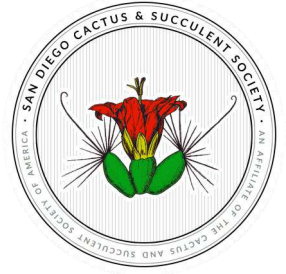


ESPINAS Y FLORES



VOL. 59, No. 09
SEPTEMBER 2024

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



STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE // SEPT GUEST SPEAKER: KAL KAMINER //
AUGUST BRAG TABLE RESULTS // UPCOMING EVENTS // ...and more



ON THE COVER

Haworthia 'Fried Candy'

Photo by **Kevin Hosmer**

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UPCOMING SDCSS SCHEDULE

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

September 14th

OUR NEXT UPCOMING MEETING

October 12th

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Picnic Regalement	[open]
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Newsletter Editor	Der-shing Helmer
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CONTACT SDCSS

membership@sdcss.net

CONTACT EyF EDITOR

eyf.editor@gmail.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings! Our Summer has been fairly mild with only a couple random hot days, however this week has turned HOT—92° in the cool shady areas of my yard, and 105° in the hothouse here in Spring Valley. I have been watering more than I usually would, since I want the plants to look their best for my Coffee in the Garden on the 21st of September. Hopefully that will be a cooler day!

Our August meeting was a fine one—lots of interesting activities. There were a couple new vendors and some cool plants for sale along with handcrafted pottery. There were several new members—always great to see—who were given a “tour” of the meeting to orient them to all our activities. We do this every meeting, so if you are a new member or have never been to a meeting, be sure and participate in this orientation... it's a good way to meet people and learn about all our activities! Our **Plant of the Month** talk was wonderfully, if reluctantly, presented by **Kevin Hosmer**, who, despite complaining that his partner, Rick, had coerced him into it, gave a fun and very interesting talk about how his hybrids are named. Kevin is a master at hybridizing *Haworthias* and so has needed to name many plants—not always an easy task. Kevin, with his kooky sense of humor, has named more than a

few plants after people he knows from SDCSS (including “*Haworthia* ‘Pamarazzi’” after yours truly)! Along with the fun of hearing the names he came up with, his talk was a very informative insight into the naming of plants. Thanks Kevin!

The main speaker for August, **Gabriel Diaz**, came to us from Mexico, the title of the talk was “Whoa! Mexico,” and a fitting name it was! Gabriel treated us to a wild ride around Guanajuato, Mexico, showing off the biggest to the smallest cactus of his home state. Thanks to Gabriel for the adventure!

At our September meeting we will, once again, be treated to a **Plant of the Month** presentation by board member **Jen Greene**. Jen's presentations are always fascinating, so I'm looking forward to what she comes up with this time. If you have ever thought of doing a Plant of the Month talk but feel you don't know enough, or are too shy to get up there, I challenge you to reconsider. I didn't know much when I first did one, and hated talking to groups of people. But I was just fascinated by *Melocactus*, so I got a book from the library (this was before the internet—now you can just Google, though the books in the library are amazing!), wrote a short article, brought in a few specimens, and talked a bit about



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

them. I learned so much in this process I was glad I did it!

At the meeting there will be plant and pottery sales, a benefit drawing, a plant exchange, and our Library. Our main speaker will be giving us hints on how to identify field collected plants in order to protect and conserve endangered plants.

Our annual Holiday Party (an event not to be missed!) will be coming up in December, and we are looking for creative ways to decorate the tables. We are looking for volunteers to create one or several suitable decorations. Painted rocks, little succulent gardens, vases with succulent themes...use your

imagination! We will have sign-up sheets at the meeting, so start thinking of what you can create! These creations will be auctioned off with funds going to the CSSA consolations efforts. Consider creating for the cause.

REMEMBER—if you haven't yet brought in any treats for the break, please consider sharing! If your treat needs a bowl or plate, please bring one if possible!

See you on September 14!

Best to you,

Pam Badger
August 17, 2024



A view of the garden

PAM BADGER

UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKER**SEPTEMBER 14th SPEAKER****KAL KAMINER****“GRAB A SHOVEL: AN HONEST TALK ABOUT CONSERVATION IN THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT COMMUNITY”****ABOUT OUR SPEAKER**

Kal Kaminer has been obsessively growing cactus and succulents ever since he moved to Los Angeles and needed some plants to fill an empty balcony. Collecting plants soon turned to growing, and he began selling at many of the California cactus and succulent shows. He's also an avid grafter, focusing on grafting the most unusual and bizarre mutant cactus. In 2020, Kal opened his retail nursery, LA Succulents, in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. His nursery specializes in unique and unusual succulent plants, including Ariocarpus, Astrophytum and Stapeliads, of which he grows over 200 species.

ABOUT OUR TALK

The topic of Kal's presentation is "Grab A Shovel: An Honest Talk About Conservation in the Cactus and Succulent Community." The illegal plant trade has historically weaved its

way through the Cactus and Succulent hobby in the US, especially in California. Kal will explain to us why plants collected from habitat are strongly desired among collectors, where these plants come from, and why it's wrong for consumers to buy collected plants. He will educate us in identifying these types of plants, and the part we can all play to stem the trade of field collected plants in our community. As someone who was once on the wrong side of this issue, he fully understands why it's so critical that we promote a conservation-minded approach to collecting cactus and succulents, and looks forward to sharing his story and outlook with us.

Don't forget to join us before the talk for our POM presentation by Jen Greene!

[SEE YOU ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2024!](#)

Join us before the meeting at noon!

The SDCSS will be hosting the Biannual CSSA International Convention of Succulent Plant enthusiasts in the Spring of 2025. This is a fun and exciting event, and we will definitely need volunteers to help out in many areas. We will be holding CSSA organizational meetings every monthly meeting at noon before the general meeting. If you have special skills and/or experience related to event organizing, or if you just want to find out more about ways to help out, please join us for this meeting and for more information!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER COFFEE IN THE GARDEN!

Who: Pam Badger

When: September 21st, 9am - 2pm

Where: 9105 Avocado Street, Spring Valley, 91977

Parking: Park on the street below the hill. A bottom gate will be open to walk up through the garden. Wear good walking shoes! Some paths may be steep in places.

Handicap-accessible parking: There will be room for 2 vehicles in the driveway, first on the right as you come up the hill, for easy garden viewing.

Snacks and beverages will be provided for your enjoyment.

Please come enjoy the garden, meet and greet old and new friends.



Enjoy an article about Pam's garden on the next pages!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER COFFEE IN THE GARDEN!



You are invited to come visit my garden on September 21, 2024 for a Coffee in the Garden event.

It has been a while since I opened my garden for visitors, and what I remember from the past is questions about how the garden came to be and repeatedly telling the story of this garden, which is now 40 years old. All gardens have their own stories about when, why, and how they came to be. I love the story of my garden, as I have been there from the beginning, and have been the sole caretaker for the past 8 years.

My husband Lee (now deceased) and I began collecting cactus in about 1972, not long after we met. We were both attracted to

these amazing plants, and soon our San Francisco flat was bulging with them and we began a small business buying bare-root cactus in San Diego, bringing them home, potting them up, and selling them wholesale to the numerous plant stores around The City. The business thrived, and we opened a small plant store of our own. This was a fun time in our lives which we gave up in 1976 when we decided to move to Central America. With the idea of growing cactus to ship to the USA for sale, we packed up our lives, our 200lb pup, and headed south; that is another whole story, quite an adventure, which came to an end in 1979 when a civil war broke out in the country where we were living (Nicaragua) and we fled back to California, finally settling in San Diego. After a few years of getting back on our feet, we were able to purchase a little house in Spring Valley on a 1/4 acre on a hillside. I had told Lee that I didn't need a fancy house, I just wanted a Succulent Garden! My garden was born.

When Lee started building the garden in 1984 it was a blank slate—a steep hill, flat with no rocks, lots of weeds, and a scraggly hedge at the bottom. To begin, the slope was contoured into diagonal ridges running down the hill and along the bottom loads of DG (decomposed granite)-created mounds. We had made numerous trips to Baja in the early 70's and 80's and wanted to create the feel of the desert around Catavina—some of the first plantings included *Brahea armata*, the Mexican Blue Palm endemic to Baja, which I grew from seed collected on a trip. Numerous Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia*) and Acacia trees (fast growing, drought hardy) were planted to

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER COFFEE IN THE GARDEN!

provide shade from the harsh Spring Valley sun, making establishing cactus and succulents more feasible; succulent ground covers were planted to stabilize the slopes. Over the years *Dracena draco* and palms grew and the shade trees were removed; tall Euphorbias, tree Aloes, and Alluadias reached toward the sky. Changes and additions were always happening. Over decades, Lee became less able to work the garden due to chronic pain, and he passed in 2016. As the garden developed over the years, I had contributed little in the upkeep of the garden as I worked more than full time, though I spent time in the garden as often as possible watering and enjoying the ever-changing landscape. Suddenly, now it was all my responsibility. I would weed-whack the ever-aggressive weeds when possible, but the garden mostly went neglected until the pandemic. Like many others, I was left with time on my hands and had mostly retired by then—time to get the garden in shape! I started tearing out overgrown ground cover and leggy plants, replacing them with plants from the collection, and adding rocks and new top dressing. Each time I would get an area reworked there would be another area that cried out for attention; at this point, I have redone about 80% of the original plantings. The big plants are mostly still there, but 4000lbs of rock, 6 cu yards of DG, and numerous plants have truly made this into My Garden.

One of my favorite features is not actually a cactus or succulent, yet is amazing. Here is the story: one of the early developments we made on the property was cutting down an old pepper tree (not the pretty kind) to build a deck overlooking the garden. Lee designed



The “floating Ficus tree”

PAM BADGER

it with a large planter box that appeared to go down to the ground below. The box was lined with metal and planted with a couple of 1 gallon *Ficus benjamina* trees. Twenty years later the deck was starting to fall apart—time for a new one. When the old deck was demolished, we discovered the the roots of the (now much larger) Ficus had grown through the box and down to the garden below. The massive roots were the shape of the box: 12 feet tall and supporting the very large tree. A new deck was built around the root structure, which remains exposed ...a sight to be seen to be believed!

PAM BADGER

STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER**STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE
BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER**

ARTICLE BY JEN GREENE



Stapelia leendertziae
JEN GREENE

If you're the sort of grower who likes a themed garden, and you've chosen a gothic theme for your plants – these are a must-have in the collection. The blooms are easily in my top 10 favorites, being dramatic, enormous, and easily stopping people dead in their tracks. The plant itself is fast-growing, and while it technically is supposed to grow in a compact clump, it can make for an attractive hanging specimen with a sprawling habit resembling tropical plants.

HABITAT

A South African native, these are known from the eastern side of the country, in the Transvaal region.

In habitat, they grow in compact, upright clumps and strongly resemble *Stapelia gigantea*. In cultivation, they often receive enough water and shade to develop a rather striking resemblance to an octopus or sea monster (which you can also see in this post from the South African National Biodiversity Institute). This lanky and long-limbed appearance isn't typical, but the plant seldom seems to mind.

CULTIVATION FOR STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE

These are enormously forgiving and very easy to grow, provided you trend towards under-watering, rather than overwatering.

SOIL AND POTTING

While forgiving, they do require the #1 need of good succulent soil: excellent drainage!

I pot this in a mix of 50% succulent soil, 25% pumice, and 25% orchid bark. If you're further inland and it's often hot and dry, you could make the soil percentage higher, or even mix in some houseplant soil for additional nutrients. I do find that they grow faster and are more likely to bloom with a bit of richer soil included, but this can also be encouraged with fertilizer (more on that later!).

When selecting a pot, start off bigger than what the plant is currently in by at least 1 inch, preferably 2 inches or more. They will grow to fill the pot quickly, and appreciate the room.

STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER

The hotter your climate and the brighter the area you plan to keep them in (read: more hours of direct, full sunlight), the larger the pot you can put them into. If you're in a cooler zone with more clouds, marine layer, or lingering fog, you may want to increase the amount of pumice you use compared to soil. The best way to encourage nice, compact growth is to have them suffer a bit.

WHAT'S WITH THE ORCHID BARK?

Why orchid bark? I use orchid bark in my mix as opposed to coconut husk or coconut fiber because it produces a nice, chunky mix that better encourages drainage. It's been a game-changer for me, living inland and having much of my cacti and succulents in my nice toasty greenhouse. The orchid bark holds on to moisture longer than the pumice does, with plenty of air accessible to the roots, without being soggy or compacting the way coconut coir is prone to do.

If your plant is outdoors, your greenhouse is cooler, you get more morning fog, or otherwise find that your succulents don't dehydrate into plant jerky if you skip watering for a week...you can also probably skip the orchid bark. It helps me, so it stays in my mix.

LIGHTING OR SUN EXPOSURE

As evidenced with my plants, when grown in even partial shade, they really sprawl. In habitat, they have a very tight, compact, and upright growth habit. In cultivation, with richer soil and regular water, they very very rapidly begin to resemble a vining plant.

There's a careful balance to strike to encourage nice, compact growth (if that's your goal). Immediately throwing a nursery plant, or a shipped plant, into full sunlight is almost guaranteed to scorch your stapelia.

If you want them to resemble their cousins in habitat, slowly acclimate your plants to full sunlight over the course of several weeks. The best time to move them from a more protected, shaded area to full sun is in early spring, just as the first risk of frost



Oct 13, 2023, just about to open

JEN GREENE

STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER

is really past. Cloudy spring weather, shorter days, and milder high temperatures are all ideal for timing when you move a plant from shade or overwintering indoors to back outside.

I have mine growing in my greenhouse with 40% shade cloth, and that's resulting in quite a sprawling, rambling growth habit. If you'd told me these typically have a growth pattern similar to *Stapelia gigantea*, enough that they can be mistaken for each other in habitat, I'd have thought you were lying!

So! Despite these being excellent hanging plant candidates, I don't recommend them for indoor growing. If you have enormous, floor to ceiling windows that are south facing, sure, give it a try.

But for us average people with average windows? Or if you're in an apartment or condo? Nope. Keep them on your patio, or plan to provide supplemental lighting.

What if it's already stretching out and I don't like it? Any lanky or lateral-growing arms that have already developed will not become upright-growing if you expose them to more sun (they'll just get sun scorch). If you want a stretched, gummy-shaped outgrowth to become a dense clump of arms, you'll have to trim it and start over. Use clean shears, trim the arm or branch, and let it callous over for at least a day. Once the cut end is dry to the touch (within a day or two), you can stick it pointing straight up into a pot of soil mix. Don't add water until you wiggle the cutting and feel some resistance, indicating that the cutting has started to root.



First opening, Oct 14, 2023

JEN GREENE

WATER

While these are succulents, the hotter the days get, the more water they need. What I enjoy about this species in particular is that they are very transparent about their water needs: when they're thirsty, they wrinkle.

STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER

Even if they're thirsty, they can be thirsty for days and be fine. The rooted cuttings I've plopped outdoors next to rocks or in random areas to experiment with hang on to life for a surprising amount of time – weeks, even months, without special care.

In pots, I have several of these plants, and they aren't watered any more often than the rest of the greenhouse (for 2024, it's about once a week, even during heat waves). They do look considerably sadder after a heat wave, but they've hung on!

WHAT ABOUT BLOOMING?

If you want those big, amazing blooms, the stapeliad needs to be well-nourished as it enters blooming season. I've seen mine begin to develop blooms in late summer, usually around this time of year in early August. It takes ages for the blooms to plump up and open! I think from first sight of a bud to actually seeing the flowers above, it was about a month. The first tiny bud is so small and hard to see you may miss it. From tip-of-your-finger sized to ready to open is only about 2 weeks, but it'll feel like forever.

During the time the blooms are growing, the plants are hungry. They need regular water and fertilizer. My favorite go-to balanced mix (20:20:20 at half strength) was enough for a couple blooms last year... but I wanted more. So this year I tried using a bloom booster formula (12:55:6) at half strength, a mix originally purchased for my bearded irises - and saw at least a dozen flower buds within a couple weeks of feeding.

Unfortunately for me, I ran out of that bloom booster fertilizer...and the buds promptly began to desiccate and dry out. Keeping them regularly watered didn't help - they needed food!

Lesson learned: if you want profuse blooms of this extremely dramatic stapeliad, plan on having a richer, bloom-oriented fertilizer on hand. I've since reordered the fertilizer, as I used it on all my stapeliads at the end of summer and saw multiple species start building flower buds for the first time.

I will note that it's important not to overdo it! A little fertilizer offered consistently will be better for your stapeliads than a big burst and then nothing (as I've seen). To keep them building their flower buds, you'll want to have a steady regime of water and fertilizer so they have the food and energy to build those blooms.



Day after blooming

JEN GREENE

STAPELIA LEENDERTZIAE - THE BLACK BELL CARRION FLOWER

Sprawling, as it does, across the entire bench,
May 21, 2024

JEN GREENE

DO THE FLOWERS SMELL?

Oh, yes. I have a dozen species of stapeliads in my greenhouse at this point, including *S. gigantea* and *S. grandiflora*, and I'll admit...this was the stinkiest to encounter first thing in the morning. I moved my giant flowering species out of the greenhouse, but even when they first opened, I didn't walk into the greenhouse and immediately wonder if some small creature had died in a corner I couldn't see.

If kept completely outdoors with good ventilation, the smell is only noticeable if you stick your face right up next to them. Considering these are a part of a family commonly referred to as "carrion flowers", I

have little sympathy for anyone who thinks it's a good idea to take a big whiff of one. For those who didn't know this, my condolences. You'll only make that mistake once.

WHAT ABOUT WINTER?

While these should be outdoors as close to year-round as possible for the best light, they can be brought indoors if you're worried about a hard frost. There's a near-zero chance of them blooming during winter months, so that's not what you should be worrying about.

The biggest concern is that these do not have a season where they're fully dormant. When bringing them indoors, to slow down growth, it's a good idea to dial back watering to the bare minimum. Chances are they won't need any water at all for the few weeks our weather is cold enough at night to justify a move.

As soon as nights stop dropping below 30F at night, move them right back outside. I'm able to keep mine outdoors year round, and they've been fine with lows dipping into the high 20s. They are soft and fleshy, so hail will certainly cause damage and scarring, as will snow or hard frost.

The good news is that they grow so quickly and produce so many arms that even if some look imperfect once you emerge from the other side of winter, you can trim, let the ends callous over, and stick them in pots to begin growing new plants. They make lovely gifts for fellow enthusiasts who are adequately warned about the blooms, or for your least favorite relatives without said warning.

Jokes aside - these are so, so, SO cool. When you see those dramatic black bells open for the first time, you'll be as enamored of them as I am.

Just hold your nose.

JEN GREENE

AUGUST BRAG TABLE



SDCSS members shared a full table of plants at the August Meeting's Brag Table!

Thank you for bringing in your incredible plants, and thanks to judge **Tom DeMerritt** for reviewing this table from our members. The brag table will be back in August, so step right up and bring your best late-summer plants to the meeting!

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE SUCCULENT



1ST: *CRASSULA DECEPTOR*

NAOMI OROSZ



2ND: *HAWORTHIA SP.*

JODI VISOSKY

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE SUCCULENT



3RD: *Echeveria* sp.

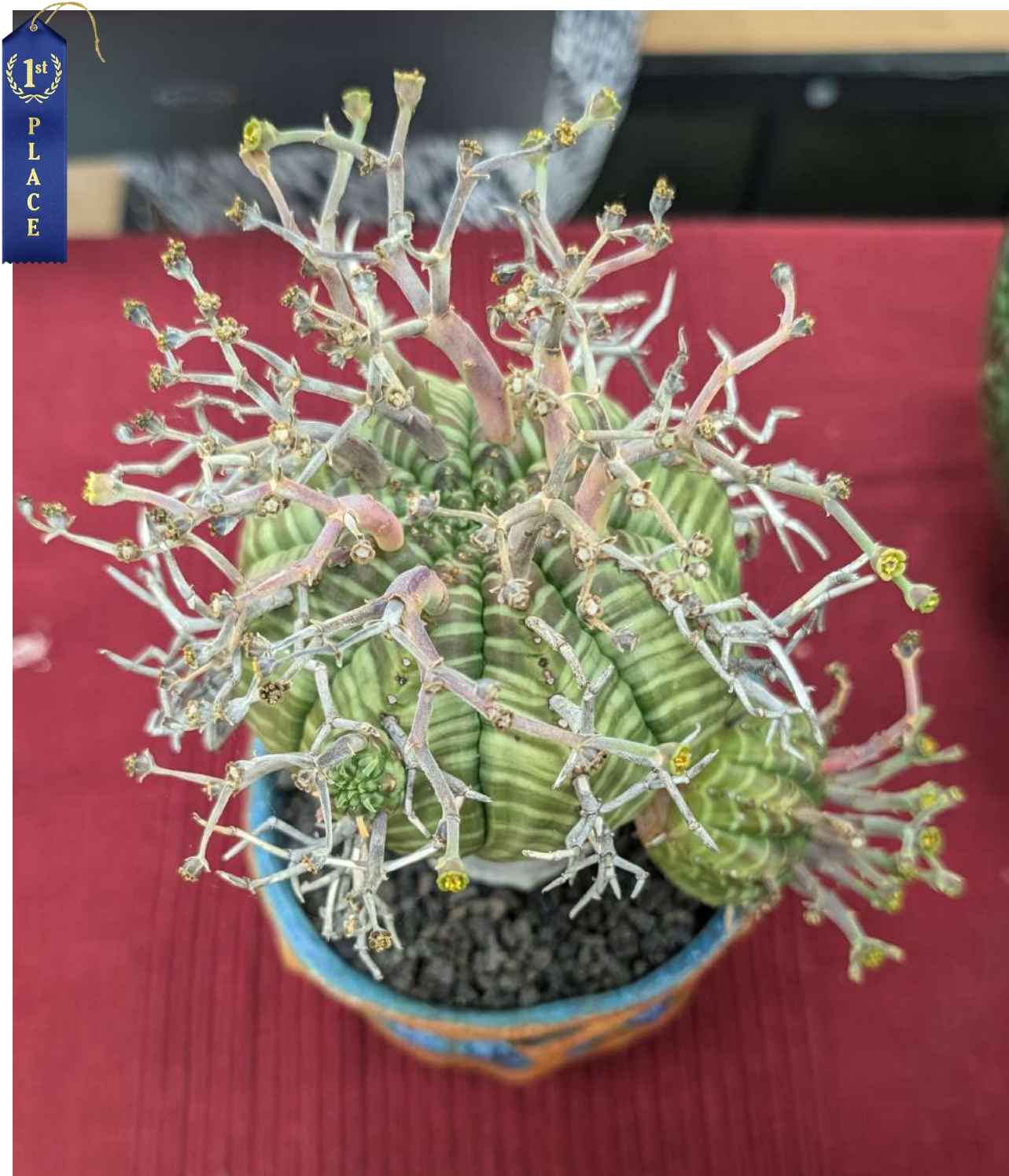
LIEN LIEU



CERARIA PYGMAEA

NAOMI OROSZ

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



1ST: *EUPHORBIA MELOFORMIS SSP VALIDA*

LUIS GONZALEZ

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



2ND: *PSEUDOBOMBAX ELLIPTICUM*

CHUCK RAMEY



3RD: *EUPHORBIA* AFF. *ACTINOCLADA*

JARED PETKER



DEUTEROCOHNIA BREVIFOLIA

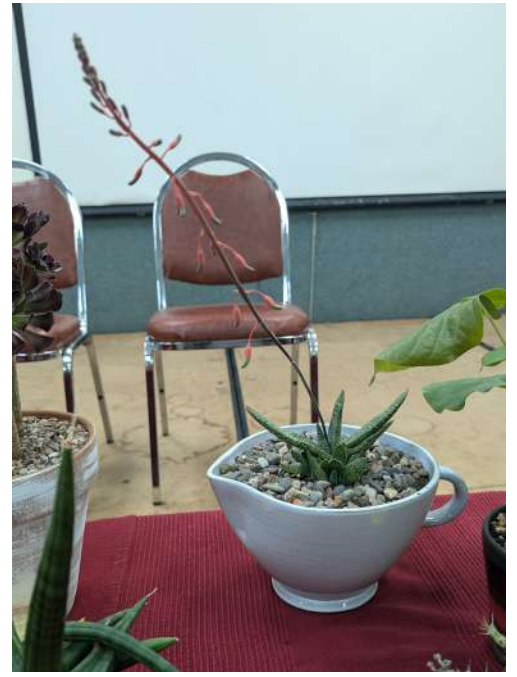
LUIS GONZALEZ

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



JATROPHA PODAGRICA

LUIS GONZALEZ



GASTERIA CARINATA

MIRIAM PARENT



HAWORTHIA PYGMAEA VAR. ARGENTEO-MACULOSA

HEATHER CHAN



AEONIUM ARBOREUM

MIRIAM PARENT

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE SUCCULENT



ALOE 'CHRISTMAS CAROL'
LUIS GONZALEZ



DRACENA 'ED EBY'

CHUCK RAMEY



AEONIUM ARBOREUM

MIRIAM PARENT



EUPHORBIA POLYGONA VAR ANOPLIA **CHUCK RAMEY**

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT



1ST: *PACHYCORMUS DISCOLOR*

JERRY AND CANDY GARNER

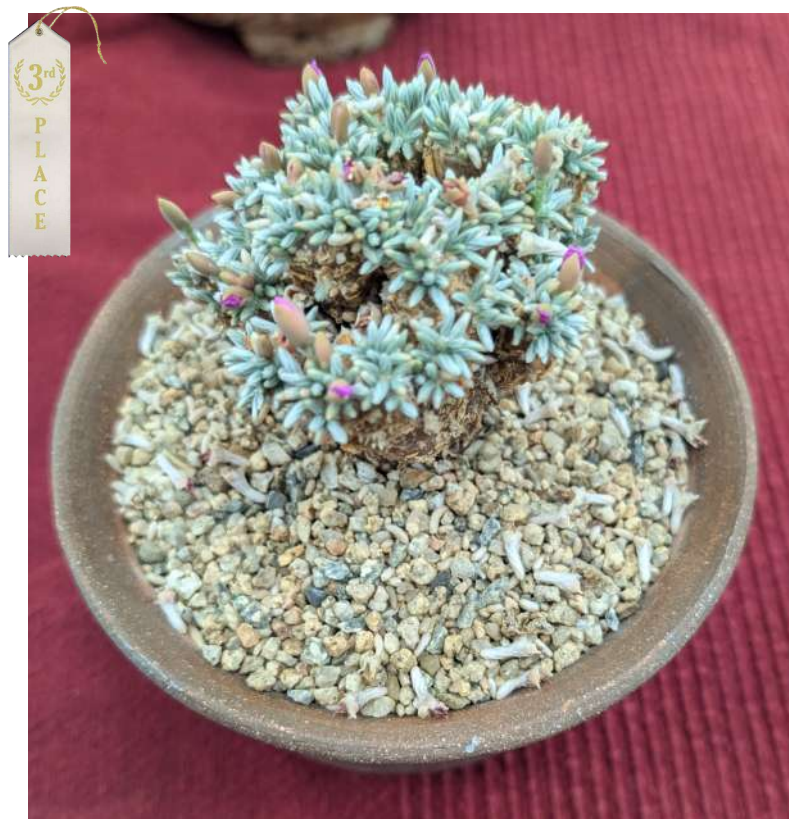
BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT

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2ND: *EUPHORBIA SQUARROSA*

PAM BADGER



3rd
P
L
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C
E

3RD: *AVONIA QUINARIA SPP. ALSTONII*

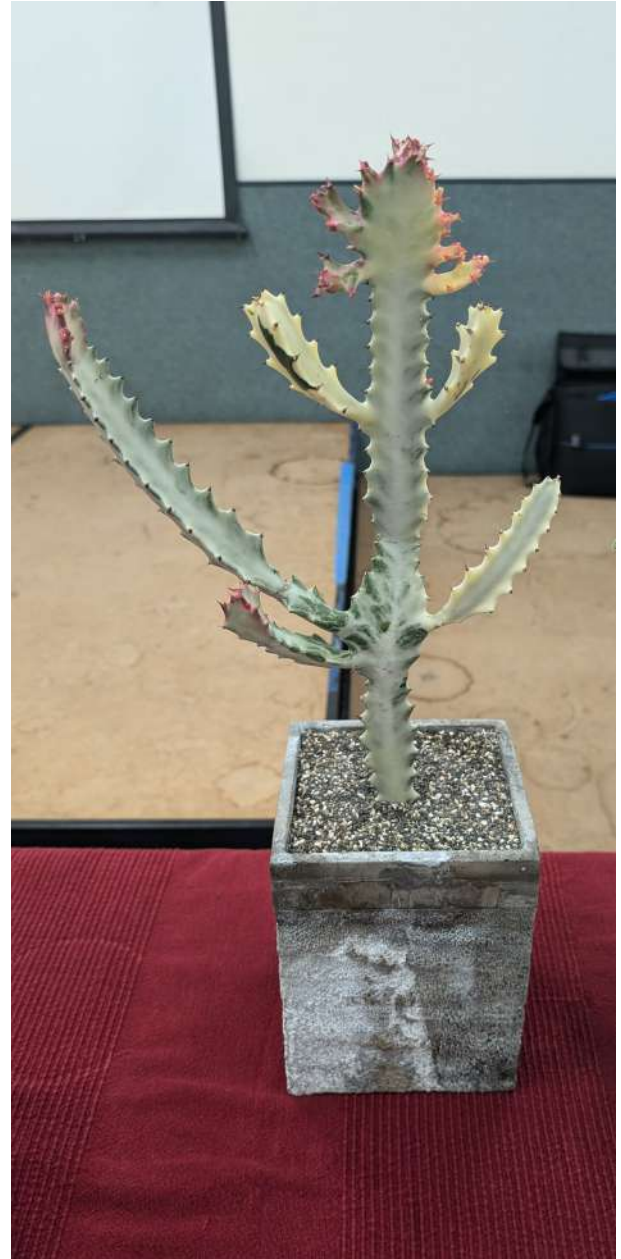
BRIAN SHEPHERD

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED SUCCULENT



UNCARINA GRANDIDIERI

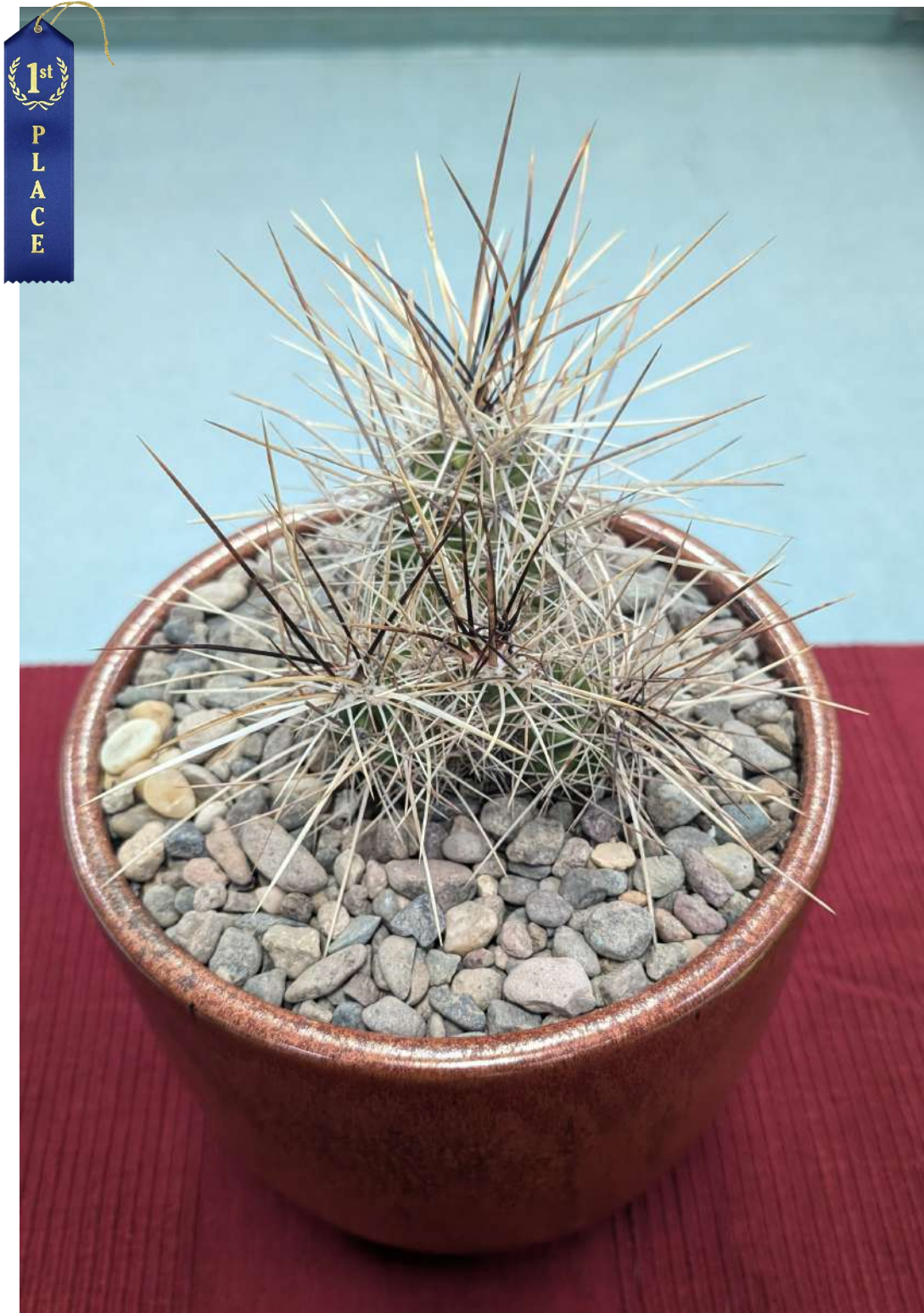
PAM BADGER



EUPHORBIA LACTEAL 'GHOST'

RITA LUNCEFORD

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE CACTUS



1ST: *ECHINOCEREUS ENNEACANTHUS*

ROCCO PIERSANTI

BRAG TABLE // NOVICE CACTUS



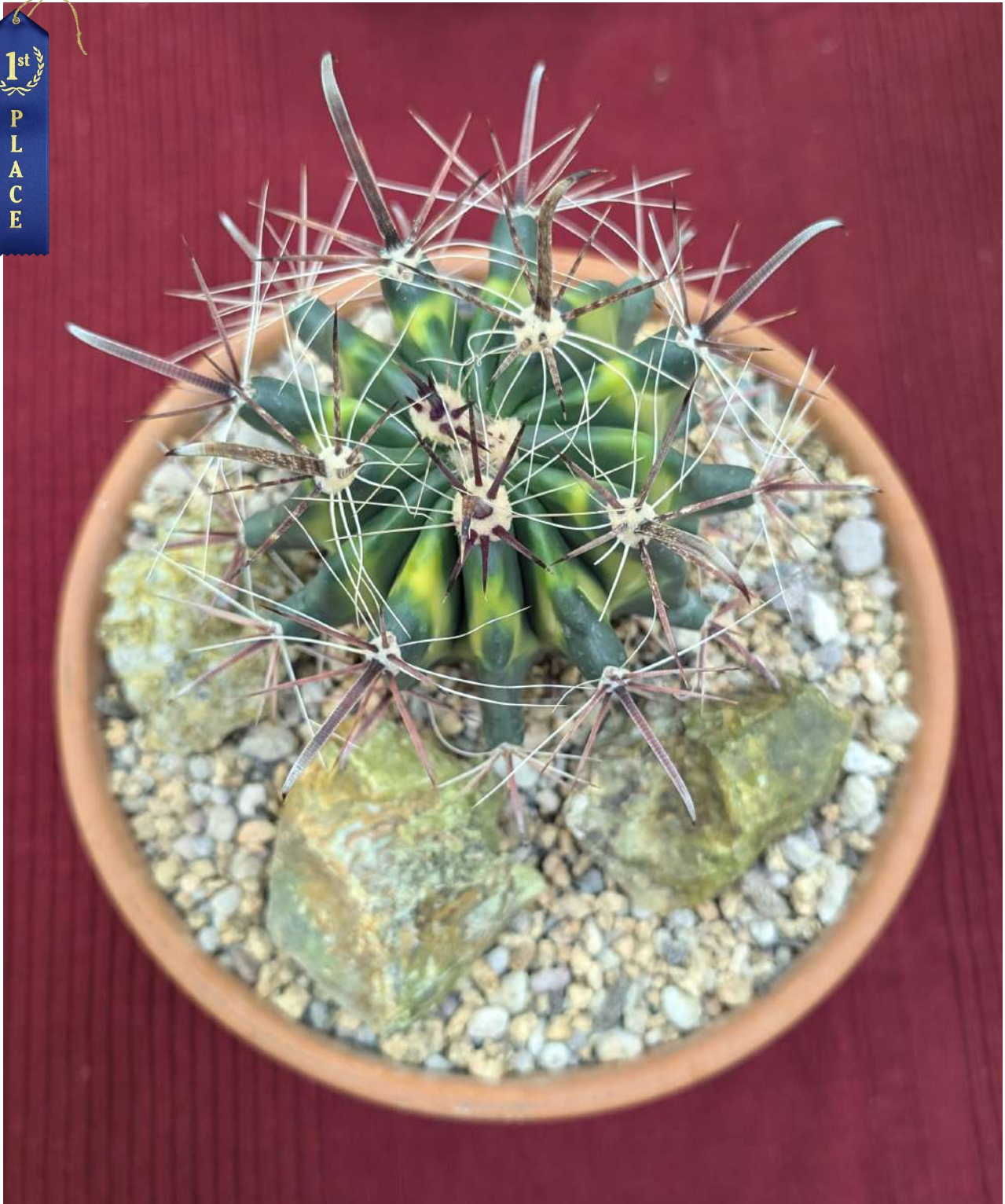
2ND: *TRICHOCEREUS ANDALGALENSIS* (JOHNSON'S LONG SPINED FORM)

JODI VISOSKY



3RD: *POLASKIA CHICHI* ROCCO PIERSANTI

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE CACTUS



1ST: *FEROCACTUS GRACILIS* 'COLORATUS' VARIEGATED

CHUCK RAMEY

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE CACTUS



2nd
P
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2ND: *GYMNOCALYCIUM SAGLIONIS*

LUIS GONZALEZ



3rd
P
L
A
C
E

3RD: *OREOCEREUS*

MIRIAM PARENT



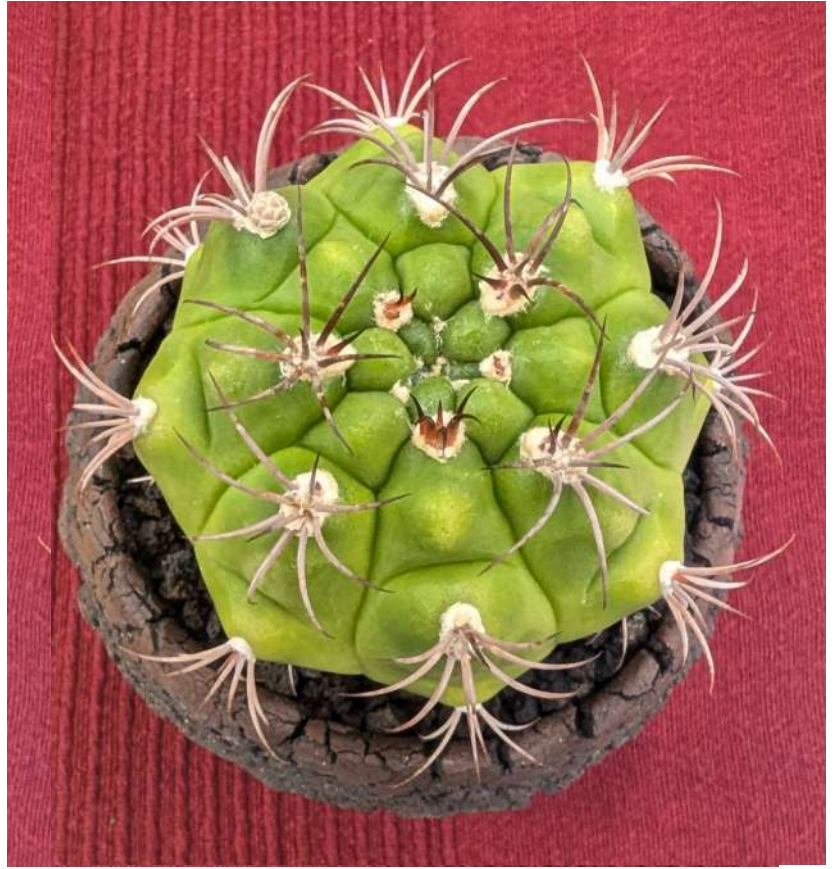
MAMMILLARIA VETULA 'THIMBLE CACTUS'

HEATHER CHAN

BRAG TABLE // INTERMEDIATE CACTUS



EPOSTOA RITTERI MIRIAM PARENT



GYMNOCALYCIUM PFLANZII VAR. *MARQUEZII* LUIS GONZALEZ



GYMNOCALYCIUM HORSTII NORB RODEN



MAMMILLARIA MYSTAX CHUCK RAMEY

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED CACTUS



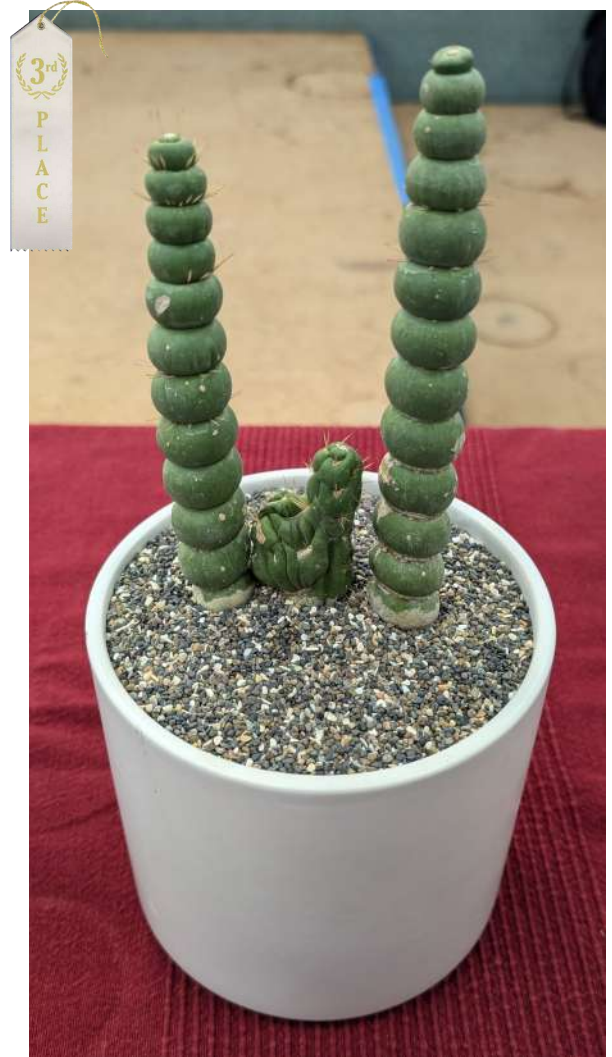
1ST: *ECHINOCEREUS MARITIMUS*

BRIAN SHEPHERD

BRAG TABLE // ADVANCED CACTUS



2ND: *TEPHROCACTUS* CLUSTER RITA LUNCEFORD



3RD: *EULYCHNIA CASTANEA SPIRALIS*
RITA LUNCEFORD