



SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Communiqué



UPCOMING EVENTS

* Club Meeting October 8

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

* C&S Workshop October 21

Topic: Winter Seed Workshop

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 to the
general public.

In This Issue:

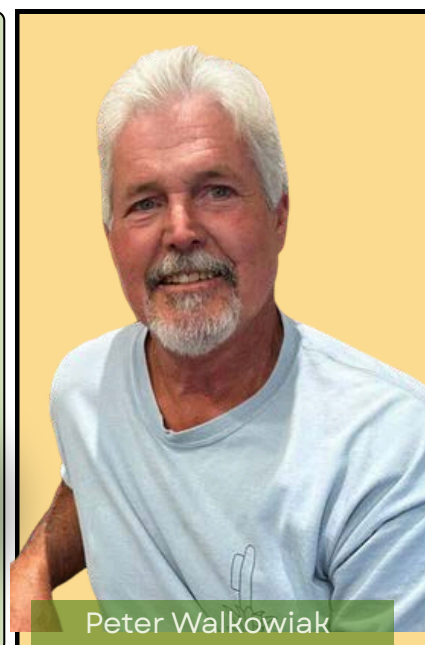
President's Message	Page 2
SGVCSS Membership Renewal	Page 2
Speaker of the Month: Peter Walkowiak	Page 3
Cactus of the Month: Melocactus and Discocactus	Pages 4-5
Succulent of the Month: Madagascan Pachypodiums	Pages 6-7
Annual Picnic Photos	Pages 8-9
Plant of the Month Mini-Show Winners	Page 10
Events, Calendar, POM Schedule	Page 11
Leadership Team	Page 12

Plants of the Month:

*Melocactus and
Discocactus*



Madagascan
Pachypodium



Peter Walkowiak

President's Message



Fall is upon us! With cooler weather and shorter days, our summer growers are beginning to go to sleep while our winter growers are waking up. Of course, that doesn't mean we won't get another hot spell sometime this month to confuse all our plants. Welcome to the new normal!

But just because fall has arrived doesn't mean our club activities come to a standstill. The fun continues with our upcoming field trip** on October 18 to the UC Riverside Botanic Gardens, followed by lunch and visits to a private palm plantation and La Vista Nursery. More details will be announced at the October general meeting.

** We still have a few seats available!
Contact Gunnar Eisel at:
gunnar.eisel@gmail.com for information.

Before the field trip, be sure to attend our October 8 general meeting with guest speaker Peter Walkowiak, who will give a talk and demonstration on growing specimen plants. And don't forget our ever-popular Winter Growers Seed Workshop on October 21. The club provides all the materials, and everyone will go home with at least two pots of planted seeds.

Warm regards,
Nick Renteria

Did your SGVCSS Membership lapse?
Membership is still \$20 per year.
You may pay at the meetings or
use the QR Code to the right.



Join



Renew

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH: PETER WALKOWIAK

How to Grow and Stage Winning Show Plants



Peter Walkowiak graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 1985 with a B.S. degree in Ornamental Horticulture. He spent 14 years working in wholesale nurseries and another 14 years operating a landscaping business, specializing in succulent landscapes during the final five years.

Peter began collecting succulents while in college, and his collection has grown to more than 2,000 plants, including cacti, euphorbias, and caudiciforms. His interest in propagation led to the nursery he has owned and operated for the past 15 years.

He is a past president of the Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society, has served on the boards of the San Diego CSS and the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, and has chaired several major cactus and succulent shows.

In this program, Peter will cover many of the topics he considers important for successful plant growing, including soil mixes, watering, water pH, fertilizer, sun and exposure, pest control, propagation, and staging plants for shows.

The program will be interactive, and attendees are encouraged to bring questions. Peter's goal is to share as much useful information as possible during the hour.

Peter does most of the propagation for his nursery from seed, so questions about seed growing and propagation are especially welcome.

For the staging portion of the program, Peter will bring a variety of plants to demonstrate different approaches and styles. Cacti are staged differently from bonsai-style plants, and the natural way a plant grows often provides direction for how it can best be presented.



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

PLANTS OF THE MONTH: *Melocactus and Discocactus*

A *Melocactus* was very likely the first cactus seen by a European explorer, and certainly one of the first to be brought back and successfully grown. They were known in English collections by the late 16th century, less than 60 years after Columbus' first voyage. It's likely that he or other early explorers also brought back some *Opuntia*, and much more likely that the *Opuntia* survived.

Melocactus are immediately recognizable by the large cephalium that develops on mature plants.

Melocactus grow as normal-appearing but flowerless globular cacti until they reach maturity. This can take from 6 to 15 years in cultivation, with a greater range in habitat. Once they reach maturity, the body stops growing vigorously (it still grows slowly). Most of the plant's energy goes into producing a cylindrical flowering and fruiting structure known as a cephalium. This is usually white with short hairs of yellow, orange, or red. As the years go by, the cephalium becomes more cylindrical, with the base becoming more colorful. The flowers are usually red-purple, and the fruits are almost always bright red to attract birds. With age, the cephalium can grow to 18 inches or more in height, occasionally bifurcating or trifurcating.

Melocactus are native to a large region, Brazil to Southern Mexico, including a good part of the Caribbean. As might be expected cacti from the tropical regions particularly coastal regions are sensitive to cold and wet. Cold and wet conditions can cause scarring of the body which usually appears as brown or tan lesions on the skin. A few of these are unavoidable but a badly scarred plant quickly becomes unsightly. At the same time almost all the *Melocactus* expect high humidity and a higher moisture level than might be expected. Many grow within sight of the ocean or in some of the more tropical and humid regions of Brazil. They like water but demand good drainage.

Melocactus levitestatus is from Brazil. It can get large. It grows in seasonally dry regions, making it a good choice for Southern California.



Melocactus levitestatus

Melocactus and Discocactus

Melocactus are generally solitary so the only means of propagation is through seeds. Fortunately, they produce plenty of seed and these germinate readily especially when the weather is warm. Keep the seedlings protected from direct sun and moist until fairly large. Although it is several years from seed to a flowering plant, most of the *Melocactus* have magnificent spination and vividly colored bodies which make keeping them a pleasant task.



Melocactus sp.



Melocactus sp.

Two *Melocactus* at Pitzer College
photo Gunnar Eisel



Melocactus conoideus

Discocactus are another genus of mostly tropical cacti. They come from Brazil and Paraguay stretching into Bolivia. They grow at higher altitudes than *Melocactus*. Most of the species grow cephalia. They are generally smaller than *Melocactus*. There are about 25 currently accepted species.

-Tom Glavich



Discocactus crystallophilus

Photo and plant / Gunnar Eisel

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: *Madagascan Pachypodiums*

Pachypodium are members of the *Apocynaceae* or Periwinkle family, and are most closely related to *Adenium*, and more distantly to Oleander and Plumeria.

Pachypodium are native to only Southern Africa and Madagascar. There are more Madagascan species than there are African due to the geography of the island of Madagascar, with islands of rock outcrops that encourage the development of unique populations of plants, animals and insects isolated from others of the same genus. New species are still being discovered as botanists explore the more remote regions of Madagascar.

The Madagascan species are easy to grow, with the sole difficulty being their sensitivity to cold and wet. If they are protected, either by being brought indoors during the winter, or protected from rain and cold in a cold frame, or even a garage, they will survive and prosper.

Propagation from seed is easy. Seeds are simply placed on good moist potting soil, and germination generally occurs within a week to 10 days. Seeds should be sown in the spring. Protection from direct sun is necessary until the first few leaf pairs have formed, and then gradual movement into strong light, with an increase in fertilizer and water will bring quick and strong growth.



Some Southern California growers are starting seeds and growing *Pachypodiums* in a mix of commercial seed starting mix and pumice or perlite. Some of the better plants seen in displays are growing in pure pumice. These two potting mixes are generally supplemented by a time-release fertilizer, as well as frequent feedings. Fast growth, along with very healthy root systems, have been achieved with the pure pumice potting mix. The mix drains very quickly, and prevents the loss of roots from rot caused by overwatering.

All of the Madagascan *Pachypodiums* are worth growing.



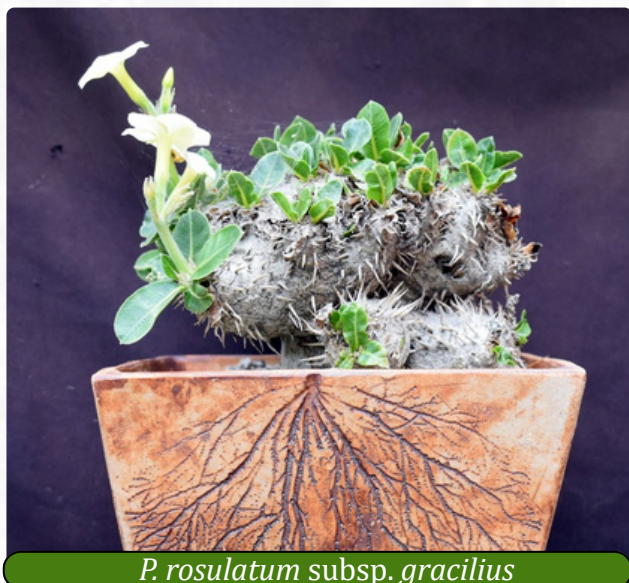
Pachypodium geayi
G. Eisel backyard photo

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: *Preeminent Pachypodiums*

Pachypodium rosulatum subsp. *makayense* is a relatively new species, but not difficult to find and easy to grow. It has a good caudex and a fat stem and branches freely.

Pachypodium lamerei is the best known of all the Pachypodiums, available as a “Madagascar Palm” in florists, home centers and even supermarkets. It grows quickly, reaching 12 inches within a year if well grown (lots of food and water). It tolerates indoor life well and is popular as a houseplant. It is grown in the San Gabriel Valley in the ground with quite a bit of success, reaching flowering size in about 6 or 7 years. Several cultivars have been created, with more robust trunks, or lower and more frequent branches. It grows in the South and West.

Pachypodium rosulatum subsp. *gracilius* is a fantastic caudex forming plant, slow to grow and more difficult than most species.



P. rosulatum subsp. *gracilius*



P. rosulatum subsp. *makayense*



P. rosulatum subsp. *gracilius*

Pachypodium brevicaule (right), is a ground-hugging, nearly flat caudiciform, the shortest of all the species. It comes from central Madagascar, near the middle of the island. The knobby top growth hides roots that anchor it to the soil.

Tom Glavich
Photos by Tom Glavich

OUR ANNUAL PICNIC! A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!



Ron Broussard: "I got it, I got it"

"I ain't got it"

Opuntia Toss:

1st place - Mary Jo Mateer

2nd place - Betty Farfan

3rd place - Walter Weststeyn

Water Balloon Toss:

1st place - Mary Jo Mateer and Rick Kangrga

2nd place (tie) - Ron Broussard and Tom Blanton, Terri Powell and Bill McClelland

OUR ANNUAL PICNIC! CAMERADERIE, FUN AND GOOD FOOD!



Betty Farfan, Walter Weststeyn, and Mary Jo Mateer



Mary Jo Mateer and Rick Kangrga



Auction



PLANT OF THE MONTH AWARD WINNERS

NOVICE DIVISION: CACTUS

First Place	Celesta Pappas-	<i>Ariocarpus bravoanus</i>
Second Place	Mike Pearson	<i>Ariocarpus fissuratus</i>
Third Place	Russell Kibbee	<i>Ariocarpus retusus furfuraceus</i>

NOVICE DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Mike Pearson	<i>Bursera fagaroides</i>
Second Place	None	
Third Place	None	

ADVANCED DIVISION: CACTUS

First Place	Travis Martin	<i>Ariocarpus 'Cauliflower Godzilla'</i>
Second Place	Travis Martin	<i>Ariocarpus trigonus</i>
Third Place	Louise Stack	<i>Ariocarpus retusus</i>

ADVANCED DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Tricia Kangrga	<i>Bursera fagaroides</i>
Second Place	Nick Renteria	<i>Bursera fagaroides</i>
Third Place	None	

OPEN DIVISION: CACTUS

First Place	Tom Glavich	<i>Ariocarpus fissuratus</i>
Second Place	Tom Glavich	<i>Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus</i>
Third Place	None	

OPEN DIVISION: SUCCULENT

First Place	Manny Rivera	<i>Bursera fagaroides</i>
Second Place	Manny Rivera	<i>Bursera fagaroides</i>
Third Place	None	

2026 C&S AND EPI EVENT CALENDAR

OCT. 4:

Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Auction

1:00 PM-3:30 PM Info. Call 714-553-6914

Women's Club of Bellflower,
9402 Oak St., Bellflower, CA

OCT. 11:

Conejo Cactus and Succulent
Society Fall Sale

9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Info. www.conejocss.com
or conejocss@hotmail.com

558 N. Ventu Park Rd.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Oct. 23-25:

Huntington Fall Plant Sale

- Reservations Required

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Information and reservations:

www.huntington.org

Sale information: 626-405-3571

Oct. 24:

Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society
Fall Show and Sale

10am-3pm

Info. rwkopfstein@gmail.com

Grace Presbyterian Church, 1450 East Vista
Way, Vista, CA

NOV. 14:

Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society
Holiday Sale and Auction

Sat. 10am-3pm

(9am opens for members only)

Collectors LIVE Auction 12pm

Info. www.lacactus.com

One Generation, 18255 Victory Blvd.,
Reseda, CA

PLANT OF THE MONTH AND WORKSHOPS

Oct	<i>Madagascan Pachypodium</i> <i>Melocactus, Discocactus</i>	Winter Seed Workshop
Nov	Crest and Monstrose	Tips and Techniques

Snack Schedule	October	Last Name: Q-T
-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------



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

