

# CACTUS CORNER NEWS

## Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

[www.fresnocss.org](http://www.fresnocss.org)

Vol. 33, no. 8

*Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America*

August 2015

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, August 6, 7:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30 P.M.)  
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 North Fresno Street, Fresno**

### PROGRAM:

## **“Not so common cacti and their flowers.”**

### PRESENTED BY: **Elton Roberts**

Elton Roberts is a well-known and highly respected grower of cactus and succulents, and a regular contributor to the Cactus and Succulent Journal as well as many cactus websites. His knowledge of cacti is extensive. He said he learned to love the desert, “when as a very young child granddad would take us kids out to the desert. It was in those days a half-day journey. I got to like the desert because it seemed so peaceful of a place.

This was back in the days when Palm Canyon was only known to a very few people. What a wonderful place that was for young kids for we could look at cactus or play in the stream flowing among the palm trees. Someone gave me a start of an Aeonium when I was about five years old. I did not know what to do with it but I guess they told me to stick it in the ground. It grew into a fantastic plant. Someone gave me a cactus plant in a pot and the rest is history”.

Elton has had cactus plants most of his life and formed Roberts Cactus and Succulents Nursery in 1987 and now he has well over 2,000 different kinds of cactus.

*Let's give Elton a BIG welcome back!*

**Plants: Elton will be bringing plants for purchase.**



**Arthrocerus itabiricola**

Toledo's Mexican Restaurant  
367 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno  
559.224.0975 Menu:

<http://toledosmexicanfood.com/menu/>

~ DINNER ~  
Members are invited

Contact: Rosanna Rojas by Wednesday,  
August 6, to make reservations  
Phone: 559.999.001  
Email: [rfrojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfrojas96@gmail.com)

**FROM THE PREZ ...**

Hi, all,

Can you believe it? The year is more than half over! I always groan when I think of this, as I wonder just what I've accomplished so far with my yard and plants. For this year I can trot out the excuse that my bad hip and resultant surgery slowed me down—and it did; but now I can walk without a problem and can pick up things and carry them around. (It's amazing how you take that ability for granted.) So why am I not outside—*right now*—repotting, dividing, etc., etc.? You know what? I've decided that I'm just going to do what I can get done. If some things have to wait, so be it.

September is our Members' Sale Night (Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>). Those of you who wish to sell plants and plant-related items should sign up at this meeting. There is a \$10 fee for each vendor. Remember that this event is open to the general public and that we send out advertising postcards to those on our mailing list. Start stockpiling boxes and small change. There will be a club sale table, as well, and we will be glad for anything you may wish to donate. We will have a signup sheet, as well, for those who wish to bring refreshments.

Later in September is our annual bus trip. We're going up to U.C. Davis to visit the botanical conservatory, Ernesto Sandoval, Director. It's possible that we'll have time for another stop. I've heard about a herb farm in the Vacaville area that is experienced in accommodating bus parties. (They have drought tolerant plants, too). Does that sound like something we would like to do? To reserve a seat on the bus, get your \$40 check to Cindy Duwe. (The checks will not be deposited until just before or after the trip.)

In the absence this month of Paul and Madeleine Mitchell, Karl Church has volunteered to run the Plant Opportunity Table, and Charlene Stebles will be handling the club library. Many thanks to them both. Paul and Madeleine will be cruising in the Baltic Sea area, where it's likely to be a lot cooler than it will be here.

Looking even farther ahead, the Fresno Fair will be October 7-18. We hope to have our club's usual large presence in the Floriculture Building. We need you as an exhibitor and/or helper around the cactus and succulent exhibits. Check the exhibit schedule online or get the "Exhibits Handbook" from the Fair office. Drive in at the Chance Ave. gate (Gate #2); there are a bunch of signs pointing you toward the office.

Hop to see you at the meeting, **Sue**

**MESSAGE FROM MADELEINE MITCHELL, OUR CLUB LIBRARIAN:**

"There are several overdue books and some will owe fines so be sure to return books due or bring some cash." The following is from the Library, Rules of Use, 'To check out a book a borrower must have been a member for at least 2-months and have attended 2-club meetings. A borrower may sign out two books at a time with a loan period of 2-months. The fine for overdue books is \$2.00 per month. All fines are to be turned over to the club Treasurer.' For the complete rules see your Club binder. If you weren't issued a binder, please contact Board member, Tom Meyer.

**BOARD MEETING:**

The August board meeting will be Monday, the 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista.  
All members are welcome to attend; board members should attend.  
If any are unable to attend, please let Sue know.



**FRESNO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD MEETING****July 6, 2015****President Sue Haffner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.**

**Attendance:** Robert Scott, Treasurer; Cindy Duwe, Secretary; Rosanna Rojas, Vice President; Tom Meyer, Board Member; Rudy Rulloda, Board Member; Mary Drumheller, Board Member; Polly Dunklin, Board Member; Ann Bierbower, Board Member; Carole Grosch, Board Member.  
**Absent:** Fred Gaumer. **Visitors:** Susan Cook, Linda Olivas, Doris Hooton, Dominic Ortiz

**Officer Reports:**

At the June meeting the room was left in less than pristine condition; therefore, someone will be vacuuming at the end of the meeting if needed. The air conditioner was turned off before the meeting. Sue will make sure it is on, if needed, at the next meeting. The Plant Opportunity Table at the August meeting, in the absence of Paul and Madeleine Mitchel, will be run by Karl Church. Charlene Stebles will be in charge of the Library.

Vice President, Rosanna Rojas announced the speaker for August will be Elton Roberts. The club needs someone to set up the computer and the digital projector before the next meeting. Robert Scott will be the speaker for November.

Treasurer, Robert Scott, announced the club netted \$14,961.25 at the Show & Sale in June. The club table netted \$589.00.

**Old Business:**

Show & Sale was discussed. It was suggested that we need a larger room. Cindy Duwe will look into renting one for next year. Crowd control was fine with the exception of the large crowd at the very beginning of the morning on Saturday. No suggestion was forthcoming. The Show Plants/Tables were discussed. It was agreed that there is a need for the Show Plants. No changes were made. Cindy Duwe announced that the bus has been reserved. She sent Classic Charter \$150.00 to reserve the bus for the Bus Trip on September 19, 2015. The board decided to charge the members \$40.00 for the trip, included in the price is the \$8.00 entrance to the U.C. Davis Botanical Conservatory. The fee is non-refundable unless one of the board members is notified of the change in plans by September 12, 2015.

If the members on the bus trip spend over \$25.00 at the Conservatory they will receive a 10% discount on subsequent purchases.

**New Business:**

Sue announced the need for a sign up sheet at the August meeting for those wanting to be vendors at the Member's Sale in September.

The last t-shirt was sold at the Show & Sale. Sue stated there is a need for a member to design a logo for the club. More t-shirts will be printed.

Sue suggested that the club put together a portfolio of photos showing gardens and drought tolerant plants of the members of the club. She said this will be very useful at events such as the Water-Wise Event in the spring.

Dominic Ortiz gave a report on his participation at the Discovery Center. His student mentors helped set up the Show & Sale. They were greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Duwe, Secretary





**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** Rudy Rulloda (2<sup>nd</sup>);  
 Noelle Anderson (4<sup>th</sup>);  
 Howard McLachlin (10<sup>th</sup>);  
 Lucy Mays (18<sup>th</sup>); Lisa Brew (28<sup>th</sup>);  
 Alicia Cobian (30<sup>th</sup>).

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**VISITORS IN JUNE:** Toni Phillips; Patty Miller,  
 Edward Etheridge, Elena Snapp, Craig Roberts and  
 Gwen Olshove.

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**PHOTOS NEEDED:** We need photos of drought  
 tolerant landscaping using succulents. Those of us  
 who represent the club at “water-wise” gardening  
 events really need to be able to show visitors  
 views of how others have used cacti and succulents  
 in their yards. Ann Bierbower has volunteered to  
 put together a binder of these views. We would  
 appreciate members sending her photos of their  
 yards: [abierbower@comcast.net](mailto:abierbower@comcast.net).

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**CLUB TEE SHIRTS:** As we’ve sold our last tee shirt,  
 we will need to produce a new edition. I would like  
 a committee to work on a new design. Are you  
 artistic? Have an eye for design? We need your ideas.

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**BIG EVENT THIS MONTH**

30<sup>th</sup> Annual InterCity Show and Sale,  
 August 8-9, Los Angeles County Arboretum,  
 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, sponsored by the  
 Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Gabriel Cactus &  
 Succulent Societies; hours 9-5, both days.

Information:

[www.lacss-show.com/intercityshow.html](http://www.lacss-show.com/intercityshow.html)

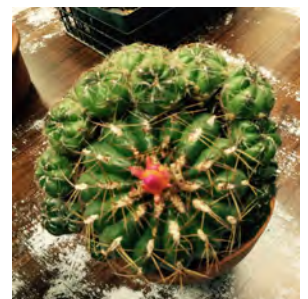
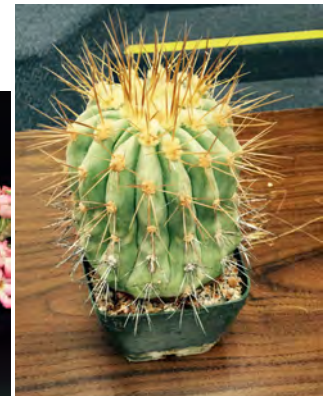
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**GET ON THE BUS:** The club bus trip will be  
 Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>—to the U.C. Davis  
 Conservatory and probably to another  
 destination or two. Cost is \$40.00; first come,  
 first served. Get your check to Cindy Duwe (the  
 check holds your seat.) If you have any  
 questions, get in touch with Cindy: 433-3304,  
 285-4622, [cindyduwe@yahoo.com](mailto:cindyduwe@yahoo.com).

**JULY BRAG TABLE:** Fred Gaumer brought  
*Haworthia truncata v. maughanii* (3 specimens  
 showing different markings), *Copiapoa hypogaea*,  
*Neochilenia maleolata v. lanata* and *gymnocalycium*  
*glaucum*. Dennis Anderson displayed *Copiapoa*  
*haseltoniana*. Bill Gale showed *Oroya minima* and  
*Astrophytum ‘Ginsya’*. Val McCullough showed a  
 beautiful *Adenium* cultivar. Charlene Stebles  
 brought “just 2 pretty patio plants.”

We thank all of them and want to encourage  
 others to bring in items for the Brag Table.

(Workshop plants on page 8.)



## Getting to Know You . . .

### Domenic Ortiz

Big changes have come to The Discovery Center and the Deutsch Garden. A major change is in the person of Domenic "Dom" Ortiz. He is a newer member and has helped out in some of our activities. One greatly appreciated event was when several of his student volunteers helped with our June Show and Sale by setting up tables and preparing them for plant staging.

A Fresno native, Ortiz is the young adult and adult volunteer co-coordinator at the Discovery Center. Volunteering and volunteering is a big part of Dom Ortiz's life. "I love it, I just love what I do," he says. "I want to get young people to think about volunteering. Somewhere down the line it will come up - what have you been doing, what have you done with your life? "



After retiring, Ortiz has been connected with the Center since 2012. He played golf with FC&SS member Jack Loughmiller, learned about the Discovery Center and volunteered at the Center to unwind. It was there he met Paul Mitchell and Tom Meyer. "Paul just goes, goes, goes," Ortiz relates. "I've learned a lot from him. I remember him telling a group of volunteers, 'This is when you learn to love cactus.' "Tom is a dynamo," he says. "He's done a lot for the Garden." Both Mitchell and Meyer gave hours upon hours of their time in caring for the cacti and succulents throughout the property.

Married for 40 years, Dom and his wife, Elizabeth, don't concentrate on a garden at home. A cactus resided in their front yard for many years, before it passed away. Their home was known in the neighborhood as "The house with a cactus in front." Instead of spending time on a personal garden, he tends the Center's Deutsch Garden and oversees the volunteers working there. "It's sort of like acting as a labor contractor," he says. "We provide water, shade and breaks. Volunteers are here for such a short period of time; we want things the simpler the better. They can choose an area to work in, give themselves willingly to a project."

Before retiring, Ortiz was a residential electrician and has a background in, among other things, maintenance, painting, plumbing and concrete work, all skills that come in handy in maintaining the various areas of the Discovery Center. "Like everywhere else, water is a high issue here," he says.

A few facts about the Deutsch Garden:

Starting in 1930 and over several years' time, the late Fred Deutsch and his wife Perle collected and planted 250 varieties of cacti and succulents in the backyard of their Fig Garden home. They obtained the plants during their travels to Mexico and the Southwestern United States.

It was Deutsch's wish the garden be preserved and shared with the public, but a permit to operate the garden as a public park in the Fig Garden area, was not granted after neighbors objected.

*(Continued on following page.)*

The Deutsch Garden was moved to Fresno's The Discovery Center in 1995. This is a hands-on science and environmental education museum, located at 1944 N. Winery Ave., in Fresno.

The Garden is approximately 85 years old measures about one acre.  
Admission to the garden is free. Hours are 10-4, daily.

"I want young people to volunteer later in life, says Ortiz. "There are so many organizations out there. " It's wonderful that my wife is very supportive. That's really important."

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Deutsch Garden can call Ortiz at (559) 696-1614.

***Carole Grosch***

## **DON MARTIN**



We are sad to report that longtime member Don Martin passed away July 14<sup>th</sup> after an illness of several years. He was 91. Several club members joined family and friends on July 22<sup>nd</sup> for a memorial service at West Minster Church.

Don and his wife, Dolores, had been members of FC&SS for decades, were always willing to help out with club activities in any way they could. In addition to succulents, Don and Dolores were champion camellia growers and exhibitors and were stalwart members of the Central California Camellia Society (now inactive). Some years ago, their yard was on our spring garden tour. Members were duly impressed with the succulents, camellias, bonsai, vegetables and fruit trees.

Don was a lifelong Fresnan. Drafted into the service in 1942, he served in the Pacific Theater with the Army Air Corps. His unit was involved in the Iwo Jima campaign. After the war, Don finished college at Fresno State and became an elementary school teacher, serving at Lincoln, John Burroughs and Norseman schools. In addition, he was a dedicated member of West Minster Church, having joined when he was a boy. He was Sunday school superintendant and an elder. (He and Dolores met at that church.)

All of us who knew Don were impressed with his kindness and generosity. He was a thoroughly decent man. Our sympathies go out to Dolores and their family.

***Sue***

**Club access:** President, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu); Programs, Rosanna Rojas, 999-0017, [rfrojas96@gmail.com](mailto:rfrojas96@gmail.com); Treasurer, Robert Scott, 960-3665, [Rob\\_scott85@yahoo.com](mailto:Rob_scott85@yahoo.com); Editor, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:sueh@mail.fresnostate.edu); Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 226-0145, [mforvet@comcast.net](mailto:mforvet@comcast.net); Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, [madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net); Webmaster, Vickie Veen, [vickieveen@gmail.com](mailto:vickieveen@gmail.com); Sunshine, Carole Grosch, 323-8602, [cgg266@comcast.net](mailto:cgg266@comcast.net).



## PLANT WARFARE

### By Elton Roberts

Think about all the seed that plants make. Some plants will only make a few seed per pod; others will make a lot of pods in one season and lots of seed. One plant can make several hundred seed; some make several thousands of seed in one season. I pollinate my plants so as to get seed. From one *Echinocereus coccineus* plant alone I can get a half dozen seed pods. Each pod can have hundreds of seed in them. Some pods on some plants have thousands of seed in them. Think what the desert would be like if every one of those seed grew into a large plant. There would not be room for the sand and rocks and there would be no rattlesnakes to watch out for.



If you go to the flats in Arizona where saguaro grow you will see all the plants spaced out quite evenly on the desert. The reason is that the plants have roots that radiate out like spokes on a bike wheel. In a healthy stand of saguaro you will not see a small or young plant. Saguaros make many thousands of seed each year. A single stem can have as many as a dozen or more flowers on it. Think how many flowers a large plant with a half dozen arms can have. Each seed pod makes 2,000 to 3,000 seed. So now think about it: if a stem has a dozen flowers and makes a dozen seed pods, that one stem alone makes 24,000 to 36,000 seed. That is for one stem; if it has, say, 6 arms and the main stem, that plant alone makes a quarter of a million seed in one year. And there are many thousands of plants. Think about it: if you could gather every seed pod from every saguaro for one season you would not have a place to store them all. It would be billions of seed. So why are there no young saguaro plants among the old healthy plants? The reason is that the healthy plants kill any seedlings that grow so they will not have competition from others. Saguaros do not kill other kinds of cactus plants like *echinocereus*, *opuntia* or other species of cactus, only saguaro plants that would be competing for the meager rainfall.

Yes, many seedlings germinate each year but the healthy large plants use some kind of chemical warfare to kill the seedlings. Now if you go into the hill country, say north of Phoenix, you will see saguaros growing fairly close together. I have seen them even growing only a meter or two apart. Why do they not kill each other? It is because of the rocks that make the hills and hold them in place. The rocks may be like blades standing up on edge and the roots of one do not grow over the blades and meet up with the roots of other plants because of the lay of the rocks. So they do not fight, but in space between the blades of rock that has a plant growing in it you will not see another plant, for it would be killed.

Now let's go back to the flat land and say that in a powerful thunderstorm lightning hits a saguaro and kills it; what happens? In its place will grow many seedling saguaros. As these grow the strongest one will kill the weaker ones around it and this happens all over the area that the large plant had controlled. There is a real war going on in that area. Soon there are only a dozen or so seedlings and let's now say they are from one to two feet tall. Their roots grow out more and more to support the plant. As the roots of each plant meet up with those of others, the chemical war is on again and the weaker of the two plants will be killed. In time there is only one plant taking the place of the plant killed by lightning. This war can take quite a few years to complete. The winning plant will be fairly close to where the original plant grew. To be off to the edge of the circle of roots would make them come in contact with the roots of the other old plants. These older plants also kill many seedlings that try to grow away from where the old plant grew. It's war: seedlings are against seedlings and any that grow too close to the old plants are also killed by them.

*(Continued on following page.)*

I have planted saguaro seed several times and out of 100 seed I can get 100 seedlings up. I have counted and was surprised for every seed had germinated. In a few weeks I count and there are maybe only 85 seedlings. Before long there are only 2 seedlings out of 100 left alive. One looks good and the other not so good. They are at opposite ends of the seed tray. I take them out and give each a pot of their own and in short order they both look good and are growing. This happened several times and that got frustrating; it was then that I figured out that even these tiny seedlings were also making warfare. So the last time I planted saguaro seed I let them get to about 10 days old and then I transplanted them and I did not lose them this time. Some of those plants are now 50 cm. [20 inches] tall.

This warfare does not go on with all cacti. I have seen that plants like *rebutia* and *sulcorebutia* do not use warfare but live in peace. I am not saying that all of them live in peace but I have not seen the warfare going on with all cacti of the same species. One time I had lots of white flowering *Echinocereus pentalophus* from seed and I planted 3 seedlings per pot. These seedlings were 1 ½ to 2 inches tall; I figured 3 plants to a pot would fill the pots faster. I planted them in 8 inch hanging pots. Before long I saw that the plants looked like they needed help: one was growing and was almost twice as large as when planted; the second was growing but was smaller than plant #1, and plant #3 was smaller than when planted. I had planted maybe 20 pots like this and every pot was the same way. That was when I learned that saguaros are not the only cacti that use chemical warfare. I had to remove two plants from each pot. I potted each in its own pot and they all took off growing and before long even the smallest of the warfare plants were growing just fine. By the end of the season you could not tell any difference in the plants.

(Editor: Elton wrote this as part of the article on seeds that appeared in the June newsletter)

**WORKSHOP:** We had a fun time at the July workshop, looking at plants in genera starting with E and F. Euphorbias populated the table: Bill Gale brought a collection of rare ones, including *E. poissonii*; Mary Drumheller brought *E. tortirama*; our youngest member, Sean, brought a pair of *E. obesa* plants, a male and a female on which he had successfully set seed; Sue Haffner brought *E. gariepina*; someone displayed a blooming *Pedilanthus macrolobus* (it's in the euphorbia family).

Where were the F's? Mary displayed a spineless form of *Ferocactus glaucescens*. Dan Gale brought a flat of *astrophytum*s to give away, as well as some fruit and vegetables. And we had a bit of a party, dining on the picnic leftovers of carne asada, rice and homemade tortillas. The August workshop will be Wednesday, Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista.

All members are welcome. Join us!





## SANSEVIERIA CV. 'BONCEL'



In recent years a new sansevieria cultivar has intrigued fans of these plants. Sansevieria 'Boncel' has short, thick, tubular leaves characterized by prominent cross-banding.

In an article in *Sansevieria, The Journal of the International Sansevieria Society*, no. 22 (May 2010) the plant's originator, Edianta Sebayang, described how he found it in an Indonesian nursery:" For three years a new clone of sansevieria has been found in Indonesia, namely *Sansevieria* 'Boncel', which in Indonesian means "dwarf", referring to its small stature or below normal size. This type of sansevieria was originally discovered at my friend's plantation. He had

planted around one thousand specimens, namely *Sansevieria cylindrica v. patula*, *S. cylindrica v. cylindrica*, *S. trifasciata* 'Bantel's Sensation', among others. Among these types, they came across one kind that came from a seed of *S. cylindrica v. patula* but with a different shape, size and color. It seems this specimen is a new clone that was established from a natural crossing, because although I tried to propagate it at home, leaf cuttings stayed the same as the mother plant: its length, diameter, absence of canal, distichous leaves, along with its light green color with lighter grey-green cross banding."

The picture above, from the journal, is of a plant grown by Mr. Sebayang. "I grow sansevierias with a sand and potting soil mixture. This mixture contains a combination of sands with pores that are taken from volcanic eruptions, compost that has undergone a process of fermentation, along with a small amount of dolomite limestone. I plant the sansevieria in a pot with a big hole at the bottom for drainage." He keeps most of his plants outside under UV plastic, watered 3 times per week, except in rainy weather. He also feeds with a complete organic fertilizer and employs growth hormones.

*Sansevieria cylindrica v. patula* cv. 'Boncel' has been available from commercial sources for several years. Even so, a nurseryman from the Netherlands has jumped in to patent what is basically the same plant: USPP 24457 P3, *Sansevieria* cv. SAN201202; "seedling of *cylindrica* noticed in 2007; discovered by the inventor, J.W.M. Scheffers, Netherlands, in 2008 in Bangkok." In the article referenced above, Mr. Sebayang states that around 2007 he had shared propagations of 'Boncel' with friends in Thailand and the Philippines. Could one of these plants be the one that Mr. Scheffers "discovered"? By patenting the plant, the nurseryman reserves the right to propagate and sell it.

The International Sansevieria Society was established in 2001 in Great Britain. Thirty-three numbers of the *Journal* have been issued. Now all 33 are available on a CD which you can purchase on the Society's website: [www.sansevieria-international.org](http://www.sansevieria-international.org); the price is 21.50 British pounds (around \$33.33). It's a great deal for any sansevieria fan.

