



Colorado  
Cactus &  
Succulent  
Society

TODAY'S EDITOR:  
SCOTT BURKHOLDER

## SHOW PLANTS

Are you watering and  
maintaining all your  
winter-growing plants?

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[February's  
Meeting!](#)

[March's  
South Africa  
Symposium](#)

[Plus Photos!](#)

February 2024, Vol 28 No. 2

The Colorado Cactus & Succulent Society promotes education, enjoyment, cultivation, and conservation of cacti and other succulents among our members and the larger community.



Michelle DePrenger-Levin presenting her talk  
Scott Burkholder Photo

## UPCOMING MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday, February 13th, 2024

**Time:** 7:00 pm

**Location:** Gates Hall  
Denver Botanic Gardens  
1007 N York St  
Denver, CO 80206

**Presentation:** David Ferguson - "What's Up  
with Portulacaceae ,or, Are Cactus just  
Fancy Moss Roses?"

**Details:**

Dave's talk will focus on the Portulacaceae, an often overlooked group of succulent plants. He will discuss the colorfully blooming annual the moss rose (which are neither moss or roses!)

# SUCCULENT BITS

## **February's Meeting!**

As indicated in the adjacent box, we have moved our meetings to the second Tuesday of the Month. February's meeting will be held on Feb 13th.

**See You There!**

## **Food and Drink!**

In the pre-Covid days, we use to have food at the meetings. We'd like to revive this feature.

Members would bring chips, cookies, & other yummy treats.

If your last name starts with letters from A to F, please bring some snacks to share!



Six months ago we were warm and happy!  
Scott Burkholder Photo



This week it's pounding snow.  
Scott Burkholder Photo

## **2024 Show and Sale!**

The 2024 Show and Sale is April 27 & 28. We are starting prepare the CCSS's part, creating committees and such, and will hold a meeting very soon.

If you are interested, and you should be, contact Scott Burkholder!

## **March's Meeting!**

Panayoti Kelaidis & his Team are planning a South African symposium for March. Featured speakers include Steve Brack and others

The symposium is Sunday, March 17th, at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

**Save That Date!**

## NOTES FROM THE POTTING BENCH

I am really looking forward to the presentation this month by Dave Ferguson. He has done extensive work on the genius *Opuntia*, which is extremely difficult to classify because of its propensity for promiscuity and its ability to exist in so many varied altitudes, locations and climates. Taxonomists have been stymied for years trying to put these cacti in order. *Opuntia* flowers come in many colors, pads are different shapes and sizes, and the pads are spiny or almost spiny (with only glochids). The glochids, although irritating, have been collected for use in making itching power!

We are still looking for volunteers to help with the show and sale, please see Scott Burkholder to find out which committees he needs help with. Scott is also setting up the Sign-Up Genius area on the website, so you can volunteer in specific areas for specific times. We are looking for 50-60 volunteers.

The board still needs ideas from members regarding garden tours, field trips and ideas for our club find projects that CCSS can help financially that promote our mission. This could include funding demonstration gardens, grants/stipends for research, tuition for students, purchasing plants for botanical gardens, just to list a few.

If you have any ideas, please contact one of the board members.

Randy Tatroe  
2024 CCSS President  
rltatroe1950@gmail.com



## THIS MONTH'S PRESENTATION

### ***What's Up with Portulacaceae ,or, Are Cactus just fancy Moss Roses?***

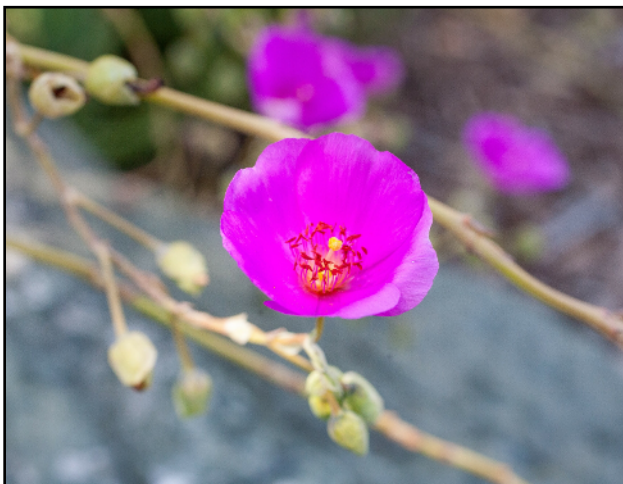
Dave Ferguson's talk will focus on the Portulacaceae, an often overlooked group of succulent plants most commonly encountered at big box stores as the colorfully blooming annual the moss rose (which is not related to either moss or roses), or in sidewalk cracks (and salads!) as purslane. This group of plants is very interesting taxonomically with some considering it to be split up between 3 or 4 different families, and others considering it as one large family, even including all of the the Cactaceae! Even though it is often overshadowed by its spikier cousins, the Portulacaceae includes many beautiful garden plants, many of which are winter hardy in Colorado. Dave will cover all aspects of this family, discussing both the taxonomy and nomenclature in addition to sowing the best species suited to Colorado cactus and rock gardens. Don't miss this presentation to find out what is up with Portulacaceae!

## THIS MONTH'S PRESENTER

David Ferguson is a recognized authority on the genus *Opuntia*. At age six he started growing prickly pears and has been growing them ever since. Dave graduated from Colorado State University in 1981, with a BS in Entomology. He has worked in pest control and in surveying and monitoring threatened and endangered species.

From 1984 to 1995 he did fieldwork and plant propagation for Mesa Garden in Belen, NM. During this period he also conducted botanical expeditions to Mexico, Argentina, and much of the American Southwest. From 1995 until he recently retired, he was a curator for the Rio Grande Botanic Garden in Albuquerque, NM.

Dave is currently on the Board of Directors for the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. He continues to research and grow Opuntiads, Iris, and lots of other plants!



*Calandrinia grandiflora* Flower  
Jackson Burkholder Photo



Dave Ferguson sorting Opuntia Pads  
Jackson Burkholder Photo

# 2024 PLANT SHOW

The 2024 Plant Show is less than three months away! Now is the time to start choosing plants and preparing them to the Show. This includes:

Choosing Plants - Do you have one that you are proud of? Bring it to the Show!

Get a Name - You'll need the plant's scientific name to enter it, if you don't know it send us a picture and perhaps we can help.

Inspect the Plants - Check that plant for disease and pests.

Choose a Pot - Now is the time to find a pot for that special plant. Select one that highlights your plant's coloring and best features.

Find Top Dressing - Once again, select a color and texture that really shows off your plant.

Get a Box - Nobody knows what the weather will be for the Show and Sale, get a container now.

***Prepare your prize-winning plant today!***



A Blue-Ribbon Winning *Lithops*  
Scott Burkholder Photo



A Blue-Ribbon Winning *Schlumbergera*  
Scott Burkholder Photo

# EX AFRICA SEMPER ALIQUID NOVI

## *"There are no end of wonders out of Africa"*

I have seen this Latin phrase attributed to Pliny the Elder, but anyone who's been lucky enough to visit, you will agree. South Africa in particular holds the LION'S share of succulents we grow in our homes and gardens (if we quietly ignore cacti, agaves and American Crassulaceae). South Africa boasts around 10% of the world's Flora, and 40% of all plant species in Africa. South African plants have had an enormous impact on Denver Botanic Gardens' plant collections and truly helped launch Plant Select. Hardy ice plants (*Delosperma*) were practically invented in Denver - and more and more South African succulents (other Mesembs - but also Anacampseros, Crassula, Euphorbia, Othonna, Oxalis, and MORE) have joined their ranks.

We are extremely fortunate to have three of the world's leading authorities on South African plants present in a symposium co-sponsored by DBG, RMC-NARGS, and the CCSS. This will be a unique occasion not to be missed!

***The Symposium is Sunday, March 17th, Save the Date!***

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Growing up on a small family farm in Wisconsin I became interested in horticulture at a young age, grew plants as a kid to enter in the local county fair. While in college studying physics after seeing some cacti and succulents at a friend's house on the windowsill, I went to the library to find some books on these strange plants. I started reading these books and found the plants just fascinating. I used interlibrary loan to borrow hard to get books and a big world opened. In some of these books various clubs and Societies were mentioned, so I wrote away to join a few and then found seed lists from the groups.

I started to grow cacti and succulents from seed and acquired a few plants back in 1970. Soon was on the hunt for seed lists, and what was amazed me was to get seeds with a Latin name and the geographic source. Then

I read a series of articles in a British journal about the travel adventures of an English tourist that visited New Mexico. At this point I was interested in seed growing and the idea of moving to New Mexico to start a nursery really took hold. I wanted a life working with seeds. My wife accepted this weird idea instead of becoming a physics teacher, and we moved to NM in the spring of 1973. After 3 years of working on the project we started Mesa Garden in 1976.

Since 1973 we have taken many trips to collect seeds to grow stock plants for the nursery, it has been a great life of desert camping, hiking and seeing plants in nature. After 41 years of running the nursery we sold it to a couple that were employees and are busier than ever in retirement.

**Steve Brack**



**Adam Harrower** is Senior Botanical Horticulturist; he curates the conservatory and xerophytic plant collections at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens. Prior to taking on his current challenging job, he was Arborist who oversaw the unique and extensive Kirstenbosch tree collections, and truth be said, his knowledge of herbaceous, shrubby - all plants of South Africa really - is second to none.



In addition to his extensive fieldwork throughout South Africa resulting in the discovery of many taxa new to science, he has rediscovered many long lost species, and documented these not only with scientific specimens, but by professional quality photography, best seen in the gorgeous coffee table book **Kirstenbosch: The Most Beautiful Garden in Africa**, coauthored with Brian Huntley and published in 2012.

Adam is also an accomplished Bonsai grower - specializing in South African trees - which are wonderfully showcased in the entry courtyard of Kirstenbosch. Adam is no stranger to North America, where he has often come to visit in-laws.

This is, however, his first time lecturing in the United States.

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**Karel Du Toit** has served 37 years as a detective in the South African Police Department, overseeing as Captain the Springbok Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit in the northern Cape where millions of rare plants as well as animals have been under enormous pressure from poachers. Karel has arrested dozens of poachers and confiscated over a million stolen plants.

He has unparalleled knowledge of the flora and folkways of South Africa. As a well known and highly respected officer of the law, he commands the respect of landowners who allow him access to some of the most biodiverse land on the continent - access few are allowed due to the depredations of poachers. He has been leading tours to these remote places for several decades, and has recently retired from police work in order to expand his tour company, Pillansii Tours.

Karel is also an extraordinary photographer.

Those who have traveled with Karel are impressed not only with his extraordinary knowledge of plants, people and places, but by his sensitivity to those he guides. His good humor, sense of fun and attention to detail are second to none. His passion for South Africa is infectious!

This is Karel's first visit to North America.



# 2024 COLORADO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

February 13th - CCSS Monthly Meeting at Denver Botanic Gardens

March 17th - The South African Plant Symposium

April 27th & 28th - CCSS & RMC-NARGS Plant Show and Sale

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION:



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