

# Thorny Issues

SACRAMENTO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Volume 53, #9

## COUNTRY STORE — Monday, September 24th

Our September program is the Country Store. This is a fundraiser for our Club with proceeds supporting future activities as the Christmas Party, so be generous!

Center doors will open at 6:30 pm for set-up. Country Store will start at 7:00 pm. Come early with your donations, buy your tickets and settle in for a fun and fruitful night. For those who have never experienced our Country Store, just visualize the room full of plants, produce and bakery goods with a Silent Auction thrown in! There will be 5 areas: Cacti, Other Succulents, House Plants, Produce, and Sweet Shoppe. If you bring plants, please bring clean well-grown ones, labeled if possible. Cactus and Succulent donations are obvious. House Plants can be anything including African violets, bromeliads, ferns, fuchsias, geraniums, bulbs, trees, seeds, perennials, annuals, pots, rocks, etc. The Produce area includes fresh produce, home canned items, herbs, fruits, nuts, jams, jellies, zucchini bread and so forth. Sweet Shoppe is all calories. Bake an extra batch of cookies, a cake, more of that zucchini bread, brownies, etc. Please place a few cookies, brownies, slice of cake or bread on a paper plate, cover with plastic wrap and it will be raffled for the hungry mob. This will keep your energy level up for all the furious raffling and plant snatching happening at the rest of the tables.



Leona & Ron Harris calling & redeeming tickets at the Cactus Table



"I've got a winner, please check it!"  
Lou Grubaugh & Ellen Ragasa working the Other Succulents Table

**Raffle Tickets will be 50¢.** Each table will have a container where you place your ticket stub. Good tactics are to place your tickets where you can win the most!

The last area is the Silent Auction. Hopefully there will be Cactus and Succulent themed items donated such as jewelry, place mats, glasses, mugs, towels, greeting cards, pictures, stationery, books, pots, nicer plants or planters - all kinds of stuff. These items will be

displayed with a bid sheet for each. Write your name and your bid. Your bids will not be hidden so there is potential for some spirited bidding for a coveted item.

Come, relax and bring a box for your goodies. Questions? Contact Keith Taylor (Country Store, Chair Person) [REDACTED].

P.S. Volunteers are needed to be ticket callers at all but the Silent Auction. Just show up Monday. Sam (*Sweet Tooth*) Williams always does the calling at the Sweet Shoppe!

### Inside this issue:

InterCity Show	2
Mini-Show Winners	2
Dates & Details	3/5
Making Clay Pots	3/4
Field Trip – Oct 20	4
Clean terracotta pots	5
Calendar – OCTOBER	6



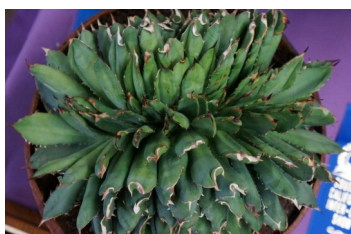
*Echinocereus coccineus*  
(pure orange flower)  
Courtesy, Elton Roberts

### 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

# INTERCITY SHOW — 2012

The 24th Inter-city Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale was held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanical Garden in Arcadia on August 11th and 12th.



*Agave titanota crest*  
Ron Harris



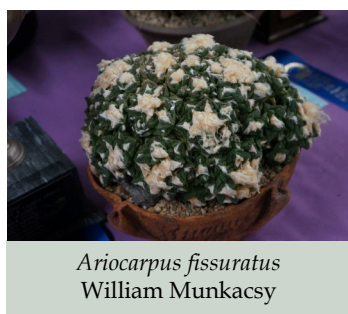
*Aloe pearsonii*  
Woody Minnich.



*Ancistrocactus uncinatus*  
William Munkacsy



*Astrophytum 'Onzuka'*  
William Munkacsy



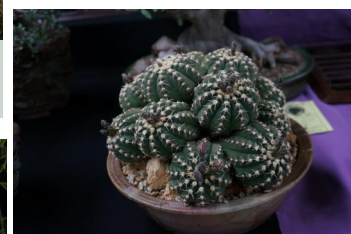
*Ariocarpus fissuratus*  
William Munkacsy

Several members of our own Society entered plants in the competition – here are just a few of the spectacular plants for you to enjoy! The

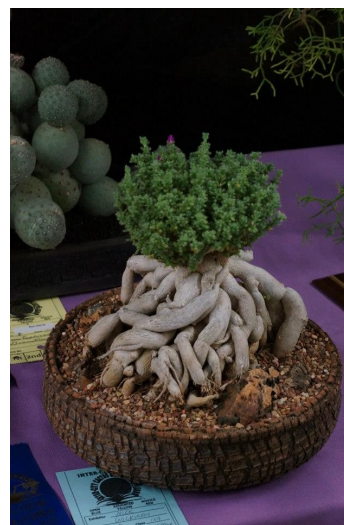


*Echeveria 'cante'*  
Nick Wilkinson

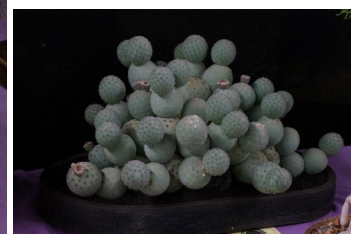
Show is sponsored by the Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Societies.



*Gymnocalycium ocoterenae*  
William Munkacsy



*Trichodiadema bulbosum*  
Nick Wilkinson



*Tephrocactus alexandri*  
var. *geometricus*  
Ron Harris

## Thought for the Month

### Autumn

A touch of cold the Autumn night – I walked abroad.  
And saw the moon lean over a ruddy hedge.  
Like a red-faced farmer.  
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,  
And round about were the wistful stars  
With white faces like town children.  
– T. E. Hulme 1883–1917



First day of Autumn — September 22nd



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

## Mini Show Winners — August, 2012

Cactus — Echinopsis	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Echinopsis subdenudata</i> , Mary Schuett
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Echinopsis sp.</i> , Michelle Egan
Succulent — Lithops/Faucaria/Conophytum	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Conophytum friedrichii</i> , Penny Newell
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Conophytum pearsonii</i> , Keith Taylor
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Conophytum obcordellum</i> , Michelle Egan
HM	<i>Conophytum stefanii</i> , Mary Schuett



## DATES & DETAILS —

### ➤ MAKING CLAY POTS – AUGUST MEETING

The August meeting was as hands-on as it gets: We made our own clay pots! As many of you know, president Keith Taylor is an accomplished potter and brought not only the clay but also the inspiration.



Here is one of Keith's small pots.



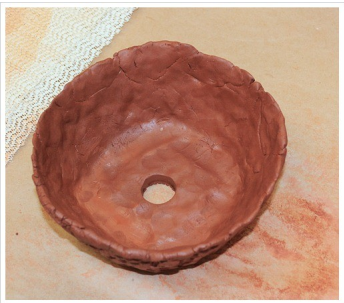
Here are some other pots, Fired and unfired, that gave us ideas on what to do.

Each member received one ball of clay, about a pound's worth. This was enough to make two or three miniature pots, or one small pot. Additional clay balls were available for purchase at \$5/each.



We had a choice between white and red. I went with red because I thought it would look better in my garden. George Krigas, who was working at the table next to mine, ingeniously combined both white and red clay into a contemporary-looking tall pot; I look forward to seeing the final result.

Aside from a family pottery class many years ago, I didn't have any experience making pots. Much to my surprise,



forming a pot was harder than I thought. This is the

first pot I made at the August meeting: Definitely a bit rough around the edges, literally and figuratively. But that's OK. I was definitely going for texture. (The dimples were made using a chopstick.)



A quick glance around the room showed everybody busy at work



My second pot had even more texture thanks to the small pieces of lava rock I attempted to embed in the clay. Every other piece fell out, it seems, but I'm hoping some will have stuck. Doesn't this pot look like a chocolate pie crust ready to go in the oven?



Here are my creations after I packaged them for transport to Keith's house. Keith was going to let them dry completely in his garage before firing them.

My partner in crime, Candy Suter from [Sweetstuff's Sassy Succulents](#), used two balls of clay to make a large, shallow dish.

One final look at some of the pots the other SCSS members made. It was obvious that some of them had done this before. Their pots looked much more refined than mine.



Candy Suter showing her creation

## DATES & DETAILS — (CON'T)



The next step will be to glaze or stain the fired pots at the October meeting (September is Country Store time). I'm not sure yet what I will do, but maybe apply some darker brown accents. Or

maybe I'll simply glaze them on the inside to make them water-resistant. That is, if any of my pots survive the firing!

Sometime next year, then, each member will bring in their finished pot planted with a complementary succulent for a show-and-tell.

— Gerhard Bock, <http://www.bambooandmore.info>

### ➤ THE "IDEAL" POTTING MIXES

*(Now that those of you who participated in the pot making DIY will have an empty pot to fill with soil & plants, the following is a collection of potting mix recipes for your reference)*

A container soil should be inexpensive, readily available, well drained but with good water reservoir. It needs to be low in soluble salts with good fertilizer holding capacity and near neutral pH. It should be easily reproducible so you get predictable results. Try for a mix that is long lasting so it does not break down before you need to repot. It should be pest and pathogen free. The real test is how your plants grow. Two good rules of thumb for cacti and succulents are avoid using soil high in peat and be consistent throughout your collection. Below are several mixes used by members of our club as well as the UCD Plant Science greenhouse and Arboretum mixes.

#### UCD Succulent (Xerophyte) Mix

- 1 part ground canadian sphagnum
- 1 part uniform coarse sand (horticultural grade 2- /16)
- 1 part white pumice or red volcanic pumice
- 1 part redwood compost
- 3 lbs. oyster shell/yard
- 3 lbs. dolomite/yard
- 3 lbs. single super phosphate/yard

#### UCD Arboretum Mix (used for all plants)

- 30% redwood compost
- 30% sand (horticultural)
- 15% peat
- 15% scoria (small volcanic rock)
- 1% perlite

#### Elton Roberts' Soil Mix

- 1 part Redi-Grow potting mix
- 1 part perlite
- 1 tbs. sulfur/gallon mix (keeps soil on acid side)
- 1 tbs. gypsum/gallon mix (buffers so not too acid or alkaline)

(Elton waters using 1 Tbl white vinegar/5 gal water)

#### Keith Taylor's Soil Mix

- 80% Grit (mixture of pumice, decomposed granite and red lava or scoria)
- 20% old soil mix

#### Marilynn Vilas' Soil Mix

- 1-2-cubic foot bag of Redi-grow or Greenall potting mix
- 1-50# bag sand (horticultural)
- 1 cup complete fertilizer (16-16-16)

Wow! What a selection to choose from! Again, whatever works for you is the best. Thanks to Doug Walker, Elton Roberts, Keith Taylor and Marilynn Vilas.

— Marilynn Vilas

**(Editor's Note**— You may substitute "Dry Stall" for perlite. It is much less expensive, \$12 for 40 lbs. It can be found at Tack & Feed stores)

### ➤ FERTILIZE OR NOT FERTILIZE???

Succulents Don't Need Regular Fertilization, according to Don and Laura Starr, Master Gardeners. They say, "Succulents are efficient plants and happiest when grown in a lean mix of organic and inorganic materials. Using a commercial cactus mix or potting soil mixed with pumice have enough nutrients for plant health. Avoid using compost, it's too rich for succulents. All types of mulch are fine to use, just don't place it too close to the plant's base."



### ➤ FIELD TRIP — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>

Join me at— The Ruth Bancroft Gardens,  
Fruit tasting Tour (Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>)  
Door opens 9 AM — Tour 10AM - 11:30 AM



#### Fruit Tasting Tour

The Garden has an abundance of fruit-producing plants and Fall is a great time to sample. Join us for a special event where we



## DATES & DETAILS — (CON'T)

will sample cactus fruit, palm fruit, dragon fruit and more! All ages are welcome to attend. Due to the nature of this event, advanced registration and an additional fee will be required to attend.

You must go to the Ruth Bancroft Garden's website (<http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/>), then click on Events, then go to the October calendar, and click the link for the Fruit Tasting Tour to pay for the tour to reserve a spot (Tickets are \$18 + \$3.33 fee). Even members pay this time. After you do that, if you'd like to carpool or let me know you're going, email me at [REDACTED]

— Martha Bleshman, Field Trip Chair

### ➤ BUDDING ARTIST



I thought you might like to see the water color my 8 year old son Taylor created. It's the cactus on my in-laws back porch. I thought I would share it with the Club.

— Michael Lynch

### ➤ HOW TO CLEAN TERRACOTTA POTS

Terracotta pots have a timeless beauty and can last for several years if given some TLC once and a while. One of the advantages of using terracotta pots is that they can absorb water, and help prevent over-watering (Terracotta is great for succulents and cacti). But, terracotta pots also absorb fertilizers, salts and other chemicals in the water. Over time, these will build up and create a crusty residue on your beautiful pots.



#### Step 1: Remove any loose

**dirt.** Brush off as much dirt as you can, but you don't have to get it all off. I got this fancy pot brush for Christmas a few years back, but you don't need to go out and buy one of these. Before I got this brush, I used a

cheap toilet brush that I bought for a few dollars (but please don't use an old toilet brush - yuck!)



**Step 2: Soak pots in vinegar/water solution.** Ideally, you would use 1 cup of white vinegar (5% acidity) for every 3-4 cups of water. The less vinegar you use, the longer you'll need to soak the pots. Completely submerge the pots in the solution. You may hear a sizzling sounds or see bubbles. Don't worry; that's a combination of the vinegar doing it's job at dissolving the buildup, and the pot absorbing the water. I start by soaking the pots for 20-30 minutes. If the buildup wipes or scrubs off easily, they're done. Otherwise, I'll soak them longer. Keep checking until all the residue is easy to remove. You may need to use your brush to scrub it off.



For really tough crusty buildup, you can soak the pot in pure vinegar (here I'm just soaking the rim of the pot where the buildup is the worse). If you soak the entire pot in vinegar, you might want to soak it in water

afterward to dilute the vinegar that the pot absorbed.

**Step 3: Run through the dishwasher.** As a last step, I run the pots through the quick wash cycle on my dishwasher. This will help to disinfect the pots and clean them. If you don't have a dishwasher, you can scrub the pots in soapy water (will require a little extra elbow grease).



That's it, I told you it was easy. As for those dirty old pots I got for free. Well, here's what they look like now...

I'm pretty sure it's been several years since these pots have been cleaned (if ever). It's good practice to clean terracotta pots every time you use them to keep them looking beautiful, and prevent pests and diseases.

— Courtesy, Get Busy Gardening! (August 14, 2012)



*Echinocereus coccineus*  
(rare yellow flower)  
Courtesy, Elton Roberts

# FIRST CLASS

Next Meeting Date ♦ Monday, September 24th 6:30 – Set up

## 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)



# OCTOBER, 2012

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 ██████████ ██████████	2	3 ██████████ ██████████	4	5	6 ██████████ ██████████ SG&AC Annual Fall Sale 10 -- 4
7 SG&AC Annual Fall Sale 10 -- 4	8	9	10	11	12 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████	13 Sacramento Orchid Forum. 10 – 4
14 ██████████ ██████████ Sacramento Orchid Forum. 10 – 4	15	16 ██████████ ██████████	17	 <p>SILENT AUCTION – item will be up for bid at Country Store</p>		20 Fruit Tasting Tour-RBG, 10am Camellia City Porcelain Arts Show, 10 – 4
21 ██████████ ██████████ Camellia City Porcelain Arts Show, 10 – 4	22 ██████████ ██████████ Sacramento C&S Mtg – 7pm	23	24 ██████████ ██████████			27 ██████████ ██████████
28	29 ██████████ ██████████	30 ██████████ ██████████	31 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████			