



Central SPINE

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

www.centralarizonacactus.org

President's Letter October 2003

Hello Everyone:

Well, the days are still a little warm, but our nights are cooling off, and I'm finally getting some growth out of my plants after this long summer. This is the time to give them a little fertilizer to help wake them up for a while before most go dormant for the cold weather. Winter growers, like most mesembs, some Euphorbias, and others can start to be coaxed into activity, giving them a little water at a time, until they show signs of life. Others will start to lose their leaves, and this is a signal to back off and let them rest. Many of the books in our library contain cultural information like this, as well as some of the nursery catalogs.

Are you ready for the silent auction? I hope so, because we're going to have lots of plants and other items and plenty of good deals, so bring in those plants, bring your wagon along, and let's have some fun! We can start bringing plants in as early as 12:30, so arrive in plenty of time to get set up. See you soon, Scott

Growing Aztekium From Seed

by Piotr Swiatoniowski - From the San Francisco C&S Society newsletter

The genus *Aztekium* is one of the most famous sort of cactus, and unfortunately also the most difficult to grow. The problems in its cultivation refer principally to extremely slow growth but also to some other special requirements that make these plants laborious to raise even in their native land of Mexico. A few years ago I decided to take up some experiments in growing *Aztekium* from seeds and grafting it on different stocks. First of all, it is desirable to check all seeds because many of them can be imperfectly developed or crushed. It is reasonable to sow only these grains which are felt with a finger tip as possessing spherical form, and not being just flakes, because these ones won't germinate. There is no danger to damage a seed if you perform this activity delicately. Afterwards the seeds should be protected against the development of any fungus. The best treatment in this case is soaking them for about fifteen minutes in the 0.1% solution of chinosol, and later when they dry up, additionally in the common seed dressing.

Aztekium grows generally in the habitat on this type of breeding ground but investigations performed by Sociedad Mexicana de Cactologia A.C. proved that in the case of *Aztekium ritteri* the pH equaled about 5.5. Thus it would be very clever to use, for the seedlings, distilled water that is free of any biological pollution, with the addition of some acid and good fertilizer in the ordinary concentration. The seedlings of *Aztekium ritteri* are almost always spherical

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CACSS Library News, October 2003

Notes On Pedilanthus

The beautiful *Pedilanthus* plants that grace our gardens belong in the very large Spurge (*Euphorbiaceae*) family which includes over 5,000 species. It is not in the Euphorbia genus, but as a close second cousin is tucked away in its own genus. There are 15 species of *Pedilanthus* all native to the West Indies, Mexico and Central America.

Pedilanthus macrocarpa is a native of the Sonoran desert in Mexico and is especially prevalent in Baja California. The name adds some insight into the plant itself:

Pedilon = Gr sandal, shoe, boot

Anthus = Gr flower (male)

Macro = Gr long or large

Carpo = Gr fruit

As the name implies, it has a flower shaped like a shoe and a large seed pod. The common name is the Slipper Plant

This variety grows to a height and width of about 4 feet. The cylindrical branches are a muted gray-green color and the stems are sometimes jointed. The branches arise from a central root crown and have very tiny ephemeral leaves which seem to disappear shortly after they have sprouted. The sap is a milky latex fluid which is poisonous and irritating. As with all Euphorbia family members, care should be taken to wash off this stuff before you get a rash or other reaction.

There is also a crested form. Some of the cylindrical stems may have a flat portion at the end of the stems with a typical fan shaped formation ... the cells are dividing along a line rather than around a central point. It gives a strangely beautiful and somewhat grotesque shape. *Pedilanthus* likes well draining, porous soil with full sun exposure, even here in Arizona.

The flower is very unusual and even has a special name cyathea (cup shaped). It is not symmetrical and has the color and shape of a cardinal bird's head. The seed pod is also quite beautiful, shaped like an inverted tear drop, with graceful colors of red and muted green. It really could pass for a Christmas ornament. The Slipper plant blooms from February to May and then again from August to October. A little extra water may keep this one blooming more ... in Mexico it blooms all summer. The flower is an enticing magnet to hummingbirds, which are about the only pollinator that can reach the nectar.

Does this flower make you think of Dorothy's red shoes or perhaps Cinderella's glass slipper? Whichever designation appeals to you include this plant in your garden as a special treat for the hummingbirds.

REVIEW OF SOME BOOKS IN OUR LIBRARY:

- *Plant Biology: A Concise Introduction*, by H. Ross Jr. and George F. Bazinet Jr. (1977, 553 pp., paperback). The mysteries of photosynthesis revealed. Plant genetics unraveled. More plant sex than you can shake a stick at. This comprehensive text book covers the plant kingdom from chemistry to ecology. Drawing, B&W photos.
- *Cacti and Their Cultivation*, by H. A. Auger, P.R. Chapman, and J. Margaret. (1971, 205 pp., paperback) One of the general books on cacti this covers the basics of habitat, cultivation, and propagation of the major genera. Many individual species are mentioned, although some are described without the benefit of illustration.
- *Name that Succulent*, by Gordon D. Rowley (1980, 268 pp. hardbound). This fine little book deals with the taxonomy of succulent plants. Not only are there keys to all the plant families that contain succulents, but there are chapters on how plants are named, how they are classified, and what to do if you think you've discovered a new species or cultivar. Line drawings.

HELP OR REPLACEMENT FOR THE LIBRARIAN

I have had the privilege of being the CACSS librarian now for about 2 years. If someone would like to be co-librarian and share responsibilities with me or assume the librarian's job, please contact me. My phone numbers and email addresses are below.

HOW DO I CHECK OUT CACSS BOOKS?

To see a list of the books we have please see our catalog. Paul Schueneman, the CACSS librarian, can email you a copy of the catalog (see contact information at the end of this article). Or, you can pick up a catalog from him at a CACSS meeting. Or, there's a copy of the catalog on the CACSS website: www.centralarizonacactus.org/liblist.htm. When you would like to check out books or journals, contact Paul at least a couple of days before the CACSS meeting and he will give the books to you there or he will go with you to Webster Auditorium (our books are shelved there) after the meeting and you can browse/check out books.

NEED HELP?

Contact the CACSS librarian, Paul Schueneman:
602-381-9859 (W) • 480-706-1672 (H)
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WRITE-IN CANDIDATE FOR CSSA BOARD

We are supporting Dean Hart in his quest to become a Director on the CSSA Board. We have known Dean for many years and consider him to be an able and honest businessman. He has his own general contracting and plumbing business in southern California, and his main hobby is growing cacti and succulents which he loves. Dean recently purchased the business of Loehman's Nursery which is now known as Sunrise Cactus and is located at 6836 Berry Ave., Buena Park CA 90620, e-mail: customer@sunrisecactus.com. Dean, at the age of a young 52, is full of compliments for the CSSA organization. He has many skills which could benefit the CSSA. He has expertise in handling publicity and particularly enjoys promotional projects and does everything with enthusiasm. Dean could be a great asset to the Society. Give Dean the chance to use his knowledge and abilities for the benefit of the CSSA.

Please write-in the name of DEAN HART on the ballot form in the space provided for Director write-ins.

The Committee to elect Dean Hart to the Board of Directors of the CSSA:
Lloyd Garretson, Co-Show Chair, Orange County C&SS
Jim Kampwirth, C & J Nursery, Vista CA
Madelyn Lee, Grigsby Cactus Gardens, Vista CA
Kathy McNair, President, Orange County C&SS

Notes About Our Up-Coming Silent Auction

Silent Auctions, as well as our monthly meetings, are open to members and the general public.

Our October meeting is devoted mainly to a large Silent Auction. At each other months' meeting, we will have a smaller Silent Auction during the meeting.

Bring a box to carry home your new finds.

Members bring plants and other items to donate for the auction table. Members have brought in pots, decorative rocks, top dressing, books, tools, and seeds, as well as plants.

Label each plant with a permanent label. If you bring in multiple cuttings, please make one label per cutting.

Bring a bid card for each item. A 4 x 6 card or quartered piece of notebook paper work fine.

It is nice to write a little about the plant and how to grow it on the card.

At the top of the bid card, write the name of the plant or item. Under that write the opening bid.

It is also nice to write your name on the bid card, so the lucky person who takes your plant home can ask for more information.

At the regular meetings, there will be one or two tables for auction items. Set the items on the table(s).

Before and after the general meetings, bidding will be open.

To bid on an item with no other bids, just write your name next to the opening bid.

To bid on an item that already has other bids, write your name under the previous bidders' name and write your new bid.

Minimum bid increment is 25 cents.

During the general meetings, when the President ends the Silent Auction, the highest bidder on each

item will pay the Treasurer the amount of the final bid.

At the end of a Silent Auction, any items not attracting bids may be bought by anybody for the price of the opening bid.

Any items remaining unclaimed after all plants have been paid for will be taken home by the person who brought them. This person does not have to pay for the items.

All items must be removed from Webster Auditorium after the auction.

The October Silent Auction is a lot bigger! Bring a box or two or three to carry home your new finds!

We usually have over 10 tables of plants and other items.

Members will be given 5 minutes to peruse all the tables without bidding.

The President will set a secret timer for each table, and hide it under a flower pot. The times are staggered so each tables' timer will sound at a different time. Then, the bidding begins!

When a timer goes off, bidding on that table is closed. The highest bidder on each item has won.

But - There are more tables!

When the last timer has sounded, all bidding is over. Pay the Treasurer and take your plants home!

At the end of a Silent Auction, any items not attracting bids may be bought by anybody for the price of the opening bid.

Any items remaining unclaimed after all plants have been paid for will be taken home by the person who brought them. This person does not have to pay for the items.

All items must be removed from Webster Auditorium after the auction.

Top Ten List of Ways to Botch Up the Auction

Hello, fellow CACSS members. This month's silent auction promises to be a big one, but in order for it to be successful, it has to run smoothly, and everyone has to do their part. In order to clarify things for all you newcomers and probably for most of the rest of us, here is my Top Ten List of ways to botch up the auction:

10. Show up at Dorrance Hall. No, no, no! This month, it's at Webster. If you go into Dorrance, you'll be interrupting someone else's meeting.

9. Forget there's a concert going on at Ullman Terrace and try to bring your plants through the audience. Take a left instead once you're inside the rolling gate and come in through the back way to Webster.

8. Drive past the service road and get lost in the main parking lot. You want to take the service road, the first right as you come in from Galvin Parkway, and go all the way into the small parking lot to unload your plants. Once you're done, go back to the main parking lot.

7. Bring in 300lb of Aloe vera hybrid offsets that you've just removed from your yard and expect us (or the Garden) to take them off your hands. Not a good way to make points.

6. Forget to fill out your labels and bid cards. We need this information. If you don't know the name, ask someone or do the best you can.

5. Assume someone else will provide plenty of boxes for your purchases. Just like on the buying trips, this is when we get selfish!

4. Ignore your President during the meeting and start talking and bidding before the auction starts. Like most vain, egotistical despot, he likes to have your complete attention while taking care of business and explaining the rules.

3. Leave your name off the bid cards, so you won't have to answer any questions about your plants. Come on, don't you want to take credit for getting them through this past summer?

2. Forget to take all your plants with you when you leave. Some people actually do this every time!

...and the number one way to botch up the silent auction:

1. Leave your money at home. Sorry, no IOU's, no credit, no loans, no lay away, no credit cards and no financing. We get your money, you get your plants!

Good Luck, Everybody!
Harry

Growing Aztekium From Seed - Continued from page 1

in contrast to these of *Aztekium hintonii* that can be as well ball shaped, discus shaped or even elongated, regardless to the mother plant. These ones that are the last to germinate, grow worst and at the lowest speed. Unfortunately, it will be very difficult to check if this original shape has any direct relationship with the proportions of the definite specimen. In the habitat there indeed exist this kind of differences, but especially in the case of *Aztekium hintonii*.

In spite of the large germination power, the seedlings are very sensitive for the first two months and many of them perish because of several factors. There can be mentioned three main agents here: too high concentration of the fertilizer, too high temperature and too strong light. Taking into consideration the proper temperature, my experiences proved that for a few weeks after germination it shouldn't overstep the limit of 28C and it is better to keep it at this level for almost two months. Later the seedlings become stronger and even the temperature of 45C is harmless for them, though this one is probably too high and it can, of course, slow down the growth. Then they become very hard and extremely resistant to the lack of water.

Upcoming Events - CALENDAR

General meetings are at 2:00 pm unless otherwise noted. Board meetings are one hour earlier. Members are welcome to attend board meetings.

October 26, 2003 Silent Auction of Member's Plants - **THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN WEBSTER AUDITORIUM. PLEASE TAKE NOTE!!!**

November 2, 2003 Open Garden - Marc Fleischer

November 23, 2003 Leo Martin - Convention report, Dorrance Hall

December 7, 2003 Holiday Party 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Webster Auditorium

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.

Change of Address: contact our Treasurer, Judy Brody, with any changes of address.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE!

The deadline for material submission for the next issue of *Central Spine* is:

November 7, 2003

Please make a note of this!

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