

Central Spine



January 2014
Newsletter of the Central Arizona
Cactus & Succulent Society

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

January 2014 Meeting
Sunday, January 26
2 p.m. Dorrance Hall
Desert Botanical Garden
Presenter: Tom Gatz

Articles
We Need You! For the 2014 Show & Sale
Nicky Davis: Cactus Cake Maker
Cliff Fielding's Open Garden

Tom Gatz's Presentation:
Creating Bonsai with Desert Plants

Tom will go over the basic steps of creating miniature living sculptures using desert-adapted plants with an emphasis on those with succulent qualities including Ficus, Fockea, Bursera, Pachycormus, Portulacaria, Pelargonium, Adenium, and Operculicarya.



Portulacaria afra, informal upright bonsai style Photo by Tom Gatz



Pachycormus discolor, in bloom Photo by Tom Gatz



Ficus petiolaris, root-over-rock bonsai style Photo by Tom Gatz



Nicky Davis: Cactus Cake Maker

By Sue Hakala

Nicky Davis created the amazing cactus cake displayed and devoured at the Society's annual holiday party. "It took about eight hours to make, and was a real labor of love," Nicky said.

It was not an original idea. "I just googled it and you can't believe how many different variations came up. I originally made it for my brother Tristan's birthday (also a CACSS member) and it was a big hit. He suggested that I make the cake for the party."

"My mom introduced me to cake decorating a long time ago," Nicky said. "I've got three grown kids, and have made and decorated many cakes through the years," Nicky said. "I've perfected my techniques by buying and watching classes from craftsby.com. Once you buy the classes, they are yours forever to watch as many times as you want."

For the cactus cake, she started with a ball cake pan making two halves put together with raspberry filling. She used a real terra cotta base, and then crushed up vanilla and chocolate sandwich cookies to make the gravel at the base. She then frosted the cake with green frosting and began the real labor intensive part making the spine clusters with buttercream frosting. "I made the white spines with long thin pieces of royal icing piped thin. After it dried, I broke it up and put two in each spine cluster. It takes time, but I'd do it again. I have some ideas for cactus cupcakes for a future party," Nicky said.

We can't wait to see your creations!



Nicky was a perennial gardener in Ohio, but quickly adapted to her new desert environment after moving here about 18 months ago. "I grew up in California and wanted to get out of the cold and into the warm," she said. "Also my brother lives in the Phoenix area and volunteers at the DBG. He helped me transfer my perennial gardening experience into a love of cactus and agaves." She has an all-desert garden with over 60 Agaves in the ground, and is now discovering Echinopsis. Nicky does project management for a living, working for Origami Aloe, a custom jewelry company in Chandler.

Nicky Davis holds the delicious Cactus Cake she baked for the annual holiday party.



Open Garden



**Sunday, February 2, 10:30 am – 3 pm
16819 S. 15th Ave., Phoenix**

Cliff Fielding is having his seventh annual open garden and cactus social. There are a bunch of African bulbs, hundreds of seedlings, collector cactus, and a whole mess of mesembs. Most of the plants are seedlings or young plants. Everyone and their guests are welcome to spend a pleasant afternoon in the warm February sun. There will be a few snacks and drinks.

For directions, call Cliff at 480-283-1940.

See you there!



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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. 5.

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

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