Greg Starr’s Top 5 Agaves
By Greg Starr

Back by popular demand, or because nobody else would fill this time slot, Greg has given this topic much thought, and will reveal his top 5 agaves (okay, maybe top 6, who knows?). Agaves are tough, easy to care for, and once established nearly bulletproof. Well, not literally bulletproof, but they are some of the best visual attractions in southwestern landscapes. With the variety of colors ranging from many shades of green to blue gray, silvery gray and even hints of purplish, the diversity of leaf shapes and sizes, and plant sizes, one can find an agave to fit practically any situation. Since 2000, Greg has been mulling over which agaves are his 5 favs, and every time he thinks about it, the list changes. Come prepared to endure a David Letterman style countdown of these stout (sometimes), sculptural, and artistic plants that can grace a landscape or decorative pot.

Agave bovicornuta  Photo by Greg Starr
Greg Starr was born in Tucson, Arizona, and is the author of two books, *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens* and *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers*. Greg has written several horticultural articles about landscape plants for the journal, *Desert Plants*. He travels throughout the Desert Southwest and Mexico in search of new plants that can be used in xeric landscapes. Greg lectures at various venues throughout the West, primarily on unique desert landscape plants and the fabulously sculptural agaves. Greg spends most of his days tapping at the computer hoping another book will take shape, preparing PowerPoint presentations, specializing in cacti and agaves, and tending to Starr Nursery. He and his four-legged pal, Nikki, spend many hours in the nursery potting up agaves and other cool plants, chasing rabbits, and napping on the soil pile.  

*By Tom Gatz*
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CSSA Affiliate Representative Sue Hakala
Facebook Coordinator Nick Diomede
Finances-Accounting Tom Rankin, Ingrid Swenson
Holiday Party - December 2013 Wendy Barrett
Library Paul Schueneman, Marty Shahan
Membership Beth Kirkpatrick
Members-Keeping-In-Touch Jo Davis
Mailed Newsletter Subscriptions Sue Tyrrel
Newsletter Diana Decker
Nominations for Board Officers, Directors -- Mike Gallagher, Dan Smith, Jackie Vasquez
October Silent Auction Jo Davis
Plant Rescues Open Position
Private Plant Sales at General Meetings- Sue Tyrrel
Programs (Speakers, Workshops, Open Gardens, Special Interest Groups) Gard Roper, Doug Dawson
Refreshments Cindy Capek
Show & Sale – 2013 Sue Tyrrel
2014 Show & Sale Chair Linda Michaelson
Website Beth Kirkpatrick

Telephone numbers, emails, and addresses can be found in the CACSS Member List emailed periodically to members by Beth Kirkpatrick.

2013 Meeting Schedule
Sunday, September 29
2 p.m. Dorrance Hall

October 20, 2013--Silent Auction
Let’s get our plants together for the Silent Auction so the highest bidders will give the plants new homes.
We welcome back to the Board Diana Hiser, who last served on the Board in 2006. She has replaced Joe Miracle whose term would have ended December 31. I am sure her institutional memory will be helpful in guiding us forward.

Just when you think that time is running out, someone will come forward and say “I will do it.” We are so lucky to have had great volunteers over the years, and our society is a success because of them. But even outstanding volunteers tire, and new ones are needed to fill the void. We benefited so much from our past volunteers who contributed their time and energy to make our past Show & Sales successful, but new volunteers are always needed. Your Board of Directors was seriously wondering if we had the needed volunteers to support the 2014 Show & Sale. Never doubt, however, the support of our members. Lynda Michaelson came forward at our July General Meeting to offer her services as the General Chair for the 2014 Show & Sale. On behalf of the entire CACSS Membership, I heartedly thank her. We all know the task that lies ahead, and I am sure she will have your support for another memorable occasion.

Organizations such as ours can only serve its members through new ideas and suggestions. So if you see a need that is not being met and would like to create a new group within the CACSS, please let me know. At our last General Meeting, Lee Brownson discussed the Cactus Rescue Committee, which he founded several years ago. It was a favorite endeavor of our society, but it has been dormant for the last couple of years, largely because of a lack of a Chair. If you are interested in more information about it or spearheading a new initiative, please contact Lee for more information. Also Gard Roper needs help in forming a Travel Committee. Our Members enjoy out-of-town trips, but they do take careful organization. So please contact him if you can help plan these trips.

Every month our membership grows, which is a healthy sign. I just got an email from Beth Kirkpatrick informing me that our membership now stands at a record 350 members, which compares to 305 a year ago. With four months to go before the end of this year, we probably will see a new record set each month.

I hope everyone is getting ready for the big auction on October 20, a great fundraiser for our society and a great opportunity to acquire high-quality plants for your collections. Jo Davis will undoubtedly be looking for your help and donations of plants.

Please Wear Your Name Tag at Monthly Meetings

Board Member Jo Davis asks members to wear their name tags at monthly meetings and other club events. Members then can more easily spot guests and talk with them about the guest’s interests and CACSS. If you need a lanyard to hang the name tag around your neck, see Jo at the meetings.
Raffle Winners for the 40th Anniversary of CACSS
at the June General meeting, June 30, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member's name</th>
<th>Name of plant chosen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Colby Lieber</td>
<td>Saguaro</td>
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<td>Barbara Holst</td>
<td>Euphorbia sp.</td>
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<td>Edra Drake</td>
<td>Trichocereus hybrid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Pickson</td>
<td>Agave parryi truncata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thom Young</td>
<td>Aloe dichotoma</td>
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Welcome To New Members

Susie and Rob Carr
Monte Crawford
Alan Dahl and Nicole Yarborough
Sheryl Leigh Davault
Janet Edmonds
Celeste Gornick
Catherine (Cass) Mielke
Victor Peterson
James Racinowski

Membership Chair: Beth Kirkpatrick

Contact the Central Spine Editor
Diana Decker
dianadec@cox.net
(602) 220-9825
for article and photo submissions for the Central Spine.

When you send emails with photos of members to the Central Spine editor, please include the members’ first and last names.

Jo Davis talks to members at the food table at the July meeting celebrating the CACSS 40th anniversary. Jo was helping Cindy Capek, who organized the pastries and fruit, which were on plates made by Debora Life. Lois Schneberger provided the plants for the table. Photo by John Crummey

A Memorable Show
by Jo Davis

I've been a member of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society since the 1990s. I decided to volunteer for the yearly show. The planning meeting for the show was held at Henry Triesler’s home. Scott McMahon and Jim Elliott also attended. We were going over what had to be done to prepare for the show, and since we were going to be there awhile, we decided to order pizza. It was pouring rain outside. Suddenly, the lights went out. Henry shouted “Don't move!” Henry’s house was filled with artifacts from all over the world on the walls and everywhere. I’m sure he was worried that something would get broken if one of us got up. After the lights came back on, we continued our meeting. The pizza finally arrived. We ate the pizza and called it a night. The show went well. I have to say I’ve been volunteering every year since then.

At the persuasion of Jim Elliott, I decided to enter my aeonium in the show. The next day walking into the show, I approached my aeonium and noticed a stained glass trophy next to it. I was so surprised, I was almost in tears.

Henry passed away and I miss him. He was such a great guy with a heart of gold.

Correction: In the July newsletter article by Lin Levian, “A Memorable Trip,” Lin visited the home of Herman Schwartz, not the home of Rudolf Schulz.
Book Carriers
We have had three people volunteer to help carry CACSS Library books back and forth from their homes to our CACSS monthly meetings: Jeanne Ann Brush, Carla England, and Tom Gatz. Thank you, Jeanne Ann, Carla, and Tom! With three more book carriers, we will be able to bring more library books to our meetings for attendees to browse and check out. If you are interested in being a book carrier, please contact Paul Schueneman: email: schue888@wbhsi.net; cell: (602) 327-5751.

Book Donors
Several people have recently made generous donations of books and journals to the Library.
**Debora Life**: *Hillerman Country: A Journey Through the Southwest With Tony Hillerman* by Tony Hillerman; *Desert Images* by Edward Abbey and David Muench.
**Cecilia Phelan**: *Aeonium in Habitat and Culture* by Rudolf Schulz.
**Nancy Mumpton**: *Desert Plants* by the University of Arizona for Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum; 18 hardbound volumes of quarterly journals for the years 1979 through 2002.
**Gard Roper**: *Guide to the Aloes of South Africa* by Ben-Erik van Wyk and Gideon F. Smith; *Agaves, Living Sculptures For Landscapes and Containers* by Gregg Starr.
**Sue Hakala**: Numerous copies of the CSSA Journal.
**Tom Gatz**: *Cacti Biology and Uses* by Park S. Nobel; *Pachyforms II: Bonsai Succulents* by Philippe de Vosjoli and Rudy Lime.

My apologies to those of you who donated books or journals but your names do not appear in this list. I accidentally lost part of my donor list.

New Books
**Pachyforms II: Bonsai Succulents** by Philippe de Vosjoli and Rudy Lime
This is the second volume of *Pachyforms*, a series that focuses on the cultivation of sculptural plants characterized by unusually thick or globose bodies. It is also the first book dedicated to the use of succulent plants as bonsai and is illustrated with 500 color photographs, including some of the finest examples of this American form of horticultural art. The second portion of the book is a continuation of the catalog of pachyform plants started in volume I.
**Cacti Biology and Uses** by Park S. Nobel

The Cactaceae family, with about 1,600 species, is cultivated worldwide for fruits, forage, fodder, and even as a vegetable. Cacti are recognized for their attractive flowers, special stem shapes, and ability to tolerate drought. Because of their efficient use of water and other adaptations, biological and agronomic interest in cacti has soared. These fascinating plants also have much to teach us about biodiversity and conservation. Yet a current, synthetic, wide-ranging reference on cacti has not been available until now. This comprehensive book, compiled by a well-known cactus biologist, includes authoritative, up-to-date chapters by 35 contributors from around the world on topics ranging from evolution to biotechnology. It is the first book of its kind to compile information on cactus biology, ecology, and uses in one convenient place.

The first half of the book provides a thorough overview of cactus biology and morphology and discusses the environmental and conservation issues that affect the plants. It includes a discussion of the evolution of the family, paying particular attention to new genetic and molecular approaches. The second half of the book focuses on the practical concerns of cultivating cacti, such as pest control and diseases, horticultural and forage applications, and techniques for agronomy. Other chapters cover the different markets for cacti and products that are made from them.

This unique volume will be a reliable and informative reference for ecologists and environmentalists, agriculturists, plant biologists, and anyone seriously interested in these remarkable plants.

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**Rebutia: The Cactus File Handbook #2** by John W. Pilbeam

The second book in The Cactus File series tackles a very popular group of plants, which presents a bewildering range of variations and forms and consequently, is to date, the largest publication in this series. People have always found it difficult to understand the relationships between the various groups and species, and John Pilbeam's lucid text makes this as easy as possible. Some of the difficulties arise from the many names, which have been published by various authors, sometimes superfluously, and also by the large number of forms in cultivation under collectors’ numbers. The extensive section in the book on superfluous names and list of collectors’ numbers will be particularly useful in this respect, as will the detailed literature references given under the accepted species names.

As in the first volume of the series, Bill Weightman's photographs accurately depict the appearance and flowers of these plants, making this the ideal reference work for both beginners and more specialist collectors. This publication can only enhance the popularity of the genus. As people would imagine has happened with some of John's previously published books, this publication can only enhance the popularity of the genus.

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**Gymnocalycium in Habitat and Culture** by Graham Charles

This book is well-illustrated, showing Gymnocalyciums both in habitat and cultivation - very useful since plants vary tremendously in appearance based on growing conditions. A history of the genus, defining characteristics, and habitat distribution maps further enhance the book’s usefulness. Cultivation advice is also included for growers looking to improve the health and flowering of their own plants.

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**A Request**

Please refrain from loaning books to other people before you have checked them back in. While this may be a friendly thing to do, it has led to lost books, because we have no contact information for the other person.

Thank you.

>>>>>>
The Desert Botanical Garden’s agave collection is recognized by the American Public Gardens Association as part of the National Plant Collection under the auspices of the North American Plant Collections Consortium. As such, it is the single most important collection of agave plants held by any Garden in the nation. The Agavaceae and Aloaceae Collections Manager is responsible for the stewardship of this collection, including both research and display plants, in collaboration with other staff members of the Horticulture and Research Departments. In addition, the Agavaceae and Aloaceae Collections Manager serves as the resident expert and active partner in supporting education, exhibition and event/member services in all matters related to these collections.

Responsibilities include knowing of all major agave and aloe collections held by public gardens throughout the world, and actively communicating with colleagues at other agave and aloe-collecting institutions; participating in the formulation and periodic revision of the Garden’s comprehensive collection plan - especially as related to the agave and aloe family - for both scientific and display purposes; optimizing the holdings in the agave and aloe collection, as called for by the comprehensive collections plan, including regular accessions, de-accessions, and loans; writing best practice standards for the horticultural care of the Garden’s agave and aloe collection; actively implementing those standards, or collaborating with other members of the horticulture department who are directly responsible for their implementation; providing in a timely manner to the Garden’s Plant Recorder all relevant information about the agave and aloe collection as deemed necessary for research and horticultural purposes; participating in the planning and design of Garden exhibits that include agave and aloe specimens; preparing and presenting a formal “State of the Agave and Aloe Collection” report to the Board Research, Collections and Horticulture Committee once each year;

participating in CACSS and other professional and hobbyist desert plant groups, and writing frequent articles about the Garden’s agave and aloe collection for horticulture professionals and hobbyists; developing and teaching classes in the Desert Landscaper School and other Garden programs, as assigned by the Director of Horticulture; providing regular tours of the agave and aloe collection for visitors and members, and actively soliciting speaking engagements at conferences and workshops regarding the Garden’s agave and aloe collection; assisting with other functions of the department and the Garden, such as the semi-annual Plant Sale and Las Noches de las Luminarias; and training and supervising Hort-aide Volunteers involved in the care of the agave and aloe collection.

Requirements include a Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture, botany or related field; minimum of five years of experience in the study or care of agave and aloes; excellent communication and teaching skills; and the ability to lift 60 pounds and work in extreme weather conditions.

Kenny Zelov, Assistant Director of Horticulture | Desert Botanical Garden
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To apply for an open position, please e-mail resume and letter of interest to Human Resources at: hr@dbg.org, fax to: 480 481.8173, or mail to: Human Resources
The Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society and the Desert Botanical Garden:
Growing Together Since 1973

Summarized by Tom Gatz and Lois Schneberger from information compiled by Lois Schneberger,
with editorial support from Sue Hakala

This year, both the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society (CACSS) and the Desert Botanical Garden (DBG) are celebrating anniversaries, 40 and 75 years, respectively. We thought it would be a good time to go over our early history together. Lois Schneberger encouraged me to peruse the club notes taken at earlier CACSS meetings from which I gleaned the following information.

The relationship between the CACSS and its members with the DBG extends back many years. Some of the founding members of our society volunteered as well as entered plants in the DBG’s Cactus and Succulent Show. H. Robert Earle, the Director of the DBG, played a big role in getting our society established in 1973. That relationship continued after the CACSS was founded and continues to this day.

The CACSS co-sponsored the Garden’s Annual Cactus and Succulent Show in the 1980s and 90s with the Phoenix Gazette and then the Phoenix Home and Garden magazine.

The DBG has offered meeting space for our general meetings from the very early years of our history, and continues to do so, first in Webster and then Dorrance Hall. The DBG also serves as the venue for our annual cactus and succulent show and the fall silent auction.

In the early years, CACSS members served on the DBG Board of Directors. CACSS members then and today are members of the DBG, and some are volunteers. DBG employees have been members of the society, often serving as officers and/or directors.

1973: The CACSS was the brainchild of Henry Treisler and Hubert Earle, the director of the DBG, 1957 – 1976
1974: Meetings were held at members’ homes. It was later agreed that the DBG would be the permanent meeting place, unless members offered their homes. The CACSS passed a motion to propagate cacti from seed for the DBG, a project envisioned by Rodney Engard.
1975: Four CACSS members were also on the DBG Board of Directors.
1976: The club donated $100 to be used for a winter protection structure for the DBG’s aloe collection. Hubert Earle came up with the new name for the CACSS newsletter “The Central Spine.”
1977: The CACSS donated several organ pipe cacti left over from the CSSA National Convention banquet centerpieces to the DBG.
1980: It was decided that the CACSS and the DBG would produce the cactus show cooperatively. The CACSS donated $300 toward a PA system for Webster Auditorium in consideration of the DBG’s courtesy to give us a meeting place.
1982: The CACSS purchased two infant strollers (the first of several) as “thank you” gifts to the DBG for the use of its facilities. The club purchased a 5 x 8 foot American flag that was displayed over the DBG gift shop.
1985: The DBG asked the CACSS for recommendations and donations regarding succulents for the renovation of the Succulent House.
1986: The DBG provided a tent to house the annual Cactus Show.
1988: The CACSS donated two more infant strollers to the DBG as a thank-you for using Webster Auditorium. The DBG emphasized that it has enjoyed the ongoing association with the CACSS and wants to strengthen that association by working on new projects together.

1989: A cartoon toasting the DBG for its 50 years in research, service, education, and conservation was published in The Central Spine. A Letter of Understanding between the DBG and the CACSS established a propagation and conservation program at the DBG.

Since then, the positive relationship has continued to grow between the DBG and the CACSS, and we look forward to maintaining that partnership in future years. Like all healthy, long-term relationships, it will continue to take nurturing, coordination, and effective communication for it to remain successful. As in the past, the CACSS will continue to support the DBG’s educational efforts and serving the community.
In one of our many cooperative ventures over the years, the Desert Botanical Garden hosts the popular annual Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale that is run by the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society volunteers.
The plant is *Pachypodium namaquanum*. Doug Dawson took the photo on May 13, 2012 in the Umdaus area of the Richtersveld in South Africa.
PLANT QUESTIONS?? WHOM TO CONTACT!!!

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list. Call or e-mail Diana Decker, Central Spine editor. Find contact information on p. 2

For now, the list is simply alphabetical with principal interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

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