



# THE OFFSET

**JANUARY 2014**

Webpage <https://sites.google.com/site/cocssok/>

*Echinocereus reichenbachii subsp baileyi* in the Wichita Mountains NWR, Oklahoma. Mount Scott in the background. Photo by Michael Douglas

## NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL OKLAHOMA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY

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**Meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7 pm. At the Will Rogers Garden Center at 3400 NW 36<sup>th</sup> in Oklahoma City. (except for the month of our show&sale, picnic and Christmas party).

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**CLUB NEWS- FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Happy New Year to everyone - I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season and are ready to face 2014 with whatever it may bring us all. We are starting the New Year with a great program on Jan 16 featuring a new and interesting program by the Douglas'. (See details elsewhere in the newsletter.)



November and December turned out to be 'busts' for the club with the early winter weather and then personal health and family issues involving several members. My father passed away in December and although I still have lots of estate issues to take care of, the loss is slowly becoming more bearable and the fog is lifting. I'm ready to get back into the club groove and have missed everyone.

**IMPORTANT** - After the Douglas' get us off to a great start for 2014 with their program on the 16th, we will be having a Planning Meeting on **Saturday the 18th** at 10:00am at Peggy Anglin's home. **I am encouraging everyone to attend this meeting - this hour or two Saturday morning is going to be very important for the club.** We are currently at a cross-roads as far as the 2014 Mid-States Conference, scheduled in June, is concerned. It is imperative that we have as many members as possible at the meeting to discuss the pros and cons of hosting this conference and make a decision whether to accept some help from another club out of state to host the event or decide our limitations are too great and regrettably back out.

As when we agreed to host the conference, this is a club decision, not to be made by just a few people, and everyone should be informed and aware of what will be expected from us all. We all have demands & interests in our lives from differing areas and our club contributions are many times dictated by those demands. If you feel at the present time that you can participate in the planning & helping with the conference, then your co-members need to know this -- however, if you have other obligations which *will* limit your participation, *could* limit your participation or even keep you from helping at all, this is extremely important for everyone to know so a decision can be made in the best interest of us all. If we had 15-20 active members available to work on the conference, this would be ideal but when working with the number we have, even just 1 or 2 people stepping away *at any point* will be a hardship on those remaining. Please make it a top priority to attend the meeting on the 18th and let your thoughts, intentions, and/or limitations be known. It is highly likely that a **ballot vote** on the issue will be taken at the meeting but not until new information regarding the conference & possible help is presented.

Niki Furrh

## FROM THE EDITOR

*Rosario Douglas*

**Happy New Year** to all our readers. After all the ice and snow and very cold temperatures we experienced recently here in Oklahoma, we are already dreaming of Spring.



We are planning to meet on January 16<sup>th</sup> unless the weather is really bad.

I would also like to ask all members if they have any ideas or suggestions for programs for this coming year. I also would love to have some book reviews we can post in the newsletter.

I need a favor from you, **I need one or two volunteers** to print the newsletter in black and white every month and mail it to the two members that do not have email. This would really help. If you can do this let me know and I will give you the name and address of the 2 members that require a printed newsletter.

Hope to see you at the monthly meeting and hopefully at the meeting scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Rosario

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### VERY IMPORTANT MEETING – EVERYONE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

An important meeting is scheduled at 10 a.m. on **January 18<sup>th</sup>**, 2013 at Peggy's (56<sup>th</sup> & Miller). If you can't come but have a comment or idea you can email Niki before the 18<sup>th</sup>. Hope to see you there.

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### TIME TO RENEW YOUR DUES

**Don't forget that it is time to renew you dues. It is \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. You can mail the check to Peggy Anglin or you can pay at the next meeting. Let Peggy know if you have a new email address or a new address.**

## From the members



Member Jean Heart sent me some information about her large *Agave americana* plant that was about to bloom in December. Here are her comments:

**November 8<sup>th</sup>** Here is an update on the Agave bloom. My last hope for keeping the Agave at home is the garage where the ceiling is 8'4" tall. The bloom is now within 1" of the ceiling.

I can no longer wheel it in and out without tilting it and it's hard to do that by myself. The babies at the bottom are very healthy and happy even as their Mother is probably coming to the end of her life.

The college in Chickasha may give it a home but it is not a good time for them to find a spot as USAO (University of Science and Art) doesn't have a greenhouse and most larger areas have Christmas decorations. I am on a mission this week to find a final destination.

The wonderful contacts I had at USAO have all retired. The lady I spoke with was excited and very enthusiastic. At the moment, I have no idea what the fate of this "awesome creature" will be.



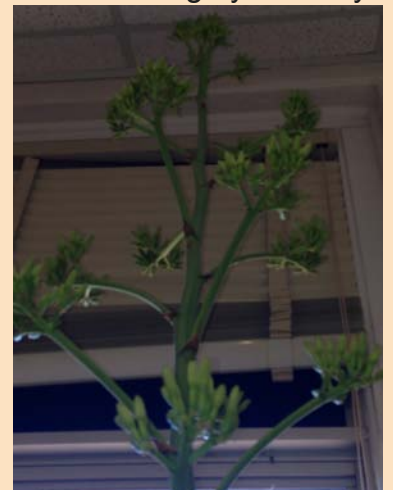
The Will Rogers Arboretum is nearing completion. That could be an option. The big drawback would be getting it there without breaking the top off.

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** I have intended to get back over to the college and take a picture. I have not spoken to Dr. Loutsch since moving the Agave to her third floor classroom of Austin Hall in the Biology Lab. Dr. Jeanette Loutsch is the Professor who has been in charge. I'm just afraid the shortage of light will make it have a pitiful bloom.

**December 18**

Hi! Hugh and I went to the college yesterday

and he took three



pictures of the Agave. Now if I can get him to send them, I will forward them on to you. It would probably be 3 to 5 times that large.

Update: Jean is trying to get back to the college to take a photo of the flower.





<http://www.cactusexplorers.org.uk/journal6.htm>



*COCSS JANUARY 16th Program*

***“Landscapes and succulents of the Richtersveld  
-South Africa”  
by Mike and Rosario Douglas***



During our recent 2 month trip to southern Africa we visited the distinct succulent area known as the Richtersveld. Come share with us this arid area's beautiful landscapes with its surprising number of succulents.

**7 pm** at the Will Rogers Garden Center- Oklahoma City

**Refreshments by:** Rosario Douglas and Peggy Anglin



## ODD AND ENDS

*Photos by Mike Douglas*

Here are some photos Mike took after our last ice storm in mid December. Ice is a pain but it sure changes the landscape and the plants, providing many photo opportunities.

The photos were taken in our backyard and front garden.

Upper left: A holly with berries, upper right: an Echinocereus. Middle left our backyard, Middle right: A dry flower stalk. Lower right: Grass covered in ice.







Upper left: Icy Agave, Upper right: an Opuntia pad. Bottom photo: A cholla (*Opuntia spinosior*) joint covered in ice.

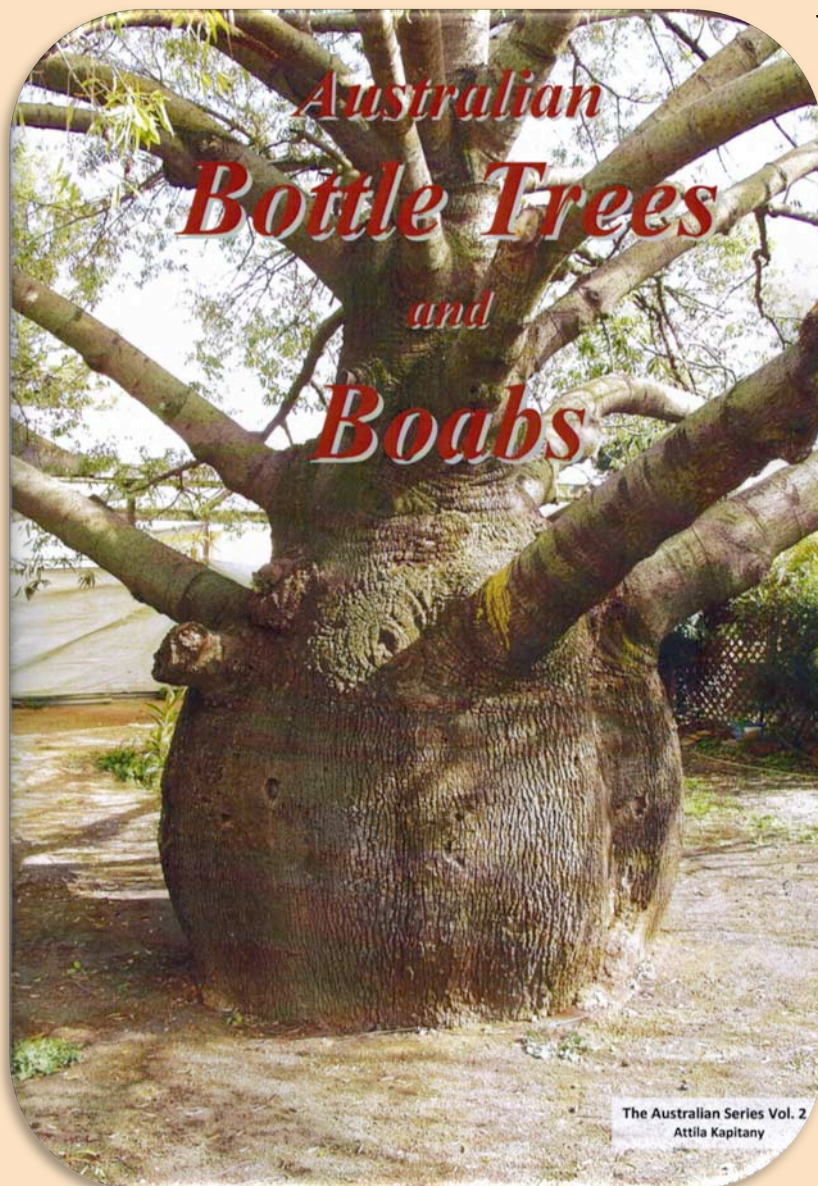


## BOOK REVIEW

By Rosario Douglas

**"Australian Bottle trees and Boabs" by Attila Kapitany**

This book is part of the Australian series Vol.2 by Attila Kapitany. The book is 39 pages and was apparently self-published in 2012.



The introduction nicely explains succulent/caudiciform trees and makes the point that these trees are not like most trees because they store much water in their stems. The author also notes that Baobs (Australian term for Baobab) or Bottle trees are generally found in semi-arid areas or areas with strong seasonality of rainfall. The booklet explains the meaning of terms like caudex, caudiciform, pachycaul, succulence and succulent.

The author describes the one and only species of *Adansonia* (*Adansoni gregorii*) found in Australia) and the Bottle trees of the genus *Brachyton*. Although there are 40 species of *Brachyton* (endemic to Australia), the booklet focuses on the three most common ones plus one new one. Bottle Trees have a bottle-shape stem or caudex and are succulent. Their fruits, flowers, distribution, general habitat and growth habit are described with many photographs.

Another section of the Booklet describes the differences between these two genera. Flower, leaves, fruits and stems are compared.

Towards the end of the booklet there are sections about cultivation of these trees as well as habitat rescue information. Finally the book ends with a section about fire recovery and conservation.

Every section has a good number of photographs illustrating all the subjects covered. You can check out this book from our club's library.

## SUCCULENT PLANTS

By Rosario Douglas

### Baobabs giants of the succulent world

The name Baobabs refers to a group of trees in the genus *Adansonia* that have succulent stems. The genus is in the Malvaceae family and consists of 8 species, six



of which are found in Madagascar. One is found in Australia, one is found in mainland Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The genus is named after the French naturalist Michael Adanson who described *Adansonia digitata*, one of the species found in mainland Africa. Source: Wikipedia

*Adansonia* species can be fairly tall (16-98 feet) and wide (33-36 feet in diameter). Radiocarbon dating has shown one particular specimen from Namibia to be at least 1275 years old (thus the oldest angiosperm). Source: Wikipedia

Baobabs live in semi-arid areas or areas with seasonal rainfall and for this reason they have developed the ability to store water in their stems. They can store up to 26,000 gallons. They also shed their leaves in the dry season. Wikipedia



Baobabs have been used by locals in a variety of ways. Some are sources of fiber, dye and fuel. Leaves of *A. digitata* are consumed as greens. Fruits are large and can weigh up to 3 pounds. In some African countries the fruit powder is used in food preparation. Ice cream is also made from the fruit. Source: Wikipedia

Upper left: Michael Adanson (1727-1806) Michael Adams. Painting by Jules Pizzeta, Wikipedia commons  
Lower left: *Adansonia gregorii*, the Australian Baobab. Photo by Nachoman au, Wikipedia commons  
Lower right: *Adansonia grandideeeri* from Madagascar. Photographer: Bernard Gagnon, Wikipedia commons.





*Adansonia digitata*, the African baobab, has always been of economic and social importance in the areas where they grow. Many parts of the tree are used as mentioned above and trade routes were often established along routes where baobabs (with their own names) grew. The pendant flowers are large (up to 20 cm in diameter) and they are pollinated by bush babies and bats.



Fibers from this plant are used to make rope and string to make baskets.



People don't usually cut baobabs given their importance, however elephants can inflict damage to these trees in their effort to get at the water. Mature trees can thus suffer significant damage from these attacks.



An example of their social significance is the use of baobab seeds in magical practices. It is believed that a concoction using the seeds will keep you safe from crocodile attack. Flowers are believed to be inhabited by spirits. Source: Kew Botanical gardens – *Adansonia digitata* at: <http://www.kew.org/plants-fungi/Adansonia-digitata.htm>

Upper left: *Adansonia digitata* fruit – photo taken in Senegal by Mike Douglas, Upper right: *A. digitata* flower – photo taken in Senegal by Mike Douglas. Middle left: Fruit of *A. digitata* – Photo by Alex Antener. Wikipedia commons, Lower right: *A. digitata* photographed in Namibia – photo by Rosario Douglas



Below are some examples of *Adansonia digitata* photographed by the author and her husband in 4 African countries. These old and very large trees never fail to impress.



Upper left: *Adansonia digitata* in Senegal, Upper right: *A. digitata* in Kruger National Park-South Africa. Lower left: *A. digitata* in Mahango Game Park-northern Namibia, Middle right: *A. digitata* and huts at Planet Baobab Hotel in Botswana, Lower right: *A. digitata* at sunset in Botswana at Planet Baobab. Photos by Michael and Rosario Douglas



## THE BOTANICAL CORNER

by Rosario Douglas

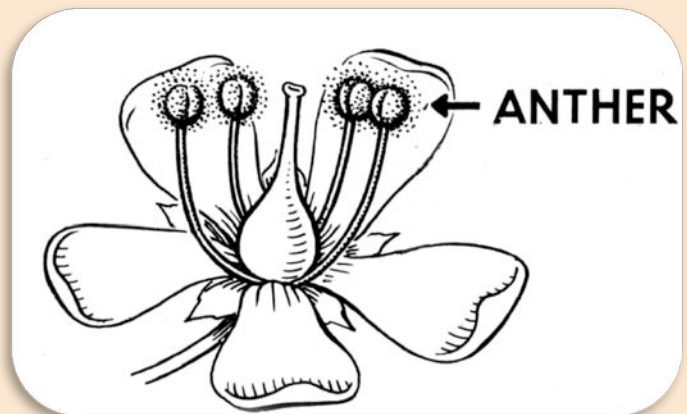


**Amethystinus**      violet or amethyst-colored

**Anacanthus**      without spines

**Ancistrophorus**      carrying hooks

**Anther**      The sac containing the pollen; the essential part of a stamen



Terms from a book by W. Taylor Marshall and R.S. Woods. The book is titled, **Glossary of succulent plant terms**, published in 1938. The Cactus Museum at [www.CactusMuseum.com](http://www.CactusMuseum.com), Wikipedia, A glossary put together by John Chippindale of Leeds England. Also terms from CactiGuide.com at <http://cactiguide.com/glossary/>.

Top Left: *Eileanthus amethystinus* from Wikipedia commons. A tropical orchid found in Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador.

Middle left: *Ancistrocactus sheeri* from Wikipedia commons. From an illustration by Mary Emily Eaton (1873-1961)

Bottom right: Anther illustration by Pearson Scott Foresman donated to the Wikimedia foundation. Wikipedia commons.