Central Coast Cactus
& Succulent Society
c/o Markus Mumper
780 Merced St.
Pismo Beach, CA 93449

On the Dry Side

July 2010

Inside this issue:

CCCSS June Meeting Recap

Well, our Show and Sale in May was a great success. Thanks to all volunteers (including **Wayne Mills** who was inadvertently left out of the list of volunteers, sorry Wayne). Four hundred and sixty plants were entered and all looked great. The "Best of" awards were presented at the meeting where even "Novice" entries won the best entry in some categories.

Terry Skillin announced that we will have a field trip on August 14th to the Intercity Show & Sale at the Arboretum in Arcadia, $10.00 for S & S volunteers and $20.00 for all other members (see Meeting Minutes inside). There will be more information at the July meeting.

Elton Roberts was the June speaker. Elton has collaborated with **Malcolm Burleigh** and **Russel Wagner** in writing articles for the CSSA Journal regarding acidification of irrigation water. Elton, like many (if not all) of us, has observed that succulent plants show a growth spurt when re-potted but then slow down, or even start to shrink, a few months thereafter.

Elton did a little research and found the average rain water in desert areas of the United States has a pH (a measure of the acidity or basicity of a fluid) of around 5.0.* This means that rain water is on the acid side since a pH of 7.0 is considered neutral (any measurement above this number is called basic and a measurement below this number is considered acidic). Most city and well water comes in at about pH 8.0 or slightly basic. Many plant nutrients will not dissolve in basic water.

Elton experimented with various methods of acidifying water. He found an easy way for hobbyists to lower the pH of their irrigation water is to add common household 5% vinegar. Adding about 1.0 tablespoon of vinegar (or 1/4 tablespoon citric acid) to 2 1/2 gallons of 'average' city water will lower the pH to around 6.0. At this pH most plant nutrients and micro nutrients will readily dissolve (stay in solution) in the water and be available to our plants.

For the last few years I've tried this method myself and it really seams to work. Give it a try and the results should be evident.

*As a side note: Rain water is acidic because it contains no minerals and has absorbed CO_2 from the air which lowers the pH. Cities increase the pH of the water to prevent corrosion of water pipes and most well water contains minerals which raises the pH.

JULY'S PROGRAM

Speakers of the Month

Tim Harvey

NAMIBIA - NEW PLANTS FROM AN OLD PLACE

Tim started growing cacti (almost exclusively) in England over 30 years ago. In the early 90s he moved across the pond to North America and in 1994 settled in California. Since then his interests have changed, focusing on the "other succulents", especially pachycaul and xerophytic trees. Tim also grows quite a few *Aloes* and geophytes. He has a Ph. D. in Biochemistry and having escaped the Biotechnology Industry with his morals intact, he now spends his time trying to get his backyard nursery to be more productive.

Against the spectacular backdrop that is Namibia the program will cover the summer rainfall area (with a few diversions) with emphasis on the 'big' plants, e.g. *Cyphostemma* and *Commiphora*. The effects of various factors, natural and otherwise, on the plants from year to year will be illustrated and a number of little-known or undescribed species discussed. Finally, the horticultural potential of Namibian plants will be illustrated.

Please don't miss this great presentation about an incredible area of the world.

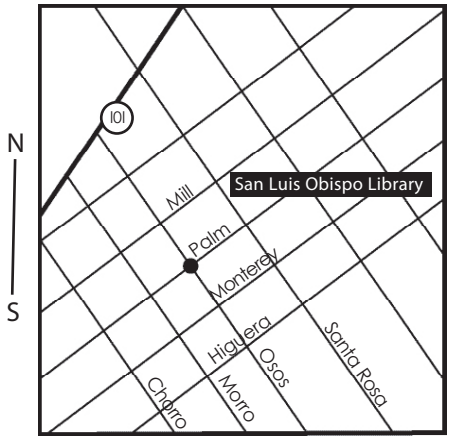
MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS

Cacti & Succulents Step by Step Growing Success, by B. Kern
Cacti and Succulents, by Gunter Anderson
Cactus & Succulents, by Sunset Magazine
Epi Flora Vol 1&2
Epiphyllum Basics How to Grow Epiphyllums for Beginners, by Sean Minogue
Pachycaul and Caudiciforms, A Guide to Growing, by P. de Vosjoli
Stuck on Cactus; A Beginners Guide, by David E. Wright
The Complete Book of Cacti and Succulents, by T. Hewitt
The Encyclopedia of Cacti, by Gerhard Groner
The New Haworthia Handbook, by M.B. Bayer
The Sansevieria Trifasciata Varieties, by B. Juan Chahinian

WAYNE MILLS

Wayne was inadvertently not mentioned in the list of volunteers for our show & sale. Sorry about that Wayne - your help has been invaluable over the years and we know we can't do it without you. And thanks again!

NEXT meeting:



Sun, July 11'th at 2:00 pm

San Luis Obispo Public Library

995 Palm Street San Luis Obispo

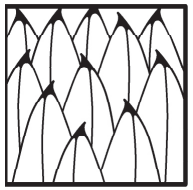
NEWS FROM THE JUNE BOARD MEETING:

- **THE OCTOBER MEETING WILL BE ON THE 17TH, THE 3RD SUNDAY!**

- **INTERCITY SHOW & SALE FIELD TRIP:** The board voted to thank all Show & Sale volunteers by supplementing their costs to the Los Angeles Arboretum and the Intercity Show and Sale August 14th. Members get a discount and non-members pay full price, still a bargain. That's $10 for volunteers, $20 for members and a guest, and $32 for non-members. Breakfast on the bus is included as well as a raffle chance and water bottle. No food is allowed into the park but there is a restaurant, and we will bring a cooler for those wanting to keep their lunches from home cool. More details at the meeting! - Terry

BOARD—MEETING

The next Board Meeting will be held on July 11'th right after our General Meeting. As always all members are welcome.



Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society
e-mail: **markusmumper@gmail.com**
All submissions to the CCCSS newsletter must be submitted two weeks prior to the monthly meeting.

A one time free newsletter will be mailed out to those who sign in at the monthly meetings. After this dues must be paid in order to start a subscription.

Ben Trogdon ©

EL CHOYERO SPEAKS:

Question: El Choyero, some of my plants have mealy bugs, what should I do?

Answer: Hola Amigos and Amigas!

Mealy bugs are a common pest but are really easy to control if you don't let them go crazy.

If you see just a few bugs try dipping a Q-Tip in 70% isopropyl alcohol for spot applications or spray the whole plant with the alcohol. Do this in the evening out of direct sunlight to avoid burning the plant.

Bayer CropScience makes an insecticide called Imidacloprid. Try their '3 in 1 Insect, Disease and Mite Control' product. This can be found at Orchard Supply or Home Depot. This is a good product as imidacloprid is a systemic (it is absorbed and spread throughout the plant) insecticide and will kill for an extended period.

If you have root mealies saturate the soil with 'Bayer Tree & Shrub'.

Remember to follow the instructions exactly.

Si Se Puede - Adios!

Upcoming Events

July 23 - 25
British Cactus & Succulent Society International Convention
E-mail morrisbcss@btinternet.com for information.

July 23 - 25
Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Summer Show & Sale
Fullerton Arboretum, - 10:00am - 4:00pm
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton (714) 267-4329

August 14 - 15
25th Annual Intercity Show & Sale
Los Angeles County Arboretum - 9:00am - 5:00pm
301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia (626) 798-2430

September 26
Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction
Rancho Dominguez Adobe - 12:00 noon
18127 South Alameda Street, Rancho Dominguez (310) 644-2709


Best in class show plants from our May Show & Sale

Hospitality News

Sign up to bring refreshments and get a 4 inch plant!! You must sign the **Hospitality Sign-Up sheet** and bring refreshments to get a plant. We need refreshments for each monthly meeting and we need to know who is bringing them. Thanks to everyone who has been contributing to the refreshment fund; donations can be made at the refreshment table. ~Pat

Plantae, Tracheophyta, Magnoliopsida, Urticales, Moraceae
[zipcodezoo.com]

Dorstenia *(for Theodor Dorsten (1492-1552) German doctor)*

The genus *Dorstenia* comprises both succulent and non-succulent species. Most of the succulent species hale from Africa and the Arabian peninsula. Some are edible or used for medicinal purposes.

The genus' inflorescence (flower) is called a hypanthodium, the genus *Ficus* has the same structure. Many small individual male and female flowers are contained within the flat 'shield' of the inflorescence, sort of like a miniature sunflower. They are sometimes called 'Shield Flower' plants. Some are self fertile and some are not. Ripe seeds are mechanically ejected and can travel several feet from the plant. Seedlings may start to pop up in neighboring plants, normally this would be a problem (weeds) but these plants are so attractive that the seedlings are usually encouraged to thrive.

These plants thrive on bright light but keep out of direct sun exposure. As usual, grow them in a free draining soil and reduce watering when they go dormant in the Winter. They will start leafing out and flowering in the Summer when temperatures start to warm. They can take a lot of water while growing and do not like the soil to completely dry out. Try to keep minimum temperatures above 40 degrees or so. Fertilize as you would your other succulent plants. They do best in greenhouse cultivation.

A common species in cultivation is *Dorstenia gigas* which can get quite large, 4 to 6 feet tall, compared to most species which stay much smaller. It generally resembles a small tree with a solitary trunk. This plant also likes a little more light than most.

Dorstenia foetida is also commonly available at succulent shows & sales. This plant stays small, around a foot tall, but will produce many 'trunks' over time to produce a wide and very attractive plant.

Plantae, Tracheophyta, Magnoliopsida, Caryophyllales, Cactaceae
[zipcodezoo.com]

Turbinicarpus *(L. - turbo (spindle), G. - karpos (fruit))*

The genus *Turbinicarpus* is a collection of very small cacti making them very suitable to pot culture. They occur mostly in the north east regions of Mexico. Some contain alkaloids, which can be medicinal and/or hallucinogenic, but are not generally used for such purposes as better alternatives are available.

They typically grow in full sun or under a nurse plant in desert areas with little, if any, topsoil. Many grow only in rock cracks or collections of pebbles. The plants usually posses large (relative to the above ground portion) tap roots where the majority of its water is stored. Many have extensive spinery, either traditional or papery, which provides both shade and surface area for water condensation. They are difficult to see in nature unless flowering which helps them escape being eaten by herbivores.

Turbinicarpus, while slow growing, are generally easy to cultivate. Most can take full sun. Again, like most succulents, they like to grow in free draining soil. Watering should be withheld in the Winter when the soil should be allowed to dry out almost completely before watering again. They can survive frost conditions of short durations and will grow outside in the South County. In the Summer frequency of watering should be the same as is typical for cacti. Too much water can make the plant split resulting in a wound that will take many years to grow out. Propagation is almost always by seed although some plants will produce pups that can be removed, calloused and rooted.

There are about 60 recognized species and sub-species. They are not generally found at succulent shows & sales but seed can be ordered from the usual vendors. A little searching on the InterNet will bring up a good selection. One of the best things about this genus is that in a small area of a few square feet you can grow many, many plants!