



CENTRAL COAST CACTUS  
& SUCCULENT SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2020

# ON THE DRY SIDE

Our September meeting will be online using Zoom software.

The meeting will take place on **September 13, 2020 at 2:00 PM.**

Our Guest Speaker will be  
Jeff Moore

In This Issue:

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## Landscaping with Succulents

Jeff Moore is a collector-turned-nursery owner, is a succulent expert, garden designer, photographer and author who for 26 years has owned Solana Succulents nursery in Solana Beach, near San Diego. He is also a CalPoly alumni who hails from southern California. Has been writing books for the past 7 years (up to 4 and working on 5 and 6). Married, two sons recently graduated from Cal Poly SLO. He'll be showing images and talking about how we combine succulents in landscape applications, the 'do's' and 'maybe don'ts' (but go ahead and do it if you want to) .... some of the challenges we collector types have in bringing order to the chaos of all of our plants in one landscape. I'll show organized and refined gardens, some that are more like organized chaos, and still others that are total chaos but captivating nonetheless. I'll touch on some of the xerophytic non-succulent companion plants as well, and discuss some basics about bringing at least some order to the chaos.

He welcomes your questions, so be ready.





— CONTINUED



## PLANT OF THE MONTH . . . *Lithops*

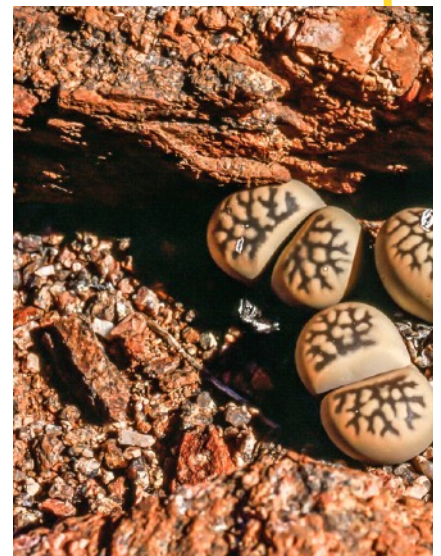
Greek: *Lithos* = Rock and *Opsis* = Similar To

*Lithops* are simultaneously some of the easiest and some of the hardest succulents to cultivate. Like *Titanopsis* they practically demand to be ignored; you'll find they fare far better with little intervention in a controlled setting.

*Lithops* are endemic to very arid regions of southern Africa, at times less than 4" of rain a year. This is the driving factor in why they are so unique – water conservation.

While all succulents are adapted to conserve water, rarely do they do it so well as *Lithops*. They rarely drink at all, and when they do, it isn't very much. In fact, some wild *Lithops* never see rain. They survive by drawing moisture from mist or fog a few times a year.

*Lithops* unusual shape is for more than just water conservation, though. In the wild, they grow level with the ground surface mixed in amongst the rocks and sand. The flattish tops are comprised of translucent cells that act as windows, allowing the light to penetrate deep into the plant where it can reach more chlorophyll.





## — CONTINUED

This ingenious adaptation lets them live underground, more or less safe from predators and from the sun.

*Lithops* don't have a true stem. They usually have two leaves that taper down in a conical fashion directly to a taproot. The roots are large compared to the plant, up to 6 inches long, so a deep pot can be beneficial. Older specimens of some species will have more than one pair of leaves connected to the same root and grow in a crowded cluster.



The optimal growing medium for *Lithops* is one heavy with perlite, coarse sharp sand, gravel, pumice and/or lava rock, whatever materials are available to you locally. Approximately 1/5 of the medium should be organic matter (soil) and the rest should be mineral. In fact, *Lithops* do very well in a soil-less medium.



When you purchase new *Lithops* or find another reason to re-pot them, you should try to do it during a growing season (Spring or Fall). The best time to replant succulents is before you water them as long as you let any damaged tissue scarify first. Watering helps promote new root growth and helps to stabilize succulents in a new pot. However, if you need to replant *Lithops* at a time when you should not be watering (Summer or Winter) just don't water them until appropriate.

*Lithops* have a very distinct seasonal cycle that determines watering schedules:

**SUMMER – DO NOT water!** They are dormant during the summer, and any watering could kill them. They expect this season to be bone-dry with no humidity or rain. Make an exception only if they become very wrinkled – then you can water them with a very small amount and they will plump up again within a week.





## – CONTINUED

FALL – In early Fall *Lithops* resume growth. The first sign is often a bud that forces its way out from between the leaves. This shoot becomes a flower, and you can often see the beginnings of new leaves around this time. Jump-start the growing process by giving it a full watering at the beginning of this season, entirely drenching the plant. Continue watering as necessary. Remember to never water a succulent if the soil is still damp from the last time.



## WINTER

– DO NOT water! During this season, the new pair of leaves are drawing water from the old ones. They will appear to shrivel over time, and the new pair will steadily grow. If you water, the old leaves will try to drink it, which ultimately confuses the plant's growth and will cause both sets of leaves to die.



SPRING – Once the old leaves have shriveled up into paper-like husks, you may finally remove them and resume watering.

Water lightly to encourage the new bud to begin growth, then gradually increase it to full waterings as necessary.



If you follow these guidelines your *Lithops* should live a full life (40-50 years). Be aware that for some *Lithops* watering may only be necessary 3 or 4 times a year. For others, you can water them every couple of weeks during their growing seasons.

Good luck!

Adapted from and special thanks to <https://www.sublimesucculents.com/lithops-complete-care-guide/>

OUR LIST OF THE  
PLANT OF THE MONTH  
for the coming year

9/20 Lithops

10/20 Sedum

11/20 Conophytum

12/20 Christmas cactus

1/21 Aeonium

2/21 Cotyledon

3/21 Adenia

4/21 Parodia (inc Notocactus)

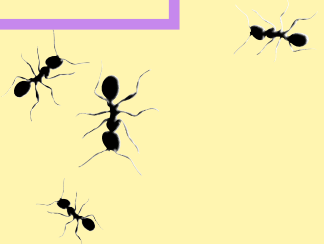
Guest Writer:

Rob Skillin

## I Got Ants in my Plants!

Every year at about this time ants become a problem for me in the greenhouse. As the soil outside becomes drier with the heat of summer, they start looking for vacation homes and think my potted plants are a perfect solution. I believe they are seeking water, and also relish the sweet nectar that many plants secrete; especially adenias in my case. I get ant trails all over the greenhouse, and when I water a plant with an ant nest in it, a swarm of ants suddenly appears, carrying larva up the stems out of harm's way. I also see a lot of the larger, specialized types that don't usually come to the surface like the workers do. Although the ants themselves don't actually damage the plants, they do "farm" mealy bugs and other insects which feed on the plants, and the ants use the secretions these insects give off.

My preferred way to rid my collection of ants is to use Stylet-Oil. This is a food grade mineral oil (not toxic!) intended for agricultural purposes which kills them by plugging their breathing pores and asphyxiating them. An advantage of this is it's not something they can become resistant to over time, like some chemical treatments. I mix 2 tablespoons to a gallon of water, or 1.5 teaspoons per quart (usually a little more for good measure), and use a hand sprayer to spray it directly on the ants, and it kills them nearly immediately. When I find a nest in one of my potted plants, I pour the solution into the pot to saturate the soil, and that wipes out the nest without damage to the plant. Stylet-Oil is available at Farm Supply. The last time I checked, the smallest size they carried was 2 gallons, which is way more than you will ever need, so partner up with some friends and share it.





Gene Schroder recommends using cotton seed oil as a substitute for Style-Oil as it is cheaper and still effective. Check with him for availability.

After treating ants in the greenhouse there can still be a problem with ants that are nesting in the ground and coming in to visit your plants. For these, I do resort to poison. I find that Terro Ant Killer works well. It is granules in a shaker bag, making it easy to apply. I shake it along their trails, and in a couple of days they are gone. It's available in most garden centers, and I'm sure that there are similar, equally effective products from other companies.

Another way to discourage ants from reappearing from outside, is to obliterate their trails; they leave chemical markers which lead other ants to what they are after, and it can be difficult to eliminate these trails. I've tried rinsing with water, and spraying with alcohol, with no success. But bleach seems to work very well. I think it degrades the organic chemicals left by the ants. A handy form of bleach to apply is the foaming type available in a spray bottle. But good luck in finding it now with the increased demand due to the coronavirus.

Guest Writer:

## Gene Schroder **A Time for Reflection**

The last 6 months have changed the lives of everyone. Our normal activities have been stopped, altered or even banned. When and how we will resume our prior lives is a topic for everyone I know. Almost all social gatherings will have to be creative, even inventive, to recast into a form acceptable to new realities. I have been long time member and advocate of special interest clubs. An unbroken string of such memberships beginning as a Cub Scout in 1947. At no time I remember did I ever not belong to, usually, multiple groups. I can't imagine a world without the benefits that can come from special interest organizations. (Let me here define these as hobby or social groups – not political!!)

As I write this, know that officers and board members past and present are searching every option they can think or learn of to retain their members and events. This certainly includes CCCSS and our associates Cactus & Succulent Society of America and California Garden Club.

As members, we benefit in many ways from CCCSS membership. All without any requirements or minimums other than you share a common interest. We don't even define the range of interests. You, as a member are free to treat us as a huge buffet taking or sampling what you wish. The task of all members and officers is simply to keep it interesting and informative.

Please help any way you can with suggestions as well as your continued support.



We all miss each other greatly. Here are just a few of the things that I find of most value other than the simple social interaction of shared interests. Please stay with us so we don't have to lose any of them.

**Resource Sharing:** When you are new in town as I was 12 years ago, you often don't know where to find things or even ask advice. The members of your new club surely can answer those questions and will continue to collect and share such knowledge.

**Club Activities:** Many clubs have additional activities such as our Garden Gatherings or interest groups such as our Propagation Group. Member sales are also common.

**Local and Regional Events:** Most clubs have their own local events and keep a calendar of nearby items and events via newsletter or website. These things are not often on the 6:00 O'clock news but your club members will know.

**Local Knowledge:** Clubs tend to concentrate knowledge by attracting members, presentations, events, and resources that can't be found in a library or the internet. People doing exactly what you are in the same local and conditions are the best source. Not a book written 20 years ago in England or South Africa

**Expertise:** Every club has a variety of experts and in our case, we have the "Ask Me" group that will answer your questions or direct them to the best qualified group member.

**Education:** All CGG Affiliate have a directive to provide education. It's also a strong part of our activities. Our annual show and sale presents the public with a wonderful look into our world plus our monthly selection of speakers is geared to inform in all aspects of the hobby by offering a wide range of topics and presentations.

CCCSS is your club. Do what you can to stay involved. During this time we are staying involved with the virtual meetings, phone calls, emails and such. If you have questions or ideas let us know. Our email is [info@centralcoastcactus.org](mailto:info@centralcoastcactus.org)

**Gene Schroeder**  
**Past President, CCCSS, OCCSS, Member CSSA, BCSS, in the hobby**



## Grounded with Air Plants by Richard Rowe

Contrary to popular opinion, Tillandsias or airplants are not found dead fastened to magnets attached to refrigerator doors. Tillandsias have been found growing on power lines, on the sides of houses, or on the arms of cactus, and it seems wherever convenient. The largest indigenous populations are in Central and South America. We also have them in the southern parts of the eastern United States. Florida is home to *T. queroensis*, a vine like plant that is at home in the trees. The warm and humid air is ideal for airplane cultivation. *T. usneoides*, also known as Spanish Moss can be found in bayous in Louisiana, and has been naturalized in Australia. Then there are the collectors; we can be found all around the world, and in all climates. Some of us grow our plants inside, outside, in greenhouses and even in terrariums sharing their quarters with lizards.

Tillandsia belong to the Bromeliad family, which are mostly found in the Americas. Plants such as Ananas [pineapple], Bilbergias, Cryptanthus, Dyckias, and Puyas are also members of the family. Airplants can be found growing with their relatives, often sharing the same locale as Aechmeas. In a rainforest outside of Puerto Vallarta, I found Tillandsias growing on trees, alongside Aechmeas, Orchids, and a whole group of arboreal plants which I could not identify. The foliage was so thick that the tree was enveloped. It was hard to not step on fallen airplants.



Airplants are epiphytic, and as such, do not require soil for nutrients. Roots are primarily used as anchoring mechanisms. Plants such as *T. ionantha*, *T. stricta*, and *T. vernicosa*, have clumps of roots, while others such as *T. bulbosa* and *T. juncea* have few. *T. duratii* has few roots, but the leaves are curled to attach themselves to tree branches. Soil can be used to keep the plants growing upright. I use orchid mix to keep several of my plants stable. Plants such as *T. secunda* and *T. rhodocephala* are easier to display in a container which keeps them upright. If you use soil to display your plant, make sure it drains quickly. Epiphytes take in their water and nutrients through their leaves. Scales called Trichomes cover the surface of airplants. The cells on plants such as *T. tectorum* and *T. magnusiana* appear to be a silvery fuzz, while on plants such as *T. bulbosa* and *T. cyanea* they are less apparent.

The blooms on air plants can vary from simple to complex. *T. ionantha* sends up tube like spikes with violet flowers from the center of the plant, while the

## Guest Writer cont'd

surrounding leaves may turn shades of red. *T. stricta* produces a red bloom scape with floral bracts which change color as they grow older. *T. Cyanea* and its various forms have a paddle shaped bract which features a large petal of violet or other colors. *T. brachycaulos* turns cherry red when it blooms, with violet blooms rising from the center. One of the most spectacular blooms can be found on *T. duratii*; this plant produces a spike which is often longer than the plant itself. The flowers are lilac and white and have a fragrance which is similar to grape KoolAid. After the plant blooms look for pups. They may occur before, during or after flowering, and often in multiples. Location of pups varies from plant to plant. Check the base of the plant or in leaf bracts along the stem. *T. maritima* pups from the center of the plant, as do *T. andreana* and *T. stricta*. *T. secunda* develops pups on the bloom spike. Don't toss a deleted looking plant until you look for pups.



What keeps an airplant from dying on the door of your refrigerator? If your plant is indoors, it needs a good drenching or soaking once a week. Misting is welcome, but they need that good soak. Outdoors is a different story. If you live at the beach, there will usually be some moisture in the air. Fog is good. I can tell the amount of moisture in the air by the looking at my vehicle. The further you go inland, the hotter and drier the conditions become; you'll need to water accordingly. I usually give my plants a good hosing once a week. Tillandsias like to dry out over the space of about 4-5 hours. They don't like wet feet, and if the plant is in a container, make sure it's empty of water.



Tillandsias grow in all kinds of light and temperature conditions. *T. latifolia* varieties grow in the sands of the Peruvian desert, while *T. duratii* can be found in forests in Argentina and Brazil. If your plant is indoors, bright indirect light is ideal. Window shelves are popular, but make sure the light isn't too intense. Grow lights are fine; fluorescent light is ok for some plants. Outside you can put your plants in indirect sunlight, shade, greenhouses, trees or let your imagination be your guide. Your plant will let you know if there is a problem.

Tillandsias do best in temperatures from 40-90 degree Fahrenheit. They do not do well in freezing conditions.



## Guest Writer cont'd

Airplants need a certain amount of air circulation. Plants indoors will do better in a spot where there is some air movement. Bathrooms will work if there is decent light and air circulation. Outside is best for air circulation, but watch out for hot dry winds.

Displaying your Tillandsias can be as elaborate or simple as you like. Large airplants such as *T. xerographica* or *T. latifolia*, need to be hung, or attached to something for stability. Large plants such as *T. ampla* can be put in a container and kept in place with bark. I use sections of lattice to display my plants; you can place them through the openings, or use floral wire to attach them. Clay holders, sea shells, chicken wire, bird cages, hollowed out gourds and grape burl are among popular display containers. If you need to attach your plant to an object you can use glue or wire. I use E-6000 for gluing, because it doesn't dry hard, but if you remove the plant, you'll probably still leave some of the plant behind. I prefer attaching plants with floral wire, which is easier on the plant. Are the roots of some Tillandsias causing mounting problems? You can trim them to fit the opening. Tillandsias can be found in many nurseries which carry house plants. If you prefer to shop online, Tillandsia International or Tropiflora Nursey have an excellent selection of plants. Plant shows which feature Succulents and Bromeliads usually will have plants for sale. If you like your information from books *TILLANDSIA*, volumes 1 and 2 by Paul T. Isley III, has a detailed description of many plants, with color plates. ENJOY YOUR PLANTS!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Succulent September Succulent Plants and Pottery Sale

SEPTEMBER 25 (FRI.) 11AM - 6PM  
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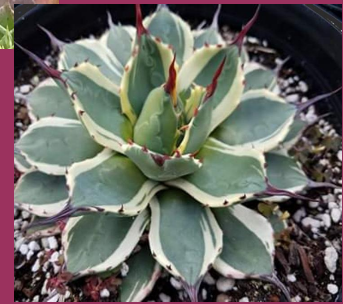
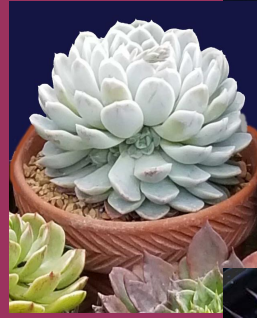
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**Masks/Face Coverings REQUIRED for entry.**

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**Number of shoppers will be monitored; you may experience a short delay to enter.**

**NO EARLY BIRDS.**



FOR UPDATES:  
#wegrowslo



## August 9, 2020 General Membership Meeting Minutes

**Welcome:** Harry Harlow our new CCCSS President called the meeting to order at 2:07pm. He welcomed everyone to our 1<sup>st</sup> virtual meeting via Zoom.

### **Business:**

- Due to the Corona Virus, the April through July General Meetings have not been held and according to the club By-Laws the official vote for the new slate of officers cannot be done until we have an in-person General meeting.
- Membership dues were due in July. Payment should be sent to Terry Skillin. (Note: We will not be dropping members during the Pandemic.)
- The Show and Sale is the club's main source of income and unfortunately, we had to cancel the May 2020 Show and sale. We rescheduled the Show and Sale to August but this didn't work out either. Next year, the Show and Sale is scheduled for May 2021.
- Odd Fellows Hall: We are still renting the hall even though we are not using it, so that the Hall is reserved when we can have in-person meetings again.

Things members can do during the lockdown:

- Help support local vendors who are having their own Shows. Notices for upcoming shows will be published in the Newsletter.
- CSSA Webinars every other Saturday

Next meeting will be on September 13, 2020. Speaker to be announced in the September Newsletter.  
Meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m

**Submitted by: Ann Byrne, CCCSS, Secretary**

## August 9, 2020 Board of Director Meeting Minutes

**Called to order:** The virtual meeting was called to order by President, Harry Harlow.

**Board members and guests present:** Ann Byrne, Ken Byrne, Tasha Erickson, Bill Findley, Kathy Goss, Pat Gilson, Harry Harlow, Mary Harlow, Karen Kolba, Loring Manley, Carol Mortensen, Rob Skillin and Terry Skillin (Quorum present)

### **Old Business:**

1. Approve July 2020 Board of Director Minutes - Approved
2. Update from Treasurer regarding rent & adjustment of misc. bookkeeping fees (Kathy Goss)
3. Update website contact for membership to Terry Skillin - Done
4. Standing Rules update from Rob Skillin.

### **New/Other Business:**

1. Discuss today's Zoom meeting and ways to improve.
2. Carol Mortensen – newsletter parameters. Submitted content must be edited and ready for publication. Carol will not store items for future newsletters.
3. Recruit more members to participate in both regular (in person) and virtual meetings. For example: Presentations, discussion of Plant of the Month/Brag plants/Opportunity plants.
4. Form committee to select POM in advance, possibly for the year.
5. Report by each Board member. Any additional business to be discussed

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is September 13, 2020

**Submitted by: Ann Byrne, CCCSS Secretary**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



Hello folks,

Join us Saturday, September 5th at 10:00 a.m. PDT for the 9th in a series of webinars featuring Cactus and Succulent experts from around the world.

**Tom Glavich presents [Mutant Cacti and Succulents](#)**

Tom Glavich is a long-time grower of succulent plants. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and is currently the co-chair of the Inter-City Cactus and Succulent show and sale, one of the largest C&S shows in the world. He is the author of the *Beginner's Guide to Succulent Monocots*, and the *Beginner's Guide to Succulent Dicots*. He is a frequent contributor to the CSSA Journal and an active member of several Los Angeles area Cactus and Succulent Societies.



Program: This webinar is a look at mutant cacti and succulents, with an emphasis on the genetic changes and their impact on the appearance of crests, monstrous and variegated cacti and succulents. A survey of typical and unusual forms will be followed by a short introduction into cultivation and propagation.

We hope to see you!  
Gunnar Eisel, Executive Director

**To register for the webinar in advance Click [here](#).**  
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email.





# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 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](http://slobg.org), review the **Call for Artists** document, then complete and email the **Artist Application** to [heather@slobg.org](mailto:heather@slobg.org).

Scholarships are available thanks to our sponsors at The Coastal Awakening.

Please contact [heather@slobg.org](mailto: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](http://slobg.org)!

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

## MEMBER BRAG PLANTS

From Rob Skillin

*Pachypodium brevicaule*; I've been trying an experiment with my smaller pachypodiums – growing them outside in the full sun, and holding back on the fertilizer, to see if that would result in tighter, more compact growth, and the development of a larger caudex. The *P. brevicaule* did not seem to like it though, I think because of the lower temperatures compared to the greenhouse, so I moved them back inside and this plant rewarded me with the flowers you see here – the second set of blooms this year.



*Pachypodium ambongense*; this is another pachypodium I'm growing in full sun, and it seems to like it. It is small, in a 5 inch pot, but here is its first flower, which looks very similar to that of *P. lamerei*.



*Mammillaria schumanii v globosa*; this plant grows in my greenhouse. I repotted it a month or so ago, and it seems to appreciate it! I think it also is responding to the high temperatures (over 100 degrees in the greenhouse) from the heat wave we experienced a couple of weeks ago. I only water cacti in larger pots like this one once a month.



# MEMBER BRAG PHOTOS Cont'd

From Bill Findley



*Sansevieria hallii* (Basball bat)  
in full bloom



Janis Ferguson

*Echinocereus virreckii*  
ssp. *morricalii* from  
Miles to Go.  
Flower lasted 7 days.






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

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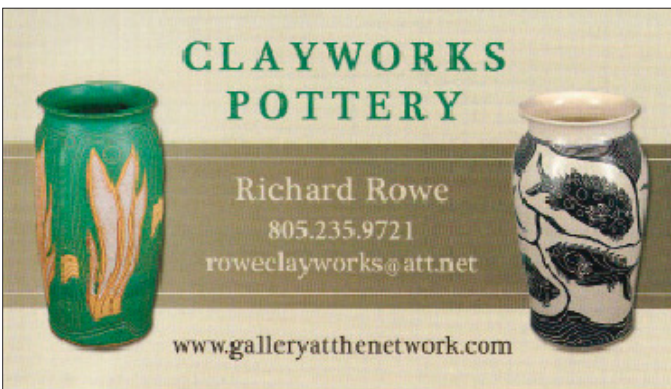
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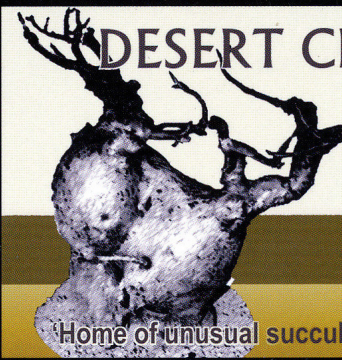
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**HAPPY**  
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