



LOS ANGELES  
CACTUS  
AND  
SUCCULENT  
SOCIETY

# CACTUS CHRONICLE

January 2010

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Next Meeting: January 7, 2010



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## "Desert Splendor"

By John Martinez

For more than three decades, Duke Benadom, former LACSS President, CSSA President, CSSA Show Chairman, and current CSSA Convention Chairman, has been enthralled in the world of succulent and other plants. He first became interested in cacti as a child. Since that time he has expanded his interest to bromeliads, tillandsias, xerophytic trees, a smattering of arums, and now also engulfed in cycads. He has traveled extensively throughout North America, several in Europe, Africa, and various Pacific islands photographing ad nauseam on each peregrination. His photography has been published in the CSSA Journal in "Cacti & Succulents for the Amateur" and later as "Suburb Succulents" Along with several other articles in that journal, various other journals, and in several plant-related books.



**PLANTS FOR THE YEAR 2010**  
**LOS ANGELES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY (LACSS)**

Month	Cacti	Succulent
January	Hooked Spine Mammillaria	Senecio and Othonna
February	Monotypic Cacti	Adromischus, Anacampseros & Avonia
March	Copiapoa	Aeonium, Sempervivum & Sedum
April	Astrophytums	Cucurbitaceae
May	Echinopsis, Libovia, & Trichocereus	Agavaceae
June	Thelocactus	Caudiciform Euphorbia
July	Melocactus	Cissus & Cyphostemma
August	Favorite	Favorite
September	Miniatures	Miniatures
October	Variegates	Variegates
November	Echinocactus	Haworthia Retuse Type
December	<i>Holiday Party</i>	

**Entry Classes:** All new members, new to the hobby, should enter plants in the Novice class. Novices must move to the Advanced class after they have won a total of 40 first place awards in the Plant of the Month competition. Individuals who own a nursery are required to enter in the Open class. Although it is not advised, LACSS members are free to enter a plant in the Open class at any time.

**Prizes:** All prizes are awarded at the Holiday Celebration in December. Trophies are awarded by entry class for those members who scored the most points in either the cacti or combined succulent categories. In the Novice and Advanced classes the top three scorers in each of the plant categories will also receive a prize (typically a plant). These prizes are awarded based on the total number of points scored during the year. Finally, a trophy is awarded to members, regardless of class, who have earned the most points in the cactus or two succulent categories during the prior year.

**Entry Requirements:** All entrants must be LACSS members. Members are restricted to two plants per entry category per month – a total of four plants. In the Advanced and Open Classes, members must have been in possession of their plants for at least one year. Those members showing in the Novice class may immediately enter a recently obtained plant. You can only enter plants that conform to the Plant of the Month schedule described above.

Plants that are in flower and the rarity of the entry are two additional criteria judges employ in determining monthly winners

Judging Scale		Points Awarded	
Condition	50%	First	5
Size and Maturity	25%	Second	3
Staging	20%	Third	1
Nomenclature	5%		

**No New Members the Month of December**

## Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society

### Cacti of the Month January 2010 - *Mammillaria Hooked Spines*



*Mammillaria bombycina*

*Mammillaria* is one of the larger genera in the *Cactus* family, and one of the most variable, with some members remaining as solitary columns for their entire lives. There is incredible variability in the genus with some species being fingernail size, others solitary globular plants, some are straight spined, some form sizeable clumps, while others are heavily spined with hooks.

A *Mammillaria* is often one of the first cacti that a beginning grower buys. They are available, often for less than a dollar, at discount stores, and for just a bit more at local home centers and discount stores. A credit to the toughness of these plants, is that many survive for years in spite of all sorts of abuse and neglect. Many inexpensive purchases at local chain stores have been grown on to become show plants, the quality of the plant maturing with the skill and experience of the grower. In part because they are so generous with flowers and seeds, and the seeds germinate so readily, many rare species end up in unlikely places like home centers, supermarkets, and hardware

stores. It's worth keeping an eye out for unusual specimens, but beware of names found on discount store plants.

The secrets to good growth are a continual supply of water and fertilizer during the growing season (typically from March through October), strong light, intense heat if available, and maintenance of a clean and insect free growing environment. Many people starve and under water their plants, in attempt to avoid rot. Most *Mammillaria* will take quite a bit of water and fertilizer when in growth. During the summer heat growth slows for a time, picking up again when the weather cools, before stopping around Thanksgiving. Almost all *Mammillaria* will do just fine in Southern California, with little or no winter protection, as long as they are potted in a freely draining potting mix.

The appearance of white mealy bug egg cases (*Mammillaria's* worst enemy) on the tips of the spines or the appearance of ants means that mealy bugs are sucking the sap and life of the plant. Immediate treatment is required, with a thorough washing, and spraying with an insecticide. A less toxic solution is to soak the entire plant in soapy water overnight. Followed by a good rinse with water from a hose.

The spines found on *Mammillarias* differ radically. Some species produce hooked spines while others are either straight or feathery. Some species have hair or wool in the axils between the tubercles that provide protection against extreme sunlight.

Most Mammillarias originate in Mexico, although there are 10 species found in the south western portion of the United States. There are even a few species that extend as far north as Canada.

A distinguishing feature of all Mammillarias is that flowers appear at the point of two tubercles and form a ring around that particular stem of the plant. Flowers appear on the previous year's growth. A smooth brilliant red club-shaped berry appears if flowers are fertilized.



*Mammillaria bocasana*

References:

J. Pilbeam, **Mammillaria**

David Hunt, **The New Cactus Lexicon**

Tom Glavich May 2003

Edited by Steven Frieze, January 2010

## Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society

### Succulents of the Month January 2010 – *Senecio* and *Othonna*



*Senecio scaposus*  
Photo T. Nomer

*Senecio* and *Othonna* are two plant genera in the *Compositae* family. The two plants share a common ancestry with a distinction that it shares with such common plants as Sunflowers, Asters and dandelions. *Senecio* is a very large and cosmopolitan genus, with species in most of the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world.

All of the *Compositae* are distinguished by a flower head that appears to be a single large flower, but is really a cluster of many smaller flowers (florets) protected (and advertised to passing pollinators) by colorful bracts. The flowers of *Senecio* show obvious resemblance to dandelions and sunflowers. The seeds are held in loose clusters, and scattered by the wind, just as with dandelions.

Almost all species are easy to grow, requiring only modest attention to growing

periods, and tolerant of out of season watering, with-in reason.

*Othonnas* is a very diverse genus and one of its characteristics that is of greatest appeal to collectors is that it is a winter growing succulent. Species vary considerably with some producing caudexes - elongated but proportionately swollen stems. Other species are dwarf and compact succulents with short branches. Another highly desirable group is comprised of tuberous geophytes with subterranean rootstocks and deciduous stems or leaves. Other species are orthodox shrubs.



*Othonna capensis*

The potting mix for *Othonna* and *Senecio* should be well drained, with only small amounts of organic matter. Fertilizer should be applied sparingly, and only during good weather.

Both genera are relatively easy to grow, requiring only modest attention to

season watering, with-in reason. All species are winter growers, losing their leaves in the heat of summer, and leafing out again in early fall.

Seed is occasionally available, and germinates readily. It's best planted in mid fall, with maximum growth and development of water storage tissue possible before the first summer.



*Othonna herrei*

## References

Gordon Rowley, **Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents**  
Hermann Jacobsen, **A Handbook of Succulent Plants**

Tom Glavich January 2004  
Edited Steven Frieze, January 2010

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010**

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### **We Want Your Stories**

The Board of Directors has had several discussions on the content of the Chronicle. They thought it would be good to have some fresh ideas about the world of cactus and succulents. One of the suggestions was for volunteer “guest columnists” write an article focusing on their special interests. We are confident that many of you could easily write 500 words on your favorite topic, such as – how I got interested in cactus and/or succulents, my favorite potting soil, my favorite plant (or least favorite), and why. If we had a person a month do one article to be published in the Chronicle it would enhance everyone’s knowledge and can be used as a diversified learning tool.

**So who will step up and author the first guest column?** We want to publish the first article in the **February 2010** Chronicle and hope that all of you will contribute to this new feature.

Please email your article to me by January 20, 2010 so it can be included in the **February 2010** issue. It would be helpful if you could let me know the subject you will write on and what month it can be sent to me for inclusion.



### **LACSS 2010 Calendar of Events**

**Please contact me at [phyllis.98@hotmail.com](mailto:phyllis.98@hotmail.com) if any of the above information is incorrect or you want to add an event to the calendar.**

**January, 2010**

**From the Stacks of the Library  
By Joyce Schumann  
LACSS Librarian**

Happy New Year to you all.

Last year was an especially good year for the Library. Several purchases and donations allowed us to increase the size of our library to over 150 titles. A special thanks to everyone has made this possible.

To begin the New Year, the Library will feature four books new to the club, two purchased and two donated. One of the donated books is written in Chinese and the other in Japanese. Don't be intimidated by this. The photos are not only labeled in English but are excellent. Both are good references for identification purposes.

For those members who are taking up landscaping with succulents, the new book titled "*Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*" by Greg Starr will be especially helpful. The introduction covers the usual topics followed by an alphabetical listing of plants grouped by size. I think you will enjoy this book!!

The last book featured this month is a slight departure from our definition of "succulent." For those of us who have included Hoyas in our collections, "*The Genus Hoya*" by Wennström and Stenman will be a must read/look. The 20 pages of introduction are followed by descriptions and photos of over 150 species of Hoyas.

In an effort for all members to see the new books, we will try a new check-out system. The first person who would like to check out the new book may do so BUT we ask that the book be left on the Library table until the end of intermission. That will allow others to also look at it before the end of the meeting. **This is for new books only!**

So, let's start the New Year off properly and return the books that you have checked out. And then..... check out another one.

**Please stop by at the next meeting.**





**General Meeting** starts at 7:30 PM on the **first Thursday** of the month at the Sepulveda Garden Center located at 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino between Hayvenhurst and Balboa.  
Set-up and social hour starts at 6:30 PM.

Bring a smile! Make new friends! **GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Visit Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society *ONLINE* at [www.lacss.com](http://www.lacss.com)

Upcoming Programs:

First Class Mail

**Next Meeting: January 7, 2010**  
Sepulveda Garden Ctr. 16633 Magnolia Bl. Encino

**PO Box 280581, Northridge, CA 91328**  
**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Newsletter of the Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society

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