



# ON THE DRY SIDE

## In This Issue:

Speaker for Nov. Meeting  
Attila Kapitany.  
Plant of the Month  
Interesting Article from  
Kathie Matsuyama  
Announcements

Article from Leisa Swanson  
Brag Plants  
Meeting Minutes  
Business Members  
Board Members

Remind your cactus club friends that the next presentation will be November 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 2pm. We will no longer need attendees to be CCSSS members so you are welcome to share the link with others who may be interested.

We will be hearing from a long-time member and leader of this amazing club we are a part of. There is also a rumor of a virtual "Garden Gathering". The club will bring the presentations and you provide the snacks.

Our speaker this month will be the very enthusiastic and interesting speaker, Attila Kapitany. He will be speaking on **"The Future of Succulents in Garden Design"**. Attila's home is Australia where he is well known for his passion for cacti and succulents! He is a past president of the Cactus & Succulent Society of Australia with 10 years in this position. He has over thirty-eight years' experience growing and enthusiastically marketing cacti and succulents. Attila is also a member of the Horticultural Media in Australia, writing regularly in magazines, journals and newspapers and promoting succulent plants. Attila has co-written seven books with Rudolf Schulz about succulents, with an eighth book (a solo effort) on Australian native species. His newest publications are a series of ten booklets on xerophytic Australian plants, a total of 18 books.



Since 2007 Attila has dedicated much of his time and resources to promoting the lesser known Australian succulent plants and touring the Australian and international speaking circuits regularly on television and radio.

# PLANT OF THE MONTH: Conophytum

Plantae

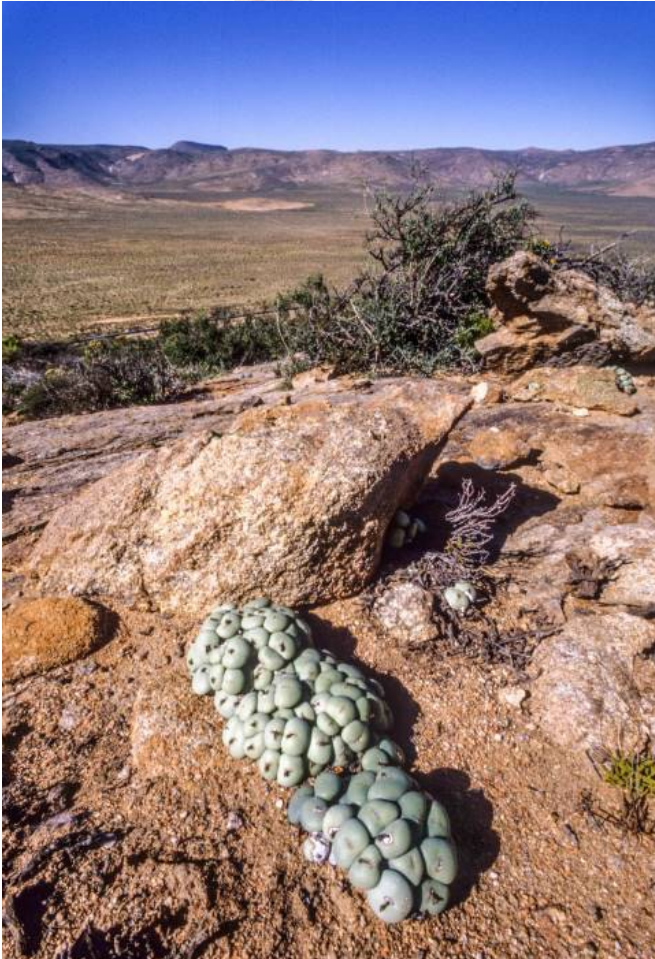
Angiosperms

Eudicots

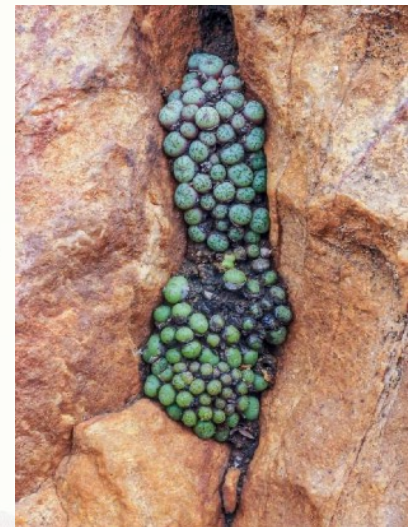
Caryophyllales

Aizoaceae

**Conophytum** is a genus of succulent plants currently consisting of approximately 150 species and are native to South Africa and Namibia. Some 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 of about 450 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 genus 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. *Conophytum* 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.



## PLANT OF THE MONTH —Continued



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. 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 excessive humidity and need constant care to raise them successfully.

The in situ types of soil suitable to this genus can be varied for each species because of their great diversity; the common feature is, however, 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.



Adapted from <http://seedscactus.com/en/> by Markus Mumper

Photos courtesy of Rob Skillin.



## ARE CACTUS MOTHS COMING TO A PRICKLY PEAR NEAR YOU?

We are all familiar with invasive species. Killer bees, or Africanized Honey bees (in addition to the even newer and scarier invasive Murder Hornets!) are rapidly colonizing and working to wipe out our European Honey bee hives. Freshwater zebra mussels stick to hard surfaces such as boat motors, water treatment pipes and turtle shells. They cost North America more than a Billion Dollars each year. You may have seen our anti-Zebra Mussel billboard in North County.

In the southeastern U.S. they have the invasive Kudzu vine that grows a foot a day--- 60' a season! Kudzu is extremely bad for the ecosystems it invades; it smothers plants and trees under a blanket of leaves, hogging all the sunlight and keeping other species in its shade, eventually killing them. In California, 20 species of invasive bark beetle prey on our drought-stricken Sierra Nevada forests exacerbating horrific wildfire conditions.

And now we are facing yet another potentially devastating invasive species, the cactus moth. The article below appeared in the University of Texas at Austin UT NEWS on October 28, 2020. Many thanks to Esther Robards-Forbes from the College of Natural Sciences for permission to reprint.



### **Invasive Cactus Moth Likely to Spread and Destroy Native Prickly Pear**

The cactus moth has a wingspan of only about an inch, but this invasive insect has the potential to cause largescale agricultural and ecological devastation in Texas, according to the first study of cactus moths in Texas.

Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin's Invasive Species Project based at Brackenridge Field Laboratory in Austin have found that four native species of prickly pear cactus — and the species that rely on them — face a serious health threat from the moth.

“Cactus is a hugely important part of the landscape,” said Colin Morrison, a graduate student researcher at UT Austin. “Many different animals depend on cactus for food and habitat in Texas, Mexico and across the southwestern United States. It's also an agricultural staple for millions of people.”

The study, published this week in the journal *Ecological Entomology*, looked at characteristics of four native prickly pear species, including one that is harvested for nopales, the prepared pads of the cactus that are used in Latin American cuisine. Experiments showed that the cactus moth will eat all four types of prickly pear and that there were negligible differences in nutritional value across the species.

Additionally, built-in chemical and physical defenses of the cactus proved to be no match for the moth.

“We looked at how tough the cacti are and how nutritious the cacti are,” Morrison said. “The invasive cactus moth is highly likely to be able to perform, survive and grow very well on all of these species. This is alarming to us because it's pretty much pure cactus land in all directions.”

## CACTUS MOTHS Continued.

The cactus moth island-hopped from the Caribbean to Florida about 30 years ago. After it started to spread toward Texas, UT Austin's invasive species research team began preparing for its arrival by studying its natural enemies with collaborator Patricia Folgarait in Argentina. That work was recently published in *Florida Entomologist*. They think the moth appeared in Texas in late 2017, when infestations appeared along the Texas Gulf Coast. One goal of the research was to better understand the likelihood of the moth continuing to expand its range throughout the state and into Mexico.

"If nothing is done, these moths will continue to expand, and after a certain point it will be impossible to stop them," Morrison said.

It is believed that there are no natural predators in Texas that will control the cactus moth. Scientists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture have studied the use of parasitic wasps from South America that prey on cactus moths as a way to control cactus moth populations. However, the moth infestation degraded Florida's cactus populations before sufficient research had allowed permits for field trials of the wasp.

Robert Plowes, Nathan Jones, Lawrence Gilbert and Colin Morrison all contributed to the research. Funding support was provided by the Lee and Ramona Bass Foundation, the Texas Ecolabs program and a UT System-CONACYT ConTex grant.

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By now you may be asking why do I care? I don't grow any prickly pears (*Opuntias*) in my yard or greenhouse. Ouch!! All those glochids! Well, rather than me trying to explain, let me have the best *Opuntia* expert I know, Dr. Charles Spotts, tell you about *Opuntias* from an article he wrote for our CCCSS January 2014 Newsletter. In the article, Dr. Charles Spotts said:

"*Opuntias* have been used for centuries by Native Americans for food (prickly pears, nopales, tunas), drink, building material and fiber, and still continue to be so used in many areas. In some regions the flat padded *opuntias* (*Platyopuntias*) are used as animal food and the name is said to originate from a thistle-like plant in the region of the *Opuntiani*, a Greek tribe.

If we accept the genus in its broadest sense (e.g. *sensu* Benson), we find its distribution to have the greatest range of any genus in the cactus family, from Southern Alaska and Canada to the tip of South American, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coasts; with representatives in nearly every ecological zone except perhaps the Amazon Basin. Many have become naturalized in other areas of the world: Hawaii, Africa, Australia, etc., where they grow profusely, sometimes displacing native vegetation."

In other words, if this cactus moth proliferates unchecked across America and into the northern and southernmost ranges in which *Opuntias* grow, the moth could wipe out a wide swath of cactus plants in the world. Cactus that many animals, a wide variety of other plants, as well as people (if not so many collectors!) are dependent.

As a public university, our work belongs to the public.

We ask that you credit the University of Texas at Austin in the reprint, but that's it.

Have a great day!

Esther Robards-Forbes, Public Affairs Representative

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Thank you Kathy for submitting this important information.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



San Luis Obispo  
**BOTANICAL  
GARDEN**

Hi everyone,

I wanted to share four events taking place at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden in the coming weeks. I have attached the full press release and images (Nov\_monarch provided by Wiki-Commons, Nov\_AcornAdventures provided by SLO Botanical Garden, Nov\_FullMoon provided by Dawn Feuerberg). Below are the brief descriptions.

Thank you for sharing this information with the community. Please contact [education@slobg.org](mailto:education@slobg.org) for questions.

**Event:** Acorn Adventures Kid's Outdoor Education at SLO Botanical Garden

**Time and Date:** Wednesdays, November 4 - December 2, 3PM - 4PM

Kids are invited to discover the natural world with Environmental Management and Protection major, Danika! Explore and get hands-on with nature to better understand the plants, animals and natural processes found around us. Each week we'll focus on new topics.

**Location:** San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd

**Cost:** Free

**Event URL:** <https://www.slobg.org/calendar-of-events/acorn-adventures>



**Event:** All About Monarch Butterflies: What They Need and How We Can Help

**Time and Date:** November 14, 1 pm -2 pm and 3 pm-4 pm

**Event description:** The monarchs are here! Join us for a Zoom presentation, and optional socially distanced garden walk with butterfly expert and biologist. Learn the most up-to-date information from scientists and conservationists about monarch butterflies, and what you can do to create and protect monarch habitat. Event details and registration at [slobg.org](https://www.slobg.org)

**Location:** San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd

**Cost:** Suggested donation of \$5.00 Garden members, \$10.00 public for each event

**Event Contact Number:** 805-380-6619

**Event URL:** <https://www.slobg.org/calendar-of-events/Monarchs>

**Attendance:** 100 for Zoom presentation, 10 for butterfly walk



**Event:** Full Moon Ceremony and Gratitude Rituals at SLO Botanical Garden

**Time and date:** Sunday, November 29, 5:00pm-7:00pm

**Event description:** Join Dawn Feuerberg for ceremony, meditation and rituals that support your emotional and physical health. Pre-registration required. Visit [slobg.org](https://www.slobg.org) for more info.

**Location:** San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd

**Cost:** \$55

**Contact:** Dawn Feuerberg [dawn@auroraadventures.us](mailto:dawn@auroraadventures.us) or 805-540-1762

**Event URL:** <https://www.slobg.org/calendar-of-events/nov-full-moon>

**Attendance:** 14 people



## ANNOUNCEMENTS—Continued

### Holiday Potluck

I am sure you have all guessed, our Holiday Potluck is cancelled for this year. That sentence was one of the saddest things I have had to do this year. I miss seeing you all, please be happy and healthy till we can meet again face to face. Enjoy our virtual meetings, Newsletter and our Facebook page.

Sincerely,  
Pat Gilson  
Hospitality Chairperson, CCCSS

### MEMBERSHIP DUES NEWS

Dues for the membership year 2020/21 are payable now, by mail. Nobody will be dropped from the rolls until our next in-person membership meeting, by which time you must have paid your dues. It would be very helpful to the club to pay your dues now, as we have ongoing expenses even though we are not meeting in person. Please pay by check, made payable to CCCSS. Dues are as follows: Individual - \$20; Family, all under same roof - \$25; Business, \$40. Please mail your dues c/o Terry Skillin, 8910 Camino Cielo, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420.

Please take a moment to renew your dues today. A membership application is not needed unless there are changes to your current membership status or you are a new member. Applications can be found online at [https:// centralcoastcactus.org/home/membership-information/](https://centralcoastcactus.org/home/membership-information/)

It is with great pleasure that **Mary Peracca** has agreed to rejoin the board as member at large with the board's approval. Mary has expressed interest in involving our society with the botanical garden and I suggested that she could serve as botanical garden coordinator. Thanks to Karen and Mary we will now have all positions on the board filled. Good work team. Harry

Thanks Harry. I'm looking forward to being more active in the club and the possibility of collaborating with the SLO Botanical Garden. I volunteer there in propagation: succulents of course!...Mary

*Mary Peracca will be selling her ceramic planters here.*

# Holiday Artisan Craft Sale

## Handmade gifts by 20 local artists



Indoor & outdoor sale! Masks & distancing required for safety.  
20% of proceeds toward Caliwala's meals for ECHO Homeless Shelter

**Saturday, November 21st, 10 am - 4 pm**  
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Select online pre-sales and browsing in November: [www.caliwala.com](http://www.caliwala.com)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS—Continued

Three good friends who grow superior succulents - another friend who is a potter that focuses on great succulent display pots - got really, really tired of having NO local Cactus and Succulent meetings and worse, NO SALES. So we got together, and with permission from the County are having a face-mask and socially distanced two-day sale! We've done FOUR since early March, and each has been better than the last. Take a short trip and join us!

2016 - 9th St. Los Osos, CA, immediately next door to La Casita Mexican Restaurant.

"CELEBRATE the SEASON"

Friday 13 Nov; 10 am - 4:30 pm

Saturday 14 Nov; 10am - 4:30 pm



NOVEMBER 13 (FRI.) 10AM - 4:30PM

NOVEMBER 14 (SAT.) 10AM - 4:30PM

# *Celebrate the Season*

## *Succulent Plants & Pottery Sale*

**2016 9th St. - Los Osos**



*#wegrowslo*

From member, Leisa Swanson,

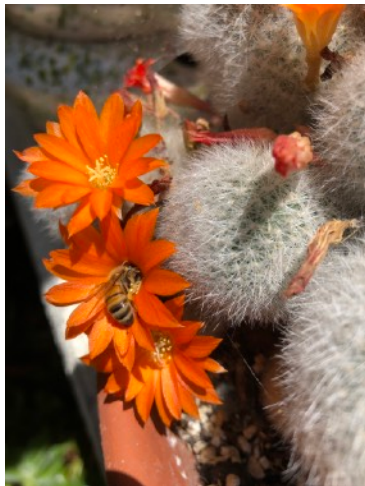
I have been working on a Pollinators Garden.

After learning about the disappearing Monarchs, I decided that I wanted to work more toward attracting Monarchs and other butterflies into my garden.

The wasp is a pollinator, but he is a bad guy too. They not only eat the eggs, but the caterpillar and butterflies if they can catch them. Sadly, I had lots in my yard this year. I didnt know the damage they had done until I noted that I had fewer caterpillars this year compared to last year. I have been told to hang a wasp catcher over the water sources in which they drink.. Im on it for next year!



#1 photo:.There are many types of Milkweed. I decided to plant one of the tropical variety, and wow, do I get Monarchs! And more!!! It made me so excited that I went about making a pollinator garden.



#2 my cactus has been attracting bees.



#3 my basil plant is buzzing



#4 bees on flowers of an everlasting



#5 I have a very large flowering pepper tree that buzzes all summer long.



#6 another type of everlasting

## LEISA SWANSON - Continued



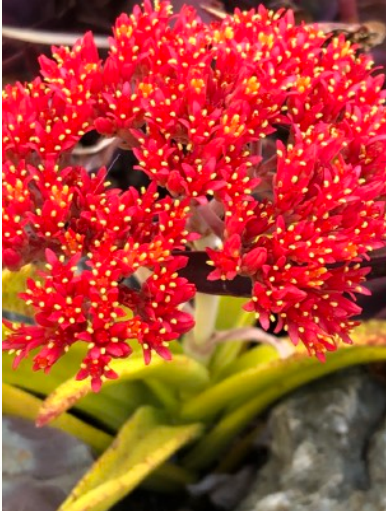
#7 Common name is Firecracker bush attracts humming birds.



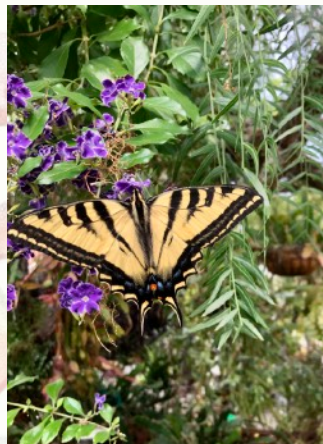
#8 Passion butterfly on milkweed, but loves passion plant the best.



#9 I have a huge Duranta blue flowering bush/tree. It is in the verbena family and is a main attractor for all pollinators. (The white flowers are from pepper tree.)



#10 Name? is a great colorful attractor.



#11 Swallowtail butterfly on Duranta



#12 one very fat and happy Monarch caterpillar.

## LEISA SWANSON - Continued

Being a cactus lover, I came across this and thought you would want to know it too!

I remember seeing the movie "Sahara" with Matthew McConaughey. It had a desert, but had once been a river that had dried, leaving ships stranded. It wasn't the Aralkum, since it dried in-1960s, but what a great movie... I recommend the movie if you can find it!!

Hugs, Leisa

- A desert is defined as an area receiving less than 10 inches of rain per year.
- The word "desert" comes from the Latin word *dēserere* meaning "to part company", "abandon" or "forsake."
- Deserts can be hot and dry; cold; semi-arid; or coastal. Deserts can have more than one type within their boundaries.
- Approximately 1/3 of the earth qualifies as desert.
- The largest desert is Antarctic Polar Desert. It is a cold desert, with over 5,000,000 square miles. Next is another cold one, the Arctic Polar Desert. The third largest is the hot Saharan Desert.
- The Namib Desert endured arid or semi-arid conditions for about 70 million years, and may qualify as the oldest desert in the world. It boasts some of the world's driest regions, with only South America's Atacama Desert as a possible challenger. Because of its age, the Namib may be home to more native plants and animals than any other desert in the world.
- The Sahara Desert can reach upwards of 116°F making it one of the hottest places on earth.
- Death Valley, CA rivals the Sahara Desert for hottest with temperatures known to pop the thermometer at over 120°F on a regular basis! Recently, on August 16, 2020 at Furnace Creek in Death Valley, a reading of 129.9°F may be the hottest temperature ever recorded. (A reading in 1913 of 134°F in Death Valley has been questioned.) Furnace Creek also holds the record for the highest recorded natural ground surface temperature at 201°F (93.9°C) documented on July 15, 1972).
- The Thar Desert, located between India and Pakistan, is the most populated desert in the world, with about 83 people per sq. km.
- The Aralkum desert is the newest desert on earth. Around 1960, the area in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan known as the Aral Sea, began to dry up when water from the rivers that once fed it were diverted for an irrigation project. This desert is littered with rusted ships from a once thriving fishing and tourism industry.
- The driest desert may be Chile's Atacama Desert, which receives less than 0.06 inches of rain during some years. Some parts have no recorded instance of precipitation.
- Every year, roughly 45,000 square miles of arable land change to desert due to climate change, forest clear-cutting, rapid development, or poor management. Known as desertification, this change threatens the employment of more than a billion people in 110 countries, according to the United Nations.
- During a 1923 American Museum of Natural History expedition, Roy Chapman Andrews dis-

## LEISA SWANSON - Continued

- Mars is the only other planet in the Solar System, besides Earth, on which deserts have been identified.
- The Atacama Desert is home to some of the biggest and best observatories in the world. The draw for astronomers is the high altitude, clear skies, dry air, and lack of light pollution and radio interference from nearby cities and towns.
- Deserts often contain many mineral resources, like manganese, iron, and copper, giving them their characteristic colors.
- *The Martian*, starring Matt Damon, was filmed in the Middle Eastern desert of Wadi Rum, Jordan. The orangey-red desert is a Hollywood favorite for shooting scenes “on Mars.”



Here is a handy link to a list of Winter Growing Aloes;  
[https://www.smgrowers.com/info/brian\\_aloe.pdf](https://www.smgrowers.com/info/brian_aloe.pdf)  
(from the Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society)

## BRAG PLANTS

from Susan Chandler



Gasteria (Or Gasteraloe?) in the foreground. Flower is very unusual I think.



This one had at least 8 blooms! Possibly a Gymnocalycium or a Ferocactus?



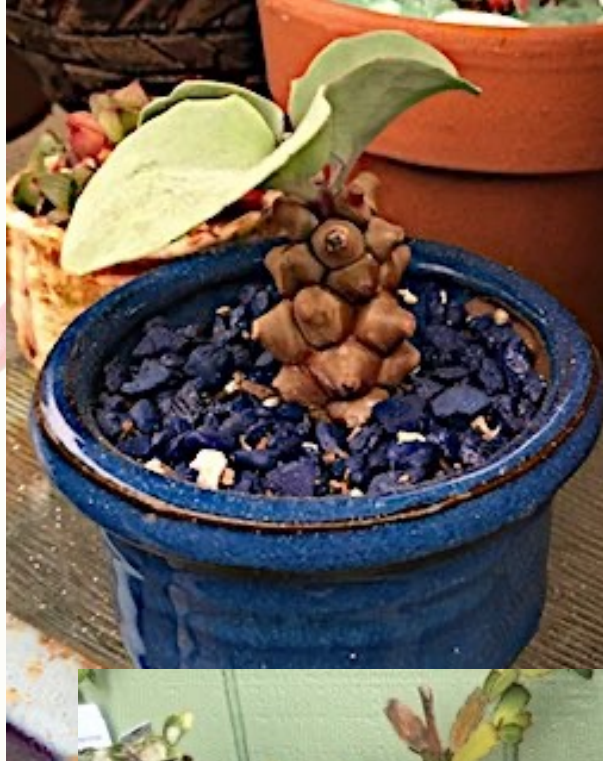
? With Lovely flowers

# BRAG PLANTS - Continued

Susan Chandler



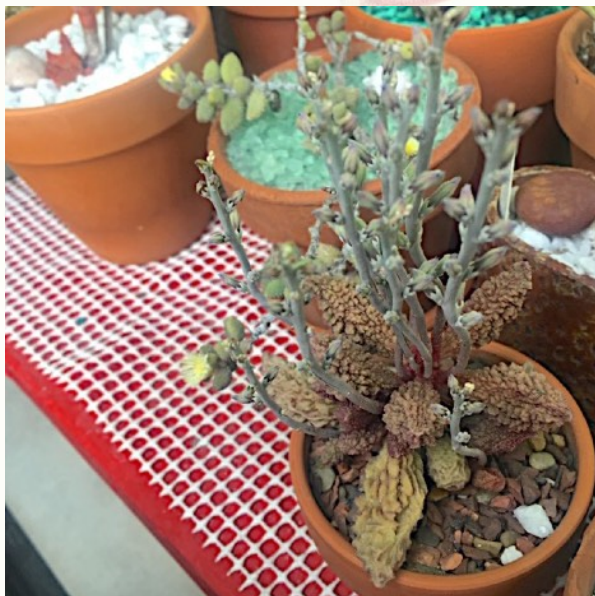
Gasteria?



I got this at a meeting and paid \$15 but lost the tag! But it finally got some leaves and may eventually get some flowers I hope.



Pleiospilos in great flower



This is another one I got at a meeting and lost the tag. It has tiny flowers although there is a bigger one at the bottom.

# BRAG PLANTS - Continued



I apologize, but have misplaced the owner's name for these plants.



Kathie Matsuyama

My pet *Tavaresia grandiflora*  
(*Tavaresia barklyi*) inflorescence



BRAG PLANTS - Continued

Bill Findley



Alluadia procera  
flowers a morning  
in October



Aloe bakeri



## September 13, 2020 BoD Meeting Minutes

**Called to order:** The virtual meeting was called to order by President, Harry Harlow at 4:05pm.

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

### Old Business:

- Approve August 2020 Board of Director Minutes
- Update from Treasurer (Kathy Goss)
- Membership Update (Terry Skillen): Club membership is significantly down. To date we have received 56 membership renewals. Terry will rewrite the notice in the Newsletter to remind members that their dues are still due even though we haven't been having in person meetings, and remind them that we still have expenses such as paying speakers for virtual meetings.
- Harry attended the Montana de Oro district meeting of CGCI. Met local representatives and helped approve the General Business.

### New/Other Business:

1. Discuss today's Zoom meeting (Harry Harlow).
  - a. Meeting went well, but we need to educate attendees on how to use the Chat during the presentation.
  - b. Everyone enjoyed Mary Paracca's presentation and look forward to future presentations by past presidents.
  - c. We need to put a thank you to the speaker in the next Newsletter with a summary of the presentation.
  - d. Possibility of virtual Garden Tour was discussed. We would need someone with experience to film the presentation along with the proper equipment to do so. This person would also need to be experienced in editing. Hold off until we explore this further.
2. Possible virtual auction at December meeting. Suggested members for committee: Natasha, Karen and Cathy.
  - a) Bill Findley – Still needs volunteer to help with sound system. Loring volunteered to help. Randy Ball is storing the equipment, so Loring will need to contact him.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm

Next meeting is October 11, 2020

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

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