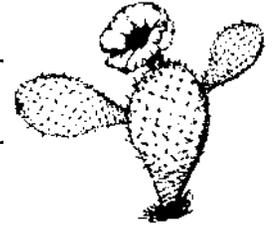


The Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society
% Polly Hargreaves, editor
pollypearl@hotmail.com



Kedrostris africana
Succulent Cucumber
Don Gale (Fresno CSS)

THE CACTUS PATCH



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 17 **December 2014** Number 12

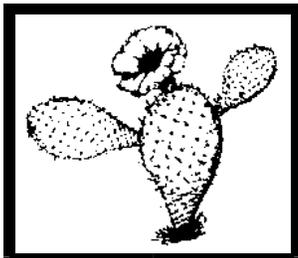
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program
**Annual Potluck Dinner
& Silent Auction**
@ St Paul's Episcopal Church
6 PM

Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday,
December 9th**
at
6:00 PM:
Potluck Dinner

**The December
Meeting is the
Installation of
Officers for 2015
Dues payable now**



The Cactus Patch

Volume 17 Number 12
December 2014

The Cactus Patch is the official publication of the Bakersfield
Cactus & Succulent Society of Bakersfield, California



Membership in the Bakersfield Cactus & Succulent Society costs
\$20 per year for an individual and \$25 a year for a family.

Visit Us On the Web!

www.BakersfieldCactus.org

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DECEMBER 9th MEETING

Annual Holiday Potluck & Silent Auction 6:00pm

The rules for the potluck are simple:
there are no rules.

Bring any kind of dish you want to share, and don't forget something sweet to eat. You may want to bring your own forks, knives and good plates, the Club will furnish plastic forks and knives and paper plates as well as sodas and cups. The whole family is invited!

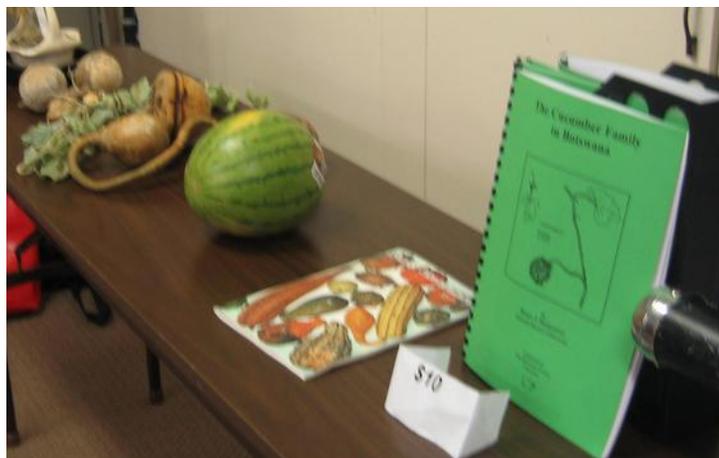
We will also have our Silent Auction, where members bid on special plants. If you have a special item that has something to do with Cacti & Succulents and would like to donate it to be auctioned off, please bring it and add it to the auction tables.

At the November meeting, a motion from the Executive Board raised dues for 2015: \$20, individual and \$25 family membership

Visit Us On the Web!

www.BakersfieldCactus.org

November 11, 2014



Bruce's display ^

The Cucumber Family in Botswana

Program by Bruce Hargreaves

An introduction to the 31 members in Botswana

The Hargreaves Family in Botswana

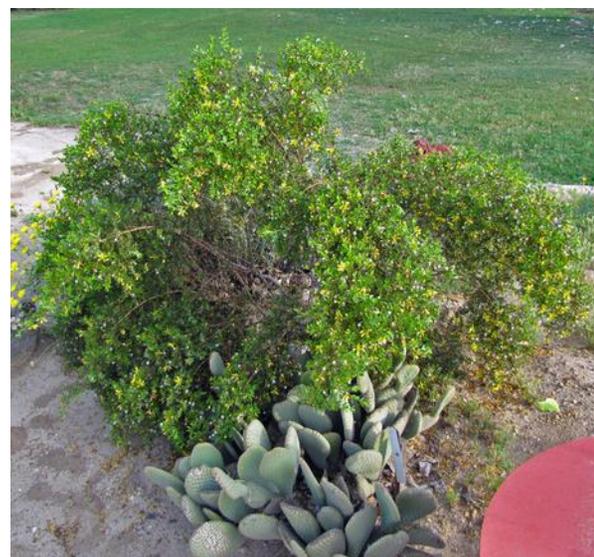


Short Program by Polly Hargreaves

An introduction to some of the family in thirteen years in Botswana

~4~

The Succulent Garden at Cal State



Larrea tridentata

If you have been to any of the deserts in the southwest you have seen *Larrea tridentata* – Creosote Bush. You've seen tens of thousands of them, mile after mile after mile of

them. This is the most prominent shrub of the Mojave desert. It grows to about 7 feet high and 8 feet wide, but can be larger. Creosote Bush is very long lived, a thousand years or more (clonal colonies may live in excess of 10,000 years!).

The one in our garden was planted from seed and then later transplanted. This was six or seven years ago and it has now grown into a nice sized shrub. It is often covered with small, propeller-like yellow flowers and small fuzzy fruits. The leaves are a glossy green and the plant has the typical resinous smell you often experience in the desert.



This is an excellent landscape plant: extremely drought and heat resistant, evergreen, constantly in flower, and easy to grow. It should be used more.

Stephen Cooley

~5~

Plant of the Month

Dioscorea mexicana

Dioscorea mexicana is a “fat plant”, having a large caudex which becomes divided into plates resembling a turtle shell. Until fairly recently it was known as *D. macrostachya* which is the name I knew it by until I began digging into the



information on the internet about this member of the Dioscoreaceae (the yam family). This is a large family with between 500 and 1000 species in a “pan-tropical” distribution. As the name implies however, *D. mexicana* is native to Mexico and also El Salvador and Panama, where it grows in forests. The caudex may reach up to 20 in. (50 cm.) in diameter where it will live in the shade of taller species. Each growing season a vine will grow from the caudex upward climbing on the surrounding plants reaching to a height of 30 ft. (10 m.) or more. At the end of the growing season the vine typically dies and the base becomes dormant for a time and then repeats the cycle. Individual plants are variable as to their season of growth. Some are winter growers and others prefer the warmth of summer. Perhaps in the tropics the cues that set off the growth cycle are more complicated than mere photoperiod. I have a different species of *Dioscorea* which is a warm weather grower but it is resisting going into dormancy having spent the summer outside it refuses to drop its leaves even though we have been down to thirty several nights in the past two weeks. I may just have to chop the vine off and force it into dormancy. I would hate for the caudex to freeze should we get a hard frost.

~6~

The leaves are large and heart-shaped about the size of a man’s hand (8 in., 20 cm.) long. Plants are dioecious, meaning they have separate male and female plants



One needs both male and female plants to obtain seed. Flowers are very small only a few millimeters across and grow in clusters. They are pale greenish yellow with purple centers. These plants typically want more water than a typical succulent during the growing season. They can go pretty dry when dormant.

Some species of *Dioscorea* have commercial use as a producer of a steroid diosgenin which is used to synthesize the steroid hormones progesterone, cortisone and pregnenolone.

Jack G. Reynolds

Thank You from Rose Gonzalez

The club received this nice Thank You note from Rose Gonzalez: Her plant was chosen as the club's favorite at the Kern County Fair. It was a very impressive mammillaria in flower.

Thank you for picking my cactus as Best Of Show. I really love all my 2014 plants and looking forward for next year. My family & friends were really proud of me. Sincerely, Rosie Gonzalez.



~7~



The Golden ticket

A Letter from Bruce

On 6
Nov.

we heard Nick Wilkinson speak in Fresno. As well as presenting an interesting talk on Baja he also brought a lot of interesting sale plants. Fred was back at the brag table which was loaded. (See plant on back cover.)



On the 11 we went with John to Milt's Coffee Shop for their 50th anniversary. They gave us free T-shirts.

Then we went to the BCSS meeting where, of course, I was the main speaker. Anne presented the brag table and Polly also spoke.

Sad news: my mother, Alice, was weakening and we had to put her into care as we were no longer able to give her the help she needed. She passed away on 1st December.

Last June I mentioned that we received a "golden ticket" on our 50th anniversary. It was a check to be used for a cruise! At first we looked at cruises down to Baja, but were not too happy as we have already been to Catalina and Ensenada (although not by boat). Our son John informed us that Caribbean cruises are cheaper, even though they require flying to Florida. He booked us through price line and on 14 Nov. we set off. He drove us down to LAX with a stop at Claim Jumpers in Stevenson Ranch for a late lunch/early supper. We were disappointed to find they no longer serve Range Rattlers (Jalapenos stuffed with cheese and shrimp).

At LAX we were given a perfunctory run through security as "elderly" and let on the flight as "pre-boarding". We managed to avoid luggage fees by putting everything in our "hand" luggage.

Despite warnings that everything costs (and the fact that it was a late night flight), they did serve us free soft drinks and light snacks.

In the morning we flew into Tampa which is wet and green: lots of mangroves and palms. After deplaning we asked for a bus into town and were told to take a taxi as the bus does not go to the docks. Being stubborn, we took the bus into town where it connects with a trolley line that does go to the docks! Incidentally, the bus passed a cemetery which had beautiful old oaks festooned with Tillandsia. (By this we knew we were back in the South.)

Unfortunately, we were too early for the first trolley, so we found a Starbucks and had breakfast. Eventually the trolley came and we rode it to the end of the line and back to the dock. By then it was time to go aboard our Carnival Paradise ship. It was a bit of a mob scene with long lines, but eventually we made it to our cabin with its portholes (a minor expense). It was very late by the time we found where we could get lunch (a start on almost continual feasting) and settled for a Reuben sandwich. That evening we had our first dinner with three other couples: Ruth Ann (my sister is Ruth Anne) and Bill (I have a cousin Bill); Debby (I have a niece named Debby) and Michael (our older grandson's name); and Ruth Ann and Tom (Polly's father was Tom). For once I was able to remember people's names!



After dinner we went to a piano bar which was circular with fake keys all around. The real piano was in the middle of the circle. We were supposed to sing along with Mark, but we didn't know most of the songs he chose, so eventually turned in. I will continue with the cruise next month.

Bruce Hargreaves

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

Brag Table

Richard Amaya brought his tiger jaws which had been selected as cutest in the show. The flowers were open earlier but had closed for the night.



Paulette Drake brought a *Stapelia gigantea* which had smaller flowers than some. It is common among stapeliads to have different sized flowers and even stems.

Sidney Kelly brought an *Albuca spiralis* in a new pot.

Jack Kelly brought a *Girardinthus macrorhizus*. This went along with the lecture topic as it is a succulent in the Cucumber family, although it is from South Africa and not Botswana.

Polly brought a *Sesamothamnus lugardii* which is found in Botswana but is in the Sesame family.

I brought a boab and a baobab fruit as the subject was brought up at the previous meeting. Unfortunately they are not from Madagascar as no one there offered me a fruit.

Jill Brennon brought a *Larryleachia marlothii*, a stapeliad related to Hoodia. (Both Larry Leach and Marloth were botanists of southern Africa. I did meet the former, but the latter was well before my time.)

Donna Pitcher brought a prickly pear because it was healthy and cute.

Yard Tour at the Drake's.



There was a nice turnout for the yard tour. Many of the newer members came. Paulette and Frank Drake are fairly new members so it was nice of them to let us see their succulents. It's always fun to see how people display their plants. Paulette enjoys using unusual container for her plants. She has a great potting area. Frank has become interested in bonsai. He's built a nice area for that purpose.



~Sidney Kelley

Letter from Oregon

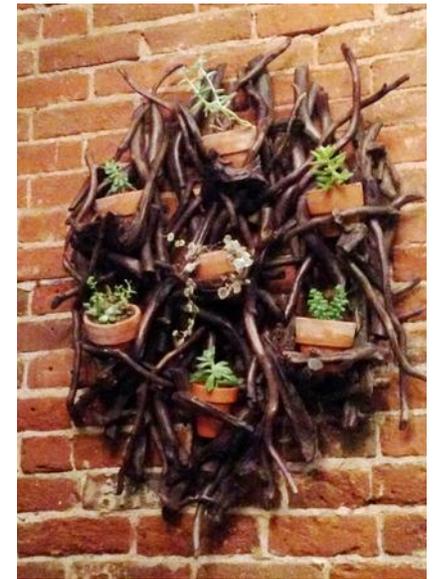


Hello all -- It was fun to read about the Show & Sale and see postings of members' plants. We seem to be settling in to our new home. There are still many boxes to unpack, but we are managing without whatever is in them. The summer was hot & dry. We did not have to do any landscaping, due to the drought, but it looked pretty desolate out the windows. Bill cleaned out loads of blackberry vines that were encroaching upon the house. Many trip to the landfill

were made. We usually take a weekend hike; I try to keep active with "senior" yoga & tai chi, Bill has joined a gym. We managed to miss the first two Audubon meetings, but are aiming for November's. I did go on a birding field trip with the group & saw a few new spots & birds. Another day I volunteered with a group for a clean up day @ the local reservoir, Emigrant Lake. A good time for it with only about 8% of the lake filled. It was a beautiful day. Countless tires were dug out. At least 95% of what I gathered was beer cans & bottles. Walking in our neighborhood we have noticed many succulents in/on rock walls. As soon as we had our first big rain, they have gone from desiccated to gorgeous. I have been purchasing a few here & there to add to our rock wall; we shall see which do best. Also, several familiar birds have been spotted. In order to complete our occupancy permit, we have had installed most of the sprinkler/drip system. We hope the hydro-seed fellow will show up soon, so that the grass will germinate. Bill spread some older seed out in the back, which was very popular with the quail & turkeys! We both attended a gardening seminar one Saturday, taking enjoyable classes from hardscape design & monarch butterflies to making & using tufa & drought tolerant

planting. The autumn has been most spectacular, the colors intense & eye-catching. There are several interesting nurseries tucked in the hills -- Plant Oregon, Forest Farm, Shooting Star. I try to patronize all nurseries!

When out with a nurse I used to work with, I noticed a nice display of succulents on a wall in the restaurant, which might make a nice way to show plants on the front door or on the patio. It has begun to cool down. We have most plants in the insulated garage & have been covering the few remaining on the deck. It usually has been frosty here more by now -- only a couple of nights went to 30 degrees.



We had many family & friends visit us since we have been here &



more family will be here for Thanksgiving. Looking forward to a visit in December from Andy & Sasha. We miss BCSS & hope you have a fun Holiday season & a tasty Christmas pot-luck & silent auction.

*Lynn & Bill
McDonald*

Desert Images 11/22/14



There were 11 of us who headed out on a perfect day for our trip to Desert Images Nursery in Oak View. The drive over along Highway 33 was beautiful with the fall foliage at its finest. We arrived about 10:30 am. Richard, the owner, had put most of his plants that can't take the cold/frost into the hot houses for the winter. So they were crammed full. The

outside display area was kind of sparse, as you can see in these pictures taken by Stephen Cooley. We spent the next two hours in pure bliss picking out plants for the December meeting's Silent Auction.

Frank, Paulette, and Larry left us at that point. The rest of us went on to have lunch at a local Mexican restaurant we've visited before.

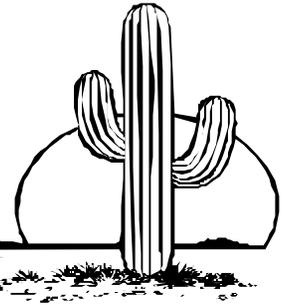
Then it was on to the Cactus Mart in Piru. We didn't find any club plants there. Maynard and I each found a very nice specimen plant for our own yards. Richard and Chris split off from us there. Maynard, Stephen, Lena, Jill, Jack and I went on towards home - with a stop at the Foster Freeze in Castaic. Then it was on to home. Another great day.



~Sidney Kelley

~14~

UPCOMING EVENTS



Dec. 9th: BCSS meeting,
Family Dinner/Potluck

Jan. 13th: BCSS meeting
John Matthews "Haworthias, Up close and Personal"

Feb. 10th: BCSS meeting
Paul Klaassen

March 10th: BCSS meeting
Woody Minnich
"South Africa, The Land of the Halfman"

April 14th: BCSS meeting
Buck and Yvonne Hemenway
"Why We love South Africa"

April 18th: Garden Fest
@ Bakersfield College

MAY 2015
BCSS Yard Sale

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

~15~