



# ***San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society COMMUNIQUE***

An Affiliate of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America  
September 2017—Volume 50, Number 09

**The next meeting  
of the San Gabriel  
Valley Cactus and  
Succulent Society  
will be Thursday,  
September 14th  
at 7:30 pm  
in Ayres Hall at the  
LA County Arboretum  
in Arcadia.**

**Cactus and Succulent  
Workshop  
Wednesday, September 20th.  
Topic: Astrophytum**  
The C&S Workshop will meet on  
in the Palm Room  
at the Los Angeles Arboretum  
on Wednesday, at 7:30 pm

**Mini –Show Plants  
for September  
Cacti: Astrophytum  
  
Succulents: Bursera  
and Commiphora**

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**This Month's Presentation:**  
**Nels Christianson**  
**“Flora in Eastern and Southern Brazil”**

This program features some of the diversity of flora in eastern and southern Brazil, including cacti from Minas Gerais. It includes photos from the Inhotim Botanical Garden with its collection of bromeliads and palms, Constantino Gastaldi's collection of Dyckias in Santa Catarina state, and scenes from the Canyonlands of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil's southernmost state).

Nels Christianson is a native of Merced, California. He was educated at UC Santa Barbara, Georgetown University, UCLA, and the Federal University of Minas Gerais (where he studied Brazilian literature through a Rotary Foundation scholarship). He retired in 2012 after a 37-year career in hospital administration and international relations at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Nels is a board member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, a published poet, and a board member of California Poets in the Schools (an organization which brings poetry composition workshops to 25,000 K-12 students statewide). Nels has been a member of the CSSA and of the Sunset Succulent Society in Marina del Rey since 1984. He has participated in CSSA trips to Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Oaxaca, northeastern Mexico and the Canary Islands. He is a potter and sells planter pots at his club meetings. Nels is the president of the Westchester Begonia Society, a member of the Culver City Gesneriad Society, a member of Bromeliad Society international, a member of La Ballona Valley Bromeliad Society, and the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad Society. He is a weekly volunteer at the Desert Collections at the Huntington Botanical Gardens.

Photo of Nels Christianson on page 3



## San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

**Cactus of the Month September 2017 - *Astrophytum*****Article by Tom Glavich**

***Astrophytum*** are often one of the first cacti that collectors buy. They are inexpensive, available in discount stores, groceries, and home centers. How can anyone resist the special Bishop's Cap? More than a few show plants started out this way, but most are soon dead. Keeping seedlings alive for the first year or so is much more difficult than maintaining a mature plant. Growing a perfect 10 or 20-year-old specimen plant is a challenge few growers can master. Fortunately, the genus offers rewards and surprises at every level between novice and master making it one of the most popular genera of cacti.

***Astrophytum*** are native to Southern Texas and Northern to Central Mexico. They grow in very arid regions in porous mineral soils. One of the cultivation difficulties with ***Astrophytum*** is their tendency to split open from sudden increases in soil moisture level. To avoid this, keep them in a soil that is very quick to drain and which has little organic matter. A mixture of pumice and gravel with only a little potting soil is best for these plants. The roots are designed to pump up as much moisture as possible in as short a time as possible from infrequent rains. In a slow draining potting mix they will do this very effectively and the body of the plant will swell, but the skin will not. Eventually the body pressure gets too great and the skin cracks.

There are currently six recognized species. There are also varieties of the species, cultivars, and hybrids, all worth growing.

Growers in Japan and more recently in Thailand and China have developed some spectacular clones, cultivars and hybrids. The Japanese cultivars of *A. asterias* are sold under the name of *A. Super Kabuto* and *A. Miracle Kabuto*. Some of these special clones with intricate patterns can sell for more than \$100. After a few years of propagation, the price drops to levels that most can afford. Look for some of these special clones at upcoming shows and sales.

### Astrophytums:

*Astrophytum asterias* is the smallest of the species. It is the hardest to grow well, prone to splitting if over-watered. It is the parent plant for many of the best hybrids. It is native to the Chihuahuan Desert of Northern Mexico. It has prominent spineless areoles,

*Astrophytum capricorne* is generally the longest spined species, with spines that are generally twisted and curved. Although young plants are globular, they soon become ovoid, and eventually columnar. It is widespread in the Chihuahuan Desert.

*Astrophytum caput-medusae* is the most recently discovered species and looks very different from the others. However, the flower morphology and DNA have proven its close relationship.

*Astrophytum coahuilense* looks very much like the more common *Astrophytum myriostigma*, but it is slower growing and generally a larger diameter.

*Astrophytum myriostigma* is the well known 'Bishops Cap.' Although usually five sided, three, four, six, seven and eight sided clones are also cultivated. Spiral forms are also well known as are some very large clones. *A. myriostigma v. columnare* can grow to several feet.

*Astrophytum ornatum* from Hidalgo can grow to 12 inches in diameter and three feet in height. The spines are straight, yellow brown, and the woolly areoles tend to come in patches.

*Astrophytum myriostigma*  
*tulense*

photo by Tom Glavich

This naturally occurring  
columnar variety can grow up  
to 90 cm tall (about 3 ft.)





*Astrophytum myrostigma*  
variegata Photo by Flavio Agrosi  
from llifle.com



*Astrophytum ornatum mirbelii*  
uploaded by Valentino Vallicelli  
from llifle.com



*Astrophytum myriostigma nudum*  
from Wikipedia



*Astrophytum capricorne var senile*  
from www cactus-art.biz

## San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society

### Succulents of the Month September 2017 - *Bursera* and *Commiphora*

#### Article by Tom Glavich

This month's succulents are a study in parallel evolution of two genera of pachycaul (swollen trunk) shrubs. Both **Bursera** and **Commiphora** are members of the Burseraceae. **Bursera** are confined to the New World, mostly from Southern California through Guatemala and into the islands of the Caribbean. **Commiphora** are confined to the Old World, mostly South and East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Madagascar.

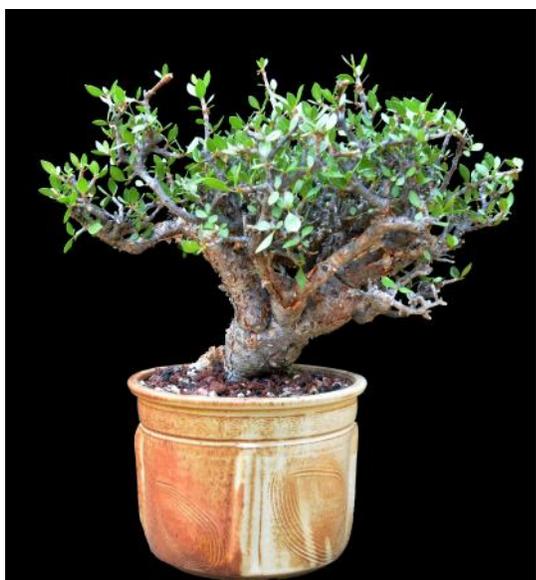
All three genera have similar cultivation requirements. They all do best when watered in the summer in Southern California. They will all tolerate being left unprotected outdoors during the winter rains, although some of the *Commiphora* are sensitive to freezing temperatures, and need protection when hard freezes occur. Any standard succulent mix will do as a potting medium. Growth is much more rapid when they are fed and given free root room. If grown in an open mix they can take an amazing amount of water in the summer, and will reward the grower with substantial growth and trunk thickening. These are trees. They need food! All of the plants do well when treated as bonsai, and pruned to expose the geometry and structure of the trunk and bark. Planting in the ground along with proper irrigation will greatly accelerate the growth rate. They can be left in the ground for several years, and will tolerate lower temperatures in the ground than they will in pots.

*Bursera* is a wide spread genus with a range that extends from California into South America. Many of the species are beautiful trees with red or brown peeling bark rarely seen in cultivation. Some of the tree-like species are very vigorous growers, going from a foot to 4 feet or more in a just two years in a three-gallon pot. They should be pruned to shape rather than left to grow into thin whips. Most *Bursera* are aromatic with wonderful woody to turpentine-like fragrance from their leaves and bark. Nearly all of the species are worth growing and can be made into show specimens by suitable pruning. Many of the larger species require hard pruning every year to avoid having them turn into trees.

Species frequently seen are *Bursera fagaroides*, *Bursera microphylla* (with very small leaves), *Bursera multijuglans* (with red peeling bark), and *Bursera simplicifolia*. There are many other species from Central and Southern Mexico, and Central America that should be grown and shown.

***Commiphora*** are the African equivalent of *Bursera*. *Commiphora* is also a widespread genus stretching from South Africa through tropical Africa and continuing into Madagascar. Many of the species have peeling bark although the color tends to run more towards the yellow and brown rather than red.

Vigorous growth is also found in well fed and watered plants. *Commiphora* are aromatic, with fragrances that manage to be both similar to and different from *Bursera*. *Commiphora pyracanthoides* is similar to some of the tall growing *Bursera*, and is easily grown from seed. *Commiphora capensis* and *cervifolia* are both occasionally available. Unnamed (or unidentified) species of *Commiphora* from Sudan, Madagascar, Kenya, and Tropical Africa are sometimes available. Named species are beginning to appear on seed lists and nursery catalogs. The genus is understudied, and there are many species unknown or unidentified. Almost all *Commiphora* first appear as unremarkable seedlings in relatively small pots. If these are grown on, and grown in the ground for a few years, very much as Bonsai growers do, amazing trees and shrubs appear. These are all worth the effort of a little digging and a lot of pruning.



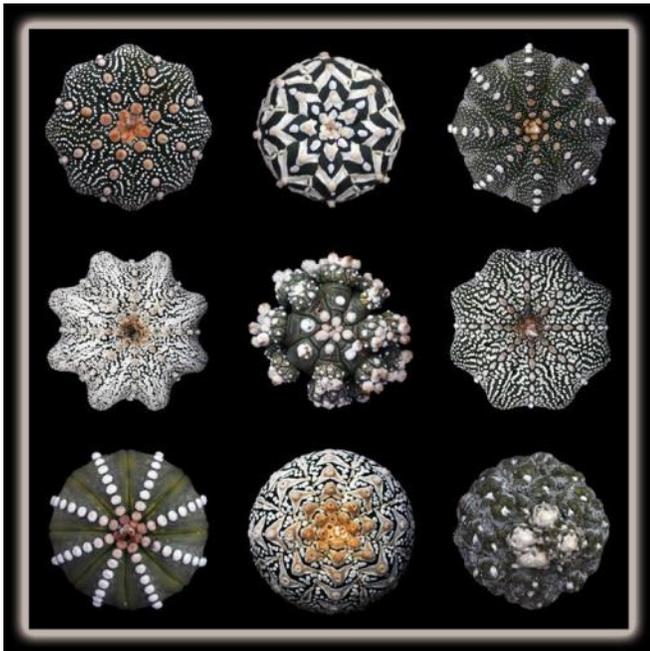
*Bursera schlechtendalii*  
Photo by Tom Glavich



*Commiphora guillaminii*  
Photo by Tom Glavich

## Cactus and Succulent Workshop

Workshops are held on the third Wednesday of the month. The workshop is an informal, hands-on learning experience that is fun for the expert and novice alike. Come and learn from the experience of others. We are happy to share our knowledge.



An assortment of Astrophytum  
Photo from Pinterest.com

## SGVC&SS LEADERSHIP TEAM - 2017

Tom Vermilion, President  
 Gunnar Eisel, Past President  
 Vince Basta, Vice President  
 Louise Guerin, Secretary  
 Margie Wilson, Treasurer  
 Rebecca Mallonee, Director  
 Mary Brumbaugh, Director  
 Jean Mullens, Director  
 Gunnar Eisel, Director  
 Sharon Sedillo, Director  
 Kal Kaminer, Director  
 Manny Rivera, Winter Show Chair  
 John Matthews, Winter Sales Chair  
 Tom Glavich, Inter-City Show Chair  
 Jim Hanna, CSSA Affiliate Rep  
 Gunnar Eisel, Website Chair  
 Woody Minnich, Program Chair  
 Mary Brumbaugh, Membership Chair  
 Cindy Arakaki, Librarian  
 Richard Roosman, Newsletter Editor

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**\*\*Note \*\*** Join the San Gabriel Valley  
 Cactus and Succulent Society.  
 Membership Dues are \$20 per year  
 or \$30 if you request the newsletter  
 (the Communique) by mail.  
 Your 2017 Club member dues  
 can be paid at the next meeting  
 or mailed direct to Mary Brumbaugh,  
 2123 Pinehurst St.,  
 Glendora, CA 91741.  
 Make checks to SGVCSS.

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### September Refreshments

The first three club members who sign up and then bring refreshments for the meeting will receive a **free** plant.

Bringing Snacks:

Una Yeh

Lydia Gartt???

Fred Parrales

### 2017 Cactus and Succulent Workshops

Jan	Othonna and Senecio
Feb	Caudiciforms and Medusoid
Mar	Crests and Monstrose
Apr	Spring Seed Workshop
May	Vegetative Propagation
Jun	Staging Workshop
July	Echinopsis
Aug	Member Photo Tour
Sep	Astrophytum
Oct	Mesembryanthemum
Nov	Winter Seed Workshop
Dec	None

### Plant of the Month: Cacti

Jan	Mammillaria clusters
Feb	Copiapoa and Eriosyce
Mar	Crests
Apr	Cephaliated Cacti
May	Miniatures
June	Echinopsis
July	Monotypic Cacti
Aug	Favorite cactus
Sept	Astrophytum
Oct	Columnar Cacti
Nov	Variegated Cacti

### Plant of the Month: Succulent

Jan	Agave
Feb	Tylecodon and Cotyledon
Mar	Crests and Monstrose
Apr	Haworthia
May	Pachypodium
June	Miniatures
July	Adenium
Aug	Favorite succulent
Sept	Bursera and Commiphora
Oct	Mesembryanthemum
Nov	Variegated Succulents

## **Plant of the Month Mini Show Results for July 2017**

### **Open Cactus**

- 1st — Cindy Arakaki — *Rebutia heliosa*
- 2nd — Cindy Arakaki — *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus*
- 3rd — Cindy Arakaki — *Strombocactus disciformis*

### **Open Succulent**

- 1st — Cindy Arakaki — *Pseudolithos migiurtinus*
- 2nd — Cindy Arakaki — *Monadenium ritchiei*
- 3rd — Cindy Arakaki — *Adromischus marianae* “Little Shepherd”

### **Intermediate Cactus**

- 1st — Louise Stack — *Astrophytum ornatum*

### **Intermediate Succulent**

- 1st — Louise Stack — *Aloe hemmingii harlanii*

### **Novice cactus**

- 1st — Shaun Adams — *Mammillaria elongate crest*
- 2nd — Fred Parrales — *Cereus* sp.

### **Novice succulent**

- 1st — Shaun Adams — *Ledebouria socialis* vareigated
- 2nd — Irene Chew — *Haworthia chloracantha* c. *denticulifera*
- 2nd — Margie Wilson — *Haworthia cuspidata*

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**September 2 – Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium.**

All day Saturday at the Huntington. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino.

**September 9 – Donna Baker's Succulent sale**

Saturday 10 am to 2 pm at Bill Baker's California Garden Center,  
18552 Erwin St, Tarzana. Info: Donna Baker 818-344-4856

**September 16 – Fall Cactus and Succulent Sale**

Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. The Sepulveda Garden Center,  
16633 West Magnolia Blvd., Encino. Information:www.lacactus.com

**September 17– Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction.**

Sunday from noon to 5 pm. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road,  
Long Beach,. Information 562-631-5876

**October 7 – Conejo Cactus and Succulent Sale** Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm.

Elks Lodge, 158 N. Conejo School Road Thousand Oaks, CA,  
91362 Information:805-501-0761

**October 14 & 15 Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale**

Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday from 11 am to to 3 pm. St. Paul's  
Church, 2216 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93304 Free admission & parking,  
Information 661-831-8488

**October 28 & 29 Palomar Show and Sale**

Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm.  
San Diego Botanic Gardens, 230 Quail Gardens Road, Encinitas  
Information: hciservices@gmail.com or call 858-382-1797

**November 4 & 5 San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Winter Show and Sale**

Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 4 pm both days show and sale  
Los Angeles County Arboretum, 310 North Baldwin, Arcadia, CA .  
Information: Manny Rivera 626-780-6957  
or John Matthews 661-714-1052

**January 7, 2018 San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Annual Banquet** at the Arboreum.

List compiled by Jim and Roberta Hanna  
modified by Richard Roosman



Inter-City Trophy Winners August 2017

SGVCSS Annual Picnic



Manny with his  
Opuntia tiara!



We have winners!  
Rico and Marlo Leon



**COMMUNIQUE**

Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley  
Cactus and Succulent Society  
c/o Richard Roosman  
P.O. Box 5222  
Huntington Park, CA 90255

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

If you have a cactus or succulent related event that you would like to have announced in the **COMMUNIQUE**, forward the information to the address below. Please verify the event date. Articles, Notices and Corrections can be sent via email to: [richardinwalnutpark@msn.com](mailto:richardinwalnutpark@msn.com) or via mail to:

San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter Editor, c/o Richard Roosman,  
P.O. Box 5222, Huntington Park, CA 90255. Material must be received by the 20th of the month to be considered for publication in the next issue of the **COMMUNIQUE**.