

Espinas y Flores

BULLETIN OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
Affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Inc.

Vol. XIII, No. 3.

March, 1978.

MARCH MEETING DATE:

Saturday, March 11th, 1978.

PROGRAM:

"GROWING YOUR OWN FROM SEED -
CACTI AND SUCCULENTS, THAT IS."

This will consist of a Panel Program, whereby we should all learn a great deal from the experts, and can quiz them to our hearts' content, so bring all your queries along to the meeting!

Our Panel will consist of:-

Dr. Lee Phelps
Floyd Gable

and Martin Mooney
Dr. Ronald Monroe

<u>IN THIS ISSUE.....</u>		<u>Page</u>
March Program		1
Cactus of the Month	Dr. Ronald E. Monroe	2,3
The Sun shines again	Audrey Johnson	4,5
Cactus Cartoon	"Scotty" (W.R.Scott)	5
Succulent of the Month	Rick Latimer	6,7
**Regalement for March		7
Short story of a theft	W.R.Scott	8
Another Fun Show	Audrey Johnson	9
Two Messages from.....	Perlso Lewis	9
Plant Sales Notes		9
M.E. Reporting	Geoff Johnson	10
Tips on Pest Control	Ruth Stanton	10
Board Members & Officers		11

DEADLINE FOR APRIL ISSUE.....MARCH 21st. PLEASE

Cactus-of-the-Month

Notocactus

Dr. Ronald E. Monroe

The genus Notocactus (south or southern cactus), like so many of the South American cacti, has had its share of study, discussion and revision. The very first plant species in this group that we now recognize as a "notocactus" was established in 1819 under the old "catch-all", Cactus, and the species was C. erinaceus. Since that time many "new" plants were added to Cactus, Echinocactus, Malacocarpus, Wigginsia, Eriocactus and Brasilicactus. Thus, depending on the source, one would have quite divergent opinions as to what each species actually was (see: Britton and Rose, 1937; Borg, 1959; Krainz, 1966; Buxbaum, 1967; and Mace, 1975) However, because of flower structure, fruit and seed morphology, recent authors now consider all the species in the above mentioned genera as well as the "Brazilian parodias" as proper to the genus Notocactus (Krainz, 1966; Buxbaum, 1967; Mace, 1975). Thus, we find that there are ca. 61 species of Notocactus and nearly that many varieties with one half of them occurring in N. ottonis and N. scopa.

Members of the genus are found growing in grass, scrub and well-drained rocky outcrops in Uruguay, Paraguay and the southern states of Brazil and Argentina at altitudes seldom exceeding 2000m. The largest numbers of species are on the Uruguay-south Brazilian border, especially in the states of Rivera and Rio Grande do Sul.

Because of the massive novo comb. of the above mentioned genera to Notocactus, it is impossible to describe a typical plant representative to the genus. However, they are mainly globular plants, although a few are columnar (N. tenuicylindricus, for example), and in habitat most attain rather large sizes (up to 30 cm diameter!). The ribs can be few and rounded (N. uebelmannianus) to many and quite sharp with deeply notched podaria (N. buiningii). Spines can be few and spidery (N. uebelmannianus), numerous and soft-white (N. haselbergii), massive (N. mammulosus) to long hooked centrals (N. alacriportanus and N. brevihamatus). Flowers, as a rule, are large and showy, and most usually think of a yellow flower as being proper for the entire genus. However, we find brilliant red flowers (N. haselbergii), carmine flowers (N. purpureus) pale pink (N. rutilans and N. roseoluteus) dark red-purple (N. uebelmannianus), orange-pink (N. horstii), cream-yellow (N. alacriportanus) and green to green-yellow (N. graessneri). Although the flower buds originate near new growth at the center of the plant, most do not open until the plant has put on considerable growth; thus, the open flower is usually several cm from the plants' center. Flowers usually open for 2-5 days, but flowers of N. haselbergii may remain open for 14 days.

Cultivation of these plants is remarkably easy if a few simple rules are followed. The soil should be one that drains readily (half builders' sand and half potting mix is preferred) and the soil must be kept on the acid side (pH 5-7). Because San Diego water is slightly alkaline, the plants may grow very well for a few years and then suddenly die from the alkaline salt buildup--I strongly recommend Stern's Mir-Acid[®] liquid fertilizer to counter this problem (feed twice monthly during the growing season). Too, the plants are used to lots of water (20-40 inches per year in habitat), but never allowed to stand "wet" for long periods of time. They also have massive root systems and repotting the plants is a never ending chore, but a delightful one, as they grow and mature. Also, don't be alarmed if some of the plants grow faster on one side than the other. This is a very normal growth pattern in such plants as N. Leninghausii, N. warasii, etc. Too, let the plants rest for at least 1.5-2 months for good

flowering the following spring. Although the plants are found growing in light shade in habitat, they do just as well in greenhouses, full sun outside or under 63% Saran®.

Propagation is usually from seed. The plants are mostly self-fertile which can cause a problem if several species are flowering at the same time-- people often think the seed will be "pure" as to species, when in fact it probably has been crossed with other simultaneously-flowering species. However, with care, one can obtain hundreds of viable, pure seed from a single plant and after curing the seed for 3-4 weeks it will readily germinate. Some species, particularly varieties of N. ottonis and N. scopa, can be propagated from offsets.

Although the usual pests are mealy bugs and spider mites which have been considered as the prime pests of the other cacti in previous writings for Espinas y Flores, a new pest has come into its own this year because of the long, continuous rains (and directly attributable to the high humidity and warm temperatures). A very small, black fly, the Sciara sp. fly, which normally is thought to feed, as larvae, on the fungus and other organic detrites in the potting mixture, has been found, on occasion, to attack the plant per se. As they are small, they do not cause much damage themselves, but are responsible for opening wounds on the plants where rot begins, and, eventually, kills the plant. Always a pest in small seedlings because the larvae attack and feed on the developing root system close to the soil surface, this pest has now been identified as indirectly causing rot on large specimen plants; even feeding on plants above the soil surface! Mist spraying the plants weekly with Cygon . 2E and spraying the outside of the pots and pot supports with diazinon (use concentrations as directed on the label) solves the problem. Any large plant that is discovered to have a "rotting spot" can be scraped clean and then dusted liberally with Orthocide® (50% Captan)--many a plant has been saved in this manner.

References Cited

- Buxbaum. 1967. Krainz die Kakteen. CIVC, January.
- Borg. 1959. Cacti. Blanford Press, England. 512 pp.
- Britton and Rose. 1937. The Cactaceae. Vol. III. Dover Publ., Inc., New York.
- Krainz. 1966. K.u.a.S. 17: 195.
- Mace. 1975. Notocactus, a review of the genus incorporating Brasilicactus, Eriocactus and Wigginsia. National Cactus and Succulent Society, England. 87 pp.

Author's Note: If this article appears to be a slight longer than most, then it is due to a very willing and excellent critic, my son, who has collected over 100 species and varieties of this beautiful genus! The article is, therefore, dedicated to his dedication.

THE SUN SHINES AGAIN!

Audrey Johnson
Ye Lady Ed.

If you are anything like myself, you are still luxuriating in the pure enjoyment of SUNSHINE, and haven't yet given too much attention to the damage which may have been caused by this year's torrential rains. As a matter of fact, and surprisingly enough, two months of almost incessant rain hasn't done nearly as much harm to the plant world as one might have expected. Of course, I must admit that I did rush out, between showers, to empty those of my potted plants which were up to their necks in water during the rainy season, and that may have helped somewhat - in fact, I'm sure it did! The man-made portions of our property, on the other hand, are another matter. Our driveway, for instance, has for weeks had a trickling stream running down to the valley below - the run-off from the hillside above - and is at present something of a disaster area. We will certainly have to do something about that very shortly.

I was particularly concerned about my outdoors container plants, and their condition for showing at the Wild Animal Park last weekend. Nevertheless, although many of them had been out in the pouring rain, and had had very little sunshine, for some weeks, they recovered remarkably well, and were greatly admired by the visitors. "What do they know", I muttered rather crossly, and impolitely, to myself, but then, upon closer examination of my table, I had to admit that, taking everything into account, they didn't look so bad after all! Which is just one of the advantages of growing cacti and succulents, as we all know.

As I sit here writing in the glorious sunshine, I am planning to get started on a tour of our hillside next week, to see what needs to be done. Of course, that's after Geoff and I have put together and mailed this edition of "EyF" to you all. Oh yes, and then there's the next wave of publicity for Quail Gardens' Spring Sale to bear in mind/^{and} the starting date for publicity about the lovely waterfall that they are presently installing in the Gardens, to be decided upon.... After this, I think I'll dig out some of the "pups" on my agaves and aloes to spread around on the hillside, and make a list of chores for future reference. I know that I'll find plenty of those! Anyhow, after all that rain, I recently decided to take advantage of every scrap of sunshine for awhile, and I intend to stick by my decision. Housework? Well, apart from the necessary day by day duties of running a household, that will have to wait. Speaking for other ardent gardeners, like myself, I might say: "Doesn't it always?".

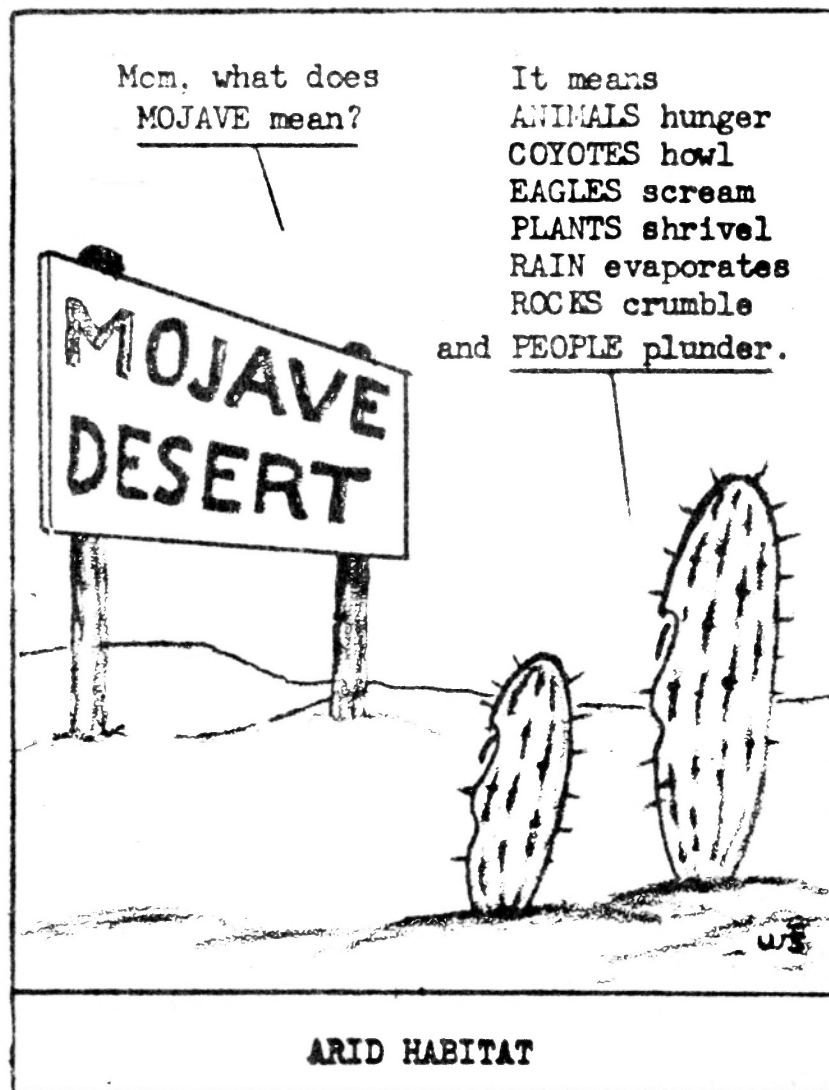
P.S. THE BIRDS

Apart from emptying waterlogged pots, my other chore, during respites from rain, was filling the bird-feeders and throwing food scraps on the rocks for my soggy bird friends. This they seemed to appreciate, between showers, and we are again having almost daily visits from my roadrunner, who seems to want to join in the fun.

Concerning our indoor birds, I think that I might say that things are progressing slowly, but surely. My particular friend, Fred, the Cockatiel, and I managed to keep one another cheerful during my long enforced stay indoors. I am always particularly amused by Fred's nonchalant whistling along with the radio music, and usually have a good laugh at his expense. Nothing daunted, he imitates my laugh, I join in, and we "have a ball"! He certainly cheers things up when one is housebound!!

As for our nesting problems, I hope that we have finally licked them. Mr. and Mrs. Boing-Boing, those neat little zebra finches, we have practically renamed: Mr. and Mrs. Dum-Dum - they seem to be the dumbest and the messiest of all the birds. It took them quite some time to find their way into the nesting area, to start with, and even then they put the nesting material on top of the wicker nest, and spread it just about everywhere inside and outside the cage (mainly the latter!). Finally, in desperation, Geoff, Mike and I started stuffing small bits of the nesting material into the small aperture (letting a little of it hang out), and eventually they got the idea. Now, they have the nest filled up almost to the top, and we're hoping that Mrs. B. is about ready to lay her eggs. Having, as it were, "helped" to build the nest, we all feel that they will surely be Johnson baby birds, should we ever be blessed with any! One thing still bothers me. If any babies do get born in that overfilled, rather messy, nest, I do hope that the poor little things don't get suffocated. I guess time alone will tell!

P.S.2. My big acacia tree is at present laden with golden, fluffy blooms, and my favourite vine for hillsides is blooming again and spreading still farther afield. Now is the time to watch your Senecio Angulatus take off! Ye Lady Ed.





Succulents of the Month

ALOES

By Rick Latimer

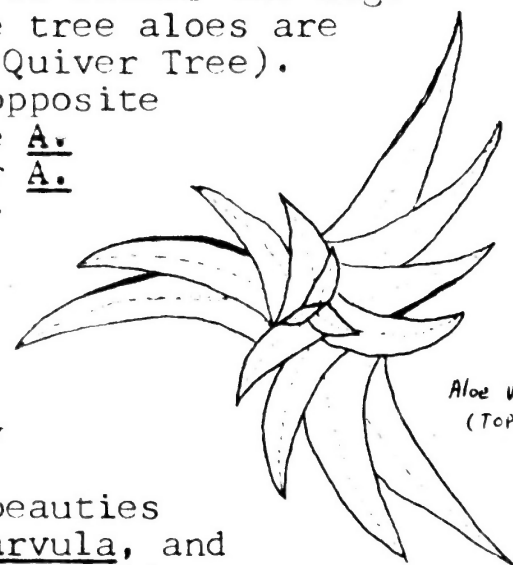
"Aloes are an acquired taste, they have a peculiar fascination all their own."-G. W. Reynolds

Some years back when I was leaving the "Wilshire Terrace Gardens" Walter Scott said to me that if he were to begin again, he would grow only aloes. Sometime later at one of our general meetings, Augie Pfeiffer, when asked what his favorite group of succulents were, replied that he preferred aloes. At the time I thought their devotions were misplaced, since I had no particular fascination with these plants. I had only done business with a few of the commoner ones. A. nobilis and A. arborescens both make good landscape elements, have adequate foliage, and attractive flowers (The first one we called cobra heads and the second always blooms at Christmas). The third one, A. ciliaris, climbed in and out everywhere (Anybody who has been to the Nelson's has seen proper use of this plant). The last aloe, however retains a bad reputation, even to this day. It is my 'Agave' aloe, because it suckers freely enough to be a weed. I have probably dug as many of these up as I have Agave Americana. I believe the name of this one may be A. saponaria. At any rate I had some enrichment yet in store.

The order Liliiflorae is subdivided into three suborders. One of these is the Iridineae suborder. It contains among other things, the Gladiolus, Crocus, and of course the Iris. The suborder Liliineae contains several families including Dioscoreaceae, Amaryllidaceae (which we will deal with next month), and Liliaceae (Lily family). The Liliaceae contains such genera as Liliium, Allium (onion), Asparagus, and Aloe.

In general, the choicest aloes seem to be either the huge ones or the miniature ones. My two favorite tree aloes are A. plicatilis and A. dichotoma (Kokerboom or Quiver Tree). Many aloes start out having only a pair of opposite leaves but later forming a full rosette like A. marlothii (and Gasteria batesiana). However A. plicatilis (Fan aloe) always remains dichotomous. The A. dichotoma tree is one of the many plants that are a must to see at the Taylors. I think A. bainesii is most attractive when the plant has two symmetrical branching heads. A. thraskii is most noble when full grown, but is surely the dullest when immature.

The dwarf aloes include such precious beauties as A. haworthioides, rauhii, descoingsii, parvula, and aristata. The first one, as the name implies, could pass for a Haworthia (until it blooms!). One smallish aloe has caused quite a bit of trouble for years at the Fair. One group insisted it was A. zanzibarica while another group preferred A. squarrosa. Finally it was discovered to be a hybrid-"Juveana". My favorite aloe remains to be A. variegata.



Aloe variegata
(TOP VIEW)

The range of colors of the foliage includes more of the rainbow than just greens (depending upon varieties, sun, and growing conditions.); light blue-A. brevifolia(Southern Cape), blue-A. ortholopha(Rhodesia), lavender-A. parvula(Madagascar), purple-A. parvibracteata(Zululand), tan-A. barbadensis[vera](Egypt or India??), brown-A. bellatula(Madagascar), and red-A. cameronii(Malawi).

The flowers themselves are not overly outstanding like cactus flowers, but they offer their own range of variations. Flower colors form a spectrum from green-A. viridiflora(Windhoek), white-A. albiflora[if not grown in the sun](Madagascar), yellow-A. ramossissima(Namaqualand), bright orange-A. haworthioides var. aurantiaca(Madagascar)[A. haworthioides has pale pink flowers], flesh-A. jucunda(N. Somalia), vermilion-many if not most, to A. rubroviolacea(Yemen) whose name suggests red-violet, but is described as only red. A. peckii(N. Somalia) has striped flowers. A. tomentosa(N. Somalia) has fuzzy flowers and A. doi has hairy flowers(Aden). Some flowers are long and tubular and others are short and open. The prettiest flower is probably that of A. bellatula.

The flower stalks are a study in themselves. Some stalks resemble the Eremurus like A. suzanne[Mme. Decary](the only night blooming aloe). Many look like the red hot poker(Kniphofia) e.g. A. speciosa(whose flower stalk has a tricolor orchid-white-rose effect). The flowers of A. comptonii remind me of those of a coral tree. A. capitata's tight yellow flower head's top flowers bloom first. Loose arrangements as those like A. karasbergensis are generally considered to be less desirable. Some aloe flower stalks come out sideways like A. claviflora while most are more or less straight up as A. jacksonii. The first year I got my A. marlothii it had a single vertical flower stalk. As typical of aloes, the flowers hung down. Last year the flower stalk came up with the central stalk, but then dividing into several horizontal stems. The flowers were thus sideways with their former bottoms curving upwards!


REFERENCES:

Jeppe, Barbara, South African Aloes, (Cape Town:1969), pp.1-144.

Lawrence, George H. M., Taxonomy of Vascular Plants, 11th ed., (New York:1970), pp. 411-413.

Reynolds, G. W. "An Aloe Enthusiast", CSSA Journal, Vol. XXIII, No. 6, Nov-Dec., 1951, p.173.

Reynolds, G. W., The Aloes of Tropical Africa and Madagascar, (Cape Town:1966), pp. 1-537.



REGALEMENT FOR MARCH:

Just a reminder to the following members, who signed up for refreshments:

Ruth Stanton
Ed Miller
Gaylene Bunch
Anna Cornett

Ione Hubner
Betty Athy
Gloria Cavanaugh
Rosemary Myers
Goldie Peddie
Ethel Standish

SHORT STORY OF A THEFT
YOU MAY BE A FUTURE VICTIM

The point of this story is to alert all club members to the probability of the loss of transportation homeward following a Club meeting.

On Saturday, February 11th, I drove to the Club meeting and parked my Chevy on the lot south of the Merry-Go-Round and locked it (or so I thought). I continued on to Casa del Prado and enjoyed the sociability and the speaker.

Later, about 4 o'clock I returned to the space where I had previously parked the car. Its absence was conspicuous.....a different car was parked in the space. I know cars haven't yet been designed to 'evaporate'. I visualized TWO happenings: 1) A Chevy involved in a crash with the result resembling the product ordinarily seen in an auto scrap yard, and 2) A car crossing the border.....and 'Goodbye'.

I reported the theft to the police immediately. An officer called at my home in person in minutes and took a full report of the missing car. Its description was on the 'air' in minutes. I would never have guess how quickly and precisely the machinery of recovery rolls.

At 4:45 p.m. the phone rang---the caller was calling from the Auto Theft Division. She inquired about identity and ownership of the car I had earlier parked in Balboa Park. She added: "Officers are standing by with the car in the 3600 block of Imperial Avenue....would I report to that address as soon as possible?" A long time neighbor provided 'taxi' service to the scene.

Upon arrival at the address on Imperial Avenue I noted the car 'appeared to be intact' for which I was appreciative. The officers asked for identification and proof of ownership----both of which I had. The officers reported that they began following the car when they observed what appeared to be two drivers which were 'too young' to be behind the steering wheel.....and the occupants started to accelerate their speed but changed their minds and abandoned the car on a 'slope'. The car rolled down the hill into a telephone pole and was thereby solidly 'stopped' as borne out by an impression bearing an asphaltic residue usually found on such poles.

The 'contact' resulted in damage to the windshield and the right front doorframe----believe that or not. The 'contact' pushed the fender back into the windshield and caused a 'misfit' of the doorframe. Extra force was necessary to open the door....it now fits very tightly.

The gauge on the gas tank showed a loss of about 10 gallons of gas. No determination could be made of the cause--driving or siphoning. The time element indicated the latter. I drove the car home.

Additional theft prevention devices will be added to its equipment. I trust the devices I apply are no so effective that I am unable to drive the car away from whatever place I choose to park it----and lock it up.

WRS

PS: I trust YOU never have to walk home if your car shows up missing, especially if you live in Escondido or El Cajon.

ANOTHER FUN SHOW AT THE WILD ANIMAL
PARK

Audrey Johnson

Those of you who did not make a trip to the Wild Animal Park some time during the recent holiday weekend, certainly missed a treat.

A very special place of interest to all was the area occupied by the Cactus and Succulent Show, sponsored by Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society, in which members of our Club and those of Palomar displayed a great variety of beautiful plants, much admired by multitudes of sightseers during the three day weekend. To our very pleasant surprise, the weather was perfect, as it was last year: in fact, I remember the three days spent at the Park Show last year as three of the most enjoyable ones in the whole of 1977! This year's show was equally successful, with the admiring public anxious to purchase just about everything on display. Although (naturally) unprepared to part with our own treasures, we (the exhibitors) were delighted to direct the enthusiasts to many of our tried and trusty Nursery friends, who, I'm sure, will start them on the hobby of growing, and caring for, our very own good natured plants, the cacti and succu

Kathering MacDonald, as and tender loving care into organiz superb job of it once again. What v

One of the highlights of the enchanting new greenhouse, which This was greatly admired by all of u stocked as it was with members' spec or too precious, to be left out in the open for three days or more...

Talking to people from all parts of the United States - we chatted with visitors from Chicago, Ohio, Kansas, Arizona and Oregon during the course of just one afternoon - sometimes makes for problems when discussing growing conditions, but it certainly provides excellent conversation material. It's all great fun, anyway, so do plan to participate in future events. As I believe I mentioned last year, our fascinating Wild Animal Park grows bigger and more beautiful year by year. Keep abreast with the changes. I guarantee that you will be very pleasantly surprised! Ye Lady Ed.

TWO MESSAGES FROM PERLSO LEWIS:

1. If you have certain plants you desire, perhaps you can swap with a member. Contact me at the registration desk.
2. To obtain name plates, see me at the registration desk. Your name, plus \$2.00 will do the trick!

PERLSO LEWIS

PLANT SALES:

The following gave 25% of the money received from plant sales to the Society:-

Ruth Stanton	\$.85
Rose D'Attilio	\$ 3.25

PLANT SALES TABLE:

Our thanks to Shirley Berry and Rose D'Attilio for their contributions to the Plant Sales Table at the February meeting.

In our January issue we published the Reports from all the Club Committees, but, owing to lack of space, the Publication Committee got squeezed out! Once again in February, the same story - no room left. So - let's try for March.

Briefly, in the 18 months that Audrey and I have been publishing the Bulletin, the response from club members has been extremely gratifying. In this period, no fewer than twenty-four different members have contributed towards the publication, so that not once in all that time have we had to resort to fillers.

Our objective has been to make this a Bulletin with something of interest for everybody, and these contributors have done a great deal towards helping us achieve this objective.

Each month our "regulars" have faithfully produced Educational Articles for "Cactus-of-the-Month", "Succulent-of-the-Month", and Conservation, tempered with a look at the lighter side of our hobby by "Ye Lady Ed's" articles on the down-to-earth goings-on in our e, the ever popular "Cactus Cartoon"

tributors, and to all other members who me to write for us, a very sincere a little easier and more rewarding. with other members regarding any aspect you!

n is typed, please use single spacing, s dark, then your original copy can be used without the necessity of retyping it. If you don't type, clear hand-written copy is acceptable.

To ensure publication in the current issue, please submit by the deadline date.

"Tips" on Pest Control

Ruth Stanton

Several weeks ago, the following "tips" were given to "Ye Lady Ed" by Ruth Stanton and may be of interest to other members.

- * A spray consisting of equal parts Rubbing Alcohol and Ammonia with twice as much water is good for Crassulaceous plants.
- * Fertilizer for Leaf Succulents :-
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Sodium Phosphate
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Potassium Nitrate
 - 1 Gallon Water
- * Marigolds repel Nematodes
- * Chives repel Aphids

SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY OFFICERS

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The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing Cacti, Other Succulents, and Exotic Plants.

Dues are \$6.00 annually; Single copies of Espinas y Flores are \$0.50.

Meetings are the second Saturday of each month, 1:30 p.m. in Room 101 of Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. (Exceptions noted in Espinas y Flores.)

Executive Board Meeting after the General Meeting.

AND SO TO BED...30

Audrey Johnson
1226 Citracado Pky.
Escondido, CA 92025
Address Correction Requested

10/10/00