



Santa Barbara Cactus and Succulent Society

www.sbcactus.org

Our mission is to provide opportunities for fellowship and exchange of information among persons sharing an interest in succulents; to encourage, promote and support all aspects of the collection, culture and study of succulent plants; and to provide opportunities for the exchange and exhibition of succulent plants.

October 2007 Newsletter

Program: Friday, October 5, 2007—7:30 PM

**Meeting Hall: Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center
De la Vina and Victoria Streets—entrance on Victoria**

MESSAGE FROM CO-PRESIDENTS

KAREN DAVIDSON AND BETTE ELIASON

September has proven to be unusually and quite unbearably hot. However, now we are expecting rain, which is also unusual, but quite wonderful. I presume our plants, which take their cues from hours of daylight, without reference to clocks which are set back or ahead, are not as confused as their caretakers. The Cactus and Succulent Society's schedule is sure to provide some measure of predictability and routine and help to put us all back on track. The nominating committee for 2008 will be chosen at our October meeting. The membership will then be able to retain or replace some or the entire current regime in the December elections. Finally, club dues are traditionally collected in November and December, and a small incentive is being planned in order to encourage full participation. We look forward to the times ahead, and to your continuing collaboration.

October 2007 Speaker: Karen Ostler • Topic: Agaves & Yuccas

THOSE PESKY MEALY BUGS

By: Chuck Staples, Editor-Mid-Iowa C&S Society Newsletter, (Re-printed from their September 1990 issue)

"Do not wait for mealy bugs to find your plants. Take PREVENTIVE measures on a regular basis." That is a quote from Isabelle McDermid in her article "Tips on Growing Stapeliads" in *The Amateurs' Digest* (Col. 2, No. 3) the Canadian C&OS publication edited by Marina Welham. Isabelle sprays her Stapeliads at least once a month with a mixture of equal parts rubbing alcohol and sudsy ammonia. She says it doesn't hurt the plants and it discourages the mealybugs. She also drenches the soil in the pots with a good 'systemic' dissolved in water. She finds this prevents root mealybugs from taking up residence in the potting soil. I think this is good advice for all our cacti and succulents. Be careful with the systemic. Don't get the solution on your skin. Reading this article and others in the same issue on mealybugs reminded me of how I try to cope with this universal problem. Here is the rubbing alcohol mix I prepare in a one-gallon jug (I've never tried sudsy ammonia):

1. 4 pints of 70% (by volume) Isopropyl Rubbing Alcohol
2. Ivory dishwashing liquid, about 8 to 12 or so drops.
3. Tabasco Pepper Sauce. Same drops as in 2 above.
4. Water from the faucet. Fill the rest of gallon jug with water.

The Ivory dishwashing liquid is the sticking agent that makes the mix stick to the little mealy bodies, which hopefully makes them sicker than the devil. Tabasco sauce helps discourage spider mites. I've used this mix for years and I've never seen any bad affect on any of my plants. Although I don't have any scientific data on the effect of this mix on mealybugs and spider mites, I've kept the population down some by my constant use of it. I have a number of squirt bottles full of the mix strategically placed near my plants for immediate use when I need it.