

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

The last month has gone by quickly, due in no small part to the weekend outings organised by the branch. The weather has been good too – we've had a few hot days, but on the whole nothing too uncomfortable. A few showers in between have prevented the garden from drying up completely.

## Announcements

The last month included branch visits to the **Mammillaria Event** at Wisley, the **Mace** collection in Sussex and the **South West Cactus Mart** at Bristol. I hope all those who attended enjoyed these outings.

Coming up this month is our **Anniversary Garden Party** (hosted by Alice) on 27<sup>th</sup> July followed by our display at the **New Forest Show**. A map of how to get to Alice is available from the front table. I have also prepared a sheet for members to register their interest in attending the MSG Event in Banstead, in September.

The BCSS recently published the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Guide to Shows**, and as part of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we are handing out a free copy of this to all our regular attendees. Please see me if you would like a copy.

The selling of **raffle tickets** at the branch meetings will be changed slightly – the price per ticket will change from 10p to 20p (so £1 for a strip of 5) and the tickets will be sold from the plant sales table. Assuming everyone continues to spend the same amount on the raffle this won't alter your chances of winning but it will mean we have less tickets to fold.

## Last Month's Meeting

Stuart mentioned it was nice to see a thriving branch - there were more people present at the talk than you get at some branches in the whole year. And looking at our website, he was impressed that there were so many things organised rather than just a set of meetings. He asked to audience to pose questions as he went through the talk. He would discuss some real plants in the first half and then show slides in the second half. Although the talk was mainly about hybrids, he had included one or two plants that weren't hybrids.

In our hobby, hybrids are considered strange things – and until a few years ago, hardly any were grown, apart from Epiphyllums which are too large for most people to grow, and some hybrid Rebutias that flower nicely. With other plants like fuchsias or pelargoniums or roses, virtually everything would be a hybrid - but with cacti it's the opposite and almost all the plants we grow are species. Only in the past few years have new hybrids started to appear, as nurserymen try to produce something new to sell or something that might flower at a different time.

If you grow a batch of seedling of a species there will be variations in the seedlings but they will most likely be similar. With hybrids there is more variation and a few unusual ones may appear. The first plant he described was *Haworthia limifolia* v. *striata*. Until a few years ago it was impossible to find this, and plants in the US were selling for \$150. Then the Dutch started tissue culture and the plant is much more readily available. Tissue culture is useful for plants that don't offset easily or produce seeds. It should produce perfect genetic clones, but sometimes you find variations even in the clones, and he had found a *striata* with different shaped leaves - they were wider, and the plant had a different form of growth. Next was a cross between different genera - closely allied genera such as *Haworthia*, *Gasterias* and *Aloes* can interbreed. This was another tissue cultured plant, and it was originally a cross between *Gasteria verrucosa* with rough leaves and *Aloe variegata*. Amongst the clones, one different version turned up which had a

different form. These forms are stable and they themselves can be propagated.

Another plant was a cactus from Doug Sizmur of Biggin Hill, Kent which “glowed” with health. It was bought as *Astrophytum* “Kiko” but it was something else – a variegated *Astrophytum*, with a green body but a vivid yellow-red centre. If you grow hybrid cacti from seed you often get some variegates. And if you grow cacti from seed and get some variegates it may suggest that the seed may be hybrid. *Stenocacti* are small Mexican cacti which usually remain solitary and *Ferocacti* are the same thing but bigger. You can cross the two and we saw a cross between *Stenocactus coptogonus* (which doesn’t have wavy ribs) and *Ferocactus macrodiscus*, a plant which flowers when small. Miles Anderson in Arizona had produced these. If you can hybridize between genera it suggests they are closely related. You can also get *Ferocactus* and *Thelocactus* to breed, as well as *Ferocactus* and *Leuchtenbergia* to produce weird things like *Ferobergia* - think of *Leuchtenbergia* as a *Ferocactus* with long tubercles, and it makes sense. *Ferocactus*, *Stenocactus*, *Leuchtenbergia* and *Thelocactus* are all Mexican and can interbreed. Miles watches a lot of old British TV programs and tends to name his crosses accordingly. “Spring Surprise” is named after a chocolate in a Monty Python show and other names for *Stapeliad* crosses include “Speckled Jim” and “Purple Nurple”.

There is no point in producing hybrids unless it’s better than the parents and some should probably be destroyed at birth. An American nurseryman called Dick Wright produced lots of fancy *Echeverias* with little lumps and bumps on the leaves. He kept the best ones and named them, but the rejects were sold on to other nurseries, and those were also sold as Dick Wright hybrids and so they still got around. The opposite of this happened with the fancy *Aloe* hybrids, some of which are turning up at garden centres now. They picked out the best ones, tissue cultured them and scrapped the rest, which is what should happen. As an example of hybrids that look worse than either parent, a cross between *Aloe descoingsii* - which is a nice little *aloe* which flowers small and has nice markings on the leaves and clusters well, and *Gasteria batesiana* which is a nice plant in its own right produced a boring plant which seemed to lose the best characteristics of each parent. There’s no reason for keeping it other than using in the talk. It came from Steve Hammer and he’s usually good at selecting interesting plants.

Hybrids go from extreme to the other. There are less of them in the cactus world than in the succulents. Plants produced in Holland which are crosses of *R.*

*narvaecensis* (which is floriferous and has nice flower colours) and *R. heliosa* (which has a nice body form) produces a free flowering plant with a long flowering period. This example was called “Striped Peach”. One problem is that one nursery gives it one name and another can give it another. He noticed someone was selling plants online which were *Notocactus buiningii* but being sold as *Bolocactus* - it turns out that in Dutch nurseries they call all cacti with a barrel shape *Bolocactus*. This person had just copied the name - no names were mentioned but the person concerned grows *Opuntias* and come from the West Country. *Rebutia heliosa* has an orange flower and crossing it with *R. narvaecensis* you can get everything from white to pink to cream and peach. There’s even a cultivar called “Red Spider”, because of its spidery flowers!

There are some lovely *Echinopsis* hybrids around, but apart from their stunning flowers which are open for a few days, the other 360 days of the year they look like grafting stock. There’s a collectors set mentality with some plants, but there’s over 200 of these to collect. Sometimes people pay silly prices because they want to complete their set. The person growing the best ones of these is Bryan Goodey in Lincolnshire - he goes around the big shows like Chelsea and Hampton Court and realises there’s a good market with ladies who see a plant with their name on it, so virtually every one of his hybrids is named with a ladies’ name. Other plants that tend to be overlooked are the *Chamaecereus/Lobivia* hybrids. *Chamaecereus silvestrii* is not really grown in collections any more – but cross it with *Lobivia* and you get some really attractive plants, which until this year wouldn’t have done so well because our Shows look for mature plants. However in the new *Guide to Shows* there’s more priority on cultivation and less on maturity - so it means the really old *Ariocarpus* plants aren’t necessarily always going to get all the prizes. Anyone new to the hobby didn’t stand a chance before, but perhaps now they will.

Geoff Penrose asked about Nature’s Curiosity Shop – which was run by Rick Nowakowski. This American grower was in California and then settled in Pahrump, near Las Vegas. Stuart said that if you sent him an email, 10% of the reply would be about the plants and 90% would be about his back and how ill he was feeling. He passed away 3-4 years ago but his listings are still up on the Cactus Mall. His was probably the only *Gasteria* nursery in the country. People never seem keen on them and grow them under the stage or in some corner, but there are some very attractive ones around. They are not phototropic, so won’t bend towards the light, although the flowers will. Rick used to sell a lot of

his plants on Ebay. The current editor of the BCSS Journal Al Lauis was one of the first to get his plants into this country. Rick probably produced 200-300 hybrids but tended to use a small group for the parents, so some are rather similar. We saw "Alligator". It had no teeth on the leaves, a nice mottled stem and was very slow growing. You can take a couple of leaves off the bottom when repotting and that will produce a small plant after 2-3 years.

Tissue culture is a special talk in its own right - but it's not something he can do since it needs lab conditions. It has given access to a lot of plants that otherwise would not be available. The process is to take meristem tissue from the growing point in the centre and put it in different sorts of gel to make it grow umpteen growing points. If you want to find out more about tissue culture, visit Robert Wellens' website in Holland (look for "Succulent tissue culture") - or go on one of the coach trips to Holland which the London branches organise. Tissue culture had been used in the horticultural trade for many years to create plants like the *Spathiphyllum* peace lily, ferns and also all the orchids you tend to see in Tesco's and Garden centres. It is not usually cost effective for cacti and succulents. Tom Radford mentioned there had been articles on tissue culture in the journal many years ago. Kathy Flanagan mentioned she had come across *Mammillaria hernandezii* being tissue cultured in Hertfordshire.

We saw the product of *Aloe variegata* crossed with *Gasteria verrucosa*. It looked like an *Aloe variegata* with rough leaves. If you look long enough at the tens of thousands being grown in wholesale nurseries, you will find the odd variegate. If an offset grows from the variegated side, it will also be variegated. If he hadn't bought that plant it would probably have ended up in some garden centre somewhere. The next time he went he found that one of the people who ran the nursery had picked out a dozen or so variegates and put them on one side and he was able to buy these for 3 euros each. One of these was an *Echeveria*, *E. subsessilis*. It won't propagate from leaves, unfortunately, so you have to chop the centre out. "Do you drill the centre out?" asked Adrian. Stuart said he did that once when Graham Charles suggested it for *Uebelmannias* - he did that to 4 plants, but they just sat there and only produced one offset each. In Agaves, the less damage you do to the growing point, the more offsets you tend to get. *Echeveria* "Compton Carousel" is another nice variegated one.

With the fancy *Aloe* hybrids, he came across them at the National before last, so around 6 years ago. They are hybrids of hybrids and the parents are

often not known. They would do well in garden centres. They first came from the States and were initially created by Kelly Griffin. He worked at a wholesale nursery and his job was to try and produce new hybrids. *Aloe striata* has a pink edge to the leaves and others have a nice texture so you can cross these and strive to produce a combination of the colour, the texture and a small plant. This has been taken one step further, and Karen Zimmerman at the Huntington does this now - it's much the same except there's a better record of the plant's parents. One he bought back from the States 4 years ago and sold some to a person in Holland where it was put into tissue culture called "DZ" (Debbie Zimmerman). It flowers at a small and also offsets when quite small. It has some nice colours in it and may contain some *Aloe parvula*. They also don't need desperately strong light to keep the colour. Some of them don't like his growing conditions, where he waters everything with overhead water once a week. The ones that are harder to find are the ones that haven't been tissue cultured, and need to be grown from offsets.

Agave hybrids are harder to create due to the need to have two agaves in flower at the same time. An interesting plant is a hybrid between *Agave macroacantha* and a Manfreda, the latter being the spotted deciduous Mexican agaves, some of which have spotted leaves. You end up with an Agave with spotted leaves that doesn't die back in the winter. Called "Bloodspot" he has not had an offset on these yet. These were produced in the USA by Shady Oaks, in Minnesota - but they have now decided they're not making enough money from Agaves so have stopped doing them. This might restrict the supply going forwards, since they don't offset very easily. Some of the tissue cultured agaves revert to green. Two other nurseries in the US do produce tissue cultured agaves but they don't seem to be able to produce many variegated ones. If the variegation is in the centre of the leaf, you can't meristem them since there's no chlorophyll in the meristem - hence all the ones that are meristemmed have the variegation on the outside. A Manfreda x Agave cross called Mangave "Macho Mocha" has softer and bigger spotted leaves and there's a variant with a yellow spotted edge. David asked whether Manfredas are terminally flowered, like Agaves? Stuart said he'd never flowered one. There are lots of *Echeveria* hybrids around. One from Bryan Goodey is called Frosted Queen and this will grow from leaves. It is a cross between *Echeveria setosa* which has soft leaves and flowers easily, and *Echeveria laui* which is stiff leaved with larger leaves. You put the two together and the result is probably nicer than the parents but very slow growing. How can it be nicer than *E. laui* asked David? Stuart answered because

it doesn't mark when you touch it. It is like a stiff leaved *Echeveria setosa* and flowers when small. It was no good for Bryan Goodey since he needs something that can be sold in 2-3 years and these plants will only reach half an inch across in that time.

Most of the nice *Echeveria* hybrids won't grow from leaves so they are grown by tissue culture. A lot of the *Echeverias* that have lumps and bumps on the leaves and cameo type bits (carunculations) on the leaves are being produced. There's one species with these lumps and bumps on the leaves and when you start hybridizing, you can get different sorts of cameo shapes. The nicest one is "Raindrops" which has one circular dot on each leaf. He saw one of these on sale on Ebay. The auction would end overnight, so he put in a bid for \$120 and saw the next day that it had sold for \$300. He talked about this to Robert Wellens and he learnt that it was Robert who had placed the winning bid! However, the American nurseryman learnt it was going to a tissue culture place told Robert the plant had died and refunded his money. About a year later Stuart went around the American National Show and bought three for \$20 each and gave one to Robert so he has some now. *Echeveria* "Baron Bold" has straight edges to the carunculated bits. The problem with *Echeverias* is that they are magnets for mealy bug. But if you have mealy then you might as well have something that attracts it. The other things that attracts mealy are *Aeoniums*. There's some nice hybrids around, and one from the States is called "Bronze Teacup" – it has bronze outer leaves and a paler centre.

*Haworthia* hybrids are probably worthy of an entire talk by themselves. They are a case in point where you can come up with plants that are a lot nicer than the parents. We saw a *Haworthia maughanii* hybrid which had nicer markings and was easier to grow than the parent. *Agave* "Romanii" stays small and the leaves go almost white in enough sun. *Agave* "Little Shark" is a cross between *Agave macroacantha* x *Agave victoria reginae*, and there's also a penguin series containing "Little Penguin" and "Blue Emperor".

After the break we switched to a digital slide show. Stuart mentioned that he might have shown the first picture at a previous talk - it was the part of a cactus we don't often see - the flesh. If you slice an *Aztekium ritteri* in half (or also a couple of *Pediocactus* species) they have a pink colouring to their flesh. On the outside it's just a regular green body. *Mammillaria bocasana* is also pink inside. We saw pictures of some hybrids - a *Sulcorebutia rauschii* (ring of flowers at base) x *Weingartia*

*neocummingi* cross. Next was *Kalanchoe daigremontiana*. Normally you wouldn't want this anywhere near your collection because it can run rampant with the offsets which form on the leaf edges and drop into any nearby pot. However this cultivar "Pink Butterflies" has a variegated edge to the leaf and so the plantlets have no chlorophyll and it doesn't spread. One of the newer plants is *Pleiospilos nelii* "Royal Flush". It has a purple body colour similar to that of *Lithops optica* rubra and has red flowers. It was first grown at a nursery located at Royal Road in Vista, California.

A hybrid that might be grown for a hybrid's sake is a *Neohenrica* (mesemb) cross. It has heads the size of a matchstick and the cross does not look as good as the original parents. *The Aloe descoingsii* x *Aloe batesiana* cross from Steve Hammer doesn't really have a lot going for it. It doesn't have the nice markings of *Aloe descoingsii* or the patterns of *Gasteria batesiana* and it should probably have been strangled at birth. He got it in a mystery parcel from Steve Hammer and he grew it on, thinking it will do something but it's now 3 inches across and still doesn't look anything special. A cross between *Aloe variegata* and a pale-leafed *Gasteria* produced a plant with the shape of *Aloe variegata* but with some of the *Gasteria*'s characteristics, it was perhaps more attractive than either of the parents. We saw a group of plants which all came from the same group of seeds, which were a *Gasteria armstrongii* x *Gasteria batesiana* cross. One looked like *armstrongii* but with very smooth leaves, the others were like *batesiana* and two had very pale leaves. In this case, you really couldn't look at some of these plants and tell what the parents are, when 4 of the offspring are so different. Geoff Penrose said he had seedlings from the *Haworthia* society which were a *G. armstrongii* x *G. pillansii* cross and they looked similar to Stuart's pictures. *G. pillansii* has fine teeth along the top edge of leaf. Still with aloes, a reasonably new cross with thin tapering leaves is *Aloe* "Jade Temple".

A few years ago John Bleck who used to run the Abbey Garden nursery in Santa Barbara was trying to produce small free flowering plants and *Gasteria* "Little Warty" was one of the results. It is one of those plants which grows faster than you can sell it. The little ones look dull but if you grown them for a bit the leaves change from pale to a rich green and it makes a nice rosette. An American growing things back in the 1930s-1940s was Ed Hummel and he is best known for *Crassula* "Hummel's Sunset". He grew quite a few *Echinopsis* hybrids and there's also a *Gasteria* "Hummel's Silver". With Rick Nowakowski, he doesn't know where all Rick's plants went, following his death. When you buy

them they are unexciting looking little plants but they mature into something better and we saw "Satellite" and "Alligator". A lot of his "blue" series grow quite large but they don't form offsets very well. Virtually all *Gasterias* will grow from leaves, and you don't need a whole leaf - even a piece will do. However, they are dreadfully slow to get going, and it may take a year just to get a root or two, and maybe 3 years to get a shoot you can take off. They are generally tough plants and it's not easy to kill a *Gasteria*.

Rick produced lots of variegated ones and he gave them all names, but none of them really reproduce with stable variegation, Sunspot was one example, with different offsets looking very different. It's really not worth naming a plant if every one comes up different. A plant he found at a nursery at Solana Beach, on the US west coast looked like a short stumpy *Aloe variegata* with white spots and leaf edges. A lot of plants are given fancy Japanese names by the Japanese. One was called "satu satu no matsu". Well, "satu no matsu" means wind blowing through pine trees, so this would be a very strong wind through pine trees. It makes a nice cluster. Another plant called "Thais" might have that name or might simply have come from Thailand. *Gasterias* are useful for parts of the greenhouse where you can't grow cacti. When he visits Cok Grootsholten in Holland, the first of the sale plants he looks at are the *Gasterias*.

Next were pictures of *Haworthia limifolia* striata and how it normally looks, with long fairly thin upright leaves along with a variant he found which has wider leaves and a flatter shape. And if you grow enough of these, you'll eventually find a variegated one. At the nursery he visited, there were 30,000 of these being grown. They were in 12 foot wide bays so it needed a lot of patience and searching to find any unusual variants. David Neville said he had asked the grower how many he was growing this year and the answer was 300,000! So it's being grown on a vast scale, and even in hot humid conditions to bring them on quickly. The plant has been named "White Spider" to try and give it some protection under plant breeder's rights. David Neville said Peter Lock had asked him how to introduce this to the UK, but it's already available here. The first ones were sold for silly prices in the USA and he took them over to the States to give them as gifts. I asked whether his striatas produced flower spikes since mine seem to always abort their spikes. He said he didn't really look. David said his had flowered and he had tried to cross with other things and set seed, but nothing took. Stuart got one from Steve Hammer originally and tried to cross that with the newer ones, but didn't get anything.

We saw some mutations of a hybrid between *Aloe variegata* and *Gasteria verrucosa*. Some had completely smooth leaves and one looked like a variegata with rounded leaves. Next we saw a picture of Kelly Griffin. He's really good at doing what he does and doesn't mind telling you this. We saw a batch of his assorted hybrids. "Pink Blush" was his first one and it has been around for a good 6-7 years now. The first year Stuart saw them, he wasn't able to buy any because they had all been pre-ordered. They are grown in large quantities and aimed at the garden centre market. There's an awful lot of the hybrids around now, but you only need around 10 of them to have most of the variations in body shape and texture and so on. "Lavendar Star" is the nearest to a bluey-lavender leaf. "Sugar" has white markings on a green leaf and looks like it has been frosted. It has not been tissue cultured yet. Stuart saw Kelly at the nursery where he works and he couldn't be given any offsets since they were not Kelly's property. However, when he gave a talk a few days later, Kelly gave him a bag of cuttings. There are CITES regulations to protect endangered species, and all Aloes are included, despite the fact that these are man made hybrids and don't occur in the wild. So you need Cites permits and phytosanitary permits. As long as you have that, the customs people are OK, and just wave you on.

A view of a US nursery showed tens of thousands of *Aloe* "Pink Blush" being grown. "Christmas Carol" is a newer cross and it actually looked better once he had brought it back - the leaf colours improved. The plants start to colour up once he gets them home. At the Huntington, we saw Karen Zimmerman who produced the "DZ" hybrid. He tends to go see her each year when he visits the Huntington. They have produced a lot of *Aloe* hybrids, but only choose 3-4 each year to put into tissue culture. Some that turned up on the ISI list include "DZ" and "Gargoyle". There's now a fish series featuring plants like "Pirhana", however it's getting to the stage now where there's really nothing new that's sufficiently different. The Americans tend to only take out American patents so a plant can be propagated in Europe. They need to spend a bit more and get worldwide protection. A member from the audience asked if the patents are enforced? A firm called Altmans grows many of the plants for the US market and they would probably follow up if they found examples of their patents being infringed. We saw "Green Sands" being grown in full sun outdoors, in 3.5 inch pots. It has a nice texture to the leaf and clusters well even at that size.

There are some really nice attractive *Euphorbias*. *Euphorbia milli* - the crown of thorns - is best grown as a house plant on a windowsill and watered

throughout the year. There are numerous large flowered hybrids from Thailand and the “flowers” look like hydrangeas. Echinopsis plants are lovely in flower but look like grafting stock at other times. The “Paramount” hybrids originated in Paramount in California and were used for landscaping. They started with the white flowers of Echinopsis and crossed with Lobivias to get the yellows and oranges and pinks. Bob Schick took them one stage further and produced a couple of hundred attractive hybrids, including a lot of double flowers and frilled or two-tone flowers. The Huntington sold 7-8 each year and it was rather like collecting sets of stamps. Eventually the Huntington stopped exporting them, making them harder to come by. Some offset freely, others sit there and stubbornly don't offset at all. You sometimes see two different flower colours on a plant since the flowers fade a little after opening. The flowers last 2-3 days - or only a day if pollinated, so if you are out at work all day you might never see them unless they flower at the weekend. Doug Sizmur of Kent Cacti has quite a few of them. The larger they get, the more they flower, and if you have a collection of 30 to 40 plants, you might have something in flower all the time through the summer. The larger flowers can be 6 inches across. “Volcanic Sunset” is a Trichocereus hybrid and the flowers are a foot across. The plant itself is horrible. “Flying Saucer” is another one – they're like Epiphyllum flowers on a cereus. The giant flowers open for a couple of days and you also get to see a couple of days of opening and a couple afterwards. These larger flowered plants flower when the stems are a foot tall, which is probably 3-4 years of growing from a plant in a 3 inch pot. “Pale Peace” came from a grower in Dover and flowers really well.

Rebutia hybrids look really nice when in flower in late spring and you often get a second flowering later in the year. Bryan Goodey in Lincolnshire and Doug Sizmur in Orpington Kent have good varieties available. They are very easy to grow and will grow readily from offsets. They are mostly produced by crossing *R. narvaecensis* with *R. heliosa*. When in full flower, you can't see the plant body. With Chamaelobiva, there are some pretty ones around. Crossed with Lobivia, you get 4 inch flowers. They are free flowering and will flower throughout the growing season. Bryan Goodey has many named “Lincoln”-something and Lincoln Curls/Lincoln Imp/Lincoln Charm are all nice ones. His best was “Lincoln Gem” which was priced at £12.50 for a small piece although it did come down a little in price in later years. The flowers are really attractive.

*Coryphantha/Escobaria nelii (minima)* x *dasyacanthus* was also produced by the grower in

Dover. There are also Ariocarpus hybrids around and with *A. kotschoubeyanus* x *A. retusus* - the flower size is improved. Many of the Aeonium hybrids originated in the States, from Jack Catlin. Although you can't really improve on the dark leaved *Aeonium zwartkop*, since it's available everywhere then the fancier ones get some attention. With *Aeonium* “Suncup” almost every offset is different. A plant described as *Aeonium tabuliforme* x *A. zwartkop* would have purple leaves with a yellow centre - but it was nothing like he imagined and he was lucky he didn't buy a whole load of them before having seen it in person. He had hoped it would be flat on the ground and not on a 6 inch stem. “Purple Blast” is a Kelly Griffin hybrid. The ISI (International Succulent Institute) is really an offshoot of the Huntington and one of the plants they offered was *Aeonium* “Martian Heads”. The curled up rosettes look like brussels sprouts but as soon as you water it, the heads open and then it's rather boring. There are several *Crassula* hybrids worth growing, and “Buddha's Temple” is instantly recognisable. It has pink flowers fade which fade to white, although there are other colour variants too. Stuart also showed a variegated “Buddha's Temple.” Robert Wellens also has created an artificially variegated one so there are two types going around.

Some *Crassulas* do have stunning flowers. Examples include a miniature *Crassula falcata*, a cultivar “Pink Pyramid”, and “Morgan's Beauty””. One plant he brought back from the States was *Crassula* “Sharks Tooth” which had angular leaves. It was stunning when he got it and he brought it back, chopped it into pieces, and gave it a good bit of sun, and should have looked pretty good but it etiolated and never really recovered. It looked nothing like what he had seen in the States, so it must need Californian sun to grow well. Adeniums are another plant where hybrids are now available. They don't like a winter rest period and prefer to be grown as house plants.

The Agave hybrid “Blue Glow” needs to be back lit to appreciate the beauty of the red edge to the leaves. “Royal Spine” is a cross between *A. macroacantha* and *A. victoria reginae* which didn't look better than either of the parents, and he hoped it would get better as it aged. *Agave* “Romanii” is a cross between *Agave celsii albicans* and *Agave filifera*. Bloodspot is a cross between *A. macroacantha* and a Manfreda. The variegated version of this is called “Expresso”. He's got two of them and they haven't offset yet. Plumerias are in the Guide to Shows - they need room and heat - there are some pretty hybrids and cultivars around. We saw *Echeveria* “Frosted Queen” which he got

from Bryan Goodey followed by two groups of Echeverias which looked very different. They were both *Echeveria* “Perle von Nunberg” - but the 2nd group had been through some leaf shine treatment which takes the bloom off the leaves and make it look like a different plant. When new leaves grow, they will have the bloom again. *Echeveria* “Rainbow” is a colourful variegated which didn’t really take off. We also saw *Echeveria* “Raindrop” which he got from the American National. The leaves do not have the drop marking in their juvenile form, but they will grow it eventually. Some of the larger Echeverias are nice but they are better suited for big American gardens. There’s a series named after Snow White’s dwarves “Bashful”, “Dopey” etc. *Graptopetalum* and Echeverias can also be crossed. *Pachyphytum oviferum* (the sugared almond plant) crossed with *Pachyphytum viride* produces a plant half way between the two, and in sun the leaves go bright orange. We also saw a new hybrid of *Tacitus bellus* which seems easier to grow - it has quite large flowers and seems to form two or three different flower colours on the same plant.

We saw some mesemb cultivars with swirly flowers. He can’t grow mesembs well because of his watering regime where he stops watering everything in October. With *Astrophytums* there are several choice plants to collect, including “Super Kabuto”, “Onzuko”, “Hanazono”. Some have lumps and bumps between the ribs and there are other weird forms too. There are also variegates, and clustering plants which offset profusely. Moving on to *Haworthias*, Joyce Cocozza grew some of the best English hybrids and one called “Bradgate” is well known. We saw some American ones, which were variations on *H. pumila*. We also saw hybrids of *Haworthia truncata* and *maughanii*, with some looking better than the parents. *Haworthia* “Yumedono” has frosted leaves and *Haworthia* “Kintaikyo” is a *H. venosa* x *H. koelmaniorum* cross from Japan. Bob Kent in the USA has probably got some of the best *haworthia* hybrids around. They look like *Ariocarpus retusus* - but 10 times better. A variety of *H. pumila* looked like it had been glazed. One of the best plants had silvery markings on the leaves and it’s something that should really be tissue cultured.

We finished with some of Mile Anderson’s stapeliad crosses. A plant that should perhaps have read it’s label “See a Doctor” had perished, a second one also died on him. *Huernias* are easier to look after. Plants with names such as “Pistachio Yoghurt” and “Speckled Jim” sell better than a species. Stuart ended with a “smiling” cactus and a cristate conifer.

Vinay Shah

## Table Show Results

There were 15 entries in the June table show.

|              | Cacti –<br>Parodia                              | Succulents –<br>Mesembs                          |
|--------------|---|--|
| Open         | (1) I Biddlecombe<br><i>Parodia magnifica</i>   | (1) B Beckerleg<br><i>Lithops bromfieldii</i>    |
|              | (2) B Beckerleg<br><i>Parodia leninghausii</i>  | (2) M Jakins<br><i>Faucaria tigrina</i>          |
|              | (3)   | (3) I Biddlecombe<br><i>Conophytum sp.</i>       |
| Intermediate | (1) B Beckerleg<br><i>Parodia escayachensis</i> | (1) I Biddlecombe<br><i>Conophytum pubescens</i> |
|              | (2) I Biddlecombe<br><i>Parodia maxima</i>      | (2) B Beckerleg<br><i>Conophytum herreanthus</i> |
|              | (3)   | (3) I Biddlecombe<br><i>Aloinopsis setifera</i>  |

Ivor Biddlecombe

## Branch Committee Meeting

A branch meeting was held at Dot’s on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

Branch funds remain at a healthy level – thanks to the external displays, we are tending to break even at present.

The meeting raffle remains a problem spot. We will experiment with a couple of changes - the strips will be priced at £1 instead of 50p and this should mean less folding of tickets. And also Bruce was willing to take on the task of selling the tickets from his plant sales area.

At recent meetings, our attendance is slightly down compared to last years. Some new members have joined and some have come along to a meeting or two. Dot asked whether we should use a questionnaire to ask the membership if there’s anything we can do to improve our meetings.

The display at Sparsholt went well. The recent visits to external events organised by the branch have had reasonable participation, but on the whole it was largely committee members who made up the numbers. We did our best to publicise the events and lay on lifts for everyone who wanted to go.

Tickets and the rota for the New Forest Show were discussed. The organisers required us to order any extra ticket by the end of June in order to receive a discount.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary garden party is upcoming and preparations for this were discussed. Alice would provide a map of how to reach her house, since it is just under a mile off the main road.

*Vinay Shah*

## Bookwork Corner

We have now gone past the longest day so that means that we are now in high summer, unless you are Mark of course, who is insisting that it is now autumn!!!

The flowering in the cacti house seems to be tailing off with parodia, turbinicarpus and a few mammillaria. On the succulent front, the adromischus are sending up flowering stems with gasteria flowering all over the place, indoors, outdoors and even under the potatoes in the cold greenhouse!

Out in wider countryside the birds are presenting fledglings left right and centre at the moment! Teal my trusty survey dog has been very patient while I try and count broods of hedgerow birds including blue tits, great tits, blackbirds, robins, wrens, whitethroats, chaffinches and blackcaps. It has been a great pleasure to see the red kites gliding low and having a good look at Teal, I told him he better not go to sleep in case the kite decided to have him for breakfast!

Don't forget to have a look at the donated books for sale on the library table, these include: Cactus Lexicon (Backeberg 1976); The Mammillaria Handbook (Craig 1979); The Encyclopaedia of Cacti (Cullman, Gotz & Groner 1986); The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Cacti (Innes & Glass 1991); The Cactus File Handbook 2- Rebutia (Pilbeam 1997); The Cactus File Handbook 6- Mammillaria (Pilbeam 1999) and Cacti for the Connoisseur (Pilbeam 1987).

## 'ENJOYED THE LECTURE? THEN ENJOY THE BOOK!'

### June

Stuart Riley gave us an interesting talk on 'new cactus and succulent hybrids'. Trying to come up with books for this talk was tricky, however I went for '**Cactus File Handbook 2 – Rebutia**' (Pilbeam) and '**The Genus Echeverias**' (Pilbeam) which has such splendid photographs.

### July

We are back in the Americas this month with David Minnion presenting a talk on 'Nevada'. Books worth considering are '**Cacti and Succulents in Habitat**' (Preston-Mafham) which has some good photographs showing how different plants look in habitat than in our greenhouses! '**The New Cactus Lexicon**' (Hunt) is a weighty set of books but well worth the effort as it has great pictures and text for every (hopefully) cacti that David will mention tonight. Both of these books will be in **Featured Book Corner** so do go over and take them out for a bit of bedtime reading!

*Sue Wilson*



## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be on 5<sup>th</sup> August and will feature a talk by Trevor Wray.

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

The **Mammillaria** group contains 13 genera, including *Mammillaria*, *Bartschella*, *Cochemiea*, *Dolichothele*, *Mamillopsis*, *Mammilyodia* and *Solisia*.

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

Do remember that for each month's table show, there is also a group for displaying any flowering cactus or succulent plant.

## Forthcoming Events

|                          |               |  |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Jul | Isle of Wight | What I Did Last Winter (Paul Klaassen)   |
| Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> Jul | Portsmouth    | Propagation of Cacti & Succulents (Tony Roberts)                                   |
| Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> Jul | Southampton   | 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniv.Garden Party - hosted by Alice Jankovec, West Moors, Dorset |
| Tue-29 <sup>th</sup> Jul | Southampton   | Display / Plant Sales @ New Forest Show, Brockenhurst                              |
| Thu 31 <sup>st</sup> Jul |               |  |
| Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug  | Southampton   | Around the Shows (Trevor Wray)   |
| Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Aug  | Isle of Wight | Open Evening at Peter & Jan Collard's  |
| Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> Aug | Portsmouth    | No meeting   |
| Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> Aug | Portsmouth    | Display / Plant Sales @ Emsworth Horticultural Society Show                        |
| Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sep  | Southampton   | Caudiciform Succulents (Bob Potter)  |
| Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Sep | Southampton   | Display / Plant Sales @ Romsey Show, Broadlands                                    |
| Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Sep | Isle of Wight | Mesembryanthemums Part3 (Eddy Harris)  |
| Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> Sep | Portsmouth    | What I Saw Last Winter (Paul Klaassen)   |
| Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> Sep | Southampton   | Branch visit to MSG Show, sales & lecture – Banstead, Surrey                       |

Branch website: <http://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk>  
 Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>