

CCSS Newsletter

Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

November 2007

From the President

I am recovering very well after my surgery on the left elbow that was in the making for more than 21 years. I will explain more about it at the meeting, if anyone is interested.

John Spain is also recovering quite nicely from his trip to the hospital back the first part of October.

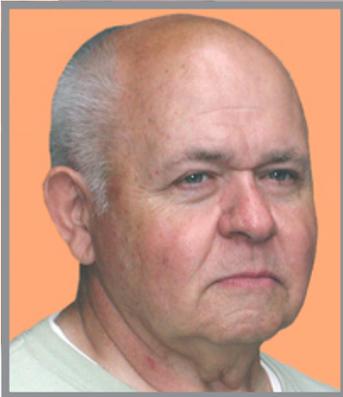
Sorry I could not attend last month's meeting, but I understand **Matt Opel** stepped right in on

short notice to take over and all went well.

I have arranged for our annual Christmas/holiday get-together at the The Golden Age of Trucking Museum on December 2nd. The get-together time will be from noon to 4:00 p.m. when the place will close for the day. With the meeting we also have a grab bag for all those that want to participate and we try to limit the cost to about \$10.00 per gift. At this get-together, there is no limit to what anyone can bring for our potluck feast.

At our November meeting, no one will have to bring chairs, because the facility will have an area set up with tables and chairs on the second floor at Wilber and King Nurseries. This is again a very nice facility that we have used before. Thank You.

Frank



From the Vice President

Tongue Plants

by Matt Opel

I have an interest in many different cacti and succulents, but my real area of expertise is the mesembs, a group of about 2000 species of succulent plants in the family Aizoaceae. While I will try to cover a variety of topics in my columns for the CCSS Newsletter, quite a few are probably going to deal with mesembs. I will start this month, by introducing the genus *Glottiphyllum*, the tongue plants.

Glottiphyllum plants have soft, spongy, tongue-shaped leaves filled with stored water.

The tongue plants are endemic to the Little Karoo in South Africa, a region to the east of Cape Town, in the dry "rain shadow" created by the steep sandstone mountains of the fairest cape. They can grow in shattered shale or quartz, or sometimes in deep clayey soils that turn to muck when rains do come, mainly in winter. *Glottiphyllum* plants have soft, spongy, tongue-shaped



leaves filled with stored water.

Some species, like *G. oligocarpum*, grow in the open and are covered with a thick layer of light-colored waxes to prevent desiccation and reflect excess sun. Others, like *G. depressum*, tend to live in the shelter of shrubs, where they become fat, green and alarmingly large, at least as far as mesembs go (leaves 6–8 inches long are typical in this species, which is one of the biggest of the genus).

Tongue plants are also not nearly as eager to rot as many of the compact mesembs seem to be.

For some succulent plant enthusiasts, mesembs have a reputation for being difficult. If you have croaked your *Conophytum* plants by watering at the wrong time of year, or forgetting to water at the right time of year, and are feeling a bit gun shy about trying mesembs again, tongue plants are a good place to start. As with a lot of mesembs, growth in *Glottiphyllum* plants in habitat is synchronized to seasonal patterns of rainfall, meaning that plants in the wild



Glottiphyllum oligocarpum: This plant is healthy, but slightly on the chunky side.

Photo by Matt Opel

are most active in the cooler months, and torpid in summer. In cultivation the plants are unusually flexible, and adapt to summer watering and growth quite easily. They are opportunistic, really, and will happily soak up moisture whenever they can get it.

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The CCSS Newsletter is published each month except January. Annual membership of \$10.00 includes subscription to the newsletter. This membership includes all members of an immediate family residing at the same residence. Payment is payable to the Treasurer, Mr. Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Road, Andover, CT 06232

Tongue plants are also not nearly as eager to rot as many of the compact mesembs seem to be. I have kept plants outside in plastic pots, or even planted in the ground, all summer, fully exposed to rain, without incident, in conditions that would cause most Lithops to turn to mush in a week and a half. The plants probably need exposure to full sun to tolerate this sort of heavy watering, but that is not a problem for most of us in the summertime.

I've kept plants outside in plastic pots, or even planted in the ground, all summer, fully exposed to rain, without incident . . .

In the winter, tongue plants need to come inside, but unlike most mesembs they seem to be able to get by just fine in a cool east or west windowsill, with only a few hours of sun, if kept quite dry (water lightly, only when they get seriously wrinkled).

While it is not difficult to keep tongue plants alive and vigorous, growing a really beautiful, compact specimen is a challenge. Judicious watering, intense sunlight, and little or no use of fertilizer will help to keep them from getting out of hand. But, there seems to be a very fine line between conditions that leave a *Glottiphyllum* plant wizened and pathetic, and conditions that cause them to become uncharacteristically bloated and green. Most cultivated specimens tend towards the bloated and green end of the spectrum, but they seem to be perfectly happy like that, and will flower profusely, even if they are not as svelte as their relatives in the Little Karoo.

Matt Opel, the Vice President of the CCSS, is Curator at the University of Connecticut EEB Plant Growth Facilities in Storrs, Connecticut.

Treasurer's Report

Income:	
Auction	\$ 63.00
Total	<u>\$63.00</u>

Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 4th: The November meeting will be held at Wilber & King Nurseries, 350 Goose Lane, in Guilford, Connecticut. (203) 458-8733; www.wilber&king.com.

1:00 P.M.

Do Not Bring Chairs

Entrées: H—S

Appetizers/Sides: T—Z

Desserts: A—G

Sunday, December 2nd: The December meeting will be held at The Golden Age of Trucking Museum in Middelbury, Connecticut.

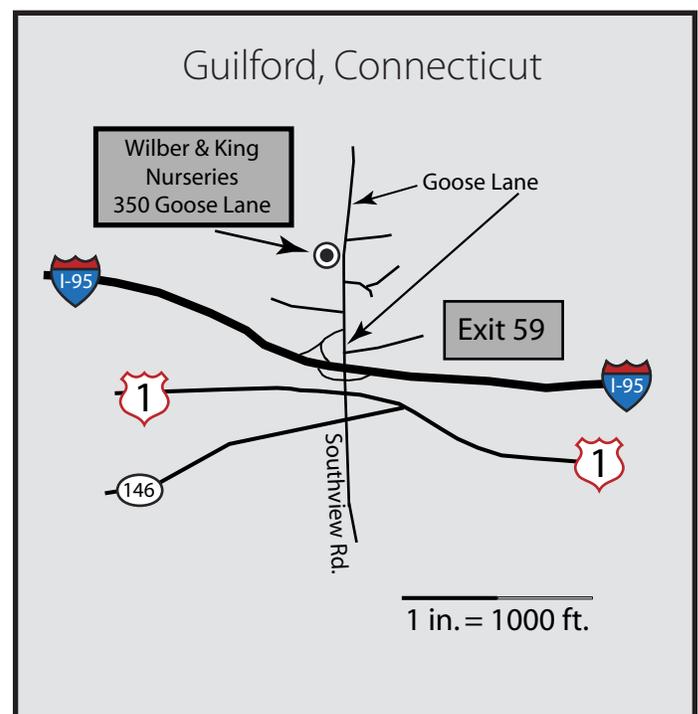
January: No meeting

Directions to Wilber & King Nurseries

Going west on I-95, take Exit 59 and then turn left onto Goose Lane.

Going east on I-95, take Exit 59 and then turn left onto Southview Road. Southview Road becomes Goose Lane on the north side of I-95.

Wilber & King Nurseries is only about ¼ mile north of Exit 59.





At the October meeting at Lauray's of Salisbury, members are attentive to David Schultz as he addresses the membership. Vice President Matt Opel stands as he listens. Matt replaced President Frank Zapatka as moderator. Frank was recovering from surgery and could not attend the meeting.

Photo by Herbert (Sully) Sullivan

Second Update on *Pachyform 2–Succulent Bonsai Book*

By David Schultz

I have had one copy of the book, *Pachyform 2–Succulent Bonsai* reported as defective, with pages out of order and not all complete. I have notified the author. He has had no other such reports, but always expects at least some will show up.

Before I make arrangements to replace this defective copy, anyone else who has purchased a copy of *Pachyform 2–Succulent Bonsai*, please check yours and make sure that it is OK.



Andy and Jeanine Loya discuss a point made at the October meeting.

Photo by Herbert (Sully) Sullivan

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