



18TH MID STATES CONFERENCE – JULY 26, 27 & 28, 2024 – SANTA FE, NM

Steve Lovecky, Keynote

Steven Lovecky has been growing succulents in Central Texas for over 50 years. He has had the opportunity to attend many cactus and succulent conferences across the nation and has visited most of the cacti habitats in the US. His goal is to successfully grow and propagate these amazing plants and to share his successes and failures for the benefit of others. He has spent countless hours identifying and photographing cacti throughout the US, guiding cactus clubs and individuals, sharing the beauty of these unique plants.



Steven is one of the founders of the Central Texas Cactus and Succulent Society and is a past TACSS (Texas Association of Cactus and Succulent Societies) president. Also, he was privileged to guide participants in the CSSA 2013 Pre-Convention Field Trip to Big Bend National Park and was a presenter at the CSSA Convention in San Louis Obispo, California. He is a member of the McLennan County Master Gardeners, serving in various offices and speaking to gardening clubs in Central Texas.

Steven and his wife Darlene live in Hill County, Texas, in the community of Birome, where they enjoy retirement after a lifetime of farming and ranching.

The Cacti of Big Bend, Texas and Big Bend National Park

About 60 years ago my dad took me on a camping trip. All I had to do was finish tilling the 20-acre cotton field in front of our house. That job didn't take long, and we were off heading west to Big Bend National Park. I was smitten by the beauty, ruggedness, magnitude, and yes, cacti of the high desert country of the Big Bend. Countless trips to this beautiful arid land promised adventure through hiking, backpacking, guiding, camping, and photography. Over time my interest in the plants and animals of the region directed my focus on the cacti and succulents of the Big Bend. The next best thing to being there is sharing with others a portion of what makes Big Bend National Park so unique.

Doug Dawson



Doug is a retired math professor who travels to areas of the world where succulents grow, including Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Yemen, Socotra, Africa, and his own state of Arizona. He has organized over 20 botanical exploratory trips to South Africa and Namibia, each time camping on local farms and public areas, and exploring the surrounding mountains and hills. His next trip to South Africa will be in October, 2024.

Doug has a passionate interest for growing cacti and succulents from seed. Other interests are photography and PowerPoints with succulent content. He has delivered many workshops and speaking engagements in Arizona and other states.

Doug's private plant collection emphasizes seedlings, Lithops, other Mesembs, Northern Cape Crassulae, and Arizona natives. He is a member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society. Since 1989, Doug has been an active member of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society.

Superb and Unusual Succulents of South Africa

During the last two decades, I have made yearly plant exploration trips to South Africa, spending approximately three weeks in the wilderness each time, documenting and photographing succulents. Of the hundreds of species I have seen, this PowerPoint includes some of my favorites.

Many of these plants are seldom found in American collections. Others are exotic, curious, or unusual. You may wish to add some of these to your collection.

Mike Hellmann



Mike Hellmann started collecting cactus and succulents 36 years ago while working at a greenhouse, where he picked 12 bare root cacti, several of which he still has today. He became obsessed and discovered there were many other collectors just like him. Thanks to their influence, knowledge, and encouragement, Mike has over 800 plants that he keeps today with the support (and amusement) of his wife, Vickie. Of special interest are the Euphorbiaceae, Moraceae and Aizoaceae families, as well as xeric trees.

A commercial flower grower for over 25 years, Mike now brokers young plant material to growers and garden centers throughout the Midwest. He has been a member of the Henry Shaw Cactus and Succulent Society since 1994, serving as program chair, show chair and president. He also served on the Board of Directors for the CSSA.

He currently resides in Edwardsville, IL with his wife Vickie and two elderly, puppy mill rescued shelties, Sammi and Sadie.

Can You Grow What You Want to Grow, Where You Grow

The Midwest covers a huge part of our nation — from high deserts through the Great Plains to hot, humid farm country, and from cool Michigan summers to the warmer Bluegrass region, the number of climate zones is endless.

What grows well in St. Louis may not grow well in Denver, and vice versa. So how do we grow what we grow...and grow it well? The answer to this open-ended question goes beyond the typical discussions of watering, light exposure and proper soil. We'll look at some proactive and reactive ways of handling this challenge to help us grow our plants better while at the same time helping us perhaps make better buying decisions.

Panayoti Kelaidis



Panayoti Kelaidis is a plant explorer, gardener and public garden administrator associated with Denver Botanic Gardens, where he is now Director of Outreach. He began his career at DBG as curator of the Rock Alpine Garden, where he designed and oversaw the initial plantings. Garden Design Magazine has rated it as the best public rock garden in North America. He is also part of the design team at Centennial garden and has designed the Watersmart knot gardens at Denver's Civic Center.

He has introduced hundreds of native ornamentals from the Western US to general horticulture. Collecting trips have taken him to South Africa, the Andes, the Himalaya, and much of Europe, the Caucasus and Turkey. Perhaps the best known of Panayoti's introductions are dozens of showy hardy ice plants now available at garden centers across America and in other parts of the world.

Panayoti also champions Western native plants. He was secretary of the Colorado Native Plant Society, and past president of the American Penstemon Society. He has explored the Western mountains from Alaska to southern Mexico, collecting seeds of more than 1,000 kinds of wild plants for collections, research and study.

Succulents Outdoors in Cold Climates

Everyone admires the extraordinary cactus and succulent gardens in Los Angeles or Tucson. But what can be done in climates with cold and abundant rain? This talk will explore outstanding hardy succulent gardens on three continents, and the dramatic new techniques like crevice gardens that have created a whole new frontier for this art.

Woody Minnich



For more than 50-some years, Wendell S. (commonly known as Woody) Minnich has been passionately involved with the world of Cacti and Succulents. He has made 128+ major trips to the wild places where these wonderful plants call their homes. From all of North and South America to much of Africa, Australia, Europe and many an island paradise, he has studied and photographed the great majority of our favorite plants.

Woody has also operated the nursery, Cactus Data Pants, since 1975. With his involvement with many of the C & S organizations, he has now been honored with 13 honorary life memberships from coast to coast. Woody and his wonderful wife Kathy, have lived in Cedar Grove, NM for the last 17 years, and they are also very active members of the Santa Fe CSC. After being a teacher for over 32 years, it brings him great joy to share his knowledge and experiences with these wonderful places, plants and animals. Let's go to Brazil, it has lot to offer!

The Gems of Brazil, Cactus of Course

Southeastern Brazil, commonly called the Highlands, and two of its states, Minas Gerais and Bahia, contain more cacti than any other region of Brazil, plus a wealth of other plants, including Bromeliads, Orchids and Palms.

We'll look at cacti *Melocactus*, *Buiningia*, *Coleocephalocereus*, *Pilosocereus*, *Microcranthocereus*, *Discocactus*, *Tacinga*, *Arrojadoa* and *Uebelmannia*. Other featured plant genera are *Bursera*, *Cissus*, *Dyckia*, *Encholirium*, *Orthophytum* and many other Bromeliads. We'll also discuss the severe conservation issues facing this unique region. Due to our rapidly changing world, much of what I will show you in this presentation may not be around for much longer.

Steve Plath



Steve is a native of Southern California and has been an enthusiastic cactus and succulent hobbyist for 50+ years. He joined the Cactus & Succulent Society of America in 1975, serving as board member and vice president. He has also been a board member and president of numerous affiliate clubs in Arizona, California and Nevada.

Steve began growing native plants for habitat restoration and implementing field revegetation in 1994 at Castle Mountain Mine in the East Mojave Desert of California. Over the years he has worked for an assortment of environmental companies such as Bitterroot Restoration, Native Resources International and RECON Environmental, Inc. and has managed restoration projects in California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas.

Steve recently retired from the Gila Watershed Partnership, where he managed the Gila Native Plant Nursery in Safford, AZ. Prior to that, he and his wife Julie owned and operated their native plant nursery, Signature Botanica, for 14 years in Morristown, AZ.

Supporting the Mutual Affair of Agaves and Bats

Bat Conservation International (BCI) began an initiative in recent years to enhance habitat for the Lesser long-nosed bat in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. Along with two other North American species, this bat is primarily a nectar feeder, relying on cactus and agave flowers to supply its energy needs during its annual migration between the US and Mexico. The impact on the pollination of the larger native succulent plant species is critical to both the bat's and plant's survival.

In 2019 BCI contacted the Gila Watershed Partnership and Gila Native Plant Nursery to grow thousands of native agaves (*Agave palmeri* and *A. parryi*) for planting along known migratory paths of these bats. Propagation is predominantly from wild collected seed; they are then grown in a nursery setting until large enough to plant in the field. This presentation illustrates the unique blend of environmental horticulture and plant production with necessary field-planting methodologies to ensure survival and provide habitat for targeted conservation of an animal species.