

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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50th Anniversary Edition



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Editorial

A quick glance at the header should remind you that this month marks our 50th Anniversary! I wasn't even born when the branch was set up, but thinking of all the things that have changed or been invented since 1954 makes it hard to imagine what life was like, all those years ago. Nevertheless, it's quite reassuring to think that our branch has survived through all that time, and in recent years is actually doing rather well – we have a nice meeting hall, we host a good series of events each year, and the branch's finances are in a relatively healthy state.

Announcements

I hope everyone is aware that the Convention to mark our 50th Anniversary will take place this coming Sunday. If not, there is still time to buy tickets from Margaret! Access to the hall will be possible on the preceding day, so we should be able to make some preparations on the Saturday. On the day itself, the doors open at 9:30am, but we will need assistance from volunteers from 8:00am onwards, to help unload plants for the visiting nurseries, and for any last minute setting-up of tables and chairs.

Quotes for outsourced catering proved to be quite unreasonable, so we've decided to prepare filled rolls on the preceding Saturday. (Please talk to Margaret if you can help with this task.) On the day of the convention, we will need

members to help in the kitchen through the day with preparing tea and coffee and serving food.

The provisional date of the **Branch dinner** has been chosen as Friday, 7th May, and the venue is likely to be the Clump Inn at Chilworth. Please let a member of the committee know if you would like to come.

It is extremely sad to have to report on the passing away of David Corina's mother, **May**, three weeks ago. She was a regular visitor to our meetings and used to help in the kitchen, and it only seems like a few days ago when we saw her at the Christmas social. At the turn of the year, she caught an infection which severely weakened her and she was unfortunately unable to recover from this illness.

At the last two meetings, the **car park** immediately in front of the meeting hall has become full. If when you arrive for a meeting, there's no space to park, then please head east (towards junction 7 of the M27). Just 100 yards up the road, turn left and then left again into the main church car park. There is a walkway from that car park back to our hall.

A new edition of the **BCSS Guide to Shows** has been published by the Society. We have bought several copies and these are available from the Pots and Sundries table for £2.

Now a brief history of the branch, from Peter Down:

The First 50 Years

(of the Southampton & District Branch of the NCSS and BCSS) - A personal view by Peter Down (Branch Chairman)

In 1950 I did a school exchange visit with my French pen pal, Jean-Pierre Serrier. He lived just outside Paris and during the three week stay we visited Paris several times. Jean-Pierre's family had a small cactus collection which spent the winter in the cellar! In August the plants looked fine. On our trips to Paris we often passed the market stalls on the side of the river

Seine. Some of them sold cacti and succulents and I bought a few. The French family gave me some cuttings and I returned to Southampton with about 20 plants. I was 'hooked'!

In the next couple of years I made myself known to anyone I noticed had cactus plants in their greenhouse or, more often, on their window sill. Kenneth Harle ran a cactus nursery in Lower Basildon just north of Reading near the river Thames. He supplied Woolworth's and other outlets with nice clean healthy seedlings and many of the older generation of cactus growers started with his plants. In 1952 and 1953 he put on a display of plants at the Southampton "Fish Keepers" show at the Avenue Hall. There I met George Hiscocks who had a lot of cacti and lived fairly near me in St. Deny's. We decided it would be a good idea to have a Southampton Branch of the NCSS. I joined the national cactus society in 1953.

Having found out where Lower Basildon was, I cycled to my aunt's in Reading from Southampton and from there visited Kenneth Harle a little further on. My aunt lived at 1 Ramsbury Drive and later took in Gordon Rowley as a lodger when he got a job at Reading University. Gordon later bought the house from her and developed it into 'Cactusville'. Another time in the early fifties a friend and I cycled to a nursery near Arundel to visit an elderly eccentric who lived in his greenhouse. (This is quite commonplace in Holland now but seemed a bit strange then; also thinking about it, the elderly gentleman was probably a lot younger than I am now!) Anyway he gave me a 2 foot (0.6 metre) topcut from a *Cereus peruvianus* which I strapped across my saddlebag and took great care getting on and off my bike on the way home.

After twice meeting George Hiscocks at the fish show, I persuaded my neighbour, Bert Thompson, to put an advert in the 'Echo' to see if anyone else was interested in forming a local branch. There were several names, thanks to my contacts and the newspaper advert and the first meeting happened at the back room of the Royal Arms, Padwell Road, in March 1954. I was up to my neck in 'muck and bullets' at the time doing my National Service. My dad went to the first few meetings and reported progress. In 1955 I was freed from National Service and soon got involved in branch activities. I probably joined the committee in 1956 and have been involved ever since, many years as

treasurer, as vice chairman and more recently chairman.

Bert Thompson was the first secretary and Elsie Margetson was one of the first chairmen. Elsie was a teacher from Winchester and had been growing cacti for years and was very encouraging to new growers and collectors. George Hiscocks started to import plants from Edelman in Holland and everyone was able to get a good variety of choice plants. I seem to remember that nearly all of K. Harle's plants were mammillarias. After a few years we moved from the pub. I don't remember the reason, perhaps we were not spending enough at the bar (you could get a nice plant for the price of a pint), or perhaps we were drinking too much! The next meeting place was the committee room of the St. John's Ambulance Hall in Kings Park Road. This was like having a meeting on a coach, the room was long and narrow and difficult to socialise in as there was only a narrow through way from front to back. We were allowed to use the main hall for our 10th anniversary meeting when Mr. Hampshire and Winnie Dunn visited us. George Meager was chairman at that time.

Growing numbers and the meeting place restrictions caused us to move to the Spiritualists Church Hall off the Avenue. The hall was down a dark lane behind the main church, and more than one member found themselves in a spiritualist service before they realised they were at the wrong meeting!

Ian Acton moved from Newcastle in the mid-sixties and quickly got involved. He became branch secretary about 1965 and negotiated a rental for the newly built Allotment Association Hall in Bangor Road, Freemantle. This served us well for over thirty years but the hall deteriorated and parking became a problem. In 1968 the branch enrolled its 100th member, a young man called Oxborough. He was a botany student at Totton College and as I live near to it he spent many summer lunch times in my greenhouse. Ken Halstead was chairman then, Ian Acton secretary and myself treasurer.

We continued to meet at Bangor Road until 2001 when we moved to the Church Hall at West End which is much more comfortable and has proved a good move. We have been getting new members join and some away for years have started coming back to meetings.

Some of the names that come to mind during our 50 year history are Elsie Margetson, George Meager, Ken Halstead, Doris Meager and Roger Labbett as chairmen. Bert Thompson, Ken Thornton, Ian Acton, David Phillips and Richard White as secretaries.

We are proud at Southampton to have had David Neville as a member since he was a teenager. Ivor Biddlecombe has been show secretary for about thirty years, following George Cozins. There are so many people who have done so much for the branch over the decades that I cannot name them all, I cannot remember all their names for one thing! We are indebted to Margaret Corina for organising the 50th Anniversary celebration Convention and also the ‘prickly potting’ attraction at the show at Broadlands, well supported by her husband, David.

To sum up — the branch would not be what it is today without the support and contributions of many people and especially the committee and helpers of today. Everyone should be proud of Southampton & District’s first 50 years. I wish you continued success in the next 50!

Peter Down

Last Month’s Meeting

Plants of Interest

This month’s *Plants of Interest* featured plants brought along by a number of different members. First to speak was Jim Roskilly who had brought along an unusual plant purchased at “The Range”. The plant had been labelled as an Aloe, but Jim thought it might be an Agave. In actual fact, the plant was a *Dyckia*, which is a bromeliad. The dozen or so dark green leaves were arranged in a rosette and were covered with white speckles, and had fine teeth along the edge of the leaves. Someone from the audience had identified the plant as *Dyckia marnier-lapostollei*.

Ivor Biddlecombe had brought along 4 plants. He mentioned that at this time of the year, it seemed that only the Aloes were doing anything in his greenhouse. First was Aloe cv. ‘Doran Black’, which is a cultivar with nicely patterned leaves. The plant had several heads, of which 4 were bearing spikes of orange flowers. By contrast, *Aloe longistyla* has a much sturdier flower head.

Next was Aloe cv. ‘Lizard Lips’ which had 8 heads. This is a relatively easy plant to grow, capable of producing a nice clump in no time at all. The leaves are attractive, featuring a dark green base with light green markings.

Ivor’s final plant was *Aloinopsis rubrolineata*, which featured 3 buds which were likely to go on to produce yellow flowers. Ivor wasn’t sure whether this plant was flowering early or late!

Finally, Philip Clemow had brought in a *Veltheimia* - a South African bulb which is a member of the Hyacinthaceae. The main flower spike was forming on a stalk, and had yet to open, but the unusual thing was that 2 red flowers had somehow formed and burst out midway through the flower stalk.

Copiapoathon 2003

Paul Klassen started his talk by explaining that the term Copiapoathon was first coined by David Hunt, in reference to a meeting where the taxonomy of Copiapoas was being discussed. In Paul’s usage, Copiapoathon referred to an event related to the study of plants of the genus Copiapoas and the environment they grow in.

Paul has made a couple of trips to Chile (in 2001 and 2003) to study this genus, and his talk was to be an account of a dozen or so of the stops made during the 2003 trip. On this trip, the UK contingent consisted of Anne Adams, Paul Klaassen, Angie Money, Benjy Oliver, Paul Sherville, Bryan Thomas, Cliff Thompson and Ian Woolnough. Others such as Finn Larsen from Denmark, Rudolf Schulz from Australia and Dutchman Leo van der Hoeven and several friends from Chile met up with the party at various stages of the trip.

Before continuing with an account of Paul’s talk, I should mention that he has done an excellent job of documenting his trips to Chile with detailed day-to-day diaries which are available for viewing on the Internet. These are well worth reading if you have an interest in Copiapoas, or are thinking of visiting Chile. Accounts of his trips can be found at:

2001 Copiapoathon
<http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/paul.klaassen>

2003 Copiapoathon
<http://copiapoathon2003.mysite.freemove.com>

Paul started by showing some maps of Northern Chile, showing the towns and regions they travelled through. Chile is a long and narrow country on the western side of South America. Although only 100 miles wide at its widest point, it is around 3000 miles long. Copiapos grow along the coastal strip of the Atacama desert, and also on the side of the hills facing the Pacific ocean. These hills are either close to the sea or a few kilometres inland and they rise to around 1000 metres. Although rainfall is very low in this region, plants receive moisture when clouds from the Pacific hit the hills and the mist/fog condenses.

The first discoveries of Copiapoa plants were made in the 1850's, but it wasn't until 1922 that the genus was set up by Britton and Rose. [I presume the genus was named after the province and town called Copiapo in central Chile.]

The flight from Heathrow to Santiago was routed via Madrid and Buenos Aires, and the trip took a long 24 hours. The first photo featured a plant which Paul described as a "scrawny little mess". A matchstick gave a size of scale, and this was *Copiapoa laui* in the Guanillos Valley. We also saw a *Neoporteria* with a pink flower. Paul mentioned that their trip was in June, which is winter in the southern hemisphere, so flowers on any of the cacti were a rare sight.

Between himself and Angie, a lot of photographs were taken during the trip. Angie took around 4000 photos using a digital camera, and Paul took 2500 with his conventional camera. If it wasn't for the talks he gives (and the need for slides), he would take all his photos digitally because of the convenience of being able to preview the pictures right at the point of having taking them. There was always a danger with conventional photography that some problem might prevent the film from being developed properly. Also with digital pictures, their quality is undiminished by age.

They eventually came across a large specimen clump of *Copiapoa longistaminea* with 50+ heads. They knew of the plant because Rudolf Schulz's book "Copiapoa in their Environment" features exactly the same plant on page 93, but the picture was reversed during printing, so it took them a while to realise whether or not they had really found the same plant.

Some of the Copiapoa plants bore yellow flowers. Although the shortest day occurs in June, at this latitude there is little difference in day-length between winter and summer, and the late flowerers were a welcome sight.

Copiapoa esmeraldana might just be a juvenile form of *C. grandiflora*. Seedlings germinated from seeds taken from the two species do appear to be very similar. We were shown another large clump of *C. longistaminea*, with the black spines making a nice contrast against the pale green body. Some of these plants were so large that Paul thought it was possible some might be thousands of years old, given the fact that there was so little water around.

We then saw a *C. longistaminea* with *C. grandiflora* growing on either side. The former had green bodies with black spines. The latter were dark green and less attractive to look at. Paul mentioned that with four species growing close together in this region, there was always the chance of hybrids.

We then saw a cristate *C. grandiflora*, next to a *Neoporteria*. When the plants are dry and there are no flower remains, it's really quite hard to tell different species apart; they just look like spiny balls. In some cases, it was a challenge to even find the plants. Well camouflaged plants were easier to spot if in flower, but at this time of the year, most weren't.

They found a *C. laui* which consisted of 25 heads (offsets) in a 3" x 3" square. Paul linked this find to the fact that the only noise they heard was the hooves of Guanacos, which are a small version of the llama. These animals are protected from hunting but unfortunately they like to feed on *C. laui*, so the attempt at conservation has upset a delicate balance, resulting in plants being wiped out in some areas. Paul thinks that guanacos eat the main plant body, causing the damaged plants to form masses of small offsets. Sometimes, the juvenile offsets can look quite different from the parent.

They headed out towards the Pacific coast, and found the monument to Alan Craig. Alan died in 2001 and his favourite spot was in the Guanillos valley. His widow Gwen had got a local stone mason in Esmerelda to make a monument and this had been placed near the beach at the mouth of a valley. Nearby was another *C. longistaminea*.

A group photo showed several of the party, including Cliff Thompson, Finn Larsen, Anne Adams, Paul Sherville, Bryan Thomas, Ian Woolnough and Benjy Oliver. Paul mentioned that he and Benjy will be going back to Chile in October this year, possibly with our own David Neville.

Next, the party headed back inland, towards Esmerelda. Through a small opening in the hillside, they came across “Secret Valley” – a spot ideal for camping. Rudolf had found this location in 1996, and they had also been there in 2001. Here they found 2 species growing close together, so we saw a photo of *C. longistaminea* and a 2-stemmed *C. columna-alba*.

We also saw a close up of the body of a *Copiapoa* which was covered in the black cyanobacterium *Nostoc*. This organism can survive extreme conditions, but it has to be careful, since if it covers the entire surface of the plant, the host will be unable to photosynthesize and will eventually die!

Quite spookily, time seemed to have stood still in “Secret Valley”. The remains of a fire which they had lit in 2001 were still there, as was a stem of *Copiapoa columna-alba* which they had cut and left as an experiment. It seems that the dry conditions lead to very little natural rotting. There was another majestic *C. columna-alba*, and they also saw several dichotomous and crested plants.

North of Guanillos valley was Tigrillo valley, where the plants were like *C. longistaminea*, but had a different spine colour. These had been named as *Copiapoa tigrillensis* (nomen nudum, no description had been published to back it up) by Karl Knize. The same plant has also been cited as *Copiapoa uhligiana*.

Paul mentioned that the soil here was open/porous granite, and quite different from other localities. There were high concentrations of nitrates and minerals such as copper and arsenic in the soil. Indeed, differences in the appearance of plants may well be due to the different concentrations of chemicals and metals in the soil. This may be another reason why plants grown in cultivation look different from those in habitat.

It was very peaceful. There was no sound except for the waves; they were around 50m from the sea.

A scene from one of the hills showed them at the junction of three valleys. The high hills in the background were the northern part of the Pan De Azucar national park. Still at Tigrillo, they found a plant which might be what Knize described as *Copiapoa goldii* (another nomen nudum). Some of the plants did have golden spines, but other nearby plants had darker/grey spines. At another location, they found a more mature plant, where the gold colouring was disappearing, so it seems that offsets and young plants can look quite different from adult plants.

Paul mentioned that he is working on creating a CD containing a summary of his trips together with the associated photographs. However, he was keeping some of the best photos back for a book (to be written in collaboration with Marlon Machado and others) which when published might be called “South American Cacti, Coast to Coast”.

Because of geological action, Chile is still being pushed out of the Pacific Ocean at the rate of one inch per century, so the Andes continue to get taller. Earthquakes and tremors in Chile are quite a regular occurrence!

Moving one kilometre inland, they found around a dozen specimens of *Copiapoa columna-alba*, including 3 tall ones. This is considered to be a member of the *C. cinerea* complex, and it is the southernmost example of that group.

The numbers of plants increased as they moved further inland. The plants lean at 60° towards the north so as to minimise their exposure to the sun. At noon, the woody apex of the plant directly faces the sun, and the rest of the plant is therefore in the shade. However, sometimes the plants do tip over!

We then saw some examples of photos published by Marlon Machado called “Cacti above the Clouds.” Mount Perales at Taltal is 800ft above the ground and it’s possible for clouds to envelope the hills. Paul showed us some slides from 2001 for comparison, and said that he was disappointed that there were hardly any clouds to be seen in the 2003 visit! Here, they found the high altitude form of *C. cinerea*, which Ritter described as *C. tenebrosa*.

To Paul, the genus *Copiapoa* seems to be one highly variable species. It’s hard to get anyone to define clearly how the different species vary, and there are so many variations to be found in

nature. In addition, all the plants have yellow flowers and there is no specialisation for pollination. In 2001, in Guanillos valley, they had seen a single bee visiting all 4 species present, indicating probable hybridization over the years.

Overlooking Taltal, there was another photo of *C. tenebrosa*. After travelling 20km, they ended up at Chifunco. Some of the shrubs they saw along the way were *Euphorbia lactiflua* and *Oxalis gigantea*.

At Paposa, they found another plant in the hills. *C. eremophila*, is a high-altitude form of *C. haseltoniana* which itself is a form of *C. cinerea* (with yellow wool in the apex of the plant). In other species, the wool is white. There were clumps of dozens of plants, all leaning at the same angle.

They continued south from Chifunco. In the rocks, they found a golden yellow ball of spines, which was identified as *Eriosyce rodentiophila* sp. *chifunco*. A 6 headed plant was perhaps a northern form of *C. longistaminea*? Some of the plants grow right on the coast and must be tolerant of salt in the sea spray. At San Ramon, they found plants trapped in a valley. *Copiapoa krainziana* had yellow wool and white spines. It seems that *C. krainziana* is really like a densely spined *C. cinerea*.

Continuing after the break, we saw *Neoporteria taltalensis*, and an aged *C. cinerea* battered with marks all over the body. A plant with dense spines was probably *C. krainziana*, or it might have been an extreme form of *C. cinerea*. A light green sphere was a *C. cinerea* seedling. We saw clumps with 25 heads, and also two 2 clumps with different spine colours. *C. albispina* is a cinerea-type with white spines, but these are not as dense as with *C. krainziana*.

Up on the sides of some of the overhangs, there were some spectacular plants. Some of these had become dislodged and it was very tempting to just pick up these plants, but it's illegal to import these into the UK. Seeds are not included in the ban, but in Chile, it was illegal to collect seeds from plants within National Parks.

They moved north of Taltal to Papaso. On a hill it was very foggy, but they found *Neoporteria paucicostata* and *Copiapoa humilis*. Here they also found another plant with plenty of offsets which was probably the result of damage caused

by a guanaco. The main plant and the offsets looked different, and Paul offered the possibility that *C. laui* might well be related to bigger bodied plants but it just looks different because most plants are relatively young.

They again encountered heavy fog and a slide showed how their cars were almost impossible to see in the thick mist. Damp air is unable to reach the Atacama desert, because of the coastal hills and the Andes. East of Antofagasta, Maria Elena is said to be the driest place on earth. Paul stated that over 30 years, the average rainfall had been calculated as 0.4mm / year!

They headed back towards the Pacific Ocean. Just north of El Cobre, they again encountered clouds in the mountains. Offshore from one of the bays is the Isla Pan de Azucar, which is home to 3000 humboldt penguins.

They found thousands of plants on hillside after hillside. These were colonies of *Copiapoa columna-alba*. The climate here is influenced by El Niño, and Paul suggested that every 25 years there may be heavy rains and that's perhaps why there were groups of plants of similar age, but nothing in between. He couldn't see the distribution of plants of different ages which one would expect to see in a normal population.

At Carrizal Bajo, they found *C. dealbata* with 100+ greyish heads (and black spines) in a 5 foot clump. Also found in this area were the similar-looking *C. carrizalensis* and the rather different *C. echinoides* – which had a green body and grey spines.

They found a yellow flowered *Cumulopuntia sphaerica* (also known as *Tephrocactus bertii*), and on the way home, took pictures of *C. coquimbana*. *Miqueliopuntia miquelii* (a monotypic genus) was a plant they had seen before, but this was the first one in flower. They risked life and limb to get a photograph of the pink flower; the plant was 10 metres across and the flower was right in the middle!

Paul ended his talk by using a mixed collection of slides. A slide borrowed from Leo showed a 30-headed specimen of *C. atacamensis*. We then saw a really woolly *C. krainziana* and a very aged and white *C. krainziana* with a tuft on the top. We ended with another of Leo's slides which showed a hairy *Sulcorebutia* with red flowers.

To summarise, Paul gave an interesting talk on the genus *Copiapoa*. The scale and condition of the plants was excellent, and I am sure that many of the people who saw the photos must have wished they could see the plants in person!

Vinay Shah

Table Show – February

There were 12 entries in the February table show.

	Cacti – Echinocactus Group	Succulents – Agave Group
Open	(1) I Biddlecombe <i>Copiapoa hypogea</i>	(1) B Beckerleg <i>Agave victoria-reginae</i>
	(2) G Finn <i>Copiapoa uhligiana</i>	(2) J Roskilly <i>Agave utahensis</i>
	(3) –	(3) I Biddlecombe <i>Agave victoria-reginae</i>
Intermediate	(1) B Beckerleg <i>F. horizontalanus</i>	(1) I Biddlecombe <i>Agave fernandi-regis</i>
	(2) G Finn <i>Ferocactus macrodiscus</i>	(2) B Beckerleg <i>Agave striata</i>
	(3) I Biddlecombe <i>Ferocactus macrodiscus</i>	(3) P Clemow <i>Agave toumeyana bella</i>

Ivor Biddlecombe

Branch Committee Meeting

Committee meetings have been held at the Corinas' on January 19th and February 23rd.

Matters discussed included plans for future events, in particular the 50th Anniversary Convention, and our participation in the Garden Show at Broadlands over the Easter weekend.

A tremendous amount of hard work has gone into the organisation of the Convention and everything seems on course. This should be one the best BCSS-related events on the South Coast in recent years. As of February 23rd, over 70 tickets have been sold, so we are approaching break-even.

At the Broadlands Show, we will be setting up 3 stations for prickly potting. The organisers have asked us to cater for up to 500 children across the 2 days!

A date for the Branch dinner has provisionally been set as Friday May 7th, at the same venue as last year (The Clump Inn, Chilworth).

Glenn Finn has volunteered for the post of catering manager, which has been vacant for many years. At recent meetings and shows, we have been fortunate to rely on a group of people taking on this onerous responsibility.

We discussed ideas for how to continue with a Zone show. Zone funds have reduced below £200, and with recent shows resulting in losses of around £100, the show cannot continue in its current format. There is also little point in hosting a show at a cheap hall if no members of the public come to see the show. It is Southampton's turn to host the Zone show, and one possibility which was discussed was to use one of the two days of the Broadlands Garden Show to host a Zone Show and to then stage a display on the second day.

Vinay Shah

Branch Website

The setting up of a branch Website has been discussed at recent committee meetings. In previous years, Richard White had maintained a set of pages promoting our Branch on his web space at Southampton University, but access to the information had become intermittent. Indeed, after Richard's move to Cardiff, access to the pages he had created was removed completely!

In order to restore a presence on the Internet, towards the end of last year we arranged for web hosting via Tony Mace who also hosts many of the other BCSS branch sites. After resolving some access issues, I am pleased to inform that a new form of the branch's Website is up and running again.

The site can be accessed by using the URL:

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

I will be responsible for maintaining the website but have only had a few hours to work on it, so at present, it consists of just a couple of web

pages. One of these describes our branch, and provides a listing of our 2004 branch programme. The other page is dedicated to describing the 50th Anniversary Convention. In future, I hope to expand the site by including more information:

- downloadable copies of our newsletters
- information about our events and shows
- cultivation advice
- additional information about branch officers
- a picture gallery of members' plants
- links to useful resources on the internet

If you have any ideas, suggestions or comments on the Website, please let me know! [For those of you who don't have internet access, it's quite likely that your local library will be able to help provide access.]

Vinay Shah

Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on April 6th, and will feature Ian Woolnaugh, who will talk about seed raising. I assume that this will be a practical talk. It's certainly well timed, with April being a good month in which to sow seeds.

The April Table Show will feature the **Opuntia** Group (cacti) and the **Aloe** Group (succulents).

The **Opuntia** group contains 21 genera, with the commonest being *Opuntia*, *Pterocactus* and *Tephrocactus*.

The **Aloe** group contains *Aloe*, *Bulbine*, *Chamaealoe*, *Guillauminia* and *Lomatophyllum*.

Forthcoming Events

Sun 7 th Mar	Southampton	50th Anniversary Convention and Plant Mini-Mart Nursling and Rownhams Village Hall, Nursling, Southampton
Fri 19 th Mar	Isle of Wight	"An Introduction to Succulent Plants" – Ray Jeffs
Sat 20 th Mar	Portsmouth	"Arizona in Flower" – Richard Hodgkiss
Tue 6 th Apr	Southampton	"Seed Raising" – Ian Woolnough
Sat 11 th Apr – Sun 12 th	Southampton	Spring Garden and Flower Show, Broadlands, Romsey
Fri 16 th Apr	Isle of Wight	"Asclepiadaceae" – T W Radford
Sat 17 th Apr	Portsmouth	Bring & Buy Sale
Tue 4 th May	Southampton	Members' Mini-show (schedule published in April)
Fri 7 th May	Southampton	Branch Dinner (to be confirmed)
Sat 15 th May	Portsmouth	"A to Z" – Bill Morris
Fri 21 st May	Isle of Wight	Pre-show preparations (@ Peter Collard's)
Sat 29 th May	Isle of Wight	Isle of Wight Branch Annual Show - Church Hall, Town Lane, Newport

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