

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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Branch Secretary
Margaret Corina
79 Shirley Avenue
Shirley
Southampton
Hampshire
SO15 5NH

(023) 80779057

Newsletter Editor
Vinay Shah
29 Heathlands Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO53 1GU

vvshah@clara.co.uk
(023) 80261989

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Editorial

As everyone will be aware we did not hold a meeting in January so it's been a couple of months since we all met. I must say I have benefited from a nice long rest since producing the last newsletter!

The weather seems to be changeable at the moment – it was cold with a sharp frost a couple of nights ago and this was then followed by a wet and windy evening, reminiscent of what we usually experience in March. A few signs of the end of winter are beginning to appear out there - I saw some crocus in flower last week, and have also noticed a set of yellow daffodils along the roadside.

I stopped watering my plants in mid-October last year and many of them now look like they need a drink, but I have resisted the urge to water anything as yet. There is still a risk of a sharp frost so I will wait until the end of the month – if we then have a couple of warm days in a row, I may wake everything up by giving them a light watering.

Announcements

Today's meeting will consist of a variety of short talks by members, and we will have the use of a digital projector. If you have brought along images on a CD or memory card, please let me know.

All members should have received the December journal along with membership renewal forms at the end of last year. If you haven't already done so, please renew your membership as soon as possible.

The **2008 Branch programme** has been prepared and programme cards are available from the front

table. For those of you who tend to misplace the programme, I should mention that it is also displayed on our website.

Now, news of a couple of conventions. Further details of these are available from the front table.

Northampton and Milton Keynes Branch will be hosting a **Zone 6 Convention** at Milton Keynes on Saturday 23rd February. Speakers include Marlon Machado (The Cacti of Eastern Brazil, The Cacti of the Pampas) and Petr Pavelka (Namibia - From South to North, Madagascar - Diago Suarez to Antananarivo). Tickets are £12 (and include a light lunch. There will also be plant, book and sundries sales.

Zone 9 will be holding a Convention on Sunday 20th April, at Hardwicke Village Hall, near Gloucester. Speakers include Martin Lowry (Rebut's Jewels of the Andes), Petr Pavelka (Plant Hunting in Madagascar) and John Miller (Turbinicarpus in Habitat and Cultivation). There will be plant sales and tickets are again £12, including lunch and tea.

Last Month's Meeting - AGM

Chairman Peter Down started proceedings at the Annual General Meeting. He mentioned that the committee reports were included in the December newsletter, but the Chairman and Treasurer would say a few words.

He started by mentioning that 2007 had been a mixture of lows and highs, the lowest being the death of David Corina, a great loss to the branch. David had made a tremendous contribution to the branch over many years and we will miss him greatly. The New Forest Show proved to be problematic due to the weather, which turned the show into a mud bath. The branch show held in August was another disappointment with very little support from members – as a result, Ivor has stated that he does not want to organise any more shows but will continue with displays.

Now for some of the highs. In March, Steve Hammer gave a brilliant talk and our number were

swelled due to the MSG. At Easter, "Prickly Potting" was again a success, with 400 children potting up plants at the Romsey Garden Show. We had a enjoyable Branch dinner and we also hosted the Zone Quiz which went very well. Some of the committee have manned displays at Whiteley and Hilliers and these events went well. In September we had Marlon Machado speak to us. He thanked the committee and the members for supporting the branch by attending meetings and events.

Jim Roskilly mentioned that three of the four boys from the Hartley family (who came along to the "Prickly Potting") had had successful bone marrow transplants and the fourth (Luke) was due to be treated soon. (Indeed the latest news at <http://www.teamhartley.co.uk/fnews.asp> indicates that Luke has had his transplant, and things appear to be going well.)

At the end of Peter's summary, David Neville suggested that everyone in the room raise their glasses in memory of David Corina.

Margaret Corina then gave the Treasurer's report. She mentioned that the one person we haven't thanked yet was Peter Down - he does a lot for the branch, and even founded the branch so without him we wouldn't be here! She called for everyone to show their appreciation with a round of applause. Copies of the annual accounts had been handed out and Margaret went through some of the key figures. Page 2 showed the income and expenditure figures. The numbers were slightly down on last year but it had still been a good year. Our meetings remain free - David Neville mentioned that half the branches in the country now charge an attendance fee at their branch meetings. Page 4 showed assets added during the year, which included books for the library and also a new projector screen which has been admired by everyone who's seen it. The accounts were accepted and Peter asked the members to show their appreciation for Margaret's efforts.

Show Manager Ivor Biddlecombe spoke next and he explained his reason for not wanting to organise any more shows. It takes a lot of organising and effort before and after the actual event and sadly the shows are no longer well-supported by our members. Displays are easier to put on since there is no need to worry about things like the schedule or judging or prize cards. Similarly, the table shows at branch meetings are poorly supported and only 5 people entered through the whole year. It's a pity since new members or visitors benefit from seeing these plants. People don't need to enter every month - just bring along plants one or twice in the year would

make a difference.

Peter mentioned that *Plants of Interest* was another regular feature at meetings which required support from the audience. The plants brought along don't necessarily have to be cacti or succulents - most of us are interested in other types of plants too.

Peter thank Ivor for all the work he does for the branch and proceeded to mention our Plant Sales officer, Bruce Beckerleg. Plant sales are responsible for quite a significant part of the Branch's income. Peter mentioned that he recently found a financial report for the branch dated December 1960 and the branch closed the year with funds of £41 4s 2d. In those early days the branch used to struggle from year to year until some of the members started the idea of selling plants at meetings.

My work on the Newsletter and Branch website were mentioned next – we continue to have a good quality newsletter and our website promotes us to a greater audience. Peter thanked David Neville for producing the 2008 Branch programme, and Jim Roskilly for his efforts on publicity. Jim mentioned that getting a mention in the local papers depended very much on what else is happening in the region. Radio Solent have also changed the way they mention local events.

Philip Clemow was mentioned next. Peter is standing down as Librarian, and Peter thanked him for all his efforts over the years and his contributions to the running of the committee. During the year we were finally allocated space to store books at the halls. One of the things Philip has done is to go through the library lending records and identify the books which are not borrowed often or at all. Peter also proceeded to thank Glenn Finn (and members of the Finn family) for handling the arduous task of refreshments at each of the monthly meetings. I am sure everyone is grateful for this service at our meetings!

Peter mentioned that as usual there had been no new nominations for the committee, but following Philip's decision to retire, Dorothy (Dot) England has gallantly stepped forward to assume the role of Librarian. Peter thanked our auditors Colin and Lorraine Bielckus for once again producing a professional set of accounts. He proposed a show of hands to confirm election of the committee and the new committee was duly accepted.

Peter concluded by thanking June Purseglove for handling the raffle, and also people like Derek Prior and the others who help at our displays and events.

The final act was to award prizes for the table show. Jim Roskilly had won the Gateway Vase (Open Succulents) and Bruce Beckerleg had won the other three main trophies. Jean Burnay again won the Ladies Cup for having the highest point total for a female entrant.

Following this, Peter invited everyone to help themselves to the vast spread of food which had been brought in by everyone.

Vinay Shah

Branch Committee Meeting

A branch committee meeting was held at 79 Shirley Avenue on the 21st of January. Our new Librarian Dot England was attending her first meeting, having taken over from Philip Clemow.

The branch finances remain in a healthy state. The meeting hall rent is being increased this year, but as a registered charity we continue to receive a 50% discount.

Arrangements for the February meeting were discussed. It was hoped that some members would bring along slides or digital pictures, and we would arrange to borrow a digital projector from Colin/Lorraine Bielckus.

Margaret Corina will need some help to prepare supplies (compost, potting packs, seeds, labels etc) for "Prickly Potting", so several of the committee will assist with this. David Neville will again obtain a supply of plants from the continent.

There was concern that attendance at our Branch meetings in the latter half of last year was lower than usual, even allowing for the summer vacation period. A future edition of the newsletter will include some questions to gauge what sort of meetings members would like us to put on.

Ticketing for the New Forest Show in July will again be a problem this year. We have only been allocated 2 tickets per day for each of the three days, and it really needs three or four people to man the sales table and stand, and talk to the public. The branch will purchase some additional tickets to allow more helpers to attend each day.

Some "open days" where members allow branch members to visit their collection will be considered for the summer months.

Vinay Shah

One of the last actions of our outgoing librarian Philip Clemow was to prepare a list of ex-library books which are being sold off. If you are interested in any of these titles (some of them are actually quite good!), please have a word with Dot England.

Books for Sale

<i>Cacti (Botanical aspects, descriptions & cultivation)</i>	W Barthlott	£2
<i>Cacti-A gardener's handbook to their identification and culture</i>	J Borg	£2
<i>The Mammillaria Handbook</i>	R T Craig	£3
<i>Cacti and Succulents for the Amateur</i>	Glass & Foster	£2
<i>The Cactus Handbook</i>	E Haustein	£3
<i>The Study of Cacti</i>	V Higgins	£1
<i>Succulent Plants</i>	Jacobsen	£3
<i>Cacti</i>	W Kupper & P Roshardt	£2
<i>The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Succulents</i>	G Rowley	£10

Philip Clemow

The following was contributed by Jim Roskilly. Perhaps I should have waited till the summer before including it, but here it is anyway :

The BBQ

It is almost barbecue season. Therefore it is important to refresh your memory on the etiquette of this sublime outdoor cooking as it is the only type of cooking a real man will do, probably because there is an element of danger involved. When a man volunteers to do the BBQ, the following chain of events are put into motion

Routine:

1. The woman buys the food.
2. The woman makes the salad, prepares the vegetables and makes dessert.
3. The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces and takes it to the man who is lounging beside the grill - beer in hand.

Here comes the important part :

4. THE MAN PLACES THE MEAT ON THE GRILL

More routine...

5. The woman goes inside to organise the plates and cutlery.
6. The woman comes out to tell the man that the meat is burning. He thanks her and asks if she will bring another beer while he deals with the situation.

Important again;

7. THE MAN TAKES THE MEAT OFF THE GRILL AND HANDS IT TO THE WOMAN

More routine...

8. The woman prepares the plates, salad, bread,

utensils, napkins, sauces and brings them to the table.

9. After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes

And most important of all.

10. Everyone PRAISES the MAN and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts.

11. The man asks the woman how she enjoyed "her night off" and, upon seeing her annoyed reaction, concludes that there's just no pleasing some women!

Ted Budgen (Submariners Association)

Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 4th March, and will feature a talk titled "Asclepiadaceae" by our branch member Tom Radford. Tom's talk was originally due to be given last September but he kindly agreed to be rescheduled when we arranged for Marlon Marchado to speak to the branch at short notice.

The March table Show will consist of the **Echinocactus** group (cacti) and the **Agave** group (succulents). Please note that you can submit more than one entry in any of the classes.

The Echinocactus group includes *Echinocactus*, *Ferocactus*, *Homalocephala*, and *Leuchtenbergia*.

The Agave group includes *Agave*, *Beaucarnea*, *Beschorneria*, *Calibanus*, *Dasylirion*, *Dracaena*, *Furcraea*, *Hesperaloe*, *Manfreda*, *Nolina*, *Samuela* and *Yucca*.

Forthcoming Events

Fri 15 th Feb	Isle of Wight	Branch Quiz & Members' Talks
Sat 16 th Feb	Portsmouth	"Argentina – Part 2" – Cliff Thompson
Tue 4 th Mar	Southampton	"Asclepiadaceae" - Tom Radford
Sat 15 th Mar	Portsmouth	"Basic Botany for Cactophiles" – Mal Weobley
Mon 17 th Mar	Southampton	Branch Committee Meeting
Fri 21 st Mar	Isle of Wight	"Society Slides" – Sonia Barker -Fricker
Tue 1 st Apr	Southampton	"Mesembryanthemums" - Terry Smale

Branch website: <http://www.southampton.bcss.org.uk>