



### Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

Please see important changes to paper newsletter mailing on pg. 3

#### President's Message

*Chris Allen*



Pres. Chris Allen  
Photo credit: H. (Sully) Sullivan

It was a lengthy drive, but we had quite a good turnout for our September meeting at the Americal Civic Center in Wakefield, MA. This was only the second year our friends at the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts have held their show and sale there. We were treated to a number of plant vendors and a very nice show that our CCSS members

helped judge. I believe that if they continue to have their show & sale at this same location, it will only be a matter of time before the CSSM approaches the success we have enjoyed with our show and sale.



Members listen intently to Pres. Chris Allen's words of wisdom during the Sept. meeting.  
Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan

**Our October meeting will be at Ballek's Garden Center in East Haddam.** Ballek's is a family run garden center and greenhouse that offers a large assortment of unusual plants. They also have a special area where we will be meeting called the Stone House Meeting Room. Whenever we meet at a commercial establishment such as Ballek's, I encourage members to patronize the business as they are hosting us at no charge. Our speaker is Richard Carlson, one of CCSS's excellent growers. Richard is a professional in the plant industry and has been growing succulents for

many years. Outstanding and skilled growers like Richard have unique tips to share and hopefully you will be there listening.

At our August meeting we started doing a show & tell. I encourage members to consider bringing in plants and articles of interest to our monthly meetings and tell us about them. You may also have a plant that has a cultural problem which you would like other members to diagnose. At our September meeting, Sharon SmithDelisle showed off some very nice pottery that she bought at a local craft store at bargain prices.

Speaking of Sharon, on behalf of the Society, I would like thank her for a super September newsletter. Keep sending Sharon your articles and pictures so she has lots of material to put into the newsletter. We are also working to bring down the monthly cost of the newsletter which can run as high as \$350.00. As previously mentioned, if we can get those members who do not need or want a paper version of the newsletter to change over to the email version, our costs go down dramatically. After discussing this at the September meeting, we have decided that members will be moved to the email newsletter list after three months notice (Feb. 2016 newsletter) if they do not contact Ken Mosher and tell him that they want the paper newsletter. **To be clear, all members who want the paper version of the newsletter are welcome to continue getting one, but you need to contact Ken Mosher, see pg. 3 of this newsletter.**



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

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Editorial Office  
38 Robinhood Rd.  
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## Secretary's Report

~ John Canali



Secretary John Canali  
Photo credit: H. Sullivan

### Secretary's Report 9/12/15

We met at CSSM's Show and Sale in Wakefield Ma. There were, as expected, many stunning examples of the plants we all admire so much. The ' Best

in Show' plant was an amazing *Ariocarpus retusus*.

There were 14 people in attendance. A short business meeting was held. We had one guest, Dennis Tetrault who accompanied Ken Moser to the Show/meeting.

Some discussion was had about paper vs electronic copy of the newsletter. Many clubs are going completely electronic, although we are probably not there yet. It was suggested that in 3 months' time, members should let Ken Moser know if they still want a paper copy sent out or not. This was met with some resistance. However paper copies will still be available to those who want it. Give your feedback to Ken or Chris.

It was also suggested that we might want to pool resources with the Mass. club to get professional speakers to give talks and demonstrations at our meetings. Let us know what you think about that.

Discussion is still ongoing about planning a meeting/ field trip to a botanical garden in the area in the spring.

Next month's meeting is scheduled at Baleek's Garden Center in East Haddam, CT .



*Ariocarpus retusus*, "Best in Show"  
Cactus & Succulent Society of Massachusetts  
Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan



CSSM's Auction Table  
There was plenty of friendly rivalry during the Saturday afternoon auction of many magnificent offerings. Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan



Welcome committee at the Cactus & Succulent Show and Sale of Massachusetts, Sept. 12-13  
Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan

## Upcoming Meetings

- October 4<sup>th</sup>** Ballek's Garden Center, East Haddam, CT - CCSS member Richard Carlson speaking
- November 1<sup>st</sup>** Southbury Public Library, Southbury, CT - CCSS member Fred Kattermann speaking
- December 6<sup>th</sup>** Trumbull Agriscience & Biotechnology Center - Holiday Party & Tour
- January 2016** No meeting
- February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016** Marsh Botanical Greenhouses, Yale University, New Haven, CT - Speaker TBA
- March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016** UConn, Storrs, CT - MCSS member Francis Passavant speaking
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016** 2016 CCSS Annual Show & Sale



Magnificent plant seen at the CSS of Mass at their show on Sat., Sept. 12, 2015  
Photo credit: Herbery (Sully) Sullivan



John Spain carefully scrutinizes a plant at the Cactus and Succulent Show of Massachusetts on Sept. 12th.  
Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan

## For the Bookshelf but we should be reading the books rather than storing them, so....

~ David Schultz

The following titles are either new or upcoming. To make life easier, we will take names for any books of interest to you. If you are interested, you have to let us know. Final orders will be placed after publication dates have been determined and we have the order details.

- ***Beginner's Guide to Gasterias, Haworthias, Agaves and other succulent Monocots***  
by Tom Glavin, SB, 7" X 10" size, 100pp, 77 color photos, \$27 in stock now
- ***Cacti & Succulents of Baja California*** by John Pilbeam; HB, 233pp, 437 pictures, list 46BP (approx. \$78 less 30%) about \$60
- ***Agaves, Yuccas and their Kin*** by Jon Bowker PB, 6" X 9" size, 456pp, 481 color photos, list \$49.95, our price about \$35: Jan, 2016 Texas Tech Univ Press
- ***Succulents – An Illustrated Guide*** - by T. Hewitt available in Nov. our price \$7.50
- ***Propagation*** by Gordon Rowley: early 2016 published by BCSS
- ***Garden Aloes*** by G. Smith & E. Fieueriedo: PB, 208pp, available now from Amazon at \$29
- ***Agaves of Baja California*** by Greg Starr: hopefully 2016 - he will keep me updated
- ***Aloes & Agaves for the Landscape*** by Jeff Moore: hopefully 2016 - he will keep me updated
- ***Cacti of Peru*** by G. Charles & coauthor: hopefully 2016 – he will keep me updated

### CALENDAR for 2016

- ***Succulents*** list \$14.95 With enough interest, I will place an order.

## From the Editor — Confessions of a caudiciform captive

~ Sharon SmithDelisle

Hello Everyone — Thank you for all of your kind words and encouragement am enjoying my new job very much. Speaking of the newsletter, here is work every member needs to do. In an effort to rein in escalating costs, paper copies of the newsletter beginning with the February 2016 edition.

**we will continue to provide a paper copy to any member who wishes to have it.** But if you really don't need a paper copy, please help us reduce costs by signing up for the electronic edition. You need to sign up for the CCSS Yahoo Group. To do this, follow the instructions at the bottom of the club's Content Page, [ctcactusclub.com/contact.aspx](http://ctcactusclub.com/contact.aspx). **Please be aware that only YOU can do this! No one else has the ability to add you to this group and no, Ken can't do it for you.** Signing up for CCSS Yahoo Group will trigger an automatic notice to you when the newsletter has been posted on the CCSS website. Easy & convenient!

**In order to continue receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, please contact Ken Mosher. He prefers that you send him an email at [ken@spatulacity.com](mailto:ken@spatulacity.com) but you may also send him a written request to: Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Rd., Andover, CT 06232 and finally, you may speak to him in person or leave a message at (860) 462-8899. Speak your name slowly and clearly.**



regarding the newsletter. I some very important home-CCSS will stop mailing most

**PLEASE DON'T PANIC! We**

## I didn't know that....!



### Potting –Bench Urban Legends

By Matt Opel, PhD

(Editor's note: This article originally ran in the February 2008 edition of the CCSS newsletter)

Every plant enthusiast keeps a mental library of horticultural rules-of-thumb. Some of these rules we learn from other gardeners, some we read about, and some we come up with on our own. Most of these tips and tricks are, in fact, perfectly sensible:

you can start new jade plants by sticking a leaf in soil; you should not water a cactus immediately after transplanting it; you can control mealy bugs by dabbing them with rubbing alcohol. However, some frequently encoun-



Jade plant cuttings.

Photo credit: Nico Paix, [www.gardeningknowhow.com](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)



Ugh!! Mealy bugs

Photo credit: [www.goodtogrow.wordpress.com](http://www.goodtogrow.wordpress.com)

tered horticultural “rules” do not actually hold up under close scrutiny. Cactus and succulent growers are particularly concerned about drainage, and so many cactus and succulent urban legends involve insuring that excess water does not stay in pots.

#### Urban Legend #1:

*Shallow pots drain better than deep pots*

All else being equal, this one is dead wrong. Soil holds onto water by capillary action, and a certain amount of pressure is needed for excess water to be forced out of the drainage hole of a pot. That pressure comes from standing water in a layer of saturated soil at the bottom of the pot. The depth the saturated layer can be supported before water starts draining off depends on the characteristics of the soil, not the shape of the pot. So in a shallow tray the layer of soil that's stays soggy after watering is closer to the soil surface and takes up more of the soil volume than in a steep container. Of course, all else is rarely equal, and a shallow pot might actually dry out more quickly than a deep pot because it holds less soil, and presents more soil surface to the air for water to be lost via evaporation. **But for efficient initial drainage of water, deeper pots are better.**

#### Urban Legend #2:

*A layer of gravel or crocking at the bottom of a pot improves drainage*

If your concern is the unimpeded flow of excess water out of the soil after irrigation, a layer of “drainage material” is counterproductive. **It is a basic principle of soil science that a soil layer that is either less or more porous than the layer above it, will act as a barrier to the downward flow of water.** Thus, a layer of highly porous gravel or pot shards actually impedes the movement of water in a pot, and leads to the development of a “perched water table” — a layer of soggy, saturated soil — above it. Another way of thinking about it is that filling the bottom of the pot with porous material essentially turns a deep pot into a poorly drained shallow pot. In certain situations, a pot with lots of crocking may dry out faster than one with just soil, but only because the total volume of soil is reduced, not by improving drainage. **Minimal usage of stones or potshards over drainage holes of a pot is often desirable, however, simply to prevent soil from pouring out.**

#### Urban Legend #3:

*Adding sand to a soil mixture makes it well drained*

This one is not always false, but it is not as universally true as you might think, either. Some mixes that are heavy on sand are indeed very well drained, but I have also experimented with sand-based mixes that water would just sit on top of for half an hour before percolating into the soil. The type of sand makes a difference; sands with larger, sharp-edged grains tend to promote water movement, while sands that include a high percentage of very fine material, or with weathered, rounded grains — like beach sand— can clog a soil mix. **Strictly from a drainage-improvement perspective, the best sands are probably the courser types used for sandblasting.** However, drainage is not the only consideration when deciding on a soil mix, and **sands with some silty fine material can offer benefits, too, such as sequestering the nutrients and water needed for plant growth.**

So experiment with the materials that are available to you, and do not get thrown off track by horticultural urban legends.



## Show & Tell

Members forum — photos, tips & tricks,  
bragging rights, war stories,  
supplies & equipment....  
What would you like to share ?



*Brahmasia 'Super Nova'*

Your, and my favorite photographer, Herbert (Sully) Sullivan shared this magnificent blooming plant with us. Talk about bragging rights!! Sully is justifiably proud of this blooming success story.

Photo credit: Herbert (Sully) Sullivan, of course

### Wanted: Those old clay pots you have stacked up in the corner of your greenhouse.

Our recent guest at the September meeting, Dennis Tetrault suggested that members who have used, clay pots in good condition that aren't needed anymore donate them to CCSS. Pots could be available on a first-come basis or perhaps resold to the membership at bargain prices, which would generate a little income for the club.



Supplier: Michael's Craft Store  
Tapering, 3" diameter at top X  
4" tall clay pot with  
drainage hole.  
\$1.69 ea.



Supplier: Venamy Orchids  
Rt. 22, Brewster, NY  
Hand-thrown,  
clay pot, 4" di-  
ameter X 5" tall,  
with drainage  
hole and saucer.  
\$7.00 ea.

### *Pots, Pots, Pots*

Your editor is always on the lookout for inexpensive or reasonably priced, small pots. Here are three examples I found recently. The 8" diameter bowl-shaped pot is a little on the steep side price-wise but too wonderful in size & shape to pass up. Know where there are other resources for cheap pots? Please share with us!



Supplier: Venamy Orchids,  
Rt. 22, Brewster, NY  
Hand-thrown, clay pot, 8" diameter X 3"  
tall, with drainage hole and saucer.  
\$14.00 ea.





**Directions to our Oct. 4, 2015 meeting location at Ballek's Garden Center,  
90 Maple Ave., East Haddam, CT. (860) 873-8878**

**Note:** Rt. 9 SE may be accessed from Rt. 91 at exit 22 between Berlin and Cromwell or I-95 at exit 69 NW at Old Saybrook

**From Route 9:**  
 Take Exit 7 (long exit ramp, approx. 2.5 miles)  
 Take left onto Route 154 North  
 In 1/4 mile - first traffic light  
 Take right onto Route 82  
 Go over East Haddam Bridge crossing CT River

**PLEASE CONSULT A MAP OR GOGGLE MAPS FOR MOST ACCURATE DIRECTIONS OR BALLEK'S GARDEN CENTER AT (860) 873-8878.**

**Note:** Rt.2 NW may be accessed from I-395 at exit 81 at Norwich or from Rt. 84 E in East Hartford.

**From Route 2:**  
 Take Exit 16  
 Take right onto Route 149  
 At traffic light, go straight on Route 149 (crossing Route 16)  
 Go through Moodus Center  
 After 7-11 gas station on left , turn left onto Route 151

**RED LABELS**

If you have received a newsletter with a red label, this indicates that it is time to renew your membership.

## Join Us Today!

Just fill out the form, below. Include a check for \$12.00—the membership fee which includes all family members living at the same residence—and mail to:

Mr. Ken Mosher  
 Treasurer, CCSS  
 8 Bailey Road  
 Andover, CT 06232

Please make checks payable to CCSS.

Renew Today

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_