



MAMMILLARIA THORNERI

Espinas y Flores

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"HAPPY CHRISTMAS"

GOD BLESS THE MASTER

God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children,
That round the table go:

And all your kin and kinsfolk
That dwell both far and near;
We wish you a merry Christmas,
And a happy New Year.

Anon

CACTUS AND SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH: Christmas Colors.

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Deadline for January publication is December 15th, 1976.

CACTUS AND SUCCULENTS CULTURAL HINTS

From Succulent Communique, 1975,
CSSA

Prepare an open, well-draining but fairly rich soil mix. We recommend the use of $\frac{1}{2}$ coarse, washed sand and $\frac{1}{2}$ humus, such as oak leaf mold or a good grade of planter mix. A small amount of bone meal and hoof and horn is also beneficial.

The plant may be potted immediately upon delivery. Always use a pot with a drainage hole, and generally the smallest size that the plant will easily fit into. Faster, healthier growth is obtained by regularly potting plants up into larger sizes as they grow, rather than putting a small plant into a large pot where there is greater danger of rot. Plastic pots require less frequent watering, but clay pots offer more control over conditions.

Except for a few winter growers, such as the succulent pelargoniums, composites and many of the mesems, the plants should be watered throughout the spring, summer and early fall. Do not merely dampen the surface of the soil, which encourages only a weak surface root system, but soak until water comes freely out of the drainage hole, then allow the soil to begin to dry out before watering again. This may vary from 3 to 10 days, depending on temperature, active state of growth of the plant, etc. In late fall and winter water infrequently just enough to keep roots from dying. Most plants will grow much better with this resting period. Stapeliads are particularly sensitive to moisture in cold weather, and we keep these plants quite dry. Many growers do not advocate watering newly acquired bare root plants, but we feel that most plants will re-establish better with some moisture in the soil, and that there are others that will simply never re-establish in bone-dry soil.

Fertilizer in dilute form should be used frequently during growing season. Any goo, all-purpose liquid fertilizer is adequate, but it should be used at $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ the recommended strength and about twice as often as suggested on the container. Frequent, light feedings are much better than an occasional large dose.

In some cases plants will be grafted, as this is one of the best methods of propagation of new material. If you would like to remove the plant from its stock and grow it on its own roots, the very simple procedure follows: Wait until the weather is warm and the plant is actively growing. Cut off the stock with a clean sharp knife just below the union of stock and scion (or top) then allow scion to dry for 2-3 weeks. After the base has become well calloused it can be rooted in the same manner as any cutting. (This does not apply to plants without chlorophyll such as Red Caps which must be grafted to live). The best culture comes from careful observation of the plant's responses. When you know your plants, you can tell by just looking at them when they need water, if they need more light, etc. If a plant shows an inclination to grow, encourage it; if it seems to want to go dormant, encourage that too! If it looks sick, don't hesitate to unpot it and examine the roots. A green thumb is really just tender, loving care.

ORGAN PIPE CACTUS

Kingsley Douthwaite
Reprinted from Detroit's Spinal Column,
Nov. 1975, taken from the CSSA Journal
No. 4, Vol. 46.

A good way to get a persistent health insurance salesman to go away is to inform him that you are subject to skin cancers. For many years I have been a dermatologist's bank account and a pest to health insurance companies. In fact, before leaving for Mexico last May I checked, in some consternation, with my dermatologist because a skin cancer, that he had treated five times in the past five years was acting up again. Was it safe to absent myself for three weeks from the inscrutable wisdom found only in our advanced technology?

The doctor gave me, as it were, three weeks' parole, on condition that I report in as soon as I got home for another gouging treatment - "burning the hell out of it", as the expert put it.

In Guadalajara I chanced upon a scrap of information familiar, I have discovered since, to many Indians not only of Mexico but of Peru; that certain cacti are good for skin cancers - in particular, in Mexico, the Organpipe cactus (Stenocereus marginatus). Having nothing to lose, I gambled five pesos on a kilogram of Organpipe cactus at Liberstad market, placed a slice of the meat of it upon the five-times treated recurring skin cancer and stuck it there with adhesive tape. It should stay there at least a week, my authority said.

After five days of flesh-to-flesh contact, the "recurrence" had disappeared. And it has stayed smooth; just as if I had had the "treatment" plus the two weeks elapsing, while the wound healed. The "cure" -- how permanent it is, of course, impossible to say yet -- is so spectacular that, had I known about it thirty years ago, I probably would never have been seen in my dermatologist's waiting-room. I have tried it since on another skin disturbance which has all the weary familiar symptoms of being another skin cancer, with equally spectacular results. "

Editor's Note: Two things struck me when reading this very interesting article. The first is the time element, the original article having appeared in the July-August 1974 issue of the CSSA Journal; any further follow-ups from Mr. Douthwaite? The second is the fact that the Organpipe Cactus was not known to me by the name of Stenocereus marginatus. Obviously, an alert member of the Detroit Cactus and Succulent Society saved me a lot of time doing my own research. Here are his comments:

WHY THESE AWFUL NAMES?

Louis Keller
Spinal Column, Nov. 1975

Unfortunately, a common name is given prominence in connection with "Stenocereus marginatus" for the cactus in question. This latter name aroused my suspicion since, to my knowledge, the plant generally known as Organ Pipe Cactus is Lemaireocereus thurberi. A long search finally

cont'd on page 7

CEREUS-LY SPEAKING

Tom Hamecher, Santa Claus pro tem, will be the fellow to keep your eye on at our December meeting; he is in charge of our annual Christmas party. What goodies those brown bags will contain, not even he knows. There will be a gift plant for everyone - extra plants to be auctioned off if there are any left over.

Also, please note: The library will be closed in December; there will be no formal program, no plant sales table or plant exchange table. But bring your plants of the month: Cacti and succulents in Christmas color.

Nibby Klinefelter, a hard-working past editor and present vice-president, has finally decided to retire from public life (temporarily, we hope?). We regret to have to announce her resignation: Sorry to see you leave your office, Nibby, we all want to thank you for your time and effort you have put into your job. Madelyn Lee has volunteered to fill that vacancy - Congratulations, Mad. While on the subject, I'll also want to extend our congratulations to our new treasurer (a position left vacant by Mad.): Russell Evans who will take over his duties as of January 1st, 1976.

A reminder: During the December meeting, two new board members will be elected by the membership-at-large. Nominated for the three year terms are Shirley Berry and Tom (Santa Claus) Hamecher.

Regalement Committee: The Hapemans, Jean and Leta, with the help of Edith Billmeyer, David Bush, Vernetta Cotten, Joan Fleer, Perlso Lewis, Ed Miller and Ruth Stanton, came through with another eye-catching, tasty coffee break!

The San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc., with whom we are affiliated, has come up with a splendid idea: A giant plant sale, the first of its kind, has been planned for the weekend of May 29th and May 30th, 1976. This will be an annual event. The Board of the S.D. Cactus and Succulent Society, at the last board meeting, has agreed to help promote this worthy cause, which will be a delight to all plant lovers. All members are being asked to donate one plant towards this sale and are being asked to start potting and growing the choice of their plant - or plants - right now.

For those interested: a new plant society is in the process of being organized - the Gesneriad Society. I understand, that Mitch Beauchamp, one of our own members, is heading this new group. Check with him for more particulars. Best known members of the Gesneriad Family of plants are African Violets, represented by an already existing society. Other Gesneriads are Aeschynanthus (a hanging basket plant), Rehmannia - thought to be a foxglove relative -, Rhytidophyllum - a small shrub growing to a height of five feet, and the more commonly known Gloxinia.

Before you forget: one more bill to be paid this year - your membership fee is due as of December 31st, 1975.

Continued on page 5

Cereus-ly Speaking, cont'd:

Audrey Johnson, Publicity Chairwoman for Quail Gardens Foundation Inc., issues an invitation to all to attend "Christmas in Flowerland" Bazaar, Sunday, December 7th, 10 am to 4 pm, at Quail Botanic Gardens, 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas. The bazaar will feature hand-made gifts of all kinds; plants of all types, sizes and varieties; spectacular poinsettias, Mr. Ecke's specialty, at low cost; and last but not least, home-made delicacies and refreshments.

GARDEN HINTS

Potting Mix, by Madelyn Lee:

2 scoops nitrate humus	2 scoops pumice for grit
2 scoops builder's sand	2 scoops gravel for grit
2 scoops horse manure	Add charcoal if you wish

Mad uses no soil in her potting mix but fertilizes once a week with $\frac{1}{4}$ strength solution of a good type fertilizer. Euphorbias, her specialty, like a lot of food. Add more perlite or charcoal for good drainage. Charcoal holds moisture but also absorbs some nutrients.

Potting Mix, by Martin Mooney:

1 part dirt (sand pit)	3 parts planter mix (Hawaiian Magic
2 parts sand (pulvarized rock)	6 parts vermiculite mix)

Martin says he never fertilizes and mixes all ingredients with his hands.

Growing Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving Cacti is not at all difficult. From "Horticulture", Dec. 1972, by Ladislaus Cutak. Since these species are jungle inhabitants, they prefer a soil mix richer in humus and leaf-mold and an ample supply of water in addition to warmth and partial shade. A rest period is very important if abundant bloom is to be expected. If possible, keep the plants outdoors during the summer in a shady location where air circulation is good.

The dormancy period should be started about the middle of September and continued for six to eight weeks. After that time plants must be watered more often. Do not move the plants about and avoid drafts. If you desire plants to reach their blooming peak at specific times, like at Christmas, try the short day treatment. This means no light may reach the plants after 5 pm during the rest period.

So, whether you prefer the Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter cactus or like to grow all three, there are no great mysteries to their culture. (Apparently with a very low temperature, say less than 55 F., buds will set regardless of day length).

Editor's comments: I have all three varieties, and each blooms abundantly. However, one year I almost lost my large Easter Cactus, just at the peak of its blooming period. Its succulent pads shrivelled up, turned yellow and I felt the only way to save the plant was to remove every single blossom. The following year, just about the same thing was happening when Joe Bibbey noticed the plant - he explained that these plants could actually bloom themselves to death if left with too many buds. Ever since then, I take care to remove all but two buds at the end of each pad and have had no problem since. Oddly enough, none of the other varieties have shown this tendency - or death wish, if you will. I would consider this a possibility, though.

Garden Hints, cont'd:

Upside-Down Hoya, from P. Bourdoux in "Cactus" Vol. 5, No. 6, 1973, translated by P.J. Brunelle.

The smaller, more fragile Hoyas such as H. angustifolia and H. bella can be grown in such a way as to take advantage of their trailing habit. One simply pots them upside-down in suspended pots. A large, plastic azalea pot, for example, is pierced with a hot nail in five or six places and fitted with a suspension harness of some sort. When filled with the appropriate soil, a large plate or pan is placed face down over it and the whole is turned over. Then the plate is filled with water until the soil is fully irrigated. Rooted cuttings are then planted in each of the holes and, when they are growing well, the pot is turned over again and suspended by its harness, watering at the top when needed. The need for repotting is much delayed by replacing the surface soil, periodically, with well-rotted manure.

I prepared one of these planters by piercing five holes in a small plastic bucket. Hoya bella, in five months, developed into a nice 50 cm (20") diameter shrub carrying never less than twenty flower bracts from the second month. By the way, hoyas appreciate nutrient sprays of either diluted manure water or commercial fertilizers.

Question: Is it bad for a person's health to sleep in a room with house plants, and would cactus be less harmful, or more so?

Answer: This has been believed because plants do give off carbon dioxide at night; however, cacti transpire less. It is surely a ridiculous concern however, because who has ever claimed it is bad to spend a night in a jungle as opposed to a barren plain for this reason? (This little item from CSIE, Mar. 75 issue).

BOOK REVIEW

Bill Throop
Reprinted from CSIE, April 75.

ECHEVERIAS, L. Carruthers & R. Ginns, 1973, Arco Publishing Co. Inc., New York, \$ 7.95.

Carruthers and Ginns have done an outstanding job in this 110 page book devoted to Echeverias. Certainly anyone growing this group of plants could find no better source of reference from the layman's view. The first part of the book covers such things as the history of the genus, their habitat, and a description of the two main types of inflorescence. Next, good notes on cultivation and propagation are given. The main part of the book is a description of over 100 species and their varieties. Not only do the authors describe each species in full, they also give former names, where the plant came from originally (if known) and how best to propagate it. The same treatment is given to some sixty hybrids.

Forty-eight half page color photos are included in the book; of these forty-six are close-up pictures of individual plants. Most of the pictures show excellent detail. The authors are to be congratulated for the fine book they have produced. I find myself wishing that someone would do the same for other groups of succulents. What an addition to our reference libraries if we had comparable books on Lithops, Aloes, Euphorbias, etc.

SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Officers

PRESIDENT - Martin L. MOONEY, 97 K Street, Chula Vista, CA 92011	427-6796
1ST V.P. - Madelyn Lee, 2310 Bella Vista, Vista, Ca. 92083	1-727-1364
2ND V.P. - Reed PIERCE, 3525 Wilshire Terrace, San Diego, CA 92104	291-1994
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Why These Awful Names, con't:

uncovered Stenocereus as a synonym for Lemaireocereus (Marshall & Bock, page 80, and Britton and Rose II, page 99). Fig. 27 & 28 M. & B. "Lemaireocereus marginatus" and Fig. III B. & R. II "Pachocereus marginatus" (which was later transferred to Lemaireocereus) are of the same genus, but are definitely different from L. thurberi, Fig. 143 B. & R. II. However, the description of P. marginatus carries the following notation: "This species is commonly cultivated throughout central and southern Mexico as a hedge plant and, when properly cared for, forms an impenetrable barrier; it is there called "organo" (the Spanish word for organ)".

So it appears that Organ Pipe Cactus in the USA and Organ Pipe Cactus in Mexico are two different species of the same genus, and quite possibly more. Here is a classical example why proper names are absolutely essential for correct identification.

Membership: The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing cacti, other succulents and exotic plants.

Dues: \$ 5.00 annually, due in December of each year.

Single copy of E y F : \$ 0.50.

Meetings: 2nd Saturday of each month, 1:30 pm, Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, unless otherwise indicated. Board convenes after the general meeting.

Augie Pfeiffer
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Address correction requested

FIRST CLASS