

CENTRAL SPINE

January, 2002

The Congress of the International Organization for Succulent Studies (IOS, <http://www.ios.org>) will be at the Desert Botanical Garden in April, 2002. There will be an opening reception at 5 P.M. Sunday, April 7, in Webster Auditorium. That Sunday is also the last day of our Show. The DBG has asked CACSS members exhibiting plants in our Show to leave our plants on display until Monday so members of the IOS may view the show. Webster Auditorium is locked nights and it will be locked Monday to protect our plants. We will be able to pick up plants any time Monday until 7 P.M. Special arrangements may also be made to pick up plants Tuesday morning. I would like to ask those of you entering the Show to please help us show the members of the IOS how we can grow succulent plants here. If any of you would be unable to pick up your plants Monday or Tuesday, I will pick them up for you and arrange to get them to you.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Note! This month's meeting is Sunday January 20, at 2 P.M. in Webster Auditorium. This is NOT the last Sunday in January.

The officers and directors elected at the December holiday party, and their terms, are listed below:

Term ending 31 December 2002

- ☉ President Leo Martin
- ☉ Vice President Judy Brody
- ☉ Secretary Sue Daley
- ☉ Treasurer Pam Bass

Directors

Term ending 31 December 2002

- ☉ Jerry Chapman
- ☉ Doug Dawson
- ☉ Scott McMahon

Term ending 31 December 2003

- ☉ Carol Clapp
- ☉ Ray Daley
- ☉ Richard Maxwell
- ☉ Jeff Stinebiser

We all thank Jo Davis for excellent coordination of the Holiday Party potluck. Every year gets better. I especially liked having more free time for socializing rather than tackling the food as soon as possible and having the party dissolve into a feeding frenzy of grunting, smacking, slurping, and gulping.



Our Show is coming up. We have been asked to leave our plants in Webster Auditorium until Monday or Tuesday after the show so the botanists of the International Organisation for Succulent Studies (IOS) may view our plants during their welcoming reception Sunday night, April 7. We as a club are helping the DBG in hosting this reception, and all CACSS members are welcome to attend. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet people from around the world who have a deep interest in our favorite plants.



Aloe striata

Let's, as a club, put on a great display for the IOS! Just enter a few of your best plants in our show. Even one plant will help, and five entries are very easy to manage. We have about 130 club members, and normally have 600 to 800 plants in the show belonging to about only 25 of our members. I am certain the five best plants in everybody's collections are very nice plants. It is very easy to prepare plants for the show,

especially if one starts now and only prepares 5 plants. For this special show, look beyond the competition to giving the IOS something to remember.

Remember, even one entry will help. One plant? One dish garden? You can do it.

We will be having a much larger plant sale this year during our show. The exact locality in the DBG has not been finalized but I think there will be a lot more vendors, and the site will really wow everybody.

Cathy Babcock is soliciting interest for a Spring bus trip to San Diego nurseries. She will contact nurseries. We would stay overnight at a budget motel and total cost would not be too high, probably under \$100 per person for bus plus room.

Contact Cathy or me. We would need about 20 participants to make this work. Which month? Which nurseries? Let us know.

We will plan on having 2 silent auctions this year unless our income from the April plant sale exceeds what we would get from an auction. The Silent Auctions are not just about making money for the club, however. Our newer and beginning members can get wonderful, otherwise-unobtainable plants at these auctions. Your Board will make sure we find a way to preserve this aspect of the Silent Auctions should we decide to go to one a year instead of two.

Leo A. Martin

PLANT GENUS OF THE MONTH—*ALOE*

The genus *Aloe* was described by Linnaeus in 1753. Aloes had been known, though, for millennia; dried sap of some aloes was an important commodity of antiquity used as a purgative and to treat open wounds. The slimy juice of many has been used to soothe burns and abrasions. Searching the Internet for "aloe history", however, yields sales-oriented Web pages of silliness and fiction.

We grow them for their beauty. Leaves are often toothed, spotted, marbled, or all three, in shades of green, bronze, red, brown, and white. Some are diminutive, resembling grass, others trees, but most medium to large, ground-hugging rosettes. All have tubular flowers borne in spikes with mostly yellow to red flowers, pollinated by sunbirds, which in Africa fill the ecological niche occupied here by hummingbirds. Most are quite easy and rewarding to grow; *Aloe vera* has been grown worldwide for centuries and was often one's first succulent. It is one of the easiest to grow under widely varying conditions.



Aloe vera? [pic by Jim A Davis]

Aloes are exclusively Old World plants. Most are found in Africa, with many also in Madagascar and the Arabian Peninsula. Some of these species were no doubt disseminated by humans, as were *Agave* here in North America.

The great majority of *Aloe* grow from summer-rainfall regions. Few, though, experience summer temperatures as hot as ours. These summer growers rest during the hottest part of our year and grow actively in the spring and early fall. In habitat many of these plants occupy niches more moist than their surroundings: crevices in rocks, flats near streams, and areas with substantial fogs or night dews.



A. melanacantha

Aloes from western Africa experience a so-called Mediterranean, winter-rainfall climate. They grow when rains come, and are mostly dormant during the hot, rainless summer. During the summer droughts they usually receive water as dew, so they seldom must tolerate long spells of complete drought. Some of these winter growers are *Aloe arenicola*, growing on the beach; the beautiful tree *A. dichotoma*, which may get summer rain as well; *A. falcata*, *A. framesii*, *A. gariensis*, *A. melanacantha*, *A. pearsonii*, *A. pillansii*, *A. ramosissima*, another spectacular tree, and *A. variegata*, the partridge breast *Aloe*. In habitat these plants look severely stressed during the summers:

leaves sunburned red and curled up, tips brown, resembling not at all the plants we enter in shows.

In our climate, most prefer at least light shade, or morning sun with full afternoon shade. Overhead tree canopies will provide both shade and some frost protection; only a few are fully frost hardy in the open in our winters, though *A. polyphylla* is a high-altitude alpine plant experiencing snow cover every year. Its seeds must be frozen in ice before sprouting. Those who have tried to grow it in Phoenix suggest treating it as a winter annual.

Leo Martin

BEUCARNEA RECURVATA – PONYTAIL PALM

The common Ponytail Palm of houseplant fame makes a striking specimen plant for any landscape situation; it is also a very clean plant with no spines and can be useful around a pool. This is one of the few succulents that can withstand full sun, although it also does well with partial shade.

Beaucarnea has the potential to become huge - up to six feet in diameter at the base and up to 25 feet tall. Small plants should be protected from frost below 28 degrees F.

There are several species of *Beaucarnea* and, in fact, the most recent issue of the British Cactus & Succulent Journal featured all the species of this genus. Flowers occur on mature plants and are spikes of small, creamy-white flowers. These plants are in the Nolinaceae family, which has recently been split out from the Agavaceae family.

Beaucarnea recurvata is native to Mexico. Huge specimens can be viewed at the Huntington Botanical Garden in San Marino, California. Lotusland also has an interesting planting of them: They planted a lot of small plants fairly close together so that as the plants are maturing, their bases are starting to overlap one another. It's a very interesting effect—you have a mini-forest of sizable ponytail palms, some with bases touching or overlapping. So if you have the space, I highly recommend this plant; just remember to give it some room. Although it is not particularly fast growing, you want to think twice about planting close to a building or wall foundation.

Office Changes

Librarian

Muriel Beroza, our librarian for several years, is asking to be replaced. She finds she is working each Sunday afternoon and is not able to deliver the service she would like.

The Librarian is in charge of our book collection and circulation, and:

- ☉ keeps the catalog of our books
- ☉ catalogs new books as they are acquired
- ☉ handles purchasing of new books from the library fund
- ☉ circulates the library fund contribution can at each meeting
- ☉ keeps track of the library fund
- ☉ makes suggestions of books to buy, as well as takes suggestions from members
- ☉ takes calls from members wishing to check out books
- ☉ brings requested books to the next meeting
- ☉ tracks books checked out, and reminds members with books to return them at the upcoming meeting

Central Spine Editor

Jim Davis, our Newsletter Editor for this past year, is asking for a replacement. The job requires computer publishing skills or the desire to learn them. (It is not hard for anybody who can use a computer.) The Editor:

- ☉ requests articles from members
- ☉ receives the articles via E-mail, US mail, or in person
- ☉ assembles the newsletter on computer with a publishing program
- ☉ finds and inserts plant and other photos
- ☉ sends the newsletter computer file to the proofreader for corrections
- ☉ sends via e-mail final copies of issues to members who want to view issues in color

Please contact Jim or Muriel for more information; their contact information is listed elsewhere in this issue. Neither of these jobs is that difficult (and both can be a lot of fun).

OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Leo Martin	602.852.9714 leo1010@attglobal.net
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Librarian	Muriel B	xxxx

Deadline for insertion in the next issue of the *Central Spine*: February 13, 2002. Send insertions or communications to Jim A. Davis at: pantenor@earthlink.net or to him at P O Box 2875, Peoria, AZ 85380 (or 623.583.3901)

C.A.C.S.S.
P O BOX 8774
SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85252-8774 USA

Central Spine is the newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society. All opinions are those of respective authors. Publication herein does not imply that CACSS or any CACSS members agree with any statements published.

Changes of address: contact our Treasurer, Pam Bass, with any changes of address.

CALENDAR

January 20	Ken Schutz, Director of the DBG, on the future of the DBG and on his trip to Kenya
February 24	Cesar Mazier of the DBG on Australia
March 24	Leo Martin talking on the Flora of Veracruz and Oaxaca, Mexico
April 3–7	Annual Plant Show
May 19	Show Awards & Plant Auction
June 30	
July 28	
August 25	

Meetings are at 2 P.M. in Webster Auditorium, unless otherwise noted. All meetings include a question and answer session on growing plants.

[Address picture: a flowering *Ariocarpus fissuratus* v *fissuratus* of December 2001—Jim A Davis photo]

