

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

## Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

*http://www.fresnocss.org*

Vol. 28, no. 11

November 2011

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 3; 7:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30 P.M.)  
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

## PROGRAM

### "Impressions of South Africa: Succulents, Flowers, and Animals"

**Presented by  
Dr. Peter Beiersdorfer**



*Euphorbia cooperii*

This program on South Africa will highlight some of the sights that anyone of us can see by being in the right place at the right time in South Africa ... if we are so lucky. It is based on Peter Beiersdorfer's three trips to South Africa since 2003 during which he explored the regions of Johannesburg, Kruger, Durban, and Cape Town, including a trip to Point Agulhas, the southern-most point of South Africa.

Peter Beiersdorfer has been interested in succulents since childhood, when his grandmother had several large cacti. After moving to Livermore 18 years ago, he was able to collect cacti in earnest; and after his first trip to South Africa, he began to collect other succulents as well. He started to propagate plants from seed and cuttings during the past ten years mainly to make sure that he had "spares", in case one of his plants did not make it. He has been successful with propagating his plants to the point where he has become a regular vendor at the sales events of the Cactus and Succulent Society of San Jose and more recently at the sales events of the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Area Succulent and Cactus Society. Last year he took on the task of sales chair of the San Jose semi-annual show & sale.

**PLANTS:** Peter will bring some of his rare plants for purchase.

Please join Peter for Dinner on November 3, 5:30 p.m.  
To reserve, contact Vickie at  
[vickieeven@yahoo.com](mailto:vickieeven@yahoo.com) (or 559-824-8789).

Toledo's Mexican Restaurant  
367 E. Shaw Ave, Fresno, CA 93710  
(559) 224-0975 (Southwest corner of  
Shaw Avenue and Fresno Street)  
<http://www.toledosmexicanfood.com>



## President's Message



*Ariocarpus retusus*

WOW... time is flying by so fast! Now that fall has finally decided to cool off, myself as well as my plants are really enjoying our weather! Right now is a great time to start gradually exposing your plants to more sun and have their colors really brighten up! I took the 40% shade cloth down over many of my benches and many of my Aloes, Gasterias and Haworthias are showing wonderful shades of red, pink, and burgundy. The cooler night temperatures also help show off these intense colors! Another thing about this time of year I look forward to is the flowering of my Ariocarpus. I spent all weekend admiring my plants, going back in forth from inside to outside multiple times to enjoy our weather and go look how nice everything is coloring up as well as the beautiful but

ephemeral Ariocarpus blooms! Remember, fall is also time to start preparing for winter and begin tapering off on watering the summer rainfall plants we grow, as well as start watering plants from the winter rainfall regions.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Big Fresno Fair. The show plants and display look amazing and to everyone who took a shift(s) in keeping an eye on the plants and the display, we all appreciate this!

See you at the meeting!

*Nick*



### FAIR MUSINGS:

I want to thank all the members who helped out at the Fresno Fair. We didn't manage to cover every hour the Greenhouse was open, but the new arrangement, with the cacti and succulents secured behind a fence, helped with plant security, I think.

Some people complained that they were kept too far away to read the plant labels, so Jennifer Waite, Floriculture Chairman, had all the labels reprinted in a larger font. Next year, the labels will be readable from the fence line, she promises.

Congratulations to Pam and Dennis Margosan whose spectacular multi-headed Golden Barrel was judged Best Cactus, and their great *Pachypodium namaquanum* was voted Best Succulent. I saw a lot of visitors taking pictures of it with their cell phones.

I have to give a shout-out to former member Dwight Horiuchi, who was at the Fair every day and who spent a lot of time monitoring the cacti and succulents. He even set up a couple of impromptu repotting demonstrations that attracted the attention of visitors. Chuck Thew was also there every morning, and Charlene Stebles, working at Fair Education, was there every weekday morning.

I thought the new arrangement, with cacti at one end of the display and the succulents at the other, showed off the plants quite well (except for some of the very small plants.) (It also showed how the 'other' succulents make up the bulk of the entries.) The number of exhibitors was down this year, for various reasons. We hope some of those who were unable to participate this year will be back next year.

*Sue*

**SYMPATHIES:**



Our condolences go out to Susan Cook, whose father, club member Dan Clark, passed away on October 17<sup>th</sup>. A number of club members joined Susan and her sisters at an October 24<sup>th</sup> memorial service.

**Marine Echapare**, longtime member, passed away Oct. 24th. Our sympathies go out to her family.

A year ago Joe Wujcik presented a program for us on pots, potting and staging. We were sad to hear that his wife, Carol, passed away on September 28<sup>th</sup>. She was a prominent person in the hobby and was well-known by many of us.

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**WELCOME** Visitors last month: Jean Graveline, Renee Perez.

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**Add these emails to your roster:** Beth Teviotdale, [teviotdale@sbcglobal.net](mailto:teviotdale@sbcglobal.net); Chuck Thew, [charlesthew@att.net](mailto:charlesthew@att.net).

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**Happy Birthday:** Carmen Linares (4<sup>th</sup>); Karen Willoughby (7<sup>th</sup>); Sue Haffner (14<sup>th</sup>); Josie Thomas (16<sup>th</sup>); Dan Gale (17<sup>th</sup>); Cindy Duwe (20<sup>th</sup>).

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**Another author in the club: Carole Grosch** is one of the authors of "50 Unified years: a history of Clovis schools," by various local authors, with watercolor images of each school by Pat Hunter. The authors were hosted by Barnes & Noble for a book-signing recently. Carole said she met a lot of interesting people, and even sold a few books!

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**FOR SALE:** *Beaucarnea recurvata* specimen, 15" wide trunk. Call Jack Fleming, 227-9915.

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**NEWSLETTER SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 21.**

**COMING EVENTS**

**Sat.-Sun., Nov. 5-6**, San Gabriel C&S Society show and sale, Los Angeles Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

**Fri.-Sat., Nov. 11-12**, Orange County C&S Society Winter Show & Sale, Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim CA; hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Sat., Nov. 19**, San Joaquin Clay & Glass Association fall sale, 1084 W. Bullard (Redeemer Lutheran Church); hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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**CLUB WORKSHOP: Wed., Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>**, 6:00 p.m., Workforce Connection Room, Manchester Center. Subject: Winter Growers. Last month, Dan Gale brought his seed flat with a number of rarities growing in it. More members should have been there to see it.

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**CHRISTMAS PARTY NEXT MONTH:** Be sure to mark your calendars for December 1<sup>st</sup>—our Christmas potluck party. The club will supply tri-tip and chicken. There will be a signup sheet at this meeting for you to list what you would like to bring.

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**LIBRARY NEWS**

An occasional column featuring new books or reviews. Sue Haffner has donated a new book for our use: "Succulent compositae: a grower's guide to the succulent species of Senecio & Othonna" by Gordon Rowley.

Earlier this year we acquired "Glossary of botanical terms with special reference to succulent plants" compiled by Urs Eggli. Since no one has checked it out I thought I'd let you know what a gold mine of information is contained within this pale green book. For you beginners, especially those who may be puzzled by some of the botanical Latin names of plants, this will be a great help. For instance, it explains the name *Bisnaga*, which is a vernacular Mexican name for a large globular cactus, like ferocactus, as the spines were used as toothpicks.

*Madeleine*

**Club access:** President, Nick Deinhart, 801-4232, [Nicholas.Deinhart@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Deinhart@ars.usda.gov); Programs, Vacant; Treasurer, Polly Dunklin, 266-9143, [pollydee@comcast.net](mailto:pollydee@comcast.net); Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu); Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 226-0145, [mforvet@comcast.net](mailto:mforvet@comcast.net); Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, [Madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:Madeleine43@comcast.net); Webmaster, Vickie Veen, 824-8789, [vickieveen@yahoo.com](mailto:vickieveen@yahoo.com); Sunshine, Val McCullough, 226-5744.



(Photo: "Epiphytic cactus" by H. Takashi (1982))

## LEPISIUM CRUCIFORME

This easily-grown basket plant (sometimes included in *Rhipsalis*) is fairly common in plant collections. It is also seen more and more in succulent container gardens. For instance, check some of the pictures in Debra Lee Baldwin's book "Succulent container gardens."

It is native to NE Brazil where it grows on coastal rocks and in seasonal forest. It is greatly variable in habit and flower color—cream, yellow, pink or even magenta—depending on ecological factors. Basically, *Lepismium cruciforme* is a slender cereoid with up to 6-ribbed stems and tiny flowers. There is a larger-growing form available, with stems up to 3 inches in diameter. Stems of both forms can assume a bright red or purple color in good light.

Water it well in summer; keep drier in winter. It is easy to propagate from cuttings.

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## MAMMILLARIA VETULA SSP GRACILIS

This little cactus has long been known in the hobby as *Mammillaria fragilis*, an apt name given its propensity to come apart at the slightest disturbance. John Pilbeam in his book "Mammillaria" proposes that this may be the most widespread *Mammillaria* species in cultivation, "featuring commonly at almost any event where plant sales occur, except paradoxically at cactus-oriented events, where it would be ignominious to offer it."

I suppose his tongue-in-cheek comment is a reference to the poor thing's common use. You see it in garden shops in tiny pots by itself or as a component of cactus dish gardens. Its stems are slender, cylindrical, to 13cm long, 1 to 3 cm wide, with 11 to 16 chalky white radial spines, 3 to 8 mm long. Central spines either absent or, if present, up to 10 to 12 mm long. Flowers are small about 12 mm long and wide, pale yellow with pinkish or brownish mid-stripe.

It was originally described from plants collected in the Mexican state of Hidalgo, under shrubs in leaf mold on limestone rocks at 1,600 meters altitude. It is also found in the neighboring state of Queretaro.

Another factor contributing to *M. vetula ssp gracilis'* common status is its ease of culture. It seems to survive all manner of neglect—heat, cold, wet, drought. Yes, it's not very showy, but its compact shape with white chalky spines makes it agreeable and not too aggressive. Propagation is ridiculously easy.

Elton Roberts writes: "You have to have a steady hand when repotting the plant or you will knock heads off and have a very non-symmetrical plant ... I keep the plants dry over the winter. They are in my regular soil mix. They want an acidic soil."

There are some variants of *ssp gracilis*, for example *var. pulchella*, a smaller and even more slender variety. European hybridizers have developed other forms, as well.

This is truly a plant to be recommended for beginners. **Sue**



Photos  
by  
Elton Roberts



**Mammillaria vetula ssp. gracilis 'pulchellus'**

## HUNTINGTON SUCCULENT SYMPOSIUM

The 28<sup>th</sup> Huntington Succulent Symposium was held September 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, San Marino. Attendance was very good, the second largest on record. The speakers were excellent and gave the audience a lot of think about. Mark Dimmitt, who has just retired after 32 years at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, spoke on "What is a succulent?" We all know what a succulent is, don't we? When people ask, What's the difference between a cactus and a succulent? Don't we always say, All cacti are succulents but not all succulents are cacti? That's what I've said for years. Turns out, maybe that's not the case. Mark showed how botanical authors have tended to avoid being very specific in how they define what is a succulent plant. He offered some criteria for succulence: water holding in tissues; extensive shallow root system, with its efficient utilization of water; CAM photosynthesis (using 1/10<sup>th</sup> as much water as regular C3 plants), meaning the plant stores carbon dioxide as an acid, stoma closed during the day, open at night; never really dormant, but "idling", waiting for better conditions. Audience discussion was enthusiastic. I was reminded of my friend Phyllis Flechsig's definition: succulents are what succulent growers grow.

The second speaker, Nancy Vivrette, of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, presented an interesting and amusing tour through botanical libraries and herbaria all over the globe with "Identifying ice plants: a case for the history detective." Her search for the identification (and mis-identification) of the ice plants established on the California coast took a lot of odd turns, too numerous to relate: ice plants as ship's ballast? Ice plants and their place in Victorian mourning customs?

At the morning break, Laurel Woodley, President of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, made the presentation of the first *CSSA Myron Kimmach Lifetime Achievement Award* to its namesake, Myron Kimmach, Emeritus Director of the Huntington Botanical Gardens, former editor of the *Cactus & succulent journal*, recipient earlier this year of the *Cactus d'Or* of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study. His achievements in the field are almost too long to list, as are his publications and the new species of succulents that he has discovered and introduced into cultivation. This new award will be presented in even-numbered years at upcoming Symposia.

Brian Dorsey, University of Michigan, was the last morning speaker. He discussed "Systematics of xerophytic and succulent euphorbia." He related the work of the participants of a group EuphORBia: the global inventory of the spurges. Check out their website: [www.euphorbiaceae.org](http://www.euphorbiaceae.org).

Lunch, which is included in your registration, was the usual delicious Mediterranean fare. "Take two plates!" the caterer kept reminding everyone. During the break the Desert Conservatory was open, or attendees could tour the Desert Garden or shop in the gift shop or visit the various Huntington galleries. (They could also keep upping their bids in the silent auction. There were a lot of very desirable plants on the auction tables. The bidding usually goes up way too high for me.)

Kathy Musial, of the Huntington, started off the afternoon session with a program on "Chile's semi-arid north, the Norte Chico". The Norte Chico is one of the 5 natural regions of Chile, extending from the southern border of the Atacama Desert to just north of Santiago. It's an area of interesting micro-climates.

James Folsom, Director of the Huntington Botanical Garden, outlined the extensive renovations which are due to begin shortly at the Huntington. It is likely that, by the time of next year's Symposium, we will see a lot of changes underway. Foremost among the changes is a new Desert Conservatory and new pathway orientation in the Desert Garden, as well as a new irrigation system for the Garden.

Kathy Musial returned to the podium to relate memories of Gary Hammer, well-known southern California nurseryman, who had been killed in a freak accident a few days earlier. An extensive obituary in the September 2<sup>nd</sup> *Los Angeles Times* reviewed his plant hunting adventures, with one friend calling him the "Indiana Jones of botanists." Several others, including Michael Buckner, also shared memories of Gary Hammer, who was hit by a car on a busy Phoenix street.

The last afternoon program, "Namibia in 3T" featured slides by Tim Harvey, Todd Masilko and John Trager. The guys went to Namibia together earlier in the year.

After the talks, the attendees went down to the nursery to shop, or went to the reception in Banta Hall for beer and salsa.

The evening speaker was the extraordinary Steven Hammer, author, musician, mesemb hunter, operator of the Sphaeroid Institute in Vista CA. His name on a speaker's list is sure to fill a hall. Since both he and Jim Folsom had recently observed their 60<sup>th</sup> birthdays, Steven was persuaded that he should talk a bit about his life, despite his protestations of shyness. His talk, "Music of the sphaeroids", covered his training as a pianist (he was a professor of music at UC Santa Cruz), his parents and brothers and his growing interest in succulents. As usual his talk was full of humor and plays on words. He showed slides of recent discoveries in the mesembs of South Africa, contributed by accomplished photographers all over the world who are Steven's friends. He then sat down at the piano and played the Aria from Johann Sebastian Bach's "Goldberg Variations". I couldn't help but think that, of all the billions of people on the planet, only Steven Hammer could have given such a presentation.

(And the piano, a 1927 baby grand, was a recent gift to the Huntington from the estate of a lady who had been a Hunting-ton Overseer for years. She had grown to love the Desert Garden and left 15 million dollars for its upkeep. She also gave them a painting, a Picasso that she and her husband had bought for \$57,000 many years ago. The Huntington put it on the market, and it sold recently for the highest price ever paid (so far) for a single work of art: around 114 million dollars. Wow.)

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2012

The election of officers 2012 will be conducted at the November meeting. The Nomination Committee is proud to announce its' recommendations, which are shown in the sample ballot reproduced in the adjacent column. Members of the nominating committee, Polly Dunklin, Vickie Veen and Cindy Duwe made an effort to contact all eligible members to determine if they had any interest in holding elective office. Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the meeting. Proposed nominees must be qualified under the Standing Rules, demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of the office and express a willingness to serve. We will try to consume as little time as possible with the election process, so as to not interfere with the evening's program. Ballots will be passed out as soon as there has been an opportunity to see if there are to be any nominations from the floor. **Please bring a pencil or a pen with which to mark your ballot.** After all of the candidates have been introduced, we will ask for a voice vote to elect those unopposed candidates. You will then mark your ballot for the remaining unfilled offices, fold it and **after your name is checked from the eligibility list**, deposit your ballot in the ballot box. **Please wear your membership badge for quick identification.** When the balloting is concluded the regular meeting will be continued and the Committee will go to a quiet location and count the votes. Any candidate or their designee will be allowed to observe the counting procedures. A Statement of Results form will be filled out and signed by the election officials. The ballots and a copy of the results statement will be sealed in a large envelope and preserved for a year. It may only be opened by an order from the Board of Directors in the event of some controversy.

**The results of the election will be announced at the conclusion of the meeting's program presentation.**

## SECRET BALLOT

**MARK THE SQUARE(S) OF YOUR CHOICE**  
*If you wish to vote for a candidate that has been nominated from the floor you must write their name in the appropriate space provided.*

### PRESIDENT:

- Sue Haffner
- \_\_\_\_\_

### VICE PRESIDENT:

- Mary Ann Villegas
- \_\_\_\_\_

### TREASURER

- Polly Dunklin
- \_\_\_\_\_

### SECRETARY

- Cindy Duwe
- \_\_\_\_\_

### AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVE CSSA:

- Fred Gaumer
- \_\_\_\_\_

### AT LARGE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Madeleine Mitchell
- Rosanna Rojas
- Rudy Rulloda
- \_\_\_\_\_

**(Continuing board members, terms expire Dec. 31, 2012: Dan Gale, Nell Lemke, Rudy Rapisura.)**