

## President's Letter ————— July 2004

Hope you're having a great summer. I, for one, am glad that it has not been as hot as last year. They are not succulents, but my tomato plants are producing the best yield in years. Great for those BLT's!

I don't want to make anyone feel bad, however, if you were not able to go on the trip to California, you missed a great time. The weather was perfect for seeing and buying. The Huntington Botanical Garden was wonderful, as always. Lotusland was spectacular, a must see for all plant/garden lovers. The CSSA Cactus and Succulent show had some of the weirdest (i.e. best looking) plants I have ever seen. What a show!

We had a great time spending money, too. Everyone scored some really fantastic plants. We visited Bill Baker's eclectic nursery, Tom Cole's aloe nursery and California Cactus Garden, which had great plants and a fantastic selection of pottery. We also got to the CSSA Sale early Thursday afternoon and the vendors didn't know what hit them. No one came away empty handed.

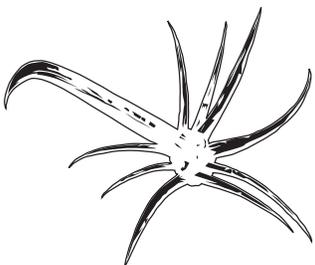
Enough about the past, what lies ahead? The next meeting will be feature Chris Monrad, founder and co-chairman of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's Plant Rescue Committee. If you have been to a meeting recently, you have heard me talk about this program and how it might be something the CACSS would like to emulate. Chris is a great guy and I know his presentation will be interesting. If you know of anyone who might be interested in saving some of our native cacti and succulents from the bulldozer blade, bring them to hear Chris speak.

People join our club for many reasons, but two or three stand out above the rest. The first is because they have a love affair going on with the plants. Who know who you are - the ones hopelessly hooked on buying, owning, showing, and talking to cacti and succulents. A second reason is that you are in the beginning stages of becoming hopelessly hooked on these plants but you just don't know it, yet. You are the ones who say you came because you "want to learn more about desert plants."

A third reason is because you know that people who are in love with plants are wonderful and fascinating individuals. No? How about that you know that they know a lot about how to grow these things and you want to tap into this great body of information. Fortunately, our members are both smart and nice!

Spreading information about cacti and succulents is one of our primary missions. To that end, we have a great opportunity to reach a huge number of people by participating in one or more of the three Maricopa County Home Show events throughout the year. We can have a free booth space. All we need to do is provide people who are willing to send a couple of hours at the show talking with the general public. Many of the other garden/plant societies already take part.

I am looking for someone who would be willing to be the chairman of a committee to organize our participation in the January Home Show. How about you??? If you are a relatively new member, this will provide a great opportunity to talk to and meet the rest of the members of the club. You would need to find and organize the volunteers to be at the show and, maybe, arrange to have some plants there to sell to make a little money for our group. What do you say? Anyone out there interested in this project? Call or email me (see page two).



## **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)  
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

Ray Daley (December 31, 2004)  
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 - Agave Xpressions  
602.266.2976  
nick@agavex.com

## *Calendar*

*All CACSS meetings held last Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM at Dorrance Hall in the Desert Botanical Garden unless noted.*

July 25, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

**CACSS:** Chris Monrad, co-chairman of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's Rescue Program, will describe their efforts to save native cacti and succulents from the bulldozer blades of land developers. This is a program we are considering implementing here in Phoenix.

August 29, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

**CACSS:** Doug Dawson. Exploration of the Southern Fifth of Namibia, Summer 2004 Hiking from sunrise to sunset and camping out for 3 to 4 weeks in the South of Namibia provides an up close perspective on many of the exotic succulent species we cherish in our plant collections.

September 29, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

**CACSS:** Pam Slade will discuss Management of the Wallace Garden

October 23, 2004 Time TBD (Saturday)

**CACSS:** Members only special tour of HB Wallace Gardens.

October 31, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

**CACSS:** Silent Auction.

### EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE SOUTHWEST AREA

August 5, 2004 7:00 PM (Thursday)

**TCSS:** Mark Dimmitt, Director of Natural History, Arizona-Sonora. Mark will present a talk on the beautiful Trichocereus group.

August 14 - 15, 2004 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Saturday & Sunday)

### 19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL INTER-CITY CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SHOW

L.A. County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA  
The largest and finest cactus and Succulent Show Anywhere!

September 2, 2004 7:00 PM (Thursday)

**TCSS:** Chuck Hanson of Arid Lands Greenhouses will be doing a presentation on Succulents of Madagascar.

September 14, 2004 7:00 PM (Tuesday)

### ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY: Wendy Hardy & Daryl Workman

The first meeting after our Summer break will be an interesting presentation from the City of Scottsdale regarding the native plant salvage program. Please mark you calendar to join us, and invite a friend or two!

October 1-3 2004

**ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY:** Annual Conference (see notice p.3)

**WWW.CENTRALARIZONACACTUS.ORG**

*Publication of the material in the Central Spine does not imply agreement with the ideas expressed therein by any portion of the membership of CACSS, nor does it constitute an endorsement or support for any portion of such material by CACSS, or the Central Spine, regardless of any position or office held by the author(s). All such material represents a comment and/or personal opinion of the author(s).*

Your most treasured agave has sent up its life-ending flower stalk, blooming with superb beauty. Don't despair, you may be losing the agave as most species only bloom once and die, but keep the stalk as it can become a nursery and a reminder of your special plant.

Cut the stalk to an appealing size with a saw, and wedge it between heavy rocks or other items to maintain its verticality in a protected and semi-shaded area. As the stalk dries out, it will become the perfect nursery for carpenter bees. These handsome bees are hairy, bluish-black, about one-inch long, and as wide as your thumb. They won't sting you unless trapped or threatened, and do not form a hive as they live alone. They are excellent pollinators, and important to have in your landscape.

Single female carpenter bees nest in wood. They will compete heavily for a chance to nest in your stalk. If you sit patiently in the spring, at a safe distance of about ten feet, you can observe the females posturing with each other to see who will get the prize usually for days at a time. The winner architect will then proceed to chew into the stalk, and begin to tunnel a section 8 – 9 inches out. You can see the telltale signs of sawdust collecting at the base of the stalk. If you listen closely, you can hear the chewing and digging going on inside as she makes a tunnel 3/4 of an

inch in diameter. Somewhere during this time, she mates. When finished with her tunnel, she will collect pollen, fertilizing your plants, returning to the nest with it.

The pollen is then rolled into a ball, placed in the bottom of the tunnel. She then lays an egg on top of it. The pollen becomes food for the developing bee. Chewing up the cellulose of the stalk, she forms a roof over this cell. She continues this process until the tunnel is pretty full. I've observed females returning to their tunnel at sunset for their night's sleep. Very early in the morning, she can be seen sleeping in the tunnel doorway guarding her brood. When the adult bees are ready, they emerge, each in turn, chewing out their roof.

Carpenter bees normally use dead tree limbs or other unfinished wood, e.g., firewood, as nurseries. If they are tunneling into wood of value, cover it, varnish or, paint it. They over winter in their tunnels or, in this case, your agave stalk. I've had bees nesting in a cherished agave stalk for several years, providing great entertainment and valuable pollination. This is a grand natural history lesson to observe for kids as well.

## ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 1-3, 2004

The Arizona Native Plant Society (ANPS) is holding its annual conference at the Lake Pleasant, Desert Outdoor Center. Arizona's native plants are crucially interconnected with our native cacti and succulents and with our native bird populations. Please join members of ANPS for an informational conference to share ideas and work together to assure the survival of our unique native plant heritage for future generations. Hear 9 speakers including Dr. Robert Ohmart, ASU, Brian Nowicki, Center for Biological Diversity, Dr. John Alcock, ASU, Mary Irish, renowned author/speaker and others. There is a cost for room, board, speakers, etc. for the 2-21/2 day conference. Topics will include the relationship between native plants and wildlife, landscaping with native plants, the effect of drought upon our landscape, managing threatened and endangered species in Arizona and other choice subjects on "Plants, Water and People." For more information, contact Doug Green, CACSS member, and ANPS Board Member at 480-998-5638 or at [azbotman@yahoo.com](mailto:azbotman@yahoo.com) for added details. Costs for the conference are yet to be determined, but will be held to the bare minimum.

## NEW JOURNALS:

**CACTUS AND SUCCULENT JOURNAL, VOL. 76, NO. 1, May-June 2004.** Articles of Interest:

Under Discussion: *Anacampseros*. By Fred Dortort.

*Mammillaria tetrancistra* and *M. guelzowiana*. Care, culture and hybridization. By Malcolm Burleigh.

*Facheiroa braunii* Esteves—A new species of Cactaceae with a review of the genus *Facheiroa*. By Eddie Esteves Pereira.

Fifty Thousand Flowers (*Dracaena*). By David Symon.

*Aloe irafetnsis*. A beautiful new distichous species from The Yemen. By John Lavranos, Tom McCoy & Abdul Nasser Al-Gifri.

Sedums of Europe—Stonecrops and Wallpeppers. Book review by Ray Stephenson.

Dwarf Euphorbias after Years of Drought. By Andrew Wilson.

More on Clark Champie. By Colin Walker.

The Malodorous or the Curly? Unveiling the Identity of *Dorstenia Foetida*. By Matija Strlic.

Superb Succulents. By Duke Benadom.

The Fish River Tick Plan. A Newly Described Dwarf Succulent From the Albany Center of Endemism. By Tony Dold & Estelle Brink.

Succulents on Stamps. *Melocactus*. By Peg Spaete.

**BRADLEYA. YEARBOOK OF THE BRITISH CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY. VOL. 22/MAY 2004.** Articles of Interest:

Studies on Mexican Cactaceae. IV. A new subspecies of *Echinocereus palmeri* Britton & Rose, first record of the species in the Chihuahuan Desert. By Hector M. Hernandez and Carlos Gomez-Hinostrosa.

Resolving the phylogenetic placement of *Blossfeldia liliputana* (Cactaceae): reticulate evolution, chloroplast inheritance, and graft-chimeras.

*Agave hurteri* Trelease (Agavaceae): the perfect landscaping plant for large gardens. Gideon F. Smith and Elsie M.A. Steyn.

Adaptations and phytogeography in the Ice-Plant family (Aizoaceae) – the interaction of the genetic equipment and ecological parameters. I. One leaf-pair is the plant. By H.E.K. Hartmann.

Emilio Chioyenda and his contribution to the knowledge of East African succulent plants, with a selected bibliography. By Lucio Russo and Guido Moggi.

*Obetia ficifolia* (Urticaceae): a pachycaul nettle in danger. By Clement Duret.

*Opuntia* Index Part 10: T-V. By Richard Crook and Roy Mottram.

A model to predict the developmental stage of *Stenocereus thurberi* (Cactaceae) fruit from pulp and skin colour.

By Martin Ernesto Tiznado-Hernandez, Angel Javier Ojeda-Contreras, Alberto Sanchez-Estrada, Delia Moreno-Velazquez and Jorge Nemesio Mercado-Ruiz.

Another look at the pachypodiums of Madagascar. By Jonas M. Luthy.

Cacti and other succulents: stem anatomy of “other succulents” has little in common with that of cacti. By James D. Mauseth.

**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](http://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.

**BINDING:** Several of our older books, particularly the paperbacks, are starting to fall apart. Some of the books cannot be replaced (eBay, Alibris, etc. do not have them). Does anyone know how to bind books or have the equipment they could loan me to do it? Professional bookbinding is beyond the library’s budget.

**NEED HELP?** Contact the CACSS librarian, Paul Schueneman:

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

(W) [paul.schueneman@ndchealth.com](mailto:paul.schueneman@ndchealth.com) - or - (H) [schue888@aol.com](mailto:schue888@aol.com)

6. Lithops grow fine in a great variety of soil recipes. My mix usually has 1 part organic mix from the nursery, 2 parts sand, 1 part pumice, and 1 part plain old desert dirt from my yard. Do not use a loamy mix like you would for tropical house plants.
7. Be careful about taking cultivation advice from books whose main audience consists of gardeners in England. Everything is different there.
8. Lithops like some air movement. In your greenhouse or window, try to have a fan going nearby.
9. *Lithops optica* and especially *optica rubra* seem to be very sensitive to our high summer temperatures. I have developed the habit of bringing them in for the summer, watering them very little if any. They sit on a north windowsill by the kitchen sink. They go back out to the greenhouse about October 1.
10. Pots???? Plastic or clay? I keep most of mine in plastic like most of my other succulents. More frequent watering is needed in clay pots. Soil Depth: due to our extreme heat, at least 3" depth is preferred. Most of mine have at least 4" depth of soil.
11. Pests: Birds are the worst. Sometimes crickets may take a bite, and of course, keep mice a way. Mealy bugs don't seem to bother mine, but I sometimes need to be on the lookout for red spider mites.
12. Can they be successfully grown in the house? I have given many to a friend in Portland, Oregon. She grows them well on her kitchen counter with morning sun. Of course they grow a bit taller than normal and don't bloom, but they still look nice.
13. Can they take frost? Probably, especially if they are dry. I have never yet lost one to frost.
14. Transplanting: they can usually be easily transplanted and do not need their roots left out to dry like many cacti. Just do not water them much for the first week after transplanting.
15. They love rocky topdressing. In nature many grow in quartz fields or in shallow crevasses of stony outcroppings.
16. If you buy them from a store here like Home Depot, etc., they were probably grown in California. It is usually best to repot them since the cardboard-like soil they come in is inappropriate for our conditions.
17. Do not fold, bend, spindle, or mutilate.

## Club Welcomes New Members

At the May 23rd meeting, Doug Dawson announced a program to welcome new members in a meaningful way. New members are encouraged to contact Doug at monthly meetings or at 480-893-1207 to receive an invitation to visit the home of one of our longtime members to socialize, create meaningful networking, and of course, to talk plants and see plants.

We wish to be very careful not to overlook any new or recently new members, so please contact Doug if you or someone you know could have been missed by this program now or in the future. At the May 23rd meeting, six of our new members signed up for this special greeting program, so we're off to a good start!

### Welcome

Bill Cook, Tempe Az June 2004  
Margaret Ryan Sun Lakes, AZ July 2004



CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

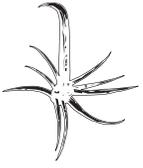


JO  
DAVIS

Interested in one of the name badges you see other members wearing? You can have one also.

Send check in the amount of \$7.50  
(payable to CACSS) to:

Jo DAVIS  
2714 W. MONTE AVE, MESA, AZ 85202



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



ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS:  
AUGUST 5, 2004  
SEND TO NICK@AGAVEX.COM

---

---

## Growing Lithops in Phoenix ————— Doug Dawson

Eight years ago, like many other plant people, I was hesitant to purchase any Lithops since I had killed my share in the past. I decided to try again and this time from seed. I succeeded with *L. schwantesii* which seems to like our climate. Since then, I have grown nearly 250 species, subspecies, varieties, and cultivars with a great deal of success. Phoenix is a much better place to grow them than many places in the world. However some cautions are in order to prevent meltdowns, sunburn, and other problems.

### **TIPS TO HELP LITHOPS SURVIVE PHOENIX:**

1. Lithops like light, but one should not transfer them to full sun without giving them an adjustment period. In the hot Phoenix summer, most lithops cannot survive full sun. I keep mine in at least 40% shade due to my greenhouse conditions.
2. In the summer while they are dormant, they definitely do not want a full watering. I water most of mine once or twice a week in the evening but very scant - only enough for the water to soak down about 1/4" deep. If you have a spray bottle, just 2 or 3 squirts for a 4" pot. During humid or cloudy August monsoon days, refrain from watering when in doubt. *L. ruschiorum* is the most sensitive to overwatering. *L. lesliei* needs the most water.
3. During the fall before they bloom it is good to give them a thorough watering all the way down to their toes. Of course, the soil must have excellent drainage, like almost all succulents. While blooming and when reabsorbing last year's leaf pair, watering should be less. Once the old leaf pair is nearly absorbed, a good drink is in order as long as really hot weather has not hit. Note: it is important for the plant to reabsorb the old leaf pair. Some species are more stubborn than others on this point and therefore need water to be withheld to a degree for this to occur.
4. If Lithops are left out where birds can get at them, eventually the birds will peck them to death.
5. Fertilizer seems to be unnecessary. A very weak fertilizing once in the spring and once in the fall probably would not hurt.

CONT. PAGE 5