CENTRAL SPINE

December 2023

Facebook Cactus of the Month. Part of Cliff Fielding's ferocactus collection.

NEW LOGO FOR CACSS Photos and text by Logo Committee Chair Sue Hakala

Several years ago when the Education Group developed a new club brochure to educate the public about the CACSS, we all knew that we needed a new contemporary club logo. Then COVID hit. Plans for a new logo were put on hold.

This last winter seemed like the right time to begin the process of designing a new one. I first researched what other clubs were doing around the country, then took some examples to the CACSS board for them to review and choose a style that they liked. Of course, lots of different ones were favorites, but it gave a general direction.

Erik Ruggaard, man of great patience.

I asked at a club meeting for volunteers that would like to be involved in creating the logo. The very first hand that went up came from new member Erik Ruggaard. Erik told me that he had professional graphic design work experience. Yippee! Other volunteers include Kim Andrews, a board member, Nadia Whiteside, who just spent months with a group creating a new logo for the company she works for, and Wayne Kramer.

As members live all over the valley and Prescott, we chose to meet via zoom for all our meetings which Nadia set up. I shared the club logos that the board had reviewed and members of the Logo Group did some research on their own, sharing more logo styles they liked.

We quickly agreed on the desire to have a clean, contemporary graphic that would be used well into the future and would represent what a growing vigorous group we are. We also wanted it to work in black and white, color, down to one inch in size for printed materials, social media, and bigger on a T-shirt, hat, tote bag, etc.

We chose to have a central Arizona plant in the logo. As Desert Botanical Garden uses an agave and the Tucson C&SS uses a saguaro, we knew we couldn't use them. I did some research to select central Arizona cactus and succulent plants that might lend themselves to graphic interpretation. Nadia found photos for all the plants so we could become familiar with them. After reviewing them, we asked Erik to draw our top choices.

After several meetings and redrawing, and redrawing, and redrawing, the healthy, growing prickly pear was chosen. Erik selected the type face and colors, and after lots of discussion and input from the group, put it all together.

The Logo Group's top two choices were presented to the Board in July 2023. Everyone voted and the overwhelming majority chose the design we are using. It was decided to unveil the new logo at the 50th Anniversary party in November.

Erik deserves a big round of thanks from all of us for his great eye and LOTS of patience. He did an amazing job of combining all the input he got from the group, and, somehow pleasing us all. I hope you agree.

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

EST 1973

A special thank you to Erik and Nick Diomede for their help with the new newsletter masthead.

FIFTY YEARS OF FELLOWSHIP AND THE LOVE OF CACTI AND SUCCULENTS By 50th Anniversary Party Chair Pat Adler

November 19 has arrived. Volunteers are scurrying around the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center to set up the room for the big 50th anniversary event and reveal of our new logo. The caterer, ChefaGoGo, arrives to arrange the beverages and appetizers. Nick Diomede brings in the 32 donated prizes (gorgeous cacti, wonderful pots, artwork, and gift certificates) that everyone admires as they enter. Members are reminded to pick up their new lifetime membership pin and/or their trophy pin (for those who won trophies at the Annual Show and Sale).

Club members enjoying some socializing while waiting for their table to be called for the buffet. Photo by Nick Diomede.

It's one o'clock and time to get started. President Cricket Peterson delivers the welcome and makes several announcements as well as introducing next year's Board members. She then calls up Emily Adler, JR Trevas, Lois Schneberger, Mary Miller, Pat Adler, and Nick Diomede for congratulatory certificates that acknowledged their efforts to organize and execute the celebration.

The historical slide show created by Lois and JR entertains everyone. The program handed out at the entrance contains an abbreviated version of our 50 year history compiled by our Historian, Lois Schneberger. Now it's time for food!

Celebrants head to the buffet tables. The cakes are on display. Wow! They are beautiful, artful and delicious. Look it's the new logo on one cake! Honey Moon Sweets produced a fantastic desert scene on the other cake. Yum! Yum!

Thank you, Lois, for donating all the historic postcards that serve as table decorations and party favors. Each guest receives an envelope with logo stickers, logo sticky-note pads, logo pot stakes, and the new bookmark. Now for the raffle. As the numbers are picked, the winners head to the prize table to pick their chosen treasure.

The party ends at 4 p.m. Volunteers get busy doing the tear down and clean up. Great, we are finished before 5 p.m. Time to go home. When's the next celebration?

Above, members enjoying a presentation. Photo by Nick Diomede. Below, the beautiful and delicious cakes made by Honey Moon Sweet. Photo by Sue Hakala.

CACSS MISSION STATEMENT By Kathi Mertzger

For 50 years, CACSS has presented educational programs, supported conservation efforts and promoted interest in cacti and succulents to those in our community. The many purposes of CACSS are shown on our website and other collateral material. However, CACSS has not had a defined mission statement since our organization began. Mission statements are a clear and concise way to describe to the community why an organization exists.

In March, the CACSS Mission Statement Task Force began the job of creating a mission statement for our organization. We reviewed mission statements from like organizations, incorporated language from our purposes, ran ideas through artificial intelligence, and ensured our final ideas were grammatically correct. Ultimately, the Task Force proposed the mission statement:

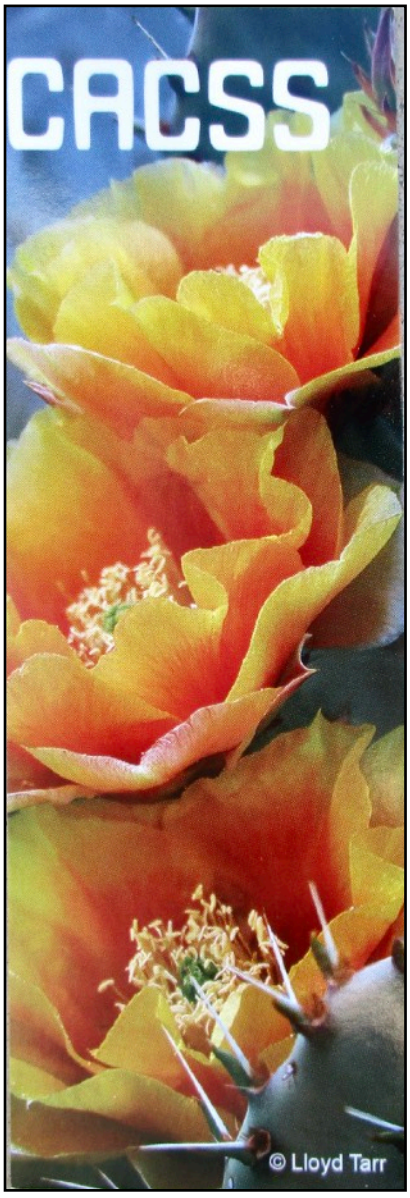
> The mission of the CACSS is to inspire knowledge and appreciation of cacti and succulents through education, programs and conservation.

It was approved by the Board in July. A big thank you to Pat Adler, Kim Andrews, Don Begley, Debbie Bertolet, Nick Diomede, and Kathi Metzger for their important work on this undertaking. We look forward to further promoting the work of CACSS to the community through our mission statement.

Opuntia sp. by Tom Gatz.

BOOKMARK By Bookmark Committee Chair Sue Hakala

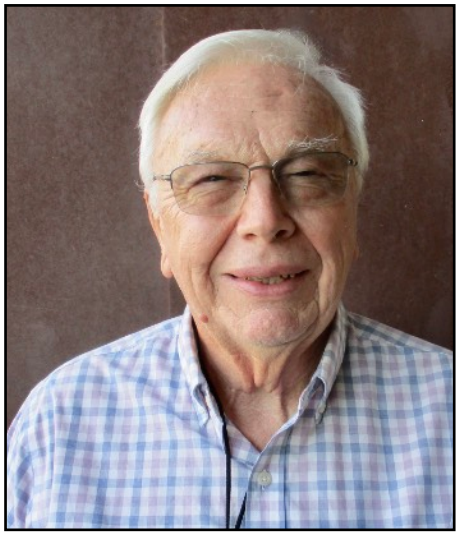
The group that designed the logo was asked by the Board to develop a bookmark for Society use and to distribute it at the 50th anniversary celebration. The group met and decided that we should use a central Arizona plant for the photo.



An email went out to all members asking for photos of a central Arizona plant that would fit the bookmark format with dimensions given. Many excellent quality photos were submitted, making the decision as to which one to use a very difficult one.

Nadia Whiteside, Kim Andrews, Erik Ruggaard and I all had our favorites. We ultimately decided to use a prickly pear in bloom to compliment our logo and club brochure. It was not an easy choice as there were several very good ones to choose from.

Member Lloyd Tarr (below) was very excited that his photo was selected. Erik then got busy and laid everything out. Revisions were made in the wording, then more, then more, until we were all satisfied. We thank Erik for his patience and perseverance. The Board approved the bookmark and wording at the September meeting. We all hope you like it too.



50TH ANNIVERSARY DOOR PRIZE DONORS By Nick Diomede and the 2023 CACSS Board

What an appropriate time to say thank you. As we celebrate a half-century of growth, passion and friendship, the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society is filled with immense gratitude for the incredible support we have received from our generous community. Our 50th anniversary event was a wonderful success, and it wouldn't have been possible without the kindness and generosity of individuals and businesses who believe in our mission.

We extend our deepest thanks to the following donors for providing the fantastic door prizes that added an extra layer of joy to our celebration:

- Arizona Cactus Sales arizonacactussales.com
- Boyce Thompson Arboretum btarboretum.org
- Debbi Dutra Pretty Prickly Designs djsdutra@gmail.com
- Desert Botanical Garden dbg.org
- Dyana E. Hesson dyanahesson.com
- Eric Lundberg pioneerhorn@yahoo.com
- Joan Baron www.joanbaron.com
- Ken Luiten luit6987@gmail.com
- Lauren Marks laurendmarks@gmail.com
- Maria Salvucci salvuccimaria@gmail.com
- Veronica Countryman Instagram@azveronikamakes

Your contributions made our anniversary event not only memorable but also highlighted the spirit of community that defines the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society. The passion and dedication of each donor shines through, reflecting a shared commitment to the appreciation and preservation of these unique and fascinating plants.

As we move forward into the next chapter of our society's journey, we carry with us the warmth of your support. Your generosity has inspired us to continue fostering a love for cacti and succulents in our community. We are truly fortunate to have such wonderful friends and partners.

Once again, thank you for helping us make our 50th anniversary celebration a spectacular and unforgettable occasion. We look forward to continuing our shared journey of exploration, education and appreciation for the incredible world of cacti and succulents.

AGAVE AQUACULTURE: WHO KNEW? Photos and text by Tom Gatz

Most everyone at Desert Botanical Garden knows that the quickest way to kill a cactus, agave or other succulent is by over-watering it. So who would have known that one of the quickest ways to get an agave bulbil to grow roots would be by submerging its base in water? Desert Botanical Garden's Assistant Director for Plant Sales and Production Kenny Zelov did. Getting those tiny agave bulbils from a bloom stalk to root when planted in potting mix is often hit and miss and can take some time. However, Kenny kick-starts the process by submerging the bottoms of the bulbils in trays of water. He often sees roots in just a few days with almost 100% success. After a few weeks, and once the roots are an inch or two long, we pop them out, transplant them to a well-draining potting mix and grow them out for the next plant sale.

Kenny Zelov holds a tray of *Agave karwinskii* bulbils that produced roots in just a few weeks when grown in water. Look for them at a future plant sale.

If you just want one or two bulbils harvested from your agave bloom stalk to root quickly, you can do this at home with a shot glass half-filled with water; sort of like we used to do to get an avocado seed to root in a glass of water on our windowsill. Or, you can mass produce them like Kenny does and gift them to your friends. If it's a rare or unusual variety, check with Kenny. He may want some of your extras for the next plant sale.

Rooted *Agave karwinskii* bulbil ready for transplanting. Bonus info: this species is often used to produce mescal. A variety called 'Barril' is said to be "very complex, dry and elegant with notes of citrus peel."

Be sure to visit CACSS on the web at: centralarizonacactus.org, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube at: CentralArizonaCactus, and members only at: CentralArizonaCactus Swap and Shop.

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THE GENUS SANSEVIERIA: A Pictorial Guide to the Species by Robert H. Webb and Leonard E. Newton Reviewed by Wayne MacDonald

Sansevieria lovers have a new reference for their favorite plants! This book is the most detailed description of this enigmatic genus to date. I should mention up front that one of the authors, Webb, is co-owner of Arid Lands Greenhouses in Tucson, AZ and a friend of CACSS who has donated many plants and spoken at several meetings.

This is a serious and deeply researched book providing photos and botanical descriptions for 89 recognized species, with separate tables for species that either can't be confirmed or are considered problematic. The introduction is well worth the read and provides an excellent overview of the detail botanists must undertake to rectify species names. The authors provide very clear reasons for these difficulties. Consider first the temporal aspect of plant naming, which has spanned centuries, and how taxonomic conventions have changed and matured over time. For example, Carl Linnaeus included known sansevieria species in his book *Species Plantarum* which was published way back in 1753.

Sansevieria concinna

Another problem with accurately naming species is locating the original populations given how humans have destroyed habitats and how political strife prevents current access to some locations. The term "type species" is not part of the formal code botanically, but it is generally understood as being a sample specimen which can then be referenced as an example. This is why identifying the location for the original population is such an important part of the science behind this book. So, even if you have an herbarium specimen, a "dead squashed plant" as a type species, there's no way to know that it's not a hybrid if you can't find the original population.

A further complication that is well known to sansevieria lovers is that the plants have moved taxonomically several times. A recent search of the International Plant Names Index (www.ipni.org) places sansevieria under the genus dracaena. The authors contend that the placement is still actually unresolved. Indeed, my copy of *Plant Systematics: A Phylogenetic Approach*, Fourth Edition, places them under the Ruscaceae family.

Each of the individual species entries begins with the protologue. This botanical term guides the reader toward everything associated with a species in a valid publication, e.g. description, diagnosis, illustrations, references, geographical data, citation of specimens, etc. The authors also provide a proposed subgenus for each species:

capitulatus, paniculatus and sansevieria. With a bit of digging, I was able to find a DNA study performed by Webb et al. providing statistical analysis for their contention[1]. This notion is not yet generally agreed upon, and further research is needed, but it's an exciting proposition and one to watch for in the future.

Detailed information is provided for each recognized species and is the heart of this excellent book. I found welcomed guidance to positively identify the species in my own collection. For example, photo 1 above is my *S. concinna* (Lavranos 5933) which I won in a raffle at my very first CACSS Propagation Education Group meeting. Coincidentally, this plant was donated by co-author Webb.

Each entry includes a reference to other similar species which had me flipping back and forth to see the commonalities for myself. One of the many things I learned from this book is that my *S. cylindrica* may just be the cultivar 'Skyline Light' given its vivid banding (see photo 2 below).

The brief description for *S. cylindrica* starts with, "This acaulescent and rhizomatous species is known for its distichous, cylindrical leaves." I highly recommend purchasing a botanical glossary of terms[2] which will help you untangle the scientific lexicon so vital to accurately identifying plant species.

This well researched book provides definitive guidance in resolving the uncertainties surrounding these plants. Unfortunately, it is out of print so take advantage of the CACSS library which has two copies. Members can check out books for up to two months, although you may find yourself burning through it in a single day.

Want More?

1. Andrew S. Baldwin and Robert H. Webb, Ph.D., (2016), *The Genus Sansevieria: An Introduction to Molecular (DNA) Analysis and Preliminary Insights to Intrageneric Relationships*, *Sansevieria 34*, *The Journal of the International Sansevieria Society*, 14-26, ISBN 1473-3765.
2. A well regarded botanical glossary is James G. Harris and Melinda Woolf Harris, *Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary* Spring Lake Publishing.
3. See CACSS *Central Spine* article September, 2021, *A Stolon By Any Other Name*, page 11. Please note that this new book identifies this species type locality in Mozambique whereas my article incorrectly references Tanzania.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE By Cricket Peterson

It's been great to serve as the club president for three years. It helps when you have an awesome board to help get things done and who are always there to support efforts to make things better for our club.

2023 has been a good year with an amazing show and sale, silent auction, great speakers, and as always, members that always pitch in to volunteer when events and projects need to happen. I am thankful for members who donated plants and their time to keep our club moving forward and to raise money for our club.

A special thanks to Pat Adler, Emily Adler, JR Trevis, Nick Diomede, Mary Miller, and Lois Schneberger for putting together a wonderful 50th Anniversary celebration for the club. It was a beautiful setting at the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center and perfect weather. Thank you to all for your help.

The club will be in good hands with our new President Don Begley and his leadership.

Please give a moment of silence to those members we lost this year.

Kent Newland Diana Decker Loren Rodewald

Debbi Bertolet David Johnson

There is no meeting or party in December. See you January 28.

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IN MEMORIAM: DEBBI BERTOLET By Bette Beck Photo by Tom Gatz

Goodbye to our beautiful friend, Debbi Bertolet. Debbi passed away on November 27 after battling pancreatic cancer for two plus years.

No words can describe Debbi. She was bigger than life, a ball of energy. You always knew when Debbi was in the room. You heard her first, then you saw her radiant smile.

CACSS played an important role in Debbi's life. She was a member for several years. One of her most memorable experiences was attending the Huntington Library CSSA show in 2018 with several individuals from this chapter. She came home with a greater appreciation of succulents and several new friends (no surprise).

Debbi was passionate about plants and people. This year Debbi wanted to make a lasting impact by joining the CACSS board as a member-at-large, even though she was undergoing experimental treatment. She always looked for opportunities to share with the public what an amazing organization we are.

Debbi's CACSS friends were a source of strength for her. Debbi, you showed us how to live life to the fullest and how to die with style. You will be missed my friend!

CENTRALARIZONACACTUS FACEBOOK PAGE By Michelle Schrade

Weather in Phoenix has been especially warm for this time of year. Many of our group FB posters shared photos of their “bonus blooms.” It’s been enjoyable to experience such a long season of flowering. Pictures help tide us over until aloes and other succulents begin their winter bloom season.

Several lucky CACSS members posted photos of their visit to member Eric Lundberg’s garden. A special, on-site PEG meeting (morning and afternoon) was held there on November 18. Sixteen lucky people attended and learned hands-on how to plant and grow cactus from seed. Members Tristan Davis, Ken Luiten and Tom Briggs helped Eric demonstrate the proper care, planting technique, soil, water, and temperature needs of cactus seedlings. Attendees were given goody bags with tools and a template to use in their future endeavors. Posts also showed pictures of Eric’s beautiful garden and greenhouses.

Succulent of the Month: lithops posted November 18 by Cliff Fielding.

Attendees of the CACSS 50th anniversary celebration at Rio Salado Audubon Center posted photos of the lovely event. A good time was had by all as attendees were treated to food, drink, dessert, raffle, gifts, a special presentation, and socializing with fellow Society members.

Each month a photo of a cactus and succulent posted by CentralArizonaCactus members is selected for recognition.

Cactus of the Month: ferocactus posted November 18 by Cliff Fielding on the cover.

BEGINNER'S CORNER: GETTING READY FOR WINTER By Sue Hakala

Read the articles from the *Central Spine* newsletter below for helpful information on how to treat your cactus and succulent plants in the winter. Note the page number the article is on, then just click on the green title, then open link, and it will take you to the newsletter that has the article in it.

It took me several decades of trying to remember which plant got which piece of frost cloth as it came out of my plastic storage bin. It finally occurred to me to put a label attached with a clothespin on the frost cloth when I took it off and stored it for winter. I now do this with shade cloth as well. Makes it all so much easier the next year.

Winter Care

- 10/10 Temperature Guide (when to cover plants) by Tom Gatz, 1/03, page 2
- Altering Microclimates During Winter by Kim Andrews, 3/20, page 10
- Altering Microclimates During Winter by Kim Andrews, 1/21, page 7
- Breaking Dormancy by Kim Andrews, 4/20, page 6
- Cacti and Succulents in Cold Weather, by Russ Hintz, 12/00, page 3
- Crash Course on Winter-Growing Bulbs by Celeste Gornick, 10/08, page 5
- Frost Damage 2004 by Jim Elliott, 3/04, page 2
- Frost on the Cactus by Kent C. Newland, 1/76, page 6
- Frost Protection found within Leo Martin's *From Your President* column, 1/99, page 1
- Growing in the Desert Series: Coping with Wet Winters by Mark Dimmitt, 1/12, page 4
- Gymnocalycium Habitat and Winter Culture by Mike Goodson, 8/85, page 6
- Insects in Winter by Sue Hakala, 1/20, page 21
- Some Observations on Winter by Joan Skirvin, 10/92, 8/85, page 4
- Turn of the Seasons by Leo Martin, 9/02, page 2
- Winter-growing Bulbs: Part II by Celeste Gornick, 3/09, page 6
- Winter Growing Plants found within Leo Martin's From Your President column, 12/01, page 1
- Winter Growing Mesembs Through the Year by Leo Martin, 7/01, page 1
- Wintering Plants in Phoenix by Leo Martin, 11/0, page 3
- Winter Prep by Sue Hakala, 11/20, page 2
- Winter Protection by Leo Martin, 10/02, page 2
- Winter Watering found within Leo Martin's From Your President column, 2/01, page 1
- Winterizing Your Adeniums by Tom Gatz, 11/14, page 10

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS

Four new members were added this year: Cindy Capek, Nick Diomede, Steve Martinez, and Steve Plath. The Board has approved Honorary Lifetime Membership's for all presidents.

- 1995 Vera Gamet
- 1996 Carolyn O'Malley, Jocelyn and H.B. Wallace, Frank Hennessey (founding member)
- 2000 Robert Moulis (founding member)
- 2001 Elaine and Jerry Chapman
- 2008 Jim and Electra Elliot, Joan and Stan Skirvin
- 2015 Lois Schneberger, Doug Dawson, Leo Martin, Scott McMahon, Gard Roper
- 2018 Cathy Babcock, Lee Brownson
- 2019 Dan Smith, Jo Davis, Wayne Whipple
- 2022 Mike Gallagher, Sue Hakala, Beth Kirkpatrick
- 2023 Steve Plath, Steve Martinez, Chris Ginkel, Nick Diomede, Cindy Capek

Prickly pear created by Nick Diomede with assistance of AI.

2024 CACSS DUES ARE DUE By Membership Chair Beth Kirkpatrick

Your 2024 dues renewal is due by 12/31/2023. We operate on a calendar year basis.

There are three ways to pay:

1. At a meeting
2. PayPal or credit card on our website. The PayPal record has all the information needed for renewal: https://centralarizonacactus.org/membership/
3. Print the membership form on our website and surface mail it to our P.O. Box. This method is the least desirable as the post office box is picked up infrequently.

If you are unsure if your 2024 dues are paid, email Beth Kirkpatrick at centralarizonacactus@gmail.com

Ferocactus latispinus by Veronica Countryman

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

Officers: President **Cricket Peterson** | Vice President **Chris Ginkel** | Secretary **Joanne Johnson** | Treasurer **Nick Diomede**

Members-at Large: **Emily Adler** | **Pat Adler** | **Kim Andrews** | **Don Begley** | **Debbi Bertolet** | **David Hemming** | **Elaine Hu** | **Joan McDonnell** | **Kathy Metzger** | **Mary Miller**

CACSS PROGRAM AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023

- Annual Show/Sale Chair 2023: **Nick Diomede**
- Archivist/Historian: **Lois Schneberger**
- Auction Chairs: **Chris Ginkel, Nick Diomede**
- Audit Committee: **Mike Gallagher**
- Central Arizona Cactus Swap and Shop Page: **Chris Ginkel**
- CSSA Representative: **Mike Gallagher**
- Facebook Coordinators: **Tom Briggs, Chris Ginkel, Celeste Gornick, Ken Luiten, Thom Young**
- Holiday Party 2023: **Sue Glenn**
- Co-Librarians: **Diana Rogers and Nancy Mumpton**
- Keeping in Touch with Members: **Jo Davis**
- Membership: **Beth Kirkpatrick**
- Newsletter Editor: **Sue Hakala**
- Private Plant Sales at meetings: **Sue Tyrrel**
- Programs: **Elaine Hu**
- Propagation Education Group (PEG): **Tristan Davis**
- Pumice Sales: **Tom Briggs**
- Website: **Anna-Rosa Lampis**

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS WILL NO LONGER BE PROVIDED IN THE NEWSLETTER AS ISSUES HAVE OCCURRED. To contact a board member, committee chair, or specialist, use the Contact Us form on the club website. When filling in the form, put the name of the person in the subject field that the message is intended for so it can be forwarded to the appropriate person.
Just click on the direct link below:
https://centralarizonacactus.org/contact-us/

SPECIALISTS TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

- **Tom Briggs** Manages the pumice pile.
- **Tristan Davis** Specializations include plant propagation and heading PEG (Propagation Education Group).
- **Doug Dawson** Specializations include growing from seed, flora of Namibia, *Lithops*, other *Mesembs*, *Melocactus*, and miniature cacti and succulents of Arizona.
- **Chris Ginkel** Co-manages the Facebook page and CACSS Swap and Shop page.
- **Anna Rosa Lampis** Manages the website.
- **Ken Luiten** Manages the Instagram page
- **Dean Patrick** Specializations in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting, rooting cacti, *Agave,* and *Aloe*.
- **Diana Rogers** and **Nancy Mumpton** Co-librarians for CACSS collection
- **Sue Tyrrel** Manages selling at meetings.

Always looking for more members to list here.

Any comments, suggestions, thank yous, etc., please submit to the *Central Spine* Editor Sue Hakala.

Prickly pear fruit ready for harvest by Gardner's Path.