



Espinas y Flores

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

Volume XX, Number 8

August 10, 1985

AUGUST MEETING

Saturday August 10, 1985

1:30 P.M.

Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

PROGRAM

CACTI AND SUCCULENT OF ARIZONA
 VICTOR M. GASS

Victor M. Gass is a **native of Phoenix**, Arizona, obtaining his formal education in the Arizona School Systems getting a B.A. in geography from Arizona State University. Presently curator of the living collections at the Desert Botanical Garden and at the nation level is chairman of the Computer Services Committee of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, on the use of computers for plant records management. His enthusiasm and commitment to the plants of the Arizona desert will make his presentation especially interesting.

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DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ---- August 31, 1985 ----- Thanks Mary

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NEWS NEWS NEWS

Welcome to our new members

Paul Hession - La Mesa	Sol Kleinman - Las Vegas, Nevada
Walter J. Weyres - Upper Marlboro, MD	Darryl and Audrey Tucker - Long Beach, CA
Sallie Rostad - Poway	Brenda Post - La Mesa
Dan and Mona Harrison - Lakeside	Suzanne Rogers - San Diego
Lisa Falkenthal - San Diego	Milton Yarbrough - Imperial Beach
Bill and Diane Crowley - San Diego	Betty and Keith Whitcomb - El Cajon
Thom and Amy Whidden-Winter - San Diego	

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Wild Animal Park is looking for two things concerning their library. First: you must be a member of the Zoological Society of San Diego! Volunteers are needed to help in the library - they will train you. Any amount of time may be donated to this purpose (1 hour/month/week or ?). Also, they need funds for books that need care, such as rebinding of old and rare books they have. If you help on either of the above, you are considered a member of the "Friends of the Green" and will be invited to participate in various horticultural events at the Wild Animal Park. Contact Diana Gibbons at 747-8702 if you wish to volunteer.

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Dick Wright's nursery, specializing in ECHEVERIA hybrids, burnt down in the fire in Vista in early July with nothing saved. The Board of Directors decided to donate \$500 to him for living expenses, or whatever, since he has been a supporter of the Society for many years. Individual donations (including plants he may need for rebuilding) may be sent to : John Cooper, 1097 Crest View Rd., Vista, CA 92083

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"My garden will be open to any member (or small group- its a small garden!) when I'm available. Any children must be under strict control. You must make an appointment with me. I'm home at odd times - try calling between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. My phone number and address are on the last page of this bulletin.

Lee Phelps, Presiden"

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THOSE who have volunteered to bring refreshments are:

Estelle Viertel - Susan Shepherd - Marianne Thrombly - Eileen Smith - Margaret Gallik
Kathe Roberts - Mildren M. Bradley - BrunniScheffler - Mary Aubuchon - Shirley Bahr
Nancy Welnich - Sean Minogue - Susan Clements.

Thanks in Advance

Succulent-of-the-Month

DIDIEREACEAE

by Rick Latimer

The plant Order Caryophyllales includes succulents in five families (both large and small): Cactaceae, Didiereaceae, Mesembryanthemaceae, Portulacaceae, and Chenopodiaceae. Although at first there seems to be little in common between a cactus, ice plant, an elephant bush, or a member of this month's plant family; they are linked by subtle attributes according to embryological, anatomical, biochemical, and morphological characteristics. One obvious example is that the dazzling reds, magentas, and pink colors of the flowers of many of the species included in these five families are not due to the chemical 'anthocyanin' found in other plant families; but are due to the chemical 'betacyanin'.

While the cactus and ice plant families are the two largest plant families as far as the number of succulent species contained in them go, The Didiereaceae is a very small plant family. It is one of 8 families endemic to the island of Madagascar and is represented by only four genera and eleven species. One of the genera and the family were named in honor of the French colonel and naturalist A. Grandidier. The species are native to the western and southwestern portion of the island, which is also the hottest and driest portion of the island. The plants are not terribly succulent, being more woody than anything, but the plants are desert dwellers, some of them look like plants from other succulent families, and some are curious and/or spiny. The flowers are relatively small and insignificant and are dioecious (and rarely bloom in cultivation). It was not too long ago that these plants were unknown in our collections.

The most primitive member of this family is Decaryia madagascariensis. Young plants are shrubby, but old plants become arborescent. The most notable feature of this plant is the zig zag branches with two spines at each angle. The flowers are described as whitish.

In contrast to the monotypic genus Decaryia the genus Alluaudia is quite "populous" having six species. A. humbertii starts out as a bush but may reach as high as 20 feet. The stems are thin and thorny and one form has bluish leaves. More impressive is A. comosa which will form a nice bonsai if trained properly. The most widely distributed species in the wild is A. procera. The plants are reminiscent of our ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens), however the stems are neater looking and the spines spiral putting the ocotillo to shame. When the basal stems die out, the plants may reach as high as 30 feet. The tallest member of the family is A. ascendens - up to 45 feet tall. The branches form a V-shaped candelabra. A. montagnacii has a restricted habitat, plants look like boojum trees (Idria columnaris), and the leaves and thorns may spiral up the trunk in either direction. The last species is something else (A. dumosa) in that it always leafless and the thick round brown stems remind one of a dried out Euphorbia tirucalli. The broom-shaped trees may attain a height of 20 feet. The genus is named in honor of another French colonel - Alluaud.

The third genus - Alluaudiopsis - only has two known species. The plants are bushy, have thin, spiny stems, and reach a height of six feet. A. fiherensis has solitary spines, whitish flowers, and long, deciduous, succulent leaves. A. marnierana has its thorns in pairs and carmine flowers.

Didierea trollii starts out with a number of branches near the ground, but then sends up erect stems after a number of years, which in turn become horizontal, but higher up. D. madagascariensis is the most interesting species in the family. The juvenile form is unbranched and rather cereus-like. Each long thorn has several short thorns at its base. Mature plants branch out into a many armed, ocotillo-like plant up to 20 feet in height.

REFERENCES:

Guenther Andersohn, Cacti and other Succulents.

Werner Rauh, The Wonderful World of Succulents.

Werner Rauh, "The Xerophytic Vegetation of Southwestern Madagascar, Parts V-VII", CSSA Journal (50), 1978.

Gordon Rowley, The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Succulents.

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SHOW SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

Aug 17 & 18	San Diego Fern Show	Sat:1:00-5pm	Sun:10am -5pm
Aug 24 & 25	San Diego Turtle & Tortoise Show	Sat: & Sun:	10:00am - 5:00pm
Aug 31 & Sept 1	San Diego Gesneriad Show	Sat:12pm-5pm	Sun:10am - 5pm
Sept 7 & 8	San Diego Bromeliad Show	Sat:1:00-4:30pm	Sun:11-4:30pm



Cactus-of-the-Month

ECHINOPSIS

by Phyllis Flechsig

Prominent among the small South American barrel cacti is the genus *Echinopsis*, first described by Zuccarini in 1837. The name means "looks like a hedgehog." The plants are often low and globular, but may be tall and columnar, with continuous, sometimes wavy ribs. Flowers are funnel-shaped, usually white, yellow, or pink, and have a long, narrow tube. The tube has short fuzzy hairs or wool but no spines on it. The plants are native to southern South America--southern Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

Originally this genus included all those plants now known as *Lobivia*, but the two groups were separated by Britton and Rose in "The Cactaceae." They placed the plants with short funnel-form flowers into *Lobivia*, leaving those with long funnel-form flowers in *Echinopsis*. Curt Backeberg went a step further and established a third genus, *Pseudolobivia*, for plants that he believed to be intermediate between *Echinopsis* and *Lobivia*, but he made matters rather more confusing in his description of *Pseudolobivia* by stating that some of the species he had placed in it had tubes as long as those of *Echinopsis* while others had tubes as short as those of *Lobivias*! Donald and Brederoo wrote that the real difference between *Echinopsis* and *Lobivia* lies in the rib and seed structures--*Lobivia* has discontinuous ribs divided into tubercles, while *Echinopsis* has continuous ribs. Barthlott, in his book "Cacti," does not recognize *Pseudolobivia* as a good genus and puts all its species back into *Echinopsis*. Other authorities agree, and put all of *Trichocereus* into *Echinopsis* as well. Confused? Well, if you've got a small round cactus with strong ribs and a long-tubed funnel-shaped flower, it is probably an *Echinopsis*.

Harry Johnson, of Johnson's Cactus Gardens that was formerly in Paramount, California, made many crosses of *Lobivia* and *Echinopsis*, which he called *Lobivopsis*. These plants, also known as "Paramount hybrids," were very popular in the sixties for their bright colors and free-flowering habits. It is a pity that not many seem to be on the market any more.

Culture is easy--the usual fast-draining soil mix, good light, relative dryness in winter. Some popular species are *Echinopsis subdenudata*, a nearly spineless plant with white flowers; *E. aurea*, with bright yellow flowers; *E. bridgesii*, with white flowers; *E. multiplex*, with many offsets and pink flowers; and the cultivar 'Haku-jo,' introduced from Japan, an odd, somewhat monstrose plant that has grey felt stripes up its ribs.

Literature consulted:

Backeberg, Curt. "Cactus Lexicon"

Barthlott, Wilhelm. "Cacti"

Britton, N. L., and J. N. Rose. "The Cactaceae"

Donald, J. D., and A. J. Brederoo. "The Rebutias, Part 5," *Ashingtonia*, Mar. 1976

"Species Catalogue for the Cactaceae," *Ashingtonia*, Jan. 1974 ff.

August 1985

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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 pm 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 60 cents.

Editor

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