

Upcoming Events - CALENDAR

General meetings are at 2:00 pm unless otherwise noted. Board meetings are one hour earlier. Members are welcome to attend board meetings.

August 25 (Weisz Learning Center) CACSS Board member Doug Dawson: Namibia and Southwest Africa

September 29 (Webster) Anthon Ellert: Euphorbias of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, Africa

October 27 (Webster) Silent Auction of Member's Plants

November 17 (Webster) Woody Minnich The New Turbiniarpus of Northern Mexico

December 8 (Webster) Holiday Party

January 26 2003 (Webster) TBA

C.A.C.S.S.
PO BOX 63572
PHOENIX, AZ 85082-3572

Brown Bag Lunch Series

Webster Auditorium,
Desert Botanical Garden
Tuesday, September 10, Noon
Ian Oliver, Karoo National Botanical Garden,
Republic of South Africa
South Africa's Succulent Biodiversity-
Conservation Status of the Rare and Endangered

Central Spine is the newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society. All opinions are those of respective authors. Publication herein does not imply that CACSS or any CACSS members agree with any statements published.

Change of Address: contact our Treasurer, Pam Bass, with any changes of address.



Central SPINE

CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

President's Letter August 2002

For August and September we will be meeting in the new Weisz Learning Center classrooms, which have great air conditioning and are close to handicapped parking and the main parking lot. The board meeting at 1 pm will be in the Marley Education Building next to the Weisz Center. These buildings are east of the main gate and just south of the bus loading zone. For the October Silent Auction we will move back to Webster Auditorium, of which we have many warm summer memories.

Our buying trip to San Diego was magnificent. Cathy Babcock selected seven fantastic nurseries and one pottery store. Jo Davis arranged friendly bus service. Jeff Stinebiser selected a motel next to a Red Lobster, which pleased the crowd. There was actually some trouble fitting all the plants and pots on the bus, but nobody got to ride in someone else's lap on the way home despite much wishful thinking. Our bus driver Latonya Miller caught the bug and followed advice from Harry O'Carpus, grabbing an uncommon and big *Cordyline australis* in a 7 gallon pot for only \$15. By common assent of members present, she was thanked with a 2002 membership to the CACSS in appreciation of her hard work driving around a bunch of middle-aged juveniles and one sophisticated teenager for three days. We hope to see Latonya at meetings.

December and our annual elections are coming. Nominations need to be announced at the November meeting. If you are diligent and would like to serve on the nominating committee, please contact me.

We need candidates for President, Vice President,

Secretary, and Treasurer, and at least one Board seat. We also need appointed Committee Chairs: Program Chair, Liaison to Desert Botanical Garden, Publications Chair. Main responsibilities of the Officers, Board, and Committee Chairs are:

President: Presides at Board and general meetings. Writes the agenda for each Board and General meeting, and distributes Board agenda to Officers and Directors. Oversees the functions of the club; appoints Committee Chairs as needed and in consultation with other Officers and Board. Notices when committee chairs need help; calls on other Officers, Directors, and general Members to ensure tasks are completed. The President will not be Show Chair; I will do that. This position does not entail a lot of time but each task must be done regularly on schedule.

Vice President: Assists President and presides at meetings when President is off buying plants. Assists other Committee Members as needed. This position entails less time than President but is a vital position.

Secretary: Takes minutes at Board meetings. Types them up and circulates via E-mail or surface mail to Officers and Board in advance of next meeting. Keeps archive of minutes. This position does not entail much time.

Treasurer: Receives membership applications and deposit checks. Keeps checkbook current and in balance. Visits mailbox (main post office, 50th St and Van Buren) at least twice monthly to ensure new members receive *Central Spine* and checks are deposited regularly. Reports financial balances at each Board and General meeting. Maintains club

OFFICERS

Officers (1 year term):
President
Leo Martin
(602) 852-9714
leo1010@attglobal.net

Vice President
Judy Brody
(480) 951-1363
popymallow@aol.com

Secretary
Sue Daley
(623) 876-0060
DaleySPUDBUD@aol.com

Treasurer
Pam Bass
(480) 460-4369
pambass@cox.net

Past President
Cathy Babcock
(480) 921-9396
cbabcock@dbg.org

Directors (2 year terms)
Term ending December 31, 2002:

Jerry Chapman
(480) 945-6543

Doug Dawson
(480) 893-1207
doug.dawson@gmail.maricopa.edu

Scott McMahon
(480) 657-7786
smcmahon2@mindspring.com

Term ending December 31, 2003:
Carol Clapp
cactusnews@earthlink.net

Ray Daley
(623) 876-0060
DaleySPUDBUD@aol.com

Richard Maxwell
(602) 252-6101
nuttster@attglobal.net

Jeff Stinebiser
(602) 955-7819
jkstinebiser@aol.com

CSSA Representative
Henry Triesler
(480) 946-1122

Librarian
Paul Schueneman
(602) 381-9859
Schue888@aol.com

Newsletter Editor
Joseph Orazio
(602) 482-3751
jorazio@cox.net

Our Club buying trip to San Diego area 1 - 3 August 2002

by: Carol Clapp

We had a ball! If you didn't come along you missed a great time. We bought so many plants and pots we had to take everything out of the cargo holds on the last morning and repack it so we could generate some space for our anticipated purchases at the last stop on Sunday morning. If you bought a lot at the final stop you had to be prepared to carry it on your lap on the homeward journey.

One moral in getting more plants traveling safely is to bring lots of small boxes with your name printed on them - these fit better on the bus and hold your plants firmly upright. Duct tape and marker pens are also indispensable. We had tall plants and Canyon Pottery pots on and under our seats on the homeward leg.

Fun in Old Town, San Diego, was a unanimous vote for the Saturday evening and included a visit to The Plant Man, Mike and Joyce Buckner's cactus store in Old Town. Other nurseries visited included Rainbow Gardens in Vista for both books and plants; Tropic World in Escondido; Rancho Soledad in Rancho Sante Fe; Solana Succulents at Solana Beach; Cactus King at Encinitas; and Exotic Gardens, San Diego. I was fortunate to find and buy the plants at the top of my Wants List - a pair of *Adenia globosa*, both female and male, to add to my *Adenia* collection, and lots of Agaves. The other objective of this trip was to have fun getting to know more members of our cactus club.

We must thank all the nursery owners and staff who coped with the influx of enthusiastic cactophiles from Phoenix and patiently answered all our questions, and toured us around their plantations, even in golf carts up and down the hills. Somehow we kept on schedule and we didn't manage to leave anyone behind - this time. Thanks too to Jo Davis and Cathy Babcock who organized this trip; to Leo Martin for being our tour boss and, last but not least, to our new succulentophile, Latanya, who drove the bus most competently and actively joined in the fun. We hope to see her at our meetings - unless she's driving a bus. The trip was great value for the money spent. When can we have another? Anyone, any ideas?

President's Letter June 2002

...continued from first page.

roster as a computerized database or spreadsheet. Prints labels each month for *Central Spine* mailing and delivers them (mail or in person) to Publications Chair. Writes checks at direction of Board. This position does not entail much time but the functions are vital and must be performed punctually. In addition, the person must be bondable. Financial felons need not apply.

Directors: Review work of the Program Chair to ensure monthly programs are set up and ready to go. Review work of the Editor to ensure the *Central Spine* is published each month. Review work of Show Chair to ensure our annual Show runs smoothly. Review work of Sales Chair to ensure our annual Sale held in conjunction with the Show runs smoothly. Review work of the Librarian. Serve on newly-constituted Committees as needed. Transact any other business which comes before the Board. Directorships do not require a lot of time.

Program Chair: Arranges speakers for our programs; consults with DBG to ensure space is reserved for our meetings and annual Show & Sale. This position is a lot of fun. The Program Chair gets to speak with lots of famous cactus and succulent people and invite them to visit Phoenix on our nickel. Visiting speakers almost always bring plants for this person. Program Chair has to be willing to cold call. This position does not require a lot of time but failure to perform is very noticeable.

Liaison to DBG: It would be best if this person already has a relationship with the Garden. Liaison will serve as the CACSS representative in dealing with the DBG. This function is not time-consuming and could easily be fulfilled by another Officer or Director. It has been fulfilled jointly by the President and Program Chair for the past three years.

Publications Chair: Works with Editor to see *Central Spine* is published monthly to give notice to Members of meetings. Convinces Henry Triesler, Jr, to write down the history of the Club, which I have not been able to do in 5 years. Convinces Joan and Stan Skirvin to write down just a fraction of their vast growing experience for publication in *Central Spine* so CACSS Members can benefit from their knowledge. This position does not require a lot of time.

Publicity Chair: This is an extremely important position which we have never filled properly. More publicity equals more members, more visitors to the DBG, more visitors to our meetings and Show & Sale, more sales, and more money to the club for speakers and books. The Publicity Chair contacts media to publicize CACSS and our annual Show & Sale. The Publicity Chair needs to be organized, able to take notes, and willing to cold call. This position requires: looking up contact people, phone numbers, fax numbers, and E-mail addresses at as many media outlets as possible; finding out and recording publication deadlines for each publication or broadcasting station; contacting these people regularly to remind

them of the CACSS, and keeping notes of each contact; formulating press releases and faxing them to media outlets in time to meet publication deadlines but not too early; calling each outlet to ensure the fax was received and offering to answer any questions; writing thank-you notes to reporters for their time, and having CACSS Officers or Members available for answering any questions. This position entails regular small amounts of time during the year and a flurry of activity in the weeks preceding our Show & Sale.

CACSS Member Celeste Gornick took it upon herself to look in the horses' mouth rather than joining in the gossip. Here is a response to an E-mail message she sent: *Arid Lands is NOT closing! Chuck Hanson is moving the mail order portion of the business to Iowa; I will continue to keep the Tucson greenhouses open for retail and some wholesale. You can now clear up any confusion about Arid Lands future to the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society. Thankfully, Marilyn will be here with me for an indefinite amount of time. Our hours are Tuesday thru Saturday 8am to 4pm until further notice. We look forward to your visit. Call us at 520-883-9404 if you need directions. Thank you for your interest and concern.*

Sincerely, Kristy Hanson

Silent Auction

We are going to hold a Silent Auction at the August meeting. Please bring in labeled plants and bidding cards. 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 cards work well for this. At the top of the bidding card put the name of the plant and perhaps a bit of culture information or a description if the plant is not well-known. Then write an opening bid, minimum \$0.50, and leave room for bidder's names and bids below. If you would like me to E-mail you a document with blank bidding cards for you to modify with your word processor and print out, let me know your E-mail address.

The auction will commence as soon as you set down the plant on the auction table. It will be suspended during the meeting, and will resume for less than 10 minutes at the conclusion of the meeting. Please bring cash or checks (made out to CACSS) to pay for your new purchases.

This month's speaker is CACSS member Doug Dawson. Doug is a retired mathematics teacher. In the Q&A section he will be happy to explain about the ladder leaning against the wall at a 56 degree angle, how fast the bucket will hit the ground, and when the trains will meet if choo-choo train C leaves from station S at time T traveling at velocity V while choo-choo train C' leaves from station S' at time T' traveling at velocity V' while returning home from San Diego loaded with plants. He will be talking about his May trip to southwest Africa and Namibia. Bring in plants to show off or about which to ask questions. As usual, please leave diseased plants and insects at home, and bring a picture instead.

Leo A. Martin

Plant Of The Month HOW TO TREAT A NEWLY ACQUIRED PLANT by: Leo A. Martin

New plants are always a delight. You can plop them down in an open space and most will do fine after a little adjusting (that means BURNING in Arizona in August.) Or, you can do things in such a way they take off and grow as though they were born here.

More than half the plants you buy from commercial sources will be infested with mealy bugs, scale, or other pests, especially if they come from cold-winter climates and were kept in greenhouses year-round. It's just a fact of the nursery business. Bugs have short generation times, requiring frequent spraying with expensive pesticides for optimum control; they hide in crevices well and are easy to miss with the spray nozzle; and they become resistant to pesticides rapidly. Some plants are more affected than others: Asclepiads and pachypodiums will usually have some hiding in cracks, and many cacti from California have root mealybugs. You need to treat all your new plants before they infest the rest of your collection.

It is simple but not necessarily easy. Repotting new plants is best; you get to inspect the roots and base of the stem, they will need different-sized pots here, you probably use different soil than the plant was grown in, and you may wish to put the plant into a nicer pot. Begin by unpotting the plants and removing ALL the soil. Use the spray from a garden hose, an air jet from a compressor, or swish the roots vigorously in a tub of water. Discard the old soil (or sterilize/solarize if you wish to reuse. Leaving it in the sun away from other plants for a week should kill any bugs in there.) Inspect the plants for signs of bugs.

If you mail-ordered bare-root plants, most of the work has been done for you.

Treat the bare-root plant with something to kill bugs even if you can't see any. Rubbing alcohol mixed with a few drops of dish detergent works well but you will have to spray the plant with this every 3-4 days for 3 weeks; it does not kill the eggs and generations are short in the heat. Use a soft brush to work into all the crannies. Some people prefer to spray the plants with an insecticide. After treatment let the plants dry for a few days in the shade before repotting. Inspect again just before repotting; retreat if needed. It is much easier to eliminate bugs from bare-root plants than from those in pots.

I have been sorry later every single time I didn't repot a new plant shortly after acquiring it.

Imidacloprid is a chemically-modified nicotine derivative. It is highly toxic and is absorbed by

plants, killing bugs that eat those plants. It is one of the few reliable mealy bug killers. It is sold as Marathon and comes in fine granules. A quarter teaspoon in the potting soil of a 4" pot will work well. Be sure not to get the dust inside any of your openings to the outside world. Unfortunately, Marathon is extremely expensive, sold in large containers only, and not sold in home retail outlets. It is available at agricultural supply businesses. But, since a little goes a long way, some clubs have purchased a container and divided it up. This is against the labeling for the product and I am not recommending you violate Environmental Protection Agency regulations. I am just reporting what I have been told.

After the normal drying period, repot your plant into a new pot with new soil. Water per your preferences after repotting; I always water cacti, pachypodiums, and summer-growing mesembs immediately, but wait a few days for ascleps, euphorbs, and winter-growing mesembs. But don't just put a new plant outside with your other plants! It's weak and not used to our sun and heat.

You know what would happen to any of your plants if you moved them suddenly to the west side of your house, or from a greenhouse out into full sun, without a little babying. Well, the same goes for plants you just bought, especially plants coming to Arizona from California in the summer. Even those grown in full sun in California are not prepared to handle an afternoon of Phoenix sun. This goes double for landscape plants; they have grown in their pots, cheek to cheek with others just like them, carefully watered, and perhaps under shade cloth. Now, put that 1 gallon plant into a crushed granite landscape in full sun, and it will dry up.

Place newly-acquired potted plants in a very shady part of your collection for a week or so. Inspect them every few days; even in what you think is shade may be too sunny for them. If the plant begins yellowing, move it to someplace shadier still. After a week of looking OK, move that plant into a little more sun. Continue this week-by-week adjustment period until the plant is where you want it. If it ever turns yellow or white, move it back into a little more shade.

For landscape plants, I would either leave them in the pots in a lot of shade and wait until late

October to plant them, or I would plant them now and cover them with shade cloth until November. It does look a little funny but your neighbors certainly know you're strange already. Tack the shade cloth down securely or it will blow off in a monsoon storm just after you leave for a weekend in Flagstaff.

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Don't forget fertilizer! The faster seedlings grow to marketable size, the sooner the grower gets paid. Most growers fertilize far heavier than do hobbyists. Steve Southwell said a large commercial grower in Vista uses full-strength Peters fertilizer with micronutrients at every watering. Grigsby's reports they use full-strength Peters once a week for 3 weeks and regular tap water the fourth week, then repeat the cycle. These plants are fat, puffy, and often carefully shaded. They are bright green and round. Move that plant to your growing condition with much less fertilizer, and the plant suddenly makes nice, tight growth with dense spines—but the diameter is smaller and it now looks funny. To prevent this, fertilizer new plants heavily at first and gradually taper off on the fertilizer.

When you go on a buying trip it is tempting to leave those plants together in one place in the original pots. Don't! They will grow much better for you over the long term if you remove the pests, put them in an appropriate pot and soil for your growing habits, and move them to appropriate conditions in your collection.

Winter-growing plants require a little more care. They are sleeping in the summer and can't even imagine our temperatures in their most horrifying nightmares. I do repot these plants and treat them for bugs, but after repotting I don't water them except for a brief spritz with a spray bottle a few days later. I keep them inside my house on a window sill all summer, until night temperatures are really cool, mid November or later. Plants such as *Argyroderma*, *Cheiridopsis*, *Crassula*, *Echeveria*, and *Mitrophyllum* are sure to die if you bring them from cool coastal California to Arizona in the summer and put them outside. *Conophytum* are still more special; they will require regular misting, just to dampen the surface of the soil, all summer long or they shrivel and die before temperatures fall enough for them to commence growth.