



The Spine

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Fall 2020

Published in October



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Dues Reminder

As a reminder, if club members have paid their dues in full for 2020, dues are being waived for 2021.

Content Needed for Next Newsletter

Content is needed for the upcoming winter newsletter. This can be in the form of an article, photos, suggested NE Ohio places to visit, and/or other items to benefit the club.

Please send all content to Melissa at Melissa415@hotmail.com for inclusion.

Also, content is always needed for the club Facebook page, as well as the club website. Please see the back page of this newsletter for email contact information for both Facebook and the website.



September In-Person Gathering

Even with the social distancing mandate and mask requirement in place, club members still managed to get together on Sept. 20 at Lake Metroparks Chagrin River East—Reeves Road Shelter—for a quick meeting, followed by a fun plant exchange.

Meeting Discussion

A topic of discussion was whether the date and time that the Zoom meetings that the club has been holding (the third Wednesday evening of each month) were beneficial for club members. By a unanimous vote, it was decided that the meetings will be moved to the afternoon of the third Sunday each month (to coincide with the dates/time of regular in-person meeting). This provides an opportunity for those who work longer weekday hours/evenings to participate.

Plant Exchange

Thank you to everyone who brought plants to share in the plant exchange. Even those who didn't bring plants were still able to bring some home. By the looks of the photos below and on the following pages, those in attendance had a great time and were happy to see fellow club members in person (the last in-person club meeting was held in February!).

Executive Committee

Thank you to executive committee members for planning this event and purchasing all food, condiments and other essentials. This day would not have been possible without these members!



September In-Person Gathering (Con't.)



Club Treasurer Tammie Host calls raffle numbers for the plant exchange.



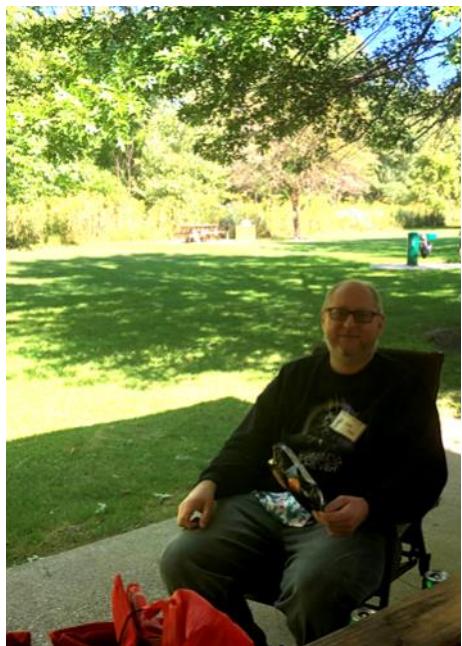
September In-Person Gathering (Con't.)



Club members collect and bag various seed types, kindly donated by Club Member Carolyn Hufford. She had a few seed-starting tip flyers on hand — click [here](#) to view the flyer.



September In-Person Gathering (Con't.)



Thank you to our grill masters—Mike Briggs (left) on hamburgers and Greg Smith (right) on hot dogs!

August Zoom Meeting Presentation: A Colorful Look into the Briggs' Greenhouse



During the August Zoom meeting, Cub Member Christie Briggs (along with husband Mike) gave an informative presentation (with dozens of colorful photos) of many different varieties of cacti and succulents found in their backyard greenhouse.

The photos below and on the following pages (taken by Christie) are just a few of the many gorgeous flowering specimens discussed in the presentation.

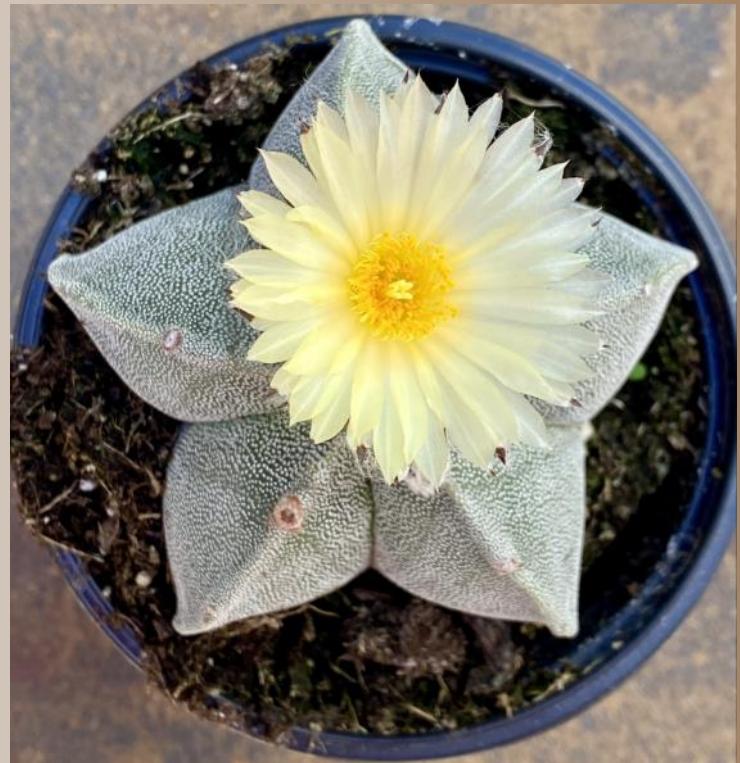
Thank you Christie and Mike for opening up your greenhouse for a look inside your beautiful collection!



Briggs' Greenhouse Presentation (Con't.)



Briggs' Greenhouse Presentation (Con't.)



How to Make Succulent Pumpkins



By Kathy Smith

Note: This is a reprint from a previous issue.

Looking for a fall project that costs very little and will give you fabulous results? Try these succulent pumpkins!

I've done these for a couple years now and the best part is, you can find most of the supplies in your own back yard and craft stash. NO pumpkin carving required, which keeps your design fresh for several weeks.

Here are some items you will need:

1. Find a firm pumpkin, but be sure NOT to get one that has any soft spots, as it will rot faster. I look for 'mini pumpkins' that are three-to-five-inches across. Cut off the stem as low as you can without damaging the pumpkin.
2. Collect a variety of succulents. You can use tender succulent cuttings OR hardy succulents. Cut the stems close to the rosette OR use trailing plants for some added drama.
3. Other items needed: Spanish Moss (as a base for your design), other natural decor like twigs, pine cones, wheat, colorful moss, leaves, etc.
4. You'll need a hot glue gun; I use a low-temperature hot glue (on the LOW setting). Low-temp hot glue DOES NOT harm the plants.



Assembling the succulent pumpkin:

1. Take a small amount of Spanish Moss and form it into a loose disc shape (it's good if it hangs over the pumpkin a little); using the hot glue, glue it to the top of the pumpkin.
2. Glue your succulents to the moss by putting a dollop of hot glue on the bottom/center of each succulent. The glue sticks to the moss very quickly, so don't try to move things around or you'll pull off the moss. Depending on your design, you can choose larger rosettes, then fill in with other small succulents OR do a cluster of similar-sized plants.

Design Note: If you use sticks or wheat (or something taller), glue those on before adding any plants. It's too hard to add those after all the plants have been attached. Also, DO NOT stick anything into the pumpkin, as this will cause it to rot faster.



It's all about having fun with what you can find around your own home. I created these pumpkins (shown in the photo above) with plants and decor I already had, so all I had to purchase were the pumpkins. They will need some water to stay looking good; I spritz them with the plants once a week (don't drench them). Your succulent pumpkin should look good for up to eight weeks (or longer). When the pumpkin starts to rot, you can lift off the entire cluster of plants and place them in soil or pull off the individual plants to root and grow.

Once you start making these it's hard to stop...the good thing is that they make great gifts!

From the President's Desk...

Deserts Are Not What You Think



Now that it is getting cooler, most of us have started, or even completed, the annual cactus migration—moving our plant from their outdoor vacation spot to their indoor overwintering space. My plants move from patio, to sheltered porch, then final distribution about the house. Since the kids moved out, my son's bedroom becomes the Sansevieria room; another bedroom is the Mammillaria room. The larger (therefore heavier) specimens stay on the first floor with the largest plants finding a home nearest the door.

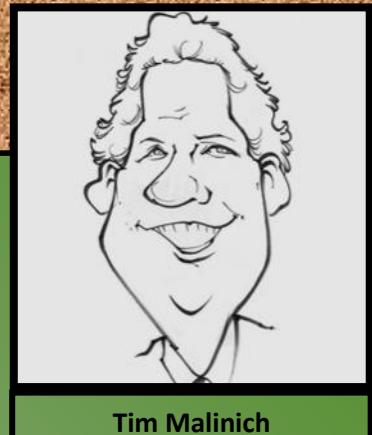
I do make a somewhat successful attempt to decorate with my overwintering cacti. The Cleistocactus, thin and tall, look nice clustered in a corner. Groups of my larger Gymnos end up on the hearth or next to the cat tree. Every placement is out of the necessity to find space for a collection of plants that need to remain dormant for the next four or five months; my house becomes the desert.

But, deserts are not what some people think. Even when moving plants indoors in fall, you should consider the conditions in some of the deserts the plants normally live in. Many of our cacti grow at elevations of several thousand feet or more. It gets cold up there. Cacti are not the dainty wall flower that dies with the onset of the first cold night. They can handle cold nights on occasion without damage. Opuntiads are especially good at dealing with the cold. Depending on the species, you will find them growing in deserts of South America to Canada.

Mammillaria are a bit more on the tender side and would prefer to be one of the first cacti to come indoors before they experience too many nights in the 40s. Euphorbias (remember they are succulents, not cacti) are even less tolerant and will show signs of yellowing and drop leaves when temperatures consistently drop below 50. Do consider that the damage from cold will come, not from the short cold period, but from long-term exposure to below-normal temperatures or with wet soil during periods when the roots are too cool to deal with the moisture.

When it comes to those cold fall nights, don't panic, but consider the native conditions for your collection and take appropriate actions. Deserts are not the continually sun-baked oven that you think—your cacti can handle some cool temperatures, just not too cool or for too long.

-Tim Malinich, MWCSS Club President



Tim Malinich

~ Moving Cacti Indoors for the Fall ~

For further information on moving cacti and succulents indoors for the fall/winter, take a moment to read the below suggested articles:

- <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/bring-cactus-indoors-winter-80823.html>
- <https://www.treehugger.com/how-help-succulents-survive-winter-indoors-4863294>
- <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/care-succulents-indoors-during-winter-66271.html>

Cactus and Succulent Society (CSSA) News

Membership Renewal

Have you renewed your membership lately to the Cactus and Succulent Society (CSSA)? It is easy and convenient to complete online. Visit the [CSSA website](#) and select the Membership tab. Follow the instructions from there.

Webinars

In light of COVID-19 and, like so many other organizations in the country, the CSSA has been hosting webinars to continue educational enrichment. These webinars are available to everyone, but registration is requested. Visit the CSSA website (link above) to register/join the next educational webinar!

New E-Newsletter

CSSA is producing a new newsletter called *To The Point*. All CSSA members are able to receive this, and articles, photos, growing techniques, etc. are always welcome. Also, information on local affiliate clubs is available as well.

If you are a CSSA member and are not receiving the newsletter, simply visit the CSSA website (listed above) and complete a quick form to ensure you begin receiving this valuable publication!

MWCSS Mission:

Cactus and succulent collectors and hobbyists helping each other succeed.

New Membership Information:

Contact Tammie Host at itamara@sbcglobal.net 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

Zoltan Onutz—Club secretary

Tammie Host—Club treasurer

Other:

Kathy Smith—Club publicity/CBG affiliate

Melissa Mezgec—Club newsletter writer/editor

New Club Secretary

During the September in-person gathering, Club Member Zoltan Onutz volunteered to be the club's new secretary.

Thank you, Zoltan, for stepping up to fill this position!

General Club Meeting Information

****Note: Due to COVID-19, the remaining meetings for 2020 will be held via Zoom meetings. See upcoming emails for a specific details. Thank you for your understanding.**

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.

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 Jeptha (at art museum) to Wade Oval.

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

