

# Espinas y Flores

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

Vol. XIII, No. 11

November, 1978.

NOVEMBER MEETING DATE:

Saturday, November 11th. 1978

PROGRAM:

HOYAS, CEROPEGIAS, (and a few STAPELIAS)

By Lt. Col. Leo Pickoff

Leo will present an interesting slide program featuring the above named plant types. He has promised to give information and advice upon any HOYAS, and CEROPEGIAS (NOT STAPELIAS), that members may care to bring along to the meeting.

This program was to have been presented at the April Meeting, but there was quite a mix-up with the meeting date, and we are fortunate that this program could be re-scheduled at this time.

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Note: From M.E.

Traditionally, there are no 'Plant of the Month' articles written for the December Bulletin so now is the time for all good members to come to the aid of your Editors with those interesting articles you have been saving for a rainy day.

DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER BULLETIN.....NOVEMBER 21st. PLEASE

## Cactus-of-the-Month

### Gymnocalycium

Dr. Ronald E. Monroe

Gymnocalycium Pfeiffer (naked bud; chin cacti) was recognized as early as 1845 when it was separated from Echinocactus (see Backeberg, 1977) but had to be discovered again by Britton and Rose (1937) before it found its rightful place taxonomically among the South American cacti. Britton and Rose (1937) recognized ca. 23 species, Borg (1959) about 50 species and Backeberg (1977) about 108 species and 48 varieties; however, current authors consider about 80 species and nearly 65 varieties as proper to the genus. Thus, it is one of the largest genera of South American cacti.

The genus is very widely distributed from Bolivia, Paraguay, Southern Brazil, Uruguay and most of Argentina, and although the plants are usually found in grassy plains at rather low altitudes a few grow as high as 3000 m in the Andes of Bolivia.

The plants are solitary or caespitose and have spiral or straight well-marked ribs which are notched into spine-bearing tubercles with a relatively prominent "chin" below the areole. The spines vary considerably as do the plant bodies and, especially, the flowers.

The flowers are produced usually (but not always) from the center of the plants on new growth and they are normally large, diurnal, white or pink and with a glabrous short or long tube. There are exceptions to the usual white or pink flowers -- G. baldianum (pink to scarlet red), G. mostii (pink to light red), G. chuquisacanu (magenta) and G. tillianu (dark red).

Most plants found growing in collections are G. denudatum (which must be protected from hot, direct sun), G. baldianum, G. damsii, G. saglione (the largest plant of the genus), G. mihanovichii, G. bruchii (one of the smallest plants of the genus) and G. friedrichii. G. friedrichii, G. mihanovichii and G. damsii v. rotundulum could be easily collected for the plant body per se as they are colored brightly above and below the tubercles (the latter) or resemble a Scotch plaid (the two former ones). Although some of the plants bloom continuously throughout the year, most bloom only in the spring. Free-blooming plants are the more popular species found in cultivation as mentioned above.

Propagation is via rooted cuttings (from caespitose species and the cuttings root readily) and more commonly, from seed. The main problem concerning this group is that the plants are self-sterile so at least two clones are required to produce seed. Another problem is that wild bees pollinate them rather freely and the plants are known to cross with any number of Andean cacti (Sulcorebutia, Weingartia, Neoporteria, etc.) producing some unusual hybrids (this is all too common even in habitat !). One hybrid produced in cultivation that has known parents (and, therefore, of genetic value) is G. denudatum X G. baldianum. The plant has the body of the former but the brilliant red flower of the latter.

The group is quite hardy, takes considerable water during the growing period but they should be fed only lightly to maintain their barrel-shape. Mealy bugs, spider mites and snails or slugs (in season) are the principle pests which are controlled in the usual manner as described in earlier articles in *Espinas y Flores*.

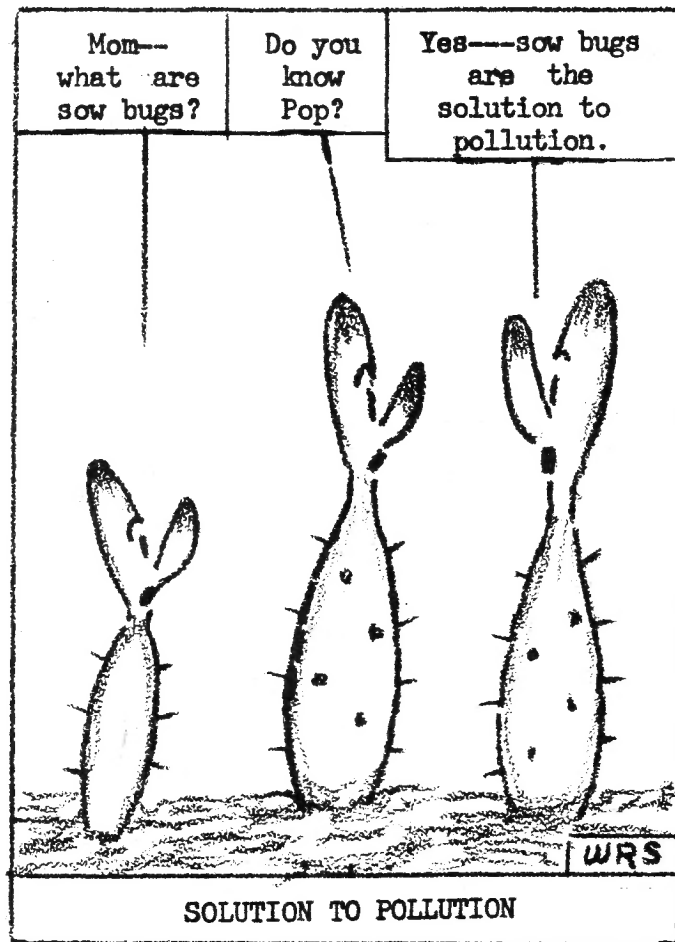
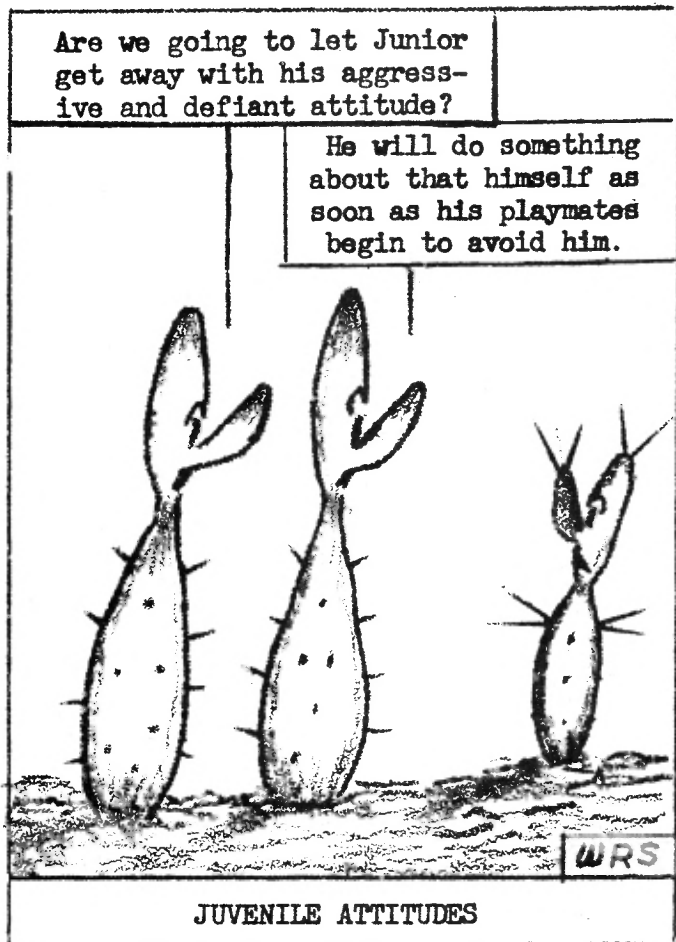
References

Backeberg, Curt. 1977. Cactus Lexicon. Blanford Press, England.

Borg, J. 1959. Blanford Press, England.

Britton, N.L. and J.N. Rose. 1937. The Cactaceae. Dover Publ., Inc., N.Y.

Venning, Frank. 1974. Cacti. Golden Press, N.Y.



REGALEMENT FOR NOVEMBER:

The following members have signed up to provide refreshments at the November Meeting:

Eleanor Dice

Katherine MacDonald

Alberta Widen

Virginia Buckner

Edith Werner

Joan Johnson

Marcelle Barfield

Dody Gaughen

## SUCCULENT-OF-THE-MONTH

### Cucurbs

by Rick Latimer

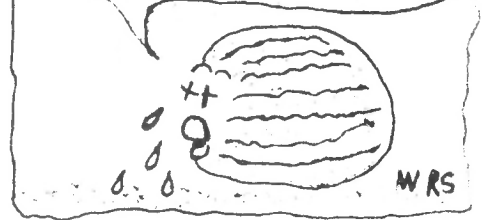


Last Month, for Cactus-of-the-Month, we did Melocactus; so it now seems fitting that we do succulent melon family members. In general, the Cucurbitaceae consists of climbing or prostrate, annual or unfrequently perennial herbs. There are about 100 genera of about 850 species, primarily of pantropical and subtropical distributions, and are about equally divided between the Old and New Worlds. The flowers are usually unisexual, rarely bisexual and can be either monoecious or dioecious. (We all know what these words mean. Last month's plants were a prerequisite for this month's.) The fruits can be often large and are considered to be berries. (Note: A berry is a simple fruit with a smooth skin and has the seeds in the inside. Grapes, bananas, and tomatoes are berries. Strawberries and Raspberries are not berries!) The cucumber family has several important genera as far as food crops go: (Cucurbita) pumpkin and squash; (Cucumis) cucumber, gherkin, and muskmelon; (Citrullus) watermelon; and (Lagenaria) calabash. The word cucurb is the Latin name for the family. As we shall soon see, many of the genera in this family have a common suffix-sicyos, which is the Greek equivalent for the family. (There is even a genus that is simply Sicyos!) The Cucurbitaceae is closely related to the Passifloraceae, so the closest related succulents are the Adenias.

Unfortunately, I could find no information on how each genus is related to the others, so I will have to cover them by geographical localities. Starting with the Southwest, I know of plants that grow in the County and others that grow in the Borrego Desert, but I do not know what any of them are (some may not have caudices). Ibervillea is the most well known of American cucurbs. I. sonorae (varieties: sonorae from mainland Mexico and peninsularis from Baja) has tubers that from which arise yearly long flexible liana-like shoots which reach a length of 3 or more meters. The leaves are palmate (var. s. blue, var. p. green). There are records of a tuber sitting on a museum shelf for six years and sending out shoots each year. I. tripartita is native to southern Texas and has a large attractive seed pod. Closely related to Ibervillea is the genus Tumanoca. I. macdougallii from the Tucson area has a tuber and small red berries.

From southwestern Africa comes Acanthosicyos horrida. This dioecious, monotypic, and endemic plant has branches with 1 inch long thorns. The taproot may be up to 40 feet long. The spiny, ½ kg. fruit is edible. Dendrosicyos socotrana from Socotra can be a 6 meter tree in height and 1 meter in diameter. The fruit is hairy. Other African Cucurbs are: Gerardanthus, Kedrostris, and Momordica. The Mooney's had some of these in their open house exhibit last June, so we know they are being grown.

I'm just a lonely cantaloupe  
no matter how hard I try,  
I can't figure it out. I'm  
very succulent, but at the  
most I'm not a succulent!



from Madagascar

When we examine the Cucurbs<sup>†</sup>, we finally find some that begin to look like they have stem succulence. Sevrigia humberitii froms with age potato-like tubers. The stems are quadrangular and covered with white wool. The flowers and leaves are ephemeral and minute. Sevrigia gracilis also gets a tuber eventually. Its stems are fleshy cylinders that are brown with white polka dots. The members of the genus Xerosicyos form lianas which climb with the aid of tendrils. Their rounded, xeromorphic leaves are more or less succulent. The most interesting species is X. danguyi.

There are still plenty of members in this family. More succulent genera are: Aniosperma, Apodanthera, Ceratosanthes, Corollocarpus, Cucurbita, Echinocystis, Eurandria, Neoalsomitra, Pisoperma, Raphanocarpus (not to be confused with Raphionacme), Telfaria, and Zehneria (=Meloritha). Evidently this family is either under-exploited or underrated or something. Let's see what we can come up with.

#### REFERENCES:

Dodson, J. W., Introduction to the Study of Succulent Plants, p. 92.

Jacobsen, Hermann, A Handbook of Succulent Plants, pp. 35-36, 337, 520, 635, 679, 907.

Knox, Alice, "The Stem of Ibervillea Sonorae", The Torrey Botanical Club Bulletin, V. 34, PP. 329-330.

Lawrence, George H. M., Taxonomy of Vascular Plants, 11th ed., pp. 717-720.

Rauh, Werner, "The Xerophytic Vegetation of Southwestern Madagascar IV", CSSA Journal, 1977, #6, pp. 270.

#### PLANT SALE:

HERB HEWITT is selling most of his collection of Potted Plants. He may be contacted at 270-4179.

#### ANNUAL ELECTIONS:

A Nominating Committee, consisting of John Pasek, Doris Rake, and Ione Hubner, has been appointed to present nominations for the following offices:

President  
1st. Vice President  
2nd. Vice President  
Treasurer  
Recording Secretary  
Corresponding Secretary

Their selections will be announced at the November Meeting.

COOL WEATHER - AT LAST - IN

ESCONDIDO.

Our hillside gardens continue to improve rapidly in lushness and colour day by day - helped along by the cooler days and the damp mists at night-time, no doubt. Already by old friend, Senecio Angulatus, is making bold splashes of yellow up and down the hillside. So far, I haven't managed to collect any of the even more colourful Senecio Confusus, but, when I do ( and if it takes off even half as well as its energetic cousin), what a colourful sight that will be! My favourite hillside garden, which was recently equipped with sprinklers, is particularly flourishing, and shows every sign of turning into the hillside "jungle" I had hoped for.... The birds particularly seem to enjoy the extra moisture, and we now have the daily pleasure of watching a bevy of small goldfinches disporting themselves among the sprinklers, and flitting to and fro between a couple of small trees, which are also shooting up rapidly at the moment.

Regarding our all-too-short trip to Ojai and Santa Barbara (from which we had to return for business reasons), the four days went with a bang from start to finish. The weather was beautiful, and I was particularly pleased with the charming country town of Ojai, set in a valley amid wooded hills and mountains. The sight of those gorgeous trees, many of them giant live oaks, was a real thrill, and there were even running streams in and around the area. What a pleasure that was!! In addition, the park in which the Jazz Festival was held was quite lovely, with huge live oaks over and around the stage and seating area, and shady lawns upon which the audience could picnic while listening to the concert. As for the music, that more than came up to expectations, and was followed by more fun with our musician friends, culminating in a get-together breakfast next morning. And then, on to Santa Barbara, some thirty miles away.

The drive to Santa Barbara in itself was a joy, through beautiful heavily-wooded scenery, skirting an enormous lake, and driving through countless lush and healthy looking avocado groves. Quickly we settled into our favourite Motel on the sea front in Santa Barbara, and were very soon on our way to one of my favourite spots - the live fish bait tanks on the old wharf - to view ~~the birds~~, of course! Here we found a goodly collection of large pelicans, a few white heron, ordinary gulls, and shearwater gulls. The latter, although much smaller than ordinary gulls, I love to watch as they stop dead in mid-air, corkscrew down in a sort of Victory Roll, and then dive beak-first into the water to catch some poor unsuspecting fish! The other birds were mostly getting their meals the easy way, by thrusting their bills through the nets into the live bait tanks. The sun was shining, and that salt, fishy smell was (to me) divine! We took a whole roll of film of the birds, but, even then, Geoff had a hard time getting me away from that fascinating dock - I could have spent all day there and probably shall on my next visit!!

That evening we dined at an outdoor restaurant on the wharf. The fish (cooked, of course) was delicious, and the view divine. All the fishing and sailing boats in the harbour were gaily lit up, and a million twinkling points of light dotted the hillside behind. It was truly a sight to behold. And so to the last day of our trip, which was mostly taken up with a leisurely drive, keeping to the coast most of the way.

We seemed to have been away so long that I was quite surprised to find the dog happily flourishing at the Kennels, the birds (looked after by my daughter) quite safe and sound, and the gardens coping very nicely, thank you! It all taught me a lesson, I think, about things can take care of themselves for awhile, at least. We'll have to disappear, for short periods at any rate, more often in the future. Ye Lady Ed.

QUAIL GARDENS CHRISTMAS SALE.

Audrey Johnson

Advance publicity for a project unhappily seems to make fleeting time flee ever more quickly, which is a roundabout way of saying: Have you already started thinking about getting things started for the Christmas Sale at Quail Botanical Gardens - On Sunday, December 3rd? As usual, we need all the help we can get from all of you in order to keep up the financial success of our Christmas Sale.

So far we have done remarkably well, and the proceeds from our Christmas and Spring Sales have kept up quite adequately with the expenses incurred in the upkeep of the Gardens. This year we have a need for additional funds, since we are in the process of landscaping the beautiful Mildred McPherson Waterfall, with the objective of officially opening it to the public somewhere around Arbor Day, 1979. To those of you who haven't already viewed the waterfall, I would say - be sure to pay it a visit in the near future. We are very proud of our progress to date, and hope for even better things to come.

In the meantime, fellow members, please go to work and deliver at the Gardens all the potted plants that you can spare on Friday, the 1st December, for inspection on Saturday morning, so that they will be already for another super-successful sale on Sunday, the 3rd. To those of you who have helped in the past, and to those of you planning to help us in the future, we would like to say: Thank you, one and all!

*Audrey Johnson (Mrs.)*  
Publicity Chairwoman & Trustee  
QUAIL GARDENS FOUNDATION, Inc.

SPECIAL BULLETIN:

NELLIE KENNETT, one of our staunchest members, has broken her ankle in three places through a fall in her yard on Oct. 15th. Apparently she is doing fine but not enjoying the restriction of the cast (from hip to foot).

We hope you will be "Back on your feet" very soon, Nellie.

Many thanks to Evelyn Chatham for letting us know so that we could share this with all the club Members.