

CACTUS CORNER NEWS

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society

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Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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February 2019

NEXT MEETING: February 7th, 7:00 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.)

NEW MEETING LOCATION: REDEEMER LUTHERN CHURCH

1084 West Bullard, Fresno (near the NW corner of Palm and Bullard.)

Program: "20 Years in the Atacama, The Land of the Copiapoa."

Presented by: Woody Minnich

Similar to the coast of Namibia, the coastal and inland regions of northern Chile, known as the Atacama, is mainly watered by amazing fogs, "the Camanchacas." These fog-fed regions, in two of the driest deserts in the world, have some of the most interesting cactus and succulents to be found anywhere. The Atacama of northern Chile has an endemic genus considered by many to be one of the most dramatic to have ever evolved, the Copiapoa. This ancient genus is also believed to be tens of thousands of years old, and there are those who feel it might well be on its way out! The ocean currents that affect the coastal Atacama have changed considerably over the last hundreds of years, and now its only source of moisture is primarily from consistent dense fogs. Some of these areas rarely, if ever, get rain and the plants that have evolved there live almost entirely off the heavy condensation from the Camanchaca.



There are many different Copiapoa species ranging from small quarter sized subterranean geophytes to giant 1,000-year-old, 300-head mounding clusters. Thanks to Rudolf Shultz's excellent field work and his two comprehensive Copiapoa books, we have all been introduced to these amazing plants. Having worked with Rudolf in Chile, I can honestly say that the genus Copiapoa is without comparison! Now, having visited Chile numerous times over the last 20+ years, I have become familiar with most all of the representatives of this genus. With this presentation, I hope to taxonomically introduce you to most of the Copiapoa species as well as show their relationships and synonyms. Along with the Copiapoa, we will also encounter many other genera including the Neochilenias, Neoporterias, Eriosyce, Eulychnias, Trichocereus, as well as many of the other Chilean succulents. Chile also offers some of the best lunar landscapes, geologic formations, and spectacular beaches to be found in all of South America.



Eulychnia acida

This last August 2018, I had the pleasure of leading a group of 20 crazy cactophiles in seven four-wheel drive trucks. Our objectives were to see most of the fantastic plants and spectacular scenery that are to be found in this the land of the Camanchaca. Most of our group were very young adults (25-35yrs), and they all wanted to see and know how us old timers (Rudolf, Woody, Ritter and Charles) used to do our explorations to the wild and seldom seen places of Chile. Not only did we take them on very bad roads, the kind of dusty, dirty two tracks we used to have to maneuver, we also had them camp out in the middle of nowhere with the scorpions.



(Continued on next page)

No restaurants, no showers, no beds, and no bar! These camp-outs were exceptional as we could often see, without light pollution, the Southern Cross and the Magellanic Lights until the Camanchaca fog slowly blanketed our campfire discussions. What an incredible trip it was!

The energy of the young people and my memories of the last 20+ years in Chile made this an epic adventure, one I will never forget! Join me at the meeting, and hopefully you'll share our exhilarating experience and the overall magic of this wonderful arid region, the Atacama.

Let's give Woody a warm welcome back to the club!



Copiapo Columna alba crest

Plants: Woody will be bringing a nice selection of plants for purchase.

~~ DINNER ~~

High Sierra Grill House
203 West Bullard Avenue
Fresno, (559) 435-8500
[Menu](#)

Begins promptly at 5:00 p.m.
Reservations under Fresno
Cactus Club. Members are
invited to attend.

Contact Rosanna by
Wednesday February 6th
to make reservations:
Phone: (559) 999-0017



LOST AGAVE UNCOVERED

An agave new to science is being hailed as a 'lost crop' grown by the Hohokam, an ancient North American people living in Arizona from about 200 to 1400 CE.

Archaeologists have previously found tools and carbonized agave remains, which indicate the Hohokam cultivated agave for food, drink and fibers. Botanical remains, however, have been too fragmented to allow identification, so since the 1980s scientists have been striving to work out which agaves were actually grown.



Research has now identified populations of *Agave delamateri* and *A. murpheyi* growing in ancient agricultural fields, plus a third plant that was a mystery. Teams from the Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, and Archaeology Southwest have named it *A. sanpedroensis* after the nearby San Pedro River, which fed the terraced fields. The plant (pictured left) has gray-green leaves with thick bases and attractive bud imprinting.

Characteristics such as no apparent fruit set and being found next to ancient man-made features like rock piles point to it being a domesticated crop.

Agave sanpedroensis is being reintroduced into cultivation for conservation.

To read a scientific paper on this plant from *Systematic botany*, Google the following: www.bioone.org, in the search box type "Hohokam."

Sue

(From an article in *The Garden* (Royal Horticultural Society), January 2019.)

FROM THE PREZ ...

Hi, All,

Well, what do you think of our new meeting room? Terrific, isn't it? We had a great meeting in January—with 77 in attendance—and everyone seemed to have nothing but good things to say about the multipurpose room at Redeemer Lutheran Church. (We even have control of the thermostat!)

Due to various circumstances, we didn't have the library last month, but hope to have some books *available this time. No fines will be charged on books that might have been due in December or January.*

Speaking of new venues, the board has been discussing the location of our June Show and Sale, June 1-2. As you know, our two previous events have been held at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District building. In 2017 we had two rooms, the Board Room (show) and the Veteran's Room (sale). It was a tight squeeze for the sale, but we managed. Last year we were fortunate to get the Ballroom, the largest piece of real estate in the complex. It was great; the vendors and public loved it. We followed the convoluted procedures for reserving that room again for this year, but were unsuccessful. Instead, we were offered the Independence Room. It's a large room but it actually has less square footage than the Board and Veteran's rooms combined (4,647 sq. ft.) It also has an awkward approach—down the hall past the Ballroom and a 90-degree left turn. We have a reservation for the space, but we decided to look further, given the uncertainty from year to year as to our location and amount of space we'd have.

Several officers have checked out the Commerce Building at the Fresno Fairgrounds. Cost-wise, it's about as much as the CVMD room, is 25,000 square feet and has a full kitchen. We can set up all day on Friday, rather than being limited to 3-9 p.m. at CVMD. Club members can drive onto the grounds and park around the building. The public can park free in the Chance Avenue lot and enter the grounds via the pedestrian gate across the street from the parking lot. The Commerce Building is immediately adjacent to the pedestrian entrance. Also, it's easy to reserve a building at the Fair a year in advance, unlike the process at CVMD.

Rob Scott will discuss this issue at the meeting. If you have questions, be sure to ask them.

Rob will also discuss the Home & Garden Show, March 1-3. If you wish to be a vendor, you need to sign up at this meeting.

We will also have signup sheets at the meeting for those who can spare a few hours to work at the show. Hours for the event are Friday and Saturday, 10-7; Sunday, 10-6.

What better way to get involved in the club than to volunteer to help with the above-mentioned events. It'll be fun and, if you're a new member, it's a great way to get acquainted. We hope you'll think about it.

See you at the meeting, **Sue**

Renewals: all memberships are now due. If you're not sure of your status, ask Craig Roberts.

FEBUARY BOARD MEETING:

**The board meeting will be Monday, February 11th, 6:00 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista.
We will be discussing the Home & Garden Show, June show venue and Standing Rules.
Any member is welcome to attend.**

Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society Board Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2019

The meeting was called to order by President Sue Haffner at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Sue Haffner, Fred Gaumer, Cindy Duwe, Rob Scott, Mary Drumheller, Polly Dunklin, Bill Gale, Ama Siguenza, Jim Brummel, Rosanna Rojas and myself, Karen Willoughby. Absent were Marilyn Carter and Michele and Craig Roberts.

Officer Reports:

President: No report.

Vice-President: February speaker is Woody Minich.

Treasurer: No report since Michele was absent.

New Business:

Revised membership form

Home & Garden Show, March 1-3

Chairmanships are as follows:

Annual Show and Sale: Karen Willoughby and Rob Scott.

Facebook: Karen Willoughby

Fair Display Coordinator: Rudy Rulloda

Hospitality Table: Tony Sharp

Library: Marilyn Carter and Jim Brummel

Membership: Craig Roberts

Opportunity drawing: Karl Church

Photographer: Karen Willoughby

Publications: Sue Haffner and Mary Ann Villegas

Publicity: Carole Grosch

Refreshments: Nancy Jobin

Rules & Parliamentarian: Sue Haffner

Sunshine: Carole Grosch

Webmaster: Vicki Veen

Workshop: Mary Drumheller

Clovis Botanical Garden "Spring into your garden" event is March 16, 2019

Home Garden Tour

Bus trip

Old Business:

Show and sale venue

Library

Donation acknowledgement form:

Spring Picnic: Need someone to be in charge of arrangements.

Standing Rules Revision,

No further new or old business to be discussed, meeting was adjourned at 7:00. Next board meeting is February 11, 2019. If you would like further information on any of the above items, please speak to a board member.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Willoughby, Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: *Brenda Anderson (1st); Gary Thacker (6th); Mary Drumheller (8th); Sharon Hill (15th); Rose Rowe (17th); Sharon Kinnear (18th); Alice Rodriguez, Peter Beiersdorfer (25th); Jim Brummel (26th); Edie Chaney (29th).*



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**SAY HELLO TO THESE NEW MEMBERS:**

Sharon Hill, Sharon Kinnear, Martha Duran

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Visitors last month: Josefa Price, Sharon Kinnear, Sharon Hill, Susan Brundhorst, Ryan Matcha, Joel Patrick, Sam Cisneros, Jack Wilkinson, Ana Siguenza, Patricia Alvarado, Nancy Hannah and Dwight Horiuchi.

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**Our sympathies go out to Rachel Bermio** on the death of her father, Romarico Bermio.

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CACTI AND SUCCULENTS ARE EVERYWHERE!

Does it seem as though you see succulents used everywhere—in magazines and advertisements? Online there are innumerable YouTube videos of plant tours and collections. Google “Hank’s Cactus Visit to Poot’s 2018” for a colorful tour of the Nursery grounds.

Look forward this month to the US Postal Service latest stamp issue, ‘Cactus Flowers.’ It is supposed to go on sale Feb. 15th. Check it out on the USPS website; the stamps are beautiful. The US international stamp for the past several years is a green stylized echeveria rosette.

I even found a bottle of cheap chardonnay at Grocery Outlet called “Succulent.” The label features stylized succulent rosettes.

In addition, there’s been a flood of books on succulents—a lot of them more in the nature of decorating with succulents, some sort of in the “cactus-for-dummies” format. They certainly speak to particular audiences.

BIG EVENT THIS MONTH

San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Winter Show & Sale, Balboa Park, Room 101.

Saturday, February 9th

For more information: 619-990-2061

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**Fresno Home & Garden Show**,

Friday-Sunday, March 1-3.

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March club meeting,

Thursday, March 7th, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

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**Clovis Botanical Garden**

"Spring into your Garden" event,

Saturday, March 16th, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Club Spring Picnic,

Saturday, April 13th, at Dennis Shamlian's

Coarsegold garden, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

More information about these events will be in future newsletters.

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**SPINE, THORN OR PRICKLE?** A spine is a modified leaf (cacti). A thorn is a modified branch; is typically an integral part of the plant and will not snap off easily (pyracantha). A prickle is a hard pointed extension of the plant’s epidermis; is usually attached to the surface of the cane and snaps off easily (roses). But whatever we call it, it will still smart if you come into contact with one.

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A question from one of our members, Roz:

“Found this on one of my aloes today. Do you think it might be aloe mite?”



Answer from member Rob Scott:

“If the Aloe mite-affected portions of the plant are small, you can cut them off with a knife and use Sevin to kill them. You will need to spray every week for a while and be alert to remove any more affected parts of the plant.”



JANUARY BRAG TABLE: Fred Gaumer brought *Weingartia neumanniana*, *Gymnocalycium pflansii* v. *albipulpa* and two pots of *Sulcorebutia rauschii*; Brian Nagles showed an imaginatively potted *Rhipsalis sulcata*; Bruce Hargreaves exhibited a *Schlumbergia* cv. 'White Christmas' (from his mother's memorial service 4 years ago); Bill Gale brought three euphorbias, *suzannae*, *enopla*, *poissonii*, and *Glottiphyllum peersii*; Dennis Anderson showed *Lobivia arachnacantha*, *Echinopsis subdenudata* and *Rebutia pygmaea*; Eddie Etheridge brought two pots of South American cacti (one a purple *Sulcorebutia rauschii*, as I recall) and a mammillaria. Thanks to them all.

Don't be shy about bringing a plant for the Brag Table, even if you don't have a name for it. Fred can help you with most plant identities.

Photos by
Karen Willoughby



JANUARY WORKSHOP: The group met on a rainy evening to examine plants in genera that begin with A. We looked at the following: Agave, Aloe, Astrophytum, Ariocarpus, Argyroderma, Aeonium, Acanthocalycium, Acharagma, Anacamperos, Adromischus, Austrocephalocereus, Adenium and Aztekium. Bringing plants were Mary Drumheller, Sue Haffner, Ana Siguenza, Bill Gale, Tom Meyer, Dennis Anderson, Karl Church, Jack Fleming, Eddie Etheridge and Dan Gale.

Discussion topics included cold weather care, watering and winter growers. Dan not only brought plants and fruit to give away, he also made a delicious cheesecake with strawberry topping. Thanks, Dan!

The February workshop will be Wednesday, Feb. 20th, 6 p.m., at 3733 N. Sierra Vista. All members are welcome to attend. Topic will be genera that begin with B and C.

Photos by
Cindy Duwe



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NEW GREENHOUSE

Here are photos of member Cindy Duwe's greenhouse from Santa Barbara Greenhouses. It's 11x16 feet and framed in redwood. Member Tom Meyer and his helpers Mark and Monty built it up.



ECHINOFOSSULOCACTUS (OR STENOCACTUS)



Echinofossulocactus, that long, awkward name, was first used in 1841 by George Lawrence, an English gardener, in a catalog of the cacti grown at Hendon Vicarage (North London). As understood today, the name refers to a group of small, mostly solitary barrel cacti with numerous thin, wavy ribs, conspicuous papery spines, and small to medium-sized flowers in white, purple, yellow, or striped white and purple. For some years they were known as *Stenocactus*, which was originally a subgenus of the huge *Echinocactus* group.

Backeberg lists 32 species, which Nigel Taylor, an English botanist, reduced to six back in 1979. A year later he had second thoughts and pared it down to 4, returned them to the old generic name *Stenocactus* and made that a subgenus of *Ferocactus*! Now, some of us were happy not to have to write “*Echinofossulocactus*” on plant labels, but considering these plants to be ferocacti was a step too far. Still, *Stenocactus* has stood for some years, only to be tossed by the roadside in the new DNA-informed compilation by Joël Lodé, who resurrects *Echinofossulocactus*.

But you know what? Through all this the plants, themselves, haven't changed. They are well worth adding to any collection.

Eight species are currently recognized: *coptogonus*, *crispatus*, *multicostatus*, *obvallatus*, *ochoternanus*, *phyllacanthus*, *sulphureus* and *vaupelianus*. Except for *coptogonus*, the only broad-ribbed member of the genus, the other species can be quite variable in appearance, making them difficult to identify. All can have 20 to 100 narrow, wavy-edged ribs and numerous transitional forms can be found (hence those 32 species of Backeberg). All are native to north and central Mexico. They grow mainly on grassy slopes; their flattened spines may help to disguise them in the grasses.

Culture of these plants presents no difficulties: well-draining soil mix, strong light and dry in winter. They can survive below freezing temperatures. They flower in early spring—pretty but not really showy. The deep grooves between the ribs can hide insect pests, so periodic inspection is necessary.

Sue

ALOE POLYPHYLLA



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Aloe polyphylla, the spiral aloe, is one of those fantastic plants that make you want to rub your eyes. Is it real? A specimen plant, showing its spiral growth pattern, is truly awe-inspiring.

It is also one of the world's most endangered plants. *Aloe polyphylla* (the name means "many leaves") is native to basaltic mountain areas of Lesotho, a small country entirely surrounded by South Africa. Plants cling to high altitude slopes which are characterized by copious rainwater runoff and snow in the winter. This habitat is under severe pressure from farming operations, and

the plant's only pollinator, the Malachite Sunbird, is also endangered. In addition to all this, *Aloe polyphylla* has been over-collected for years. Travelers have mentioned seeing local people selling plants along the roadsides or in markets. These collected plants have virtually no chance of being reestablished in cultivation.

Fortunately, nurseries have been propagating this species from seed for years, and small plants are available in the trade at reasonable prices.

The young plants resemble some other aloes, such as *nobilis*, except that their leaves are noticeably softer and more "watery". (*Aloe polyphylla* is 95% water.) Plants must reach a diameter of at least 8-12 inches before they begin to spiral—and they may spiral either left or right—and amass about 90 leaves in order to support production of the large bloom stalk.

In our climate *A. polyphylla* should be protected from hot temperatures as much as possible. Most growth will occur during the cooler times of spring and fall. The plant's roots have a high oxygen requirement, and this combination of temperature and water availability will keep the leaves firm. One sign of a plant in distress is flaccid outer leaves lying on the soil surface.

Alan Beverly is a Santa Cruz area grower who has specialized in *Aloe polyphylla* for years. His firm is called Ecoscape (www.ecotree.net). He recommends the following container mix: to any good commercial mix add 50% by volume orchid bark or 5/16" red lava rock or washed pumice. Be aware that, if you use bark, it will disintegrate in two years and have to be replaced. Don't be reluctant to put small plants into large containers, as their roots appreciate the insulation and the free root run opportunity. In the ground, the plants will develop best in sandy loam supplemented with organic material.

Propagation is by seed, though seed of this species is seldom available, or by stem cuttings. *Aloe polyphylla* offsets only rarely. An article in the May-June 1995 issue of *Cactus and succulent journal* described efforts to pollinate this species. It also mentioned means employed by the Huntington to get the plant to offset (e.g., cutting out the growing point.)

Alan Beverly considers Fusarium crown rot to be the plant's most serious disease. This is characterized by wet purple lesions on the leaves, and can be treated with Benomyl or other fungicides.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

While the cooler summers of Santa Cruz produce better growing conditions for *Aloe polyphylla* than does our hot Valley, you can still grow nice plants if you cater a bit to their needs.

Sue