

The Hooked Spine

Newsletter of *CoronaCactus Nursery LLC*.

Volume 1, Issue 04

July/August 2010

27th Succulent Plants Symposium

Huntington Botanical Gardens

September 4, 2010

By: Darryl Craig | Photos: Jennifer Craig

We attended this year's 27th Annual Succulent Plants Symposium at the HBG for the first time. We couldn't pass up the chance to meet the famous John Lavranos and listen to his talks on his journeys to some incredible habitats. Dan Mahr presented a talk on Bonaire, a small island in the Netherland Antilles. Sula Vanderplank presented a talk about where the Chapparal meets the Desert. Dylan Hannon presented a talk on Collecting plants in your own Backyard. John Lavranos presented 2 talks; the first was Arabia Felix a great tour of African countries. His 2nd talk was about his 50 years of plants and people. Some really great places and some incredible plants! The HBG opened up their collection conservatory and gardens to all attendees. Amy Korn & Matt Randolph presented a nice introduction to the design and construction of the new HBG conservatory. We can't wait to see this completed, the design is really awesome.

There was also a silent auction, by which many members brought some really great plants! We won a cool looking *Agave marmorata* sport. Lunch and dinner were nicely catered. ❖

Continued on page 5 & 6 with photos

The Hooked Spine

Summer Edition

July/August 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 04

Hot enough for you?

Summer around here always is! Most of the plants just love it, although some don't and take a mid summers nap. Careful with your watering during this time!

This issue has an account of the Succulent Symposium 2010 at the HBG, including photos.

The plant of the month is a native Californian, *Cylindropuntia ramosissima* (Diamond Cholla)

We have an article about the ingredients we use in our potting mixes. We hope this helps clear up some questions. Also 2 Book reviews on *Sclerocactus* and *Pediocactus*.

For our *Flower Fotos*, this month we've substituted flower pictures from the Huntington Botanical Gardens during the symposium. ❖

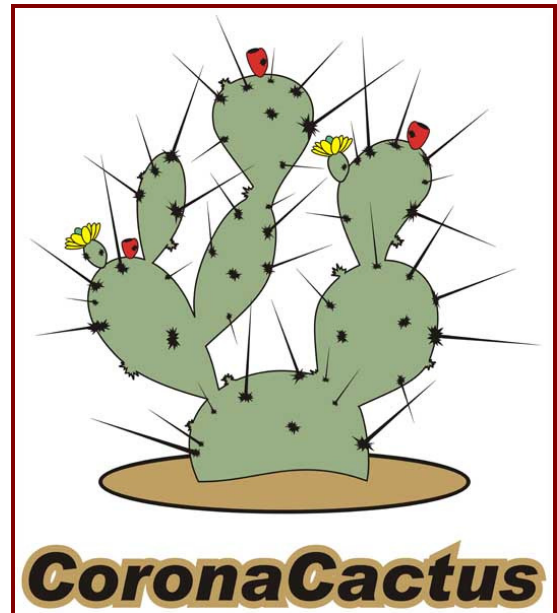
We hope you enjoy!

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C&S Potting mix

Ingredients we use in our potting mix

August, 2010

By: Darryl Craig

We've tried many different mixes, some worked, some didn't. Your geographical climate may be the most dependent on the mix you use, besides the actual plant you are potting and your regimen of culture. Here in So. California it's much more arid and hot than it is in say, New York. Your growing conditions (Greenhouse, open air, windowsill) will also play a part in your potting mix choices. Here in the desert a potting mix can dry out very quickly, especially when using a mineral mix. Watering schedules increase and fertilizing becomes more frequent. Back in New York that same potting mix could take a few days longer to dry out, due to lower air temps, higher humidity, etc.

The type and size of pot you use also changes things. Plastic pots will retain moisture longer than clay pots. Plastic is not able to breathe so the mix will take longer to dry out. Clay pots are breathable so the moisture can evaporate through the sides. *FYI: Glazed clay pots will perform about the same as a plastic pot, as the glazing seals the pot.* A full mineral mix in a plastic pot in an arid region will dry out about the same as a slightly organic mix in a clay pot in a more humid region. This is merely a theory, but you get the idea. The pot size will also play a part in the dry time. Makes sense right? There's more in the pot so it'll take longer to dry. This is another reason for using the correct sized pot for the plant.

We've narrowed our ingredients down to 3, sometimes 4. The amount of each ingredient depends on what we're potting up. We use a combination of: Commercial cactus mix, pumice, diatomaceous earth and sand.

The commercial cactus mix is always the smallest portion and sometimes can be as little as 3 to 1. For example: 1 part Commercial mix, 2 parts pumice, 2 parts diatomaceous earth. Meaning, if we mix 1 scoop of commercial mix, we'll mix in 2 scoops of pumice and 2 scoops of DE. Small adjustments can be done on the fly to get the consistency we are looking for. Our test is very simple. Grab a handful of your mix, squeeze it tightly to make a fist and then open your hand up. The mix should just crumble away and not clump up at all. If it does still clump, add more pumice or DE.

Organic and Mineral Which is which?

Organic: Organic ingredients are made from natural resources. Decomposed plant material (leaves, tree bark, moss) and contain natural minerals and matter that plants use as food. These ingredients are ok for pot grown cacti, but should be used in very small amounts. Most cacti do not grow naturally in these ingredients, so they do not like to be condemned to a pot full of moss and tree bark. Some plants really dislike any of these ingredients and do not do well at all being potted in them.

One disadvantage of using these organic types are pests, -gnats, larvae, algae, fungus, etc. There are no guarantees these bags are completely sterile and these pests can be present and in turn get put into the pot with your cactus. To ensure the mix is pest free, sterilizing is mandatory.

Mineral: Non-organic ingredients are made from mined minerals rock, sand, loam, etc. These do not contain any type of organic matter or nutrients the plants can use. However, they do offer some mineral trace elements that, in conjunction with fertilizer, do help the plant. Non-organic or soilless mixes do require more culture practice, but it is well worth it for a healthy growing cactus.

Plant of the Month

August 2010

Cylindropuntia ramosissima



Read the article at: www.coronacactus.com/PotM.htm

Website Updates

We ran into some issues with the software provider for our new website design that we had been working on. Unfortunately these issues could not be resolved and we've had to start all over again. We are working hard to get the new site up and running by the end of October.

Our plant lists have been updated with some great Aloe and Agave hybrid offerings.

New photo galleries have been added:

- [CoronaCactus Collection: June 2010](#)
- [CoronaCactus Collection: July 2010](#)

Plant of the Month article; *Cylindropuntia ramosissima*.





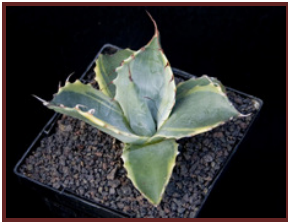

CactiGuide.com

CactiGuide.com is quickly becoming the authoritative website on the net for the positive identification of the Cactus Family. With the vast number of plants out there, they are always looking for photos of plants to display in the guide. Due credit will be given to the collection, the plant and the photographer.

So if you see a missing photo on the guide and you have that plant in your collection (and it's been positively identified) please contact Daiv at, daiv@cactiguide.com

Plant Specials

Subscribers can take early advantage of these newsletter only specials.

<p>Aloe cv. 'Bright Ember' (New release)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$25.00</p>	
<p>Aloe cv. 'Coral Fire' (New release)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$25.00</p>	
<p>Aloe cv. 'Sal' (New release based off an original KG hybrid)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$20.00</p>	
<p>Agave cv. 'Royal Spine' (KG New release)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$25.00</p>	
<p>Agave parransana var. "FireBall" variegata (KG New release – This is based off a variegated habitat plant in Mexico)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$30.00</p>	
<p>Agave bracteosa cv. "Monterrey Frost" variegata (KG New release – This is based off a variegated habitat plant in Mexico)</p> <p>Pot Size: 4" Price: \$25.00</p>	

Special Introduction: New Kelly Griffin Aloe Hybrids

Kelly Griffin has released a new batch of his Aloe hybrids. These originated directly from Kelly himself. Being friends with Kelly, you can be assured these are the real deal!

We also have a few of Kelly's newly released variegated Agave's. These plants are based off true variegated habitat plants from Mexico.

We are offering these specials in our Newsletter first, so act fast as these are extremely popular and sell out very fast.



CoronaCactus Collection Photo Galleries

We've been working on monthly photo galleries of new growth and flowers from our collection plants. April, May, June and July have been uploaded and we're working on August's offerings. These galleries can be found on our website, as well as our Facebook page. Lots of great blooms, including many first timers for us.



We're on Facebook

Send a friend request to:
[CoronaCactus Nursery](http://www.coronacactus.com)



For more information, Plant Sales Lists, Cultivation Articles and more...

Please visit our website:
www.coronacactus.com

Check us out on eBay! CoronaCactusNursery

Our listings generally start on Tuesday and end on Sunday.
We offer lower than listed starting prices to give you a chance at some really great deals!



Book Review 1

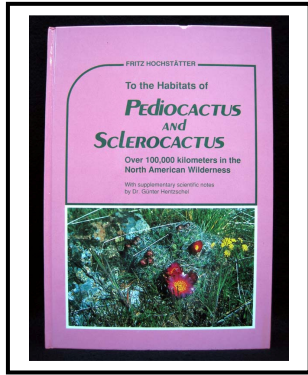
To the Habitats of Pediocactus and Sclerocactus
Over 100,000 kilometers in the North American Wilderness
Author: Fritz Hochstätter

Published in 1990, this book goes into detail about the habitats of these plants. The majority of the text photos are all black and white, while there is still a nice section of many color photos.

This book differs from other cactus books in the fact it's more of a reading book than just a research book. Along with the descriptions, keys to the species, spine details and all that we normally see in books. Fritz takes this a step further providing stories and experiences from his many trips to habitat. What he saw along the way, who he met and how they helped and what I found most interesting, the descriptions of how he got up that steep mountain, or across that deep ravine to get to the plants.

Each species has a location map showing where Fritz found plants, while he takes you from state to state on his journey exploring their habitats. Supplemental scientific notes provided by Dr. Güther Hentzschel offer very detailed information about the climates and substrates these plants grow in. Seed details are and photos are also provided.

All in all this is an excellent book that provides great information about these rarely seen plants. A cactus book you can actually sit down and read as a story.



Book Review 2

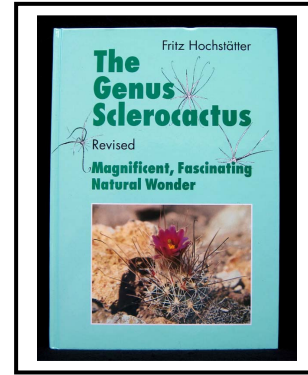
The Genus Sclerocactus Revised
Magnificent, Fascinating Natural Wonder
Author: Fritz Hochstätter

Published in 1993, as a follow up to his *Pediocactus and Sclerocactus* book, this one is only about *Sclerocactus*. Hochstätter is an expert on the genus and has traveled many times to habitat locations. The majority of the photos are from habitat and as with the *Pedio/Sclero* book, unfortunately they are also in black and white, although there is a nice section containing many color photos.

Hochstätter goes into detail about each species' morphology and their habitat. A nice feature is the hand drawn spine clusters for each species. Dues to the endangerment of these species, Fritz chose not to provide specific location details or maps. Locations are given as Counties and/or States.

Keys to the species are provided, as well as detailed photos of the seeds. Fritz also provides a list all his field numbers for the species he's collected and in which State and County.

If you're a *Sclerocactus* collector or would like to be one, this is an excellent research book for your library.



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An archive page has been created on our website for viewing past Newsletters. Current Newsletters will be available a few weeks after release.

www.coronacactus.com/newsletter.htm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: FALL 2010

SEPTEMBER 23-24-25-26

A Pacific Horticulture Symposium
Gardening Under Mediterranean Skies VIII;
Style & Whimsy in the Sustainable Garden
Los Angeles County Arboretum
301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA

OCTOBER 15-16-17

Silverado Days
William Peak Park
7225 El Dorado Drive, Buena Park, CA

NOVEMBER 6-7

San Gabriel Valley C&SS Winter Show & Sale
Los Angeles County Arboretum
301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA

DECEMBER 4-5

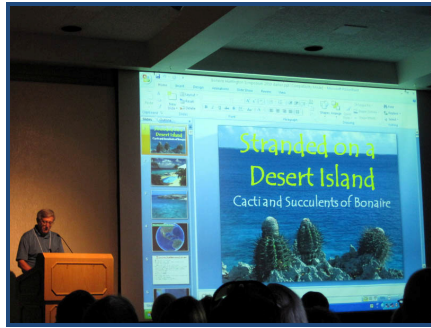
Orange County C&SS Winter Show & Sale
Fullerton Arboretum
1900 Associated Rd., Fullerton, CA

27th Succulent Plant Symposium

Huntington Botanical Gardens September 4, 2010



MC: James P. Folsom



Dan Mahr



Dan Mahr: *Melocactus* sp.



Dan Mahr introducing John Lavranos



John Lavranos



John Lavranos: *Dorstenia* sp.



Myron Kinnach introducing John Lavranos



John Lavranos



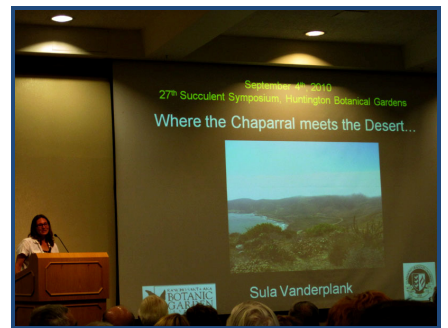
John Lavranos: *Aloe pillansii*



Amy Korn & Matt Randolph



Dylan Hannon



Sula Vanderplank



Opuntia dillenii



Coryphantha bumamma



Opuntia cf. auquatorialis



Stenocereus alamosensis



Cleistocactus ferrari



Opuntia repens



Ferocactus robustus



Ferocactus X californicus



Ferocactus herrerae



Ferocactus rectispinus



Cleistocactus viridiflorus



Ferocactus cylindraceus