

On the Dry Side

SEPTEMBER 2012

CCCSS August Meeting Recap Minutes from 8/12/2012

President Charles Varni welcomed members and thanked first-time visitors and the members who provided snacks with a free plant. Dues are due! Librarian Gene Schroeder asked for feedback on the library and its services and/or requests for specific books. Publicity Chairperson Wayne Mills is working on final preparation for the tour of SLO North Coast gardens on September 8. Wayne also reminded us that the club has a plant exchange every month. We also have a new feature called Please Identify Me where you can bring in a mystery plant and challenge our experts to identify it.

Gene Schroeder led the discussion on *Turbinicarpus*, the August Plant of the Month. Charles Spotts provided the write-up in the newsletter, which is recommended reading. There are many varieties, many of which were discovered in the '90s. In habitat they are small and buried in odd places and are difficult to find. They go through three distinct growth stages and can flower and reproduce as juveniles. You can visit an English website for much more information at <http://www.cactusplant.co.uk/page9.html>. Rob Skillin added that they are easy to grow from seed but noted that they only grow big (relatively speaking) when cultivated. They are water-sensitive and will split if over-watered. A very loose mix of 80 percent pumice and less than 10 percent organic matter is recommended.

Rob also described the raffle plants and discussed the many seed-grown succulents provided by **Markus Mumper** and **Maggie Wagner**. Maggie introduced our "Learn by Doing" team of Rob, Gene and Markus who began this month's presentation by mentioning the reasons for growing plants from seed; in some instances the only way to get a particular plant is to grow it yourself, either because of lack of availability or cost considerations. You also get first choice of the best specimens, and there's that extra, gratifying boost you get when you've grown it yourself!

As we have come to expect, our three presenters each has his preferred way of propagating by seed. They all use small plastic pots filled with specially prepared soil mixes which they soak in water and then place in a baggie. Rob expands on this by including a professional fungicide. Rob uses a fine-grained mixture of 50 percent fine sand and 50 percent coir (a coconut-husk fiber). Gene told us that he makes his soil mixture for propagation with one-third pumice, one-third #16 sand and one-third commercial potting mix. Markus doesn't use fungicide either, and his soil is high in pumice. Members report that pumice (Drystall) is available at Farm Supply and horticultural pumice is sold at OSH. Attendees were then invited to do their own propagation with all materials provided, including a choice between each guy's soil and an assortment of seeds. Depth of seed in the soil is the same depth as the size of the seed. Mist, then cover with a thin layer of top dressing. Place them where they can get some light, but not bright light. Knowing the requirements of your seed is helpful; for instance, plants from Mexico will germinate in heat, but Haworthias prefer a colder environment. After your seeds germinate, you can acclimate the seedlings by gradually opening the baggie for a week or two before removing, picking out the ones you want to plant, and planting. And the "funnest" part of all? We will bring our plants back to the February 2013 meeting to see how we did.

-submitted by Carol Moss, Secretary

PLANT OF THE MONTH- SPINY MADAGASCAR EUPHORBIAS

SEPTEMBER

BY CHARLES SPOTTS

A comprehensive review of Madagascan euphorbias by Werner Rauh can be found in the "Euphorbia Journal" vol. 3:19-38, and vol. 4:11-26. A check list of about 140 species of Madagascar euphorbias is present in the same source, vol 3 pp 15-17. These plants range from tiny shrubs to large trees, some spineless and some covered with thorns. Many of the spiny forms are members of the *Euphorbia milli* complex, the familiar 'crown of thorns', a large and complex group.

The 'euphorbia flower' is actually more accurately termed a cyathium. It consists of an inflorescence of little note, surrounded by 5, often colored, glands sometimes mistaken for small petals, and finally, below the glands, a pair of colorful bracts. The bracts are often mistaken for flower petals.

The discussion of this topic is borrowed in part, with permission, from an outstanding article by Tom Glavich, "Beginners Guide to Spiny Shrub Euphorbias in Madagascar" which was published in "To the Point", the newsletter of CSSA, Nov-Dec 2010. His essay concentrates on the plants with long sharp thorns and small leaves. These are shrubs are found at the edges of forest clearings that have toxic sap and which constitute a nuisance to the inhabitants trying to clear the land. Most are endangered because of the land clearing, but are widely available in the trade because they are easy to propagate as seedlings and cuttings. They are easy to cultivate provided a fast draining soil mixture is used. The growing season depends on nighttime temperatures and depends little on daytime temperatures. Most will leaf out and begin to grow when the nighttime temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees F. Some will drop their leaves in cold weather, and need protection if the weather drops below freezing.

Propagation is relatively easy. Cuttings can be taken anytime when the plants are in full growth, left to dry for a few days, then potted in pure pumice. They root quickly and show growth within a month after potting. Most euphorbia sap is toxic, and gloves and protective goggles should be worn when taking cuttings.

Euphorbia milii. (splendens) The familiar 'crown of thorns' may grow into a relatively large shrub. There are many varieties, and many cultivars which have been developed to show off a large variety of flower size and colors.

Euphorbia croizatii. Will grow into a spiny shrub cluster of loose stems up to 2 feet high with thin green leaves.

Euphorbia delphinensis. A slower growing species with rounder leaves. The flower bracts are yellow. A good species for bonsai treatment

Euphorbia genoudiana. A densely leaved shrub which needs lots of sun, water, and fertilizer to achieve maximum potential where the leaves nearly obscure the stems. Rapidly growing and relatively easy.

Euphorbia rossii. Similar to *genoudiana* but with thinner and sparser leaves. Produces tuberous roots which can be displayed. Growth is slower than *genoudiana* and needs full light to maintain its compact form.

Euphorbia viguieri. The ornamental stems bear 5 rows of longitudinally arranged persistent leaf scars alternating with 5 longitudinal rows of thorns.

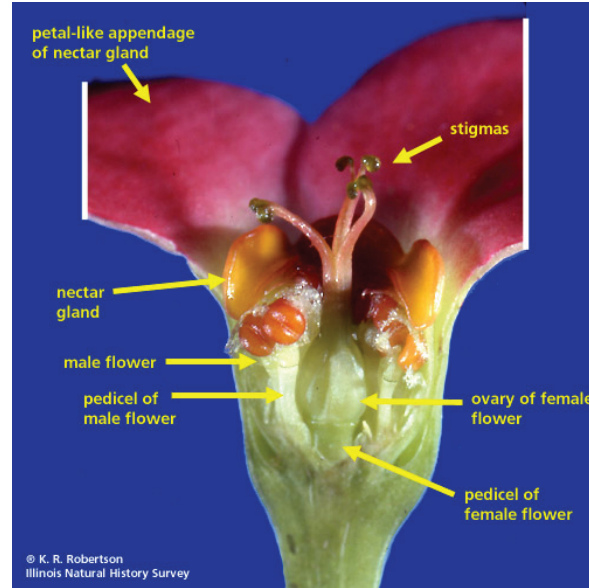
Spiny Madagascar Euphorbias



E. rossii



Euphorbia milii cyathium



E. milii cyathium x-section



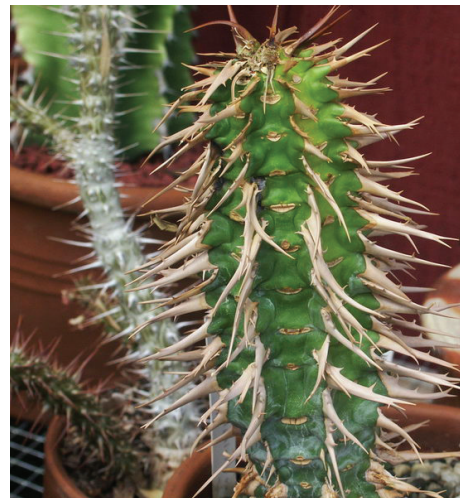
E. milii
"crown of thorns"



E. croizatii



E. delphinensis



E. viguieri

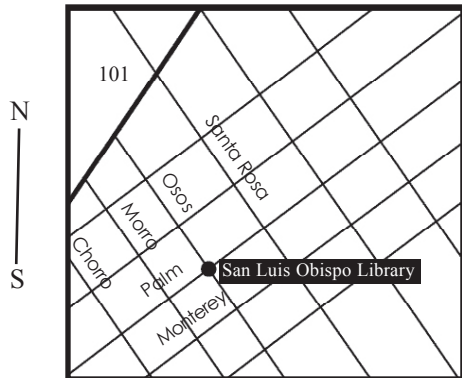
If you have one of these plants, please bring it to the next meeting to share during the "Plant of the Month" section.



E. genoudiana

NEXT MEETING:

Sun. September 9 at
2:00 pm



**San Luis Obispo
Public Library**

**995 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo**

Please be aware that the City of San Luis Obispo has started charging for parking on Sunday afternoon, 1pm. The parking structure gives the first hour free and has 2 elevators. Or, you can park on the street and feed the meters!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Charles Varni

Hello to all you cactus and succulent lovers—and seed propagators. What a great meeting we had in August with everybody who wanted going home with their own mini greenhouses planted with cactus and/or succulent seeds. Thanks again to Maggie, Markus, Rob, and Gene for the great presentation and all the preparation work that went into this hands-on experience. Our presenter shared many more details and specialized information regarding fungicides, fertilizers, seed starting mixtures, etc., so please see them for more information. I know we all look forward to sharing our “germination and growth” experiences over the next few months. Remember, be patient, as many seeds can take weeks to germinate. Over the following days and weeks say nice things to the seeds, reminding them of what a good parent you will be.

The Board approved a club fieldtrip to the world famous Lotusland Gardens in Montecito (just South of Santa Barbara) on Sunday Feb 16, 2012. So please, if you want to go, set the day aside, mark your calendars, and more detailed information will be forthcoming (transportation, cost, etc.) at the November meeting.

I will miss our September meeting due to a long ago scheduled three day natural history trip to the Channel Islands. Thanks to Vice-President Markus Mumper for taking over my duties.

Happy growing!

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER Tim Harvey, “Tissue Culture”



Technological developments affect and have changed all of our lives, whether we like it or not. One of the more pleasing aspects of this has been a recent surge in the propagation of cacti and succulents through micro-propagation, commonly referred to as tissue culture (TC). Widely applied to food crops and more conventional garden plants in the past, the last five years has seen a surge in the availability of rare species, cultivars and variegated succulents. However, the use of the technique and availability of plants has happened much faster than its understanding by the plant hobbyist. This presentation attempts to bridge that gap, and explain TC so all can understand.

The talk will provide a non-technical overview of the properties of plants that make them amenable to TC, as well as some background as to why plants do what they do in the first place. An overview of practical considerations follows, giving examples of the equipment and materials needed for success. You may even discover a new use for alcohol! Propagation of a diverse set of plants will be presented in detail, with examples coming from a variety of succulent plants. Many of those highlighted may have made their way into your collection via the International Succulent Introductions program. Finally, some perhaps surprising and novel uses of TC will be mentioned, together with speculations for future developments.

Upcoming Events

September 8

CCCSS North Central Coast Succulent Tour. Contact Wayne Mills for information wwmills50@hotmail.com 481-3495

September 15 & 16

Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society Fall Show & Sale. Garden of Jardines Restaurant, 115 Third St., San Juan Bautista, CA 95045.

October 27 & 28

Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale. San Diego Botanic Garden, Encinitas, CA. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information: Peter Walkowiak hciservices@aol.com

November 3 & 4

San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society Winter Show & Sale, Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia, CA. 9 a.m. to 4.30. For information: <http://www.savcss.com/>

November 9 & 10

Orange County Cactus & Succulent Winter Show And Sale. Sale Friday November 30: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday December 1: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Anaheim United Methodist Church. 1000 S. State College Blvd. Anaheim, CA. For information <http://www.occss.org/>

February 16, 2013

CCCSS Lotusland Fieldtrip is in the planning stages-----save the date!



Photo op at the meeting venue!



Our meal

C C C S S
E - NEWSLETTER
M E M B E R S P A G E

dedicated to sharing our love of cacti and succulents

Gene Schroeder' photographs of the 2012 CCCSS Show & Sale are now on line at:

<http://tinyurl.com/2012-CCCSS-Show>
(hit "slideshow" upper right corner)

THE BERLIN CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

by Maggie Wagner, CCCSS Treasurer

Markus (CCCSS V.P.) and I had the opportunity to visit Berlin, Germany, this past July. While we were unable to attend our own July CCCSS meeting we did make it a point to hook up and hang out with some European succulent-o-philes. The Germans are pretty crazy about cacti in particular so prior to our trip Markus checked the Internet and discovered that the Berlin Cactus and Succulent Society meets the 1st Tues of the month at 7:00 PM. Markus was quite pleased with the meeting venue -- the meetings are held in a Biergarten!

We weren't certain how old the posting on the Internet was, but we figured what the heck, what do we have to lose? While we were approaching the venue we simultaneously spotted an older gentleman walking in with a box full of cacti. We just looked at each other and started to laugh -- there was no doubt we were in the right place! The meeting was held in a separate room within the restaurant with a dedicated waitress who obviously had a long standing relationship with the group. We ordered soup, a platter with fruit, cheese, sausages, bread and, of course, beer. It appeared that almost everyone had ordered a beer, even the speaker. Markus kept saying: "This is so civilized. This is how it should be". The meeting was very orderly. Everyone had to sign in, including us, and the board sat at a long table as if they were part of a wedding party. There was 30 minutes for socializing, then a bell rang followed by 30 minutes of club business, another bell indicated time for a bathroom break, followed by the speaker who was a club member presenting a slide show of cactus flowers from plants in his greenhouse. At the end of the meeting they gave us a round of applause and presented us with a copy of their annual publication. We were so glad we went, our only regret is that we didn't bring any cactus seed to share with our German counterparts.

Do you have a succulent that you have no idea what it is or how to take care of it? Bring it to a meeting for our

****PLEASE IDENTIFY ME****

section of the program.

affiliate:

FRESNO CSS

ANNUAL MEMBER'S SALE NITE

Public welcome

Thursday, September 6, 2012
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
Center

5330 North Fresno Street, Fresno
Sale begins – 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Some of our members are participating in this event!
It is an opportunity to purchase pottery at their studios
for your transplanting pleasure!

2012 OPEN STUDIOS ART TOUR:
OCTOBER 13 & 14 AND 20 & 21 FROM 10 TO 5PM

A list of artists starts on page 59 of the pdf catalogue
<http://www.artsobispo.org/images/web/2012OpenStudiosArtTourCatalog.pdf>



The newsletter editors front planter one year after landscaping!

Aloes, alluaudia, agaves among other plants compliment the hardscape. Maybe in a few years it will be garden tour worthy.

MEALY BUG CONTROL from a flyer by Chuck Staples- Mid-Iowa CSS

Here are Chuck's thoughts and recommendations:

*"Do not wait for mealy bugs to find your plants.
Take PREVENTIVE measures on a regular basis."*

In a one-gallon jug mix

- 4 pints of 70% (by volume) Isopropyl Rubbing Alcohol
- 8-12 drops Ivory dishwashing liquid (Dawn would probably also work)
- 8-12 drops Tabasco Pepper Sauce
- Fill the rest of the jug with water from the faucet.

The dishwashing liquid is the sticking agent that makes the mix stick to the little mealy bodies- which hopefully makes them sicker than the devil. He read somewhere that the Tabasco helps discourage spider mites. He has used the mix for years with no harm to his plants. Keep the mix in squirt bottles in strategic locations for immediate use!

He also recommends drenching the soil in a good "systemic" (e.g. Bayer Advanced) dissolved in water; this prevents root meales from taking up residence in the potting soil. Be careful with the systemic; keep it away from pets and off of your skin.

Visit our friends below!

License 557155-C-27 John Goetz
805.459.3132

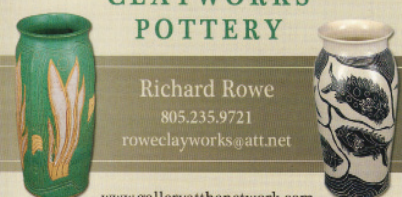


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August Board Meeting Notes

August 12, 2012

---Terry Excell, Newsletter Editor, requests that all submissions for the newsletter be delivered within ten days after the previous meeting.

---The Board discussed the Newsletter Editor's discretion and concluded that s/he can include whatever s/he wishes as long as it is connected to the interests and activities of CCCSS. Events such as the SLO Open Studios Tour can be included in the Calendar of Events and/or the page devoted to member notices and requests (e.g., carpooling to events). Take specific questions to Terry.

---Wayne Mills reported on his progress in organizing the tour of North Coast gardens. He is charging \$5 per participant to cover expenses for water, snacks and the picnic lunch he has organized for Morro Bay. Any leftover monies will be donated to CCCSS.

---The subject of the selling of plants by members was discussed and it was agreed that if a monthly speaker will not bring plants for sale, a few members will be allowed to bring plants for sale, but they must be pre-authorized by the Vice President, currently Markus Mumper. In lieu of the customary percentage of sales paid to the club, members will be asked to contribute an appropriate item to the raffle and to be responsible for any taxes.

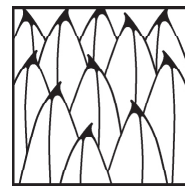
---Treasurer Maggie Wagner presented the treasurer's report, including an adjusted balance. We owe Maggie special thanks for the many hours she has spent updating our finances and creating a new mailing list. A motion was duly made and seconded accepting the Treasurer's Report.

---It was suggested that the Secretary prepare an official set of minutes to document the Board's decisions.

---The Standing Rules are being defined and discussed so that they can be memorialized in CCCSS's official records.

---Wayne Mills and Charles Varni were asked to draft a Standing Rule setting a dollar amount for non-authorized miscellaneous expenditures, such as for refreshments on a club-sponsored tour or for office supplies. A maximum of \$50 was suggested.

---Rob Skillin and Markus Mumper were asked to draft a Standing Rule allowing members to sell items when the scheduled speaker at a monthly meeting will not be selling products. The Board's recommendations are stated above.



Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society
On the web at: <http://centralcoastcactus.org/>

EDITOR: Terry Excell: txlraiders@gmail.com
1680 13th St. Los Osos, CA, 93402

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

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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.