



ON THE DRY SIDE

CENTRAL COAST CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

JANUARY 2019

OUR JANUARY SPEAKER OF THE MONTH: JOHN TRAGER PRESENTING “SOUTH AFRICAN WINTER GROWING SUCCULENTS”

John Trager is Curator of the Desert Collections at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, where he has worked since 1983. Trager’s horticultural writings have appeared in the Cactus and Succulent Journal, the Euphorbia Journal, and various other horticultural publications. He is perhaps better known for his photography (over 2000 of his images have been published in numerous textbooks and horticultural journals). John has traveled widely in search of plants (and insects). He holds a bachelor’s degree in Horticulture from Cal Poly Pomona and earlier he studied Botany at UCSB and Santa Barbara City College.

South Africa’s west coast is one of the five Mediterranean climate regions of the world. It is also a biodiversity hotspot for succulent plants. Some of these succulents are favorites of gardeners and collectors, while others are rarely-grown species found in only a few specialized collections, or are not in cultivation at all! This program surveys the rich diversity of South African succulents, and explores the special climatic conditions and adaptations that allow these plants to survive.

Discover the unique species successfully grown in a Californian garden, as well as a wide array of South African species growing in their natural habitat. The Huntington Desert Garden is nearly 100 years old, features more than 2,000 species of succulents and desert plants in 60 landscaped beds. This 10-acre garden display is the Huntington’s most important conservation collection and is home to an Aloe (Aloaceae) collection, constituting one of the largest collections outside Africa.

John will also be speaking at the SLO Botanical Garden on Saturday, January 12.



DON'T MISS OUR NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING — SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH.

Odd Fellows Hall, 520 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo
Parking is limited — please consider carpooling!

JANUARY PLANT OF THE MONTH:

CONOPHYTUM

Plantae / Angiosperms / Eudicots / Caryophyllales / Aizoaceae

Conophytum is a genus of succulent plants currently consisting of approximately 150 species and is a native of South Africa and Namibia. Some scientists tend to consider the family of Aizoaceae, to which this genus belongs, as a subgroup of the family of Mesembryanthemaceae; but the most accepted trend is to consider them as two distinct genera although there are some similarities between them. The plants are small and easily recognizable because of their unique appearance and are not too difficult to cultivate.

The genus Conophytum was created in 1922 by the British botanist N. E. Brown and initially comprised about 450 taxa of species, subspecies and varieties; revision came relatively recently (1994) by the hand of the botanist S. Hammer of Vista, California: he unified some species previously identified with synonyms or local micro-variants and created the current classification system. The name comes from the Latin word “conus” (cone) and the greek word “phytum” (plant), a representation of the special conical shape of the seedlings. The genus is very diverse and includes species with very different characteristics.

These plants are perennial and small or very small (from a few mm to 2-3 cm), they have a tendency to frequently offset forming compact mounds several tens of cm across and about 10 cm high: this morphology takes the name of “pulvini” and is the form most efficient to live in arid environments with very exposed positions (the low ratio of exposed surface area and volume maximizes moisture retention). Other species instead tend to develop under the surface of the soil and only their apex, often transparent, is visible. The stems are short, fleshy, sometimes covered by protective hairs and the epidermis may be unicolor, spotted or striped. All species have a central fissure from which the flower grows (day or night blooming depending on the plant, often resembling a daisy) and new foliar pairs.

The Conophytum vegetate during the winter season. They must then be kept dry during the summer and then start to keep gradually wet upon autumn arrival: the moisture stimulates the release of new root hairs and the plant will grow for the entire winter season, foliar issuing new pairs from inside the existing ones. Flowering usually occurs in autumn and the color of the flowers is extremely variable from species to species.

MORE PHOTOS NEXT PAGE >>>



Conophytum meyeri

Cultivation is quite easy, but care must be taken to avoid excess water and to prevent rot while the plants are dormant: the plants themselves communicate their water needs with a slight wrinkling of the epidermis. Propagation can be made from seed or by cuttings; seed germination is quite easy but the young seedlings are very sensitive to humidity and need special and constant care to raise them successfully.

The types of soil suitable to this genus are various and different for each species because of the great diversity of different specimens; the common feature, however, is the high drainage capacity and good porosity. The plant emits short, thin, branching roots which possess a good ability to regenerate themselves: the size of the pots should be minimized, they will do better a little pot bound compared to too large a pot. Conophytum require a very bright environment. It is necessary to allow good air circulation to dry any excess moisture and prevent collar rot.



Conophytum bilobum

CONOPHYTUM — CONTINUED



Top: *Conophytum jucundum*, location overview
Left center: *Conophytum minusculum*
Bottom left: *Conophytum friedrichiae*
Bottom right: *Conophytum limpidum*

Photos courtesy of Rob Skillin
POTM article provided by Markus Mumper



BULLETIN BOARD

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE CCCSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

If you've considered becoming more involved with CCCSS, the Board of Directors has announced that the **Membership Chairperson** position is now available. Membership involves signing up new and renewing club members and maintaining a current membership roster. **Basic computer and Excel skills are needed, and you must be a club member for at least six months.** Training and orientation will be given by Barbara Brooks. This position is extremely satisfying, rewarding, and a wonderful opportunity to give your time and services to CCCSS. Start the new year by volunteering for the Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society! For more information, please contact Barbara Brooks at 805.680.1389, or barbarahbrooks@sbcglobal.net.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with our annual potluck in December! We couldn't have done it without you.

Pat Gilson
Hospitality Chairperson

ASK ME TABLE FOR CACTUS AND SUCCULENT QUESTIONS

Bring your questions about cacti and succulents to the **ASK ME TABLE** conveniently located next to the library book table at our monthly meetings. The Ask Me table will be capably staffed by our venerable expert Cactophile, Gene Schroeder. Gene has never met a cactus he didn't like! (And many succulents as well.) Assisting Gene will be Succulentophile Kathie Matsuyama. Please do not bring any diseased plants to the meeting! Instead, bring good photos of the plants and/or bugs.

We look forward to seeing you at the ASK ME TABLE!

REGIONAL SHOW & SALE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The 2019 Calendar of California Cactus & Succulent Shows & Sales is available in the "files" section of our Club's Facebook page: Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society. We will also be posting it shortly to our website as well: www.centralcoastcactus.org.

CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA (CSSA)

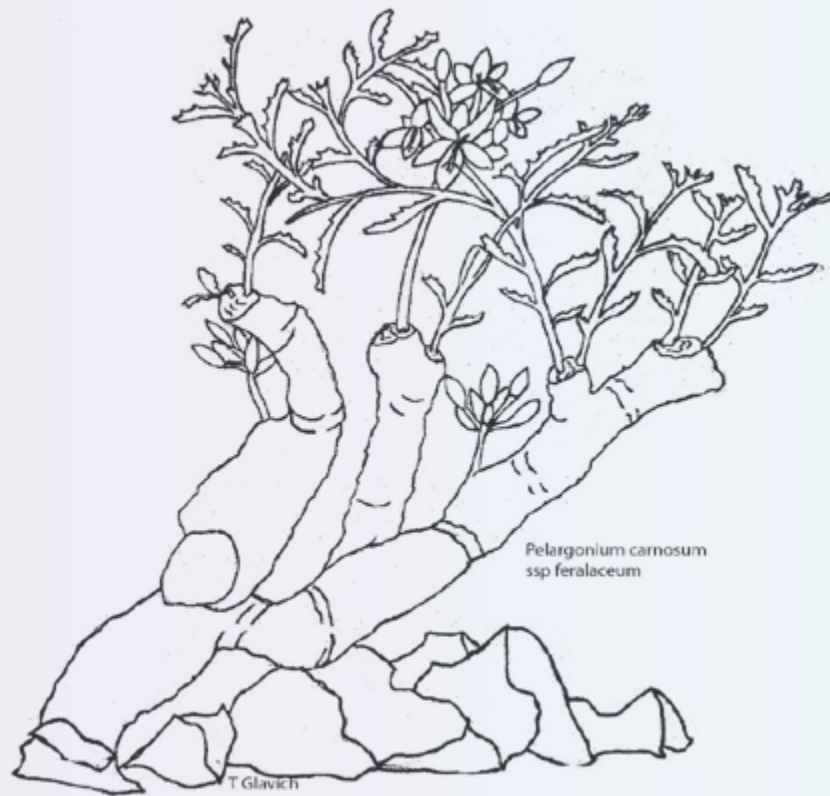
Convention Advertisers And Volunteers Needed: Our Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society (CCCSS) is hosting the Cactus and Succulent Society of America's 38th Biennial Convention, July 17-20, 2019 in San Luis Obispo at the Veterans Hall on Monterey St. CSSA will be distributing a 2019 CSSA Convention program which will be professionally designed with full color advertisement space available. We still need more advertisers, thus if you are interested in purchasing an ad space this year in support of the CSSA Convention, please contact Terrie Leivers at terrieleivers@gmail.com. Terrie is the 2019 CSSA Convention Host Co-Chairperson and our CCCSS Publicity Board Member.

Additionally, if you would like to get on the list to volunteer during the convention between the dates of July 18-20, 2019, you can email Terrie for that as well (terrieleivers@gmail.com), and you will be added to the list for volunteer opportunities that may interest you. It looks like an approximate 5-hour shift will get you a 1-day pass to attend lectures (there are usually 6 lectures per day) with a max of two 1-day passes, depending upon the number of volunteers we get who are interested, or if you are interested in being a field trip host your trip will be covered by CSSA. Please note that the pass cannot be split among different days of the convention.



25th San Gabriel Valley

Winter Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale



January 12 – 13 2019 9 AM to 4 PM

LA County Arboretum 301 N Baldwin, Arcadia

www.sgvcss.com

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Free with paid admission to Arboretum

GARDEN GATHERING NEWS

Garden Gatherings are currently planned for Ed and Susan Chandler's garden in Los Osos on Saturday, January 26, and for Carl and Stephanie Kleinman's garden in San Luis Obispo on Saturday, February 23. See the **Ask Me Table** at the January meeting to sign up, or you can email Susan Ross or Kathie Matsuyama (see below) for more information.

Sign-ups for Garden Gathering Hosts for 2019 are underway! Volunteer early—choose your favorite month in your garden!

If you're not familiar with CCCSS Garden Gatherings, here are the FAQs:

- **What:** "Garden Gatherings" are a chance to meet club members in a fun, casual garden setting. Food, and a tour of the member's garden are included.
- **Why:** CCCSS club is large; it's hard to connect with other cactophiles at our huge meetings.
- **Where:** Gatherings take place in a CCCSS member's garden.
- **Who:** Garden Gathering participants must be CCCSS members. The host decides the number of guests. Sign-ups are taken at monthly club meetings.
- **When:** Hosts pick the date and time for the event.

The process of pre-planning, event organization, sign-up sheets, emailing your guests, etc. will be capably coordinated by Susan and Kathie! Please don't hesitate to sign up because you have a weed or two in your garden, we all do! And don't worry if your garden is not all cacti- or succulent-related. The intent of Garden Gatherings is to get to know other members of CCCSS, and this is a delightful way to do just that!

Please let us know if you are interested in hosting!

Susan Ross: susanrosscra@yahoo.com or **Kathie Matsuyama:** luvbigdogs@earthlink.net.



Some of Ed & Susan Chandler's container plants

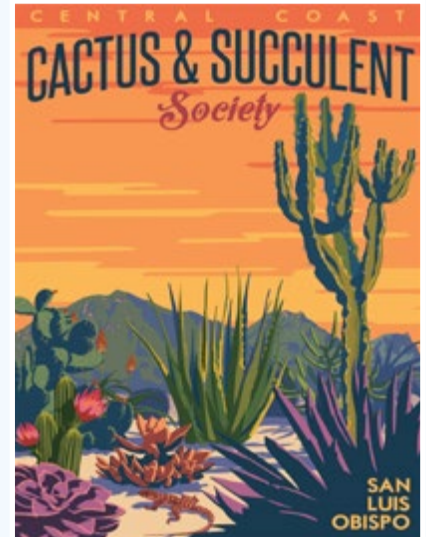


Photos from Carl & Stephanie Kleinman's garden

BEAUTIFUL ART FOR SALE

Have you noticed the gorgeous cactus and succulent artwork available for sale at our meetings? This art was commissioned by Just Looking Gallery in San Luis Obispo. The artist of this wonderful work, **Steve Thomas**, was born in Canada and is based in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Thomas has a long history as a commercial artist, working with organizations such as America's National Park Service, Clif Bar and Disney. Currently he focuses on creating fine art paintings heavily influenced by the 1930s Art Deco movement. Over the past five years, working with Just Looking Gallery in San Luis Obispo, he has developed an extraordinary series of vintage style travel posters capturing the beauty and unique nature of California's Central Coast. We certainly LOVE the art he created especially for the CCCSS!

The profit from every piece of this beautiful cactus and succulent art sold by CCCSS goes to CCCSS! **Thank you, Ken McGavin and Ralph Gorton of Just Looking Gallery**, for your kindness and generosity! Just Looking Gallery is located at **746 Higuera Street in Suite 1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401, (805) 541-6663.**



The art prices including tax:

12"x18" framed print: \$120, and 24"x36" print on canvas: \$420

Orders for art pieces will be taken at the club meetings, cash and checks only please. Your print will be ordered from Just Looking Gallery and delivered to you at the following club meeting.

For more information, see Kathie Matsuyama at the Ask Me Table or contact her at luvbigdogs@earthlink.net.

In next month's newsletter: Get the backstory! Why did Just Looking Gallery commission Steve Thomas to create a work of art specifically for the Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society? Stay Tuned!

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799 Facebook members! View club updates & member photos. Also find us online at www.centralcoastcactus.org.

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