



Succulent Scoop
Conejo Cactus and Succulent Society
CSSA Affiliate

February 2025 **Volume 10 Number 1**

Mission Statement:

The Conejo Cactus and Succulent Society encourages the study, cultivation, conservation, and appreciation of cacti and other succulent plants.

Email: ConejoCSS@hotmail.com Facebook: Conejo Cactus & Succulent Society Web: ConejoCSS.com

Next Meeting Wednesday February 5th
Doors Open at 6:30 Meeting starts at 7:00
California Lutheran University - Lundring Events Center
130 Overton Court Thousand Oaks, CA. 91360

February Speaker - Eli Cohen

Hello members of the Conejo Cactus and Succulent Society! My name is Eli Cohen, I'm currently a student at Pasadena City College and a propagator of many fascinating plants! My fixation with the unusual forms, lives, and adaptations of xerophytic plants has become a lifelong passion, having grown a wide variety for over a decade. I hope to share some of the joy and beauty I have discovered in lifeforms not frequently encountered or discussed.

About a year ago at this time, I was lucky enough to take a botanical trip into the heart of one of California's more protected deserts. From wacky weather to geometric geology, every piece of the landscape and ecosystem was a wonder to behold. The focus of the conversation today will go beyond the scope of this small trip, but it serves as a great introduction to some of the many hidden gems California has in terms of desert-dwelling plants. Some families and forms will be familiar, such as ferns and crassula, which have taken on remarkable adaptations to survive extreme conditions. I also hope to introduce species that many have not heard of or seen, with a brief introduction to the plants that shed light on the geological history of California. Hopefully, many are encouraged to see new worlds open up before them, even in their own backyards!



President's Message February 2025



What a beginning to a new year!

I'm sure most of us know someone who has been terribly impacted by the southern California wildfires. I know 3 people and all of them are from the cactus and succulent industry.

Julie Tabor, the business manager for the CSSA, lost her home in the Eaton fire. James Lemos of the San Gabriel Cactus & Succulent Society lost everything in the Eaton fire. James is very active in the Inner-City Show and the CSSA show. He had a wonderful collection of show plants. The last Facebook post I saw from James was a picture of a few clay pots that survived. The third person who lost everything in the Palisades fire is our own Chris Biehl's, sister. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone affected by this terrible disaster.



Lisa and I are working on different field trips for 2025. We realize most of you don't want to travel too far or stay overnight, so we are taking that into consideration. One trip being planned is a home tour of Glen and Pam Smith's collection in Ventura, then on to the Ventura Botanical Garden. The tour will be planned for one of Ventura Botanical Garden's free days, so it will likely be a weekday.

Additional field trips are being planned but are not finalized yet, so if you have any suggestions for places we can visit, including home garden tours, let Lisa know, so we can add them to our event's calendar.

It's been a while since we had a Photo Contest. What are your feelings about having another one?

I'd like to make 2025 our best year ever, so if you have any ideas for fun and educational projects, please let me know. If your idea is chosen you will receive a FREE 2026 membership.

April is going to be a busy month. First, we have our Spring Sale on April 14th followed by the CSSA Convention in San Diego the following weekend.

When we miss a meeting (i.e. January) it seems like such a long time since we've seen each other, so I am looking forward to seeing you all at our February meeting.

Linda Holub
President, CCSS



Note: The last three pages of this newsletter contain donation requests. The club is highlighting three people affected by the fires. We are aware that so many more have had their lives devastated by the fires. All donations are voluntary and these listings are only suggestions.

James Lemos pots that survived the fire





Refreshments 2025



If your last name begins with **A or B** please bring refreshments to share at the February meeting. Coffee is courtesy of Terry Wilson. Water supplied by the club. Anyone is welcome to bring additional refreshments.



Volunteers, suggestions and comments are always welcome!



WHO TO CONTACT?

Below is listed Conejo Cactus and Succulent Society's current Officers and Board members.

All members are welcome to politely express any questions, concerns, ideas or improvements to any of the CCSS officers. This is your club and we are your elected officers.

Come up to us at a meeting, call or email.

Club email is ConejoCSS@hotmail.com.

President Linda Holub - cactuscougar@icloud.com 805-501-0761

Vice-President Donna Pachorek - dpachorek@gmail.com 805-279-4801

If interested in being an Officer on the board, please add you name to our nomination list for future elections.

CCSS 2024 Officers

President Linda Holub	Treasurer Chris Gailey	Director II, Education Terry Wilson	Website Tim Alvord
1st VP, Programs Donna Pachorek	Secretary Ryan Ripley	Scoop Editor Ann Hopkinson	Librarian Glen Smith
2nd VP, POM & Education Kyle Williams	Director I, Membership Glen Smith	Hospitality Julie Cox & Liz Gollner	Propagaton Terry Wilson
3rd VP, Special Events Lisa Gailey	Assistant to Director I Pam Smith, Membership	Drawing Coordinator Gerry Caruso	Event Publicity Lisa Gailey

Plant of the Month 2025

Month	Cactus	Succulent
January	None	None
February	Ariocarpus & Obregonia	Lithops & Conophytum
March	Gymnocalycium	Echeveria & Dudleya
April	Miniatures	Miniatures
May	Echinocereus	Terrestrial Bromeliads
June	Echinopsis/ Lobivia	Dorstenia & Ficus
July	Mammillaria	Euphorbia
August	Opuntia & relatives	Adenium
September	Astrophytum	Stapeliads
October	Variegates	Variegates
November	Copiapoa	Aloe
December	Favorites	Favorites

Plant of the Month (POM) What is this all about?

Each meeting of the CCSS will feature a friendly plant show/competition (POM). The goal of the POM is to introduce the membership to the various cactus and succulent genera and to open up a discussion of the culture, care and display of these plants. We encourage members to share their plants with the other members of CCSS.

POM Submissions

Members may submit up to (3) three plants in each of the two categories (Cactus and Succulent). Plants entered in the intermediate and Advanced Divisions must have been owned and maintained by the member for a minimum of one year. Plants entered in the Novice Division may be newly acquired plants.

POM Divisions

Novice: 0-25 Total points

Intermediate: 26-100 Total Points

Advanced: >100 Total points

When a member has accumulated the total number points in their Division, they will be moved up to the next higher Division in the following calendar year.

POM Judging Criteria

Plants are evaluated according to the following criteria.

Condition (health, form, damage) – 50%

Maturity and Size – 25%

Staging (artistic composition – container, stonework, etc) – 20%

Nomenclature (proper plant identification) – 5%

Additional criteria may include rarity, difficulty in growing, and whether the plant is in flower.

POM Judging

1st Place – 6 points 2nd Place – 3 points 3rd Place – 2 points

All other entries will be awarded 1 point. Entry slips will be collected by the POM Coordinator for tabulation, record keeping and publication in the CCSS Newsletter.

We encourage all members to participate in the POM. This is your opportunity to show off your prized treasures or to possibly learn how to better care for your plants.

February 2025 Cactus of the Month

Plant of the Month: *Ariocarpus* & *Obregonia*

Ariocarpus is one of the most prized and distinctive of all cacti genera. Ranging from Central and Northern Mexico to southern Texas, the genus has some of the most spectacular species of the entire family. Some succulent growers, who otherwise avoid cacti, make this genus their sole exception. There are collectors who collect nothing but *Ariocarpus*, and have hundreds of plants in their collections. Rare specimens can change hands for hundreds of dollars. Rare cultivars with unusual tubercles can be sold for even more, particularly in Japan. There is no denying that this single genus has generated a worldwide cult of devotees.

What about *Ariocarpus* has led to such popularity? There are several possible reasons. The form of the plant is nearly unique among cacti. Specifically, the tubercles are flattened and triangular, looking very much like succulent leaves. There is essentially no stem separate from the tubercles. Most of the species are quite distinct from each other, and all of them stay small enough to grow in pots. Additionally, they are very slow growing and, until the last 10-15 years, most were rarely seen for sale. Fortunately, a number of growers have been producing *Ariocarpus* in large numbers and supply is keeping up with demand. This allows people to collect them at a fair price and helps reduce the demand for wild dug plants. Today, the high priced *Ariocarpus* are usually unusual hybrids or variegates.



Ariocarpus retusus



Obregonia denegrii

Obregonia denegrii, the only species of *Obregonia*, is from a small region of Tamaulipas, Mexico. This plant gets its name from a fairly shameless attempt to impress both the President of Mexico, Alvaro Obregon and the Agriculture Minister of Mexico, Ramon De Negri, at the time the plant was discovered. Commonly called the "Artichoke Cactus", the plant forms unusual leaf-like tubercles that really do resemble an artichoke, though this is much slower growing and you wouldn't want to eat it! For a long time, this species was quite rare and expensive in cultivation. In recent years the price has come down quite a bit as more and more plants are produced. Plants are slow growing but cultivation isn't particularly difficult. If grown in shady conditions they are usually green but give them more light and they will become a beautiful bronze color. Because they are slow growing and tuberous rooted, they can be prone to rot, especially in the winter, if kept too moist. Treat it like an *Ariocarpus* and you will be fine.

Ariocarpus and *Obregonia* have an undeserved reputation as being difficult to grow. They are no more difficult to grow than many other central Mexican genera, and are well within the cultivation ability of even beginning growers. They come from a hot desert region that gets most of its rain in the summer, with the winter being quite dry. That is the exact opposite of our rainfall pattern, which has led some people to have trouble with them. Wet cool winters will make them rot prone, but it is the water that is the problem not the temperature. So during the rainy season just put them under a bench or somewhere dry that still gets bright light and don't water until spring. This "cool and wet is bad" advice goes for a lot of succulents, but most of the time the plants actually want warmer weather and people bring them inside for that reason (e.g. *Euphorbia* and *Adenium*). Leave these guys outside, just keep them out of the rain.



Ariocarpus Hybrid

February 2025 Succulent of the Month

Lithops & *Conophytum*

For this month's succulent we look at two superficially similar genera that differ in some important ways, *Lithops* and *Conophytum*. They both belong to the mesemb family, Aizoaceae, and both are small clumping plants that are essentially two fat fleshy leaves with roots.

Everyone is familiar with, *Lithops*, the Living Stones even if they've never grown them. There are approximately 36 species of *Lithops*, all of which have the same basic form of a small, stemless, fat plant with patterning on top and a fissure down the middle that is mostly buried in the soil. What makes the genus so interesting is how much variation you can have within an extremely similar basic body plan. Leaves can be green, brown, orange, red, gray and other colors. The patterning can be anything from small lines to large mosaic windows, to even polka dots.



Lithops otzeniana

All *Lithops* are native to southern Africa. In terms of countries, virtually every wild *Lithops* is native to either South Africa or Namibia. A few small populations are known from Botswana as well. This range makes sense with *Lithops* preference for arid regions with low humidity and comparatively cooler nights than you'd find further north in the more tropical zones. They prefer to grow in open rocky areas with mineral soils in full sun. Exceptions exist, but in cultivation all species have similar requirements, though some are touchier to mistreatment than others.



Conophytum ectypum

Conophytum has a similar number of species as *Lithops*, but *Lithops* has more varieties and forms in cultivation, making it seem like a bigger genus. *Conophytum* comes from the winter rainfall regions of South Africa and Namibia. The best way to tell *Conophytum* apart from *Lithops* is to look at the leaves. In *Lithops* you have two distinct leaves, while in *Conophytum* the leaves are fused together with just a small pore or slit in the center from which the flowers emerge. *Conophytum* forms a dry papery sheath around itself when dormant while *Lithops* never does and in fact never truly goes dormant. Another clue is that *Conophytum* are winter growers while *Lithops* are most active in summer and fall. This feature is an adaptation to the areas they grow in the wild; *Lithops* in summer rainfall regions and *Conophytum* in winter rainfall zones. Additionally, *Conophytum* flowers have petals united into a tube at the base and "bracts" (small scale or leaf like growths) on the tube. *Lithops* has no tube or bracts.

While *Lithops* and *Conophytum* like full sun in their native habitat, they like protection from hot afternoon sun in cultivation. Why is this? For one, we like to grow them higher than they would be in the wild. By that I mean that we pot them up so that most of the leaves are above soil while only the very base and roots are below soil. In nature the plants are mostly below the soil with only the very tops of the leaves exposed. That means more of the plant is exposed to the hot sun. Also, in a pot the soil can heat up quite a bit, stressing the roots. In the wild you usually only see the tops of the plants sticking up out of the soil. That means most of the plant is protected from the sun. As the sun can only heat the very uppermost layer of soil, most of the plant is insulated from the heat. During dormancy in the hottest times of year the plant shrinks down even further, almost completely sinking below the soil in some cases. Interestingly, the tops of *Lithops* and some *Conophytum* are often windowed which allows filtered sun throughout the plant. This means even parts of the plant below the soil can photosynthesize.



Lithops leslei v. rubrobrunnea

-Kyle Williams

Photo Credits: Kyle Williams

**CONEJO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
PLANT OF THE MONTH (POM)
December, 2024**

Cactus - Favorites

Novice:

1st	<i>Stenocereus marginatus</i> 'Crest'	Chris Biehl
2nd	<i>Mammillaria hahniana</i>	Keith Schmidt
3rd	<i>Gymnocalycium saglionis</i>	Chris Biehl

Intermediate:

1st	<i>Tephrocactus molinensis</i> 'Monstrose'	Susan Krevitt
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Advanced:

1st	<i>Monvillea spegazzinii</i> 'Crest'	Bryan Chan
2nd	<i>Astrophytum ornatum</i>	Ann Hopkinson
3rd	<i>Mammillaria hahniana</i>	Ann Hopkinson

Succulents -Favorites

Novice:

1st	<i>Haworthia limifolia</i> 'Variegata'	Leslie Cox
2nd	<i>Euphorbia piscidermis</i>	Chris Biehl
3rd	<i>Euphorbia aeruginosa</i>	Ann Powers

Intermediate:

1st	<i>Cheiridopsis</i> sp.	Lisa Gailey
2nd	<i>Huernia pillansii</i>	Susan Krevitt
3rd	<i>Aloe deltoideodants</i> 'Sparkle'	Lisa Gailey

Advanced:

1st	<i>Euphorbia decaryi cap-saintemariensis</i>	Ann Hopkinson
2nd	Original <i>Aloe</i> x	Bryan Chan
3rd	<i>Tylecodon paniculatus</i>	Ann Hopkinson
HM	Original <i>Dyckia</i> x	Bryan Chan

For the December POM display the theme was Our Favorite Plants. There were 19 Novice, 5 Intermediate, and 9 Advanced entries for a total of 33 plants.

Based on the accumulated points, the following members will advance in class for the year 2025.

Chris Biehl	Novice to Advanced
Jonathan Zhu	Novice to Intermediate
Susan Krevitt	Intermediate to Advanced
Cheryl Norris	Intermediate to Advanced
Ryan Ripley	Intermediate to Advanced

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all that participated.

POM is one of the educational segments of our club meetings. The POM mini show allows the membership to become better acquainted with the different succulent plant genera and how to effectively care for and stage them. Get involved and enter your plants. This is your show.

December 2024 POM Cactus - Favorites



Chris Biehl
3rd Place Novice
Gymnocalycium saglionis



Chris Biehl
1st Place Novice
Stenocereus marginatus 'Crest'



Keith Schmidt
2nd Place Novice
Mammillaria hahniana



Susan Krevitt
1st Place Intermediate
Tephrocactus molinensis 'Monstrose'



Ann Hopkins 3rd Place Advanced
Mammillaria hahniana



Ann Hopkins 2nd Place Advanced
Astrophytum ornatum



Bryan Chan
1st Place Advanced
Monvillea spegazzinii 'Crest'

December 2024 Pom Succulent - Favorites



Ann Powers
3rd Place
Novice
*Euphorbia
aeruginosa*



Chris Biehl
2nd Place
Novice
*Euphorbia
piscidermis*



Leslie Cox
1st Place Novice
Haworthia limifolia "Variegata"



Lisa Gailey
3rd Place Intermediate
Aloe deltoideodantia 'Sparkle'



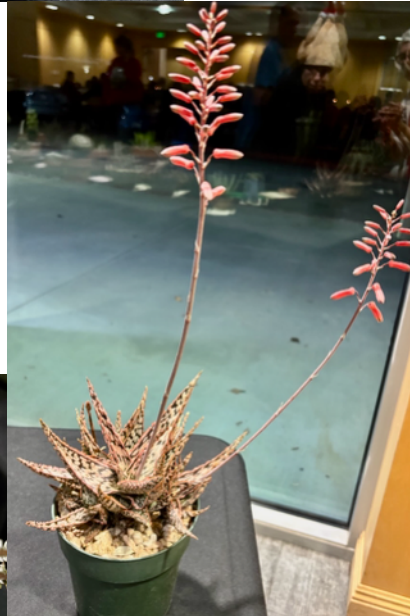
Susan Krevitt
2nd Place
Intermediarte
Huernia pillansii



Lisa Gailey
1st Place
Intermediate
Cheiridopsis sp.



Bryan Chan
Honorable Mention
Original *Dyckia* x



Bryan Chan
2nd Place Advanced
Original *Aloe* x



Ann Hopkinson
1st Place Advanced
Euphorbia decaryi cap-saintmariensis



Ann Hopkinson
3rd Place Advanced
Tylecodon paniculatus

CSSA Convention 2025



Cactus and Succulent Society of America

2025 Biennial Convention



Hosted by

San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society

at the Mission Valley Marriott, San Diego

Save the Dates **April 23 - 27, 2025**

Join our members-only convention! Enjoy world-class speakers, exclusive tours, rare plants, exquisite pottery, and engaging presentations for all levels. Connect, learn, and indulge in this unique experience. Members only—register now via the link below or member portal!

more information at: cactusandsucculentsociety.org/events/convention/

As usual the convention will feature talks from world renowned botanists, explorers, authors, and growers. It's a great place to catch up on the latest research, but also to make connections with these top-tier succulentists.

International Presenters

Julia Etter & Martin Kristen (Mexico)
Andrew Hankey (South Africa)
Attila Kapitany (Australia)
Andry Petignat (Madagascar)
Elisabeth Sarnes (Germany)
Pieter Van Wyk (South Africa)
US Presenters

Michelle Cloud Hughes (Opuntoids)
Kelly Griffin (Dudleya)
Steven Hammer (Mesembs) – Keynote Speaker
Brian Kemble (Agave, Yucca, Gasteria)
Tom McCoy (Saudi Arabian Aloes)
Guillermo Rivera (Argentina, Pre-conference Tours)
Jeremy Spath (Agave)
Joe Stead (Fouqueria, Bursera)
Final list subject to change.



This is a request CCSS received through club email.

John is looking for plant donations to help his Dad Mike who lost his plant collection when he lost his home in Altadena.

Mike is a member of the San Gabriel Cactus and Succulent Society



Hi everyone - my name is John Pearson, and I am a lifelong California resident. This is an incredibly devastating time for everyone across Southern California, and there are no words for the destruction we have all experienced. My mom, dad, and sister were among those that lost their home in Altadena this week in the Eaton Fire. My family is fortunate enough to be safe and sound in a rental home close to me and my partner Jory. They are not asking for donations or support at this time.

However, my dad Mike lost thousands of cactus and succulents in the fire. The hours of love and care that were put into tending these plants cannot be recovered. I would love to surprise my dad by helping him to restart his garden, so I am reaching out to you for help. This is not just about replacing the plants he lost, it's about letting him get back to what he has always been passionate about - cultivating and growing plants.

My dad has been an avid gardener and plant collector his entire life. He taught me the joys of gardening, the magic of plant names, and he is a huge part of why I became the landscape architect and plant lover I am today. He has always been incredibly generous with his plant collection, and many of our friends and family have plants that were originally cuttings from his garden. He is an active member of the San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society, where he has won many ribbons for his specimens. Something that he was most proud of was cultivating seedlings to sell at the Cactus Society plant sales in order to raise money to keep the chapter going.

We are not asking anyone to go out and purchase anything, but we would love if you could give your garden a once over to see if you have any cuttings or spare plants that you could contribute. If you don't have plants, we are also collecting any special stones, gravel, or planter pots so Mike can create entries for the Cactus and Succulent shows that he participates in. If you're not familiar with the fantastic world of competitive plant shows, the presentation and staging of the entry plants is very important!!

Mike and his family are staying in a temporary home, so we are asking people to bring anything they can donate to our place in Elysian Valley. We will take care of everything here until my family finds a permanent residence.

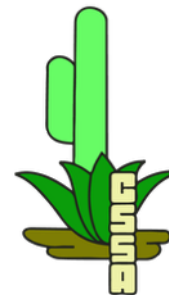
You can drop plants off at **2240 Riverdale Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90031**, or call me at **818.636.8178** and I can arrange to come to you for a pick up. If you are sending something via mail, please address to:

John Pearson
2240 Riverdale Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Please include a note with your contact information so we can send you a thank you. For those of you who are far away, this may be more tricky, but please send me a text or [email](#) and we can figure something out. If you can't help directly, please help by forwarding this link to someone so we can increase our reach!

Julie Taber is the Cactus and Succulent Society of America Business Manager. She has been an invaluable team member helping CSSA with the transition to the new website and assisting with our new membership portal. She has an important role in the functioning of the CSSA.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-taberhall-familys-recovery>



Help the Taber/Hall Family Rebuild After the Eaton Fire

Dear Friends, Family, and Kind Strangers,

My sister, her husband, and their family are facing unimaginable loss after the Eaton Fire destroyed their beloved home in Altadena. Their charming Janes Cottage in West Altadena, a home filled with love, memories, and countless family milestones, was reduced to ashes, leaving them with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

The Taber/Hall family is known for their warmth, generosity, and strong community ties. Over the years, their home has been a place where friends and family gathered to share joy and laughter. Now, as they navigate this devastating chapter, they need our support to restore a sense of stability for their family.

Funds raised will go directly toward helping them:

- Secure temporary housing
- Replace essential belongings

Every donation, no matter the size, will make a meaningful impact. If you're unable to contribute financially, sharing this campaign with your network would mean the world to us.

Let's come together to help the Taber/Hall family rebuild and show them they're not alone in this time of need. Thank you for your kindness and support.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-taberhall-familys-recovery>

John Lemos is a long time member of the San Gabriel Cactus and Succulent Society. He is often seen working at the Inter-City Show and Sale and the CSSA Show and Sale.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-eaton-fire-victims-the-lemos-family?attribution_id=sl:8766ef4e-01c1-4b1a-809b-58356590e0e1&utm_campaign=man_sharesheet_dash&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=instagram_story



Hello Friends, Family, and Community Members,

My name is Mary and my parents were unfortunate victims of the Eaton fire in Altadena. The morning of January 8, their home, bought by my father's father in 1974 and maintained by my family since his and my grandmother's passing, was burnt to the ground along with everything inside of it. They additionally lost their car and their beloved cat, Chester.

While James and Lisa Lemos are the strongest people most of us have ever met, this world-altering event has left them without a home, and without a lot of basic necessities. The goal of this fundraiser is to help get them the necessities they are currently without, and to help pay for my mom's replacement medical devices that were lost in the fire. She has a medical implant in her spine that causes stimulation to decrease discomfort from multiple spinal injuries and surgeries. This device cannot function without its remote or charger, both of which now need to be replaced.

Both born Angelenos, my father served the city of Los Angeles for over 20 years, and my friends and I had the privilege of seeing my mom on a daily basis at Pasadena Christian School for the majority of my childhood. During the past few years, they have welcomed 2 grandchildren, picked up new hobbies (James is a ceramist), adopted a cat (who was lost in the fire), and saved family from homelessness.

Please join me in lifting up James and Lisa, my incredible parents, who have spent their lives serving others. It's time for us to take care of them.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-eaton-fire-victims-the-lemos-family?attribution_id=sl:8766ef4e-01c1-4b1a-809b-58356590e0e1&utm_campaign=man_sharesheet_dash&utm_medium=customer&utm_source=instagram_story