

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society
Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America
[http: www.fresnocss.org](http://www.fresnocss.org)

Vol. 27, no. 2

February 2010

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 4; 7:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30 P.M.)
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC), 5340 N. Fresno Street, Fresno**



PROGRAM

"BRAZIL, BAHIA TO MINAS GERAIS"

Speaker

Woody Minnich



Woody has been in the cactus hobby for some 40 years and has become well known for his participation in many of the cactus and succulent clubs. He has served in almost all positions of leadership from president to newsletter editor to show chairman. He is also known for his extensive field work studying primarily the cactus family. He has traveled throughout the United States, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Africa, Yemen, and Socotra. From these trips he has developed an extensive knowledge of the cactus family as well as many of the other succulent genera. He has become an international speaker and has spoken for plant conventions - organizations all over the United States as well as in England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and Mexico. He is well known for his cactus and succulent nursery, Cactus Data Plants which opened in 1975. Woody is a retired high school teacher of 32 years where he taught Graphic Arts, Architecture, Art, and Health.

Woody's program features a combination of three trips into the south eastern portions of Brazil. The region is commonly called the Brazilian Highlands and includes two states, Minas Gerais and Bahia. In these two states there are more cacti than in any other region of Brazil, and a wealth of other plants is to be found including bromeliads, orchids, and palms. This field adventure will feature the back country, the towns and their people, as well as a wide variety of plants and animals. The cacti he will focus on include Melocactus, Buiningia, Coleocephalocereus, Pilosocereus, Microcranthocereus, Discocactus, Tacinga, Arrojadoa, and Uebelmannia. Some of the other plant genera will include Bursera, Cissus, Dyckia, Encholirium, Orthophytum, and a myriad of other bromeliads. He will also feature some of the severe conservation issues facing many of the plants and animals from this unique part of world.

Please give Woody a warm welcome back to Fresno! Pam

PLANTS

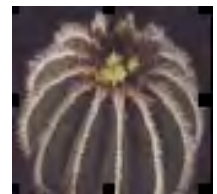
Woody will bring a nice selection of plants for you to purchase!



For More Information

Woody Minnich
Cactus Data Plants
4 Vida Del Agua
Edgewood, NM 87015-6517
505-281-5884

cactusdata@msn.com



Plaza Ventana Mexican Restaurant
5088 N. Blackstone, Fresno, CA
559-229-2189

Members are invited to attend!
Dinner begins at 5:30 PM!

DINNER

Please contact me by **Wednesday, February 3**
to make your reservation:

Home/Message: 252-2360/pmargosan@aol.com

Work: [487-5891](tel:487-5891)/pamela.margosan@ams.usda.gov

FROM THE PREZ:

We had an excellent turnout last month - 57 members and visitors in January! Thanks to Pam for a terrific program on the Huntington Forum; her photography was very evocative. It even made the plants in the conservatory look better than they look in the bright light of day. Thanks, also, to Nick Wilkinson for bringing a truckload of nice plants for sale.

A number of our members made it down south to this year's Forum: Pam and Dennis Margosan, Bruce and Polly Hargreaves, Paul and Madeleine Mitchell, Sue Haffner, Fred Gaumer, Nick Deinhart and Justin Delemus. (I didn't see any other members there.) It was a beautiful day Saturday, perfect for strolling around in the Desert Garden and the rest of the Huntington grounds. I went down to the Japanese Garden and climbed up the other side of the ravine to look at the bonsai exhibit at the tea house. It had been years since I'd last gone to that part of the grounds. Botanic Garden director Jim Folsom told us of ambitious new building plans for the Huntington, including a re-design of the Allen Avenue entrance.

I had to stay over for the CSSA board meeting on Sunday. By the time I left Pasadena at around 4 p.m., the nice weather had given way to rain. The drive back over the Grapevine—rain, fog, zero visibility, and heavy traffic—was pretty hairy.

This month we welcome back our old friend Woody Minnich as our speaker. I'm looking forward to his program, and I'm sure you are, as well.

See you at the meeting,

Sue

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**2010 OFFICERS**

This year's officers were elected and installed last month:

- President: Sue Haffner
- Vice President: Pam Margosan
- Treasurer: Polly Dunklin
- Secretary: Mary Ann Villegas
- Affiliate Representative: Fred Gaumer
- Board members: Mary Drumheller, Jack Fleming and Tom Meyer. (Continuing: Nick Deinhart, Dwight Horiuchi and Rudy Rapisura.)
- Thanks to the Nominations Committee: Herb Thorne, Charlene Stebles and Polly Dunklin.

**Chairmanships:** The list of committee chairs is included in the board meeting minutes. These people will be asking for help from the membership, so please volunteer or say 'yes' when asked. You'll find that working on club events or projects can be fun.

**CLUB LIBRARY:** Thanks to Paul Mitchell, it appears we will be able to keep our club library at the DHHSC so that members will have access to all the books. Our library has been somewhat in limbo ever since we left Manchester—the cabinet in storage, the books at Sue Haffner's home, with only a small selection brought to the monthly meetings. Last month, clearing up after the meeting, Paul spoke with Jose Garcia, the facility coordinator who opens the room for us, and another DHHSC staff person (I think her name is Cathy) about keeping our library on site. They said there is space in the storage room down close to the stage. The cabinet needed a few repairs, which Tom Meyer was working on.

We hope the library will be available by this meeting. If not, it will be in March.

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BOARD MEETING: Monday, Feb. 8th, Senior Center, at Manchester Center; 6:00 p.m. All members are welcome to attend.

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**WORKSHOP:** Wednesday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m., Senior Center. Subject: continuing with plants in genera that start with 'A'. All members welcome

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RENEWALS: MANY OF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP. THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER IF WE DON'T GET YOUR RENEWAL SOON.



BIG EVENT THIS MONTH

Saturday, Feb. 13th: San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Winter Show & Sale; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park.



ADVERTISING: We need members who have expertise or interest in advertising—press releases, graphics, other ideas—for our May 15-16 show and sale. We were a bit deficient last year in this department, so we want to make a better effort this year. If you can help or offer advice, we want to hear from you. Thanks in advance.

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**CLUB ACCESS:** President/Newsletter, Sue Haffner, 292-5624, [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu); Programs, Pam Margosan, 252-2360, [pmargosan@aol.com](mailto:pmargosan@aol.com); Treasurer, Polly Dunklin, 266-9143, [pollydee@comcast.net](mailto:pollydee@comcast.net); Refreshments, Marian Orvis, 266-0145, [mforvet@earthlink.net](mailto:mforvet@earthlink.net); Librarian, Madeleine Mitchell, 638-2784, [madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net); Webmaster, Larry Homan, 277-8404, [lhoman@comcast.net](mailto:lhoman@comcast.net)

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY BOARD MEETING



**Meeting called to order at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center.**

**Attending:** Sue Haffner, Pam Margosan, Polly Dunklin, Mary Ann Villegas, Fred Gaumer, Rudy Rapisura, Tom Meyer, Mary Drumheller, Nick Deinhart. **Absent:** Jack Fleming, Dwight Horiuchi. **Visitors:** Paul Mitchell, Herb Thorne, Paulette Rapisura, Juan and Sereena Guzman.

**Financial report:** Polly reported \$12,937.31 on hand. 2009 finances were discussed.

**Renewals:** Polly said that many members had not yet renewed.

**Events:** Spring Home & Garden Show (March 5-7): Mary, Mary Ann and Nick will be in charge. **We need to get commitments from members regarding bringing show plants, as well as helping at the exhibit.**

Spring home tour: Larry Homan will be in charge.

Annual Show and Sale (May 15-16): Nick volunteered to be Chairman. We are still involved in some negotiations with Sierra Vista, so the contract has not yet been signed. Last year's Community Room has been leased; the new Community Room is roughly half the size of last year's, so we will need to be careful with vendor space.

**Tee shirts:** Herb and Mary Ann will select some shirt styles and colors to show club members at the regular meeting. For now, we will re-use the screens for the old design.

**By-laws and Standing Rules:** Herb asked board members to review these documents for updating.

**Plant raffle:** Paul discussed the raffle and how much he could spend per flat of raffle plants. The raffle normally brings in around \$80.00 per month. It was moved, seconded and approved to increase the amount he could spend to \$75.00.

**Elections:** Herb said we should avoid the scheduling issue which delayed the 2010 club elections until this January. (This was brought about by the Members' Sale Night being held in November.) It was moved, seconded and carried to have the sale night in September.

### **Chairmanships:**

Show and Sale: Nick Deinhart

Audio-visual: club members

Brag Table: Fred Gaumer

Fair display—publicist: Pam Margosan

Field trips: Pam Margosan

Historian/photographer: Herb Thorne

Librarian: Madeleine Mitchell

Membership/hospitality: Rudy Rapisura

Programs: Pam Margosan

Publicity: we need to ask members who have expertise in media, graphics, advertising, etc.

Publications: Sue Haffner

Raffle: Paul Mitchell

Refreshments: Marian Orvis

Rules/parliamentarian: Herb Thorne

Webmaster: Larry Homan

Workshop: Rudy Rapisura

**New business:** Travel: Nick is making a scientific trip to Isla de Cedros, Baja California, in March. He will present a program on the trip at an upcoming meeting. It was moved, seconded and carried to contribute \$200 toward his expenses.

**Library:** Paul reported that space will be allocated at the DHHSC for our library cabinet. It has been in storage for the past year, or so, and the books relocated to Sue Haffner's home. This is great news, for which we owe Paul many thanks!

**Donation to DHHSC:** It was moved, seconded and carried to donate \$100 to the DHHSC for courtesies shown to the club.

**Appreciation:** Fred mentioned that a strong show of appreciation should be given to Frank and Marian Orvis for faithfully carrying out the refreshment duties at the monthly meetings.

Upcoming programs: Pam said Woody Minnich will be the February speaker; Ernesto Sandoval will be the March speaker.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.**

## Welcome to the New Year!



As the Chairperson of your Nomination and Election Committee, I wish to apologize for the sloppy manner in which the candidates were introduced at the January meeting. In my eagerness to not delay the program for the evening, the candidates certainly were not given appropriate recognition. All were standing for reelection. I should of have had laudatory remarks for each and every one of them for a job well done! Sue Haffner brings dignity to the office of President, a post that she has held on more than a few occasions, because no one else wants to assume the responsibilities. Pam Margosan brings energy and organizational skills to the office of Vice President. Polly

Dunklin completed her first year as our Treasurer and has done a flawless job. Mary Ann Villegas has also completed her first year as our Secretary, bringing superior talent and innovation to that post. The members of the Board of Directors who stood for reelection: Mary Drumheller, Jack Fleming and Tom Meyer have contributed in many different ways. Fred Gaumer as our Affiliate Representative to CSSA has delighted us all with his quick wit and plant knowledge.

Joining the members of the Board is Nick Deinhart, who was appointed to fill the term of Ouita Windmueller due to her untimely death. Nick has already volunteered to Chair our Annual Show and Sale. He will need every member's help. This is our big fund raiser and requires all of our efforts. Ask him what you can do.

Under our Standing Rules there are several Chairmanships to be filled. These appointments should have been made at the January meeting, but the delay in our election caused by the scheduling of meetings has put that off. Please look over the jobs available and tell Sue that you would like to become an activist. The more active that you become, the more fun you will have.

One of the chores that I volunteered for was the securing of a new supply of club "T" shirts. Authority to purchase was obtained through the budget committee. There were thoughts that we should get a new design for the shirts. No one came up with anything that was deemed to be acceptable. Many of us believed that the current design would be difficult to beat. The last time that we ordered shirts, we ordered too many of the wrong sizes. The silk screen company that we selected to produce our shirts told us that our silk screens were no longer useable, so they photographed one the old shirts and produced a plate that was used to print the new shirts. This process was more expensive and the quality was inferior. The cost was \$8.50 per shirt. We found that the original silk-screens are perfectly useable. With the expertise and business connections of Laurie Ceronsky we will be able to take orders at the February meeting for high quality shirts at the following prices: Men's regular " T " \$6; long-sleeved "T" \$7; add \$1 for 2 XXL or 3 XXL; Women's "T" are \$1 more in all sizes. Sweatshirts are \$8. The "T" shirts will be available in Sand, Tan, Light Blue and Light Green. The sweatshirts will be the traditional Ash. We hope to have samples of the shirt styles available at the meeting. We will be ordering 50 shirts unless we receive more advance orders. There is \$50 set-up fee which would increase our cost if we order less than 50.

We are happy to have the designer and the original producer our club "T" shirts as our guest speaker of the evening, Woody Minnich. He is a long time friend of FCSS. He always presents a superior program and has high quality plants to sell. **Let us welcome Woody to our meeting by wearing those Club "T" shirts which he designed.**

*Herb Thorne*

## ASCLEPIADS IN ARIZONA: HOODIA

By Leo A. Martin

While living in St Louis, Missouri, reading decades-old issues of the Cactus and succulent journal of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, I first came across descriptions of these fabulous, hard-to-grow milkweeds. Every article exuded the raw odor of fear when describing their culture and longevity in captivity.

St Louis has a warm, very humid and rainy summer, and an icy, snowy winter. People there without greenhouses put plants outside when it's warm and take them into the basement for the winter. Basements are somewhat cool and damp.

Hoodias were supposed to rot quickly when moist for too long and need warmth in the winter. My first plant, *H. bainii*, went into a 4 inch clay pot with a soil mix of half gravel and half small rocks, the better to drain. Summer watering was only when the soil had been bone dry for a week or so. In the winter it went into the basement under fluorescent lights and received no water.

It grew not at all during the entirety of two summers and two winters. "At least it's not dead," I thought.

Toward the end of our second winter together we moved to Phoenix. Clay pots dry out very fast here in the summer heat and it was due for repotting in late spring.

I read some more and saw the photos of plants growing in hardpan soil without shelter from the sun. I read about African climate patterns and learned about the summer rains. The photos looked remarkably like the deserts of southwestern North America, and it seemed reasonable to treat hoodias like the plants here in Arizona, where we have a similar climate. After rains, soil here is usually damp close to the surface for about a week. "Maybe hoodias can use more water than I've been giving them," I thought. I guessed they grew during the warm season as do almost all ascleps.

After frost danger had passed, I moved it to full sun. When spring came, the plant, with three stems no more than 4 inches tall, went into a 8 inch pot. I used a soil mix of half commercial potting soil and half fine local decomposed granite (the soil at my house.) When the weather warmed up a bit more (nights over 68° F) I soaked the plant and held my breath.

Well, not for too long ... Within two days the tips of the stems showed bright green in the cracks between the tubercles and the plant started growing. I had not seen this before in the almost 3 years I'd owned the plant. Not wanting to push my luck, I let it dry out to avoid rot. When it dried out the bright green went away and the plant stopped growing.

Over the next few weeks, as the temperatures rose to our normal summer heat, I shortened the watering intervals until the plant was never near dryness. It grew and grew and grew, without sign of rot. I started fertilizing and it grew faster. Being in the full sun it stayed nice and tight. By the end of the season it had over a dozen stems.

By now I'd read of the winters in Hoodia homeland: sunny, cool, dry air, little to no rain, occasional frost at night. This sounds like Arizona, so I left the plant outside, dry, under an eave to avoid rain and frost. I knew from that St Louis experience it would easily survive a dry winter. It did; the next spring, with a good soaking, it resumed its growth. And, a month later, it bloomed, with tan stars hiding the top ¾ of the plant. It grew even better that year, and in midsummer I put it into a 10 inch glazed ceramic pot. It looked somewhat overpotted but last summer it grew so much it now looks underpotted. Best growth is during spring and fall, but it grows all summer.

Two other species I bought a year ago didn't get as much water this summer as I would have liked due to lack of time. But they grew a little but, each time they dried out, they stopped growing.

I didn't mention mealy bugs because I haven't had them on my hoodias yet. But the symptoms of infection are probably the same as for other stapeliads: failure to thrive, rot entering the roots.

*(Continued on next page)*

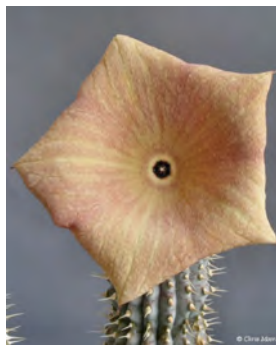
I took some cuttings this year to learn how. I didn't keep them continually moist and they didn't root. They still look just as they did in July. I'm going to overwinter them and try again next year. I think the important factors to remember about Hoodia culture are:

- At all times give as much light as possible. Direct sun all day even with 122° F temperatures will not harm these plants if they've been moved to full exposure gradually. Use supplemental lighting even in the summer if plants aren't tight.
- Keep cool and completely during winter. The less winter humidity then the better.
- When nights warm up, start watering. During warm weather, while growing, don't allow to dry completely, but don't grow as bog plants. This will require attention to soil mixture, type of pot used, and the weather. Few asclepiads will rot while actively growing unless infested with mealybugs or standing in a dish of water.
- During the summer place the plant where it will get as much heat as possible. If nights are cool, placing against a south wall or on a concrete patio may help provide extra heat.
- Summer relative humidity below 60% does not seem to present problems. Humidity above this may require measures to provide more heat and faster drying soil.
- Go ahead and fertilize while growing. A heavy hand with the scoop is fine.
- Have a regular mealybug prevention program, even while dormant for the winter.
- Don't bring them into the house while they're blooming.

(From: Asklepios 82 (April 2001). The author, Dr Leo Martin, is a Phoenix anesthesiologist, and has long been active in the cactus and succulent hobby. Until very recently, he was on the board of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America.)



*Hoodia officinalis ssp officinalis*  
by Chris Moore



*Hoodia gordonii*  
by Chris Moore



*Hoodia alstonii*  
by Martin Heigan



*Hoodia pilifera*  
by Martin Heigan



*Hoodia flava*  
by Martin Heigan