



Espinas y Flores

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

XVIII, Number 4

April 9, 1983

APRIL MEETING
Saturday April 9, 1983
1:30 PM

Casa Del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

PROGRAM

LEO PICKOFF
asks you to
"MEET SOME MESEMBS"

Leo is a photographer of accomplishment and with the assistance of his wife Lillian have prepared a number of slide programs for CSSA, of which he is a former president.

X O X O X O X

Joan Johnson will present the Cactus of the Month that was to be for March 12, "Thelocactus". Members who have Thelocactus and or Coryphantha are requested to bring them in to the April Meeting.

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REMINDER --THE MAY MEETING IS THE FIRST SATURDAY, MAY 7 --DEADLINE FOR THE PAPER APRIL 18. No breathing room this time. Did you notice the new type? I love it! and thanks for this help to make my job easier. Mary

NEWS news NEWS

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BRAGGING TABLE WINNERS FOR MARCH:

1st Beverly Kent for her Euphorbia Esculenta
2nd Wilna Johnson for her Pelagorum Lobatum
3rd Phyllis Flechsig for her Mammillaria Coahuilensis

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TO ALL MEMBERS

Please support our show in June by entering plants. Ideally each member would enter one or More plants. It is not too early to start getting them ready. Remember that first time entries have won top prizes.

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Thank you to Shirley Berry for donating plants to the sale table.

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John will have some more types of top dressing available at the next regular meeting. These may be helpful in preparing your plants for the show.

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The plants on the exchange table need to be upgraded. A lot is thrown into the trash after the meeting. These plants should be wantable and named if possible. Please help us make the exchange table a successful part of our program.

Thanks to Rick Latimer for his display of Conophytums and Lithops on the VIP Table.

X O X O X O X

Perlso tells me that we must have a minimum order of five for the name tags. The name tags are \$3.00 each and you will receive yours the following month. Perlso will not be ordering again until October. See Perlso Lewis at the reception table when you come in.

X O X O X O X

Those who have volunteered to bring refreshments are:

Virginia Buckner - Teresita S. Lime
Floretta Warner - Barbara Jolly
Ramona Huftill - Curt Hammel
Joan E. Fleeer - Ethel Standish

The response to my call last month was terrific. Thank you so much. We have a somewhat short list this month also, but if you bring something- just bring one thing. And thanks again to you. Looks like you want to have the refreshment table to continue.

X O X O X O X O X

Cactus-of-the-Month

Coryphantha (Engelman) Lemaire

Frank Thrombley

Coryphantha (Kō-rī-fān'-thă)

A genus of small cacti from Canada, the United States and Mexico. The name is derived from the Greek words for "top" and "flower" which refers to the position of the flower at the apex of the stem. A large genus occurring from Alberta, Canada south to central Mexico and from eastern Oregon and California into Kansas.

The stems are solitary or branching and in some species they form clumps with 200 or more stems. They are small, globular, or sometimes cylindrical cacti, dividing into tubercles. They do not have ribs. One of its identifying features is an elongated groove on each of the tubercles. This groove is on the upper side of the tubercle and connects the spine-bearing part of the areole with the base of the tubercle.

There are between 30 to 60 species listed, depending upon the botanist or author of your choice.

The habitat of this genus is primarily the grasslands of the plains or plateaus, sagebrush areas and juniper-pinyon woodlands, ranging from elevations of 600 to 9,000 feet.

Lyman Benson, in his publication "Cacti of the United States and Canada" reduces some of the species to varieties, and therefore claims that there are some 30-40 species. Using his book as the guide we find that Coryphantha vivipara has the largest distribution and is a very variable species. Coryphantha vivipara variety vivipara is found in Alberta to southwest Manitoba, Canada; Steen mountains in eastern Oregon to eastern Montana, Minnesota, Kansas, northeastern Utah, northeastern New Mexico, Texas panhandle, Archer County, and western Oklahoma. The plants are very difficult to find as they are usually covered by plains grasses or under shrubs or bushes. They grow in grasslands and woodlands between 1,000 feet and 8,000 feet elevation. They are conspicuous only at flowering time and the flowering is photoperiodic - governed by the length of day. Lyman reported that plants collected at several places in South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado all flowered each spring on the same day in Claremont, California. Further, flowering only lasted for an hour or two.

Cultivation is easy; the soil used in potting should be porous and moderately rich - addition of leaf mold would be helpful. They will do equally well in full sunshine or partial shade. If potted plants are kept dry in the winter the species from the northern latitudes will take below freezing weather. In our San Diego climate, the species planted in our gardens will do well as long as there is good drainage. All species are interesting and worth growing.

Reference used:

The Cacti of the United States and Canada

Lyman Benson - Stanford University Press 1982

SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH

Bursera, Fouquieria, and Pachycormus

by Phyllis Flechsig

These three genera of xerophytes are not related to each other, but are grouped here because all are numerous and conspicuous in the landscape of Baja California, and each group contributes a few attractive species to our succulent collections.

BURSERIA

Bursera is a genus in the Burseraceae, the torchwood family, both named for Joachim Burser, a 16th-century botanist. The genus contains about 40 species, mostly tall trees of tropical America. One of these, B. simaruba, the gumbo-limbo tree, is sometimes grown in succulent collections. Just one species of Bursera is native to California: B. microphylla, the "elephant tree" of the Anza-Borrego desert.

Burseras in the wild can easily be identified by their strong, not unpleasant smell; a characteristic of the group is its aromatic resins. The bark peels off in large sheets in some species but is quite smooth in others. Leaves are usually pinnately compound, but may be simple. Flowers are inconspicuous; the fruit is usually glaucous and reddish-purple, about 3/8 inch long, and just as aromatic as the rest of the plant; there are 1 to 5 hard seeds per fruit, each encased in a fleshy aril.

Six species of Bursera occur on the Baja peninsula, and at least three more occur in Sonora; these species are the ones we most often grow. B. microphylla (named for its minute leaves) is very popular; it grows from Southern California and Arizona south through western Sonora and all the way to the tip of Baja California. It is a small tree up to 24 feet high with red branches, peeling bark, and tiny pinnate leaves. Another very common and widespread Bursera is B. hindsiana, which has larger leaves usually borne singly or in threes. A third popular species is B. odorata (not so well named, as "odorata" could apply to any of them), which grows on the east side of much of the peninsula and as far south as Puebla on the mainland of Mexico. Its bark is orange and peels off in large, papery sheets; leaflets are 3 to 9, pinnate, and 1 to 2¼ inches long.

FOUQUIERIA

Fouquieria is a genus of either 11 or 12 species, depending on your authority. Together Fouquieria and Idria (if you accept it as separate) make up the entire ocotillo family, the Fouquieriaceae. It is named for Pierre Edward Fouquier, a professor at the Paris School of Medicine in the 19th century.

The fouquierias are all xerophytic shrubs or trees; only two, plus Idria, could be considered to be succulent. They all have small alternate leaves; the primary leaf grows at the tip of a short petiole; when the leaf falls, the petiole remains to form a spine. In the axils of the petioles the secondary leaves appear; the same axil may produce leaves over and over, but the petiole

has a leaf only once. The tubular flowers usually grow in clusters at the branch or stem tips, and are white, yellowish, or red. The overall shape of a Fouquieria varies from the mass of long, slender branches of our familiar ocotillo (F. splendens) through small trees with a conventional trunk and branches, to massively thick-based plants that produce small twigs on top, culminating in the weird, tall, thick, tapering trunk of the cirio of Baja California, Idria columnaris.

The ocotillo of California has by far the widest range of any Fouquieria, extending east to Texas and south into the Chihuahuan desert of Mexico. All of the others grow only in Mexico; several have very restricted ranges. Fanciers of succulents are most interested in the two species of succulent fouquierias, F. purpusii and F. fasciculata, and in Idria. These three have greatly swollen stems containing much water storage tissue; in F. fasciculata this tissue is confined to the swollen base; in F. purpusii it continues into the lower branches, and in Idria, of course, it makes up much of the tall stem.

Idria (or Fouquieria) columnaris, a spectacular plant native to Baja California and to a small area in Sonora, is a striking feature of the central Baja desert. Its weird stems may reach more than 76 feet high.

PACHYCORMUS

Pachycormus is a monotypic genus in the Anacardiaceae, the sumac family. Like Bursera microphylla, it is often called "elephant tree"; like B. odorata, it may be called "torote blanco" (big white bull), showing the general confusion of common names. Pachycormus ("thick stump") is endemic to the Baja peninsula, with its one species, P. discolor, divided into three varieties. Var. discolor grows on Magdalena and Santa Margarita Islands and in the Sierra de la Giganta; it has larger leaves than the other varieties. P. d. var. pubescens grows from the northern end of the central desert south to the foothills of the Sierra de la Giganta, and has smaller leaves and pale rose flowers in loose panicles. P. d. var. veatchiana, again with smaller leaves, has rose-red flowers in dense panicles and grows only on Cedros Island and nearby Turtle Bay.

Pachycormus is another of the conspicuous plants that give the central deserts of Baja California their special character; branches as well as trunk are thick and gnarled, with peeling bark; leaves, which appear and disappear with the rains, are small, soft, and pinnately divided. They are not aromatic. The plant is leafless much of the year, and generally grows on rocky slopes and hillsides through the central third of the Baja peninsula, reaching its greatest height (about 30 feet) in the lava flows near the Tres Virgenes volcano. The specific name refers to the variable color of the small flowers, which may be whitish to pink or dark rose and appear in summer.

CULTURE

Culture is similar for all these plants. They are not difficult as long as excellent drainage is provided. If watered regularly, they will retain their leaves most of the year. Newly collected plants should be kept fairly dry but may be misted until new growth develops. Pests are most likely to be aphids and whiteflies; remove these with insecticidal soap or a systemic insecticide.

REFERENCES

- Henrickson, J. 1969. An introduction to the Fouquieriaceae. CSJA 41: 97-105.
_____. 1969. The succulent fouquierias. CSJA 41: 178-184.
Humphrey, R.R. 1970. Five dominants of the central desert of Baja California. CSJA 42: 210-211, 275-276.
Shreve, F., & Wiggins, I.L. 1964. Vegetation and Flora of the Sonoran Desert. Stanford University Press.

Ada Perry

A Society That Sticks Together

Next weekend the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Show will be offered in Room 101 of Balboa Park's Casa del Prado.

The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society, which presents the free show, is one of the largest garden clubs in the country. Its membership numbers 300 and averages 150 at its monthly meetings. Members include some living in England and Mexico.

Hours next Saturday will be 1 to 5 p.m.; next Sunday they will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The club meets the second Saturday of the month at Casa del Prado.

Cactus plants grow in the wild from the Peace River, Canada to Patagonia, Argentina, I was told. Some are very hardy and some very tender, requiring a greenhouse even in subtropical San Diego.

Never had I appreciated the beauty and interest of cactus so much before. Richard Latimer Jr., president of the society, took me to visit the garden of the Martin Mooneys of Chula Vista.

Mooney said he admires the plants' interest of form and ease of care. He hastened to add that he likes all flowers. He is from Texas and has lived in Chula Vista for 18 years.

One of Mooney's plants caught my eye. The *Opuntia*, commonly known as Joseph's Coat, was leaning against a 6-foot fence and facing the patio. The flat segments were all yellow on the shady side and variegated yellow and green on the sunny side. The *Opuntia* was blooming flowers of yellow, orange and deep orange successively

Mooney and Latimer chuckled about it being "no apartment-sized plant." It might be if you could give it one whole room to itself.

To my question about a 10-foot plant that looked like "a 2 by 4 stuck in the ground," Latimer said it was *Stenocereus marginata*. Mooney added that it was from Mexico and grew about a foot a year, and there was a legend it was effective for skin cancer, but there was no medical proof.

Another legend for which there's not much proof, he said, is that cactus evolved from the wild rose.

All these giant cacti were growing on a bricked, raised bed with a greenhouse at the rear to protect seedlings and tender cactus. I could see many smaller beauties. Some had green flowers, other such as the *mammillarias*, had perfect crowns of small red flowers on their heads.

There was a crested *stapelia*, the first I had ever seen making an outlandish spot of ground cover. Its blooms were smelly, reminding me of spoiled meat. It belongs to the plant family of *Asclepiadaceae* though often included in cactus and succulent collections.

Once inside the greenhouse, Mooney said: "The first thing is I control ants (chlordane) not by spraying the plants but in areas around them; then I keep them dry, watering and fertilizing only about three times a year; a touch of alcohol takes care of some insects."

The water and fertilizer (myrical gro or fish) is applied around the edges of the containers, not on top of



The San Diego Union/Jim Burnet

the plants.

Containers were the right size, gracefully shaped, and in harmonizing colors. He makes them himself.

Asking for his favorite group of cactus, I got a surprise and you will too, I believe. It was *Melocactus*, informally called Turk's Cap and different from the common barrel cactus of the southwest.

This was the first genus of cactus seen by Europeans in the new world. It has a round, thorny green body, is not very tall and it is slow-growing.

But when it is ready it develops, of all things, a pinkish "fez" or turk's cap on top. This rounds up and produces tiny pink flowers and very small slivers of seed pods with even smaller

seeds in them. Talk about unusual sights!

But there's more. When asked about his most unusual plant, he brought out *Pelecypora aselliformis* from Mexico, which is never going to be more than 3 or 4 inches tall and thinks nothing of taking 150 years to do it.

"In no hurry whatsoever!" chorus Mooney and Latimer.

It increases like the *Mammillarias*.

Touching one of the tiny, tiny new heads is like stroking the head of a hummingbird baby.

Every cactus fan has a favorite soil mix. Mooney's is 1 part supersoil, 2 parts coarse builders' sand, 4 parts planter mix, 8 parts volcanic pumice. The last is

obtainable at Woodward's in Lakeside.

Beach rocks are used for top dressing on the pots from tiny to marble size. They are very effective.

Mooney mentioned the water situation. He has just finished the front yard and the raised bed in back by first weeding (by means of blood, sweat and strong language), then contouring and installing underground plastic piping and sheet plastic to keep the weeds down. This enables him to follow the pattern of watering only three times a year. Maybe living in Chula Vista's humid atmosphere near the bay helps.

The front planting has more succulents in it. There was black *aeoneum*, the yellow flowered tiger's jaws, and, thankfully, a very handsome but small *agave*; a brilliant red "throw rug" of *iceplant* and many more plants than I listed.

Martin Mooney estimates he has 500 plants in his collection.

Perry has been a regular garden columnist for The San Diego Union for 22 years.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBERSHIP

The officers and board directors of the SDC&SS, during the February 1983 meeting, proposed the following changes in the SDC&SS by-laws.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERS

Section 1 - Regular Members

Change d. Annual dues are due and payable on January 1 of each year. Members joining the society after September 30 will have dues paid through the following year.
Sentence underlined to be eliminated.

Change e. Regular members will be dropped from membership if annual dues remain unpaid on February 1. (At the close of the February meeting). All rights and privileges of the society are lost to regular members for non-payment of dues.
Eliminate words underlined and substitute with words in brackets.

Please address your constructive criticism at the April 9, 1983 regular meeting. The SDC&SS board will vote on this issue in April 1983.

To obtain a copy of the SDC&SS by-laws, request same from me.

Thank you, Frank Thrombley.

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Show Schedule for April

April 10	Convair Garden Club Rose Show	Sun: 1 - 5 pm
Apr. 16 & 17	San Diego Rose Show-Balboa Park Club	Sat; 2 - 7pm Sun:10am-6pm
Apr. 16 & 17	Exotic Plant Show	Sun:11am-5pm Sun:11am-5pm
Apr. 23 & 24	San Diego Bonsai Spring Show	Sat:10am-5Pm Sun:10am-5pm
Apr. 30-May 1	San-Imperial Co. Iris Show	Sat:12:30-5pm Sun:10am-5pm

The Annual Botanical Plant Sale is scheduled for May 28 & 29 in the Casa Del Prado Patio. The San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. would appreciate any plants, cuttings, bulbs, etc. that any one can contribute for this sale. Contact Walter Bunker - 281-5027 for further information. Contributions would be brought in on Friday afternoon, 27 May.

Note of Interest: Coronado Flower Show April 16 & 17

SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

OFFICERS

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dorothy Dunn, Phyllis Flechsig, Madelyn Lee
Dr. Ronald Monroe, Joe Clements, Bud Aubuchon

COMMITTEES

Activities:
Audit:
Conservation: Dr. Ronald Monroe
Education: Cacti - Frank Thrombly and Dorothy Dunn
Succulents - Rick Latimer and Dorothy Dunn
Exhibits: Bragging Table - Shirley Berry
Historian: Rick Latimer
Library: Jack Schlotte and Carl McLeod
Membership: Warren Buckner
Open House: Frank Thrombly
Plant Exchange Table: John Roth
Plants & Supplies Table: John & Verna Pasek and Gerald & Eleanor Dice
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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