



ON THE DRY SIDE

JUNE 2025

Greeting fellow succulent lovers and MBACSS members,

Our sale was successful in that even though there was so much insecurity in our world and people were cautious we did make a little money and at the same time we created some good will by offering everyone who came a free little plant. Hopefully that will result in greater attendance at our next sale and show. Another thing we offered was 10-15 minutes talks by our members for the public on various succulent related topics. I attended a couple of them and was impressed with and grateful for their presentations. I was so very impressed with the vendors who so very generously provided the free plants (many more plants than I had requested or that we needed). I was a bit overwhelmed with the quantity and quality of these donations. I have never been a part of an organization that supported each other and the club with such good will and largess. I am very grateful to each of the vendors who donated as well as the other volunteers who gave of themselves in any way as volunteers, speakers, cashiers, etc.

I am starting to make about 100 cuttings to root and bring for freebies at the Fall Sale and Show. I got some free 2" pots from Naomi's sale and a large bag of potting soil from Ortegas to share with you if you need pots and soil. Also, one of the vendors donated about 100 smaller white pots (about 1 1/2 inches) for anyone to use to provide freebies for the next sale. I will bring them to the next membership meeting to share with whoever wants them.

This has been a time sadness for our club since the April Sale and Show. Our last remaining founder, Naomi Bloss, died a short time before the Sale and another of our long-time members, Gary Stubbelfield, died the Saturday morning of the Sale!



I am grateful with how our members came to support both the Bloss and Stubblefield families, especially helping prepare for and working at the auction and sale of Naomi's wonderful collection. We will miss both of them but will always be grateful for their generous contributions to our club.

Our June Membership Meeting will be next Sunday, June 15 and Father's Day. Our speaker will be Anna Boer taking us on a journey through Ganna Walska Lotusland! Should be interesting! See you there.

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

APPROVED MINUTES

JUNE 2025
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Call to Order: Mary Cross.

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

Minutes of 4/6/2025: Mary/Meryl. All action items completed. April minutes accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report: Lou. Accepted as presented. Lou previously presented an accounting of the Spring Show and Sale. We had \$900 in donations plus \$1900 in profit. Next month he will need to pay deposits for our 2026 shows.

Chairpersons' Reports:

Membership: Lyn. About 10 people signed up at the Show. We have approximately 146 paid memberships. Report accepted as presented. Lyn noted that many of our new members are active volunteers, come to meetings, and seem excited about our group.

Sunshine Committee: Another long-time member of the club has died. Our hearts go out to Gary Stubblefield's family. A memorial in his memory is being held this week. Nancy will write something for the newsletter.

Programs: Jorge. The May program will be a travelogue of Oaxaca with Troy Stephens. Stan is scheduled to bring the Raffle plants in May.

New Business: Annie Wolf gave details of Naomi's Celebration of Life and the sale of her plants and books on 5/24. Volunteers are needed on that day and this coming weekend and if you care to help, contact Annie at norcalcsa@gmail.com or 917-86 8-9159. There are some Ann Shein slides that Diane can convert to digital; Jorge will pick these up from Annie on Saturday. There are also some plants and books that belong to the club that will be put aside and given to Jorge or Stan.

Spring Show and Sale: All. The guest book and framed pictures were given to Naomi's son John.

Food was good, volunteer cups lovely if not printed to artist standards, fewer volunteers this time. We should sign up members at meetings plus use ivolunteer. Perhaps Peter could give out table assignments at the Show set-up at the same time he provides vendors with their volunteer assignments. Vendors would be responsible to swap schedules as needed. Linda Waters did this when shows were in San Jan Batista; Mary will call Linda for info on how she did this.

Publicity: unclear if there was a Facebook ad. At least 500 people attended and there were a couple of hundred purchases made. Vendor-supplied give-away plants were very nice; the Board thanks the vendors for their generous donation of flats. Next time, we will offer plants "while supply lasts". No vendor complaints about the 30% to the club.

Peter just returned from the Sacramento show and explained how they facilitated a judged show. Of note: small format, vendors could bring plants to fill out the show but not allowed to compete, lots of categories to win including best novice so many members could win, vendors as judges paid a stipend of \$50-125. S.F. show winners are paid in "show bucks" so they spend their prize right there at the show.

Other Business: All. Mary will continue to write a beginner's article for the newsletter, people have commented their appreciation. Peter Shaw has resigned from the Board. The Board can appoint someone to replace him and some member possibilities were discussed.

Adjournment: Mary.

Respectfully submitted by Meryl Abramson

JOURNEY THROUGH GANNA WALSKA LOTUSLAND - ANNA BOWER

Join Anna on a virtual tour of Ganna Walska Lotusland, a 37-acre botanic garden located in Santa Barbara, CA. The property has a long horticultural history beginning in the late 1800's under the ownership of Ralph Kinton Stevens who operated a rare fruit and palm tree nursery on site. The final owner, Madame Ganna Walska, purchased the estate in 1941 and worked with many talented horticulturists and designers to create the gardens you see today. Lotusland opened to the public in 1993 and operates under a conditional use permit granted by Santa Barbara County. Anna will guide viewers through Lotusland's themed gardens, highlighting significant plant collections and the history of the estate. Special focus will be given to the cactus and succulent gardens including the Dunlap cactus collection.



BIO:

Anna is the Assistant Curator of Living Collections at Ganna Walska where she manages the plant records systems and runs the nursery. Prior to working at Lotusland, she completed a M.S. in Plant Science from the University of Delaware with a special focus on botanic garden curation. Anna has experience working and volunteering at several gardens in both Washington and Pennsylvania, including Longwood Gardens, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. Anna has served as the President of the Santa Barbara Cactus and Succulent Society for the past three years.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FAUCARIA BY TOM GLAVICH FROM MAY/JUNE 2004 ISSUE OF "TO THE POINT"

The common name for *Faucaria* is Tiger Jaws, a good name to describe the appearance, and unusually close to the botanical name which is derived from the latin word for jaws, 'faux'. *Faucaria* offers some of the easiest and most impressive plants of the Mesemb or ice plant family. They are related to *Lithops* and to the many general and cultivars of ice plants. They are easy to grow and can be used as ground cover, potted plants, or show plants.

Faucaria are readily available. This is in part due to their ruggedness, and ability to withstand incredible abuse, and in part due to ease of cultivation. Studies have shown that there are a number of species and as with many South African plants, there is enormous variation within some species from location to location. They may be the easiest of the showy Mesembs to grow. Good cultivation practices for *Faucaria* will result in a dense collection of heads, with little or even no stem showing. To achieve this look, give lots of water and fertilizer during the spring, when leaf growth is slow. To minimize summer stem growth, use a very porous potting mix. Lots of drainage material such as pumice, and little organic matter is best. *Faucaria* need lots of light; it is difficult to give them too much. This regimen will allow the plants to develop the best color in the summer and early fall. Bright light, lots of food in spring and summer, and good drainage will result in a spectacular display of yellow flowers in the late summer and early fall. The entire clump is often hidden by the flowers.





They also make surprisingly good garden plants that can take full afternoon sun when grown in the ground. In habitat they grow either in full sun or protected by desert shrubs. They do the same in the ground here. When grown under a little protection they can take some frost. They are not particular about water and will happily sit out a couple of weeks of neglect, even in mid summer. They are great plants for a rock garden as they are not aggressive. But their leaves are very tempting to snails.

Faucaria are amazingly easy to propagate. A stem cutting is taken and simply stuck into potting mix. Rooting is generally quick, particularly if the cuttings are taken during the growing season. During dormancy cuttings should be allowed to dry a few days before being planted. In spring, the new growth is distinctly different in color than the older leaves, giving a remarkable appearance. In late summer and early fall the edges of the leaves and teeth color up nicely, making a great show display.



All Faucaria are wonderful plants, easy to grow for the beginner, and when grown for a few years spectacular plants for the show table. They give enormous pleasure for just minimal effort. They are nature's introduction to one of the best of all succulent families.

Edited by Mary Louise Cross

Improve Your Potting Soil Mix

Use alternate soil mediums to enhance plant growth and longevity

By Tom Vincze

Now that you've bought some amazing new succulent plants you may be thinking about potting them up: what pots or containers you will use and where you will place them. You may also need more potting soil. Before you buy another bag, know this may not be the best and only option for your treasured plants. Why not? Just about all commercial soil mixes consist primarily of peat moss. It's inexpensive and a light material to ship in large quantities but it has its drawbacks for succulent and cactus growers. If not kept continually moist, peat moss will dry out quickly. It eventually hardens and shrinks—it will compact around your plants' roots reducing water permeability—and is difficult to rewet. Because peat moss breaks down quickly, any nutritional benefits will not last too long—maybe a season. Also, it is less environmentally friendly since it is a very slow-forming natural resource harvested from Canadian bogs.



There are alternative and more effective mediums for your succulents and cacti. They have several desirable characteristics you should be aware of to create better cultural conditions for your plants:

Drainage is important for your succulents and cacti so they never remain in standing water. Since these plants are adapted to survive for long periods without water, any excess water will promote the rotting of your plants.

Aeration describes the degree to which air pockets exist around roots—a characteristic of coarser and porous mediums. More air flow allows for faster evaporation of moisture and also reduces the formation of damaging molds and fungus. Increased aeration generally comes with better drainage.

Moisture retention means water is available to plant roots for longer periods without soaking them under water.

Ideal soil mixes leverage all these characteristics by using a balanced combination of organic and inorganic mediums. *Organic* mediums provide moisture retention as well as supply nutrients to plant roots. Over time, however, they will compact and break down, becoming depleted. *Inorganic* mediums increase both drainage and aeration but they do not break down over time as the organic materials will.

In natural habitats, succulents can be found growing on rocks and thrive there for decades with no soil to grow in. Strange but true! The rocks provide the best drainage and aeration possible for succulents, so that even during rainy seasons, they will absorb only the water that they need without turning into mush. Succulent and cacti growers aim to mimic these beneficial characteristics in their own custom soil mixes. Several mediums can be used to increase drainage and aeration of your plant soil. They are available at local nurseries and landscape material suppliers.



COCONUT COIR

This fibrous peat moss alternative breaks down more slowly and is a sustainable resource. Provides moisture retention and aeration.



PUMICE

An stable growing medium that allows excellent drainage and aeration, yet also retains moisture in its pores. Does not break down as organic mediums will.



PERLITE

This medium adds aeration and drainage to soil mixes. It is lighter than pumice and does not retain moisture like pumice.

A good alternative, peat-free mix to start using for your succulents is a blend of coir and pumice. You can then adjust that ratio for your particular growing conditions that take into account both ambient temperature and average moisture level. The warmer your climate, the faster moisture will evaporate—increasing the ratio of moisture-retaining mediums will compensate for that (or you will need to irrigate more frequently). As a general rule with succulents, the mix should fully dry out between waterings. If your mix is drying out too slowly, then add more inorganic materials to it. There is no single solution that works universally; plan time for observation, experimentation and then making the necessary adjustments to your mix to achieve the right balance for your environmental conditions.



If you just need to improve the water drainage of a your purchased soil mix, you could amend it with an inorganic medium in any ratio up to one part pumice/perlite to one part of your purchased potting mix until water quickly drains through it. Or consider buying a peat-free succulent soil mix.

There are always exceptions. Certain plants may grow better in just a single medium. For example, caudiciforms and cacti can be grown in pure pumice. Sedums and crassula, however, are more tolerant of heavily organic mixes. The world of succulents and cacti is vast and each plant's needs will vary. To learn more about the cultivation requirements of the plants you like to grow, consider attending your local succulent and cactus society meetings—a great venue to gain valuable plant cultivation information first hand from monthly speakers and members who share similar interests.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

June 15, 2025

Presenter: Anna Bower

Topic: Journey Through Ganna

Walska Lotusland

Mini Show: Show and Tell

July 20, 2025

Presenter: Jorge Quinonez

Topic: Epiphytic Cacti

Mini Show: Show and Tell

August 17, 2025

Country Store

FUTURE MBACSS SALES SAVE THE DATES

Here are the dates of the
upcoming sales for 2025:

Fall 2025 - Sept 13, 14

Spring 2026 - April 25, 26



The August Meeting will be our annual Country Store. I'm including the information about it early so you can get prepared.

How it works:

Everyone brings 4-8 items to contribute to the store. This can include healthy, strong plants (does not have to be rare or expensive), books, pots, top dressings, tools, art, or anything related.

Items are separated onto tables by category

Tickets are sold at 8 tickets for \$5.00

Members put their tickets towards any or all of the tables

Names are picked raffle style and members get their pick from the items left on the table

This event turns into a fun, loud, social event and we all get to go home with new plants and items to enjoy. The proceeds of the Country Store go to the club to fund future events.

OFFICERS

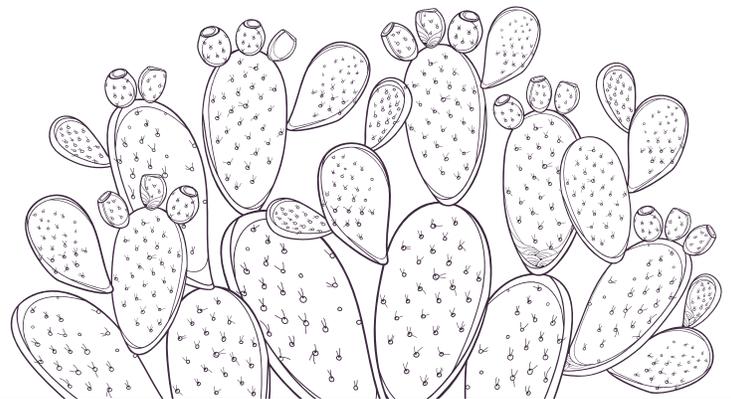
President - Mary Cross
Vice President - Nancy Thomsen
Secretary - Meryl Abramson
Treasurer - Lou Falek
Membership - Lyn MacDonald
Affiliate Representative - Jorge Quiñónez
Directors at Large
David Kurtz
Daisy Szeto
Immediate Past President - Tom Karwin
Founding Member - Naomi Bloss

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
Assistant Floor Manager - Janet Sparks
Sunshine Committee - Cheryl Albert
Webmaster - Diane Salewski
Greeter - Dave Novarina

**See our website for
more information!**

mbsucculent.org



Our next membership meeting will be:

July 20, 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



58TH ANNUAL

CSSA
SHOW
& SALE

JUNE 27-29, 2025
10AM-5PM DAILY

@ THE HUNTINGTON
1151 OXFORD RD, SAN MARINO, CA

CSSASHOW.COM + @CSSASHOW