

VOLUME 56 • NUMBER 06 • JUNE 2021



ESPINAS Y FLORES

UPCOMING EVENTS & WEBINARS • MEET THE BOARD
GYMNOCALYCIUM • VIRTUAL BRAG TABLE WINNERS & more!

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

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Gymnocalycium cardenasianum
 cv. 'Cat Claw'
 Photo by Mark Fryer

SDCSS SCHEDULE

June 12th club webinar:
[12:30 pm on Zoom \(see pg 4\)](#)

June in-person meeting:
CANCELLED

Upcoming meetings:
August 2021!

HERE TO HELP

In need of assistance
 due to COVID?

Contact:

Tina Zucker at
 (858) 342-9781

- or -

Al Klein at
 (760) 519-9987

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President Pam Badger
 Vice President Chris Miller
 Secretary Donna Roden
 Treasurer Mitch Hubbard

DIRECTORS

Jen Greene, Kelly Griffin, Denise Huntsman-Griffin,
 Whitney Meier, Don Hunt, Al Kline, Dean Karras

COMMITTEES & SUB COMMITTEES

Conservation Herb Stern
 Brag table Denise Huntsman-Griffin & Susan Hopkins
 Plant of the Month Pam Badger
 Summer/Winter Show Kelly Griffin
 Historian Jerry Garner
 Grants Jerry Garner
 Library Don Hunt
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 Annual Sales Chris Miller
 Auction & Holiday Plants Kelly Griffin
 Show Auction Manager *[open]*
 Monthly Plant Sales Jim DeForest & Melanie Howe
 Monthly Supply Sales Gerry Plaisted

Benefit Drawing Table Allen Clark & Chuck Ramey
 Programs Kelly Griffin
 Reception Susan Hopkins & Candy Garner
 Monthly Regalement Kathy Clark & Sandy Wetzel-Smith
 Picnic Regalement *[open]*
 Coffee in the Garden Coordinators Julie Dixon & Chuck Ramey

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 CSSA Affiliate Rep Rick Bjorklund
 SD Botanic Garden Phyllis Flechsig
 SD Botanic Foundation *[open]*
 SD Floral Association Jeanette Dutton
 SD Zoo Safari Park, Baja & Old World Gardens May Fong Ho
 Palomar CS Society Liaison Brita Miller

MEMBERSHIP & PUBLICITY

Membership May Fong Ho
 Newsletter Editor Der-shing Helmer
 Webmaster Jared Petker
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings! Looks like Summer is just around the corner. My Winter growers, Tylecodons especially, are in full bloom mode before they go dormant, and cactus are blooming everywhere. Most Euphorbias are waking up, putting on new growth and their rather strange flowers.

I made a trip to the Safari Park last week and was very impressed by all the work that has been done by our volunteers in the Old World Succulent Garden and the Baja Garden. May Fong Ho, our primary envoy and volunteer coordinator, was kind enough to show me around the new greenhouse and explain some of the changes in the gardens. Many thanks to May and all her industrious volunteers who maintain these beautiful gardens. If you have not visited in a while, or ever, it is well worth the trip for a visit—Spring is great before it gets too hot. Also—if you are interested in volunteering, contact May—she is also our membership chairperson, easy to find her info in the newsletter.



Plans are moving forward for our sales event in July 16th-18th, so save the date and plan to visit a few of our vendors that weekend. We will, once again, be providing 20\$ vouchers for members, so be sure to check out all the details in the July Newsletter next month and request your voucher as instructed.

We are definitely planning on meeting in August and are working on our “reopening plan” as required by the Park. We will not know the details until June 15th when new official guidelines will be announced.

Our May Zoom gathering was quite a treat. Having Tom Knapik as main speaker was great. I have known Tom for many years and always appreciate his talks. As a long time educator, Tom always brings enthusiasm and depth of knowledge to his subjects—this one was no exception. In “Fascinating Asclepiads,” we not only learned about those amazing plants, but also a bit about the math of plants and Monarch butterflies! Thanks to Tom for a great talk, and to Kelly for arranging great speakers for us.

Best wishes to all! Stay Safe,

Pam Badger

May 23, 2021

SHARE YOUR PASSION!

Have you ever read the *Espinas Y Flores* Newsletter ‘Plant of the Month’ and thought - “I could do that!” Why participate by writing a piece? You don’t have to be an expert! Pick a genus or species that interests you, do a little research, find or take a few pictures and create an article. It’s a great way to learn more about a plant you have an interest in, and share it with others.

Do you have a large, amazing desert or a small, beautiful succulent garden? or a patio filled with potted plants you love? Share it with us! Create a 5-10 minute slide show to present at one of our virtual meetings, or do a photo essay for the Newsletter - or both! We would love to see your plants.

Contact Pam Badger: pambad1@mac.com

SDCSS ONLINE

FACEBOOK:

www.facebook.com/sdcss

TWITTER:

[SanDiegoCactus](https://twitter.com/SanDiegoCactus)

INSTAGRAM:

[#sdcss](https://www.instagram.com/sdcss)

WEBSITE:

www.sdcss.net

SDCSS WEBINARS



Join us on **Saturday, June 12th** at 12:30pm PST for our next club webinar featuring Karel Du Toit!

Our **Webinar** subject is TBA, but will cover the subject of his work in South Africa! You can find out more about Karel's work at his Facebook account, "Pillansitours."

Our **Pre-meeting Speaker** for the month will be Mark Fryer, speaking on the plant of the month, *Gymnocalyciums*.

As always, the speaker Webinar begins at 1pm, but join us at 12:30 for the Pre-meeting speaker, and to catch up!

Join SDCSS via Zoom on June 12th [here!](#)

SDCSS EVENTS!

Did you have a great time at our Winter and Spring events? Well, brace yourself, because the **2021 SUMMER EVENT** is headed your way!

We'll be sharing more details in next month's Newsletter and in our emails, so keep an eye out for news and information! And don't forget: all those club box you've been winning with the brag table can be used at these events. More info coming soon!

SDCSS TREASURER POSITION OPEN!

We're seeking a volunteer for a **PAID** Treasurer position within SDCSS!

A qualified Treasurer candidate will be organized, financially minded, Quickbooks proficient, familiar with Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, and have cash management experience.

This position has a monthly stipend of \$200.

Tasks during normal operations:

1. Manage bank accounts
2. Cut checks to vendors as needed
3. Record transactions in Quickbooks as incurred
4. Quarterly CA Sales Tax Returns
5. Compile annual financial statements and send to Tax Prep Team.
6. During club sales: manage cash before, during, and after events as needed
7. Provide monthly bank report to Club Board for Board Review and Approval.
8. Must be available Wednesday after the monthly club meeting for board meetings.



If interested, contact us at membership@sdcss.net!

MEET THE SDCSS BOARD!

Here's your SDCSS board!

We're so looking forward to the return of in-person meetings, and seeing all of your faces again—new and old members alike! And in case you don't remember what ours look like, here's a chance to get re-acquainted with your board.

If you happen to see us at a seasonal event or meeting, please feel free to say hello.



Pam Badger—President

Pam Badger has been a member of SDCSS for about 30 years. She served on the board for many years and this is her second time serving as **President**, though she is best known for managing food at our events. A plant enthusiast since childhood, she first fell for cactus in 1972 and started importing plants from San Diego to her home town of San Francisco, selling them to local plant stores. She loves working in her extensive landscape and propagating many kinds of plant, especially Euphorbias.



Chris Miller— Vice President

I'm **Chris Miller**, currently the club's **Vice President**. I've been a member of SDCSS since 1996 and have done most of the jobs as a volunteer. Like everyone else I am a sucker for a plant in bloom (even if I have a couple of them already). I grow everything from Gasterias to Cactus.



Donna Roden—Secretary

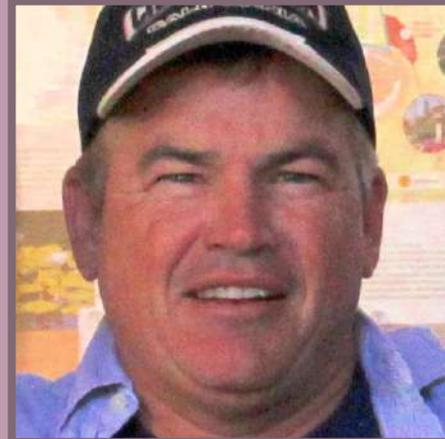
I am **Donna Roden** and I am the **Secretary** of the club. My husband and I have been members for almost five years now. We needed a hobby that both of us could enjoy when we retired. We have not only learned a lot about cactus and succulents, but have made some fabulous friends. I hope you enjoy being in the club as much as we do!

MEET THE SDCSS BOARD!



Jen Greene—Director

Jen has been a member of the club since 2018, and is located in Escondido. Her favorite genera are Mesembs and Gymnocalyciums, and she enjoys pushing the boundaries on what can be planted in-ground in our region.



Kelly Griffin—Director

Kelly is one of the Directors of SDCSS



Denise Huntsman-Griffin—Director

I'm Denise! I started coming to meetings 16 years ago with Kelly and then one day I realized, I really should join the club! I've always loved Cactus and people, so this club was a good match for me. I've enjoyed volunteering as a cashier for the sales, writing "Meet a Member" articles for the newsletter, helping with the brag table, and being a director on the board for the 3rd year.



Whitney Meyer—Director

Whitney is one of the Directors of SDCSS

MEET THE SDCSS BOARD!



Don Hunt—Director

Plant geek: 17 Choice ribbons at show.
Ceramics geek: Make about 500 pots per year
Book geek: Club Librarian all personal book shelves full.
Reptile geek and general naturalist



Al Klein—Director

Al discovered his love for succulents and cacti as a teenager after moving to California from Chicago. He has a degree from Cal Poly Pomona in Ornamental Horticulture, and is the current owner of Botanic Wonders Nursery.



Dean Karras—Director

Dean is the founder and owner of Gnosis Nursery in Ramona, CA. Member of SDCSS since 2019. His passion for plants extends far beyond succulents to include organic gardening & permaculture practices, natives, edibles, and ethnobotanically significant plants. When not busy propagating and selling plants, Dean can be found exploring and photographing the Desert Southwest and Baja.



Who's our next club Treasurer? could it be...
YOU?

SDCSS is looking for a paid volunteer for our open Treasurer position! See **page 4** for all details of the position, and instructions on how to apply. Thanks for participating!

JUNE'S PLANT OF THE MONTH FEATURE

GYMNOCALYCIUM

A UNIVERSE OF FORM

BY MARK FRYER



Gymnocalycium strigianum

Mark Fryer

*Gymnocalycium pflanzii marquezii*

Mark Fryer

The name “*Gymnocalycium*” is literally translated to mean “naked bud,” one of the more distinguishing features of all plants of this interesting genus. It was named some 70 years before Britton and Rose’s attempt at explaining the cactus family in their landmark, 4-volume tome “*The Cactaceae*,” published in 1922, by Karl Pfeiffer. Many species described as “*Echinocactus*” (meaning a globular cactus with sharp ribs) in the B&R book are actually *Gymnocalycium*, so there’s a punt for cactus naming conventions. At the time of B&R’s publishing, there were something like 20-25 species of *Gymnocalycium*.

The genus in the wild occupies a wide area of distribution, primarily in Argentina, but also in Paraguay, Uruguay, southern Bolivia, and southeastern Brazil. The type species is arguably *G. denudatum*, and it’s type locality is in southeastern Brazil.

Widely cultivated for well over 100 years, *Gymnocalycium* enthusiasts continue to have a plethora of new material to play around with, and for anyone interested in the globular cactus, *Gymnocalycium* has to be one of the favorite genera for people to acquire. The first real cactus flower I ever saw was a grafted “Hibotan” that I had apparently neglected properly on my windowsill many years ago, but I can still recall the enthusiasm for cactus in general and curiosity about *Gymnocalycium* specifically stemming from that event. It was a long, long time ago!

Many years later while botanizing with one of my mentors in Oregon’s high desert, we visited a population of very large *Pediocactus simpsonii* that my friend liked to refer to as “those Gymno saglione sized plants.” To this day I have yet to lay my eyes on any *Gymnocalycium*s in the field, but I do grow around 40-odd species with a number of varieties mixed in, and am constantly observing various traits and experiment with hybridizing and selections.

So what’s in a name? When it comes to *Gymnocalycium*, there’s a ton of confusion. I remember meeting Graham Charles about 12 years ago at the nursery, shortly before he published his monograph on the genus, “*Gymnocalycium in Habitat and Culture*.” He arrived in the greenhouse and said something along the lines (in a thick English accent) of, “Now show me all these made up forms that don’t occur in nature!” Ha! What a great sense of humor! We were all chewing on the newly described *G. kieslingii*, a close relative to *G. bodenbenderianum*. We were growing things that apparently didn’t actually occur in nature (*G. odoratum*, *G. mihanovicii*, as examples), or that possibly did occur in nature but whoever originally collected them didn’t do a very complete job of notating where the heck they found them.

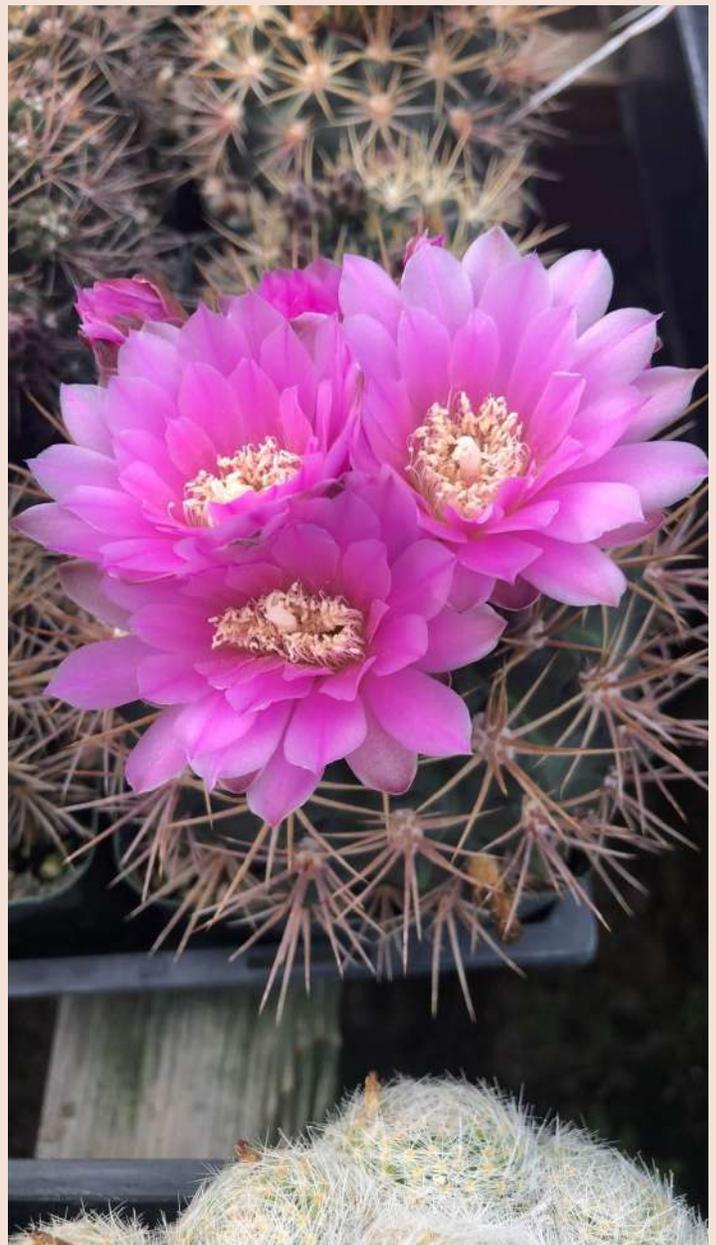
We had an additional issue with names due to the proliferation of *Gymnocalycium* species offered by Jorg Piltz, who collected several hundred distinct forms and offered them annually through his seed offerings; 40 years of seed-raising continues to raise eyebrows to this very day. Of course, any

commercial interest in these species left the nursery open to ascertaining various seed collections from European cactus seed dealers, and while some distinct forms clarified certain aspects of the genus, others simply obfuscated it.

As an example of “nomenclutter,” confusing names/associations between distinct forms, take the name “*armatum*.” That epithet is associated with both *G. spegazzinii* *and* *G. cardenasianum*. To further muddle this name is the concept that *G. cardenasianum* is simply a form of *G. spegazzinii*, yet we have a very dark-bodied, black-spined plant in *G. spegazzinii* v. *armatum* versus the very green-bodied, horn-colored spines found in *G. cardenasianum* var. *armatum*. Consider this when trying to distinguish between *G. friedrichii*, *G. anisitsii*, *G. damsii*, and *mihanovichii*! Add to the confusion by supplying copious varieties and what you’re left with will undoubtedly leave you scratching your head!

Well-intentioned authors have sought to clarify various sections of the genus to distill a palatable and concise definition of the genus, only to have it turned on it’s ear with new discoveries and anomalies found both in the wild and in cultivation. So relax, do the best you can to maintain the records that come with your plants and don’t worry too much about whether it’s “right” or not, it will likely get sorted out at some point, and if not, maintain a certain level of mystery into the future!

Cultivating *Gymnocalycium* is probably what a lot of us experienced growers would define as standard cactus culture - the vast majority of species are happy being underpotted in a healthy mix of leafmold and pumice or perlite and coir, when mature most appreciate regular balanced feeding during the growing season (March - December here in southern California). Gymnos love heat! They tend to sulk at temps below 70degF and won’t need much water if any (depending on the mix they’re planted in) during the winter. Spring and summer in the greenhouse where temperatures can exceed 100° F daily they tend to want lots of water and appreciate free root-roam, many will only flower well in fresh mix at high temps.



Gymnocalycium neuhuberii

Mark Fryer

Producing seed is a fairly straight-forward affair, most species produce perfect flowers (having both viable male and female flower parts on the same plant), but there are a few exceptions, most notably *G. bruchii* and her kin, which are all dioecious (separate plants being either male or female), some of the forms of *G. monvillei* (multiform, etc) are dioecious as well, and I *suspect* there are occasional dioecious mutants among otherwise normal species, so don’t get too upset if you have a plant that simply refuses to set fruit, HE might not be able to!



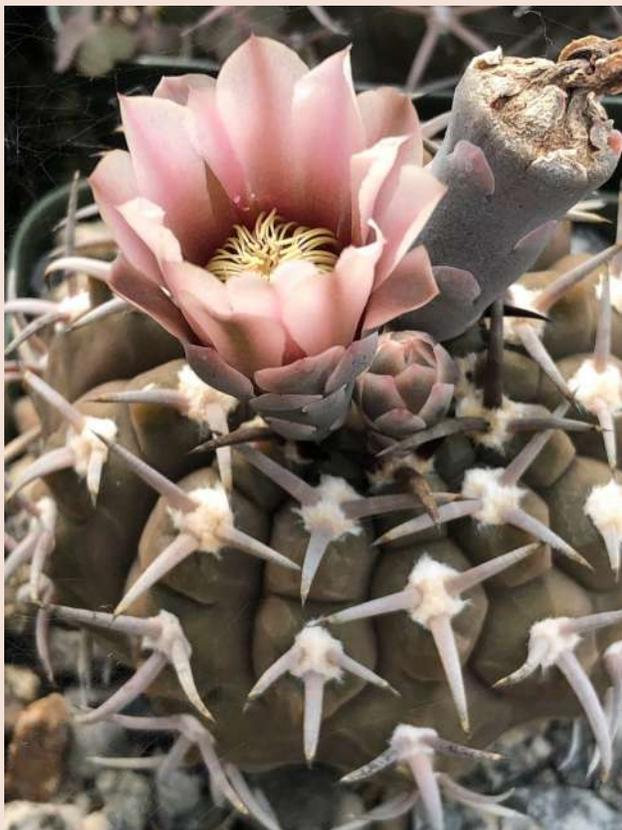
Gymnocalycium cardenasianum v. armatum ex Jürgen Menzel

Mark Fryer



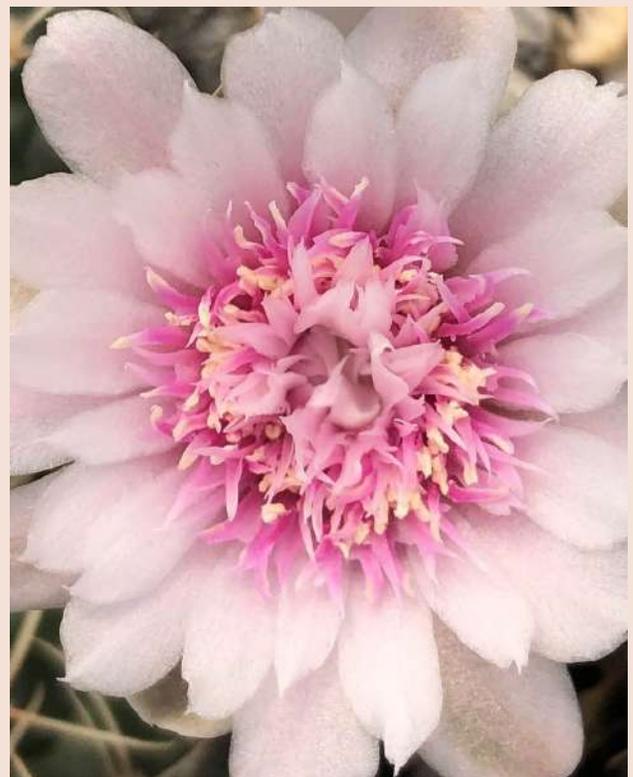
Gymnocalycium variegata from overseas that lost it's roots last winter, grafted it and viola

Mark Fryer



Gymnocalycium strigianum

Mark Fryer



Gymnocalycium odoratum with a monstrous flower (multiple stigmas)

Mark Fryer



Gymnocalycium mihanoviccii crest

Mark Fryer



Gymnocalycium denudatum - a new seed collection now flowering and producing seed

Mark Fryer

Growing *Gymnocalycium* from seed is rewarding but sometimes frustrating as numerous species have notoriously small seeds and yield incredibly tiny seedlings for the first year or so; so be sure to check your sowings before you throw them out thinking nothing's germinated, they may just be so tiny you can't really see them! A jeweler's loop or magnifying lens can really come in handy in these cases. Look before you toss! Oh, and just because the mother plant is large and enormous doesn't necessarily mean her offspring are going to start off like plump little *Astrophytum* seedlings or anything, species like *G. pflanzii* and *G. saglione* have very small seeds and produce very small seedlings, and they stay that way for the first year or so of their lives. Once they reach a certain point in their development, they really get up and go, and the only thing that will limit their size is the container they're being grown in!

A number of species will only flower well when over-potted, and many of these also have a carrot-like taproot and tend to be somewhat challenging for the

novice grower to cultivate. Other species just form typical stringy, rope-like roots and these are the species that are happy being underpotted, in terms of flowering.

There are some interesting fragrances to be found sniffing through a *Gymnocalycium* collection, *G. marsoneri* has a very fruity, rose-like fragrance, *G. odoratum* has a scent similar to lilac, others are fragrant but the fragrance isn't particularly welcoming, more like chemical in it's nature and not pleasant.

The vast majority of *Gymnocalycium* enthusiasts grow the plants for the body and spine details, which aren't quite as temporary as flowers anyway!

MARK FRYER



MAY 2021 VIRTUAL BRAG TABLE WINNERS GALLERY

We asked SDCSS members to submit photos of their best plants to the March Brag Table, judged by guest judge Terry Parr!

Our participants included:

45 specimens: 26 cactus, 19 succulents

20 members

We are still awarding DOUBLE WINNERS in the novice categories to encourage newbies to submit now and in the future!

Congrats to the winners, thank you to all of the members who submitted, and we can't wait to see you next month!

Submit to next month's brag table for boasting rights, judge feedback, and club bucks!

Just send in your name, your plant's scientific name, a photo, your category (cacti or succulent, up to 2 plants per category) and your rank (novice= <10 wins, intermediate= 10+ wins, advanced= pro grower) by **June 20th, 2021**.

To enter, email your entries with the subject line "Brag Table" to the editor at: eyf.editor@gmail.com

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS

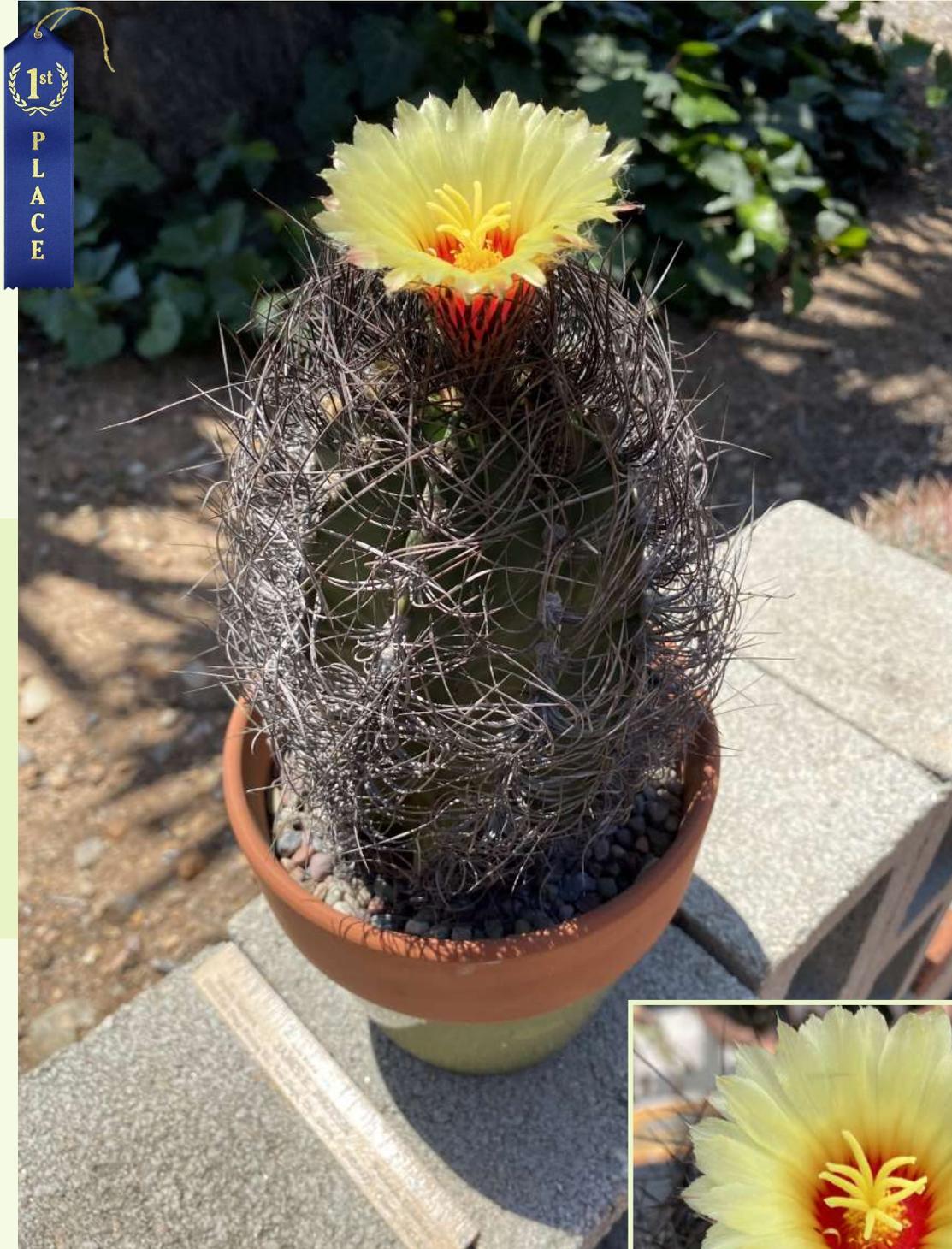


1st: *Opuntia macrocentra*

Jennifer Greene



MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS

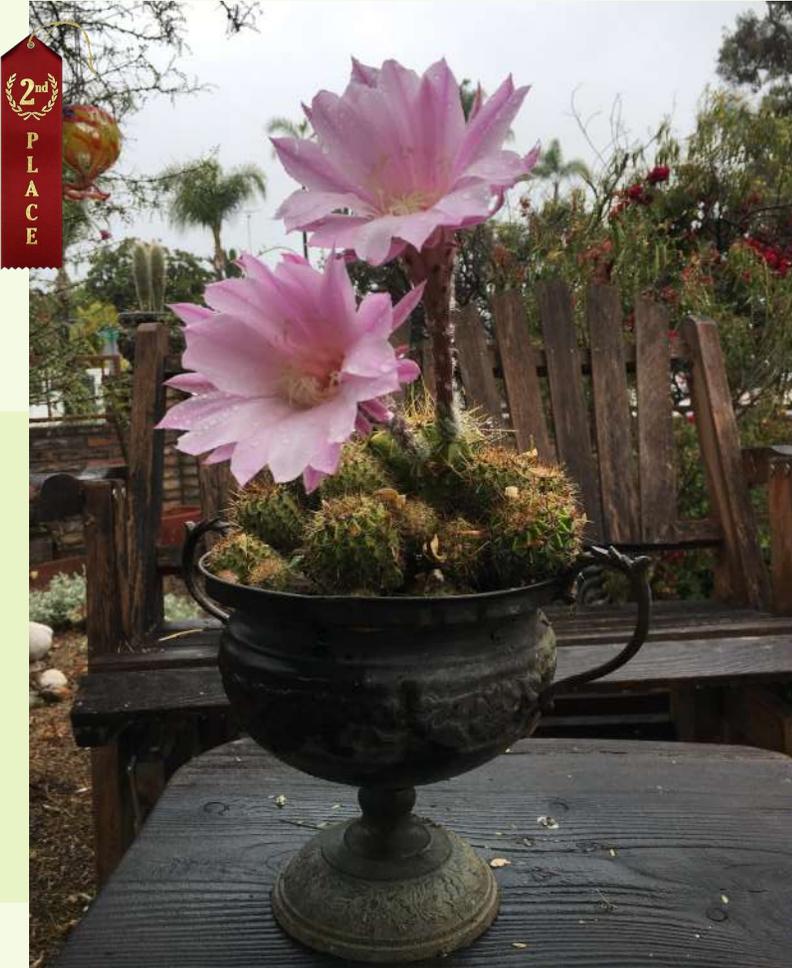


1st: *Astrophytum capricorne* var. *senilis*

Ruth Contino



MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS



2nd: *Echinopsis oxygona*

Kathy Moser & Hector Perez

"All of our plants live outside so are a bit "natural" looking."

-Kathy & Hector



2nd: *Stenocactus crispatus*

David Thurbon

"I've had this *Stenocactus crispatus* for about 15 years, and I figure it's about 20 years old. It has some corking around the base, and a serious lean towards the sun, but it's 8 inches tall and 5 inches diameter, not including the spines. It also has its first pup forming at the base. That's very slow growth for 20 years!"

-David

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS



3rd: *Rebutia narvaecensis*
David Thurbon

“An uninteresting little cactus for most of the year, but puts on this display for a few weeks each Spring. One of the most floriferous and beautiful Rebutias.”

-David



3rd: *Echinocereus* sp.
Lila Wagar

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS



Echinopsis oxygona

Rick Pope



Epiphyllum sp.

Lori Cardoza



Notocactus leninghausii

Ruth Contino

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS



Mammillaria sp. (magninamma?)

Jodi Visosky



Astrophytum capricorne

Jodi Visosky



Echinocereus sp.

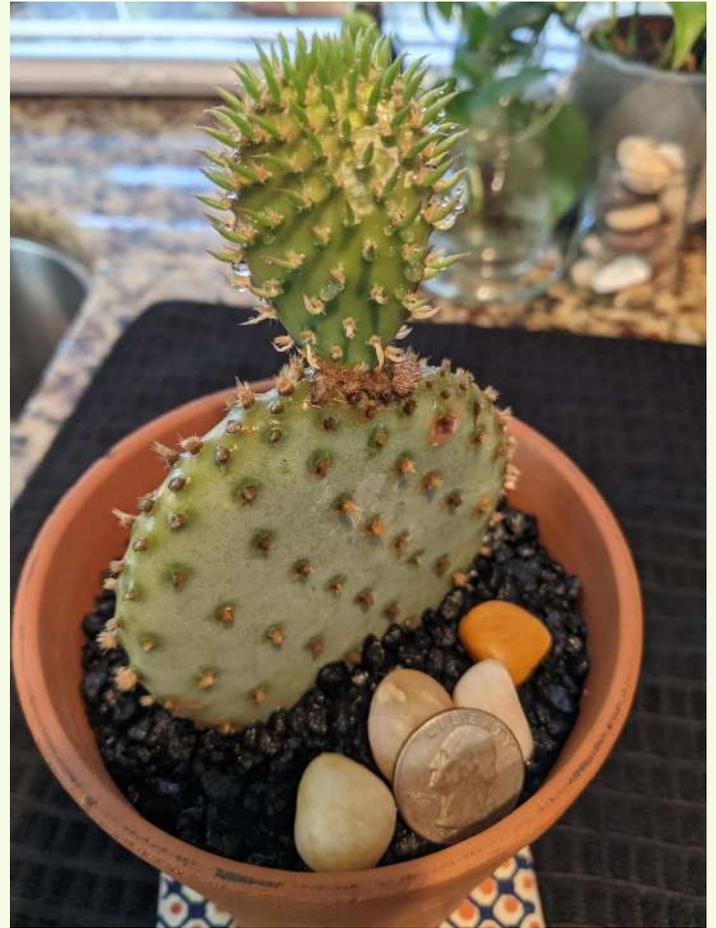
Lila Wagar

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE CACTUS



Unknown crest

Shouqin Huo



Optuntia microdasys

Lori Cardoza



Notocactus buiningii

Jennifer Greene

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: INTERMEDIATE CACTUS



1st: *Obregonia denegrii*

Norb Roden

“Small, but nice condition,
I suggest a ceramic pot for
showing”

-Terry



2nd: *Thelocactus hexaedrophorus*
var. *lloydii major*

Allen Clark

“Nice form, flowering, some
discoloration at base.”

-Terry

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: INTERMEDIATE CACTUS

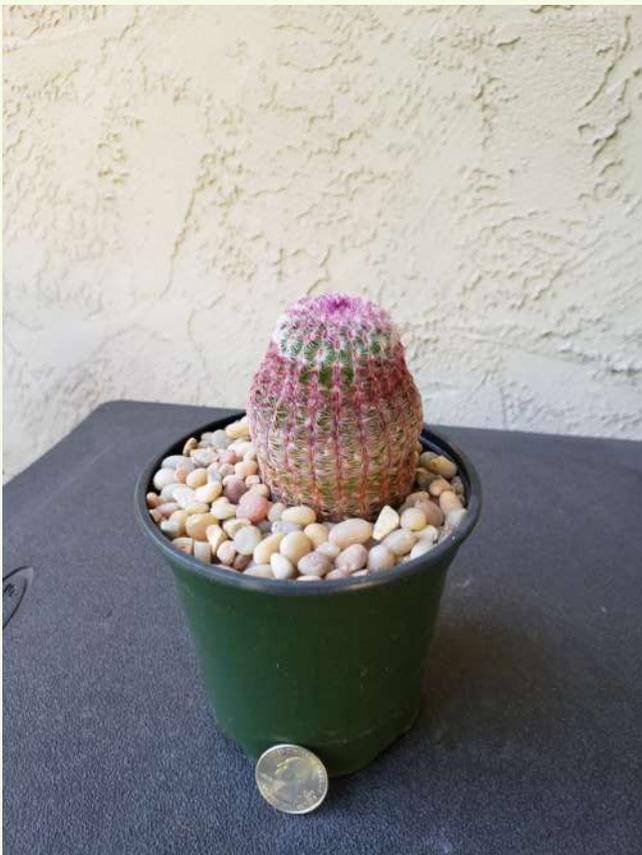
3rd
PLACE



3rd: *Mammillaria spinosissima*



Antonina Lansangan



Echinocereus rigidissimus var. *rubrispinus* Norb Roden



Gymnocalycium baldianum

Allen Clark

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED CACTUS



1st: *Obregonia denegrii*

Michael Burkhardt

“Good size, condition”

-Terry

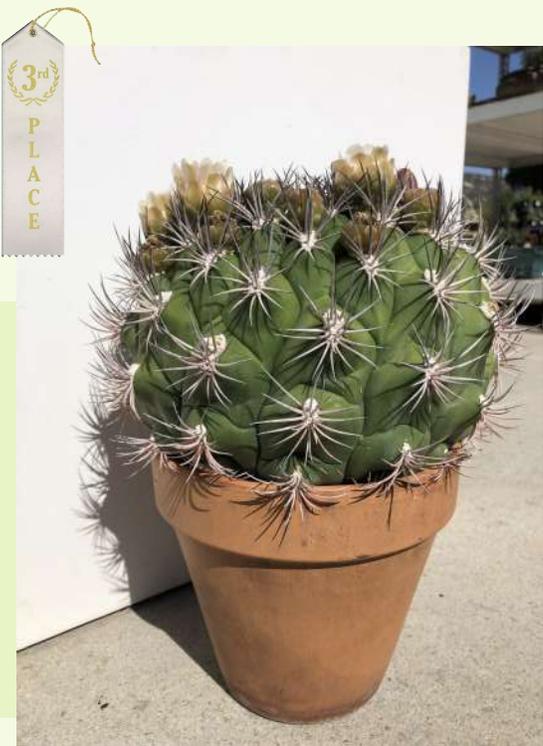
MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED CACTUS



2nd: *Ariocarpus confusus*

Mike Burkhardt

“Great condition.” -Terry



3rd: *Gymnocalycium saglionis*

Dean Karras

“Very nice plant.”

-Terry

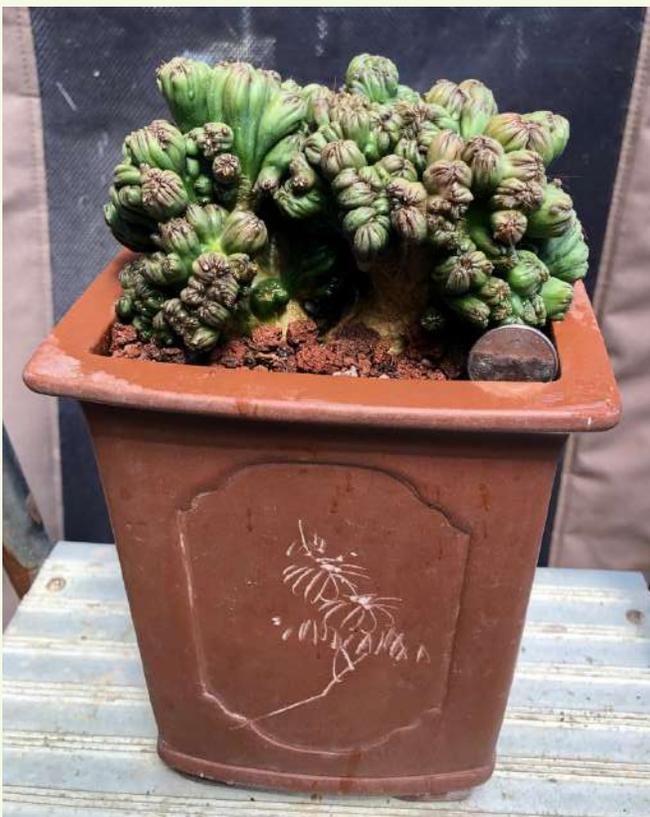


MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED CACTUS



Echinocereus coccineus

Pam Badger



Cereus forbesii monstrose

Pam Badger



Copiapoa cinerea

Dean Karras

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE SUCCULENT

1st
P
L
A
C
E



1st: *Monadenium ritchiei variegata* Patti Nelson



APRIL BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE SUCCULENT



1st: *Echeveria setosa monstrose*

Diana McNeill

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE SUCCULENT

2nd
P
L
A
C
E



2nd: *Haworthia cymbiformis*
Jodi Visosky

2nd
P
L
A
C
E



2nd: *Aloe castilloniae*
Jodi Visosky

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE SUCCULENT

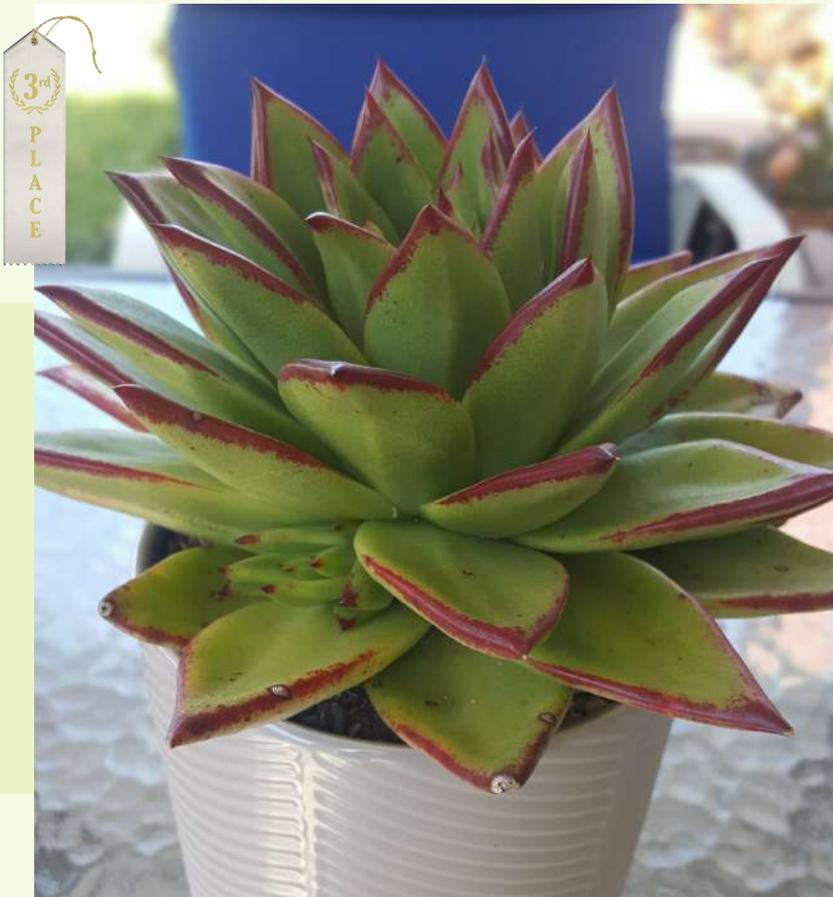


3rd: *Haworthia
springbokvlakensis*

David Thurbon

“So slow growing. I'm
trying to pollinate to get
seeds.”

-David



3rd: *Echeveria agavoides* 'Lipstick' w pups

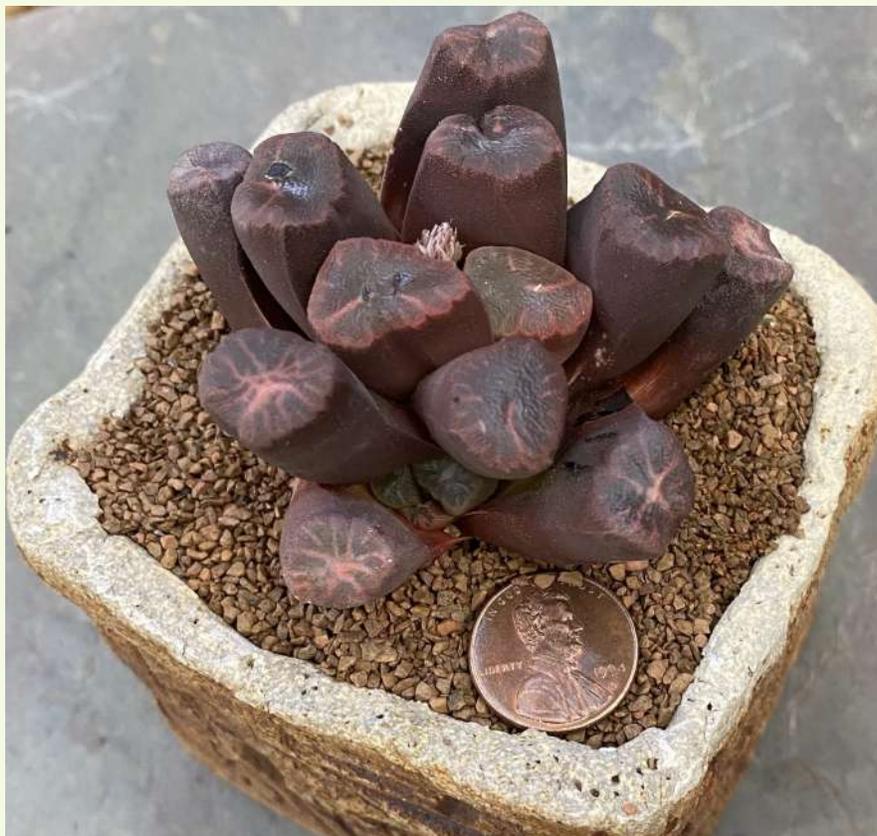
Judi (Mary) Walden

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: NOVICE SUCCULENT



Aloe polyphylla

David Thurbon



Haworthia truncata maughanii

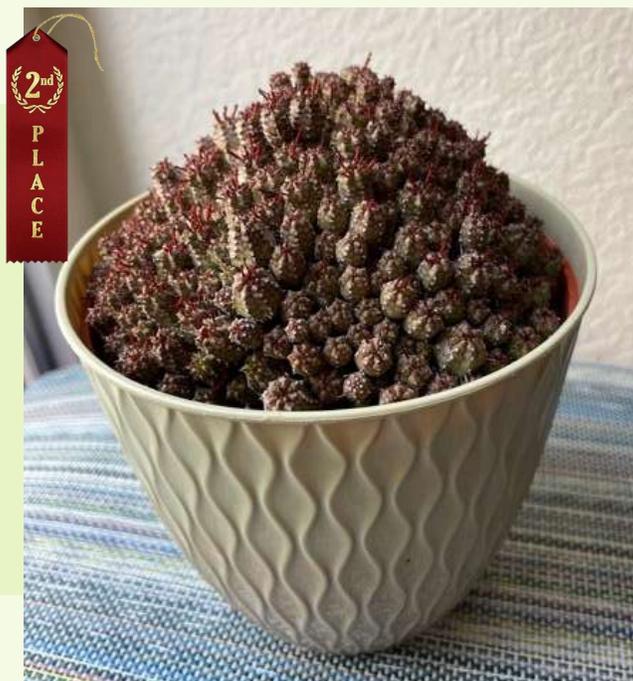
Patti Nelson

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



1st: *Euphorbia lactea variegata*
grafted

Norb Roden



2nd: *Euphorbia submammillaris*

Antonina Lansangan

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED SUCCULENT



1st: *Ipomea platensis*

Dean Karras

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED SUCCULENT

2nd
P
L
A
C
E



2nd: *Euphorbia suppressa*
hybrid

Michael Burkhardt

3rd
P
L
A
C
E



3rd: *Sarcocaulon*
herrei

Candy and
Jerry Garner

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED SUCCULENT



Euphorbia tubiglans x Euphorbia obesa

Michael Burkhardt



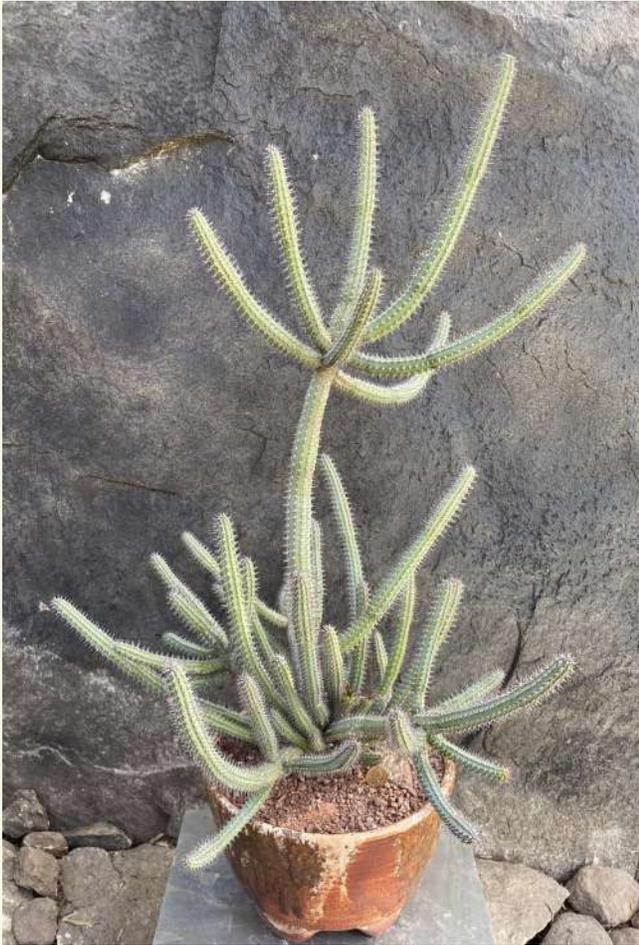
Pachypodium succulentum x bispinosum **Mike Nelson**



Euphorbia francoisii

Pam Badger

MAY BRAG TABLE RESULTS: ADVANCED SUCCULENT



Euphorbia baioensis

Mike Nelson



Euphorbia anoplia

Dean Karras



Sarcocaulon multifidum

Pam Badger