

Prickly News

South Coast
Cactus & Succulent Society



November 2025 South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter



President's message

PLEASE NOTE!!!! OUR MEETING for November will be at Zamperini Field, at the Torrance Municipal Airport and will start at **1:00pm**. Help with set-up and take-down would be appreciated starting at 12:00pm. Parking is available just outside the meeting room.

Elections: We will hold elections of officers for the Society at our next meeting. Thank you to Bob Caplan for being the Nominating Committee and presenting the slate for voting:

President: Maria Capaldo

Vice-President: Liz Ying

Secretary: Nancy Sams

Treasurer: Debra Bushweit Galliani

Members at Large;

Martin Dorsey

Linda O'Hara

Theresa Nicoletto

Before elections we will again invite anyone from the membership to put their name forward.

Holiday Pot Luck: Save the date for Saturday, December 13, 12:00pm for set-up at Palos Verdes Art Center. This should be a fun time for all. More information in our next Newsletter.

Plants of the Month: Cactus: South American columnar cacti. Succulent: *Lithops* and *Conophytum*.

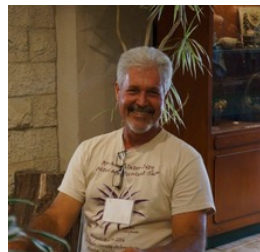
Presentation: We welcome Peter Walkowiak who is an expert grower to give us tips on growing succulents I hope to see you there.

Maria Capaldo

South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Meeting

November 9 1:00pm-3:30pm
Zamperini Field
Torrance Municipal Airport
3301 Airport Drive
Torrance, Ca 90505

PRESENTATION



Peter Walkowiak
"HOW TO GROW
SUCCULENTS;
Tips from a
Grower"



To learn more, go to
<https://southcoastcss.org>

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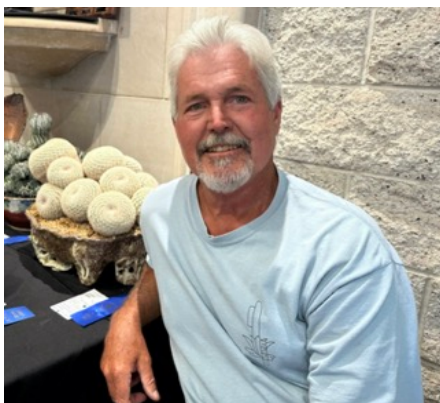
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PRESENTATION FOR NOVEMBER

"HOW TO GROW SUCCULENTS; Tips from a Grower"



Peter with trophy winning *Mammillaria*

Peter has been growing plants his whole life, his interest starting at five to six years old. The purpose of this talk is to educate people on all aspects of growing succulent plants. Peter has a very large and diverse collection of succulent plants, grown hard and big. He has entered many of his plants in shows and won many trophies.

His presentation will address all stages and materials that go into growing succulent plants successfully. During this talk questions will be encouraged, and he will have gift plants for great questions. This will be a learning, informational talk.

Topics to be covered:

Soil: Fast-draining, easy-to-wet soil. Materials to use and stay away from.

Water: PH, acidity vs alkalinity, fertilizer, when to water.

Exposure: sun vs shade, air movement.

Growing techniques: pruning, size of pots, saucers.

Peter will be bringing display plants to help demonstrate the points in his talk for your enjoyment. There are many things that we do, myths that are detrimental to plant growth and vigor, and these will be discussed.

Peter graduated in 1985 from Cal Poly Pomona with a B.S. Degree in Ornamental Horticulture. He worked as manager, production manager and section manager for three wholesale nurseries for 14 years. He ran a landscaping business for another 14 years, the last five years of which he specialized in succulent landscapes. He started collecting succulents while at Cal Poly and his collection now numbers in the thousands. This led to propagating plants from seed and thus, the seed was sown for the nursery that he now owns and runs for the last fifteen years.

He is the past president of the Palomar CSS and was on the board for the San Diego CSS. He was on the Board of Directors of the C.S.S.A. (Cactus and Succulent Society of America) for the last ten years and served as the Nominations Chair and Convention Sales Chair. He was show chair for Palomar's one and San Diego's two shows and co-chair for the Intercity Show.



November
2025

Mini-Show Plant of the Month: Cactus

*Cereus hildmannianus**Cereus jamacaru**Cereus repandus*

Columnar cacti are not a closely related set of genera, but a lumping together of all the cacti that are much longer than they are round. Columnar cacti vary in size from a few inches, as in the aptly named, *Pygmaecereus* to the giants like *Pachycereus* and *Carnegiea* (Saguaro). Most are robust growers, given adequate water, fertilizer, root room and support. They expect more nitrogen in their soil (or plant food) and more water than most globular cacti. They do well in normal cactus soil, as long as they get additional fertilization.

Propagation is generally by cuttings or seed. Cuttings need to be dried well before planting. A few weeks is the minimum for some of the larger columnar species. They do best if dried in an upright position. If placed on their sides the cut end rots easier. Seed of columnar cacti are readily available, and are particularly enjoyable to grow. While all of the globular cacti are the size of a pea, many of the columnar cacti fill the pot, and an inch or more high. If grown from seed, many will not tolerate crowding for long, and demand their own pot. This is particularly true of *Oreocereus*, which will quickly stop growing if there is more than one plant per pot.

The plants take many years to reach flowering size, and are only really happy in the ground, and get too big for pots in any case.

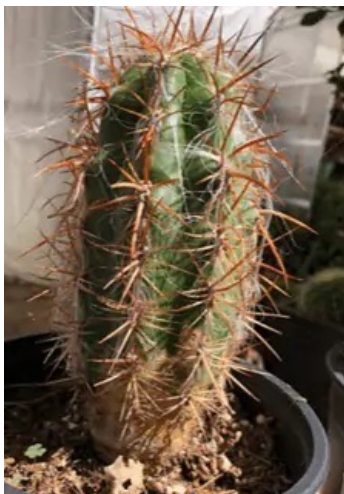
Some popular South American columnar cactus genera:

Cereus is a genus of cacti including around 33 species of large columnar cacti from South America. *Cereus peruvianus*, found in many Southern California gardens, has been cultivated for over 400 years, and is not known in the wild! The flowers do not have areoles or spines, but they have a few scales. They are generally large, white, either funnel or trumpet-shaped. They are followed by a yellow or red fruit, generally edible containing black seeds.

Cleistocactus is one of the most beautiful genera of the columnar cacti. These slender plants branch from the base, and have dense spination. They are easy to grow, and quickly set flowers that are usually long red tubes sticking out through the spines. Some of the best are *C. smaragdiflorus*, with red flowers, a yellow band near the tip, and a bright green tip. *C. strausii* is a fuzzy white marvel, and often seen at sale tables at shows.

November
2025

Mini-Show Plant of the Month: Cactus

*Cereus forbesii**Cleistocactus strausii**Oreocereus celsianus*

Espostoa come from Ecuador and Peru. Most of these are covered with a dense white wool that entirely hides the plant body.

Haageocereus come from Peru and Chile. They stay short (for a ceroid), rarely exceeding 3 or four feet, and have dense spines, and showy red flowers.

Micranthocereus is a small genus of Brazilian cacti. All of the species branch from the base, and make densely-spined clusters. They stay small, and are happy as pot plants. Quite a few of these have been in the shows in the past few years.

Oreocereus are beautiful hairy plants, with wicked spines hidden in the hairs. Some branch from the base. They prefer outdoor air to a greenhouse, and need frequent turning to keep symmetrical growth.

Pilosocereus is a largely Brazilian genera, almost all of which are worth growing. It has a wide distribution, stretching into central Mexico. Many of the species are a glaucous blue with bright yellow spines and hairy areoles. *Pilosocereus magnificus* is one of these, with 4 to 12 deep ribs. The outer edges are covered with short yellow spines. *Pilosocereus aureispinus* has 18 to 20 very shallow ribs, and distinct areoles, that make dense yellow spirals around the plant on a dark green background.

*Espostoa lanata**Cleistocactus colademononis*

November
2025

Mini-Show Plant of the Month: Succulent

*Lithops hookeri**Lithops lesliei**Lithops dinteri**Lithops karasmontana**Lithops verruculosa**Lithops optica* 'Rubra'*Lithops hallii*

Lithops are very simple plants. All you get are two leaves, each mostly filled with water holding cells. They are dormant when the weather is too hot or too cold, and grow most in the spring.

On a fine level, no other genus has such a wealth of variation in color, shape, texture and pattern (except maybe *Conophytum*).

There are a little less than 60 species, about 800 or so known local variations of the species, and a few hundred named and unnamed cultivars.

No two *Lithops* plants look the same, yet a knowledgeable grower can identify most species.

There are as many successful ways of growing *Lithops* as there are growers, and the cultivation practices are modified to fit individual habits, and local micro-climates. The basic cultivation routine is: Stop watering after flowering, or at the end of November, except for *L. optica* which needs water until the end of December. Start watering after the old leaves completely dry (usually late March or Early April.) Water freely during the summer. Grow them in an open, fast draining mix. Most growers use at least 50% pumice, some sand, and little organic material. Keep peat out of the mix. Some good growers fertilize frequently, some hardly ever. Keep them dry during the winter.

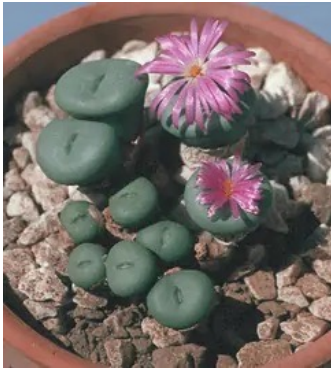
Lithops are small, they don't take up much room.

They are easy to grow from seed, with seed planting best in either October or April. There are good growers who do it both ways, and some who do it both times.

Because they are small and inexpensive, its best to grow them in quantity. Most of the people who can't grow *Lithops*, have killed a few one by one. They are best grown by the dozen. Even the best growers have plants that mysteriously dry up, or leave during the night.

November
2025

Mini-Show Plant of the Month: Succulent

*Conophytum bilobum**Conophytum minutum*
var *pearsonii**Conophytum ficiforme**Conophytum calculus*

Conophytum is a large genus of small plants. They are winter growing. They generally, but not always clump. They are relatively easy to grow, as long as they are allowed to be dry when dormant, and then protected from overheating and desiccation. An eastern exposure is often recommended. They are readily available as plants and seeds. Once the knack is acquired, most *Conophytum* are easy to grow. In late July, *Conophytum* are generally dormant, and are covered by the paper thin leaves from last year's growth.

The bilobum types tend to be easier (more forgiving of watering errors) for beginners. These have two definite leaves, with a deep notch between them. The more difficult small round-leaved forms provide an additional challenge, and additional rewards with spectacular colors, patterns and shapes. A large collection can be maintained in a very small area.

*Conophytum flavum**Conophytum meyeri**Conophytum minimum**Conophytum jucundum*

October
2025

Mini-Show Winners

OPEN CACTUS



1st - Maria Capaldo
Turbinicarpus gielsdorfianus

OPEN SUCCULENT



1st - Jim Gardner
Adromischus sphenophyllus



2nd - Maria Capaldo
Adromischus cristatus

INTERMEDIATE CACTUS



1st - Terri Straub
Turbinicarpus saueri



2nd - Terri Straub
Turbinicarpus schmiedickeanus



3rd - Jim Gardner
Adromischus cristatus



3rd - Terri Straub
Turbinicarpus viereckii

INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



1st - Terri Straub
Adromischus cooperi



2nd - Bonnie Ikemura
Adromischus sp.



3rd - Bonnie Ikemura
Adromischus sp.

October
2025

Mini-Show Winners

NOVICE CACTUS



1st - Liz Ying
Turbinicarpus schmiedickeanus
subsp. *klinkerianus*

NOVICE SUCCULENT



1st - Vincent Darmali
Adromischus cooperi



2nd - Martha Bjerke
Adromischus cooperi



3rd - Martha Bjerke
Adromischus marianiae var. *immaculatus*

Mini Show Standings October 2025

Novice Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals	Intermediate Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals	Open Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals
Julie Biggs		6	6	Anita Caplan	14	18	32	Maria Capaldo	55	49	104
M. A. Bjarkman	6	7	13	Martin Dorsey	11	14	25	Phyllis DeCrescenzo	51	60	111
Martha Bjerke		10	10	Sally Fasteau		3	3	Gary Duke	25	11	36
Bob Caplan		2	2	Bonnie Ikemura	5	22	27	Jim Gardner		32	32
Vince Darmali	22	7	29	Jackie Johnson	2	3	5	Jim Hanna		5	5
Lupe Hulett		1	1	Lemono Lott		12	12	Laurel Woodley		32	32
Shane Mullen	5	8	13	Mike Short	1	19	20				
George Unrine		1	1	Terri Straub	66	50	116				
Judy Unrine		4	4								
Liz Ying	17	29	46								

2025-2026 Mini-Show Calendar		
<u>Month</u>	<u>Cactus</u>	<u>Succulent</u>
November	South American columnar cactus <i>Cleistocactus, Espostoa, Oreocereus</i> , etc.)	<i>Lithops, Conophytum</i>
December	Holiday Pot Luck	Holiday Pot Luck
January 2026	<i>Mammillaria</i> – straight spine (clumping)	<i>Haworthia, Astroloba, Tulista, Haworthiopsis</i> ,
February 2026	Epiphytic cactus	<i>Aloe, Kumara</i>
March 2026	<i>Echinocactus, Kroenleinia</i>	<i>Cissus, Cyphostemma, Dorstenia</i>
April 2026	Show and Sale	Show and Sale
May 2026	<i>Astrophytum</i>	<i>Agave, Manfreda</i> and hybrids
June 2026	<i>Opuntia, Tephrocactus, Cylindropuntia, Austrocylindropuntia</i>	<i>Euphorbia</i> (not from Madagascar)
July 2026	<i>Melocactus</i>	Bromeliaceae (other than <i>Dyckia, Hechtia</i>)
August 2026	<i>Copiapoa</i>	<i>Graptopetalum, Graptoveria, Pachyveria</i>
September 2026	<i>Notocactus, Parodia</i>	<i>Sedum, Pachyphytum, Sempervivum, Graptosedum</i>
October 2026	<i>Ariocarpus, Obregonia</i>	<i>Adenium, Adenia</i>

Mini-Show Rules

Exhibitors must be Society members and must be present at the meeting in order to receive points. One name representing the same household must be used unless plants are grown separately. Mini-Show coordinator will be consulted if there is any question of entry identity.

Any container may be used, including plastic, as long as it is clean. All plants must be groomed and free of pests and disease. There are two plant categories: 'Cactus' and 'Succulents'. Up to three plants per individual may be entered in each category.

Scoring:

First Place: 6 points

Second place: 4 points

Third place: 2 points

Placement: all entries that are not disqualified: 1 point.

An individual plant may be entered only once a year.

There are three entry classes:

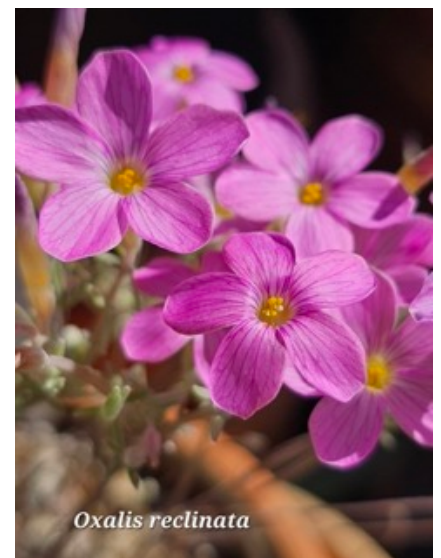
'Novice,' 'Intermediate,' and 'Open.' Only members new to the hobby would be expected to be in the Novice class.

After the November meeting, members' point totals will be reviewed by the Board of the Society.

Novice members awarded more than 64 points or winning at least 6 first place awards may be asked to move to the Intermediate class in both categories. Intermediate members awarded more than 64 points or winning at least 6 first place awards, may be asked to begin showing in the Open class.

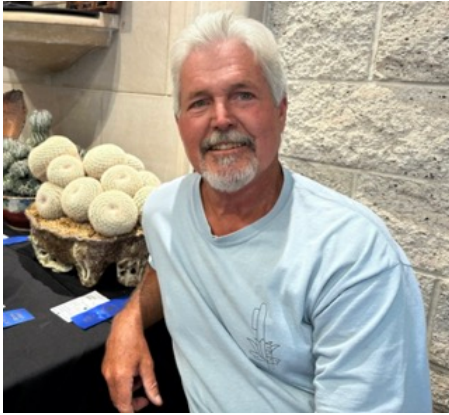
All plants must be grown by the exhibitor for a minimum of six months for Novice and Intermediate and one year for Open class.

MEMBER PHOTOS



What's in Your Garden?

Upcoming Events



South Coast Cactus and Succulent
Society Meeting
Sunday, November 9, 2025
1:00-4:00pm
Zamperini Field
3301 Airport Drive
Torrance, California
Presenter: Peter Walkowiak
"How to Grow Succulents;
Tips from a Grower"



Info. www.lacactus.com
One Generation
18255 Victory Blvd.
Reseda, CA



South Coast Cactus and
Succulent Society

Holiday Pot Luck
Saturday, December 13, 2025
12:00pm set-up
1:00-3:00pm Festivities
Palos Verdes Art Center
5504 Crestridge Rd.
Rancho Palos Verdes

For more information and to learn more



2025 Board of Directors

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