

On the Dry Side

December 2014

CCCSS November Meeting Recap

November 9, 2014



At 2:00 PM on Sunday, November 9, 2014, President Ken Byrne called to order the general meeting of the Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society. November's attendance was back to normal levels; the unofficial count was 120 attendees, which included some first-time visitors who received a succulent in exchange for introducing themselves. Our wonderful snack providers also received a succulent, including a few folks who had to be coaxed, and Wayne Mills, our publicity guy, who can be counted on to bake a birthday cake in November (and didn't require coaxing).

It was announced that the December pot-luck will begin early, with set-up starting at noon. Participants are encouraged to arrive at 1:00 PM with a goal to start serving the meal at 1:30 PM. You probably don't need to be reminded to get here on time, or early ... even with the huge parking lot at the Odd Fellows Hall, parking will be challenging for those getting here last. If, for some reason, you haven't signed up with Pat Gilson, it is imperative that you do so. We already have over 140 folks signed up and each person over that will require a place at the table and more food. Please be considerate. As always, we will have both live and silent auctions and Auctioneer Extraordinaire

Nick Wilkinson will be conducting the live auction which somehow always results in a lot of hilarity sprinkled in with the bidding. Please have your succulent-related contributions to the auctions approved by immediate past-president Charles Varni in advance.

There were many lovely plants on the Brag Table and representing the Plant of the Month. Snake, as always, had some interesting contributions, and Rob Skillin brought in a selection of *Lithops* that were blooming. Yes, *Lithops* are challenging. Rob says that when they begin flowering, stop watering them and don't resume until they start showing new growth in the spring. Other members who shared were Susan Chandler (by photograph), Ellen Stubblefield, and Richard Hart, who is known for growing succulents from seeds. Kathie Matsuyama also had some stunning contributions. Thank you to everyone who goes to the trouble of bringing in their plants (especially if I don't know your name!), and to Charles Varni, who brought in a large array of Bill Baker hybrid *Gasteria* seedlings that he shared.

Kathie presented the Plant of the Month, *Crassula*. She wrote an informative article in the previous newsletter that you should refer to for information on this succulent that has between 150 and 200 different species. Most are of the familiar jade-plant variety, along with *Crassula* varieties with stacked leaves. To keep them from getting leggy, it is advised that they be trimmed from time to time to keep them small and compact. To prevent scarring when trimming back plant growth, pinch off the new growth at the tip instead of cutting a thick stem. Paula Jaster, Kathie, Rob, Maggie, Terry Skillin, Harry & Mary, and Donna Anderson brought in *Crassula*. [I hope I didn't leave out anyone!]



Rob Skillin described the raffle plants ... another awesome selection that resulted in a lot of happy winners. Rob reminded us that if you want your plants to grow larger, they need to be potted "up" ... give them some growing room. He also mentioned what Ann, our bonsai expert, told us: if you want to "train" a plant to survive in a shallow pot, you should remove a third of the roots and immediately re-pot into the original pot. Do this every month for three or four times. The final time, chop off all remaining big roots. By the third or fourth trimming, you will be left with a lot of new, small roots. At this point the plant is ready to go into the shallow pot.

Kathie then introduced our featured speaker, Peter Walkowiak. His biography/career information is in the last newsletter. Peter presented one of our popular hands-on demonstrations, primarily on soil composition and nutrients. He provided a handout that outlines his soil mix, which is 60 percent Perlite #3 (or pumice, scoria, volcanic material), 20 percent compost (or a good potting soil) and 20 percent decomposed granite (aka DG), screened to remove fine particles. Moisten the Perlite thoroughly (make it wet) so that, when mixed together correctly, the organic matter and DG completely surround the Perlite particles. This makes it unnecessary to put screen-type material over the pot's holes – a dry mix will fall through, but damp mix won't come out the holes. You should also NOT water newly potted plants for a week. The damp mix is sufficient and adding water encourages root rot. We were also told to not use coir ["kor"] (although we have heard from other speakers that it is OK) and everyone seems to agree that commercial cactus mix is useless. Sand and peat moss are other no-nos. Water needs to percolate through the soil ... some products make the mix too dense. Make sure water doesn't collect on the top of the soil. If it does, you need to repot in a mix that will breathe and drain.

CCCSS November Meeting Recap Continued:

Peter also discussed fertilizer and explained what the three numbers mean when printed on the label: the first number refers to nitrogen (N), the second to phosphorous (P) and the third to potassium (K). The remainder of the solution is comprised of micro nutrients. Peter recommends a fertilizer with an even concentration of the three main nutrients and advises against mixtures that are higher in nitrates. Everyone agrees that fertilizer should never be used at full strength, and we are hearing more reports that acidifying water with vinegar makes succulents happy. Try two tablespoons of vinegar per gallon of water. It can be mixed with fertilizer. If you have the ability to check pH, you should aim for a pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Another nutrient that can be added is calcium nitrate, which must be dissolved prior to adding vinegar.



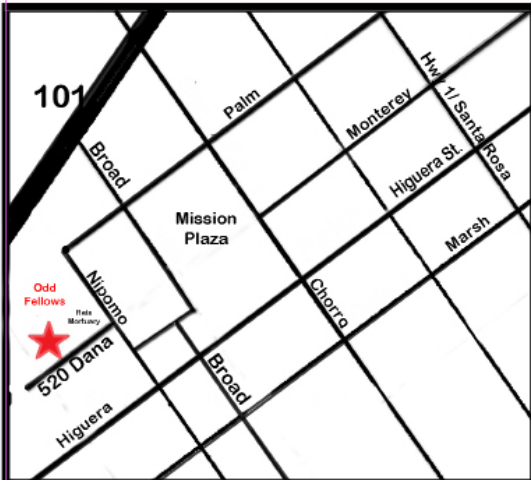
Peter made up his soil mix as he spoke, and then did some repotting and staging. [His hands were filthy!] He recommends leaving 1/4-inch to 3/8-inch of space above the soil for top dressing, which he says is essential. He also likes to place rocks on top before adding the top dressing ... usually DG for him, or some other coarse material, but nothing should be packed down, including the potting soil. Water needs to percolate right through the pot. Do not put rocks, broken pottery, sand or gravel in the bottom of your pot. Remove and replace soil from newly acquired plants if you aren't sure that the mix is compatible with your watering habits or environment, and as always, know where your plant originated and treat it accordingly.

Peter had so much information to share that he continued after the meeting broke for recess and during the raffles. Thank you, Peter, for such a useful and entertaining presentation.

Following the break, the various raffles were conducted and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

NEXT MEETING:



**Sunday
December 14
1pm potluck**

setup at noon

**THE ODD
FELLOWS
HALL**

**520 DANA ST.
(off Nipomo St.)**

CCCSS MEMBERSHIP

If you cannot make it to the meeting,
send your info to:

CCCSS Membership

c/o Barbara Brooks
441 Marsh St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

barbarahbrooks@sbcglobal.net

Membership: single-\$20 family-\$25
business-\$40

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 14:

CCCSS HOLIDAY PARTY. SEE ANNOUNCEMENT THIS NEWSLETTER.
No Plant of the Month or Speaker... just Food and Fun.

Jan. 11

January meeting CCCSS: Speaker-Jeff Moore who owns Solana Succulents (he will bring plants to sell)

POM- Tephrocactus

Jan. 17, 2015:

CSSA annual Desert Forum, Huntington Botanic Gardens and Library, Admission is free to CSSA members and members of CSSA Affiliated Clubs (wear your badge). 1151 Oxford Rd, San Marino, CA.

Jan. 17, 2015: CCCSS Bus trip to the CSSA Desert Forum at the Huntington- You must be a member of the CCCSS, the CSSA, or another affiliate for free admission (club nametag is required: tag box will be on the bus or bring your's if you have it at home). The club will provide the usual breakfast, coffee, snacks and refreshments, but not enough to satisfy most people for a long day... so bring a lunch. Please refer to the attached flyer for complete information.

IF YOU HAVEN'T
ALREADY
CONTACTED HER,
PAT GILSON
NEEDS TO
KNOW **ASAP**
IF YOU ARE
ATTENDING
THE HOLIDAY
POTLUCK.

DECEMBER--- THERE WILL BE NO SPEAKER OF THE MONTH OR PLANT OF THE MONTH DUE TO THE POT-LUCK

Haworthias and Other Window Plants for the Winter

by Stephen McCabe (printed with permission from the author)

Along California's central coast there are plants that can grow by windows, plants that should grow indoors by windows to protect them from frost or rain, and plants that are themselves "windows". Rain, frost, shade, and the combination of those things makes it very difficult for some succulents to survive. People have a wide variety of strategies to assist their plants cope with winter. A simple solution is to bring the plants indoors from November until March or April to dry out. Keeping the plants fairly to very dry through the winter is a good way to avoid potential fungus problems for some of the more sensitive species too. Another strategy for succulents that are somewhat tolerant, but may have some problems in the cold and damp, is to put them underneath the eaves of your house. In our area, the coldest nights are very still and the cold drops straight down, so anything under the eaves will get a couple of degrees of protection and will receive less rain. A tree can provide a couple of degrees of frost protection for plants under it, but it will obviously let the rain through. Any house leaks some heat, so next to a house is usually warmer for this reason too.

Some plants that may or may not be grown on a window ledge are Haworthias. The low growing ones will pull themselves down level with the soil, if given the opportunity in a raised bed or large pot and their leaves will be partly underground. Translucent "windows" let light through the interior of the leaves to where there is chlorophyll for photosynthesis. So in these window plants, photosynthesis may take place underground! The more above ground species like *Haworthia attenuata*, don't have the translucent windows, but will still grow well on a windowsill through our winters. Some species of *Haworthia* and the related *Gasteria* are tolerant of bright sun, if introduced to it gradually, but can take a surprising amount of shade if they are kept fairly dry.

A couple I gave Aloe cuttings to live near the San Lorenzo River in Felton, California. When I gave them the cuttings, they had just moved in and there was sun. Now that it is later in the year, it is very shady all day. I suggested they take the newly rooted cuttings and either put them under the eaves or dump out almost all of the soil in the pots. The *Aloe arborescens* will do fine with almost no soil during the dark of winter and will be less likely to lose the roots to rot. Again, the main trick to getting succulent plants to survive darker, damper areas along the central coast is to protect them from a combination of too much water and cold. Many will beautifully coast through to springtime.



I am lucky enough to have a large 'window seat' area where many of my favorite *Haworthia* and *Gasteria* species reside. -
--Terry Excell (editor CCCSS Newsletter)

Stephen McCabe, Director of Development and Research and Curator of Succulents, Arboretum at the University of California Santa Cruz. <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu>
Facebook: UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, Norrie's Gift Shop

WINTERING YOUR PLANTS

---MANY OF YOU ON FACEBOOK SAW THE LINK TO A WEBSITE WHERE THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS "DORMANCY" AND LISTS SOME "WINTER GROWERS" AND "SUMMER GROWERS". IT IS A WONDERFUL WEBSITE CALLED **THE HIGHLAND CULTURE GUIDE**. HERE IS THE LINK TO HELP YOU FIGURE OUT WHICH PLANTS NEED YOUR SPECIAL ATTENTION THIS WINTER.

http://www.highlandsucculents.com/culture_guide.htm#dormancy

---SOME CLUB MEMBERS HAVE DEVELOPED WAYS TO PROTECT THEIR PLANTS FROM FROST, COLD AND TOO MUCH WATER. MARY AND HARRY HARLOW POSTED A PICTURE OF HOW THEY DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM. GOOD JOB YOU TWO!!!

---FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE LOOKING FOR "COLD HARDY" PLANTS TRY THIS LINK FOR INFORMATION.
<http://austincss.com/Cold%20Hardy%20Cacti%20&%20Succulents%2003-11.pdf>



IMPORTANT UPDATE ON THE HOLIDAY POTLUCK!!!

Don't forget that we are starting early on Sunday, December 14th. Setup begins at NOON and we would like everyone there by 1pm (Tentative eating scheduled for 1:30pm). This will give you time to converse and examine the plant materials available in 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 like January's excursion to the Huntington.



- If you can carpool, it would help with the overcrowded parking.
- PLEASE bring an extension cord if you are bringing a dish that needs to be plugged into an outlet... we never have enough!
- Serving utensils would also be a plus (mark them for easy ID)

If you have any questions, e-mail Pat Gilson, Hospitality
hupt74@yahoo.com or call her at 805-481-5596.

The Digital Library

by Gene Schroeder

Now that the days are getting shorter, we all should have more time to read so I am reviving this feature after some absence. The last few months have produced new editions of some of my favorite online journals. These journals are a look into the future of specialist publishing. Previously, this type of content has been available only by expensive subscription. Now, only a download away. Try them all. You won't be disappointed.

New postings include Cactus Explorers No.12 with an article about the newly described *Mammillaria bertholdii* – a miniature jewel related to the *M. saboae* group and discussion of *Selenicereus anthonyanus* – an epiphyte that some of you grow but have seldom see flower

http://www.cactusexplorers.org.uk/Explorer12/Cactus%20Explorer12_complete.pdf

Xerophillia No.9 posted in June but a great read with lots of habitat info and photos. No. 10 will be available by the time you read this -- don't worry, it bilingual including english

<http://xerophilia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Xerophilia-09-lq.pdf>

Acta-Succulentia The outstanding Italian journal edited by Davide Donati, now offered in English – Links below to the last two issues.

http://www.acta-succulenta.eu/dwn/en/ActaSucculenta_2_2_2014_EN.pdf

http://www.acta-succulenta.eu/dwn/en/ActaSucculenta_2_3_2014_EN.pdf

The Cactician – a scholarly and technical journal by Roy Mottram. Most issues are heavy in discussions of taxonomy and botanical history but the issue linked below contains a fascinating article on Curt Backeburg, his history, background and contributions. If you are interested in cacti, you probably own one or more of his books and plenty of his namesake plants.

<http://www.crassulaceae.ch/uploads/files/Cactician/Cactician%206%20LQ.pdf>

And don't forget to look at <http://centralcoastcactus.org/library.html> where you can view our own library and even download your own searchable list.

Club Officers

PRESIDENT

Ken Byrne
agaveken@msn.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Kathie Matsuyama
luvbigdogs@earthlink.net

SECRETARY

Carol Moss

TREASURER

Maggie Wagner

HOSPITALITY

Pat Gilson
hupt74@yahoo.com

AT-LARGE

Loring Manley

AT-LARGE

Harry Harlow

LIBRARIAN

Gene Schroeder
Leschroeder@earthlink.net

PUBLICITY

Wayne Mills

MEMBERSHIP

Barbara Brooks
barbarahbrooks@sbcglobal.net

CSSA AFFILIATE

Rob Skillin

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Terry Excell
txlraiders@gmail.com

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

Board of Directors

October 12, 2014

After the general meeting and clean-up of the building, the following members assembled for the meeting of the Board of Directors of CCCSS: Barbara Brooks, Ann Byrne, Ken Byrne, Pat Gilson, Harry Harlow, Mary Harlow, Loring Manley, Wayne Mills, Carol Moss, Markus Mumper, Mary Peracca, Gene Schroeder, Rob Skillin, Terry Skillin, Charles Varni and Maggie Wagner. Barbara will be working on membership activities with Mary Peracca and was introduced to the Board

•A discussion ensued about the possibility of CCCSS purchasing the equipment necessary for the presentations of our featured speakers. Markus Mumper, who is the club's unofficial media person, will assemble information for the Board's later action. •Maggie gave the Treasurer's report. •Gene discussed tax returns and the need for an accountant to handle the club's more technical financial aspects. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to accept the tax returns prepared by Gene which will be filed on or before November 15 by the Treasurer. Further discussion of the need for a CPA was deferred until January 2015. •Carol continues to promise to provide an operations calendar (and she later did so). •The membership roster still has some problems. Barbara, Gene and Terry Excell are working on correcting it. •The Board decided there will be no special recognition given at this year's holiday party/meeting. Details of the December meeting/feast were discussed. •Charles is working on finalizing the survey which will be presented to the general members in February or March. It will be included in the newsletter and also distributed at the meeting, or some similar method of distribution will be used. •Rob reported that he is having difficulty with the City of San Luis Obispo over reserving the Ludwick Center for our Memorial Day weekend show and sale. The city is no longer allowing us to reserve the building in November, as we have done in the past. They are treating us differently because we are no longer a "regular" customer because we outgrew and stopped renting the library meeting room. The city wants us to wait until three months prior to the show and sale. Rob will continue to try to get the reservation; otherwise, we will certainly have a problem. (NOTE: Rob was able to reserve the Ludwick Center for our show and sale over Memorial Day weekend, but this is the last year they will allow us to do this. •A possible field trip for January was discussed and Terry Skillin will see if arrangements can be made in time. Sign-ups may occur at the December meeting ... stay tuned. •Other business was deferred to the January meeting and the Board adjourned after 6:00 PM.

By email, a motion was made, seconded and carried that authorizes the Treasurer to complete our liability insurance for the coming year, including adding the Odd Fellows as an added insured on our policy.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

REQUESTING ITEMS/DONATIONS FOR DECEMBER LIVE AUCTION



AS PART OF OUR WINTER HOLIDAYS CELEBRATION AT THE DECEMBER MEETING THE CLUB WILL SPONSOR BOTH LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS. ITEMS IN THE LIVE AUCTION ARE TYPICALLY HIGH QUALITY PLANTS AND CERAMICS VALUED AT \$45 OR MORE. THE CLUB TAKES A 25% MINIMUM OF THE FINAL SALES PRICE FOR LIVE AUCTION ITEMS (OWNERS CAN DONATE MORE IF DESIRED). SILENT AUCTION ITEMS ARE TYPICALLY NICE QUALITY PLANTS OR SUCCULENT RELATED ITEMS WHICH ARE DONATED TO THE CLUB.

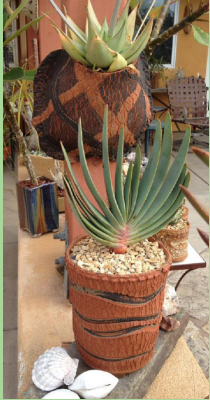
IF YOU WANT TO HAVE ITEM(S) IN THE LIVE AUCTION PLEASE CONTACT CHARLES VARNI AT EITHER 459.6698 OR CHARLES@VARNI.ORG WITH DESCRIPTIONS, PICTURES, ESTIMATED VALUE OF YOUR ITEMS. IF DONATING ITEMS FOR SILENT AUCTION PLEASE SHOW UP EARLY TO THE MEETING WITH YOUR ITEM.



HOLIDAY STONEWARE PLANTER SALE

Saturday, December 6, 1-5 pm
Studio and Home of Charles Varni
1745 Rochelle Way, Oceano 93445

Cash or check only Please
 CCCSS Members receive a 20% discount



Join Charles Varni, Maggie Wagner, Ben Trogden, Richard Rowe, and Mary Peracca and celebrate the planter. Perfect gifts for you or any plant lover. Saturday Dec 6 from 1-5 pm at the studio of Charles Varni located in Far East Oceano at 1745 Rochelle Way 93445.



This will also be a great opportunity to tour Charles' extensive succulent based landscape. <http://www.varni.org/gallery> Ph 459.6698 or charles@varni.org for more information.



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 a new 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."

Central Coast
 Cactus and
 Succulent
 Society

**PLEASE
 SUPPORT
 OUR
 BUSINESS
 MEMBERS!**

**SAN LUIS
 OBISPO
 Realty**
 BARBARA BROOKS
 Broker Associate
 (805) 680-1389

License 557155-C-27 John Goetz
 805.459.3132

**SAN SIMEON NURSERY
 LANDSCAPES**

Specializing in low maintenance, drought resistant California landscapes.

P. O. Box 7149 Los Osos, CA 93412 email: jgoetz@charter.net

15% FOR CCCSS MEMBERS

grow
 rare & unusual succulents

2024 MAIN ST | GROWNURSERY.COM | 805.924.1340

DESERT CREATIONS

North Hills, CA

(818) 482-8795

Home of unusual succulents and cactus

PLANTERA PRIMAL
 SOLAR ELECTRIC FIRED STONEWARE CERAMICS
CHARLES VARNI
 OCEANO, CALIFORNIA
 805.459.6698
WWW.VARNI.ORG
CHARLES@VARNI.ORG

FARM SUPPLY
 COMPANY

We Have Four Locations To Serve You

224 Tank Farm Road 1108 Paso Robles Street
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Paso Robles, CA 93446
 805.543.3751 • FAX 805.543.0613 805.238.1177 • FAX 805.238.3527

1079 El Camino Real 1920 N. Broadway
 Arroyo Grande, CA 93420 Santa Maria, CA 93454
 805.489.5514 • FAX 805.473.7263 805.922.2737 • FAX 805.922.6982