

## **South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society**

*Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America (CSSA) • Associated Plant Society of California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI)*

### **Minutes of the General Zoom Meeting, April 11, 2021**

#### **Board Members:**

Maria Capaldo, President  
 M. A. Bjarkman, Vice-president  
 Bernard Johnson, Treasurer  
 Sue Wong, Secretary  
 Terri Straub, At-large Board Member  
 Clif Wong, At-large Board Member & Newsletter Editor  
 Cory Zedler, At-large Board Member  
 Gary Duke, Programs Committee Chair & Speaker  
 Co-coordinator  
 Sally Fasteau, Membership Committee Chair

Lou Hagemeyer, CGCI Liaison  
 Jim Hanna, Finance Committee Chair & Plant Man  
 Mike Short, Communications Committee  
 Chair & Webmaster

#### **Committee Members (Tasked):**

Jade Neely, Speaker Co-coordinator  
 Ann Nye, Monthly Publicist  
 Jim Tanner, Mini-show Coordinator  
 Laurel Woodley, Facebook  
 Caitlin Rubia, Instagram

The meeting was convened at 1:30 pm and was being recorded. The Club's Zoom meeting was co-hosted by our Vice President, M. A. Bjarkman and Scott Bunnell from the Long Beach Cactus Club. M. A. wished everyone a good morning and welcomed them to the meeting. Maria was unable to be here. She thanked Scott and asked Jade to introduce our speaker.

Jade said that we have been trying to get Karen to come and speak for years. Karen Ostler got her first cactus in the Spring of 1979 and began her collection. She has been involved with CSSA and the Intercity Shows. She is originally from the San Fernando Valley. Now she grows only cactus at her High Desert home. M. A. requested that all questions be asked after the talk.

#### **Program:**

**“Staging.”** Karen defined “staging” as bringing out the best in your plants. She showed a photo of her Mammillaria greenhouse where most of the plants are in Show pots. She says that way they can be ready for a Show at any time and you can treat any plant “like a prize.” They look fabulous dressed up. Her list of tools for staging includes: clippers, brushes, tweezers and tags. She notes on each tag when the plant was last transplanted and from what size pot.

*How to choose a pot:* There should be no restrictions at the neck for easier transplanting, no bright colors or shiny finishes to distract from the plant itself and she prefers hand-thrown pots for their character. If you must use plastic pots, please make sure that they are new and clean. Plastic and clay pots can be rubbed with mineral oil to add sheen.

*Plant placement:* In a perfectly round or square pot, place the plant right in the center. In rectangular pots, divide the space into thirds and place your plant off to one side. *Rules of rocks:* Place rocks in odd numbers. The rocks and top dressing should match. The color of the top dressing should complement the plant and should come up to the top of the pot. When planting, Karen places one rock in back at an angle that reaches down to root level. She waters on that rock instead of over the top of the plant and knows the water will travel down to the roots. Rocks should match, be slightly buried instead of sitting on top and shouldn't have a shiny or polished finish. Don't use an oversized rock that will distract from your plant. *Finding a new home for your plants:* Size your pots to your plants. The pot should frame the plant, at least a finger's width of top dressing showing all around. What part of your plant do you want to emphasize?

Check the roots for pests and rot before you repot. Chopsticks can hold the plant up while you try out different pots and before you fill them. Karen emphasized her judge's dislike for “campfire” rings of rocks around plants. She also showed examples of staged plants that break all her rules and are still successful. “Do what you feel is right for your plants.” Texture is also very important to the final presentation. If you are not sure about the amount of texture in your arrangement you can take a black and white photo with your phone to check. You can also use color to enhance selected plant features such as matching the top dressing to the color of the plant spines or choosing a contrasting color pot or maybe even a monochromatic color scheme. Use your pot shape to call attention to your plant shape.

While Karen prefers to use shallower pots for her plants, some plants have roots that may require a tall pot. Karen thanked all of us for watching and a question and answer period followed. After the Q&A there was another round of thanks for all involved.

**April Plant-of-the-Month:** At 2:45 pm, Laurel Woodley made the presentation of the Plant-of-the-Month-favorite cacti and succulents. She began showing member's garden and Brag photos and followed with the P.O.M. submissions in all categories. Karen helped make staging suggestions for some plants along the way. Laurel said it was a good opportunity to use what Karen just presented.

**May Presentation:** M. A. announced that next month's Zoom meeting will occur on Mother's Day (Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>). Jade announced that Laurel will present an updated version of her talk on *Kalanchoes*.

**May Plant-of-the-Month:** Cactus: *Coryphantha*, *Escobaria* and *Acharagma*; Succulent: *Dudleya*, *Cotyledon*. Please remember to send your photos of your Plants-of-the-Month to Maria by May 7<sup>th</sup>. Also send photos of your gardens as well. Any Brag plants are also welcome.

**CCSA Webinars** continue to be available every other Saturday at 10:00 am. The next one is on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. Julia Etter and Martin Kristen will talk about "*Crassulaceae of the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt*." Mike Short will send a link by email again. Please check with the website periodically to get notices of upcoming events.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the March Zoom Meeting, previously distributed, were approved.

**Treasury Report:** The balance for April was given.

**Intercity Show:** Gary mentioned that the Intercity Show will occur during the second weekend in August. Karen said it is still on the schedule, pending on any new break-outs of the COVID virus. Karen is working on a list of judges for the show. She will keep everyone updated. Laurel also joined the discussion about how judges are needed in multiple categories, as well as tie breakers and backups. Karen will choose eighteen people in all. The current plan is for people to bring their plants on Friday to set them up, with Saturday and Sunday left open to the public. Plants will be picked up at the end of the day on Sunday. All vendors must show proof of vaccination and wear masks. A limited number of people will be admitted at any one time. There will be no dinner.

**Bellflower Pop-up sales:** Gary will post the specific dates.

**LA Club Pop-up sale:** Karen said the Club may have another pop-up sale in mid-June in an outdoor venue. Vendors will be separated. One hundred people will be admitted and sent in different directions and new people will be admitted as others leave.

M. A. felt that this was a very rich, productive meeting. The viewers seemed to agree. The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Submitted, Sue Wong, Secretary