

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

<http://www.fresnocss.com>

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

Vol. 43 No. 3

March 2024

THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)

REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH

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

Richtersveld Road Trip

Peter Beiersdorfer

In January 2024 we took a break from our usual work on Namibian Lithops and spent a couple of days in South Africa. Hilde and Frikkie Mouton, the owners of the lodge that has become our home away from home in Namibia invited us to join them on a road trip to the Richtersveld. The Richtersveld area is close the Atlantic coast and extends from northern South Africa to the southern tip of Namibia close to the Orange River. Because of occasional summer fog and a little winter rain, the area is a hotbed of succulent plants. Hilde and Frikkie know the area well and could show us the location of many of the endemic plants. Iconic plants of the region are the "halfmens" (*Pachypodium namaquanum*), and many rare *Crassulas*, *Euphorbias*, *Tylecodons*, *Aloes*, and *Mesembs* hail from the region. During our whirlwind tour to South Africa, we took over 10,000 pictures. This presentation covers the most interesting plants of the region, including many that are very rarely seen in collections, such as *Euphorbia multiramosa* and *Euphorbia miscella*, and rarely visited sites, such as the locations of *Lithops meyeri*, *Aloe pearsonii*, and *Fenestraria rhopalophylla*.

In recent years, Peter has spent much time searching for *Lithops* in Namibia. Together with Jaan, Hilde, and Frikkie, he has written several articles on his findings for the CSSA's *Cactus and Succulent Journal*. Check out the article on their rediscovery of *Lithops opalina* in the February 2024 issue! 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. ~



FROM THE PREZ:

Hi Members,

Fresno Home & Garden Show: March 1st - 3rd

This weekend is the annual Fresno Home & Garden Show at the Fresno Fairgrounds. We will be having 9 local vendors participating this year, providing wonderful plants and pottery for sale. The event runs Friday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm each day. The Club booth is in the Garden Pavilion that is just east of the Butler Avenue entrance. We hope all our members can come out to the event to support our club and vendors. This is a great opportunity to start your spring plant shopping!

Volunteers

Anyone who has signed up to volunteer can use their badges to get free parking at the Butler and Chance Avenue parking lot. Then you will take the passage that goes under Butler to get into the Fairgrounds. Your badge will also get you free entrance into the Fairgrounds. We appreciate you taking the time to help the Club!

Boxes

Anyone who has been collecting boxes can drop them off at the Fairgrounds on Thursday, February 29 from 10am to 6pm. You will be able to drive into the Fairgrounds and park next to the building the Club is located in. The entrance to drive in is located just east of the Butler entrance. Our booth is located inside that building on the north wall, can't miss us. Boxes can be piled up on the Club checkout tables. Thank you for collecting boxes and bringing them to the setup!

The Fresno Home & Garden Show is a full weekend of plant sales, with thousands of people coming to our booth. It's a lot of work but also fun. It gives our Vendors a chance to sell and for the Club to raise funds. Thank you to everyone for supporting us.

Committees

We are still in need of some people to take on the following Committees. If you are interested or have questions, please contact me.

Librarian: At each meeting the Librarian would set up the library and help members check out books. The library is a small collection of popular books in a rolling case that is kept at the meeting location.

Annual Show CoChair: We are looking for a person who would like to help Karen, our current Show Chair, with the plant show that takes place at our Annual Sale in June each year. She would like to find a Co-Chair that will help and learn how to run the plant show.

Hope you can make it to the next meeting, March 7th where Peter Beiersdorfer and Jaan Lepson will be joining us to give an excellent presentation.

Thank you,

Robert

MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Michele Roberts (3rd)
Claudia Carlson (22nd)
Veone Gale (22nd)
Roel Luga (23rd)
Daniel Antonio-Casillas (26th)
Skye Adams (31st)

RECENT NEW MEMBERS

Janie Fabela
 Patty Riley
 Ed and Tina Rodriguez
 Jake, Newton and Sue Seiden

The latest issue of **Cactus and Succulent Journal** will soon reach members of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Our members Peter Beiersdorfer and Jaan Lepson have an article included, "Rediscovery of the type locality of *Lithops opalina* and taxonomic implications." Congratulations!

The issue also contains two articles on *Dudleya* and one on *euphorbia latex* danger.

For CSSA membership:

<https://shop.cactusandsucculentsociety.org>

Aloes in Wonderland is an amazing garden and nursery in the Santa Barbara hills created by plantsman Jeff Chemnick. It's well worth a visit. Jeff also has a number of YouTube videos showing off the garden and individual plants it contains.

When you look at the vast extent of the garden it's hard to believe that the property was ravaged in 2008 by the Tea Fire. Jeff and his wife lost their home and outbuildings, not to mention many, many plants. When I visited with the 2015 CSSA Convention you couldn't tell that such a calamity had occurred. Jeff had restored the gardens around the house and was busily expanding more down the steep hillside.

His website opens with a drone view of the garden that never ceases to amaze: www.aloesinwonderland.com

THE TAXONOMISTS ARE COMING FOR AGAVE

The genus *Agave* has been overdue for revision for some time and one of the first treatments has just been published. Four botanists from Mexico and Venezuela have described several new genera including one that encompasses plants that we know and love.

Meet *Echinoagave*:



(Photo from www.gardenia.net)

This is *Echinoagave* (formerly *Agave*) *striata*. This new genus separates the so-called needle-leaved agaves into a discrete category based on DNA studies as well as leaf and flower structure. It includes 12 species, including *striata*, *striata*, *tenuifolia* and *albipilosa*. These plants have very narrow, stiff leaves that end in a sharp terminal spine.

Echinoagave striata bloomed in my yard last summer. Instead of dying, which is usually the case with agaves, it is putting out offsets in the leaf axils. It will be interesting to see just how it will develop from here on.

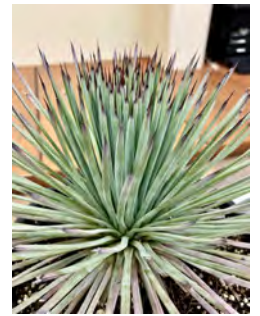
Gerhard Bock, editor and webmaster for the Sacramento Cactus and Succulent Society, has an interesting blog, <https://www.succulentsandmore.com/> It features his excellent photography. Give it a look.



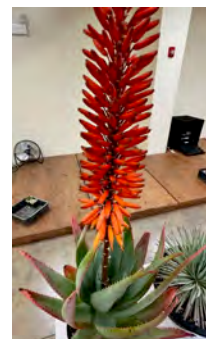
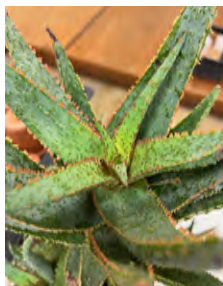
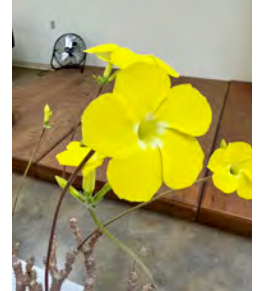
FEBRUARY BRAG TABLE:

We were treated to some beautiful plants last month on the Brag Table. Mark Muradian, Ann Bierbower, Eddie Etheridge, Dan Gale, Jack Fleming, and Bill Gale brought items to display. Mark ably filled in for Fred Gaumer, delayed in the foothills by bad weather.

Thanks, Mark. *Sue*



Photos by
Robert Scott



JUDGING

Those who offer up their plants for evaluation in judged shows inevitably come around to the question: “Why did the judges decide the way they did?”

One of the responsibilities of a show judge is to defend his or her decisions, but if these individuals have already departed the show venue, exhibitors sometimes are puzzled as to why they made their choices. As a longtime participant in cactus and succulent shows, I know that there have been a number of occasions in the past where we were all scratching our heads over the judging. As someone who has also helped judge a few shows, I thought I might contribute some thoughts.

The criteria by which plants are judged are not precisely prescribed and there will always be a degree of subjectivity involved. Cactus and succulent judges are experienced growers and recognized authorities. They should be exhibitors themselves. Judges on a panel of three (optimum) or two (which is sometimes the case) can be subject to dynamics that may impact the judging. I know for a fact that a strong personality can persuade other judges on a panel to change their minds. Exhibitors should be aware of this and know that a different group of equally qualified judges (or the same panel on a different day) might come to different conclusions.

Judging takes into account many characteristics of the entry: condition of the plant, size or degree of maturity, difficulty of culture, staging and grooming, and nomenclature. Although “condition” is generally accepted as most important, there is considerable disagreement among judges as to the relative importance of other criteria. Some show rules have “rarity” as an element of the judges’ score sheet, but current practice is to replace that with “difficulty of culture.”

Condition, size, and difficulty of culture are considered in relationship to each other. For example, an old plant with a few blemishes might possibly be rated higher than a virtually flawless seedling, or a small plant that is difficult to grow might be judged better than a larger one that is relatively easy. A grafted plant would doubtless be judged lower than a smaller one of the same species on its own roots.

Staging includes many things that are involved in presenting plants so they look their best: selection of pot and top dressing, position of the plant in the pot, etc. This is a matter of individual taste, but conservative pots and subdued top dressings are generally preferred. Staging and grooming are a real art by which even ordinary plants can sometimes be made to look special.

Nomenclature means accurate identification on the entry card. Leaving your own label in the pot depends upon how the show schedule reads, though experienced exhibitors usually remove them. Where differences of opinion exist between botanists regarding the correct name of a plant, or where revisions are recent and not generally available, nomenclature will not affect judging.

In shows with divisions for advanced growers, entries are judged, usually, against perfection. Novice plants are judged against what is on the show tables. If judges do not feel any entry in a class warrants an award, none may be given.

Entering the annual show is fun. Sometimes you’ll be surprised by the ribbons you find on your plants.

Sue





NEOWERDERMANNIA

In Woody Minich's program last month he showed several habitat views of *Neowerdermannia vorwerkii* and remarked on how rare this plant is in cultivation. I remembered how sought-after this plant was many years ago, when it seemed to be more available than it is now.

Neowerdermannia is a small genus of two species and one subspecies; small, spiny globose plants very similar to *Gymnocalycium*. They are lowgrowing, with a sturdy taproot and numerous spiraling ribs divided into distinct tubercles. Central spines are stiff, hooked or curved, with flexible radial spines. The flowers are diurnal, self-sterile and appear at the top of the young tubercles, white to lilac-purple; pollinated by bees.

The plants are native to the altiplano of the Andes, in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru. They are found in purely mineral, stony or sandy soils, often covered by mosses.

The species are *N. chilensis*, *chilensis* ssp *peruviana* and *vorwerkii* (pictured). The last species is eaten by local people as a potato substitute.

Fred Gaumer got a plant of *vorwerkii* from Woody years ago. He described the small pink flowers as appearing as though they were piped on with the sugary accents that are sometimes applied to chocolate Easter candy. The plant lasted a couple of years. Fred thinks they don't like our summers. Years before that, when he was living in the San Jose area, he had a white-flowering *vorwerkii*. He eventually gave it away, having never been able to find another blooming plant for cross pollination.

The generic name honors German botanist Erich Werdermann (1892-1959). (So why isn't it *Werdermannia*? Well, by the time the identity of these plants was straightened out, there was already a genus of plants named for Werdermann, hence the "Neo" (new) part of the name.)

Sue

(Illus.: www.cactiguide.com)



ECHINOMASTUS JOHNSONII



This is a little cactus native to eastern California (Inyo Co.) through Nevada to Utah and as far south as northeastern Mexico. Discovered in 1870 near St. George, Utah, by Joseph E. Johnson, an amateur botanist of that town, it has had a confusing taxonomic history before the experts decided on *Echinomastus* (though some still argue for *Sclerocactus*.)

It's a small barrel cactus almost completely hidden by interlocking spines; usually solitary, only branching in cases of apical injury. Spine color can vary from yellow, gray, lavender to red. Flowers vary from yellow to pink to magenta.

This is not an easy plant to try to grow in a pot. Drainage would have to be perfect, for one thing. It's probably best enjoyed by seeing it in its habitat. The generic name is from the Greek *echinos* = hedgehog or sea urchin, and *mastos* = beast. I think we can all agree that this plant is a spiny beast. *Sue*

(Photo from Wikimedia)

CLUB DINNERThursday, March 7th - 4:45 pm

Blast & Brew, 799 West Palmdon Drive, Fresno

Call, text or email Rosanna Rojas for Reservations

(559) 999-0017

TREASURER'S REPORT		-----	January, 2024
Income:			
Memberships			435.00
Raffle			57.00
Silent Auction			200.00
	Total		\$ 692.00
Expenses:			
Room rent			-100.00
Monthly Charges (Zoom/Verizon)			-62.82
Newsletter (copies/postage)			-38.53
CGCI Liability insurance			-197.50
CGCI Added Insured			-35.00
Speaker fee			-350.00
Speaker Raffle plants			-100.00
Speaker meal (+ family)			-94.57
	Total		\$ (975.42)

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Below is the remaining updated 2024 C&S & Epiphyllum Calendar of upcoming events.

- OCT. 6** **LONG BEACH CACTUS CLUB ANNUAL AUCTION** 1pm-3:30pm Info. call 714-553-6914
 Women's Club of Bellflower, 9402 Oak St., Bellflower, CA
- OCT. 13** **CONEJO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SALE 9AM-4PM**
 Info. www.conejocss.com or conejocss@hotmail.com
 558 N. Ventu Park Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
- OCT. 26-27** **PALOMAR CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SHOW AND SALE**
 San Diego Botanic Garden admission required
 Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 10am-3pm Info. rwkopfstein@gmail.com
 San Diego Botanic Garden, Conservatory, 230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas, CA
- NOV. 1-3** **HUNTINGTON FALL PLANT SALE - RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FRI./SAT./SUN.**
 10am-5pm Info. Reservations- www.huntington.org, Sale call 626-405-3571
 Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA



FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY PLANT SALE

March 1st-3rd

Daily: 10am-5pm

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for details and tickets

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