

# C A C T U S CHRONICLE

A P R I L 2 0 2 3

VOL. 91 ISSUE 04

MONTHLY PROGRAM

**GIANLUCA BACCI**

**Socotra**

The Land of Dragons and Bottles



ARID PLANTS A-Z

**ELI COHEN**

Remember to bring in  
your problem plants, plant ID  
+ special interest plants



**REFRESHMENTS  
THIS MONTH:  
LAST NAMES  
BEGINNING  
WITH 'C'**

MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE HELD EVERY FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

MEETING START TIME: 7PM, DOORS OPEN AT 6:15PM

ONE GENERATION: 18255 VICTORY BLVD. RESEDA CA.

# LACSS DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANT FESTIVAL

Sepulveda Garden Center  
FREE ADMISSION  
+ PARKING

April 22nd 9am - 4pm  
April 23rd 9am - 3pm

EARTH DAY  
WEEKEND  
30+ Vendors





# FESTIVAL INTERIOR SHOW

We are inviting all members to participate in a JUDGED interior show this year. Get your plants ready!

**WINNERS  
RECEIVE  
PRIZES**

## CACTUS

Mammillaria (ALL TYPES)  
Astrophytum  
Ariocarpus  
Rebutia  
Gymnocalycium

## SUCCULENTS

Aloe (Pot up to 8" diameter)  
Pachypodium  
Mesembs (ALL TYPES)  
Euphorbia (ALL TYPES)  
Haworthia

**PLANT ENTRY - FRIDAY APRIL 21, 11AM-5PM**

# SATURDAY DINNER AND AUCTION

Winners will be recognized at the MEMBERS only Dinner Saturday, 6pm.

**We will also have a LIVE AUCTION of plants.**

**WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BRING plants you would like to donate or offer a 70/30 split donation for the Live/Silent Auction!**

This year's dinner will be catered by Dearmore BBQ Catering

Tri Tip + Chicken Dinner  
Chili Beans or Vegan Beans

Green Salad  
Chips, Salsa and Guac

Members are welcome to bring dessert or appetizer platters.

**DINNER IS \$25, SPACES ARE LIMITED.**

# LACSS DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANT FESTIVAL

April 22nd 9am - 4pm  
April 23rd 9am - 3pm

Sepulveda Garden Center  
16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD., ENCINO  
FREE ADMISSION  
+ PARKING

## VENDOR LIST

AGAVE GABE  
BOTANIC WONDERS  
CACTUS QUEST  
CORONA CACTUS  
DEATHCAXTUS POTTERY  
DESERT CREATIONS  
DESERT WONDERS  
DISTINCTIVE FLORA  
FORMOSA NATIVE PLANTS  
GONZALO'S YARD ART  
GROW UP LOS ANGELES  
GT NURSERY  
HANNA'S SUCCULENTS  
INNERSCAPES PLANTS  
JAY'S PELARGONIUMS  
(GERANIUM SOCIEY)  
JOHN MARTINEZ PLANTS  
JUNE'S POTS

KYLE'S PLANTS  
LA SUCCULENTS  
LISA ROCKS  
MARK MURADIAN POTS  
MONALISA'S PLANTS  
PEETY POTS  
PORT TOWN POTTERY  
POT DEALERS  
RALPH'S PLANTS  
RENE HERNANDEZ  
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY  
BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
SOMIS SUCCULENT  
SPECIALTIES  
SUCCULENT GEMS  
SUCCULENT GERANIAC  
SUPERB SUCCULENTS  
URBAN POTTER  
VAN UNEN CERAMICS  
XANANDA ARTS





# LACSS DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANT FESTIVAL KIDS DAY

FREE ADMISSION  
+ PARKING

April 23rd 11am - 2pm

FACE PAINTING  
SWAG BAG  
POT A PLANT  
+ MORE

EARTH DAY  
WEEKEND

Sepulveda  
Garden Center

16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD., ENCINO



# GET INVOLVED!

As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to be a part of an event and experience some perks too! We need individuals who are passionate about the cause and are willing to lend a helping hand to ensure that the event is a success.

There are a variety of roles available, including event set-up and clean-up, guiding guests, assisting vendors, and more.

**This year, we are offering all volunteers a \$20 VOUCHER to use at any vendor of your choice! Additionally, we will provide a \$10 voucher redeemable for lunch.**

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, gain valuable experience, and give back to the community. Plus, it's a fun and rewarding experience that you'll never forget!

So if you're ready to make a difference and be a part of an exciting event, please don't hesitate to see Joyce at the meeting or email her to sign up as a volunteer today.

(ropojo@pacbell.net)

# SOCOTRA

AN ISLAND OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN  
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN SUPPORTS  
A WEALTH OF BOTANIC WONDERS

**THIS MONTH'S  
PROGRAM**



Gianluca Bacci, our April featured speaker, will detail his journey to this remote island and the living treasures he discovered there.

He is an avid succulent collector. He has been growing plants for over 15 years, and has worked professionally in the horticultural industry for the past seven. He currently manages and cares for the xeric plant collection at the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory, which has well over 2000 species of succulents and cacti. He is also a physics major, and current student at UC Davis.





# FROM THE MESSAGE PRESIDENT

Hi everyone,

I am pleased to announce that each monthly meeting has seen an increase in attendance. We are overjoyed to see our old friends and our many new members.

Congratulations to the "A and H" member group who provided us with refreshments at the March meeting. Nicole Alter, our newly appointed "Refreshment Coordinator," has added her voice and energy to making sure you know when it is your turn to bring snacks and let you know how much we appreciate your efforts.

This month we are putting a lot of focus on our Festival. As noted in the Cactus Chronicle, we are returning to the **SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER!** Kids' Day will be on Sunday from 11am-2pm! Kids are our future – we need to encourage them to become interested in the hobby we love. Who knows?, the kid who knocks over your favorite plant may be our future president!!!

## PLEASE, PLEASE SIGN UP

We still need about 25 members to volunteer for the Festival. Being a part of the premier event of LACSS is a heady experience! You will feel the excitement, enthusiasm, amazement and joy from all the visitors, vendors, volunteers and you want to be a part of it.

Email me at [ropojo@pacbell.net](mailto:ropojo@pacbell.net)  
and let me know when you have time to join us.

Volunteering is not just a labor of love (well, it is for some of us) but a chance to get to know each other better. We exchange ideas, cultivation tips, vacation favorites, books to read and other hobby related stuff. It is only a two-hour shift and you will be rewarded with a **\$10 lunch voucher and a \$20 voucher** for shopping. If this is your first time to volunteer with LACSS, you will receive one of our famous day-glo yellow volunteer t-shirts. If you like to be outside, we have a need for you! If you prefer to be inside, we have a need for you! If you don't have a preference, we have a need for you! Email me and get signed up!!!

Everyone is talking about the rain. I can't add anything here that hasn't already been said. Did you see that incredible rainbow on Wednesday evening?? If you do have a concern or question about your plants, be sure to ask Eli during his segment at the beginning of the meeting.

There will be more details in this Chronicle and at the April 6 meeting.  
In the meantime – stay safe and stay healthy!

See you soon.  
Joyce

# B O A R D OF DIRECTORS

2 0 2 3

## LACSS MISSION STATEMENT

The Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society (LACSS) cultivates the study & enjoyment of cacti & succulent plants through educational programs & activities that promote the hobby within a community of fellow enthusiasts & among the greater public.

### **PRESIDENT**

Joyce Schumann

### **PAST PRESIDENT**

Kim Thorpe Chavez

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Ron Behar

### **2ND VP, PLANT OF THE MONTH**

Manny Rivera

### **3RD VP, EDUCATION**

Cande Friedman

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Nick Steinhardt

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### **DIRECTOR 2 SPECIAL EVENTS**

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Kimberly Gomez-Tong  
newsletter@lacactus.com

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Roxie Esterle

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Kimberly Gomez-Tong

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with Artie Chavez + Kimberly Gomez-Tong

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### **PLANT PROCUREMENT**

Collin O'Callaghan

### **HISTORIAN**

Sandy Chase

### **AWARDS DINNER CHAIR**

Vacant

### **LIBRARIAN**

Joyce Schumann

### **POM PLANT DESCRIPTIONS**

Kyle Williams

### **ZOOM MANAGEMENT**

Kimberly Gomez-Tong

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Nicole Alter - Instagram

# WHAT'S UP WITH WBT'S?

BY JACKSON BURKHOLDER [precisioncactus@gmail.com](mailto:precisioncactus@gmail.com)

When discussing the anatomy of cacti and some other succulent plants, the topic of wide-band tracheids (also called non-xylary tracheids or just WBT's for short) inevitably comes up. Tracheids are a type of plant cell found in the vascular tissue that moves water upwards through the plant body like little straws. As one of the major components of wood, tracheids are dead at maturity and have a rigid, secondary cell wall which can either form as thickened areas encircling the cell like a stretched-out Slinky, or almost completely envelope the cell. In prepared microscope slides, secondary cell walls react to a different stain than primary cell walls which causes them to appear pink instead of green.

Like many regular tracheids, WBT's have the first type of secondary cell wall, with thickened areas either in an annular or helical pattern along the length of the cell. The distinguishing feature of WBT's is the width of these secondary thickenings (Figs. 1 & 2). As their name implies these thickenings are much wider than they are on normal tracheids. These special tracheids are easy to distinguish on micrographs, showing up as thick pink-stained rings protruding deeply into the inside of the cell.

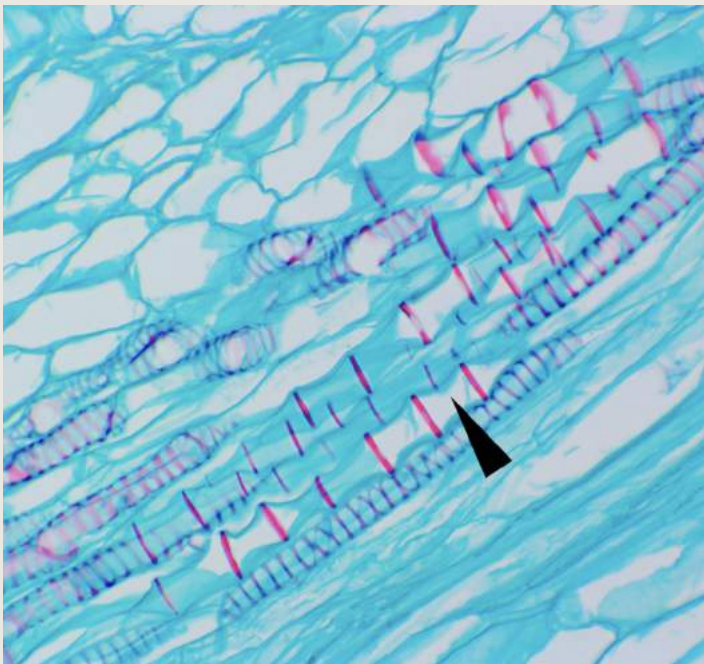


Fig. 1 - Longitudinal section of a *Turbinicarpus x mombergii* root showing the WBT's (One marked with arrow) compared to the regular tracheids. Note the pink-stained annular thickenings which protrude far into the cell. 200x.

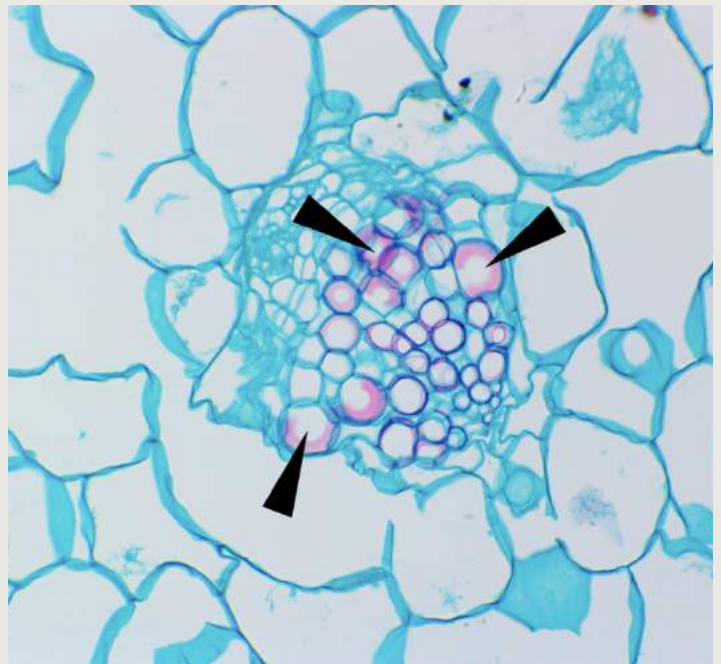


Fig. 2 - Cross section of a *Weingartia rauschii* vascular bundle showing the wide secondary thickenings of WBT's (three of which are marked with arrows). Regular tracheids with thinner secondary thickenings are also present. 200x.

WBT's are only found in three plant families. They are most common by far in the cactus family (Cactaceae) where they have been observed in almost all of the major groups (with the exception of *Pereskia*, *Leptocereus*, and some epiphytic cacti). In fact, some cacti have wood that is made up almost entirely of WBT's (Fig. 3). WBT's can also be found in a few species of the purslane family, which is closely related to Cactaceae. The third family where WBT's have been documented is the ice plant family, Aizoaceae. Among the mesembs, WBT's have been documented in the leaves of all but a few of its most basal members (Figs. 4 & 5).

This pattern also holds true for the cactus and purslane families, with WBT's being conspicuously absent from their least evolved genera. This includes *Pereskia* in the cactus family, *Portulaca* and *Talinum* in the Purslane family, and *Cleretum* in Aizoaceae. This creates an interesting problem from an evolutionary perspective. A single evolution would make the most sense, because they are found in such abundance in three related families of plants. However, the absence of these cells in the most basal genera of these families suggests that they evolved separately as each group became more succulent.

Another potential explanation could be that WBT's only evolved once but were lost in the less succulent members of each family. This could make sense as WBT's certainly have the most benefit to highly succulent plants. It is theorized that WBT's are essential for allowing the wood of ball and barrel cacti to shrink and swell as the plants experience different levels of moisture. The wide secondary thickenings could also help keep these tracheids from collapsing completely when they shrink due to drought conditions.

Knowledge of WBT's is essential to understanding the anatomy of cacti and some other related succulent plants. These structures represent another fascinating way these plants have adapted to their desert environment. Unfortunately like many succulent adaptations, the evolutionary origins of WBT's are difficult to resolve.

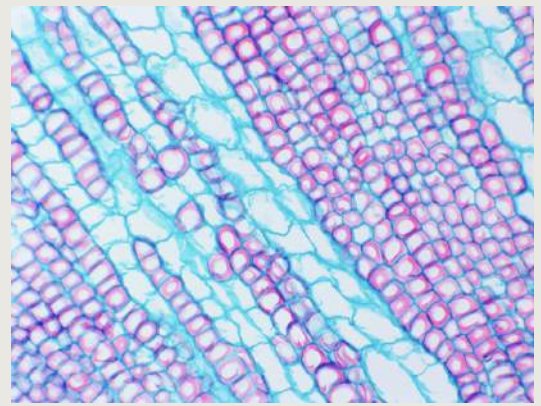


Fig 3. – Cross section of an *Astrophytum capricorne* stem showing wood composed of almost all WBT's. 200x.

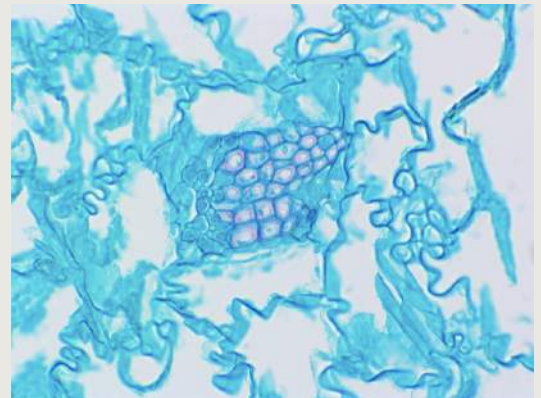


Fig. 4 – A cross section of a *Delosperma cooperi* (Aizoaceae) leaf showing a vascular bundle filled with WBT's. 400x.

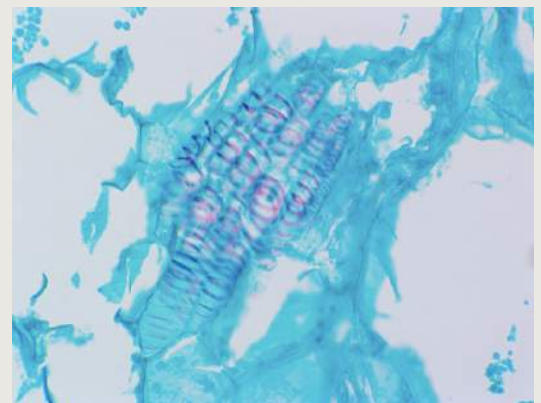


Fig. 5 – A vascular trace in a longitudinal section of a *Lithops* sp. leaf showing another example of WBT's in the Aizoaceae. 400x.

*Further reading:*

Crang, R., Lyons-Sobaski, S., and Wise, R. 2019. *Plant Anatomy*. Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland.

Landrum, J. V. 2006. *Wide-band tracheids in genera of Portulacaceae: novel, non-xylary tracheids possibly evolved as an adaptation to water stress. J Plant Res. 119: 497-504*

Mauseth, J. D. 2004. *Wide-band tracheids are present in almost all species of Cactaceae. J Plant Res. 117: 69-76*

*Jackson Burkholder has been growing cacti and succulents for over twenty years. He grew up attending Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society events, and what started as one or two small plants every year has turned into an obsession with desert flora. He is currently serving on the Board of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and the leadership team of the International Cactaceae Academic Network. His focus is on well-documented South American cacti that thrive in the high elevations and cool nights of Colorado as well as winter hardy species from North America.*

*Jackson is also interested in restoring and using antique scientific equipment and experimenting with traditional scientific techniques. He combines both of his passions by studying plant anatomy and is working on finishing his master's thesis on this subject at Texas State University.*



# PLANT OF THE MONTH

## **JANUARY**

Matucana, Submatucana, Oroya  
Aeonium

## **FEBRUARY**

Coryphantha, Neolloydia, Neobesseya  
Sarcocaulon

## **MARCH**

Echinocactus  
Anacampseros, Avonia, Grahamia

## **APRIL**

Aztekium, Epithelantha  
Aloinopsis, Antimima, Aptenia, Argyroderma

## **MAY**

Cacti staged as miniature  
Succulent staged as miniature  
(Diameter of pot  
NO LARGER THAN 3")

## **JUNE**

Favorites

## **JULY**

Melocactus  
Euphorbia Medusoid

## **AUGUST**

Mammillaria (Dichotomous & 2 Heads)  
Gasteria, Astroloba

## **SEPTEMBER**

Cacti from Coahuila  
Nolina, Calibanus, Beaucarnea

## **OCTOBER**

Espostoa  
Fouquieria

## **NOVEMBER**

Crest and Monstrose

## **DECEMBER**

Holiday Awards Party

P L A N T O F T H E M O N T H

# AZTEKIUM + EPITHELANTHA

B Y K Y L E W I L L I A M S

This month we focus on two very small genera of cacti, both in size and number of species. *Aztekium* contains three species of small, slow growing cacti that grow in highly inaccessible areas (though not inaccessible enough to stop poaching) of Nuevo Leon state in northeastern Mexico. The plants are quite small, averaging 1-4" diameter depending on the species, although *A. hintonii* can reach 5"+ on very mature specimens. They stand out from other small globular cacti in having very unusual and attractive wrinkles covering the plant body. They grow in cracks and pockets of limestone and gypsum cliffs. They are said to prefer growing on north facing slopes, which is common for small cliff dwelling succulents of all types. Small plants eking out a living on the side of a cliff with a tiny area for roots is hard enough. Getting blasted all day by the intense desert sun in addition to that is just too much for little plants to bear.



*Aztekium hintonii*

If you were interested in *Aztekium* in the early 1990s you would have thought the genus was monotypic containing just *A. ritteri*. So difficult to find are these plants that it wasn't until 1991 that the second species, *A. hintonii* was found, and it took all the way to 2013 to find and name the newest member of the genus, *A. valdezii*. At first glance it would be difficult to tell the species apart, but paying attention to the size of the plants, the shape and number of ribs, and details of the flowers can help you distinguish them. By contrast, *Aztekium* has such a unique appearance that it would be nearly impossible to mistake any other cactus for this genus.

*Epithelantha*, is a miniature cactus with just two species, *E. micromeris* and *E. bokei*. They were originally described as *Mammillaria* as they have a similar look and tubercle development. Both species are native to the Big Bend region of Texas and adjacent areas of Mexico, with *E. micromeris* also extending into New Mexico and eastern Arizona. They prefer growing among limestone rock with the white color of the rocks letting the plant blend in and avoid easy notice. The species look very similar to each other and some botanists believe they may all be a single species. The plants are small and round and covered in dense, short white spines. The flowers are pinkish but it is the fruit that is the real standout. They are club shaped and bright almost neon pink. The bright color attracts birds which eat them then distribute the seeds. The plants are 1-3 inches in diameter and grow upright, but never get particularly tall.

All species of both genera take similar care. They are small and slow growing, so keep them in an appropriately small pot with well-draining soil. Bright light is important but avoid direct hot afternoon sun. They have tuberous roots and come from regions that are dry in the winter so protect from our winter rains as they can be somewhat rot prone.



*Aztekium valdezii* (grafted)



*Epithelantha micromeris*

P L A N T O F T H E M O N T H

# ALOINOPSIS, ANTIMIMA, APTENIA, + ARGYRODERMA

B Y K Y L E W I L L I A M S



*Aloinopsis schooneesii*

This month we are looking at four genera of Mesembs (Aizoaceae) that start with the letter “A” but are otherwise not especially closely related. The Aizoaceae contains over 130 genera and nearly 2000 species, making it as big or bigger than the Cactaceae. Most Aizoaceae are fleshy and succulent plants. While the species that we grow are very highly succulent, such as the genera under consideration today, some genera are just slightly succulent and more resemble a typical herb while others form woody shrubs. The family has a worldwide distribution in arid regions, including two species native to California. Despite the family technically being worldwide, the overwhelming number of genera and species (96%) come from southern Africa.

Aloinopsis contains 8-12 species that form thick tap roots and clusters of leaves. When large enough the plants can be raised to show off the roots which give the plants a distinct caudiciform look. They will grow faster and make larger clumps if the root is left buried however. Most species come from winter rainfall regions of South Africa’s Cape Provinces. As such they prefer more water in the winter and less in the summer. Despite being winter growers, they should not fully dry for extended periods (unlike Conophytum).



*Argyroderma crateriforme*

Antimima is the largest genus we look at today, with over 100 species. It used to be placed in the even larger and more complex Ruschia, but today is considered a distinct genus. Many species, unsurprisingly, looks similar to Ruschia or Cheiridopsis and are clumping ground cover like plants with long leaves. Others look more like Argyroderma and in fact the genus name means “imitation” in Greek, in reference to this. The most commonly grown species are winter growers.

Argyroderma has approximately 10 species and the most Lithops-like of the genera. Plants have 2 fat leaves that make up nearly the entirety of the visible part of the plant and each year a new set of leaves form, replacing older leaves. Care is very similar to Lithops where watering is most wanted in the spring & fall. Keep drier in the middle of winter & summer. These plants are very prone to splitting when overwatered. Fear not, the split will heal, albeit with a noticeable scar. Next year’s leaves will replace these scarred leaves giving you a clean looking plant once again. They clump in time and do not like to be repotted too often.

Aptenia is one of the most commonly grown mesembs even if the name itself may not be familiar. The genus has 4 species, though *A. cordifolia* is far and away the best known and most commonly grown. It is a stem forming ground cover with “normal” looking leaves, at least in comparison to the strange and varied leaf types usually seen in the mesembs we grow as collectors. It makes a great ground cover that grows fast and is drought tolerant. The more water it gets the faster it grows. It produces bright pink-red flowers in the spring.

It is interesting to compare the Cactaceae with the Aizoaceae in that both families have developed extreme succulence in order to survive their arid habitats, however how they went about it shows that evolution can converge on a basic idea in two different ways. Cacti have evolved thick fleshy stems that store water during lean times while also getting rid big green leaves (except in *Pereskia* and a few other species) that lose a lot of water on hot days. The leaves of a cactus have been turned into the spines that protect the plant from predators. The Aizoaceae took a different path. The stems have been nearly lost in many species or tend to be fairly thin and not much for water storage. The leaves have become extremely fleshy to the point where they are practically balloons filled with water in a lot of species.



*Antimima lawsonii*



*Aptenia cordifolia*





# Convergence!

## More Than Meets the Eye

written by Eli Cohen

Have you ever taken a stroll in your neighborhood and noticed a tall, columnar cactus thriving in the warm sun? Have you ever considered that it may not be a cactus at all? The same traits that we marvel at in cacti can be found in unrelated organisms, in order to survive similar environmental pressures. There are many examples in the natural world, but today let's focus on traits that aid xeric plants in surviving their particularly dry biomes.

This convergence of traits can lead to confusion at a visual level. Traits that look similar when expressed can come from very different places genetically. Over time, natural selection occurs, and successful traits survive and pass on. However, these visual traits can still hold valuable information for cultivators, and even humanity. As we understand the history of our natural world, and the way things have learned to survive, perhaps humanity may find a way to evolve for the better.

Cacti as we know them began to evolve around 30-35 million years ago, most likely from a scrubby tree, then adapted to a climate with seasonal dryness and noticeable warmth. *Pereskia grandifolia* is a good example of this adaptation, and illustrates how cacti branched out into drier places beginning with a plant that learned to survive in extended droughts.



*Pereskia grandifolia*

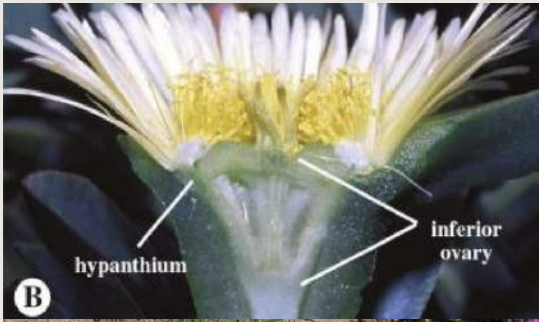


*Euphorbia ingens*



*Cereus peruvianus*

In hotter and sunnier places, leaves serve as a major source of water loss. An exposed stomata could mean death for the plant in such extremes. There are many ways to adapt to a dry climate, but *Pereskia* exemplifies how certain traits are particularly successful at conserving water and protecting an organism. The flowers reveal it is still a true cactus, but the shift towards losing leaves and developing spines is important. However, cacti were not the first plants to do so, far from it. In Africa, *Euphorbia* probably began to develop 114 million years ago. In that larger stretch of time, many evolved to have similar visible structures to cacti; small, deciduous leaves, spines to protect the plant while shading stomata in between ribs, succulent stems to store excess water, and other traits suitable for drought conditions. The further separate development of the traits is supported by observing how



*Aizoaceae flower*



*Asteraceae inflorescence*



*Notocactus sp. Vs Euphorbia sp.*

genetically distant they are, belonging to separate orders of the plant kingdom. This is also supported by the fact that Gondwana, the supercontinent that followed Pangaea, began to break up 180 million years ago: since cacti likely originated in South America, and only a small number of cacti species live in contemporary Africa at all, it can be inferred that cacti and euphorbia developed similar traits in distant locations..

There is another enormously successful trait shared by many different families in the plant kingdom, which provides particular success in arid climates. Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) allows plants to perform photosynthesis during the day while performing gas exchange only at night, which keeps the stomata safe from the potentially deadly sun. There are many other methods for plants to survive extreme climates, however this all reveals how similar traits can be shared by genetically unrelated plants. For example, Euphorbia spines are not developed cactus spines, but the resulting success is similar. Another overlap could potentially be seen in Asteraceae, the daisy family, and Aizoaceae, the ice plant family. Both are successful families across the globe in many habitats, and contain many succulent species. However the most curious similarity is how, upon first glance, the flowers look incredibly similar. A dissection actually reveals how different they truly are. While Aizoaceae take on a somewhat average flower structure, Asteraceae have a complex inflorescence known as a capitulum, which is actually a dense disc of many small flowers. The initial visual similarity is likely intentional; the capitulum is very evolutionarily successful, and pollinators that frequent Asteraceae may also visit nearby Aizoaceae flowers. Mimicry of this type can serve as an indication of convergence, as this selected trait is very successful in the habitat it is found.

Plants develop many methods to survive xeric climates. The method and timeline for doing so may be different, but the effect of continued reproductive success is achieved. While similar observable traits may lead one to believe one understands the history of the plant kingdom, there is more than meets the eye. These observations on survival and evolution in contemporary conditions are incredibly valuable, but so is the historical understanding of how they came to be.

# HUNTING THE RARE

by dkakti

I live in a working-class neighborhood in central Los Angeles. I won't go into detail where, let's just say it's famous for a specific type of barbecue. Sometimes a high profile "incident" punctuates the daily routine. The other day I witnessed the end of a high-speed chase. The expected violent crash, a naked combative driver, a mob of black-clad LAPD, screaming, cursing, beanbag rounds, lights, sirens — dramatic urban theater playing out

for a big city audience.

My family says I should move. Yes, I could live somewhere else if I wanted. But when you only pay \$800 a month in a rent-controlled unit, it's a powerful incentive to stay put. And what you get for \$2300 in this city is a sick joke. Besides, I have my own garden space populated with rare and unusual plants I helped raise from the ground up. Yes, there's something of a story behind that.

The back of the building was nothing special when I first moved in. A dirt lot punctuated by some ancient redwood 2x4's and a lineup of vandalized trash bins. I didn't give this slice of Mad Max outback much thought, especially when my motley plant collection was safely perched on the third-floor fire escape landing. But deep in the back of my brain I knew that this miniature wasteland had potential to be something more.



But I wasn't the first to act. It was a hipster couple in 105 who made the first move. Despite looking like they had never held tools in their lives, this man and woman sparked an impressive transformation of the back area. Over a few months they sifted years of junk out of the soil, planted hardy greens and succulents, marked a path in broken concrete, and dragged in a weathered table and chair set off the street. Then one day, as with so many tenants over the years, they were just gone.

As maintenance dressed up 105 for its future occupants, I knew it was my time to become the garden's steward. I envisioned a green urban oasis the likes I'd encountered before in the Bay Area's pre-tech, art communes in the late 90's. Amid sprawling industrial compounds, people had created lush tropical gardens that defied their surroundings, and if they were capable of doing so in South City, so could I.



Time was not wasted. My collection of cacti and succulents came down off the fire escape, joining the thriving green assembly at ground level. I rescued neglected plants from the streets, took free cuttings from club meetings, snagged cuttings from yards on walks, copped freebies on Craigslist, and adopted plants abandoned by departing tenants. All of it went into the ground, gratefully taking root as part of an ever-expanding pocket of exotic plant life.

The more exotic plants in my collection were effortlessly blended with more common varieties making up the garden's framework. Today, packed beds of hard-grown cacti share borders with overflowing pots of succulents. Thriving *Tilandsia* colonies shelter in the canopy of an overhanging *Brugmansia*. *Burseras* and *Opercularias* mingle with *Dioscoereas*, *Haworthias*, and *Fouquierias* camouflaged among the bushes. The sum of it all attracts a range of wildlife from lizards and beneficial insects to migratory birds and annoying squirrels.

# Refreshments!

A warm "HELLO" to LACSS members! We have seen an increase in attendance at our monthly meetings after bringing back refreshments. Since most of our members (excluding retirees) come straight from work, it is nice to have a snack while enjoying the LACSS meeting.

It is a collective effort and responsibility each month to supply our members with sustenance, **THIS BRINGS US TO THE MONTH OF APRIL AND THE ALPHABET ASSIGNMENT IS FOR THE MONTH IS LAST NAMES BEGINNING WITH LETTER "C."**

If your last name begins with that letter, please bring something to share, enough for approximately 10 people. If you'd like to bring more that is okay too.

To facilitate set-up and clean-up, we ask that your contribution be in individual portions and/or a disposable container. At the end of the meeting, all leftovers, including containers, will be discarded. If you are available to help set up or tear down the refreshment center, please see me at the meeting at the Refreshment Table.

If you are unable to contribute, the club will also have a jar/bowl at the refreshment table if you would like to donate money so that the club can continue to supplement refreshments brought by the attendees.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [nicole.karin.alter@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.karin.alter@gmail.com).

**April - Members whose last name begins with "C"**

May - Members whose last name begins with "D, E, F"

June - Members whose last name begins with "G, L, Y"

July - Members whose last name begins with "I, J, K, P"

Aug - Members whose last name begins with "M"

Sept - Members whose last name begins with "S, T"

Oct - Members whose last name begins with "N, W, Z"

Nov - Members whose last name begins with "B, V"

Jan - Members whose last name begins with "O, R"

# L A C S S S A T U R D A Y PROGRAM

On Saturday, March 11th, Dean Karras was scheduled to speak to us about potting and staging our plants. Unfortunately he had car issues and was unable to make it. Luckily both Sandy Chase, and Artie Chavez were there in attendance to save the day! They stepped up and spoke to us and potting, staging, and care of out plants. They answered all the questions that were asked. Thank you Artie and Sandy!

**ARE YOU CRAZED BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE, TELLING YOU DIFFERENT SOIL MIXES TO USE FOR YOUR PLANTS? PUMICE OR PERLITE? SAND OR DECOMPOSED GRANITE? WELL COME TO OUR SATURDAY PROGRAM WITH**

**MATT MAGGIO**

**SATURDAY,  
MAY 13TH 2023  
SEPULVEDA  
GARDEN CENTER  
10AM**



In demonstrating his gratitude towards LACSS, Matt will return to his San Fernando Valley roots for a **RARE** public presentation! The topic will be a comprehensive crash course in soil science, as it pertains to succulent cultivation. Matt will crystalize his hands-on knowledge of habitat ecology, landscaping and nursery propagation into gems of wisdom for the practical hobbyist. There are many dug-in opinions on the subject of soils. Matt hopes to erode some stubborn myths and deliver some clear, unbiased concepts. This will be a demo-type presentation, making heavy use of live props. His talk on soil promises to cover a lot of ground.

Matt will discuss some of the key physical and chemical properties of soils: texture, drainage, porosity, microbes, cation exchange(nutrient holding) capacity and pH. He will discuss factors that go into a soil mix; type of plant and the application (e.g. landscape vs. container culture, commercial grower vs. hobby collector, seed starting or other propagation), your local microclimate, availability of materials and lessons from habitat.

There will be a soil mixing and repotting demo, repotting a succulent you find in a commercial mix, into a better mix. He will also open a bag of store bought cactus mix, providing his critique and how we might doctor it for different scenarios.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING,  
PLEASE EMAIL [LEEARC@AOL.COM](mailto:LEEARC@AOL.COM)**

An LACSS DIY Event April 15th | 9am-2pm

**NEW  
DATE!**



## CURSES! FOILED AGAIN!

Once again, the weather has gotten the best of us. We regretfully have to postpone not only the soil delivery, but also the planting scheduled for March 18. We simply can't do an installation when the soil is drenched. Everything needs to dry out so we're not working in mud.

Consequently, we've tentatively selected the date of Saturday, April 15, almost 5 months since we first began the project and potted up the plants. Sorry for the inconvenience and we appreciate your patience.

Thanks,  
Jim and Roxie

# Dig it yourself

## LACSS members

You're invited to dig up and purchase mature aloes, agaves, cacti, and other select plants in a beautiful garden setting, as well as a potted plant silent auction. The address in Van Nuys will be sent out the day before the sale. No early access.

**RSVP - [Jimesterle@gmail.com](mailto:Jimesterle@gmail.com)**

## PLAY FOR JADE EVENTS INC.

All sales and donations benefit the *Jade Lee Marasigan Charitable Fund* which helps at-risk adolescents access and afford age-appropriate mental health treatment for their mental health and suicide prevention.

**[playforjade.com](http://playforjade.com)**





**S A V E   T H E   D A T E**

**LACSS DOUBLE FEATURE FIELD TRIP TO**



**LOTUSLAND**

**MONTECITO**

**&**

**ALOES IN  
WONDERLAND**

**JEFF CHEMNICK'S AMAZING  
SANTA BARBARA GARDEN**

Transportation and Admission fees are \$20 per person  
with LACSS underwriting the remainder of the cost

**MEMBERS ONLY. THE MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE IS 28**

Reserve your space by emailing Jim Esterle  
[jimesterle@gmail.com](mailto:jimesterle@gmail.com)

## 2023 CACTUS AND SUCCULENT CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- APR. 2           CONEJO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SPRING SALE 9AM-4PM  
558 N. VENTU PARK ROAD, THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91320  
INFO WWW.CONEJOCSS.COM OR CONEJOCSS@HOTMAIL.COM
- APR. 15-16       SOUTH COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
DAILY 9AM-4PM INFO CALL 310-346-6206  
PALOS VERDES ART CENTER, 5504 CRESTRIDGE RD., PALOS VERDES, CA
- APR. 22-23       LOS ANGELES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SPRING SALE  
SATURDAY 9AM-4PM. SUNDAY 9AM-3PM INFO WWW.LACACTUS.COM  
SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER, 16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD., ENCINO, CA
- APR. 29-30       SAN JOSE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
SAT. 10AM-5PM, SUN. 10AM-4PM INFO. WWW.CSSSJ.ORG  
PETERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL, 1380 ROSALIA AVENUE, SUNNYVALE, CA
- APR. 30           HUNTINGTON SPRING PLANT SALE - RESERVATIONS REQUIRED  
10AM-5PM INFO RESERVATIONS- HUNTINGTON.ORG, SALE CALL 626-405-3571  
HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS, 1151 OXFORD RD., SAN MARINO, CA
- MAY 5-7           SACRAMENTO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
DAILY 9AM-5PM INFO. WWW.SACRAMENTOCSS.COM  
SHEPARD GARDEN AND ARTS CENTER, 3330 MCKINLEY BLVD., SACRAMENTO, CA
- MAY 6-7           SUNSET CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
DAILY 10AM-4PM INFO. CALL 310-822-1783  
VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER, GARDEN ROOM,  
4117 OVERLAND AVE., CULVER CITY, CA
- MAY 7            LONG BEACH CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
INFO. CALL 714-553-6914  
WOMEN'S CLUB OF BELLFLOWER, 9402 OAK ST., BELLFLOWER, CA 90706
- MAY 12-13        GATES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SALE  
DAILY 9AM-4PM INFO. WWW.GATESCACTUSANDSUCCULENTSOCIETY.COM  
OR CALL 909-910-9195 REDLANDS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE,  
1307 E. CITRUS AVE., REDLANDS, CA 92374
- MAY 13            SANTA BARBARA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
MEMBERS EARLY ENTRY 9:30AM, GENERAL PUBLIC 10AM-3PM.  
MORE INFO AT WWW.SBCACTUS.ORG
- MAY 27-28        CENTRAL COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW AND SALE  
SAT. 10AM-5PM, SUN. 10AM-4PM INFO. WWW.CENTRALCOASTCACTUS.ORG  
NIPOMO HIGH SCHOOL, 525 N. THOMPSON AVE., NIPOMO, CA

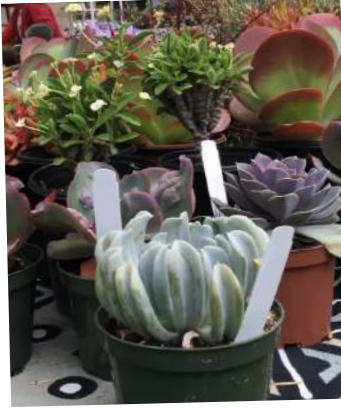
# LACSS Drought Tolerant Plant Festival

April 22nd 9am-4pm  
April 23rd 9am-3pm

Sepulveda Garden Center  
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino  
Free admission + parking



Join us Earth Day weekend



Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society

## Drought Tolerant Plant Festival

Spend EARTH DAY weekend with us April 22nd 9am-4pm + 23rd 9am-3pm



Kid's Day returns April 23rd  
11am-2pm with Pot-A-Plant  
and educational display.

All new judged interior show  
featuring dozens of unique  
cacti and succulents.

Knowledgeable experts on hand to  
answer your questions.

All new interactive photo booth  
with multiple habitat backdrops.

On-site food vendors

Silent auction  
Saturday and Sunday

Explore the beautiful  
Sepulveda Garden Center

FREE admission and parking

### Over 25+ vendors

Cacti, succulents, landscaping plants,  
collectible plants from around  
the world, pottery, hobby supplies,  
handmade crafts, and much more.

### Show info

LACSS-SHOW.COM | LACACTUS.COM  
IG @la\_cactusandsucculent\_society  
FB Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society  
(818) 749-5346





## **Succulent & Cactus Plant Sale** **Sunday, April 2, 2023**

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

558 North Ventu Park Road

Thousand Oaks, CA, 91320

Southeast corner of Ventu & Hillcrest

Vendors will be offering  
Cactus, Succulents, Bromeliads & Plumerias

Along with Pottery  
and Jewelry

Experts will be available to answer  
questions concerning planting  
and care



For more information: Facebook: Conejo Cactus & Succulent Society  
Web: ConejoCSS.com Email: ConejoCSS@hotmail.com

South Coast  
Cactus & Succulent  
Society  
**Annual  
Show & Sale**

**April 15 and 16, 2023**  
Hours: 9am to 4 pm

Palos Verdes Art Center  
5504 Crestridge Road  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

**FREE**  
admission and parking



## Save water, landscape with succulents

South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society

# Annual Show & Sale

April 15 and 16, 2023 Hours: 9am - 4pm

Palos Verdes Art Center  
5504 Crestridge Road  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. 90275

Admission and parking: **FREE**

Information: [southcoastcss.org](http://southcoastcss.org)  
or call 310-346-6206

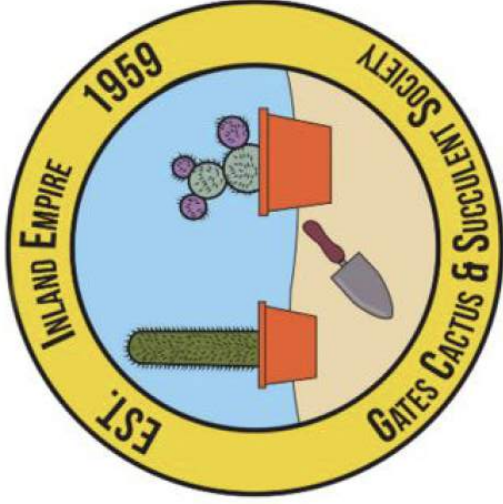


For anyone who  
loves the beautiful  
and the unusual

Collectors  
Gardeners  
Landscapers  
Families & Friends  
Kids and Grandkids



- Thousands of plants for sale
  - Hard to find plants
  - Artistic pottery
- Expert advice for beginners & advanced  
Showing plants in an artistic venue  
Art Center galleries and gift shop open



# *Gates Cactus and Succulent Society*

## *48<sup>th</sup> Annual Sale*

Plant Sale – Friday & Saturday, May 12–13, 2023

Exhibit Show – Saturday, May 13, 2023

9:00am – 4:00pm Both Days

Redlands Church of the Nazarene

1307 East Citrus Avenue, Redlands, CA 92374

### **FREE ADMISSION**

Thousands of rare and unusual cacti and succulents for sale.

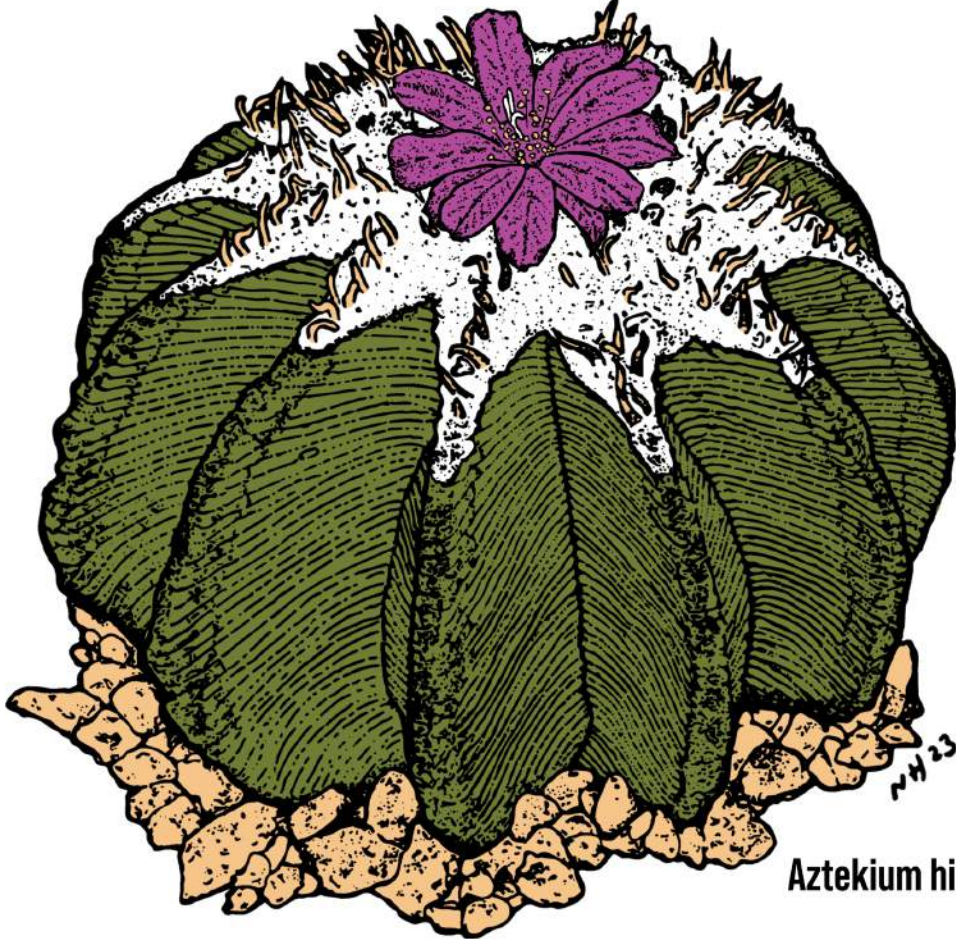
Learn growing tips from professional growers about drought-tolerant plants.

Unique handmade ceramic pottery for your plants.

[www.gatescactusandsucculentsociety.com](http://www.gatescactusandsucculentsociety.com)

(909) 910-9195

37<sup>th</sup> Annual **Inter-City**  
**Cactus & Succulent**  
**Show and Sale**



*Aztekium hintonii*

**August 4th, 2023 - Sale 8AM-5PM**

**August 5th & 6th, 2023 - Show & Sale 8AM-5PM**

**Los Angeles County Arboretum - [www.intercityshow.com](http://www.intercityshow.com)**

**Hosted by the Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Societies**

**Instagram: @intercityshow      Facebook Group: intercityshow**

**\*We encourage you to bring your own box to the sale\***