



# THE OFFSET

**OCTOBER 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:** Third 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****President's Message**  
October, 2014

It's finally cooling off some and hope we have a beautiful fall and not jump right into winter. I would like to thank everyone who was able to make the picnic in September. We had a great time, great food, and enjoyed having the club members over to socialize after a very hectic few months around our house. Tony and I are hopeful that next spring will bring some renewed energy to both of us -- our yard has never been so neglected and overgrown in any house we have ever lived in! Speaking of October, it's time to get those plants indoors whether a greenhouse, garage, or spread throughout your house. (We usually end up using all three but I think this year the greenhouse is going to be able to take care of most of them.) If you have any questions regarding some of your plants, don't hesitate to call any one of the members and pick their brains about your situation or particular plant.

October is also election of officers month and this will be a short business item to be taken care of either by our Vice President or our Treasurer after our guest speaker. Tony and I will be out of town and unable to attend the meeting but I am *thrilled* to report that Robert Millison has stepped up and volunteered to be our new secretary for 2015. Since we have had no other nominations or volunteers for any other office, the current slate of officers are up for re-election. We look forward to working with Robert this next year.

Just a note to let everyone know that Jim and Joyce Hochtritt have volunteered to host the Christmas Party this year, wanting to make it more of a treat for all of us and avoid having to have it at the Garden Center since we do our annual luncheon there during the Show and Sale. The exact date will be published soon.

I have no other news or mind bending facts or knowledge to bore everyone with so will end this and see you at the November meeting. Although I swore I was never again going to put myself thru it, Pufferfest is this week and I have found myself involved again after some pleading --- I don't think because "I'm that good" but because the person who was going to do what I have done in the past quite 3 weeks ago. It's all for the PUGS!

Niki Furrh  
President

## *COCSS Program*

*October 16 th*

### **Will Rogers Gardens- Planning for the Next Millennium**

Our October meeting will feature horticulturalist Melinda McMillan. Melinda is the new horticulture and garden manager for Oklahoma City.

Melinda's talk will address the planning being created to keep Will Rogers Gardens relevant to the citizens of Oklahoma City and to develop the next generation of garden enthusiasts.

Mr. Kenton Peters, the new education naturalist at the Will Rogers Gardens, will also be attending.

The program starts at 7 pm.



## CACTUS AND SUCCULENT HAPPENINGS IN THE REGION



**October 16<sup>th</sup>** Central Oklahoma Cactus and Succulent Society monthly meeting at 7:00 pm at the Will Rogers Garden Center.

Program: **Will Rogers Gardens - Planning for the next Millennium**  
by Melinda MacMillan

*Refreshments:* Fred Hill

**November 20<sup>th</sup>** Central Oklahoma Cactus and Succulent Society monthly meeting at 7:00 pm at the Will Rogers Garden Center.

Program: By Steve Owens, co-owner of Bustani Plant Farm in Stillwater. **Title: TBD**

*Refreshments:* Rosario Douglas

**December 11<sup>th</sup>** - **Christmas Party**

## ARTICLE OF THE MONTH *by Mike and Rosario Douglas*

### The island of La Gomera



Continuing our Canary Island adventure, we left the island of El Hierro and headed for the island of La Gomera. This sounds simple, yet it required taking two ferries. As mentioned in last month's article, the connections to El Hierro are not very good. To go from El Hierro to La Gomera, which are relatively close to each other, we had to take a ferry to Tenerife and then had to transfer to another ferry from a different company to go to La Gomera. Thus we arrived at our rural house *Los Patos* ("the ducks" in Spanish) after dark.



La Gomera has a population of 22,000 according to the 2006 census. It has better ferry connections to the other islands and tourists are able to come to the island on day trips from Tenerife, where many tourist resorts exist. We discovered this; the island was noticeably less crowded before the arrival of the morning ferry from Tenerife and after their departure in late afternoon.



Upper: *Aeonium gomerense*, endemic to La Gomera. Photographed at the National Park visitor center.

Middle: The Fred Olsen ferry arriving at La Gomera.

Bottom: The Naviera Armas ferry, leaving Tenerife.

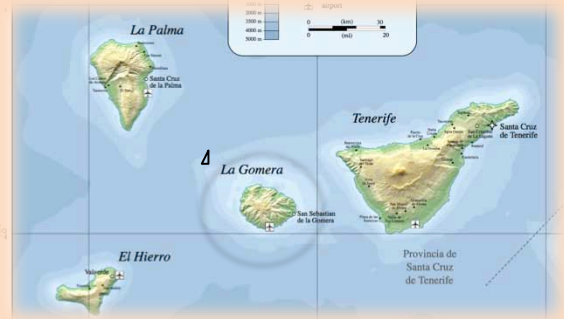
Above: San Sebastian de la Gomera where the main town and port are located. Note the ferry in port. Photos by Mike Douglas

La Gomera played a role in the explorations of Christopher Columbus, who in 1492, stopped at the port of San Sebastian to get last minute supplies of food and water before heading to the Americas. He made this a routine last stop for all of his trips to the Americas.

When visiting La Gomera one is impressed by both the moist and dark Laurisilva forest and by the impressive topography – the dry side having especially deep and steep canyons.

Some of the roads had large elevation changes, going from sea level to almost 4000 ft in a handful of miles. We noted that La Gomera does not have as extensive a Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*) forest as found on the other three islands we visited.

La Gomera has the largest protected area of laurisilva forest in all of the Canary Islands. Altos de Garajonay National Park protects a large part of this habitat and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1986. These forests are a result of enhanced fog drip due to the prevailing northeast trade winds impinging on the island's slopes.



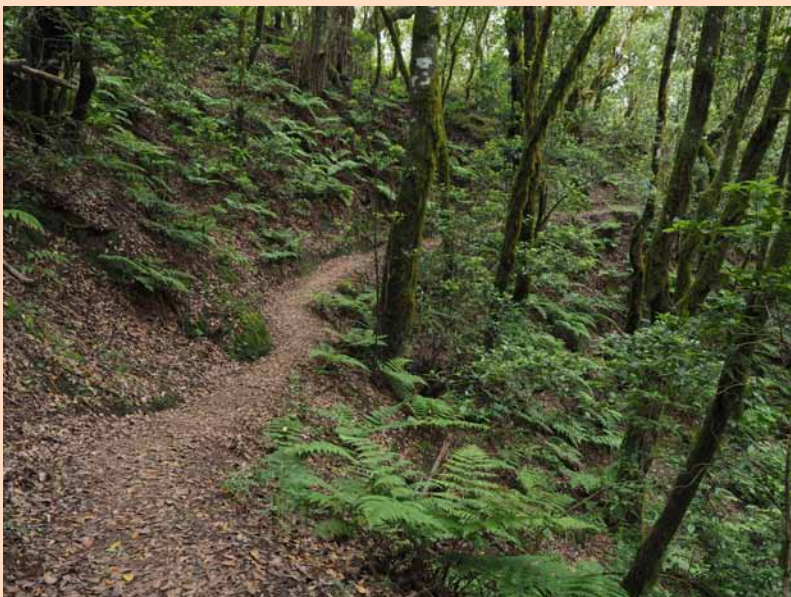
Upper and middle right: the location of La Gomera and a map of the island. Lower left: a volcanic “neck” – eroded remnants of a core of the volcano, on La Gomera. Lower right: sign at the entrance to the Altos de Garajonay National Park. Photos by Mike Douglas. Maps from Wikipedia Commons.



Upper left: Steep road and slopes.

Upper right: Views of San Sebastian from higher up, note the elevation change from sea level which happens in a relatively short driving distance.

Middle left: Road/trail in the Laurisilva forest near El Cedro. Note the height of the trees compared to the person.



Lower left: fern understory along a trail in the Laurisilva forest.

Photos by Mike and Rosario Douglas



Fog drip is especially important during the summer months when rain rarely falls. In one spot we witnessed the fog drip – with water drops falling off the trees and wetting the ground. The amount of water harvested from the fog is significant – there are several permanent streams on La Gomera due in large part to this fog drip. This moisture, plus the lower temperatures associated with higher elevations, provide the perfect habitat for large lichen-covered trees, ferns, and other moisture-loving plants. The parts of the islands that are outside of this fog/elevation belt tend to be much sunnier and drier.



During our 4-day stay on La Gomera we rented a fully furnished rural house in the hamlet of El Cedro. This turned out to be a good choice because El Cedro is walking distance to the Altos de Garajonay National Park and there were many trails that started very close to where we were staying. The fog and cloudiness on some of the days lowered the temperatures enough for us to use the wall heaters that were scattered throughout the house. On sunny days, we had nice views of the forested hills from our patio.

Every island has its culinary specialties and every island has a unique goat cheese. La Gomera is also known for a very special cheese spread called “*almogrote Gomero*”. This is a mix of olive oil, garlic, paprika and aged Gomero goat cheese. This combination produces a very tasty treat that is eaten with almost anything, but especially with the wrinkled potatoes (these are locally grown small potatoes that are boiled in very salty water – once out of the water the potatoes look wrinkled). Another local specialty is the *miel de palma* or palm honey which is extracted from the sap of the Canary Island Date Palm.



Upper left: our rural house (Los Patos), middle left: Mike in the kitchen (rare event), Lower right: Terracing and the road on the dry side of La Gomera. Some Canary Island palms are visible. Photos by Mike and Rosario Douglas.





A peculiarity specific to La Gomera is the “whistle language” (“sylbo” in Spanish). Due to the very steep island topography, shepherds developed sylbo to communicate with each other. This whistling allows communication up to 7 kilometers (~ 4 miles) under *ideal* conditions. You can see a demonstration at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CIRCjoICA>

The “shepherd’s jump”, although not exclusive to La Gomera, is also practiced here. This way of getting around a very steep landscape is unique to the Canary Islands and was adapted from the practice of the local inhabitants, the Guanches. A pointed pole of varying height is used to go down or up. This was primarily used by the shepherds while taking their animals through very steep terrain. You can see some videos about this interesting practice at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GVmdCfyr2o>



Upper left: A view of the road to a drier part of the island.

Upper right : Canary Island palms on abandoned terraces.

Lower left: A view of the terraces used for cultivation. Note the steep terrain rising to about 4000 ft.

Photos by Mike Douglas

Although there is some banana cultivation on La Gomera (mostly exported to Europe), tourism has become a very important source of income for the islanders. The main lure for tourists is the extensive network of hiking trails (ranging from very short to more than 10 miles long) through the Laurisilva forest. We noticed that there are many good signs on the trails to guide you through the forest. These trails tend to fill with day visitors coming from Tenerife, who arrive after 10AM on buses from the ferry port of San Sebastian.



During our stay we managed to visit almost every part of the island, as the roads, although narrow, are good, and with light traffic.

During our daily drives we continuously saw succulents. Aichryson and Aeonium were growing on the road cuts along the very narrow cobblestone road that led through the forest from El Cedro to the main highway. The area near the port of San Sebastian was sunnier and here were found large succulents such as *Euphorbia canariensis*. However, as on the other Canary Islands, succulents introduced centuries ago from the Americas (especially Agave and Opuntia (prickly pears) often dominated the drier landscapes. It was often a challenge to take photos of the native succulents without including some introduced ones as well. As for the native succulents, there are nine *Aeonium* species endemic to La Gomera and there are other succulent genera, such as *Greenovia* and *Monanthes* as well. Canary Island Palms were also present, commonly growing on the sunnier parts of the island - though they could be found almost anywhere.

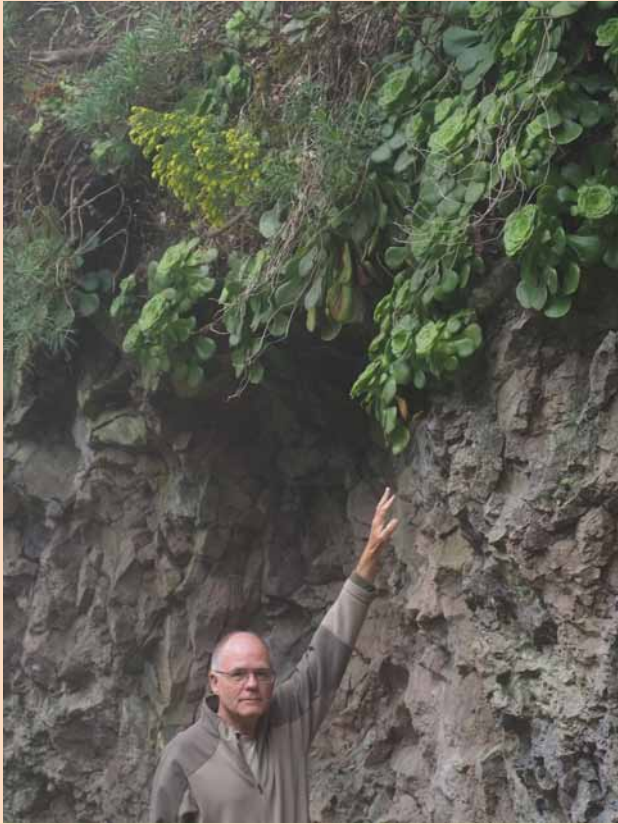


Middle left: a common rock wall lizard (*Gallotia caesaris gomerae*)

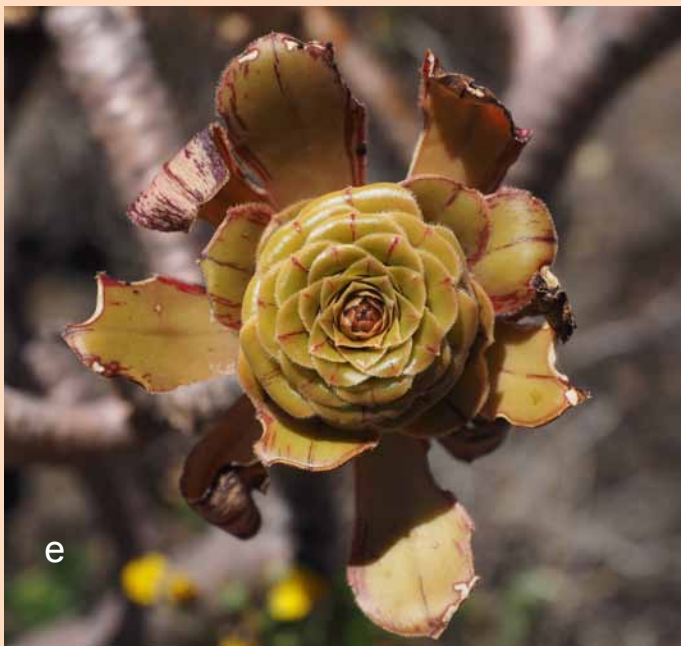
Upper right: View of the road. There are Aeoniums and *Greenovia* growing on the rocks.

Lower left: This was the road we had to drive on in order to get to our house. Believe it or not it is a two-way cobblestone road.

Photos by Mike Douglas

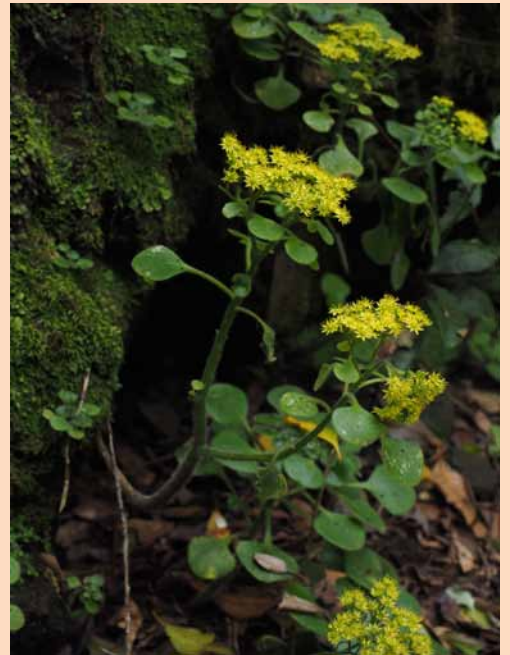


All photos show the endemic *Aeonium subplanum*. This *Aeonium* is relatively large, some were barely accessible. Photos by Mike and Rosario Douglas



- a- *Aeonium decorum*
- b- Closer view of *Aeonium decorum*
- c- *Aeonium castello-paivae*
- d- *Aeonium appendiculatum*
- e- *Aeonium rubrolineatum*

All of these *Aeonium* are endemic to La Gomera.



Different views of *Aichryson laxum*. Note that it can grow on trees as well.

Photos by Mike Douglas



Upper left and upper right : *Greenovia diplocycla* in different states of hydration.

Lower left: *Euphorbia canariensis* pendant on a cliff.

Lower right: A flowering *Monanthes amygdros*, an endemic. Note: the ring is size 6

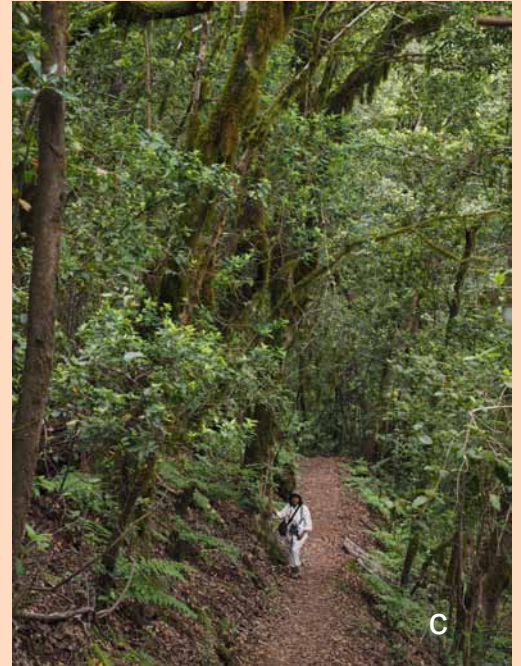


a

Our secluded house, surrounded by native forest and so close to the National Park, made for a very pleasant stay. Good roads, scenic views and many interesting plants added to our enjoyment of La Gomera.



b



c



d

### TO BE CONTINUED...

The last part to our series of short articles will describe the island of La Palma.

a- Our house near El Cedro

b- *Senecio kleinia*

c- Rosario in the Laurisilva forest

d -*Monanthes laxiflora* .

Photos by Mike Douglas

## SUCCULENT PLANTS by Rosario Douglas



# Succulents from the Canary Islands of Tenerife, El Hierro, La Gomera and La Palma

## The genus *Monanthes*

This genus is comprised of about 10 species of very small perennial succulents in the *Crassula* family. Its members are found primarily in the Canary Islands, the Savage islands, and on Madeira.

Most species are found on the island of Tenerife. The name comes from Greek, meaning single flower. Plants can be herbaceous or small shrubs with dense rosettes of tiny succulent leaves.

Source: Wikipedia and Succulent plants of the Canary Islands, identification easy guide by Joel Lode.

*Monanthes amygdros*, an endemic from La Gomera. The photo at the top shows my 6 size ring.

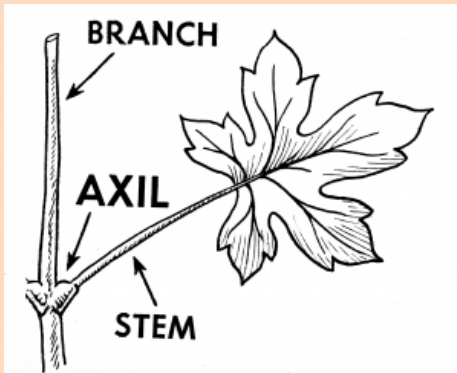
Photos by Mike Douglas





## THE BOTANICAL CORNER

by Rosario Douglas



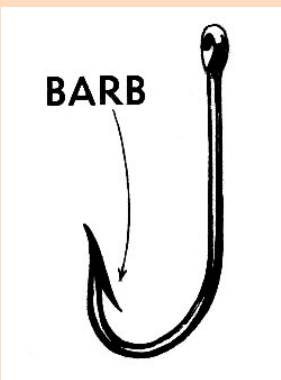
**Axil** The upper angle formed between the stem or branch and any other branch, leaf, tubercle, or other organ arising from them

**Azureus** Sky blue



**Baccate** Berry-like; pulpy throughout. A plant that bears berries is said to be baccate.

**Balsamiferus** Producing an aromatic substance by incision or flowing spontaneously



**Barb** A hair or bristle ending in a hook or double hook

**Basal** At the base of an organ

**Basilaris** Pertaining to or arising from the base

Berry: Creative commons wikipedia attribution 2.5 Pilosocereus azureus from the Pilosocereus gallery online: <http://www.cactus-succulents.com/pilosocereus-collection.html>. Barb public domain Wikipedia. Axil figure from the web.