



SACXS FACTS

Newsletter for the San Antonio Cactus and
Xerophyte Society

The San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society was organized in 1977. Its mission is to promote the study, propagation and public awareness of cacti and other succulent plants.

The Secrets of Growing Quality Cacti & Succulents, Woody Minnich

Woody Minnich, renowned succulent expert, world traveler, and nursery owner, will appear as our special guest speaker at our February 15th meeting. He will present **The Secrets of Growing Quality Cacti & Succulents**. Woody is a regular guest speaker and has entertained us with highlights of his travels around the world to observe cacti and succulents in their native habitats. Don't miss this program! He is sure to give us many tips for providing our plants with the best care we can give them. Read this description of his program to see what he has in store for us.

The Secrets of Growing Quality Cacti and other Succulents Wendell S. (Woody) Minnich 2013 How do you find out what the secrets are? They are important strategies about how to grow plants well and they can be accomplished by doing five easy things: visiting habitats, traveling from garden to garden the world over, participating in shows, accessing numerous cactus and succulents books, and most importantly, talking with the growers of these wonderful plants. It is your awesome opportunity to learn from these various experiences! With these experiences, it doesn't take long to learn the many different approaches on how to grow quality cacti and succulents. Like most things, years of experience help, but seeing cacti and succulents in the field (their natural habitat) gives one incredibly valuable insight. Also, visiting numerous collections and gardens around the world helps add an even greater dimension to the understanding of cultivation in various environments. Participating in cactus and succulent shows is another great way to give one a full perspective on how to present and grow quality plants. Last, but not least, read the books! Don't hesitate to use all of these available means to add to your information bank, and mostly, don't be afraid to ask questions. "Why" is the biggest word in the world! Many of the factors for growing quality plants aren't really secrets, but often, only the stories not shared or observed! We will refer to both cacti and succulents as "succulents" because all cacti are succulent. Succulent plants are what they are for a reason! The storage of water is what gives them their succulent character and this storage is what gives them the ability to survive in often harsh habitats. The great majority of our succulent plants come from deserts or relatively arid regions.

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These environments are often very dry, and usually lack moisture for extended periods of time. These same habitats are usually very sunny and often reach high summer temperatures when moisture can so quickly be lost. Thus, our plants are succulent, because they must have water storage to get them through the often extended hot and or dry times. Due to the variable environments that our succulent plants come from, there are many considerations that one must keep in mind. These factors include: * At what time of the year does water generally become available and how? * What are the high and low temperatures and air movement from the dry to wet times? * What is the substrate, soils or rocks or bark, the growing medium? * Does the substrate contain minerals, acids, alkalinity and or nutrients? * What is the plant's method of water storage, leaves, stems or roots – tubers? * What is the plant's method of acquiring water - roots or foliar? * What is the plant's orientation to the sun, amount of exposure, nurse plants etc.? * What is the plant's ability to take or need cold temperatures? * What are the plant's root-system needs, confinement or open, drainage, temperatures? * When does the plant grow or when is it dormant? * What is the elevation at which the plant naturally grows? * When does the plant normally flower and fruit? * Does the plant have any symbiotic relationships? * What are the plant's enemies: insects, bacteria, fungi, animals etc.? In a general way, we will cover all of these aspects and how they relate to you and your overall growing environment. Each one of us live in a slightly, to extremely different micro niche. It is from all of the above mentioned factors and how we apply them that will determine how successfully we grow our plants. Don't forget, much like life itself, it is often from our mistakes that we gain our greatest learning experiences.

Refreshment Assignments for February

Robert and Tempella Guernsey
Joey Gutierrez
Suzanna Harrison
Lucy Huff
Stephen Jackson

Refreshments

Each person will be contacted by our Refreshments Coordinator. If you are unable to attend the meeting and bring refreshments, please consider donating \$5 or more so something can be purchased as a substitute.

Refreshments only happen when people volunteer and share the responsibility. Thank you for helping!

Auction Plants

Typically, members donate a plant or plants worth at least \$5. If unable to bring a plant to the meeting, please consider making a \$5 cash donation. Our auction proceeds go toward covering the building rental for our meetings.

Auction Plant Assignments for February

Linda Lopez de Roman
Diane Lunow
David Maclure
Alma Marks
Janet McCarthy

Introducing Guide-by-Cell

Please take the opportunity to check out our program information and SACXS Show & Sale information on Guide-by-Cell, our mobile website. Using your text feature on your phone, type **56512** in the "send to" box and type **sacxs** in the "message" box. Click on the link and that will take you to the SACXS mobile web page. Take a look at the **2017 Upcoming Programs and Events**. If you click on February Meeting, you can get information about our February speaker, photos of the speaker and other related photos, information about the program topic, and a poll to complete after attending the program. If you attended the January program, you can still complete the poll for the Soils program by clicking on January Meeting. The program director would love to have your feedback. If you are having any trouble accessing the mobile website, please talk to Barbara Schulze or Linda Draper.

2017 Show and Sale is Coming Soon

During the last week or so I've been finding time each day to go out to the greenhouse and work on some of the repotting chores I've been putting off. I've got lots of offsets and cuttings potted up that I hope will be ready to donate for raffle plants at our Show and Sale in April. I decided that some of the offsets looked good now so I potted up this little grouping of a *Sansevieria*, an *Aloe*, and a *Ledebouria*. I even found a lump of agate from one of our field trips to the 4M Ranch to add to the pot for additional interest.



I'd like to encourage you all to be thinking of what you can donate. Almost anything cactus or succulent related will be welcome. One member told me she had found a succulent themed puzzle that she plans to donate. A few years ago one of our members donated a walking stick fashioned from the bloom stalk of a sotol. I was lucky to win the bid on that one. It's a great favorite of mine.

If you have something you'd like to donate that's NOT a living plant, you can bring it to our March meeting. If it's plants or dish gardens, we'd ask you to keep them safe at home until show time....our greenhouses are pretty full with raffle plants from the pot-a-thon, and auction plants we've started acquiring for the live auction.

It's not too soon to be getting educational displays planned. Remember, we'll be using the Guide-by-Cell technology to add interest to our Show and Sale and the educational displays. A display need not be elaborate to be successful. A well-grown plant and some information about it can be very instructive and we can "jazz it up" with additional fun facts in a recorded message on Guide-by-Cell. If you need help or ideas, Barbara Schulze or I would be happy to give you a hand.

Remember, we'll be continuing to add information to the Guide-by-Cell mobile website we introduced you to at the January meeting. To access it from your mobile phone type 56512 in the address field and sacxs in the message field. The text message you get back will have a link to the mobile website. If you have questions, contact Barbara Schulze or Linda Draper; SACXS 2017 Show and Sale Co-Chair.

Linda Draper, SACTX 2017 Show Co-Chair

Upcoming 2017 SACXS Events

- 02-15 Monthly Meeting Woody Minnich on *"The Secrets of Growing Quality Cacti & Succulents"*
Garden Center - 6:30 arrive & mingle, 7:00 monthly program
- 02-25 Field Trip Living Desert Ranch
Spicewood Texas Darrell Dunten's nursery 22701 Hwy 71 W. Spicewood, Texas 78669
512.264.2830
8:30 Meet HEB on 281 and Evans Road (N of 1604), Leave HEB at 9:00
11:00 to 1:00 at Living Desert Nursery, 1:30 BBQ lunch across the
highway at "All Good BBQ"
- 03-15 Monthly Meeting Swap Meet and Barbara's Show & Sale update
Garden Center - 6:30 arrive & mingle, 7:00 monthly program
- 03-17 & 18 Plant Sale - SA Garden Center's Annual Plant Sale
- 03-18 Field Trip Keller Materials - a premier landscape supply business...soils, rock,
and stone
Selma TX - 10:00 meet at 9388 Corporate Dr, Selma, TX 78154

Be sure to mark your calendars; you don't want to miss out on any of our

Raffles

We sell raffle tickets on plants, seeds, cuttings, etc., in each meeting that our members bring in and donate. It's fun to add to your collection this way at a low cost and help support your club at the same time. Please bring something to share!

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