

The

Central

Spine

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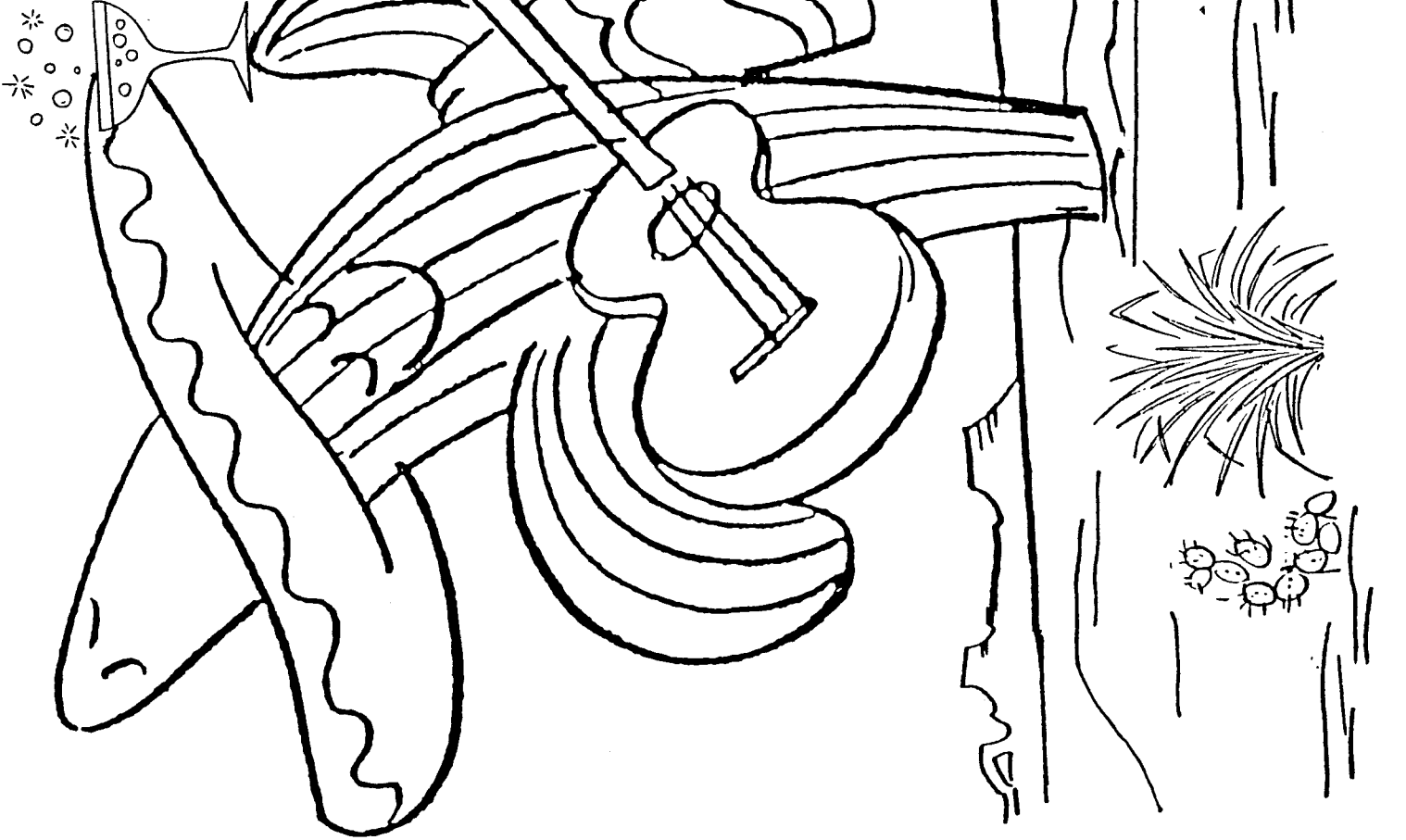
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A TOAST TO FIFTY YEARS OF THE DBG.
IN RESEARCH, SERVICE, EDUCATION, CONSERVATION.

WE ARE PLEASED TO BE PART OF YOUR
CELEBRATION AND LOOK FORWARD WITH
YOU TO THE FUTURE.

CENTRAL ARIZONA
CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY



HOW IT ALL BEGAN by Frank Hennessey

Since April is the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society perhaps a few words on how it all came about would be in order.

Early in April of 1973, at a meeting of the CACTOMANIACS at the Desert Botanical Garden, Henry Triesler and Bob Moulis discussed the possibility of forming a chapter of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America in Phoenix. They discussed the subject with W. Hubert Earle, the director of the Desert Botanical Garden, since they did not want to infringe on the "Cactomaniacs" a social society which was an auxiliary of the Garden, acting as a volunteer group which assisted the Garden in putting on functions.

Mr. Earle, who was a Fellow of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, had wondered why such a group had not been formed before since he was sure there were enough cactophiles in the area to support such a chapter.

An organizational notice was sent to all interested persons that were known at the time. An exploratory meeting was held at the home of Henry Triesler, 324 East Sheridan in Phoenix, on April 13, 1973.

Attending were Henry, Bob Moulis, Lew and Barcia Bremer, Lee Tollison, Warner Dodd, Frank and Phil Hennessey, Martha Chester and Genevieve Oppen.

It was decided that there was enough interest to form a chapter, and the next meeting was scheduled for May 27, 1973, at the Moulis home, 13431 North 33rd Place in Phoenix.

In the interim, since Bob and Henry were going to the convention at Las Vegas, they would be our representative to find out how to start the chapter and to become affiliated with the C.S.S.A.

Additional prospects were Elaine Moulis, W. H. Earle, and Kent Newland of the Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Henry Triesler was elected temporary chairman, and the by-laws were drafted and approved. The name the CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY was adopted. The fiscal year was to be from July first to June thirtieth. A copy of the by-laws was sent to the C.S.S.A. for approval. Dues were set at \$10.00 with \$1.00 for spouse. Included was a subscription of the CACTUS AND SUCCULENT JOURNAL

Officers were elected as follows:

President	Henry Triesler
Vice President	Robert Moulis
Secretary	Frank Hennessey
Treasurer	Lewis Bremer III
Affiliate Representative	Warner Dodd

Henry Triesler and Lew Bremer gave a report of the Las Vegas Convention. Phil Hennessey displayed the first "show and tell" a Rebutia krainziana in full bloom. We then toured the amazingly beautiful garden at the Moulis home.

The third meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Chester, 5437 East Yale, Phoenix, on June 24th. New members at the meeting were William Chester, Mrs. Doris Boyce, Mrs. Lee Tolleson (Fran), Rod McGill, Margaret Caldwell and Sharon Fairchild.

Our by-laws were accepted by the C.S.S.A. as well as our own society. It was decided that July 1, 1973 was to be the cut-off date for charter membership.

Other members added by July 1st were Belle Cooper, Beverly Dodd, Lucille Earle, J. Whitran Evans, Chester Oppen, John and Nevelyn Hopkins, totalling 26 members for the official opening of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society.

The meeting of July 29th was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Tolleson, with Bob and Clara Bribbenow as new members. It was agreed that we would meet on the last Sunday of each month.

The August meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lew Bremer in Sun City with Stanley Jones of Cave Creek and Lowell Bokken of Tempe being added to the roster. Lew Bremer gave a talk of caryophantas and his research on this genus. He has described a number of plants of this genus in the Cactus and Succulent Journal as SPECIES NOVA.

The September meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Warner Dodd, when we were invited to put on an exhibit at the State Fair. We accepted. Warner Dodd headed a committee consisting of Genevieve Oppen, Martha Chester, Nevelyn Hopkins and Margaret Caldwell and our first show as a society was very well accepted by the public.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum invited the group for the October meeting.

The November meeting was held at the Desert Botanical Garden where we toured all of the new facilities, and saw slides presented by Witt Evans. The December meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Earle on the 30th of the month.

We continued to meet at the homes of members until August 1974 when the Desert Botanical Garden became our official home. All of the first slate of officers were re-elected. In October our second printed membership roster showed 51 members and we were off and running.

In November Kent Newland showed an advertisement for a "Cactus Smasher" which was to be attached to the bumper of off-road vehicles. We passed a resolution banning such an item and sent copies of the resolution to 25 people in politics, to organizations, and to the manufacturer of the item, as well as the magazine carrying the ad. The manufacturer withdrew the "smasher" from the market. We received much publicity and public commendation nation wide for our stand and action in the matter.

The first edition of THE CENTRAL SPINE was published in September 1975. In the intervening 15 years we have been on many field trips, we participated in a show at the Valley Bank Center and at Metro Center.

Last year, our largest undertaking to date, the 1987 C.S.S.A. national convention, by any criteria was a tremendous success.

HOW WELL DO YOUR PLANTS GLOW by JAMES ORAVETZ

One of the most important keys to success in growing Cactus and Succulent plants is your potting soil. We oooh and aaah when looking at obviously well grown, healthy plants. While the top, above ground portion, of the plant wins ribbons, trophies and praise, the most essential and vital part of the plant is rarely seen--THE ROOTS. So lets stop growing the tops of our plants and begin cultivating the roots. A well grown, well cared for root system will reward you with the strong, healthy, award winning plant you have always dreamed of.

What does it take to grow a strong, healthy root system you ask? In addition to good cultural practices, the most important is your potting mix.

What is good potting mix you ask? Ask that question to ten people and you will get ten different answers.

For the best results your potting mix should:

- (a) Drain off excess water quickly
- (b) Retain moisture
- (c) Remain open for air circulation through the root system
- (d) Have enough weight/firmness to support the plant
- (e) Not break down quickly
- (f) Not contain high amounts of peat moss.

Now, let me be the first of ten people to tell you what potting soil mix I use.

First, select the proper measuring device: a one pound or a three pound coffee can works just fine. My secret formula is:

- 3 cans of Kelloggs Potting Soil
- 2 can pumice -- medium size
- 1 can silica sand/turkey grit
- 1 can of washed builders sand

To this basic mix, add one tablespoon of bonemeal or superphosphate

coffee
using the one pound can, or two tablespoons if you use the three pound can.
Moisture the mix with water containing fungicide, your favorite brand. Mix well.

Why this mix you ask? Kelloggs Potting Soil is composed of: composted oak leaf mulch, shredded redwood bark, ground wood products, nitrohumis, sewage sludge, very little peatmoss, fine sand and a touch of dolomite to adjust the PH.

The Kelloggs retains moisture and food. The pumice retains moisture and holds the soil open. The silica sand/turkey grit and builders sand hold the mix open for air circulation and adds weight to the mix to support the plant.

This is a good basic mix. A great many Cactus and Succulent plants can be grown successfully in it. However, there are a few species that require a modified mix. Either a little more or a little less compost in the mix. This mix can be adjusted by using a little more or less Kelloggs Potting Soil for these special plants.

I have used this mix for seedlings, cuttings and established plants.

Success or failure with some plants depends on HOW they are re-potted.
I'll pass on to you my methods of repotting in the next installment of HOW WELL DO YOUR PLANTS GLOW.



CONCLUSIONS AFTER THIRTY YEARS OF EXPERIMENTS by FRANK HENNESSEY

Phil and I have experimented with a number of mixtures. Remember if you get twenty serious growers together you will get twenty mixtures. But the common denominator of them all will be a friable, well drained mixture.

I hope more of our members will experiment with potting mixes and report to us what they think is a good one.

Don't repot all your plants with a new mix. Do a portion and mark the pots with the new mix. Observe the plants. Compare results with the old mix to see which grows at the faster rate. Unpot a few after six months to see if the roots

are stronger. Don't accept any new mix just because someone thinks it is better.

The basic part of our mixture is Unigro Cactus Mix. It is available at Tip Top and Baker's nurseries, and perhaps others in the area. I buy 1-1/2 cubic foot bags (39 dry quarts.) It contains redwood sawdust, ground fir bark, agricultural pumice, washed sand, and peat moss. To this I add 20% by volume of garden soil, and a small amount of powdered gypsum, and a very small amount of Osmacote, a very slow dissolving fertilizer (14-14-14.)

The addition of garden soil can give benefits as well as harmful results.

All garden soils contain some fungi as well as various bacteria. These things are present when plants are put directly in the ground. Since we have 800 to 900 plants in the ground without any more trouble than potted plants, I am willing to take a chance on the possible benefits derived. Also there are many dissolved minerals in the garden soil that are beneficial to plants. The garden soil is a great aid in the decomposition of the organic parts of the mix.

The gypsum is to prevent acid buildup from the decomposition of the redwood sawdust, fir bark and peat moss, as well as helping white thorned cactus to stay nice and white.

Osmacote replaces the nitrogen used by the bacteria in ~~the~~ decomposition as well as adding phosphates needed by the plant to bloom.

Now for the specifics of my mixture. My measure is a 3 pound coffee can, same as Jim Oravetz. (I am going to miss these cans when they are no longer available.)

- 8 cans of Unigrow Cactus Mix
- 2 cans of garden soil sifted.
- 1 (1 pound) Crisco can of powdered gypsum
- 2 tablespoons of Osmacote.

Mix all ingredients very well so that it is hard to tell one substance

from another, except for the pumice.

When potting the mix should be damp, NOT WET. When you squeeze a handful it should not ball but should feel damp. If you are using clay pots, soak them thoroughly before using. If the potting mix dries out it should be re-wet again.

Cover any left over mix with plastic to slow down the drying process and to prevent your cat, or your neighbor's cat, from getting into it. They consider potting mix to be high class kitty litter.



PH FACTORS

By STEVE STEMPLESKI

Most damage to plants occur when pH values get too high. A plant after spending several years in the same pot has an accumulation of salts on the sides and on the surface of the plant's soil. This crusty looking build up prevents oxygen from reaching the root area of the plant, inhibiting the plant's absorption of water and minerals. The concentration of the alkaline build up also prevents iron from being used by the plant. The iron necessary for chlorophyll formation is bound up or has reacted with this lime-like build up on the soil and never reaches the roots. As you know yellow cactus is not very pretty and this chlorosis will eventually kill the plant.

A slightly acid to neutral range is ideal for most cactus and succulents.

I have been experimenting with an all purpose tomato plant food to counter react our area problems with alkaline build up in my pots.



"Basically my concern is very simple. Whatever problems---we do have problems of all kinds---the economic recession, inflation, racial problems, unemployment, ghettos--- everything becomes totally academic if your home is unliveable. And the Earth is our home. If it becomes unlivable, what in hell do all the other problems mean? They become meaningless by comparison. I don't think anything is more important than the ecological problem."

JACH LEMMON in an interview in CALYPSO LOG, COUSTEAU SOCIETY
DECEMBER 1979.



THE SHADE SCREEN PROJECT

by STEVE STEMPLOSKI



LIVING IN ARIZONA CAN BE A DISADVANTAGE WHEN TRYING TO GROW CACTUS AND SUCCULENTS. IT SEEMS THAT THE MAJORITY OF MY PLANTS WOULD PREFER A COOLER AND LESS INTENSE DEGREE OF SUNLIGHT. ORIGINALLY I INTENDED TO LOAD MY COLLECTION INTO A U-HAUL AND HEAD FOR CALIFORNIA BUT FEARING THAT I WOULD GET STOPPED AT THE BORDER, I DECIDED TO BUILD A FRAMED SHADE SCREEN ON THE SIDE OF MY HOUSE, IN MESA WHERE THE POTTED OVERFLOW FROM MY GREEN HOUSE AND PATIO WOULD RESIDE.

THE WESTERN EXPOSURE MEASURED 11' X 25' AND WAS BETWEEN MY HOUSE AND SIDE WALLS. I THEORIZED THAT MOST OF MY SUCCULENTS AND SOME OF THE CACTUS WOULD DO WELL IN THIS AREA. TO GIVE THE SHADE HOUSE A DIMENSION, I WANTED A ROOF TYPE LOOK WITH A SLIGHT PEAK IN THE MIDDLE. STARTING TO GET QUOTES ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF MATERIAL AND WAYS OF JOINING THE STRUCTURE BECAME EXPENSIVE AND VERY TIME CONSUMING. I WANTED A STRUCTURE THAT WOULD GO UP IN DAY, SEMI PORTABLE, (MEANING THAT I COULD MOVE IT TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION) FAIRLY ATTRACTIVE AND NOT TOO EXPENSIVE. THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION I DECIDED ON A PIPE FRAME STRUCTURE JOINED TOGETHER WITH ANGLED PIPES SPECIALLY MADE FOR THIS PURPOSE. FOR MY SMALL STRUCTURE ELECTRICAL CONDUIT WAS PERFECT. THE ANGLED PIPES WERE READILY AVAILABE FROM TWO SUPPLIERS AT THE LOCAL PARK AND SWAP. BE CAREFULL TO GET THE CORRECT SIZE PIPE AND PROPER ANGLES FIGURED OUT BEFORE MAKING ANY PURCHASES. YOU CAN HAVE AS MANY AS FOUR PIPES GOING INTO ONE OF THESE JOINTS. I USED 1" CONDUIT AS I FELT THE 1/2" WOULD NOT HANDLE THE LOAD AND HIGH WIND WE SOMETIMES GET. THE CONDUIT WAS PUCHASED ON SALE IN 10' LENGTHS. THE SHADE SCREEN WAS PURCHASED IN A 50' FOOT ROLL AND CUT TO SIZE. BE SURE TO GET THREE OR FOUR PRICES ON SEWING AND GROMMETING THE SHADE SCREEN AS PRICES VARIED BY 100%. THE SHADE SCREEN WAS TIED DOWN WITH GROMMETS SPACED ONE FOOT ON THE ENDS AND TWO FEET ON THE SIDES. IN THE COOLER MONTHS I AM PLANNING ON RUNNING TWO 25' FOOTH LENGTHS OF FLAT FIBERGLASS GREEN HOUSE TO SEMI-ENCLOSE THIS AREA. THE COST OF THIS STRUCTURE WAS ABOUT THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS COMPLETE.

