

# On the Dry Side

SEPTEMBER 2013

## CCCSS August Meeting Recap

8/11/2013

With President **Charles Varni** at his son's wedding, Vice-President **Kathie Matsuyama** rushed to the SLO Library from the San Jose Airport to conduct the August meeting of CCCSS. Good job and thanks! She welcomed around fifteen visitors; every seat was filled and some hearty members gave up their seats for the floor to accommodate the standing-room-only crowd (again!). First-time visitors and our generous snack providers were thanked with a free plant. We were reminded that **the October meeting ONLY will be held on the third Sunday, October 20**, due to a decision that is out of our control. Our speaker in October will be **Robin Stockwell**, owner of The Growing Grounds in Castroville (which was closed when I tried to go there this past Sunday, the 25th. *Ach!*). We will also be hosting the executive board of the California Garden Clubs in October. Announcements also included a reminder that yearly dues are due now, so please take care of that if you haven't done so already. **Jim Harlow**, tour organizer extraordinaire, announced that he rescued a small succulent – *Portulaca molokiniensis* – that was left behind on the Ojai trip. Please claim it at the September meeting.

**Rob Skillin**, just back from Madagascar, provided an impromptu discussion of aloes, the plant-of-the-month. (In a bit of serendipity, our featured speaker also gave a program on aloes, and it worked out so nicely that we are considering a tie-in between the plant-of-the-month and the topic of our featured speaker, when practicable.) Rob mentioned that some aloes are OK with light frost. There are many hybrids, and some aloes get very tall – up to 12 to 20 feet [Tom said some get as tall as 35 feet]. They need well-drained soil and can grow in full sun. Some do not flower for years; Rob has had some in his greenhouse for 35 years that have never flowered! Apparently gophers (Rob's special thorn in his side) love agaves but don't bother aloes. Good to know! While describing the raffle plants, Rob noted that *Pachypodiums* need lots of root room, and said that if any plant remains small when it was expected to grow, it should be up-potted ... replanted in a larger pot.

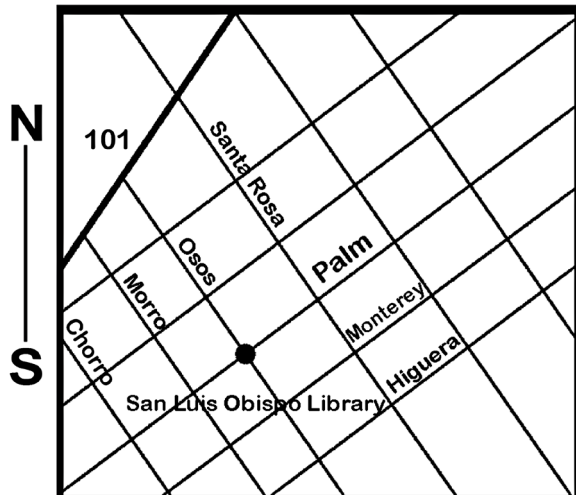
Our speaker, **Tom Cole**, is very active in the organization *Save the Children*, a charity based in Uganda. His mission is teaching the populations in the Sudan and other parts of east and south Africa to rebuild their ability to grow their own food. He showed us photos of the inhumane conditions under which many of these populations now live. When in Africa, Tom takes the opportunity to seek out succulents *in situ* and noted that the plants we raise here are much lusher than they are in their native habitat. Aloes tend to turn brick red and markings also become more prominent when stressed. In habitat, aloes are pollinated by sunbirds – as those in cultivation are pollinated by hummingbirds. Aloes are not monocarpic like agaves. There are so many similar species of aloe (over 500) that some can only be correctly identified when in flower. The similarities were evident from the photos that Tom showed and he mentioned that only about 10 percent of known species are seen in shows. Flower colors range through the yellow-orange-red spectrum and can differ in color even when side-by-side. When possible, Tom collects seeds that go to the *Institute of Aloe Studies* in Oakland which works towards preservation and propagation. Many aloes have a use, some medicinal, such as aloe vera, which can be used for burns, malaria and digestive upsets. Others are poisonous. Some aloes have rust and black spots in habitat, so don't be concerned if your garden aloes have these spots. He recommended the book *Aloes: The Definitive Guide* as an excellent resource (available at Amazon.com for a pretty penny). He also mentioned a writer from the 50s and 60s, G.W. Reynolds, who wrote about aloes, and whose books are also listed at Amazon.com, but for a very rare penny, if you catch my drift. (Check with Librarian **Gene Schroeder** or our website to see if we have these in our library.) Tom himself has identified two new species and is writing a book on the aloes of Uganda. Thank you, Tom, for a wealth of information on aloes!

The meeting was adjourned following the Raffle, Reserve Raffle and Exchange Raffle, which **Wayne Mills** has reorganized to make it more manageable.

Because the general meeting was very long, the Board decided to postpone its meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

## NEXT MEETING:



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

**San Luis Obispo  
Public Library**

**995 Palm Street  
San Luis Obispo**

Membership Renewal Time

**Our NEW YEAR started  
July 1st**

Dues are:

\$20 for individuals

\$25 for families

\$40 for business members

(allows a business size ad in

the Newsletter).

See Maggie to renew for 2013/2014.

OR Mail to:

CCCSS

c/o Maggie Wagner

780 Merced Street

Pismo Beach, CA, 93449

## **SPEAKER OF THE MONTH**

**Tom Glavich**

### **“Gasteria Cultivars and Hybrids”**



Tom’s presentation will start with a look at some of the more interesting *Gasteria* species, and then move on to look at what growers around the world have been doing to develop new and interesting cultivars. Particular attention will be paid to some of the fascinating variegated hybrids now available. Please note that he also wrote our “Plant of the Month” article on *Gasteria*.

Tom Glavich is a member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) and chair of the CSSA Research Fund. He is one of the co-chairs of the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show, held each August at the Los Angeles County Arboretum. He is also the author of the “Beginner’s Guide” articles that appear in the CSSA ‘Newsletter To The Point’. For his most recent CSSA article, click here:

<http://cssainc.com/index.php/beginners-guide-to-echeveria-species/>

Tom will be bringing a wonderful selection of plants to sell to our members!

## **HELP! SUCCULENT RESCUE**

- There are many specimen plants being taken out for a parking lot. They are free to anyone who is interested, but you have to remove them.



Contact Jerry or Maggie at 237-1721 or [maggiesmtn@wildblue.net](mailto:maggiesmtn@wildblue.net)

They are located in north SLO county off Santa Rosa Creek Rd.

## **FREE CUTTINGS**

*Hi all, I’ve gotten a big bag of nice, large, healthy Firestick cuttings from a neighbor. Anyone wishing to have some can either come and get them at my house—Duna Vista Mobile Senior Mobile Home Park, 2400 Cienaga St, Spc 14, Oceano CA-805-481-5596, (Please call before coming.) or they can pick them up at our September Meeting.*

*--Pat Gilson*

## **PUMICE ANYONE?**

Rob Skillin has 30 pound bags of horticultural pumice, which he will sell to members for \$8.00 on a first come, first served basis. You can call him at 709-3033 to reserve a bag, and he will bring it to the next meeting



## **CHANGE IN MEETING DATE**

**October Meeting:  
OCTOBER 20, 2013**



# PLANT OF THE MONTH

## GASTERIA

BY TOM GLAVICH



*Gasteria* is a popular and easily grown genus of plants that has been collected and kept as house plants since the 17th century.

*Gasteria* are readily distinguished from *Aloe* and *Haworthia* (both very close relatives) by the shape of their flowers. *Gasteria* flowers are carried on a long scape (leafless flower stalk). They generally hang down as they open, and have a swollen (gasteriform) portion at the base of the flower. The word *Gasteria* comes from the Greek "gaster" meaning stomach or belly.

*Gasteria* vary in size from about an inch to several feet in diameter. Almost all plants start out with the leaves in two rows (distichous), although most eventually begin to spiral, either remaining in a distichous spiral, or changing into a rosette form. *Gasteria* are very variable in appearance. They have definite juvenile and adult forms, have local variations in appearance, and have form and growth habits that are dependent on the soil type and amount of sunlight.

Typical natural habitats are humus rich, sandy soils. They grow on dry rocky hillsides and generally grow under larger shrubs, particularly when young. They also can be found in rock fissures or in the shade of large rocks. The roots are shallow and thick, and this helps the plants obtain moisture from barely wet soils, and nourishment from decaying leaves and debris from larger shrubs.

*Gasteria* cultivation is easy. They are mostly winter and spring growers, but exhibit some growth all year except for the hottest part of the summer. They are tolerant of almost any growing mix, although they do best with high organic content mixes, similar to their natural growing conditions. They prefer partial shade, particularly in the afternoon, however the best color is obtained by giving them as much light and sun, short of sunburn, as possible.

*Gasteria* are generally free from most pests. The one difficulty is 'black spot', a fungus that attacks many *Gasteria*, particularly large, show quality plants. The fungus is rarely fatal, but causes large unsightly black spots on the leaves. There is no way to remove the spots, and since the leaves remain on the plants for several years, the fungus can quickly ruin show plants. The fungus can be minimized by keeping the leaves dry, and particularly keeping dew off the leaves. It can be prevented by regular application of systemic fungicides, but vigilance is required. Funginex is a popular rose fungicide that works well on controlling black spot.

*Gasterias* are readily propagated from offsets at the base, which can be simply pulled off and planted. Leaf cuttings will also root easily. *Gasterias* left in the open in California will be rapidly pollinated by hummingbirds, although the resulting seed is then an uncontrolled and unknown hybrid. Controlled pollination is easily accomplished with a small brush or toothpick. Seed can be collected as soon as the fruits start to dry.

*Gasteria* hybridize easily, and cross pollination can produce interesting plants. A number of hybrids are available, as are several variegated and at least one monstrose cultivar. Intergeneric hybrids with *Aloes* and *Haworthias* are also available.

Selected species include:



↩ *Gasteria nitida* var. *armstrongii* (usually found as *G. armstrongii*) This is a small plant, with distichous leaves only a few inches long. The leaves are dark green (almost black in some cases), and are tuberculate (covered with small bumps) It offsets freely from the base, forming nice clumps. Larger specimens can be obtained by over-potting.

*Gasteria batesiana* is another of the dark green tuberculate species. The leaves spiral with age to form rosettes. The plant is much larger than *Gasteria armstrongii*, and the tubercles are often a lighter green than the main body, giving the plant a speckled appearance. ➔



↩ *Gasteria carinata* var. *verrucosa* (often found as *G. verrucosa*) is a lighter colored species. It is larger than *G. batesiana*, with thinner leaves, The tubercles are much larger, and often merge into large areas of glaucous green on a dark green background.

*Gasteria carinata* var. *carinata* cultivar 'Grat Brak' (often found as *G. schweickerdtiana*) is a particularly beautiful plant. In this cultivar the tubercles on the underside of the leaves form bands. Tubercles also merge on both the upper and lower leaves to form glaucous green stripes on a dark green background. ➔



References:

E. J. van Jaarsveld, *Gasterias of South Africa*.  
F. Sajeve and M. Costanzo, *Succulents, The Illustrated Dictionary*.

# Upcoming Events

## August 31

Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium. Info: 626-405-2160.

## September 14-15

Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society 2013 Show & Sale. Jardines Restaurant Garden, San Juan Bautista. Sat. 9am–5pm, Sun. 9–4pm.

## September 22

Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, CA. For info: 310-922-6090

## October 19

Charles & Joann Spotts Plant Auction (Phase II). Details below.

## October 20

CCCSS Monthly meeting; changed from 10/13.

## November 2-3

San Gabriel Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale. Hours: 9-4. LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave. Arcadia, CA.

For info: Tom Glavich: 626-798-2430 or John Matthews: 661-297-5364.

## CHARLES & JOANN SPOTTS AUCTION #2

The auction will be held at Charles & Joann's home on **Saturday, October 19** (*Changed from October 12*), from 10 a.m. until finished, usually about 3 or 4 p.m. At this time, there is a tentative list of plants. (Attachment included with the eNewsletter.) They are in show pots and have come from his show collection. Most of the plants have been selected to appeal to the novice and intermediate showers and the minimums will generally be quite affordable. There will also be a few plants more suitable for the experienced collector. He will bring some copies of the list to the meeting, along with directions to his house.



His home is 5941 Lone Pine Place, Paso Robles. To get there from south county take hwy 101 to Paso Robles, then take hwy 46 East, about 7 1/2 miles, to Geneseo Road. (Currently this intersection is where the highway 46 construction begins and the road is not well marked, but the intersection might be completed by October). Drive south on Geneseo about 2 1/2 miles to Lone Pine. Left on Lone Pine, we are the third house on the left. There is plenty of parking. The plants will be on display at 10 a.m. and the bidding will start at 1 p.m. Lunch, sodas, and water will be available.

## IMPORTANT LIBRARY UPDATE

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.](#)

The description for each includes Title, Authors, Year Published, number of pages, binding (PB=paperback, HB = hard bound), a loose classification (specialty, general) and some description to guide you to the content and level of the publication.

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.

# PET SAFE GARDENING

(from an article by the ASPCA) by Terry Excell

We love our succulents and we love our pets. Since many of us possess both, we need to be aware of the toxic plants, fertilizers and insecticides that are often used in our gardens here on the Central Coast. Proper placement of plants, safe fertilization and thoughtful pest control are important aspects of being a pet owner and succulent lover.



Tuzzy in the FRONT yard

We all know about euphorbia, but did you know the following plants can harm your pets? (For a more complete list of succulent and non-succulent plants, see the ASPCA website at the end of this article.)

Adenium obesum  
Agavaceae (many varieties)  
Aloe (Aloe barbadensis, Aloe vera)  
Kalanchoe tubiflora  
Crassula arborescens (Jade plants) Many crassula species are safe, check the ASPCA website.  
Dracaena (most varieties, Agavaceae family)  
Pelargonium species  
Yucca

## Fertilizers

They can be horrible on animals' digestive tracts, causing stomach upset or a life-threatening gastrointestinal obstruction. Follow the instructions carefully on the fertilizer packaging and wait the appropriate amount of time before letting your pet run outside.

**Cocoa Mulch-** If a dog ingests enough cocoa mulch, symptoms would be similar to chocolate poisoning. Consider using a less toxic alternative, such as shredded pine or cedar, OR use in an area where it cannot be accessed by dogs.

**Compost-**Compost gets moldy and some foods we ingest are not okay for animals, such as coffee and certain fruits and vegetables.

## Insecticides/Pesticides

"The most dangerous are snail bait with *metaldehyde*, fly bait with *methomyl*, systemic insecticides *disyston* or *disulfoton*, mole or gopher bait with *zinc phosphide* and most forms of rat poison." Store insecticides in areas inaccessible to animals and read labels for directions carefully.

If you witness excessive vomiting, changes in the color of urine/stool, or notice a change in the activity or personality of your pet, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If we practice safe gardening we can ensure the success and happiness of plants, pets and ourselves.

For the complete article go to:

<http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/aspca-guide-pet-safe-gardening>

<http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>

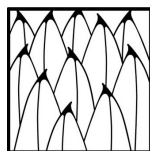
## T-SHIRTS AND CAPS

If you would like to purchase a club t-shirt or hat, please contact Susan (aka. "Braids") [braids97@sbcglobal.net](mailto:braids97@sbcglobal.net) And she will bring your item to the meeting. The shirts are \$10 and the hats are \$12. XL 2012 show shirts are \$5.

## NAME TAGS

Name tags for members who joined CCCSS in January or later are in the accordion file at the front desk. If you don't have a name tag or would like a new one, please contact Carol at: [carol.moss@gmail.com](mailto:carol.moss@gmail.com)  
She will put one in the file for you the following meeting. Carol will put a personal succulent photo on it if you send one to her.

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



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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.



## A SPECIAL THANKS

*Our Prez, Charles Varni, graciously donated 75 Aloe brevifolia plants to the San Luis Botanical Garden for possible use in their Firesafe Garden. To show their appreciation, they gave Charles a wonderful Dudleya pulverulenta that they grew from seed collected in the garden.*



## LINKS OF INTEREST

<http://www.lapshin.org/succulent/karlov4.htm> GASTERIA images ( & aloe and haworthia) from a Russian botanical garden

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/planetgasteria/> The Gasteria Facebook Group

<http://www.gardeningsuccs.com/1/post/2013/08/a-detailed-look-at-succulent-addiction.html> A humorous look at our hobby

<http://www.plantzafrica.com/frames/plantsfram.htm> A very informative link to South African plants.

[www.cactuspro.com/biblio/en:accueil](http://www.cactuspro.com/biblio/en:accueil) is a site where you can download books and journals on our hobby.

[www.cssainc.org](http://www.cssainc.org) is the new website for the Cactus & Succulent Society of America.

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