



*Gates Cactus  
and  
Succulent Society*

**JANUARY 2008**

**NEXT MEETING: " WEDNESDAY " JANUARY 2nd**

**AT THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MUSEUM**

**I- 10 AT CALIFORNIA STREET IN REDLANDS, CA.**

**PROGRAM**

**South African Adventure**

**Our Favorite Places** by *Buck Hememway*

Yvonne and I found so many unbelievable places where succulent plants were the main attraction in South Africa. This show will share some of our favorites both in the formal Botanic Garden sense and of our own discoveries, which of course are the most special to us.

**(New) PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

If I had only known... to bad the Gate's Presidency isn't more like our countries. He at least has speech writers and ghost writers. Welcome to a new year at The Gates Society. I'm hoping the interest in cacti and succulents, as well as our members AND attendees, will continue to grow. What's planned ahead for this

year will hopefully stimulate you to a deeper rooting in this prickly field.

Now that the bad puns are out of the way, January should prove to be interesting. Our January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will feature the second episode of Buck and Yvonne's South African excursion. The January Mini Show will be clustered columnar cactus and sanseveria for the succulents. A more complete list should be on a later page. Since there is a 6-month possession requirement for entries, the list can also be considered a "shopping list". Hopefully, there will be more use of the discussion table. We do have several individuals who are quite capable of analyzing various plant issues, unknowns and oddities for our edification.

We will be voting on the proposed by-law changes, published in the December Open Gates on page 5, to expand the board. Please re-read them.

President	951.235.6678	Mike Green	Director	951.485.1816	Dennis Kucera
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Past Pres	951.360.8802	Buck Hemenway	Librarian	909.796.6417	Barry Urman
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Since the New Year is usually a time for Resolutions, the GCSS Board has resolved to further improve the Society. At the January 2nd meeting, we are asking everyone to take a few minutes and fill out the survey. The information received will help us make the Society more responsive to YOUR interests. Please help us all to make this an even better year for our "pointed" interests. We appreciate any and all input.

We're all invited to the Annual Aloe Walk, at the Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center (JMCC.) This is a Guided Tour, conducted by our own Buck Hemenway. It will be held on Saturday, January 26 at 9:30 AM. The aloes are blooming and we hope as many members as possible can enjoy this interesting and educational event. It usually lasts about 1 1/2 hours. Buck says 'The aloes should be in full regalia and I look forward to this event every year.'

As a reminder, the Huntington Botanic Gardens will hold a Desert Forum on Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. Registration is at 9:30AM. All CSSA and affiliated cactus societies (that's us) are FREEEEE (no mattresses). Extra flyers will be available at our Meeting.

Come on out and start the New Year right! *mjg*

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#### **Member Spotlight for 0108**

**Judith (Judy) and Jerry Horne** joined GCSS in 1985 because she was interested in how to grow cactus. Judy is also a volunteer in the gardens at the Huntington Library and a begonia and orchid club member. Jerry belongs to a professional geological society and the Smithsonian Association. Judy is a retired special education teacher and Jerry is a retired college professor. Judy likes pachypodiums and pilosocereus and Jerry likes agaves and parodias. Judy and Jerry live in Yucaipa. Judy is on the GCSS board of directors.

*Why is it that our children can't read a Bible in school, but they can in prison?*

#### **HAZELLE & DAVIS NEWMAN AWARD.**

There was only one nominating letter for the award this year. Maybe because the nominee **Bob Laughlin** appeared to be unbeatable.

And during the December evening we didn't have to mark our ballots. You acclaimed **Bob Laughlin** to receive the 2007 Award. He joins the long list of previous recipients.. That list was published in the December O/G.

Congratulations to Bob for the many work hours, and plants you have donated to the society over the years.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS BOB LAUGHLIN**

The Award will be presented during the January 2008 Meeting.

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#### **Member Spotlight for 0108**

**Chris and Karen Roholt** joined GCSS sometime in the 90's because of an interest in the cactus that their house's previous owners had used in landscaping the yard. Karen likes any kind of barrel cactus and agave and Chris likes gymnocalyciums, yucca, and agave. Karen is a first grade teacher in San Bernardino and Chris is the wilderness coordinator for southern California for the Bureau of Land Management. They belong to the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and enjoy their memberships to the Huntington Library, UCR Botanic Garden, and the Bowers Museum. Chris and Karen live in Riverside.

#### **MINI-SHOW AWARDS WERE PRESENTED IN DECEMBER**

At our December Christmas party the persons with the highest point totals for the 2007 Mini-Shows received beautiful pots handcrafted **by Joe Wujcik**. It was more fun and more of a surprise to announce the winners at our Christmas party before we published the winners in the Open Gates. So, Here, in the following article are the High Pointers for 2007.

*Dennis Kucera*

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**CACTUS, SUCCULENTS OF THE MONTH  
2008 MINI-SHOW PLANTS**

- JANUARY Succulents Sansevieria species,  
Cactus, clustered columnar, 3  
stems, or more
- FEBRUARY Madagascar succulents, Alluaudia  
Didieria, Cyphostema, Adenia,  
Cactus white spined Mammillarias
- MARCH California natives,  
Succulents Yucca, Agave,  
Dudleya,  
Cactus Opuntia, Ferocactus  
Echinocereus, Mammillaria dioica
- APRIL Plants of Socotra Island and  
Arabia  
Succulents Dorstenia, Ficus, Aloe.  
Cactus, Epiphyllum, Easter and  
Christmas cactus = Schlumbergia
- MAY Your best staged cactus and  
succulent in a special pot, 1 each.
- JUNE Succulent, Aeonium,  
Cactus, Copiapoa Coryphantha
- JULY Dish gardens, Planters, cactus and  
or succulents, PHOTOGRAPHS
- AUGUST Succulents Brometlia family,  
Dychia, Abromiatella,  
Cactus, Astrophytum,  
Gymnocalcium, Parodia
- SEPTEMBER Variegated, Monstrose, Crested  
Succulents or Cactus, max 2 ea
- OCTOBER Succulents, Stapelia, Huernia,  
Hoodia and relatives,  
Cactus Melocactus,  
Dead Cactus, Dead Succulent

NOVEMBER, AUCTION ONLY

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And don't forget the 'Aloe Walk' at the JMCC on  
January 26th @ 9:30.

**CACTUS OF THE MONTH January 2008**

*by Dennis Kucera*

**CLUSTERED COLUMNAR CACTI**

This is a catch all group of many genera of  
the cereus subfamily of the Cactaceae.  
These related genera have 3 or more tall  
upright, generally cylindrical stems sprouting  
from ground level, base of the plant, from;  
one root system. These cacti; usually have  
many spiny ribs rising vertically on the upright  
stems. Following is a list of genera that have  
this growth habit.

ARMATOCEREUS, AROJADOA,  
BERGEROCACTUS, BUINGIA,  
CEPHALOCEREUS, old man cactus 3  
species from Mexico, CLEISTOCACTUS 50  
species from the mountains of S.  
America, CORRYOCACTUS syn. ERDISIA,  
20 species from S. America, ESPOSTOA, 10  
species from S. America, FUCHEIROA,  
HAAGEOCEREUS, 40 species from  
mountains of Peru and Chile,  
HILDEWINTERIA AUREISPINA the one  
species from Bolivia with upright and trailing  
stems. LOPHOCEREUS, 2 species from  
Baja CA, MICRANTHOCEREUS,  
NEOBINGHAMIA, NEORAIMONDIA,  
OREOCEREUS, 6 species from mountains of  
S. America, PILOCEREUS, 60 species from  
Mexico through S. America,  
STENOCEREUS, 25 species from Arizona,  
Baja CA, Mexico to S. America and West  
Indies, S. thurberi, is the organ pipe cactus,  
and TRICHOCEREUS.

Look through your collection and bring a few  
of these cacti with 3 or more upright stems to  
the MINI-SHOW. NO Mammillarias, NO  
Parodias Rebutias, Echinopsis or Opuntia's.

*Dennis Kucera*

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And don't forget the FREE Cactus Clubs  
Day at the Huntington on January 19<sup>th</sup> @  
9:30. Get a flyer at the meeting.

# SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH

## SANSEVERIA January 2008

by Dennis Kucera

There are about 60 species of Sansevierias belonging to the Agave family. Before the 1970's they were included in the Lily family as found in the older Exotica plant encyclopedia. They have clusters of small fragrant white flowers with 6 lobes like a lily. Most species are stemless, xerophytic succulents, with rhizomes, underground stems as big as your finger that end in a cluster of upright leaves. These evergreen perennials grow wild in dry rocky habitats in tropical and subtropical Africa, Madagascar, India and Indonesia. They are frost tender and should be grown in a protected shaded patio, warm greenhouse or as a house plant. Many kinds can tolerate neglect and only need occasional watering once a week or less in summer with good drainage. A half strength liquid fertilizer can be given monthly during the warmer months. Propagation is easily done by separating rhizomes with leaf clusters and also by leaf cuttings.

**S. trifasciata**, the mother in law's tongue or snake plant and its varieties is the most commonly grown. It is native to Transvaal, Natal and the eastern cape of South Africa. This species has lance shaped, fleshy leaves to four feet high with horizontal light and dark green bands.

**S. trifasciata 'Laurentii'** the most popular variety has upright leaves to 18 inches with golden yellow marginal stripes. The 'Golden Hahnii' variety forms dwarf rosettes of broad leaves to 8 inches long, with wide golden yellow vertical stripes. The variety 'Silver Hahnii' is a birds nest type with leaves with metallic pale silvery green leaves.

**S. Kirkii** of horticulture is probably *S. grandicuspis* from the Congo. It has coved leaves about one inch wide to 20 inches long of deep green, cross banded with light grayish green.

**S. singularis** has cylindrical gray brown or reddish leaves to 25 inches or more. It comes from tropical Africa.

**S. gracilis** has stoloniferous stems sprawling above the ground with clusters of narrow pointed leaves to 20 inches long. The leaves are cross banded light and dark green. It is native to eastern Africa.

**S. deserti** is called rhino-grass and grows wild in the Kalahari desert to the dry veld, Transvaal and Rhodesia. It forms dense masses of very stout cylindrical leaves 1 inch thick and 3 feet long with a very sharp tip. It is avoided by wild animals.



## PEST OF THE MONTH

A Monthly Feature by *Michael J. Green*

### Mites, They kill Aloes, don't they?

Well, at least one does, sort of. The dreaded Aloe mite, aka Aloe gall mite, Aloe wart mite and Aloe cancer mite, doesn't exactly "kill" the Aloe, but it does destroy the aesthetics. The technical name is *Aceria aloinis* or *Eriophyes aloinis*, two names for the same villain.

Eriophyid mites can be identified by the plant and damage seen. Some, like our "Aloe mite", are more parasitic. *Eriophyes aloinis* are part of a group of plant-feeding mites that inject a plant growth regulator into the plant tissues as they feed. This induces abnormal plant growths called galls. Stems, leaves and flowers may be affected. These tiny mites typically overwinter on their host plant. They begin feeding and initiate gall formation in spring as leaf or flower buds open. *Eriophyes aloinis* usually does not cause serious injury but the damage may/will be unsightly, depending on your sense of aesthetics.

It is fairly easy to control (but not destroy) Aloe mites. Infected areas should be cut out to eliminate adult mites and remove unattractive tissues. Burn, or (plastic) bag and dispose of

infested plant tissues in the trash. Removing and destroying the galls is needed to stop the spread of mites on the aloe and any neighboring aloes. Exposed mites are easily controlled, but most pesticides do not kill the mites living within the galls.

Spraying, or root drenching, aloes, will not get rid of the galls (deformity) once they have been formed. Apply insecticides in early spring, and again just after bud break for later blooming species. Dormant oil, carbaryl (Sevin), horticultural oils, and insecticidal soaps may be effective. Orthene, used according to the directions, has been successful for some hobbyists, but it does not contain any miticide. Based on experimentation, dimethoate (which does have a miticide in it) is used by at least one aloe specialist. Applying any chemicals to control *Eriophyes aloinis* may also kill beneficial insects. See <[www.gatescss.com](http://www.gatescss.com)> website for more complete information.

Photos by Mike Green



## ***It Works for Me*** Harvey Welton

### **SOIL**

When growing any plant there are several major factors that will have a significant effect on the end product. They are soil or growing media, water, fertilizer and growing environment (light and heat.)

These factors are all equally important to a successful grower. I am most often asked to recommend a soil mix or growing media so I will start there. Once again let me stress if what you are using is giving you the results that you want - DON'T CHANGE!

First a little background so that you can understand why and how I have arrived where I am now. I have seen cacti and succulents successfully grown in everything from the street sweepings of one of our Southern California cities and blown vineyard sand to very specific formulas that included very exact amounts of everything from sand and gravel to humus, fertilizer and micronutrients. I suspect that there are as many soil mixes in use today as there are individuals producing plants either as a commercial enterprise or as a hobbyist. My nursery has used several soil mixes with equal success and when I changed it was for a specific reason.

The first mix that we used was referred to as the UC mix. As you might suspect it was a formula that was provided by the University of California for growing cacti and succulents in a nursery environment. It contained, as near as I can remember, equal parts of washed plaster sand, pea gravel and peat moss.

At the time we were growing in wooden propagation flats that were nailed together and measured 18" square and 2" deep. There were several problems with this situation. First the wooden flats were used over many times. To eliminate the problem of disease contamination they had to be sterilized after each use before new soil and plants could be planted in them. Then the nails that held the flats together rusted from the constant dampness, required to keep the young plants growing. Of course eventually the flat, usually full of sticky plants, would fall apart. Not good! The last problem was weight. Each flat, filled with wet soil and depending on the size and number of plants, would weigh as much as 20 to 30 pounds. Thirty pounds may not be a problem for most men but in those days, 40 years ago, most of the small commercial growers were or had been hobbyists and

were either older folks or women. For them weight was a problem.

Styrofoam flats were invented about the time we moved to Riverside and began growing cacti. The change in flats necessitated a change in the soil mix. The UC mix was so heavy it would often cause the flats to break. So initially we substituted pumice for the pea gravel. That didn't reduce the weight enough so we cut the amount of sand in half and substituted vermiculite for the missing sand. Now the mix was 2 parts pumice, 2 parts peat moss, 1 part sand and 1 part vermiculite. That mix worked well even though we had to provide almost constant fertilizer which resulted in very soft or tender plants that had to be hardened off before we sold them.

A few years later the disposal of old car tires became a problem and it was solved by making them into the propagation flats that we now use. At my nursery my three daughters and wife did the majority of transplanting and wanted the soil mix still lighter. Again we began the substitution process.

The soil mix now became 2 parts commercial seed mix, 2 parts perlite and one part washed plaster sand. I used this basic soil mix for the last 25 years or so. Eventually I added a small amount of balanced slow release fertilizer and a systemic insecticide to control fungus gnats. Recently I began having trouble with an influx of weeds which I determined were coming into the nursery via the sand we were using. So to remedy this problem I changed to 2 parts commercial seed mix and one part pumice and that is what we are presently using. So far it seems to be working well. Only time will tell if we need to modify this formula.

by: Harvey Welton, Mexican Hat Cactus Nursery



**Why is it that:**  
*For every action, there is an equal & opposite government program.*

*Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.*

*There is always one more imbecile than you counted on.*

## **.OTHER TABLES**

Plant Sales, Discussion, and Refreshments Tables will be reopened for the January 2008 Meeting.

Bring your Show and Tell plants to discuss or to get identified. A good picture will also do!

If you can, bring some 'Goodies' to support our popular *Refreshment Table*.

And a special thank you to those who frequently bring the goodies we enjoy so much.

We will need to circulate a list so that you can sign up to be a Hostess/Host for one month this year. If you didn't take a turn last year, why not give it a try this year. You only get to do this every three or four years!

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### **DUES ARE DUE**

Yes, It Is That Time again. The dues remain at \$12, Twelve Bucks, a dollar a month. Our membership runs from January 1 to December 31.

To make it easier on me, and to pick up mistakes on our mailing list, I'll have some renewal slips at the Meeting. You'll need to fill one out in order to renew.

There will be a place for your e-mail address. The Board is asking you to consider receiving "The **Open Gates** Newsletter" by e-mail. You'll receive it earlier (maybe, even on time!), pictures will be in color and the Society will save \$1 per issue,

### **Sliced cactus can cure your hangover**

LONDON: Suffering from a hangover? Well, then just take a bite of sliced cactus.

A new study has revealed that eating the prickly plant before boozing prevents post-alcohol sickness and headaches.

Researchers at the Tulane University, New Orleans say that the cactus' atypical carbohydrates obstruct the gut absorbing too many sugars.

"Many of the health benefits of cactus are related to its water-retaining properties," The Sun quoted lead researcher Prof Tony Blake, as saying.

*Provided by Mike Green*

THE HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS  
INVITES CSSA MEMBERS AND AFFILIATE CLUBS TO A FREE

## **DESERT FORUM**

**SATURDAY - JANUARY 19, 2008**  
1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

#### **9:30 – 10:00 A.M. REGISTRATION**

Assembly and Registration at the Entrance Pavilion  
(For those bringing sack lunches please write your names onto the bags and they will be transported to the Teaching Greenhouse for later consumption)

#### **10:00 – 12:00 A.M. TOUR OF THE DESERT GARDEN**

Knowledgeable staff will be stationed throughout the Desert Garden and Desert Conservatory. Aloes will be flowering.

#### **12:00 – 1:30 P.M. REFRESHMENTS, SALE AND LUNCH**

Light snacks and beverages will be served in the Teaching Greenhouse  
Welcome by Jim Folsom  
Book signing by Gary Lyons  
Information related to the CSSA by Laurel Woodley  
Plant sale in Desert Nursery  
Sack lunch or visitors may go to the Huntington's Café (no reservations required)  
Tea Room – Reservations required several days prior (626) 683-8131

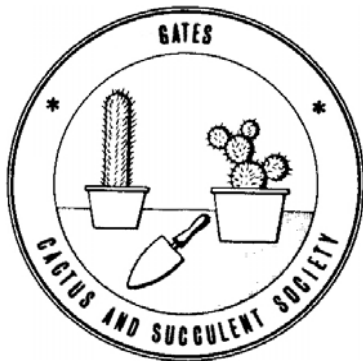
#### **1:30 – 2:00 P.M. TALK**

Location: Teaching Greenhouse  
Topic: "The Future of the Desert Garden"

#### **2:00 – 4:30 P.M. FREE TIME**

Visitors are free to tour the Gardens and Galleries on their own until closing time  
For further information call Rosalie Gorchoff @ (310) 822-1783





## MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Thinking back to when you first joined the Gates Cactus & Succulent Society "GCSS", or if you are a new member which of the following statements best describes your primary reason for joining GCSS?.

- I heard about and want to participate in the tour and party activities.
- To learn more about how to care for my cactus.
- To have access to unusual or hard to find specimens to add to my collection.
- I grow cactus and I want social activities with others who enjoy cactus.
- I have a serious interest in the identification and classification of cactus.
- To have a forum to share and compare my collection with other collectors.
- To learn more about cactus in habitat.
- For the opportunity to see the unusual and beautiful specimens that are brought to the meetings.
- To get help in finding the names of the cactus I grow.

NEW MEMBERS SKIP TO QUES.#3

2) If you have been a member for two or more years, please indicate your reasons for continuing as a member of GCSS.

(Please check off as many as are important to you)

- The tour and party activities.
- To learn more about how to care for my cactus.
- To have access to rare and unusual specimens to add to my collection.
- I grow cactus and I want social activities with others who enjoy cactus.
- I have a serious interest in the identification and classification of cactus.
- To have a forum to share and compare my collection with other collectors.
- To learn more about cactus in habitat.
- To see the unusual and beautiful specimens that are brought to meetings.
- To get help in finding the names of the cactus I grow.

3) Thinking about our regular GCSS meetings, please tell me which three of the following meeting activities you personally enjoy the most.

(Chose only three)

- Availability of plants to purchase
- Mini-show (The showing and judging of member's plants)
- The raffle of plants and other items
- Pot luck snack break.
- Slide shows of travel and cactus in habitat.
- Discussion table (The identification and discussion of member's plants)
- "How to" group forums which are held occasionally.
- Special programs i.e. dead cactus or madrigal choir

4) Please indicate any of the following activities which you don't particularly enjoy or that you think needs change or improvement?

(Please limit your selection to no more than three)

- Availability of plants to purchase
- Mini-show
- Pot luck snack break
- Slide shows
- Discussion table
- "How to" forums
- Special programs

5) Thinking about all of our club activities, please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how important to you are each of the following?

(Please write your importance number on the line)

Not Very Important = 1--- 2--- 3--- 4---5---6---7---8---9---10 = Very Important

- \_\_\_ Home tours
- \_\_\_ "How to" programs at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Special destination tours.
- \_\_\_ Slide shows of travel and cactus in habitat.
- \_\_\_ Annual Bar-B-Que party.
- \_\_\_ Discussion table at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Annual show and plant sale.
- \_\_\_ Raffle of plants and other items at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Annual Christmas party.
- \_\_\_ Availability of plants to purchase at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Pot luck snack break at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Mini-show at regular monthly meetings.
- \_\_\_ Aloe walk

6) Thinking about how we spend our time at the regular meetings, is there any one activity on which you think we should spend less time?

Less time \_\_\_\_\_

7) Is there any meeting activity on which you think we should spend more time?

More time \_\_\_\_\_

8) Thinking about scheduling special tours or activities in addition to our regular meetings, which days and times are most unacceptable to you? (i.e. Sunday Mornings, Friday nights, etc.)

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

9) Which of the following activities have you participated in?  
(Please limit your selection to no more than three)

- Regular monthly meetings
- Home tours
- Special destination tours
- Annual show and plant sale
- Annual Bar-B-Que party
- Annual Christmas party
- Mini-show
- Dead cactus ( in October)

10) Please give us any idea's you have for new activities or for "topics of interest" to be addressed at our regular meetings.

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Your ideas and comments are welcome:

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