

Central Spine

January 2013

Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America On the Web at www.centralarizonacactus.org

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CACSS January 2013 Meeting
2 p.m. Sunday, January 27
Dorrance Hall Desert Botanical Garden
Presenter: **Woody Minnich:**
**The Secrets of Growing Quality Cacti
and other Succulents**

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Subpilocereus repandus with 14 crests- Photo 5 in Sue Hakala's article about Aruba, p.9. Sue took the photo.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Wayne Whipple

I am honored to have been elected your new President. We have a great Board of Directors that will be governing this Society. The Board now has 16 members, probably the most we ever have had and the maximum allowed by our bylaws.

I am happy that our Society will continue to benefit from the loyalty and dedication of our Vice President and Program Chair Gard Roper, who has the herculean challenge of not only organizing the speakers for each general meeting, but also overseeing the workshops and special interest groups within the Society.

Lois Schneberger will continue as the Society's Secretary and will add to her list of duties that of Historian/Archivist. I enjoyed my five years as Treasurer but am pleased that Tom Rankin, CPA, will succeed me. He has the skills and is a former Board Member. Steve Martinez, our Immediate Past President, to whom we owe a great deal of gratitude for his three years as President, will continue to serve in many capacities and is the current Sales Committee Chairman for this year's April Show & Sale.

We welcome back to the Board two energetic workhorses that we all know well, Jo Davis and Doug Dawson, who were recently elected to two-year terms. Doug is going to be Gard's worthy programming teammate, and they already have some great speakers lined up for the year. One of our members, Woody Minnich, is our January speaker, and we have enjoyed many of his well-prepared presentations.

The Propagation and Aloe Committees remain active, and we would like to have more committees such as these. So please give us your suggestions for programs, workshops, and special interest areas and your offers of help in organizing them. Although our monthly meetings with outstanding speakers will probably remain the core of our activities, we also realize that our members have broad interests, which we hope to satisfy.

Jo will be heading a new initiative entitled Members-Keeping-In-Touch. A service she has done well for a long time. We often wonder what is happening to members outside of the meetings, and Jo will keep us informed about significant events in their lives.

The Society's membership at the beginning of the year stood at 335 members, up by 29 percent over the previous year. The growth was due substantially to our Membership Committee headed by Beth Kirkpatrick, and after reelection, we are fortunate to have her remain in that capacity. With a larger membership, we will be able to expand our activities to satisfy the diverse interests of our membership. For example, we should be able to see more workshops and special interest groups such as those specializing in aloes.

Three active members who joined the Board this year are Wendy Barrett, Mike Gallagher and Dan Smith, who already have proven their capabilities as directors. Wendy organized our Holiday party in December. Mike not only judged our Show & Sale last spring, but also served on the Nominating Committee. Dan Smith also was a great help at last year's Show & Sale and is already planning an adenium exhibit for this year.

We are fortunate to have diligent workers, who were not up for reelection this year, remain on the Board. Those include Joe Barnes, Joe Miracle, Nancy Mumpton, Cindy Capek and Sue Tyrrel. All have been members for quite some time and have volunteered to help with major Society functions, especially the Show & Sale. Last year, Sue Tyrrel chaired the Nominating Committee, and she is the current Chair of this year's Show & Sale. Everyone knows Cindy as she handles the refreshments at the meetings.

We have a strong Board this year, and I thank all the members for serving. We have a shared vision to see that the CACSS remains loyal to its mission, and we have the camaraderie of dedicated members to achieve this.

You may not be aware of it, but we recently had problems with our website. It is up and running now, but only because of the tremendous work done by Leo Martin.

We are looking forward to the continued commitment of those who work hard for the Society but do not serve on the Board. Certainly, everyone greatly appreciates the hard work done by our Newsletter Editor Diana Decker. We are so fortunate to have her. Our Librarian Paul Schueneman and Assistant Librarian Marty Shahan are here at each meeting with our collection of books -- a lot of hard work. I am happy that they will remain in their current positions.

One of our favorite programs over the years has been our Cactus Rescue. Mainly because of the slowdown in the overall economy, building construction also slowed, and that in turn reduced the number of rescue opportunities. This slowdown seems to be abating, and we need to be prepared to restart our Cactus Rescue program. We need volunteers to get it rolling again. Please contact me if you are interested in spearheading this popular program.

Through your help and participation, we will again have another great year. We are so very lucky to be able to meet at the Desert Botanical Garden, which gives great support to all our activities held here. Again, I thank you for electing me your new President and am looking forward to a great year.

Welcome To New Members

Minyon "Mickie" Bond

Edmund Hunt

***Membership Chair:
Beth Kirkpatrick***

Open Garden

Sunday, February 17

10:30 am - 3pm

16819 S. 15th Ave., Phoenix

Cliff Fielding is having his 6th annual open garden and cactus social. There are a bunch of African Bulbs, hundreds of seedlings, collector Cactus, and a whole mess of Mesembs. Most of the plants are seedlings or young plants. Everyone and their guests are welcome to spend a pleasant afternoon in the warm February sun. There will be a few snacks and drinks.

For more details, call Cliff: 480-283-1940

**2013 Dues
are now overdue.
If you haven't paid yet,
use the form on page 12.**

SAVE THE DATE

On Saturday, March 16, four CACSS members will have open gardens.

**Jo Davis, Sue Hakala, Debra Life and Joe Miracle
all live within about one mile of each other. They will have their gardens open
for touring on that day. Debra will host a potluck at the end of the tour. The
gardens are all near the 101 and Guadalupe Road exit. More details later.**

An Interesting Experiment in Seed Germination

By Dick Carter

During the years 2002-2008, I lived in Shijiazhuang, China, the capital city of Hebei Province. Cacti are a great passion with many people in China. I acquired and grew a number of very interesting plants from the city's open-air houseplant and tropical fish market. Before going to China, I had raised quite a few plants from seed that I had acquired from Steven Brack at Mesa Garden in New Mexico. I thought it would be fun to repeat the experience in China -- and e-mailed Steven to see if he would send seed to China. He would, and did. Most of the seed were sown soon after their arrival, but I reserved a small number of seed from several packets to be sown later, in case the first sowings damped off. I had no problems with these seedlings, all of which grew well -- and eventually ended up with Chinese friends, when I returned to the United States. *Rebutia marsoneri* was particularly popular, as it usually blooms after its first year above ground, and the yellow flowers are quite beautiful.

This past September, I was going through some boxes of "junk" that I had brought back from China, and discovered the seeds that I had reserved from the original shipment. They had been purchased in 2005, making them seven years old, at minimum. I sadly thought that the seeds had been wasted, as it is fairly well known that cactus seed germinates very poorly if it is not reasonably fresh. However, having nothing to lose but a little of my spare time, I decided to sow this seed as an experiment to see how viable it might be after such a long time.

For the most part, the results were as I had expected: no germination. Included in this group were *Echinocereus*, *Epicactus* hybrids, *Stenocactus*, *Gymnocalycium*, and *Rebutia*. There were two interesting surprises, however: *Harrisia fragrans* produced 11 nice seedlings, and I got one seedling of *Hylocereus trigonus*. Four genera of Crassulaceae exhibited no germination at all, nor did *Calibanus hookeri*, *Ceropegia bulbosa*, *Raphionacme dyeri*, and *Dioscorea hemicrypta*. Other succulent families were of greater interest, though.



Jatropha cinerea (Ortega) Müller Argoviensis 1866



Ipomoea pubescens Hornemann 1813



Merremia dissecta Hallier 1894

Three species of *Euphorbia* showed no germination and neither did *Jatropha podagrica*. *Jatropha cinerea* was another story. This plant has quite large seeds, almost a centimeter in diameter. I had reserved two seeds of this taxon, and after a 24-hour soaking I planted them on December 3. I was amazed when a humongous seedling appeared on December 10. This plant is now exactly four weeks old, is 6 inches tall, with its first true leaves about 3 inches across, and has been transplanted to a four-inch pot. The stem is already beginning to "fatten up." My amazement was due to the fact that the **fresh** seed I had sown in China all rotted away!

I have generally had poor luck with geophytic cucurbits (gourd family, *Cucurbitaceae*). Steven Brack assures me that it is only because I don't keep the seed pots warm enough to induce germination. However, a few seeds of *Coccinia indica* produced one nice seedling that is about to outgrow its seed pot, after 29 days from planting.

The best germination results were all from geophytic plants in the family Convolvulaceae. A few seeds of *Ipomoea pubescens* produced two handsome plants, now 28 days from planting. Both have several true leaves, and have vines about one foot in length. *Ipomoea digitata* has a single seedling after 23 days. The cotyledons are large and widely spread, and the first true leaf is just visible. *Ipomoea teotitlanica* also produced a single seedling after being sown on December 19. This seed was upside down unfortunately, and at one week of age, the cotyledons were below ground and two roots were up in the air. I upended the plant and reset it, but it still does not look too healthy. Hopefully, it will survive. *Merremia dissecta* also produced a single seedling from five seeds sown on December 8. This plant now has several true leaves, and the vine is almost a foot in length. All of the Convolvulaceae taxa produced at least one seedling.

In summary: It is worth trying to sow seed that is not completely fresh, particularly if you expect no results. If you **do** get seedlings, they are a pleasant surprise, especially when they appear during the holiday season!

ALOES ALOES ALOES ALOES ALOES ALOES ALOES ALOES

Article and photos by Diana and John Crummey

This is the time to visit our botanical gardens to experience the aloes in bloom, or soon to be in bloom. We visited the Desert Botanical Garden last week and were rewarded with the densely flowered *Aloe hercules*, *A. ramosissima* and *A. dichotoma*. Aloe Cynthia Giddy is displaying her colors en masse, making a lovely entrance to the aloe garden. Aloe *wickensii*'s showy bicolor flowers of deep orange-yellow blooms are a joy to see. Don't forget to look for the South African irises that are at their peak in the aloe gardens, and also look for the lithops.



Aloe hercules DBG



Aloe ferox at Boyce Thompson Arboretum 2012

In February, the Boyce Thompson Arboretum aloes will be out for a spectacular display along the canyon walls and down along the creek. *A. ferox* and *A. marlothii* should be in flower by then. The flowers are bright red-orange. Make sure you look for *A. taurii* which is planted in the main aloe bed. Congratulations must go out to Cathy Babcock, Director of Horticulture, Tammy Knight and the BTA staff for working year round, planting more aloes from Arabia, South Africa and Madagascar. This is a wonderful garden to visit. Please take the time to drive to Superior and experience the beauty of the BTA aloes.



**Answers to the This Cute Little Plant's Questions
(featured on page 1 of the
December 2012 Central Spine)**

Doug Dawson took the photo
of this Conophytum sp
in the Richtersvel area in northwest South Africa.



Visitors look at beautiful plants at the 2012 Show and Sale

Photo by John Crummey

The 2013 Show & Sale –April 5, 6 and 7, 2013

Article by Sue Tyrrel, Show and Sale Chair

Bring your plants for the show on Wednesday April 3, 2013. This may sound like a long way off, but you should start thinking now about which lucky plants will be shown. The plants must have been cared for by the exhibitor for at least six months; this mean you must have owned it since November 2012. The complete information booklet is on our wonderful website: <http://www.centralarizonacactus.org>. Check it out and take notice of those beauties and oddities you care for; which one or ones will you share with us?

Here is information from our rule book:

Entry Details:

- *Current members of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society and the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society are eligible to enter this Show.
- *Exhibitors may enter both the Competitive and Noncompetitive portions of the Show.
- *Competitive exhibitors will register and receive an Exhibitor Number and blank entry cards before the Show.
- *Competitive exhibitors will register as Novice, Advanced or Master.

Entry tag color codes:

This classification is based on cumulative blue (first place) ribbons won in all previous competitions as follows:

Novice Exhibitors..... None to 24

Advanced Exhibitors..... 25-99

Master Exhibitors.....100 or more

Aruba Cactus

Article and photos by Sue Hakala

The island of Aruba is 75 square miles of cactus country. Aruba lies 18 miles north of the Venezuelan coast. This island is out of the hurricane zone, is constantly 81 degrees with ever present trade winds. The beaches are breathtaking.

I recently visited Aruba as part of a cruise to celebrate my 40th wedding anniversary. I did not go there to swim, but to see the cactus. We hired a fellow and his grandfather who drove the van to take us around the island. When I told them I wanted to see cactus, get up close and take photos, they looked at me as if I was a bit touched. Grandpa said, in a Creole accent, "No problem, you'll see them, but don't you want to go to the beach?" That is what any normal tourist does.

About three minutes of driving from the port area, the cactus scrub surrounded us — this is not a tropical island. Cacti are EVERYWHERE. I really did not expect this. A thick thorn scrub covers the island made up of *Acacia tortuosa* trees with big, stiff white thorns, other bushes and cactus. Home sites are bulldozed out of the scrub (see photo 1). Grandpa was right; we saw lots of cactus.



Photo 1 - Cactus scrub and homes

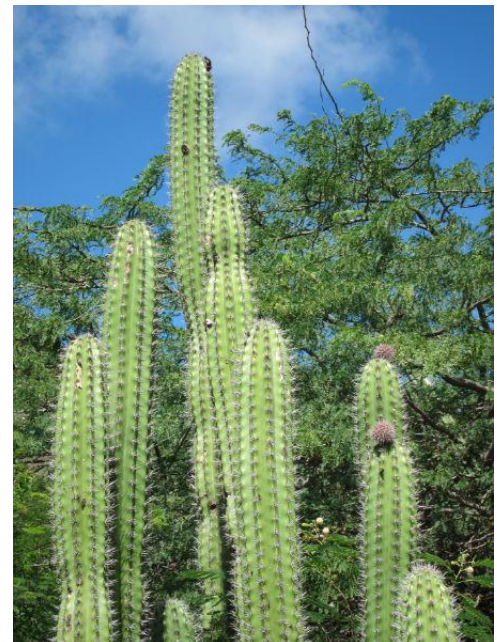


Photo 2 - *Stenocereus griseus* seed pods

The *Stenocereus griseus* start ramifying (branching) from the ground up, growing to about 30 feet. We did not see the big white cereus-type flowers that open at night, but we did see the bright red seed pods covered in thick spines (see photo 2). This cactus has clusters seven or eight thick and tough gray-to-white spines covering the arms. Parakeets and iguanas, among others, enjoy the fruit. Local people cut off the arm tips and make fences to keep things in/out, although the practice is dying out (see photo 3). To watch the building of a fence, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and type in: building the cactus fence.



Photo 3 - *Stenocereus griseus* fence



Photo 5 - *Subpilocereus repandus* with 14 crests

The humidity was daunting to us desert folks. Grandpa told us that was because it was the rainy season, which runs from late October to late January (we were there in mid-November). It rains a bit nearly every day. The island gets about 18 inches of rain annually.

The other ubiquitous cactus on Aruba is *Subpilocereus repandus*, known locally as the kadushi. This magnificent plant grows more like a tree with a trunk and branching segmented arms reaching up to 33 feet (see photo 4, on page 1). The eight to 20 spine clusters on the arms are long and thin, with no spines on the fruits. We saw at least eight plants with crested arms in our travels. The one shown in photo 5 had a least 14 crested arms. A liqueur is distilled from the cactus peel, lime and other secret ingredients. Unfortunately, we never found any.

Other plants we saw included: *Melocactus* species, *Opuntia wentiana* and *eliator*, *Agave*, *Pilosocereus lanuginosus*, divi divi and mesquite trees. Researchers speculate that the cacti found on Aruba came from northern South America. They are found around Oaxaca, Mexico, Curacao and Bonaire.

When we saw such large tracts of cactus scrub, we were surprised and pleased to learn that Aruba has created the Arikok National Park covering 18 percent of the island. The Park preserves the unique cactus scrub communities and the native fauna.

After cactus overload, grandpa was right; we did want to go to the beach.

PLANT QUESTIONS??? WHOM TO CONTACT!!!

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list. Call or e-mail Diana Decker, *Central Spine* editor. Find contact information on p. 2

For now, the list is simply alphabetical with principal interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

DOUG DAWSON

480-893-1207

dawsonlithops@hotmail.com

Specializations include Growing from Seed, Flora of Namibia, Lithops, other Mesembs, Melocactus, Miniature Cacti and Succulents of Arizona.

MIKE GALLAGHER

602-942-8580

mgallagher26@cox.net

Specializations include Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti, and *Turbinicarpus*.

DEAN PATRICK

480-759-0312

desertpatrick@cox.net

Specialization in softwood stem-cuttings, plant division and seed starting (rooting cacti, agave and aloe).

STEVE PLATH

623-915-7615

revegdude1@juno.com

Specializations include General Propagation and Desert Revegetation, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Cyphostemma*, *Echinocereus*, *Fouquieria*, *Thelocactus*.

DAN SMITH

480.981.9648

smithdans@cox.net

Specializes in adeniums. raising adeniums from seed, grafting and adenium culture in general

BOB TORREST

480-994-3868

robertst9114@msn.com

Specializations include Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees and Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, *Trichocereus*, and *Opuntia*.

**THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
2013 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

To renew your membership, please fill in this form and make your check payable to CACSS. Mail the check and form to: CACSS, PO Box 63572, Phoenix, AZ 85082-3572. Membership dues should be received by December 31, 2012.

****Please take special care in ensuring your e-mail address is legible.****

Please Print

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Areas of volunteer interest: _____

The colored newsletter is sent monthly by e-mail for free. If you wish to receive a black and white newsletter sent in the US mail there will be a \$5.00 fee to cover postage.

Annual Membership Fee: Individual \$20_____ Family \$25_____

Newsletter by mail \$5 extra annually_____

TOTAL_____

If you do not want to have any of your membership information
published in the CACSS membership list,
please indicate what you do not want published.

If you have ideas for speakers or ideas on how we can improve your club experience, please indicate below.

If you would like to speak to someone about your membership please contact
Beth Kirkpatrick, Membership Chair, at 2kirks@cox.net or 480-275-4833.

We look forward to your continued participation in the club.

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