

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

Vol. 42 No. 8

August 2023

**IN-PERSON MEETING: THURSDAY, AUGUST 3<sup>RD</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)**

**ZOOM MEETING: ID: 832 5200 1381**

**Passcode: 108473**



## Plants of the Namib Desert

By Peter Beiersdorfer

Since the early days of Covid, when travel to other countries was impossible, Peter and Jaan have been traveling to Namibia. During these trips they were asked to join the local Lithops Research and Conservation Foundation and have undertaken several conservation projects. Their main project has been to search for the elusive species *Lithops halenbergensis*, which has not been seen in the wild since 1930, and there are no plants in cultivation. *Lithops halenbergensis* was reported to grow near a remote train station in the Namib desert. The Namib desert is one of the driest deserts in the world, and plants are lucky, if they get an inch of rain per year. Nevertheless, by thoroughly searching more than 20 square miles of this extremely arid area surrounding the abandoned train station they encountered the most wonderful succulent plants, which Peter will share in his presentation. These include plants in the genera *Titanopsis*, *Crassula*, *Namibia*, *Ebracteola*, *Euphorbia*, *Conophytum*, and *Tylecodon* among others. They also encountered some rare *Asclepiadaceae*. In June 2023, the desert fortuitously received a significant amount of rain and many *Lithops* burst into bloom -- in the middle of the Namibian winter! Similarly, *Sarcocaulons*, *Perlargoniums*, and *Othonnas* leafed out and set flower buds; all the while, Peter and Jaan had to scrape frost off the windshield of their rental car before driving to their study areas. Peter's talk will take us on a tour of the plants of this desert and update us on the whereabouts of the elusive *Lithops*.

Peter retired from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory almost four years ago, and he spends about 2 to 3 months per year traveling. At his home in Livermore, Peter propagates plants from seeds and cuttings, including mesembs and bulbs from the winter rainfall areas of Southern Africa and many cactus species from South and North America.

**\*\*\* Peter will bring plants for sale. \*\*\***



Dinner for Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at  
Casa Corona on Bullard & West at 4:45pm.  
Please call, email, or text if you are coming.  
Rosanna: (559) 999-0017



**FROM THE PREZ:**

**Hi Members,**

**Fall Cactus & Succulent Sale**

Our Fall Sale this year will be on Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> 10am-2pm at Redeemer Church. In the past, the Sale had always been on our September meeting night and only for 2 hours. We thought this was unfair to the sellers and wanted to give them more time with the possibility of more people attending. Having a Saturday event will hopefully do this. This is a great time for members to sell their extra items and for buyers to find those special gems.

To be a seller you need to be a club member and the fee to participate is \$20 per member (Fee will be collected at the Sale). Each seller will get one table and can fill it as full as they like, even putting items under your table to maximize space. All sales are done through each seller, so sellers please bring your own change or ability to take credit cards. We do advertise this event as cash only to make it easier for all sellers. The club will provide water and bring your own lunch.

If you would like to sell, please email me and I will get you on the list. I will also have the sign-up sheet at the August meeting. Setup starts at 9am on event day.

The club will also have a table at this Sale and is collecting item for donations. If you would like to donate, please bring items to the day of the event.

**With the Sale being September 30<sup>th</sup>, there is no September meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>.**

**August Meeting**

Peter Beiersdorfer and Jaan Lepson are returning to give another wonderful presentation to our club. They are wonderful people with large amounts of knowledge that they love to share. Don't miss out on experiencing this presentation!

This is a quiet time of year for the club after having our huge Show and Sale, but Fall is around the corner with a few events planned. Hope everyone is doing well in this heat. Our plants aren't enjoying these temperatures, but they are made to survive. We don't have it so bad here, unlike Arizona where Saguaros are dying. Sometimes you just have to be appreciative of temperatures in the low 100's.

*Take care,*  
**Robert Scott**



### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Rudy Rulloda (2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Howard McLachlin (10<sup>th</sup>)  
Nicki Bradford (25<sup>th</sup>)  
Ryan Hansen (26<sup>th</sup>)

### NEW MEMBERS:

Paula Singer, Fresno  
Kathleen Revoir, Fresno  
Sue, Newton and Jake Seidel, Fresno  
Susan Casmero, Riverdale

*Welcome*



### BIG EVENT THIS MONTH

Inter-City Show & Sale,  
August 4, 5 and 6

[www.intercityshow.com](http://www.intercityshow.com)  
(Flyer attached on last page.)

**FRESNO FAIR ENTRY DEADLINE:** All entries that must be pre-registered have to be submitted online by September 8<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 p.m.

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**JOSHUA TREE PROTECTION:** California lawmakers just passed the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act, permanently protecting the iconic, imperiled trees. It bans unpermitted tree killing and removal, creates a fund to protect the species, and more.

The Western Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) can be seen in the Mojave Desert, especially in Lost Horse Canyon in the Joshua Tree National Park (Riverside and San Bernardino counties).

Real estate developers have been active recently in some areas of the Desert and there have been instances of unpermitted Joshua Tree destruction.

\*\*\*

**DRINK YOUR DASYLIRION:** We are all familiar with tequila and mezcal, two liquors made from agave plants. Now there is a newer one available, sotol, which is made from *Dasyliirion*. It is supposed to be less smoky than mezcal but more flavorful than tequila.

By Mexican law sotol must be produced in the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila or Durango. The most common *Dasyliirion* species used are *wheeleri*, *cedrosanum* and *leiophyllum*.

Having wrestled with *D. wheeleri* in my yard, I don't envy the "sotoleros" their job, as the plant has razor sharp leaves.

### Adromischus

*By Bruce J. Hargreaves*

I would add Lesotho to the list of countries which have *Adromischus*. I discovered a population in the northwest corner of the country when I taught at the National University there. I reported this in the Journal of the Zimbabwe Aloe Cactus and Succulent Society since I was a member of it at the time.

Unfortunately, I had keyed it out as *Adromischus umbraticola* using Tolken's work. I later found a better key and sent another note correcting the name to *A. trigynous*. This also makes more sense in terms of distribution as it touches the border between South Africa and Lesotho in the map given in the Cactus File Handbook. (*A. umbraticola* is further north and is closer to Botswana, although I never found an *Adromischui* in Botswana.)

\* \* \*

**The July-August issue of *The American Gardener*,** the magazine of the American Horticultural Society, has an article, "Kicking the plastic pot habit," that should be of interest to most gardeners. Plastic pots contribute to the growing stream of plastic that ends up in landfills around the country. Even a lot of the "recyclable" plastic that we place in the recycle bins actually ends up as garbage.

According to the article Home Depot stores take back plastic pots and trays from customers, clean them and send them to a specialized recycling facility. (I would inquire first before I dropped off items, though.)

Growers are encouraged to invest in pots made of biodegradable materials. A few years ago, I bought a biodegradable pot from a vendor at a Clovis botanical Garden event. I believe the nice-looking pots were made from bamboo. The pot was supposed to last for 3 years but I've had it longer than that and it shows no sign of deterioration.

Other materials used for biodegradable pots include wood pulp, paper fibers, coir, rice hulls, even composted cow manure(!)

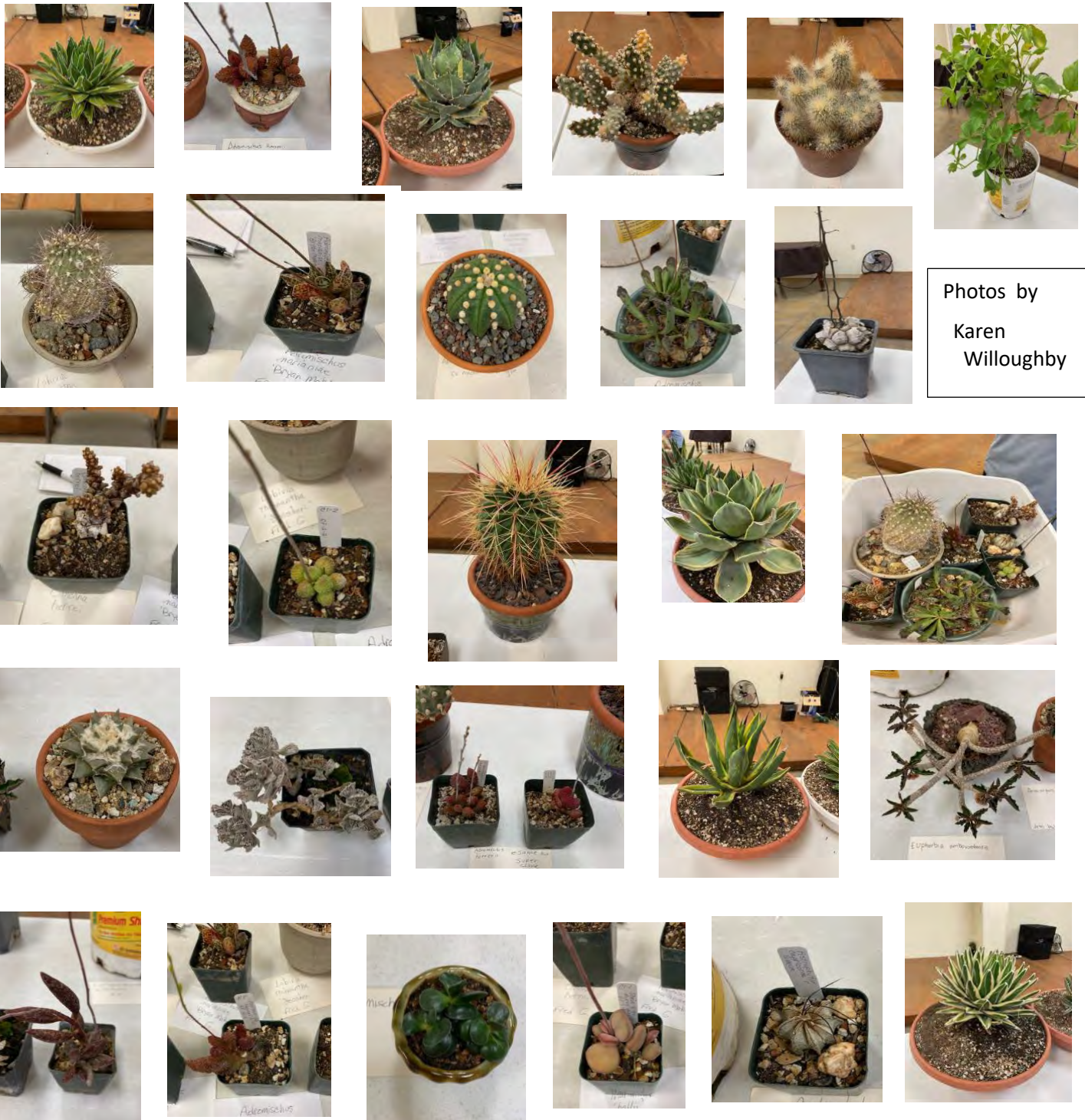
*Sue*

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**CLUB LIBRARY:** The club has a nice selection of books relating to cacti and succulents which can be charged out by members. Speak to Karen Willoughby at the meeting if you would like to browse the collection.

**JULY BRAG TABLE:** We had a number of interesting plants on the Brag Table last month. As our program was on Adromischus, we had a number of those, as well as agaves, astrophytums and an unusual cactus hybrid, Ferobergia x Echinocactus grusonii. Bringing plants were Dan Gale, Bill Gale, Fred Gaumer, Jess Hull, Mark Muradian, David Madrigal and Eddie Etheridge. Many thanks to them and to Fred for presenting the plants.

If you have a plant that looks good--or if it's one you just have a question about--bring it in for everyone to see. **Sue**



Photos by  
Karen  
Willoughby

## A NAME FOR ALL REASONS

*Gymnocalycium pflanzii* ssp *zegarrae*  
Photo: Wikispecies



Identity is as very important factor in our physiological makeup. Being recognized makes that little “me” inside of us feel especially good. Remembering a person’s name has become an invaluable aid in the business world and on a social level.

Plants also have legal names, and these names are an invaluable aid, too, when it comes to discussing these botanical beauties. Frequently, plants, like people, are tagged with a nickname because of their appearance or their place of origin. Although this is sometimes helpful to draw the mental picture, it can be confusing because these common names are not the same in different areas.

Scientific names for plants have been in use since the mid-eighteenth century. Carolus Linnaeus (Karl von Linne), a Swedish naturalist, (known by his Latin name, since his work was done in Latin) devised the classification system for plants based on flower parts. The result of this standardized terminology (binomial = two names) is that minimal space is used to convey the necessary information.

Most plant family names end in *aceae* (*Cactaceae*, for example). A family is then divided into genera (plural of genus). The first name (capitalized) is the genus (*Gymnocalycium*), and the second name (not capitalized unless it is a hybrid) is the species (*pflanzii*). The species may be further divided into subspecies or varieties (*Gymnocalycium pflanzii* ssp *zegarrae*).

Species names are selected for various reasons. They are often named after the place where they are found (*Decarya madagascarensis*). The ending – *ensis* is added to the name of the place. They are also named for men by adding – *ii* to the last name (*Fouquieria purpusii*). If the name ends in a vowel or an r, then only one *i* is added to the name (*Aztekiumritteri*, *Lithops lesliei*). For a woman, – *iae* is added to the name (usually the last name, occasionally the first name = *Mammillaria theresae*). Again, if the name ends in a vowel or an r the *i* is dropped and just the – *ae* is added. If the plant is named in honor of a man or a woman, then – *ianus* is added to the name. Sometimes you will see – *iana* or – *ianum*, as the ending has to agree with the gender of the genus.

Names are also selected because they describe the plant’s growth habit, flower size or color, or body features (*Neoporteria grandiflora* = “large flower”). If a plant is a hybrid (a cross between two different species), the name is capitalized and appears in single quotes (*Echeveria* ‘Blue Curls’). Double quotes signify a common name (*Frithia pulchra* “Purple Baby Toes”). Occasionally two different genera are crossed. This new genus is then identified by placing an X before the new name (*X Graptoveria* = a cross between *Graptopetalum* and *Echeveria*). A name becomes legitimate only after it is validly published. An international code governs botanical nomenclature; it is very formal and systematic. We may sometimes tear our hair out when plant names are changed, but taxonomists are scientists who take their work seriously and do not react out of whim. They have to defend their decisions before panels of other scientists.

Knowing the botanical names of plants is helpful for many reasons, especially when you are looking for that certain plant. Understanding what some of the Latin and Greek terms mean will help you to remember the names of your plants and to tell you something about the plant if you have not seen it (*tomentosa* means “hairy”; *retus* means “blunt”; *stigm-* means “spot”). Become acquainted with your plants because “What’s in a name” can tell you many things.

**Sue** (suggested by an article by Peg Spaete)

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**THE MARIPOSA CACTUS:**

(Illus from Wikipedia)

Here is a case wherein a mistake in nomenclature caused a fairly common plant to be placed on the endangered species list. This golf ball sized cactus was first described in 1945 as *Echinomastus mariposensis* when it was discovered near Mariposa, Texas, an old mining town in the Big Bend region. This was thought its only habitat. Twenty-four years later Lyman Benson, one of America's foremost cactus experts, renamed it *Neolloydia mariposensis*, and it was subsequently placed on the endangered list.

Recent studies by Ted Anderson and others at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix have shown beyond any doubt that this plant is, instead, a sclerocactus. Field surveys show that *Sclerocactus mariposensis* is clearly not threatened with extinction. In fact, it is fairly common in the Chihuahuan Desert region of west Texas and northern Mexico. The researchers have recommended to the Fish and Wildlife Service that it be de-listed, more accurately reflecting its status in the wild).

\* \* \*

**WHY DO SOME PLANTS HAVE SPIRAL LEAVES?** There is a small group of plants native to arid regions of the world which exhibit spiraled leaves. When you see such a characteristic you might ask: Why? What is the evolutionary advantage?

Most of these are small bulbs native to winter rainfall areas growing in windy, exposed areas. Bulbs, unlike trees or shrubs, lack the strong stems to withstand environmental conditions. It's thought that coiling strengthens the stem and also the flower stalk. It also can protect the leaves from scorching sun, while still allowing photosynthesis to take place. This leaf shape can also reduce the loss of water via transpiration. These are just some possible explanations.

Pictured: close-up of the foliage of *Albuca spiralis* (from Wikipedia)



\* \* \*

**SUCCULENT CUCUMBERS**

The cucumber family (*Cucurbitaceae*) is a large one, with species throughout the temperate and tropical regions worldwide. We are all familiar with its common members—cucumber, watermelon, pumpkin and cantaloupe. Many are edible, but some are poisonous.

The cucurbits that succulent growers find interesting are the tropical caudiciforms. Those from the Old World include *Kedrostis*, a genus of about 35 species, with *K. Africana* being the most common. *Gerrardanthus* is similar, as is *Melothria*. *Xerosicyos*, from Madagascar, has quarter-sized green leaves widely spaced on sprawling stems. It is easy to grow if kept well-watered during active growth. Also from Madagascar is *Seyregia* which has bulbous roots and attractive stems—patterned or felted—depending on the species. *Momordica rostrata* forms a pleated, cone-shaped caudex. One of the rarest of succulents is *Dendrosicyos socotrana*, the cucumber tree from the island of Socotra, which can grow to twenty feet.

New World cucurbits include *Ibervillea*, native to Texas, Mexico and Central America. *I. lindheimeri* (pictured) and *I. sonorae* are among the most commonly grown. Other more unusual genera are *Anisosperma*, *Cephalopentandra* and *Ceratosanthes*. Found in California are *Echinocystus macrocarpa*, known as Marah, which forms a huge underground caudex, and *Cucurbita foetidissima*, the Buffalo Gourd.

Generally, the above species produce an annual vine beginning in late spring. Warm weather is necessary to get growth started, and the season is over by late September or October. Many growers have found that these plants do better with free root run in the ground, rather than in pots. Vines can be trained on trellises or allowed to grow up through bushes and small trees. When the vines die back in fall, they can be cut and the caudex dug for dry winter storage, if necessary. (Illus from [www.cactusjungle.com](http://www.cactusjungle.com)).

Sue

# 37<sup>th</sup> Annual **Inter-City** Cactus & Succulent Show and Sale

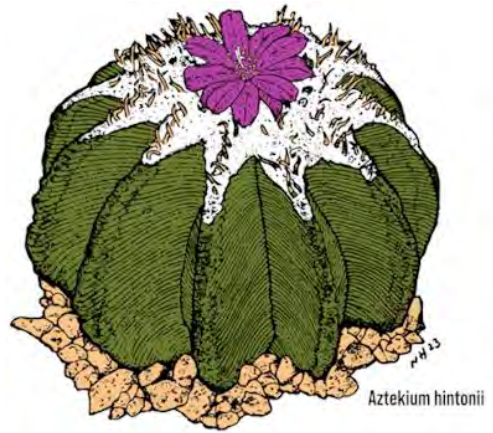
August 4th, 2023 - Sale 8am - 5pm

August 5th & 6th, 2023 - Show & Sale 8am - 5pm

LA Country Arboretum, Arcadia  
Advance Tickets Required

[Show Schedule & Plant Entry Rules](#)

[See our Photo Gallery!](#)



It's time again for our cactus & succulent hobby's largest event of the year. A little competition, a little shopping, and a lot of comradery! Come join your fellow plant enthusiasts in the three-day Inter-City Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale held this year on August 4th, 5th, & 6th, 2023. Our 1500 plant exhibits represent the globe, with significant collections from South Africa, Madagascar, Mexico, South America, and the United States.



Whether you find your plants cute, fascinating, or scientifically interesting, we have friends, plants, and knowledge at every level. It is very satisfying to connect over the thrill of the shopping hunt for a new favorite species or to see your child's eyes light up over their very first favorite plant. We highly encourage first time entrants! You do not have to be a member of any club to enter plants in this jointly-hosted show.

The Long Beach Cactus Club, The Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society, & The San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society hope to see you at this year's show with plants, questions, and smiles!

## 2023 Inter-City Vendors

### Succulent Plants

Botanic Wonders (Al Klein)  
California Cactus Center  
Desert Creations  
Grow Nursery  
John Matthews

Kyle's Plants (Kyle Williams)  
LA Succulents (Kal Kaminer)  
P W Plants (Peter Walkowiak)  
Plantae Novae (Tim Harvey)  
Planta Seca (Bill Munkacsy)

Rain Shadow Designs (Matt Maggio)  
Skyview Succulents (Tom Glavich)  
And so many more!

### Potters

June's Pots (June Wong)  
Peety Pots (Pablo Gonzalez)  
And a couple more!