

Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society
February, 1993

This month

Our monthly meeting will be held February 28, 1993, at 2pm in the Webster Auditorium. This month's program will be a workshop to prepare for our Annual Cactus and Succulent Show. Members will discuss rules, preparation, classifications, judging. Bring your plants in for hands-on preparation and identification during this meeting; a misidentified plant will be disqualified during the show. Volunteers are still needed, so you can sign up during the meeting.

A Board of Directors Meeting will be held before the general meeting at 12:45pm in the Archer House. All members are invited to attend.

Anyone who would like a copy of the bylaws can sign up on the table at the meeting, and we will have them available at the March meeting.

Rosters will be available at this meeting. Remember, if you haven't paid dues, you will not be included in the roster.

Last Month

Stan Skirvin discussed plant classification for the Show. He noted that divisions were revised last year. One suggestion was that Discocactus should be separated from Melocactus. Any comments on this change, or any other proposed changes should be communicated to Stan.

Bud Terrell talked about plant staging. He had some tips on pot preparation, and plant trimming and displaying. Ultimately, you should like the way the plant looks in the pot.

Miles Anderson talked about plant preparation and choosing pot size in relation to plant size. Miles relieved us all by stating that he wouldn't be showing plants this year (since he is one of the judges).

Dr. Joe McAuliffe, Director of Research for the Desert Botanical Garden, discussed the history of the Saguaro National Monument, and dispelled myths about the "bacterial necrosis disease" afflicting saguaros. He also talked about the changes in the size and maturity of the populations throughout the last 60 years.

Other stuff

Did you know that the Birthday Bank is the primary (if not only) source of funds for our library?

Be generous--have a birthday twice a year, or contribute five cents a year instead of a penny, or just empty out your change drawer one month, if you feel like it.



There are lots of interesting books out there, but since they have such a limited audience, they tend to go out of print quickly, we need to be able to purchase them quickly. Then, since the whole point of the library is to educate the membership, take advantage of these books! There's a lot of information available. For example, Frank Hennessey donated several books before he moved to Florida. Check them out!

Next Month

Next month has a full plate:

March 5,6,7: The Phoenix Home and Garden Show: "Floriade" at Hance Park, the I-10 deck park. Edra Drake needs volunteers to staff the booth. We will be answering questions, selling plants, giving freebies, and having a petting zoo to teach kids about plants that are safe to touch and not safe to touch, in an attempt to get kids interested in plants. We need to borrow tables; if you have one to lend, we can pick it up at your house and return it there.

March 13 and 14: The Maricopa County Extension Services Garden Club Show. Edra Drake is also organizing this event. The same kind of activities will occur at this show.

March 25, 26, 27 and 28: THE ANNUAL CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY PLANT SHOW. Volunteers are still needed; contact Bob Welsh to volunteer.

The DBG will hold a plant sale the weekend of our show, and we will need a few volunteers to staff a plant information and tips booth.

ON THE DRY SIDE
by Timothy Chapman

Those of you who have seen the paintings and prints that I make shouldn't be too surprised that my most profound influence is one of the true icons of Western Art: Dr. Seuss. His surreal landscapes and fantastic creatures were the products of a creative imagination unmatched by Dali, and they had a warmth that Magritte clearly lacked. It's that same sense of whimsy that draws me to many of the succulent plants. To me, a Dorstenia would look perfectly at home somewhere "on beyond zebra".

Most of the 170 or so members of the genus Dorstenia are non-succulent herbs and shrubs; only about a dozen are truly adept at the fine art of water storage. The group, named after the German botanist Theodore Dorsten, is spread throughout the tropical regions of Africa, Madagascar, India and the Americas.

Taxonomically speaking, we are now in the Mulberry family, or Moraceae, which includes the more familiar fig (Ficus). As is usually the case with plants, flower structure is everything when it comes to classification. Dorstenia's special floral innovation is the hypanthodium, a kind of flat, asterisk-shaped inflorescence sporting tentacle-like bracts. The flowers themselves are inconspicuous and unisexual. Both male and female flowers are crowded onto the central disk of the hypanthodium in some cases. Such intimacy is good news for growers since it means that many species are self-fertile.

Dorstenia has a clever method of seed dispersal. In a process called differential contraction, which works sort of like squeezing a wet bar of soap out of your hand, seeds are shot out up to a meter away from the parent plant. Bumps on the surface of the hypanthodium are not seeds, but everted fruits. The seeds have already left and are palling around with the Astrophytums a yard away.

The species most commonly encountered in cultivation are probably D. crispa and D. foetida. D. crispa is common in the undergrowth of dry Kenyan forests. A plant will commence growing as a single stem to a height of about 15 cm. After that, it begins to branch from the base and can reach 40 cm. The surface of the stems have a lovely pattern of spirally arranged leaf scars. The leaves themselves are dark green and elongate with dentate margins. The hypanthodia are about 2 cm in diameter. D. foetida comes from the highlands of southern Arabia and grows in rocky clefts. It is more richly branched than D. crispa, particularly in shaded cultivation, where shoots grow up to 15 cm. In a sunny position, however, the branches will unite into an irregular and nicely deformed caudex resembling that of Pachypodium brevicaule. Both species need a loose, sandy-humus soil, and plenty of water during the summer growing period. Plants tend to drop some or all of their leaves in winter, when they should be allowed a dry rest.

If Dr. Seuss had described the genus, it might have gone something like this:

Deep in the forests of southeastern Kenya
Grow odd little plants by the name of Dorstenia.
They sit with their leaf scars and fancy fake flowers
And take aim and spit seeds for hours and hours.
The seeds start to sprout, and the sprouts start to grow
Into little Dorstenias all in a row.
And with great careful aim from their leafy green tops
They spit seeds right back at their Moms and their Pops.

FROM DEBRA'S SHADEHOUSE

I've been watching the new Administration in Washington as to how to include everyone in the process of governing, building and managing. The lessons I am learning are worth sharing with you as the new CACSS Board takes office and begins its year long adventure in governing.

BE INCLUSIVE.

We want to share our concerns, outlook and crazy ideas with you and hope that you will share yours with us. Board meetings are open to all members and you are invited to join us in the Archer House at 12:45 pm before our regular program at 2pm. Also, welcome guests and new members as you would new neighbors. Enlarging our circle is fun and brings new knowledge to the entire group.

SHARE IN THE WORK & REJOICE IN THE REWARDS

We want this year to be fun and informative! Thus, we all have a stake in the present and future of the Society. Your participation in the monthly programs, special activities, committee work and other activities will enhance the pleasure of participation. As the saying goes, "You get what you put in."

DON'T KEEP GOOD THINGS SECRET

Talk us up to other groups you know and spread the good word about what we're doing. There are lots of green thumbs, young and old, who would love to know about the Society. Our March Show is a unique community event to celebrate. Reach out to school groups, neighbors, community bulletin boards and other places or people you know. At the same time, bring information to the Board that you think could be important for fundraising, programming, community outreach, etc.

TAKE RISKS

Adventurous undertakings are risky, exhilarating and necessary to shaping our future. We've dedicated ourselves to partnering with the Desert Botanical Garden and the Tucson Cactus Society. Let's use cooperative change as a positive means for moving forward together.

I am excited about the great ideas that so many of you have shared with the Board. The the spirit of volunteerism and camaraderie is invigorating. Please don't hesitate to let me and the Board know what's on your minds, in your hearts and in your gardens. Let's have a great year!

Dedicated to our success,



Debra Korobkin
CACSS '93 President

