



# SACXS FACTS

Newsletter for the San Antonio Cactus & Xerophyte Society

December 2019

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## President's Message

*As we close out 2109 and roll into the Holiday Season, it's time for reflection.*

- Each Monthly Meeting brought its own set of educational programs and member experiences. Many thanks to Mandy Bulmer, our dedicated First Vice President in charge of Programs. Mandy facilitated a variety of Speakers which is no easy task.
- We had a very successful Show and Sale in April as Barbara Schulze and her volunteers planned and executed another great event.
- Claude Townsend organized several interesting field trips that were well-attended.
- Our membership count is over a hundred paid members, which is second only to that of the Austin Club.
- We had a significant net gain of several thousand dollars in our treasury which is ahead of last year's fund-raising efforts.
- We awarded the first *Larry Murphy Memorial Scholarship* to a local high school student, and will continue the tradition in 2020.
- We anticipate continuing our Blue Santa gift donation at the Christmas Party.
- AND, we pulled off one fo the best TACSS Fall Seminars in recent memory.

I want to offer my personal "Thank You" to the 2019 Board of Directors. Claude Townsend, David Maclure, Lucile Lively, Bill Fry, and Don Snyder will be rotating off the Board. Their input and contributions during this past year were invaluable.

Onward to 2020!! A new set of officers, more interest in our Society, and new adventures for the Club. The Show and Sale is now in the capable hands of Mandy Bulmer with a cast of volunteers. Alyssa Danna will be responsible for field trips; she is already an enthusiast.

We will have a solid group with much experience to help continue to guide the club.

I'm proud of the achievements and fortitude of SACXS. I look forward to sustained, if not bigger, outcomes in 2020. Thanks to everyone for their continued support and participation. To you we owe our success. I appreciate your dedication. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas Party on Wednesday the 18th at the Garden Center.

**Jimmy Black, SACXS President**



**You're Invited to our Annual Christmas Party:**

# Chili & Cactus...

*We're Having A:*

**Potluck Supper**

**White Elephant Gift Exchange**

**Blue Santa Gift Donation**

**Wednesday, December 18, 2019**

**7:00 pm at the San Antonio Garden Center**

*Bring Your Favorite Chili or Fixin's to Share.*

*Here are suggestions for chili accompaniments,  
side dishes and desserts:*

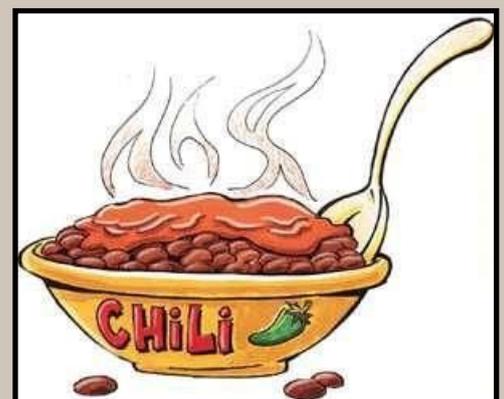
- Cornbread
- Shredded or Grated Cheese
- Chopped onions, olives, avocado
  - Sour Cream, yogurt
  - Queso
  - Rice or casseroles
  - Salads & Veggie Trays
- Snacks like chips and dips
  - Desserts

Tamales, soft drinks, iced tea, coffee, and lemonade will be provided.

Please bring your own servingware.

Food should be fully prepared and ready to eat.

Please include a description of your chili for persons allergic to nuts, gluten and other ingredients.



## Let's Share Our Holiday Cheer!!

Please bring a new, unwrapped toy, suitable for children of all ages to the Christmas Party. More information about Blue Cares may be found at their website: [bluecaresicare.com](http://bluecaresicare.com)



## What to Bring for the White Elephant Gift Exchange

Gifts can be something from home, like a cactus plant, a succulent arrangement, a book, arts and crafts etc. Or you can purchase your item. Please bring a gift valued between \$10 and \$15.

Hey!!! No gag gifts!!!



# Did you know this about the Common Christmas Cactus???



The Familiar Christmas Cactus brings holiday cheer along with pointsettia plants and amaryllis bulbs. Christmas cactus belongs to the genus *Schlumbergera*, which is a small genus of tropical cacti with six to nine species. Also included are the other holiday cacti, the Thanksgiving and Easter Cacti. They are found only in the coastal mountains of south-eastern Brazil. These plants are epiphytic, growing on trees or rocks in habitats that are generally shady with high humidity. Most species of *Schlumbergera* have stems which resemble leaf-like pads joined one to the other. Flowers appear from areoles at

the joints and tips of the stems. Cultivars are available in many colors including red, pink, yellow, orange, purple, and white. The common names originate from the seasonal timing of their blooms.

## PLANT CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Christmas cacti grow well in most potting soils, as long as it drains well.
- Make sure that your pots have drainage holes.
- Plants should be kept in bright, indirect light.
- Soil should be allowed to dry out between watering.
- A daytime temperature of 70°F (21°C) and an evening temperature of 60-65°F (15-18°C) is preferred.
- Feed every two weeks with a balanced fertilizer in the warm months and monthly in the cool months.
- To trigger blooming, nights need to be at least 14 hours long and days between 8 to 10 hours for six weeks. If you have strong indoor lighting at night, you may need to cover your cacti. Flowers will only form when the temperature is between a cool 50 to 55°F (10 to 13°C).
- The plant may be susceptible to mealy bugs and, if over-watered, root rot. If you have problems, cut out infected areas and repot into clean soil.
- When the buds of a Christmas cactus look as if they're about to open, make sure you water the plant regularly and keep it cool.

## HOW TO TELL HOLIDAY CACTI APART

There are several types of holiday cacti: Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. They typically bloom closest to the holiday that they're named after. In terms of care, they're very similar.

To tell the three cacti apart, pay attention to their leaf shapes and flowers:

- Christmas cacti have flattened leaves with rounded teeth on the margins of the leaves.
- Thanksgiving cacti have flattened leaves with pointed teeth.
- Easter cacti also have flattened leaves with rounded teeth, but their flowers are broader and almost daisy-like, whereas the flowers of the other cacti are more tube-shaped.



**By the way, that Christmas cactus you are buying is probably not actually a Christmas cactus.** Surprise! According to U-Mass Extension Service, "Most commercial cultivars of holiday cactus are actually *Schlumbergera truncata*, commonly known as Thanksgiving cactus or Zygocactus. True Christmas cactus is an interspecific hybrid of *Schlumbergera truncata* and *Schlumbergera russelliana* that originated about 150 years ago in England. It's a common houseplant but not often grown commercially."