On the Dry Side

July 2011

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CCCSS June Meeting Recap

I think we are getting a good reputation for an awesome Show & Sale. It’s takes many people to pull this off so many thanks to all that helped. A special thanks to Rob Skillin and Nick Wilkinson for being co-chairs.

Lemurs, Lizards and Aloes: Madagascar Revisited was our June presentation. Our guest speaker was Kelly Griffin. Kelly is from San Diego and is an expert grower known for his beautiful Aloe hybrids, among others. He shared his latest adventure in Madagascar. This island is the size of California. The country has a mix of people that speak many dialects of Malagasy and some speak French.

Their chief crop is rice, the key to their economy. The island is home to some huge Pachypodium. Some of the species are gracilis, lameri, brevicaule and geayi. The Pachypodium tend to flower when they have little or no foliage.

Aloe grow all over Madagascar, some growing in limestone cliffs. One can find the Aloe capitata growing in rock masses. Kelly found three new species in this last trip.

Growing in sandy beaches was Cyphostemma montagnacii along with Euphorbia stenoclada and Ceropegia dimorpha growing among grasses.

Kelly shared with us some of the most beautiful pictures of lizards/chameleons. These creatures are plentiful there. The beautiful radiated tortoise was also abundant there. The people of Madagascar don’t kill them and each shell has a unique pattern.

Kelly walked many miles a day looking for that special Aloe and then ended up sleeping in small mud huts. Sounds like a great experience; Thanks Kelly for a most interesting presentation.

For more info. on Kelly’s plants: Xericgrowers.com or Xericworld.com

See everyone in July ~Jan Moon
Speaker of the Month  

**Tom Knapik**  
**Geometric Geophytes**

Tom Knapik was born and raised in Northern New York. He moved to California where he attended and graduated from Humboldt State University in 1981 with degrees in Biology and Zoology. While visiting a college friend in 1982 he saw a small succulent collection that changed the direction of his life. He moved to San Diego and worked part time for David Grigsby.

Tom became a member of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society and eventually became more involved as program chair, board member, president and then newsletter editor. He was the annual show chair for 12 years. He has photographed succulent collections in England, Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, Thailand, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. He’s photographed succulents in habitat in Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, and the U.S.

His program will look at the amazing little gems under our feet. Adaptive strategies, habitat characteristics and growth design will be discussed.

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NEXT meeting:  

Sun, July 10’th at 2:00 pm  
San Luis Obispo Public Library  
995 Palm Street  
San Luis Obispo

**NEWS FROM THE MAY BOARD MEETING:**

- Maggie Wagner and Jan Moon will take over Library duties in a month. Jeanne & Martin will help in the transition. Thank You Jeanne & Martin for all the years of your dedication to the library duties.
- Rob addressed problems with tag swapping at show. We will deal with this before the next show but possible suggestions for the future would be to put stickers on expensive plants, to alert cashiers.
- Exoticbooks.com has offered that any purchase made with them by a CCCSS member, they will donate 10% to our club.

**BOARD—MEETING**

The next Board Meeting will be held on July 10’th right after our General Meeting. As always all members are welcome.

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All submissions to the CCCSS newsletter must be submitted two weeks prior to the monthly meeting.

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A one time free newsletter will be mailed out to those who sign in at the monthly meetings. After this dues must be paid in order to start a subscription.
Hospitality News

You must sign the Hospitality Sign-Up sheet and bring refreshments to get a plant. We need donations for each monthly meeting and we need to know who is bringing them. Thanks to everyone who has been contributing to the refreshment fund; donations can be made at the refreshment table.

~Pat & Ann
This month the topic is a catalog of the succulent plants (other than cacti) of Central and Southern California. The areas included are the Mojave Desert (including Death Valley), the Sonoran Desert (Northern Baja California and the Northwestern Mexican State of Sonora), and here including Anza Borrego S.P.), and the Colorado Desert (sometimes regarded as a northern subdivision of the Sonoran Desert basically comprising the lower Colorado River Valley). Areas also included are the coastal plains, the coastal chaparral belt and offshore islands.

**Agave** - Agaves form trunkless rosettes of thick fleshy leaves with spiny tips and teeth along the margins. There are about 250 species of Agave, but only 3 occur naturally in California. Agave deserti is found in the Sonoran Desert of Anza-Borrego S.P. It is a relatively small rosette but forms large clusters. Agave shawii is primarily a Baja California native but occurs rarely in the San Diego coastal region. It is a bright green, colorful plant with fleshy teeth which form attractive imprints on neighboring leaves. Agave utahensis v. nevadensis is found in the Clark Mountains of Eastern California near the Nevada border. It is a relatively small grey-green agave with narrow lanceolate leaves terminating in a long thin spine.

**Dudleya** - The native habitat of the genus Dudleya is the U.S. Pacific Southwest and neighboring Baja California with the primary distribution in California. Eggli recognizes 44 species of which about 24 are native to California, primarily occurring in the winter rainfall regions of the Pacific Coast from sea level into the higher elevations of the coastal mountains and in the offshore islands. They grow well in cultivation and are best treated as winter growers and kept rather dry during the summer. Species of interest to the central coast include: abramsii, caespitosa, farinosa, palmeri (coastal S.L.O. & S.B. Co.’s) candelabra, gnoma, greenii, nesiotica, traskiae, virids (offshore islands) cymosa, densiloba, lanceolata, verityi (coastal mountains)

**Elephant Trees** - Pachycormus discolor is primarily a Mexican species, but isolated stands can be found in Anza Borrego S.P. Bursera microphylla, another Mexican species, can also be found in isolated regions of the Sonoran Desert and in Anza-Borrego S.P.

**Nolina** - Nolina are yucca-like plants belonging to the same family as Dasylirion and Beaucaria. There are about 30 species of Nolina occurring from the Southern U.S. To Central Mexico, but only 4 species occur in California. They are notable for their impressive inflorescences which can be seen for miles in the distance. N. bigelovii and N. parryi are found widespread in the Sonoran and Colorado Deserts. The plants form trunkless or short trunked rosettes with tall inflorescences which may reach as much as 10 feet high. Nolina interrata is a smaller fire-adapted species found only in the chaparral of a small isolated area near El Cajon in San Diego County. It has an underground trunk which branches and sends up clusters of rosettes. It grows readily but seems to flower only after a burn. Nolina cismontana occurs in isolated locales of the chaparral belt of the coastal mountains from Ventura to San Diego Counties.

**Ocotillo** - Fouquieria splendens is the only species of its family to occur in California. Its spiny branches, 1 to 2 inches in diameter, arise from a cluster near the base and may reach a height of 15 feet, each branch producing a cluster of tubular bright red flowers which attract hummingbirds, orioles, and photographers. The plant is drought deciduous, losing its leaves during dry periods, but capable of producing a new crop of leaves within days of a rain. It is a common site in the Colorado Desert between Indio and Blythe, and the Anza-Borrego State Park.

**Yucca** - Anyone travelling from the central valley through the mountains of Interstate 5 to the Los Angeles basin will have seen the tall, almost luminescent, stalks of “Spanish bayonet” or “our lord’s candle”. These tall spikes are the inflorescences of Yucca whipplei, widespread among the chaparral of the hillsides from Monterey to San Diego. This species has now been reclassified into its own genus, Hesperoyucca. The Joshua Tree, Y. brevifolia, is a bizarre tree requiring perhaps hundreds of years to achieve its ultimate status as a signature plant of the high desert, and arguably one of the most significant features of the entire California landscape. When mature they may be 30 to 40 feet tall. They are widespread throughout the Mojave Desert from the Antelope Valley into Nevada. Other yucca in California include the “Spanish dagger”, and Y. schidigera, and the “banana yucca”, Y. baccata, both occurring in the Mojave Desert.

**References:**