



SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Communiqué



UPCOMING EVENTS

* Club Meeting November 12

Ayres Hall of the
LA Arboretum:
Meeting 7:30 PM
Doors open at 6:00 PM

* C&S Workshop November 18

Topic: Tips and Techniques

Palm Classroom of the LA
Arboretum. 7:30 PM
Doors open at 6:00 PM

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 with
the general public.

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Monstrose and Crests



Al Klein

President's Message



Happy Thanksgiving!

Hopefully everyone has something for which to be thankful. I'm thankful that I belong to such a great club that has plenty of activities, such as last month's field trip to the UC Riverside Botanical Gardens. After a docent-led tour of the garden, members were dropped off for lunch near the world-famous Mission Inn. After lunch, we stopped at the Palm Plantation nursery and had a quick tour of their exotic palms, cycads and succulent trees. We ended the day with a stop at Shuna's Succulent House in Chino where no one left empty-handed. Lots of great plants and pottery at affordable prices.

A big thanks to Gunnar Eisel for organizing yet another great field trip!

Although we don't have any special events this month, we do have special guest speaker Al Klein from Botanic Wonders speaking on "Caudiciforms" at our general meeting on November 12. And don't forget the November 18 workshop on Tips and Techniques where members share their secrets to cultivating great plants using a variety of methods and tools.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the general meeting.

Warm Regards,
Nick Renteria

Did your SGVCSS Membership lapse?
Membership is still \$20 per year.
You may pay at the meetings or
using the appropriate QR code below.



Join



Renew

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH: AL KLEIN

Growing “Fat Plants”: Succulent Caudiciforms



Caudiciform succulents, often called “fat plants,” are among the most unusual plants we grow. Plants such as *Dioscorea elephantipes*, *Euphorbia*, *Cyphostemma*, and *Pachypodium* are favorites with collectors, but their care can sometimes be challenging.

This presentation covers soil mixes, watering, fertilizing, and light, with useful tips for both beginners and experienced growers. We’ll also learn when to water and when to hold back during dormancy, how to protect exposed bases from sunburn, and what to consider when growing these plants from seed or cuttings.

Whether you have a few fat plants or a whole collection, there should be something here for you.

Al Klein’s interest in plants and the natural world began while growing up in Chicago. Visits to the Field Museum of Natural History inspired him to grow cacti and collect fossils, minerals, and insects. At 17, Al moved to California, where his interest in horticulture grew. He worked at South Shores Nursery in San Clemente while attending Cal Poly Pomona, earning a degree in Ornamental Horticulture with an emphasis in landscape design and retail nursery management.

After graduation, Al joined Roger’s Gardens in Corona del Mar and became Nursery Manager within a year. He later helped open Canterbury Gardens and Gifts in Escondido, where he became a partner and worked for 35 years before retiring.

Al now devotes his time to his own nursery, Botanic Wonders, specializing in growing and selling rare and unusual plants, including succulents, cacti, and cycads.



[INSTAGRAM.COM/SGVCSS_ORG](https://www.instagram.com/sgvcss_org)

PLANTS OF THE MONTH: *Crested and Monstrose Succulents*

Crested and monstrose plants are mutants. Something has gone wrong with the cellular structure of the primary growth tip (apical meristem) of the plant. In normal plants the growth tips are points and the biochemistry of the plant forces one tip to be dominant or at least locally dominant. In crests, genetic mutation removes this dominance and instead of a single growth tip the area of active cell growth degenerates into a line. In monstrose growth, the dominance of all or at least many potential growth points is equal and many new bodies try to form simultaneously.

Cresting and monstrose growth are two of the three most common mutations, the other being variegation. Two or even all three forms are sometimes combined in a single plant. For this month any combination of cresting or monstrosity either alone or together or combined with variegated growth is acceptable. Grafted plants are also welcome.

Cresting is not unique to succulent plants. Crests are found in many genera of non-succulent plants, including conifers and many common garden plants.



Epithelantha micromeris crest

Crests are grown exactly as normal plants of the same species. Some crests have weak roots and only grow well as grafts. Others are robust growers and do perfectly well on their own. Careful observation of the health of the plant and comparison to healthy non-crested plants of the same species will quickly show whether grafting is necessary. Crests tend to be more sensitive to poor growing conditions, getting sunburn more quickly and getting unsightly brown spots more easily than normal plants of the same species.

For the same reason, they are more attractive to spider mites and mealybugs than normal plants, and a careful eye must be kept on them to keep them healthy. A mix of 80% pumice and 20% organic matter will keep most crested and monstrose plants in good health, either on their own roots or grafted. Steady fertilization is important for good growth and healthy plants. Monstrose and crested plants will occasionally produce normal growth. This has to be removed promptly or the normal growth will take over from the mutant growth. Grafted plants will often send out offsets from the base of the stock plant. These should be removed as well, or all the energy will go into the offset and not into the mutation.



Euphorbia ritteri

PLANTS OF THE MONTH: *Crested and Monstrose Succulents*

Propagation of Crested Plants

Crests and monstrose plants flower and produce seed just as other plants do but less often. Healthy strong growth is probably the best way to produce a flowering crest. This means regular watering and fertilization and proper light. Cresting and monstrosity are not generally transmitted by seed; however, seed from a mutant plant is much more likely to be a genetic mutant than that from a normal plant. The genetic mutation is more likely to be the same as the parent, but any other mutation is also possible. Plants from mutant mothers are much more likely to produce new mutations, but the number of mutations will be small, generally much less than one percent, so grow lots of seed.



Gymnocalycium leeanum monstrose

The most common method of propagation of crested plants is vegetative. Cuttings of crests are often grafted to speed growth and to preserve special growth forms. Cuttings of varieties that are on their own roots will generally root easily, as long as the cuts are taken during the growing season. After a few days of drying, the cut sections are simply stuck into slightly moist potting soil. After a few weeks, there will be sufficient roots to resume normal watering.



Euphorbia pseudocactus crest



Eulychnia castanea monstrose

FIELD TRIP TO RIVERSIDE

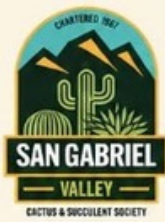


FIELD TRIP TO RIVERSIDE



FIELD TRIP TO RIVERSIDE





OCTOBER PLANT OF THE MONTH AWARD WINNERS

NOVICE DIVISION: CACTUS

First Place	Mike Pearson	<i>Melocactus conoideus</i>
Second, Third	None	

NOVICE DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Mike Pearson	<i>Pachypodium lamerei</i>
Second Place	Mike Pearson	<i>Pachypodium saundersii</i>
Third Place	Nora Sandoval	<i>Pachypodium lamerei</i>
Third Place	Charlene Sandoval	<i>Pachypodium lamerei</i>

ADVANCED DIVISION: CACTUS

None		
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ADVANCED DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Nick Renteria	<i>Pachypodium lamerei</i> var. <i>ramosum</i>
Second Place	Nick Renteria	<i>Pachypodium baronii</i>
Third Place	Nick Renteria	<i>Pachypodium ambongense</i>
Third Place	Tricia Kangrga	<i>Pachypodium lamerei</i>

OPEN DIVISION: CACTUS

None		
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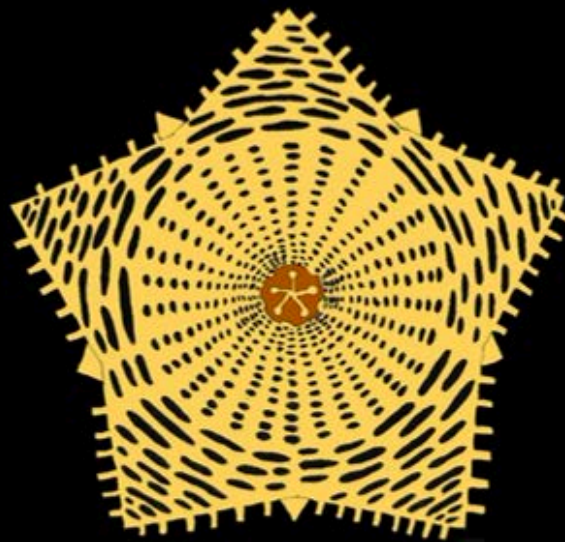
OPEN DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Gunnar Eisel	<i>Pachypodium rutenbergianum</i>
Second, Third	None	

NOVEMBER: LOCAL EVENTS

- Nov. 14, Los Angeles Fall Sale: 10 a.m.–3 p.m., ONEgeneration, Reseda. Noon auction; free admission and parking. Member shopping: 9–10 a.m.

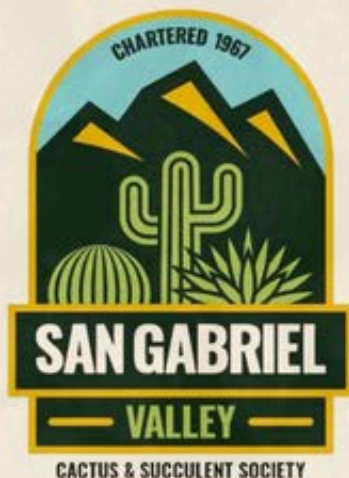
Snacks: If your last name begins with U to Z, it's your turn!



32nd Annual San Gabriel Valley
Cactus and Succulent Society
Winter Show and Sale

January 29-30 2027
9 AM- 5 PM

Check out our [YouTube video short: Spread the word!](#)

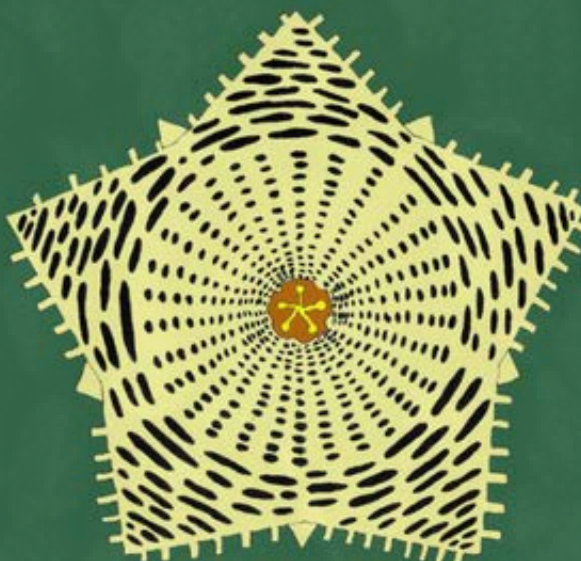


32nd Annual SGVCSS Winter Show and Sale

January 29–30, 2027
9 AM–5 PM Daily

Free
Admission
and Parking

Arcadia Masonic Center
50 W Duarte Rd,
Arcadia, CA



Huernia kennedyana



See outstanding cacti and succulents, shop for unusual plants, and meet fellow enthusiasts.



Everyone welcome! Accessible facilities.



Visit us: www.sgvcss.com



Scan for details

Indoors!
Come Rain or Shine



LEADERSHIP TEAM 2026

Officers and Directors:

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

Committee Chairs and Appointed Positions:

Program Chair – Gunnar Eisel
 Membership Chair – Keiko Doi
 Club Librarian – Cindy Arakaki
 Newsletter Editor – Gunnar Eisel
 Social Media Chair – Open

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

General Meetings

Second Thursday of each month
 Doors open at 6:00 PM
 Meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Location: Ayres Hall
 Los Angeles County Arboretum
 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia

Workshops

Third Wednesday of each month
 Doors open at 6:00 PM
 Meeting begins at 7:30 PM

Location: Palm Classroom
 Los Angeles County Arboretum
 (No workshop in December)

Got News or Comments?
 Contact us at: editor@sgvcss.com

