



ON THE DRY SIDE

JULY 2025

From the Editor:

Happy Summer!

It's July and that means its rodeo week in Salinas. This is the 115th year of the California Rodeo Salinas. I will be working at the rodeo this weekend and will not make the meeting this Sunday. I will miss my friend Jorge Quiñónez give a talk on Epiphytic Cacti. I hope all of you can make it to the meeting to hear our member Jorge about this unique cacti species.

I bought some plants at the end of the year auction in 2023. All were in nice pots and looked good. The problem I have with these purchases is I have no idea what the "soil" mix is in these pots. I assume there is a well-draining medium in them so I treat them accordingly. I have found twice now that that is not the case. I have a large round arrangement of lithops that started dying. When I checked under the dressing, I found ... soil! Only dirt. No wonder I killed those lithops. I salvages a couple of plants and replaced the dirt with a well-draining mix. Now I have the arrangement looking nice again. That happened again with a plant from the 2024 auction. This time I melted it. I am trying to save it, but I need to learn to check under the dressing when I get these nice plants. This is my cautionary tale for today.

The Fall Show and Sale is just 2 months away – September 13 and 14. The volunteer signup will be available in August. You will be able to signup online or in person at our August meeting. This is the time to help the club with the biggest event we do all year. I always enjoy the sales because I get to talk to the growers about my plants and I get to spend time with my friends in the club. So please signup when asked and help out your club.

This is very early, but we will have elections for officers at the end of the year. A nominating committee is being organized and will start asking members to run for an office. For the club to grow and prosper, it needs the input of many members and not the same members. This club needs you. We will need a new President and Vice President as well as Directors-at-Large. Please think about volunteering to help run the club. Any member can hold any position. If you have ideas about the future of the club, this is your opportunity to see those through. My time on the board has been rewarding and I made many friends because I joined the board. Please come to the meeting to hear our club member and cacti expert talk about Epiphytic Cacti.



Nancy Thomsen
Editor/Vice President

Call to Order, Roll Call Mary Cross

Attendees were: Lou Falek, Lyn MacDonald, Nancy Thomsen, Mary Cross

Since there was not a quorum, no decisions could be made. We had a short discussion and closed the meeting.

*Mary told the group that Annie Wolf had given her some additional Ann Shield Slides which she agreed to get to Diane Salewski who has agreed to digitize them

*The San Jose club contacted Mary to say they want to do some kind of a memorial for Naomi at UCSC Garden but are not clear about what they wanted to do or what the costs would be but they are inviting us to join them.

*Lou shared what happened with the website and how it was resolved

*Several members had indicated that we might want to explore the idea of using the Capitola mall with other garden clubs for our sales. The thought was at this meeting that we are established at the ISTW Hall now and probably will stay there.

*Mary reported that she had tried to contact Tyson regarding taking Peter Shaw's place as a "Director at Large" but had some trouble following through with him. She was able to talk to Dave Autore who was able to commit to Peter's remaining time. This will be confirmed at the next Board Meeting.

Notes respectfully submitted by Mary Cross



Photo by Jorge Quiñónez

BEYOND THE DESERT INTO THE FORESTS AND VALLEYS: AN INTRODUCTION TO EPIPHYTIC CACTI

JORGE QUIÑÓNEZ

Jorge Quiñónez, a school psychologist in Salinas, California, has been cultivating succulents for a decade, with a recent focus on South American species. This talk delves into the world of epiphytic cacti, exploring the main groups and insights on propagation. Along the way, he discusses accidental epiphytes, plant posers, a pinch of biogeography, and some tips based on years of experience. The presentation blends botanical information, personal insights with practical cultivation advice, making it accessible to both novice and experienced growers seeking to expand their knowledge of succulent plants.



WHAT ARE EPIPHYTIC CACTI?

From World of Succulents

Forget what comes to mind when you imagine a cactus because epiphytic cacti do not grow in the sand and do not have large spikes.

Epiphytic cacti are members of the Cactus family (Cactaceae). They are native to South and Central American rainforests and grow at altitudes ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 feet (900 to 1,500 m). Unlike most cacti, which live in arid, desert conditions, epiphytic cacti growing in rainforests may receive up to 157 inches (400 cm) of rainfall annually.



They are called epiphytic because they grow on other plants, although they are not parasites. With their roots, they anchor themselves in the crotches of tree branches, where organic matter tends to collect and decompose. This light, loose medium allows water and oxygen to reach the roots of the plant, which absorb the water and dissolved nutrients. Various species of epiphytic cacti with interesting foliage and spectacular blooms are currently available. Schlumbergera (Christmas Cactus and Thanksgiving Cactus) cultivars are easy to find and come in many colors. Hatiora (Easter Cactus) cultivars are increasingly popular, as are cultivars of Epiphyllum (Orchid Cacti). Their names generally refer to the season when they bloom.

PESTS

Fortunately, succulent collections are not attractive to most pests. Fungal and viral attacks are seldom seen so it's usually just insects that must be kept in check. Plants and insects are natural companions. If you have plants then you'll have insects. If you discover an outbreak of some insect pest, there is seldom reason for panic. Your job is simply to keep insects under control. You will never eliminate them completely.

By far the most common and persistent insect succulent growers must face is the ubiquitous mealybug. There are several species of it but it's the citrus or greenhouse mealybug that is attracted to succulents. Adults are about one eighth inch in size and have a white mealy epidermis. They bear live young (crawlers) in white cottony masses on the underside of leaves and in cracks and crevices especially on soft new growth. They exude a sticky sugary substance which is greatly attractive to other insects such as most ants which will then transport the crawlers to other plants. Keep ants in check and you automatically control many other insects.

Succulent enemy number one is the common mealybug. An infestation can quickly get out of control such as the one building on this *Cyphostemma hardyi*. Look for them on the underside of leaves, on new growth, and on flowers. You will often have hundreds of tiny crawlers that are less than one millimeter in size that cannot be seen with the unassisted eye.

Mealybug is easy to control and is seldom fatal unless left unattended. Mites, scale, and white fly are occasionally attracted to succulents, pose a more serious problem, and are difficult to eradicate. Mites, which are not true insects, are voracious sucking pests and are attracted to hot dry conditions. A poorly ventilated greenhouse full of underwatered plants is prime territory. Scale and white fly are very persistent and difficult to eliminate unless caught at the right time in their life cycle. Volumes of information exists on these pests and a little research on your part will go a long way in identifying and controlling them. The internet and your county extension office are excellent sources for help.

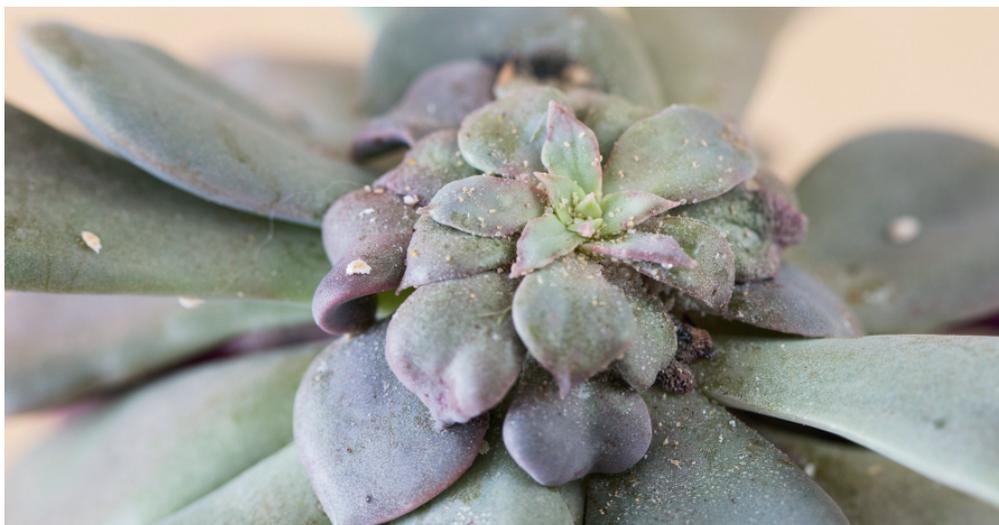
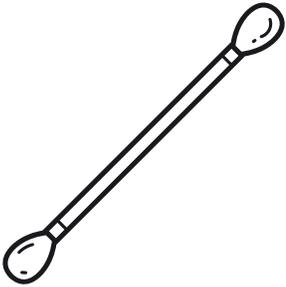


Photo from succulentsandsunshine.com

PESTS CONT.

EASY EFFECTIVE CONTROLS



Rubbing alcohol on a Qtip will render the odd mealybug or two harmless but what about several badly infested plants with hundreds of tiny crawlers embedded in the delicate growing apex? Try blasts of tap water applied with a Fogg-It nozzle on a trigger type hose shut-off. A few minutes of pulsating blasts of ordinary tap water worked in very close in all the difficult to reach places will render just about any plant squeaky clean. It will even clean off badly encrusted scale which is a very difficult job.

Spray nozzles are an inexpensive option. Use the appropriate spray style for your plant. You could even improvise with the kitchen sink sprayer but outside with the garden hose is usually more practical. This may sound a bit too simple but try it and see how effective it is.



CHEMICAL CONTROLS

- if things are out of hand and you are dealing with many badly infested plants, chemical controls are sometimes necessary. The number one rule is absolutely do not, repeat do not, use petroleum based products on succulents. These are usually labeled "liquid" this or that and are designated "EC" or just "E". The petroleum base in EC's will severely burn succulents so avoid them at all costs. Systemic pesticides have become popular but the concept of making the entire plant toxic creates personal exposure problems beyond what many growers consider safe.

Most wettable powders and water based or aqueous suspension insecticides can be used on succulents with no phytotoxicity. But again what product to use for what insect requires a little homework on your part. A recommendation from the garden center or a friend won't do. Always go slowly when trying something new. Never apply an untested chemical to your entire collection. Do a controlled application to just a few test plants instead.

Finally if you are an active collector who frequently acquires plant material from many sources, then it's inevitable that you will bring in new insects. A good hand lens or loupe of 6x-10x therefore becomes a necessity for inspecting new arrivals and your collection up close and personal.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

July 20, 2025

Presenter: Jorge Quinonez

Topic: Epiphytic Cacti

Mini Show: Show and Tell

August 17, 2025

Country Store

September, 2025

No Meeting

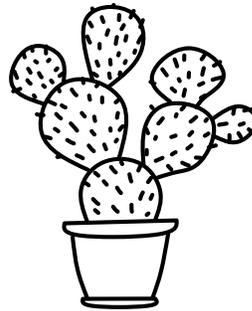
Fall Show & Sale

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



COUNTRY STORE

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

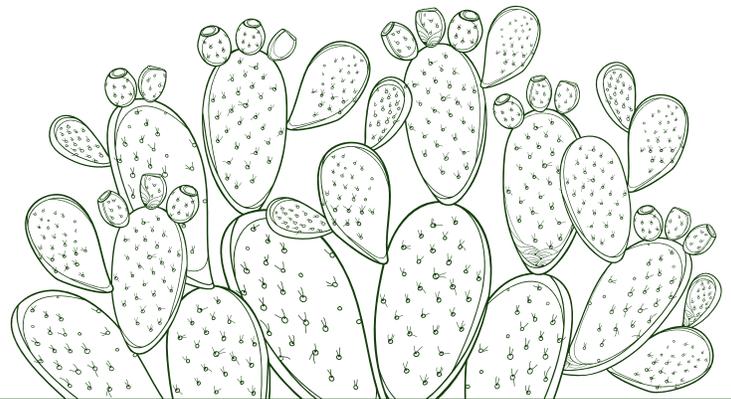
President - Mary Cross
Vice President - Nancy Thomsen
Secretary - Meryl Abramson
Treasurer - Lou Falek
Membership - Lyn MacDonald
Affiliate Representative - Jorge Quiñónez
Directors at Large
David Kurtz
Daisy Szeto
Immediate Past President - Tom Karwin
Founding Member - Naomi Bloss

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