

August 2020

ROADRUNNER NEWS

Newsletter of the Long Beach Cactus Club
Founded 1933; Affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Inc.

Meeting Program: Gunnar Eisel: “The Folklore, Enchantment, and Evolution of the C&S Hobby from 1894 to the Present Day”

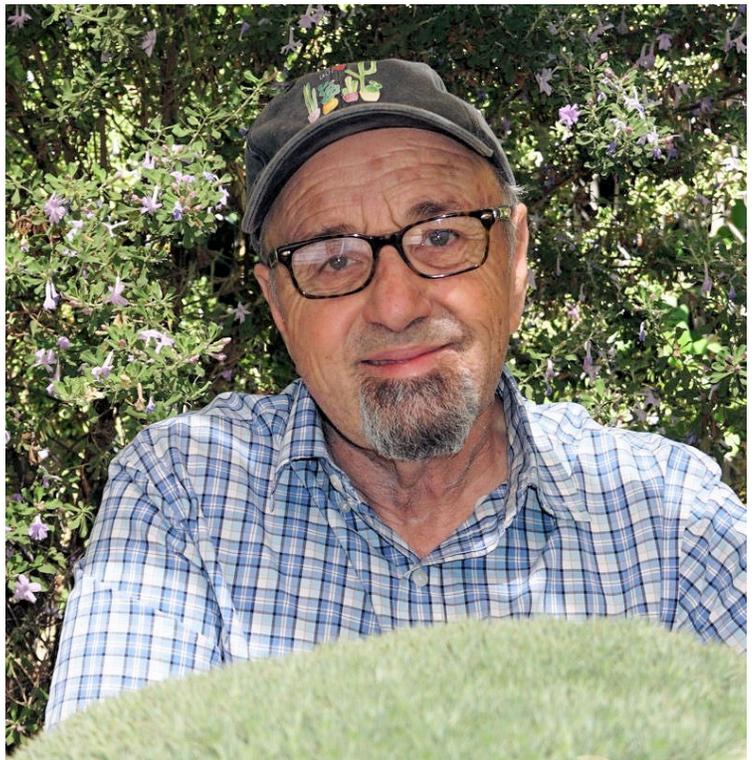
The allure of cacti and succulents has fascinated people for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. However, unlike some other horticultural endeavors, the collecting and fostering an interest in the C&S is fairly new. This program focuses on the people, the changing American landscape, and a curious set of events that have shaped our hobby as we find it today.

Gunnar Eisel's interest in cacti and succulents can be traced back to his childhood infatuation with photographing night-blooming cereus flowers and a few unfortunate encounters with opuntia glochids. His interest in cacti became intensified through many annual trips to the Anza-Borrego desert.

Born and raised near Heidelberg, Germany, Eisel has taught music at CSULA, CSUF, Whittier College, and Fullerton College. He recently retired as music professor at Citrus College in Glendora where his students were frequently subjected to his rantings regarding cacti and succulents.

An avid C&S collector, he serves as Executive Director of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) and President of the San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society.

The time of and a link to the meeting will be emailed to all members.



Message From the President

by James Lemos

Hello Long Beach Cactus Club,

Just a few lines from me then on to the rest of the newsletter... Yes, the newsletter, the Roadrunner will start up again. We need articles for the newsletter, if you would like to contribute but are not sure how to go about writing an article, we can help. Just shoot me an email and I will help.

The POM has been moved to Facebook until we can have in-person meetings again. Each month the number of photos and participants grows. If you do have a Facebook account, make sure to vote! Chris will give instructions on how to vote. Depending on the amount of entries (Chris will give direction), you can vote from one to three times by "liking" photos. The photos with the most "likes" will be declared the winners.

You don't have to have a Facebook account to participate, just email your photos with the names of the plants and your Category to Chris Bucca. He will post them and onto the Club's Facebook Group for voting. So again, to enter the POM, email, or Facebook message your photos to Chris Bucca. Chris' email: jtreecp@gmail.com

Our Club Zoom Meetings are doing well. Percentage wise, we are doing better than most other clubs with attendance of 35 to 39 for the meetings. Information on this Sunday's meeting is included in this newsletter. The presenter will be Gunnar Eisel. He's a good speaker and is always interesting.

If you are not familiar or are hesitant to try to get into the zoom meeting, and want to have an individual or private lesson, please email me and I will do a personal Zoom meeting with you so that you can get comfortable with the format.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to have a practice Zoom meeting with me, shoot me an email: jameslemos@yahoo.com Your eyes will be open to the world of Zoom meetings. There are several Zoom webinars available for your viewing every month on various succulent and Cacti subjects. Most offer a question and answer session at the end. We will have access to other club's meetings as they invite our club to their meetings. CSSA also offers 2 webinars each month that are open to all interested parties. The attendance for these webinars can be up to 350 persons.

Take care, stay safe and healthy,

James

LBCC PLANT-OF-THE-MONTHS RULES

At the April, 2003 meeting, the following rules were adopted for the Plant-of-the-Month (POM) competition:

- A maximum of three plants may be entered in each category (cactus and succulent).
- There will be three classes for entrants: advanced (blue tag), intermediate (pink tag) and beginner (yellow tag).
- Advanced and intermediate entrants must have had the plant in their possession for at least six months, beginners for three months.
- Entrants will receive 8 points for first place, 6 points for second place, 4 points for third place, 2 points for show/honorable mention (HM) and 1 point for showing a plant that does not place.
- At the discretion of the judges there may be up to three third places in a category. If plants are not deemed to be of sufficient quality, no third place will be awarded.
- For an entrant to receive points, the entry tags must be collected by the person in charge of record keeping for POM.
- At the annual Christmas party, award plants will be presented to the ten highest cumulative point holders regardless of class.

2020 LBCC PLANTS-OF-THE-MONTH

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>CACTI</u>	<u>SUCCULENTS</u>
August	Lobivia & Echinopsis	Lithops & Conophytum
September	Coryphantha & Escobaria	Bromeliaceae
October	Notocactus & Parodia	Cotyledon & Tylecodon
November	Miniatures (pots under 3")	Miniatures (pots under 3")

2020 POM STANDINGS

Advanced		Intermediate		Beginner		Rookie	
Russel Ray	59	Kathy McNair	55	Henry Angulo	51	Mike Zepeda	14
Gary Duke	27	Amy Angulo	46	Gloria R. Hansen	16		
Jim Hanna	22	Richard Salcedo	38	Tom Wang	16		
Gary James	7	Mike Martin	30	Alan Ronn	15		
		Andrew Lander	10	Kelly Eddy	15		
		Regina Fernandez	7	Coni Nettles	14		
		Alden Norris	6	James Lemos	11		
		Lemono Lott	4	Sony Bantad	9		
		Scott Bunnell	3	Shirley Kost	9		
		Annie Morgan	1	Angela Clubb	8		
				Tanisha Herr	8		
				Jim Tanner	8		
				Gretchen Lewinsky	7		
				Linda Pruden	6		
				Margot Tamb	6		
				Chris Bucka	5		
				Blake Dempsey	3		
				Nan Halbert	3		
				Christine Isham	3		
				Silvia Ary	2		
				Josephine Balboa	2		
				Lemono Lott	2		
				The Prestons	2		
				Crystal Eckman	2		
				Tim Jones	1		
				Judy Leong	1		
				Katrina Mosher	1		
				Kyle Shirada	1		

Growing Pachypodium From Seed: Questions

by Ben Rigney

I signed up with the Cactus Club just before COVID19 hit so I only got to go to a couple of meetings before the shutdown. Over at my folks house here in Long Beach I take care of all of their succulents and cactus and their yard. And about a month ago saw that the pods on their pachypodium were getting ready to open.

They finally opened up and I waited a day for them to loosen until I could brush all of the seeds out of the pods. I ended up with a whole bag full! I'm leaving the bag partially open because I don't want them to rot but I don't want them to dry too quickly either. I do not know how to safely preserve the seeds so I was wondering if anybody could give me some pointers. How long can you safely store them? How many of them should you plant at one time to get one healthy plant?

I ran across one of the seeds 10 days ago that I missed and wrapped it in a paper towel partially covered with Saran wrap but it could still breathe. Three or four days later it sprouted, and now I've transplanted it into a little 2 inch pot and as you can see it opened up into a U shape so both the root and the leaves are growing up level with each other. I just uncovered it to show you what was occurring with the seed itself. It seems quite hearty and healthy so I've covered it back over and will let it proceed at its own pace.



Should I allow the soil to dry out at this point, keep it slightly damp, or soak the soil? I don't know how to take care of these seedlings so I'll be going online to see what's what.

It's great being able to leave my plants here at the house where they're getting some decent sunlight and being able to do new things like planting seedlings which I used to do a lot of as a kid in my parents yard. Definitely easier than trying to keep them healthy in an apartment window! I'm a Potter by trade and I usually make dinner table accents, salt

and pepper shakers, butter dishes and things for the kitchen like spice jars and my own original artwork. and I have been making cactus and succulent planters for a couple of years now after attending cactus & succulent shows with a friend who got me interested and asking questions about how people want their planters made and what they look for, so all the pots you may see here in future articles have been made by me.

I thought I would just throw this out there real quick to show that we might not be going anywhere but the plants can still grow. I hope everyone is managing to stay busy and not getting too stir-crazy with all these shutdowns good luck, stay safe, and take care.



Sustainable Cultivation: Shining Light On a Growing Issue

by Gavin Hunn

Bangkok, Thailand boasts one of the largest and most frequented plant markets in the world. The Chatuchak market takes place from Friday through Sunday every week and offers myriad commercial products, food, music, and, best of all, plants. The year round warmth and high humidity of Thailand provides amazing growing conditions for a wide variety of plants. Adeniums, Euphorbias, and Gymnocalciums hybridized in Thailand are sought after throughout the world. Flowers with never-before-seen color combinations and cacti with incredibly unique variegation and mutations are common throughout the market. Euphorbia milii that look like roses pop up throughout plant stalls as one meanders up and down aisles taking in the vast array of offerings. In addition to incredible hybrids, Thailand is also home to many amazing native species. Within the horticultural trade/hobby, Stephania species are among the most popular.

Stephania are slow growing, vining caudiciforms within the moonseed family. They grow in mountainous regions in limited sunlight and relatively low water conditions. They produce deciduous vines with attractive leaves. Stephania erecta is among the most common within cultivation due to its nearly perfectly circular leaves. Within Thailand and throughout Indochina, these plants are abundant. However, the growing plant market has cast a shadow on the longevity of Stephania sp. in their native habitats. Stephania are harvested en masse and sold throughout markets like Chatuchak. The abundance and ease of growth within Thailand has created a market saturated with Stephania, to a point where continued harvesting poses a potentially existential threat for little to no reason aside from ornamental value.

Nearly all of these plants are habitat collected and propagation from seed remains an uncommon practice. Moreover, the frequent governmental disruptions, changing laws, and lack of proper enforcement in Thailand has allowed these conditions to flourish. Stephania are exported from Thailand throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. Given the remarkably low cost of these plants, sellers are in a position to make a substantial profit by selling these plants. The only real economic setback is shipping. The expense of shipping these plants leads sellers to purchase them in bulk, further aggravating the environmental impact that harvesting, or frankly poaching, has on local habitats.

This issue was brought to light by a good friend and plant hobbyist who resides in California. I had uploaded several Instagram stories and posts regarding the frequency of habitat plants within our community. I specifically called attention to plants many of us are familiar with, Copiapoa from Chile, Pachypodium from Madagascar, Mesemb from Namaqualand, and Ariocarpus from Texas/N. Mexico to name a few. Many of us should be familiar with the issues regarding poaching and collecting habitat plants, not only because it's fairly common within our community, but also because a few months back, Woody Minnich gave a thorough presentation on cacti and succulent conservation for our club. I remember this meeting fondly, not only because Woody is an excellent speaker, but it was also the last in person meeting we had before COVID-19 brought everything to a standstill, effectively forcing a virtual existence upon us.

The general response to these posts was positive, as I feel it should be. As growers and collectors of these plants, we have a responsibility to their continued well-being in habitat. Part of that responsibility includes sustainable practices, such as growing from seed or cutting and not removing plants from habitat for personal gain. In particular, one response to my post caught my attention. The aforementioned friend and caudiciform enthusiast commented, "I'd also like to pile on the insane habitat-clearing of various Stephania species from Thailand...they're being poached at an extremely alarming rate and it basically goes under the radar." This was news to me. I have frequently seen Stephania on Instagram and Reddit and on webstores such as Etsy and Ebay, to name a few. However, it never registered that the source of these plants was nefarious and detrimental to local plant populations. So, I opened a new tab in my browser and began to research anything and everything I could on Stephania poaching. Well, it turns out, there is nothing, absolutely nothing online regarding Stephania poaching. But, photos of local markets, quick searches to retailers, and personal experiences all indicate that this is in fact a surmounting issue.

In search of more information, I reached out to my friend and asked him if he would be willing to quickly provide some information regarding his experience that I may use for a prospective article I intended to write, the very one you are reading. My friend has been to Thailand 6 times and has visited the Chatuchak plant market on several of these trips. He mentioned among the rows of sellers, there is an older couple who sell very large Stephania for next to nothing. He mentioned he knew of the severity of the poaching because he had, unfortunately, purchased one before realizing the manner in which they were acquired. Then, he asked me a question that I had not personally considered: "have you ever seen Stephania seeds for sale?" To which I replied, I had not, and I frequent caudiciform seed catalogs online quite often.

Frankly, it is far easier to acquire a mature *Stephania* than it is to acquire seed. You can find packs of 5 seeds online for roughly the same price that you can purchase a large *Stephania* in Thailand. Granted, in the United States these plants can fetch anywhere from \$50-150 quite easily. I hope the picture that I am painting is starting to become quite clear.

A retailer can purchase *Stephania* species in bulk from Thailand for a small expense incorporated into the larger expense of shipping, and then sell these plants for an outrageous profit. The increased demand of these attractive caudiciforms has created an increased supply within our markets. However, it is a supply that consists almost inherently of habitat collected specimen. Your personal opinions of habitat plants aside, the strictly ecological impact of large-scale poaching is quite severe. Removing a species, or several for that matter, from a local ecosystem has unforeseen consequences for potentially every other member of that ecosystem, flora and fauna. Moreover, removing these plants for a purely superficial reason seems down right malicious and greedy.

Cacti and succulent collectors raise arms when hundred year old *Copiapoa* are taken from habitat, and for good reason. These plants belong in habitat, not in a pot sitting on a table at a local plant show. This is especially true when many of these plants, now referring far beyond *Copiapoa*, are easy enough to propagate from seed—with no impact to the environment. It is my goal through bringing awareness to this issue that anyone interested in purchasing *Stephania* will inquire into its source. Better yet, you will go and purchase seed and grow them yourself. The benefits of growing from seed extend beyond the personal, which for me is sufficient enough—you grow something from seemingly nothing and witness every stage of its development—and extend well into the environmental. Nurseries with room to house 25 mature caudiciforms have ample space to propagate dozens of seeds. In return, they help curb ecologically damaging behavior and encourage responsible behavior within the community.

In places like Thailand, where political turmoil and changeovers are rampant, there is very little room for regulations like those imposed by the IUCN. And regulations that are in place are easily sidestepped under the guise of CITES certificates purchased through local governments, many of whom have far greater concerns than wildlife poaching. This is not to cast shame on Thailand, their history of external pressures from the West and major Asian powers, in addition to multiple coup d'etats in the past decades have created an ever evolving political climate, which as stated, makes lesser issues like wildlife enforcement quite difficult.

It is for this very reason that we have a responsibility as plant enthusiasts to practice sustainable and ethical sourcing. Instead of purchasing a full grown caudiciform for \$100, spend that money on a small grow set-up and purchase seeds. Then, sow those seeds and be patient. Patience is a virtue we can all benefit from and one that is inherent to a hobby like cacti and succulent cultivation. These plants grow slow, but they don't grow so slow that you won't ever see them reach maturity. In time, you will have a beautiful seed-grown plant that you know was derived from ethical and responsible practices. And in all fairness, these plants have enough to worry about due to the continued prevalence of climate change and human expansion—two issues that are inextricable and existentially dangerous to more species of flora and fauna than we can comprehend.



Stephania ready for export

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NEWSLETTER

IF YOU HAVE ANY STORIES, cultivation tips, information about upcoming events, photos, *corrections*, or news in general about cacti and succulents that might interest our members, **please send them in**. **Comments and suggestions are always welcome**. **Remember, this is your newsletter**. Physical address: Andrew Lander, 3041 Roxanne Ave., Long Beach, CA 90808. Cyber address: landruc@gmail.com