

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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**Branch Secretary**  
David Neville  
6 Parkville Road  
Swaythling  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO16 2JA  
davnev@btopenworld.com  
(023) 80551173 or  
07974 191354

**Newsletter Editor**  
Vinay Shah  
29 Heathlands Road  
Eastleigh  
Hampshire  
SO53 1GU  
vvshah@clara.co.uk  
(023) 80261989

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### Editorial

Another year has raced past, and Christmas is now just a few days away. The weather has continued to be unseasonably warm, with just a hint or two of frost recently. In the past couple of weeks, I’ve seen azaleas, roses, hydrangeas, fuchsias and marigolds in flower. Hopefully our winter heating bills will benefit from the mild November but of course the coldest months still lie ahead.

I stopped watering plants in my conservatory at the end of October, although the weather in November meant I could (should?) have watered once or twice more. Of course it is too late now and we may get a frost at any moment. A few mesembes continued to flower and the haworthias have coloured up nicely, but there’s not much else to report.

### Announcements

The meeting in January will consist of short talks presented by branch members, and we will have access to both conventional and digital projectors. We’d like members to bring along photos or plants, and talk about them for a few minutes. Digital

pictures can be brought along on a CD or memory card or memory stick, and should be numbered/prefixed 001, 002, 003 etc. to ensure they are shown in the correct order.

The **Branch Programme** for 2012 has been finalised and copies should be available from the front table.

### Committee Reports – 2011

#### *President’s Report*

I want to congratulate the branch on another very successful year. There is a good social atmosphere at meetings and this year especially there has been new faces at most meetings.

Well done to David and the committee for all their hard work, however some more help is needed with the catering and a new librarian is also needed. Consider getting involved with the committee, you get much more out of your membership if you do. So well done to all of you who support the branch in a variety of ways.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a successful New Year

*Peter Down*

#### *Chairman’s Report*

I am pleased to report that 2011 was another successful year. The attendance level has been very good this year so thanks to everyone for their support. Some of this must be due to the very good speakers that we have had, so our thanks must also be extended to our secretary David. It is also very satisfying to be able to say that all the shows that we have supported have done very well. So all in all a very good year & lets hope that the coming year is as good - or even better!

Wishing you all the best for a Happy Christmas & a Happy & successful growing New Year.

*Geoff Card*

## **Secretary's Report**

2011 has been another successful year for Southampton and District branch. We have maintained our healthy attendance figures, welcoming a number of new members during the year, and as always we are pleased to welcome our friends from Portsmouth branch who often pay us a visit. Once again we have received nothing but positive comments from visiting speakers, who are pleasantly surprised by the number of people at our meetings. We make every effort to thank our monthly speakers; I usually take them out for a meal before the meeting, and in addition to paying their travel expenses we present them with a bottle of wine to thank them for their willingness to travel to talk to us.

The branch programme for 2012 is now complete and copies should be available at the AGM. A copy of the programme and the December newsletter is sent to all of our members who are unable to attend the AGM and Christmas Social meeting. I have tried once again to put together a good mix of talks for next year, and hope that we will enjoy some interesting and entertaining presentations.

The branch committee attributes much of the success of the branch to the number of public displays that we undertake, ensuring that we project a strong image to potential new members. Unfortunately the number of events that we have planned for 2012 is fewer than we have staged in recent years, but this is due to reasons outside of our control. For some years we mounted a display at the Garden Fair at Whiteley Village Shopping Outlet, but the site has now closed for redevelopment. We have also staged a 2 day display each year at the Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum in Ampfield, but the gardens are now council owned and run, and because of falling revenues (presumably due to the global recession) they have decided only to stage displays that bring them a revenue, and so in 2012 the display area will be used only for commercial art and photographic displays. For several years we have also staged a display at the show of the Solent Fuchsia Society in Titchfield, but they will not be holding a show next year because of a virulent new pest, the Fuchsia gall mite, which has arrived in the UK, and which is currently most prevalent in Hampshire. Already this pest has spread into outdoor, hardy fuchsias in the area, and as it is virtually uncontrollable the society members are wondering if they are going to be able to grow fuchsias at all in the future! We will still however have a presence at the 3 largest shows that we regularly attend, these being the Countryside Day at

Sparsholt Agricultural College, the New Forest Show, and the Romsey Show.

The branch committee is always looking for new ways to promote our meetings and activities, so if anyone has any suggestions of other events that we should attend to promote the BCSS we would be pleased to receive your ideas. Similarly, if you can think of any ways in which we can improve or enhance the monthly meetings we would be delighted to consider them.

In closing I would like to thank everyone for their help and participation throughout the past year, and I wish you a prosperous and successful 2012.

*David Neville*

## **Treasurer's Report**

Unfortunately I am unable to attend AGM in person, as my baby is due at the end of the month. Despite difficult economic conditions, branch finances have remained stable and we have managed to break even whilst continuing to allow members to attend meetings for free. This is thanks to all of us through continued support of the raffle, plant sales, refreshments and taking part in shows.

Our Branch has taken part in five shows through the summer which raised £345. Profit was down compared to last year, mainly due to increased costs in attending the New Forest Show, but this has been balanced by good profits from other shows and £80 prize money won at Romsey. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in these events.

The cost of visiting speakers has increased. On the other hand, the branch received additional income from sales of donated plants and books, (thanks to Roger & Linda, Ian, Philip) which was greatly appreciated. We have even been able to purchase the new Aloe book for the library. Going forwards, we will save £40 a year as our web hosting fees will now be paid by the National Society.

Wish you all the best throughout the festive season and hope to see you all next year.

*Alice Jankovec*

## **Display Manager's Report**

*Sparsholt Countryside Day 14th May*

On Saturday 14th May, we held our first display of 2011. We were not too sure about the weather so I decided to use my gazebo since the branch gazebo is not waterproof. But when we tried to put it up I

realised that one of the roof bars was missing so we had to use the branch one after all. We were fortunate with the weather but it was a bit breezy and not very good for sitting out. The College put on a very good event with plenty of interesting things to see and I think that all branch members who attended had an enjoyable time. During the October heatwave I decided to make a new bar for my gazebo - after cutting and filing a metal rod to fit, I discovered the missing bar - it had got jammed into one of the legs!

#### *Hilliers Branch Display 21-22 May*

This year we were lucky to have our display in the entrance to the Gardens. This combined with an Art Trail in the garden and a lovely sunny day made Saturday one of the best days we have had for plant sales and visitors to the display. On Sunday the weather was not as nice and this affected the number of visitors to the garden and our plant sales, but it was well worth doing. I hope we will get invited to put on a display in 2012.

#### *The New Forest Show 26-28 July*

I am pleased to say the weather was like last year - fine for the three days with just the occasional shower. Our display was again in the main marquee but this time we had an island site. At first I thought we would be tight for space but it turned out we had space behind the display to store sales plants. This year we had a larger display and I was a bit worried we would not have enough plants as Bruce Beckerleg had broken his arm and was unable to attend. But we had more plants than normal as Ted Smith and Tony Gretch brought plants and Bruce also sent some. This helped me a lot since I was able to take some of my plants home, leaving more space for when we packed up. One of the disadvantages this year was that we had to pay for extra tickets since we were only allowed 2 free tickets for each day, and we need at least three to man the stand and display. Our display won a silver gilt award but as there isn't any prize money it did not help our funds.

#### *Solent Fuchsia Show 30 July*

This was held in the Community Hall at Titchfield. This is only a small display with David, Ted and Tony helping put up the stand and supplying plants. It was easy to man and organise the show, but they did not get as many visitors as they had hoped and our plant sales weren't very good. Fortunately it's an easy show to do and I always enjoy it. The Fuchsia show was very good and the main problem seems to be lack of publicity which is a shame since it deserves more visitors.

#### *The Romsey Show - 10 September*

We were again asked to put on a display at Broadlands. I was a bit worried this year as David, Geoff, Dot and Ted would be away during the show. Fortunately, Bruce and Tony were able to bring plants for the display and we were able to put on a good show. Friday morning when we were loading the car, the weather was showery, but by the time we arrived at the marquee it was sunny and we soon had the stand ready. On Saturday, Bruce, Tony, Jim and Ciprian arrived to sell plants and man the stand, and I am pleased to say we won a gold medal which was worth £80 towards branch funds.

The branch Table Show had a few new members enter this year, which was good to see. I hope even more members will enter in 2012. Do not forget you can make more than one entry per class.

I would like to thank Ian Acton for all the plants he donated to sell at the Shows, and to all the members who helped me at the shows - and also my brother Peter for all his help.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to you all.

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

#### **Librarian's report**

The level of borrowing this year was much the same as last year. A stock take was undertaken at the January meeting. There were some titles missing however these were easily recovered having been placed in storage, and therefore not in cupboard and available for borrowing.

From this experience it would seem sensible to do an annual stock take. I will do a stock take each January as a routine.

A large number of books were donated by Philip Clemow and by the estate of a deceased member. Some were sold, others remain in storage to be available for sale at future meetings, and a few will be added to the library stock. The sum from the sale of these books is shown below.

One new book has been purchased. *Aloes: The Definitive Guide* by S Carter et al. and this has well borrowed.

Revenues for the year ending September 2011 were as follows:

Lending	£ 9.00
Sale of books	£ 99.50
Total	£108.50

*Dorothy England*

## Newsletter/Website

During this year we have continued with the idea of getting people to wear small name badges at our meetings, and I hope this makes it easier for new members to join in and mix with everyone.

I produce around 35 newsletters each month and sometimes these do run out, so I would like to remind everyone that newsletters can be viewed or downloaded from our website. If you need a printed copy of any back issues, just let me know. The supply of snippets seemed to dry up this year but I'll thank those of you who did submit something for publication. Please continue to keep your eyes open and send me articles that might be of interest to other branch members.

Hall floor damage forced us to cancel the October meeting. I try and update the website with any such news as soon as it is known, so to avoid wasting time and making an unnecessary journey, I'd advise everyone to try and check the branch website on the day of the meeting – especially if the weather is questionable.

We only sold a couple of badges this year, and I'd like to remind newer members that we do have a nice gold-plated enamel badge featuring the branch, available for £2 (or £3.50 for two).

Best wishes to everyone for 2012,

*Vinay Shah*

## Publicity Officer's Report

First of all, as usual, my thanks to all who have in any way contributed to publicising the branch and its activities. We have finally got into the Echo on 2 consecutive months, so let's hope this continues. Radio Solent continues to give us regular support on their *What's On* spot. I am putting up more posters in the libraries if they will agree, as most that were previously displayed have now been taken down.

Finally, seasons greetings to all and good growing in 2012.

*Jim Roskilly*

## Plant Sales Officer's Report

The Season started off with a small display at Sparsholt which I missed last year. We took £340 which was good for just one day. Next was Hilliers which we did not do last year, where we took £486.

The New Forest Show was up on last year with takings of £965 but this is still a bit below average

for this event. I do not go to the Fuchsia Show but we do not normally sell very much there.

We did the Romsey Show for the second time where we took £358, well up on last year, added to which we got £80 in cash for a gold medal.

Sales at branch meetings continue to be buoyant, partly because we continue to have higher attendances than we used to but also because we have more sellers which has added extra interest to the sales table.

I would, once again like to thank all of you who brought sales plants to the various events and also those, Ian Acton in particular, who made donations of sales plants.

For those of you who do not know, anyone can bring plants for the sales table, just make sure each plant has a price label with your initials on. We charge a 10% commission at branch meetings and 15% at shows.

*Bruce Beckerleg*

## Last Month's Meeting

The meeting started with a presentation of a gift to Ivor from the branch – for all the cakes he makes for the monthly meetings, committee meetings and shows – without him ever accepting payment for the ingredients or the effort involved.

The gift was a plant which David described as a Japanese variegated small-growing Agave. It had been bought at ELK, the plant was some 8 inches across and the label was marked *Agave potatorum v. marginata*.

## Plants of Interest

It was also Ivor who had brought along some *Plants of Interest*. The first group consisted of mesembs in flower – these were *Conophytum herreanthus* (white flowers), *Conophytum truncatum* (yellow flowers), *Conophytum spectabile* (feathery pink flowers) and *Conophytum obcordellum* with pink flowers. The fifth was a *Faucaria*.

Ivor mentioned that when he does displays, he often brings along young plants which look good through a magnifying glass since some children find this a fun activity. Today he had brought along some mature plants which had interesting spination. These included *Mammillaria crucigera*, *Mammillaria schiedeana*, *Mammillaria moelleriana*, and *Mammillaria chionocephala*.

He had also brought a couple of examples of *Mammillaria carmenae* – one with white spines and the other with brown spines. You can also get almost any shade in between. Next were four forms of *Mammillaria albilanata* – the standard plant is white-spined but there are several named varieties.

Next was *Mammillaria theresae*. This produces large 1.5" flowers and Ivor described how he had nursed a small plant of only 2 heads into a much larger example. It seemed to do better when he moved it from a plastic pot into a clay pot. The final plant was a *Mammillaria plumosa*, an offset saved from a plant which had once filled a 12 inch pan but which had subsequently died. The unusual thing was the diameter of this single head – normally it would have started to offset at a much smaller size.

### **The Little Karoo**

Geoff introduced our speaker, Rodney Sims, who was going to talk about the Little Karoo. Rodney commented it was nice to see so many people at the meeting – he was used to smaller audiences. He started by asking how many people knew where the Karoo was? A few members raised their hands.

He explained that botanists in South Africa had decided to study the variations in the flora, and the differences in the number of plants in different regions, and this led to the creation of several plant zones. The first slide showed a map of the general region. The Karoo is an area with reduced rainfall in the lower centre of the country. Some areas get winter rainfall while the centre gets summer rainfall. The Little Karoo (Klein Karoo) was a specific area to the south of the main Karoo. There is a mountain range along the bottom which controls the rainfall in the area, and further mountains on both sides, including the large black mountains, the Groot Swartberg. Along the bottom are the Langeberg and Outeniqua ranges. So overall, you have an area of a highish plateau between a number of mountain ranges.

Initially they would travel to Montagu through the Rooibergs and then on to Oudtshoorn and Schoemanshoek, and then up through the Swartberg pass. Rodney showed a pilot's map which showed the ranges of mountains. There was sea to the South and dry continent to the North. Wet winds come in from the Antarctic, hit the mountains and the moisture condenses out, usually on the seaward side. This causes a rain shadow on the landward side of the mountains, creating an environment for succulent plants. The soil is shallow and often red in colour. In the West, the rainfall is 150mm, and in the East it gets to about 450mm. You can often get a

50% deficiency in the amount of rain, so the plants have to be capable of surviving this. The temperatures range from 0°C to 50°C – in other words, blooming cold to blooming hot.

He stated that over the years, since it has been known to us, the little Karoo has been overstocked with animals. Previously, the natives - the San and the Khoisan - lived in balance with the land. He showed us some interesting cave paintings from the region, including one which perhaps featured an *Aloe ferox*. White farmers introduced intensive farming and there were 48 million sheep raised in an area that should have supported 7 million, leading to over grazing. One of the other big problems introduced by the white man was Ostrich farming. These birds eat every piece of vegetation they can see, so no vegetation is left in their compounds, and when the rains come, there is a lot of erosion. Also, ostriches weigh up to 360kg - and have feet which are 6 square inches in area - so this means they exert tremendous pressure on the ground, destroying and compacting the soil structure.

When flying into the area, if you're lucky you may have an East facing seat on the plane and it is nice to see the sun coming up. Through the mists you can eventually see the land and structures on the ground. He showed an aerial picture of a bend in a river, some rapids, sand banks and a water fall and farm tracks, but said that he had never been able to locate this on a map. Ian Acton said that if they were dry rivers, it might be the region of South Africa that is north of Augrabies and which sticks up between Namibia and Botswana.

They got to Cape Town and then went to Montagu which was a typical colonial town. We saw a picture of the impressive bank. They were staying at the Montagu Country Inn, where they were welcomed with "bucks fizz" and a live pianist playing in the dinner room, so it was real luxury. A lot of the towns spell out their name on the hillside using white stones. They are proud of their colonial heritage and there was a colonial trail. Their group consisted of 4 Brits and 2 South Africans, including Jan Vlok who was to be their guide. Jan is the author of a recent book called *Plants of the Klein Karoo*.

Their first stop yielded *Gasteria bayeri* with a 3 inch leaf span. Rodney mentioned that in South Africa there are large numbers of species and families of parasitic plants - and we saw *Cytinus sanguineus* with flowers which were red balls one cm across – the plant itself would be feeding on the roots of the host. We also saw masses of blue daisies, Felicia. *Adromischus maculatus* showed superb coloration.

Next was a geophyte, possibly *Euphorbia crista* or something similar. It will have a big caudex underneath and is not easy to grow in cultivation. In parts of South Africa, grasses are replaced by restios. Bulbines are not easy to identify but we saw what might be *Bulbine aloides*. A splash of red revealed the thin stems of a *Microloma* (an asclepiad) which is an interesting twining plant. *Stapelia rufa* had a flower 2 inches across – it is quite uncommon to find them in flower. *Hyobanche glabrata* is another parasite. It has small zygomorphic flowers with beautiful colours. Where there is a vegetative matter you can get fires and this is a major destructive and constructive force in this area. Driving along, they suddenly saw a splash of colour and this was *Aloe variegata* in flower. In habitat you rarely see them with more than 6 leaves.

The stems of *Euphorbia juglans* looked like large walnuts. It shrinks and fills back out again and you could see that it had pushed the soil out around it. We saw *Antigibbaeum fissoides* and the epidermis of older leaves had been colonised by some sort of algae or bacterial growth. Next was *Avonia papyracea*, with pieces of white flint in the soil. If you find this type of quartz, you will usually find other interesting plants too. *Adromischus filicaulis* v. *marlothii* again had old leaves that were blackened by the algae. There were some shrublets where the cambium is down the inside of the stem – effectively an inside-out bush. In amongst the trees and bushes were one or two plants. *Gibbaeum pubescens* was growing in the quartz patches and it was a fantastic sight in flower. Unfortunately this area was soon to become a safari park. We also saw a green *Gibbaeum cryptopodium* – the name means hidden foot. These plants had apparently been nibbled by tortoises. *Crassula tecta* used to be very popular in cultivation and it was very beautiful. We also saw *Crassula pyramidalis* in flower. The plant was about 2 inches high and the leaves were very densely packed. It is monocarpic, so would die after flowering.

Inside the fence was a Quaqua, which is one of the hard tubercled Carralumas, with creamy yellow flowers – this was *Q. marlothii*. They again found the *Antigibbaeum* – you can see some of these plants along the roadside, so there's no need to ask for farmer's permissions or to cross fences. *Crassula deltoidea* has angular leaves in the shape of a delta and it was beautifully marked. They found an *Astroloba* which may have grown under the shelter of a shrub – but when the shrub dies, the plant is exposed and starts to suffer. A stick *Euphorbia* was nicely marked but these are hard to identify and he wasn't sure of the species.

They went through an open gate and after looking around, found *Bulbine succulenta* – barely one cm tall. Tucked away in a corner was the red flowered *Sutherlandia frutescens* – known as kankerbos, it is used by the natives to treat cancer. David said it can be found in health food shops. The flowers are 2 inches tall and quite large, eventually going on to form spherical pink seed capsules, giving it the name balloon pea. *Gibbaeum heathii* was seen everywhere. It has pink bodies with pink or white flowers. *Gibbaeum geminum* is one which grows in branches in a cruciform pattern and the magenta flowers were starting to develop. There was a blurred outline to *Gibbaeum pubescens* and this was caused by fine hairs. The plant sits down low but had still been grazed by something.

They moved on to the burn site, which had, within the last 6 months, had a fire. Some of the flowers beginning to appear were *Lapeirousia* with white flowers on stalks 2-3" tall. *Moraea ramosissima* had yellow flowers – it branches all over the place, and is a member of the Iris family. *Oxalis obtusa* had nice salmon-coloured flowers, the colour varies from white through orange to dark red. *Babiana* is a bulb which is called the baboon nut because they try and dig these up and eat them. It had a purple and yellow flower. A weedy looking plant had beautiful flowers – the genus was *Nemesia*. If it was a new species, it should be called *Nemesia orchidiflorus*. Rodney mentioned that the plants here may have to wait for many years before a fire destroys the other plants and gives them a chance to grow. And what about the pollinators? How do they handle the sporadic appearance of these plants? Next was a *Ferreria* showing the stigmas and exotic flowers with repeating patterns. We also saw *Ferreria divaricata* and another bulbine – we had seen three so far, and all were very diverse.

They had to leave this area to go and find some succulents. On the way out they passed a *Drosanthemum speciosum* with spectacular orange-yellow flowers. We saw a view from the site and could see some of the internal mountains in the distance. Next was *Gibbaeum velutinum*, perhaps the most widely distributed of this genus. The tallest leaf was 3-4" high, and the two leaf forms were clearly apparent. An *Astroloba* (formerly *Apicra*) had lost its protective plant and was now getting scorched. A plant of *Gibbaeum pubescens* had over 50 magenta flowers open. He called plants of *Crassula columnaris* "tartan buttons" because of the pattern on the tips of the plants. They were growing in enormous densities, exceeding 100 per square metre. A picture of a yellow *Gazania* flower showed black markings round the centre of the flower –

these resemble insects and the marks are supposed to attract pollen beetles.

Jan thought an *Anacampteros* with brown hairs might be something new. In the Langeberg mountain range, they were on one of the coastal roads and investigated one of the banks and found some interesting plants. They found *Senecio rowleyanus* and large clumps of the small headed *Gibbaeum pretense*. The latter was found in diverse sizes and he took 20-30 pictures, but without including something to give an idea of scale, this was a wasted effort. An annual tuberous *Crassula* was either *C. septas* or *C. capensis*. With *Euphorbia susannae* it was difficult to establish whether they were looking at one plant or five – it had pulled itself into the quartz and dirt. *Senecio ovoideus* (?). Another gibbaeum was *G. schwantesii* which was smaller than *G. velutinum*. *Othonna furcata* had an impressive head-sized tuber. On the other side of the road was *Gibbaeum album*, with dimples on the body. They also found *Muiria* and then the hybrid between the two. There were 5 of these, all with a grin. They also found a *Muiria* in a plastic bag which someone had dug up and then abandoned.

They stopped just south of the Rooibergs and found *Drosanthemum bicolor* which had flowers with a white centre changing to yellow with a red edge. *Gibbaeum dispar* grows on a shale substrate and it looks just like the rocks it is growing in. They found *Conophytum pubescens* and also lichens that looked like dead conophytums. They went over the top and down the other side. *Aloe striata* had blue green leaves and orange flowers. Gall mites were affecting the flower buds and it looked like no seeds were forming on any of the plants. They stayed for 4 days at a hotel in Schoemanshoek just north of Oudtshoorn. It was a very pleasant location, with all sorts of birds (little grebe, ostrich, cape cormorant, sacred ibis, common ibis and herons) to be seen around the water. It was a bird watcher's paradise to sit in bed and watch them in the morning.

They left the hotel for a trip up the Swartberg pass, to visit a *Portulacaria afra* habitat, and they soon found bushes of this species along with a few Aloes, and *Crassulas* in massive clumps. These are steep west facing slopes which receive the evening sun, and so featured plants which like a little shade. They found *Haworthia starkiana*. On the other side was a "problem plant" introduced from South America by a German Count - *Nicotiana glauca* - which has blue leaves and tubular yellow flowers, and it can spread everywhere. A climbing *Geranium* was *G. peltatum* and they found *Crassula unicolor* and a small *Bulbine mesembryanthemoides*. You would normally only see one leaf on this - but it had been

growing in shade and had managed to form a rosette. They spotted a rather beautiful splash of blue on the side of the hill and a clue to the identity was the arrangement of the leaves in fans – it was a woody iris, *Nivenia concinna*. He found some for sale at a recent South African Bulb Group meeting. It lives half way up the pass and he hoped it would be hardy in cultivation. The flowers are not iris-like. Towards the top, they found *Romulea atrandra*. Looking into the hillside and looking back over the area they had come through, they got an overall view of the little Karoo - only small patches of the original terrain remain on the valley floor.

Just over the hill they found *Romulea fibrosa*, and also an attractive *Protea*. This genus is very dependent on the burns. Going back, they went down another route to De Rust. They found a big euphorbia - each head was 4 inches thick and it was *Euphorbia mammillaris*. The tops were covered in seed capsules. A tortoise they came across was about 2 feet across and probably one of the biggest species on the continent. There was lots of thicket and dead branches lying around and this was worth investigating. A haworthia was probably *H. zebrina*. Another small *Euphorbia* was from the group of *E. atrispina*, *heptagona* and *enopla*. Dr Bruyns is looking into producing a monograph for this genus. Another *Euphorbia* was some 12 feet across. The genus does need looking at since there are lots of similar looking plants in this area. Under the scrub they found an *Adromischus* and an *Euphorbia* seedling. Another interesting plant which took a lot of effort to identify was *Crassula sebaeoides*. Unusually, this has 5-fold symmetry in the flowers. They stopped in a clump of gum trees. These can be a real pain – they have leaves that do not rot down, so they form a mulch which stops other things from growing.

Jan then offered them a treat, to find something exciting. Along the way, they found a few *C. sebaeoides*, some mesembs, a few *Tritonias*, *Senecio scaposus* including a green one without any felt, and a *Gasteria*, possibly *G. brachyphylla*. It was a big clump with pointed leaves, but the offsets did not have pointed leaves. A pink-tinged *crassula* had hairy leaves, but it was not *C. tomentosa*. Finally they saw a few grassy leaves with a haworthia flower spike and this was the recently discovered *Haworthia graminifolia*. We also saw a lizard who had changed his colours to beautifully match the rock he was sitting on.

They went on a site south of De Rust where a new aerial had been put in for phone communication. A new path had been cut through all the scrub – and although it meant more litter, it also provided access

to plants. A *Trichodiadema* was hard to identify. There were two *Pachypodiums*, *P. bispinosum* and *P. succulentum* growing together on the same hillside. A plant described as *Euphorbia colticola*(?) had many heads, each about one inch thick. It wasn't one of the medusoid types – the branches were distinct rather than coming from one head. Next was a special *Moraea* with purple flowers which according to Jan was very rare. Looking to the east, towards Willowmore and Port Elizabeth, there seemed to be interesting areas for exploration.

They headed back to Oudtshoorn and stopped at a track. They found a lovely *Crassula tomentosa* with a 2 foot inflorescence. A *Tylecodon paniculata* had a hollow trunk – from the size, it must have been very old. The plant they had come to see was *Haworthia truncata* - the “hairy” form with papilla. It took ages to find and he wasn't that impressed by it. *Cotyledon orbiculata* is variable and they found ones with 6 inch leaves and tall inflorescences. Along a dirt road they found a colony of one of the more interesting *Euphorbias* - *Euphorbia clandestina*. Each stem was 4 inches thick and the plant was as tall as a man. It must have been very old. There was a high fence alongside them, and a farmer was maintaining a game shooting area alongside this area. They made one or two trips along main roads and came across a lovely *Glottiphyllum linguiforme*. It does look like tongues over there - here we tend to overgrow it, despite the fact that we get more light per day here than the plants in habitat. *Cotyledon glandulosa* was coming into flower. *Haworthia scabra* can get very tatty but it just about survives under the bushes. They also found some examples of *Haworthia emelyae* – there were 4-5 plants growing in a group. *Crassula expansa* v. *filicaulis* is probably an annual. The leaves were only 1 cm long.

A *Haworthia* from a nature reserve just north of Oudtshoorn was very similar to the hairy *H. truncata* they had seen earlier. The plants were very well camouflaged. There was another aerial mast here and creating the access for it had uncovered lots of interesting bits and pieces. We saw a picture of greyish rock which Rodney said was a stone age hand axe.

They then made their way back towards Cape Town. At a side branch off the road, they found a lovely *Euphorbia caulicolina*(?) - one of the first *Euphorbias* he had bought from Tom Jenkins – growing just outside someone's front door. One of the most beautiful sights is the karoo violet (*Aptosimum*) – but you can never capture the right colour in a photograph. A *Glottiphyllum cruciatum* was only known from 4 sites. It was sun burnt to a

brown colour and was in flower. *Aloe humilis* was also in flower. Next was a bulb of *Drimia*, although something had taken a bite out of the side. Another specimen of *Glottiphyllum cruciatum* was greener than the previous example, and it had longer leaves. A little further on, *Haworthia arachnoidea* was growing in a crack between some rocks. This was an area where there were supposedly plants of *Aloe longistyla* but they found lots of fence pots around and it seems that this was another area that will be enclosed and turned into an ostrich farm. They did eventually find plants of *Aloe longistyla* but all the flowers had aborted so there was no seed. They found a curly leaved *Ornithogalum suaveolens* and a few more poor looking *Aloe longistylas*.

On the road towards Calitzdorp, they saw some colour on a side road and stopped to have a look. There were interesting bits here and they almost trod on the plant, which was a *Lachenalia*. It was 3 inches tall and had hairy leaves and yellow flowers, and was not one that is described at this area - so it might be a new species. They finally found an *Aloe longistyla* with seed. There were further things around here. An *Othonna capensis*, and a mesemb with a 5 compartment seed capsule and thick leaves. There are only two genera with fat leaves and 5 compartment seed capsules and these are *Cerochlamys* and *Bijlia*. They came to the conclusion this was *Cerochlamys pachyphyllum*.

They moved on to another aerial site. Some rare and interesting fossils had been found here but he was disappointed not to find during their visit. They did however find an example of *Aloe variegeta* with over 100 inflorescences – it was the biggest clump he'd ever seen. *Monsonia succulentum* had white flowers and was quite a sight. *Cotyledon ladismithensis* is related to *C. tomentosa*. They went to a little site just to the north to find *Huernia pillansii*. It likes deep shade and is usually well hidden in the middle of a bush. There was also a disjunct group of *Euphorbia coerulescens*. Having unbranched single stems, it was unlike the main colony 200km away at the Eastern Cape.

Continuing back towards Cape Town, they now were on normal roads. We saw views of clouds above the Langeburgs, and the sun under the clouds shining onto the hills made them look like they were on fire. They reached Worcester, ready for the flight to take them home. Rodney ended his talk with a photo of his dog “Tick” who lives in a cupboard in the kitchen.

He summarised that the Karoo was a very interesting place to visit. The biggest problem is the development of safari parks, with large areas now



being fenced off. South of the main roads, Almond orchards are now being developed so even more areas of habitat are being cleared and destroyed.

*Vinay Shah*

### Table Show Results

There were 6 entries in the November table show.

	<b>Cacti – Echinocereus</b>	<b>Succulents – Lithops</b>
Open	(1) T Grech Echinocereus nivosus	(1) B Beckerleg Lithops otzeniana
	(2) B Beckerleg Echinocereus nivosus	(2) -
	(3) -	(3) -
Intermediate	(1) B Beckerleg Echinocereus rigidissimus var. rubrispinus	(1) B Beckerleg Lithops bromfieldii
	(2) -	(2) T Grech Lithops sp.
	(3) -	(3) -

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

### Branch Committee Meeting

A committee meeting was held on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

The branch results for the year to September were discussed. Alice had not yet passed the information to prepare the accounts to Colin/Lorraine kus, so we would not have accounts ready by the time of the AGM. She had done some rough calculations which showed that we had just about broken even for the year.

David presented a provisional programme of events for 2012. Just one or two meetings needed to be finalised. The Zone 11 Quiz would now take place in November 2012. He had also arranged for us to attend 3 external events, but mentioned that the Fuchsia Show would not go ahead in 2012 (apparently there is some nasty Fuchsia mite going around, making it impossible to hold the show), and also Hilliers were no longer making their facility available. We would explore other opportunities as the year progresses.

The branch continues to investigate the purchase of a new gazebo - although we really only need it for one event – our display at Sparsholt.

Arrangements for the Christmas Social were discussed.

*Vinay Shah*

### Table Show 2011 – Overall Results

#### Open Section – Cacti (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy)

<b>T Grech</b>	<b>26</b>
B Beckerleg	19
A Sheader	11
T. Smith	8
T Radford	4
J Burnay	2
J Roskilly	1

#### Open Section – Succulents (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy)

<b>B Beckerleg</b>	<b>16</b>
T Grech	10
A Sheader	10
J Roskilly	7
J Burnay	5
T Smith	3
T Radford	3

#### Intermediate Section – Cacti (Peter Down 50<sup>th</sup> Golden Jubilee Trophy)

<b>T Smith</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>B Beckerleg</b>	<b>20</b>
T Grech	15
J Roskilly	10
J Burnay	4
T Radford	3
A Jankovec	3

#### Intermediate Section – Succulents (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Paperweight)

<b>J Roskilly</b>	<b>29</b>
B Beckerleg	22
T Radford	13
A Jankovec	11
J Burnay	10
T Grech	10
T Smith	9

#### Ladies Cup (highest points total/Female entrant)

A Sheader

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

## Next Month's Meeting

Our first meeting of 2012 will be held on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and will feature short talks by branch members. If you have a subject that you would like to talk about (even if only for a few minutes), please let a Committee member know as soon as possible.

We will have access to conventional and digital projectors, so members are welcome to bring along slides, or a CD or memory card or memory stick containing digital pictures. You can also bring along live plants if you want to talk about those!

There will be no table show at the January meeting

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*Best Wishes for a  
happy Christmas and  
a merry New Year!*



## Forthcoming Events

Sat 10 <sup>th</sup>	Dec	Isle of Wight	Annual General Meeting & American Supper
Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jan	Southampton	Members' Mini Talks
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup>	Jan	Isle of Wight	No meeting
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup>	Jan	Portsmouth	Short Talks and Discussions by branch members
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup>	Feb	Southampton	"Highlights of Arizona and Utah" – David Neville
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup>	Feb	Isle of Wight	Plant auction and Members' slides
Sat 18 <sup>th</sup>	Feb	Portsmouth	"California and Arizona 2011" – Angie Money

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