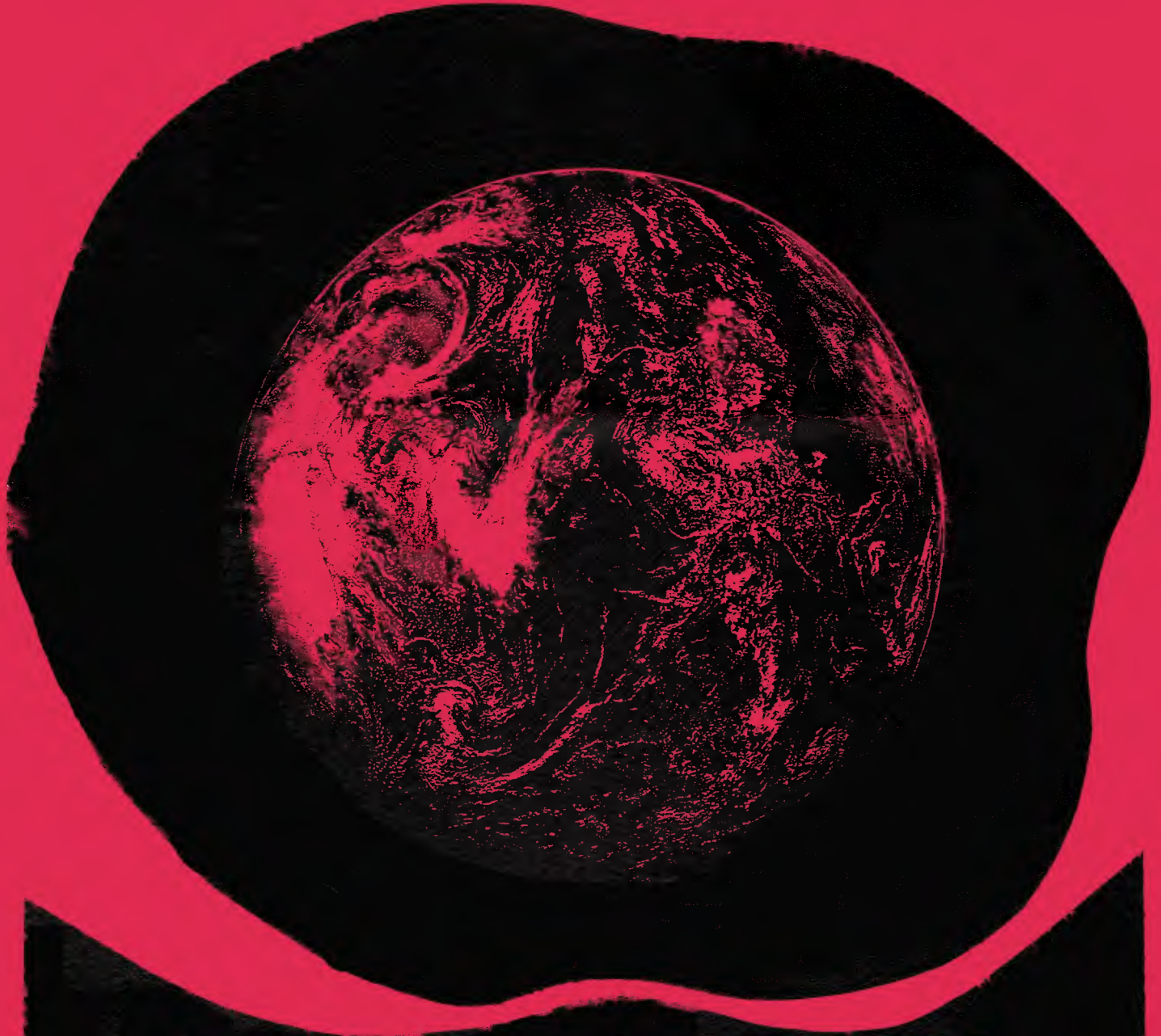




MAMMILLARIA THOMPSONII

ESPINAS Y FLORES

NEWSLETTER of the SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY, INC.
A Non-Profit Public Benefit California Corporation
VOLUME XXXIII NUMBER TWELVE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1998 @ NOON



**PEACE ON EARTH
GOODWILL FROM MAN**

DECEMBER'S HOLIDAY BANQUET BEGINS AT NOON POTLUCK DESSERT & PLANT GIFT EXCHANGE

Once again our December meeting consists of a wonderful catered banquet by **Top Hat Catering** (full dinner menu on reservation form inside this issue) with wine and soft drinks provided by the club. And because it was such a smashing delicious success last year, we are requesting that you bring a plate of your favorite holiday dessert to share. We had every kind of cookie, pie, cake, and candy imaginable — all were terrifically delicious. There were some homemade delicacies which were downright awesome!! And best of all — because it was Christmas there were no calories in any of it!! (I wish!) Velvety Swedish Christmas cookies, dark rich fudge brownies, lemon tarts, pumpkin pie, walnut candies, raisin spice cake, and Virginia Buckner's fantastic peanut butter cookies! Yum! Yum! Along with the banquet and potluck desserts, everyone who pays for their dinner will receive a gift plant. Look for the registration form insert in this issue, and **PLEASE MAIL IT IN TODAY**, if you haven't already done so!

Each year we also have a Holiday Plant Gift Exchange. This is how the plant exchange works: Any member or guest may participate; all you need to do is bring in a healthy, happy, desirable cactus or succulent. It can be staged in a nice ceramic pot or simply be growing in a plastic one. Just remember, the more desirable your plant is, the sooner it will be chosen. So, you may want to re-plant in a clay pot or add soil topping, etc. Make sure your plant is clean and healthy. **ALL GIFT PLANTS SHOULD HAVE A LABEL THAT IDENTIFIES THE PLANT AND HAS YOUR NAME ON THE BACK OF IT.** The first plant to be selected will be auctioned off at the end of the meeting. The lucky person who brought in that plant gets first choice of all the gift plants on the table. Whenever a plant is selected, the person who brought it gets the next choice. The more appealing the gift that you bring in, the earlier you will get your chance to select from the many fine specimens our members have brought in. This is a terrific way to give, receive, and broaden your plant collection. I know of several fine show plants that were originally acquired in this plant exchange. This is a fun way to participate. So go check your collection — you are bound to have an impressive specimen that you are willing to part with. You will be pleased with what you bring home in exchange!

Our cover: Collage by Michael & Joyce Buckner. We wish you the very best of holidays. Cheers!

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

MICHAEL & JOYCE BUCKNER, EDITORS
2327 "N" AVENUE, NATIONAL CITY, CA 91950
NEW PHONE /FAX NUMBER:
(619) 477-4779

Publication deadline for the January 1999 issue is Saturday, December 12, 1998

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 400 with about 375 issues going to members (*one issue per household*) and an additional 20-30 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.

MEMBERS ON THE MEND: Floyd Gable, Art & Phyllis Flechsig, and Ethel Standish. We certainly hope that all of you are feeling better and are out and about real soon!

Thank you **Kelly Griffin** for making all of the arrangements for our 1998 programs — GOOD JOB!! We know first-hand that this is no easy feat! Kelly has already supplied us with a partial schedule for 1999. Some of our exciting speakers for next year are: **Woody Minnich** - who did such a terrific job with last month's program — THANK YOU WOODY! — we just had to have him back next November; **Myron Kimmach**, editor of the Cactus & Succulent Journal (U.S.); **Michael Louie** from the San Francisco Bay area will speak in February on a subject near and dear to him, "Succulent Plant Tissue Culture"; and **Duke Benadom** will give a presentation on South Africa. If you have a specific request, suggestion, recommendation, or even a question regarding SDC&SS programs, please contact **Kelly Griffin @ (760) 942-4866**.

The 1999 Cactus and Succulent-of-the-Month schedule is being organized by **Jeff Harris @ (619) 294-5708** and **Joyce Buckner @ (619) 477-4779**. If you have done a cactus or succulent-of-the-month article in the past, chances are you will be hearing from us!! So, you might as well start thinking about which taxon you would like to learn about next! Writing a plant-of-the-month article supplies you with a terrific incentive to research those specific plants of interest — something you would probably never get around to doing on your own! So go ahead and take that first step, give one of us a call and make a commitment!! If you would like to volunteer to write an article, or have any plant-of-the-month related requests, suggestions, or questions please give one of us a call. A full 1999 calendar will be published in the January 1999 issue of *Espinás y Flores*.

Additionally, we would like to thank the following members: **Pamela Badger, Joey Betzler, Tom Birt, Michael Buckner, Joyce Buckner, Ron Burnight, Ed DeLollis, Chuck Everson, Phyllis Flechsig, Kelly Griffin, Michelle Heckathorn, Vicki Lane Hill, Virginia Innis, Fred Keller, Beverly Kirkegaard, Nibby Klinefelter, Thomas Knapik, Elibet Marshal, Karen Miner, Woody Minnich, Ric Newcomer, Marilyn Newcomer, Edward Nolan, Kay Quijada, Bruni Scheffler, D'erdra Smothers, Greg Wade, Monte Woodworth, Carol Wujcik**, and (I hope I didn't leave anyone out!) for their contributions of publishable material (plants of-the-month-articles, miscellaneous articles, illustrations, etc.) included in the 1998 *Espinás y Flores* newsletters. We have a very fine club indeed, to have so many knowledgeable and eager contributors! THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Please keep up the good work!! We don't always let you know this, but we really appreciate your input.

And just a note of observation regarding **Greg Wade's** excellent cactus-of-the-month article in November's issue: Greg stated that all of his *Rhipsalis* flowered in the springtime . . . Well, right now — that's late November — at the home of SDC&SS Life Member, **Warren "Papa" Buckner**, I observed several different species of *Rhipsalis* in full spectacular bloom. Perhaps it is the culture, perhaps the location (Lemon Grove), or the fertilizer, or who knows what? But it certainly blew some holes in Greg's theory! Just wondering — anyone else out there with winter blooming *Rhipsalis*? Let us know.

Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5 - CHRISTMAS ON THE PRADO in Balboa Park. This is a really fun yearly event celebrated throughout Balboa Park. All of the park's museums are open - for free - until 9:00 pm. There are stages setup all over the park with various performances, Christmas caroling, demonstrations, great food and drinks from around the world, arts & craft gifts at the Spanish Village, botanical Christmas tree exhibits and plant sales in Casa del Prado, children dancing, maids a' milking, drummers drumming and much, much more!! There is lots of parking in the lower lots on Pershing Avenue and at the Navy Hospital Parking Lot — and a whole bunch of buses will pick you up and take you back. There is sure to be something of interest for every member of your family! And what a fun way to get into the spirit of the holiday!! See you there!

December 6, 11, 12, 13, 18 - 23, 26 & 27: Quail Botanical Gardens - GARDEN OF LIGHTS - La Posada celebration on December 19 with Mariachi band. Tour the Gardens decorated with holiday lights, children's activities & holiday crafts.

Seen in Death Valley over Thanksgiving weekend: *Echinocactus polycephalus* — a huge magnificent specimen getting ready to bloom, and *Opuntia basilaris* in cryptic purple camouflage. All of Death Valley was terrific — not too hot — not too cold! We observed some magnificent sun sets, and it barely rained at all! stopped at Tecopa Hot Springs for a relaxing hot bath and visited the museum in Shoshone. These were both stops that we had wanted to make in the past, but had always run out of time. If you have never visited Death Valley you should plan a visit — even if only for a day — this spring when you are on your way to the CSSA Convention in Las Vegas. The wild flowers should still be blooming at the time.

Welcome SDC&SS Officers for 1999 and 2000: President - **Tom DeMerritt**, Vice President - **George Plaisted**, Secretary - **Laura DeMerritt**, and Treasurer - **Herb Stern**.

- ★ HOW ARE WE DOING? DID WE GET IT RIGHT?
- ★ CHANGE OF ADDRESS? PLEASE LET US KNOW!
- ★ MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION SHOULD APPEAR ON YOUR MAILING LABEL
- ★ PLEASE FILE ANY CHANGES BY CONTACTING PAMELA BADGER @ (619) 589-1223.

AND WHILE YOU ARE AT IT — PLEASE THANK HER FOR TAKING TIME OUT OF HER ALREADY BUSY MONTH TO FOLD, SORT, LABEL, AND DELIVER THESE NEWSLETTERS TO THE POST OFFICE!!! THANK YOU PAM, LEE & JEFF!!!

THE JOY OF EATING CACTUS

BY VIRGINIA INNIS

Most cactus and succulent society members would rather exhibit a cactus than eat one. Before someone envisions their prized cactus being devoured — stop — don't worry — it isn't going to happen. Prized old ornamentals are too old and too tough to eat!

Mexico has a large commercial crop with a market for cactus pads. The common name for these vegetable pads is *nopal* or *nopales*. These tender young pads are harvested from opuntia plants. In the fall of 1998 fresh cactus pads of this kind were priced at three pounds for a dollar at the El Fruteria Market on 25th Street in San Diego. In larger San Diego and Tijuana food stores opuntia pads are often available; in these large commercial markets they are ready to cook — clean and with all their spines removed. If you are harvesting your own or purchasing pads which have not been prepared, the spines must be removed. Use a sharp knife and wear a leather glove on the hand that holds the pad.

There are several ways to use cactus pad in cooking. The topic came up in a pottery workshop that I attended. Nahako Mieson spoke up, she is a young woman who came to this country from Japan; she confessed that she has a taste for cactus pads and uses them as a vegetable ingredient in her stir-fry recipes. Nahako soaks the pads in water for a half an hour, then pats them dry, and chops them up into bitesize strips. Then she adds them to her stir-fry as she would any other vegetable. She likes to use a garlicky soy sauce in this cactus stir-fry; she makes the soy sauce garlicky by adding peeled cloves of raw garlic about a week before using the soy sauce.

A Mexican American woman, who was also attending this pottery workshop, shared her favorite cactus recipe. She stated that the most common way of preparing the pads that she knew was to

dice them small, saute them in butter or oil, and then cook them in a skillet with scrambled eggs for breakfast, and they also worked well in omelets. This same woman recalled seeing the pads cut like fingers on a hand, so that they stayed together when grilled over a hot fire.

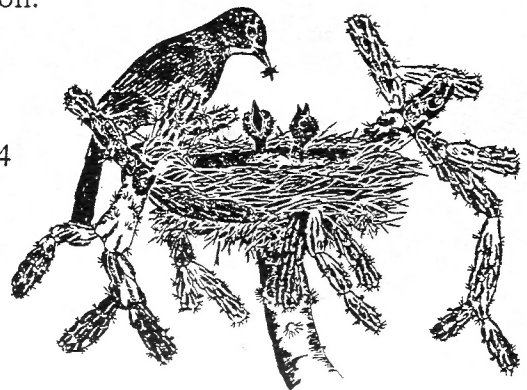
Several of my classmates mentioned cactus soup, and that tortillas, quesadillas, and guacamole all went well with this soup. In fact *nopales* or *nopalitos* can basically be used in any recipe as a substitute for chopped green bell peppers, which is said to have a similar taste. Here is a recipe for cactus soup. If you cannot find fresh cactus pads, they are also available in cans. The canned variety I found called the young cactus pads *nopalitos*.

CACTUS SOUP

- 2 cups diced cactus pads
(cleaned and without spines)
- 2 cups beef, chicken, or vegetable stock
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups tomatoes - peeled and cored
(canned ones - 16 oz. will work fine)
- 1 cup cooked chic peas
(Garbanzo beans - 8 oz.)
- salt to taste

Place all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer until done. Serve hot or cold. A hot tortilla or quesadilla goes well with this soup, and you may wish to add Tabasco Sauce, peppers, or some salsa for a spicier version.

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EAT A TUNA: All prickly pear opuntias are edible, as are their fruit, which are call *tunas*. Pads must be young and tender, however, any old plant can produce fruit, and it is often the scared up mature old opuntia tree that produces the sweetest fruit. *Tunas* are best collected with a tong and held to wash under water. Cut off both ends, peel back the skin and remove the pulp. *Opuntia megacanthus* is said to be the choice species for cactus fruits. Various species have different tastes. [editor's note: We have tasted and were given a recipe for 'prickly pear mead' or 'tunas wine'. Should we come across this recipe - somewhat doubtful considering our big move — or if you just happen to have this recipe and would like to share it, we will happily publish it in some future edition!]

There are also several other genera of cacti which produce edible fruit. At the August 1997 SDC&SS meeting, our speaker, Dennis Sharmand, gave a great program about numerous edible cactus and succulent species. He passed out several different varieties of edible fruits for us to taste, and offered for sale starts of many cactus species which were supposed to produce good fruit. I got one that was not an opuntia! So far it has not produced any edible fruit — perhaps in 1999?

Virginia Innis

Editor's note: We did a little research of our own. Here is what we learned from **REMARKABLE AGAVES AND CACTI** by Park S. Nobel, 1994, Oxford University Press, NY:

Young stem segments (cladodes) of prickly pear cacti are used as a green vegetable throughout Mexico and in the southwestern United States. The whole cladodes are commonly called "joints," "pads," or "nopales" (sometimes they are erroneously referred to as leaves). Once prepared for eating, the sliced or diced cladodes are almost always called "nopalitos." Various species are used for nopalitos, primarily *Opuntia ficus-indica*, *O. robusta*, and *O. streptacantha*, plus *O. rastera* in the Chihuahuan Desert. Sometimes species of *Nopalea*, including *Nopalea auberi*, *N. cochenillifera*, and *N. karwinskiana*, are also used. Milpa Alta, located just southeast of Mexico City, is the major region for growing *Opuntia ficus-indica* and other platyopuntias for the important nopalito market of Mexico City.

The cladodes are often sliced into strips about 6 millimeters (0.25 inch) wide. They are then cooked with onions, peppers, cheese, eggs, and spices to make delicious fillings for tacos and other dishes. The strips can also be marinated before being cooked. Bottled marinated nopalitos are now commonly sold in grocery stores throughout the southwestern United States and increasingly in other locations. Marinated nopalitos can be eaten directly as an hors d'oeuvre, placed in salads, or used in cooking. Cladodes can also be diced into cubes about 1 centimeter (0.38 inch) on a side and then put into omelettes or used as a vegetable in other dishes, such as the mouth-watering treat mixiote.

The key to preparing delicious nopalitos is the starting material. Tender young cladodes a few weeks old are picked when they are thin, dark green, and 15 to 30 centimeters (6 to 12 inches) long. The spines at this stage are often inconspicuous, and the glochids are not yet the menace that they are for mature cladodes. Moreover, the areoles, on which the spines and glochids arise, are prominently raised above the young stem. With a few deft strokes using a sharp knife that is moved at a grazing angle to the cladode surface, the glochids and other parts of the areole can thus be removed without the loss of much stem tissue. This is frequently done in front of the nopales purchaser in Mexican markets. A potato peeler can also be used to remove areoles, which, although slower, requires less skill.

A cladode is usually sliced or diced, depending on the desired texture and cooking time. The stems can be simmered until tender (about 10 minutes) in roughly one-third their volume of water with salt and sometimes onions, garlic, and cilantro. If any sticky material remains after draining, the nopalitos can be rinsed with cold water. There are over 200 recipes for these vegetables, whose taste is pleasant and whose texture is appealing. Some say the taste is like gherkins or green peppers, and the texture is between that of string beans and okra. Acceptance among first-time users is high, and veteran users may eat nopalitos seven days a week.

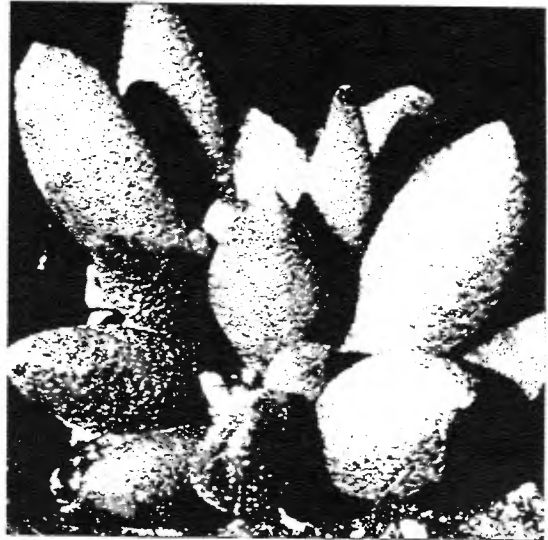
The nopalito market in the United States is confined mainly to the Southwest, where approximately 400 tons were consumed annually in the 1980s in Arizona, California, and Texas. Sales are particularly strong during the springtime season of Lent (the 46 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter). Nearly all nopales are imported from Mexico and are eaten by people of Mexican decent, although the popularity of nopalitos in Mexico in 1992 was about 250,000 tons fresh weight grown on 6000 hectares (15,000 acres). Under careful management, with harvests every 15 days, more than 400 tons fresh weight hectare⁻¹ year⁻¹ have been produced in Milpa Alta.

WARTS AND ALL: *ADROMISCHUS HERREI*

BY FRED KELLER

When I began my subscription to the Cactus and Succulent Journal in the mid 1950's Paul Hutchison was in the midst of proposing new taxa in the genus *Adromischus* and I would eagerly follow the series which was beautifully illustrated by May Blos. Unfortunately, only a few species became generally available in the trade and my interest waned. However, I was always fascinated by the rough surface of *Adromischus alveolatus*, one of Hutchison's species which became available at the time. These plants looked as though they were coated with sintered glass and were quite unusual.

At the 1994 CSSA convention, among the many fine items offered in the auction there was a glassine multi-pocket slide envelop containing leaves of about twenty *Adromischus* species assembled by Steven Hammer. It seemed to be a great opportunity to form the basis for a fine collection and occasioned many a longing glance by the attendees. One problem was the large number of "high rollers" amid the bidders and the chance of obtaining the *Adromischus* lot seemed small at best. Among the plants represented was the brown warty form of *Adromischus herrei*, certainly the prince of this genus. Desperate situations beget desperate measures, and so a friend and I decided to pool resources and form a syndicate. However, our agreed upon limit was soon passed and the chance for the prince appeared lost — one further example of failing to seize the moment.



Three variations of *Adromischus marianiae* "herrei". Photographs from *ADROMISCHUS* by Pilbeam, Rodgerson & Tribble, The File Handbook #3, 1998.

As it turned out, I began to acquire *Adromischus* species from other sources and eventually spent far more than the syndicate limit; but the "prince" remained elusive. Several years ago I acquired an unusual "bumpless" form of *Adromischus herrei* from Abbey Garden with the location given as Wolfberg and the synonym *Adromischus marianae* var. *immaculata*, and followed up by obtaining a photocopy of an article by H. R. Toelken in *Bothalia* (1978) dealing with new taxa and combinations of *Cotyledon* and allied genera. In the author's view *Adromischus marianae* is an extremely variable species and *Adromischus herrei* and *Adromischus alveolatus* are included in variety *immaculata*.

In looking at the leaf profile, *Adromischus herrei* seemed extremely collectable regardless of its taxonomic status and my interest continued unabated. When I would inquire about the availability from Lem Higgs at the Carpinteria location [of Abbey Garden Nursery] he said that he believed he had the plant at Orange County, but things never clicked.

Recently I had need of some gardening help resulting in a nice specimen of *Haworthia koelmaniorum* going to that great compost heap in the sky. I called Lem about replacing the *Haworthia* and in passing asked again about the *Adromischus*. You can imagine my pleasure upon learning that he could supply a specimen. I have indeed received it after a multi-year quest which found even the power of the "syndicate" wanting. Needless to say, it occupies a place of honor where I am sure to view it often.



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JANUARY 9, 1999

THE SECOND ANNUAL WINTER SHOW OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

San Diego has a lot to brag about! Yes, the Padres were in the World Series . . . but that's not what I'm talking about! I mean the upcoming SDC&SS Winter Show & Sale. Our one-day Mini-Winter Show & Sale will be held all day, Saturday, January 9th (10:00 am to 5:00 pm) in our regular meeting room, Room 101 — Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. This is a great opportunity for all SDC&SS members to show off all their wonderful Winter growing succulents and bulb species. You know the plants — they are some of the nicest plants in your whole collection, but every June when our big show rolls around these are the same plants that sit leafless and dormant often looking more dead than alive at that time of year! Needless to say, you can't show them off when they look like that, but now there's hope that these fine specimens can get the recognition they deserve.

This is a great chance for all SDC&SS members to exhibit their plants in a casual non-competitive setting. If you have never shown before this is a great event to get you started. The idea of Winter growing plants has caused some confusion . . . so, rather than give a complex definition we will simply say that you are welcome to show any plant — succulent, cactus, or bulb — that looks good and alive at this time of year! Since this show is not nearly as large as our two day June extravaganza, you could sort of consider it an expanded Brag Table. Some examples of Winter growing succulents: *Lithops*, *Conophytum*, *Hereroa*, *Mitrophyllum* (any species from the Mesembryanthemaceae family), *Aloe*, *Dudleya*, *Pelargonium*, *Sarcocaulon*, *Tylecodon*, *Kalanchoe*, *Crassula*, *Euphorbia*, *Senecio*, *Aeonium*, *Adromischus*. Some examples of Winter-growing cacti: *Mammillaria*, *Copiapoa*, *Echinocactus*. Some examples of Winter-growing succulent bulbs: *Amaryllis*, *Boophne*, *Gethylis*, *Haemanthus*, *Lachenelia*, *Ornithogallum*.

This show is planned as a noncompetitive educational display with the emphasis being placed on presenting the plant, not winning ribbons. This year Steven Hammer will again be showing, judging, and giving a slide show presentation in the afternoon; he will also be offering (some for the first time) a multitude of rare succulents and bulbs in the sales area — a rare opportunity not to be missed! And in the spirit of recognizing the best of the best there will be awarded seven rosettes to the seven plants that are deemed "special" or stand out from the crowd. A detailed Winter-Mini-Show Schedule will be included in the January 1999 issue of *Espinas y Flores*.

If this is not enough of a temptation — we are also resorting to blatant bribery to help pull in the complacent!! For every three (3) plants that are shown, that member will receive a free Monthly Benefit Drawing ticket to be used at any of the 1999 monthly meetings. So the club is looking forward to **BIG PARTICIPATION**.

Last but by no means least: With 20+ vendors already signed up, there will be a large cornucopia of plant values and rare offerings. Please get there early (about 9:00 am) to help with set-up and to get the best deals!

PLEASE!! We need everyone's help. If you can assist with sales, or wish to sell plants please contact Tom Birt @ (619) 452-0389 IMMEDIATELY. Deadline for vendor registration is December 15, 1998. If you can help with show & sale set-up or breakdown — please make and keep that commitment. If you have any questions, or if you would like to offer assistance in some other way, or if you are planning to show a large number of plants, or if you wish to reserve a display area in the show — please contact Ed DeLollis @ (760) 945-7892. THANK YOU!!



December Holiday Meeting Starts at Noon

Our holiday meeting is very special, tremendous fun, and should not to be missed — even if you just recently joined our society — don't feel you know enough people — or are still intimidated by the plants and their seemingly unspeakable names (*unpronounceable, maybe, but unspeakable? . . . well, maybe a few!*). The food is delicious. And the desserts, which are brought by our members, are absolutely fabulous!!! Top Hat Caterers of Lemon Grove has been serving us for the past twelve years. And the price is excellent (\$14 per person); and something new this year: the price of the dinner includes the cost of the gift plant. Anyone who pays for their dinner will be given a ticket for the gift plant drawing which takes place while we are eating our dinner. The SDC&SS actually does supplement this amount as the cost of the gift plant and dinner is much closer to \$18 per person than it is to \$14! It was the decision of the SDC&SS Board of Directors that it would be more appropriate to raise the cost of the holiday dinner with gift plant than to raise the cost of the dues.

We want every member to be able to attend and enjoy our Holiday dinner and receive a gift plant. If this increase in cost presents a financial hardship, please contact an SDC&SS officer or board member, and special arrangements will be made. If you are a vegetarian or have other diet limitations please note them on this form, so that Top Hat Catering can provide all of us with the correct dinner! The basic dinner menu includes: Roast turkey with sage dressing, mashed potatoes with giblet gravy, hot buttered corn, tossed green salad with tomatoes & choice of two salad dressings, relish tray of fresh vegetables, cranberry sauce, rolls and butter, coffee, tea, sodas, or wine. **AND FOR DESSERT: POTLUCK — PLEASE BRING IN SOMETHING SWEET AND DELICIOUS!**

There is also a plant gift exchange which we hope you all will participate in. See page two for additional information on Plant Gift Exchange.

If you plan to attend the holiday dinner on December 12, 1998, please send in this registration form **IMMEDIATELY!** We need to give the caterers and the gift plant procurers a final count no later than Wednesday, December 9th!

IF YOU NEED TO RENEW YOUR DUES FOR 1999, PLEASE TURN THIS FORM OVER A FILL OUT THAT PART, TOO!! THANK YOU!!

Please reserve Holiday Dinners and Special Succulent Gift Plants for the Following Members @ \$14.00 per person:

Member name(s) _____

The SDC&SS Holiday Meeting begins at 12:00 noon - Holiday Dinner to be served at 1:00 pm - Plant Exchange begins at 12:30 and continues through dinner. Gift Plant distribution to commence once everyone has been served their dinner. **Please wear your fancy "Cactus Duds"!** After all this is a party!!!

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

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SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society is a nonprofit, hobby organization created to stimulate interest in succulent plants. This society brings together people with a common interest for the purpose of educating the public about the beauty and uniqueness of these remarkable plants, encouraging proper collecting and maintenance of the plants through preservation of native habitats and horticultural propagation, and to foster good fellowship. You are invited to join our society, whether you are an expert, amateur, or a beginner with an interest in unusual plants and flowers.

You will receive our publication *Espinas y Flores*, one of the best cacti and succulent newsletters. We produce 11 issues a year. You will get great articles and keep up with club news for the next year.

Our meetings are on the second Saturday of the month (except June and September) and newsletters are received the week of the meeting. We offer knowledgeable speakers who present educational & entertaining programs; many are world renowned scholars, botanists, explorers and authors. The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society's Annual Show and Plant Sale occurs the first weekend of June in Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. A wide range of succulent plants, ceramic pots, and growing supplies are available during most meetings. There is also a plant exchange table and a library. For more information regarding membership, please call Joey Betzler, Membership Chair, at (619) 569-8510.

Yes, I/We wish JOIN or REJOIN the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society.

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, COUNTRY & ZIP+4: _____

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Wow, talk about synchronicity! D'erdra Smothers gave us (at the November meeting) the basics for the following pages full of good opuntia information and some excellent cactus recipes (which were edited by Joyce Buckner) while searching the internet. Thank you, D'erdra! Your contribution to *Espinas y Flores* could not have come at a better time!

(<http://www.graylab.ac.uk/usr/hodgkiss/crecipe.html>)

CACTUS RECIPES

. . . *Opuntia* species have been introduced and grow in many countries. Do be careful to remove the spines and glochids completely before eating any *Opuntia* pads. These recipes are only for *Opuntia* pads and should not be adapted for other species of cacti, some of which are poisonous. Some of these recipes were sent to me by Dr. Andreas Laras. - Richard Hodgkiss, U.K.

Cactus Pads — also called: *Nopalitos* and Cactus Leaves

All opuntia species are edible (non-toxic) but some species are easier to use than others. Two parts of the plant are edible, the pads (*nopalitos*) and the pear (*tuna*). The pads are vegetable and the pear is fruit. The state of Texas named the prickly pear cactus as the state fruit /vegetable in 1995. Texas A&M in Kingsville, TX has done extensive work on a cultivar designated as "the 1308" which is spineless, resists cold weather and contains less mucilage. While young opuntia pads contain less mucilage (the gummy secretions), some work has been done on cactus mucilage as a possible dietary supplement to increase soluble fiber intake which has various health benefits.

About 40,000 pounds of pads come into Texas each day from Mexico where they are available in any large grocery store. Although opuntia pads are cooked and eaten by humans, a majority of opuntia cultivation around the world is intended for feeding livestock. There are now several spineless varieties which are available fresh already washed and diced, or as whole pads. You can also find them canned in many grocery stores. And in the fancier gourmet shops you can often find them preserved in glass jars: roasted, oiled, pickled and spiced — available at "gourmet prices", of course. Opuntia pads contain large amounts of Vitamin A and C, and also a fair amount of B vitamins and iron. The opuntia fruits are also nutritious and are often made into "tuna jelly".

You used to have to go "South of the border, down Mexico way . . ." as the old song says, to enjoy *Nopales* or cactus pads. But just as burritos have found their way into our kitchens, so have tamales, refried beans, tacos, guacamole, quesadillas, and a large variety of hot peppers and hot pepper sauces. Now we can also enjoy the soft but crunchy, tangy and silky textured *Nopales* right here at home. If you are unable to tolerate the slippery taste of okra, then *Nopales* may not be for you as they have just a hint of that same type of slip, however, it is complimented by a fresh tangy crunch. If you are willing to sample this interesting vegetable which is often served in Mexico, choose medium sized, firm pads. Avoid purchasing limp, dry, or soggy pads. Wrapped in plastic they should keep in the refrigerator for several weeks.

If you just want to try a pad from your own backyard opuntia, put on your gloves, get out a sharp knife, and chose a tender pad of new growth. To clean cactus pads, take an ordinary kitchen peeler and remove the spines and eyes. Wash well. Trim edge to remove bruised and / or dry parts and wash well again. Some chefs drain off some of the sticky liquid the plant exudes, and put it into their favorite recipes, using it in soup stocks or sauces; others soak the pads in water for 20 to 30 minutes before slicing up. If you just want to taste it, you can dice it up to about the size of small green beans, and simmer in water until tender, or saute in butter for a few minutes. Salt to taste and enjoy.

Nopales can be eaten raw, but are preferred cooked by most people. They can be steamed over boiling water for a few minutes and then combined with other foods. Favorites include: *Nopalitos* & eggs, added to soups or chili, mixed into tortilla fillings, or even stuffed with cheese and deep fried. Experiment with them and you just may come to enjoy their unusual texture and taste. Here are three more cactus (*Opuntia*) pad recipes (two from the internet article and one from Joyce Buckner):

Grilled Cactus Pads

1 pound (2 cups) of cactus leaves
olive oil

This is an interesting treat for a cookout. Scrub cactus leaves well with a vegetable scrubber to remove any spines that may be on them. With the end of a potato peeler cut around the spiny nodules and remove them. Make sure that all are removed. Grill the leaves over charcoal or a wood fire for about ten minutes on each side. Thicker pads may take slightly longer to grill. Brush leaves with oil occasionally while grilling. Serve hot.

Scrambled Eggs Arizona Style

1 to 2 cups of cleaned diced Cactus Leaves (about two cactus pads)
1 to 2 ounces of Butter or Margarine
8 Eggs
¼ cup Milk (nonfat is fine!)
½ cup (4 ounces) of Shredded Cheese
(Monterey Jack, Cheddar, or any kind of commercial "taco cheese blend" will do)
Salt, Pepper, and / or Cumin to taste

Saute cactus leaves in butter for approximately five minutes. Remove from stove. Beat eggs and milk in a mixing bowl; add shredded cheese and sauteed cactus leaves. Pour into heated skillet and scramble. Add salt, pepper, and Cumin to taste. Serve warm with fresh salsa and tortillas.

Pork Stew with Nopales by Joyce Buckner

1 to 2 cups cleaned sliced Nopalitos (about 6 young cactus pads)
2 pounds lean Pork Roast, cut into cubes
2 Onions finely chopped
1 tablespoon Olive Oil
2 cups Water
1 to 3 fresh Jalapenó Peppers or other fresh hot Green Chilis (such as serranos)
1 to 3 cloves minced Garlic
1 pound Tomatoes peeled, cored, and chopped (16 ounce can is fine)
2 cups Chicken or Vegetable Stock [I often use a Miso base for soup stock.]
Salt, Pepper, and Cumin to taste
1 bunch finely chopped fresh Cilantro leaves

This is a perfect "slow cook" recipe for a big Dutch oven or a Crock Pot. Using Dutch Oven or skillet saute Onions in Olive Oil. Once they are slightly brown, add Pork cubes stirring frequently and browning the outer edges. Remove from stove. Wash fresh Hot Green Chilis or Jalapenó Peppers; cut away stems and slice in half; remove all seeds from the insides of the peppers. Peppers can be finely chopped, or pureed in the blender using a little water. BE CAREFUL — pepper juice/oil can burn tender skin and will find even the tiniest of cuts. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after cutting peppers and removing seeds.

If using a skillet, place browned Pork and Onions in Crock Pot; if using Dutch Oven simply add all remaining ingredients: Water, pureed Jalapenó Peppers or Chilis, Garlic, Tomatoes, Soup Stock and Salt, Pepper & Cumin to taste — except Nopalitos and Cilantro which should be refrigerated until needed. Cook in Crock Pot 6 to 8 hours on low heat, or place Dutch Oven with lid tightly sealed down in a low heat oven — 325° to 350°. Check occasionally — about once an hour — soup stock should be simmering, not boiling. If stock is boiling you may need to stir in additional water and adjust temperature to something slightly lower. Cook pork until completely tender — about 4 hours in Dutch Oven. Approximately one hour before the pork is done, add the chopped Nopalitos. Garnish stew with fresh Cilantro and serve hot with freshly warmed flour tortillas, perhaps some black beans, and a good Mexican Cerveza (beer). I suggest something slightly darker than the usual Corona . . . such as Negro Modelo . . . or at this time of year — why not try a Noche Buena!

NOW FOR DESSERT – ONE MORE CACTUS RECIPE COURTESY OF D'ERDRA SMOTHERS

Edible cactus fruits come from several species of cactus besides the *Opuntia* (Prickly Pear). The fruit from *Hylocereus polyrhizus*, *Hylocereus undulatus* and *Stenocereus queretaroensis* is commonly called *pitahaya*, *pitajaya*, *pitaya*. Fruit from the *Opuntia* cactus is referred to as *tuna*. Cactus fruit is farmed and exported from several countries including Colombia, Honduras, Israel, Mexico and Nicaragua, and is sometimes available in European and USA supermarkets.

Jalea De Cacto (Cactus Jelly)

3 to 4 pounds (6 cups chopped peeled fruit) fresh ripe Prickly Pears

(*Tunas* from *Opuntia* species of cactus)

3 cups Sugar

½ cup Lemon Juice

¾ cup (6 ounces) Liquid Fruit Pectin

Boiling Water

Cheesecloth

(1) Place Prickly Pears in a large saucepan or kettle. Cover with boiling water, allow to soak for two to three minutes, and then pour off water. This aids in softening skin of fruit (with glochids) making it much easier to peel the fruits.

(2) Peel prickly pears being careful to remove all glochids. You may wish to use gloves! Cut into pieces, and place in a medium-sized saucepan. Cover Prickly Pears with water (about 2 cups of water) and boil at high heat for 5 minutes.

(3) Pour boiled mixture through Cheesecloth. Drain as much juice as possible; save all juice in measuring cup. Discard seeds.

(4) Measure drained cactus juice. Combine 3 cups of cactus fruit juice with Sugar, and Lemon Juice. Place in a large saucepan or kettle. The acidity of the lemon juice is needed to promote setting of the pectin which combines with the sugar to set when cold.

(5) Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-high. Add Liquid Pectin, and cook mixture for 8 to 12 minutes, or until the mixture begins to thicken. Skim off any foam that may have formed.

Note: Liquid pectin is added because, presumably the cactus fruit does not contain sufficient pectin to set. Even so, cactus jelly made in this way may "jell" soon after processing or can take as long as 2 to 3 weeks. Clearly Native American people making cactus jam did not traditionally have access to liquid pectin and probably sufficient pectin was obtained either by stewing the peel of the fruit (which is discarded in this recipe) or the fruit pulp for a longer time before straining. Sufficient pectin can be "naturally" obtained by adding an equal amount of green cooking apples to the prickly pears prior to boiling the fruit in step #(2). To test for pectin, put 1 teaspoon of juice into a small glass, allow to cool and add 3 teaspoons of methylated spirit. Shake gently and leave for one minute. A jelly-like lump indicates that plenty of pectin is present; lots of small lumps indicate that little pectin is present and that the jelly is unlikely to set unless more pectin or another high pectin fruit is added.

(6) Pour mixture into hot, sterilized, half-pint canning jars and seal according to manufacturer's directions.



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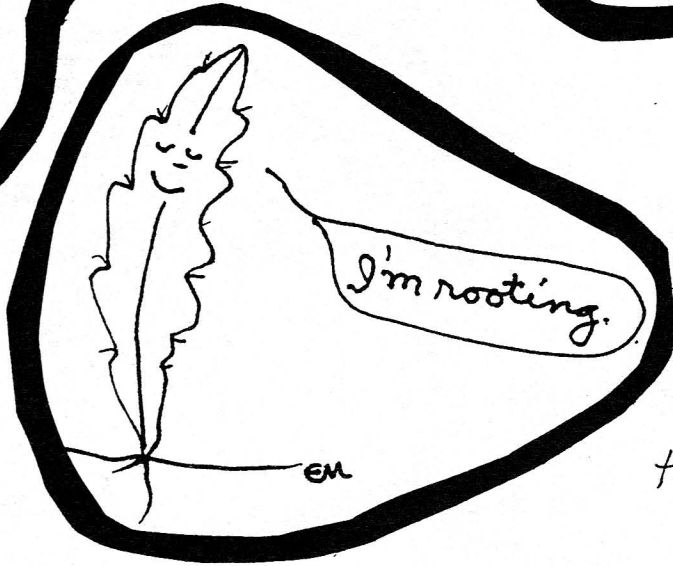
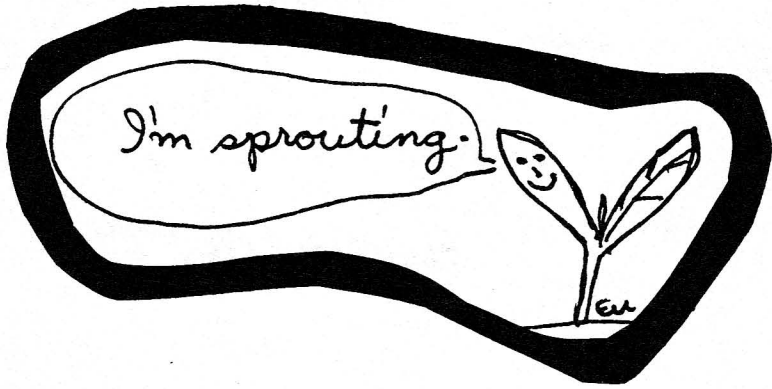
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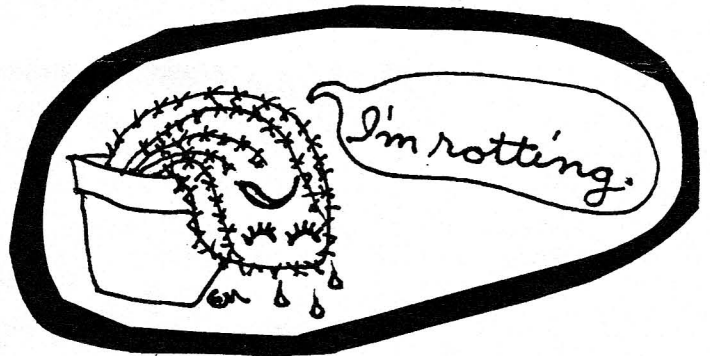
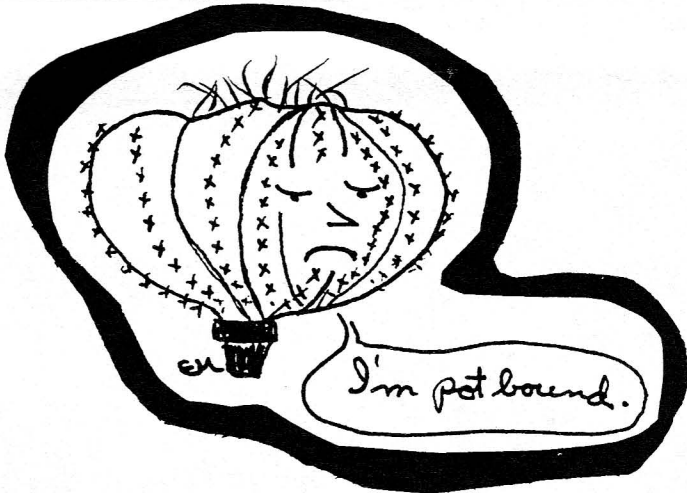


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Talk to your plants of course but can you also hear what they're saying?



Of course you should talk to your plants, but you should also hear what they're telling you.



**I used to be Snow White,
but then I drifted.**

— MAE WEST

**WISE AND
OTHERWISE**

by Michael Buckner

**The year's end is coming;
I feel great contentment.
Completion means rest.
Rest means renewal.
Renewal means new beginnings.**

— DENG MING-DAO

The only joy in the world is to begin.

— CESARE PAVESE

Extra-sensory Spheroids — Do conophytums think? Do they experience regret as they shuffle off their (im)mortal coils? Do they broadcast fear or sense affection? Have they participated in their own exterior decoration? These are questions I cannot answer, though I do know that their time-telling, as regards to seasons and the smaller divisions of their year, is uncannily accurate. Year after year, plants in a collective pot will shed and flower in exactly the same succession.

I have had a number of "irrational" experiences involving the plants and will relate one, though the incident may reveal much more about my perceptions than theirs. In 1981 I received a single-headed cutting of the then-rare *Conophytum ectypum* subspecies *sulcatum*. It was the first example I'd seen and I was entranced by its strangeness. I put it in the central and safest place in my greenhouse, a house so crowded that to reach the innermost platform one had to crawl on the floor and then pop up, rabbit-like, through a gap in the bench.

The plant rooted and soon it grew beautifully. But a few months later, in the middle of the night, I was seized by a sudden anxiety: I knew that I must visit the greenhouse. I took my flashlight, and went straight to subsp. *sulcatum*, which was being devoured by a snail! The beast had chosen only this plant, out of all my many thousands, for his banquet. He was still busy with the upper portions, so the growing point was intact. I terminated his dinner and preserved the plant.

Disregarding the obvious possibility of coincidence, one could say that I had received a message from the snail, not from the plant; but it seems nonetheless that I was led straight to the scene. And I have had a number of similar episodes, some of which involved finding species in nature — once again, the peculiar feeling of having been drawn to them. And another time I received a new species in the post, unannounced, and visualized the plant before I opened the box!

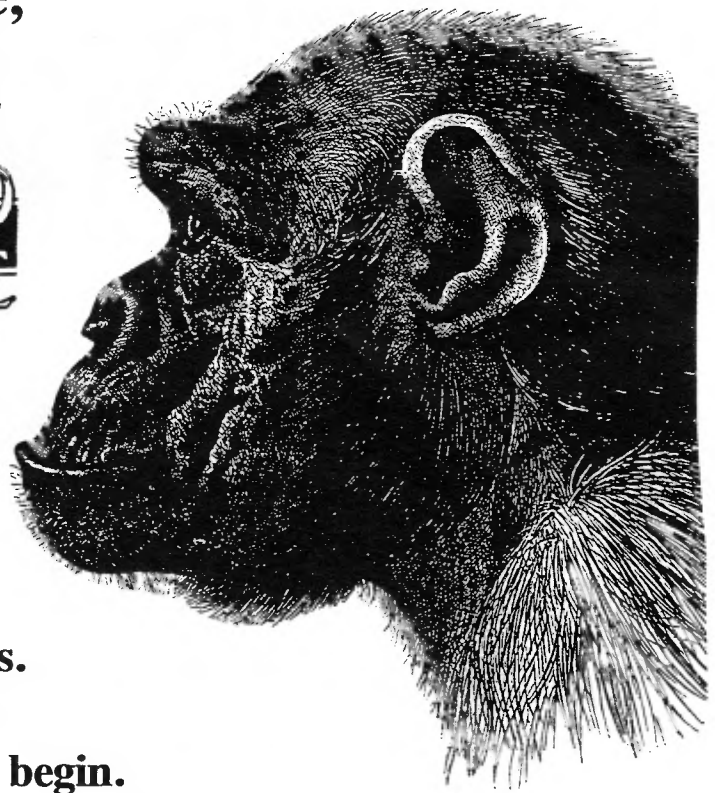
Steven Hammer, *THE GENUS CONOPHYTUM — A CONOGRAPH*; 1993, Succulent Plant Publications, Pretoria S.A.

**The aim of life is to live,
and to live means to be aware,
joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware.**

— HENRY MILLER

It is better to give and receive.

— BERNARD GUNTHER



Before proceeding to consider the scientific (Latin) names of Lithops, it may be interesting and entertaining to devote a few words to the vernacular names by which they are known in various languages. In English Lithops are known, *inter alia*, as Flowering Stones, Living Stones, Pebble Plants, Stone Plants and Stone Faces. In Afrikaans the most widespread term is *beeskloutjies* 'little cow hoofs', hence also simply *kloutjies*, but *bokkloutjies* 'little goat hoofs' and *perdekloutjies* 'little horse hoofs' are also often heard; also *bokpootjies* and *perdepootjies* 'little goat or horse feet', and *bokspootjies* 'little goat tracks or footprints'. Other names are *toontjies* 'little toes' (though this seems to be more appropriate to *Frithia pulchra* which is known by the same name), and *sitpol* 'seat tuft or cushion'.

In SWA/Namibia Lithops are known to the German-speaking population as *Hottentottenpopos* 'Hottentot backsides or buttocks', referring to the resemblance, especially that of the cordate species such as *Lithops ruschiorum*, to the steatopygic feature so characteristic of the Khoisan (Hottentot and Bushman) peoples. The Nama (Hottentot) name is *biri-/eis* 'goat hoof', echoing or perhaps giving rise to one of the Afrikaans names. In Herero (Bantu) of SWA/Namibia, the plants are known as *ombuma yombwa* 'testicle of dog', which parallels the Afrikaans name for the smooth-stemmed Trichocaulons, *hondebal* 'dog ball'.

In Tswana (Bantu) of Botswana, northern CP and parts of the OFS, we have come across several names: *tlhakwána* 'little hoof', with which compare the Afrikaans; *sebudulána* or *sebudulwána* 'bubbler (in the stomach)', because, I was told, the plants cause intestinal bubbling when eaten — this name is used also by the Sotho (Bantu) in the OFS; *marete-ápitse* 'testicles of-horse' (cf. the Herero), and *marágo-ábanyána* 'bottoms of buttocks of-girls' (cf. the German), this in reference to *Lithops lesliei*. When I inquired of my informant, a young man, whether they might also be called 'bottoms of-boys' (*marágo-ábasímané*), I was given a firmly negative answer without any evidence of amusement!

— Desmond Cole, **LITHOPS - FLOWERING STONES**; 1988, Acorn Books, South Africa.

WISE AND OTHERWISE



No hay mejor salsa que un buen apetito.

There is no better sauce than a good appetite.

— from **FOLK WISDOM OF MEXICO**, Chronicle Books, 1994, SF.

There was a little old man and a little old woman who took care of an orchard. One night he fell sick, and the wife went out to the edge of the road, to see if she could find somebody to come help her pray over him so he could die a Christian death. She found a drover and asked him to help her, but the man didn't want to because he said he didn't know what to do.

He says, "What will I say?"

"Things about the church."

"Altars, vestments, monstrances, candlesticks?"

"No, no! Things that are sweet to the soul."

"Taffy, candied citron, glazed pumpkin?"

"No, no! tender things."

"Green squash, string beans, tomatoes?"

"No, no! Things that will move the soul."

"Ah, things that remove the soul. Cutlasses, daggers, knives?"

And in the meantime the little old man died.

— from **Folktales of Mexico** edited and translated by Américo Paredes; 1970, University of Chicago Press.

How steadily it rains! a wholesome fall storm that the ground absorbs. Certainly gardening makes one conscious of the great variety of ways in which the work of moistening the soil is done. To some people all rains are alike. In the city I have never heard any distinction made except that of a storm or a shower. I well remember being ill one spring at the planting season and listening to the rain as I lay in bed. I asked a town-bred maid whom we chanced to have, what sort of rain it was. She looked blankly at me, then out of the window as if hardly comprehending my meaning replied, "Just plain rain, Miss, there isn't any thunder." A countrywoman would have said either a growing, a cold, a washout, a spring filling, or a smart rain, according to the facts.

— From **THE GARDEN OF A COMMUTER'S WIFE**, written anonymously by "The Gardener"; copyright 1901, MacMillan Company/Norwood Press, Mass., U.S.A.

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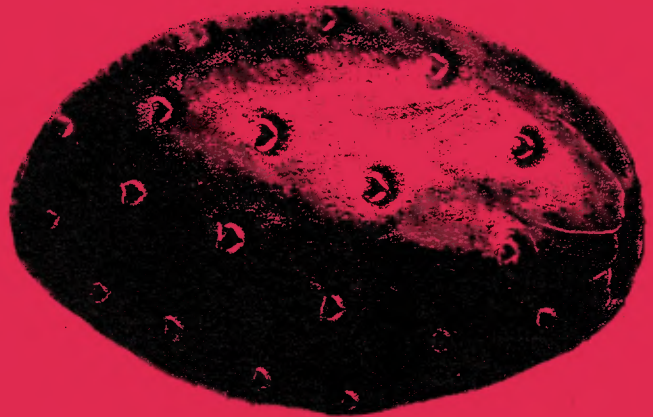
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