

# SOUTH COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 2007

GENERAL MEETING--Sunday, January 14, 2007, 1:30 P.M.

South Coast Botanical Gardens Classroom

WOODY MINNICH will be presenting  
Another of his beautifully photographed  
And fascinating programs! The topic?  
You will have to come to find out, but  
One thing sure, you won't be disappointed!!

MEMBERSHIP--The Christmas party, December 10, which was shared with  
Members of the Long Beach club, was a great success--as always-- and we  
Welcome the 2007 officers who are:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| PRESIDENT--Dale LaForest                  | SECRETARY--Philip Ross        |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> VICE PRES.--Hank Warzybok | SHOW CHAIRMAN--Harry Fletcher |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> VICE PRES--Gary Duke      | REFRESHMENTS--Carol Causey    |
| TREASURER--Marsha Huebner                 | NEWSLETTER--Vera Thaxton      |

In acknowledgment of her many years of service to the Club, DALE LAFOREST  
Presented CAROL CAUSEY with a large bouquet of roses.. The continued  
Success of the organization has been largely due to Carol's persistent efforts and  
Her dedication is greatly appreciated.



**DUES:** Are your dues paid yet? In case you have forgotten, fill in the form below, make out a check (\$10 for one; an additional \$2 for each extra family member), and send it to MARSHA HUEBNER, 1043 E. Joel, Carson, 90743. Make the check payable to SOUTH COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY.

MEMBERSHIP                      NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

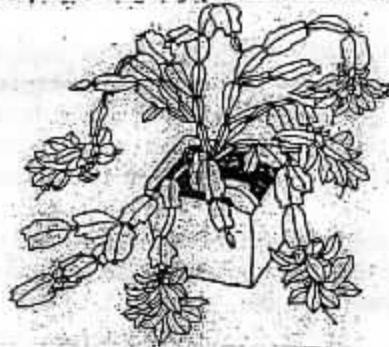
STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

PLANT OF THE MONTH RULES

- \* A maximum of three plants may be entered in each category (cactus and succulent).
- \* There will be two classes of entrants: novice and advanced.
- \* Intermediate entrants must have had the plant in their possession for at least six months; beginners, for three months.
- \* Entrants will receive 6 points for first place, 4 points for second place, 2 points for third place, and 1 point for third showing a plant that does not place.
- \* There may be up to three third places in a category. If plants are not deemed to be of sufficient quality, no place will be awarded.
- \* Entry tags must be collected by the person in charge of recordkeeping
- \* At the annual Christmas party, award plants will be presented to the ten highest cumulative point holders, regardless of class.



SOUTH COAST CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
2007 PLANTS OF THE MONTH

CACTI

SUCCULENTS

Jan	Melocactus		Gasteria
Feb	Echinocereus		Aeonium, sempervivum, sedum
Mar	Parodia/notocactus		Sansevieria
April		SHOW TIME	
May	Variegates		Variegates
June	Mammillaria		Euphorbia
July	Favorite 3		Favorite 3
Aug	Cereu (columnar cactus)		Xeric bromeliads
Sept	Gymnocalycium		Agavaceae family
Oct		BREAK	
Nov	Miniature (under 3 inches)		Miniatures (under 3 inches)
Dec		CHRISTMAS PARTY	



*CACTUS AND SUCCULENT  
CALENDAR OF UP COMING EVENTS  
Tenative for 2007*

- FEB.10<sup>th</sup> SAN DIEGO WINTER SHOW AND SALE 9to4pm  
RM. 101 CASA DEL PRADO, BALBOA PARK, SAN DIEGO
- APR. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> SOUTH COAST CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW &  
SALE AT SO. COAST BOTONICAL GARDENS  
26300 CRENSHAW BL., PALOS VERDES, CA # 310-832-2262
- APR. 22 SOUTH BAY EPIPHYLLIUM SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
SAME ADDRESS AS ABOVE Info. CALL 310-831-1209
- APR 21& 22 GREEN SCENE PLANT SALE—AT THE FULLERTON ARBORETUM
- May 5 & 6<sup>th</sup> SUNSET CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER, GARDEN ROOM  
4117 OVERLAND AVE. CULVER CITY, CA. INFO. #310-822-1783
- MAY 20 HUNTINGTON PLANT SALE 10 TO 5 HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL  
GARDEN 1151 OXFORD ROAD, SAN MARINO, CA 626-405-2160
- MAY 20 EPIPHYLLIUM SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM, ARCADIA, CA 310-831-1209
- MAY 25-30 CSSA 32<sup>ND</sup> BIENNIAL CONVENTION—SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
- JUNE 9<sup>th</sup> GATES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY 29<sup>th</sup> SHOW AND  
SALE—SAT. 9 TO 4 SUN. 9 TO 4 —SAT. SHOW STARTS AT 1 PM  
JURUPA MOUNTAINS CULTURAL CENTER, 7621 GRANITE HILL DRIVE  
GLEN AVON, CA INFO. 909-360-8802
- JUNE 2 & 3<sup>rd</sup> SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY —SHOW AND SALE  
BALBOA PARK, ROOM 101, SAN DIEGO, CA. INFO.—#619-477-4779
- JUNE 29<sup>th</sup>-  
July 1<sup>st</sup> CSSA ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE —HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL  
GARDENS AT 1151 OXFORD ROAD, SAN MARINO, CA.  
626-405-2160 or 2277 PLANTS SALES START JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> THRU JULY 2<sup>ND</sup>  
THE SHOW OPENS ON THE JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> THRU THE 2<sup>ND</sup> TO THE PUBLIC
- JULY 14&15 LOS ANGELES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER, 16633 MAGNOLIA BL., ENCINO, CA.  
SHOW INFORMATION-CALL 818-363-3432
- AUG. 18 & 19 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL INTERCITY SHOW AND SALE-LA COUNTY ARBORETUM  
301 NO. BALDWIN AVE., ARCADIA, CA. INFO. CALL TOM GLAVICH  
AT 626-798-2430 or GENE OSTER AT 818-998-9306
- SEPT. 2 HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS SUCCULENT SYMPOSIUM  
ALL DAY AT THE HUNTINGTON
- OCT. 13 & 14 SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
SHOW AND SALE— LA COUNTY ARBORETUM ADDRESS ABOVE.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

### MELOCACTUS

Before the time of Linnaeus, a German physician, J. T. Tabernaemontanus illustrated a plant in his Herbal published in 1588. He called it Melocarduus, Melon-thistle, as it appeared to him to be intermediate between a melon and a thistle. Melocacti were included by Linnaeus in his Species Plantarum of 1753. They were among the first cacti discovered by Europeans as they grow on the coasts of the West Indian Islands first discovered by Columbus.

The type species set by Linnaeus was Cactus Melocactus. In 1827, H. F. Link and F. Otto wrote a monograph, The Genus Melocactus and Echinocactus, in which they renamed the genus Melocactus and the type species became known as Melocactus communis.

At one time, over zealous collectors had named some 300 species of Melocacti. Today, saner minds prevail, and about 60 species are commonly described. Their native habitat covers Mexico, Central America, West Indies, Venezuela, N.E. Brazil, Columbia and Peru.

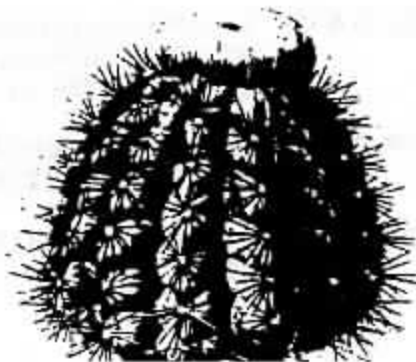
Melocacti can be divided into two groups based on their habitat. The inland species occur far from the coast and often at a high altitude. The others, a large group of coastal species grow close to the sea on islands.

As with most cacti, Melocacti prefer a well drained soil mix. In habitat they have an extensive, shallow root system. In this manner they are able to take advantage of the frequent summer rains. In cultivation, they may be watered frequently during their summer growing period. During the winter the coastal species would prefer some warmth, not less than 55°F, although they will withstand colder temperatures if the soil mix is kept fairly dry. The inland species can withstand somewhat colder weather with ease. While not strictly a greenhouse plant in Southern California, some protection is helpful during our winters, especially protection from the winter rains.

When Melocacti reach flowering maturity, they cease growing and start to form a cephalium at the crown, composed of wooly hair and bristles. Small pink to red flowers are pushed outward by the pressure of the cephalium wool. The cephalium continues to grow and may reach a height several times taller than the body of the plant.

For the beginner to Melocacti, some easily grown species include, *M. intortus*, *M. lemairei* and *M. communis*. After some experience, other species should be tried. They are easily propagated from seed, but a few years are needed before they reach flowering size.

Fred Hutflesz



## Succulent-of-the-Month

### GASTERIAS (Liliaceae)

By Dorothy Dunn

Gasterias, along with Aloes, Haworthias, Bowieas and Bulbines, belong to the Liliaceae family, which also includes such varied and non-succulent relatives as asparagus, onions, tulips and lilies. They were initially classified as Aloes by Linnaeus. The genus currently contains about 100 described species, and stands today as a classic example of taxonomic chaos. Edgar Lamb said of them: "Gasterias have been in cultivation for a very long time and there are many unnamed hybrid plants in cultivation which defy identification." Doreen Court, in The Succulent Flora of Southern Africa, states that "It is very probable that at least three-quarters or more of these specific names will not survive the test of a full-scale field investigation of the group".

Gasterias are native entirely to South Africa, with the center of distribution being the eastern Cape Province. Some complexes occur in the southern Karroo District and northwards to Namaqualand and Namibia, while others range over into Natal and the southeastern Transvaal. In habitat they grow in the shade of other bushes, from sea level up to the cooler mountain slopes.

The generic name Gasteria is derived from the Greek and means "stomach" or "belly". This refers to the swollen, belly-like lower part of the flower-tube, which is very pronounced in some species. All species have distichous (two-ranked) leaves when young, and some retain this habit throughout life, as in the G. pillansii complex. For example, in G. armstrongii (thought by some to be a hybrid) this juvenile, or distichous form remains constant, and mature plants of this species are very striking. Botanists call this type of "arrested juvenility" neoteny, a term borrowed from zoology. However, most species spiral with age, and juvenile and mature forms of the same plants can look so different that in many cases different names have been given to the same species - hence the taxonomic confusion.

Adding to this confusion, Gasterias hybridize very readily, not only among themselves but with other members of the Liliaceae, particularly Aloes (x Gastrolea) and Haworthias (x Gasterhaworthia). The usual Aloe parent seems to be either A. aristata or A. variegata, and in some hybrids this is quite obvious.

Gasterias are remarkably tough and drought-resistant. In cultivation they can be grown much like Haworthias, in that they need good drainage and a fair amount of shade. However, they are not as touchy as Haworthias in many respects and do not seem to experience the periodic loss of roots which tends to be an inevitable part of the annual cycle of some Haworthia species. Like Haworthias, they are mainly winter growers. Although quite slow-growing, most species are ridiculously easy to propagate.

Since most of them cluster prolifically, it is a simple matter to remove and root the small offsets, most of which detach from the parent plant complete with roots. Also, all species can be grown from leaf-cuttings, and you do not even need an entire leaf to accomplish this (however, you do need patience - they are slow!). Larger leaves can be cut in half, and each section will root and produce several plants. They can, of course, also be grown from seed, but this is not usually recommended because of the previously-mentioned tendency to hybridize. Hummingbirds love Gasteria, Haworthia, and Aloe flowers alike, and visit all three indiscriminately.

Gasterias seem to be relatively pest-free. The most serious affliction is probably the black spots which appear on the leaves of some species - cause unknown. In size they range from the diminutive and charming G. liliputana through the dark, reptilian beauty of G. batesiana to the very large and imposing G. acinacifolia, whose leaves have been known to reach a length of one meter. Although Gasterias are often overlooked by collectors, being somewhat overshadowed by their relatives the showier Aloes and the more elegant Haworthias, they are nonetheless a worthwhile group to cultivate, and all species are useful either as pot plants or as striking landscape subjects for shaded areas.

Literature consulted:

Barkhuizen, B.P.	<u>Succulents of Southern Africa</u>
Ghidamian, Claude:	<u>The Book of Cacti and Other Succulents</u>
Court, Doreen:	<u>Succulent Flora of Southern Africa</u>
Haselton, Scott:	<u>Succulents for the Amateur</u>
Lamb, Edgar and Brian:	<u>Popular Exotic Cacti in Color</u>

