Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society Newsletter

On the Dry Side

January 2015

January Meeting

Our Speaker for January is Stephen McCabe DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, CURATOR OF SUCCULENTS, at UCSC. Steve will discuss Dudleya, and the growing of succulents in the landscape environment. Here is a bit more about Steve from the UCSC web site: I have enjoyed sharing my enthusiasm for plants starting at a young age, then through work as a naturalist in Pinnacles, Año Nuevo, and Yosemite, and since 1985 here at the Arboretum. Part of the satisfaction I get from work here are the successes achieved by the wonderful community of volunteers, students, and staff working towards a common goal. We work on tours, signs, the website, educational events, the library, native plants, and succulents. We raise money through plant sales and the Dried Flower and Succulent Wreath Sale.
I coordinate Arboretum research done by students and professors from UCSC and other institutions. I help TAs and professors use the garden for classes. I write grants, press releases, and for publications. My horticultural and conservation research is on natives and succulents, and my botanical research is on the genus . I have taught UCSC courses.

President's Message

Greetings everyone, Hope you all have enjoyed a healthy and happy holiday with your families and friends. We look forward to a new year, with much fun growing the succulent plants, and also finding new varieties to add to our collections, and learn about. The weather has been quite harsh outdoors in the past few weeks with heavy rains and bitter cold nights. Remember to check the weather reports and watch your plants to see how they are responding. Cactus in pots need to be kept dry this time of year, and other fleshy leaf succulents, such as Echeveria, Adromiscus, Haworthia, desert Agave, and the Mesembs need to be protected from too cold night temperatures and also excess water that does not evaporate quickly. Our national CSSA organization will be having their Bi-annual convention this year at Pitzer College in Claremont, CA on the dates of June 14-19. This is an excellent opportunity to visit a giant vendor Show and Sale with many unique and specimen plants. Also are featured many lectures, and slide show--movies presented by leading researchers--explorers from around the world who will come to share their recent finds. I encourage you to make plans to attend this exciting event. See me if you are interested, so we can share information re: accomodations. We are also looking forward to a presentation this month by Steve McCabe---Curator at UCSC, who will share with us ideas about growing succulent plants in the landscape environment. See you on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2015 ~Stan Verkler

Mini Show January 2015

The plants for the January mini show are:

-Any flowering aloe

-Any succulent or cactus native to California or Baja California for example agave, yucca, dudleya, carnegiea, coryphantha, cylindropuntia, echinocactus, echinocereusferocactus, grusonia, mammilaria, opuntia, sclerocactus, nolina, dasylirion ~Jeff Brooks

Look a Book

Brand new, 'A Plant Lover's Guide to Sedums' by Brent Horvath, has detailed descriptions of 150 different sedums. Includes growing tips, companion plants, and landscape use, and lots of great pictures! ~Suzy Brooks

Cold?

The current issue of the members' bulletin of the Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix AZ, offers the following tips for protecting your succulents from freezing weather. This is chiefly for plants growing in the ground:

- If a freeze is in the forecast and your plants are in a vulnerable location, a frost blanket typically can provide enough protection. Do not use plastic.
- Refrain from watering your succulents in advance of a freeze. Succulents typically have a better survival rate if the soil around them is kept dry.
- Columnar cacti, such as the organ pipe or *Cereus* are the most vulnerable at the tips of the stems. The growing tips can be protected with a frost blanket or with StyrofoamTM cups. Do not leave cups on after the danger of frost is past.
- Aloes typically bloom in the winter months when a freeze is most likely. Aloe plants are able to take the cold but the flowers are frost sensitive. To protect the bloom stalks without damaging or breaking them, place your frost cloth over a frame similar to a tomato cage.
- Be sure to remove all frost coverings the next morning after the sun comes up and temperatures have recovered. Keep your frost cloth handy in case another event is expected.
- If your plant shows signs of freeze damage, do not remove dead tissue until later in the season after the danger of frost is past.
- South-facing areas and patios with hardscape can also provide more radiating heat during cold nights, making suitable locations for succulents. Every property has areas that offer more protection for delicate specimens. Take the time to study your garden and situate your plants well. Don't fear the freeze, prepare for it!

Annual Society Dues

If you have not paid your dues to renew your MBAC&SS membership, please do so as soon as possible. Dues can be paid at our monthly meetings or by mailing a check made out to MBAC&SS to Ruth Pantry. Her address is 37 Young Dr. Salinas CA. 93901.

Some thoughts on seeds from Joël Lodé

"Cold can be an essential ally in germination. I remember seeds of Yucca brevifolia (the Joshua Tree) taken from habitat but unable to germinate, in spite of indisputable freshness. Collecting old seeds did not give any better results. Then, one day in winter I went to the Mojave Desert, California. Pods of Yucca brevifolia still remained which had passed the winter on the plants and endured snow and freezing. These seeds germinated at a rate approaching 100% ... You will undoubtedly have noticed that sometimes, in a cactus fruit, or other succulent, that it is sometimes possible to find germinated seeds and that sowings spontaneously appear. This happens more particularly in fruits which have remained on the plant for a long time, supporting a high rate of humidity.

These germinated seeds can be planted out perfectly well with some care ... There are also to be found brown seeds among normally black seeds. These seeds (which float on the surface of the water during washing of the fruits) are generally regarded as dead ones. However I have sometimes been surprised to note that these seeds regarded as sterile are indeed fertile! ... When there is no other alternative, seed capsules of Aloe may be gathered before completely maturing, but provided that the first (lower) capsules on the spike are dry and slightly opened."

(International Cactus Adventures, Oct. 2000)

New Members

Stephanie McFarland, P.O. Box 1010, Gonzales, CA 93926, 831.809.5685, gvs1951@sbcglobal.net

Allan Neymark, 2561 Brnciforte Dr., Santa Cruz, CA 95065, 831.457.2505, aneymark@hotmail.com

Shelly May, 205 Florence Dr., Aptos, CA 95003, 831.334.7783, shellaptos@gmail.com

And add Victor Suarez to Gloria Suarez's info. His e-mail is vmsuarez@pacbell.net

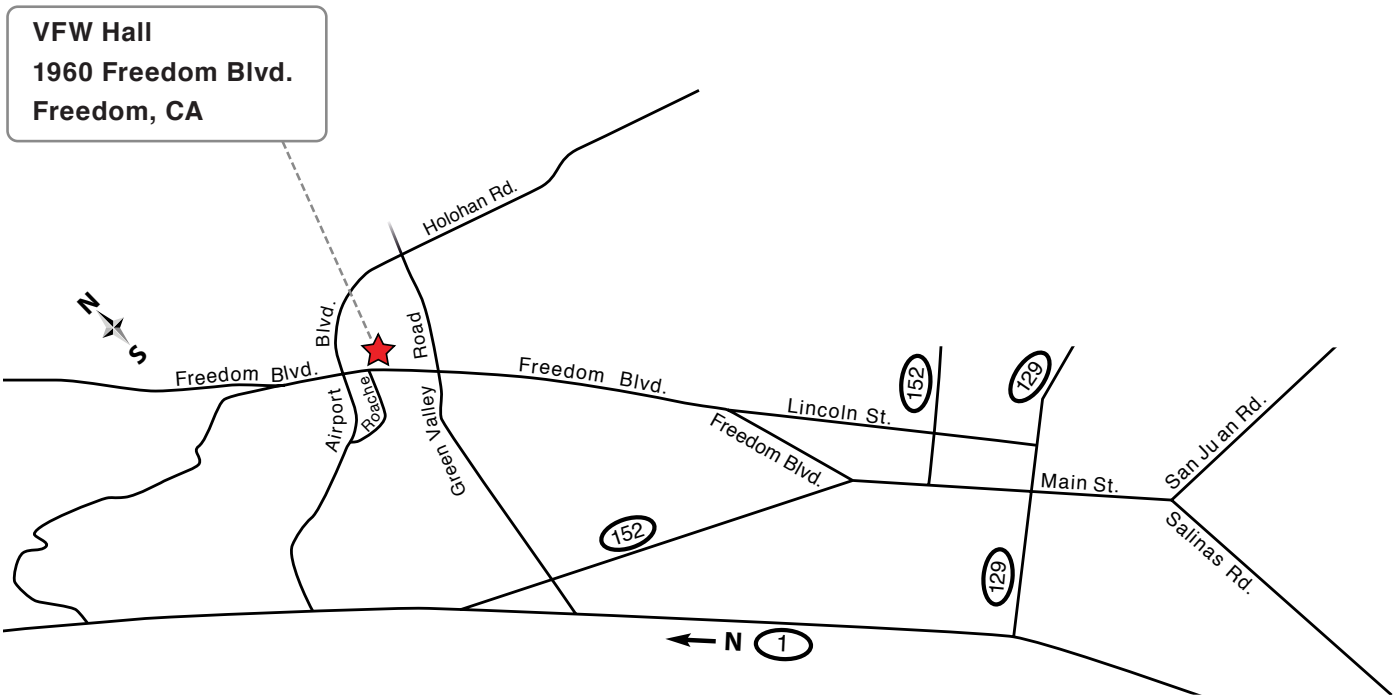
Elizabeth Gilkie, 1390 30th Ave., #123, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, 831.475-7143

Please add to your rosters, and give a warm welcome!

On the Dry Side is the newsletter of the Monterey Bay Area Cactus Society. Club Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of each month in the VFW Bldg., 1960 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville, CA. A pot luck lunch starts at 12:30 p.m. followed by the program. Visitors are always welcome. For more information call Membership Chair: Linda McNally (831) 247247-4382 or Club President: Manson Waters (831) 663-3355

Board & Committee Chairs:
President – Manson Waters (831) 663-3355
Vice. President – Naomi Bloss (8312) 722-1446
Secretary – Pat Livensparger (831) 6252980
Treasurer – Ruth Pantry (831) 758-6645
Membership – Linda McNally (831) 247-4382
Library –Suzy Brooks (831) 207-4021
Programs – Manson Waters (831) 663-335
Director at Large-Tom Karwin (831) 760-6727
Director at Large –Gary Stubblefield (831) 663-4411 Director at Large –Anita Crawley (831) 293-8788

CSSA Rep: Jeff Brooks- (831) 207-4021



BOARD MEETING AT 11:00 AM

Last Minute Additions

ON THE DRY SIDE

Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society
Sharon Lucchesi, Editor

You may have noticed we had some beautiful “Christmas Cactus” presented as gifts at our December Holiday Meeting, here is a bit about their culture, information gleaned from NCCSS Newsletter~Enjoy

Schlumbergera bridgesii

Christmas Cactus

There are three difference holiday cacti, the Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*),

Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*), and the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*). The difference that accounts for which holiday their names reflect is their flowering period. The Thanksgiving cactus flowers in mid to late November. The Christmas cactus flowers in mid to late December and the Easter cactus flowers in early to mid April. The three plants also differ slightly in the shape of their stem segments. These are not leaves, but modified stems called as phylloclades.

Growing a Christmas Cactus

Growing techniques are essentially the same for all the holiday cacti. Although the Christmas cactus is a true cactus, it does not need the intense sunlight most other cacti require. A bright location with little or no direct sun is best.

The potting media must be well drained but should also hold sufficient moisture so that the media is never completely dry. A potting mix of two parts (by volume) of a standard house plant potting soil plus one part perlite works well.

Keep plants warm, within a temperature range of 65 to 80 degrees F. Water thoroughly and then keep an eye on the surface of the potting media. Once the surface has begun to dry out, water thoroughly again within the next day or two. Do not allow the potting media to go dry for an extended period. If the plant is producing new growth, apply a regular house plant fertilizer (following label directions) once a month.

Flowering a Christmas Cactus

The two factors that initiate flowering in a healthy Christmas cactus are length of daylight and the night temperature. Flower initiate begins when plants receive light for 9 hours or less and complete darkness for 15 continuous hours. Even the light from a table lamp many feet away is enough to disrupt the required continuous darkness. Flower initiation is enhanced by maintaining night temperatures between 55 to 65 degrees F. in conjunction with short days beginning in the early fall, around 1 October in the Washington D.C. area. Generally is takes about 6 weeks of short days to initiate flowering. Once buds are visible, discontinue short days and flowering will occur in 3 to 4 weeks.