



Kerr County Cactus & Succulent Society News

The KCCSS meets on the third Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm in the conference room of the Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water Street, in Kerrville. Visitors are always welcome.

Membership dues are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. The membership year starts in July.

President	Mike Sykos	830-896-7425	Newsletter*	Bill & Cheryl Wildfong	830-896-8940
Treasurer	Allen Duncan	830-896-5582	Library	Elliot Hatch	830-896-3891
Secretary	Edna Platte	830-257-2185	Historian	Natalie Fagarason	830-792-5421
Past President	Bob Taylor	830-792-3773	Director	Larry Fagarason	830-792-5421

VP, Programs — shared between Larry Fagarason 830-792-5421 & Bill Gibson 830-896-1229

* Items for the newsletter are due the FIRST Tuesday of the month. Email them to wildfong@windstream.net
(Snail-mail: 342 West Water St., Kerrville TX 78028; fax 928-752-5463)

Our April 21 Meeting

Wendell Bingham will give one of his entertaining and informative PowerPoint presentations. At press time, he had not chosen a topic, so come to the meeting and be pleasantly surprised.



Refreshments

Our thanks to these kind folks have volunteered to cater our refreshments in 2009:

January	Natalie Fagarason
February	Judy Surles & Cheryl Drumheller
March	Bill & Cheryl Wildfong
April	Rose Marie Turner
May	Mary McFadin & Betty Collins
June	Bonnie & Bob Taylor
July	Mike Sykos
August	Norma Lozano
September	Buddy & Evelyn Weaver
October	Wendell & Gayle Bingham
November	Bill Gibson

Coming Events

April 18, KERRVILLE, TX: Earth Day 2009; Co-sponsored by the Native Plant Society of Texas- Kerrville Chapter, & the Riverside Nature Center. 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Native Plant Sale; free lectures on rain-water harvesting and water and soil conservation; kids activities; nature tour; refreshments; lunch. Various organizations, including the KCCSS, will have displays, and folks to answer your questions. For details go to home.windstream.net/wildfong/KCCSS.html

April 23-25, SAN ANTONIO: SACXS Annual Show & Sale, 8:00 am till 5:00 PM. This is a State Juried Show. Plant Auction on Friday and Saturday at 2PM. Located at the San Antonio Garden Center on N. New Braunfels and Funston St. Open to the public.
Website: sacxs.org

May 2 & 3, Houston CSS Spring Sale; Houston Arboretum and Nature Center; For more info visit www.hcsstex.org or contact Richard Stamper at 713-523-2705 or cactusboy11@sbcbglobal.net

May 8-9, KERRVILLE, TX: KCCSS Annual Show and Sale, 9 AM- 5 PM. Get a gift for Mother's Day! River Hills Mall, on hwy 16 just south of the river. Open to the public.
home.windstream.net/wildfong/KCCSS.html

KCCSS at SACXS

The Kerrville gang had a good turnout at the special SACXS meeting last month: Wendell & Gayle Bingham, Larry Fagarason, John Farmer, Buddy & Evelyn Weaver, and Bill & Cheryl Wildfong. We all agreed that the opportunity to meet Debra Lee Baldwin and enjoy her presentation was well worth the 70-mile trip. The snacks were terrific, too!

KCCSS Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2009

The meeting was opened by President Mike Sykos.

Visitors were introduced.

Wendell Bingham announced that Wednesday March 18 SACXS will have a special meeting featuring the book and author USING SUCCULENTS IN YOUR HOME AND GARDEN LANDSCAPES by Debra Lee Baldwin.

The annual KCCSS Show and Sale was announced. It will be at the River Hills Mall on Friday and Saturday May 8 and 9 from 9 AM to 5 PM. Everyone's help is needed for this sale.

Claude Townsend of San Antonio discussed the *Adenium Obesum*, a native of Africa but is now propagated in many countries and known for its shape and flowers. He discussed propagation and care for the plant and distributed information about growing cactus from seed.

Refreshments were provided by Bill and Cheryl Wildfong

Twenty-eight people attended the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Edna Platte Secretary

Unusual Cactus for Sale

This cactus, identified by Larry Fagarason as *Cereus peruvianus monstrose*, is for sale at the Riverside Nature Center Gift Shop. It's native to South America and needs sunshine and temperatures over 45F.

The cactus is 27 inches tall and is reasonably priced at \$35.00. They recently sold their other specimen, 35 inches tall, for \$60; go see this one before it's gone.



How Smart Are Plants - Really?

By Sue Haffner - Fresno C&S
[via the CSSA Journal, Issue 23]

It is easy to dismiss plants as a lower form of life even though they compose 99% of the earth's biomass. Plants don't move much, are pretty quiet, and certainly do not think - we think! It seems, though, that the old phrase "dumb as a stump" is very far off the mark. How far off we don't know because we are just now realizing how complex plant behavior really is.

Two recent articles in the journal Nature outline new discoveries about plants ("Mindless Mastery", Feb. 21, 2002; "How Plants Fight Dirty", March 21, 2002).

Humans possess five major senses, but plants continuously monitor 15 different environmental variables, from sunlight to the alighting of an herbivorous insect. These signals from the plant's sensors are fed into a remarkably diverse communications system comprising chemicals (proteins, hormones, nucleic acids, etc.), electrical signals, and mechanical information. Every plant processes a prodigious amount of information - how and where this is done we don't know. We do know, though, that incoming information is acted upon in ways that increase the fitness of the plant. If intelligence is defined as adaptable behavior leading to increased survivability, then plants are intelligent.

Take the dodder, a parasitic plant, as an example. It reaches out for a host and upon contact assesses its exploitability within an hour or two with its sensors. If the first potential host is inadequate, it makes a "conscious" decision to move on to another prey. When a suitable host is found, the dodder coils around, deploys the appropriate number of suckers, and starts to siphon off the host's resources.

Plants even warn their neighbors of herbivore attacks by releasing volatile chemicals and thereby allowing early construction of chemical defenses. It has also been observed that in some contacts with herbivorous insects the attacked plant sends out specific volatile signals that attract the proper species of parasite that will dispatch the insect attacker.

Where are these plant decisions made and where do the 15 streams of sensor data end up? Untold numbers of bytes must be processed somewhere but we know of no plant central-processing-unit. We suppose that plant brains are of a distributed nature and employ chemical and electrical "chips". In reality, we can only guess because we have long ignored the information-processing aspects of this kingdom of life. A kingdom, which, lest we forget, powers all other life - except for a few bacteria that can tap geochemical energy sources.

(Based on a note in Science frontiers, no. 141.)

**Please bring back
those library books!**

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