



On the Dry Side

Next Meeting: November 15th Potluck 12:30 Program

Study: Almost One Third of All Cactus Species on Verge of Extinction

Oct 6, 2015 by Sci-News.com

Nearly 30 percent of 1,478 known cactus species are on the verge of extinction, according to a new report published yesterday in the journal *Nature Plants*.

Cacti in the Sonoran Desert. Image credit: Bob Wick / Bureau of Land Management / CC BY 2.0. Cacti are members of the plant family Cactaceae. They are key components of New World arid ecosystems and are critical to the survival of many animal species.

Specimens taken from the wild are particularly sought after due to their rarity. "These findings are disturbing. They confirm that the scale of the illegal wildlife trade – including trade in plants – is much greater than we had previously thought, and that wildlife trafficking concerns many more species than the charismatic rhinos and elephants which tend to receive global attention," said Inger Andersen, Director General of IUCN, who was not involved in the study. "We must urgently step up international efforts to tackle the illegal wildlife trade and strengthen the implementation of the CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, if we want to prevent the further decline of these species." "The startling results reflect the vital importance of funding and conducting assessments of the threatened status of all of the species in major groups of plants, such as the cacti," said co-author Dr Kevin Gaston from the University of Exeter, UK.

"Only by so doing will we gain the overall picture of what is happening to them, at a time when, as evidenced by the cacti, they may be under immense human pressures."

Dr Gaston and his colleagues gathered data for each of 1,478 cactus species on their distribution, population trend, habitat preference and ecology, conservation actions, use and trade

"This included over 38,000 occurrence point records, which were used to generate preliminary range maps," the scientists explained.

November Meeting

Title: "Hunting Agave utahensis in the southwest states"

Speaker: Tony Krock

Agave utahensis is one of the most northerly distributed Agaves known, and it occurs in northern Arizona, southeastern California, southern Nevada and Utah. There are two subspecies and three varieties. This plant tolerates cold down to 0 degrees F, but is poorly tolerant of water in the winter time. Tony has explored many locations in two of the four states for these varieties of Agave utahensis. He will be showing many stunning examples of these plants along with other succulents that he has found in these nearby habitats. As an expert Agave grower, he will also be explaining how to best cultivate these plants. As an extra bonus, Tony will be bringing small Agave utahensis var. eborispina plants to offer for sale to our members.

Tony Krock is familiar to many of our members for his local expertise on growing succulents. Besides Agaves, Tony has built an extensive collection of rare cacti and succulents. Tony has worked for the last 10 years at Terra Sol Garden Center as one of their plant experts and the Succulent Curator. He has a 20 year professional background in horticulture as a nurseryman, organic farmer and as a broker of rare succulent specimens.



MiniShow Categories

Featured plants for the November mini show.

This month featured succulent is any variegated succulent and the featured cactus in any columnar cactus.

Cactus category is any **BLOOMING** cactus. **All plants not fitting the criteria will not be judged.**

Plants are to be healthy and in show condition.

NEW MEMBERS

Linda Kennedy, 1408 King St.,
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Please add to your roster &
give a warm welcome!

DUES ARE DUE!

Well dues are actually due by January 1st...BUT, if you get your dues paid by the December meeting, you will be entered in a raffle to win a great plant! So send your dues to Ruth Pantry OR pay at the next meeting in November. We thank you so much ~*~*~*~*~'

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Just to inform you that this will be the last newsletter edited by me, Sharon Lucchesi. Please let the Board know if you might like to become the next NEWSLETTER EDITOR!

Arboretum Wreath and Gift Sale which is Nov. 21 and 22. Members of the Arboretum can get in at 9am all others 10am and it goes until 4 both days.

An Introduction to Harmless Cacti:

Those with No Spines and No Glochids

Part 2: Desert Cacti

In this article, I turn my attention to desert cacti. I focus on cacti from two genera and a monstrose form of columnar cacti species. Cacti with no spines or glochid usually have at the end of their botanical names “inermis” (English “unarmed”) or nudum or nuda (English “naked” or “bare”). However, nudum or nuda can also mean that the cacti has no particular color patterns as is the case with *Astrophytum myriostigma nudum* whose color is sometimes plain green. One thing I've learned is that frequently spineless or glochidless cacti originate in cultivation because the cactus would never survive in nature. For example, there is the glochidless *Opuntia microdasys* cv. *Caress* (European origin) and the spineless and glochidless *Puna bonnieae* f. *inermis* which I don't discuss here due to their relative rarity in the cactus trade.

The Ariocarpus genus

Any of the 8 species from the *Ariocarpus* genus is worthwhile seeking out. This does not look like your average cactus. Rather than having spines for defense, these cacti use camouflage, which is why they are usually called “Living Rocks.” They occur from central México to south Texas. *Ariocarpus* species are the slowest growing cacti and shortest among the 2 genera and 1 species discussed in the article. *Ariocarpus* cacti are so different that one species, *A. fissuratus* var. *lloydii*. could pass for a *Haworthia*!

The Astrophytum genus

In this genus, only 3 are spineless: *Astrophytum asterias*, *A. caput-medusae* (the rarest in cultivation), and *A. myriostigma*. These species are a favorite of collectors that along with cacti in the *Ariocarpus* genus are almost always for available for purchase at C&S club sales. Depending which cactologist you agree with, five or six species comprise the genus. The species in this genus have popular names “Sand Dollar Cactus” or “Bishop's Hat” due to their distinct appearances. These are great plants for beginners that grow a lot faster than *Ariocarpus* and are therefore a lot less expensive (usually a half to a third the cost of an *Ariocarpus*). Where an *Ariocarpus* may set you back around \$25 to \$30; expect to pay around \$10 for an entry level *Astrophytum asterias*.

“Totem Pole Cactus”

The scientific name for this cacti is *Pachycereus (Lophocereus) schottii* f. *monstrosus* is a spineless form of the regular *Pachycereus (Lophocereus) schottii*. It occurs naturally halfway down the Baja California peninsula and is much sought after. The Totem Pole is slow growing compared to other columnar cacti, growing with time over 10 feet.

~Jorge Quinonez

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.

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Newsletter Editor: Sharon Lucchesi (831) 688-8454

Board Meeting 11:00 am, Members welcome to attend.

Visitors are always welcome. For more information call Membership Chair: Linda McNally (831) 247-4382 or Club President: Stan Verkler



Holiday Extravaganza

Don't forget to mark your calendars! Our annual Holiday Party is not to be missed. We have a beautiful potluck feast, a multitude of auction plants (both live and silent auction) as well as raffle. Remember to have your dues paid up by December meeting (12/20) so you have a chance to win a raffle plant! Come join your fellow cactus & succulent society members for a truly festive event!