*July 2026*

# Roadrunner News

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

**Presention:** Jeff Moore: *California Succulent Road Trip*

This presentation came about as an idea for a zoom presentation during the time of COVID. Having made a round of talks to cactus clubs in New England in 2018, I learned that whenever those succulent enthusiasts wanted to take a snowbird escape trip to see some of their favorite cacti and succulents, they almost always thought first and foremost of visiting Arizona.

I also love visiting Arizona, but after making multiple California speaking trips in support of my books, I had gained an even greater appreciation for the quality of growers, nurseries and botanical gardens in the Golden State. So, I created this Powerpoint presentation as a commercial to consider opting instead to follow a loose plant for a ten-day to two-week trip, flying into the Bay Area, spending a few days visiting the Ruth Bancroft and Berkeley botanic gardens, a few local collectors and nurseries, then proceeding down the coast, with stops in Monterey, then ideally down through Big Sur (if that option ever comes back), to San Luis Obisopo, then visiting Lotusland and Aloes in Wonderland in Santa Barbara.

Time permitting, continuing onto some of the famous gardens in LA, then finishing off in San Diego with private gardens/collections and wholesale growers. The presentation toggles between beautiful images of private gardens, nurseries and botanic gardens, showcasing primarily succulents both containerized and in-ground, along with some other xerophytic plants.

After giving zoom presentations to a few east coast clubs (one is planning to do this trip in reverse in conjunction with the San Diego C&S convention in 2025), it occurred to me that those of us in California often find ourselves sequestered in our corners of the state and would benefit from at least some version of this adventure - sort of a succulent excuse for a coastal California road trip (not shown but mentioned are some of the other highlights of such a trip - places to eat, breweries/wineries, museums, etc …).

I have owned and operated Solana Succulents, a small retail nursery in Solana Beach, since 1992. I have written or co-written six books on succulents over the past 12 years, and have been on the speaker's circuit during that time, including a recent talk to the Cactus and Succulent convention in New Zealand. I am married with two grown sons, but am the only certified OCD plant person in the family.

***Pachypodium***

When most people think of *Pachypodium* they think of Madagascar for good reason. Of the 30 plus species known to science, all but 5 come from there. The rest come from Southern Africa. Some species look like true desert dwellers like *P. namaquanum*, others look like they are from tropical rainforests, but are actually from tropical dry forests, like *P. lamerei*. Yet others, most notably *P. brevicaule*, look like they could come from an alien world!

*Pachypodium horombense*

That means every species you see comes from Madagascar, except: *P. namaquanum, P. succulentum* (including *P. griquense*)*, P. bispinosum, P. saundersii & P. lealii*. Interestingly, these African plants tend to be a bit easier to grow on the whole, possibly due in part to more tolerance of our cool winters. Madagascar by contrast is a more tropical island with uniformly warm temperatures, even in the driest regions.

*Pachypodium namaquanum*

*Pachypodium* belongs to the Apocynaceae, one of the largest of all plant families as well as one of the families with the most species of succulents. It is closely related to *Adenium*, Stapeliads, *Fockea*, Oleanders, Milkweeds, Plumeria, and many other non-xeric plants. While most similar to *Adenium*, *Pachypodium* can be distinguished from it by having spines, and usually by flower color. While pinks and reds are extremely common in *Adenium*, only a few *Pachypodium* have red or pink in their flowers. *Pachypodium* also stands out from most of the family, including *Adenium*, in having alternate leaves (one leaf at each node) while the rest of the family (usually) has opposite leaves (paired leaves).

Have you ever given thought to how plants end up where they are and why some places have more species than others? The distribution of *Pachypodium* may lead you to consider that. Why are there so many more (4-5x) as many species in Madagascar than in the whole of continental Africa? It must be because *Pachypodium* evolved in Madagascar, right? Possibly, but it is equally likely that it evolved in Africa but didn't diversify greatly there, but when a single plant arrived in Madagascar it rapidly spread around the island then became isolated in different habitats which over time evolved into different species. In other words, a center of diversity for a plant group today doesn't necessarily mean that's where the group originated. In one location the conditions may have allowed for tall, tree like, species to form (e.g. *P. lamerei & P. geayi*) while in other places, such as very dry rocky hills, small very xeric species may have been better adapted. Yes, Africa also has lots of different habitats, but it may have had to compete with many other plants already there while Madagascar might have had fewer plants at the time, making it easier for *Pachypodium* to thrive and diversify. Recent research into the relationships of *Pachypodium* suggests this may well be what happened!

*Pachypodium brevicaule*

Cultivation of *Pachypodium* is generally easy. Most like constant moisture (not wet though!) during the growing season. When they drop their leaves in the winter keep dry. Some species, like *P. brevicaule* are more water sensitive than others. The biggest difference between African and Madagascar species is in cold tolerance. In general, African species can tolerate more cold, while Madagascar species need to at least be kept above freezing, with some species only thriving if kept above 50 degrees. Pachypodium lamerei is the biggest exception in that it is a Madagascar species that can tolerate the occasional light frost in our region.

**-Kyle Williams**

**Photo Credits: Kyle Williams & Daederot**

***Rebutia* (including *Sulcorebutia, Cintia* & *Weingartia*)**

*Rebutia kupperiana*

*Rebutia*, *Sulcorebutia*, and *Weingartia* are South American cacti from the highlands of Bolivia and Northern Argentina. They are similar in appearance, in habitat and culture. Coming from high altitudes, they are both tolerant of cold, and if dry, can be left out in all weather. The populations of species of these genera overlap, but they do not naturally hybridize.

These genera are easily grown. They are dormant in winter, and start to grow in late March or April. They flower from April through June, with the peak flowering period varying from year to year depending on the weather. Two flowering cycles are common in cultivation in California. The flowers appear in abundance, and vary in color from purple and red through orange to yellow. They do well in standard cactus mix, and grow best with regular fertilization when in active growth. They are both attractive to spider mites. Damage can be prevented by frequent inspection, and a weekly, forceful wash down with water. I have found mealybug infestations in *S. rauschii* to be particularly difficult to deal with because of the numerous densely packed heads. Multiple applications of imidacloprid (e.g. Bayer Tree and Shrub) over the course of six months were needed to eliminate my plant's infestation.

*Sulcorebutia rauschii*

Propagation from offsets is easy. The offsets should be cut off, left to dry for a few days, and then replanted. Very small offsets can be successfully rooted. Seed is easy to germinate, but is short lived.

Those of you who enjoy banging your head against a wall will enjoy learning about *Rebutia, Sulcorebutia,* and *Weingartia* taxonomy. It is one of the most complex taxonomic problems among cacti and has been argued over for years. Thankfully, DNA sequencing and phylogenetic systematics research is finally starting to make headway into the issue, though much is left to be done. This subject is far too complicated to get into detail here, but *Sulcorebutia* and *Weingartia* (as well as the monotypic *Cintia knizei*) should be lumped into a single genus, with *Weingartia* being the oldest name (and therefore the one that should be used).

*Rebutia* itself is distinct from these genera but has an even bigger problem, it contains two groups of species that are not closely related to each other (in scientific terms *Rebutia* is not monophyletic). One group of *Rebutia* is related to the *Weingartia/Sulcorebutia* group (but not part of it). This group includes *R. padcayensis* and *R. minuscula*. For nomenclatural reasons this is the group that would remain *Rebutia.* A second group of *Rebutia* including *R. pseudodeminuta*, *R. fiebrigii*, *R. deminuta*, *R. pygmaea*, *R. steinmannii* and *R. einsteinii* is distinct evolutionarily from the first group and will be considered a different genus. This group will require a new name for the genus. It should be noted that there are clear morphological differences that separate these groups, so it isn't just DNA that "says" they are different! Just to summarize: *Rebutia* will become two genera and *Sulcorbutia, Weingartia,* and *Cintia* will be lumped into a single genus.

**Kyle Williams**
**Photo Credits: Kyle Williams**

**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 2026 Plants of the Months

| MONTH | CACTI | SUCCULENTS |
|---|---|---|
| July | Rebutia/Sulcorebutia | Pachypodium |
| August | Notocactus/Parodia | Sansevieria |
| September | Lobivia/Echinopsis | Adromischus |
| October | **AUCTION** | |
| November | Minatures (3” or below) (3) | Minatures (3” or below) (3) |
| December | **XMAS PARTY** | |

## 2026 POM MINI-SHOW STANDINGS

| Advanced | | Intermediate | | Beginner | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Henry Angulo | 116 | Amy Angulo | 55 | Gretchen | 31 |
| Gary Duke | 39 | Raymond | 53 | Cynthia Roberts | 28 |
| Christian N. | 4 | Alden Norris | 47 | Aldo Granda | 23 |
| | | Dylan Stewart | 14 | Karen Krebs | 12 |
| | | Andrew Lander | 13 | Arianna Gardeazabal | 8 |
| | | Margaret Lander | 3 | Christian N. | 5 |
| | | Dan Papilli | 2 | Shirley Kost | 3 |
| | | | | Sandra & Osuar | 2 |
| | | | | Anthony Eriksson | 1 |

*Fig. 1 Difficult driving conditions*

# Like it or lump it –

## Madagascan caudiciforms

**by Al Laius**

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and, owing to its geological history and present geographical position, its vegetation is characterised by a high percentage of endemic plants (and animals). About 80% of all flowering plants on the island are endemic to it.

A recent trip to the Galoko mountains in north-west Madagascar in search of the rare and elusive *Sansevieria sambiranensis* ended in failure. With our Land Rover stuck in deep mud (Fig. 1) and the waters of the mangrove swamps rising above the level of the exhaust pipe, being eaten alive by mosquitoes, stung by wild wasps and attacked by what seemed like the fastest moving leeches on planet Earth, we just did not have the time or resources then to climb higher than we did, where we might have had a chance to find the plant. Still we

*Fig. 2 Ravenala palms and secondary forest in northern Madagascar*

***Above:***
***Fig. 3 Sansevieria canaliculata near Ankify***

reached high enough to experience one of the last vestiges of the natural primeval forest of the 'Great Red Island'. Madagascar has lost almost 90% of its natural forest cover over the last few hundred years due to deforestation and slash-and-burn practices. Of the taller growing plants only the *Ravenala madagascariensis* palm (not a true palm but actually a member of the banana family) can survive fire and it is easy to differentiate between primary and secondary forest by the number of these palms present (Fig. 2).

So, not having seen a succulent plant in over five days, we decided to head further north and visit the Ankarana National Park and surrounding area. On the way there, a stop-off at Ankify was essential in order to see the only other *Sansevieria* on the island, *S. canaliculata* (Fig. 3). Although not endemic to the island, being an introduction from Mozambique many years ago, it has already evolved there over time and differs mainly by having up to five flowers per tuft (as opposed to three).

***Fig. 4 View over the tsingy at Ankarana National Park and Fig. 5 Crowned lemur (Eulemur coronatus) on tsingy***

The Ankarana plateau consists of a mixture of dry deciduous forest and limestone karst pinnacles known as 'tsingy' (Fig. 4). Tsingy is the Malagasy name for the bizarrely eroded limestone formations found here and in several other places in Madagascar. Its 500 foot thick limestone is riddled with caves and canyons, and the knife-edged pinnacles rise 3–4 feet high. The limestone is so hard and uniform that, on the surface or inside the caves, blades left in the erosion process produce melodious tones when struck – making a 'tsing' like sound.

Apart from the adorable lemurs (Fig. 5) it was the euphorbias and various caudiciform plants that caught my eye, and which form the basis of this short article. Plants of *Adenia epigea* (Fig. 6) were not difficult to find as their large caudices, ranging in shape from round, globular, flattened or irregular, and often reaching up to one metre in diameter, were in plain view above the ground. They were often found growing together with other 'lumps' such as *Cyphostemma pachypus* (Fig. 7) and *Euphorbia ankaranensis* (Fig. 8). This *Euphorbia* is only found in northern Madagascar where it grows in pockets of humus on limestone escarpments in deciduous forest. We were lucky to catch it in flower during the dry season. The cyathia often appear in such large numbers that they form a globose head. After the fruits ripen, the cyathia drop off and new leaves emerge at the start of the rainy season. The other *Euphorbia* frequently encountered in this area is *E. pachypodioides* (Figs. 9 and 10). This is an attractive plant which derives its

***Above left:***
***Fig. 6 Adenia epigea***

***Above right:***
***Fig. 7 Adenia epigea (left) and Cyphostemma pachypus (right)***

***Fig. 8 Euphorbia ankarensis***

***Fig. 9 Euphorbia pachypodioides***

***Fig. 10 Euphorbia pachypodioides clinging perilously to life***

specific name from the columnar, unbranched stems which look like the juvenile form of *Pachypodium geayi* or *P. lameri*.

Other caudiciform plants include *Adenia lapiazicola* (with a liana in the shape of a demijohn in juvenile growth) which was only described as recently as 1997 by Martine Bardot-Vaucoulon, and is found growing in cracks in the limestone (Fig. 11); *Cyphostemma rutilans* (Fig. 12); *Trochomeriopsis sp.*, a cucurbit (Fig. 13) and of course no article on Madagascar would be complete without mentioning pachypodiums. One of the rarest and also the least spiny species of the genus is *Pachypodium decaryi* (Fig. 14). This is a bottle-shaped species which grows on limestone plateaux in just a couple of locations in northern Madagascar. The flowers are also supposedly the largest in the genus, and we were fortunate to be there during flowering time which is mainly between April and June (Fig. 15). Gordon Rowley in his book *'Pachypodium and Adenium' (Cactus File Handbook No. 5)* suggests that this species is of great botanical interest as it could be a bridge to the genus *Adenium*, from which it differs mainly in the narrower flower tube and tail-less anthers.

Wandering around in the tsingy was a thrilling experience and succulent plant discoveries were round every corner. Wherever you looked there were 'lumps' just lying around! (See front cover.)

After a couple of days in the National Park we decided to explore some other areas in the region. We had already seen some examples of tall tree-like pachypodiums in the distance on our drive north, so it was therefore essential to set off on foot in order to get closer to them. These were *Pachypodium rutenbergianum* (Fig. 17), a tree-like species which is widespread in the north in deciduous forests, savannah and on limestone rocks. These plants can reach up to 12 metres high although the average is around 3–6 metres. Young plants have spiny trunks and the branches, even on large mature plants, are also spiny. The scented white flowers appear after the leaves have fallen (Fig. 18). We also photographed two other *Euphorbia* species which did not occur in the National Park – *E. alfredii* and *E. neohumbertii*. *E. alfredii*

***Fig. 11 A particularly large example of Adenia lapiazicola***

***Fig. 12 Cyphostemma rutilans growing in a most unlikely place***

***Fig. 13 Trochomeriopsis sp.***

(Fig. 19) is very close to *E. ankarensis* but it has thinner stems and both the leaves and cyathophylls differ. *E. neohumbertii* (Fig. 20) is a very attractive plant both with or without flowers. The plants are usually unbranched and can reach up to one metre tall. The epidermis is a bright green colour and the corky grey leaf scars are arranged across the stem – this is particularly evident in younger plants.

While some of these photos may whet your appetite and you may be keen to acquire them for your collections, please bear in mind that much of the flora of Madagascar is endangered and that wholesale collection of plants from habitat, for the export market, still occurs. Obviously this is not sustainable and, as many of these plants are difficult in cultivation, it is surely better to grow them from seed or acquire vegetative propagations (where appropriate) than to purchase habitat plants. Please develop the habit of always asking the source of any plants you buy and remember that often plants from habitat are grown on in gardens in Madagascar and then shipped overseas as so-called nursery-grown stock. Let us try to conserve these plants by not buying habitat collected material.

***Fig. 14 Pachypodium decaryi, and***
***Fig. 15 P. decaryi flower***

***Fig. 17 Pachypodium rutenbergianum, and***
***Fig. 18 Close up of the flowers of P. rutenbergianum***

***Above:***
***Fig. 19***
***Euphorbia alfredii***
***Above right:***
***Fig. 20***
***Euphorbia neohumbertii***

My trip would not have been possible without the expertise and botanical knowledge of Christophe Quénel, a resident of Madagascar and botanical tour operator. A Frenchman, he also speaks English and a few other languages and his wife Nadia (who often accompanies tours) is Malagasy. Christophe can offer fixed itineraries or will put together specific plant-orientated circuits depending on your personal interests.

For further information contact Christophe Quénel at: christophe.quenel@yahoo.fr or visit his website: www.madabotanik.com ■

***Photos: Al Laius***

# The Long Beach Cactus Club

*Est. 1933*

**Meeting Highlights:**

- Monthly programs led by plant experts from around the world
- Mini shows each month with different categories of cacti & succulents
- Vendors selling plants, pots, tools, and more
- Monthly raffles
- Advice from members for plant identification and care

**Meeting Information:**

1st Sunday of each month
1:00 pm
Woman's Club of Bellflower 9402 Oak St, Bellflower, CA

## Member Sign Up

$20.00 per year, per membership
$10.00 for engraved name badge (optional)

☐ Cash or ☐ Check - Made out to the Long Beach Cactus Club

Membership year: _____ Amount paid: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address (for mailing purposes): _____

Phone number: _____

## SNACK AND REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

| MONTH | LAST NAME STARTS WITH |
|---|---|
| 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 2026

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PRESIDENT | Nelson Hernandez | SECRETARY | Kelly Eddy |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Scott Bunnell | TREASURER | Henry Angulo |
| BOARD OF DIRECTORS | Daniel Almanza, Christopher Bucka, Tanisha Herr, Lemono Lott, Alfonso Molina | | |
| CSSA LIAISON | Scott Bunnell | NEWSLETTER | Andrew Lander |
| VENDORS | Gary Duke | PROGRAMS | Nelson Hernandez |
| MEMBERSHIP | Lawrence Hofman | HISTORIAN | Ken Shaw |
| INTER-CITY SHOW | Henry Angulo & Scott Bunell | MINI-SHOW | *Open* |
| LIBRARIAN | Nelson Hernandez | X-MAS PARTY | *Open* |
| PHOTOGRAPHER | Dereck Diaz | REFRESHMENTS | Erika Villalobos |
| MAY SALE | Henry Angulo | AUCTION | Gretchen Lewotsky |
| INSTAGRAM | Cynthia Roberts | | |
| WEBSITE | German Rivera | | |

## 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