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ROADRUNNER NEWS

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

Presentation: *Woody Minnich on The Miniature Jewels of Mexico*

The Miniature Jewels of Mexico presentation features the often rare, but always tiny, species of cacti and other succulents that are found in the vast country of Mexico. This presentation includes Woody's photos and experiences covering 45 years of exploring almost all of this, the most cactus rich country in the world. We will see Mammillarias, Ariocarpus, Turbinicarpus, Thelocactus, Strombocactus, Aztekiums, Gymnocactus, Astrophytums, Escobarias, Coryphanthas, Geohintonias, Echeverias, Sedums etc., etc., etc. We will encounter miniature plants from such states as; Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, San Lois Potosi, Sonora, Sinaloa, Queretaro, Oaxaca, Puebla and many more. Within these states we will find ourselves traveling through such famous regions as the Sonoran Desert, the Chihuahuan desert, the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental.

Woody Minnich was introduced to the cacti of the Mojave Desert at the age of 5, sparking a lifelong passion for cacti and succulents. He soon started his own cactus garden and collection of rare potted specimens, eventually becoming a dedicated cactophile in the late 1960s. Woody joined the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Long Beach Cactus and Succulent Societies, serving in numerous leadership roles and introducing the first cactus T-shirts.



After earning degrees in Graphics, Architecture, and Art from Cal State Long Beach, he taught Graphic Arts and photography while exploring the southwestern United States, Mexico, and South America, with a special focus on the genus Mammillaria. His travels later expanded to Africa and Madagascar, where he studied a wide range of succulent genera. Fifty years ago, he founded Cactus Data Plants nursery, blending his expertise in growing and fieldwork to promote conservation. With over 128 field trips, Woody discovered seven species, including Mammillaria minnichii, named in his honor. His photography and publications, featured in works such as Cactus Lexicon, The Xerophile, and the Mammillaria Handbook, continue to inspire a deep appreciation for cacti, succulents, and their habitats.

Pushing the Limits with cacti and succulents in cold climates #24

For gardeners in climates with truly cold winters, the use of succulent plants in the landscape has primarily been limited to sedums and sempervivums, until the last quarter of a century. No doubt, these are showy succulents that can be attractive in any garden, and they can be exceptional groundcovers, or rock garden subjects. In modern times, the trend toward water conservation has dramatically increased the popularity of any plant that looks like it may be water thrifty. The fat leaves or stems of succulents give just the right impression. In fact, for the last several seasons the number of new sedum and sempervivum cultivars being introduced to the garden industry has grown by leaps and bounds. I would like to review some of the more successful, cold hardy succulents that can be recommended to gardeners in cold climates.

It is logical that low maintenance plants, with less demanding water needs, would enjoy a great deal of appeal to many gardeners. An added bonus for those using succulents in the landscape is that many of these plants will remain attractive through the winter months, and oftentimes the dormant foliage will turn rich colors or add dramatic texture in the snow (Fig. 1). As xeric gardens gain favor, the increasing demand for more cold tolerant, succulent plants is not surprising. While sedums and sempervivums handily fill the needs

of most gardeners, there are always those with an eye out for something special. They too have plenty to choose from. Other choices within the Crassulaceae include jovibarbas, rhodiolas, rosularias, and some quite attractive orostachys species and hybrids. In the last few years these plants have become much easier to find in garden centers and through mail-order nurseries. For the truly adventurous succulent collector that is willing to take risks, there are even more choices. *Crassula sarcocaulis* subsp. *rupicola* and *C. corallina* have been tested in cold climates and both are known to be possible to grow in the right microclimate. The Denver Botanic Gardens had *C. sarcocaulis* subsp. *rupicola* in an open bed for quite some time. There are hardy clones of *C. corallina* in cultivation from higher altitudes in South Africa that are somewhat dependable in cold regions. *C. setulosa* is reliably cold hardy and



1. Even where snow and cold winters can be counted on large numbers of cacti and succulents can be grown outdoors. A week after this snowfall several mesemb flowers were blooming.

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2. The introduction of delospermas, such as 'Blut' and 'Firespinner', into the mainstream the American garden industry increased the popularity of garden succulents.

can be grown in part-shade, but it requires a moist position, not what is expected for the majority of succulents. Though it may not be completely reliable, there is a form of *Cotyledon orbiculata* from one of the colder regions of South Africa that is possible to grow in cold climates, but a protected microclimate must be found.

Without a doubt, it is those same drought tolerant qualities that have helped make the cold hardy iceplant species become garden favorites so quickly. The intensity of color, when these plants are flowering, has always made iceplants spectacular features in the landscape, wherever they are grown. Among the cold hardy iceplants, delospermas led the way, sharing many of the traits that make sedums so popular with gardeners in colder climates (Fig. 2). Groundcovers, such as *Delospermum nubigenum* and *D. cooperi* (both introduced through the Denver Botanic Gardens) have become favorites with gardeners across the United States and also in Europe. In more recent times, Mesa Gardens reports that delosperma seed is selling well even in parts of China. Now there is an amazing variety of delospermas adding color to gardens in climates, whereas not that long ago, gardeners were surprised to see them even survive. Some of the recent

introductions, such as *D. dyeri*, and *D. sp.* 'Fire Spinner' are unbelievable when seen in bloom. Also there are numerous other named cultivars such as *D. ashtonii* 'Blut', *D. sp.* 'Lavender Ice', *D. cooperi* 'Mesa Verde', and *D. sp.* 'Table Mountain' ice plant, also known as 'John Proffitt'. For rockeries or containers, slow, creeping species such as *D. basuticum*, which covers itself with bright yellow, or glowing white flowers in early spring, is an outstanding species. *D. sphalmanthoides* is more challenging, but is another slow growing, cold hardy plant that can be used in troughs or rock gardens. I have had better luck with that one when it is placed in full sun through the winter and partial shade in summer. These are just some of the most popular, and readily available delospermas, but there are many more that are useful in gardens where winters are cold. Without a doubt more species will be introduced and enjoyed for years to come. Hybrid delospermas, such as the 'Jewels of the Desert' series and the 'Wheels of Wonder' hybrids have been introduced in the last few years and they are extremely colorful. However, in my experience none of these hybrids are particularly drought tolerant, but they could be perfect for climates where moisture is more abundant than it is here in eastern CO.



3. Mesembs, like *Rabiea albinota* grow slowly, making them superb rockery or trough subjects.

There are other mesembs that spread too slowly to be considered groundcovers, most if these plants spread slowly in all directions. Among them are species such as *Chasmatophyllum musculinum*, which will add texture and color to a succulent garden for most of the summer. *Khadia alticola* has turned out to be quite dependable where winters are cold. The flowers are gorgeous, but it is worth growing just for the cranberry color that the foliage turns in the colder months. There is a growing number of *Stomatium* species including *S. loganii*, *S. agninum*, and *S. beaufortense* that are ideal for adding texture to rock gardens in colder climates. *S. mustellinum* has proved to be one of the most dependable mesembs in cold climates. Some collections of *Bergeranthus vespertinus* (syn. *B. jameisii*) will make dense mats of small, pointed, glaucous-green leaves that are covered by bright yellow flowers in the spring. Several ruschias are tolerant of cold climates. *Ruschia pulvinaris* is the most well-known and widely used. There is a clone of this species that I received from Steven Hammer a few years ago that might be the ultimate cold tolerant mesemb. But other cultivars, like 'Calvinia Pink' are gaining popularity. These plants make excellent garden specimens draped over rocks. For the rock garden or trough enthusiast, looking for something special, there is a treasure-trove of extremely ornate, cold hardy, small mesembs. Many of these are species that succulent collectors have always found irresistible. Although a protected microclimate, such as the south side of a heated building may be required for long-term survival, there are dozens of mesembs that have been found to be hardy to temperatures of at least minus 10°F (-23.3°C). But for those who are willing to put the effort into creating or finding the right microclimate there are rewards. Species such as *Aloinopsis orpeanii* and *A. spatulata* have been grown successfully for



4. Another excellent rock garden plant, *Nananthus transvaalensis*; some collections of this species are much more tolerant of frigid winters than others.

over 10 years in northern NM and eastern CO gardens. There are clones of *Nananthus broomii*, *N. transvaalensis*, and *N. vittatus* that are impressively cold tolerant and they bloom in late winter when flowers are rare. *Rabiea albipuncta*, *R. albinota* (Fig. 3), *R. comptonii*, and *R. lesliei* have grown and seeded around in my garden for more than 10 years, and they bloom reliably in late winter through early spring every year. Some clones of *Titanopsis calcarea* have shown a surprising ability to withstand cold temperatures. There are now a few plants of this species that have seeded into my garden.

James West wrote a series of articles for this journal in the 1930s. He started his discussion of the genus *Ebracteola* in the September, 1933 issue by suggesting that these plants were better, suited for a rockery with saxifrages and gentians than for typical succulent conditions. That has not been my experience, but *E. willmaniae* has turned out to be fairly dependable in the cold, if it is grown like other high altitude mesembs. Several *Hereroa* species, such as *H. incurva* can be reliably grown in cold climates. Perhaps more surprising is the capacity of *Lithops salicola* to adapt to extremes of cold and moisture. Several *Lithops* species are capable of dealing with extremes of cold if moisture can be controlled.

Yuccas, century plants, and *Hesperaloe parviflora* were virtually unknown, or ignored by gardeners in climates with cold winters, until the water rationing made it impossible to overlook them. These plants have become popular relatively quickly, especially where summers are hot, dry, and windy, even where winters are cold. Throughout the desert southwest such plants have always been valued, but the use of this type of garden material has crept north, and with good reason. Desirable, landscape species such as



5. Among the most cold tolerant cacti is *Pediocactus simpsonii*, a species that is native to the high mountains of the western United States.

Yucca thompsoniana, *Y. rostrata*, and *Y. faxoniana* have surprised many knowledgeable growers by their ability to cope with cold temperatures. Several *Agave* species, such as *A. harvardiana*, *A. neomexicana*, *A. parryi*, and *A. utahensis* are being marketed as USDA zone 5 (-20°F, -28°C) hardy. Once established, none of these plants need pampering. During periods of water rationing and drought this can be very important.

Until recently, cacti were seldom seen in gardens, outside of desert areas where they are expected to be.

Now, in many western cities it is somewhat common for a cholla to be spotted in a roadside planting. The use of *Escobaria* and *Echinocereus* species in rock gardens has become virtually fashionable. Species such as *Echinocereus fendleri* (Fig. 6) or *E. reichenbachii* lend themselves quite well to this purpose. People who are familiar with the Cactaceae are surprised by the number of incredibly ornate species such as *E. knippelianus*, *E. davisii*, or *E. canus* that will adapt to climates with frigid winters. Both *Gymnocalycium bruchii* and *G. gibbosum* have been growing and flowering in my garden in Colorado Springs for over ten years. Species such as *Lobivia thionantha* and *Rebutia pygmaea*, as well as maihuenias and *Maihueniopsis* species are being successfully used as rock garden or container subjects where winters are bitter. It surprises many experienced cactus growers that *Astrophytum capricorne* will withstand extreme cold in winter, if it is kept completely dry. There are too many interesting cacti, of many genera that can be grown where thermometers read bitterly cold temperatures, to list here.

There are other plant families that offer choice succulents for gardens in freezing climates. In the Asteraceae there is *Othonna capensis* 'Little Pickles', which makes an attractive, blue-green mat, with masses of yellow flowers. 'Little Pickles' is a great indicator



6. Trays filled with blooming *Echinocereus fendleri* at Wild Things Wholesale Nursery, ready to go to garden centers.



7. In cold climates, gardeners who experiment with cacti have known the adaptability of *Escobaria sneedii* to withstand bitter winters for generations.

plant that shrinks quickly when soils are dry, letting the gardener know it is time to water. The Euphorbiaceae is represented by *Euphorbia clavarioides* subsp. *truncata*, which will grow with vigor in zone 5 if the plants are covered through the coldest periods of winter. The covering may be snow or cloth, and it is best if plants are not covered for the entire season, as long as they are protected during the periods that the air temperature is colder than negative 12.2°C (10°F) for more than a day or two.

The Portulacaceae is also represented. Rock garden enthusiasts in bitter cold regions have known the decorative qualities of lewisias for many years. In recent years, hybrid cultivars of these plants have even shown up in the garden departments of big box stores at times. If these succulent treasures are placed in crevices, where soils drain quickly they will grow, and bloom for years. Also there is a form of *Anacampteros rufescens* introduced by the Denver Botanic Gardens that has been grown outside in Colorado gardens for many years. Several decorative talinum can be grown in cold climates, such a *Talinum calycinum*.

To grow these plants successfully, in open gardens, it is wise to consider the obvious things, such as soil type and plant placement. Creating berms can be quite helpful, as they will cause excess moisture to drain from the soil surface and away from plants. Mixing gravel into the soil will help the moisture from melting snow to be absorbed into the berm. Loamy soils will be the most suitable for creating berms. Including decorative rocks of varied sizes helps the

planting be more attractive and will create valuable microclimates. If the rocks are partially buried they will help to channel water toward the root zone where it will be helpful and away from the surface where it can be detrimental. Southern exposures are warmer in the colder months. With this type of gardening finding microclimates is important.

Keep in mind that many succulents that are capable of adjusting to colder climates are high altitude or alpine plants. For many of these spe-

cies the heat of summer is as stressful as the cold of winter. Planting in early spring, or when temperatures begin to moderate in autumn will often times make it easier for plants to adapt to the climate. If freezes occur after planting the plants can be covered for short periods. The growing season is generally a bit longer, where many of these species occur in nature. For this reason, it may be helpful to force the plants into dormancy ahead of the first Arctic air in autumn. Generally speaking, withholding water can accomplish this. Plants that are fully dormant can withstand temperature extremes that might mean death to a growing plant. Many mesembs such as rabieas, *Titanopsis*, and *Nananthus* species will try to break dormancy during warm spells in winter. It is better not to encourage them by watering. When they are blooming during a winter thaw, if temperatures drop suddenly they should be covered by cloth if there is no snowfall that comes with the colder temperatures.

I would encourage any succulent loving gardener living in a cold climate to try a few succulents other than the traditional sempervivums and sedums. Seed is cheap and many of these plants grow quickly, and easily from seed. But I will offer this warning, it can be addictive once you find a couple of plants that do well in your climate. Also, you might the first to find a new succulent that can be grown outside in your area. Every year, brave gardeners, where winters are frigid, experiment with new succulent species and find more that can be recommended.

Cacti of the Month

Escobaria is a genus of small, globular to short cylindrical cacti, often forming clumps. The stems are covered with rather than ribs, and each tubercle bears spines that can be short and bristly or long and needle-like. Flowers typically emerge from the stem apex and come in shades of pink, yellow, or green. Escobaria fruits are small, fleshy, and often red.

Escobaria is native to the deserts, grasslands, and rocky outcrops of North America, ranging from southern Canada through the central and southwestern United States to northern Mexico.

They prefer well-drained, sandy or rocky soils and are cold-hardy compared to many other cacti, tolerating freezing temperatures in some regions. These plants experience hot summers, cold winters, and seasonal rainfall.



Coryphantha, commonly known as "beehive cacti," features globular to cylindrical stems with pronounced tubercles arranged in spiral patterns. A key distinguishing feature of Coryphantha is the presence of a groove running from the areole (where spines emerge) to the axil (where flowers form) on each tubercle. The flowers are typically large, showy, and come in yellow, pink, or purple hues, appearing at the plant's apex.

Coryphantha is native to the southwestern United States, Mexico, and parts of Central America. They are adapted to hot summers and cool to cold winters, with some species tolerating light frost. Like Escobaria, they prefer well-drained soils and are drought-tolerant, relying on seasonal rainfall for growth.

Succulents of the Month

Senecio is an incredibly diverse genus that includes succulents, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants. The succulent species, often popular in cultivation, have fleshy leaves that may be cylindrical, rounded, or flattened. Examples include *Senecio rowleyanus* (string of pearls) and *Senecio radicans* (string of bananas). The flowers are typically small, daisy-like, or in some cases, inconspicuous, and often yellow or white.

Senecio species are distributed worldwide, with succulent forms primarily found in southern Africa. Other species occur in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Australia.

Senecio are well adapted to arid and semi-arid climates, thriving in well-draining soils with infrequent watering. They prefer bright light and can tolerate full sun, though some species benefit from partial shade in hotter climates.



Uploaded by: Sándor Horváth

Othonna consists of small, shrubby or succulent plants, some with underground tubers or caudexes. Leaves can be fleshy, cylindrical, or flat, and they are often deciduous in response to seasonal changes. *Othonna* flowers are typically bright yellow and daisy-like, borne on long stalks that rise above the foliage. Some species have a striking appearance due to their swollen stems or unusual growth habits. *Othonna* is primarily found in southern Africa, especially in the winter-rainfall regions of South Africa and Namibia. *Othonna* species are adapted to Mediterranean-like climates with cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Many species enter dormancy during the dry season, shedding their leaves to conserve moisture. They thrive in well-draining soils and full sun to partial shade.

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.

Long Beach Cactus Club 2025 Plants of the Months

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>CACTI</u>	<u>SUCCULENTS</u>
February	Copiapoa / Eriosyc / Islaya	Gasteria / Haworthia
March	Corypantha / Escobaria	Senecio / Othonna
April	Variegated cacti	Variegated succulents
May	CLUB SALE	
June	Hybrids & cultivars	Cultivars & hybrids
July	Melocactus / Discocactus	Fockea / Ficus / Ipomoea
August	Favorites (3)	Favorites (3)
September	Grafted cacti	Grafted succulents
October	AUCTION	
November	Miniatures (3) under 3 inches	Miniatures (3) under 3 inches
December	HOLIDAY PARTY	

2025 POM MINI-SHOW STANDINGS

Advanced		Intermediate		Beginner	
Gary Duke	21	Amy Angulo	18	Raymond Q.	16
Richard Salcedo	16	Andrew Lander	2	Dam	14
Henry Angulo	9			Kelly Eddy	9
Daniel Zepeda	1			Shirley Kost	8
				Arianna Gardezabal	1

SNACK AND REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>LAST NAME STARTS WITH</u>
February	C, D
March	E, F, G
April	H, I, J
May	Show & Sale
June	K, L, M
July	N, O
August	P, Q, R
September	S, T, U, V
October	Auction
November	W, X, Y, Z
December	Holiday Party

LBCC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2025

PRESIDENT	Nelson Hernandez	SECRETARY	Kelly Eddy
VICE-PRESIDENT	William Ramirez	TREASURER	Henry Angulo
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	Daniel Almanza, Christopher Bucka, Scott Bunell, Lemono Lott, Alfonso Molina		
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MEMBERSHIP	Lawrence Hofman	HISTORIAN	Ken Shaw
INTER-CITY SHOW	Henry Angulo & Scott Bunell	MINI-SHOW	<i>Open - Contact if Interested</i>
LIBRARIAN	William Ramirez	X-MAS PARTY	<i>Open - Contact if Interested</i>
PHOTOGRAPHER	Dereck Diaz	REFRESHMENTS	Erika Villalobos
MAY SALE	Henry Angulo	AUCTION	Gretchen Lewotsky
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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