

# Philadelphia Cactus & Succulent Society

## APRIL 2026

| SUN  | MON   | TUE   | WED   | THU   | FRI  | SAT  |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| 29   | 30  | 31  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4   |
| 5   | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9   | 10   | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17   | 18   |
| 19   | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24   | 25   |
| 26   | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 1  | 2  |

## April Meeting

Many of our members will be attending the Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society's annual Show and Sale on Saturday, April 11. Further details on page 3.

Then, on Sunday, April 12, we hold our regular meeting which will feature a presentation by Maya Marcy.

Maya Marcy is currently the Greenhouse and Gardens Manager for Swarthmore College's Biology and Environmental Studies Departments. Maya's career thus far has included work in tropical/house plant cultivation for research/teaching, vegetable farming/gardening for both commercial production and research/teaching, and native plant production.

Maya will talk about their background as a horticulturist, how they came to be the Greenhouse and Garden Manager, and about Swarthmore College's plant collection - where it started, how it's going, and future plans for it.

### In this newsletter

April Meeting

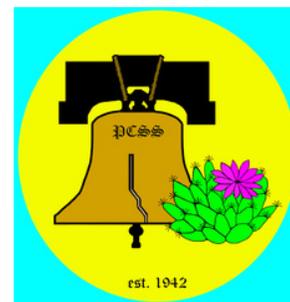
Renew Your Membership!

March Recap

Upcoming Meetings

Plant of the Month

2026 Phila. Flower Show Judging Results ( 15 pages! )



One of the many vendors at the Connecticut Show and Sale



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## Renew Your Membership!

We are no longer able to process credit card payments through our website, but can still accept them in person at club meetings and other events, along with cash and checks.

Or, to renew your membership by mail for the 2025-26 season, send a \$20 check, payable to PCSS, to our Treasurer:

Renee Thompson,  
Phila. Cactus & Succulent Society  
69 Tanglewood Drive  
Milford, DE 19963

## March Recap

As a result of our exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show, and our members' participation in the Horticult, ten new members joined during the Flower Show and ten more joined at the March meeting, bringing our membership to 146. That's not a record, but it beats last year. And there's still time for more to join.

Paul Wesolowski gave a report of our club members' success in the Horticult, and some of that information is reproduced in this newsletter.

Our next election of officers is in June. Fred Irvin and Al Toizer were appointed to the Nominations Committee. All existing officers are running for re-election, but if there are any challengers, they should contact Fred or Al so they can be vetted and added to the ballot.

Paul Wesolowski, Barry Bush and Ken Preteroti (assisted by Tim Day) analyzed a couple dozen plants that members thought could be doing better, and the experts recommended treatments for each.

The most common problem seemed to be underwatering plants, especially the winter growers like Aloe, Haworthia and Gasteria. While succulents will survive being underwatered better than overwatering, they will look best with just the right amount of water.



## Join Us For a Meeting

Our meetings are held at Cathedral Village, 600 E Cathedral Rd, Philadelphia, 19128.

When entering the property, follow the green signs to the right, indicating the route for VISITORS.

We meet in the auditorium known as Cathedral Hall; the entrance is underneath the canopy labeled "Main Entrance." Look for our sky blue and yellow flag in the window on the left.

Set-up, POTM plant entry, snacks and social hour starts at 11, which is when you should plan to be there. The meeting starts promptly at noon. Typically our meeting is over by 2 pm.

Non-members can join us for a free meeting, to determine whether they want to join, so feel free to bring a friend.





## Upcoming Meeting Dates

April 11, 2026: The Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Show and Sale. Many of our members find it worthwhile to attend this event at The Bristol CT Senior Center, 240 Stafford Avenue, Bristol, CT, 06010. There is a judged plant competition of amazing plants, as well as a gymnasium full of succulent plant dealers.

May 3, 2026: PCSS Auction - This is the first Sunday of the month because the second Sunday is Mother's Day. The CSSA Eastern Plant Show and Sale in Brooklyn, NY has been cancelled due to the difficulty in finding a suitable venue. This is a unique opportunity to acquire specimen plants, and the proceeds support our club. Even if you don't plan to bid, it's fun to watch others competing for a must-have plant.

June 14, 2026: PCSS Picnic - A primarily social event, the picnic is a chance to meet other members, with a small POTM competition. This year we will also have an election of officers. Note that there will be World Cup Soccer at the Linc, which may impact travel for some members, depending on your travel route.



Three anonymous judges at the 2026 Philadelphia Flower Show, sharing a laugh before the serious business of selecting winners.



## Plant of the Month

All PCSS members are invited to submit four entries to be judged for Plant of the Month at each meeting.

Plants must match a monthly category, have one species per planting unless specified otherwise, and have no visible infestations. All pots are permitted, though judges may comment on unappealing plastic pots.

Not following the rules, or leaving your name off of the POTM entry form can lead to reduction of ribbon to Honorable Mention or to disqualification.

Impress the judges by providing the correct botanical/ scientific name for each entry and use decorative soil dressing or planters that enhance the entry's beauty!

The more you participate, the more you will learn what the judges are looking for.

Here is the 2024/2025 POTM Point system

- Entering - 1
- Honorable Mention - 2
- 3rd Place - 3
- 2nd Place - 4
- 1st Place - 5
- Best in Show - +5 (10 total)

There will be a year-end award for the three contestants with the most cumulative points.

### APRIL, 2026 POTM CATEGORIES

| <i>Class</i>         | <i>Theme</i>  | <i>Examples / Ideas</i>   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Cactus               | <b>Echinocereus - Melocactus Group</b><br>(subfamily Cactoideae, tribe Echinopsidae)          | Echinopsis, Lobivia, Cleistocactus, Matucana, Oroya, Rebutia, Sulcorebutia, Gymnocalycium, Aylosteria |
| Succulents (Cycle A) | <b>Crassulaceae 3</b><br>All other Crassulaceae except those included in October and November | Echeveria, Sedum, Dudleya, etc.   |
| Special Category     | <b>Parent and Offspring</b>   | Two specimen plants, one propagated from the other, in two separate pots, (counted as one entry)      |



The March Plant of the Month was this Melocactus conoideus, from Gene Tobia.

## Judging at The Philadelphia Flower Show



The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society invites expert judges from around the country to serve on judging panels in the Philadelphia Flower Show's Horticult. Each three-person panel is assigned specific classes to judge. A class can contain up to a few dozen plants, and larger classes are subdivided before judging.

In each class, the judges will select one plant as the First Prize (Blue Ribbon) winner. They can then award multiple ribbons for other plants in the class which are selected as Second, Third and Honorable Mention. When all of the plants in a class are exceptional, the judging panel can award a Class Commendation, and each plant in that class also receives an additional sky blue ribbon.

At the end of the day, the senior judge from each panel becomes part of a final panel, to review the Blue Ribbon winners, from which they select the Best Entry of the day, as well as Second-Best Entry of the day.



PCSS appoints separate judges to award special rosettes. The PCSS judges review all of the cactus and succulent classes looking for the best of the best. On each of the three judging days, four PCSS rosettes are awarded to spectacular plants, independent of how those plants were judged by the regular judges.

On each judging day PCSS also awards one Gerald S. Barad Award to an Outstanding Blue Ribbon entry in the cactus and succulent classes. This award was established in 2015 in honor of our longtime member, who passed away the following year.

New in 2026, on each judging day PCSS also awards one Deb Donaldson Award for an outstanding variegated cactus or succulent plant. Our late member had a special fondness for these plants.

Other plant societies have similar rosettes, that are sometimes awarded to a cactus or succulent, or to another kind of plant entered by a PCSS member.

# First Judging Day: Friday, February 27, 2026



Deb Donaldson Award:  
Gymnocalycium mihanovichii  
variegated form, Gene Tobia (this was  
the first time this award was issued.)



Gerald S. Barad Award: *Deuterocohnia brevifolia*,  
Brandon Huber

PCSS Award: *Euphorbia cylindrifolia*, Gene Tobia



PCSS Award: *Ferocactus wislizenii*, Effie Wister



# First Judging Day, continued



PCSS Award: Mammillaria albicoma, crested form, Gene Tobia

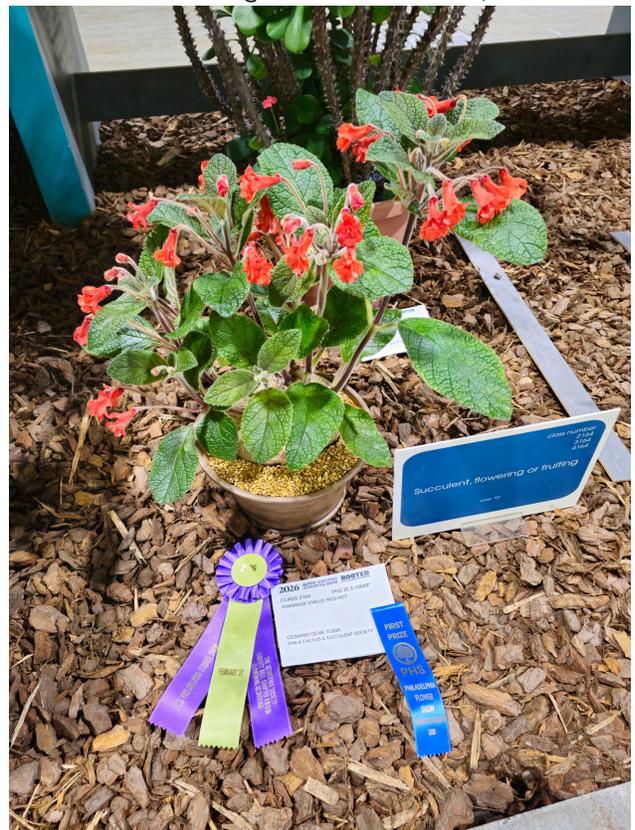


PCSS Award: Melocactus bahiensis, Gene Tobia

North American Rock Garden Society Award: Operculicarya decaryi, Gene Tobia



Gesneriad Society, Liberty Bell Chapter Award: Sinningia 'Owlee Red Hot', Gene Tobia





Best in Show on the first judging day at the 2026 Philadelphia Flower Show was this Agave Victoriae-reginae entered by Leslie Ann Miller. This plant was given by Gerry Barad to Mike Slater, who grew it for more than 25 years. Last year Mike donated it to the PCSS auction, and Leslie Anne was the winning bidder. She gave it the repotting it needed and the judges loved it.

The next PCSS auction is May 3, 2026 and you'll have another opportunity to acquire a spectacular specimen such as this!

# Second Judging Day: Monday, March 2, 2026



Deb Donaldson Award: Gasteraloe 'Green Ice',  
Gene Tobia

Gerald S. Barad Award: Begonia dregei,  
Gene Tobia -->

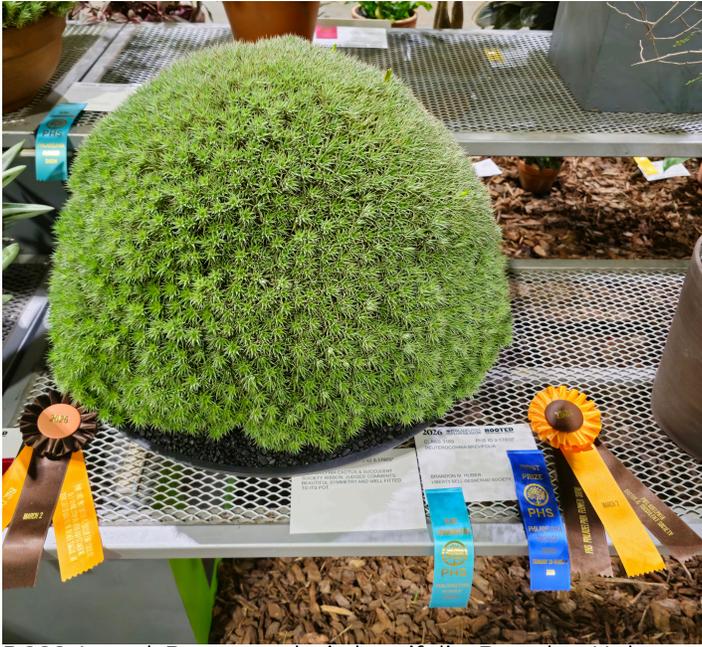
PCSS Award: Aeonium 'Chanel', Damon Smith



PCSS Award: Euphorbia sp. cristata, Michael Bowell



## Second Judging Day, continued



PCSS Award: Deuterocohnia brevifolia, Brandon Huber



PCSS Award: Melocactus conoideus, Gene Tobia -->

American Primrose Society Award: Primula acaulis, Gene Tobia -->

American Primrose Society Award: Primula acaulis cv., Gene Tobia



## Second Judging Day, continued



North American Rock Garden Society  
Award: Cyclamen cv., Gene Tobia



Best in Show, second place,  
Ariocarpus retusus 'Cauliflower',  
Gene Tobia

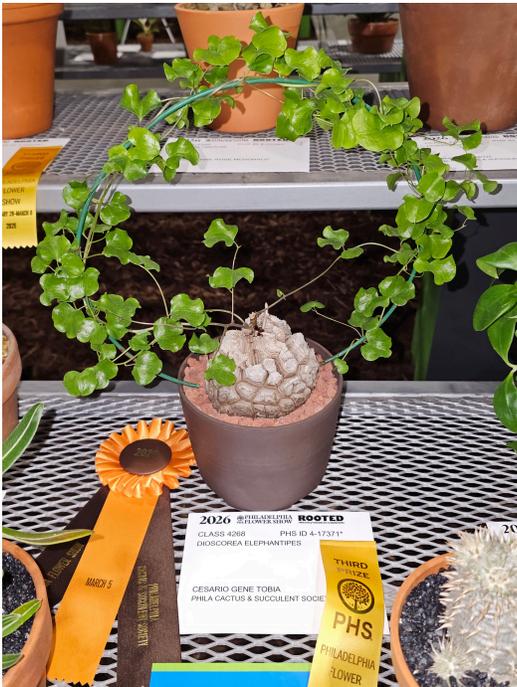


Best in Show on the second judging day,  
Sinningia micans, Gene Tobia

# Third Judging Day: Thursday, March 5, 2026



PCSS Award: *Dioscorea elephantipes*, Gene Tobia



Gerald S. Barad Award: *Mammillaria perezdelarosae*, crested form, Christopher Huber

← Deb Donaldson Award: *Euphorbia poissonii* 'Variegata', Damon Smith

PCSS Award: *Gymnocalycium mihanovichii* variegated form, Gene Tobia





PCSS Award: Melocactus bahiensis, Gene Tobia



PCSS Award: Operculicarya decaryi, Gene Tobia

## Third Judging Day, continued

Elsa R. Efran Award for Outstanding Entry in the Novice Classes: Haworthia cooperi, Danielle Moler -->

American Herb Society Award: Ariocarpus fissuratus, Gene Tobia



# Third Judging Day, continued



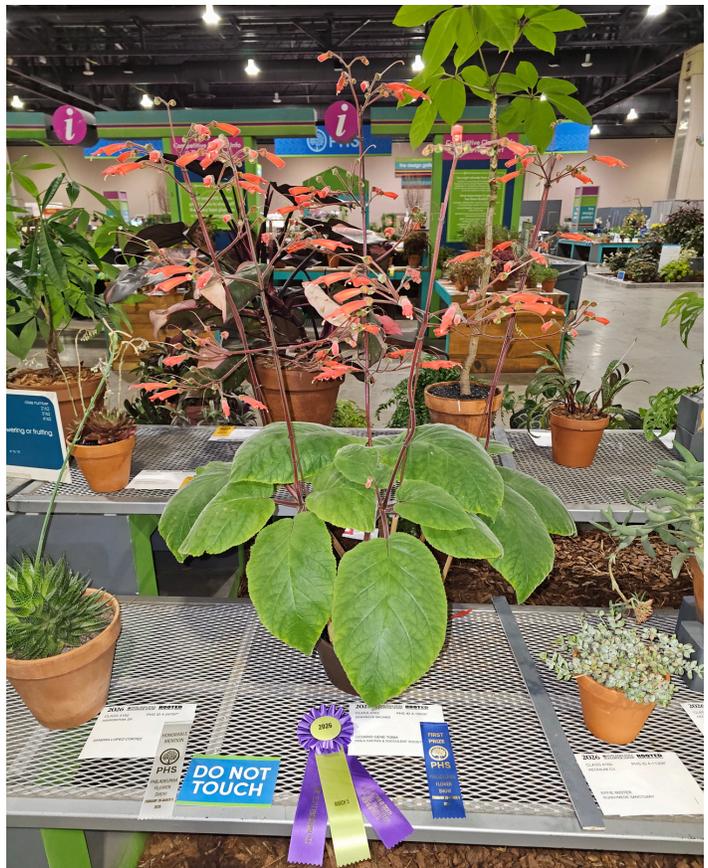
American Primrose Society Awards: *Primula acaulis* cv, Gene Tobia; and *Primula acaulis* cv, Gene Tobia

American Ivy Society Award: *Hedera helix*, Gene Tobia -->



North American Rock Garden Society Award: *Pelargonium appendiculatum*, Gene Tobia

Gesneriad Society, Liberty Bell Chapter Award: *Sinningia micans*, Gene Tobia -->





Best in Show on the third judging day: Euphorbia abdelkuri, Gene Tobia



## Far Out Cactus Award

Far Out Cactus was a wholesale and retail cactus and succulent nursery in Brandywine, PA, established by Jeff Sedwin and Richard Lenat. In 1974 they sponsored the silver trophy pictured above, to acknowledge the Outstanding Blue Ribbon winner in the cactus and succulent classes. At the time there were only two such classes, but with so many plants being entered there are now fifty distinct classes for cactus and succulent plants! Each year the new winner's name is engraved on the trophy. It is awarded only once a year, and this year it was won by Gene Tobia's *Euphorbia abdelkuri*.

The complete list of winners is shown on the following page, but here is a summary:

PCSS member Gerry Barad won the award twelve times before his passing in 2016.

Sylvia Lin won eight times before her passing in 2018. She was also a member of PCSS.

Several growers won three times: Joan Marano, Claire Muller, Deb Donaldson, and Gene Tobia. Of these, only Gene is still competing in the Horticult. PCSS members Ray Rogers and Bob Albright were both two-time winners, and PCSS member (and Far Out co-founder) Jeff Sedwin won once.

For security reasons, the trophy is no longer placed in the Horticult. Starting in 2027, a new Far Out Cactus rosette will be placed in the Horticult, next to the winning plant, to further acknowledge the winner, and to give the winner something to take home.

**Below is a list of the winners of the Far Out Cactus Award.  
The engraved name is the name under which each winner entered their plants.**

|                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1974 Mrs. Joseph G. Marano    | 2000 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1975 Duffield Ashmead IV      | 2001 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1976 Duffield Ashmead IV      | 2002 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1977 Robert Grenfell          | 2003 Mrs. Paul M. Lin                 |
| 1978 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Marano | 2004 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1979 Mrs. Joseph G. Marano    | 2005 Ray Rogers                       |
| 1980 Morrell Devlin           | 2006 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1981 Claire Muller            | 2007 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1982 Claire Muller            | 2008 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1983 John A. Filippi, Jr.     | 2009 Ray Rogers                       |
| 1984 Claire Muller            | 2010 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1985 Mrs. Paul M. Linn        | 2011 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1986 Marion Singer            | 2012 Dr. Gerald Barad                 |
| 1987 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2013 Cody Bryce Worden                |
| 1988 Patti Lee                | 2014 Jeffrey Sedwin                   |
| 1989 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2015 Lynn Cook & Troy Ray             |
| 1990 Mrs. Louis W. Welsh      | 2016 Lynn Cook & Troy Ray             |
| 1991 Gerald T. Ronnins        | 2017 Bob Albright                     |
| 1992 Dr. Gerald Barad         | 2018 Bob Albright                     |
| 1993 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2019 Deb Donaldson                    |
| 1994 Dr. Gerald Barad         | 2020 Deb Donaldson                    |
| 1995 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2021 (no award given; no competition) |
| 1996 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2022 Cesario Gene Tobia               |
| 1997 Mrs. Paul M. Lin         | 2023 Deb Donaldson                    |
| 1998 Betty J. Toland          | 2024 Cesario Gene Tobia               |
| 1999 Betty Toland             | 2025 Effie Wister                     |
|                               | 2026 Cesario Gene Tobia               |



Richard Lenat still sponsors the Far Out Cactus Award.  
He is shown here visiting the 2026 winning plant.



Martha Stewart has been visiting the Philadelphia Flower Show for many years. She is shown here at the 2026 Flower Show with PHS President Matt Rader (left) and Seth Pearsoll, VP and Creative Director of the Philadelphia Flower Show.

In the foreground are two examples of *Euphorbia poisonii*, variegated form, entered by PCSS members Gene Tobia (staged in the rear) and Damon Smith (staged in front.) Damon's plant won a PCSS rosette in that morning's judging, but it had not yet been placed next to the plant at the time the digital image was captured.

# Flower Show Judging Summary

Those who enter plants in the Horticult receive points for each plant entered, and additional points if it is pre-entered before a deadline. Further points are earned for keeping a plant in the show for all three judging days, for winning ribbons, for winning rosettes, and for being selected as Best of Day, or Second-Best of Day. When the entrant identifies as a member of a garden club or plant society, the organization is also credited with their points.

| Rank | Points | Exhibitor             |      |
|------|--------|-----------------------|------|
| 1    | 7,221  | Wister, Effie         |      |
| 2    | 4,552  | Miller, Leslie Anne   |      |
| 3    | 3,811  | Tobia, Cesaria Gene   | PCSS |
| 4    | 1,708  | Smith, Damon G.       | PCSS |
| 5    | 1,463  | Mills, Carol          |      |
| 6    | 1,311  | Maciejewski, Stephen  |      |
| 7    | 967    | Albright, Bob         | PCSS |
| 8    | 905    | Durbrow, Tim          |      |
| 9    | 891    | Wister, Diana S.      |      |
| 10   | 885    | Bowell, Michael       |      |
| 11   | 883    | Tran, J.T.            |      |
| 12   | 808    | Huber, Brandon M.     |      |
| 13   | 780    | Junus, Khairil Azhar  |      |
| 14   | 711    | Zhang, Kevin Raymond  |      |
| 15   | 679    | Alvarez, Joe          |      |
| 16   | 657    | Straup, Frank         | PCSS |
| 17   | 560    | Huber, Christopher    |      |
| 18   | 470    | Hamell, Bex Claire    |      |
| 19   | 463    | Coulson, Darah        |      |
| 20   | 453    | Davidson, Kathryn     |      |
| 21   | 376    | Stecura, Melanie      |      |
| 22   | 365    | Satch, Christopher S. |      |
| 23   | 364    | Nguyen, Peggy         |      |
| 24   | 328    | Orr, Keegan M.        |      |
| 25   | 320    | Forum, Hortus         |      |

This list of the top twenty-five entrants with the most points is annotated to show PCSS members. Several other PCSS members who also entered plants are not shown here. But their combined 796.5 points still count towards our club's total.

| RANK | POINTS   | EXHIBITOR                                    |
|------|----------|--|
| 1    | 9,969.00 | Runnymede Sanctuary                          |
| 2    | 7,939.50 | Phila, Cactus & Succulent Society            |
| 3    | 5,186.00 | Barbary Botanicals                           |
| 4    | 3,320.00 | Liberty Bell Gesneriad Society               |
| 5    | 2,290.00 | Del. Val. Branch -- American Begonia Society |
| 6    | 1,735.00 | Rutgers Alumni Growers & Exhibitors          |
| 7    | 1,732.00 | The Garden Club of Princeton                 |
| 8    | 1,395.00 | Mid-Atlantic Carniverous Plant Society       |
| 9    | 754.50   | Rowan College of South Jersey                |
| 10   | 622.00   | Lansdowne Friends School                     |

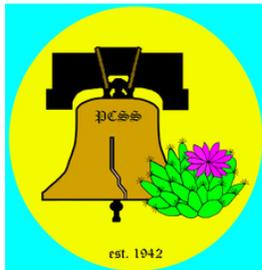
PCSS was "First Runner Up" in the points sweepstakes for organizations. We appreciate all who entered plants in the Horticult as members of our club!

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**CACTUS & SUCCULENT**  
**SOCIETY OF AMERICA**  
**2027 BIENNIAL CONVENTION**



**MAY 19-24, 2027, TUCSON, ARIZONA**

This will be well worth the trip, so start planning now! The saguaros will be blooming, there will be countless opportunities to buy unusual plants, great speakers, and a chance to meet new friends in the hobby. Next September, Paul Wesolowski will present a slide show on his trip to the 2025 convention in San Diego.



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>PHILADELPHIA<br/>         CACTUS &amp; SUCCULENT<br/>         SOCIETY</p> | <p>philadelphia.cactus@gmail.com</p>   |
| <p>www.philacactus.org</p>   | <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/202733996526503">https://www.facebook.com/groups/202733996526503</a></p> |

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