SooWai Eng has captured this year’s spectacular wildflower season at Pinnacle Peak.

There is no meeting in April.
Unlike most Aloes that quickly develop roots on cuttings placed in pumice or other fast-draining substrate, Aloe ramosissima and Aloe dicotoma can be challenging to root from cuttings. In fact, they are so different than the other Aloes that some taxonomists now believe they should be in their own genus, Aloidendron.

I was always cautioned that these species should be watered in the winter and kept on the dry side in summer to prevent rot. I previously tried to get them to develop roots, always unsuccessfully, by watering cuttings of them in the wintertime only. Then, I bumped into Ty Petersen, of Arizona Cactus Sales, while helping to unload cactus for the DBG plant sale a few years ago. He gave me some great tips.

Ty recommends taking the cuttings in the late spring or early summer, putting the cuttings in ¹⁄₄ minus decomposed granite and watering them every two weeks, but only when the temperatures are consistently above 90F. I did this, and most of my cuttings had roots by the fall.

Ty also said to be very careful when un-potting the rooted cuttings because they often only grow a few long succulent roots that can break off easily.

*These Aloe ramosissima cuttings were potted up in the spring, developed roots over the summer, and were ready for re-potting in September.*
A member asks: What are the most outrageous cactus flowers?

These cactus flowers may or may not be outrageous, it's all a matter of perception and how familiar one is with these flowers in general. For me, it's the seldom seen species, the ones that rarely bloom, or ones with different shapes and colors.

The *Lemaireocereus gaumeri* has green flowers, hardly a color to attract pollinators. The flowers of *Pterocactus tuberosus* just burst out of the ends of the stems. The *Isolatocereus Myrtillocactus* hybrid is rare, but still beautiful. The *Harrisia* seldom blooms for us, but it’s spectacular. *Uebelmmania pectinifera* has tiny exquisite flowers tucked in the hairs of its apex. The *Arrojadoa* has flowers with extraordinary colors, but they hardly open at all.

From left: *Isolatocereus Myrtillocactus hybrid, Uebelmmania pectinifera and Pterocactus tuberosus.*
From left: Arrojadoa rhodantha, Harrisia martinii and green flowered Lemaireocereus gaumeri.
The first weekend in April is a momentous occasion for the CACSS. It is our annual Show and Sale (S&S), which we held at Dorrance Hall and Boppart Courtyard. The 2019 S&S was a rousing success, and we owe it all to the team comprised of the steering committee, volunteers, vendors, exhibitors, and the Desert Botanical Garden.

We would like to thank everyone for their participation in this year’s Show and Sale. We will start with the S&S steering committee: Wendy Barrett—photography, lead judging; Chuck and Jeanne Ann Brush—exhibitor registration; Cindy Capek—potting and holding area coordination; Jo Davis—sales area setup, and everything else; Nick Diomede—plant sale checkout, vendor activities, and much more; Mike Gallagher and Gard Roper—donated cutting table; Sue and Emily Glenn—lunches, drinks, and sustenance; Rita Gosnell—show chair assistant; Cricket Peterson—marketing, sale area setup; Lois Schneberger—plant entry awards and tabulation, etc.; Dan Smith—education exhibits, volunteer signup and more; and Sue Tyrrel—awards table.

We especially want to thank all the volunteers who took the time to perform the following activities: the kick off activity was retrieving society show and sale items from storage, show setup (including plant entry), sales area setup (including vendor setup), judging clerks, greeters, show plant educators, lunch prep and follow through, and floaters who did everything from making water available to taping boxes and filling in any empty volunteer spots. Also, cashiering, potting and plant holding, purchased plant assistance, cutting table assistants, show breakdown, sales area breakdown, plant award, and plant entry tabulation.
Four great show plant judges graced us this year. They were for cactus: Ty Petersen and Tristan Davis and for succulents: Doug Dawson and Cliff Fielding. A big thank you to our judges!

A comprehensive listing of show and sale statistics is being tabulated. However, we would like to give you a few highlights based on increases from the 2018 S&S. Plant sales were up 32%, our cutting table sales were up 31% and show plant exhibitors were up 24%.

Finally, we want to extend a personal invitation to our members to get involved in the next year’s show and sale excitement and fun. Our members and volunteers are instrumental in making the event a grand success. We are looking forward to seeing and working with you as volunteers and show plant entrants at the CACSS 2020 Show and Sale.

Above, Mammillaria mazatlanensis garnered Pam Rush the Best Mammillaria in the Show, Best Cactus of the Show and a Judge’s Choice Award.

Our youngest members entered the show: left, Johnny Briggs age 8, with Mammillaria bocasana, and right, Danny Briggs age 11 with Mammillaria sempervivi.
Taken on a bus trip to California, Tom Gatz presents a “Succulent Buffet.”

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A MEMBER ASKS: How do I stop a cactus from rotting?  

Text and Photo by Sue Hakala

The most important thing to stop a cactus from rotting is to remember not to water until the soil is dry. For smaller pots, that means water once about every 7 days in the hot months; big pots maybe every 2 weeks. The best way to know is to just put your finger in the soil. If it feels wet or moist, just wait. You’ll get the rhythm after awhile. I don’t use a moisture meter as tender roots/tubers can be punctured introducing bacteria and pathogens.

Most cactus go dormant in the high heat/humidity of the summer, so just let them rest and don’t water—even though you want to. Also, most go dormant in the cold. Again, just let them rest. Cactus don’t like to be cold and wet.

If you have rot, sterilize a sharp knife with alcohol (after every cut). Cut off the rot until you get to healthy tissue. Place the plant in the shade, and let it callus over for days to weeks until a fingernail can’t penetrate the tissue. This is to keep bacteria and other pathogens from entering the plant. I have 100% success rooting in pure pumice. This might take a year for some plants. Water like normal. After rooting, repot in clean cactus mix soil (not potting soil which is too rich) with 50% pumice and a clean, sterilized (with bleach) pot. If planting in the ground, rough up the soil down a couple of inches and plant. I usually mix in a little pumice to help with the initial drainage. You may have to stake your plant for awhile.

Do not place soil from a rotted plant in your compost heap as it could have bad stuff in it. Throw the soil away, and any rot that was cut off.

If the cactus is in the ground, sterilize a knife as above. Then, cut until you get to healthy tissue. Mix one gallon of water with a couple of good glugs of bleach. Wash the wound to disinfect it and kill anything that might have been in the wound. Allow to dry out and form a callus. The callus is like a scab on you, it keeps the bad stuff out.
CACSS FACEBOOK PAGE

By Michelle Schrade

Our membership has grown to 4,572 members from all over the world! This month was especially fun with CACSS members gearing up for our annual sale, and warm weather bringing everyone’s favorite: BLOOMS!

Popular topics this month:

• **BLOOMS, BLOOMS and BLOOMS**: The FB page is a wonderful way to show off your plants in all their glory. Flowering plants with blossoms of every color and shape imaginable can be seen. *Echinobivia, Echinopsis, Mammillaria, Adenium, Trichocereus, Astrophytum, Thelocactus, Peniocereus, and Euphorbia* grace this month’s FB pages. Be sure and keep a pencil and pad nearby while perusing so you can update your plant wish list.

• **QUESTIONS?** Plant identification requests were at an all-time high with over 50. Questions about light requirements, soil preparation and pest/disease ID came flooding in. A big thank you to CACSS members who took the time to answer a multitude of questions.

• **‘TIS the SEASON (to REPOT)** The warm weather and upcoming show and sale motivated members to put on their gloves and goggles and get out their favorite plants and pots. Speaking of pots, my favorite posts this month (besides flowers) were the different types of pots used in members’ cactus and succulent collections. Pots in different shapes, colors, textures, and materials were displayed. Hanging pots, pots on walls, clay pots, Talavera pots, doll head, kitty cat, cactus, turtle, elephant, dinosaur, donkey, and even Baby Groot pots were posted.

• **CACSS co-librarian, Nancy Popp Mumpton, gave a sneak preview of several new books added to the CACSS library.**

• **Member and FB administrator, Dan Smith, shared an informative video March 23 on How to Trim Adeniums.**
Each month a photo of a cactus and succulent posted by a CACSS FB member is selected. I'm including selections from last month too. Thank you everyone for sharing your wonderful photos. You can join the CACSS FB page at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/cacss2

From left: Euphorbia enopla posted March 14 by Linda Branum Hoefner, above Mammillaria canelensis posted February 26 by Sue Hakala, and Echinocereus bonkerae posted March 14 by Ronald Souder.
CSSA OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019

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Fertilizer Sales:  Eric Holst
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 Rescue:  open
Private Plant Sales:  Sue Tyrrel
Programs and Room Setup:  Gard Roper, Wayne Kramer, Jo Davis
Propagation Education Group (PEG):  Tristan Davis
Pumice Sales:  Gard Roper
Refreshments:  Tara Richards
Research Grants:  Tristan Davis
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