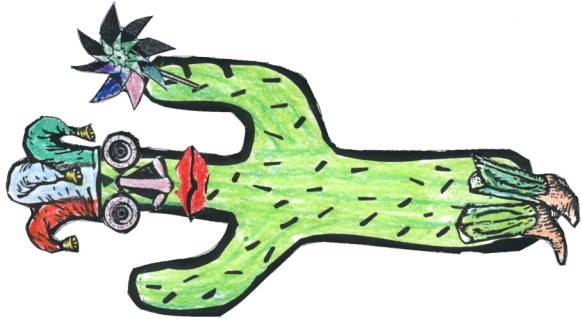
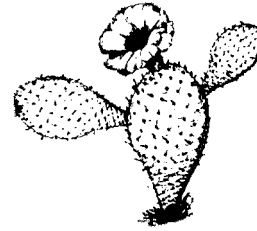


The Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society
% Stephen Cooley, editor
thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com



Nathaniel Cooley's
Cactus Paper Doll

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 4 **September 2001** Number 9

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program

Showing Plants

presented by

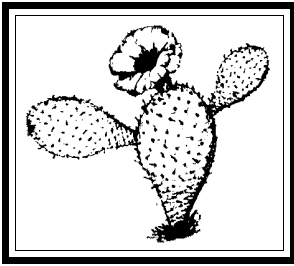
Woody Minnich

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 11
Olive Drive Church
Christian Life Center
5500 Olive drive at 7 PM

(West of 99 freeway on corner
of Olive drive & Victor street)

**Plant of
the Month
Member's
Show Plants**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 4 Number 9
September 2001

The Cactus Patch is the official publication of the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society (BCSS) of Bakersfield, California. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the times and places noted within.
GUEST ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

2001 Officers

President - Rob Skillin
Vice-President - Lynn McDonald
Treasurer - Maynard Moe
Secretary - Bonnie East
Editors - Stephen Cooley
Linda Cooley

2001 Directors

CSSA Representative - Bobby Williams
Past President - Bruce Hargreaves

2001 Chairpersons

Refreshments - Bill McDonald
Historian - Bobby Williams
Librarian - Bobby Williams
Field Trips - Dan French

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BCSS General Meeting: August 14, 2001

On August 14, 2001, the BCSS met at the Cactus Valley. We thank all the people that came, which were: Linda Cooley, Stephen Cooley, Jennifer Cooley, Nathaniel Cooley, Winnel Spencer, Leslie Moe, Ed Colley, Frans Colley, Charlie Cowie, Marilyn Cowie, Anne Lee, Alice Hargreaves, Bonnie East, Tony East, Dallas, Lynn McDonald, Bill McDonald, and Gordon Sanford.

We started with chips, salsa, beer, and soft drinks. Everybody was starting off with conversation. Lynn talked about the Show and Sale in October and a field trip to the Catalina Islands and their Botanical Gardens. Lynn says, "Please bring in some of your show plants into the next meeting." Leslie had Grilled Cactus for dinner. I tried some. It was O.K. Everybody enjoyed their dinner. The joy of Mexican food!

JENNIFER COOLEY

BCSS Executive Board Meeting: September 4, 2001

Due to the late date of this month's executive board meeting, we were not able to include any details in the newsletter.

The Far East **A Letter From Bruce**

July began with a gala supper show on the 5th 6th & 7th. The first half was Gilbert & Sullivan's "Trial by Jury" and the second bits of other G&S. This was a joint production of Capital Players and the Gaborone Music Society. I was the counsel for the plaintiff and Polly painted hats and sang in the chorus (she arrived too late to do much else.) Ruth Khama (widow of the First President) was at the opening night and shook all our hands.

The farthest East you can go in Botswana is also the lowest point where the Limpopo is joined by the Shashe. This is also the meeting point of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana. Plans are afoot to make it a three country game reserve, but that's a ways off. The Bird Club had a campout there as the 16th & 17th were holidays (President's Day).

On 14 July we drove 269 km (167 mi.) North to Palapye and then 230 km (143 mi.) NE through Sefophe and Bobonong till we hit dirt. It was 26 km (15.5 mi.) S on corrugated road to the managers office and then 6.3 km (3.9 mi.) on rough (we were rolling stones and dragging branches with our poor VW CitiGolf) dirt to the Limpopo River Lodge Campground. 15 of us stayed there and 15 had luxury in the chalets (but paid much more). We were greeted at the campsite by a fish eagle (close relative of the bald eagle).

At 7:30 on the 15th we were led along the Limpopo by Chris Brewster,

Botswana's leading birder, and saw a lot from snake bird to brilliant little bee eater. Yes, there were fever trees as recorded by Kipling ("The Great Grey-green Greasy Limpopo/ Where the Fever Trees Grow") but I found the Sycamore Figs more impressive. After a short break we went for a climb on nearby rocky hills (which just about did Polly in) and saw commiphoras (same genus as myrrh and same family as the elephant trees of Mexico) of all sorts: red, white (actually zebra-barked), blue, green and yellow (actually paper-barked). There were also shepherd's trees, rock figs, baobabs, carrot trees and *Sterculia rogersii*. That evening we all got together at a campfire at the campground.

Next morning at 8 there was another bird walk and at 3:30 we went for a game drive. The thorn trees kept trying to knock us off and the elephants stampeded. That night we met at the Chalet campfire and next day drove back to Gaborone.

As if that wasn't enough of the Limpopo, the museum had a workshop at the Tuli Lodge in Aug. This was to luxuriate while hammering out a museum policy for the country. On the 6th we took a luxury bus to the mining town of Selebi-Phikwe - 94 km N and 57 km E of Phalapye - where we had a hotel lunch. From there it was 45 km to Sefophe and another 50 to Bobonong, all on paved road, but in a smaller bus. 53 km after Bobonong we turned left onto dirt and traveled another 30 km to the Tuli Lodge. After supper we went for a night game drive. The next two days saw us hard at work, but we managed to see the Limpopo (here the trees are even bigger) and go for a sundown and sunrise game drive. I didn't have time to locate the succulents I saw there in '89 and '90 (including *Adenia spinosa* hanging upside down from a cliff) but we did get to see foxes and hyenas. The elephant damage to the trees was pretty horrendous. Most of it was browsed mopane trees, but the forest of *Sesamothamnus* also showed considerable damage.

Our freight just arrived and included was a book sent to me by Jean and Bill Pawek (lay missionaries in Malawi while we were Peace Corps and now in California) on the Kora Preserve in Kenya. Amazing parallels to the rocky hills near the Limpopo (but 2 times the commiphoras and a few more euphorbias. There is even a species of *Sesamothamnus*. It is "Islands in the Bush" by Malcolm Coe 1985, George Philip, London. I'm not sure what market it appeals to: not enough glossy photos and too much text for the coffee table.

Next a celebration

Bruce J. Hargreaves

CACTUS PAPER DOLLS

Linda Cooley has provided us with these fun and fantastic Cactus Paper Dolls. Color them, cut them out and dress them up! Have fun with your plants! (Only don't laugh at them, they may look tough but their feelings can be hurt easily).

PROGRAM NOTES

Woody Minnich, who has spoken to our club numerous times, will be back once again to talk to us about Shows and Showing Plants. Our 2nd annual Show and Sale is coming up in October so this is a good time to brush up on your presentation skills. Woody is not only a knowledgeable grower of succulents (those who have been to his nursery [Cactus Data Plants](#) can vouch for this) but for years has been instrumental in the organization of the Inter-City Show & Sale.

PLANT OF THE MONTH: ***Member's Show Plants***

Bring one of your plants that you would like to show in our upcoming Show & Sale. Find out the best way to stage it, clean it up, and make it a top quality show piece!

Finishing Touches

by Bob Smoley

from the Prickly Pages, Greater Pittsburgh C.&S.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 toppings 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!!

CALENDAR

Sept. 11 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

speaker: Woody Minnich

program: Showing Plants

plant-of-the-month: member's show plants

Sept 15-16 Monterey Bay Area C&SS Show & Sale, Jardins De San Juan, San Juan Bautista

Oct. 9 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

speaker: Mark Muradian (from the Fresno Club)

program: Socotra

Oct. 13-14 BCSS 2nd Annual Show & Sale!

Oct. 13-14 C&S Society of California Show & Sale. Lakeside Garden Center, Lake Merritt, 666 Bellevue, Oakland.

Oct. 20-21 San Gabriel Valley C&S Society 7th Annual Winter Show. Los Angeles Arboretum.

Nov. 13 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

To have your article printed in The Cactus Patch get in touch with:

Stephen Cooley, editor

Linda Cooley, editor

thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com

Membership in the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society costs \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 a year for a family. This extraordinarily reasonable price not only includes twelve issues of The Cactus Patch but entitles you to participate in club field trips to far-off (out-of-town) and exotic places (more exotic than Bakersfield). You will also receive a nifty name tag that will be your ticket to the members only plant raffle held every meeting featuring the best plant on the raffle table! All this is in addition to the wonderful programs and people at the meetings. To become a member contact:

Maynard Moe, treasurer

Lithops44@bak.rr.com

