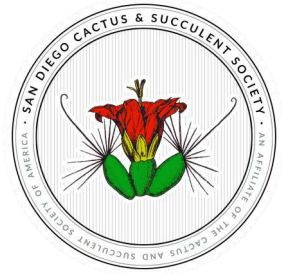


ESPINAS Y FLORES



VOL. 60, No. 09
SEPTEMBER 2025

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
AN AFFILIATE OF THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA



BLOSSFELDIA // SEPTEMBER SPEAKER // MEMBER SECTION //
WOLWEKRAAL THANK-YOU // ...and more



ON THE COVER

Cultivation image of *Blossfeldia liliputana*
on its own roots

Photo by Tom Knapik

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's message pg 3

September Guest Speaker pg 4

Plant of the Month guest article pgs 5 - 6

Member section pgs 7 - 9

August Brag table pgs 10 - 24

UPCOMING SDCSS SCHEDULE

UPCOMING MEETING

September 13th

UPCOMING EVENT: PICNIC AT KATE SESSIONS

October 11th

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President	Kelly Griffin
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Rick Bjorklund, Patricia Bryan, Luis Gonzalez, Tom Knapik, Georgia Kenney, Rita Lunceford, and Jared Petker

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Conservation	Herb Stern
Brag Table	Rocco Piersanti
Plant of the Month	Denise Huntsman-Griffin
Summer/Winter Show	[open]
Historian	Jerry Garner
Grants	Jerry Garner
Library Committee	Luis Gonzalez
Exchange Plants/Seeds	Michelle Heckathorn
Annual Sales	Rita Lunceford
Auction & Holiday Plants	Kelly Griffin
Show Auction Manager	[open]
Monthly Plant Sales	Rita Lunceford
Benefit Drawing Table	Chuck Ramey
Programs	Kelly Griffin
Reception	Susan Hopkins & Candy Garner

New Member Orientation Patricia Bryan & Jay Crowley

Monthly Regalement Sandy Wetzel-Smith

Picnic Regalement Georgia Kenney

Coffee in the Garden Coordinator

Jodi Visosky

LIAISONS

Balboa Park Desert Garden
Susan Hopkins

CSSA Affiliate Rep Rick Bjorklund

SD Botanic Foundation Lynn Elliot

SD Zoo Safari Park, Baja, & Old World Gardens
May Fong Ho

Palomar CS Society Liaison
Brita Miller

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Newsletter Editor Der-shing Helmer

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General Club Publicity Christie Lathrop

Show & Sale Publicity Patricia Bryan & Emily Shuffield

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a nice meeting we had in August! Thanks go out to **Oakes Austin** for his take on growing and breeding Haworthias. I look forward to seeing more of his work both with regard to species, selections and hybrids. I hope he gets a chance soon to see them in their native South Africa.

I appreciate you letting me tell my tales of plant hunting in Madagascar. *Aloe castilloniae* continues to be a great addition to collections as well as a superb contribution to hybrids. Look for more great plants to add to your "must have" list!

Our up coming meeting will be presented by a great friend and plantsman, **Andrew Hankey**, from the far off land of South Africa's Gauteng province where he works as lead Horticulturist at the Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden. I believe he will be talking about his new book but probably would be happy to field questions about his work at the Botanical Garden in addition to discussing his adventures in the veld.

Tom Knapik will be discussing his encounters with the tiniest of cactus *Blossfeldia liliputana*. I am sure he will share more about his travels to South America for our opening act of plant of the month!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the October 11th club picnic at Kate Sessions Park!

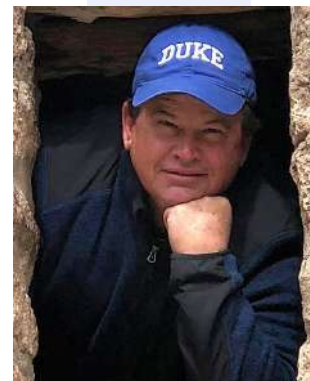
I hope you had a chance to let our representatives know about our concerns with the parking tolls. If nothing else, at least we expressed our opinions!

I look forward to sharing more adventures with you all soon!

Best!

Kelly Griffin

August 26, 2025



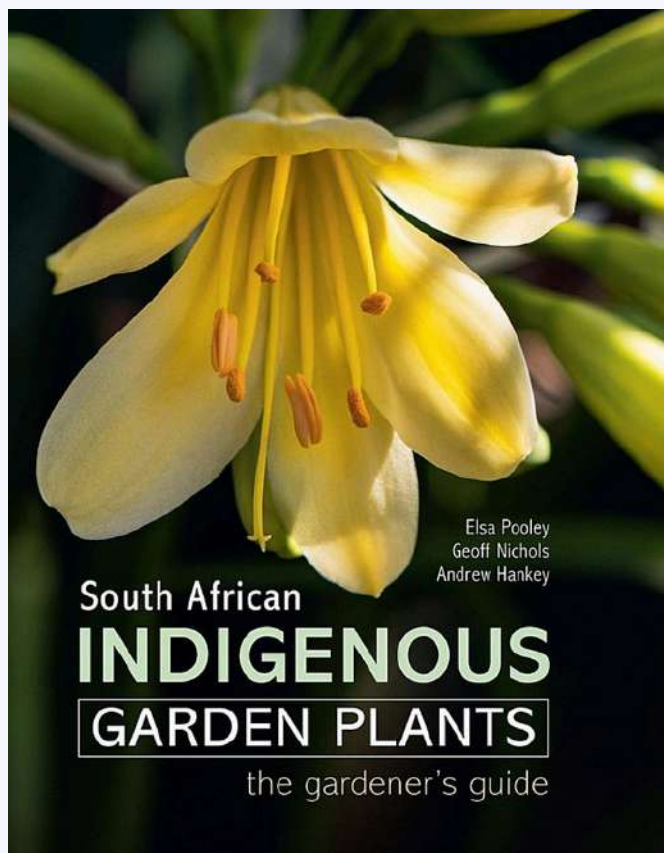
UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKER



SEPT 9th SPEAKER
ANDREW HANKEY
“SOUTH AFRICAN
INDIGENOUS GARDEN
PLANTS”

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER TOPIC

Andrew will be speaking on the subject of his new book, which showcases 2,400 South African indigenous plants, making it a comprehensive guide to the range of local plants available to gardeners to transform their outdoor spaces. He'll cover climate, various garden styles, spatial planning and garden maintenance, as well as giving suggestions for attracting wildlife to the garden.

**ABOUT OUR SPEAKER**

Andrew Hankey is a botanical horticulturist spanning a career of 30 years, developing and maintaining a botanical garden and associated nature reserve. He has an extensive resume of published articles and papers in technical, popular and scientific journals on subjects relating to gardening, botany and natural sciences. Over the years he has become highly regarded in his field and is regularly invited to present and speak to a wide variety of audiences.

He is most noted for his significant and broad influence over the development of the well known and popular Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden (WSNBG). As part of his role at WSNBG Andrew heads up the threatened plant project at WSNBG, where he and his team perform various roles with regards to various threatened plant species.

PLANT OF THE MONTH PRESENTATION

As always, we'll kick off our meeting with the Plant of the Month. This month, **Tom Knapik** will speak on the subject of *Blossfeldia lilliputiana*. Check out the companion article in this issue!

[SEE YOU ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2025!](#)

BLOSSFELDIA

ARTICLE BY ERIC DRISKILL

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE HENRY SHAW CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, NOV 2016



Wild *Blossfeldia*
SEBASTIÁN SANTECCHÍA (via iNaturalist)

Blossfeldia belongs to the subfamily Cactoideae and tribe Notocactae. *Blossfeldia* was discovered in 1936 by Harry Blossfeld and Oreste Marsoner in northern Argentina. The genus was described by Erich Werdermann in 1937, honoring Blossfeld.

Botanically speaking, *Blossfeldia* is very unique for several reasons. It is the smallest of all known cacti genera for starters, but that's not where the weirdness ends! Anatomical studies revealed this genus almost entirely lacks stomata and certainly has the fewest stomata per unit of surface area of any photosynthesizing plant.

Blossfeldia plants also lack a thickened cuticle or outer cell wall, which is what allows most other cacti to avoid desiccation. *Blossfeldias*, in fact, are believed to be poikilohydric, meaning they can endure severe drying out, like many mosses and lichens can. The plants have the ability to lose up to 80 percent of their moisture and still withstand droughts lasting more than a year. They are able to survive almost total loss of moisture and rehydrate their cells when watered again.

The genus has only one species, *Blossfeldia lilliputiana*, honoring Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels*. *Blossfeldia* was discovered in northern Argentina 210 years after Swift's novel and oddly enough at roughly the same latitude in South America as Lilliput and Blefuscu, the two fictional island nations featured in Swift's novel.

Blossfeldia plants are found over a wide geographic area from southern Bolivia to northwest Argentina at elevations of 1,200 to 3,600 meters. *Blossfeldias* are found growing on rocky slopes, often in the cracks of almost vertical shale-like cliffs.

The plants are button-like and gray-green without ribs or tubercles. They grow to to 0.5 inches in diameter and have no spines. The plants do have areoles, which spiral around the plant and bear tufts of wool. If you look closely at several plants, you will notice that some tufts spiral one direction, while other plants have tufts that spiral in the other direction.

BLOSSFELDIA

The flowers are white to pink, 6 to 15 millimeters long and 5 to 7 millimeters in diameter. The plants' tuberous roots anchor them to their precarious perches on those cliff faces.

Blossfeldias require some shade and a very porous potting mix. Growth is extremely slow, and the plants are often difficult to raise from seed. It may take up to five years for plants to grow large enough to water with anything other than a mister. Some people use the bagging method when germinating seed, and may leave the plants in their bags for up to two years.

Most often, plants for sale are grafted. Grafted plants often form many-headed specimens atop their stocks. The flattened, buttonlike growth gives way to a more globular growth when grafted.

The advantages of grafting include a plant that isn't nearly as sensitive to root rot and grows much faster. Grafted plants also have many heads to admire. When the heads become globular, the spiraling tufts are more apparent, since there is more surface area to cover.

The plants are often self-fertile and produce seed in abundance, although the seeds are less than 0.5 millimeter long. They often appear to be dust or grit on the plant heads when the seed pods open. Blossfeldia is certainly a plant species you may want to consider adding to your collection – it certainly will never take up much room!

ERIC DRISKILL



Wild *Blossfeldia*

SEBASTIÁN SANTECCHIA (via iNaturalist)

MEMBER SECTION

We continue our section of haiku poetry inspired by our Plant of the Month by member Emily Weaver! As always, thanks to Emily for her thoughtful and creative contributions.

CASTILLONIAE

Miniature clump
Poikilohydric wonder
Resurrecting disc

EMILY WEAVER

A thank-you to SDCSS from Wolwekraal Conservation and Research

Thanks to support from our members, the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society contributed \$2000.00 USD towards a Conservation Grant for the South African Wolwekraal Conservation Reserve. They'll be using this award for security cameras to protect their space. Here is a message they sent our way:

"In appreciation of your support, I would like to offer the committee members of CSSA and San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society free guided walks on Wolwekraal Nature Reserve should they visit our town of Prince Albert."

You can find out more about their work here:

<https://wcro.co.za/>



The SDCSS monthly newsletter welcomes and appreciates essays, photography, artwork, and similar contributions from its members.

If you have a contribution related to cacti and succulents that you'd like to share with the club, please let us know, and you could see your work in a future issue.

We'd love to hear from you!

Contact the editor: eyf.editor@gmail.com

CLICK TO VISIT US ONLINE!



SAN DIEGO
Cactus & Succulent Society

MEMBER SECTION



Our final crop of winners and their award certificates from the fruitful 2025 Summer Show .

! NEW ! OPEN VOLUNTEER ROLES!

Looking to take your leadership role in the club to the next level? You're in luck!
We've got some great new positions open for interested members.

GREETER

Our club greeter is the friendly face of the club—great for someone who attends our meetings beginning-to-end and doesn't mind a seated/ less-physical role. You'll be working alongside our steadfast Susan Hopkins, who knows all there is to know about this role.

SHOW CHAIR COMMITTEE

Be a part of our amazing yearly shows! We're expanding this role to a multi-member committee to reduce the workload on a single member. If you've enjoyed the Winter and Summer shows and want to get more involved, we're sure to have a place for you.

Email membership@sdcss.net if interested!

MEMBER SECTION



A cactus acquired from Brent Wigand, Echinopsis 'Super Orange'

SHOUQIN HUO

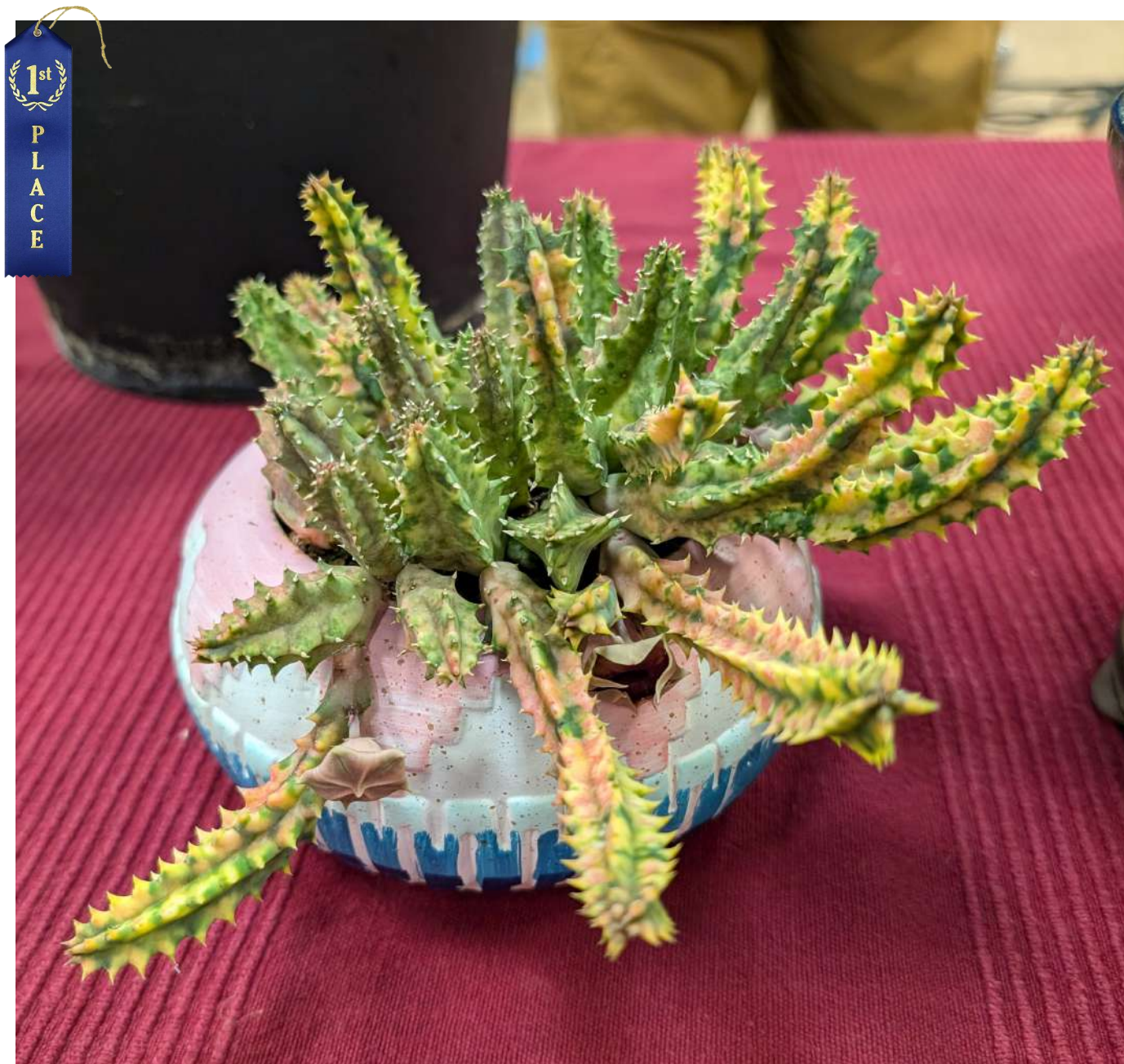
AUGUST BRAG TABLE



SDCSS members shared a stunning table of plants at the August Meeting's Brag Table!

Thank you for bringing in your plants, to [Oakes Austin](#) for reviewing this table from our members, and to [Kelly Griffin](#) for his stunning *Aloe castilloniae* display. We're looking forward to seeing all of your summer-kissed plants again at our upcoming September meeting!

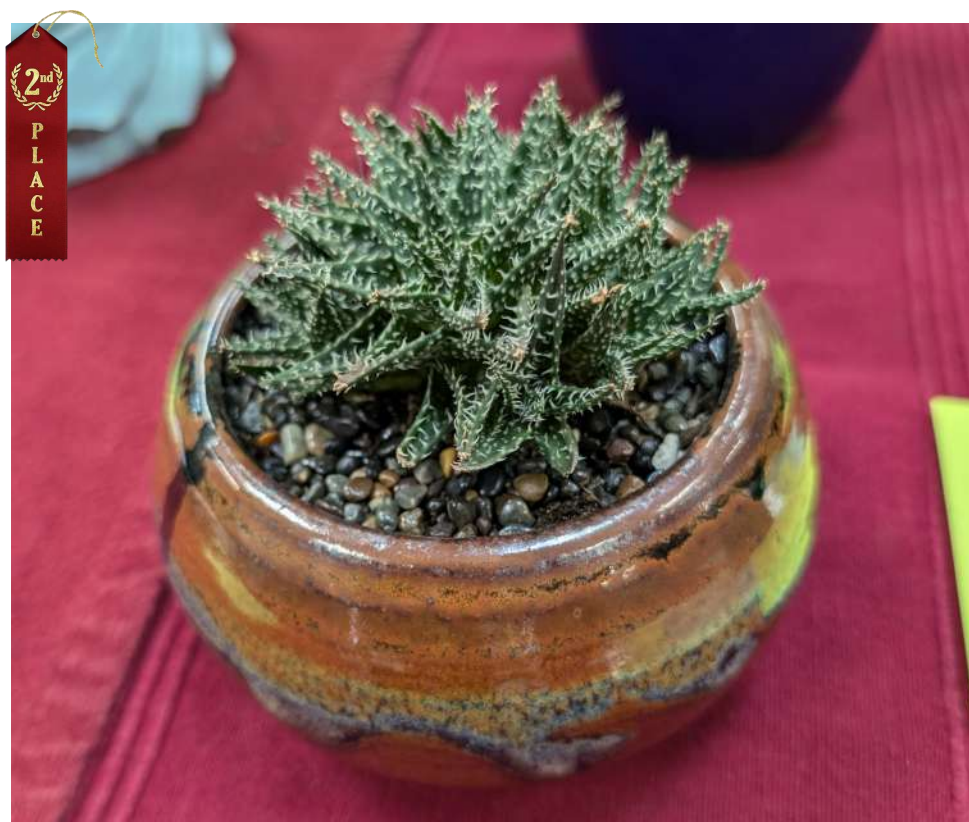
BRAG TABLE // NOVICE SUCCULENT



1ST: *HUERNIA ZEBRINA*

LIEN LIEU

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE SUCCULENT



2ND: *ALOE X HAWORTHIOIDES* 'PEPE'

JUDI WALDEN



3RD: *Echeveria benitsukasa*

ROCCO PIERSANTI



3RD: *ALOE* 'CHRISTMAS SLEIGH'

JUDI WALDEN

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE SUCCULENT



Echeveria 'Fireball'
VICKI HOFFMAN



Monadenium Ritchiei
EMILY W.



Haworthia zebrina
TRICIA BOSTARD



Echeveria harmsii

LIEN LIEU



Aloiapepos striatula

STEVE JOHNSTON

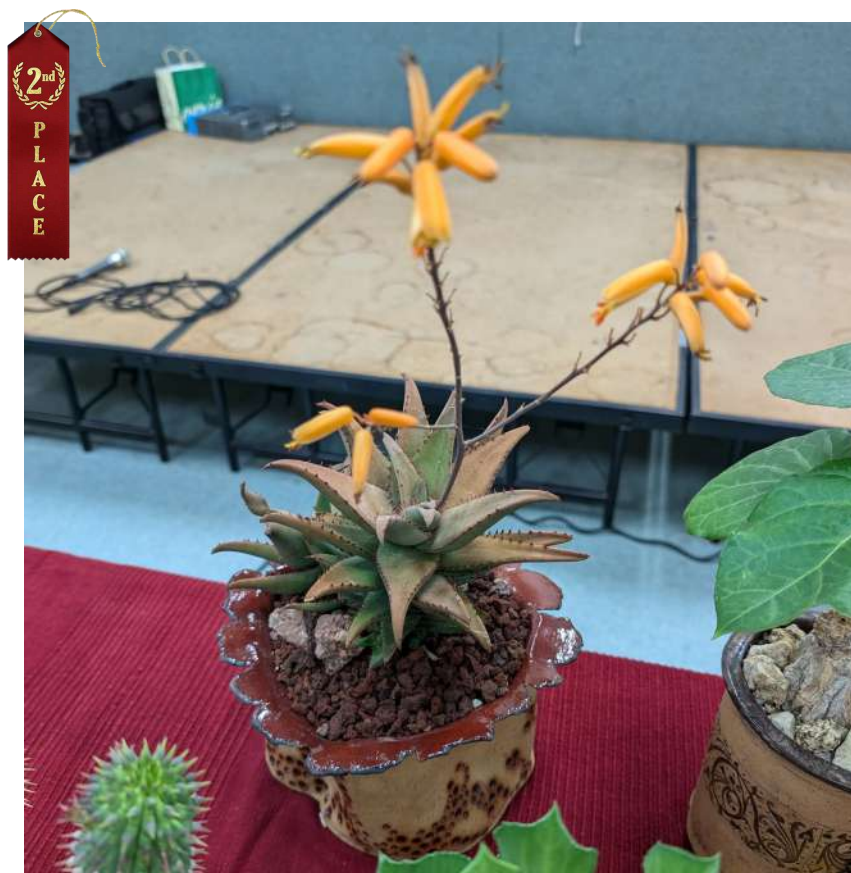
BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



1ST: *DORSTENIA GIGAS*

LUIS GONZALEZ

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



2ND: *ALOE CASTILLONIAE* (KEVIN HOSMER HYBRID)

SUE THOMAS



3RD: *OPERCULICARYA DECARYI*

LUIS GONZALEZ

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



DELOSPERMA ECHINATUM VARIEGATED

NAOMI OROSZ



MATALEA CYCLOPHYLLA

SUE THOMAS



CEROPEGIA COLLARICORONA

NAOMI OROSZ



HOODIA MACRACANTHA

JARED PETKER

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



HAWORTHIA 'DESERT ICON'

JARED PETKER



CEROPEGIA SANDERSONII

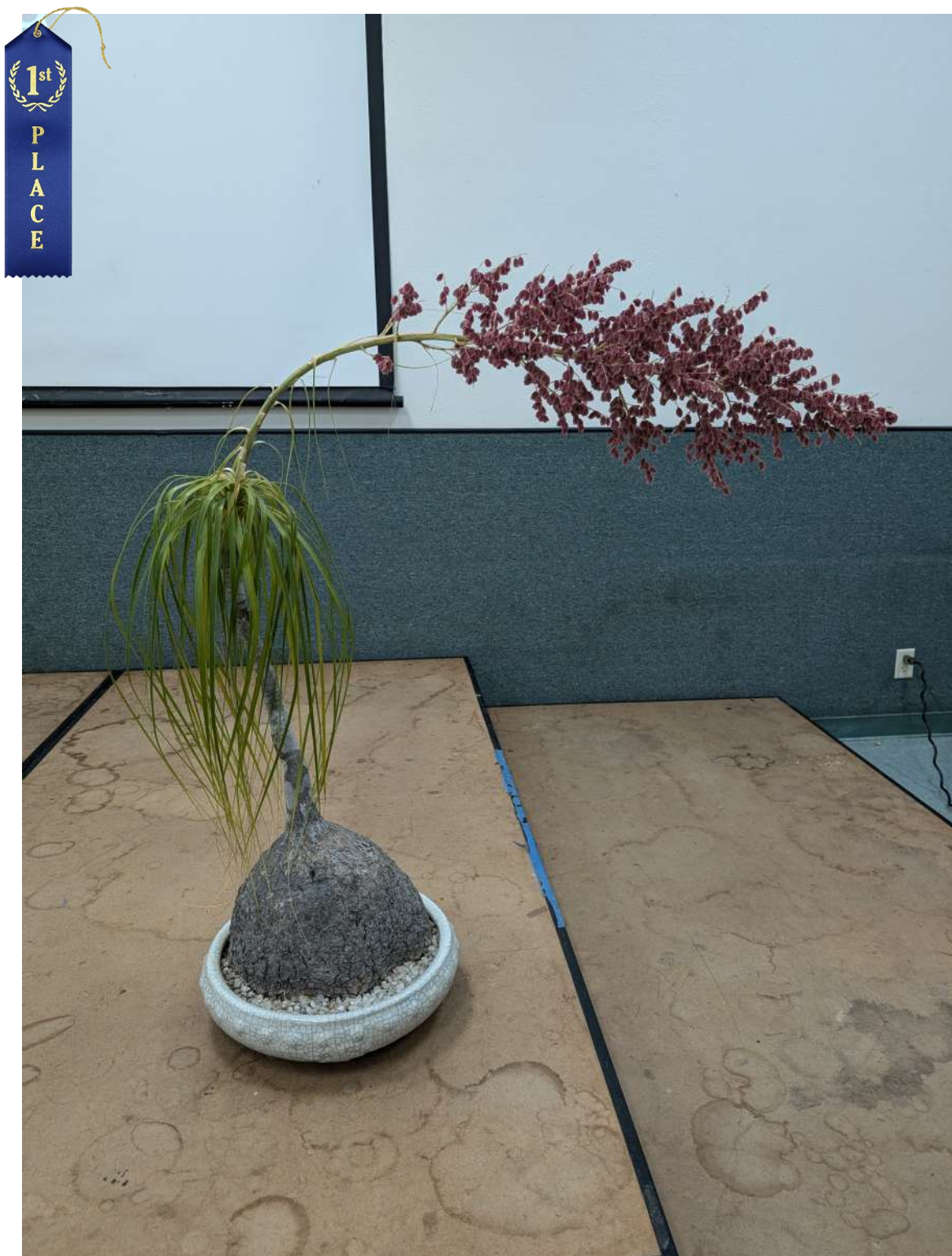
JODI VISOSKY



EUPHORBIA TORTIRAMA

SUE THOMAS

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT



1ST: *BEAUCARNIA RECURVATA* BONSAI

JULIAN DUVALL

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT



2ND: *PSEUDOLITHOS MIGIURTINUS*

CANDY & JERRY GARNER



3RD: *SARCOCAULON HERREI*

CANDY & JERRY GARNER

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT



EUPHORBIA GUENTHERI

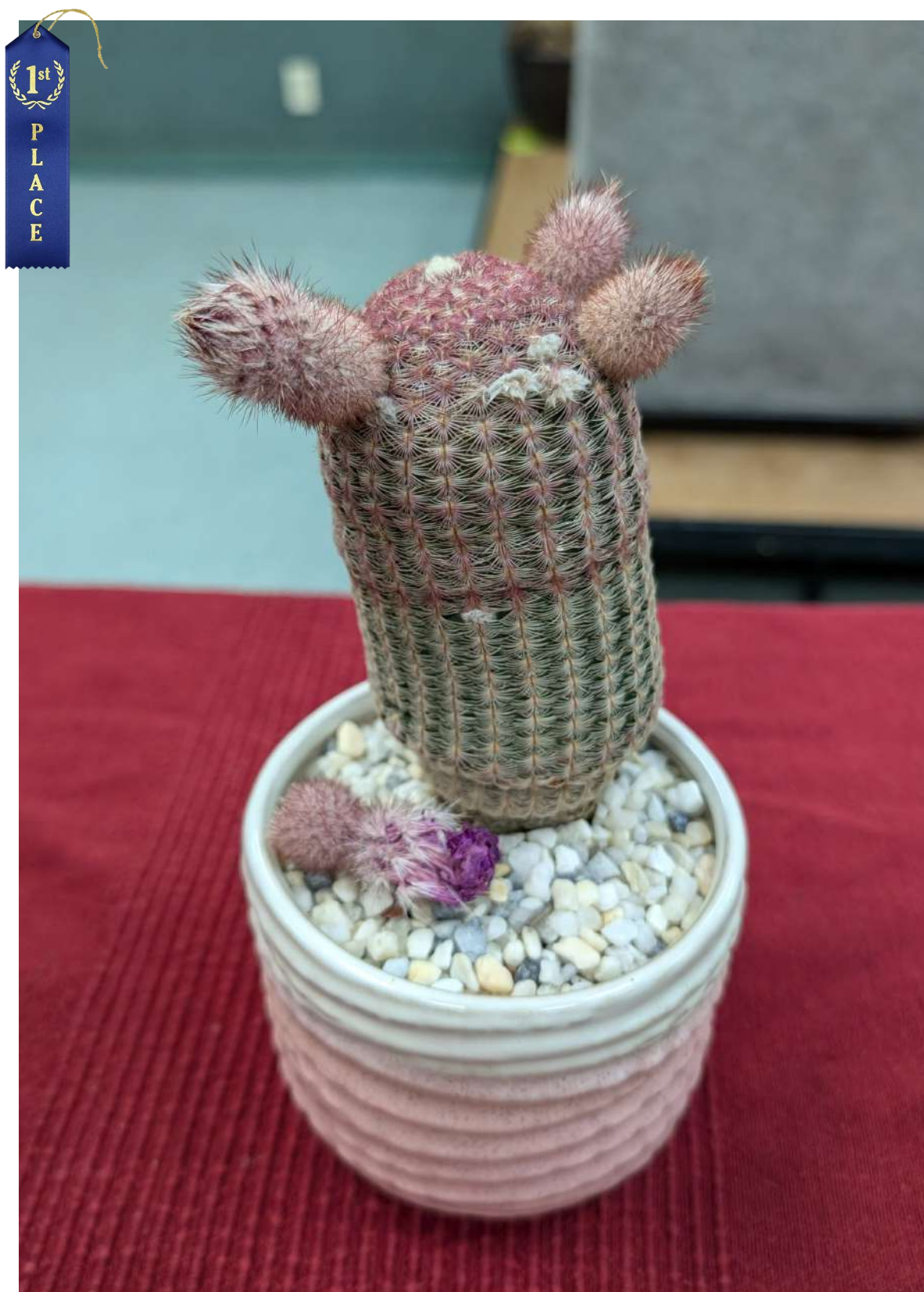
PAM BADGER



VELTHEIMIA SP.

CANDY & JERRY GARNER

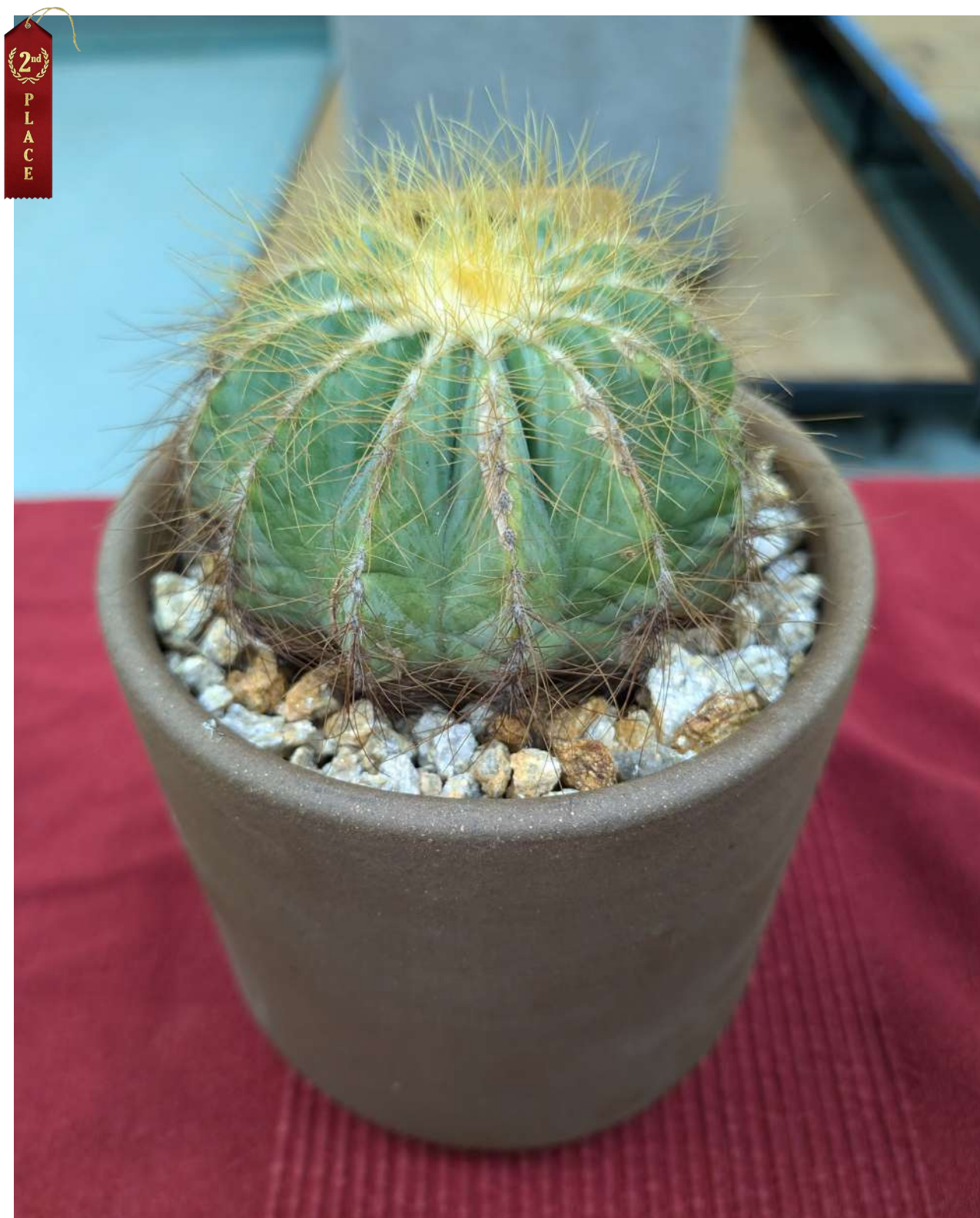
BRAG TABLE // NOVICE CACTI



1ST: *ECHINOCEREUS RIGIDISSIMUS*

TRICIA BOSTARD

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE CACTI



2ND: *PARODIA MAGNIFICA*

VICKI HOFFMAN

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE CACTI



1ST: *COPIAPOA HYPOGAEA*

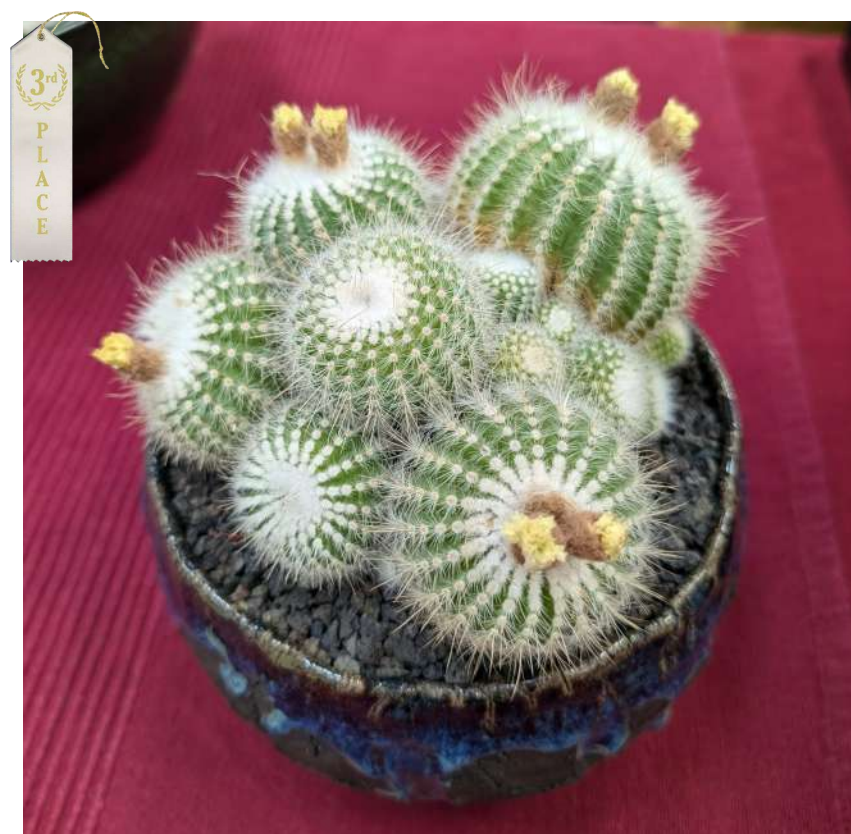
ALLEN CLARK

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE CACTI



2ND: *TRICHOCEREUS HYBRID CREST*

JODI VISOSKY



3RD: *PARODIA SCOPA*

LUIS GONZALEZ