Volume 17  September 2014  Number 9

The Newsletter of the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society

This Month's Program
Planning for the
Fair Exhibit: Sept. 17-28
and
Show & Sale @ East Hills Mall:
OCTOBER 11 and 12

Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, September 9
At 6:30 PM: social
7:pm meeting

NEW meeting location!
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
2216 17th Street
Bakersfield
See Map on Page 2
Our NEW meeting place is
St. Paul's
Episcopal Church
2216 17th Street

We have the use of the room from 6PM until 9:30 PM.

This will allow for:
- 6PM set up.
- 6:30 Social time.
- 7 PM Meeting.
- 9PM clean up and clear out.

Let's all plan ahead and be good tenants!
There is ample parking on the street and in the lot on the south side of 17th Street.

At this meeting we will be planning for Kern County Fair display. Bring top dressing and any pots you wish to share.
- Sep 17, 2014 - Sep 28, 2014
- Sept. 15 & 16: Bring plants. Sidney Kelley will print uniform ID labels. Give her a list at the meeting if you know what you will bring.
- Sept. 29: Take home all plants.

Planning for the Show and Sale Oct 9-11
- Oct 10: Friday SET UP Tables and racks; around 3 pm.
- Oct 11: PLANT SET UP: Saturday, 7 am to 10 am.
- Oct 11: SHOW HOURS: Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm.
- Oct 12: Sunday 11 am to 4 pm.
- Oct 12: Take Down: Sunday 4 pm to 6 pm. We are usually done about 5 pm.
Robby's Nursery & Calico Gardens
We met at Robby's Nursery and Calico Garden. There are lots of plants, as well as garden furniture and ornaments, for sale.

Kathy Robinson talked about maintaining a garden in the this drought and heat. She emphasized that it is easy to over water, while thinking you are protecting your plants. Plant roots need to dry a bit and have access to air, too!

Old Friends
A Letter from Bruce
The Bakersfield cactus was once a separate species *Opuntia treleasei*. It was then decided that it was just a variety of the beaver tail and was renamed *Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei*. In the recent issue (July-Aug 2014) of the Cactus and Succulent Journal (US), it has once more been returned to its status as a separate species. In an article on “Diploid *Opuntia* hybrids from northwester Arizona”, Marc Beckstrom, A. Dean Stock, Chris Ginkel and Nancy Hussey have decided that the Bakersfield cactus was originally a hybrid between *Opuntia basilaris* and *Opuntia erinacea*, the grizzly bear cactus. Although grizzlys (both bear and cactus) have long been extinct in Kern County, they surmise they were once here. They base their case on hybrids found at Mormon Mesa, Clark Co., Nevada where both beaver tails and grizzlys still co-exist.

Another old friend I found in the news recently is Dr. Gerald Barad. He is being honored at the 18th Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania from 12 to 14 Oct. I wish I had a ticket to fly out to see him honored. We met the Barads in the early 70s when I was a graduate student at New York University and we were active in the N.Y.C.S.S. We met them recently at the National Convention in Tucson and more recently when he and I were both speakers at the Huntington Gardens Succulent Symposium.

The ride “It’s a Small, Small World” at Disneyland is celebrating fifty years. Polly and I met this ride at the Worlds’ Fair in New York on our way to Peace Corps training. Very appropriate.

On 7 Aug we heard a talk by the FCSS treasurer, Robert Scott. He spoke on cultivation Basics and his talk was indeed very basic. It would have been better as a workshop.
We also went to Robby’s Nursery for the BCSS meeting on the 12th. It was much more interesting, but an outdoor meeting in August is guaranteed to be HOT! I think a word of explanation is due on the so-called Lady’s Slipper Plant. This is, of course, not the orchid of that name! It is *Euphorbia macrocarpa* (formerly in the genus *Pedilanthus*) and it does, indeed have a slipper-shaped flower. They grow in Baja where I have seen them in the wild.

I was sorry to hear of Robin Williams death. He was a great actor. Although I did not like *Mork and Mindy* as a show, I did admire the sartorial splendor of Mork. (I still have a pair of suspenders in his style.) I especially liked “Good Morning Vietnam”. There are a number of reasons I find his suicide upsetting, not the least of which was the much earlier suicide of my cousin while he was a student at Berkely. His was a third generation suicide and was probably due to hereditary depression. He and his sister lived with us after his mother died. When I was a graduate student at UCNC we socialized with his sister who was at nearby Duke University. She watched our baby John and wondered if it would be wise to have a baby. I told her environment was probably more important than hereditary and she went on to have a child. But this was before her brother’s death!

We might even be related to Robin Williams since my great grandmother was a Williams. It is said that Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and the Baptist Church in America was an ancestor. (Although I have run across a note stating that we are probably descended from his brother Robert.) On the other side of the family, my maternal grandfather had Parkinson’s disease, although he did not die young, nor was he suicidal.

[Bruce’s opinions are his own and are not necessarily that of the BCSS]

~7~
A SUCCULENT TRIP TO THE MONTEREY AREA

The later part of June my husband Frank and I took a trip to the Monterey area. We had heard about the Succulent Gardens located northeast of Castroville. We went to the "Gardens" and were completely blown away with the huge selections of cactus and succulents available to see and buy.

The primary sales area is a covered green house that covers several thousand square feet. There are potted plants from 2 inches to gallons sizes. You can shop at your own leisure while pulling your little four wheeled cart. Staff are available to answer your questions and assist you, Note: cash or checks only, no credit cards. Needless to say I went through my cash and some of Franks with a great deal of ease. I found the prices to be reasonable.

There are numerous arrangements also on the grounds, from small to enormous. There are also several smaller green houses where they grow their inventory. Some are open for viewing only. This was quite an experience for someone new to the succulent and cactus hobby, soon to become an obsession.

Note: Succulent Gardens can be located on the internet at: www.sgplants.com

The next day we stumbled on a neat find. We were told about a garden gallery called The Red Door. The Red Door is located at 860 Tioga Ave, Sand City, between Marina and Monterey. Where the Succulent Gardens is massive, the Red Door is a small converted residence, cute as can be with a neat assortment of succulents and yard art. Frank was intrigued with information they provided on how to make "Hypertufa" a substitute for "Tufa Rock". Hypertufa is a light weight porous rock made of Portland cement, peat moss, perlite or vermiculate and water. Frank has not attempted this yet.

Note: www.reddoorgardengallery.com

Paulette Drake

Ed. Note: Writers Wanted!
We can always expand from our base of 12 pages to 16.
Let's have more writing.

~9~
The Succulent Garden at Cal State

**Aloe striata**

Coral Aloe is one of the showiest aloes you can have in your garden. And, it is fairly easy to grow. This aloe comes from the Cape region of South Africa which has a similar climate to ours. Though it requires a bit of summer water to look its best the plant really shines with cooler temperatures and winter rain. It is hardy down to the low 20's F.

We have two or three of these in the garden and they never fail to put on a show, usually in April. Coral Aloe is also free of any stiff spines which makes it a safe succulent for your garden. Our plants have slowly formed clumps up to 2 feet wide and about 18 inches high. The flower stalk reaches up to about 30 inches.

~10~  Stephen Cooley

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept. 7:** Long Beach C&SC Plant Auction Noon to 5 PM
Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Rd., Long Beach CA

**Sep 17, 2014 - Sep 28, 2014:** Kern County Fair display

**Sept. 26 & 27:** Succulent Extravaganza,
Succulent Gardens, 2133 Elkhorn Rd, Castroville
“Succulents: the landscape is changing”

**Oct 11-12:** Show and Sale at East Hills Mall
Set-up on Friday Oct. 10, Take down Sunday 4-6 PM

**Oct. 14:** BCSS meeting

**Nov 1-2:** San Gabriel C&SS Show and Sale
9am-4pm, L.A. County Arboretum
301 N. Baldwin Ave. Arcadia, CA

**Nov. 11:** BCSS meeting

**Dec. 9:** BCSS meeting, Dinner/Potluck

**June 14-19 2015:** Cactus and Succulent Society of America,
Biennial Convention
Pitzer College, Claremont, CA

~11~
Hello all from Sunny, Hot & Humid
Southern Oregon

The humidity is a bit unusual at this time of year, but who can complain of a monthly rain... so nice in the cool morning.

We believe our home in Bakersfield is sold, a big relief for sure. We still have more "stuff" there, which will require at least one more trip; and some will remain in storage. We are slowly settling in, but never know just where anything is and spend time going from place to place!

The cats (4) made the move pretty well, save for a little drama. But since it is all new, they are much more relaxed around one another -- less sibling rivalry. They enjoy all the new scents, the deer with fawn, turkeys & chicks, quail. They do sneak out for the cool night, and we have not lost any yet to whatever lurks out there. Sightings have been made of bear, fox, raccoon, not sure if there are any bobcats or not.

I have nearly killed several plants. Too hot & sunny, most of our plants had a lot of shade as our trees grew there, so they were overwhelmed. I have taken to using shade cloth mid-day to keep leaves from burning further.

We cannot do any landscaping until autumn due to water curtailment. But we will have a landscaper out soon to begin to finish the hardscape, take out blackberries, amend the soil & look into deer fencing for roses & vegetable garden.

No rush, but a little lawn will be nice to look at in autumn. We will also be looking for a design for a rock wall succulent garden. There are some hardy types native to the Cascades -- we will use our gifts from the club when it is time for that. Thank you again.

Bill is feeling more settled about closing his practice. He may look into some work later in the year. I however, seem to have little interest. There is "La Clinica" to check out later to volunteer -- need to brush up on my Spanish a little bit (a lot).

We have had our second group of friends visit in June & July, so feeling more as if it is our home.

We miss the club and our activities together. We will be joining Audubon, which begins again in September.

Lynn & Bill
I have a couple of these plants in my collection and a recent event caused me to choose it as this month’s plant of the month. E. ambovombensis gets its name from Ambovombe in southern Madagascar the location where Werner Rauh collected it in 1987. There it grows in shady locations under shrubs in the dry scrub forests.

Plants are low growing and seldom get over a foot (30 cm) high. They often form a caudex with multiple branches crisscrossing over the top to form a sort of “cushion plant”. They are considered to be a stem succulent. Leaves are about an inch (25 mm.) long, bronze green and lance shaped with a slightly wrinkled border. Flowers are light greenish bronze and about a half inch (12 mm.) across. They form in small clusters.

This species is not frost tolerant and wants to be in filtered sun or shade. It should not be watered in winter. I don’t water mine from mid November - February. When the leaves begin to close up along their long axis it is time to water. They may loose all their leaves in winter.

They grow easily enough from cuttings and I have started quite a few over the years. The event that made me bring it up for consideration was the annual BBQ and auction of plants at my bonsai club, Sansui Kai. I have thought that E. a. would make a good accent plant for any desert dwelling bonsai, so I took a well started cutting and put it in the auction. It immediately attracted attention even though it was the smallest thing there being only about two inches high in a yogurt cup. Several people asked me about it and I told them what little I knew. (I know more now after researching this article.) Long story short, a bidding war ensued and that little cutting sold eventually for $25. I had donated the plant so of course received nothing but it helped fatten the treasury of the club. The next day I started four more cuttings for future sales. Bidding wars can be fun. I think testosterone has something to do with it.

Jack G. Reynolds