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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024

# Kaktos Komments

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



*Ferocactus glaucescens* cv. Split Rock  
by Andrea Varesic



**Houston Cactus and Succulent Society**  
**Founded in 1963**  
**Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America**

## Membership

**Sara Ortiz and Karla Halpaap-Wood**

On September 25, 2024 we met at the Metropolitan Multiservice Center. There were 36 members in attendance. The program "Unique cacti of Cochise County, Arizona" was presented by Rob Romero. The Cactus of the Month, *Turbincarpus alonsoi*, was given by Echo Pang. The succulent of the month, *Euphorbia milii*, was given by Eddie Novak. As usual, we had a lot of fun with door prizes and raffle plants donated by our members.

In October 24 members and 8 guests attended the meeting. We elected the HCSS officers for 2025:

President: Andrea Varesic

First Vice President: Echo Pang

Second Vice President: Vicki Treybig

Recording Secretary: Alex Zabula

Treasurer: Karina Boese

We had a very special program by Robert Feldman "Caudiciforms: *Fockea*, *Pachys* - Staging and Pottery". Succulent of month was *Echidnopsis cereiformis* by Karla Halpaap-Wood.

Please renew your membership for 2025 and use the revised membership form that you can find here:  
<http://www.hcsstex.org/HCSSmembership.pdf>

Congratulations to our own Liliana Cracraft for her appointment as the secretary of the Texas Association of Cactus and Succulent Societies (TACSS). She will serve in that position for the next two years. Additionally, Liliana and her husband Mike have been invited by the editor to write an article for *Euphorbia World*, the journal of the International Euphorbia Society.

We are sorry to have to inform our membership of the passing of Jeff Boggan. He was only 67 years old and his death came suddenly. We had just seen him a few days before his passing, when he was judging plants at our fall show.

Jeff was a member of HCSS since 2005. He was president of the club in 2007, 1st Vice president in 2010 and the show chairman for several years. He gave many plant of the month presentations about his rare and special plants, always very well researched. He won the Dick Gregg Award for Best Cactus of Show twice.

We as a club extend our deepest condolences to his mother, siblings and the rest of his family.



**From the Editor**

**Karla Halpaap-Wood**

Starting in January of 2025, the board has approved a change to the KK. The printed and the mailed version will no longer be included with a paid membership. The price for this service far exceeds the membership fee we pay. So, if you still want the KK printed and mailed, please contact Imtiaz (rokk43@sbcglobal.net) and he will continue to provide this service to you. Then the cost associated will be paid directly to him. You also may use a print shop of your choice. We will have a few printed copies available to look at during monthly meetings.

I will continue to use the current format in 2025, so the KK can be printed in booklet form like usual.

**HCSS September 2024 Program Recap**

**Rob Romero**



Echinocereus pseudopectinatus

“I hope that everyone enjoyed my short tour of Cochise County, Arizona seeing some of the unique cacti growing there. My goal was to educate people on the unique cacti of the area and to show that Arizona is so much more than the land of the Saguaro! This particular part of Arizona is full of areas to hike and enjoy the native cacti and plants. Many places are parks or other areas where one can also learn about the geology and other land forms plus the wildlife that is present. If you find yourself out west, please try and visit. Virtually all of the plants I showcased are in cultivation in the form of either plants or seeds. I would encourage everyone to give them a try. I understand that Houston can be a bit of a challenge for many cacti but certainly worth the challenge.”



Escobaria robinnsorum

A recording of the zoom program is available on HCSS YouTube Channel:  
<https://youtu.be/2LCZ6eswaiU?si=BeTmx5QYF5pMWmnx>

<b>Calendar:</b>	
<b>November 9, 2024</b>	10:00 am-12:00 pm Open yard John Weistroffer
<b>November 13, 2024</b>	7:00 pm Board Meeting via Zoom
<b>November 20, 2024</b>	6:45 pm Membership Meeting, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center Joint meeting with Bromeliad Society Program: “Collecting Adventures with Linda Cathcart” by Dennis Cathcart
<b>December 11, 2024</b>	6:00 pm Christmas Party - Installation dinner. Teotihuacan, 1511 Airline Blvd., Houston, TX 77009
<b>January 1, 2025</b>	Deadline for submitting articles for the KK.

## A recap of October Program and Joint Program in November with the Bromeliad Society Echo Pang



I enjoyed Mr. Robert Feldman's presentation on "Caudiciforms: Fockea, Pachys, Staging & Pottery" very much. He introduced to the audience all six species of Fockea from South Africa and a few classic Pachypodium species from Madagascar. He showcased many elegant specimens with interesting caudices from his collection at home in California. All the specimens are staged beautifully in his handmade pottery. Seeing his collection is truly a feast for the eyes! There are four principles Mr. Feldman used to demonstrate about staging: orientation, proportion, topping and landscape; and he suggested using 40% cactus and succulent soil with 60% pumice when it comes to making a soil mixture for Fockea and Pachypodium. Video of the full presentation is available on HCSS YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/6w1fEq-Xe2A?si=IXevhunZn9Yc32tk>

presentation is available on HCSS YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/6w1fEq-Xe2A?si=IXevhunZn9Yc32tk>

In my personal experience, Fockea and Pachypodium are very easy and rewarding to grow in Houston's climate. They are valuable plants in collection that live a very long time in good cultivation. Growing in Houston, they tolerate our summer heat well, but you want to protect the caudices from scorching Texas sun and always ensure excellent ventilation in our very humid environment. Keep in mind that in habitat, these plants are geophytes (the caudices remain buried underground); they are only being lifted in cultivation to reveal the interesting shapes. Most Fockea and Pachypodium are NOT cold hardy, but they can ride through a light frost easily underneath a frost blanket. They can also be kept indoor under growlights or in a bright sunroom for a couple of months with minimal water.

Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to our first joint meeting with Houston Bromeliad Society (BSH) this November! The joint meeting will take place on Wednesday November 20th at 6:45pm. The meeting is in-person at the Metropolitan center and on zoom. (Please email [hcssvicepresident@hcsstex.org](mailto:hcssvicepresident@hcsstex.org) if you'd like to attend via zoom)

An educational program titled "Collecting Adventures with Linda Cathcart" by Dennis Cathcart will be presented. Dennis will share with us about his "Forty years of collecting adventures with his wife Linda Cathcart, across the jungles and deserts of Mexico to South America. Featuring bromeliads, cacti, succulents, orchids and other exotic flora."

A short bio of Dennis Cathcart:

Dennis is a lifelong naturalist with a deep interest in reptiles, amphibians, and plants. In 1976, following a decade of work in herpetology, he founded Tropiflora, LLC, a bromeliad and tropical plant nursery in Sarasota, Florida. An avid plant explorer, he and his wife Linda made frequent expeditions to many countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Later, they expanded their travels to Africa, Madagascar, and Southeast Asia. Their travels led to the discovery of many species new to science and horticulture. Hundreds of specimens they contributed reside in various herbariums and botanical gardens worldwide.

Books and plants from Dennis and Tropifolia (bromeliads and succulents) will be available for sale at the meeting.

## November Cactus of the Month

Andrea Varesic

### *Ferocactus glaucescens* cv. *Split Rock*

(*Ferocactus glaucescens* forma *mostruosa nuda*)

**Family:** Cactaceae

I purchased this plant in the fall of 1993 from a nursery around Richmond, Virginia. It was 2 cm tall and I paid one dollar for it. I bought three little ones and I still have two. At the time they were identical “triplets”, but have grown into different plants. I never knew the name of this specimen until I posted it on a rare cactus forum in 8-2023. The gentleman that answered, said that he had never seen one “this big and this old”.

I believe my specimen is: *Ferocactus glaucescens* cv *Split Rock*

In Latin “ferox” means fierce.

**Habitat and climate:** This is a nursery produced specimen. The wild species occurs over a wide range in arid environment in Eastern central Mexico.

It is a beautiful and very rare cultivar with irregular ribs that split open displaying odd sculpturesque shapes. This plant can be raised only by seeds and is very rare and sought after by collectors.

It should not be confused with the common *F. glaucescens* forma *nuda* which is a different cultivar that is similar only when very young. The unique charm of *Ferocactus glaucescens* cv *Split Rock* shows as it ages.

**Description:** *Ferocactus glaucescens* cv *Split Rock* is a solitary barrel cactus that looks like an old weathered rock.



The younger plants are similar to the common *F. glaucescens* forma *nuda* with spineless grey stems, but the epidermis of this cultivars starts soon to split open and then have an appearance of a rock surface. The plant slowly grows up to 55 cm in height, 50 cm in diameter. The plant has 11 to 15 ribs, they are very irregular often fused together, then broken or scratched with thin grooves. The areoles are light orange or grey, long and often fused together. There are no spines. Flowers are lemon yellow, funnel-shaped, 3-4 cm in diameter. Blooming season is late spring and summer. The flowers last a very long time. The plants start flowering when about 13 cm in diameter. Fruits are white, 2 cm long with the remnants of the flowers attached. The growing season is spring and summer.

**Cultivation:** Plants grow slowly at first but are easy to grow and require little care once they have reached a nice flowering size. *F. glaucescens* is suited for any rich, well drained soil in full sun throughout the year. They grow best in a fairly roomy, well-drained container filled with a porous cactus soil mixture that doesn't contain too much humus. Plants should be watered during the active growth cycle. This plant need plenty of water. Do not wet the bodies of these plants while they are in sunlight. A wet cactus in the sun light can cause sun burning, which can lead to scars or even fungal infections and death. In winter keep completely dry at 10°C. But the plant can tolerate sporadic light frost.

It does not like a lot of fertilizer, so fertilize once a year with a dilute fertilizer, rich and phosphorus and potassium, but low in nitrogen.

**References:**

[http://www.llifl.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/21527/Ferocactus\\_glaucescens\\_cv.\\_Split\\_Rock](http://www.llifl.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/21527/Ferocactus_glaucescens_cv._Split_Rock)

[http://www.llifl.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/1532/Ferocactus\\_glaucescens](http://www.llifl.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/1532/Ferocactus_glaucescens)




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## November Succulent of the Month

Vicki Treybig

**Agave potatorum****Description:**

*Agave potatorum* is a dwarf succulent belonging to the Agavaceae botanical family. The plant is solitary and produces offsets and forms a small clump. The plant produces a dense rosette of thick fleshy leaves, pale bluish green in color with a sharp reddish spine.

**Habitat:**

*Agave potatorum* is native to Mexico.

**Cultivation:**

It is a slow growing plant and easy to cultivate. It needs full sunlight, but it is recommended to avoid direct sunlight exposure during the hottest periods. The plant does not like temperatures below 42.8°F (6°C), so it needs to be placed indoors during the coldest periods. It is prone to root rot so it should have a well-draining potting mix. Watering can be done regularly in spring and summer, approximately weekly, checking to see that the soil is dry before watering again. In winter stop watering to allow the plant to go dormant. For faster, lush growth, fertilize the plant once a month during the growing season with specific fertilizers for cacti and stop fertilizing during the winter. If the pot becomes too small for the plant, repot the plant in a container 2 cm wider. Repotting should be done early in the growing season with fresh new potting soil.



My plant, variegated form.

**Propagation:**

Propagation can be done by cutting or by seed. Make the cut during the spring when temperatures are around 68°F (20°C) and let the cutting dry. After a few days, the cut surface will dry and form a callus. Plant the cutting in a mixture of sand, soil and pumice. By seed it is very simple to propagate the plant by sowing seed in a sandy loam soil and keep it with a high level of humidity and when temperatures reach approximately 58°F (14°C).

**References:**

The Complete Book of Cacti & Succulents

The Garden Succulents Primer

<https://www.giromagicactusandsucculents.com/agave-potatorum>

**December Cactus of the Month****Tara Johnson*****Buiningia brevicylindrica***

*Buiningia brevicylindrica*, with the accepted scientific name of *Coleocephalocereus aureus*, are a group of Cacti endemic to Brazil. This cactus is found in habitat on rocky outcrops at an elevation of 920-3,000 feet above sea level.

This species consists of short columnar plants with up to about 35 shallow ribs. Spination is revealed from small, closely spaced areoles. The most amazing and distinctive feature of this cactus of this particular genus is the lateral cephalium. The cephalium is a specialized flowering structure that is full of short golden spines and many flowers that run along one side of the plant. This cephalium is a permanent addition to the plant when it occurs. This cephalium creates quite a show in the mature plant for when this cactus is young, it resembles any average green cactus. The flowers are small white or red and the fruits are small, rounded, and reddish in color.

*Buiningia brevicylindrica* can grow to about 50 inches in maturity and boasts a summer booming season. It needs porous, well-draining soil with bright light and morning sun. Water thoroughly when soil is dry. Semi-tropical temperatures are best. This plant is propagated generally by seed or cuttings. Protect from frost.



<https://www.pinterest.copin/373376625348850283/>



I have two of these amazing little cacti in my collection, they are about 3-5 years old. I am excited to watch them grow and for them to reach maturity and develop their cephalium.

**References:**

CactiGuide.com

KylesPlants.com

## December Succulent of the Month

Mike Cracraft

### Plant Name: *Euphorbia fractiflexa* S. Carter & J.R.I. Wood

**Habitat/Distribution:** Northwest Yemen and southwest Saudi Arabia on rocky outcrops.

**Description:** *E. fractiflexa* is a spiny succulent shrub, with multiple ascending branches from the ground. Branches are 3-angled, broadly winged, sometimes twisted or bent backwards or forwards in a zig-zag fashion. Short spines extend out in pairs with beautiful small flowers yellow to light brown in color, extended on short stems.



#### Cultivation:

Grows predominantly in spring and summer with flowers appearing early. These plants can produce plentiful seeds on mature plants which

will easily germinate and will grow to 2 to 4 inches in about one year. After 2 years, the main stem will start producing branches. Our more mature plants, being 5 years or more in age, have multiple branches and are now about 1 foot

tall.

This plant can be propagated by cuttings or seeds. The photo below shows multiple seed pods.

**Availability:** An internet search will find this plant available from various vendors.

**Comments:** We originally got our first plant from Mike Navolio (HCSS President 2001). By now we have 3 additional medium size plants, and many young ones grown from seed.

#### References:

A Handbook of the Yemen Flora, J.M.I. Wood, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Euphorbia Journal, volumes 4 and 5. Strawberry Press, Mill Valley, California





2024 Show and Sale  
September 6 and 7 at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center



Ariocarpus retusus Cv Cauliflower  
Robert Perez



Pseudolithos cubiformis  
Jacob Martin



Astrophytum ornatum Mirabellii  
Josie Watts

Best Novice Cactus

Best of Show Novice



Gymnocalycium saglionis  
Ronald Gilland



Agave potatorum kissho kan  
Kristi Schmidt

Best Collection



Astrophytum Collection, *A. myriostigma*, *A. fukuryii*, *A. nudum*, *A. capricorne*, *A. nudum* ssp. *Kikko*

Tara Johnson

Judges: Josie Watts, Jeff Boggan, Wally Ward, Karina Boese, Noreen Tolman, Karla Halpaap-Wood  
Clerks: Kristie Schmidt, John Weistroffer, Liliana Cracraft, Wanda Estrada, Elizabeth Jackson  
Show Chairman: Eddie Novak  
Head Clerk: Cindy Gray  
Main Clerk: Vicki Treybig

Vendors were  
Dave Thomas, Echo's Cacti and Succulents, Jimbos, Madame Cacti, Marie Schaer, Jacob Martin, Sara Ortiz, Thirst for Succulents, Unicorn Cactus Nursery, Karla's Kreatif, MellocactusTx, KoboriCactus



### Field Trip to Jimbo's Nursery October 12, 2024



CSSA NEWS

LILIANA CRACRAFT

The CSSA 2025 Bienial Convention will be hosted by San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society at the Mission Valley Marriott, San Diego. Save the dates April 23-27, 2025. Join CSSA for a unique event featuring world-renowned speakers, a diverse selection of rare and exotic plants, exquisite pottery for sale, and captivating presentations tailored to both, hobbyists and professionals. For more information visit: [cactusandsucculentsociety.org/events/convention](https://cactusandsucculentsociety.org/events/convention)

A webinar entitled Whoa! México, presented on October 19, is now available at the CSSA website. You can access it at: <https://cactusandsucculentsociety.org/2024/10/03/webinar-whoa-mexico/>

The 2024 CSSA Conservation Award was given to Adam Harrower, Senior Curator at Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens in Cape Town, South Africa. Harrower was recognized for his work in saving tens of thousands of poached Conophytums from poachers and working with South African police to rescue the plants. He has since cared for and propagated the plants in the greenhouses at Kirstenbosch, and some of the seeds have been distributed globally.



We also want to extend our thanks to those of you who submitted your votes for the CSSA Officers and Board Nominees to serve for the next two years.

And remember that CSSA memberships start at only \$20. For more information visit: <https://cactusandsucculentsociety.org/membership/>

**HCSS Leadership and Contact Info**

President  
Andrea Varesic  
avaresic@att.net

Treasurer  
Bruce Moffett  
bmoffett@mindspring.com

Education  
David Van Langen  
dvl@pdq.net

First Vice President  
Echo Pang  
echo8891@gmail.com

KK editor and Webmaster  
Karla Halpaap-Wood  
khalpaap@me.com

Ways and Means  
Eddie Novak  
efniii@hotmail.com

Second Vice President  
Cindy Gray  
grayco60@hotmail.com

KK publisher  
Imtiaz Bangee  
imbangee@yahoo.com

Publicity and CSSA affiliate  
Liliana Cracraft  
opuntia77@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary  
Benjamin Stroble  
bstroble@live.com

Membership  
Sara Ortiz  
qbc.sara@gmail.com