

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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Editorial

The weather has been patchy for the last month and we've had a few cool evenings. I think it's fair to say that the summer is over, but we'll have to see how many days before we get to experience the first frost.

In the conservatory, most of the flowering activity right now is limited to mesembs and Aloes and Haworthias. I expect to continue watering this month, but at less frequent intervals, and stop if a severe cold spell shows up.

Announcements

The branch had a successful day at the Romsey Show on Saturday 12th September. Our display won a gold medal and some welcome prize money, and there was good interest from the public.

Due to the large attendance at last month's meeting copies of the newsletter ran out – I have re-printed some spares. Note that newsletters for the last dozen years can be downloaded from our website. And if you have trouble parking, note that there is an overflow car park at the church, just past the next junction.

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

Ben Turner had brought in a plant of interest – it was a bulb called *Bessara elegans*. It comes from central Mexico and grows in habitat with cacti and succulents. He suggested taking a look at the plant from below - the red flowers which pointed

downwards have attractive markings and green pollen.

Cool Customers

John Hughes said the aim of his talk was to make you think about whether you were heating your plants when it wasn't necessary - or let you select plants which you might be able to grow at lower temperatures. Via a show of hands, he asked how many people in the audience heated their collections and concluded that more people heat than don't.

The plants we grow come from different places - and most exist without plentiful water at certain times of the year. Plants from the West Indies or parts of Brazil can have high temperatures throughout the year, in some cases above 50°F all year - to places like the Alps where they grow under a blanket of snow - no water because it's frozen. You have a choice of what temperatures to use and what plants you grow. And if you have a window sill, you can bring some of the more tender plants from places like Socotra or Brazil - *Adenium obesum* makes a nice house plant. Tonight's talk would be about plants that will survive under cool conditions and how to give them the best chance. Most people may have had a greenhouse heater failure and have lost plants - maybe just not prepared for the possibility, and might have watered a bit longer. The essential thing is that you must dry the plants out thoroughly - your aim being to concentrate the sap in the plant tissue. Some of you might remember the experiment in school where you have a beaker of ice - throw salt on it, and it melts. The same applies to plants if you get the plants to rest earlier and get them thoroughly dry, then it improves their ability to withstand low temperatures.

Of course there are some plants that never get cold weather and the cell walls will rupture as temperatures drop, and those are ones we will need to avoid. As time goes on, the cost of heating tends to increase and can become a factor. Dropping the minimum temperature by a few degrees can have a significant effect - some studies suggest that reducing the minimum temperature from 45°F to 40°F can halve the heating bill. Having a frost stat

setting is quite a good thing - a heater that kicks in at 1°C or 2°C can protect against any sudden drops. If you are using electricity, then use economy 7 which offers lower price electricity (1/3 of the normal rate) between 11pm and 6am.

You can also try and position the greenhouse in a sheltered position and away from the wind - a hedge helps. You should also go round and make sure they are no drips, and also no gaps at the door which might let drafts in. He uses bubble wrap plastic. The winter of 1963 was particularly severe and using bubble plastic saved the plants from the severe frost. As mentioned before, dropping the minimum temperature by 1°C can save 20-30% on your heating bill. In a really bad period you can throw some newspaper on the plants for protection. It's really just those odd weeks when the temperature outside drops to -8°C or -10°C. He goes for a closed atmosphere and keep things as warm as he can. If you have a lean to, use a black plastic lining on the back wall to catch the heat. You can also use black plastic containers with water and use these as a heat sump. Cliff Thompson leaves his windows open, since he believes air circulation is more important than the temperature. If you're going to experiment with growing new plants, don't buy small plants in September - you will be desiccating them in the winter, so go for something a little bigger.

Starting in South America he was show us some of the places he visited, to show plants in nature. In Peru in 1975, we saw some of the plants growing around Lake Titicaca. The lake is at 12,700 feet above sea level and it is quite a bit south of the equator. The area above the lake is at 14,000 feet. The average day temperature = 49°F in summer and 41°F in winter. In night temperatures are as low as 20°F. The lake has an ameliorating effect. Most of the rain falls in the summer - the annual rainfall can actually be quite high, and once the nearby railway line was washed out. The region at this altitude is bleak and barren, and there are no trees. There are some houses near the lake, and we could see the clothes worn by the locals - they use lots of shawls etc. The women wear about 20 layers of skirts - they wash the outer ones and then stick them underneath. That amount of clothing also serves as protection against sexual attacks! Going up past houses with thatched roofs, by the lake itself, we saw *Opuntia versaffeltii*. There are also llamas here. Lake Titicaca is the largest inland lake in South America. You could see how much rain they had recently, there was still standing water. Alpine plants also grow here. We saw *Blumenbachia spinosa* (?), which is related to stinging nettles. The *Lobivias* growing here include *L. maximilliana*. The natives were friendly and dug him up three plants. One

flowered within a year - and the flowers are almost like neoporteria or oroya. 20 years later the third plant bloomed and it was actually *L. pentlandii*. Some slides from Graham Charles highlighted groups of different plants with different coloured arrows. A *Tephrocactus floccosus* didn't look very hairy and it is variable in the wild - the ones in cultivation are the more attractive hairy forms. We saw a picture of a plant he had been growing for 25 years. He had labelled it as *T. lagopus* but it should now be *T. floccosus*, and what was *T. malyana* should be *T. lagopus*.

Between Andahuaylas and Abancay at 12,500 feet, there were some patches of grass growing - the trees stop at 7-8000 feet. There was an awful sulphur smell in the air. The oroya found here is *Oroya peruviana*. A plant which survived all these years despite being attacked by red spider - was *Oroya minima* which was in a 2¾" pot which was now almost a 3 inch round. It clumps by growing stolons. Graham Charles says it's not been found in the wild since.

Now in Chile at 10,000 feet near Volcano Chillan - a picture in the summer showed there was still snow on the mountain. This has the longest ski piste in South America. He stayed at Las Trancas at 4,000 feet - it was an area with a nice waterfall. There were also some southern beech trees which had died. This was summer - in the winter it is covered in snow for 6 months. Growing by the roadside was *Maihuenia poeppigii*. This is difficult to grow in cultivation, it needs a cold climate to grow, and the best one he's seen in this country was in Edinburgh. Also here are alpines and we saw the cushion plant. A large clump of *Maihuenia* was 9 feet by 7 feet across but he had to clear it of a large number of coca cola cans before he could photograph it. It grows in volcanic ash. The Alpine Garden Society has started to allow plants such as *Mammillarias* and *Tephrocactus* in their schedules. The rosulate viola *Viola rosulata* produces an amazing grey swathe of leaves. It grows in an area which is covered in snow for 6 months and yet in the summer very hot, the ground can burn your knees through jeans in just 30 seconds. There were also some orchids growing here.

In Northern Argentina at an altitude of 11000 feet, in June and July the temperatures were only 3°C, and these regions also only gets 13 inches of rain. This comes in the summer months, it is dry in the winter. We saw some guanacos, which are related to llamas. Generally the higher you go, the more squat the plants are, but here was the tall growing *Oreocereus celsianus*. In the summer the temperatures are higher, about 15-18°C at midday.

We saw some green vegetation and lovely examples of *Oreocereus celsianus* - a plant which can take low temperatures easily. There is also a cristate form around.

In the same locality is *Tephrocactus/Maihueiopsis subterraneus*. This is a diminutive plant above the ground but underground, it forms large swollen roots. When they bloom, they have some nice flowers, and we saw some of Rene Geissler's plants. At the same locality is *Tephrocactus nigrispinus* - this is not common in cultivation. It can be grown in a 5½ inch pot and has dark purple pads and little vestigial purple leaves - quite pretty overall. He once had it flower but he didn't see the event, only seeing the remains of the flower some weeks later. A friend of his found it in Northern Argentina and send him pictures of it in flower. It's a plant which is a bit of an enigma, it doesn't fit in with any of the other South American opuntias.

He spent 2 hours at Paso Jama between Chile and Argentina - they were in the 3rd of 4 coaches with only one man checking every passport at the border crossing. It was pretty bleak, and this was at the edge of the Atacama desert. There were Alpines here and the cacti which grow with them can withstand low temperatures too. *Hoffmannseggia trifoliata* has yellow, orange or red flowers - it is sometimes called the partridge foot, due to the shape of the ends of the leaves. It is a plant from the pea family. Growing with it is *Maihueiopsis hypogea*. *Cumulopuntia ignescens* forms huge clumps, covered in spines and is another plant that can be grown in a cold greenhouse. A flower plant was a dwarf lupin. *Lobivia (Echinopsis) tarijensis* is a tall growing Lobivia, found from Salta up to the border with Bolivia. *Weingartia neumanniana* grows here and is pretty unusual. It is the type species and should be really easy to grow, but it looks different from the other weingartias.

In Northern Argentina, he visited Quebrada del Toro near Salta and the ruins at Santa Rosa de Tastil. *Trichocereus pasacana* is quite common from 7000 feet and higher and grows up to 12000 feet. They start off with a yellowish colour until they are 6 -7 feet tall and start to flower, then the top turns white. You should be able to grow in a cold greenhouse. *Lobivia ferox* from Northern Argentina is a variable plant and this one had stout spines. At Iruya they found *Lobivia marsoneri v. iridescens* - this has orangey flowers and is as good as any of the Schick hybrids. Further south is a plant which is quite exotic, and the colours of the flowers look like the colours of the hillside. This was Denmoza which is an anagram of Mendoza. The red flowers of *Denmoza rhodocantha* are hummingbird pollinated.

At Coranzuli salt flats, higher up at 12470 feet is *Rebutia einsteinii*. Near Purmamarca was *Oreocereus trollii*.

This is the prize winner for growing at altitude - *Lobivia chrysochete*, illustrated by a slide from Graham Charles. It grows at 14500 feet, and the plant was in excellent condition, some 6 to 8 inches across the heads. Some of the sulcorebutias also come from quite high up. *Sulcorebutia verticillacantha* was from Tarabuco. *Sulcorebutia pulchra* was found at 9000 feet. Sulcos are often a little temperamental and Kathy Flanagan agreed this plant was quite touchy. Most rebutias can take -10°C, Sulcos can only handle -7°C. The plant was growing down in the subsoil and had tall heads. It's an area where the sun can make daytime temperatures reach 30°C and yet at night there will be frost. With *Opuntia clavarioides*, David Brigg's plant was 30 inches across and was a National Show winner - it was kept heated to 38°F. It is often grown on a graft and then you need to take the sensitivity of the stock into account as well.

At Grenoble in France, there is the largest French National Park and here you find succulents, including Sempervivums. We saw *S. arachnoideum*. These don't get water in the winter since they are covered in snow. The flowers have 8 petals. He advised to buy the plants in person rather than choosing names from a catalogue. *S. "blue moon"* is a form of *S. calcarea*. *Sempervivum ciliosum* var *borisii* comes from Bulgaria and it has a yellow flower. Many hybrids are available, and he mentioned "Icicle" and "Lovely Bug". *S. cv. "Oddity"* has strange leaves formed into tubes. Jovibarba is closely related to Sempervivum, the flowers have 6 petals and these are joined together in a tube. *J. heuffelii* splits dichotomously. Other plants mentioned were *Sedum telephium*, *Sedum reflexum* at Dungeness beach and *Sedum acre* which can be found all the way from Norway to Iran. *Sedum palmeri* was planted out at Tony Mace's. *Sedum multiceps* needs a lot of water - it is from Algeria at 5000 feet. *Sedum pachyclados* grows at 11000 feet in Afghanistan's Khyber Pass area. The Dutch have propagated it and so it is readily available. The rosettes almost look like Echeverias. John reminded us that hot air rises - if you're keeping stuff in a greenhouse - the tender things ought to be placed higher up, and the hardier things can remain lower down.

Sedum spathulifolium - sometimes mislabelled "capablanca" comes from Cape Blanco in Oregon. The variety 'Purpureum' has reddish leaves. One group he likes is *Orystachys* - this is a boehmeri hybrid - which comes from Japan's coastal area. It

can flower itself to death and the featured plant was coming into flower in a 5.5 inch pot. In the months of September and October, it can flower on every head. There are two forms of *O. fimbriata* - it form a candle of flowers, and the other type was 5 inches across. The plants will produce offsets if you core the centre out. You need two plants to set seeds. John mentioned Anthony Mitchell from the Isle of Wight grows a number of these. *Orostachys iwarenge* forms a conical growth just before flowering. *Orostachys spinosa* is the main one we tend to see in the shows. It has yellow flowers.

Lewisia is in the *Guide to Shows*, and the genus is named after Captain Merriweather Lewis, who crossed the Rocky Mountains in 1805 and found the plants in the Bitterroot Mountains. It is a plant with quite a thick caudex - if grown in open ground - put it an angle, to avoid water collecting. For him, he finds them harder than melocacti. *Lewisia tweedii* is even more difficult. It has very pretty flowers, the seed structure is different, it doesn't cross with the other lewisias and is now placed by itself in *Lewisiopsis*.

We resumed after the mid-meeting break. Gordon Rowley has done experiments on growing cold hardy plants in open ground while living in London and Reading, and he has written articles for the Cactus File and the BCSS Journal. He relates to EA Bowles (famous for growing crocus and wall flowers) who in 1927 offered to give a talk to the RHS on his experiment with growing cacti in rockeries - unfortunately the winter prior to the talk was very harsh so he had to open his talk with the words, "this is a memorial lecture". It is always worth saving a few cuttings as backups in case misfortune strikes.

A plant that crosses across the alpine and succulent hobbies is *Crassula sarcocaulis* - it forms little trees. However the flowers smell like musty socks! It comes from Lesotho, and grows fairly high up, there are pink and white flowered forms. *Chamaecereus silvestrii* was grown by someone in Denmark for several years, including years when the temperatures went down to -15°C to -18°C in the winter. It was however lost after three weeks at -21°C. In cultivation, it is only really known from one clone, although he did bring back a different clone from Argentina. At the end winter it should look red and shrivelled but will soon recover. It is an easy-to-grow plant and has been used for hybridizing. Southfields have kept the chamaelobivia name because they have used it to create many hybrids, and we saw pictures of "Lincoln firecracker". "Lincoln gem" has lovely fluted petals with orange on yellow tones. There are

also white-flowered forms. They are devils for red spider. It does them good to be put out in the garden in the summer months.

Aporocactus flagelliformis (now *Disocactus*) is the rat's tail cactus. The plants grow high up in Hidalgo. Gordon said they can be grown in a rockery. David Minion from Ruislip grows *Agave parryi* in his border and it is said to be hardy to -20°C. Another example was Derek Bowdery's *A. utahensis* which will also take -20°C. Apparently *A. utahensis* ssp. *kaibabensis* from the Colorado River is even hardier. *Agave stricta* should be ok in a cold greenhouse. *Agave schidigera* should also be ok. *Aloe polyphylla* comes from high up regions of Lesotho very high up, and can withstand snow and hail and winter rain. It grows OK in Cambridge and we saw Paul Hoxley's plant growing in his garden. *Aloe aristata* is also hardy, he was once given an example which filled a wheelbarrow. It will survive outside but keep a spare piece just in case. He also advised against taking an unrooted rosette indoors and letting it flower - a native saying suggests this will initiate pregnancy! It has an attractive flower and an article in the Cactus World journal had suggested it should be classed as a Haworthia.

You don't always need perennial plants. Livingstone daisies (*Cleretum*) have beautiful flowers, although he does not find them easy from seed. The central part of the stigma has 5 parts, which is unusual. *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* has become a complete pest in Chile and it grows well during the summer and then releases salts when it dies which kills off the seeds of other plants. *Delosperma sutherlandii* is another plant that can be grown outside - "Peach Star" is an attractive cultivar. It is quite free flowering and will seed itself, he kept it for several years. *Lampranthus* is another plant that can survive outside, and you see beds of this in Eastbourne. The main problem is giving it enough water to stop the roots from drying out in the winter. Another thing you see in rockeries is North American flat padded opuntias, and we saw *O. polyacantha* growing in a rockery at the Maces. This plant had cherry red flowers with green stigmas. From Rene Geissler's collection, we saw *Opuntia albescens* but the name doesn't seem to exist, so he wasn't sure what it really was.

Warren Withers grew many plants in cold frames and a greenhouse. His collection included a lot of things we've already seen such as *Maihuenia* and *Maihueniopsis*. *Tephrocactus mandragora* comes from high up in Argentina and was in a 5½ inch pot. *Tephrocactus articulatus* - his own plant of this came from an auction for just £1 because no one else wanted it. Within 3 weeks of purchase it

produced buds and went on to produce white flowers. He's also kept *Tephrocactus molinensis* in an unheated frame. He finds this a little surprising because he's seen it growing near Cafayate in a valley which wasn't particularly cold. Pterocactus grow south into Patagonia - *P. tuberosa* loses its upper stems but those will grow back in the future.

Anything from the US central states or north of Texas should be hardy - some grow even up to the Canadian border. *Pediocactus bradyi* was on a graft and others like *Sclerocactus parviflorus* would also be OK. Pediocacti do not like to be watered in the middle of summer. John Ede grows some of the best in the country, and he told him that his plants at the national show get one watering at the beginning of the year and one at autumn - they don't like water in the middle of the year. *Toumeyia paprycantha* grows in grasslands where it gets very cold and it can be covered in snow.

There is no end to the number of Echinocerei you can grow. They provide an explosion of colour but not much else to look at the rest of the year. A lot of the featured plants were grown for 10 years in an unheated 6x4 greenhouse or coldframe. For him *E. pentalophus* v. *alba* grown from BCSS seed proved to be disappointing because the flowers were pink. It is supposed to handle going down to -7°C. *Echinocereus primolanatus* is not particularly hardy but Warren had grown it without heat for many years. *E. purpureus* was another plant from a cold area (Oklahoma) and is supposed to handle -23°C. *E. triglochidiatus* is supposed to go down to -30°C and it has the typical claret cup flowers. *E. viridiflorus* has a very nice lemon scent to the flowers and is totally hardy, down to -23°C.

Escobarias grow up almost into Canada and they are very hardy. The flowers not that attractive, but they go on to form some amazing plump seed pods, as on *Escobaria missouriensis*. Another plant which grows in pinewoods at high altitude is *Mamilopsis senilis*. Warren went over to see these when first available from De Herdt in Belgium, and they were growing outside in a frame with just some glass over the top and open sides. Do we mollycoddle these plants more than we need to? From Bolivia, *Lobivia wrightiana* is one of the easiest and more reliable plants. *Mila caespitosa* never flowered in his normal collection but when kept colder, it did. Chris Holland lived in Kings Lynn and he had a 13 x 10 Alton green house and he prepares his plants for winter by withholding water 2 months before the temperatures will reach -3°C so this probably means stop watering sometime in September. He does allow plenty of light and air movement. His plants seem to be fine with winter temps down to -7°C but

he does notice a big difference if it goes to -10°C. Plants from the genus *Ancistrocactus* and *Austrocactus* (*Austrocactus gracilis*) grow over a wide range in Chile and Argentina and they will mostly be fine. *Carnegiea gigantea* can take snow in the winter but of course it can grow rather large, although it is slow. Rebutias were OK down to -7°C and some down to -10°C. He had grown over 50 types down to those temperatures and we saw *R. heliosa cajasensis*. *Astrophytum asterias* can also take some low temperatures. If you're going to buy *A. myriostigma* then go for the cv. "Onzuko" which is a nice white-flecked form. *Ferocactus acanthoides* is also hardy, as is *Lophophora williamsii* - look for the fluffier examples. All of the thelocacti can take lower temperatures since they tend to grow in the northern reaches of Mexico, and we saw *Thelocactus bicolor*. *T. hexaedrophorus* and *T. macdowellii*.

He went to visit a lady in Bridlington called Ann Hudson and she doesn't water her plants from September to April. She doesn't use bubble wrap either, and is only 2 miles from the North Sea, which might perhaps have an ameliorating effect. She does take in some things like Aeoniums, and Stapeliads. We saw some of the plants she's had a lot of success with - *Rebutia* cv. "Apricot Ice", *Echeveria elegans*, a *Echeveria* hybrid from the fantasia series (contains *E. setosa*) and *Copiapoa barquitenensis*. This reminded John that when he had a heater fail and temperatures went down to -8°C for a week, he didn't lose any Copiapoas. There were three plants of *Leuchtenbergia principis* - and they were setting seed. They had been kept in a cold greenhouse for several years. The plants of *Mammillaria plumosa* were small - these were re-rooted offsets following the death of an old plant. With *Ophthalmophyllum*, in very severe winter the leaves might split and mark up, but the marks disappear when the leaves renew in the next year. We also saw *Parodia chrysacanthion* in a 5 inch pot.

The last person he featured was Graham Hole who was no longer with us. He was very keen on the genus *Gymnocalycium* and he reckoned many were hardy - *G. bruchii*, *G. gibbosum*, *G. baldianum*, *G. quehlianum* all grew quite well in an unheated greenhouse. John also suggested that you try growing plants from several sources - given that some plants have a very wide distribution, some clones would be hardier than others.

Vinay Shah

Table Show Results

There were 15 entries in the September table show, and 5 entries for "Plants in Flower".

	Cacti – Gymnocalycium	Succulents – Euphorbia
Open	(1) I Biddlecombe G. saglionis	(1) B Beckerleg E. valida
	(2) B Beckerleg G. strigianum	(2) M Stevenson E. ambovombensis
	(3) P Bircher G. saglionis	(3) I Biddlecombe E. suzannae
Intermediate	(1) I Biddlecombe G. mihanovichii	(1) B Beckerleg E. mosaica
	(2) I Biddlecombe G. baldianum	(2) I Biddlecombe Euphorbia sp.
	(3) B Beckerleg G. spegazzini	(3) A Mant E. ferox

Cacti/Succulent in Flower
(1) B Beckerleg Crassula sp.
(2) B Beckerleg Adromischus phillipsiae
(3) A Mant Mammillaria sp.

Ivor Biddlecombe

Bookworm Corner

The autumn season is certainly here with the trees producing leaves in a riot of colours which look so spectacular in the sunshine. Until yesterday of course when it decided to be very windy and rainy resulting in a much more colourful road surface instead! However the mushrooms and toadstools are appearing in the grasslands and woodlands now and it is amazing how rapidly they emerge from the ground. I particularly love seeing the classic red and white gnome toadstool, the fly agaric, as it is so cheerful looking.

In the garden I keep inspecting the central flowerbed for signs of life from my colchicum bulbs but as yet nothing. I only have a couple of bulbs but last year had quite a few flowers just from one bulb. The cyclamen growing under a hardy fuchsia bush have just finished flowering and gave us a lovely display, visible mostly by peering over the foliage of Japanese irises! We saw various autumn flowering crocus and cyclamen in the Greece last November which was fantastic. Beautiful flowers and no spines, what more could you wish for!

The cacti house is filling up again and the hot box in place. It is that challenging (nightmare) time of year when trays of cacti are moved about from the cold greenhouse to the cacti house, from the cacti house to the cold greenhouse or into the kitchen. Its once they have reached the kitchen I fear the most as it is then just a small skip & jump to invading the bedroom again...However my sansevieria spend the entire year (except for very chilly weather) on the living room and back bedroom window ledges but that of course is just fine!

Trays of *Copiapoa* and *Erioseye* having not done much growing over the last 2 or 3 months are now romping away having been turfed out of the greenhouse into the autumn rains. Interesting that we have had very few *Lithop* flowers so far but not sure why as they have been on the top shelf all summer, in the same position as last year when we had loads of flowers. The pelargoniums are coming out of dormancy and into leaf and the *Aeoniums* are growing well again encouraged by autumn rains, I guess they are still timed with their native habitats. The glass in the cacti house is going to have to go in soon, if only to keep the hordes of slugs and snails out.

'ENJOYED THE LECTURE? THEN ENJOY THE BOOK!'

September

John Hughes gave a talk entitled '**Cool Customers (Growing with Minimal Heating)**'. Books that hopefully tied in with the talk include '**Dumpling & his Wife**' (Hammer S.) which covers *Conophytums* (Hammer reckons can be kept at a minimum of 5 degrees C). If you prefer to grow cacti then have a read of '**Gymnocalycium – A Collector's Guide**' (Pilbeam J.), as these plants should be happy at 5 deg C. A more general book with a good list of species that could potentially also survive out in the garden on a permanent basis is '**Growing Cactus & Succulents in the Garden**' (Bell S.A.).

October

Martin Sheader will be giving us what promises to be a very interesting presentation on '**A Plantsman in Southern Peru**'. We have in the library '**The Genus Matucana**' (Bergman R.) which occur in Peru. More general books to take out could include '**The New Cactus Lexicon**' (Hunt D.) which has one book of excellent photographs and a second book of descriptions. '**The Cactus Family**' (Anderson F) is another book worth a look for plants mentioned in the talk. All these books can be found in the **Featured Book Corner**

Sue Wilson

Branch Committee Meeting

A committee meeting was held at Dot's on 30th September.

With the financial year end in sight, Alice was preparing to pass over details to our accountants so that they could draw up the accounts. The branch's funds appeared to be healthy and suggested we will have made a modest profit during the year.

Meeting attendances are running at healthy levels and even crossed 40 last month. Ben mentioned our facebook page has more "likes" and he has also arranged for our meetings to be listed in the Country Gardener Magazine.

Recent events and meeting events were discussed. Despite unsettled weather and heavy rain, the garden party was well attended. The "Ask The Experts" session went well. At New Forest Show, we had record takings. At Romsey Show, takings were down 20%, perhaps due to a competing seller being present, but we did win a gold medal and £75 prize money.

Arrangements for the Zone Quiz – which we will host in November – were discussed. Our AGM is also only 2 months away.

David will make a start on next year's program and we also discussed possible trips for next year. The BCSS National Show is on, and Portsmouth Branch may operate a subsidised coach again.

Vinay Shah

Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 3rd November and this will be the Zone 11 Quiz, with the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight sending teams to battle over the coveted Mealy Bug trophy (which we won last year!).

For those of you who have not attended this event in the past, the meeting tends to be a fun event, with a mix of questions on cacti & succulents, horticulture and general knowledge. The audience collectively also form a fourth team. The whole point is to have some fun and all the questions are directed at the team and not an individual, so no one need fear "being put on the spot".

Refreshments and Tea will be free at the November meeting.

There will be no table show at the November meeting.

Forthcoming Events

Sat	10 th	Oct	Isle of Wight	Off the Beaten Track 3 (Rodney Sims)
Fri	17 th	Oct	Portsmouth	Around the Shows - BCSS & RHS Shows (Trevor Wray)
Tue	3 rd	Nov	Southampton	Zone 11 Quiz Hosted by Southampton & District Branch
Sat	14 th	Nov	Isle of Wight	Andrew Nightingale – title TBC
Sat	21 st	Nov	Portsmouth	Practical help with your plants (David Neville)
Tue	1 st	Dec	Southampton	AGM, followed by Christmas Social/American Supper
Sat	5 th	Dec	Portsmouth	Annual General Meeting & Christmas Social
Sat	12 th	Dec	Isle of Wight	Annual General Meeting followed by American Supper

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

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>