

Cactus Courier

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

Volume 72, Number 3

March 2026

What's Inside



Club Info.....	1
March Speaker	1, 2
Spring Festival Info	1, 3
Donors' Tribute	1
Keith Umbreit Service	2
February Brag Table Winners.....	4-7
February Meeting Recap	8
Plant of the Month	9
Home Garden Brags	10-12
El Cajon Library POM.....	13
CSSA Webinar Info.....	14
Meetings, Speakers, & Info	15, 16



to Monterey, Big Sur, San Luis Obispo, then Lotusland and Aloes in Wonderland in Santa Barbara. He would then continue to some of the famous gardens in LA, and finish in San Diego with private gardens/collections and wholesale growers. The presentation shows beautiful images of private gardens, nurseries and botanic gardens, showcasing primarily succulents along with some other xerophytic plants.

Jeff Moore will talk about Succulent Road Trip: Gardens from San Francisco to San Diego

Jeff created this presentation as a commercial to urge plant enthusiasts to follow a loose plan for a California trip, flying into the Bay Area, spending a few days visiting the Ruth Bancroft and Berkeley Botanic Gardens, a few local collectors, and nurseries, Then he would proceed down the coast, with stops in Monterey, then

Meeting Fourth Saturday, March 28 11:00 am—3:00 pm
Grace Presbyterian Church, 1450 E. Vista Way, Vista

- Brag Plant Table closes to entries at 11:30 am.
- Benefit drawing, exchange tables, and auction will all be held.
- Plant of the month: **Aloe**

PCSS RECOGNIZES THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

MIKE AND PATTI NELSON FOR THEIR CRASSULA LEVEL DONATION TO THE CLUB

NEW MEMBER, JEREMY LEON GUERRERO

RETURNING LONG-TIME MEMBER, MICHAEL REGAN

Important Request for Members Showing Plants at Meetings and Shows

To ensure that your prize-winning plants get photographed and you get credit for showing, please leave your plants on the tables until 2:00 pm. That will give members time to admire your carefully grown beauties.

If you must leave the meeting early, please leave your entry slips on the table where your plant was. We keep track of the points you earn with the entry slips. That's true whether or not your plant wins a prize.

THANK YOU!

There's only a month and a half until Spring Festival!

Let's all talk it up, post on social media, tell your friends, shout from the rooftops!

Tell everyone that there will be awesome plants at bargain prices,
super pots and other plant-related items!

There will be a great plant show and three interesting presentations!

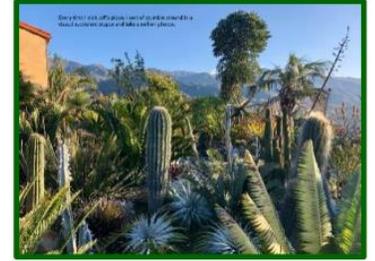
March Speaker: Jeff Moore. Succulent Road Trip from San Francisco to San Diego



The idea for this presentation came after Jeff made a round of talks at cactus clubs in New England. He learned that whenever those succulent enthusiasts wanted to take a snowbird escape trip to see some of their favorite cacti and succulents, they almost always thought first of visiting Arizona.

After making multiple California speaking trips in support of his books, Jeff gained an even greater appreciation for the quality of growers, nurseries and botanical gardens in the Golden State. For that reason, he created this PowerPoint presentation as a commercial to promote growers, gardens, and succulent sites in California.

Jeff became interested in succulents in the early '80s after seeing a display of Rudy Lime's bonsai succulents at the San Diego County Fair. He sold succulents in his spare time at street fairs and farmer's markets before opening Solana Succulents, primarily a succulent retail nursery, in 1992. He used to do a bit of succulent landscaping but has phased out of doing much of that, aside from some consulting. He wrote his first book in 2014, followed by three more, then a book on Agaves co-written with Jeremy Spath, and another book on Dudleyas, co-written with Jeremy Spath and Kelly Griffin. At present he is working on a book about aloes in California cultivation.



Memorial Service for Keith Umbreit

A nice contingent of PCSS members attended the service, as did a group of members of the Wranglers square dance club where Keith was a member. Many family members and friends – some of decades-long duration – spoke about Keith. There were lots of funny comments, especially about his garage, which apparently was a cross between a museum and Fibber Magee's closet! Below are a few photos from the day.



Pictured left to right: Keith's nephews Ian and Paul, Ian's friend from medical school, Patrick





12th Annual Spring Festival Show & Sale Saturday, April 25, 2026

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. We will again have the People's Choice Award for each level and this year we will also have a Best in Show award, decided by the public! *If you have questions contact Charlyne at charbar6000@gmail.com 858-922-3380.*

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%. *You **MUST** sign-up to reserve space if you would like to sell. Contact Brita at britamiller1@gmail.com 858-776-7216.*

PLANT DONATIONS - If you donate plants to PCSS, 100% of the proceeds go to the club. Make sure the plants are disease/pest free and in clean containers. Price them using sticks with the price (*minimum \$4*) and PCSS written on them. There will be free sticks at the March meeting or you can use plastic or wooden sticks of your own. If you don't want to bring the plants to the church and you live near Vista, Lorie will be happy to pick them up. If you have any questions and/or want to donate, please contact *Lorie Johasen at Lorie@casavista.us 760-613-1934 or Sherman Blench sblench2022@gmail.com 760-522-2470.*

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. *Bring in your lunch-worthy goodies for our potluck.*

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:

- ~ Set-up Friday midday or Saturday set-up or take-down
- ~ Assist in show area
- ~ Assist in sales area - plant holding tables (sit-down job), etc.
- ~ Assist in presentation area
- ~ Security (sit-down job)
- ~ Kitchen
- ~ As needed

For more details or if you want to volunteer contact
Brita at britamiller1@gmail.com 858-776-7216.

Many thanks to those who have already signed up to help!!

DO YOU HAVE A CANOPY (to keep the customers, sellers and volunteers out of the sun)?

DO YOU HAVE TABLES WE CAN BORROW? Please contact Brita.

February Brag Table Winners

2026 February Brag Plant Winners

Novice Cactus

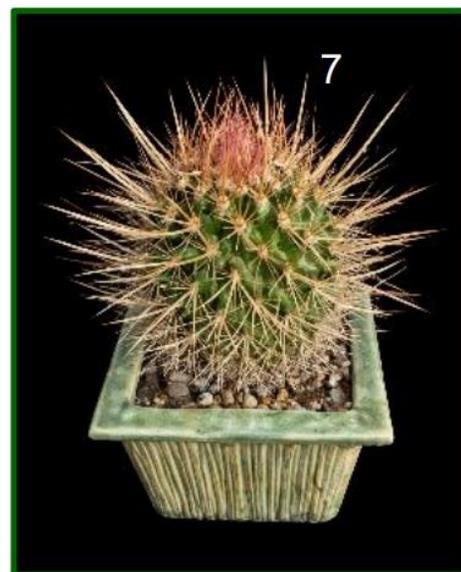
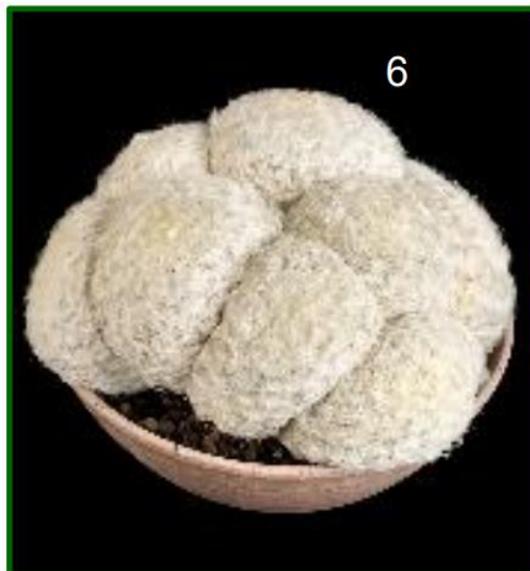
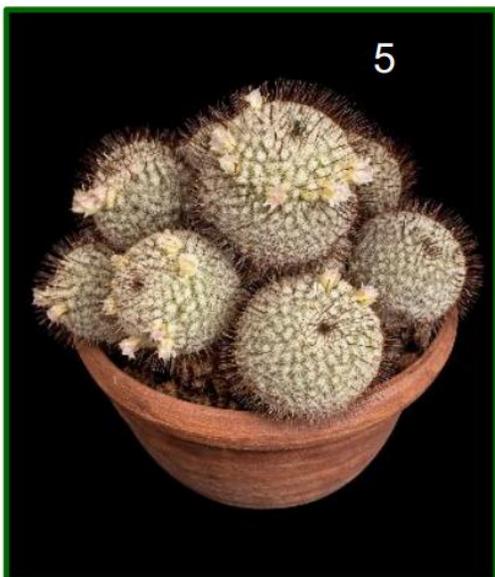
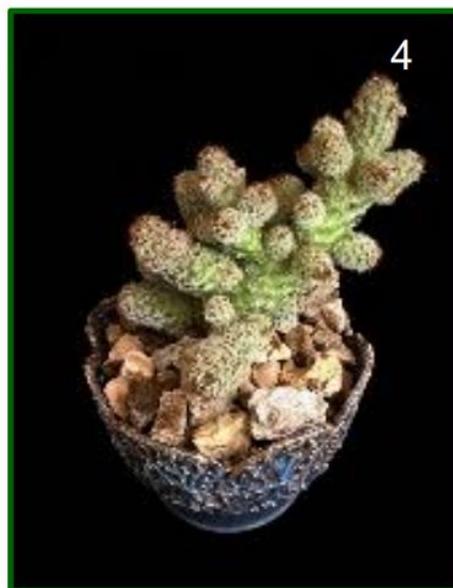
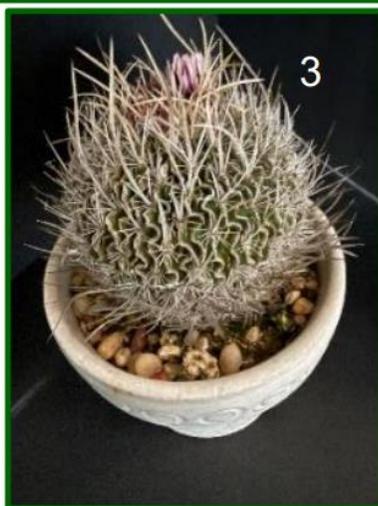
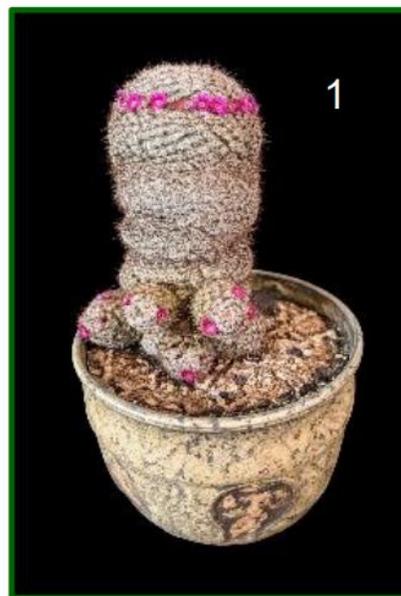
- 1st Lynn Cahill Mammillaria albilanata 1
2nd Lottie Foster Opuntia microdasys 2

Intermediate Cactus

- 1st Libbi Salvo Stenocactus multicosatus 3
2nd Libbi Salvo Mammillaria elongata 4

Advanced Cactus

- 1st Kathy McNair Mammillaria
 perezdelarosae 5
2nd Jeff McNair Mammillaria plumosa 6
2nd Candy & Jerry Garner Stenocactus
 multicosatus 7



February Brag Table Winners Continued

Advanced Cactus Continued

3rd Nike Nelson *Neoporteria nibus senilis* 8

Novice Succulent

1st Lynn Cahill *Agave stricta* v. *nana* 9

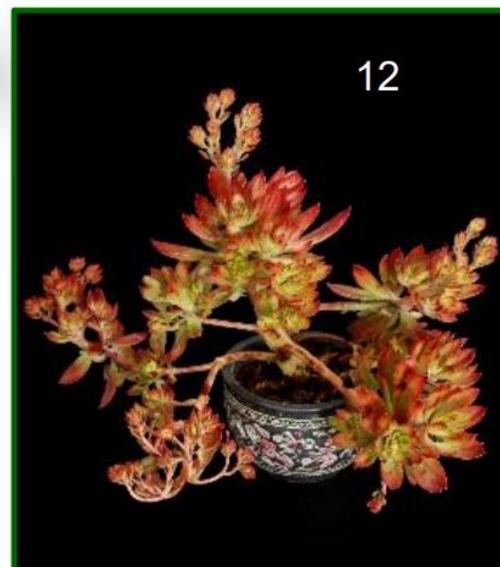
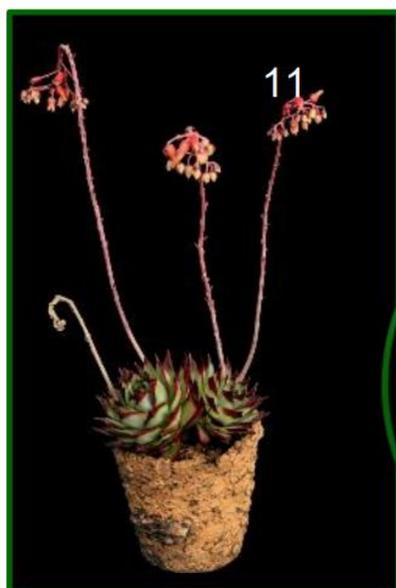
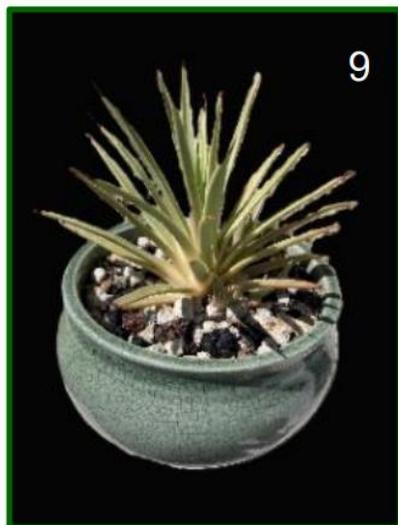
2nd Kristi DeTar *Haworthia retusa* 10

Intermediate Succulent

1st Patti Nelson *Haworthia decipiens* ssp. *virella* 11

2nd Patti Nelson *Echeveria agavoides*
'Ebony' 12

2nd Chris Barkley *Echeveria* 'Pulv-Oliver' 13



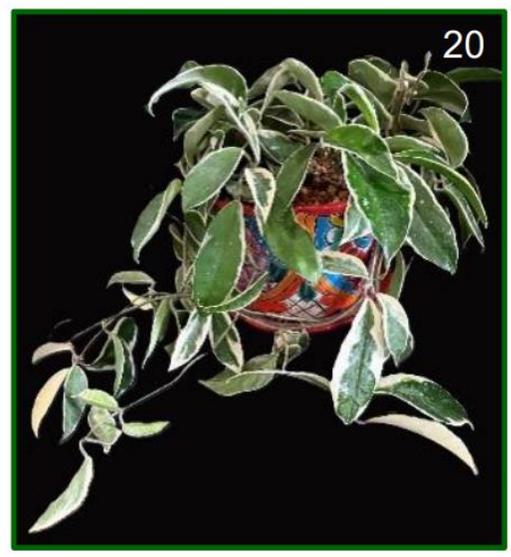
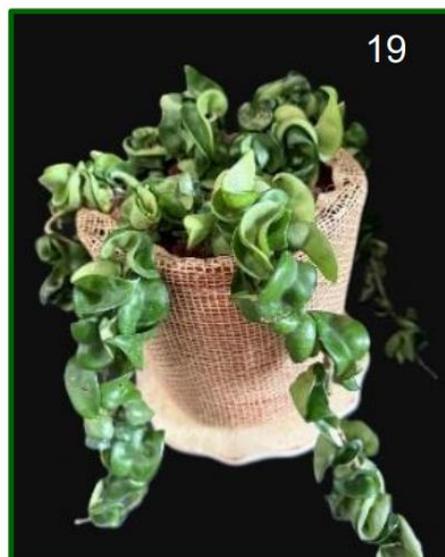
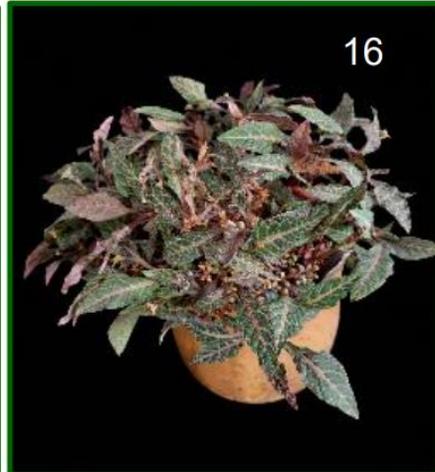
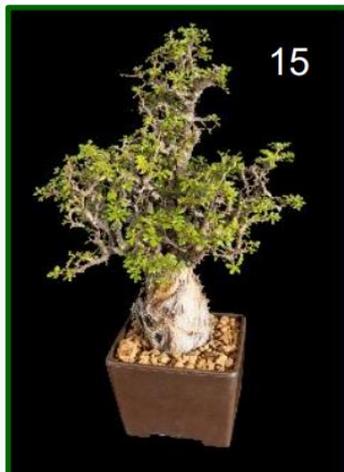
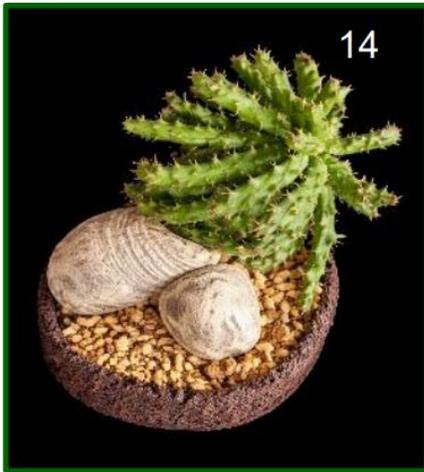
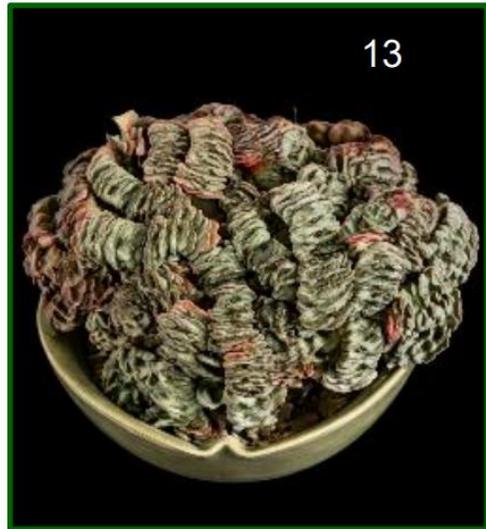
Brag Table Winners Continued

Advanced Succulent

- 1st Kathy McNair Haworthia truncata 13
2nd Julian Duval Euphorbia squarrosa 14
3rd Julian Duval Pachycormus discolor 15
3rd Candy & Jerry Garner Euphorbia francoisii 16

Plant of the Month – Intermediate

- 1st Lois Walag Hoya wayetii 17
2nd Lois Walag Hoya wayetii variegata 18
3rd Charlyne Barad Hoya carnososa v compacta 19
3rd Charlyne Barad Hoya carnososa v. tri-color 20



February Brag Table Winners Continued

Plant of the Month – Advanced

- 1st Wanda Mallen Hoya callistophylla 21
2nd Wanda Mallen Hoya 'Leland Joseph' 22
3rd Wanda Mallen Hoya latifolia albo 23

Dish/Bowl Garden - Novice

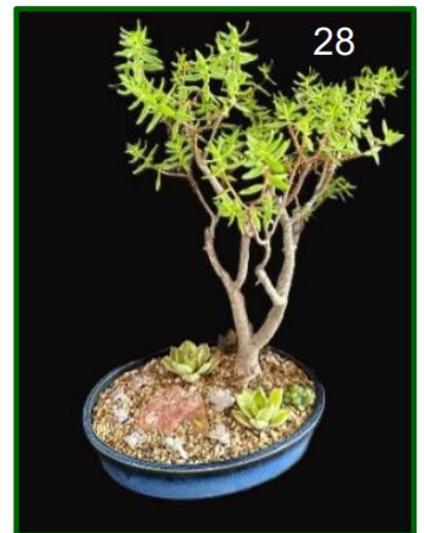
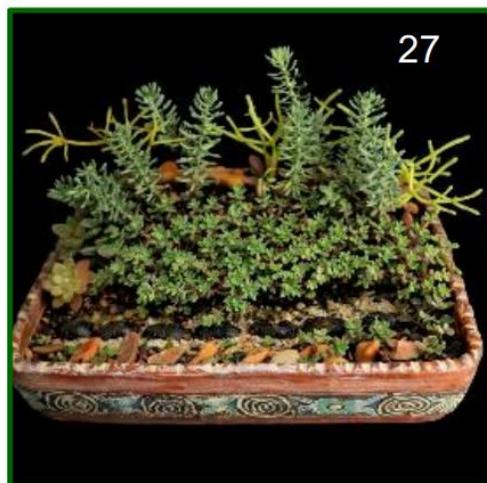
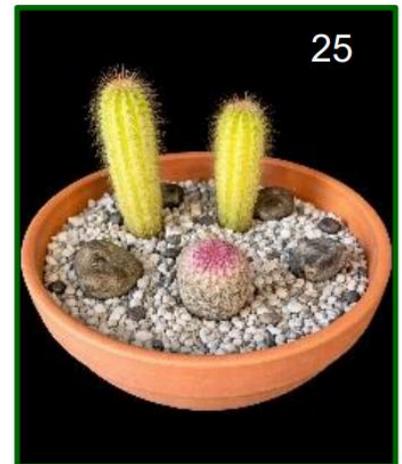
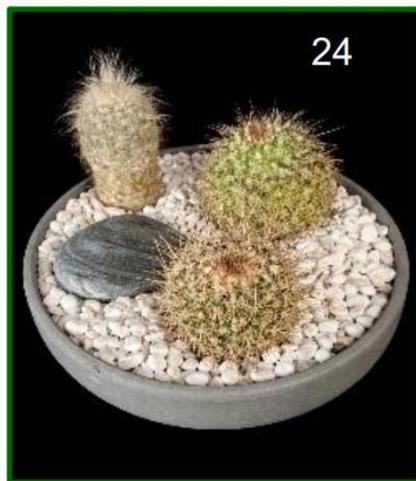
- 1st Suzi Harris Mammillara compressa,
Ferocactus townsendianus, Oreocersus 24
2nd (No photo or entry slip available)
3rd Lynn Cahill Stetsonia coryne
Echinocereus rigidissimus ssp. rubispinus 25

Dish/Bowl Garden - Intermediate

- 1st Libbi Salvo Dish Garden 26
2nd Charlyne Barad Dish Garden 27

Dish/Bowl Garden - Advanced

- Mike Nelson Dish Garden 28



February Meeting Recap



We began the February meeting by honoring Barbara for her years of dedicated service to PCSS as manager of our library. We thank you, Barbara!



As usual, the auction had many plants to tempt bidders.



SOLD!



Fortunately, someone bought this before it enveloped Lorie!



Dr. Marie Simovich talked about our local desert habitat and the ways organisms interact with each other and the environment.

DESERT COMMUNITY ECOLOGY

Plant and Animal interaction:

- Cactus flowers are large, cup shaped, and strong-smelling to attract and accommodate bats.
- Plants adapt to deter herbivores: spines, toxins – plants are toxic or bad tasting.
- Herbivores evolve to produce chemicals to detoxify, then plants evolve to make stronger toxins.
- Predator/prey interactions: Prey evolves to avoid predation. Predators evolve to get past prey's defenses.
- Animal adaptations for predator avoidance: diurnal – fewer predators, camouflage, warning colors, smells, and noises.
- Mimicry: harmless animals imitate harmful animals to avoid predation.
- Sensory adaptations for prey detection: pit organs detect heat/infrared to form image of prey. Tapetum lucidum in eyes stimulate retinal cells twice for keener low light vision. Additional olfactory organ produces keen sense of smell. Large auditory bullae produce sharp sense of hearing.
- Adaptations for capture: scorpions – neurotoxin varies by species, tarantulas – weak poison, tarantula hawk, wasp – female stings and paralyzes tarantula, lays its eggs in it, then larvae eat the tarantula.
- Rattlesnakes, pit vipers have retractable hypodermic fangs at front of mouth. Young cannot control amount injected. Some snakes have fangs at the rear of their mouths.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Aloe

by Russel Ray

Aloe is a genus containing over 650 species of flowering succulent plants, and about 75% of aloes are known for their medicinal and cosmetic properties as special soaps or other skin care products. The most widely known species is *Aloe vera* (picture →), cultivated as a standard source for assorted pharmaceutical purposes, and used both internally and externally as folk or alternative medicine; also included are *Aloe perryi* and *Aloe ferox* (picture ←). The Ancient

Greeks and Romans treated wounds with *Aloe vera*. In the Middle Ages, the yellowish liquid found inside the leaves was favored as a purgative. *Aloe perryi*, *Aloe barbadensis*, *Aloe ferox*, and hybrids of *Aloe ferox* with *Aloe africana* and *Aloe spicata*, are listed as natural flavoring substances in the US government Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. *Aloe variegata* has been planted on graves in the belief that this ensures eternal life.

Aloes are native to tropical and southern Africa, Madagascar, Jordan the Arabian Peninsula, India and various islands in the Indian Ocean (Mauritius, Réunion, Comoros, etc.). A few species have also become naturalized in other regions (Mediterranean, Australia, North and South America, Hawaiian Islands, etc.).

Most aloes have a rosette of large, thick, fleshy leaves; flowers typically are tubular, frequently yellow, orange, pink, or red. Flowers also are densely clustered and pendant at the apex of simple or branched, leafless stems. Many aloes appear to be stemless, with the rosette growing directly at ground level. Other varieties may have a branched or unbranched stem from which the fleshy leaves spring. Leaves vary in color from gray to bright green and are sometimes striped or mottled. Some aloes native to South Africa are tree-like (arborescent).

The circumscription of the genus has varied widely. Molecular phylogenetic studies, particularly from 2010 onwards, suggest that *Aloe* should be divided into more tightly defined genera. In 2014, John Charles Manning and coworkers produced a phylogeny in which *Aloe* was divided into six genera: *Aloidendron*, *Kumara*, *Aloiampelos*, *Aloe*, *Aristaloe*, and *Gonialoe*. *Agave americana* and *Kumara plicatilis* (picture →) used to be in the *Aloe* genus.

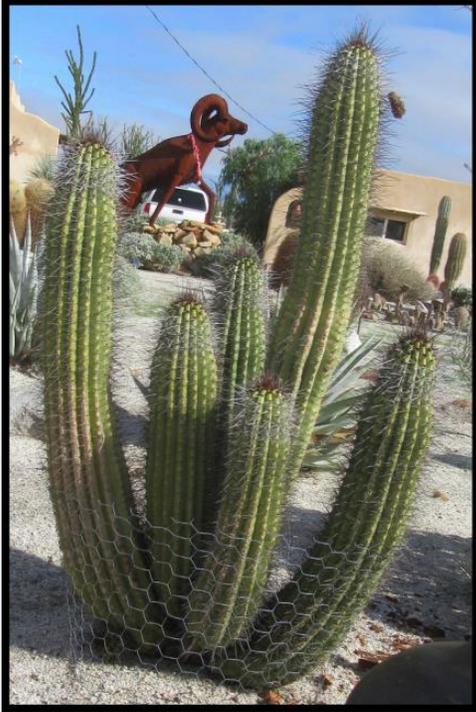
Aloes frequently are cultivated as ornamental plants both in gardens and in pots. Many aloes are highly decorative and are valued by succulent collectors, *Aloe polyphylla* (picture ←) coming immediately to mind.



HOME GARDEN BRAG

by Joan Herskowitz

Share an especially nice section of your garden, a plant that is in the ground, a plant that bloomed between meetings, or one that is too large to bring to the Brag Table. Earn 2 points for each published photo. You may send in a maximum of two photos. Send submissions to: jmherskowitz@yahoo.com. SUBMISSION DATES IN 2026: 1st day of each month.



Stenocereus thurberi

Jeff McNair



Stetsonia coryne

Jeff McNair

The above 2 photos were inadvertently left off the February newsletter.



Dyckia brevifolia

Tom McCarter



Aloe rupestris

Sherman Blench



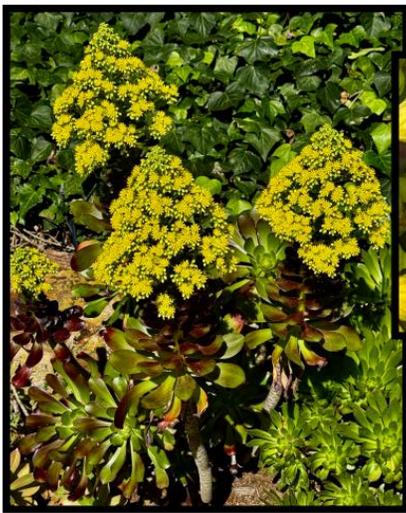
Cereus peruvianus

Chet Reed



Hoya pubicalyx 'SilverSplash'

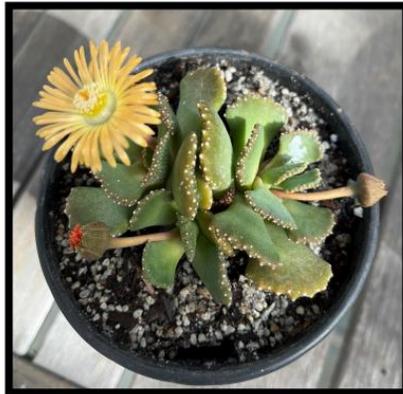
Lois Walag



Aeonium hybrid
(a magnet for bees)
Annie Morgan



Pilosocereus pachycladus
Chet Reed



Aloiopsis malherbei
Joan Herskowitz



Pleiospilos nelii in flower
& other mesembs
Joan Herskowitz



Gardens with agave, euphorbia,
aeonium, trichocereus (top) & other
columnar cacti (bottom).
Deborah Pearson



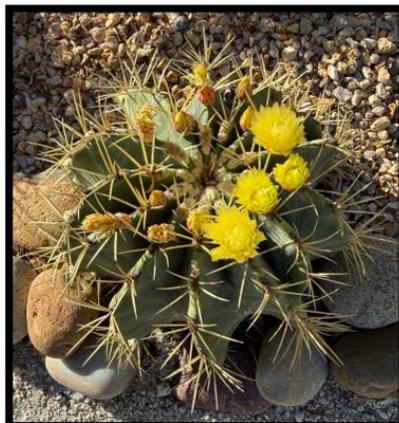
Euphorbia milii hybrid
Sally Linedeman



Schlumbergera truncata
Sally Linedeman



Mammillaria bombycina
Lynn Cahill



Ferocactus glaucescens
Kathy McNair



Aeonium canariense
Stacy Day



Espostoa lanata
Lynn Cahill



Aeonium 'Sunburst'
f. *crestata*
Stacy Day



Aloe 'Erik Red & White'
Kristie DeTar



Opuntia basilaris
Kathy McNair



Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi



Aloe 'Superman'
Christine Sangster



Aloe castanea
Christine Sangster



Euphorbia horrida
Russel Ray



Dasyliiron sp.
(Left) Base of plant
(Right) 8 ft. flowering stalk
Martina Reed



(Left) **Pachycereus pringlei**
Jeff McNair



Ferocactus cylindraceus
Jeff McNair

El Cajon Library

Plant of the Month

Sponsored by Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

Mammillaria elongata cv. *Kopper King*

by Russel Ray

The Plant of the Month is *Mammillaria elongata* cv. *Kopper King*. It is a nursery-produced cultivar.

The natural *Mammillaria elongata* is a native of Hidalgo, Guanajuato, and Queretaro in central Mexico. Possibly the most common *Mammillaria* found naturally, it occurs in more variations than any other *Mammillaria* species. It commonly comes in many color and spine variations and flowers profusely between late winter and early summer. Flowers are a dainty white or pale yellow. It typically grows to about six inches tall by twelve inches side and consists of densely packed clusters of elongated oval stems. It has been awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit.

This is a popular and easy cactus species. It will form large clumps with hundreds of offsets if given time and grown properly. It is especially suited for window sill and dish gardens. Water regularly from spring through fall, but overwatering can result in root rot. Soil should be moderately dry between waterings. In winter, keep dry or water only enough to keep the plants from shrivelling. Use pot with good drainage and a very porous potting media. Newly potted plants should not be fertilized for about a year, while established plants should be fertilized each spring with a high potassium fertilizer. It is quite frost resistant if kept dry. Can tolerate full sun outside with some afternoon shade. It needs bright light inside to encourage tight growth and flowering.



The clumps of young plants at the base of the main stem can be removed at any time of the year, and it also can be grown quite easily from seed.

The plant on display here belong to Russel Ray.

March Webinar
Use of Scent Detection Dogs for Rare Plant Monitoring

Conservation Forum Immediately Following the Webinar



Learn how detection dogs are helping protect rare plants, plus insights on propagation, seed studies, plant salvage, an species reintroduction with Steven Blackwell of the Desert Botanic Garden

This webinar offers a unique opportunity to learn about cutting-edge conservation strategies directly from a professional working at the forefront of rare plant preservation.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

(CONTROL-CLICK)

CONSERVATION FORUM

The Conservation Committee will host a **Conservation Forum immediately following the March webinar**, beginning at approximately **11:00 a.m. Pacific Time**. The same registration link may be used for both events. If you plan to attend only the Conservation Forum, you may simply join the session at **11:00 a.m. Pacific** rather than at 10:00 a.m.

Registration is through Zoom. Once registered, you will receive an email from Zoom with a link allowing you access to the webinar on March 21st. If you do not see the email, check your spam folder.

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 Shusterman treasurer@palomarcactus.org
Secretary - Moni Waiblinger
Director at Large, Assistant to the Treasurer - Liz Rozycki
Director at Large - Julian Duval
Director at Large - Martina Reed
Director at Large & SDCSS Liaison - Brita Miller



Other Volunteers

Event Coordinators - Charlyne Barad, Brita Miller eventcoordinator@palomarcactus.org
Spring & Fall Festivals Chair - Brita Miller
Show Chair - Charlyne Barad Plant Donations - Lorie Johansen Sales - Brita
Membership - Richard Miller membership@palomarcactus.org
Publicity (print) - Tom McCarter (online) - Lou Harris SDCSS Liaison - Brita Miller
Website & Club Email Management - Annie Morgan, Russel Ray
www.palomarcactus.org, info@palomarcactus.org

Monthly Meetings:

Monthly Meeting Set Up - Brita Miller, Lorie Johansen, Charlyne Barad
Monthly Meeting Clean Up - Brita Miller, Liz Rozycki, Moni Waiblinger, Gracelia Conde
Brag Table Set Up - Libbi Salvo, Jamie Straub, Barbara Raab
Brag Table Judging Team - Mike Nelson, Wanda Mallen, Debra Lee Baldwin, Annie Morgan
Brag Table Photographer - Charlyne Barad, Libbi Salvo
Brag Table Point Tally - David Buffington Garden Brag Point Tally - Annie Morgan
Refreshments - Sandy Wetzel-Smith, Bruce Barry
Program Coordinator, Plant Auction - Robert Kopfstein
Meetings Sales Cashiers - Teri Shusterman, Liz Rosycki
Meeting A/V - Russel Ray
Exchange Table - Brian Magone Benefit Drawing - Martina Reed
Visitor & New Member Ambassadors - Lorie Johansen, Brita Miller
Name Badge Drawing - Julie Kort
Additional Meeting Volunteers - Gracelia Conde, Stacy Day, Sherry Hunga-Moore

Newsletter Team:

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