



Espinas y Flores

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

Volume XXV, Number 8

August 11, 1990

AUGUST MEETING

Saturday August 11, 1990

1:30 P.M.

Casa del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

PROGRAM

Cactus and Flowers of Big Bend National Park, Texas

by Leo Pickoff

Leo Pickoff will present a slide program of the Cactus & Flowers of the Big Bend National Park, Texas. The park is situated in the Southwestern part of Texas and borders Mexico. This is the first time there has been a program of this part of the country.

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Deadline for the September E y F - August 25, 1990

Thanks Mary

NEWS NEWS NEWS

Refreshments for August -----

Cathy & Sandy Frost

Jeanette Dutton

Mark St. Clair

Ed & Beth Blackman

Herb Stern

Mary E. Halma

Donna Couchman

Susan Shepherd

Red Bernal

Dick and Frances Johnson

Jayne Walther

Susan Barker

Thanks

I Did not receive bragging plant winners for July. Will try to get and print next month.

CHRISTMAS PLANT EXCHANGE

Every year at our December meeting we have a Christmas Plant Exchange. Any member may participate; all you do is bring a cactus or other succulent plant. It should be in good condition and nicely potted. Include a label that identifies the plant on one side, with your name on the other side. The best plant is selected to be auctioned off at the end of the meeting. The person who brought that plant gets the first choice of all the remaining plants. Whenever a plant is selected, the person who brought it gets the next choice, so the better the plant you bring the earlier you will get your chance. Sorry, only one plant per person. The Christmas Plant Exchange is in addition to the distribution of gift plants.

PLANT EXCHANGE TABLE

The Plant Exchange Table provides a means for members to exchange plants, cuttings, or plant-related materials. Members bring their items to the Plant Exchange Table, for which they receive one number (usually in the form of a ticket). At the end of the regular meeting these numbers are drawn at random. When your number is drawn you may select one item from the table.

The plants may be potted, bare root (please put the root ball in a bag) or cuttings. Please bring good cuttings--not trimmings that should have gone into the trash. The person in charge of the Plant Exchange Table may refuse any unsuitable material.

The genus Jatropha *** Succulent of the Month***

Of all the genera in the Euphorbiaceae the genus Jatropha is the least understood. There are more or less 150 species growing world wide, mostly in Tropical climate zones. In form they are shrubs, trees, perennial herbs, and some that form a caudex or underground tubers.

Jatropha is the least specialized, florally, of the genera. The inflorescence is unisexual, either male or female. A Euphorbia 'flower' is a cyathium of one female surrounded by several males. The inflorescence color varies from white to green to orange to red depending on species. Pollinators vary from moths to ants to birds. J. capensis from the Cape of Good Hope is pollinated by a special wasp.

Species native to one place have been transported to other places for some useful, ornamental, or medicinal reasons. J. gossypifolia, from the American tropics, is used in Malawi as a hedge. J. multifida, from Brazil, is used in the Philippines as a fish poison.

Some species change their growth habit depending on the soil they grow in. J. cinera, from Baja Calif., will form thick, tuberlike roots when it has sandy soil to grow in. In hard ground it will often have a thick trunk and thicker branches and the tuberlike roots do not form.

Some species lose their leaves and branches and die back to an underground tuber or caudex. J. cathartica and J. macrorhiza from Mexico and Texas are two well known species with this habit.

Some species make short shrubs, 3' to 8' tall, usually with multi-branches from the base. J. mcvaughii is my favorite of this type. It has large, velvet covered leaves and bunches of white fuzzy flowers. Lovely to pet and nice to look at.

This is an interesting group of plants for a collector. The wonderful variety of shape, leaf texture, trunk and tuber make these plants anything but boring.

Insects don't seem to like the taste of these plants and are seldom a problem.

The biggest problem is determining when the plant is dormant so you can adjust the amount of water so it doesn't rot. You see, all the plants of one species don't necessarily go dormant at the same time or even yearly. One plant will be in full growth and another with the same name will be dormant. Some are dormant and have a few small leaves, some are not dormant and also have a few small leaves. Most species seem to have some kind of dormant period between Nov. and April. You just have to watch the plant and lower the amount of water until it starts to grow again.

In Southern California many of the Jatrophas can make a new and different plant for a garden in a frost free area. Most have a graceful shape and are easily trimmed if they get unruly.

So bring your Jatropha to the meeting and let's talk about this neat group of plants.

by M. Lee

Cactus of the Month

TEPHROCACTUS (Opuntioideae)

By Dorothy Dunn

Do you secretly yearn to grow Opuntias, but feel you lack the necessary space to accomodate their aggressive and often belligerent and uncivilized growth habits? Then try growing Tephrocacti, the well-bred, dwarf versions of Opuntias.

Tephrocactus is a sub-genus of Opuntia, and although the range of Opuntias in general extends from Canada to Patagonia (the greatest range of any sub-family in the Cactaceae), the Tephrocacti inhabit a much more limited and specialized world. They are confined to South America, where they are distributed throughout central Peru on both sides of the Andes, the Argentinian foothills, Chile and Bolivia, and down to the Straits of Magellan, encompassing a range of about 4,000 miles. Although they are usually considered to be denizens of extremely high altitudes and cold climates, a few species occur almost at sea level. From there they range on up to almost 16,000 feet, and some species have been known to flower while half-buried in snow. They are very dwarf plants compared with most other Opuntias - usually growing only a few inches tall - but they can form clumps or mounds several feet across in the wild. However, in cultivation they can be confined quite easily to a three or four-inch pot.

The generic name is derived from the Greek ('tephra' means "ashes"), and refers to the generally ashen-grey color of the mature stems in habitat. As Leighton-Boyce and Iliff describe it in their monograph The Sub-Genus Tephrocactus: "The name seems not inappropriate, because although fresh vegetative growth is purple or red or various shades of green or glossy brown, mature stem segments are often of a dull, dead-looking dirty brown or grey, and 'burnt' is an adjective which comes readily to mind". (Don't let this turn you off.) The genus was first established by Lemaire, who also first erected Astrophytum as a separate genus.

The available literature concerning Tephrocactus is very sparse, and no two authorities seem to agree on either the actual number of valid species in existence or the relative importance of this group of plants in the overall scheme of things. Whereas Backeberg, true to form, described 84 species and many varieties, which he divided into two series, Borg and others ignored Tephrocactus altogether as a separate genus. A few others give it a bare mention. Although at one time or another as many as 120 allegedly different "species" have reportedly been in cultivation, it is probably closer to reality to cite about 50.

The flowers of Tephrocacti are typically Opuntia in form but are usually smaller - generally an inch or less in diameter. The colors range from yellow to red to pinkish-white. The individual stem segments are very short and cylindrical or club-shaped. And, like their larger relatives, they do possess glochids. There is quite a variety in the spines; some are wide and ribbon-like, as in T. glomeratus, a few are long, thin, white, and wildly flexuous, as in T. floccosus, and some are very short or almost non-existent. Many species have tiny, very transitory leaves.

Of the few species commonly in cultivation, T. floccosus must surely rank as one of the choicest. On the cold plateaus of the high Andes in southern Peru it forms low cushiony mounds five to six feet across and about one foot high. The plants are covered with dense masses of snow-white silken hair. The plants have been described variously as looking, from a distance, like patches of snow or like small sheep or poodle-dogs. One visitor to the region in 1917 (a Mr. O.F. Cook) called it the 'Polar Bear Cactus'. Another very hairy and closely-related Tephrocactus is T. rauhii, which is sometimes compared with Oreocereus.

Tephrocactus glomeratus, from western Argentina, is one of the papery-spined species. It is common on the dry hills around Mendoza, and is also fairly common in cultivation.

Tephrocactus subterraneus is native to northern Argentina and adjacent Bolivia where it grows almost buried in sand on stony plains. It reportedly has one of the most attractive flowers of all the small Opuntias.

Tephrocactus molinensis, from the Salta region of northern Argentina, is one of the species considered to be spineless. However, it has pronounced tufts of reddish-brown very vicious glochids.

Tephrocactus pentlandii is another species quite common in cultivation. It occurs prolifically on the high pampas of southeastern Peru and Bolivia and extends into adjacent Argentina. Britton and Rose stated: "This is one of the most characteristic plants of the high pampas of the Andean region, mostly growing at elevations of 12,000 feet or higher, forming low, broad, compact clumps, sometimes made up of 100 plants or more".

The most southerly species of Tephrocactus is T. darwinii, names for its discoverer Charles Darwin, who found it on the Straits of Magellan. Its type locality is Port Desire, Patagonia, and it is common in that part of Patagonia now known as the Territory of Santa Cruz in Argentina. It grows close to the ground, never more than an inch or two high, on arid gravelly plains quite close to the sea. The climate there is hot, dry, and clear, but with sharp frosts during the winter nights.

One major requirement for the successful cultivation of Tephrocacti would seem to be very intense light, considering their natural habitats. This is particularly true for the white hairy species. They can tolerate quite an extreme range of temperatures, but need to be kept on the dry side in winter. Most books which give any clue as to their cultivation are written for the English climate, but all seem to agree that they need extremely strong light, good air circulation, and a nutrient-rich soil which is fast-draining. Although they adapt readily to being grown in small pots, they can also be grown in the open ground where they will eventually form the more characteristic large, low clumps found in their native habitat.

Literature consulted:

Backeberg, Curt:	<u>Cactus Lexicon</u> , pp. 475-487
Barthlott, Wilhelm:	<u>Cacti</u> , pp. 229-230
Britton, N.L. and Rose, J.N.	<u>The Cactaceae</u> , vol. I, pp. 84-99
Leighton-Boyce, G. and Iliff, James:	<u>The Sub-Genus Tephrocactus</u>

SHOW SCHEDULE

Aug. 4 & 5	San Diego Co. Dahlia Society Show	Sat: 2pm-5:00pm	Sun: 10am-4:30pm
Aug. 18 & 19	San Diego Fern Society 12th Show	Sat: 1pm-5:00pm	Sun: 10am-5:00pm
Aug. 25 & 26	San Diego Turtle & Tortoise Soc. 16th Show	Sat: 10am-5:00pm	Sun: 10am-5:00pm
Sept. 15 & 16	San Diego Bromeliad Society 16th Ann. Show	Sat: 1pm-4:30pm	Sun: 11am-4:30pm
Sept. 29 & 30	San Diego Bonsai Club Fall Show	Sat: 10am-5:00pm	Sun: 10am-5:00pm
Oct. 6 & 7	Balboa Park African Violet Soc. Fall Show	Sat: 10am-4:00pm	Sun: 10am-4:00pm
Oct. 20 & 21	San Diego Co. Orchid Soc. Fall "Mini" Show	Sat: 12pm-5:00pm	Sun: 10am-4:30pm
Oct. 27 & 28	Ichiyo School of Ikebana, San Diego Chap.	Sat: 11am-4:30pm	Sun: 11am-4:30pm
Nov. 3 & 4	San Diego Tropical Fish Soc. 33rd Show	Sat: 12pm-6:00pm	Sun: 9am-4:30pm
Nov. 18	Sun-i-e Painting & Ikebana 15th Annual Show		Sun: 11am-4:00pm
Nov. 30 & Dec. 1	San Diego Floral Assoc. Christmas Show (Christmas on the Prado)	Fri: 5pm-9:00pm Sat: 11am-9:00pm	



NEWS RELEASE

T H E H U N T I N G T O N
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1151 OXFORD ROAD · SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA · 91108

CONTACT: Catherine Babcock, Communications Coordinator (818) 405-2147
Lisa Blackburn, Communications Associate (818) 405-2140

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

SUCCULENT SYMPOSIUM AT THE HUNTINGTON

The Huntington Botanical Gardens will hold its 7th annual Succulent Plant Symposium on Saturday, September 1, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The day-long program will feature lectures by noted experts on topics such as cactus evolution, conservation, and surveys of South American cacti. Also included will be tours of the Desert Garden and the Desert Garden Conservatory, a sale of succulent plants, and an optional Saturday evening banquet.

Symposium speakers will be Roberto Kiesling of the Instituto de Botánica Darwinión in San Isidro, Argentina; Nigel P. Taylor of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England; Edward F. Anderson of Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington; Adriana Hoffmann of the Fundación Claudio Gay in Santiago, Chile; Beryl Simpson of the University of Texas, Austin; and Robert Wallace of Iowa State University.

Registration for the symposium is \$45 per person, which includes a reception on Friday evening; the Saturday evening banquet is an additional \$30. To register, send a check along with name and address to: Succulent Symposium, Huntington Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. Deadline for registration is August 23. For additional information call (818) 405-2160.

SEVENTH HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS SUCCULENT PLANTS SYMPOSIUM

PROGRAM:

- *World Wildlife Fund Cactus Conservation Studies in Chile*
Edward F. Anderson, Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington
- *Survey of the Cacti of Chile and Associated Flora*
Adriana Hoffmann, Fundación Claudio Gay, Santiago, Chile
- *Survey of the Cacti of Argentina and Associated Flora*
Roberto Kiesling, Instituto de Botánica Darwinión, San Isidro, Argentina (Banquet Speaker)
- *Overview of the Phytogeography of South America*
Beryl B. Simpson, University of Texas, Austin, Texas
- *Systematic Studies of East Brazilian Cerecae*
Nigel P. Taylor, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, England
- *Molecular Phylogenetics of Cacti: Chloroplast DNA and its Role in Examining Cactus Evolution*
Robert S. Wallace, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

OTHER EVENTS:

- Succulent Plant Sales
- Silent Auction of Rare & Unusual Succulents
- Tours of the Desert Garden and Desert Garden Conservatory

DATE & TIME: Saturday, 1 September 1990

Continental breakfast and Registration start at 8:00 A.M. Programs from 8:30 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. will include speakers, special events, refreshments, and box lunch. Evening reception, banquet, and program are scheduled from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Friends' Hall, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California 91108, (818) 405-2160, FAX (818) 405-0225

REGISTRATION: A fee of \$45 per person covers attendance at the main program as well as the cost of refreshments and lunch.

Attendance at the evening banquet is an additional \$30 per person.

To register: Mail your name(s), address, and a check for the appropriate amount to:

Succulent Symposium
The Huntington Botanical Gardens
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, CA 91108

Make checks payable to: The Huntington Library.

Registration DEADLINE: August 23, 1990.

We cannot guarantee that meals will be provided for late registrants.



SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

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S. D. Botanical Garden Foundation - Kathy Van Arum
S. D. Floral Association - Elizabeth Glover
Program - Joe Clements

The San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing cacti or other succulent and exotic plants. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at 1:30 p.m. 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, and \$2.00 for each additional member of a household within the family. Single copies of Espinas y Flores are 60¢.

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