

# CCSS Newsletter

## Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

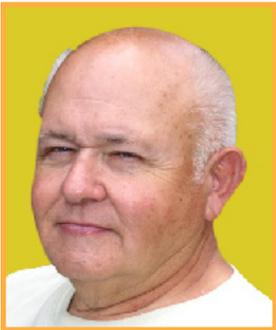
October 2008

### From the President

**T**HE SEPTEMBER MEETING WENT WELL in spite the delay by the weather people who said to expect flooding and high winds on the weekend of September 7. Looks like I should have not listened so closely to reports on the non-storm. Better safe than sorry.

I regret any inconvenience to those people who were not contacted by Dave or myself via the phone or the CTCactus@yahoo.com Web site.

We had a fine time at **David DeLucia's** house a week later. The weather was good and all attending saw what Dave has done in his greenhouse.



I asked for suggestions for some place for our upcoming Christmas party and got several which I am working on.

I talked about **Dan Downey** and the Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference. He said that they were surprised how well it worked for the Cactus and

Succulent Society of Massachusetts. It had looked like they would be hurting financially. They had put away money from the last two-year's sales to cover costs at the 2008 conference. With these savings and with sales at this conference, they were able to cover the costs sustained for the previous two year's sales and for the Conference.

The weekend we canceled our meeting, the CSSM had a sale at Tower Hill and got rained out. Dan has brought our staging back to my house and it is in safe storage until next year.

**David Shultz** addressed the club with needs for our next year's show and sale. He spoke very strongly about the need for help. The Scultzs's family medical problems may limit Dave's participation in next year's show.

**John Spain** and I will be involved with the college through David Schultz so that we will become familiar with what Dave goes through getting things operational.

*Continued on page 2, right column*

### The Secretary's Report

**O**UR SEPTEMBER MEETING WAS HELD at the home of **Dave DeLucia**. It had been postponed a week due to the imminent arrival of Hurricane Hanna's remnants.

Wasps had nested under David's deck and were threatening anyone who tried to enter the house. **David Shultz** swatted most of the critters not already "done in" by a can of spray. Later we were able to use the deck for eating and for David DeLucia's talk and auction.

**Frank Zapatka** started the meeting with a discussion of the "how and where" of the Holiday party. The first question was: Do we cater or do we potluck? Nobody spoke up in favor of catering or going to a restaurant. I guess we all know our own food is great.

Then the following venues were suggested:

a) **The Trucking Museum** is centrally located, but they gave us less space last year, and we suspect their prices may go up.

b) **Beardsley Zoo** has a new facility and it would be free, but it is down in Bridgeport—a long drive for some members.

c) **The Pitkin Community Center** in Farmington is spacious, has a small kitchen, is centrally located, and probably costs \$40 plus a tip for the janitor.

d) **Edgerton Park** is closer for some of our members, but has been hard to heat.

All these places will be researched further.

**Lydia Pfrimmer** reminded us that we have not had any garden field trips in a long while. **John Spain** said he thought the last trip was to Longwood—an overnight trip—more than ten years ago.

After **Dave Schultz** talked about books, he presented a synopsis of the discussions at the Eastern Conference in Massachusetts, and at Naugatuck Valley Community College. [See *Eastern Conference 2010, page 2.*]



*Continued on page 2, left column*

### Secretary's Report, continued

John Spain made the motion that the CCSS agree to sponsor the Eastern Conference in 2010, subject to positive negotiations with NVCC. The motion was voted on and passed. The dates will coincide with our Show and Sale on April 10–11, 2010. (Easter will occur on the Sunday of the previous weekend, April 4.)

We then adjourned to the deck where **David DeLucia** gave a talk on Mesembs, complete with examples of many genera. He showed illustrations in his books as well as actual plants. David gave instructions for propagation: 1. Cuttings may be made, but the stems must be included. 2. After flowering—which occurs in October—keep them fairly dry for winter; spritz in summer; and water some in fall before flowering. 3. But be cautious, the roots rot easily.

Then David conducted the plant auction netting \$135.00. Many plants were offered, mostly Mesembs.

Respectfully Submitted  
Becky Lynn



## The Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

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The CCSS Newsletter is published each month except January. Annual membership of \$12.00 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.

### From the President, continued

A few of us will be contacting members for help. We hope to get a good response so that our show will go on in fine fashion as it has in the past 25 years. Volunteers will be **essential** next April.

**Helen Prichard** had surgery last week. I wish her well. I will try to keep all informed of her health. Her address is **16 Ashlar Village, Wallingford, Ct. 06492.**

Thank You,  
Frank

## From The Book Shelf

By David Schultz

One new book arrived just in time for the Eastern Conference and I had not passed along the information.

*The Garden Succulents Primer* by Gideon Smith and Ben-Erik van Wyk is published by Timber Press and arrived the day before the conference. It is hardbound, lists at \$29.95. Our price is \$24.50. I still have a couple copies and will bring them to the meetings. If we run out, the Timber Press/Storey Books annual group order will be coming very soon. ○

## Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference 2010

By David Schultz

The affiliate representatives of the attending cactus and succulent clubs met on Sunday morning at this year's Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference. Several Connecticut Cactus and Succulent members had discussed the future of the conference over breakfast and sent **Matt Opel** off with instructions to query other societies.

The consensus was that the CCSS should not volunteer to host the 2010 ECSC due to the rather limited manpower and the increased workload that that would involve.

Matt returned to the meeting with the clear understanding that no other society was able or interested in hosting the conference in two years. But the result of various ensuing discussions was that the CCSS was being asked to consider hosting the conference and stage it in conjunction with our annual show and sale.

Wow! What a great idea.

One of the greatest shortcomings of the Eastern

Conferences has always been the scant attendance of the public causing frustration to the organizers and vendors. Combining our show and the conference may remedy that troubling situation.

To host the conference in conjunction with our show would require adding an invited lecture series, a banquet, and a hotel for the participants to lodge at.

I have already approached the Naugatuck Valley Community College and broached the subject. We would have a very nice lecture hall at the college for the lecture series—right now this seems feasible. The college has an agreement with the hotel across the driveway, so we have a start there with the lodging.

The invited lecturers would be the responsibility of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America through **Lee Miller** in the Washington, D.C. club, the National Capital Cactus and Succulent Society, and would not add an additional burden on our own resources.

There are still issues to address and I will arrange a meeting with the space coordinator, the dean of Math & Sciences (our co-sponsor), and anyone else my contacts at NVCC suggest as possible resources for us.

The society voted to agree to host the conference subject to successful discussions with the college. I will keep everyone informed as things progress. By the way, the dates that we would be shooting for are April 9, 10, and 11, 2010. Plan ahead.

During the discussion, I indicated that we should maintain our Saturday and Sunday free lectures as continued attractions for the public.

## CCSS 2009 Show Update

By David Schultz

Our next show is scheduled for April 3, 4, and 5, 2009. It will be held at the same place (Naugatuck Valley Community College) as the past 25 years. We are starting on our second 25 years!

At the September meeting, I requested members to consider offering help with the show this coming year.



If I am unable to attend, the show must be up to date and ready to go on without my presence.

Health issues with both my mother and Barb's father may prevent us from participating. There are no guarantees that I will be able to fulfill the role as chairman. I have had one offer and others are

welcome. You can call me at (860) 489-8356 to discuss what is involved and the duties left to be fulfilled.

## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, October 5:** The October meeting will be hosted by Judy Becker at Lauray of Salisbury, 432 Undermountain Road (Rt 41), Salisbury, Connecticut. Phone: (860) 435-2263

**1:00 p.m.**

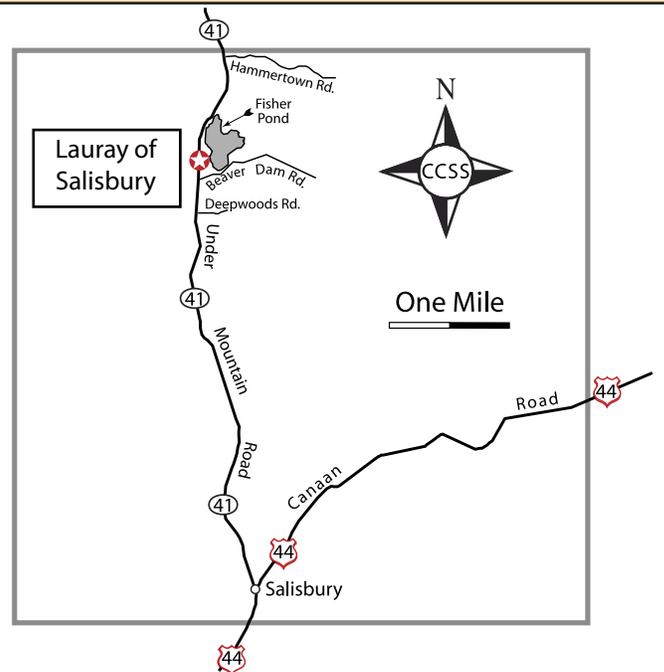
**Bring chairs**

**Entrées: T—Z**

**Appetizers/Sides: A—G**

**Desserts: H—S**

**November Meeting:** (To be announced)



## Treasurer's Report

**Income:**

Book Sales at Eastern Conference	\$214.00
April Show Commission	165.00
Auction	135.00
Dues	48.00
Book Sale at September Meeting	20.00

**Total Income:** \$582.00

**Expenses:**

August Newsletter	\$190.06
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**Total Income (Expense)** \$391.94

**Current Bank Balance** \$9,516.55

## *Conophytum minusculum*

By Dr. Matt Opel

**M**ID-SEPTEMBER IS THE PEAK SEASON FOR *Conophytum* flowers, and for a brief interlude my collection looks something like a very small version of the poppy fields in Oz. Cono flowers tend to be incongruously gaudy compared to the compact, often camouflaged vegetative portions of the plants. The flower/leaf mismatch is particularly extreme in *Conophytum minusculum*, which has succulent leaf pairs the size of match heads, which sport violet to dayglow pink flowers easily five times as large as the leaves.

*Conophytum minusculum* hails from the southwestern parts of the range of the genus in South Africa, which means it is adapted to a relatively mild Mediterranean climate, rather than hard desert. The plants grow in crevices and among mosses and lichens on sandstone outcrops, in a scrubby vegetation type peculiar to the Cape region called fynbos. Fynbos occurs on sites with poor, acidic soil and winter rainfall, and is subject to fires every decade or two, though it seems unlikely that the rocky, barren niches that fynbos *Conophytum* plants favor ever burn directly.

### *Conophytum minusculum* is a definite cool-season grower . . .

*Conophytum minusculum* is a definite cool-season grower, and tends to be even more strict about seasonality than other conos. Although the plants flower in the early autumn, the new leaves often do not take up water and emerge from their summer sheaths until it really gets cold and dreary in November or December. In cultivation, I water the plants more than usual for winter growing South African succulents, enough to keep the soil evenly moist from flowering, through the fall and winter, up until the point where the leaves yellow and dry up for the summer dormancy in April. The plants need as much sun as possible in winter. During the warmer months, I keep my *C. minusculum* pots in partial shade, and do not water except for a light misting every few days. Summer misting should be just enough to barely moisten the surface layers of soil, which prevents possible losses from sunburn.

The soils where *C. minusculum* grows in the wild are particularly thin and low in mineral nutrients. Under glass the plants do well in shallow pots, with a gritty, impoverished soil mix. If I were really on top of things, I would water them with rainwater, though the tap water here in eastern Connecticut seems to be sufficiently clean



*Conophytum minusculum* in September, still in summer mode apart from the flowers. These plants are an informal cultivar named "Roseum" with particularly intense floral coloration, derived from material collected by plant explorer, Frank Horwood.

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

and low in salts. The plants seem to be well suited to cultivation in New England; famous succulent growers in the Southwest have trouble getting *C. minusculum* and its relatives to thrive, because of their relatively hot, dry weather and hard, salty water.

*Conophytum minusculum* is mostly propagated by cuttings which establish easily in fall or winter. Seed is hardly ever available: the flowers aren't easy to pollinate, and even successful pollination tends to result in only small numbers of seeds. ○

*Dr. Matt Opel, the Vice President of the CCSS, is Horticulturalist at the UConn EEB Plant Growth Facilities in Storrs, Connecticut.*

