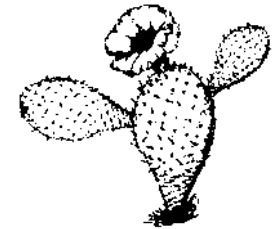




*Euphorbia (Modenium)
echinulata*
Blooming @ the Fresno CCS

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 19 **February 2016** Number 2

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program

"The Islands of Baja"

Eunice Thompson

@ St Paul's Episcopal Church

6:30 PM

Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday,
February 9th**

at

6:30 PM

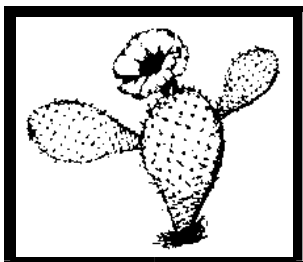
Pay2016 dues now

Meet the Speaker

Dinner @ 5:00 PM

Sizzler

900 Real Rd.



The Cactus Patch

Volume 19 Number 2

February 2016

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.

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www.BakersfieldCactus.org

~2~

February 9th MEETING

The Islands of Baja

I look forward to sharing the thrill of exploring the islands of Baja California in the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean. We observe the diversity of the cacti and succulent endemics and compare them to their cousins found on the mainland.

I became passionate about Cactus & Succulents 10 years ago, and sought out like minded hobbyists and experts to gain knowledge of these plants. I participated in many club activities and eventually serving as a president of the Long Beach Cactus Club. I was able to combine my passion for travel and photography with cacti and succulents in their native habitats.

My first opportunity presented itself join an expedition to Baja California in



2008 to visit the native plants of that region. Since then my travels have taken me back to Baja and mainland Mexico as well as the many desert habitats across the globe. This has also given me an opportunity to observe the hobby first hand in UK and mainland Europe.

Currently I am working on filming a travel documentary featuring cactus and succulents and their impact. I organize small tours to mainly to Baja California but also other plant habitats around the world.

I am co-author of "Tea at Gordon's" – a self published tribute to Gordon Rowley

~3~

January 12, 2016



Michelle Cloud-Hughs, relaxing before the meeting. Her enthusiasm was quite contagious. I wanted to sign up for whatever field work she needed done; preferably in the shade and on a smooth surface! Oh well, my ankles aren't what they used to be. At least we get to enjoy what others are doing...

Polly H.: ed.

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~4~

The Succulent Garden at Cal State The *Echinopsis* Project



I've often thought that it would be nice to have a display of *Echinopsis* at the Succulent Garden. They come in such wonderful colors,

especially some of the new hybrids. The trouble is, the garden hasn't been a great place for growing *Echinopsis*. It is too hot in the sun, and there was no shade. Without the shade they required more water than they were getting. Most have withered away over the years.



Now, in part thanks to the planned Botanical Garden, some concrete block and pavers were offered to the garden and I started putting them to use. I have added a corner to the block wall on the west side and the plan is to pave around the desert willow (there is a lot of bermuda grass there). In the shade of the tree and in large pots on the pavers we can display all sorts of *Echinopsis*.

Unfortunately, the demolition of a greenhouse and the removal of some trees is making it hard to work at the garden. I don't know yet if that will interfere with our annual spring weeding work days.

~5~

Stephen Cooley

Plant of the Month

Myrmecodia beccarii

When Attila Kapitany visited our club to enlighten us about the interesting succulent plants of Australia, I was struck by how different and exotic they were. I particularly wanted to learn more about the so called “ant plants”. The term ant plant can mean any plant that has formed a symbiotic relationship with ants. It turns out that there are many such plants representing many families. The relationships are generally very complex. Two basic patterns can be found. *Obligate* ant plants are those that require their ant symbionts in order to live. *Facultative* ant plants do not require ants to survive but generally do better when they have them. Since I was planning a trip down under I had a longer conversation with him to discuss my itinerary. He was very generous with his considerable knowledge of Australia and made some recommendations for me.

One of my stops was Cairns in northern Queensland. They have a very nice botanic garden. One of the positive things about the British colonial period is their love of natural history and the tendency to create parks and botanic gardens in their cities. A town of any size will have one or more parks, usually well laid out. Any medium to large city will have a botanic garden. Attila had talked of the distribution of ant plants and I was pretty sure I would find them in Cairns.

The garden is a short bus ride from the center of town and lies along an estuary. I spent a lot of time in the part of the garden devoted to the evolution of land plants hundreds of millions of years ago including Cycads which I love and used to collect till I moved to Lake Isabella where they will not grow in the ground. Anyhow when I decided to look for ant plants the battery on my camera was down to ten percent!

I asked a very nice lady in the information center if she could help me find any ant plants in the garden. At first she didn't know what I was talking about but as I explained she suddenly smiled and said of course, she knew right where one was and marked on my map where I should look. It was a half mile walk down the path through the tropical rain forest and right where she said it would be.



Fortunately it was only slightly above eye level so I could get close enough for a picture. I took two and then the battery went flat.

Myrmecodia beccarii is one of about six Australian, “myrmecophyte” (ant loving) plants listed by Kapitany. One is a *Hoya* relative and another is a fern! The other four are all in the genus *Myrmecodia*. *M. beccarii* is a guess on my part after looking at my pictures and the pictures in Kapitany’s monograph on the ant plants of Australia. It is a facultative ant plant so does not require ants for life. It accommodates ants and sometimes other insects as well as the occasional tree dwelling earthworm in chambers in the swollen tuberous stems. The

mutualistic relationship is that the ants get a place to live and the plant gets nutrients from the wastes and debris that the ants create within the chambers. When a plant gets nutrients from ants it is called “myrmecotrophy” (ant fed)

Myrmecodia beccarii is found in the coastal floodplain of the coast of Queensland from Ingram to Cooktown. It is an epiphyte associated with Mangrove and Melaleuca forests. Individual plants can reach a stem size of about 30 cm. (1 ft.) in diameter. Stems are irregular and covered with short spiky nodules. Several entry holes for the ants will be found near the base. As plants grow large they may fall of their own weight. This usually will result in the death of the plant because of rot but occasionally they will survive and continue to grow in the ground. Flowers are very small and white in color resembling the fruit they produce after fertilization.

~7~ Jack G. Reynolds



A White Christmas?

Bah, Humbug!

A Letter From Bruce

We went back and forth a lot as to where the family should gather for Christmas. One of the first ideas was to go to Yosemite, but I objected to freezing in the mountains. We never got a consensus, so there were family gatherings in various places. In Bakersfield we began with a cookie exchange at Lora's on the 18th of December. Anne had a white elephant exchange on the 20th. On the 21st, Polly, John and I set off for the mountain town of Susanville! Yes, over my objection, we spent Christmas freezing in the mountains!

We spent the night at Polly's sister Nancy's in Fresno and on the 22nd had lunch at "A Touch of Britain" in the Sacramento area. We filled up on the way with gas at \$2.19 and after lunch noted the price at that same station had gone back up! The road



over Donner Pass was clear and we reached Susanville by 6:09. The next day it snowed! We got to watch poor Esther the chicken sit outside her coop while snow built up on her shoulders. Why she didn't go inside remains a mystery. Maybe it's a bird thing. There were lots of birds in the trees, including a Northern Flicker.

Inside we had a wood stove burning and remained warm. A good thing, too, as seven month old Alice is now crawling around. She'll be walking soon. Unfortunately the snow kept the boys indoors so it was noisy even though they spent most of the time on computer games.



On Christmas Eve we got dressed up and went to a church service. I was disappointed to note the trend seems to be toward videoed music. It takes the local talent out of productions.

Next morning we had a pajama party with presents (Emily had made us matching outfits) and that evening we had dinner at the casino. We had a specialty which was pork "wings". I guess pigs can fly! At any rate, they were quite tasty. After dinner we went to the fairgrounds where they had animated figures in lights. On the 26th we rested except for a brief foray down to where I had photographed wild flowers so I could complete the series with a few snow shots.

On the 27th we had a farewell dinner at the Happy Garden which continues its reputation for great Chinese cuisine. There was light snow on the 28th but we set off on our return journey. The road to the Nevada border was not well cleared and at one point we slid a little on some ice. Just after that we passed a van going the other way which was upside down. It must have just happened as there was a fellow talking through the window to someone inside while another was on his cell phone (presumably calling 911). At any rate we had a clear road shortly after that and had brunch at Mel's Diner in Boom Town. The sky cleared after Truckee and we had a safe, but long trip home.

We played games and welcomed the New Year at Anne's. On the 7th of January we heard Petra Crist tell the Fresno Club all about how she set up her succulent business. She convinced me I made the right decision in not going into the business. It's enough work as a hobby.

On the 12th, of course, we heard all about discovering a new cholla. We had heard Michelle Cloud-Hughes' talk earlier at the National Convention, but it was well worth hearing again.



Bruce Hargreaves

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

BRAG TABLE

Richard Amaya brought two delightful pots, one a duck with Crassulas and the other a shoe with a Haworthia.

Polly Hargreaves brought *Euphorbia clavarioides* which is frost tolerant and forms huge mounds in the mountains of Lesotho.

Bruce brought a succulent cucumber, *Trichomeria debilis*. Although the tuber is usually underground, he has raised it up to show it off.

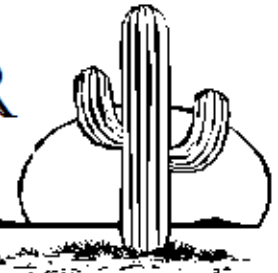


Sidney Kelley brought a *Gasteria glomerata* which was blooming.



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CALENDAR



February 9th BCSS Meeting

Eunice Thompson
"Islands of BAJA"

March 8th BCSS Meeting

Woody Minnich
"Mexico, the Hidden Treasures of Coahuila."

April 12th BCSS Meeting

April 16th
Garden Fest at Bakersfield College

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MID-STATES
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