

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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### Editorial

Recent weather has certainly been summer-like, with temperatures building up nicely over the past couple of weeks. I have been watering the plants in the conservatory two or even three times a week.

Some of the cacti are starting to produce their second flush of flowers, so there is still some colour around the greenhouse. I think feeding of the plants (with Miracid) during the past couple of months has also been beneficial to them, with plant body and spine colours looking quite good, especially immediately after a watering.

### Announcements

The Branch took part in the **Southampton Festival** this past weekend, and it proved to be a successful event. The weather was very warm and conditions in the marquee were exhausting. However, we had a good number of helpers on both days and people were able to take turns at the sales table to cope with a steady stream of customers. Thanks are due in particular to Tony and June & Derek and Merrilyn. The branch won a gold medal for our display.

The **Branch Dinner** will be held at the Clump Inn this coming Friday (7th July), at 7:30pm for a 8:00pm start. Please let Margaret or David Corina know if you would like to attend, so that we can confirm numbers.

The next major event for the branch is the **New Forest Show**, which will run from 25-27<sup>th</sup> July. We will have a display and sales table at this event,

and if you would like to help out, please contact Margaret Corina.

By now, you should all have received the June Journal and this should have contained a **Gift Aid** form. If you are a tax payer, filling this form and returning it allows the society to claim a 28% rebate on your current and past subscriptions. It is certainly advisable to do this since the society may be able to claim several thousand pounds from the Inland Revenue, and this will help keep membership fees low for a while longer.

### Last Month's Meeting

#### *Plants of Interest*

At the June meeting, *Plants of Interest* were brought in by David Neville. First was *Aloe polyphylla* which grows in a spiral. It comes from high altitudes in the mountains of Lesotho. This particular plant was a lucky find in a garden centre, where it was being sold amongst more common aloes such as *A. aristata* and *A. humilis*.

*Opuntia berteri* (also know as *O. dimorpha* or *Cumulopuntia sphaerica*) bore yellow flowers. David said it was possible to get this species to flower if it is grown on a high shelf in a sunny position. The plant is frost hardy if kept dry. Next was the spineless form of *Ferocactus glaucescens* with 13 ribs, and also bearing yellow flowers. It is capable of flowering when 5 inches across. David said that he had managed to flower the spineless form at a smaller size than the spined variety. This plant had been purchased growing as a graft.

The flowers of *Gymnocalycium cardenasianum* have a tough time trying to force themselves through the fierce spines. David considered it as one of the finest gymnocalyciums. It is extremely slow growing. He had never seen an open flower since the spines prevent the flowers from opening properly. In habitat, the plant remains solitary and can reach a foot or so in diameter. He grows it hard, at a high position in the greenhouse to try and develop the spines, which are really strong and twisted.

Next were two specimens of *Astrophytum asterias*, although David thought that from the shape, one was probably a hybrid. The older plant was 20 years old and had started to shrink round the base. David thought this was a sign that it was on its way out. This species grows to a maximum diameter of 6-8 inches in the wild and tends to be very flat.

David had purchased a number of plants of *Agave macroacantha* from a nursery in Holland, and one of these had scorched in the centre. This would grow out in a couple of years so he was going to donate the plant to the raffle. It is a slow growing species, with strong thorns on the ends of the leaves. It is good for showing and doesn't grow very large.

The final plant was an *Epithelanta* whose name he was not sure about. John Pilbeam thought that the plant was *Epithelantha micromeris* ssp. *greggii*.

Thanks are due to Peter Down for providing the following account of last month's talk.

### **Rebutias & Sulcorebutias**

John Pilbeam was the speaker at our June meeting, talking about Rebutias and Sulcorebutias. John is an old friend of our branch and we always look forward to his visits.

John said that in some ways this would be a sad occasion, as the new Cactus lexicon is due to be published in the next few weeks and many of the plants he would show us would be lumped together and if recognised, may only get subspecies or variety status. I am sure that most of us who are in the hobby will still want to collect all the forms and varieties of our favourite genera.

Within Rebutia, John said there were three groupings: (a) *Rebutia* (in the strict sense), (b) *Aylosteria*, often characterised by long narrow flower stems and (c) *Mediolobivia*, which are short stocky plants nearly always with short attractive flowers, often bi-coloured.

### **Rebutia**

We were first shown a selection of plants from the Rebutia group. *R. fabrisii* usually has red flowers and has come into circulation in the last 10-15 years. There is also a yellow flowered form (v. *aureiflora*) which is an untidy grower making long stems. There is also v. *nana* which is half the size. *R. karusiana* has pale pink flowers and there are white flowered forms. This is believed to be related to *R. marsoneri*. The petals and spine

length are variable. *R. krainziana* has short white spines which makes the body look attractive. It is usually red flowered but it can also have orange, yellow or white flowers.

*R. marsoneri* has lovely yellow flowers and purple brown flower buds. It is one of the first rebutias to flower each year. *R. minuscula* has red flowers but is very prone to red spider (like many rebutias). Variety *grandiflora* has larger flowers. *R. padcayensis* includes *R. singularis* and *R. margarethae*, and has flower colours ranging from crimson and shades of red to orange and yellow.

*Rebutia senilis* is one of the plants many of us probably started with. The flowers are usually red but the form v. *kesselringiana* has yellow flowers, easily distinguished from *R. marsoneri* on account of the green flower buds. Less common is the form *R. senilis* ssp. *lilacinorosea* with, surprise surprise, lilac pink flowers. *R. violaciflora* has attractive pink violet flowers and *R. violaciflora* v. *knuthiana* is a form with reddish violet flowers. *R. wesserniana* has blood red flowers and bristle-like spines. It makes large stems up to 3 inches across. [PD - I found one of these growing on a tree in Northern Argentina on a steep cliff, the effort to photograph it was worth it!] *R. xanthocarpa* has short stemmed flowers. The flowers vary from carmine red and the variety *salmonea* has salmon pink flowers.

### **Aylosteria**

*R. albiflora* forms dense white spined mats of tiny stems with white flowers which sometimes contain pink petals. This has been used by hybridisers to produce some interesting plants. John has produced a hybrid called "Snow White" by crossing with *R. narvaecensis*. *R. albipilosa* has attractive fine spined stems with orange flowers, but he advised plenty of grit in the compost and care with the watering since it was a bit touchy. *R. albopectinata* has short pectinate spines on short stems and red flowers and his view was that it should probably be classified with the mediolobivias. *R. brunescens* has red flowers; when resting the bodies are a nice brown colour. *R. buiningiana* has flowers which are orange pink with clear pink outer petals – the flower colour fades to nice pastels as the flowers age. *R. donaldiana* was named in honour of the late John Donald, an authority on Rebutia. It has orange flowers and brown spines which contrast against the green plant bodies.

*R. fiebrigii* is quite variable and has had lots of names. It has red flowers. *R. flavistyla* has glassy

white spines and very attractive orange flowers. *R. fulviseta* forms handsome plants with brown spines and dark red flowers. *R. fusca* is slow growing and has short spines and red flowers. *R. heliosa* has beautiful miniature spination and orange flowers. In his opinion, it was one of top two or three rebutia species worth growing, *R. heliosa* v. *cajasensis* and v. *condorensis* are both beautifully spined varieties with red flowers. Rebutias are self-fertile but aylosteras are not. John said that the latter can be fooled by introducing foreign pollen and then re-pollinating with its own pollen. .

*R. hoffmannii* has dense spines and attractive pastel orange flowers with lilac outer petals. *R. jujuyana* has long amber-yellow spines, and orange flowers with violet red margins. *R. kieslingii* has pure orange or red flowers. *R. kupperiana* is an old favourite with colourful spines and fiery red flowers. *R. narvaecensis* is a beautiful species with white and pale pinkish-lilac flowers which is quite variable. *R. pulvinosa* is sparsely spined with small but prolific orange flowers. *R. schatzliana* has reddish orange flowers. *R. simoniana* is not widely known yet – it has clear orange/yellow flowers.

*R. spegazziniana* is an old 'classic' with blood red flowers. *R. sumayana* has orange red flowers which are sometimes bicoloured. *R. supthutiana* looks like a mediolobivia and has bright red flowers. *R. tarijensis* is not to be confused with the sulcorebutia of the same name. It has flowers which range from vermillion to scarlet red. *R. tarvitaensis* has bright orange red flowers which are amongst the largest of all the rebutias (can reach 6cm across). *R. tuberosa* has small bicoloured flowers (vermillion and pale violet). *R. vallegrandensis* has attractive spination and blood red flowers. *R. walteri* is a relatively new species.

## Mediolobivia

After the break, we moved on the Mediolobivia group. There was just enough time to present Glenn Finn with a trophy made by Ivor as the "Fastest Repotter" in Southampton after his efforts at the Cultivation Evening in May.

*R. atrovirens* has numerous varieties, all having attractive bodies and flowers. The plants prefer deep pots. The subject of red spider was mentioned here and John said these plants generally are prone to attack. He uses a couple of treatments of PBI houseplant insecticide (yellow squirt bottle) at 4-5 week intervals where necessary. *R. atrovirens* v. *pseudoritteri* has blood red flowers, *R. atrovirens* v. *raulii* has small red flowers. *R. atrovirens* v. *zecheri* looked stunning, covered in blood red

flowers. *R. aureiflora* has many forms and flower colours. *R. aureiflora* v. *sarothroides* has yellow spination and red flowers. There is some conflict about *R. brunneoradicata* and whether it is a form of *R. pygmaea* or *R. atrovirens*, but grow it anyway! *R. einsteinii* is a yellow flowered midget. *R. einsteinii* v. *gonjianii* has very short spines and paler yellow flowers. *R. leucanthema* is one of the best white-flowered rebutias, but is hard to grow. The roots can break during repotting and it is best to leave the compost dry for a while after repotting to avoid rot. With *R. mixticolor*, as the name suggests, the flowers are orange red and purple on a pinkish yellow base. *R. steinmannii* is very variable and is usually red-flowered.

*R. pygmaea* has plenty of varieties, a couple of which (*R. pygmaea* v. *canacruzensis* + v. *colorea*) have pale pink + carmine purple flowers respectively. *R. pygmaea* v. *crassa* is larger growing than the type and has red-orange flowers. *R. pygmaea* v. *diersiana* grows high in the mountains and has yellow flowers with violet pink tips. *R. pygmaea* v. *elegantula* has bicoloured red-orange flowers. *R. pygmaea* v. *eos* has flowers which are pale whitish pink with sometimes a deep pink midstripe in random petals. Plants sold under this name are often something else. *R. pygmaea* v. *friedrichiana* has light reddish orange flowers. *R. pygmaea* v. *minor* has yellow flowers. *R. pygmaea* v. *orurensis* grows in a different locality and has flowers which are pale pink in the centre, with red at the tips of the petals. *R. pygmaea* v. *pallida* has multicoloured flowers in various shades of pink and yellow. *R. torquata* has a distinctive body form and the flowers are fiery red with a pale yellow throat.

## Sulcorebutia

We then moved onto Sulcorebutias. These have a longer areole (like a groove), and all come from Bolivia. *S. albissima* is very variable in spine type and colour, but all have magenta pink flowers. *S. arenacea* is also very variable in spine colour and length. It is one of the most popular species and has yellow flowers. *S. augustinii* forms attractive plants with magenta pink flowers. *S. breviflora* usually has short yellow flowers but there are white and magenta flowered forms. *S. candiae* is another very variable species, usually yellow flowered. *S. menesesii* has dense spination in various colours and lengths, the flowers are yellow. *S. canigeralii* soon forms mounds of small bodies; the flowers are red or bicoloured. Some forms have dark bodies and v. *brevispina* has short spination and red flowers. *S. crispata* is variable in spine length and colour (usually white),

the flowers are usually pink/magenta but can also be white.

*S. cylindrica* soon becomes cylindrical and flops about. It is usually yellow flowered but white and magenta flowered forms exist. *S. fischeriana* forms small clustering plants with red flowers. *S. flavissima* is a yellow spined form of the mentosa-swoboda group. *S. frankiana* is variable in body colour and spine length and colour. Some forms have bicoloured flowers. *S. heinzii* is a recent name for handsome plants circulating as HS151 for some years, and it has deep magenta flowers.

*S. hertusii* is one of the *S. tarabucoensis* forms, circulated as *S. senilis* for some years due to its long white hairs. It has magenta flowers. *S. krahni* is a distinctive species with attractive bodies and yellow flowers. *S. krugerae* forms clumps of small bodies with variable spines and usually has yellow flowers. The form *S. krugerae* ssp. *hoffmannii* has bicoloured flowers and stronger spination. *S. krugerae* v. *lindenii* (JD134) has smaller bodies and red flowers. *S. langeri* has tiny bodies and can be found with a variety of spine colours. The flowers are yellow. *S. mariana* deserves to be better known and has bicoloured flowers. *S. markusii* has an attractive body form, the flowers are red-magenta. *S. markusii* v. *tintinensis* goes under HS57. *S. menesesii* forms quite large stems and clumps and has yellow flowers. *S. mentosa* is variable in body and spine colour. The flowers are generally magenta but some forms have almost white flowers. *S. mizquensis* is a very attractively spined miniature with magenta flowers. *S. oenantha* is variable in spine and flower colours and can form large bodies. *S. pasopayana* (*S. perplexiflora*) forms large clumps – there was once a plant with hundreds of heads at one of their shows.

*S. pulchra* (HS78) forms attractive low growing plants, the flowers are magenta sometimes with white throats. *S. purpurea* is very variable with large-chinned tubercles and makes large stems. The flowers are dark red. It tends to scorch, so perhaps it grows in sheltered areas. *S. torotorensis* forms large stems (weingartia-like) and has purple flowers. *S. rauschii* is one of the best species, and variable in spination and body colour. It has tiny pectinate spines and is hard to grow well. The flowers are magenta. *S. steinbachii* is extremely variable in spination and body colour. The flowers are red or bicoloured pink and yellow or magenta. *S. swoboda* forms attractive plants with soft spines. It might be an extreme form of *S. mentosa*. and has pink flowers. *S. tarabucoensis* forms lots

of tiny bodies and forms red or yellow or bicoloured flowers on various forms. *S. tiraquensis* is extremely variable in every respect. The best known form is v. *bicolorispina* having spines of 2 colours. The flowers can be red, orange, pink or magenta. *S. vasquenziana* is tough to keep alive for more than a few years. *S. taratensis* (*S. verticillacantha* v. *taratensis*) has very variable flowers being red, magenta or bicoloured.

We were running out of time so John dashed through a few more slides with the minimum of commentary. As usual, John gave a most entertaining and informative talk, illustrated with slides of his plants. John has done a great service to the hobby by producing the *Cactus File* handbook on Rebutia and a book on Sulcorebutias called “A Sulco Gallery”. Both books are a must if you are interested in these genera or are wanting to start collecting them.

What the new lexicon will do to all these names remains to be seen but I think keen collectors will continue to grow and seek out the various forms and varieties listed in John's books - I hope so!

[Ed: At the end of the talk, John was presented with a “liquid” gift from the branch to help celebrate his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, which occurred just a day before the talk.]

Peter Down

### Table Show – June 2006

There were 20 entries in the June table show.

	Cacti – Parodia Group	Succulents – Crassula Group
Open	(1) G Finn Notocactus scopa	(1) B Beckerleg Echeveria lilacina
	(2) B Beckerleg Notocactus magnificus	(2) J Roskilly Echeveria agavoides cv 'Ebony'
	(3) T Grech Parodia microsperma	(3) J Roskilly Echeveria haesowensis
Intermediate	(1) B Beckerleg Parodia andreana	(1) J Burnay Crassula orbicularis
	(2) G Finn Parodia sp.	(2) B Beckerleg Crassula susanna
	(3) J Roskilly Parodia nivosa	(3) J Roskilly Adromischus nana

Ivor Biddlecombe

## Snippets

### *Cactoblastis cactorum*

No, this is not the latest expletive used by cactophiles, but the scientific name of the cactus moth. According to a leaflet published by the United States Department of Agriculture, this has recently reached there from Australia. The leaflet does not explain how a creature dependant upon cacti as its host plant came to be on a continent where cacti are not endemic when it was not present among cacti in habitat. Or perhaps I have missed something somewhere?

The adult moths lay chains of eggs known as egg sticks on the pads of 'prickly pear' species of Opuntias. These are up to about 24mm (nearly one inch) long, and resemble the Opuntia spines except they are slightly curved, blunt ended and do not originate from areoles. The caterpillars or larvae burrow into, and feed inside the Opuntia pads. The pads ooze sap from the damaged areas, on which black mould may grow.

Cactus moth caterpillars reportedly have been found on most flat padded or 'prickly pear' species of Opuntia. However, they do not apparently have a taste for the cylindrical 'cholla' types of Opuntia which grow in the same parts of America, or for other species of cacti.

*Ian Acton*

## Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting will be held on August 1<sup>st</sup> and will feature Terry Smale, who will give a talk titled "Cacti in Northern Mexico - Part 2". This is a continuation of the talk which Terry gave to our Branch in June last year. If you happened to miss part 1, Terry will be giving that talk at Portsmouth Branch on July 15<sup>th</sup> !

The August table Show will consist of the **Mammillaria** group (cacti) and the **Euphorbia** group (succulents). Please note that members are allowed to submit more than one entry in any of the classes, and that points will be earned for each placed entry.

The Mammillaria group contains *Mammillaria*, *Bartschella*, *Cochemiea*, *Dolichothele*, *Krainzia*, *Leptocladodia*, *Mamillopsis*, *Mammilloidia*, *Oehmea*, *Phellosperma*, *Porfiria*, *Pseudo-mammillaria* and *Solisia*.

The Euphorbia group only contains *Euphorbia*.

A reminder for the committee that there will be a branch committee meeting on Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of July.

## Forthcoming Events

Fri	7 <sup>th</sup>	Jul	Southampton	Branch Annual Dinner @ The Clump Inn, Chilworth (7:30pm)
Tue	11 <sup>th</sup>	Jul	Southampton	Branch Committee Meeting @ 79 Shirley Avenue
Sat	15 <sup>th</sup>	Jul	Portsmouth	"Cacti in Northern Mexico – Part 1" – Terry Smale
Fri	21 <sup>st</sup>	Jul	Isle of Wight	"6000 Miles around South West U.S.A" – Cliff Thompson
Tue	25 <sup>th</sup>	Jul	New Forest	Display and Plant Sales @ New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
Thu	27 <sup>th</sup>	Jul		
Tue	1 <sup>st</sup>	Aug	Southampton	"Cacti in Northern Mexico – Part 2" – Terry Smale
Sat	4 <sup>th</sup>	Aug	Portsmouth	Portsmouth Branch @ Southsea Show
Sun	6 <sup>th</sup>	Aug		
Sat	12 <sup>th</sup>	Aug	Ampfield	Display and Plant Sales @ Sir Harold Hillier Gardens,
Sun	13 <sup>th</sup>	Aug		Jermyn Lane, Ampfield
Mon	14 <sup>th</sup>	Aug	Sussex	Freshacres Nursery - Open Day (~ 6:30pm)
Fri	19 <sup>th</sup>	Aug	Isle of Wight	Open Evening
Tue	5 <sup>th</sup>	Sep	Southampton	"Mesembryanthemums" – Eddy Harris
Fri	15 <sup>th</sup>	Sep	Isle of Wight	Zone 11 Quiz

# Southampton Flower Festival – 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> July 2006

## Summary of Cactus & Succulent Show Results

No.	Class	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
11	Any Cactus – 1 plant – unlimited	T Grech	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
12	1 Mammillaria – unlimited	B Beckerleg	I Biddlecombe	T Grech
13	1 Rebutia – 5"	P Clemow	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
14	1 Echinocereus – 5"	P Clemow	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
15	2 Mammillarias – 5"	T Grech	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
16	2 Gymnocalyciums – 4½"	B Beckerleg	D Prior	I Biddlecombe
17	2 Astrophytums – 4½"	P Clemow	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
18	2 Echinopsis – 4½"	B Beckerleg	I Biddlecombe	-
19	2 Thelocactus – 4½"	I Biddlecombe	P Clemow	B Beckerleg
20	2 Parodia – 4½"	D Prior	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg
21	2 Opuntia – 5"	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg	-
22	Any Cactus – 4 plants – 3½"	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg	D Prior
23	Any Cactus – 6 plants – 2¾"	B Beckerleg	I Biddlecombe	J Roskilly
24	Any Cactus – junior entry	V Roskilly	R Courtney	-
25	Any Succulent – 6 plants – 2¾"	I Biddlecombe	J Roskilly	-
26	Any Succulent – 4 plants – 3½"	B Beckerleg	I Biddlecombe	D Prior
27	2 Mesembs – 4½"	I Biddlecombe	B Beckerleg	J Roskilly
28	2 Crassula – 4½"	B Beckerleg	J Roskilly	T Grech
29	2 Euphorbia – 5"	T Grech	I Biddlecombe	D Prior
30	2 Haworthia – 4½"	I Biddlecombe	D Prior	B Beckerleg
31	1 Aloe/Agave – unlimited	J Roskilly	I Biddlecombe	D Prior
32	Any Succulent – 1 plant – unlimited	B Beckerleg	J Roskilly	D Prior
33	Any Succulent – junior entry	V Roskilly	-	-

Winner of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy for Cacti      I Biddlecombe

Winner of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy for Succulents      I Biddlecombe

Best Cactus      Mammillaria compressa      (B Beckerleg)

Best Succulent      Adenium obesum      (B Beckerleg)

The Branch was also awarded a Gold Medal for its display.