

# ON THE DRY SIDE

## FEBRUARY 2026



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm starting to settle in to this job. I didn't know how many emails were involved. Granted, the new venue and collaboration for the Spring Sale is generating a large portion of the messages, but I still get many club messages. The Board members, committee chairs and Sale Committee members are making the transition easier. Thank you.

It's February, but it has been warm and I have to remember to water and tend my plants more often than usual in winter. The rain always makes my plants happy because the Ph balance is perfect. It is amazing how fast a plant will perk up or bloom after the rain.

We had several new members join at the last meeting. It was a great first meeting to have new members. Joseph Hidalgo showed us how to stage a plant so it looks like it's in nature in a pot. It was fun and so inspiring. A suspect members are looking for rocks and sticks to arrange with their show plants. I already repotted a couple of plants with my own rocks.

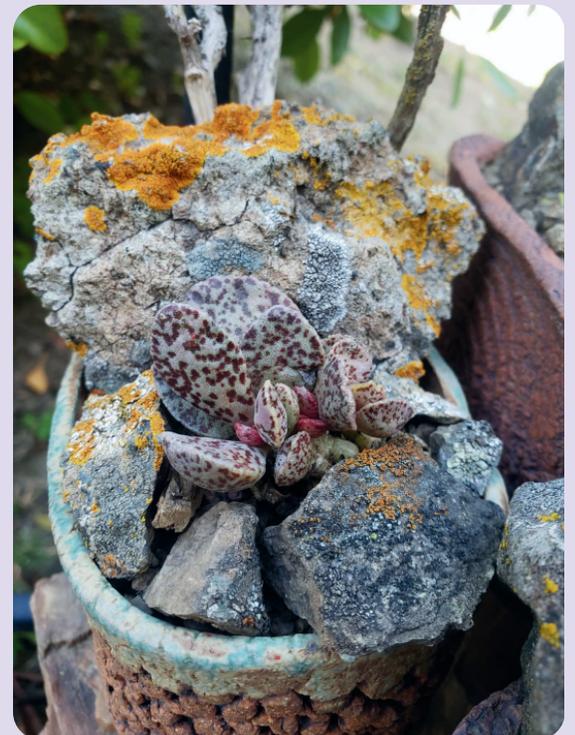
Planning for the Spring Show and Sale are ongoing. Committee members are meeting with their counterparts in the Bonsai club and organizing the event. We will need many volunteers for this event. If you volunteer, you get access to the food tent and a laurel and hardy hand shake. Volunteer signups will begin in March.

Our next membership meeting is this Sunday, February 15. Our speaker will be Marc Beckstrom who will talk about Oxalis and how it's not just a weed any longer. There will be a Show and Tell for the members to bring a plant and tell the group about it – why it's special to you. Maybe you nursed it back to health. Maybe you inherited it. Whatever the story, we want to hear it. There will also be a raffle/drawing for plants.

Have a great February  
Nancy Thomsen  
President

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# MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Nancy Thomsen

Members present: Nancy Thomsen, Lyn MacDonald, Lou Falek, Jon Lubbe, Jorge Quiñonez, Dave Autore, David Kurtz, Diane Salewski, Meryl Abramson.

Minutes of 12/7/2025: Nancy. December minutes in AI form only and need to be revised.

Year-End event: All. This event needs a formal name. "Winter Banquet and Auction" was chosen as the best name so far. Decorations were lovely and made the event more festive.

Food: All. Amazing!! A special thank you to Lyn and Lou for their donation of time and expense in providing (shopping, preparing, schlepping, etc.) the food, which was wonderful!! Lyn was happy with the set-up for the meal, as the tables and chafing dishes were ready to receive the food.

Treasurer's report: Lou. Club took in \$2600, cleared \$732. This is the lowest of the last 3 years. We had no party expenses, everything was donated (food) or re-used (decorations). About 50 people attended, we usually have 15 or so more than that. Speculation about the drop was that the Banquet date was closer to Christmas; the date will be close again in 2026.

Rent for 2026 has been paid to the Corralitos Grange. Lou has requested insurance for the Grange and the Sept. show at ISTW and needs to do so for the April event

Lou gave an update on the return of our deposit from Portuguese Hall. See Spring Show & Sale, below.

Membership Report: Lyn. Several people renewed at the Winter Banquet. Two new members so far for 2026. 146 members on roster, several need to pay dues  
A life member no longer pays dues.

Silent Auction – Dave Autore. Dave felt this went better than last year's auction, and has even more new improvements to implement next time. Fewer plants this time, and fewer went unsold. Numbers were placed on plants to match up to sheets. Need better control between the two auctions. Email sheets before the event, perhaps with Banquet invite.)

Live Auction – Jon. Prefers new form. Let's not split into 2 parts; we lost momentum in second half. Sound seemed to be ok.

Plant Exchange – All. Plants were not as nice as they have been in past years. Board discussed discontinuing this from the Banquet, with the possibility of a plant exchange at a general meeting instead. Assigning numbers to each plant continues to be a fairer way to distribute the plants.

Other: All. We still need a co-librarian, and a new Sunshine Chair. The Sunshine Chair sends a thank you card to each speaker and to each member who is sick or has a sick family member. There are some beautiful cards we should consider. These jobs do not require much time, and would be ideal for a new member wanting to get involved.

January meeting: Jorge and Meryl. Joseph Hidalgo is scheduled to speak. Daisy is going to provide the plants and lead the Raffle. Mark Beckstrom was noted as a possible speaker. The possibility that others (beside the president) preside as Master of Ceremonies for general meetings was discussed, to add interest and to get others involved.

Spring Show & Sale: All. The Board has committed to a change in venue, moving to the Capitola Mall and sharing space with the Bonsai Club. A committee is in place: Stan is Chair and Show Coordinator; Lyn will oversee volunteers and food; Peter B. will handle the vendors/sale; Jorge on-site things; Diane will provide publicity and coordinate that with Bonsai Kai as well as with the Capitola Mall itself. Jorge, and likely Nancy, plan to inspect the space this coming week. The Bonsai Club will ask for a donation for entrance, as their event is more show than sale. It appears that we can hold a "Members Only" sale on Friday without paying extra to the Mall. We will need to rent tables and chairs, and possibly create new signage. Estimated cost including half the \$1000 rental fee should be less than \$3,000. ISTW charges over \$5000 in rental.

Lou has spoken with the ISTW/Portuguese Hall people. Our Club paid a \$2475 downpayment to hold the date for our Spring Show. Changing the venue to the Capitola Mall and sharing the space opens new possibilities for the Club and will substantially save money on rental expenses. The ISTW agree be a bit more generous than the terms of the lease, and will return \$1075 immediately. If and when they are able to re-rent that weekend, the rest of our full downpayment will be refunded.

Adjournment: Nancy.

Respectfully submitted by Meryl Abramson

# FEBRUARY SPEAKER

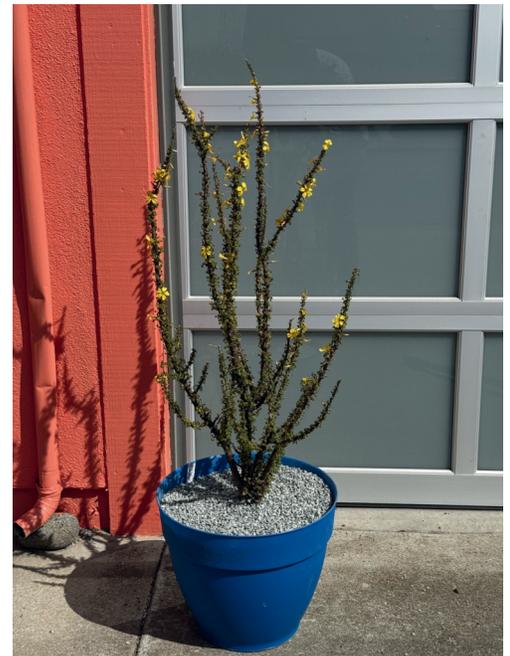
## MARC BECKSTROM

### OXALIS



When people hear the word Oxalis, a terrible weed is what first comes to mind. This month, Marc Beckstrom will be talking about his research into a unique type of Oxalis which is not a weed and more akin to Ocotillo. He will discuss his research and fieldwork focused on classifying *Oxalis gigantea* into several unique species. If you've ever wondered about plant taxonomy, and how researchers determine and name plant species, this meeting will provide insight into that process. New plant species are still being documented in the wild today.

Marc will also share photos and discuss how the Oxalis project began, the fieldwork conducted in South America, and the [iNaturalist](#) research that supported the study.



# OPEN HOUSE

## SISTER SUCCULENT OPEN HOUSE

We have new members from Sister Succulent, a beautiful garden filled with cacti and succulents and many specimens for sale. Dave Autore took these pictures when he attended the open house last Saturday, February 7th.



# BEGINNER'S GUIDE

## WHERE TO BUY CACTI & SUCCULENTS

A huge variety of cacti and succulents can be cultivated but only a limited choice of species- usually those that are easy to grow-can be bought at garden centers or florists. Visit a cactus nursery or local cactus show if you wish to buy a more unusual variety of plant

## HOW TO SELECT A HEALTHY CACTUS

The stem skin of a cactus reveals a great deal about the plant's health

- Avoid plants with tired and dull stem skin or ones that have large, unsightly skin blemishes
- Check that the spines are evenly distributed and are undamaged
- Look at the soil mix in the pot. If it is fresh and weed-free, the grower has cared for the plant

## SELECTING HEALTHY SUCCULENTS

- Many succulents are leafy, and by inspecting the leaves you can determine the plant's condition Avoid succulents that have only a few leaves or have pale leaves, this is an obvious sign of poor growth
- Examine the leaves to make sure that none is deformed
- Check that the level of soil mix in the pot has not dropped

## EASY CARE FOR BEGINNERS

Many of the species sold by florists and garden centers are ideal for beginners, in fact they have often been selected on the basis that they are easy to care for. These cacti and succulents will tolerate some neglect and, unlike other species, they produce flowers when only a few years old.

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE 'WINDOWED' AND 'RETUSE' HAWORTHIA

By Tom Glavich

From "To the Point", February 2005



Haworthias are incredibly variable, incredibly beautiful small plants from South Africa. Almost all the species are easy to grow. The most often collected of all Haworthias are the 'retuse' and 'windowed' species. The word retuse means blunt ended; most of the windowed Haworthias are blunt ended; and most of the retuse Haworthias have windows. There are exceptions to both. The plants are addictive. A good collection can be kept in a small space. Almost all of these are perfectly happy in three and a half inch pots.

Haworthias, along with Aloe and Gasteria are members of the Aloaceae Family. Haworthias are confined almost exclusively to South Africa. The genus has

historically posed some significant taxonomic challenges and most of the species have been named several times over. For the beginning grower, the best solution is to hang onto the label that came with the plant. Fortunately, none of that affects cultivation.

Haworthias are classic "Winter Growing" succulents. They start growing when the summer heat ends, with growth picking up in the cooler days of late September and October. They generally stop growing for a while in December and January and start growing again in February or March. They will continue to grow until the sustained heat of summer arrives and shut down for summer dormancy. If kept warm (60 to 70 F), and under artificial lights, they can be kept growing throughout the winter. (note from editor – in our warmer climate they can continue to grow all year long.)

When growing, they benefit greatly from rainwater; and can take surprising amounts without damage. A little light fertilization will bring out the best growth. Too much fertilizer will cause excessive leaf growth, and the whole plant will start to look flabby. It is best to work for a rosette of tight, firm leaves. Good light will bring out complex and subtle shades of dark red, pink and white. Too much light will result in burnt tips.

Haworthias in general are tolerant of varying potting mixes, and success has been reported with everything from straight pumice to potting soil mixed with pumice or perlite, to plain potting soil and even garden soil. As long as there is good drainage, they will thrive. One exception is mixing peat with your potting mix. It is hard to wet when dry and seems to promote root loss.

They can take light freezes without damage as long as they warm up during the day. They can be naturalized as a ground cover, placed under shrub cover in warmer areas of the country.

They are easy to propagate as most species offset or pup when still relatively young. Or a single leaf can be pulled from the plant, keeping at least one of the little ears on the side of the leaf where it attaches to the main stem. The leaves that work best are neither the oldest nor the youngest but one that has recently become full grown, but they take longer to root and not all leaves will be successful. Finally, seeds are occasionally available. They should be planted in the fall. Seedlings are very slow at first and require nearly constant moisture and freely moving air.



Edited by Mary Cross

# CLUB NEWS

## JANUARY MEETING

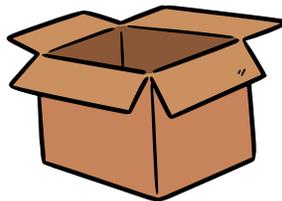
Our January membership meeting was a great success. Joseph Hidalgo gave a short talk and then a demonstration on staging plants. Joseph is a potter who uses interesting techniques to decorate his pots. Many of you have some of his pots in your collection. Here are the two plant he repotted at the meeting. He uses rocks and sticks he pick up on hikes and walks. He likes the rocks with lichen. The finished product is beautiful.

When most of us repot a plant, we just put it in a bigger pot and maybe put some dressing on top. This is completely different. These plants are surrounded by rocks so they look like they are in nature. It is stunning. For everyone at the meeting, they will look at potting differently going forward.



## SAVE YOUR BOXES!

Please start saving boxes to be used during the Spring Show and Sale April 25th & 26th



## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

February 15, 2026

Speaker: Marc Beckstrom

Topic: Oxalis

Mini Show: Show and Tell

March 15, 2026

Speaker: Carl Carter

Topic: Bolivia Talk

Mini Show: Show and Tell

## SHOW & SALE DATES:

**Spring 2026**

April 25, 26

New venue - Capitola Mall

**Fall 2026**

September 26, 27

# LEADERSHIP

## 2026 OFFICERS

**President:** Nancy Thomsen  
**Vice President:** Jon Lubbe  
**Secretary:** Meryl Abramson  
**Treasurer:** Lou Falek  
**Membership:** Lyn MacDonald  
**Affiliate Representative:** Jorge Quiñónez  
**Directors at Large:**  
David Kurtz  
Dave Autore  
Diane Salewski  
**Immediate Past President:** Mary Cross  
**Founding Member:**

## CHAIRPERSONS

**Librarian:** David Kurtz  
**Mini-Show:** Tyson Curtis  
**Newsletter Editor:** Nancy Thomsen  
**Newsletter Designer:** Leia Dilley  
**Photography:** Paul Albert  
**Programs:** Jorge Quiñónez  
**Raffles:** Meryl Abramson  
**Sales 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](http://mbsucculent.org)**

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING INFORMATION

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

**Location:**  
**Corralitos Grange**  
**165 Little Corral Way, Corralitos.**