Central Spine

Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society

CENTRALARIZONACACTUS.ORG CENTRALARIZONACACTUS

Echinopsis 'Flying Saucer' with pink Mexican evening primrose just says spring. By Nancy Mumpton.

EUPHORBIAS

Photos and text by Tom Glavich

Our next meeting is May 22, 2 p.m. at Papago Buttes Church of the Brethren, located at 2450 N 64th St, Scottsdale, AZ 85257.

Euphorbias can be found on every continent except Antarctica. They are the mainstay of many collections and make up a large fraction of every cactus and succulent show. They range in size from tiny geophytes, to giant tree-like specimens and range in difficulty of cultivation from the nearly impossible to kill, to nearly impossible to keep alive. We will explore the world of *Euphorbias*, looking first at *Euphorbias* from South Africa, Madagascar, North Africa, and Mexico. Then we will look at mutants' cultivation and propagation. We will finish with a tour of some habitats and gardens.

Tom Glavich is a long-time collector and propagator of succulent plants. He is one of the co-chairs of the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show. He is the author of two succulent cultivation books published by the CSSA. Tom is a frequent contributor to the CSSA *Journal* and *To The Point*. He lives in Altadena, California.

Left, *Euphorbia clivicola,* native to South Africa. Right, *Euphorbia hallii* flower, native to Central Cape Province, South Africa.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DAN SMITH

By Denise Smith

Thank you to CACSS members for your kind thoughts on Dan's passing.

Every word of love and encouragement, every gesture of heartfelt support and every expression of affection for Dan has overwhelmed us during this challenging time. Words fail to communicate all the emotions we feel but are grateful for your love for us. When we say, "thank you," please know that these words are filled with a lingering hug, a few tears and immense gratitude.

I am continued to be blessed by Dan's friends! I've let our four kids know of your generosity to the Desert Botanical Garden in his memory. Thank you so much for all your love and concern, kindness and prayers.

Sincerely,
Denise, Jarrod, Beverly, Connie, Dylan, Josh, Christine, and Nephi (and 14 grandchildren)

SUMMER CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SHOWS AND SALES

If you are in California this summer, you might want to time your trip to visit one of the the events below.

- June 4 - 5 San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society Summer Show and Sale, Balboa Park, room 101, San Diego, CA 858-382-1797

- June 10 - 11 Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society Sale, June 10, 6 - 8:30 p.m., June 11, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., One Generation, 17400 Victory Blvd., Van Nuys, CA www.lacactus.com

- Cactus and Succulent Society of America Annual Show and Sale, reservations required, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1152 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA. Plant sales start July 1 - 3, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., show opens July 2 -3, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. 626-405-3504

- July 22 - 23 Orange County Cactus and Succulent Society Summer Sale, July 22, noon - 6 p.m., July 23, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA 949-212-8417

- August 5 - 7 36th Annual Intercity Show and Sale, reservations required. Sale and show 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily, LA County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 626-821-3222

- September 3 Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium, reservations required, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 626-405-3405

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THE METRO PHOENIX SAGUARO CENSUS

From the DBG website

The Desert Botanical Garden needs your help to count and follow the health of saguaros your neighborhood. This is the first step to generate a database to monitor the saguaro population in the Valley, learn more about their health, and research the effects climate change might have on them.

The project seeks to understand the biology, distribution and genetics of the urban saguaro population by comparing them with their relatives growing in the wild. The project will also be used to develop tools to understand and preserve endangered cactus species in the Southwest with substantial community involvement.

There are two ways to participate. Just search online for Desert Botanical Garden Metro Phoenix Saguaro Census. You can even volunteer to have a tiny tissue sample taken from your own saguaro(s) to check DNA. You'll want to participate.

A small number of saguaros appear crested—a fan-like form which is referred to as cristate. The cause of this mutation is unknown. There are several theories as to what starts it, including damage by frost, lightning and genetics. Crested saguaros form this fan shape when the cells in the growing stem start to divide outward, rather than in a circular pattern of a normal cactus. According to experts, there have been more than 2,000 crested saguaros discovered and documented.

GENERAL MEETING UPDATES

By Nick Diomede

Due to several large events at the Desert Botanical Garden (DBG), the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society (CACSS) needed to make compromises finding alternate locations to host several meetings. We found a welcome host and space with Papago Buttes Church of the Brethren (PBCoB), located at 2450 N. 64th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85257. We will be at PBCoB May, June and November of 2022 and will keep members posted of any additional future meetings at this location.

Members and guests are welcome to attend these monthly meetings. At this time, signup will not be required. Masks are always encouraged and one's personal space should be respected.

To the delight of all, our silent auction and freebies have returned! All donations are appreciated. If you need a donation letter, please see the treasurer. At all events, whether at DBG or PBCoB, when bringing freebies please make sure you have a plan for disposal if your plants are not taken. Too often this is left for the last of those that remain, burdening them with the responsibility of removal.

We are also planning on the return of our library. At the PBCoB location, we will see a reduced number of books, due to the limited space. When we are at the DBG location, our librarian and many volunteers will be doing their best to present much of our extensive collection. We will always have the red box available to accept returns.

We do have a call-to-action. PBCoB has shown to be a wonderful alternate location for our meetings. However, we do not have the luxury of tables for all of our amenities. We are asking any members that might have portable tables to please bring them to any meetings at PBCoB to facilitate the library books and silent auction plants. There will be members available to help offload and set up, if you need assistance.

CACTUS AND SUCCULENT WORD SCRAMBLE ANSWERS

Unscramble these cactus and succulent names. Here's the answers from last month.

EAVGA	AGAVE
BUOAPIHER	EUPHORBIA
SUFOCERTCA	FEROCACTUS
PSILTOH	LITHOPS
LESAIPAT	STAPELIA
PSICNIHESO	ECHINOPSIS
PRCTESUTOACH	TEPHROCACTUS
HRAODSUSMIC	ADROMISCHUS

AUSTROCYLINDROPUNTIA FLOCCOSA From llife.com

Austrocylindropuntia floccosa grows at 11,000 - 15,500 feet of elevation, from central to northern Peru to Bolivia. The area has a dry season with night temperatures of 32 to -15F.

The white cottony plant can grow to 23 feet plus in diameter. Visitors say that from a distance the plants look like sleeping sheep. The long dense 'hairs' protect the plant from the high altitude ultraviolet light and from the freezing temperatures. It has bright flowers emerging from yellow spines.

This is, unfortunately, a plant that will not like our local conditions. So, admire this great picture by Marc Beckstrom.

WHERE ART MEETS THE DESERT

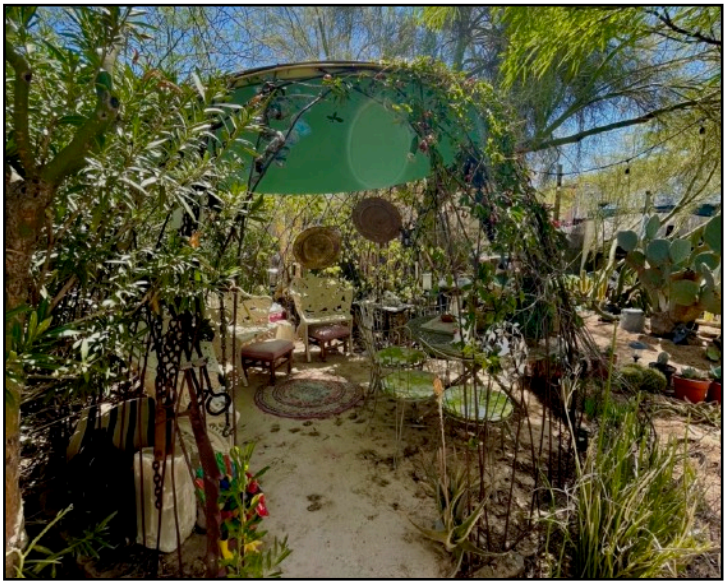
Photos and text by Nick Diomede

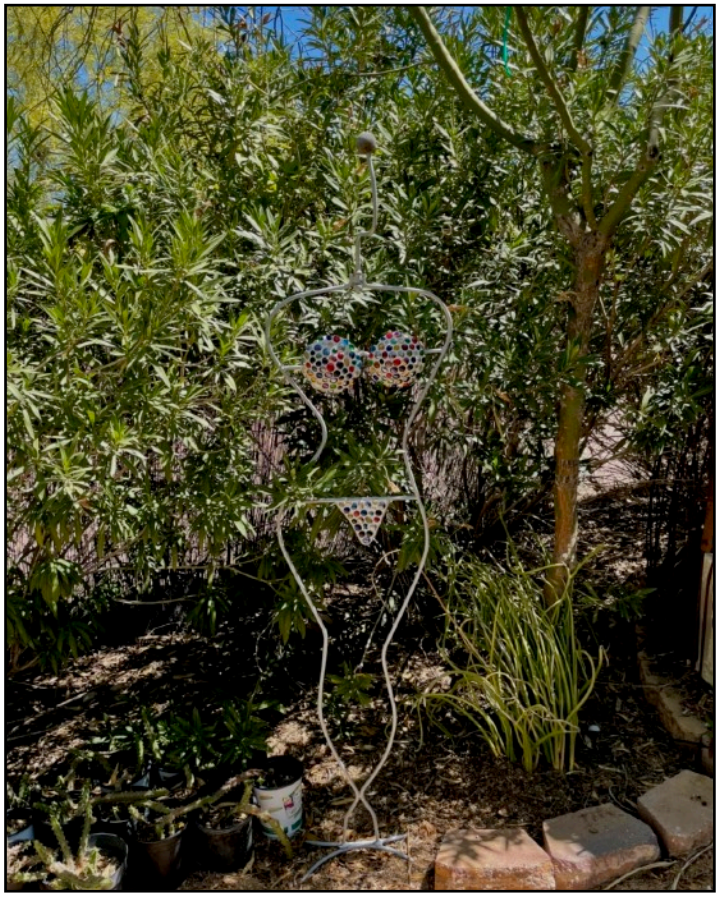
Driving along the Sonoran Scenic Route (Cave Creek Road) north of Phoenix, we are reminded of the beauty our Sonoran Desert holds. A vibrant landscape, dotted by saguaros and cholla, with an abundance of bright yellow flowers of palo verde trees, meets a sky that is a little bit bluer. Coming up to Smokehouse Trail, we are welcomed to the wide-open garden of our hosts, Joni Hamari and Bill Pence. Here we are invited to enjoy an abundance of wildlife and beauty.

This is one of those gardens where crushed rock walkways meander through densely planted areas of cacti and succulents, trees, shrubs, and art. Everywhere you look, art! Splitting their time between Alaska and Arizona, it is their love of the Sonoran Desert, and passion for all things creative, that is evident everywhere you look. From mass plantings of agaves, various opuntia, tree aloes, totems, multi-headed barrels, and many other columnar cacti, you are never not amazed by any collection here.

A garden such as this commands involvement and patience from its visitors. It cannot be taken in at a glance and requires at least a second trip through to see everything you missed the first time around. I got to enjoy listening to Bill talk about collecting large pieces of driftwood along the shores of Alaska, the large redwood root on display, his plans for expanding his garden and his hopes for their giant *Agave mapisaga*.

Joni was no less enthusiastic sharing about her life creating art in all its varying forms, before she took out her adorable little fur baby Birdie. You can tell Birdie loves this desert garden and does not miss the so-called need for “grass.” Next up we meet “the digger,” Tig, a catahoula/pit mix. I heard about “the digger” before, which did him no justice. This is a dog that can dig on command and could be part of any landscaping crew. This is a slice of the Sonoran Desert not to miss if the opportunity comes up again. Thank you to Bill and Joni for opening their garden for members to visit.





More scenes from Bill Pence and Joni Hamari's garden.

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.

CENTRALAZCACTUS FACEBOOK PAGE

By Michelle Schrade

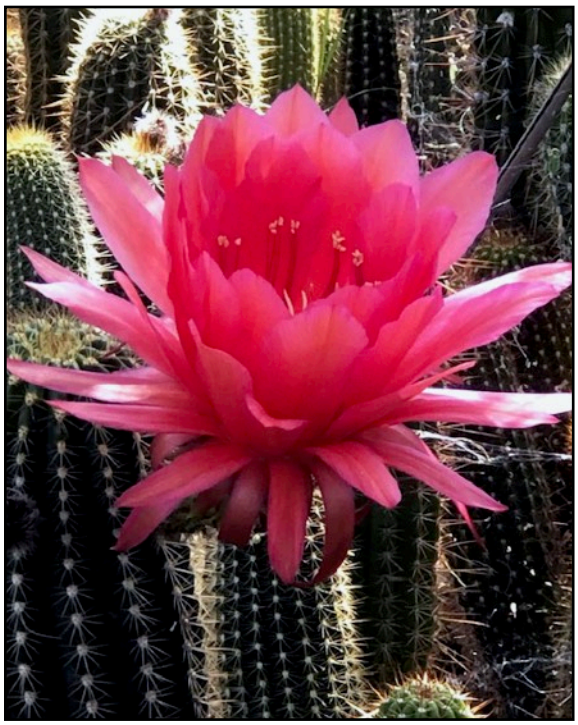
Sue Hakala, our wonderful editor of the *Central Spine*, had mercy on me. She knew I faced the impossible task of selecting one photo for the honor of Cactus of the Month, as there were so many incredible photos posted on our FB page. Sue graciously suggested I select eight photos for recognition. Thank you, Sue! It was still a difficult task. There were so many wonderful images.

You can join the CAC FB page at: https://m.facebook.com/groups/cacss2/

Succulent of the Month: *Yucca rostrata* by Butch Gaberman.

ALL THOSE BELOW ARE CACTUS OF THE MONTH

Trichocereus ‘Flying Saucer’’ by Judy Braden.



Trichocereus hybrid by Celeste Gornick.

Echinocereus pentalophus by Wendy Barrett.

Trichocereus ‘Pink Argentine Giant’ by Chris Ginkel.

Opuntia sp. by Robert Sasha.

Echinocereus triglochidiatus by Kristan Johnson.

Echinopsis sp. Lori Heade.

Mammillaria baumii by Sue Hakala.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD FACEBOOK PHOTO

Photos and text by Michelle Schrade

Many photos were so close to being selected, except for small, but important reasons. When there are so many good photos to choose from, little things count. What is the distinction between a “good photo” and a “great photo?” I decided to take a few photos with my phone to help illustrate.

Photo #1 (left below) is an example of a nice cactus, but the image contains many distractions, making it a poor photo. 1) The light is too bright, making the overall effect harsh. 2) Leaf detritus on the cactus and plant label detract from the beautiful plant. 3) Try not to include feet in the photo. 4) Beware of shadows which could easily be cropped out of the photo. 5) Busy backgrounds draw eyes away from the subject of the photo. 6) Close-ups are a great way to make your cactus the focus of the photo. 7) Be sure your picture is in focus.

Photo #2 (right below) is an example of the same cactus, taken immediately after Photo #1 but with different results. The lighting is softer after moving the pot to a shaded patio. The plant label and detritus were removed. Shooting the cactus in close-up removed troublesome shadows and a busy background, resulting in a much nicer photograph.

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TOP DRESSING

By Sue Tyrrel

The reason I use top dressing on my plants is mostly because it looks like a more finished product; it doesn't look complete without it. There are other benefits. Top dressing can help reduce the evaporation of water, similar to adding granite to your landscape. Top dressing can help to stabilize the plant when first planted by holding the soil and plants in place until there is some root growth.

Though the top dressing may be messy on your patio, with occasional falling pebbles, it is NOT recommended that you glue the rocks in place. This technique can be seen in some retail stores. This will keep the top dressing in place, but how will the plants receive water, and just as importantly, how will any water in the soil evaporate?

PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS PADS ARE MADE INTO LEATHER

Be sure to visit Youtube.com, then search for curiosity series: cactus leather. Designers have figured out how to make "leather" out of prickly pear cactus pads. It looks like the real thing made into shoes, purses, clothing. It also is much friendlier to the earth. What cactus lover doesn't want this?

Opuntia aciculata by Carlos Manglano.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM THE SUN

By Sue Hakala

My friend, Brian, was helping a neighbor chainsaw a storm-fallen cactus. All the bending and stooping made the top of his balding head visible. The neighbor insisted that Brian see her doctor the next day. The doctor confirmed what Brian's neighbor suspected; Brian had skin cancer. A 2 x 4 inch strip was removed, giving him a sort of facelift and a very big scare. We spend a lot of time in the outdoors caring for our plants. It's important to know how to protect yourself.

Skin cancer is the abnormal growth of skin cells labeled as basal or squamous, both slow growing and very treatable, if found early. Melanoma is the more serious kind that affects the deepest layers of the skin and can spread throughout the body. The main cause of skin cancer is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation; the sun or tanning booths.

Early detection and avoiding the sun are the two best ways to protect yourself from skin cancer. The Skin Cancer Foundation offers the following suggestions:

- Do not sunbathe or use tanning devices.
- Avoid unnecessary exposure to the sun, especially from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen that is rated SPF 15 or higher liberally, uniformly and often. Apply 30-minutes before going out in the sun. Read the labels, using lotions approved by the American Cancer Society for adequate protection.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, broad-brimmed hats, and UV-protective sunglasses. Baseball-type hats don't cover the tops of ears or the side of your face or neck.
- Teach your family/kids about good sun protection.
- Examine your skin from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet and between your toes and fingers every three months.

Not all changes in your skin are skin cancer. Your primary health provider, or a dermatologist, should check out all changes to be safe. The Skin Cancer Foundation at www.Cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/skin provides directions on how to examine yourself and loved ones. Look for small growths, a sore that bleeds, crusts over, heals and opens again. Be on the lookout for pearly or waxy bumps, flat, flesh-colored lesions, firm red nodules, a large brown spot with darker speckles, lesions with irregular borders, rough, scaly, brown to pink patches, or anything that is different. Don't wait. Have it looked at by a professional.

Those most susceptible to skin cancer have fair and or fragile skin, a personal/family history of skin cancer, excessive sun exposure, exposure to environmental hazards, and other conditions that you can read about at www.MayoClinic.com – skin cancer. Mayo points out that office workers, spending vacations tanning on the beach, are more susceptible than roofers.