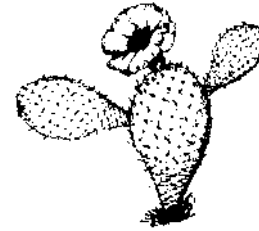




Picture by Peggy Holden

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 6 **July 2003** Number 7

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program

Honeymoon in South Africa

Presented by Petra Crist

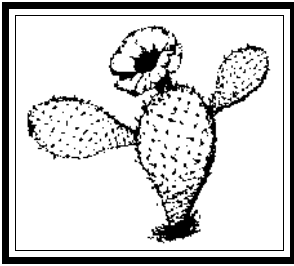
Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 8
Olive Drive Church,
5500 Olive drive
at **6:30 PM**

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

**Come early
to Socialize!**

**Meeting to start
promptly at 7**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 6 Number 7
July 2003

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

2003 Officers

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

2003 Directors

CSSA Representative - Bobby Williams
Past President - Rob Skillin

2003 Chairpersons

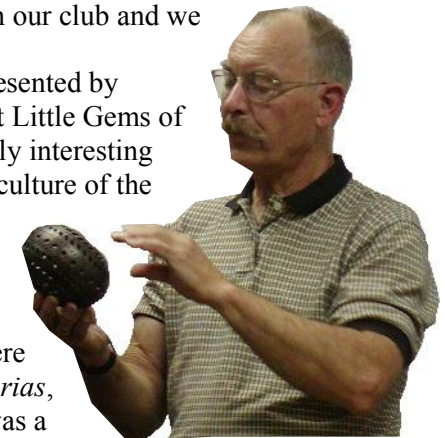
Hospitality - Bill McDonald
Librarians - Matt & Sylvia Ekegren

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Wow! We had a great turnout this time--32 people! Rob stood in for our absent president and vice president. We had some reports about various club activities, such as: the Mourning Cloak Ranch field trip, which was attended by 12 people. It was a great morning, with a personal tour and lunch outside under the trees. We even got to buy some plants. We learned from Maynard that the yard sale earned the club around \$800 and the club has about \$2000 in the bank. He also informed the club that the cactus ID at CALM had taken place and that all of the non-CA-native cacti need to be removed by the fall, and club members are welcome to go get any that they want. Lynn reported that the plaque in memorial of Marilyn Cowie is ready and that Jack and Sidney have found the perfect rock and it needs to be installed. Vonne gave us an update on the new T-shirts and got a rough count of how many of each size should be ordered. Our new librarians, Matt and Silvia let us know that there is a book review form that may be filled out if and when a member checks out and peruses a book. (And one was even turned in at the meeting--check out the review elsewhere in this newsletter.) Our next field trip will be to the Huntington Garden for the CSSA show and sale on July 5. Members were saddened to learn that Charles Cowie is moving to Washington to be near his daughter and that this was his last meeting. Charles, and his late wife Marilyn, were very active members in our club and we will miss them. Good luck, Charlie!

We then had our program, presented by Charles Spotts, who spoke to us about Little Gems of Mexico. His program included not only interesting plants but also information about the culture of the Oaxaca area of Mexico. He had examples of some of the woodcarvings, black pots, and weavings which form part of the distinctive culture of this area. We were treated to slides of *Agaves*, *Mammillarias*, *cerioids*, *Ortegocacti*, and others. It was a



very informative and interesting program.

After the program, we took a look at the plants of the month: *Mammillaria*, *Astrophytum*, and *Echeveria*. Thanks to Rob, Stephen, Silvia, and Linda for bringing in plants to show. We had our raffle, and lots of good food.



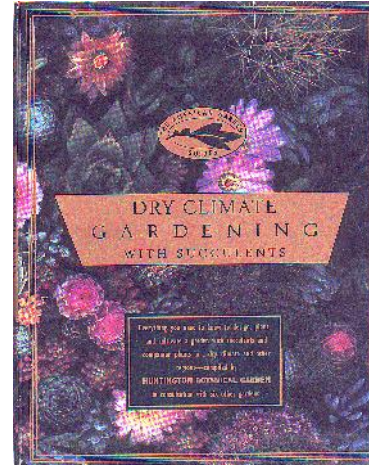
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING NOTES

A short executive meeting was held June 24th @ the McDonald home. Bonnie, Terry, Paul (reading the newest Harry Potter) & Lynn were present. We discussed the next meetings and programs, upcoming field trips, the Show & Sale in October. It was hoped that we can encourage our new members to participate in the Show & Sale -- by volunteering for the organizational committee, entering a few favorite plants, and most fun of all, by being there for a few hours at the display to enjoy the day & help our interested visitors. The next meeting will be held @ the Skillin's on July 29th. See you there! Lynn

Lynn McDonald
Secretary

Membership in the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society costs \$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@bak.rr.com



BOOK REVIEW

Dry Climate Gardening

Elvin McDonald, ed.

Hey everyone! CHECK IT OUT!!
(From the library...)

reviewed by: Brian Adams

Brian reports that this book contains general information, as well as natural history and cultivation how-to, and great pictures! He considers it appropriate for general use, with no requirement to be an expert on cacti or succulents. He found out what many of his plants were because the pictures are so great! He says, " This book is from the Huntington Gardens, one of my favorite places. It talked about the history of the gardens, propagation methods and lots of photos. It was great for identifying plants that I have." This book is available from our club library--CHECK IT OUT!

Thanks, Brian, for taking the time to review this book.

BE SURE TO VISIT US ONLINE AT:
www.BakersfieldCactus.org



The Huntington Gardens

POISON A Letter From Bruce



"We're still some of the worst drivers, especially young people. They buy the most expensive cars and drive at the highest speeds."

President Festus Mogae, Botswana Daily News, 28th May 2003

The 19th of May began with a parade to celebrate International Museums Day. We marched through town with flags of many nations, mostly African (non-African were France, Germany, Sweden, India and the U.S.A.). This was followed by speeches, music and dancing at the museum. Unfortunately, I had to leave all the celebrating for a meeting with experts regarding the restoration of the old coach house at the Botanic Garden. (Despite all the constant hiccups, it's good to see the garden project pushing ahead.)

That evening we had a normal choir rehearsal. Unfortunately, on the way home we were hit by a Mercedes driver who ran a red light at high speed and took out the front of our VW Citi Golf. (It is totalled!) I guess we are fortunate that he took out the engine and not us! Polly has broken arm bones now put together with metal pins. She will get them taken out about the end of July. I was luckier -- I only dislocated my shoulder (for the fifth time).

Warning for anyone wishing to visit Botswana: red light running is only one of the poisonous bad driving habits here. And it's getting worse. On the positive side, we still have our Hyundai and it's automatic (unlike most cars here) so we are able to drive it one-handed.

I managed to get back to work on the 22nd, but Polly is still spending most of her time resting at home. On the 2nd of June we went to a book signing by Unity Dow, author and High Court Judge. Her newest book "Screaming of the Innocent" (Double Story, Cape Town, 2003) centers on ritual murder and is very heavy reading. In addition to fiction, she has also written a surprisingly readable account of her legal battle to get Botswana citizenship for her children. (Prior to her successful battle, citizenship was automatically awarded only on the basis of the father's.)

That wore us out, but by the 8th we were recovered enough to see "The Quiet American", a film we recommend. It is based on a story by Graham Greene which covers the end of the French and the beginning of Americans in Vietnam. We went with Lilian Turton who, it turns out, actually met Graham Greene. I'm jealous -- I consider him one of the best authors of the 20th Century. By the 9th we were brave enough to

return to choir - just in time for the annual general meeting. Polly was elected vice-chairman i/c of the newsletter.

On 11th June I went to the hills between Lobatse and Kanye to check out plants that might be disturbed in power line construction. There are interesting species here because it is the highest plateau in the country. Near the Kanye end I recommended preserving a rocky outcrop which has caudiciform, *Adenia glauca*, as well as unusual trees. The day was exhausting, but my shoulder survived the dirt tracks.

Then on the 14th we went to a concert by four jazz bands which were honoring those killed in the South African raid into Botswana on 14th June 1985. (We were in Lesotho at the time but were well aware of the event: the 6-year old niece of one of the University of Lesotho technicians was killed. Also, Lesotho, along with all of South Africa's neighbors, had been similarly raided.) The first three bands had a friend of ours in each, so it was great to see them perform (and the music was terrific). They were still going at midnight, but we gave up and went home and collapsed.



We have had a mild winter so far and even a bit of unseasonable rain. Earlier, however, drought conditions still prevailed and there were reports of cattle dying from eating "mogau" (*Dichapetalum cymosum*), a leathery leafed plant with woody underground stems.

Cattle usually avoid it, but it was about the only green thing left. We have watched cattle in Lesotho grazing in fields full of the poisonous wild yellow Iris, *Homeria pallida*. I was told, however, if naïve cattle are brought in they will eat the plants and die. How do animals learn?

This brings us to the book "Murder in Morija" (Tim Couzens, 2003, Random House, Johannesburg) which I promised last month. (The whodunits I mentioned will have to wait.) This is a most unusual book and I can't imagine who will buy it (even at the reasonable price of P194 or about \$40). The book is a bit lengthy (474 pages of text) and does have a good number of historic photos (62 pages of them). It covers the history of Lesotho, Protestant missions from France and Switzerland, poisonous plants and a host of other topics. All of this stems from a novel "Love at the Mission" (R.

Hernekin Baptist, 1938, Macmillan & Co., London). [Baptist was actually Ethel Howe, better known as Ethelreda Lewis, co-author of the Trader Horn books.]

As Couzens explains: "...what story was the novel based on? The person who solved this particular mystery for me was David Ambrose of the National University of Lesotho. He did not know the novel, but immediately recognized its outlines as based on the life and death of Jacottet. David is the encyclopaedia of Lesotho. He knows everything about the country, he collects everything, he shares everything generously. He and his wife Sumitra Talukdar, an expert botanist, run a household the locals call 'The Hammerkops' after those birds that collect everything for their nests, from reeds to ribbons. The Ambroses are the scholarly equivalent." [Naturally, we are good friends of David and Sumitra.]

It turns out that Edouard Jacottet was murdered in 1920 by arsenic in the soup. The mystery as to who did it was never solved. He was head of Morija, the first mission in Lesotho [named after the Biblical Mount Moriah where Isaac was taken to be slain by Abraham]. This leads Couzens into the history of Lesotho and the fact that the missionaries were from France and Switzerland leads back to Europe. It is a very convoluted book.

Despite the fact that arsenic is known to have been the poison, Couzens delves deeply into poisonous plants including the use of *Aloe ferox* and others to induce abortion. Couzens acknowledges that much of this information came from Sumitra who in turn got it from "The Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Southern and Eastern Africa" (Watt & Breyer-Brandwijk, 1962, Livingstone, Edinburgh). [What is not stated, of course, is that copies of this monumental tome disappeared from the University library long ago and David actually photocopied all 1457 pages from my copy when I left Lesotho in 1989.] Other interesting anecdotes involve the National Archives which were rotting in the University library basement and have, apparently, been recently moved and scrambled. This leaves David as a major resource.

There is a sketch map of the Jacottet house which shows a number of exotic plants, including a "yucca tree". Surprisingly there is no mention of *Agave americana*, which is now ubiquitous in Lesotho.

I won't reveal what Couzens thinks actually happened in 1920, so if you want to know you'll have the painful job of wading through his book. Bon chance!

Bruce J. Hargreaves

The World of Cactus and Succulents



18th Annual
Intercity Cactus and Succulent
Show and Sale

August 16 - 17, 2003

9:00 to 5:00

Los Angeles County Botanic Garden

301 S. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia

2000 Plants on Display

24 Vendors of Cacti and Succulent Plants

Talks on Cultivation by Expert Growers

The CSSA Show & Sale at the Huntington



CALENDAR

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

Speaker: Petra Crist

Presentation: Honeymoon in South Africa (travel in Namibia and it's plants)

July 29 BCSS Executive meeting at the Skillin's.

Aug 12 BCSS meeting

Cactus Valley Dinner meeting or CSSA Slide Show ???

Aug 16-18 Annual Intercity Cactus & Succulent S&S. 9am-5pm.

LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia

Possibility of a club field trip.

Aug 30 20th Succulent Plant Symposium, Huntington Gardens

Sept ?? BCSS Field Trip to Nurseries in Vista?

Sept 9 BCSS meeting a program devoted to the show and sale, and preparing plants/staging, etc.

Oct.?? BCSS Field Trip to the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden?

Oct 4-5 BCSS SHOW & SALE

Oct 14 BCSS meeting might be a pot-luck and organized member slide show at Maynard and Linda's.

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

Speaker: Tom Glavich

Presentation: Succulent Bromeliads

Dec 9 BCSS meeting. Olive Drive Church

Auction/raffle/potluck.

For more information concerning calendar events, contact the editors

**To have your article printed in
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thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com

Linda Cooley, editor