



# CACTUS CHRONICLE



## 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.

## A Word From Our President

Probably, I could fill this entire page with my thoughts and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. But then, so could everyone else since we all are going through the same thing. Suffice it to say: I renewed my interest in crossword puzzles, Rose is doing a lot of cooking and laundry, and both of our phones are so old they can no longer receive emails. That required me to return to the "old" way of checking emails – turn on my computer.

The world of cacti and succulents adapted quickly to the restrictions using the tried-and-true technology of Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, Skype and the latest, ZOOM. LACSS participated in a few of those formats – staying in touch without overwhelming the system. Our approach was to contact each other without being a pest.

The latest news from the ONEGeneration is that they will be closed till further notice. It seems like every two weeks, the schedule gets moved forward by two more weeks. We will lose a couple of months of great speakers, plant showings and socializing but will not lose our community and our love of the plants that brought us together in the first place. I offer my most heartfelt "thank you" to those who immediately volunteered for the Festival. You are at the top of my list for the next event we hold. Your energy and dedication will always be appreciated by all of us.

May is here and that means our weather should start looking more like summer. The spring rain was fantastic! My plants loved it although the ones that are not protected were thinking "Enough, already!", some have even flowered. We should be fertilizing a bit but Karen will advise you on that.

The Board of Directors has stayed in contact through emails and phone calls. We will have a virtual meeting some time to plan our strategy for the remainder of the year. If you have any thoughts on that topic (or any other), please let me know.

Please forward your comments/photos to our Editor to include in the June newsletter. It is another way to share our plants and participate in club activities. Also, this is a good way to brag about a plant that is waaay to big to bring to the meeting.

Thanks to everyone for staying safe, staying home, social distancing, wearing face coverings and gloves and most important staying positive and in touch.

See you soon.  
Best,

Joyce, LACSS President



**THE LACSS MAY MEETING IS  
STILL CANCELLED  
AS IS THE JUNE MEETING  
AND THE FESTIVAL**

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Kimberly Gomez-Tong  
newsletter@lacactus.com

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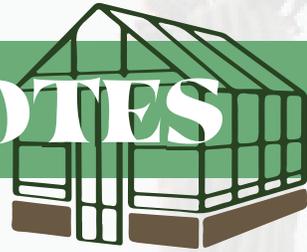
Susan Phillips

## MEETING REFRESHMENTS

## POM PLANT DESCRIPTIONS

Kyle Williams

# GREENHOUSE NOTES



by KAREN OSTLER

**April showers** bring May flowers, especially if it is followed by days of warmth and sunshine. Although that old adage was written for English gardens, this year it is holding true for us. If you listen you can almost hear your plants growing. I took a walk around my yard, and the few cactus that can tolerate our winter are getting ready to burst into flower. Opuntias; both the native *O. basilaris* and *O. echinocarpa* and the non-natives such as *O. macrocarpa* are covered in buds that are swelling by the day. *Ferocactus herrerae* is already in flower and *Cleistocactus senilis* has red buds tempting all the hummingbirds.

If there is a silver lining in this troubled time; it is the opportunity to stay at home and play with our plants. For many of us, this is a doubled edged gift; worrying about friends and family and at the same time getting to see our plants on a daily basis.

In the greenhouse, temperatures are already up into the high 90's, and *Astrophytum*s are pushing out flower buds as are all of the *Mammillarias*.

*Gasterias* are a riot of long flower covered racemes, and the ants are busy pollinating as they collect the sweet dew that forms on some of the flowers.

*Operculicaryas* are pushing out leaves and *Fouquierias* leap into leaf literally overnight.

Now is the time to start fertilizing all of these wonderful plants; with the exception of your *Lithops*; just ignore them. Ease into it, I normally fertilize 1 part fertilizer to 16 parts water; in the beginning I add extra water lowering the ratio down to about 1 part fertilizer to 20 parts water; I don't want to get some weird growth because I over-fertilized after a winter without any.

Watch the overnight temperatures, we can still get a cold night or two, look out a week ahead and if it is predicted, don't water. We have all killed more plants with kindness than neglect.

As gardeners we have an outlook focused on the future, or else we wouldn't have the patience to grow some of the slowest plants in the world. Take that patience and that positive outlook and see into the future when we can all share our plants in person.

Stay safe, stay home, and stay healthy, I don't want to lose a single one of you.

Karen Ostler

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Hello there LACSS! In our last supplementary we asked you to send us photos of plants you would have entered into April's POM. Because of this we will be including Kyle Williams' April POM articles instead of May's. If you paid attention to your blasts 😊, I sent out a supplementary mid April that included Karen Ostler's guide to growing with seeds! She's got an update for us, I've included it on this page. Thank you to those who have sent photos (WOW YOU GUYS HAVE LOTS OF AGAVE!) or dropped us a line or two. Keep them coming, we enjoy receiving them and it is important we all feel in touch and connected. I know it's a difficult time for all of us and hope you find some peace and sense of unity even through our newsletter! Keep checking those emails, your supplementary will be sent in the next couple weeks. Sending love and light to all of you, stay safe!

- Kimberly

## Seed tutorial update from Karen Ostler,



Here is a shot of the *Oreocereus celisanius* seeds I started for the tutorial. I started 15 seeds on the 6th of April, and today 10 seeds are up.



### PLANT OF THE MONTH 2020

#### APRIL

Obregonia, Strombocactus,  
Ortegocactus  
Agave

#### MAY

Small cacti & succulent staged as  
miniature

#### JUNE

Favorites

#### JULY

Aztekium & Geohintonia  
Pachypodium from Madagascar  
& Plumeria

#### AUGUST

Sulcorebutia & Weingartia  
Fockea

#### SEPTEMBER

Ferocactus & Leuchtenbergia  
Dorstenia & Ficus

#### OCTOBER

Parodia & Notocactus  
Euphorbia Stem Type

#### NOVEMBER

Crest & Monstrose  
Crest & Monstrose

# APRIL PLANT of the MONTH

## OBREGONIA, ECHINOMASTUS, & ORTEGOCACTUS BY KYLE WILLIAMS

Photo credits: Kyle Williams, Kaktus855, & CactiLegacy



*Echinomastus erectocentrus*

This month we have a grab bag of three small, unrelated, genera of cacti, Obregonia, Echinomastus, and Ortegocactus. All combined these three genera have only approximately 11 species between them. They are native to Mexico for the most part, though some Echinomastus reach the Southwestern United States. All stay small enough to make nice potted specimens.

Echinomastus has about six to nine species in northern Mexico and the United States, particularly in Arizona, Texas, and adjacent parts of Mexico. Most species are covered in dense spines. Interestingly, the various species could easily be mistaken for other genera at first glance. *E. johnsonii* resembles *Ferocactus*, *E. mariposensis* looks like a *Mammillaria*, while *E. erectocentrus* could be mistaken for an

*Echinocereus*. The reality is that Echinomastus is most closely related to *Sclerocactus*. In cultivation they take typical cactus care, and most are reasonably to very cold tolerant, certainly able to withstand any cold snaps in our region.

Obregonia is a monotypic genus (i.e. a genus with only one species) containing the species *Obregonia denegrii* from a small region of Tamaulipas, Mexico. This plant gets its name from a fairly shameless attempt to impress both the President of Mexico, Alvaro Obregon and the Agriculture Minister of Mexico, Ramon De Negri, at the time the plant was discovered. If you are going to have a cactus named after you this is one of the better ones as Obregonia is one of the most unusual and coveted cacti in cultivation. The common name "Artichoke Cactus" belies this. The plant forms unusual leaf like tubercles that really do resemble an artichoke, though this is much slower growing and you wouldn't want to eat it! For a long time this species was quite rare and expensive in cultivation. In recent years the price has come down quite a bit as more and more plants are produced. While certainly not common, you can find it fairly readily at cactus shows and through specialist cactus nurseries. Plants are slow growing but cultivation isn't particularly difficult. Plants grown in shady conditions are usually green, but give them more light and they will become a beautiful bronze color. Because they are slow growing and tuberous rooted they can be prone to rot, especially in the winter, if kept too moist. Treat it like an *Ariocarpus* and you will be fine.

Ortegocactus, like Obregonia, is monotypic. It comes from a small area of Oaxaca and is noteworthy for having a unique mint or seafoam green color nicely complimented by short black spines. This color, more than anything else, has made the species highly desirable to collectors. It is a slow grower but in time forms a clump of small round heads. It has a tendency to form rusty orange coloration at the base of the plant in time.



*Ortegocactus macdougalii*



*Obregonia denegrii*

# APRIL PLANT of the MONTH

## AGAVE

BY KYLE WILLIAMS

Photo credits: Kyle Williams & Stan Shebs

Agaves are one of, if not THE, most popularly grown succulents in California and the Southwest. It is hard to go down any street in our region without seeing at least one *Agave americana*, *A. attenuata*, *A. potatorum*, or a host of other species. They are easy to grow, come in a great variety of sizes and shapes, and most thrive on neglect. No wonder they are so popular!

Agaves, like the Cacti, are entirely new world in origin, although many members have been naturalized around the world. Agaves are native to Southern North America, Mexico, Central America, Northern South America and the Caribbean. A few species are native to the deserts of Southern California. There are roughly 200 species of *Agave* and countless varieties and cultivars, with new species being discovered regularly. Some species are so common in cultivation that you practically can't give them away while others (such as *A. albopilosa*) command \$100 or more for a small plant.

Many people shy away from Agaves because they think the plants are all spiny giants that take over half of your yard. While species like *A. americana* and *A. mapisaga* certainly fit that description, there are lots of well-behaved small to mid-sized species such as *A. victoriae-reginae*, *A. potatorum*, *A. isthmenensis* which can even be grown in a pot (hopefully so or we won't have any entries for our contest!). If stiff leaves and sharp spines are the problem then *A. attenuata* is perfect for you. Its leaves are so soft and lush that it would look right at home in a tropical planting instead of a xeric one.

Agaves are easily grown from seed. Although many of members of this genus grow very large with age, they are particularly good looking as seedlings, and can be kept small for many years in pots. They thrive with regular feeding with any general purpose fertilizer. Their appearance is best when they are cleaned regularly, with debris removed from the leaves, and



*Agave palmeri*



*Agave isthmenensis* 'Ohi Rajin'



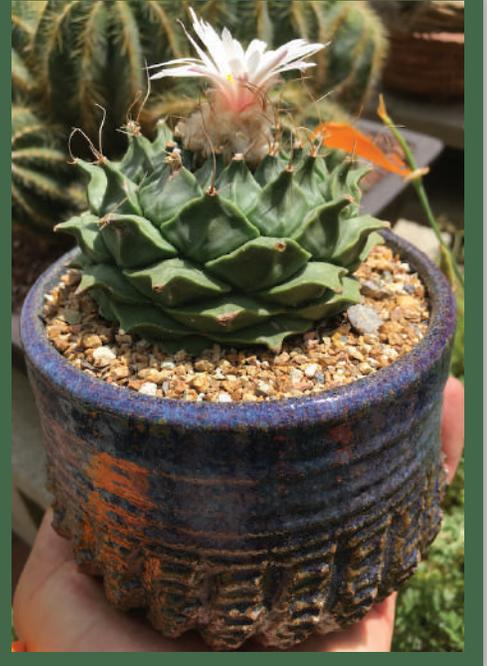
*Agave albopilosa*

and dead leaves removed to prevent insects from making homes. Many offset freely, and these offsets can be removed and repotted, giving a steady supply of small plants. Many growers keep the offsets, and dispose of the mother plant, keeping size, health and condition under control. *Agave* flowers are spectacular with spikes that sometimes reach as high as 20 feet. After flowering, the *agave* mother plant dies back.

# PLANT <sup>of the</sup> MONTH SUBMISSIONS



OBREGONIA DENEGRII  
NICK STEINHARDT



OBREGONIA DENEGRII  
COLLIN O'CALLAGHAN



OBREGONIA DENEGRII  
KAREN OSTLER

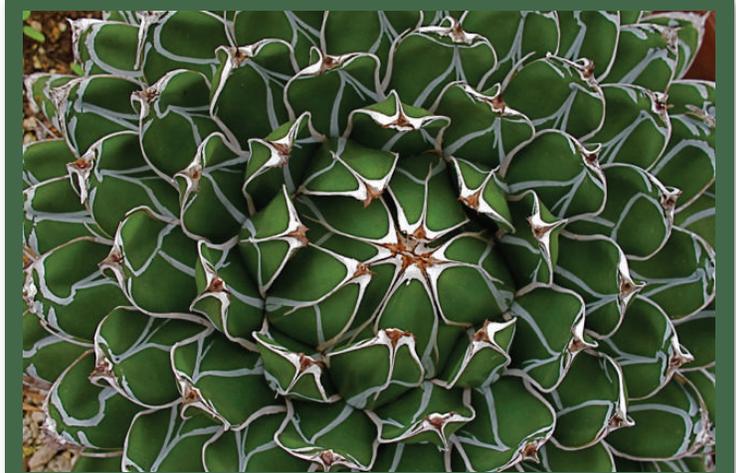


STROMBOCACTUS DISCIFORMIS  
DUKE + KAZ BENADOM

# PLANT <sup>of the</sup> MONTH SUBMISSIONS



A. UTAHENSIS  
DUKE + KAZ BENADOM

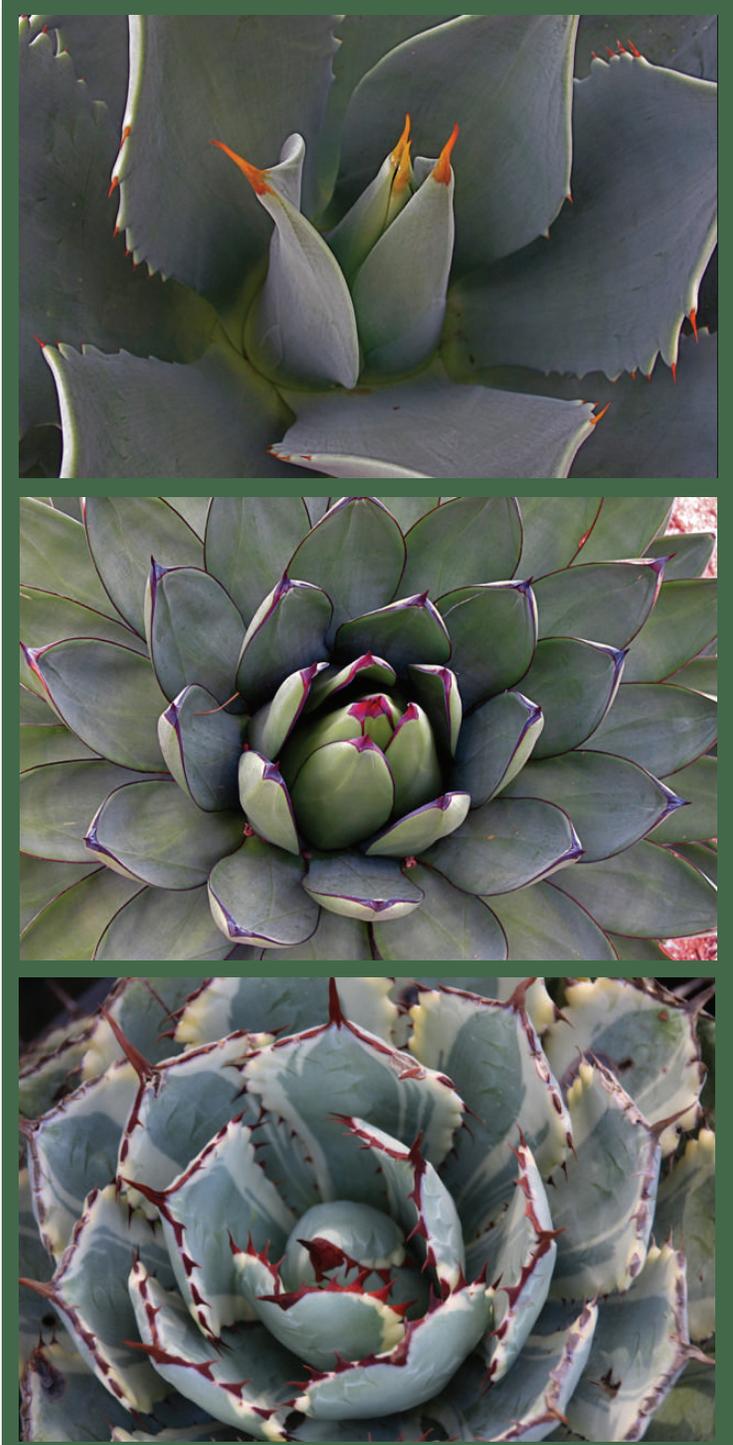


AGAVE NICKELSIAE / A. FERDINARDI-REGIS  
AGAVE 'DAVID VERITY'  
AGAVE FILIFERA  
GRETCHEN DAVIS



LEFT : A. HAMMERTIME, RIGHT : A. VICTORIA REGINAE  
NANCY NEYMARK

# PLANT <sup>of</sup> the MONTH SUBMISSIONS



AGAVE HYBRID 'KICHIJOKAN'  
AGAVE HYBRID 'ROYAL SPINE'  
AGAVE HYBRID 'KISSO KAN'  
PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY GRETCHEN DAVIS

KELLY GRIFFIN DEVELOPED  
RANCHO SOLEDAD NURSERY



AGAVE HYBRID 'KISSO KAN'  
COLLIN O'CALLAGHAN

# PLANT <sup>of the</sup> MONTH SUBMISSIONS

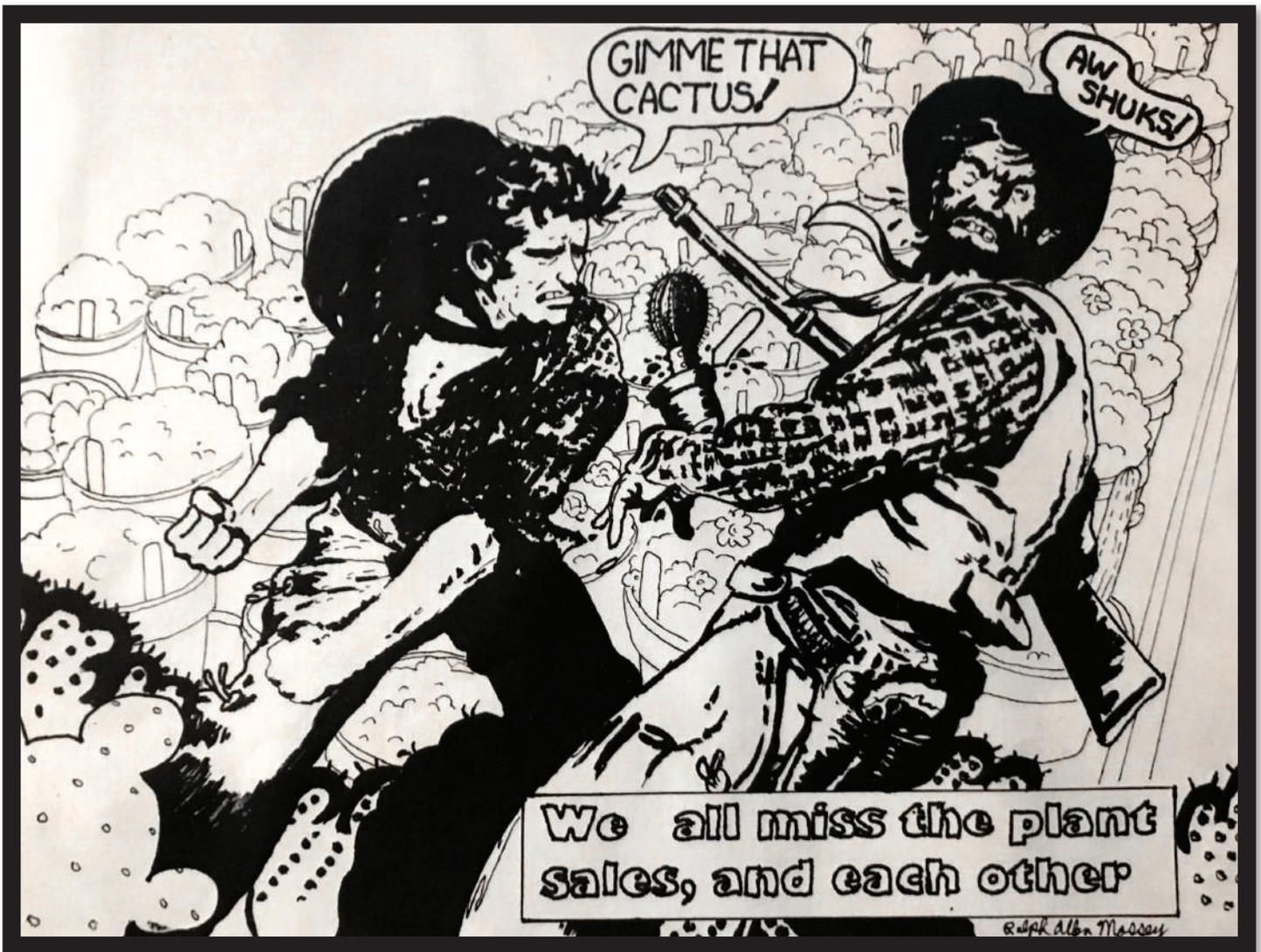


TOP LEFT: A. BLUE GLOW  
 TOP RIGHT: A. DESMETTIANA  
 BOTTOM LEFT: MOTHER OF AGAVE  
 DESMETTIANA  
 BOTTOM RIGHT: A. ANGUSTIFOLIO  
 JENNIFER BENSI



TOP LEFT: A. LOPHANTHA  
 TOP RIGHT: A. VICTORIA REGINAE  
 BOTTOM LEFT: A. GEMINFLORA  
 BOTTOM RIGHT: A. BOUICORNUTA  
 AL MINDEL

# MEMBER BLURBS



BY RALPH MASSEY

This is my oldest plant. Not the first one I acquired but the one that survived all the newbie errors. The thing that is so remarkable about this plant is that it actually has died at least two times in its 30 years of existence. The first time I mourned the loss and then moved on to other things. A few years later, a new plant pad appeared and thrived for a couple of years. Then it too died. So I kind of kicked the pot to the side and left it alone. Again, a few years later, a new sprout began to evolve from the old and crispy remains of the original plant. Since then, it continues to grow and add new pads each year. Currently it is about 10 years old. It survives on a minimum of care - a splash of fertilizer every 3 or 4 years and a sprinkle of water every now and then. To the best of my recollection, it has never flowered. The moral to the story is - just because it's dead, it might not be. The roots may still be alive.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 55TH ANNUAL CSSA SHOW & SALE

The Huntington has made a decision to cancel all June events which means our show & sale scheduled for June, 26-28, has been cancelled for this year. The CSSA held off making that decision for as long as possible but now it has been made for us. I'm hopeful that we can all get through these difficult times safely and see each other soon. I look forward to the 55th Annual Show & Sale next June, 2021, at the Huntington and hope to see all of you there.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Hall  
Annual Show Chair