



DRY TIMES

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President: Rosalie Gorchoff
(310) 822-1783

Editor: Nels Christianson
(310) 396-1231
nelsico@gmail.com

October meeting
Tuesday, October 6, 2015
7:30 pm

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

PROGRAM

Mammillarias: Everyone's First Cactus
Karen Ostler

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Cactus

Stenocactus, Ariocarpus

Succulent

Echeveria, Dudleya

Sunset member Karen Ostler will give a general overview of the genus *Mammillaria*, including recent changes to the genus. Karen will also give the club members her valuable growing and staging hints. Karen grows some of the finest and hardest to grow *Mammillarias*, so her program is highly recommended!

Last month Attila Kapitany gave a very engaging presentation on the botanical gardens of Australia.

If your last name begins with **O - S** please bring in goodies for the refreshment table.

2015 Plant of the Month

MONTH

CACTUS

SUCCULENT

October
November

Stenocactus, Ariocarpus
Cleistocactus, Pilosocereus,
Oreocereus

Echeveria, Dudleya
Senecio, Othonna

Cactus of the Month: *Stenocactus*, *Ariocarpus*

Long known as *Echinofossulocactus*, *Stenocactus* is a genus of the Chihuahuan Desert of northern Mexico. *Stenos* means “narrow” in Greek and most of the species have thin ribs that run vertically down the body of these small to medium globose plants. Small flowers are borne at the apex and can be yellow, pink, lavender or white with a pink pinstripe. Normally, flowering is in early spring. There are eleven species. Due to very similar body configurations in the genus the identification of species can be difficult in habitat without the presence of flowers. Culture is not difficult.

Nels Christianson



Stenocactus multicostatus and *S. crispatus*, photos by N. Christianson

Ariocarpus is one of the treasures of the world of Cacti. This genus, from Central to Northern Mexico and Southern Texas has some of the most spectacular species of the entire family. Some succulent growers, who otherwise avoid cacti, make this genus their sole exception. There are collectors who collect nothing but *Ariocarpus*, and have hundreds of plants in their collections. Rare specimens can change hands for hundreds of dollars. Rare cultivars with unusual tubercles can be sold for even more, particularly in Japan. There is no denying that this single genus has generated a worldwide cult of devotees.

With all of this, you might expect *Ariocarpus* to be difficult to come by, and difficult to grow. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are no more difficult to grow than many other central Mexican genera. All of the species and all of the varieties are readily available, and nearly all are affordable. This genera is well within the range of even beginning novice growers. Field collected specimens are occasionally available, and these are much more expensive, and much harder to grow. Recently collected specimens are now almost always illegally obtained.

With all of the fuss we make over this genus, it is important to remember that the plants have had important ethno-botanical uses. The tubercles have a sticky mucilage, and this was often used as glue to mend broken pots. *A. kotschoubeyanus* was boiled and used as a cure for rheumatism, and several species were used as a ‘false peyote’ in religious ceremonies.

Cultivation is not difficult, when the home environment of these plants is remembered. They grow in mineral soils, with very little organic matter. They all have large tuberous roots. They grow in areas that are very hot in the summer, and that have summer rainfall. If they are protected from excess organic matter, particularly peat,

and watered heavily only in hot weather, good growth will result. They need protection from winter rains. There are six species, several varieties, and a near infinite set of cultivars.

References:

Anderson, E. **The Cactus Family**

Cullman, Gotz and Groner, **The Encyclopedia of Cacti**, Preston-Mafham, **Cacti, The Illustrated Dictionary**

Innes, C. and Glass, C., **Cacti**

Tom Glavich



Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus near Vizarrón de Montes, Querétaro – *Ariocarpus retusus* near La Muralla, San Luis Potosí, photos by N. Christianson

Succulent of the Month: *Echeveria*, *Dudleya*

Echeveria is a large genus of rosette-shaped plants of the *Crassulaceae* family native to Mexico and Central America with a few species found as far south as Ecuador and Peru. These plants are much prized for their spectacular shades of bluish green, lavender, pink tones, reddish, deep rose and bright green. Much loved species include *E. cante*, *E. laui*, *E. purpurorum*, *E. gigantea* and *E. agavoides*. Star-shaped flowers, often pendulous, grow on cymes of various lengths and tend to be orange, coral, pinkish or yellow in color. Propagation is by seed, leaf cuttings or pups. When a plant has become too tall or lanky the top can be cut off and left to heal in a dry location. In time roots will form and the top can be replanted. The genus *Echeveria* has been much hybridized over the last seventy years and there are many fanciful and elegant hybrids available on the market. Deep pots are not a requirement but pots should be amply wide. *Echeverias* prefer bright light, whether it be morning sun or daylong dappled shade. There is a good sample of *Echeverias* in the Succulent Greenhouse at The Huntington Botanical Gardens.



Echeveria lutea, Valle de los Fantasma, Tamaulipas
N. Christianson



Echeveria subrigida near Pinal de Amoles, Querétaro, photos by

Dudleya is a genus of rosette forming succulents of southwestern North America, ranging from Oregon to Baja California and east to Arizona. *Dudleyas* are typically found in rocky outcrops and on cliff faces. *Dudleya pulverulenta* is found locally in Sepulveda Canyon, along the Malibu coastline and in Topanga Canyon. Leaf color ranges from green to gray while flower color can be white, cream, yellow, coral, orange and pink or reddish pink. *Dudleya brittonii* from the Ensenada area is more commonly gray but the green form is not uncommon. Some species such as *D. candelabrum*, *D. gnoma*, *D. greenei*, *D. nesiotica* and *D. traskiae* are restricted to the Channel Islands. *D. pachyphytum* is restricted to Cedros Island in Baja California. Some of the continental species such as *D. densiflora* and *D. verityi* are very localized. Other species such as *D. caespitosa*, *D. farinosa*, *D. palmeri* and *D. stolonifera* are essentially coastal species while still others such as *D. abramsii* and *D. cymosa* are widespread in California in two or three mountain ranges.



Dudleya caespitosa



Dudleya edulis, photos by N. Christianson

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 24 & 25, Palomar Show and Sale, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4, San Diego Botanic Gardens, 230 Quail Gardens Rd., Encinitas, Info: hciservices@gmail.com 858-382-1797.

June 9-11, 2016, Mid States Conference (MSC,) Denver, Colorado Hosted by the Colorado Cactus & Succulent Society. Conference registration \$100.00, early registration before May 2016 is \$85.00. Venue: The Double Tree by Hilton, 13696 E. Iliff Place, Aurora, Colorado 80014. Info. Randy Tatroe rtatroe@q.com 303-699-8958.

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

President	Rosalie Gorchoff	(310) 822-1783	Vice Pres.	Laurel Woodley, Plant of the Month
Secretary	Peggy Oberg	(310) 645-7946	Treasurer	Gretchen Davis
Membership: Coni Nettles				

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