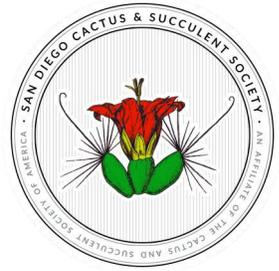


# ESPINAS Y FLORES



VOL. 61, No. 03  
MARCH 2026

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



SUCCULENT SYMMETRY // MARCH COFFEE(S) IN THE GARDEN //  
MARCH SPEAKER // 2026 WINTER SHOW & SALE RECAP // ...and more



**ON THE COVER**

Blooming *Pleiospilos*

Photo by member **Patty L**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

President’s message pgs 3 - 4

March speaker: Brian Kemble pg 5

March Coffee in the Gardens pgs 6 - 7

Plant of the Month pg 8 // Member Section pg 9

2026 Winter Show tabulated results pgs 10 - 11

2026 Winter Show winner photo gallery pgs 12 - 20

**UPCOMING SDCSS SCHEDULE**

**OUR NEXT MEETING**

March 14th

**NEXT FUTURE MEETING**

April 11th

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

<b>President</b>	Kelly Griffin
<b>Vice President</b>	Der-shing Helmer
<b>Secretary</b>	Olga Batalov
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ken Brown

**DIRECTORS**

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

**COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES**

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

<b>New Member Orientation</b>	Patricia Bryan & Jay Crowley
<b>Monthly Regalement</b>	Sandy Wetzel-Smith
<b>Picnic Regalement</b>	Georgia Kenney
<b>Coffee in the Garden Coordinator</b>	Jodi Visosky

**LIAISONS**

<b>Balboa Park Desert Garden</b>	Susan Hopkins
<b>CSSA Affiliate Rep</b>	Rick Bjorklund
<b>SD Botanic Foundation</b>	Lynn Elliot
<b>SD Zoo Safari Park, Baja, &amp; Old World Gardens</b>	May Fong Ho
<b>Palomar CS Society Liaison</b>	Brita Miller

**MEMBERSHIP, BUSINESS, & PUBLICITY**

<b>Membership</b>	Olga Batalov
<b>Business Manager</b>	Donna Roden
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Der-shing Helmer
<b>Webmaster</b>	Jared Petker
<b>General Club Publicity</b>	Christie Lathrop
<b>Show &amp; Sale Publicity</b>	Patricia Bryan & Emily Shuffield

**CONTACT SDCSS**      membership@sdcss.net

**CONTACT EyF EDITOR**      eyf.editor@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in articles and editorial comments are solely the opinions of the author or the editor, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the SDCSS, the board of Directors, or the organization as a whole. All material submitted to the *Espinas y Flores* for possible publication may be edited in form and content and shared on the club's social media with attribution. All material contained in the *Espinas y Flores* may be reprinted by other non-profit organizations unless permission is expressly denied in a note accompanying the article. Reproduction in whole or part by any other organization without the express consent of the editor is prohibited.

Happy (almost) Spring! We had a really great turn out for our Winter Show and Sale in Balboa park. In spite of the anticipated (and realized) frustrations in regards to parking, we still had full tables and full aisles all day long. We were also lucky that our great San Diego weather showed up for us!!

We want to thank some folks for making the right decisions and working so hard to pull this off. We truly appreciate all of those that showed up, big or small. The whole club always steps up for this...it is truly amazing to us, and we have nothing but thanks to you all!

We want to thank the set up crew and those that stayed late on Friday night to watch over the precious plants (until 10pm!); Vicki Hoffman, Lynn Elliott, Donna Roden, Chuck Ramey, Norb Roden, Georgia Kenney, Anne Crenshaw, Susan Hopkins, Sandy Wetzel Smith, Rocco Piersanti, John Tennant, Denise Huntsman, and Jared Petker. THANK YOU!

Thank you to Sherman Blench and Brita Miller for storing and bringing boxes for the sales plants.

We want to thank Ken Brown for overseeing the registers alongside his crew and all of the fine cashiers that presided over and maneuvered through some unexpected glitches. Thank you to Tricia, Linda, Denise, Beth, Jodi, Suzy, Michelle, Lynn, Melanie, Brita, and Winston.

We want to extend thanks to Rita Lunceford for overseeing and managing the Sales end and for coordinating all the vendors. We want to thank Jared Petker for handling the many duties of Show Chair. The Kitchen crew, once again, made sure there was an abundance of great food to keep us energized. Thanks to Pam, Sandy, Kaija, Emily, Chuck, and crew!

To all of our greeters—Candy, Donna, Dee, Heather, Jessica, Suzy, and Susan—Many thanks!

Thank you to all the people that worked security; Brian, Olga, Alva, Pat, Pete, Christopher, Wendy, James, and Rita....Thank you, all! Also, thank you to the peeps that worked the plant holding areas inside and out! You did a tremendous job! Chuck, Norb, and Emily.

We wish to thank all of the vendors for being our most ardent supporters



and who are truly the life blood of our club. We appreciate you so much more than words can convey.

We want to say thanks to our newest Life Members, Candy & Jerry Garner and Pam Badger, for their continued support of our club and events in so many ways, greeting and feeding and supporting the show in so many ways with pots and ribbons. We are so glad we have you!

If we missed you on this list, we certainly didn't miss you at the Show and Sale. Once again, a gigantic THANK YOU!

We have a great lineup of program speakers this year. Our March program will feature the Curator of the Ruth Bancroft Botanical Garden, Brian Kemble, on his trip to seldom-visited country of Ethiopia! Don't miss this special program (please see the details and photos included in this newsletter).

Our Plant of the Month presentation will focus on the geometry of succulents from first-time presenter Tim Shepard. We're all really looking forward to seeing his take on this fascinating subject!

Last but not least, don't forget your brag table plants! We love to see what you grow in-between shows at our next meeting.

See you soon,

*Kelly Griffin*

February 25, 2026



A few of our many terrific SDCSS volunteers



Rita Lunceford



## MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup> SPEAKER

**BRIAN KEMBEL**

**“FROM MEGA TO ANKOBER:  
LOOKING FOR SUCCULENTS  
IN ETHIOPIA”**

### ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

**Brian Kemble** is the Curator at the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California, where he has worked for many years. He is also the VP of the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society, and a past board member of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America. He has written over 700 published articles on succulents and other drought-tolerant plants, and he has contributed photos to numerous books on succulents, including *The Timber Press Guide to Succulent Plants of the World*. His travels in search of succulents have taken him to many countries, including Mexico, South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Socotra and of course Ethiopia.

### ABOUT OUR SPEAKER TOPIC

In July 2018, Brian Kemble traveled to Ethiopia for two weeks, along with Walker Young (garden manager at the Ruth Bancroft Garden), John Miller (president of the Institute for Aloe Studies), and Tom Cole (author of *Aloes of Uganda*). Although the trip was planned around visiting various Aloe localities, there were of course many other interesting plants encountered along the way, including tree-sized euphorbias, a variety of stapeliads, and alpine kniphofias.

The habitat types seen were incredibly diverse, from desert to savannah to thorn-forest to jungle to alpine tundra (punctuated by stands of giant lobelias). It was certainly a change of pace to be in a country where a traffic jam usually meant having to weave your way through camels, donkeys and goats!



### OUR PLANT OF THE MONTH TOPIC

Join us at 1am, just before Joey's talk, for a Plant of the Month presentation about the geometric symmetries found in cacti and succulents, given by Tim Shepard. And, catch a preview of this subject in this month's newsletter!

**[SEE YOU ON MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2026!](#)**

## KRISTA MILL'S COFFEE IN THE GARDEN

**Who:** Krista Mills    **Date:** Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>    **Time:** 9am-2pm

**Where:** 4167 Cole Way San Diego, CA 92117    **Parking:** plenty available on the street

Krista Mills has invited us back to her to her amazing garden in Claremont. Their property has a beauty huge backyard above Tecolote Canyon. The terraced gardens were all created by Krista and her husband when they moved in over 20 years ago. A beautiful deck with gorgeous plants including cacti and bromeliads in handmade pots overlooks a succulent and cactus garden filled with amazing mature specimens of all kinds. You'll drool over Aloe trees, Ferocactus, *Yucca rostrata* and so much more. This is a must-see garden.

**Note:** This property has elevation and stairs, so please wear good shoes.  
This property is not wheelchair accessible.



# Cactus and Succulent GARDEN TOUR & PLANT SALE

MARCH 28<sup>TH</sup> 9:00 - 12:00



## A celebration of Cactus & Succulents

**Garden location:**  
**6460 Boulder Lake Ave.**  
**San Diego**

Tour the entire garden and experience a range of garden themes, from native plantings and fruit trees to community plots, a butterfly garden, and cactus and succulents.



- **San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society "Coffee in the Garden"**  
See how a once ordinary garden has evolved into a diverse and inspiring landscape. Coffee and light snacks will be served.
- **San Carlos Community Garden Tour**  
Tour a model community garden sustained by volunteers, and strengthened by community.
- **Cactus and Succulent Plant Sale**  
Great selection of interesting, uncommon plants well suited for our San Diego climate. Sales help support the garden. Our plant sellers/growers: Ken Blackford, Mike Fernandes, Sue Thomas, Christine Vargas, and Jodi Visosky

[www.SDCSS.net](http://www.SDCSS.net)

[www.sancarloscommunitygarden.com](http://www.sancarloscommunitygarden.com)

# THE SYMMETRY OF SUCCULENTS AND CACTI

BY TIM SHEPARD



Spiraling in *Aloe polyphylla* Wikipedia

Succulents and cacti are a fascinating group of plants to study. We all have noticed a feature in them that initially caught our eyes. For some it might have been the alien-looking features of the lobes of a cactus. For others it may have been spire that rises up out an Agave plant that Dr. Suess may have based his Truffula trees off of. There's always something that piqued all of our interest in these fascinating plants. Mine was the geometric symmetry of succulents and cactus. The circular patterns with varying degrees of shapes and styles are truly fascinating. Spirals seem to be one of nature's favorite shapes to put into cacti and succulents.



Spirals of *Cereus hankeanus* and *Epithelantha micromeris* Tim Shepard



Symmetry found in *Echinocactus grusonii* Tim Shepard

There is also the perpendicular symmetry of the common Barrel Cactus to be marveled at, with its endless rows of spikes that form rows of crosses on top of one another.

These are just a few examples of the geometric symmetries scattered through the succulent world which have caught my eye.

**TIM SHEPARD**



(top) *Cochemia dioica*, photos from Anza Borrego Desert State Park on 2/2/2026. (Below) Desert Christmas Trees (*Pholisma arenarium*), a beautiful parasite that seems to prefer cheesebush (*Ambrosia salsola*) in that locality. **Olga Batalov**

## March Haiku: Fibonacci Sequence

Mystery spirals  
Grow in golden ratio  
Wonders of nature

**EMILY WEAVER**



A huge thanks to Jim Bishop for allowing us to view his gorgeous garden in February!

Do you come to meetings early and enjoy talking to new SDCSS members? **We are seeking a volunteer to help hand out new member ID cards at the meetings.** If interested in learning more, please reach out to us at [membership@sdcss.net](mailto:membership@sdcss.net)

The SDCSS monthly newsletter welcomes all contributions from its members!

If you have a personal 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](mailto:eyf.editor@gmail.com)



**SAN DIEGO**  
Cactus & Succulent Society

**THE 2026 WINTER SHOW WAS A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS THANKS TO MEMBERS LIKE YOU!**

We are thrilled to report that there were a whopping **368** plants entered into our show from **49** individual participants... we can't thank you enough for making this Show an incredible experience for our many members and visitors, despite the parking situation. As for the breakdown, we had 22 Open category growers, 13 intermediate entrants (an increase from 11 entrants in 2025), and 14 amazing novice enthusiasts. See the final tallies on the next page for the full show results.

**As always, we welcome and strongly encourage all members—especially newer ones—to try their hand at showing their plants at a future event!**

Our two judges, Mark Fryer and Tom McCoy, awarded our main category winners and Judge's Awards. The two Show Chair Award plants were selected by Head Clerks Jared Petker and Der-shing Helmer, and the two President's Award plants were selected by Kelly Griffin. A gigantic thank-you to our spectacular judges and our amazing Clerk team of Vivian, Vicki, and Rocco, to security for helping keep our judging area clear, and to Donna Roden for providing the final tally of show results.

**We'll see you and your lovely plants again at our meeting brag table on March 14<sup>th</sup>!**



Our Judging team and President surveying the many beautiful plants brought in by members.



Rita Lunceford

NOVICE	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL PLANTS
Vicki Hoffman	12	3	1	1	43	17
Ron McCullaugh	5	3	3	3	24	14
James Brandl	7	0	0	0	21	7
Emily Weaver	3	2	1	0	14	6
Assat Majen	3	2	0	0	13	5
Rocco Piersanti	2	2	0	0	10	4
Ted Galvez	1	2	1	0	8	4
Kristine New	2	1	0	0	8	3
Kit Cranford	2	0	1	1	7	4
Trevor Adler	1	1	0	0	5	2
Georgia Kenney	1	1	0	0	5	2
Jason Gupta	1	0	1	1	4	3
William Jimenez	1	0	0	0	3	1
Jason Cox	0	1	0	0	2	1

INTERMEDIATE	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL PLANTS
Jared Petker	14	4	4	2	54	24
Keith Taylor	9	5	1	0	38	15
Chris Garcia	7	2	5	2	30	16
Suzy Foran	4	3	2	1	20	10
Naomi Orosz	4	3	1	2	19	10
Chuck Ramey	2	3	2	0	14	7
Lisa Brosseau	2	2	0	2	10	6
Norb Roden	2	1	1	0	9	4
Der-shing Helmer	1	1	0	0	8	2
Peter Hagopian	2	0	0	1	6	3
M. Aparicio	0	1	3	1	5	5
Jodi Visosky	0	2	0	0	4	2
Oakes Austin	0	1	0	0	2	1

OPEN	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL PLANTS
Peter Walkowiak	17	10	4	9	75	40
Jen Greene	4	5	5	1	27	15
Tina Zucker	5	3	5	5	26	18
Botanic Wonders	4	3	3	2	21	12
DR Cactus	3	3	1	1	16	8
Matt M.	3	1	4	1	15	9
Steve Hammer	3	2	1	4	14	10
Don Palmer	2	3	0	4	12	9
Arnold Chaney	1	4	1	0	12	6
Candy & Jerry Garner	2	2	2	1	12	7
Kyle Williams	1	1	2	2	8	6
Doug Hobson	1	1	3	3	8	8
Rita Luncford	2	1	0	0	8	3
Michiel Pillet	0	3	1	2	7	6
Steve Salley	1	1	2	2	7	6
Corona Cactus	1	1	2	2	7	6
LA Succulents	1	1	2	2	7	6
Julian Duval	2	0	0	0	6	2
Thom Oasis	0	1	3	1	5	5
Mike Fernandes	1	1	0	4	5	6
Antonina Lansangan	0	0	4	5	4	9
Pam Badger	1	0	0	2	3	3

## A NOTE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S WINNER TABLE PHOTOS

You might notice our photo feature looks different than previous years—we sadly did not obtain high-enough resolution photos to create our usual plant cutouts! Thanks to Show photos taken by Rita Lunceford, we do have a photo to feature most of the winning plants, and the editor reached out to additional members whose contact we had on file to fill in any blanks. Thank you very much to Rita as well as our winners who replied and provided an additional photo.

If you are one of the Judge/ President/ Chair award winners who was unable to send a photo in time and would like to have your plant featured in the April newsletter, please reach out to us at [eyf.editor@gmail.com](mailto:eyf.editor@gmail.com) before March 18, 2026, and we will include it at that time. Thanks again for your participation, and congrats on the wins!

Winner Name	Winning Plant	Award
Ron McCullough	<i>Copiapoa humilis</i>	Best Cactus Novice
Peter Hagopian	<i>Mammillaria scrippsiana</i>	Best Cactus Intermediate
LA Succulents	<i>Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus elephantidens</i>	Best Cactus Advanced
James Brandl	<i>Agave oteroi</i> 'Filigree'	Best Succulent Novice
Jared Petker	<i>Euphorbia polygona monstrose</i>	Best Succulent Intermediate
Peter Walkowiak	<i>Pachypodium densicaule</i>	Best Succulent Advanced
Trevor Adler	<i>Crassula alstonii</i>	Best Winter Grower Novice
Keith Taylor	<i>Dudleya gnoma</i>	Best Winter Grower Intermediate
Peter Walkowiak	<i>Kumara plicatilis</i>	Best Winter Grower Advanced
Peter Walkowiak	<i>Adenia arabicum</i>	Best in Show
Suzy Foran	<i>Echeveria pulvinata</i> 'Devotion'	Judge's Award (Mark Fryer)
Kyle Williams	<i>Mammillaria theresae</i>	Judge's Award (Mark Fryer)
Sphaeroid Institute	<i>Bulbine bruynsii</i>	Judge's Award (Tom McCoy)
Jared Petker	<i>Euphorbia kalisana</i>	Judge's Award (Tom McCoy)
Matt Maggio/ RSD	"Punta Norte" display	President's Award (Kelly Griffin)
Tina Zucker	<i>Monilaria moniliformis</i>	President's Award (Kelly Griffin)
Julian Duval	<i>Euphorbia squarrosa</i>	Show Chair's Award (Jared Petker)
Suzy Foran	<i>Dioscorea elephantipes</i>	Show Chair's Award (Der-shing Helmer)



**BEST IN SHOW**

*Adenia arabicum*

**Peter Walkowiak**



**BEST WINTER GROWER:  
NOVICE**

*Crassula alstonii*  
Trevor Adler



**BEST WINTER GROWER:  
INTERMEDIATE**

*Dudleya gnoma*  
Keith Taylor



**BEST WINTER GROWER:  
ADVANCED**

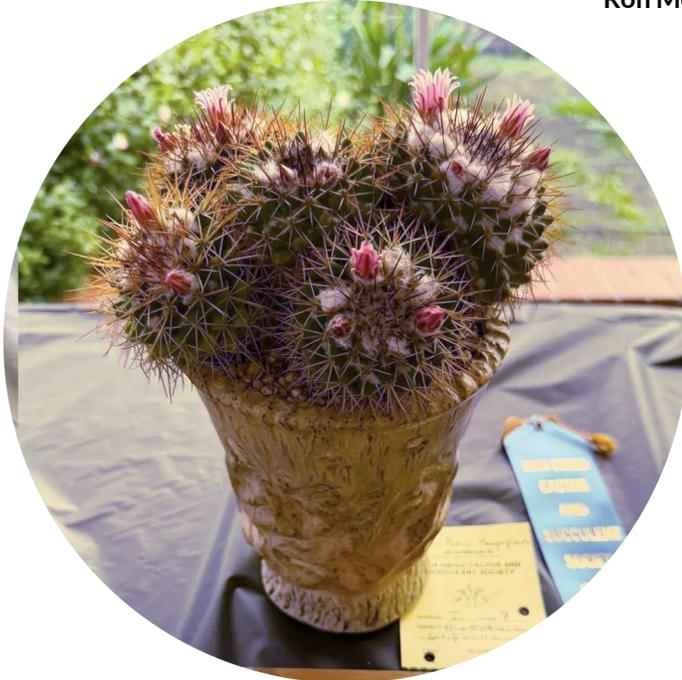
*Kumara plicatilis*  
Peter Walkowiak



**BEST CACTUS: NOVICE**

*Copiapoa humilis*

Ron McCullough



**BEST CACTUS: INTERMEDIATE**

*Mammillaria scrippsiana*

Peter Hagopian



**BEST CACTUS: ADVANCED**

*Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus*  
*elephantidens*

LA Succulents



**BEST SUCCULENT: NOVICE**

*Agave oteroi* 'Filigree'

**James Brandl**



**BEST SUCCULENT:  
INTERMEDIATE**

*Euphorbia polygona monstrose*

**Jared Petker**



**BEST SUCCULENT:  
ADVANCED**

*Pachypodium densicaule*

**Peter Walkowiak**



**JUDGE'S AWARD:  
TOM MCCOY**

*Bulbine bruynsii*

**Sphaeroid Institute**



**JUDGE'S AWARD:  
TOM MCCOY**

*Euphorbia kalisana*

**Jared Petker**



**JUDGE'S AWARD:  
MARK FRYER**

*Echeveria pulvinata* 'Devotion'

Suzy Foran

**No Photo Available!**

**JUDGE'S AWARD:  
MARK FRYER**

*Mammillaria theresae*

Kyle Williams



**PRESIDENT'S AWARD:  
KELLY GRIFFIN**

*Monilaria moniliformis*

Tina Zucker

**No Photo Available!**

**PRESIDENT'S AWARD:  
KELLY GRIFFIN**

"Punta Norte" display

Matt Maggio/ RSD



**SHOW CHAIR'S AWARD:  
DER-SHING HELMER**

*Dioscorea elephantipes*

**Suzy Foran**

**No Photo Available!**

**SHOW CHAIR'S AWARD:  
JARED PETKER**

*Euphorbia squarrosa*

**Julian Duval**