



Central Spine

November 2000 Newsletter of the

Central Arizona

Cactus and Succulent Society

From the Garden

At this writing our treasurer Alan Rinstone remains extremely ill. Our thoughts are with Karin and him. There was a beautiful writeup, with photos, of their cactus and succulent garden in the most recent Phoenix Home and Garden, with a plug for the CACSS at the end.

We welcome our new **Central Spine** editor Jim Davis. December will bring his first issue. We wish outgoing editor Nick Diomede all the best as he returns to school and thank him for so raising the quality of our newsletter.

Sunday, December 10 is the annual Holiday Party and election of officers and Board members for 2001. Note the date, which is NOT the last Sunday of the month. If you would like to serve as an officer or on the Board, please contact Cathy Babcock at 480-921-9396.

A friend of mine teaches science to disadvantaged high school students at Ocotillo Charter School. She has asked me for suggestions for landscaping the gravel expanse in front of the school. The students maintain and clean the school. I would like to have CACSS members give a few daytime classes to her students on biology, desert plants, climate, and landscaping if possible, and assist the students as they design and install their own landscaping. This would be a great way to introduce young people to our hobby. We could also receive lots of publicity in the print and broadcast media; they are always looking for feel-good stories, and we would get out word of our club. Please contact me about this.

Do you or your friends have children or grandchildren? Why not bring them to the meetings? And, now that winter visitors are returning, how about bringing them to the meetings as well? It is a nice Sunday to come to the garden, look around, hear some jazz on the patio while enjoying a snack, and go to the CACSS meeting. I bet your guests would think it swell. The best way to convince people to get involved with our hobby is to show them how passionately we enjoy it.

This month we welcome the return of Woody Minnich from California. He will speak on Cactus Genera of Northeastern Mexico, including Ariocarpus. They have been blooming for a few weeks now, so it is appropriate to feature them as Plant of the Month.

Leo A. Martin

On behalf of the Desert Botanical Garden, I would like to thank all the members of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society for their continuing help at our semiannual Landscape Plant Sale Festivals.

This year's festival was successful despite the rain. We are grateful to those volunteers who take time from their weekends to help the Garden.

Cathy Babcock

From the Internet

One cactus species that really lives up to its nomenclatural appellation is *Micranthocereus densiflorus*, for it does indeed bear an amazing abundance of flowers throughout its lengthy flowering season. My plants start flowering in earnest about this time each year and bear continuing series of dense flower clusters until about June of the following year. The peak of flowering for this species here is usually during the Christmas season, so this is my personal "Christmas cactus"!

The stems of my plants are now beginning to glow with bright orange flower buds and I took a couple of photos this morning that illustrates this.

James Pickering
Tucson, Arizona

Brazilian Cacti in Cultivation
<http://www.brazilcacticult.org/>

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Upcoming Meetings

Sunday December 10, 2000
 Holiday Party
 Election of Officers



Sunday January 21, 2001
 Brian Kemble
 Terrestrial Bromeliads



Sunday February 25, 2001
 Steve Southwell



2001 Annual Show April 4-8
 (Setup 4th, 5th Open to Public 6th-8th)

Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society

2000 Officers

President	Leo Martin	602-852-9714
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Secretary	Dana Hiser	602-368-8606
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 All opinions are those of respective authors. Publication herein does not imply the CACSS nor any CACSS members(s) agree with any statements published.

Plant of the Month: *Ariocarpus*

Leo A. Martin

Named by Scheidweiller in 1838, *Ariocarpus* is a genus of some 8 species from northeastern Mexico. One, *A. fissuratus*, extends into Texas. Dr. Ted Anderson of the Desert Botanical Garden is an expert on this genus and has named several species and subspecies.

At one time or another plants now known as *Lophophora*, *Obregonia*, *Ortegocactus*, *Pelecyphora*, and *Strombocactus* were included here, and botanists are still uncertain of close relationships between *Ariocarpus* and other cacti.

All are extremely succulent with very thick taproots. They tend to occur in microenvironments of only one kind of substrate, exposure, and climate, so are usually thought rare. When the proper conditions occur they are numerous though very hard to see—until one develops the proper search image. Then they may be noticed everywhere.

They bloom in the fall with the onset of cool night temperatures. The diurnal flowers only open fully in full sun. Flower color ranges from white to yellow to pink in various species and individuals of any species may have flowers with petals variously fringed, pointed, rounded, and broad or narrow.

They are not hard to grow if one remembers their habitats. Many grow hidden flat against the rock or covered with gravel on hilltops composed of fractured rock with no shrubs for shade (*A. fissuratus*, *retusus*, *trigonus*); *A. agavoides* grows under trees and shrubs; *A. kotschoubeyanus* grows in the mud bed of a normally dry lake, underwater after rains. Once one is in a region where they occur, if one sees the usual substrate, they will almost always be found.

Excellent drainage is a must. Overwater will kill them. *A. fissuratus* in Big Bend Park may get rain once or twice yearly, if that. Yet, they flourish. I let mine dry completely before watering; the ones from exposed habitats I don't water more than monthly, if that. Mine bloom each year. I use granite grit for soil, zero organic material.

They are not hard from seed, just slow growers. I have flowering now for the first time an *A. furfuracea* which was probably started in 1996.

CACSS BOARD, OCTOBER 29, 2000
DANA HISER, CACSS SECRETARY

TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Rimestone is seriously ill. The checking account contains \$2,562.45 as of 9-23-00. July Brody will fill in as treasurer for November and December.

LIBRARY REPORT

Muriel Beroza's husband has passed away, and any donations should be made directly to the Garden. Muriel will return next month.

CSSA AFFILIATE

Henry Triesler reports that CSSA dues are due and encourages everyone to go to the Convention in Los Angeles in July 2000.

NEWSLETTER

Nick Diomede has resigned due to an extremely busy schedule and a new editor is needed immediately. **[Jim Davis has stepped forward—Leo]**

CLUB GROWTH and MEMBERSHIP

One new member was acquired during the Boyce Thompson plant sale.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Cathy distributed a tentative program schedule for the upcoming months. It was suggested Kathy Rice present a program environmental conservation sometime next summer.

OLD BUSINESS

The four new banners (two each of two designs) announcing monthly meetings and the spring show arrived. They will be placed on the DBG signs on Galvin Parkway. Cathy Babcock and Leo Martin will take one of each banner.

Bob Davis will expand his inquiries for a hotel for the possible Convention 2005 bid. The two hotels involved so far need more facts and figures by July in order to commit to a price.

NEW BUSINESS: None

WINTERING PLANTS IN PHOENIX
BY LEO A. MARTIN

Most of my plants are outside during warm weather under a patio cover made from polycarbonate greenhouse material. Exceptions are winter growers; many of these I put on a north windowsill and forget about until nights cool down.

In November each year I move plants to their winter sites. Most winter growers go outside under the patio cover where they get sun and frost protection. The "summer growers", though, are not a uniform group. Some tolerate much more frost than we ever get in Phoenix and many can't tolerate cool weather at all. Some of the plants will grow and bloom all winter if just a little warmer than normal outside winter weather in Phoenix.

Here is my system for wintering my plants:

The frost-hardy ones get moved to my front yard where they will be outside in full sun all day, fully exposed to the elements. I water and fertilize them regularly through the winter; they are seldom dry more than a week at a time, and grow for me all winter. I have found these plants require cold exposure to flower well. This group includes *Carnegiea*, many *Echinocereus*, *Echinopsis*, *Haageocereus*, *Harrisia*, *Lobivia*, high-altitude *Matucanas* such as *M. aureiflora*, *Morawetzia*, *Neocardenasia*, many *Opuntia* kin, *Oreocereus*, *Oroya*, *Rebutia*, *Sulcorebutia*, and *Trichocereus*. I don't have any frost-hardy succulents.

The tough but not quite frost hardy plants requiring cool winters to flower stay under the glazed patio cover. I remove all shade cloth. The more tender get moved against the house. This group includes (Cacti) *Ariocarpus*, *Borzicactus*, *Cereus*, *Cleistocactus*, *Copiapoa*, *Echinocactus*, *Echinofossulocactus* (AKA *Stenocactus*), some *Echinocereus*, *Ferocactus*, *Frailea*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Mammillaria*, *Monvillea*, *Myrtillocactus*, *Neoraimondia*, *Notocactus*, *Obregonia*, *Parodia*, *Peniocereus*, *Stenocereus*, *Turbincarpus*, *Weingartia*; (Succulents) *Agave*, *Aloe*, *asclepiads*, *cucurbits*, *Haworthia*, *mesembs*. I will water all these if we have a week or two of warm weather; I usually resume regular watering in January if weather permits. Some years, if I've had mealy bug problems, I bring the *ascleps* into an unheated room of my house where I will see them more often to watch for mealy damage. I don't water the *ascleps* in the winter much at all, and only if temperatures are really high.

After I'd been in my house a few years I noticed a south-facing patio with cover was shaded by the eave overhang during the summer, but sunlit in the winter. I have plenty of summer growing space but had no good winter site for warmth lovers, since I rarely heat my house. (Usually just when visitors come over.) I enclosed the patio with standard 8 foot high sliding glass doors and had the area between the tops of the doors and the cover filled with windows. I left the floor 4 inches below the floor level of the house, and left a space about 3/4 inch under one door for water drainage to outside. Now I have a winter greenhouse that gets sun for just over 1/2 the day. I leave the doors from the patio to the house open during the day and close them at night. I put a strong fan in there for air circulation and a small space heater for really cold nights. This greenhouse heats my entire house most of the winter and provides a warm, often humid environment for my warmth-loving plants. In here for the winter go *Adenia*, *Adenium*, *Brachystelma*, terrestrial bromeliads, cacti from Baja, Brazil, and the Caribbean (*Dendrocereus*, *Discocactus*, some *Mammillaria*, *Melocactus*, *Pachycereus*, *Pilosocereus*) and some *Cleistocactus* for January flowers, *Euphorbia*, *Fockea*, succulent orchids, *Pachypodium*, *Plumeria*, *Pterodiscus*.

Look around. You can fit lots more plants into your home.

Central Arizona Cactus
and Succulent Society
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**Central Arizona Cactus and
Succulent Society Meets
Sunday November 19, 2000, 2 pm
Webster Auditorium,
Desert Botanical Garden**

This Month's Feature:

***Woody Minnich
Cactus Genera of
Northeastern Mexico
including Ariocarpus***