



DESERT BREEZE

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society

November 2012

Thursday, November 1, 2012 at 7:00pm

“Cacti & Succulents the Rocky Mountain Way”

Presented by Marcia Tatroe

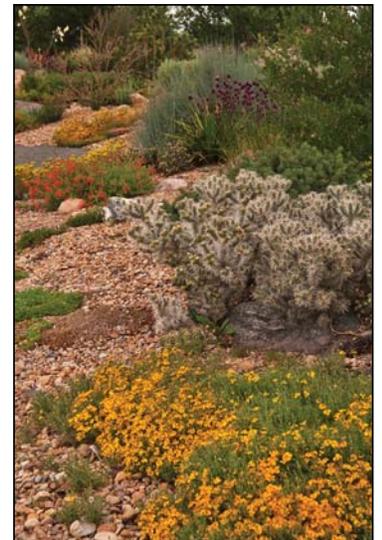


Coloradoans grow many of the same cacti and succulents familiar to Tucson gardeners. But frost eight months of the year, hot summers and dry winters have fostered an entirely new garden paradigm. In Denver a trunked yucca grows alongside a fernleaf peony, or in another garden across town, next to a dwarf peach and a tall garden phlox. The Colorado gardener's willingness to incorporate new ideas without discarding the old has created a synergism

between traditional garden design and the amazing diversity of plants that thrive in a high plains environment. The resulting gardens do not resemble anything heretofore—a style found only in the Mountain West.

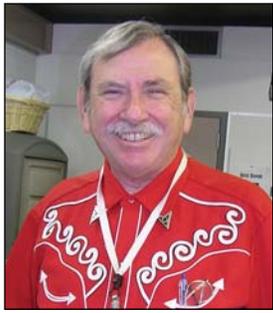
Author of best-selling *Perennials for Dummies*, Marcia Tatroe writes the monthly “Mountain Garden Checklist” for *Sunset Magazine*, a weekly gardening column in *The Denver Post*, and is a frequent contributor to *Colorado Gardener* and other gardening publications. She has been gardening in Centennial CO for 25 years. Her garden has been featured in numerous books, magazines and nationally televised gardening shows. She lectures throughout the West focusing on garden design, perennials, xeriscape, and incorporating native plants into gardens and landscapes. In her most recent book, *Cutting Edge Gardening in the Intermountain West*, she advocates using drought-tolerant and native plants and indigenous materials to create a gardening aesthetic unique to this region.

This is our final speaker program for 2012 so please join in and welcome Marcia Tatroe as our guest on November 1. We will surely enjoy an excellent program, great foods, FREE plants and much more.



Free Plants

An exciting assortment of winter-flowering mesembs from South Africa will be available for free plants, raffle and door prizes.



President's Message

The final events are taking shape for the close of another great year. November will be our last speaker this year. The programs have been great and Vonn Watkins deserves all of our thanks for another great year of speakers. There are not enough superlatives about the job he does and has been doing for the last decade or so plus the Sonoran Conferences and 2009 CSSA Convention. I just want all of you to know what a special member and friend he is.

This newsletter is put together by Karen Keller. This is another member of our team who every month produces a quality newsletter. Just go online and see how great she makes us look. Thank you Karen!

We are planning a bus tour to the Desert Botanical Gardens and Arizona Cactus Sales on November 18, 2012. The information is

in this newsletter and most of you will receive additional reminders online or in the mail. I hope that many of you who have wanted to view the Gardens will take advantage of this opportunity.

Our year will end early on December 2, with our Holiday Party. There is no regular meeting in December but we will be back on schedule on January 3, 2013 with our regular monthly meeting.

Everyone will receive a mailing about membership renewal, an election ballot and a reservation form for the Holiday Party. Please return them by the date indicated.

Again this year we have well over 1,000 members. There are many reasons for our success. Actually there are over 1,000 reasons and they are you.

Thank you for your support,
Dick Wiedhopf, President

Bus Tour: Desert Botanical Gardens

When: Sunday, November 18, 2012

Time: 7:30am to 5:30pm

Cost: \$40.00 per person

(travel, snacks, lunch and admission to gardens)

For more than 70 years, the Desert Botanical Garden has been teaching and inspiring visitors from the local community and around the world, providing research, exhibits and more designed to help us understand, protect and preserve the desert's natural beauty. Today, the Garden features:

- 145 acres
- 65 acres under cultivation
- 50,000+ plant displays showcased in beautiful outdoor exhibits

"The Garden's vision is to be the premier center in the world for the display, study and understanding of desert plants and their environments. The Garden strives to be an indispensable resource in the Southwestern United States for helping individuals learn about Sonoran Desert Plants as well as desert plants of the world, so that they will conserve and protect the natural world for the benefit of future generations. Every element of the Garden will reflect excellence, beauty and inspiration to transform the visitor experience into one of discovery and meaning about deserts and desert plants."

A visit to Arizona Cactus Sales

This nursery opened Easter weekend of 1968 in Phoenix on 27th Avenue north of Camelback Road. It soon became known as the best source of native plants in the state under the leadership of Scotty Farmer. Almost immediately, he began adding propagated plants of many species with a continual emphasis on careful handling and the best value to the customer.

In May of 1977 the retail portion of Arizona Cactus Sales was sold to Jim and Electra Elliott (TCSS Members). The new owners maintained the high standards and expanded the selection of plants and services offered. Within a few years they became a primary supplier of plants to botanical gardens nationwide as well as local sales. Their reputation for honest dealing and premium quality plants continues to attract these institutions which need careful documentation of their purchases.

Jim and his staff have been long time supporters of TCSS and great friends to the hobby.

We will need at least 40 paid participant by **November 7, 2012**

Please send your Payment to:

TCSS Bus Tour, PO Box 64759, Tucson, AZ 85728-4759

Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society Holiday Party and Gift Exchange

Sunday, December 2, 2012

Junior League Facility, 2099 East River Road

Setup: 1pm - 3pm • Dinner: 3pm - 5pm

The Society will provide Turkey, Ham, Shrimp, Condiments, tableware and Drinks (coffee, punch and water). You will provide your favorite recipe (enough for 10 or more servings) Hot or Cold Salads - Starches - Vegetables - Desserts (please bring serving dish and serving utensils). For the last decade or so we have been collecting money and/or food for the Community Food Bank. This year the need is even greater, so let's make it special for others. Please bring donations (for a cash donation that is preferred, they can get 10 times the food) for the Tucson Community Food Bank.

Gift Exchange:

Everyone can participate by wrapping (cleverly) a plant or plant related gift of at least \$10.00 value. If you bring a gift you get a gift and the fun is in the way we will distribute them.

Meeting:

Additionally there will be a short Annual Meeting, Election Results, Awards and Table Prizes. Please vote and/or RSVP on the notice you will be receiving in the mail.

TCSS Apparel Program

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the availability of a new, ongoing, service for our members - the TCSS Apparel Program. Partnering with a local company, Aztec Embroidery, members can order a plethora of items, ranging from polo shirts to golf bags to sweatshirts, all marked with the colorful embroidered TCSS logo! These items are offered at our cost (plus tax). You can order one at the current meeting night and pick it up at the next meeting! To give you an idea of prices (which include the TCSS logo), men's and women's Polo/Golf shirts start at \$14.98 with an extra \$1.50 charge for 2XL or larger. Women's sleeveless Polo/Golf shirts start at \$15.98. You can also order the shirts with pockets (additional \$3.00 per shirt) or with your name embroidered on the right side (additional \$3.50). At the next meeting, just stop by our table and review the catalog!

Growing in the Desert Series: Putting Adeniums and other Tropicals to Sleep for the Winter

by Mark Dimmitt

Adeniums are succulents related to pachypodiums, plumerias, and oleanders (Figure 1). They are the newest ornamental plant to be domesticated (the process began only 20 years ago), and their popularity is growing rapidly. They are easy to grow if their cultural needs are understood and provided for. Spring is one of the critical times during which many adeniums and other winter-dormant tropical plants are lost (see article April 2012).

The other critical skill is to recognize when to let them go dormant for the winter. Remember this crucial fact: Adeniums hate cold, wet roots. These plants are nearly indestructible during the hot summer. But only a few days of cold nights can kill the most sensitive clones if the medium is wet. The critical night temperature is about 50 degrees, but it is influenced by the daytime highs, as will be discussed later in this article.

What is dormancy?

Dormancy in plants means a cessation or great slowdown of active growth. The main evidence is that the plant produces few or no new leaves (Figure 2). Below ground, root growth and water absorption greatly diminish, so the potting medium dries out more slowly than it did in summer. A dormant plant may retain leaves, or either shed them all at once or slowly over the winter; don't be fooled by that. A dormant plant may also flower, either with or without leaves. What's important is that it has slowed down and is using much less water than during its growing season. Therefore you must give it much less water, or even none for weeks or months at a time.

This discussion recognizes two horticultural groups of adeniums:

1. Most adeniums in cultivation are *A. obesum* and its hybrids. Almost all of the plants in this group are potentially evergreen if they are kept in tropical conditions (sunny, hot days, warm nights) through the winter (Figure 3). A sunny greenhouse is best; a sunny window in the house is good. If you can't provide such conditions, the plants will go dormant during the cool season. Depending on the temperatures, light, and the particular plant, they may retain most or all of their leaves.

2. All of the other species, except some *A. arabicum*, have an obligate winter dormancy, even if the conditions are sunny and hot. Most species will shed their leaves in fall or early winter, often suddenly (Figures 4 and 5). *Adenium swazicum* may sleep for only a month or two; *A. multiflorum* and *A. crispum* sleep for three or four months. *Adenium boehmianum* and *A. socotranum* often remain dormant for six months. *Adenium arabicum* is extremely variable over its large natural range; you need to learn the individual plant's habits. Some become spontaneously dormant in fall and shed their leaves (Figure 6). Most become dormant but retain most of their leaves well into winter if kept warm (Figure 7). Some clones are potentially evergreen and even grow through winter if kept under hot conditions (Figure 8).

Overwintering Tips

If most of your plant's leaves suddenly turn yellow and fall off, this is a clear signal to greatly reduce or cease watering (Figure 9). This may happen as early as the fall equinox, or more likely after the first cool nights later in the fall. A more common response is that the plant's water consumption greatly diminishes. It often happens quite suddenly. One week you need to water three times, and the next week only once or not at all. Monitor the moisture in the potting mix of each plant carefully in autumn in order to catch this change and respond accordingly.

If your adeniums are overwintered in a hot greenhouse, almost all of them will still use much less water even if they keep growing. My Adenium house gets up to 100 degrees F on sunny days, and is heated to 45 at night. Most of my plants stay in leaf and often flower well into winter. Those with obligate dormancy enter it at different times; some keep growing slowly until January, when the short days finally stop them. *Adenium obesum* and its hybrids keep growing under these conditions, taking only a brief rest about March, just before they begin growing again. As long as my plants have leaves, I water and lightly feed them every week or two.

Gene Joseph has an unheated greenhouse that also gets to 100 F or more on sunny days, but drops to near freezing on the coldest nights. The hot days seem to average out the cold nights, and his adeniums stay active well into winter.

If you store your adeniums in cooler conditions, you must keep the potting medium very dry to avoid root rot. Plants in 8-inch pots or larger can be left unwatered for the three to five months of cold weather. Smaller plants will probably need a light watering every couple of weeks, just enough to keep the stems from shriveling. Most species and cultivars will survive near-freezing temperatures if the medium is bone dry. (*Adenium swazicum* can take a few degrees of frost, even with moist medium. *Adenium crispum* and *somalense* are the most susceptible to rot in cold weather.)

Most Adenium growers in climates with cool or cold winters recommend culture similar to that in this article. But those who have a warm greenhouse (or live in the tropics) can have the pleasure of seeing adeniums at their best. Under warm conditions, most modern cultivars flower from September through May, while summer is spent on vegetative growth. Forcing dormancy of *obesum* and its hybrids that would prefer to stay active causes a deep shutdown and a slow awakening in spring. This may cause the plants to miss the spring flowering season, replaced by a more meager summer bloom.

Another advantage of keeping evergreen or late-dormant adeniums warm into fall and winter is caudex growth. Leafy adeniums that are not growing new stems need something to do with all the solar energy being captured. That energy goes into fattening the caudex. The evidence of this is that most of my pots split during fall and winter.

See the article in this series from April 2012 for how to wake up adeniums in spring.

Other succulents with similar winter needs

Many tropical succulents are native to semiarid tropical habitats with sparse to ample summer rain and dry winters. These plants must also be overwintered as described above. They vary greatly in how susceptible they are to rot if overwatered while dormant. Examples include

Pachypodium	Scadoxus
Plumeria	Dorstenia
Cyphostemma	Sansevieria
Alluaudia	Euphorbia (summer growers)
Bursera	Caralluma & many other stapeliads
Commiphora	Uncarina
Boswellia	
Cacti (many tropical species)	



Figure 1. *Adenium* 'Beautiful Mule' is a nearly perfect example of what adeniums are: It has a massive caudex and bold stem architecture (sculptural elegance) and showy flowers borne in abundance over a long season (floral extravagance).

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Photos by Mark Dimmitt



Figure 2. The *Adenium arabicum* X *obesum* hybrid on the right is active – it's growing new leaves. The one on the left is not, and is in the process of going dormant. Both can be watered whenever the potting medium becomes dry, which will be less often as the weather cools. The *A. socotranum* (inset) is also not growing new leaves and is semidormant.



Figure 3. *Adenium obesum* (left) is growing new leaves in December, so it is still active. If days are hot and nights are above 50 F, it can be watered regularly. *Adenium obesum* complex hybrids with other species, such as the crispum hybrid 'Starfish' (right) are also active year round under tropical growing conditions.



Figure 4. This *Adenium multiflorum* was a mass of green foliage only a week earlier. In mid October the foliage suddenly turned yellow as nights cooled. The message being broadcast is that it needs no more water until it leafs out in spring. The hybrid 'Beautiful Mule' in the right corner is still in leaf, is especially sensitive to rot if the roots are cold and wet. For that reason, watering was stopped October 1, and it will soon shed its leaves.



Figure 5. The same *A. multiflorum* as in Figure 4, in flower in January. Don't be fooled by the flowers; it's still dormant and needs little or no water.



Figure 6. This clone of *Adenium arabicum* 'Ram Gandhi' sheds its leaves in fall, and flowers while still leafless in spring. The photo was taken in March. It needs no water until it begins to leaf out in April.



Figure 7. This clone of *Adenium arabicum* keeps leaves almost all winter, even if not watered for four months. It also flowers year round.



Figure 8. This dwarf *Adenium arabicum* is not only evergreen, it grows as well as flowers year round under tropical conditions. I water it regularly even in winter. Drought will force it into a leafless dormancy.

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Figure 9. *Adenium boehmianum* (left) and *A. sp. nov. Oman* both have a long winter dormancy. When the leaves yellow and fall, don't water them until they awaken, which might be as late as early summer. Again, ignore the flowers; both plants are dormant and using very little water.

Book Review

by Gene Murphy, Tucson Landscaper (retired)

"Intermountain Flora Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume Two, Part A Subclasses Magnoliidae-Caryophyllidae"

By Noel H. Holmgren, Patricia K. Holmgren
and James L. Reveal and Collaborators

New York Botanical Garden Press

The scope of this book is phenomenal! It starts off with water lilies and some 634 pages later ends with cactus. In between it described probably the most diverse flora ever set in type. Family after family, page after page: no treatise could be more eclectic. Some families are so little known as to be from another planet.

Maps on the back of the front cover and duplicated on the back cover includes a vast area of the interior of the Western States and a small portion the Northwest corner of Arizona.

Being volume two, Part A one might expect there is a volume two, Part B. Such is the case, this being the latest in a series of 8 books that were left to last, because of the eccentricities of the plants involved. After reading this volume, I doubt if one plant has been omitted. Scientifically, this volume with its companion volumes are without a doubt definitive.

Naturally, the Tucson Society's interest is the cactus family, pages 634-698. Cholla, prickly pear, hedgehog, barrel etc, abound in their various forms, such as eagle claw, fishhook, pin cushion, etc. I like common names and thank the authors for their use of them throughout the book. A great deal of small print is incorporated and the notes, which are at the end of the species description, are what I've found to be the greatest interest. The particulars and details found there are tidbits not listed probably not found in any other publication.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the illustrations which appear on every other page. To most, the meticulous line drawings are considerably more than adequate. However, the tantalizing colored photo at the beginning of the book makes one want more.

Apparel Program table

Need a unique gift for the holiday season? How about a warmer shirt or sweatshirt for those cool weather Cactus Rescues? Stop by the Apparel Program table to review the catalog and order a TCSS Denim Shirt (starting at \$19.98), Sweatshirt (starting at \$14.98), Hoodie (starting at \$29.98), Windbreaker (\$30 and up) or many other items. These are only available here! Any questions, don't hesitate to contact us at tcss_apparel@centurylink.net.



There's a New Park in Town

by Reporter Odalys Catalan, AZVA

Note: This great story was written by a fourth grader, originally published in the October issue of "Bear Essential News for Kids"



Like the mystical Phoenix rising from the ashes this park has risen from the depths of an old gravel pit. On Sept. 22, I attended a much anticipated park dedication and opening. The park is called Pima Prickly Park and it is built on an old abandoned gravel pit. Awesome!!

It has so many trees, cactus, birds singing and butterflies gliding through the air. "1, 2, 3!" the people said as they cut the green silky ribbon. As seven or eight pieces of the ribbon floated to the ground many camera shutters went off at a single moment.

Fortunately, I was able to interview Rafael Payan, the director of Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation. He has been with PCNR for 33 years!

"This dedication was about opening this amazing park and ...the restoration of a gravel pit," Payan states. "This park should teach the community to protect and love the desert, as well as care for it. We...started restoring about 7-8 years ago and also installed the trails about one year ago!" Payan credits the hard work of numerous volunteers and the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. "Without their help and cooperation this park would not have been possible."

Payan feels that with over a mile of trails on this nine and half acre oasis visitors will get an education and some exercise as well. Moving on to the trail, there is some eye-catching stuff. We saw, my favorite, the unforgettable Saguarohege.

Saguarohege is a group of saguaros growing in a circular pattern sitting majestically on high ground overlooking the park. This memorial will "provide a sacred place for reflection and pondering the ancient relationships between people and the Sonoran Desert." This monument pinpoints the beauty of the desert and also is the soul of the park.

I had the opportunity to plant a baby Saguaro cactus, took home my own cactus, met some artists and conservationists and so much more!

Inside the PCNR building nestled in the park, visitors were met by some really cool creepy crawlies. There was a bark scorpion, horse lubber grasshopper (that was outrageously humongous), beetles (not the vehicle), and a team of praying mantis. It was pretty cool.

Other features of the park include Cristates, an Agave Garden, the Cholla Forest Maze and Cholla Rose Garden, and a Hummingbird Garden. The Pima Prickly Park is located at 3500 W. River Rd.

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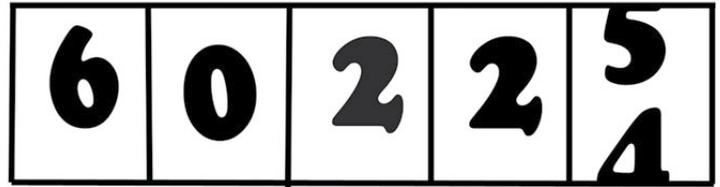
For additional information call: (520) 256-2447

Everyone is Welcome!

Bring your friends, join in the fun and meet
the cactus and succulent community.

November Refreshments

Those with family names beginning with G, H, I, J, K, L,
and M please bring your choice of refreshments to
the meeting. Your generous sharing will be greatly
appreciated and enjoyed!



Cacti Rescued 293 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

November 2012

Thursday, November 1, 2012 7:00pm

Monthly Meeting, "Cacti & Succulents the Rocky Mountain
Way" presented by Marcia Tatroe

Tuesday, November 13, 2012 7:00pm

Board meeting at the U of A College of Pharmacy

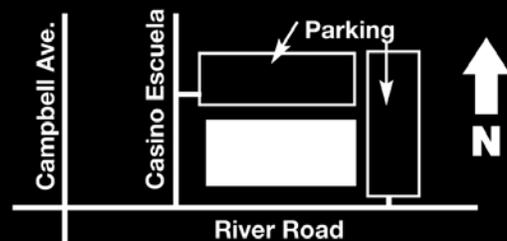
Acknowledgement of Contributions

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.

Pima Prickly Park
(In Memory of Larry Miller)
Emily Miller Varkala
Patsy & Joe Frannea
Joyce Walker

Pima Prickly Park
Patsy & Joe Frannea
Pat & Dick Wiedhopf

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.



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