



Open Gates

A publication of the
Gates Cactus & Succulent Society
September 2019



NEXT MEETING, WEDNESDAY, September 4th at 7:00 PM
AT THE REDLANDS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
1307 E CITRUS AVE, IN REDLANDS, CA

Plants of the Month

Cactus –

Epiphytic Cacti

Succulent –

Agave

Save the Date!

SEPT 14 LOS ANGELES
 CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY- FALL SALE

From Our President:

Last month Kelly Griffin presented us with his new agave presentation and it didn't go unnoticed. Several members acknowledge afterwards that Kelly's talk help changed their outlook on agaves. They had never realized the many different forms and varieties of agaves that could be so vibrant and unique. For these members, agave plants are now on their wish list to add to their collection. Oh course it's also no secret that as a field explorer, collector and hybridizer, Kelly is always working diligently to introduce new succulent plants into the trade and hobby. We will just have to wait for them.

This month's speaker is Gunnar Eisel who is also an experienced collector and grower well-known to us succulent junkies. He will share his wit and outlook with us in his new talk about Astrophytum. If anyone has a question or concern that's keeping him/her up at night about the cactus and succulent society, here's your chance to get it addressed. Gunnar is the Executive Director of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and he would be able to update us on the state of the society.

In case you hadn't notice with the Inter-City Show and Sale last month, it was another affirmation of the ever-increasing popularity in cacti and succulents. Not only were the usual veteran growers and their show plants present, there was a definite rise with the number of novice growers and their number of entered plants. How much of a rise? Over 1500 plants were entered in the show exhibits. The plant sale is always inundated with shoppers and if this is any indication of the continuing popularity of succulents outreaching to the general public...succulents are here to stay. There are about four more local cactus/succulent events remaining on the calendar for the 2019 season. As the fall season approaches, there are still plenty of warm growing days for our plants. Make the most of it.

Phuc

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Leadership Team 2019

Our Program This Month

Gunnar Eisel

"Astrophytum Revisited"

How does a genus like Astrophytum, consisting of six species, remain such a perennial favorite and source of joy, headaches, and frequent disappointment? Clearly, a major attraction is the stunning beauty of these plants' exquisite symmetry and often intricately detailed body patterns. However, successful growing of these plants can pose problems and pitfalls even to some experienced growers.



The presentation will focus on primarily two species; A. myriostigma and A. asterias and the multitude of cultivars that have made these plants so popular. Starting with identification and sorting out the myriad of variations sought by Astrophytum collectors, Mr. Eisel will share a few tips based on his successes as well as point out some colossal failures in his attempt to master cultivation of these species.

Bio

Gunnar Eisel's interest in cacti and succulents can be traced back to his childhood infatuation with photographing night-blooming cereus flowers and a few unfortunate encounters with opuntia glochids. His interest in cacti became intensified through many annual trips to the Anza-Borrego desert.

Born and raised near Heidelberg, Germany, Eisel has taught music at CSULA, CSUF, Whittier College and Fullerton College. He recently retired as a full-time music theory and history of music professor at Citrus College in Glendora where his students were occasionally subjected to his rantings regarding cacti and succulents.

An avid C&S collector, he serves as Executive Director of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) and President of the San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society.

Mini Show Results

Please remember to CLEARLY fill out the Mini show entry forms. Incomplete or illegible forms will be disqualified.

Cactus

Novice

1st _

Intermediate

1st _

2nd _

3rd _

Advanced

None

Succulents

Novice

1st _

2nd _

3rd _

Intermediate

1st

2nd

3rd

Advanced

None.

Editor's Note

I apologize for the missing mini show results, I was unable to collect the results in time for the Newsletter to print. I will have both August and Septembers results in the next Newsletter.

Again, I apologize for the inconvenience.

- Trisha Davis

Epiphytic Cacti

By: Buck Hemenway

Epiphytic plants are those that grow on other plants or on above ground structures but are not parasitic to the host. It is counter intuitive, but most epiphytic cacti grow in tropical environments and generally in locations that have much higher annual rainfall than we normally consider cacti to be comfortable with. From the jungles of Central America, to the more tropical areas of northern Argentina, we find many species and genera of epiphytic cacti. In addition, the only cactus native to the Old World is *Rhipsalis baccifera*, must have the largest range of any cactus. It is found from the Caribbean through South America and in Africa, Madagascar and Sri Lanka.

We will consider plants from the genera *Rhipsalis*, *Epiphyllum*, *Hatiora*, *Lepismium*, *Schlumbergera* and *Hylocereus* to be eligible for the mini-show.

These plants tend to have long stems or leaf-like structures that drape downward from the tress in which they hang. Their flowers can be extremely small as in some of the *Rhipsalis* species to huge and glorious as in many of the *Hylocereus* and *Epiphyllum* species. The stems can be flat (two-sided), three sided to round.

The *Epiphyllum* Society carries a registry of more than 10,000 names of plants. The plants are named for their blooms, just as roses are.

Many of our members grow these stunning plants and enjoy their blooms at this time of year. We will accept cut flowers in the Mini-Show and consider those to be the "Small" entries in the show. We will bring the hanger that we use at the main show to display full pots of plants.

They are, for the most part quite easy to grow. They root easily from cuttings and are for sale at nearly every Show and Sale as cuttings and sold by the bloom color. One needs to be certain to plant the cutting right end up and away they grow. They do well in shady spots and most bloom when the weather starts to turn warm in mid to late spring. *Schlumbergera truncata* or Christmas Cactus that blooms in November and December is one of many species, most of which are cultivated varieties, that have never been found in the wild. We now have a form known as Easter Cactus that blooms in early spring.



Epiphyllum hybrid



Hylocereus undatus (Dragon Fruit)



Agave

Buck Hemenway

Agave is a large genus of succulents with leaves. They range in size from miniature plants such as *A. minibell* to giants like *A. americana* and *A. salmiana* which have rosettes that are nearly 15 feet across.

There are several ways to identify an *Agave*. 1. Their leaves are always tipped with a terminal spine. Even the soft tipped *A. attenuata*, has an obvious terminal spine. 2. The leaves are formed in a tightly wrapped bud. There is so much pressure in the bud that those leaves with "teeth" leave permanent "bud imprints" on the leaves fronts and backs. 3. Leaves tend to be fairly rigid and grow in rosette form.

Agaves are "moncarpic" which means that they have only one life cycle. No matter how long it takes for the plant to produce it, the bloom stalk is a terminal inflorescence. That means that the plant dies after blooming. The bloom stalk can be produced from 7 years to 40 years of life depending on conditions and the variety of the plant.

Agaves grow in the Southwest US and on some Caribbean Islands, south through Mexico. They were an important resource for all peoples who lived on the land throughout history. The extremely fibrous leaves with the very sharp terminal spines have always been used to sew or bind other materials together. Their roots make good soap. They all will produce a fermented beverage that was used throughout their range. We are most used to Tequila which is derived from the *Agave tequilana* in the state of Jalisco.

Some, such as *Agave americana*, are cold hardy to below zero deg F. Depending on the variety, they tend to offset and form large clumps of plant material. It is important to know which you are planting and how it normally grows. Most will take full sun and heat, as well as cold and are extremely easy to grow.

There is no more dramatic landscape plant than a large *Agave*. It can become the key to an attractive succulent landscape. The inflorescence is truly a wonder of nature. The energy used to create those 25 foot tall trees in just a few weeks is amazing. While most of them will not reproduce from seed naturally in our area, one can only marvel at the tens of thousands of seeds produced by one mother plant.



Agave cv. Blue Glow - hybrid



Agave angustifolia



Agave gigantensis - special form at Hemenway's

2019 Upcoming Events

SEPT 14 LOS ANGELES CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY- FALL SALE, 9- 4pm
SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER, 16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD.,
ENCINO, CA. INFO. www.lacactus.com

SEPT 15 LONG BEACH CACTUS CLUB ANNUAL PLANT AUCTION, 11-1pm
RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS, 6400 BIXBY HILL ROAD, LONG BEACH,
CA 90615 INFO. 562-631-5876

JoAnn's
Succulent, Yard Art, & Jewelry
Extravaganza!
1014 W. Sunset Drive
Redlands, CA 92373
Friday October 4th 8:00am – 5:00pm
Saturday October 5th 8:00am – 1:00pm
For info or requests, call 909-793-0680

Oct. 12-13 BAKERSFIELD CACTUS and SUCCULENT SOCIETY, SHOW & SALE
SAT. 10-5pm-SUN. 11-3pm,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, 2216 17th STREET, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93304
FREE ADDMISSION & PARKING, INFO 661-8318488

OCT. 25-27 HUNTINGTON FALL PLANT SALE, HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL
GARDENS 1151 OXFORD ROAD, SAN MARINO, CA INFO 626-405-3504

OCT. 26-27 PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SHOW AND SALE
SAT 9-5pm, SUN 10-3pm, SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN
230 QUAIL GARDENS DRIVE, ENCINITAS, CA
INFO EventCoordinator@PalomarCactus.org

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