

CACTUS COURIER

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

Volume 58, Number 3

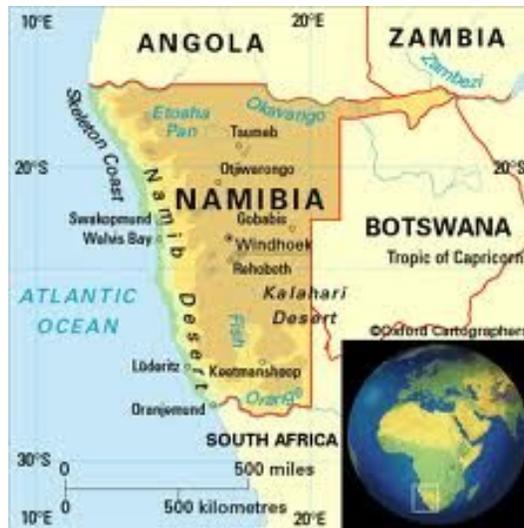
March 2012

The Meeting is the **4th** Saturday

MARCH 24, 2012

Joslyn Senior Center
724 N. Broadway, Escondido

12 NOON
(Board Meeting at 10 am)



“Namibia – Just Add Water”

•• Tim Harvey ••

Mention of the word Namibia often brings to mind the bleak, intimidating skeleton coast, or barren, red sand dunes of the Namib Desert. Less common are thoughts of a verdant and plant-filled wilderness, yet this is currently the case – a result of several consecutive

years of exceptional rainfall. A trip in March/April 2011 forms the basis of this talk, which highlights the effects that a little (or in some instances, a lot!) water can bring about.

Home to many of the plants we love to grow, e.g. most of the pachycaul *Cyphostemma* species, the talk will highlight plants from the summer rainfall region, from the northern border with Angola, south to the Khomas Hochland plateau around the capital Windhoek. En route, the flora, including *Euphorbia*, *Aloe* and numerous bulbs and *stapeliads*, to name but a few, will be illustrated in the majestic scenery that is their habitat. Cultivation of these plants in Southern California will also be discussed.

If you have not heard **Tim Harvey** talk, you might not know that he is originally from England. He moved across the pond in 1992, falling a little short, working Toronto for a couple of years. He completed the trip to California where he went to work in the Biotechnology industry. He was also able to relocate his cactus collection, started 20 years earlier, to a more favorable climate. Escaping with his morals intact in 2006, he became a full-time propagator and pollinator of his favorite plants. He makes frequent appearances at clubs in Southern California, either as a Speaker, or as a Vendor at sales. He has a passionate interest in ex-situ conservation through propagation, and was able to use his scientific training to enliven the micro-propagation facility at the Huntington library. Never able to walk

past a plant in flower without trying to pollinate it, he is a keen hybridizer, with the pachycauls, *Aloe* and bulbs in his collection being defenseless subjects for experimentation.



BOARD MEETING • PLANT SALES • BRAG PLANTS • EXCHANGE TABLE



REFRESHMENTS

Jerre Stafford

Jean O'Daniel

Kathie Hoxsie

Francis Granger

[Your Name Here!!!]



Cactus:

Advanced

- 1st *Neoporteria bicolor*
Peter Walkowiak
- 2nd *Stenocactus multicosatus*
Peter Walkowiak
- 3rd *Stenocactus crisptatus*
Peter Walkowiak



***Brag Plants
February 2012***

Intermediate

- 1st *Mammillaria vetula*
Lorie Johansen



Succulents:

Advanced

- 1st *Veltheimia bracteata*
Ron Chisum
- 2nd *Euphorbia flanaganii* Hybrid
Peter Walkowiak
- 3rd *Crassula* "Morgan's Pink"
John Barkley
- 3rd *Dudleya* Hybrid
Phyllis Flechsig



Intermediate

- 1st Dish Garden (Lovely Table!)
Gloria Medina
- 2nd *Pleiospilus nelii*
Beverly Ficuciello
- 3rd *Aloe* Hybrid
Geraldine Stafford
- 3rd *Sedum nussbaumerianum*
Vicki Martin



February Plant of the Month

"Eriosyce"



Eriosyce used to be a small genus, but it now includes such older, more familiar names as *Neochilenia*, *Neoporteria*, and *Horridocactus* among at least a half-dozen more. One was even named as an *Echinocactus*!

Origin: Coastal Chile, Atacama Desert, into Argentina

Habitat: Grows on rocky outcrops on coastal terraces and cliffs, slopes, often hanging from rocks. Plants in the genus *Eriosyce* are rugged survivors of arid South American deserts and can be found from very arid Mediterranean climate to areas of transition between Mediterranean climate and humid forest. Many occur at high altitudes where they endure big temperature swings and high UV. To deal with the harsh climate, the plants will sit dormant until conditions are again favorable. This environmentally controlled growth leads to a big discrepancy between plants in habitat and those in cultivation even of the same species.

Cultivation: It is a summer grower species. Easy to cultivate but somewhat rot prone if kept in a non-ventilated place. Require a very fast draining drying soil, water regularly in summer, but do not over-water. Needs a full sun exposure or light shade. Good heat tolerance. Hardy to at least -5°C (23°F), but probably can tolerate -10°C (14°F) for brief periods.

Propagation: Usually propagated from Seeds.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE for MARCH 2012

I was very impressed with the turnout for the brag table last month – it must be a record. This is exactly what I was hoping for when I changed the format; I wanted increased participation and that is what we got. Remember, you get at least one point for every plant entered. The plant of the month is *Eriosyce* which includes *Neoporteria*, *Neochliinia* and several other genera but these are the most commonly seen in the trade and it is these three are the ones I will talk about. So if you have these, bring them in to share. Many cacti and succulents are coming into bloom now – we would love to see your plants.

Next month we are having the garden dedication event. This will include tours of the campus flora, a guided tour of the arboretum and succulent garden, so bring your walking shoes. It was going to be a potluck but the Palomar Foundation told us we could not do this because this is a public event. They said they would provide some food and drinks, but I am recommending that you bring a brown bag for your personal consumption. There will be an auction of some garden art and a few nice plants to benefit the club at lunch. Don't forget your hat and sunscreen.

This is a good time of the year to do pruning and shaping of your plants. Plants are starting to wake up now so this is the best time to get some of this done. Re-potting should also be done now for all summer growers. The criteria I use for selecting plants for re-potting are as follows; plant is too large for its pot or dries out too fast and the final reason, it is doing nothing, not thriving, failing to grow. These plants you want to examine the roots to see if they are healthy, rotting or have root mealy bug. Remove all soil and replant in fresh soil if the roots look okay. If there is rot, remove all rotten roots and replant in fresh soil. If it has root mealy soak entire plant in a bucket of soapy water for one hour – dish soap works great. To determine if you have root mealy you should see cottony substance on roots or white residue on inside of pot, replant but do not wash off soap. Remember, plant in moist soil and do not water for several days to allow roots to heal. Always top dress with a fine gravel, this protects the soil and plants grow faster. I mix my own soil, it consists of 60% #3 perlite (you can use pumice instead), 20 % screened decomposed granite (use gravel for top dressing and fines for soil), and 20% aged compost (you can use regular potting soil instead, not peat moss). Wet perlite or pumice first, mix DG and compost together and mix into perlite, when finished you should see very little white. Your soil is now ready to use, if it dries out always re-wet it before using.

Peter Walkowiak, President



Saturday, April 28

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

**Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society
50th Anniversary Celebration!!**

**Open House at the Cactus & Succulent
Garden and meet at the Patron's
Pavilion (in the Arboretum) for lunch.**

**This gathering is in place of the April PCSS
meeting (Don't go to Joslyn!)**

*We can't do a Potluck as per the College, but
maybe we can get away with cookies!*



**The May 19th Plant Sale and Picnic will be at
Alta Vista Gardens**

1270 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista, CA 92084

<http://www.altavistagardens.org/>



Namibian Dunes (*I couldn't resist!*)



Commiphora wildii

We just got word of several wonderful new books coming soon to our local botanical book seller, **Chuck Everson**:

Mar. 10, 2012

Hello, Folks:

"I wish to tell you about 3 exciting books to be released in the next 90 days: "Baja California Plant Field Guide," "Cacti and Succulents for Cold Climates," and "Agaves, Living Sculptures."

If you would like to pre-order these (send no money), just send me an email, telling me which one(s) or all that you want, and I will advise you when they arrive, and you can then send me an official order."

Thank you.

Chuck Everson, Bookseller
"The Cactus Bookstore"

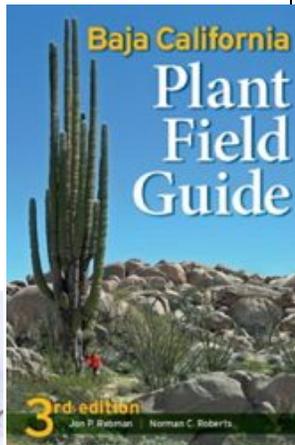
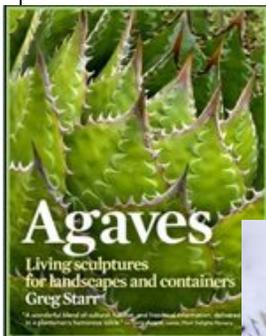
1444 E. Taylor St.,
Vista, CA 92084-3308 USA

email: rbgdns@aol.com

Phone: 760-758-4290 (Tuesdays and Fridays only)

Fax: 24 hours a day: 760-945-8934

Website: www.cactusbookstore.com



The Cactus Explorers Club (a group set up to encourage interest in such things as unusual plants, unusual places, historical topics, etc.) posted the first issues of the free journal Cactus Explorer. Yes, the group is out of Great Britain, but the love of the plants *is* world-wide.

They are available to download:

<http://www.cactusexplorers.org.uk/journal1.htm>

"The New Medium"

(Excerpt from the Introduction to the First Issue)

"Cacti and Succulents have fascinated gardeners and professional botanists ever since they were first discovered. Those of us who have enjoyed the cultivation and study of

these plants over many years have seen dramatic changes to our hobby, none more so than the arrival of the World Wide Web. Now we have access to a wealth of information and even the possibility to buy plants, seeds and books without leaving our home. The Web has enabled people with a shared minority interest like ours to communicate much more easily, even if we speak different languages, by using the on-line translation tools.

Traditional cactus and succulent societies have seen a decline, both in their membership, and in the number of people attending their meetings. The inability of these societies to attract younger members has also been a cause for concern. There has been much speculation about the reasons for these trends but I believe the digital age provides a possible remedy.

Encouraged by the success of the first specialist on-line journals, I have decided that it is time to offer you one with a broader scope, based on my experience organizing the Cactus Explorers Club for the last 6 years. I really hope that I shall get your support, not only by downloading it and reading it, but also by contributing material."

(Graham Charles, Editor)



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

24 March Joslyn Center

28 April Palomar College

19 May Alta Vista Gardens, Vista

NOTE!!! 3rd Saturday!!

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

NOTE!!! 3rd Saturday!!

15 December Joslyn Center

NOTE!!! 3rd Saturday!!



Out-of-town member **Pete Gammarano** had an article in the Jan/Feb issue of "To the Point" from the CSSA about a flat of *Pachycereus pringlei* seedlings he bought back in 1981. Two of them were planted in his old yard in Ramona, and the rest were sold as seedlings – except one he took up to Seattle in 1990 still in its pot. He sent me recent pictures of the plants: his accidental experiment! Clearly they prefer the ground...



Yes, the Club has had to raise the dues a little this year. I looked over the records, and it is the first time in nearly 6 years.

The fees for the hall have increased – only to be expected – and other expenses are climbing as well. In order to help with expenses, we have decided to institute a \$5 discount for members accepting an email-only copy of the "Cactus Courier." Save a tree!

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



SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY



Susan Krzywicki on

Fitting California Natives into California-Style Gardens

April 9, 2012, 6 pm at Del Mar Fairgrounds, Surfside Race Place

On Monday, April 9, 2012 the San Diego Horticultural Society welcomes a leading authority on California native plants, **Susan Krzywicki**. Susan will discuss *Fitting California Natives into California-Style Gardens*. California native plants have an exciting place in our gardens if we understand which plants perform well in which conditions. They bring a sense of heritage and they look to the future. They offer an ecologically sound way of blending the requirements for a highly cultivated place with a need to conserve resources and minimize exposure to chemicals.

<http://www.sandiegohorticulturalsociety.org/>

Cactus may give farmers a cure for poisoned crop land

By Mark Grossi, The Fresno Bee



FRESNO ---- The prickly pear cactus may not sound like a trendy cash crop, but it could become a phenomenon among farmers on the arid west side of California's San Joaquin Valley.

The cactus can grow in the west-side's salty soils, drink briny water and live just fine in very dry times. But the real attraction: As it grows, the cactus slowly absorbs and cleans up a chemical villain in the soil – selenium.

Selenium in irrigation drainage widely killed and maimed wildlife during the 1980s at Kesterson Reservoir on the Valley's west side. Before that, selenium was known only as an essential natural element in animals and people – in small doses.

Then The Bee broke the story about mega-doses of selenium causing the disaster and suddenly, the New York Times and “60 Minutes” were on the case. West-side agriculture has been scrambling for a cleanup ever since.

No silver bullet has been found yet, partly because the problem is more than just selenium. West side land also is slowly being poisoned by salts from irrigation water that can't be drained away.

But the stakes are too high to give up, farmers say. It's about saving a billion-dollar farm belt nearly half the size of Yosemite National Park.

The prickly pear cactus might help with the selenium part of the problem, scientists say.

The biggest challenge probably would be marketing the crop, which is not in high demand in California but might become a hot item in other countries.

Working with federal researchers, farmer John Diener is growing the cactus on 15 acres at his west-side Red Rock Ranch near Five Points. He has been experimenting for years on ways to remove soil contaminants and dispose of salty irrigation drainage.

“Some people would rather retire this land rather than working on the problem,” Diener said. “I think that's ignoring the reality of the world's need for crops we grow.”

The west side grows 250 different crops, including almonds, garlic, tomatoes, cotton, alfalfa and grain.

Cactus fruit is billed as a health food, sometimes used in fruit drinks. It's also used in jam and marmalade. Cactus has been shown to help protect the nervous system and treat gastritis, arteriosclerosis and diabetes.

Cactus fortified with selenium from west-side soil might become a more attractive product in Europe, Australia, India and China, where selenium is sometimes lacking in people's diets, scientists say.

Cactus would be a gentle way to clean up the soil, says Gary Banuelos, a federal plant and soil scientist at the Agriculture Research Service in Parlier, although it would take many years to make a difference.

Because it takes in selenium very slowly, the plant would not be toxic to birds and other animals.

Banuelos has experimented extensively with cactus in Parlier, using soil from the Valley's west side. He is growing a spineless variety that is easier to handle.

“The spineless cactus has only tiny spines that float through the air, land on your skin and make you itch,” he said. “It grows with a minimal amount of water. That's what you really need on the west side of the Valley.”

West-siders are desert farmers, working on land high in natural salts, boron, selenium and other mineral debris ---- leftovers in the soil from an ancient sea.

In addition, ocean salt rides in with irrigation water sent to the west side in canals from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

Perhaps the toughest part of the west-side's problem: Layers of west-side clay beneath the ground's surface stop used irrigation water from seeping into the deep underground. The trapped water builds up toward crop roots, carrying a tide of concentrated salt. Sooner or later, the land is poisoned.

Thousands of west-side acres have this problem. Desert agriculture around the globe has encountered it, too.

In the mid-1990s, Diener set up his own 640-acre experimental plot of land to discover ways of coping with the problem. He grows high-value crops, such as spinach. After irrigating with fresh water, he captures the salty drainage and reuses it on salt-tolerant plants, such as alfalfa and Jose tall wheatgrass.

Now, he hopes to use the saltier drainage from the alfalfa and grass on cactus. After the cactus irrigation, he would capture the remaining drainage and harvest the salt for disposal or perhaps as a product to sell. The remaining drainage water would be sent through sprinklers over a gravel bed to evaporate.

“If we added cactus into our program, it would reduce the volume of brine at the end,” he said. “It's just easier to deal with a lower volume of brine.”

(c)2012 The Fresno Bee (Fresno, Calif.)



PLANT SALE

Sponsored by
**Palomar Cactus &
Succulent Society**

**Saturday May 19
10am – 4pm**



10 AM

**Basics of Growing
Succulents Lecture
by Peter Walkowiak,
President, PCSS**

12:30 PM

**Tour of Garden and
Art by Bryan Morse,
President/CEO of
Alta Vista Gardens**

**Alta Vista Gardens
1270 Vale Terrace Drive
Vista, CA 92084**

On-line directions to Alta Vista Gardens at
<http://www.altavistagardens.org/html/directions.html>

May 19 –PCSS Sale at Alta Vista Gardens- 1270 Vale Terrace Drive Vista CA 92084

Saturday, May 19 10:00 a.m. – 4:00

- From Route 78 take the **Vista Village Drive** exit and travel **North**.
- Vista village Drive changes name to East Vista Way.
- Turn right on Vale Terrace Drive.
- Continue past the Main Entrance and **turn left at the Second Entrance to Brengle Terrace Park**, continue past the Senior Center and follow to the **TOP of the hill**.
- Turn left at **the 'Welcome, Alta Vista Gardens' sign** and left again. Follow the road around towards the Garden House Headquarters. Sales areas will be visible

