

# On the Dry Side

Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Cactus & Succulent Society

## President's Message

by Tom Karwin

Are you ready to party?

The Society's traditional Holiday Party begins earlier than our regular meetings. That allows time for the Holiday Pot-luck, Raffle and Live Auction.

Page three has the information you'll need to enjoy this event.

The coming year will bring important changes for our regular meetings. The new VFW Post Commander has announced an increased rental rate for use of the Hall, and asked us to move our meetings from Sundays to a weekday. This is not yet a "done deal." Your board of directors will determine whether we can arrange a satisfactory arrangement at the VFW Hall, or if a different meeting location and/or schedule will be the best plan for the coming year.

Meanwhile, our 2016 Holiday Party will be at the VFW Hall, as expected. Your comments and recommendations will be welcome as always. Share your thoughts with any board member (see page 8 for names and your membership roster for contact info).

Watch for the January issue of *On the Dry Side* for the latest news about the time, date and location of our January meeting.

Meanwhile, let's celebrate the holiday season in the company of friends. I'll see you at the Holiday Party!

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## Save the Date!

### MBACSS Meets

**Dec 18, 2016**

Gathering @ 11:00

Potluck Lunch @ 11:30

Raffle & Auction  
@ 12:00

### Board Meets

**Dec 18, 2016**

Board meets @ 11:00,  
very briefly this month

Members are always  
welcome to attend

### Future Meetings

**Third Sundays**

Location  
to be  
Announced  
Visitors are welcome!



Schlumbergera x buckleyi

# Minutes of the MBACSS Board Meeting, November 2016

By Stan Verkler (edited by Tom Karwin)

**Attendance:** Naomi Bloss, Jeff Brooks, Tom Karwin, Sharon Lucchesi, Linda McNally, Ruth Pantry, Gary Stubblefield, Stan Verkler. Manson Waters

**Guests:** Lynda Waters

**Approval of Minutes:** The Board the minutes of the October meeting as published.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ruth Pantry presented the current financial report and summarized bills that she paid recently. She also emailed a budget history to board members, for discussion at the January board meeting.

**CSSA Report:** Jeff Brooks will report to the CSSA the MBACSS Spring Show & Sale date of April 21<sup>st</sup> 2017, at San Juan Batista's Community Hall, for inclusion in the CSSA's published calendar. (Note: This date was moved after the board meeting to May 20-21, for coordination with the show & sale of the San Jose CSS, and reported to CSSA.)

## PROGRAM

Manson Waters is scheduling programs for 2017. He has received suggestions from Bill Kurtz, and is planning for a talk by UCSC Arboretum Director Martin Quigley, on the development of the Arboretum's succulent collection. The January issue of *On the Dry Side* will include a new calendar for 2017.

## PUBLICITY

Sharon Lucchesi invited suggestions for ways to improve the Society's public relations, e.g., additional web links, more photos, etc. She indicated that she would focus on the website (working with Webmaster Anita Crawley) and the social media. Tom Karwin said that Anita Crawley has offered to revise the Society's website as needed to provide refinements. Tom Karwin will work with Ruth Pantry to develop printed media. In discussion, the board agreed to continue the previous practice of providing Society members with printed flyers for the Show & Sale, and to upgrade the graphics for the flyers.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Portable Lighting:** The board discussed the previous decision to purchase one string of LED lights to test its effectiveness in illuminating plant displays at monthly mini-shows and the Spring and Fall shows. Stan Verkler will order the light string and look into devices to support it at an appropriate height. Possibilities include accessories offered by Outdoor World, Harbor Freight or Mel Cotton (San Jose), or a custom-made clamp assembly.

The board agreed to allow only board-approved lighting equipment at the Show & Sale, to ensure safe practice.

**Projection Screen:** Tom Karwin reported that the VFW Post Commander Daniel Magdaleno is leading the purchase and installation of a new projection screen for the VFW hall. Karwin will check with him to determine the status of this project.

**Sound Amplification:** Naomi Bloss has not yet located all the components of the sound system that the Society has used in the past. Manson Waters will check with Costco for the cost of a new system, if needed.

**Revision of Show Rules:** Discussion was postponed

**2019 CSSA Convention:** Manson Waters reported that the site of this event has been moved from San Luis Obispo to Santa Barbara, so the Society no longer is a candidate as co-host of the occasion.

## NEW BUSINESS

**HOLIDAY PARTY:** The Board discussed plans for this event and recruited volunteers for specific tasks:

- Turkey Roast: Sharon Lucchesi, Gary Stubblefield
- Ham Roast: Naomi Bloss, Stan Verkler
- Gifts: Lynda Waters, Eddy Livermont
- Plants: Naomi Bloss, Stan Verkler

The party will be held on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, the Society's regular meeting day. The day's schedule:

- Set-up at 10:00 a.m. (members are encouraged to help)
- Arrival of Guests: 11:00
- Holiday Dinner: 11:30 (The Society provides entrees; members bring a special potluck dish for 8-10 guests.)
- Raffle and Auction: After dinner. (There will be a special drawing for those who have paid their 2017 dues.)

**Adjournment:** 12:00 p.m.

## Holiday Party, December 18, 2016



The Holiday Party set-up will begin at 10:00 a.m. You are invited! The November board meeting minutes (p. 2) lists the members who are making this event happen. Many thanks to them all!

The Society will provide turkey and ham for the potluck. Everyone is asked to bring a favorite holiday side dish or dessert, with servings for 8-to-10 guests.

Remember that we will convene at 11:00, and plan to enjoy a festive potluck at 11:30. This will be followed by a raffle and a live auction.

The Society will provide plants for the raffle and the ever-popular table favors. Remember that those who have paid their 2017 dues by the date of the holiday party will be included in the raffle of an exceptional plant. This is a nice incentive —on top of membership benefits —to pay your dues on time.

For the live auction, each member is encouraged to bring up to three plants. These should be special plants, something you are proud to pass on to another cactus or succulent collector. Perhaps you have enjoyed the plant long enough and now want to make room for a new plant or two. Your well-grown plant might inspire another member to create a new live auction record.

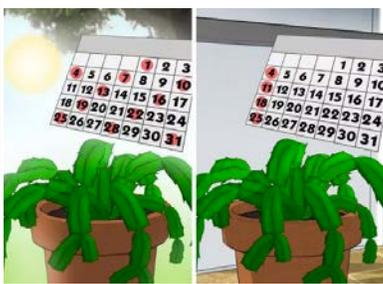
Providers of plants and the Society will share the proceeds of the live auction on a 75%–25% basis. If they choose to do so, providers are invited to donate their plant to the Society, and not require a share of the auction proceeds. No pressure!

## Christmas Cactus Care

Excerpt from WikiHow

A beautiful holiday plant (botanically known as *Schlumbergera* or *Zygocactus*), the Christmas Cactus unsurprisingly blooms at Christmas and also sometimes around Easter time if cared for properly. A month prior to Christmas you will be able to watch the tips of the leaves beginning to grow. The tips grow darker as each day passes, until a bud forms. At Christmas time, as if by magic, the buds open to a beautiful flower that will add color and warmth to any holiday season.

This illustrated article is an excerpt from the WikiHow web page, How to Care for a Christmas Cactus. The page includes four parts: Choosing Your Spot, Soil, and Set-Up, Watering Your Christmas Cactus, Getting a Timely Bloom, Caring for Your Cactus Post-Bloom. To see all four parts, visit the WikiHow page by clicking [here](#).

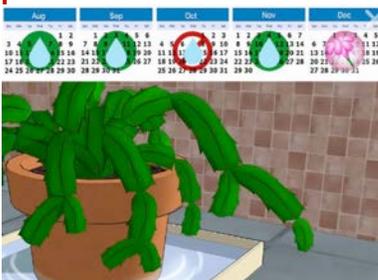


**Change your watering schedule seasonally.** Water the cactus based on your environment and the time of year. A good method is to water a cactus as follows: [

*Dry climate, outdoors:* Water every two to three days when warm and sunny

*Humid, cool or indoors:* Water every week

During the fall and winter months, the plants should be watered less frequently in order to promote blooming.



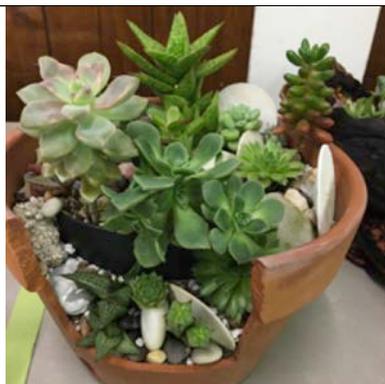
**Stop watering around October.** When October hits, your watering duties are over. You can carefully resume a light watering in November. If it's dry where you live, feel free to place the pot over a tray of moist pebbles. This is all to set up the bloom happening around Christmas.

The only other time you should cease watering is after the plant blooms. At this time, cease watering for about 6 weeks to allow the plant to rest. New growth will still appear – and that is when watering should be resumed.

Continued on page 7

# November's Mini-Show Results

Recorded by Jeff Brooks, Photographed by Fred Valentine



Dish Garden  
Dot Hurley



Novice Succulent  
Fred Valentine  
*Pelargonium carnosum*



Intermediate Succulent  
Pat Boylan  
*Adenium arabicum*



Intermediate Cactus:  
Pat Boylan  
*Opuntia subulata cristata*



Advance Cactus (1<sup>st</sup> Place)  
Jorge Quinonez  
*Tacinga subcylindrica*



Advanced Cactus (2<sup>nd</sup> Place)  
Ellen Stubblefield  
*Opuntia sulphurea*



Novice Cactus:  
Karen Valentine  
*Opuntia 'Snow'*



Advanced Succulent  
Ellen Stubblefield  
*Cussonia paniculata sinuate*

## MBACSS Calendar for 2016

MONTH	PROGRAM	CACTUS MINI-SHOW	SUCCULENT MINI-SHOW
1/17	Colors and Shapes of Mexican Succulents (Steve McCabe narrated the slide show)	Mammillaria	Aeonium
2/21	Steve McCabe: Growing and Conserving Rare Succulents: Threats to Dudleyas	Baja California: Cochemiea, Ferocactus, Myrtillocactus, Pachycereus, and Stenocereus	Dudleya
3/20	Rob Skillin: Cacti of the Central Andean Cordillera	Ariocarpus, Astrophytum	Aloes in bloom
4/17	Naomi Bloss: Planting, Growing and Showing Succulents	Rebutia, (including Sulcorebutia) Echinopsis (Lobivia)	Mesems, e.g., Lithops, Conophytum, Cheiridopsis. Pleiospilos
4/23-24	<a href="#">Monterey Bay Cactus &amp; Succulent Society</a> —Spring Show & Sale, San Juan Batista, CA (Set-up on 4/22)		
5/15	Jeff Moore: Under the Spell of Succulents	Echinocereus, Parodia (Notocactus)	Crassula
6/19	Peter Wachowiak Landscaping with Succulents	Mammillaria, Escobaria	Sedum, Sempervivum, Jovibarba
7/17	Gunnar Eisel: Building and Maintaining a Cactus and Succulent Collection'	Ferocactus, Blossfeldia (cancelled)	Euphorbia, Stapelia (cancelled)
8/21	The Country Store	No mini-show	No mini-show
9/18	Joseph Hidalgo: Succulent Asclepiads	Coryphanha, Tephrocactus	Senecio
10/1-2	<a href="#">Monterey Bay Cactus &amp; Succulent Society</a> —Fall Show & Sale, San Juan Batista, CA (Set-up on 9/30)		
10/16	Ernesto Sandoval The Needs of Succulents	Copiapoa, Cephalocereus	AGAVACEAE: Agave, Yucca. Beschorneria, Fucraee, Manfreda, Mangave
11/20	Herb Fong Stanford's Arizona Garden	Opuntia, Rhipsalis, Schlumberger	Any caudiciform or pachycaul succulent
→ 12/18	Christmas Party	No mini-show	No mini-show

### CSS EVENTS ELSEWHERE IN CALIFORNIA

4/2-3	<a href="#">San Jose Cactus &amp; Succulent Society</a> , Show & Sale, Sunnyvale
4/23-24	<a href="#">Huntington Botanical Gardens</a> —42nd Annual Spring Plant Sale, San Marino (members only 4/23)
5/14	<a href="#">Santa Barbara Cactus &amp; Succulent Society</a> —Annual Plant Sale, Santa Barbara
5/28-29	Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society—Annual Show & Sale, San Luis Obispo
6/4-5	Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society—Summer Show & Sale, Clovis
6/11-12	<a href="#">Los Angeles Cactus &amp; Succulent Society</a> Plant Show & Sale, Encino
6/11-12	<a href="#">San Francisco Succulent &amp; Cactus &amp; Society</a> Show & Sale, San Francisco
7/1-3	<a href="#">Cactus &amp; Succulent Society of America</a> —51th Annual Show and Sale, Huntington Botanical Gardens, San Marino
8/13-14	<a href="#">31<sup>st</sup> Intercity Show &amp; Sale</a> , Los Angeles County Arboretum, Arcadia
9/2	Huntington Symposium, <a href="#">Huntington Botanical Gardens</a> , San Marino

## Finishing Touches

By Bob Smoley

(Note: Bob Smoley wrote this article for *Prickly Pages*, the newsletter of the Greater Pittsburgh CSS. It has been reprinted widely. Bob was a major seller of *Sansevieria* and other succulent plants. He passed away recently.)

It is surprising and at times amazing how much beauty and value ten cents worth of top-dressing can add to a plant. Believe it or not, that ten-cent expense could even be the tiebreaker in a show plant (even though it shouldn't be).

Top-dressing a plant with a color-coordinated stone that picks up or contrasts the color of the show plant tells the viewer, who could be the judge, that the grower of this plant is putting forth an added effort in showing and displaying his or her prized specimen. I find that an attractive top-dressing also increases the value of the plant. If two identical plants were side by side, I could easily receive an extra dollar for the plant this is attractively top-dressed. But where does one get all of these rocks and pebbles? I will try to point everyone in the right direction, and as you will see, a strange direction at times it will be.

Two of the most unlikely places to find top dressings are your local feed store and sandblasting supply houses. Others that are more recognizable would be pet and tropical fish stores, and of course, your local garden centers and nurseries. At the feed store you can find what is called chicken grit. This is crushed granite that is fed to chickens to harden their eggshells. It comes in two or three sizes, the smallest size working just fine to dress 2- or 3-inch pots for *Lithops*. It also works well to top-dress freshly sown seed, but be sure to use only a thin layer up to one-eighth inch. The larger size of grit is okay for pots up to six inches or so. Since it is granite, the rock is grayish silver color with a bit of a sparkle to it.

Moving on to the sandblasting supply yard, we found a number of choice toppings available. Q rock, which comes in 4 grades or sizes, is great for smaller pots and is inexpensive at seven to eight dollars for a hundred-pound bag. Number 2 Q rock is also great for covering newly sown seeds. Another sandblasting rock, black beauty, is a byproduct of the steel industry and is a shiny jet-black glass. Black beauty is really sharp looking when used to top-dress small pots of *Lithops* and mimic plants, and provides a striking contrast color for *Echeverias* and other succulents. Finally, some sandblasting supply yards sell small, graded river gravel that is about an eighth-inch in diameter with nice earth-tone colors that look great on any pot, and shades of dark red. The heavier grades are very good for pot sizes of six inches and larger.

Let's travel next to a good nice-sized pet supply or tropical fish store. Here you can find some really fantastic looking aquarium gravels in almost any size or color. Some that are especially nice looking are the epoxy stones that have a nice clean shine to them. You can also find crushed quartz that is very natural and clean looking. Also available is volcanic rock, which usually comes in only a few sizes and in black, brown and shades of dark red. The heavier grades are very good for pot sizes of six inches and larger.



Well, what's left for the garden center or nursery to sell? Well-stocked garden centers should stock many of the tropical fish gravels and small pea gravel. They might also have pumice, which can be used as a great soil additive for cacti and succulents and a top-dressing as well. A more recent product that is good for large pots is expanded clay, which is small pieces of clay that have been heated and popped, much like popcorn. Also, available for larger pots are various grades of crushed marble.

If you want to get really exotic and a bit expensive, travel now to your local gem and mineral store. You might find crushed chips of amethyst, quartz, rose quartz, citrine, agate and many others for those extra-special plants on which you need to spend that dollar in the your wallet. Larger pieces of gems and minerals also make really nice accent pieces in mixed plantings. Try an all-succulent planting of *Echeverias*, *Crassulas*, *Kalanchoes*, or any other succulents in a low, natural clay bowl top-dressed with a clean, which aquarium gravel and accented with a few pieces of amethyst crystals and iron pyrite (Fool's Gold) and you have an exquisite planting.

There are some practical reasons for top-dressing your plants: first, as a fine topping over newly sown seed. Since seedlings should be kept moist at all times (in most cases), the top-dressing helps keep moisture in so you don't need to water as much. Best of all, the pots that have been top-dressed will show a lighter color as they dropout on the surface compared to the darker color of ones still moist, making it easy to tell when to water. In larger pots, the top-dressing helps hold down the germination of weed seed, which makes for a lot less work later.

One final comment: wash the top-dressing material and let dry before use. This removes any impurities and finer dust particles that may be present. And please don't add any of that glue, cement, or whatever it is that the mass producer use to hold the top-dressing in place for shipment—it's not good for the plants and is really tacky. Happy growing!!

## Christmas Cactus Care

Excerpt from WikiHow (continued from page 3)



**Watch out for bud drop.** One of the most frustrating things that can happen to Christmas cactus is after the flower buds have developed they drop off the plant. Bud drop can be caused by several different conditions. Usually it's because of over-watering, but it can also be due to a lack of humidity or insufficient light.

If this starts happening, water the plant less and add some fertilizer to the pot. Move it to an area away from a hot radiator or vent and try a new spot where it can get a bit more sunlight.



**Encourage the flower blooming for the holiday season by lowering the temperature.** The key to getting Christmas cactus to flower during the holiday season is proper light exposure, correct temperatures and limited watering. If you manipulate these things yourself, you can time a bloom just how you'd like.

Because this plant is thermo-photoperiodic, it will set buds when day length is about equal to night length and when the temperature drops to 50 to 60 degrees F for several weeks. If the temperature drops further, the plant will not bloom.

From September and October, the Christmas Cactus should be kept in a cool room where temperatures will remain around 50-55°F (10-12°C), give or take a few degrees. Don't expose the plant to freezing temperatures. Plants should be blooming for the holidays if cool treatments are started by early November.



**Keep the plant in a dark room during the night.** During the fall months, the Christmas Cactus should be placed in a spot where it receives indirect, bright light during the daylight hours but total darkness at night – it requires long, uninterrupted dark periods of about 12 hours or more.

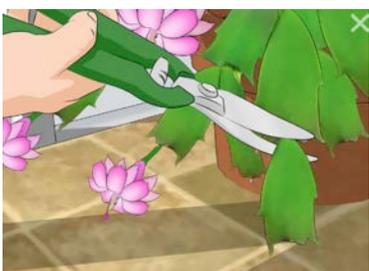
Begin the dark treatments in about mid-October to have plants in full bloom by the holidays. Place the plants in a dark area from about 12 or more hours each night for 6-8 weeks or until you see buds forming. A closet or unused bathroom are ideal places.

Be especially careful with watering at this time. Reduce the watering slightly. Do not soak the soil after a dry period; only moisten the top few inches, since buds, flowers and even leaves can fall off if the roots are suddenly saturated.



**When you see flower buds forming, increase light and humidity.** The "dark ages" are over when your plant starts budding. At this point, you should increase, humidity, light, water (not too much, of course), and the temperature. In other words, continue as you were a few months ago.

If the buds form too early, you can lower the temperature to stunt them. When you're ready, up the temperature and they should resume their progress.



**Prune the Christmas cactus about a month after blooming.** This will encourage the plant to branch out, especially after a period of "rest" has been granted. It will not look very pretty after the blossoms have faded. Some people wait until March or so, when new growth begins, to prune the cactus.

As mentioned before, cease watering for 30 days post-bloom. When you see new growth forming, you can begin watering again.

# Officers and Chairpersons, 2016

## OFFICERS

PRESIDENT — Tom Karwin  
VICE PRESIDENT — Naomi Bloss  
SECRETARY — Stan Verkler  
TREASURER — Ruth Pantry  
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR — Linda McNally  
AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVE — Jeff Brooks  
DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE  
— Gary Stubblefield  
— Manson Waters  
— Sharon Lucchesi  
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT — Stan Verkler

## CHAIRPERSONS

LIBRARIAN — Suzy Brooks  
MINI-SHOW — Jeff Brooks  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR — Tom Karwin  
PROGRAMS — Manson Waters  
PUBLICITY — Sharon Lucchesi  
RAFFLES — Gary Stubblefield  
ROSTER — Ruth Pantry  
SALE — Gary Stubblefield & Lynda Waters  
SHOW — Naomi Bloss & Janet Sparks  
WEBMASTER — Anita Crawley

## Members Update

## 2017 Mini-Show Preview

Continuing members are reminded to send their 2017 dues payment to Treasurer Ruth Pantry.

New members who pay their dues in December will enjoy full membership for 2017.

Both new and continuing members who pay their 2017 due by the date of the Holiday Party will be included in a drawing for a particularly appealing plant. Don't miss this terrific opportunity!

Join the Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society!

Date	Cactus	Succulent
1/15	Any columnar cactus must be 12" or taller	Aeonium Euphorbia
2/19	Mammillaria, Escobaria	
3/19	Rebutia (inc. Sulcorebutia), Echinopsis (Lobivia)	Aloe
4/16	Ariocarpus, Astrophytum	Haworthia
5/21	Epiphyllum	Sansevieria
6/18	Ferocactus, Blossfeldia	Kalanchoe
7/16	Melocactus	Stapelia
8/20	Country Store	No Mini-Show
9/17	Rhipsalis	Adenium, Pachypodium
10/15	Echinocereus, Parodia	Echeveria
11/19	Opuntia, Opuntiads	Gasteria
12/17	Christmas Party	No Mini-Show

## On the Dry Side

Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society  
<http://mbsucculent.org>