



ESPINAS Y FLORES

Bullitin of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, Inc.

Affiliated with the Cactus and Succulent Society of America

Volume XXXIV Number Seven, Saturday August 14, 1999 at 1:00 PM

Mammillaria thornberi



SOQOTRA: ISLAND OF DRAGONS BLOOD

During a 3 week period in Feb. and Mar., **Gary James** along with **Bruno Mies** and **John Lavranos** explored and photographed the wonders of Soqotra (Gary's preferred spelling). Twenty five foot tall *Dorstenia gigas* and massive *Adenium socotranum* as seen on the cover are just a couple of the treasures found.

Soqotra is a very difficult place to visit. As part of Yemen with a large Army base, it took Gary, Bruno, and John 5 days to obtain the proper permits. Upon departure, they were searched twice, once by environmental officials and then by the Army. However, it's just this kind of locality that Gary wants to visit, photograph and observe succulent plants in habitat.

After retiring as Dean of Math and Science at Orange Coast College 6 years ago, Gary's primary goal is to travel, collect seeds, and propagate rare plants to reduce the pressure collectors have on wild populations. Many plants he grows are almost gone from the wild.

This is a program **NOT** to be missed! Join us for Gary's slide show and see more photos like the incredible picture on our cover. **Aug. 14, 1:00 PM, Casa del Prado, room 101, Balboa Park.**

NEW EDITORS NOTE: I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Buckner's for editing *Espinas y Flores* over the last 9 years. They have spent countless hours working to produce a highly regarded newsletter. Few realize how much they have contributed to our club so please let them know how much you appreciated their work over the years.

I have agreed to edit our newsletter for awhile but I need your help to maintain its quality. Please send your letters, artwork, poetry, Cactus or Succulent of the Month articles, puzzles, comments, or criticisms, etc. to:

Tom Knapik
4669 71 Street
La Mesa, CA 91941
Phone (619) 462-1805 e-mail eyf2000
FAX (858) 569-8510

**Newsletter submissions are due before the 14th each month
unless other arrangements are made.**

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 and an additional 20-30 issues going to educational institutions, botanical societies, cactus and succulent nurseries, local publications, related natural history events and exhibits, and other interested groups or individuals upon request. Subscriptions are \$10 per year for bulk mail within the U.S.A.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE & SEPTEMBER PICNIC NEWS:

Thanks again to all for a fantastic June show. With the discovery of Terry Parr's plant, pie spatula's, etc., all missing items from the show have been found. It's almost time again for our annual September picnic. This year the picnic will be held in the Mission Bay area on Saturday, September 11, 1999. We will announce the time at the next meeting and have maps available in the next *Espinas y Flores*. Please bring a main dish, side dish or dessert to feed up to 6. The club will provide beverages and paper goods such as cups, plates, napkins and cutlery. Listed below are directions from 5 going south:

Exit Sea World Drive

Follow to Ingraham Street, merge to the left lane ASAP

Left on Vacation Rd. (the first light)

1st Left, (signs for Youth Camp/Model Yachts)

Stay to the left, it will curve around for .3 miles

Look for signs – and 2 SUN TARPS. This location affords a beautiful view of Mission Bay, trees providing shade, restrooms, easy access and a great walking trail. Bring chairs, sunscreen and a desire for a great afternoon.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! We have set a new record for summer memberships. In June and July we gained 26 new members including Rancho Soledad Nursery! I have talked to some of the people listed here that found out about our meetings and show on the internet, some received complimentary show fliers through their patronage at last years show and sale, and a few came to the Spring Garden Show at the Del Mar Fair grounds. Thanks to everyone who brought in a new person to the Society. If you have an interesting membership story please let me know.

— Joey Betzler Membership Chair

Thomas Anglewicz, Jim Baker, John Barkley, Ellen Bauder, Duke Benadom, Christina Clifford, James Flowers, Glen Grady, Charles Hunts, Katy Kane, Marilyn Laine, Tanya Luhrmann, Wanda Mallen, Manuel Monroy, Mark Nall, Carol & James Nickens, Mr. & Mrs. Dan Rammelkamp, Lois Sherman, Michael, Rebecca and Michael Smith Jr., Nancy Smithwick, Michael Sockell, and Will Spires.

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING: July 10, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. in Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa. The following announcements were made:

- Please use your "flashers" when parking in the loading zone if you're transporting items to/from our meeting to avoid ticketing!
- Tom DeMerritt announced several members were moving and had plants for sale from their private collections, please contact Tom if interested.

PLANTS OF THE MONTH: The Cactus of the Month, *Aporocactus* was presented by Jerry Williams and the Succulent of the Month, Miniature Euphorbias by Michael Buckner. Duke Benadom presented the Brag Table plants and selected 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. See Shirley Berry's report on page 9 for the details.

A FINE JOB WAS DONE BY ALL - THANK YOU!

Tom De Merritt pointed out the excellent display of Benefit Drawing plants and urged members to purchase tickets.

PROGRAM: Kelly Griffin introduced Duke Benadom, long-time member of our Society, who gave a slide presentation on his trip to South Africa in 1996. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 8: Concert Under the Oaks at Quail Botanical Gardens - Jimmer Bolden and Kathy Echert perform vocals with the Joe Azarello Trio. Begins at 5:00 p.m. - \$15; info (760) 436-4036.

August 14 & 15: The 14th Annual Inter-City Show and Sale at Los Angeles County Arboretum - "Color Me Cactus - Color Me Succulent." For an Inter-City Show Newsletter and Show Schedule contact Carol Wujcik (714) 963-3146, email: cawujcik@aol.com. Show or sales information contact Woody Minnich (805) 944-2784 or Dick Hulett email: airomatic@aol.com. For general info., and directions Michael and Joyce Buckner (619) 477-4779. Saturday night banquet and plant auction. Walks and Talks: Sat 11:00 a.m. - Gene Joseph, Noon - Tom Glavich, 1:00 p.m. - Bill Hagblom - Red, White and Pink Adeniums, Bill Baker and Joe Clements - Color your Landscape, 3:00 p.m. - Joe Stead - Propagation. Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - Miles Anderson "Color Them Grafted", Noon - Michael Buckner and Woody Minnich - "The Color Blue" Trophy Table, 1:00 p.m. - Michael and Joyce Buckner "Color in a Bowl", 2:00 p.m. - Rudy Lime "Color him SMOLA".

August 22: Concert Under the Oaks at Quail Botanical Gardens - The Silverwood Musical Ensemble performing Irish music, from Celtic airs to dance music. Begins at 5:00 pm; \$15 includes light dinner, dessert and coffee. (760) 436-3036.

August 22: Long Beach Cactus Club - Rudolf Schulz "Brazil, the Uebelmannias" - Slide lecture; meetings begin at 1:30 p.m.; Dominguez Adobe, 18127 South Alameda Street, Compton, CA 90221. Info: Dick Hulett (310) 832-2262.

August 28 - 29: UCI Arboretum Summer Bulb Sale - 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.; Admit \$2; North Campus - UCI, Irvine (949) 824-5833.

September 4: Succulent Symposium at the Huntington Botanical Gardens - 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108, at the south end of Allen Street; Educational programs, Sales, Rare Plant Auction, Tours, etc. (818) 405-2160.

September 11: SDCSS Picnic at Mission Bay, see details in this months Presidents message.

September 25 & 26: Del Mar Orchid Show and Sale (formerly Quail Garden Orchid Show) now at the Del Mar Fairgrounds; Sat 9:00 - 5:00; Sun 10:00 - 4:00. Admission to Orchid Show is free; parking is \$5.00.

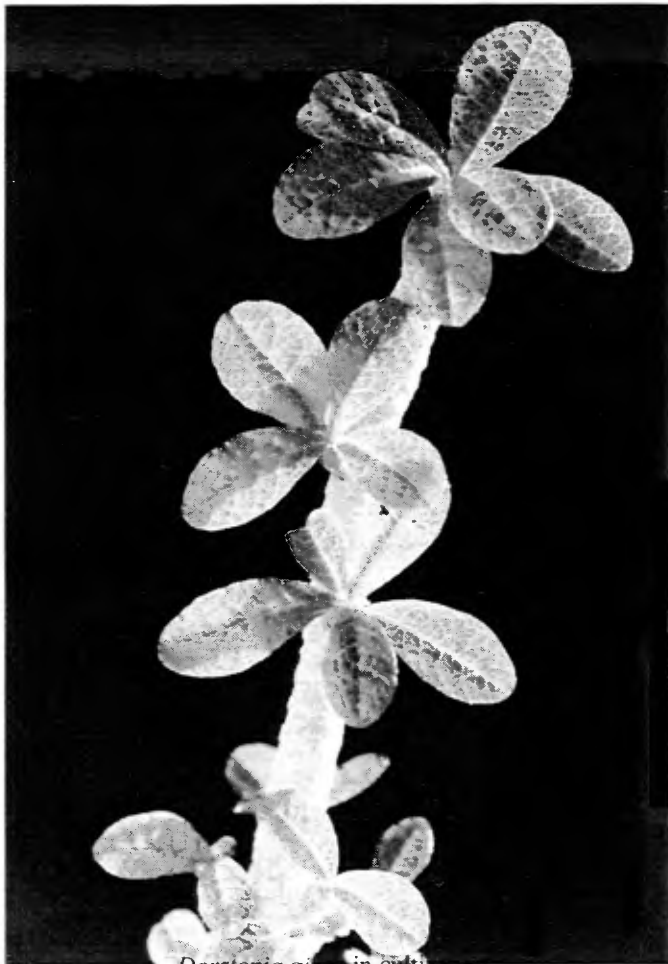
For more info. see: www.cactus-mall.com/cssa/events.html or www.cactus-mall.com/events.html

CULTIVATED FLORA OF SOCOTRA

by Dylan Hannon

The following taxa are Socotran plants I know to be cultivated in the U.S., Europe, and South Africa. Except for *Crinum balfouri*, I have seen all of these personally. Succulents are in **bold face**.

Aloe perryi
Aloe aff. *perryi* ("sp. Dwarf Socotra")
Aloe squarrosa
Adenium multiflorum* ssp. *socotranum
Ballochia rotundifolia
Begonia socotrana
Cephalocroton socotranus
Caralluma socotrana
Cissus hamaderoensis
Cissus subaphylla
Crinum balfouri
Dendrosicyos socotrana
Dorstenia gigas
Dracaena cinnabari
Euphorbia abdelkuri
Euphorbia arbuscula



Dorstenia gigas in cultivation.



Year and a half old seedling of *Dendrosicyos* from C&J Cactus Nursery

Euphorbia* aff. *schimperii
Euphorbia socotrana
Euphorbia spiralis
Exacum affine
Eurieandra balfouri
Ficus socotrana (= *F. vasta*)
Hibiscus scottii
Hypericum revolutum
Jatropha unicostata
Kalanchoe farinacea
Kalanchoe robusta
Ledebouria grandifolia
Plectranthus socotranus
Punica protopunica
Ruellia insignis
Sarcostemma socotrana
Senecio scottii
Trichodesma scottii
Withania riebeckii

In addition, a few of Socotra's five or so *Boswellia* species (frankincense) may be in a handful of collections. Possibly lost to cultivation is *Duvaliandra* (*Caralluma*) *Dioscoridis*.

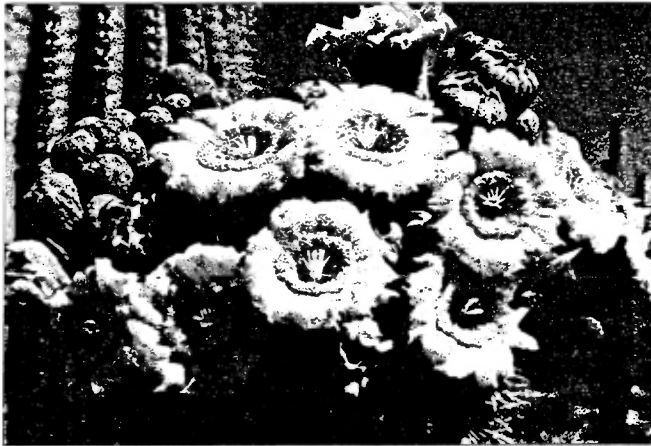
EVF

SAGUARO FRUITS ARE SPECTACULAR

by Virginia Innis

Attempting to explain why collectors are attracted to certain plants is a difficult task. Some are attracted to certain plants for their form, shape, or flowers. Yet, on occasion fruit can be more spectacular than any other factor.

Many collectors will tell you that they do not consume the fruit. Although some prize it: many worldwide, grow cacti for their fruit. Although Apples are a well fruit known, Cactus Apples do not have the same claim to fame. Mention a tuna and many expect a fish. Tuna is a native name for *Opuntia* fruit in Mexico, also called "prickly-pear." Many opuntias prized for their fruit are native to the warm southwest. The plants are found on mountains, canyons, and deserts in great profusion. They usually share their environment with the rattlesnake!



Saguaro flower cluster

Before the Spanish came, the Tohono O'odham (Papago) Indians of the Sonoran area depended upon cactus fruit. The Indians collected the fruit from the organ pipe cacti, *Stenocereus (Cereus) thurberi* and the giant Saguaro *Carnegiea gigantea* (this plant is named in honor of Andrew Carnegie).

The Indians were farmers who dug irrigation ditches to grow corn, beans, squash, and cotton. Though they did not farm the Saguaros these fruits helped them to survive through the winter. It gave them products they could store for winter or items to trade.

During the time when the fruits matured the natives gorged themselves on fresh cacti fruit. They stored the pulp in clay pots, they made flour, gruel, syrup, jam, and candy. When water is added to the pulp it can fermented into wine.

The Tohono O'odham practiced conservation by taking care not to harm plants while harvesting the fruit. Saguaros tower over the landscape. Indians

used long poles made from Saguaro ribs. They also collected fruit in baskets to protect it from bruising.

The Saguaro flowers in May with funnel shaped, creamy white blooms with golden yellow centers. Opening at night they remain open until the following afternoon. Ceroids tend to flower on the tip end of their stems. The fruit ripens in June into July and is the size and color of ripe plums with red pulp. Fruits weigh slightly less than two ounces. The natives had competition with birds, bees, ants, pocket mice, kangaroo rats, ground squirrels, coyotes, javelina, for the ripe fruit. Food for everyone, homes for some.

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[Ed. Note — The next article and the two recipes are reprinted from the 1995 CSSA Convention guide. One of the Field trips was to go and witness a Saguaro harvest. These trips were popular. To read a bit more about the Tohono O'odham Nation look up: www.azstarnet.com/~amerind/govton.html or www.nativeauthors.com/search/tribe/papago.html on the internet. The two recipes are designed for Saguaro but will work for most sweet cacti fruit. No authors are credited, though Julie Turko was the head of the Convention Handbook committee.]

Haṣañ Bahidaj — The Tohono O'odham Saguaro Harvest

As the lushness of spring turns to summer dryness, the Sonoran desert offers a unique gift to the world; *Carnegia gigantea*, the giant saguaro, produces its bright red, sweet fruit. Birds, rodents, and people are waiting for it.

Pollinated in early May, the saguaro's white, waxy flowers are visited by bats, birds, bees and wasps.

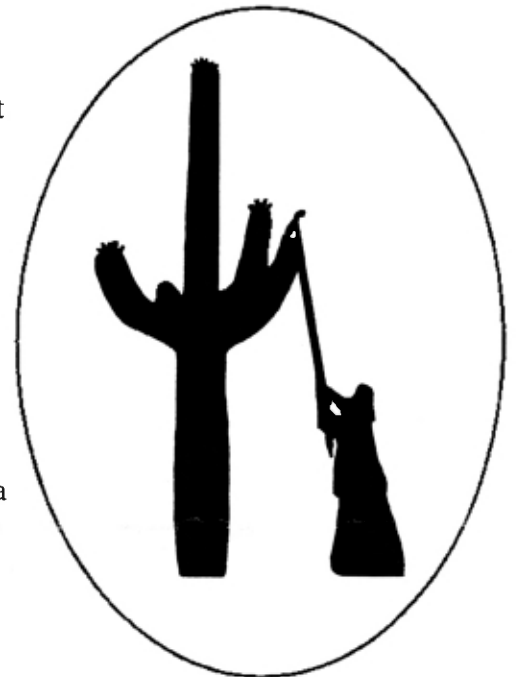
As the fruits ripen, The Tohono O'odham people prepare for the ancient ritual of Haṣañ Bahidaj, the saguaro fruit harvest. In a typical year, the first fruits are ready in the middle of June. The harvesting season lasts from four to six weeks.

The traditional tool of the harvest is called a "kuibit," and it is fashioned from a strong length of saguaro rib. This gathering pole is about thirty feet long, with two short crosspieces, or "matsuguen," which are used to knock the fruit down.

The ripe fruit is then gathered into buckets, the hulls discarded, and soaked in galvanized tubs. Water, pulp and seeds are mixed together and then cooked down. The fruit is used -for jam, syrup and "tis-win," a fermented beverage. The seeds are used to make candy, gravy, and as chickenfeed.

Other materials gathered during this time are cholla cactus buds for pickling and canning, and strips of yucca and devil's claw for baskets.

As the season closes, The reaping process is still far from over. When the saguaro fruit is finished, the desert yields another treasure, the ripening pods of the mesquite.



1995 CSSA Convention Logo

Saguaro Syrup

1. Remove pulp and outer hull from fruit
2. Mix fruit with water. Soak and knead by hand to separate pulp and seeds. Let it stand for a day.
3. Pour into a cooking vessel and place over a mesquite wood fire.
4. After cooking 1 ½ hours, strain through a fine wire screen.
5. Continue to boil another 30 minutes.
6. Strain again, using cheesecloth.
7. Spread pulp and seeds to dry for use in making jam.
8. Continue to boil juice until it reaches the consistency of syrup.
9. Pour finished syrup into glass containers and seal.

Saguaro Cactus Jam

1. Half cover 4 cups of saguaro cactus pulp with water and cook for one hour, stirring occasionally.
2. Boil in a covered pan over low flame for 30 minutes.
3. Reserving the pulp, strain off the liquid and boil it slowly to a syrup, stirring constantly because it burns easily.
4. Crush the pulp and put it through a fine sieve to remove any seeds.
5. Add the pulp back to the thickening syrup, and cook to the consistency of jam. No sugar is needed, the saguaro fruit is sweet itself.

EPIPHYTIC SUCCULENTS OF THE AMERICAS

by Gary Noel

Tillandsias compose a single genus (of four total) within the subfamily Tillandsioideae of the family Bromeliaceae. There are approximately 400 named species and at least that many hybrids. Members of the genus occur from Virginia through Arizona then south through Central and South America to Chile. There are species from sea level to over 10,000 feet in a tremendous variety in habitats. Tillandsias also come in many shapes and sizes, ranging from 2 inches to 5 feet across. Although the typical form is a rosette, there are many other variations such as the chains of Spanish moss. There is also a large variety in the size and arrangement of the flower spikes.

What Tillandsias have in common is an adaptation that allows them to grow without soil, enabling them to attach themselves to trees, rocks, and even telephone wires. This adaptation is enabled by a combination of succulence and a specialized scale called a tricomb which gives them a silver appearance.



Tillandsia tectorum from Birdrock Tropicals

Technically, a succulent plant is defined as one having a Crassulacean Acid Metabolism or CAM metabolic cycle. All plants use sunlight to convert CO₂ into the building blocks of plant growth. Succulence enables plants to only transpire at night and close their pores tightly during the day to prevent moisture loss. This is made possible because the plants can store CO₂ as organic acids which then break down during the day to provide the carbon necessary to produce the carbohydrates required to build plant tissue. The juiciness which was relate to succulent plants is necessary not just to store moisture but also to provide enough water to support the formation of these acids.

Tillandsias share succulence with the plants of many other families, but have added the tricomb, which enables the plant to also absorb

water and nutrients directly into the leaf tissue. These scales open when the leaf surface is moist so that the plant can actively draw in moisture. The openings are large enough so that organic nutrients and minerals are also absorbed. For this reason the plants do not need to be rooted in soil. Tillandsias absorb their water and nutrition through the leaves, not through the roots like other plants. This combination of features creates a plant that is very thrifty and efficient and enables it to find niches that are unavailable to other plants.

Like all other plants, they require regular and thorough applications of water and fertilizer, and adequate light. As a rule of thumb, water them once a week and fertilize them once a month. The best and easiest way is to put them on the same schedule as your other plants so they are not forgotten. However, they **MUST** be fertilized because they are not growing in soil. In nature, although the plants frequently must survive an extended dry season, they generally receive substantial rain during the warm, thundershower season. There are also a variety of nutrients available to the plants, which includes the droppings of animals and, more importantly, insects, and the organic compounds of live and decomposing plants.

The best way to water is to dip the plants in a sink or bucket of water or wet them with a hose. We do not recommend misting the plants in the Southern California area because of the high salt content of our water. Misting does not flush off the old salts and they accumulate which is very harmful or fatal to the plants. To fertilize, mix plant food with water, dip the plants in the water or spray it on the leaves. Any good water-soluble plant food is fine, but recent studies have shown that the leaves of plants more rapidly absorb the urea form of nitrogen than the nitrates of ammonium. If you have a choice, read the labels and choose the plant food with the highest percentage of urea. The plants should have bright light but not excessive sun. Morning or filtered sun is ideal and will bring out the color in the leaves. The plants with more gray scales generally can handle more light and slightly drier conditions.

There are a variety of unique and creative ways to display Tillandsias. A glue gun or silicone can be used to attach only the roots of

the plant to most anything including shells, pieces of wood, hoops or rings, rocks, china, or anything else you can think of. Using this type of glue on the main stem of the plant can smother the plant, and plants glued by only the leaves will fall off when the leaves die back. Plants may also be tied with fish line or green plastic garden ties to lattice posts, or other structural items. They can also be tied to a few nails pounded into a large tree trunk or on a fence. Simply sitting them on a windowsill or shelf, can be quite effective. Another eye-catching method is to simply suspend them in mid air on virtually

invisible fish line either by themselves or interspersed with other hanging plants. Spanish Moss, also one of the Tillandsias, is invaluable in creating the tropical effect and creates an excellent background against a wall or lattice, and can be draped through the trees or from overhead panels of lattice, hung from hoops. There are undoubtedly other, as yet undiscovered methods that you may devise to display the plants.

EYF

**BRAG TABLE WINNERS FOR
July, 99**

Succulents

- First: Don Patterson's
Adromischus herrei
- Second: Rudy Lime's
Foquieria fasciculata
- Third: Nibby Klienfelter's
Aichryson species

Cactus

- First: Don Patterson's
Pterocactus tuberosus
- There were no other plants entered
Judged by Duke Benadom



THE MONTHLY BENEFIT DRAWING

A "BIG" thank you to all of those who contributed to last month's hugely successful Benefit Drawing Table. These were: **Jerry Williams, Shirley Berry, Carol Jean Wolcott, Marilyn Henderson, Betty Athy, Lee Phelps**, and five lovely plants from an anonymous donor. Please keep up the good work and call **Betty Athy, (619) 469-7647**, with any donations for August.

WHATS THE STATUS?

by Tom Knapik



Many times rare plants are offered for sale only once. They are dispersed among collectors only to disappear from the market for years. What happened to those plants sold? Are they thriving in someone's collection or are they all gone? Due to restrictions of national and international laws, I feel it is important to establish a forum by which information about these rare plants can be exchanged by collectors. In this regular column there may be more questions than answers at times but hopefully, some reader will have and share information about the status of a species or topic. Issues on laws, conservation, events, collections, etc.. are all possible. Please contact me on any column topic at eyf2000@aol.com.

TOPIC #1: *Dorstenia gypsophila* Lavr.

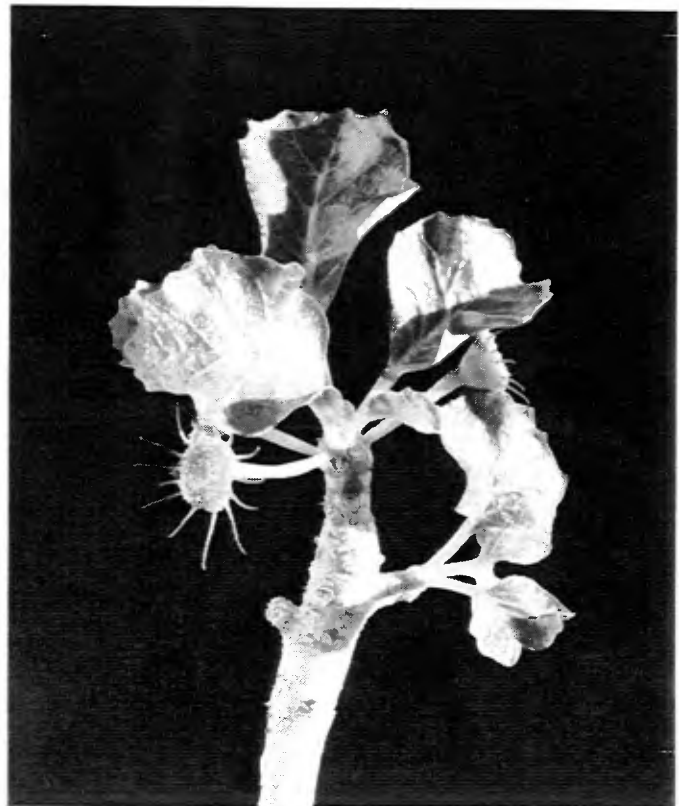
John Lavrnos described this species in a 1972 Nov/Dec issue of the Cactus & Succulent Journal. It is the second largest *Dorstenia* species growing to 4 feet and inhabits the gypsum hills near Las Anod, Somalia. Frank Horwood later added his observations of the plant in a 1974 Sept/Oct issue of the CSJ stating that it had the largest root system of the genus and that the population was healthy. In 1986, plants were collected by Barad, Linden, Carter, et al and those gave rise to seedlings offered for sale by Chuck Hanson's Arid Lands in the spring of 1990. He listed it 4 times but after the spring of 1991, it was not offered again. Since then, the political situation in Somalia has changed dramatically. We won't be getting new material any time soon!



Horwood photo of a huge *Dorstenia gypsophila* at its type locality.

In a recent phone conversation with Chuck, he mentioned that he still has several plants but they don't seem to set seed in Iowa. It is not a self-fertile plant. The one I purchased in 1991 is still alive and flowering but very slow growing. I stop watering it completely in the fall when it drops its leaves and keep it bone dry all winter. In the spring, at the first sign of life, I start watering it again and do so as I would any cactus throughout the summer. Where are all the others that were sold? I have not seen this plant in anyone's collection or heard about it from any collector. Please contact me if you have any info. at all on this magnificent species. I will share correspondences in future issues of *Espinasy Flores*.

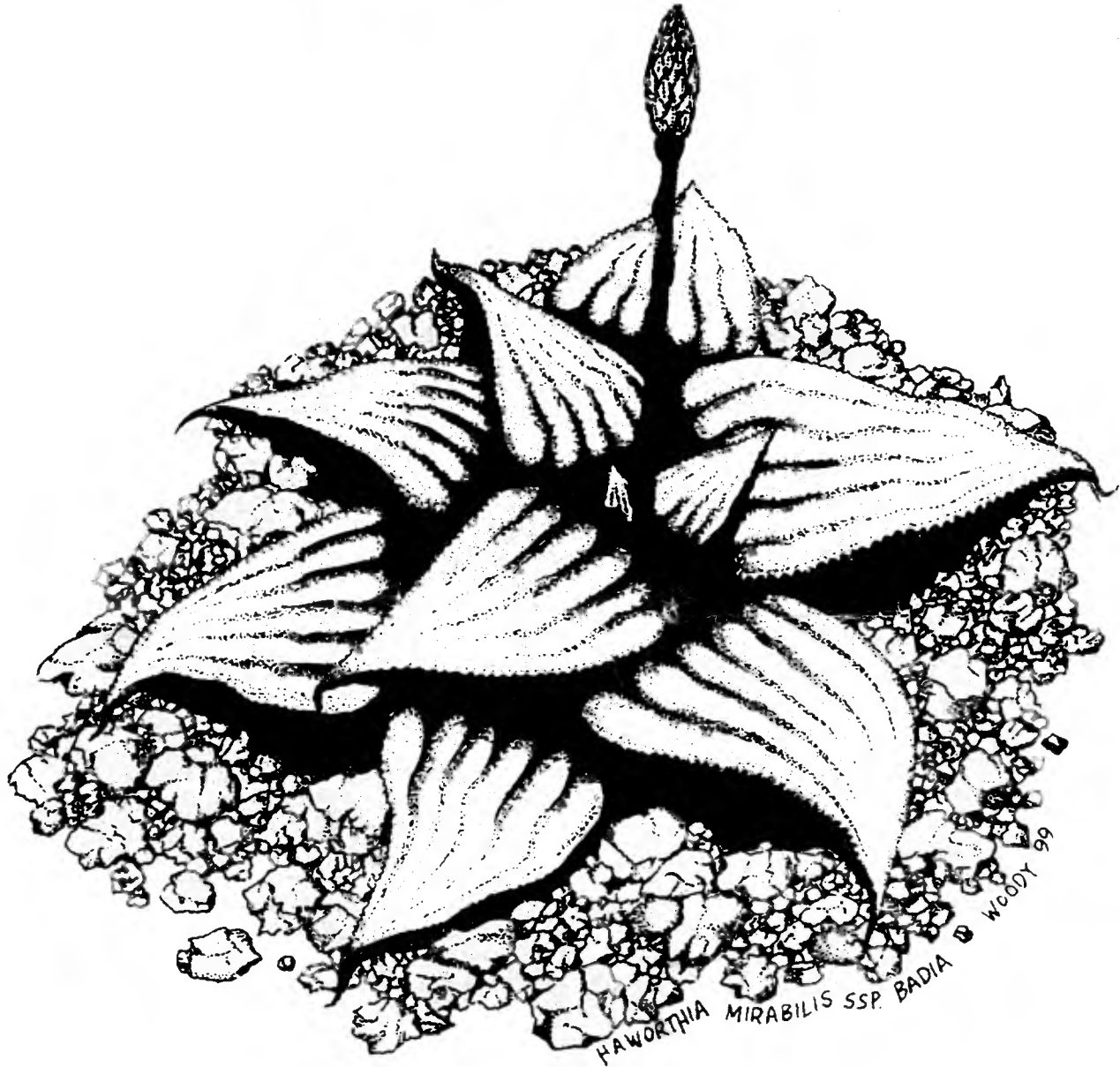
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Flowering *Dorstenia gypsophila* in cultivation

14th Annual Inter-City Cactus & Succulent Show

Sat. & Sun. August 14th & 15th, 1999



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Mammillaria thornberi

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The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, Inc. is open to all persons interested in growing cacti and other succulent plants. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month (except June, Sept. and Dec.) at 1:00 PM in room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Executive Board meetings are open to all members; call any officer or director for the time and location. Annual dues are \$10.00 per single member per year, \$5.00 for each additional member within the same household. Single copies of Espinas y Flores are \$1.00 per copy sent within the USA; foreign subscriptions are \$25.00. Affiliated with the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Inc. SOCSS Web Page available soon please stay tuned for address.