

# ESPINAS Y FLORES



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MARCH 2025

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
AN AFFILIATE OF THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA



KALANCHOE // MARCH EVENTS // JOIN IT // CSSA CONVENTION  
WINTER SHOW 2025 RECAP & TABULATIONS // ...and more



**ON THE COVER**

*Pink Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi*  
Photo by Rocco Piersanti

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**UPCOMING SDCSS SCHEDULE**

**OUR UPCOMING MEETING**

March 9th

**FOLLOWING MEETING**

April 13th

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

<b>President</b>	Kelly Griffin
<b>Vice President</b>	Der-shing Helmer
<b>Secretary</b>	Olga Batalov
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ken Brown

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Rick Bjorklund, Patricia Bryan, Luis Gonzalez, Tom Knapik, Georgia Kenney, Rita Lunceford, and Jared Petker

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<b>Conservation</b>	Herb Stern
<b>Brag table</b>	Denise Huntsman-Griffin & Susan Hopkins
<b>Plant of the Month</b>	Denise Huntsman-Griffin
<b>Summer/Winter Show</b>	Rick Bjorklund
<b>Historian</b>	Jerry Garner
<b>Grants</b>	Jerry Garner
<b>Library Committee</b>	Luis Gonzalez
<b>Exchange Plants/Seeds</b>	Michelle Heckathorn
<b>Annual Sales</b>	Chris Miller
<b>Auction &amp; Holiday Plants</b>	Kelly Griffin
<b>Show Auction Manager</b>	[open]
<b>Monthly Plant Sales</b>	Chris Miller
<b>Benefit Drawing Table</b>	Chuck Ramey
<b>Programs</b>	Kelly Griffin
<b>Reception</b>	Susan Hopkins & Candy Garner

<b>New Member Orientation</b>	Patricia Bryan & Jay Crowley
<b>Monthly Regalement</b>	Sandy Wetzel-Smith
<b>Picnic Regalement</b>	[open]
<b>Coffee in the Garden Coordinator</b>	[open]

**LIAISONS**

<b>Balboa Park Desert Garden</b>	Susan Hopkins
<b>CSSA Affiliate Rep</b>	Rick Bjorklund
<b>SD Botanic Foundation</b>	Lynn Elliot
<b>SD Zoo Safari Park, Baja, &amp; Old World Gardens</b>	May Fong Ho
<b>Palomar CS Society Liaison</b>	Brita Miller

**MEMBERSHIP, BUSINESS, & PUBLICITY**

<b>Membership</b>	Olga Batalov
<b>Business Manager</b>	Donna Roden
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Der-shing Helmer
<b>Webmaster</b>	Jared Petker
<b>General Club Publicity</b>	Christie Lathrop
<b>Show &amp; Sale Publicity</b>	Patricia Bryan & Emily Shuffield

**CONTACT SDCSS**      membership@sdcss.net

**CONTACT EyF EDITOR**      eyf.editor@gmail.com

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

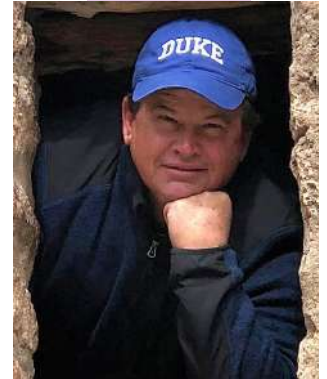
**G**reetings! We had an incredible winter show! Thanks to all of you!

I want to say sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this record event. A special thanks to our leads, but truly, this is a team effort and many hands make for easier work. Thank you to our new sales Chair, **Rita Lunceford**. Thank you to **Rick Bjorklund** for managing the show aspects. Thank you to **Ken Brown** and his entire crew of **all-star register magicians** who took in all that cash and plastic. Thank you to **Pam Badger** and **Sandy Wetzel-Smith** and the **excellent kitchen crew** that kept us fed so well. Thank you to the entire **security team** that worked tirelessly to check people in and out of the room and keep the show area safe. Thank you to the people who came and **set up** on Friday and stayed late until we got the doors locked. And thank you to the ones who stayed around until the bitter end folding tables and sweeping up. I want to thank our Judges **Mark Fryer** and **Der-shing Helmer** and the **clerks** as

well. Thank you, **Donna Roden**, for doing the tabulations and all the other small details that just get done like magic. Thank you, **Jerry Garner**, for once again getting the ribbons and show gift pots. Thank you to **Candy Garner** and the **crew that greeted** and signed up **60 plus new members** at the hospitality table.

**A special thanks to all our great vendors**, you are our life-blood! We truly appreciate you sharing your art and incredible plants with us. **Finally, thank you to all the members that took the time and trouble to show off your beautiful plants**, you are our show's foundation. All of you named and unnamed really made the Winter Show work like a fine-tuned machine.

If you helped out and did not get your plant bucks, you probably did not turn in your badge to Candy and crew! Regardless, if you would still like them, please contact me at the meeting, and I should have the checklist and coupons.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT.

**We have a special once-in-a-decade event coming up, The CSSA 2025 Convention.**

Our National CSSA Convention plans are in full swing. I say national, but it is truly an international happening with speakers from all over the world. We are having bi-weekly planning zoom meetings for this to work on publicity, sponsorship, and most importantly hosting duties. Please get on the zoom list and on the volunteer sign-up. We need your help! We will be having an important in-person meeting on **March 8th at 12 noon** (just before the regular meeting) in Room 101. The Convention is a short two months away. SDCSS is hosting this at the Marriott Mission Valley on **April 23rd to 27th**. Please join us and be a part of this historic gathering.

We have made huge strides to make this event affordable and will continue

to do so with your help. Volunteers can work two half-day shifts and “earn” a day of convention activities.

As to our March meeting: our upcoming meeting will feature our own member extraordinaire, Luis Gonzalez, presenting on his very recent trip to Madagascar. Our plant of the month will be focused on the genus *Kalanchoe* by Rocco Piersanti. It should be exciting and informative. I am looking forward to both of these talks, and I am sure you are as well. Can't wait!

Please plan on spending your Saturday with your friends at SDCSS on March 8th.

See you all soon!

*Kelly Griffin*

February 22, 2025

## UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKER



### MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup> SPEAKER

#### LUIS GONZALEZ

**“MY TWO-WEEK TRIP THROUGH  
MADAGASCAR — PEOPLE, BAOBABS,  
PACHYPODIUM, AND MORE.”**

#### ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Luis Gonzalez is the librarian of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society where he also serves as a director on the Board. He’s a plant enthusiast who loves science, books, travel, and nature. He has been interested in plants since his childhood. Growing up in a small mountain town in Puerto Rico, he was surrounded by fruit and tropical tree species. He learned about planting and cultivation from his grandfathers while watching them do grafts on avocado and citrus trees, and helped them plant trees, shrubs, and ornamentals. His love for books and science is a gift from his parents—he has great memories of the study room in his house where his dad kept half a dozen encyclopedias among all sorts of different books. Luis studied engineering at the University of Puerto Rico and moved to San Diego shortly after graduation nearly forty years ago.

#### ABOUT OUR SPEAKER TOPIC

Luis’ introduction to Madagascar came in the 1990s when he became interested in herpetology and started keeping frogs and chameleons. What do you do when you get into a new hobby? You buy a book, of course! Books are where he first



saw the Avenue of the Baobabs, located near the town of Morondava, and he knew right then that he would have to visit someday. Right around that time, Luis and his wife Laura enrolled in the Ornamental Horticulture (OH) program at Cuyamaca College where they were part of the OH Department’s botanical society. Of the many plant species native to Madagascar, he keeps Pachypodium, Delonix, and a few others in his collection.

In his talk, Luis will share photos, stories, and observations of the people, flora, and fauna of his recent trip to Madagascar last October. As he tells it, the island did not disappoint. The baobabs were majestic, and Luis got to see many of his favorite succulent and caudiciform plants *in situ*. We hope you can join us for Luis’ talk.

**[SEE YOU ON MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2025!](#)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MARCH COFFEE IN THE GARDEN!****Who:** Krista Mills with potter Jeff Perry**Date:** March 22, 2025**Time:** 9am - 2pm**Where:** 4167 Cole Way San Diego, CA 92117**Parking:** Plenty on the street

We are all in for a treat in March! **Krista Mills** has invited us to her *amazing* garden in Claremont. Their property has a beautiful, huge backyard above Tecolote Canyon. The terraced gardens were all created by Krista and her husband when they moved in over 20 years ago. A beautiful deck with gorgeous plants, including cacti and bromeliads in handmade pots, overlooks a succulent and cactus garden filled with amazing mature specimens of all kinds. You'll drool over Aloe trees, Ferocactus, *Yucca rostrata*, and so much more. **This is a must-see garden!**

Krista will be selling plants and a "new to us" potter Jeff Perry will showcase his creations for sale! This property has elevation and stairs, so wear good shoes. Not wheelchair accessible.



## “JOIN IT” MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM UPDATE



### San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society

[www.sdcss.net/](http://www.sdcss.net/)



CONTACT US

MEMBER LOGIN

SDCSS Mission Statement: To promote knowledge, study and interest in cacti and succulent plants through educational programs, public exhibits, a public garden, conservation, and sharing of this common interest. The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization. Our club, founded in 1961, is made up of hobbyists, researchers, and enthusiasts who share a common interest and appreciation for the uniqueness and beauty of succulent plants. We welcome everyone to our group, whether an expert, amateur or novice. Our monthly meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings are held in Room 101, Casa Del Prado, across the street from the Natural History Museum in Balboa Park. The meetings are typically held on the second Saturday of each month.

### Membership Options

Annual Membership, Single Person, E-Mailed Newsletter

2 Year Membership, Single Person, E-Mailed Newsletter

5 Year Membership, Single Person, E-Mailed Newsletter

Lifetime Membership  
\$500.00

A preview of the Join It website

Hello all, some exciting news—SDCSS has implemented a new and convenient online membership system hosted by **Join It**, which is now live! This is the same great software already used by Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA). Through this new system, you'll be able to easily review and manage your membership information and status. If your SDCSS membership is expiring or has expired, you can now renew it through this system directly as well.

Other features of this new system: Join It comes with the option to gift a membership or to make an additional donation of any amount; you can do so when you renew. You'll also be enrolled in auto-renewal for your club membership (**please note:** you'll have to check "opt out" if you would prefer not to auto-renew). If you have been paying in-person or by check, that method will continue to be available—your Join It profile will be manually labelled to reflect your "off-line" transaction.

Ready to check it out? If you haven't already logged in, please follow the instructions below to access your Join It account for the first time:

1. Click this **Join It link**: <https://app.joinit.com/o/san-diego-cactus-and-succulent-society-2/>
2. Click the "Member Login" button (use the email address your newsletter link is delivered to)
3. Set a new password

You did it! You can now review your SDCSS membership account.

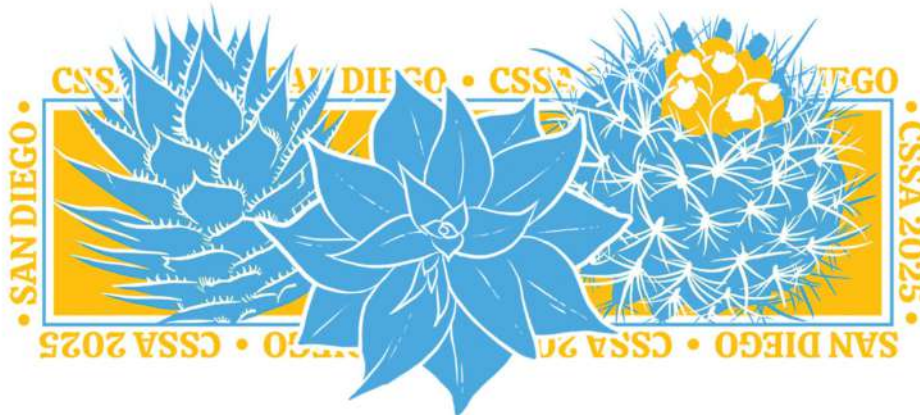
Do you like this new system? Having any issues with Join It that you'd like us to be aware of? [Please fill out our survey](#) or email any feedback to [membership@sdcss.net](mailto:membership@sdcss.net).

We hope that you will find the ability to check your status at any time, update your personal information, opt-in for auto-renewal if desired, and purchase gift memberships for loved ones to be beneficial.

Sincerely,

SDCSS MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, OLGA BATALOV

## UPCOMING CSSA CONVENTION: VOLUNTEER SIGNUPS



I am very excited about the upcoming CSSA convention that SDCSS is hosting **April 23-27**. A great group of speakers and tours have been arranged ([click here](#) for more details). We have a wonderful group of volunteers at SDCSS, who have helped put on exciting, successful, and fun shows and sales as well as other events.

We are asking you to volunteer for the CSSA convention to help make it a successful event as well. You can volunteer by [signing up online at this link](#). All volunteer positions and times are listed there, as well as the number of volunteers needed for each one. Many of them need several volunteers during the same day and time period, such as cashiers and security, much like our shows and sales. Some also include a brief job description, based on what we anticipate. Volunteers earn various credits (see sign-up sheet) that can be used for conference attendance. If you need help signing up online, please contact me, Rick Bjorklund, at (619)417-5008 or [Plantguyrb@gmail.com](mailto:Plantguyrb@gmail.com) and I will assist you.

The list of volunteer positions, dates, and times is listed below (please see the online list for the most current information, including what positions are still available).

The following roles will likely be suitable for those who cannot stand for extended periods of time: Registration check-in, Hospitality Table, Plant Holding and possibly the cashier/scanner roles. The other roles will likely involve standing and/or walking around for most of their duration.

Late evening times are underlined for those that cannot help out during the daytime.

We will discuss this more at our 12:00 meeting on March 8 before our 1:00 club meeting.

### **PRE-CONVENTION SETUP & ASSISTANCE; FLOATER (misc duties)**

Weds, April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1-3pm
Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-7pm

### **REGISTRATION CHECK-IN STATION (help Julie Taber of CSSA)**

Weds, April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	3-6pm
Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 am & 9-11am (split up to enable overlap w/ field trip coordinator), 11-3pm, 3-6pm
Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-9am

*List continues on the next -page*



## UPCOMING CSSA CONVENTION: VOLUNTEER SIGNUPS

### HOSPITALITY TABLE (give info and directions)

Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11 am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm

### FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR (remain at Marriott)

Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 am
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### CASHIER: SQUARE POS STATION (4x) & SDCSS REGISTERS (2x)

Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	<u>8-10 pm</u>
Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11 am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-2pm

### ASSISTANT CASHIER: SCANNERS

Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	<u>8-10 pm</u>
Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11 am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-2pm

### SALE SECURITY

Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	<u>8-10 pm</u>
Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11 am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-2pm

### LIVE AUCTION SUPPORT

Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	<u>7-10 pm</u>
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### AV SUPPORT FOR SPEAKERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	8 am - 12 pm, 12-4pm, 4-6pm, <u>7:30-9:30pm</u> (for auction)
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	8-12pm, 12-4pm, <u>6-10pm</u> (for banquet and awards)
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	8am-12pm, 12-4pm

### PLANT HOLDING (check plants in and out of holding area)

Thurs, April 24 <sup>th</sup>	<u>8-10 pm</u>
Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-6pm
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-5pm

### SHIPPING STATION (assist staff handling plant shipping, give info)

Fri, April 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-6pm, <u>8-10pm</u>
Sat, April 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-11 am, 11-3pm, 3-6pm
Sun, April 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-11am, 11-3pm, 3-6pm

Kindly,

**RICK BJORKLUND**

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: KALANCHOE

# KEEPING UP WITH KALANCHOE

ARTICLE BY ROCCO PIERSANTI

**Y**ou're a donkey ear. Well, you look like a flapjack! If you overheard this chat, hopefully it was a conversation between two Kalanchoes! These are some of the common names in this species I will describe in a bit.

But first, let's pronounce this. The term **Kalanchoe** (ka-lan-KOH-ee ) was originally used by Michel Adanson in 1763. It refers to the phonetic transcription of the Chinese term "Kalan Chauhuy" which means "what falls and grows". The name Kalanchoe describes the propagation of leaf embryos, and this is why species of this genus are popularly known as "mother-of-thousands" or "mother-of-millions". They spread by vegetative reproductions, where plantlets (also known as bulbils) form on leaves, land on the ground, and grow into new plants.

Kalanchoe is a diverse genus of tropical, perennial succulents native to Africa, Arabia, and Asia. It is a member of the stonecrop family (Crassulaceae) and has [175 accepted species](#). The Kalanchoe genus includes everything from small trees, shrubs, and monocarpic plants a few inches tall, to even climbers. One of the things that sets Kalanchoes apart from other members of the Crassulaceae is having 4 petals instead of 5 on the flower. It is prized for its long-lasting, colorful, showy flowers and interesting, succulent foliage. In some species, such as *K. thyrsiflora*, the inflorescences are densely flowered and club shaped, while in others, such as *K. sexangularis*, the inflorescences are more diffuse but apically carry numerous, small, tubular flowers with recurved corolla lobes.



A form of *Kalanchoe synsepala* in habitat

Kelly Griffin

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: KALANCHOE

Some leaves of kalanchoe are hairy, or tomentose, while others have purple-mottled leaves such as *K. marmorata*. The foliage is unique and will add color and texture to your landscape or houseplant collection. These plants are food plants for caterpillars of the [Red Pierrot butterfly](#) in India and southeast Asia. The butterfly lays its eggs on leaves, and after hatching, caterpillars burrow into the leaves and eat their inside cells.



*Kalanchoe beharensis*, with tomentose leaves, in the garden

Rocco Piersanti

In general, kalanchoes are undemanding, largely pest-free, and easy to cultivate in containers.

Plants will grow well in almost any soil type, although a well-drained mixture with a high humus content work well for most species. They grow actively during the warm summer months, and produce their often substantial, multi-flowered inflorescences in winter. The majority of kalanchoes require around 6–8 hours of sunlight a day; a few cannot tolerate this, and survive with bright, indirect sunlight to bright shade.

### TEMPERATURES AND WATER

Water these plants well and then allow the soil to dry out between waterings. These plants are winter hardy in zones 9 to 12. They prefer temperatures between 60 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. They can be planted in a container and brought indoors over the winter before the temperatures drop below 50 degrees F. They are also grown as a specialty desert-type plant and for temporary color. Being a succulent, they are drought tolerant once established. Plants of this genus may be propagated by division, offsets, stem cuttings, or leaf cuttings

Less than 20% of the genus *Kalanchoe* have been reported regarding their popular uses. From these, there exists a broad ethnopharmacological knowledge of four species that are more often cited as medicinal plants (*K. pinnata*, *K. laciniata*, *K. crenata*, and *K. daigremontiana*), suggesting that they can be adopted to treat wounds, cancer, diabetes, infections, and inflammation. However, there are no reports in the scientific literature that describe the amounts of plant or dosages for ethnomedicinal uses.

A recent study by Stefanowicz-Hajduk et al. noted *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* ethanol extract may be a valuable component of dermatological and cosmetic preparations due to its high antioxidant, (*cont'd*)

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: KALANCHOE

*Kalanchoe luciae*

Rocco Piersanti

antihyaluronidase, and antielastase activity. The phenolic acids contained in the plant extract accumulate in the human skin and may play a crucial role in the protection of this barrier against damaging factors. These results will be the basis for further research on living organisms in the future.

A 2021 study by Tian et al. noted their results support that Bryophyllum and Kalanchoe should be treated as one single genus and that they have evolved a series of positively selected genes related to the CAM photosynthetic carbon assimilation pathway. These findings suggest that the plastid genome can be used as an

informative genetic marker for improving our understandings of speciation and diversification in Kalanchoe, most of which are drought-resistant succulent plants.

## COMMON KALANCHOES

*Kalanchoe beharensis* is more dramatic in the landscape and can become a large shrub or even a tree in the right climate, growing up over ten feet tall. The leaves can get large- up to a foot long or more, and nearly as wide. Stems become gnarled, twisted and covered with bizarre, ornamental leaf scars. This plant is one of the most heat tolerant of all the Kalanchoes tolerating the hottest, drying sun in Southern California. It comes in several cultivars, some with bronze or copper fuzz or none at all, and some miniature varieties. Cold tolerance is not great, but at least down into the high 20Fs.

*Kalanchoe luciae*, aka Flapjack Plant or Paddle Plant, has large, flat and often red-tinged leaves (that look like paddles) and has pale yellow to nearly white flowers and without much of a smell). This plant has little cold tolerance but is one of the more sun-tolerant of the smooth-leaved Kalanchoes only suffering on the hottest days in full sun here in Southern California. This is a monocarpic plant, meaning it will die after flowering but often offsets before dying and these offsets can regrow taking the place of the original plant. Plants grown in shade will usually remain a light green while those in full sun or exposed to drought and/or cold will show a variety of color changes including reds, oranges, pinks and even yellows sometimes. This species seems quite prone to mealy bug and snails if grown in moist, shady conditions, and it can rot if overwatered when it's really hot out.

*Kalanchoe synsepala*, or walking Kalanchoe, has attractive foliage and flowers. Usually has thick fleshy leaves with a pink/purple margin. It has plantlets at the ends of long stolons after blooming, bending to the ground and taking root.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: KALANCHOE



More forms of *Kalanchoe synsepala*... the white specimen could be a new subspecies

Kelly Griffin

### FUN FACTS

1. A *Kalanchoe* species was one of the first plants to be sent into space, sent on a resupply to the Soviet Salyut 1 space station in 1979
2. You might see them soon in antiaging skincare products!

### SOME COMMON NAMES

***Kalanchoe beharensis*:** Drake, Blue Slick, Fang, Oak Leaf

***Kalanchoe bracteata*:** Silver Spoons (gorgeous red flower!)

***Kalanchoe delagoensis*:** Chandelier Plant, (formerly *Bryophyllum*)

***Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi*:** Lavender Leaf Plant

***Kalanchoe gastonis-bonnieri*:** Donkey Ears (leaves that reach up to 20 inches long)

***Kalanchoe luciae*:** Paddle Plant or Flapjack

***Kalanchoe marmorata*:** Pen-wiper Plant

***Kalanchoe orgyalis*:** Copper Spoons (fuzzy)

***Kalanchoe synsepala*:** Walking Kalanchoe

***Kalanchoe tomentosa*:** Panda Plant, Chocolate Soldier, Teddy Bear, Black Tie (dark green fuzzy leaves with almost black edges)

ROCCO PIERSANTI

## ESSAY: AN AGAVE TRIBUTE

My mom passed away in early 2024 leaving me bereft of my life long partner in all things green, spiny and succulent. She is and always will be my single biggest inspiration to become the gardener I am today. Almost every single specimen that is growing in my yard came from hers; a supremely developed acre in east county, that has been on garden tours and even featured in Better Homes and Gardens magazine. My own yard is a tribute to her.

I have always known about the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society but have not been to one of their bi-yearly shows for a long time. My mom frequently went to these shows with her friends and since one of them was in June, my birthday month, I received many a cacti or succulent variety in various beautiful handmade pottery from her as gifts. In January, 2025, I ran across an advertisement for the SDCSS winter show, perhaps in the paper, and it brought back memories of my mom as almost anything garden related can. I made up my mind, I was going to enter this show to honor her and I knew exactly what I wanted to enter.



The author's winning *Agave nickelsiae*, with a bit of extra info added to her card

Vicki Hoffman

My mom always gave freely from her yard anything I wanted. Almost every time I visited her, we would take a stroll through her acre of a yard and I would go "shopping." A fancy way of saying, to take cuttings from the many varieties that she grew. Several years ago, she gave me a potted pup taken off of an agave that had been growing in the ground in her yard. She hesitated just a moment and said, "if you don't want this plant, please bring it back." She indicated that she thought the agave was hard to find and she wanted to make sure I would treasure it as she did. This succulent was the only plant specimen ever given to me conditionally. The plant's name: *Agave victoriae-reginae* —or so I thought.

## ESSAY: AN AGAVE TRIBUTE

I replanted this agave last summer in a beautiful pot my mom had given to me, presumably purchased from a former SDCSS event. The day before the show, I dutifully brought my agave down to Balboa Park to set up. As I was taking the plant out of my car, a man walked over to me and said, “I know that pot.” I looked at him for a moment and replied back, “did you make it?” Indeed, it was Mark Muradian himself, the potter, and very talented artist. What were the odds? Thirty seconds more and he would have passed me by and I would have never met him. This encounter brought tears to my eyes. Encircling the pot with my arms, and talking to the man my mother bought the pot from brought me closer to her. I miss my mom.

I invited my father to go to the show along with my husband Rick the next day. We got down to the park bright and early, the parking already a madhouse. As we walked through the park to Casa Del Prado, wispy clouds trailing across the otherwise sunny winter sky, I

was excited to see the show and wondered whether or not my *Agave victoriae-reginae* would win a ribbon. I secretly believed that she was beautiful.

We walked into the show and straight to my plant, my mother’s plant, and, to my joy...it had a blue ribbon! I turned to my dad and said, “Dad, we won! Mom’s plant won!” and I hugged him. Tears, once again in my eyes.

Upon further inspection, and also, with just the tiniest bit of chagrin, I noticed that it was the only one entered in that category—Novice Agave. I shrugged it off and my Dad, Rick, and I all laughed at our naive exuberance. Right about that time I hear a voice from behind.

“I changed the name of your plant.” A gentleman says to me.



The agave in Muradian pot, and its proud owner

Vicki Hoffman

## ESSAY: AN AGAVE TRIBUTE

I turned around and looked at him then down at the card and yes, “*victoriae-reginae*” had been crossed off and “*nickelsiae*” had been written in instead. I looked up. “So it’s not a *victoriae-reginae*?” I asked.

“Nope. It’s related, but not a *victoriae*.” He went on to explain the difference in agave stalks, terminal black spines, size and how this particular version hailed from the northern regions of Mexico. Formerly known as *Agave ferdinandi-regis* but was now called *Agave nickelsiae*; named after Anna Nickels, a plant collector, in 1895. She discovered and documented this variety before anyone else.

I was in awe that this man knew so much. I thanked him and asked him for his name as I gave him mine and introduced my Dad and Rick. He showed me his lanyard, but I didn’t see his name. He clarified.

“My name is Kelly—Kelly Griffin. I am the president of San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society.”

I think I stood up a little bit straighter just then. The president! I got the attention, time and institutional knowledge from the president of this club. I was more than flattered. I thanked him again and we continued to chat as I asked him more questions. At some point, I looked back down at my agave and joked that I got first place out of one entry in that category.

“You should be happy to get a ribbon at all,” Kelly quipped. “The judges are particular like that.” He went on to add. “When I first entered this show, years ago, I got 3rd place but there were only two specimens in my category. I was miffed about this so I took it to one of the judges and asked why I got third out of two entries. The judge looked at my plant and said, ‘because it doesn’t deserve a second place’.”

We all got a good laugh at this anecdote and took the meaning for what it was meant to be. My blue ribbon was an honor to receive. I’ll take that any day.

What a great afternoon we all had. We enjoyed the rest of the show, and I purchased a few more specimens for my collection. Reflecting on my success, it really didn’t matter what I won because I know what I have in my now newly named *Agave nickelsiae*. I have a beautiful plant, in a beautiful pot, that stays at my home for all to enjoy. And most importantly, I have an entrusted specimen to care for. Don’t worry mom, I gotch you.

VICKI HOFFMAN

Thank you to Vicki for this wonderful essay.

The SDCSS monthly newsletter welcomes and appreciates essays, photography, artwork, and similar contributions from its members.

If you have a contribution related to cacti and succulents that you’d like to share with the club, please let us know, and you could see your work in a future issue.

We’d love to hear from you!

Contact the editor: [eyf.editor@gmail.com](mailto:eyf.editor@gmail.com)

CLICK TO VISIT US ONLINE!



SAN DIEGO  
Cactus & Succulent Society



## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS

THE 2025 WINTER SHOW WAS A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS THANKS TO MEMBERS LIKE YOU!

We are thrilled to report that there were a whopping **377** plants entered into our show from **51** individual participants... an *increase* from last years' 300 plants from 40 participants. As for the breakdown, we had 25 advanced growers (up from 23 in 2024), 11 intermediate entrants (up from 10 in 2024), and—best of all—15 novice enthusiasts (up over double from 7 entrants in 2024). See the final tallies on the next page for the full show results.

As always, we welcome and strongly encourage all members—especially newer ones—to try their hand at showing their plants at a future event!

Our two judges, Mark Fryer and (newbie Judge) Der-shing Helmer, awarded our main category winners and Judge's Awards. The two Show Chair Award plants were selected by Rick Bjorklund, and the two President's Award plants were selected by Kelly Griffin.

We'll see you and your lovely plants again at our meeting brag table on March 8<sup>th</sup>!



Our two judges, Der-shing Helmer and the amazing Mark Fryer!  
Jared Petker



## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS

NOVICE	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL PLANTS
Naomi Orosz	5	2	3	5	15
DR Cactus	4	2	0	0	6
Rachel Burns	4	0	0	0	4
Vicki Hoffman	3	0	1	0	4
Gerald Richert	3	3	3	1	10
Jodi Visosky	2	0	1	1	4
Andrew Espinosa	2	1	0	0	3
Nate Bazer	1	5	1	1	8
Matt Jillson	1	1	0	1	3
Lou Crow	1	0	0	0	1
Aakasid	1	0	0	0	1
Oakes Austin	1	0	0	0	1
Jason Gupta	0	1	1	0	2
Alex Gaerlan	0	3	2	1	6
Ron Lebaco	0	1	0	0	1

INTERMEDIATE	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL PLANTS
Jared Petker	9	5	2	3	19
Antonina Lansangan	4	1	2	1	8
Peter Hagopian	3	5	0	1	9
Susan Foran	3	1	1	3	8
Luis Gonzalez	3	2	0	1	6
M. Aparicio	3	2	0	0	5
Chuck Ramey	2	3	0	0	5
Jim Anderson	1	1	0	0	2
Bear Dog Pottery	1	1	2	2	6
Mirian Parent	0	1	2	3	6
Sherman Blench	0	2	1	0	3

ADVANCED	1ST	2ND	3RD	NO PLACEMENT	TOTAL PLANTS
Peter Walkowiak	18	10	2	8	38
Brian Shepherd	5	3	1	5	14
Tina Zucker	3	5	3	2	13
Candy & Jerry Garner	3	2	2	3	10
Josh Allen	3	2	3	9	17
LA Succulent	2	1	0	3	6
Jen Greene	2	1	3	8	14
Hidden Agave	2	1	1	4	8
Terry Parr	2	1	1	3	7
Sphaeroid	2	1	2	4	9
Doug Hobson	2	1	3	1	7
Julian Duval	2	0	0	0	2
Botanic Wondar	1	2	5	5	13
Corona Cactus	1	1	0	4	6
Andrew Alcasid	1	3	1	1	6
Kelly Griffin	1	1	1	5	8
Matt & Amanda Flammany	1	1	5	7	14
Pam Badger	1	0	0	1	2
Matt/RSD	1	0	4	2	7
Monalisa Palmeri	1	3	0	2	6
Arnold Chaney	0	4	1	1	6
Lorie Johansen	0	1	0	3	4
Steve Salley	0	1	2	3	6
Kopfstein	0	0	1	1	2
Tom Biggart	0	0	0	6	6

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST IN SHOW**

*Euphorbia tuberculata*

**Peter Walkowiak**

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST WINTER GROWER: NOVICE**

*Echeveria 'Angel Kissed'*

**Naomi Orosz**

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST WINTER GROWER: INTERMEDIATE**

*Aloe castilloniae*

Chuck Ramey

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST WINTER GROWER: ADVANCED**

*Dudleya candida*

Josh Allen

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST CACTUS: NOVICE**

*Cylindropuntia columnar*

D. R. Cactus

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST CACTUS: INTERMEDIATE**

*Gymnocalycium pflanzii marquezii*

Luis Gonzalez



**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**BEST CACTUS: ADVANCED**

*Ferocactus glaucescens*

**Peter Walkowiak**

## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**BEST SUCCULENT: NOVICE**

*Aeonium sedefolium*

Jodi Visoski

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**

**BEST SUCCULENT:  
INTERMEDIATE**

*Euphorbia groenwaldii* x *venefica*

Jared Petker



## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**BEST SUCCULENT:  
ADVANCED**

*Operculicaria decaryi*

**Julian Duval**

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**JUDGE'S AWARD: MARK FRYER**

*Copiapoa dura*

Peter Walkowiak

2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**JUDGE'S AWARD: MARK FRYER**

*Euphorbia loricata*

**Peter Walkowiak**

## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**JUDGE'S AWARD: DER-SHING HELMER**

*Echeveria pulvinata* 'Ruby Blush'

Tina Zucker

2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**JUDGE'S AWARD:  
DER-SHING HELMER**

*Pelargonium klinghardtense*

Peter Walkowiak



## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**SHOW CHAIR'S AWARD: RICK BJORKLUND**

*Titanopsis* mix

**Brian Shepard**

2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**SHOW CHAIR'S AWARD:  
RICK BJORKLUND**

*Haworthia cuspidata* variegated

Oakes A.

## 2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS



**PRESIDENT'S AWARD: KELLY GRIFFIN**

*Euphorbia francosii*

**Candy and Jerry Garner**

**2025 WINTER SHOW RESULTS**



**PRESIDENT'S AWARD: KELLY GRIFFIN**

*Sansevieria kirkii* 'Silver Blue'

Jared Petker



See you at our next Show in June 2025!