



DRY TIMES

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No. 9

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September meeting
Tuesday, September 7, 2010
7:30 pm

Burton W. Chace County Park
13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey

PROGRAM

The Wonderful World of Shows
Laurel Woodley

PLANT OF THE MONTH

CACTUS:

Frailea, Blossfeldia

SUCCULENT:

Adenium, Pachypodium

We hope that the summer has been good to you and your plants. We welcome you back to our regular schedule of monthly meetings with CSSA President and longtime Sunset member Laurel Woodley presenting a program based on the many cactus and succulent shows she has attended. Her pictures will underscore the beauty we find in spination, caudex development, leaf forms, growth habits, color of spines and plant bodies, pots, top dressing, and many other details of plants groomed to perfection. Laurel's knowledge of plant families and biology in general combined with her many years of teaching always make for an enjoyable and educational presentation.

**** If your last name begins with letter M-R, please bring goodies to munch on at the break. Thank you!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 4, Succulent Plants Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens, all day, San Marino.

September 26, Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction, 18127 S. Alameda St., Rancho Dominguez, CA, 12 Noon

November 6-7, San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Show and Sale, LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA



Adenium obesum at 2010 Intercity Show and Sale at the LA County Arboretum, photo by Nels Christianson

June 2010 Plant of the Month Winners

Junior Cactus

1 st Place	John Luhnnow	Gymnocalycium sp.
2 nd Place	John Luhnnow	Gymnocalycium triacanthum
3 rd Place	Lee Freehling	Gymnocalycium horstii

Senior Cactus

1 st Place	Brian Gold	Gymnocalycium sp.
2 nd Place	John Matthews	Gymnocalycium obductum
3 rd Place	Brian Gold Karenn Ohlinder	Gymnocalycium saglionis Gymnocalycium obductum

Junior Succulent

1 st Place	John Luhnnow	Calibanus hookeri
2 nd Place	Gerald Richert	Calibanus hookeri
3 rd Place	John Luhnnow	Yucca whipplei

Senior Succulent

1 st Place	Jim Hanna	Calibanus hookeri
2 nd Place	Jim Hanna	Yucca desmetiana
3 rd Place	Laurel Woodley	Calibanus hookeri

The June POM judges were Bill Campbell and David Verity accompanied by Guy Wrinkle.

Plant of the Month for 2010

	CACTUS	SUCCULENT
October	Cactus, crested	Variiegated Succulents
November	Turbinocarpus	Conophytum, Lithops, Faucaria

September 2010 Cacti of the Month - *Frailea* and *Blossfeldia*

Frailea is a medium size genus of small cacti. The range of *Frailea* stretches from Colombia to Argentina, and overlaps that of *Parodia* and *Notocactus*. The genus is closely related to *Parodia*. The number of species is probably less than 50, but uncertain, with many species recently named and available only as seed from European suppliers. Many of these new species are probably redundant, and when a careful revision of the genus is published will disappear as synonyms.



Frailea schlinzkyana entered in the 2001 Intercity Show by Tom Glavich

Frailea are easily grown, requiring bright light, and some protection from mid-day full sun. Any well drained potting mix will do. In habitat they can be found among rocks and in grassland, getting the same kind of broken shade that they get when grown under screen or light shade cloth. This genus is somewhat less tolerant of summer over-watering than many, with some of the more collectable species (*F. asteroides*) being the least tolerant. Almost all the species are weakly spined, with the pattern of the areoles on the body an important part of the plant, and often emphasized in staging for shows. The bodies are often strange blends of brown, purple and dark green.

In habitat, this genus is generally short lived, with an average plant living only a few years before succumbing to predators, rot, or drought. The plants generally stay very small, from not much bigger than a nickel to an inch or two in diameter. When grown in pots, protected from predators, disease and drought, two interesting things happen. The first is that they grow to enormous size. Single heads can get as large as 3 inches, and clumping species can fill a six inch pot with remarkable speed. The second is that they lose control of their meristems. The meristem is the center of new tissue growth, normally at the center top of the plants. As they age, normally solitary species start producing pups, sometimes with great abandon. It's not unusual to see an old plant producing a set of pups, some normal, some not. Pups are usually produced at areoles, but occasionally are produced internally to the body of the plant, eventually erupting through the side.

Frailea invariably have yellow flowers. These are usually cleistogamous, which means that they pollinate themselves as buds. *Frailea* flower freely when warm and sunny, but even when the flowers don't open they don't they produce hundreds of seeds. The seeds are easily raised, germinating quickly, but are only viable a short time. Seeds collected in late summer can be planted immediately, or can be saved until spring, however after a year there will be a noticeable loss in viability. Some germination still occurs with two and three year old seed, if carefully preserved in cool, dry storage.

Blossfeldia is the genus containing the smallest of the cacti. *Blossfeldia liliputana*, the only currently recognized species grows to only ½ inch across in habitat. The genus is native to Bolivia and Argentina, and is established over a wide geographical area. These are difficult plants to grow on their own roots. Their specialized environment (mountain rock cracks), and the extremely dry environment makes them very sensitive to root loss. *Blossfeldia* have many unique characteristics, the most important is their ability (in habitat) to survive nearly complete desiccation, recovering when fog, mist or rain returns to their natural environment.

Fantastic Fraileas

Frailea angelesii is a well known clumping species, growing more slowly than *Frailea grahliana*, below, but eventually producing small clumps of dark purple heads.



Blossfeldia liliputana entered in the 2001 Winter Show by Laura and Gene Oster

Frailea asteroides is the collector's choice. When well grown, it is often a dark brown to purple. As it ages, it tends more towards brown. Normally a single head, but with good growing conditions, and attention to watering, specimens like that shown above can be produced.

Frailea cataphracta is another normally single headed species, which with age begins to clump and grow oddly. It stays small, and keeps it's dark brown color. Crests of this species are also available, and have been recent show winners.

Frailea grahliana is a common clumping species. It grows quickly, and can easily fill a six inch pot.

Frailea pulcherrimia is a representative of a less frequently seen group. These are still small plants, but have finger thick stems that become several inches long, branching freely. The main stem quickly starts to sprawl under the weight of the additional stems. It is a dull green, with short brown and yellow spines.

Frailea schilinzkyana remains solitary, and depressed globular (wider than taller). It stays a medium dark brownish green, with short tan spines.

References

Edward Anderson **The Cactus Family**, Cullmann, Gotz & Groner, **The Encyclopedia of Cacti**, S. and L. Brack, **Mesa Garden Seed List**

Tom Glavich November 2004, Photos T. Nomer

About DRY TIMES

DRY TIMES is published monthly by the *Sunset Succulent Society* (SSS), whose officers are:

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		2nd Vice Pres., Plant of the Month		Laurel Woodley	

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