

ESPINAS Y FLORES



Program

Gary James on Somalia

Plants of the Month

Astrophytum - Ric Newcomer

&

Get a Grap on Yourself

or

Fee Fie Fo Fum Grow Yourself a Pachyphytum

Jeff Harris

The Newsletter of the San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Inc.

Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America

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Saturday April 10th 2004

1:00 PM

Room 101 Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park

Presidents Message

March 21, 2004

Happy Spring! I hope you are all having some time to get out and enjoy your plants in this vibrant time of year. Our landscape is very exciting now with many Aloes, Gasterias, Euphorbias and Orchids in bloom. This makes it prime time for humming birds also as they jet around enjoying the nectar and staking out territory to build their nests. It is also gratifying to see the large plants we rescued and installed last summer beginning to take off in their new locations.

Hope all in attendance enjoyed the meeting last week. It was a very busy day in the park so parking was difficult, but all who braved the St. Patrick's Day crowds were treated to some very interesting presentations. Andrew Wilson covering both Cactus and Succulent of the Month, gave a talk on Flowers that Grow in the Spring. Thanks to Andrew for sharing information on *Matucana* and *Othonna* and your informative article explaining how it is we are so privileged to enjoy such great blooms in winter and early spring. For our main presentation we were treated to a visit from Duke Benedom, president of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA). Duke presented a beautiful slide show of Blooming *Echinocereus* of Mexico. I know these plants are amongst the best bloomers, but this did not prepare me for the fantastic variety of blooms displayed

in this genus. Thanks Duke for a fine show and for filling in at the last minute.

See you April 10th.

Pam Badger
pambad1@mac.com

From the Vice President

All of you are welcome to take the opportunity to speak on a cactus or other succulent plant of the month. With your help, the plants that we'll talk about in 2005 can be decided on in 2004, thus allowing this schedule to be published sooner. I expect that, if not recalled, this job will still be mine in 2005, so please let me know if you'd like to do an article and a chat on a subject. Thank you, and my sincere appreciation for the members, in this year and past years, that have taken the time and trouble to research, write and speak on these plants of ours.

Jeff Harris

Cover photo: Tim Nomer



March 2004 Brag Plants

Cactus

**1st Place Mammillaria bocasana var. multi-
lanata**

Don Patterson

2nd Place Cochemiea maritima

John Durham

3rd Place Matucana aureiflora

Mark Fryer

Succulents

1st Place Othonna herrei

Rudy Lime

2nd Place Pelargonium crithmifolium

Rudy Lime

2nd Place Othonna retrorsa

Rudy Lime

3rd Place Pelargonium lobatum

(...yes) Rudy Lime

(A clean sweep for Rudy!)

Recorded by: Kay Quijada

ASTROPHYTUM

By Ric Newcomer

One of the best known of all the cactus genera, *Astrophytum* comes from eastern and northern Mexico and a small part of Texas.

These are wonderful plants with *A. myriostigma* being the most desirable in collections, with *A. asterias* probably second --- and the most difficult.

Today the Japanese have taken this genus and created some very beautiful and different plants, in most cases using *A. asterias* and *A. myriostigma*. Many are coming into our country now and several nurseries are growing them.

The most common *Astrophytum* are:

- A. asterias*
- A. capricorne*
- A. myriostigma*
- A. ornatum*

There are several varieties of the above plants.

I will be bringing 12 plants for you to see and compare. *A. myriostigma* can have 3 to 7 ribs, 5 being the most common. They can grow to a



height of 3 feet and more in the right conditions.

A. asterias, the most difficult to keep, will rot out easily in the winter if not kept dry.

A. capricorne, the most interesting with the long brown twisting spines turning into each other.

A. ornatum, I have several large plants and not any two look the same.

All of the above come in numerous forms and are fun to collect.

We use our normal mix of 50% super soil with 50% pumice --- with gravel added for good drainage. I would suppose, if I could give any advice on growing these plants to maturity, it would be --- if you think they need water, DON'T! Only mist them from



September to April.

Many collectors stay away from this genus because of the corking that develops as they get beyond the 5 year mark. But this is nature. It is normal and I wish the show judges would realize this and not detract for this condition.

Flowers are various shades of yellow --- to yellow with red centers --- to a dull orange. They are very large and beautiful. A sunny location in your greenhouse is required all year long. Off-setting is rare but I do have a double-headed *myriostigma*.

I look forward to sharing these plants with you at our meeting and leave you with this thought. Start with seedlings and it will give you something to live for!

For those with Internet access, there are a number of sites that offer lots of pictures and information on the *Astrophytum* genus. The love affair with this cactus is evidently world-wide. Here are some of the addresses (these were compiled from the search engine Google):

www.astrophytum.de

www.astrobase.de

www.lapshin.org/cultivar/N18/astro-e.htm

www.tosca.si/zvone/cactusbase/a/rod_astrophytum.html

<http://deawcactus.tripod.com/gallery/index.htm>

http://www.geocities.com/astromeister_usa/

<http://www.geocities.com/danskibsted/ahyb.html>



GET A GRAP ON YOURSELF OF FEE FIE FO FUM

GROW YOURSELF A PACHYPHYTUM

By Jeffrey Harris

Graptopetalums and Pachyphytums, members of the New World Crassulaceae Family, sub-Family Echeveriodeae, are succulent plant genera that are of easy culture, long-lasting flowers of different hues and a lovely palette of leaf color. This article will focus on the true genera, rather than the intergenetic vegetative love children that have been hybridized with each as a parent or one of them and *Echeveria*, *Lenophyllum*, *Sedum*, *Thompsonella* or *Villadia* as the other parent.

Sixteen *Graptopetalum* species and fifteen *Pachyphytum* species are recognized in the latest Handbook of Succulent Plants - Crassulaceae. Both genera come principally from northern and central Mexico, but two species of *Graptopetalum* (*G. bartramii* and *G. rusbyi*) are also found in Arizona. These genera can be characterized as low-growing shrublets with fleshy leaves, growing in a rosette or rosette-like form. Some members of each genus can be confused with each other, but the inflorescence lets the cat out of the bag. A *Graptopetalum*'s inflorescence is branched and its flowers spotted or mottled, whereas a *Pachyphytum*'s inflorescence is unbranched and its flowers very similar to that of



Echeverias. Flowering occurs primarily in the winter and spring. Growth normally follows flowering, but in San Diego, as with other Crassulaceae, they seem to grow year-around.

Culture is quite easy. These plants like a regular, porous soil, though they don't seem to object too much to heavier soils. They grow best in the ground but will do fine in potted culture. I water mine throughout the year, but if grown in a colder climate minimum watering should be given in the winter. They can be semi-frost hardy if they're dry. They can suffer from the usual succulent plant ills of scale and root mealy bug. Additionally, care should be given to the flowers, both in bud and open; these are favorite roosting places of aphids (or whatever those little black bugs are called).

Of the roughly thirty species found in the combined two genera, some species are particularly recommended to

the collector:

- 1) *Graptopetalum pentandrum* v. *superbum* - largish purple rosettes and a spray of diminutive flowers make this plant a fan favorite.
- 2) *Graptopetalum amethystinum* - truly a multi-hued jewel, as its specific reflects. This plant looks like a reddish *Pachyphytum*, but its flowers belie its true Grapto origin.
- 3) *Graptopetalum macdougallii* - while this is a fairly non-descript plant, in terms of color, its rambunctiously fecund habit of sending out pups on extended stalks in all directions make it a fun plant to grow.
- 4) *Pachyphytum bracteosum* - its affinity to the commonly-found *P. oviferum* is quite obvious, but for my money, it's more colorful in leaf and in flower.
- 5) *Pachyphytum viride* - a nice example of green in the otherwise purple-leaf-dominated *Pachyphytum* field. Its oblong-elliptical leaves take on a nicely red cast when grown in lots of sun.
- 6) *Pachyphytum longifolium* - while its inflorescence is similar to that of *P. bracteosum*, its leaves, as the specific tells us, are elongated and oblanceolate. A nice plant, though not commonly available.

Care should be taken when handling most members of these genera, as the



leaves on many of the species' leaves are farinose (glaucous); touching them removes this powdery protectant and it may take some time to return.

There are crests (*P. compactum* and *G. paraguayense*, to name two) in both genera, but the only variegated form I've seen (again, *G. paraguayense*) was pictured in a book. It's certainly on my wish list!

I'm hopeful that this article will encourage you to expand your collection and add some of these plants to it - they're rewarding succulents, they grow quite well with a minimum of fuss (and grow even better given some fuss), they'll treat you to year-around displays of leaf color and seasonal celebrations of flower power.

Sources

- ◆ The Illustrated Handbook of Succulent Plants - Crassulaceae (2003), Urs Eggli, editor
- ◆ Succulents and Succulents II - The New Illustrated Dictionary (2000), Maurizio Sajeve and Mariangela Constanza
- ◆ Cacti and Succulents, A Practical Handbook (1961), Walter Haage
- ◆ A Lexicon of Succulent Plants (1977), Hermann Jacobsen
- ◆ The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Succulents (1978), Gordon Rowley



When bad things happen to good cactus

By Sue Haffner, Cactus Corner News

What's this? Your favorite Rebutia has developed a pin-head? Your Lobivia looks like a belt is cinching its waist? What's going on?

It's so disappointing to find your favorite plants producing abnormal growth. The usual reason for "pin-headedness"-etiolation-is that the plants were grown in too much shade and/or watered too much. Sometimes, though, etiolation can occur in plants that are in a well-lighted situation. One plant can etiolate, while the one next to it looks fine. The speculation is that the etiolated plant got off to a too-rapid start in the spring. Also, some genera may be more prone to this behavior than others.

Characteristics of an etiolated plant are these: a thinner growing point, an increased distance between nodes or tubercules, a paler color of the stem, a "stretched" appearance.

Sometimes a short, columnar cactus will have a narrow area about the middle of the stem. This "waist" ruins the appearance of the plant. It is usually assumed that this indicates a change in culture in the plant's history. Etiolation might have begun, then normal growth resumed. Whatever the cause, cells collapsed and this constricted area will never "plump out" again. One friend had a

Mammillaria with such a narrow waist that he had had to devise a kind of crutch to hold up the plant's head, its narrow middle now too weak to hold it upright.

Another ugly condition that can overtake your plants is a corky, brown epidermis that seems to creep up the plant from the soil line. The experts can't agree on what causes this. Some genera, such as Notocactus, seem more susceptible to this than others. Even plants in habitat can display this condition.

Aside from being philosophical about it, what can you do to return these misshapen plants to a more normal condition? Well, get out a sharp knife. You can declare, along with the Red Queen from "Alice in Wonderland"-Off with her head!

Take off the etiolated top of the plant and discard it. Offsets will grow from the old stump and can be removed from it to root on their own. For a plant with a waist, the top can be taken off and put down to root. Be sure and let the cuts dry before putting the plant in a rooting medium. For good measure, also clean your knife with rubbing alcohol or a bleach solution when you move from one plant to another.

CSSA Promotional Article (2004 #1)

There have been some changes recently with respect to CSSA publications as a number of you may already be aware. **Russell Wagner** is the new editor of the **CSSA Journal**. **Tom Glavich** has been interim newsletter editor for November/December 2003 and January/February 2004. Our new newsletter editor **Peter Boekenthien** will begin his editorship of *To the Point* with the March/April issue. We are sure that they will continue the high standards set by **Myron Kinnach** and **Carol Clapp**, respectively.

Two CSSA sponsored overseas field trips are scheduled for 2004, a **Madagascar trip** with **John Lavranos** as tour leader in May and a trip to **Chile** to visit *Copiapoas*, etc., in habitat scheduled for October/November. Being able to participate in these trips is one of the many benefits of CSSA membership. Yet another benefit of membership is access to our **Seed Depot**, which makes available to members seeds of rare succulents at very reasonable prices. This benefit should appeal to all you seed growing aficionados out there. Attendance at our **biennial conventions** is yet another membership benefit and our 2005 convention in **Phoenix** in the heart of cactus country, promises to be one of the best ever. More details will appear in subsequent articles as convention plans develop. The CSSA website will also provide updates. For a complete list of other CSSA services to members, see the listing in any issue of the CSSA newsletter, *To the Point* or go to the CSSA website <http://www.cssainc.org>. Membership information is available at both the above-mentioned sites.

The administration of the CSSA continues to be concerned about membership numbers which have been fairly stagnant in recent years. We are far from the only organization facing this problem. We now have a **Membership Committee** whose task it is to address this issue. As I have mentioned before, the more members we have the more benefits we can offer our membership. In the coming months the committee will be kicking around a number of ideas for increasing our membership and we are certainly open to any suggestions that might occur to readers of this article. I would definitely appreciate any feedback on the issue of CSSA membership and ways to increase it. Please feel free to contact me by E-mail (b.barth@mail.utexas.edu) or snail mail (602 Terrace Mountain Drive, Austin, Texas 78746).

Thanking you in advance for any input, I remain

Sincerely yours,
Bob Barth
Publicity Chair
CSSA Board of Directors



Bursaria fagaroides

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DIRECTIONS: From I10, take 405 south to Crenshaw, go south on Crenshaw or take 110 south to Pacific Coast Hwy., go west to Crenshaw and turn left.

A SOUTH COAST CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
PRESENTATION



Cylindropuntia densiflorum v. *densiflorum*

Upcoming Events

2004

March 27 - 29 Colorado C&SS Show and Sale, Denver Botanic Gardens, 1005 York Street. Contact Helen Norton, 970-353-9581 or e-mail at Rips-mom@aol.com

April 10 & 11, 9am to 4pm, South Coast Cactus & Succulent Society Show and Sale. South Coast Botanical Gardens, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd. Palos Verdes Peninsula. For more information contact Dick Hulett at 310-832-2262 (E-mail petplants@sbcglobal.net); Carol Causey at 310-675-5843; Jim Hanna at 562-920-3046 or aloecats1@aol.com.

April 9 - 12: Australasian Cactus Convention, Quality Hotel, Steeple Conference Centre, Fitzherbert Ave, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Hosted by Manawatu and Tararua Branches. This event will incorporate the AGM of the C&SS of NZ. Air New Zealand, Origin Pacific or Freedom Air can fly you into Milson Airport. Registrants who make prior arrangements can be met on arrival. Keynote speakers included Paul Forster (paulforster@uq.net.au) on Succulents of South Africa Cape Provinces and Haworthia; Rudolf Schultz (copiapoa@iaccess.com.au) on some of his South American experiences in "Out of Brazil" and about "Succulents of the Canary Islands;" and Attila Kapitany (gecko@connexus.net.au) will present his research on "Succulents in the Garden" and will talk about his experiences in Argentina. More info from Frances Verrity at verrity@actrix.gen.nz Updated info at: www.cactus2004.freesevers.com/

April 17: CSSA Board Meeting 9am at Scottsdale Plaza Resort, Scottsdale, Arizona (site of 2005 Convention)

May 1 - 2: Houston C&SS Spring Sale at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Dr, Houston TX Open from 10am to 5pm each day. Rare and unusual Cacti and Succulents for sale. Contact Hank Andresen for more details. Tel: 713-436-1734 or e-mail Hank at hand1609@hotmail.com

May 3 - 5: Sonoran V Conference at Inn Suites Hotel (formerly the Ramada Inn) Theme will be BAJA. Speakers and workshops. Tentative plans include Friday night pre-conference dinner, speaker and opening of the plant sales area for all members and conference participants. Conference opening will be on Saturday morning for registrants. Show and Sale open to public. Silent auction, raffle and a special dinner on Saturday night featuring recipes utilizing cacti, succulents and other desert plants. Contact Dick Wiedhopf at wiedhopf@pharmacy.arizona.edu

June 5 Celebrate Lotusland's new cactus garden, featuring the spectacular Dunlap Collection. Enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres, and informative tours of this dramatic new venue. For information, call 805-969-3767, ext. 107

June 11 - 13: Mid-West C&S Conference Co-hosted by River City C&SS of Omaha, Nebraska, and Mid-Iowa C&SS of Des Moines, Iowa, at the Travel Lodge, Council Bluffs, Iowa. For conference registration information, please contact Connie Staples, 3417 Bel Aire Rd, Des Moines Iowa 50310. Tel: 515-255-1734 or e-mail her at cfstaples@aol.com

July 1 - 3: CSSA Show and Sale at HBG (Note: HBG closed on July 4) Entrance to HBG is free on July 1, 2004. Set-up on Thursday, Show open Friday and Saturday.

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