

My Cold Tolerant Succulent Life Rod Haenni

I have always been interested in plants as both sets of my grandparents were farmers and I spent much time on farms when I was young.

I was employed as a minerals exploration geologist in 1978, travelling the desert southwest and became intensely interested in cacti during my travels. I planted my first cold tolerant succulent garden in 1978 in Denver and my interests since then have increased geometrically. I have searched throughout the western U. S., South Africa, Patagonia and nurseries in Germany and Switzerland for new and rare succulents for my collections.

I have gardened on nearly one acre in Littleton, Colorado since 1991 and have substantial gardens featuring cold tolerant cacti and succulents. These gardens also include a rock and crevice garden and a recently established hardy mesemb garden where I continue to assemble both a seed-grown and nursery purchased collection of South African succulents that surprise me with their cold tolerance.

I am an active board member of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, currently serving as Vice-President. I am passionate about conservation, research and development for the CSSA and I see this as a golden era for those of us interested in succulent plants.

Finally, our changing climate poses both challenges and opportunities. I can now grow plants in my gardens that would not have survived our winters of 20+ years ago. However, the milder winters seemed to have increased the rabbit populations enormously, requiring screening to prevent choice plants from being destroyed.