

CACTUS COURIER

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

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VIRTUAL TOUR OF *Disneyland Resort*

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY MONICA MOSACK



Incredicoaster on Pixar Pier at California Adventure Park

In August, 2021 the kids and I ventured out of the house to enjoy a much needed trip to Disneyland. They kept telling me, "We need to go to Star Wars!" I thought they were talking about the Space Mountain update that has been renamed "Star Wars Hyperspace Mountain." I was wrong.

Far, far away...in the back of the park...Disney has built an entirely realistic town called "Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge." I felt like I was really on the planet Batuu, dragging my dropped jaw through the Black Spire Outpost village. Upon entry it became obvious that succulents and other weirdo plants comprised the alien landscape.

Gone were the ornamental cabbages, chards and other edible foliage that filled Disney's planters for the last decade. Disney has gone succulent. Perhaps they just got tired of replacing all their plants seasonally...like the rest of us.

The town is completely immersive. The attention to detail is absolute. Weathered buildings augmented with industrial pipes and riddled with blaster holes demonstrate how the arrival of the New Order and the Rebellion affected this ancient civilization. Pots of succulents and drought tolerant plants, along with banners and awnings, keep every alley and corner from looking forgotten. As newcomers wander the stalls they can enjoy a Rontu Wrap roasted by pitmaster droid 8D-J8. My kids still have the odd Sprite bottles they purchased from a street vendor.

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*Succulents grace a droid junkyard in
Galaxy's Edge at Disneyland*

VIRTUAL TOUR OF Disneyland Resort

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PCSS member Robert Mosack with agaves and tree aloes

The only ride of the day that we needed to try twice was Millennium Falcon: Smuggler's Run. Visitors file past the docked Millennium Falcon before entering it to encounter the Dejarik table, at which a holographic chess-type game is played...and one always lets the Wookiee win. We were divided into teams that worked together to pilot and defend the fastest hunk-of-junk in the galaxy. It's possible I was a gunner. All I know is my kids kept screaming in frustration, "Mom, push the button!"

Two drought-tolerant plants I was delighted to see in the town were *Acacia cognata* 'Cousin Itt' and *Casuarina glauca* 'Cousin It.' These draping, hairy plants live quite happily in my own garden alongside my aeoniums and echeverias. If you see them in a garden center, just get them.



Planters full of drought-tolerant plants tucked into a corner of the Black Spire Outpost



Rontu

Photo from starwars.fandom.com



Rontu Wrap

Available at Rontu Roasters



Sprite bottles

Only found in a galaxy far, far away

Dasyliion longissimum
Jacobaea maritima 'Dusty Miller'



Casuarina glauca
'Cousin It'



Acacia cognata
'Cousin Itt'



VIRTUAL TOUR OF *Disneyland Resort*

(CONT. FROM PAGE 2)

But wait, there's more! Last week we went to California Adventure Park, the other enormous theme park at the Anaheim Disneyland Resort. Much has changed. Most of the movies represented are from Pixar which has had many blockbuster releases since the park opened in 2001. My son noted that it's not as immersive as Disneyland. Possibly because the current tone of the park overlays new worlds on attractions that formerly represented California highlights, such as Fisherman's Wharf, Santa Monica Pier, Napa Wine Country, Hollywood and Redwood National Park. However, there's more room for succulents.

One region planted with succulents was Cars Land. As we strolled down Route 66 we marveled at the perfectly recreated town from the movie *Cars*. The line for Radiator Springs Racers, the premier attraction, is straight-up succulent eye candy.

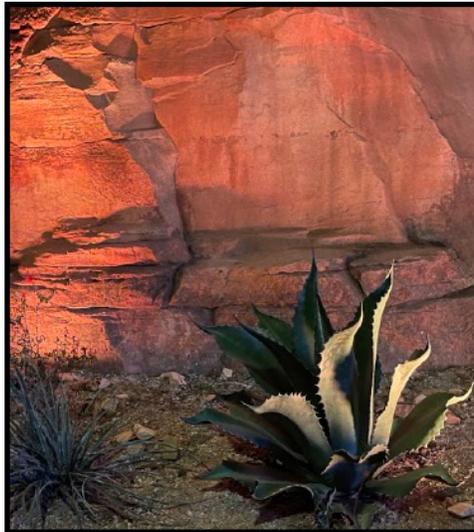
Succulents are also used to enhance the otherworldly ambiance of the Avengers Campus. Many superheroes of the Marvel Comics Multiverse call this place home. This land is built overtop of A Bug's Land, which broke my heart because there I was the size of an ant, walking under giant clover and hitching a ride in a Chinese takeout container. I did survive though, mostly because we were treated to a landscape thick with the most well-cared-for succulents. The cornerstone of this area is Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission Breakout. The backstory of this falling-elevator ride is that a character from the movie, known as The Collector, travels the galaxy gathering up creatures and artifacts for his collection. Some of them want out. Outside the attraction, formerly known as the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, the collection is exclusively succulents. So many plants, such a quickly moving line. There is not enough room to post many of the lovelies I saw. If you haven't been to the Disneyland Resort in a while, you should go. The succulent collection is beyond imagining.



Yucca rostrata 'Blue Beaked'



Yucca brevifolia 'Joshua Tree'



Agave salmiana var. 'Ferox'



Agave parryi



Aloe ramosissima
Pedilanthus bracteatus
Pedilanthus macrocarpus



Myrtillocactus geometricians f. *cristatum*
Euphorbia polygon 'Snowflake'

JANUARY 2022 *President's Corner*

BY ROBERT KOPFSTEIN

If you consult the dictionary you will find a plethora of negative words to describe them: undesirable, unattractive, not wanted, rank, useless, detrimental, unsuitable, troublesome, common. (Is there anything more damning to a plant collector than for a plant to be labeled "common"?) My 1847 dictionary defines weed: "an herb, noxious or useless."

The word "weed" is a native English word dating back to the Old English period (500 CE – 1100 CE), and apparently the Anglo-Saxons brought it with them when they invaded what was then Celtic/Roman Briton—which soon became known as their territory, or Angle-land. The original meaning of the word was grass or herb, and whether or not the gardeners of the early middle ages accepted all the negative connotations that modern plant people associate with the word is a matter of conjecture. What is certain is that by Shakespeare's time (early Modern English) "weed" was decidedly a pejorative term. This is evidenced in several of Shakespeare's plays. In Hamlet act 1 Scene 2 Hamlet describes the state of Denmark: "'tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature possess it merely."

So with all of this bad repute it is no surprise that the plants we label "weeds" have such a tarnished reputation. But consider this issue from the plant's perspective. Why are weeds hated so vehemently? Is it because they are so effective and efficient at what they do?

Weeds seem to be able to survive in the worst of conditions. Heat, drought, cold, poor soil, none of these factors seem to defeat the relentless weed. Think of your own garden. You carefully and tenderly watch over the plants that you have collected. You are mindful of the soil, the fertilizer, the watering schedule. You manage the amount of sun or shade in order not to damage the leaves or flowers. You prune, cultivate and mulch. But even for all of this, every once in a while—sometimes all too often – one of the little beggars croaks, and it is usually the one you spent a lot of money to buy. Meanwhile in a crack in a cement walkway in your garden a healthy happy weed flourishes.

What is it that makes weeds so enduring? Two attributes for sure: they are tough cookies and they reproduce themselves better than libidinous rabbits. Consider three fairly common weeds in the west: tumbleweeds (*Salsola kali*), oxalis (850 species), and the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), which is especially unwelcome to Easterners who treasure their manicured lawns.

Weeds.

We all have them.

We none of us want them.

Poor weeds.



Kali tragus 'Russian thistle'
Photo from mentalfloss.com

The tumbleweed, or Russian thistle was originally native to the Ural Mountains region. The seeds were inadvertently sent to Bonhomme County, South Dakota in a shipment of flax seed imported by Ukrainian farmers in 1877. By 1900 the plant had reached the West Coast, and now it can be found even in Alaska and Hawaii.

The genus name, *Salsola*, is derived from the Latin for salt (*sal*) because the plant is highly tolerant of salty or alkaline soils. It can withstand drought and both high and low temperatures. As a result it can be found in Death Valley below sea level as well as at elevations above 8,000 feet. Each plant can produce up to 250,000 seeds which are distributed as the mature plant breaks loose from its roots and tumbles in the wind, scattering the seeds over a very wide area. This weed was even celebrated in song in the 1940's. The Sons of the Pioneers, a singing group associated with Roy Rogers, had a hit titled "Drifting Along With The Tumbling Tumbleweeds."

So this plant certainly meets all the criteria that define what a weed is.

President's Corner

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Another "weed" that is a bit more complex is the genus *Oxalis* with 850 species. The earliest mention of this plant comes from a source in northern Italy in 1568. It is native to South Africa, the tropics, and South America.

Very different from Russian Thistle, *Oxalis* produces copious amounts of nectar which is a good food source for honeybees and butterflies. One species, *O. tuberosa*, has tubers that are used for food in Colombia and in the Andes. *O. triangulares* is currently being marketed as the shamrock (even though the original shamrock that was used by St. Patrick to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity was a different plant). The *Oxalis* that is now so visible in Southern California is *O. pes-caprae*, sometimes called sour grass, was named by Linnaeus because he thought part of the plant looked like a goat's foot. Originally from South Africa, it was introduced to California in the early 1900's—by whom is not clear, but luckily that plant person has gone on to the big garden in the sky; otherwise I would be happy to lead the lynch mob to exact swift justice on the malefactor. You can pull out this *Oxalis*; but unless you dig deep and extract the bulblets 8" – 10" or more below the soil level, guaranteed it will be back with a vengeance next season. Personally I have found that 3" – 6" of heavy mulch will at least discourage the next year's crop.



Oxalis pes-caprae 'Bermuda buttercup'
Photo by Monica Mosack



And speaking of crops, the dandelion, which is in the daisy family, was brought to the new world in the mid-1600s as a source of food and medicine. The name comes from the French "dent de lion" (lion's tooth). There are birds that feed on the seed, and the nectar of the flowers provides sustenance for bees and butterflies. The taproot can be dried and ground to make a coffee substitute—I wonder if Starbucks might be interested in this tidbit of information? You sometimes find dandelion leaves for sale in the supermarket; they make a tasty addition to any salad, and they are chock full of vitamins and minerals. The flowers, not the stems, make a passable wine.

Teraxacum officinale
Photo from thespruce.com

Some years ago I was camping just outside Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The weather had been cool and moist, so the dandelion leaves were large and succulent. I proceeded to gather some for dinner when a woman passed by, stopped, and asked what on earth I was doing. Gathering dinner I replied. I suppose it is just as well that I did not hear what she muttered as she walked away.

So perhaps you can surmise from this brief overview of some of the plants we dismiss as "noxious and useless" weeds, that some of the bad press is well deserved. But there is also a positive side to be considered. And from the perspectives of the plants, they consider themselves wildly successful – and they are.

SUCCULENT WEEDS



Portulaca oleracea 'Purslane'
Photo from pennington.com



Bryophyllum x houghtonii 'Mother of Millions'
Photo by Monica Mosack



Oxalis gigantea 5 of 10
Photo from worldofsucculents.com

VIRTUAL Brag Plants



Sansevieria trifasciata 'Moonshine'
with bonus Praying Mantis
Photo by Monica Mosack



Kalanchoe luciae
Photo by Pauline Wong



Aeonium arboretum f. cristatum
Photo by Pauline Wong

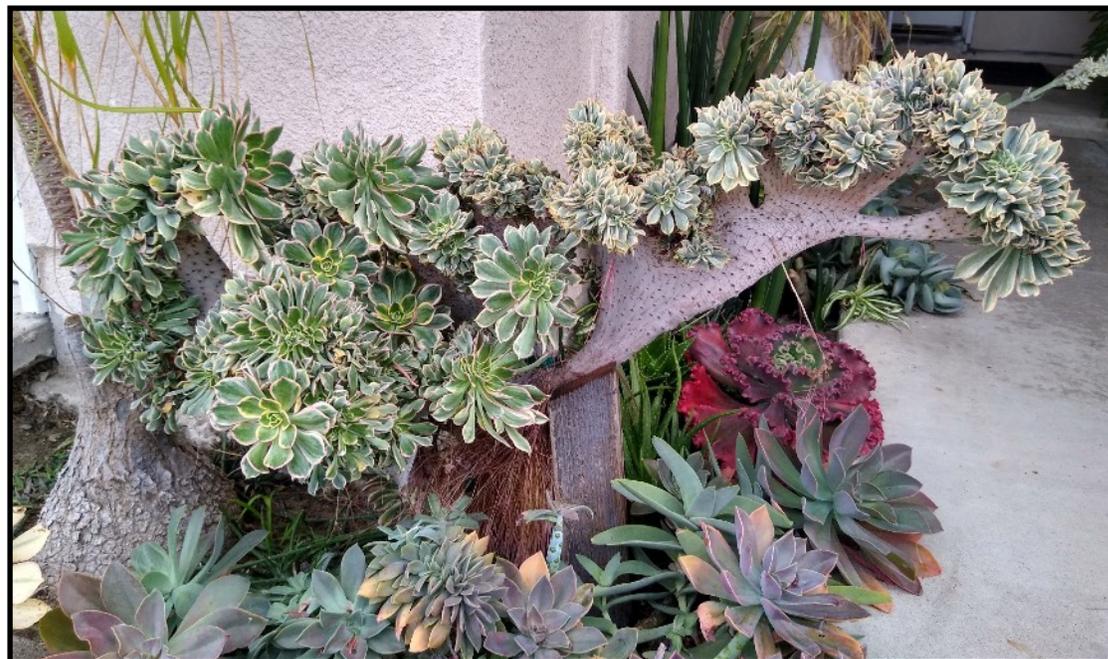


Machairophllum latifolium
Photo by Pamela Dunlap



Echeveria 'Crimson Tide'
Photo by Keith Umbreit

Aeonium 'Sunburst' f. *cristatum*
Photo by Keith Umbreit



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to everyone who renewed in November and December! Remember, we now ask that ALL RENEWALS BE SUBMITTED BY FEBRUARY 22ND.

There is a link to the printable form on page 10 that you can mail in, or forms are available at meetings. You may renew at a meeting with CASH, CHECK, or a CREDIT CARD.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

We will be printing up a Membership Directory that will be available at the March meeting, after all membership renewals have been received. Please indicate on the Membership Form which information you'd like to have included. Please contact Richard by 2/22/22 if you have any questions.

JANUARY

Plant of the Month

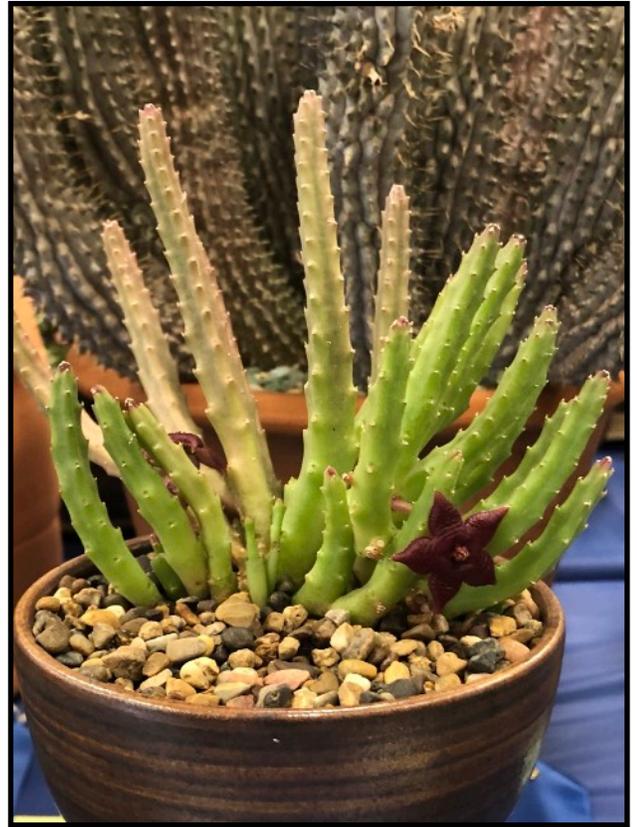
BY LORIE JOHANSEN

SUPER STINKY STAPELIAS

Well, not all 50+ species smell like rotting meat. Two rare species, *S. erectiflora* and *S. flavopurpurea*, have sweetly scented flowers. Commonly referred to as starfish flowers and carrion flowers, the strong putrid scent can be recognizable at a great distance, especially on a hot afternoon. The hairs, coloration and surface mimic decaying animal matter and attract mostly flies, which act as pollinators. *Stapelia* is a genus of perennial succulent plants from SE Africa (Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa). It is in the Dogbane family (Apocynaceae) which is the same plant family as milkweeds.

S. hirsuta, *S. grandiflora* and others produce hand-sized flowers. The well-named *S. gigantea* produces yet larger (blooms 10-15" in diameter) that make even non-gardeners take a second look. The "Zulu Giant" is known for having one of the largest flowers in the succulent plant kingdom. It makes a wonderful ground cover growing up to 3' in diameter. There are many dozens of *Stapelia* species, each with flowers of varying sizes, color, and hairs (hairiness). *S. gigantea*, *S. grandiflora* and *S. hirsuta* are three of the very easiest species to grow. Others, often with hairy stems and more unusual flowers, require careful watering during the summer growing season and complete water withdrawal during the winter dormant months.

Stapelia was historically merged with *Orbea*. In 1975, it was re-separated into its own genus. Several Asian and Latin American species were formerly included but they have all now been transferred to other genera. *Stapelia* relatives include *Edithcolea*, *Stapelianthus*, *Caralluma*, and *Huernia*.



Stapelia asterias
Photo by Monica Mosack



Stapelia gigantea
Photo by Lorie Johansen

JANUARY

Plant of the Month

(CONT. FROM PAGE 7)

PROPAGATION: Stem cuttings is the easiest method. Allow cuttings to dry before planting. Lay them (don't bury) on well-draining mix, they will then root from the underside of the stems. If you grow several species together, you may get random fly-pollinated hybrid seed. Let the seed pods ripen and split to release the furry, tufted seeds. Notice the close relationship to *Asclepias* (milkweed) seeds. The seeds stay viable for several months to a year or more if kept cool and dry. Each individual seed has a milkweed-like parachute. Plants in Hawaii have escaped gardens to the point where the plant is now considered to have invasive potential.



Stapelia gigantea
Photo by Lorie Johansen

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS: *Stapelia* are summer-growing desert succulents and crave as much sunshine as you can give them, and want water only when bone dry, especially in winter. Their only cultural enemies are chilly, wet soil, insufficient light, and being grown in pots that are too large (causing the first issue, wet soil). In summer they want water every two weeks or so. In spring/autumn perhaps once a month. When it comes to winter, you can skip watering altogether. When in doubt, don't water. Overwatering causes stem rot which cannot be cured. As soon as stem rot is noticed, the affected parts should immediately be cut away and destroyed.

Woolly aphids on the roots and underground stems and mealy bugs on the stems and bases are the most common problems. A strong jet of water or a 50/50 mix of alcohol and water can be used to eradicate these pests.

You can avoid most pests and diseases by growing this genus with benign neglect.



Stapelia asterias
Photo by Monica Mosack

RESOURCES:

<https://succulent-plant.com/families/apocynaceae/asclepiadaceae/stapelia.html>

<http://pza.sanbi.org/stapeliahttps://>

<https://mrplantgeek.com/2018/01/28/why-everyone-should-grow-stapelias/>

<https://succulentsnetwork.com/stapelia-cactus-plant-care/>

<https://worldofsucculents.com/genera/stapelia/>

THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY'S
WINTER SHOW AND SALE

Sat Feb 12 & Sun Feb 13, 2022

The annual SDCSS Winter Show and Sale returns this year for a 2-day event!

Bring your best show plants to be professionally judged and to win prizes,
and enjoy a sale featuring many succulent plant sellers and potters.

TIMES & DATES

SATURDAY

9am–11am	members only sale (membership card required)
11am–4pm	sale open to the public
10am	show room opens

SUNDAY

10am–3pm	show and sale
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setup on Friday Feb 11th from noon–6pm in room 101, or Saturday before 10am

LOCATION

Show: Room 101 of the Casa del Prado Balboa Park

Sale: patio between the Children's Theater and Casa Del Prado

Safety

Mask protocols will be enforced in enclosed Show and Sale areas. The show will follow Covid-19 safety measures set in place by Balboa Park, as well as any mandates required by the State of California.

Additional info

As in previous years, bring a box or bag to hold your purchases.

We look forward to seeing you!

SUCCULENT GARDEN PARTY AT RICK AND KEVIN'S PLACE

Previously Planned Sunday, January 23, 2022

HAS BEEN CANCELLED

"I was very much looking forward to hosting the event this year after taking a break due to the pandemic, and have been preparing the garden and testing recipes. However, out of an abundance of caution, I believe it is best to cancel the event as I would feel very badly if someone became exposed or infected with Covid due to attending the event. This appears to be an increasing possibility with the surge of Omicron following the holidays."

Thanks for your understanding!

PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Kopfstein - President, Show Chair - president@palomarcactus.org
Don Nelson - Vice-President, Program
Brita Miller - Past President, Meeting Set-Up
John Barkley, Nathalie Nguyen - Treasurer
Moni Waiblinger - Secretary
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 Points

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Monica Mosack - Newsletter Editor
monicaatpcss@gmail.com or text 619-379-4303
Richard Miller - Membership - membership@palomarcactus.org
Annie Morgan - Website and Facebook
info@palomarcactus.org
Dean Karras - Program, Plant Expert, Instagram
gnoisnurseries@gmail.com
Dennis Miller - Cash Register at Monthly Meetings
Sandy Wetzel-Smith, Bruce Barry,
Jamaye Despaigne & Ellen Pankuch - Refreshments
Barbara Raab - Librarian
Kevin Smith - Brag Table
Francis Granger - Guest & New Member Ambassador
Brian Magone - Exchange Table
Russel Ray - Photographer, Website, AV
Julie Kort - Name Tag Drawing Plants
Libbi Salvo - Monthly Meeting Set-up

2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

Date - Speaker and Topic - Plant of the Month

February 26th	Nick Basinski / Dudleyas	TBA
March 26th	Spring Festival	
April 23rd	Petra Crist / Rare Succulents	TBA
May 28th	Stephan Burger / TBA	TBA
June 25th	TBA	TBA
July 23rd	TBA	TBA
August 27th	Picnic	
September 24th	TBA	TBA
October 22nd	TBA	TBA
November 19th	TBA	TBA
December 17th	Holiday Party	

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/2021/10/PCSS-Membership-Form-Rev-10-23-21.pdf>

Social Media

Website: www.palomarcactus.org
Instagram: [Palomar.cactus.succulent.org](https://www.instagram.com/palomarcactus.succulent.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)