

# CACTUS COURIER

*Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society*

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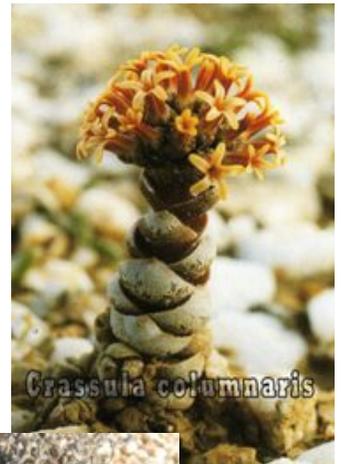
June 2012

The Meeting is the 4th Saturday

**June 23, 2012**

**12 NOON**  
*(Board Meeting at 10 am)*

**Joslyn Senior Center  
724 N. Broadway, Escondido**



## Journey with Stan Yalof

The plant life of western South Africa leads the world in botanical diversity. Wouldn't you expect that such a place would have rich soil, generous rain, and moderate temperatures? Au contraire! Despite fierce temperatures, minimal rainfall, and almost no soil nutrients, its botanical diversity is unparalleled by any other region on earth. This ecoregion is home to more than 5,000 higher plant species, nearly 40% of which are endemic. It harbors one third of the world's 10,000 succulent species including 435 miniature succulents, 630 geophytes, eye-popping flower fields. What are the secrets of these marvels of the plant world? Join me as I meet with many plants and animals...

### The Naming of Crassula

Crassus was inspecting one of his farms with his overseer Stanus. "Looks very good, not only the income but the beauty and organization of the place. I particularly like your rock wall and its garden." "I know you like such things and I've scoured the area for sedums and such." "Perhaps you can do similar things with my other plantations." "That would please me. We've done very well in this farm because of your glass factory. We've been able to beat the market in cucumbers using glass in our cold frames and we've managed to spread the manure early before the tax collector came."<sup>1</sup> "I like your attention to details, Stanus. I didn't become the wealthiest man in the Roman Empire by being careless." "Those spectacles that you put on in the Coliseum must increase your popularity?" "Very hard to afford." And with a straight face, "The lions are eating up the prophets!" After Stanus' laughter subsided, he asked, "It must have been a setback to your plans when Caesar was assassinated?" "I had a lot invested in Caesar, both in hopes and goals. I was to get a military command to round out my career." "A disappointment, for sure!" "Well, other opportunities will present themselves." "Several are trying to fill Caesar's shoes. Pompeii, Mark Anthony, and his upstart nephew, Octavian."

In the distance there was the sound of a horn followed by flashes of light from a ridge. Andreas shielded his eyes, "Hmm, we have visitors coming, two riders, one appears to be a Centurion. They are nearing the gates of the farm." A few minutes later, two horsemen's rode up. They dismounted, one held the reins and the other approached.

"Welcome Octavian. What brings you here? Just happened to be in the neighborhood?" Octavian chuckled, "My dear Crassus, you will never guess! I know you love plants and my friend Dioscorides, at my request, collected these for your garden." He spread a canvas on the ground and on it were about 50 plants. "In your honor I have named their group *Crassula*."

Andreas examined them closely with a sigh of appreciation. "They appear scleleferous so should do well without too much water, and they should add much variety to the rock wall." Crassus added, "...and some of them seem to have a silvery skin. Do they have flowers?" "So I've been told. Dioscorides reported that they have many symmetrical petals with 4 to 5 sepals, and twice as many stamens as petals. The plant with the silver skin supposedly has a fringe of purple petals surrounding a recess cup containing the stamens and a treat of nectar for the pollinators. Insects crawl in and leave with pollen." "A wonder", retorted Crassus. Octavian nodded, "Also, curiously, Dioscorides mentioned that the leaves taste acidic at night but sweeten pleasantly as the sun rises."<sup>2</sup> I have named some of them in good Latin on this parchment. Naming is a form of immortality. I have, perhaps presumptuously, entered these plants in the Hortus Romanus." Stanus picked up the plants, "I'll see that these are propagated in a cold frame." "Very nice of you, Octavian." "Crassus, what else could I give that you don't already have? And well, I apologize for visiting without notice." He gestured to his Centurion to bring up the horses. They mounted, waved, and rode away.

"I like that boy, Stanus." "Because he gave you some plants and named them for you?" "No. I admire a person who attends to details."

Some time later the news came back to Stanus that Crassus, now General Crassus, was killed in battle. He sadly shook his head. "He was a great patron, a great businessman, but not so great a general. My last memory, before he rode to battle, he came by, mounted, in resplendent armor. I asked him, 'How can you cleft the Roman empire in twain?' " He chuckled, "I know that one, 'With a Caesar' " "His last words to me." On the rock wall was a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of the original *Crassulas*. "I wonder if he got my scroll about the Hortus Romanus keeping *Crassula* as a group but removing several into a new grouping, particularly his favorite, 'Silver Skin', now in the group *Argyroderma*. Will in the future Crassus be remembered for *Crassula*? Perhaps. Sic semper mundi."

**Note: The Romans were masters of agriculture, with plantations in Italy, Spain, and North Africa. Romans were familiar with what we call *Crassula*, but by another name.**

<sup>1</sup> In Virgil's Georgics, a rich long poem about care of the land and crops, manuring is given pride of place. The tax collectors, as mentioned above, included the manure piles as assets.

<sup>2</sup> This is now known as Crassulan Acid Metabolism (CAM). The plant pores (stomata) open at night to take in carbon dioxide to form carbonic acid. In daylight, the stomata are closed to conserve water and the ingested carbon dioxide with stored water is photosynthesized into sugars.



## BOARD MEETING • PLANT SALES • BRAG PLANTS • EXCHANGE TABLE



### REFRESHMENTS

**Beverly Ficuciello**

**Gloria Medina**

**This happens when we have meetings out of the Center! *[Your Name Here!!!]***



### June Plant of the Month

#### **“CHOLLAS” (*Cylindropuntias*) – By Erik Gronborg**

A recent article in the San Diego Natural History Museum’s publication by Jon Rebman clarifies the latest status of the former genus *Opuntia*. It has been divided into 5 genera for the North American plants: *Opuntia*, with flat pads, *Cylindropuntia* (the Chollas), *Grusonia* (the low growing club-chollas), and *Nopalea* and *Consolea*, found only in Florida. In addition we have a number of South American genera among them *Austrocylindropuntia* and *Tephrocactus*.

The genus *Cylindropuntia*, the Chollas, has about 35 species; half of them in Mexico. Eleven species grow in California, nine of them in San Diego County.

Chollas are found in a wide range of climatic locations from the low elevation and extreme dry heat of Baja California and Anza Borrego State Park and the lower Sonoran desert around Yuma and Organpipe Cactus National Monument north to Joshua Tree National Park and all the way to the East Sierra mountains past Lone Pine.

We can see chollas in the costal chaparral up past Santa Barbara. Most species are specific to certain elevations, ranging from sea level to the 4000 feet of Joshua Tree to 6500 feet north of Flagstaff in Arizona.

Like all opuntia family members, chollas have areoles with glochids, which are bunches of tiny bristles which get embedded in the skin at the slightest contact, and which will irritate the skin for a long time. The main identifying characteristics of the chollas are the joints, which are round in cross section, as compared to opuntias with flat pads. The diameter of the joints ranges from 1/4 inch of *cylindropuntia ramosissima* to over 2 inches of *c. bigelovii*. Another help in identifying chollas are the shape and size of the tubercles (the pattern of nodules on the joint), and the placement, number, and size of the spines on each tubercle. For example the Teddy Bear cholla has fat short joints noticeably raised tubercles and numerous long golden spines; the Diamond cholla has long thin joints with flat tubercles and a single long spine on each tubercle.

Chollas bloom for weeks in the spring after the winter rains. The flowers, one to two inches wide, range in color from pale green through yellow and orange to red and maroon.

Probably due to their unfriendly nature (jumping cholla is a well-deserved nick name) chollas do not seem to be popular garden plants, though they are easy to grow, and can be rooted from a single joint and even from a flower base.

Literature consulted:

*What has happened to Opuntia?* by Jon P Rebman, San Diego Natural History Museum  
*Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada*, by Stephen Ingram  
*The Native Cacti of California*, by Lyman Benson

The plants were photographed in natural habitats.



**Officers • Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society**

Peter Walkowiak – President

Chris Barkley – Vice-President

Libbi Salvo – Secretary

Vicki Broughton – Treasurer

Ron Chisum – Program Chair

Dick Henderson – Board Member & Garden Chair

Bruce Barry – Board Member & Exchange Table

Don Nelson – Board Member

John Barkley – Board Member & Refreshments

Francis Granger – Board Member & Exchange Table

Stan Yalof – Board Member

Brita Miller – Librarian

Dennis Miller – Raffle & Plant Sales & Membership Co-Chair

Eleanore Hewitt – Newsletter & Membership Co-Chair

**2012 MEETING SCHEDULE**

23 June	Joslyn Center
28 July	Joslyn Center
25 August	to be determined
22 September	Joslyn Center
27 October	San Diego Botanic Garden (Quail)
17 November	Joslyn Center
<b>NOTE !!! 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday !!</b>	
15 December	Joslyn Center



**Long-Tailed Weasel**  
at Alta Vista Gardens



A number of us were lucky enough to see one of the residents of Alta Vista Gardens during the Sale and Picnic. He was a very busy little guy – moving back and forth between gopher burrows and the planter beds. He didn't

seem afraid of us, but kept a close eye on us nevertheless. Annie Morgan looked him up – he’s a Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*), a native to our area. It was a real treat!



## Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

P.O. Box 840, Escondido, CA 92033

### *Membership Application*

I/We wish to join/renew membership in the  
**Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society**

**\$25.00 Single Membership**  
**\$30.00 Dual Membership (Same Address)**

(1/2 price after June 30th)

There is a **\$5 discount** on the fees if you choose to receive your newsletter by email-only. Save money, leave a small carbon footprint, and reduce Eleanore's workload!

**Please print! We have to be able to read it!**

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:

“Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society”  
P.O. Box 840, Escondido, CA 92033



### FREE PLANTS!

A lady named **Marilyn Wilson** (Intrepid Gardener) approached Lorie at the Plant Sale and said that she has many different cacti in the ground that need to be thinned. She indicated that members can come and get them.

Her contact info is:

760-945-2251

[BBBMarilyn@hotmail.com](mailto:BBBMarilyn@hotmail.com)

She lives on Anza Avenue in Vista.



## **Southern California EVENTS**

### June 8 thru July 4

Del Mar Fair, Jimmy Durante Blvd., Del Mar,  
[www.sdfair.com](http://www.sdfair.com)

### June 28 thru July 1

CSSA Annual Show & Sale  
Huntington Library & Botanic Gardens, 1151 Oxford  
Road, San Marino, CA. Sale Friday – Sunday. Show:  
Saturday & Sunday 9:00 til 5:00.

### July 27 & 28

Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Summer  
Show & Sale. First Anaheim Methodist Church, 1000 S  
State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA, 9:00 am til 5:00 pm.  
[www.occss.org](http://www.occss.org)

### August 11 & 12

Inter-City Show & Sale, Los Angeles County Arboretum,  
Arcadia, CA. 9:00 am til 4:30 pm. [www.sgvcss.com](http://www.sgvcss.com)



### **From Lorie:**

#### IT'S LIKE HAVING A BABY....

The genesis of our 2012 spring sale started about 9 months ago when a gentleman named Gordon Schlesinger wanted to find a good home for his recently deceased wife's beloved 60+ year-old succulent collection. When Ron Chisum and I met there to load our vehicles, there was so much that Gordon loaded his truck also and drove from San Diego to my home in north Vista. I spent the next week, cleaning, repotting, and snail baiting all 75 eppies, which was the bulk of the donation. The other plants including many cymbidiums, gastererias, various cacti, and sansaverias.

Thanks to the club members who donated plants and pots and who attended the picnic/sale day at Alta Vista Gardens.

Thanks to the plant preppers and pricers who came to my house the week of the sale to work, share stories, and eat a great lunch: Vicki Broughton, Annie Morgan, and Francis Granger.

Thanks to the following for making the pre-sale prep day run smoothly: Peter Walkowaik, Libbi Salvo and Francis who picked up a large truckload of plants from my house. Meanwhile Leon Lafreniere unloaded plants from Peter's truck, placed and priced accordingly. Stan Yalof sauntered in for a few hours to contribute plants and priced them. He shed a few words of wisdom just like Stan always does... Annie was busily making signs and care sheets for plants and arrived with food mid afternoon. She brought new energy to some very hungry and tired people who had been there most of the day. Don

Nelson pulled up the rear and stayed with the plants until the park closed.

Sale Day: Mike Regan (the ultimate sign man) arrived early on the scene to guard the plants until others arrived. Then he proceeded to put up signage with Vicki's assistance to guide customers to the venue. Beyond that, he stayed the entire day to transport plants to customers' cars, and finally stayed to clean up the area -- breaking down boxes that were not used. Repeated thanks to Ron who brought a truck and trailer load of Altman plants from Oasis. He worked a few days collecting the plants and transported them Saturday morning and returned in the afternoon to collect those plants that did not sell. When he returned in the afternoon, we all enjoyed another round of the icy cold pucker-power punch (the best ever Ron), as we were hot, tired, and parched. Repeated thanks to Vicki, Annie, Libbi, Peter, Francis, and Leon for working the sale day as well as the setup day. Dennis managed the cashier position with such grace, making every customer feel special. Brita relieved us so we could join the picnic and bought a carload full of plants that she said she wasn't going to buy... Gloria Medina and Beverly Ficuciello donated a few plants and helped out at the sale.

Special thanks to our president, Peter for teaching 18 people better ways to grow cacti and succulents with hands-on demonstration of how to make soil and how to transplant cacti without incurring a thorny experience of the dermis. I learned so many things that I can do better and save money! Also, Peter donated many wonderful flats of perfectly grown plants to the sale tables.

As the early birds were getting hungry, Eleanor rolled in with a van filled with goodies including a divine Mediterranean salad and her most coveted flan. Nearly single handedly, she set up for the club's picnic and tore it down leaving the area spotless as if we had never been there. The lunch ambiance was perfect, cool shade under the large pepper trees with a slight breeze, an exchange of recipes, and delighting in scrumptious picnic cuisine. For those who missed it; I am sorry to say you missed a GRAND day at Alta Vista Gardens.

Special thanks to Don Nelson for quickly substituting for Bryan Morse (who couldn't be found) to do the tour of the gardens. Susan and Leon arrived mid afternoon, freshly pressed, cool, calm and collected with drinks and lawn chairs ready with the energy we didn't have to tear down -- tables, plants, and load them in respective vehicles.

And perhaps the most thanks of all goes to our last customer who delighted in purchasing ALL the eppies and bromeliads, ALL the dish gardens, some of the Altman plants and more of the clubs plants. This is exactly the type of sale needed at the end of the day when we were wondering if enough money was made to cover all the expenses -- venue, insurance, taxes, donations, etc. AND end up with a decent profit. We all wondered how it would be possible to get all of the plants into a Prius and a Corolla. It was a miracle and a much needed sale. We hope Mauricio and Yolanda will attend a few meetings to

learn more about the plants they purchased. They recently bought a one acre property in Fallbrook after relocating from Columbia, South America.

And now for the delivery of our baby -- after all expenses, the profit is...

**Thank you, Alan Mahlke, for the wonderful photos!!!**

