



# ON THE DRY SIDE

MARCH 2025

Greeting fellow succulent lovers and MBACSS members,

Today I spent several hours with my collection fighting off aphids! They are ubiquitous when it comes to new growth and especially new flower buds. I'm so glad that I found out that 71% rubbing alcohol doesn't hurt the plants but does indeed kill the aphids (and mealy bugs also). I have tried some commercial products in the past and killed plants! Not a good plan! Anyway, I hope you are enjoying your own collections and looking forward to our upcoming Sale/Show in April.

Slowly more people are coming to our membership meetings. Before Covid our attendance was 40-50 people every month. We are now getting about 30. Covid and the Flu are showing up again but, I feel confident that our meetings are spread out enough, so folks don't have to be more than normally cautious. We continue to have masks available if you wish one. Please see me if you do.

For our March Membership Meeting we will have a Show and Tell activity again and the plant drawing as well with plants being provided by the Stubblefield's. Our speaker, Gerhard Bock, will be telling us, "What You Always Wanted to Know about Mangaves". See more about him in a later article of this newsletter. I gather Mangaves are very popular right now so we will get a chance to learn more about them. I hope he is bringing plants to sell so we can add them to our collections.

The Board is vigorously, and creatively planning our Spring Sale/Show and coming up with possible new things for you to enjoy like volunteer incentives, the possibility of some "Easter" themed (?) plants to show, free plants at the entrance, short informational talks by members about succulent/cactus topics, new vendors with succulent related items, etc. Be sure to come, bring a favorite plant to enter in the Show, volunteer to help in some way. Bring your family, friends, and neighbors, put flyers (available on-line and at the March Membership Meeting) in stores, libraries, etc. I will look forward to seeing you there.

Mary Louise Cross, President  
Monterey Bay Area Cactus and Succulent Society



# APPROVED MINUTES

MARCH 2025  
PAGE 2

**Call to Order:** Mary Cross.

**Members present:** Mary Cross, Nancy Thomsen, Peter Beiersdorfer, David Kurtz, Jorge Quiñonez, Lou Falek, Lyn MacDonald, Diane Salewski, Meryl Abramson.

**Minutes:** Mary/Meryl. Reviewed action items. January minutes accepted as written.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lou. Accepted as presented. We are on sound footing financially.

## **Chairpersons' Reports:**

**Membership:** Lyn. Report accepted as written.

**Sunshine Committee:** One of our members was hospitalized

**Programs:** Jorge. February speaker will be Ernesto Sandoval on growing plants from seeds. Daisy will supply the raffle plants. If you would like to supply a month or two of raffle plants, please contact Meryl. Jorge has largely scheduled speakers for 2025. March program is Mangaves and Gary & Ellen will supply the raffle plants. Our March speaker, Gerhard Bock, has a well-known blog and Jorge shared that link.

Our goal is to educate. Show & Tell will continue; even new members participate. One raffle ticket will be given to anyone who brings a Show & Tell plant.

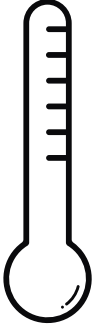
**Old Business:** All. Board discussed library and storage issues. Mary investigated rentals and all options seem to be expensive, and there can be rodent issues. One member offered garage storage space and this will be investigated further. Lou generously offered to fund a new cabinet, however, we are constrained by available space at the Grange. More discussion to follow next month.

Dave Atori ran the Silent Auction at the December party and did a great job. He has ideas for changes; the Board agreed to let him run things but would like to hear the changes.

**New Business:** All. The upcoming Spring Show is April 18-19-20. Board agreed to give all entrants a free plant again (or a free magazine as above). Nancy is working on a new press release. 'Ask an Expert' was quite popular and will be repeated, as will vendor talks. Nancy's design for the flyer was accepted. Only one, not two, greeter is needed every shift, and the mailing list will be placed on the front table. Undecided: if we will send postcards again. If we do so, no \$1 off because we are already giving away a free plant. Peter noted that San Jose's sale in the fairgrounds had huge sales, however, the venue was very costly and the social media ad campaign was costly and extensive as well. Board discussed running the Show/Sale on Friday rather than Sunday; we will sell on Sunday and finish at 3:00 p.m. The vendor split this time will be 30% to the Club, no discussion. We have a number of interested vendors on a wait list.

**Adjournment:** Mary.

Respectfully submitted by Meryl Abramson



## TEMPERATURE

Most collectable succulents are not hardy. Although a few Agaves and Sedums might take a few degrees of frost, they will not tolerate freezing temperatures. Many growers maintain a minimum of 55° F year round for most plants while keeping more sensitive species at 60° F.

Maximum temperatures are usually determined by weather conditions and succulents are well adapted to tolerate temperatures slightly over 100° F. Prolonged exposure to excessive

heat usually prompts most plants to simply go dormant and wait it out. Many plants can however be damaged by excessive heat and if you are growing in a greenhouse or any other type of solar structure, constant air movement is essential. Hot stagnant air will rapidly damage most succulents.

## WATERING



When and how much to water your plants has always been a controversial subject. Far too much complexity has been made of this very basic element of cultivation that we all must practice. Most importantly, it's crucial that you realize many elements cannot be prescribed or decided for you. You must observe. Watering is certainly one of these elements and you alone must decide.

The general idea should be not how much but when to water, and this is largely determined by your environment. If your conditions are good and you are using a quality growing medium, most plants will dry out in just a few days. So as a good starting point use this simple rule: do not let containers become dust dry at any time. It works. Water, wait until the plant uses what you gave it and then water again.

How can you tell if a plant has used what you gave it? Pick it up. If the pot feels light, water until it appears at the drainage holes. With a little experience, you will quickly be able to tell if water is needed just by looking.

Don't think of watering as an exact science where every drop must be measured. It's just not that critical. Make sure your plants are well watered and forget it. Yes there are some succulents that are more sensitive to over and under watering but observation and experience will ready you for these.

When watering, use a good breaker on your hose or a soft rose on your can. This prevents root damage caused from washed out mix. And finally do not push anything into your containers to test the moisture level. This means your finger or those awful dreaded moisture meter probes. Succulents have delicate fragile roots and you will only damage them. Broken roots can rapidly lead to rotted plants from this bad novice habit.

## GERHARD BOCK MANFREDA X AGAVE

What you always wanted to know about mangaves

Mangaves—hybrids between Manfreda and Agave, two closely related succulent genera—have become the “it” plants of the nursery world. Combining the fast growth and user-friendliness of manfredas with the longevity and architectural beauty of agaves, mangaves are a great fit for today’s waterwise landscapes and are equally at home in the ground and in containers.

Gerhard Bock gardens in Davis, CA and loves spiky plants. Based on his years of experience trialing mangaves, he’ll present a deep dive into this new intergeneric genus: what it is, where it’s come from, and where it’s going. Gerhard will show you some of the most beautiful and popular mangaves in the trade as well as rare sports and new varieties in the pipeline.

To find out more about Gerhard and his garden, check out his blog:  
[www.succulentsandmore.com](http://www.succulentsandmore.com)



By: Robert Morrell as printed in "Cacti & Other Succulents"  
in The Amateurs' Digest, Vol 2, No. 5, January ,1991

## INTRODUCTION

A caudiciform is a type of succulent plant that in time attains a "caudex". This is a large base on a plant consisting of root, stem, or both. It is somewhat like a sponge on the inside and woody looking on the outside. The caudex is the food and water storage part of the plant. Many caudiciform plants have sculptural or even grotesque forms which make them very fascinating. They display an untamed appearance and many are excellent bonsai subjects.

Most caudiciforms from So. Africa react to seasonal changes by going dormant. When the leaves drop off or the branches shrivel a little, let the plant rest by cutting back on watering. Water only often enough to prevent the caudex from shriveling. Expect a small amount of shrinkage in this period of rest because they are living off their stored water and food. If overwatered, they may start to rot which is undetectable until it is too late. Remember, when in doubt, DON'T!

## GROWING CONDITIONS

**LIGHT:** In most cases, succulent caudiciforms from So. Africa need as much light as you can supply. But always remember they must be adapted to outside direct light slowly. This can be accomplished by screening or other means to cut the sunlight intensity. Caudexes can burn as well as leaves and branches and they do not heal after the damage has been done. It only takes a few hours on a hot day. A good adaptation time is about three weeks. Apartment dwellers should also remember to put screens on windows if growing these plants on windowsills, as the light is intensified and magnified when passed through glass.

**POTTING SOIL:** All caudiciforms require a well-drained mix. The author uses over 70% pumice in his mix with other combinations of mulches and nutrients. Very coarse sand (1/4") can be substituted for pumice. The main requirement is that the mix be fast draining and nutritious. Smooth edged sand tends to clump or bond together after some time and should be avoided. Use only sharp, jagged edged sand.





**WATER:** Water your caudiciforms only when they are dry. Let the mix dry out between watering. In warm weather, the plants may need to be watered more often. However, in winter months, reduce watering. In late fall and winter the plants may be left quite dry and encouraged to go dormant. They need the rest and will grow much better in the summer. Plants grown in clay pots tend to dry out faster than those grown in plastic pots.

A good practice in watering any caudiciform is to bottom water and let the water soak up towards the roots. This only takes a few minutes with the mix mentioned earlier. Never let the water drain down onto the caudex. Never encourage growth in the spring by watering. Your caudiciform may still be in deep dormancy and the excess water may cause it to rot.



## HELPFUL HINTS:

When ordering these plants from a nursery make sure you buy seedlings and not cuttings. Many cuttings from certain caudiciforms will not form the typical caudex. Make sure prior to purchasing.

In habitat, most of the caudex is underground and cannot be seen. Since drainage is not a problem in So. African habitat, plants survive well. When growing in a pot of any kind keep the caudex above the soil. It is a very absorptive tissue. One untimely watering can be fatal if the caudex is buried.

Never pull spent branches or leaves off the caudiciform. This can cause an open wound in the plant and encourage fungal growth. Let them fall off naturally.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

**March 16, 2025**

Presenter: Gerhard Bock

Topic: Mangroves

Mini Show: Show and Tell

**April 19 & 20, 2025**

MBACSS Spring Show & Sale

**May 18, 2025**

Presenter: Troy Stephens

Topic: A Botanical Tour of Oaxaca

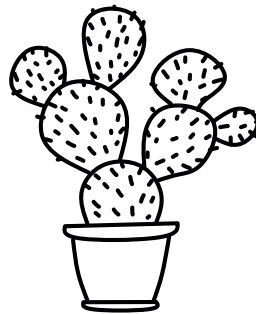
Mini Show: Show and Tell

## FUTURE MBACSS SALES SAVE THE DATES

Here are the dates of the  
upcoming sales for 2025:

**Spring 2025 - Apr 19, 20**

**Fall 2025 - Sept 13, 14**



## SPRING SHOW AND SALE - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are preparing for our annual Spring Show and Sale. We need a few volunteers for Friday set up and many more for the weekend. There will be a surprise gift for all volunteers and lunch is provided each day. If you have worked the sale in the past, you know it's a bit of work but it's also fun to be around so many cactus and succulent enthusiasts.

Please tell your friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, the person sitting at the table next to you and anyone else about this event. We found that many people attended past sales because someone told them about it.

There will be printed flyers and handouts available at the March meeting. We will be sending out a press release to local media soon.

# LEADERSHIP

MARCH 2025  
PAGE 8

## OFFICERS

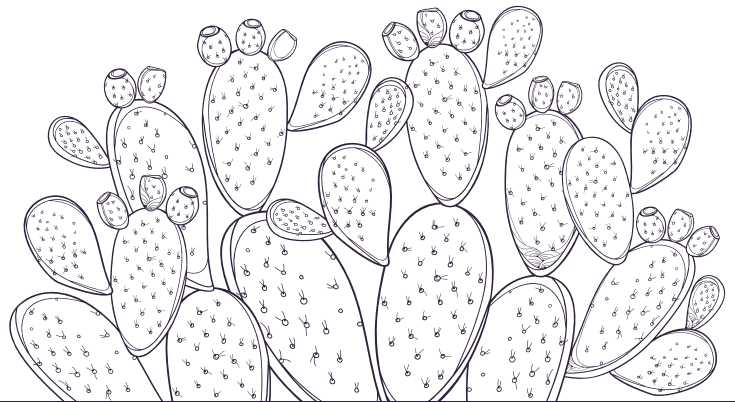
President - Mary Cross  
Vice President - Nancy Thomsen  
Secretary - Meryl Abramson  
Treasurer - Lou Falek  
Membership - Lyn MacDonald  
Affiliate Representative - Jorge Quiñónez  
Directors at Large  
David Kurtz  
Peter Shaw  
Daisy Szeto  
Immediate Past President - Tom Karwin  
Founding Member - Naomi Bloss

## CHAIRPERSONS

Interim Librarian - David Kurtz  
Mini-Show - Stan Verkler  
Newsletter Editor - Nancy Thomsen  
Photography - Paul Albert  
Programs - Jorge Quiñónez  
Raffles - Meryl Abramson  
Sale Floor Manager - Peter Beiersdorfer  
Show Managers - Naomi Bloss  
Assistant Floor Manager - Janet Sparks  
Sunshine Committee - Cheryl Albert  
Webmaster - Diane Salewski  
Greeter - Dave Novarina

**See our website for  
more information!**

[mbsucculent.org](http://mbsucculent.org)



**Our next membership meeting will be:**

**Sunday, March 16, 2025  
Corralitos Grange  
165 Little Corral Way, Corralitos.**

There is plenty of parking near the hall and the building is ADA accessible.

Doors open at 11:00am

Bring your own lunch starts at 12:00pm

Meeting starts at 12:30pm



**One free plant  
for everyone!**



**FREE PARKING  
FREE ADMISSION**



**MONTEREY BAY AREA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY PRESENTS**

# **Spring Show and Sale 2025**

**Saturday, April 19 – 9AM – 5PM**

**Sunday, April 20 – 9AM – 3PM**

**Experts on Hand  
to Answer Your  
Questions**

**Large Variety of Cacti,  
Succulents, Pottery, Books,  
Utensils for Sale**

**Vote for Your Favorite  
Plant/Pottery/Photo at  
the Peoples Choice Show**

**Portuguese Community Hall 124 Atkinson Lane, Watsonville, CA**



**[mbsucculent.org](http://mbsucculent.org)**