



# THE OFFSET

December 2014

Webpage <https://sites.google.com/site/cocssok/>

*Echinocereus reichenbachii subsp. baileyi*  
in the Wichita Mountains NWR, Oklahoma.  
Mount Scott in the background. Photo by  
Michael Douglas

## NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL OKLAHOMA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

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**Meeting:** Third Thursday of the month at 7 pm. At  
the Will Rogers Garden Center at 3400 NW 36<sup>th</sup>  
in Oklahoma City (except for the month of our  
Show&Sale, picnic and Christmas party).

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**CLUB NEWS****PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
**DECEMBER, 2014**

It seems a general consensus at the moment that everyone is asking, "Where did the year go?!". If I could find my year, I'd take a long hard look and see what happened (& didn't happen) and wonder if I could have (or should have) done a few things differently. Perhaps in the long run it's probably best that I don't even look for it. I do remember, however, that it was a year ago that my father passed away and I miss him terribly. He was 94 years young (7 days short of his 95th birthday), active up until the last 6 weeks of his life and, although he realized that his 'time' could come at any moment, he looked forward to the future and made plans just in case he was still around.

2015 is just around the corner and officers and members are meeting this weekend to discuss programs and activities for the club for the new year. Our Vice President, with some help from all of us, did a great job in 2014 with scheduling speakers and trying to arrange programs that would interest all of us. She has already lined up a couple of speakers for 2015 and we look forward to more programs from the Douglas' in 2015. Having done this for the past several years, I can say it is not easy to come up with 10 months of programs, trying not to repeat topics too frequently and keeping the interest of club members. Input for programs is rather slim and I'm never sure if this is from basic non-caring about programs from others or if the task really is difficult and others can't really come up with any ideas or thoughts to share when asked.

The programs will be planned as best possible and if anyone has any major concerns about topics (or lack of topics) for our meetings, please feel free to voice any ideas. So taking some advice from someone who lived it, we will look forward to 2015 and do our best to schedule interesting and informative programs that hopefully appeal to all, just in case we are still around.

Niki Furrh  
President

**CLUB NEWS*****REFRESHMENTS***

*With a new year approaching, we need members to sign up to bring refreshments for meetings.*

*A sign up sheet will be available at the January meeting for 2015 and at each meeting until it is full. (At the present time, we need a volunteer for the January meeting. Please contact me if you are willing to do this.)*

*Refreshments need only to be drinks and a treat of your choice. The club is willing to reimburse any member up to \$20 for refreshments per meeting. By signing up, you will be helping spread the responsibility for refreshments among all of us and this is greatly appreciated.*

*Niki Furrh*

**TIME TO RENEW YOUR DUES**

**Don't forget that it is time to renew your dues. It is \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. You can mail the check to Peggy Anglin or you can pay at the next meeting or pay at the Christmas party. Let Peggy know if you have a new email address, new phone or a new address.**

**CLUB NEWS****CENTRAL OKLAHOMA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 20, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by President Niki Furrh. The following were present: members Peggy Anglin, Matthew Baginski, Tom Diggs, Mike & Rosario Douglas, Tony & Niki Furrh, Fred Hill, Peggy Holland, Deb Trimble, Ed Vermillion and approximately 15 guests.

Treasurer Peggy Anglin reported 44 paid members to date and a bank balance of \$7,555.39. Ed Vermillion was the first to pay his 2015 dues, and anyone else who would like to do so can send their check to Peggy at 2700 NW 56 th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73112 (\$10 individual, \$15 family).

**Since the meeting, the Christmas Party has been rescheduled to 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, at Jim and Joyce Hochtritt's home at 600 N Pine Street in Midwest City. They will provide all food items but request that you bring your own beverage. If you wish to participate, bring a Dirty Santa gift valued at approximately \$15-\$20 to trade. Please RSVP by December 11<sup>nd</sup> to [cactibud@cox.net](mailto:cactibud@cox.net), or call Joyce on 737-1831.**

A planning meeting is scheduled for 10:00 AM to Noon on Saturday, November 29 at the Will Rogers Garden Center. We will be planning our 2015 program schedule. The meeting is open to all members. If you have any suggestions for programs or field trips for next year, please attend the meeting or communicate your ideas to Niki Furrh at [tnfurrh@cox.net](mailto:tnfurrh@cox.net) or call 722-1718.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM. Refreshments provided by Rosario Douglas and Niki Furrh were enjoyed by all.

Steve Owens, owner of Bustani Plant Farm in Stillwater gave a wonderful talk on Succulents and Companion Plants that included details of the recent construction of his rather extensive rock garden. We can't wait to see it this spring!

***Submitted by,  
Treasurer Peggy Anglin***



## CHRISTMAS PARTY



COCSS Christmas Party, Thursday, **Dec18th**, 2014, 7:00 pm  
Will be at the home of Jim and Joyce Hochtritt, 600 N. Pine Ave.,  
Midwest City, OK. 73130.

You **will not** need to bring anything but your own favorite drinks. We will be doing the main course, side dishes, desserts, ice for drinks and paper goods. If you wish you can bring a favorite drink.

The meat dishes will include honey glazed smoked ham and either smoked brisket or smoked turkey; some of Joyce's home made cole slaw; Joyce's herb roasted new potato and sweet potato mix; creative vegetable dish of some kind and then assorted cookies and fancy desserts from Ingrid's and La Baguette.

We will also be doing Dirty Santa gift exchange. So bring something wrapped, plant or garden related.

We will need everyone to RSVP by **Dec. 11**, 2015.

Phone ([405-737-1831](tel:405-737-1831)) or email Joyce at:  
[Cactibud@cox.net](mailto:Cactibud@cox.net)



## THE CULTIVATION CORNER

The following article was written by Bob Stewart, editor of the Eastern Spine, a newsletter of the National Capital Cactus and Succulent Society. He graciously agreed to my request to publish it in our newsletter.

### Simplified Potting Mixes

*By Bob Stewart*

There is a bewildering number of potting mixes for succulent plants. Is it necessary to have a half dozen or more components in a successful mix? Can succulent potting mixes be simplified?

I have long heard that a potting mix for succulent plants must be well aerated and well drained. My experience in growing succulents for 30+ years agrees with that tenet. However, when you do a little research you find a myriad of recipes for concocting the ideal mix. Within a short time, you end up with bags and bags of potting mix components, all absolutely necessary to create the ideal potting mix. I have actually had fun over the years using my potting mix materials as a master chef might, adding a little of this and a lot of that. Are complicated recipes, with dozens of ingredients really necessary to produce a successful potting mix for succulent plants? Probably not.

The potting mix is the domain of the plant's root system and the root system has three critical needs, air, water, and a collection of essential elements we'll call nutrients. The physical structure of the potting medium determines the amounts of air and water present. If the potting medium is very coarse, water will rapidly drain out of the spaces between the mineral particles and be replaced by air. Such a medium will have plenty of air available to the roots, but often insufficient water.

If the potting medium is fine and the spaces between mineral particles small, water will drain out slowly and there will be little air. Without sufficient air roots will die and the plant will fail.

Nutrients, in the form of fertilizer, can be added to any potting media but the potting media must have the ability to absorb and hold onto the nutrients. Otherwise, the nutrients will be rapidly flushed out during watering. Adequate air, water, and nutrient holding capacity are the three characteristics we need in a successful succulent potting media. Of these three, problems with adequate aeration is the most difficult to deal with after a plant has been potted. We can add additional water. We can add additional nutrients, but there is no way to add additional air.



A successful potting mix must supply adequate air from the start. With adequate air as a prerequisite, I once considered gravel as a stand alone potting medium. I noticed that if there was regular rainfall, weeds grew very nicely in my gravel driveway. But, gravel dries out so quickly and holds nutrients so poorly, I would need to water and fertilize almost daily. A better choice than gravel might be pumice. This is a volcanic rock ground into pieces the size of small gravel. It is light in weight, and has excellent aeration and drainage properties.



Pumice also holds moisture and nutrients longer, but still dries out relatively fast. With pumice, my watering would be once a week rather than every day. In fact, pumice is being used alone as a potting medium for succulents.

While pumice has been around for a while, there is a relatively new potting component that can provide good aeration and drainage and holds moisture and nutrients even longer than pumice. This new material is coir. This is a natural fiber extracted

from the husk of coconut. It looks a lot like sphagnum peat moss, but isn't as acidic, and is not hydrophobic. One of the problems with the sphagnum peat moss, which has been used in potting mixes for many years, is that once it dries out, it is difficult for it to absorb water again. Dry sphagnum peat repels water. This is a problem when it's used in a potting mix for succulent plants since we are told to allow the potting medium to dry out between waterings. Plus, sphagnum peat is very acidic, which reduces the availability of nutrients. Coir has a near neutral pH and is not hydrophobic. Coir also absorbs and holds both water and nutrients while maintaining good aeration and drainage qualities. Coir is becoming the preferred replacement for sphagnum peat moss in potting mixes.

A year ago, I potted two *Haworthia truncata* plants using a potting medium of pure pumice. Both are growing well. I water them once a week and fertilize them once a month. I believe you can grow most succulent plants successfully in pure pumice. I am going to plant two additional Haworthias using pure coir as the potting medium and compare their growth with those in the pumice. Hopefully, simplification of a potting mix for succulents will help all growers, but especially growers new to the world of succulent plants.

## ARTICLE OF THE MONTH



## Major changes in the genus Aloe



For this short article I thought I would share with you some interesting news about the genus Aloe. The magazine "Aloe" Vol 50, No 4, 2013 published by the Succulent Society of South Africa, has an article about a new classification for this important genus.

The article *New developments in the world of Aloes* by Kotie Retief explained that Aloes are a varied group with many members found only in South Africa. The number of species as well as the diversity of growth habit makes Aloes a very interesting genus. There are tree aloes, creeping aloes, aloes that look like Haworthias and the list goes on.



This article reports a number of important publications in 2013 about the Alooid genera. In an article that appeared in *Phytotaxa*, by Grace et.al, the new genus *Aloidendron* was created for the "tree Aloes" such as former *Aloe dichotoma*, *A. pillansii*, *A. ramosissima*, *A. eminens* and *A. tongaense*. *Aloe plicatilis* was placed in the genus *Kumara* and the scrambling aloes have now been placed in the genus *Aloiampelos*.

In a February 2014 article by Manning et. al. molecular phylogeny was used as the bases to reorganize again the Alooid genera. The new genera are: *Aloe*, *Aloidendron*, *Aloiampelos*, *Kumara*, *Aristaloe*, *Gonialoe*, *gasteria*, *Astroloba*, *Haworthiopsis*, *Tulista* and *Haworthia*. Manning mentions that as more results of molecular studies become available, new classifications will undoubtedly appear for the Alooid genera.

**Phylogeny:** The evolutionary development and history of a species or higher taxonomic grouping of organisms. Also called *phylogenesis*

Photos: Upper left: *Aloe dichotoma* now *Aloidendron dichotoma* (Wikipedia)  
Lower left: *Aloe plicatilis* now *Kumara plicatilis*. Wikipedia creative commons.



## SUCCULENT PLANTS



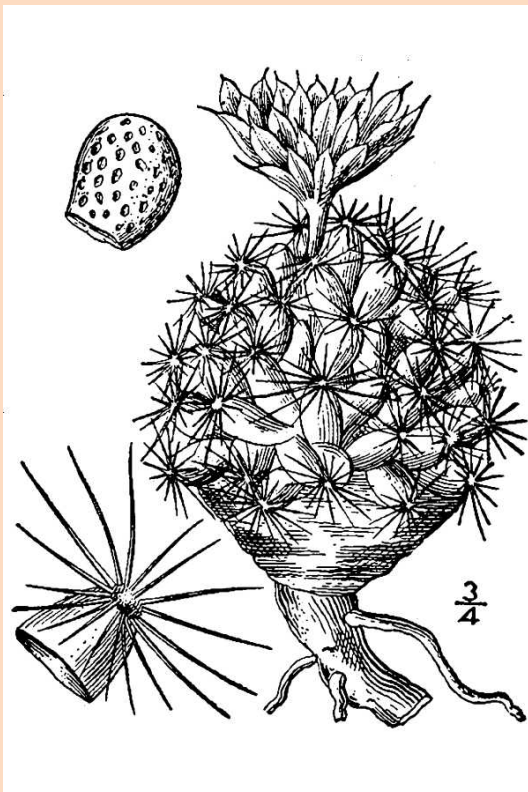
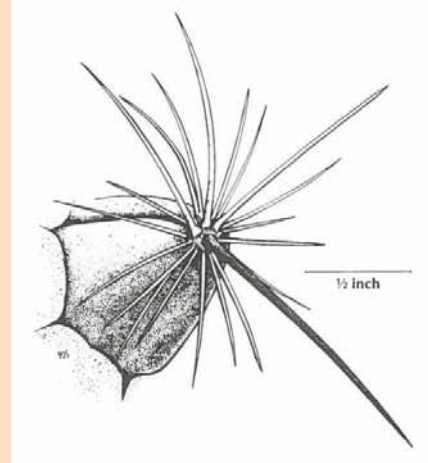
### The genus *Coryphantha*

The name *Coryphantha* comes from the Greek *koryphe* which means crown and *anthos* which means flower. *Coryphanthas* or "beehive" cactus are a group of globose cacti with flowers appearing at the end of spine-bearing tubercles (cone-shaped areoles) instead of ribs.

*Coryphantha* is genus of 50+ to 70+ species depending on which author you read. Members of this genus are native to arid parts of Mexico and the Southern US.

The genus *Coryphantha* is characterized by flowers at the apex (top) of the plant, having grooved tubercle bearing flowers and by having reticulate seed coats. A distinguishing characteristic, the furrow or groove in *Coryphanthas* is located in the upper side of the cone-shaped areole and it extends from the tip to the base of the areole. Flowers originate from this groove.

Some species produce nectary glands in the grooves or axils. It is believed that these nectaries, which produce a sugar-containing sap, attract ants. Ants eat the sugary substance while providing a certain degree of protection to the plant from bud-eating predators.



*Coryphanthas* resemble cacti such as *Mammillarias*, but *Mammillarias* never have grooved areoles.

Upper right: shows the groove on the cone-shaped areole of a *Coryphantha* from an article on the Texas Parks and Wildlife at: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife\\_diversity/nongame/listed-species/plants/coryphantha-ramillosa.phtml](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nongame/listed-species/plants/coryphantha-ramillosa.phtml)

Lower left: *Coryphantha missouriensis* (Sweet) Britton & Rose – COMI.

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. Public domain



Coryphantha flowers also tend to be larger than Mammillaria flowers (3-10 cm in diameter). Many species of Coryphantha have yellow flowers, although some have white or pink flowers.

The greenish fruits and light brown, smooth seeds also distinguish Coryphanthas from similar looking cacti such as Escobarias, Neobesseya and Neolloydia.

Species of Coryphantha can be very attractive due to their flowers and contrasting central and radial spines. In cultivation plants require full sun.

Identification can be a problem because plants can have individuals lacking central or radial spines. Thus plants of the same species may appear different.



Upper left: *Coryphantha ramillosa*, Wikipedia.

Middle right: *Coryphantha erecta*, plate from Lemaire, C.A., *Iconographie descriptive des cactees*, t. 13 (1841-1847). Public domain.

Lower left: *Coryphantha elephantidens*, plate from Lemaire, C.A., *Iconographie descriptive des cactees*, t. 13 (1841-1847). Public domain



Sources: Cactiguide.com <http://cactiguide.com/cactus/?genus=Coryphantha>, *The Encyclopedia of Cacty* by Gullman, Grotz and Groomer, Timber Press, 1986, *Coryphantha cacti of Mexico and Southern USA* by Reto F. Dicht and Adrian D. Luthy, 2005 published by Springer-Verlag) and Wikipedia.

**ODDS AND ENDS**

*Photos by Mike Douglas*



The photos above were taken in our greenhouse this Summer/Fall, 2014.

Upper left: *Conophytum* sps.

Upper right: *Huernia confusa*

Lower left: *Echinocereus brandegii*

Lower right: Bloom of *Ferocactus* sps.

Photos by Mike Douglas

## THE BOTANICAL CORNER

by Rosario Douglas



**Bisnaga** Also visnaga. A Spanish name for barrel cactus

**Bispinosus** With two spines

**Bombycinus** Silken

**Botuliform** Shaped like a sausage

**Brachy** A “Greek” prefix meaning short.

**Brachypetalus** With short petals

**Brevi** A Latin prefix meaning short.

**Breviarticulatus** Short-jointed

**Brevicaulis** With a short stem



Photos: Upper left: *Ferocactus cylindraceus*

Lower right: *Cerastium brachypetalum*

Source: Wikipedia commons

Terms from a book by W. Taylor Marshall and R.S. Woods. The book is titled, **Glossary of succulent plant terms**, published in 1938. The Cactus Museum at [www.CactusMuseum.com](http://www.CactusMuseum.com), Wikipedia, A glossary put together by John Chippindale of Leeds England. Also terms from CactiGuide.com at <http://cactiguide.com/glossary/>.