



SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

# COMMUNIQUE

## UPCOMING EVENTS

\* **March Club Meeting**

**March 12:**

Ayres Hall of the LA Arboretum: 7:30 PM.  
Meet and Greet as early as 6:00 PM

\* **C&S Workshop**

**March 18:**

Palm Classroom of the Arboretum. 7:30 PM

**Topic: Seed Workshop**

### ABOUT SGVCSS

Chartered in 1967,  
San Gabriel Valley

Cactus & Succulent Society's objectives are to promote knowledge, study, and interest in cacti and other succulent plants through educational programs, public exhibits, & the sharing of these interests to the general public.

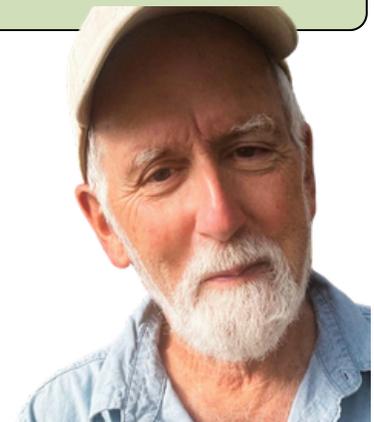
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### Plants of the Month:

*Coryphantha, Escobaria*

*Medusoid Euphorbia*



Speaker: Steven Hammer  
*Mesembs From Z to A*

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## President's Message

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Wow! That's the best way to describe our hugely successful 31st Annual Winter Show and Sale. Members braved the rain on Thursday and brought in their individual plants, arrangements, and displays for a combined total of six hundred and thirty-five entries. What really made a difference was the Winter Show Committee's decision to move the sale area inside which helped to create a sense of community and an environment that encouraged people to linger longer in the show and sale areas. And those who attended the show dinner and auction on Friday night had some great food and great prices on auction plants.

A big thanks goes out to all the Winter Show Committee members, volunteers, and members in attendance. A special shout out goes to Show Chair, Manny Rivera, and Sales Co-chairs, James Lemos and Tom Glavich.

No major events are planned for March, but our general meeting features special guest speaker, Steven Hammer, giving a talk on "Mesembs from Z to A". And a week later don't miss the workshop on "Medusoid Euphorbia".

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the general meeting on March 12.

Warm regards,  
Nick Renteria



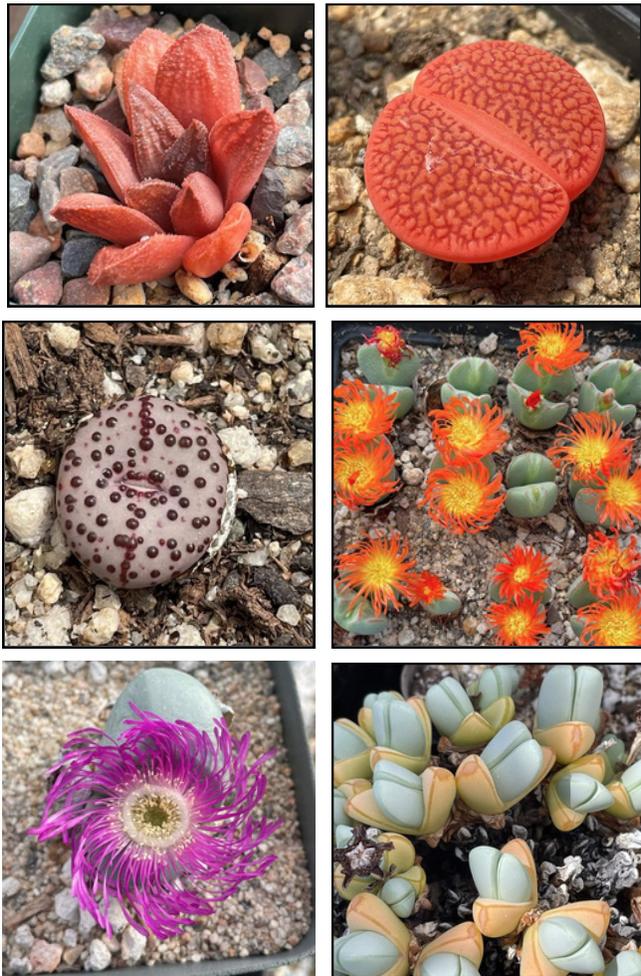
**SPEAKER OF THE MONTH: STEVEN HAMMER**



Steven Hammer has been watering succulents since 1961 and snapdragons and peas long before that. In 1957 his Indiana-born Grandmother Ray, who feared for his ruralian genes, came out to pagan Santa Monica to show him how to sow seeds, can green beans, and make Boston brown bread. She succeeded pro parte and he became a lifelong baker, sower, and grower. He is probably best known for his work with the hopelessly complex and beautiful genus *Conophytum* but has also investigated and resurrected smaller mesemb complexes like *Marlothistella* and *Deilanthé*. He lives and works in Vista at his *Sphaeroid Institute*, managed, if not entirely contained, by its Game Warden, Oakes Austin.

**Mesembs From Z to A**  
by Steven Hammer

“We have 26 letters in English but ca. 126 genera in Latin so I can only attempt a symbolic presentation of the more arcane obscurities, many of which have such interesting and bizarre adaptations. All of them bear the typical mesemb pinwheel flowers, doubled or simplified, and tough-walled seed pods.”



## CACTI OF THE MONTH: Coryphantha and Escobaria

*Coryphantha* and *Escobaria* are two closely related genera. They are also closely related to *Mammillaria*, and almost all species have been described at one time or another as members of all three genera.

Recent research has moved all *Escobaria* into *Pelecyphora*, a once-monotypic genus. However, most plants are still labeled as *Escobaria*, and this is also how they are typically listed in shows.

Both *Coryphantha* and *Escobaria* have furrowed tubercles, while *Mammillaria* do not. The furrow is a groove that runs from the tip to the base of the tubercle. It is sometimes obvious and sometimes so faint that it is difficult to see. Most *Coryphantha* have extra-floral nectaries, glands that produce nectar located in the epidermis of the plant, while *Escobaria* do not. There are also floral differences. *Escobaria* flowers tend to have fringed petals, while *Coryphantha* flowers have simple petals. Both genera flower from the apex of the plant rather than from a ring of tubercles further down the stem.

Both genera include some spectacular species, yet both are neglected by many collectors. They are relatively easy to grow and are temporarily out of fashion, although both have recently become more popular.

*Coryphantha* is a medium-sized genus of mostly globular plants from Mexico and the southwestern United States. Its range overlaps with *Thelocactus*, stretching through Texas into Oklahoma in the north and continuing into Arizona and California as far as San Bernardino. In the south, the genus extends to Oaxaca. The center of its range lies in the central Mexican states of San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, and Nuevo León. There are about 50 to 80 species, depending on the reference consulted and the accepted circumscription of the genus. They are grown for their beautiful spination and large, colorful flowers

*Escobaria* includes about 23 species, some of which are highly variable. It ranges from central Mexico to southern Canada, with two species accounting for most of this wide distribution.

Cultivation of both genera is similar to that of *Mammillaria*. They begin growing slightly later in the year than *Mammillaria* and remain in active growth later into the summer. Excessive watering before active growth begins can lead to rot and possible loss of the plant. Overall, cultivation is not difficult and is well within the capability of most growers. Since many species come from the southwestern United States and higher elevations in Mexico, they are tolerant of cold when dry and should pose no significant environmental problems in Southern California.

## CACTI OF THE MONTH: Coryphantha, Escobaria

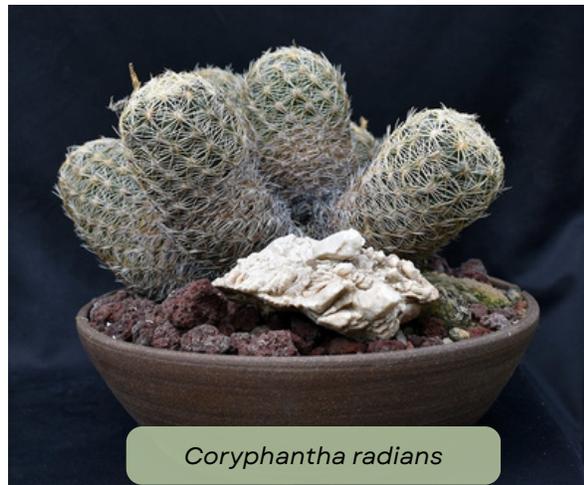
### Particularly Interesting Species:

*Coryphantha elephantidens* is another of the woollier species, this time with red to reddish-brown spines. It has large tubercles, and offsets at the base. A large multiheaded specimen is a hard plant to beat.

*Coryphantha radians* starts as a single head but with age sets multiple heads. It is an impressive show plant. A mature, multi-headed specimen in full bloom makes a bold show plant, especially when grown hard and tight to maintain good form.

*Coryphantha nickelsiae* is a mounding species that will fill a large pot in a surprisingly short time. It is easily grown and readily available.

It is an excellent choice for both beginners and seasoned growers, and a mature specimen makes a full, impressive show entry.



# CACTI OF THE MONTH: Coryphantha, Escobaria

*Escobaria lloydii* is a beautiful white clumping species with the bodies nearly covered with spines.



*Escobaria tuberculosa* is a good clumping species and variable in habitat. It is easily grown and needs room to expand.



- Tom Glavich  
February 2026

Snacks for the Meeting	
Last name	
Jan	A-D
Feb	E-H
Mar	I-L
Apr	M-P
May	Q-T
Jun	U-Z

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: MEDUSOID EUPHORBIA

The myth of Medusa is very old, and predates Greek Mythology. Medusa's character changes with culture, social conditions and time. The best known story comes from late Greek Mythology; where Medusa was a mortal woman descended from the gods whose beauty was so renowned that she fancied herself more beautiful than the god Athena. As punishment (or in revenge) Athena turned Medusa's hair to snakes and placed a curse on her so that any living being looking at her was turned to stone.

The origin of the myth is from North Central Africa and the plants we grow and exhibit come from much further south. These are some of the best of all the Euphorbias and demonstrate a variation on parallel evolution with cacti that is hard to match. Although no one turns to stone the first sight of Medusoid Euphorbias often stops viewers at our shows. The medusoids are among the most unusual of the Euphorbias and have no close parallel in other genera. On the other hand, they look a lot like extreme cacti!

The Medusoid Euphorbias are easily identified. A (usually) large body is covered with arms. The arms may be stubby and widely spaced (*Euphorbia decepta*) or they may be long, snake-like and closely spaced (*Euphorbia caput-medusae*). For all of the Medusoid Euphorbias the central thickened stem is equivalent to a caudex. It is the central storage organ and acts as a reservoir for nutrients and moisture in times of stress.

Many of the medusoids will shed their arms (branches) during extended droughts, growing new ones when the rains return.

Medusoid Euphorbias come from a wide range of habitats, with Cape Province South Africa being Medusoid central; but all go through extended periods of low moisture. Cultivation for many is relatively easy as long as attention is paid to not watering during periods of dormancy. There are generally two periods of dormancy a long one during the late fall and winter (mid November through the end of February) and a shorter one during the peak of the summer heat (a few weeks in August and September). The arrival of the summer one is harder to predict, and over-watering in late summer can result in root rot. In spite of the sensitivity most of the Medusoid Euphorbias do well as unprotected pot plants outdoors in Southern California during the winter.

It's nearly impossible to find seed for most of the Medusoid Euphorbias, and in general, the seed is short lived (months). Vegetative propagation is easier. Most Medusoid Euphorbias can be propagated from arm cuttings, although a year or two will be required before the plant is worth showing.

Tom Glavich  
February 2026



## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: MEDUSOID EUPHORBIA

### SPECIES OF NOTE:

#### ***Euphorbia caput-medusae***

One of the classic species. It is from Cape Province, with a caudex of up to 8 inches in diameter. The branches are long and serpentine. It's the most snake-like of all the species.



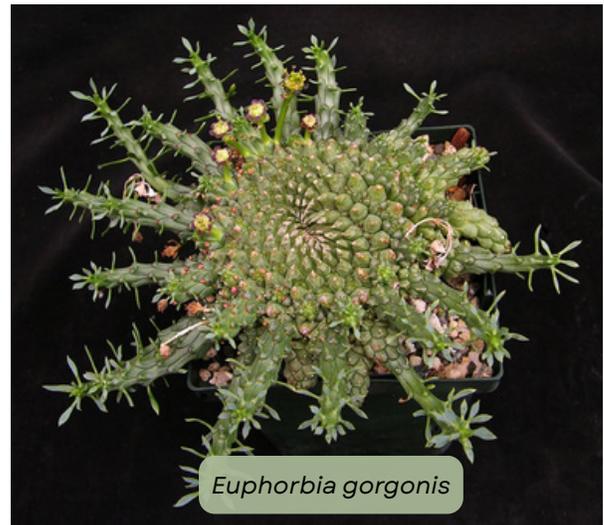
*Euphorbia caput-medusae*

#### ***Euphorbia decepta***

This is one of those plants that hides its best feature underground. Native to the Western Cape, it develops a thickened tuberous base that stores water below the soil line. Short stems and tiny seasonal leaves appear during the growing period, then retreat again. It's understated, compact, and very satisfying to grow well.

#### ***Euphorbia gorgonis***

One of the best-known “Medusa head” euphorbias, this species forms a flattened central body surrounded by radiating arms. As it matures, the arms branch and the plant becomes increasingly sculptural. It stays low and wide and always draws attention at shows.



*Euphorbia gorgonis*



*Euphorbia decepta*

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: MEDUSOID EUPHORBIA

### ***Euphorbia gamkensis***

Named for the Gamka River region, this plant is extremely similar to *Euphorbia decepta* and is often treated as the same species by botanists. In cultivation, however, the name still sticks, especially when the locality is known. It has a neat rounded caudex with clustered stems and makes a tidy, attractive specimen.

### ***Euphorbia hopetownensis***

Originally described from the Hopetown district, this name is now generally treated as a synonym of *Euphorbia crassipes*. Like others in this group, it produces a swollen underground base and short seasonal stems. Older labels may still carry the historic name, which makes it a good reminder that plant names change over time.

### ***Euphorbia atroviridis***

A striking dark-green medusoid euphorbia often seen in collections. It resembles *Euphorbia gorgonis* but with deeper coloration. Its exact taxonomic standing is somewhat uncertain, but in cultivation it is prized for its dramatic color and bold radial form.



# SGVCSS WINTER SHOW Trophy Table Highlights



*Ortegocactus macdougallii*  
Steve & Dolores C.



*Astrophytum asterias hybrid*,  
Desert Creations



Individual Display, Angela C



*Agave albopilosa* - Glenn M

# SGVCSS WINTER SHOW Trophy Table Highlights



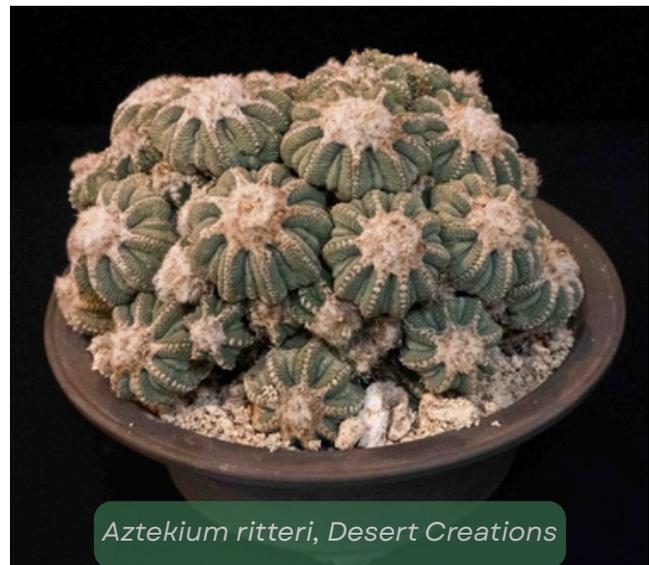
*Haworthia hybrid* - Jim S.



*Gymnocalycium saglionis inermis* -  
Desert Creations



*Lachenalia flava* - Lynn M.



*Aztekium ritteri*, Desert Creations





We were all so glad to see Richard Salcedo again!



A heartfelt thanks to our show cashiers. Margie and Louise



Manny Rivera, Show Chair, in deep reflection



Susan made a friend

# PLANT OF THE MONTH AND WORKSHOPS

Month	2026 Plants of the Month	2026 Workshops
Jan	Mammillaria Clusters Echeveria	Crassula
Feb	Rebutia, Sulcorebutia, Weingartia Crassula	Coryphantha, Escobaria
Mar	Coryphantha, Escobaria Medusoid Euphorbia	Medusoid Euphorbia
Apr	Seed Grown	Spring Seed
May	Cactus Staged as Mini Succulent Staged as Mini	Trichocereus, Echinopsis
Jun	Trichocereus, Echinopsis Lithops	Adenium
Jul	Echinocactus Adenium	Grafting
Aug	Favorite Cactus Favorite Succulent	Ariocarpus
Sep	Ariocarpus Bursera	Madagascan Pachypodium
Oct	Melocactus, Discocactus Madagascan Pachypodium	Winter Seed Workshop
Nov	Crest and Monstrose	Tips and Tricks



Time to Join Us or Renew your SGVCSS Membership!  
Membership is still \$20 per year.  
You may pay at the meetings or use the QR Code below:



Join



Renew

## Events Calendar

### March 6–7

#### Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society – Spring Sale

Fri 12 pm–6 pm | Sat 9 am–5 pm

Anaheim United Methodist Church

1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA

Info: 657-549-0702

### March 6–8

#### Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society – Spring Sale

Daily 10 am–5 pm

Fresno Fairgrounds, Garden Pavilion

1121 S. Chance Ave., Fresno, CA

Free with paid Fresno Home & Garden Show admission

### April 10–11

#### South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society – Show & Sale

Fri 1 pm–5 pm | Sat 9 am–4 pm

Palos Verdes Art Center

5504 Crestridge Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Info: [southcoastcss.org](http://southcoastcss.org) | 310-346-6206



2026: YEAR AT A GLANCE



## LEADERSHIP TEAM 2026

Nick Renteria, President  
Amanda Gerberich, Vice President  
Charlene Sandoval, Secretary  
Margie Wilson, Treasurer  
Gunnar Eisel, Past President

Margie Wilson, Director  
Manny Rivera, Director  
Sharon Sedillo, Director  
Angela Clubb, Director  
Mike Pearson, Director  
Liz Wagner, Director

Gunnar Eisel, Program Chair  
Cindy Arakaki, Club Librarian  
Social Media, open  
Newsletter Editor, Gunnar Eisel  
Membership Chair, Keiko Doi

Manny Rivera, Winter Show Chair  
James Lemos, Winter Sales Chair  
Gunnar Eisel, Inter-City Show Chair  
Tom Glavich, Inter-City Sales Chair  
Amanda Gerberich, CSSA Representative

