Happy Holidays to one and all. There is no meeting in December. Plan to attend the Holiday Party Sunday, December 10, 1-3 p.m., at Tumbleweed Recreation Center, 745 E. Germann Road, Chandler. RSVP to Sue Glenn at 920-327-3137 or ekmglenn@hotmail.com now. Please RSVP with your name and item you will bring to pass (main dish, appetizer, salad/vegetable or dessert). Please include a serving spoon/fork with the item you bring. We will supply plates, napkins, eating utensils and turkey and ham for all to enjoy. We will need volunteers to help set up and clean up at the end. We will have a plant exchange for anyone interested. If you bring a plant, you will get a ticket from Jo Davis. Jo will conduct the exchange during the meal, so please wait for your number to be called before taking a plant.
THANK YOU TO NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

By Editor Sue Hakala

This year, 43 people contributed to our newsletter. It really is a club effort.

The newsletter wouldn’t be possible without the technical assistance provided by Nick Diomede. When I was ready to throw my computer through the window last spring, Nick figured out the never-ending issues. His kindness and patience have been wonderful. Thank you Mr. D.

The next major contributor to the newsletter has been Diana Crummey. Every month she is the go-between for the monthly speaker and me. She nudges them to send her the text and photos, and then ensures they are in the correct format to send on to me. She and I have often gone back and forth, back and forth, and back and forth for about four more times to get everything just right sometimes. She always perseveres!

Thom Young, monthly Facebook contributor and organizer, has the happy task of selecting the Facebook photos for the newsletter and providing a summary of FB activity.

Tom Gatz contacts show award-winners every month to include their horticultural information for us all to learn from. Thanks for your hard work.

Beth Kirkpatrick, our president, provides her monthly missive which, she says, is the hardest part of being president for her.

Give a special thanks to everyone who has contributed this year. Think about how you can make a contribution in the future. All submissions and photos are welcome. Send items to: CACSScentralspine@gmail.com.

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott McMahon   Tristan Davis   Deborah Robin
Jim Elliott     Nancy Mumpton   Linda Larson
Lois Schneberger Mike Cone     Tom Glavich
Jo Davis        Wendy Barrett   Heather Holst
Eric Driskill   Michelle Schrade Kelly DePetro
Elton Roberts   Cliff Fielding  Steve Mack
Beth Kirkpatrick Grant Meyer   Loran Rodewald
Mary Irish      Cindy Capek    Dan Smith
Mike Gallagher  Chris Ginkle   Gard Roper
Tara Richards   Mark Dimmitt   Holly Martinez
Lauren Marks    Rita Gosnell   Dean Patrick
Sue Hakala      Pam Rush      Doug Dawson
Julie Plath

CACSS

December 2017
DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN CLASSES

Sign-up now for upcoming winter classes at learn.dbg.org or call 480-941-1225.

- **Mammillaria**, February 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m., with Scott McMahon, club member, past president, show judge and manager of the cactus collection at the garden. Even though I’ve grown *Mammillarias* for over 40 years, when I took the class, I learned a lot. Members $27/$34 general public.

- **Insects of the Sonoran Desert**, January 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m., with Dr. Carl Olson. He will debunk bug-related myths and highlight the benefits of desert insects. He’s been my bug guru for decades and makes learning about insects fun. $27/$34

- **Container Gardening with Succulents**, January 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m. with Starr Urbatsch, manager of the *Agave*, *Aloe* and non-cactus succulent plants at the garden. $30/$38

SCHLUMBERGERA OR CHRISTMAS CACTUS

*Schlumbergera*, or Christmas cactus, can be a little tricky to get to re-bloom. For help, read Leo Martin’s article, *Holiday Cactus*, in the December 2002 issue of the *Central Spine*. Find it on the club’s website under newsletters.

Our library also carries the *CSSA Journal* with articles on *Schlumbergera* in 1978, 1982 and 1984. Ask a librarian for help in finding the issue you want.
FAVORITE TOOLS

I can never work on plants without reaching for any and all of these Bonsai tools! Anytime I eat Asian food, I pick up a pair of chopsticks that go right in my purse. They make great dibbles for loosening roots or dibbling fresh soil into small containers around roots or to settle soil and get out air pockets.

I use a single chopstick, the two still attached together and the blunt top end. A heavier tool for loosening roots and removing old soil on larger plants is the metal Bonsai hook. This tool is a monster worker that I also use to get weeds out of pots or in the ground! Definitely worth the investment and can be found online. Finally, my "Joyce Chen" scissors. Flexible handles, sharp blades: I trim small roots, branches, leaves and deadhead flowers. I have several floating around the nursery and in the house at all times! There are knock-offs and I grab them frequently. Check nurseries, hobby and fabric stores, online, or box stores and get several!

Again with the Bonsai tools! I love these scoop sets to use when potting up plants. The three sizes are ideal for getting fresh soil in between the plant roots and the new pot. They are efficient and reduce spine, glochid and sap attacks on your hands! For the bigger plants, I love my pewter scoop. Not easy to find anymore, although I haven't searched online. This serious scoop has been lovingly used for years and years and suspect that it will outwork my gardening life!
BOOK REVIEW:  

Wild Lithops, by Anja and Harald Janta, is a hard cover book with 488 pages, 2,000 color and 60 black and white photographs, 13 maps, 14 tables, 10 diagrams, and 22 pages of references with a summary of the content of each listing (holy smoke!). The book is printed on high quality paper with excellent color pictures (at least 3 per page) has a professional logical layout, and weighs in at about 4 pounds. It’s $95.95 purchased from exoticplantbooks.com. If you love books, you’ll love the heavenly smell of a quality printing job by publisher Klaus Hess. Now in the CACSS library.

This is not a book about cultivation, but it’s some of the best armchair travel you’ll experience. The German authors motored in a 4 x 4, in 16 tours over 12 years exploring South Africa and Namibia searching for every species of Lithops in habitat. They covered 6,650 miles in 475 days visiting 315 Lithops localities.

“We don’t grow or study Lithops, we’re just obsessed to observe and photograph them in their habitat,” Harald said. “We find it mind-bogglingly complex to begin to question the classification of Lithops and leave that to the experts. We want to see how they grow, how their diversity creates gradients of form, color, and texture that defies easy classification.”

They make it clear that a species can be immensely variable throughout its range. In one section, 226 colonies are represented with 4 photos of different plants from one colony next to each other to show the change in appearance throughout even a small range.

“After three hours of searching, one double-headed plant was so buried it was discernible only via a visible seed capsule,” Harald says. This makes the reader fully aware how much a practiced eye is needed to find and identify these plants.

Getting to them is hard too. Some days, “a full day of searching only got us a spitting cobra,” Harald states. The Jantas have developed Lithops habitat in South Africa. How can they be found?
a network of Lithoparians throughout the areas where the plants are found. This makes accessing private property easy.

A history of Lithops discovery is presented covering the years 1811-2008. Small snapshots of “discoverers” are shown with plants named for them, a nice touch. Locality data and charts of rainfall amounts are helpful to growers.

I traveled to South Africa to see Lithops in habitat. I remember looking at the very wide expanse of landscape as we flew down the highway guided by Graham Williamson, wondering how we would ever find them. With Graham’s experience and practiced eye, he made it seem easy (this was before GPS). We saw so many in some locations, I had to literally tip-toe through the landscape so as not to step on them. Then it would be miles and miles to the next stop. Graham timed some stops so that we could see the plants in afternoon bloom—so thrilling! This book makes me feel like I’m back in that landscape.

As the author says, Lithops have “a determination to survive harsh environments.” They have evolved to match in color and texture the small rocks and pebbles they grow among. It takes time, walking with the head down, to spot them; then getting on elbows and knees to get a photo—it’s a work out.

Lithops can be so tiny in habitat that the Jantas use a finger tip for scale. Some would fit on a thumb nail. They show photos of distorted plants growing in crevices.

After blooming, Lithops absorb the moisture and nutrients from the old leaves. They never should be watered during these months, and is when most people lose them to rot. In habitat, they shrink a lot, sometimes to below ground, to escape blasting sun and hungry mouths. “The old leaf edges provide some shade and protection from the never-ending winds that blow sand and gravel across the

Look closely, the Lithops are there.

This prepared photographer is wearing knee and elbow pads to take photos of Lithops in the field.
landscape,” Harald says. “The paper-like structures of the old leaves probably protect against too much ground humidity during the rainy season.”

I was thrilled to see my oldest *Lithops* plant, *L. schwantesii sb. schwantesii*, purchased in 1980, in its Namibian environment and in bloom, one of the few blooms shown in the entire book. “It has a huge distribution and is immensely variable. We had to depend on patterns of distribution for identification,” Harald says.

Even if you never get to go to these amazing plant habitats, you’ll feel as though you have after reading this mind-blowing book. Wide landscape shots set the scene, and thousands of close-ups allow you to see the detail and incredible variety of these tough little plants in this sumptuous publication worthy of the immense effort. (continued)
To see literally thousands of *Lithops* growing here and to get expert advice, ask club member Doug Dawson if you can visit his vast greenhouses. He welcomes visitors. Or, take a trip to Plants of the Southwest nursery in Tucson for a jaw-dropping experience.

Visit the club web site and read articles about *Lithops* in old *Central Spine* newsletters:
- *Growing Lithops in Phoenix* by Doug Dawson, 4/16
- *Lithops* (no author), 4/88
- *Lithops* (no author), 11/99
- *Lithops* found within Leo Martin’s *From Your President* column, 12/00
- *Lithops N. E. Brown* by Leo Martin, 5/00

The CACSS Library has more books on *Lithops*:
- *Growing Lithops from Seed* by Desmond Cole
- *Lithops for the Curious, the Collector and the Cultist* by Nick Rowlett
- *Lithops, Treasures of the Veld* (second edition) by Steven Hammer

*Wild Lithop* book trivia:
- World’s largest cultivated *Lithops* plant has 350 heads
- *Lithops* can easily outlive humans as evidenced by *L. Optica* recorded at 95 years old
- Roots are highly sensitive as they are most exposed to bacteria and fungi causing death easily
- Longest name: *L. pseudotruncatella ssp. pseudotruncatella var. pseudotruncatella*
- Seed pods are triggered when hit with not one but many drops of rain. The pods can open and close several times if they sense there is not enough rain and will just wait until conditions are right.
- More than 1,000 separate colonies have been discovered.
- They will be very threatened with increased planet temperature.
Our annual October auction proved a tremendous success this year. We could not have accomplished this without the support of our volunteers, our members who provided us with a large variety of desirable cacti, succulents and pottery and, of course, everyone who spent their money to support the society.

Our 2017 auction found us inside Dorrance Hall providing us relief and comfort from the elements and, just maybe, contributing to the bidding enthusiasm. It showed in our numbers as both the live and silent auctions brought in greater revenue than the past two years.

The live auction consisted of 19 desirable and rare plants and unique pottery pieces bringing in $1,116.50. The silent auction, filling most of Dorrance Hall with other desirable plants, cuttings and pottery, brought in $4,400.50. With this year’s total reaching $5,517, we find ourselves with a 115% increase over 2016. I hope the excitement is building for 2018.

WINTER GROWING PLANT TIPS
Visit the club website (centralazcactus.org), choose newsletters and then select by year and month to read these helpful articles from past issues of the Central Spine.

BULBS
• Crash Course on Winter-Growing Bulbs by Celeste Gornick, 10/08
• Fall Bulb and Mesemb Seed Alert! by Leo Martin, 9/07
• South African Bulbs found within Leo Martin’s From Your President column, 12/01
• Winter-growing Bulbs: Part II by Celeste Gornick, 3/09

WINTER CARE
• 10/10 Temperature Guide (when to cover plants) by Tom Gatz, 1/03
• Cacti and Succulents in Cold Weather by Russ Hintz, 12/00
• Frost Protection found within Leo Martin’s From Your President column, 1/99
• Gymnocalycium Habitat and Winter Culture by Mike Goodson, 8/85
• Winter Growing Plants found within Leo Martin’s From Your President column, 12/01
• Winter Protection by Leo Martin, 10/02
• Winter Watering found within Leo Martin’s From Your President column, 2/01
• Wintering Plants in Phoenix by Leo Martin, 11/00
HOW'D YOU GROW THAT PLANT

Compiled by Tom Gatz

COPIAPOA TENUISSIMA MONSTROSE

Best Monstrose Cactus of 2017 Show

Grown by Scott McMahon

PURCHASED: From RSVP Nursery at the 1995 CSSA convention in Tucson, June 1995. Owned by the late Steve Southwell. We visited his nursery later in the Palo Alto area on one of our CACSS bus trips.

POT: It's been in a clay pot since the first time I repotted it, so it's been a long time.

FERTILIZER: It’s had regular low doses of 10-30-20 or more recently 10-16-38 during the regular growing season.

POTTING MEDIUM: I’ve always used a commercial cactus and succulent mix with about 50% pumice added.

SUN EXPOSURE: It has never received direct sun, rather 50% shade cloth with a full day’s worth of sunlight.

WATERING: Average once per week in summer, less in spring and fall, almost none in winter.

FROST: It’s in my greenhouse, which gets covered during the colder months. During hard freezes, I add electric heaters on timers which come on during the night and early morning hours.

This plant will add many heads over time, but wait for the pot to get a little crowded before moving up in size. Don’t over pot!
Purchased: Mike purchased this South African succulent from Cliff Fielding when he had a table at the annual show and sale a number of years back.

Pot: The pot is a Goodwill find which had to have a hole drilled in the bottom for drainage.

Fertilizer: Mike says that “Like most of my plants, fertilizing is an afterthought. It may get fertilized once or twice a year. I use the all purpose fertilizer sold by the club at about 25% of the recommended strength.”

Potting Medium: He uses his normal potting soil, which was described in a previous article, consisting of commercial potting soil, coffee grounds, small pebbles, sand, and pumice. There is bone meal and gypsum added to this mix as well.

Sun Exposure: The plant sits in one of the lower light areas of his lath house. Summer exposure is around 30% and in winter somewhat lower.

Watering: During the growing season it gets watered with all his other plants, which he tries to do on a weekly basis (“somewhat unsuccessfully,” he adds).

Frost Protection: Growing in his lath house, the Glottiphyllum gets exposed to some fairly low temperatures. The lath house is toward the back of his lot, which sits at the base of Moon Mountain. Because of this, there is sometimes a 10 degree F difference between the back and front of his house. The plant gets no additional cover on very cold nights and probably had at least a 27 degree F exposure or maybe even lower.
MAMMILLARIA MAGNIFICA  Judges’ Choice for a Cactus and People’s Choice Award of the 2017 Show
Grown by Sue Hakala

PURCHASED:  In 2013 on a bus tour to California.  The plant was found at an all succulent nursery, in the parking lot, on the ground, out of its pot, and waiting to get run over.  I love Mams and knew it needed to go home with me.  The owner agreed to a purchase price of $1.

POT:  I prefer terra-cotta, especially for big plants.

FERTILIZER:  I use the club fertilizer at one-half strength in the growing season, every third watering.  Then, once more before winter so the plant has food to make its red flowers.

POTTING MEDIUM:  I use 3 parts Black Gold Cactus Mix, 3 parts pumice and 3 parts perlite with a good handful of 1/4” granite thrown in to open the soil more in this 18” pot.

SUN EXPOSURE:  In the summer it gets full a.m. sun until about 11, then it’s behind 30% shade cloth.  In the winter, it gets eased into full sun.

WATERING:  It’s watered about every 10-14 days in the warm months, with none during the monsoon and winter.  Watering gets tricky in such a big pot, so I often do the finger probe to test for moisture.

FROST PROTECTION:  This plant is really pampered and comes in the house on cold nights.  I keep it on a furniture mover so it just rolls right in.

SPECIAL NEEDS:  I feel that we have a special relationship as some days I think it just smiles at me and wants a smile back.
CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

For new and renewal membership, complete this form and make check payable to CACSS.

Mail to: CACSS, PO Box 63572, Phoenix, AZ 85082-3572.

Please take special care in ensuring all information is legible.

Name (1): ___________________________ E-mail: ____________________________

Name (2): ___________________________ E-mail: ____________________________

☐ For renewing members, please check if all following information remains same.

Address: _______________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________ Zip Code: ______________

Phone (Home): ___________________________ (Cell): ___________________________

☐ Do not publish my information to the CACSS membership list. (Note: we do not share information.)

Areas of volunteer interest: ______________________________________________

How did you hear about us: ______________________________________________

Includes monthly full-color newsletter via e-mail.

Annual Membership Fee: ☐ Individual $20 ☐ Family $25

Multi-year renewal (x) Years __________ = Total Fees Submitted __________

Please share your ideas for speakers or how we can improve your club experience:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

If you would like to speak to someone about your membership please contact Beth Kirkpatrick,

Membership Chair, at bethalia@gmail.com or 480-275-4833. We look forward to your

continued participation in the club.
FACEBOOK UPDATE

By Thom Young

The Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society (CACSS) Facebook (FB) page membership in November rose to a total of 3,227 members. This is a two (2) percent increase from the month of October. Please join the CACSS FB page. Our FB page is an open forum on cacti and succulents (C&S). There are many C&S questions, commentaries along with requests for C&S IDs. Our page has many informative C&S posts associated with all aspects of growing C&Ss. Our page offers the opportunity to post photos of your favorite plants in pots, in your yard and garden.

The following are the different C&S in flower posted on our FB page in November: Adenium, Aloe, Ariocarpus, Cleistocactus, Conophyton, Copiapoa, Coryphantha, Cycad, Datura, Dinteranthus, Echidnopsis, Echinocactus, Echincereus, Echinopsis, Eremophila, Euphorbia, Ferocactus, Gasteria, Huernia, Lithops, Mammillaria, Matucana, Melocactus, Micranthocereus, Opuntia, Plumeria, Sansevieria, and Stapelia.

The photos of our beautiful plants in flower are of great assistance in plant identification. You can find the beautiful photos here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/cacss2/ (copy and paste to your search engine).

Each month we feature a cactus and a succulent (non-cactus) photo from our FB members. November’s featured cactus photo is Chris Ginkel’s post of a Echinocereus pentalophus in bloom. The featured succulent photo is from Steve Plath’s post of a Dinteranthus wilmontianus in bloom. Thanks to Steve and Chris for posting their photos on the CACSS FB page. Facebookers keep posting those photos.
NOMINATIONS AND VOTING FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Board members serve a two-year term with half of the Board seats up for election each year. Dan Smith will be sending out an email giving instructions for electronic voting.

Board members continuing are: Cindy Capek | Jo Davis | Carol Parrott | Edmund Hunt
Dan Smith | Kelly DePetro | Heather Holst, secretary

Nominated for Board positions are:
Jim Oravetz, president
Judy Tolbert, vice-president
Nick Diomede, treasurer
Pam Edsall | Russ Faust | Mike Gallagher | Beth Kirkpatrick | Ken Lutten

Chris Ginkel's *Echinocereus pentalophus* in bloom.
The old adage, “Time flies when you are having fun” certainly applies to the last two years of my CACSS presidency. It has been great fun, I’ve made new friends and as a Board of Directors we’ve had some notable accomplishments, including a wonderfully successful national convention, a new research grant program, successful shows and sales and a wildly successful annual auction this year. Our speakers each month have been outstanding and our silent auctions not only provided interesting plants for members, but also considerable revenue for our club. Our newsletter is first class and very informative. We are very fortunate as a club to have so many volunteers who work tirelessly to make our club successful. Thank you to all of you.

It is now time for me to move on. A new president and vice-president will be elected in December along with some new and some former board members. Our club will be in good hands with them and I know you will all welcome them and give them your support. Please vote when you get your election e-mail.

I will continue to be the webmaster and membership chair. I am still hoping to have someone with Wordpress skills replace me as webmaster, so if you would like a nice volunteer assignment let me know!

I look forward to volunteering with you in 2018 and beyond.

Be sure to visit CACSS on the web at:
centralarizonacactus.org the Society’s web site.
Facebook Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society
CACSS Swap and Shop, a place to connect with members.

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The CACSS is an affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America.
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Manages the Seed Depot.

**Tristan Davis**  480-540-9540  
minime8484@hotmail.com  
Specializations include plant propagation, and heading PEG (Propagation Education Group).

**Doug Dawson**  480-893-1207  
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Specializations include growing from seed, flora of Namibia, Lithops, other Mesembs, Melocactus, and miniature cacti and succulents of Arizona.

**Mike Gallagher**  602-942-8580  
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Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, columnar cacti, and Turbinicarpus.

**Chris Ginkel**  602-908-2664  
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Manages the Facebook CACSS Swap and Shop page.

**Eric Holst**  480-786-2010  
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Manages the fertilizer program.

**Dean Patrick**  480-759-0312  
desertpatrick@cox.net  
Specializations in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting, rooting cacti, Agave and Aloe.

**Steve Plath**  623-238-3342  
sbotanica@inreach.com  
Specializations include general propagation and desert revegetation, Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, and Thelocactus.

**Gard Roper**  602-996-9745  
Manages the pumice pile.

**Dan Smith**  480-981-9648  
smithdans@outlet.com  
Specializes in Adenium, raising Adeniums from seed, grafting and Adenium culture in general, and co-manages the Facebook page.

**Bob Torrest**  480-994-3868  
robertst9114@msn.com  
Specializations include desert landscaping, unusual (including rare fruit) trees and shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, and columnar cacti.

**Thom Young**  480-460-0782  
te77@q.com  
Co-manages the CACSS Facebook page.

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Cover photo by Sue Hakala with the snow-capped Superstition Mts, and Cylindropuntia bigelovii.
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CSSA Representative: Mike Gallagher
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Facebook Coordinators: Dan Smith and Thom Young
Fertilizer Sales: Eric Holst
Holiday Party 2016: Sue Glenn
Librarians: Wendy Barrett, Nancy Mumpton
Mailed Newsletters: Sue Tyrrel
Keeping in Touch with Members: Jo Davis
Membership: Beth Kirkpatrick
Newsletter: Sue Hakala
October Auction: Mike Gallagher
Plant Rescues: Lucy Rand
Private Plant Sales: Sue Tyrrel
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A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPS MAKE OUR SOCIETY RUN SO SMOOTHLY.