

Thorny Issues

Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society

October 2020

Volume 63, x

President's Corner

Dear gardening friends,

October is one of my favorite months as the leaves start to turn and our Northern California weather finally turns cooler after record breaking summer heat. Now that the air quality is improving again I am hopeful our brave firefighters can put out the remaining fires that added more challenges to the year and the pandemic that continues to plague the country. I hope you all stay safe through the fall and winter months.

This month we will be hosting a Zoom speaker meeting on Monday, October 28th at 7 pm. Details are in this newsletter.

It's also time for elections so we need volunteers for positions when we return to regular meetings next year sometime. Please see the list of officers, Board members and committee chairs where we have vacancies and please contact me ASAP if you can help out. Due to the pandemic a special election ballot will be sent by separate email and votes collected by return email. Please vote!

Due to the impact of COVID-19 this year, the Board has agreed that all members in good standing in 2020 will automatically have their membership extended through next year. We hope this will be a welcome early holiday gift and help you to stay engaged as we continue to try to offer programs virtually for the rest of the year.

Happy (socially distanced) Halloween and have fun gardening!

Maribel Dennis



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Note: some board member and officer positions are up for renewal.



Are you interested?

Zoom Meeting—October 28th 7pm (log on from 6:45pm)

Special Guest Speaker: Andy Siekkinen (see p2)

[Link to Zoom meeting](#)

Or if you have your own Zoom app:

Meeting ID: 829 0188 4706

Passcode: 180291

Mini Show by Steve Goodman



Cerpegia cimiciadora

Cerpegia is a genus of plants within the family Apocynaceae, subfamily Asclepiadoideae, native to Africa, southern Asia, and Australia. It was named by Carl Linnaeus, who first described this genus in volume 1 of his *Species plantarum*, which appeared in 1753. Linnaeus thought that the flowers looked like a fountain of wax. From this the scientific name was derived: *kērós* meaning wax and *pēgḗ* meaning fountain.

They have many common names including lantern flower, parasol flower, parachute flower, bushman's pipe, string of hearts, snake creeper, wine-glass vine, rosary vine, and necklace vine. The stems are vining or trailing in most species, though a few species from the Canary Islands have erect growth habits. Among some species, such as *Cerpegia woodii*, the nodes swell, and the roots similarly expand to form tubers beneath the soil surface. The leaves are simple and opposite, although they can be rudimentary or absent.



Cerpegia woodii

Especially in certain succulent species, the leaves may also be thick and fleshy. The flowers have a tubular corolla with five petals most often fused at the tips, forming an umbrella-like canopy, a cage, or appendage-like antennae. The flowers of this genus are adapted for pollination by flies. A great diversity of fly species are associated with cerpegias. The flowers are often inflated and fused at several points, forming a cage. Flies become momentarily trapped inside, accomplishing pollination as they move about. Species of this genus bear similarities to the carrion flowers or stapelias. There are more than 180 known species and more are being discovered and described regularly. They are distributed throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar to the Arabian Peninsula, southeast Asia, the Canary Islands, the tropical Pacific, and Australia.



Peniocereus cuixmalen

Plants in the genus *Peniocereus* are mostly sprawling stick-like plants from the Southwest United States and Mexico. In the wild, the plants are hardly noticed as they grow among shrubs and themselves appear to be simply dead branches. A number of the species feature large underground tubers which may reach 70 pounds or more. The flowers, by contrast, are as showy and prominent as the stems are nondescript and obscure. White and nocturnal in most species, rarely red, the flowers feature long, slender floral tubes, with prominent areoles and spines or bristles - often fragrant. Fruits are typically large and juicy with black seeds in white or red pulp.



Peniocereus greggii

October Zoom Meeting Special Guest Speaker: Andy Siekkinen

An introduction to succulent bromeliads: in the field, in the garden, and in the lab

Bromeliads are not the first thing most people think of when they use the word succulent, but there are many plants in the family that are perfect for California cactus and succulent collections. The bromeliad family (Bromeliaceae) is the largest plant family endemic to the New World with ~3600 species (second is the Cactaceae with ~2000 species). Like the Cactaceae, there are bromeliads present in nearly every tropical and subtropical ecosystem. There are several genera that fit nearly any standard definition of a succulent, but even those that you might not expect to be 'succulents' have modified tissues for water storage! This presentation will be a brief introduction to the family and focus on the succulent bromeliads. Plants will be shown in their habitat, in cultivation, and through the lens of a laboratory to help us understand these plants better.

Andy Siekkinen is a botanist studying the genus *Hechtia* (Bromeliaceae). With a life-long interest in evolution, nature, and gardening he took a while to come around to becoming a botanist/evolutionary biologist. It took the Great Recession to be convinced to leave nanoparticle chemistry behind and pursue this career. Finding a few "*Hechtia* sp." thriving in San Diego collections, he realized little was known (at least in horticulture and by hobbyists) about these plants that are mostly found in Mexico deserts. As he was teaching himself the basics of taxonomy and botany (and

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fieldwork!) and digging through the scientific literature he realized not all that much was known in the professional level either. Very quickly the hook was set. Now a decade on, formal training completed and digging into the world of genetics as well as taxonomy, he is describing new species, studying the evolutionary relationships and history with DNA, and working on a revision of the genus. With ~85 species accepted, he is working on at least an additional 60 more species to the genus. On his last fieldwork trip last summer, 17 new species were found in 6 days, most still being found along major highways—so one can only imagine how many more will be hidden in the mountains and canyons of Mexico! Currently he is developing his own nursery focused on bromeliads and continuing his research independently.

Members' Recent Garden Tours (courtesy of Gerhard Bock's SucculentsAndMore blog)

Mariel's: <https://www.succulentsandmore.com/2020/08/mariels-collector-garden-succulents.html>
and <https://www.succulentsandmore.com/2020/09/mariels-collector-garden-more-plant-fun.html>

Theresa's: <https://www.succulentsandmore.com/2020/10/a-southwest-garden-experience-in.html>

Membership

The Membership dues are \$15 per person or \$20 per family for one calendar year. Lifetime memberships are also available for a one-time payment of \$100. Please see Carole Hada for more information at the next meeting or you can download the membership forms on the website at www.sacramentocss.com/membership or mail them to: Carole Hada 4239 Arnold Way Mather, CA 95655

2020 Board of Directors

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Vice President	Theresa Roberts	VP@sacramentocss.com
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National Assoc. Affiliate	vacant	
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Mini Show	vacant	
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