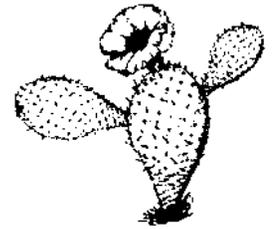




Ferocactus chrysacanthus

The Cactus Patch



Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei

Volume 21 **September 2018** Number 9

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAKERSFIELD CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

This Month's Program
“Aloes on my mind”
Karen Zimmerman
September 11th @ 7:00
St. Paul's Church, 2216 17th St.

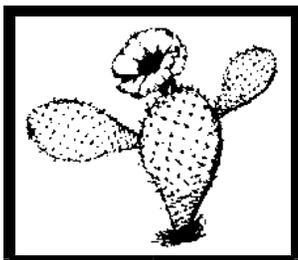
SHOW & SALE

Oct 13 & 14

St. Paul's Church
2216 17th St.

Meet the Speaker!

Dinner at
Sizzler
5:00 PM
900 Real Road



The Cactus Patch

Volume 21 Number 9

September 2018

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

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September 11th Meeting

"Aloes On My Mind: Exploring Aloe Hybrids One Generation at a Time"

Karen Zimmerman



I start with an overview of the genus aloe; distribution and diversity of species. I talk a little about the work of hybridizers up to the present, with a special mention about Kelly Griffin, my inspiration to try my hand at it. I show parent plants and offspring, some that became good enough to name and distribute, and others that became disappointments.

Then I showed some promising babies and future possibilities.

I am the succulent propagator for the Huntington Botanical Gardens' Desert Collections, a huge potted collection outside of the public gardens. I have worked at the Huntington for nearly 20 years. I've always been drawn to growing plants. The first plants I grew from seed were pine trees. A small local nursery gave my best friend and me an envelope of pine seeds, and I can still remember the deep excitement and awe when they germinated! We jumped into the pool with our clothes on. We were 10 years old.

I still get that same "Christmas morning" excitement when a batch of new aloe hybrid babies germinate. It's even better when they start to develop some character, often very early with the first true leaf. Despite careful breeding for specific traits such as color, size or toothiness, unexpected anomalies can appear in any breeding, especially given how complicated these aloe hybrids have become with generations of species and crosses in the mix. The standouts are, of course, the ones I crave!

Photography is another great love of mine, and I find it pairs well with horticulture. It is easy to overlook small details, and you can really see them through a lens up close. I love to share tiny wonders.

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The Succulent Garden at Cal State



Escobaria vivipara *var. deserti*

“Desert Spiny star” is the common name for this small desert southwest and California native. I didn't know it had (or needed) a common name. The scientific name has changed (multiple times) but I like this one if only because that's what the tag says in the garden.

This is a small 'Mammillaria-type' cactus that is now just reaching 5 inches high after about 14 years from seed. It shrinks to roughly half its size in the heat and dryness of summer then expands during the winter rains and blooms in the spring.



This cactus would look good in a pot but is not as eye catching as other small cacti. The main attraction is that it is not commonly seen in collections. We have it in the garden because it is a California native.

Stephen Cooley

KERN COUNTY FAIR NOTICE AND CALL FOR DISPLAY PLANTS



The fair runs from Sept. 19-30. They have given us a smaller display area this year than last. We only get the wall on the end of the horticulture room and no longer get the side area. I want to set up on Tuesday the 18th between 12 noon and 5 PM. It should not take long once the plants are delivered. Plants should be at least softball size to prevent theft. Large is good. They should be “staged” as for a show. If you have tags that give the name of the plant as well as the owner bring them. I need some nice cacti as well as any good succulent. I plan to bring down a few nice succulents of mine but I don't have any good cacti so need those badly. Please think of this as a chance to show the community what our club is all about.

Thanks,

Jack Reynolds

Plant of the Month

Opuntia (Cylindropuntia) echinocarpa

We are continuing this month with native species that might work in a xeriscape garden in our area., The recent revision of cactus taxonomy has split the genus *Opuntia* into the flat pad types *Opuntia* and the cylindrical pad types, *Cylindropuntia* or “chollas”. *C. echinocarpa* has the common name of “silver cholla”.



The mature plant can be a tree or shrub up to 6 ft. (2 m.) high with an intricate branching pattern. Joints are from 2 to 10 in. (5-25 cm.) long and 0.75-1.25 in. (2-3 cm) in diameter with numerous narrow tubercles. Areoles will contain 2-20 straw-colored spines up to 2 in. (5 cm.) long.

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The spines are barbed and often in trying to pull them out the joint will break away from the plant, a means of vegetative reproduction.

Flowers are 1.25-2.5 in. (3-6 cm.) in diameter and greenish-yellow in color. Fruits are dry and straw-colored when mature, round with many glochids. They are not edible as are the fruits of many other *Opuntias*. Seeds are irregular and pale about 0.25 in. (3 mm.) in diameter.

The species grows across the south-western US from Modoc Co. CA, Nevada, Utah, Arizona to north-western Mexico and Baja CA. It is found in the Sonoran and Colorado Deserts along dry washes in gravelly soils associated with creosote bush scrub, Joshua tree woodland and pinyon-juniper woodland from 1000-4000 ft. (300-1200 m.) elevation.

Because of its spiky aggressive nature it should not be planted near walkways. It would however probably make a good barrier to intrusion. They are hardy and frost tolerant. According to Wikipedia the Cuban government planted an 8 mi. band of *Opuntia* around the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in 1961 to prevent Cubans from entering the base to get to the US. One wonders if it worked and if the present administration knows about it.

Jack G. Reynolds

SHOW & SALE

Oct 13 & 14

**St. Paul's Church
2216 17th St.**

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FIRES!

A Letter From Bruce

It was predictable, but the number of wildfires this year is still astonishing. When the Ferguson Fire started I had to look up the name. Even though the name is clear on the map, I had never noted it. The ridge crosses the 140 just west of Yosemite. I was afraid the fire would devastate the park, but they managed to keep it out except for a small area on the west. It was still a bit of a shock when they had to close the main valley because of the smoke. Fred Gaumer, who does the brag table for the Fresno club, reported that the bad air in Fresno was nothing compared to Coarsegold (on 41 halfway to the park) where he lives.

Next we received a picture of fire columns at Clear Lake. It was taken by friends who had been on the caving trip to Botswana. They have since bought a home at Clear Lake, but, fortunately, had the sense to clear the area to make it fire-safe. I have also been watching the Mendocino Complex Fire because the Hargreaves Ranch (where my grandfather lived and which is now owned by my cousin Kirk) is just west of 101 north of Calpella. Fortunately, the fires have remained east of 101.



Courtesy of Karole Ward



When we went to Fresno on the 2nd of August, we had dinner at BJ's with the speaker and others. One latecomer found no place and so moved a table over from a set next to us. Fortunately she asked the waitress if this was OK and was told no, so she moved the table back. Just then a huge group of firefighters came in and occupied the space! We have also noticed firefighters at restaurants here in Bakersfield.

The speaker that evening was Peter Beiersdorfer who took us on a tour of Namibia. He began with a video taken as they landed at the capitol, Windhoek. I told him I found this of interest as I have never flown into Namibia. (We took the train!) His talk was a good mix of people, places and plants, but I found his maps too detailed to follow (and I've been there!)



The Bakersfield meeting on the 14th was, of course, dinner at the Old Hacienda. [They always provide great food, good service. PH] The attendance was rather low; any suggestions to make August more exciting?

I recently read an old issue of Smithsonian (Sept. 2015) which has an article on Hang Son Doong, the longest cave, which is in Vietnam. It describes the discovery as follows: "Ho Khanh, a local man then in his early 20s, went to the national park in search of aloe, whose resin he planned to sell to perfume makers." How many errors can you spot? I'll give the answer next month, but if you are impatient, look at the Cactus and Succulent Journal 1998 vol. 70, no. 3 pgs. 124-126.

I would like to comment on four recent obituaries. The first was Dr. George T. Tatsuno, the brother of Marlene who has sold her attractive pottery at our shows. He was nine years younger than I am, so was much too young. We all offer our sympathy.

The second death was that of V.S. Naipaul who won a Nobel Prize for his books. I will never forget the first one I read which was "A House for Mr. Biswas". If you haven't read any of his books, this is a good one to start with. I hope I live as long as he did – he was ten years my senior.

Then, of course, was Aretha Franklin, only three weeks my senior. I'll never forget that gorgeous hat she wore when she sang at Obama's inauguration.

The fourth and final was Kofi Annan, four years my senior, another Nobel Prize winner and the first African Secretary-General of the UN. His leadership towards peace can never be forgotten.

One last bit of news. New York University Medical School has announced they will no longer charge a tuition fee. This is great as the fees everywhere have gotten ridiculously high. I was a Ph.D. student there back in the seventies and thought the fees were high then. Fortunately my tuition was paid for by the National Institutes of Health. (My doctoral thesis was on cerebral malaria.)

Bruce Hargreaves

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



Karen
Zimmerman's
aloe babies



September 11th BCSS Meeting

Karen Zimmerman

"Aloes on My Mind, Exploring Aloe"

Sept. 19-30 Kern County Fair

October 9th BCSS Meeting

Cactus and Succulent Show and Sale

October 12th Afternoon Set Up

October 13th 10am – 5pm

October 14th 11am – 3pm

St. Paul's Church – 17th and "B" Street

November 13th BCSS Meeting

December 11th BCSS Meeting

Winter family Potluck

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