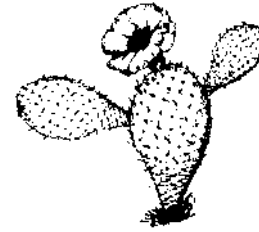




Calret Cup (*Echinocereus*)
in the ESA Garden
photo by Sydney Kelley

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 8 **May 2005** Number 5

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

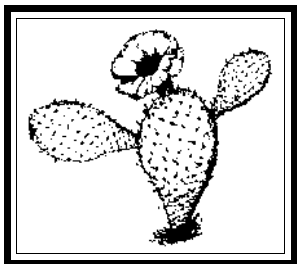
This Month's Program
**Exploring Northern
Argentina**
presented by **Woody Minnich**

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 10
Olive Drive Church,
5500 Olive drive
at **6:30 PM**

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

**Plant of the
Month:
Argentine
Succulents**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 8 Number 5
May 2005

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

2005 Officers

President – Vonne Zdenek
Vice-President – Bonnie East
Treasurer - Maynard Moe
Secretary – Les Oxford
Editors - Stephen Cooley
Linda Cooley

2005 Directors

CSSA Representative - open
Past President – Matt Ekegren

2005 Chairpersons

Hospitality - Bill McDonald
Librarian – James Parker
Field Trips – Lynn McDonald
Historian – open
Show & Sale - open

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Tonight we had seven guests with us! I think that must be a record! We scheduled a garden work day for Saturday, the 23rd at 9 am. Members were reminded that we have a great library and that they can check out books to take home. Maynard the treasurer told us that we



have about 60 members now and about \$2400 in the bank. The Yard Sale was discussed: it will be held on May 21 and 22 and Sidney and Jack Kelley's home. The signup sheet will be out tonight and the

next meeting. Sidney will do the advertising, but would like someone to make signs for the event. Vonne reminded us of the Show and Sale which will take place in October. Lynn reported on some Field trips that have been taken: camping in Palm Desert and gathering rocks with Dan. Upcoming is the Windwolves Preserve trip and the New York Mountains camping trip. Vonne asked members to let her or the other officers know if there are any special areas of interest for upcoming programs. Brian Adams donated a big box of Organic Gardening magazines.

Our speaker was Larry Nichols, who led us through his xeriscaping adventure from start to finish. He completely redid his front yard from a lawn with shade trees and turned it into a desert garden. His presentation was extremely thorough, and members were left with an appreciation for his organization skills!

We finished, as usual, with the raffle.

BCSS BOARD MEETING

No board meeting notes were available



Windwolves Fields Trip

April 16th was the club's outing to Wind Wolves Preserve. A group of twelve of us gathered to meet with Preserve manager David Clendenen while he gave a brief history of the Wildlands Conservancy, The San Emigdio Ranch and information about "our" preserve. We all managed to fit into the van & be off on our tour. Jack always takes the best seat in front, so he can chat with Dave! We saw our first fauna right away -- a scout troop planting trees for an eagle badge project. Next we happened upon a gopher snake sunning itself on the road. One of Bill's office staff had to jump out to see it & then (after a request) pick it up, much to her delight -- Amber's not the snake's.

We were able to see the nesting great horned owl again this year, concealed on the cliff, with the aid of Dave's spotting scope. It was oddly drier there than it has been for us in the valley, and so we were driven to higher elevations than on any of our previous trips. We were in search of the elusive Tule Elk, who managed to stay out of our way, no matter where we looked. We did see some wetlands (fenced off so the grazing cattle were prohibited) where there were flocks of Tricolor Blackbirds. These birds used to be much more plentiful eons ago (when Jack was a youngster). We also saw some Bullock's orioles. On the eastern side of the valley we saw **wind wolves**, many more wildflowers, petroglyphs, and a red-tailed hawk on her nest.

It was an excellent day trip and we concluded again with a fabulous group luncheon, under the shade of some trees.

Lynn McDonald



Members of Bakersfield Danish Lodge join up with BCSS for field trip to Wind Wolves

MAY'S PROGRAM

Exploring Northern Argentina

presented by **Woody Minnich**

Woody Minnich, a frequent speaker to, as well as a member of our club, will be presenting a new program about Northern Argentina. Woody will tell us all about the trip he took in the fall of 2004 and is sure to have plenty of gorgeous photos!

Cactus Data Plants

Woody's Succulent Nursery, will be having its annual Spring Draw-Your-Discount Sale this Saturday, May 7th 9am to 5pm.

**Cactus Data Plants, 9607 E. Ave S-12, Littlerock, CA 93543
for more info call Woody**

Plant of the Month Succulents of Argentina

These would include the very popular *Gymnocalycium* and *Rebutia* as well as *Trichocereus* (now *Echinopsis*) and *Parodia*.

Bakersfield Cactus in the Oil Patch

by Bonnie East

On April 11, 2005 I had an opportunity to view some flowering populations of Bakersfield Cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* variety *treleasei*) within Chevron/Texaco's Kern River oil fields just north of Bakersfield. The digital photos are an example of one of the larger populations of Bakersfield cactus growing in this oil patch. However, on this particular day it was my job that took me to the oil fields to meet up with my contact, Larry Rhodes. Larry has been documenting populations of the cactus in the Kern River oil fields but performs other job related duties as well because it can't be all fun and no work. So looking at the cactus as we drive along inspecting oil wells and tanks happens to be the job that must be performed and the cactus are like icing on the cake. Of course the occasional kit fox, snakes, birds of prey, bobcats and various other flora and fauna seen during these trips add another level of enjoyment to my workday as well.

Due to the abundant rains we had had this winter and spring, the Bakersfield cactus populations were truly flourishing and blooming in April. Larry oversees a 20 square-mile area and as of April 25, 2005 had mapped 55 populations of the cactus in the hills. In looking for the clumps of cactus that seem to like the tops and sides of hills where there are gentle sloping descents; it has been a little challenging at times to spot them amongst miles of pipelines as well as the annual forbs and grasses that also grew like weeds this year. However during a prolific period of bloom beautiful magenta-colored flowers could be spotted peeking from behind the forbs. According to Larry other cactus populations took a little more work to find



especially if there were no blooms. All in all, the cactus I saw blooming in the oilfields this spring were truly like rubies shining in a desert grassland and I can only be so lucky to see them bloom like this again next year.

Until we meet again, Bonnie.



TOO MANY NIGHTS OUT

A Letter From Bruce

We began on 18 March with the Capitol Players award dinner. We haven't been in any shows lately, but it was good to see old friends. The next night we went out to Ruretse (north of town) for a bird club BBQ. The projector had been left behind so poor Mary Webb, visiting from her new job in Nigeria, had to describe things in words. We also had a bit of stargazing (the advantage of being away from city lights). The bird club met again on Tues. the 22nd and Mary was able to show us a pictorial version - much better.

Our friend Isaac Lusunzi stayed with us from the 20th to 26th, visiting relatives and friends. After he left we bought a Land Rover which had been donated to the bird club. We shall now be ready for visitors who want to see the back corners of Botswana. Just let us know - a few people have. This brought us to a delightfully dull Easter.

On 31st May a touring Swedish choir combined with a local choir for an interesting performance. It may seem odd, but the rhythms blended well. Then on the 5th of April the Germans started a film festival (together with the film club) with the beautiful "Good Bye Lenin", a story of a family and the breaking of the Berlin Wall. (We were in Berlin just before that time, so it had added meaning for us.) As expected, the German beer was excellent. This festival overlaps with the Ditshwanelo (Human Rights) film festival which began on Thursday, 7 April and continued daily until the 14th. (The first three we went to each had technical problems!)

Both film festivals are included in the annual Maitisong Festival which officially began on Friday 8 April with Oliver Mtukudzi from Zimbabwe with his enthusiastic song, guitar and dance routine. Saturday was a one-man production of an Indian family in South Africa and Sunday a dance group. Monday we had choir rehearsal and Tuesday a German film. Wednesday was another human rights film, Thursday a show called



"Muti" (medicine) which highlighted intellectual property rights, Friday was a French acrobatic show and the Festival ended on Saturday with a choir/orchestra concert. We sang as members of the choir. There were other events, but it is always impossible to do everything (tho we foolishly keep trying). We are exhausted.

We finally got some decent rain at Easter so we may survive. This is certainly late rain for here. They were showing floods on TV at



Ghanzi which is on the western (i.e. dry!) side of Botswana. A second storm washed out many of the potholes which had been filled 1 April (the new fiscal year!) as well as deepening ones not filled. Coming home on a dark street, we hit a deep one full tilt and bent the tire rim on the blue car. Polly got the rim hammered out and the tire resealed for free—we had to buy a new tire for the white car when the oldest tire gave out. The real downer on that was when Polly left it in a shopping mall lot to go for help and they clamped it!

I promised a book on Bakersfield, so I won't keep you in more suspense. While we were in Pretoria I found California - a Book for Travellers and Settlers by Charles Nordhoff which was published in 1873! (Sampson Low, Marston Low & Searle, London.) Interestingly, it has a map with Bakersfield and Visalia, but not Fresno! The author says,

"Visalia will, I think be the largest city in the valley; it has a number of intelligent and enterprising merchants, who will not let slip their opportunity. Both Visalia and Bakersfield will make a rapid growth, now that they are to have railroad communications with the rest of the world."

" The whole San Joaquin Valley is hot; but the heat being dry, people do not suffer from it -- such is the universal testimony -- nearly as

much as they do in the more eastern States." ... "I suspect that the oak groves make Visalia hotter in summer than the more open plain surrounding it. It has the reputation of being a hot place. Some years ago it was affected with malarious fevers; but the drainage caused by irrigation has, I suppose, removed the cause of these fevers, for it is now said to be healthful."

[Incidentally, my grandmother had malaria in Stockton on her wedding day. She took to bed immediately following the ceremony.]

Specifically of Bakersfield he says,

"Bakersfield lies on what is called Kern Island, a large tract of extraordinarily rich alluvial land, abundantly watered by the Kern River, which flows about and past it into Kern Lake after emerging from the mountains through a romantic pass within sight of the town....to persons fond of hunting and fishing, Kern River, and Kern and Buena Vista Lakes offer greater attractions than perhaps any part of the United States. The river abounds in large trout; the lakes and the slough or strait which unites them are also filled with fish, and abound with wild life of almost every kind. Ducks, geese, cranes, swans and snipe swarm on or near the shores. In the tule reeds, far out in the lake, you find the raccoon perched on high, watching for fish and ducks; otter and beaver, the first in large numbers...and in the mountains which surround these lakes, at a little distance, the California lion, the grizzly and cinnamon bears, the wild-cat (a formidable little beast), antelope, deer, and fox are to be found by those who care to look for them." ... "Bakersfield has as yet no hotel; but this is to be remedied this summer. Until it is, no one should take ladies down there, for the accommodations are of the rudest. A traveler in this part of Southern California will do well to provide himself with a pair of good blankets in San Francisco, Stockton, or Visalia; then he is independent; for with these and an overcoat he can, if it is necessary, sleep on the verandah of a store or on the ground, and he need not fear catching cold.

"Bakersfield is a new town; it has decidedly a frontier look...I found there an agent of this company -- the California Cotton Growers' and Manufacturers' Association -- preparing to plant 1200 acres of cotton this spring, on ground made ready last fall for that use. He intends also to plant sesame for oil, and to try the opium poppy and madder. The latter, East Indians believe, can be profitably grown here.... The dearth of lumber has been a serious disadvantage; fifty dollars per thousand is the usual price, and even at this rate, just now, none can be bought."

Bruce J. Hargreaves

the succulent garden at cal state

bcss garden journal

april 23, 7am



stephen and i met out at the garden bright and early (actually it was a bit overcast...) we weeded, watered, and planted for a couple of hours (we were early due to stephen's schedule) until jim parker showed up--on time--and we cut down a carolina cherry tree to make room for a valley oak that will be planted there sometime in the future. it was a lot of fun!

linda cooley

ESA GARDEN BULLETIN -- I have found some granite boulders at a church not-so-far from our garden. I asked at the office and we are welcome to have some of these for our garden. Sidney & Jack checked them out & there is only one that we could easily obtain -- the others are larger. Does anyone in the club have access to any equipment that might be able to help us transport a few of these boulders? We can discuss it at our meeting. Or call Lynn, Jack or Sidney. Thanks.

Lynn

Gone to Seed

by Stephen Cooley

PART FOUR: Getting Ready to be a Grandparent

When your seeds have germinated and your plants are growing you can certainly say that you were successful in your seed starting adventure. But, there is perhaps one more goal that brings a feeling of accomplishment to the seed raiser -- Flowers. It is indeed a special day when one of your seedlings flowers. This is truly the culmination of all your work. The flower is a sign that your plant is now fully mature.

Some plants can flower very quickly from seed. Annuals, like Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*) and Livingstone Daisy (*Dorotheanthus* spp.) will certainly provide abundant flowers in one season. But, other perennial succulents can also be fast to bloom. I have had *Glottiphyllum* bloom in less than a year and *Mammillaria zacatecasensis* bloom in less than two years. I am sure with the right treatment there are many more examples, but I would suspect these probably would not be cacti. In general, most succulents are slow and you must care for them for many years before seeing flowers.

Now, it is not my intent to go into detail on how to raise your plants to adulthood and flowering. Still, there are some things you should be aware of. Your very young seedlings must be prepared before they head out into the real world. If you have started your seeds under artificial lighting, then acclimation to the sun is essential. I have found that even very small plants will do better in the brighter light and (usually) warmer temperatures of the outdoors. I also know that plants unaccustomed to this environment can be burnt, desiccated, or killed.

Acclimating your plants is not hard to do, but it does take patience and diligence. What must be done is a slow process of increasing the light and temperature so that the plant can get used to its new surroundings. I usually take my new plants outside into an area of bright shade and keep them there for a week. I then move them to an area with a bit more light for another week. After that, I put some out in the full sun (many of my young plants stay under a shade cloth for the first year). Checking your plants each day during this process will alert you to any problems (too much sun is a common one) and allow you to correct it.

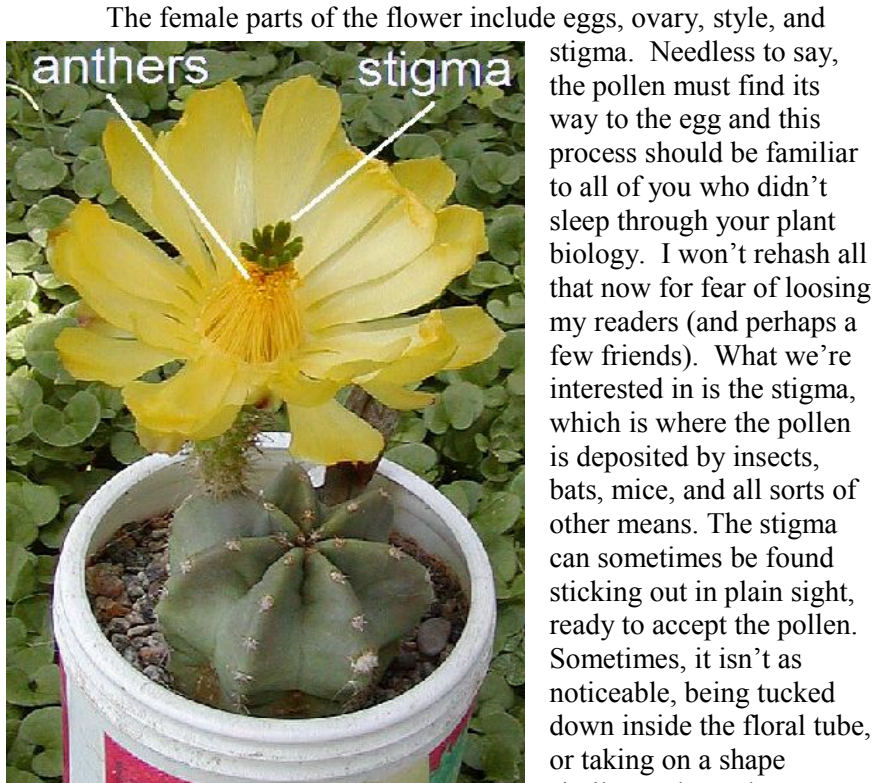
Once your plants are used to their new location you should use your own good cultivation skills to keep them healthy and growing to adulthood.

Let's skip a bit shall we -- Let's say you and I are a little bit older

and your seedlings are coming into flower. You are, of course, ecstatic and you've probably showed them to all your cactus-and-succulent – loving friends. It may occur to you at this time that you might be able to collect seed from your plants, and you could plant them and that would sort of make you a grandparent. But, how should you go about this seed making?

As you might suspect, you're going to need a Mommy and a Daddy to make babies, right? That's not always true in the plant world. Sometimes seeds can be produced without any mixing of genetic material, but we're not going to go into that here.

The 'Daddy' would be the pollen which is on the anthers and is usually that yellow powdery stuff that gets on your nose when you smell a flower (okay, I know you don't get that close to too many cactus flowers). Pollen can also be other colors as well and is not always powdery but it is usually not hard to find. The 'Mommy' is not always so easy to find, however.



The first flower of an *Echinocereus subinermis* seedling

The female parts of the flower include eggs, ovary, style, and stigma. Needless to say, the pollen must find its way to the egg and this process should be familiar to all of you who didn't sleep through your plant biology. I won't rehash all that now for fear of losing my readers (and perhaps a few friends). What we're interested in is the stigma, which is where the pollen is deposited by insects, bats, mice, and all sorts of other means. The stigma can sometimes be found sticking out in plain sight, ready to accept the pollen. Sometimes, it isn't as noticeable, being tucked down inside the floral tube, or taking on a shape similar to the anthers. Sometimes it can't be found at all. This may be due to your

aging eyesight or it could be that the flower doesn't have one (just when you thought it was going to be easy). Some plants have the male and female parts on different flowers, so you may have to look around. Some plants have the male and female flowers on different plants, so you may have to look a bit further. Fortunately, the male and female parts are usually on the same flower. Notable exceptions: many *Euphorbia* have separate male and female flowers (the popular *Euphorbia obesa* has them on different plants) and many of the pachyform cucurbits (you fat-plant collectors know what I'm talking about) have them on different plants.

At any rate, you need to find the pollen and find the stigma and get the pollen on the stigma. A small paint brush works well. Oh, by the way, before you dash out with your brush here are a few rules that will increase your chances of success. Try to keep your gene mixing in the same family; Cacti with cacti, asclepiad with asclepiad, mesemb with mesemb, etc.. Better yet, stay within the same Genus; *Echinopsis* with *Echinopsis*, *Pachypodium* with *Pachypodium*, *Haworthia* with *Haworthia*, etc.. And even better, stay within the same species. The farther the relationship between the male and female, the less likely that seeds will be produced. You will find that sometimes a plant will pollinate itself but many times it won't. Cross pollinating two individuals (not clones) of the same species will not only give you good results, but the seedlings will be stronger and you at least will know what to call them.

Once fertilization has occurred a fruit will form with the seeds inside. This fruit can be large, small, long, short, fleshy, dry, hidden, or in plain sight. Knowing when the fruit is ripe and the seed ready can be as easy as waiting for an *Opuntia* fruit to turn red and fall or as hard as finding that the *Euphorbia* fruit has exploded and scattered the seeds all over the greenhouse. Collection can be made easier with a little bagging and gluing and I'll try to get into that a bit more next time.

Next month PART FIVE: Customizing Your Cactus

If you have any questions about this article feel free to contact me. Also, when you feel like you're ready to try some seeds let me know and I'll let you have some of mine. Email me at thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com or talk to me at the meeting.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PLEASE WELCOME
A NEW AND A RETURNING MEMBER**
(and add their names to your roster)

Gary Krivokapich Peggy Holden

SHOW & SALE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Our annual Show & Sale will once again be put on in October and it is now time to be thinking about volunteering. Please think about joining in the organization of this, our most popular and visible event.

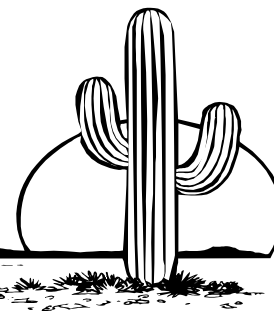
**To have your article printed in
The Cactus Patch get in touch with:**

Stephen Cooley, editor Linda Cooley, editor
thecactuspatch@bak.rr.com



***Be Sure To Check Us Out
On The Web At:
www.BakersfieldCactus.org***

UPCOMING EVENTS



BAKERSFIELD CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY EVENTS

- May 10 BCSS Meeting 6:30 pm Olive Dr. Church, 5500 Olive Dr.
SPEAKER: Woody Minnich
PROGRAM: Exploring Northern Argentina
- May 21-22 BCSS Yard Sale at Sidney & Jack's home.
- June 14 BCSS Meeting 6:30 pm Olive Dr. Church, 5500 Olive Dr.
SPEAKER: Gary Duke
PROGRAM: Echinocereus hybrids in the Jarillo Mts.
- June 28 BCSS Board Meeting
- July 12 BCSS Meeting 6:30 pm ESA, Cal State Bakersfield.
Potluck Picnic at the CSUB Cactus Garden
- October ANNUAL SHOW & SALE

OTHER CACTUS AND SUCCULENT EVENTS

- May 15 Huntington Gardens Plant Sale. 10am-5pm.
- May 15 Epiphyllum Society Show & Sale, LA Arboretum.
- May 21-22 Gates C&SS Show & Sale Jurupa Mts Cultural Center, 7621 Granite Hills Dr., Glen Avon. 9am-4pm.
- June 4-5 Sand Diego C&SS Show & Sale, Balboa Park, Room 101
- July 1-3 CSSA Annual Show (2nd-3rd) & Sale (1st-3rd) at the Huntington
- Aug 5-11 CSSA Biennial Convention. Scottsdale Plaza Resort, Phoenix.
- Aug 20-21 20th Intercity Show & Sale. Los Angeles Arboretum. 9am-5pm
- Sept 3 Huntington Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens
- Oct 15-16 San Gabriel Valley C&SS Winter Show & Sale, LA Arboretum

contact the editors (page 14) for more information