

The Spine

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Winter 2019/2020
Published in December



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Christmas Party Info.:

Date:

Sunday, Dec. 15

Time:

1 p.m.

Place:

Harry's Steakhouse
5664 Brecksville Road
Independence, OH 44131

Bring:

A wrapped plant or in a gift bag for the gift exchange (participation is optional, but this is a fun event!).



Christmas Party Set for Dec. 15

The Midwest Cactus and Succulent Society's Christmas party will once again be held at Harry's Steakhouse in Independence, Ohio, in the upstairs Hilltop meeting room, on Dec. 15, 2019, at 1 p.m.

This party is a closed event for members only (each member can bring a guest, but RSVPs were due to Karen Snell several weeks ago). The menu will be the same as last year's. Food will be served buffet style, and a cash bar will be available. Club members do not need to bring anything (i.e., sides, desserts, etc.).



After dinner, Club Vice President Bill Hendricks will present "The 2019 Chelsea Flower Show—London." After the presentation, club members (who wish to) will participate in the annual plant gift exchange.

New this year (unanimously voted on during the October meeting) will be a drawing, for those who wish to be entered, for three club members to receive a free year's membership to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA), which includes many benefits (they can be found [here](#)).

We hope everyone can attend, as a fun time and great food was had by all last year, as seen in these photos.



Glow Wreath Decorating

Once again this year our club is represented at the Cleveland Botanical Garden Glow event, which is a winter spectacular of gingerbread houses, decorated trees, children's events and many other holiday festivities and events.

As a participating affiliate garden club of the Cleveland Botanical Garden, our club chose to decorate a wreath this year (some other affiliate garden clubs opted to decorate a tree). As such, our wreath is adorned with stockings and ice skates filled with vibrant succulents, and a beautiful Christmas tree in the center made out of succulent cuttings.

Special thanks to club members Kathy Smith and Melissa Mezgec for creating the wreath décor and Club Vice President Bill Hendricks for donating the live succulent cuttings.



Kathy Smith and Bill Hendricks selecting succulents to create the Glow wreath.

NE Ohio Winter Events

Cleveland Botanical Garden

Glow Event

Through Jan. 4, 2020

See [website](#) for further detail, hours and days of operation.



Holden Arboretum

Seasonal events for December—see [website](#) calendar for events, days and times.

Lake Metroparks

A variety of seasonal events is offered through Lake Metroparks, most of which are for kids, and take place at the Farmpark. See [website](#) for complete listing.



The Ohio State University Extension—Geauga County Master Gardeners

Holiday Craft with Nature's Bounty

Saturday, Dec. 14 9 a.m.—noon

Create your own long-lasting table arrangement with MGV Phyllis Mihalik. Start with a charger plate in gold, silver, candy apple red or holiday green. Add oasis and a creative hurricane lamp with candle. Fresh mixed fragrant evergreens are provided, along with pinecones/other décor. \$40—call (440) 834-4656 to register/for directions.

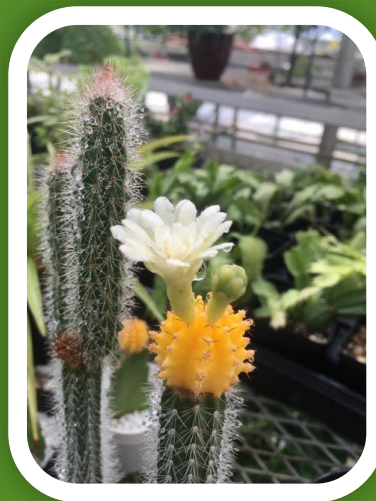


Interesting Reads

Thanks to Club President Tim Malinich for sharing both of these articles. Taken from the MWCSS Facebook page.

This might inspire others to create some cool grafted (Frankenstein) cactus.

The Master Gardeners in Erie County work with the residents of the Ohio Veterans Home in their greenhouse. Over the years, we have had many of the grafted *Gymnocalycium* show up at the greenhouse with the rootstock rotted out. We try to save them but have also recently started re-grafting them with quite a few successes.



This one was grafted onto a *Cleistocactus* and bloomed several times this summer. We also grow a couple dozen Christmas Cactus to give to the residents.

Cacti love cramped quarters. The best way to kill a cactus is to put a small plant in a big pot.

A friend of mine gave me a few pieces of tufa rock several years ago, so I dropped a couple of *Mammillaria gracilis v fragilis* cuttings into the depressions. They started out with a tablespoon of soil in each depression—since then they get whatever debris blows in from the yard.

Though they remain small, they have bloomed every fall for the past two years.



October Presentation Recap

Record Keeping and Databases (For Cacti and Succulents)

During the October club meeting, club member Shawn Murdock gave an informative presentation on record keeping and database management for cacti and succulents. A few highlights from the presentation are listed below. Thank you Shawn for a wonderfully informative presentation!

Presentation Highlights

Beneficial Reasons to Keep Records/Database

Identification, historical information, personal knowledge, relatively easy and not expensive.

Items of Which to Keep Records

- Plant scientific name
- Purchase information
- Notes
- Care
- Origin

How to Keep Records

- Brain – Good for small collections, simple and free
- Paper – Small-to-medium-sized collections, simple and cheap, but easily damaged
- Spreadsheets – Any size collection, simple to back up, cheap and has a learning curve
- Databases – Any size collection, easy to manipulate data, free-to-expensive, large learning curve
- Other software – Any size collection, easy to conform to needs, but custom data formats can be an issue

Tips

- Planning is always important – What system? How much information do you want to keep track of? How frequently will you want to maintain my system?
- Do not create a system that is more complex than you need. That will make it harder to maintain, will ultimately “take the fun out of it,” and then you won’t want to deal with it anymore.
- Create rules to follow to keep data organized. For example: file and picture naming standards for electronic methods of record keeping:
 - ◇ *Genus_species_somesuffix.jpg* for picture files. So *Cephalocereus_senilis_Flower.jpg* might be an actual picture file for your Old Man Cactus flower.
 - ◇ Avoid using spaces in file names. Most software supports spaces, but some don’t and some do only in certain situations so save yourself some work. The underscore (`_`) is the most common substitution for a space.
- When looking for a software solution, consider options for importing and exporting your data. You might spend a lot of time entering your information into software A only for the company to go out of business later down the road. Then when you find software B you really don’t want to have to enter all that data again. Being able to export your data from software A and then import it into software B can be a life saver; and is called data portability.
 - ◇ Common data import/export formats are the CVS and JSON files.
- Most importantly, protect your data. In a software record keeping solution that means keeping backups of your data. Best practices are to have three copies of your data: one that you use; one copy that is used for a backup; and one copy for backup that is in another location (think friend’s house or something). This last copy protects you from things like your house burning down.
- Keeping important information in several sites is a good idea for any really important information or documents.



From the President's Desk



Tim Malinich

A Big Map

Our annual holiday meeting will again feature Bill's epic adventures as he hops the globe to take even more pictures of plants. When I travel, locally or abroad, my curiosity takes me to Google Earth — <https://www.google.com/earth/>. Just like binge-watching your favorite baking show, you can spend hours exploring the Earth from the comfort of your comfy chair.

My favorite spots are the smattering of small islands that dot the Atlantic Ocean (there are more out there than you think) and the huge empty expanse in the Southern Pacific. South America is much further to the east and Africa fits with it like a puzzle piece. Canada, Mexico and the United States take on a whole new dimension when viewed as a single continent.

Our succulents consider the same maps as they grow and evolve. Cacti are the New World plants, living in our hemisphere throughout both continents. Their only means to spread off of our half of the world would be to island-hop great distances. Madagascar, in isolation off the east coast of Africa, has it's own unique mix of Euphorbia.

The isolation of plants to a geographic area is what leads to the development of new species. For instance, a population of cacti growing on one side of a mountain range will develop its own preferences and strategies for temperature, soil, pollination and water. If seeds are carried to the other side of the mountain range by wind, water, bird, human or other animal, then that new group of plants will develop preferences and strategies to handle the new temperatures, water, pollinators, etc.

Both groups of plants have the same genetic variability but they will only successfully pass on the traits that help them survive in their unique geographic area. Over centuries the plants will be so dissimilar they might be considered different species. This notion of geographic isolation is part of what taxonomists consider when naming new species or subspecies — if there is variability within a population it may just be normal variation (think brown hair or black hair in humans). In the case of our mountain-cacti neighbors, they may be considered subspecies if their variation is subtle, but a new species if the variation is significant.

Our job as responsible collectors is to try to keep our species straight. Our problem is that early explorers tended to make judgements based on what was known at the time — limited geographic exploration, slow communication leading to shortcuts and shipping constraints that make FedEx look absolutely miraculous. Many plants were named without proper documentation so the same plants could be given different names by different collectors or nurserymen. As more information became available, some of the confusion was cleared up by creating new genera and species. Taxonomy "rules" began to dictate whose naming of a plant actually was legitimate and whose was unsubstantiated.

As collectors, we're left with a mess of names and synonyms going back over 150 years. Our responsibility is not to make sure we use the most recently reclassified names, but rather that we make use of legitimate names for our plants so we can share them and carefully preserve a "known" species in cultivation.

Tim Malinich

MWCCS Club President

Impressive Globose Cacti

The plant of the month theme for the November meeting was any globose cactus. From the photo below, new club member Andrew Perneti “wow-ed” other members with these globose beauties. The large one is *Echinocactus grusonii* (Golden Barrel Cactus) and the small one is *Mammillaria hahniana* (Old Lady Cactus). Thank you, Andrew, for sharing from your personal collection.



Have impressive specimens at home? Bring them in to share — each month there is a different plant of the month theme.

2020 Mid-States Conference

The Kansas City Cactus and Succulent Society will host the 2020 Mid-States Conference from June 11—14 at The Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center in Independence, MO.

Some of the highlights for this 17th biennial conference include:

- International guest speakers
- Field trips
- Plant sale with vendors from around the country

Further discussion about the conference will occur during upcoming regular meetings.

Make sure to pencil in this special event on your 2020 calendar!

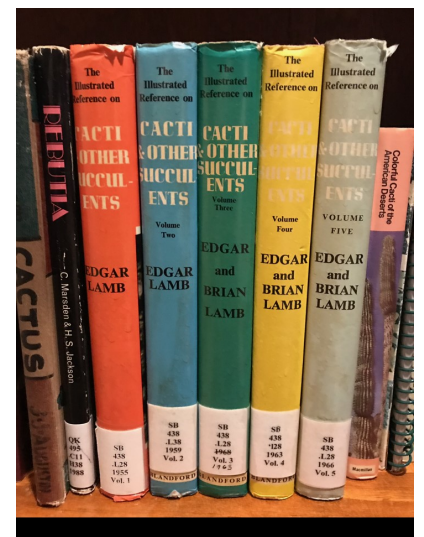
Fort Worth Flair

Heading to Fort Worth, TX in May? Check out the Fort Worth Cactus and Succulent Society's show and sale at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden on May 2 and 3. Sale times are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.



Book Nook

A suggested read by club member Jeff Havel is actually a series of books by authors Edgar and Brian Lamb. There are five different volumes of books titled “The Illustrated Reference on Cacti & Other Succulents,” each of which serves as a pictorial encyclopedia (with many both black and white and color photos). They provide a quick and easy recognition of cacti and succulents. Each plant illustrated is captioned with its name, botanical authority, country of origin, notes on color, size and general cultivation. The non-technical information is easily understood by the average collector. Thank you, Jeff, for this reading suggestion! If you have any suggestions of your own, please share with the club—write to Melissa at Melissa415@hotmail.com.



2020 Spring Show and Sale Info.

It's not too early to start preparing your display and/or sale plants for the 2020 Spring Show and Sale.

The event will be held a few weeks later than it has been the past several years. Sale dates are April 4 and 5 at the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Setup will again be the Friday before (April 3).

The layout will be a bit different in 2020 than in years past. A walkthrough was provided during the October meeting. For any club member who missed it, please see club member Mike Briggs for details.

Further information on logistics and other important items will be discussed during upcoming regular club meetings.

Everyone's participation is critical for making the 2020 Spring Show and Sale the same success as in years past.

Photos from the 2019 Show and Sale



A Call for Presentations

A variety of different presentations is needed for the upcoming 2020 meetings. If you have a topic of expertise you would like to share with fellow club members, please see Club Vice President Bill Hendricks.

Presentations are held at the end of regular club meetings and are usually accompanied by a PowerPoint slide presentation.

Thank you to everyone who have already presented. Sharing your knowledge and first-hand experiences on topics continues to enrich our club members and drives forth our club mission to help each other succeed.

Newsletter Content Needed

Newsletter content is always needed, especially for local northeast Ohio events. If you have something going on in your hometown that would be of interest to club members, reach out to Melissa at Melissa415@hotmail.com with information. Note that it doesn't have to be plant related, but since we are plant lovers, it would be helpful.



Quarterly Calendar of Events



*Note all meetings are from 1—4 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

December 2019

Club Christmas Party — Dec. 15 at Harry's Steakhouse in Independence, OH. Please see information and directions on page one. As a reminder, club members have the opportunity to participate in the annual plant gift exchange. Bill Hendricks's presentation is "The 2019 Chelsea Flower Show—London."

January 2020

Regular club meeting at Cleveland Botanical Garden on Jan. 19. Presentation by special guest speaker Curt Hanson on "Cacti of Argentina and Chile." Plant of the month is South American cactus. Please bring a snack to share.

February 2020

Regular club meeting at Cleveland Botanical Garden on Feb. 23. *****NOTE THIS IS THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH.***** Presentation by Tim Malinich and Bill Hendricks on seed raising. Plant of the month is any seed-grown plant. Please bring a snack to share.

MWCSS Mission:

Cactus and succulent collectors and hobbyists helping each other succeed.

New Membership Information:

Contact Karen Snell at kdsnell@roadrunner.com for new membership info.

Other Club Resources:

www.mwcSS.com—Fresh content is always needed for the club's website. Email Tim at timj@hearthstonefarm.net.

<https://www.facebook.com/mwcSS/>—Fresh content is always needed for the club's Facebook page. Email Kathy at kesmith913@gmail.com.

MWCSS Club Officers:

Tim Malinich—Club president/webmaster

Bill Hendricks—Club vice president

Karen Snell—Club secretary

Tammie Host—Club treasurer

Melissa Mezgec—Club newsletter writer/editor/designer

Kathy Smith—Club publicity (Facebook page)/CBG affiliate

General Club Meeting Information

The MWCSS generally meets the third Sunday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Cleveland Botanical Gardens (CBG) in the Smith Classroom (unless otherwise noted). Directions are below.

For exact monthly meeting information, see Karen Snell's email she sends out monthly.

CBG Directions

11030 East Blvd.,
Cleveland, OH 44106

CBG is in the University Circle/Wade Park area of Cleveland, five miles east of downtown.

From I-90 Lakeshore Memorial Freeway: Exit at Martin Luther King Drive and go south on MLK.

Cross E. 105th and take right curve. Turn left on Jephtha (at art museum) to Wade Oval.

CBG is across the park and at the end of East Blvd.

