For those of you who missed our Fall Silent Auction on Sunday, Oct 28, you missed another interesting conglomeration of plants, t-shirts, seeds, journals, etc. It was all so quick. I arrived at noon to set up tables and organize. Soon others were there and in no time everything was ready for the 2 pm silent auction. By 4 pm, I looked around and everyone was gone except a very few of us doing the final touches of the cleanup. We made over $1300 for our club - this will go a long way towards speakers, etc.

I really hope you will make it to the next general meeting: Sunday, Nov 18, with speaker, Jon Weeks of Tucson. He has spoken previously to our group and also to the Tucson club. Jon is very knowledgeable about cacti and agaves and their appropriate use in landscaping. Next time you go to Tucson, include his nursery in your rounds of the usual Tucson nurseries.

Also at the Nov 18 meeting we will have a signup sheet for the annual end-of-year banquet. This year, the date is Sunday, Dec 09. Please make sure you attend.

Due to the holidays, there is not an end-of-month additional meeting. I know it is one of my favorite meetings since there is a lot of time to converse with other members and get to know each other better. Oh, we will also take time to have elections for next year’s board and officers. The signup sheet will ask how many will be in your party and what category of dish you will bring to the potluck.

We will need a fairly accurate count so that tables can be reserved for Webster Auditorium. If you need to communicate your attendance but won’t be at the Nov 18 meeting, please call Doug Dawson (480-893-1207) or Jo Davis (480-839-3792) by Nov 25.

Here I am really pushing attendance at the December potluck, and unfortunately I will have to miss it. The choice was: Dec potluck or Exploring the island of Socotra. Socotra won out! I have an opportunity to travel there Nov 27 - Dec 17. This will be the first Dec potluck I shall have missed in the last 16 years, but who could pass up Socotra?

At our last board meeting, Lee Brownton introduced the topic of getting our website in better shape. Since our membership is not amply talented in that arena (unless someone is hiding their light under a bushel), we are entertaining hiring an expert for several hundred dollars to rebuild and perhaps also to maintain our website. At our next board meeting (Nov 18, 12:30 pm) we will probably take action.

This is a good time of year to find new members for our club. Take a few moments to consider which friends of yours you would like to invite to join the club. Better yet, give them a holiday present of a 2008 membership!

See you Sunday, Nov 18.
November 18th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker John Weeks will give a presentation on winter hardy cacti for Arizona gardens.

December 6th, Thursday, 7 pm
By-law Committee Meeting
Home of Ingrid Swenson

December 9th, Sunday, Noon
Holiday Party & Elections
Webster Auditorium, Desert Botanical Garden
Contact Doug Dawson or Jo Davis (480-839-3792) to RSVP.

January 10th, Thursday, 7 pm
Show & Sale Committee Meeting
Home of Ingrid Swenson

January 27th, 2008, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker Mark Muradian will give a presentation on his trip to Bolivia.

February 24th, 2008, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

March 30th, 2008, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

April 2nd - 6th, 2008, Wednesday - Sunday, All Day
2008 Show & Sale
Dorrance Hall & Boppart Courtyard, Desert Botanical Garden
April 2nd, Wednesday: Show setup
April 3rd, Thursday: Show setup & judging; vendor setup
April 4th - 6th, Friday - Sunday: Show & sale open to the public

May 18th, 2008, Sunday, 2 pm (not the last Sunday)
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

June 29th, 2008, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular Club Meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden

THE COVER PHOTO
Conophytum bilobum ssp bilobum 'Hanamatsu' flowering at the home of Tim Jackson, Phelen, CA. Photo taken by the editor on 10/27/07. * See page 3 for additional photos.

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**November Speaker**

Jon Weeks was born and raised in Stratford, Connecticut. He received a B.A. from Gettysburg College in 1971 and in 1975 started Landscape Cacti, a desert nursery devoted to growing cacti and agaves from seed for landscape use. In 1986, he received a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and worked as a Research Scientist for the University from 1986 to 1992 while living along the coast of Sonora, Mexico.

From 1992 to the present, Jon has operated Landscape Cacti, where he grows landscape cacti and agaves. Be sure to join us for the November meeting where Jon will give a presentation on winter hardy cacti for Arizona gardens.

Speaker biography courtesy of the Tucson C&SS’s Desert Breeze newsletter.

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**Speaker Opportunity for the SBCSS**

The Santa Barbara Cactus and Succulent Society would like to invite speakers from clubs outside our area, and maybe even outside our state, to come and share their knowledge and pictures.

We are a friendly bunch and would like to hear what other clubs and speakers have to offer.

Santa Barbara (Southern California) is a beautiful place to visit, with lots to see and do. We have Lotus Land, Desert Images Nursery, the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate and many other nurseries in the area. In addition, there are many wonderful private gardens and some notable growers here.

What our club is looking for are Cactophiles that would be in our area for vacation/and or business and could detour up to Santa Barbara, which is about 1 ½ to 2 hours north of LA right on the ocean. Palm trees, mild year round temps, great plants and gardens, a truly beautiful area… what more could you want?!

Our club is prepared to offer an honorarium, a place to stay and help with getting access to what our area has to offer in the way of plants and nurseries.

The following are dates that are available: Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 7, Aug. 8, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, and Dec. 5. These dates are the first Fridays of the month and the meetings start at 7:30 pm.

Rob Hofberg  
SBCSS Program Chairperson  
rhofberg@cox.net
Field trip day! I chose the trip east over the mountains to see hardy cactus in a home garden and *Pediocactus simpsonii* in habitat. The other option was touring around Seattle, seeing botanical gardens.

We boarded early, picking up our lunches on the way into the bus, and encountered the first serious glitch. Several people on the bus had requested vegetarian meals when they registered months in advance. Somebody made the choice to ignore this request, and no vegetarian lunches were available. Each lunch bag contained a meat sandwich along with the standard chips, apple and cookie. There was a can of soda for each person, but no water! Second serious glitch, since we were entering a desert area. Fortunately nobody died of dehydration on the trip.

We left SeaTac traveling north and then east, along the shore of Lake Washington. While still in town we saw a bald eagle soaring over the lake. This surprised me, since I had been led to believe they required vast open spaces away from people and cities, but this obviously wasn’t true. I sat behind Sheila Collenette so she and I could ask each other questions.

The road rises east from Seattle through evergreen forest and soon enters the Cascades, a volcanic mountain range running from northern Washington to California, including in Washington Mts. Adams, Baker, St. Helens, and Rainier, and in California Mts. Lassen and Shasta as well as the highly eroded Sutter Buttes north of Sacramento. The Cascades are relatively high; cool, moist air moving eastward from the Pacific rises up the Cascades and drops almost all its water as rain on the western slopes. This is why western Washington and Oregon are so wet. Beyond the Cascades, eastern Washington and Oregon are drier than central Arizona. Yakima, our first destination, receives about 4" - 6" rain per year, almost all in the fall and winter.

Late May is still time for cool weather, and as we approached Snoqualmie Pass we saw snow on the freeway shoulder. Above us the mountains had moderate snow pack, with trees poking through here and there. We stopped at a fuel station at the top, right next to the ski lifts. The local volunteer fire department was selling tickets for an upcoming event. There wasn’t quite enough snow on the ground for skiing this low, but it was bracing weather nonetheless, and the hot chocolate was great.

Back in the bus we crested the pass and headed downhill into western Washington through mixed evergreen-alder forests. We passed a number of meadow and marshy areas, some near buildings. Everywhere water stood we saw masses of a beautiful tall yellow Iris in bloom. Sheila identified it as an English species, probably imported for gardens. In the more meadow areas another yellow flower bloomed, but we couldn’t identify it at 65 mph.

As we left the foothills we looked down into the endless rolling plain of eastern Washington. Mount Baker towered over us to the southwest on this cloudless day; it was far enough away that only the snow-covered upper three-quarters were visible, the lower portions invisible in the distant mists. We headed southeast to Yakima, and the terrain became drier and drier. Many different birds flew overhead; we saw a kingfisher’s nest perched atop a telephone pole.

Yakima is a beautiful small Midwestern town transported to Washington. This part of Washington is largely devoted to agriculture. Apples, pears, cherries and wheat are prominent local crops. We wound our way to the home of Ron McKitrick, identifiable immediately, as are so many of our homes. Everybody debarked rapidly in search of the restroom or water.

The McKitricks live in a nice housing development on a moderate slope; perfect for growing cactus. And this is just what Ron does. He has built enormous rectangular raised beds bordered with railroad ties; about 2-3 ties wide and 4-10 ties long. In each bed is piled local volcanic-derived soil mixed with a good proportion of golf-ball sized rocks. The hardy cactus grow in this. We arrived to find the entire garden--almost every single plant--in glorious full bloom. It was the most spectacular display of flowering cactus I have ever seen, almost overwhelming. Just look at Cynthia’s and my photos.
Echinocereus, one after another, mainly in the *E. coccineus* and *E. reichenbachi* groups. Opuntias from all over North America: *O. pulchella*, a tiny cholla with a huge tuberous root and brilliant magenta-pink flowers; several color and pad forms of *O. basilaris*; and, even better, high-altitude Andean plants: *Maihuenia poeppegii*, *Maihueniopsis darwinii*, *Austrocylindropuntia*. Pediocactus. These are plants about which we have only dreamed, thriving in Yakima’s hot summer days and cold nights.

Ron also grows a few succulents; in bloom were the local *Leuisia rediviva* (“back to life”), so named because a pressed specimen collected on the Lewis & Clark expedition bloomed months later in Washington, and an unnamed local *Talinum*. Like all hardy cactus growers, he pushes the climate envelope and has losses, but he has wonderful successes - his *Agave victoria-reginae* is one of the nicest I’ve seen.

Ron sells plants locally. I don’t know whether he ships, but his contact information is [http://www.hdbgi.com](http://www.hdbgi.com) and hillsidecacti@nwinfo.net.

I asked Ron about his climate and how he grows plants. Yakima summer days are slightly cooler than ours, normally in the low 100s between June and late August. There are no clouds and no rain all summer. Summer nights are routinely in the 60s or even 50s. As fall and then winter approach temperatures drop and cloud cover becomes more frequent. Almost all rain falls in late fall when days are cold and overnight frost is usual. Winter is cold, with frequent cold snaps far below freezing lasting days to weeks. There may be snow. Spring and summer are dry, without rain.

Ron covers most of his beds with heavy clear plastic sheeting on a sturdy frame in fall after the first few nights of frost, but before the rains begin. They stay covered all winter until well into the spring, after any chance of rain. He showed me an *Agave havardiana* which was seriously damaged when the plastic drooped and touched the rosette. He does not fill the beds with mulch. He does not cover the beds with high-altitude Andean plants and extremely cold-hardy North American ones.

Ron waters his plants twice per year: once in the spring, some days after removing the plastic, and once in early summer when flowering is over. He carries water to each plant in a container. He does not fertilize at all. His plants are vibrantly healthy.

I was taken with his plant labeled *Opuntia darwinii*, a low mat-former of heavily-spined, pointed ovoid stem segments, which has beautiful coppery-orange flowers. I bought a fat, firm cutting with one stem from him.
two years ago, and three new ones last year. Graham Charles told me it is now placed in genus Maihueniopsis, and is from about 16,000 feet. I began to doubt I could grow it, and considered what to do. I resolved to plant it in a smallish but show-ready container, place it outside during the day, and put it into my refrigerator each night, mimicking the temperature swings in Yakima and Argentina. Winters would be spent outdoors.

Back home, I put the cutting in my alluvial soil and set it on my western bench under the polycarbonate. At night it held an honored spot in the fridge. I gingerly watered the soil around the cutting about once a week, just before placement into the fridge. The cutting slowly but steadily became more and more soft. Not rot-soft, but drying-out soft. I know various Opuntia cuttings can last many months or years, gradually shriveling, and then root when conditions are favorable. So I continued my cultural regimen.

Two days after our monsoon began I touched the cutting and it was once again as hard as a store-bought peach. Success! It rooted! Toward the end of the monsoon it sprouted a new stem from one of the back areoles on the oldest stem. Two days later Earthquake, my Giant Schnauzer, took a shortcut and jumped over the plant, removing the tallest of last year’s stem segments and carrying it into my house on his fur. I found it with the sole of my foot in the dark, but fortunately didn’t crush it. I planted the single-segment cutting in a small container and treated it the same way. Soon it, too, sprouted another growth. So now I own the only two Maihueniopsis darwinii in Arizona, as far as I know.

Ron sprouts seeds indoors under lights, using the same technique used by many cactus growers. He grows a lot of plants from cuttings as well.

We bade our farewells, then set out for the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. I don’t know how it got that name and I’m not about to speculate. (I heard nobody call it Quilomene Wildlife Area.)

The area is gently sloping hill country; the hills are constructed of layer upon layer of lava flows. We have similar formations here in Arizona. The Lewisia and Talinum live on the flat hilltops, and the Pediocactus simpsonii variety robustispinus on the southern slopes, almost but not quite to the crests. We hiked up a gentle grassy slope, looking at lots of wildflowers: Allium, buckwheat, Camassia (?), daisies, goatsbeard, Lupinus. Near the top the grass almost disappeared, and the hilltops were mostly bare lava.
The Pedios began very close to the road, and there were quite a few of them. This is a globular, clumping cactus, stems to perhaps softball size, with flowers in many colors, supposedly smelling of coconut. We were about a week late for flowers but almost all plants had flowered. I noticed there were plenty of small solitary plants, quite a few with up to 4 heads, but not many larger than that. I also noticed most plants had a good half to one inch of bright-colored spines on top, meaning plenty of fresh growth. I realized if the plants grew that fast, they must not live very long, or there would be lots of much larger plants. These are protected plants on a reserve; but, just as in Arizona, cattle ranching is more important than silly plants, and the area is leased for rangeland. The cattle trample the plants, which don’t live long. Fortunately they are reproducing well.

We saw many Lewisia in bloom (and fruit.) Flowers are basically pink, but no two plants had the same shade. Leaves emerge from the thick underground root much later, so all we saw were strange red-orange things like sea anemones emerging from the dark lava. Plants seemed to open only one flower at a time, though most plants produced at least 10 flowers, often more. This is a favorite flowering succulent for people in cold-winter climates. Being in family Crassulaceae, it doesn’t like hot summer nights. I don’t know how it does in the house under lights but I’m sure somebody in our club can tell us.

The tiny Talinum was really nice. It has bright green leaves the shape of, but about half the size of rice grains. Flowers are small, about 1/4 inch, but such a bright magenta as to be easy to spot from a long distance. It also grows from an underground tuber. I don’t know whether it is in cultivation beyond its home state.

Then it was time for the long ride back home. We piled into our bus and soon most people were snoozing. We stopped at a rest stop; a local charity was giving hot coffee for donations. Since it was midsummer, and we were far north, we arrived back in Seattle in broad daylight, but close to 7 pm. There was time for a quick shower before dinner. ☀️
MINI-Bits.............if you're like me you sometimes wonder how plants got their names. In line with that thought, I saw a reference to a specific plant the other day, I forget where, but in case you also saw it and wondered where this plant's name came from, or in case you didn't see it and have always wondered where the name came from, or even if you've always known, here it is... from a Lewis Carroll poem published on April Fools' Day in 1876, here's part eight - *The Vanishing* from *The Hunting of The Snark*:

They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care;  
They pursued it with forks and hope;  
They threatened its life with a railway-share;  
They charmed it with smiles and soap.  

They shuddered to think that the chase might fail,  
And the Beaver, excited at last,  
Went bounding along on the tip of its tail,  
For the daylight was nearly past.  

"There is Thingumbob shouting!" the Bellman said,  
"He is shouting like mad, only hark!  
He is waving his hands, he is wagging his head,  
He has certainly found a Snark!"

They gazed in delight, while the Butcher exclaimed  
"He was always a desperate wag!"  
They beheld him--their Baker--their hero unnamed--  
On the top of a neighboring crag.  

Erect and sublime, for one moment of time.  
In the next, that wild figure they saw  
(As if stung by a spasm) plunge into a chasm,  
While they waited and listened in awe.  

"It's a Snark!" was the sound that first came to their ears,  
And seemed almost too good to be true.  
Then followed a torrent of laughter and cheers:  
Then the ominous words "It's a Boo-"  

Then, silence. Some fancied they heard in the air  
A weary and wandering sigh  
Then sounded like "-jum!" but the others declare  
It was only a breeze that went by.  

They hunted till darkness came on, but they found  
Not a button, or feather, or mark,  
By which they could tell that they stood on the ground  
Where the Baker had met with the Snark.  

In the midst of the word he was trying to say,  
In the midst of his laughter and glee,  
He had softly and suddenly vanished away---  
For the Snark was a Boojum, you see. ☹️

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October 31 - Trees and shrubs are providing lots of color although it is still unusually warm. Since the end of August there have been flowers on yellow bells, red birds, yellow oleander, Coulter’s hibiscus and even some on *Tipuana tipu* again. By the start of October, *Acacia aneura* was loaded again along with *Caesalpinia mexicana* (Mexican bird), desert willow and Cape honeysuckle. Desert asters are colorful, prolific and provide some low shade. The Leatherleaf acacia (*A. craspedocarpa*) has a long flowering season and will be a favorite. Of course, Baja calliandra and ruellia as well as Desert senna and salvias are colorful and dependable. Pomegranates and dates were ripening and at month’s end *Acacia salicina* had put on its white puff-ball flowers. A small *Ceiba* (*C. acuminata*) which leafed out at 4.5 feet in late June had grown to all of 56 inches and by the end of October was losing its leaves. A large *Chorisia* (*C. speciosa*) which had substantial freeze damage, has survived the summer and even added some sprouts on the west side and higher up to protect itself from the sun. Note that all three of the acacias mentioned are from Australia.

For the succulent plants, cacti have done best with our unusually extreme weather this year. The large Cereus varieties have had a great year for flowering… especially those sold as *C. peruvianus* which are still at it. *C. aethiops* and *C. huntingtoniiana* got going in early September along with some Pilosocereus and Trichocereus varieties. The native mammillaria was flowering again and potted notocacti like *N. warasii* and *N. schumannianus* are intermittent. *Monvillea spegazzinii* is good on a palm trunk and on east facing walls and was covered in flowers by mid September. Later on several Coryphantha got going, e.g., *C. poselgeriana* and *C. macromeris* (long tubercles with large deep pink flowers), and then *Ariocarpus fissuratus* and *Astrophytum capricorne*. By mid October, *Euphorbia polyacantha* was covered with yellow flowers on lots of thin upright arms. At the end of the month, *Coryphantha elephantidens* (carmine flowers) and some golden barrels were flowering.

This year has been especially tough on some aloes. The hard freezes took an initial toll (some aloes gone soon after were listed in a previous article) and then others continued to show leaf tip die back. Now, after the hottest summer on record, a 2ft. *A. thraskii* which had grown well for some years in a shaded spot is gone and the last of the *A. plicatilis* (which were in an evaporatively cooled room) have finally given up (another reason for a trip to South Africa!). Hopefully, the conditions in the future won’t be quite so severe in each extreme. But to be on the safe side, some aloes that have come through and still look fine include *A. aculeata*, *A. claviflora*, *A. variegata*, *A. sinkatana*, *A. zebra*, *A. striata*, *A. karasbergensis* (in shade), *A. africana*, *A. ferox*, *A. cryptopoda*, *A. vaombe*, *A. elegans*, *A. camperi* and others. The agaves which still show freeze damage include several of the miniatures and also *A. desmettiana*, *A. guiengola* and the plant recently sold as *A. titanota* (but not the ‘original’ form in the Irish’s Agave book).

Editors note: There is a large *Chorisia speciosa* (now classified in the Genus Ceiba) flowering in a park on the east side of 64th Street (Galvin Parkway) between Indian School & Thomas, just north of the DBG. If you’ve never seen the flowers first hand, stop by on your way to the November meeting. They are beautiful!!

Above photo taken by editor.

Leo wrote a good article about fertilizer injectors, but I would like to point out that it was me who brought the Chemilizer to the Phoenix area. I was visiting Gene Joseph at Living Stones/Plants of the Southwest some years ago. I saw him watering his plants from a Chemilizer he mounted on a rolling cart, and I talked to him about it. I figured since Gene is a good businessman, he would find the best tool to use, and so I ordered two: one for fertilizer; one for acid. I installed them myself into the irrigation system in the back of my house. Much later, Rodney Anderson saw my setup, and decided to get one. I have realized I can mix vinegar with my fertilizer solution so I no longer need to use both injectors.

By the way, the cheapest place to buy them is from Tek Greenhouse Supply.
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  
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Specialization includes Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs & Melocactus.

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

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

WHOM TO CONTACT!!!

ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS: DECEMBER 3, 2007  
EMAIL TO CROBIN500@MSN.COM