

# Espinas y Flores

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

XVIII, Number 5

May 7, 1983

## MAY MEETING

Saturday May 7, 1983

1:30 PM

Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

## PROGRAM

Dr. LeRoy Phelps will explain and demonstrate what Judges look for when choosing winners for shows. There will be examples of the good bad and the disastrous. Come and find out how you can get a step ahead of those who do not attend this meeting.

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DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE ISSUE IS MAY 27 --Please help me make this a full membership newsletter and send contributions of articles that would be of interest to all. Thanks, Mary

NEWS

NEWS

NEWS

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THE APRIL BRAGGING TABLE WINNERS ----

1st Place Wilna Johnson for her Sarcocaulon Peniculinum  
 2nd Place Joe Clements for his Sinningia Leucotricha  
 Tied for Third Place  
 Dorothy Dunn for Mammillaria Spinosissima  
 Marianne Thrombley for her Sedum Furfuraceum

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TROPHY WINNERS

from last year are asked to bring their trophies to the meeting in May. We need them for presentation at the June Show.

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THANKS

to Emery Cotton for donating plants to the sale table.

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS --

Marlene & Chuck Evans of San Diego

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Those who have signed up to bring refreshments in Mary are:

- Mary Aubuchon Judy Hannula
- Frances Johnson Susan Barker
- Jan Miller Marianne Thrombley
- Susan Clements Bev Kent
- Karl Zanker
- Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clark

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FROM THE LIBRARY

We thank

Joan L. Johnson for donating  
 CACTI OF THE SOUTHWEST BY  
 W. Hubert Earle  
 and  
 Lyman Benson's  
 NATIVE CACTI OF CALIFORNIA

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REMEMBER to be preparing your plants for the show. We need a large representation from our members.

## SHOWS AND JUDGING

Exhibiting your plants in a show can be fun, stimulating, and very educational. If it is a competitive show, judged by discerning and knowledgeable plant experts, it becomes even more challenging and exciting. It's also very gratifying to overhear strangers ooh-ing and ahh-ing over your "pampered darlings" which you have (hopefully) groomed and dusted to perfection for their public appearance. Unfortunately, too many of us hesitate to enter plant shows because of lack of information concerning just exactly what constitutes a "show-worthy" plant. So - the purpose of this article is to acquaint the timorous uninitiated with a few basic guidelines in preparing plants for a show. Remember, first of all, that judging is a very individualistic and opinionated process, and that rarely will any two judges ever see the same plant in the same way on any given day. A plant which sends one judge into paroxysms of delight may be passed over almost without comment by another.

The criteria most often followed in cactus and succulent shows is the CSSA (Cactus and Succulent Society of America) Judging Scale, which is as follows: Condition = 70%; Staging = 15%; Size and Degree of Maturity = 10%; Nomenclature = 5%.

The condition of a plant relates to general culture. How well has the plant been grown and cared for? Condition reflects on the growers' ability to assess a particular plant's needs to maintain characteristic, healthy growth. Is the plant etiolated? - (too green and lanky, indicating too much shade and/or fertilizer) - Is it sunburned, scarred, discolored, or diseased? - Is the growth uniform and even? - Are there any signs of mealy-bugs, scale, or ants? An experienced judge will note immediately and automatically all of these things.

Staging is the manner in which the plant is displayed, and includes pots, top dressing, and cleanliness. Pots may be ordinary clay, stoneware, ceramic, or even plastic, but they must be in good condition (no chips or cracks) and they must be clean (no alkali encrustations, algae, dirt clinging to the pot, etc.). The pot should be of a complementary size, shape, and color for the plant: no garish, shiny colors or elaborate designs, and no fanciful, overly ornate or "too-cute" shapes. Remember, you are displaying the plant, not the pot, and while the pot should always subtly enhance the plant it should never overwhelm it in any way. The judges will, however, take the total effect into consideration. The plant must, of course, be straight and centered in the pot. Top dressing is optional, but generally adds to the well-groomed effect. It may consist of clean gravel, pebbles, lava rock (scoria), or coarse sand or decomposed granite. Aside from being neat-appearing, top dressing is also beneficial to the plant; it keeps the soil from caking and cracking, conserves moisture, and discourages weeds. Here again, as with the pot, it should never detract from or clash with the plant. If you choose not to use a top dressing, the soil around the plant should be clean and fresh-looking and free of weeds or debris. The plant itself should be as immaculate as you can

possibly make it - no spider-webs and/or (worse!) spiders, no snail tracks and/or (worse!) snails, etc., ad nauseum, and it should be cleaned of hard-water marks on the leaves or body and free of dust, dead leaves and other debris. Dead blooms should be removed, unless they have been left on the plant for the purpose of setting seed.

A large, relatively mature "specimen-size" plant, if well-grown, will always take precedence over immature or seedling plants. This is where Size and Degree of Maturity come in. It is especially satisfying to display a plant which you have successfully grown from a seedling into a handsome and mature specimen. Due to the recent emphasis on conservation and endangered species most judges tend to cast a somewhat jaundiced eye on obviously collected plants, and there is some discussion about disqualifying them altogether. Most show rules also require that the plant must be grown by the exhibitor for at least six months prior to the show, and some judges feel that the plants shown should ideally reflect the end result of several years of painstaking effort on the part of the grower. Rarity, and how difficult the plant is in cultivation, although not listed in the judging scale, can also be factors with individual judges, especially when all other points (condition, staging, etc.) are virtually equal. A very rare or difficult-to-grow plant is bound to influence most judges.

Nomenclature has to do with the proper labelling and correct botanical name of the plant. Even though it counts for only 5%, you should make every effort to provide the correct name for your plant. When in doubt, if all else fails, it is probably better to label it - for example - simply Mammillaria species, rather than to give it an erroneous specific name or, worse yet, an ambiguous common name such as "Pincushion Cactus". Labels should be clean, neat, and inconspicuous, if used. (Many shows use entry cards instead of labels.) The owners' name cannot be visible to the judges.

Now - start making plans to cart your favorite plants off to the next show with confidence, relax and enjoy it, and try to accept with grace and suitable modesty the compliments and ribbons which are sure to reward your efforts!

By Dorothy Dunn  
March, 1983

## SUCCULENT-OF-THE-MONTH

### Yuccas et al

by Rick Latimer

Allied to the Lily and Amaryllis families is the Agave family. It is divided into the Agavoideae and the Xanthorrhoeadeae. A member of the latter group is the genus Xanthorrhoea, which is native to Australia. The former group includes the tribes: Polyantheae, Agaveae, Nolineae, Formieae, Dracaeneae, and Yucceae. The first tribe includes the genus Manfreda, and a few others. The second contains Doryanthes (also from Australia), Beschorneria, Furcraea, and of course Agave (the last three genera are all American). The fourth includes species from New Zealand. The fifth contains the Old World and South Pacific genera Sansevieria, Dracena, Cohnia, and Cordyline. The third and sixth tribes embrace those genera that we are concerned with this month, namely - Dasyllirion, Beaucarnea, Calibanus, and Nolina and Hesperaloe and Yucca - all North American genera.

The difference between the Yucceae and the Nolineae is that the first tribe has species with "larger" flowers, while the second has sprays of small flowers. The members of these two tribes are not all that succulent. Some has thickened woody stems or roots, while others have tough, fibrous leaves (that do not store water) that somehow withstand extremely dry conditions.

All of the 15 or so species of the genus Dasyllirion have stiff, hard leaves. D. longissimum from eastern Mexico, has long leaves that are free of teeth. Mature plants have many many of these leaves, and it would take an expert to distinguish this plant from that of a Xanthorrhoea preissii! D. wheeleri from southeastern Arizona has blue, hook toothed leaves that curve in an attractive manner. The flowers of this genus are whitish and are dioecious.

The genus Beaucarnea is included in Nolina by some. The most popular one is B. recurvata from southeastern Mexico. It is commonly called the "Elephant Foot's Palm" or "Bottle Palm". The species name refers to the recurving light green leaves. B. stricta from further north in Mexico, has thinner, bluish leaves. A Beaucarnea at Huntington Gardens was measured to be 27 feet tall with a swollen base 8 feet across.

The larger members of the genus Nolina look like the larger members of the genus Yucca (such as N. parryi). The flowers of this genus are said to be incompletely dioecious (meaning that the ovaries are abortive in those flowers with fertile stamens. One of the San Diego County native Nolinas is N. interrata. It is known only at two localities and its common name is "Dehesa beargrass". This endangered species does not grow up into a tree like the other species, but instead branches underground with only the bluish leaves showing. Mitchell Beauchamp told us that

this habit of growth protects the main part of the plant in the case of brush fires.

The monotypic genus Calibanus was lost for many years until fairly recently it was rediscovered in its known habitat. What was assumed to be a bluish grass was examined and found to hide the typical globose, fissured, tuberous trunks. A C. hookeri plant looks like that of a B. stricta that could not decide where to send up its main stem, so it sent up tufts of also rans. Specimens in the wild have been reported as big as Volkswagons! Like Dasylyrion, male and female flowers appear on separate plants.

The genus Hesperaloe (meaning "western Aloe") has three species that look like smallish Yuccas. The leaves are nearly straight and upright and have white marginal threads like some Yuccas and Agaves. Yucca flowers are "spreading", while those of Hesperaloe are tubular like an Aloe. H. funifera from northern Mexico has whitish-green tinged with purple. In Summer, one may see the rose red flowers of H. parviflora used as a landscape plant in the heart of Texas.

The genus Yucca is endemic to North America. It ranges from Fort Mandan, North Dakota (near the Canadian border) - the type locality of Y. glauca - to Central America, Bermuda, and the Antilles - e. g. Y. elephantipes - and from the Atlantic to the Pacific

(except for the Great Lakes basin and the most mountainous regions of the U. S. A. The genus numbers about 42 species, 29 of which live in Mexico. All Yuccas are characteristically xerophytes. Even those that grow in "rainy" zones, show a preference for less humid habitats - even Y. lacandonica, which is an epiphyte! Many of the Mexican species are of arboreal habit, but the two San Diego County natives are of the "short form". Y. schidigera has green leaves with white marginal hairs. Since it branches, the whole plant does not die when it blooms. The entire range of this species is northern Baja to southern Nevada and into western Arizona. The range of Y. whipplei is Baja to Monterey, Ca. and into northwestern Arizona. This species remains single, so

## YUCCA

By Elizabeth-Ellen Long

Seeing them first by full  
moonlight,  
Tall as tapers and waxy white,  
Men of the cross, men of the  
sword,  
Called them the "Candles of the  
Lord."  
Conquistadores, helmeted, booted,  
Dreaming of golden cities, looted,  
And brown-robed padres,  
sandal-shod,  
Counting the souls they would  
bring to God,  
Seeing them first when the moon  
was high  
And hills rose tall on a Western  
sky,  
Stood by the trail, their faces  
aglow,  
Long miles behind them, long  
miles to go,  
With mountains to climb and  
canyons to ford,  
And called them the "Candles of  
the Lord!"



when it blooms, that is it! The leaves are stiff and thin and since they are terminated with sharp spines - watch out - this is one of the "dangerous" species! The leaves are colored a glaucous blue and some forms have very short leaves. This species has a great sentimental value to me. A few months after our great back country fire of 1971, I was up in Jamul. At one location the landscape was still black except for the granite boulders. A few plants like the lilacs were just beginning to send out green shoots. The crowning example of survival was a Y. whipplei in full bloom. The leaves had all been singed, but the plant had enough strength left to bloom. I was inevitably reminded of the myth of Pandora, who had opened the box containing all of the evils that were then released upon the world. When she opened it again, she released - Hope!

REFERENCES:

Howard Scott Gentry, The Agave Family in Sonora.

Charles Glass & Robert Foster, Cacti and Succulents for the Amateur.

Joseph Wood Krutch & Andree Robinson, "The Yucca and the Moth", Arizona Highways, 2/69, p. 26-30.

Ignacio Piña Luján, "Geographic Distribution of the Genus Yucca", CSSA Journal (52), p. 277-281.

Eizi Matuda & Ignacio Piña Luján, "Consideraciones Sobre la Taxonomia del Género Yucca y Plantas Afines", Cactaceas y Succulentas Mexicanas, (22:3), p. 60-64.

J. Riha & R. Subik, The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Cacti & Other Succulents.

Forrest Shreve & Ira Wiggins, Vegetation and Flora of the Sonoran Desert.

Sunset's Western Garden Book.

the illustration is from the CSSA Journal (19:2), p.30.



SHOW SCHEDULE FOR MAY AND JUNE

May	8	San Diego Epiphyllum Show	Sun: 11:00am - 5:00pm
May	14 & 15	San Diego Geranium Show	Sat: 12pm-5:00pm Sun:10am-5pm
May	21 & 22	San Diego Bromeliad Show	Sat: 1pm-4:30pm Sun:11am-4:30pm
May	28 & 29	Heartland African Violet Show	Sat: 1pm-5pm Sun:11am-5:00pm
June	4 & 5	SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SHOW	Sat: 1pm-5pm Sun:10am-5pm
June	12	SoWestern Hemerocallis Show	Sun 12pm - 5pm



## Cactus-of-the-Month

### Cleistocactus (Lemaire)

Frank C. Thrombley

Cleistocactus (klis-tō-kāk-tūs)  
Cereus Group

A genus of slender-stemmed, columnar plants which branch from the base or the sides. The name of the cactus-of-the-month is derived from the Greek "closed cactus". The name refers to the flowers which are zygomorphic and do not expand at their open ends.

The species are all South American. Distribution ranges from Central Peru through Eastern Bolivia to Northern Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. They live in relatively high altitudes ranging from 460 meters in the Andean foothills to 2800 meters in Bolivia and Peru.

The flowers are borne on the sides and on the upper part of the stems or columns. The flower colours range from yellow, orange, green, red and combinations of same. Only one specie, from Peru (*C. Morawetzianus*), has white flowers. The fruits are dense and finely scaly, not large; seeds mostly numerous. The fruits, like the flowers, have a wide range of colors including black.

The spines are predominantly fine, generally hairlike with rather firm spines interspersed. The firm spines are all needle-like. The colors are honey-brown, brown, yellow and white. Probably the most popular specie, *C. Strausii*, is completely covered with all white spines so that the color of the stem cannot be seen. A beautiful plant that one wants to touch because of its soft fuzzy look.

Britton & Rose recognized and described three species in their second edition, "The Cactaceae", published in 1937. J. Borg described fourteen species in his second edition, "Cacti", published in 1951. Curt Backeberg described fifty-two species in his first edition, "Kakteenlexikon", published in 1966. As one can see, these are all recent finds of previously unknown species from South America.

Cleistocactus is a vigorously growing plant worth collecting for their beauty without considering the flowers. Pot culture is not difficult, the compost should be very porous and permeable so that after watering it drains rapidly and allows air to reach the roots freely. In the summer they require standard watering treatment for cactus and strong light to keep the hair or spines in good condition. They are easily propagated by seed, cuttings of the topped stems or offshoots.

#### References used:

- |                  |      |                                                  |
|------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Backeberg, Curt  | 1977 | Cactus Lexicon, Blandford Press, England         |
| Borg, J          | 1976 | Blandford Press, England                         |
| Britton and Rose | 1937 | The Cactaceae, Dover Publications, New York City |



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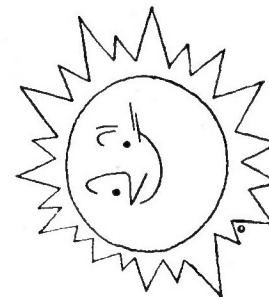
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Orientation:

The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing cacti, other succulents and exotic plants. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at 1:30 pm in Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Board of Directors meetings are held after the general meetings. Annual dues are \$8.00 per single member per year, \$2.00 for each additional member of a household within a family. Single copies of Espinas y Flores are 60 cents.

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