

Dudleya: Succulent Diversity in Our Own Backyard

The Santa Monica and San Bernardino mountains are home to a plentiful and varied assortment of Dudleya. An hour's drive into our local hills can yield 11 species and 6 subspecies, a genus density equal to that of Baja. For the past two years, John Martinez and Nils Schirmmacher have photographed these succulents in habitat, trekking slopes and canyons to locate and identify our native treasures. Their introduction the Dudleya of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties will feature their photos, provide a description of each species, and impart lessons learned in the field.

John currently lives in Moorpark with his wife Linda and is a retired Los Angeles Fire Department Battalion Chief. He is a member of the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad Society, Los Angeles CSS, San Gabriel Valley CSS, and a past volunteer at the Huntington Botanical Garden. John has a deep fondness of nature and has been growing xeric plants most of his adult life. Over the past 6 years he has shared a co-op succulent growing compound in Somis with three experienced growers of cactus, succulents, and other exotics.

Aside from maintaining his plant collection, John's time is divided between gardening, golf, photography, occasional fly fishing, and grandchildren. As a native of Southern California John attended California State University of Northridge where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Art.

Nils Schirmmacher has been collecting succulents since 1999, the year he joined the CSSA. In 2005, he became an LACSS member and currently serves as club historian. From his Los Angeles apartment, he's building a collection of seed-grown plants that includes members of the Aizoaceae, or mesembs. This pursuit led to his joining the Mesemb Study Group in 2014.

Nils shares his home and garden with his wife Malynda, who is kindly indulging his newfound interest in tarantulas. He holds a Master's Degree in Art from UC Irvine and has had several gallery exhibitions of his artwork. By day, Nils works as an Art Handler.