



ON THE DRY SIDE

OCTOBER 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Halloween Month. Fall has arrived – the mornings are cool and the afternoons are warm. We had another heat wave last week and my plants loved it. Plants that never bloomed in the past have bloomed. Other plants have decided its winter. One of my winter growers had died off and then just started growing again. That is the amazing thing about succulents and cacti. They can look dead for a year or more and then decide it is time to grow. I had a plant that turned black. I pulled off all the black parts and waited a couple of years. Now it is healthy again.

We have a very busy few months coming up. This month we will have two firsts – Ice Cream Social and Plant BINGO. I think it will be a blast – ice cream and a game. The prizes are some very nice plants. Next month, we will have Ernesto Sandoval with a workshop on propagating from seed. That will be interesting and educational. Then in December, we will have our annual Winter Banquet and Auction with a nice meal, live auction and silent auction. In order to attend the winter event, you must pay dues for 2027 and reserve your place with Lyn. Right now, go find that email and let Lyn know you are coming. Lyn will be cooking the meal again this year. The menu will be similar to last year. Again this year we will need volunteers to set up and decorate, serve food, clerk for the auctions and help with clean up. There is no sign up for helping, just show up early or plan to stay late. Thank you in advance.

Nancy Thomsen
President

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MEETING MINUTES

Call to order

Nancy Thomsen Jon Lubbe, Lou Falek, Lyn MacDonald, Diane Salewski, Mary Edmund, Dave Atoure, Mary Cross

August minutes were approved

Lou gave a treasurer's report

Lyn gave a membership report - 1 new member

There was discussion about the August meeting. Good presentation, all the new A/V equipment worked well.

Upcoming September meeting is on orchids. The presenter will bring plants. It was decided that we will invite a local vendor to sell at most meetings. Jorge will bring sale plants for the September meeting. Mary Cross will bring the raffle plants. The Show & Tell category is Gasteria.

There was a long discussion about the October meeting. The board had an idea and it needed to be organized. The idea is Plant Bingo. Through dialog the idea was worked through and everyone agreed that this will work. The Show & Tell category is Mamalaria and Daisy will bring raffle plants.

Jon wants to have a presence at the Santa Cruz County Fair. We didn't have much information, but Jon took point and Lyn will send out a request for volunteers to work at a table at the fair for short shifts.

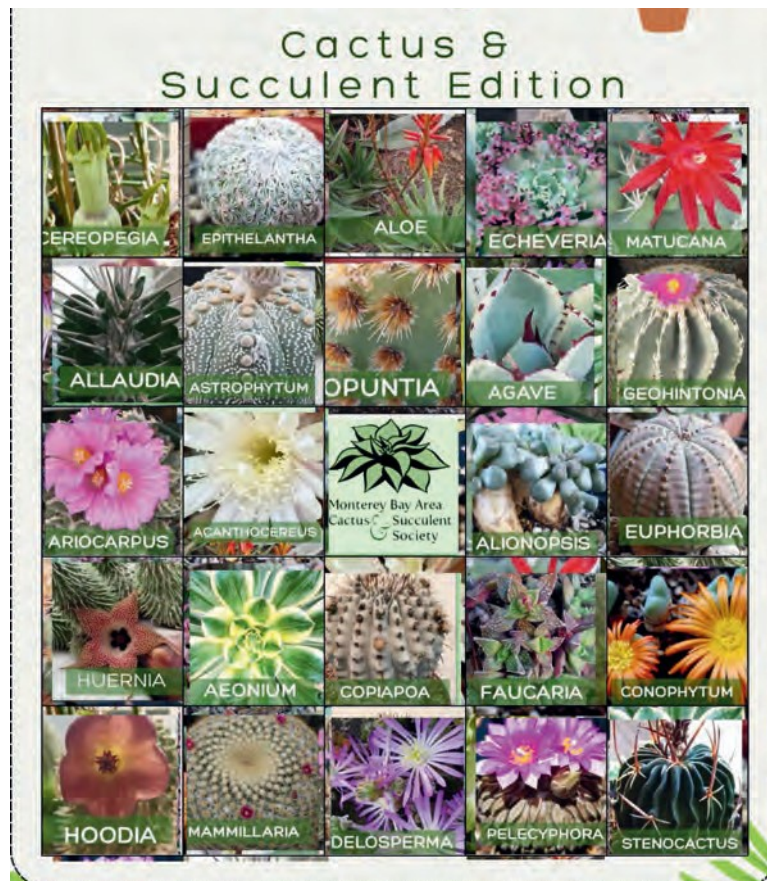
Meeting adjourned by Nancy

OCTOBER Meeting



We have an extra fun meeting planned this month!

- Plant BINGO. We have made a custom BINGO card filled with different types of cactus, succulent, and other plants. Each card has 4 games, so you have 4 chances to win a nice plant!
- Ice cream social after lunch! Enjoy ice cream and toppings while you play.
- There will also be a raffle and Stan Verkler will be selling plants in the back before the meeting begins.
- The Show and Tell category is **Aloe**.



BEGINNER'S GUIDE

GROWING CACTI AND SUCCULENTS – POTTING MIXES

By, Mac Clarke (CSSA Director, Cleveland) in CSSA Newsletter Jan/Feb 1995

(Original Author's note: I am writing this to someone who has discovered that succulents are fascinating, but wonders "what do I do next?" My primary qualification for writing this is that I was a beginner myself in 1989, so I still remember how ignorant I felt at the time. Ignorance is easily overcome, and the process can be a lot of fun. Most important is to get out there and grow some succulents!)

As you can see, we are starting at the bottom - Potting Mixes. Arguments among hobbyists on what constitutes the ideal potting mix make politics and religion seem non-controversial. The incredible range of mixes that are used are mute testimony to the adaptability of succulents. The mix described below works pretty well throughout the eastern 2/3 of the country and I know people in the desert who use similar ones as well.

Potting mixes must satisfy four needs of the plant and particularly the plants roots.

SUPPORT: Almost anything can be used to keep the plant upright.

AIR: While some succulents can develop submerged roots, that is not what they will have when you get them, or when you repot them. So the mix must have enough coarse particles so that the fines cannot fill all the spaces.

WATER: Liquid water as a film on the outside of the particles. If the mix doesn't drain (that is what the hole in the bottom of the pot is for!) water will fill the space between the particles and exclude air. Porous particles can hold a reserve of water in their internal pores and cut down on the frequency of watering.

NUTRIENTS: Nutrients must be dissolved in the liquid water to be available to the roots. Yes, you can throw solid fertilizer on the surface. It will dissolve and wash down to the roots as you water. But most hobbyists use soluble house plant fertilizer dissolved in the water you use to water the plants.

I recommend a mix containing one volume of a commercial soilless potting mix and one volume of one of the expanded aggregates – pumice, perlite, vermiculite, or calcine clay (Turface). I use a locally produced peat and composted bark based mix. And I use perlite since it is readily available. Everything I hear about pumice says it is better than perlite, but my nearest source is 150 miles away and is only sold in large quantities. Lots of people use vermiculite, but it breaks down into fines pretty fast. Use whatever potting mix is available in your local nursery/garden supply stores, they all work. For seedlings, use finely ground material, for 4" pots and up use coarse materials.

You might consider adding a small amount of ground agricultural limestone (not lime) if you plan to water with rain water or if your water supply is acid for other reasons. Try for a high magnesium limestone called dolomite. This is optimal.

Most of my potting involves mixing a wheelbarrow load at a time, but for small quantities I use plastic dishpans to mix in, and old fertilizer containers as measuring cups. Add a little water to lay the dust and stir the mixture with a convenient tool until it looks uniform. Try for a mix that is dry enough to be free flowing after mixing but if you overshoot and have dripping water it will drain when in the pot, so no problem.

Edited by Mary Cross

SEPTEMBER MEETING



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Fair



CLUB NEWS

WINTER BANQUET AND AUCTION

The MBACSS Winter Banquet and Auction is Sunday, December 20, 2026. Everyone planning to attend must pay 2027 dues and RSVP with Lyn. Lyn sent an email with a description of the event and instructions on how reserve your place. Reply to that email or use this address MBACSS.membership@gmail.com

DUES

Membership Dues for 2027 are payable by January 1, 2027

Single is \$25/year and Family is \$30/year.

There are several ways you can pay your dues – online through our website, check by mail, or in person at a meeting. mbsucculent.org/membership

If you plan to pay at a meeting please fill out the dues form, bring a check or exact change and place in the box for dues payments at the entrance. If you have any questions about your membership status, please email Lyn: mbacss.membership@gmail.com

YUCCA - KATHY WITTPENN

I wanted to share this photo because it takes years for the blue Americana agave to bloom. It's been looming over the driveway in bloom for almost a year. The birds have enjoy feasting on the flower heads and seeds.

On Friday my friend cut it down while I stood guard collecting pieces. I was thrilled to have such a gift!

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

November 15, 2026

Speaker: Ernesto Sandoval

Topic: Propagation from seed workshop

Show & Tell: Mammallaria

December 20, 2026

Winter Banquet and Auction



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:

Dave Autore

Diane Salewski

Mary Edmund

Immediate Past President: Mary Cross

CHAIRPERSONS

Librarians: Andrea Michels & Lynn Vieyra

Newsletter Editor: Nancy Thomsen

Newsletter Designer: Leia Dilley

Photography: Paul Albert & Dave Autore

Programs: Jorge Quiñónez

Raffles: Meryl Abramson

Sales Floor Manager: Peter Beiersdorfer

Assistant Floor Manager: Janet Sparks

Sunshine Committee: Paul Albert

Webmaster: Diane Salewski

Greeter: Dave Novarina

**See our website for
more information!**

mbsucculent.org

MEMBERSHIP MEETING INFORMATION

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

Doors open at 11:30am

Bring your own lunch starts at 12:00pm

Meeting starts at 12:30pm

Location:

Corralitos Grange

165 Little Corral Way, Corralitos.