

On the Dry Side

JULY 2013

CCCSS June Meeting Recap

6/9/2013

President Charles Varni opened the June 9, 2013, meeting of CCCSS shortly after 2:00 P.M. in the meeting room of the San Luis Obispo City/County Library. A standing-room-only turnout included approximately thirty first-time visitors who introduced themselves and received a free succulent. Many of our visitors attended because of the favorable impression they got from interacting with our folks at our show and sale. Our members who provided snacks for the meeting were thanked later by donations from Gene Schroeder who had plants for sale. Thank you all, guests, snack providers and Gene!

Our trip coordinator, Jim Harlow, was not able to attend the meeting, but details of the trip appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Rob Skillin announced that he has bags of coir for sale at \$10 each; contact Rob if you wish to purchase coir at less than cost. Terry Excell, newsletter editor, reports that nearly all members are now receiving *On the Dry Side* via e-mail. Terry says that some servers, notably Yahoo, are prone to putting "mass mailings" (like our newsletter) into a spam folder. If you add her to your address book, you should be able to receive her mailings, so please do so! Charles and Joann Spotts were in attendance and said that the second auction of their spectacular succulents will be held in mid-October. Stay tuned!



President Varni then spent considerable time recognizing and thanking the members of the committees that planned and manned (and, definitely, "womaned") the show and sale. I believe I can speak for all the volunteers when I say that we worked hard but with joy and camaraderie, and our efforts were rewarded in a huge way – for each of us personally and for the club's coffers. It was truly a team effort and we are proud of the results.

Charles also thanked the judges for their service and for being flexible enough to do all but the special-category judging on Friday evening, ensuring that the doors opened on time this year – just one of many modifications made for this year's event that made it more enjoyable for both patrons and workers alike. Lastly, Rob thanked Charles for taking over as chair of the show and sale. Charles took it on cheerfully and wasn't at all bashful about stepping in the middle and figuring out what to do. (As if!)

Rob explained how the raffles are conducted and described the raffle plants and the plants on the Brag Table. Related to that, Rob explained that caudiciform refers to a plant with a fat part – the caudex.

Gene then handed out the special awards with certificates and ribbons, along with the permanent trophies. There were fifty-four rookie entries this year ... this is great participation and we hope even more rookies and novices will enter next year.

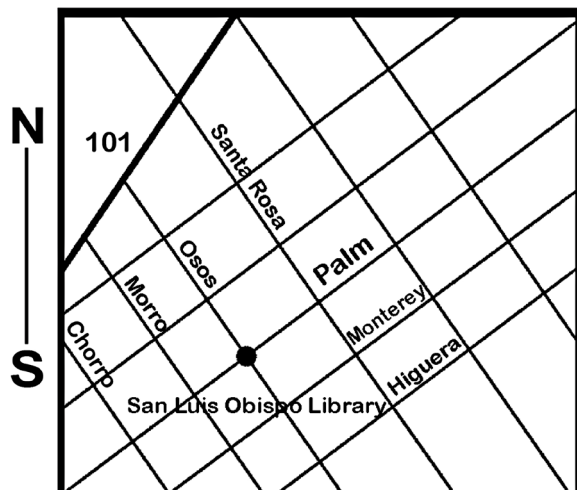
After the break our experts (Gene, Rob, Markus, Kathie and various other "chimers-in") presented their program, "Succulents 101, An Introduction to Growing Succulents." The program followed a loose question-and-answer format, and the following notes consist of the gems I was able to extract from the dialogue.

- There is no botanical definition of "succulent." A succulent has the ability to withstand a lack of water.
- Gene's favorite saying is All cactus are succulents, but not all succulents are cactus.
- A cactus plant has needles and an areole structure.
- To re-root *aeonium crassula*, allow the stems to develop roots for three to four weeks, then plant.
- There are many on-line resources for care of specific plants, and CCCSS has an extensive library of relevant books.
- Soil: There is no secret soil mix! Commercial cactus mix is generally too rich for succulents. It was suggested that commercial mixes be mixed 50/50 with DryStall or pumice (or the like). Richer soil retains water longer and may cause rot in sensitive succulents. The addition of pumice allows water to flow through more readily, preventing the soil from becoming soggy. In very hot regions, such as the Paso area, a slightly richer soil mix may be better. There are so many micro-climates on the Central Coast that we need to experiment with what works best where we are located. It's the same with the plants themselves – they have adapted to widely varying habitats. Some get very little (if any) moisture from rain, while others exist in a somewhat damp environment. Some plants are winter growers and some grow in summer. Become familiar with the needs of your individual plants in your individual micro-climate.
- Watering: In a greenhouse, all plants can be watered at once. Otherwise, there are various factors to consider, such as the plant's original habitat and water availability, growing season and dormancy, type of soil, size of pot, etc. – a bigger pot doesn't dry out as fast, and a glazed pot will probably keep the soil too moist for succulents. Plants with more leaves require more water. If a plant is wilting with sagging leaves, water it! Top dressing can hold the soil in place while watering. It was suggested that plants be grouped by water requirements. One person uses two differently colored plants tags to differentiate between winter and summer growers.
- Kathie Matsuyama showed us what she has in her tool kit. It includes chopsticks for cleaning and propping, tweezers – long ones, a toothbrush, window screen for covering the holes in pots (keep soil in, bugs out), a good-quality trowel, plant tags, containers for debris, pruning shears, bonsai tools. Gene suggested using pieces of aluminum mini-blinds for tags. Windmill Farms reportedly has plant tags. (I went online and found a lot of different kinds of plant tags at Amazon.com, along with long tweezers, including a pair of bent tweezers that look like they would be really handy for picking out debris).
- You can Google any plant name and find many referrals.
- Cleaning Plants: Should dead parts be removed? Opinions vary, but the plant doesn't care unless the debris is harboring pests. And what about bugs? Spider mites can be done in with rubbing alcohol. You can use a systemic product such as Bayers or try rubbing alcohol or blast bugs off with water.

The meeting was adjourned after the various raffles. The Board straightened up the room and left without a formal meeting.

Respectfully submitted
Carol Harlow Moss, Secretary

NEXT MEETING:



**Sun. July 14 at
2:00 pm**

**San Luis Obispo
Public Library**

**995 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo**

Membership Renewal Time
Our year starts July 1st

Dues are:

\$20 for individuals

\$25 for families

\$40 for business members

(allows a business size ad in
the Newsletter).

See Maggie to renew for 2013/2014.

OR Mail to:

CCCCS

c/o Maggie Wagner

780 Merced Street

Pismo Beach, CA, 93449

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH WENDELL (WOODY) MINNICH

"40 Years of Field Work Around the World"



Woody, as he is commonly called, has been in the cactus hobby for some 45 years and has become well known for his participation in many of the cactus and succulent clubs. He is an honorary life member of nine clubs as well as a life member of CSSA (Cactus & Succulent Society of America.) He has served in almost all positions of leadership from president, to newsletter editor, to show chairman and so on. He is also known for his extensive field work studying primarily the cactus family. He has traveled throughout Africa, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, Socotra, the United States and Yemen. From these trips he has developed an extensive knowledge of the cactus family as well as many of the other succulent genera.

Woody is also known for his many presentations. His photography is considered to be special and his commentary very entertaining and educational. He is a recognized international speaker and has spoken for plant conventions - organizations all over the USA, as well as in England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and Mexico. Woody has also authored a number of articles for various newsletters, the CSSA journal and his photographs are well published. Woody is the creator-originator of the first color version of the CSSA journal "Cacti and Succulents for the Amateur" that also featured show plants, shows and the growers of the pictured plants.

He is also known for his cactus and succulent nursery, Cactus Data Plants. CDP was started in 1975 and is still in operation today. Cactus Data Plants specializes in show specimens and rare cacti and other succulents with particular emphasis in *Ariocarpus*, *Astrophytum*, *Mammillaria*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Turbinicarpus*, *Melocactus*, *Copiapoa*, *Fouquieria*, *Pachypodium*, *Euphorbia*, *Cyphostemma*, *Adenium* and *Adenia*.

Woody and his wife Kathy now live in the beautiful mountains south of Santa Fe New Mexico in a region called Cedar Grove. He has a small 1,200 sq. ft. greenhouse where he grows his unique plants. He is always on the move and travels frequently to do presentations and shows throughout the western United States. Woody is the proud parent of three children, Leah, Denver and Sarah, all of whom are now grown and out in the big world. Woody is also the proud grandparent of three grandsons, Indiana, Ashton and Logan. He is a retired high school teacher of 32 years and he taught Graphic Arts, Architecture, Art and Health.

Plants: Woody will be bringing a nice selection of plants for you to purchase.

For more information contact Woody Minnich at:

Cactus Data Plants, 4 Vida Del Agua, Edgewood, New Mexico 87015-6517

Telephone: (505) 281-5884; Email: cactusdata@msn.com

PLANT OF THE MONTH

THE PACHYFORM CUCURBITS

BY ROB SKILLIN

Excerpted from A Guide to Growing Pachycaul and Caudiciform Plants by Philippe de Vosjoli

Among the easiest and most satisfying to grow of all the caudiciforms are the members in the squash and cucumber family: the Cucurbitaceae. This family is the probably the most caudiciform rich, with several hundred species forming tuberous caudices. It also offers a great range of form, character, and size, although the vegetative growth of most species is very similar and typically consists of trailing tendrilled vines with lobed or dissected palmate leaves. Most caudiciform cucurbits are ideal beginner's plants, easily grown and propagated, that have generally been neglected by the horticultural trade. Few plants are more satisfying to grow either as greenhouse plants or as houseplants to be maintained outdoors in the summer or indoors near a sunny window. A number of species will thrive under bright artificial lighting and some will fare well in desert terraria.

One of the benefits of many of the caudexed cucurbits is that they are pretty rugged. Compared to many other caudiciforms, they are generally less prone to rot. Some of the South African and North American species, such as *Kedrostis africana* and *Ibervillea* species, are somewhat cold tolerant and, with some protection, will survive a mild frost. However, the great majority will require heat in the 80's and bright light during the growth stage. A few, such as *Gerrardanthus macrorrhizus* and *Momordica rostrata* will grow well even in partial shade, although they usually will not flower under those conditions. With few exceptions, such as *Marah macrocarpa* from the western U.S., most of the caudexed cucurbits are summer growers and require a drier winter dormancy.

Cephalopentandra ecirrhusa-Northeastern Africa

Many hobbyists rank this species as their favorite caudexed cucurbit, and after having seen large imports, I would tend to agree. The ontogeny of *Cephalopentandra* reminds me a little of *Dioscorea*. They start off thin, then become subglobose with bumps and ripples, and finally spread out, ending up as broad-based cones, textured by multiple rounded tubercles. The caudex can grow to about two feet in diameter.

Coccinia trilobata-Eastern Africa

Coccinia are generally among the most rewarding of all the cucurbits to grow and of these, *C. trilobata* is one of the best, with smallish leaves and vines that are easily controlled through pruning. The caudex has textural character and can grow to more than 15 inches in diameter. A good candidate for a sunny window.

Corallocarpus bainesii-Eastern/Southern Africa

This popular cucurbit develops a conical aboveground caudex that develops a bark with raised white incrustations. I haven't been able to find information on the maximum caudex size but it does not appear to grow very large. The leaves are pubescent and the vines are invasive if not kept pruned or trained on a trellis. Good for bonsai presentation.

Cyclantheropsis parviflora-Eastern/Southern Africa

This rarely offered species is one of the best of the pachycaul cucurbits, developing a partially exposed rounded base and a thick main stem from which spring many long, tendrilled vines with beautiful, dark-green leaves that look polished. The vines can extend for 15 or more feet and will require pruning or a trellis for display. The largest imports I've seen had a base the size of a soccer ball.

Dendrosicyos socotrana-Socotra

Here we have another oddity from the remote island of Socotra, a member of the squash family that becomes a massive tree up to 18 feet tall and up to three feet in diameter. The trunk becomes covered with a thin, cream-white bark that provides a dramatic contrast to the bristly, gray-green leaves. Thanks to the success of a few botanical gardens and specialist nurseries, this rare species is now occasionally offered for sale.

Gerrardanthus macrorrhizus-Southern Africa

This fine species forms an aboveground caudex that can reach two or more feet in diameter from which spread long tendrilled vines with large shiny green leaves. One of the more attractive of the caudexed cucurbits. It will fare well if grown near a brightly-lit window and can retain leaves most of the year if kept warm. It has been successfully grown outdoors in milder areas of southern California.

Ibervillea sonora-Mexico

A species with a conical to bottle-shaped caudex, often partially aboveground, with a main thickened stem that is usually perennial. This growth pattern allows for a nice bonsai presentation and offers an appealing alternative to the globose or flying saucer-shaped caudex of many cucurbits.

Kedrostis africana-Southern Africa

This is Africa's version of an *Ibervillea*. With age, it forms either a large, globular to fat flying saucer type caudex or a more elongated branched caudex up to 20 inches in diameter. The leaves are dark-green and finely dissected if grown in full sun. This is tough plant that can be grown outdoors even in areas with mild frosts. As with many cucurbits, its main flaw is the invasive nature of the vines. Fortunately, they will die back during winter dormancy. To obtain a large caudex, it should be allowed to grow buried for several years before raising. Exposed caudices can acquire a grey, pewter-like appearance.

Momordica rostrata-Eastern Africa

This great cucurbit forms an aboveground, dark green, conical, pleated caudex up to two feet tall and about a foot wide from which emerge numerous tendrilled vines with pinnate leaves. If unpruned the bases of the vine stems become thick, branch-like structures. The combination of smooth rippled caudex, thick branches, and roots can result in very sculptural forms. One of the most satisfying to grow of the pachyforms and very adaptable as a houseplant.

Odosicyos bosseri-Madagascar

In the wild, the large caudex, up to three feet in diameter, of this cucurbit grows mostly underground with just the upper portion becoming partially exposed. Once exposed, the caudex will often develop a neat, knobby bark. It is a rare and desirable species still poorly represented in collections.

Zygosityos pubescens-Madagascar

Formerly in the genus *Xerosicyos*, this neat cucurbit combines a squat, ridged caudex, up to a foot in diameter, with small-leaved creeping vines. Most of the rounded base normally grows underground but it can be partially raised and exposed. The thickened primary stems are perennial. Pruning will help control the many thin vines. One of the top five caudexed cucurbits.



Cephalopentandra ecirrhusa



Momordica rostrata



*Gerrardanthus
macrorrhizus*
grown in coir mix
by Rob Skillin



*Corallocarpus
bainesii*

*Cyclantheropsis
parviflora*



*Zygosicyos
pubescens*



The Digital Library

by Gene Schroeder

This feature took last month off but Terry put newsletter links to some good sources for basic succulent culture. There are many more especially if you search genera specific websites. A quick search on cactus-mall.com under international specialists groups will lead you to many of these. Specialist groups are treasure troves of knowledge and by looking at a site's links page, you may be led to much more that will help you.

Good examples, beginning with "A" would include

- Ariocarpus* -- <http://www.living-rocks.com/> -- check cultivation & habitat
- Adromischus* -- <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/adrodisp/> -- all you could wish to know about them
- Asclepiads* -- http://www.asclepidarium.de/English/index_e.htm -- all about stapeliads

On line Journals are one of my favorite reads

New postings include Cactus Explorers No.8

http://www.cactusexplorers.org.uk/Explorer8/Cactus%20Explorer%208_complete.pdf

and Xerophillia No.5 <http://www.xerophillia.ro> -- don't worry, it's bilingual including English.

And lastly – Schuetziana – The Gymnocalycium on-line journal <http://www.schuetziana.org/index.php>

---And don't forget to look at <http://centralcoastcactus.org/library.html> where you can view our own library and even download your own searchable list.

If you would like Gene to bring a specific library book in to the meeting, please contact him at:

leschroeder@earthlink.net 929-2161

CULTIVATION CORNER

COIR FOR SALE

Rob Skillin has 8-2 cu.ft. bags of coir still available (coir is an all-natural coconut fiber). It's the loose kind – not a brick. Very easy to use and he thinks it's the best organic component for potting mixes. He is selling them at his cost - \$10/bag. If interested call him at 709-3033 and he will bring them to the meeting.

Coir is suitable for any type of succulent, just mix it in an appropriate proportion with the coarse drainage material. If you want to know more check out on article by Mark Dimmit in the June 2013 Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. www.tucsoncactus.org

Why Acidified Water Helps Our Plants

Have you wondered why your plants have been looking better with the acidified water? (Approximately 1 tbs. white vinegar/gal. of water for most areas). It has to do with nutrient absorption in the root system. If your plants are looking yellow, the nutrients needed may not be available on a microscopic level.

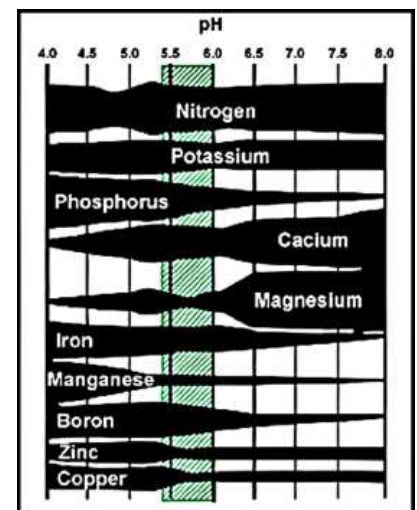
As the chart demonstrates, the optimum substrate pH is between 5.4 to 6.... The substrate includes the soil particles and water so you also have to be aware of the type of material in your potting mix; peat breaks down giving a very acidic pH whereas bark is less acidic. Inorganic materials such as perlite, vermiculite and volcanic rock are neutral.

If you want more information, these two websites go into detail.

Plant nutrition and pH:

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7351&pg=al&ak=E

For the process of testing the substrate pH: <http://www.pourthruinfo.com/>



Succulents 101 – Reading Between the Lines

BY GENE SCHROEDER

After our July panel discussion, I fielded some questions that made me think about the entire dialogue.

As a group, we panel members, though helpful, may have confused some of you through over-simplification. That's excusable because we all wish to make things seem easy so we won't scare off new succulent owners.

An example of that is the answer to "how often do you water"? Our answers were varied but most of you probably wrote down "once a week". Here is where it becomes important to "read between the lines"

What does "X" mean when he/she says "water once a week"?

A clearer meaning can be found by decoding the statement to where "water" means "look at plant and make a watering decision". This distinction allows us to consider the other variables such as "winter grower vs. summer grower" or "dormant vs. growing". The truth is that the best growers are the best observers and the key to proper watering is completely tied to observation of the plant's status and needs. Weekly or even more frequent observation will greatly improve your results. Un-needed water is the primary killer of succulent plants.

How do you best "read between the lines"? Be specific about your plant and its environment then tell us what you have observed. With this additional bit of information, the experienced grower will be able give a much better answer instead of a generalized oversimplification.

Tweezers

By request, these are websites that have tweezers at a reasonable price.

<http://www.harborfreight.com/4-piece-tweezers-set-32381.html>

<http://www.hobbytools.com/contents/en-us/d9.html>

There is a site where I (Terry Excell) can purchase a packaged set of 6, 8, 10 & 12 inch long tweezers in bulk. If there is enough interest, I can order them for the club at \$8 to \$10 a set. I purchased a similar set at last years CSSA show and love them!.

Upcoming Events

July 20

CCCCS volunteer appreciation trip to Ojai. See blurb below.

July 26-28

Orange County Cactus & Succulent Society Summer Show and Sale. Fri/Sat 9-5, Sun noon to 4pm. Anaheim United Methodist Church, 1000 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA. For info: 949-212-8417.

August 17-18

28th Annual Intercity Show & Sale, 9am to 5pm. LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. For info: Tom Glavich: 626-798-2430 or John Matthews: 661-297-5364.

August 31

Huntington Botanical Gardens Succulent Symposium. Info: 626-405-2160.

September 22

Long Beach Cactus Club Annual Plant Auction. Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, CA. For info: 310-922-6090

November 2-3

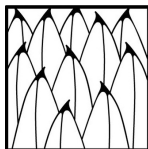
San Gabriel Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale. Hours: 9-4. LA County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave. Arcadia, CA. For info: Tom Glavich: 626-798-2430 or John Matthews: 661-297-5364.

T-SHIRTS AND CAPS

If you would like to purchase a club t-shirt or hat, please contact Susan (aka. "Braids") braids97@sbcglobal.net
And she will bring your item to the meeting. The shirts are \$10 and the hats are \$12. XL 2012 show shirts are \$5.

Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society
On the web at: <http://centralcoastcactus.org/>

CLUB OFFICERS/ CONTACT INFORMATION



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709-3033

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Pat Gilson
hupt74@att.net
481-5596

A one time free newsletter will be mailed out to those who sign in at the monthly meetings. After this dues must be paid in order to start a subscription.

CCCCSS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION TRIP TO OJAI

- On July 20th, a Saturday the CCCSS will take a 'Thank You' trip to Ojai.
- The seats costs are as follows:
- \$15 for members who volunteered at the S&S and any family members,
- \$25 for other CCCSS members and any family members.
- \$35 for other guests of the club if any seats remain unpaid for by club members after July 15th.
- Checks must accompany requests.

REVISED ITINERARY

- 7:00A pick up at Big 5 at Madonna Plaza
- 7:20 A pick up at car pooling area (near Carters) in Pismo Beach Outlet Center
- First stop at Desert Images - Wholesale prices
- Lunch - fast food in Ojai or "Brown bag" (BYO)
- Second stop at The Australian Nursery - 10% off retail
- THIRD stop at Terra Sol Nursery - 10% off retail
- 3:30 leave for home

Mail checks (CCCCSS) to Jim Harlow
3575 Cloudy Meadow Rd
Templeton 93465
info: [805 550 6660](tel:8055506660)

Please include with your check which pickup location - Madonna or Pismo

NAME TAGS

Name tags for members who joined CCCSS in January or later are in the accordion file at the front desk. If you don't have a name tag or would like a new one, please contact Carol at:

carol.moss@gmail.com

She will put one in the file for you the following meeting. Carol will put a personal succulent photo on it if you send one to her.

Request for Help AIDS Memorial Garden

Contact information:

Lucas Carlow

(805) 806-5753

lucas.carlow@yahoo.com

Epis for the Taking 6/10/2013

A Los Osos resident contacted the club to let us know she has some epiphytes to share. Her name is:
Jane Weidner-528-2765

IT IS VACATION TIME!

Your membership in the CCCSS entitles you to a California Garden Clubs, Inc. membership card. The cards will be at the front entrance desk at the meeting this Sunday, so pick one up if you are interested.

For a list of California gardens that offer CGCI members a discount go to: californiagardenclubs.com.

PLANTERA PRIMAL

SOLAR ELECTRIC FIRED STONEWARE CERAMICS

CHARLES VARNI

OCEANO, CALIFORNIA

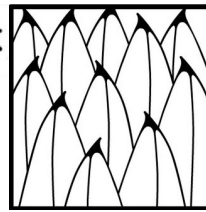
805.459.6698

WWW.VARNI.ORG

CHARLES@VARNI.ORG



Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society



We Have Four Locations To Serve You

224 Tank Farm Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.543.3751 • FAX 805.543.0613

1108 Paso Robles Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446
805.238.1177 • FAX 805.238.3527

1079 El Camino Real
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805.489.5514 • FAX 805.473.7263

1920 N. Broadway
Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.922.2737 • FAX 805.922.6982

15% FOR CCCSS MEMBERS



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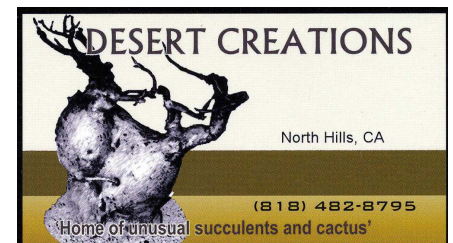
CLAYWORKS POTTERY



Richard Rowe
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www.galleryatthenetwork.com



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OUR BUSINESS
MEMBERS!**