

# CACTUS COURIER

*Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society*

Volume 57, Number 8

August 2011

The Meeting is the **4th** Saturday

**AUGUST 27, 2011**

**San Diego Botanic Garden**  
230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas, CA

formerly known as...

***Quail Botanical Gardens***  
Ecke Building (south of the parking lot)

**Noon "ish"**

**For a Wonderful Potluck Lunch!!!**



(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

photo by Debra Lee Baldwin



photo by John Tashjian

***"Quail Botanical Gardens"***  
*(I just can't keep from calling it Quail Gardens!)*



Summer is here with a vengeance! The temperature is soaring in Escondido and parts east! So wend your way west towards lovely Encinitas where you can count on it being several degrees cooler near the ocean. (It could still be pretty warm, so don't forget your hat and your sunscreen.)

We are most fortunate to be able to meet again at the **Quail Botanical Gardens** – OK, OK... **San Diego Botanic Garden**...for our summer meeting. This excellent facility features desert gardens, rare bamboo groves, a tropical rainforest, California native plants, Mediterranean climate landscapes, and a subtropical fruit garden. As part of our arrangements, we will be welcome to visit throughout the Gardens. Please take some time to enjoy this wonderful place. And feel free to bring a friend! **The people at the kiosk will be checking the membership list.**

We are planning one of our excellent **Potluck Lunches**, so please bring a dish to share: appetizers, salads, main dishes, desserts, etc... *(there might even be a flan!)* I know this bunch – I expect there will be lots of food, so you better bring guests! The Club will provide the drinks and tableware.

**NO Board Meeting • Brag Plants • Plant-of-the-Month  
or Exchange Table**  
**...It's TOO Hot in Escondido... But it's lovely on the Coast!!! ;-)**

Driving directions to San Diego Botanic Garden aka Quail Botanical Gardens starting at Joslyn Senior Center, 724 N Broadway, Escondido via West San Marcos Blvd and Olivenhain Rd. *(I used Google Maps.)*

16 miles

- Head **north** on N Broadway toward E Mission Ave
- Turn **left (west)** onto State Route 78
- Take exit 12 for San Marcos Blvd
- Turn **left** at W San Marcos Blvd
- Turn **left (west)** at S Rancho Santa Fe Rd
- Continue west onto Olivenhain Rd
- Continue west onto Leucadia Blvd
- Turn **left (south)** at Quail Gardens Dr
- Turn **right (west)** at the Ecke Ranch Rd at the Garden sign:

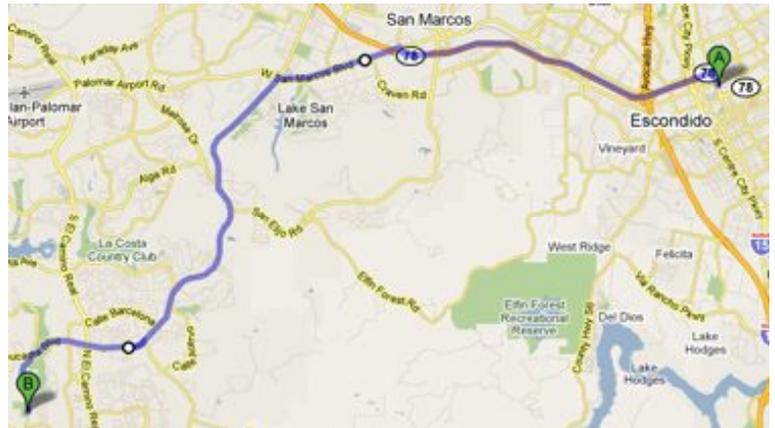




photo by Katie Denham



**2011 MEETING SCHEDULE**

**27 August SD Botanic Gdn (Quail)**  
 27 September Joslyn Center  
 22 October **Plant Show & Sale at SD Botanic**  
 19 November Joslyn Center  
**NOTE!!! 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday !!**  
 17 December Joslyn Center  
**NOTE!!! 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday !!**

**Officers • Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society**

**Vicki Broughton – President**

**Peter Walkowiak – Vice-President**

**Libbi Salvo – Secretary**

**Dennis Miller – Treasurer & Membership Co-Chair**

**Bruce Barry – Board Member**

**Dick Henderson – Board Member & Garden Chair**

**Chris Barkley – Board Member**

**John Barkley – Board Member**

**Don Nelson – Board Member**

**Brita Miller – Librarian**

**Ron Chisum – Refreshments & Speakers**

**Eleanore Hewitt – Newsletter & Membership Co-Chair**



**Brag Plants**  
**July 2011**



**Cactus:**



- 1<sup>st</sup> *Mammillaria mazatlanensis*  
Peter Walkowiak
- 2<sup>nd</sup> *Lobivia pectinifera* Crest  
Peter Walkowiak
- 3<sup>rd</sup> *Lobivia aracanacantha*  
Peter Walkowiak



**Succulents:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> *Uncarina roeoesliana*  
Peter Walkowiak
- 2<sup>nd</sup> *Sarcocaulon* (?)  
Peter Tashjian
- 3<sup>rd</sup> *Aloe KG Hybrid* "Red Ridge"  
Peter Walkowiak



**Palomar Cactus &  
Succulent Society**  
**Plant Show and Sale**  
**Sat. Oct 22 9 - 5**  
**Sun. Oct 23 10 - 4**



**Plant Show & Sale at San Diego Botanic Garden, Encinitas – formerly Quail Botanical Gardens**

**Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Set Up in the Hall**

**Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 9 am to 5 pm** **Annual Members' Plant Show – Open Judging from Noon to 3 pm**  
Chairperson Peter Walkowiak promises an outstanding Show and Sale this year. The public will be able to follow along as the judges comment on entries and make their selection in the 7 divisions of Cacti and Succulents for both Novice and Advanced participants. The judges will also announce the Best Cactus, Best Succulent, and Best in Show winners. These selections will be able to be viewed on Sunday as well.

**Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 10 am to 4 pm** **Saturday & Sunday Plant Sale**

Vendors of plants and pottery will be selling from 9-5 Saturday and 10-4 Sunday. The plant vendors will have specimens for collectors as well as beginners.

**Members of PCSS and affiliated clubs may show their membership cards for entry to the Garden.**

Questions: email [pcss@palomar.edu](mailto:pcss@palomar.edu)

**Now is a good time to start working on you plants for the Show! Good grooming will pay off in October!**



## A Bolt Out of the Blue...

### Blue senecio's color complements other succulents

**The plants can be grown from cuttings and don't need a lot of water.**

By Debra Lee Baldwin  
(reprinted with permission)

To some, the plant may look like a tray of blue French fries.

Dave Bernstein, owner of California Nursery Specialties in Reseda, describes the ground cover as “the velvet on which to set your garden's jewelry.”

To the rest of us, it's the succulent we're seeing everywhere, and with good reason. Though exotic-looking, blue senecio (*Senecio mandraliscae*) is easy to grow. The juicy-leaved plant needs significantly less water than a lawn or a flowerbed. It does well on slopes and is lovely planted in drifts.

Perhaps best of all, you don't even have to buy it. Obtain cuttings from a friend or neighbor, and you can start new plants in nursery flats. Roots will form in six to eight weeks.

For anyone who's familiar with blue senecio and is sold on its virtues, the question becomes: What to plant with it?

Bernstein suggests alternating blue senecio with green-leaved ice plants for waves of color.

”You also might combine it with other succulents

that have blue in their leaves, like striped agaves,” says Bernstein. Another approach is to contrast blue senecio with red-leaved aloes, lavender 'Afterglow' echeverias, orange pencil plant (*Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Sticks on Fire'), a variegated plant commonly called elephant food or elephant bush (*Portulacaria afra* 'Variegata') or the burgundy-leaved aeonium called 'Zwartkop.'

Other types of plants besides succulents can look dramatic with blue senecio and can do well as long as they have similar requirements for sun, water and other cultivation requirements. Companion plantings include ivy geranium; parrot's beak, which has bright orange blooms; California poppy; and gazania.

### More cultivation tips:

**Sun:** Provide full sun along the coast, partial shade inland, especially on hot summer days. Blue senecio will grow in shade but tends to elongate as it seeks light.

**Soil:** Plant in loose soil. If you have heavy clay, add 30% pumice or perlite to improve drainage. If you're planting a large area, rototill the soil.

**Spacing:** For best coverage, install small, rooted plants about 4 inches apart. Nurseries sell *Senecio mandraliscae* in flats (49 rooted cuttings) for about \$25. Bernstein sells 4-inch pots containing three to five established plants, which can be pulled apart, for \$4.

**Cuttings:** Cut stems 4 to 6 inches from the tip and set them aside for a few days until the raw tissue heals. Then insert cuttings into a nursery flat filled with potting soil and place in bright shade. Keep the soil moist. (It's possible to plant cuttings directly into garden soil, but you run a higher risk of sun scorch.)

**Trim:** Pinch back plants to encourage fullness. Because old leaves fall off and new ones grow at the ends of the stems, plants become lanky unless made to branch. Cut back a couple of inches of tender new growth and discard the pieces, or wait until the stems are longer and prune farther down (yielding cuttings). As the plant grows, keep pinching back so branches form more branches.

**Water:** Blue senecio needs regular watering until it's established, then you can cut back. In summer, water only during the cool part of the day because heat-stressed senecio may rot when wet. In winter, you can keep it on the dry side. If not plump with water, the plant is hardy to 15 degrees.

**Flowers:** They're small and daisy-like, appearing atop slender stalks in spring. When dry, the blooms resemble dandelions and can make the plant look untidy, so just snip them off. After all, the plant is grown for its foliage.

*Baldwin is the author of “Designing With Succulents.”*



## The Garden is looking great!

Give Dick Henderson a call and come out to see it soon. He's there every day!

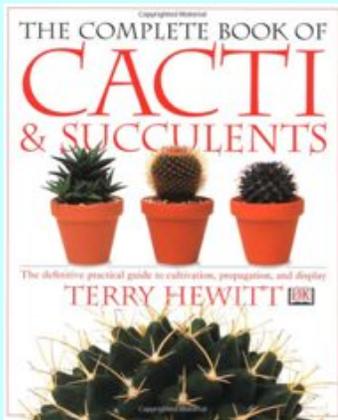
He says the Trichocereus and Dasylerion are in bloom...

760-480-4181



Susan LaFreniere has donated a new book to the Club Library:

### “The Complete Book of Cacti & Succulents” by Terry Hewitt



Check it out in September (*no library at Quail!*)



Your Friendly Editor subscribes to a free online site called **Dirt du Jour** at: [www.dirtdujour.com](http://www.dirtdujour.com). You will find many interesting little tidbits there.

One that caught my attention in June that had to do with treating mildew and other fungus seemed quite useful, and easy to try.

[http://www.dirtdujour.com/item/got\\_fungus/](http://www.dirtdujour.com/item/got_fungus/)

June 24, 2011



### Got fungus?

This year's buzz about powdery mildew and other fungus has some gardeners reaching for the milk bottle. And not just the Jerry Baker-types either. Even the wine grape industry is looking into milk as a safe solution to control fungi among [*the vines*] and some kinds of blight. Early adopters are saying milk works even better than chemical fungicides, even though science is not sure why.

Mix 1 part of any kind of milk to 9 parts water and spray on your plants. More milk in the ratio is NOT better and makes a mess.

Milk can't cure a bad case of existing fungus, but it is an excellent prevention solution. So clean up a badly infected plant first, then spray once a week.



At the July meeting, Peter Walkowiak told us he's been getting outstanding results since he's started to **acidify the water** he uses on all his plants. Apparently the *Pachypodiums* are especially grateful.

The water we use in our gardens tends to be alkaline. Municipal water systems often buffer the water to a pH as high as 8.0 to help our pipes last longer. That's great for the pipes, but can be hard on our plants.

Soil pH affects the overall conditions for root growth. It determines the availability of some elements required for plant growth, as well as the availability of others that are actively toxic to plants. Nutrients such as zinc and iron have limited availability when soil pH is above 7.5. Soil is acidified (the pH is lowered) to increase the amount of iron, zinc, and other nutrients available for plant growth.

If I got it right, Peter uses 2 tablespoons of white vinegar per gallon of water. He has set up a siphon arrangement. I'll get more details soon.