



ON THE DRY SIDE

CENTRAL COAST CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

MAY 2020

SPECIAL ISSUE

“When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden.”

– Minnie Aumonier

“The glory of gardening:
hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart
with nature. To nurture a garden is to
feed not just the body, but the soul.”

– Alfred Austin

“I like gardening. It’s a place where I find
myself when I need to lose myself.”

– Alice Sebold

“My extravagance is my garden — it’s the
first thing I look at every morning when I
wake up. It gives me so much pleasure.”

– Ina Garten



While we continue to postpone our monthly meetings until further notice, we hope you are making the best of staying at home, and enjoying all the gifts of your garden and plant collection. Please enjoy this newsletter, and we’ll see you soon!

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *Our Plant of the Month – Gymnocalcium*
- *Propagation 101: Planting Seeds*
- *Notes on Adenium Shaping*
- *Members’ Virtual Brag Plants*
- *And more!*

OUR MAY MEETING IS CANCELED.

We regret we won’t be seeing you this month. Please enjoy this special issue of our newsletter and we hope to see you again as soon as possible. Stay safe!

MAY PLANT OF THE MONTH: GYMNOCALYCIUM

Gymnocalycium: from the Greek words *gymnos*, meaning “naked” and *kalyx*, meaning “bud.”

It is fairly easy to place an unknown cactus into the genus *Gymnocalycium* especially with a flower bud. Choosing the species is another matter. The majority of species in this genus consist of globose, solitary plants with ribs that are often only somewhat tuberculate. This slight punctuation along the ribs results in a “chin-like” appearance and this characteristic has earned it the nick-name “Chin Cactus”. In general, each areole has a handful of proportionately-sized spines. Of course, there are exceptions of clumping, strongly tuberculate, or heavily-spined species, but in these cases flower buds will ensure that even these plants belong in *Gymnocalycium*.

These flowers are defined as being “naked”, that is, without any spines, wool, or bristles. In all species, they are smooth and scaled, somewhat resembling the tip of young asparagus shoots. Nearly all species have white, cream-colored or pale-pink flowers, while a few have dark red or yellow. Flower size is moderate among cacti and typically flowers are 1 to 1.5 inches (2.5 to 3cm) wide. While flowers come easy and at an early age on *Gymnocalycium* plants, they usually need high-heat to open fully and thus do much better in a greenhouse for those outside Arizona!



The largest of this genus may grow to around 7 inches high and 12 inches in diameter, while most species stay well under 5 inches (13cm) in height and diameter. This small size and relatively easy care requirements make this genus very popular in cultivation. Among the most popular is the red-flowered, *G. baldianum* and the unusually colored *G. mihanovichii*. The latter of these is even more popular as a grafted mutation of either variegated or chlorophyll-lacking, bright red plants incapable of surviving on their own roots. In fact, these might be one of the most prolific plants in cultivation as they are sold in large retail outlets as a novelty with the name “Lollipop Cactus”.

In habitat, this species occurs in South-Eastern South America in various environs and elevations.

CactiGuide.com

(more photos next page)

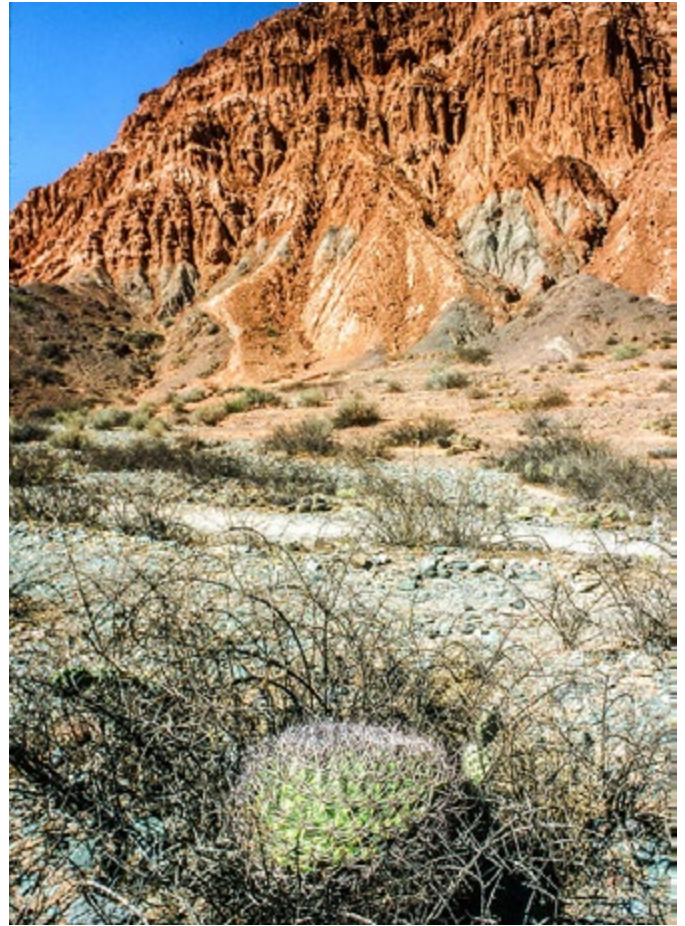
Pictured top right: *Gymnocalycium mostii*
At left: *Gymno baldianum*

Plant of the Month feature provided by Markus Mumper.
Photos courtesy of Rob Skillin.

GYMNOCALYCIUM: CONTINUED



Top: *Gymno pugionacanthum*
Center: *Gymno spegazzinii*
Bottom: *Gymno glaucum*



Above: *Gymno saglionis*, location overview
Below: *Gymno saglionis* crest



CLUB BULLETIN BOARD

HUGE MOVING SALE – SUCCULENTS!

Beautiful potted succulents in various sizes for sale Saturday, May 16, in Grover Beach. Priced to sell, all in great condition. Some plants are show quality. Cash only, by appointment only — due to coronavirus restrictions.

For an appointment, please call Susan Ross at 805.218.3875.

Please note this is not a garden gathering or a social event, due to COVID-19. House will not be open to visitors. You must wear a mask. No children or pets, please. Thank you.

FOR SALE

Agave plants, approximately 2 1/2 feet in diameter and 2 feet tall. Smaller sizes are available.

Price negotiable, between \$15 and \$25, depending on how many you want to buy.

Contact Spring Smith: 941-330-1606



FOR SALE

I have two old barrel cactus I have owned for 30 years. I brought them over from Visalia where I took them out of the ground and potted them. I would like to sell them, first, or plant them in a garden at my house as a second choice.

The cactus are approximately 24 inches high and 18 inches around. They are two different kinds as one has straight sharp spines and the other has curved spines.

I am in Los Osos.

Contact info:

Sterling

srayb65@gmail.com

805-235-9876 phone or text



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Huntington has made a decision to cancel all June events which means the Show & Sale scheduled for June 26-28, has been cancelled for this year.
- Our own annual CCCSS Show & Sale is postponed, and tentatively rescheduled for August 29th & 30th.
- The Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale has been postponed to September 5th & 6th, at the Fresno Fairgrounds.



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Also find us online at www.centralcoastcactus.org.

PLANTING SEEDS

By CoolCactusKid

First off, I am not an expert at starting seedlings, although I have been doing it sporadically for years. That said, I want to share a method I have been using lately which works for me and gives me healthy plants with decent germination rates (how many of the planted seeds sprout). (See picture #1) Are there other ways to start cacti and succulent seeds that are successful? Yes, of course there are, but this works for me. Give the following method a try if you have not tried growing succulents and cacti from seed, or even if you are already a regular at doing it.

When starting seeds such as a sunflower, the results all happen in one season. These fast results are fun and exciting. On the other hand, succulent seedlings take quite a bit longer, and cactus seedlings tend to be even slower to grow. Growing succulent and cacti from seed is rewarding, but it requires time.

Besides the challenge, another enjoyable aspect of growing cacti and succulents from seeds is the genetic variations within seed batches. This can happen even if the seeds are not cross-pollinated. (Cross-pollination or hybrid occurs when a plant is intentionally or naturally pollinated with a different plant.)

The key for growing the plants that we love from seed is patience.

The first step is to acquire the seeds. In picture #2 are *Aloe deltoideodonta* v. *sparkler* seeds; notice the pencil point to get an idea of the size. I have acquired seeds from friends, as well as from my own plants. I find it very rewarding to harvest seeds from my own garden and start them. Ebay and other online sources can be used, as well, but be sure to check their feedback. If you purchase seeds, make sure that whoever you are buying them from has a good reputation for fresh, viable seeds. CSSA (Cactus and Succulent Society of America) sells seeds to its members only. They have a nice list on their website, and the prices of the seeds are very reasonable. CSSA has a good reputation for seed quality. Be aware that when you collect seeds from your plants or friends' plants, they could have been cross-pollinated (hybrids) with other similar plants that are blooming nearby. Although these hybrids may not be what is expected, the resulting plant can be exciting and interesting.

Next, I sanitize and sterilize all ingredients, materials, and tools. This allows me to leave the seedlings in their sealed bags for several months without needing to water or disturb them. Sterilizing everything prevents fungus from killing the seedlings when they sprout. This is a of "set it and forget it" method. Without the sealed bag, they will need daily watering and attention.

Pots, screens, name tags, and any other tools needed are soaked in Star San (used for sanitizing wine and beer bottles) and allowed to dry. There are other methods to sterilize; this works easily for me. (See pictures #3, #4 & #5).

(continued next page)



PROPAGATION 101: CONTINUED

You will need a good quality cactus mix (soil) and some nursery sand. Then heat sterilize in separate covered dishes or pans in the oven at about 250 degrees until the internal temperature of the soil maintains 180 degrees. (I use a dish with a glass lid, but aluminum foil works well, too.) Adjust the oven temperature so that the interior temperature of the soil stays close to 180 degrees for 30 minutes. If it gets much hotter (above 200), it will kill off the good stuff in the soil. You don't need to worry about the temperature of the sand. A meat thermometer, either digital or analog, can be used to monitor the soil temperature. After this heat treatment, allow the soil to cool. You will need some sterilized water at this point. I just boil the water to kill off anything bad in it. Allow the water to cool before using it. You may want to add some of the water to rehydrate the soil if it dried out during the heating process. (See pictures #6 & #7)

The final step is assembling the pots with the seeds. After sterilizing all the parts, tools, and materials, it is important to let them dry. I lay it all out on a very clean table, sometimes inside on the dining table or kitchen counter covered with paper. Try to keep everything clean so the seeds don't succumb to fungus. Wash your hands completely before starting. (See picture #8)

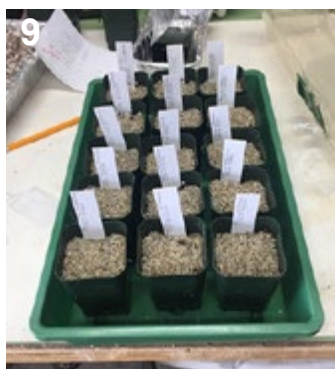
Put screen at the bottom of the pots to keep out bugs and to keep the soil in the pot. Use a strainer to sift off some of the finer parts of the cactus soil, and set aside. The courser soil goes in the pot first with some room to put $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of fine sifted soil on top. Pack it down lightly. Put the seeds on top of the fine soil. If they are larger seeds, count them so you can figure out your germination rates (how many sprouted). Smaller seeds can be mixed with fine sand to evenly distribute in the pot. Cover the seeds with fine nursery sand (also heat sterilized). Then water and label each pot, including the date and full botanical name if you know it. (See picture #9)

The planted pots go into new Ziplock-type bags and sealed. Make sure that there is enough air inside to keep the bags from collapsing. I find that putting two to three pots into each gallon bag works well. Do not open them after they are sealed. (See picture #10)

Now all the preparations pay off because all you need to do is keep the bags in bright light (no direct sun). I have been experimenting with keeping the pots warm with a seed germination pad (about 75 degrees). I believe this increases the germination rates. All the sterilizing keeps the little mini greenhouses (Ziplock bags) from getting fungus and killing off the seedlings, and the seedlings are kept moist with the recycled water in the bag. (See picture #11)

You will want to check on them from time to time to see how they are doing. Don't be tempted to open the bags until the seedlings are much less fragile (usually three months or more). The process of seeing a bare pot turn into baby plants is a lot of fun.

Questions or comments, email me:
coolcactuskid805@gmail.com.



NOTES ON ADENIUM SHAPING

By Club President Loring Manley

Adeniums can be very satisfying plants to grow. Given warmth, proper watering, and feeding they develop a pleasingly fat caudex rapidly and fairly easily. They have charming trumpet shaped flowers that can appear in abundance on a well cared for plant. Adenium obesum is very popular as a cultivated plant in much of the world and is available in an amazing variety of colors and shapes. (A google image search for “Adenium obesum colors” reveals a wide spectrum of colors, doubles, picotees, and a variety of sizes of Adenium obesum flowers.)

Put all together these features can be combined into an astonishing flowering succulent specimen. (Another Google image search, look for “adenium Bonsai”).

I am not any kind of an expert on Adeniums. But, for the last three years I have been raising a group of Adenium seedlings and I have collected some notes that I think might be helpful.

You can buy fresh seeds online. Ebay can be a good place to find people selling adenium seeds. You may also be able to find seeds on Amazon. In both cases you may have to try a few times before you find a source that delivers fresh viable seeds. Often, seeds you get on line are cultivars or hybrids. If you want “pure” species you may need to look elsewhere. If you are a CSSA member you can get Adenium species seeds from the CSSA seed Depot. On the other hand cultivated Adenium obesum is available in a wide variety of colors and patterns. Which might be fun as well.

I have worked mostly with Adenium arabicum and Adenium obesum. Adenium socotranum is also popular, but seed and plants are harder to come by. Which also means more expensive. Why not start out with affordable seed?

Start the seeds right. Seeds should be purchased just before you mean to start them. You won't have good germination with old seed. Start seeds in sanitized pots with sanitized soil. As typical with succulents, use a quick draining soil. Water the first time with clean tap water. After planting and watering, put the whole pots in ziploc bags to preserve moisture until the seedlings have gotten a good start. Use a bottom heating seed starting pad, if possible. (Heating pads are available from Amazon and many garden supply websites)

Adeniums grow pretty quickly, if you water them appropriately and keep promoting them to bigger pots promptly. The Adeniums we are talking about are basically dry adapted tropical plants. When they are dormant, they expect dry soil and can have trouble dealing with excess moisture. But when they are actively growing, they expect and can thrive with ample water. If they are blooming and putting out new, big leaves. They are active. This is mostly in warm conditions with long days – spring, summer, and a bit of fall. But small seedlings can, and maybe should, be encouraged to skip dormancy their first year, if they are kept warm enough.

The key to getting big plants, quickly, is to feed them and water them when they are active and keep potting them up.

The key to getting fat plants is pruning. Especially, early on. Prune the tip bud and the tip of the roots of an established seedling (stem one half inch in diameter). Pruning close to the bud or when the stems are still small yields smaller, less conspicuous scars on the resulting adult plant. Putting an obstruction such as flat piece of plastic or rock in the soil under the roots of a seedling can help spread out the roots for shallow pots, form more interesting roots, or shape the roots to fit over a rock in later staging .

Get help from YouTube. There are a multitude of Adenium shaping “how to” videos on YouTube. Adenium culture is very popular, and highly developed in southeast Asia. Particularly Thailand. Try searching for “adenium training” or “adenium bonsai” on YouTube. Also, a YouTube search for “Thailand Adenium” can provide both a source of inspiration and humility.

Be adventurous. Buying and starting 10-15 Adenium seeds can give you a nice little group of plants to learn propagation and shaping skills without spending much money. Why not make a project of it?



VIRTUAL BRAG PLANTS

SHOW PLANTS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, OR JUST PLANTS OUR MEMBERS WANT TO SHOW OFF...

From Pat:

I was going to enter this (in the Show & Sale) as an educational entry: *How to use a broken pot*. My Sister sent this pot to me and it came broken into about 8 pieces. I wanted to save it, and I'd seen some different techniques on Facebook and other social media. I took those ideas, mixed them with my own, this is the result.



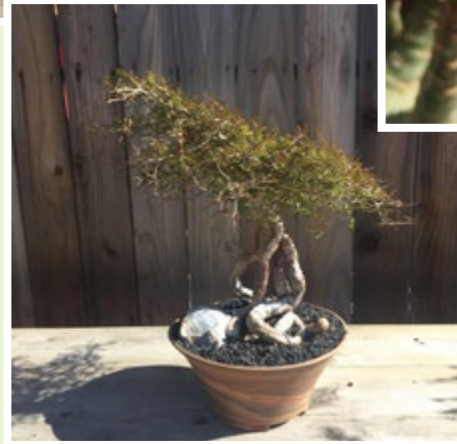
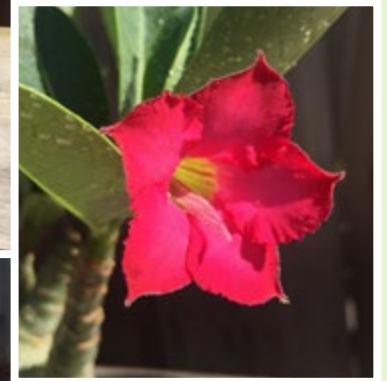
From Linda:

She has had her Christmas cactus for over 35 years and always by a window with indirect lighting. Last year she moved it two feet over in front of a north facing window and now it blooms all year round. Before it would bloom twice a year and never this many blooms. She lives in Grover Beach a mile from the ocean, she waters the plant as needed and fertilizer with Osmocote Plus, for outdoor and indoor plants, twice a year.



From Loring:

Adenium obesum x A. arabicum 'Tiny ding dong'. Grown from seed 2 years 5 months old. Grown in a greenhouse. Top and roots trained.



Operculicarya decaryi from Grow nursery, purchased at our S&S. I have had it about 4 years. Greenhouse grown.

From Jose:

Albuca spiralis



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General Club Email Address:
info@centralcoastcactus.org

Newsletter Submissions:
markslo@gmail.com

*Deadline is 2 weeks before the next monthly meeting.

EVENT POSTINGS & UPDATES

CHANGES TO UPCOMING EVENTS:

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San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden: A Call For Artists ART IN THE GARDEN SHOW AND FUNDRAISER

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA – Art in the Garden is an opportunity for artists to show and sell their work to community members. This juried art event will be held at the Garden's Event Pavilion on November 6th, 7th, & 8th.

Last year over 1000 people visited the Art in the Garden event, and this year we expect more! Artists will be selected to give visitors exposure to a variety of art mediums. We invite you to submit an application to participate in this Fall's Art in the Garden.

To participate in this art show and sale, please visit slobg.org, review the **Call for Artists** document, then complete and email the **Artist Application** to heather@slobg.org. Scholarships are available thanks to our sponsors at The Coastal Awakening. Please contact heather@slobg.org for a scholarship application.

The art show fundraiser will feature 20 local artists. This juried show will include jewelry, glass, paintings, graphics, wood, ceramics, and textiles. All art will be for sale and a portion of all sales will benefit the SLO Botanical Garden.

The event is free to attend and will be held in the Oak Glen Pavilion at the SLO Botanical Garden.

All art will be for sale and a portion of all sales will benefit the SLO Botanical Garden.

For more information visit slobg.org!

Please note: Scheduled events may change, please be sure to contact the venue for more info and updates.

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Online Wednesdays 12PM



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THE MIND



Dawn Feuerberg, owner & founder of Aurora Adventures, began meditating at age 9. She offers guided meditation in a relaxed and accessible atmosphere so that it can be used as a source of practical life change.

FOR MORE DETAILS & TO REGISTER:

<https://www.slobg.org/calendar-of-events/meditation>



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In addition to protecting yourself and others during this pandemic, please try to support local businesses as much as possible, including our valued Business Members on these pages. Click on images to visit their websites or to contact them via email. Many will take online or phone orders. Some are now on Etsy!

You can advertise on these pages by becoming a Business Member of CCCSS.

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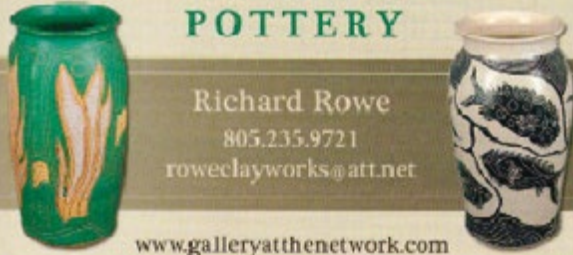
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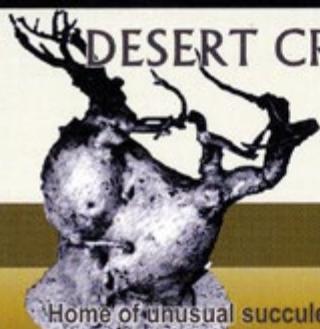
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Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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