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MARCH-APRIL 2016

# Kaktos Komments

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



*Euphorbia milii*  
by Karla Halpaap-Wood

## From the editor

Spring is here early, which means lots of work, clean plants up and take from their winter protection. The winter was mild and I never moved some of my larger plants under cover.

I want to thank everybody who contributed to this edition of the KK and promised articles for the next ones. I want to encourage everybody to participate in submitting articles or pictures.

Also please note we will have a special presentation in April when Michael and Rosario Douglas from the Central Oklahoma Cactus and Succulent Society visit.

Karla Halpaap-Wood

## MEMBERSHIP

KATHY FEWOX

Twenty-four members were present for the January 13, 2016 meeting of HCSS. Also attending were three guests: Gary Steen, Heidi Purcell, and our guest speaker Jaime Gonzalez. We had several very nice door prizes contributed by generous members. Noreen Tolman donated a *Cryptostegia grandiflora* (the Succulent of the Month), which was won by Bruce Moffett. Karla Halpaap-Wood contributed a beautiful plant calendar, won by Milton Pierson. Daryl Rebrovich donated a *Stenocereus pruinosus* (the Cactus of the Month), which went home with Dave Van Langen. Richard Stamper brought two three-issue sets of "Cactus and Succulent Journal" publications, which were won by Paul Stricklin and guest Gary Steen.

Our February 10th meeting was attended by twenty-one members. We were joined by three guests: Karla T. Hernandez, Jason Flores, and Sophie Perrin. We had many door prizes to give away. Richard Stamper donated two copies of "Cactus and Succulent Journal" January/February 2016, which were won by A.C. Randle and Craig Hamilton. Dick and Phyllis McEuen donated a *Sansevieria suffruticosa*, twisted form, which was won by Soraya Hayek. Dick and Phyllis also contributed two big black pots, which were taken home by Dave Van Langen and Josie Watts. Karla Halpaap-Wood donated a night blooming cereus, which went home with guest Sophie Perrin. Karla also contributed a *Euphorbia milii*, which was won by guest Karla T. Hernandez. Wally Ward donated two *Huernia hysterix*, won by Karla Halpaap-Wood and Daryl Rebrovich. Karla T. Hernandez and Jason Flores became members during the evening.

Please send news of HCSS members and their families to [kathyfewox@aim.com](mailto:kathyfewox@aim.com).

### Calendar:

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>March 23</b>   | Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W Gray St, Houston, TX 77019. Wally Ward, HCSS, will give a presentation on "Succulent Plants of Texas Beaches."  |
| <b>April 9-11</b> | Field trip to El Paso   |
| <b>April 27</b>   | Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Rosario and Michael Douglas, Central Oklahoma Cactus & Succulent Society, will give a presentation "Madagascar: a natural history perspective with an emphasis on the succulent plants " |

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# Madagascar: a natural history perspective with an emphasis on the succulent plants

Time: April 27 at 7:45 pm

Place: The Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
in Houston

Speakers: Rosario and Michael Douglas

Madagascar is well known for its biological diversity. A combination of its geology, climate and isolation from Africa over the eons have produced unique plants and animals found nowhere else. This talk explores Madagascar's natural history with a focus on its succulent flora. We also note the human impacts and current conservation issues facing this unique island.





**Rosario Douglas** was born in Chile where she lived until the age of 7. She then spent 13 years in Panama. After a year and a half stay in Montreal, Canada learning English and some French she moved to the US to finish her first Bachelor's degree at Florida State University. She has now lived in the US with Mike for more than 30 years.

She has degrees in English Literature and in Biology and has accompanied Mike during most travels. She shares Mike's interests in nature, especially birds and also enjoys the cultural and historical aspects associated with travels.

Rosario is the Vice-President, newsletter editor, webpage editor and lately the facebook administrator for the Central Oklahoma Cactus and Succulent Society.

Michael Douglas is a research meteorologist, recently retired from NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory. He has been interested since childhood in many natural history subjects. Born in Montreal, he grew up in San Diego and school and work have allowed him to live widely within the US. His work allowed for wide travel in Latin America and parts of Africa, and this travel continues.



We have been fortunate to travel widely (about 36 countries) in the last 30 years. This travels included both work-related and personal trips. Our most in-depth explorations have been in Latin America (especially Mexico, which we have visited more than 25 times since 1987) and in South Africa (visited 6 times since 2002).

Notes from the Cactus Shack

by Cactus Canyon Karl

Winter of 2015-16 has been more sunny, windy and drier than usual. Watering has been more frequent and deeper than we can remember around the Shack this time. I guess Turbinicarpus are usually winter bloomers in habitat because they are closer to the equator or something. So too some Mams. It looks like this T, bonatzii may be cresting. This is the third bloom set on this T. panarrotoi this winter.

Note: C. C. Karl (that is his last name) is the new part time employee at the Cactus Shack. Don't really need him, but he needs us. Comes from the Arizona Canyonlands. Thanks, Cactusboy



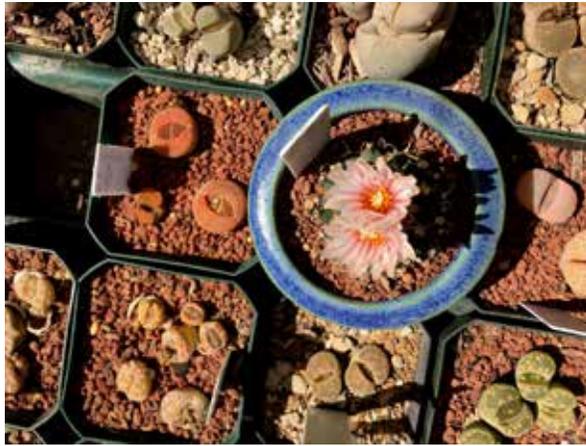
Mammillaria tlalocii



Euphorbia milii



Cephalophyllum subaltoides



Turbinicarpus panarottoi



Turbinicarpus bonatzii



Turbinicarpus valdeziana



### March Cactus Of The Month

**Jeff Boggan**

- **NAME:** *Eriosyce napina* subsp. *challensis*  
 First described in August 20, 2004 by Ingrid Schaub Albertz & Dr. Ricardo Keim Zwanzger (1)  
 I-P-N-I The International Plant Names Index (2)  
*Eriosyce* – erion meaning wool and skyon meaning fig – which describes the fruit. (3)
- **SYNONYMS:** *Thelocephala napina* ssp *challensis*, *Neoporteria napina* ssp *challensis*  
*Thelo* – thel'-o as in Othello, to be resolved; *cephala* – sef-uh-luh – head like an arthropod.
- **HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION:** Chile, South America, Parque Nacional Llanos de Challe, this is part of the Atacama Desert. This location is one of the driest places on the planet. Some areas have been desert for over 200 million years. It is located between two chains of mountains that block moisture from the Pacific and from the Atlantic. They grow near the Pacific coast at an altitude between 550 to 1000 feet. The soil is mostly sand with gravel and rocks of igneous minerals. There are very few other plants that exist in the area. (3)(4)(5)

- **DESCRIPTION:** Blooms about once every 5 years about a month or two after the rain. Most plants in the same vicinity will bloom simultaneously. The flowers will stay open for 3 to 4 days. It has a large tuber up to 8 inches long and 8 inches wide. The stem of the plant is small and round, about half to three quarters of an inch in diameter. The spines are white and fold back against the plant. The areoles have white to beige wool. It is found as a solitary head and as a cluster. The stem predominantly stays just below the rocky surface. You can only see them about every five years when there is sufficient moisture in the spring. They will then puff up and produce flowers. Spring in the Southern Hemisphere runs from September to the end of November. The fruits are very wooly and reddish to brown in color. (3)(4)(5)

- **CULTIVATION/GROWTH:** Very slow growing. Can be grown from seed and by grafting. (1)

- **AVAILABILITY:** Still a very recent discovery. Seeds and grafts are occasionally available from a few European and South American nurseries. Seldom advertised as available in the US. (5)

- **REMARKS/COMMENTS/MY EXPERIENCE:** I came across this species while searching for new cactus discoveries on the Internet. The name *Thelocephala* grabbed my attention. Then when they said it looked like a South American version of *Epithelantha*, I was hooked. I had to get hold of a specimen. The first thing I searched for were seeds but nothing showed up. I had been looking for *Thelocephala* seeds. Then I searched for *Eriocyce* seeds in general. A collector in Florida had some available. I sowed 10 seeds in June of 2014. However, the seeds did not germinate until August. Five seedlings reached a height of about ½ an inch in a few months and are now about ¾ of an inch high. Three were lost over time so I am down to two.

Eventually, I found a grafted specimen for sale on eBay. The grafted plant grows faster and are less susceptible to root rot. It has also produced numerous offsets.



#### REFERENCES:

1. Detailed description of *Eriocyce napina* subsp. *challensis* - [http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/2792/Eriocyce\\_napina\\_subsp.\\_challensis](http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/2792/Eriocyce_napina_subsp._challensis)
2. Link to the International Plant Names Index - [http://www.ipni.org/ipni/plantNameByVersion.do?id=77068540-1&version=1.1&output\\_format=lsid-metadata&show\\_history=true](http://www.ipni.org/ipni/plantNameByVersion.do?id=77068540-1&version=1.1&output_format=lsid-metadata&show_history=true)
3. Detailed article on the genus *Eriocyce* - <http://cactiguide.com/cactus/?genus=Eriocyce>
4. This is a link to a republication of an article written by Ricardo Keim & Ingrid Schaub. [https://www.cactuspro.com/articles/eriosyce\\_napina\\_ssp.\\_challensis\\_un\\_nouveau\\_thelocephala](https://www.cactuspro.com/articles/eriosyce_napina_ssp._challensis_un_nouveau_thelocephala)
5. Richard Keim and Ingrid Schaub are a couple that live in Santiago de Chile. Now devoting a large amount of time and expense to the research and collection of Chilean cactus and succulents. Here is a link to their cactus and succulent business <http://www.cactusalvaralto.com/>
6. Carlos Alonso Hidalgo Villa of San Pedro de La Paz, Chile is a Chilean cactus enthusiast. He has contributed to the collection of data and research specific to the Atacama region of Chile. <http://xerophilia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Xerophilia-nr-6.pdf>

## March Succulent of the Month

by Cactusboy

*Pedilanthus tithymaloides* var. *cucullatus*

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Common Names: Devil's Backbone, Zigzag Plant, Red bird

Habitat: From Florida, through Central and Northern South America in tropical climates.

Culture: Hardy at Zone 9. Can be planted outdoors. Bright position with shade during the summer. Free draining soil mix and ample water during warm periods with less during the cooler season.

According to the "authorities" *Pedilanthus* has been subsumed into *Euphorbia*. The monstrous form of this semi-succulent is seen on the sales table of Dave Thomas. I saw this variegated one on the table of Joyce Hochtritt at the TACSS seminar in Fort Worth last October.

When I got it back home it went into one of the cold frames. Soon it drooped badly, so I staked it. Then it wilted, so I moved it into the shade house and onto the back of the back bench. HOME AT LAST!!! Since this plant is said to be tropical I put a saucer under it and water well twice a week. Another thing is that *Pedilanthus* do not like cold.

Images on-line show several possible forms of variegation on this plant. Even the stem shows variegation and no leaf is quite like another.

WARNING: This is a *Euphorbia*. Do not get the white stuff on ya.



## April Cactus of the Month

Kathy Fewox

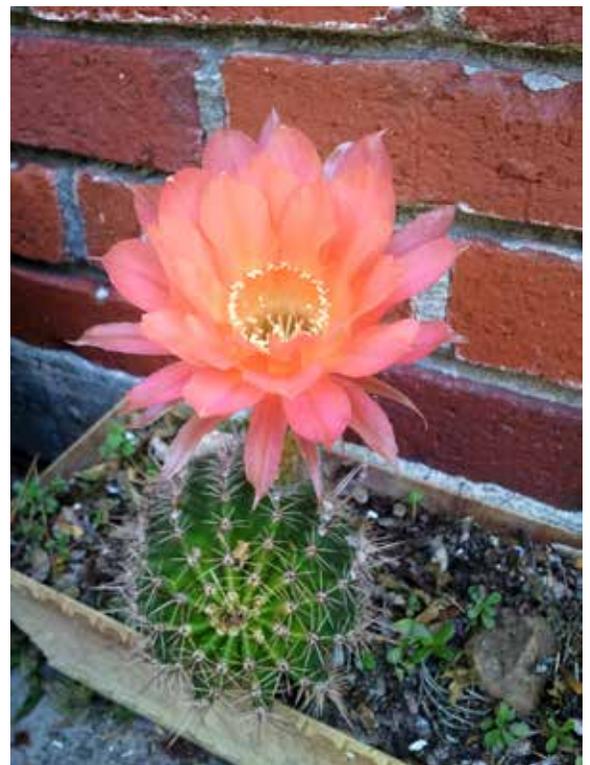
### Echinopsis Hybrids

The genus *Echinopsis* is native to South America, primarily Bolivia and Argentina, but also parts of Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. The previously separate genera of *Trichocereus* and *Lobivia*, which are smaller and not as spiny, are now included with *Echinopsis*. However, many cactus enthusiasts reserve the name *Echinopsis* for the larger, mostly spiny, ribbed, globose plants. While the plants originally known as *Echinopsis* usually had white or pale-colored blooms, *Trichocereus* and *Lobivia* often had vibrantly colored flowers. What all three have in common is the large size of their blooms, and their similarity in structure, being funnel-shaped with hairy or wooly scaled floral tubes. The flowers seldom last more than a day, and may be diurnal or nocturnal (depending on the species). These species hybridize easily, and the resulting *Echinopsis* hybrids often have brightly-colored flowers.

Among the first hybridizers of *Echinopsis* were specialists from Europe, including many from Germany. American Harry Johnson was a master hybridizer of *Echinopsis* for over forty years. Through his Paramount, California nursery he began marketing his uncopyrighted and unnamed hybrids in the 1930s. In the 1950s he began offering them as named varieties. Unfortunately, he didn't keep detailed records, so the parentage of his hybrids isn't usually known. Paramount hybrids are available for purchase at some nurseries and on the internet.

Expanding on the work done by Harry Johnson, famed hybridizer Bob Schick introduced 128 named hybrids through The Huntington Botanical Garden's International Succulent Introductions program from 1986 through 2004. Unlike Johnson, Schick kept careful records. These Schick hybrids are still available through the ISI on The Huntington's website. Today, there are hundreds (if not thousands) of *Echinopsis* hybrids, the work of hybridizers all over the world. The variety of colors and the sizes of blooms (some eight inches in diameter) are astounding. Try Googling "*Echinopsis* Hybrids" and you will discover flowers so beautiful as to appear almost fake.

Besides being beautiful, *Echinopsis* hybrids are very easy to care for. They are among the easiest cacti to grow, especially for those of us living in humid climates. In fact, once daytime highs rise to 70 degrees F. or over, *Echinopsis* hybrids enjoy regular watering. How often depends on the weather, the type of pot, and the amount of sun received. They can survive on very little water, but they won't flower as much. A good test is to stick a pencil down into the soil. If little or no soil sticks to the pencil when you pull it out, the soil has dried and it's time to water. When watering, water thoroughly until water runs out the bottom of the pot. Once the weather cools and daytime temperatures regularly remain below 70 degrees, *Echinopsis* become semi-dormant. At that time cut back on watering, perhaps once a month or less, and only



when the soil is dry. Some *Echinopsis* growers don't water at all in winter.

*Echinopsis* need a good amount of sun to maximize blooming. However, as *Echinopsis* are prone to sunburn in areas of intense summer sun, it's best to move the plants into an area that gets direct sunlight only half the day. The Huntington uses 50% shade cloth, if no other shade is available.

*Echinopsis* can survive fairly cold temperatures, although it's not particularly wise to leave them outside if a hard freeze is predicted. The Huntington says their plants can survive temperature ranges from the 20s in the winter to the 100s in the summer, and perhaps into the single digits in a drier climate. My own plant has been outside, uncovered but protected from north and east winds, during a mild freeze and nothing has happened to it in the 15-plus years I've owned it. Still, I now cover it with frost cloth or bring it inside if a hard freeze is predicted.

For the soil mix, John Trager (head curator for the desert collection at The Huntington) recommends 80% pumice and 20% compost. Greg Krehel, author of *Echinopsis.com* website, lives in Florida (with a climate very similar to that of Houston) and recommends a soil mix of 25% perlite, 25% gritty sand (like builder's sand), and 50% soil. Greg sprinkles extra sand around the base of the plant, to provide an environment that's conducive to the production of pups. When the offsets appear, they can either be removed for transplant or left on the parent plant to create a cluster of *Echinopsis* for what will eventually become a really big flower display.

*Echinopsis* offsets will be identical to the parent plant, so growing from pups guarantees that the flowers will be true to the parent. It is also easy to grow *Echinopsis* hybrids from seed, but the blooms from seed-grown plants might be completely different in color and shape from those of the parent plant. Greg Krehel uses the following method to propagate plants from offsets: Let the pups grow to one inch in diameter or larger, so they'll mature faster once they're on their own. Once removed from the parent plant, if an offset already has roots and is free of open wounds, it can be planted in its own pot immediately. However, if the pup was directly attached to the parent plant and has an open wound at the point of separation, it will need to heal before planting. Place it on a dry surface with the wound facing upward, and let it sit in that position for seven to ten days in partial sun. Avoid watering it during this healing process. Once the wound has healed completely, the offset can be planted in a small pot. Fill the pot with the same soil mix used for a mature plant, and make a depression one-half to one inch deep in the center. Fill the depression and the area surrounding it with a half-inch layer of sand (to discourage rot). Place the pup in the sand, but don't push it through to the dirt below. (When roots develop eventually, they'll grow down into the dirt.) Give the pup a little water every other day, or even every day if daily temperatures rise to 90 degrees F. or higher. Don't soak the soil. Put a little water directly on the pup and let it drizzle down to lightly moisten the soil below. Follow this watering schedule for the first month or so, until the pup starts to grow on its own. At that time you can start watering as you would a mature plant.



Echinopsis are fairly heavy feeders. Once the growing season begins, fertilizer promotes plant growth and blooms. Greg Krehel suggests fertilizing one of the following three ways: an all-season granular fertilizer, sprinkled on the soil surface; a once-a-month liquid fertilizer; or a liquid fertilizer diluted with water to one-sixth strength and applied every time you water. Greg says when applying liquid fertilizer directly on plants, follow with a spray of plain water to wash the fertilizer off the plant body and into the root system. The Huntington fertilizes with every watering using 2/5 the recommended strength of Liquinox (12-5-5), "but any balanced fertilizer with a similar percentage of nitrogen will do."

Echinopsis likes to be repotted every spring, as fresh soil encourages flowering and plant growth. You can wait longer, but the bloom display won't be as spectacular. Unlike some cacti, Echinopsis don't like to be root bound, so it's important to use a pot that's big enough for another year's growth (and even bigger, if you plan to wait two or three years before repotting again). As Echinopsis have shallow root systems, azalea pots are a good choice. The Huntington's website suggests plastic or other non-porous pots, which help keep roots hydrated. Greg Krehel says to add an inch of pebbles to the bottom of the pot for drainage. After repotting, move the plant into the shade for four or five days to let it recover from the shock of repotting.

If you like big, gaudy flowers that come in lots of bright colors, you really should try Echinopsis hybrids. I've had mine for at least 15 years and I've never paid much attention to it except when it was blooming. I plan to start paying attention to it now and taking better care of it. Maybe it will reward me with more blooms, not that it hasn't put on a show in years past with almost no encouragement from me whatsoever. Several websites offer Echinopsis hybrids. They aren't cheap (and if they are, they're likely tiny pups that won't mature for years). But once you see the blooms, I promise you'll be hooked!

Special thanks to Greg Krehel for his help and the information contained in his two wonderful websites, "Echinopsis.com" and "Echinopsisfreak.com." Besides knowing all about Echinopsis hybrids, Greg is an amazing photographer. His time lapse videos of Echinopsis hybrids opening and closing are not to be missed! Thanks also to all the other websites I visited while researching this paper.

#### REFERENCES:

"Echinopsis.com" website, authored by Greg Krehel  
<http://echinopsis.com/>

"Echinopsis: Queen for a Day," from "Verso," the blog for The Huntington  
<http://huntingtonblogs.org/2014/03/echinopsis-queen-for-a-day/>

"International Succulent Introductions: Shick Hybrids, About the Hybrids"  
 The Huntington Library, Art Collection and Botanical Gardens website  
<http://www.huntington.org/BotanicalDiv/ISI/Schick/abouthybrids.html>

"Paramount Hybrids" by Louis Zelenak, from "Desert Silk" website by M. Gunn  
[http://desert\\_silk.fortunecity.ws/johnson.html](http://desert_silk.fortunecity.ws/johnson.html)

"Water When Dry, The challenges and joys of an Arizona low desert gardener" by Aiyana  
<http://waterwhendry.blogspot.com/2008/05/echinopsis-season.html>

**April Succulent of the Month****Richard Holland**

- **NAME:** *Haworthia limifolia*
- **COMMON NAME(S):** Twister, Fairy Washboard
- **HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION:** Southeastern Africa, Swaziland, Namibia
- **DESCRIPTION (STEM, FLOWERS, FRUITS):** Rosettes with dark brownish-green leaves. The leaves have transverse ridges. Plant height 6" to 12". Plant width 6" to 9". Blooms May through July. Blooms are white. Drought tolerant.
- **CULTIVATION/GROWTH:** USDA Zones 9b to 11 (25 to 40 deg F), Use fast draining soil mix. Repot ever four years. Plant in Sun to Partial Shade. Propagation is by offshoots or seeds.



• **REMARKS/COMMENTS/MY EXPERIENCE:** Bought my plant on December 5, 2014 in a 4" pot. It is kept outside in the sun. Plant has flowered once.

• **REFERENCES:** <http://www.columbus-cactus-club.webs.com/Haworthia%20limifolia.htm>

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/2394/#b>

<http://wimastergardener.org/?q=Haworthia>





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## Houston Botanical Garden

There will be a new botanical garden in Houston.

In May 2014, Jeff Ross, president of Houston Botanic Garden, gave a presentation to our club about the search for a location. A long-term lease with the City of Houston was signed last year to transform a 120 acre site at Glenbrook Park Golf Course into a botanical garden. This was not the original choice for the site, but for a large city like Houston it is still centrally located.

The planning board of directors chose West 8 Urban Design and Landscape Architecture to design the garden.

On February 17th, the Garden Club of Houston hosted the Nancy Stallworth-Thomas Horticulture Lecture. Adriaan Geuze, Co-Founder and Director of West 8 Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, gave the presentation. He tried to make the audience understand his thoughts when he designs a garden. Geuze described his personal garden in northern Spain. He also explained the meaning of gardens from historical times to the present, such as Adam and Eve in their garden and the gardens in Mesopotamia up to modern times. He described the relationship of poetry and gardening, water and music, and light and shadows. Some of the structures seem unusual but are very effective.

Geuze showed pictures of some of his garden designs:

The Swamp Garden in Charleston, South Carolina with Spanish Moss hanging on wires to form ultra-light, wavy walls creating an open-air room.

“A twisted boardwalk leads from solid grounds into the swamps and is extended along two sides within the secluded area. One side offers a landing place for vessels, the other side provides two benches that have been constructed of a cypress trunk, found on



the site. Here, in the surreal isolation of the cypress swamp, visitors can meditate.”

Padua, Italy, Pine Cone Garden, where walls and ground are covered with pine cones.

“One of the inner gardens of the Carthusian Monastery of Padula, Italy, has been strewn with thousands of pinecones collected by children in the neighborhood. In combination with the existing ce-



dar trees, they create an aroma of forest and dried wood. The excess of pinecones is overwhelming and the crackling of drying seeds in the sun brings a consciousness of the evolution process. During the night the pinecones glow from underneath with a red light”



For the 2011 Xi'an International Horticulture Exhibition, Geuze designed the Garden of 10,000 Bridges which represents the path of a person's lifetime. The garden design is supposed to take people on this walk of life as a winding trail through a bamboo forest.



“Gardens tell a story. They combine poetry and narrative. The Garden of 10,000 Bridges represents the human life; the path of people's lifetime, which is a route of uncertainty and burden, but also of highlights and elation. The garden design takes you on this walk of life as a meandering, winding trail – continuous and like a labyrinth. It lets you find your way through nature and takes you over 10,000 bridges.”

Park pergola in the Leidsche Rijn Park, Netherlands: an open concrete pergola that will have plants growing on it, 2 miles long and 18' high. On entering it you are supposed to leave your worries behind.



Geuze did not give details for what is planned in Houston but said it will have lots of shade and breezes to enjoy the garden.

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# S.A.C.X.S. SHOW & SALE



The San Antonio Cactus & Xerophyte Society is holding its 38<sup>th</sup> annual Show & Sale on April 21-23 at the San Antonio Garden Center. The Show & Sale will be open to the public from 9:00AM to 5:00 PM. Our Show & Sale keeps getting bigger and better each year. Please join us and enjoy what we have to offer the cactus and succulent enthusiast.

- ❖ 8 cactus and succulent and pottery vendors
  - ❖ Raffle drawings every hour
  - ❖ A silent auction on Thursday and Friday
- ❖ An auction of unique and landscape cactus and succulents at 2:00 PM on Friday and Saturday
- ❖ Educational Displays that will wet your appetite to try growing a new plant or find a new way of enjoying the succulents in your collection
  - ❖ The one and only SACXS official Fiesta medal
  - ❖ Cactus/Succulent friends & experts to talk with

We hope you will join us at our yearly Show & Sale!

Barbara Schulze, Show & Sale Chairman

Contact at [barbaralschulze@yahoo.com](mailto:barbaralschulze@yahoo.com) or

call 830-281-5766