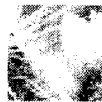
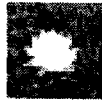


J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 3



Central SPINE

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

President's Letter January 2003

Hi Everyone: This month's meeting and most future meetings are going to be held in Dorrance Hall, the large auditorium just east of the education building classrooms, where we have met in the past. The board meeting will be in the Library conference room adjacent to the library's north exit. The Garden has had numerous scheduling problems associated with Webster Auditorium on Sundays, and so it was decided to have many of our meetings in Dorrance, which is not used as much. There are advantages to this location, one of which is its proximity to the parking lot, and another is its easy access for unloading plants for our upcoming annual show in April.

I'm working on lining up some Tucson nurseries for a bus trip on Saturday, March 1. Pencil in the date until I can get more information.

I'll be hosting an open garden this spring, probably after the annual show, and hope some of you will also consider doing this. It's a great way to get to know each other in an informal setting and to learn how others grow their plants. We all bring something, so the expense of putting it on is nominal.

We're going to continue with our mini silent auctions for most of the meetings, so bring those cuttings, seedlings and offsets in and help out the club.

As always, we are looking for contributions to this newsletter on any subject related to cacti and succulents and their care. Maybe you came up with a new potting mix, a new way to get rid of those mites, or maybe you just want to express an opinion on something...send it in!

This month's talk will be on the group of islands known as Socotra. Located east of the horn of Africa, these islands contain some of the most fascinating and rarest succulents in the world, many of which are found nowhere else. If you have any plants which have their origins from this wonderful place, do bring them in and share them with us at the meeting.

See you there!

Scott McMahon

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Meeting Venue Change!!!

The general meeting and program will be in Dorrance Hall at the usual time. The board meeting will be held in the Farrington (Library) Conference Room in the Research & Horticulture Building.

This Month's Speaker

This month's speaker is Dylan Hannon, plant propagator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. He will be doing a presentation on the island of Socotra. One of the least known yet most beautiful destinations in the world, Socotra is rich in plant life (850 species with 35% endemism), anthropology and zoology. The island lies in the Arabian Sea and is governed by Yemen. It has been largely inaccessible to researchers and tourists alike until very recently. Highlights of the talk will include huge specimens of *Adenium obesum* ssp. *socotranum*, cucumber trees (*Dendrosicyos socotrana*), *Dorstenia gigas*, dragon trees (*Dracaena cinnabari*) and dramatic scenery.

In Memory Of...

Bud Terrell, former member of the CACSS, passed away December 25, 2002.

Bud, together with member Fran Tolleson, is the sponsor of the CACSS Perpetual Trophy for Best Aizoaceae given in memory of Vickie Bone. Watch next month for more about Bud.

CACSS LIBRARY NEWS, January 2003

by: Paul Schueneman

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/pubs/hortcom.htm

This web site is home for the *Horticulture Communicator*. This is a bimonthly newsletter on gardening in the desert published by the Maricopa County Master Gardeners. You cannot view current issues of the *Horticulture Communicator* (you need to subscribe to get those) but you can download back issues published between 1992 and 1999. While many of the articles are not devoted to cacti and succulents there are numerous articles that are. The best part of the newsletter is that it is tailored to our unique Phoenix climate and soil conditions and features articles by University of Arizona faculty, professional horticulturists, and experienced Master Gardeners.

NEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS:

Cactus & Succulent Journal, No. 4, Volume 20, December 2002. Articles of interest:

- Explorations in the habitat of *Echinocereus lindsayi*
- The 2002 BCSS Seed List
- Pep for plantsmen - Part 5, succulent peperomias in cultivation
- White-spined discocacti from the Brazaillian state of Bahia
- A new species of Aloe (*Aloaceae*) in Kenya with secund flowers
- *Bulbine* - a neglected genus
- A sterile method for raising cacti from seed

Desert Plants, Volume 18, Number 2, December 2002. Articles of interest:

- A Rapid Biological and Ecological Inventory and Assessment of the Cajon Bonito Watershed, Sonora, Mexico. Part 1: Natural History.
- Is Your Landscape Threatening the Desert?
- Identification and Taxonomy of *Tamarix* (*Tamaricaceae*) in New Mexico.

A Field Guide to the Plants of Arizona by Anne Orth Epple, Lewis E. Epple (Photographer), 1997, paperback, 347 pages. Description: *A Field Guide to the Plants of Arizona* covers just the rich and unique flora of the Grand Canyon State. From deserts to mountaintops, grasslands and chaparral, this handy volume enables both amateur and professionals to quickly and accurately identify Arizona plants from ferns to cacti, wildflowers to trees.

NEED HELP?

Contact the CACSS librarian,
Paul Schueneman:

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Bus Trip

It's official...there will be a bus trip to Tucson on Saturday March 1, 2003. Scott is taking care of all the arrangements and has so far confirmed that three of the four nurseries asked are on board. The trip will only cost \$25 per person. There will be more details and sign up at the next meeting. Start saving now!

Is Your Patio Appealing or Going to Pot?

by: Tom Gatz

Containers are a great way to manage and display cactus and succulents, allowing you to vary potting mixes and watering and feeding regimens as well as the ability to move them as sun and frost conditions change. Although long lines of similar-sized container plants are often the most practical way to manage cactus and succulents in greenhouse and nursery conditions, many of us also enjoy showcasing our best plants in our patio or courtyard. In our zeal to add "just one more plant" to our already burgeoning collections, however, we sometimes inadvertently risk changing our patio's appearance from that of an attractive botanical garden to a stark, haphazard, commercial nursery-look.

Here are 3 simple tips to get that "Frida Kahlo Courtyard" appeal back on your patio.

1) Ditch those black, plastic pots!

Nothing detracts from a patio's appearance more than the "I haven't gotten around to planting this yet" black pot-look. Besides, in full summer sun, the black plastic can really cook the roots of many plants. The terra cotta look (clay or plastic) is a neutral and appealing alternative. Don't be afraid of color. Try a lemon-yellow pot against a bright red or blue wall, with a lime-green Agave, Aloe, Nolina, Yucca, Dasylirion, or Furcraea (see plate 61 in the Irish's Agave book) to create a striking "static fountain" effect.

2) Avoid lining up your pots in straight, evenly spaced rows.

Use the tried and true interior-decorating guideline of clumping pots in groups of 3's, 5's, and 7's, with an occasional big singleton pot for a nice architectural "exclamation point". Try grouping similar plants in different sized/shaped pots or contrasting plants in similarly shaped pots. Experiment. If you're somewhat aesthetically challenged (like me) ask for a friend or loved one's opinion (and believe them!).

3) If a plant looks bad, put it out of sight in a temporary home such as a side yard or behind the greenhouse (if you're lucky enough to have one) until it dies or

recovers. It's tough love, but life is short, patio space is limited, and nothing distracts your visitor's eye away from your prize Adenium faster than a drooping, bare or yellowing plant.

Some practical tips: - Be sure to elevate pots enough to maximize drainage, keep roots from plugging the drain holes and to prevent circular stains on your patio.

- Rather than paying for those expensive "pot holders", buy some saltillo tile at Home Depot and break or cut them to size. For really big pots, two or three 1"-high paving bricks work well.

- If a pot has a wide base and only a single drain hole in the center, be sure the pot is level or water will collect in the down-slope end and may cause rot (or play it safe and drill extra holes around the perimeter).

- Plastic (brown) can actually work better than clay pots for some plants that you don't want to dry out too quickly (especially very small pots in the summer months).

- To prevent soil from falling through the drain hole, buy a roll of plastic, yellow, dry wall mesh tape (Home Depot again) and cut a piece to fit over the hole.

- A product called "Lime Away" has been recommended to clean up stained pots, but I personally prefer the weathered-look.

- Italian pots last longer than the less expensive Mexican pots. A product called "Pottery Sealer" is said to minimize stains and prolong the pot's life; at a minimum, it seems to slow evaporation through the pot wall.

I'm sure others in the club have additional useful tips for pot culture and aesthetics, and I look forward to hearing about them in the Central Spine!

10/10 Temperature Guideline

To decide if you need to cover your tender plants to protect them from possible freezing temperatures, look at your outside thermometer at 10 pm. You can expect the temperature in your yard to drop approximately an additional 10 degrees by dawn on a typical clear winter night with no wind (even less on cloudy and /or windy nights). So, with a 10 pm temperature of 43 degrees or higher, it is usually safe not to cover your plants. The only time it might exceed this is if a cold front is forecast to pass through after 10 pm. I've tested this "10/10 rule" for the past 2 years and so far it has worked for me!

Tom

