

Cactus Courier

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

Volume 72, Number 1

January 2026

We wish you a 2026 filled with delights and the good health to enjoy them! -Your Newsletter Team

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January Speaker: **DIANA LINDSAY**

Topic: **PLANTS USED BY DESERT INDIANS**



Diana Lindsay is the author or editor of over a dozen books, largely focused on the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park area. As part of her presentation at the January PCSS meeting, she will bring some Indian artifacts to discuss and share.

Diana is passionate about outdoor recreation and the conservation of our local habitats and environment. She is a lifetime member of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Botany Society. She is also an honorary California State Park Ranger.

Meeting Fourth Saturday, January 24 11:00 am—3:00 pm
Grace Presbyterian Church, 1450 E. Vista Way, Vista

- Brag Plant Table closes to entries at 11:30.
- Benefit drawing and exchange tables and auction will all be held.
- Plant of the month: [Echinopsis](#)
- See detailed brag plant guidelines, including new point structure, on page 13.

Meet Our New President!

Hideho Everyone!



As your new president I want to say how much I look forward to this new year. I have been a member of many organizations over my years, and this is one of the best I have experienced. It is an honor to help out with such a wonderful, friendly, fun, vibrant, caring, focused, and knowledgeable group of members who make you feel welcome from day one even if you may know little about cacti or succulents. Onward!! Upward!! In the New Year!!

Joe Cobb

January Speaker: **DIANA LINDSAY**

Diana Lindsay's master's thesis from San Diego State University was on the history of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. It was subsequently published as *Our Historic Desert*. Among the more than a dozen books she has authored or edited; she co-authored *The Anza-Borrego Desert Region*. For 38 years she was involved in publishing books about the natural and cultural history of this region. She was presented the Medallion Award from the State of California for her 30 years of volunteer work on behalf of ABDSP.



Desert plants were the mainstay of our local desert Native community. Finding and collecting local plants was just like shopping at your local supermarket. Even though there were people of different cultures and languages in the area, they all processed the same things in the same way and managed the land.

Cordage and basketry are necessities for a gathering economy. Major cordage and basketry plants are most often monocots. Yucca and agave are key fiber sources. Key plants used in basketry include bunch grass, three-leaf sumac, and juncus. Pine needles are also used. Arroyo willow is used for both basketry and housing.

Numerous plants were used for food. For desert Natives, the most important food sources are those that can be stored and used in years when the harvest was poor. Those food sources include mesquite, agave, acorns from oak trees, and pinyon pine nuts. Much of the equipment used to gather and process food is also made from native plants.

Virtually every part of a plant was used – flowers, seeds, leaves, stalk, branches, trunk, and root. While women focused on gathering and processing goods, there were also special plants that were only gathered and processed by men.



Acquiring needed medicine meant finding the right plant for the specific ailment. Many desert plants have medicinal value. Plants were also used for tools, weapons, and clothing. They were also used for cleansers, dyes, and paint for rock art. Some special plants were used in sacred rituals and ceremonies.

Diana will be going over the major plants used by our Native communities and will have illustrations of all the key plants. She will have a display of many of the crafts and foods used by local Natives. She will also have a selection of books for sale at discounted prices.

Important Information You'll Want to Know

- January, along with July, is a month when you may show plants in plastic nursery pots. Judges will judge the plant only, not the pot or staging. Of course, plants and pots still need to be clean and dry.
- **Look for brag table guidelines on page 13. New members will find this especially useful.**
- Last month you read a bit about the history of our PCSS library. We received a letter from Sean Visintainer, Head, Special Collections, Cal State University San Marcos stating that our books are now part of the university's special collections. He wrote that PCSS members are welcome to research in any of their collections by appointment. PCSS members are welcome to email the title(s) of the work they are interested in accessing to Special Collections at archives@csusm.edu.
- **Sherman Blench needs 4" and 6" plastic pots to pot up plants for sale at our Spring Festival in April. Those plants will be donated for club sales. If you have any extra used pots she can use, please bring them to the January meeting. For questions, email Palomarcactus.org.**
- PCSS board officers were elected at the holiday party. The slate of candidates was President: Joe Cobb, Treasurer: Teri Shusterman (returning), and Director at Large: Julian Duval. All candidates were elected by acclamation of members present.

Thank you, GENEROUS MEMBERS!

DONATIONS TOWARDS 2026 EXPENSES

Crassula Level

(\$100 - \$249.99)

David & Debi Buffington

Brian Youens Linda Case

Charlyne Barad Robert Kopfstein

Debra Lee Baldwin Hisako Coombes

Sandy Wetzel - Smith Cy Chadley



Ocotillo Level

(\$250 - \$499.99)

Candy & Jerry Garner

Lynn Cahill & Joe Cobb

John & Chris Barkley

Julian & Leslie Duval

Saguaro Level

(\$500 & Above)

Mike & Nancy Peters

Russel Ray

Anonymous -3

THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY PRESENTS
2026 WINTER SHOW & SALE
Saturday February 14th, 2026
at the Casa del Prado in Balboa Park

See incredible out-of-this-world succulent and cacti from around the globe and enjoy rare plants and pottery from dozens of plant vendors and local artisans. Best of all, **FREE ADMISSION** and early-bird access for members!

TIMES & DATES

FRIDAY

noon — 8pm

noon — 7pm

vendor setup times in Room 101

members, bring in your show plants!

SATURDAY

8am — 10am

10am — 4pm

9am — 11 pm

11am — 4pm

final show plant setup

Show open to the public

Sale Room 101 open EARLY to members only

Sale Room 101 open to the public

The show is open to anyone who grows succulent plants, and there is no limit to the number of entries per class or number of classes entered!

HOLIDAY PARTY RECAP

Photos by Lorie Johansen, Brita Mille, Charlyne Barad

Page assembly by Charlyne Barad and Brita Miller. Captions by Brita Miller

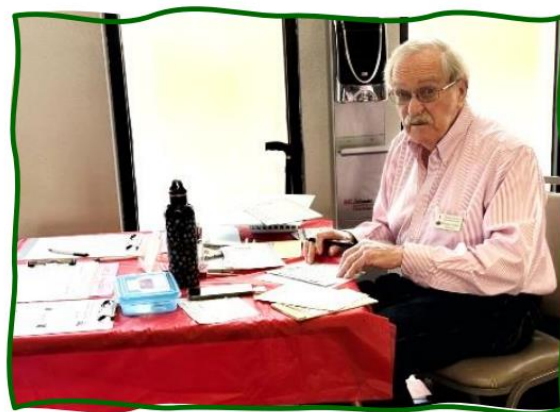
What a celebration it was! Many thanks to everyone that brought so much luscious food to share. A special thanks to Eleanore and Lorie for cooking the turkey, and to Eleanore for making her famous gravy, managing food contributions, and keeping the kitchen running smoothly. Thanks to Brita for managing room set up design and set up Saturday morning. Thanks to all the members who worked hard in the kitchen so we could enjoy a delicious meal! Thanks to Annie and the rest of her team for picking out and bringing in the wonderful gift plants. Thanks to Charlyne for making the little succulent centerpieces and to Sherman for bringing the pretty light-up bottles for decorations. Huge thanks go to everyone who came early to set up and to those who stayed to clean up. All together the party was a spectacular event and loads of fun for us all!



Bonnie and Bill DiAngelo,
always with a ready smile.



Jeff McNair in the Christmas spirit.



Richard, our membership chair,
greet party goers.



Charlyne's festive
table decorations.



Sherman Blench, Art Schadeberg and Harold
Dunn in the kitchen. Looks like Lois Walag
was too busy to look up and say cheese.



Marlene Walder and Sherman decorating the buffet



New member, Elle Schubert, enjoying her first PCSS holiday party.



Robert managed to be first in line.



Richard Miller, Keith Umbreit, Brian Magone, Bonnie and Bill DiAngelo



Marlene and Sandy Wetzel-Smith are looking over the yummy dessert table and Hanukkah decorations.



Eli Stuart, our youngest member, and a great volunteer, chatting with John and Chris Barley.



Liz Rozycki, Teri Shusterman, Stacy Day, Libbi Salvo, and Kathie Hile having a good time catching up on the past year.





Members enjoyed the feast and each other's company.



Art and his wife, Kym made the yummy soup.



Jerry Garner & Bill O'Daniel in deep discussion.



Is Brita having a conversation with the tree?



Lorie with Stan Yalof, one of our oldest members.



Annie Morgan and Lynn Cahill surveying the gift plants.



Russel Ray gave his special calendars to the top 10 brag winners!



It's PCSS Renewal Time!

For those of us who love PCSS (and who doesn't!) it's time to renew our memberships. Annual dues remain \$35.00—a bargain for a year of cactus pleasure & succulent excitement!

Dues were due by December 31 but you still may pay now.

You may pay by cash, check or credit card at meetings or
send a check by mail to: PCSS, P.O. Box 840, Escondido, CA 92033-0840

For those who would like to make a tax-deductible donation to
Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society (a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)
we have three levels:

Crassula \$100

Ocotillo \$250

Saguaro \$500

With donors' permission, we will honor them with their names published in
our monthly Newsletter, the *Cactus Courier*.

Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus & Succulent Club

Membership Application – Please ✓ a category ~ New Member ____ **OR** Renewal ____

____ Annual Dues w/email newsletter ~ \$35 ____ Annual Dues after June 30th ~ \$18
____ Additional Household Members ~ \$5 each ____ Engraved PCSS Name Badge ~ + \$8

NEW! Tax-Deductible Donation

____ Crassula Level ~ \$100	- benefit = $\frac{1}{2}$ off annual membership
____ Ocotillo Level ~ \$250	- benefit = 1 year free membership
____ Saguaro Level ~ \$500	- benefit = 2 years free membership

____ Permission to list donor's name(s) in newsletter by category. Amounts will not be listed.

PCSS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. A receipt showing your deduction will be emailed to you.

Payment: Cash ____ Check ____ Charge ____ Total = \$ ____



Please Print! We must be able to read it!

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Preferred Phone _____ Home _____ Mobile _____ Office _____
Email _____

Membership Directory: Please ✓ which, if any, we may include: ____ City ____ Phone # ____ Email **OR** ____ None

Make checks payable to PCSS. Credit cards accepted at meetings. Please bring this form & check or cash to a meeting, or mail it in to: **Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society or PCSS ~ P.O. Box 840, Escondido, CA 92033**

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Echinopsis

by Russel Ray



Echinopsis is a genus of cacti native to South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay). They thrive in desert grasslands, shrubland, and in situations where the soil is sandy or gravelly, such as the sides of hills in the crevices of rocks. Common names include hedgehog cactus, sea-urchin cactus, and Easter lily cactus. They are remarkable for the size, tube length (up to eight inches long), and beauty of their trumpet-shaped flowers.

As of November 2025,

according to **Plants of the World Online**, the genus *Chamaecereus*, *Lobivia*, *Soehrensia*, and *Trichocereus* have been subsumed into *Echinopsis*, resulting in a genus of about 80 species, ranging from large and treelike types to small globose cacti.

Plants can bloom multiple times during the March through August growing season, especially if fed with a low-nitrogen, high-potassium cactus fertilizer every six weeks. The greatest flush of flowers usually is the first flush in the spring. Most species bloom at night, and the flowers usually last for just a day although there are some species where the flowers remain open for 36 hours.

Echinopsis should be grown in a warm location with protection from full sunshine during the summer. Grow plants in rich, porous soil and water regularly during the growing season. However, let the soil dry between waterings. Decrease water and withhold fertilizer during the winter rest period from fall to early spring. Optimal growing temperature is 75° to 85°F during the day and 65° to 70°F at night. Most plants are hardy to 30°F although some species survive the winter in snow.

If grown indoors, *Echinopsis* likes a southern exposure providing about four hours of direct sun daily. Fresh air circulation is important, as is humidity of about 30%. Humidity can be provided by setting the pot on a tray filled with pebbles and then filling the tray about half-way with water.

Repot *Echinopsis* when the plant crowds the container, and check for aphids, mealybugs, spider mites, scale, and fungus disease. Plants can be rot-prone if the roots remain constantly wet. Plants freely produce offsets but also are easily propagated from seed.



Plant names, top to bottom: *Echinopsis oxygona*, *Echinopsis famatimensis*, *Echinopsis hybrid*, *Echinopsis chamaecereus*, *Echinopsis* 'Maria Piazza'

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. (Point amounts for the Brag Table winners and Garden Brag will be changing in February.) You may send in photos of a maximum of two plants. Send submissions to: jmherskowitz@yahoo.com. SUBMISSION DATES IN 2026: 1st day of each month.



Faucaria tigrina
Pauline Lien Wong



Echeveria 'Moana Loa'
Pauline Lien Wong



Aloe vanbalenii
Lorie Johansen



Aloe thraskii
Lorie Johansen



Echeveria pulvinata
Joan Herskowitz



Mangave 'Lavender Lady'
Christina Sangster



Kalanchoe marmorata
Jamie Straub



Aloe 'David Verity'
Christina Sangster



Leucophyllum frutescens
(Texas Ranger)
Deborah Pearson



Garden Vignette
Deborah Pearson



Beaucarnia recurvata
Julian Duval



Euphorbia abdelkuri
Julian Duval



Senecio barbertonicus (top)
Crassula ovata (right)
Lottie Foster



Yucca rostrata
Kim & Art Schadeberg



Aloe hercules
Kim & Art Schadeberg



Bilbergia distachia
(bromeliad)
Tom McCarter



Aloe hercules
Tom McCarter



Mammillaria spinosissima
Lynn Cahill



Agave 'Blue Glow'
Charlyne Barad



Euphorbia heterophylla
Charlyne Barad



Aloe hybrid
Sherman Blench



Aechmea hybrid (bromeliad)
Lynn Cahill



Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi
Bill Modi



Rhipsalis pilocarpa
Lois Walag



Mammillaria laudii subducta
Kathy McNair



Ferocactus wislizeni
Kathy McNair



Gasteria acinacifolia
Joan Herskowitz



Agave victoriae reginae
Jeff McNair



Fouquieria macdougalii
Jeff McNair

2026 GUIDELINES FOR BRAG TABLE & GARDEN BRAG

Each month members can share their plants in two ways.

- 1 - The **Brag Tables** at regular meetings and at the show tables at our Spring & Fall Festivals.
- 2 - The **Home Garden Brag** in our newsletter is for sharing plants that bloom in between meetings or are too large or heavy to carry to a meeting. Entries are due by the 1st of each month.

➤ **CATEGORIES:** Cacti, Succulents, Dish Gardens, & Plant of the Month.

➤ **LEVELS:** Plants will be judged at each level in each category. Levels are:

- **NOVICE:** for beginning growers who have won 10 blue ribbons or fewer. Use **GREEN** entry slips.
- **INTERMEDIATE:** for collectors beyond Novice, but not yet Advanced. Use **YELLOW** entry slips.
- **ADVANCED:** for the long-term collector whose plants are exceptional. Use **WHITE** entry slips.

All plants MUST be in place and labeled by 11:30am to be eligible for judging.

~ There will be members there to help with categories and plant names.

~ Entries must be in the possession of exhibitors for at least six months before showing.

~ One plant per pot unless entered as a dish garden.

~ Plants must be clean and healthy - no insects and disease, and should have top dressing. No wet plants!

~ Members may enter up to five plants at the Brag Tables, and two plants for Garden Brag - each month

~ You may show a nice plant in a terra cotta, ceramic or decorative plastic pot.

* Judges consider how containers and staging affect the overall presentation in their decisions.

* Twice a year, January and July, judges will ignore the plant's pot and staging and judge strictly on a plant's merits. During those two months only, you may show in a clean plastic nursery pot.

➤ **GARDEN BRAG - for the Newsletter**

This non-judged category is for sharing plants too large or heavy to bring in, or that bloom in between meetings. This is also the place to share special, attractive, smallish sections of your C & S garden as members love to see what others have done to give them ideas for their own gardens.

Send photos to Joan Herskowitz @ jmherkowitz@yahoo.com. Include your name, and the plant's name(s.)

Please make sure the plants names are spelled correctly and check the spelling online as needed so Joan doesn't have to. Photos may be cropped and will be used at the discretion of the newsletter editors.

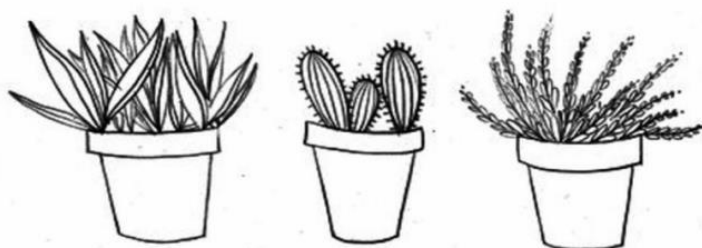
➤ **Point Structure for Entries & Winners**

- **Brag Table Entries** - 1st place = 3 pts ~ 2nd place = 2 pts ~ 3rd place = 1 pt + 2 pts for entering
- **Garden Brag Photos** - 2 points for each photo published

Note: Occasionally, the PCSS Board may request that a member move up to the next level (i.e., from Novice to Intermediate), because of the excellent quality of their plants. This is a compliment and is done to keep the competition level fair and not dissuade other members from entering their plants.

➤ **GIFT PLANTS**

Members who earn 10+ points will receive a gift plant at our December Holiday Party! Those with the most points will get first choice, so the more plants you bring in, the more likely you will receive the gift plant of your choice.



El Cajon Library

January Plant of the Month

Sponsored by Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

Mammillaria spinosissima subspecies pilcayensis

by Russel Ray

Mammillaria spinosissima is native to Guerrero and Morelos, states in Mexico southwest of Mexico City, at elevations of 5,200 to 6,200 feet. *Mammillaria spinosissima subspecies pilcayensis* (picture ◀ of plant loaned by Russel Ray) is named for its occurrence in the Barranca de Pilcaya, in Guerrero.

Mammillaria spinosissima subspecies pilcayensis prefers low humidity and full, filtered sun. When grown in cultivation, they should be planted in well-draining soil and watered sparingly—no more than every two weeks—and kept nearly dry during the winter months. Propagation is by offsets or by seeds sown in the early spring. Temperature preference is between 34°F and 43°F. They require no pruning and make good patio and container plants. They are disease resistant but are susceptible to pests such as mealybugs. This plant has gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit.

Plants are solitary or sparsely branched from the base. Stems can grow up to 20 inches long, and while they start out as columnar stems, as they grow longer and heavier, they often start to grow horizontally and can even hang down. There are about 30 central and



radial spines which are pale, glassy yellow and up to a quarter of an inch long, sometimes with a brown tip. The flowers are purple-pink and grow in the typical mammillaria ring.

The plant exhibited here is 8 years old, and was purchased as a solitary head. It gets 8-16 hours of sun each day, and annual rainfall from 15" (2022) to 70" (2019, yes 70", not a typo). Soil is a 40/60 mix of organic/pumice. Because my plant is outside with no protection whatsoever, this is one of my few pots that has a drainage hole. I do not fertilize it, leaving it to rainfall to do that. It has survived low temperatures of 28°F for three consecutive nights and highs of 100°F to 118°F for 41 consecutive days in 2020.



2026 MEETING DATES, PLANT OF THE MONTH, SPEAKERS & TOPICS

Dates	Plant of the Month*	Speakers & Topics
Jan 24	Echinopsis 	Diana Lindsay, Plants in Anza Borrego used by native peoples
Feb 28	Hoya 	Marie Sinovich, Desert animals of Anza Borrego
Mar 28	Aloe 	Jeff Moore, Succulent road trip — Gardens from San Francisco to San Diego
Apr 25	None	Spring Festival/Sale
May 23	None	Picnic at Palomar College
Jun 27	Opuntia 	Woody Minnich, Pachypodiums
Jul 25	String succulents 	Nan Sterman, California-Dreamin' — Gardening in a Mediterranean climate
Aug 22	Euphorbia 	Antonio Rangel, The gardens at Palomar College — Landscaping for education and conservation
Sep 26	Astrophytum 	Dylan Zoller, Jewels of the Brazilian highlands
Oct 24	None	Fall Festival/Sale
Nov 21	Schlumbergera 	Cristy Brenner, Cactus adventure in Argentina and Chile
Dec 19	None	Holiday Party 

***We are doing something different this year in that the plant of the month has been chosen from lists of birth plants (similar to birth stones).**



PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Board Members & Officers

President - Joe Cobb president@palomarcactus.org
Vice President - Sherman Blench
Treasurer - Teri Schusterman treasurer@palomarcactus.org
Secretary, Meeting Clean-up - Moni Wailblinger
Director at Large, Assistant to the Treasurer - Liz Rozycki
Director at Large - Julian Duval
Director at Large - Martina Reed

Other Volunteers

Membership - Richard Miller membership@palomarcactus.org
Event Coordinators - Brita Miller, Charlyne Barad eventcoordinator@palomarcactus.org
Monthly Meeting Set-up, SDCSS Liaison - Brita Miller
Guest & New Member Ambassadors - Brita Miller, Lorie Johansen

Brag Table Set Up - Libbi Salvo, Jamie Straub, Barbara Raab, Annie Morgan
Brag Table Judging Team - Mike Nelson, Wanda Mallen, Debra Lee Baldwin, Annie Morgan
Brag Table Photographer - Charlyne Barad, Libbi Salvo, Annie Morgan
Brag Table Point Tally - David Buffington, Garden Brag Point Tally - Annie Morgan

Refreshments - Sandy Wetzel-Smith, Bruce Barry
Program Coordinator, Monthly Plant Auction - Robert Kopfstein
Meetings Sales - Teri Shusterman, Liz Rosycki
Meeting AV - Russel Ray
Benefit Drawing - Martina Reed, Annie Morgan

Exchange Table - Brian Magone
Name Badge Drawing - Julie Kort
Additional Meeting Volunteers - Sheila Grasso, Graciela Conde
Publicity (print) - Tom McCarter, (online) - Lou Harris
Website & Club Email Management - Annie Morgan, Russel Ray, info@palomarcactus.org

Newsletter Team

Annie Morgan - Coordinator, Charlyne Barad - Co-Coordinator,
Annie Morgan & Charlyne Barad - Brag Table Pages
Joan Herscowitz - Garden Brag Pages
Brita Miller - Spring & Fall Festivals, Holiday Party Recaps, misc.
Russel Ray - Plant of the Month, Library Plant of the Month, Collator & Distributor
Winston Chan - Miscellaneous Pages
Wanda Mallen - Proofreader

