

Cactus Courier

Newsletter of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society

The North San Diego County Cactus and Succulent Club

www.palomarcactus.org

Volume 72, Number 8

August 2026

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Meeting Fourth Saturday, August 22

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 and exchange tables and auction all will be held.
- Plant of the month: **Euphorbia**

PCSS Welcomes New Members

Mayra Christiansen

Anthony Moore

Jody Stone

Daniel Ward

Riley Ward

Latisha Reed

Patti Holden

Denise Neary

PCSS is grateful to a new
anonymous Saguaro level donor.
Thank you!



This Month's Speaker: Woody Minnich Pachypodiums and Other Fat (Caudiciform) Plants



The Genus Pachypodium is one of the most popular of all caudiciform genera. Pachypodiums are all old-world plants, coming mainly from Namibia, South Africa and Madagascar. The genus Pachypodium means having a short, thick or often succulent stem appearing like a platform. From this platform, or thick stem, the branches appear and are apically attached to this fat or caudiciform base.

Once appearing above the caudex (base), the branches stay thin and often radiate outward in multiple numbers. Pachypodiums also are recognized by the morphology of their flower, fruit, and seed. Along with the Pachypodiums, there are many other genera that develop a large swollen base, but they often branch from the base or side or top of the caudex. These other large water storing caudiciforms are frequently found growing side by side with many of the Pachys. Other fat plants include; Adansonia, Adenia, Adenium.

Woody will share photos from his trips to seven countries in the southern hemisphere; Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.



A huge PCSS THANK
YOU goes to our new
A/V team: Ken Brown
(SDCSS), Windy Chen,
& Laura Fish!

Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich Biography



Woody at LA Convention Center

Woody was about five years old when his dad introduced him to the cacti of the Mojave Desert. Soon after that, he started his own cactus garden, and a coveted collection of rare potted specimens. By the late 1960's he was a totally addicted cactophile, joining several cactus and succulent societies. He quickly dedicated himself to doing extensive field work to study and photograph the cacti and other succulents from all around the world. Because of his contributions to many American cactus and succulent societies, he received honorary life memberships from 14 clubs.

After college and grad school, Woody became a full-time teacher of graphic arts, photography and silkscreen at Antelope Valley High School in Lancaster, CA. Living in the high desert, he started roaming the entire Southwest United States. His focus was on rare and sometimes endangered species of cacti from California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado. After years of searching these amazingly beautiful regions, he turned his interest to the incredible diversity of cacti from Baja California and the mainland of Mexico. This seriously turned his focus to the genus *Mammillaria*. After almost 40 years of exploring all of Mexico he developed a giant documented collection of this genus. The Agaves, *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytums*, *Echeverias*, *Echinocereus*, *Fouquierias*, *Turbinicarpus*, and so on, were all soon to follow. While doing all this field work and photography, he developed a strong interest in the great majority of the other cactus and succulent genera from most of South America. Many trips to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru opened his eyes to countless other wonderful cactus and succulent such as: *Copiapoas*, *Gymnocalyciums*, *Neochilenias*, *Neoporterias*, *Rebutias*, *Sulcorebutias*, etc. His dedication to the study of all of these genera grew, prompting trips to South Africa, Namibia, Yemen, Socotra and Madagascar. He became a student of many of the succulent genera, including: *Adenia*, *Adenium*, *Aloe*, *Asclepiad*, *Chyphostemma*, *Conophytum*, *Crassula*, *Euphorbia*, *Lithops*, and many more, including the fantastic sculptural caudiciforms. He fell in love with them all!

He started his nursery, Cactus Data Plants, in 1975, where he grew almost all the above-mentioned genera. After numerous years as a grower and a field worker, he learned from these combined disciplines how important the nursery trade is to help in the conservation and protection of so many of our favorite species. As a passionate lover of all life, he has shared many of his world experiences through his photography and publications. Much of his work is published in various books and journals, including *Cactus Lexicon*, *The Xerophile*, *The Copiapoas*, *Mammillaria Handbook*, and others. During his 55 years of growing and studying all of these plants, he has been lucky enough to have gained a great deal of wisdom about their cultivation and conservation. Resulting from over 128 major field trips around the world, he has been fortunate enough to have discovered seven species and even had one provisionally named in his honor, *Mammillaria minnichii* nn. Working with friends Glass, Lau, and Reppenhagen in their field studies allowed him to share six other new species he had discovered. His cactus-crazy friends and other fellow explorers eventually described them all.

His favorite byproduct of numerous years of teaching and learning is sharing the many wonderful experiences he has enjoyed. The stories told and the photography we will see hopefully will make us true lovers of these plants, animals and their habitats. He hopes that together all of us will do our best to protect and preserve our amazing and precious wild world.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_Minnich

www.cactusdatapants.com

<http://g52p.2.vu/2> (images)



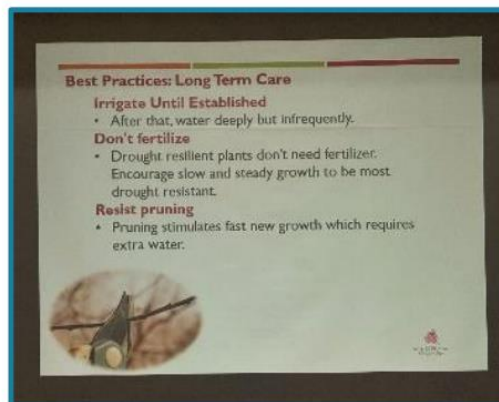
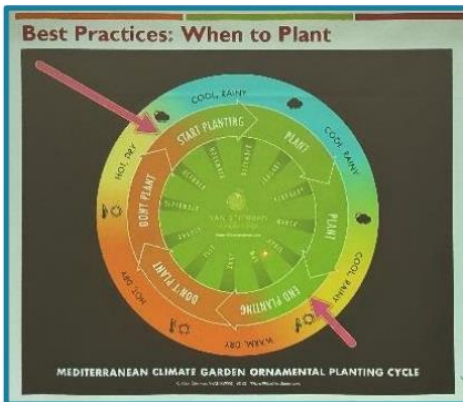
July Meeting Recap

At our July meeting, PCSS was pleased to host as our speaker Nan Stermann: plant expert, garden designer, teacher, author, botanist, award-winning journalist, TV host and producer. Nan talked about gardening in Southern California's Mediterranean climate. She encouraged us to intersperse our cactus and succulent gardens with other drought-tolerant plants for variety in color and texture.



Nan provided a highly informative talk and photo presentation. She also brought copies of her book *Hot Color Dry Garden* to sell and sign.

Our well-known and erudite speaker brought out a standing room only crowd!



We got good advice about when and where to plant, ways to care for our plants long-term, and best practices in irrigation for our dry climate.

Links:

Nan Stermann, WaterWise Gardener

www.WaterWiseGardener.com

Nan Stermann's Garden School

www.NanStermannGardenSchool.com

Instagram: [NanStermannWaterWise](https://www.instagram.com/NanStermannWaterWise)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WaterWiseGardener

A Growing Passion on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@agrowingpassion>

July Brag Table Winners

2026 July Brag Plant Winners

Novice Cactus

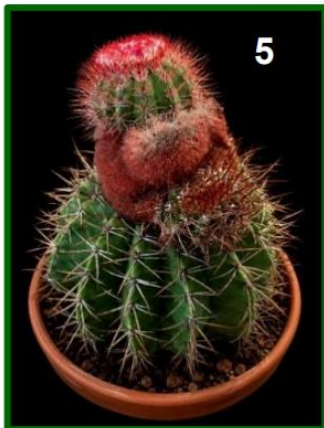
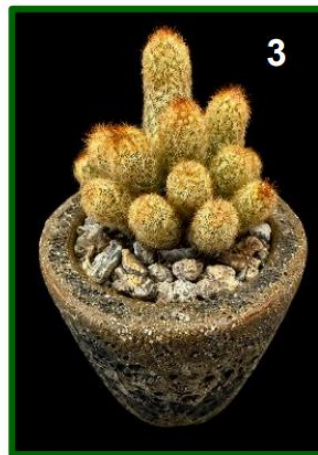
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 st Adam Rettig | Tephrocactus alexanderi – Best in Show 1 |
| 2 nd Lynn Cahill | Echinopsis oxygona (formerly E tubiiflora) 2 |
| 3 rd Elijah Stuart | Mammillaria elongata 3 |

Intermediate Cactus

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 st Harold Dunn | Leuchtenbergia principis 4 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|

Advanced Cactus

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 st Kathy McNair | Melocactus zehntneri 5 |
| 1 st Kathy McNair | Mammillaria geminispina 6 |
| 2 nd Kathy McNair | Mammillaria hahniana 7 |
| 2 nd Russel Ray | Mammillaria plumosa 8 |



July Brag Table Winners Continued

Advanced Cactus Continued

3rd Moni Waiblinger *Matucana madisoniorum* 9

3rd Moni Waiblinger *Stenocactus* sp. 10

Novice Succulent

1st Adam Rettig *Pseudobombax ellipticum* 11

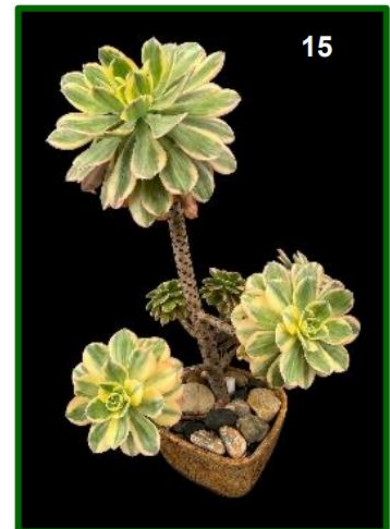
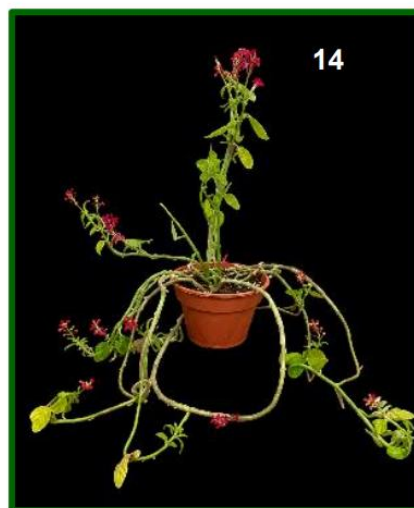
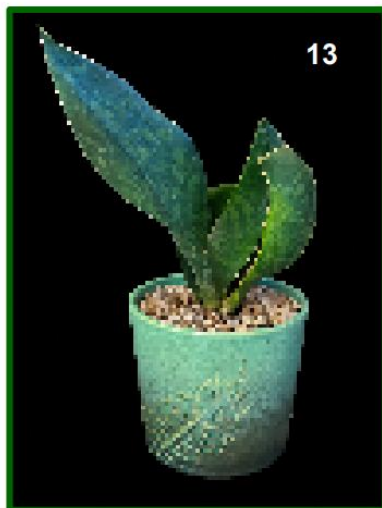
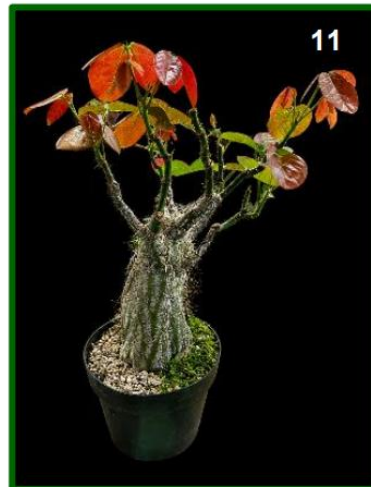
2nd Barbara Raab *Adromishus triflorus* 'Calico Hearts' 12

3rd Lynn Cahill *Dracaena masoniana* (formerly
Sansevieria 'Mason Congo' 13

Intermediate Succulent

1st Lois Walag *Euphorbia neococcinea* (formerly
Monadenium neococcinea) 14

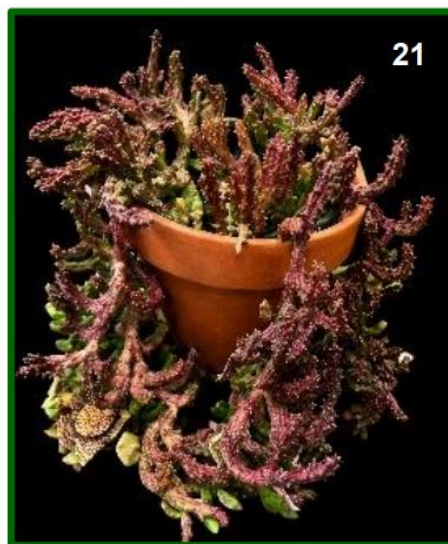
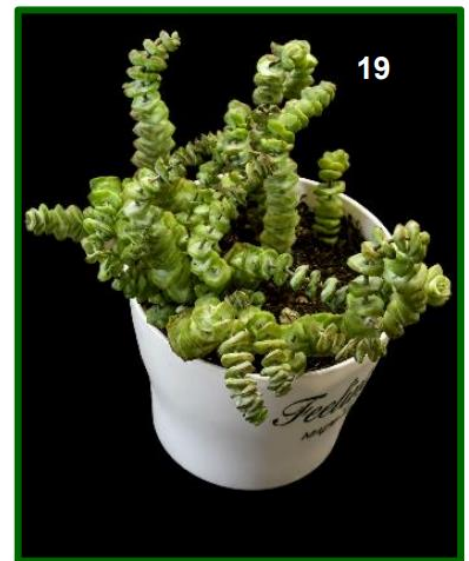
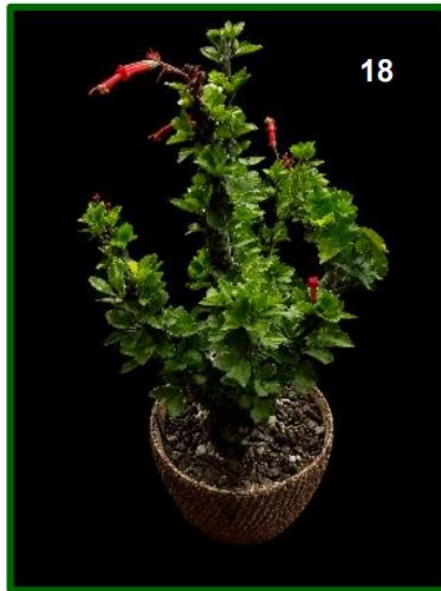
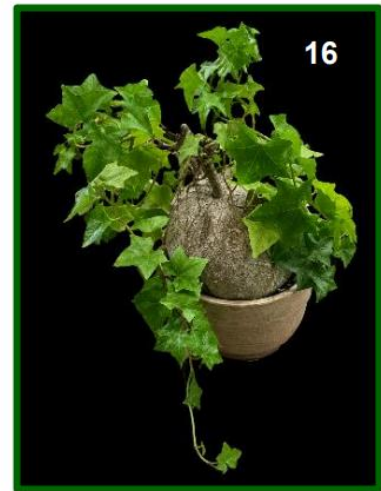
2nd Pauline Wong *Aeonium decorum* 'SunBurst' 15



July Brag Table Winners Continued

Advanced Succulent

1 st Jeff McNair	Gerrardanthus macrohizus	16
1 st Jeff McNair	Pseudobombax ellipticum	17
2 nd Jeff McNair	Fouquieria formosa	18
2 nd Russel Ray	Crassula marnieriana	19
2 nd Robert Kopfstein	Euphorbia viguieri ankarafantsiensis	20
2 nd Moni Waiblinger	Orbea variegata	21
2 nd Moni Waiblinger	Adenium obesum	22



July Brag Table Winners Continued

Plant of the Month – Advanced

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 st Lois Walag | Ceropegia linearis (String of hearts) 23 |
| 2 nd Lois Walag | Curio citroformis (String of tears) Formerly
Senecio citroformis 24 |
| 3 rd Adam Rettig | Senecio tropaeolifolius 25 |

Dish/Bowl Garden - Novice

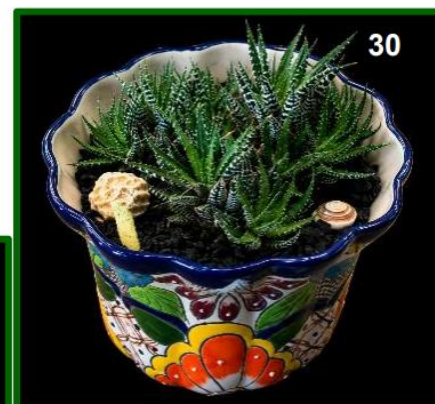
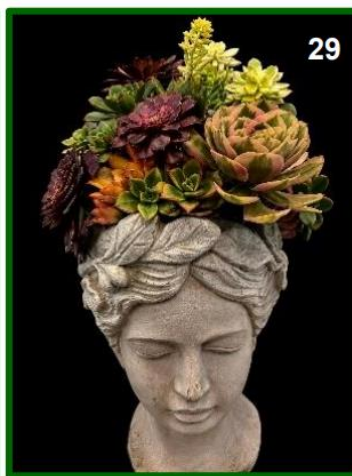
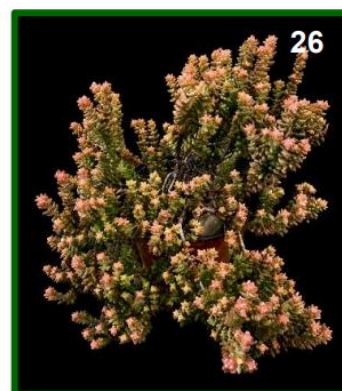
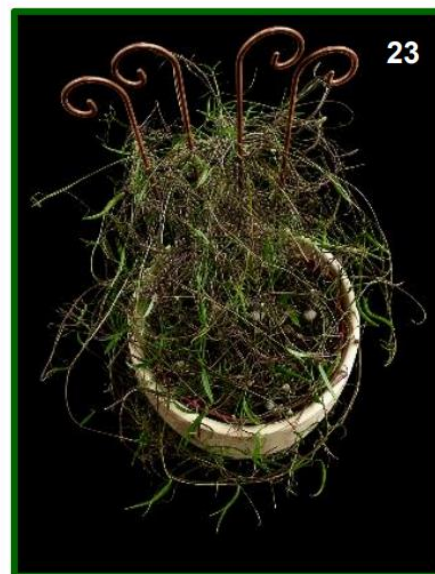
- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 st Elijah Stuart | Crassula rupestris 26 |
| 2 nd Adam Rettig | Haworthia truncata 27 |
| 3 rd Elijah Stuart | Aloes 28 |

Dish/Bowl Garden - Intermediate

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 st Sherman Blench | Mixed Aeoniums 29 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|

Dish/Bowl Garden - Advanced

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 st Kathy McNair | Haworthia Dish Garden 30 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|



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 DEADLINE: 1st day of each month.



Aloe plicatilis
Erik Gronborg



Epiphyllum oxypetalum
Julian Duval



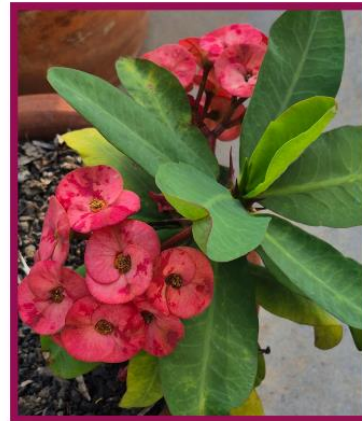
Agave 'Blue Glow'
Russel Ray



Euphorbia milii hybrid
Russel Ray



Portulacaria afra
growing on canyon edge
Candy & Jerry Garner



Euphorbia milii
Kristie DeTar



Aloe tomentosa 'Julie'
Nick VanderWesthuizen



Rhipsalis quellebambensis
Lois Walag



Crassula perfoliata var. falcata
Lorie Johansen



Selenicereus 'Bruni'
(Dragon Fruit hybrid)
Nick VanderWesthuizen



Grusonia marenae
Robert Guerra



Crassula perfoliata var. falcata
Lottie Foster



Selenicereus 'Bruni'
(Dragon Fruit hybrid)
Charlyne Barad



Monsonia vanderiatiae
Joan Herskowitz



Euphorbia tirucalli
Joan Herskowitz



Aechmea fasciata
(bromeliad)
Suzie Harris



Notocactus magnificus
Suzie Harris



Epiphyllum oxypetalum
Lori Brandt



Plumeria rubra
Teri Shusterman



Echinopsis oxygona
Chet Reed



Echinopsis 'Edwardian Lady'
Chet Reed



Echinopsis hybrid
Lori Brandt



Adenium obesum
Teri Shusterman



Pachypodium lamerei
Lorie Johansen



Trichocereus huascha
Lynn Cahill



Pereskia aculeata (in bloom) with aloes,
agaves & euphorbias
Bill Modi



Aechmea blanchettiana
Lynn Cahill



Crassula perfoliata
var. falcata
Jeff McNair



Echinopsis hybrid
Jeff McNair



Hoodia gordonii
Kathy McNair



Gymnocalysium denudatum
Kathy McNair



Echinopsis 'Eroica'
Deborah Pearson



Trichocereus hybrid
Deborah Pearson



Dish Garden with
Kalanchoe thyrsiflora,
Echeveria agavoides &
Haworthia fasciata
Stacy Day



Euphorbia enterophora
& **Aloe 'Pink Blush'**
Stacy Day



Selenicereus undatus
Charlyne Barad



Euphorbia millii 'Dwarf Apache'
Kristie DeTar

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Euphorbia

by Russel Ray



Euphorbia is a large and diverse genus of flowering plants, commonly called spurge. Euphorbias range from tiny annual plants to large and long-lived trees, with perhaps the tallest being *Euphorbia ampliphylla* at 98 ft or more. The genus has roughly 2,000 species, making it one of the largest genera of flowering plants.

Some euphorbias are widely available commercially, such as poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) at Christmas. Some are commonly cultivated as ornamentals, or collected and highly valued for the

aesthetic appearance of their unique floral structures, such as the crown of thorns plant (*Euphorbia milii*). Succulent euphorbias from the deserts of Southern Africa and Madagascar have evolved physical characteristics and forms similar to cacti of North and South America, so they are often incorrectly referred to as cacti. Some are used as ornamentals in landscaping because of beautiful or striking overall forms, and drought and heat tolerance.

Euphorbias all share the feature of having unique floral structures; when viewed as a whole, the head of flowers looks like a single flower (a pseudanthium). It has a unique kind of pseudanthium, called a cyathium, where each flower in the head is reduced to its barest essential part needed for sexual reproduction. The individual flowers are either male or female, with the male flowers reduced to only the stamen, and the females to the pistil. Flowers have no sepals, petals, or other parts that are typical of flowers in other kinds of plants. Structures supporting the flower head and other structures underneath have evolved to attract pollinators with nectar and with shapes and colors that function in a way petals and other flower parts do in other flowers. It is the only genus of plants that has all three kinds of photosynthesis—CAM, C3, and C4.

The common name "spurge" derives from the Middle English/Old French espurge ("to purge"), due to the use of the plant's sap as a purgative. The botanical name *Euphorbia* derives from Euphorbos, the Greek physician of King Juba II of Numidia and Mauretania (52BC–23AD), who married the daughter of Anthony and Cleopatra. Juba was a prolific writer on various subjects, including natural history. Euphorbos wrote that one of the cactus-like euphorbias (now called *Euphorbia obtusifolia* ssp. *regis-jubae*) was used as a powerful laxative. In 12 BC, Juba named this plant after his physician, Euphorbos, as Augustus Caesar had dedicated a statue to the brother of

Euphorbos, Antonius Musa, who was the personal physician of Augustus. In 1753, botanist and taxonomist Carl Linnaeus assigned the name *Euphorbia* to the entire genus in the physician's honor.

The plants are annual, biennial, or perennial herbs, woody shrubs, or trees. The roots are fine, thick and fleshy, or tuberous. The succulent trees and large shrubs are mostly confined to southern and eastern Africa, but others are found elsewhere. For example, *Euphorbia neutra* is native to the Caatinga of Brazil, and *Euphorbia royleana* is found in the Himalayan foothills. The deciduous leaves may be opposite, alternate, or in whorls. In succulent species, the leaves are mostly small and short-lived. The stipules are mostly small, partly transformed into spines or glands, or missing.



Like all members of the family *Euphorbiaceae*, spurges have unisexual flowers. In *Euphorbia*, flowers occur in a head, called the cyathium (plural cyathia). Each male or female flower in the cyathium head has only its essential sexual part, in males the stamen, and in females the pistil. The flowers do not have sepals, petals, or nectar to attract pollinators, although other nonflower parts of the plant have an appearance and nectar glands with similar roles. Euphorbias are the only plants known to have this kind of flower head.

Euphorbia flowers are tiny, and the collection of many flowers may be shaped and arranged to appear collectively as a single individual flower, sometimes called a pseudanthium. The majority of species are monoecious (bearing male and female flowers on the



same plant), although some are dioecious with male and female flowers occurring on different plants. It is not unusual for the central cyathia of a cyme to be purely male, and for lateral cyathia to carry both sexes. Sometimes, young plants or those growing under unfavorable conditions are male only, and only produce female flowers in the cyathia with maturity or as growing conditions improve.

The fruits usually are three-compartment capsules, sometimes fleshy, but almost always ripening to a woody container that then splits open, sometimes explosively. The seeds are four-angled, oval, or spherical, and some species have a caruncle.

The milky sap of spurges (called "latex") evolved as a deterrent to herbivores. It is white, and transparent when dry, except

in *Euphorbia abdelkuri*, where it is yellow. The pressurized sap seeps from the slightest wound and congeals after a few minutes in air. The skin-irritating and caustic effects are largely caused by varying amounts of diterpenes. Triterpenes such as betulin and corresponding esters are other major components of the latex. In contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth, the latex can produce extremely painful inflammation. The sap has also been known to cause mild to extreme Keratouveitis, which affects vision. Therefore, spurges should be handled with caution and kept away from children and pets. Wearing eye protection while working in close contact with euphorbias is advised. Latex on skin should be



washed off immediately and thoroughly. Congealed latex is insoluble in water but can be removed with an emulsifier such as milk or soap. A physician should be consulted if inflammation occurs, as severe eye damage including permanent blindness may result from exposure to the sap.

Euphorbia pekinensis is used in traditional Chinese medicine where it is regarded as one of the 50 fundamental herbs.

Several *Euphorbia* species are used as food plants by the larvae of some butterflies and moths, like spurge hawkmoths and

the giant leopard moth.

Euphorbias have been hybridized extensively for garden use, with many cultivars available commercially.



El Cajon Library

Plant of the Month

Sponsored by Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society

Euphorbia anoplia

by Russel Ray



Euphorbia anoplia, native to Africa and commonly known as the Tanzanian Zipper Plant, is a small, clumping succulent featuring ribbed, dark green to whitish-green stems with distinct geometric zig-zag patterns. It requires careful handling due to its white, milky sap, which can cause severe problems to humans and animals, including severe dermatitis and temporary to permanent vision loss, and even death if swallowed.

It thrives in well-draining soil, but plants can suffer from root rot if overwatered, and stems will dry out and look wrinkled if underwatered. They often do best if ignored rather than over-tended. Known pests include mealybugs and spider mites.

In the spring and summer, tiny, dark purple or burgundy flowers (called cyathia) appear in rows along the ridges, looking like small decorative buttons.

This succulent craves bright, indirect light. If it doesn't get enough sun, it will lose its tight, compact zipper shape

and begin to stretch out (etiolate), looking thin and weak. However, sudden, harsh, direct light can cause sunscald, resulting in dark, scabby, or crispy brown patches. It is fairly easy to grow indoors as long as the light is acceptable (6+ hours per day); east and west windows seem to be best. Temperatures below 50°F or cold drafts can turn tips black and mushy.



The plant displayed here belongs to Russel Ray. It is 8 years old, gets 8-16 hours of sun each day depending on Spring, Summer, Winter, or Fall, and annual rainfall from 15" (2022) to 70" (2019, yes 70", not a typo). Soil is a 60/40 mix of organic soil/pumice, and it is in a large, shallow pot which allows the soil to dry out quickly. 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 100-118°F for 41 consecutive days in 2020.



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

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).

August 22

Plant of the month: Euphorbia

Speaker: Woody Minnich, Pachypodiums



September 26

Plant of the month: Astrophytum

Speaker: Dylan Zoller, Jewels of the Brazilian highlands



October 24 — Fall Festival and Sale

Plant of the month: None

Speaker: None

November 21

Plant of the month: Schlumbergera

Speaker: Cristy Brenner, Cactus adventure in Argentina and Chile



December 19 — Holiday Party

Plant of the month: None

Speaker: None

PREVIOUS MEETINGS IN 2026

January 24

Plant of the month: Echinopsis

Speaker: Diana Lindsay, Plants in Anza Borrego used by native peoples



February 28

Plant of the month: Hoya

Speaker: Marie Sinovich, Desert animals of Anza Borrego



March 28

Plant of the month: Aloe

Speaker: Jeff Moore, Succulent Road Trip - Gardens from San Francisco to San Diego



April 25 — Spring Festival and Sale

Plant of the month: None

Speaker: None

May 23 — Picnic at Palomar College

Plant of the month: None

Speaker: None



June 27

Plant of the month: Opuntia

Speaker: Antonio Rangel, The gardens at Palomar College -
Landscaping for education and conservation

July 25

Plant of the month: String succulents

Speaker: Nan Serman, California-Dreamin' - Gardening in a Mediterranean climate.



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 Show & Sale Chair & Sales - Brita Miller

Show & Presentations - Charlyne Barad Plant Donations - Lorie Johansen, Sherman Blench

Membership - Richard Miller membership@palomarcactus.org

Publicity (print) - Tom McCarter (social media) - Lou Harris

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, Graciela Conde

Brag Table Set Up - Libbi Salvo, Barbara Raab, Stacy Day

Brag Table Judging Team - Mike Nelson, Debra Lee Baldwin, Wanda Mallen

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, Art Schadeberg

Program Coordinator, Plant Auction - Robert Kopfstein

Meeting Sales Cashiers - Teri Shusterman, Liz Rosycki

Meeting A/V - Russel Ray Ken Brown - starting in September, back-up - Laura Fish, Windy Chen

Exchange Table - Brian Magone Benefit Drawing - Martina Reed

Visitor & New Member Ambassadors - Lorie Johansen, Brita Miller

Name Badge Drawing - Julie Kort

Additional Meeting Volunteers - Stacy Day, Lottie Foster, Laura Fish

Newsletter Team:

Charlyne Barad - Coordinator, Speaker, Club info, Meeting Recap, Brag Table Winners

Russel Ray - Plant of the Month, Library Plant of the Month, Collator & Distributor

Joan Herskowitz - Garden Brag Page

Brita Miller - Spring & Fall Show & Sale and Holiday Party Recaps, misc.

Winston Chan - Miscellaneous Pages

Wanda Mallen - Proofreader