



May
2026

South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MEETING DATES:

Sunday, May 17 at the South Coast Botanic Garden at 1:00pm.

Sunday, June 14 at the Fred Hesse Jr. Community Park at 1:00pm.

April Show and Sale: Thank you to all who worked so hard to make our Show and Sale a success. The format of 1 1/2 days on Friday and Saturday seemed to work well. Many of you brought in plants to sell and really made an impact on our revenue.

A special thanks to the following:

Mike Short, who labored diligently to get us started on Bar Coding for the checkout. It worked well and streamlined the process of cashiering and financial reports. It also enabled us to have a larger and varied selection of vendors.

Terri Straub, who coordinated the volunteers, lunches for everyone and stayed throughout assuring a seamless process and well-organized event.

Laurel Woodley, who in addition to the donation of excellent plants, helped with the identification and nomenclature of plants and staffed the Society Sales Table the entire time.

Debra Galliani, who arranged Zelle payments and did all the financial work involved.

Sally Fasteau, who made up a large sign for our event and with Jim Gardner hung it for publicity. She also staffed the Hospitality Table with help from volunteers and greeted visitors obtaining valuable information for the future.

To all of you who helped unload, set-up and organize plants, hang signs, staff the Holding and Hospitality Areas and Society Sales Table, cashiers, assistants to cashiers and those who stayed to help pack up and load cars, a heartfelt thank-you. It really takes a village.

I hope you enjoy the photos of the Show and Sale - we had a good time!

Maria Capaldo

South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society Meeting

May 17, 2026 1:00-4:00pm
South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

PRESENTATION



Joe Stead
"My Journey
with
Operculicarya"



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



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Farewell to Roberta and Jim Hanna

After 46 years of living in the same home in Southern California, Jim and Roberta are preparing for a new chapter. They are moving to Tulare by the end of May.

Their involvement in the succulent community started around 1980, right after they got married, when they saw an ad in the Press-Telegram for a plant sale. It was the Long Beach Cactus and Succulent Show and after attending, they became hooked. They joined the Long Beach Club and in 1985 became members of the South Coast Society. They also joined the Sunset, San Gabriel and before long were involved everywhere.

Plants became part of daily life. Jim spent 35 years working in a wholesale warehouse in Vernon, while Roberta balanced multiple careers, including running her own dental lab and later managing a medical office. Through it all, their growing plant collection remained central. After Jim retired in the 1990s, the hobby deepened. "The plants became a major focus," Roberta says. Jim reflects, "We didn't plan on turning it into a business. It just grew along with everything else."

By the early 2000s, that focus became Hanna Succulents. Over the years, the Hannas have supplied plants to numerous clubs for meetings and raffles and have been longtime vendors at shows and sales throughout Southern California, becoming a familiar and trusted presence in the community.

Over four decades, the Hannas have seen the cactus and succulent world change dramatically. "There are a lot more vendors now," Jim says. "But it also means you see plants today that we never would have seen back then." "The presentation of plants has improved as well. The staging is much more professional today," they note, pointing to the influence of leaders like Larry Grammer.

If plants brought people together, the Hannas helped turn those gatherings into something memorable. At CSSA conventions, they hosted a suite that became a welcoming hub. "People came from all over," Roberta recalls. "Some didn't have anywhere else to go. We had food, drinks, and a place to sit and relax. They were so grateful." These moments, as much as the plants, defined their experience.

Our thanks go to Roberta and Jim for their tireless efforts over the years. Always involved in our Society, bringing plants for the meetings, selling plants, setting up an information table, bringing publicity from other clubs, attending Board meetings, obtaining vendors for the Sale, bringing food for our pot-lucks and always being there to pitch in wherever necessary.

They will have some time to themselves to travel, but will stay involved in the community at Fresno and local clubs. We wish them well.



Presentation: “My Journey with *Operculicarya*”



Joe with a large specimen

Joe Stead will give a presentation on his experience growing *Operculicarya*. Horticulturist Joe Stead has been cultivating and popularizing these pachycaul succulent trees for decades. There are about nine *Operculicarya* species and Joe grows many of them. He has propagated from root cuttings, from seeds and grafting. He even has twins!



Joe Stead is the Horticulture Coordinator and a part-time instructor at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California. He has worked at the college since 1994. Specializing in plant propagation and hybridization, he has co-authored articles on *Boswellia*, *Operculicarya* and *Fouquieria* species, published in the "Cactus and Succulent Journal." His expertise in succulent garden design earned him a feature story in "Sunset Magazine."

Currently, Joe is spearheading two major projects: the planning and installation of a large succulent garden around the planetarium on the Orange Coast College campus, and a new International Succulent Introductions (ISI) project for the Huntington Botanical Gardens.

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Mini-Show Plant of the Month Cactus



Astrophytum asterias, in flower
(Photo by CactiGuide.com)



Astrophytum coahuilense



Astrophytum capricorne
(Photo by CactiGuide.com)

The *Astrophytum* genus is comprised of four species of globose to short cylindrical cacti and one sprawling, octopus-like member. The first four were discovered between the years 1828 and 1845. Two of these are spineless and two have prominent spines. While each species is quite distinct, one from another, these four feature a star-shaped appearance when viewed from above. Hence the name *Astrophytum*, which means star plant. *Astrophytum* species have been frequently compared to marine life, in particular *Astrophytum asterias* for its striking similarity to sea urchins.

The fifth member of this group was newly discovered in 2001.

Astrophytum caput-medusae is quite distinct from the other members of the genus and actually very distinct from all other cacti genera as well. Hence, many enthusiasts feel it should be part of its own genus and consider it to be the sole species in the genus *Digitostigma*. The name *Digitostigma* describes the long digit-like tubercles that grow something like an octopus.

Despite the noticeable differences, all five species including *caput-medusae* feature a sort of flocking of white trichomes (or bumps) on the epidermis. Although, in cultivation, some forms are bred for their lack of flocking. Plants in this genus also all have yellow flowers with fuzzy floral tubes. Some have a red-centered flower, all are radially symmetric and eventually turn into dry, fuzzy seed pods bearing relatively large, black seeds that are among the easiest to germinate.

The four original *Astrophytum* members have been extremely popular in cultivation and numerous exotic hybrids have been created that accentuate various features such as amount of flocking, number of ribs, lack of spines, etc. With the uniqueness of *caput-medusae* coupled with its late discovery, it is currently one of the most sought after cactus species by collectors world-wide. And in that sense, it fits in quite well with the other *Astrophytum* species.



Astrophytum caput-medusae
(Photo by CactiGuide.com)

Astrophytum is a Chihuahuan desert native occurring in North/Central Mexico and Southern Texas, USA. The generic name *Astrophytum* derives from the Greek words *astron*, meaning a “star” and *phyton*, meaning “plant.” The Genus name implies: “star plant.”

[Ed: Many wonderful hybrids and cultivars have been produced in Japan, particularly those of *A. asterias* and *A. myriostigma*. ‘Super Kabuto’ shown below is one example.]



Astrophytum asterias 'Super Kabuto'



Astrophytum myriostigma



Astrophytum ornatum

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

The meanings of Latin plant names on this page – from <http://davesgarden.com/guides/botanary/>

- **asterias** [ass-TEER-ee-as]
Starred.
- ***Astrophytum*** [ass-troh-FY-tum]
From the Greek *astro* (star) and *phyto* (plant).
- **capricorne** [kap-ree-KOR-nee]
Like a goat’s horn.
- **caput-medusae** [KAY-put me-DOO-say, KAY-put me-DOO-see]
Medusa’s head, referring to the Greek mythological figure.
- **coahuilense** [kwa-wee-LEN-see]
Of or from Coahuila, Mexico.
- **myriostigma** [my-ree-oh-STIG-muh]
From the Greek *myrios* (many, countless) and *stigma* (thorn, point).
- **ornatum** [or-NAH-tum]
Ornate, adorned.

2026

May

Mini-Show Plant of the Month Succulent

*Agave filifera**Agave geminiflora**Agave lophantha* 'Quadricolor'*Agave* × *pumila**Agave potatorum* 'Kichijokan'*Agave utahensis* var. *eborispina**Agave victoriae-reginae**Agave* 'White Rhino'

The genus *Agave* is part of the family Agavaceae. There are around 200 species in the genus. Most of these are from Mexico, although they occur in the southern United States and into South America.

Plants are characterized by forming rosettes of fleshy (succulent) leaves which have a sharp point or spine terminally. The leaf margins may be smooth or spiny.

Agave plants have been given the common name “century plant” because of their blooming habit. The idea is that the plants live for 100 years, bloom and die. While it is true that *Agave* are monocarpic, meaning they bloom once and then die, few species, if any, take a full 100 years to do this. When an *Agave* does bloom, it sends up a large flower stalk out of the center of the plant that grows very quickly. The height of the bloom stalk is often many times higher than the plant. This often catches people by surprise when the *Agave* they were growing in their garden for years, suddenly and rapidly goes through this transformation. This is often when they try to identify and learn more about their plant.

Because of the fleshy green succulent leaves and the sharp points, many people try to look up cactus or cacti when in fact it is an *Agave* they are searching for.

Manfreda was a genus of flowering plants in the family Asparagaceae, subfamily Agavoideae. Along with *Polianthes*, members are commonly called tuberose. The generic name honors 14th-century Italian writer Manfredus de Monte Imperiale. All species are now placed in *Agave*.

Manfreda species have rosettes of spineless, fleshy leaves branching from a very short stem, and flowers at the end of a long stalk. The flowers are tubular and whitish, yellow, green, or brownish, with lengthy stamens. *Manfreda* prefer part sun to light shade as long as the soil is well-drained. Many are prized for their patterned, wavy leaves and they look great in containers or rock gardens.



Manfreda maculosa



Manfreda undulata 'Mint Chocolate Chip'

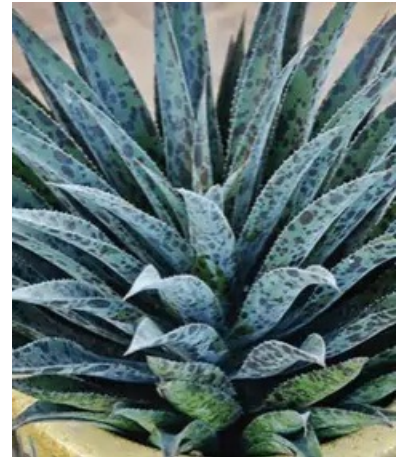
× *Mangave* is an intergeneric hybrid created by cross-breeding *Agave* and *Manfreda*. *Mangave* is often employed as an ornamental plant in dry environments, as the hybrid possesses traits of durability found in both *Agave* and *Manfreda*.



× *Mangave* 'Mission to Mars'



× *Mangave* 'Bloodspot'



× *Mangave* 'Pineapple Express'



× *Mangave* 'Spotty Dotty'

Mini-Show Calendar 2026-2027

<u>Month</u>	<u>Cactus</u>	<u>Succulent</u>
May	<i>Astrophytum</i>	<i>Agave, Manfreda</i> and hybrids
June	<i>Opuntia, Tephrocactus, Cyllindropuntia, Austrocylindropuntia</i>	<i>Euphorbia</i> (not from Madagascar)
July	<i>Melocactus</i>	Bromeliaceae (other than <i>Dyckia, Hechtia</i>)
August	<i>Copiapoa</i>	<i>Graptopetalum, Graptoveria, Pachyveria</i>
September	<i>Notocactus, Parodia</i>	<i>Sedum, Pachyphytum, Sempervivum, Graptosedum</i>
October	<i>Ariocarpus, Obregonia</i>	<i>Adenium, Adenia</i>
November	Crested and Monstrose	Crested and Monstrose
December	Holiday Pot-Luck	Holiday Pot-Luck
January 2027	<i>Mammillaria, Cochemiea</i> - Hooked Spines	Caudiciform (<i>Beaucarnia, Calibanus, Fockea, etc.</i>) No <i>Pachypodium</i>
February 2027	<i>Eriosyce</i>	<i>Gasteria</i> and hybrids
March 2027	<i>Echinocereus</i>	<i>Dudleya, Cotyledon</i>
April 2027	Show and Sale	Show and Sale

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.

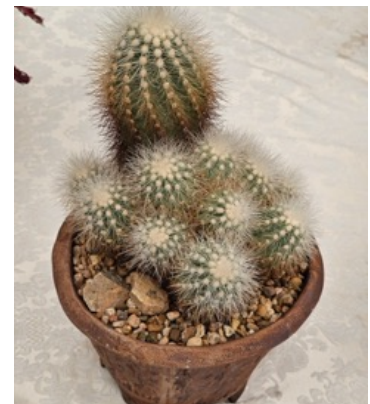
All plants must be grown by the exhibitor for a minimum of six months for Novice and Intermediate and one year for Open class.

APRIL MINI-SHOW STANDINGS

Novice Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals	Intermediate Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals	Open Class	Cactus	Succulents	Totals
Martha Bjerke		9	9	Anita Caplan	5	6	11	Maria Capaldo	4	4	8
Gustavo Cardenas	6	16	22	Vincent Darmali	8	20	28	Phyllis DeCrescenzo	26	18	44
Debra Galliani	10	2	12	Lemmono Lott		17	17	Gary Duke	10	10	20
Anna Salas		1	1	Mike Short	1	3	4	Jim Gardner	14	22	36
Warren Woodrum	6	2	8					Jim Hanna		5	5
Liz Ying		8	8					Terri Straub	12	15	27
								Laurel Woodley		5	5

SHOW AND SALE-Society Show Tables

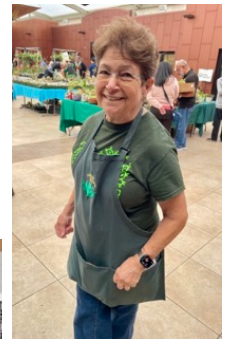
Photos by Laurel Woodley and Maria Capaldo



SHOW AND SALE - VOLUNTEERS



Society Sales Tables ready to go!



SHOW AND SALE-VENDORS



DeCrescenzo's



East Los Succulents



Corona Cactus Nursery



Green Touch Nursery



Hannas



Gary Duke



PW Plants



Desert Creations



June Wong



Russ Richer



RDD Succulents



Pet Plants



Jim Gardner

Upcoming Events



SOUTH COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY MEETING

PRESENTER: Joe Stead

"My Journey With *Operculicarya*"

May 17, 2026 1:00pm-4:00pm

South Coast Botanic Garden

26300 Crenshaw Blvd.

Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA

[For more information and to learn more](#)



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