

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.

November 17 (Webster) Woody Minnich: The New *Turbinicarpus* of Northern Mexico

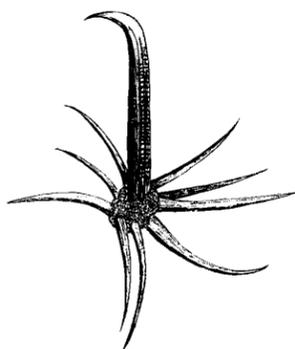
December 8 (Webster) Holiday Party - Noon

January 26, 2003 (Webster) TBA

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The article about how our newsletter operates was left out due to space constraints. It should appear in next month's issue. Watch for it! Once again, I encourage all of our members to contribute any information they would like to share. Our newsletter will become even better by sharing our knowledge and experience.

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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 November 2002

Our November meeting will NOT be on the last Sunday. We will meet on Sunday, November 17, in Webster Auditorium, at the usual time. Our speaker will be perennial favorite Woody Minnich of Cactus Data Plants in California. He will show us some newly-described species of *Turbinicarpus* cactus from Mexico. These are ideal plants for cactus lovers without much space: they are small plants, some even thumb-sized or smaller; they like small pots; and, they do very well in our climate. I usually have volunteer seedlings in the pots among mine. Cactus lovers in more humid climates have a lot of trouble with them and dream of growing them as well as we can. Plus, they are very handsome plants and flower most of the summer. If you don't have a few *Turbinicarpus* in your collection you might want to reconsider.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read the sad news of the passing of Bev White, co-owner of B & B Cactus in Tucson. For those wishing to send cards the address is 11550 East Speedway Boulevard, Tucson, AZ, 85749.

There will be a great article next month about the **Central Spine** and how it runs. Please read it! Joseph would welcome items to pub-

lish from all of you. You don't have to write a full article. Just jot down some of your observations about a favorite plant or group of plants and send it to Joseph. Tell us about your favorite plant, or a potting technique you find helpful. Tell us your favorite nursery story. Tell us how you propagate your plants. We would like to learn from you!

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. All four of our officers will be stepping down, by personal preference or because of our constitution's three term limit.

And, remember our December 7 holiday party in Webster Auditorium is approaching. We will once again have a coordinated potluck to eliminate the problem of 30 desserts and one main dish.

Leo A. Martin

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IN MEMORY...

Beverly Jean White died on October 29, 2002. She was born and raised in the Cleveland, Ohio area. She was her high school valedictorian. She attended Heidelberg College, and the need for nurses in World War II drew her into nursing. She moved to Tucson in 1972 and finished her nursing career at Tucson Medical Center. It was her great love of the Tucson desert landscape that inspired her and her husband, Bob to found B & B Cactus Farm in the mid-1970's, which remained her greatest interest.

She is survived by her husband, Robert White; her daughter, Janice Funk; her son, Douglas Gobeille; and her grandchildren, James and Jeffrey Gobeille. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Botanical Gardens of Tucson in her memory. There was a gathering of family and friends Sunday, November 3, at the family residence.

CACSS LIBRARY NEWS, NOVEMBER 2002

Paul Schueneman

OUR NEW LOCATION

Our CACSS Library was moved to Webster Auditorium August 2002 and the new location is doing great!!! Since we moved the more than 20 books have been checked out by our members at the last two CACSS meetings.

NEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS: Recent new arrivals in the library are:

- *The Genus Conophytum, A Conograph*, Steven Hammer, 1993. The first book EVER written totally on this subject - the largest among the genera of highly succulent mesembryanthemums. Text covers every species, full descriptions, notes on ecology and cultivation. 13 taxa are described for the first time. Lavishly illustrated with more than 280 large format color photographs.

- *Excelsa No. 17, Journal of the Aloe*, 1996, Cactus and Succulent Society of Zimbabwe. Major articles: hoodias, *Ceropegias*, aloes, Namibian succulents, flora of the Sperrgebiet. 81 color photos, 2 black and white photos, 4 black and white drawings, 2 maps. 112 pages, 7" X 9.5" softbound.

- *British Cactus & Succulent Journal* No. 1, Volume 20, March 2002.

- *Aloe*, Vol. 39, No 1, 2002, Journal of the Succulent Society of South Africa. Articles on: Conservation - The Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Plan; notes on the genus *Machairophyllum* (Mesembryanthemaceae) - its taxonomy, distribution and ecology; Canary Islands: Land of the Dragon Trees.

- *Geophytic Pelargoniums Field and Cultivation Studies of Pelargonium section Hoarea*, Charles Craig. South Africa boasts a wealth of Pelargonium species including those in the section Hoarea, geophytes with some of the most unusual and spectacular flowers in the genus. This book can be appreciated not just for its discussion of the species but also the illustrations that accompany the text...they are absolutely beautiful.

- *Regions of Floristic Endemism in Southern Africa, A review with Emphasis on Succulents*, Abraham E. van Wyk &

Gideon F. Smith, 2001. The extraordinary floristic diversity in southern Africa is not only one of the region's greatest natural assets, but also one of the botanical wonders of the world. Here, south of the Cunene-Zambezi Rivers, more than 10% of all vascular plants (over 30 000 species), including more than 46% of all succulents, are found on about 2.5% of the world's land surface area. Moreover, at least 60% of these species are strictly confined (endemic) to the region. It is remarkable that most of southern Africa's endemic plants are concentrated in only a few relatively small and well demarcated areas, known as Regions or Centers of Endemism. Although the existence of these Centers has been known to field botanists for a long time, most of them remain comparatively little known outside scientific circles. Over many years, the authors have carefully documented the diversity of endemic plants and now for the first time, present the results of their efforts to recognize and define areas that warrant status as Centers of Endemism.

- *Cactus and Succulent Journal*, Vol 74, September-October, 2002. Articles are: Parkas? Ice picks? Oxygen bottles? A cactus expedition in highland Peru - Part III by James D. Mauseth and Carlos Ostolaza; *Kleinia mccoysi* (Compositae), a new species in the Sultanate of Oman by Leonard E Newton; The Jardín Botánico in Mexico City and its National Agave Collection: a succulent plant paradise in the New World by Gideon F. Smith; Something Borrowed, something blue: a new species, *Hallianthus griseus* by Steven Hammer; Yemeni aloes: a new species and a synonymized variety by Michel Rohmer; *Agave dasylirioides* by Julia Etter & Martin Kristen; *Agave nayaritensis* Manfreda and its allies by Dylan P. Hannon; Superb Succulents by Duke Benadom

NEED HELP?

Contact the CACSS librarian,
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Frailea - A Cactus Genus for the Space-Impaired

by: Joan & Stan Skirvin

The cactus genus *Frailea* was split off from *Echinocactus* by Britton and Rose during their monumental study of the Family Cactaceae during 1919-1923. They were named in honor of Manuel Fraile, who had maintained the cactus collection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

Quoting from Edward F. Anderson's *The Cactus Family*, "Plants are usually many-stemmed but sometimes solitary. Stems low growing, depressed globular to short cylindrical. Ribs and tubercles weakly developed. Spines small. Flowers yellow."

Those yellow flowers want a lot of light, although they probably prefer no more than open shade in Phoenix. It seems to be a cause for celebration in England when a grower gets blooms on a *Frailea* because of the country's relative dearth of sunlight. The flowers are about 1-1/2 inches in diameter, large for the plant body size.

Seventeen species and varieties are recognized, but not all of these were found in the nursery trade when we were actively acquiring *Frailea*. Fifty have been reported according to Anderson and it is evident that many of these "unrecognized" names are available in the nursery trade.

From 1978 thru 1982, we acquired 37 non-duplicate *Frailea* whose tags contained the following names:

(Alacriportana), *alegretana*, *argentina*, *(asperispina)*, *asterias v. albiflora*, *asteroides*, *(pygmaea v.) aurea*, *(carminafilimentosa)*, *(cataphracta)*, *(chiquitana)*, *(Columbiana)*, *(concepcionensis)*, *cuchilla (rivera negra)*, *(curvispina)*, *(pygmaea v.) dadaki*, *(frederiekii (sp?) friedrichii)*, *(graciliana (sp?) gracillima (sp?), grahliana)*, *grandiflora*, *(horstii)*, *itapuensis*, *(knippeliana)*, *(lepida)*, *magnifica*, *(moseriana)*, *(pygmaea v.) (phaeodisca)*, *(pseudopulcherrima)*, *(pumila)*, *(pygmaea)*, *(pygmaea v. aurea)*, *pygmaea sanluisensis*, *pygmaea x cacapava*, *schlosserii*, *schutziana*, *sp. nov.*

argentina (de herdt), *sp. nov.* kz125, *sp. nov.* u-2296, *(ybatense)*.

The 10 marked with square brackets ([]) are among the 15 names given by Anderson. We do not know if the *sp. nov.* plants have been published as new taxons or made synonymous with existing names.

Curt Backeberg, the splitter would-be taxonomist, wrote Cactus Lexicon. I have placed braces ({}) around the 21 *Frailea* names found in that work.

These *Frailea* have endured through years of either over attention (at times) and serious neglect when they have been watered but remain in the same 3" or 3-1/4" pot their entire life. In later life, a couple developed crested growth.

They set seed (when well grown) and grow easily from seed. In fact, they are reported to set seed even if the flower doesn't open. This self fertilization is called cleistogamy.

Stan's reality check: I visited our shade frame where I knew the flat with the *Frailea* was located. I realized that I had not really paid attention to them in some years; only 8 pots were there and only 4 of those had name tags! I have placed asterisks (*) ahead of the 3 unique names (there are two pots of *ybatense*) I have been able to locate. Not very impressive survival, but the plants were purchased from 20 to 24 years ago. Considering that we have never been able to keep many-headed pots of *Rebutias* alive for over 8 to 10 years, the thought occurs that *Frailea* might also have limited lives. On the other hand, perhaps we're to blame.)

Backeberg indicates that the plants come from S. Brazil and Uruguay through N. and SE. Argentina and Paraguay, to Bolivia, with one report of a wild population from Columbia.

Frailea are, therefore, quite cosmopolitan even if little seen in nurseries. We

acquired ours from about 16 different nurseries, plant sales, and individuals. Not all exist anymore.

Miles' To Go's latest list (Fall 2002) has *Frailea castanea* for \$3.00 which he describes as a "marvelous dwarf, low brownish body, minute black sp., yellow flowers", if you want to try one.

To find more, if you get interested, check dealer's lists and, whenever you're in a nursery, ask if they have any *Frailea*.

Leo's note: Most people now regard *Frailea* as being very short-lived, possibly annuals in habitat! They reseed readily around the base of the mother plant from self-set seed if kept reasonably moist during warm weather. It is a good idea to keep restarting them from seed; what looks like a healthy big plant may suddenly die without warning.

There are great accounts of finding *Frailea* in habitat in the book *A Cactus Odyssey...* by Kiesling, Mauseth, and Ostalaza. They apparently prefer a narrow ecological niche. Large rock domes protruding from surrounding soil have a zone where the soil meets the rock and is less than an inch or two deep. Some plants specialize in this niche, and this is where *Frailea* are found. The soil is too shallow for a lot of plants that otherwise would shade out the tiny *Frailea*.

The seed is shaped strangely for a cactus, and is often described as boat-shaped. That is a good description, for it is among the few cactus seeds that float! They are thought to be dispersed in habitat by floating away on runoff.