

Espinas y Flores

Newsletter of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, Inc.
Affiliated with the Cactus and Succulent Society of America
Volume 30 Number 1, Saturday, January 13, 2001 at 9:00 AM



ALOE PICTIFOLIA

CHARLES BRAX
1996

WINTER SHOW AND SALE

WITH A SPECIAL PROGRAM BY GERHARD MARX

Chuck Hansen has hired an outstanding plant propagator ... from South Africa, Gerhard Marx. And he is an accomplished artist as well. Arid Lands latest T-shirt, featuring a beautiful rendering of *Euphorbia schizacantha* is by Gerhard. You can see a sample of the shirt modeled by Ina Marx, to the right.



The genus *Euphorbia* is well represented in the Eastern Cape Province and particularly in the Albany district with 49 species. *Euphorbia bupleurifolia* Jacq., was chosen as the botanical logo for the Selmar Schonland Herbarium. Gerhard was called upon to come up with the design. The drawing to the left is his final design.



Our cover drawing is another testament to his talent. The painting, reproduced here in black and white is of, *Aloe pictifolia* Hardy. This species was described as recently as 1976, the leaves appear to have markings painted on them as the name 'pictifolia' implies. The narrow leaves are 12 to 15 cm in length and the height of the plant reaches 30 cm, inflorescence included. This species is confined to a very small area in the Humansdorp district in the southeastern Cape where it grows on steep, rocky slopes. The rosettes divide and subdivide to form clumps of up to six rosettes, giving it a nest-like appearance against the vertical rocks. The old, dry leaves are persistent and add to the effect.



Please send your letters, artwork, poetry, Cactus or Succulent of the Month articles, puzzles, comments, or criticisms, etc. to:

Tom Knapik
4669 71street
La Mesa, CA 91941
Phone 619-462-1805 e-mail eyf 2000
Call ahead for FAX 858-569-8510

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE BEFORE THE 14TH EACH MONTH UNLESS OTHER
ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE.**

Espinas y Flores, the newsletter of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, Incorporated, P.O. Box 33181, San Diego, CA 92163-3181, is published monthly with the exception of a combined May-June issue (11 mailings per year). Newsletter circulation is approximately 260, with approximately 20-30 issues going to educational institutions, botanical societies, cactus and succulent nurseries, local publications, related natural history events, exhibits, and other interested groups or individuals upon request. Subscriptions are \$15 per year for bulk mail within the U.S.A.

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PRESIDENT'S JANUARY

MESSAGE 2001

OUR HOLIDAY PARTY was held in Room 101 on Saturday, December 9th. Over 100 members and guests attended and it appeared that everyone had a good time! I know I did. There were so many outstanding plants, great food, amazing desserts, and plenty of Holiday Cheer. Rudy Lime brought a beautiful Christmas tree (one of his SMOLA trees decked out with little lights) and many people pitched in, to make the party such a delightful affair. Tom and Laura De Merritt did a great job setting up and decorating with the help of Jeff Harris and John Williams. Herb and Anna Stern deserve kudos for setting up the bar and making sure no one went thirsty. Lee Badger and Tom procured the gift and auction plants, they made great selections from Grigsby Cactus Gardens, Madelyn Lee, and Cactus Data Plants, Woody Minnich, excellent plants for 2000!

Many members brought in wonderful plants for the gift exchange and once more this was great fun! I think I got the most unusual exchange plant - it is a plant and fish growing together symbiotically - put together by Michelle Heckathorn, THANKS Michelle! The dessert table was the best ever, thanks to everyone who brought in the goodies, though I will have to swim some extra laps next week! I hope everyone enjoyed the buffet put on by Soup Plantation, let us know what you thought. Highlights came with the presentation of *The Volunteer of the Year* award. This year it went to Tom Birt for his years of dedication as sales chairperson, librarian, and board member, THANKS Tom, you deserve it. Tom De Merritt was also recognized for his years as president, his positive input to our club has been immeasurable, as has his enthusiasm and inspiration! THANKS AGAIN Tom!

As you know our next big event is coming right up. The WINTER SHOW AND SALE will be held on Saturday, January 13. We will be needing hands to pitch in with set-up in the morning, sales, and talking with people about plants - if you have your 'ASK ME' badge from last June, put it on and show up. Look at your collection for those jewels that come in to their own in the winter months and bring them in for the show... hope to see you all there! I look forward to serving as president and invite any member to contact me with suggestions, questions, comments or complaints.

Sincerely, Pam Badger (pambadge@earthlink.net)

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR...VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR...VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

TOM BIRT was recognized for his years of service to SDCSS as the 2000 Volunteer of the year. He has implemented our barcode scanning cash registers and barcode systems. Though a change for us, these barcodes have meant that customers at our large sales, winter and spring, get out of line faster. It also means that vendors get paid faster and with less mistakes. In the 'old days' we had to remove a tag from the pot and put it in a safe place. Then the treasurer and several helpers had to categorize and add up the totals for each vender. Now, this is all done automatically ... the register totals the numbers for each vender and a paper tape records all of these numbers. Easy, about the only thing the treasurer has to do is write a check, well not quite. This has made a lot of club members happy. Tom is also in charge of the library and has served as a director on the board for the Society. Please let Tom know that you appreciate his work by helping out with either plant sales or in the library.

Tom THANKS for volunteering your time to SDCSS

The Brag plant winners for November 2000 were Judged by Woody Minnich

NO CACTUS WERE ENTERED!

SUCCULENTS: FIRST **Kelly Griffin** for *Brighamia insignis* SECOND **Phyllis Flechsig** for *Dykia x Fosteriana x Lapostolle* THIRD **Kelly Grffin** for Aloe "Fang"

Calendar of Upcoming Events

— 2001 —

⇒ JANUARY

- 8 Kelly Griffin talks to the San Diego Horticultural Society about plant hunting in Mexico, more info. call 760-630-7307
- 13 SDCSS Winter Show and Sale. If you want to help with the sale please call: Tom Birt (858-452-0389). To help with the Show call Ed DeLollis: (760-945-7892). Your help is vital in making this day a success.
PLEASE BRING BOXES!

⇒ FEBRUARY

- 7 Take a horticultural tour of South Africa at San Diego Horticultural Society meeting, more info. call 760-630-7307
- 23-25 CSS of New Zealand Annual General Meeting and Convention, Lincoln Green Motor Hotel, 159 Lincoln Rd., Henderson, Auckland

⇒ APRIL

- 13-16 Succulenticon 2001, the Conference of the Australasian Cactus and Succulent Societies at the Hotel Heritage, Narrabundah, ACT. Presentations by 14 speakers from all over Australia will feature aspects of the Australian scene as well as presentations by speakers of their overseas field trips, studies and specialty interests. Other activities include sales of quality plants and books and a visit to local collections. For further information either write to Succulenticon 2001, PO Box 484, Mawson ACT 2607 or email smith@dynamite.com.au

⇒ JUNE

- 2-3 SDCSS Spring Show and Sale
- 30-1 CSSA Show & Sale, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino CA.

⇒ JULY

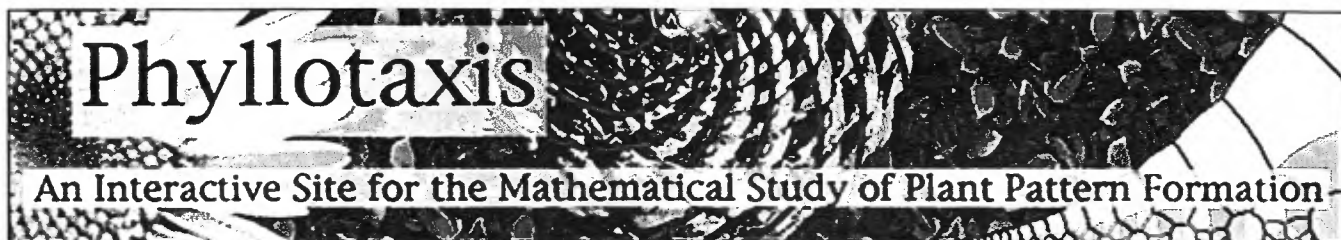
- 1-6 CSSA Convention, Warner Center Marriott, 21850 Oxnard St, Woodland Hills CA.
This is the correct date! See www.cssainc.org/convent.html for details

⇒ SEPTEMBER

- 1 Huntington Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino CA. Info. 626-405-2160 or 2277

FYI FYI F O R Y O U R I N F O R M A T I O N FYI FYI

- ⇒ PLEASE BRING IN YOUR BOXES for our Winter Show and Sale. We need your help! Small boxes, medium boxes, empties that had presents. If you have questions call **Joe Kraatz** at 760-758-7042.
- ⇒ **Jeff Harris** wrote: "My company, SeaWest WindPower, has a Community Service Committee which performs volunteer work in Balboa Park (usually in or around Florida Canyon). We work there every other month on a Saturday from 8:00 AM until noon. If you are interested in volunteering some time to a cause that very much needs you, and is closer for many than the **Wild Animal Park**, please call **Jeff Harris**: 619-294-5708 or the Balboa Park Ranger Station, 619-235-1122. We get so much from Balboa Park, and would appreciate if you can spend a day a year (or more) in volunteering to assist the Rangers in their work of bettering Balboa Park. Thank you!"
- ⇒ 'Not to be telling you' to join another CSS club, but the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society puts out a good newsletter: Points of Interest. If you have an opportunity take a look at it. **Harriet Olds** is the Editor and also the author of this issues: *Four Deserts of North America*.
- ⇒ Thanks to the following people for their benefit plant table contributions **Ken Blackford**: (2) *Cotyledon orbiculata* 'Jingle Bell', (2) *Echeveria agavoides*, (1) *Echeveria* hybrid; **Carol Jean Wolcott**: (1) *Opuntia sublata*, (1) *Pachypodium lealii* ssp. *saundersii*, (1) *Lobivia* sp.; **Shirley Berry**: Soil Test Kit and a Wildlife of the World Calendar.
- ⇒ For kids 4 to 94 a lecture titled *Fangs and Stingers* is on Friday January 26 at 7:30 PM at the Borrego Springs Performing Arts Center. What a great way to start off an early visit to the desert. There is a \$5.00 charge if you are not a member of the Association, when you are out there take a look at the night sky. Check out their web site: 'www.abdnha.org' or call the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (760-767-3052).
- ⇒ The two **Tom's**: **Knapik** and **De Merritt**, judged the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society's Winter Show and Sale, they sure get around don't they. Also, congratulations to **Peter Tashjian**, he is the new president of the PCSS!

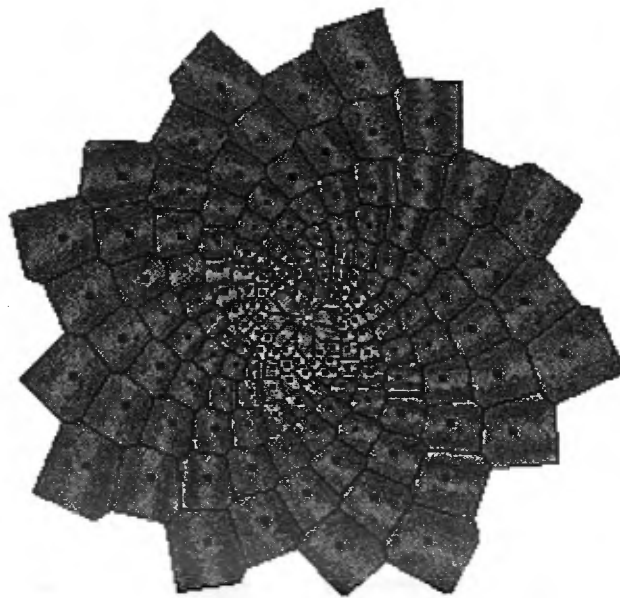


The Geometric Secrets of the Cactus

It could be said that cacti are exceptional examples of geometry, the branch of mathematics that focuses on points, lines, planes and figures. They can assume amazing forms, and some are masters of the helix and other complicated mathematical sequences and equations.

Helixes are three-dimensional spirals that are governed by a set of increasing numbers called the Fibonacci series that goes 1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21 and so on. The sequence was developed back in the Middle Ages by the same mathematician who convinced Europe to accept the Arabic numeral system.

Fibonacci, of course, never saw a cactus or its spirals, because cacti are native to the New World, which was yet to be discovered. Helixes are found in other natural objects, though, including many seashells and DNA (which is actually a double helix).



In The Cactus

Primer (Harvard

University Press; 1985), by Arthur Gibson and Park Nobel, devote an entire chapter to the complicated geometry of cacti, describing the science behind it. They do not theorize why, but others have. Some say that the spiral arrangement of ribs and the little bumps called tubercles make the plants structurally sound, that they act like fins for cooling, or allow for seasonal expansion and contraction.

The helixes on cacti may be obscured or disguised by thorns and bristles. You can view this by finding one of the less spiny cacti or any of the smaller ones that are quite free of thorns. Then look down on the arrangement of ribs or tubercles, and you will see the spirals.

You can clearly see this geometry on the cactus inside the greenhouses of the Huntington Botanical Gardens, Desert Conservatory, in San Marino. This greenhouse has some of the smaller kinds that would not survive on the 'mean streets' of the Huntington's sprawling outdoor collection, where bigger, tougher cacti grow.

Arranged in handsome, earthy pots, the small cacti are easy to study. And John Trager, the caretaker of these little jewels and the curator of Desert Conservatory, points out that cacti are also "adept at geometrical aberration".

Collectors will pay top dollar for some of these aberrations, including the so called "crested" or fasciated cacti. These specimens have bizarre, malformed tops, that do not follow the Fibonacci series. Fasciated cacti have a cylindrical base that turns into a flattened, fan-like crown of dubious distinction that is nonetheless valued by collectors.

Editor's note: We will have some of these geometric beauties on display and for sale at the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Societies Winter Show. See page 11 for more details. This article was submitted by Shirley Berry and is based on an article that appeared in the LA Times, Aug. 7, 2000 issue by Robert Smaus.

Four Deserts of North America

by Harriet Olds



California Fan Palms in Palm Canyon

THERE ARE A few general things to keep in mind about deserts.

Temperatures in deserts are affected by both latitude and elevation. The Great Basin is the farthest north and is at a high elevation, therefore making it

the coolest of the North American deserts. The Sonoran Desert is the warmest because it has the lowest average elevation and is further south than the Great Basin. Temperatures in the Chihuahuan Desert are cool because even though it is the farthest south, it is the highest desert in North America. Humidity in desert regions is normally very low, thus affecting our perception of heat. The primary reason for this is that your perspiration evaporates quickly in dry air, cooling you skin. Soils in desert regions may be simple or very complex. Usually, little organic matter may

be found in desert soil and it tends to be very hard. Water retention in desert soils is typically very poor.



Saguaro community in Arizona



Claret Cup cactus in Big Bend

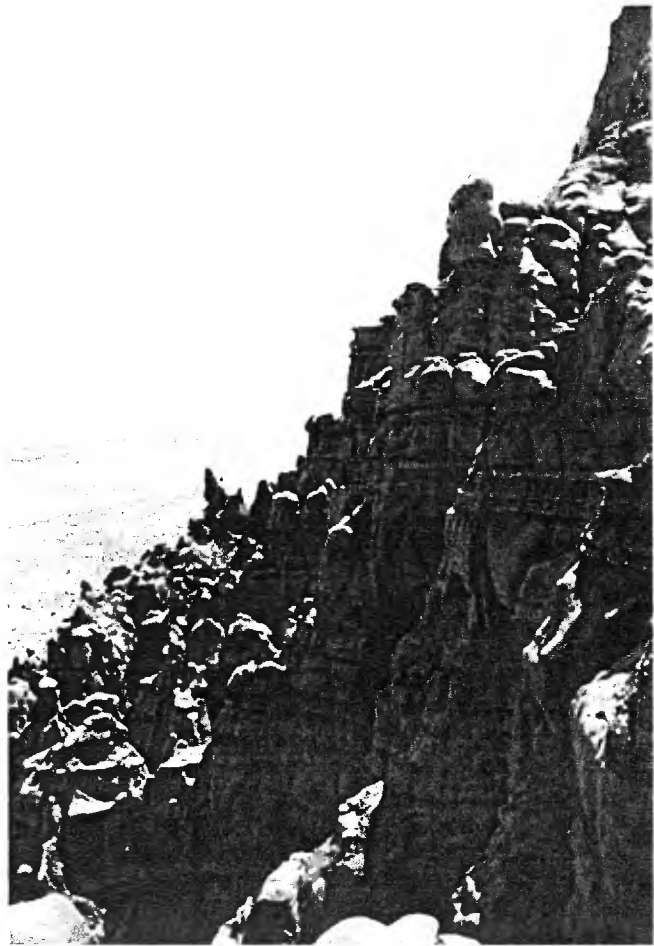
The Chihuahuan Desert

Most of the Chihuahuan Desert, the largest desert in North America, covering more than 200,000 square miles, lies south of the international border. In the U.S., it extends into parts of New Mexico, Texas, and sections of southeastern Arizona. Its minimum elevation is above 1,000 feet, but the vast majority of this desert lies at elevations between 3,500 and 5,000 feet.

Like the Great Basin desert, this is a shrub desert. The biological diversity of perennial plant life is relatively low. Yuccas

and agaves, growing with grasses and often creosote bushes, give this desert its characteristic appearance. Prickly pears and ocotillo are other large plants that grow here.

The Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute is located near Ft. Davis, Texas. The institute features a 20-acre arboretum with the largest living collection of Chihuahuan Desert cacti and succulents on display anywhere in the world. It is an independent, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization. The purpose of the organization is to expedite scientific investigation pertaining to the natural sciences and the Chihuahuan Desert region and to create public awareness of the natural phenomena to be found there. While maintaining its independence, the institute works closely with a number of colleges, universities, institutions, and organizations. The organization has its roots in nearby Sul Ross State University and enjoys a close relationship with this institution.



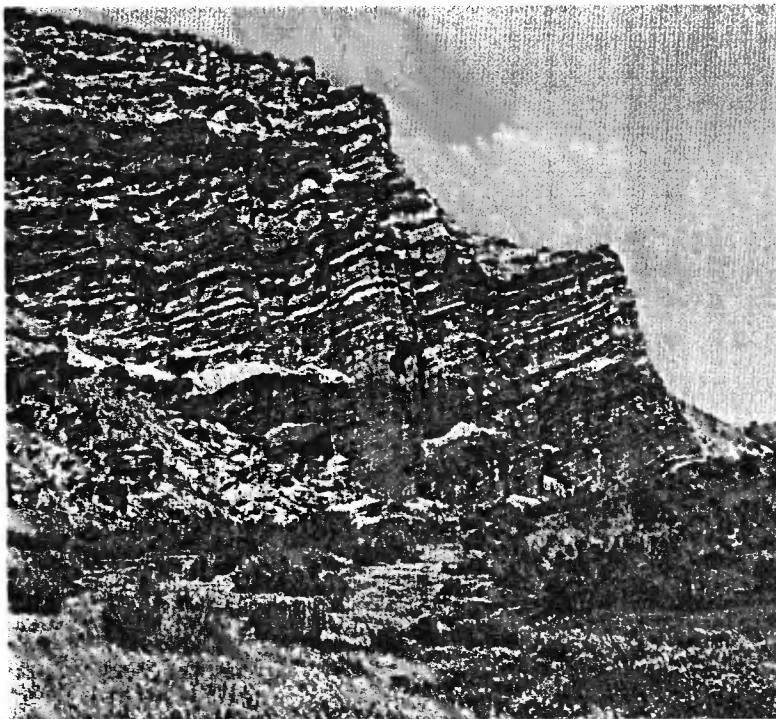
Goblin Valley - Utah

The Sonoran Desert

The Sonoran Desert includes southern Arizona, north to the Grand Canyon and Mogollon Rim; the southeastern corner of California; the state of Sonora, Mexico; the Baja California peninsula of Mexico; and the Gulf of California and its islands. Because of its location, biotic communities representing all of the

world's biota, exist there. Two visually dominant life forms of plants distinguish the Sonoran Desert from the other North American Deserts: legume trees and columnar cacti. It also supports a rich spectrum of some 2000 other species of plants.

The Sonoran Desert differs from the other three North American deserts by having mild winters; most of the area rarely experiences frost. The Lower Colorado River Valley, a subdivision of the Sonoran Desert, is the hottest and driest of these. Geography consists of broad, flat valleys with widely scattered, small mountain ranges of mostly barren rock. There is also a sand sea (the Gran Desierto) and the spectacular Pinacate volcanic field. The mountains



Mojave Desert in Bloom

support a wider variety of shrubs and cacti, but the density is very sparse. Annual species comprise well over half the flora. They are winter growing species and appear in number only in wet years. The elevation makes for cooler temperatures and the cacti that grow in these mountains may thrive in Colorado.

The Arizona Sonora Desert Museum is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering public appreciation, knowledge, and wise stewardship of the Sonoran Desert region. Current operations and growth are funded entirely by memberships, contributions, grants, and admission fees. The collections managers, keepers, botanists, and other museum staff work to gather information to improve the quality of there exhibits, educational and conservation efforts, and collections management.

The Great Basin Desert

This is the largest U.S. desert, covering an arid expanse of about 190,000 square miles and bordered by the Sierra Nevada Range on the west, the Rocky Mountains on the east, the Columbia Plateau to the north, and the Mojave and Sonoran deserts to the south. The Colorado Plateau, including the Four Corners region of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, is part of the Great Basin Desert. Generally, Great Basin vegetation is low and homogeneous, often with a single dominant species of bush for miles. There are only occasional yuccas and very few cacti. If we choose to base our research projects only in Colorado, the two ecosystems that we would definitely want to focus our attention on would be the semidesert shrub lands and the Pinon-Juniper woodlands.

Semidesert shrub lands are Colorado's "cool desert", hot as the blazes in the summer



Great Basin Bists Badlands in New Mexico

but with winter temperatures well below zero degrees Fahrenheit. They are dominated by greasewood, saltbush, sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and other shrubs. Most of the precipitation in this ecosystem falls as snow, with moisture averaging less than 10 inches per year. Semidesert shrub lands in Colorado form the eastern edge of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau. They cover a broad range of elevations- from 5,000 to over 10,000 feet.

Another arid region in Colorado is the Pinon-Juniper woodland. These two trees, the Pinon Pine and the Juniper, grow where few other trees can survive in coarse, gravelly soil in warm, dry areas. They get 10 to 20 inches of precipitation each year, but coarse soils let the water soak deep enough to support trees.

The Pinon-Juniper woodland is a unique and interesting place with a long history of human use, ranging from gathering Pinon Pine nuts to cutting down trees for building material and grazing cattle. Unfortunately, the trees grow slowly and overgrazed woodlands are very slow to recover. Today, one of the best places to find them is the La Garita-Penitente Canyon area of the west side of the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado. In western Colorado, Colorado National Monument near Grand Junction, is a good place to explore the pygmy forest. Most of Colorado's native cacti grow in the semidesert shrub lands and in the Pinon-Juniper woodland regions.

San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Financial Report 2000

INCOME

Advertising	110.00
CSSA sales	80.00
Dec lunch	995.00
Donation	143.00
Dues	2999.00
Interest Inc	18.78
June book sales	183.46
Miscellaneous	187.00
Name tags	45.00
Opening balance	5621.92
Plant sale	39568.16
Poster sales	15.00
Supply sales	113.28

TOTAL INCOME 50079.60

EXPENSES

Art	48.60
Beverages	140.94
Check charge	53.00
Clubs & coops	245.00
Earth Day	211.64
Gifts Given	53.88
Jan sale	4000.13
Jan show	100.00
June sale	11058.85
June show	1024.40
Library	441.93
Lunch Dec	945.33
Membership	171.91
Misc.	157.09
Newsletter	4364.90
P.O. Box	64.00
Picnic supplies	75.47
Plants	11289.77
Postage	74.72
Pots	6.00
Program speaker	950.00
Service award	12.00
Tax	1758.00
Tax, Business	175.00
WAP supplies	429.54
Web site	80.00

TOTAL EXPENSES 37932.10

CASH ON HAND 12147.50*

*Note: Cash on hand includes funds set aside for Wild Animal Park activities.



Tylecodon paniculatus in habitat near the Wolfberg turnout on the way to Port Nollath, South Africa.

Don't forget to come to the Winter Show and Sale, and tell a friend!

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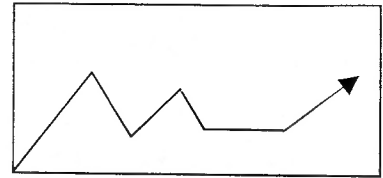
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WHAT'S THE STATUS?

by Tom Knapik



Topic #10: Threatened Succulents of San Diego County

I wanted to present the rare succulents of San Diego County since the cacti were covered in the Sept. Issue. Available on the internet at <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/sandiego/rareplants/> this information was written by Craig H. Reiser. There are many other non-succulent California natives that need our protection as well.

Shaw's Agave [*Agave shawii* Engelm.]

State/Federal. Status Federal candidate *AGAVACEAE* Sep.-May

Global Rank 3,000-10,000 individuals or 10,000-50,000 acres State Rank **threatened**

Distribution: San Diego County; Baja California, Mexico

Status: Shaw's Agave is almost extirpated in the U.S. and should be reintroduced at selected coastal sites utilizing native seed as source material. All existing sites should be protected.

Orcutt's Dudleya [*Dudleya attenuata* (Wats.) Moran ssp. *orcuttii* (Rose) Moran]

State/Federal. Status -Federal candidate *CRASSULACEAE* May-Jul.

Global Rank Apparently secure State Rank **threatened**

Distribution: San Diego County; Baja California, Mexico

Status: Orcutt's Dudleya is close to extirpation in the United States. All populations should be fully protected. An appropriate buffer against human intrusion needs to be established for the population at the Border Field site. It is recommended that seed be taken from this small population at Border Field State Park and grown horticulturally for establishment on similar state parklands near this northernmost site.

Short-leaved Dudleya [*Dudleya blochmaniae* (Eastw.) Moran ssp. *brevifolia* Moran]

State/Federal. Status - California endangered species *CRASSULACEAE* April

Global Rank 3,000-10,000 individuals or 10,000-50,000 acres State Rank **very threatened**

Distribution: San Diego County

Status: Short-leaved Dudleya is presently stable in San Diego County. This County endemic is endangered by the proposed construction of new homes near the Carmel Mountain sites. This tiny succulent cannot be adequately counted except during the spring following the "corm" sprouting of leaves, and during the short flowering period. Late in the season, the minute leaves dry and shrivel quickly. This species is recommended for Federally Endangered status. All sites should be fully protected with adequate buffers.

Variegated Dudleya [*Dudleya variegata* (Wats.) Moran]

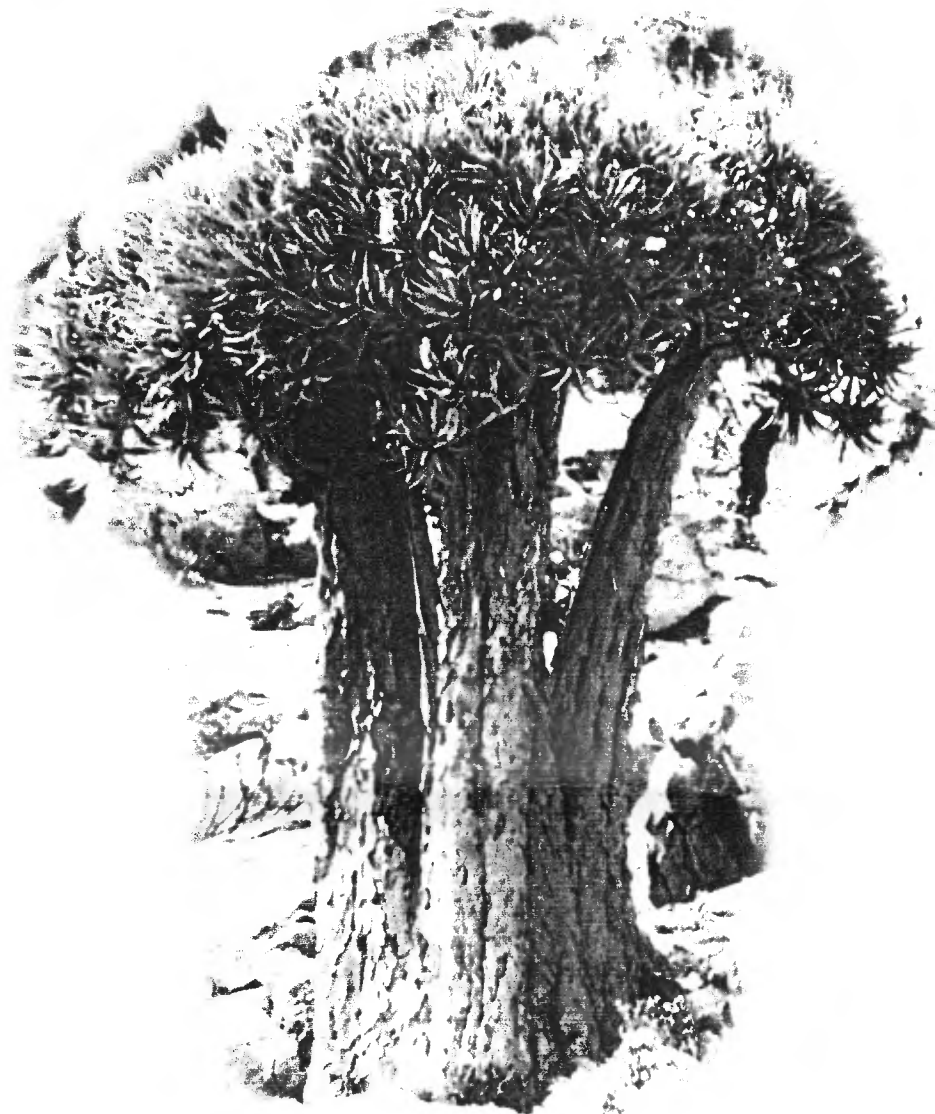
State/Federal. Status - Federal candidate *CRASSULACEAE* May-Jun.

Global Rank 1,000-3,000 individuals or 2,000-10,000 acres State Rank **threatened**

Distribution: San Diego County; Baja California, Mexico

Status: Variegated Dudleya is severely declining in San Diego County. The cryptic nature of this species except during spring and early summer makes focused botanical surveys in possible habitat suspect outside these seasons. Widespread grading on Otay Mesa has recently eliminated major populations and outlying colonies. The land rush to take advantage of federal tax benefits bestowed on industrial parks adjacent to the Mexican border is the primary stimulus for this habitat loss. Despite the number of historically reported locales, recent losses indicate that all substantial populations should be protected, and that significant portions of all smaller populations should be placed into biological open space.

**THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
PRESENTS: A WINTER SUCCULENT AND BLOOMING CACTUS
SHOW AND SALE : 2001 - A PLANT ODYSSEY**



Aloe dichotoma with flowers, in habitat near Springbok, in the Richtersveldt, South Africa.

See what to grow for winter color and buy from the premier growers in our area.
Please bring in some of your plants for display at our show.

One Day Only: Free admission!

January 13, 2001

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Room 101 - Casa del Prado,
Balboa Park, San Diego, CA

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

Ed DeLollis 760-945-7892

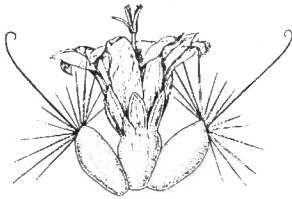
See a special presentation
by Plant Artist and
South African Plant Expert Gerhard Marx
starting at 2:00 PM.

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 and Lee Badger
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 Betzler and Kay Quijada
 Winter Show - Ed DeLollis
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 Monthly - Rudy Lime and Stefy Mangold
 Picnic - Laura and Tom DeMerritt

The SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY, INC. is open to all persons interested in growing cacti and other succulent plants. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month (except June, Sept. and Dec.) at 1:00 PM in room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Executive Board meetings are open to all members; call any officer or director for the time and location. Annual dues are \$15.00 per single member per year, \$5.00 for each additional (associate) member within the same household. Single copies of *Espinās y Flores* are \$2.00 per copy sent within the USA; foreign subscriptions are \$30.00. Affiliated with the CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC. The *New* SDCSS Web Page is: SDCSS.COM - please take a look and give feedback to the webmaster.