



Colorado
Cactus &
Succulent
Society

Updated: March 27th, 2025
Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society (CCSS) Show Rules
and Judging Categories Document

CCSS (Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society) Official Show Rules

Judging Categories

Category Nr.	Family	Specific Species / Notes
Section 1 – Cactaceae (Cactus Family)		
1-1	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Leuenbergeria, Maihuenia, Pereskia</i>
1-2	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Dwarf Opuntiods (<i>Cumulopuntia, Maihueniopsis, Puna, Pterocactus, Tephrocactus</i>)
1-3	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Other Opuntiods
1-4	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Ariocarpus, Neogomesia, Roseocactus</i>
1-5	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Aztekium, Geohintonia</i>
1-6	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Astrophytum, Digitostigma</i>
1-7	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Epithelantha, Neolloydia, Ortegocactus</i>
1-8	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Coryphantha, Escobaria, Neobesseyia</i>
1-9	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Mammillaria</i> with hooked spines (<i>Cochemiea</i>)
1-10	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Mammillaria</i> without hooked spines
1-11	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Acharagma, Gymnocactus, Rapicactus, Turbinicarpus</i>
1-12	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Encephalocarpus, Obregonia, Pelecyphora</i> sensu stricto, <i>Strombocactus</i>
1-13	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Navajoa, Pediocactus, Sclerocactus, Toumeya</i>
1-14	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Echinofossulocactus, Echinomastus, Glandulicactus, Hamatocactus, Thelocactus</i>
1-15	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Echinocactus, Ferocactus, Leuchtenbergia</i>
1-16	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Discocactus, Melocactus</i>
1-17	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Acanthocalycium, Echinopsis, Helianthocereus, Lobivia, Trichocereus</i>
1-18	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Gymnocalycium</i>
1-19	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Denmoza, Matucana, Mila, Oroya</i>



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1-20	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Echinocereus, Morangaya, Wilcoxia</i>
1-21	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Aylosteria, Medioblobivia, Rebutia</i>
1-22	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Cintia, Sulcorebutia, Weingartia</i>
1-23	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Blossfeldia, Yavia</i>
1-24	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Brasilocactus, Frailea, Eriocactus, Notocactus, Parodia, Malacocarpus</i>
1-25	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Copiapoa, Eulychnia</i>
1-26	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Eriosyce, Horridocactus, Islaya, Neochilenia, Neoporteria, Pyrrhocactus</i>
1-27	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Disocactus, Epiphyllum, Hylocereus, Pseudorhipsalis, Selenicereus, Weberocereus</i>
1-28	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	<i>Hatiora, Lepismium, Rhipsalis, Schlumbergera, Zygocactus</i>
1-29	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	North American Columnar Cacti (<i>Carnegiea, Myrtillocactus, Pachycereus, Stenocereus</i> , etc.)
1-30	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Brazilian endemics (<i>Arrojadoa, Buiningia, Coleocephalocereus, Micranthocereus, Uebelmannia</i> , etc.)
1-31	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Other South American Columnar Cacti (<i>Brachycereus, Browningia, Cleistocactus, Denmoza, Espostoa, Haageocereus, Harrisia, Oreocereus</i> , etc.)
1-32	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Crested Cacti
1-33	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Monstrose Cacti
1-34	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Variegated Cacti
1-35	Cactaceae (Cactus Family)	Specialty Grafted Cacti
Section 2 - Succulents		
2-1	Various Families	Succulent Gymnosperms (<i>Cycadaceae, Welwitschiaceae</i> , etc.) and <i>Zamioculcas</i>
2-2	Aizoaceae (Ice Plant Family)	<i>Lithops</i>
2-3	Aizoaceae (Ice Plant Family)	Globular Species other than <i>Lithops</i>



Category Nr.	Family	Specific Species / Notes
2-4	Aizoaceae	Shrubby Species (<i>Mitrophyllum</i> , <i>Ruschia</i> , (Ice Plant Family) <i>Trichodiadema</i> , etc.)
2-5	Anacardiaceae (Sumac Family)	<i>Operculicarya</i> , <i>Pachycormus</i>
2-6	Anacampserotaceae, Portulacaceae	<i>Anacampseros</i> , <i>Claytonia</i> , <i>Grahmia</i> , Montiaceae, <i>Lewisia</i> , <i>Talinum</i> , etc. ("Purslane Families")
2-7	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	<i>Adenium</i> , <i>Plumeria</i>
2-8	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	<i>Pachypodium</i>
2-9	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	<i>Brachystelma</i> , <i>Ceropegia</i>
2-10	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	Caudiciform Asclepiads (<i>Cibirhiza</i> , <i>Fockea</i> , <i>Matlea</i> , <i>Petapenta</i> , <i>Raphianacme</i> , etc.)
2-11	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	Non-Caudiciform Vining Asclepiads (<i>Cynanchum</i> , <i>Dischidia</i> , <i>Hoya</i> , <i>Sarcostemma</i> etc.)
2-12	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	Dwarf Stapeliads (<i>Larryleachia</i> , <i>Pseudolithos</i> , <i>Whitesloanea</i>)
2-13	Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)	Other Stapeliads
2-14	Asparagaceae (Asparagus Family)	Species <i>Agave</i> Including <i>Manfreda</i> and <i>Polianthes</i>)
2-15	Asparagaceae (Asparagus Family)	Hybrid <i>Agave</i> , "Mangave", etc.
2-16	Asparagaceae (Asparagus Family)	<i>Yucca</i>
2-17	Asparagaceae (Asparagus Family)	<i>Beaucarnea</i> , <i>Eriospermum</i> , <i>Dracaena</i> , <i>Nolina</i>
2-18	Asteraceae (Aster Family)	<i>Kleinia</i> , <i>Othonna</i> , <i>Senicio</i>
2-19	Bromeliaceae (Bromeliad Family)	<i>Abromeitiella</i> , <i>Cryptanthus</i> , <i>Dyckia</i> , <i>Hetchia</i> , <i>Puya</i> , etc.
2-20	Burseraceae (Torchwood Family)	<i>Boswellia</i> , <i>Bursera</i> , <i>Commiphora</i>



Category Nr.	Family	Specific Species / Notes
2-21	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Adromischus, Cotyledon, Tylecodon</i>
2-22	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Aeonium, Grenovia</i>
2-23	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Crassula, Kalanchoë</i>
2-24	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Dudleya, Echevaria</i>
2-25	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Jovibarba, Orostachys, Rosularia, Sempervivum</i>
2-26	Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)	<i>Pachyphytum, Sedum</i>
2-27	Didiereaceae (Didierea Family)	<i>Alluaudia, Alluaudiopsis, Ceraria, Decarya, Didierea, Portulacaria</i>
2-28	Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family)	Medusa-Type <i>Euphorbia</i>
2-29	Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family)	Stem-Type <i>Euphorbia</i>
2-30	Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family)	Geophytic <i>Euphorbia</i>
2-31	Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family)	Pachycaul <i>Euphorbia</i> , including species from Madagascar
2-32	Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family)	Other Genera (<i>Jatropha, Monadenium, Pedilanthus, Synadenium</i>)
2-33	Geraniaceae (Geranium Family)	<i>Monsonia, Pelargonium, Sarcocaulon</i>
2-34	Moraceae (Fig Family)	<i>Ficus, Dorstenia</i>
2-35	Orchidaceae (Orchid Family)	<i>Dockrillia, Eulophia, etc.</i>
2-36	Piperaceae (Pepper Family)	<i>Peperomia</i>



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2-37	Pedaliaceae (Sesame Family)	<i>Pterodiscus, Sesamothamnus, Uncarina</i>
2-38	Various Families	Succulent Bulbs (<i>Albuca, Boophane, Bowiea, Bulbine, Drimia, Haemanthus, Massonia, Ledebouria Ornithogalum</i> , etc.)
2-39	Various Families	Other Geophytic Caudiciforms (<i>Cucurbits, Dioscorea, Ipomea, Sinningia</i> , etc.)
2-40	Various Families	Other Tree Pachycauls (<i>Adansonia, Brachychiton, Bombax, Erythrina, Fouquieria, Moringa</i> , etc.)
2-41	Vitaceae (Grape Family)	<i>Cissus, Cyphostemma</i>
2-42	Xanthorrhoeaceae (Xanthorrhoea Family)	Species <i>Aloë</i>
2-43	Xanthorrhoeaceae (Xanthorrhoea Family)	Hybrid <i>Aloë</i>
2-44	Xanthorrhoeaceae (Xanthorrhoea Family)	<i>Astroloba, Chortolirion, Haworthia</i> (Other Types, i.e. <i>Haworthiopsis, Tulista</i>)
2-45	Xanthorrhoeaceae (Xanthorrhoea Family)	<i>Haworthia</i> (Retusa series)
2-46	Xanthorrhoeaceae (Xanthorrhoea Family)	<i>Gasteria, Verigated Gasteria, Poellnitzia</i>
2-47	Various Families	Crested Succulents
2-48	Various Families	Monstrose Succulents
2-49	Various Families	Other Variegated Succulents



Category Nr.	Family	Specific Species / Notes
Section 3 – Other Categories		
3-1	n/a	Collections
3-2	n/a	Dish Gardens of Cacti
3-3	n/a	Dish Gardens of Succulents
3-4	n/a	Novelty Pots and Plants
3-5	n/a	Seedlings
Section 4 – Non-Plant Categories		
4-1	n/a	Educational Displays
4-2	n/a	Individual Photographs
4-3	n/a	Photo Montage
4-4	n/a	Fake Cacti & Succulents

Disclaimer: Most categories were formed by grouping the plants taxonomically. In order to create competitive categories, some groups are split or combined based only on morphological characteristics.

Special Category Information

From Section 3

Collections (Category 3-1) : A collection is defined as a group of two or more plants, one per pot, that share a common theme. Contiguity is expected in the staging of each plant as well. Both the name of the theme of the collection and of each plant should be written on the show card by the exhibitor. The entrant is also permitted to write a short (one to two paragraph) explanation of the collection that will be judged for accuracy and informational value.

Dish Garden (Category 3-2 and 3-3) : A dish garden is defined as a pot with more than one plant planted in it. The plants may be of the same species or different species. The name of each plant should be written on the entry card. If there is a mix of cacti and succulents in the dish garden, it should be entered in category 3-3. **Novelty Plants and Pots (Category 3-4) :** A novelty plant or pot is defined as a staged plant that is judged more for creative and novelty value as opposed to horticultural value.

Seedlings (Category 3-5) : This category is for pots of cactus or succulent seedlings entered in the pot they were germinated in. Seed must have been sown by the exhibitor.



From Section 4

Educational Displays (Category 4-1) : An educational display is defined as an exhibit about cacti or succulents created out of a single trifold display board. Entries may or may not include plant material, living, or otherwise.

Material will be judged for accuracy, value, and interest to other cactus and succulent enthusiasts and the general public, as well as for neatness, composition, and presentation.

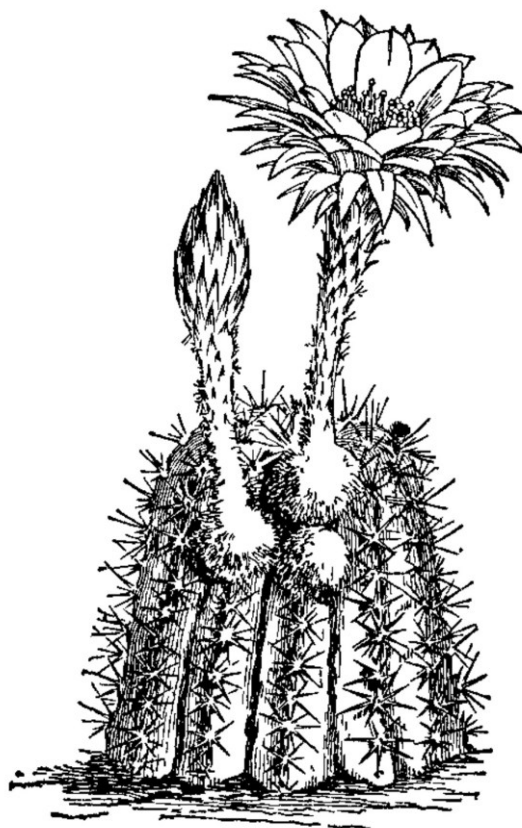
Individual Photographs (Category 4-2) : This category is for stand alone photographs of cacti and / or succulents. Entries will be judged on artistic and/or scientific value. One entrant may enter multiple photographs in this category. Entries larger than 8 x 10" should be matted or framed. Photograph must be taken by the entrant. The entrant will retain full ownership of the photograph(s).

Photo Montages (Category 4-3) : This category is for groups of images that share a common theme, entered as a group. Otherwise, all of the same rules for photographs in **Category 4-2** apply to this category as well. **Fake Cacti & Succulents (Category 4-4)**: This category includes 3D sculptures in any medium created by the exhibitor to look like potted cacti and/or succulents.

Show Rules

Show Room Rules

- Plants and Exhibits must be delivered to the show room with a completed entry card and registered with show staff between the hours of 11:00am and 5pm on the Friday before the show.
- Show room will remain open to the public after judging is finished Saturday morning until 5pm. On Sunday, the show room will be open from 9am until 3:30pm.
- **Plants and Exhibits must remain on display and no plants may be removed from the show room until 3:30pm Sunday.**





Show Protocol Rules

- Exhibitors must register their plants with the show staff to receive an exhibitor's number, as well as an individual ID number for each plant.
- All entries must be accepted by the show staff.
- Exhibitors are limited to three plants per identical species / subspecies / variety.
- Exhibitors are personally responsible for correctly identifying their plants on their entry cards. Limited assistance will be available on Friday only.
- **Disclaimer:** Neither the show staff nor the judges are liable for the loss or damage of plants or displays while in the show. Plants and displays are entered at the exhibitor's risk.

Rules for Entries

- All plants must have been in the possession of the exhibitor for a minimum of 6 months.
- All plants should be exhibited in containers that are both horticulturally and aesthetically suitable for the dimensions and growth habit of the species
- A completed entry card with the correct genus, species and subspecies / variety must accompany each plant.
- Exhibitors are responsible for the orientation of their plants in the show and are free to choose the side they want the judges to see. Even if the show staff needs to move an entry, they will make sure to the best of their ability to keep the orientation consistent with how it is placed by the entrant.
- Additional information about an individual entry that may be of interest to the public, or may aid in judging, may be provided on a 3x5" index card. Information may be judged for accuracy.
- Plants should not have nametags or saucers when entered in the show.
- Plants should not have wet or waterlogged soil. Please do not water plants for at least 4 days before the show.
- No plants afflicted with a disease or insect pest present may be entered in the show.
- Wild collected plants are prohibited from being entered in the show.
- All species of the genus *Lophophora* prohibited from being entered in the show.
- **Disclaimer:** The show staff and judges reserve the right to remove plants from the show that they suspect to be wild collected or infected with an insect or disease without notice or explanation to the exhibitor. These plants will be returned to the exhibitor at the earliest opportunity.

By entering a plant or item in the show, the exhibitor agrees to all the rules stated above.



Rules for Personnel

- All Judges and clerks should report in the show room by 7:00am Saturday morning.
- The judging should start with awarding ribbons per category. The Special Awards should follow, then lastly the Traveling Awards. The CCSS Trophy is awarded first. No plant should win two Traveling awards.

Competitive Divisions

Novice: The Novice Division is restricted to hobbyists who have won no more than 25 blue ribbons in previous CCSS competitive shows or growers that have shown less than 10 years. Commercial growers or vendors may not enter the Novice Division. Please use a blue-green entry card.

Open: The open Division is open to any exhibitor. Please use a white-tan entry card.

Awards

Competitive Awards

The following ribbons may be rewarded at the judge's discretion in each judging category in each of the competitive divisions

First Place = Blue Ribbon = 3 Points

Second Place = Red Ribbon = 2 Points

Third Place = White Ribbon = 1 Point

Honorable Mention = Yellow Ribbon = No Points

A maximum of 1 blue ribbon may be awarded in each judging category in each competitive division. Multiple other ribbons may be awarded. A blue ribbon may not be awarded in every category and not every plant may receive a ribbon.

Special Awards

Award for Plant of Advance Age: This ribbon will be awarded to a plant that, while it may not be technically perfect, shows great age and maturity. This ribbon will be awarded regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division.

Best Cactus: The best cactus in each competitive division will be given a *Best Cactus Ribbon* regardless of Judging Category.

Best Succulent: The best succulent in each division will be given a *Best Succulent Ribbon* regardless of Judging Category.

Judge's Choice: Each Judge will award a *Judge's Choice Ribbon* to a plant they deem worthy of special recognition. Each plant will be selected regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division.



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People's Choice: On Sunday, the ballots for the *People's Choice Ribbon* will be counted. The plant with the most votes will be awarded a *People's Choice Ribbon*. The plant will be selected regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division. **Rarest Plant in the Show:** This ribbon award will be awarded to the rarest plant in the show regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division.

Sweepstakes: This ribbon will be given to the show entrant whose plants earned the greatest number of points. This ribbon will be awarded regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division.

Traveling Awards

CCSS Trophy: Will be awarded to the best plant in the show, regardless of Competitive Division.

Mary Ann Heacock Trophy: Will be awarded to the best *Haworthia* or member of a related genus (Categories 2-43 – 2-44) regardless of Competitive Division. It is named in honor of CCSS founding member Mary Ann Heacock who was also a *Haworthia* enthusiast.

Jerry Sochor Trophy: Will be awarded to the best Colorado native cactus or succulent, regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division. It is named in honor of longtime CCSS member Jerry Sochor who grew winter hardy cacti and succulents in a garden outside his house.

Jim Sykes Trophy: Will be awarded to the best cactus entered in the Novice Division. It is named in honor of CCSS Past-President Jim Sykes who grew beautiful specimen cacti in a small greenhouse attached to his house which he heated through a bathroom window.

Lynn Wilson Trophy: Will be awarded to the best (non-cactus) succulent, regardless of Judging Category or Competitive Division. It is named in honor of Oklahoma nurseryman Lynn Wilson.

Dana Such Trophy: Will be awarded to the best *Mammillaria* or member of a related genus (Categories 1-9 – 1-10) regardless of Competitive Division. It is named in honor of longtime CCSS member Dana Such, who regularly entered a beautiful *Mammillaria spinosissima* clump over 2' in diameter in the CCSS show.

For each award, both a ribbon and a trophy will be awarded. The owner of the winning plant will be able to keep the ribbon, while the trophies are traveling and are held by the CCSS.

Disclaimer: All Special and Traveling awards are awarded based on the judge's discretion. Additional awards may be awarded, or some awards may not be awarded.



Judging Criteria

Each judge is unique and has a slightly different way of evaluating plants based on their experience with growing and observing different species. Despite this, there are some general criteria that can be used in judging plants that create a good picture of their overall qualification. This is the system that the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society recognizes as a highly accurate way to evaluate plants based on an easy to calculate point system. There are also some convenient questions to ask yourself when evaluating your own plants.

Criteria	Description	Point value
Condition	How does the plant look? Is it grown to resemble how the plant would look in nature? Is it free from mechanical damage like lost spines, sunburn, and scarring? Is there any evidence of a previous infestation of a pest or disease? How old is the plant, and how mature is it? Does the plant look healthy, e.g. blooming fruiting, putting on healthy growth?	75
Staging	Preparation of plant. Is the plant clean and free of debris? How does the selection of the pot, top dressing, and presentation compliment or take away from the plant?	15
Nomenclature and Rarity	Accurate identification of genus, species (and subspecies / variety if applicable) written on the entry card. If a note card with extra information is provided, is the information correct? How rare is the plant? Is it commonly seen in cultivation, or is it something rarely encountered?	10
TOTAL POINTS		100