

# Espinas y Flores

BULLETIN OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
*Affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Inc.*

Volume XXII, Number 3

March 14, 1987

## MARCH MEETING

Saturday, March 14, 1987

1:30 p.m.

Casa del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

Program: NATURAL HISTORY OF NORTHWESTERN MEXICO

by Mark Dodero

Mark is one of our newer members, a Science teacher with the San Diego City Schools, Field Associate with the Herpetology Department of the San Diego Natural History Museum, and an avid naturalist, as well as an excellent photographer. His program will take us on two photographic transects of northwestern Mexico: one down the Baja California peninsula and the other down the west coast of mainland Mexico, from Sonora to Durango. The program will not only compare the succulent floras of the two regions, but examine other aspects of the vegetation and fauna, as well.

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Deadline for the April Issue

March 28, 1987

Thanks, Mary

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Charles J. Hansen - Chula Vista  
Kerry James - San Diego

Ed & Julie Marty - San Diego, CA  
Daniel W. McAllen III - Dallas, Texas

Those who have volunteered to bring refreshments for March:

Evelyn Chatham  
Marie Pearce  
Rose Robilotta  
Dyan Brown

Jeanette Dutton  
Elibet Marshal  
Frances J. Nardi  
Mary Aubuchon

Olga Holtzer  
Diane Crowley  
Susan Clements  
Elizabeth Glover

The refreshments have been outstanding the last couple of months. We really do appreciate your efforts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rick Latimer will lecture on Baja Cactus in Hanau, Germany in April. He will show slides (his own) and an interpreter will translate into German.

Rick lectured in Aukland, New Zealand in April of 1986.

CACTUS VISITATION LIST

Those wanting visitors this month -- 3rd Weekend  
Harold Richter 3136 Main Stree, Chula Vista  
Open 9 am to 9 pm

422-2588

SHOW SCHEDULE FOR MARCH AND APRIL

Mar. 13,14,15	San Diego Co. Orchid Soc. 41st Spring Show (Scottish Rites Mem. Bldg. Mission Valley) Admission: \$3.00	Preview Sat: 9am-9pm	Fri:7pm - 10:00pm Sun: 9am-5pm
Mar. 21 & 22	Ikebana International 19 Exhibit/Show	Sat:11am-4:30pm	Sun:11am-4:30pm
Mar. 28 & 29	Balboa Park African Violet Club 12 Show	Sat:Noon-5:00pm	Sun:10am - 4 pm
April 5	Convair Garden Club 37th Rose Show		Sun: 1pm - 4:30pm
April 11 & 12	San Diego Rose Society 60th Show (Balboa Park Club - Balboa Park)	Sat: 2pm-6pm Admission: \$1.50	Sun:10am - 5:30pm
April 18 & 19	Exotic Plant Society 9th Show	Sat:11am-r:30pm	Sun:11am-4:30pm

## CACTUS OF THE MONTH

### TURBINICARPUS

by Robert Kent

Turbinicarpus, a small group of small Mexican cactus, are a collector's delight. They have attractive and often unusual spination as well as pretty flowers ranging in color from white to red to green. And they require little space, often maturing when less than one inch in size and, if getting larger, only very slowly. At the same time, with the at present six species and seven additional varieties, plus some variation in flower color within the species, they are a perfect answer to us collectors who harbor a desire to possess all the known types in one genus.

The Turbinicarpus are a relatively new group, the first species described only sixty years ago, as an Echinocactus. Some ten years later, Backeberg and Buxbaum established the Turbinicarpus genus, which has slowly been enlarged over the years, the most recent addition being in 1982. Taxonomists being what they are, there has been continuing controversy on the proper classification of Turbinicarpus. Strombocactus and Toumeyia have been suggested as the correct designation, and more recently Glass and Foster have pointed out that the plant is closely allied to Gymnocactus and that further studies could result in uniting the two genera.

Present, widely accepted classification rests upon a Glass and Foster revision of the genus which appeared in the Cactus and Succulent Journal of July-August 1977 (see the Journals of May-June 1979 and March-April 1982 for new discoveries.) These articles are "must" reading for any collector who wishes to study or acquire members of the genus.

The recency of the last discovery of a Turbinicarpus, the harshness of the land in which they grow, and the small dimensions of the localities in which they often exist all suggest the strong possibility of there being other, still unknown Turbinicarpus. The genus is listed in Appendix I of the CITES, however, as endangered. The species are not listed separately, but as "Turbinicarpus ssp.," the only cactus genus so treated. Thus the list would seem to cover as yet undiscovered Turbinicarpus species, a neat trick of divining the unknown. One consequence of this ordering is to reduce sharply the likelihood of an American collector finding and returning legally with a new Turbinicarpus species.

Turbinicarpus habitats occur in northeast and central Mexico between Saltillo and San Luis Potosi with one species found further south in Queretaro and Hidalgo. The plants grow most often on low hills, usually limestone and frequently in cracks in rocks, but at times may be found in flat, rocky

ground at the base of hills and in one case on dry patches in semi-swampy country. Plants are often "similar in form to *Lophophora*, with rather soft, depressed stems, varying in color from grayish to bluish green to brown," and "are pulled low to the ground by large, tapering, fusiform roots. The spines, in most cases, have evolved into papery, hair-like, or feathery structures, often rather ephemeral, which serve more as camouflage than as armament. The fruits are top-shaped or turbinate, from whence the genus gets its name, naked, smooth, dull colored berries which dehisce or split by a longitudinal slit through which the seeds fall away. Unlike the bright red fruits of many small species of cacti, the drab fruits of *turbinicarpus* are unlikely to be eaten by birds or other animals which might provide the plants with a wider distribution. Most of the distribution is determined by ants, wind and run-off from the rains which afford the plants a very limited range. Within the colonies thus produced, there is almost no variation." (The quote, which says it all very nicely, is from the Glass and Foster revision.)

Cultivation is easy: good drainage, bright light, careful watering during the growing season, and winter rest. Keep a close watch for mealybugs; they seem to find this genus a choice one. Propagation from seed can be almost automatic. With two clones present for cross-pollination, volunteer seedlings will often appear among the plants.

Check list of *Turbinicarpus* species:

*T. valdeziana*  
*T. pseudopectinata*  
*T. lophophoroides*  
*T. laui*  
*T. pseudomacroechele* v. *pseudomacroechele*; v. *krainzianus*  
*T. schmiedickeanus* v. *schmiedickeanus*; v. *gracilis*; v. *macroechele*; v. *schwarzii*; v. *klinkeranus*; v. *flaviflorus*; and v. *dickisoniae*

The most likely "non-name" *Turbinicarpus* collectors may find in their searches is *T. polaski*, which Glass and Foster describe as a brown stemmed form of *T. schmiedickeanus* v. *schwarzii*.

## SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH

### SEDUM

By Phyllis Flechsig

What genus of succulents has members native to Siberia, Turkey, Spain, Japan, the United States, and Mexico? Our subject this month has--it is one of the most widespread of all succulent plants. Sedum, often called "stonecrop," is named for its medicinal uses--the Latin for sedate, that is, to alleviate ailments. It has been known from ancient times. In fact, a 16th-century Aztec herbal illustrates Sedum dendroideum and recommends its use for relieving a wide variety of ailments, from burns to dysentery. Sedum's native range is all round the world, mainly in the northern hemisphere, and often at moderately high altitudes. In the genus are not just ground-dwelling perennials but epiphytes, annuals, and biennials. Because it has been so well known for so long, people tend to sneer at sedums as "common," yet there are some very choice species in the group.

Sedum is a member of the very large Crassula family. It is defined as a plant whose flowers usually have 5 petals, sepals, and carpels but 10 stamens; the petals are divided to the base, not joined, and the flowers are open and star-shaped. All are more or less succulent in stems or leaves. The flower color varies from white, yellow, pink, or red to even light blue. Plant size varies from tiny ground covers such as S. dasyphyllum to tree types (reaching about 1 meter in height) such as S. oxypetalum.

Sedums are popular in Europe, where the native species are mostly hardy to cold; we in subtropical climates are more apt to favor the frost-tender Mexican species, so the selection of sedums available in nurseries here can be totally different from those found in the Old World. Native habitats are often in poor, shallow soils on slopes, particularly volcanic slopes; the plants do well when grown in crevices in stone walls. It seems safe to assume that a plant that has colonized itself over such an enormous range must be adaptable and opportunistic, and a few sedums, especially ground-cover species, can escape from cultivation and run rampant in the surrounding countryside.

Choice species for our climate include such kinds as S. suaveolens, a showy blue-white rosette with clusters of white, sweet-smelling flowers. This plant, from 3800 feet altitude in Durango, is a relative newcomer, named by Myron Kimnach in 1978. Another choice Mexican is S. hintonii, a little tricky to grow but well worth the effort (actually, lack of effort is called for: it does best with benign neglect). The so-called "tree sedums" include S. frutescens, S. oxypetalum, and S. torulosum. The first two have thin leaves that fall off in cold weather, and thick stems with peeling bark; they can easily be pruned into interesting bonsai shapes. The last-named one also has thick

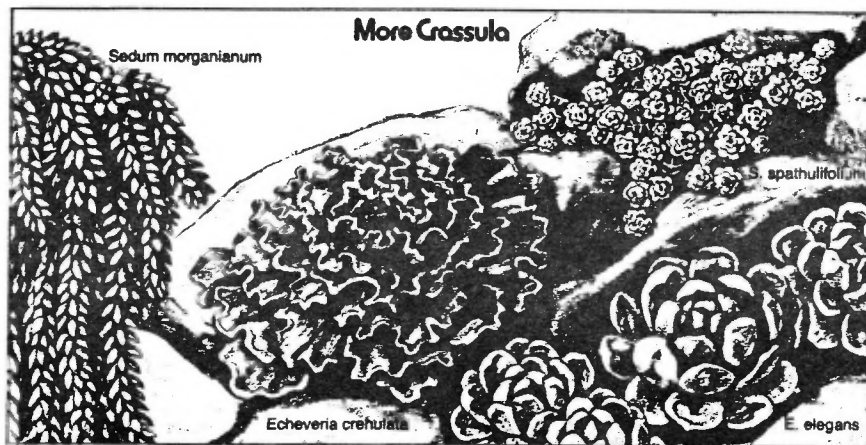
stems, but its leaves are in fleshy rosettes at the ends of its branches. These plants are native to old lava flows in the volcanic belt of south-central Mexico. Several species are native to California--a form of S. spathulifolium called 'Cape Blanco' is worth looking for: it has charming little blue and white rosettes. There is even a species native to Yosemite, S. yosemitense, though it is probably not available to gardeners.

For use in the landscape, rather than as potted specimens, there are many choices. Some of the named forms of Sedum spectabile have bright red flowers and can be very showy in the garden; they die down in winter. S. confusum--shiny light green leaves and yellow flowers--and S. rubrotinctum--bronze leaves, reddish-yellow flowers--make useful ground covers. S. spurium 'Dragon's Blood' is an evergreen, hardy plant also used as a ground cover; it has bronze leaves and red flowers. These plants can be bought at general nurseries rather than from specialists in succulents.

Sedums are very easy to propagate; those with thick leaves will often grow from leaves, and all will grow from stem cuttings. It must be said that small sucking insects relish sedums, so frequent inspection and spraying with insecticidal soap or treatment with a systemic insecticide are called for. Do not use Malathion on sedums.

#### LITERATURE CONSULTED

- Sunset New Western Garden Book. 1979. Lane, Menlo Park.  
Evans, R. L. 1983. Handbook of Cultivated Sedums. Science Limited, England.  
Bleck, J. 1972. Sedum L. Cactus & Succulent Journal 44: 243-245.  
Clausen, R. T. 1959. Sedum of the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.  
\_\_\_\_\_. 1975. Sedum of North America North of the Mexican Plateau. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.



## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Botany Department of the San Diego Natural History Museum is looking for volunteers to assist in two curatorial projects related to succulent plants.

One project is the curation of a large photographic slide collection of cacti and succulents, donated to the Museum by the former Chairman of the Botany Department, Dr. Reid Moran, upon his retirement in 1982. This will be a very valuable reference collection, once it is properly curated. The Museum needs someone who would be willing to sort, label and refile the slides in a coherent taxonomic order (ie. agaves with agaves; the cacti and Crassulaceae organized alphabetically by genus, etc.). Last year the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society provided the necessary funds to purchase the archival-quality storage files for these slides, and a four-drawer file cabinet in which to house them. Work was begun on the curation of the collection by a volunteer last summer, however, he was unable to complete the project.

The second project involves a large, scientifically valuable collection of herbarium specimens of Crassulaceae (mostly Mexican) collected by Dr. Moran over the past 30 years. These specimens need sorting, checking against Dr. Moran's field notebooks, and the typing of herbarium labels, in order to process them for incorporation into the main herbarium collection or distribution to other institutions.

Both of these collections represent valued resources to the Museum and to professional botanists, students and interested collectors of succulent plants. However, they are of limited use until they are properly curated. Neither task requires any expertise or specialized training in the field of botany, only an interest in succulent plants and a willingness to work on the project. Even a couple of hours per week would result in significant improvements to the two collections. Direction and guidance will be provided by the Botany Department staff. If you would be interested in working on either of these projects, and can spare a few hours during the week, please call Dr. Geoffrey Levin, Chairman of the Botany Department, or Jim Dice, the departmental assistant, at 232-3821 X229.

*Harriet Sopp, died Saturday, February 21, 1987  
She was a former active member and recording  
Secretary in 1971*

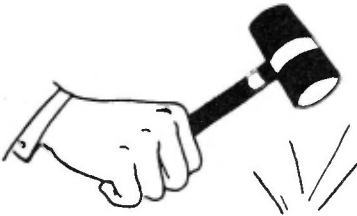
NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

- R. Mitchel Beauchamp, A Flora of San Diego County, California  
Bijan Dehgan and Grady L. Webster, Morphology and Infrageneric Relationships of the Genus Jatropha (Euphorbiaceae)  
T. Hashizumi, Peacock Cactus, Squillfish Cactus, and Easter Cactus (Epi-cacti), Parts 1 & 2 (in Japanese)  
H. Hirao, Color Encyclopedia of Cacti (in Japanese)  
Japan Succulent Society, Color Encyclopedia of Succulents (in Japanese)  
International Asclepiad Society, Asklepios, Vs. 35-37  
Werner Rauh, Bromeliads - For Home, Garden and Greenhouse  
William J. Webb, The Pelargonium Family

DONATIONS

- Robert & Virginia Natwick:  
Ethel Bailey Higgins, Our Native Cacti
- Dave Grigsby:  
Desert Plants (magazine) various issues
- Chuck & Dana Adams:  
Ortho's The World of Cactus & Succulents
- Brunhilde Scheffler brought from South Africa from Dave Hardy:  
Aloe (Journal of the South African Aloe and Succulent Society) various issues

---Rick Latimer, SDCSS Librarian



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BOARD MEETING

A bonsai demonstration will be conducted by Rudy Lime between 12 noon and 1 p. m., preceding our regular March meeting.

Our October 10 meeting will be held at the Wild Animal Park -- cake, coffee and punch will be served by the Park.





The following is an article for the March edition of Espinas y Flores

"Sculptural Techniques of Bonsai"

When you looked at the superb bonsai displays at the annual show last June you must have wished that you could make some of your plants look just that beautiful with a snip and a clip here and there, plus some training with wires, of course. This will be your big opportunity to learn how an expert does it. Rudy Lime is willing and anxious to share with you his knowledge and techniques of pruning and training plants for their maximum potential of design and symmetry. At the next meeting you are invited to bring a plant that would be suitable for bonsai treatment, and Rudy will explain and demonstrate these techniques for anyone who wished to attend. His demonstration will take place from 12 noon until 1:00 P.M., and will continue for many meetings to come. The subject is extensive and cannot be covered in only one meeting, so, with the approval of the Board of Directors, this will be an on-going event. This is a FIRST..... so come with your plants. It is not advisable to prune plants which are dormant, so bring something in a growing stage and see it go home more beautiful than you thought possible! Anything with a trunk or caudex would be suitable. Join us at noon at the March meeting for this exceptional opportunity!!!!

Shirley Berry

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BRAGGING PLANT WINNERS

1st Place - Joe Clements for his Echinocereus  
viridiflorus davisii

2nd Place - Rudy Lime for his Euphorbia francoisii

3rd Place - Frank Thrombley for his Seticereus  
icosagonus

**SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
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Vice President - Bud Aubuchon  
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Secretary - Beverly Kirkegaard  
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Shirley Berry, Jerry Brattmiller, Cathy Frost  
John Pasek, Joe Clements, Chuck Adams

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CSSA Affiliate Rep.: Cathy & Sandy Frost  
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Succulents - Dorothy Dunn  
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Picnic: Hannah Nachman  
Plant Exchange Table: Marilyn Lemrow  
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Program: Joan Johnson  
Jim Dice  
Joe Clements

The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing cacti, other succulents and exotic plants. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Board of Directors meetings are held after the general meetings. Annual dues are \$8.00 per single member per year, \$2.00 for each additional member of a household within a family. Single copies of Espinas y Flores are 60c.

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