

CENTRAL SPINE

NEWSLETTER OF CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

JUNE 2000

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America holds a national convention every other year -- Las Vegas in 1999, Los Angeles in 2001 -- and various affiliate clubs hold regional conventions in even years. The Henry Shaw Cactus Society, founded 1942, hosted the Mid America Conference June 9-11. Four CACSS members went to St Louis for the conference. We had a wonderful time; conventioners said this was one of the best, most informative, and most enjoyable conventions ever.

It was held at the Viking conference center in the West County area. The hotel has been remodeled recently. It easily accommodated the somewhat more than 120 registrants, vendors, and speakers. By comparison, the national convention usually draws around 300 plus. The conventioner traveling the farthest came from India.

A guided tour of the Missouri Botanical Garden herbarium and rare book collection was a highlight of the convention. We saw specimens collected by Georg Engelmann (think *Echinocereus engelmannii*, *Opuntia engelmannii*,...) and first editions of Linnaeus' books.

Jerry Barad showed slides of Madagascar, with its rapidly disappearing natural areas, and coastal Chile. Chuck Hanson spoke on pollinating various genera of succulents; there are many tricks involved. Dan Mahr showed slides of a trip to northern Namibia, including many *Commiphora*, *Adenia*, *Euphorbia*, *stapeliads*, and *Welwitschia*. It was very informative to see these plants, familiar to us in pots, in their natural states. Dan also spoke on the climate and rainfall patterns. Mike Massara, formerly of Arid Lands but now established in his own nursery Out of Africa (together with wife Maureen), showed slides of his trip to Ethiopia in fall 1998, from which he brought back several novelties and nearly lost his life when Ethiopian gunmen decided they didn't like his Somali driver. Your club is working on getting Mark to speak to us here. Mark Olson spoke on genetic diversity and the question of whether private collections can help preserve endangered species. The answer is Yes and No depending on the natural variation in the species. Bob Smoley showed slides of famous nursery greenhouses across the world. Rob Wallace talked about the anatomy of Lithops and showed why they are his favorite plants; he also presented an overview of what his lab's DNA research is revealing regarding evolutionary relationships in family

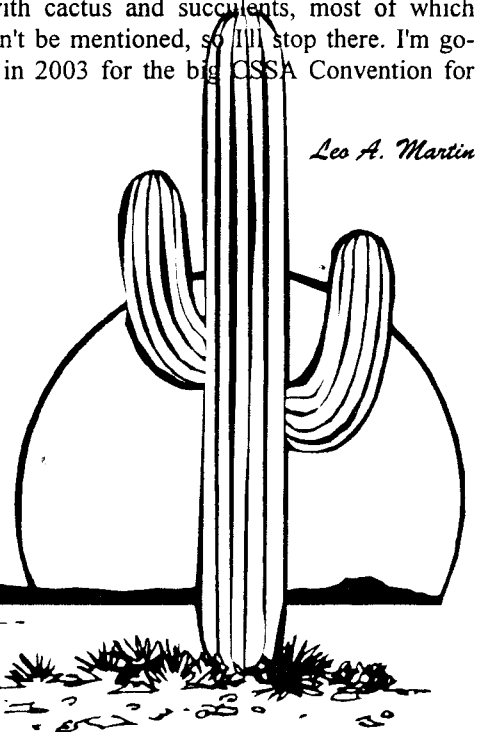
Cactaceae. There were many minor surprises and a major one: genus *Maihuenia* deserves to be its own subfamily, together with the traditionally accepted three of *Perskioideae*, *Opuntioideae*, and *Cereoideae*. Your Board will be incorporating some of Rob's findings when we revise the show schedule for next year.

The plant sales area was even more interesting than a chocolate buffet. Five plant vendors and Joe Wujcik's pots filled three rooms. There were plants to break any budget.

Friday evening featured a cocktail party with all the hors d'ouvres we could eat and fascinating conversation. Nobody left hungry.

Saturday evening featured a banquet, followed by a rare plant auction. CACSS member and DBG staff member Judy Braun put 14 plants from the DBG into the auction, which was well-appreciated. Prices reached the stratosphere and close to \$4000 was raised.

There was an after-hours party in your president's room each evening. Conventioners, CACSS members, and lecturers spoke freely and hilariously on many topics, some having to do with cactus and succulents, most of which probably shouldn't be mentioned, so I'll stop there. I'm going to St Louis in 2003 for the big CSSA Convention for sure!



A. desertiana

Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

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Central Spine

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July 20th 2000

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*Next CACSS meeting
Sunday June 25th 2000 at 2:00 PM*

DBG Webster Auditorium

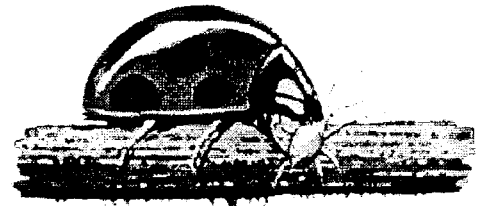
*Dr. Edward Anderson,
Director of the Desert Botanical Garden.*

Bug-of-the-Month

Sue Hakala

Ladybugs

Life Cycle: The length of the life cycle depends upon temperature, humidity, and food supply, usually requiring about three to four weeks. In the spring, overwintering females find food, then lay egg clusters of 10 to 50 eggs in aphid colonies. They lay from 50 to 300 eggs in a lifetime. Eggs hatch in 3-5 days with the larvae feeding on aphids or other insects for 2-3 weeks; then, they pupate. Adults emerge in 7-10 days. There may be 5-6 generations per year. In the autumn, adults hibernate in aggregation sites. These sites can be along a fence row, under a fallen tree, or under a rock.



Amount of Food Consumed: Although adults and larvae are primarily known as predators of aphids, they also like soft-scale insects, mealybugs and spider mites. Some feed on plant and pollen mildews. One larva will eat about 400 aphids during its development. An adult will eat about 300 aphids before it lays eggs, or about 3-10 aphids for each egg laid. An adult will consume more than 5,000 aphids in its lifetime.

Collecting Ladybugs for Sale: Ladybugs are collected in the mountains of California. Ladybugs return to the same huge aggregation sites each year. Some sites have been known to contain as many as 500 gallons of the bugs (72,000-80,000 adults per gallon). Bugs collected in December, January, February, and early March before normal migration are cold-stored. When released they tend to disperse quickly and widely, especially when temperatures reach 65F and above. As a consequence, few stay in the area where they are liberated. Those released in the summer don't disperse any great distance. They will drink water but don't eat existing on their stored fat.

Purchased Ladybugs = Unwise Investment Shipped-in ladybugs aren't really an economical way to manage aphid infestations. Bugs collected from outside Arizona are of less value as a pest eater than the local beetle populations, which will multiply in accordance with prey. Ladybugs can be beneficial in a greenhouse with tightly screened vents. In that case, one-half pint (about 4,500 ladybugs) per 3,000 square feet is the recommended rate. Release in the evening after watering down the area. Spray wheat (a combination of whey and yeast) on plants to attract Ladybugs.

Plant of the Month
June 2000
Gymnocactus Werdermann

Leo A. Martin

Mostly small globular plants with smallish pink and purple flowers, these gems feature beautifully colored spines against bright white wool. They have been included in Neolloydia in the past but seem to have settled in their original genus. More and more are available now. They are native to north central Mexico. One species, (*G. subterraneus*), has a long taproot that reaches deep into cracks in rocks in habitat.

Many think them difficult to grow--but we live in the Sonoran desert, where they grow easily. They like pure mineral soil mix (our native soil is ideal), dry cool winters and adequate summer water, drying out between waterings like *Mammillaria*. Prolonged dry spells are much more easily tolerated than too many waterings. Mine seem happy with full sun, which brings out the wool from the centers.

**DBG SPRING PLANT
SALE SUCCESSFUL**

I wish to express a heartfelt thank you to all of you who helped to make the spring plant sale a resounding success. We broke records again, and it couldn't be done without the help received from volunteers. Muriel Beroza, Edra & Jim Drake, and Dana Hizer worked tirelessly for days setting up the whole Cactus & Succulent shade area, labeling and pricing plants. It is a thankless job. My deepest thanks to Jane Schlosberg who spent hours making up the computer labels for all 20,000 plants that were out on the lot. And the assistance you all give to the customers in helping them choose the proper plant is invaluable: Elaine & Jerry Chapman, Barb Danielson, Jo Davis, Delores Grott, Janet Hazlett, Cindy and Scott Klingbeil, Lin Leivuan, Scott McMahon, Alan Rimestone, Joan Skirvin, and Leo Martin (who also helped us reconfigure the sales lot early Sunday).

Cathy Babcock

June tips...
From Arizona Cactus Sales

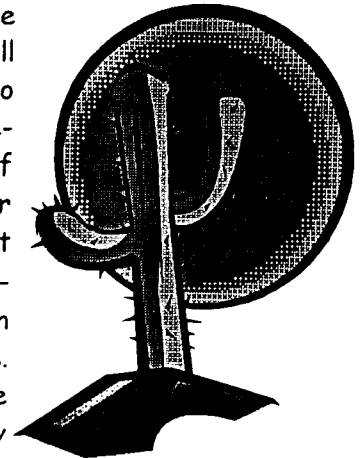
www.arizonacactusales.com/tips/monthly_tips.htm

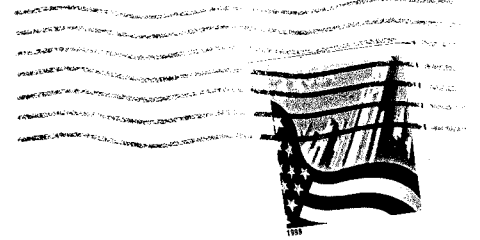
Don't water newly planted cactus. If you are repotting or adding to your landscape the same rules apply: plant dry and wait to water. Watering all depends on the weather: the cooler it is the longer you wait for that first drink. You should usually **wait at least a week**, this gives the succulent roots time to heal before being exposed to water. Only water again when the soil is dry at the roots: each situation is different.

Time to Label! With the blooming season in full swing, it's time to label those colors and the date they bloomed. It is somewhat remarkable to see year after year that most plants bloom right on schedule as last year. Each year is different depending on the winter rains and temperature. So, labeling is important to collect data, or just plain remembering.

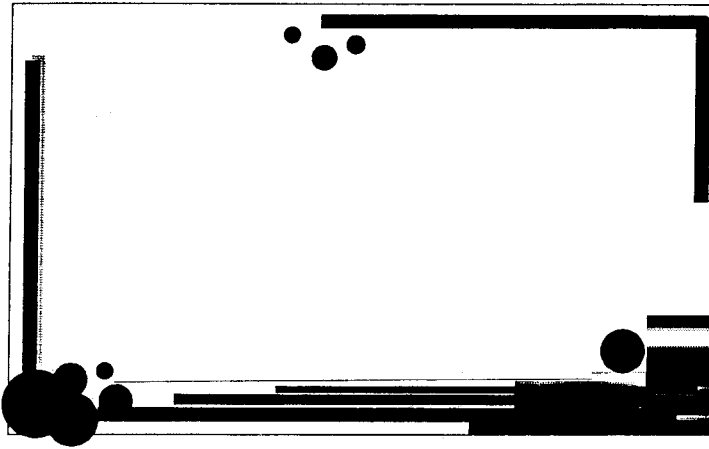
Those pesky mealy bugs. Our cactus seem to be growing so nicely, then along comes that hungry mealy bug and starts sucking the juice right out of them! There are lots of ways to get rid of these pests, from patiently picking them off with tweezers, to spraying chemicals. If there are not that many we suggest picking them off. Keep some rubbing alcohol handy for sterilizing. If you have to spray, follow mixing directions on the Malathion bottle to ornamentals.

Before spraying be sure that plant has been well watered a day prior to treating. This will decrease the risk of chemically burning your cactus. If spraying soft succulents, cut the mixture of Malathion in half or dilute by 50%. Succulents are more tender: they also may lose their leaves, so be careful!





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Cactus & Succulent Society
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Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

Meetings held last Sunday of the month

Time: 2:00-4:00 PM

Location: Webster Auditorium, DBG

Next Meeting: Sunday, June 25th 2000

Board Meeting: 1:00-2:00 PM Location: Archer House

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|-------------------|---------|--|
| June 25, 2000 | 2:00 PM | Dr. Edward Anderson, <i>Director of the Desert Botanical Garden.</i> |
| July 30, 2000 | 2:00 PM | Kent Newland <i>"Using Cactus & Succulents to Jazz Up Xeriscaping"</i> |
| August 27, 2000 | 2:00 PM | Mary Irish <i>Agaves/Yucca, taken from her new Book</i> |
| Oct 29, 2000 | TBA | CACSS Fall Cactus & Succulent Silent Auction |
| Nov 19, 2000 | 2:00 PM | Woody Minnich |
| Dec 10, 2000 | TBA | CACSS Annual Holiday Party |
| Jan 21, 2001 | 2:00 PM | Brian Kimball <i>Terrestrial Bromeliads</i> |
| February 25, 2001 | 2:00 PM | Steve Southwell <i>"Grafting and Other Propagation"</i> |
| March 25, 2001 | 2:00 PM | <i>"Preparing Plants for presentors, Judging"</i> |