



CACTUS CHRONICLE

September
2012

Visit Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society ONLINE at www.lacss.com

For more information

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Next Meeting: September 6, 2012



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The Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society is a non-profit organization. Since 1935 our purpose has been the education, conservation, & study of cacti & succulents. The "Cactus Chronicle" is the official bulletin of the Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society, an affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc. Any material in the "Cactus Chronicle" may be copied or reproduced by other clubs on our mailing list, or any non-profit organization, provided proper credit is given to the author and the Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society.

Hunting Hyacinthaceae in Habitat and Herbarium presented by CODY COYOTEE HOWARD

Cody Coyotee Howard is currently employed as Conservation Technician for the Huntington Botanical Gardens where he works with the desert collection. His interest in Hyacinthaceae, specifically *Ledebouria*, began 2 years ago and since has developed into a passion. He is in the infant stages of working on a revision of the genus in Namibia and was fortunate enough to visit the country for the first time this past April. During that time he discovered a whole new world and a new point of view.

An overview of the taxonomic past of the commonly cultivated succulent bulb genus *Ledebouria* will be given. Following a short historical introduction to Namibia and the biodiversity found in the Kunene (Kaokoveld) region. The various species of *Ledebouria* found in Namibia will then be presented, accompanied by distribution maps and photos. In addition, some of the other exciting, larger plants found throughout northwestern Namibia will be highlighted.

When Cody has completed his talk, you will leave with a better understanding of *Ledebouria* and its past, its diversity, and become as spellbound with them as the speaker.



SEPTEMBER 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hope you and your plants are surviving this extended and fierce heat wave. Here's some wisdom from Artie Chavez: In this heat, water your plants in the evening. This keeps the plants from sitting in hot water during the day, keeps the roots alive, and allows the plants to maintain their metabolic functions at night. Good luck.

INTER CITY SHOW

The Inter-City Show was held at Los Angeles County Arboretum on August 11 and 12. The "inter" indicates that this is a joint project among three local clubs: Los Angeles, San Gabriel Valley, and Long Beach. We are represented by co-chair John Matthews, and greatly appreciate his dedication to this event. While the 100°+ weather that weekend presented challenges, LACSS members took away some top honors. Please refer to John's article in this issue.

GARDEN PLANTING

The date we have set for the planting phase of our re-hab project at the Sepulveda Cactus Garden is Saturday, October 6. We will begin early at about 8:00, and will end with a pot-luck lunch shared with the Bromeliad Society that meets at the Garden Center on that morning.

Many of you have offered to donate plants from your collections for this project. Artie has suggested some plants to complement the many cacti and succulents that are already growing there. We are looking for plants that will achieve a maximum height of about 18" or lower when mature. This includes low barrel and other clumping cacti, low aloes, crassulas, clumping euphorbias, sedums, senecios, kalanchoes, aoeniums and others.

Please bring plants you wish to donate to the meeting on Thursday evening, October 4, so that we will be able to plan the design prior to the actual "planting party" on Saturday.

ELECTIONS and PARTICIPATION

As I wrote last month, we are entering the LACSS election cycle and need volunteers. In addition to filling officer positions, we are looking for individuals who are willing to take on positions as trainees, to learn how to assume roles at some time in the future. Please let me or Sylvia Strehlo (chair of the nominations committee) know if you are willing to serve as an officer, on a committee, or become a trainee. Your participation is vital to our club.

And last, if your last name begins with the letters **E, F, G, or H**, we are counting on you for sustenance during our September 6 meeting. This isn't a competition, but A, B, C and D did a pretty fantastic job last month.

Roxie Esterle
LACSS President
Lacss.contact@gmail.com



REFLECTIONS by Walt Wegner

This time of year is special as I sit in my yard (jungle) and see the many Schick echinopsis hybrids in bloom, many different ones every day. But this isn't about today, it is about my reflections of times past. As far as I can tell Maxine and I joined LACSS around 1975 when meetings were in the valley. Our first meeting was at the National Guard Center on Balboa. We new comers were not well treated and had to ask a lot of questions with few answers. The big players were Ed & Betty Gay, Victor Turecek, Bill & Ellen Low and a very young Woody Minnich. We were planning a trip to Cabo San Lucas and needed information on cacti and succulents in Baja, we got little help. We made the trip anyway and had a great time and made a second trip may years later. We love Baja. Anyway over time, the club became friendlier and I was elected to be a board member.

Woody was president then and at a board meeting gave me the job of Treasurer, relieving Betty Gay, who had held this position for many years. During these years we had annual show meetings in the Topanga Mall where a young Chris Rogers joined me. One member, Chet Emery, showed all his plants in white pots. We had plant sales at Griffith Park for a couple of years, enter Sandy Chase. I was honored to be the President in 1985 to celebrate our 50th anniversary of the LACSS at the Reseda Country Club. Some of guests were Joyce & Harry Tate, founding members. Over the years we attended many CSSA Conventions held, prior to school closing, in the spring preventing school teacher members from attending. I was treasurer for the CSSA's 50th anniversary in Pasadena, one of the best was our 2001 convention right here with our club as hosts. We had so many wonderful field trips over the years; such as Rainbow Gardens in Vista, the Punchbowl, south of Little Rock, which was a state park and many member nurseries such as Woody's CDP. I am honored to have been the Chronicle Editor for 12 years, not an easy job but Betty Gay was always there to provide Plant of the Month articles, god bless her.

For some 20 years we helped set up and tear down the Inter City Show and entered many plants in competition, even some winners. We are very proud to have been selected as Life Members, presented to us by Woody. We have met so many giants in our hobby over the years such as Dr. Semour Linden, Dr. Larry Mitich, Glass & Foster, Frank Horwood, Dr. Bob & Eiko Schich, Manny Singer, Dr. Herman Swartz, Susan Carter Holmes, David Grigsby and others. The main strength of our club, over the years, has been and continues to be the outstanding programs offered to the membership, I even gave a couple.

Today we are the oldest (longest) active members of LACSS and continue to attend meetings as long as we can. I am a member of The Greatest Generation (87 years young) having served in WWII as a Navigator on B-24 bombers (51 missions), B-29's in Korea (54 missions) and four years on B-36's in the Cold War. I retired in June 1967 with 24 years in the USAF in the rank of Lt.Colonel, 24 with Litton Industries in Woodland Hills. WWII veterans are passing at the rate of 1,000 day but don't worry I am good for another 100,000 miles.



Trekking with Ed and Betty: A History of L.A.'s Cactus King and Queen

Part 1

LOVE AT GILA BEND

Nearly everyone who grows cacti and succulents has a story of their first plant: a tale describing the particular specimen that bit with the collecting bug. But there are few whose story can match that of Ed and Betty Gay, for their first plant was not only the beginning of a collection, but also the start of an enduring marriage.

The year was 1957. Ed was living in Los Angeles, working at Paramount studios. While visiting family in Tucson, he met Betty. After a period of courtship, the two decided to marry, the wedding to take place in the desert

city where they both had been raised.

After the ceremony, the couple drove to Los Angeles to make their new home. In the town of Gila Bend, they pulled over and plucked a cactus from the side of the road. The plant was to serve as a reminder of their beginnings, its growth recording the years they would share.

Proving that the taboo of gifting knives to newlyweds does not apply to thorny desert flora, that nuptial cactus served the Gays well. In addition to firming their vows, it spawned a world-class collection, decades of service to the Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society and the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, and a retail nursery that is fondly remembered.

TANGLED ROOTS

Ed and Betty Gay joined the LACSS in 1959, a time of close ties among the CSSA, its L.A. affiliate, and nurserymen. These associations combined with the couple's charm and horticultural passion to propel them through the ranks of both local and national clubs.

Looking to stock their nascent collection, the newlyweds visited Johnson's Cactus Garden, a sprawling specialty nursery located in southeast Los Angeles. Many prominent growers have cited Johnson's as the locus of their obsession. Betty echoes their sentiments, remembering the nursery as "mecca".

While there, the Gays met its owner, Harry Johnson, then the president of the CSSA. After suggesting they join the national organization, Harry introduced the couple to Ted Taylor, another visitor that day. Ted was president of the LACSS, and he invited Ed and Betty to attend a club meeting.

The Gays became regulars at LACSS meetings, then held in the Agriculture Center of Freemont High School, where member Don Skinner taught agriculture. Betty remembers Don and his wife Murray as mentors, graciously sharing seedlings with new members. Don and Murray were founding members of the L.A. club, which began in 1935 as the “Southwest Cactus Growers”.

These serendipitous introductions mapped the couple’s future, as Ed would shadow both Ted Taylor and Don Skinner through local and national clubs. After Ted graduated from LACSS president to CSSA president in 1959, Ed assumed his post as president of the L.A. club from 1961-64. Ed then trailed Don Skinner through the CSSA, serving as vice president under Don from 1964-1967, then succeeding him as president from 1968-69.

CACTUS NUTS

Behind these dates and titles was a couple active in their club. Betty served as LACSS treasurer and edited their newsletter, *The Cactus Chronicle*. She remembers churning out copies of the paper on a mimeograph machine: its damp green ink hanging to dry before distribution. The Chronicle played an important role in educating members: a need that is filled today by Google, internet chat groups, and lavish monographs of genera once considered exotic. To make up for the scarcity of information, club members taught each other, disseminating articles dense with morphology, taxonomy, and nomenclature.

Betty’s editorial skills extended to the *Cactus Cookbook*: a book of literally succulent dishes co-authored by members Virginia Martin and Joyce Tate.

Ed and Betty led the club on field trips to Southern California deserts, gardens, and nurseries. The couple also documented their own journeys for slide shows presented locally, regionally, and to national audiences at CSSA’s biannual conventions. Their talks were delivered in an entertaining “tag team” format, with jocular exchanges between husband and wife.

A February 1961 *Chronicle* article attributed to “The Ed Gays” (a nickname for Ed and Betty as an inseparable pair), illustrates their affable delivery with an account of mishaps in the field.

Now, at journey’s end, the beasties are all sounding off in snores in their deep winter-time hibernation... time to go home, but what a predicament: packing the goodies, the mineral rocks, and what have you into the Thunderbird... and a five-gallon can of gas is discovered, taking up desired room...even a Thunderbird is a car, is a car, is a car... and what car, regardless of best care, cannot ‘blow a gasket’ at some fearfully unpleasant moment...(The Ed Gays are good kidders. Don’t take them too seriously on that point).

Several club activities from this period stand out for Betty: creating the outdoor displays for the Los Angeles County Fair, a 1961 field trip to Madam Gana Walska’s Lotusland, and the CSSA convention in Mexico City.

The displays at the county fair demanded dedication from club members, who trucked plant and landscaping materials to and from the

Pomona fairgrounds. Betty recalls that participants often camped for the several days it took to create the display.

The club's contribution to the 1963 fair measured 65' long and 10' deep, and featured a furnished patio with fire pit. The patio was adorned with succulents uniformly potted in white. Opposite the seating area was a cactus garden, dressed with matching white sand. The LACSS fetched first prize for their display: a trophy due, in part, to the 23 cacti donated by the Gays.

Murray Skinner describes the trip to Lotusland in an article from the July *Chronicle*, "A Visit to a Gracious Lady". Mdm. Wal-ska personally greeted club members, and walked them through her singular creation. She concluded the tour by leading them to a secluded meadow that held

a cluster of tables shaded by lawn umbrellas, where punch was being served...Arriving at the tables one found three mammoth cakes being cut -up—fortunate those who got there in time to see the (cake's) elaborate decorations...cacti on one, a mission replica on another, a scene from Lotusland covering the third.

The Gays' popularity was clinched at the 1961 convention in Mexico City, the only convention held outside the United States. There, the CSSA informally honored Ed and Betty by electing them convention King and Queen, granting them entry into the "Ancient Order of the Cactus Nuts".

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Shortly after the Gays' started in the hobby, they embarked to sites south of the

border. Ed and Betty's pioneering fieldwork in Mexico would be their greatest contribution to cactus and succulent culture, resulting in the discovery and introduction of new species, and the naming of several plants in their honor.

When the couple began their trips to Baja, the Automobile Club guide did not include a map for the entire state, warning that roads south of San Quintin were unsafe. This alert only motivated Ed, who was fixed on trailblazing to the tip of Baja California Sur. A *Chronicle* posting from April 1960 alludes to the adventure that ensued:

LAST MEETING...The usual business was followed by a fine talk by Ed Gay, illustrated with color slides, projector run by Betty Gay. Subject: their recent trip to Baja California. Since this was such a varied experience it is practically impossible for The Chronicle to give even highlights... since it took such a long time with so many miles and such interesting 'problems', The Chronicle cannot print it as part of the magazine...The slides showed some fearful country crossed.

With GPS a half century in the future, Betty mapped that 'fearful country', keeping meticulous notes on their routes, and desirable habitat locations. In the August 1963 *Chronicle*, Mrs. Gay was lauded for her diligence, while Ed was ribbed for his lack thereof:

...he is a good collector, except for the first few trips when he forgot to keep careful records...and got lectured by interested researchers... she keeps notes on where to collect, why to collect, and what and where everything was collected...Ed is particularly fortunate in having

such a loyal, interested, and hard-working helper.

Betty's journals were a great aid to subsequent travelers, whose esteemed names include professors Werner Rauh, Reid Moran, and George Lindsay. After the Gays introduced Mr. Rauh to Baja's succulent flora, he named a Sonoran epiphyte—*Tillandsia elizabethae*—after Betty. Reid Moran was also appreciative of the couple's work, joining names when he described what he thought was a new genus of cacti: *Morangaya peninsulis* (renamed *Echinocereus peninsularis*).

Another bromeliad bearing Ed and Betty's surname is *Hechtia gayii*. For those unable to visit the plant's type location of San Jose del Cabo, large, sunset-hued thickets can be admired at the Huntington Botanical Gardens.

Nils Schirmmacher

Next Month: Part Two, featuring more adventures in Mexico and a trip to the Gays' nursery, the Cactus Ranchito.

SUNDAY, MAY 4th 1969 - El Paso Convention



Betty and . . .

For the early arrivals who get here Sunday evening, Ed Gay, the President of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, and his charming wife, Betty, will entertain us with slides and tales of their innumerable trips down the peninsula of



Ed Gay

Baja California. The Gays are plant hunters "*par excellence*", and Lower California is their field of special interest. This talk will be held at 7:30 in the Georgian Room, and is open to the general public.

Inter-City Show and Sale

Well, the 27th annual Inter-City Show and Sale has concluded in a blast of heat. It was cooler Sunday but everyone was pretty much inside after noon anyway. The heat kept away many potential guests but those that did come out had a great time. Even though the number of plant entries was down from last year(963 vs almost 1400), there were some new and exciting plants never exhibited before. The judges had never even heard of the genus of the plant that won Rarest Plant in Show.

The person who won Best Miniature was a 14 year old boy whose mother drove him to the show. There were 79 total exhibitors. Our own LACSS exhibitors certainly had a field day.

LACSS Trophy Winners Were -

[Kim Thorpe](#) - Best Novice Cactus, Best Novice Succulent, Best Madagascar Euphorbia(as well as most points for novice succulents, most total points novice, most points succulent overall, and most total points overall). We won't be seeing Kim in the novice category after this spectacular showing.

[Tim Harvey](#) - Best Aloe Hybrid Mini(also most total points advanced)

[Gunner Eisel](#) - Best Gasteria

[Steve Ball](#) - Best Succulent Advanced

[Charles and Debbie Ball](#) - Best Succulent Open, Best Collection, Best Allied Interest

[Peter Walkowiak](#) - Best Mammillaria, Best Caudiciform(as well as most points open cactus)

[Bill Munkacsy](#) - Best Ariocarpus, Best Astrophytum, Best Gymnocalycium, Best Crested Cactus, Best Cactus - Open

[Woody Minnich](#) - Best Cereus, Best Aloe

[Michael Buckner](#) - Best Any Other Genus, Best Staged

Other LACSS members who entered plants included Sandy Chase(most points advanced succulent), Barbara Hall, John Matthews, Rio Cernik, Duke Benadom, John Martinez, Chris Rogers, John Sudio, Danielle Duboff, and Manny Rivera. Barbara Hall, Tim Harvey and Steve Ball won Golden Sweeps awards.

Our contingent of clerks helped the judges - Jim & Roxie Esterle, Kim Thorpe, Richard Just, Danielle Duboff, John Sudio, Nils Schirmmacher, and Sandy Chase.

Those judges included Artie Chavez, Woody Minnich, Bill Munkacsy, and Michael Buckner.

The Walks & Talks program also suffered from the heat since it was outside. Our LACSS members who donated their time and talents to this effort were Steve Frieze, Artie Chavez, Tim Harvey, Peter Walkowiak, Manny Rivera, Woody Minnich, Michael Buckner, and Sandy Chase.

The vendors endured the intense heat under the canopies which tended to trap the heat. LACSS vendors. They included Steve Frieze/Artie Chavez/Gerald Richert, Duke and Kaz Benadom, Charles and Debbie Ball, Erika Van Auker, John Matthews, Tim Harvey, Peter Walkowiak, Bill Munkacsy, Woody Minnich, Jim Hanna and Michael Buckner.

It is the volunteers, after all, that keep the show/sale moving along smoothly. Due extra-special recognition is Barbara Hall who ran the kitchen and kept everyone well-fed and hydrated. Other LACSS volunteers at various stations over several days were Ronit Weiss, John Martinez, Darlene Weld, Manny Rivera, Gunner Eisel, Joyce Schumann and Rose Polito, Steve and Mary Ball, Kim Thorpe, Brigitte Williams, Jim and Roberta Hanna, and Natalie Hall.

A BIG thank you to everyone who participated in any capacity in this show. I apologize as I'm sure I've overlooked a few names above. I certainly hope everyone who participated or attended the show/sale had a good time. I also hope those of you who just attended or couldn't make it this year will consider entering plants and volunteering in some capacity next year. It is a great way to make new friends and learn more about our hobby.

John Matthews, Inter-City co-chair

LOS ANGELES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
NEW PLANT OF THE MONTH POLICIES for 2012

Competition Divisions:

Rookie: 0 – 25 combined 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place “rookie” award points
Novice: 1 - 100 combined 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place “novice” award points
Advanced: Over 100 combined 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place “novice” award points
Master/Open: Any experienced grower may compete in this division, but this is required for individuals who **sell** at shows outside of LACSS.

Submissions:

Members may submit up to three plants in each designated monthly cactus and succulent category. In the Advanced and Master/Open divisions, members must have cared for their plants for at least 1 year. In the Novice division, the ownership requirement is 6 months. Rookies may show newly purchased plants. Entries should be labeled and placed on the display table by 7:00 pm.

Judging Criteria:

Plants are evaluated according to the following guidelines:

Condition (health, form, damage-free)	50%
Maturity and size	25%
Staging (complementary container, top dressing, composition)	20%
Nomenclature (identification and label)	5%

Other factors include rarity, growing difficulty, and whether or not the plant is in flower.

Awards:

First place	6 points
Second place	3 points
Third place	2 points
Other submissions	1 point per plant to acknowledge entry

Entry slips are collected by the 2nd Vice President in charge of Plant of the Month who coordinates tabulation, record keeping, and publication in the *Cactus Chronicle*.

Annual cumulative prizes are awarded at the **Holiday Party in December** to the top three scorers in each division for cacti and for succulents. Additional prizes are awarded for overall total scores from highest to lowest across all divisions. Every individual who has brought plants during the year is acknowledged with a prize. Individuals who “graduate” from one division to the next for the following year will also be recognized.

Plant-of-the-Month

	<i>Cacti</i>	<i>Succulent</i>
January	Mammillaria	Othonna & Senecio
February	Monstrose and Crest	Monstrose and Crest
March	Variegates	Variegates
April	Echinocereus	Haworthia
May	Echinopsis	Gasteria
June	Cephalium bearing cacti	Adenium
July	Eriocyce	Cyphostemma
August	Favorite	Favorite
September	Gymnocalycium	Euphorbia - Caudiciform Type
October	Parodia (includes Notocactus)	Stemless Mesembs - no Lithops
November	Frailea & Blossfeldia	Tylecodon
December	<i>Holiday Party</i>	<i>Holiday Party</i>

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September 1

**Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA
ALL Day at the Huntington**

September 23

**Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction
18127 So. Alameda St.
Rancho Dominguez, CA 12:00 pm**

AUGUST NEW MEMBERS

Narayan deVera
Pierrino Mascarino
Krystal, Michael, and Melissa Compolo
Marilyn and Allen Conrad
Lydija Kazlas
Blair Hoover

Plant of the Month - August Winners

Rookie Division

Succulent - Favorite

Award	Name	Plant
First	John Suci	Euphorbia nerifolia
Second	Marquita Ellias	Dudleya traskiae
Third	Jim Esterle	Yucca Enlichiana

Cactus - Favorite

First	John Suci	Mammillaria geminispina
First	Danielle Duboff	Ariocarpus retusa
Second	John Suci	Myrtillocactus geometrizans
Third	None	

Novice Division

Succulent - Favorite

First	Eric Winegar	Operculicarya decaryi
Second	Eric Winegar	Senna meridionalis
Second	Eric Winegar	Bursera simplicifolia
Third	Roxie Esterle	Euphorbia Bongolavensis

Cactus - Favorite

First	Rio Cernak	Ariocarpus retusa
Second	Rio Cernak	"Pancake Cactus"
Third	Rio Cernak	Leuchtenbergia principis

Advanced Division

Succulent - Favorite

First	Kim Thorpe	Tylecodon buchholzianus
Second	Frank White	Pachypodium brevicale
Second	Cheryl White	Pachypodium rpsulatum gracilis crest
Third	Kim Thorpe	Luckhoffia beuckmanii crest
Third	Barbara Hall	Euphorbia gymnocalycioides

Cactus - Favorite

First	Cheryl White	Astrophytum myriostigma
Second	Kim Thorpe	Discocactus
Second	Cheryl White	Thelocactus hexaedrophorus
Third	Kim Thorpe	Ferocactus sp variegata
Third	Barbara Hall	Sulcorebutia rauschii pulchra

Open Division

Succulent - Favorite

First	Blair Hoover	Fouqueria diguetii
Second	Artie Chavez	Euphorbia quartziticola
Third	Blair Hoover	Sedum frutescens

Cactus - Favorite

First	None	
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LACSS Membership Form (Please print the following information)

Name _____ Phone _____

Name of Additional Members: _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

E-Mail Address _____

Send me the newsletter by E-Mail Send me the newsletter by U.S. Mail(\$5 extra fee)

Send me a plastic name badge (\$6.50 each)

Type of Membership: New Member Renewal

- Single Membership \$20 annually \$10 1/2 year (July or after)
- Family Membership \$25 annually \$12.50 1/2 year (July or after)
- Newsletter by U.S. Mail \$5 fee in addition to the membership charge
- Cash Check: number _____

Special Interests _____

Monthly Meeting Refreshments

Each month different members whose last name begins with a particular letter are requested to furnish refreshments for the club. Below is the list, by month, for 2012.

January	T U V W X Y Z	July	T U V W X Y Z
February	A B C D	August	A B C D
March	E F G H	September	E F G H
April	I J K L M	October	I J K L M
May	N O P Q R	November	N O P R
June	S	December	HOLIDAY PARTY

Members were selected by the approximate number of members attending each meeting.

**Refreshments for the month of September are members whose last names
E, F, G, H**

SEPTEMBER 2012

FROM THE STACKS OF THE LIBRARY

So, here it is – summer! Most of us are on vacation or not... Regardless, since it is summer our thoughts naturally turn to Baja California! Right? And HOT OFF THE PRESS to help us on our search for our favorite local cacti and succulents is our newest book with the title ***“Baja California Plant Field Guide.”*** This book is fantastic for so many reasons. The introduction section contains a fascinating summary of the geology, ecological regions and climate of the area. I can’t do better than the authors (Jon P. Rebman and Norman C. Roberts) so I will quote a few phrases from the “About the Book” section. *“...over 715 different plants in more than 350 genera in 11 families. ...approximately 32% are endemic to the region, 50% can also be found in southern California, and about 45% are new additions in this edition.”* “Nonnative and Invasive Plants” and “Conservation” sections remind us of the fragility of this area, the issues created by progress and the actions being taken to preserve the native flora and fauna.

The field guide portion is 400 pages, organized by groups, families and genera. The photos appear to be mostly in habitat and feature *“...important distinguishing morphological characters of the plants...”*

I say this almost every month, so I say it again – You **must** see it to appreciate the quality of this incredible book. Living so close to Baja, having many of the same cacti and succulents in common, this is a must-read for all of us!

By coincidence, the July-August issue of the CSSA Journal is a “Special Issue – Oaxaca.” The timing could not have been better and is a perfect complement to our newest book. So be sure to stop by the Library table and **check them out!!**

See you soon

Joyce the Librarian



Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society
Cactus of the Month September 2012 *Gymnocalycium*



Gymnocalycium pflanzii

Gymnocalycium are among the most popular of cacti, from the novice through the advanced grower. They are easy to grow; flower readily; come in a large number of distinguishable species; look great in flower, in bud, and even when dormant. A well grown plant will often flower several times during the year.

Gymnocalycium is an old genus, first named in 1845. The genus is named for the naked (spineless) calyx (the outermost covering of the bud and lower flower). Most *Gymnocalycium* are also readily identified by their 'chins' beneath the areoles.

The heart of the genus *Gymnocalycium* is Argentina, although the genus stretches into Southeastern Bolivia, Western Paraguay, Uruguay, and into the Southernmost part of Brazil. For the most part *Gymnocalycium* are grassland plants, growing and shaded in the grass of the Pampa and Chaco (dry forest) that covers much of Argentina. As a result, most like some protection from full afternoon sun, but need bright light during the day.

Gymnocalycium cultivation is easy. They need a dry rest during the winter; they can take Southern California climate without winter heat, as long as they are dry. They should be fed regularly with a weak general purpose fertilizer when growing. They are tolerant of any well drained soil, but constant wet will cause the roots to rot. Fortunately, they are easy to re-root, with roots generally re-growing in a just few months.

Gymnocalycium are easy to grow from seed, started in a well drained, damp potting mix in a plastic bag covered pot. Germination is fairly rapid, but growth during the first year is slow compared to most *Mammillaria* and many other genera. Vegetative propagation is also easy. Offsets from clumps can be removed, left to dry for a few days and potted. They generally root within a few weeks.

All the species and all the varieties and forms of *Gymnocalycium* are worth growing. Flowers range in color from red, pink, cream, white, and tans.

Other interesting species include *Gymnocalycium baldianum* (red flower), *bayrianum*, *bruchii* (pink flower), *horstii* (pink flower), *mesopotamicum*, *mihanovichii*, *pungen*, *ragonesei*, *saglionis*, *schroederianum*, *spgazzinii*, and *strigianum*.



Gymnocalycium bruchii



Gymnocalycium spegazzinii



Gymnocalycium baldianum



Gymnocalycium mihanovichii

Reference:

Pilbeam, J., **Gymnocalycium, A Collector's Guide**

Tom Glavich September 2004
Edited, Steve Frieze September 2012

Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society

Succulent of the Month September 2012 *Caudiciform Euphorbias*

Euphorbias are among the most successful of the plant families, covering an amazing geographical and environmental range. In horticulture, they span the range from English Garden plants to trees, stem succulents, geophytic miniatures, to medusoid globulars to caudiciforms.

Caudiciform euphorbias are plants that possess a swollen base or root to store water and nutrients through dry periods that may last from several months to years. When the rains finally arrive, the stored water and energy give them a head start over the surrounding vegetation.

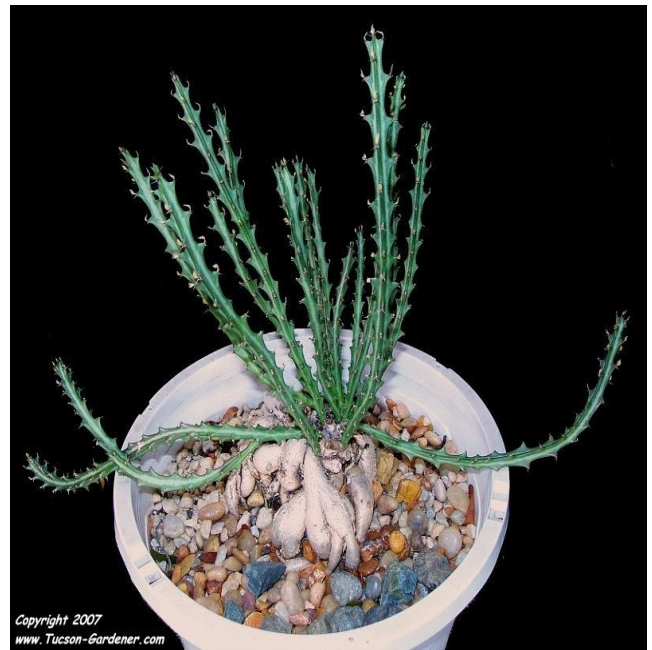
Although many caudiciform *Euphorbias* are very easy to grow, with the swollen root making them very tolerant of under watering, some are very difficult, turning immediately to mush when over watered, or watered out of season. Care must be given in watering, keeping them warm and wet while growing, and cooler and dry when dormant. *Euphorbias* from tropical areas (Madagascar, and central Africa) are particularly prone to rot if left cold and damp while dormant. Protection is mandatory if your plants are to survive the cold weather. Placing them in a greenhouse, or even a garage for a month or two in the middle of the winter will greatly increase their endurance potential.

Most caudiciform *Euphorbias* are easy to propagate. The green stems can be removed, left to dry for at least week or even a bit more, and then replanted. The newly planted stems take a few weeks to establish, and then start growing.

Some cuttings will not form caudexes unless double cut. Once growth is strong, the top of the green shoot needs to be cut off again to force the plant to start a caudex. Some species form a perfectly symmetrical caudex when grown from

seed, but form distorted (but often more interesting) caudexes when grown from cuttings.

In collections or when entered into shows, the caudexes of these plant are often raised above the soil line to expose the intricate and exotic root system that are typically submerged in habitat. Once exposed, the caudex will no longer grow or expand at the same rate they would if submerged below the soil line.



Euphorbia knuthii

Euphorbia knuthii is a widely grown species that produces branches that, if not trimmed, can reach two feet in length.

A very highly prized species is *Euphorbia cylindrifolia* v. *tuberifera*. This species originates from Madagascar. When mature, the plant forms a round to spherical caudex-tuber from which arms protrude. The leaves are cylinder-like.



Euphorbia cylindrifolia v. tuberifera

Euphorbia persistens from Mozambique and Northern South Africa has spectacular patterned stems from a well developed caudex. More tropical and more difficult than some, it makes a wonderful specimen with age.



Euphorbia persistens

Euphorbia stellata is another South African species, similar in appearance and nearly as easy to grow. It too makes a caudex quickly.



Euphorbia stellata

Euphorbia squarrosa is one of the classic caudiciform species. Easily grown from double cut cuttings, it rapidly forms a great caudex. It tolerates being outdoors in Southern California without much protection even during the rainy season. It is native to South Africa.



Euphorbia squarrosa

Euphorbia capsaintemariensis is native to Madagascar and can be found in the southern most point in this island country in Cap Saint Marie. This euphorbia comes from a very sunny area with substantial amounts of wind. Plants in habitat often have a wind-swept look



Euphorbia capsaintemariensis

Lastly, *Euphorbia ambovombensis* is still another unique Madagascan plant that forms a sizeable caudex in a short period of time and produces handsome branches and leaf structure are almost burgundy in sufficient sun.



Euphorbia ambovombensis

References

Gordon Rowley **Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents**

Herman Schwartz, **The Euphorbia Journals**

Tom Glavich May 2002
Edited, Steve Frieze, September 2012

General Meeting starts at 7:00 PM on the **first Thursday** of the month at the Sepulveda Garden Center located at 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino between Hayvenhurst and Balboa.
Set-up and social hour starts at 6:00 PM.

Bring a smile! Make new friends! **GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

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