

CCSS Newsletter

Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

December 2008

From the President

I WANT TO THANK ALL THOSE THAT CAME TO OUR LAST meeting at Edgerton Park carriage house and especially those that brought plants for the park's greenhouse.

Thanks also

- to members for the extra help I got putting the meeting together with very short notice.
- to **John Spain** who gave a talk on cacti starting from seed. At the end of his discussion he passed out seed for those that wanted to try their hand in the same art.
- to **Trudy Ganz** for accepting members' plants for restocking.
- to **Bill and Martha Brown** for the clean up after the meeting and bringing things back to my house.
- especially to my wife, **Jane**, for loading our car with the plants and coffee pot and helping to get the pot going so the members could have their hot cup of coffee that they expect when coming to our meetings.
- and to **Matt Opel** for taking over the meeting for me and for doing it so very well.

I have had the latest medical problem for too long and I hope that I will get some answers from my regular doctor this week, or the rheumatologist next week, to get me back on a feeling-good track.

Another couple of members of our club need grateful recognition. We all take their generosity for granted, because they do the same thing most of the months. They are **Alex Rostocki** and **Bob Kulberg** for that delicious chicken they bring.

Our Christmas party is coming up on Sunday, December 7, at the Beardsley Park Zoo. It will be held in their main meeting area just right of the parking area. We have the use of the place for the afternoon and have to be out by no later than four o'clock, closing time.

At the party, we will have potluck. Each member should bring enough food to share with at least eight

Continued on page 2, left column

The Secretary's Report

FRANK ZAPATKA AND HIS WIFE WERE AT THE EDGERTON Park facility before the meeting started, but left by the time we started to eat. His leg pain was increasing and he knew everything at the meeting was set to go. We hope something can be found soon to relieve his condition.

Vice President **Matt Opel** led the meeting. Our Christmas Party will be at the Beardsley Zoo on Sunday, December 7. They want us to bring donated plants unless it is too cold to transport them on that day. Otherwise someone can take them down later. Anyone wishing to join in the gift exchange should bring a wrapped plant-oriented gift worth approximately ten dollars.

Dave Schultz was not in attendance because his father is ill. He and **John Spain** will go to meet with **Bonnie Simon**—and perhaps others—at the Naugatuck Valley Community College to make plans with them to hold the Cactus and Succulent Society Eastern Conference at the college.

The Club got a certificate of thanks from NVCC for the scholarship. The Club also got a fifty-dollar check from the Connecticut Federated Garden Club because **John Spain** had conducted a class in judging cacti.

Vito Riccio reported on the bus trip to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden sponsored by the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts. They hope to go to Gerry Barad's—probably on July 11—and to Longwood Gardens in the future. Members of our club could join them and get picked up in Connecticut.

Matt Opel is giving a talk to the Philadelphia Club at their next meeting.

John Spain gave a short talk on planting cactus seeds. He told about the Mesa Garden catalog's zone rating system and where the plants grow naturally. Prices are good compared to other catalogs.

For his growth medium, John uses tamped seed starter mix. The cactus seeds are spread over the starter mix.

John then spreads grit—the smallest size chicken grit, or fish tank grit—over the seeds.

Continued on page 2, right column

From the President, continued

others so we can enjoy a variety of what is brought. We also have our annual grab bag for all those that want to participate. The value of the gifts should be around ten dollars. All those that bring will get.

I spoke to **John Leto**. Originally he had said maybe it is not a good idea to bring plants in December, because it might be too cold. He has since spoken to the person that takes care of the greenhouse and that person will make room for anything that is brought. John also said that he will try to get someone that is in charge of the zoo to bring over a couple animals to present and discuss.

I hope you all make it to our December meeting, even though it looks like it will be a very busy time for all.

Thank you.
Frank

Secretary's Report, continued

John also makes a fungicide solution. Some of this he sprays on top of the spread grit.. He also soaks his pots in fungicide solution in trays. (Having the pots soaking-wet at seed-sowing time sounds strange because they are cacti, but it is important.)

Put glass over the pots and put them under fluorescent lights—shop lights are fine—so that the lights are 6–8 inches above the glass He also puts a couple of 60-watt "trouble lights" underneath. The pots should stay damp, but not wet, while germinating and growing, using regular tap water. About 8 months after sowing, he lines the seedlings out and takes them to the greenhouse, being careful not to let them burn.

John sows much more seed than he will need, because he believes in the 60/60/60 theory: 60% of seed will germinate; 60% will survive after lining out; and 60% of those will live in the pots.

After the meeting many members went down to the greenhouse to drop off plants they had brought and to look around. Thank you Trudy.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Lynn
Secretary pro tem

The Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

President: Mr. Frank Zapatka; (203) 596-9214; fzapatka@snet.net

Vice President: Dr. Matt Opel; h (860) 429-9091; w (860) 486-4052; matthew.opel@uconn.edu

Secretary pro tem: Ms. Becky Lynn; (203) 758-9549

Treasurer: Mr. Ken Mosher; (860) 742-8859; ken@spatulacity.com

Editor: Mr. LeRoy F. Saucier; (860) 228-7602; saucierl@sbcglobal.net

Staff Photographer: Mr. Herbert (Sully) Sullivan; (860) 646-4809; irish_dragon98@yahoo.com

Society Website: www.ctcactusclub.com

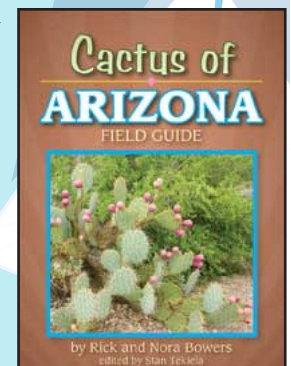
The CCSS Newsletter is published each month except January. Annual membership of \$12.00 includes subscription to the newsletter. This membership includes all members of an immediate family residing at the same residence. Payment is payable to the Treasurer, Mr. Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Road, Andover, CT 06232.

New Book Available

By David Schultz

I have received a new book which will be of interest to anyone planning for the CSSA national convention next spring in Tucson. *Cactus of Arizona Field Guide* is a smaller format—236 pages—soft-bound book, that lists at \$14.95. It is available to us for \$10.50. I will have copies at our next meeting.

Adventure Publications proudly presents the field guide that is sure to interest Arizona's residents, tourists and snowbirds. The *Cactus of Arizona Field Guide* introduces readers to 50 species of those prickly plants. Organized by family, then by shape, this field guide includes the information you will need to identify and learn about Arizona's cacti.



Invitation to 2009 CSSA Convention

The following article is a transcription of an e-mail sent on October 9, 2008 to **David Schultz** by **Laurence Magner** of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts.

Hi Dave,

Art Scarpa suggested I pass this message along to you in the hopes that you could, in turn, forward it to the members of the Connecticut C&S Society. We in the Mass. C&S Society are kicking around the idea of attending the national CSSA convention in Tucson this coming April. But, rather than stay at the "official" CSSA-designated hotel and sign up for the "official" optional tours, we would travel as a group, in our own stretch-van, and stay at a cheaper hotel. We would also travel on our own to the various areas around Tucson that would be of interest to us as plant lovers.

If any members of your club would like to join us, they would be most welcome. Unfortunately, the convention is scheduled over the Easter weekend, and so we may not be able to pull this trip off. But, it's worth testing the water to see if we can get a large enough group together to make it worthwhile.

I've attached a spread sheet [right column] roughly comparing costs to us as an independent group, on our own, versus the costs of attending the convention and following their price structure and event schedule.

Take care, and thanks for any help you can give us.

Laurence Magner
CSSM

[E-mail: lmagner@verizon.net]

Convention Cost Comparisons Based on Ten People

	Our Cost/pp	Convention cost
Flight (AA)	\$517.00	\$517.00
Van Rental	\$66.00	
Compact Car	\$222.00	
Gas	?	
Hotel	\$80.00 (per double room/per night)	\$1,113.00 (\$159.00/night)
Meals	?	?
Admissions	Saguaro National Park \$8.00	\$50.00
	Desert museum \$13.00	\$35.00
	Tumacacori, Tubac, San Xavier -0-	\$35.00
	Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument \$8.00	(not scheduled)
	Tohono Indian Reservation Museum/Sells -0-	(not scheduled)
Convention	\$189.00	\$189.00

Date	Day	Day's Activity
April 9	Thursday	Flight (AA)
April 10	Good Friday	Trip to Organ Pipe National Monument/ Sells
April 11	Saturday	Conference
April 12	Easter Sunday	Conference
April 13	Monday	Trip to Tumacacori/ Tubac/San Xavier
April 14	Tuesday	Conference
April 15	Wednesday	Trip to Saguaro NP/ Desert museum
April 16	Thursday	Flight home

Matt Opel Visits Japan

By Dr. Matt Opel

People occasionally, somehow, get the idea that I am an enthusiastic and frequent traveler, but that is pretty far from the truth. I stick close to home most of the time, though every once in a long while I scrape together enough money and enthusiasm to do something big, like my vacation in Japan this October.



I went over with a couple of friends from Connecticut, which was great for defraying costs and providing moral support. We planned our own itinerary, which cut expenses, and provided the freedom to go where we wanted at our own pace. It worked out well, and it certainly helped that we all knew some Japanese, and had some friends over there.

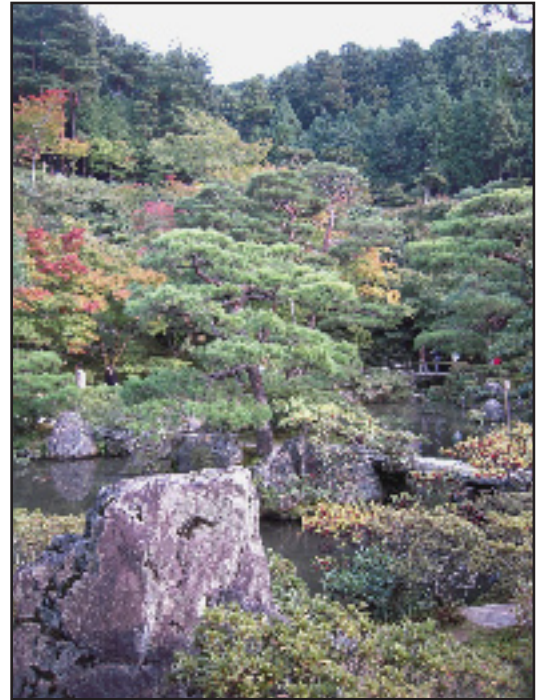
I stayed in the southern part of the main island of Japan, in the Tokyo and Kyoto regions. This area has a



Tokyo's "electric town," Akihabara

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

humid, subtropical climate, somewhat similar to the coastal Carolinas and Georgia. October is considered a good time to visit: not stifling, but not frosty, either. Apparently, this October was unusually hot and hazy, and the weather was more summer-like than I had expected. It was not unpleasant, but I quickly went through my supply of short-sleeved shirts.



Gardens around the Silver Pavilion in Kyoto

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

Tokyo is a little overwhelming. It is one of the largest cities in the world, with close to 13 million residents, and the urban landscape stretches out to the horizon in every direction when viewed from the top of the skyscrapers in Shinjuku—you can take the elevator up the Tokyo Metropolitan Building for free. It is not too hard to get around; the train system is user friendly, and important signs usually give English translations.

Home base was a traditional inn, or ryokan, called Homeikan, close to the University of Tokyo, in a quiet residential neighborhood. I quickly felt comfortable in the area, which was not nearly as hectic as the central parts of the city. There was not much space for horticulture, but the inn had a small but immaculately maintained traditional garden. Around the neighborhood, people had collections of potted plants wherever they could find space, and I even spotted some aloes, echeverias and mesembs. The climate is warm enough that what would be houseplants in Connecticut stay outside year round. On plots of open ground around street trees near the inn,



*Echeverias and a Peanut Cactus
(Chamaecereus silvestrii) along a street in Tokyo.*

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

someone had even planted Brugmansia (Angel's Trumpet), which I usually think of as a true tropical plant.

I also visited Kyoto and Nara, both former capitals of Japan that are famous for their ancient shrines, temples and gardens.

Some of the most beautiful scenery, I thought, was at Ginkakuji, the Silver Pavilion, at the base of the mountains on the eastern side of Kyoto. Moss gardening is a specialty at the Silver Pavilion, and there was even a display showing which mosses were considered weeds,



Matt Opel, crowds, and a tame deer at Nandaimon, a gate leading to Todaiji Temple in Nara.

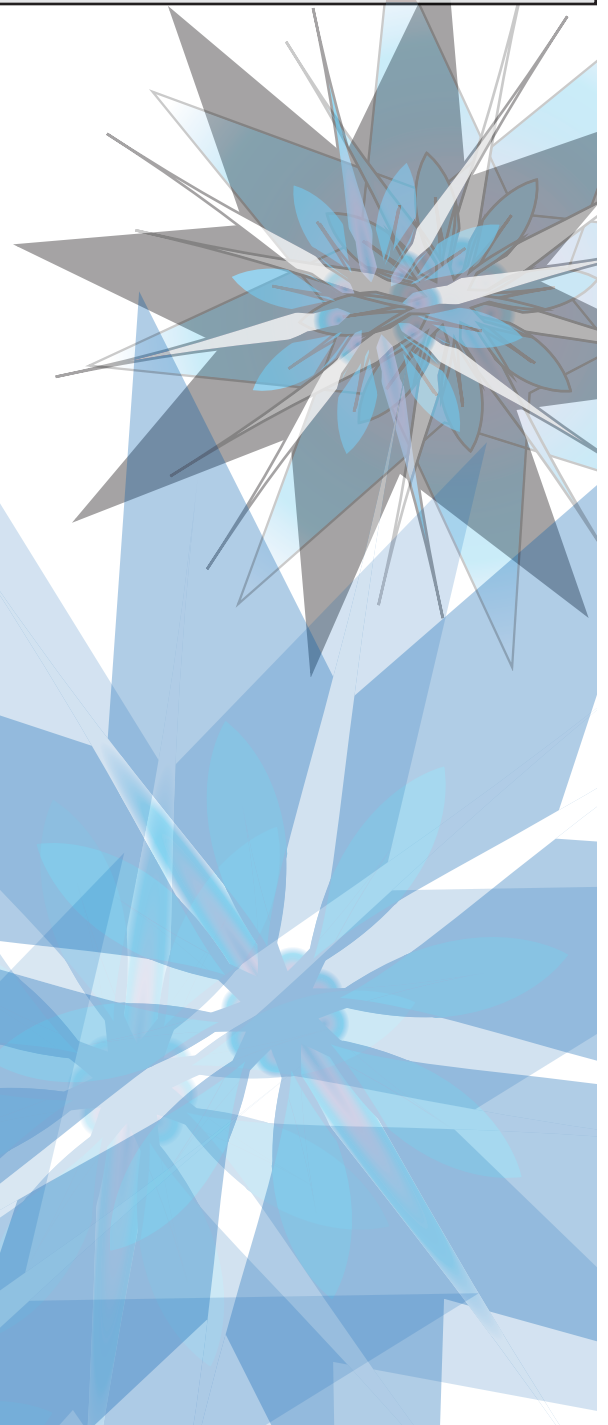
and which were carefully nurtured.

Nara was wonderful as well, with a central park that includes numerous historic sites, including Todaiji, a Buddhist temple that is the largest wooden structure in

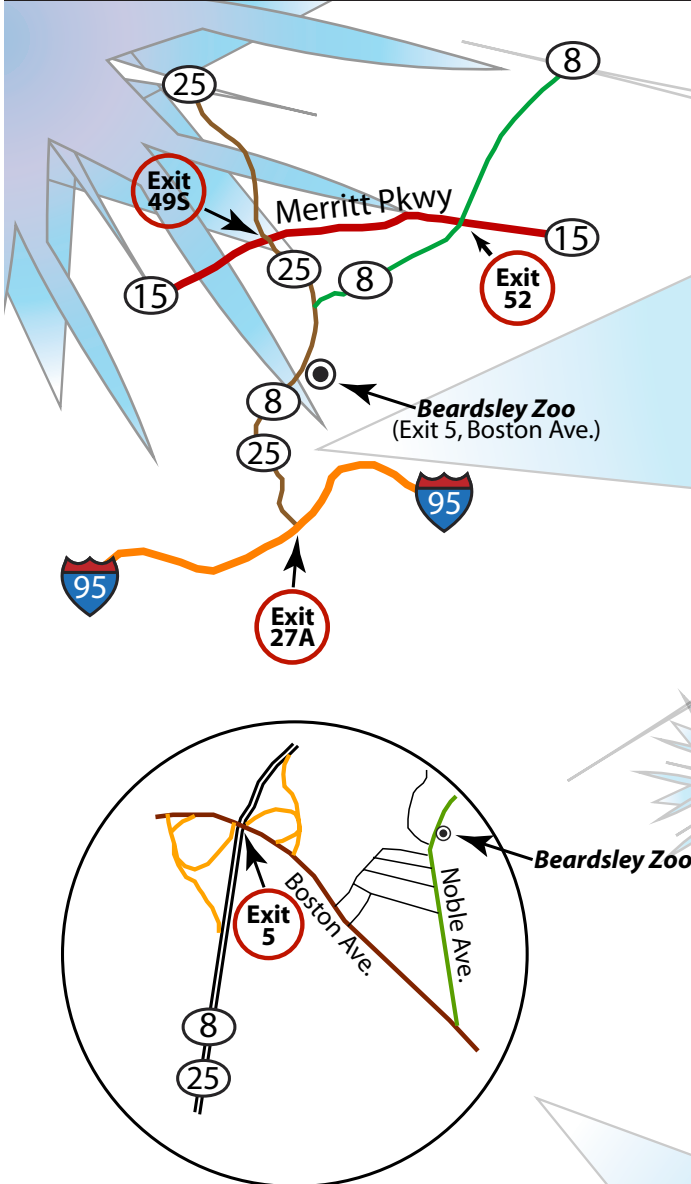
the world. Nara Park is also home to a large number of more or less tame deer, which have the run of the place and will follow visitors around looking for handouts.

All in all, I had a fantastic time during my two weeks in Nippon. I would love to go back sometime to explore more in Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara, and maybe try to get further afield.

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



Map to Beardsley Zoo



Directions to Beardsley Zoo

From Route 15 (Merritt Parkway)

From New Haven: Take Exit 52 (South to Bridgeport) to Routes 8 and 25. Proceed to Exit 5 (Boston Ave). At the end of the ramp, bear right and go to the fifth traffic light. Turn left onto Noble Avenue and proceed to the Beardsley Park entrance on the left. Follow the signs to the Zoo entrance on right.

From the west (New York): Take Exit 49S (Bridgeport) to Route 25. Proceed to Exit 5 (Boston Ave). Continue as directed above.

From I-95

Take Exit 27A to Routes 8 and 25. Proceed to Exit 5 (Boston Ave). At the traffic light at the end of the ramp, go left to the fourth traffic light. Turn left onto Noble Avenue and proceed to the Beardsley Park entrance on the left. Follow signs to the Zoo entrance on right.

Treasurer's Report

Income:

CSSM Payment for Coir and Soil	113.00
Federated Garden Club Honorarium	50.00

Total Income: \$163.00

Expenses:

November Newsletter	\$110.22
---------------------	----------

Total Income (Expense) \$52.78

Bank Balance \$9,491.18

Upcoming Events

December Meeting: December 7 at the Beardsley Zoo, 1875 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
(203) 394-6565

1:00 p.m.
Do not bring chairs
Potluck Dinner

No January Meeting
No January Newsletter