

On the Dry Side

DECEMBER 2013

CCCSS November Meeting Recap

11/10/2013

The November 2013 general membership meeting of the Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society was brought to order on November 10, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the San Luis Obispo County Library by its president, **Charles Varni**. The President thanked members who provided refreshments and first-time attendees (about six this month) and each was given a succulent as thanks. Thank you **Randy Ball** for acting as Greeter.

The first order of business was a reminder that the December gathering will be a feast and other celebratory activities instead of the usual meeting format. You should still have time after this is published to let **Pat Gilson** know if you and any guests are planning to attend. You can also consult with Pat who will let you know if anything in particular is needed as your contribution to the potluck. Please be courteous and let Pat know *how many* are coming and *what* you will bring if you didn't do so earlier.

In addition to the feast, the December get-together will have both a live and a silent auction. The live auction will be limited to fifteen show-quality plants. Members can arrange to place a suitable high-quality plant in the live auction by getting **Markus Mumper's** approval. Please contact Markus for further information. The donating member will receive 75 percent of the proceeds, with the remainder going to the club. Items contributed to the silent auction are just that: a contribution, with all proceeds going to the club. Anything related to succulents and our hobby in general can be entered in the silent auction.

Your comments and responses to the short survey that appeared in last month's *On the Dry Side* are genuinely needed by the board. (If there is room in this edition, we will reprint it.) We hope that more of you are interested than responded, but if it appears that only a few members think these ideas are worth pursuing, they will be shelved. Your board is working to improve the club's activities, but we need to know that you will participate. We welcome any and all suggestions, criticisms, ideas – we would even accept appreciative remarks!

More exciting news that we can now confidently report is that we have finalized our agreement with the **Odd Fellows Lodge** and will move there beginning with our February meeting. Everyone has enough to deal with right now, so we will save the details until later.

The Plant-of-the-Month segment of the program was presented by Past-president and current Librarian, **Gene Schroeder**, on the subject of bromeliads, which Gene claims he knows very little about. (It's hard to imagine that Gene knows very little about ANY plant!) The bromeliad family (Bromeliaceae) has three subgroups. Bromelioideae consists of mostly epiphytic plants (e.g., *Aechmea*, *Neoregelia* and *Ananas* [pineapple]); Tillandsioideae are mostly epiphytic (tillandsias and vrieseas); and Pitcairnioideae, which are generally terrestrial plants with tubular flowers and dry fruits. [Thanks to *The Timber Press Guide to Succulent Plants of the World* for this information. My other general succulent books don't discuss bromeliads – not everyone considers them to be true succulents.]

Plants from the Brag Table were admired, and **Snake** was again responsible for many of them. *Thank yous* to everyone who shares. **Rob Skillin** described his contributions to the Brag Table, along with the raffle plants – also his responsibility at every meeting – and noted that the winter growers are starting to come back.

Vice-president **Kathie Matsuyama** introduced our guest speaker, **Gregg DeChirico**, owner of Gregg's Greenhouse in the Santa Barbara area, specializing in seed-grown, rare and exotic plants. (See his biography in last month's newsletter; see also Gene's write-up on Bromeliaceae in that issue). Gregg's presentation focused on the tillandsia branch of the bromeliad family with an emphasis on growing them in Central California. Gregg began by commenting on the unmatched vitality of CCCSS, echoing similar comments from recent speakers. We should be proud of the recognition that we are receiving from the California succulent community.

There are around 600 species of tillandsia, growing in diverse climates from north to south, sea level to 10,000 feet, so there is something that will flourish in every mini-climate. Your job is to figure out where you fit and which plants are best for your particular climate – exactly as we have been told to do with all the different plants we study. Some popular but incorrect lore has it that tillandsia are "air plants" and require no care, but of course we know better. In fact, regular misting is probably not proper care either. Gregg suggests soaking them for at least an hour, up to all night, especially when they start to "taco" (the edges start curling in). They will perk right up. They also need fertilizer, but diluted to one-quarter strength. They can be grown outside in zones 10a, 10b and 11, but they are in danger from Santa Ana winds and dry air can kill them. They tolerate temperatures in the 95° - 35° range and may even survive a light frost. Tillandsia do not like to be too cold or wet in the winter. They do their best when they can be grown outside. Their large flower bracts can stay intact for up to a year, but they are not known for their fragrance. Moisture and nutrients are gathered from the air through structures on their leaves called *trichomes*. They are not monocarpic (they do not die after flowering). Most grow into clumps; they get supplemental moisture from fog; they take seven years to flower when grown from seeds. There are many ways to display tillandsia because they are *epiphytes* (also called *aerophytes* or *air plants*) and normally grow without soil while attached to other plants for support. Gregg had photos of his friend who has plants on every part of a lath house and he showed photos of a tree with plants attached all over its trunk and limbs. (continued page 2)

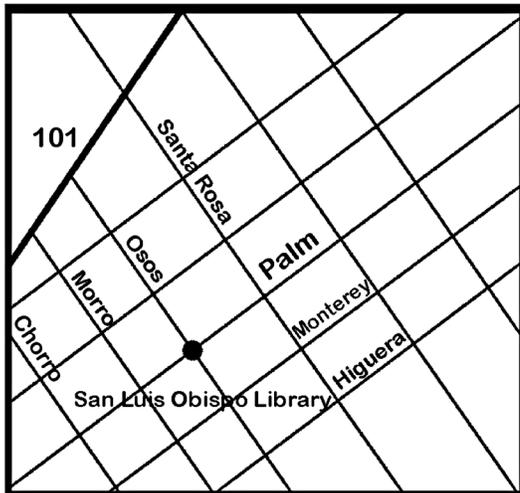
November Meeting Minutes..... continued from page 1

Tillandsias can be grown on wine corks, stuck loose in pots, wedged in with pieces of cork – but they need air circulation and room to grow. They cannot be wet all the time or they will rot. Sphagnum moss is okay. Plants can be attached to supports with wire, but use only covered wire, and never use copper wire because it is toxic to all plants. Gregg packed a lot of useful information into his presentation and his photos were beautiful. Thank you Gregg! We hope we can visit Gregg's Greenhouse on our next field trip down south. [Thanks also to Wikipedia for help when my notes were hopeless.]

We had a short break and should remember to thank **Claudette** and the people who bring refreshments. It's nice to feed the kitty once in a while too. The raffles were held after the break, accompanied by the usual grumbling from the first couple of rows. **Jan Moon** was particularly lucky and generously offered her last winning ticket to one of our first-time visitors who was thrilled to receive five small succulents that Snake said would likely do very well in the Collections Category at the next Show and Sale if she cares properly for them (and remembers to enter them). After we had the plant exchange – which will work much better at the Odd Fellows Lodge – we were finished and everyone but the board went home.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

NEXT MEETING:



**Sunday
December 8
at 2:00 pm**

**San Luis Obispo
Public Library**

**995 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo**

STOCKING STUFFERS???

T-SHIRTS AND CAPS

If you would like to purchase a club t-shirt or hat, please contact Susan (aka. "Braids") braids97@sbcglobal.net And she will bring your item to the meeting. The shirts are \$10 and the hats are \$12.



**WE ARE MOVING OUR MEETINGS
BEGINNING IN FEBRUARY!**

Due to the incredible growth in membership, we have outgrown our present home! (all of you that come to the meetings have surely noticed it is "standing room only")

**STARTING FEBRUARY 9, 2014,
WE WILL BE MEETING AT**

**THE ODD FELLOWS HALL
520 DANA STREET (off Nipomo St)**



PLENTY OF FREE PARKING



WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

**THERE WILL BE NO SPEAKER OF THE MONTH
PLANT OF THE MONTH
OR BRAG TABLE BECAUSE IT IS TIME FOR OUR**

CCCSS DECEMBER HOLIDAY POTLUCK DECEMBER 8 at 2PM

It's that time of year again, holiday season. As many of you may know, our December meeting is a potluck dinner/lunch with a plant auction and social get together. Our chance to celebrate the holidays Cactus and Succulent style. As always, the club will supply turkey and ham main dishes. Sign up sheets for those wishing to provide appetizers, salads, other main and side dishes and/or dessert and those who would like to volunteer for set up and clean up duties will be at the November meeting. We'll need to know how many people will attend. Those of you who will be attending the dinner/lunch, but will not be at the November meeting give me a call @ 805-481-5596 or email me hupt74@att.net. Hope to see you there!--Pat Gilson/Hospitality



DECEMBER AUCTIONS: LIVE AND SILENT

As we have done in the past, we will be having two auctions at our December potluck, and we are looking for donations to each. Donations to the silent auction are 100% donations to the club, and this has been a great way for us to raise funds in the past. Please bring anything that relates to our hobby – plants, pots, top dressing, whatever seems right. The bidding forms will be provided – you just need to set a starting bid amount, and the bid increment.

For the live auction, we need about 15 nice show quality plants. If you have something you would like to be considered, contact Markus Mumper at markusmumper@gmail.com 805 458-9816 [days], 805 773-1499 [evenings] A picture would be appreciated. If your submittal is accepted for the auction, you will receive 75% of the winning bid, and 25% will go to the club.



NEW 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.”

Haworthias and Other Window Plants for the Winter

Stephen McCabe, Director of Development and Research and Curator of Succulents, Arboretum at UCSanta Cruz. <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu>

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.

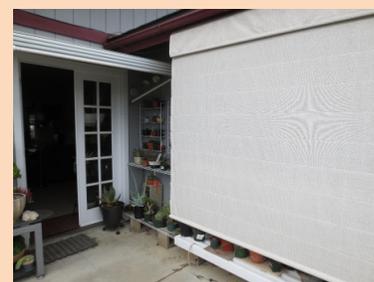
Some plants that may or may not be grown on a window ledge are Haworthias. The low growing ones will pull themselves down level with the soil, if given the opportunity in a raised bed or large pot and their leaves will be partly underground. Translucent "windows" let light through the interior of the 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.

Article from the Monterey Bay Area Newsletter

IN THE SPIRIT OF THIS ARTICLE...

Our new Member-At-Large, Loring Manley, would like to compile an educational resource for coping with winter conditions in our area to be posted on the CCCSS website when completed. He would like to have specific ideas for our multiple microclimates. If you have any "tricks" for keeping your plants happy and healthy over the winter months, let Loring know! loring.manley@gmail.com



The shade is Sunbrella fabric that has been protecting my shelves of plants under the eave. It has worked very well protecting them from rain, cold and heat. It also makes a nice backdrop for the view from my office.

Terry Excell, Editor

MEMBERS: GIVE US YOUR INPUT

Do you think you would participate in a workshop and/or focus group?
What would you like to learn to do in a hands-on workshop at a member's home?
What would you like to study in a focus group in a member's home?
Do you like the idea of a pot-luck meal after the session?
Would you be willing to host a workshop or focus group?

Please send Carol your comments and responses and she will compile them to the members who are organizing this potential new program. Carol.moss@gmail.com

YOUR INTEREST IS CRUCIAL!

IMPORTANT LIBRARY INFORMATION

Members may check out books on a monthly basis. If there is a specific book you are interested in, please contact our librarian, Gene Schroeder (CCCSS.library@gmail.com), so he will be sure to bring it to the next monthly meeting (the library is too large to bring all the books to every meeting).

This list is by book title but if you download a copy, it can be searched for any individual word.

[Link to a downloadable copy of our list of library books.](#)

Titles in **RED** will be considered "reference" or "reserve" only and must be requested in advance for checkout. Those marked are of very high value and most of them are irreplaceable except at great cost. In consideration of this, they will be tightly controlled.

The most popular titles based on checkout activity will be at each meeting. Please contact the librarian at the meeting or via email if you wish a specific title to be at a future meeting.

BOARD UPDATES

November 10, 2013

Following the general membership meeting on November 10, 2013, President Charles Varni called the board meeting to order. Also in attendance were Gene Schroeder (Librarian), Maggie Wagner (Treasurer), Kathie Matsuyama (Vice-President), Wayne Mills (Publicity), Pat Gilson (Hospitality), Rob Skillin and Terry (CSSA Rep and Spouse) and Markus Mumper (Spouse). Old business regarding board positions was again discussed and it was determined that circumstances required some changes. It was agreed that Wayne Mills will return to his former position as Publicity Chair. Wayne previously held that position for a very long time and tried to take on something different, but graciously agreed to step back into his old position. Thank you. It was suggested that departing board members might have an "exit interview" to make sure everything is covered and Pat Gilson agreed to have an exit interview with Nancy Greene, who is leaving the Publicity position. We thank Nancy for volunteering to serve on the board.

We discussed the move to the Odd Fellows Lodge (OFL). At the time of the board meeting we believed the first meeting at the new location would be in January, which would have necessitated getting insurance for one month (or one day, possibly). A later change in plans moved our first meeting to February, obviating the need for special insurance. We will be required to carry insurance and can obtain it through California Garden Clubs at a very low rate, but it begins in February (no longer an issue). Rent at the OFL will be paid in two installments to coincide with our fiscal year. Rob Skillin will coordinate changes with our website and with CSSA. Other old business, including recognition awards, was discussed. The Vice-President discussed coordination of the Plant-of-the-Month newsletter article and presentation in conjunction with the speaker of the month topic. If no experts are available, responsibility for the Plant-of-the-Month will reside with the Vice President. It was suggested that our members who are experts on a particular plant might be recruited to write the article and make the presentation at the meeting. It was noted that Charles Spotts is scheduled to present the POM in January on Opuntias. (Opuntias are like cilantro – you either love 'em or hate 'em.) Charles Spotts wrote the POM article and did the presentation for many years, so it will be nice to have Charles up front and center again. Another suggestion was that we involve our members who bring plants for the Brag Table by doing as we have been doing lately and asking the member to describe their plant. The last idea discussed was to increase a board member's tenure to two years and perhaps altering the election cycle. This needs some hashing out, but we again ran out of time. The BOD will hold at least one supplemental meeting before the next scheduled meeting to work on unfinished business. The OFL has a separate meeting room where the board can meet until 7:00 p.m. if we need to.

November 20, 2013

The board convened off-site on November 20, 2013 to resolve unfinished business. In attendance were Charles Varni, Kathie Matsuyama, Pat Gilson, Harry and Mary Harlow, Loring Manley and Carol Moss. The board unanimously voted to appoint Loring to the vacant Member-at-Large position. The availability of CCCSS t-shirts was discussed and we will ask "Braids" to give us further information regarding ordering more generic t-shirts. The member recognition awards were thoroughly discussed and analyzed. Certain aspects will go forward as planned, but any further activity in this area will be handled by a special committee of past presidents. The Odd Fellows Lodge will provide CCCSS with three keys to the facility; Charles Varni will have one, and he is committed to being at the new meeting site at 1:00 p.m. on meeting dates. A key in north county will be held by the Harlows (Carol Harlow Moss and her brother and SIL, Harry and Mary Harlow). Rob Skillin will have a key for the folks in Outer Mongolia. Charles Varni would like to explore how elections and terms of office are structured. The board would like to be more inclusive and perhaps institute a program of mentoring for board positions. This will require further study and will include a possible amendment to the bylaws

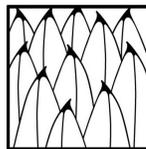
See you all at the party!

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society

On the web at: <http://centralcoastcactus.org/>

CLUB OFFICERS/ CONTACT INFORMATION



PRESIDENT

Charles Varni
charles@varni.org
459-6698

VICE PRESIDENT

Kathie Matsuyama
luvbigdogs@earthlink.net
929-4692

SECRETARY

Carol Moss
carol.moss@gmail.com
438-4906

TREASURER

Maggie Wagner
margaretwagner@gmail.com
773-1499

CSSA AFFILIATE

Rob Skillin
709-3033

AT-LARGE

Loring Manley
loring.manley@gmail.com
934-3246

AT-LARGE

Harry Harlow
maryharlow50@gmail.com
438-5308

LIBRARIAN

Gene Schroeder
Leschroeder@earthlink.net
929-2161

PUBLICITY

Wayne Mills
wwmills50@hotmail.com
481-3495

HOSPITALITY

Pat Gilson
hupt74@att.net
481-5596

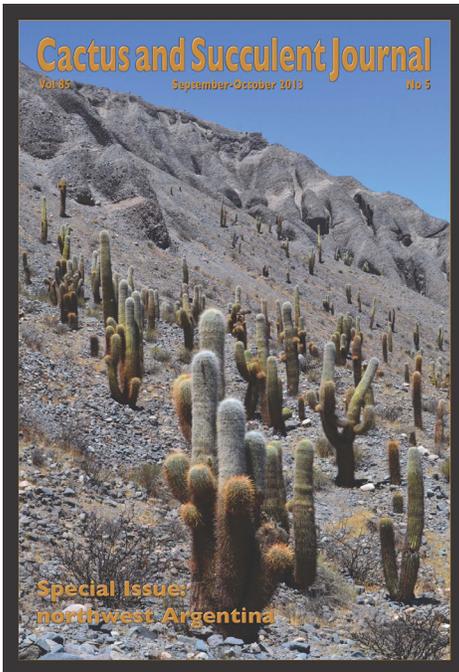
EDITOR: Terry Excell: txlraiders@gmail.com

1680 13th St. Los Osos, CA, 93402

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

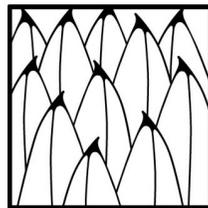
A one time free newsletter will be mailed out to those who sign in at the monthly meetings. After this dues must be paid in order to start a subscription.

CSSA CORNER



Dan Mahr begins this extra-large issue with an extra-long article, setting the scene for the CSSA fieldtrip to northwestern Argentina. He introduces the vegetational types of the region, then gives an overview of the numerous species seen at the 96 plant stops made during the 14-day, 3000 km trip—everything from mighty *Trichocereus* to diminutive *Yavia*. Dr Guillermo Rivera, who served both as tour guide and operator, next illustrates the often unrealized variability of plants in habitat, and advises caution when rushing to create new species without first carefully researching and understanding the plants variability over their entire range and populations. *Opuntia sulphurea*, increasingly seen in cultivation with wonderfully curled spines, is the subject of Judy Pigue's article, the culmination of several years' desire to see the plant in its natural habitat. Bromeliads are widely distributed in South America, and Nels Christianson provides an in-depth guide to the various species encountered, often in dramatic settings, during the group's travels. Nels also penned a poem inspired by the plants and animals seen during his time in the field. Root Gorelick draws our attention to an easily overlooked genus, *Pterocactus*. These very cryptic plants were seen at a number of localities on the trip. Dick Schreiber, a frequent visitor to desert habitats, provides a participants-eye view of a day in the field. Clearly, these are not all heat, sweat and dust. Finally, another CSSA field trip stalwart, Rick Gillman, tackles the genus *Gymnocalycium*, which must be one of the most diverse of the cactus genera in the area.

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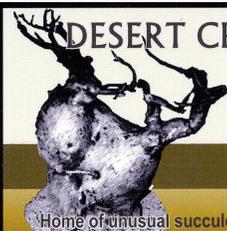
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DESERT CREATIONS

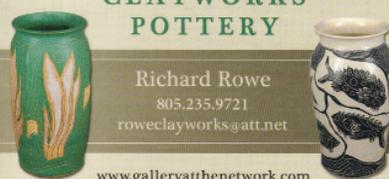


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