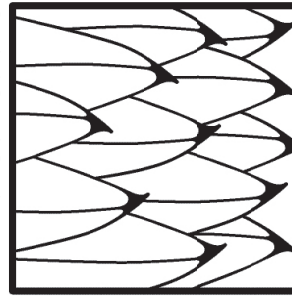


Central Coast Cactus  
& Succulent Society  
c/o Markus Mumper  
780 Merced St.  
Pismo Beach, CA 93449



# On the Dry Side

March, 2012

## CCCSS February Meeting Recap

The February meeting of CCCSS opened with President **Gene Schroeder** welcoming a large number of guests, along with a big turnout of members.

Old business included the need for new leadership in our Society. Elections are held in May, so please start thinking about how you could help out by running for a position on the Board. **Rob Skillin** is heading up the Show & Sale Committee, with the first organizational meeting scheduled (and already completed as this is being written). So you have something else to be thinking about: The plants you will enter in the Show. **Linda Hicks** of the California Garden Club was taking signups for a trip on March 21 to the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show. If you missed signing up, Gene can help you. **Terri Skillin** asked for volunteers to help tend to the planters provided by Arroyo Grande in Bloom. They particularly need cuttings and clippings for the pots and hanging planters on Bridge Street. Contact Terri if you can help.

**Charles Spotts'** plant of the month was *Crassula*, in particular the compact varieties and not the larger plants such as jade plants. These succulents typically have compactly stacked leaves that can be so dense that they hide the stem. They are found in habitat in South Africa and are winter growers that are flowering right now. If they don't get enough light they will get leggy. They are easy to grow, although subject to mealy bugs, and if infected they need to be dealt with right away. Charles recommended spraying with a 70% alcohol solution which will kill the mealy bugs, they should then be picked out of the plant. Possibly treat the plant with an insecticide as a follow up. During their summer dormancy *Crassula* require little water. They need to be rejuvenated every few years by repotting and trimming the top. They grow well in the ground but are frost sensitive. Charles says that he fertilizes every time he waters with a very dilute (one-fifth to one-tenth strength) solution and he also acidifies his water. The formulation for acidified water is variously one teaspoon of vinegar per gallon of water or four ounces per twenty four gallons. The water police backed down on the "no watering in winter" dictum and conceded that watering is acceptable during extended dry periods with little moisture. Use some common sense, and if John Lindsey says it's gonna rain soon, hold off.

Our guest speaker was **Mark Muradian**, a succulent enthusiast and potter from Fresno. His presentations are always entertaining, and this one was no exception. Mark played a video of a trip to Peru in 2010. He produced, directed, selected appropriate music, edited and starred in the production and included wonderful footage of the cactus, succulents and wildlife of Peru, along with its people and architecture. Great job, Mark, and thanks.

## February Board Meeting Notes:

- Gene reported that our two gift basket donations to the California Garden Club were very well received at their show. They weren't able to include the "baskets" in the auction, but they were part of the raffle. Gene also mentioned that attendees at our monthly meetings can earn an hour of Master Gardner credit because of the educational nature of our plant-of-the-month feature.

- Replacement Board members are urgently needed for the positions of Newsletter Editor and Treasurer. Carol Moss was ratified as Secretary for the remainder of this term. We are grateful to Jan Moon who was unable to complete her term as Secretary. The possibility of adding a planner for outside activities such as tours and external events – maybe a second Vice President – was discussed.

- A motion was duly made and carried authorizing the Show & Sale Committee (S&S) to take any and all actions required of it in preparing for and carrying out the activities of the show and sale in May 2012.

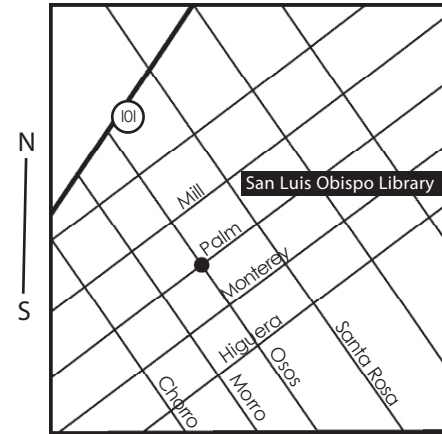
- Gene said that our non-profit status and related matters, like taxes, are all current through this year. Some changes were made in accounting procedures due to our membership in the national organization. We need to install a new Treasurer as soon as possible ... someone with some basic bookkeeping knowledge.

- Jim Harlow agreed to coordinate a possible Saturday trip to the Huntington Botanical Gardens' show in late June. Members who volunteer to work at the May Show & Sale will get a price break for this event.

- The S&S Committee had a productive organizational meeting in which subcommittee chairs were selected. The committee will sponsor a contest to select a new design for 2012 CCCSS tee shirts.

**Please note that our April meeting will be held on our regular meeting date of April 8, which is also Easter this year.**

## NEXT meeting:



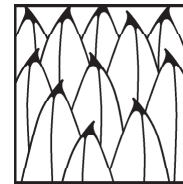
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## LAST YEAR'S TROPHY WINNERS

**Please return your rotating plaque or trophy to Jan Moon for use in this year's show and sale. Thank you!**



Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society

e-mail: [markusmumper@gmail.com](mailto:markusmumper@gmail.com)

All submissions to the CCCSS newsletter must be submitted two weeks prior to the monthly meeting.

<b>PRESIDENT</b> Gene Schroeder 929-2161	<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b> Nick Wilkinson 528-8880	<b>SECRETARY</b> Carol Moss 438-4906	<b>CCSS AFFILIATE</b> Rob Skillin 473-0788	<b>TREASURER</b> Edie Price 489-8491
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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.

## Speaker of the Month

**Tim Harvey**

**Namibia; Just Add Water**

Mention of the word Namibia often brings to mind the bleak, intimidating skeleton coast, or barren, red sand dunes of the Namib desert. Less common are thoughts of a verdant and plant-filled wilderness, yet this is currently the case; a result of several consecutive years of exceptional rainfall. A trip in March/April 2011 forms the basis of this talk, which highlights the effects that a little (or in some instances, a lot!) water can bring about.

Home to many of the plants we love to grow, e.g. most of the pachycaul *Cyphostemma* sp., the talk will highlight plants from the summer rainfall region, from the northern border with Angola, south to the Khomas Hochland plateau around the capital Windhoek. En route, the flora, including *Euphorbia*, *Aloe* and numerous bulbs and *stapeliads*, to name but a few, will be illustrated in the majestic scenery that is their habitat. Cultivation of these plants in Southern California will also be discussed.

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## Upcoming Events

**March 17 - 18**

**Midwest Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show & Sale**

Cleveland Botanical Garden  
11030 East Blvd., Cleveland OH

**March 23 - 24**

**Orange County Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale**

First Anaheim Methodist Church  
1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim CA

**March 30 - April 2**

**Cactus & Succulent Soc. of Australia and the Ballarat Cactus & Succulent Soc.**

Hoppers Crossing, Victoria, Australia  
[www.cssaustralia.org.au](http://www.cssaustralia.org.au)

**March 31 - April 1**

**Cactus & Succulent Society of San Jose 43rd Annual Show & Sale**

Marian A. Peterson Middle School  
1380 Rosalia Ave., Sunnyvale CA

**May 5 - 6**

**Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale**

Sacramento Garden and Arts Center  
3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento, CA

### T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

Submit your design for our 2012 Society T-shirt to

**Nicole DeVecchio**

**Winner Selected in April / Shirts Sold at the May Meeting**

## Plant of the Month – Hook spined *Mammillarias*

*Mammillaria* – small globular to short columnar cacti characterized by nipple-like areoles. The areoles are smooth, never grooved, arranged in spiral rows (not ribbed), and crowned with radial spines at the tip. One or more central spines very different from the radials may be present. Flowers are simple, funnel shaped with pointed petals (except *Mamillopsis* and *Cochemeia*). They may be very small, hidden within the plant's spination, or larger and sometimes hiding the body of the plant itself. They are formed in the axils of old tubercles and give rise to rings of flowers near the shoulders of the stem. The fruits are berries, often bright red and highly swollen.

The Genus consists of almost 200 species which exhibit great diversity in size, spination, habitat and growth form. Some species remain globular, others tend to form cylindrical stems. Some species are small and solitary, others form large clusters. Some species are widespread, others may be very localized, occasionally limited to only one hillside. *Mammillaria* is basically a Mexican genus, but a few members can be found in the southwest U.S. and a few farther south in Central America, the East Indies and coastal Venezuela. As currently described *Mammillaria* includes many species which had previously been separated into their own genera (*Bartschella*, *Dolichothele*, *Phellosperma*, *Solsia*). Two subgenera, *Mamillopsis* and *Cochemeia*, show unusual characters; they are tentatively included in *Mammillaria* at present but there is much support for them to be established as separate genera.

Treated mostly as summer growers, cultivation is generally easy with standard cactus precautions: good drainage, lots of light and air movement. Some species, however, require particular care, especially the desert species of Baja California and the California-Arizona deserts. These species are very sensitive to over watering and will quickly die if the substrate is allowed to remain moist for very long. They need an especially fast draining growth mix and must be allowed to dry before watering again. Most species will tolerate freezing temperatures if kept dry.

For purposes of discussion and exhibition it is desirable to separate the species into smaller groups with similar characteristics. Botanists have identified about 20 groups based on highly technical anatomical details, but it is more convenient to identify groups by readily observed visual criteria such as size, shape, color of spines, solitary vs. clustering, etc. One characteristic commonly used is the presence of hooked central spines. There are about 45 *Mammillaria* species with hooked spines; they are not necessarily closely related. Here are a few of my favorites:

### Plants globose, thin soft textured tubercules, wooly or hairy radial spines, small flowers:

*bombycina*. Central Mexico (Jalisco) 8000'. Produces huge clumps in cultivation. Woolly axils, 30-40 short white radial spines with a prominent brownish hooked central spine. Pink to lilac flowers.

*bocasana*. Central Mexico (San Luis Potosi) 6-7000'. Easily grown, freely clustering in cultivation producing a huge mound of wooly stems with prominent reddish brown hooked spines. Flowers are yellowish with pinkish midstripes. Fred is a monstrose form.

*duwei* (nana). Central Mexico (Queretaro) abt 6000'. Small globular bodies, eventually clustering. Yellow pubescent spines, highly variable. Yellow flowers. Very sensitive to overwatering.

*guillauminiana*. Western Mexico (Durango) abt 5000'. Small clumps of flat-globular bodies covered with stiff white spines and central brown tipped hooked spine. Flowers pink with darker midstripe.

*zeilmanniana*. Central Mexico (Guanajuato) cliffsides 6000'. Forms small clusters of globular stems covered with bristly white radial spines and a fine reddish brown central spine. Flowers are large, very showy, red or pink making it a popular plant at garden centers.

Next month: columnar hooked spine *Mammillarias*.

Descriptions from "*Mammillaria*" Cactus File Handbook No. 6 by John Pilbeam.



*M. bombycina*



*M. bocasana*



*M. duwei*



*M. guillauminiana*



*M. zeilmanniana*