

Espinas y Flores

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

Affiliated with the Cactus and Succulent Society of America

Volume 35, Number 11, Saturday, November 11, 2000 at 1:00 PM



November Program: IN SEARCH OF THE LOST *ORTEGOCACTUS MACDOUGALLII*

BY WOODY MINNICH

This month's program will be fantastic! Woody Minnich will present a program entitled "In search of the lost *Ortegoactus macdougalii*" (note: this is a wonderful little cactus named for the late Thomas MacDougal, a renowned explorer of Mexican flora). Woody will share with us the thrills of exploring the Mexican State of Oaxaca.

For those of you that aren't yet familiar with Woody, he is a teacher by profession, but a seriously afflicted plants-man by all other accounts. In his retail nursery, Cactus Data Plants, he grows an incredible variety of cactus and succulents superbly. He is highly regarded as a top authority on the genus *Mammillaria* along with other cacti rarities from Mexico. Woody is a distinguished photographer as well. His sharp focused slides seem to dance with color. **You won't want to miss this - our last program of 2000!** Join us at 1:00 PM November 11, Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park.

Cover: Habitat shot of *Pachypodium rosulatum* var. *gracilius* H. Perr. Isalo Mountains, Madagascar. Photograph by Werner Rauh. See page 5 for more information about this fantastic group of plants.

Please send your letters, artwork, poetry, Cactus or Succulent of the Month articles, puzzles, comments, or criticisms, etc. to:

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FAX

Newsletter submissions are due before the 14th each month
Unless other arrangements are made

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President's Message

NOVEMBER 2000:

We had a full schedule at our Oct. meeting. Thank-you Pam Badger for your interesting talk on *Oreocereus*. (Ed. Note: I want to thank Tom De Merritt, the humble guy that he is, for a great *Monadenium* talk and Texas presentation. The trio of Stan Yalof, Phil Favell, and Tom De Merritt treated members to a wonderful natural history tour of Texas.) Thank-you to Shirley Berry for your donation of 4 books to the library;

1. A Manual of Plant Names 2nd edition by C. Chicheley Plowden (this is no longer in print)
2. The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Succulents by Gordan Rowley
3. The Instant Guide to Healthy Cacti by John Pilbeam
4. The Instant Guide to Healthy Succulents by John Pilbeam

Room 101's refurbishment is complete. The room looks fantastic, everything from floor to ceiling has been replaced, including the projection screen. We will meet in Room 101 for the November meeting. Although our last few meetings have been in cramped quarters I wanted to say thanks to our vendors and the membership for being flexible. I also want to remind everyone to bring boxes for our Nov. plant sales.

Officer elections for the 2001-2002 term will take place at this meeting. The following members have been nominated: President, Pam Badger, Vice-President, Jeff Smith, Treasurer, George Plaisted, Secretary, Laura De Merritt.

I hope to see you all at the November meeting.

Sincerely, Thomas De Merritt

Brag Plant Winners for October 2000 Judged by Tom De Merritt

Cactus Winners

First place: Joe Quijada for *Ariocarpus trigonus*

Second place: Kelly Griffin for *Espostoa lanata variegata*

Third place: Phyllis Flechsig for *Cochiameia maritima*

Other Succulents winners

First place: Ken Graham for *Brighamia insignis*

Second place: *Pachypodium lamerei*

Third place: Eilibet Marshall for *Echeveria minima*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

■ NOVEMBER

— 2000 —

20 Palomar C&SS Show, Joslyn Senior Center, 724 N Broadway, Escondido CA. Info 760-743-1560

■ JANUARY

— 2001 —

13 SDCSS Winter Show & Sale. Please call to volunteer (see note below).

■ FEBRUARY

?? C&SS of New Zealand Annual General Meeting And Convention, Auckland, New Zealand
Info; Joan Wells, j.m.wells@xtra.co.nz or www.cactus-mall.com/cssnz/index.html

■ MARCH

13-16 C&SS of the ACT, SUCCULENTICON 2001, Canberra. Info Annette & Mike Smith, PO Box 484, Mawson ACT 2607, 02 6386 2984, mmsmith@dynamite.co.au

■ APRIL

13-16 C&SS of the ACT, SUCCULENTICON 2001, Heritage Motel, 203 Goyder St, Narrabundah, Australian Capital Territory. Info Annette & Mike Smith, PO Box 484, Mawson ACT 2607, 02 6386 2984, e-mail mmsmith@dynamite.com.au

■ JUNE

2-3 SDCSS Spring Show and Sale

30-1 CSSA Show & Sale, Huntington Botanical Gdns, 1151 Oxford Rd, San Marino CA.

FYI FYI FOR YOUR INFORMATION FYI FYI

- ⇒ We have our **Winter Show** coming up at our January 2001 meeting. Please call Ed DeLollis to help with the Show (760-945-7892) and Tom Birt (858-452-0389) for sales information. Gerhard Marx, will be our speaker – what a treat! Please participate and help make this event great.
- ⇒ **WE NEED SMALL BOXES FOR OUR SALE**, please start bringing them to our November meeting ... *THANKS*.
- ⇒ Please take a moment to look at the back of this newsletter and see if you are listed on a committee. Are you signed up for something that you no longer help with? Is your name spelled correctly? Better yet – get involved and help out on one of the committees. Call the editors to make corrections and call the president to participate. We need your support!
- ⇒ Palomar CSS is having a Plant Show on November 20. Everyone is welcome to participate and show-off their plants. Please enter a plant or two to help them make a great show – they do the same for us. Call Stan Yalof at 760-743-1560 for more information.
- ⇒ Were you intrigued by Kelly Griffin's announcement for **\$2,000 in travel expenses to India, Africa or Madagascar** to look at succulent plants? SDCSS member and Succulent Plant Publisher Herman Schwartz (Strawberry Press) is offering \$10,000, split between five lucky members of the CSSA. All of the details are in the recent issue of the Cactus and Succulent Journal, if you don't get the journal you are not a member. Call Kelly Griffin for information on how to join the CSSA at 760-942-4866.
- ⇒ **NEWS FLASH!! You saw it first in *Espinas y Flores* Vol. 34 No. 7** – the cover of our issue ran on Vol. 72 No. 5 of the *Cactus and Succulent Journal* (the CSSA journal), September–October 2000. The picture was of Gary James sitting beneath *Adenium socotranum*, on the Island of Socotra. These are the articles that were in that issue: *Hylotelephium pluricale* (*Crassulaceae*), with digressions into name changes, oriental wanderings, et just plain cetera. By Reid Moran; *Oreocereus tacnaensis* Ritter - a natural hybrid? By Graham Charles; Report of the CSSA Research Committee for 1999. By Daniel L. Mahr; *Euphorbia specksii* Rauh, a new species of subgenus *Trichadenia*, and its close ally, *Euphorbia platycephala* Pax. By Werner Rauh; The beautiful *Hylocereus stenopterus*. By Ralf Bauer; Two remarkable South American peperomias. By Werner Rauh & Myron Kimnach; Frankincense on Socotra Island. By Bruno A. Mies, John J. Lavranos & Gary James; *Euphorbia guerichiana* Pax. By Anthon F.N. Ellert; Superb Succulents. By Duke Benadom; Spotlight on Round Robins. By Braden Engelke & Rita Fleischmann. WOW what a list.
- ⇒ Hey, do you want to help edit a great cactus and succulent newsletter? Call the editor and find out how you can have a rewarding position with the nations best local C&S periodical: *Espinas y Flores!*
- ⇒ Thank You for the help with the Garden Celebration at the Wild Animal Park. The following volunteers helped with the fund raiser specifically for the Old World Succulent and Baja Gardens. And the winners are: **Chris Miller, Juergen Menzel, Eugene Orth, Janice Byrne, Marcy Rose, Pam and Lee Badger, Bert Evans and Joey Betzler**. There were enough people to help spread out the work and we made a bit more than last year. **GREAT WORK - THANKS!**

PLANT OF THE MONTH: PACHYPODIUM

by Alan Weiss

The Pachypodiums are a genus of about 20 species belonging to the plant family *Apocynaceae*. This family also includes the oleanders, *Adenium* (a closely related group of succulent plants), the tropical vines *Beaumontia* and *Allamanda*, and significant drug bearing plants including *Rauwolfia serpentina*, the source of the drug reserpine. They are all mainly tropical or sub-tropical, occurring in southern Africa (six or seven species) and about thirteen species occurring exclusively on the island of Madagascar. The plants vary from tall, slightly succulent tree-like forms, to swollen, very succulent caudiciforms, with or without branches, with the caudex either subterranean or above ground. Most of the species bloom freely, varying from white, pink, purple, yellow, and red. Most are not difficult to cultivate, with the notable and possibly the most desirable exception being *P. brevicaulis*.



Pachypodium baroni var. *windsori*, near Diego-Suarez, Madagascar

As noted above, many of the *Pachypodium* relatives are tropical vines, and it is easy to surmise that the 'Pachy's' may very well have been derived from vine-like ancestors which adapted to increasing drought conditions. Since there are no fossils of these plants (at least, not known to this author), this argument probably can't be proven. A study of the climatic history of the last million years or so in the habitats where they occur

would almost certainly indicate that drier conditions increased over this period of time. If one is lucky enough to have most of the various species, it's possible to see how they may have evolved during this time. Shrubby plants with longer branches progressing to more succulent bodied plants with short branches, and finally to the point where the branches have been completely

telescoped into the body of the plant to form a lumpy caudex. The latter, of course, refers to *P. brevicaulis*, which this author regards as the most highly adapted member of the group.

In cultivation, I find that almost any well-aerated, porous soil will do well, as long as it drains easily and does not get soggy. I usually use pumice, although perlite would probably do as well if it were fairly coarse, and compost in more or less equal amounts. If there is a lot of very fine powder or dust in the medium, I usually try to sieve it out through a window screen, otherwise this fine material may retain too much water and cut off oxygen at the roots. I also try to avoid peat-moss based planting mixes, as the peat may actually expand when watered and shrink when dry, possibly damaging the very fine root hairs. Most *Pachypodiums* don't seem to like being over-potted, and can be maintained in ridiculously small pots for a very long time, nor



Pachypodium brevicaule with the typical fruits of the family Apocynaceae

do they like repotting, which should only be done when absolutely necessary, i.e., when the potting medium breaks down and gets too mushy when watered. As the root mass tends to get very hard, I don't attempt to separate it. This probably causes less trauma to the roots, though it may take a little longer for the plant to re-establish this way. I think that's better than having the poor plant go into shock and collapse very rapidly, which usually is fatal. It's amazing how fast some of these plants will go from a healthy state to a pile of mush if things are not to their liking. Fortunately, this doesn't happen very often and most of them are quite hardy, as long as they are kept in warm conditions (50°F minimum to about 90°F maximum), well-watered (remember the stuff about the tropical vines), and given the brightest light they can tolerate (usually full sun). During very hot (90-100°F or more) weather they will collapse very rapidly if not watered almost every day.

Fertilizers may actually be necessary for Pachypodiums, but I use it very sparingly, only

two or three times a year, well diluted, and low in nitrogen. Otherwise, the plants will "bolt" and form long, scraggly growth that is ugly and may actually cause the plant to be more susceptible to disease. When repotting, I try using small amounts of bone meal, chicken grit (actually crushed oyster shell), Mag Amp (magnesium ammonium phosphate), or anything similar that I can get my hands on. If you use a proportioner in your watering system on a frequent basis, I would be sure to dilute to 1/5 of even 1/10 of the recommended strength.

Several new species of *Pachypodium* have been described in recent years. All of these seem to be closely related to *P. rosulatum*, which is itself quite variable. These new plants have been described in the CSSA journal. Older publications include the references listed.

As mentioned, most of the 'Pachy' species are easily cultivated. *P. namaquanum* is one of the slower-growing species, but does not seem especially difficult. Because of its slow growth, it is still somewhat of a rarity, and large plants can be very expensive. *P. rosulatum* is also easily

grown, if it can be kept in its natural form, which is very compact and not "leggy" like many greenhouse-cultivated plants. Its growth rate is fairly good, but it still takes many years to acquire a specimen with a massive caudex. It blooms quite freely, mostly in spring, with bright yellow flowers on long pedicels. *P. baronii* v. *windsorii* is one of the more desirable forms, which has red salverform (blame Gordon Rowley for the term, not me) flowers, and eventually forms a large caudex, although it is very slow. A small seedling, which I purchased about 12 years ago, is now about 2 ½ feet tall, with a five-inch diameter caudex. *P. decaryi*, although very rare in habitat, has been available at moderate (?) prices, and is easy to grow, but also quite slow. *Pachypodium geayi* is probably the largest and fastest growing of the genus, and easily obtained, but is a little more sensitive to cold than its 'look-alike', *P. lamerei*. *Pachypodium brevicaulis* is undoubtedly the biggest challenge, as it is difficult to obtain (except for small seedlings) and cultivate. Large plants that were formerly imported to the U.S., and may have been a hundred years old, almost invariably have died. However, they are readily propagated from seed, can bloom (bright yellow

flowers) when only one inch in diameter, and seedlings can grow quit fast, reaching two or three inches diameter in a few years. The CITES (Committee on International Trade of Endangered Species) status of this plant has been changed, for some reason, from Appendix I, which is most endangered, to Appendix II. This means it might be possible to obtain field-grown plants, but, as noted, large field-grown plants are very costly and likely to die in cultivation. Most of the other Pachypodiums are listed in Appendix I and cannot be legally imported to the U.S. unless they are documented nursery-grown plants.

To paraphrase the old saying: Try a Pachy. You'll like it!

REFERENCES

- Rauh, Werner, 1995&1998, *Succulent and Xerophytic Plants of Madagascar*, Vol. I & II
 Rauh, Werner, 1972, *Cactus and Succulent Journal*, *The Genus Pachypodium* (PHOTOS FROM THIS)
 Rowley, Gordon, *Adenium and Pachypodium handbook, Adenium and Pachypodium, Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents*.

THE PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY IS HAVING A WINTER PLANT SHOW ON NOVEMBER 20.

Everyone is welcome to participate in this event. Come and show-off those fine specimens.

Bring a plant, or two or more to help make a great exhibition.

See you there!

Call Stan Yalof at 760-743-560 for more information.

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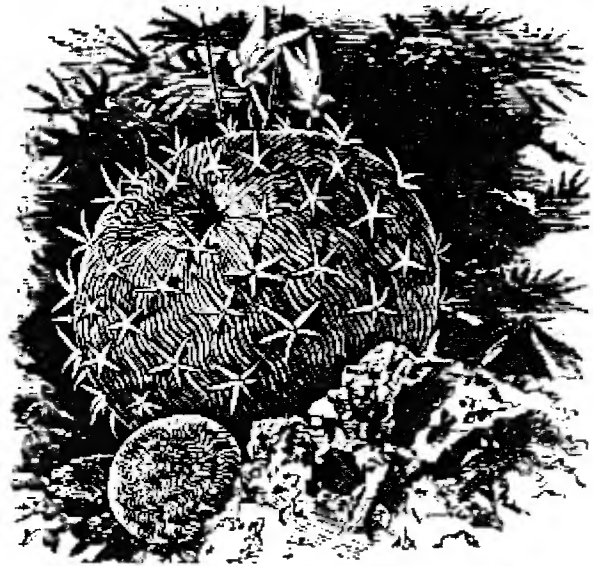
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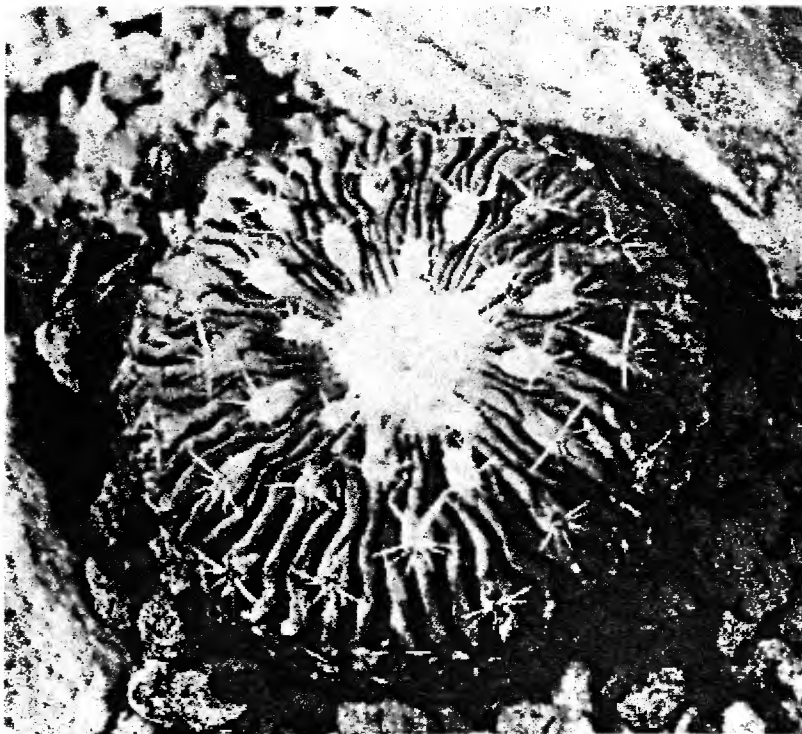
ECHINOFOSSULOCACTUS

by Ed DeLollis

Echinofossulocactus is a 19-letter name for a genus of wavy-ribbed cacti found in northern and central Mexico. The epidermis of these small, subglobose plants is usually dark green with many ribs (thirty, sixty or even one hundred or more). The often conspicuous flattened spines form an attractive contrast to the blooms which are small, glabrous, violet-tinged and sometimes bicolor. These flowers appear in groups near the apex in early spring and can last a long time relative to other cacti. The approximately twenty species have widely different types of spination, which are not constant and show a wealth of transitional forms from robust in character to dense. This complicates classification based on this main diagnostic. *Cactus Lexicon* (Backeberg) lists thirty-five species, but many of these are probably geographical varieties or forms created by some zealous splitters. Of the



Wood cut by Blanc of *E. multicostatus* that was used by Abbey Garden as their insignia



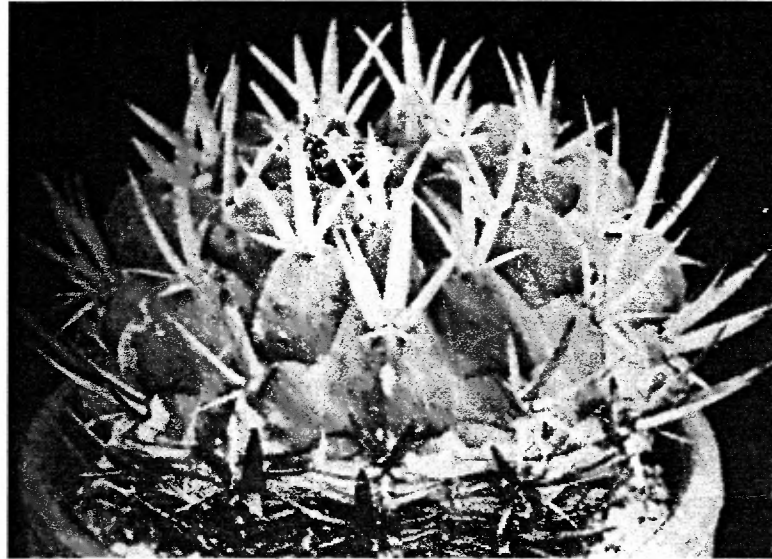
Echinofossulocactus tegelbergii

Echinofossulocactus that I have seen, I am more enamored by the plants whose sparse areoles and few spines tend to show off the wavy ribs that cause some to call this the "brain cactus". Actually, these ribs are not really that convoluted. As a matter of fact, there are several species of *Mammillaria* whose convolutions make them the true brain cactus. Be that as it may, I find them charming small plants with cute long-lasting blooms that any collector would love.

One of the first collections in which

these cacti appeared, belonged to the Reverend Theodore Williams of England. In 1841, his gardener, George Lawrence, first named the plant *Echinofossulocactus* in his nine-page catalog that featured 222 species of succulents in total. All went well for this name until 1898 when German nomenclature giant, Karl Schumann, named the group of plants *Stenocactus* in his tome *Gesamtbeschreibung der Kacteen* (complete description of cacti). Less than ten years later, in the United States, upstarts Nathaniel Britton and Joseph Rose changed the name back to *Echinofossulocactus*. They used a nomenclature that featured the American Code where absolute priority of names was required, with no exceptions allowed. A year later when the Italian botanist Spegazzini wanted to commemorate the two Americans for all the work they had done on this wavy-ribbed genus by calling it *Brittonrosea*, his change was denied when the same rule of priority was again called into play. In 1929, when Alwin Berger chose to call the genus *Stenocactus* instead of the longer name in his

monograph *Kacteen*, a rift was created which still exists today. You will still find both names depending on which reference you choose. In this case the name becomes unimportant. I would like to see more people experience these little gems. Toward that end, I will list what I think are some good ones to collect if you can find them: *E. albatus*; *E. arrigens*; *E. Lloydii*; *E. multicostatus*; *E.*



Echinofossulocactus coptonogonus

zacatecasensis; *E. xiphacantus*; *E. crispatus* (*Lloydii* may be a form of this); *E. pentacanthus* and finally *E. coptonogonus* that was the first of this genus to be discovered and has only about ten ribs which are not wavy!

Care of the plants in the genus *Echinofossulocactus* is simple. Place them in a bright but semi-shaded location. In the summer give them plenty of water probably once a week. In the winter, don't let them get too cold and you should give them a little water, enough to keep the roots from going totally dry. These plants don't grow very fast but in time they take on a more oblong almost columnar appearance exposing more of those luscious ribs. In spring their blooms will wake you up to the fact that another glorious growing season is on the way!

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3. Cacti, The Illustrated Dictionary, Rod and Ken Rpreston-Mafham
4. A History of Succulent Plants, Gordon D. Rowley
5. Cactus Identifier, Helmut Bechtel
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7. Popular Exotic Cacti in Color, Edgar and Brian Lamb

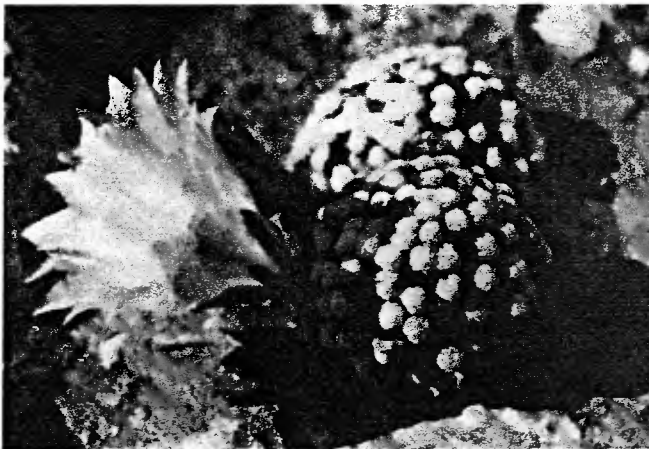
WHAT'S THE STATUS?

by Tom Knapik

Topic #9: *Mammillaria luethyi*

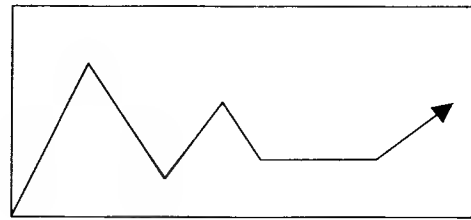
One of the most anticipated releases of cacti has finally occurred. *Mammillaria luethyi*, a plant shrouded in mystery since 1952, will give all cactus connoisseurs something to cherish.

In 1982, I was just discovering how fascinating cacti could be when I found 4 issues of the CSSA journal from 1978 in a used bookstore. In the March/April issue under the column "What's New" Glass and Foster wrote about the rediscovery of *Mammillaria carmenae*, one of the most beautiful members of the genus. In that same column they mention another plant has now taken first place in the great North American cactus hunt. A cryptic little gem found growing in a 1 LB coffee can at the Crosby Hotel in Ciudad Acuna,



Mexico in 1952. The caption for the photograph above read, "Mystery Plant from the Fluorite County of Coahuila Mexico".

We now jump to Jan/Feb 1998 when the CSSA journal published that the mystery had been solved in a wonderful article by WA Fritz Maurice. He recounts the story of what is now known as *Mammillaria luethyi*. In short, Luethy and Hinton went looking for another *Mammillaria*, possibly a form of *lasiacantha* in the Sierra Paila Mountains. They found the plant and then spent an evening reviewing other possibilities for further exploration. Hinton told Luethy about a mystery plant from the fluorite country of Coahuila.



Luethy's topographical map indicated this area and it was right where they had been exploring. They returned to the area, found the plant and solved a 46-year mystery.

I spent August of 1998 in Italy visiting cactus nurseries around Europe. In the Czech Republic I was told about 2 clones of *Mammillaria luethyi* that were being propagated. Apparently, it is possible to graft the tubercles on *Pereskopsis* producing many plants quickly. Several grafts have been imported from Germany and will eventually be more widely available in the U.S.



SEM photograph of a group of *M. luethyi* spines showing their unique characteristics

The Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society is hosting:

CSSA's Convention for 2001

Sunday, July 1 through Friday, July 6

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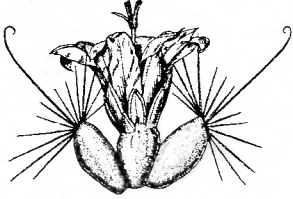
Information Art Chavez (Host Chair) 818-363-3432 or color@gte.net

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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 \$15.00 per single member per year, \$5.00 for each additional (associate) member within the same household. Single copies of *Espinas y Flores* are \$2.00 per copy sent within the USA; foreign subscriptions are \$30.00. Affiliated with the CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc. SDCSS Web Page available soon please stay tuned for address.