

MAMMILLARIA THORNERI

# Espinas y Flores

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

Vol. X, No. 7

July 1975

PROGRAM:

Our Annual Potluck at Suzanne and Bob Taylor's Cactus Gardens in El Cajon, including a Graft Demonstration and Plant Auction. (For details see page 4).

July 12, 1975, 10:00 am at the Taylors!. Serving to start at noon. (For directions see map on page 4).

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MEMBERSHIP: The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society is open to all persons interested in growing cacti, other succulents and exotic plants.

Dues: \$ 5.00 annually, due in December of each year.

Single copy of E y F : \$ 0.50.

Meetings: 2nd Saturday of each month, 1:30 pm, Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, unless otherwise indicated.

Deadline for August publication is July 16, 1975.

## REBUTIAS and their CARE

by Ewald Kleiner

(Translated by Paul Kittel from Kakteen and Andere Sukkulente, March 1974)

Reprinted from CSIE. Jan 75

Not seldom the love of cacti begins with Rebutias. As small as these South American dwarf cacti mostly are, their amazingly big flowers are so fascinating. So it is not surprising to find them as favorites on window sills, in cold frames and greenhouses. Of course one has to fulfill a few of their individual preferences. There are not many, but still enough to spend a few words on them, to help get your newly acquired Rebutias over the first critical weeks, and have them annually unfold their magnificent flowers.

The birth of Rebutias for sale occurs mostly in a cactus nursery. There the tiny black grains of seed germinate. After a few weeks the seedlings will be pricked off and not later than in two years will be ready for sale. After a systematic guided program in the nursery, the critical time starts, to adjust to a new environment somewhere in the home of a cactophile. Here is where the most losses occur.

Newly acquired REbutias do best in a warm, not too sunny room; ideal of course is a greenhouse. There the adjusting presents no problem. The window-sill hobbyist, the person we primarily want to talk about, will have to get along with a less favoured location at the window or close to it. Mostly not all the flower buds, if there are some, will open; they retard and drop off. There is no cause for alarm. The plant adjusts. Now is the time for repotting, because the present container is too small and the growing medium was not thought to be permanent.

For new containers I prefer plastic, and especially planters, for here the plants can roam to their heart's delight. To provide the plants for years with space and food, it is important not to plant them too dense, and give them a good growing medium. The soil should be rich with food but open. For years my Rebutias have had a soil made up of the following parts: beech leaf mold (maple or poplar should do equally well), peat moss, sterile clay, crumbled pumice, crumbled styrofoam, coarse sand, loam and charcoal. Depending on location outside, exposure to rain, I add more opening agents to it. Covering the top with grit or gravel is not only for looks, it also prevents caking of the soil.

Rebutias grow in the high mountains of Argentina and Bolivia, up to 4000 metres or about 13,000 feet. That explains their need for sun and fresh air. When the buds grow to one cm. or 3/8 inch be more generous with water. Feed often with a weak solution poor in nitrogen and you will have healthy plants with beautiful flowers. The growing season for Rebutias lasts till September; that is the end of the Rebutia year. You water less and less; then every four weeks a light mist. A slight shrivelling should be no temptation to give more water. The plant needs the rest.

Outdoors where there is a sheltered place with no rain, you can leave Rebutias till the early frosts. They are tolerant of a few degrees of fall frost. It happened several times that my plants got snowed in. As the cold spell went and the snow too, I brought them in a cool room and let them slowly get warmed up. But these are extremes; mostly you bring the plants to safety in due time. In a room of 10° Celsius or about 48° to 50° Fahrenheit the Rebutias slumber towards a new spring. Dark or light does not make any difference. How fast are the winter months gone! In March, brought to a sunny window, there will soon be buds and a few weeks later wreaths of flowers adorn the otherwise not too showy plants.

What kinds to prefer is hard to say. Besides the old and new ones, there are lots of hybrids and they are just as pretty. You find colours from pure white (a hybrid between Rebutia and Pseudolobivia) to yellow, several shades of red to the violet-red of Rebutia violaciflora, and orange, -- even bicolours and new flower forms occur. So there is no limit for the ardent connoisseur.

SCORES, DEL MAR FAIR 1975 EXHIBITS

by Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society  
and  
S.D. Cactus and Succulent Society

	Design 30%	Workmen- ship 20%	Quality 20%	Rarity & Variety 20%	Correct & suitable labeling 5%	Lightening 5%	Total Score
<u>CACTI</u>							
Palomar	25	20	20	15	5	5	90
San Diego	20	15	15	15	5	5	75
<u>SUCCULENTS</u>							
Palomar	30	20	20	20	5	5	100
San Diego	25	15	15	15	5	5	80
<u>GRAFTS</u>							
Palomar	10	12	12	15	5	5	59
San Diego	10	12	10	10	5	5	52

Congratulations to our competitors from the Palomar Society for their excellent display. But we have also heard many complimentary remarks about our own exhibits which I think were very well executed. The thanks for this Herculean task goes to our new members, Tom and Marcia Ham-echer who did a splendid job with the help of Bob and Mildred Anderes, Evelyn Chatham, Nellie Kennett, Richard Latimer, Perlso Lewis, Oliver and Sophie Loyland. Plants on display were kindly made available from the gardens of Warren Buckner, George Kennerson, Nellie Kennett, Nibby Kline-felter, Perlso Lewis, Oliver and Sophie Loyland, Martin Mooney, Bill and Ruth Nelson, Augie Pfeiffer, Dr. Leroy Phelps, Doris Rake and Bob Taylor.

CEREUS-LY SPEAKING

The following gardens will be open for viewing by members only on the date and during the times indicated.

Dr. Leroy Phelps, 4348 Aragon Way, San Diego.

July 19th and 20th, 10 am to 4 pm.

July 21st thru July 25th, mornings only. Afternoon viewings by appointment only, telephone 582-8236.

Bill and Ruth Nelson, 4253 Maryland St., San Diego.

July 26th, 11 am to 4 pm.

Augie and Christel Pfeiffer, 5163 E. Bedford Dr., San Diego.

July 26th, 11 am to 4 pm.

Garden visits have always been greatly appreciated by our members. Why don't you invite us to see your garden? Please contact the editor and let him know a suitable date and time.

Thanks again to the regalement committee: The Hapemans with their team of Helen Claydon, Maria J. Fisher, Joanne Flear, Perlso Lewis, Margaret Lickert and Ruth Stanton.

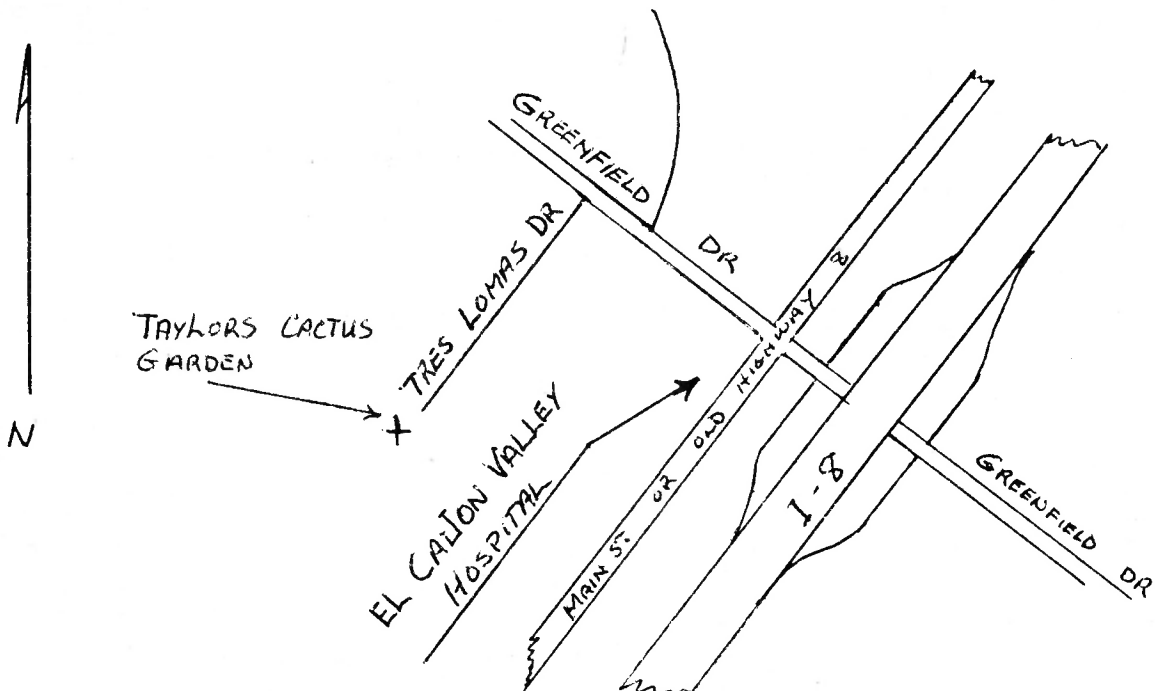
Nibby Klinefelter with more details on our July meeting:

Remember, this is a potluck; so bring a goodly portion of your favorite whatever - also your personal table service including plates, and a folding table with chairs. (Don't worry - you can always join us sitting on a rock). The day will include a graft demonstration by Bob and a plant auction. Bob sends word that members may bring a plant to be grafted. If they do not have stock he "always has some around".

After the demonstration and auction, Bob will dig plants for those who want to buy. Come for fun and bring your joy.

Address: 1051 Tres Lomas Drive, El Cajon, Ca.

Directions: Take Interstate 8 to the Greenfield Drive turnoff in the El Cajon area. Turn west on Greenfield Drive, go past the El Cajon Valley Hospital to Tres Lomas Drive, turn south, and Taylors Cactus Garden is located on top of the hill.



THE LIBRARIAN REPORTS: by Edith Werner.

Three books have recently been added to our library.

"Colorful Cacti of The American Desert" by Edgar and Brian Lamb, published by Blandford Press, 1974.

This book is different in makeup from the other books written by the Lambs. It gives a simplified description of species and genera, and also discusses the desert area and conditions. In addition, there is a chapter on photographic hints demonstrating some of the skills used by the authors in obtaining their superb photographs. The book contains 140 illustrations of cacti in habitat and their flowers in cultivation which should be of interest to anyone.

"The King's Highway in Baja California" by Harry Crosby, published by Copley Books, 1974.

Contents are based upon the history and life of Baja California when the Spanish missions were established. The author reports on a trip he made covering the almost impossible route of the first missionaries. The book tells how Baja began, how it is today and, perhaps, how it will be in the future. It is an interesting story, enhanced by 78 pictures, 24 in color.

"Our Historic Desert" by Diana Elaine Lindsay, published by Copley Books, 1973.

The book contains the history of the Anza Borrego Desert and is based upon a thesis submitted for a Master Degree which is on file at the San Diego State University. It includes the formation of the desert, touches upon life of the early settlers and the coming of the white man and his endeavors to farm and mine the land. This book will make your visits to Borrego so much more interesting and worthwhile. You will know what to look for and where and begin to realize that Borrego is different from other deserts. Some of the fascinating places are captured in 94 illustrations, 33 in color.

CACTI AND SUCCULENTS FROM SEED, by Warren Withers, reprinted from CSIE, March 1975.

With the seed sowing season upon us, a brief word about the method I have developed over the years would be in order. When I first started growing cacti and succulents from seed some fifteen years ago, I must have tried all methods that are to be found both in old books and in up-to-date articles in many journals. Of these many methods I found the following to be the most successful.

Seed is sown in February of each year, using individual 2 3/4" square plastic pots for each species. This method I find best because it is very difficult to identify seedlings if mixed in large pans. It is possible to divide pans into sections using string of plastic, but the seed can easily be mixed when sown. Another point against this method is that some seeds will germinate more quickly than others and will need replanting sooner. You can quite easily disturb smaller seedlings in the pan when this method is used. With the seeds in individual pots they can be treated independently of others.

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## Cacti and Succulents from Seed (cont'd)

The compost I use is Arthur Bowers Cactus Medium. The pots are filled to within half an inch of the top, and then top-dressed with fine grit. Before the seed is sown the pots are soaked in water with the addition of Chinosol to prevent damping off. The seed is sown, making sure that it is not covered too deeply. If the seed is just sprinkled on the grit, and then the pot tapped on the bench, the seed will fall in between the grit particles. Larger seeds (e.g. Opuntia) will require to be planted slightly deeper. With the pots thoroughly soaked, they are then placed in small plastic bags and the bags sealed. The pots are then placed on a soil-warming cable, which has been built into a wooden propagation frame. This will give a temperature of between 70 degrees F and 80 degrees F which will be ideal for germination. This will generally take place within 3 to 4 weeks for most species. Some species take a while longer but in my opinion not above two months for any species. If after two months nothing has germinated, I remove the pot from the propagator and deposit it in the trash-can. The reason for failure to germinate is in my opinion that the seed is not viable, and over the years you are able to determine which are the best suppliers to obtain good fresh seed. Having been growing seed for many years, I have no doubt in my mind that a good supplier of seed is deHerdt of Belgium.

Once the seeds have germinated in their plastic bags, I leave them growing inside the bags until the summer months when the temperature rises. They are then removed from the bags and left in the propagator for a further year. In the middle of the second year of growth, during the summer months, they are repotted into small (2") pots and kept in a shaded place on the greenhouse staging. Depending on the species they are either left in the cool greenhouse (min. 45 degrees F) or if tender species (e.g. Melocactus, Discocactus) are given higher temperatures of about 55-60 degrees F.

The most important factor, that I have not yet mentioned, is the fact that throughout germination in the propagator, overhead strip lighting is provided. This consists of a 5 ft. strip light, which is kept on for approximately 15 hours a day. This I am sure gives the seedlings the light required for growth, and has given me excellent results since method was first used four years ago.

It will be found advantageous once the seedlings have been removed from the plastic bags to feed the plants with a diluted solution of 'Maxicrop' or other liquid fertilizer, once every two months. A weak solution of Chinosol will also prevent damping off if used three or four times a year.

## GARDEN HINTS

A new biological insecticide to combat lepdoptera larvae (belonging to the order of insects consisting of butterflies and moths) is on the market and is being sold as Thuricide, Dipel, and Biotrol. It is not a chemical but is a crystal substance taken from living bacteria and destroys the digestive processes of the larvae. It is harmless to humans and their pets, the bacteria it is derived from being present in many places in nature.

If you wish to combat fire with fire, or rather insects with insects, here are the addresses of mailorder houses who stock beneficial insects which can be used to destroy their damaging counterparts. To obtain a list of available insects and their prices, write to:

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SAN DIEGO CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Officers

PRESIDENT - Martin L. MOONEY, 97 K Street, Chula Vista, CA 92011	427-6796
1ST V.P. - Nibby KLINEFELTER, 2201 Fairfield Street, San Diego, CA 92110	276-6517
2ND V.P. - Reed PIERCE, 3525 Wilshire Terrace, San Diego, CA 92104	291-1994
SECRETARY - Doris F. RAKE, 4410 38th Street, San Diego, CA 92116	282-1722
TREASURER - Madelyn LEE, 2310 Bella Vista, Vista, CA 92083	1-727-1364
CORRE-SEC - Jeanie MERRILL, 9306 Mesa Vista, La Mesa, CA 92041	469-6014
PAST PRES - Loyal J. BIBBEY, 490 Citrus Ave., Imperial Beach, CA 92032	423-5133

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2-year term: H. Warren DUCKNER and August PFEIFFER  
3-year term: Mary H. BIRCHELL and Perlso LEWIS

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ACTIVITIES -- Perlso LEWIS  
EDUCATION -- Madelyn LEE, Succulents, Dr. George E. RADWIN, Cactus  
EXHIBITS -- Thomas and Marcia Hamecher  
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MEMBERSHIP -- Madelyn LEE  
PLANTS & SUPPLIES -- Reed PIERCE  
PROGRAMS -- Nibby KLINEFELTER  
PUBLICATION -- Augie PFEIFFER, 5163 E. Bedford Dr. S.D. CA 92116 280-4444  
RECEPTION -- Lucile BECKFIELD and Edith BILLMYER  
REGALEMENT -- Jean and Leta HAPEMAN  
Rep. to S.D. Botanical Garden Foundation -- Mr. & Mrs. Robert ANDERS

Garden Hints, cont'd:

Bo-Biotrol, 54 E South Bear Creek Dr., Merced, Ca. 95340  
California Green Lacewings, Box 2495, Merced, Ca. 95340  
Rincon-Vitova Insectaries Inc., Box 95, Oakview, Ca. 93022  
Western Biological Control Lab., Box 1045, Tacoma, Wash., 98401

NOTE: The library will be closed for the July meeting. Please do not return your library books until August.

**Augie Pfeiffer**  
5163 E. Bedford Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92116  
Return Requested