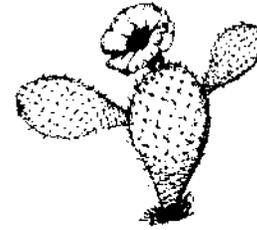




Vince Basta's *Mammillaria lenta*
from the Inter City Show

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 6 **September 2003** Number 9

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program

Preparing For The Show and Sale

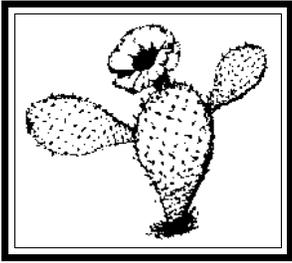
Presented by Terry & Paul Skillin

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 9
Olive Drive Church,
5500 Olive drive
at **6:30 PM**

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

**4th Annual
Show & Sale
Oct 4-5**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 6 Number 9
September 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
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BCSS Meeting August 12, 2003

A whole bunch of us met at Cactus Valley and enjoyed a great meal together, in lieu of our regular-type meeting. Our summer-break meeting at Cactus Valley is becoming an enjoyable tradition that seems to be a pleasant change for a lot of us! We did take care of some business, though. President Bonnie spoke to us about the fair and we sent around a sign up list for the show and sale. A good time was had by all (especially the "other" group out on the patio!)

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING NOTES

August 26, 2003

The executive board met Tuesday, August 26th. Bonnie, Terry, Linda & Lynn were present. We discussed the recent changes in the church policies regarding our meeting place.

Our new T-shirts are at the printer, and should be available soon. A Kern County Fair display organizational meeting was planned. Upcoming field trips were reviewed. The September meeting was planned. Our next board meeting will probably be September 30th.

Lynn McDonald
Secretary



The InterCity Show

PROGRAM NOTES

Preparing For The Show and Sale

September's meeting will be our annual, 'Prepare For The Show and Sale' meeting. Paul Skillin has been working on a power point presentation that will surprise everyone, and yours truly will be doing the narration. Its all about BCSS! Also, don't forget to bring in your tired, weary, overgrown, dilapidated and haggard plants to have our members help you re-pot and spruce them up in time for the show and sale. You will be pleasantly surprised how those neglected plants can really come to life when given a clean pot, new soil, top dressing and maybe a special staging rock or position in the pot. We need everyone to participate in the show and sale, and this is a great way to get those plants ready. Believe me, once your plant is cleaned up, you will find new interest and enthusiasm in the growing and care of it!

The board decided to have our monthly raffle prior to the hands-on portion of the meeting. This way we can raffle off some donated plants, that are really quite nice, but that need a little bit of TLC. Trading WILL be allowed, and if you have any you need to find new homes for, feel free to add them to our raffle.

Bring your own gloves, tools of the trade(well marked) and we'll have some to borrow while you're there. The club will supply some potting mix, top dressing, plastic pots, but if you have anything you'd like to contribute, please do so.

See you all there!

Terry

BE SURE TO VISIT US AT
www.BakersfieldCactus.org

Boy Scouts and Other History

A Letter From Bruce



A group of Boy Scouts from Shashe (just South of Francistown) used the President's Day Holiday to work in the Botanic Garden. They camped from the 24th to 27th of July and managed to renovate the old display house (built in the 90s with help from Rotary, USAID etc.) Just before they arrived a trench was dug for a sewage line. The construction company built a temporary bridge but most of the time, the scouts just jumped the trench.

It may surprise some that there are Scouts in Botswana, but the Boy Scout movement actually began in Mafeking (now Mafikeng) which is in South Africa just south of Botswana. This was during the 2nd Anglo-Boer War. Incidentally, the British governed the Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) from Mafeking. The present city of Gaborone was created at independence in 1966.



Boy Scouts working in the Display House, 25 July 2003.
The plant in the foreground is *Euphorbia monteiri*

There was a British presence in Gaborone before independence, but

it was small. Police lines and a fort were established in what is now the Village section of Gaborone in 1890. Tlokwenj Village is just across the Ngotwane River and a Gaborone is still the kgosi (chief). The oldest standing building in the Village is the old Coach House built as a rest stop in the 1890s. It is now a part of the Botanic Garden and is being renovated to serve as a visitors' center.

We had a class from Northside School here on the 7th of Aug. to see the building where historic figures such as Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Leander Starr Jameson stayed. It is alleged that the Jameson raid which preceded the 2nd Anglo-Boer war was planned here. (Since Rhodes officially did not plan the raid, this is where he didn't do it!) Half the raiders left from Pitsane in Botswana and the others left from Mafeking. Before they got to their goal of Johannesburg they were all arrested - they had been betrayed!

More recent history was brought to mind when John Case came by the office to find out about the rare gecko found only at Tsodilo Hills in NW Botswana. Fortunately, it was an easy request as a new book, Amphibians and Reptiles of Botswana (B. & R. Clauss, 2002, Gamsberg Macmillan, Windhoek) had just appeared and I had bought it to look up Setswana names of frogs (requested by a former Peace Corps volunteer). [The previous book on the subject by Auerbach did not include such names, although it has good distribution maps.] At first I thought the new book did not include the Tsodilo gecko, but then I found it on a separate page for "some exceptional lizards". It has the only photo I've seen of this rare animal. (For the curious, the scientific name is *Pachydactylus tsodiloensis**)

Having settled that question we began to compare origins as we recognized a common accent. It turns out John Case is from Santa Anna and came out to Malawi as a Peace Corps Volunteer (1963-65). Although he was at Karonga (70 miles from our post in Chitipa) and we arrived in 1965 just before he left, we had never met. He is now working on computer networking in Botswana - says he can't afford to go back to Calif. We'll have to have a social evening and learn more.

I'm especially interested if he knows anything about Paul Theroux, another Malawi PCV of his same time period. We were told in training about how Paul had sided with the so-called rebels against President Banda by driving David Rubadiri's household goods across to Zambia. Paul was expelled from Malawi and the Peace Corps and almost got the

* A picture of the Tsodilo Gecko can be found at:
http://www.gekkota.org/html/p__tsodiloensis.html

Peace Corps expelled. He and David ended up teaching at Makerere University in Uganda.

I never met Paul even though we visited Makerere in 1967 when he was there. I had planned to return and teach there myself; but, by the time I had my Ph.D., Idi Amin (who just died in exile this month) had ruined the place, so I ended up teaching at the University of Malawi. I did eventually meet David Rubadiri as he was teaching at the University of Botswana when I first joined the museum here (1989).

Paul Theroux has made his fame as an author of numerous novels and travelogues. The only one which I found worthwhile was the novel Mosquito Coast which is a hilarious account of developmental misadventure in Belize. It has also been made into an excellent film.

Recently I was lent The Darkstar Express (2002, Penguin, London) with the promise that it was not negative like all his other travelogues. Well, I beg to differ! The only book more negative is The Patagonia Express describing his trip through Latin America - and at least that book has the somewhat redeeming value of describing the occasional cactus or agave. [Unlike a book (whose author I forget), The Long Thin Country which describes Chile and its Atacama Desert without one mention of a succulent.]

Despite its negativity, Darkstar was meaningful in covering places and times with which I am familiar. Especially moving is the meeting with David Rubadiri in Zomba, Malawi now that there has been a change in government. There are few plant references. He does mention cactus in Guguletu, a shantytown suburb of Capetown, but is sometimes confusing. On the same page, Paul refers to the Karoo as a desert (which it is) and a prairie (which it is not). In Malawi, he says that Livingstone recommended cotton as a crop. What Livingstone did was describe varieties of local and imported (by the Portuguese) cotton. It was and is grown in Malawi. There are other places where he plays fast and loose with facts, but perhaps this is poetic license.

Another jolt from the past was a visit from Isaac Lusunzi. He brought his new wife Maureen and 7-month-old son John for a weekend visit. He was one of the brightest students I taught at the University in Lesotho and went on to get a Ph.D. in Australia. He is now working for the South African Department of Science & Technology. His job is to alleviate poverty - good luck on that one!

A final blast from the past was the movie Amandla (Power), subtitled "A Revolution in Four Part Harmony". We missed this at the Maitisong Festival earlier in the year (there's always too much to do) and were glad to see it return. It is a review of music and musicians associated with the freedom struggle in South Africa. Polly took solo singing from one of the

featured singers (Sophie Mgcina) at music camp in 2001.

Not everything is from the past. Our choir continued its mall singing on 2nd Aug. - this time at Riverwalk, a more open mall next to the Ngotwane River (just upstream from the Botanic Garden).

More on the plant side: Nick Walker, an archaeologist, brought in some flowers from the Tuli Block along the Limpopo River. Fortunately, some of the stems had roots, so I potted it up for the garden. The farmer there said it came from Pilanesberg in South Africa. I recognized it as *Euphorbia xanthii*, a Mexican species and produced a picture of it I had taken at the Domingues Adobe near Long Beach in 2000. How did it get to Pilanesberg? My guess is that it was brought in as landscaping for Sun City, a Las Vegas style complex there. [Incidentally, this is just north of Rustenburg, but we resisted zipping up there during IPUF.]

The weather has been going up and down. We thought the winter was over at the beginning of August, but then it dropped down to freezing in the second week. We've had a couple of nasty sand storms as well.

Bruce J. Hargreaves



FIELD TRIPS

September 13, 2003

Grigsby Cactus Garden & Rancho Soledad

Meet first at Grigsby's in Vista from 9:00-1130

Lunch -- bring your own or stop for fast food en route to

Rancho Soledad in Ranch Santa Fe from 1:30-closing (4:30pm) Ranch Santa Fe is supposed to cover a large area, so be prepared w/ good shoes, sun protection, etc.

We are looking into reserving some campsites at San Elijo State Beach, near Encinitas. Plans to be solidified at the meeting. Please call me or any of the officers, if you would like to go on this trip, but cannot be at this month's meeting.

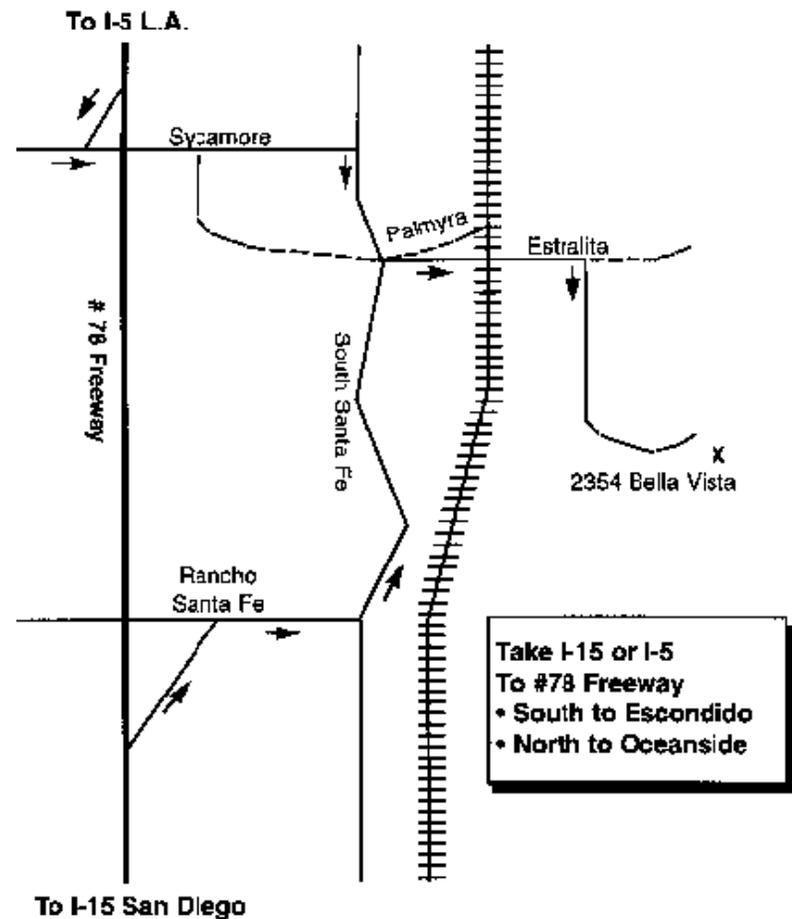


GRIGSBY CACTUS GARDENS

-2354 Bella Vista Drive Vista CA 92084-7836

Tel : 760-727-1323

www.cactus-mall.com/grigsby



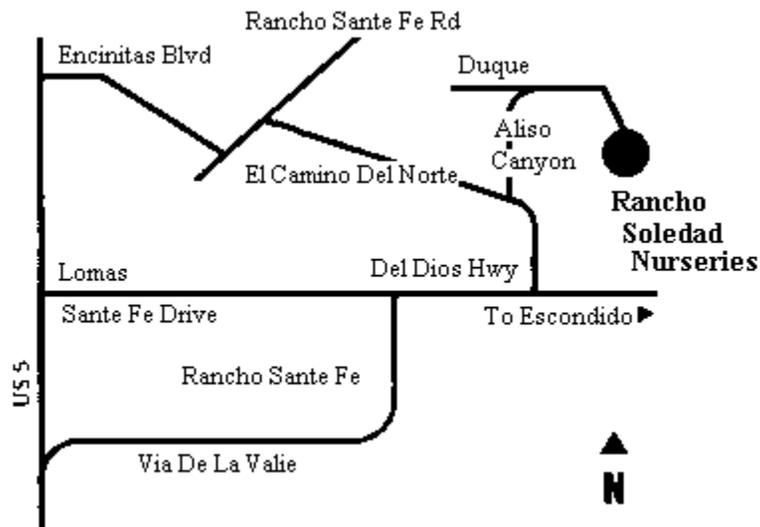
Rancho Soledad Nurseries, Inc.

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18539 Aliso Canyon Rd, Rancho Santa Fe, CA, 92067

www.rancho-soledad.com



October 18, 2003

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
& possibly, Desert Images nursery in Ojai.

November 8 &/or 9, 2003

Windwolves Preserve

Volunteer Work Party &/or tour.

Lynn

Letter From A Cactus Mom

Parenting is hard. We parents enjoy all the positive, outside influences we can give to our children.

As a parent, I am happy to say I have three kids who have been exposed to their father's interests in Cactus and succulents. Why would that make anyone, especially a parent, happy? My children have had the opportunity to meet other enthusiasts from this genre, people who have interesting jobs, yet still find joy in the growing, collection and traveling to visit these unique and interesting plants from the cactus and succulent world. By becoming members of the local Cactus and Succulent Society, they have participated in any event we could possibly take them to, and have become fond of the members who have taken time to show them around and speak to them. They have seen and heard stories of travel that few youngsters their age have ever heard. They have been given rejected plants that they have nursed back to health, or finished killing off, and have learned that those things happen in even the best growers' collections.

I am proud that my oldest has taken to grow his own plants from seed, even though this means I have had to give up a bit of kitchen counter space and basement space in the process. He has taken the childhood joys of playing in the mud and growing things to develop a respectable *Agave/Aloe/Gasteria* garden in our side yard. This past year, he made some money by selling the larger specimens to a brother-in-law who needed landscape plants. This year those remaining pups are gaining size, and are again almost landscape size. I am proud I have a 14 year old that gets excited about the interesting things in life, and is not a TV tube kid, or a video game-head...not that he wouldn't like that, too.

Several weekends ago, we had a very negative experience, dealing with mean people. We returned from a couple of days away, to find that someone had taken seven agaves and one aloe from his yard. *Agave victoria-reginae*, *A. Utahensis*, *A. Colorata*, *Aloe vera* (oh, come on!), and some other nice varieties. White flesh with large spines, dark flesh with long white spines...they were really good looking.

Where was Wiley (our dog)? Probably barking, but we were not there.

What a crushing way to return from a nice trip. Paul's lucky he had several pups from one or two of the plants in the green house, already. But it is pretty low for someone to stoop and dig out someone's yard plants. As Paul says, "How stupid is THAT?"

Oh, we've heard about the sago palm thieves, but CACTUS?!? Good and bad outside influences. In this case, the good RULES! The bad

is just really bad, and seen as such. As a parent, I want to bite the head off that person or persons who took my son's plants. Good to know though, they didn't take his gardening spirit. He's been out there planning and checking his plants, even in the 100+ heat.

Now...what variety will the girls take too?

Signed, a cactus mom, not a soccer mom.

Terry Skillin



If you're ever in Northwest California, a delightful place to visit from late spring to early autumn, is the Arcata Farmer's Market. Take a step back in time to wander among the lovely flowers and vegetable booths around Arcata Plaza. Listen to the sounds of Andean pan-flute, Reggae and other music styles, as you browse or stop to rest on the grassy areas. On a



recent visit I noticed a new booth featuring Cactus & Succulents. They re grown in Kneeland, in the hills east of Arcata and Eureka, at around 2300 feet elevation, by Midge & Ben Catching. A nice addition to the popular market.

Lynn

The 2003 InterCity Show & Sale



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our next field trip will be to Vista and Rancho Soledad Nursery. More info is in this issue of the Cactus Patch.

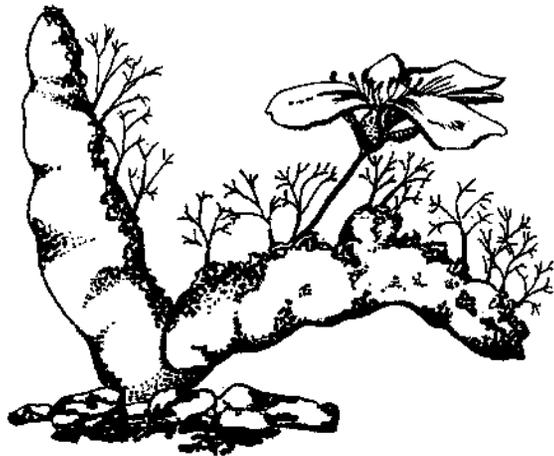
The San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society
Presents the

10th Annual Winter Show

and PLANT SALE

Saturday & Sunday October 18th & 19th, 2003

From 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day



at the

L.A. County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave. Arcadia, CA

For more information please call...

Vince Basta (714) 738-1422, Bill Gerlach (626) 332-8008, Tom Glavich (626) 798-2430
Jim Hanna (562) 920-3046 or Woody Minnich (661) 944-2784

CALENDAR

- Sept 9 BCSS meeting** a program devoted to the show and sale, and preparing plants/staging, etc.
Sept 13 BCSS Field Trip to Nurseries in Vista.
Oct. 18 BCSS Field Trip to the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden
Oct 4-5 BCSS SHOW & SALE
Oct 14 BCSS meeting
Nov 8-9 Windwolves Preserve Field Trip.
Nov 11 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
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 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