



Succulent Morsels

News of the Chinle Cactus & Succulent Society
December 2013 Vol. 5, No. 12

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

2013 ANNUAL DINNER DECEMBER 12TH

"A Colorado Country Christmas"

Saddle your hosses, put on your cowboy boots and get ready for a western style Annual Dinner Meeting on December 12th at the Tiara Rada Country Club!

Judy McCart, coordinator for the evening, has planned a wonderful evening with a Colorado Country Christmas theme, and you won't want to miss it! The event begins at 5:30 pm and will follow the schedule shown below:



5:30 PM - Registration, Social Hour, Silent Auction Bidding
6: 30 pm - Dinner
7:30 pm - Business Meeting, Election of 2014 Officers
8:30 pm - Door Prizes, Gift Plants & Silent Auction Winners
9:30 pm - Adjourn

Judy needs to know if you plan to attend by December 5th to allow time for the restaurant to order and prepare enough food. You can pay at the door, but if you make a reservation and can't make it, you will be expected to pay since the Chinle C&SS will be charged anyway.

Give Judy a call at 623-9279 or email her at ladyj512@bresnan.net. There are some delightful door prizes and of course, attendees will receive a free plant! And dress in Western attire for fun!

NOVEMBER PROGRAM A POTPOURRIE OF INFO!

A good crowd of Chinle members attended the November 14th Regular Meeting of the CC&SS, with a program featuring favorite genres, tips for photographing cacti & succulents, how to pot a strawberry pot and even a demonstration of portable and stationary glochid removal systems!





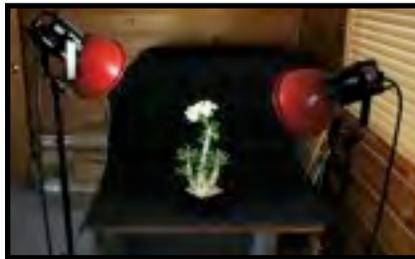
Lynn Dunham (L) and Judy McCart (R) did a nice review of one of their favorite genre, Euphorbias, using a True-False exercise for members to guide them through their presentation. Euphorbias are the largest genre of succulents, but not native to North America. They have a latex sap, which can be a skin irritant, and if in the eyes, an ophthalmologic emergency.

The plants can be propagated by cuttings, seeds, offsets and grafting. Euphorbias need loose, well drained soil, fertilization in the summer, watering a bit more than cactus, and if a fungicide is used, choose one appropriate for roses and ornamentals.

These plants are very diverse in appearance, as shown by the variety of specimens Lynn and Judy displayed. Their blooms are characteristically small and occur in small clusters. Probably the most common plant not associated with being a Euphorbia is the Poinsettia.



Tom Burrows gave a detailed presentation of how he set up a "homemade" studio for photographing cacti and succulents. He prefers the indoor studio to eliminate weather issues and wind to obtain the best focused and lighted results. The "studio" consists of a card table covered with a black cloth draped over some cardboard boxes. Because normal fluorescent lights do not produce accurate daylight colors, he purchased bulbs especially designed for photography, as shown in the photo on the right.



Don Campbell, shown below, enjoys shooting photographs in the outdoors or using natural light in his sunroom. A technique he demonstrated was using light defusers and light reflectors to control how light strikes his subject. He highly recommends using a tripod with remote shutter release to limit camera movement for the best focus. He uses both black and gray fabric for his backgrounds. See photos below.

Don also recommends staging the plant, and altering it if you need to for artistic effect. Adding a pad or a bloom can dramatically improve the final photo. With a tripod, one is able to use smaller apertures and longer shutter speeds to maximize depth of field and sharp focus.





Tom Burrows then presented a rather humorous but helpful demo of “portable” and “nonportable” glochid removal systems. Small tweezers honed to a fine point with fine sandpaper and/or a “midge plier”, commonly used for tying flies work effectively in the field to remove embedded glochids.

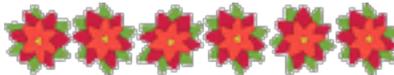


Descriptively named “the Third Hand”, a nonportable table top vice combined with a jeweler’s glass allows the visualization and removal of glochids that are very small and difficult to see.

Last, but not least, Lynn Dunham, shown on the right, showed us how to plant a strawberry pot by creating a core of gravel held in place by a paper towel tube, then packing soil in around it.



As plants are placed, the tube is gently raised, adding more gravel and soil packed around it until the pot is full and all the plants are in place. The core of gravel provides an excellent way for water to reach all the openings that contain plants.



LEO MARTIN ON CONTROLLED RELEASE FERTILIZERS

Question:

Osmocote comes in several formulations from short term 1-3 months to long term 12-14 months. Does anyone have experience with these?

Leo responds:

Two issues here. Yes, cactus seedlings grow best with LOTS of fertilizer, especially in a medium with absolutely no nutrients like most people use for their plants. Don't pay attention to books and people telling you to avoid nitrogen with cacti of any age. Weak and spindly growth is caused by insufficient light, not by too much nitrogen. If you can't provide your plants with enough light, they are going to look weak and spindly. If you fertilize them under low-light conditions you will have weak and spindly plants that grow faster. The problem is not the fertilizer.



Osmocote is great for people who don't have the time to mix up their own liquid fertilizer solutions and use them regularly. It will be more expensive in the long run but for small-scale hobbyists the extra cost is minimal, and the fact that your plants will still get their fertilizer even if you're working lots of overtime is a blessing.

Nitrogen fertilizers are less stable as temperatures rise. Bacteria in the soil convert nitrogen products into nitrogen gas, and they become more active at higher temperatures. And nitrogen compounds break down spontaneously into nitrogen gas as well, faster and hotter temperatures.

I heard a lecture from a soil scientist here in Phoenix. He said: “Most Osmocote preparations decompose rapidly once temperatures reach 90 degrees F/32C and are useful for little more than a week. Osmocote is great for

house plants because most of us keep our houses cooler than 90F. Osmocote does not last forever, so if you want to depend on it for your fertilizer you must repot at least annually.

“Osmocote must be incorporated into the soil and not sprinkled on the surface. The nutrients leach from the surface of the spheres into the soil. Spheres lying on the soil surface have only a tiny area in contact with the soil, so most of the nutrients will not get into the soil.

“Plants in commercial growing media don't get any nutrients at all from the medium. If you use media such as perlite compost, you must use a fertilizer with all the major and minor nutrients. Most commercial "potting soil" nowadays is blackened sawdust, and not even well-composted at that. This is why people think they have trouble with houseplants.

“Plants in real soil from planet Earth generally have most major and minor nutrients available at reasonable pH, lacking only nitrogen. Check with your local county agricultural extension office to see whether your soil lacks any nutrients. Plants in potting media with local soil generally do fine with nothing more than ammonium sulfate as fertilizer since they get other nutrients from the soil. Ammonium sulfate is a lot cheaper than "balanced" fertilizers.

“Ammonium sulfate must be broken down by bacteria into the nitrates and nitrites plants can assimilate. What the bacteria don't convert will decompose to nitrogen gas and not get to the plants. The bacteria are temperature-dependent and hardly function during cool weather. So ammonium sulfate is only useful during warm weather and it is the best lawn grass fertilizer during the summer. Ammonium sulfate solutions watered into the soil decompose to nitrogen gas in less than an hour during Phoenix summers, so there is little chance of burning plants with reasonable amounts of it during hot weather.

“During cooler weather calcium nitrite is a better nitrogen fertilizer because the nitrogen is immediately available to the plants. During warm weather it decomposes to nitrogen gas so fast it is a waste of money. It is the best lawn grass fertilizer during cool weather.

Leo Martin, Phoenix Arizona USA
Courtesy of CACTI_ETC Digest 6099

'Bucky' in the Backyard

Don Campbell reports seeing this “very docile and well mannered four point buck, still in the velvet” on September 13th in his back yard. “However, later in the season,” Don continues, “this miserable buck will, undoubtedly, be scraping his antlers on all of my shrubs and stepping on as many of the small cacti & other succulents as possible.”



PLANT OF THE MONTH: EUPHORBIA NEOHUMBERTII

Euphorbia neohumbertii is a species of plant in the Euphorbiaceae family. It is endemic to Madagascar. Its natural habitat is rocky areas. It is threatened by habitat loss and is listed on the 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

The plant is a very stately Euphorb with four angled stems and very large leaves. The leaves drop leaving behind a decorative scar on the thick stems. Spring into summer, the tops of the stems are topped with vivid scarlet-orange flowers tipped in yellow. It is a very stable and easy grower, albeit a bit slow.



The plant ranges from 24 to 36 inches in high, both in habitat and in cultivation. It likes sun to partial shade and is not hardy to Colorado climate which is unfortunate since the plant is drought-tolerant and suitable for xeriscaping.



Since all parts of plant are poisonous if ingested, use care in handling the plant since it, like most Euphorbias, produce a toxic latex sap that may cause skin irritation or allergic reaction.

Photo credits: (Left) Google image; (Right) J. Hassell, 11/20/13



WHAT'S BLOOMING?

Jeff Brimley, our Bountiful, Utah member, reports that "I found these growing 14 feet up on the bloom stalk of my *Agave utahensis kiababensis*." He notes that he has sent some "pups" to Don Campbell, so we may see more of them in our gardens in the future.

Photo credit: Jeff Brimley



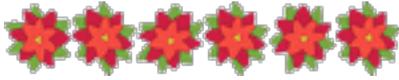
A SNEAK PREVIEW OF SOME SILENT AUCTION PLANTS

This Haworthia in a 6-inch pot is one of many lovely plants featured in the Annual Dinner Meeting Silent Auction this year. Others shown on the following page include a '*Lophocereus schottii monstrous*', an '*Ariocarpus retusus*', an '*Haworthia retusa v. gigantea*', a "Ming Thing" Cactus, a '*Baynesia lophophora*', a '*Haku Jo*' and a '*Copiapoa hypogaei*'.

Don't forget, there will be attractive plants for all attendees and door prizes. Check out the plants on the next page:



Just more reasons to come to the Annual Dinner Meeting! See you there!



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



Not many Chinle C&SS members were aware that outgoing Chinle President, Bill Hassell, was imprinted on cacti at the tender age of 18 when driving his grandparents, aunt and uncle around the US in 1956.



AND FOR A FEW SMILES.....SOME OF THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF ENGLISH:

1. ONE TEQUILA, TWO TEQUILA, THREE TEQUILA..... FLOOR.
2. ATHEISM IS A NON-PROPHET ORGANIZATION.
3. IF MAN EVOLVED FROM MONKEYS AND APES, WHY DO WE STILL HAVE MONKEYS AND APES?
4. THE MAIN REASON THAT SANTA IS SO JOLLY IS BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHERE ALL THE BAD GIRLS LIVE.
5. I WENT TO A BOOKSTORE AND ASKED THE SALESWOMAN, "WHERE'S THE SELF- HELP SECTION?" SHE SAID IF SHE TOLD ME, IT WOULD DEFEAT THE PURPOSE.
6. WHAT IF THERE WERE NO HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS?
7. IF A DEAF CHILD SIGNS SWEAR WORDS, DOES HIS MOTHER WASH HIS HANDS WITH SOAP?

8. IF SOMEONE WITH MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES THREATENS TO KILL HIMSELF, IS IT CONSIDERED A HOSTAGE SITUATION?

9. IS THERE ANOTHER WORD FOR SYNONYM?

10. WHERE DO FOREST RANGERS GO TO "GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?"



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS DECEMBER 2013 - FEBRUARY 2014

- DEC 2 Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10 am
2666 Summer Hill Ct., GJ
- DEC 12 CHINLE ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
The Iron at Tiara Rada - 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm
- JAN. 6 Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10 am
2182 Standing Rock Dr - The Benoits
- JAN. 9 Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS
Program: TBA
6:30 pm, Sagebrush Room, Mesa County Fairgrounds
- FEB 3 Chinle C&SS Board Meeting - 10 am
2182 Standing Rock Dr - The Benoits
- FEB 13 Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS
Program: TBA
6:30 pm, Sagebrush Room, Mesa County Fairgrounds



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 2nd 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 Mailing Address: Chinle Cactus & Succulent Society
PO Box 20000-5280
Grand Junction, CO 81502**

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