

# On the Dry Side

FEBRUARY 2014

## CCCSS January Meeting Recap

1/12/2014

On Sunday, January 12, 2014, President **Charles Varni** brought to order the final meeting of the Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society at the San Luis Obispo County Library. We had another standing-room-only situation, including fourteen first-time visitors who were thanked with a free succulent, and which proved again the necessity for moving to a larger venue. **DON'T FORGET: FEBRUARY 9 MEETING AT THE ODD FELLOWS LODGE.**



Announcements: □ **Susan/Braids** will have CCCSS t-shirts for sale at the February meeting (at the **ODD FELLOWS LODGE**). □ **Gene Schroeder**, Librarian, distributed duplicate/unneeded copies of various editions of the CSSA's journal, *Cactus and Succulent Journal* which is published six times a year. CCCSS is an affiliate of CSSA (among other things, we get insurance through them for our new meeting place at the **ODD FELLOWS LODGE**). Gene encouraged CCCSS members to become members of CSSA, which includes a subscription to the journal. Gene also reminded members to contact him when there is a specific book from the club's library they would like him to bring to a meeting at the **ODD FELLOWS LODGE**. □ Ideas for focus/study groups and one-day/weekend workshops were discussed and members were encouraged to submit their ideas and suggestions for possible club activities.

**Rob Skillin** described the raffle plants and presented the plants on the Brag Table. Rob mentioned that this warm, dry weather is confusing plants which rely on temperature instead of length of daylight for their cue to go dormant – some plants are starting to grow that should be dormant now.

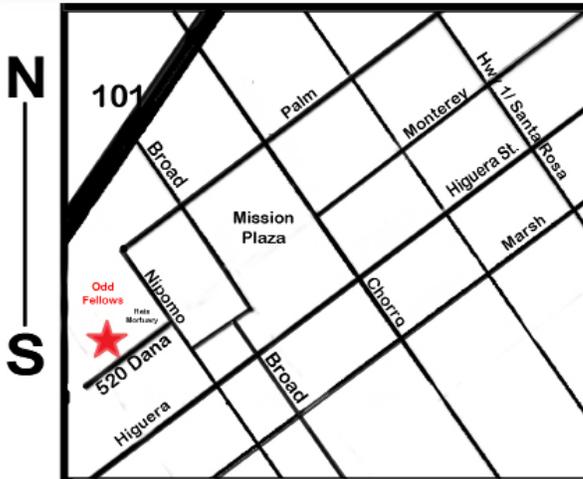
CCCSS honored **Charles Spotts** at the holiday meeting for (among so many other things) his sharing of knowledge, and he did it for us again by presenting the Plant of the Month, one of his favorites, *Opuntia*. Charles brought in many different examples of *Opuntia* and Charles Varni showed off his skill at tongs by holding them up (well, he held them up most of the time and inadvertently was able to demonstrate how to remove plants with stickers from one's hand). Please read Charles Spotts' article in the last issue of *On The Dry Side* for a better summary than I could give you from my notes. Some interesting tidbits from my notes that aren't in the article include the fact that Luther Burbank developed many spineless *Opuntia* for culinary purposes. Red *Opuntia* are related to beets, and the insect cochineal is a parasite of *Opuntia*. Cochineal produces a red dye that was used by the Indians. The Spaniards exported it to Spain where it was used to dye the robes of royalty. Its value was second only to that of gold. Charles followed up his presentation on *Opuntia* with his new program showcasing photographs of cactus that he has encountered throughout the new world.

After the break – graciously provided by members who received verbal thanks and an IOU because of the many visitors – the raffles were held and the meeting adjourned.

**FEBRUARY AT THE ODD FELLOWS LODGE! Do a drive-by beforehand so you don't have to stress on the day of the meeting. And if you are able-bodied and willing, come early and help us set up.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

## NEXT MEETING:



**Sunday**  
**February 9 at**  
**2:00 pm**

**THE ODD**  
**FELLOWS**  
**HALL**

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



**PLENTY OF FREE PARKING**

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS**

## **February Program!**

### Winter Growers

The speakers will be Gene Schroeder, Markus Mumper, and Rob Skillin, discussing winter growers in a question and answer format. Topics will include the watering of winter growers--when & how much. They will also cover issues concerning planting medium density, and feeding. Many of our favorite plants fall into this category such as aloes, gasteria, haworthia, aeonium, and crassula. Come join us and learn how to get the most out of your plants this winter season.

These plants are generally winter growers:

Adromischus  
Aeonium  
Aloe  
Anacampseros  
Astroloba  
Avonia  
Bowiea  
Bulbine  
Ceraria  
Conophytum  
Cotyledon  
Crassula  
Dioscorea

Dudleya  
Fouqueria  
Gasteria  
Gibbaeum  
Graptopetalum  
Graptoveria  
Haemanthus  
Haworthia  
Kalanchoe  
Neohenricia  
Othonna  
Pachycormus  
Pachyphytum  
Pachyveria

Pelargonium  
Peperomia  
Portulacaria  
Sansevieria  
Sarcocaulon  
Sedeveria  
Sedum  
Senecio  
Stomatium  
Talinum  
Tylecodon



One of the items that Gene will discuss is "Hardy Aloes". Below is a link to a pdf that you can print as a reference guide for your files.

***Brian Kremble's List of Hardy Aloes***

[http://www.smgrowers.com/info/brian\\_aloe.pdf](http://www.smgrowers.com/info/brian_aloe.pdf)

*Aloe arborescens*

*Aloe striata*



# LIBRARY NEWS

Thanks to the generosity of the bidders at our Holiday Party, the auction of library books produced sufficient funds to purchase some new books. They represent my vision of a new direction for the library in which we will concentrate on stocking the library with newer, lower priced books that offer wider appeal to the general membership. The recently added books by Schulz & Kapitany on succulents (a series of 3) and Timber Press's Guide to Succulent Plants of the World. This is as opposed to specialized, scholarly and usually expensive books aimed at the very advanced student or collector.

Following this line we have purchased the following for addition to our library.

**A Gardener's Guide to Cactus, by Scott Calhoun** – the author presents the 100 best cacti and shows how to use them in your garden or a container with planting and care tips.

**Cactus & Succulents for Cold Climates , by Leo Chance** – 274 plants suitable for drought tolerant, cold hardy gardens. Tips on bed preparation, planting, watering, winter protection etc to ensure survival in areas where we usually don't think of these plants.

**The Genus Echeveria, by John Pilbeam** – A thorough treatment of this popular genus. Includes cultivation, classification and distribution of over 140 species. Accompanied by 474 color photos and the authors easy to read commentary.

**Echinocereus, by John Pilbeam** – Another treatment of a popular genus well known for it's striking form and flowers. Plants native to the US and Mexico with many being very cold-tolerant. Great landscape or container subjects for our area. A lot of detailed information and images but presented in a very easy to read style.

**Haworthia for the Collector, by Rudolf Schulz** – There are many books on Haworthia but most focus on plants in habitat or taxonomy. This book focus on the needs of the collector: identification, care, health and propagation. Almost all you need to know in order to collect and enjoy this wonderful group of plants.

**Mesembs of the World, by Gideon Smith** – A well illustrated and easy to read overview of most current mesemb genera. In addition to a guide to the major groups, it includes information on cultivation, identification, distribution, and uses of this unique group of succulent plants.

**Pachyforms II, by Philippe de Vosjoli and Rudy Lime** – Part II of this series on caudiciform and pachycaul plants. Over 300 photos with cultivation tips and advice from the "Father of Succulent Bonsai" Rudy Lime.

**Prickly Pears, by Cheryl Green and David Ferguson** – Charles Spotts showed this book at last month's presentation. Said it was his favorite for the American species. I agree, and though it is out of print, I found a copy and have added it as well.

I hope that this list has something for everyone, especially the "over the grade" members which found little help in our prior offerings. All are in process of being added to the on-line listings now and will be available for checkout in March.

\*\*\*\*\*

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](mailto: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.](#)

## **JUST IN TIME for the first meeting at our new location!**

We now have a full line of Generic shirts in all sizes from small to 2X & in all colors (Black, Navy, Forrest Green & Violet) for all our new and/or current members who would like to own one.

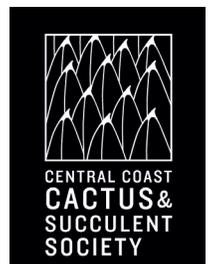
All shirts (and Caps in khaki or black) are \$10.00!

Bargain Basement is:

**2013 Show & Sale shirts & 2012 Show & Sale shirts** for \$5.00

**What a deal!**

See -----Susan-aka "Braids"



# Plant of the Month: Melocactus

by Rob Skillin (from *Popular Exotic Cacti in Color* by Edgar & Brian Lamb)

*Melocacti* are native to almost all the tropical islands of the West Indies and the coastal regions of Central America, including southern Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil. In some cases plants grow exceedingly near the sea, and are quite tolerant even of the salt in sea spray. Most of them grow in a very sandy soil, sometimes almost pure sand. There is the odd inland species such as *M. neryi* from Brazil.



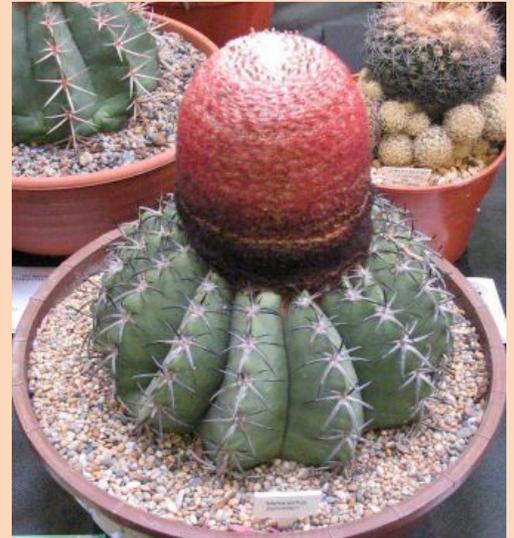
*Melocactus neryi*



*Melocactus glaucescens*

*Melocacti* are globular to short-cylindrical plants, up to 3 ft in height, but usually much less and having a diameter from 4 to 8 in. They normally remain solitary. They are distinctly ribbed plants with 9-20 ribs, usually straight. *Melocacti* produce a true cephalium which is terminal. The cephalium is a compact mass of hair and bristly spines which develops on top, and from which the rings of small flowers appear. In many cases plants do not develop this terminal cephalium for perhaps ten or twenty years, so in early life the plant looks totally different, rather similar to other globular cacti. The flowers are very small, usually in brilliant colours, lasting but a few hours during the afternoon, but they are produced in abundance, often daily, over a period of many weeks or months during the summer and autumn. The fruits which appear later are rather elongated, smooth skinned, up to 1/2 in. or more in height, often in shades of pink when ripe.

*Melocacti* require in most cases a winter minimum temperature above the 50 °F mark, preferably nearer 60 °F. They are shallow rooted plants, but produce long roots. Roots even as long as 9 ft have been recorded, so they prefer a shallow pan-pot, rather than the more normal deep pot. All species should be grown in a sandy humus mixture, at least two parts of sand to one of humus, and watered with care at all times during the spring to autumn growing period. In dull cool weather during the growing period it is safer to refrain from watering at all, as they can rot very easily if over-watered and if the soil stays moist for too long. They are best grown on a top shelf under lightly shaded glass, whilst in winter they should be dry.



*Melocactus zehntneri*



*Melocactus macracanthus*

## Upcoming Events

Feb 8

San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show and Sale, Balboa Park, Room 101, San Diego, CA. For information: 858-3821797.

Mar 28-30

Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show and Sale. Fri/Sat 9-5, Sun 9-4. 1000 S. State College Blvd. Anaheim, CA. 562-587-3357.

April 27

Huntington Plant Sale. Huntington Botanical Gardens. 10-5. 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA. For info: 626-405-2160.

May 4

South Bay Epiphyllum Society Show & Sale. 9a- 4p. South Coast Botanical Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes, CA. 310-833-6823.

May 17-18

Long Beach Cactus Club Plant Show & Sale 10-5 [www.lbcss.org](http://www.lbcss.org) Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach Info (310) 922-6090.

## Board of Directors Meeting ( 1/12/2014)

The following board members assembled for a meeting following the final clean-up of the library meeting room: Charles Varni, President; Kathie Matsuyama, Vice-President; Carol Moss, Secretary; Maggie Wagner, Treasurer; Rob Skillin, CSSA Representative; Loring Manley, Member-at-Large; Pat Gilson, Hospitality; Wayne Mills, Publicity, Gene Schroeder, Librarian; and Markus Mumper. \* Books to add to our library were discussed. \* Charles Varni reported that he has paid rent for the Odd Fellows Lodge through June (the end of our fiscal year). Keys for the Lodge will be held by Carol Moss in North County, by Rob Skillin in South County, and by the President. Charles asked board members to get to the February meeting at 1:00 P.M. We need to set up approximately 120 chairs and determine where the various items associated with meetings will be located. Wayne Mills will take care of publicizing the new location. \* The annual show and sale was discussed. Wayne reported that he has already sent publicity to *Sunset* and *Westways Magazine*. The Ludwick Center has been reserved, and although Charles Varni is not planning to return for another term as president, he will continue to serve as a mentee to Rob in overseeing preparation for the S&S. \* Elections will be held in May and as past-president, Gene will propose a slate of candidates for the May meeting. New officers will be installed in June. Charles proposed making a board position a minimum two-year term, but the board members did not think it was a necessary change. \* The February meeting will present a panel (Rob, Gene and Markus) discussing winter-growing plants. Kathie will write the POM article. \* Kathie and Wayne are preparing a tour of South County gardens for spring.

For the last time, the board rushed out at 5:30 before concluding its discussions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary



### **COPING WITH THE COLD**

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](mailto:loring.manley@gmail.com)

**Do you think you would participate in a workshop and/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](mailto:Carol.moss@gmail.com)**

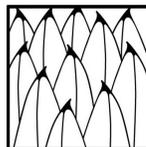
## **NEW POLICY FOR ADS**

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."*

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

### CLUB OFFICERS/ CONTACT INFORMATION



**EDITOR:** Terry Excell: [txlraiders@gmail.com](mailto:txlraiders@gmail.com)  
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All submissions to the CCCSS newsletter **must be submitted two weeks prior** to the monthly meeting.

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

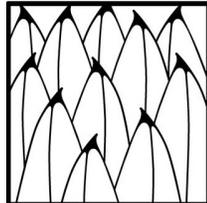
Bill Munkacsy at [plantaseca@yahoo.com](mailto:plantaseca@yahoo.com) is selling some plants.

Contact him for more information.



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