

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, July 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

Our President, Maria Capaldo, began the meeting at 1:42 pm. Recording began for YouTube. She welcomed us to the meeting. Scott Bunnell, our usual co-host from the Long Beach Cactus Club, was unable to be here. Maria asked all viewers to mute themselves during the meeting. Viewers can unmute themselves to ask questions during the interactive presentation. She asked Jade Neely to introduce today's speaker.

Program:

“Soil Mixtures and Watering Schedules.” Jade introduced our presentation: She and Gary were talking about a newsletter with a panel of experts giving a similar presentation. Maria Capaldo, Mike Short, Laurel Woodley and Gary Duke from our Club will share their information.

Maria prefaced how she grows things and where. She lives a quarter mile from the coast in Manhattan Beach where there is fog. She mostly grows her plants in pots. She uses a cactus soil mixture from the store. She used to use E.B. Stone's mixture but found that it contains large pumice and wood particles. Switching to Uni-Gro Cactus Mix has yielded smaller particles. She adds 1/3 pumice (3/16" size) or moistened Perlite (wear a mask when handling). Then she adds diatomaceous earth (1 cup to ¼ cup cubic feet of mixture) to help control insects. A little more sand or diatomaceous earth can be added after that. For cacti she uses extra Perlite or pumice and sand. For succulents she adds less because they need a moister soil. Her greenhouse gets watered more often. She mixes white vinegar with her hard water and adds 20-20-20 fertilizer during the growing season (1/4 dilution from the manufacturer's instructions). In the winter her plants go for 2-3 weeks without being watered. Her outdoor plants in December through January get a lot of moisture from fog, so she only waters them every two weeks. She won't water during the 2-3 weeks following rain in the winter and removes the dishes underneath her pots so the water won't be reabsorbed.

Mike loves propagation. He learned a lot by working in the propagation department at the Garden. He lives one mile from Torrance Beach where there is a marine layer. He has many microclimates with no greenhouse or shade cloth. He keeps to a tight budget and propagates more than show plants. His garden is mostly organic and mixes his own potting medium, varying ratios for individual plants. His mix contains Kellogg Garden Soil because it is organic and they are a local company who are patrons of the Garden. Bird's Eye Gravel comes from B.D. White in Gardena and it helps to loosen the soil. He also adds pumice, Kellogg Organic Plus 4-4-4 and Osmacote fertilizers. Mike's sprinklers run twice a week in three timed intervals to avoid runoff. They run once a week in the winter. Some mature plants in pots are watered once a week manually. In the winter he allows weeds in the pots so they can absorb extra moisture from the soil. He uses fennel in the summer garden to shade plants and attract butterflies. Double potting a one-gallon plastic pot inside a three-gallon plastic pot can help insulate the roots and keep plants cooler in hot weather.

Laurel lives a little further inland than Mike and has a basically open area garden. Everything is in pots. She tends to move her plants around according to the seasons. Pay attention to how they look and don't overwater them. She uses Kellogg Cactus and Palm Mix as her soil. Then she adds a 50-50 ratio of sponge rock or Perlite. She suggests wetting down the Perlite in the bag to settle the harmful dust and then pour it into a trash barrel to use. Add more sponge rock to the mix for plants that are susceptible to rot. She also adds a granular fertilizer for new plants (Azalea/Rhododendron Fertilizer) to counteract hard water instead of using vinegar. Laurel hand waters her plants with a hose from overhead. Top dress your plants to keep the soil from washing out if you are watering from overhead. Pea gravel can replace Show Topdressing Mix. She tries to avoid using pesticides but has used Bayer insecticide sparingly. Fence lizards patrol her yard for insects. In the summer, she waters once a week. If a plant's leaves droop, it is an indicator that it is time to water. Wilting weeds is also an indicator. In the winter, try to water early in the morning so the plants will dry out before nightfall to avoid soil fungi. In the summer, water in the late afternoon so the plants will soak up water all night without stress. When watering, she goes back over each section three or four times to make sure that the water penetrates the soil deeply.

Gary started with his soil mixture formula: 1/3 pumice (3/8") + 1/3 sand + 1/3 topsoil/compost. *Ariocarpus* gets extra pea gravel. He adds pumice to plants subject to overwatering. He creates his mix in a garbage can and rolls it around on its side to mix. Gary says to marry your water schedule with your soil mix and the environment. He lives the farthest inland of today's presenters. For example: a friend in Panama gets rain every other day. He built a greenhouse and uses all pumice with his plants. He needed a soil mix that was well-drained and accommodated the high humidity in the area. Another example was of a friend who waters twice a week and needs a better draining soil mix. Commercial growers use mostly pumice to keep their shipping costs down, but have to water more often. Gary waters his plants about every 7-10 days. He suggests not watering when the temperature is below forty degrees or above ninety to ninety-five degrees. The plants are dormant under these conditions and will rot. He uses Grow More Fertilizer, a 6-30-30 blend low in nitrogen.

A question and discussion period followed. Please let Maria know if you liked today's topic or if there are any others you may like to hear. We will add to our Links page a list of summer and winter growers. It may not be completely accurate by genus—species can vary. This presentation ended at 3:20 pm.

July Brag and Garden Plants: Maria showed photos submitted by Club members of their favorite plants from their gardens.

July Plant-of-the-Month: Maria gave a photo presentation of the Plants-of-the-month which were: Cactus: *Lobivia* and *Echinopsis*; and Succulents: *Sanseveria* and *Dracaena* in all show categories. She thanked everyone for sharing their plants.

At 3:40 pm the recording was stopped.

Announcements:

August Meeting: Next month's Zoom meeting is cancelled. However, Clif is willing to publish an August Newsletter so we can still share our plants of the month. Clif asked if we should collect photos from the Inter-City Show as well and Maria volunteered.

August Plant-of-the-Month: Cactus: *Ferocactus* and *Leuchtenbergia*; Succulent: *Stapeliads*. Please remember to send your photos of your P.O.M. to Maria by August 15th. Also send photos of your gardens as well. Any Brag plants are also welcome.

CSSA Webinars continue to be available every other Saturday at 10:00 am. Yesterday's presentation by Karel Du Toit on "Illegal Poaching of Succulents in Namaqualand" is available on YouTube which may be accessed through a link at the CSSA website or on its Facebook page.

Other upcoming events:

Rob and Terry Skillin invite you to their ranch for "Open Greenhouse Day 2021" for a day of fun, food, friends and plants at the Skillin Ranch in Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo County. It takes place on Saturday, July 24 starting at 9:00 am. Please see the listing on our website. Rob's greenhouse is especially impressive and worth the trip.

The Inter-City Show and Sale is on August 6-8. The Sale starts at on the 6th and the Show starts on the 7th. The listing is on our website. Please keep up with the website periodically to get notices of other upcoming events.

Pop-up-sale: at Garibaldo's Nursery next Saturday, the 17th, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The information is now posted on our website.

Reports:

Minutes: Last month's Minutes were posted. There were no corrections and the Minutes were accepted as published.

Treasury Report: Bernard Johnson gave his Treasury Report.

In-person meetings: There are still requirements for in-person meetings on masking in the county and since we are unable to meet at the Botanic Garden, we will continue Zoom meetings. In the meantime, we will need to look for another meeting site. If anyone has suggestions for a place that can accommodate us on a Sunday, please let me know. I would appreciate any help with scouting out locations. Gary suggested looking for a Veteran's Hall in the South Coast Area. Sally volunteered to help Maria scout for locations.

Board positions: We are still needing someone to replace Sue Wong as Secretary for taking the Minutes. Gary and Jade have also asked to be replaced and Gary has offered to train his replacement. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions.

Maria closed the meeting by thanking everyone. The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Submitted, Sue Wong, Secretary