

# ESPINAS Y FLORES

Combined May & June Show Edition



Plants of the Month

Melocactus by Mark Fryer  
&  
Haworthia by Michelle Heckathorn

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

Volume 39 Number 5 & 6  
Saturday May 8th 1:00 PM  
Saturday & Sunday June 5th & 6th  
see newsletter for times  
Room 101 Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park

# Presidents Message

April 17, 2004

I am sitting here in front of the fire, on a cold, rainy afternoon, wondering at how fast the weather changes around here! Great to see the rain in what is looking to be another drought year, and the plants are all loving it.

It was another fine day in Balboa Park last Saturday for our meeting - and a fine meeting it was. Big THANKS to Ric Newcomer and Jeff Harris for their "plant of the Month" talks. Astrophytums are such fascinating plants, and bring many novices to our hobby with their interesting shapes and colors - and many of us go on to be hooked on these great plants. Ric gave a wonderful talk on these plants and was very generous to share his many resources (I will get those back to you Ric!) Jeff shared his superb collection of Pachyphytums and Graptopetalums. These plants do so well in our gardens - their interesting colors and shapes enhance any landscape.... The program, presented by Gary James guided us through Ethiopia giving us an intriguing look at the people, culture, landscapes and plants of this part of the world. The latent anthropologist in me was very excited by this beautiful presentation. Thanks Gary.

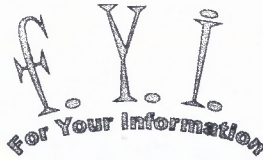
We will be unveiling our new SOCIETY TEE SHIRT, commemorating our June Show, at the meeting in May. As a special benefit to members - at the May meeting only - you will be able to purchase this beautiful tee

shirt, with original art by Irina Gronberg, at our cost. After that they will be available at full retail at the show. Speaking of member benefits - we will also be signing up for the BUS TRIP on July 3rd to the Huntington. This date coincides with the CSSA Annual Show and Sale so this will be a fantastic opportunity to see the Gardens as well as some of the best Cactus and Succulents from around the country. So come prepared to get a tee shirt and sign up for this trip!

While we are on the subject, another great benefit of belonging to this Society is the opportunity to help out with the big show and sale in June. There are lots of things to do - a job for everyone. At the May meeting we will be passing around signup sheets with times and jobs. We know everyone likes to pitch in where needed and these lists will be a great help in organizing and making sure all jobs are handled. So sign up for two days or two hours, but SIGN UP!

I am planning a SPECIAL DISPLAY for the June show featuring "cactus kitsch," and would like your help. We all have lots of cool cactus stuff - so pick out a couple of your favorites and bring them to the May meeting - or to set up day on Friday, June 4 - BE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME ON ALL ITEMS so they all get home safely. THANKS!

See you on May 8th! Pam Badger  
pambadge@earthlink.net



## April Brag Table Winners

### Cactus

- |                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1st - <i>Astrophytum myrostigma</i> | John Durham   |
| 2nd - <i>Rhipsalis</i> sp.          | Donne Willett |
| 3rd - <i>Neoporteria multicolor</i> | Don Patterson |

### Succulent

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1st - <i>Pelargonium appendiculatum</i>                         | Rudy Lime        |
| 2nd - <i>Whitesloania crassa</i> x<br><i>huerniopsis</i> hybrid | Jurgen Menzel    |
| 2nd - <i>Sarcocaulon vanderetiae</i>                            | Rudy Lime        |
| 3rd - <i>Euphorbia esculenta</i>                                | Phyllis Flechsig |
| 3rd - <i>Psuedolithos migiurtius</i>                            | Jurgen Menzel    |

recorded by Kay Quijada

# MELOCACTUS

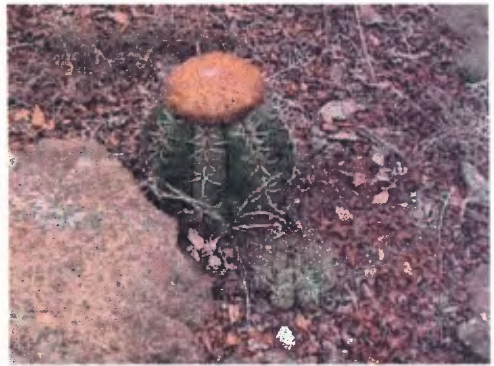
By Mark Fryer

**T**he quintessential globe, other than Artichoke or Thistle, is the cactus genus *Melocactus*. As beguiling a plant as it is in its form alone, the Melocacti raise further interest about their possible systematic position(s) within the family Cactaceae, their somewhat fussy cultural requirements, and their wacky nomenclature.

*Melocactus* has an interesting place in our cumulative knowledge about cactus plants by being perhaps the first globular cactus seen by early European explorers. In some historic accounts we hear the names "Melon Thistle" and "Urchin Thistle" to describe the newly found plants. Common names like "Turk's Cap," "Grenadier's Helmet" seem to follow various explorations of the New World, no doubt in reference to whomever was exploring at the time. Native peoples of the Caribbean Islands called them "Melones." In most early accounts of people indigenous to *Melocactus* habitats, the plants are always referred to as a melons, or thistles, or both.

The early Linneans, and subsequent authors up and to the time of Britton and Rose, coined the name *Cactus* for these early finds, using the

term *melocactus* as a specific epithet in the original cactus binomial *Cactus Melocactus Linneaus* (1753). As a result of the early enthusiasm about these plants, a specific taxon of *Melocactus* (*M. curvispinus*) is thought to be one of the most synonymized plants in the plant kingdom. This is the sort of thing that transforms nomenclature into nomenclutter. Today's experts recognize around 40 species give or take, with numerous forms and variations on a given theme.



*Melocactus matazanus* (in habitat)

*Melocactus* are distributed equally on both sides of the equator. Their northern range extends from the southern Florida keys in the east, to Oaxaca, Mexico in the west, and in their southern range from Brazil in the east to Peru in the west. Few other

cacti genera share this specific distribution within the horse latitudes, the exceptions being members of *Opuntia*, *Pereskia*, *Pilosocereus*, and various members of the tropical *Hyloceranae*; *Epiphyllum*, *Harrisia*, *Cereus*, and the like.

Melocactus is one of those enigmas encountered in the horticultural trade that is often overlooked as a suitable subject for dining room adornment. Sans roly-poly eyes and straw flowers, these delightful orbs of fuzz and wool are completely capable of standing on their own. As a youngster, most Melocacti fit the perfect description of a globe of cactus, with an amazing array of spine-types and colored skin to boot. As with children, it is in their adolescence that they begin to become difficult, at least in terms of cultivation.

Growing Melocactus is almost exclusively done from seed. Seedlings that are given plenty of heat, light, and water will usually mature within 5 to 7 years, and will begin the process of flowering with the formation of a specialized flowering zone called a cephalium. A cephalium is an area of a cactus stem that produces nothing but flowering areoles, replete with hair, fuzz, and bristles. In Melocactus, the cephalium is terminal, that is to say it encompasses the entirety of the stem. Because it is terminal, the lower stem can do little more than add a few ribs over time and provide the necessary health for the production of flowers and fruits. It is for this reason that most Melocacti become fussy about being transplanted or overcrowded later in life, their cycles of root-generation and stem growth become almost paralleled in their overall appearance of having

nearly stopped. The unfortunate aspect of this for the grower is the plants will never grow out of any scars, sunburns, spine-breakage, or unsightly blemishes. It's plants like this that make growing cacti one of the supreme challenges to even the most skilled agronomists.



*Melocactus pacificus*

The majority of Melocactus species are self-fertile, many mistakenly considered cleistogamous (closed flowering), and at least one species (or group) which is not self-fertile at all. Most species will produce hundreds of fertile fruits with thousands of viable seeds every season. Hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers and will often memorize where certain plants are so they can visit them throughout the day. As the fruits develop beneath the protective fuzz and wool of the cephalium, the meristem continues to elongate with the addition of new flowering areoles, so the lower areoles are forced together taking up space. This

forces the mature berries out, to lay around naked on top of the bullseye shape of the cephalium for whatever fauna that will have them, to disperse them.



*Melocactus communis*

Here in coastal San Diego where we are essentially frost free for the majority of the winter, about the only requirement for growing these plants in the out of doors is plenty of supplemental watering during hot dry spells. Using *Pilosocereus* as a barometer of potential success with *Melocactus* in the landscape, one must only consider the relative size and longevity of species for deciding whether a particular plant might be best for pot or plot. Some of the larger species (*M. broadwayii*, *M. intortus*, *M. zehntneri*) can reach a globular girth of over 2 feet in diameter, with cephaliums as long as an additional 2 to 3 feet. There was an arguable world's record cephalium on an old *Melocactus*

*intortus* on Bonaire, which was alleged to be over 6 feet in height (length, actually, as it sort of fell over and grew along the ground).

The medium to small-sized species are wholly suited to ornamental culture, being happy to live out it's days in a pot, be it ordained or not. I would suggest to anyone interested in learning more about these plants to read the following (most of these are available in the San Diego C&S Society's library):

"The genus *Melocactus* (Cactaceae) in Central and South America" Nigel Taylor in *Bradleya* 9 1991, also published as a stand-alone monograph (although it's hardly a monograph considering it doesn't cover roughly half the known species).

"*Melocactus* No Brasil" Carlos Rizzini (In Portugese, but offers a different systematic approach to the Brazilian species from Taylor)

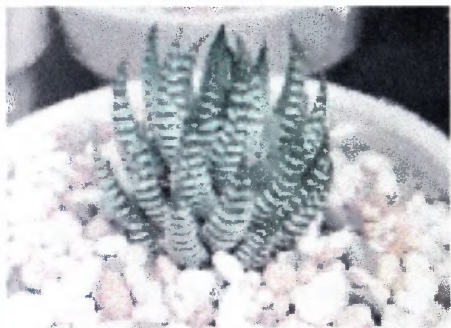
There have been a number of newly discovered and described species over the past 20 years or so. A few species are in such remote locations and are so infrequently visited and revisited by naturalists that conflicting descriptions of certain species from identical localities has caused some to speculate that these plants may actually be transforming themselves in front of our eyes. An intriguing notion, and one which, if proven, would certainly change the way we think about these plants. The chapters something as complex as a *Melocactus* could write in our cumulative knowledge about flowering-plant evolution is mind-boggling.

# Haworthias

*May they live long and Prosper*

By Michelle Heckathorn

**H**aworthia *fasciata* was one of the first succulents in my collection. I know that people would say that it is common and easy plant to grow, but for a novice it was great. Every year it got larger, even though the only thing I did was remove the offsets. Excited by my success with this one plant, I began my explorations into the universe that encompasses the genus Haworthia.



*H. reinwardtii v. zebrina*

Exploring this genus made me realize that it embodied one of my favorite ideals from Star Trek: Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations. Haworthias are an excellent example of this principle because of the ever-continuing variation in size, shape, color (including variegation), and patterning of the tubercles and windows on the leaves. This occurs not only in the genus itself, but also within each species. The diversity can make iden-

tification of Haworthias a major pain to do. Bruce Bayer chose to make our explorations easier by dividing the genus into three subgenera based on the work done before him. The separation of these subgenera was determined by the flower structure, rather than the appearance of the plants. The shape of the perianth, style, tube, and its connection to the pedicel characterizes the three subgenera. The first, Haworthia, uses *H. arachnoidea* as its type species. The second, Hexangulares, has *H. coarctata* as its type species. And the last, Robustipedunculares, has *H. pumila* as its type species. This really helps if your having problems with identifying one of your Haworthias, just wait for the flowers to narrow which subgenus it falls into.

Adventuring into their growing needs can be just a diverse experience as the rest. Even though Haworthias came from the same general area of the world, their flowering times, growth and dormancy cycles all vary. They all do agree on some of their requirements. All like bright light, but no direct sunlight (they turn red, black or burn). They seem to like a regular watering cycle: water, and then let them dry out almost completely before watering again. This holds true except for late winter to early spring. At this time the majority of the species lose all their



*H. uniodalensis*

roots and grow new a whole new set. Until the roots are established, even healthy plants are vulnerable to rot. During this time, I only give them enough water to keep the surface moist. I also pot them in a very well drained mix: 2 parts soil, 1 part perlite, and 1 part sand. For feeding I use fish emulsion at least once a month, which seems to keep mine happy.

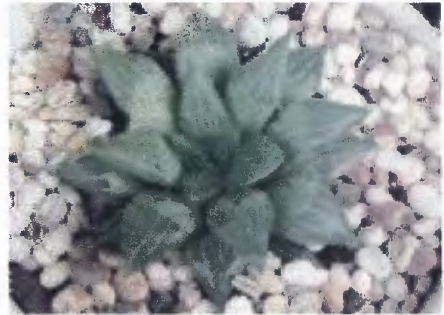
The only enemies that my Haworthias seem to have are snails and slugs, mealybugs, and my cat (who thinks that my plant shelves are his to play and nap on!). In case of those pesky snails and their ilk, I use organic snail bait. Beware of the chemical kind, because I found if left on the leaf surfaces stains or burns occur. The mealybugs get a solution of 4 parts water to 1 part rubbing



*H. limifolia*

alcohol. I put it in a spray bottle for the ones on top, or in a watering can for the ones below for the instant kill.

One of the best ways to get your Haworthias to prosper is to propagate them! We all know that propagating is the easiest and most environmentally friendly way to keep our plants going. Indulge in a mini adventure and grow your own from seed. Some of species it is the only way to get more because they rarely offset. It also allows you to achieve the plant that you want though hy-



*H. mirabilis*

bridizing. Be aware that for most Haworthias, it is not a quick process, but it rewards you with a plant that is yours from the very beginning.

When you next look at Haworthias, remember the principle of I.D.I.C. and you will know that that all things are possible even in a single genus of plants.

Bayer, Bruce *Haworthia Revisited: A Revision of the Genus*. Umdale Press: South Africa, 1999.  
Scott, Charles L. *The Genus Haworthia: a taxonomic revision*. Aloe Books: Johannesburg, South Africa, 1985.



# WHAT'S IN A NAME

By Stan Korabel  
from The Beaver Tale -- Southern Nevada

Recently I deviated from my usual evening ritual of studying the works of the 18th and 19th century philosophers while I listened to my collection of Gregorian chants. Instead I watched a TV special entitled "Girls Gone Wild – Retrospective and Critique". As I was taking notes I suddenly remembered that 250 years ago Carl Vonlinne (Linnagus) introduced Binary Nomenclature, the method in which organisms are classified with two names, genus and species. A set of rules, universally accepted by taxonomists governs the naming of plants – the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature.

Now I think that all of us are familiar with the concept. The problem for most of us is the Latin and Greek nomenclature. While I don't want to play down the difficulties there are some ways to overcome them. One of the best is a good dictionary (good=5lbs). My new Webster's Dictionary (Lexicon Publisher) has many botanical terms. You will find words such as Glauca=sea green, Glomerate=clump forming, Seta=bristle, and Cephal=head and many more. Did you know that Alexander's favorite horse was named Bucephala, "Hammer Head"? When I lived on Floogle Street one of the guys went by the name of Hammer-the simplest tool known to man. (took me a long time to get there).

Another source is our library. Many have a Glossary of Terms. One of the best is "Vygies, Gems of the Veldt". Attached is a list of some words (prefix, suffix) you might come across.

I'll end this with botuliform=shaped like a sausage. Otto Von

Bismark, one of the most savvy politicians of the 1800's, said "There are two things you don't want to know—how sausages are made and how laws are made".

Caule=stem  
Crassa=thick  
Fruiticose=shrub-like  
Poella, pulchra, pulchella=beautiful  
Truncate=cut off  
Carpus=fruit  
Platy=flat  
Fili=thread like  
Tenuis=thin or hair like  
Pubescent, Villose, Pilose, Tomentose=hair like (in varying degrees)  
Glabrous=smooth, hairless  
Macro=large  
Micro=small (also Parvi)  
Acantha=spined  
Phyte=plant  
Costate=ribbed  
Phyllum=leaf or plant  
Pauci=few  
Brachy=short, also Brevi  
Oides=resembling also Opsis  
A=without  
Ab=without  
Carpus=fruit  
Acantha=spine  
Caule=stem  
Hamatus=hooked  
Cephal=head  
Dentate=sharp teeth  
Digitate=with fingers  
Echinote=with spines or horns  
Eriv=wooly Sycefig  
Opsis & Oides=closely resembling  
Beruliform=sausage  
Rhiza=roots  
Pachy=thick  
Phytum=plant  
Parvi=small  
Pauci=few



# Get Ready For The Big Show

**O**ur annual show and sale is right around the corner and we all need to get ready. Several key members of our club will be out of town that weekend visiting the magical succulent heaven of Madagascar, so we need your help to make the show a success. Bring in as many cacti and other succulents you can. If you really want to contribute to the show, develop a display, just let me know how many tables you'll need. Entry cards will be available at the May meeting. If you won a trophy and took it home, please have it engraved with your name and bring it to the May meeting.

The show schedule is printed with this edition and there are some aspects to be aware of. The specialty division IV has trophy awards that have been donated over the years. If you wish to enter your plant in one of these categories, it will not be considered for another division trophy. For example, if you have a fantastic Mammillaria from Baja, you need to decide which trophy, best Mammillaria or best Mexican Plant you want your plant to be eligible to win because, it cannot be both. We do this to simplify the judging process, which takes hours. With more than 700 entries last year, I hope we can grow in size without being limited by the judging time.

On Friday, June 4, there will be members helping unload cars of those who would like the help. If you make a list of your entries it will help you keep track at the end of the show. Bring in those empty boxes for our sales area. If you are interested in selling plants, please contact Tom Birt our Sales Chair. You must obtain a bar code number before the deadline or you will not be able to sell at our event. As always, we need your help and participation to make this a huge success. See you there,

Tom Knapik

# Upcoming Events

2004

**May 1 - 2** : 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](mailto: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 5th & 6th** The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society Annual Show & Sale. Saturday June 5th, 12:00 (Noon) - 5:00 P.M. Sunday June 6th, 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. Room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego CA The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society is hosting one of the largest exhibits of Cactus and Succulents in the United States. This show features spectacular specimens of cactus and other succulents from around the world. Exhibitors will be in on hand to answer your questions concerning culture of these plants. The show is free to the public. A large Plant Sale with many vendors is also conducted during the show. For more information please contact: Thomas DeMerritt, 858.270.5544

**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](mailto:cfstaples@aol.com)

**July 1 - 3** : CSSA Show and Sale at HBG Plant Sales are July 1, 2 and 3. Plant Show is July 2 and 3 only. Hours for both events are 10:30a.m. - 5:00p.m. Parking & Admission to Plant Sale and Show are free. (Special note: admission to Huntington Bot. Gdns is free on July 1). For more info. contact: Jim Hanna at: [aloecats1@aol.com](mailto:aloecats1@aol.com).

**July 17 - 25** Henry Shaw Cactus Society will hold its Annual Show and Sale at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Opening at noon on Saturday July 17 it will be open daily until Sunday July 25 during the hours from 9am until 5pm. Both show and sale will be in the Orthwein Floral Display Hall at the MBG. Details from Bob Harris at [bobharris@accessus.net](mailto:bobharris@accessus.net) or Pat Thomann at [prt@charter.net](mailto:prt@charter.net)

**August 14-15** Houston C&SS Annual Show and Sale. Free Admission to (judged) show of cacti and succulents. Rare and unusual plants for sale. Children's drawing contest (prizes!). Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway Dr, Houston, Texas. Hours 10am-5pm each day. Contact Hank Andresen for more details. Tel: 713-436-1734 or e-mail him at [hand1609@hotmail.com](mailto:hand1609@hotmail.com)

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