

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.



**January 2008
Newsletter**

Program: Friday, January 4, 2008—7:30 PM
Meeting Hall: Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center
De la Vina and Victoria Streets—entrance on Victoria

Featured Speaker: Brian Kemble

Brian is the curator at the Ruth Bancroft Garden (www.ruthbancroftgarden.org) in Walnut Creek, CA, and a long-time member of the San Francisco Succulent & Cactus Society. He has been a grower and hybridizer of Aloes since the seventies, and is vice-president of the Institute for Aloe Studies (www.aloestudies.org), based in Oakland. His trip to South Africa in November and December was his fifth visit there, and he has made journeys to many other localities rich in succulents, including Namibia, Madagascar, and various parts of Mexico. On his recent trip to South Africa, Brian was fortunate enough to accompany Charles Craib, author of the book *Grass Aloes in the South African Veld*, on an outing to the eastern part of the country to see an assortment of the diminutive grass aloes which grow amongst grasses and blend in with them until their brightly colored flowers give them away. Heading to the western part of South Africa, he spent several days with Gerhard Marx, whose artwork has on many occasions graced the cover of the *Cactus & Succulent Journal*, paying visits to many *Haworthia* localities. A highlight of his trip was seeing a large old clump of *Aloe haemanthifolia* in full flower on a mountaintop northeast of Cape Town.

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE SBCSS PRESIDENTS, KAREN DAVIDSON & BETTE ELIASON!

Haworthias by Pam Schnebelen (*Reprinted from the St. Louis—Henry Shaw Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter*)

I started growing *Haworthias* almost 20 years ago. At that time, I lived in a city apartment with no yard, few windows and no space for large plants. *Haworthias* did well in my limited environment. They are easy to grow. *Haworthias* are small and compact, most fit comfortably in three to five inch pots. They grow as solitary or clumping rosettes that stay close to the soil level. They don't have to be outdoors in summer and they don't need a hard, cold, winter dormancy. Instead, most *Haworthias* are winter growers. They are tolerant of soil mixes and watering schedules. And, they bloom easily, putting up cute whitish flowers on long stems that tower above the body of the plant. My first lessons in propagating from offsets and leaf cuttings came from working with *Haworthias*. On top of all these growing characteristics that make these plants ideal for both the beginning and advanced collector, *Haworthias* are absolutely gorgeous. They have fascinating shapes and symmetries, ranging from tight spirals of layered triangles to heaping mounds of tiny clear-skinned grapes. Colors vary from bright yellow to a deep red-brown, from pale lime green to deep blue green. Leaf textures are interesting too. Some plants have bright white raised tubercles in stripes or patterns of dots on the tops and bottoms of leaves. Other leaves have rough surfaces that look as though they have been dusted with sugar crystals. Then there are those "windows", perhaps the most interesting leaf feature of these plants. Many *Haworthias* have clear leaf tips and surfaces. These translucent windows allow sunlight to penetrate into the body of the leaf. In most plants, photosynthesis occurs only on the surface; in windowed plants, photosynthesis can occur throughout the body of the leaf. When discussing odd plant features and *Haworthias*, we must also discuss roots. *Haworthias* have long, fleshy, "contractile" roots. In the cool wet seasons, these roots serve as a water store, much like the caudiciforms. In the dry hot summers, these roots serve two functions: they return moisture to the body of the plant and, while doing so, they shrink, pulling the plant deeper into the soil to protect the plant from sun and heat.

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