

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

fresnocss.com

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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IN-PERSON MEETING: THURSDAY, AUGUST 4th, 7:00 P.M. (Doors open 6:30 P.M.)
REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH
1084 WEST BULLARD, FRESNO (NEAR NW CORNER OF PALM AND BULLARD)

Treasures of the Southern Atacama Desert

By Peter Beiersdorfer

Chile is home to some of the most iconic cacti in the world. This talk will focus on the genus *Copiapoa*, which grows in the far southern part of the Atacama Desert centered on the Chilean town of Copiapo. Plants shown in the presentation will include *Copiapoa cinerascens*, *C. dealbata*, *C. echinoides*, *C. haseltoniana*, *C. krainziana*, *C. longistaminea*, *C. serpentisulcata*, and *C. solaris*. The area is also home to other cactus species such as *eulychnias*, *eriosyces*, *miqueliapuntias*, and *cumulopuntias* as well as other succulent plants that are adapted to grow in one of the most arid regions on our planet.



Peter retired from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory nearly four years ago. Since then Peter has traveled twice to Chile during early spring to explore and photograph its succulent flora, complementing two earlier trips to Argentina. Peter is one of the vendors at our annual show & sale. He propagates plants from seeds and cuttings, including mesembs and bulbs from the winter rainfall areas of Southern Africa and many cactus species from South America. *He will bring plants for sale.*



FROM THE PREZ . . .**Hi Members,****It's HOT!**

This heat wave has been long and brutal. Weeks of over 100 degrees is hard on us, our pets, and our plants. Makes it difficult to get outside to care for our plants, you don't want to get sick when just watering. At least our cactus and succulents have evolved to take this heat, even if needing some protection. They all have water storing cells to get them through times of drought and heat. The leaves or stems wrinkle as they slowly use their water reserves. Then when the water comes, they plump right back up! This is why we love them! Able to go through these hard times and survive, even if it sometimes happens because we just forgot to water.

For these long heat waves, it's best to provide some sun protection for your plants if they are in pots. Pots heat up, losing moisture faster and can actually burn roots that are touching the inside walls of the pot. You can have a selection of shade cloth on Amazon, and 40% works really well here. Provides enough shade but your plants get light still. You can also use screen door material that can be found at any big box store. Comes in rolls, and you can cut it to whatever size you need. If you need to create denser shade, you just fold over the material a few times. Super easy and it lasts for years. This is also great for plants in the ground. Cut a size you need and drape it over the plant. Easy and you won't have big blankets of shade cloth laying in the yard.

Peter Beiersdorfer and Jaan Lepson are joining us for our August meeting. Peter will be giving a presentation on the Southern Atacama Desert in Chile, which is home to the mesmerizing genus *Copiapoa*. Peter gives wonderful presentations and will be bringing plants for sale. You don't want to miss this meeting!

For our September meeting, we will be having our Member's Sale. This is when you, as a member, can bring your plants to sell at our club meeting. This event will take place September 1st, in place of our regular meeting. Members can start setting up their tables at 5:15pm. The doors will be open to the public from 6pm-8pm. All sales will be through the individual member who is selling. If you are selling you will need to bring your own change. At the end of the event, all sellers are expected to clean up their area. The fee to sell is \$10 per member (cost has been reduced) and will be collected that night. If you would like to sell, please contact me. The club will be having a table, and anyone is welcome to donate items for the club table. Donated items need to be at the building between 5-5:30pm. Doors open at 6pm and there will be no selling till that time. The club will be promoting this event to get the word out to the public. We have had a lot of people show up in the past, so get there early to get in line.

Please start sharing the news of this event with friends and family! Bring your own boxes to carry plants.

We would highly encourage everyone to wear a mask to the meeting. The virus is spreading again, and we need to protect our members. Remember, it's not about you but the people around you!

Thank you,

Robert

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

*Rudy Rulloda (2nd);
Lori Clark (7th);
Howard McLachlan (10th);
Rebecca Diaz (12th)*

NEW MEMBERS *Welcome*

Bryan Clark, Clovis; Laura Clark, Fresno; Lilli Hull, Fresno;
Merber T. Pinat, Clovis; Tari Prinster, Fresno;
Malanie Salwasser, Reedley; Casey Tomasetti, Fresno;
Juergen Vespermann, Fresno; Thien Vo, Fresno;
Brian Wilds, Coarsegold

BIG EVENT THIS MONTH

36th Annual Inter-City Show & Sale, August 5, 6, 7
Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia CA
Show is free with Arboretum admission
Advance tickets required, available via the website:
www.arboretum.org
For more information: www.intercityshow.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CLOVIS BOTANICAL GARDEN

Sat, Sept. 10, Tree Pruning & Care, John Pape

Sat. Oct. 10, Pumpkin Succulent Arrangements
Roz Tampone

Fri.-Sat., Oct. 14-15, Fall Plant Sale

www.clovisbotanicalgarden.org

The garden has a cadre of enthusiastic volunteers and can always use more. Some of us remember when this garden was in its infancy; it's now well-grown.

This garden was new to me: California Botanic Garden. It's an 86-acre garden devoted to California native plants, 1500 N. College Ave, Claremont CA.

www.calbg.org

CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Our club is an affiliate of CSSA, the national organization that represents our hobby. It advocates for education, research and conservation of cacti and succulents.

Our annual affiliate dues are \$55. For individuals, there are several membership categories: \$50 for full membership which includes a quarterly journal; quarterly online newsletter, *To The Point*; access to the Seed Depot; field trips and bimonthly webinar series with experts world-wide. There is a new supporting membership, \$20, which includes all of the above except the journal.

The recent national show and sale was a financial and artistic success. We hope some of you were able to attend. www.cactusandsucculentsociety.org

In last month's newsletter we had an article about a cycad that might be the "loneliest plant." Now the latest issue of the U.C. Berkeley Botanical Garden newsletter has an article about their cycad rescue program.

In 2002 the Garden contracted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to care for about 1,000 plants confiscated as part of an elaborate sting, "Operation Botany," which targeted illegal importation. Most of the plants were probably poached from habitat, chiefly from South Africa, Asia, Australia, and Mexico.

Not all the plants the Garden received survived (which is always true of poached plants), and some of them took up to four years to leaf out of dormancy. Twenty years after rescue many of them are thriving in Berkeley, establishing its capacity as a Plant Rescue Center.

They have a webpage devoted to the cycad collection:

<https://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/collections/cycads-in-the-garden>

Sue



JULY BRAG TABLE

We had a great Brag Table last month, but no photos, unfortunately, as our photographers were absent. Bringing plants were Jack Fleming (*Adenium obesum*); Bill Gale (*Sacrocaulon multifidum*, *S. henrii*, *S. pattersonii*, *Othonna euphorbioides*, *Pachypodium namaquanum*); Jess Hull (*Crassula alstonii*, *Welwitschia mirabilis*); Mark Muradium and Patty Miller (*Adenium* in heavy bloom); Cindy Duwe (six colorful aloe hybrids); Bruce Hargreaves (*Aloe cooperi*); Fred Gaumer (*Mammillaria* cv 'Red Fred', *Ariocarpus fissuratus*); Ed Etheridge (*Adenium obesum*, *Pachypodium namaquanum*, *Euphorbia poissonii*).

We thank these exhibitors very much. If you have a plant that you think is interesting, bring it in! **Sue**



THE OLD MAN CACTUS

There are a number of cacti generally referred to as "Old Man Cactus." These are tall plants exhibiting long white "hair" (modified spines). While they may be similar in appearance, they belong to various genera: *Oreocereus*, *Espostoa* or *Pilosocereus* and are not closely related.

But the "real" Old Man, sometimes called "Mexican Old Man," is this guy, *Cephalocereus senilis*. The genus is widespread over several states of Mexico and is usually the dominant plant in these landscapes. The name *Cephalocereus* means "head candle" for the pseudocephalium that appears near the top of the stem in mature plants.

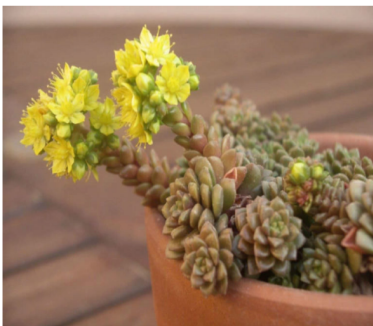
In habitat, *C. senilis* will produce stems many feet high, but the plants most of us have are young plants like those pictured here (from Wikipedia). They are slow-growing, reaching a few feet in height after a number of years. As they won't bloom until very tall, we love them for their shaggy, white spines and woolly appearance. It is thought that the "hair" protects the plant's stem from the intense sun which is common in their habitats.



Culture isn't difficult: well-draining potting mix and dry winter rest. **Sue**



LITTLE GEM



(Illus: worldofsucculents.com)

Sedum "Little Gem" is an attractive little plant, suitable for pots or dish gardens. It's a cross between *Sedum nutans* and *S. humifusum*, created by the late Bob Grim of San Jose, CA., a prolific grower who produced numerous hybrids of plants in the large crassula family.

'Little Gem' is a hardy grower, forming a mat of numerous compact sempervivum-like rosettes which can flush reddish in the sun. (That being said, it should be protected from the direct sun in our area.) It can take a few degrees of frost.

You might find the plant called 'Desert Gem' in some nurseries. But I think we all can agree that 'Little Gem' is a true gem. **Sue**



PLANT HELP IN THE KITCHEN (OR BATHROOM) CABINET

“Aspirin water” (three aspirins dissolved in four gallons of water and sprayed on plants every few weeks) can improve growth and yields, often remarkably. Aspirin is salicylic acid, which plants manufacture to trigger natural defenses against bacteria, fungi and viruses.

Gardeners are reporting that “willow water” produces the same results. Made by steeping cuttings of willows (*Salix*) in water for 48 hours, it is often used to increase rooting of cuttings by soaking them in it for 24 hours, then treating them with rooting hormones. The active ingredient in willows is believed to be rhizocaline, which is not itself a hormone but that greatly enhances the action of hormones.

Willows are also rich in salicylic acid (or possibly other compounds of similar action), and so can serve as a substitute for aspirin.

Indigenous people knew the wonders of willow water centuries ago. When I was still working in the CSUF library, one of our student assistants said that his brother, a medical researcher, told him that, if aspirin were discovered now, it would be available only by prescription.

Hydrogen peroxide is as common a household item as aspirin, and like aspirin it has application in the garden. The popular cleaner-bleach-antiseptic is also proving to be a good plant protector and growth promoter. Gardeners report improved germination of many seeds when they are soaked overnight in one ounce of 3% hydrogen peroxide (the formulation usually sold in drug stores) in a pint of water. Added to foliar fertilizer sprays or drip irrigation water, it is said to prevent or cure bacterial or fungal diseases, and also helps supply oxygen to roots in compacted or saturated soil. It may also be useful as an insecticide, killing the eggs and larvae of certain pests.

Sue



THE INCHWORM PLANT



(photo from World of Succulents)

The Inchworm Plant, *Senecio pendulus*, is a curious little plant. It has thick, fleshy cylindrical stems marked with gray and sharply constricted at intervals to form distinct joints. It is native to NE Africa and Arabia. The Inchworm loops its way across the soil, diving underground, then coming up at a later spot. It is best cultivated in a shallow pan or even in the ground. I recall seeing it growing under the benches at Henrietta’s Nursery many years ago, covering an area of several square feet.

(If you’re new to the hobby, Henrietta’s was a one-of-a-kind nursery at 1345 N. Brawley in Fresno, operated by Jerry and Sylvia Hardaway. It was quite a place. They did a big mail order business, and Jerry’s catalogs were collectors’ items.) *Sue*

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