interesting and entertaining as reviews from his tour participants. presented by our guest speaker Jeff His slide show supported his Chemnick, owner and operator of assertions about the diversity and Aloes-in-Wonderland, a specialty popularity of the plant life, as the nursery and garden in Santa audience reacted positively to the Barbara. He is also the founder many species depicted, including and operator of Mexico Nature an enormous Beaucarnia gracilis Tours, specializing in botanical and a Yucca lacandonica. Other (and ornithological) throughout Mexico and a respected the red *Hechtias*, the white-flowered authority on Mexican cycads who Plumeria rubra, the very tall has published numerous articles Dasylirion longissimum, as well as and described several species new to Agave montana, Pachycereus weberi,

slide show was 'Treasures the Sierra Madres: Botanizing Mexico," and we were taken on a lively, colorful and informative focusing primarily on the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas.

mountain ranges converge in the to Mexican state of Chiapas, in a region known as the Transvolcanic Belt. The area is characterized by snowcapped mountains which drive the botanic speciation but is also home to cloud forests and deserts, with the whole range available for exploration in the Tehuacan Cuicatlan Biosphere Reserve in Oaxaca. There is also an abundance of limestone outcroppings and cliffs throughout southern Mexico, and Chemnick shared photos of some of the varied, but inaccessible, plant life that could be seen growing on these rock walls. It is his contention that this region is home to the best plants because of its unique climate and terrain.

Chemnick's first trips were cycad tours to Chiapas, and he remarked that in addition to the cycads, he www.aloesinwonderland.com. found that the agaves and echeverias

February's program was both were among the plants given the best ecotours unusual specimens he showed were science. The topic for the evening's *Platanus mexicana*, and many, many

mammillarias, echeverias and tillandsias. His pictures gave viewers a great sense of the size longevity and some of these plants can attain when growing undisturbed in their natural habitat. He also

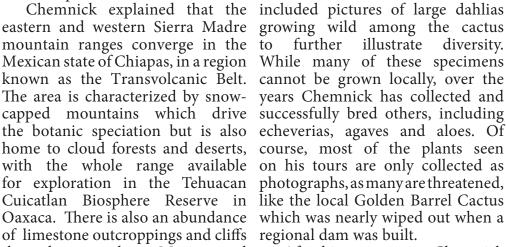


Photo provided by Jeff Chemnick

After his presentation Chemnick responded to audience questions and noted that many of this tours can be tailored to a group's preferences, as the areas he travels to offer such a variety of choices for exploration. For more information on his tours, you can visit: www.mexiconaturetours. com; or you can check out his local plant selections from his nursery at

CA Sabine Steinmetz

SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES

Who would you like to nominate for consideration to be honored as 2018's Horticulturist of the Year?

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The responses we received to last month's question have been compiled and will be reviewed at the next Board Meeting. We will be announcing this year's Horticulturist of the Year (HOTY) honoree in the next few months and appreciate all of your suggestions, and especially your participation.

Thank you!

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We will resume printing your responses to the current "Sharing Secrets" question in the April newsletter - but to hold you over, we have a few more holiday horticultural gift responses to share:

When I returned to L.A. after holidays up north, I was greeted by a huge box full of tillandsias courtesy of a colleague I met at the Association of Zoological Horticulture conference. When she said she would send me a few "tillies" I was thinking a handful of specimens but this was a cornucopia of beauties. It was a lovely way to start the New Year, deploying them in the garden.

Sandy Masuo

I was delighted to receive gift certificates for two of my favorite mail order nurseries from my son and daughter-in-law!

Sherry Heyman

While I was given several lovely gardening books and other gardenrelated items, the best gift I received was getting my husband's assistance (during his week off at New Year's) to plant all the miscellaneous gallon containers that were wasting away in our driveway. They now have a chance to thrive and I have room for new acquisitions....

Anonymous