



*San Gabriel Valley
Cactus & Succulent Society*

COMMUNIQUE

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc.

January 2010 - Volume 43, Number 1

**January Meeting:
Thursday,
January 14 at 7:30 pm**

Meetings are held on the
2nd Thursday of the month
at **7:30 pm** in the Palm Room,
Los Angeles County Arboretum,
Arcadia.

Mini-Show Plants:

CACTUS:

*Straight Spined
Mammillaria*

SUCCULENT:

Aloes from Madagascar

Study Group:

Study group will meet on Wednesday,
January 20th in the Palm Room,
Los Angeles County Arboretum at
7:30 pm. The topic will be:

Plant Identification

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President's Message

The first Board of Director's meeting of the new board will be prior to the Study Group on January 20. We'll meet at Coco's on Colorado Blvd. and Michillinda at 6:00, you can order dinner if you wish and we'll talk about 2010.

We're finishing our plans for the bus trip to San Diego on Saturday, Feb. 13. We'll visit the San Diego C&SS Winter Show and Sale and then go to the San Diego Botanic Gardens (formerly Quail Botanical Gardens) for a nice tour. The bus will leave the parking lot of the Arboretum at 8:00 AM and we should return by about 6:30 PM. Lunch is included. The price is \$20.00 and is restricted to Members and immediate family/significant others as the club is paying for the bus.

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This Month's Program

"The Three Key Ingredients for Growing Show Quality Plants" Rene and Patty Caro have been cactus and succulent plant collectors for about 15 years, and members of the SGVCSS the whole time. They have grown plants in diverse environments such as in Glendale, CA (on the north side of a hill); Lancaster, CA (where it is hot and dry in the summer, and very cold in the winter); Durango, CO (where it is ideal

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Study Group

Wednesday, January 20th • Plant Identification

The study group is an informal, hands-on learning experience that is fun for expert and novice alike. Come and learn from the experience of others. We are always happy to share our knowledge.

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Palm Room at the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

2009 Mini-Show Points Winners

Here are the Top Ten –

Cindy & Calvin Arakaki	326 Points
Rita Gerlach	190
John Matthews	147
Pat Swain	134
Rene Caro	131
Manny Rivera	130
Anne Keegan	113
Barbara Hall	107
Barbara Nolan	105
Karen Ostler	98

Refreshment Signup

These club members have signed up to provide refreshments at our January meeting.

- William Molina**
- Anne Keegan**
- Phil Skonieczki**

The first three club members who sign up and bring refreshments each month will receive a **FREE** plant as thanks.

Be sure to take a look at the Club’s website at www.sgvcss.com. Thanks to Gunnar Eisel for managing our website. If you wish to receive your **COMMUNIQUE** on-line please notify the editor at yvonne@pricklypalace.com.

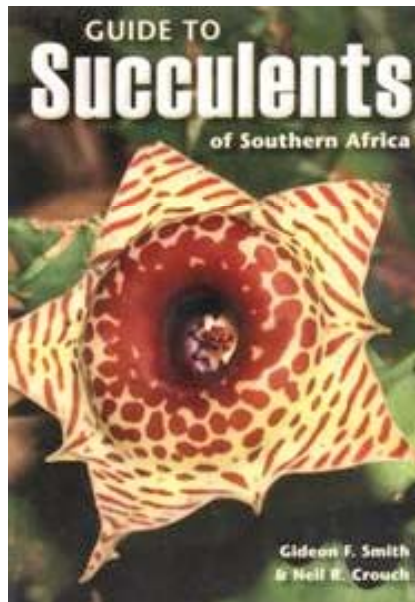
Book Review

Guide to Succulents of South Africa

Reviewed by: Chuck Everson

Dr. Gideon F. Smith & Mr. Neil R. Crouch
Struik Books, South Africa. 1st Ed. 2009. English
136 pages, est. retail price \$15.00

Dr. Smith is the author or co-author of more than a dozen books on South African succulent and/or succulent-related plants.



This book features over 240 of the region’s most interesting and commonly encountered succulents. The reader will find that the book is accessible, user-friendly, and an excellent guide for key identification features. 230 small distribution maps show the occurrence of each species in southern Africa.

You will also find 458 very nice color photos, 6 color drawings, and 1 large color map. The book measures 6 inches x 8-1/4 inches, softbound, with a very heavy, glossy color cover. My only complaint is that it did not also come in hardbound.

2009 Holiday Plant



Stenocactus multicostatus

See the write-up on page 6 for cultivation information.

President's Message

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Woody is finalizing the 2010 Speakers schedule. It looks really great so far. Don't miss January's "The Three Key Ingredients for Growing Show Quality Plants". Patty Caro with help from Vince Basta, will give us the scoop on how to do it.

Don't miss the Desert Forum at the Huntington on Saturday, Jan 16. 9:30 AM. Wear your badge for free admittance. Details in the flyer in this newsletter.

Also see the notice on the Aloe Walk at the Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center. Saturday, Jan 30, 9:30 AM, no charge.

Thanks again to Tommy Dodson and his great committee for a terrific Holiday Party. We counted just about 140 people in attendance. What a great evening.

Oh, and if I didn't see you in person - **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Buck Hemenway

2009 Holiday Party and Auction



Chief Elf Tommy Dodson and his helpers put on a great party.

Kudos from Dick Tatman: Congratulations on the very BEST Christmas party the Club has had since I've been a member (10 years)!



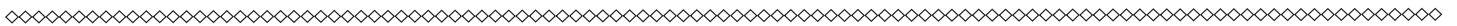
Hannah, we loved your decorative touch.



We had an outstanding selection of auction plants. Thank you to our acutioneers Michael Buckner and Buck Hamenway.



Very enjoyable holiday music provided by Gene Oster and Ken Shaw.



SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2010

Buck Hemenway, President
Horace Birgh, Vice President
Ana Wisnev, Treasurer
Anne Keegan, Secretary
Phil Skonieczki, Board Member
Karen Ostler, Board Member

Ralph Massey, Board Member
Bill Gerlach, Board Member
Patty Caro, Board Member
Judi Romine, Board Member
Manny Rivera, Winter Show Chair
Tom Glavich, Intercity Show Chair

Jim Hanna, CSSA Affiliate Representative
and Plant Sales Chair
Wood Minnich, Program Chair
Bill Gerlach, Membership Chair
Liz Alba, Library Chair
Yvonne Hemenway, Newsletter Editor

Plants Of The Month

Enter your specimen plants in our monthly minishow. It will help you prepare for the real shows and give you an additional opportunity to show others your pride and joy. If you don't have any of these species of plants you can learn about them at the meeting.

CACTUS OF THE MONTH —

Straight Spined Mammillaria

Mammillaria is one of the larger genera in the Cactus family, and one of the most variable, with some members remaining as solitary slowly increasing hemispheres, some becoming single large columns for their entire lives, some remaining as fingernail size solitary globulars, some clumped and heavily spined with hooks. Some of the most attractive are the straight spined clusters. Some of the most challenging are the straight spined columns.

Although most *Mammillaria* are native to Mexico, some species in the genus can be found from Columbia to Kansas and California. With this wide distribution, the cultivation requirements obviously vary considerably. The species from the tropics and warmer areas are rarely tolerant of cold and damp. Those from the drier desert regions are also intolerant of continued damp, but can take considerable cold. With these restrictions aside, most *Mammillaria* are easy to grow.

The secrets to good growth are a continued supply of fertilizer during the growing season, strong light, and maintenance of a clean and insect free growing environment. The appearance of white mealy bug egg cases (*Mammillaria's* worst enemy) on the tips of the spines or the appearance of ants means that mealy bugs are sucking the sap and life of the plant. Immediate treatment is required, with a thorough washing, and spraying with an insecticide. If there is no growth in late spring and most of the summer, something is wrong underground. Take the plant out of the pot, inspect the roots for root mealybugs, and clean and repot in a fresh potting mix.

Propagation of *Mammillaria* clusters is easy. Cuttings can be taken at any time during the growing season (April to early November), left to dry for a few days and replanted in a clean potting mix. Rooting is

rapid, with short white roots generally appearing after a couple of weeks. *Mammillaria* is one of the easiest genera to grow from seed. The seeds are simply placed on top of a damp potting mix, covered with a light coating of gravel, placed in a plastic bag in bright



Mammillaria spacelata ssp. viperina

light, but out of direct sun and allowed to germinate. Germination usually occurs in a week or 10 days. The seedlings can stay in the plastic bag for several weeks until they get large enough to survive unprotected, and should then be removed to a still shaded, but brighter and drier environment. Most will survive, and grow quickly. Show quality plants can sometimes be grown in just 2 or 3 years, and entries can be ready for seedling classes in as little as 6 months. Propagation of the single headed species is only through seed.

Classic Straight Spined Mammillaria

Mammillaria chionocephala is a great single headed species, growing slowly from seed and eventually becoming a columnar species displaying bands of dark green tubercles and white wool. It is easily grown and tolerant. It needs to be turned periodically to keep it growing straight.

Mammillaria crucigera produces clumps by splitting dichotomously (each head splitting into two). The body ranges from green to almost brown to almost purple. This species is a slow grower.

Mammillaria decipiens subsp. campotricha from Queretaro, long known as the birds nest, has a dark green body and long twisting spines that can vary from white to yellow (most common) to red, depending on the clone.



*Mammillaria
baumanii*

Mammillaria elongata, one of the first cacti that everyone grows, is easy and extraordinarily tolerant of abuse. It is oddly very popular and unfairly neglected, with advanced growers ignoring this easy grower. It's not so easy to grow a large defect free specimen plant. There are a variety of forms and colors, many of which make spectacular plants.

Mammillaria geminispina is a variable species with some varieties having short white spines, while others have long flexible centrals. The plant shown above has one head that has crested.

Mammillaria luethyi from Coahuila, and discovered in 1996 is now available in cultivation. A breathtaking miniature, it has very short white spines on a dark green body.

Mammillaria lloydii is a great single headed species, staying small with white wool making a ring through the dense tubercles.

Mammillaria plumosa is a relatively quick grower, forming mounds of white heads. The heads are covered with white feathery spines, which must be kept dry if the color is to be maintained.

Tom Glavich December 2009



*Mammillaria
longimamma*

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH —

Aloes from Madagascar

The genus Aloe has a very large distribution, ranging from South Africa through tropical Africa to the Mediterranean, and stretching across the Arabian Peninsula into India. There are two major centers of biological diversity, Southern Africa and Madagascar.

Some of the Madagascan species have cryptic or ornate leaf patterns that made early impressions on collectors and hybridizers. The small size of some species was also attractive to those who wanted to produce pot plants for table top or garden decoration.

Madagascan Aloe cultivation is generally easy. The plants are more cold-sensitive than the South African species, to be expected given their habitat is more tropical. They are also more sensitive to out of season watering, doing better with some protection from cold and wet conditions. Most species will do fine in Southern California, with just protection from continued winter wet. Our normal winter night temperatures result in little more than leaf tip browning.

All Aloes are subject to Aloe mite. This is normally discovered when the flower stalk appears distorted and almost crested. This flower stalk should be immediately removed, and the plant either discarded (the preferred method) or immediately treated with a strong miticide. Hummingbirds and insects will spread this mite through an entire Aloe collection. The smaller Aloes are occasionally home to mealy bugs, easily seen as white fuzz near the center of the plant. These are easily cured with any insecticide or repeated washing and soaking.



Aloe pseudoparvula

The long blooming racemes of brightly colored Aloe flowers are attractive to sunbirds in Africa and hummingbirds in the West. When in bloom, hummingbirds will visit

every few minutes, going from plant to plant and yard to yard, fertilizing hundreds of flowers as they make

their rounds. Aloes readily hybridize not only with other Aloes, but also with Haworthia and Gasteria.

Pictures of four Madagascan aloes accompany this article. The first is *Aloe pseudoparvula*. This species and the very similar *Aloe parvula* are often used in hybridization. The wonderful surface texture often makes it through the genetic process and appears in second and third generation hybrids. The second is *Aloe* 'Winter Sky', a hybrid between a Madagascan and African aloe. The third one is *Aloe divaricata*, a representative of the shrubby Aloes. These make wonderful landscape plants with sparse inflorescences with a dark red flower. It is generally out of season with most of the African Aloes, and makes a welcome addition to garden color.



Aloe divaricata

Recent work by Kelly Griffin of Escondido and Karen Zimmerman of the Huntington, as well as several others have given us a wealth of named and unnamed hybrids. The next ISI offering of the Huntington should offer some spectacular new hybrids. Look for it in the March-April issue of the CSSA Journal or on the Huntington web site. *Aloe* 'Medium Well Done' is a perfect example of the work of



Aloe "Winter Sky"



Aloe "Medium Well Done"

Kelly Griffin. Look for even more wonders in the near future. The golden age of Aloe hybridization is just beginning.

Tom Glavich December 2009

This Month's Program

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in the spring, summer and fall, but gets minus 15 degrees in the winter); and presently, Littlerock, CA near the Mojave Desert.

Their passion is in growing immature plants into show-quality specimens. Their plants have won blue ribbons, rosette ribbons, best in category plaques and best in show trophies in many of the shows they have participated in over the years.

We have boiled down all the things we do to grow excellent plants to these 3 as being the most important ones. Although we do probably 25 different things to get happy, well grown plants, these 3 ingredients are the key ones - without which good growth is not likely

Holiday Plant Write-up

Stenocactus multcostatus will tolerate temperatures down below 50 °F. if the roots are kept dry. Its growing season is late spring through summer and it will tolerate lots of water during this time.

Stenocactus multcostatus stores water in the body of the plant, leaving the root system small enough to fit into a proportionally sized pot. This cactus flowers easily, but results will depend on a variety of growing conditions, particularly the amount and intensity of light.

Good locations: Tolerates low light levels. *Stenocactus multcostatus* will do well as a houseplant in locations with short periods of direct sun and some indirect or filtered light. This species will tolerate very cool days and nights, with night temperatures above 28 °F. It is possible for this species to survive freezing temperatures, but cold exposure will cause skin damage. When grown outdoors *Stenocactus multcostatus* needs a location with filtered light.

Size: Grows as a single head to about four inches in diameter.

Ancestry: Mexico: Coahuila. Saltillo, Chihuahua, Duran



Thank you to Tom Glavich for putting together the Plant of the Month article. If you would like to participate by submitting a plant of the month write up for the **Communique**, please contact Tom Glavich at tglavich@sbcglobal.net.



**** Note ** Membership Dues are Due!** Your Club membership renewal can be paid at the next meeting or mailed direct to Bill Gerlach, 719 S. Albertson, Covina, CA 91723. \$15 regular membership or \$20 if you request the Communique by mail. Checks to **SGVCSS**.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 17, 9:30 am to 4:40 pm — DESERT FORUM at the Huntington Botanical Gardens. CSSA members and affiliate clubs are invited to a free day at the Desert Garden including a tour with knowledgeable staff, plant sale, and forum led by Director of the Gardens, Jim Folsom. Wear your name badge!

January 21, 7:30 pm — Study Group, PLANT IDENTIFICATION. Palm Room of the LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia.

January 30, 9:30 am - 11:00 am — 10th Annual ALOE WALK at the Jurupa Mountain Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hill Drive, Glen Avon, CA. Phone 951-685-5818 for directions. The 6 acre succulent gardens at the Center are the result of planting done in the late 1960's and early 1970's. We will tour among the many specimens of blooming aloes and discuss their wide ranging natural habitats and how they survive in our Inland Empire climate. The Granite Hill Nursery will be open. This event is Free.

February 13, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm — San Diego Winter Show and Sale, Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.

February 13, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm — San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society BUS TOUR to the San Diego County Botanic Garden (formerly Quail Botanic Garden) and San Diego CSS Show and Sale. Bus will leave the LA Arboretum at 8:00 and return about 6:00 pm. Cost of the bus trip is \$20.00 which includes lunch. Please see Bill Gerlach to sign up or call 626-332-8008.

2010 Plant-of-the-Month and Study Group Topics

	Cacti of the Month	Succulent of the Month	Study Group
Jan.	Straight Spined Mammillaria	Aloes from Madagascar	Plant Identification
Feb.	Rebutia	Crassulacaea	Agave
Mar.	Cacti from Oaxaca	Medusoid Euphorbia	Pelargonium
Apr.	Melocactus	Dudleya	Spring Seed Workshop
May	Ferocactus	Miniatures	Vegetative Propagation Workshop
June	Epiphyte	Lithops	Lithops
July	Thelocactus, Stenocactus	Pachypodiums from Madagascar	Staging
Aug.	Favorite Cactus	Favorite Succulent	Copiapoa
Sept.	Astrophytum	Bursera, Commiphora	Mammillaria
Oct.	Ariocarpus	Sansevieria	Tips and Tricks for Successful Growing
Nov.	Opuntia	Asclepiad	Winter Seed Workshop

