

Central Spine



February 2015 Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America On the Web at www.centralarizonacactus.org

**February, 2015
CACSS Meeting
2 pm Sunday, March 1,
Desert Botanical Garden
Speaker: Julie Plath
Topic:
The Art of Growing and
Showing Plants**

Articles

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The Art of Growing and Showing Plants

The lecture will be on demonstrating 'Show Prep,' about cultivating, growing and grooming your plants for the Show & Sale.

Julie Plath Personal Biography

My obsession with plants began 40 years ago when my older sister brought home a few plants from a propagation class at the University of WI-Madison. Being that it was the Great White North my fascination started with houseplants, although I do remember buying a wooden display case from some store, filling it with dirt (I didn't know the word was improper yet!), lighting it, and filling it with pathetic little cactus. They lived awhile.

As I always knew I would, I went to the University and majored in Horticulture with a Business minor. They actually wanted me to know science stuff and do chemistry and accounting! I also scored a job working for a Mom and Pop nursery that grew all their own cell-packs of annuals and vegetables from seed! So my next focus was ANNUALS. I came to really appreciate petunias.

But school had other ideas and when I took perennials I was immediately hooked and started to need to collect every kind there was (for Zone 4); no matter that I lived in rentals. I liked to think everywhere I ever lived over the years has a little piece of me in the ground. This was followed by courses in woody landscape plants under a man I still think of as my mentor.

By this time I had gotten excited by Public Gardens and tried to get a job after graduation. HA! What I found was an opportunity to get my Master's degree from the University of Minnesota under a professor doing research at the U of M Landscape Arboretum on *Rhododendron prinophyllum* with the objective of increasing their hardiness range. Note I now went to live in Zone 3.

Upon completion of this messy business (I defended my Master's thesis on crutches – another story), I talked my way into a position of Research Gardener at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. For nine years I hauled hose tending first to 5,000+ different accessions of plants from all over the world with the intention of bringing these into public display as ornamental crops. A big and favorite group was South African bulbs. Longwood was also great as it taught me how to display and groom plants to perfection. I was on the Christmas committee which also meant that besides the year-long effort to plan the next display I learned to professionally light Christmas trees. It still haunts me.

Me being me however, I saw the handwriting on the wall when they moved me from my position to the Production dept. Boy did I learn to produce plants including forcing over 75,000 spring bulbs for display. I should also mention that this is the time I joined a Bonsai society and whetted my appetite for growing woody plants in little pots!



Adenium arabicum Photo by Steve Plath
(See more photos on Page 4)

So I applied for and became the Greenhouse Gardener for the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas. There I was responsible for designing the crops greenhouse as backup for the Conservatory. I worked for a year before they opened and a year afterward. That was kind of enough for me. During that time I met Steve Plath and after a period, (since we both SO loved Las Vegas), we moved to Northern California outside of Sacramento and were married at Lake Tahoe.

Long story short, together we moved around a bit, I held horticulture and non-horticulture related jobs and finally landed in Morrissett, AZ. We began Signature Botanica, LLC, in 2005, growing primarily native plants for ecological restoration projects. Thanks to Steve I've since become totally immersed in cactus, succulents, native plants and desert environments.

Fortunately for me, it has also afforded me the opportunity to know all the good people in the CACSS and beyond!



March, 2015 *Central Spine* Deadline: March 11, 2015

2015 CACSS Officers

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CACSS Program and Committee Leaders

| | |
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| Archivist/Historian | Lois Schneberger |
| CSSA Affiliate Representative | Sue Hakala |
| Facebook Coordinator | Dan Smith |
| Finances, Accounting | Nick Diomede Ingrid Swenson |
| Holiday Party – December 2015 | Sue Glenn |
| Librarians | Wendy Barrett, Nancy Mumpton |
| Membership | Beth Kirkpatrick |
| Members-Keeping-In-Touch | Jo Davis |
| Mailed Newsletter Subscriptions | Sue Tyrrel |
| Newsletter | Diana Decker |
| Nominating Committee 2015- | Chuck Brush, Jo Davis, Lois Schneberger, Dan Smith |
| October Silent Auction | Mike Gallagher |
| Plant Rescues | <i>Open Position</i> |
| Private Plant Sales at General Meetings | Sue Tyrrel |
| Monthly Speaker-Programs | Diana Crummey |
| Pumice Sales | Gard Roper |
| Refreshments | Kat Hanna |
| Show & Sale – 2015 | Sue Tyrrel |
| Website | Beth Kirkpatrick |

Telephone numbers, email addresses, and street addresses can be found in the CACSS Member List emailed periodically to members by Beth Kirkpatrick.

**For questions, and to send articles and photos for the newsletter, contact the newsletter editor, Diana Decker:
(602) 220-9825 dianadec@cox.net**

President's Letter February 2015

Wayne Whipple

Everyone who attended Tammy and Cliff Fielding's open garden on Sunday, February 8, had a great time at the party under a clear, blue sky and warm temperatures. We chatted and munched on goodies from the kitchen as the day quickly ended for us around 3:00 PM. We were not only able to enjoy Cliff's impressive collection of succulents, but also some of us even were able to buy some of the plants. I only saw one of his two tortoises as the mother tortoise was hiding in the bushes. A minor drama occurred when the adolescent tortoise wandered to the edge of the pool and was rescued just in time as it surely would have flipped into the water. Several pictures of the party have been posted on our CACSS Facebook. Thanks, Tammy and Cliff, for another great party.

The fun will continue with another open garden in March. Dana Hiser has invited CACSS members to her house on March 8; details to get to her place are in this Newsletter. I have not been to Dana's house and am looking forward to attending. I am sure it will be a treat for everyone.

I am looking forward to hearing our next speaker, Julie Plath, on March 1. Her presentation will be somewhat different than most of the others as she plans a demonstration while she lectures. As elaborated in this newsletter, Julie has had extensive horticulture experience. When I lived in New Jersey, I used to enjoy very much my visits to Longwood Gardens, which are located near Philadelphia, PA. Longwood Gardens is one of the best gardens, if not the best, in the United States. Julie was employed there for eight years as a horticulture curator.

We had to change the date for Julie's presentation from the last Sunday of February to the first Sunday in March. (There will be two General Meetings in March.) Dorrance Hall was booked for a Desert Botanical Garden event, and Webster Auditorium is too small. One of our challenges as a growing Society is inflexibility to meet in smaller spaces. We used to meet often in Webster when Dorrance was not available. But Webster has a capacity of only 80 people; our meeting in January had around 175 attendees in Dorrance.

On the last Sunday in March, Scott McMahon will speak to us about his cacti-and-succulent-seeking trip to Peru. Scott is a Past President of the Society, and we are always fortunate to have him address us. Programs for our General Meetings for the rest of this year and for most of 2016 have already been booked by our Program Chair, Diana Crummey. All the scheduled future programs have well known speakers who are highly respected as being knowledgeable about cacti and other succulents. They are listed on our website so mark your calendars.

We do not have a General Meeting in April because of our Show & Sale on April 10, 11, 12. So are you reviewing your succulent collections and zeroing in on what plants to display at this year's Show? Our steering committee under the leadership of this year's Show & Sale Chair, Sue Tyrrel, has been working diligently to make this year's S & S the best ever. As discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, there are several ways you can volunteer to help – even by going online to sign up.

Not only do we need your help for the Show & Sale, but also for several of the Society's other committees and activities. We need help in organizing the popular road trips, hosting open gardens, conducting education classes and workshops, and chairing special interest committees. Dean Patrick will continue to chair the Propagation Committee, but more people are needed for the other activities. Also we are still in need of someone to chair the Plant Rescue Committee; this position has been vacant for several years. We often receive calls from people who are moving or who no longer want their plants. To handle these requests, we probably should have regional point-people throughout the Valley to decide what can be done with these orphans-to-be. Please let me know what interests you.

We have a new contact person at the Desert Botanical Garden. Her name is Nicole McCall, and I along with Diana and John Crummey recently had an enjoyable meeting with her at the DBG. Amber Hawn, who is Nicole's supervisor and our former contact person at the DBG, was promoted, and Nicole was chosen to be our new coordinator with the DBG. We enjoyed working with Amber, and feel that we will have the same good relationship with Nicole.

OPEN GARDEN--You are invited to an open garden at Dana Hiser's home on Sunday, March 8, from 11 am to 2 pm. Hope to see you then. Dana

More Photos of Previous Show & Sale Winners



Graptopetalum rusbyi



Mammillaria formosa

Photos by Steve Plath

Please Wear Your Name Tag at Monthly Meetings

Board Member Jo Davis asks members to wear their name tags at monthly meetings and other club events. Members then can more easily spot guests and talk with them about the guest's interests and CACSS. If you need a lanyard to hang the name tag around your neck, see Jo at the meetings.

Please bring boxes to the meetings so you can carry plants home more easily.

Jo Davis

CACSS NEW MEMBERS

- Carol Alexander
- Pam Bass
- Connie Bennett
- James Brooks
- Kayla Clark
- Lesa Etter
- Dorothy Heller
- Joel Horn
- Rob & Cheryl Mariani
- Marie Pemberton
- Marsha Potesta
- Cynthia Robinson
- Joe Schallan
- Pamela Steele
- Jerry Van Wyngarden

**Membership Chair:
Beth Kirkpatrick**

Desert Botanical Garden's Spring Plant Sale Needs Volunteers

The spring plant sale will be on Friday-Sunday, March 20-22, and as always, it would be very helpful to have members of the CACSS there to answer questions and direct people to plants. Even those with limited experience are welcome to help get people where they need to go. Our busiest times are Friday and Saturday mornings from 7 am-12 pm. Afternoons are less hectic, but help is still needed. CACSS members can check in when they arrive at the volunteer tent on the lot. Wearing their CACSS badges will help identify them as people who can answer questions, and they can even promote the club.

Scott McMahon, Cactaceae Collections Manager



Please Volunteer for the CACSS Show & Sale

The CACSS 2015 Show and Sale is coming up soon. It is time to think about volunteering for the event. Volunteering is fun and rewarding and a great opportunity to meet and work with other members of our Society.

For the 2015 CACSS Show & Sale the Planning Committee is using a software program to schedule volunteers for the 5 days of the Show & Sale. The committee is very excited about using this program, Volunteer Spot-The Scheduler, and hope that you will check out the website and schedule yourself for the days and activities for which you can volunteer.

To check out the website please click on this link <http://vols.pt/DJF35p> and follow the instructions. The link is also posted on the Society's website and on Facebook.

If you prefer, you can contact Dan Smith (480-839-3792), Jo Davis 480-981-9648) or Lois Schneberger (480-946-8373) by phone to volunteer or send an email to Dan (smithdans@cox.net) or Lois (lschneberger@cox.net). This is the first time that The Scheduler will be used for a Society activity and feedback, both positive and negative, is very important. So please let us know either by email or phone. Some members have already volunteered and those names have been added to The Scheduler.

Thank you. Show and Sale Committee

CACSS Show & Sale Meetings

March 15, 1:00 pm Kokobelli's Bagels
The Show & Sale is April 10-12.

Show plants are to be delivered Wednesday, March 8, to Dorrance Hall.
Volunteers are needed☺

Contact Sue Tyrrel for more information: 480-797-8952 styrrel@cox.net

Propagation meeting

Date : Saturday, Feb. 21

Time : 8 am - 10:30 am

Location : Whiteman Conference Room
(next door to Webster auditorium) Everyone welcome

Dean Patrick desertpatrick@cox.net

Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society December 31, 2014 Financial Statement

| | <u>2014</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2012</u> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Checking Account | \$ 32,199 | \$ 24,687 | \$ 22,002 |
| Savings Account | \$ 10,513 | \$ 10,510 | \$ 10,503 |
| Total | \$ 42,712 | \$ 35,197 | \$ 32,505 |
| Growth | 21% | 8% | |
| Membership | 413 | 382 | 355 |
| Growth | 8% | 8% | |

The Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society continued to show strong growth in 2014. Membership has shown an 8% increase over 2013 to 413 total membership, another record level. Our financial assets have increased by 21% over 2013 to \$42,712 in our combined checking and savings accounts.

The board has voted to maintain our DBG donation at \$2,500; we will also be donating a \$1,500 tribute tile to the garden. The board is also committed to its annual Show & Sale profit sharing contribution to the DBG

The Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society has no paid positions and thus we depend entirely upon the volunteers from the club's membership to plan, organize, and execute all of our club activities. Many thanks to those members who have volunteered their time and hard work to make our club an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

Sincerely, Nick Diomede, 2015 Treasurer

SHOWING CACTUS & SUCCULENTS FOR THE NOVICE Part 2

By Steve Plath

(This article originally appeared in the March 2008 *Central Spine*)

POTS

I know for some novices this can be a very touchy subject. They look over in the Advanced or Master categories and see these huge plants in these obviously expensive pots and think, why in the heck would anyone even look at their plants. My suggestion: don't worry about the advanced growers and their fancy pots...they've got their own demons to deal with! Focus on your plants, the ones that you enjoy. Think of the plant as the artwork and the pot as the frame. The frame should never outshine the artwork. With that philosophy in mind, the straightforward approach of keeping it simple is best.

Again, as a beginner, you're not expected to have the exotic bonsai pot or gazillion dollar ceramics. If you've got a few, flaunt them, but don't 'not' show because you don't have any. You can display your plants in plain plastic or clay pots just fine. Like the plants, make sure the pots are clean. If you have plants in clay pots and there's some calcium build-up, clean it off. If it won't come clean, repot the plant into a cleaner pot. Taking some mineral oil and wiping it on an older clay pot can give it new life. Make sure you wipe off excess oil. Plastic pots can solarize in our desert sun, so if your show plant is in a plastic pot that's starting to deteriorate, repot it.

If you're bound and determined to use a more decorative ceramic pot, make sure it's got a drainage hole! Please do not pick a ceramic pot that has some hideous colors thinking that it'll draw the judge's attention. Actually it will, but not for the right reasons! The color of the pots should be fairly neutral or earth-toned. Remember, you don't want the frame to outshine the artwork. Keep it simple!

The only time I've really ever considered the pot in judging is if it's so bad it detracts from the plant or if the category of plants displayed are so wonderfully beautiful and equal that I then have to look for faults or points to choose one plant over the others. One other point is to properly match the size of the pot to the size of the plant. Try to achieve a balance, where the pot size compliments the plant. An over potted plant, where what you see is mostly pot and soil surface, looks lost. An under-potted plant (too big for the pot) is a little better than an over potted plant but not by much. When in doubt, repot to an appropriate sized pot.

TOP DRESSING

Top dressing the soil surface is a way to finish off that space between the plant and the pot and is an extension of "the frame." Like the pot, the top-dressing should be simple, neutral and not detract from the plant. Natural gravels, whether collected or purchased, work best. Some people like the natural aquarium gravel you can buy at pet stores. The uniformity in size of store-bought gravel can lend a certain formality to the display, where different sized gravel gives it a more informal effect. If I'm planting in a formal bonsai pot, I might want to maintain a certain formality with uniform sized gravel. The other advantage with natural gravels is they will tend to not conflict with the color of the pot, though there are exceptions once in a while.

I generally don't suggest artificially colored or epoxy coated gravels for most plants. The artificial colors tend to clash with the plant, the pot or both. Avoid something as stark as white gravel as it

almost always outshines the plant. The one exception to the use of colored gravel is in the case of black, but then only in careful applications. I’ve seen some very artistic uses of black colored gravel, but it has been rare. My personal approach to the use of it is if the plant I’m displaying has very light colored spines and the body of the plant nearly fills the pot and I just want the ground surface to fade away. Then black gravel can be useful. However, if there’s a lot of soil surface and it’s covered in black, it can be fairly distracting.

Part 1, January *Central Spine* • In the Beginning • Exhibiting Plants • The Plants
Part 3, March *Central Spine* • It’s Been Known to Happen

Publication of material in the Central Spine does not imply agreement with the ideas expressed therein by any portion of the membership of the CACSS, nor does it constitute an endorsement or support for any portion of such material by the CACSS, or the Central Spine, regardless of any position or office held by the author. All such material represents a comment and/or personal opinion of the author.

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Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society Speaker Schedule 2015

Print this page and put it on your wall, refrigerator door or note board as a reminder.

March 1, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Julie Plath: Topic: The Art of Growing and Showing Plants

The talk will focus on demonstrating "Show Presentation" focusing on cultivating, growing and grooming your plants for our annual show.

March 29, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Scott McMahon: Topic Peru: From Cajamarca to Cuzco

Scott will speak about the plants of this region.

April 10 - 12, CACSS Show and Sale

May 31, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. David Palzkill: PhD: Topic: Adenium

Presentation on Adenium propagation, care and comments on some varieties; Will include discussion of various propagation techniques, re-potting, pruning and pest control.

June 28, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Ernst van Jaarsveld: PhD: Topic: The genus Gasteria and the new arrangement of genera within the aloe family

Ernst's talk will be an introduction to the new arrangement of the aloe family but the emphasis on Gasteria.

July 26, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Scott Calhoun: Topic: "The Gardener's Guide to Cactus"

Join author and garden designer Scott Calhoun for a journey into the world of garden cactus. Scott will bring books for sale.

August 30, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Jason Eslamieh: Topic: Boswellia.

Jason's talk will cover cultivation of, habitat and distribution, taxonomy of all nineteen species.

Sept 27: 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Jeff Chemnick: Topic: The greatest wildflower show on earth -- The Richtersveld and Namibia

Join Jeff for an armchair tour of the Richtersveld ...a place where daisies, mesembs, aloes, and other succulents abound in spectacular array.

October 18: Annual Auction

November 22, 2:00 – 5:00 pm. Leo Martin and Monte Crawford: Topic: Cycads. This will be a combined lecture

Leo will speak on Mexican Cycad (Dioon) species and raising cycads from seed. Monte will talk about how to move cycads, plant them, injector fertilization and working with pH issues. This pH discussion should be valuable to every Gardener.

PLANT QUESTIONS??? WHOM TO CONTACT!!!

DOUG DAWSON

480-893-1207

dawsonlithops@hotmail.com

Specializations include Growing from Seed, Flora of Namibia, Lithops, other Mesembs, Melocactus, Miniature Cacti and Succulents of Arizona.

MIKE GALLAGHER

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Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and *Turbinicarpus*.

DEAN PATRICK

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Specialization in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting (rooting cacti, agave and aloe).

STEVE PLATH

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Specializations include General Propagation and Desert Revegetation, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Cyphostemma*, *Echinocereus*, *Fouquieria*, *Thelocactus*

DAN SMITH

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Specializes in adeniums: raising adeniums from seed, grafting and adenium culture in general

BOB TORREST

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Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, *Trichocereus*, and *Opuntia*.

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