

Thorny Issues

Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society | October 2015 | Volume 56, X



OCTOBER PROGRAM

POTTERY WITH KEITH TAYLOR

*I*n what has become a tradition, we'll be making and glazing our own pottery at the next two club meetings. Our October meeting Monday, October 26, will be dedicated to making pots. Club president Keith Taylor, a very accomplished potter whose creations are highly sought after by collectors, will provide the clay. Each member will get one pound of clay to play with. Additional clay will be available for \$5/pound (payable to Keith). You should bring newspaper and a flat box so Keith can transport your pots to his house for firing as well as a hair dryer, small plastic tub for water, pencil, rolling pin, bowls for molding, skewers or toothpicks, objects to add textures and your imagination.

Check out Keith's creations and be inspired at:

www.potterybykitoi.weebly.com or

www.facebook.com/groups/kitoi

—Gerhard Bock, Program Chair



Photos by Keith Taylor

OCTOBER SUCCULENT AND CACTUS MINI SHOW

Mini Show Descriptions by Steve Goodman. Photos by Gerhard Bock

Succulent • KALANCHOE

Kalanchoe is a large genus of succulents in the family *Crassulaceae* and has a very wide distribution area: all of Africa south of the Sahara desert, Madagascar, islands of the Indian Ocean, India and Malaysia. Most of the species interesting to collectors are coming from Madagascar or South Africa. These species are generally sub-shrubs with succulent leaves. The genera *Bryophyllum* and *Kitchingia* are generally now included in *Kalanchoe*. Contrary to other members of the family *Crassulaceae* that have flower parts in multiples of 5, *Kalanchoe* flowers have 4 connected petals forming a tube, 4



Kalanchoe marnieriana



Kalanchoe marnieriana flowers

carpels, and 8 stamens. They should be planted in well drained soil and care should be taken to avoid searing afternoon sun. A number of species can take temperatures close to freezing for short times, but none will really tolerate any frost. The species that have pubescent (fuzzy) leaves can generally tolerate Phoenix-type intense heat without trouble particularly if kept in light shade. The species with smooth leaves are a little less tolerant, but fare generally better than most other *Crassulaceae* in such hot conditions. In general, *Kalanchoe* do better with bright shade, although some species are comfortable with some direct sun, while others tolerate shade.

In our last newsletter there was suppose to be no mini show for September, since we had the Country Store. For October we are repeating what was shown in the last newsletter. Sorry for any confusion. Enjoy some new photos!

INTERESTED IN BEING MORE INVOLVED IN THE SCSS?

You can volunteer to run for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or be on the nominating committee. Make your dreams of being a succulent cactus leader come true! Elections coming up in November. For more information contact Keith (707) 290-0627 or email caudex.one@gmail.com

Cactus • ASTROPHYTUM

The genus *Astrophytum* is comprised of 4 species of globose to short cylindrical cacti and one sprawling, octopus-like member. The first four were discovered between the years 1828 and 1845. Two of these are spineless and two have prominent spines. While each species is quite distinct they all feature a star-shaped appearance when viewed from above. Hence the name *Astrophytum*, which means star plant. *Astrophytum* species have been frequently compared to marine life, in particular *Astrophytum asterias* for its striking similarity to sea urchins. The fifth member of this group was newly discovered in 2001. *Astrophytum caput-madusae* is quite distinct from the other members of the genus and actually very distinct from all other cacti genera as well. Hence, many enthusiasts feel it should be part of its own genus and consider it to be the sole species in the genus *Digitostigma*. The name *Digitostigma* describes the long digit-like tubercles that grow something like an octopus. Despite the noticeable differences, all 5 species including *caput-madusae* feature a sort



Astrophytum ornatum, or star cactus, from central Mexico



Different species of star cactus (*Astrophytum* sp.)

of flocking of white trichomes (or bumps) on the epidermis, although in cultivation some forms are bred for their lack of flocking. Plants in this genus also all have yellow flowers with fuzzy floral tubes. Some have a red-centered flower, all are radially symmetric and eventually turn into dry, fuzzy seed pods bearing relatively large, black seeds that are among the easiest to germinate. The four original *Astrophytum* members have been extremely popular in cultivation and numerous exotic hybrids have been created that accentuate various features such as amount of flocking, number of ribs, lack of spines, etc. With the uniqueness of *Astrophytum caput-madusae* coupled with its late discovery, it is currently one of the most sought after cactus species by collectors world-wide. And in that sense, it fits in quite well with the other *Astrophytum* species. *Astrophytum* is a Chihuahuan desert native occurring in north/central Mexico and southern Texas.

SACRAMENTO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Next Meeting Monday October 26th, 7:00pm

Shepard Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95816
center phone: (916) 808-8800

www.sacramentocss.org

For publication submissions
email: succulentcrazy@gmail.com
by the 5th of the month

COUNTRY STORE REPORT

Country Store Report: You people are awesome! The club netted \$672 of which \$339 was in ticket sales! Thank you to all the donors of plants, produce, pots, and sweets. Thank you to all the Silent Auction donors – you helped the club with \$333 worth of goodies. And another thank you to all the ticket callers that ‘volunteered’ at the last minute. Now start saving stuff for next year!
–Marilynn Vilas, Chair

HAVE A SUCCULENT STORY?

Do you have a great succulent story? Or want to share photos of your succulent garden? Email: succulentcrazy@gmail.com by the 5th of each month and you might see your article or photo in the SCSS newsletter!



Jackie's Toad cactus (Orbea variegata) is in bloom!

SUNSHINE REPORT

It is with great sadness that I relay the recent passing of Bill Toy, a member since 1981. He and three other fellow members, known as ‘The Fearsome Foursome’ used to travel to shows and sales all over California, Nevada and Arizona. They would always come back with tales of derring-do that would leave the audience in stitches. All are gone now to that great succulent sale in the sky. Good travels, all. –Marilynn Vilas, Sunshine Chair.

SCSS MEMBERSHIP

We have a new membership chair! Thank you Oanh Vu for volunteering.

Thank you succulent enthusiasts for renewing your membership! New guests are invited to join! Dues in the Society are \$15 per person and \$20 per family membership for one calendar year.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
SCSS (Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society)

MAIL TO:
Oanh Vu
8837 Monterey Oaks, Elk Grove CA 95758
Any questions? email: oanhthai@yahoo.com

SCSS NAME BADGES

Any member who never has had a badge is welcome to purchase a badge for \$10.00. Sign up with Michelle Egan at the next meeting or call at (916) 424-5233.

