

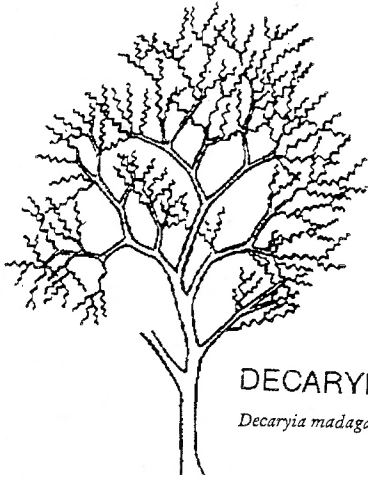
*Mammillaria thornberi*

# Espinas y Flores

NEWSLETTER of the SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY, INC.

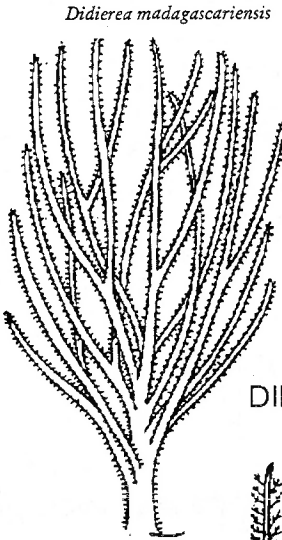
A Non-Profit Mutual Benefit - Public Benefit Corporation

VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER FOUR SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 1999 @ 1:00PM



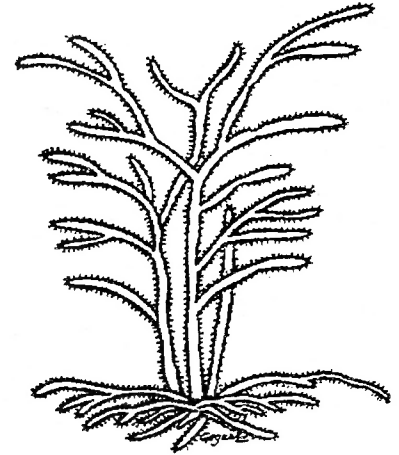
DECARYIA

*Decaryia madagascariensis*

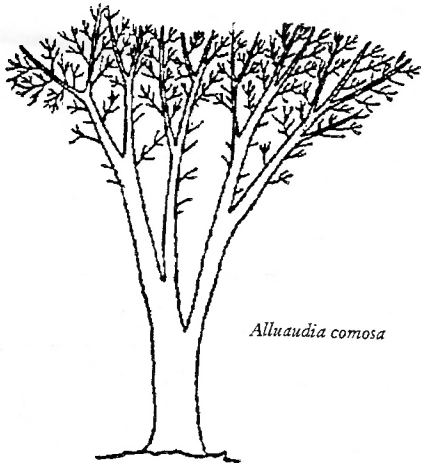


*Didierea madagascariensis*

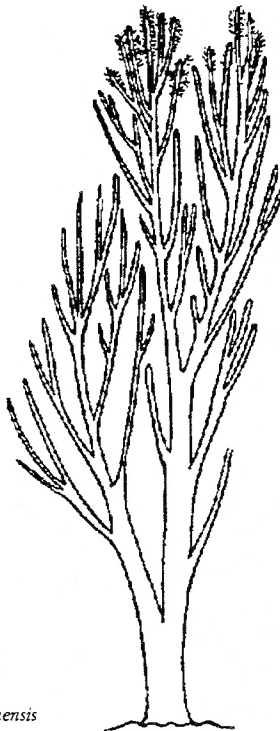
DIDIERIA



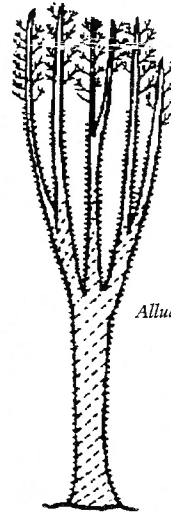
*Didierea trollii*



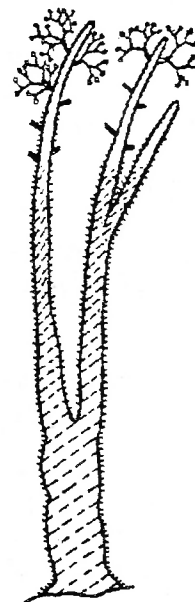
*Alluaudia comosa*



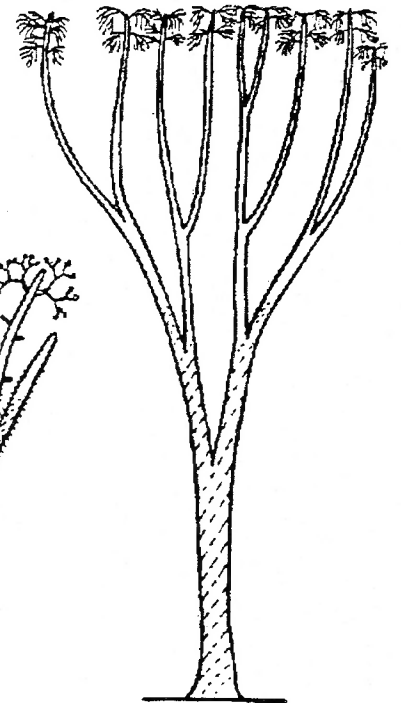
*Alluaudia dumosa*



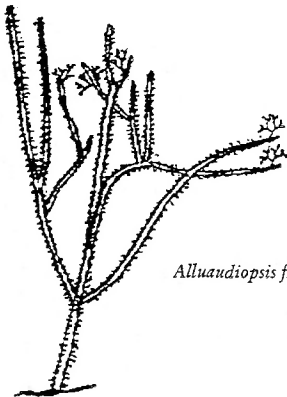
*Alluaudia ascendens*



*Alluaudia montagnacii*



*Alluaudia procera*



*Alluaudiopsis fiberensis*

ALLUAUDIOPSIS

ALLUAUDIA

# Agaves ~ From My Point of View

## April Program by Kelly Griffin

First I want everyone out there to know that as SDC&SS Program Chairman it was not my intention to schedule one of my own programs this year! . . . especially for the month of April! . . . but the best laid plans . . . I had wanted to take advantage of the fact that we were going to have some very knowledgeable and interesting foreign guests in the area because of the CSSA Convention in relatively nearby Las Vegas. I had a decidedly South African slant planned, and relentlessly pursued several conventioners that fit this bill. Unfortunately, with our meeting on Saturday so close to the opening day of the convention on Sunday, I was unable to find a speaker with an amicable travel schedule. Dorothy Byer & Betty Athy, just back from a two-month South African adventure were "riding shotgun" and had generously agreed to present their program if I was unsuccessful in securing a South African speaker. . . . but Dorothy is still recuperating and just not up to giving a program yet. Dorothy & Betty's South African Adventure is scheduled for October - the next available opening for this year. I look forward to seeing this one - it will be a treat!

This month's program will highlight the most fascinating aspects of the genus *Agave*. It features plants from the Grand Canyon to mainland Mexico, and Baja, the Mojave, and Anza Borrego. I have included some of the associative flora like yuccas, nolas, and other succulents (including some cacti). This program is quite different from the program Brian Kemble gave us last October. I have been working on this presentation for a long time and I hope to share a distinct perspective.

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Our cover: HABIT PROFILES OF DIDIEREACEAE (Not all the same scale) (After Rauh 1963). From a distance, most species can be recognized by the silhouette alone. From DIDIEREACEAE 'CACTI OF THE OLD WORLD' by Gordon D. Rowley; published by The British Cactus & Succulent Society; 1992.

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Please send your letters, artwork, poetry, Cactus or Succulent-of-the-Month articles, comments, or criticisms, etc. to:

MICHAEL & JOYCE BUCKNER, EDITORS

2327 "N" AVENUE, NATIONAL CITY, CA 91950

PHONE/FAX NUMBER: (619) 477-4779

**Publication deadline for May/June Show & Sale Issue is Saturday, April 10, 1999.**

*Espinas y Flores*, the newsletter of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, Incorporated, P.O. Box 33181, San Diego, CA 92163-3181, is published monthly with the exception of a combined May-June issue (*11 issues per year*). Newsletter circulation is approximately 350 with about 300 issues going to members (*one issue per household*) and an additional 40-50 issues going to educational institutions, botanical societies, cactus & succulent nurseries, local publications, related natural history events & exhibits, and other interested groups or individuals upon request. Subscriptions (*membership dues for an individual*) are \$10 per year for bulk mail within the USA.

Opinions stated in the articles and editorials of *Espinas y Flores* are solely the opinions of the authors or editors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of other SDC&SS members, the Board of Directors, or the organization in general. All materials submitted to *Espinas y Flores* for possible publication may be edited for form and content. All material in the *Espinas y Flores* may be reprinted by non-profit organizations (**unless such permission is expressly denied in a note accompanying the material**) provided that proper credit is given to the SDC&SS *Espinas y Flores* and the author, and one copy of the publication containing the reprinted material be sent to the editors. Reproduction in whole or part by any other organization or publication without the permission of the editors is prohibited.



## Earth Day - Earth Fair - Sunday, April 18th

The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society will once again be participating in Balboa Park's Earth Faire festivities. We will have a booth where we will be giving anyone interested information about cacti & succulents and our society, as well as selling plants. **Volunteers are needed.** We especially need help in setting-up (7 :30am - 9:00am) and breaking down (4:00pm - 6:00pm). The SDC&SS will provide lunch for all helpers. Hope you will join us for this fun day. Vendors interested in selling plants, or volunteers needing more information may contact **Pam Badger @ (619) 589-1223.**

✿ **Desert Wildflowers in the Anza Borrego** are just beginning to appear. This winter's colder temperatures and sparse rainfall will deliver an entirely different selection of wildflowers & bulbs. *The Sand Paper*, Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association newsletter, states "In the Borrego Badlands, the purple Orcutt's aster can be seen. . . . the red chuparosa, alive with hummingbirds, and the bees' favorite, desert lavender. This year the fun will be searching for the mini-bouquets playing hide & seek among the rocks on the shady side of a wash. The Borrego Desert is always worth a springtime visit." The **Anza-Borrego Desert Wildflower Hotline (760) 767-4684** states that the *Ocotillo* is in full, magnificent bloom, and *Agave* stalks are popping up all over - sounds like a great spring for succulent lovers!!

And did you know that there is a **Wildflower Walk in Balboa Park?** This walk begins at the foot of Zoro Canyon and proceeds along the paved road that travels south under the bridge, and ends at the parking lot at the police horse stables. Wildflowers planted in Gold Gulch include: *Eschscholzia californica* - California Poppy, *Lupinus succulentus* - Arroyo Lupine, and *Phacelia campanularia* - California Bluebell. For information about Balboa Park Tours **(619) 235-1100**; also for Balboa Park Interpretive Walks conducted by Balboa Park Rangers call **(619) 235-1121** for schedules & topics.

And in other parts . . . "the Spring desert wildflowers are always spectacular at the **Desert Botanical Garden!**" (Phoenix, AZ). Special accolades in March went to the desert marigolds, California poppies, and the wonderful blooming Yuccas. For Sonoran Desert wildflower info, tours and workshops: (602) 941-1225. Also, there is a **Desert Wildflower Report Website** (for entire U.S.A): <http://www.desertusa.com/wildflo/wildupdates.html>.

If you have a Cactus & Succulent educational program - demonstration and/or slide presentation, and would like to be listed in the new CSSA Lecture Program Data Base contact **Lee Miller, CSSA Lecture Coordinator, 2715 Ontario Road NW, Washington DC 20009-2107; (202) 232-0629 or email: leemiller@erols.com.** Lee will send you a questionnaire to fill out. We are hoping he will publish the entire list of speakers & programs; I'm going to send him a large stamped self-addressed envelope with that in mind!

The **Lotusland Field Trip** was a smashing success. When you actually receive Thank You Notes from some of the participants, well then you know for sure that it was a good trip! Thanks for the notes! There was virtually no traffic driving through the Los Angeles rain - we reached Summerland in record time giving everyone an interval for a leisurely lunch and a walk through this quaint town, and the sun even came out! Most of us made it to the little nursery downtown - with incense burning, the New Age music accompanied by the trickle of numerous fountains & waterfall sculptures, and several fat cats and dogs that you had to negotiate around, this was a real flash from the past. As **Jeanette Dutton** put it, "I feel like I'm back in the '60's!" Many of us checked out the antique stores - whew what prices! And a wonderful garden shop, "Botanik."

Lotusland was beautiful! It drizzled just a bit, making the plants look all the lovelier, and the cloud cover makes for great photography. **Nibby Klinefelter** has already sent us several wonderful photographs which - room willing - will be featured somewhere in this issue. (If they aren't here, look next month.) Thank you! Nibby!! Should you come up with some good photos (of people or plants) please send us a copy. We'll run a few in next month's newsletter and the rest will be put in our SDC&SS History Display for the June Show. This time the camellias in the Japanese Garden were in full magnificent bloom - a sight I had not seen before. Special thanks to: **Sandy**, our Lotusland greeter & reservationist (she suggested Summerland); **Fred Keller & all the knowledgeable Lotusland docents** who walked us through the intimate gardens giving us the special illusion of being the only ones there; our driver, **Scott Aveldson of Sundance Stage Lines**, who joined the last tour out and had a wonderful time, too! On the drive home he was asking all sorts of plant questions - he was as enthusiastic as the rest of us, and I bet he comes to see our Show & Sale in June! The only downer of this trip was that health matters & circumstance caught up with a few members who called to cancel just hours before our scheduled departure. We hope you are feeling/doing better now. So sorry you missed it. Thank you for calling! I appreciated the phone calls. Immediately we attempted to contact anyone & everyone who was "wait-listed," but with such short notice I was unable to fill any of these seats. Still, I am certain that if I were to overbook one of these trips, it would be the trip in which everyone would show - the Murphy's Law of Field Trips! The wider the butts, the narrower the seats!! . . . **Next trip? How does The Living Desert in Spring 2000 sound?**

Thank you **Myron Kinnach** for the fascinating program - full of adventure and intrigue!! Myron is a class act. I have always enjoyed and learned from his excellent programs. Now this one is my favorite! That's because by the time you read this I will be in the Mediterranean on my way to Gibraltar, where I will definitely visit the Botanical Gardens and look for the *Draceana draco* . . . and then on to Morocco, one day in Casablanca and one in Tangier. But alas, I'll have no time to take the Trail Less Traveled and trek about in search of the dragon trees! Just a visit to the market . . . and perhaps a museum!

**April 10 & 11: South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale** - South Coast Botanical Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula. Admission fee; Friday set-up noon to 8pm; Show Sat noon - 4:30, Sun 9:00 - 4:30; Sale 9:00 - 4:30 Sat & Sun; **Dick Hulett @ (310) 832-2262.**

**April 10 & 11: Orchid Magic - Palomar Orchid Society Spring Show** - San Marcos Community Cntr, 3 Civic Center Drive, San Marcos; Sat noon - 5:00; Sun 10:00 - 4:00. The Palomar Orchid Society meets at 6:30pm 2nd Friday of the month, Vista Senior Center.

**April 11 - April 16, 1999 - The CSSA Convention at The Tropicana in Las Vegas, Nevada** - Tropicana @ 1-800-468-9494 for hotel reservations. Featured Speakers: Susan Carter Holmes, Gerhard Marx, Derek Tribble, Eva & Voytek Foik, and Sonia Barker-Fricker. Sunday thru Friday morning; Book & Plant Sales. Wednesday Field Trips: Red Rock; Valley of Fire; Ash Meadows/Devil's Hole; Castle Mt Mine - info: **Deni Plath @ (702) 367-6336.** CSSA website @ <http://www.cactus-mail.com/CSSA/> or Mindy Fusaro, CSSA Registrar, P.O.Box 2615, Pahrump, NV 89041; (702) 751-1320; fax (702) 751-1357.

**April 17: Sacred Plants - Botany Class @ San Diego Museum of Natural History** - 9am to noon; cost \$35; senior, student & member discount. For registration info or to request a **FREE Education Programs** brochure, call (619) 232-3821 #203.

**April 17 & 18: Ohara School of Ikebana** presents Early Summer Floral Arrangements. Community Room - La Jolla Library, 7555 Draper Street, La Jolla. Sat 11:00 - 5:00; Ikebana demonstrations at 1:00 & 3:00; Sun 1:00 - 4:00; demos 2:00 & 3:00; free admission; free parking.

**April 18: Sunday, Earthday - Earth Faire in Balboa Park** - Call Pam Badger @ (619) 589-1223 & please see Page 3!

**April 18 - 26: Post CSSA Convention Tour of Baja California, Mexico** - Tour leader **Jon Rebman Ph.D.**, curator of Botany SDMNH and **Monte Woodworth**, Baja Natural History expert. Contact: Baja Discovery @ (619) 262-0700.

**April 22: Del Mar Fair Flower & Garden Show Exhibitor Meeting** - at 7:00pm in the Boardroom of the Flower Show Offices at the Del Mar Fair Grounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar; additional info (619) 755-1161 or fax (619) 481-7338.

**April 23 - 25: San Diego County Insect Fair @ Quail Botanical Gardens** - If you have kids (especially boys!) and/or an interest in butterflies, beetles, etc. This is a show not to be missed!!! Call (760) 436-3036 for additional information.

**April 23 - 26: The 1999 Desert Research Symposium & Mojave Desert Field Trip / Calico Mtns & Coyote Lake** - contact: Jennifer Reynolds, MDQRC, 777 E. Rialto Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92415; fax (909) 383-3247; phone (909) 387-2582.

**April 24 - 25: Green Scene Plant Sales at the Fullerton Arboretum.**

**April 27 (Tuesday) & May 1 (Saturday): Artist in the Garden Class at SDMN** - Call (619) 232-3821 ext# 203 for information.

**May 1 & 2: Alpine Sage & Songbirds Festival** - JK Corral, 2500 Alpine Blvd, Alpine. Butterfly release, hummingbird exhibit, live raptors, educational demonstrations, entertainment, etc. Call for times & more info: (619) 445-7675 or [www.chirp.org](http://www.chirp.org).

**May 1 & 2: Sunset Succulent Society Show & Sale** - Veteran's Memorial Bldg, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City, CA; (310) 839-1783.

**May 9: Annual Mother's Day San Diego Epi Society Show & Sale** - Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. This year's theme is Ancient Civilizations. Show Chairman: Don Francis; Epi Society President, Phil Peck @ (619) 491-9495.

**May 8 & 9: Mother's Day Guild & Garden Tour @ Quail Botanical Gardens** - 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas. Two day event sponsored by Quail and the San Dieguito Art Guild: Spring flowers, Live Music, Art Displays - Offtrack Gallery; Docent Tours 10am, 11am, 1pm & 2pm. Mother's Day Luncheon Tea \$15; Dessert Tea \$10; Reservations (760) 436-3036.

**May 15 & 16: Huntington Botanical Gardens Annual Plant Sale** - Members only on 15th - open 10:00am to 4:00; (626) 405-2160.

**May 15: Grand Opening "Hose-Cutting" Ceremony & Reception Water Conservation Garden @ Cuyamaca College.** This exciting new demonstration garden is located on a 4.2 acre site at the entrance of the Cuyamaca College Campus. Word has it that they are still looking for a few selected cacti & succulents for the Cactus & Succulent area. Entire list of desired plants appeared in the March FYI. If you would like to make a contribution of time, money or plant material, etc. please contact: **Jan Tubiolo @ (619) 670-2290** or **Shirley Massie @ (619) 466-0585**; website @ [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org). Docent program please contact **Dorcas Utter @ (619) 448-1915.**

## **June 5 & 6: San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale**

Free Admission - Room 101 - Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. Open Show - you need not be a SDC&SS member to participate. Friday, June 4 - Set-Up noon til 8:00pm. Sale Sat & Sun 9:00am - 5pm. Show: Sat noon to 5:00pm; Sun 10:00am to 5:00pm.

### **Mark Your Calendar! Get Your Plants Together!! PARTICIPATE!!**

For Show information, please contact Show Chairman, **Tom Knapik @ (619) 462-1805**; to assist with publicity or to make a commitment to assist in some other way, please contact SDC&SS President, **Thomas DeMerritt @ (619) 270-5544.** Show schedule and a poster for distribution will be included in May issue of *Espinaz y Flores* (619) 477-4779.

**June 19 & 20: Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society First Annual Show & Sale** - Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino. For Information call **Mary Weld @ (310) 455-1176.**

As of **July 1, 1999 Mexico** will be charging Baja (and Mexico) travelers a fee of \$15 person. The Mexican government announced that this fee would be charged to tourists who travel more than 15 miles beyond the border by air, land or sea. The revenue will be used "to improve Mexico's immigration system and to promote tourism." (Oh, how we wish it were earmarked for a few loftier & long-term environmental issues!) There is much confusion regarding where this fee actually starts, and how it will be enforced. Many Ensenada officials and hotel /resort /restaurant owners have been assured that their city (which is 65 miles south of San Ysidro Border) will be exempted. If you have any additional knowledge of the why's, when's, and where's of this new fee, please send us a note, so that we can share this information with everyone.

# **San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society, Inc.**

## **Vendor Application**

- When: Saturday, June 5, 1999 - 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
 Sunday, June 6, 1999 - 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Where: Casa Del Prado - Balboa Park, San Diego, CA.
- Who: Any SDC&SS member can sell. You do not need to be a commercial vendor, or have sold any items during our regular monthly meetings to participate.
- What: Succulent plants - all sale plants should be clean, healthy, & pest free. **No field collected plants are allowed to be sold.** Ceramic pots, plant containers, artwork, photographs, posters, books, or any other item which is appropriate to growing succulent plants.
- How: All purchases /sales transactions to take place at SDC&SS check-out tables, using SDC&SS's scanning cash register.

All sale items must be priced with bar-code labels. Plants should be labeled with plant name. Bar-codes are used for the speed and accuracy that they provide. The UPC code used is the standard for SKU numbers as approved by the California Cactus & Succulent Societies. Bar-code labels are available in 62 prices (\$ amounts) only. The lowest price label is \$ .50; the highest is \$250.00. Higher prices are only available in increments of \$10 or more. (There are 12 prices available between \$40 and \$250.) **These standard, pre-set prices are the only prices that you can use.**

Bar-code labels must be purchased /provided by the vendor. (Several commercial growers have obtained the software to print their own labels, and we are told that this software is available on the internet.) The usual rate is 2 cents per label, and generally they can only be ordered in multiples of 30. (i.e. If you have one item that you wish to price @ 50 cents, you still must purchase a minimum of 30 labels with the \$ .50 price amount.) To obtain a Bar-Code Order Form or additional label information: Joey Betzler (619) 569-8510 (phone or fax), e-mail: JABetzler@aol.com. Label order deadline is May 15, 1999.

The percentage paid to the vendor and the percentage which goes to SDC&SS treasury varies according to the category of sales item. Percentages are as follows:

	Vendor	SDC&SS
Plants:	65%	35%
Pottery / Ceramic items:	75%	25%
Photography, Posters, Books, Artwork, etc:	90%	10%

If you are planning to sell items in more than one category (different percentages) you will need a different set of labels to insure proper percentage. Please indicate which item(s) above you wish to sell.

Vendors should spend some time in their sales area. Generally sellers provide their own table coverings and their area should be kept clean at all times. The society is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Number of tables you are requesting \_\_\_\_\_

Name of company (*name on label*) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign & date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please Mail Applications to: **Tom Birt, SDC&SS Show Sales Chairman**  
**8187 Via Mallorca**  
**La Jolla, CA 92037**

Application Deadline is May 15, 1999.

Questions? Additional Info?  
 (619) 452-0389, e-mail: tbirt@fastwave.net

# RUTH FLYNN NELSON

1904 - 1999

In the duplex role as Editor and Historian of our Society, I have the unfortunate responsibility of being the Messenger of Passages. Fortunately, I also have the enviable experience of having personally known many of these gentle, warm and intelligent SDC&SS Members. Two of these quality people were the Nelson's: Bill and Ruth. They were among the founding members when this Society first came to be in 1961, and they were both deservedly chosen to be Life Members - SDC&SS's original Life Members.

Bill Nelson was an enthusiastic and encouraging force for many of us "Yunguns." In the late '60's and early '70's they often entertained fellow SDC&SS Members. One never left their lovely abode in North Park without a bushel basket full of cuttings and plants. Rare Hoyas, Ceropegias, Epis and Rhipsalis were freely given to the point of embarrassment for the recipient. Bill served as SDC&SS President in 1965, and Ruth served as the club's Secretary that year. Later Ruth took on the duties as Librarian - a position she held for many years. In 1973 Bill was once again chosen as SDC&SS President. He served on the Board of Directors during the interim between his two terms as President.

Ruth & Bill were both very actively involved with the Flower Show Exhibits at the Del Mar Fair. In the '60s and '70's showing individual plant specimens & creating elaborate aesthetic & educational exhibits at the Del Mar Fair was highly competitive. With cash prices for individual plant specimens ranging between \$150 and \$100 - (which was a lot more money in those days!!) - members honed their skill and passion for the hobby. This was prior to the SDC&SS's Annual June Show & Sale in Balboa Park; the first year for our now "Annual" June Show was 1980.

The Nelson's had an ever-growing passion for hanging cacti, epiphyllums, and they won many, many, Flower Show Awards in the "Hanging Basket" categories. In 1970 Bill & Ruth became some of the founding members of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society. The first meeting was held at their home. Bill passed away over two decades ago, and Ruth, we are told, past on this January at the age of 95. Bruce Burkett, Ruth's nephew, informed us that she was in no pain and simply went to sleep. She had spent her last three years in a Rest Home. Rick Latimer continued to visit her in later years when she stopped attending our meetings. Rick was her favorite - how unfortunate that we also lost Rick.

I remember my last conversation with her in the early '90's. She told me how she looked forward to receiving and reading *Espinas y Flores* every month. What lovely people, and what a lovely garden they had! Coincidentally, Joan Fleer recently gave us a whole set of "Garden Articles" written by Julianne Rice & Betty Baker in the late '60's and '70's. Of course "The Nelson Garden" was among these, and it deserves re-publishing one more time - please see next page. Thank you, Joan. Blessed are we to have known such wonderful, genuine human beings . . .

*Michael Buckner*

# The Monthly Benefit Drawing

At our March meeting the Benefit Drawing Table presented twenty-five wonderful plants. *Albuca spiralis*, *Agave gypophylla*, *Ceraria fruticulosa*, *Eulophia petersii*, *Gerrardanthus macrorhizus*, *Strombocactus disciformis* and nineteen others were the lucky winners of an unusually colorful and interesting group of tall, short, light, dark, bushy, bald, male, female, young . . . and younger specimens of *Homo sapiens!!* Many, many thanks to our thoughtful and generous donors:

**Betty Athy** for *Euphorbia milii* var. *imperatae* and *Mammillaria melanocentra*; **Carol Jean Wolcott** for *Agave gypophylla*; **Michael & Joyce Buckner** for *Cryptanthus univittatus*; and **Joe Quijada** for *Sansevieria kirkii* var. *pulchra* and the *Puya* species.

If you were a participant in our January show and have not yet received your complimentary benefit table tickets, please stop by the table and pick them up. These tickets (all, or one) may be used for any Benefit Drawing in 1999 (Apr, May, Jul, Aug, Oct & Nov). Remember, we really welcome your donations and participation, so stop on by and visit us.

Thank you, **Kay Quijada**

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## BRAG TABLE WINNERS FOR MARCH 1999:

### JUDGED BY MYRON KIMNACH

#### SUCCULENT:

FIRST PLACE: Michael Buckner's *Agave toumeyana bella*

SECOND PLACE: Lee Badger's *Dudleya attenuata*

THIRD PLACE: Kelly Griffin's *Aloe* hybrid

#### CACTUS:

FIRST PLACE: Don Patterson's *Ortegocactus macdougalii*

SECOND PLACE: Kelly Griffin's *Echinofossulocactus* species

THIRD PLACE: Joyce Buckner's *Neoporteria nidus senilis*

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## The Nelson Garden

Page 7

By Betty Baker

Hidden behind a dense arboreal foreground, the Nelson cottage is a microcosm of tranquility that their neighbors call "the Garden of Eden." When visiting in July, I kidded them about needing a machete to get to the gate. This in itself explains the charm and distinction of the Nelson's "garden." Bill & Ruth have been involved with their hobby for so long that everything they have is in full maturity. Bill's favorites are his Epiphyllums, and under a large tree Ruth calls *Coccolus laurifolius*, is the most spectacular collection, especially beautiful because their branches are allowed to hang freely in the flickering sunlight from baskets and containers hung in the tree replicating their habit in nature. The healthy, dark green succulence of all of the species and varieties reflect a very special propensity toward this group of cacti.

The display of succulents in hanging baskets is one of the most outstanding features of this well-established collection. Bill has had remarkable success in growing hanging baskets; to mention a few that attract special interest are the Hoyas: *Hoya imperialis*, *H. longifolia*, *H. shepherdii*, *H. cinnamomifolia*, *H. exotica*, *H. carnosus*, *H. obovata*, *H. bella*, *H. fusca* and a

ruffled species. Their *Senecio rowleyanus* has made several trips to the Fair, and is absolutely gorgeous!

The lucky people who the Nelson's called one night last July received the thrill of a lifetime - their huge *Hylocereus undatus* put on a breathtaking display of more than thirty magnificent night-blooming flowers. Actually glowing in the darkness!! Hauntingly beautiful, this was one of the most thrilling "floral" events many of us had ever witnessed.

One must not miss *Rhipsalis houlletiana*, *R. werkiei*, and *R. pachyptera* when visiting here. Forty-six species and hybrids of *Mammillaria* sit in the filtered sunlight under another large tree. If one sits in this spot there is an inexhaustible array of marvelously cultured plants to admire: *Ceropegia stapeliaformis* with its incredible flowers; a Hummel hybrid of *Euphorbia splendens*, *Pereskia sacharosa*, and *P. diaomata*. Then there's the King of all the Tradescantias: *Callisia (Spirocnema) fragans*.

Bill and Ruth have so much experience in culturing cacti and succulents, that they have their own formula for just about everything. And they are always extremely gracious about sharing them.

# CACTUS OF THE MONTH

## NOTOCACTUS

by Marilyn Newcomer

Page 8

*Notocactus* include approximately 80+ vigorous cacti which flower readily and are ideal for any collector, including beginners. All the species are attractive even without flowers.

### HISTORY OF THE GENUS:

It would appear that the year 1819 was the first discovery of a plant belonging to the genus *Notocactus* as we know it today. In that year Haworth mentioned *Cactus erinaceus*. This was followed in 1825 by *Notocactus scopa* described by Sprengel as *Cactus scopa*.

In 1826 and 1827 Schumann described *N. ottonis*, *N. linkii* and *N. langsdorfii*. In 1920 Britton and Rose used *Brasilicactus*, *Eriocactus*, and *Wigginsia* to cover a wide group of South American globular cacti.

Approximately 1941 could be claimed to be the true birth of *Notocactus* since this was the first time it was given full generic status by Berger. This is when *Brasilicactus*, *Eriocactus* and *Wigginsia* were considered to be a sub-genera of *Notocactus*. It's true that the former *Brasilicactus* and *Eriocactus* lack the characteristic red stigmas of *Notocactus*, but have been widely accepted into the latter group.

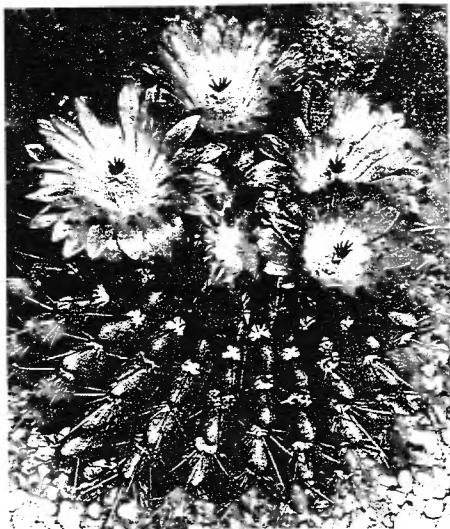
In the Jan/Feb 1995 issue of the Cactus and Succulent Journal (Vol.67, No.1) it was proposed that the genus *Parodia* should include all the species of *Notocactus*. However, Buxbaum noted a fine distinction in the seed structure. *Notocactus* has a dry seed cord which breaks off easily while that of *Parodia* is merged with the spongy tissue. (This is very obvious when trying to remove the dry seed). John Pilbeam has taken a broad view of this and *does not* accept lumping the two genus' together. Hooray for him!

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION:

*Notocactus* are found in Uruguay, Paraguay, the southern states of Brazil and parts of Argentina at altitudes of up to 6,600 feet. The largest number of species are on the Uruguay/south Brazil border.

### HABITAT/CLIMATE:

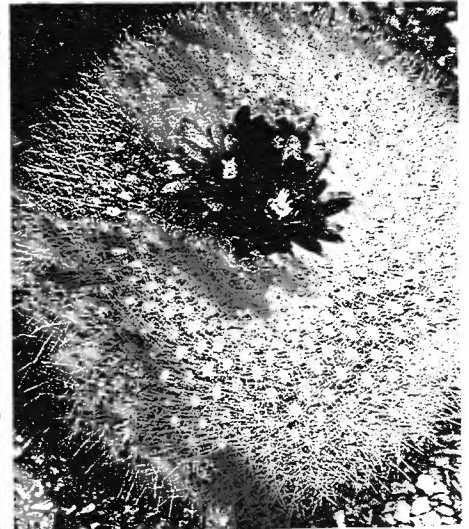
The areas where *Notocactus* grow are not really typical of xerophytic plants --- the average rainfall is quite high, between 20-40 inches per year and there is usually only a fairly short dry season. Average temperatures are generally fairly high, although some of the areas can experience occasional frost. Our *Notocactus* do extremely well in our area with summer temperatures lingering in the low 100's and winter nights dipping into the low 20's for several days in a row. Ours are in a cold frame with a roof to protect them from rain, receiving morning sun only and exposed to the variable temperatures.



*Notocactus herteri* Werd.



*Notocactus magnificus*



*Notocactus haselbergii* (F. Hge.) Berg.



## NOTOCACTUS, cont'd.

The plants grow among grass and shrubs on well drained rocky soil. Although the area gets plenty of rainfall, the plants are in situations where the water drains away very quickly --- so it is apparent that they need to be able to absorb this moisture quickly and store it. In habitat they produce quite a widespread fibrous root system, as they do in cultivation if given ample pot room. The main reason for cultivation failure is being grown in a small pot in a compost that compacts hard. This, of course, causes them to lose their roots and stop growing. *Notocactus* will achieve wonderful size if repotted in fresh soil every 2-3 years and being potted up to give them adequate root growing room. This is the main reason we rarely see full size plants in this country.

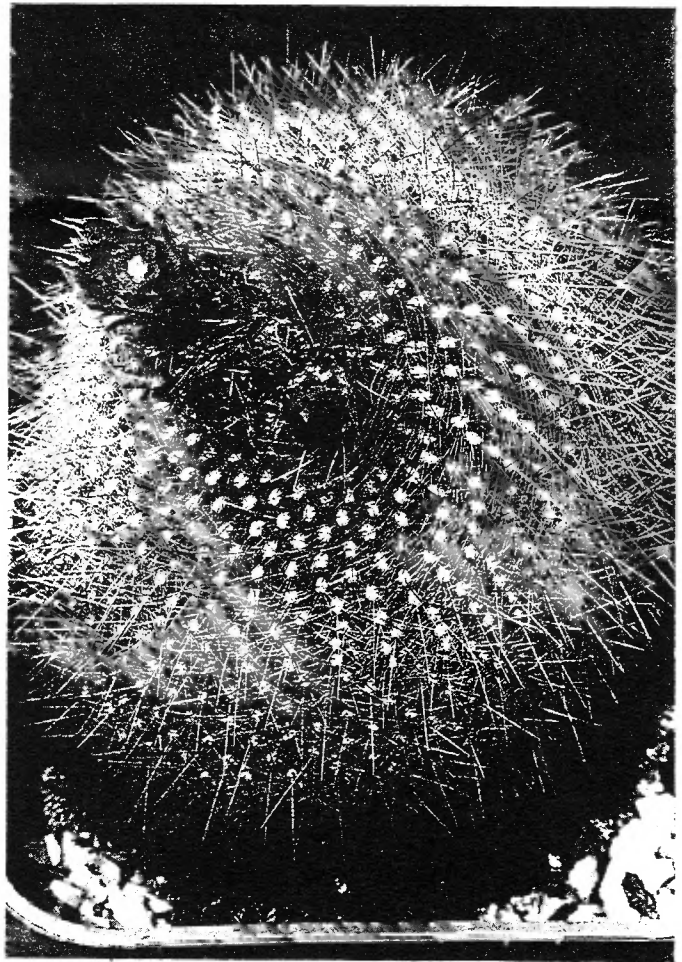
They do not want to be kept constantly wet during the winter months, this is a sure way to rot the root system. But they do not take kindly to a long period of desiccation which they certainly do not experience in habitat very often. Therefore, small amounts of water should be given in the winter. Once growth recommences in the spring, large quantities of water can be given and plenty of food of the less nitrogenous type, such as a good rose or tomato fertilizer! They like an acid soil, with a ph ranging from 5-7. However if you are short on shelf space, I guess you could starve them and keep them smaller!

As I mentioned above, ours are exposed to quite cold temperatures in the winter, which is OK as long as they are frost-free. They do appreciate a bright, warm situation in summer, although those species without dense spines should be protected from brilliant sun.

As grassland plants they will even tolerate half shade and can be left in the open in the summer. Several species are prone to corking at the base. This is natural but sometimes the corkiness spreads steadily up the body until only the top part is unmarked. There seems to be no way of preventing or curing this.

### FLOWERS:

The flowers are one feature by which many of the *Notocactus* species can be distinguished. Most are relatively large and attractive. They are freely produced, mostly in the spring. Flowers are borne close to the crown. An obvious distinguishing feature is the red or purple stigmas which stand out very conspicuously from the flowers and stamens. The buds and flower tubes are covered with wool. It used to be that collectors were content with the beauty of the plant, along with the large yellow blooms which easily appear every year. But now more species have been introduced that have very colorful flowers and are on our "want list"!! Some examples are *N. herteri*, pink/purple; *N. roseiflorus*, *N. rutilans*, pink; *N. uebelmannianus*, *N. ottonis*, purplish to wine red; *N. graessneri*, green.



*Notocactus graessneri*

NOTOCACTUS, cont'd.

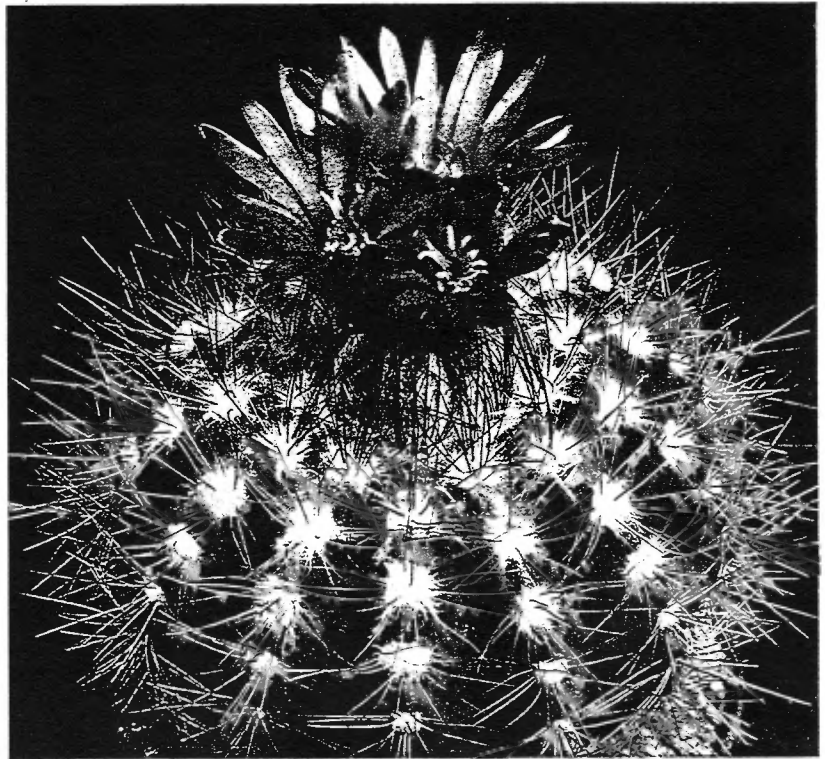
#### PROPAGATION:

*Notocactus* grow very easily from seed, which is one of the reasons why so many cultivated plants are of doubtful origin. They set seed readily and many growers find them ideal plants to raise for sale. Generally several *Notocacti* will be in flower in the greenhouse at once, and unless special precautions have been taken, the plants produced will be hybrids. Collected seed is readily available and much to be preferred if the plants are being raised for sale to collectors.

#### TREATMENT OF SICK PLANTS:

If a *Notocactus* looks unhappy and shrivelled and is not growing, it is no good leaving it in its pot hoping it will get better --- it won't --- it will only get worse. Remove it, take away all the old soil and cut off any dead roots, if necessary right back to the rootstock. Replant in loose, fresh compost and place in the shade. Keep the compost slightly moist and spray the plant occasionally.

**Reference:** Mace, Tony. *Notocactus*. 1975  
Cullmann, Gotz & Groner. *The Encyclopedia of Cacti*. 1984  
*The Cactus File*.



*Notocactus  
muegelianus*

Page 10

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## CORRECTION TO THE ARTICLE ON CACTUS OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY 1999 --- UEBELMANNIA

My research for this article took me to several authors who were incorrect in their research. The following is the way discovery of this genus happened.

In 1966 after the discovery of *Parodia gummifera* and *Parodia flavispina* by Horst and Baumhardt, Ritter went to Brazil to see these new species of *Parodia*. However, after studying the new finds two problems came up. *Parodias* come from Bolivia and Argentina, not Brazil. Also the flowers were not *Parodia*.

It was at this time that Uebelmann came from his home in Zurich, Germany to join Ritter. They decided this had to be a new genus and Ritter named these two new plants *Uebelmannia gummifera* and *Uebelmannia flavispina*. Horst and Baumhardt agreed and Uebelmann was delighted. He had discovered many *Melocactus* in Brazil but never was one named after him. Now he had a whole new genus.

While in Brazil, Ritter and Uebelmann discovered *U. pectinifera* and *U. pseudopectinifera* and later the wonderful little *U. buiningii*. Since then many other varieties have been made available.

Ric Newcomer

# The Curious Didiereaceae of Madagascar

## By Joe Quijada

**Didiereaceae** This family is endemic to Madagascar. It has four genera, two of which I will address in this article, the *Alluaudia* and the *Didaerea*. These species are xerophytic shrubs or trees and not true succulent plants. The six species of *Alluaudias* grow in southwestern Madagascar as tall shrubs or trees, and support some of the islands remaining Lemur animal species. *Alluaudias* are leafless during dry periods and bear pairs of small, bright green leaves when water is available. The leaves are arranged in a vertical orientation to the sun to reduce water loss. Flowers, when produced, are small. Most of the following descriptions are excerpts from **Werner Rauh's** "**Succulents and Xerophytic Plants of Madagascar**", **Volume Two.**

***Alluaudia ascendens*** Drake Columnar stems, sparsely branched to 35 feet high, leaves are round and reddish-green in full sun. This the tallest of the *Alluaudias*. (*I bought a small plant in March 1991. It is now 4 inches in diameter, 8 feet tall, and growing in a 5 gallon pot.*)

***Alluaudia comosa*** Drake Very densely branched, with a cushion-like flat crown. Described by W.Rauh as "easily recognized ... from a distance this plant looks like a mushroom"... Has short, silvery spines.

***Alluaudia dumosa*** Drake Werner Rauh describes this species, "the most curious of the genus because of its rod-like branches. Plants shrubby, trunk short and thick. Flowers conspicuous; stamens brilliant red. The usually leafless stems are the photosynthetic organs for this species. The cylindrical branches make *A. dumosa* look much like a leafless, coralli-form *Euphorbia*. *A. dumosa* is easy to propagate from cuttings".

***Alluaudia humbertii*** Choux This species grows with and looks somewhat like *A. procera* but maintains the branched habit into maturity. The male flowers have red stamens and the smaller female flowers have white stigmas.

***Alluaudia procera*** Drake This is the most widespread *Alluaudia* of the genus. It forms small shrubby trees when young. Primary stem branching near base covered with spiral rows of spines. The lower branches die off as the plant matures. ....(*The branches of **A. procera** are thinner than those of **A. ascendens** and when young look very much like **Fouquieria splendens** ('Ocotilla') native to Mexico and Southern California. I would suggest this is a good example of convergent evolution. I have found propagation of **A. procera** easy to grow from cuttings.*)

***Alluaudia montagnacii*** Rauh This is an exceptional species that has a very small distributions. The juvenile stages, growth habit, branching pattern, and the leaf shape of *Alluaudia montagnacii* are all very similar to *A. ascendens*, making it very difficult to distinguish between the two species. Only the longer, stouter spines of *A. montagnacii* vegetatively differentiate the two.

## Didiereaceae of Madagascar by Joe Quijada continued

The genus **Didierea** has only two species, *D. madagascariensis* and *D. trollii* and grows in the coastal region of southwestern and southern Madagascar.

***Didierea madagascariensis*** Baillon Werner Rauh, in his book writes, "the species *D. madagascariensis*, ...the more northern species... shows the closest morphological similarity to columnar cacti amongst the Didiereaceae. The primary stem of *D. madagascariensis* is solitary and grows erect. During the rainy season the leaves completely hide the spines of the primary stem. Branching may occur when the primary stem reaches a height of 5 feet. Propagation is from seeds or, new shoots may be grafted onto *Alluaudia procera*. (My 8 year old plant is getting too tall so after our last June Show I cut the top off: Both mother and baby are doing fine.)

***Didierea trollii*** Capuron and Rauh A significant difference between *D. trollii* and *D. madagascariensis* is the juvenile growth habit. The long shoots of *D. trollii* are branched and all grow horizontally or down curved, creeping on the ground. The spines are also shorter thinner and less in number than *D. madagascariensis*. (I grow my 9 year old plant in a hanging pot, and except for an occasional spine in the forehead, it does quite well.)

Reference: "Succulents and Xerophytic Plants of Madagascar"  
Volume Two, By Werner Rauh, Strawberry Press



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# Exploring the Desert - How to Find a Cactus by Ron Burnight

Once you get hooked by the cactus hobby, the problem of finding plants gets more and more difficult. The first few plants almost always come to you. You admire a plant of an afflicted friend and he dumps it on you. A relative who has traveled through the desert buys one of those "funny looking things" to prove he was actually there. Sometimes the intention is not so friendly: your husband's girlfriend sends you one for Mother's Day.

The next step is casual collecting: you buy one of those cute little devils with the buckshot eyes glued on. A person's first plants are like love letters: they are often embarrassing later on in life. Then comes the time you actually get in your car and drive all the way to a cactus nursery. You're hooked. Like Dutch Elm disease, there is no cure.

The final stages of the disease are manifested by a burning desire to go places so hot and barren the devil only comes out at night. Suddenly it seems rational to want to climb hills with rocks so hot they burn your hands, to sweat so profusely you cannot see through your glasses, and to suffer terminal nose sunburn. When first you announce to your friends that you are going to the desert, they assume you mean Palm Springs or Las Vegas. When you explain that you are going to the desert desert, you get that "your fly is open" look. You hear partial phrases whispered behind your back, "Poor soul . . . a little dotty . . . I didn't think men went through that." Only a true cactophile can look at four million acres of sand and rock so hot it blisters lizards, and think he is in God's country.

Finding the desert is relatively easy - just go East, young man, go East. Finding cacti, on the other hand, can be quite a chore. Surprisingly, the desert is not carpeted with cacti. In fact, cacti tend to be rather rare in the desert. Oh sure, some cacti can be seen from a speeding Greyhound Bus: jumping chollas, yuccas, etc. But real cacti are rare. We have discovered the first principle of finding cacti: Any cactus that can be found next to the road (with one exception) is "common."

Any cactus worth its spines will be on the side of a hill. The better and rarer the cactus, the bigger, steeper, and rockier the hill. The really nice ones grow right on top. If you want to see or photograph rare stuff - that's a whole different league. Rare or new cacti are like prosperity . . . are just over the next rise.

Which leads us to the second principle of cactus visiting: Any cactus, or photograph thereof, represents a good deal of sweat equity - not to mention punctured feet, skinned knees, third-degree sunburn, and some weird bug bite that makes you the envy of medical science.

The third principle of going to "habitat" is the principle of *deja vu*. After you have walked ten miles, climbed a hill roughly the size of Anapurna, fallen off a rocky ledge, slid 200 feet down a lava flow, landed in a clump of *Opuntia biglovii*, and then struggled wounded, back to your car - there by the car, so close to the wheel you cannot figure out how you missed running over it, is the same rare *Sclerocactus obscurantus* that you just photographed at the top of the hill.

I have a theory about these near-be's. I do not think you miss them the first time at all. I think that after you have gone on your hike, they sneak up to get in the shade of your car. I know one guy that builds cactus blinds - cardboard cut-outs of '56 Chevys. He sits behind the cut-outs sipping ice tea and studying Playboy, and waits for the cacti to come to him.

It's a great hobby. I love it.

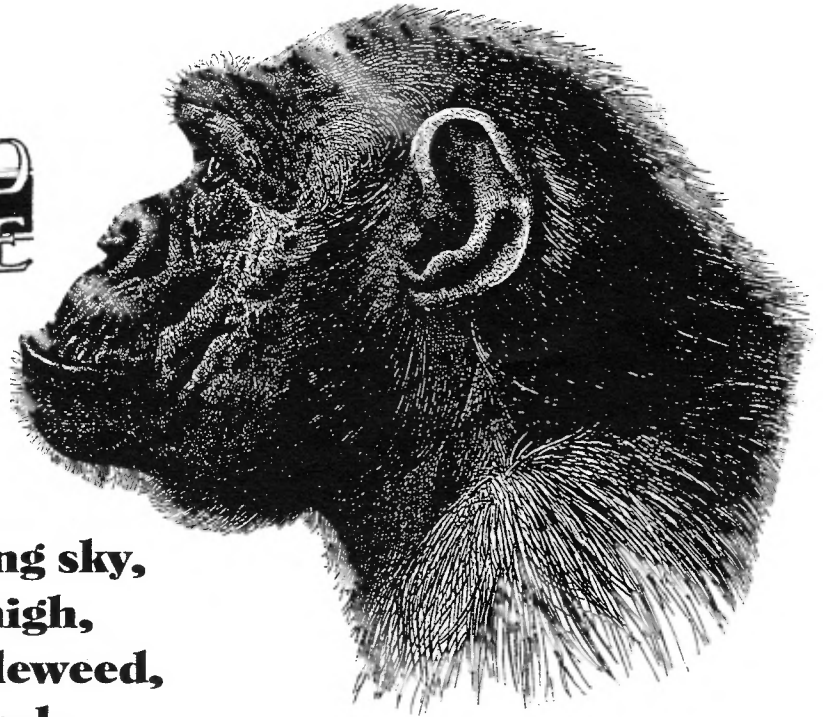
Ron Burnight wrote this in 1990 while he was still living in Sacramento. Since then he has moved to Pahrump, Nevada where he has taken the stages of cactus disease even further. This article was first printed in **Roadrunner News** the newsletter of the Long Beach Cactus & Succulent Society, December 1992, Carol & Joe Wujcik, Editors.

**All things happen by necessity;  
in nature there is neither good or bad.**

- BENEDICT SPINOZA

**WISE AND  
OTHERWISE**

by Michael Buckner



**The desert is no lady.  
She screams at the spring sky,  
dances with her skirts high,  
kicks sand, flings tumbleweed,  
digs her nails into all flesh.  
Her unveiled lust fascinates the sun.**

PAT MORA, *Chants*

**SEED DISPERSAL BY ANTS:** In a large number of higher plant species ants play a significant role in the dispersal of seed. Almost everyone who cultivates cacti out of doors has found that the seed of many species must be harvested as soon as they are ripe, otherwise they are often carried away by ants. Unfortunately again, very little field data on cactus seed dispersal by ants is on record.

Seeds are only attractive to ants if they contain nutritious substances such as lipids and sugars. Most ant-dispersed seeds possess appendages containing the ant food. These appendages are called elaiosomes (= oil bodies). Ants usually carry the seeds to their nests where the elaiosome is bitten off to be fed to the larvae. The seed proper with the enclosed embryo remains undamaged. The seeds may be stored anywhere inside the nest, alternatively the ants may remove the seeds from the nest to a 'garbage heap'.

Ant dispersal has a number of advantages for the plants species. If the seeds are buried in the ant nest, the seeds are protected against granivores. Secondly, seeds that germinate in or nearby an ant nest are able to grow faster as a consequence of the higher content of nutrients in the soil. These nutrients result from the decomposition of all kinds of plant and/or animal material which is regularly brought into an ant nest. A third advantage of ant dispersal is that the minor damage to the seed coat caused by the ants, enhances its permeability to water, so that the seed germinates faster.

The seeds of several cacti are provided with appendages which probably serve as elaiosomes (e.g. *Parodia*, *Blossfeldia*, *Aztekium*, some *Mammillaria* species). In other genera the funicles may be swollen (as in *Gymnocalycium* and *Copiapoa*, for instance), or the attractive nutrients may be stored in the funicular tissue inside the hilum cup of the seed.

Rob Bregman, *THE GENUS MATUCANA*; 1996, A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

**He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who  
does not ask a question remains a fool forever.**

- SMILEY BLANTON

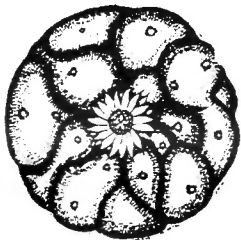
The spurge family, Euphorbiaceae, is the fourth largest family of living dicotyledonous plants, after Compositae, Leguminosae and Rubiaceae. . . . The family is predominantly tropical, with a few hundred species of the tribe *Euphorbiae* found in temperate regions, along with a handful of *Croton* species. Twenty-two genera are native to the United States.

The family *Euphorbiaceae* is even more diverse than the genus *Euphorbia*. Besides the perennial and annual herbs that are as familiar as garden spurges, many are shrubs or trees, others are climbers, some float on water, a few are lianas, of which some have stinging hairs. Some are tall rainforest trees, others are succulents a few millimeters high. All taxa have unisexual flowers. Pollination is achieved by a wide variety of agents: some are wind pollinated, some species of *Pedilanthus* are pollinated by humming-birds, others by bats or non-flying mammals. Almost every kind of vegetative adaptation is represented, with the exception of epiphytes, i.e. plants that have no roots in the ground but are supported either by another plant or by plant debris. Many are xerophytes, i.e. they are adapted to growing in dry conditions. Others, in contrast, are marsh plants, such as *Caperonia*, a Latin American and tropical African genus. Several Australian species are ericoid (having narrow, needle-like rolled leaves, like heather) in habit. Some resemble Lauraceae (Laurel family) more than Euphorbiaceae in general appearance. Although distribution of the family is worldwide the main center for the family in the Old World is the Indo-Malayan region, and in the New World, Brazil.

EUPHORBIAE - GARDENER'S GUIDE by Roger Turner; 1995, Timber Press, Portland, OR.

**No great genius is without a mixture of madness.**

ARISTOTLE



WISE AND  
OTHERWISE

Almost all species in subfamily Euphorbioideae have white or whitish latex, and none have petals. Nor is the cyathium a feature unique to the genus *Euphorbia*: it is found in all members of the tribe Euphorbiae. There are ten genera in this tribe: *Anthostema* (3 species from West Africa and Madagascar), *Dichostema* (3 species from West Africa), *Neoguillauminia* (one species from New Caledonia), *Calycopeplus* (3 species from Australia), *Cubanthus* (3 species from the West Indies), *Monadenium* (50 species from East Africa), *Synadenium* (10 to 15 species from East and South Africa), *Endadenium* (one species from Angola), *Pedilanthus* (15 species from Mexico and Central America) and *Euphorbia* (2,080 species, worldwide).

I suspect that you could easily spend a lifetime trying to sort through 8,000 species and fit them into a neat filing cabinet with a rational classification system, only to find that subsequent discoveries or emphases put your proposals out of court, and as Radcliffe-Smith (1987) wisely remarks:

*"The problem lies . . . in there being more levels of similarity and distinctions in nature than can be adequately reflected in the categories of our hierarchical structure, so that whatever system we eventually settle for is bound to be a compromise, and the more so as data from the various newer disciplines superimposes further, and sometimes rather different, networks of relationships upon those already considered to exist."*

EUPHORBIAE - GARDENER'S GUIDE by Roger Turner; 1995, Timber Press, Portland, OR.

**Common sense is not so common.**

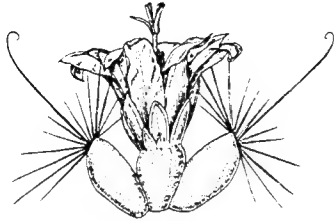
- VOLTAIRE

**New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason, but because they are not already common.**

- JOHN LOCKE, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*

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*Mammillaria thornberi*

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*Ganna Walska hosting a party at Lotusland.*



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