

C A C T U S
CHRONICLE

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 2 4

VOL. 92 ISSUE 9

MONTHLY PROGRAM
Brian Kemble

Hectias



ARID PLANTS A-Z
ELI COHEN



Remember to bring in
problem plants, plant ID
+ special interest plants

REFRESHMENTS
THIS MONTH:
LAST NAMES
BEGINNING WITH
'O', 'P', & 'R'

MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE HELD EVERY FIRST THURSDAY
MEETING START TIME: 7PM, DOORS OPEN AT 6:15PM
ONE GENERATION: 18255 VICTORY BLVD. RESEDA CA.

Refreshments!

It is a collective effort and responsibility each month to supply our members with sustenance, **THIS BRINGS US TO THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER AND THE ALPHABET ASSIGNMENT IS FOR THE MONTH IS LAST NAMES BEGINNING WITH LETTERS "O, P & R"**

If your last name begins with that letter, please bring something to share, enough for approximately 10 people. If you'd like to bring more that is okay too.

To facilitate set-up and clean-up, we ask that your contribution be in individual portions and/or a disposable container. At the end of the meeting, all leftovers, including containers, will be discarded. If you are available to help set up or tear down the refreshment center, please see me at the meeting at the Refreshment Table.

If you are unable to contribute, the club will also have a jar/bowl at the refreshment table if you would like to donate money so that the club can continue to supplement refreshments brought by the attendees.



Aug - Members whose last name begins with "M"

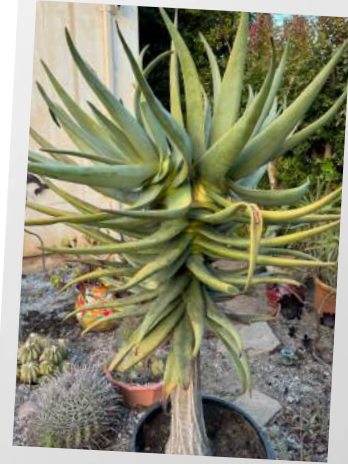
Sept - Members whose last name begins with "O, P, R"

Oct - Members whose last name begins with "S, T, U, V"

Nov - Members whose last name begins with "W, N, Q, Y, Z"

FROM THE MESSAGE PRESIDENT

As summer comes to an end, I hope you and your plants have managed to thrive despite the intense heat. The summer months have undoubtedly tested our resilience, as gardeners of our cacti and succulents. Personally, I'm looking forward to the cooler weather, not just for some relief from the heat, but because I recently acquired a larger **Aloe dichotoma**. I can't wait for the temperatures to drop so it can wake up from its summer dormancy, and be planted in its new home!



I trust that many of you had the chance to attend the Inter-City Show at the Arboretum this year. Despite the daily temperatures reaching the 90s, the event was spectacular! The show featured over 1,100 specimens, showcasing the incredible diversity of cacti and succulents. It's always a pleasure to discover new and unusual plants, especially those that we don't often see at our own meetings. The creativity in the pottery and planters were as impressive as ever.



This year, the show also introduced us to some new vendors, offering an array of incredible plants and unique pots for sale. I found it particularly difficult to resist the temptation of adding yet another spiky specimen to my collection—there's always something new and intriguing that catches my eye! It's these experiences, shared with fellow enthusiasts, that make our community so special. Whether it's marveling at rare plants, exchanging tips, or simply enjoying the camaraderie, events like the Inter-City Show remind us why we're all so passionate about our hobby!

As we transition into the cooler months, I encourage you to reflect on your own collections and perhaps think about how you can prepare

your plants for the changing seasons. Whether it's repotting, propagating, or simply enjoying the growth you've nurtured through the summer, there's always something to look forward to. I'm excited to see what the upcoming months have in store for our club, from new learning opportunities to the chance to connect and share with one another.

Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and participation in our club. It's our love of plants that we share with our fellow members that make this hobby and our meetings so fun!

Wishing you all a wonderful start to the hopefully cooler months ahead!



**See you all Thursday,
September 5th
Cande Friedman**





Brian Kemble

is the Curator at the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, CA, as well as the VP of the San Francisco Succulent & Cactus Society and the VP of the Institute for Aloe Studies. He has been growing and studying succulents since the 70's, and has written many articles for the Cactus & Succulent Journal, as well as other publications. His photos appear in numerous books on succulents, including the Timber Press Guide to Succulent Plants of the World.



Hectias

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

The Bromeliad Family is a large group of plants from the Americas with great importance in horticulture. One family member, the pineapple, is also important as a crop in tropical countries. It is presumed that the family originated in South America, because this is where the family is most diverse, but Central America and North America have some wonderful examples as well, including the genus *Hechtia*. Most of the *Hechtia* species come from Mexico, though they do cross the border into the southwestern U.S., as well as into Guatemala in a southward direction. Unlike many bromeliads, the species in *Hechtia* have separate male and female plants, a difference that shows up only when they flower. This talk will feature many *Hechtia* species in habitat, as well as ones in cultivation.





OF BOARD DIRECTORS 2 0 2 4

LACSS MISSION STATEMENT

The Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society (LACSS) cultivates the study & enjoyment of cacti & succulent plants through educational programs & activities that promote the hobby within a community of fellow enthusiasts & among the greater public.

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PLANT OF THE MONTH

JANUARY

Blossfeldia, Yavia
Dudleya, Cotyledon

FEBRUARY

Mammillaria Hook Spine
Cheiridopsis, Dinteranthus

MARCH

Copiapoa
Tulista, Astroloba

APRIL

Cacti of Baja California
Succulents of Baja California Mex

MAY

Cacti staged as miniature
Succulent staged as miniature
(Diameter of pot
NO LARGER THAN 3")

JUNE

Favorites

JULY

Opuntia North America
Jatropha, Pedilanthus

AUGUST

Neochilenia, Neoporteria
Commiphora, Boswellia

SEPTEMBER

Ariocarpus
Fockea, Ipomoea

OCTOBER

Trichocereus
Hoya, Ceropegia, Dischidia

NOVEMBER

Variiegated

DECEMBER

Holiday Awards Party



Fockea & Ipomoea

B Y K Y L E W I L L I A M S

*Fockea edulis*

This month we are looking at two unrelated genera of caudiciforms that nevertheless have similarities in shape, vining habit, and ease of cultivation.

Fockea is a genus of six species from southern Africa (Kenya to South Africa) belonging to the Apocynaceae, the family of Adenium, Pachypodium, Stapeliads, Plumeria and thousands of other plant species. The most commonly seen species is *Fockea edulis* while *F. capensis* (aka *F. crispa*) is less commonly cultivated. The other four species are rarely seen and generally grown by specialists. Plants are vines with a large tuberous root. The species mainly differ in the size of the leaves, ranging from very narrow to broadly oval or circular. Technical details of the flowers

also help distinguish the species. All six species in the genus form a thick tuberous root that is normally buried below the soil in nature but is commonly raised in cultivation since it is the most distinctive feature of the plants. It is important to note that a buried tuber/-caudex grows significantly faster than a raised tuber. So, you should consider growing small plants with the tuber buried for several years and then once it is of a good size you can raise it to show it off. Easy to care for, in fact it is one of the best choices for new growers developing an interest in caudiciforms. It grows fast, tolerates drought but also is more resilient to overwatering than most caudiciforms. The only thing to be aware of is that they are vining plants and will spread out quickly and grab onto neighboring plants if left uncontrolled. Just give it a trim occasionally or let it scramble up a trellis.

Do you enjoy sweet potatoes? Then you'll love *Ipomoea*! This is a huge genus of over 600 species, best known for sweet potatoes, morning glory, bindweed, and water spinach. Many species make tubers, but most collectors are interested in the species that make large, caudex-like tubers, most of which come from Africa. The caudiciform species vary in leaf shape and flower color, but most notably in shape. Some species form a nice round caudex while others are flatter, lumpier, or multi-branched tubers. The most unusual species is *Ipomoea arborescens* from Mexico, which is a tree! Care for the caudiciform species is straightforward. Most are summer growers (or year-round in a greenhouse). When actively growing water regularly and don't let them dry out fully. In the winter when they slow down or go dormant cut back on water, letting them go dry for extended periods in the winter. They, like *Fockea*, are vining plants and therefore should be trimmed back occasionally or allowed to climb a trellis.

*Ipomoea holubii**Ipomoea platensis*

Ariocarpus

B Y K Y L E W I L L I A M S

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 in their collections. Rare specimens can change hands for hundreds of dollars. Rare cultivars with unusual tubercles can be sold for more, particularly in Japan.

What about Ariocarpus has led to such popularity? There are 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 Hybrid

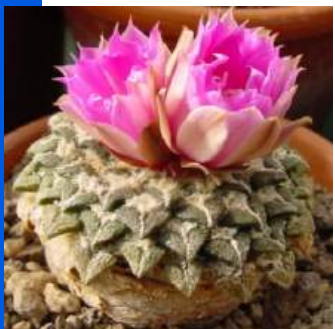
Ariocarpus has an undeserved reputation as being difficult to grow. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are no more difficult to grow than many other central Mexican genera, and is well within the cultivation ability of even



Ariocarpus retusus

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). Don't do that with Ariocarpus. They come from a winter region with colder winters than ours, so they like the chilly weather. It truly is just the water that is the problem.

With all of the fuss we make over this genus, it is important to remember that the plants have had important ethno-botanical uses. The tubercles contain a sticky mucilage, which was often used as glue to mend broken pots. *A. kotschoubeyanus* was boiled and used as a cure for rheumatism, and several species were used as 'false peyote' in religious ceremonies. Cultivation is not difficult, when the home environment of these plants is considered. They grow in mineral soils, with very little organic matter. They all have large tuberous roots. If they are protected from excess organic matter, particularly peat, and watered heavily only in hot weather, (but lightly throughout the summer growing season) good growth will result. There are six species (or more depending on if you want to divide *A. retusus*), several varieties, and a near infinite set of cultivars.



Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus

Blooming Knowledge

**UPCOMING
Educational Workshops
HOSTED by the
Los Angeles Cactus
and Succulent Society**

OUR EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS SPAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, EACH MONTH FEATURING A DIFFERENT THEME AND EXPERT SPEAKER. LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT AWAITS ATTENDEES IN THE COMING MONTHS:

**THIS
MONTH'S
WORKSHOP**

**SEPTEMBER 14
10AM**

**SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER
16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD,
ENCINO, CA 91436**

Grafting with Will & Nelson

Join us in September to learn about the art of grafting succulents. This hands-on workshop will provide participants with practical skills in plant propagation, opening up new possibilities for creating unique and resilient hybrids.



OCTOBER 12

**Winter Seed Workshop
with Tom Glavich:**

Round off the year exploring the beauty of winter seeds. Participants will learn about the different adaptations of cacti and succulents during the colder months and how to capture their seasonal charm.

NOVEMBER

Ralph Massey

Topic TBD

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING,
PLEASE EMAIL EMILYDIEBOLD13@GMAIL.COM**



Spine Mealy Bugs, No Such Thing!

written by Elton Roberts

I have seen my share of 'spine mealy bugs'. I was at a commercial cactus nursery one time and an entire 90-foot-long bench of plants was covered in white 'spine mealy bugs.' I was horrified as were some other people in the group that was there. I am sure that the owner had taken care of spraying the bugs, but I do not know for sure. It was not till I joined a cactus club that I heard of spine mealy bugs. If anyone brought a plant in for the mini-show or even a regular show and sale and it had even one white spot that looked like a mealy bug, the plant was banned.

I got to thinking about spine mealy bugs and wondering where they come from. They can show up overnight. I have not seen one with wings so how can a plant that has no mealy bugs one day be covered the next day? Why is it that, a lot of the time they are only confined to one plant? Root mealy bugs get their food from drilling holes in the roots and sucking them dry. But what do the spine mealy bugs live on?

I got a magnifying glass and I found a spine mealy bug that was willing to talk. It was carrying several tools and some water bottles. I asked Mrs. Bug what she was up to. She said she was going out on a nice large spine and was going to drill several holes in the nail hard, dry spine to tap it for juice to drink. You know, like people do sugar maple trees to get the sap for syrup. She showed me the hand drill and the bits she uses. She also takes some corks to stop up the holes she drills so they will not leak and let the spine go dry. When she has all her containers full of spine juice, she can go hide and drink all she wants when she wants. I asked her why all the spine mealy bugs were left hanging on the spines. She explained that those things people call spine mealy bugs are only egg cases that are hung on the spines to dry and to have a place for the eggs to hatch.

Now as you can probably tell that is almost a true story. **FOR THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SPINE MEALY BUG!** If a person happens to see a live mealy bug on a spine it is either going to breed and is looking for shelter for the day, before it goes back down to the roots of the plant. After emerging, the spines very soon become hard as nails and there is no sap in them for mealy bugs to feed on! What are called spine mealy bugs are really root mealy bug egg cases. Root mealy bugs that have come up at night to lay their eggs in sacks they glue on the spines. The eggs are laid in a sack that hangs on the spines. It is these egg sacks that people are calling spine mealy bugs. Mealy bugs are like aphids; they find soft plant tissue and feed on sap of the plant.

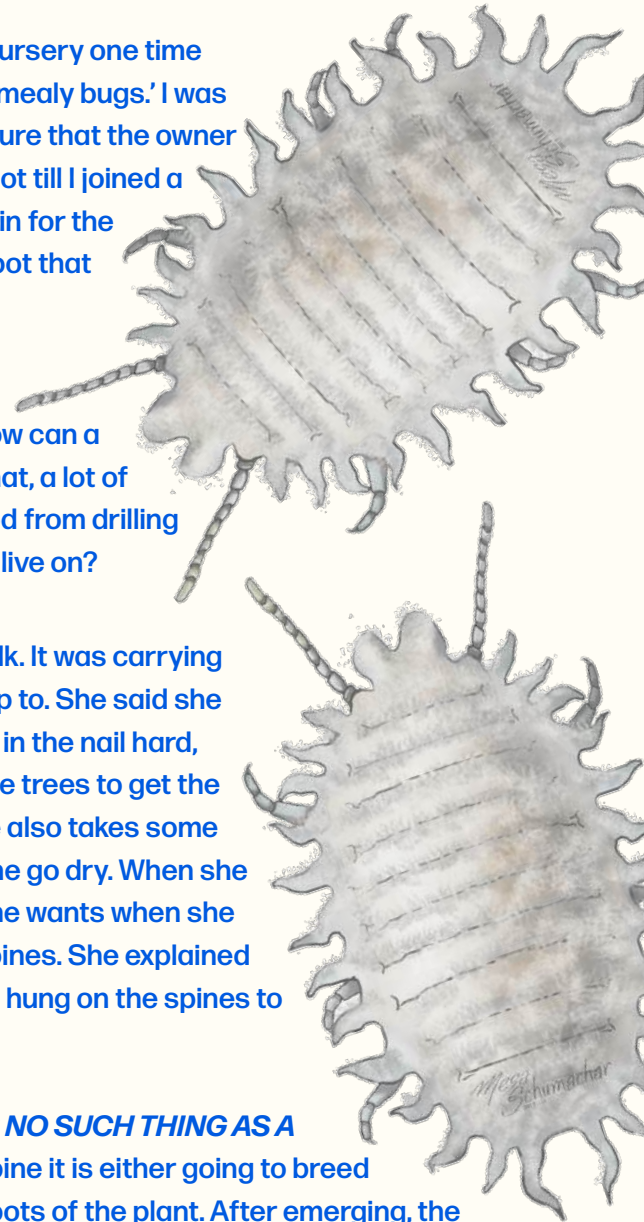




Photo 1

In the war against mealy bugs, the stand by treatment was and still is 50% rubbing alcohol and 50% water. But I found no lasting results. People then started talking about using a systemic called Cygon 2E. A brand name for Dimethoate, a good systemic soil soak and spray. In its love for its citizens of the good old USA, the government figured we are too stupid to know how to use the stuff and so off the market it went, that was quite a few years ago. I got a permit and for years used dimethoate (1 pint to 100 gallons of water). Using a sump pump I went after mealy bugs.

It was frustrating to have so many plants suddenly have mealy bug egg cases on them. But it let me know that I was finally making head way on killing mealy bugs. I have seen that when a plant is really watered even with only water the mealy bug egg cases will show up on the plants. Another thing I discovered is watering with systemic or poison will also make mealy bugs head for the spines to lay eggs. In the one case the bugs may think they are being flooded and better get top side and lay eggs. In the other case they can get just enough poison that they get sick and head up to lay eggs.



Photo 2

I have a *Coryphantha elephantidens* form that has just sat and none nothing for some years. Then I noticed that the main stem was dying. After watering with systemic bug juice over and over I saw the plant needed some help. I tipped the pot on its side and the plant fell out for most of the plant had nothing in the way of roots. The plant came out as several different stems. Some had no roots and others had a root it was trying to grow since the application of systemic. The underside of the stems was white with dead mealy bugs. I mixed up some strong systemic and dipped each stem about five times and let them soak for about a half hour. I dry I soaked them again for 2 days. When I figured they were more than dead, I blew the mealy bugs off the plants with compressed air.

Photo 1: the root end of a stem; white with 'mealy bugs and egg cases.' If you look closely, you can see a lot of what looks like mealy bugs mainly on the spines. Those are not mealy bugs but mealy bug egg cases glued to the spines. Also notice that the stem has no main root. The mealy bugs sucked the root dry and what was left rotted away. There are nubbins of roots that started to grow after the mealy bugs were poisoned.



Photo 3

Photo 2: the top of that stem and there are mealy bug egg cases glued to the spines and even in the growing center.

Photo 3: is of another stem. This stem was worked over by the bugs like the stem in photo 1. This stem tried to make a new main root; it also was being attacked by the mealy bugs. Most of the feeder roots are only short nubbins for they could not grow while being sucked on.

Photo 4: is the same plant showing lots of egg cases even after I blew 90 % of them away. This show that the glue the bugs use is quite strong for I used 120 PSI of air and it would not blow the cases away.

Photo 5: is of another stem. This one had the fewest of the mealy bug egg cases on it. It did manage to grow 3 tap roots from beside where the main tap root had been. Even these roots show damage from mealy bugs working on them.

Photo 6: is the top of that stem and it is easy to see that the mealy bugs even got to the growing point of this stem.

Photo 7: is an offset from one of the stems. It is about an inch in diameter and it tried to grow roots and the mealy bugs also kept its roots from growing. What looks like mealy bugs are egg cases. The mealy bug got some poison and decided to go up and lay eggs, if they got any eggs in those small cases I do not know. But those really small egg cases show that the mealy bugs were in a rush to lay eggs before they died.

Mealy bugs are not spine mealy bugs. The bugs cannot stick their snout in a dry hard spine to suck sap out of it. There is no sap, water, juice, milk or any other liquid in a hard dry spine for any mealy to feed on. The mealy bugs live on the roots till it's time to go up and lay eggs. They glue an egg sack to a spine and then they go back down to the roots. If you water a plant really well the bugs will make for the top of the plant as fast as they can to lay eggs in case they are drowned. The same happens with systemic poison, the bugs sense something is wrong and head up the plant to lay their eggs before it is too late. Notice in these photos the egg cases are small the bugs tried to lay eggs and made egg cases but did not or could not lay the eggs for the cases were not filled. If a mealy bug figures it is time to lay eggs and they are not being drowned or poisoned the egg cases will be to about 8 to 10 mm long and filled with eggs.



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

South Coast
Cactus & Succulent Society

John Trager

**"SUCCULENT TREASURES
OF TAIWAN IN HABITAT
AND CULTIVATION"**

John's talk will focus on his tour of Southern Taiwan's succulents in habitat and their specialized cultivation in nurseries.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2024
1:00 PM**

South Coast Botanic Garden,
26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes
Peninsula 90274.

Free admission for SCCSS members and
their guests. For more information visit
southcoastcss.org



2024 CACTUS AND SUCCULENT CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- OCT 6 LONG BEACH CACTUS CLUB ANNUAL AUCTION
1PM-330PM, INFO. CALL 714-553-6914
WOMENS CLUB OF BELLFLOWER, 9402 OAK ST., BELLFLOWER, CA
- OCT 13 CONEJO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SALE 9AM-4PM
INFO. WWW.CONEJOCSS.COM OR CONEJOCSS@HOTMAIL.COM
558 N. VENTU PARK ROAD, THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91320
- OCT 26-27 PALOMAR CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SHOW AND SALE
SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN ADMISSION REQUIRED
SAT. 9AM-5PM, SUN. 10AM-3PM INFO. RWKOPFSTEIN@GMAIL.COM
SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN, CONSERVATORY, 230 QUAIL GARDENS DR.
- NOV 1-3 HUNTINGTON FALL PLANT SALE - RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FRI./SAT/.SUN.
10AM-5PM INFO: RESERVATIONS- WWW.HUNTINGTON.ORG CALL 626-405-3571
HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS, 1151 OXFORD RD., SAN MARINO, CA
- DEC 8 LACSS WINTER ONE DAY SALE
INFO TBA