



Succulent Morsels

News of the Chinle Cactus & Succulent Society
December 2014 Vol. 6, 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

DECEMBER'S PROGRAM:

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING DEC. 11TH

It's ADM Time Again!

Mark your calendars and make reservations for the always-popular CCSS Annual Dinner Meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2014. This fun, end-of-the-year social event will again be held at the Rock Bar and Grille at Tiara Rado Golf Club, from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm.



As in past years, this event will include a cash bar, buffet dinner, a short business meeting and election of Officers for next year. Our ADM would not be complete without lots of wonderful door prizes, interesting gift plants for everyone, and numerous opportunities for bidding wars on beautiful and unique silent auction items. You won't want to miss this ever-popular CCSS gathering!

Loren and Maryann Benoit are coordinating the event, with the assistance of many Chinle members. The cost for this year's festivities is \$23.00 per individual. Please call Maryann or Loren at 970-254-7471 to make your reservations **no later than December 1**. Your checks, made out to CCSS, may be mailed to PO Box 20000-5028, Grand Junction, CO 81502 **and payments need to be received by December 5, 2014**.

Joy Bush is organizing your donated items for door prizes. Please give her a call at 255-6467 or Maryann at 254-7471 if you have items still to be donated. Or, you may call her to arrange pick up of your items. Since we never know whose name will be picked for any particular gift, please try to make items appropriate for either a man or woman.

We look forward to seeing you at the ADM. Don't miss out on the fun. For photos of some of the Silent Auction plants, turn to page five.



SLATE OF OFFICERS SET FOR ANNUAL ELECTIONS

We are pleased to announce the following slate of officer candidates for the 2015 Society year: Continuing to serve in their current capacities are Maryann Benoit, President; Janet Hassell, Vice President; Loren Benoit, Treasurer; and Janet Hassell, Newsletter Editor. Members who have come forward as candidates are Deb & Glenn Mallory, Co-Secretaries; Lisa Cain, Member-At-Large & Archivist; and Sheri Skeie, Program Co-Chair with Don Campbell. This demonstration of interest and commitment is much appreciated by the current Board, and will contribute to the future success of the Society.

Additional candidates can be nominated by members between now and the Annual Meeting, and at the Annual Meeting itself.

NEW MEETING PLACE IN OUR FUTURE!

Any of you who have been to the Fairgrounds lately can see that there are many changes taking place. One of the major changes is our access to the Sagebrush Room. We will no longer be able to meet there on Thursdays as we have in the past.

To keep our monthly meetings on Thursdays, the Board has elected to move the meetings to the Mesa Mall Community Room beginning January 2015. We used this room previously before we began meeting in the Sagebrush Room.



The Community Room at the Mall is entered through a single side door on the east side of Cabelas, directly west of the east parking lot. Upon entering this door, you are in the back hallway of several stores. The Community Room is the first opening on the left side of this hall.

The January Board meeting will be held at the Benoit's home on Tuesday evening, January 6, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The address is 2182 Standing Rock Drive off South Camp Road in the Redlands.

PLANT OF THE MONTH - LITHOPS

by Nora Graf (with permission of the Tucson Master Gardeners' newsletter)

Lithops are unusual plants. They are sometimes called living rocks but that is just the beginning of the interesting characteristics. They were discovered by William John Burchell, a botanist and artist, who first thought he had found an odd-shaped stone. Lithops are a succulent that form their own genus within the ice plant family. The name comes from ancient Greek, lithos meaning stone and ops meaning face. Their native lands are Namibia and South Africa. Lithops are supremely adapted to dry habitats being able to survive long droughts up to 20 months long. The average rainfall where they live is about 2 inches per year. Plants may completely disappear during droughts. The plant does spread by division but since it is so slow-growing it takes many years for the plant to expand.

They look odd, like two rocks nestled against one another. What you are seeing is actually two leaves that are opposite one another and attached at the base. The tops of the leaves are somewhat flattened and are the only exposed part of the plant. Leaves have a mottled appearance that helps camouflage them. Over time the fissure





between the leaves gets larger and a flower is produced in October and November.

The flowers are dramatically large, somewhat daisy-like and yellow or white, maybe more like a cross between a daisy and a cactus. Most species' flowers have a spicy-sweet aroma. Lithops don't flower until they are between 3 and 5 years old. Cross-pollination is required for seeds to form. The seed pod is a dry capsule which opens when it gets wet. Seeds are actually ejected by raindrops falling on them. When the capsule dries it recloses.

Once the plant flowers the two leaves start being absorbed by the plant and replaced by two new leaves. You will see the leaves start to shrivel. The plant is beginning the process of absorbing the old leaves. The new leaves form inside the old leaves. Once the bloom is over you should begin to mist every other week.

Active growth starts in late spring; at that point water once a week until the beginning of summer. During the summer the plant becomes semi-dormant (about late May) and only needs to be watered every three to four weeks.

Lithops are often sold as house-plants and I'm sure they are available if you want to give them a try. They need a well-drained soil. The recommendation is 25% decomposed granite or pumice, 50% compost and 25% sharp sand. Or you can use a commercial cactus mix with added sand—two parts mix to one part sand. The pot needs a drainage hole in the bottom.

Lithops need bright light but not direct sun, at least four to five hours per day. In higher elevations they might need full sun to get enough light. A sign of a lighting problem is if you see the plant growing way out of the soil. They are getting too much water and not enough light. The leaves should be at the soil level. You only want to see the leaf surface. Excessive heat can kill the plant. Another interesting twist is that if they experience poor lighting because of a long period of overcast days or in the wrong location in a house they will lose their tolerance of bright light. If that happens they need to be reintroduced to bright light gradually.

Do not fertilize except every few years. Any fertilizer should be applied in early spring or early fall. You will need a low-nitrogen, water-soluble fertilizer for house plants mixed at 1/2 the recommended dose.

Few pests bother these plants. Sometimes mealy bugs or root mealy bugs may harm them. Control is simply soapy water or a q-tip dabbed with alcohol. Sometimes birds will peck holes in them. In home environments spider mites can be a problem. While it is tough to see the mites, evidence of them comes in small white spots of scar tissue on the leaves. You can use a miticide for control. For more information: <http://www.lithops.info/>

If you are interested in growing lithops there is a nursery in Tucson that sells them.

Living Stone Nursery/Plants of the Southwest <http://lithops.net/aboutus.htm>
50 E. Blacklidge, Tucson, Arizona 520-628-8773

DIETER STILL KNOWS HOW TO GROW 'EM!

Former Chinle member and past president, Dieter Kubisch apparently still has "the touch" when it comes to growing *Opuntia*! He shares this photo of a robust blooming plant in his backyard in Crowley, Texas (outside of Dallas). Apparently the rabbits think they're great, too!

Dieter did a great job while he was here in Grand Junction and was an active Chinle gardener and participant in club activities. He even perfected a system for putting up the display tent at activities such as Bloomin' Deals and Earth Day. We wish Dieter and Nancy the best and hope they return to visit Grand Junction in the future.



SCENE AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING

Despite the cool temperatures, there was a nice turnout for the Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS on November 13th. Lois Davidson gave an informative slide presentation on the key elements of identifying various



species of cacti, and Don Campbell showed photos of the devastation poor lighting can have on cacti with resulting etioliation. Chris Christlieb won the Silent Auction plant, and other members took home drawing plants.



A SAGUARO NEEDS A NEW HOME!

Wayne Ash and his wife Linda bought this Saguaro cactus ten years ago when it was only about 10 inches tall. In the ten years they have owned it, it has grown to 42 inches with the pot.

Wayne says it is getting to be too much work getting it into their garage for the winter—and back out in the spring. They would love for someone to give it a new home.

If you are interested, give Wayne a call at 245-2775. They live off S. Camp Rd behind Wingate School at 2165 Red Cliff Circle.

HERE'S SOME OF THE SILENT AUCTION PLANTS YOU'LL SEE AT THE ADM



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE!



Kenton Seth sends us this photo of *mammillaria wrightii* fruits. You can sense their size by observing he is holding them in the palm of his hand!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:
DECEMBER 2014 - JANUARY 2015



- Dec. 1 *Chinle C&SS Board Mtg -10 am*
2182 Standing Rock Drive
The Redlands off S. Camp Road
- DEC 11 *Chinle C&SS Annual Dinner Mtg*
5:30 pm - 9:30 pm
"Rock Bar & Grille"
Tiara Rado Golf Course
- Jan. 5 *Chinle C&SS Board Mtg -10 am*
2182 Standing Rock Drive
The Redlands off S. Camp Road
- JAN 8 *Regular Meeting of the Chinle C&SS*
Program: *Scenes on the Colorado*
National Monument
Presenter: *Don Campbell*
Location: *Mesa Mall Community Rm*

2014 Chinle Cactus and Succulent Society Board

President: Maryann Benoit
970- 270-3287

Web Master: Tom Burrows
970-462-6767

Treasurer: Loren Benoit
970-254-7471

Vice President: Janet Hassell
970-263-0910

Member at Large: Vacant
Secretary: Vacant

Newsletter Ed: Janet Hassell
970-263-0910

Program Committee:
Don Campbell – 970-245-5088
Lynn Dunham – 970-243-1822

Past President: Bill Hassell
Bill Hassell
970-263-0910

Garden ActivitiesCoordinator:
Lois Davidson
970-242-2879

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 20000-5028
Grand Junction, CO 81502

CHINLE C&SS WEBSITE: www.chinlecactusclub.org

