

# Thorny Issues

SACRAMENTO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Volume 53, #7

## NAMIBIA — A Dry Place in a Wet Time, 2011 Monday — July 23rd, 7pm



Our July speaker is Woody Minnich, who with his wife Kathy, live south of Santa Fe, NM, in a region called Cedar Grove. Woody owns a well-known cactus and succulent nursery – Cactus Data Plants, [CDP] he started in 1975 where he specializes in show specimens and rare cacti & succulents. Woody, a cactus hobbyist for over 41 years, is an honorary life member of seven Cactus & Succulent clubs including the Cactus & Succulent Society of America. He is known for his extensive field work studying the cactus family in many foreign countries as well as being an international speaker.

On his trip to Namibia, Woody took over 10,000 photos a few of which found their way into tonight's presentation. Be prepared to see the trip of

a life time in Namibia, one of the driest regions in the world. Rarely, if ever getting rain and, often sustained only by seasonal nightly fog. Due to these very arid, Mojave desert-like landscapes many of the world's most unique plants and animals can be found. Namibia experienced one of their heaviest summer rains ever January-April 2011. Woody planned his visit in this unusually wet time because the plants and scenery would be different than what one would normally experience, and the timing was perfect. Windhoek, the country's capital was green and they were blessed with open roads and passable river crossings for the entire three weeks.

As you will see in his presentation the vegetation includes fantastic plants from the statuesque *Pachypodium namaquanum* to the many jewel like mesembs. Some of the different genera included: *Lithops*, *Sarcocaulons*, *Tylecodons*, *Conophytums*, *Othonnas*, *Aloes*, *Hoodias*, *Cerarias*, *Haworthias*, *Titanopsis*, *Adromischus*, *Pelargoniums*, *Crassulas*, *Avonias*, *Larryleachias*. On further meandering they encountered a very different group of succulent genera. The plant taxa generally became larger and often very sculptural: *Cyphostemmas*, *Pachypodiums*, *Welwitschias*, *Commiphoras*, *Sesamothamnus*, *Adansonia*, *Moringas*, *Aloes*, *Hoodias*, *Adenias*, *Adeniums*... They stumbled across wonderful animals not in game reserves, as well as some of the most beautiful indigenous peoples. The Herero and Himba tribes were both unexpected cultural highlights of this amazing trip!

Woody will be bringing two tables of his 'CDP' plants to sell as well as \$150 of plants for our raffle. So, if you want to purchase or win some unique plants this may be the meeting to do it! Don't miss this program!!

– Sandy Waters, Program Chair/Vice President

### Inside this issue:

Mini Show – JULY	2
Mini-Show Winners	2
Dates & Details	3-5
June Field Trip	3/4
Slate How to DIY	5
Calendar – AUGUST	6



*Echinocereus metornii*  
(courtesy, Elton Roberts)

### Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society

- Meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 7pm
- Location: Shepard Garden & Arts Center in Sacramento.
- 3330 McKinley Blvd
- Center's phone number — 916/808-8800
- No official meeting in December
- The public is warmly invited to attend meetings

## Cactus — “Fiercely Spined”

Spination is for many one of the most interesting features of plants in the Cactaceae Family. The endless variety is mind boggling to behold. From massively spined specimens such as *Stetsonia coryne*, to the feathery plume-like spines of *Mammillaria plumosa*, magnificence and beauty are to be found in almost every genera and species. Spines can come in all shapes, sizes and every color of the rainbow. Many times it is the dominate desirable feature of the plant. Spination likely evolved as a means of defense from grazing animals. Spines can also offer a defense from the searing sun especially those that have evolved almost hair like spines like some of the South American columnars. Many genera such as *Ferocactus* and *Echinocactus* are massively spined and animals give them a wide berth. Others such as some of the *Gymnocaclyciums* have spines that seem to engage the plant, protecting without being quite as offensive. But in some cacti the spination is harmless and seemingly more decorative. The spines of plants like *Mammillaria theresae*, *Mammillaria plumosa* and the like probably serve more for shade than anything else. Their harmless spination can offer no protection from foraging animals and can even be pleasant to the touch. In some cacti such as the *Opuntias* and especially the *Cholla* varieties, spination can also serves as an aid to reproduction. Animals brush by the fallen segments and they become temporarily stuck in their fur or flesh. Eventually the animal will work the segment free and deposit it farther away where it will often take root and become a completely new plant or colony.



*Stetsonia coryne*  
 (“Toothpick cactus”)

## Succulent — “Vining”

**Burro's Tail** — (*Sedum morganianum*) is rather descriptively named since its leaf-covered stems hang like down like thick tails. Each stem is about 2 feet long, with the 1-inch succulent leaves occurring in clusters down the stem. The leaves come off easily when brushed, so a hanging basket helps protect stems while ably showing off the tails.



**Rosary Vine** — The rosary vine (*Ceropegia woodii*) produces thin long stems of a purplish hue and heart-shaped leaves of less than an inch long. The leaves are silver and green on top and green and purple underneath. These leaves are responsible for some of the plants other common names, including string of hearts, chain of hearts and hearts entangled, since the stems can get tangled if left to travel out on their own outside of the confines of a pot. The name rosary vine likely comes from tubers the stems produce along leaf nodes. These tubers can be used to grow new plants. Tubers also grow within the soil from the roots, and these, too, can make new succulents.



**String of Pearls** — Known also as string of beads, the string of pearls (*Senecio rowleyanus*) plant produces long, thin string-like stems with small globular leaves spaced evenly apart down the length of a trailing vine. Each “leaf” is only about ¼” in diameter. Though to some, the leaves might look like berries or peas, they are poisonous when eaten. The plant's flowers are not much bigger than the leaves, growing from thin side shoots, one flower to a shoot. Blooms are white with noticeable purple stamens, the flowers possessing a spicy scent.



## Mini Show Winners — June, 2012

Cactus — Ferocactus	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Ferocactus chrysacanthus</i> , Mary Schuett
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Ferocactus gracilis v. coloratus</i> , George Avery
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Ferocactus wislizenii</i> , Bill Hagbery
HM	<i>Ferocactus latispinus</i> , Michelle Egan
Succulent — Tree-like Succulents	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Adenia fruticosa</i> , Keith Taylor
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Pachypodium namaquanum</i> , Michelle Egan
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Cyphostemma cirrhosum</i> , Mary Schuett

## Thought for the Month

“Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.”

— Thomas Jefferson



### From the Editor's Desk —

**Publication Deadline — 10th of each month.**  
Please forward all submissions for consideration to my contact info (per your choice) found on back page.

Respectfully your editor, Mara Aditajs



## DATES & DETAILS —

### ➤ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joanne Geggatt

Edward Myhro

### ➤ PUNCTURED THUMB AWARD – THANK YOU!

I would like to THANK the Officers & Board for awarding me this honor for 2012. It is a great feeling to be appreciated & recognized for all of the work that I contribute to our Club!! Also, it makes all of those hours of work at my PC ever so worthwhile. As with any award I have not been solely working in a vacuum – there are others that have contributed their talents & must be given credit as well. The great folks at FEDEX-Kinkos, who can format my creations even when I am unable to explain it. They must have a great crystal ball! My fabulous “proofer,” Marilyn Vilas. Her red pen works at lightning speed & laser accuracy. Lastly, for those



members who receive their newsletter by US mail – I must extend a nod to the *Corgi Courier Express*, who delivers your monthly editions to the US post office faithfully no matter what the day/time/conditions may

be! It is my sincere desire to not only maintain this level of quality for the membership, but to raise it in the future.

*Your editor, Mara Aditajs*

### ➤ AVERY – BRUGA – VILAS, FIELD TRIP

We woke up to a most unusual crisp late June morning.

At the Shepard Garden & Arts Center *meet and greet* included 3 new members (2 more met us later). Car-sharing was arranged and we set off to the Avery collection. George and Oksun use their small outdoor space to the max, thanks to the greenhouse George assembled and Oksun’s organization. An almost unbelievable number of beautiful plants are set on 2 long two-shelf tables under a



Avery’s plant shelf table



New members Joann & Doug Delaney and Kathy Siebenmann



Inside Avery’s greenhouse

wide overhang. To the surprise of many of us, the east light there is perfect. Then we heard of George’s adventures with the greenhouse and saw the most prized plants inside. We won’t forget the tea, coffee and cakes to which we were treated!



Lunching at the Brugas

Down the dirt Creekside Road outside of Davis to our next stop where everyone broke out lunch on picnic tables



Dick Bruga “Plant talking”

with the Brugas bustling helpfully about. Some members could hardly wait to walk through the tree-shaded gardens. After we ate and drank our fill, and got to know each other a little better, Dick filled us in on their development of the land and how it’s used now to propagate for the UC Arboretum sales as well as ours. Can you believe the UC people initially turned down Marilyn Vilas’ succulents? Guess that’s how she came to us. As the Brugas started





## DATES & DETAILS — (CON'T)

specializing in grasses, that area was a highlight of our tour. We also saw agaves, aloes and ground covers.



3 views of Marilyn's greenhouse



Our final stop of the day was Marilyn Vilas' where you could choose beer, wine or soft drink and feast on Mara's sweet and salty iced pretzels. Marilyn told tales of her greenhouse, while



Relaxing with new members, Kathy, Michael, Greg, & Doug by the pool.

the wonderful plantings around the pool, near her to-die-for potting table and hanging from the eaves spoke of hours of care. We visited and relaxed at the end of a field trip graced by the best weather and delightfully sharing hosts.

All of us learned so much. One member commented, "The gardens were so differentiated." Another, "All we know at meetings is the person and one or a few plants they bring. Today we saw where and how they grow them and that tells us a lot." One of my big "Ah ha" moments was seeing how many cacti and succulents do better in more shade. It was a wonderful day and we were able to get to know each other just a little better. **Join us for the next field trip – stay tuned!!**

*Martha Bleshman, Field Trip Chair*

### ➤ "GOLDEN TORCH" (LARRY ROEDENBECK)

I bought my home in Auburn about 15 years ago. On the property were 2 established *Cereus* plants. As the years went by the roots grew under the lawn and were often

over watered and stalks would fall over. I was worried about losing the old plants. I became familiar with the propagation process of the plants (Thanks to Norm Klein for his advice getting started in the process.). Things went very well. When my friend's property, where they were all going, was lost to foreclosure I was up to my ears in rooted starter plants. I found Marilyn Vilas' name some place and asked her if she knew of a home for over 2 dozen plants. As a thank you, I sent her three photos of the plants, one of the old plants in bloom, one of the starters in nice pots and one of starters in plastic pots.

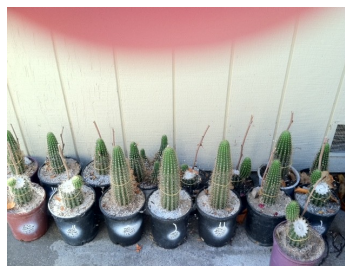


Larry Roedenbek stands next to his blooming *Cereus (Echinopsis spachiana)*, which creates a fragrant flower that lasts just two days each year, usually around the Summer Solstice. This year's bloom was crazy – there had to be over 75 blossoms! (Auburn Journal)



Since then, I have planted 8 plants in a local community garden, given a lot away to friends and acquaintances that recognized their beauty. I have a few left but I can find good homes for them through my travels. I would like to show people that actually care about cacti the pictures of my hobby, it would make my day! Enjoy!!

*– Thank you, Larry Roedenbeck*



(If you are interested in Larry's "starter *Cereus*" plants you may contact him via his email address – [REDACTED])

### ➤ WATERING TIPS HELP YOUR GARDEN BEAT THE HEAT

Here are some tips for keeping your miniature gardens (potted plants), and your full-sized gardens, healthy during heat waves. With proper watering techniques, you can get the most out of your watering even in extreme temperatures.

1. **Test:** Only water if needed. Stick your finger down into the soil at least an inch deep. If it is still moist or damp, you can put off the watering for a day or so. If it's dry, then water. For smaller pots, lift them up to feel how heavy, or light, they are. Dry soil will be

## DATES & DETAILS — (CON'T)

much lighter than moist soil.

2. **Frequency:** Water your in ground gardens deeply and infrequently. This will teach the roots of the plants to look for water on their own, and grow deeper into the soil. Watch your watering for your containers and water accordingly for the plants' needs, not just because it is a new day.
3. **Timing:** Water in the early morning or, better yet, at night after the sun has gone off your garden. The plants can recover during the cooler nighttime temperatures. Watering mid-day is useless – most of the water will evaporate quickly.
4. **What to water:** Water the soil, not the plant, and make sure the water gets down to the roots.
5. **What to use:** Conserve water by hand watering. Sprinklers and sprays of water don't direct the water straight to the plant's roots where it is needed. Use a watering wand on the shower setting, and turn the tap on half-way to avoid strong, misdirected sprays of water that is just going to evaporate in the heat.



Succulent Container Arrangements by Thomas Hobbs  
(Courtesy, [The Succulent Perch](#))

6. **Corral the water:** Build a trough around the base of your plants to direct the water straight down to the roots. Fill up the trough with water and let it drain down a couple of times for some deep watering. This is a critical technique if your garden is planted on a hill.
7. **Cover the ground:** Some of our most favorite miniature garden plants are ground covers fortunately. By covering the bare ground with plants and foliage, it will slow down the soil drying out.
8. **Move it:** Is your miniature garden in a container? Move it out of the full sun into a bright shade spot, the

north or east side of the house. Even if the plants belong in full sun, they'll be okay for a few days on the porch or awning until the heat wave passes.

9. **Plant more:** It is too late to plant anything new during a heat wave but this fall, consider planting more of your full-size garden. Big trees bring shade, combined with big shrubs can create a naturally cool place in your garden. Planting in fall is one of the best times to get a garden established before next summer, and you'll use less water next summer, because the winter rains will help them get established in their new home. (Tips courtesy, [The Mini Garden Guru](#))

### ➤ A SUCCULENT & SLATE HOW-TO DIY

One of our crafty *terrain* gardeners recently whipped up this show-stopping DIY while trying to reuse succulents whose stems had been trimmed short for a recent photo shoot. We've since bombarded her with requests for them, leaving her with no choice but to kindly show us how to create our own ... And now you can too!

1. Select your slate. We prefer slate roof tiles, which already have holes drilled for hanging and can be sourced anywhere you would find slate roofing materials locally.
2. Select your succulents. Choose a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes to fit your slate. Trim the stem of each plant to 0.5"-1". Alternately, get creative and leave some stems long for variation.
3. Lay out your slate garden design, starting with the largest, or statement succulents, and accenting with smaller plants as you go.
4. Once your design is final, add a small amount of waterproof glue to the stem of each succulent and apply with light pressure against the slate until glue is secure. Allow 24 hours for your arrangement to dry.
5. Choose a spot with plenty of indirect light, hang, and enjoy! Your plaque will only need to be watered sparingly, and well taken care of it will thrive for two months or more. At that point, your succulents can be removed from the plaque and planted in a low bowl or terrarium.



(Courtesy, <http://www.shopterrain.com/>)





*Echinocereus metornii*  
(Courtesy, Elton Roberts)

# FIRST CLASS

Next Meeting Date ♦ Monday, July 23rd, 7pm

## SACRAMENTO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

c/o Mara Aditajs, Editor

██████████  
 ██████████  
 ██████████  
 ████████████████████

### WE'RE ON THE WEB!

Click on the 3 links below to go directly to our website, Facebook, or the CSSA website

[www.sacramentocss.org](http://www.sacramentocss.org)



# AUGUST, 2012

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 ██████████ ██████████	2	3	4
5	6 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████	7 ██████████ ██████████			10 ██████████ ██████████	11 ██████████ ██████████ 27th Inter-City C&S Show/Sale
12 ██████████ ██████████ 27th Inter-City C&S Show/Sale	13	14			17	18
19	20	21			24	25
26	27 Sacramento C&S Mtg – 7pm	28 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████			29 ██████████ ██████████	30 ██████████ ██████████

CSSA 2012 Show, Succulents  
Succulents in Ahmanson Classroom (Photo by Laurel Woodley)