

Thorny Issues

Sacramento Cactus & Succulent Society

January 2017

Volume 58, I

January Program

GROWING AND PROPAGATING COLD HARDY ALOES

Through the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory and private gardens, Ernesto Sandoval has been experimenting with a greater diversity of aloes in Northern California. He would like to share his experience with growing and propagating a variety of aloes beyond some of the common species such as *A. comosa*, *melanacantha*, *peglerae*, *hereroensis* and other cool/wet tolerant aloes. He will touch on the more and less available Aloes. Although his talk is focused for Northern California conditions, he will also talk about those that are even more suitable for Southern California. As always, he will bring a selection of uncommon succulents, Aloes, and other plants for your collection and gardens to help the Botanical Conservatory's programs.



ABOUT OUR SPEAKER, ERNESTO SANDOVAL

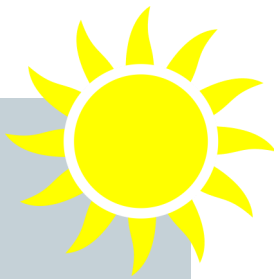
Ernesto Sandoval has been wondering and seeking answers to why plants grow and look the way they do for a long time. When he was about 13, he asked his dad why one tree was pruned a particular way and another tree another way. His dad answered bluntly, "because that's the way you do it." Since then, he has been learning and teaching himself the answers to those and many other questions, getting a degree at UC Davis in Botany and working from student weeder/waterer to Director over the last 25 years at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory. Now he explains and interprets the world of plants to a variety of ages and experiences, from K-12 to professionals and Master Gardeners. He regularly lectures to a variety of western Garden Clubs, particularly to Succulent Clubs, since that group of plants is his particular passion (within his general passion for plants). Ernesto thoroughly enjoys helping others, and gardeners in particular, to understand why and how plants do what they do.

He has long left the "mow blow and go" monoculture landscape gardening world, immersing himself in the world of polyculture and biodiversity by growing several thousand types of plants at the Conservatory, many of them succulents. He promotes plant liberation, encouraging gardeners to grow more plants in the ground. He loves Botany's technical language but prefers to relate information in more understandable methods of communication. By helping people understand how plants work, he hopes to help us better understand how to and why plants do what they do and how to maximize their growth with less effort.

Sunshine Corner

Wishing everyone a healthy new year, but if someone is under the weather or needs a “cheer up,” contact Marilynn Vilas so she can send a card. Her email and address are in the roster. Thanks!

—Marilynn Vilas, Sunshine Chair



Election Results

Our annual election of Society Officers and Board Members occurred at November’s meeting. A special thanks to our Officers and Board Members for volunteering their time and energy for the upcoming year.

- President: Steve Goodman
- Vice President: Mariel Dennis
- Treasurer: Greg Lang
- Secretary: Gerhard Bock
- Board of Directors: Ed Egan, Joe Samora, Hal Coburn

SCSS Library Acquires New Books

Thanks to the generosity of our club's Board of Directors, the library has acquired six new books to become part of our permanent collection:

The Bold Dry Garden: Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden by Johanna Silver. This volume offers unparalleled access to the garden and the extraordinary woman responsible for it. In its stunningly photographed pages, you’ll discover the history of the garden and the design principles and plant palette that make it unique. It is packed with growing and maintenance tips, profiles of signature plants for a dry garden, and innovative design techniques.

Small Opuntias by John Pilbeam and Mike Partridge. A feast of color photographs of various Opuntia species in habitat and cultivation in flower, with cultivation notes, maps, description references.

Aloes & Agaves in Cultivation by Jeff Moore. With over 1000 images, this book is as close to a definitive guide to these wonderful sculptural plants in cultivation as you will find. Photographed primarily in California, this isn't about plants in habitat; it is about how we grow them in the California, with cultural tips and insights from an author with over thirty years of experience.

Under the Spell of Succulents by Jeff Moore. Succulents are some of the most architecturally diverse and colorful plants on earth. This book takes you on a journey into the world of succulents in cultivation, through the eyes of a hobbyist-turned-collector-turned-nursery owner. The major plant groups are shown in vivid color along with an insight into how enthusiasts engage with their succulent passion.

Ariocarpus et cetera by John Pilbeam and Bill Weightmn. As the book's subtitle explains these are “The special, smaller genera of Mexican cacti.” The photography is superb and nearly every one of the 138 pages of this book is graced with one or more large photos of impressive habitat plants sure to make any cactus collector drool.

The Genus Echeveria by John Pilbeam. The author begins with short accounts about species in habitat, cultivation and a checklist of accepted species. Chapters include cultivation, classification, synonyms and more. The main section of the book is the alphabetic commentary on the illustrated species. 140 species are fully discussed and described, giving original description source, distribution and cultivation information.

Please come to the library table at our next meeting to review these new books and possibly check out one for a month.

—George Krigas, Librarian



Mini-Show by Linda Roye

I have been asked and have agreed to be your new Mini-Show Chair. As such, let me first offer my thanks to Michelle Egan for chairing the Mini-Show last year.

The Mini-Show winners for the month of November (no show in December) are as follows:

In the Cactus category (Schlumbergera/Zygocactus, first place to Mariel Dennis, second place to Linda Roye; in the Succulent category (Any Grafted), Carolyn Allen came in first; Keith Taylor won second. Congratulations to the winners.

And now, drum roll please, Mini-Show Winner for 2016 is Michelle Egan! Well done, Michelle!

All members are encouraged to enter the show as often as they wish. For each plant you enter, you receive a free raffle ticket for the drawing. Here are the rules:

1. You may enter one cactus and/or one succulent in the featured plant categories.
2. You must have owned the plant for at least three months. If you acquired a plant in January, you can show it in April.
3. On an entry form, enter the genus and species, if known, and your name. Fold the form on the dotted line so that your name does not show. Place the form and a bean cup near your plant.
4. First, second, third and honorable mention will be chosen based on total number of beans (votes) in cup. Ties are possible.
5. First prize earns 4 points, second, 3 points, third 2 points, and honorable mention 1 point. Points are cumulative throughout the year. The person receiving the most votes at the end of the year is the Mini-Show Winner and will receive an engraved plaque at the January meeting. The plaque is surrendered each year to the new winner.

The following are the cactus and succulent selections for 2017. In choosing these, I tried to select categories that have not been selected for some time. So plan ahead!

Month	Succulent	Cactus
January	Agave	Variegated
February	Aloe	Parodia (Notocactus)
March	Variegated	Stenocactus
April	Dudleya	Thelocactus
May	Memsebs	Epiphyllum
June	Adenium	Discocactus
July	Anacampseros/Avonia	Epilantha
August	Euphorbia caudiform	Turbinocarpus
October	Cotyledon	Corypantha/Escobaria
November	Adromischus	Copiopoa
December	South African bulbs	Crest/Monstrose

Membership

Membership Renewal Annual membership fees were due in November/December. Contact Oanh Vu if you have questions about membership or to obtain a membership form. Please note that if you initiated membership in October, November, or December 2016, you are paid through 2017. **The January newsletter will be your final newsletter if you have not paid dues by the January meeting.**

Membership Roster The SCSS membership roster for 2017 will be distributed in March, another benefit of being a member. Please let Oanh Vu know if you have any changes of address/phone/email address, or if you noticed any errors in the 2016 roster.



January Mini-Show

CACTUS: ANY VARIEGATED

Variation refers to a variety of color in the plant. In most cases, the cause is difference in the amount of pigment (chlorophyll) in the plant's structure from a total lack to a subtle difference. The most common cause of variegation in naturally grown plants is genetic, though naturally variegated plants are for the most part uncommon. The most common cause of variegation in cultivated plants is not naturally genetic, but due to aberrant mutations in the chromosomes of the growing tissues. Seeds of these plants will usually not germinate into another variegated plant. In most of these variegated cultivated plants, the variegation mutation is bred through stem cuttings, and many of these are consistent from generation to generation.



SUCCULENT: AGAVE

Agave is the common name and genus name of a large, botanical, New World group of succulent plants in the flowering plant family Agavaceae, characterized by large, basal rosettes of thick fleshy leaves typically with a sharp terminal point and spiny margins. One of the most familiar species is *Agave Americana*, which is also known as the “century plant” because of the long time before the plant flowers.



Agave are popular as ornamental plants, as well as for providing food and fiber. The flowers, leaves, stalks or basal rosettes, and the sap all are edible. Some varieties of *Agave* are made into the alcoholic beverages mescal and tequila. The rare bloom of the agave plants are a wonder to behold, for the plant prepares for a number of years for the moment when it can flower and reproduce, yielding a spike with a cyme of big yellow flowers, only to die after flowering. Ecologically, the plants provide food and water for animals.

Meeting Details

The Sacramento Cactus and Succulent Society meets the 4th Monday of each month at 7 PM.

Next meeting: January 23

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