

The Eastern Spine

Newsletter of the National Capital

Cactus & Succulent Society

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(NCCSS Home Page)

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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

A Tale of 20 Botanical Succulents in a Sunroom: Temperature and Light Intensity. presented by NCCSS member Edd Barrows

There are a myriad of environments in which succulent plants are grown. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. As growers we all must adapt our plant selections and cultivation techniques to match our environments the best we can. This month's program examines the sunroom as a succulent plant growing environment.

Our Next Regular Monthly Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday May 19, 2019**. It will be held at the **St. Anselm's Abbey School at 14th & South Dakota Ave. N.E Washington, DC**. The meeting begins at **10:30 am** and ends at **Noon**. The Board meeting, which is open to all members, begins at 9:30 am and ends at 10:15 am. The sales plant table is usually set up by 10:00 a.m.

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The NCCSS is on Facebook

Thanks to the efforts of Ben Burkhardt the National Capital Cactus and Succulent Society now has a Facebook Page. You can find us here:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Capital-Cactus-and-Succulent-Society/223669454422179>

NCCSS HAPPENINGS

It's Your Society - Get Involved

Remembering Lee Miller

Our May meeting will be special this year because at the conclusion of our regular meeting Joanna Miller will join us for a tribute to her brother, and our longtime member and friend Lee.

Lee Miller was a member and officer of our society for 40 years. He served in nearly every office position in our club, including President. He was our representative with the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and served as their elected recording secretary.

We hope you will have the opportunity to attend our May meeting and remain a little longer than usual as we remember Lee.

See page 6 for more information on Lee.

Meadowlark Gardens Sale

Our annual plant sale at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens is scheduled for Saturday June 1, 2019. If you want to sell plants, please check with Donna Kuroda. You can call Donna at 703-264-9633 or email her at dkuroda@aol.com

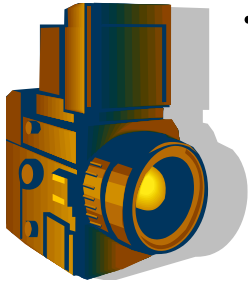
(See page 5 for more information about selling plants at the sale)

Plant Sale at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens - Saturday, June 1, 2019

Plant Display and Sale at Brookside Gardens - Saturday, August 3, 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 18, 2019	CSSM Regular Monthly Meeting. Program: To be determined.
May 19, 2019	NCCSS Regular Monthly Meeting. Program: Growing succulents in a Sun Room presented by Ed Barrows
June 1, 2019	Meadowlark Plant Sale
June 15, 2019	CSSM Regular Monthly Meeting. Program: To be determined.
June 16, 2019	NCCSS Regular Monthly Meeting. Program: The genus Echeveria. Presented by Donna Kuroda
July 17-20 2019	CSSA 39th Biennial Cactus & Succulent Convention in San Luis Obispo, California.
August 3, 2019	Annual Plant Show and Sale, Brookside Gardens (one day only)



The Photo Page

SPRING CACTUS FLOWERS

By Bob Stewart

The flowering show for most cacti begins in late March and early April. In this photo page I would like to feature a few of the cacti in my collection that flower during this time of the year.

The Button Cactus - *Epithelantha micromeris*

This is one of the smallest cactus, a mature plant is less than 2 inches in diameter, and the flowers even smaller, but it is a sure sign that spring is on its way when you see the top of your button cactus adorned with its tiny pink flowers. For me *Epithelantha micromeris* usually flowers in mid February to late March. The flowers are so small they are easy to miss, but after growing the this cactus for over twenty years, I eagerly watch for their appearance.



The Horse Crippler - *Echinocactus texensis*

A large *Echinocactus texensis* is quite a sight when the large pink flowers with red centers cover most of the top of the plant. Flowering usually occurs in March and last about seven to 10 days. My regret is that I do not have another horse crippler plant in flower to initiate cross pollination and have the plants produce the large, red fruit, another great feature of *Echinocactus texensis*.



The Green Pickle Cactus

Echinocereus viereckii var. *morricalii*

This is one of the earliest flowering species in the genus *Echinocereus*. My plant's flowers open toward the end of March, a few weeks after the horse crippler flowers. Unlike the horse crippler, that has large, thick spines, *Echinocereus viereckii* var. *morricalii* is almost spineless. The name green pickle cactus is the name I gave my plant. I do not think it is a name generally used for *Echinocereus viereckii* var. *morricalii*. I grew my plant from seed obtained from Mesa Garden Seed in Belen New Mexico.

Plant of the Month

Golden Barrel Cactus

Echinocactus grusonii

The golden barrel cactus is one of the most popular and recognizable of all cacti in cultivation. When grown well it is also one of the most attractive cacti, with a relatively large, green globular body completely covered in large, yellow spines. This is a cactus that is generally not grown for its flowers, but for its form and beautiful spines. Unfortunately, it is also not a cactus for the average windowsill, as it can grow much too large and heavy for such a location.

Echinocactus grusonii is native to the steep hillsides and cliffs of Queretaro, Mexico. It is almost extinct in habitat due to its limited habitat area and the construction in that area of a large dam. While rare in habitat, it is possibly the most widely propagated cactus in the world, and specimens exist in almost all public and private cactus collections. Most mail order nurseries specializing in cactus offer it for sale, including relatively large specimens. Even in the Washington, D. C. area it is not uncommon to find six to eight inch diameter plants offered for sale at local garden centers and nurseries.



To grow well, the golden barrel cactus requires lots of direct sun, a well-drained potting mix, and intelligent watering. To develop the beautiful spines it should receive at least 5 hours or more of daily direct sunlight. Water only when the potting mix is beginning to dry out and then water thoroughly. If possible, keep it dry and cool over the winter. Many growers move their plants outdoors when the danger of a frost has passed, but initially provide some shade to allow plants to gradually acclimate to the full sun as even cacti can suffer sunburn damage.



With maturity and proper care, the golden barrel cactus will flower in cultivation. Plants usually have to be 15 years or older to begin flowering. As shown in the photo at right, the flowers are bright yellow and about an inch in diameter.

Plant of the Month for June 2019

Senecio serpens
Blue Chalk Fingers

Meadowlark Sale

Saturday, 1 June 2019

Our Sale is scheduled to start at 10 am and end at 4pm. However, if all is in place shortly before 10 am, we can start selling plants. In addition, it can end earlier, before 4pm, if plants are sold out.

Meadowlark Staff around 9 am with some help will start setting up our tables and a canopy. Chairs will be made available as needed:

- Under the canopy four tables are placed in a U shape. Only house plants are placed on these tables. Here space is allotted on a table for one designated member to handle the sales transactions and other members can offer assistance if needed.
- Nearby is a separate table for only hardy plants.
- If there are a very large number of sale plants, additional table(s) will be added nearby to accommodate more plants.

Sellers can begin placing their plants on tables after set up has been completed:

- Sellers must be a member of NCCSS but anyone can buy plants.
- Everyone is required to be respectful by allowing enough space for other sellers.
- The sales items need to have a sticker with the seller's three initials and a price in dollar amounts. These stickers are round 3/4 inch that can be purchased at Office Depot, Staples, etc.
- Colored stickers are indicative of certain sellers, i.e., pink, red, green have already been taken to make seller identification easy. There will be an effort to help newer sellers with a color. If in doubt, use white.
- These stickers go in a notebook that has a designated space allotted for each seller and will be tallied later. Sellers get 75%, NCCSS gets 25%, and Meadowlark gets 10% which comes out of the NCCSS 25%
- Dress for the occasion as it can be hot & sunny or chilly & breezy! Fortunately, we have never had a rainy day so far. Bring your own chair if you desire extra comfort.
- Enjoy good fellowship and harmony with your fellow plant sellers by avoiding topics like politics and religion.
- Also, sellers are encouraged to interact with buyers by answering questions and responding to plant issues. All plants should be clean and free of insects and weeds.

At the end of the Sale, we clean up any messes, help Meadowlark take down canopy, and bring in tables and chairs. We must leave the area where we sold plants neat and tidy as we found it.

Important Notice: Sellers are required one week in advance to inform the Treasurer Donna Kuroda at dkuroda@aol.com if they are selling plants. She needs to prepare the notebook with a specific designated space for each seller's stickers.



In Memory of Lee Miller

by Bob Stewart

I never contemplated needing to do this page. I never envisioned a time Lee would not be here. Lee was a society member who was always there; always handling something that need doing. I never heard him say, "I can't do that," or "I don't want to do that," or "That's not my job." There was never a time Lee was "just a regular member." He was always a club officer, including President, Vice President, Membership Secretary, and Treasurer. If there was a problem in the club, you called Lee Miller. He was our contact with other C&S

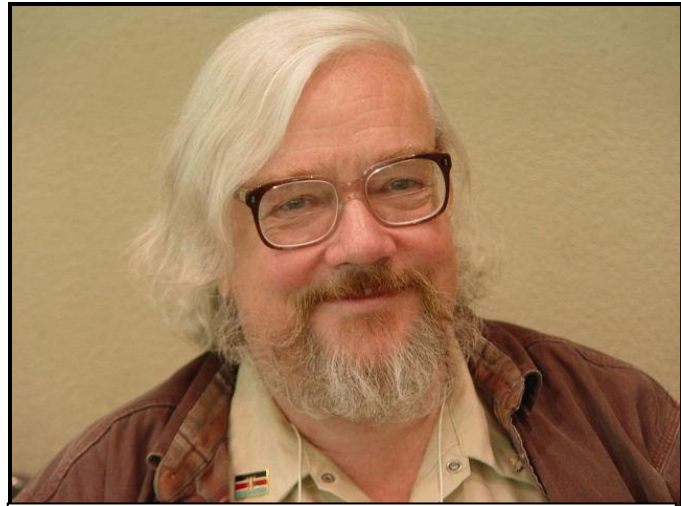


Figure 1 Lee Miller at 2013 NCCSS Annual Show and Sale.

societies. He was our contact with the CSSA, our national C&S society. He was the driving force for the three Eastern C&S Conferences our club sponsored and hosted.

Sadly, Lee Miller passed away on Feb. 11, 2018, following several years of failing health and a recent fall. Even though Lee had experience health problems over the past few years, losing him has still come as a big shock, because ever since 1975, when Lee first joined NCCSS, he has always been there. Our society will not be the same without him. Lee is survived by his sister Joanna Miller, and I offer condolences on behalf of the National Capital Cactus and Succulent Society.

The loss of Lee Miler extends well beyond our local society. Lee was well known throughout the C&S community both nationally and internationally through his participation in many conferences, conventions and field trips.

Our society has lost one of its most important members, and I have lost a very good friend.

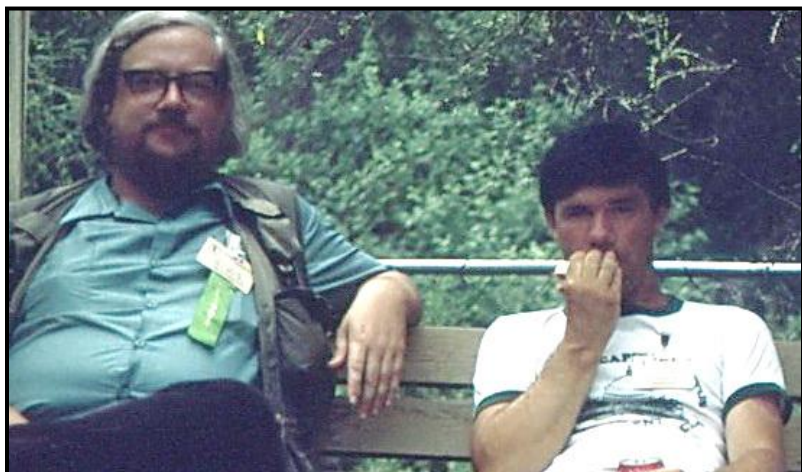


Figure 2 Lee Miller and Bob Stewart relaxing at the CSSA Convention in 1981.