



# CENTRAL SPINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

ON THE WEB AT <http://www.centralarizonacactus.org/>

MARCH, 2007



## *President's Letter*

*Doug Dawson*

The countdown is on - only a few weeks left until our annual Show and Sale, April 20 - 22. Have you selected several plants from your collection for showing? Please don't only go for the very unusual or rare. Too frequently we don't have on display what some of us might consider more common. If a plant is well-grown, it is worth entering. Most persons who will be viewing our show have not seen many of the easier to obtain plants. Entries must be brought to the back entrance of Dorrance Hall on Wednesday, April 18. Several of us will be there to help identify and make sure forms get filled out correctly. Please try to have most forms filled out before coming in. One last request - bring in a few more cacti; we are often short on them.

It is March and many of our plants are waking up with longer days, higher temperatures, and warmer soil. Spring is a good time to make cuttings of many cacti and succulents. In order to establish roots, they need the chill to be gone from the soil. Seed starting is also great this time of year. I just looked at my record from last March and April: Mammillarias, Coryphanthas, Agaves, Astrophytums, Fockeas, Adeniums, Hoodias, Neoporterias, and many more. In a year or so, your extras will look great in one of our silent auctions.

On another note, our closest cactus club affiliate is the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. They meet the first Thursday of the month at 7pm in Tucson. Please consider attending. The April 05 talk is "Southern California Hot Spots," presented by Joe Clements. We hope to work more closely with their club in the future, especially since they will be hosting the 2009 CSSA Conference. Many of you have also already participated in their cactus rescue as well as our own. Visit their website at [www.tucsoncactus.org](http://www.tucsoncactus.org).

While I am on websites, when was the last time you visited [www.cactus-mall.com](http://www.cactus-mall.com)? It is jam-packed with information, links to many other sites pertaining to our hobby such as nurseries, seed sources, organizations, and many, many more topics. If you run across a dynamic website you think the rest of us would enjoy, let us know. See you at the March meeting and the April Show!

## ***Officers***

**President—Doug Dawson**  
480-893-1207  
doug.dawson@gmail.maricopa.edu

**Secretary—Julie Plath**  
623-915-7615  
revegdule1@juno.com

**Treasurer—Celeste Gornick**  
602-548-8106  
hheaven77@aol.com

## ***Directors***

**Lee Brownson**  
480-951-4945  
lsbrownson@cox.net

**Steve Plath**  
623-915-7615  
revegdule1@juno.com

**Cynthia Robinson**  
602-615-2261  
crobin500@msn.com

**Gard Roper**  
602-996-9745  
tommy15@cox.net

**Lois Schneberger**  
480-946-8373  
lschneberger@cox.net

**Daniel Sumberg**  
480-361-6503  
daniel@csmorrell.com

**Ingrid Swenson**  
602-957-9865  
iswenson@cox.net

**Librarian**  
**Erik Anderson**  
480-967-3984  
woodcraftman@earthlink.net

**Newsletter Editor & CSSA Affiliate Rep**  
**Cynthia Robinson**  
602-615-2261  
crobin500@msn.com

### **The Cover Photo:**

A rare find within the Organ Pipe National Monument - this pink flowering Ocotillo, *Fouquieria splendens*, was just getting ready to bloom. A large Organ Pipe cactus, *Stenocereus thurberi*, is in the background. Photo taken 03/03/07 by Cynthia Robinson.

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## ***Local Calendar***

**March 22nd, Thursday, 7 pm**  
Board meeting  
Home of Ingrid Swenson  
Interested club members are welcome to attend.

**March 25th, Sunday, 2 pm**  
Regular club meeting  
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden  
Guest speaker **Chad Davis** of the Desert Botanical Garden will give a presentation on the Succulent Society of South Africa's International Succulent Congress, *Succulenta 2006*.

**March 29th, Thursday, 7 pm**  
Show & Sale planning meeting  
Home of Ingrid Swenson  
Interested club members are welcome to attend.

**April 1st, Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm**  
Plant Staging Workshop  
Home of Daniel Sumberg  
CACSS Board member, Steve Plath, will be holding a workshop on how to prepare your plants for this year's show. Please call Steve to RSVP, (623)915-7615.

**April 18th, Wednesday, 12 pm - 8 pm**  
Show Setup  
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

**April 20th - 22nd, Friday - Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm**  
Annual Show & Sale  
Desert Botanical Garden  
Dorrance Hall & Boppart Courtyard  
Many volunteers will be needed to make this annual event a success. See Cynthia Robinson (Show & Sale Chair) or Ingrid Swenson (Volunteer Chair) for additional details.

**May 20th, Sunday, 2 pm** (Not the last Sunday)  
Regular club meeting  
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden  
Guest speaker is CACSS member, **Laurence Garvie**; topic TBA.

**June 24th, Sunday, 2 pm**  
Regular club meeting  
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

## ***Regional Calendar***

**May 25th - 30th, Friday - Wednesday, All Day**  
Cactus & Succulent Society of America's 32nd Biennial Convention  
Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport  
Seattle, Washington  
Contact Cynthia Robinson or visit [www.cssainc.org](http://www.cssainc.org) for more information.

**July 5th - 8th, Thursday - Sunday, All Day**  
Annual Show & Sale of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America  
Huntington Botanical Gardens  
Los Angeles, CA

**September 1st, Saturday, All Day**  
24th Annual Huntington Succulent Symposium  
Join the Huntington in celebrating the centennial of the desert garden!  
Huntington Botanical Gardens  
Los Angeles, CA

## ***2007 Show & Sale Plant, Pottery & Book Vendors***

Have you been searching for an elusive plant or book that you just can't seem to find? Maybe you have a list already put together, but are not able to make it to the sale at 9 am Friday morning. Why not contact a vendor to "pre-order" the items on you "wish list" or ask if they have that plant that you just can't seem to find here in the Valley. Most vendors love to know that their merchandise is already sold before they even get it to the Show!!

### ***Plant Vendors***

#### **Cactus Data Plants**

Woody Minnich  
(661)944-2784  
cactusdata@thegrid.net

#### **Desert Gems**

Jimi Asencio  
(520)792-0320  
desertgemstucson@aol.com

#### **Plantas del Sol**

John & Dorothy Pasek  
(520)682-8883

#### **Rainbow Valley Nursery**

Sheri & Denise  
(520)424-3464  
rainbowvalleynsy@aol.com

#### **Starr Nursery**

Greg Starr  
(520)743-7052  
gstarrsprint@earthlink.net

#### **Sticky Situation**

Jana & Kim  
(520)743-9761  
cactus@stickysituation.com

#### **Succulent Productions**

Maury Clapp  
(520)908-9001  
desertmule@earthlink.net

#### **Xerophytic Design**

Thomas Park  
(602)231-9728

### ***Pottery Vendors***

#### **Baobab Pottery Company**

Mike Cone  
(623)215-7692  
imakepots@hotmail.com

#### **CT Creations**

Cynthia Crawford  
(480)671-9085

#### **Lithic Vision**

Steve Holmes  
(520)795-1842

#### **Handmade Stoneware Pottery**

Mark Muradian  
(599)584-9118

#### **Pinacate Planters**

Jon McNamara  
(520)780-9125  
iamjonnymc2003@yahoo.com

### ***Photography Vendors***

#### **David Spiegelberg Photo**

(602)690-4086  
photoartiste@msn.com

#### **Sunstate Photo**

Irwin Segerman  
(623)386-1024

### ***Book Vendor***

#### **Rainbow Gardens Bookshop**

Kevin & Helen Barber  
(520)577-7406  
kevin@rainbowgardensbookshop.com

### ***Garden Art Vendors***

#### **Botanicals in Clay**

Sandy Siegel  
(602)470-8214

#### **D & D Tile**

Dave Jarvinen  
(602)279-2989  
dej@ddtile.net

#### **Skoolgirl Antiques**

Tom & Beth Steuber  
(602)323-5965  
theskoolgirl@aol.com

#### **Yvonne Allen**

(480)513-8006

#### **Cynthia Eddy**

(623)780-2979



*The locustis bicolor*  
Photo taken by Cynthia Robinson

## **Three Cold-hardy, Full-sun Euphorbias for your Landscape**     **Tom Gatz**

(Modified from an article originally printed in “The Gathering”,  
the newsletter for volunteers at the Desert Botanical Garden)

Are you as discouraged as I am after viewing the damage of the January 13 and 14 hard freeze that turned many of our leafy plants brittle and brown and caused our more frost-sensitive succulents to melt before our eyes? Peeking under the frost cloth to assess the damage almost seemed more like peeling a bandage off of a wound. What would we find underneath? Among the injured and dead were some of the more delicate euphorbia species. Most euphorbias don't tolerate freezing temperatures or full-sun exposures very well and do best sheltered on our patios and covered or brought inside during hard freezes like we had last month. There is good reason many of these species sold at the Desert Botanical Garden are protected inside or under shade and often labeled with a “3” indicating that they are very frost sensitive or a “C” indicating they need lots of summer shade. *When mature*, plants labeled “A-1” can usually be acclimated to full-sun areas with no frost protection needed (down to 18 degrees F for short periods). However, be aware that these ratings were developed in cooler Tucson where the term “full-sun” doesn't have quite the same brutal connotation that it does here in the Valley of the Sun.

Some of us compiled lists of those plants in our landscapes that were damaged by the two nights of temperatures down in the lower 20's for future reference when selecting hardier plants or warmer micro-sites in our gardens in which to protect them. As my list of casualties continued to mount, I needed something to cheer myself up, and I decided to focus instead on the positive: those plants that came through the freeze with little or no damage. Three of the species that I never cover yet still look great are euphorbias planted in almost full-sun areas with no overhead protection from the frost. All three are in clay soil that is mounded to improve drainage and tolerate drip irrigation every 10 days during the summer but would likely do fine with less. All three can be propagated from cuttings.

Moroccan Mound (A-2) (*Euphorbia resinifera*). Hardy to 20 degrees F. A tight, clumping plant with stout, erect stems. There is a magnificent specimen at the Wallace Garden with a landscape light tucked in the middle of it. An effortless plant, it does equally well in the ground or in a planter such as the one in Boppart Courtyard. They maintain better color with some afternoon shade.

Gopher Plant (A-1) (*Euphorbia rigida*). Hardy to 5 degrees F. Spreads to 4 feet; reseeds but not invasively. This leafy perennial produces new stems just as the old stems with chartreuse yellow flower bracts start to fade (remove them) so you never have a bare spot. **Mary Irish** suggests part shade such as those planted west of the Garden Shop near the restrooms, but mine do fine in almost full sun, where their leafy appearance contrasts nicely with the more sculptural form of a nearby agave.

*Continued on page 5...*



*Euphorbia resinifera* is one of the oldest documented medicinal plants. The genus (and possibly this species) is named after Euphorbus, the Greek physician of Juba II, King of Mauretania (ca 50 BC-19 AD). Juba was married to the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra and had an interest in botany. “Euphorbus” roughly translates to “well fed.” Some suggest this was a play upon words by the King referring to both the plant's succulent form and to his doctor's corpulent physique.

Photo by T. Gatz

## Three Euphorbias ...continued from page 4

Candelilla (A-1) (*Euphorbia antisyphilitica*). Hardy to 15 degrees F. Spreads by rhizomes to 3 feet wide. Creates a vertical accent; looks nice with boulders or in a planter. Wax on stem is used in products such as chewing gum, lip balm, skin creams, candles, soap, polish, and ointments. Plantings at the DBG include Boppart Courtyard and the PPSD trail.

Give these three hardy euphorbias a try to help fill in those gaping holes and empty pots left in your landscape by "The Big Chill of 07". An added bonus: the caustic sap in these plants that reminds you to wear gloves when handling them also likely discourages rabbits from eating them. Of course, selecting plants native to our area for landscaping is still the best way of all to liberate us from the seasonal shackles of shade screen and frost cloth.

Thanks to **Cathy Babcock** and **Scott McMahon** for helping me with this article. Scott observed that *Euphorbia officinarum* and *E. coerulescens* in the Garden beds and *E. echinus* in the shade house also survived the recent cold spell uncovered with no apparent damage. For a more complete list of succulents and their hardiness, go to the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society website at [www.tucsoncactus.org](http://www.tucsoncactus.org), click on "publications" and then "TCSS ABC-123 Care Code".

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY



JO  
DAVIS

Interested in one of the name badges you see other members wearing? You can have one of your very own! Talk to Jo Davis at the meeting or send her a check for \$7.50, made out to "Jo Davis," to her home address:

2714 W. Monte Ave.  
Mesa, AZ 85202

## What's Blooming...

By Cynthia Robinson

What's blooming in your yard - or in my case, on my patio? The recent onset of nearly 100° F weather has super-charged the few cacti in my collection into producing a profusion of flowers. Four species of Neoporteria are currently loaded with varying shades of pink flowers. *Thelocactus bicolor* and *T. rinconensis* are also putting on a nice show and buds are just beginning to form on a number of Echinocereus. Hopefully, some of the cacti will still have flowers a month from now.

Succulents blooming include a *Jacaratia corumbensis*, *Commiphora africana* (with its miniscule flowers) and a handful of Euphorbias. Many of the smaller Aloes are still blooming & all of the succulent trees have a healthy crop of new leaves.

It's almost official - Spring is here!!



*Neoporteria nidus*.  
Photograph taken by Cynthia Robinson

Editor's note: Members with an email address should consider signing up to receive a .pdf copy of the Central Spine. The pictures look so much better in color than in black & white. Plus, you still have the option to continue to receive the hard copy edition as well.

Over the years I've had any number of reasons not to exhibit my plants in shows. On any given year just a couple of months before a show I'll think, "There's just no way I'll be able to make the time to prepare my plants". I've even convinced myself that I just don't have any show-worthy specimens. One of my favorites is: "My plants are in a "down" cycle and just aren't looking good enough to exhibit". A number of years ago I even told myself that my car wasn't big enough to haul enough plants to make showing worthwhile. In over 20 years of showing plants I've come up with all the excuses. Ironically, each year no matter where I've lived, I've always ended up showing my plants at the local cactus and succulent society show.

I've wondered why, in what always seems like a last minute effort, I manage to pull off preparing my plants, then dash down to the exhibition hall on set-up day and get the plants on the tables. Was it the prospect of winning some specific ribbons or trophies? It couldn't be because most of the time I'm not even sure what rosettes or trophies are up for grabs. Perhaps I like the competition, beating out someone else's favorite plant in a category that's their specialty? No, that couldn't be it either because that's just not the way I am. What if I'm just psychotic enough to get some weird kick out driving myself crazy in my procrastination? Maybe, but I don't think that's it either. To be honest I usually can't tell you why, just before a show, I madly scurry about, like some lemming racing for the cliff, matching pots to plants.

It's not until the first day of the show, after the ribbons have been handed out and the trophy plants have been moved to their prestigious perches that it sinks in. As I'm prowling amongst the exhibited plants lusting after someone else's plant that may have not even received a ribbon I pause as another observer stops at one of my plants and says, "Wow". It's only then that, like a proud father, a sense of pride comes over me as I realize someone else thinks a plant I've nurtured over the years is pretty cool too! I'll usually strike up a conversation by telling the other person something about the plant, like how long I've had it or one of its peculiarities of cultivation. Sometimes the person asks if the same species is available in the sales area so I offer to go there and look with them, talking about plants as we go. You see, I really love talking about plants! I mean I REALLY love talking about plants! And it isn't only me talking to others about plants but exchanging information and learning new things about plants from someone else as well. It's at that point I realize why I love to show my plants. For me it really doesn't have to do with winning (though it's fun to have your plant recognized as a fine specimen), and it's not because I like driving myself crazy in the preparation process. It's because I like talking to people about plants and a show is an awesome forum where it all happens.

The beauty of exhibiting plants is that it can be many things for many people. To me the comradeship of being with other people that have a similar interest or better yet those who are just discovering that interest makes showing all worthwhile. Showing your plants adds a whole other dimension to cultivating and enjoying the plants we love. If you're still sitting on the fence debating about putting plants in the show why not give it a try. And if you come to the show and admire one of my plants I'll be sure to bend your ear a little! Hope to see you there!

## **Show & Sale Schedule**

4/18, Wednesday: Show set-up  
8 am - 12 pm: Table set-up  
12 pm - 8 pm: Plant check-in  
\*\*Please have as much of your entry cards filled out as possible.

4/19, Thursday: Show judging & Sale set-up

4/20 - 4/21, Friday - Saturday: 9 am - 5 pm  
Show & Sale open to the public

4/22, Sunday: 9 am - 4 pm  
Show & Sale open to the public

## **Volunteers Needed!!**

What are you doing on Friday, Saturday or Sunday of the Show & Sale? If you answered nothing, why not consider volunteering a couple hours of your time to help out? There are a variety of positions that need to be filled: Cashiers, Greeters, Floaters (answering questions), etc. For additional info, contact Ingrid Swenson at (602)957-9865 or [iswenson@cox.net](mailto:iswenson@cox.net).



A female house finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) was enjoying the nectar of this Aloe inflorescence. Photo taken by Cynthia Robinson

### THE AFTERMATH OF THE REALLY HARD FREEZE OF JANUARY 13 AND 14

February 28 - By now, the extent of most of the freeze damage is apparent. Of course, in many cases it was immediately obvious... frozen aloe flower stalks, mush at aloe growing tips, etc. In other cases, it took a little while before the pilosocereus columns bent over, or less than healthy cacti finally gave up. We have been growing all kinds of cacti and other succulents a mile north of Camelback Road on 64th Street for over 23 years and this freeze was, by far, the most severe and damaging with temperatures down to about 20F everywhere. In fact, tough plants that had never shown any significant freeze damage before couldn't handle it. They included *Agave datylio*, *Aloe dichotoma* and *ramosissima*, *Portulacaria afra* and *Stenocereus griseus*. Trees like *Tipuana tipu* and yellow oleander are still brown. I'll be surprised if a small *Ceiba* survives. The extent of damage to a large *Chorisia speciosa* remains to be determined.

But before going into the gory details, there are colorful flowers on Cape honeysuckle, Salvias, Ruellia, Coulter's hibiscus and Hardenbergia vine, as well as a protected Blue hibiscus. Aloes flowering include *A. vaombe*, a large striking plant with bright red flowers (leaf tip damage was worst in the most shaded spot), *A. claviflora*, *A. aculeata*, *A. striata*, *A. karasbergensis*, *A. variegata*, *A. gariiepensis*, *A. vacillans*, *A. globuligemma*, *A. branddraaiensis*, *A. sinkatana*, *A. spinosissima*, *A. zebрина* and several hybrids. And with all these aloe flowers the hummingbirds are happy. Cacti flowering include mammillarias such as *M. bombycina* (purple), *M. macdowellii* (pink-purple) and *M. lindsayi* (green clumps with yellow flowers), and *Neoporteria nidus* (with its striking bright long lived flowers). There are buds on some *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* and *Ferocactus glaucescens* is getting started with its small yellow flowers.

*Aloe ramosissima* is a striking plant with bright yellow flowers and a nicely marked trunk. They came through with only leaf tip damage for large mature plants in full sun. The damage was worse for plants in part shade and for two plants in lots of shade, the growing centers were all mush. So, plant at least some of your *A. ramosissima* in full sun. They can be grown from cuttings if you are patient. A miniature form (less than a foot high) that has been sold recently was ok on the side facing an adobe wall (at several feet) but seriously damaged on the side farthest away from the wall. *A. arborescens* was fine in sun near a block wall and the flower was little damaged. For plants in more shade there was more damage but they will survive. A small *A. dichotoma* is gone but larger plants are ok with only more or less leaf tip damage. *A. divaricata* was half lost in shade and in worse shape in a more exposed location. *A. dorotheae* has a nice red-purple color adjacent to an adobe wall, but in more exposed locations there was lots of damage. The bushy *A. kedongensis* lost some exterior tip growth but most of it was fine. *A. secundiflora* flowered in an exposed location, but with substantial leaf damage. It came through with little damage adjacent to an adobe wall. Aloes lost in 1 gallon pots included *A. jacksonii*, *A. trichosantha*, *A. congolensis*, *A. bulbilifera*, *A. pictifolia*, *A. elgonica*, *A. niebuhriana*, *A. mcloughlinii*, *A. pruinosa*, *A. thraskii* and *A. nobilis-variegata*. Of course, some of these might have survived with a cloth cover.

Cacti Damage - For columnar cacti, the cereus varieties are fine. *Stenocereus* are mostly ok with no problems for senitas, totem poles and Arizona organ-pipes, but there was tip damage or, in a few cases, more on some of the Mexican organ-pipes (*S. griseus*). Also, there was a bit of tip damage on some *S. gummosus* and *S. alamosensis* and on a more tropical variety. *Pachycereus* seem to be mostly ok except for some small emerging arms on a Cardon. *Pilosocereus* were all protected at the tips with polyfoam cups or paper sacks and are mostly ok. But thin columns like *P. gounellei*, *P. chrysostele* and *P. aureispinus* froze below the cups and some have collapsed. I won't bother with these varieties again. The attractive Mexican varieties like *P. palmeri* are fine. A few months ago I mentioned a tropical columnar, *Backebergia militaris* (Grenadier's cap), that was finally growing after 20 years in the ground. It was totally frozen and we will have to live without it. Some of the *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* froze on the tips and rib edges to a chalky white. Others were fine. Surprisingly, the monstrous form seems to have had less damage, and where there was tip damage they are already showing new growth.

Bismarckia palms have been planted recently around town...apparently an expensive mistake. On the other hand, the striking Mexican Blue Palm (*Brahea armata*) with similarly colored foliage has come through undamaged, as have almost all the other Baja plants. Damage on a large *Pachycormus discolor* has yet to be determined but a small one in a more protected location is fine. A Madagascar ocotillo (*Alluaudia procera*) has some frozen branch tips and lots of brown leaves on an 8 ft plant but new green leaves are already out to 6 ft.

Note - While only limited information can be provided in this kind of brief article, if you have questions about landscaping suitability of uncommon plants please call or e-mail and we may be able to help.



CENTRAL ARIZONA  
CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
PO BOX 63572  
PHOENIX, AZ 85082-3572  
WWW.CENTRALARIZONACACTUS.ORG

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ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT  
CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS: APRIL 2, 2007  
EMAIL TO CROBIN500@MSN.COM

## ***Plant Questions???***

## ***Whom To Contact!!!***

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list (just call or e-mail Bob Torrest). For now, the list is simply alphabetical with principle interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

**DOUG DAWSON**  
480-893-1207  
doug.dawson@gmail.maricopa.edu

Specialization includes Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs & Melocactus.

**MIKE GALLAGHER**  
602-942-8580  
mgallagher26@cox.net

Specialization includes Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti & Turbinicarpus.

**STEVE PLATH**  
623-915-7615  
revegdude1@juno.com

Specialization includes Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, Thelocactus, General Propagation & Desert Revegetation.

**CYNTHIA ROBINSON**  
602-615-2261  
crobin500@msn.com

Specialization includes Flora of Madagascar, Growing from Seed, Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents, Aloes, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fouquieriaceae, & Succulent Bonsai.

**BOB TORREST**  
480-994-3868  
robertst9114@msn.com

Specialization includes Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees & Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, Trichocereus & Opuntia.