

C A C T U S CHRONICLE

A P R I L 2 0 2 1

VOL. 89 ISSUE 4

An overview of succulent
BROMELIADS
WITH ANDY SIEKKINEN

LACSS ZOOM MEETING, EVERY FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
NEW MEETING START TIME: 7PM, HOST WILL OPEN ROOM AT 6:30PM

APRIL 1ST, 2021

B O A R D OF DIRECTORS

2 0 2 1

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.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hey folks! So happy that spring is here. I'm looking forward to the Spring Sale, are you?

Next month's Plant of the Month is

MINIATURES!
(please make sure they are in pots
NO LARGER THAN 2")

Please send photos of these from your collection to me at newsletter@lacactus.com

Don't forget to also submit photos of what's happening in your yard!

I hope you are all safe and well.

See you at our Zoom meeting April 1st!

- Kimberly

IN THIS ISSUE

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

MONTHLY PROGRAM:
AN OVERVIEW OF SUCCULENT BROMELIADS
- ANDY SIEKKINEN

PLANT OF THE MONTH

IN MY YARD

DUKE BENADOM BOOK SPECIAL SALE

SATURDAY PROGRAM

CSSA WEBINAR

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ASK AN EXPERT

CSS VENDORS

FROM THE M E S S A G E PRESIDENT

HI TO EVERYONE AND HAPPY SPRING

Our plants know it and we know it. Summer is not that far away. How do we know? By the price of gasoline going up as it does every summer. Sometimes we need to take the clues where we find them.

In spite of quirky weather for the last six months (we had hail in the last rain fall) most of our plants should have survived due to all the expert advice and several mentoring sessions offered by LACSS. If you found any new tricks that work for you, please share them so we can use them next year.

The Spring Sale is about to happen. Everyone is very excited about it. In spite of the very cold rain we had at the Fall Sale, it was very well received and was considered a fantastic success. The weather is expected to be friendlier in April and should ensure an even better turnout. Again, we will need lots of volunteers to assist in various areas. Friday will have only one shift 6:00PM – 8:30PM but Saturday will be scheduled with the usual 2 hour shifts. Please email me to let me know you want to join us at this fun event! Our volunteers make each event a joy to attend.

Not only is the POM list out for all of 2021, the 2022 POM list is also out. Attending the Spring Sale is an excellent chance for you to get a head start on acquiring your prize winning plants for this year and 2022! There is more information about the Spring Sale published in this Chronicle. Look for it. And don't miss out on all the good buys....

And speaking of POM – make sure you watch the slideshow of the submissions that Kimberly will be playing prior to the start of the meeting. We hope you will enjoy this preview presentation. The mission statement of our club includes “education” and we always consider that aspect when making decisions for activities and events. POM is one of our major educational features and I encourage everyone to participate by submitting photos (you can't win if you don't play). Kyle's articles coupled with Manny's explanations give everyone a huge amount of info about your favorite plant. And in some cases, introduce you to your next favorite plant.

Our Membership chair (Rose) will be sending out a letter to members who did not respond to the first one asking you to confirm your information that we have on file. This will insure that you will continue to receive the Chronicle and other announcements.

Everyone stay safe and stay healthy. See you soon.

Joyce



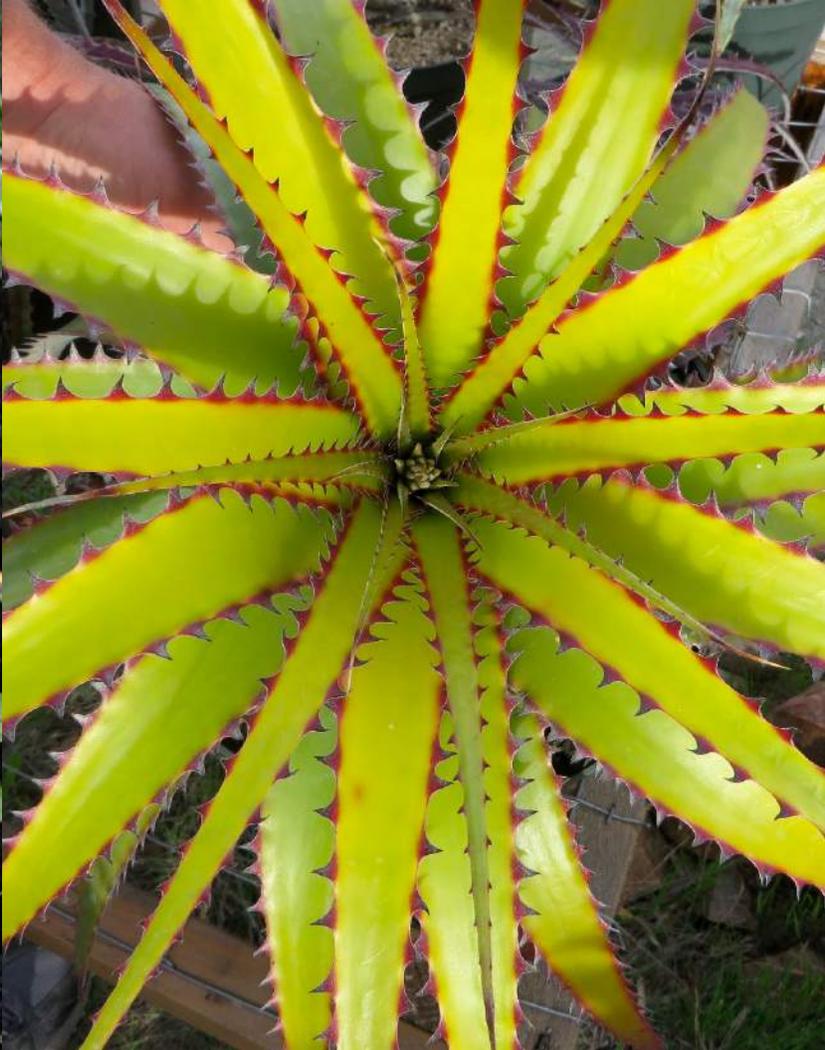
AN OVERVIEW OF SUCCULENT
BROMELIADS
ANDY SIEKKINEN

The Bromeliad family is the largest plant family restricted to the New World (save for a single species that colonized West Africa). They are diverse plants ranging from cactus to orchids and nearly everything in between. Therefore, species have evolved many adaptations to survive and thrive from getting sprayed by the ocean waves to growing at over 14,000 feet elevation in the Andes; deserts, rain forests, cloud forests, bogs; and range from terrestrial, epiphytic, lithophytic (growing on rocks/cliffs), psammophytic (growing in shifting sands/sand dunes), and even seasonally growing in fast moving water. In many of the biomes they inhabit, key adaptations often relate to water management.

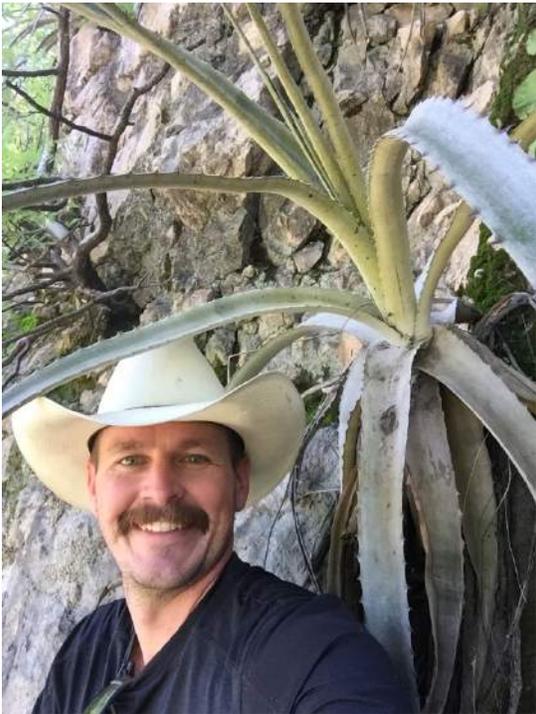
While the entire family is interesting regarding evolutionary adaptations, this time we will focus on the many genera throughout the family that have evolved leaf succulence. It appears that succulence has evolved several times independently throughout the family, so we will compare these plants by looking at their distribution and some evolutionary history. You will probably recognize some of the genera (Deuterocohnia, Dyckia, and hopefully Hechtia!), but we will also look at some of the less common genera. We will see them in habitat, cultivation, and through the laboratory.

PHOTO CREDIT: Andy Siekkinen





B R I E F B I O G R A P H Y O F ANDY SIEKKINEN



Andy Siekkinen is a botanist studying the genus *Hechtia* of the bromeliad family (Bromeliaceae). Beginning fieldwork over a decade ago, he has discovered well over 50 new species (5 published, 7 recently submitted, and the rest in process of describing), studied them with the newest molecular techniques, investigated their leaf anatomy, maintains the largest living research collection, and is actively hybridizing within the genus for both horticultural and scientific uses. Based in San Diego, his primary horticultural interest is solidly focused on bromeliads, but also has a strong interest in the cactus and succulent world as well as any other bizarre or interesting plant—as long as they don't need too much water! He is currently building a nursery and continuing his research following graduate school.

PLANT ^{Of the} MONTH

2 0 2 1

JANUARY

Columnar cactus
Sedum & Sempervivum

FEBRUARY

Mammillaria straight spines
Pelargonium

MARCH

Copiapoa
Bulb

APRIL

Echinocereus
Conophytum

MAY

Cacti staged as miniature
Succulent staged as miniature
(Diameter of pot
NO LARGER THAN 2")

JUNE

Favorites

JULY

Echinofossulocactus
(aka Stenocactus)
Adenium

AUGUST

Echinopsis
Euphorbia with caudex

SEPTEMBER

Ariocarpus
Cyphostemma & Cissus

OCTOBER

Grafted
Grafted

NOVEMBER

Variegated
Variegated

DECEMBER

Holiday Awards Party

POM Online Policies

AS LACSS CONTINUES ITS ONLINE MEETING FORMAT FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS, SOME SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS IN THE PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH (POM) COMPETITION HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BEGINNING FEBRUARY, 2021. WE HOPE THESE CHANGES WILL MOTIVATE MORE MEMBERS TO COMPETE IN THIS LONG-STANDING EDUCATIONAL TRADITION. BESIDES, IT'S REALLY FUN TO GET YOUR PLANTS READY FOR THEIR CLOSE-UPS.

- SUBMISSIONS WILL BE LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF 2 CACTUS AND 2 SUCCULENT SUBMISSIONS PER PERSON.
- WINNING POINTS WILL BE RECORDED AND ACCUMULATED FOR PRIZES AWARDED AT OUR YEAR-END HOLIDAY PARTY IN 2021.
- COMPETITION DIVISIONS (ROOKIE, NOVICE, ADVANCED, AND OPEN) WILL BE JUDGED TOGETHER, AS THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PLANTS FOR A COMPETITION IN EACH DIVISION.
- ONE POINT WILL BE AWARDED FOR EACH ENTRY, AND WINNERS IN THE CACTUS AND THE SUCCULENT AREAS WILL BE AWARDED 3 POINTS FOR 3 RD PLACE, 4 POINTS FOR 2ND PLACE, AND 5 POINTS FOR 1ST PLACE.
- PHOTOS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO OUR CACTUS CHRONICLE EDITOR : NEWSLETTER@LACACTUS.COM BY THE 20TH OF THE MONTH PRECEDING THE COMPETITION IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE JUDGING.
- MANNY RIVERA WILL SELECT THE WINNING CACTUS AND SUCCULENT BASED ON THE PHOTOS, TO BE ANNOUNCED DURING THE MEETING.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS PARTICIPATED IN THIS ACTIVITY!

M A R C H

PLANT Of the MONTH

W I N N E R S



F I R S T

COLLIN
O'CALLAGHAN

COIAPOA
HYPOGAEA



S E C O N D

JOHN VAN
UNEN

COIAPOA
CINEREA

C A C T U S



S E C O N D

JOHN VAN
UNEN

COIAPOA
HASELTONIA



T H I R D

EVAN
WALSH

COIAPOA
CALDERANA



T H I R D

FELIPE
DELGADO

COIAPOA
FIELDLERIANA



F I R S T

COLLIN
O'CALLAGHAN

ALBUCA
SPIRALIS



S E C O N D

FREDDIE + JONICE
ANDERSON

BOOPHANE
DISTICHA

S U C C U L E N T



T H I R D

DAVID
VALERA

VELTHEIMIA
CAPENSIS



T H I R D

SANDY
MASUO

BOWIEA
VOLUBILIS

PLANT Of the MONTH

A P R I L



**DUKE + KAZ
BENADOM**

ECHINOCEREUS FASCICULATUS

GRETCHEN DAVIS

ECHINOCEREUS MOJAVENIS
WITH RED BLOOMS



NICOLO RUSCONI

ECHINOCEREUS RIGIDISSIMUS VAR.
RUBRISPINUS CRISTATA.
STAGED IN SLOANE ANGEL POT



**DUKE + KAZ
BENADOM**

ECHINOCEREUS DELEATII



PLANT Of the MONTH

A P R I L



JOHN VAN UNEN

CONOPHYTUM OBCORDELLUM

RON BEHAR

CONOPHYTUM SP.



ROXIE + JIM
ESTERLE

CONOPHYTUM WEINSTEINII



EMILY AKERS +
JOHN GIESING

CONOPHYTUM PELLUCIDUM



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

ECHINOCCEREUS

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

Echinocereus species can be found throughout the Western United States, and the range of species stretches through the American west and through Northern and Central Mexico to about Mexico City. As might be expected from a genus covering such a large range, Echinocereus are extremely varied in form, ranging from nearly spineless green balls such as *E. knippelianus*, to very spiny short columnar species such as *E. engelmannii*, to pencil thin sticks such as *E. poselgeri*. Being a largely American genus, most species are quite cold hardy, with some species growing as far north as Wyoming. In general, the genus is comprised of upright clumping cacti that are usually 1-3' tall.



Echinocereus triglochidiatus

A day trip to the Mojave Desert will allow you to see our two native species, *E. engelmannii* & *E. triglochidiatus*. These two species look superficially similar in that they are short, heavily clumping, and have long white spines. The easiest way to tell them apart is when they flower. *Echinocereus engelmannii* has big pink to purple flowers while *E. triglochidiatus* has striking red to orange-red flowers.

An interesting feature of this genus is the way the flowers form. Normally flower buds form from growing points on the surface, generally from the areoles. However, in *Echinocereus* the buds form inside the stem below the epidermis (i.e. skin) of the plant. As they develop, they literally tear through the plant tissue and burst through the surface before opening. It is very similar to the way the creatures are born in the movie *Aliens*. Thank goodness plants can't feel pain because that really seems like it would hurt!

In general, *Echinocereus* is an underappreciated genus. Most growers have one or two, but having killed a few in their early collecting days, usually because of over watering, concentrate on other genera. Most of the species are in fact easy to grow. Many of the species are quite variable, and exhibit different spination and flower colors depending on the local environment. As a result, a large number of species were named. These are being reduced to a more conservative 30 to 50 species.

The varieties and local growth forms provide an enormous range of interesting plants to grow. Most *Echinocereus* have spectacular flowers, giving rise to such common names as Claret Cup, Strawberry Cactus, Calico Cactus. These common names are often attached to more than one species. *Echinocereus* flowers erupt through the skin, leaving scars. Offsets also erupt through the skin. Propagation from cuttings is relatively easy, but attention needs to cleanliness is important. Use of Rootone, or another rooting compound containing a fungicide helps ensure success.

A very popular species of *Echinocereus*, often found in the shows, is *E. rigidissimus* var. *rubispinus*. This plant produces a vibrant rose-colored flower during the spring and its spines retain a reddish tinge throughout the year.



Echinocereus rigidissimus



Echinocereus knippelianus

CONOPHYTUM

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

Conophytum is a fascinating genus that should be represented in everyone's succulent collection. Their reputation for being touchy and difficult to grow is undeserved. While they are usually grown in pots on benches, they can be a part of rock garden landscapes, as seen at the Sherman Library & Gardens in Corona del Mar.

Many people seeing Conophytum for the first time assume they must be some type of Lithops, so great is the similarity. Both genera do have the "living stones" look to them, belong to the same family, the Aizoaceae (often informally called Mesembs), and are native to South Africa and Namibia. However, a closer look will allow you to tell them apart quite easily. The best

way to identify a Conophytum is to look at the leaves. In Lithops you have two distinct leaves, while in Conophytum the leaves are fused together with just a small pore or slit in the center from which the flowers emerge. Conophytum forms a dry papery sheath around itself when dormant while Lithops never does. Another clue is that Conophytum are winter growers while Lithops are most active in summer and fall. This feature is an adaptation to the areas they grow in the wild; Lithops in summer rainfall regions and Conophytum in winter rainfall zones. Additionally, Conophytum flowers have petals united

into a tube at the base and "bracts" (small scale or leaf like growths) on the tube. Lithops has no tube or bracts.

Cultivation of most species of Conophytum is fairly straightforward. As the weather cools in the fall start watering your plant. If it is ready to grow it will suck up water and burst forth from the protective sheaths. Water regularly during the growing season as the plants should not dry out during this time, though keeping them too wet risks bloating, splitting and rot. A very fast draining planting medium is recommended. Keep an eye out for signs of the leaves shrinking and collapsing when the days get warmer and longer in the spring. This is perfectly normal and you should

stop watering at this time. The plants will shrink down quite a bit as the leaves turn into a dry, papery sheath that will protect the next year's leaves until fall. From this point until the fall the plants are in dormancy. Smaller species may need a bit of water, the bigger ones likely won't need any. Plants like some sun in growing season, but once the plants start entering dormancy move them to a shady location to avoid scorching. Some species can withstand light frost, but it is best to protect your plants if frost threatens. Commonly available species include *C. bilobum*, *C. obcordellum*, and *C. uviforme*.



Conophytum pellucidum



Conophytum pellucidum



Conophytum ectypum



PLANT ^{Of} _{the} MONTH

2 0 2 2

JANUARY

Frailea
Adromischus

FEBRUARY

Monotypic
Senecio, Othonna

MARCH

Mammillaria Clusters
Aloe Clusters

APRIL

Ecobaria, Acharagma
Aizoaceae Thickened Roots

MAY

Cacti staged as miniature
Succulent staged as miniature
(Diameter of pot
NO LARGER THAN 2")

JUNE

Favorites

JULY

Discocactus
Dyckia

AUGUST

Thelocactus-Hamatocactus
Bursera

SEPTEMBER

Gymnocalycium
Euphorbia Millii type

OCTOBER

Astrophytum
Sanseveria

NOVEMBER

Variegated
Variegated

DECEMBER

Holiday Awards Party



BARBARA HALL

I N M Y A R D

This article is about Barbara Hall, who from 1971-1976, discovered scented Geraniums (Pelargoniums). She bought some from nurseries and club sales, and also acquired some books. She, then, found and joined the Los Angeles Geranium Society, which met at Plummer Park in Hollywood. There she met Mike Vasser and David Tufenkian's parents. At that time she only bought cultivars (Angel's, Ivy leafed, zonal and regals). Barbara moved into an apartment and the collection did not thrive due to a lack of light.

Barbara and Larry were married on April 9, 1983, and then in 1984 bought a house in Granada Hills and raised two children.

In the mid 90's, Barbara, again, started collecting cultivars and species of Geraniums and Pelargoniums when she rejoined the L.A. Geranium Society, where she was President for 3 years. She was, also, a member of the San Fernando Geranium Society.

In 2001 Barb went to her 1st Inter-City Show and Sale looking for Pelargonium species and was blown away by what she saw. She joined the Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society in 2002, held at the Prince of Peace Church on Balboa. Barbara met Norma Lewis, who helped her become a Huntington volunteer in 2003 and she is still an active volunteer in the cactus and succulent propagation area. She joined the San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society in 2004.



Also in 2002, Gene Oster, then President of the LACSS, asked Barbara to co-chair the Inter-City Show and Sale with Tom Glavich of the SGVCSS and Harry Fletcher of the Long Beach Cactus and Succulent Society and was co-chair three years running.

As Chairman for the Cactus and Succulent Society of America's Show and Sale in 2011, Buck Hemenway asked Barbara to co-chair that year. She has chaired that Show and Sale from 2012 to present.

Barbara attended her first CSSA Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona in 2005 and has attended 7 conventions so far. She also received the CSSA's Superior Service Award in 2017.

Her passion is winter growers (bulbs, Othonas, Sarcocaulons, Tylecodons, Conophytums) and especially the Pelargoniums. Other favorites are Mammillarias and Euphorbias.

Barb uses a mix of 60% pumice, 40% cactus mix, a cup of soil acidifier and some decomposed granite. She waters once a week in the summer, every other week in winter and once a month for her cactus, depending on rainfall. She also fertilizes once a month with a Doseatron. Most of her plants are in pots, grown under 50% shade cloth.

Growing from seed is one of Barb's favorite things as well as competing in all the shows. She also cares for her tender plants in her 10x12 greenhouse.

You can't miss Barb and Larry's house as they took out their lawn in 2014 and landscaped the front, side and parkway with cactus and succulents, mostly from her own collection.

Barbara is a passionate and knowledgeable hobbyist, who is looking forward to in-person meetings and shows again where she can discuss her love of plants with her friends.

Submitted by Sandy Chase
Education Director





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PROGRAM

**SUNDAY, APRIL 11TH 2021
HOST WILL OPEN MEETING ROOM
AT 12:00PM NOON**

A BLAST WILL BE SENT OUT AGAIN!



**ALOES:
GROWING, POLLINATING &
CROSSES**

WITH KAREN ZIMMERMAN

Karen Zimmerman is the succulent propagator for the Huntington Botanical Gardens' Desert Collections, a huge potted collection outside of the public gardens. She has worked at the Huntington for 20 years. An avid photographer, she has published photos in journals, books, and a photography magazine.

"I've always been drawn to growing plants. The first plants I grew from seed were pine trees. A small local nursery gave my best friend and me an envelope of pine seeds, and I can still remember the deep excitement and awe when they germinated! We jumped into the pool with our clothes on. We were 10 years old."

"I still get that same 'Christmas morning' excitement when a batch of new aloe hybrid babies germinate. It's even better when they start to develop some character, often very early with the first true leaf. Despite careful breeding for specific traits such as color, size or toothiness, unexpected anomalies can appear in any breeding, especially given how complicated these aloe hybrids have become with generations of species and crosses in the mix. The standouts are, of course, the ones I crave!"

U P C O M I N G CSSA WEBINAR

OUT OF THE FIRE, INTO THE PAN STEVE BRACK



Join us Saturday, April 3rd at 10:00AM PDT for the next in our series of webinars featuring Cactus and Succulent experts from around the world.

(an individual blast will be sent, along with registration info)

Southern Africa has a huge amount of exposed rock slabs; in these areas are billions of depressions that fill in with grit, sand and other soil types. Many other things also grow in these pans like mosses, other succulents, and other plants. A whole ecosystem develops in these pans and in part each pan becomes its own little world. Often these pans are small, from a few centimeters to a few meters.

The surrounding high rocks are very barren compared to the depressed pans, so the high rocks are too hot to support the complexity found in the cooler pans. In the western regions of South Africa and Namibia there is a winter rainfall climate with some rain, drizzle, fog, snow and frost at night. Many winter nights in this region have some of the mentioned sources of water, and all forms of it trickle down into the pans keeping them cool and moist compared to the heat and dryness of the higher up rocks.

Some pans fill in with grit that erodes off the higher rocks, and then you have a great spot for slow growing succulents to take hold and grow from seed. The grit provides stability for the tiny seedlings to survive. In the summer, the small succulents and other bulbs, etc., pull down to hide from the sun. You will see in this program many kinds of small succulents growing in these pans and get an idea of how they survive in nature.

Biography: Growing up on a small family farm in Wisconsin I became interested in horticulture at a young age, grew plants as a kid to enter in the local county fair. While in college studying physics after seeing some cacti and succulents at a friend's house on the windowsill, I went to the library to find some books on these strange plants. I started reading these books and found the plants just fascinating. I used interlibrary loan to borrow hard to get books and a big world opened. In some of these books various clubs and societies were mentioned, so I wrote away to join a few and then found seed lists from the groups. I started to grow cacti and succulents from seed and acquired a few plants back in 1970. Soon was on the hunt for seed lists, and what amazed me was to get seeds with a Latin name and the geographic source. Then I read a series of articles in a British journal about the travel adventures of an English tourist that visited New Mexico.

At this point I was interested in seed growing and the idea of moving to New Mexico to start a nursery really took hold. I wanted a life working with seeds. My wife accepted this weird idea instead of becoming a physics teacher, and we moved to NM in the spring of 1973. After 3 years of working on the project we started Mesa Garden in 1976. Since 1973 we have taken many trips to collect seeds to grow stock plants for the nursery; it has been a great life of desert camping, hiking and seeing plants in nature. After 41 years of running the nursery we sold it to a couple that were employees and are busier than ever in retirement.



Top: *Conophytum pageae*, growing in grit in a small rock crack.
Bottom: *Adromischus marianiae* growing in moss in a pan, on a mountain top.





W E L C O M E
NEW MEMBERS

Pat Eayrs

Kenneth Felkel

Carrie Campbell

Suzanne + John + Dean
+ Otis Gordon

Michelle Cloud-Hughes

Jan Wittenberg

Christin Webb

ASK THE EXPERT

P L A N T I D , P R O B L E M P L A N T S



ROXIE + JIM ESTERLE:
Identification please?

LACSS MEMBER EXPERT,
MANNY RIVERA:

“The one on the left is Mammillaria boollii and the other one is a Parodia microsperma subs aureispina”



RON COOPER:
“They are both the same plant- with a large white patch near the base. Question would be what to do about it?”

LACSS MEMBER EXPERT,
MANNY RIVERA:

“The problem could be: Sunburn, lack of water or red spiders. Perhaps, cut it all the way down, eventually it will grow new pups. The cutting, cut/eliminate what you don't like and try to root it. Hope you found this helpful. ”



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