



CENTRAL SPINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
ON THE WEB AT www.centralarizonacactus.org

APRIL, 2007

ANNUAL SHOW & SALE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18TH - SUNDAY, APRIL 22ND DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN DORRANCE HALL & BOPPART COURTYARD



President's Letter

Doug Dawson

With the wonderful warm weather and spring temperatures, many of our best bloomers are starting to show off. This morning as I strolled my yard, the *Astrophytums*, *Mammillaria lenta*, and *Echinocereus triglochidiatus* (claret cup) provided splashes of color here and there. The most beautiful and striking bloomer in my yard is pushing forth many enormous buds. I am talking about the wonderful *Trichocereus* hybrid, Flying Saucer. If you don't have it in your collection, get it. It is usually available through Bach's Cactus Nursery, located about a block north of the intersection of Thornydale and Cortaro Road in Tucson. The colors are everything you would see in the world's most beautiful sunset and the flowers are about 8 inches in diameter!

I hope you are planning to enter at least 5 plants in our Show (April 20-22). Plants need to be brought in on April 18. Several of us will be there at Dorrance Hall until at least 8pm. Drive around back of Dorrance to unload your plants and register them. If you need help filling our entry forms or identification, we will do our best to help. The sale which will be outside Dorrance promises to be first class, with many unusual plants and great pots.

Many of you know that I am a seed nut. Therefore I am asking you to take some time each month to go through your collection and see if something interesting is going to seed. If you are not going to use the seed, consider collecting it and donating it to the club for use by fellow members who are into seed obsession. Collect the seed, make sure it is dry, place in a small envelope. On the envelope write the name of the plant, date collected, and your name. Maybe a year or two later, you will see babies from your plants appearing in one of our silent auctions.

See you in April at the Show and Sale! Remember we will not have our usual Sunday meeting in April due to the Show. Also note that the May meeting will be Sunday, May 20, which is earlier in the month than usual due to Memorial Day the following weekend.

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The Cover Photo:

Mammillaria grahamii, Desert Botanical Garden.
Photo taken 04/08/07 by Cynthia Robinson.

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Local Calendar

April 18th, Wednesday, 12 pm - 9 pm
Show Setup
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

April 19th, Thursday, 9 am - 9 pm
Show Judging & Vendor Setup
Desert Botanical Garden
Dorrance Hall & Boppart Courtyard

April 20th - 22nd, Friday - Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm
Annual Show & Sale
Desert Botanical Garden
Dorrance Hall & Boppart Courtyard
Please contact Ingrid Swenson if you would like to volunteer.

May 20th, Sunday, 2 pm (Not the last Sunday)
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker is CACSS member, Laurence Garvie; topic TBA.

June 24th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden



Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charitonius*) Butterfly.
Photo taken 4/8/07 at the DBG Butterfly Pavilion by Cynthia Robinson.

Regional Calendar

May 25th - 30th, Friday - Wednesday, All Day
Cactus & Succulent Society of America's 32nd Biennial Convention
Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport
Seattle, Washington
Contact Cynthia Robinson or visit www.cssainc.org for more information.

July 5th - 8th, Thursday - Sunday, All Day
Annual Show & Sale of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America
Huntington Botanical Gardens
Los Angeles, CA

September 1st, Saturday, All Day
24th Annual Huntington Succulent Symposium
Join the Huntington in celebrating the centennial of the desert garden!
Huntington Botanical Gardens
Los Angeles, CA

Reprinted from the *Cactus Courier*, Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society San Diego, CA

Exhibiting plants in a show can be fun, stimulating, and very educational. If it is a competitive show, judged by discerning and knowledgeable plant experts, it becomes even more challenging. And exciting. It's also gratifying to overhear strangers ooh-ing and ah-h-ing over your "pampered darlings" which you have (hopefully) groomed and dusted to perfection for their public appearance. Unfortunately, too many of us hesitate to enter plant shows because of lack of information concerning just exactly what constitutes a "show-worthy" plant. So-the purpose of this article is to acquaint the timorous uninitiated with a few basic guidelines in preparing plants for a show. Remember that judging is a very individualistic, opinioned, and often subjective process and that rarely will any two judges ever see the same plant in the same way on any given day. A plant which sends one judge into paroxysms of delight may be passed over almost without comment by another.

The criteria most often followed in a cactus and succulent show is the CSSA (Cactus and Succulent Society of America) Judging Scale, which is as follows: Condition = 70%; Staging = 15%; Size and Degree of Maturity = 10%; Nomenclature = 5%

The condition of the plant relates to general culture. How well has the plant been grown and cared for? Condition reflects on the grower's ability to assess a particular plant's needs to maintain characteristic, healthy growth. Is the plant etiolated?-(too green and lanky, indicating too much shade and/or too much fertilizer)-Is it sunburned, scarred, discolored, or diseased?-Is the growth uniform and even?-Are there any signs of mealy bug, scale or ants? An experienced judge will note immediately and automatically all of these things, because the experienced judge knows what the plant should-ideally-look like. (In some shows, plants are judged "against perfection" as opposed to being judged against each other).

Staging is the manner in which the plant is displayed, and includes pots, top dressing, and cleanliness. Pot may be ordinary clay, stoneware, ceramic, or even plastic, but they must be clean (no alkali encrustations, algae, dirt clinging to the pot, etc) and in good condition (no chips or cracks). The pot should be of a complimentary size, shape and color for the plant: no garish, shiny colors or elaborate designs, and no fanciful, overly ornate or too-cute shapes. Remember, you are displaying the plant-not the pot, and while the pt should always subtly enhance the plant, it should never overwhelm or detract from it in any way. The judges will, however take the total effect into consideration. The plant must, of course be upright and centered in the pot. Top dressing is optional, but generally adds to the well-groomed effect. It may consist of clean gravel, small natural looking pebbles, lava rock (scoria), or coarse sand or decomposed granite. Aside from being neat appearing, topdressing is also beneficial to the plant; it keeps the soil from cracking, conserves moisture and discourages weeds. Here again, as with the pot, it should never detract from or clash with the plant. If you choose not to use top dressing, the soil around the plant should be clean and fresh looking and free of weeds and debris. The plant itself, should be as immaculate as you can possibly make it-no spider webs and (worse) no spiders, no snail tracks or (worse!) snails, etc ad nauseum, and it should be cleaned of hard water marks on the leaves or body and free of dust, dead leaves and other debris. Dead blooms should be removed, unless they have been left on the plant for the purpose of setting seed.

A large relatively mature "specimen-size" plant, if well grown, will always take precedence over an immature or seedling plant. This is where size and degree of maturity come in. It is especially satisfying to display a plant, which you have successfully grown from a seedling into a handsome and mature specimen. Due to the recent emphasis on conservation and endangered species, most judges tend to cast a somewhat jaundiced eye on obviously collected plants, and there is some discussion about disqualifying them altogether. Most show rules require that the plant must be grown by the exhibitor for at least six months prior to the show, and some judges feel that the plant should ideally reflect the end result of several years of painstaking effort on the part of the grower. Rarity and how difficult the plant is to grow in cultivation although not listed in the judging scale, can also be factors with individual judges, especially when all other points (condition, staging, etc) are virtually equal. A rare or difficult to grow plant is bound to influence most judges.

Shows and Judging ...Continued from Page 3

Nomenclature has to do with the proper labeling and correct botanical name (including spelling) of the plant. Even though it counts for only 5%, you should make every effort to provide the correct name for your plant. When in doubt, if all else fails, it is probably better to label it (for example), simply "Mammillaria species, rather than to give it an erroneous specific name, or worse yet an ambiguous common name such as; "Pincushion Cactus". Labels should be clean, neat and inconspicuous, if used. Many shows use entry cards instead of labels. The owners name cannot be visible to the judges.

So, now-start making plans to cart your favorite (and most delectable) plants off to the next show with confidence, relax and enjoy it, and try to accept with grace and suitable modesty the compliments and ribbons which are sure to reward your efforts.



Julie & Steve Plath.
Photograph taken by Daniel Sumberg.

CACSS members had a rare opportunity to spend several hours with Steve and Julie Plath under the ramada at my house April 1. They exude knowledge and love of plants and made themselves available with tips and techniques about plant culture, repotting, and the aesthetics of matching plants and pots for show. Watching them repot plants was a real treat and a major learning opportunity. Having them available in a relaxed setting to answer questions was a real opportunity as well. This event was as hands on as it gets. We are fortunate to have members who not only love cacti and succulents, we all love the plants, but are willing to commit the time and energy necessary to put on a workshop and share their knowledge and love of plants with the rest of us. Thanks Steve and Julie.

Daniel Sumberg

Show & Sale Reminders...

- I encourage all members to enter at least 5 plants in the Show. Do not feel discouraged if you do not know the scientific names of your plants. There will be members available on Wednesday who can help ID them & help you fill out the entry cards. Just make sure that your plants are clean and pest free.
- You may bring your show plants to Dorrance Hall between the hours of 12 pm - 8 pm, Wednesday, April 18th. If you want to bring plants but cannot drop them off between the above times, please contact Cynthia Robinson to see if other arrangements can be made.
- Traveling trophies: If you were the recipient of a traveling trophy last year, please make sure that you bring it back clean and/or polished no later than Thursday, April 19th.
- Volunteers are still needed for the Sale. If you have a few hours available to help out, please contact Ingrid Swenson to let her know what kind of job you would prefer.

Show & Sale Schedule

- 4/18, Wednesday: Show set-up
8 am - 12 pm: Table set-up
12 pm - 8 pm: Plant check-in
**Please have as much of your entry cards filled out as possible.
- 4/19, Thursday: Show judging & Sale set-up
- 4/20 - 4/21, Friday - Saturday: 9 am - 5 pm
Show & Sale open to the public
- 4/22, Sunday: 9 am - 4 pm
Show & Sale open to the public



2006 Show plants.
Photograph taken by Celeste Gornick.

Around My (Or Your) Desert Garden

Bob Torrest

THE AFTERMATH OF THE REALLY HARD FREEZE OF JANUARY 13 AND 14, PART 2

March 31 - Last time, some of the freeze damage was described. Before adding to that material, let's start with all of the color in the garden now. Trees flowering include *Caesalpinia mexicana*, *Eucalyptus torquata*, Palo Verdes, *Acacia willardiana* (Palo blanco), pomegranates, Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*), Texas lead ball (*Leucaena pulverulenta*) at only 4 ft. and El Chanar (Chilean Palo Verde) finished its bright display recently. Shrubs flowering include cassias, creosote, and Baja fairy duster. Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) had the best flowers I've ever seen here and *Yucca rigida* (Blue yucca) always looks good with or without flowers.

Aloes now flowering include *A. gariensis*, *A. camperi* (with unusual cone-shaped flowers), *A. striata*, *A. eru*, *A. grandidentata*, *A. saponaria*, *A. vera*, *A. barbadensis*, *A. vacillans* (the last flowers) and a very nice cross of *A. variegata* with *A. saponaria*. There are several aloes with persistent red flowers that are still unidentified. Since these came through with little or no frost damage they need to be identified and I'm sure some readers can help (PLEASE). Also, the small red flowers of *A. divaricata* were protected under a leaf cluster that froze. Lots of mammillarias are in flower now. Hedgehogs started with *Echinocereus triglochidiatus*, a high county clumping plant that has done well here with afternoon shade. The native, *E. engelmannii* var. *nicholii* with golden spines can get fairly large and has great pink-purple flowers, while *E. pentalophus* (Texas "lady-fingers") looks good cascading over rocks. There are lots more and almost all make great landscape plants. Opuntias began with *O. basilaris* (beaver tail) and *O. aciculata*, both good ground covers and now the shrubby *O. rufida* is starting (from Big Bend, Texas and south) as is *O. robusta*. The notocacti started with *N. buiningii* (lots of large flowers) followed by *N. schumanianus* and *N. warasii*, while the Ferocacti include *F. glaucescens* (still for more than a month) *F. echidne* and *F. schwarzii* just getting started, and a tall red spined barrel with relatively small but bright red flowers.

Columnar cacti - Freeze damage for some of these was summarized last time. Other stenocereus that suffered were some *S. beneckeii*, and *S. pruinosus* had some rib edges frozen but the damage is now dried and easily removed. *S. eruca* (the "creeping devil") came through fine with and without light covers and *S. stellatus* has never looked better. Although *S. alamosensis* and *S. griseus* had some damage they are now flowering along with some senitas. Of course, oreocereus, espostoa, *Stetsonia coryne* and *Neocardenasia herzogiana* are all fine. The beautiful blue columnar, *Browningia hertlingiana*, was fine with a paper bag on the tip but a 5ft. plant, unprotected in a mostly shaded place, has a frozen tip that it may grow through.

Trees and shrubs - Starting with succulents, a large *Jatropha cinerea* is coming back along the interior trunk, as is a 10 ft. *Pachycormus discolor*. *Bursera microphylla* and *B. fagaroides* were up to 6 ft and took the freeze unprotected. They are now green along the trunk to a foot or so. *Alluaudia procera* (Madagascar "ocotillo") has come back on the bottom 6 ft. that was wrapped in a sheet, but another 8ft. unprotected plant is gone as are smaller plants under trees. The boojums (*Idria columnaris*) are fine as are *Fouquieria macdougallii* (often sold as Mexican ocotillo). Other trees that were damaged include some cascalotes (now all trying to come back), *Chorisia speciosa* now leafing out along the larger branches, and yellow oleander. *Acacia penatula* is gone but there may be some life in a 5ft *Ceiba acuminata*. *Ficus palmeri*, at 5 ft, is starting to leaf out at the base.

Euphorbias - In the last Central Spine, Tom Gatz reminded you that *E. resinifera* is one of several that is freeze tolerant. You will see nice mounds of this "ground-cover" around town and they have been there for years. Another relatively low grower is *E. echinus* with nice white edging. *E. fruticosa* is flowering now as is *E. polyacantha* and *E. pseudocactus* var. *zigzag* with very nice markings. Somewhat larger plants include *E. coerulescens* and *E. grandialata*. While all these came through the hard freeze without damage *E. stenoclada* is gone as is the "pencil tree" *E. tirucalli*. Although we lost 8 ft plants of *E. ingens* and *E. ammak*, they had all made it through several years in the ground with winter temperatures as low as 25F. If you are willing to risk no more 20F temperatures for another 30 years you should give them a try.

Myrtillocactus geometrizans continues to flower. Where there was some tip frost damage, new growth is coming through. Cleistocacti continue to flower and *Echinocereus texensis* flowered at the end of the month as did borzicacti and astrophytum. Large red buds on *Trichocereus candicans* (sold as "Argentine giant") look like they are about to explode and several other trichocereus are also about to flower, A cardon (*Pachycereus pringlei*) has lots of buds starting at 8 ft on a 10 ft plant (the first time). Each cardon is an individual with varying tip color, markings and blue color. Since they are faster than a saguaro and can take even this extreme winter, try some. Finally, some potted melocacti were inadvertently left out in the hard freeze. Surprisingly, the only one that was lost was *M. neomontanus*.



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ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT
CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS: MAY 7, 2007
EMAIL TO CROBIN500@MSN.COM

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 (just call or e-mail Bob Torrest). For now, the list is simply alphabetical with principle interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

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