



CENTRAL COAST CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

ON THE DRY SIDE

400+ FB MEMBERS!
CLUB UPDATES & MEMBER PHOTOS

FIND US ON-LINE AT: www.centralcoastcactus.org

DECEMBER 2015

HOLIDAY PARTY! DECEMBER 13, 2PM

HAPPY Holidays



The annual pot luck is finally here and I'm looking forward to seeing all of you. It is always so much fun. I do have a couple of important requests:

- If the item you bring has nuts in it please attach a note stating so in a prominent place. We do have some members who have nut allergies.
- Also, please attach a note if your dish is vegetarian.
- If you can carpool, it would help with the overcrowded parking.
- We need some extra help with setting up & taking down of tables. Set-up starts at 12:30.
- PLEASE bring an extension cord if you are bringing a dish that needs to be plugged into an outlet... we never have enough!
- Please don't bring anything you can't bear to lose (some losses occurred last year).
- Serving utensils would also be a plus (mark them for easy ID)
- **Anyone interested in having items in the Silent Auction and/or the Live-Auction, please drop an e-mail to Ken Byrne (at agaveken@msn.com) with a description of what you intend to enter + any expected "reserve price" (for live auction items) and/or beginning-price for the silent auction.**
- Don't forget to check out the "Live" and "Silent" Auctions. Bring Cash and/or your Checkbook (sorry, no credit cards) so you do not miss out on the opportunity to purchase some wonderful items. The plants purchased in the live auction are usually show quality or unusual plants that you will be fortunate to own and the money raised helps us run the club and pay for field trips

Thank you,

Pat Gilson

Hospitality Chair

OUR NEXT MEETING SUNDAY DECEMBER 13, 2PM

THE ODDFELLOWS HALL 520 DANA ST. (OFF NIPOMO ST.) *mark your calendar!*

CCSS: LAST MEETING RECAP

On Sunday, November 8, 2015, President **Ken Byrne** opened the meeting and welcomed a large crowd, including at least a dozen first-time visitors who introduced themselves. After the folks who contributed goodies for the break received their free thank-you succulent, the visitors also received a plant to welcome them. **Pat Gilson**, who not only recruits volunteers to bring snacks but also coordinates the December Potluck, reminded people who have not yet signed up for the feast that we need an accurate number of guests for planning purposes. **THERE IS STILL TIME TO CONTACT PAT IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND BUT HAVE NOT SIGNED UP.** Family members are welcome, and the club asks everyone contribute to the event in some way, to the extent possible.



We also need items for the live and silent auctions that are part of our holiday party. Items for the live auction must be approved by the President and are subject to a 25 percent contribution to the club, or it can be a 100 percent donation to the club at the donor's request. The items in the silent auction are a 100 percent donation to the club. Items in both auctions must be succulent-related.

Some unclaimed commemorative t-shirts and a number of tote bags were available (thanks, **Charles Varni**) and the bags (at \$1 each) sold out quickly. Special thanks to **Barbara Brooks** for dealing with sales along with a huge turnout of renewing members. The people at the back table are a major part of our success and their service includes a lot of necessary tasks that we don't even think about. **Terrie Leivers** reported that the hypertuffa workshop is completely filled. Terrie and **Terry Skillin** are anticipating having another workshop in the spring. Ken mentioned an important safety item regarding how the folding chairs are stored in the racks ... the stored chairs can have ONLY eight chairs per section and no one should remove chairs by themselves. A member narrowly avoided injury when an entire rack of chairs fell out at once.

There were some great gourd "dish" gardens on the Brag Table created by **Leslie Rotstein**, and **Donna Duerk** contributed a stressed (red) *Rhipsalis* in full bloom. People who bring plants for the Brag Table and Plant-of-the-Month table are asked to fill out minimal information about the plants they are displaying in return for a raffle ticket. Terrie explained the raffle plants, which she brought in and set up in the absence of the Skillins. This is a strenuous job, especially for one person, and we appreciate Terrie for enabling our addiction to free, unusual plants and the occasional pot, or this time, a really cute hand-made, planted hanging container that started on the Exchange Table but was quickly transferred to the raffle table. I didn't get the name of the person who donated it, but it was appreciated.

After the break, we had a presentation on container gardening by **Kathie Matsuyama** and **Ann and Ken Byrne**. Kathie prepared a fabulous collection of photos that demonstrated the more artistic aspects of container gardening. The presentation included the following advice:

1. Elevate the plant by mounding the soil and filling soil to the top of the pot – mounding elevates the root ball above the planter rim.

2. Stack other plants around the elevated root ball.
3. Pack plants tightly ... don't wait for the plants to grow and fill the pot. You are aiming for a luxurious effect.
4. Cover the bare soil with top dressing.
5. When growth distorts the planting, trim and replace with cuttings as necessary.
6. Withhold fertilizer – you don't want these plants to grow too fast.
7. Support your pots with feet to keep your planters from sitting in water. With promised heavy El Niño rains this year, we will have to take extra care to keep our plants from getting too much water.
8. Know your succulents. (This is the bottom-line advice from everyone who speaks to us. Along with the requirements of your specific plants, you also need to know about your micro-climate and its effect on your succulents.) Don't mix plants haphazardly – pay attention to their needs along with how the colors look together and how they look with the pot. (A Talavera pot picks up all the colors.)
9. Water plants a few days before potting in a container and moisten the potting soil. Don't water immediately after potting.
10. Pick the perfect plant for the perfect pot.
11. Match the texture of the plant to that of the pot; color-to-color, shape-to-shape; a collection with the same style, like old coffee cans. Basically, use anything that works as long as it has drainage.
12. Label plants, even in container gardens.



Some inspiring containers included a row of soup ladles, louver shutters, a rotting log, bird cage, old toy truck, even a horn, and a succulent fountain. It's fun to add some whimsy to your garden. It was suggested that a plant *in its pot* can be inserted into the ground so it can be removed to a greenhouse in the winter.

Some of Kathie's favorite suppliers for container gardens are Grow Nursery in Cambria (owned by our own **Nick Wilkinson**), Terra Sol Garden in Santa Barbara (owned by member **Tony Krock**), Ron's in Grover Beach, *J. Woeste in Los Olivos*, and Growing Grounds in SLO.

At this point in the program, Kathie's husband **Paul Matsuyama** joined her on the stage and they demonstrated how to make holes in containers with power tools. Paul uses a quarter-inch to half-inch masonry carbide drill bit with two different tools, a cordless drill and a much-faster hammer drill. Water is used as a lubricant because of the intense heat generated. Drilling can also result in flying bits of debris, so goggles are NOT optional. Paul commented that high-fired pots are tougher to drill. **Harry Harlow** drills holes in containers with ceramic bits.

Ann and Ken Byrne then took the stage and discussed tools, supplies, etc., that they find useful. Every person who speaks to us has figured out what potting mix works best in their conditions. They all seem to be different, and the mix used by the Byrnes is no exception ... they like a mix of 70 percent Black Gold Cactus Mix with 30 percent perlite/terralite. Container gardens require a lighter-weight, good-draining soil, and should have the soil covered by top dressing. A good basic guide to container gardening is **Debra Lee Baldwin's** *Succulent Container Gardens* [I just flipped through my copy and saw some of the photos Kathie had in her presentation. Thanks to Ms. Baldwin who gave us permission to include her photos in the presentation.] Ms. Baldwin's website is also recommended, along with *Under the Spell of Succulents* by **Jeff Moore**, who sold a lot of copies of his book to our members when he spoke to us fairly recently. Of course, there are unlimited resources on the Internet. Check the CCCSS website for recommendations, and don't forget about our

Facebook page where succulent-related posts are welcome.

Other useful items include window screen for covering pot holes ... shards and rocks are no longer recommended ... and the screen prevents slugs or earwigs (ugh) from coming into the pot. They said to buy fiberglass screen, NOT aluminum. Also a sturdy trowel; a variety of brushes (drafting for cleaning the table, pastry brush, paint brushes, brush to clean pot); chopsticks, to push in root balls; toothbrushes; shears and/or cooking shears; small nippers; long tweezers (Amazon.com is a good source); labels. They recommend placing a label in the bottom of the pot for the inevitable time when something happens to the one stuck in the top. Taking a photo of the plant with appropriate information is a good way to organize the details. Ann Byrne brought some of her dish gardens in for display, including one that was Best in Show.

Other miscellaneous items: **Garden America** is a recommended radio show; Rudolph Schultz books are now collectors' items but may be available on the Succulent Gardens site. Feather rocks, which can be carved out for planters, are available in Los Alamos at Rock House. Old Town Nursery was also mentioned, without explanation in my notes.



The audience loved this meeting's presentation by Kathie, Paul, Ann and Ken. We are so fortunate to have these knowledgeable members who enjoy sharing with us. Thank you! Following the raffles, the room was cleared (remember to stack chairs carefully!), the Exchange was held, and the Board had a meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss
Secretary, CCCSS

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Euphorbia pulcherrima by Liliana Cracraft

COMMON NAME: Poinsettia; Euphorbia pulcherrima literally means “the most beautiful Euphorbia”.

OTHER NAMES: Flor de Nochebuena-Flower of Christmas Eve, Estrella de Navidad-Yuletide Star, Holy Night flower.

HABITAT: The Poinsettia is native to México. In its wild state, it is found in the wild in tropical jungles or forests at moderate elevations, from southern Sinaloa down the entire Pacific coast of Mexico to Chiapas and Guatemala. It is also found in the interior in the hot, seasonally dry forests of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

DESCRIPTION: This plant can be cultivated and used in gardens and interiors for decorative purposes. In México the Poinsettia is a perennial shrub that will grow 10-15 feet tall. In the southern United States, and in California, the plant can grow 3-6 feet tall. The petal-like upper leaves turn bright red when they come into bloom in response to the longer nights. The real flowers appear as a small cluster of yellow berries called cyathia. The cyathia appear in November and continue to bloom until the middle of April. This is why they are known as Easter Flowers in Spain. The leaves are alternately placed and stems grow between 4” to 8” long. Plant leaves can be of various colors: bright red, dark red, pale pink, light yellow, and white, for example. These plants are grown under controlled light in order to achieve the desired color and specific temperatures to achieve blooms. Since light and temperature are determining factors of the plant development, when these factors are diminished, flowering begins. There are now over 100 cultivated varieties of Poinsettia in the world.

TOXICITY: A common misconception is that Poinsettias are highly toxic. This belief was spread by a 1919 urban legend of a two-year-old child dying after consuming a Poinsettia leaf. While the sap and latex of many plants of the spurge genus are indeed toxic, the Poinsettia’s toxicity is relatively mild. Its latex can cause an allergic reaction in sensitive individuals. It is also mildly irritating to the skin or stomach and may sometimes cause diarrhea and vomiting if eaten. Sap introduced into the human eye may cause temporary blindness. The vast majority of Poinsettia exposures are accidental, involve children, and usually do not result in any type of medical condition.

Please keep the plants away from pets that eat plants, and, especially small animals, puppies and kittens. The plants may have been treated with pesticides which could be far more dangerous to animals than the mild toxicity of the Poinsettia.

HISTORY: The Poinsettia is referred to in México as “Nochebuena”, and “flor de pascua” or “pascuaxochitl”. The Aztecs cultivated and appreciated this flower which they called “cuetlaxochitl” in their native nahuatl language. The Aztecs also used the sap to cure fever, and the bracts to make a dye. Moctezuma (1480 - 1520, last of the Aztec Kings) adorned his palaces with the plant. The plant’s association with Christmas began in 16th-century México in the town Taxco de Alarcon, where legend tells of a little girl who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus’ birthday, and was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in the Nativity in front of the church’s altar. That night, during midnight mass, crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and became beautiful Poinsettias. From the 17th century on,



Poinsettia flowers



Franciscan friars included the plants in their Christmas celebrations, and the flowers began to be known as the Holy Night (Christmas Eve) flower, or “la flor de Nochebuena.”

The plant received its name in honor of the botanist and physician Joel A. Poinsett. The son of a French physician, Poinsett was appointed as the first United States Ambassador to Mexico (1825 – 1829) by President Madison. Poinsett had attended medical school himself, but his real love in the scientific field was botany. Poinsett later founded the institution which we know today as the Smithsonian Institution. Poinsett sent some *Euphorbia pulcherrima* cuttings back to his home in Charleston, South Carolina for propagation. Since then, the Poinsettia has become a popular floral symbol of Christmas all over the world.

The person responsible for advancing the association of Poinsettias to Christmas was Paul Ecke Jr. His grandfather, Albert Ecke, emigrated from Germany to Los Angeles in 1900 and started a nursery in the Eagle Rock area. Albert’s son, Paul Ecke, developed the grafting technique. Besides changing the market from mature plants shipped by rail to cuttings sent by air, Paul sent free plants to TV stations for them to display on air from Thanksgiving to Christmas. He also promoted the plants in television appearances on programs like The Tonight Show and the Bob Hope Christmas specials. From 1923 until the 1990s, when the Ecke family moved their operation to Encinitas, California, the Eckes had a virtual monopoly on the Poinsettia business.

Paul Ecke Jr. is considered the father of the Poinsettia industry due to his discovery of a secret technique that caused every seedling to branch, resulting in a fuller plant. This technique allowed the Eckes’ business to flourish. In 1991, a university graduate student published an article that described a method for causing Poinsettias to branch. With the secret out and available to everyone, competition flourished, especially from Europe, resulting in a decrease of Eckes’ share of the market. Today the Paul Ecke Ranch in California grows over 70% of all Poinsettias purchased in the United States and about 50% of the world-wide sales of Poinsettias. In August 2012, the Ecke Ranch, which was family-owned and operated for nearly 100 years, announced that it had been acquired by the Dutch-based Agribio Group.

Poinsettias are now Christmas decorations in many countries all over the world because it is adaptable to almost all climates. December 12 is our National Poinsettia Day, which marks the death of Joel Poinsett in 1851. As a coincidence, Poinsettias are displayed in México on December 12th to honor the Virgin of Guadalupe.

CULTIVATION: Most people acquire these plants from nurseries and throw them away after Christmas, but you can save your plant. First, choose a good plant. It should be compact with lateral branches and have large brilliantly-colored flowers, a closed center, healthy foliage and be an early bloomer tolerant to heat and cold. Keep it in an area with medium light, but they can tolerate low light. Avoid full sun to prevent burned leaves.

Water when the soil surface becomes dry. Leaves should be sprinkled gently with a mist. Keep temperature between 60° and 70°F. Flower pots should not be in direct contact with the floor; they should be placed on a bed of gravel or another pot. The soil should be sterile and free of weeds and insects, toxic elements, herbicides, heavy metals or soluble salts. Humus can be added. Poinsettias require high levels of nitrogen and potassium, but manure, super phosphates or ammonium fertilizers should not be used. Poinsettias are susceptible to several diseases, mostly fungal, but also those caused by bacteria and parasites.

NOTE FROM PLANT OF THE MONTH EDITOR:

In Jeff Moore’s book, *Under the Spell of Succulents*, Jeff talks about how impossible it is to trying to grow hybridized poinsettias as in-ground plants. The plants those of us from Southern California know as large perennially blooming shrubs grown next to old homes are probably from an old original hybrid known as “Magdalena Ecke”. That old hybrid is closer to the original species stock. You will rarely find this old material in the nursery trade. If you are lucky and know someone who is growing the “Magdalena Ecke” poinsettia in the ground, ask for a cutting and start your own beautiful large Poinsettia shrub.

REFERENCES:

The Woman’s Day Book of House Plants by Jean Hersey. Simon and Schuster.

Poinsettia Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poinsettia>

The Poinsettia Pages - University of Illinois Extension: <http://extension.illinois.edu/poinsettia/facts.cfm>

Reprinted (Except for the Note From Plant of the Month Editor) from the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society Kaktos

Komments November-December 2015

BOARD MEETING: NOVEMBER

The following members assembled for a meeting of the Board of Directors following the general membership meeting on November 9, 2015: David Westberg, Kathie Matsuyama, Maggie Wagner, Barbara Brooks, Pat Gilson, Wayne Mills, Erin Stratton, Terrie Leivers, Ann Byrne, Ken Byrne, Claudette Rettig and Carol Moss.

Maggie presented the Treasurer's report. Maggie indicated that she is not satisfied with the response of the accountant we hired. Pat said she is looking into purchasing the turkeys and ham already cooked and sliced. Barbara gave the membership report and thanked Kathie for her suggestion of sending an email to delinquent members, which Barbara did to great success. **Carol Mortensen** will take over as t-shirt coordinator from **Susan "Braids" Waidner**, who did an amazing job. You worked hard Braids and we know it! Thank you. We are also grateful to **Mike Ostrouski** who was filling in for **Gene Schroder**. Mike isn't able to fill in as Librarian any longer, and that position is still open. Kathie will prepare an announcement for the newsletter.

The Show & Sale Committee was discussed. It was suggested that the committee ask **Loring Manley** to act as photographer for the 2016 show. A meeting of the committee was scheduled but was eventually canceled after some discussion by email. Possible workshops were discussed, including a probable v.2 of the hypertuffa-pot workshop, and a possible grafting workshop in the spring. The committee continued discussing a joint project with Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach. Terrie is doing more research.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 13 CCCSS Holiday Party! 2 PM. Club provides the turkey and ham. Please sign up ASAP. Let Pat Gilson know how many people you'll be bringing and what side dish you'll bring: 805-481-5596 or e-mail at hupt74@yahoo.com.

January 16 Desert Forum at the Huntington Gardens (flyer with details and contact info attached to the end of this newsletter).



Join the CSSA

<http://cssa.myshopify.com/collections/join-cssa>

Cactus & Succulent Society of America

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEEDED: LIBRARIAN

Our amazing CCCSS Librarian, Gene Schroeder, needs some assistance over the next several months. The CCCSS would like to request a volunteer to store several plastic storage boxes of our club's library books in their personal garage or some waterproof location for the next 6 months or so. The volunteer would need to transport two boxes of books to each monthly meeting. A small dolly would be provided to assist with transporting the boxes. We're looking for someone with some muscles to lift boxes into and out of their car and onto and off of the library table. The job of manning the library table during the club meeting has been assumed by another volunteer. We would greatly appreciate a volunteer stepping up to help with this job for the next several months. Thank you in advance for your help!



society6.com/peppermintpopuk

HYPERTUFA POT WORKSHOP

Here are some photos from the Hypertufa Pot Workshop; hopefully we will repeat this workshop in the spring!



POLICY FOR ADS

This is your club! We would like you to have the ability to share your club-related items so your Board of Directors implemented this policy.


"6.1 Individual club members may be allowed to place an announcement in the eNewsletter for plant-related/club-related items that might be of interest to the members. There will be no charge for the announcement and it should be limited to 30 words, and can include an optional small picture, and contact information; it can run for one month with an extension upon a re-submission of the ad material. The proposed ad must be emailed to the Newsletter Editor 2 weeks prior to the next CCCSS Monthly Membership Meeting meeting. It might not appear in the print version due to space limitations."

YUCCAS FREE TO A GOOD HOME

CCCSS member, Terri Mansker, from Los Osos has a couple of ~4 foot tall yuccas and some 1 foot tall pups that she would like to see go to a good home. Her phone number is 805-528-8550.

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



THE HUNTINGTON

LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

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BOTANICAL GARDENS

DESERT FORUM *Saturday, 16 January 2016*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 9:00 – 10:00 **Registration – in front of new visitor entry area**
Please bring your CSSA or affiliated club badge or membership card for admission
- 9:00 – 11:00 **Desert Garden**
Knowledgeable staff and docents will be stationed throughout the Desert Garden and Desert Conservatory
Aloes will be flowering
- 11:00 – 1:00 **Plant Sales**
Gate opens by the Teaching Greenhouse at 11:00 for plant sales - *please, no early bird shopping*
Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted
- 1:00 – 4:30 **Free Time**
Attendees are welcome to tour the gardens and galleries as of 10:30

Lunch:

The Café in the new visitor center features a variety of sandwiches and grilled items

The tea room at Liu Fang Yuan is a lovely option for fresh Chinese food