

# THE XEROPHILE

## July-September 2019



### RHS Plant of the Year

As reported on the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) website (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/news/2019/chelsea-plant-of-the-year-2019>—image from same source), the RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year for 2019 is the sedum, *Sedum takesimense ATLANTIS* ('Nonsitnal'). The name is quite a mouthful but the plant looks beautiful. This sedum won out over a wide variety of plants including roses, hostas, rhododendrons, and others.

The RHS goes on to add that this plant is attractive, easy to grow, versatile, and multifunctional. It flowers from June through September. The plants are said to be robust and drought resistant with blooms that are attractive to insect pollinators.

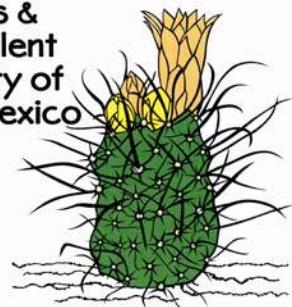


According to discoverer Dave MacKenzie, owner of Michigan-based Hortech, ([https://www.grownearthfriendly.com/search\\_form.php](https://www.grownearthfriendly.com/search_form.php)): "This variegated Sedum was discovered at Hortech as a sport of *Sedum takesimense* 'Gold Carpet' and features leaves that are green centered and uniformly trimmed in creamy white to yellow, providing visual contrast seldom seen in the world of sedums. Its growth is not aggressive, making it best suited as a small scale groundcover or accent for brightening up any sunny spot and particularly good along walkways and in containers where its unique features can be viewed up close."

The plant appears to be readily available online (okay, White Flower Farms has sold out for the season) and, like many sedums is well-suited to our growing conditions. \*

*The things women do in the name of fashion! See the story on page 6.*

Cactus &  
Succulent  
Society of  
New Mexico



### Mark Your Calendars

#### Friday July 19

No meeting so you can spend more time in your garden unless you're going to the CSSA Biennial Meeting in San Luis Obispo, California! Those dates are 17-20 July. Details at <http://cssaconvention.com>.

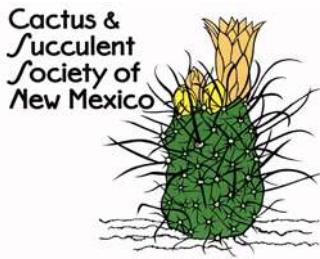
#### Friday 16 August

Regular meeting and final planning for Labor Day show. Information on page

#### Saturday 31 August— Monday 2 September

Labor Day Cactus & Succulent Show at the Albuquerque Botanic Garden

**Check the website for updates  
and changes.**



The Cactus and Succulent Society of New Mexico (CSSNM) is a non-profit organization dedicated to interest in, preservation of, and education about cacti and succulents from all over the world. We are an affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America.

Regular meetings are held at 7 pm on the third Friday of the month at the Albuquerque Garden Center; 10120 Lomas, NE. Details about programs and schedule updates may be found on the website: new-mexico.cactus-society.org.

The CSSNM may be contacted by email at: CSSofNM [at] gmail.com or by snail mail at: P.O. Box 21357

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87154-1357

"The object and purpose of the Society shall be exclusively for the study, appreciation, propagation and promotion of cacti and succulents among growers and collectors; the conservation and cultivation of native cacti and succulents; and, the exhibition of said materials whenever and wherever possible."

#### Elected Officers

President	Carl Hime
Vice President	Margaret Todd
Recording Secretary	Cheryl Haaker
Treasurer	Pia Louchios
Executive board members	Penny Hoe Lee Graham Ralph Peters

#### Key Positions

Program Chair	Steven Brack
Webmaster & Show PR	Ralph Peters
CSSNM e-mail	Steven Brack
Garden maintenance	Robert Perz
Librarian	Judith Bernstein
Representatives to CAGC (4)	Steven Brack Judith Bernstein Margaret Todd Becky Wegner
Affiliate CSSA Representative	Oleg Lagutin
Membership Chair	Lee Graham
Newsletter	Margaret Ménache
Spring Show	Daniel Finley
Spring Sale	Steven Brack
Fall Show-State Fair	Margaret Todd (info only)

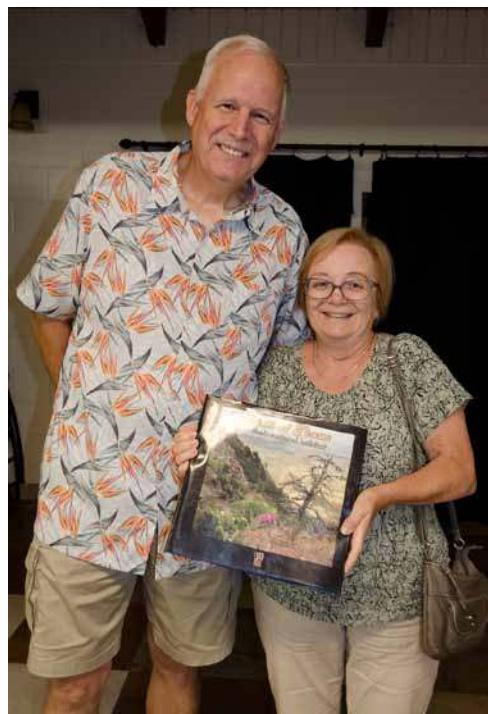
The newsletter is published on a quarterly schedule with issues being emailed to members and posted on the website on or near the first of January, April, July, and October.

If you are interested in submitting an article, please contact the editor, Margaret Menache (margaret@margaret-menache.com) on or before the 20th of the month preceding the publication date.

**Submissions for the October issue should be sent to Margaret on or before 20 September.**

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Ad and Gertrud Konings pose with a copy of their amazing book, *Cacti of Texas*. If you don't already have a copy of the book but would like to buy one, contact Steven Brack for information.

# AKTUS KIDZ KOLUMN

## CLAIRE ROSS

### Why do some cacti become cristate?

I ponder this question as I compare my crested *Opuntia* to my two normal *Opuntias*. Crested cacti have always fascinated me. According to Wikipedia, cristate (or crested) forms can occur in all plants, even dandelions. It is a rare condition of abnormal growth that can occur in many types of plants.

After researching the subject for a while I discovered that it is caused by damage to the genetics of plant cells. Plant cell genetics can be damaged in a number of surprising ways. One way this can happen is if the plant is exposed to a bacterial infection or a virus. When the bacteria attack plant cells they can alter the cells' DNA, sometimes causing the plant to become cristate. Another way plant cell genes can be altered is random genetic mutation. Random genetic mutation is when there is an error in copying the cell DNA.

I recently bought a crested cactus at the CSSNM Annual Show and Sale. I wondered if it would continue to be cristate. While researching, I learned that some crested plants can start growing normally again but others are always crested. Cristate cacti can also be crested in one area of the plant and normal in another.

So, the next time you're studying a cristate cactus, think about why it has such an interesting shape. \*



Example of a crested *Opuntia* from the author's collection.

photo: Claire Ross

**About the Author:** My name is Claire Ross and I am twelve years old. I am a sixth grader at Mountain View Middle School in Rio Rancho. I first got interested in cacti and succulents when I was eight. I saw the cactus and succulent display at the State Fair. I got a membership to CSSNM for my birthday because of my interest. Now I enjoy growing cacti from seed.

### Editor's Letter



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Dudleya#/media/File:Dudleyarubens.jpg>

It's a busy time of year for the Society. April brought an extremely successful sale and show. During May two of our members graciously opened their homes and gardens to provide some amazing landscaping ideas as well as insight into the work that goes into developing new cultivars. With our June meeting, Ad Konings described pollination in the real world but also had a great photograph of paintbrush pollination in action.

July and August will be focused on preparing for the next important event—the Exhibit at the Albuquerque Botanic Garden over the Labor Day weekend. Be sure to read Margaret Todd's article on what needs to happen and how you can help. Creating a knowledgeable public is, of course, part of the mission of our non-profit organization.

A New York Times article I just read suggests to me that a knowledgeable public might be essential to the survival of some cacti and succulents. Authorities in Northern California recently seized over 660 pounds of poached *Dudleya* succulents with a street value of over \$600,000! According to the June 3rd article, the plants would have been shipped to South Korea and sold on the black market. "Our best estimate is that these plants are going to be dead in six months to a year in many of the places that they are going," [an officer] said. "People should go to the local Home Depot and go buy a succulent for \$4.99 like I've done." With education and outreach we can discourage illegal collecting, encourage purchasing from reputable nurseries and dealers, and teach proper care so your plants will enjoy a long life.

Please feel free to contact me with any articles, photographs, ideas or suggestions you might have for the newsletter: margaret [at] margaretmenache.com. \*

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[new-mexico.cactus-society.org](http://new-mexico.cactus-society.org)

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# *Delosperma*: Some Hardy Ice Plants for Xeric Gardens

Steven Brack

*Delosperma* is a genus of ice plants native primarily to South Africa, with a few species in east Africa northwards as far as Yemen. They are mostly mat-forming species with many flowers covering the plants. Flower colors are white to pink to yellow, sometimes with colored rings of differing hues.

Within the genus some species have proven to be very hardy, both against cold and heat with dry conditions. In the past decade they have become much more popular as new introductions of species and cultivars have made their way into the market. They are well suited to xeric gardens and rock gardens.

While shopping this spring at local nurseries and garden center locations, I came across quite a few different kinds to grow. Traits that make them interesting plants for your outdoor garden are:

- They are perennials, will live for many years and spread as a ground cover.
- They give a very nice flower show in the spring into summer months.
- They like to scramble on rocks and make a nice cascade effect when allowed to grow on different height rocks.
- Shallow soils are fine for them, so they can grow out into the common gravel landscape areas in New Mexico gardens.

The most commonly found species is *Delosperma cooperi*, which is quite a tough plant. I have seen them in close to full sun in local gardens and they will flower over a very long season. If the spring and early summer months are very dry, they will flower much better with water given every one or two weeks. If they are planted in deep shade they



*D. cooperi*, Photo: Steven Brack

will not flower very well, or possibly not at all. *D. cooperi* has thick fleshy leaves with a bright pink flower. At the height of the flower season the entire plant will be covered over with bright pink.

Apart from *D. cooperi*, most of the plants available in the trade have cultivar names. The taxonomy of the origin of these cultivars is not clear. Many of them are from selections or hybrids of *D. dyeri*.



Above left: *D. JOD Granade*; Above right: *D. JOD Peridot*.  
Photos: Steven Brack



*D. cooperi* Photo: Steven Brack



Above left: *D. 'Alans Apricot'*; Above right: *D. JOD Ruby*.  
Photos: Steven Brack

To grow them in central NM a few points merit discussion. They like shallow gritty soil, loam with plenty of grit, stones, and low in organic matter. Their preferred light level is in the range of half to three quarters full sun. They are not hard desert species; they have adapted to grow in rock cracks where summer rains come. Water them about once every two weeks (unless it rains) when temperatures are above freezing. You can also grow them in troughs or shallow pots (3-5 inches deep). Once established they will be very tough. They need very little care and provide a lot of color to the xeric garden. ☀



Close up of Red Mountain Flame leaves, Photo: Steven Brack

The genus name comes from the Greek words *delos*, meaning “evident” and *sperma*, meaning “seed” in reference to the exposed seeds.

The foliage is covered with transparent flakes that somewhat resemble tiny pieces of ice, hence the common name.

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=b464>

## Pia's Neighborhood Rambles

Images to the right...

Agave (don't know what kind) living in the parkway at the end of my street.

Stalk appeared around 4/10/19; was approx. 5 ft. high by 4/19, 10 ft. on 5/15

Flowers around 6/1, seed pods around 6/13

Stalk kept tilting due to weight of seed pods, uprooting the plant; was removed by gardeners on 6/20

New pup plant was already in place when parent removed; is already approx. 10 in. diameter ☀



Photos: Pia Louchios

Images to the left...

*Agave parryi* (according to the homeowner/neighbor) planted 2008

Stalk appeared around 4/18/19; was approx. 15 ft. high by 5/5, 20 ft. on 5/27

Flowers around 6/10, seed pods around 6/23

Stalk is still straight and holding the weight of the seed pods

No new pups visible at this time ☀

# That's Some Fashion Statement!

## STRANGE ARE THE USES OF THE DESERT BLOOMS

**M**an is never content to let flowers spend their sweetness on any desert air. These prickly-garbed girls are the creations of the Tucson (Ariz.) Sunshine Climate Club, an organization set up to extol the sunny virtues of that Southwestern city. Last year two local girls were marched out into the neighboring desert, dressed up in cactus clothes and

thus photographed. Their pictures were sent out, and got into 300 papers, including some in China and South Africa. This was such a fine showing that the device is being further developed and some day the cactus girl is likely to become Tucson's trademark. The publicity hasn't brought many tourists to Tucson but it makes the people in Tucson feel fine.



Getting dressed for the desert, Mary Thoreboske is fitted by a local cowboy-photographer and Roy Drachman (right), publicity man who first had the bright idea of dressing girls up in cactus plants.



A cactus brassiere is made out of a saguaro. The bra is made of tops of giant saguaros.



This looks more uncomfortable than it is. The top of the barrel cactus on which Merri Ciochetti is



Courtesy of Roy Drachman

According to a history of the Caballeros Del Sol, a Tucson Arizona group with a mission to facilitate and promote business relationships between Tucson, Arizona communities, neighboring states, and Mexico, this 1940's full page spread in Life magazine (April 7, 1941 p. 57) was the Club's "finest hour for cheesecake." The description of this particular publicity stunt (and others) may be found on their website (<https://www.caballerosdelsol.com/about-us/our-history/>): "We hollowed the tops out of a saguaro cactus and made a bra," says Drachman. "Then we took prickly pear cactus pads and cut all the thorns off and hung them on wire for a skirt. Then we put a model from Tucson High in that outfit and took her picture. Life magazine printed it, full page."

A bit hard to imagine in this day and age - from the points of view of the cacti and of the models! \*

# CSSNM's 2019 Botanic Garden Cactus and Succulent Exhibit

## MARGARET TODD, Chair

The CSSNM Committee is working on the third annual Labor Day weekend Botanic Garden Cactus and Succulent Exhibit, scheduled for Saturday, 31 August, through Monday, 2 September. We'll open the exhibit each day at 10:00 a.m., close at 5:00 p.m. on the weekend, and at 3:00 p.m. on Monday. We have been pleased with the success of our two previous Exhibits here. Last year we used counters to record approximately 2,000 visitors during the three days.

This year's Exhibit will be held in a new location—the Atrium across from the Desert Rose Garden. Although signage directing visitors to the Exhibit may be more of a challenge, the space is larger and more inviting, and appears to provide us with the ability to have our demonstrations



Photo: Donna Behme, 2017

inside. We are also being provided space in the Rose Garden for those preferring to attract the visitors outside. The fact that the Atrium is close to restrooms and a snack bar should work to our advantage.

This is a totally educational function which goes to fulfilling our non-profit charter. Each year we have increased our number of educational displays and are currently working on something new for this year.

**But members' participation is critical.** We need your prize-winning show plants for display. And your rosettes to further demonstrate their winning status. Since fewer plants are in bloom at this time of year, pictures of their blossoms are also encouraged.

Members are also needed to volunteer to take shifts hosting the event. Ralph Peters will have a sign-up sheet on the website. The shifts are short, and the hosts enjoy the interaction with the visitors. The only requirement for being a host is your enthusiasm for the plants since there is sure to be someone available to answer any question that you can't.

**July-September 2019**

[new-mexico.cactus-society.org](http://new-mexico.cactus-society.org)

One very popular feature at previous exhibits was having small plants to give to visitors who played the plant games at the Kactus Kidz table. After all, everyone likes getting something for free.



Photo: Donna Behme, 2017

*We are happily accepting any small cactus and succulent seedlings and starts that can be used as giveaways.*

Setup will be on Friday, 30 August, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with show plants accepted between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. unless prior arrangements have been made with the Committee Chair or a member. Parking instructions will be provided prior to the event, and wagons will be available to move your plants the short distance from your car to the building.

This is the third year for most of the committee volunteers. They include Penny and Gary Hoe, Pia Louchios, Robert Perz, Ralph Peters, Kate and Claire Ross, and Steven Brack. The volunteers not only participate in the planning and prior chores, they set up and take down the exhibit, do most of the demonstrations, and are on hand throughout the Exhibit to host and provide back up as needed. **Member participation, both with plants and signing up as hosts, is critical to making this Exhibit a success.** Please volunteer—sign-up information may be found at the website. \*



Photo: Donna Behme, 2017

# April

The annual show and sale was a successful event from beginning to end. Four vendors and several CSSNM members sold a variety of beautiful plants, both cold hardy and tender. The educational part of the event, the juried show, contained a total of 402 plants (270 cacti and 132 succulents) entered primarily by members. Speaking of the show, the Spring Show Chair **Daniel Finley** said, “*It takes a lot of planning, a lot of advanced planning, to get it to this quality.*” If you didn’t enter plants this year, next year would be the perfect time! Talk with Daniel about the best way to prepare your plants to take home a ribbon or two in 2020. You know your plants would be delighted to get out and show off a bit!



*“I think this was the biggest show and sale I’ve seen in the past three years. The line waiting to get in at 10 am was very long, probably a hundred people.”* **Regina Hampton**, CAGC Garden Shop Manager. Sometimes people drop off plants to sell in the shop so you can pick up a bargain now and then. The book selection is excellent for a small shop and includes interesting books on cacti and succulents. Did you know that when you volunteer in the shop, you get a 10% discount on the day that you work? Plus, of course, any purchases you make support the Garden Center.



*“It has been a good show. Lots of people have come. I couldn’t believe the number of people who were here on Saturday. You couldn’t walk. You couldn’t people watch because they were in the way.”* CSSNM member **Siegfried Lodwig**.



*“I moved to Albuquerque from the Southeast US last August. We just bought a house and are thinking about landscaping. I’m really excited to be here today and learn some things. And find some things for the house and maybe for the outside.”* First time visitor, **Sara Leikin**.



*“I came down here to get things you can’t find in a grocery store. And I loved it... and I bought a whole bunch. This is the first time I’ve been here.”* **Gillian Sutton**, owner of Flowers by Gillian in Los Alamos.





*"The Cactus and Succulent Show is always beautiful and educational. Many of the genera in the cactus and succulent world are well represented."*

*The choices of plants for sale are many and varied."* A Show judge, **Mary Giliam.**



*"It's been absolutely great. We've sold a lot of plants. I'm selling all hardy, small, mostly South African succulents, a few cactus and the customers have been very ravenous. It's been a good day."* One of the vendors.

*"This is my first show and sale and I'm really impressed with the whole thing. I never knew that this happened every year and that there was this variety of plants for sale. And I'm really excited about the show. I displayed a lot of plants and won a bunch of awards. I was surprised. I've been doing this for a while but I'm new in the club."* New CSSNM member, **Chris Garcia.**



*"When you look at the cactus on display, I think about how old the plant is. Sig has cacti that are 40, 45 years old so we've been lugging these around all over the country for years and years and years. When we got to NM, CSSNM was the first thing we joined. So it's easy to come. We're up in Los Alamos so it's only an hour and a half drive."* CSSNM member (and faithful cactus lugger!), **Doris Lodwig.**



*"It's an amazing sale. It's been a good turnout. Lots of good plants for sale. There seems to be a real big focus on outdoor plants. People are really buying them."* CSSNM member, **David Ferguson.**

*"The show is the best it's ever been. There are more plants than I've ever seen here before. And the quality is very high. The sale has been dynamite all morning. We've had a huge number of people coming in. The primary people are here to buy cold hardy plants and I bring in the exotics so it's a little different. But I'm still selling them left and right so I'm happy. All in all, it's been a good event. Lots of good people to talk to, and lots of good questions that hopefully we can answer."* **Woody Minnich**, owner of Cactus Data Plants and CSSNM member.

From setting up the day before the show and sale to 'tear-ing down' the day after, this event has clearly been a labor of love for many of our members. There is also a huge behind-the-scenes effort that includes, but is definitely not limited to, keeping the volunteers fed and happy!



# May

For May we had a garden tour to two cactus gardens in the North Valley of Albuquerque. Both of these gardens use cacti and rock landscape to make very attractive displays. It may have been a bit past the peak of flowering, but many plants still were in flower. These gardens provide plenty of ideas and inspiration for what can be done in this area. The two gardens are about six miles apart.

## Gilmore Home



## Sillerud Home



## June

Ad Konings' presentation was filled with an abundance of information about pollination (aka the sex life of plants) and absolutely stunning photographs and video clips.

The video clips are available on youtube if you want to revisit some of the information. We watched about 4-5 minutes of Dr. Larry Jensen's Reproductive Cycle of Flower Plants from the *Amazing Lives of Plants*. The full clip is about 18 minutes. There are also clips on pines, mosses, and ferns.

We also saw a clip from Louie Schwartzberg's *Beauty of Pollination - Moving Art*. We watched a bit on bats pollinating saguaro cacti but the full clip has some other pollination examples as well. I found all of these with Google searches. If you want the links, let Margaret M know.



top: Yucca thompsoniana-KoningsYard2015-07-AdKonings  
middle: Tegeticula mexicana (Yucca torreyi moth)-BBNPOldOreRo-ad2016-02-GertrudKonings  
bottom: Yucca thompsoniana-KoningsYard2015-25-AdKonings



Yucca elata-KoningsYard2015-03-AdKonings

Plants have wide-ranging strategies to ensure genetic diversity. In many cases pollinators have co-evolved with their plant so that the two are, sometimes, totally dependent on each other. Yuccas and their moths are one such example, with a somewhat unusual partnership. Generally the plant and moth are a species-specific pair but the process is the same. The (pregnant) female moth gathers the pollen and creates a yellow ball that she carries around until she is ready to lay a single egg. She selects a pistil and deposits her egg at the ovary. Being a good mother, she leaves the ball of pollen for the larva to eat. Which, of course, pollinates the plant and provides the larva with seeds to eat as well.

In nature, it would be safe to say - no moth, no seed. However, if you have a determined human who really wants his yucca to make seed ...



Yucca thompsoniana-KoningsYard2015-15-GertrudKonings

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you grow? Greenhouse \_\_\_\_\_ Yard \_\_\_\_\_ Window \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite genera: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions for a program: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer to give a program? \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer for: Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Co-Chair an Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you: Buy plants locally \_\_\_\_\_ Mail order \_\_\_\_\_ Raise from seed \_\_\_\_\_ Buy at our sale \_\_\_\_\_

For current information about the Society, including our email address, go to the Society's website:  
<http://www.new-mexico.cactus-society.org>

Complete this application and send it to the address below with your check for \$10.00  
made out to the CSSNM.

For more information, contact:

CACTUS and SUCCULENT SOCIETY of NEW MEXICO  
P.O. Box 21357  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87154-1357

## 2020 T-Shirt Contest



At the June meeting, Doris Lodwig had several members bring in old t-shirts to inspire potential designers of next year's t-shirt, which resulted in a display of around 20 different samples. The design contest will close by August 16 and we will vote at the November meeting on which design will be used in 2020. Send your design to Doris via email ([lodwigd@comcast.net](mailto:lodwigd@comcast.net)) or snail mail (79 Mesa Vere Dr, Los Alamos NM 87547).