



SACXS FACTS

Newsletter for the San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society

June 2011

Volume 23, Number 6

"The San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society was organized in 1977 to promote the study, propagation, conservation and public awareness of cacti and

Greetings SACXS Members,

Even though it is the end of May, it seems like we are in the middle of summer with the energy-sapping heat and the absence of rain. We may need to do a rain dance to get some decent rain. It's a good thing we specialize in succulent and xerophytic plants, but even those do need water. I really miss last year's weather with prolific rains that produced masses of beautiful wildflowers.

We had a great meeting in May with lots of members attending and several guests. We have been trying to give a small plant to each new member and guests so if you have some small but nice plants that you could donate, please bring them to the meeting at the Garden Center and give them to Cal Eichler. Bobby Crabb presented an excellent program on his trip to Baja including a visit to the Tequila Factory. Thanks to SACXS member Bobby Crabb for stepping up and presenting a program that was interesting to all in attendance.

I have a few announcements to make:

1. It is important that all members review the list of proposed officer candidates and cast your vote at the June meeting.
2. Someone left an ammunition box and old hat at the McPhearson Ranch. If you think it might belong to you, call Sam Rodgers (field trip chairman) to identify.
3. Plans are underway for the yearly picnic to be held in October. Paul and Lisa Kibler have kindly offered their home as the site. The date has yet to be decided upon. Our field trip chairman is also working on setting up another trip to the McPhearson Ranch which will be in October as well. We will be working out dates for both events so there will not be a conflict.

Please make plans to attend the June meeting. You will enjoy an evening of our members talking about their favorite plants. See you at the meeting.

Barbara Schulze
SACXS President



Don't Miss the June SACXS Meeting! Read on for Important Information!!



SACXS Board Members

President: Barbara Schulze 830-281-5766 **1st Vice President:** Claude Townsend 210-655-8959

2nd Vice President: Tony Garcia 210-733-7470 **3rd Vice President:** Sam Rodgers 210-240-7721

Secretary: Bjorn Steffenson 210-479-3717 **Publicity Secretary:** Eula Townsend 210-655-8959

Treasurer: Doug Coates 210-659-7279

Directors: David Dawson 210-336-8621, Gerald Yarbrough 210-435-7157,
Ernie Akers 210-521-5772

SACXS FACTS Editor: annblack@gvvc.com Visit our website: www.sacxs.org

June 15 Meeting Information

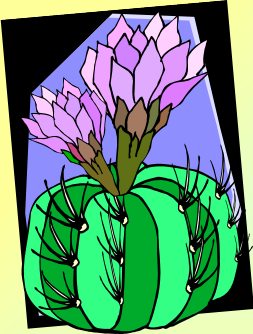
“SHOW & TELL”

SACXS members will be bringing some of their favorite and famous plants this is a wonderful way to see a variety of species. Let's all come and have fun!

Place: San Antonio Garden Center
3310 N. New Braunfels

Time: Meeting starts 7:15 pm .
Come early for social hour!
It's free and open to the public.

For more information: ctownsend@satx.rr.com.



June 15 Meeting Assignments

IMPORTANT: First person on each list, (as indicated by the asterisk) please call the others to remind them. If you have any questions, please call the first person on your list or call Cal Eichler 210-828-0833.

Refreshments

***Blocker, Richard & Carol 210-829-0585**
Harrison, Suzanna 210-860-9703
Ierien, Bob & Ernestine 210-779-5617
Kendall, Harvey 210-757-3283
Kibler, Paul & Lisa 210-658-7561

Auction Plants

***Knight, Alice 210-930-8527**
Lindner, Allen 210-737-0252
Murphy, Larry & Pat 210-655-4223
Neese, Dale 210-688-9261
Rieter, Don & Trinie 210-681-2402

Nominations for the SACXS Board of Directors (Executive Board)

The following list is the slate of proposed officer candidates for the new SACXS board. Members may mail their ballot to the current president or bring their ballot to the regular June meeting. The incoming board will be selected at the June meeting and the installation of officers will take place at the July meeting. The term of office is from September 1 to August 31.

President: Ann Black

First Vice President (Programs): Lisa Kibler

Second Vice President (Membership): Manny Zamora

Third Vice President (Field Trips): Sam Rodgers

Treasurer: Doug Coates

Recording Secretary: Ernie Akers

Publicity Secretary: Eula Townsend

Directors: Barbara Schulze, Paul Kibler, Gerald Yarbrough

Please Read: Newsletter Assignments

Newsletter Assignments:

These members are requested to provide articles for the **July** newsletter:

Paul & Lisa Kibler

Alice Knight

Allen Linder

Contact Barbara Schulze at bschulze@pisd.us if you have any questions about this assignment. **Please submit your articles by July 1, 2011.** The article can be personal (information about yourself, our society members, your experiences growing succulents, or a visit to some location you think would be of interest to other members). Articles can also be reprints from other sources such as other newsletters, books, websites, etc. Be sure to cite the author and source that the article came from. You can also write your own article by compiling information from several sources. Again, be sure to cite authors and sources. If you can include your own original photos as well, that would be great! Please do not be offended if your article is not included in the current newsletter. Some articles will be published in future newsletters.

—Barbara

Plants are needed for new members. Please donate a few nice small plants for the cause. We give them to our new members as a welcome gesture and sign of appreciation. Please turn in your donation to Cal at the May meeting. Label plants if possible.

*Here's an article from
club member John Farmer:*



Cactus has been in my blood for approximately eleven years. I enjoy building Cactus Gardens and have done so at two different houses that I have lived in. Also, I work and help maintain the Cactus Garden at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville. In traveling around, Cactus from Arizona, New Mexico, California, Texas, Wyoming, Colorado and, would you believe, Green Bay, Wisconsin, have been brought to my gardens. Suffice it to say that the Wyoming and Colorado Cactus did not like the heat of Texas. The gardens are really a combination of Cactus, non-cactus succulents and rocks. The rocks are from 32 different states.

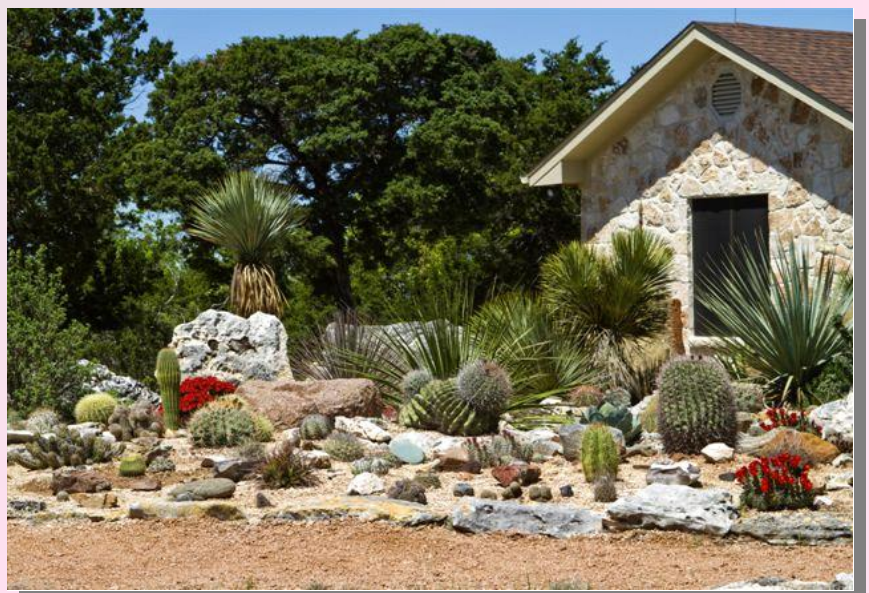
As everyone knows, the Winter of 2011 was a disaster for Cactus. In fact, the Winter of 2010 was also very hard on Cactus. At the risk of saying the obvious, I will share

my experiences and learning curve from these two winters. By the way, I do not have a Green House.

Both winters resulted in Cactus mortality with the 2011 Winter being the worst by far. In 2010, I experimented with different ways to cover the plants to protect from the cold. The results were mixed. For 2011, the plants that expired in 2010 were not replaced with the same kind. Also, the covering for the plants was enhanced to include a reasonably thick cloth loosely fit over the plant with a thick plastic plant cover over the cloth and plant. The plastic was extended up to two feet away from the plant to get more ground surface under the plastic. This arrangement did help save some plants. (Unfortunately, the light bulb strategy would not work due to Garden location and size.) However, little did I know that the cold spell would be so bad that plants (not covered) that had survived my eleven years of work would go to the promised land.

For next year I am further discriminating with what I plant. Also, I am putting several plants in pots so that they may be carried to my garage for the winter. In addition, further strength and coverage will be given to the plant cover. Then it's "cross my fingers".

Happy Cactusing!!!
John Farmer



Nature at Our Doorstep by Bob Ierien

One of the benefits that we have realized from trying to grow cactus and succulents is that the plants seem to attract many other creatures. The fact that the plants also seem to do well with natural fertilizers and solutions for insect and disease control makes them creature friendly. Although we would not consider ourselves to be organic gardeners, because we don't really understand the meaning of the term, we have used very little of

no refined chemicals on any of my plants for several years. Because of this fact a trip outside quickly becomes an adventure in nature. Spiders, frogs of several different varieties, along with a few different species of Lizards compete for the banquet of tasty mosquitoes and pesky flies that dare to come too close. It is always a thrill to get "buzzed" by one of several varieties of Hummingbird on his way for nectar. This year our colony of Cardinals which calls our garden home has evidently grown so large that there was no longer enough room in the Carolina jasmine on the fence for another nest. As a result, one expectant mother built her nest in a cactus on the porch and quickly deposited 4 eggs which she is now incubating.



Nest with eggs built and occupied by Cardinals in a hanging pot of cactus on the front porch

Only yesterday a young Red-Tailed Hawk stopped by we assume, to admire the blooms on some of the Mammillaria while perched on a nearby Euphorbia. We have had as many as 5 Large Horned Owls in the yard at one time taking turns taking showers in the sprinklers before perching in a nearby Oak or Hickory tree to preen. We have also observed "Joe" the large toad that spends most of his time burrowed deep in the large dish of garden soil that sits in an out of the way corner on the porch. This is kept moist to his liking as he heads in amongst the cactus pots for an evening feast of bugs. His loud croaking seems to be a celebration of his repast.

These are some of the benefits that we



have come to enjoy from our cactus and succulents.

...Bob Ierien



We call this area "Lizard Lair" because during the day there are usually numerous lizards crawling around and through the plants in search of bugs. Until "Joe" the toad takes over for the late evening shift

A Tree Frog doing what he likes to do best.....REST!

Are bromeliads xerophytes? By Harvey Kendall

For nearly 50 years, my plant-growing interest has focused on bromeliads. But always on the horizon of my view, cacti and other xerophytes have had a prominent spot. In the late 1970's I translated Werner Rauh's *Bromeliads For Home, Garden and Greenhouse* (published in 1979 by Blandford Press), followed in a few years by my translation of his *The Wonderful World of Succulents* (Smithsonian Institution Press 1984). Now the two strong interests were merging, and I could not help but notice that there was an overlap.

Can bromeliads also be considered succulents or xerophytes? Some definitions of xerophytes say simply that they are plants that have special water-storage devices to get them through periods of drought. Bromeliads all have trichomes, small pores on the leaf surface that collect moisture and direct it into the interior of the plant. Many also form vases that hold water and help the plant to get through periods of drought. Yet cactus and xerophyte hobbyists appear to be reluctant to admit bromeliads into their bailiwick.

Looking further into meanings, I find that some wordsmiths include the words fleshy leaf structure in their definitions. That narrows the category considerably but still leaves a problem. Fleshy is a broad term. How fleshy must a leaf be in order to be included in the category of succulent or xerophytic? Well, not to ponder the question any further, we may simply say that bromeliads with succulent or xerophytic characteristics are those that influential cactus and xerophyte hobbyists choose to accept.

If you look at show schedules for cactus and xerophyte shows, you often find specific genera of bromeliads listed. These usually include: *Orthophytum*, *Deuterocohnia*, *Dyckia*, *Hechtia*, and sometimes *Puya*. Sometimes there is a listing for *Abromeitiella*, which no longer exists. (Plants formerly with this name are now considered to be *deuterocohnias*.) It is odd that the list also usually includes *Tillandsia*. Odd because there are many *tillandsias* of the glabrous vase type that are rejected by the show authorities. And *tillandsia* leaves are not particularly fleshy. But they do indeed have devices that help them get through periods of drought – trichomes, sometimes vase-like cisterns holding water, and sometimes a waxy leaf surface that prevents evaporation.

So what to do? If you have a nice bromeliad that you want to display in a show, you are advised to check with the show chairperson before trying to enter it.

Harvey Kendall



all





Hechtia texensis photo by D. Mueller, JBS 1982 p157



Hechtia argentea

photo by Len Harrison ©



Orthophytum roseum See J Brom Soc 60(2): 67. 2010

Deuterocohnia brevifolia
ssp. *chlorantha*



BSIJ
photo by Bo



Dyckia delicata
photo by Holger Sachs