



The Eastern Spine

Newsletter of the National Capital
Cactus & Succulent Society
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(NCCSS Home Page)

www.washington-dc.cactus-society.org

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NEXT NCCSS MEETING WILL BE ON SUNDAY May 17, 2009

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

CSSA Tour of Eastern Brazil June, 2008 - Part 1

The program for the May NCCSS meeting will be a presentation from member Lee Miller, based on a Cactus and Succulent Society of America tour of South America that he participated in over a three week period (he traveled three thousand miles!) in June 2008. Lee visited the habitats of many types of cacti, including Melocactus and Pilosocereus, and also saw a couple of other genera, including some bromeliads, that are not commonly grown in the horticultural trade. Lee not only takes great photographs; his commentary on his trips is full of interesting information about both the plants he sees and the flavor of the countries he visits.

Our Next Regular Monthly Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, May 17, 2009**. It will be held at the **St. Anselm's Abbey School at 14th & South Dakota Ave. N.E Washington, DC**. The meeting begins at **10:30 am** and ends at **Noon**. The Board meeting, which is open to all members, begins at 9:30 am and ends at 10:15 am.

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NCCSS HAPPENINGS

It's Your Society - Get Involved

The 2009 NCCSS Show and Sale is Coming

The 2009 NCCSS Show and Sale is scheduled for July 31st, August 1st, and August 2nd at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland.

☀ **Friday July 31, 2009** is set up day . Plants for the show and sale are brought to Brookside Gardens and arranged on the show and sale tables. On this day the show and sale are not open to the public.

☀ **Saturday, August 1, 2009** The show and sale opens to the public at 9:00 a.m. and remains open until 5:00 p.m.

☀ **Sunday, August 2, 2009.** The show and sale opens to the public at 9:00 a.m. and closes at 4:00 p.m. Show and remaining sales plants are removed, and the room cleaned from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Selling Plants and the NCCSS 2009 Show and Sale - by Paul Hanerfeld

All NCCSS members are encouraged to sell plants at the annual Brookside Gardens Show & Sale. Each NCCSS member should register their intent to sell plants. Members should indicate their "3 initials" price label choice, and the approximate number of plants they intend to sell.

Additionally, to improve the efficiency, and accuracy, of tallying the sales, we are requiring that all plant sale price labels be computer printed. We want the price labels to meet the following standards: 1/2" by 3/4" rectangular (Avery Label product # 5418) or 3/4" diameter round (Avery Label Product # 5408)

Plant sale price labels must be of the removable type. The price labels must be white in color. Several high volume sellers will be assigned special colored price labels. The price labels must have your 3-initials printed on the top. In order to prevent duplication, the initials you use must be coordinated with Paul Hanerfeld. In order to facilitate the sales procedure, all plants must be priced in even dollar increments i.e. \$1.00, \$2.00 \$3.00 etc.

If you have any questions or comments about selling plants at the August Show and Sale please call Paul Hanerfeld.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17, 2009	NCCSS monthly meeting.	The Succulents of Eastern Brazil with Lee Miller
June 21, 2009	NCCSS Monthly meeting	Getting Ready for the 2009 Show and Sale
July 1-4, 2009	Gesneriad Society 2009 Annual Show and Sale (More info on page 3)	
August 1-2, 2009	NCCSS Annual Plant Show and Sale at Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, Md	

NCCSS Group Plant Order

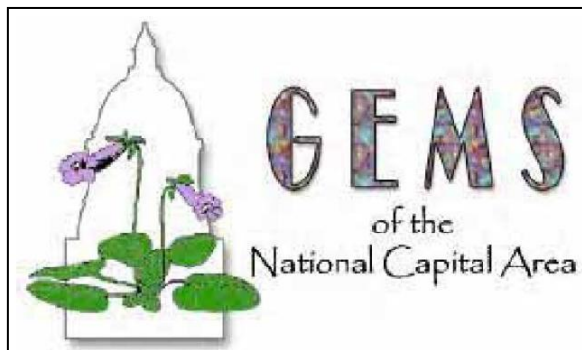
Would you like to purchase a few choice succulent plants from a mail order nursery, but the hassle of ordering and waiting for plants to be delivered just makes it too much of a chore? Many club members feel this way, and to help, the club is organizing a group order to “Miles To Go” Nursery in Arizona. The club will collect orders from members, including payment, and deal with submitting the order and receiving the plant shipment. You just come to the meeting and pick up your plants.

Miles To Go has a good mixed selection of both cacti and other succulents. I checked out

the “New Listings” section of their web site and there is a nice selection of aloes, several nice echeverias, and a 6 inch tall *Pachycormus discolor* for only \$4.00. You’ll find the “Miles To Go” web site, with lots of pictures, at: <http://www.miles2go.com/>

Bob Petza has volunteered to collect and send in the orders and the money. If you have any questions or have your plant order from “Miles To Go” ready, contact Bob at 301-490-4239.

Remember! All orders, including payment, must be in Bob Petza’s hands by the conclusion of the May 2009 NCCSS meeting.



Gesneriad Society’s 2009 Annual Convention and Show

The Gesneriad Society’s 2009 Annual Convention and Show will be held from July 1-4, 2009 at the Hilton Silver Spring, 4 blocks

from the Silver Spring Metro at 8727 Colesville Road, Silver Spring MD.

The Gesneriad family of plants includes African violets, streptocarpus, gloxinias, sinningias, chiritas, and many more. The Convention includes a plant show, a plant sale, including commercial vendors such as Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses and Rob’s Violet Barn, lectures, tours of local spots of botanical interest, and other activities.

The show and sales are free and open from 1:45 pm -5 pm on Friday, July 3, and from 9 am -3 pm Saturday July 4. For more information, please visit www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org or <http://gesneriadsociety.org/conv2009/index.htm>

Monthly Meeting Program Schedule

The BOD (Board of Directors) has initiated a study of past NCCSS monthly programs in an effort to improve the scheduling and topic selection of future programs. Of course the purpose of monthly programs is to provide interesting information to society members concerning all aspects of the world of succulent plants. It would seem rather important to know what types of topics society members consider interesting and important. I therefore urge any

and all society members, who have suggestions or comments concerning our monthly programs, to contact the BOD (remember you’ve welcome at any and all BOD meetings) and let them know your thoughts and ideas. Coming up with new programs each month is no easy task and any help you can provide (whether it’s suggesting a program or volunteering to do one yourself), is appreciated. We all need to work to make the monthly programs as interesting and informative as we can.

The Great Plant Giveaway # 4



The process: A token has been made for each club member* with their name on it. Only members who have paid their 2009 dues will have a token. At the regular monthly meeting you collect your token and place it into the "prize" drawing bag. During the meeting three tokens will be selected from the bag and those three individuals will win one of the three giveaway plants. What three plants are up for grabs for the May meeting? Read on and learn.

* In terms of family memberships, each family member will be individually entered, but if one family member is selected, the other family member is eliminated for any plants remaining. Thus, there can only be one family winner per meeting.

Sempervivum (A Pot of Six)

Sempervivums (also known as hen and chicks, house leeks, and Jove's beard) were last month's Plant of the Month and one of our Great Giveaway plants for this month. Actually, it's more than a plant; it's a pot of six different semps. These are all plants from the fine collection of Al Nichols, our past club President and long time member. Al passed away last year and his wife Florence gave Al's plant collection, including several hundred sempervivums to the club. Many were sold at last year's Show and Sale and six more will make up one of our Great Giveaway Plants this month.



Parodia magnifica



Formally known as *Notocactus magnificus*, this is a clump forming (and this month's giveaway plant is already forming a clump of stems) globular cactus from the Rio Grande do Sul, region of Brazil. The plant body is bluish green and the rows of bristle-like spines along the plant ribs are bright yellow. The combination of the bluish body and yellow spination is very attractive. The flowers are relatively large, 2 to 2½ in. wide and a bright yellow. This is a relatively easy plant to grow; just provide full sun, well drained soil, and temperatures above 45° F. in winter. This plant was in the collection of Bob Stewart and purchased by the club for the Great Giveaway.

Adenium obesum

With *Adenium obesum*, also known as the "Desert Rose" and "Sabi Star" is a popular succulent plant from Africa. It's a pachycaul, a plant with a swollen stem. It has very nice flowers and is easy to grow. It prefers a bright location, with a few hours of direct sun, a well drained soil, a winter temperature above 50 degrees F., regular watering when active and a dry winter rest. This is a plant that can develop into an outstanding show plant and when in flower is a real knockout. This is a great plant for any collection. This plant was purchased from a local nursery.



Plant of the Month

The Horse Crippler Cactus

I first knew this plant as *Homalocephala texensis* and liked it right away. My liking had nothing to do with the supposed hazard to horses this cactus was accused of; my liking stemmed from the appearance and nature of the plant itself. The horse crippler cactus, now known as *Echinocactus texensis* grows as a solitary, thick, flattened plant that hides in the sand and dirt of a good portion of the American Southwest and Mexico. The spines are dense and heavy and held close to the plant body. The body color is a dull gray, green that helps this rather massive plant disappear from view unless you are unlucky (or lucky depending on your likes or dislikes of cactus) enough to stumble over it.

Although this is a cactus that is very widespread in its distribution, it's also one that you are lucky to find, even when you are looking for it. It does grow low to the ground, it is often covered in dirt and dust, and unless it's in flower or fruit, it can easily hide from you.

The flowers are pale pink with a red center and 2 inches plus in diameter. Perhaps more attractive than the flowers is the fruit. We're talking strawberries here. The fruit is large, 1 to 1½ inches in diameter, fleshy, red, like a strawberry.

Added to the interesting plant body, the attractive flowers and fruit, the horse crippler can be winter hardy in the Washington, D.C. area. I say "can be" because I have tried and lost four 3-4 inch plants, and lost eight 1 to 2 inch plants. They can take the cold, but they have difficulty with our wet winter weather. I have several that have over wintered outside in pots, protected from rain and snow. I still plant several out in my hardy bed each spring and enjoy them through the summer, but come fall I dig them back up and repot.



(Photo by William R. Carr, Plant Resources Center, University of Texas at Austin)

It's interesting, to me at least, that the horse crippler is not often offered by cactus nurseries. The two reasons for this is that one, it is a bit difficult to grow from seed and two, it's a bit slow growing compared to many other cacti. Or, could it be that no one else, besides me, believes it's such a great cactus? Does anyone else in the Washington club have a horse crippler? If you do, please bring it in for everyone to see at the May meeting. I'll bring one of mine in too.

The Next **Plant of the Month** will be **The Subglobose Euphorbias**, *E. obesa*, *E. meloformis*, *E. valida*.



Hybrids

New and unusual plants can result from two major pathways: (1) A mutation where the genetics of the plant alter or change in an accidental manner, and (2) The result of hybridization. A hybrid is defined as the offspring of the union of a male of one race, variety, species, genus, etc. with the female of another race. I had planned to write an article about hybrids and then I received an email from one of our members. I'm still working on the article but I couldn't wait to share with you the interesting subject of the email; it's a great lead in for the future discussion of hybrid plants.

Tom Cseh's Discovery

You probably don't know Tom Cseh even though he is a NCCSS member. Tom doesn't attend many of our monthly meetings because he lives in Mexico City! Although Tom misses all the fun and excitement of our monthly meetings, it's not all bad for Tom because he lives in true cactus country. Several months ago Tom sent me an email, including a photo, about a rather unusual cactus he had found. Tom believes this may be a natural generic hybrid between *Echinocereus pentalophus* subsp. *leonensis* and *Thelocactus setispinus*.

He discovered the plant on a hilltop just 500 feet from Mexico National Highway 2. While hybrids between two different species occur with some frequency, hybrids between different genera are quite rare. I told Tom I was thinking about writing an article on hybrid plants and his discovery would be the perfect lead in for such an article. We'll discuss the hybrid Tom found and lots more in the upcoming article. Pictured below is Tom's discovery in flower.

