

Cooking with Cacti

Exploring edible cacti and succulents

Presented by Emily Diebold of the
Los Angeles Cactus and Succulent Society (LACSS)
to the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) Los Angeles chapter
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Safety

- .Always properly identify plants before eating them
- .Beware of lookalikes
- .Pesticides
- .Be sure to properly prepare plants before eating
- .Watch out for spines!

Is it edible?



Yea



Nay

Cacti?



Cacti

- Fruits are mostly edible
 - Opuntia spp
 - Hylocereus spp
 - Cereus spp
 - Pilosocereus spp
 - Mammillaria spp
 - The list could go on
- Opuntia stems are edible
 - Nopales







Agave?

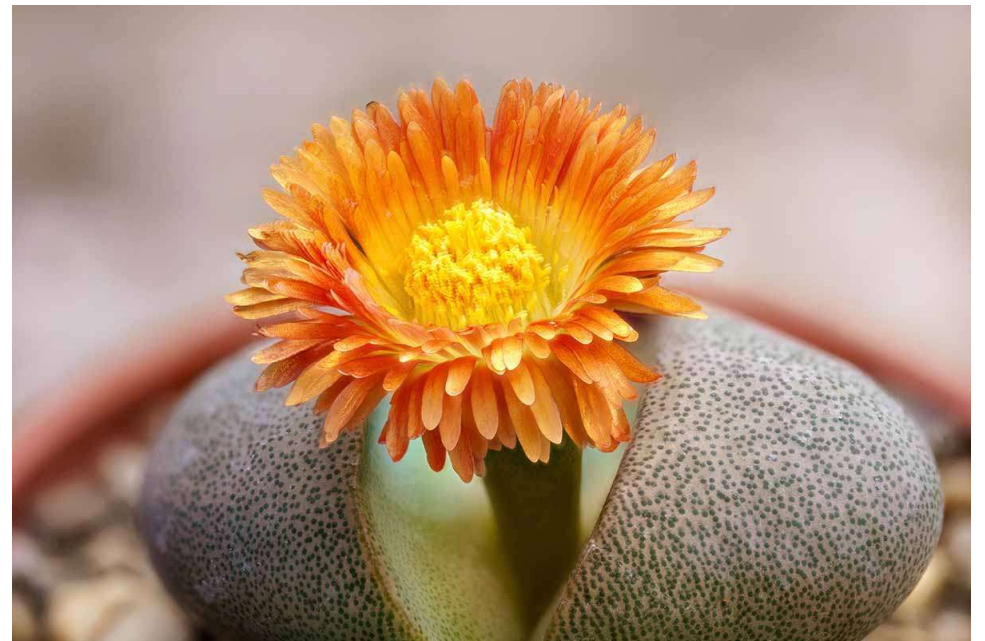
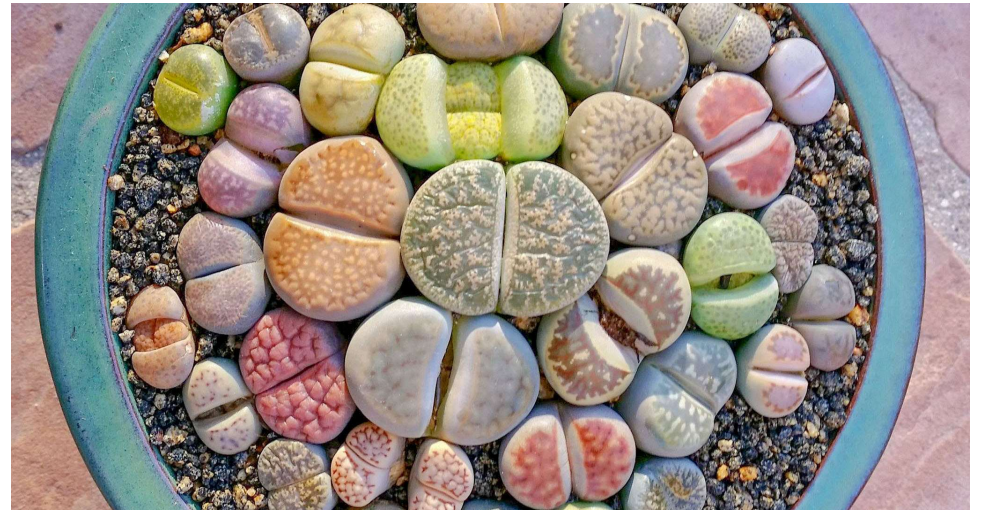


Agave

- Agave is edible
- Tequila is from *Agave tequilana*
- Mezcal is made from *Agave* spp.
- Flowers are also edible



Aizoaceae?



Aizoaceae

.Many Aizoaceae are edible!

.Let's have a look



Carpobrotus edulis



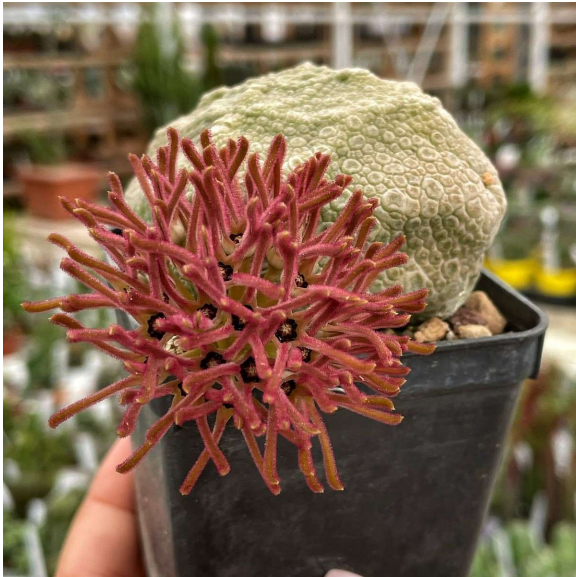
Mesembryanthemum crystallinum



Tetragonia tetragonoides



Apocynaceae?



Apocynaceae?



Apocynaceae

- .Most species aren't edible
- .Fokea edulis root is edible, but requires careful preparation



Apocynaceae

.Loroco (*Echites panduratus*)



Apocynaceae

• Natal plum (*Carissa spp.*)



Asphodelaceae?



Asphodelaceae

.Haworthia: not edible

.Aloe: some are poisonous. *A. vera* gel is edible but its outer leaf is not

.Gasteria: flowers may be edible

.Bulbine: parts may be edible. *B. frutescens* leaves are edible and make a good "relish" according to U of A



Burseraceae?



Burseraceae

.Some are edible



“Cactus Adjacent Families”?

.Anacampserotaceae

.Talinaceae

.Montiaceae

.Didiereaceae

.Portulacaceae



Cactus Adj. Fams.

•Anacampserotaceae:

Talinopsis frutescens

•Talinaceae: some, e.g.

Talinum paniculatum

•Montiaceae: Lewisia
(bitterroot)

•Didiereaceae:

Portulacaria afra

•Portulacaceae: Portulaca
oleracea



Crassulaceae?



Crassulaceae

- .Some Sedum
- .Some Dudleya, like *D. edulis*



Cyphostemma?

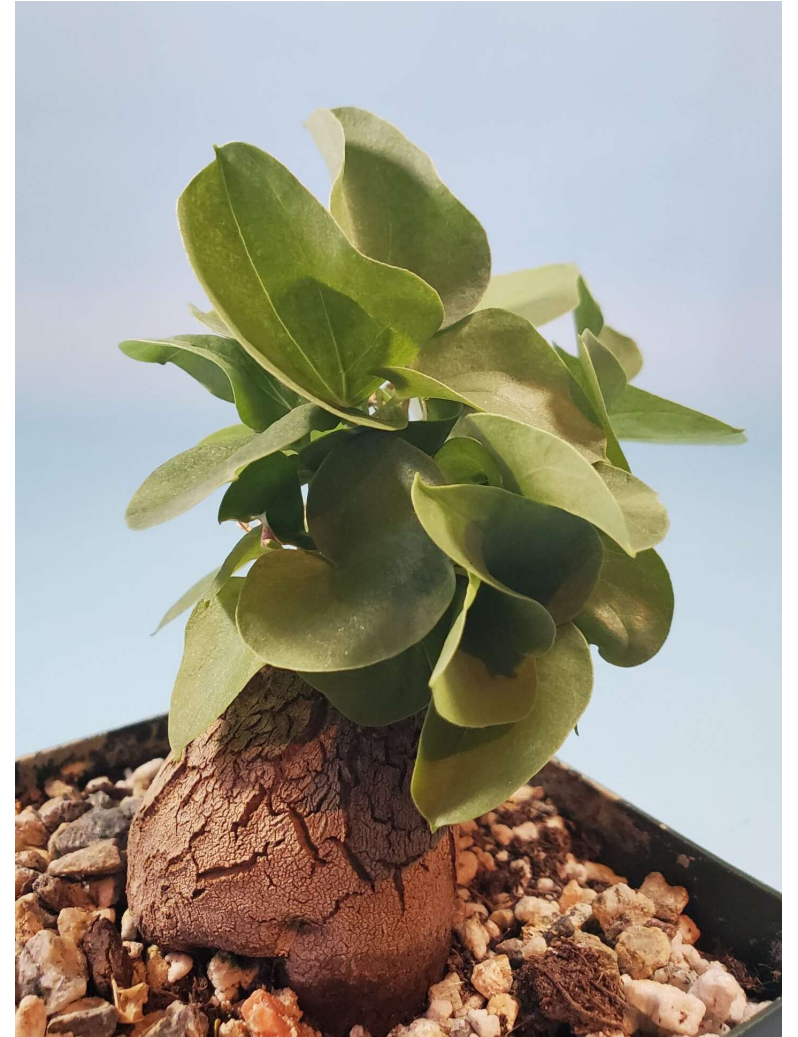


Cyphostemma

.Some are, but what we grow is poisonous

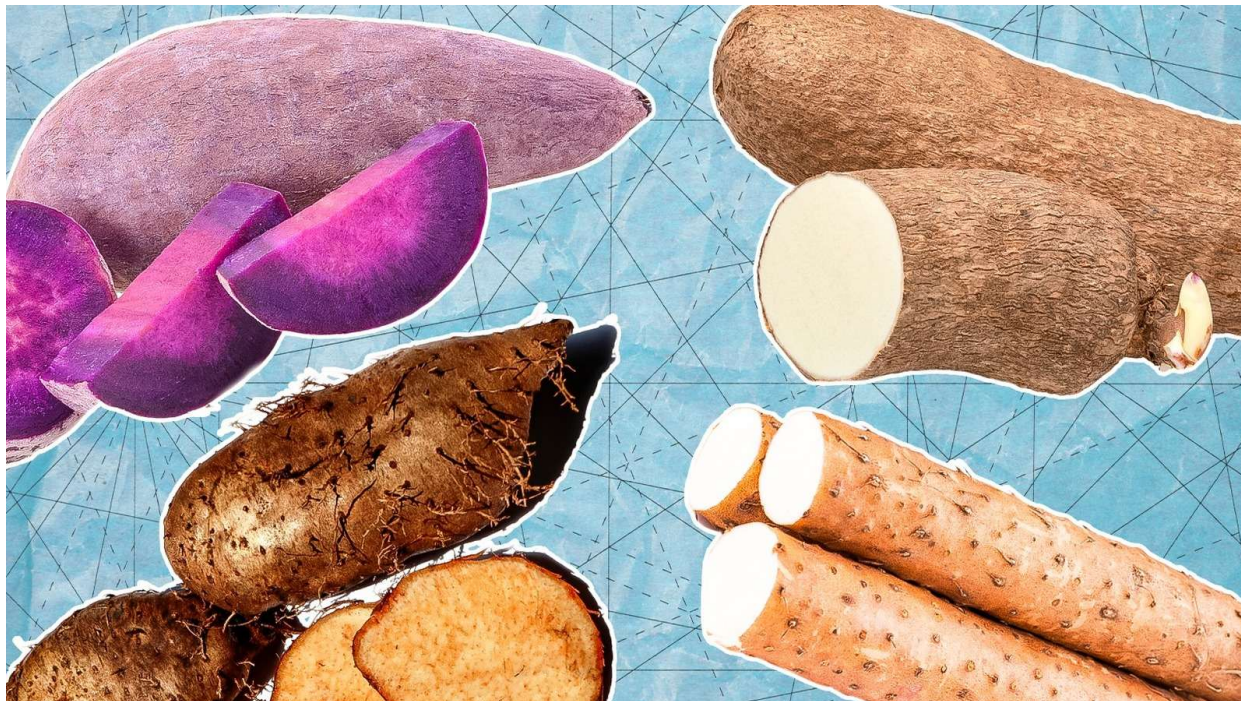


Dioscorea?



Dioscorea

- .Species we grow are technically edible
- .But yams are better...



Euphorbia?



Euphorbia

•No



Euphorbia

• ~~No~~

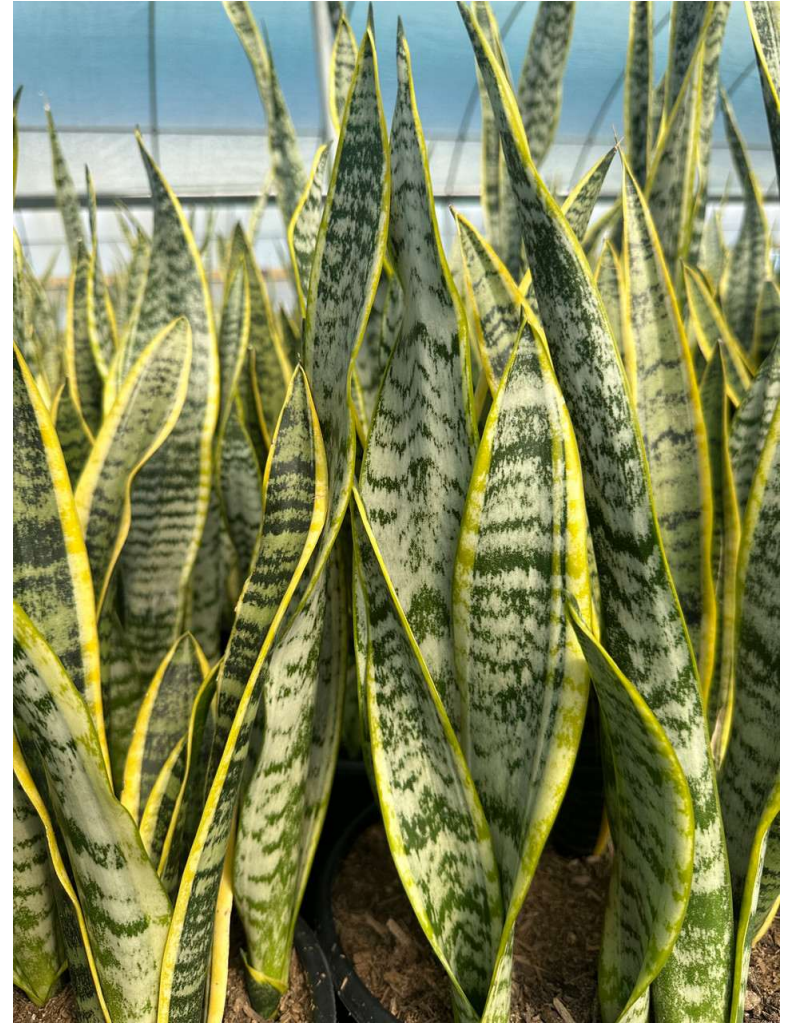


•Euphorbia antispyhilitica

- Native to Texas, New Mexico, Mexico
- Produces candelilla wax
- It's used in food (in glazes) and cosmetics
- Does not cure syphilis



Sansevieria?



Sansevieria

.No



Yucca?



Yucca

- .Flowers and fruit are edible
- .Yucca ≠ “Yuca”

