

Volume 44 Number 1

January 2009

ESPINAS Y FLORES

The Newsletter of the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society
Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America



**Program: Buck Hemenway on “Granite Caps &
Quartz Flats: Treasures of the South African Veld”**

**Saturday, January 10, 1:00pm
Casa Del Prado, Room 101
Balboa Park**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. As we transition to new board, we need acknowledge the good work that the last board accomplished.

- We locked in the upcoming CSSA Convention for 2011 in San Diego
- Successful sales. While sales at meeting has been declining, the two seasonal sales have had increased revenue, to keep us on solid financial grounds and to allow us to attract more speakers.
- Holiday party was a great success, with a wonderful meal, a great auction, wine enough for everyone and wonderful company. Huge thanks to all of you who brought in desserts. Special congratulations to our Volunteer of the Year, Pam Badger and our new Life Member, Carol Jean Wolcott. Thanks to Herb the Wine Guy for gathering wine all year for this one special day. Our auction brought was a success and helped offset the cost of the meal and the gift plants. As usual, the auctioneer added to the fun of the event.
- We had great speakers during the last year, and don't forget those meetings where we had open discussions on how to grow our plants, with our panels of experts from the club.
- We attracted new vendors for our sales
- We had a wonderful picnic in September, with a relaxed atmosphere where we all had the chance to get to know each other better.
- We rewrote the bylaws
- We set up an order for new SDCSS golf shirts. Special thanks to Allen Clark for doing the design leg work to get our shirt order off the ground. He found the source for the shirts and worked with them on the artwork. Shirts will be available at the January meeting
- We purchased new cash registers that made a huge difference in the line at the summer show. Or should I say no line.
- We continue to put out a awesome newsletter. Kathy and Steve Harris work to give us the best newsletter possible.
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On the cover: Buck Hemenway's photo of Gibbaeum pubescens

- We improved the SDCSS Library. Allen Clark has led the Library Committee to improve our library and bring it up to date with the latest books available, caught up on binding our Newsletters and the CSSA journals, and created rules to keep books available so all members have access to them.
- We had an Increase in membership and we transition membership to a once a year renewal in December
- WAP volunteers made a difference in both the Old World Succulent Garden and the Baja Garden. Juergen Menzel, Janet Svaboda, and Jim DeForest made a huge donation of their time and energy and Bert Elder has returned to the group just in time for some structural rock work.
- Volunteerism has increased and all of you have made a difference in making this a very successful organization
- The definition of Volunteerism is the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain. (From Wikipedia). Over the years many of you have donated your time and energy to this organization and we truly appreciate it. As the year progresses please consider how you can join in to support the various efforts we will need help with. The first consideration will be a new lead for the Library Committee. We are looking for someone who will carry on the good work Allen and his team has started. You will have the same team for back up and support. There will be several committees to support the 2011 Convention, so lots of opportunities will be available.
- On January 3rd the Board will have a Strategic Planning Session at my house to set the direction for the next two years. We will set goals and develop action plans to take us through the 2011 CSSA Convention and beyond. I will share them with you at the January meeting. We will need many volunteers to make this happen so you will all get a chance to help.
- For those of you who have the time please take a trip out to the Wild Animal Park. The Aloe are starting to bloom and everything has plumped up due to the rain. It will be a most enjoyable walk.

Best wishes for the New Year!

Chris Miller

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Buck Hemenway is heavily involved with the Cactus & Succulent hobby. He is currently President of the San Gabriel C&SS, Past President of Gates C&SS on the Board and Show Chair of CSSA. He and his wife, Yvonne own The Prickly Palace which is a wholesale nursery specializing in succulents.

Buck's talk is "Granite Caps & Quartz Flats hold the Treasures of the South African Veld". Join he and Yvonne on a trip of discovery finding rare and familiar succulents in Western South Africa.



Avonia papyracea



Cheiridopsis denticulata

REMINDER REMINDER REMINDER

SDCSS Winter Show & Sale

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2009

9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM



Time to start thinking about our winter show and which of your spectacular plants you would like to display for the public.

As usual, we will be needing volunteers to help with cashiering, security, sales assistants, info table, and cleanup. Mark the date and plan to spend the day enjoying the plants, the company of your fellow plant lovers and the opportunity to share our knowledge with the public.

FYI

(FOR YOUR INFORMATION)

West Nile Virus Alert: Art Marcon, husband of SDCSS member Kaija Marcon, has come down with West Nile Virus. Kaija called the Editors and asked that we get the word out about this dangerous illness. After a very long hospital stay, Art is home and he is going to be OK,.

The illness is transmitted by a mosquito bite. Wild birds, especially crows and jays, harbor West Nile Virus. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite the birds. It can also be transmitted from medical procedures such as organ transplantation and blood transfusions. Most people show no symptoms. Mild symptoms include skin rash, headache, fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, backache, muscle aches, appetite loss and swollen lymph glands. Serious symptoms can include coma, tremors, and convulsions. It can be deadly. Those of us who spend a great deal of time outdoors are especially susceptible.

You can protect yourself in mosquito infected areas by wearing long sleeves or using an insect repellent such as DEET on your skin and clothing. Eliminate standing water in your yard where mosquitoes love to breed. Empty unused swimming pools or any other sources of standing water such as bird baths and rain collection barrels. Watch for sick or dying birds and report them to your local health department. More than 400 cases were reported in California in 2008. The Marcons live in Lemon Grove, but all of San Diego County is vulnerable. - K. H.

SDCSS Member in the News: Our own Art Cooley was honored by being written up in the *La Jolla Light* newspaper's *Ten Questions* section. Art is the Founding Trustee of the Environmental Defense Fund which has taken on environmental issues since 1967. The article also mentions how he met his wife, SDCSS member, Bev Grant, his travels and other amazing accomplishments. You may read the entire article on the web at www.LaJollaLight.com.

SDCSS Golf Shirts: Our logo golf shirts will be available at the January meeting. Sizes are limited, but additional sizes can be special ordered. Cost is \$20 to \$27 depending on style/size. Order forms will be available at the meeting.

Snacks for the Break: Last names beginning with N - Z, please bring a snack to share at the break.

Please address correspondence to:
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Website: www.sdcss.com

FINISHING TOUCHES

by Bob Smoley

Prickly Pages, Greater Pittsburgh C&S

It is surprising and at times amazing how much beauty and value ten cents worth of top-dressing can add to a plant. Believe it or not, this ten cents could even be the tie-breaker in a show plant (even though it shouldn't be).

Top-dressing a plant with a color-coordinated stone that picks up or contrasts the color of the show plant tells the viewer, who could be the judge, that the grower of this plant is putting forth an added effort in showing and displaying his or her prized specimen. As a grower, I find that an attractive top-dressing also increases the value of the plant. If two identical plants were side by side, I could easily receive an extra dollar for the plant that is attractively top-dressed. But where does one get all of these rocks and pebbles? I will try to point everyone in the right direction, and as you will see, a strange direction at times it will be.

Two of the most unlikely places to find top-dressings are your local feed store and sandblasting supply houses. Others that are more recognizable would be pet and tropical fish stores, and of course, your local garden centers and nurseries. At the feed store, you can find what is called what is called chicken grit. This is a crushed granite that is fed to chickens to harden their egg shells. It comes in two or three sizes, the smallest size working just fine to dress 2-3 inch pots for lithops. It also works well to top-dress freshly sown seed, but be sure to use only a thin layer up to an eighth inch. The larger size of grit is OK for pots up to six inches or so. Since it is granite, the rock is a grayish silver color with a bit of a sparkle to it.

Moving on to the sandblasting supply yard, we found a number of choice top-pings available. Q rock, which comes in four grades, or sizes, is great for smaller pots and is inexpensive at seven to eight dollars for a hundred pound bag. Number 2 Q-rock is also great for covering newly sown seeds. Another sandblasting rock, black beauty, is a byproduct of the steel industry and is a shiny, jet black glass. Black beauty is really sharp looking when used to top-dress small pots of lithops and mimic plants, and provides a striking contrast color for echeverias and other succulents. Finally, some sandblasting supply yards sell a small graded river gravel that is about an eighth inch in diameter with nice earth-tone colors that look great on any pot.

Lets travel next to a good, nice-sized pet supply or tropical fish store. Here you can find some really fantastic looking aquarium gravels in almost any size or color. Some that are especially nice looking are the epoxy stones that have a nice, clean shine to them. You can also find crushed quartz that is very natural and clean looking. Also available is volcanic rock, which usually comes only a few sizes and in black, brown, and shades of dark red. The heavier grades are very good for pot sizes of six inches and larger.

Well, what's left for the garden center or nursery to sell? Well-stocked garden centers should stock many of the tropical fish gravels and small pea gravel. They might also have pumice, which can be used as a great soil additive for cactus and succulents and a top-dressing as well. A more recent product that is good for large pots is expanded clay, which are small pieces of clay that have been heated and popped, much like popcorn. Also available for larger pots are various grades of crushed marble.

If you want to get really exotic and a bit expensive, travel now to your local gem and mineral store. Here you might find crushed chips of amethyst, quartz, rose quartz, citrine, agate, and many others for those extra special plants on which you need to spend that dollar in the back of your wallet. Larger pieces of gems and minerals also make really nice accent pieces in mixed plantings. Try an all succulent planting of echeverias, crassulas, kalanchoes, or any other succulents in a low, natural clay bowl top-dressed with a clean, white aquarium gravel and accented with a few pieces of amethyst crystals and iron pyrite (fools gold) and you have an exquisite planting.

There are some practical reasons for top-dressing your plants. First, as a fine topping over newly-sown seed. Since seedlings should be kept moist at all times (in most cases), the top-dressing helps keep moisture in so you don't need to water as much. Best of all, the pots that have been top-dressed will show a lighter color as they dry out on the surface compared to the darker color of ones still moist, making it easy to tell when to water. In larger pots, the top-dressing helps hold down the germination of weed seed, which makes for a lot less work later.

One final comment wash the top-dressing material and let dry before use. This removes any impurities and finer dust particles that may be present. And please don't add any of that glue, cement, or whatever it is that the mass producers use to hold the top-dressing in place for shipment - its not good for the plants and is really tacky.

Happy Growing!!



Plants waiting to be auctioned off at the Holiday Party.

Photo - K.H.

SDCSS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: PAM BADGER

At the Holiday Party, President Elect, Chris Miller, presented Pam Badger with the SDCSS Volunteer of the Year award. Pam's volunteer of the year certificate reads: Certificate of Appreciation for Pam Badger. In recognition of your dedication and outstanding service as Director, President, Past President, field trip organizer, help where ever she can and chief cook for all events. Someone once said that an Army marches on their stomachs, and so do volunteers! Thanks for what you do! We hereby name you Volunteer of the Year for 2008.



Anyone who can set up a picnic and barbeque for a large group with a broken arm gets our vote!

Congratulations, Pam!



Five Past-Presidents attended the Holiday Party. From left: Tom Knapik, Mike Buckner, Warren Buckner, Tom De Merritt, and Pam Badger



Once again, Herb Stein served up an awesome selection of fine wines.



Rudy Lime and Carol-Jean Wolcott look over the buffet.



Our caterers, Ruth Henricks and the Huddle at Home crew. Great meal!



Frank & Joan Lozoya visit with Elibet Marshall.

*Holiday Party Photos:
BJ Miller*

**THE HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
INVITES CSSA MEMBERS AND AFFILIATE
CLUBS TO A FREE DESERT FORUM**

On Saturday, January 17th, 2009
Rain or Shine

- SCHEDULE OF EVENTS -

- 9:30 – 10:00 A.M. **REGISTRATION**
Assemble and sign in at the Entrance Pavilion
Bring your club name badge or CSSA membership card
Leave your sack lunch (with your name written on the bag)
to be transported to the Teaching Greenhouse
- 10:00 – 12:00 Noon **TOUR OF THE DESERT GARDEN**
Knowledgeable staff will be stationed throughout
the Desert Garden and Desert Conservatory Aloes will
be flowering
- 12:00 – 1:00 P.M. **WELCOME, REFRESHMENTS & LUNCH**
Proceed to the Teaching Greenhouse
Pick up sack lunch that you dropped off at Registration
Light snacks and beverages will be served
CSSA Welcome Table: Laurel Woodley
Note: Visitors have two other lunch options:
- Huntington Café (no reservations required), or
- Tea Room (advance reservations required: 626-683-8131)
- 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. **PLANT SALE**
Desert Nursery opens for sales and browsing at 1:00 P.M.
Cash, checks and credit cards accepted
Plants may be stored in the Teaching Greenhouse after
purchase until end of day (with your name written on the tags)
- 2:00 – 3:00 P.M. **FORUM**
Proceed to Ahmanson Classroom
Led by Director of the Gardens, Jim Folsom
Q&A session to follow
- 1:00 – 4:30 P.M. **FREE TIME**
Attendees are free to tour the gardens and galleries until
closing time

UPCOMING EVENTS

2009

Jan 17: Desert Forum at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, 9:30am-4:30pm. 1151 Oxford Road San Marino, CA 91108. Info: 626-405-2100.

Feb 1: Environmental Fair at Congregation Beth Israel (CBI) 9:00am - 12:00pm. includes showing the film "The Story of Stuff," Two speakers - Richard Anthony from Zero Waste San Diego and Doug Kalal will give a lecture on "30 great drought tolerant plants". Vendors will be present, including plant sales. 9001 Towne Centre, Dr. San Diego, CA 92122.

Feb 14: SDCSS Winter Show & Sale, 9:00am-4:00pm, Rm 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

Mar 14: California-Friendly[®] Plant Sale at the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College, 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon. Info: 619-660-0614, www.thegarden.org.

Apr 10-15: The Cactus & Succulent Society of America's Biennial Convention, at the Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa, Tucson, AZ.

Apr 25: Spring Garden Festival at the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College, 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon. Info: 619-660-0614, www.thegarden.org.

May 9: Gates Cactus & Succulent Society Show , Sale and Green Faire, 9:00am-4:00pm, Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hill Drive, Glen Avon.

Jun 6&7: SDCSS Summer Show & Sale.

Jun 25-28: CSSA Annual Show & Sale, Huntington Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.

Oct TBD: California-Friendly[®] Gardening Festival at the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College, 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon. Info: 619-660-0614, www.thegarden.org.

The due date for submission of article (Plants of the Month) and information on the program/speaker will be the meeting preceding the intended issue (approximately one month ahead of time). The due date for letters, regular columns, brag table winners, and the President's Message will be one week later. All submissions are to be made to the Editors.

SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

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STANDING COMMITTEES & SUB COMMITTEES

Education, Conservation & Exhibits

Conservation: Joe Kraatz & Herb Stern

Brag Table: Candy Garner

Plants of the Month: TBD

Summer Show: Tom Knapik

Winter Show: Terry Parr

Historian: Terry Parr

Library: Allen Clark, Chris Miller, Don Hunt, Jeanette Dutton, Steve Harris

Exchange Plants & Seeds: Michelle Heckathorn & Sara Schell

Sales, Meetings, Plant Sales & Supplies

Membership: Collette Parr

Mailing: Jean & Bill O'Daniel

Annual Sales: Chris Miller & Joe Kraatz

Auction & Holiday Plants: Lee Badger & Tom DeMerritt

Monthly Plant Sales: Joe Kraatz & Lynn Elliott

Monthly Supply Sales: George & Jerry Plaisted

Benefit Drawing Table: Collette & Terry Parr

Publicity: Tom DeMerritt & Joe Kraatz

Programs: TBD

Reception: Susan Hopkins & Judy Walkowiak

Monthly Regalement: Rudy Lime, Susie White

Picnic Regalement: Laura & Tom DeMerritt

Hospitality: Sara Schell

Liaison

Balboa Park Desert Garden: Susan Hopkins

CSSA Affiliate Rep: Peter Walkowiak

Quail Botanical Gardens: Phyllis Flechsig

SD Botanical Garden Foundation: George Plaisted

SD Floral Association: Elizabeth Glover

SD Wild Animal Park Baja & Old World Gardens: Chris Miller

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