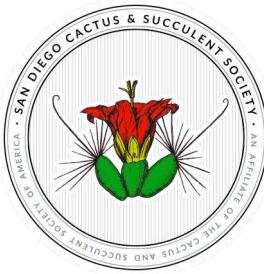


# ESPINAS Y FLORES



VOL. 61, No. 01  
JANUARY 2026

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



IT'S 2026... HAPPY NEW YEAR! // 2025 HONOREES // CARALLUMA //  
JANUARY SPEAKER // 2026 WINTER SHOW & SALE // ...and more

**ON THE COVER***Caralluma speciosa* in flower

Photo by Jodi Visosky

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**UPCOMING SDCSS SCHEDULE****FIRST MEETING OF 2026 (3RD WEEK!)**

January 17th

**2026 WINTER SHOW & SALE**

February 14th

**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

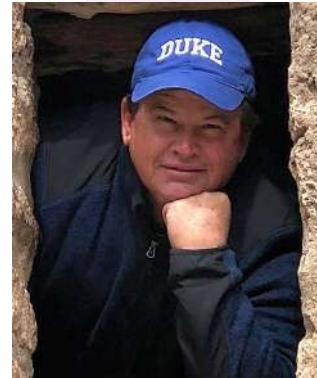
**New Member Orientation** Patricia Bryan & Jay Crowley**Monthly Regalement** Sandy Wetzel-Smith**Picnic Regalement** Georgia Kenney**Coffee in the Garden Coordinator**

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**MEMBERSHIP, BUSINESS , & PUBLICITY****Membership** Olga Batalov**Business Manager** Donna Roden**Newsletter Editor** Der-shing Helmer**Webmaster** Jared Petker**General Club Publicity** Christie Lathrop**Show & Sale Publicity** Patricia Bryan & Emily Shuffield**CONTACT SDCSS** membership@sdcss.net**CONTACT EyF EDITOR** eyf.editor@gmail.com

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Our Holiday Party was exceptional and well attended! Our new caterer did a great job, and thank you Donna Roden for taking the lead in organizing everything for our inaugural run. A special thanks to Herb Stern for, once again, handling the barista duties and securing the spirited beverages. I also want to thank everyone who brought in the beautiful centerpieces — your efforts truly made the event special!



We crowned three Volunteers of the Year for 2025. While the award is meant to be Volunteer of the Year, given our large and dedicated group, we've chosen to honor all those whose contribution this year were extraordinary. Rick Bjorklund has long been deserving of recognition for his numerous contributions to the smooth functioning of our Society and for his work to make the shows run well. Georgia Kenney was recognized for her constant and ongoing support of our activities, shows, and sales — very well deserved! Finally, Olga Batalov was acknowledged with the Volunteer of the Year Award for her work in many roles, in particular her current positions as Director and our Membership Chair. We are incredibly lucky to have her on our team!

We also honored Candy and Jerry Garner as well as Pam Badger with Lifetime Member awards in recognition of their decades of support of our society. They are true pillars of our SDCSS community and now they members for life of the Society—no strings attached, just the hope that they continue to enjoy hanging out with us!

A heartfelt thank-you goes to the entire SDCSS board for their planning and effort to make this year's event run smoothly, and to all members for their constant great suggestions and support.

We must also acknowledge the wonderful support behind the holiday gift plant project: Grow Margo (thanks, Rita!), Botanic Wonders (thank you, Al and Anthony!), Sphaeroid Institute (appreciate it, Steven Hammer and Oakes!), PW Plants (thank you, Peter!), Altman Specialty Plants (thank you, me!), and the lovely pots (thanks, Jerry!). It's a significant effort from everyone, but it's one we all enjoy and cherish — a special tradition that has truly become a highlight of the season!

Our auction was also a great success! We are grateful to our donors: Jared Petker, Gary Vincent, Botanic Wonders, Kelly Griffin, Peter Walkowiak,

and of course, the beautiful landscape plants donated by Western Cactus Growers. Huge thanks to Ed and Blanca DeLollis for their tremendous efforts in making this happen and for transporting their outstanding plants to our meeting. If I didn't mention you and you donated — thank you, too!

The silent auction also performed very well, and I want to extend thanks to everyone for helping to make this part a success.

Altogether, our society raised \$3,300 to support the CSSA Conservation Fund, dedicated to the preservation of cactus and succulent habitats. Great job, everyone!

Our January meeting will feature a presentation by our former SDCSS President Joey Betzler about a trip to South Africa and Namibia from his astute perspective. Our Plant of the Month will be presented by Emily Weaver discussing the genus *Caralluma*.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our first gathering of 2026 — the January meeting will be an exception to the regular schedule and will be held on THE THIRD SATURDAY, the 17th. A new year, a fresh start, and more opportunities to learn and enjoy time together!

Regarding the paid parking situation, with the New Year approaching, please plan accordingly. Carpool if possible, and consider parking at Inspiration Point for the best rates, as there will likely be a shuttle service from there. Be sure to allow extra time to navigate the parking options. Alternatively, there will likely be some close in parking if you are willing to pay for it.

I want to sincerely thank every one of you who contributes to making this club what it is ~ *fantastic fun!* ~ and the holiday party was certainly no exception.

Looking forward to Joey Betzler's presentation on January 17th!

All the best,

*Kelly Griffin*  
December 19, 2025



2025 Volunteers of the year, Rick Bjorklund, Georgia Kenney, and Olga Batalov (not pictured)

Rita Lunceford



2025 Lifetime Member honorees, Candy and Jerry Garner and Pam Badger

Rita Lunceford

**JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup> SPEAKER****JOEY BETZLER****“THE EX-PRESIDENT’S  
TOUR OF SOUTH  
AFRICA”****ABOUT OUR SPEAKER**

**Joseph (Joey) Betzler** has been interested in plants since childhood. One of his earliest memories is of succulent Moss Roses (*Portulaca grandiflora*) growing in Altal Loma (now Rancho Cucamonga) California. Later he discovered three volumes dedicated to The Stapelieae, by White and Sloane.

Mr. Betzler is a botanist and has extensive experience in desert floras of the Mojave, Sonoran, Vizcaíno, and Colorado Desert ecological associations in the southwest United States. He is recognized as a succulent plant expert with over 50 years of experience with cactus and other succulent plants. He has observed these plants in remote locations of: Arizona, California, Nevada, Baja California, Mexico, The Western Cape Floristic Region, the Succulent Karoo, South Africa, and Namib Desert regions in Namibia.

He was a two term President of the SDCSS and voted a Life Member in the 1990s. He is also a life member of the CSSA.

**ABOUT OUR SPEAKER TOPIC**

Joey’s talk will feature his second trip to Southern Africa, which included South Africa and Namibia. Kelly Griffin planted the seed of

a trip in 2022, Tom Knapik was also a key member. The joke was that it would be “the Ex-Presidents Tour of Southern Africa”, since all of the team were former Presidents of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society. Joey likes photography, and his favorite subject is still stapeliads. This was not a stapeliad trip but he managed to see some, as well as astounding Aloes and Ice Plants and other succulents. Though not a succulent, Welwitschia is a botanical wonder that has been adopted by succulent enthusiasts and seeing it was one of the major goals of the trip.

**OUR PLANT OF THE MONTH TOPIC**

Join us at 1am, just before Joey’s talk, for a wonderful introduction to the genus *Caralluma* presented by Emily Weaver. You can catch a preview of this subject in this very newsletter.

**OUR PRE-MEETING WORKSHOP**

At 11am, please enjoy a special pre-meeting workshop about preparing your plants for the February Show and Sale, presented by Jared Petker.

**SEE YOU ON JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2026!**

THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY PRESENTS

# 2026 WINTER SHOW & SALE

**Saturday February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

at the Casa del Prado in Balboa Park

See incredible out-of-this-world succulent and cacti from around the globe and enjoy rare plants and pottery from dozens of plant vendors and local artisans. Best of all, **FREE ADMISSION** and early-bird access for members!

## TIMES & DATES

<b>FRIDAY</b>	noon – 8pm	vendor setup times in Room 101
	noon – 7pm	members, bring in your show plants!
<b>SATURDAY</b>	8am – 10am	final show plant setup
	10am – 4pm	Show open to the public
	9am – 11 pm	Sale Room 101 open EARLY to members only
	11am – 4pm	Sale Room 101 open to the public

The show is open to anyone who grows succulent plants, and there is no limit to the number of entries per class or number of classes entered!



Detailed show and membership info available at upcoming meetings, in our newsletters, and at our website [www.SDCSS.net](http://www.SDCSS.net)

## LOOKING TO VOLUNTEER? WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU!

What could be more fun than sharing the joy of succulents with the public? Be a part of the Winter show and sign up for your favorite role from our [online volunteer sheet](#) or at the January meeting.

SCHEDULE FOR FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> 2026

BRING IN YOUR SHOW PLANTS from noon – 7pm

VENDOR Setup is at noon. Doors close at 8pm.

SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2026

8:00am to 10:00am	Set up for OUT-OF-TOWNSERS, BRING IN YOUR PLANTS!
9:00am to 11:00am	Sales area open to members only (please bring proof of membership)
11:00am to 4:00pm	Sales area opens to public
10:00am to 4:00pm	Show area open for viewing
10:00am to noon	Judging, (open to public, though judging aisles will be closed off)
4:00pm	Show and sales area close

# SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY WINTER 2026 SHOW & SALE

ANTONINA LANSANGAN • BAY GARDENS

BOTANIC WONDERS • CACTUS DATA PLANTS & POTTERY

CORONA CACTUS • DR CACTUS • GERALD RICHERT CERAMICS

GROW MARGO • HULA TROPICALS • KOBE CLAYWORKS

KYLE'S PLANTS • LA SUCCULENTS • LISA ROCKS

MARK MURADIAN • MATT MAGGIO • MONALISA'S PLANTS

PRETTY ODD PLANTS • PRICKLY PROSPECTS

THE PURRING POTTER • PW PLANTS • ROOT DOWN POTS

STEVEN HAMMER • SUCCULENT GARDENING / SUCCULENTS US

SUCCULENT PLANTS • TGZ CERAMICS • THORN OASIS

T-REX PLANTS



WWW.SDCSS.NET/  
2026-WINTER-SHOW-AND-SALE

02.14  
2026  
FREE  
ENTRY

FEAT.  
SPECIAL  
GUEST JUDGES  
TOM MCCOY &  
MARK FRYER

A hand-crafted pot and a certificate suitable for framing will be given to BEST CACTUS, BEST SUCCULENT and BEST WINTER-GROWER plants in the NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE and OPEN Levels, and to the BEST OF SHOW plant (NOVICE or INTERMEDIATE or OPEN)

First, Second, and Third Place Ribbons will be awarded in all categories for all Novice, Intermediate, and Open entrants.

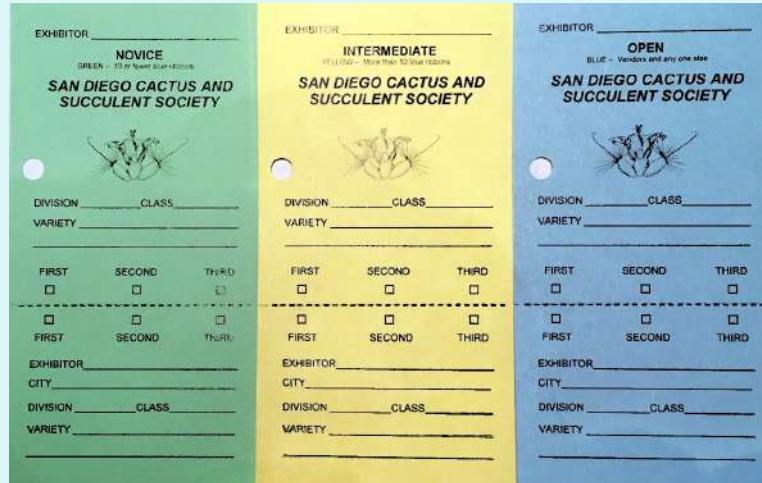


**PLEASE FILL OUT BOTH TOP AND BOTTOM PORTIONS OF YOUR TAGS,  
THANK YOU!**

**GREEN** cards for exhibitors that have won 10 or less blue ribbons in a recognized cactus and succulent show.

**YELLOW** cards are for participants that have won more than 10 blue ribbons

**BLUE** cards are for vendors and those that wish to compete against them. Awards will be selected from any category.



## ADDITIONAL RULES

### NO FIELD COLLECTED SPECIMENS.

- 1) Show is open to anyone who grows succulent plants.
- 2) Entries must be in the possession of exhibitors for at least six months. Plants must be clean, (no weeds or debris), healthy (no insects, disease or pesticide odor) and dry. Plant labels should be removed or hidden. Exhibitors are responsible for placing filled entry cards with plants prior to judging. The show committee may remove any entry that detracts from or jeopardizes the health of other entries.
- 3) Plants must be individually potted specimens except for the category 'Dish Gardens.'
- 4) Depending on number of entries, prior to judging, the show committee may combine or divide categories and rearrange entries. The show area may be PARTIALLY closed during judging, on a section-by-section basis. Judging will be open to the public. Plants must remain in show area until the end of the show.
- 5) Entries are judged on:
  - a) Condition, size, maturity and difficulty of culture: 70%
  - b) Staging - pot, top dressing, arrangement, cleanliness: 25%
  - c) Nomenclature: 5%
 Awards are given only if the judges believe they are merited, and all decisions are final.
- 6) The SDCSS and show committee will take due care to safeguard entries but cannot be held responsible for damage to, or loss of, plants and property.

DIVISION I: CACTI (CACTACEAE)	
Name	Class
Ariocarpus	1
Astrophytum	2
Aztekium, Epithelantha, Obregonia, Ortegocactus, Pelecyphora, Strombocactus	3
Coryphantha, Escobaria, Neolloydia	4
Turbinicarpus (Gymnocalycium), Stenocactus (Echinofossulocactus)	5
Echinocereus	6
Echinocactus, Ferocactus, Hamatocactus, Leuchtenbergia, xFerobergia	7
Mammillaria with hooked spines	8
Mammillaria with straight spines	9
Pediocactus, Sclerocactus, Thelocactus	10
Melocactus	11
Blossfeldia, Coleocephalocereus (Buiningia), Discocactus, Frailea, Uebelmannia	12
Copiapoa	13
Gymnocalycium	14
Acanthocalycium, Echinopsis, Lobivia	15
Eriosyce (Horridocactus, Neochilenia, Neoporteria, Pyrrhocactus)	16
Parodia (Notocactus)	17
Rebutia (Sulcorebutia, Weingartia)	18
Matucana (Submatucana), Oroya	19
Opuntioids: Austrocylindropuntia, Consolea, Cylindropuntia, Grusonia, Miqueliopuntia, Opuntia, Pereskia, Pterocactus, Tephrocactus, Tunilla, etc.	20
Columnar Cacti: Arrojadoa, Bergerocactus, Browningia, Carnegiea, Cephalocereus, Cereus, Cipocereus, Cleistocactus, Espostoa, Micranthocereus, Myrtillocactus, Neobuxbaumia, Oreocereus, Pilosocereus, Pachycereus, Peniocereus, Stenocereus, Stetsonia, Trichocereus, etc.	21
Epiphytic Cacti: Discocactus, Epiphyllum, Hatiora, Hylocereus, Lepismium, Rhipsalis, Schlumbergera (Zygocactus), Selenicereus, etc.	22
Other Genera - Any Other Cactus	23
Cactus, Seed-Grown by Exhibitor	24
Crested & Monstrose Cacti	25
Variegated Cacti (with 50% or More Variegation)	26

DIVISION II: SUCCULENTS	
Name	Class
<b>ASPHODELACEAE</b>	
Aloe - species	38
Aloe - hybrids	39
Gasteria	40
Haworthia (Haworthiopsis, Tulista), Astroloba	41
<b>ASTERACEAE (COMPOSITAE): Leptosyne (Coreopsis), Othonna, Senecio (Kleinia), etc.</b>	42
<b>BROMELIACEAE: Cryptanthus, Dyckia, Hechtia, Tillandsia, etc.</b>	43
<b>CRASSULACEAE</b>	
Adromischus	44
Aeonium, Greenovia	45
Cotyledon, Tylecodon	46
Crassula	47
Dudleya	48
Echeveria	49
Graptopetalum (Tacitus), Pachyphytum, hybrids (xPachyveria, xGraptopetra)	50
Kalanchoe	51
Sedum, Sedum hybrids (xSedeveria)	52
Sempervivum (Jovibarba)	53
<b>CUCURBITACEAE: Cephalopentandra, Corallocarpus, Dendrosicyos, Gerrardanthus, Ibervillea, Kedrostis, Momordica, Xerosicyos, Zygosicyos, etc.</b>	54
<b>DIOSCOREACEAE: Dioscorea</b>	55
Sansevieria (DRACAENACEAE)	56
<b>EUPHORBIACEAE</b>	
Euphorbia medusa types	57
Euphorbias with leaves and spines	58
Euphorbias with leaves and no spines	59
Euphorbias with spines and no leaves	60
Euphorbias with neither leaves nor spines	61
Endadenium, Monadenium, Jatropha, Pedilanthus, Synadenium	62
<b>GERIANACEAE: Monsonia, Sarcocaulon, Pelargonium, etc.</b>	63
<b>PORTULACACEAE (MONTIACEAE, DIDIEREACEAE, ANACAMPSEROTACEAE, TALINACEAE): Anacampseros, Alluadia, Avonia, Ceraria, Didieria, etc.</b>	64
Succulent Bulbs: Albuca, Boophane, Bowiea, Bulbine, Haemanthus, Lebedouria, Massonia, Veltheimia, etc.	65
Other Caudiciforms: Boswellia, Bursera, Commiphora, Cyphostemma, Dorstenia, Ficus, Fouquieria, Ipomoea, Moringa, Operculicarya, Pachycormus, Pseudobombax, Pyrenacantha, Sesamothamnus, Sinningia, Uncarina, etc.	66
Other Genera - Any Other Succulent	67
Succulent, Seed-Grown by Exhibitor	68
Crested & Monstrose Succulents	69
Variegated Succulents (with 50% or More Variegation)	70

DIVISION II: SUCCULENTS	
Name	Class
<b>AIZOACEAE (MESEMBRYANTHEMACEAE)</b>	
Lithops	27
Conophytum, Lapidaria, Dinteranthus	28
Other Mesembs without prominent roots or trunks: Faucaria, Pleiospilos, Titanopsis, etc.	29
Other Mesembs with prominent roots or trunks: Aloinopsis, Mestoklema, Trichodiadema, etc.	30
<b>AGAVACEAE</b>	
Agave, Yucca	31
Calibanus, Beaucarnea, Nolina	32
<b>APOCYNACEAE</b>	
Adenia, Pachypodium	33
Adenium	34
Stapeliads with succulent stems: Hoodia, Orbea, Pseudolithos, Stapelia, etc.	35
Caudiciform Stapeliads: Fockea, Gonolobus, Petropentia, Raphionacme, etc.	36
Ceropagia, Hoya, Dischidia	37

DIVISION III: OTHER	
Name	Class
Dish Gardens (Two or more plants in the same pot)	71

Name	Class
Acanthocalycium	15
Adenia	33
Adenium	34
Adromischus	44
Aeonium	45
Agave	31
Albuca	65
Alluaudia	64
Aloe - hybrids	39
Aloe - species	38
Anacampseros	64
Ariocarpus	1
Arrojadoa	21
Astroloba	41
Astrophytum	2
Austrocylindropuntia	20
Avonia	64
Aztekium	3
Beaucarnea	32
Bergerocactus	21
Blossfeldia	12
Boophane	65
Boswellia	66
Bowiea	65
Browningia	21
Buiningia	12
Bulbine	65
Bursera	66
Cactus - Seed-Grown by Exhibitor	24
Calibanus	32
Carnegiea	21
Cephalocereus	21
Cephalopentandra	54
Ceraria	64
Cereus	21
Ceropegia	37
Cipocereus	21
Cleistocactus	21
Coleocephalocereus	12
Commiphora	66
Conophytum	28
Consolea	20
Copiapoa	13
Corallocarpus	54
Coreopsis	42
Coryphantha	4
Cotyledon	46
Crassula	47
Crested & Monstrose Cacti	25
Crested and Monstrose Succulents	69
Cryptanthus	43
Cycads	67
Cylindropuntia	20
Cyphostemma	66
Dendroscyos	54
Didieria	64
Dinteranthus	28
Dioscorea	55
Dischidia	37
Discocactus	12
Dish Gardens (two or more plants in the same pot)	71
Disocactus	22
Dorstenia	66
Dudleya	48
Dyckia	43
Echeveria	49
Echinocactus	7
Echinocereus	6
Echinofossulocactus	5
Echinopsis	15
Enadenium	62

Name	Class
Epiphyllum	22
Epithelantha	3
Eriosyce	16
Escobaria	4
Espostoa	21
Euphorbia medusa types	57
Euphorbias with leaves and spines	58
Euphorbias with leaves no spines	59
Euphorbias with no leaves or spines	61
Euphorbias with spines no leaves	60
Faucaria	29
x Ferocergia	7
Ferocactus	7
Ficus	66
Fockea	36
Fouquieria	66
Frailea	12
Gasteria	40
Gerrardanthus	54
Gonolobus	36
Graptotetalum	50
x Graptovaria	50
Greenovia	45
Grusonia	20
Gymnocalactus	5
Gymnocalycium	14
Haemanthus	65
Hamatocactus	7
Hatiora	22
Haworthia	41
Haworthiopsis	41
Hechtia	43
Hoodia	35
Horridocactus	16
Hoya	37
Hylocereus	22
Ibervillea	54
Ipomoea	66
Jatropha	62
Jovibarba	53
Kalanchoe	51
Kedrostis	54
Kleinia	42
Lapidaria	28
Ledebouria	65
Lepismium	22
Leptosyne	42
Leuchtenbergia	7
Lithops	27
Lobivia	15
Mammillaria with hooked spines	8
Mammillaria with straight spines	9
Massonia	65
Matucana	19
Melocactus	11
Mestoklema	30
Micranthocereus	21
Miqueliopuntia	20
Momordica	54
Monadenium	62
Monsonia	63
Moringa	66
Myrtillocactus	21
Neobuxbaumia	21
Neochilenia	16
Neolloydia	4
Neopoteria	16
Nolina	32
Notocactus	17
Obregonia	3
Operculicarya	66
Opuntia	20

Name	Class
Orbea	35
Orchids	67
Oreocereus	21
Oroya	19
Ortegocactus	3
Other Genera - Any Other Cactus	23
Othonna	42
Pachycereus	21
x Pachyveria	50
Pachycormus	66
Pachyphytum	50
Pachypodium	33
Parodia	17
Pedilanthus	62
Pediocactus	10
Pelargonium	63
Pelecyphora	3
Peniocereus	21
Pereskia	20
Petropentia	36
Pilosocereus	21
Pleiospilos	29
Pseudobombax	66
Pseudolithos	35
Pterocactus	20
Pyrenacantha	66
Pyrrhocactus	16
Raphionacme	36
Rebutia	18
Rhipsalis	22
SANSEVIERIA	56
Sarcocaulon	63
Schlumbergera	22
Sclerocactus	10
Sedum	52
Sedum hybrids (x Sedeveria)	52
Selenicereus	22
Sempervivum	53
Senecio	42
Sesamothamnus	66
Sinningia	66
Stapelia	35
Stenocactus	5
Stenocereus	21
Stetsonia	21
Strombocactus	3
Submatucana	19
Succulent - Seed-Grown by Exhibitor	68
Sulcorebutia	18
Synadenium	62
Tacitus	50
Tephrocactus	20
Thelocactus	10
Tillandsia	43
Titanopsis	29
Trichocereus	21
Trichodiadema	30
Tulista	41
Tunilla	20
Turbinicarpus	5
Tylecodon	46
Uebelmannia	12
Uncarina	66
Variegated Cacti (50% or more variegation)	26
Variegated Succulents (50% or More variegation)	70
Velttheimia	65
Weingartia	18
Xerosicyos	54
Yucca	31
Zygocactus	22
Zygosicyos	54



# FETID ELEGANCE: THE EVOLVING GENUS OF CARALLUMA

BY EMILY WEAVER

**C**ARALLUMA. Elusive mystique, exotic origins, and unique characteristics. Yet, whether by karma or by chance, hard facts have been difficult to pin down about this beauty. And so, this is a piece about Caralluma—what we (I) think we (I) have learned about an evolving genus of plants.

## THE (MAYBE, HOPEFULLY) FACTS

Caralluma is in the Dogbane family—Apocynaceae—and is closely related to pachypodium and plumeria. Caralluma has thick, fleshy stems, spiny, angled edges, and star-shaped flowers. Native to hot, arid regions, it can be found in the tropics of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, India, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar.

There are a number of different sources citing the derivation of the name Caralluma. For example, several sources relate it to words in regional Indian languages. Its name in Telugu can mean “rabbit horn,” which could refer to its seedpods that form two curved pointy husks. Another source suggests that the name is derived from an Arabic phrase qahr al-luh um, which means abscess or wound, and may refer to the scent of its stinky blooms. In any case, the genus first appeared in publication in 1810 in an article describing *C. adscendens*.

Confusion about Caralluma stems from the many name changes that have occurred over the last 50+ years. Currently Kew Gardens identifies 30 species classified as Caralluma, with other species having been separated into at least 18 different genera, such as Desmidorchis, Echidnopsis, Monolluma, Orbea, or Stapelia.

## PHARMACEUTICAL USES OF CARALLUMA

Some types of Caralluma are edible and have a strong, bitter taste. In particular, *C. fimbriata* has antioxidant properties and is thought to have potential uses to suppress appetite, lower cholesterol, and protect against liver disease and cancer. In traditional medicine, it has been used to treat diabetes, rheumatism, paralysis, leprosy, and inflammation.



*Caralluma socotrana* © James Bailey – some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist

James Bailey



*Caralluma socotrana*

Emily Weaver



*Caralluma acutangula*

Emily Weaver

## TIDBITS ABOUT SOME FAVORITES (THAT MAY OR MAY NOT FORMALLY BE CARALLUMA)

*Caralluma socotrana* is perhaps one of the more well-known species and is remarkable for its milky white skin and bright red flowers. It can be found on the island of Socotra and in parts of Eastern Africa including Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen, and Somalia. *C. socotrana* can be finicky in our climate because it requires high light and winter temperatures above 60 degrees. It is particularly susceptible to root rot with cold temperatures and wet soil.

*Caralluma acutangula* --> turned *Desmidorchis* --> turned *Ceropegia* is another species that has changed names over time. It develops a large, stunning cluster of dark flowers that drives its appeal. Its native habitat is in hilly lowlands where it can grow between rocks and under shrubs in dry, deciduous bushland. This lovely lady is easier to grow and requires regular water in summer in full- to part-sun. *C. acutangula* is very toxic if eaten but its latex is used medicinally in Mali and northern Kenya on wounds and boils.

EMILY WEAVER

### CITATION LIST

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Agave close-ups. We'll be sharing more of Kelly's inspiring photos in upcoming issues!

**Kelly Griffin**



*Veltheemia capensis*

**Kelly Griffin**

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

Speaker Schedule (w/POM)	2026	SDCSS
January POM	17th	Joey Betzler Emily Weaver South Africa / Namibia Carralluma
February	14th	Winter Show
March POM	14th	Brian Kemble Tim Shepard Ethiopia Geometric fibonacci in C and S
April POM	11th	Tom McCoy Der-Shing Helmer Saudi Arabian Aloes + other xerics Open
May	9th	Jerry Moreau/ KG Rhipsalis/ Lepisium
June	6-7th	Summer Show and Sale
July POM	11th	Trevor Adler Olga Batalov IPhone and other C/S Photography Crests and Variegates
August POM	8th	Rita Lunceford Wendy Goldman China: C&S Plant Shopping/ Culture Adromischus
September	12th	Picnic
October POM	10th	Dylan Zoller Jared Petker Cacti and Xeric Bromeliads/ Brazil Brazilian Euphorbias
November	14th	Nursery Crawl Details to come!
December	12th	HOLIDAY GATHERING



We hope you had a great 2025. Happy New Year from your 2026 SDCSS Board of Directors!

