

Central Spine



January 2014
Newsletter of the Central Arizona
Cactus & Succulent Society

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America On the Web at www.centralarizonacactus.org

January 2014 Meeting
Sunday, January 26
2 p.m. Dorrance Hall
Desert Botanical Garden
Presenter: Tom Gatz

Articles
We Need You! For the 2014 Show & Sale
Nicky Davis: Cactus Cake Maker
Cliff Fielding's Open Garden

Tom Gatz's Presentation: Creating Bonsai with Desert Plants

Tom will go over the basic steps of creating miniature living sculptures using desert-adapted plants with an emphasis on those with succulent qualities including Ficus, Fockea, Bursera, Pachycormus, Portulacaria, Pelargonium, Adenium, and Operculicarya.



Portulacaria afra, informal upright bonsai style Photo by Tom Gatz



Pachycormus discolor, in bloom Photo by Tom Gatz



Ficus petiolaris, root-over-rock bonsai style Photo by Tom Gatz



PRESIDENT'S LETTER
January 2014
Wayne Whipple

I hope you had a great holiday season and are now happily looking forward to the New Year.

We are off to a good start for 2014. Programs have been scheduled, committees have been formed, and key volunteers are in place. Speakers have been selected for the first three months of the year, and our annual Show has been scheduled for the first weekend in April. An open garden has been scheduled for February 2.

Our new Program Chair Deborah Mulholland is busy organizing speakers for the year. Tom Gatz will be our kick-off speaker in January. After his excellent presentation last year, I am sure we are all looking forward on how to make bonsai from succulents. Steve Martinez, our immediate past-president, drove around the Baja California peninsula in search for indigenous cacti and other succulents. At our February meeting, I am looking forward to learn what he found on his trip. We welcome back in March Guillermo Rivera who last spoke to us in 2010. Several of us enjoyed a three-week trip to Peru in July 2010, which was organized by Guillermo.

Hold the date February 2nd for Cliff Fielding's open-garden. His February open-garden is becoming an annual event that we always look forward to. Although we have only one open-garden booked so far, I am sure there will be others.

The Show & Sale Committee has been holding meetings since last November. Lynda Michaelson and Sue Tyrrel are co-chairs this year for the April 4-6 event. It is not too early to start inspecting your plants to determine which ones to show. Although we always look forward to the vendors for the "Sale" part of the event, it is the "Show" that is paramount to us and to the Desert Botanical Garden.

I just received an email from our Membership Chair, Beth Kirkpatrick, letting me know that we started 2014 with a record of 382 members, up by 14% over the previous year. We should be able to reach the 400 mark by next summer, but this means if you haven't paid your 2014 dues, which were due December 31, 2013, please do so as soon as possible as we don't want to lose anyone for non-payment.

We serve our members through our programs – knowledgeable speakers, cactus and succulent shows, workshops, trips, the newsletter and lectures. We also serve our members through excellent membership relations by carefully maintaining members' records, encouraging volunteerism, and recognizing those who contribute immensely to the Society.

Volunteerism should be fun. By sharing our hidden talents, knowledge, and enthusiasm with other members and the general public as well, we will have achieved our purpose as a Society.

For the Society to be a success, we need your help in ways that you believe would be the best to meet the purpose of the Society. Please contact me either through email (w7676@msn.com), by phone (480-460-3623) or in person with your ideas and questions.





Nicky Davis: Cactus Cake Maker

By Sue Hakala

Nicky Davis created the amazing cactus cake displayed and devoured at the Society's annual holiday party. "It took about eight hours to make, and was a real labor of love," Nicky said.

It was not an original idea. "I just googled it and you can't believe how many different variations came up. I originally made it for my brother Tristan's birthday (also a CACSS member) and it was a big hit. He suggested that I make the cake for the party."

"My mom introduced me to cake decorating a long time ago," Nicky said. "I've got three grown kids, and have made and decorated many cakes through the years," Nicky said. "I've perfected my techniques by buying and watching classes from craftsy.com. Once you buy the classes, they are yours forever to watch as many times as you want."

For the cactus cake, she started with a ball cake pan making two halves put together with raspberry filling. She used a real terra cotta base, and then crushed up vanilla and chocolate sandwich cookies to make the gravel at the base. She then frosted the cake with green frosting and began the real labor intensive part making the spine clusters with buttercream frosting. "I made the white spines with long thin pieces of royal icing piped thin. After it dried, I broke it up and put two in each spine cluster. It takes time, but I'd do it again. I have some ideas for cactus cupcakes for a future party," Nicky said.

We can't wait to see your creations!



Nicky was a perennial gardener in Ohio, but quickly adapted to her new desert environment after moving here about 18 months ago. "I grew up in California and wanted to get out of the cold and into the warm," she said. "Also my brother lives in the Phoenix area and volunteers at the DBG. He helped me transfer my perennial gardening experience into a love of cactus and agaves." She has an all-desert garden with over 60 Agaves in the ground, and is now discovering Echinopsis. Nicky does project management for a living, working for Origami Aloe, a custom jewelry company in Chandler.

Nicky Davis holds the delicious Cactus Cake she baked for the annual holiday party.



Open Garden



**Sunday, February 2, 10:30 am – 3 pm
16819 S. 15th Ave., Phoenix**

Cliff Fielding is having his seventh annual open garden and cactus social. There are a bunch of African bulbs, hundreds of seedlings, collector cactus, and a whole mess of mesembs. Most of the plants are seedlings or young plants. Everyone and their guests are welcome to spend a pleasant afternoon in the warm February sun. There will be a few snacks and drinks.

For directions, call Cliff at 480-283-1940.

See you there!



Publication of 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 all such material by the CACSS, or the Central Spine, regardless of any position or office held by the author. All such material represents a comment and/or personal opinion of the author.

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. 5.

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

480-893-1207

dawsonlithops@hotmail.com

Specializations include Growing from Seed, Flora of Namibia, Lithops, other Mesembs, Melocactus, Miniature Cacti and Succulents of Arizona.

MIKE GALLAGHER

602-942-8580

mgallagher26@cox.net

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

DEAN PATRICK

480-759-0312

desertpatrick@cox.net

Specialization in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting (rooting cacti, agave and aloe).

STEVE PLATH

623-915-7615

revegdude1@juno.com

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

DAN SMITH

480-981-9648

smithdans@cox.net

Specializes in adeniums. raising adeniums from seed, grafting and adenium culture in general

BOB TORREST

480-994-3868

robertst9114@msn.com

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

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
PO BOX 63572
PHOENIX, AZ 85082-3572
WWW.CENTRALARIZONACACTUS.ORG