



LOS ANGELES  
CACTUS  
AND  
SUCCULENT  
SOCIETY

# CACTUS CHRONICLE

October  
2011

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Next Meeting: October 6, 2011



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## LACSS October Program Kelly Griffin Madagascar Revisited

Kelly will present "Lemurs, Lizards and Aloes ~ Madagascar revisited", and is the result of a 3 1/2-week trip made in April this year. He spent most of the time in the hinterlands, seeking new plants. This account contains a little of the flora and fauna of Madagascar, and everything in between.

Kelly is well known for his work as the curator of xeric plants at Rancho Soledad Nurseries ([www.ranchosoledad.com](http://www.ranchosoledad.com)), virtual plant Disneyland in Rancho Santa Fe CA. Together with his business partner Allen Repashy, he runs Xericgrowers ([Xericgrowers.com](http://Xericgrowers.com)), specializing in propagation of unique cultivars and select forms of Succulent plants. Don't forget to check out the Xericworld forum too - [Xericworld.com](http://Xericworld.com) - its about plants!

Kelly's programs are always worth watching. He is an excellent speaker and photographer, and has a keen insight into many diverse plant groups. Arrive early, not just to get in line for the plants he'll be bringing, but also since seating will be at a premium!



*Kelly Griffin Images*



# Nursery and Garden Field Trip to Malibu

## September, 2011

By Roxie Esterle

On Sunday, September 19, over 20 members (including 2 new families) enjoyed a field trip to Serra Gardens and Bob Morris's ranch in Malibu. The weather was perfect.

At Serra Gardens, new owner Rosemary Williams Hall toured our group and shared the 30+ year history of the nursery. Small world! It turned out that our member Joyce Shumann had actually worked for the former owner, Dr. Victor Newcomer when he was a Dermatology professor at UCLA. They never knew that the other was interested in cacti and succulents.

Serra Gardens, on 7 wonderful acres right off PCH, is being refurbished as a wholesale nursery, continuing to specialize in succulents. The highlights of the trip were the mature and enormous *Dasylirions longissimas* (one in flower over 15 feet tall), *Aloe barberi*, a forest of *Alluaudia procera*, a huge *Aloe dichotoma*, a mature *Euphorbia balsamifera*, and countless other specimens in pots and in the ground. Everything looked especially good as members sipped mimosas generously provided by Rosemary.

From Serra Gardens, we visited LACSS member Bob Morris's ranch, situated at the top of Encinal Canyon. Bob is an eclectic collector with enough space to plant countless species of Aloes, Euphorbias, Dudleyas, Agaves, Kalanchoes, and much more. Bob takes pride in rescuing sick plants, starting cuttings, propagating by seed, and experimenting with planting in different locations. He's considering some very interesting grafting ideas. He tried his luck with fruit trees, but the local critters got the best of him.

In his spare time, Bob operates an animal rescue with llamas, tortoises, peacocks, turkeys, and more. He enjoys sharing the animals with visitors and school groups.

We're looking at Saturday, November 12 for our next field trip, so please save the date.



## *Plant-of-the-Month* 2011

January	Gymnocactus and Ortegocactus	Aloe hybrids
February	Mammillaria (single head)	Dudleya
March	Echinocereus	Asclepiads -caudiciform and tuberous forms
April	Gymnocalycium (multiple heads)	Sansevieria
May	Epiphytes	Echeveria
June	Turbinicarpus and Frailea	Mesembs(other than Lithops and Conophytum) e.g. Pleiospilos, Lapidaria
July	Tephrocactus	Adenia
August	Brazilian cacti	Pachypodium (African species)
September	Ferocactus	Euphorbia (stem forms)
October	Ariocarpus	Terrestrial Bromeliads
November	Monstrose and Crest	Monstrose and Crest
December	<b><i>Holiday Party</i></b>	

**Entry Classes:** All new members, new to the hobby, should enter plants in the Novice class. Novices must move to the Advanced class after they have won a total of 40 first place awards in the Plant of the Month competition or who have been a member of the LACSS for three years or more. Individuals who own a nursery are required to enter in the Open class. Members must determine which class is appropriate for their skill level and must then continue to enter in that class for the remaining of the calendar year.

**Prizes:** All prizes are awarded at the Holiday Celebration in December. Trophies are awarded by entry class for those members who scored the most points in either the cacti or combined succulent categories. In the Novice and Advanced classes the top two scorers in each of the plant categories will also receive a prize (typically a plant). These prizes are awarded based on the total number of points scored during the year. Finally, a trophy is awarded to members, regardless of class, who have earned the most points in the cactus and/or succulent categories during the prior year.

**Entry Requirements:** All entrants must be LACSS members. Members are restricted to 3 plants per entry category per month – a total of 6 plants. In the Advanced and Open Classes, members must have been in possession of their plants for at least one year. Those members showing in the Novice class may immediately enter a recently obtained plant. You can only enter plants that conform to the Plant of the Month schedule described above.

Judging Scale*		Points Awarded	
Condition	50%	First	5
Size and Maturity	25%	Second	3
Staging	20%	Third	1
Nomenclature	5%	Entry Award**	1

\* Plants that are in flower and the rarity of the entry are two additional criteria judges employ in determining monthly winners.

\*\* Each member who enters one or more plants in a Plant-of-the-Month mini-show will be awarded a point for their participation which can be added to any other awards they receive for that month.

*Plant of the Month*

Plant of the Month winners for September will be published in the November edition of the Chronicle

***Southern California Calendar of Events  
October***

**No Shows or Sales scheduled for October**

**LACSS 2011 Board Members**

**Artie Chavez, President  
Tim Harvey, VP, Programs  
Manny Rivera, VP, Plant of the Month  
Doug George, VP, Special Events  
Ronit Weiss, Treasurer  
Helen Frank, Secretary**

From the Stacks of the Library

Hi All,



This month the Library will feature an eclectic selection of books that have, as its theme "Books that have not been featured this year." We had quite a bit of excitement up to now with all the new books, but now we will reflect on the tried and true editions of the hobby.

For starters, how about *Pelargoniums of Southern Africa Volume 1 and 3*? [If anyone has a Volume 2 of this title that you would like to donate to the Club, it would be greatly appreciated!] After you finish reading those, you could move on to *Lobivia Volume 1, 2, & 3*. If multiple books are not your thing, perhaps you would consider *The Genus Haemanthus*, *The Genus Hoya* or *The Genera of the Mesembryanthemaceae*. Or just browse through the other 13 or so books on unrelated Genera. We all have a few plants that defy identification and maybe, just maybe, you will find that plant in one of these books.....Or perhaps you need more information regarding the Plant of the Month selections...look and see...

The CSSA Journals of the 1990s will be on the table for you to browse through. Check the "end-of-the-year" index for articles of interest to you. The latest edition of the CSSA Journal will also be available. Handouts will be on the back counter [unless they get moved somewhere else].

We are nearing the end of the year and are considering various books for future purchase. We want to have your recommendations or suggestions, so please let me know. All of the Clubs' books are for our members to utilize to enhance and expand their knowledge of cacti and succulents.

**Trivia question for this month:** Who was the first President of the LACSS?

See you at the library on October 6.

**CHECK IT OUT.**

Joyce, The Librarian

## Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society Cactus of the Month October 2011 - *Ariocarpus*



*Ariocarpus fissuratus*

*Ariocarpus* is one of the treasures of the world of Cacti. This genus, from Central to Northern Mexico and Southern Texas has some of the most spectacular species of the entire family. Some succulent growers, who otherwise avoid cacti, make this genus their sole exception. There are collectors who collect nothing but *Ariocarpus*, and have hundreds of plants in their collections. Rare specimens can change hands for hundreds of dollars. Rare cultivars with unusual tubercles can be sold for even more, particularly in Japan. There is no denying that this single genus has generated a world wide cult of devotees.

With all of this, you might expect *Ariocarpus* to be difficult to come by, and difficult to grow. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are no more difficult to grow than many other central Mexican genera. All of the species and all of the varieties are readily available, and nearly all are affordable. This genera is well within the range of

even beginning novice growers. Field collected specimens are occasionally available, and these are much more expensive, and much harder to grow. Recently collected specimens are now almost always illegally obtained.

With all of the fuss we make over this genus, it is important to remember that the plants have had important ethnobotanical uses. The tubercles contain a sticky mucilage, which was often used as glue to mend broken pots. *A. kotschoubeyanus* was boiled and used as a cure for rheumatism, and several species were used as 'false peyote' in religious ceremonies.



*Ariocarpus retusus v. furfuraceus*

Cultivation is not difficult, when the home environment of these plants is considered. They grow in mineral soils, with very little organic matter. They all have large tuberous roots. They grow in areas that are very hot in the summer,



and that have summer rainfall. If they are protected from excess organic matter, particularly peat, and watered heavily only in hot weather, (but lightly throughout the summer growing season) good growth will result. They need protection from winter rains.

There are six species, several varieties, and a near infinite set of cultivars.



*Ariocarpus trigonus*

References:

**The New Cactus Lexicon**, David Hunt

Tom Glavich May 2005

Edited by Steve Frieze, October 2011

**Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society**  
**Succulent of the Month October 2011 – *Terrestrial Bromeliads***

Among the plants on the fringe of the succulent world-not actually very juicy but entirely compatible with succulents in a collection or landscape-are the terrestrial bromeliads. These are members of the large Bromeliaceae or pineapple family, native to the Americas from the southern United States all the way to the tip of Argentina, and growing from near sea level up to 14,000 feet. The epiphytic kinds are often found in misty rain forests (though some grow in deserts), but the terrestrial kinds generally grow in the open on rocks or in soil and are very drought-tolerant.

This article deals with those that are not epiphytic but terrestrial, growing in the ground just as do agaves and aloes (which they somewhat resemble). The bromeliad family is divided into three large subfamilies: Bromelioideae, Tillandsioideae, and Pitcairnioideae. The great majority of the terrestrial species are in the last-named subfamily, though a few are in the other two. I will mention three from the Bromelioideae: *Acanthostachys strobilacea*, which grows on rocks in middling elevations of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina; the only species in its genus, it has an inflorescence that looks like a tiny pineapple with orange-red bracts and yellow petals. It looks good in a hanging basket. Another well-known plant from this group is *Ananas comosus*, the commercial pineapple, so long in cultivation that its origin is not known. Third, there is the genus *Orthophytum*, native to Brazil, with handsome leaves, often colored grayish, reddish, or bronze. The inflorescence stands up straight, often with red or white flowers. Subfamily Tillandsioideae has very few terrestrial species, though there are one or two kinds that grow prolifically in the Peruvian desert sands.

Most terrestrials are in the subfamily Pitcairnioideae. They range in size from very tiny to 35 feet high (*Puya raimondii* of the northern Andes). They are well armed with sharp teeth along the edges of the leaves, but those that collectors covet may have beautiful leaves in silver, black, or combinations of the two colors. Even green-leaved ones can be very attractive, for example, *Abromeitiella* (now included by some authorities in *Deuterocohnia*), which in the garden makes a mound of tiny green rosettes and will fill even a large pot in a few years. Its flowers are inconspicuous, but the plant is well worth growing. *A. brevifolia* is the nicest one. *Dyckia* (Dick-ee-a) is a large genus of 100 or more species and a great many beautiful hybrids, with more being introduced all the time. The species are mostly native to central Brazil, with a few from other nearby South American countries. *D. fosteriana* is a parent or grandparent of many of these hybrids but is worth growing for its narrow, spiny, curved leaves that are bronzy gray in a strong light.

The flowers in this genus are yellow to bright orange to red-not spectacular but quite pretty, and the inflorescence appears laterally, not in the center, so the rosette does not die after flowering. Another plant used in propagation is *D. arnier-lapostollei*, extremely ornamental with silver leaves and native to Brazil. Because of its tropical origin it is a bit touchy about low temperatures, but many of the silvery hybrids descended from it are not at all temperamental and will grow happily outdoors in our climate.

Hechtias are mostly native to Mexico, with a few from Texas and northern Central America. *H. argentea*, from central Mexico, is beautifully silvery (all these plants get their color from silver scales on the leaves) but hard to find in cultivation. Marnier-Lapostolle, a French plantsman better known for his Grand Marnier liqueur, had a hechtia as well as a dyckia named for him, and *H. marnier-lapostollei* is another decorative silver-leaved plant.

Puya is a genus of hardy, rugged plants generally grown out in the garden. They are native to the Andean highlands. Of course, the most famous is *P. raimondii*, which takes many years to bloom; a plant in the UC Berkeley Botanic Garden bloomed at about 35 years from seed and produced an inflorescence more than 20 feet tall. It is not common in cultivation. The most popular puya in gardens is *P. alpestris*, which has flowers of an unbelievable metallic blue-green color contrasting with bright orange pollen. The plants of this species at Quail Botanical Gardens cause quite a sensation whenever they bloom. *P. coerulea* has a four-foot stalk of bright blue flowers. Leaves on these plants are generally silvery green with sawteeth on the edges, and rosettes that flower will die later, though with luck the plant will form offshoots. A number of different puyas can be seen in the desert garden at Huntington Botanic Gardens.

All these plants are easy to grow, accepting average water and well-drained soil. Division of rosettes is the standard method of propagation, though of course new hybrids must be started from seed-it's fun to plant seeds and see what develops. Some plants cluster very quickly and can give the grower a real problem when it comes time to divide or repot them. I recommend a pair of long leather gloves (sometimes sold as "rose-pickers") and a sharp knife plus some sort of pry-bar. Weeding around them is best done with the "cactus-grabber" (actually a fishhook-disgorger) that most of us who grow spiny plants have bought in self-defense. The plants do not seem to be subject to many pests or diseases, though some from Brazil, as mentioned above, may be sensitive to low temperatures. Many are really beautiful and a great asset in the plant collection.



*Dyckia "Burgandy Ice"*

Author, Phyllis Flechsig  
Edited by Steve Frieze, October 2011

**References:**

- Padilla, Victoria. Bromeliads. Crown, 1973.
- Baensch, Ulrich & Ursula. Blooming Bromeliads. Tropic Beauty Publishers, 1994.
- Byer, Dorothy, in Espinas y Flores (S. D. Cactus & Succulent Soc.), Jan, 1992.

**General Meeting** starts at 7:00 PM on the **first Thursday** of the month at the Sepulveda Garden Center located at 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino between Hayvenhurst and Balboa.  
Set-up and social hour starts at 6:30 PM.

Bring a smile! Make new friends! **GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Visit Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society *ONLINE* at [www.lacss.com](http://www.lacss.com)

Upcoming Program for  
October  
Kelly Griffin  
Madagascar Revisited

First Class Mail

Next Meeting:  
**October 6, 2011**

Sepulveda Garden Ctr. 16633 Magnolia Bl. Encino

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