

CENTRAL SPINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

President's Letter ————— April 2004

When it was first suggested to me that I run for President of the Society, I thought I would have difficulty writing the monthly President's Letter. But it has turned out to be easier than I thought. Why? Because I write it within a few days of the most recent Society meeting. So far, the meetings have always provided something to talk about.

The March meeting was no exception. About 60 members gathered at Jim and Electra Elliott's Arizona Cactus Sales to tour the facility and purchase plants. It was a great turn out, almost half the total membership. I saw a lot of plants being purchased. I know I spent more than my wife said I should. I suspect others went a bit over their "limit" too. One member confided in me that she spent over \$400. You go girl!

Everyone bought lots of plants because Jim and Electra are committed to growing and selling quality plants at reasonable prices. And their good prices were even better with the 20% discount they gave to Club members. I bought a couple of *Opuntia* species I had not seen before (Yes, I am a bit crazy in that I collect opuntias), a beautiful *Agave gracilipes*, a gray-green monstrosa variety of *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* and, upon the recommendation of Doug Dawson, a wonderful *Discocactus*.

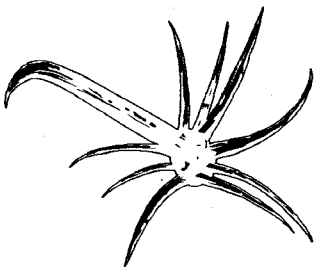
I must publicly apologize to Jim for really putting him on the spot. In last month's newsletter I said we were going to be able to view their propagation area which is closed to the public. That was a surprise to the Elliott's. Jim came to my rescue, however, and agreed to lead a tour of the "back 40." The tour was the highlight of the visit for me. I stuck close to Jim and learned volumes about the various plants they have and how they grow them. It was fascinating.

While on the subject of seeing other people's plants and gardens, don't forget the two special events coming up. Of course the first is this month's Show and Sale on April 15-18. If you plan to enter, and I hope you will - even if you've never entered a plant show before - remember that your plants have to be brought to Dorrance Hall on Wednesday April 14 after noon. The judging is on Thursday morning. The Show is open to the public on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. By the way, a new traveling trophy is being awarded this year to the Novice who wins the most blue ribbons.

The second event is our trip to California in July. We already have reached our goal of 40 people who have made their deposits. Now there is a waiting list. If we were to get enough people on the waiting list, we might be able to afford a second bus. So, if you would like to go but don't have a seat on the bus, send your deposit to Tom Ballen, our Club Treasurer. If we can get enough additional commitments, you can join in the fun. If not, we will give you your deposit back.

A third event is in the planning stages. Sometime in the fall, we hope to have the opportunity to visit the H.B. Wallace garden in North Scottsdale. Mr. Wallace has an incredible collection of cacti and succulents that is a must see. Details will be announced when the plans are finalized.

Next month's meeting will be on May 23rd. This is not the last Sunday of the month since that would be on Memorial Day weekend. The meeting will start promptly at 2 pm. The major trophies from the show will be given to the winners. The program will be about the cacti and succulents of Chile. The speaker, Kelly Griffin, is the manager of Rancho Soledad Nursery in Oceanside, California. Please don't forget to bring plants for our monthly silent auction.



OFFICERS

PRESIDENT - Lee Brownson
480.951.9494
lsbrownson@cox.net

Vice President - Gard Roper
602.996.9745

SECRETARY - Elaine Tressler
480.860.6388
phoenixet@aol.com

TREASURER - Tom Ballen
480.502.8639
tballen@aol.com

PAST PRESIDENT - Scott B. McMahon
480.657.7786
scottmcmahon1@cox.net

DIRECTORS

Carol Clapp (December 31, 2005)
520.908.9001
cactusnews@earthlink.net

Celeste Gornick (December 31, 2005)
602.938.9590
hheaven77@aol.com

Leo Martin (December 31, 2005)
602.852.9714
leo1010@attglobal.net

Doug Dawson (December 31, 2004)
480.893.1207
doug.dawson@gmail.maricopa.edu

Sue Daley (December 31, 2004)
623.876.0060
daleyspudbud@aol.com

Richard Greenberg (December 31, 2004)
623.979.5078

CSSA Representative - Henry Triesler
480.946.1122

Librarian - Paul Schueneman
602.381.9859
schue888@aol.com

Newsletter - Nick Diomede
602.266.2976
nick@agavex.com

Calendar

April 30 ~ May 2, 2004

TCSS: Sonoran V Convention

The theme for Sonoran V will be BAJA California. The speakers and some of the workshops will focus on this unique part of the Sonoran Desert. Friday night, April 30, will be a dinner for all members and vendors, speakers, workshop leaders and conference registrants followed by a kick-off speaker, Mark Dimmitt. We will open the sales and show areas at the end of the program as a special pre-sale event. We have purchased a bar code reading cash register that will be used at this event.

Saturday, May 1, 2004, will be speakers and workshops, a silent auction and a special cacti and succulent gourmet dinner. This will be an exciting and tasty event. The conference will end on Sunday, May 2, with speakers, workshops and a final luncheon and speaker. There will also be a free plant show and sale open to the public.

Confirmed Speakers: Wendy Hodgson, Desert Botanical Gardens; Mark Dimmitt & Tom Van Devender, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; and Jon Rebman, San Diego Natural History Museum.

Confirmed workshops: Mark Sitter, B & B Cactus Farm and Gecko Cactus; Diversity of the Ferocactus & Pests, Problems and Prevention; Jeff Moore, the Cultivation of Agaves; Laurel Cooper - Desert Bounty: Traditional Foods of the Sonoran Desert; Vonn Watkins, Your Adventure with Seed; Mark Dimmitt, Adenium Culture; Kevin Barber, Enjoying and Sharing your Digital Images; (These are tentative and could change)

There will be at 11 workshops available to pick from. The attendance is limited at workshops to provide for the greatest possible interactions. In early April, all registrants will receive the final list of workshops from which to select preferences. Preferences will be filled by date of registration. The Sonoran V Committee will make every effort to schedule your preferences.

This will all be explained to you in the pre-registration materials. The number of registrants will be limited to no more than 100.

May 23, 2004 2:00 PM

CACSS: Show Awards Presented; Kelly Griffin, manager of Rancho Soledad Nursery in Oceanside, California. Kelly will talk about cacti & succulents of Chile and Mexico.

Please don't forget to bring plants for our monthly silent auction.

NOTE! Due to the Memorial Day holiday, this month's meeting will

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NEW BOOKS/JOURNALS:

Cactus and Succulent Journal, Vol. 76, No. 1, January-February, 2004. Articles of Interest

- An amazing species of *Hildewintera* (Cactaceae)-- characters and systematic position.
By Roberto Kiesling & Detlev Metzger.
- Introducing: The 2003 CSSA Fellows. By Steven Hammer.
- Columnar cacti of the Rio Marañon region, northern Peru. By David Yetman.
- Illustrated Handbook of Succulent Plants: Asclepiadaceae.
Book review by Dylan Pl Hannon.
- Three recently described *Conophytum* species. By Petr Pavelka.
- Under Discussion: *Adromischus*. By Fred Dortort.
- The Color Encyclopedia of Cape Bulbs. Book review by Jeff Shipley.
- Superb Succulents. By Duke Benadom.
- Succulents on Stamps. By Peg Spaete.

OTHER SOCIETY NEWSLETTERS

Kaktos Komments, Vol. XXXXI No.1, January-February 2004 (A bimonthly publication of the Houston Cactus And Succulent Society). Articles of interest:

- Cactus of the Month: *Gymnocalycium obductum* Pitz = *G. ragoneseii* or *ragonesii* Castellanos also called *G. psuedoragonessi*. By Paul Stricklin.
- Just Don't Call it Tequila. From Drinks Magazine (Fall 2003).
- Information on a Systemic Insecticide (Marathon). By Dick McEuen.
- January Cactus of the Month. By Dick McEuen. *Mammillaria lasicantha* Engelmann. Common names: Golf Ball Cactus; Langtry Lace Cactus.
- January Succulent of the Month. By Phyllis McEuen. *Sansevieria kirkii* var *pulchra* N.E. Brown.

Kaktos Komments, Vol. XXXXI No.2, March-April 2004 (A bimonthly publication of the Houston Cactus And Succulent Society Publication: Articles of interest:

- *Coryphantha* and *Thelocactus*. By Tom Glavich, Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society.
- Cactus and Bean Salad Recipe. By Will Crump
- March Cactus of the Month: *Mammillaria humboltii* (common name White Glory). By Hank Andresen
- March Succulent of the Month: *Sansevieria* sp. FKH 424 "Harwood". By Wally Ward.
- April Cactus of the Month: *Echinocereus knippelianus* Liebner 1895. By Richard Stamper.

HOW DO I CHECK OUT CACSS BOOKS?

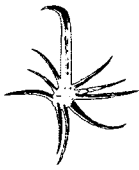
To see a list of the books we have please see our catalog. Paul Schueneman, the CACSS librarian, can email you a copy of the catalog (see contact information at the end of this article). Or, you can pick up a catalog from him at a CACSS meeting. Or, there's a copy of the catalog on the CACSS website: 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:

(W) 602-381-9859 - or - (H) 480-706-1672

(W) paul.schueneman@ndchealth.com - or - (H) schue888@aol.com



CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
 P.O.B. 63572
 PHOENIX, AZ 85082-3572



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Euphorbia ————— *Scott B. McMahon*

The family Euphorbiaceae is the fourth largest of all the families of flowering plants with more than 3000 genera. Although the family has almost world-wide distribution, the majority of the plants are to be found chiefly in tropical and subtropical Africa and South America. The milky sap is often poisonous, and some of the plants, notably castor-bean, are used medicinally as purgatives. The most valuable of the rubber plants of the world, *Hevea brasiliensis*, belongs to this family, and other genera also contain species that are sources of rubber. Cassava, a staple food of tropical countries, and tapioca are obtained from the roots of species of *Manihot*. Tung oil is extracted from the seeds of species of *Aleurites*, a mainly Asiatic genus. Castor oil, chemically altered into a drying oil, is used in paints. The succulent genera of most interest to us are: *Euphorbia*, *Jatropha*, *Monadenium*, *Synadenium*, and *Pedilanthus*. Jacobsen includes two other genera, *Stenadenium* and *Elaeophorbium*, but the few species included in these are unlikely to be encountered.

The genus *Euphorbia* contains about 2000 species, including the popular holiday plant poinsettia and the

persistent garden spurges we have all known to hate. Many of the shrubby types have been cultivated in temperate climates, but it is in the warmer parts of the world where the genus shows its real diversity and adaptative ability. Succulent *Euphorbia* species number over 400, and their forms range from the sub-globose *E. obesa* to geophytic caudiciforms such as *E. tortirama* to larger spiny shrubs and even huge trees up to 30 feet tall. Many species have fluted stems armed with spines and closely resemble cacti. This is an excellent example of parallel evolution, where different plant families growing in different geographical locations, but under similar climatic conditions, develop similar strategies for survival. Even so, a spiny *Euphorbia* can always be distinguished from a cactus, because it won't possess an areole, the felt-like pad from which the spines arise, unique to the Cactaceae.

The name *Euphorbia* is derived from Euphorbus, the physician to Juba, King of Mauritania, a province of Carthage and then Rome, roughly situated in present-day Morocco. According to the historian Pliny,