

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.

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

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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 September 2002

Our September meeting will be in **Webster Auditorium**. This is not what I wrote just last month, but scheduling conflicts necessitate the change. We will meet in Webster Auditorium through March.

December and our annual **elections** are coming. Nominations need to be announced at the November meeting. We would like to talk to people having an interest in serving CACSS as an officer or director.

We voted to hold a small **Silent Auction** at each meeting and one large Silent Auction yearly in October. For the September 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. Minimum bid increments will be \$0.25. At the end of the auction, if a plant has attracted no bids, anybody may purchase that plant for the opening bid. If plants still remain, we request the owners take them home. 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.

The **DBG Fall Plant Sale Festival and Cactus Festival** will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 18, 19, and 20. Volunteers will be needed from 8 am to 5 pm each day but do not need to be there the entire day. Our club's help and the wealth of experience in our members have been welcomed by the Garden in the past. I have been guaranteed there will be no rain and temperatures will be moderate. Please help make our presence felt as a way of thanking the DBG for hosting our meetings. If the heat is a problem for you, please read the next paragraph!

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President's Letter Continued...

The **Cactus Festival** is new this year. Held in conjunction with the Plant Sale Festival, it will be in the well-air-conditioned, enormous new Dorrance Hall east of the Weiss Learning Center. We have been asked to bring in potted cacti to show off to the public. This is not a competition but we would like the plants and pots clean and undamaged. We have also been asked to provide volunteers to answer questions about cacti. This would be a great way to gain new members for our club, and those of you who don't feel up to volunteering at the sale could help us out a lot with this indoor Festival.

Our own **Show and Sale** will be April 9-13, 2003. Entrants must own plants for at least 6 months before the show, meaning plants you acquire before October 9 of this year will be permitted.

Our meeting October 27 will be the **Silent Auction** in Webster Auditorium. Start getting plants and labels ready now!

This month's speaker is Anthon Ellert, who was born in Africa and has spent a large amount of time in Zimbabwe. He will be talking about the genus *Euphorbia* in Zimbabwe.

Leo A. Martin



Plant Of The Month SEPTEMBER 2002 - TURN OF THE SEASONS

by: Leo A. Martin

Only a few cacti grow strongly during our long, hot summer. These include *Coryphantha*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Matucana*, *Opuntia*, *Turbinicarpus*, and columnars. I water these cacti regularly all summer, trying not to let them dry completely for long. South American columnar cacti in particular make impressive growth if kept moist all summer and not allowed to dry out. Examples include *Borzicactus*, *Cereus*, *Cleistocactus*, *Haageocereus*, *Harrisia*, *Neocardenasia*, *Pilosocereus*, and the vining *Selenicereus*. I think it might be possible to stand these columnars in a saucer of water all summer without trouble.

Most other cacti stop growing in the heat and are at risk of rot with too much water. This means they need to dry out between waterings, but they do not like baking dry in the heat for any length of time. It is possible to move Phoenix summer-dormant cacti such as *Rebutia* to the dry shade, where they will do better than in the sun.

Among mesembs I have grown, *Dinteranthus*, *Lithops*, *Odontophorus*, *Plieospilos*, *Rhombophyllum*, *Ruschia*, and *Schwantesia* need regular summer watering. My *Rhombophyllum dolabriforme* has been in constant bloom since April. Other mesembs are touchy about experiencing heat and water together.

Summer sleepers resume enthusiastic growth

for our long fall when nights start cooling. This time of year can be a little tricky for growers; watering too much too soon risks rot if growth has not begun in earnest, and watering too little too late forgoes lots of potential growth. The combination of cool nights and warm to hot days is the best for most succulent plants; try to take advantage of this weather.

Our summer breaks with a few cool nights in a row sometime during August or September. Rarely, this is actually the beginning of fall -- but not this year. It is very tempting to water winter growers such as most mesembs during this break and try for a head start. But, this is a big risk; most years, another few weeks of hot weather are on the way, and a wet winter grower in hot weather is at high risk of rotting. Try not to soak your winter growers during this cool spell in August or September. You can give them a splash of water, just wetting the surface. They will absorb this during the few cooler nights and be primed to grow when nights reliably cool down for the winter later in September. Most of them are smart enough not to begin growing until they know it's the right time. Plants in this group include *Argyroderma*, *Cheiridopsis*, *Mitrophyllum*, *Monilaria*, and most winter-growing bulbs.

Cacti and "summer-growing" mesembs that have been sleeping off the heat with dry soil are already waking up as I write this in early September. I put "summer-growing" in paren-

theses because, while these plants do grow in the summer in habitat where it is not as hot as here, most are unable to use water in our heat and they will rot if kept too moist. They don't seem to mind moderate nights and days around 100; it's the steady days of 106+ and nights in the upper 80s that get them. I do soak all my cacti and most "summer-growing" mesembs during the August-September cool nights and they begin growing for the fall. Cacti in this group include *Copiapoa*, lots of *Mammillaria*, and *Notocactus*. Mesembs in this group include *Aloinopsis*, *Carruanthus*, and *Nananthus*.

One group of *Mammillaria* has a definite need for a winter dry spell. These plants are generally small with tight soft spines, large purple or pink flowers, and often tuberous roots. They are highly prized by collectors. Species include *M. hernandezii* and *M. theresae*. These plants grow in shallow soil pans on rocks. They see lots of rain between May and October, and none at all in the winter. Even a drop or two of water on these plants during the winter may kill the entire plant. They shrivel terribly but will recover rapidly with spring watering. *M. hernandezii* blooms before growth resumes, and it should not be watered in the spring until after it has bloomed, no matter how bad it looks. Its huge tuberous root contains over a year's water. *M. theresae* blooms on and off all summer but needs a "dryish" rest

during hellishly hot periods. From the time days begin to cool in late October, put these plants where they are at no risk of being watered.

Lobivia (Chamaecereus) silvestrii (the peanut cactus) will bloom better next spring if it receives a long, dry winter rest as well. It is hardy to single digits if dry.

If you have a warm greenhouse or sunroom, your South American columnar cacti such as *Pilosocereus* should go there for the winter. They can't take cold weather but will grow all year if warm enough and watered. Be sure you have enough light to prevent spindly growth. If you don't have a warm, sunny spot for them, keep them dry and warm so they don't grow.

Tucson C&SS Is Sponsoring Two Talks

Thursday, October 3, 2002 for both talks. Tucson C&SS is sponsoring two talks given by Dan Mahr, CSSA Director, and Chair of the CSSA Research and Field Trip Committees. The first talk is at 3.30 pm at the College of Pharmacy Auditorium, U of A, on NW corner of Speedway and Campbell. The title is "*The Famed Cactus Moth: Its History and Potential Threat to the Desert Southwest.*" This talk is about *Cactoblastis* which is already proving to be a threat elsewhere. There is a Boston Market on the NE corner of same cross streets, and lots more restaurants further north on Campbell. The second talk is in the evening and is entitled "*Namibia: Land of Succulent Extremes.*" This will be at 7 pm at the Junior League Building which is a block or so east of the NE corner of River and Campbell. This talk may well be of the same trip which CACSS member, Doug Dawson, gave on August 25 at the DBG. But Dan has traveled there before so there may be some extra stuff in his talk. If you need to know more about parking or how to find the venues, please e-mail Dick Wiedhopf at wiedhopf@pharmacy.arizona.edu or Joe Frannea at frannea@prodigy.net

D I R E C T I O N S
Jr. League of Tucson, Kiva Bldg, 2099 E. River Rd, Tucson. (On the north side of River, east of Campbell) Directions from Phoenix: exit I-10 East at Orange Grove, go under freeway and railroad. Turn right at first traffic signals onto new road, which is start of River. (North of this point is Thornydale Rd) River then bends and becomes west to east River Rd. Continue until shortly after crossing Campbell and turn in left driveway of meeting place.