



CENTRAL ARIZONA
CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

THE CENTRAL SPINE

EuFORBESia Newsii

With this issue of the Central Spine, I would like to send out another plea for articles. If you need ideas for a topic, we'll be glad to supply them. We also need help typing and putting the newsletter together every other month. Call me if you can volunteer your help one afternoon,

~~on an occasional basis.~~

WANT LIST

Christina Dezelsky - wants any unusual lithops

Em LaTempa - is looking for unusual varieties of Sanseveria

Sylvia Forbes - different species of Echeveria

Warner Dodd - ideas for what plants to buy for the meetings

Silent Auction

Something new is on the agenda for our June meeting. Instead of our regular plant sale, we will have a silent auction of plants. We are asking everyone to donate at least one plant to the auction. The plant or plants you bring can be of any type--houseplants, landscape plants, or, of course, cacti or succulents. If you decide to bring cuttings or offshoots, please get them rooting now, so that all plants will be rooted by the latter part of June. All proceeds of the silent auction will go to CACSS, instead of the usual split between CACSS and the donor.

The way the silent auction works is as follows: All plants will be set up on the table with a piece of paper under each pot. All plants will begin with a minimum price which will be set by the donor (the minimum will depend on the size of and demand for the plant). When the bidding starts, an alarm clock will be set for an unknown length of time. Everyone is free to bid on any plant simply by writing on the paper, under the previous bid, how much he or she is willing to pay for the plant. The bidding continues in such a fashion until the alarm clock goes off. Then the bidding stops, and the last bid on each plant is the selling price of the plant.

Anyone wishing to donate more than one plant is encouraged to do so. The more plants and the greater the variety will determine the success of the silent auction.

Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society

The March meeting of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society was held March 25th at Picacho Peak State Park. We met at 11 a. m. at the picnic tables. As we started on our walk, John Graham explained the geologic history of the Picacho Peak area. Kent then led us on a walk up the hillside, which was thick with poppies (*Eschscholtzia*) and lupine (*Lupinus*). Other flowers spotted along the way were desert chicory (*Rafinesquia*), pin-cushion flower (*Chaenactis*), scorpionweed (*Phacelia*), gilia, bladder-pod (*Lesquerella*), popcorn flower (*Cryptantha*), twist flower (*Streptanthus*), and fiddle-neck (*Amsinckia*).

After lunch we had a brief meeting (there was no board meeting). There were 18 members present, including our newest member, Colleen Davis, who "found" us halfway up the hillside. Guests were Bob Moulis, Jr., Hayes Caldwell, Joel and Chris Thies, and our very own Genevieve Oppen, who was here for a visit from California!

Frank Hennessey reviewed the program scheduled for our April meeting, which will be a slide program on the Chihuahuan Desert. Kent mentioned the upcoming 50th anniversary meeting of the CSSA to be held in Pasadena, California May 20-25. Many interesting programs are on the CSSA agenda. Also scheduled is a trip to Lotusland, a garden located in Santa Barbara that is rarely open to the public. The registration fee is \$65. Rooms at the Huntington Sheraton are \$28-33. A brochure is available from Bob Moulis or Sylvia Forbes, if you are interested in going.

Kent mentioned to the group that he is currently preparing a natural history course on the Sonoran Desert which will be given June 7-8 at the Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson. The fee for the course is \$20 and you must be a member of the SDM to take the course. For further information, check with Kent.

The door prizes were won by Bob Pribbenow and Emmy La Tempa. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully, submitted,

Emmy La Tempa, Secretary

March 25, 1979

General Meeting

The Cactophile File
by
Calliandra

Central Spine
probably the
April issue

This month, my visit to a cactus nursery took me to Evans Cactus Gardens, the oldest cactus nursery in the Valley. Evans, located at 5221 E. Van Buren in Phoenix, is difficult to find the first time. There is a sign on the south side of Van Buren at the driveway, indicating where to turn. The actual nursery is set back off the road, approximately equidistant between Van Buren and Washington Streets.

The owner of Evans Cactus Gardens is Whit Evans. His nursery has been at that location since the early 1930s. Many members of this society have known and bought plants from Whit Evans for many years. For those of you who are newer members, it is definitely worthwhile to make his acquaintance. He is truly a pioneer in his own right. He has been collecting plants from Mexico for over 40 years. Needless to say, over the years he obtained many beautiful plants, many of which comprise his own personal collection and his propagating stock. Some of these include Cephalocereus senilis (over 20 years old), Mammillaria geminispina, plus many Ariocarpus, Astrophytum and Obregonias, to mention a few.

Mr. Evans has a number of agaves, including A. victoria regina, ferdinand regis, parviflora and attenuata. Among the A. victoria regina and the A. ferdinand regis, there were quite visible differences. Evans speculated that some natural hybridizing had occurred between these two species in the field.

The Echinocereus pectinatus were very nice specimens. These are Mexican rainbows that come from the San Luis Potosi area. They are very hardy in this climate; the Arizona variety grows in a higher altitude than ours, and consequently does not do particularly well here.

One plant that was new to me was a type of tradescantis, a succulent that resembles a aloe but is more closely related to a wandering jew. It was collected near Nueva Leon. Its habit is to die back in the winter, then grow again from the base.

Another good looking plant was the Frank Marks hybrid #2, a cross between two trichocereus done by Frank Marks. It is bright green in color and reaches a maximum height of about 5 feet.

I spent about 3 hours at Evans Cactus Gardens with Whit Evans and still didn't see all the plants. We spent much time talking about his numerous collecting trips to Mexico. I learned quite a lot for one afternoon, and enjoyed myself to boot. I strongly encourage any of you who haven't been to Evans Cactus Gardens, to go. You'll get the history of every plant you buy and have an enjoyable visit with Whit Evans.

OUR LATEST POTTING MIX
by
Frank and Phil Hennessey

There are as many potting mixes as there are serious cactus and succulent growers. Over the past 15 years, we have tried many different ones. We finally arrived at our present one about 1½ years ago. The plants that have been potted into this mixture show excellent growth and bloom. Some have grown so fast that they have again needed repotting; their network of roots is amazing.

Since we don't have a large container in which to make the mixture, we make it in small batches, which allows it to be well mixed by hand. The mixture is as follows:

- 1½ gallons potting soil (we use Supersoil)
- ¾ gallon horticultural pumice
- 3 tablespoons (level) crushed phosphate rock
- 3 tablespoons (level) bone meal
- 3 tablespoons (heaping) agricultural gypsum
- 1 teaspoon (level) Sequestrene
- 3 tablespoons (level) systemic insecticide granules

You will note that no granite, perlite, sand or vermiculite is used. This is on purpose. If you use sand, examine your soil mixture when you need to repot. You will notice that most of the

sand is at the bottom. Since it is heavier than the soil, it is carried down by watering, thereby defeating the purpose for which it was intended. Vermiculite and perlite float upward in the mix. Vermiculite holds large quantities of water, souring the soil. The pumice stays in place. It doesn't hold water. It is neither acid or alkaline. It would take centuries to completely break down and then it is slightly acid. The crushed phosphate rock (available in nurseries as superphosphate) dissolves very slowly, and is available to the plant as a fertilizer, assisting in blooming. The bone meal breaks down slowly and is available to the plant as calcium and phosphorus. The gypsum also breaks down to give the plant calcium. This is beneficial to those plants which desire calcareous soils, especially those with white spines. The Sequestrene provides iron which aids in keeping the plant green. The systemic insecticide granules are a recent addition to our soil mixture. We have been plagued with crickets and grasshoppers, as well as earwigs. They have chewed some of our best plants. They seem to be especially fond of rebutias and sulcorebutias. So, we are trying the systemic method of trying to defeat them.

If this mixture has any fault, it is that drainage is too good. The soil does dry our faster, especially in clay pots, which we prefer.

We are not saying that our mixture is the best, or that you should change to it. We are saying that the mixture works best for us. How about other members giving our their "secret formula"?

LOVE THAT CACTUS

by

A. Glochid

It's cactus padding time in Arizona.

Yes, it's padding time in good old cactus land.
The cacti keep on padding, and the pads they keep on adding.
Why they do this, I just cannot understand.

They say those pads are mighty good for eating,
So I took one that looked like it was loose.
Now my hand is full of prickles, and they itches and they tickles.
From now on I will stick to cactus juice.

They say those pads can turn to pretty flowers,
And when they start to bloom are quite a sight.
Well, I've looked at them for hours and have never seen their flowers;
They do their blooming in the middle of the night.

It's cactus padding time in Arizona,
And they threaten now to cover up the state.
So, up north I will go and live amidst the snow,
And leave the Arizonans to their fate.

A CHECKLIST OF SOME OF THE PLANTS OF
THE CHIHUAHUAN DESERT

Astrophytum myriostigma

Astrophytum capricorne

Mammillaria uncinata

Mammillaria candida

Mammillaria pottsii

Mammillaria formosa

Mammillaria melanocentra

Mammillaria grusonii

Epithelantha micromeris

chinomastus unguispinus

Thelocactus bicolor

Thelocactus buekii

Coryphantha chaffeyi

Coryphantha echinus

Coryphantha dasyacantha

Coryphantha palmeri

Coryphantha noselgeriana

Euphorbia antisiphilitica

Acave scabra

Peniocereus greggii

Opuntia bradtiana

Opuntia lentocaulis

Echinocereus cinerascens

Ferocactus echidne

UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/19	2 p.m.	Desert Botanical Garden's annual membership meeting.
5/20 to 5/25		50th Anniversary Meeting of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Pasadena, California.
5/27	2 p.m.	May meeting - CACSS.
6/7 to 6/8		Course on the natural history of the Sonoran Desert to be held at the Sonora Desert Museum (Tucson). Instructor - Kent Newland.
6/24	2 p.m.	June meeting - CACSS. Silent auction.