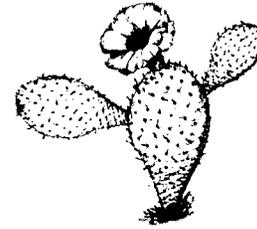


Umbilicus rupestris growing
in the wall of Dryslwyn Castle
photo by Linda Cooley

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. *treleasei*

Volume 5 **August 2002** Number 8

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program

Potting & Staging

presented by

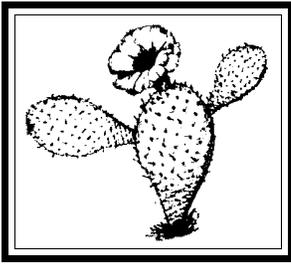
Larry Grammer

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 13
Olive Drive Church
5500 Olive drive at 7 PM

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

**Get Ready
For The
Fair!**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 5 Number 8
Aug 2002

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

2002 Officers

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

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CSSA Representative - Bobby Williams
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BCSS General Meeting: July 9, 2002

The July meeting was actually just a dinner get together at the Cactus Valley restaurant. There was a very good turn-out and we all enjoyed wonderful conversation and eats.

BCSS Executive Board Meeting: August 1, 2002

Attending this meeting were: Rob, Maynard, Bonnie, Terry, Paul, and Linda. Terry provided excellent food and drink for us!

Rob began the meeting by reminding us that we need to go to CALM to help identify cacti. Help will be sought at the August meeting. Next the August program was discussed. Larry Grammar will be speaking about potting and staging plants. The Plants of the Month will be *Aloe* and *Gymnocalycium*. The September meeting will feature a do-it-yourself potting workshop. The club (actually, Rob) will supply potting soil, plastic pots, and top dressing. Members will be able to bring their plants that need repotting and do it at the meeting. The Plant of the Month for September will be "Show-Ready plants". Maynard reported that the club has \$1487.65 in the bank. Bonnie updated us about the Fair and our display. The theme for this year is "It's all about you in 2002". She will be asking for helpers for this fun project. The dates of the Fair are Sept. 25-Oct. 6. The display would probably be set up on Sun., Sept. 22. Paul had a few comments about the Show and Sale. The meeting of the committee will have to be changed; Aug. 15 was mentioned as a possibility. Paul will notify members. Awards will need to be determined and Publicity needs to get started soon. Rob observed that we should have members "adopt a nursery" and keep them supplied with fliers about the club and its activities in the hope of luring new members. This has been successful with other clubs. The next executive meeting will be on August 27 at Bonnie's home.

BCSS SHOW & SALE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

During our last Show and Sale committee meeting, we sorted out the committee members into the following sub-committees: Art, Judging, Sales, and Publicity. We discussed changes, what each sub-committee will do, and what the Club members would need to do to put the Show and Sale together. We found that we would need to: up-grade displays, or replacing them (we can only have so many), pick out plants to represent the topics for the displays, and be ready to donate/sell plants at the Show. If you are going to do that, you will need to put 2 tags on your plants. One for you/the clubs records(price name etc.), the other for the consumer (Plant name age etc.). **Our next committee meeting will be at Barnes and Noble, at 7:00 PM on Thursday, August 15th**, if you have questions after this months' meeting. Remember the Show & Sale will be on the weekend of October 5th and 6th. Be thinking about keeping those show days free, so you can help out.

Thank you,

Paul Skillin

PROGRAM NOTES

Potting and Staging
Presented by Larry Grammer

With the Show & Sale fast approaching it is once again time to look through your collection and find those plants worthy of the show. Larry Grammer (an expert at staging plants) will be here to help us with the best ways to show off our plants. Bring in any plants you would like to dress up a little and get good (and free) advice on how to do it. **The plants of the month will be Aloe & Gymnocalycium.**

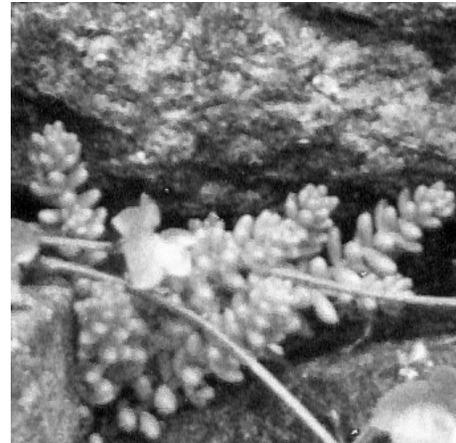
**To have your article printed in
The Cactus Patch get in touch with:**

Stephen Cooley, editor
thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com

Linda Cooley, editor

The Succulents of South Wales and Cornwall by Linda Cooley

While exploring castles in south Wales, I was surprised to find a succulent growing out of the walls of the castles. This succulent was a charming plant, with thick, circular leaves and long spikes of white flowers. Its name is *Umbilicus rupestris*, commonly called Wall Pennywort. It belongs to the Crassula family. It was quite common throughout south Wales and was also seen in Cornwall, which is farther south and much warmer. The environment it seemed to prefer was rather odd for a succulent. In Wales, it was cold (for July) and very rainy--In the winter it would be quite a bit colder than Bakersfield and much, much rainier. However, a little research revealed that this plant is native to the Mediterranean! So it seems very adaptable. Maybe if I built a castle, I could get some to grow here....



Sedum album on a Cornwall wall
Picture by Linda Cooley

In Cornwall (which is the south-west corner of England, and is considered the Banana Belt), I continued to see *Umbilicus*, but more often saw White Stonecrop, *Sedum album*. This mat-forming plant grows in many places, including on roofs! I saw it growing particularly well in the rocky regions along the Cornish Coastal Path. I kept my eyes open for Yellow Stonecrop, but never spotted any. There were beautiful natural rock gardens in many locations along the Path, filled with wild thyme and a variety of plants that I have seen advertised in

catalogs for rock gardens. It is unfortunate that our climate is unfavorable for growing these kinds of plants...I think the only way to do it in Bakersfield would be to have a "cool" greenhouse in the summer!

BE SURE TO VISIT US AT

www.BakersfieldCactus.org

Ramblings of a Succulentophile

by Meena Singh (u4bias4meena@hotmail.com)

from the ISOCS Journal - India

'Succulentophile' is a word you won't find in any dictionary but for all of us in the hobby of growing succulents it holds a great deal of meaning. It is our identity - it identifies us, in the words of my fond husband, as a bunch of loons who go gaga over some spiny plants'!! What does he ever mean? What spiny plants? Doesn't he know that all succulents don't have spines? And so what if they do? So do roses and bougainvillea, to name a few. And those are more vicious and cause greater damage than our poor cacti spines ever do. But the part of the statement I wholly agree with is that bit about being a 'bunch of loons' I am loony about my beautiful succulent plants, thorns and all.

Succulentophilly, like any other hobby, has its trials and tribulations as it has its joys. For me the joys far override the trials. When I see my large, over a foot across, *Echinocactus grusonii*, I remember the small seedling I purchased 15 years ago. The joy it has given me all these years, and also when it will flower one day. It was bought as part of a 'collection of 12 assorted cacti' from Kalimpong. I was just beginning to get interested in cacti then and did not know much about growing them. I was working then and living in Hyderabad. I had met a couple who had a lovely collection of cacti. They gave me a couple of pups and addresses of cacti nurseries in Kalimpong. I began by ordering the above mentioned '12 assorted cacti' and then '12 assorted mammillarias' and so on. These gave me joy when they grew big and flowered. They gave me joy when I could share pups with friends.

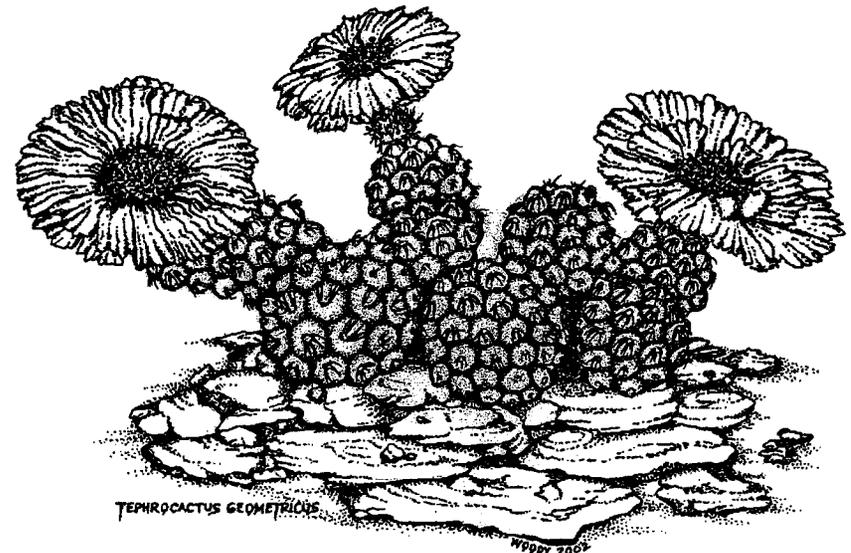
Over a period of time I find that my interests have changed a little. The 'other succulents' have slowly edged in and taken over. Unfortunately the nurseries in India can't meet up with my desires now, I have to look further a field. I read books and surf the net and see not only what gems there are in cultivation and how they are grown but also what is new in the hobby. Acquiring them is one of the trials faced. Also there are very few books on the subject in India. These books can be ordered but plants are more difficult. One manages.

What can be more joyous than seeing my *Uncarina grandidieri* tree in full bloom in spring? Or for that matter the *Adenium* flowers in their myriad shades of white to deep red. The aloes also flower at the same time and the purple sunbird then becomes a regular visitor. As it sips nectar it pollinates. When I am very lucky, it builds its nest in the aradarium and raises its family there. At these times I forget the fact that

I can't buy plants that I want easily or buy prepared compost. I forget the mealy bugs and the rot that often comes with high humidity and torrential rains during the monsoons.

Finally I remember all my friends, all over the world, who have given me so much love and have become a part of my family and me. Thank you God for succulentophilly!

The Living Rocks
17th Annual Inter-City
Cactus and Succulent Show & Sale
Sat. & Sun. August 24th & 25th 2002
9 to 5 each day at the L. A. Arboretum
301 N. Baldwin Ave. Arcadia, CA
The largest and finest Cactus & Succulent Show anywhere!



For more information, please contact Harry Fletcher 310-538-4078
Tom Glavich 626-798-2430 Gene Oster 818-998-9306
Sponsored by the Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Gabriel Valley
Cactus & Succulent Societies

ALMOST TO HEL & BACK

A Letter From Bruce & Polly



Sat. 22 June we celebrated the winter solstice (well, it was here!) with a Christmas party run by the Kalahari Hash House Harriers at the Gaborone Stables. We didn't win the prize for the best decorated table despite our giant artificial Christmas cactus and Grinch toys. Luckily we didn't join those who camped over night -- it froze!

We celebrated the 4th of July on the 6th at the embassy picnic (limited to Americans – passports required for security reasons). Next morning we went to Modipane, a village north of Gaborone, where we observed (among other things) white fronted sunbirds feeding on *Aloe cryptopoda* flowers.

The main event for July was a workshop on plant use at George in South Africa. We set off on the 8th and drove all the way to Beaufort West (1064 km or 661 mi south of Gaborone.). The only thing of interest on the way was a pond full of flamingoes just north of Kimberley. On the 9th we woke to strong wind and a bit of rain (although we were still in the summer rainfall Great (Groot) Karoo. This made for tough going east across the Karoo, but we were protected from it as we turned south at Meiringspoort, a canyon which cuts through the Swartberg (Black Mountain) Range. The twisted layers of sandstone were great, but added to this were aloes, euphorbias, pelargoniums, senecios, *Portulacaria afra*, , *Sarcostemma viminalis*, crassulas, mesembs, etc. *Aloe ferox* and *Euphorbia mauritanica* were in bloom as we had just entered the winter rainfall Klein (Little) Karoo. The road through the canyon is paved, relatively flat and accompanied by a number of well-furnished rest stops. From there the road went back west to the Ostrich capital of Outshoorn (we didn't stop as we had been there before) and then south through a valley of hops and across the Outeniqua Pass where we met the Fynbos (heather and proteas in bloom) and then dropped almost straight down to George which is the largest town in the Garden Route, a great stretch of South African coast the total for the day was only 239 km or 146 mi.

We checked into the Bougainvillea Bed & Breakfast (meeting the dogs Bruce and Annie!) and I still made it across town to the conference at the Pine Lodge for the registration at 2. Ben-Eric van Wick, co-author of People's Plants and organizer of the workshop, opened events and we had a number of presentations on the thorny problem of rewarding people for traditional knowledge. The 10th was a long day of presentations, mostly on medicinal plants (including veterinary medicine). Ben-Eric talked about plant use by the Khoi of the Northern Cape, including the use of *Hoodia*

gordonii as an appetite suppressant and I got a few comments in on my poster on similar use of *Hoodia currorii* in Botswana. We also had presentations by traditional healers.

On Thursday the stormy weather broke in time for some field trips. We started at the George Botanic Garden with its Moriarty Environmental Centre named for Audry Moriarty who published The Wild Flowers of Malawi with illustrations so bad the book bombed and the Society of Malawi had to renege on my Spurge book due to lack of funds. Audry has improved tremendously and her recent book on Outeniqua wild flowers is excellent. One feature of the garden is a planting of AIDS treatments (mesembs, cotyledons, bulbines and cancer bush). Some one asked about the African "potato" (*Hypoxis* spp., a popular immunity booster) and we were told we were standing on it – sure enough, the "lawn" was a field of *Hypoxis*!

From there we went to the New Plant Nursery, a wholesale grower specializing in indigenous plants, including a number of mesembs. I wish we had a nursery like that in Botswana to supply our Botanic Garden. From the nursery we drove east past Knysna and north into the hills to the big tree (a yellowwood which is a mere 39 m or 93 ft and 650+ yrs) for a picnic lunch. The setting there at Diepwalle (as well as our trip through Oudtshoorn and Knysna) brought to mind the story "Fiela's Child" which we almost produced last year. We visited a forestry campground, visitors facility, and tree nursery and had fern harvesting demonstrated. (They sell the ferns to the cut flower industry in Europe.) The day ended with a demonstration of tree cutting as a part of the sustainable forest harvest.

On Friday the workshop ended with papers on biochemistry centering on the anti-oxidant properties of Rooibos (Redbush) tea. That evening Polly and I had a seafood dinner at the King Fisher.

Saturday we drove back to Outshoorn, this time stopping for a little shopping. We then drove north by the Congo Caves (not stopping – I had struggled through the Devil's Chimney with James before) and went up the dirt road over the Swartberg Pass (steep and spectacular) and tried the side road on the north side which leads to Die Hel (also Gamkaskloof) which is fictionalised in Andre Brinks' "Devil's Valley" (2000, Vintage, London). The book is a bit weird, but the truth is just about as strange. The valley was settled back when there was only a footpath to carry furniture etc. in. The road (built in 1962) proved too much for our City Golf and we didn't get to Hel, but we can affirm that the road is not broad and straight as advertised. However, the road did

look like heck, with lots of dead proteas (probably from fire.)

We then dropped down to the town of Prince Albert on the other side of the Swartberg and with the help of Richard Dean, an ornithologist there, found the rare mesemb *Bijlia dilatata* as well as other mesembs, *Euphorbia lignose*, etc. Lots of the plants were in bloom. The Karoo National Park was full up, so we spent the night back in Beaufort West, visiting the park in the morning. Here the plants were mostly dormant, but I did find *Euphorbia stellaspina* in bloom (in the garden by the gate). Saturday we stayed in Kimberley and Sunday arrived home, not taking the side trip to Paradys indicated to the right just north of Kimberley.

That's enough for now. The promised musical has been postponed (not cancelled!), so more on that later.

Bruce J. Hargreaves

Cathy Dippnall (our hostess at the Bougainvillea) is an ardent quilter and directed me to all the fabric and furniture shops. She has also helped organize quilts-for-children projects, so we had lots to talk about! I wanted to check out the prices of yellowwood and stinkwood furniture. It's beautiful stuff and cheap in US\$ but expensive in local currency. I have one dining chair from someone leaving Botswana.

Polly

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Plants of the Month for August will be gymnocalyciums and aloes. We know that everyone has at least one of these--so there should be lots of them showing up at the meeting! Both kinds of plants are very easy to care for and bloom readily. Please bring in yours to show off!

Don't forget about the Great Kern County Fair! Our club will once again be participating in the garden display, thanks to Bonnie's leadership. She will be soliciting members to help create this fun project. Many people at the Fair office remarked that they had missed us last year! Let's not let them down!

The Show and Sale will be following hard on the heels of the Fair, so it's not too early to start choosing those plants that you are going to show. Dust them off, give them a shower and start choosing that perfect pot. There will be lots of help and support at club meetings, so don't hesitate. If you have never put any plants in the show, this is the year to start!

CALENDAR

Aug 13 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

speaker: Larry Grammer

subject: Potting and Staging

plants of the month: Aloe and *Gymnocalycium*

Aug 15 BCSS Show & Sale Committee Meeting, Barnes & Noble, 7:00 pm

Aug 24-25 17th Annual Intercity Cactus and Succulent Show & Sale. Los Angeles County Arboretum 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia.

Info: www.lacss.com/2002/ or Tom Glavich r Gene Oster

Aug 27 BCSS Executive meeting at Bonnie's house

Sep 10 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

program: Do-it-yourself potting workshop. The club will supply potting soil, plastic pots, and top dressing.

Plants of the month: Show-Ready plants

Sept. 22 Kern County Fair Display set-up

Sept. 25-Oct. 6 Kern County Fair

Oct 5-6 3rd Annual BCSS Show & Sale at the East Hills Mall

Oct 8 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

Nov 12 BCSS meeting; 7:00 pm Olive Drive Church

speaker: Kelly Griffin from the San Diego club

For more information concerning calendar events, contact the editors

Membership in the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society cost \$10 per year for an individual and only \$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 from 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@aol.com