

Cactus Courier

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

Volume 71, Number 9

September 2025

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September's Speaker:

Christy Brenner

Topic: Bolivian Cactus Adventures



Cristy Brenner will share slides of a trip to the Bolivian Andes with Plant Expeditions (Guillermo Rivera). The almost month-long, four-wheel drive expedition was perfectly timed for the spring blooming of the numerous cactus species in habitats up to 15,000 feet. Cristy's favorite plants are actually bromeliads, but since they often grow in the same areas as cacti, she has also traveled with Plant Expeditions on cactus trips to Brazil (twice), Peru, (twice), and recently to Argentina and Chile. As a retired geography professor, she has visited all the continents and has also photographed bromeliads in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. In this presentation there will be plenty of blooming cacti, a few bromeliads, and endless beautiful Bolivian landscapes to enjoy.

Meeting Fourth Saturday, Sept. 27,
11:00 am—3:00 pm
Grace Presbyterian Church, 1450
E. Vista Way, Vista

- Brag Plant Table: **Plants must be labeled and on the table no later than 11:30 am to be judged. Please note the earlier time.**
- Benefit drawing and exchange tables and auction will all be held.
- **Plant of the month: Bonsai C&S**

PCSS Welcomes New Member

Kathy Frasca

Fall Festival Show and Sale

On the next two pages you'll find information about our upcoming show and sale.

Our Spring Festival was a great fundraiser, and we hope the fall event will be just as profitable.

Now is the time to pot up plants to either sell yourself or donate to PCSS to sell.



PCSS Fall Festival Show & Sale Saturday, October 25, 2025

Next month we will include all the details.

PLANT SHOW - There will be a non-judged Show for *all* levels: novice, intermediate, and advanced. Now is the time to get your plants transplanted, cleaned and ready to show off. If you have never shown a plant before, this is a perfect opportunity to begin in a non-judged show. You will earn two Brag Plant points for every plant shown! Members are limited to no more than 10 plants. As it was so popular in the past, we will again have the People's Choice Award for each level!

MEMBER PLANT SALE - This is for those of you who have some plants, pots and/or garden-related items you would like to sell. Now is the time to get them ready. We will do the selling for you. You will receive 80% of the sales price and the Club receives 20%. *If you donate plants to PCSS, 100% of the proceeds will go to the club.*

TIME TO SOCIALIZE - Our members really like to have extra time to socialize with old friends and make new ones. So even if you don't have plants to show or sell, come and join in the fun! We will have a potluck lunch as usual with tables to sit at with your friends.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? - We can't do it without you. For those who helped the last few years - remember how much fun we had? For new members - this is a great way to get to know other members and to learn more about the club. Some volunteer positions are:

- ~ Setup and take down
- ~ Assist in show area
- ~ Assist in sales area
- ~ Kitchen
- ~ Other

Volunteer slips similar to the next page will be handed out at the September meeting.

Please bring your lunch-worthy goodies for our potluck. Thank you!

You can also sign up by contacting
Eleanore at eleanore.hewitt@gmail.com, 760-412-2182
Charlyne at charbar6000@gmail.com 858-922-3380
Brita at britamiller1@gmail.com 858-776-7216.



PCSS Fall Festival Show and Sale Saturday, October 25, 2025

Our Spring and Fall Festivals cannot be run without your help!!

Below is a volunteer slip you can fill out in advance.
Similar slips will also be handed out at the September meeting.

Please note there are a number of positions that are sit-down jobs: Log in both Sale and Show plants, Security inside and outside, Cashiers, Info Table. I bet we can find some more!

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 25, 2025

At Grace Presbyterian Church, Vista

Even if you are not sure, but think you might want to show, sell and/or volunteer, please complete this form or contact Brita. We need to know so we can plan for a fun and successful event!

Show plants - (about how many?) Novice _____ Intermediate _____ Advanced _____

• **Sell plants/pots** - How much space do you need?

¼ table space (30"x18") _____ ½ table space (30"x36") _____ 1 table space _____

Do you have tables or canopy you can bring?? You must sign up with Brita to guarantee a space!

• **Volunteer** - (Only for a few hours!) We need help with: Setup _____ Fri. _____ Sat. _____
Cashier _____ boxing plants _____ Assist in Sales area (9am - 10am not cashiering) _____ Kitchen _____
Assist in Show area _____ Clean-up _____ As needed _____

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Email _____

Eleanore Hewitt, call or text 760-412-2182 or eventcoordinator@palomarcactus.org

You can also sign up by contacting
Eleanore at eleanore.hewitt@gmail.com, 760-412-2182
Charlyne at charbar6000@gmail.com, 858-922-3380
or Brita at britamiller1@gmail.com, 858-776-7216

In Loving Memory, Jean O'Daniel

On September 3rd, Jean O'Daniel, our dear friend and fellow member passed away. She and Bill have been active members of PCSS since 1995. Jean was the go-to person for all things Sansevieria of which she had an amazing collection! She generously brought plants to share at meetings and was always there to help out. As members of the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society she and Bill mailed out the newsletter and helped with the club shows. In addition to her generosity, Jean was admired for her kindness to everyone and her positivity.



The O'Daniels were San Diego County Friendly Landscaping Contest's 2008 Poway Winners.



Jean created many PCSS holiday party table decorations. In addition to Sansevieria, Jean had wonderful collections of teddy bears, books, and rocks.



*Bill, our thoughts are
with you!*

Jean made sure
their backyard birds
had plenty of
nesting material.

August Picnic Recap

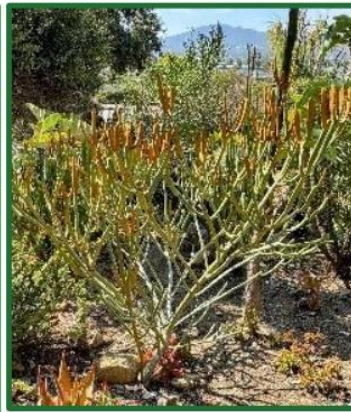
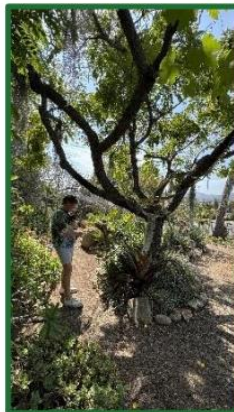
PCSS extends a huge thank you to Kevin Smith for reserving the Palomar College Garden, bringing tables and chairs, providing gift plants and cuttings, hauling members' gear from the parking lot to the picnic site, and leading a tour of the garden!



Plaque commemorating the founding of the garden by PCSS.



Our picnic featured yummy food and great company in a beautiful setting.



Thanks, Sherman for bringing the food tables.



What a feast! Thanks, Brita for bringing the picnic supplies!



Luscious dragon fruit – a fitting treat for our picnic!



Thanks, Lorie for chairing the event!



Panoramic shot of our great turnout.



Yum!



Tony Rangel, Arboretum President, talked about an upcoming class and tour at Palomar College.



Julian talked about the garden.



Everything is more fun with family involved! Libbi might want to frame this one!



Good times for a couple of champion plant growers!



Our plant lovers enjoyed shade and each other's company.



Thanks, Kevin, for all the plants and cuttings!



Above all, relax!



Note the 100° reading on Lorie's dash screen when she left the picnic. Luckily, we had shade from clouds most of the day and even had a few cooling raindrops.



Correction to Last Month's Home Brags

Pauline Wong's plant listed as Echeveria 'Sea Dragon' should have been Echeveria 'Mauna Loa.'

HOME GARDEN BRAG

by Joan Herskowitz

Share an especially nice section of your garden, a plant that bloomed in between meetings, or one that is too large to bring to the Brag Table. Earn 2 points for each published photo. Please submit a maximum of two photos to: jmherskowitz@yahoo.com by the 3rd day of each month.



Selenicereus sp.
Susie Guerra



Tillandsia ionantha
(bromeliad)
Clifford Chanco



Chamaecereus sp.
Clifford Chanco



Stapelia gigantea
Pamela Dunlap



Othonna cremnophila
Pamela Dunlop



Bromelia balansae
(bromeliad)
Christina Sangster



Myrmecodia platytyrea subsp. antoinii
Julian Duval



Selenicereus undulatus
Joan Herskowitz



Echeveria 'Topsy Turvy'
Joan Herskowitz



Euphorbia unispina
Julian Duval



Massed planting of Stapelia gigantea
Lorie Johansen



Stapelia gigantea
Lynn Cahill



Aechmea fasciata
(bromeliad)
Lynn Cahill



Euphorbia polygona 'Snowflake'
Debra Lee Baldwin



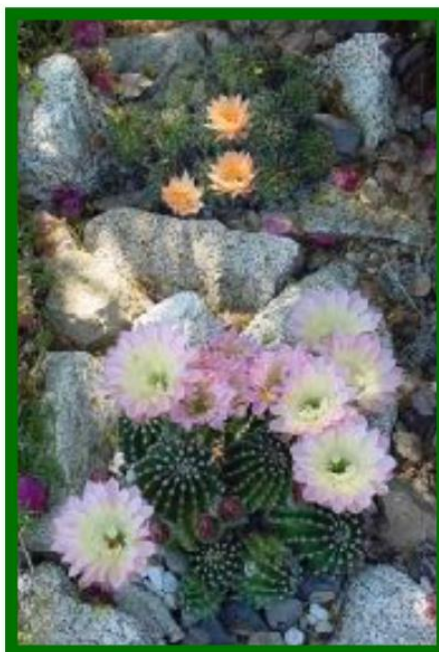
Garden vignette with Yucca 'Solaris', Agave weberi 'Arizona Star' & Curio ficoides 'Mt Everest'
Debra Lee Baldwin



Aeonium 'Sunburst Crested',
Echeveria 'Red Velvet' & Cotyledon orbiculata 'Silver Waves'
Stacy Day



Philodendron evansii
Eric Gronborg



Echinopsis hybrids
(Left)
Chet Reed



Portulacaria afra
Lottie Foster



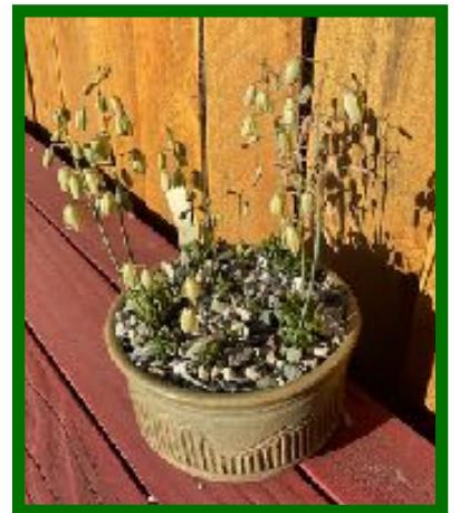
Aloe reitzii
Susan Snow



Aloe komatiensis
Susan Snow



Portulacaria afra trained to cover a wall.
(Left, front view; Right, side view)
Keith Umbreit



Albuca spiralis
Kathy McNair



Thelocactus bicolor
Kathy McNair



Succulent Dish Gardens
Martina Reed



Pachypodium lameri
Jeff McNair



Lophocereus schottii monstrosus
Jeff McNair



Drimia maritima (Sea Squill)
Teri Shusterman



Rhipsalis teres
Lois Walag



Echinopsis oxygona
Deborah Pearson



Selenicereus undulatus
(Dragon Fruit)
Deborah Pearson



Hechtia argentea
Robert Kopfstein

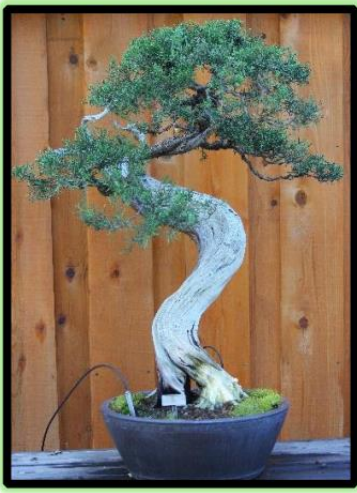


Lithops sp.
Robert Kopfstein

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Bonsai Cactus & Succulent

by Russel Ray



Bonsai is the Japanese art of growing and shaping miniature trees in containers, with a long documented history of influences and native Japanese development over a thousand years. The name itself means “tray planting.”

Bonsai has become an umbrella term in English, attached to many forms of miniature potted plants. Technically, the term should be reserved for plants that are grown in shallow containers following the precise tenets of bonsai pruning and training, resulting in an artful miniature replica of a full-grown *tree* in nature.

My three favorite bonsai exhibits in Southern California are the Bonsai Pavilion at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park (picture at left), the Huntington Botanical Gardens in Arcadia, and the

Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum in Balboa Park.

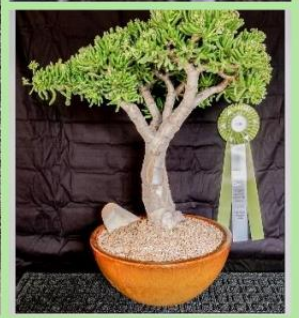
The San Diego Bonsai Club is a great club that meets in Room 101 of Casa del Prado in Balboa Park normally on the second Sunday of the month. Their meetings are a great place to learn the art of bonsai, which can then be applied to your cacti and succulents. The best phrase I

learned from one of my visits is “Less is more.” I had taken in my *Operculicarya decaryi* (top picture at right) to ask for help in pruning it. The guy who gave me that phrase was very helpful. The other plants I had brought in were not bonsai; they were, in his words, “miniature cacti & succulents.” When I came home, I pruned my *Operculicarya pachypus* (left picture in middle row at right).

The San Diego Bonsai Club has both a spring & fall show & sale, and the fall show & sale is September 27-28, Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Check their web site for the latest information (sandiegobonsaiclub.com).

Bonsai cacti & succulents fall under the umbrella term as miniature potted plants. My favorite bonsai cacti & succulents are *Operculicarya* and *Crassula*. I have seen beautiful bonsai specimens of *Euphorbia*, *Adenium*, *Aeonium*, *Agave*, *Carnegeia*, *Pachypodium*, *Portulacaria*, *Yucca*, and many more. Almost any succulent can be trained to be bonsai in appearance. It just takes patience and a knowledge of root structure, water, and air. Cacti are a little more difficult, but it can be done with them, too, particularly the columnar ones.

Three plants at right, previously unnamed: *Aeonium arboreum* var *holochrysum*, *Beaucarnea recurvata*, and *Crassula ovata* ‘Gollum.’ All pictures are by Russel Ray, and the bottom five plants belong to Russel.



El Cajon Library

September Plant of the Month

Sponsored by Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

Kroenleinia grusonii

by Russel Ray



Kroenleinia grusonii, previously known as *Echinocactus grusonii*, (Golden Barrel cactus), is native to the Mexican states of Querétaro and Hidalgo. Wild populations in Mexico were adversely affected in the 1990s as a result of poaching and the creation of the Zimapán Dam and reservoir in Hidalgo.

Although it is a very adaptable species, in its natural habitat it grows in rich, volcanic soil on well-draining, sunny slopes, and can be found at altitudes up to 4,600 feet. A single plant can grow up to 3¼ feet tall and 3 feet in width, so they really can look like a golden barrel. The golden barrel cactus also likes to create large clumps. It is among



the most popular cacti in collections and in landscaping, and has become quite popular as an architectural accent plant in contemporary garden designs. Flowers are yellow and appear around the top of the plant during the summer.

The golden barrel cactus is considered one of the easiest cactus to care for, and is a relatively fast grower in warm climates. They are happiest with an average minimum winter temperature of 54°F but can tolerate brief periods of lower temperatures



down to 18°F if provided with adequate cover and frost protection. As with most succulents, the golden barrel cactus survives with less water in winter. Water pooling around the plant can lead to root rot and death of the entire plant.

Despite being endangered in its native Central Mexico, *K. grusonii* can be found in many countries on several continents in both non-native wild populations and private and public gardens. In the United Kingdom, the golden barrel cactus has gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit. Nursery growers in the United States regularly report it as one of their top selling plants.

The plant on display here belongs to me (Russel Ray, the author) and is about 8 years old. It was a single head when I planted it. It has been grown outdoors in Winter Gardens and has been subject to high temperatures of 118°F and low temperatures of 28°F, as well as rainfall of 36" to 79" annually, so I have planted it in very well-draining soil.

Glow-in-the-Dark Succulents Created by Scientists Shine in Multiple Colors, *Scientific American*, August 28, 2025

Those of us who have read Debra Lee Baldwin's recent newsletter have seen information about luminescent succulents as reported in *Scientific American* and *Nature*. Debra cited a report from CNN. I first saw the article in *Scientific American* forwarded by a friend.

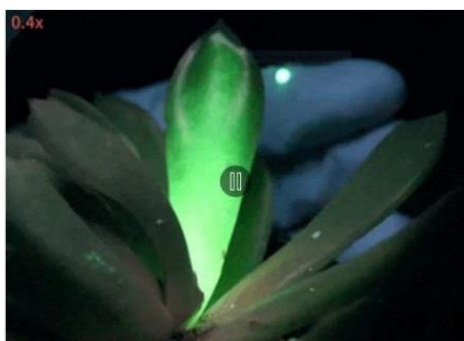
From *Scientific American* and *Nature*: Succulents become rechargeable night lights after injection with tiny phosphor particles. (Plant on left is *Echeveria* 'Mebina'.)

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/glow-in-the-dark-succulents-created-by-scientists-shine-in-multiple-colors/#:~:text=Glow%2Din%2Dthe%2DDark,decorative%20installations%20and%20living%20lighting>.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-02740-2>

Link to Debra Lee Baldwin's newsletter that mentions luminescent succulents:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/dlb%40debraleebaldwin.com/FMfcgzQcpdnTCtmLWFJfqHTJXXdkJkTh>



A Team of researchers, led by Xuejie Zhang, a materials scientist at the South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou, reported producing luminescence in plants in the journal [*Matter*](#).

The researchers produced luminescence by injecting a chemical found in fireflies. Researchers had best results with *Echeveria* 'Mebina.' They had to inject chemicals into each leaf individually. A video showing this process is available on the *Scientific American* link above. As with other glow-in-the dark items, the plants had to be charged with light before glowing. Sunlight provided the best charge. The glow lasted up to two hours and could be easily recharged by exposing the plants to light.

Tribute to Our Donors

Thank you, Generous Members!

Crassula Level (\$100 – \$249.99)

2024 (for 2025)

Lorie Johansen
Charlyne Barad
Liz Rozycki
David & Debi Buffington
Sandy Wetzel Smith
Anonymous

2025

Anonymous (4)
Ron Chisum
Debra Lee Baldwin
Phyllis Flechsig

Ocotillo Level (\$250.00 - \$499.99)

2024

Julian & Leslie Duval
Candy & Jerry Garner
Lynn Cahill & Joe Cobb

2025

Anonymous
Stan Yalof
Sandy Wetzel-Smith

Saguaro Level (\$500 & Above)

2024

2025

Anonymous (2)
Mike & Nancy Peters

Other amount

Woody Minich (2024)



2025 MEETING DATES, SPEAKERS & TOPICS, PLANT OF THE MONTH

<u>DATES</u>	<u>SPEAKERS & TOPICS</u>	<u>PLANT OF THE MONTH</u>
Jan. 25	Scott Sandel So. Africa, Karoo, Cape area to Namibia	Mammillaria
Feb. 22	Russel Ray Succulent Terrariums	Miniature C or S - pots 4" or less
Mar. 22	Andy Cuffel of Cuffel Farms Topic: TBA	Stacked Crassula
Apr. 26	Dylan Zoller Brazil – orthophytums, xeric plants	Bromeliad
May 24	Spring Festival & Sale	None
June 28	Jim Anderson Anza-Borrego Desert, How It Got Here	Parodia
July 26	Julian Duval & Debra Lee Baldwin Succulent Bonsai & Palomar College Succulent	Echeveria
Aug. 23	Annual Picnic Palomar College Cactus & Succulent Garden	None
Sept. 27	Christy Brenner Bolivian Cactus Adventures	Bonsai C & S
Oct. 25	Fall Show & Sale – TBD	Pachypodium (if no Show & Sale)
Nov. 22	Philippe de Vosjoli Topic: TBA	Monstrose, Crests
Dec. 20	Holiday Party!	None



PALOMAR CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Board of Directors

President — **David Buffington**, president@palomarcactus.org

Vice-President — **Sherman Blench**

Treasurer, Meeting Cashier — **Teri Shusterman**, treasurer@palomarcactus.org

Secretary, Meeting Cleanup — **Moni Waiblinger**

Director at Large, Assistant Treasurer — **Liz Rozcycki**

Director at Large, SDCSS Representative — **Brita Miller**

Director at Large — **Martina Reed**

Other Volunteers

Event Coordinator — **Charlyne Barad**, eventcoordinator@palomarcactus.org

Assistant Event Coordinator — **Brita Miller**, eventcoordinator@palomarcactus.org

Membership — **Richard Miller**, membership@palomarcactus.org

Brag Plant Table — **Lorie Johansen, Sherman Blench**

Brag Plant Tally — **David Buffington**

Brag Table Judge — **Mike Nelson**

Brag Table Photographers — **Annie Morgan, Charlyne Barad, Lorie Johansen**

Refreshments — **Bruce Barry, Sandy Wetzel-Smith**

Benefit Drawing — **Martina Reed, Annie Morgan**

Program, Plant Auction — **Robert Kopfstein**

Meeting Sales — **Teri Shusterman, Liz Rozcycki**

Name Badge Drawing — **Julie Kort**

Guest & New Member Ambassadors — **Brita Miller, Lorie Johansen**

Newsletter Team

Charlyne Barad — Coordinator, Club Info, Speakers, etc. pages

Annie Morgan — Pages on Brag Table Winners, reviewer, misc.

Russel Ray — Pages on Plant of the Month and San Marcos Library Plant of the Month,
Newsletter Collator and Distributor

Winston Chan — Pages on Miscellaneous Information

Joan Herskowitz — Pages on Garden Brag Plants

Brita Miller — Pages on Spring Festival and Holiday Party Recap, misc.

Wanda Mallen — Proofreader

Publicity (print) — **Tom McCarter**

Librarian — **Barbara Raab**, librarian@palomarcactus.org

Website — **Annie Morgan**, info@palomarcactus.org, **Russel Ray**

A/V, PCSS Plant of the Month, San Marcos Library Plant of the Month — **Russel Ray**

Additional volunteers who keep meetings running — **Moni Waiblinger, Brita Miller, Libbi Salvo**

Volunteers Needed

Bring refreshments

Assist at meetings with set-up, bringing in plants, etc.

Assist at meetings with clean-up

If you have specific talents or interests, PCSS could use your help!

Social Media

Website: www.palomarcactus.org

Instagram: palomar.cactus.succulent.org

Email: info@palomarcactus.org

Facebook group for members: Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society Group