



# Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

January 2010

Thursday, January 7, 2009 at 7 PM

## "South Africa - The Northern Cape Part II"

Presented by Doug Dawson



In September, Doug gave our club a program on Part I of a trip to the Northern Cape in South Africa. This follow-up program will focus on that part of the Northern Cape from the coast at Port Nolloth, many Richtersveld locations, over to Pofadder and down to a bit south of Springbok. This is all part of the Succulent Karoo Region which accounts for over 40% of the World's known succulent species.

Doug is a retired mathematics professor at Glendale Community College and now just teaches summer school each year to earn money for his trips. Right now, seed growing seems to be his greatest botanical passion. It yields much needed biodiversity. So often, especially in the succulent area, propagation by cuttings and even seed seems to limit the breadth of biodiversity. Much of what we grow or can even get seed from, comes from sources which have the same small gene pool for decades from a few select plants. It is good to introduce wild-collected seed with data from time to time to prevent a narrowing of genetic material. New sports or cultivars also effervesce when lots of seedlings are observed. With his lithops, it is like being able to go "rock" collecting for prettier, shinier "living" stones without even leaving his greenhouse. Doug is a past

president of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society in Phoenix and is also a member of the TCSS. He has done extensive botanical travels in Namibia and South Africa. Doug's program will include Mesemb, Euphorbias, Stapeliads and other succulents, wild flowers and many bulbs. Most of the photos from his talk were taken in August, 2008 (early Spring), with a few from a second trip in April and May of 2009 to show the same plants in blooming season or other conditions.

Please be sure not to miss the second part of Doug's exploration in South Africa. It will be a great way to start the new year!

## Aloe Roundtable Discussion

February 18, 2010 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Junior League of Tucson • Kiva Room

2099 East River Road

On February 18, 2010 we will be having an Aloe roundtable discussion that will be freely open to all our members interested in finding further information about anything and everything related to the Aloaceae. What plants would be good to put in the landscape garden, what would be frost hardy, what would be a good choice for excellent pot culture and much more. We will be asking some of our best local nursery owners to come out and express some of their experiences with everyone and to let everyone know what would be their choice selections. There may be many questions, a chance for everyone to express their own ideas and to find out what is the best plants to grow in the many areas in and around Tucson. Please mark your calendar now and in February, come out and ask questions, get answers and enjoy talking with others that are interested in learning more about Aloes!

**Meetings are held on the first  
Thursday of each month.**



**Junior League of Tucson, Kiva Bldg.  
2099 E. River Road**

## President's Message



I want to congratulate our three newly elected Directors, Keimpe Bronkhurst, Dale Johnson and Chris Monrad. They will join the eight returning Board Members along with the re-elected officers. I also want to take this opportunity to welcome Bill Holcombe as our new CSSA Affiliate Representative. Bill's job will be to represent and communicate all that TCSS does to CSSA and the rest of the cactus and succulent community. This is a great team.

I want to thank Helen Barber who has served as our CSSA Affiliate Representative from 2003 to 2009. Seven years of dedicated service which included the Tucson 2009 CSSA Convention, being in charge of the convention vendors, and putting up with both her husband, Kevin, and me, when we were members of the Board of Directors of CSSA, which surely complicated her job. My special thanks to her for all she has done to promote TCSS to CSSA and all of its affiliates.

I am really excited about this new year.

With the onset of colder weather the need for winter shelters for sensitive plants is everyone's focus. I remember when I could bring all the tender plants into the house for the winter. It seems the house has gotten smaller or maybe the number and size of plants has gotten larger but using the house as a winter shelter is out of the question. So I built a semi permanent PVC shelter. I hope to write about it and perhaps dedicate one of our round tables to discuss building shelters for our plants. I know others have been engaged in similar projects and it will be interesting to hear about their approach to winter shelters.

Thank you for the wonderful response to our TCSS Activity Questionnaire. Actually, it is a little overwhelming and will take a bit longer to analyze and present you the results, but we hope to have it done for the next newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support

*Dick Wiedhopf, President*

## Library Update

**TEXAS CACTI** by *Brian Loflin & Shirley Loflin*

The book starts out showing the 10 vegetational areas of Texas, followed by cactus anatomy. It then goes into the genera and species. Each species is given an account of the features, spines, flowers, fruit, seeds and a distribution map. A full-page color photo with insets helps with the identity of the plant.

**CACTUS OF ARIZONA FIELD GUIDE**

by *Nora and Rick Bowers, Stan Tekiela*

This small book contains information on the size, shape, spines, flowers, fruit and a distribution map. A full-page color photo with insets showing a close-up of the spines and flowers help to

identify each plant. Each species is given a common name first with it's botanical name beneath.

*Joie Giunta*

## President's Award

The President's Award recognizes outstanding Service to the society. Recipients are announced at the annual meeting in conjunction with the Holiday Party. A list of all past recipients will be on are website in the near future. This years President's Award were given to the follow members:

### **Matt Johnson & Pat Rorabaugh**

They have been long time contributors to our success. This year they have opened their garden for our home tour, participated in most of our rescues, including bring fresh greenhouse vegetables for everyone's delight, part of the team that cleans up after every meeting and event and have been generous with their knowledge about the desert habitat. They both contributed significantly to the success of the CSSA Convention.

### **Wendell Niemann**

A more recent member of the society who wishes he knew about us years ago. He is making up for by being an extraordinary volunteer. He is there to assist in the set up and take down of our events. Wendell takes an active roll in our rescue program and more. Someone has to help unload and maintain the rescued plants between sales. Wendell is one of those volunteers and has done a great job keeping our rescued material looking good.

### **William (Bill) Thornton**

Bill is an active member of the rescue crew and helps out at all our sales and events. He spurred on our conservation activities by getting us involved in a potential program to microchip saguaros to help prevent them form being stolen. He has authored a fine article on Saguaros for the CSSA Journal. Bill has a knack for acquiring all sorts of interesting plant from his friends for the benefit of the Society.

I have only briefly described some of the things that these four members have accomplished for the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society. The list goes on and on.

Thank you and congratulations.

Dick Wiedhopf, President

## Garden Tours

The Garden Tour Committee is planning the next tour in our series, for March 2010. We still need gardens in the West and Northwest areas. If you would like to volunteer your garden, please contact a committe member.

Members are: Bill Salisbury, Chairman. Patsy Frannea, Nancy Reid, Rim Tallat-Kelpsa.

# Eulophia petersii: A Desert Orchid by Mark Dimmitt

I was going to subtitle this article “A Succulent Orchid”, but that doesn’t say much. Of the 25,000 species of Orchidaceae worldwide, many thousands of them are succulent. But this is one of a relative few that grow in desert climates under the same culture as cacti or euphorbias. Dave Grigsby of Grigsby Cactus Gardens used to say, “Grow it like an aloe”. That’s pretty good advice, except that unlike most aloes, this orchid should be watered in summer and rested in winter.

*Eulophia petersii* is one of the most desert-adapted orchids. It grows in arid habitats from Namibia all the way to the southern Arabian Peninsula. An extreme succulent, it stores water in its large pseudobulbs, thick rigid leaves, and an ample system of fleshy roots. In spring 3- to 6-foot tall racemes bear hundreds of 1-inch brownish flowers with twisted petals.

This species was introduced to succulent nurseries in the early 1990s, when it was rare and expensive, selling for \$45 per bulb. It is now fairly easy to find.

## Culture

*Eulophia petersii* will grow best in a deep pot that accommodates the big root system. Use a coarse, well-drained succulent mix. During the summer growing season, they can take quite a bit of water, but it’s best to water only when the medium dries out, about every two weeks. They can go months without water, especially during the cool season. It is tolerant of temperatures from well over 100F. to freezing. All-day sun is a bit too much in summer; the plant will look much better in very light shade.

To ensure flowering, give the plant a cool, dry winter rest. While it can tolerate down to freezing or even a few degrees below under a cover, it tends not to flower after a cold winter outdoors or in an unheated enclosure. I keep my plants in a cool greenhouse with night temperatures about 45-50 F. Watering during winter also seems to inhibit flowering. I don’t water my plants at all from November until March.

Plants are vigorous and will grow into large clumps that bear a dozen or more inflorescences. Repot or divide as needed; the best time is in late spring after flowering and when new growths are several inches tall. Single-bulb divisions will establish well, but three-bulb divisions will make normal-sized new growth and usually flower the very next year.

Note: Verdins and goldfinches are fond of eating the flowers. If you have many of these birds, you may want to protect the plant when it’s flowering.

## Other species

The genus *Eulophia* has about 300 species, many of which are xerophytic succulents with beautiful flowers. Most, unfortunately, are very difficult to find. *Eulophia speciosa* has fleshy strap-shaped leaves from underground bulbs and 2-foot tall spikes of bright yellow flowers that look like flying birds. *E. orthoplectra* is similar in size and shape, but its flowers are purple on the front and yellow on the back. *E. keitii* and *E. leachii* have nonsucculent and succulent leaves, respectively, atop above-ground bulbs, and 1-foot spikes of small green flowers. Other species such as *E. guineensis* are herbaceous, bulbous perennials that grow in wet habitats, but also perform well outdoors in Tucson if kept well watered during the growing season.



10 foot tall *Aloe dichotoma* with frost protection frame on right. The commonest variety of *Eulophia petersii* in cultivation is this robust form with large pseudobulbs and very thick leaves. Other clones have smaller pseudobulbs and longer, more slender leaves.



The common form of *Eulophia petersii* in cultivation has brown flowers.



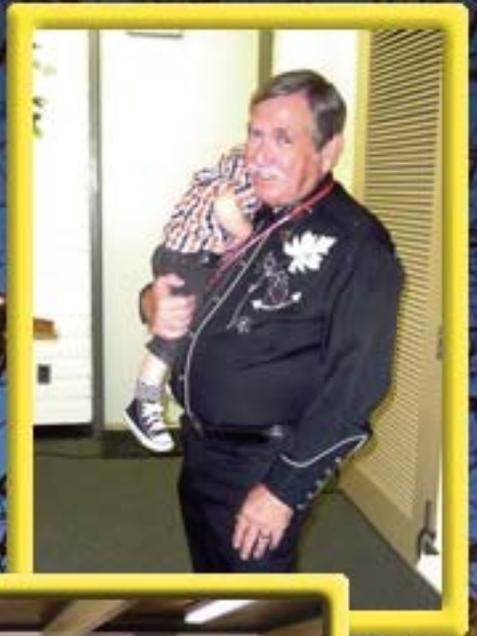
A green-flowered clone of *Eulophia petersii*. The plant is more gracile than the brown-flowered one



*Eulophia speciosa* is worth growing, if you can find it

# Holiday Party

TCSS 2009



## Last of the Year Cactus Sale



Several last of the year cactus rescues built up our inventory quickly. That triggers a sale. We had over 300 barrels and over 100 medium to very large ocotillo, some 14 feet tall, many nice large cereus cuttings and a few other cacti bringing in \$5,700. We also invited our member businesses to sell with us, five were able to do so on short notice.

Through our email lists and postcard mail list we reach out to over two thousand customer's. While December is not exactly the month most have gardening on their minds, we had over 110 customers purchase 415 plants in a few hours. Thirty TCSS volunteers made quick work of setting up and getting cacti loaded in customers cars and trucks. Not having a truck did not discourage anyone from taking home one of the large ocotillo or cereus cuttings.

A big thanks to the developers, Pima County Department of Transportation, Tucson Electric Power, U of A and Vail School District, who go the extra mile to be sure these plants are saved. The unending labor from our all volunteer TCSS Cactus Rescue Crew and great customers who give these plants a new home makes this program a huge success.!

*Joe Frannea*

## TCSS BOARD

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885-6367

Vice President: Vonn Watkins  
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(Ending Dec. 31, 2010)

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(Ending Dec. 31, 2011)

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CSSA Affiliate Rep:  
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Cactus Rescue  
cactusrescue@tucsoncactus.org

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Editor: Karen Keller  
runbunny@cox.net  
Deadline for copy: 15th of each month

TCSS Web Page:  
www.tucsoncactus.org  
Webmaster: Keimpe Bronkhorst

Everyone is Welcome!  
Bring your friends, join in the fun,  
and meet the cactus and  
succulent community.

## December Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with Q, R, S, T and U, V, W please bring your choice of refreshments to the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly appreciated and enjoyed!

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3

**Cacti Rescued**  
231 Rescues Accomplished

Please see our Website Calendar for the next rescued cactus sale. They are scheduled at various times during the year based on our inventory.

TCSS Club Members receive a 10% discount

### January 2010

Thursday, January 7, 2010

7:00pm

Monthly meeting: Presented By Doug Dawson.  
"South Africa - The Northern Cape Part II."

Tuesday, January 12, 2010

7:00pm

Board Meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy

## Acknowledgement of Contributions: September, October, November & December, 2009

The names below represent the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society members and friends whose donations helped make this year a success. We extend our sincere thanks for your support.

### General

Scott E. Calhoun  
Karen & Lon Chaney  
George E. Dodds  
Dave & Susan Gallaher  
William & Adella Hicks  
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Margaret Pope  
Linda Ryan  
Pat Wiedhopf  
Nancy L. Zierenberg

