



# AKTOS

# COMMENTMENTS

A bimonthly publication of the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society  
to promote the study of cacti and other succulents

**Volume 63 Number 3**

**May-June 2026**



*Opuntia microdasys*

by Lauren Morris



# Houston Cactus and Succulent Society

Founded in 1963

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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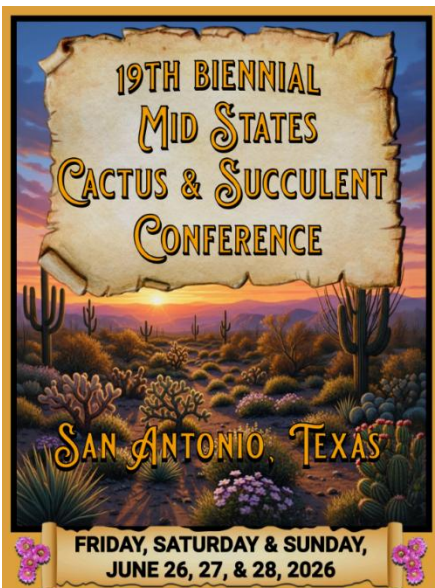
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## Calendar

- May 15-16, 2026** Spring Sale at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm: May 15<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm: May 16<sup>th</sup>
- May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026** 7:00pm Board Meeting via Zoom
- May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026** 7:00 pm Membership Meeting, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
Program: Cryptic Morphology of Desert Plants – a Slideshow of Camouflage and Mimicry by John Weistroffer
- June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026** 7:00 pm Membership Meeting, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
Program: Madam Cacti: Astrophytum and it’s Hybrids by Gierayl Clepper
- July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026** Deadline to submit articles for the KK



The 19th Biennial Mid States Cactus & Succulent Conference is scheduled for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 26-28 2026 in San Antonio, TX. This is the first time that the event will be held in Texas. The conference is being hosted by the San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society, and the Texas Cactus Coalition. The CSSA is also a major sponsor.

They have prepared an online guidebook which includes registration links, the conference details, info on hotel accommodations and more. Find the Guidebook Here: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/tnffc/Official-Mid-States-Conference-Flyer/#p=1>

The registration fee is \$95 which covers all three days of the conference.



Our dear friend and club member, Dick McEuen, passed away on March 15, 2026. He was a member when Bruce and I joined the club in 1995. He served many positions in the club, including president and vice president, and was active on the board of directors. His contributions are well known to older members, and had been listed in prior articles about him. I would like to address Dick as a fellow club member and friend. In addition to his distinguished service to the club, he was always there when things needed to be done, whether identifying plants, giving growing advice, or getting ready for and working at the club sales. He was a dedicated member and friend.



Dick was probably the smartest person I have ever known. He could provide the botanical name, growing conditions, and care of almost any plant. When we were on field trips, I used to follow him because I learned so much from him. He could do on-the-spot identification in the wild in the days when our primary goal was going out in south Texas, west Texas, New Mexico, or Mexico. In addition, he could provide fascinating geological information about rock formations.

In addition to his intelligence, he was very kind and helpful, never making anyone feel belittled. He actually taught me about grooming and preparing my plants the first time I entered my babies in a show, from cleaning them with tweezers to blowing off dust and perlite. He was that way with anyone who was interested.

Dick's plants didn't dare to be anything but perfect. He and Phyllis were "plant whisperers", with always perfectly groomed and identified plants. They were always an inspiration to us all. It was a pleasure to go to potting parties and other gatherings at their home.

One of the major contributions they made to the club was in the area of education. They were world travelers for many years, and many of their trips were botanical, such as the ones led by Guillermo Rivera. They visited habitats in Texas and the southwest United States, as well as locations in South America and South Africa. And they always shared what they learned with excellent presentations.



The last thing I will speak to is Dick's sense of humor. He never had fun at anyone's expense, but had a fantastic way of sharing laughter and a sense of fun. He and his beautiful wife and our dear friend, Phyllis, will always be remembered as very special people.

**Membership****Sara Ortiz**

On March 25, 2026, twenty-five members and four guests attended our membership meeting at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Eddie Novak and Jennifer Peskey presented “The Art of Growing Adeniums,” an informative program covering cultivation techniques, care tips, and growing practices for Desert Roses (Adeniums). Members enjoyed learning more about these unique and colorful plants, including advice on soil, watering, shaping, and flowering.

For March, Karla Halpaap-Wood presented the Cactus of the Month, *Mammillaria elongata*, and Andrea Varesic introduced the Succulent of the Month, *Euphorbia echinulata*.

On April 22, 2026, twenty-four members and three guests attended our meeting at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Liliana Cracraft presented “The Many Useful Products from Cactus and Other Succulents; Old and New,” a fascinating program highlighting the historical and modern uses of cacti and succulents in food, medicine, fibers, dyes, landscaping, and everyday products. The presentation sparked great discussion and interest among attendees.

For April, Jennifer Peskey presented the Cactus of the Month, *Pachycereus schottii* f. *monstrosus*, and Kristi Schmidt introduced the Succulent of the Month, *Kalanchoe laetivirens*.

**CSSA News****Liliana Cracraft**

Because our club is a CSSA Affiliate, our members have now access to the new CSSA Supporting Membership benefit—just \$10/year (regularly \$20). Below are the details specific to our club:

**A. Direct Discount Link (Recommended):**

<https://app.joinit.com/o/cactusandsucculentsociety/viDRLZXRuWmiEp7YS/?discount=Houston-Affiliate-Partner-Discount>

**B. Our Club’s Discount Code:**

Houston-Affiliate-Partner-Discount

**C. How Members Can Sign Up**


Option 1: Using the Direct Link (easiest method) When you click it, the discount will be automatically applied at checkout.

Option 2: Entering the Discount Code at Checkout (Select Enter Discount Code and press Apply Discount)

**For Current CSSA Supporting Members**

Members who already have a Supporting Membership should log into their existing account first. Once logged in, they can use the discount link during checkout to renew at the \$10 rate.

**What Members Will Receive with a \$10 Supporting Membership**

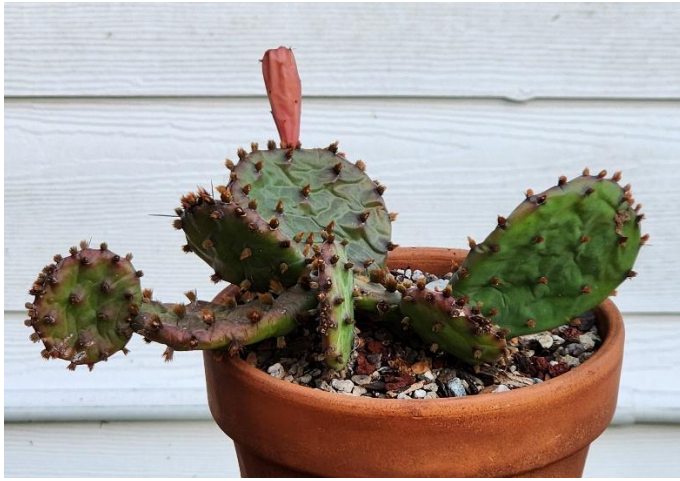
 To The Point digital e-newsletter (quarterly)

 Notifications of CSSA monthly webinars

 **Access to purchase seeds from the CSSA Seed Depot**

 A meaningful way to support CSSA’s mission in conservation, research, & education

If you have any questions, please reach out to CSSA at: [affiliate@cactusandsucculentsociety.org](mailto:affiliate@cactusandsucculentsociety.org)

*Opuntia macrorhiza***Common Names:**

Plains Prickly Pear, Prairie Prickly Pear, Western Prickly Pear, Bigroot Prickly Pear, Twist-spine Prickly Pear, and more.

**Habitat/Distribution:**

*Opuntia macrorhiza* is found growing throughout the central United States. It is seen from Texas to Minnesota and from the Rocky Mountain region to the Ohio valley, with some populations even being found in northern Mexico. It can grow in the wild from sea level up to 7000' elevation. It also grows in from open

grasslands to woodlands, on rocks, and in sand. It is native to USDA hardiness zones 3a-9b.

**Description:**

This cactus has a dwarf appearance, growing low to the ground and in a clumping formation. It will stay below one foot tall, and spread horizontally up to three feet across. It forms large and tuberous roots that can help it survive both cold and drought. The name *macrorhiza* comes from the Latin term *macro*, meaning large, and *rhiza*, meaning root.

The pads are bright green with blue tones. They can also sometimes be a pale green, or even show hues of purple under different conditions. Flowers are a bright yellow with red at the base, and can attract pollinators. Both pads and flowers generally grow no larger than four inches across. Fruits are edible, and turn from green to several shades of red as they ripen. Areoles can have several long spines, but are often found spineless. Glochids are numerous on each areole, and fall off with a very light touch.

areoles can have several long spines, but are often found spineless. Glochids are numerous on each areole, and fall off with a very light touch.

**Cultivation/Growth:**

This plant is easy to care for. It has low water needs, but also responds well to watering and fertilizing. It can be propagated easily from cuttings, with dropped pads rooting on their own. It can also be grown from seed. It prefers loose, rocky, or sandy soils. Additionally, it prefers full sun, but does well in partially shaded areas.

This cactus is cold hardy, and also does well in the heat. It will deflate and shrink in the winter to prepare for the cold, sitting even lower to the



ground and sometimes appearing dead. The plant will re-inflate and stand back up as temperatures rise. It will also deflate and wrinkle with drought conditions.

This cactus can be confused with *Opuntia humifusa* as they have a similar appearance. *Opuntia macrorhiza* seems relatively slow growing compared to the size of larger padded and taller varieties of *Opuntia*, but the smaller pads can also multiply quickly and grow vigorously. The dwarfed size, vibrant colors, and showy flowers make this cactus stand out from other plants.



#### References:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opuntia\\_macrorhiza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opuntia_macrorhiza)
- [https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=OPMA2](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=OPMA2)
- <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/165891-Opuntia-macrorhiza>
- <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/opuntia-macrorhiza/>
- <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rsg/profile.html?action=elementDetail&selectedElement=PDCAC0DOT0>

***Graptopetalum* 'Purple Delight Variegated'****Synonyms:**

Variegated Purple Delight,  
*Graptopetalum* 'Snow White  
Variegated'

**Description:**

*Graptopetalum* 'Purple Delight Variegated' is a variegated cultivar derived from the non-variegated hybrid cross between *Graptopetalum amethystinum* and *Graptopetalum paraguayense*. It features thick, fleshy leaves that form compact rosette clusters at the tips of sturdy branching stems, which may begin to trail as the plant matures. A soft coating of farina covers the leaves, acting as a natural sunscreen while enhancing the plant's signature pastel appearance.



Leaf color can range from lavender and cream to mint green, pink, and peach, with tones intensifying in response to environmental conditions such as temperature, sunlight exposure, and water stress. Rosettes may grow up to 4 inches across, while stems can reach approximately 6 inches in length.

Like most succulents, this cultivar thrives in loose, gritty, well-draining soil and benefits from infrequent but deep watering to maintain its plump, vibrant foliage.

Flower stalks typically emerge from spring through early summer, producing small, star-shaped blooms that are white to pale yellow with reddish speckling.

**Cultivation:**

The *Graptopetalum* genus is native to Mexico and Arizona. The variegated form of *Graptopetalum* 'Purple Delight' has been selectively cultivated in South Korea and other parts of Asia and is now exported and grown by collectors worldwide. This cultivar thrives in bright light, which helps maintain its compact growth habit and enhances its vibrant pastel coloration.

**My Experience:**

*Graptopetalum* 'Purple Delight Variegated' is one of the most rewarding and resilient succulents to grow. It propagates easily from both stems and leaves, making it a low-maintenance plant well suited for beginners and collectors alike. It is a treat to come across a nice cluster with all variegation patterns and non-variegated rosettes present!

My plants are acclimated to direct sun exposure, so I currently keep them in full sun to encourage their most vibrant coloration. During the hotter months of June through August, I move them to a location with afternoon shade to help prevent leaf burn from extreme heat.

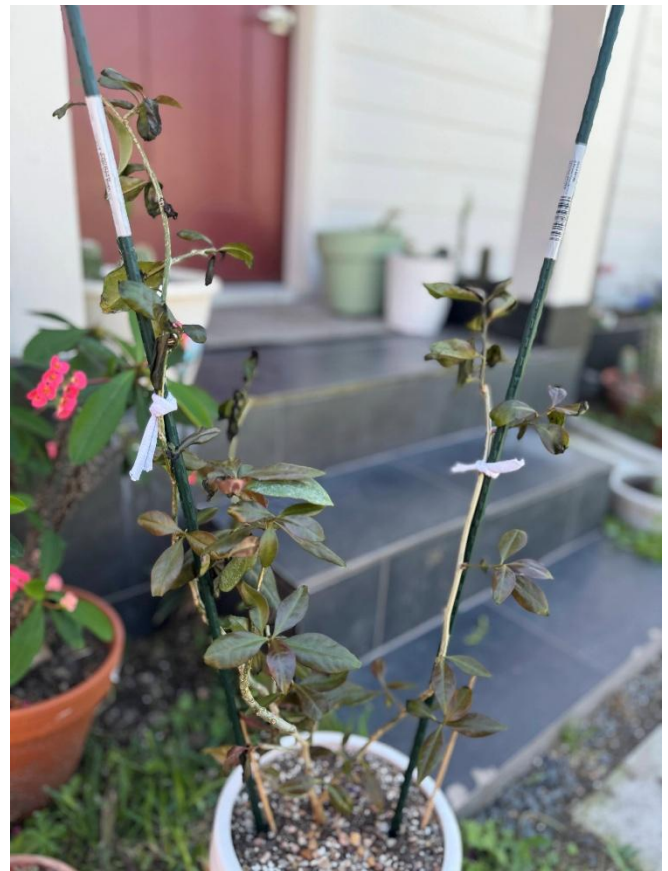
**References:**

- <https://worldofsucculents.com/graptopetalum-purple-delight-variegated/>
- <https://worldofsucculents.com/graptopetalum-purple-delight/>
- [https://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant\\_id=690](https://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant_id=690)

**June Cactus of the Month****Omar Herrera*****Pereskia grandifolia* (Rose Cactus)**

This month's featured cactus is the beautiful Rose Cactus, member of the *Pereskia* family. Unlike most cacti, the Rose Cactus has broad green leaves and a shrub-like appearance, making it stand out from the typical spiny desert cactus. Native to parts of Brazil, this unique plant is considered one of the more primitive cactus species because it still retains its leaves year-round.

It thrives in warm climates with plenty of sunlight and well-draining soil. While it belongs to the cactus family, it requires slightly more water than desert cacti due to its leafy growth habit. The Rose Cactus is admired for both its ornamental beauty and its interesting place in cactus evolution, showing what early cacti may have looked like before adapting to harsh desert conditions.



One of the most eye-catching features of the Rose Cactus is its beautiful blooms. The flowers are usually, bright pink or magenta and resemble roses, giving the plant its common name. These fragrant flowers attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies. After flowering, the plant may also produce small edible fruits that are enjoyed in some regions.



The Rose Cactus is popular as an ornamental plant because of its unusual appearance and vibrant flowers. It is often grown in gardens, greenhouses, or containers and can even be trained as a climbing plant with support. Its combination of leafy growth, colorful blooms, and cactus characteristics makes it one of the most unique plants in the cactus family.

I was inspired by my first meeting, in which I bought another member of the *Pereskia* family, the Barbados Gooseberry. I cannot wait to see them bloom, but in the meantime, I treat them like a regular plant. Watering, sunlight, shade and pruning to make sure that the plant is thriving. I hope it will be producing fruits by next year!



## June Succulent of the month

David VanLangen

### *Bursera microphylla*



*Bursera microphylla* is a small tree/large shrub that grows mainly in the Sonoran Desert of Northwestern Mexico. Of the many species of *Bursera* found in Mexico, *Bursera microphylla* is the only one that grows in the United States. It can be found in the lower deserts of Southern California and Arizona. Its natural range is limited by freezing temperatures so it can only be seen in favorable microclimates in sheltered

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locations from Phoenix southward. The substrate of the rocky slopes it grows on is volcanic or granite-based.

It has a swollen trunk with low twisted branches that are red tipped. As the name suggests - it has tiny leaves that grow opposite of each other. It's commonly called Elephant Tree because of the caudiciform, or fat stem, at ground level. The bark is attractive as it will peel off in a coppery tone. The trunk can photosynthesize much like the Ocotillo does as the small leaves will fall off in drought conditions.

This plant is in the frankincense family and has many uses by native peoples. The sap can be burned as incense and its medicinal use was said to treat several types of illness, from headaches to arthritis to soft tissue pain.

In cultivation here in Houston, the *Bursera microphylla* should always be considered a container plant. It is very tolerant of our hot summers and requires little care besides being protected from freezing temps. It is not often seen in the plant trade but is found now and then through localized special growers. I have had good luck with it, but have failed- so far- when trying to get stem cuttings to root. Also, I have seen this plant one time in habitat. It was about halfway up the south side of South Mountain in Phoenix and is shown in the article's photos.



With the upcoming sale, we are going back to the basics and throwing it back to a reprinted article from



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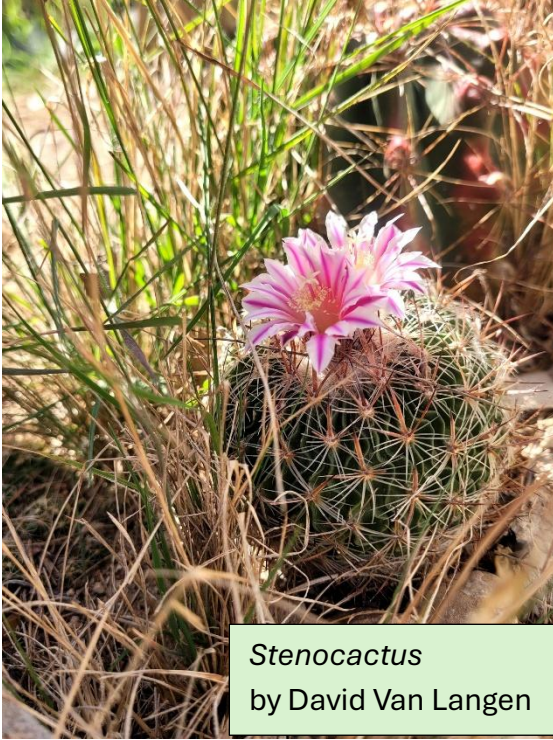
Sonoran Desert IV, woodcut, by Boyd Hanna.

the January/February 1992 issue of *Kaktos Komments*. Reminder: All *Kaktos Komments*, dating back to 1963, have been digitized and are [available for viewing!](#)

- If you spot a plant that is not necessarily in the best of shape appearance-wise- don't pass it up. Remember the old, "misgrown", etc. can produce show winning offspring.
- When shopping the dealer, be mindful of the fact that overly pristine looking plants may be so "pumped up" that by the time you get them home, repotted in your soil, etc. you may wind up with a plant that starts to look really bad because you are not "overdosing" it as it has become accustomed or you may just have a dead plant ... period.
- If you decide to buy a dish garden, be careful not to get one that has a mixture of cacti and succulents. The light and water requirements of the cacti are very different than that of succulents and vice versa.
- If you see that a plant is starting to do poorly, get a plan of action and then react - call club members and get some advice, check the book for information. · Make a decision and react! Even if you are wrong, you still may come out ahead - as opposed to just doing nothing and watching your plant die.
- With the emphasis on "very porous soils and careful watering", it makes no sense to lock up your greenhouse December 1st with no watering again until March. There is no question that the amount of water will have to be adjusted but if the plants are left totally dry, you can count on several losses when watering resumes in spring.
- You will hold your losses to a minimum if you do not pot up cuttings immediately. Set those cuttings aside and be patient. You may have to wait for weeks, but the roots will come. When they do you now have a plant that is ready to perform.
- It is very important to develop two or three soil mixtures. It has been my experience that plants will present you with three types of root systems. A. Big thick roots with little to no finer networking roots. B. Heavy feeder roots with a lot of network roots. C. Large masses of extremely fine roots most of which are the same size. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to see that just one soil mix will not let all three systems reach full potential.
- When inspecting your plants remember that white flies, mealybugs, caterpillars, etc. would all like to dine on each and every one. So, as you inspect, do not move your eye to the next plant until you have checked for these. Also be mindful of attenuation, the bonsai effect, signs of over or under watering, and whether the plant has an undesirable lean indicating that repositioning is probably necessary.

- Remember the simple fact that the sun is in one position in April but a very different position in August in relation to your plants. If you find yourself burning plants - this could be your problem and should be kept in mind when you start shifting plants around.
- If you have plants that have special watering requirements, be sure and separate them into sections of their own. That way, when watering you won't accidentally mis-water.

# Spring IN BLOOM



*Stenocactus*  
by David Van Langen



*Selenicereus anthonyanus*  
by Karla Halpaap-Wood



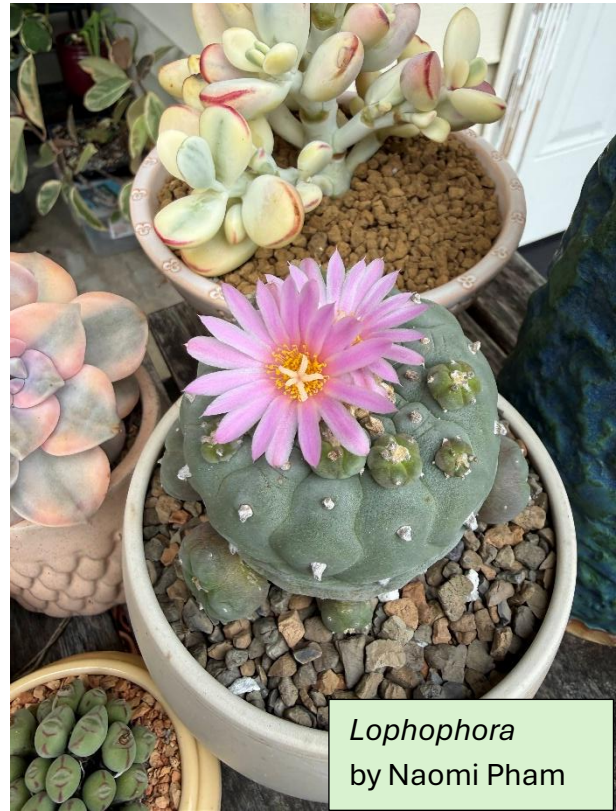
*Kadenicarpus horripilus*  
Of Grant Wells' estate  
by Karina Boese



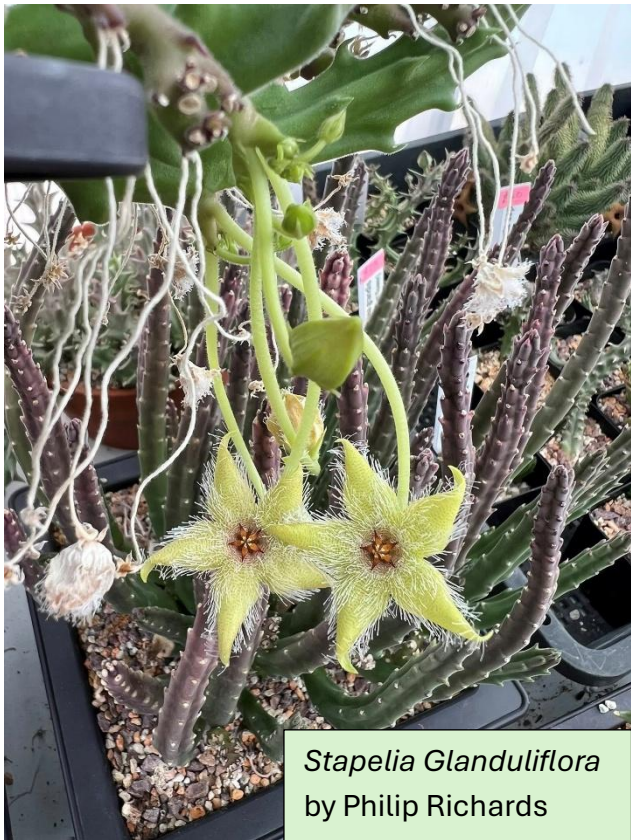
*Hoya RHM 14-1*  
by Sabrina Kamioka



*Euphorbia aeruginosa*  
by Mario Rizo



*Lophophora*  
by Naomi Pham



*Stapelia Glanduliflora*  
by Philip Richards



*Trichodiadema bulbosum*  
by Eddie Novak



*Various Stenocactus*  
by Joseph Rodd



*Euphorbia guiengola*  
by Andrea Varesic

### **HCSS Leadership and Contact Info**

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