



# Succulent Morsels

News of the Chinle Cactus & Succulent Society  
March 2013 Vol. 5, No. 3

*To promote knowledge, enjoyment, cultivation, and conservation of cacti and other succulent plants among its members, other individuals and organizations throughout West-Central Colorado*

## **MARCH PROGRAM:**

### **UTE LEARNING GARDEN - PART II WITH MIKE CALLABRO**

In August 2012 we had the pleasure of a talk from Mike Callabro, but unfortunately our meeting was a bit rushed because---can you believe it--there was a Bronco's game!!!



The four-winged saltbush, a native plant relied on for survival.



Mike Callabro

So we have invited Mike back to give us “the rest of the story”, so to speak, about the Ethnobotany Ute Learning Garden.

Mike shares that the “Ute Indians once hunted and lived in Western Colorado. They existed in small family groups with each member playing a critical role in their survival.

“Join us for a discussion of how they lived including the native plants they relied on for their survival. This introduction to the Ute Learning Garden will include the plants found in the garden and how they were used.”

From the CSU website, Dr. Curtis Swift provides additional background information about the Ute Learning Garden. **The Ethnobotany Ute Learning Garden** is a joint project of the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Agriculture U.S. Forest Service, Mesa State College, Mesa County, Colorado State University Extension and the Ute Indian Tribe, Uintah and Ouray Reservation. “An ethnobotany garden is a demonstration and teaching garden that displays how native cultures used native plants in daily life.....” – Tom Fisher, Regional Services Director, Mesa County - 5/15/08.

**PLANT SHOW WEST - MARCH 2, 3 2013**  
SEE DETAILS ON PAGE

The **overall design** of the Learning Garden was developed by Aline LaForge, Archaeologist, BLM. The site covers 2.5 acres of previously undeveloped Mesa County land located immediately west of the Mesa County CSU Extension office and adjacent to the existing demonstration gardens and Arboretum. Mesa County graciously provided us the opportunity to develop this site.

This Living Laboratory/Learning Garden is available to local schools, clubs, senior groups, members of the Ute Indian Tribe and all area visitors. The scope of the lesson plan is broad that includes an adaptive vegetable gardening learning area for people with limited mobility and/or limited space, teaching strategies for living and eating from a xeric landscape, traditional Native American gardening skills and traditional Ute structures: wickiups and miniature plant communities with representative species from the life zones in and around the Grand Valley.

In developing the project, Members of the committee met with Betsy Chapoose, Director of Ute Tribe Cultural Rights and Protection, and Clifford Duncan, Traditional Elder for the Ute Indian Tribe and the design takes their recommendations into consideration. Volunteers from our partners have worked on the garden and its development.

Many of the trees and shrubs were planted thanks to Jeff Ventlin's students and their helpers prior to the end of the 2008/2009 school year. Additional plants provided by the Environmental Plant Center in Meeker, Colorado, were planted by Ute Indian students on Friday, June 11, 2010. Shade structures modeled after Ute shade ramadas and a sweat lodge will be installed at a later date.

## **PIMA PRICKLY PARK VISITED BY CHINLE MEMBERS**



In the January 2013 issue of *Succulent Morsels* an article featured the Pima Prickly Park near Tucson and described it as a nice get-away trip to abandon the frigid weather in Grand Junction. Maryann & Loren Benoit "took the hint", and traveled west , stopping by the park for a visit.

Both Maryann and Loren were quite impressed with the appearance of this relatively new cacti and succulent garden, particularly the attractive signage and layout of the areas. As reported in the previous article, the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS) and Pima County (Arizona) entered into a partnership to transform a former sand and gravel pit into a community park with the goal of making the nine acre site the new Pima Prickly Park. The park provides a place for the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society to place cactus and succulents from their cactus rescue program (which has rescued almost 60,000 cacti and other native plants over the last 12 years).



These photos, taken by Loren Benoit, reflect the expanse of the garden and the scale of the TCSS's efforts. One of the interesting sites in the Park is the Saguarohege Garden which "builds on the Stonehenge model as a sacred space in Pima Prickly Park and will celebrate the ancient relationships between people and the Sonoran Desert. Seating boulders have been placed alongside the existing saguaros with the largest boulder standing upright in the center. The boulders (are) etched with a message about the garden and memorials to TCSS members."



*Above photos by Loren Benoit*

## 35th BIENNIAL CSSA CONVENTION JUNE 15-20, 2013

Buck Hemmingway sends us the following about the 2013 CSSA Convention: "We are working hard on the 35<sup>th</sup> Biennial CSSA Convention which will occur in Austin, Texas from June 15 through 20, 2013. We have a world class group of speakers scheduled and attendees will be able to buy plants from the leading growers of Cacti and Succulents in North America. Your club members should be planning a trip to Austin to join all of us for this terrific event. Your members can access current information and the registration form at <http://.cssa2013.com>

# THE COLORADO PLATEAU PROGRAM

## A SOUTHWEST TREAT

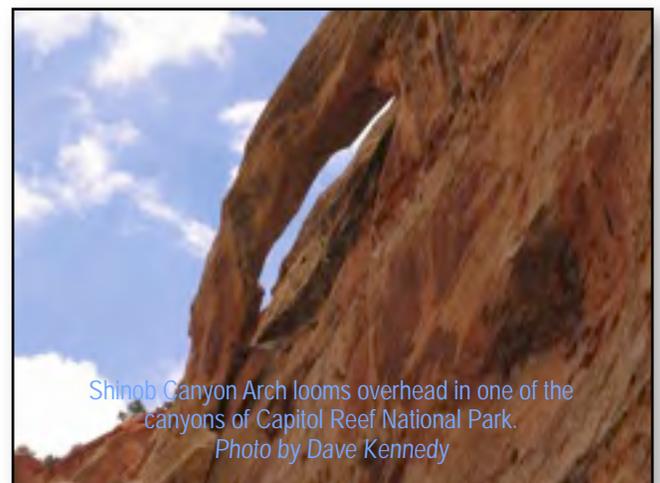


Mystery Arches are at the end of a difficult hike in the San Rafael Reef. *Photo by Dave Kennedy*

Dave Kennedy took Chinle members on a photographic tour of central Utah at the February 14th meeting of the Society. Dave's photos weren't necessarily cactus-related, but they sure did show off a lot of relatively unknown areas in that region of the Colorado Plateau. Dave recounted a couple of the conventions of the Natural Arch and Bridge Society, one in the San Rafael Reef and the other in Capitol Reef National Park.

In the San Rafael, many seldom-visited natural arches and bridges became the subject of his narration, including Mystery Arches, Colonnade Arches, Hurst Bridge, Ednah Bridge and Swasey's Arch, to name a few. Capitol Reef has more arches that may be familiar, but it also has arches that few people visit, such as Brimhall Arches, Reunion Arch, Pack Mule Arch, Boomerang Arch and Shinob Canyon Arch.

Along the way, Dave stopped to enjoy cactuses in bloom, many panels of rock art and the outstanding landscapes typical of the areas.



Shinob Canyon Arch looms overhead in one of the canyons of Capitol Reef National Park. *Photo by Dave Kennedy*



A fishhook barrel cactus displays its beauty along the Notom-Bullfrog Road, Capitol Reef National Park.  
*Photo by Dave Kennedy*



Kokopelli the Flute Player is depicted in a petroglyph in the San Rafael Swell of Utah. *Photo by Dave Kennedy*

## SAGUARO LORE FROM SAGUARO COUNTRY

(Editor's note: Thought this article by Linda McMillin Pyle from Desert USA website [http://www.desertusa.com/mag98/june/papr/jun\\_lil.html](http://www.desertusa.com/mag98/june/papr/jun_lil.html) was a nice followup to Maryann and Loren Benoit's trip to Prickly Park and the Saguarohege. As you can see, Maryann couldn't help impersonating one of the Saguaro plants!)

### Many Uses of Saguaro Fruit

The old brush smoke house on the desert floor looked like a hat with a flat top. The open entrance facing east was a dark gaping mouth. In the shadowy interior, men with tattooed faces raised a wine basket to their lips and drank.



*Photo by Loren Benoit*

The basket was passed around and around the circle. One man succumbed to the intoxicating wine and fell prone. The bottoms of his feet had been painted red to make him more attractive to the women who attended him. Slowly the rest of the men followed suit as all the Saguaro wine was consumed. Harmony with their world had been demonstrated. As their bodies are saturated with the wine, so may the dry earth be saturated with rain.

In time long passed, Tohono O'odham (Papago) Indians celebrated the New Year in this fashion. But first, the ritual gathering and preparation of the Saguaro fruit, sustenance for the dwellers of the Sonoran Desert, had to take place. Not having a reliable water source, these Indians measured strength by the ability to go without water in their arid climate. According to the mythology of the O'odham people, the first Saguaro was created when a young woman sank into the earth and rose back out as a giant cactus, arms raised toward the heavens. They, too, considered themselves as belonging to the earth.

In hot June and early July, families would camp near forests of Saguaro to reap fruits from atop the giants, the

plants they thought to be like themselves, Indians to be respected. The full crop of Saguaro fruit, which appeared even after a dry winter, might have seemed miraculous to them. Long poles made from the wooden ribs of Saguaro skeletons were used to hook and knock down the fruits. Like tiny watermelons when split open by hand, the fruit reveals a red interior pulp and thousands of black-red seeds (smaller than poppy seeds). The pulp, tasting like a fig with a hint of strawberry, quenches the thirst.

Ito'i, a legendary hero and creator, was said to have instructed the people in the ancient tradition of making Saguaro wine. Water and Saguaro syrup was to be mixed in tightly woven baskets and then poured into earthen pots called *ollas*. Stored in a dark cool place, the mixture distilled for 3 to-7 days. This time of fermentation, turning bountiful fruit into spirituous wine, was cause for lively dancing, singing of desert rain songs and incantation of poems. Their word for "drunk" meant "holy, lyrical, bringing knowledge and vision."

Preserving the rest of the harvest involved soaking the fruit in *ollas* to loosen the seeds and then simmering the mixture over a fire. The resulting thick syrup, poured into ceramic holders and sealed with desert mud could be used later like sugar. Sun dried seeds, ground then mixed with water, and flour, were baked as bread or were turned into butter. These foods helped provide sustenance throughout the year, until the next harvest.

If you are in Saguaro country can you pick a Saguaro fruit? A Ranger at Saguaro National Park outside Tucson indicated that a tiny sampling of the renewable fruit is usually permitted on public lands. But the gathering of fruit in any quantity by the general public is prohibited. Harvesting Saguaro fruit from private land requires permission of the landowner.

## PLANT GENUS OF THE MONTH - *Turbinicarpus*

The genus name "*Turbinicarpus*" comes from the Latin for "fruits shaped like a top". The *turbinicarpus* genus contains very small to medium-sized cacti, which inhabit the north-eastern regions of Mexico, in particular the states of San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Nuevo León, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Coahuila, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas. The mostly dwarf species flower in abundance. These species grow very slowly, and their success among the hobbyist has threatened them in the wild because of illegal collections on their populations that are very often covering very limited areas. They are propagated mostly from seeds. Nurseries often graft them in order to increase the growing speed. (Source: Wikipedia)



*Turbinicarpus bonatzii* - photo by Don Campbell, 1/19/2013

These plants grow mostly on limestone soil (never on volcanic soil), at altitudes between 300 and 3300 meters above sea level. *Turbinicarpus* species are usually confined to specific habitats, generally hostile for the majority of plants, mostly in very drained rocky areas, composed of limestone, sandstone, schist (neutral or alkaline), or in very acidic and humiferous understorey, or in gypsum veins, sometimes so pure that they are almost white.

In particular, *Turbinicarpus sensu stricto* is adapted to extreme niches: more than 80% of the species grow in rock cracks or among the pebbles beneath them, where enough dust has accumulated to enable root development.

It would seem almost impossible that plants so small could survive in such an environment, however in those species that inhabit dry and exposed areas, the root is very thick, becoming a taproot and acting like an anchor on the slopes but, more important, as a water storage for the dry periods, capable of significantly retracting into the ground so that the stem is less exposed to the sun; the spines are often changed to adopt a very papery structure, capable of absorbing good quantities of water.

Furthermore, the general look is extremely mimetic, thanks to the epidermis colour and the interlacing spines, guaranteeing a certain protection from eventual herbivores.

Below is another lovely example of this beautiful genus.



*Turbinicarpus juernigii*- Photo by Don Campbell 1/31/2013

## **IT'S MEMBERSHIP DUES TIME AGAIN!**

We know that none of you want to miss a single Chinle C&SS event in 2013, so it's time to pull out the checkbook and make out a check for your Chinle membership. What a deal!!! Twenty dollars for an individual and \$25 for a family. You can pay at the next Chinle meeting or mail your check to PO Box 100025, Grand Junction, CO 81507.

Membership makes you eligible for a good variety of benefits: Monthly educational and entertaining programs, opportunities for hands-on learning at WCBG and CSU Extension garden parties, tasty treats at meetings, field trips, garden tours, and the always popular, Annual Dinner Meeting.

Probably the best benefit of membership is the fellowship enjoyed by being around folks with similar interests and expertise in cactus and succulents. Be a Cactophile and renew today!!!

## Chinle Cactus & Succulent Society 2013 Gardening Calendar

Date	Day	Gardening Location
March 23	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
April 3	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
April 20	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
May 1	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
May 11	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
May 29	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
June 8	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
June 19	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
July 6	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
July 17	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
August 3	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
August 14	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
Sept 7	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
September 18	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
October 5	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens
October 16	Wednesday	CSU Extension Garden
October 26	Saturday	WC Botanical Gardens

All Garden parties start at 9:00 am and will usually end at 11:00 am. Please mark your calendars with these gardening dates so you don't forget to come out and share in this important work at our two beautiful gardens. Gardening is great for your blood pressure, it's fun, and it's an easy way to give back to our wonderful community.

While CCSS has a set of gardening tools, we encourage you to bring your own. Mark your tools in such a way as to identify they belong to you.

When the weather is too hot or too cool, feel free to come earlier or later than the scheduled times. Just let Maryann Benoit know how long you gardened each session for accurate volunteer records.

We're looking forward to seeing you at our garden parties. We need you and appreciate your help.

Any of the above dates are subject to change. Members will be informed of any changes via an e-mail

## **SECOND ANNUAL PLANT SHOW WEST MARCH 2 & 3, 2013**

Members of the Chinle C&SS again participated in the Plant Show West held at Bookcliff Gardens. The gathering of various garden clubs as spring approaches is always an encouraging event that reminds us that winter is on the way out. Photos of the event will appear in the April newsletter.

### ***ON THE LIGHTER SIDE***

(We can always count on Don Campbell to provide us with an "unusual" feature for our newsletter! Here is his contribution for our March edition!)

As a budding young cactophile, I have many bittersweet memories of 'The Singing Cowboy', Gene Autry, and his catchy rendition of:

Here comes Peter Cottontail  
Hoppin' down the bunny trail  
Hippity hoppin', Easter's on its way

Bringin' every girl and boy  
Baskets full of Easter joy  
Things to make your Easter bright and gay

He's got jelly beans for Tommy  
Colored eggs for sister Sue  
There's an orchid for your mommy  
And an Easter bonnet too

Here comes Peter Cottontail  
Hoppin' down the bunny trail  
Hippity hoppin', Easter's on its way

(I was especially attracted by the following verse)

**Try to do the things you should  
Maybe if you're extra good**

**He'll bring you an Peter Cottontail Cactus**

Finally, after decades of diligently trying really, really hard to do the things I should  
and

following many, many years of disappointment,  
awaking to find a few colored eggs and a marshmallow rabbit...  
my wish came true!

I believe this to be the only photo in existence of **Peter Cottontail**, hippity hoppin' down the bunny trail, delivering an extremely rare Peter Cottontail Cactus to a somewhat older, but very happy, cactophile.

(This Peter Cottontail Cactus is, in reality, a chimaera,  
*Myrtillocalycium* 'Polyp'  
growing on its own roots.)



# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2013 - July 2013

- MAR 2-3 PLANT SHOW WEST SHOW & SALE  
BookCliff Gardens - 10 am - 4 pm  
Set-up on March 1st
- MAR 4 *Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10am*  
*2666 Summer Hill Ct., GJ*
- MAR 14 *Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS*  
*Program: Ute Learning Garden - Part II*  
*Presenter: Mike Callabro*  
*6:30 pm - Sagebrush Room, Mesa County Fairgrounds*
- MAR 16 & 17 - Colorado Cactus & Succulent Society  
Show and Sale  
Denver Botanical Gardens
- MAR 23 FIRST GARDEN PARTY! WCBG! - Saturday, 9 AM
- APR 1 *Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10am*  
*2666 Summer Hill Ct., GJ*
- APR 3 GARDEN PARTY - CSU EXTENSION - Wednesday, 9 AM
- APR 11 *Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS*  
*Program: TBA*  
*Presenter: Dr. Gary McAllister*  
*6:30 pm - Sagebrush Room, Mesa County Fairgrounds*
- APR 20 GARDEN PARTY - WCBG - Saturday, 9 am
- MAY 1 GARDEN PARTY - CSU EXTENSION - Wednesday, 9 AM
- MAY 6 *Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10am*  
*2666 Summer Hill Ct., GJ*
- MAY 11 GARDEN PARTY - WCBG - Saturday, 9 AM
- MAY 18 *Garden Tour - (Replaces May Regular Meeting)*  
*Janet & Bill Hassell, Coordinators*
- MAY 29 GARDEN PARTY - CSU EXTENSION - Wednesday, 9 am
- JUN 3 *Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10am*  
*2666 Summer Hill Ct., GJ*
- JUN 8 GARDEN PARTY - WCBG - Saturday, 9 am
- JUNE 13 *Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS*  
*Program: TBA*  
*Presenter: Panayoti Kelaidis*
- JUNE 19 GARDEN PARTY - CSU EXTENSION - Wednesday, 9 am
- JUN 15 *35th Biennial CSSA Convention, Austin, TX*

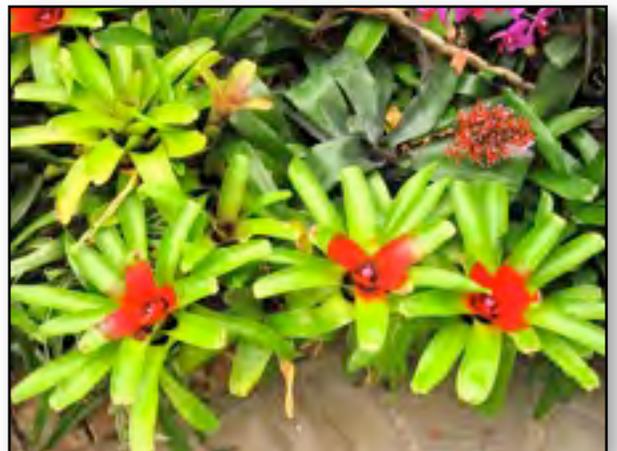
**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**FIRST GARDEN PARTY OF 2013 - MARCH 23, 2013**

**GARDEN TOUR - MAY 18, 2013**

**FIELD TRIP TO CRUMP'S GREENHOUSE - WEEKEND OF JULY 13, 2012**

The succulents shown below are in the Bellingrath Gardens' Conservatory, part of a multiacre creation of Walter & Bessie Bellingrath, located outside Mobile, AL. Taken by Janet & Bill Hassell on their trip to Florida in February. Bellingrath was Mobile's first Coca-Cola bottler.



## 2013 Chinle Cactus and Succulent Society Board

President: Bill Hassell  
970-263-0910

Secretary/Web Master: Tom Burrows  
970-462-6767

Treasurer: Loren Benoit  
970-254-7471

Vice President: Lynn Dunham  
970-243-1822

Member at Large: Judy McCart  
970-623-9279

Newsletter Ed: Janet Hassell  
970-263-0910

Garden Committee: Maryann Benoit  
970-254-7471

**Chinle Cactus and Succulent Society usually meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm. Meetings are held in the Sagebrush Room at the Grand Junction Fair Grounds. Guests are always welcome.**

**CHINLE C&SS WEBSITE: [www.chinlecactusclub.org](http://www.chinlecactusclub.org)  
CSU WEBSITE LINK: <http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/TRA/PLANTS/chinlecactus.shtml>**