



Sweepstakes Winner

Plants of the Month

Cactus – South American Columnars

Succulent – Agave

Save the Date!

August 13 & 14: Intercity Show and Sale

Sept. 5: Huntington Botanical Garden BBQ potluck

TBA Cactus Cook-Off

TBA Fall field trip

Open Gates

A publication of the
Gates Cactus & Succulent Society

NEXT MEETING, WEDNESDAY, August 3rd at 7:00 PM

AT THE REDLANDS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 1307 E CITRUS AVE, IN REDLANDS, CA

From the President:

We enjoyed a wonderful and practical talk on staging plants from Peter Walkowiak last month. Many members have expressed their liking for a non-travelogue speaker topic. Thank you Peter. His month's speaker will be well-worth your effort to attend the meeting to experience his presentation. Greg Starr will be making his Southern California speaking tour and visiting a handful of cactus and succulent societies. His depth of knowledge and first-hand experience of agaves in their natural habitat will enlighten even the most seasoned agave-aficionados. In other words, agave is his specialty! This talk has been over a year in the making and Greg will have some of his books and plants for sale.

As we are planning for our annual fall BBQ potluck and Cactus Cook-Off, I want to have some input from the club regarding some possible hosting venues. Everyone should start thinking about that special cactus and/or succulent dish for the cook-off. We are continuing to plan for a fall garden-related field trip. The destination will most likely be in the San Diego area. In the meantime, there are still plenty of summer events for your participation. Don't forget the Inter-City Cactus/Succulent Show and Sale this month. If you haven't attended this one; remember, it's the biggest one of its kind in the world. You can also enter your plant in the show now that you have learned more about staging plants.

The club's success is in no small part due to the enthusiasm of members like you who have a strong interest in succulents. I hope that you will extend your interest in becoming more involved with the club. Volunteers are always welcome to help with all the planning and implementation of various club activities. Your ideas are thoughtful and can greatly increase your personal satisfaction from being a member. Don't be shy; we can put your help to good use. Help judge the mini-show; help work in the kitchen or bring a potluck treat to share; participate in a future "cactus- rescue"; help rehabilitate rescued plants, etc. Thanks in advance for your consideration. - Phuc

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Leadership Team 2016

Our speaker this month

Greg Starr

Greg Starr has had a long standing fascination with the genus agave and has dabbled in growing them since the mid-



1980's. Greg first heard Dr. Howard Scott Gentry speak about agaves in 1983 shortly after his *Agaves of Continental North America* tome was published. It was Dr. Gentry's presentation that inspired Greg to want to learn more about these amazing plants. He has spent the past fifteen years traveling throughout the southwestern United States and Mexico photographing many of his favorite species, some which were new to science and not even included in Dr. Gentry's book. The seed for Greg's book - *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers* was sown when he came to the realization that there was a need to publicize these recently described species and to update horticultural first presented in Mary Irish's book on *Agaves, Yuccas, and Related Plants*. Come out and join in the festivities as Greg shows pictures of, and talks about, some of the most appealing agaves that make sculptural statements in the landscape. These pictures show the plants in their incredibly diverse habitats, ranging from the low, hot and dry desert to the cooler, higher elevation pine forests. These plants are not only beautiful while alive and growing, but some show intriguing beauty while showing off their incredible flower stalks! Be prepared for numerous shots as it has been said that he likes to take 360 pictures of each plant, one for every degree in a circle! The focus is on newly described, or lesser known species, so no *Agave americana* pictures are to be seen in this presentation.

BIO

Greg was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona, and has grown to love the desert and its flora and fauna. He graduated from the University of Arizona in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, and after working in the landscape industry he went back to the University to study Botany and further his education in horticulture. Greg worked for Warren Jones (co-author of

Plants for Dry Climates and Landscape Plants for Dry Regions) and Dr. Charles Mason at the University of Arizona herbarium. Greg made his first foray into the world of collecting in 1979 when he traveled with Warren and Bill Kinneson to Texas where he saw firsthand, in habitat, the many plants he had only experienced in the nursery or landscapes. He emerged from the University in 1985 with a Master of Science in Horticulture with a special emphasis on botany.

He opened Starr Nursery in the summer of 1985, and has specialized in low water use plants for landscaping in southern Arizona. Greg has traveled extensively in Mexico and the southwestern United States to study the plants for their potential landscape use in desert regions of the world. He has also traveled to South Africa and recently to Madagascar in search of juicy succulents.

Greg has written several horticultural articles for the journal *Desert Plants*. Topics have covered various groups of plants as well as botanizing in South Africa. He has also described two new species and a subspecies of *Agave*, three new species of *Hesperaloe*, and revised the genus



Hesperaloe in a monograph published in the journal *Madroño*. The first *Agave* species Greg described was *Agave ovatifolia*. He worked with Dr. Jose Angel Villarreal in describing this amazing plant which has been dubbed Whale's Tongue Agave, a reflection of the incredibly wide leaves that sometimes double as water harvesting vessels. He and Dr. Tom Van Devender described *Agave parviflora* subsp. *densiflora* a new find from the Sierra Madre Occidental in eastern Sonora. Greg's first book, *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*, was released at the end of April 2009 and is currently out of print. His second book, titled *Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers*, was released in early May of 2012. He was a co-author for the recently released *Field Guide to the Cacti and Other Succulents of*

Arizona. He has taught Plant Biology and Plant Materials classes at The Art Center Design College in Tucson for their program of Landscape Architecture. Since 2010, Greg has focused intensively on the Agaves of Baja California and he and Bob Webb described *Agave azurea*, a new species from the Picachos de Santa Clara, and submitted a revision for the genus on the Baja California peninsula to the journal *Haseltonia* which came out in January 2015.

Greg spends most of his days tapping at the computer hoping another book will take shape, preparing PowerPoint presentations and tending to Starr Nursery, specializing in Agaves and related plants as well as other succulents and new introductions of perennials, flowering shrubs, and small trees from arid and semi-arid regions around the world.

July Mini Show Results

Please remember to completely fill out the Mini show entry forms. Incomplete forms will be disqualified.

Photographs

Novice

- 1st *mammillaria bombycina* – Trisha Davis
- 2nd *Parodia hasselbergii* – Mike Madrigal
- 3rd *Enhinopsis* – Sue Dawson

Intermediate

- 1st *Astrophytum ornatum* – Tommy Dodson
- 2nd *Enchinocereus pentaloha* – Tommy Dodson
- 3rd *Ferocactus strainsii* – Karl Trisler

Advanced

- 1st *Mammillaria* sp – Dennis Kucera
- 2nd *Mammillaria* sp – Dennis Kucera
- 3rd *Mammillaria* sp – Dennis Kucera



Kitchen Duty

Andrew Gould & Trisha Davis

Mini show Judges

New sign-up sheets available

South American Columnar Cacti

By: Buck Hemenway

Otherwise known as the Giants of the Andes, many of them are among the largest cacti on earth, rivaling the North American Saguaro (*Carnegie gigantea*) and Cardon (*Pachycereus pringlei*). We include all of the upright columnar shaped cacti in this group, whether they end up being huge or not. Genera such as *Cleistocactus* are included, just because they tend to grow in a columnar way. We do not include the ball shaped *Echinopsis*, but we do include all of the newly introduced *Echinopsis* from the *Trichocereus* genus that was subsumed recently. We will accept the old or the new names for these plants.

Following are the genera from which these plants come: *Armatocereus*, *Arrojadoa*, *Arthrocareus*, *Brasilicereus*, *Browningia*, *Calymmanthium*, *Castellanosia*, *Cereus*, *Cipocereus*, *Cleistocactus*, *Coleocephalocereus*, *Corryocactus*, *Echinopsis*, *Espostoa*, *Espositoopsis*, *Eulichnia*, *Facheiroa*, *Haageocereus*, *Harrisia*, *Jasminocereus*, *Lasiocereus*, *Micranthocereus*, *Neoraimondia*, *Oreocereus*, *Pierrebraunia*, *Pilosocereus*, *Praecereus*, *Stetsonia*, *Stephanocereus*, *Strophocactus*, and *Weberbauerocereus*.

Many of these plants have enormous flowers that match the stature of the plant.

Most are extremely easy to grow. All they require in our area is good drainage and they can become huge in no-time. A little care needs to be taken when selecting a South American plant for your landscape. Even though they may grow at above 15,000 feet in the Andes, some are very sensitive to freezing. The closer to the equator that any plant grows, the more tropical it is and as such will have little or no tolerance for freezing temperatures. A little research will reveal which plants are more adaptable to colder temperatures.

Insect pests are sometimes present and can be cared for as with any cactus plant.

Any good succulent landscape should have at least one of the large *Echinopsis* (*Trichocereus*) in it. The large white flowers of *Echinopsis terscheckii* in late spring are iconic in their symbolism of what a cactus flower should look like.



***Echinopsis (Trichocereus) tarijensis* - Poco**



Oreocereus celsianus



Echinopsis (Trichocereus) atacamensis pasacana

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events 2016

August 13 & 14:

Intercity Show and Sale.

Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm. Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Information Tom Glavich 626-798-2430 or Artie Chavez 818-482-8795

September 3:

Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium.

All day Saturday at the Huntington. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino.

September 10:

Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction.

Saturday from noon to 5 pm. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach.
Information 562-631-5876

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