

# CENTRAL SPINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

On The Web at <http://www.centralarizonacactus.org/>

## September 2005.....President's Letter

### Elections Around the Corner

That's right. It will not be long before we will be electing Officers and Board Members for 2006. The By-laws state that a Nominating Committee must be appointed by the President by the September Meeting. The Nominating Committee will seek out people who are willing to serve as Board Members or Officers.

The Nominating Committee's primary function is to assure that there is at least one person willing to fill each open vacancy. Anyone can run for any office, as long as he/she has been a member for at least one year. The Nominating Committee must put all eligible names on the ballot. Unfortunately, sometimes no one volunteers to run for one or more of the offices. Then the Nominating Committee must seek out someone to fill the positions.

If you would like to be on the Nominating Committee, please let me know, either via email ([lsbrownson@cox.net](mailto:lsbrownson@cox.net)) or phone 480-951-9494.

Speaking of Officers...the club is always in need of people who will "step-up" and serve the group in a position of leadership and responsibility. Are you one of those people?

You might ask, what would be my commitment, what would I have to do?

The President is in charge of setting the agenda for, and conducting all of the Board and General Membership Meetings. He/she needs to be available to attend all the Board and General Meeting during the year. The President also appoints members of all committees and may attend any committee meeting.

The Vice-President has all the powers and duties of the President in the case of the absence of the President.

The Secretary is supposed to keep the minutes of all the meetings of the Board and of the General Membership. He/she should be committed to attending all meetings.

The Treasurer handles the CACSS finances: collecting all of the funds of the Society, making necessary disbursements and keeping the records of all financial transactions. She/he is responsible for making regular reports to the Board and membership as to our financial status. The Treasurer also keeps the membership list up-to-date.

Each officer serves for a one year term and can serve no more that three consecutive terms in any one office. You do not have to have been on the Board to stand for election to any of the Officer positions.

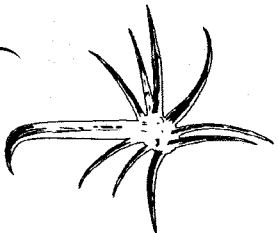
p.s - I know for a fact that the CACSS will be needing someone to serve as President. I hope someone will put her/his name forward.

### **DESERT PLANTS SALE - OCTOBER 8 (9 TO 5) AND OCT. 9 (10 TO 3)**

LOTS OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF CACTI, AGAVES, ALOES, TRICHOCEREUS, OPUNTIAS, MYRTILLOCACTI, ETC... ALSO, CUTTINGS OF COLUMNAR CACTI (SOME UNCOMMON, SOME ROOTED) AND OF JATROPHA, PORTULACARIA, PENCIL TREES. ETC... BOB TORREST (480) 9943868 CALL FOR PLANTS YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN

AT 64TH STREET (INVERGORDON) AND LUKE (1 MILE NORTH OF CAMELBACK ROAD)

CACSS MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO UP TO 10 PLANTS IN 1 GALLON POTS - FREE (CHOOSE FROM OVER 200) THEY NEED GOOD HOMES!



## **OFFICERS**

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# *Calendar*

## **September 25. Sunday**

Regular club meeting Dorrance Hall 2:00pm  
Program to be determined

## **October 30, Sunday**

SILENT AUCTION WILDFLOWER PAVILLION AT 1 P.M.  
It's time to prepare your plants and cuttings for this fun event.  
Bring some cash, too.

## **November 12, Saturday**

TUCSON PLANT SHOPPING TRIP BY BUS.  
Forty-two lucky people can go on this trip to B & B, Tanqueverde and Plants of the Southwest Nurseries. Cost is \$25.00, plus a tip for the driver. No stops for lunch are planned. Bring your own lunches and beverages. Water will be provided. Mark your calendars. Reservations will be taken September 15 and until the quota is met.

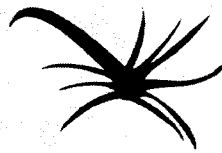
## **November 20. Sunday**

NOT The last Sunday  
Regular club meeting Dorrance Hall 2:00pm  
Program to be determined

## **December 11, Sunday**

HOLIDAY PARTY AND ELECTIONS.  
Noon NOT 2:00pm and not the last Sunday. Webster Auditorium.

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**

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# CACSS Board Meeting minutes for August 28, 2005

There was no Treasurer's report as Tom Ballon was not present.

The first item on the agenda was the CSSA Convention. Kudos to the Convention Committee! Attendees said the 2005 Convention was the "Best Ever". Many of the speakers were from the DBG and their talks were well received--an indication of the quality of the DBG as a research facility. Thanks were offered to the Elliotts who donated eleven plants for the auction--far more than any other source.

We were reminded that the Club needs a new librarian. Volunteers can contact Lee Brownson. The decision was made to purchase The New Cactus Lexicon, in two volumes, as it can be obtained for a reduced price by being ordered early.

A date and three nurseries have been selected for the Fall Trip to Tucson. The price is likely to be \$15.

There was no report concerning the 2006 Show and Sale.

A general discussion was held concerning the improvement of the software used in producing the Central Spine. Mike Gallagher can put it in PDF for the website.

Potential new projects were discussed. Ideas that were mentioned were: Creating a scholarship fund, searching for more and better speakers, purchasing software to create a web message from our newsletter, paying members' registrations to CSSA conventions, working with agencies to conquer the rampant exotic plants which threaten our state, sponsoring research projects. We will need to consider these carefully, keeping our members in mind as we do so.

A nominating committee is needed by the September meeting. Volunteers can contact Lee.

## Landscaping With Succulents.....Tom Gatz

If you missed Judy Mielke's excellent talk at the July meeting, I tried to take good notes. In addition, many of the ideas presented here are from landscaping lectures and classes I have taken at the Desert Botanical Garden and during workshops offered by Master Gardeners and the City of Phoenix. I have picked up many of these tips from Carol Schuler, Carrie Nimmer, Ron Dinschak, Kent Newland, and the horticultural staff at the DBG. Great examples of these concepts in practice can be seen in much of the more recent landscaping at the Desert Botanical Garden entrance and around the new buildings and patios. For example, check out the small, but attractive rock garden near the entrance to the library featuring several Queen Victoria agave.

While summer is the worst time of the year to try to establish landscape plants in the low desert, it is a great time to plan your fall (October/November) planting by noting which areas of your yard will be baking in the summer sun or benefiting from afternoon shade (which even many species of cacti appreciate!).

If you are planning to landscaping all or a portion of your property and want it to look more natural and appealing, here are some tips I have gleaned from the experts over the years.

- Add elevational relief with low (1-1.5 ft max), gently-sloping mounds.
- Use one large year-round focal point (a large, columnar cactus, for example) or a few seasonal focal points (large shrubs that flower at different times of the year) to anchor your landscape setting.
- For a more natural and aesthetically pleasing look, repeat 2 or 3 primary accent species of shrubs and cacti (instead of the cluttered look of a "collectors garden" with one of each species).
- Similarly, use several individuals of the same species of tree.
- Mimic nature by clustering groups of the same species or genus and boulders together, using uneven numbers (3, 5, 7) of each.
- Irregularly space clusters and individuals, leaving some open areas (neutral space) and meandering paths between "planting islands".
- Bury your boulders about 1/3 deep to eliminate the "just fell off truck" look.
- Use plants with contrasting shades, shapes and textures (examples: plant low gray foliage plants in front of taller, green foliage plants).

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# *Around My (Or Your) Desert Garden.....Bob Torrest*

August 31 - The month began with about 2 inches of rain in the first week and a series of overcast and cloudy days. That revived lots of things. In particular, there was new growth on trees including mesquites, palo brea, hybrid palo verde and cascalote. Unfortunately the cooler wet weather was largely gone by mid month and the month ended with near record temperatures.

Since a theme in this series has been "what's flowering" here goes.. Cordia boissieri flowered as a three foot shrub and eventually will make a nice small tree. The San Marcos hibiscus (gossypium) forms a rounded shrub with yellow flowers. Coulter's hibiscus, with its large colorful flowers has somehow seeded itself and spreads a bit each year as does the desert senna (cassia covesii). Caesalpinia mexicana with its bright yellow flowers did it again (even as a 3 ft seedling) as did calliandra. Desert willow won't quit.

Aloe karasbergensis continues to flower and somalensis has had a couple of weeks so far. The miniature agave polyanthiflora has had a 6 ft sike for weeks. Agave lophantha made a 13 ft spike. These mid-sized plants are colorful, take lots of sun and are small enough to have in a few places in the yard. Of course, you don't want to keep agaves in 1 gallon pots in the sun in summer but they will mostly get through in the shade with extra water.

Cactus in flower include many ferocacti, stenocereus gummosus, mammillaria microcarpa, cochemia, some coryphantha and astrophytum, thelocactus setispinus, several trichocereus and echinopsis and some of the large cereus. Overall, best flowering for the summer were mammillaria micocarpa, ferocactus hamatacanthus and acanthodes, stenocereus gummosus, trichocereus huascha (and some others) and acanthocereus pentagonus (these climb into desert trees and fill them with flowers and red fruit but can eventually overwhelm the tree).

About 20 years ago we put some columnar cacti seedlings into the ground after allowing them to grow to a foot or so in larger pots. Now the tallest of these include neocardenasia herzogiana(at 15 ft in the shade...but also fine in the sun), trichocereus terscheckii at 13 ft in a shaded spot with arms at 4 and 6 ft, cardons to 15ft and stenocereus marginatus to 13 ft with up to 7 short columns in a cluster. Stenocereus pruinosus reached 14 ft under a tall mesquite several years ago before losing the top 5 ft in heavy wind. The first three cited make good substitutes for sahuaros and all are faster The tallest of some other columnars include neobuxbaumias - polylopha (aztec column) at 6.5 ft and tetetzo at 8 ft. Pachycereus pecten-aboriginum make attractive seedlings but one in the ground mostly in shade looked scrawny until recently and is now at 10 ft with an arm at 6 ft (Cardons are more rapid, substantial and satisfying). Cephalocereus senilis has reached just 4.5 ft. Stenocereus stellatus can get some size but often breaks or has other problems and generally doesn't seem to be happy here. If you don't want to wait 20 years for nice columnar specimens try starting with good sized cuttings.

**FINALLY - CACSS MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO 10 PLANTS IN 1 GALLON POTS (FREE) CHOSEN FROM CACTI, AGAVES, ALOES, ETC. AT OUR PLANT SALE ON OCTOBER 8 AND 9 (SEE THE NOTICE OR CALL)**

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- Add "movement" to your landscape with native bunch grass accents.
- "Soften" the cacti, agaves and rocks by inter-planting with leafy desert shrubs (for example: a prickly pear and a fairy duster).
- Add architectural "exclamation points" by using specimen plants in large pots, especially in transition areas near patio, entry-ways and walkways. Again, cluster them. (See the Central Spine Jan. 2003 article on pots for additional ideas).
- Use one species of shrub or perennial to "knit" the entire landscape together (such as bur sage, desert marigold, or creosote).
- Use gravel, rock mulch and boulders of the same color for a natural look. Use angular or weathered rock; avoid round cobble unless near a water feature.
- To combine higher water shrubs with low-water succulents, try planting the plants that need less water and better drainage higher on a berm and the leafy plants at the base of the berm where the water will collect. The elevational relief will also allow the higher succulents to make more of a statement.

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# Mini Bits.....Ray Daley

MINI BITS.....when I'm not outside playing in the yard, I've got another hobby (genealogy) which involves a lot of book research, and in doing so I've seen a wide range of quality of presentation in the over 1400 books I've had off the shelves, from the excellent to the pretty awful, with the biggest and most common fault being a lack of an index. I don't even bother with those. So when I checked out a book from the CACSS library and found some presentation problems, I can't help but comment. The book is the Ferocactus book (whose author and exact title escape me at the moment), and it isn't a bad book, per se, just deficient in several areas: there is no index; the species descriptive sections are not arranged alphabetically, or in any other readily discernable order; there are 2 separate sections of color photographs, with some subject material overlap; in one species description, the same incident is related in 3 of 5 consecutive paragraphs; the font varies between sections; and the b/w pictures are unusable for field identification (or so it would seem). Well, I guess you go with what you have, not what you wish you had (right Rummy?). There, does that sound enough like some cranky old Sun City geezer with too much time on his hands? .....did you know there is a Plumeria society in town? check with Celeste Gornick if you're interested. And if that doesn't do it for you, how about the Holly Society of America, or the International Oak Society, the Internatinal Ornamental Crabapple Society, American Willow Growers, or the International Golden Fossil Tree Society, Inc? (now just what the heck is that?).....Carol Clapp is back to walking without a cane.....don't even think about asking Jo Davis to wash your windows!.....when we first moved out here we heard that you should add gypsum to the soil to loosen it up, so we did. Several years later, I'm still digging up 'undigested' lumps of the stuff. Then the other day I ran across the following in a soil amendment article by Sharon Atwood in the newsletter of a local nursery. To quote it partially: "And don't let that transplanted mid-western neighbor tell you to use gypsum to soften the soil. I used hundreds of pounds of the stuff - when I lived in Iowa. Not here in Arizona, however. Gypsum works because it's calcium **sulfate**. 16% of that 50 pound bag - 8 pounds - is sulfur. But the other 42 pounds is calcium. And guess what our caliche soils are? That's right; caliche is **calcium** carbonate. You really don't want to add still more calcium to your soil!"....."...."To those who have taken up the delightful, absorbing, intensely gratifying, maddening, and exhausting activity of gardening..dig, plant, weed, work, and read, read, read...be grateful when something works out and do not grieve too much when it doesn't" - Elisabeth Sheldon.....RayD

Continues from page 4

## ALSO CONSIDER.....

- Planting species like cholla and native bunch grasses where the western sun will back-light them.
- Replicating natural associations like a cactus and a "nurse plant" growing together.
- Think of flowers as a seasonal "bonus" instead of a year-round "focus" and depend instead on variations in shades of green and plant textures to provide year-round visual interest.
- A nice 3-way combination is the boulder/succulent/perennial combo. The perennial (penstemon, desert marigold, etc.) softens the boulder and provides seasonal color, while the succulent (cacti, agave or aloe) provides year-round visual interest with the boulder as a backdrop.

## HARDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

- Walls, fences, walkways and seating areas provide a touch of civilization to a natural landscape and help showcase the plants.
- "Pull" from the architecture of the house for your hardscape (brick, tile, adobe, wood).
- Stone walls (rock veneer over cinder blocks) provide a great backdrop for desert plants. Wedge old stockings filled with dirt to create "planting pockets" between rocks in the wall.
- 18" walls are the best height for seating.
- Add color by painting boring, cinder-block walls (be brave).
- Use old and/or interesting gates to add character.
- Use vine-covered arbors between areas of the garden to give the illusion of separate garden "rooms".

I hope these suggestions are helpful. Tom

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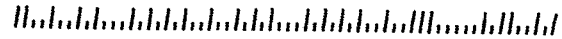
GET READY NOW WITH AZ PREPAREDNESS PLAN. AZZUL GOV



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ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT  
CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS: OCTOBER 10, 2005  
SEND TO GALYNKJ@COX.NET

85254+5254



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## Tucson Buying Trip

We are going to have another fantastic buying trip to Tucson, November 12. We will be going to three fabulous nurseries just loaded with plants you will want to bring home. For the nominal price of \$15 per member, non-refundable, you can ride to Tucson with 42 other cactus and succulent enthusiasts. The price does not include lunch so you will need to bring your own sack lunch with you.

We will be leaving promptly at 6 a.m. from the Desert Botanical Garden parking lot. Remember if you over sleep, you are out of luck. We expect to return to the DBG by 6:30 p.m.

The three nurseries we will be visiting, probably in this order, are B&B Nursery, Tanque Verde Greenhouses and Plants of the Southwest. There will be a discount of 10% at B&B and Plants of the SW [plants only]. Credit cards are accepted at all nurseries (only MC and Visa at Tanque Verde.)

To make reservations and payment: contact Lois Schneberger, 480-946-8373 or [lschneberger@cox.net](mailto:lschneberger@cox.net). Or you can send your check to her at 8689 E Roosevelt Circle, Scottsdale, AZ 85257. Checks should be made out to CACSS. Deadline is October 30.

Please wear your badges so new members will feel welcome. You also need to bring your own boxes to transport the plants you buy. Make sure they are clearly labeled with your name.