

CACTUS COURIER

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society
The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

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April 2020

A VIRTUAL VISIT TO

Baja California

BY GUEST SPEAKER DEAN KARRAS

This February, Megan and I set out for a much-anticipated field expedition to Baja California (Mexico). Our timing couldn't have been better. Our trek was nothing but blue skies and sun, but the plants we sought had just soaked up a generous season's worth of rain and the desert floor was carpeted with abundant wildflowers. This was my first time visiting Mexico despite my long-time fascination with its desert flora and having lived in a border state all 31 years of my life. Equipped with Megan's fluency in Spanish, some field ID books, a budget DSLR we had just purchased for the occasion, and a 2-door Honda Civic with 145,000 miles, off we went.

Our ambitious travel plans had us staying in a different locale every night and traversing over 1,000 miles in just shy of a week. As soon as we passed south of Ensenada we were greeted with long stretches of open desert and only small towns few and far between — many without so much as a gas station.

Although Highway 1 was well-maintained, we ventured onto dirt roads of questionable quality that led us to places so remote we spent hours exploring alien landscapes without encountering so much as another human soul.

Having spent 20 years of my life in Phoenix, Arizona, I will always have a profound respect for Saguaro, giants of the Sonoran Desert. But I was floored when I saw the magnitude of the Cardóns, some pushing 40+ feet tall! The vaguely conical, but more frequently grotesque and frazzle-topped Boojums, beautiful on their own, were jaw-dropping when seen *en masse*. Thus, the highlight of the trip for us was the area around Cataviña. Although the density and size of these giants were significantly lower in the Vizcaíno Desert, I cherished the only moments I've ever spent in a coastal fog desert ecosystem: it was incredible to me to see Tillandsias and other epiphytes (including lichen) growing all over the cacti and pachycauls in an otherwise extremely dry and harsh desert. They seemed to have a particular affinity for the gorgeous, peeling-barked Palo Adan (*Fouquieria diguetii*), some of which were in bloom, many sheltering *Mammillaria dioica* (which was ubiquitous) in the shade of their sparse

(cont. on pg. 2)

**Next Meeting
May Meeting Cancelled**

www.palomarcactus.org

We're on Facebook!

Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society Group
is the location for YOU to post your photos
of plants, gardens, ask for ID, etc.

Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society
is for Admin only to post notices, etc.

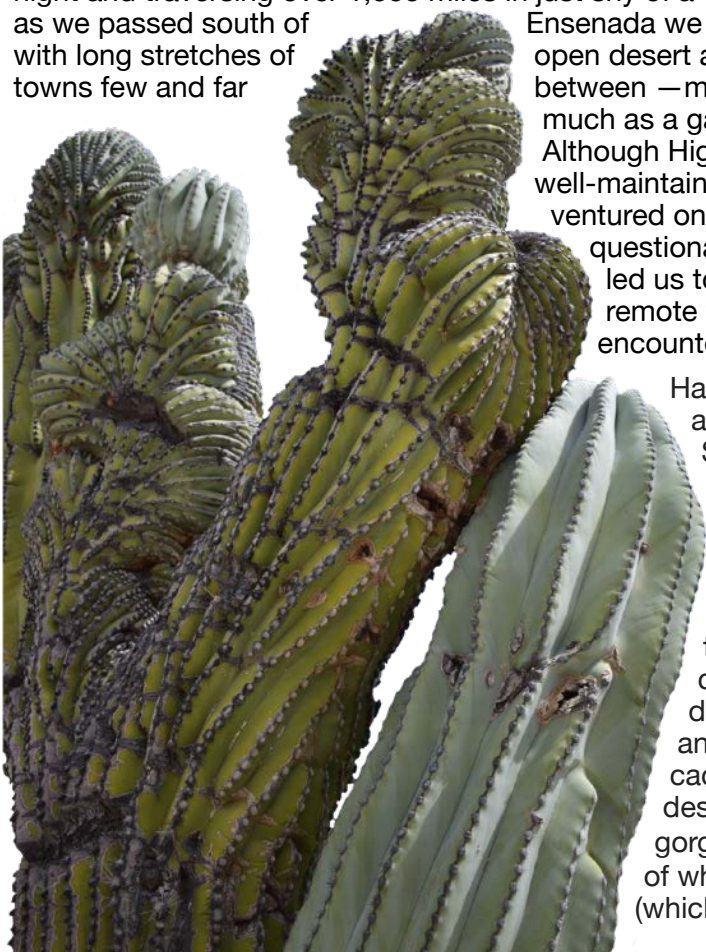
We're on Instagram as

Palomar.cactus.succulent.org

Questions???

email: info@PalomarCactus.org

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Pachycereus pringlei cristata
Photo by Dean Karras

(cont. from pg. 2)

branches. My wildflower ID skills are mediocre at best, but we saw many species of lupine, sand verbena, the dwarf Mexican subspecies of the beloved California poppy, and others far beyond my current field identification skills.

Another highlight for us was whale-watching in the Ojo de Liebre Laguna near Guerrero Negro, right on the border between Baja Norte and Baja Sur. Not only did we see California Gray Whales, but they came close enough to our boat that we were able to pet them! The seafaring birds, including osprey hunting fish with their swift dive-bombs, were also magnificent and numerous. Whale-watching was a convenient way for me to sell my wildlife biologist fiancée on the trip in the first place, although we both left with an increased appreciation of flora and fauna alike.



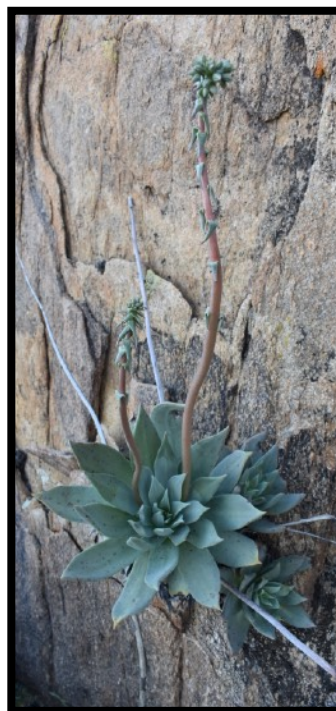
Megan & Brahea armata Photo by Dean Karras



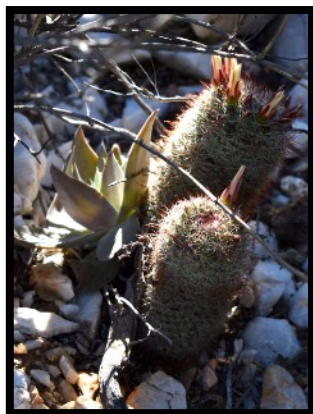
Hesperoyucca peninsularis - foreground
Ferocactus, chollas, boojums, & cardons - background
Photo by Dean Karras

*We can't wait to see what we will discover
in this breathtaking landscape next year!*

The humble people of Baja were very hospitable (Megan's command of Spanish helped tremendously), and the food was out of this world. Lobster burritos (yes, you read that correctly) are a new favorite of mine. It's not for everyone, but our "fast-and-furious" see-as-much-as-we-possibly-can from dawn to dusk, then sleep and do it all over again style of sightseeing-oriented vacationing already has us talking about making this an annual pre-spring pilgrimage.



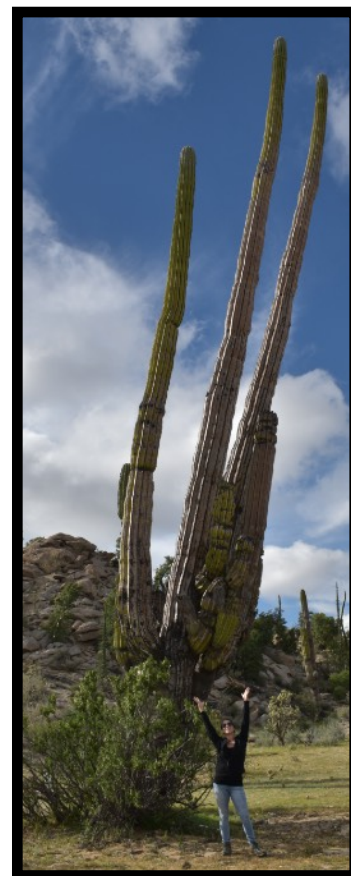
Dudleya lanceolata
Photo by Dean Karras



Dudleya lanceolata &
Mammillaria Dioica
Photo by Dean Karras



Dudleya pulverenta
Photo by Dean Karras



Megan & Pachycereus pringlei
Photo by Dean Karras



JOURNEY TO *Kelso Depot*

BY LORIE JOHANSEN

The week before our ski trip we thoroughly debated whether it was wise to go. All the ski resorts were open and assured us that skiing was a healthy outdoor exercise and there were only four confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the entire state of Utah.

We stopped in Mesquite for the night, got online to check snow conditions and weather. Press release: "Park City ski resort employee tests positive. Park City ski resort closed." Within the hour all the ski resorts closed. We were stunned. Reality hit home.

The next day, we decided to take a different route, attempting to make something out of our cancelled trip. Our drive through the Mojave National Preserve took us to Kelso Depot which was built in 1924. It housed a train station, ticket and telegraph office, restaurant, reading room, and rooms for the railroad employees. Why was there a railroad town here in the middle of nowhere? The Cima Grade was too steep and too long for locomotives to pull a train up without assistance. "Helper engines" provided extra power which required a "helper station" including a roundhouse, a wye track for turning around, fuel and plenty of water for making steam. The abundant water came from springs in the Providence Mountains and nine water wells. The people who lived there were tough, according to the testimony of a Kelso resident, "My grandfather made a good living with his business, but with the remoteness of the town, one was considered rich or poor. It was a 71-mile drive on a rough road to a paved highway. Shopping was done by mail order. The trains brought fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products."

*When life resumes,
please enjoy a
beautiful drive to
see Kelso Depot.*



Photos by Lorie Johansen

Kelso's population crashed after WWII, due to reduced rail traffic, and the increasing use of powerful new diesel engines that didn't require servicing at Kelso. The Depot became obsolete and was closed in 1985, and Pacific Union planned to raze the building. Luckily, concerned citizens intervened and the building was spared. It was beautifully renovated and reopened as a National Park Service Center in 2005.

Upon departure, I decided to use the public restroom there. I was silently singing "Happy Birthday" twice during a thorough hand-washing ritual when the woman next to me sneezed...I was taken aback and glared at her. She said, "I'm healthy." I challenged her, "Have you been tested?"



Kelso Depot Photo by Lorie Johansen

That was our last outing and our quarantine started on the 15th, four days before California's "Stay Home" mandate began on the 19th. Throughout the 14 days of potential incubation, I was unnerved whenever I had the slightest cough or hint of a sore throat. Thankfully, I feel healthy and we have neighbors who will shop for us.



Lorie Johansen at Kelso Depot

VIRTUAL Brag Plants



Trichocereus
Photo by Deborah Pearson



Echinopsis
Photo by Sherman Blench



Photo by Leon & Susan LaFreniere



Photo by Lorie Johansen



Tricholobivia hybrid
Photo by Sherman Blench



Trichocereus grandiflorus
Photo by Deborah Pearson



Discocactus flagelliformis
Photo by Ron Chisum



Albuca "Augrabies Hills"
Photo by Lori Johansen



Opuntia
Photo by Lori Johansen



Ferobergia
Photo by Ron Chisum



Trichocereus grandiflorus
Photo by Deborah Pearson



Sedum morganianum
Photo by Mary Singer

VIRTUAL *Garden Brags*



Aloe & Aeonium Photo by Leon & Susan LaFreniere



Freesias, Babianas and Ipheions Photo by Erik Gronborg



*Euphorbia mauritanica & Dasylirion quadrangulare
Photo by John Tashjian*



Aloe & Agave Photo by Leon & Susan LaFreniere



Senecio radicans & Echeveria lilacina Photo by Monica Mosack

LARGE AGAVES *Plant of the Month*



Agave colorata
Photo by Leon & Susan LaFreniere



Agave attenuata Photo by Monica Mosack



Agave bovicornuta Photo by Annie Morgan



Agave geminiflora Photo by Annie Morgan



Agave murpheyi variegated
Photo by Leon & Susan



Agave salmiana v. ferox &
Ron Chisum in appropriate attire



Agave guingola stealing nutrients
from avocado tree & Ron Chisum



Agave titanota Philip Ortega
Photo by Leon & Susan

MEMBER Container Gardens



Echeverias, Sedum & Rhipsalis
Photo by Monica Mosack



Alstroemerias, Pelargoniums & Aeoniums
Photo by Lorie Johansen



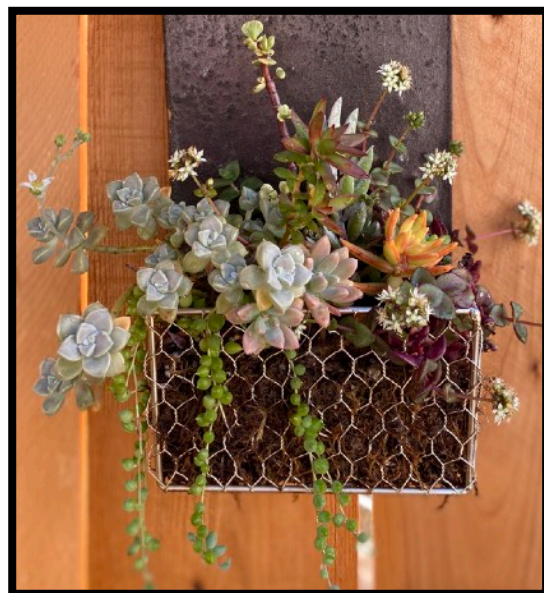
Echeverias, Sedum & Jade
Photo by Monica Mosack



Graptopetalia Fred Ives, Pachyveria glauca & Graptopetalum paraguayense
Photo by Mary Singer



Stapelia & Sedum dasyphyllum
Photo by Jamaye Despaigne



Senecio rowleyanus - String of Pearls, Crassula pellucida - Calico Kitten, Portulacaria afra - Elephant Bush, Graptopetalum paraguayense - Ghost Plant, Graptosedum - Darley Sunshine, Sedum adolphii - Golden Sedum, Sedum adolphii - Firestorm & Senecio haworthii
Photo by Jamaye Despaigne

VIRTUAL *Potluck*

Broccoli Slaw

Contributed by Nancy Dunn

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian Dressing
- 2 Bunches of scallions, chopped
- 3 pkg. Broccoli slaw
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup unsalted peanuts
- 1 cup coriander/cilantro leaves, roughly chopped
- 1 or 2 pkgs. crushed ramen noodles

Instructions

1. Mix first three ingredients together, then add remaining ingredients, not including ramen. Better to make this the day before serving.
2. Add 1 or 2 pkgs. crushed ramen noodles (raw) when ready to serve.



Cowboy Rice Salad

Contributed by Nancy Dunn*

A Southwestern rice salad filled with bright zesty flavors and tossed with a lime dressing, Made with brown rice for extra flavor, and a hint of spice flavor in the dressing to drive home the SouthWestern flavors! Serves 8 - 10 as a side, 4 - 6 as a main.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups brown rice
- 2 3/4 cups water
- Dressing:
 - 1 1/3 cup lime juice, plus more to taste
 - 1/2 cup olive oil
 - 1 1/2 tbsp honey
 - 1/2 tsp chipotle powder (sub with smoked paprika + cayenne pepper)
 - 1/2 tsp cumin powder
 - 1/2 tsp garlic powder (or 1 garlic clove, minced)
 - 3/4 tsp salt
 - Black Pepper

Salad:

- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 14 oz corn kernels, drained
- 1 14 oz black beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 tomatoes, watery seeds removed then diced
- 1 cup coriander/cilantro leaves, roughly chopped

Instructions

1. Place rice and water into a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Place lid on. When water starts simmering, turn down to low and simmer for 15 minutes until water has evaporated and rice is firm/tender cooked. Remove saucepan (lid on) from stove, stand for 10 minutes, fluff with fork. Cool to room temperature (transfer to large bowl and refrigerate to speed up process).
2. Place dressing ingredients in a jar, shake. Taste test, adjust to your taste.
3. Place salad ingredients and rice in a bowl. Drizzle with dressing. Toss, then serve. Fantastic served straight away and even the next day!

*Original post by: Nagi

(cont. on pg. 9)

(cont. from pg. 8)

VIRTUAL *Potluck*

Cottage Cheese and Fruit Salad

Contributed by Richard Miller

Ingredients

- 2 16 oz tubs Cottage Cheese (2%)
- 1 8 oz tub Cool Whip (I prefer regular vs the lite)
- 2 11 oz cans mandarin oranges
- 1 20 oz can crushed pineapple
- 1 6 oz pkg. Orange Jell-o (don't use unsweetened)
- 1 cup chopped pecans (you can also use walnuts)

Directions

1. Drain the crushed pineapple and mandarin oranges
2. Mix cottage cheese, cool whip and jello powder.
3. Mix in crushed pineapple, mandarin oranges and pecan or walnut pieces.
4. Cool in refrigerator

Notes

- I use Orange Jell-o because of the mandarin oranges but you can probably substitute any flavor of Jell-o and different fruit.
- If I am taking the salad to a function, I either delete the pecan or walnut pieces, or place a sign in front of the dish in case people might be allergic to nuts.
- Leftover salad freezes very well.

Crispy Chicken Spice Mix

Contributed by Annie Morgan

Ingredients

- salt
- pepper
- garlic powder
- onion powder
- oregano
- thyme
- smokey paprika x 3

Instructions

1. For 4 thighs or 2 breasts mix together 1/2 tsp of each spice and 1+ tsp of the smokey paprika.
2. Sprinkle it evenly on the skin and bake as usually - approx. 375 for 50 minutes depending on your oven and the size of the pieces.

Notes

This mix creates a crispy and delicious skin on perfectly cooked juicy chicken. We like it so much that I make large batches of 4 tsp of each spice and 3+X the paprika and put it in an empty spice jar so I always have it on hand. Use a table knife to mix the spices once they're in the jar.

Pea Salad with Balsamic Vinegar

Contributed by Annie Morgan*

Ingredients

- 1 16 oz pkg. frozen green peas - thawed
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds - toasted
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2+ tbsps balsamic vinegar (white preferred – from Trader Joes)
- black pepper to taste

Directions

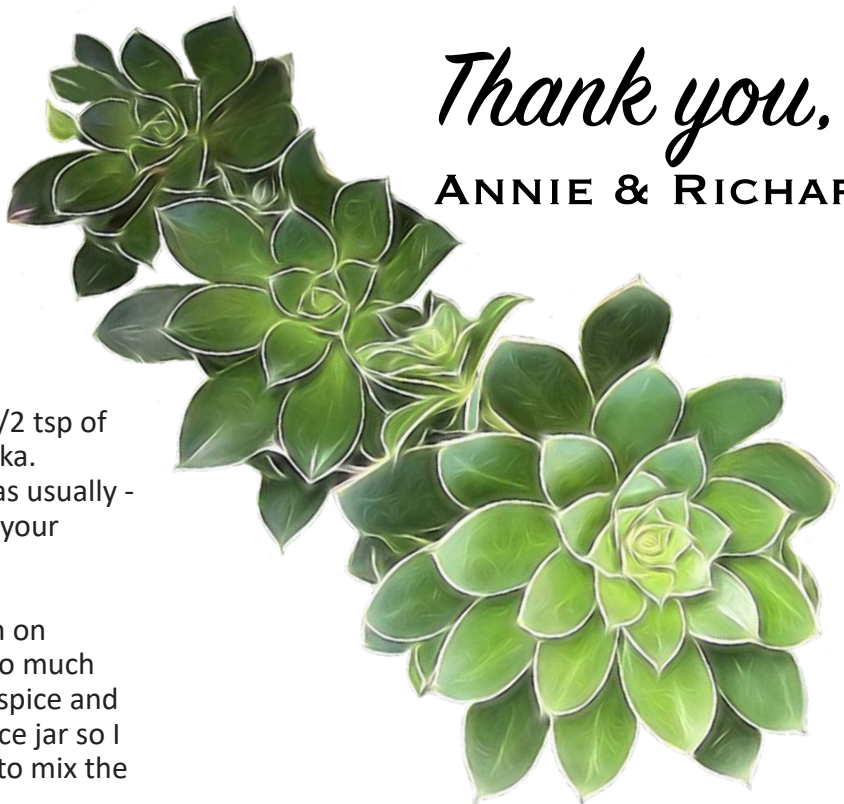
1. In a large bowl, stir peas, onions, feta cheese, and mayonnaise.
2. Mix in balsamic vinegar, and season with pepper.
3. Add toasted almonds.
4. Cover and chill before serving.

Notes

I like to make this the night before I need it as it tastes better if it sits overnight, but it is still great when freshly made. If saved overnight add almonds just before serving.

*modified from allrecipies.com

Thank you,
ANNIE & RICHARD!



Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

The North San Diego County C & S Club!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Click here for a printable form:

<https://www.palomarcactus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/PCSS-Membership-Form-Single.pdf>

2020 MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Speakers & Topic	Plants of the Month
TBD	Ron Chisum - Succulent Plants of the Galapagos Islands	Pelargoniums
June 27	Al Kline - Fat Plants	Adenias
July 25	Peter Walkowiak - Staging	Pachypodiums
August 22	Picnic & Auction	Your auction plants!
September 26	Jeff Chemnick - Seldom Seen Succulents	Ariocarpus
October 24-25	Fall Show & Sale	Your show plants!
November 21	Woody Minnich - TBA	Plants w/pots 4" or smaller
December 19	Holiday Party	Gift plants for you!

All Southern California
Events Through June
Have Been Cancelled

SUCCULENT *Eye Candy*



Sherman Blench's very own Cheshire Cat

PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brita Miller - President, Show Chair, Event & Volunteer
Coordinator - president@palomarcactus.org

OPEN - Vice-President - Contact Brita Miller for information.

John Barkley - Treasurer

Moni Wailblinger - Secretary

Peter Walkowiak - Member at Large, Plant Expert -
hciservices@gmail.com

Lorie Johansen - Member at Large, Guest & New Member
Ambassador, Plant of the Month Articles

David Buffington - Member at Large, Brag Plants

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Annie Morgan - Program Chair, Website
info@palomarcactus.org

Monica Mosack - Newsletter Editor
info@palomarcactus.org

Richard Miller - Membership -
membership@palomarcactus.org

Dennis Miller - Cash Register at Monthly Meetings

Sandy Wetzel-Smith, Bruce Barry,

Jamaye Despaigne & Ellen Pankuch - Refreshments

Barbara Raab & Tammy Harmon - Co-Librarians

Kevin Smith - Brag Table

Francis Granger - Exchange Table, Guest & New Member
Ambassador

Brian Magone - Exchange Table

Chet Reed - Brag Plant Photographer

Russel Ray - Event Photographer, Website, AV

Tammy Harmon - Coffee in the Garden

Julie Kort - Name Tag Drawing Plants

Libbi Salvo - Monthly Meeting Set-up



Boomer relaxes on Lorie Johansen's
fabulous succulent leggings