President's Letter

Kathy Butler

Those of you who were unable to attend the July General Meeting missed a wonderful presentation by Bob Webb and Toni Yokum titled Trip to Africa and Arabia III, Aloe. Bob and Toni are the new owners of Arid Lands Greenhouses.

I just visited Arid Land's impressive website at www.aridlands.com. I like the formatting of the website. The number of plants available is listed next to the name of the plant. A visit online to Arid Lands means you will never again suffer from the tyranny of the "shoulds." “I should have ordered earlier before they were all gone.” If you have a problem with self control when it comes to buying plants, I would suggest that you view the extensive plant list in small increments or give your wallet to a friend or spouse for safe keeping. Contact information and hours of operation are listed on the Arid Lands website.

117 plus degree days inside a cinder block fenced townhouse "yard" is sufficient to turn lithops in a shade house white. A white lithops has one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel. I know from personal experience - about a third of my collection went slip sliding away.

Having killed countless Venus Fly Traps and African Violets, moving the plants indoors just sounded like another avenue to mass murder.

I have a very large west window. Having no other alternative, I placed a table near it and started moving my plants inside. I did have to partially close the AC vent to raise the temperature closer to 80 degrees. Initially, the cold air blowing directly on the plants was causing problems.

My plants are not just surviving, they are thriving! There are vines climbing up the walls and a Bursera has gained a healthy 12 inches in height. Adenia glauca, Aloe striata, Aloe humilis, Cissus tuberosa, Dioscorea elephantipes, Dorstenia, Pentoptia natalensis, Fockea edulis, Fouquieria purpurea, Gerrardanthus macrorhizus, Jatropha cathartica, Kedrostis africana, Opunculcarya decaryi, Pachypodium brevicaule, Trichodiadema bulbosum and an Opuntia subulata are all doing equally as well.

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Local Calendar

August 27th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Ken Schutz, Executive Director of the Desert Botanical Garden, will speak on What’s Happening at the Garden.

September 24th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
CACSS Board member, Laurence Garvie, will give a presentation on Who Cares if Cacti Die?

October 7th, Saturday, Morning
Red Cup Society Fall Seed Starting Workshop
Location to be determined
Emphasis on fall/winter growing species. Limited to 25 participants. For more information, contact Doug Dawson at (480)893-1207.

October 13th - 15th, Friday - Sunday, All Day
DBG Fall Plant Sale
Volunteers will be needed to assist the DBG staff with answering cactus & succulent related questions, giving out CACSS & CSSA info, etc.

October 29th, Sunday, Noon Setup, 2 pm Auction
Silent Auction of Member’s Plants
Wildflower Pavilion, Desert Botanical Garden
The Annual Silent Auction is the perfect way to part with some of your propagations and/or expand your collection without spending a lot of money. Review your collection today to see if you have any plants that you could part with to help make this annual event a success!

November 4th, Saturday, Noon to 5 pm
Open garden at the home of Daniel Sumberg
More information will be in future editions of the Central Spine.

November 19th, Sunday, 2 pm (Not the last Sunday)
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker will be Steve Hammer, topic to be determined.

December 10th, Sunday, Noon (Not the last Sunday)
Holiday Party, Elections
Webster Auditorium, Desert Botanical Garden

Regional Calendar

September 2nd, Saturday, All Day
23rd Annual Huntington Succulent Symposium
“Science from the Garden” will be discussed by experts in the field of botany, ethnobotany, and plant taxonomy.
Huntington Botanical Gardens
Los Angeles, CA

October 7th, Saturday, All Day
2006 Texas Association of Cactus & Succulent Societies Fall Seminar
Seminar highlights include a day of free educational & informative lectures, plant sales and a rare plant auction. Topics include Native Xerophytes of Texas, The Diversity of Succulent Flora of Africa & Madagascar, and The Survival of Desert Flora in the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts.
Marriott Northwest Hotel
San Antonio, Texas
For more information, contact Ann Black, TACSS seminar committee, at 830-336-4471 or annblack@gvtc.com.

The Cover Photo:
This clump of Coryphantha elephantidens was especially plump after the recent rains and must have had at least 20 flowers open. Taken by the editor, 8/19/06, DBG.

Publication of the 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 portion or office held by the author. All such material represents a comment and/or personal opinion of the author.
CACSS Board Meeting Minutes for July 27, 2006

The board passed a motion allowing Lee Browson to file the application for non-profit status. This necessitates changing our Articles of Incorporation to conform to IRS requirements. He will use the Tucson club’s Articles as a guideline since they successfully obtained non-profit status in 1999. Lee mentioned that since we are filing so long after our club’s formation, there will be another form to complete and that we may be liable for back taxes.

Tom Ballen reported that we now have 209 members. Concerning our financial woes over the Show & Sale, he thinks it is time to move on. Many possibilities have been considered. Please see another article in this issue of the Spine for an explanation. For questions about the situation please see Tom or another board member. Other conversation surrounding the Show & Sale centered on the need for more planning meetings leading up to the event and the possibility of trying to obtain electronic credit card processing capability.

It is time to be planning for our upcoming election. Please make offers to serve, or suggestions, to the nomination committee or a board member.

Daniel Sumberg reported on an article which appeared in the Arizona Republic concerning invasive plants in the state. He felt this might be a project in which the Club could get involved. Daniel is willing to serve in a leadership role gathering information to relay back to the board and the general membership.

Sue Daley

President’s Letter ...continued from Page 1

The October 2005 crop of assorted Mesembs seedlings are growing under fluorescent lights and, with a little help from Super Thrive, are going to be larger than some of the two year olds from the previous year.

As soon as temperatures allow, the entire collection will go back outside, but for now, I am thankful to be able to maintain healthy plants indoors should we have a repeat of this year’s heat wave again next year.

May all of your plants live long and remain beautiful for the 2007 Plant Show.

Kindest Regards,

Kathy Butler
President, CACSS

Photos:
Left: Escontria chiotilla, DBG 7/17/06
Below: Echinocereus brandegeei, DBG 8/19/06
CACSS News & Updates

Verrado Rescue Update

I know that a lot of you have been waiting anxiously for a rescue opportunity. Unless something happens between now and then, we will be returning to the Verrado development on Saturday, August 26th. I will be going out to Verrado on Monday to nail down the logistics of the rescue. We will start early in the morning, probably 6 am and work until 10 - 10:30. The digging will be very easy but you will need to plan on bringing wheelbarrows, wagons and cactus slings as vehicles are likely to be confined to a specific area. There is a very good chance that there will be rescues at this location throughout September.

Anyone over the age of 18 is eligible to participate in the rescue but he or she MUST be a current member of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society.

A more complete email will be sent early next week with all the details. Anyone without email should contact me by Friday, August 25th for updates.

Lee Brownson
Cactus Rescue Program Chairman

Elections are just around the corner!

Currently the nominating committee is asking members of our club to step forward and volunteer to be on the Board of Directors for next year. If you are a member who attends our general monthly meetings regularly, please call Jo Davis at (480)839-3792 or Doug Dawson at (480)893-1207 for information on what the duties of being a Board member entail. Then consider running for the Board or for one of the offices (President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer). We wish to have a slate of candidates ready within the next 2 months. This is a great opportunity to be of service, have some fun, and develop your leadership skills.

Make a difference!

Doug Dawson
Nominating Committee Member

Red Cup Society Strikes Again!

As many of you know, this last spring, we offered a seed-growing seminar at Archer House at the DBG. Several have expressed interest in another seminar for this fall. Here are some preliminary details. The date will be Saturday, Oct. 07, 2006, in the morning. We will meet at a member’s home (location to be announced later). We will have to limit the class to 25 persons. If you are interested and wish to be placed on the confirmed attendee list, call Doug Dawson at (480)893-1207 as soon as possible. This is a great opportunity to see what is ideal to start from seed in the fall when the nights get cooler. Seeds and some supplies will be provided. ...Become a seed-starter...

Interested in one of the name badges you see other members wearing? You can have one of your very own! Talk to Jo Davis at the meeting or send her a check for $7.50, made out to “Jo Davis,” to her home address:

2714 W. Monte Ave.
Mesa, AZ 85202

Beautiful medium pink petals with white anthers and pollen!
2006 Show & Sale Wrap-up

Lee Brownson

If you were at one of the last two club meetings or if you heard something "through the grapevine," you know that the CACSS experienced a substantial financial loss from the April Show and Sale. The amount was about $7,500.

Why did this happen? How did it happen? Questions that everyone would like answered. The first one is easy; the second continues to elude us.

The "why" is that the cash register totals said that the vendors sold a total of $48,379 in merchandise, but the amount of money from vendor sales we actually deposited in the bank was $40,273, an $8100 discrepancy. The vendors get 70% of the gross sales and the DBG gets 15%. We paid them based on the cash register tapes. Had we paid them based on the money we had in hand, together the vendors and the DBG would have received $6,900 less. (One vendor gets paid differently than the rest so the numbers may seem a bit off.)

We always have paid based upon the register tallies because it can take more than a month to get the final payments from the credit card companies. This means we did not discover the discrepancy until well after the vendors had been paid.

That's the "why" but it doesn't explain how the numbers could be so far apart. The Board has spent a great deal of time trying to answer why the discrepancy and loss occurred. We have looked at the problem from many angles to no avail.

The first question we considered was; could someone have stolen the $8,100? We came to the conclusion that this is highly unlikely. First, $8,000 is a lot of money. Walking off with that kind of money from the cash registers would take a pretty good thief. Even if it was in all $100 bills, that would be 80 bills. We don't take in that many hundreds. And think about how bulky an $8,000 stack of smaller bills would be. The same could be said of checks (how could they be cashed?) and credit card receipts. It is possible that some credit card receipts were misplaced, but we had a good system for handling this doubtful.

Another thing that indicates that there was no missing cash is that the percentage of total sales represented by cash was the same as it was last year. Adding $8000 in cash would have put it ten percentage points higher. Unlikely. This type of statistical analysis also applies to checks and credit card receipts, very close to last year's percentages.

If $8,100 didn't disappear, where else could we look? Our second area of focus became the cash registers. Were they off? Again, we can't say absolutely yes or no. There was one strange situation regarding the registers. On Friday, the daily totals had many unusual numbers in them. As far as we know, all merchandise was priced so that every amount ended in a 0 or a 5. Friday's tapes from both of the machines we used had totals that ended in other numbers. Also, a couple of vendors who were programmed into the system (the Cactus Rescue Program for one) had no sales but did have small recorded sales on both machines. Neither situation reoccurred on the Saturday or Sunday tapes. Where did these strange numbers come from?

We don't know. Unfortunately, the decision had been made that we would not record each individual sale on an internal tape. The Sale Chairperson thought we might run out of tape if we used two in each machine. Therefore, we couldn't see how the register came up with the totals we used to pay the vendors. We couldn't check to see if a large over ring had been voided improperly. We couldn't see if there were "strange" numbers on the machine before we started our sales on Friday morning.

We get the registers from the DBG. They use them at all of their special events, such as the Fall and Spring Plant Sales, Luminaria nights, etc. They program the machines for us as they have done many times in the past. They feel that everything was in order when they gave us the machines. No one from the CACSS checked the machines before we started to use them. No trial sales were done to test the machines; therefore, no one from the CACSS could be responsible for the strange numbers. The machines were sitting in Dorrance Hall most of the day on Thursday. It is possible that someone could have played around with them, punching in odd numbers, but they would have had to plug both of them in and are likely to have been seen by one or more of the CACSS people who were there all day.

Continued on next page...
Did the registers malfunction? Who knows? But consider the odds of two separate machines malfunctioning in the same way on the same day, then both working correctly the next day.

It should be noted that the oddity of the tapes on Friday was noticed right away by the CACSS Treasurer and reported to both the President and the Sale Chairperson. No one checked the machines before using them Saturday but it appears that they corrected themselves – perhaps being unplugged on Friday and being plugged in on Saturday fixed the problem. Or, by running the totals tape on Friday night may have fixed the error.

You can see that this is a mystery. All roads lead to a dead end. Frankly, the Board has run out of ideas about this problem.

What is important now is how to prevent this from ever happening again. We will adopt three changes to how money from the Sale is tracked. First and foremost, there will always be an internal tape in the registers so we can track each and every sale. Second, the daily totals of money taken in will be compared to the amount of sales recorded each day. Third, to accomplish #2, the club will change the way we handle credit card purchases. We need to do it electronically, rather than manually via phone lines. This would provide us with daily credit card sales, as opposed to waiting until the end of the month to find out. The Board has not yet determined which system to adopt but a completely wireless capability (maximum speed and flexibility) could involve an expenditure of about $1200 for the proper equipment.

The Board regrets that this situation occurred. We were hoping to create and fund a Grants Committee to find educational and research opportunities to support financially. That will not happen this year. However, the Board also feels that the three changes mentioned in the previous paragraph will prevent this from ever happening again.

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**Mini Bits...**

**Ray Daley**

MINI Bits...the barrel cactus we got from the March rescue last year has been blooming almost all summer, not much at any one time, just a single flower or so, but pretty much all summer... and our **Guaiancoulteri** continues to bloom this summer, whereas it hasn’t other years... seeing all the hook-spined mammas at the auction last meeting reminded me of seeing a couple of ours with little bird remains stuck firmly on them... and speaking of last months meeting, and how to protect aloes from the rabbits, they haven’t bothered our unprotected **Aloe saponaria** - I’m not willing to tempt them with any others... and on the topic of rabbits, we think they’re responsible for the de-spining of one of our unprotected golden barrels, and something (I suspect a rat) has eaten off a very spiny opuntia pad... after being gone for 3 weeks and relying on our automatic watering system, our plants are looking pretty good - we’ve got some impulse sprinklers in the back yard and even the pots from the porch which I set out in the shade in the sprinkler's coverage did well - we usually beg one of our neighbors to water the pots while we’re gone, but they fared pretty well without that personal attention... we’re having a big problem with kangaroo rats tunneling into our raised mounds and generally making a mess of things - anyone know how to control/eliminate them? ...just one more gift from Mother Nature... sincere thanks to all of you who have inquired about my health status - I REALLY appreciate the concern...........Ray D.
Around My (Or Your?) Desert Garden…

Bob Torrest

July 31 - After a few days of record high temperatures, an inch of rain was followed by an unusual eight days of below 100 F to end the month. Acacias flowering included a large variety with large white spines (A. eburnea?), A. craspedocarpa (leather leaf) with rod shaped yellow flowers even on small plants, A. aneura, a small tree with rod shaped yellow flowers and A. millefolia (Santa Rita), a large shrub with cream colored flower spikes even in shade. Jatropha cinerea from Sonora, now at 15 ft, has bright green leaves and is readily grown from cuttings. Desert willow (Chilopsis linearis) is great as a shrub or tree. Shrubs flowering included red bird (Caesalpinia pulcherrima), Mexican bird (C. mexicana) and yellow bells (Tecoma stans).

Succulent plants are a lot happier with July than I am but it certainly helps to see these plants flowering. The best of these have been the native mammillaria (M. microcarpa) with bright flowers on good sized clumps several times this summer. Cochemia (from Baja) with their bright tubular red flowers are sometimes listed with the mammillarias. Notocactus magnificus flowered again as did N. schumannianus and N. warasii and several kinds of gymnocalycium. Thelocactus (Hamatocactus) setispinus continues with its bright multicolored flowers and in between flowering there are bright red fruit. All of the above are best with some shade and flower well in continuous shade under desert trees. Of course, most of the barrel cactus are fine in full sun as they get larger and this past month those flowering included F. rectispinus, F. pilosus, F. cylindraceus, F. hamatacanthus, F. coulbei and F. wislizeni. Stenocereus gymnosophus continues to flower with the largest most colorful of the stenocereus flowers. Aloe karasbergensis flowered almost all month in the shade and is one of our favorites.

Last summer the growth of some columnar cactus seedlings in 20 years was described. The largest of these plants haven't added much height but are filling out and adding arms. Trichocereus terscheckii, at 13 ft. in the shade of an acacia, has added 3 arms at 6 ft. In full sun the tallest is only 6 ft. while in morning sun it is up to 10 ft. Cardons are up to 15 ft. but don't look identical. The only one with damage (frost?) at the top (9 ft.) has put out 4 arms at 4 ft. Pachycereus pecten-arboriginum at 10 ft. in part shade has filled out and added 3 arms at 6 ft. Neocardenisia herzogiana has added a couple of feet to reach 6 ft in full sun. A much larger plant under a large mesquite has added 4 arms where it broke at 11 ft. in high wind. None of these four kinds of cacti have flowered yet. Stenocereus dumortieri is up to 10 ft. and S. stellatus, finally doing well and up to 11 ft. in morning sun, have yet to flower.

Columnar cacti that do flower at about 6 ft. include the old standby's S. thorberi (Arizona organ pipes) the tallest of which is 10 ft. (slow to get tall but make nice clumps even at just a few feet high) senitas (S. schottii) and S. giseus (Mexican organ pipes). The Aztec column, Neobuxbaumia polylopha has flowered for the first time at 7 ft. and Oreocereus fossulatus first flowered at 6 ft. The large cereus varieties are all flowering again. Cereus aethiops with 22 flowers on 4 arms to 8 ft and Huntington's cereus with 15 flowers on an 8 ft. plant are especially nice with bright pink flowers and black spines.

Other columnar cacti not mentioned previously include Browningia (Azureocereus) hertlingiana, a bright blue plant at 6 ft. and just getting started. Three kinds that are somewhat similar and often confused are Escontria chiotilla and Lemaireocereus chende and L. chichipe. All are doing well in the ground but didn't in pots. We are looking forward to seeing them in habitat around Puebla and Oaxaca. Neobuxbaumia euphorbioides has recently been planted in a somewhat protected spot. It is more cold sensitive than the others and had been kept in pots...but not much growth that way. Another large branching columnar has a blue body with yellow brown spines and white wool near the stem tops. This looks like Facheiroa sp. nova on p112 of the Innes and Glass book cited below and it takes full sun.

Several good books on succulent plants have been mentioned in previous articles. Here are some more...all are very well illustrated and usually have some useful growing and identification info.

Landscape Plants for Dry Regions by W. Jones and C. Sacamano (2000)
Plants for Dry Climates by Duffield and Jones (1992)
Native Plants for Southwestern Landscapes by Judy Mielke (1991)
The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Cacti by Innes and Glass (2001)
Cacti by J. Borg. A classic but only limited illustrations.
South African Aloe by Barbara Jeppe. A very nice book with rainfall and temperature range for each variety as well as a list of flowering by month.
Plant Questions???

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.

DOUG DAWSON
480-893-1207
doug.dawson@gcmail.maricopa.edu

Specialization includes Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs & Melocactus.

MIKE GALLAGHER
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mgallagher26@cox.net

Specialization includes Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti & Turbinicarpus.

STEVE PLATH
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regeude1@juno.com

Specialization includes Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, Thelocactus, General Propagation & Desert Revegetation.

CYNTHIA ROBINSON
602-615-2261
crobin500@msn.com

Specialization includes Flora of Madagascar, Growing from Seed, Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents, Aloes, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fouquieriaceae, & Succulent Bonsai.

BOB TORREST
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Specialization includes Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees & Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, Trichocereus & Opuntia.