



PHILADELPHIA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

founded 1942

www.philacactus.org

NEW MEETING OF 2021-2022 SEASON

SEPT 19, 2021

11:45 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87923567192?pwd=SkdJbkswRFU5ZUZTVWdqYnFit0dlZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 2356 7192 Passcode: 068129

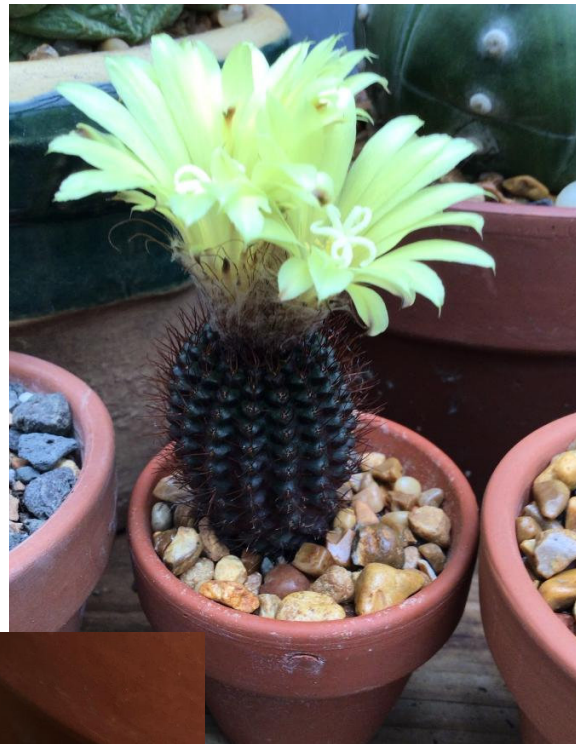
Jeff Sedwin will be speaking on plants at the Denver Botanic Gardens

Tim Day is speaking on Mangaves

Member show & tell ..

Some of the cactus and succulents are looking great so please share pictures. If your connection is weak please send to Tim Day at

philadelphia.cactus@gmail.com



Pictures from
Jeff Sedwin's
garden



Potting Soil Components: Calcined Clay / Turface

By Bob Stewart NCCSS

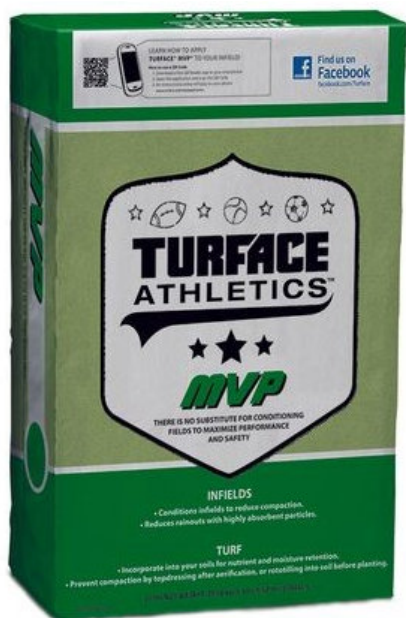
The Eastern Spine
Newsletter of the National Capital
Cactus & Succulent Society
Volume XLVIII, No. 7 September 2021

I am always playing around with potting mixes for my cacti and other succulents, seeking the mix that can be used for everything, and of course, never finding it. People always ask where they can buy a good commercial potting mix for their succulents, and the answer is always the same, there is no such thing, you have to make your own.



While a potting soil can be a single component, it is usually several components blended together. One component that I have used over the years is calcined clays. Think kitty litter. However the calcined clays I use have been heated to a high temperature and unlike most kitty litter products, they do not turn to mush when they get wet. With the ability to absorb water but maintain their shape and integrity, calcined clays make a good potting soil component.

In the last several decades these heat-treated calcined clays have found an increasing use in athletic areas to keep soils dry and provide better footing. More recently, they have begun to be used for landscape soil improvement. Currently, calcined clays are used in soil mixes for growing various potted plants, including bonsai and cannabis.



The calcined clay product I initially used was called MVP from the company Turface Athletics. It improves the aeration of a potting mix and provides a reservoir for plant nutrients from applied fertilizers. However, the primary use intended for the MVP product is use on athletic fields, thus it has not made its way into the general gardening supply chain and only available in large quantities via landscape supply companies. The Turface Athletics Company now has several additional calcined clay products, but again they are targeted for athletic field use, or the commercial landscape industry.

I have recently obtained a bag of their new "**All Sport**" product that has a smaller sized clay particle than the MVP. I am evaluating this product now in comparison with the MVP product.

Succulents are black market target around the world

A recent article in the Architectural Digest reported on the “thriving international black market that’s put endangered succulents in the hands of poachers.” Succulent-themed items are a recent fad. Have you noticed the succulent and cacti-themed items in department stores and on Amazon recently? Want a succulent-themed chime for your deck? How about succulent & cacti-themed dish towels and pot holders for the kitchen? There are live succulent wall hangings and live succulent wreaths for your front door. And let’s not get started on succulent & cacti-themed clothing. However, many of the actual living plants are in trouble. As we succulent growers know, we always want new, unusual plants. There are always some collectors who want and can afford the best and the rarest. This has created a huge black market for these plants, especially rare ones.

This market attracts poachers on both the western and eastern hemispheres to make easy money ripping up protected plants from their natural habitats, and selling them to middle-men who then put the plants into the hands of buyers around the globe. Some of the rarest plants command mind-boggling sums of money.

The poaching problem is particularly pronounced in South Africa and there have been many recent “high-profile” arrests. “South Korean poachers were caught in Cape Town with 60,000 illegally harvested *Conophytum* succulents.” Here in the states, a Los Angeles nursery’s plant procurer attempted to illegally take 8,000 *Conophytum* plants out of South Africa. After getting caught, he was slapped with a two-year jail sentence and banned from ever entering South Africa again—good enough! Of course local South African farmers, always looking for much needed extra cash, are often tempted to assist poachers locating these plants. GPS, that wonderful technology that has helped advance so many fields in our modern lives, has been put to nefarious use pin-pointing the location of many rare plants. Thus no doubt making life so much easier for poachers on a schedule to collect as many plants as possible as quickly as possible to get out of a country before they are discovered by the authorities.

Over a 1,000 rare cacti were stolen from Chile in early 2020. An organization called “Operation Atacama” located the plants in Italy and was able to get the cacti returned. It was estimated that the black market value of those plants was more than a million dollars. “University of Alabama political ecology professor Jared Margulies told *Business Insider* “

Many of the succulents currently experiencing collecting pressure over the world are desired by very passionate collectors — these are plants that require some level of expertise and care to keep alive outside of their natural habitats. They are much less commonly ending up on a casual hobbyist’s windowsill.”” Fortunately, authorities are working hard to prevent the theft of plants and to prosecute the guilty parties. According to the New York Times, some influential, ethical collectors are encouraging “more transparency in cactus sourcing.”

These activities at such huge numbers of plants stolen from an area threaten entire ecosystems. Some plants can only be found in small areas, a few square miles at best due to their specific habitat requirements. Poaching on such a massive scale may cause the extinction of some species that simply can't recover from such destruction. So many plant species in the world are struggling with habitat loss, wild fires, climate change, etc. and now poaching, which is being conducted at such commercial, whole-scale levels of greed that it puts the final nail into some plant populations' coffin.

The article concludes with reassurance that many succulents available in the marketplace have been acquired legally and ethically. But it behooves buyers to question where and from whom a plant was obtained, because in the world of "ultra-rare succulents" you no doubt will find "sketchy specimens from Chile and South Africa" available. It is up to the collector to question plant sources because poachers' greed is threatening our planet's bio-diversity.

To read the entire article, please visit

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/a-black-market-for-rare-succulents-is-emerging-across-the-globe>

(Sharon Smith Delisle, Editor CCSS)

Habitat destruction ...

Couple fined \$18,000 for bulldozing dozens of Joshua trees to make way for home

<https://news.yahoo.com/couple-fined-18-000-bulldozing-205804305.html>

OTHER STUFF

San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society

<https://www.sgvcss.com/>

Link to their newsletter

South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society

<https://southcoastcss.org/>

link to their next monthly meeting, plant of the month, etc

“Ethical Plant Shopping + CITES”

Some of us may want to buy plants on the internet. Gary Duke and CactusQuest (Hunter) have produced a short video to help you be legal in your shopping. Both he and Hunter have been accused of having collected specimens in their collections, which is the impetus for this video. Gardening and plant buying is increasing significantly during this pandemic.

Gary Duke, a member of SCCSS since 1984, was interviewed by Hunter of Cactus Quest continuing the conversation about ethical plant shopping and why as a collector conservation is something to consider. Gary has been both exploring habitats, collecting and growing cacti & succulents for over 40 years and has watched as the culture around “field collected” or poached plants has changed.

<https://youtu.be/d9wTHg4Qy78>



Mammalaria in flower at Irene's house



Check us out
on
FACEBOOK!!

Check us out at:
www.facebook.com/groups/202733996526503

It's a way to share photos and
ask questions about all things
cactus and succulents!

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