



Prickly News

South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society Newsletter

October 2015

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<http://www.southcoastcss.org>

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NEXT MEETING

**Nels Christianson: "2015 CSSA Trip to
Northeast Mexico, Part I"**

Sunday October 11, 1:30pm
We will meet in the hall.

REFRESHMENTS FOR OCTOBER

Thanks to those who helped in Sep., including:

Phyllis DeCrescenzo	Ana MacKenzie
Robert DeCrescenzo	Nancy Mosher
Marilyn Doffing	Deborah Richards
Lou Hagemeyer	Betty Saunders
Jim Hanna	

Volunteers for October refreshments are:

Carol Causey	Lupe Hulett
Pam Hardy-Carnesi	David Okihara
Barbara Heughins	

If you would like to bring something to our next meeting, please do so – thanks!

Kitchen Volunteers – Please see Carol Causey after the meeting if you are able to help with kitchen cleanup.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are in October, anxiously awaiting the holiday season AND El Niño with a mixture of excitement, dread and hope. The holidays are a sure thing, but storms this coming winter triggered by El Niño are not. The rain event like the one last month that dropped over 2" in downtown LA, may or may not be a preview of things to come. So - if you

think the rain is coming, be prepared to remove all watering trays from under your outdoor plants and perhaps even plan how you will prevent them from rotting by covering them in some way. The LA Times has an excellent weather article on their website if you'd like to learn more: [LA Times-El Nino](#)



We had 70 members and guests attend Attila Kapitany's talk on Australian succulents on rocks and trees. He was a terrific speaker and advocate for his country and its flora and fauna.

FREE PLANTS . . . Several members have been bringing in cuttings and pups for the "Free Plants" table. That's good, but perhaps some of you have one or two unusual and/or rare plants that have pups that you would like to share. You could pot them up and add them to the Door Prize plants. All I ask is that you include a label with the plant's botanical name and your name, so the recipient can contact you for growing information. I think pots less than 5" are acceptable and top dressing is optional.

Dale La Forest,
President.

PRESENTER FOR OCTOBER: Nels Christianson "2015 CSSA Trip to Northeast Mexico, Part I"

Nels Christianson will be describing the first half of the 2015 CSSA pre-convention tour to northeastern Mexico, including the states of Hidalgo, Querétaro and San Luis Potosí which includes the Barranca de Metztitla'n Biosphere Reserve, the Tolima'n Canyon and the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve.



Nels is a native of Merced, California. He received a bachelor of arts degree in the double majors of Political Science and Latin American Studies in 1973 from UCSB. Nels is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese. In 2012 he retired from the department of International Relations of UCLA Medical Center after a 37-year career.

In 1976 Nels was awarded a Rotary Foundation ambassadorial scholarship to study Brazilian literature at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte. He has traveled widely in Brazil on fifteen subsequent trips during which he has taken every opportunity to botanize. He joined the CSSA in 1984 and joined the board in 2015. He has been the newsletter editor of Sunset Succulent Society for eleven years. He is a member of the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad Society, the La Ballona Bromeliad Society, the Culver City Gesneriad Society and is president of the Westchester Chapter of the American Begonia Society. Nels serves on the board of California Poets in the Schools and through his work helps to promote the teaching of poetry composition in grades K-12 throughout the state. Nels has a special interest in the genus *Dyckia* and has grown dozens of species and hybrids from seed. He also enjoys growing plants in the genera *Aloe*, *Dudleya*, *Echeveria*, *Gasteria*, *Parodia*, *Rebutia* and *Sinningia*.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS FY2015-2016

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	Laurel Woodley

MINI-SHOW RESULTS - September 13, 2015

Open Cactus	1st	Gary Duke	<i>Melocactus species</i>
	2nd	Gary Duke	<i>Melocactus conoideus</i>
	3rd	Maria Capaldo	<i>Melocactus ernestii</i>
	3rd	Maria Capaldo	<i>Melocactus matanzanus</i>
Open Succulent	1st	Jim Hanna	<i>Yucca desmetiana</i>
	2nd	Maria Capaldo	<i>Agave victoriae-reginae compacta</i>
	3rd	Jim Gardner	<i>Agave 'Snow Glow'</i>
Intermediate Cactus	1st	Jim Wood	<i>Melocactus matanzanus</i>
	2nd	Jim Wood	<i>Melocactus ernestii</i>
	3rd	Jim Wood	<i>Melocactus matanzanus</i>
Intermediate Succulent	1st	Jackie Johnson	<i>Agave isthmensis medio-picta</i>
	2nd	Anita Caplan	<i>Agave lophantha quadricolor</i>
	3rd	Jackie Johnson	<i>Agave striata 'Nana'</i>
Novice Cactus	1st	Sally Fasteau	<i>Melocactus conoideus</i>
	2nd	William Wilk	<i>Melocactus ernestii</i>
	3rd	Bernard Johnson	<i>Melocactus violaceus</i>
Novice Succulent	1st	Sally Fasteau	<i>Agave applanata 'Cream Spike'</i>
	2nd	Bernard Johnson	<i>Agave applanata 'Cream Spike'</i>
	2nd	William Wilk	<i>Agave potatorum 'Kissho-kan'</i>
	3rd	William Wilk	<i>Agave pumila</i>

>> Click for photos of winning plants: <http://southcoastcss.org/category/cat-news/cat-mini-show-results/> <<

SCCSS MINI-SHOW STANDINGS (as of September 13, 2015)

Novice			Intermediate			Open		
Name	Cactus	Succulent	Name	Cactus	Succulent	Name	Cactus	Succulent
Roselyn Arbuckle	4	1	Anita Caplan	3	16	Maria Capaldo	47	48
Janet Avent		1	Phyllis DeCrescenzo	45	59	Gary Duke	56	15
M.A. Bjarkman		5	Jackie Johnson	5	49	Jim Gardner	20	11
Martha Bjerke	4	5	Jade Neely	49	17	Jim Hanna		25
Sally Fasteau	19	21	Jim Wood	48	7	Dale LaForest	10	6
Linda Hudson		4				Laurel Woodley	7	30
Lupe Hulett	4							
Nancy Jengo		2						
Bernard Johnson	18	27						
Philip Johnston Ross	6	3						
Mike Short		12						
Jim Tanner		1						
Judy Unrine		22						
William Wilk	10	40						

>>> Click to see tables on our website: <http://southcoastcss.org/mini-show-standings/> <<<

MINI-SHOW PLANTS OF THE MONTH (POM) 2015

	Cactus	Succulent
October	Matucana, Oroya	Argyroderma, Pleiospilos, Faucaria
November	Schlumbergera (Christmas cactus)	Aloe
December	HOLIDAY PARTY	

MINI-SHOW PLANTS OF THE MONTH (POM) 2016

	Cactus	Succulent
January	Mammillaria – single head	Dudleya
February	Echinocereus	Crassula
March	Ferocactus	Gasteria
April	PLANT SHOW AND SALE	
May	Gymnocalycium	Sansevieria
June	Eriogyne (Neochilenia, Neoporteria...)	Echeveria
July	Lobivia, Echinopsis	Pachypodium
August	Thelocactus, Stenocactus	Aizoaceae (other than Lithops)
September	Coryphantha, Escobaria	Adromischus
October	Rebutia, Sulcorebutia	Aeonium
November	Miniature (3" or less)	Miniature (3" or less)
December	HOLIDAY PARTY	

>>> Click to see complete lists on our web site <<<

CACTUS of the MONTH - Matucana, Oroya

>>> Click to see this article with full-size pictures on our website <<<

Matucana

A genus of cacti, containing approximately 20 species of mostly globular plants. The genus is only known from Peru, mostly along the Marañón River. Named after the small Peruvian town 50 miles east of Lima, where they grow at 6,000-13,000 feet

Overall, *Matucana* species are globular or cylindrical plants with shallow ribs and moderate to light spination. The largest maxing out at around 30 inches (75cm), most remain under a foot (30cm) in height. Ribs are distinctly tuberculate and the plant bodies are typically bright green. The flowers of *Matucana* are quite distinctive and showy. Most are bilateral and stand up above the plant on tall floral tubes that are reminiscent of “cowl vents” on a ship. (The vents that cartoon characters are always jumping into.) Most flowers are red, but may be orange, pink, yellow, or white. Fruits are juicy and round.



Matucana aureiflora



Matucana intertexta



Matucana formosa



Matucana grandiflora



Matucana huagalensis

Oroya

A genus of cacti, originating from Peru. The name comes from the Peruvian town of la Oroya where the first plants were discovered.

Oroya species are solitary with a globular form and many ribs with usually-dense pectinate spines. Usually up to 13 inches (32 cm) high, and 9 inches (22 cm) in diameter.

Small flowers (up to 1 cm in diameter) grow along a ring near the top of the plant. The flowers are yellow, but their stems are often pink or red. All the species are difficult to grow, and are often encountered grafted.



Oroya borchersii



Oroya peruviana

SUCCULENT of the MONTH - Argyroderma, Pleiospilos, Faucaria

>>> [Click to see this article with full-size pictures on our website](#) <<<

Argyroderma

A genus consisting of over 50 species of succulents in the iceplant family from South Africa.

These distinctive plants are among those known as “living stones”, because their highly succulent, usually stemless, blue-green leaves occur at ground level and can resemble small stones. They form small clumps of a few or many paired, usually cylindrical to egg-shaped leaves that are cleft in the center. Each stem bears just 2 leaves per season but may produce offsets over the years. In some species the old leaves persist and form a short column on which new leaves develop. Solitary daisy-like flowers, usually white, yellow, or purple, appear in the cleft.

The entire genus is naturally confined to a relatively small region in the far west of South Africa, known locally as the “Knersvlakte” area. This is a very arid region of winter-rainfall desert and rocky quartzite sands.

Like most succulents, they require extremely well-drained soil, and are damaged by repeated frosts. Their preferred mode of cultivation is a bright and sunny position with gritty free-draining soil. They may be propagated from seed, or careful division of established clumps.



Argyroderma testiculare



Argyroderma framesii



Argyroderma fissum



Argyroderma subalbum

Pleiospilos

A genus of succulent flowering plants native to South Africa. The name is derived from the Greek pleios “many” and spilos “spot”. *Pleiospilos* species have two or four opposite, very fleshy, grey-green leaves growing from a short stem that may be underground. The leaves, with their hemispherical shape and pitted texture, often strongly resemble a pile of split pebbles to deter predators. Flowers emerge from the center of the leaves, and may be very big in relation to the overall size of the plant.

They reproduce both sexually and asexually. Vegetative offshoots emerge from the root system. Seed set occurs in early spring around March.



Pleiospilos bolusii



Pleiospilos nelii



Pleiospilos nelii cv 'Royal Flush'

Faucaria

The popular genus *Faucaria* is found in the Eastern Cape Province into the Little and Great Karoo of the Western Cape Province. The genus is characterized by its triangular, mottled leaves, the margins of which have rows of soft teeth that curve inward. Flower color ranges from yellow to white and even pink. The various species make excellent pot subjects and have been cultivated in Europe for over three hundred years. All species are active in summer. Some species, such as *F. tigrina*, are quite hardy, while others can be prone to stem rot. Plants are easily propagated by seed.



Faucaria tigrina



Faucaria tuberculosa



Faucaria stomatium



Showing Cactus & Succulents for the Novice by Steve Plath

A Judge's Perspective

[Ed: This article by Steve Plath was copied from the March 2008 edition of the "Central Spine", the newsletter for The Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society. At the time Steve was the president of the society. Born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, Steve currently resides outside the Phoenix, AZ metropolitan area.]

IN THE BEGINNING

I attended my first cactus and succulent show back in the mid-70's which was in a little community hall north of Los Angeles. Since most of the plants then were field collected, they were a pretty beat-up lot with the scars and battle wounds attesting to their wild origins. Many of the exotic species of succulent plants that are somewhat common today (Adeniums for example) were unheard of then. The most decorative containers you saw were either the ordinary terra cotta clay pot or some garish colored, high-gloss ceramic donkey (with the obligatory peanut cactus growing out its back). The most common container you saw was the tin can, which was the typical nursery container of the day. No one used top dressing then and most plants were potted up in soil dug up either with the plant or from the garden.

Wow, have we come a long way!

In this article I'll go over what I consider some of the basic fundamentals for novices to exhibit plants in the shows of today.



EXHIBITING PLANTS

Showing your plants for the first time can be intimidating. I know, because I was very tentative the first time I showed any of my plants. Heck, I wasn't even sure what half their names were. I think one of the fundamental rules for showing off your plants, especially for the beginner or novice is to keep it simple. Most judges are not looking for lavishly displayed plants in the Novice category. That doesn't mean you couldn't show some creativity if you're so inclined but don't stress out thinking all the plants you exhibit need to be displayed as some grandiose works of living art. Let the natural beauty of the plant do the work for you. All you need to do is present it.

Sometimes the novice is concerned not just about preparing the plant for the show but actually getting to the show and knowing how to fill out the entry cards, where to put the plants on the table or if they've got the plant names right. The simple answer is: Ask! Now, the advanced grower with a bazillion plants scattered on the floor in front of him as he's trying to fill out all his entry cards the day of set-up wouldn't be my first choice as the person to ask for help! Nevertheless, there will always be some knowledgeable person at any show willing to give a beginner a hand.

THE PLANTS

Obviously the whole idea behind showing off your plants is the plants themselves. Again, as a beginner, a judge isn't expecting you to have exceedingly rare, exotic or huge plants in the show. That doesn't mean you shouldn't show them if you have them, but it's not a prerequisite. I would rather see a well grown common plant in a show than a poorly grown rare one. In all honesty, I've judged shows where many of the beginner plants were in better shape than some of the advanced growers. One of the first things a judge will look for is whether the plant is clean. Old spent flowers, spider webs, leaves and other debris should be cleaned off the plant. Pests and insect infestations will get your plant disqualified so avoid bringing plants with them. Is the plant actively growing? A plant that is vibrant and healthy looking will always look great and catch a person's attention. When I'm judging and looking over the category of plants, the first thing I look for is the plants that are "smiling" at me, or the ones that show some vigor. Has the plant been growing in adequate light? Plants that are etiolated, or pin-headed trying to stretch for more light, show that the cultivation hasn't been quite up to par for that specimen. Is there a marked difference in other growth habits since the individual has owned the plant?

Sometimes plants we buy at nurseries are mass produced and so their culture is basically a one-size-fits-all process for the nurseryman. This means it may not be optimal for all the plants they grow. When we take them home, provide them with good light, fertilizer, etc. all of a sudden the spine density and color improve and the plant body bulks up. It's

not uncommon to see this different growth habit on show plants. As a judge, if I see that trait on a beginner's plant I know that person is providing better culture for that plant than it had before, which is great. If the plant is young enough, I know that eventually, under that same care, the plant will outgrow the inferior habit. But most importantly, it shows me the novice is doing the right thing for the plant.



2005 best novice cactus
Photo by Lee Brownson

POTS

I know for some novices this can be a very touchy subject. They look over in the Advanced or Master categories and see these huge plants in these obviously expensive pots and think, why in the heck would anyone even look at their plants. My suggestion: don't worry about the advanced growers and their fancy pots...they've got their own demons to deal with! Focus on your plants, the ones that you enjoy. Think of the plant as the artwork and the pot as the frame. The frame should never outshine the artwork. With that philosophy in mind, the straight forward approach of keeping it simple is best. Again, as a beginner, you're not expected to have the exotic bonsai pot or gazillion dollar ceramics. If you've got a few flaunt them, but don't 'not' show because you don't have any. You can display your plants in plain plastic or clay pots just fine. Like the plants, make sure the pots are clean. If you have plants in clay pots and there's some calcium build-up, clean it off. If it won't come clean, repot the plant into a cleaner pot. Taking some mineral oil and wiping it on an older clay pot can give it new life. Make sure you wipe off excess oil. Plastic pots can solarize in our desert sun, so if your show plant is in a plastic pot that's starting to deteriorate, repot it. If you're bound and determined to use a more decorative ceramic pot, make sure it's got a drainage hole! Please do not pick a ceramic pot that has some hideous colors thinking that it'll draw the judge's attention. Actually it will, but not for the right reasons! The color of the pots should be fairly neutral or

earth-toned. Remember, you don't want the frame to outshine the artwork...keep it simple! The only time I've really ever considered the pot in judging is if it's so bad it detracts from the plant or if the category of plants displayed are so wonderfully beautiful and equal that I then have to look for faults or points to choose one plant over the others.

One other point is to properly match the size of the pot to the size of the plant. Try to achieve a balance, where the pot size compliments the plant. An over potted plant, where what you see is mostly pot and soil surface, looks lost. An under-potted plant (too big for the pot) is a little better than an over potted plant but not by much. When in doubt, repot to an appropriate sized pot.

TOP DRESSING

Top dressing the soil surface is a way to finish off that space between the plant and the pot and is an extension of "the frame". Like the pot, the top-dressing should be simple, neutral and not detract from the plant. Natural gravels, whether collected or purchased work best. Some people like the natural aquarium gravel you can buy at pet stores. The uniformity in size of store-bought gravel can lend a certain formality to the display, where different sized gravel gives it a more informal effect. If I'm planting in a formal bonsai pot I might want to maintain a certain formality with uniform sized gravel. The other advantage with natural gravels is they will tend to not conflict with the color of the pot, though there are exceptions once in a while. I generally don't suggest artificially colored or epoxy coated gravels for most plants. The artificial colors tend to clash with the plant, the pot or both. Avoid something as stark as white gravel as it almost always outshines the plant. The one exception to the use of colored gravel is in the case of black, but then only in careful applications. I've seen some very artistic uses of black colored gravel but it has been rare. My personal approach to the use of it is if the plant I'm displaying has very light colored spines and the body of the plant nearly fills the pot and I just want the ground surface to fade away then black gravel can be useful. However, if there's a lot of soil surface and it's covered in black it can be fairly distracting.

IT'S BEEN KNOWN TO HAPPEN

I remember judging the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show held in Los Angeles a number of years ago. Can you imagine most of the premier hobbyists and growers of southern California displaying their choicest plants in one setting? The category was *Mammillaria* clusters, over 12" pots. Between Novice, Advanced and Master there had to be 18 or 20 absolutely perfect, stunningly presented specimens,

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2015

OCT. 24-25 **PALOMAR SHOW AND SALE** SAT 9-5, SUN 10-4, SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDENS
230 QUAIL GARDENS RD, ENCINITAS. INFO: hciservices@gmail.com. 858-382-1797

NOV 7-8 **SAN GABRIEL CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE**
9am-4pm both days LA COUNTY ARBORETUM, 301 NO. BALDWIN AVE., ARCADIA, CA.



2005 best succulent
Rich Zeh's *Cyphostemma betiformis*
Photo by LeeBrownson

any one of which would be desirable to have. Some of these clustered masterpieces were enormous, old and rare. The other judges and I were looking for Best *Mammillaria* in Show and had determined that the 12" and over group was where we needed to choose from. The species of blue ribbon winners in the Advanced and Master categories I don't recall, but I do remember the Novice one. In a very simple round bonsai pot, brown in color, was a drop-dead gorgeous specimen of *Mammillaria bombycina*. Not many years ago that was probably one of the most common *Mammillarias* you could find. Nevertheless, this plant was absolutely at its peak and fit perfectly in what was probably a 14" pot. It not only smiled, the darned thing was grinning! Looking over all the magnificent plants that particular one kept drawing my attention. Finally I broke the silence by saying, "you know what guys (it was an all-male judging panel), that plant there (pointing to the *M. bombycina*) does it for me. The other judges scrutinized the plant further, one even commented how "common" it was. But, I pointed out that if I was going to take any one of the prospective winners home that would be the individual. And guess what, one by one they agreed! Imagine, a Novice grower winning Best *Mammillaria* in Show at the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show with a common plant like *Mammillaria bombycina*! It's been known to happen!

Good luck, and see you at the show!

LATIN LOOKUP - Loquerisne Latine (Do you speak Latin)?

The meanings of the latin names of plants in this newsletter - taken from <http://davesgarden.com/guides/botany/>

Name	Meaning	Pronunciation
Agave	Noble, handsome	a-GAH-vee
applanata	Flattened	ap-plan-AY-tuh
Argyrodema	Silver skin. From the Greek words argyros (silver) and derma (skin)	ar-gy-ro-DERM-uh
bolusii	Named for Dr. Harry Bolus, 19th century South African botanist and orchid collector	bol-LOO-see-eye
conoideus	Cone-like	ko-NOY-dee-us
desmetiana	Named for Louis DeSmet, 19th century botanist; also spelled desmettiana	de-smet-ee-AY-na
ernestii	UNKNOWN	
fissum	From the Latin fissura, to split or crack	FIZ-zum
framesii	Named for late Percy Ross Frames, the original collector	FRAMES-ee-eye
matanzanus	UNKNOWN	
Matucana	Named for the Peruvian city of the same name	mat-oo-KAN-uh
Melocactus	From the Greek melo (apple-shaped melon) and cactus; refers to the shape of these cacti	mel-oh-KAK-tus
nelii	Named for Gert Cornelius Nel, early 20th century botanist, authority on succulents, and professor of botany at Stellenbosch University in South Africa	NEL-ee-eye
Oroya	Named for La Oroya, near Lima (Peru)	or-ROY-uh
Pleiospilos	Many spots	plee-oh-SPIL-os
potatorum	Of drinkers; referring to a plant's use in brewing beer	poh-tuh-TOR-um
pumila	Small, dwarf	POO-mil-uh
stomatium	From the Greek stoma (mouth)	sto-MAH-tee-um
subalbum	UNKNOWN	
testiculare	UNKNOWN (yeah right)	
tigrina	Like a Tiger	tig-REE-nuh
tuberculosa	UNKNOWN	
victoriae-reginae	Named for Queen Victoria, 19th century monarch of Great Britain; also frequently spelled victoria-reginae	vik-TOR-ee-ay ree-JIN-ay-ee
violaceus	Violet-colored	vy-oh-LAH-see-us

Editor's Corner



Thanks to Jade Neely and Gary Duke for supplying the Presenter of the Month material and POM list.

Thanks to Jim Tanner for supplying the Mini-Show and Plant of the Month material.

Mike Short - Editor.

Contributions to the newsletter are encouraged, especially articles of an educational nature. Also information on upcoming events that might be of interest to club members are welcomed. Humorous articles, photos, cartoons, or poetry also welcomed.

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