

CACTUS COURIER

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

Volume 67, Number 3

September 2021

2021 SEPTEMBER MEETING INFORMATION

Saturday, September 25, 2021
12pm - 3:00pm

(Note: no access to the building before 10:30am
and no access through the back gate.)

The Escondido Community Center mask policy -
Masks must be worn in the building at all times.

Refreshment Table: Please bring prepackaged food to
share or your own snacks.

The Plant of the Month is Adromischus.

Brag Plant Table: Plants must be labeled and on the
table **no later than 11:45am** to be judged. Please bring
no more than 3 plants.

Exchange Table: Yes

Benefit Drawing Table: Along with this table we will have
an auction for two special plants donated by Ron
Chisum.

In This Issue	Page
September Speaker Info - Al Klein	1
September Meeting Information	1
Growing Succulent Caudiciforms	2
President's Corner	3-4
Brag Plants	4-6
Plant of the Month - Adromischus	7-8
Garden Brags	9-10
2021 Show and Sale	10
Succulent Eye Candy	11
Board of Directors	11
Membership/Social Media Info	11



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SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

Al Klein of Botanic Wonders

Al Klein's interest in the natural world started in his childhood. Growing up in Chicago he would make regular visits to the Field Museum of Natural History, and read many books on the natural sciences. His favorite hobbies were growing exotic plants like cacti, and collecting fossils, minerals, and insects.

After moving to California at the age of 17 he found his passion in plants and was amazed at the great diversity and beauty of the flora of California. While attending California State Polytechnic University in Pomona where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Ornamental Horticulture, with emphasis in landscape design and retail nursery management, Al was employed by South Shores Nursery in San Clemente, California.

After graduation he was hired by Roger's Gardens in Corona Del Mar, California. Within a year he was promoted to Nursery Manager. Al then had the opportunity to start a new business as he was asked to help open a nursery-gift shop in Escondido, California, called Canterbury Gardens and Gifts, where he soon became a partner in the business. After 35 years there, Al retired.

Consequently, he is now running his own nursery business, Botanic Wonders, full time, his true passion! Botanic Wonders, in Vista, specializes in growing and selling rare and exotic plants, including cycads, plants for succulent bonsai and other rare succulents.

GROWING

Succulent Caudiciforms

BY AL KLEIN

Of all the succulents available in the market place, my favorite type are caudiciforms. These plants are characterized by a part of the plant that basically is swollen and used for water storage and from this part a thin vine or stem grows. A perfect example of this is *Dioscorea elephantipes*, however there are many other plants that fall into this classification, such as *Euphorbias*. It is a broad classification that can also include *Pachycaul* trees, such as *Ficus palmeri*.



In my opinion caudiciforms are some of the most unusual plants on this planet. These magical plants have found a way to adapt to some of the most inhospitable environments our world has to offer. As a result of these adaptations, they can be a challenge to grow, duplicating natural growing conditions, while growing in containers. For myself this is the attraction!

There are many species that are perfect for first time growers, such as, many forms of *Euphorbias*, *Dioscorea*, *Cyphostemmas*, *cucurbits*, *Pachypodiums*, and a plethora of other species to many to mention here.

Growing caudiciforms can be a challenge as well as fun. Soil is always my first consideration. finding a soil mix which is best for you in relation to your

climate and care can be a life long endeavor! Most soil mixes become an "average" mix which can be used on a wide range of plant species which cuts back on having hundreds of different formulas! Most soil mixes should be a minimum of 60% inorganic material such as pumice or perlite. My current mix is about 70%-80% inorganics. The remaining percent should be a good organic component such as a commercial potting mix or compost. I also recommend adding a slow release fertilizer when repotting, which gives your plant a great start. With this well draining soil your watering schedule can vary depending on climate, time of year, and sun exposure.

Most of my plants are watered once a week during active growing seasons and sometimes no water for long periods during dormancy or rainy season. Fertilize during growing times regularly with a complete food containing all essential nutrients, and alternating two to three times a year with an organic food such as fish emulsion. Sun expose can also be a challenge, just

because a plant comes from a desert doesn't mean that it has to grow in hot blazing sun! In fact most of your caudiciforms will appreciate some shade or filtered light during part of the day. Many caudexes will burn with direct sun exposure. always acclimate new plants to your climate and exposure.

If you really want a challenge try growing your plants from cuttings and seed. It can be a lot of work however the satisfaction is well worth it. Remember have patience growing these wonderful plants, and your reward will be great!



The August plant of the month was the genus pereskia, so perhaps this is a good segue into a brief discussion of how plants evolve in response to global climate change.

According to research done in 2006 by Edwards and Donoghue the pereskias (17 species) which evolved in two separate areas of North and South America gave rise to the family cactaceae which today consists of 127 genera and 1750 species. The largest of these can be 63 feet tall (*Pachycereus pringlei*) and the smallest, *Blossfeldia liliputana*, only .4 inches in diameter.



Pereskia sp.
Photo by Bill Modi

Apparently the cacti began to diversify around 5-10 million years ago exclusively in the Americas. This was in response to an earth that had been wet and tropical, but now was cooler and drier with lower levels of carbon dioxide. What makes the family cactaceae unique is their response to this change.

1. Some developed shallow roots to capture scant rainfall.
2. Some developed deep roots to tap into subterranean moisture.
3. Most developed thick waxy skin.
4. Their fleshy stems stored precious water. For example, a large saguaro can take up to 100 gallons of water in a single rainstorm to swell without bursting thanks to the ribs on the stem surface.
5. CAM (crassulaen acidic metabolism) allows the cacti to do gas exchange at night when the temperature is lower and the humidity higher.
6. The spines protect the plants from herbivores seeking moisture (and are the bane of gardeners who love the plants anyway).

Adaptation is the operative word here, but note that this adaptation takes a whole lot of time. Nature is in no hurry, nor does she need to be.

Currently we are witnessing yet another shift in the global climate, except this time the shift is caused by us, not the natural phenomena of nature that have triggered previous climate changes. Some of those changes were sudden and cataclysmic—the meteor that struck near the Yucatan Peninsula 65 million years ago. Others were gradual, yet still profound: think about the last ice age.

From this climate history we can see that adaptation takes time, a fact that we impatient humans might try to ignore. What is in store for the plants and animals that occupy this amazingly biodiverse planet? Perhaps only time will tell.

President's Corner

(CONT. FROM PAGE 3)

To more local matters:

We have an interim treasurer. Nathalie Nguyen has agreed to be interim treasurer until we have our formal elections at the December meeting. (ByLaws Article VII section 1). Former treasurer John Barkley will assist and oversee the transition. A huge thank you to all of these members for filling this important position. If all goes well, the PCSS will be back to business as normal by January.

At the September meeting we are going to try out a live auction of two interesting plants donated by Ron Chisum: a bonsaied *Cyphostemma juttiae* and a *Eulophia petersii*. If the membership likes this idea, we could auction two rare/unusual plants as a regular part of each meeting.

Starting in January we will need a committee of three to line up the speakers for the year. Rather than put the burden of finding speakers on one individual, it is much easier if the task can be divided up among the members of the speakers committee who could pool their ideas and possible contacts. Ideally this committee would meet in Nov/Dec of 2021 in order to line up the first couple of speakers for 2022.

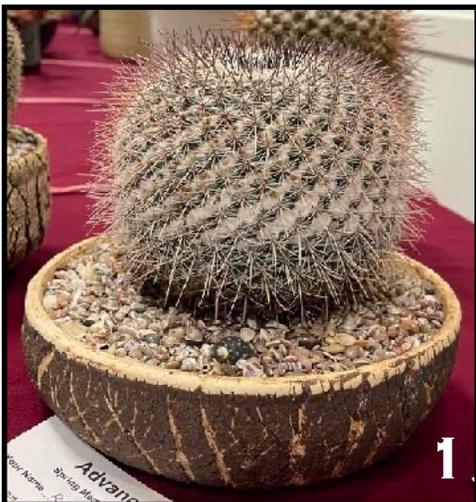
There will be a board meeting in October. The date/time/place will be announced. Anyone is welcome to attend.

I hope that this newsletter finds you all in good health, and that your summer-growing plants are pushing new growth, and your winter growers are getting a well-deserved rest.



Welcome to our interim treasurer! Nathalie (right) is pictured with Christina and Terrell, as well as a *Euphorbia ingens*
Photo by Lorie Johansen

AUGUST Brag Plant WINNERS



AUGUST
Brag Plant
WINNERS
 (CONT. FROM PAGE 4)

Novice Cactus

1st Kevin Smith Matucana madisoniorm - 14

Intermediate Cactus

Advanced Cactus

1st Russel Ray Mammillaria sp. - 1
 2nd Dean Karras Mammillaria guelzowiana - 10
 3rd Russel Ray Mammillaria sp.

Novice Succulent

1st Charlyne Barad Euphorbia obesa - 19
 1st Charlyne Barad Eulophia petersii - 20
 1st Alan Chamberlain Echevaria pulvinata 'Ruby
 Blush' - 13
 2nd Patti Nelson Monadenium ritchiei - 11
 3rd Patti Nelson Aloe castilloniae - 2

Intermediate Succulent

1st Harold Dunn Dorstenia foetida - 5
 2nd Moni Waiblinger Pseudobombax ellipticum - 3
 2nd Don Nelson Hoya carnosa 'Compacta' - 6
 3rd Moni Waiblinger Tylecodon sp.
 3rd Moni Waiblinger Crassula sp. - 4

Advanced Succulent

1st Mike Nelson Uncarina sp. - 8
 2nd Robert Kopfstein Mangave 'Crazy Cowlick' - 7
 2nd Robert Kopfstein Bromelia balansae variagata
 3rd Mike Nelson Uncarina roeoesliani - 12
 3rd Robert Kopfstein Euphorbia polygona dwarf - 16

Plant of the Month – Novice

Plant of the Month – Intermediate

1st Moni Waiblinger Pereskia grandiflora - 18
 2nd David Buffington Pereskia aculeata
 3rd David Buffington Pereskia grandiflora - 17

Plant of the Month – Advanced

1st Robert Kopfstein Pereskia aculeata - 15
 2nd John Barkley Pereskia aculeata

Dish Garden – Intermediate

1st Monica Mosack Dish Garden - 9



(CONT. ON PAGE 6)

AUGUST
Brag Plant
WINNERS

(CONT. FROM PAGE 5)



PLANT OF THE MONTH

Adromischus

BY LORIE JOHANSEN

The *Adromischus* genus is made up of 28-30 species of clumping succulent ground covers native to the desert areas of South Africa and Namibia. In ancient Greek, “adros” means thick and “mischos” means stem. In their natural habitat they grow on rocky soils, where they perfectly camouflage with the surrounding environment thanks to their combination of colors and speckles, which assume different shades of green, red and gray, of varying intensity according to the sun exposure. *Adromischus* use their leaves and tuberous roots to store water and survive during drought periods. They are appreciated for their decorative appearance due to the multitude of colors and are highly sought after for their compact shape and the intriguing appearance of its leaves in Asia.

These petite plants are in the Crassulaceae family with characteristic thick spatulate-shaped leaves. Many have attractively marked and colored leaves that require high levels of light to maintain their various colors. They revert to green when placed in too little light. As the plants age, some elongate losing leaves lower down their thickened stems.

Adromischus species generally have small flowers with a greenish-white tube and pink or reddish corolla. They produce sufficient nectar to promote a fungal infection, especially towards the end of the growing season. Since the flowers are not very decorative, many growers cut the flowers off to avoid botrytis. The only species worth growing for its flowers is *Adromischus phillipsii*, which has relatively large showy orange tubular flowers, like those of *Cotyledons* to which *Adromischus* is closely related and with which it was once grouped.



Adromischus sp.

Photo by Noelene Tomlinson

Cultural Requirements:

Adromischus prefers illuminated exposure without receiving direct sunlight in the middle of the day. Also protect them from temperatures below 40 degrees. The soil must be well draining. Without proper drainage, they will die. In the rainy months, protect from rain as water stagnation between the foliage can cause “heart rot” and possibly be fatal.

Water in the summer about every 10-15 days, waiting for the soil to dry completely before re-watering. In winter, water once a month at the most. Under-watering symptoms include drooping leaves, stunted growth, and drying leaves; caused by a range of different issues, including forgetfulness, too much sunlight, or the plant being pot-bound. Over-watering symptoms include root rot, a rotting base, or sudden plant death. *Adromischus* must have sufficient light levels (at least two hours of direct sunlight a day) to counteract the chance of root rot.

No special fertilizers or pruning required, although they could benefit from a general cacti food in the summer growing season.

PLANT OF THE MONTH Most insects that trouble pot plants can damage Adro's. Beware of green/black/whitefly on inflorescences in summer. Mealy bugs and spider mites are also a common challenge. A systemic insecticide used as a soil drench in the warmer months should control pests e.g., imidacloprid. As ever, prevention is better than cure. In addition, dispose of all dead leaves by this time of year. Good hygiene is essential.

Adromischus

BY LORIE JOHANSEN
(CONT. FROM PAGE 7)

When transplanting, handle ever so carefully as they are so fragile. Take this opportunity to lift the plant to expose the bulbous roots. After a week to 10 days, water from the bottom to prevent fungal problems.

Adro problem-solving detective Joe Bagley of ukhouseplants wrote this excellent explanation of what could be going wrong with your Adromischus:

“Leaf-drop could be the product of many issues, including too low temperatures, droughts and irregular watering. Especially in winter and spring, if the location is susceptible to temperatures below 12°C (54°F), your plant may begin to shed its older leaves, leaving you with a naked plant. These symptoms are also similar to continuous under-watering, where the plant has endured long periods of droughts. If your specimen has begun losing its older leaves, increase the temperature and slightly increase your watering a fraction. Hopefully, within a few weeks, the rapid decline will be under control, and the specimen should begin re-growing again.

Over-watering is the most common issue, with typical signs including a softened yellow stem and stunted growth. There must be periods of droughts to replicate the habitats of the central-east American deserts, as well as limiting the chance of diseases....

A pale center and deformed growth are typical signs of too little light. Offer at least an hour of direct sunlight, especially in the winter months, to provide the vital nutrients that'll be converted into plant sugars.

Scorched or browned edges are the result of too little water and over-exposure to the sun.

Although Adromischus are a superb choice for plants in sunny locations, those that haven't acclimatized to the harsh rays will show signs of sun-scorch and environmental shock. Prolonged exposure will significantly speed the process of dehydration, so consider transplantation into a bigger pot (in the spring) to wrap the roots around moister soil.

Irregular watering regimes are most likely to cause stunted growth with sudden leaf-loss. Although under-watering is far better than over-doing it with Adromischus, you shouldn't test its ability to endure long-lived droughts too often, especially if it's situated in direct sunlight!”

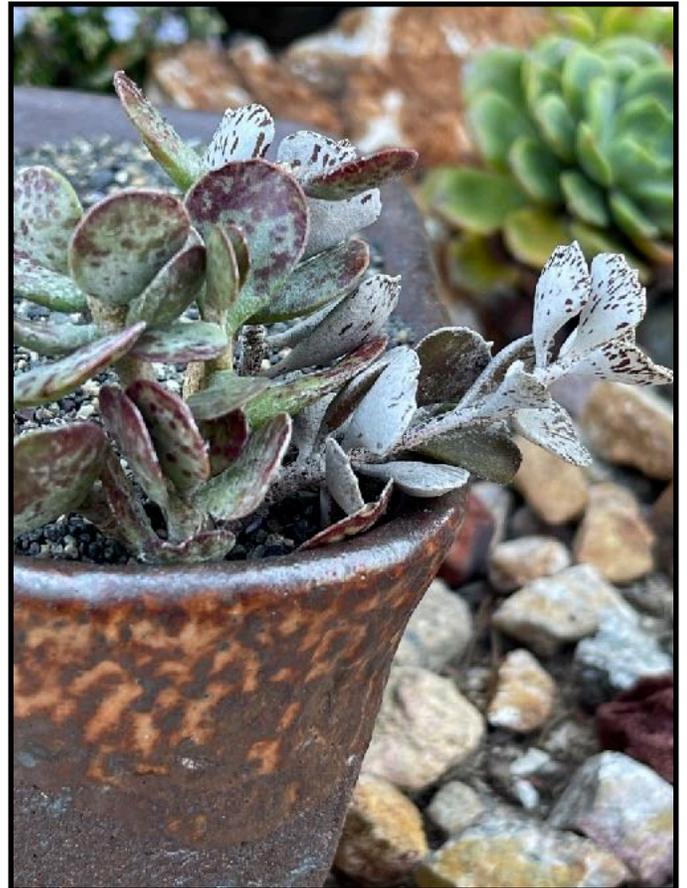
Propagation:

Many species can be propagated from leaves. Place them against the side of the pot so the stem end is just touching the soil. It can be a challenge to grow a large specimen. Some species drop easily; others require a sharp knife to carefully detach leaves for propagation.

If you are limited on space, this is the perfect genus to collect, thanks to its compact size.

RESOURCES:

<https://succulentalley.com/adromischus-species/> <https://worldofsucculents.com/genera/adromischus/>
<https://www.giromagi.com/en/shop/adromischus> <https://www.ukhouseplants.com/plants/adromischus>
<https://travaldo.blogspot.com/2019/01/adromischus-care-and-culture.html>
<https://www.crassulaceae.ch/de/artikel?akID=12&aalID=2&aalID=P&aalID=224>
<https://adromischus.cactus-mall.com/qus-pests.htm>



Assorted Adromischus sp.
Photo by Monica Mosack

Garden Brags

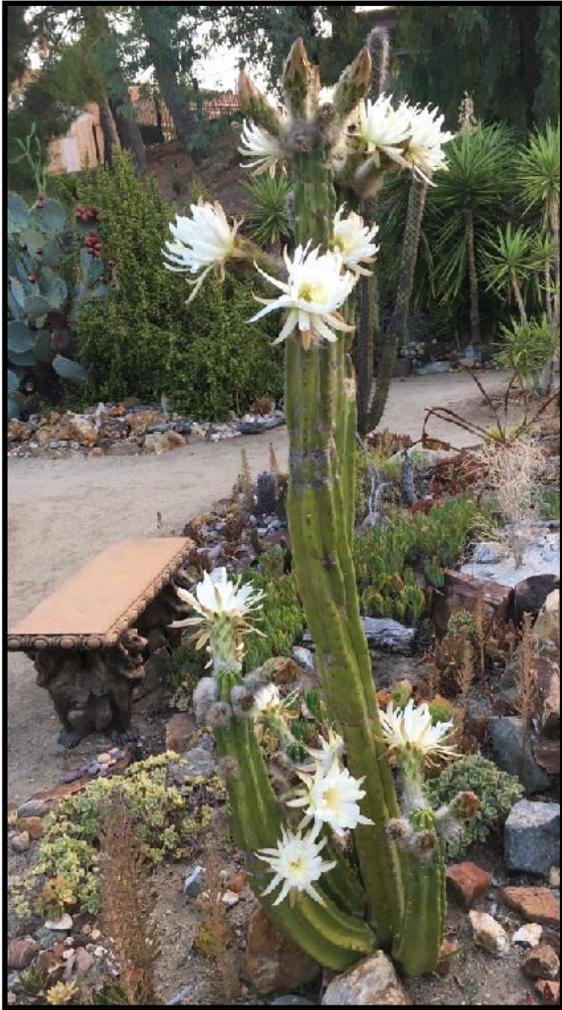


Photo by Gloria Kendall



Cactus sp.
Photo by Leon LaFreniere



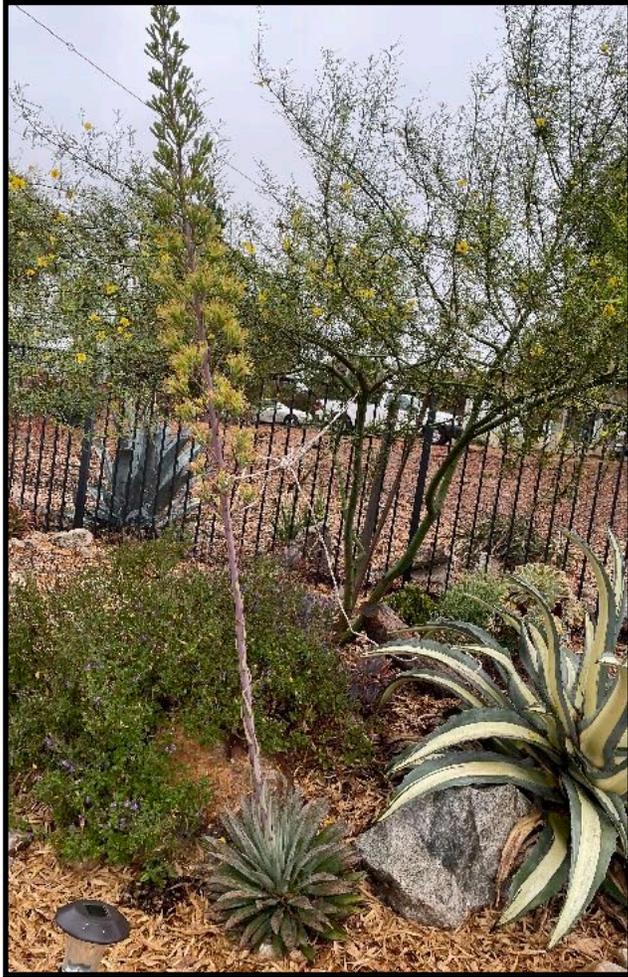
Rock Garden
Photo by Erik Gronborg



The 40-year-old Aloe thurskii that stopped traffic
Photo by Erik Gronborg

Garden Brags

(CONT. FROM PAGE 9)

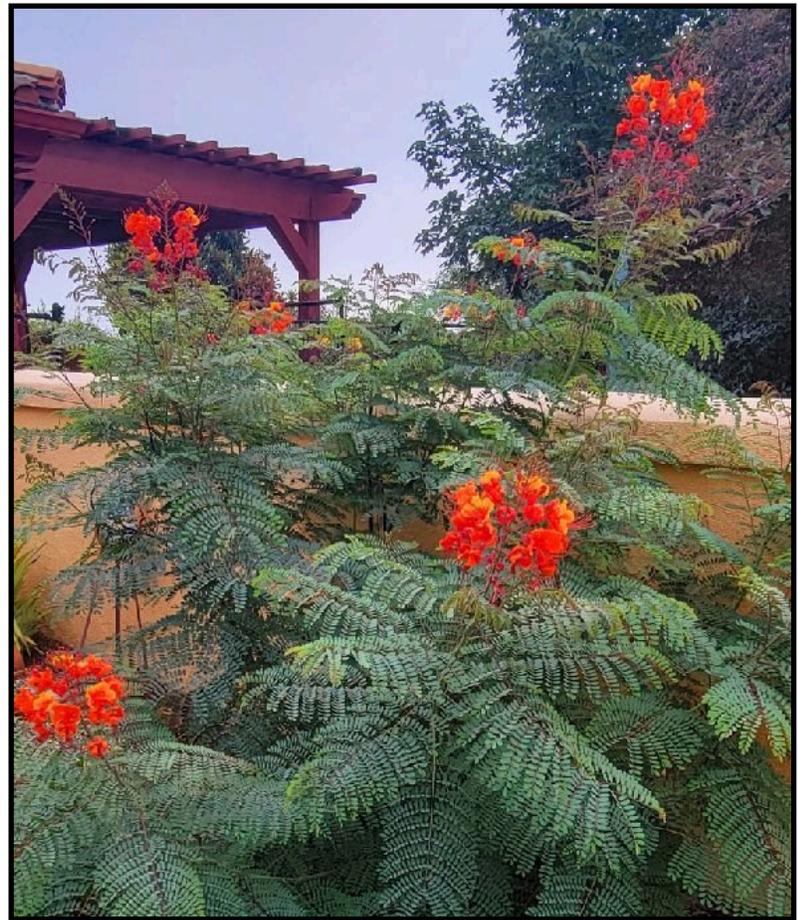


Mangave
Photo by Sherman Blench



Hymenocallis littoralis
Photo by Lorie Johansen

Reminder: the 2021
Palomar Cactus
and Succulent
Society
Show and Sale
has been cancelled.



Caesalpinia pulcherrima
Photo by Lorie Johansen

SUCCULENT *Eye Candy*



"I am Groot."
Haworthia fasciata
Photo by Sherry Hunga-Moore



Urginea maritima
Photo by Susan LaFreniere

PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

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Don Nelson - Vice-President
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Peter Walkowiak - Member at Large
Lorie Johansen - Member at Large, Guest & New Member
Ambassador, Plant of the Month Articles
David Buffington - Member at Large, Brag Plants

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Chet Reed - Brag Plant Photographer
Russel Ray - Photographer, Website, AV
Julie Kort - Name Tag Drawing Plants
Libbi Salvo - Monthly Meeting Set-up

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/2020/02/Membership-Form.pdf>

Social Media

Website: www.palomarcactus.org
Instagram: [Palomar.cactus.succulent.org](https://www.instagram.com/palomarcactusucculent.org)
Email: info@PalomarCactus.org

Facebook for admin notices:

[@Palomarcactusandsucculentsociety](https://www.facebook.com/Palomarcactusandsucculentsociety)

Facebook group for members to post:

[Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society Group](https://www.facebook.com/PalomarCactusandSucculentSocietyGroup)