

Central Spine

September 2012

Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America **On the Web at www.centralarizonacactus.org**

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CACSS Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 30, 2 p.m.

Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

Presenter: Mark Muradian

Peru: Land of the Incas, Land of Cacti

Articles

CACSS Silent Auction, October 14, Jo Davis, p.3

Preparing Your Desert Landscape for the Fall Season p.3

A Book Review: Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscape and Containers by Tom Gatz, p.4



One of the photos from Greg Starr's new book. See Tom Gatz' review on page 4. Tom says: "Won't it be great when cultivars of this newly discovered species, *Agave albopilosa*, show up at our plant sales?"

October Newsletter Deadline Sept 29, 2012

Please Note:

The Silent Auction is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 14, so the Oct. newsletter deadline is Sept. 29, the day before the Sept 30 meeting.

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for article and photo submissions, and to
suggest topics you'd like to see included in the
Central Spine.

2012 Meeting Schedule Sunday, Sept. 30, 2 p.m., Dorrance Hall Presentation: **Peru: Land of the Incas, Land of Cacti** by Mark Muradian

Mark Muradian presents the first program captured completely on video camera. His presentation includes a variety of desert plants from the area of Machu Picchu, which is located in the Cuzco region of Peru above the Urubamba Valley, 50 miles northwest of Cuzco and perhaps the most familiar icon of the Inca World.

Also included in this great program are aerial photos of the Nazca Lines. The Nazca Lines are a series of ancient geoglyphs located in the Nazca Desert in southern Peru. Scholars believe the Nazca Lines were created by the Nazca culture between 400 and 650 AD. The hundreds of individual figures range in complexity from simple lines to stylized hummingbirds, spiders, monkeys, fish, sharks, orcas, llamas and lizards.

His artist's eye provides an extra perspective on Peru, Land of the Incas, not often seen before. As an extra bonus, Mark is bringing a selection of his handmade pottery. Both his large and small pieces of pottery also work as indoor accents that might deserve special lighting.



Sunday Oct. 14 Giant Silent Auction.

The Silent Auction date was moved because the DBG's large pumpkin festival in the last weekend in October, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 27-28, takes 200 parking spaces out of the parking supply See Silent Auction details below.

Sat. & Sun. Oct. 28-29-- Bus trip to Tucson

Sunday Nov. 18--Topic to be determined.

The date was moved from Nov. 25th to avoid competition with Thanksgiving activities.

Sunday, Dec. 8-- Annual Christmas Party

Mark your calendars!!

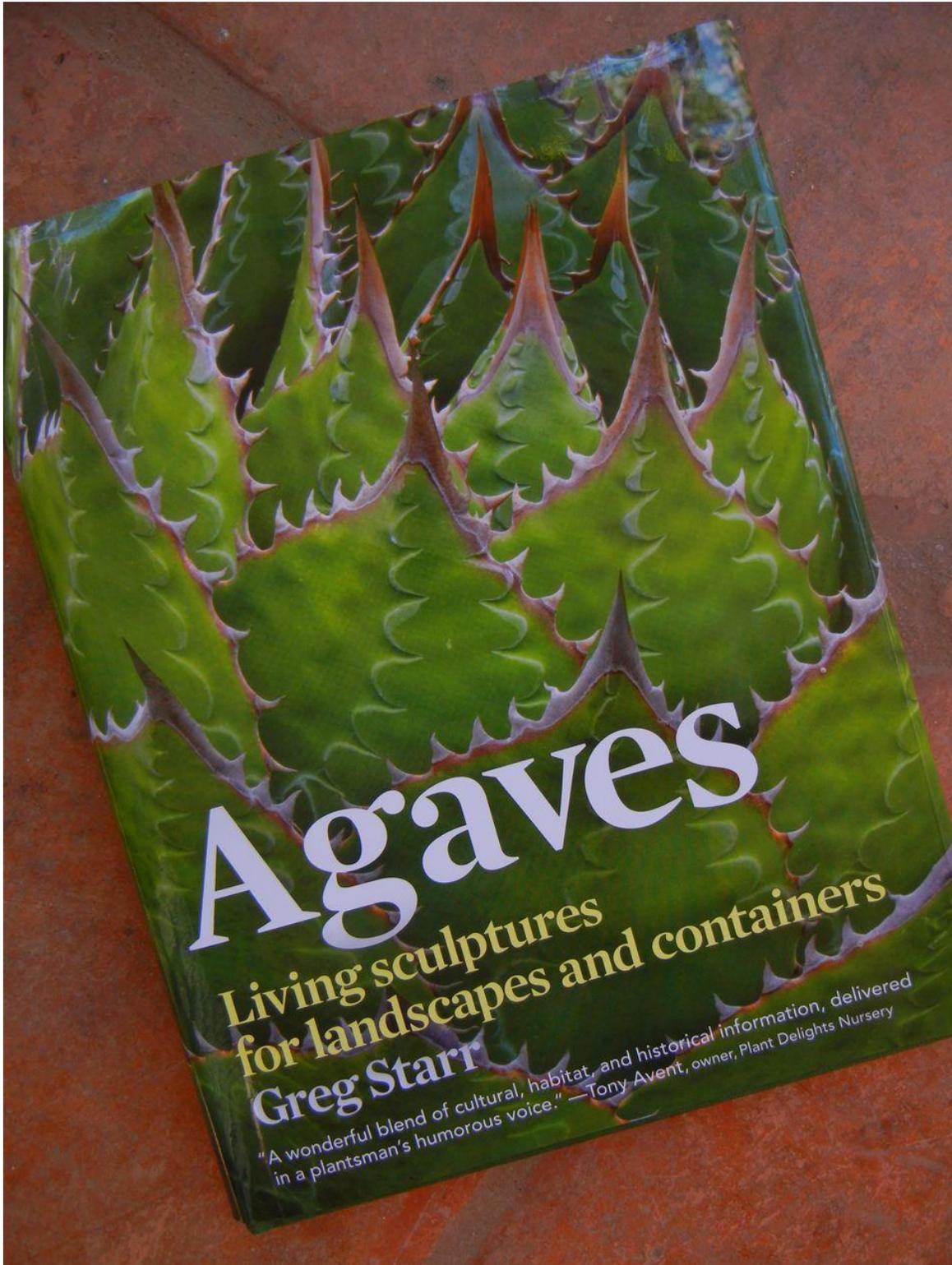
Co-hosts: Wendy Barrett and Margaret Ann Hecox.



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A Book Review: *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscape and Containers*

By Tom Gatz



If you collect and grow agaves, this new (2012) book by Tucson agave fanatic and nurseryman Greg Starr is a must for your reference library.

Greg’s book does not replace the excellent book by Mary and Gary Irish, *Agaves, Yuccas and Related Plants: A Gardener’s Guide* (2000); rather, it picks up where they left off. Over the past 12 years, new species of agaves have been described (*Agave ovatifolia* by Greg himself). Others have had their names changed, and new information on many species is now available. In fact, Greg’s new book doesn’t include some of the more commonly grown agave species that are already well covered in the Irishes’ book, such as *Agave americana*, *A. angustifolia*, *A. desmettiana*, *A. lophantha*, *A. murpheyi*, *A. sisalana*, and *A. weberi*. Their book covered 64 species out of the approximately 200 species and 50 subspecies and varieties known; Greg’s book covers 56 species and subspecies as well as 24 cultivars.

Greg’s recently published book contains chapters with helpful tips about how to grow agaves and how to distinguish look-alike species; it includes a handy table, separating the species into size categories, which is invaluable when selecting species for our landscapes. However, the bulk of the 342-page volume is dedicated to an encyclopedia and excellent photos of some of his favorite agave species with some really cool new hybrids, many of which should do well in our Valley landscapes and/or containers if we follow his advice.

For example, he cautions to be careful with water-sensitive species, including: *Agave utahensis* and *A. deserti* (keep it “dry, dry, dry”). For watering the majority of the other agave species, he recommends a thorough soaking once every seven to ten days from spring through fall. He also provides lists of those most and least tolerant of limited or extra water and of the most and least frost-hardy species.

Greg is an advocate of mixing succulents, including agaves, with desert-adapted shrubs and flowers in our landscapes; he makes suggestions for pairings of structural agaves and softer perennials for maximum visual impact in each species account. His information on their natural habitat collected while on many of his expeditions to the south, is also helpful in understanding the requirements and possible limitations of each species described.

Most helpful to the seasoned agave collector is his information on name changes (*Agave patoni* is now *A. applanata*, *A. scabra* is now *A. asperrima*, *A. celsii* is now *A. mitis*, and *A. ferdinandi-regis* is now *A. nickelsiae*). He also discloses the parentage of some of our favorite hybrids — did you know that the parents of *Agave* “Blue Glow” are believed to be *A. ocahui* and *A. attenuata*? He begins his species’ accounts by tantalizing us with the soon to be available, recently described and uniquely tufted species, *Agave albopilosa*.

Greg is an engaging and witty writer and sprinkles dry humor through the book; for example, don’t take it seriously when he facetiously recommends rubbing sunscreen on your sun-sensitive agave species!

My thanks and appreciation to Brandi Eide for her assistance with this review.





Agave gentryi changes color as it dies, but Greg says it is a slow grower so you will have to wait awhile to see this happen.



Reminder:
Mesemb Day 20th Anniversary Edition, October 20

Tim Jackson, a well-known expert mesemb grower in Phelan, California, north of San Bernardino, is hosting his 20th annual Mesemb Day. It's a very informal day-- no speakers, lectures, tours or auctions; just good people, good food, and great plants. Tim's huge greenhouse is a wonder.

Doug Dawson and Leo Martin will leave early, drive there, and drive home in the late afternoon. If you are interested in going, contact Leo Martin: voice 602-852-9714 text 602-799-8703 or leo@possi.org.

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. Call or e-mail Diana Decker, *Central Spine* editor. Find contact information on p. 2

For now the list is simply alphabetical with principal interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

Please note the addition of Dan Smith, who specializes in adeniums.

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Specializations include Growing from Seed, Flora of Namibia, Lithops, other Mesembs, Melocactus, Miniature Cacti and Succulents of Arizona.

MIKE GALLAGHER

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Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and *Turbinicarpus*.

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Specialization in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting (rooting cacti, agave and aloe).

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Specializations include General Propagation and Desert Revegetation, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Cyphostemma*, *Echinocereus*, *Fouquieria*, *Thelocactus*.

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Specializes in adeniums. raising adeniums from seed, grafting and adenium culture in general

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Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, *Trichocereus*, and *Opuntia*.

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