



CACTUS CHRONICLE

May 2014

Meeting Time
7:00 pm

Plant of the Month
Buiningia, Uebelmannia
Mesembryanthemaceae
(other than Lithops and
Conophytum)

Refreshments
I-M

April
New Members
will appear in the
June Issue of the
Chronicle

Editor

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Visit Us on the web
<http://www.lacss.com>.
OR contact us at
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Mission Statement:

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

General Meeting **May 1**

Program: Australian Succulent Plants: An Introduction

Attila is immediate past president of the Cactus & Succulent Society of Australia with 10 years in this position, and is also currently editor of its journal.

He has thirty years of experience growing and marketing cacti and succulents. Attila is also a prominent member of the Horticultural Media in Australia, writing regularly in magazines, journals and newspapers and promoting succulent plants.

He was co-founder and developer of the well-known Collectors Corner and Paradisia nurseries, where his interests focused on the breeding, cultivating and marketing of rare and unusual plants. He has travelled extensively to plant habitats around the world and has amassed possibly one of the largest collections of (mostly seed-raised) plants in Australia. Also, Attila has co-written seven books with Rudolf Schulz about succulents, with an eighth book, a solo effort, on Australian native species. His newest publications are a series of seven booklets on xerophytic Australian plants.



Since 2007 Attila has dedicated much of his time and resources to promoting our lesser known Australian succulent plants, touring the Australian speaking circuit regularly and featuring on television and radio.

He will present a fresh approach to conventional attitudes and ideas about the diversity and beauty of Australian flora. Enjoy a colourful visual tour of lesser known and intriguing Australian native plants, mostly in habitat, some of which are rare and very unusual. With Australia's natural flora of well over 20,000 species, at least 400 are considered to have a notable degree of succulence.

Attila will also touch on some traditional and modern foods, cultivation, conservation and other points of interest of at least one hundred species from forty genera. Included are some of the most under-appreciated, diverse, and interesting of Australian plants. The fact that many of them are among the most drought tolerant of all plants, helps link them all together, along with their obvious succulence.

Many of these plants have never been trialled in gardens before. Some interesting aspects of their usefulness in the garden will be explored. Marvel also at the majestic and spectacular giants of our continent—grotesque and monstrous bottle trees and boabs, at times appearing in need of a hug.

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Holiday Party Awards Procurement

Gerald Reichert

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Meeting Refreshments

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Publicity

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Monthly Drawing

Leah Imamura

Juana Williams

President's Message—May 2014

Has anyone ever wondered what happens to all the plant cuttings and pieces that show up like magic on the Freebie table and, like magic, just disappear? I, myself, am a frequent visitor to the Freebie table. My selections are usually the smallest, leftover pieces. I like to see if I can get them to root and grow into something spectacular. So far, the rooting part is working but the spectacular part is taking a bit more patience. I think it would be fun for some of us to bring in a plant or two that we have acquired from the Freebie table. Maybe a show and tell time at our Holiday Dinner? What do you think?

We always try to thank everyone for their participation at our meetings. This month I would like to give a special thanks to our member vendors. Some are regulars and some are not so regular. They always offer a fantastic assortment of quality plants and are always willing to discuss the growing needs with you. Check the Plant of the Month list and you will probably find your future winner! And where would any of us be without John Matthew's top dressing supply? No staged plant is complete without this final touch.

The Club's meeting and program would not even get started if not for the efforts of those who arrive early to set up the various areas for our activities. Many thanks to all of you and to those who stay after the meeting to put it all away.

The Club has always strived to provide events to give our members a chance to experience an aspect of collecting and growing that can't be covered in our monthly programs. After each special event (trip, mentoring, clean-up, etc.) it has been our practice to ask a participant to write an article for the Chronicle to document and comment on the event. This month we are fortunate to have **two** articles, with photos, on the latest Mentoring session. This is very special and greatly appreciated.

So, you were beginning to think that I was going to let a month go by without mentioning the need for volunteers for our Festival. Well, you are kind of right. Look elsewhere in the Chronicle for that eagerly anticipated information. Your individual volunteer efforts will be greatly appreciated and will add to the Festival success.

Since I am on vacation as I write this, I will make it short and see you soon.
Joyce

Mentoring Session

By Kathleen Misko

Saturday, April 12, I was lucky enough to be able to attend the mentoring class at Desert Creations. Before I tell you about the class, I want to tell you about me. Hopefully it will make sense in the end.

50 years ago, I joined a group called the Motion Picture Costumers. I was given the opportunity to work in an amazingly creative business. Travel the world. See sights that were stunning. Raise my family on the road. Which is where the tie in begins. In 2007, my granddaughter, Veronica, was born to my daughter, Amanda, a single mother. Because I had been a working Mom, I decided to be a grannanny and care for Veronica. So I took my retirement and joined the ranks of caregiver. She's in school now and a camping trip had been planned since last September for the same week end as the Mentoring class. At the ready for a Refugio weekend to kick off Easter break. Woo hoo. Except I got sick with that wicked cold. Feeling very sad, I begged off. Hmmm. Left me available to attend the mentoring class. I know, short story long, but I've been wanting to share some of my background with the club.

Saturday morning. Perfect weather for a class. And for those of you that have not been to Steve and Phyllis', a wonderful opportunity to see their collection. So perfectly planted. You feel as if you are exploring another land. I think their landscape is award worthy. The back of the house is laid out in such a way that you are given an opportunity to view the plants in the cold frames as well as the green house and on the tables under the shade cloth.. What a thrill to see the plants growing as they do in nature. I'm glad Steve pointed it out to us. I had brought a cactus that had been growing in sand in a trough with no drainage that a friend had brought me. I dumped it out on Saturday morning so I would have something to stage. Gerald's pots were available and I am such a fan of his work. He has the talent to create pots that enhance a planting and still inspire. I chose two as Artie had said he wouldn't know until he saw the plant.

Chairs start coming and we all gather around the master. Literally, standing room only. I got a seat, thanks to Joyce who felt sorry for my dizziness.

Artie set up his workspace and began tearing apart plants, explaining that the roots need to be stripped of the old growing medium. As we watched him rip apart each plant and massage the soil from the roots, I think I speak for all of us when I say that if we had any hesitation about re potting, it flew out the window. There were some key words that Artie shared. He talked about how he would stage a plant just because he was tired of looking at it. I laughed when I walked through my garden and saw a trio of planters that have been with us for 21 years. Ha, I'm ripping those puppies out. And I'm going to stage them to resemble their native planting. We were so lucky to have Steve narrate. I'd watch this PBS series any day.

Caudex. This was the coolest. Artie took Joyce's plant that had been in the pot three years and showed us how the caudex had been growing. As it would in nature. Bulging up under rocks. Storing it's life force. With only the top peaking out to feed itself. Well, in staging, the caudex is the showpiece. He took the clippers and "Artiel" chopped the heck out of it. Set it in a pot that Joyce had chosen, selected a few rocks, then top dressed it and Voila. Showpiece. And that was just one. We were given such an opportunity to watch and learn from the master.

We all watched as Roxie contained herself while Artie trimmed her plant. Good grief!!!, we all felt her pain and learned from that.

And what he did to John Sucio's plant. Oh my gosh. Just cut off miles of leaves. It was awesome. By then, we were old hands at that and could hardly wait to see what would happen. He staged it in a pot that John had made. We are a talented bunch, I say.

Ilona brought the free plant she got at the meeting when she joined. Artie staged it showing us how to use the round factor. Then the next one. Told us not to do that. Very simply. Each plant is its one rule. He taught us techniques. But it is up to us to study how the plants grow. To follow our eye. Don't be afraid to chop, cut, peel.

Plants blow down in nature. They live on their side. That's how mine was staged. I love it. It is so pleasing to me.

This whole class was like our little secret. I once again say "sorry to you that you couldn't come." Or those of you that thought you didn't need to learn. This was a master's class. I'm glad I got sick. And John Sucio. We are so lucky that he has taken the initiative to put together these classes. Thank you. Sign me up for the semester.



Potting Station

Mentoring Program By Ilona Burratti

There were 15 of us at Steve's house for the staging demonstration on Saturday, April 12th, and there was room for you too! The workshop is part of our Club's Mentoring Program arranged by John Sucio. What made this especially interesting is that Artie Chavez and Steve Frieze played teacher together, and *off each other*. A Tonto & Lone Ranger, Robin & Batman, Martin & Lewis...well maybe not exactly but you get the drift.

They used our plants. Some were our "babies," some were, well...to be kind not, so special, even pretty big or ugly...just something to bring and be the excuse to buy a plant from *Desert Creations*. Plants were removed (dumped) from their pots, roots were exposed, then chopped off to the horror of some of us, a pot was selected...from what we brought or if we thought the plant was worthy, a pot made by Gerald Reichert was chosen. As Artie dumped, cut, chopped, poked, there was a plant transformation happening. It became manageable. It made sense. What to do next was now eagerly anticipated. Heck, we even gave him hints. All the while Steve was giving instructions, and explanations. What to use, why we use that, where to find this or that, put the rock here or there... (Sounding like Green Eggs & Ham?)

The first plant was Roxie's, one she really liked and wanted staged. At the "dump it out stage", she smiled, at the hacking off of the roots, she gasped. As the repotting progressed her expressions became hopeful and with the final rock and top dressing Roxie beamed! That story continued with each of our plants.



Roxie Before Artie repotted her plant



Roxie After Artie repotted her plant



After so many years in the same pot, Artie sliced, diced and cleaned the roots. Here is Joyce's new plant!



Ilona's "fuzzy bunny"

My first plant was a cactus I picked up at the Freebee Table on my very first visit to the Club. So cute and fuzzy I actually petted it, which was a mistake by the way. My second plant was a succulent given to me by a friend. Both had meaning, both had root issues, and both left the workshop as Show Plants...



Steve narrates the steps Artie is demonstrating



A repotted and staged plant



<p>Waterwise Botanicals www.waterwisebotanicals.com</p> <p>32183 Old Hwy 395 Escondido, CA 92026 (760) 728-2641</p>	<p>For more information: Contact: Mikayla Taylor work: (760)728-2641 cell: (951)445-3322 mikayla@waterwisebotanicals.com</p>
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THE 2ND ANNUAL SUCCULENT CELEBRATION AT WATERWISE BOTANICALS, JUNE 6-7

North San Diego County's Waterwise Botanicals nursery will host the spectacular two-day event, Succulent Celebration, on **Friday and Saturday, June 6-7, 2014.**

This one of a kind event in Southern California celebrates the versatility, sustainability, and beauty of succulents. Come to Waterwise Botanicals to enjoy a kaleidoscope of color, creation, and education on drought tolerant landscaping, and living art at its best.

Also featured is the exciting reinvention of Garden Design magazine and its creators.

The superior lineup of speakers includes best-selling author and photojournalist Debra Lee Baldwin; plant explorer and hybridizer Kelly Griffin of Altman Plants; Peter Loyola of Oceanside's Succulent Café; Robyn Stockwell, owner of Succulent Gardens in Northern California, and Tom Jesch of Waterwise Botanicals.

All are invited to experience "the best garden event of the year" with acres of nursery and display gardens to explore, hands-on workshops, a grand assortment of succulents and low-water plants for sale, the chance to speak with industry experts, arts and crafts vendors with succulent-themed gifts, food trucks and more.

Hours 9:00am to 5:00pm both days. Free parking and admission. Event details can be seen at www.succulentcelebration.com

Waterwise Botanicals, established in 2010, is a 20+ acre wholesale/retail nursery located in the rolling hills of Escondido, in North County San Diego. Just off Interstate-15 northwest of the highway at 32183 Old Hwy 395 Escondido, CA 92026

Plant of the Month: Aizoaceae (Mesembryanthemaceae) except *Lithops*

Mesembryanthemaceae is one of the longest and ugliest plant family names. Thankfully, botanists don't call it that anymore. Now we refer to the family as the *Aizoaceae*. You can informally call them *Mesembs* as well. The change in name is due in part to the uniting of plants formally in different families. 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 most species that we grow are very highly succulent, such as *Lithops*, *Faucaria*, or Ice Plant (*Carpobrotus*), some genera are just slightly succulent and more resemble a typical herb.



Fucaria tirgina

Aizoaceae have 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. 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 (e.g. *Lithops*), 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. Whereas Cacti "fight" their predators by forming big sharp spines, the small stemless *Aizoaceae* hide from them by blending into their surroundings. They in essence become indistinguishable from rocks and are therefore ignored by thirsty predators. Another strategy employed by many *Aizoaceae* is to grow in the cracks of rocks. That gets them away from bigger, faster growing shrubs and grasses that would shade them out, but also helps them survive against predators. If a thirsty animal were to find one of these in the ground they could eat the whole thing killing it. If they find one wedged in a rock they might be able to eat the exposed leaves but the base of the plant would be protected, allowing the plant to regrow.



Conophytum obcordellum

Our climate is great for growing most *Mesembs*, though, with nearly 2000 species, general advice for growing all of them is impossible to give. However, for the fleshy leaved South African species basic advice can be given. First of all, you need to know if your plant comes from the winter rainfall regions (which is very similar to our own climate) or from summer rainfall regions. For winter growers such as *Conophytum*, *Cheiridopsis*, or *Fenestraria* you can embrace our climate by letting the winter rains water them from fall through spring and then keeping them totally dry (or nearly so) during the summer. For summer growers like *Faucaria*, *Pleiospilos*, or *Lithops* relatives like *Argyroderma* and *Tanquana* keep them totally dry in the winter and water in the summer, except when it is very hot out at which time they should be kept dry again. With few exceptions no *Mesemb* wants to be wet for any length of time. So if our winters are especially rainy even the winter growers might need some protection. Similarly, don't soak your summer growers too often even during the growing season. Please realize that summer and winter growers may vary within a genus. For example, *Titanopsis calcarea* is a summer grower while *T. hugoschlechteri* is a winter grower. The plants don't care what genus they are, they care about the climate where they live in nature. When in doubt look it up! It should be mentioned that for this month's show we are excluding *Lithops*. That has nothing to do with biology or taxonomy, so I haven't focused on it in this article. We are doing it simply to give the other *Aizoaceae* a chance to shine instead of taking a backseat to the ever popular *Lithops*.



-Kyle Williams

Plant of the Month: Coleocephalocereus (Buiningia) & Uebelmannia



Coleocephalocereus brevicylindricus

This month we look at two genera of cacti from Brazil that are difficult to spell. *Coleocephalocereus* is a genus of approximately six species of with a columnar habit. Many know the genus as Buiningia, but botanists have determined *Coleocephalocereus* is the more proper name. What makes this a standout genus worthy of cultivation (and easy to identify!) is the lateral cephalium running down the sides of mature plants. "Lateral cephalium" probably made several people's eyes glaze over, but don't worry, once you see one you won't forget it! *Coleocephalocereus* is a mouthful to say but in English it means "the Cereus with a sheath head" which makes a lot of sense.

Most people are familiar with *Melocactus* because it grows like a normal green cactus for several years but then starts to produce a strange fuzzy and spiny "head" (that's what cephalium means) which makes flowers. Over the years the this fuzzy head grows taller and taller while the normal green part of the plant remains the same. These plants are highly prized by collectors because of this. Turns out that *Coleocephalocereus* does the same thing but in a "smarter" way from a growth standpoint. While *Melocactus* completely stops producing a normal green stem for the rest of its life, *Coleocephalocereus* produces the cephalium on one side of the plant only, meaning the stem can keep growing up. This gives a very unusual but beautiful look, almost like a beard on the plant.



Uebelmannia pectinifera

Uebelmannia does not produce a cephalium but is as much, if not more, highly prized than *Coleocephalocereus*. It is a small genus of globular to shortly columnar cacti with approximately three species, though some split up *U. pectinifera* into several different species. The genus is distinctive in having numerous spine covered ribs that give a very regular and pleated look to the plant. In addition most plants are various shades of purple to gray, giving even more beauty to the species. The most popular species is *U. pectinifera* and large, show quality, specimens can sell for hundreds of dollars. The biggest problem in growing nice big plants is their propensity to form marks and scars on the stems that detract from their appearance. A specimen sized plant without distracting marks is something to behold.



Coleocephalocereus aureus

While these genera look very different, they are together as plants of the month because they are both Brazilian genera that like similar growing conditions. They are from tropical regions and appreciate warmer temperatures. It is best to keep them at a minimum of 50 degrees in the winter, but they can be grown cooler (but never below freezing) if kept dry in the winter. Cool and wet makes them prone to rot. During the summer they appreciate more water than the average cactus.

-Kyle Williams

**Plant of the Month
2014**

May

Buiningia, Uebelmannia
Mesembryanthemaceae
(other than Lithops &
Conophytum)

June

Favorite, Favorite

July

Escobaria, Corypantha
Cucurbitaceae

August

Obregonia, Strombo-
cactus, Echinomastus
Fockea, Raphionacme,
Brachystelma

September

Thelocactus
Fouqueria

October

Ariocarpus
Euphorbia
(Madagascar)

November

Miniatures

December

Holiday Party

2015

January

Discocactus
Anacampseros, Avonia,
Ceraria

February

Mammillaria Clusters
Sarcocaulon

March

Pediocactus,
Sclerocactus
Sedum

April

Variiegates

May

Astekium
Geohnintonia

Plant of the Month

Succulent -- Yucca, Nolina, Calibanus, Beaurcarnea

Rookie

First	Kathryn Boorer	Calibanis hookeri
Second	Nancy Neymark	Beaurcarnea recurvata
Third	Kathryn Boorer	Yucca hilamentosa 'Color Guard'

Novice

First	Jim Esterle	Yucca endlichiana
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Advanced

First	Kim Thorpe	Yucca endlichiana
Second	Kim Thorpe	Yucca sp.

Open

First	Artie Chavez	Calibanus hookeri
Second	John Matthews	Calibanus hookeri
Third	Gerald Richert	Calibanus hookeri

Cactus -- Single headed Gymnocalycium

Rookie

First	Kyle Williams	Gymnocalycium vatteri
Second	Kyle Williams	Gymnocalycium ansistii var. damsii
Second	Kathryn Boorer	Gymnocalycium vatteri
Third	Kathryn Boorer	Gymnocalycium mihanuuichii
Third	Kathryn Boorer	Gymnocalycium sp. variegated

Novice

First	Sylvia Strehlo	Gymnocalycium vatteri
Second	Sylvia Strehlo	Gymnocalycium strigianum
Third	Sylvia Strehlo	Gymnocalycium sp.

Advanced

First	Kim Thorpe	Gymnocalycium sp.
Second	Kim Thorpe	Gymnocalycium sp.
Third	Kim Thorpe	Gymnocalycium buerekeri variegated

Open

First	John Matthews	Gymnocalycium marsoneri ssp. Matoense
Second	John Matthews	Gymnocalycium asterias
Third	John Matthews	Gymnocalycium spegazzinii

Cactus & Succulent - Calendar Of Upcoming Events For 2014

- May 4** South Bay Epiphyllum Society Show & Sale---9am-4pm
South Coast Botanical Gardens **Info** (310) 833-6823
- May 3-4** Sunset Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale Veterans Memorial Center, Garden Room
4117 Overland Ave., Culver City **Info** (310) 822-1783
- May 16-17** Gates Cactus & Succulent Society 33rd Show & Sale Friday & Saturday 9-4:30
Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hill Drive Glen Avon **Info** (951) 360-8802
- May 17** Santa Barbara Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Sale 10am-3pm
Trinity Lutheran Church 909 N. La Cumbre Road, Santa Barbara **Info** 805-967-7962
- May 17-18** Long Beach Cactus Club Plant Show & Sale 10-5 www.lbcss.org
Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach **Info** (310) 922-6090—
- May 24-25** Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale 10-4pm Ludwick Center,
864 Santa Rosa, San Luis Obispo **Info** (805) 237-2054, www.centralcoastcactus.org
- June 7-8** San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society –Summer Show & Sale
Balboa Park, Room 101, San Diego **Info** (858) 382-1797
- June 14-15** **Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society Drought Tolerant Plant Show & Sale 9-3:30** Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino www.lacss-show.com
- June 27-29** **CSSA Annual Show & Sale** –Huntington Botanical Gardens 1151 Oxford Road
Info 626) 405-2160 or 2277 Sales Start June 27 Show Opens and Free to the Public on June 28
- July 25-27** Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Summer Show & Sale **Info** (949) 212-8417
Friday July 25 9am-5pm, Saturday July 26 9am-5pm, Sunday 27 12-4pm
1000 S. State College Bl., (Anaheim United Methodist Church) Anaheim
- August 9-10** 29th Annual Intercity Show & Sale-LA County Arboretum, 9am-5pm Daily
301 No. Baldwin Ave **Info** Tom Glavich (626) 798-2430 or John Matthews (661) 714-1052
- August 30** Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium **All Day at the Huntington**
- September 7** Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction -12-5
Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach 90615 **Info:** (310) 922-6090
- November 4-5** San Gabriel Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale 9-4 Both Days
LA County Arboretum 301 No. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

Updated 2-17-2014



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General Meeting

May 1

Program: Australian Succulent Plants: An Introduction

Presented by: Attila Kapitany

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