us better understand how to manage our plants and why our plants do what they do to help us maximize their growth with less effort.

Unfortunately, he will not be bringing plants to sell.

Club Dinner for April 6th: DiCicco's
7038 North West Avenue, Fresno
Reservations under Rosanna Rojas or Fresno Cactus Club
5:00 pm

WANTED: JOURNALIST

We are looking for someone who enjoys writing to start our "Get to know you" section for our newsletter. The person would call a member who has agreed to be interviewed and then write a short article. The article would be about their background, how they got into plants, favorite plants and how they grow their plants.

Message Robert if you would like to help.



DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR "DEAD" PLANTS

This is a picture of Rob Scott's *Dudleya cymosa*. Not exactly a beautiful specimen, is it? Last year Rob noticed the plant had become infested with mealybugs and he quickly moved it away from his other plants intending to treat it later. When he got around to it, he sprayed the plant with alcohol, but the heads still died. About a month ago, after the plant had sat out in the rain and cold, Rob noticed that it was leafing out again. So it wasn't dead, after all.

That's a lesson for all of us: don't be too quick to toss what appears to be a dead plant. Years ago, after a hard freeze, I found an aloe that had been reduced to a pile of mush. Well, that's that, I thought. But months later it was sprouting anew from the roots. Some succulents are tough. *Sue*

FROM THE PREZ:**Hi Members,****Fresno Home & Garden Show**

The club participated in the Fresno Home & Garden Show on March 3-5, and we all had a great time. Crowds seemed smaller this year, with the weather playing a big factor. Hard to get into the spring mood when rain is forecasted for every week. Still, it was fun to be back at a Plant Sale and hanging out with other club members. Can't go wrong being around other plant enthusiasts and buying new plants. The vendors did a great job bringing in a variety of plants and the pottery was outstanding. The club brought in a net total of \$12,990.00. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, we couldn't have done this event without you!

F.C.S.S Annual Show & Sale

We have a date, June 10 & 11! We will be back at the Commerce Building at the Fresno Fairgrounds and ready to make an amazing Show & Sale!

Now June isn't that far off, and plans are all ready being made to upgrade and enhance this event. Now's the time for you to prepare as well. First, mark your calendars so you're available that weekend, as you don't want to miss this. Think about volunteering a couple hours, we desperately need people to ring up orders and package plants (it's easy). On Friday's setup, we need people to help setup tables, as the more stronger backs we have, the easier and faster setup happens. Really think about helping out as this is the Club's largest event and we need the people to make it work.

Start thinking about which plants you would like to exhibit at the Show. Start pampering them to get them ready for their big debut. Get them on a watering schedule so they are nice and plump by June. You can start working on getting pots cleaned up or even replaced. Trust me, you don't want to wait till 2 weeks before the event to start getting plants ready. We will also be sending out a detailed guide on what you can do to get your plants show ready. For those of you who haven't shown plants before, it's a lot of fun! You get to show off your hard work for others to see and possibly win ribbons. It's also a great learning experience, as showing is for beginners all the way to experienced members.

Boxes! Boxes! Boxes! Start saving up those boxes as well. We can use as many as possible for packaging and the public to use. To help save on space you can always cut the tape so the boxes lay flat for storage, we can have them taped back up at setup. Box delivery will be on the setup day, Friday June 9.

Members will also be able to shop Friday evening before the public has access. A great perk of being a member! This year we have one requirement for the early member access, each member should bring at least 5 boxes with them when they come. Simple and it does help!

More details about this event will be coming. This is an early notice to get you ready and excited. At the meeting we will have postcards that you can take to start promoting the event to everyone and every place you know. Spreading the word is how we make this event bigger every year.

Raffle

We are changing the way we conduct raffles at the meetings to make the process fair for everyone. Now a raffle ticket will be drawn for each item, and the person who wins gets the said item. No more picking so that the "best" items are taken first, ending up with no one wanting the items at the end of the drawing. Hope everyone is doing well and see you at the next meeting! Ernesto gives amazing presentations that you don't want to miss. **Robert**



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Pat Schreyer (4th)
Robert Scott (11th)
Viv Shinkawa (13th)
Ann Bierbower (13th)
Bruce Hargreaves (18th)
Jan Donovan (18th)
Annie Wolf (18th)

NEW MEMBERS

Ardnia Combes, Coarsegold
 Joyce Nichols, Clovis *Welcome!*
 Claudia Quintero, Fresno



A "Thinking of you" card was sent to Dominic Ortiz. He may be facing surgery for a physical problem. We wish him all the best.

COMING EVENTS

April 22, Fresno Master Gardeners Spring Tour
<https://ucanr.edu>

April 22-23, Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show & Sale
 (See flyer elsewhere in this issue)

April 29-30, San Jose Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show & Sale, Peterson Middle School, 1380 Rosalia Ave, Sunnyvale
<https://csssj.org>

May 5-7, Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale, Shepard Garden and Art Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento
<https://sacramentocss.com/shows.html>

To The Point, the spring newsletter of the Cactus & Succulent Society, has been distributed. It includes ads, articles from affiliate newsletters, a resource guide. CSSA members receive it with their memberships.

A provocative article is "It's OK to kill plants," by Kenton Seth.

<http://cactusandsucculentsociety.org>

TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE CLUB

April 3, 2003: The club met in the Senior Center at Manchester Center. The program was "Pot 'em up!", a workshop/demonstration by members Veone Gale, Edith Puckett and Ed Myhro.

Officers in 2003: Don La Mont, President; Marlene Myatt, Vice President; Charlene Stebles, Treasurer.

The club's spring garden tour was the Saturday following the meeting. Members visited the yards of Joyce Quinn and Pam and Dennis Margosan in Fresno, then drove to Reedley to see Paul and Madeleine Mitchell's garden. Then we trekked down to Kings County to Mark Muradian's cactus ranch. It was a fun day.

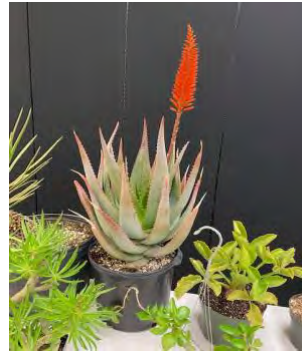
MARCH WORKSHOP: A small group met via Zoom on Wednesday, March 22nd for the first workshop of the year. Subjects discussed included aloë hybrids, help for a drooping zygocactus, mealybugs, and Cactus Juice™.

The workshops are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month; 6 p.m. Put it on your calendar.

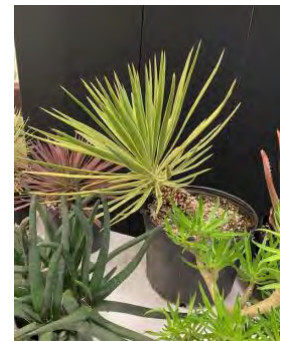
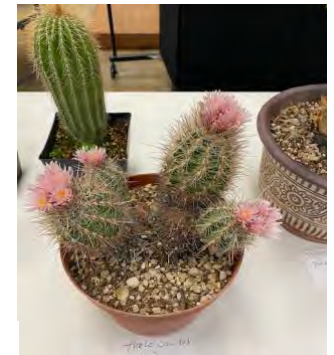
Hardy aloes: for a list of hardy aloes, just Google "Brian Kemble's list of hardy aloes."

MARCH BRAG TABLE: We saw a lot of neat plants on the Brag Table last month. Bringing plants were Bill Gale, Dan Gale, Fred Gaumer, Eddie Etheridge, Mark Muradian, Jack Fleming, Jess Hull, David Madrigal, Nancy Jobin and Jose Soto. We saw various tylecodons (the subject of the speaker's program); aloes; euphorbias; not to mention others. Jack displayed a crested variegated Euphorbia *suzannae* and an ant plant (*Hydnophytum*). Dan showed a collection of yuccas ('Blue Boy', *rostrata*, *striata*, 'Bright Star'). Jess displayed a collection of artistically potted *turbincarpus* species. Thanks very much to all the participants.

Sue



**Photos:
Karen Willoughby**





MYRTILLOCACTUS GEOMETRIZANS

Myrtillocactus geometrizans is a tree-like columnar cactus native to the Chihuahuan Desert of central Mexico south to Oaxaca and Puebla. It inhabits deserts and deciduous tropical woodlands amid mesquite, on chalky soils or rocky hills, sometimes forming large groves.

It was first described in 1837. The generic name is derived from the Greek *myrtillo*, which means small, myrtle-like, referring to the fruits, which resemble those of the true myrtle (*Myrtus communis*). The specific name, *geometrizarans*, means “in a geometrical pattern,” probably describing the spine arrangement on the stems.

Its blue-green stems freely branch from the main trunk about 2-3 feet from the ground; have 5 to 6 ribs and black, dagger-like central spines with 5 to 9 radial spines. An unusual aspect of this plant is that the areoles continue to produce flowers and fruit year after year. The small greenish white flowers appear along the stems in the spring, opening at night, staying open until hit by the full sun, when they close. Some have been observed opening again after sundown. During the day they are pollinated by bees and hummingbirds; at night by hawkmoths. The small, blue fruits are harvested by local people and are reported to taste like kiwifruit.

Old areoles of *Myrtillocactus* are mound-like and after an areole has produced flowers for several seasons it may project several millimeters from the rib edge. In 1932 a variant form was discovered with very prominent, complex floriferous cushions and was initially called *var. grandiareolatus*. It's now considered just a localized form.

Several forms of *M. geometrizans* are popular with hobbyists: a crested form, a miniature crest called ‘Elite’, and several monstrose forms. One is Japanese cultivar ‘Fukurokuryuzinboku’, or the “booby cactus,” which has areoles shaped like sagging breasts. The hybridizer obviously capitalized on the natural tendency of *geomatrizans* to produce prominent areoles. There is also a form called ‘Stacker’ which has strange, knobby growth. Other species in the genus are *M. cochal*, *eichlamii* and *schenkii*. *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* is not difficult to grow, though it is not frost-hardy (ask me how I know). Care should also be taken not to overwater.

Sue

(Illus: www.backyardnature.net)

References: Anderson, E. 2001. The Cactus family.

Gibson, A. 1988. The systematics and evolution of subtribe Stenocereinae: *Myrtillocactus*. *Cactus and Succulent journal (U.S.)*, 60:109-116.

OPUNTIA SEEDS: Despite being considered common plants and easy to grow, opuntias are not as easy from seed as most other cacti. Dave Rose, the “Cactus Cowboy” who grows his plants in Wyoming, offered an online account of his method with opuntia seeds.

“I’ve had great results with opuntia seed. I sow the seed in 3” pots during early to mid-winter. The pots are placed outside, exposed to the weather and subjected to frequent freeze/thaw cycles. If the soil dries out, I’ll add water. In mid to late March, I bring the pots inside the greenhouse and put them in a large, shallow wooden box partially filled with sand. Soil heating cables are buried in the sand and produce steady heat. Sheets of glass cover the box, maintaining a humid atmosphere. Germination rapidly occurs.” **Sue**



THE CHALK PLANTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

The mesembs (the so-called “mimicry plants”) perhaps don’t appeal to all growers. It might be a question of their diminutive size, or the peculiarities of their culture, or their appearance. Who knows? It’s all in the eye of the beholder.

But *Titanopsis* is one genus of mesembs that is especially distinctive and interesting.

The plants form small clumps of closely clustered rosettes with fleshy, sometimes carrot-like roots (becoming tuberous in old plants). Each rosette has 6 to 8 spoon- to club-shaped leaves, each covered with conspicuous warts that can be various shades of white, green, copper, pink or red. These lend the plant an element of camouflage in habitat, as they hide among the rocks. The flowers are usually yellow, though pink or white flower forms are known to occur.

The name comes from Greek *titanos* (chalk) and *opsis* (appearance). Some common names are “chalk plant”, “little tortoise feet”, or “sheep’s tongue.”

The five (or so) species of *Titanopsis* have a disjunct distribution, occurring in three separate areas of southern Africa: southern Namibia, the region around the southeastern border of Namibia and a larger area spanning between the former Cape Province and Orange Free State in South Africa. The unusual distribution means that different *Titanopsis* species live in different rainfall systems—either summer or winter rainfall, depending on the species.

Titanopsis calcarea (pictured) is by far the best known and most likely to be found in garden shops. It was discovered around 1907 by Prof. Marloth and has a wide distribution in the former northern Cape Province. It has quite a range of leaf form, with local populations displaying distinctive variations. *T. hugo-schlechteri* has reddish bumps on the leaves. *T. schwantesii* can form clumps with more than 100 heads. Its leaves are light colored, with pearly warts, even though the plant is found in an area of red sand. The leaves trap wind-blown sand, thereby disguising themselves. *T. fulleri*, which may turn out to be an eastern form of *calcarea*, has narrower and more upright leaves. These two species hybridize quite easily and it’s thought that many plants offered for sale might be of hybrid origin.

Generally, these plants are not difficult to grow. Steven Hammer has these recommendations: good ventilation, shallow pots (or trays), very well-aerated potting mix. He also recommends that growers start their plants over from seed about every five years, as the centers tend to die off and the plants become unsightly. Water lightly in summer, when plants are not in active growth. **Sue**

(Illus: www.worldofsucculents.com)

Reference: Hammer, S. (2013) Mesembs: the Titanopsis group. Oakland : Little Sphaeroid Press.

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MONTEREY BAY AREA CACTUS AND
SUCCULENT SOCIETY PRESENTS

SPRING SHOW AND SALE 2023

FRIDAY, APRIL 21 OPEN 3PM - 6PM
(CLUB MEMBERS ONLY ON FRIDAY)

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 OPEN 9AM - 5PM

SUNDAY, APRIL 23 OPEN 9AM - 3PM

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FREE ADMISSION

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See our website for
more information

mbsucculent.org





FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY 2023 SHOW & SALE

Saturday, June 10th – 10 am to 5 pm
Sunday, June 11th – 10 am to 4pm

Huge variety of cacti, succulents,
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SALE
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