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MAY SPEAKER

Invasion of the Cactus Moth
Featuring: Mike Wallace
When: May 31st at 2:00 p.m.
Where: Webster Auditorium

Invasion of the Cactus Moth! Mike Wallace, Survey and Detection Manager for the Arizona Department of Agriculture will talk to us about the local and international efforts to control the spread of the incredibly destructive Cactoblastis cactorum. This moth has invaded the United States and is slowly spreading across the Gulf Coast on its way to the cactus rich Southwest. It has the potential to wipe out entire species of Opuntia, seriously disrupting ecosystems in the U.S. and in Mexico. Even if you don’t care for prickly pears and chollas, you need to learn about this serious threat.

From the editor ... Laurence Garvie

A huge thank you to this months’ contributors - Cliff Fielding, and Bob Torrest, without whose time and effort there would be little reason for sending out this newsletter. Keep those contributions, both written and visual, coming...

A note on latin names - I know they can be a pain to spell, but if in doubt please double check their spelling in your contributions. The internet is my favorite place to check a spelling, just google the name. Similarly, when using common names, please also include the latin names in parentheses.

Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society
Plant-of-the-Month Selection - a.k.a. Mini Show

May .................. Astrophytum ..................... Stem caudiciforms
June .................. Thelocactus ..................... Euphorbia

ON THE COVER

Lichen-covered, iron-stained, quartzite harboring the bulb Veltheimia sp. and a pendulous cluster of Conophytum bolusiae. Photo taken east of Port Nolloth, on the north-west coast of South Africa. Photo © Cliff Fielding
Around My (or Your) Desert Garden

Bob Torrest

April 30, 2009 - After the great aloe show in prior months we have added a few new varieties including A. vanhulstii, which gets coppery-red in sunny drier spots and comes from an area with 35 inches of rain. Aloe comptonii, so far only in pots, should do well here. Aloe spiciformis is in morning sun where hopefully we will remember to protect it from freezing nights. There is a large plant in full sun at the Living Desert in Palm Springs where the kind of freezing nights we get here are less likely. Aloe poviottae continues to flower under high shade with its 6-ft stalks and A. sinkatana has been flowering for a month. Aloe eru and camperi began flowering at the end of March and have continued through April with A. eru lasting a bit later. Aloe zebrina and vacillens were almost done by the end of March, while a hybrid of A. variegata and saponaria continued after variegata was done. The flowers are similar but the hybrid plants are larger and worth having. The more common aloes A. saponaria, vera, and barbadensis are among the last to flower and in mid April there were also flowers on somaleensis and humilis.

As the aloe flowering subsides lots of cacti take over to provide color. Echinocereus began in March with the "Claret cup" (E. triglochidiatus) which does well here with afternoon shade, and all the others through April. Echinopsis were in flower in April but rabbits will do major damage to some lightly spined varieties. Rabbits won't nibble on Stenocereus, which have been flowering for a month or Senita, which have just started. Ferocactus pilosus began in early April followed by schwarzi, ferdii (with purple flowers on relatively small plants) and now cylindraceus.

Sweet acacia (Acacia farnesiana) and Acacia saligna were trailing off at the end of March as Palo blanco (A. willardiana) was getting started. Flowers continued on Eucalyptus torquata through April and the bright pomegranate flowers are always welcome. Courses glandulosa, a large shrub, flowered in early April along with Yellow bells (Tecoma stans) and the related "Orange jubilee" and Blue hibiscus (Alyogyne huegeldii). By mid month Catclaw (Acacia greggii) was in bud along with Screw bean mesquite (Prosopsis pubescens), silk oak (Grevillea robusta), and the large lysiloma (Lysiloma divaricatum). The White lysiloma (L. candidum) from southern Baja would be great to try but we have had no luck trying to find it here. By the end of April Palo brea and Mexican Palo verde (Parkinsonia aculeata) provided the color and there were flowers on the mesquites, yellow oleander and the standard lysiloma (L. thornberi). Justicia adhatoda (sold by Baker's as White Jacobinia) is a large shrub with lots of white flowers, a very long flowering season, and an uncommon tropical look (From India and Sri Lanka).

While it is nice to have a variety of flowering trees and shrubs, when we first moved to an acre with little more than creosote bushes, the initial trees and shrubs were chosen for relatively fast growth with drought tolerance to provide the shade we would need to grow cacti and other succulents that required some shade from summer sun. With that in mind, we started with Mexican Palo verde (Parkinsonia aculeata), Chinaberry, some mesquites, sweet acacia, Palo verd, cassias, caesalpinias and calliandra. Now, if starting from scratch, we would cut back on the mesquites which can get very large. The under story often has lots of dead wood and large trees have a tendency to self-prune. Also, the heavy shade will inhibit flowering of some succulents and lots of new spring growth requires lots of pruning. Tornillo, the Screwbean mesquite is a good small tree without the problems of the much larger varieties.

I'll be one of the vendors there this year and I'm really looking forward to participating. Up until a couple of years ago I didn't even know there was a Tucson Botanical Garden! I only found out about the TBG when I heard of the Weird Plant Sale held there. Talk about a delightful surprise upon my first visit. It's not a big Garden but it's a serene and tranquil place and very pleasing to the eye. So if you're not going on the bus trip why don't you come down Saturday morning, say hi, and enjoy one of the best kept secrets of Tucson.

Since club "business" is slow this time of year there isn't a Board Meeting in May. The next scheduled Board Meeting will be Sunday, June 28th, at 12:30 pm just prior to the General Meeting. We'll meet in Classroom B of the Weisz Learning Center, which is the building just west of Dorrance Hall. Guests are welcome!

See you at the meeting! - Steve Plath
I recently had a once in a lifetime opportunity to tour the very habitat described in the article, Namaqualand and the Richtersveld. A local plant enthusiast who had unprecedented access and knowledge of plant localities, Karel, led us on this fantastic journey. I was accompanied on the expedition by Doug Dawson, Steven Brack, Steve Martinez, and several other plant experts. Bulbs were not the purpose of the trip, nor an objective, but they were hard to miss and a delight to photograph. Surprisingly, they were not located in places that seemed to have more water than other places. They were found growing in the direct sun, in the shade of rocks, jammed in crevices on sheer walls, under shrubs, filling sandy plains, and in pans with other Mesembs. As winter was beginning, the fogs had started rolling up the Orange River and almost daily heavy dews had begun. It has been speculated that the spiral shape and crisping of the leaves catches and channels dew to the plant. Many of the bulbs had this delightful spiraling of their leaves. The bulbs also had wide flat leaves that appeared to be effective at catching dew. In one of the photos it is possible to see a pool of dew in the center of the leaves, weather the plant can access this moisture is unknown to me. Oxalis were also plentiful in the direct sun in warmer drier locations than where bulbs were found. On one hill the colors of the oxalis were white, yellow, orange pink, orange, purple, and scarlet. They were fantastic. The real treats of the trip were the blooming Brunsvigias and the Haemanthus blooming and in fruit. In conclusion, the bulbs in this area of the northern Cape seemed to be very successful in many different microclimates. They seemed to get along with infrequent rain by collecting dew and fog.
PUMICE FOR SALE

If anyone is interested in buying some pumice, I can bring bags of pumice to the meeting on Sunday. One bag - equivalent to a 5 gallon bucket full - is $2.50. Email me if you want some and how many bags you would like.

Lee Brownson - lsbrownson@cox.net

NAME BADGES

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

DUES

Pay your dues! Membership is by calendar year. Annual dues $20 individual (1 newsletter, 1 vote), $25 household (1 newsletter, 1 vote per member); 1/2 price paid August-December. Make checks payable to and mail to: CACSS, PO Box 63572, Phoenix, AZ, 85082-3572. More info: 602-852-9714.
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 principal interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

**DOUG DAWSON**
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Specializations include Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs, and Melocactus.

**MIKE GALLAGHER**
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Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and Turbinicarpus.

**STEVE PLATH**
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Specializations include Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, Thelocactus, General Propagation, and Desert Revegetation.

**CYNTHIA ROBINSON**
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Specializations include Flora of Madagascar, Growing from Seed, Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents, Aloes, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fouquieriaceae, and Succulent Bonsai.

**BOB TORREST**
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Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, Trichocereus, and Opuntia.

WHOM TO CONTACT!!!