

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, June 13, 2021

Board Members:

Maria Capaldo, President
 M. A. Bjarkman, Vice-president
 Bernard Johnson, Treasurer
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 Clif Wong, At-large Board Member & Newsletter Editor
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 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

Our President, Maria Capaldo, began the meeting at 1:30 pm. Recording began for YouTube. She welcomed us to the meeting and thanked her co-host, Scott Bunnell from the Long Beach Cactus Club. She asked Jade Neely to introduce today's speaker.

Program:

“Succulents: Liberated or Constrained in Containers?” Jade introduced our speaker, Ernesto Sandoval. This is an updated version of a talk he gave for one of our conventions. Ernesto began by suggesting people turn off their video during the presentation.

He explained how he once took home an aloe in a 4” clay pot and left it that way for seven years. Then he planted it in the ground and was amazed at how much it grew in the few years after that. He then took a class and found out how we “torture” plants in containers. Ernesto displayed photos of plants in the UC Davis Conservatory where he works. They were compared to plants in the Gardens by the Bay Conservatory in Singapore which are planted in ground beds, showing how much larger they have grown. *Dorstenia gigas* in 48” boxes and pumice are large, fat and happy. Plants in containers dry out much faster. Nutrients in pots can go from high to low in a week or less—the plants will need fertilization. Hard water in a container makes it harder to maintain the correct pH. Temperatures at the top of the pot rise more quickly and roots prefer a cooler temperature. Plants in the ground enjoy cooler roots. Plants in containers can also be more susceptible to pests. Adding vinegar to hard water will acidify it. Add about 1 tsp to 1 tablespoon to one gallon of water, depending on the original pH. That and fertilizing will make your potted plants happier. As far as planting mix for potting goes, Ernesto shared the recipe from the UC Davis Conservatory:

UC Davis Botanical Conservatory mix (succulent mix):

By volume:

3 parts (1/2): 5/16 Red Lava or ½” pumice

1 part (1/6): uniform coarse sand (=3.5 100# bags of 12 mesh sand blasting sand)

1 part (1/6): peat moss or coconut peat

1 part (1/6): redwood compost or equivalent of “supersoil”

3 pounds each added per yard: oyster lime, dolomite 65, single super phosphate.

The 12 mesh sand is also what we use to “mulch” the top of seedling pots which also decreases fungus gnat activity.

When growing plants in the ground, the more drainage the better. Don't use organic matter for raised beds for succulents. After years of decomposition, the beds will return to their original height and provide less drainage. Use a high amount of inorganic matter in your raised beds so the level doesn't sink down lower. Sandy loam or sandy soil can be mixed in existing clay soil. Red lava fines can be mixed into your raised beds. They won't break down and will provide good drainage and easy digging, as it does not compact.

Ernesto showed a beautiful aloe "island" planted in a public space on campus. It was amended with lava fines and raised up about 1-1/2' in the center. There were many more examples of aloes planted in the ground. They grow really well in raised beds. Ernesto loves travelling to other people's gardens to see how they grow plants in the ground. "Putting them in the ground is where it's at!"

The presentation concluded at 2:50 pm and was followed by a Question and Answer period. Maria thanked Ernesto for his great presentation.

June Brag and Garden Plants: Maria showed photos submitted by Club members of their favorite plants from their gardens. She thanked those participating for sharing their plants and asked members to keep sending in their photos.

June Plant-of-the-Month: Maria gave a photo presentation of the Plants-of-the-month which were: Cactus: *Gymnocalycium*; and Succulents: *Pachypodium* in all show categories. She thanked everyone for sharing their plants and recording was stopped at 3:15 pm.

Announcements:

July Presentation: Next month's Zoom meeting will be on Sunday, July 11th: "Soil Mixtures and Watering Schedules." Gary said there have been a lot of requests for information on how to grow plants. The presentation will be a panel of four local Club members: Maria Capaldo, Mike Short, Laurel Woodley and Gary Duke. Each person will have fifteen minutes to discuss their approach to summer and winter growers. It will be a good follow-up to Ernesto's talk. *For those of you who are also in the Long Beach Cactus Club, their in-person meeting is on the same day.*

Cereus needs a home: Diane Cottrell is removing a *Cereus* plant from her property. If anyone is interested in taking some of it home, she will get pictures of it.

July Plant-of-the-Month: Cactus: *Lobivia*, *Echinopsis*; Succulent: *Sansevieria*. Please remember to send your photos of your P.O.M. to Maria by July 9th. Also send photos of your gardens as well. Any Brag plants are also welcome.

August Meeting: The meeting for August is cancelled. The Inter-City Show and Sale will be on August 14th -15th with set-up and judging on the 13th. Maria encourages everyone who longs for resuming showing and buying plants to attend.

CSSA Webinars continue to be available every other Saturday at 10:00 am. Yesterday's presentation on *Sclerocactus* and *Pediocactus* by Rob Skillin is available on YouTube which may be accessed through a link at the CSSA website or on its Facebook page.

Other upcoming events: The Inter-City Show and Sale listing will be on our website. Please keep up with the website periodically to get notices of other upcoming events like Garibaldi's Nursery sale or Gary's sale for Father's Day.

Reports:

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

Treasury Report: Bernard Johnson gave his Treasury Report.

Maria closed the meeting by thanking everyone. "See you next month." The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Submitted, Sue Wong, Secretary