

# Espinas y Flores

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

XIX, Number 5

May 12, 1984

## MAY MEETING

Saturday May 12, 1984

1:30 P.M.

Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

## PROGRAM

A Mini Show For Members Only. Entry Rules:

- A) ONLY New members and those who have entered the annual show who HAVE NOT received a Blue Ribbon or have received ONLY ONE Blue Ribbon in any SDC&SS show they entered.
- B) Bring two plants (at least one) but no more. There will be a category for cactus and one for other succulents.
- C) All plants to be entered prior to the meeting start-up.
- D) Label each plant with your name on the reverse side of label. The naming of the plants is important but your name on the label is for the purpose of keeping them from getting "Mixed" up.

There will be prizes for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honorable mention in each category - A total of 8 prizes.

There will be two Judges - One for cactus and one for the other succulents. They will discuss why they chose a plant in preference to another. This is an educational program to help you to prepare your plants for a show and for your own use in displaying them. All members that come under the rules - PLEASE ENTER. This is an opportunity to participate in your club activities.

There will be a plants of the month and bragging table as well.

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PLEASE NOTE - IN ADDITION TO THE PROGRAM - THERE WILL BE "THE PLANT OF THE MONTH" AS WELL AS THE "BRAG TABLE".

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The members who signed up for the May refreshments are:

Joan and John Zanot	Jan Miller	Sanford Roberts
Marianne Thrombley	Mary and Bud Aubuchon	Vangie Englert
Curt Hammel		

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WE THANK - Nellie Kennett for her donation to the library. The book HOYA in memory of Emma Pierson.

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ANNUAL BOTANICAL PLANT SALE - May 26 and 27, 1984 in the Casa del Prado Patio. Sale hours are 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. Sunday. All clubs and individuals are invited to contribute plants, extra cuttings, seeds, or whatever and deliver them to the Library, Room 104 on Friday, May 25th from 10 a.m. till 8 p.m. Please have suggested sale prices on your articles and plants.

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SHOW SCHEDULE FOR MAY AND JUNE

May 13	San Diego Epiphyllum Show	Sun: 11am - 5pm
May 19 & 20	San Diego Geranium Show	Sat:12pm - 5pm Sun: 10am - 5pm
May 26 & 27	Heartland African Violet Show	Sat: 1pm - 5pm Sun:11am - 5pm
June 2 & 3	SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SHOW	Sat: 1pm - 5pm Sun:10am - 5pm
June 10	Sowestern Hemerocallis Show	Sun; 12pm - 5pm

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PLEASE NOTE:

The JUNE Show is the first weekend June 2 and 3. On June 1, 1984 - Friday will be set-up day. The room (101 will be opened from 10:00 am to 9pm - so ALL members should be able to enter plants. There is a regular meeting the next week.

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DEADLINE FOR JUNE - MAY 27 - Remember - we want contributions from ALL members.  
Thanks Mary

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## SUCCULENT-OF-THE-MONTH

### ECHEVERIAS

Dorothy Dunn

Echeverias are among the most beautiful of all succulent plants, their most outstanding feature probably being the infinite range of leaf color in almost all shades imaginable, as well as a variety of leaf textures. In addition to this, they are easy and reliable bloomers, and with a fairly representative collection it is possible to have some in bloom almost all year 'round. The flowers range in color from red through orange, pink, and yellow, and in some species are quite large and conspicuous. Most species are quite hardy out-of-doors in California, and these are useful as colorful and maintenance-free bedding plants for borders and rock gardens. They also make excellent pot plants.

The genus Echeveria belongs to the large Crassulaceae family, which consists of at least 25 genera including Crassulas, Cotyledons, Adromischus, Dudleyas, Kalanchoes, Sedums, Sempervivums, Pachyphytums, Graptopetalums, Aeoniums, etc. It was established in 1828 by the Swiss botanist Augustin de Candolle and named after Anastasio Echeverria, the gifted botanical illustrator of the Flora Mexicana. At that time only three or four species were known, but today there are at least 150 described species as well as innumerable hybrids and cultivars. Eric Walther's monograph on Echeveria, published in 1972 (posthumously) after many years of work, lists 143 species, which he divided into fourteen series according to each plant's individual characteristics. It does not include several more recently-described species such as E. lauii, E. lilacina, E. minima, E. pruinosa, etc., but still stands as the acknowledged authority on Echeveria.

Echeverias have a geographical range of well over 4,000 miles, extending from southwestern Texas to northwestern Argentina. The greatest concentration occurs in Mexico, where about 120 species are now known. Only one species - E. strictiflora - is native to the United States and this occurs in Texas, which is the northernmost extent of the genus. Many California plants were at one time classified as Echeverias, but they have since all been transferred to Dudleya. Their typical habitat is generally the high mountainous areas of Mexico and Central and South America, between elevations of about 3,000 to 14,000 feet, where they often grow in close proximity to Sedums and Pachyphytums. In their native habitats they are accustomed to summer rains, and a dry, almost completely rainless winter, as well as a great fluctuation in rainfall. For instance, one species (E. australis) which occurs in Costa Rica, may receive as much as 12 inches of rain in September alone, while on the other hand there are some species which may get as little as 10 inches annually. They have a definite preference for rocks, cliffs, steep slopes and recent lava flows, and they almost always seek the shelter of low bushes and the shady north slope of a hill with denser tree cover and more humus deposits.

Some species, such as E. elegans, E. agavoides, E. pulvinata, and E. setosa will stand considerable frost. None of them like high humidity, and the kinds with large, cupped leaves may start to rot or develop unsightly leaf spots when the leaves remain cold and wet in winter. In fact, some authorities recommend watering from below (that is, standing the pots in a shallow container of water) to avoid getting water on the leaves, as many Echeverias are covered with a waxy bloom which causes the water to collect in drops on the rosettes, which in turn leads to rotting. Also, our notoriously hard water can leave a deposit of salts on the foliage which spoils their appearance. Hailstorms are devastating - it may take plants almost a year to fully recover from the damage caused by wind-driven hail, and by then you usually have another hailstorm! Another disastrous event is the occurrence of a sudden heat wave following days or weeks of cool, overcast weather such as we often experience as part of our typical southern California spring. The plants simply cook.

Echeverias can be watered in moderation all year 'round as they do not require a winter rest period. They do like good ventilation and strong light. While many species will tolerate full sun, which gives them better leaf color, some of the more tender hybrids and the fuzzy-leaved varieties (notably E. ciliata, E. setosa and its hybrid E. 'Doris Taylor') prefer more shade.

Principal pests are mealy bugs (between the leaves) and aphids on the flowers. Some species are also susceptible to root nematode.

Your soil mix can consist of the usual 1/3 coarse sand or pumice, 1/3 good garden soil, and 1/3 well-rotted leaf mold or other organic material. Echeverias like a fairly rich but well-drained soil.

Propagation is by offsets, leaf cuttings, or beheading and re-rooting the larger, taller species when they become too lanky. You can also sometimes root the spent bloom-stalks after removing them from the plants. It's possible to grow Echeverias from seed, but most authorities don't recommend it as they hybridize so freely. However, in the case of some species which seldom if ever offset (E. lauii) or are practically impossible to grow from leaves (E. minima, E. lauii) seed-growing is the only alternative. Echeverias also hybridize easily with other genera, especially Pachyphytum (xPachyveria), Graptopetalum (xGraptoveria), Sedum (xSedeveria) and Dudleya (xDudleveria). This has resulted in some extremely beautiful plants which are characterized by the most outstanding and desirable features of both parents.

#### Literature consulted:

Carruthers, L. and Ginns, R.     Echeverias  
Chidamian, Claude:           Book of Cacti and Other Succulents  
Walther, Eric:                 Echeveria

## Cactus-of-the-Month

### Melocactus

F. C. Thrombley

Genus: Melocactus (mel-o-kak-tus)

A genus of melon-shaped (spherical to shortly cylindrical) cacti with an amazing type of apical woolly cephalium. The cephalium, of wool and bristles, usually reddish in color, is where the flowers arise. Some of the plants in this genus are among the oldest cacti known in Europe, where they were at one time called "Melonendistel" (melon-thistle). The botanists of the 16th century were familiar with these plants and the Heidelberg physician, Jacobus Theodorus Tabernaemontanus, illustrated one such plant in his herbal which was published in 1558.

The flowers are small in size and in my opinion are inconsequential, however, the flower size is a diagnostic character. The spination is very variable, even in one and the same species. I believe the plant is grown by the hobbyist for the beauty of the plant body and of course for its remarkable and unique cephalium.

Cultivation is usually considered to be difficult. All species of this genus come from a warm climate with a high atmospheric humidity all the year round. In habitat they develop a root system which may be yards long, but always lie close beneath the soil surface. In cultivation they should be given as much sun as possible, and a moist atmosphere such as can be obtained in a greenhouse. In winter they should have warmth also. The watering program should be such that they never are allowed to have a "soaked" root system - good drainage is an absolute must.

There are two distinguishable groups of melocacti on the basis of their natural distribution. One group is the "inland" species, which are found far from the coast, and often at considerable altitudes. The other group is a large one consisting of the coastal species, growing on islands and usually very close to the sea. In both locations they grow in areas with very porous soil - excellent drainage.

In spite of what has been said about the difficulty of growing, there are members of this society that grow them with great success. Martin Mooney has won many blue ribbons with his beautiful plants. Martin's plants were judged against plants that were grown by hobbyists such as Tom Hammacher. Tom was a member and a president of this society. He has hundreds of melocactus - all grown in a thermostatically controller heated greenhouse. For those who saw his displays at our shows will certainly not forget them. Bob Kent, of this society, has a collection of melocactus that certainly would not take a back seat to anyones. He grows them in a greenhouse that does not have a heating system, other than the sun itself. Furthermore, the temperature has dropped into the 30°F. range. These successful growers are aware of the watering requirements, compost porosity, light conditions in their greenhouses, dormant periods in winter and of course the challenge of growing these wonderful plants. I know this to be a fact for I have two plants acquired in 1976 and 1978, neither of which have started their cephaliums yet.

# SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

## OFFICERS

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1st Vice President - Dr. Leroy Phelps 4094 - 36th Street, San Diego 92104	280-9690
2nd Vice President - John Pasek 10283 Covina Place, San Diego 92126	271-0515
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Corresponding Secretary - Robert Kent 16206 Rostrata Hill, Poway 92064	485-6104
Immediate Past President - Rick Latimer 5990 Lake Murray Blvd., La Mesa 92041	697-4100

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

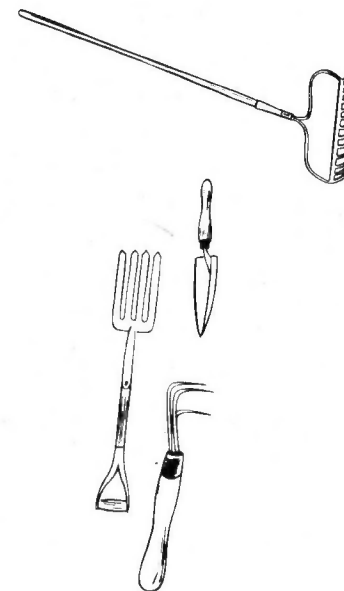
Dorothy Dunn, Phyllis Flechsig, Madelyn Lee  
Joe Clements, Bud Aubuchon, Verna Pasek

## COMMITTEES

Activities: Martin Mooney  
Audit: James Berry  
Conservation: Dr. Ronald Monroe  
Education: Cacti - Frank Thrombley and Dorothy Dunn  
Succulents - Rick Latimer and Dorothy Dunn  
Exhibits: Bragging Table - Phyllis Flechsig  
Historian: Rick Latimer  
Library: Jack Schlotte  
Membership: Warren Buckner  
Open House: Frank Thrombley  
Plant Exchange Table: John Roth and Anthony D'Attilio  
Plants & Supplies Table: John & Verna Pasek  
Publication: Mary Aubuchon - 427-3388  
Reception: Perlso Lewis and Ethel Standish  
Regalement:  
Representative:  
Balboa Park Desert Garden - John Pasek  
Quail Botanical Garden - Phyllis Flechsig  
S.D. Botanical Garden Foundation - Elizabeth Glover  
S.D. Floral Association - Verna Pasek  
Liaison & Publicity: Robert Kent  
Orientation:

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.

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