

HCSS History

In March, 1963, forty-two enthusiasts met to form the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society (HCSS). Their stated purpose for the Society was to promote interest, study, propagation, and conservation of cacti and other succulent plants. To accomplish this goal, an agenda for the monthly membership meetings was established. It included a cactus of the month and a succulent of the month presentation by the members and a guest speaker and/or slide program. This meeting agenda is still used today. At the same time, Herman Kropp laid out the format for a monthly newsletter called "Kaktos Komments" (KK). The first KK was published in July, 1963 and contained eight pages. Today, the KK has twelve 8.5 x 11 pages and is published bimonthly.

In 1967, HCSS members took their first field trip to see the habitat of South Texas cacti and succulents. Since then, the field trips have included not only visits to private ranches but also trips to nurseries, Moody Gardens, Peckerwood Gardens, Mexico, and the Big Bend area. All field trips are scheduled on weekends to accommodate as many members as possible.

1980 was a year of change for HCSS. The fiscal year was changed to coincide with the calendar year; the Holiday Dinner in December became the Installation Dinner; the first annual Yearbook was published; and the first HCSS judged show and sale was held at the Memorial Park Arboretum.

Currently, membership meetings are held the fourth Wednesday from January through October at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray St, Houston. The dates for the November meeting and December Installation dinner vary from year to year. The Show and Sale is held at the Multi-Service Center in September. A yearly calendar is available at www.hcsstex.org

HCSS makes annual donations to worthy organizations or individuals to aid in the study and/or dissemination of knowledge of plants especially cacti and other succulents. Recipients of this donation have included: member Richard May for his research on Sclerocactus; the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute; the Fort Bend County Library System for the purchase of succulent literature; the Center for Plant Conservation for the endowment of Texas cacti; Peckerwood Gardens; and the Katy Prairie Conservancy.

HCSS is an affiliate member of CSSA and TACSS (Texas Association of Cactus and Succulent Societies). HCSS has hosted TACSS meetings, TACSS seminars, and, in 1991, the Texas State Show and Sale.