

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

May 2016



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Editorial

The weather has warmed up but there are still some chilly nights out there. I have now watered my plants 4 times this year. One does have to be careful at this time of the year because the sun can be strong enough to burn plants if they've not woken up properly.

Announcements

Portsmouth Branch will be holding their **Summer Show** at their usual meeting hall on June 4th. This is your chance to see a show with a full set of classes. There will be 100s of show plants to admire, and a large selection of sales plants to buy. An electronic copy of the show schedule/entry form will be available from the Portsmouth Branch website, or from David Neville.

There are sheets on the front table for people to register their interest for the various **branch visits** that will be held in the coming months. Also, **Portsmouth Branch** are offering people a free coach ride up to the **National Show** in August (leaving from Cosham), and they have extended this offer to our members. Please let either me or David Neville know if you would like to reserve a seat and we will pass your request on to Carrie Hands.

In June, our chairperson Dot England will be hosting an **Open Day**. There are some sheets on the front table of how to get there. In addition, Dot is offering the choice of a cooked lunch or a buffet on the day – if you plan to attend, please mark up your choice on the sheet on the front table.

Members will know that the branch provides **free plants for members from time to time**, the

intention being that you grow them on and bring them along to one of our cultivation meetings, so that we can see how everyone's plants have grown. David has obtained not one but *two* plants to give to members today – *Rebutia* cv. "Sunrise" and *Euphorbia obesa*.

Next month, we will be running a **Minishow**, with 10 classes. There's a leaflet for you on the front table, detailing the classes. Basically we want members to bring in plants and enter the show, and then everyone will have a go at judging the classes. In the second half of the meeting, David will explain the judging process and tell us what he would have selected as the best plants in each class.

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

Ian Acton said he had brought along some plants which were related to the table show class, but he thought these were unlikely to be brought in by anyone else. He first discussed a plant which is circulated around and called *Aloe mitrifomis* (*Aloe perfoliata*). In his opinion the plant in circulation is a hybrid, and he had brought along what he considered a true *mitrifomis* - which is similar to *A. distans*. He had grown this from South African seed. It is a small sprawling plant which grows on rocks, and comes from a small area of the Western Cape, near a town called Darling. It is quite different from the normal *mitrifomis*.

The other plants he had brought along were also *Gasterias*, all of which had been raised from South African sourced seed, and some were quite unusual. He mentioned he had spares of some of them, so if anybody was keen to try growing them, do have a word with him.

What's New

Stuart Riley mentioned that his talk was described on our website as one he's given before - but he mentioned that he updates it every time he gets new plants so it would definitely be different from anything given before. It's really "what's new in the hobby" - new offerings from nurseries, or other plants that have recently become available, or

anything unusual that he's come across. There really aren't that many new plants or species that are interesting or collectable. At the front of the hall he had a tray-full of plants to show us in person, and in the second half of the talk, he would show some slides. Most of the plants were succulents. Some were just new to him, in some cases they were not particularly new. He started with an *Echeveria* - a hybrid called "Culebra", which had been grown by Dick Wright in the USA. Dick is now in his 80s and has produced some fantastic hybrids over the years. Stuart had brought back cuttings from the USA - but had been unable to grow them properly in this country. However, on a trip to Holland a couple of weeks ago, he found a tray of 6 of them at Ubink. He thought those plants may have been grown in Italy. The leaves are tubular and have smooth tips and a rough texture to them. It won't propagate from leaves unfortunately - if you do try planting a leaf, it might survive but it won't produce a new plant - it's a bit like the heart shaped *Hoya kerrii* which is sold around Valentine's Day and which consists of one leaf in a pot. This is a rooted leaf which will never grow. The only way to propagate this (other than tissue culture) is to cut the centre out - or to cut the top off. It should then send out some offsets. It is not popular because it doesn't look good until it gets to a certain size - but once it does, it is really attractive and photogenic, and it should be easy to grow.

Another new *Echeveria* which he saw at ELK last year was *Echeveria rodolphi*. A German seller had half a dozen of these and it's different to most *Echeverias* in that it has a different coloured leaf and is more upright growing. It was only described 6 years ago. It can be grown from seed but should also propagate from leaves. David Neville mentioned he had sold some small seedlings of this with a field collection number last year. *Echeveria agavoides* comes in all shapes and sizes. In habitat it is a nice green plant but a few years ago, pink ones started to show up. He did see one in Homebase once and almost bought it, but before he did, he realised it was sprayed with paint. The Dutch are quite good at marketing plants in this way! He found a good red hybrid called *Echeveria* "Taurus" and wrote about it on the BCSS forum on April 1st along with *Echeveria* "Bordeaux" which has the best wine red colour he's seen on any *Echeveria*. He put a picture on the forum and mentioned it was the first time he'd written about it, and let everyone else comment whether it might be a hoax. It has a fantastic colour and the nearest to it is the red on the edges of *E. agavoides* "Lipstick". It should turn up in numbers soon because it's being tissue cultured in Europe.

He went to Bryan Goodey's nursery in Lincoln (Southfields) after the last Spalding Cactus Mart and Bryan has grown trays of pink *Echeverias* - and he's also been practising with hybridizing *Echeverias* and has hybrids that you don't find anywhere else. Bryan also produces *Echinopsis* hybrids. *Echeveria* "Lincoln Harlequin" is a pretty example, with mostly bluish leaves with pink tips. It is worth looking at his website (Southfield Nurseries) and also worth visiting the nursery because you'll find things not available anywhere else.

There are new species but most would be in the slides. There are more and more unusual *Aeoniums* turning up and he found this the summer before last in the states - called "Mardi Gras" - it was the first time he'd seen a three colour *Aeonium* - it had a green leaf surrounded by yellow and then pink. The colours change a bit during the seasons and it is easy to propagate. In the next couple of days he's chop the top off and it will produce several new heads which should be ready to take to ELK in September. The same person (Renee O'Connell) who works at a wholesale nursery in California - has also produced *Aeonium* "Emerald Ice" which has large heads of bright green leaves with a white variegated edge to the leaf. Anything with an Irish connection will sell well in the States. He's already taken 20 offsets from it and it looks like it will soon produce more, hopefully in time for the National Show or ELK. He's got 2 of these - one he uses for propagation and he has another one that he doesn't mess with. The nursery he bought them from in the US was broken into a couple of days later, and all their stock plants were taken. So they are on the lookout worldwide for anyone selling them. The nursery is called Altman Plants - sells to garden centres and they employ two people full time to come up with new hybrids. They also employ Kelly Griffin, who produced all the exciting new aloe hybrids a few years ago. There are still some good aloes turning up - but they have to be sufficiently different from the previous creations to be worth getting. If they are tissue cultured, they are easy to get hold of, if not then you have to wait for offsets. A. "Lavendar Star" and another one A. "Medium Well Done" which was named by Steven Hammer. With Steve, there's usually a reason behind the name. These plants had fantastic colours. Aloe "DZ" shows what's difficult about some of these hybrids - if you underwater them, the leaf tips dry up and then if you give them too much water, they can lose all their roots. Adrian Bailey asked if Stuart watered his Aloes in the winter and the answer was no - he doesn't water anything in the winter - just doesn't like the idea of watering in the old. Even though *Aeoniums* are winter growers, they convert to our seasons and don't need watering in the winter.

Another one from Renee O'Connell was *Echeveria shaviana* "Pink Frills" which has a pink edge to it. And "Neon Breakers" has got an almost fluorescent pink top to it. This can be grown from leaves so it is very easy to propagate.

He only brought along one Agave and this was *Agave victoria reginae* - he'd gone to a nursery in Holland (Van Linden) and bought a tray of 15 in 3.5 pots - and as he was paying for them, he was told, "you do know they are all going to be cristate"? Well they didn't look anything different than a regular *Agave victoria reginae* - but they apparently came from a plant that had produced a cristate flower. He decided to take the plunge and ended up buying 4 trays - 60 plants - and potted them on as time passed. They did nothing unusual for 3-4 years, but now, some have started to crest. It seems that the ones with the smaller leaves seem to be doing it first. Someone must have beaten him to the plants because he was offered one for 100 euros recently. His plants are gradually cresting, which is something unusual for a monocot. It makes a nice plant and he's saved 4 in his collection and has a dozen more waiting for the crest to appear.

He used a little sulcorebutia to illustrate the fact that there was something different about the pot - you can take it to bits - in some talks he's done about Holland, they throw the plants and pots away in the same bin and he wondered why they didn't separate the pots out - well these pots are bio-degradable - so after a year or two they will fall apart. He tries to buy plants in pots that won't do that - but can't always be sure because the pots look the same as the normal ones. David mentioned the last thing he bought from him - it wasn't the pot that fell to bits! Stuart did mention that if you keep plants long enough, even the good old BEF pots will eventually break, this is especially true with plants like *Ariocarpus* which form tough hard bodies. Another weird thing - the sort of thing they would put on the judges course - looks a bit like an Aloe or Agave, and has a few filaments on the edge of the leaves, like a yucca - is actually a new cultivar of a plant called *Hesperaloe* (false aloe). They are from Mexico / South America. The usual plant has straggly long leaves and a pretty flower, but it is too large and straggly to be of use in our collections - but this is a new one called *Hesperaloe parviflora* "BrakeLights" - it is compact and has vivid deep red flowers. The flower spike is about a foot long and it should make an attractive plant in the collection. A small plant which we couldn't see very well was a *Faucaria* - showed what can be done with selective breeding. This was produced after about 10 years of breeding and it was a really attractive plant which he bought at ELK last year. He showed it to the

mesemb people who all wanted one, but they had sold out by then! It's one that should come true from seed. It flowers in late autumn and he got a couple so will try and set seed - it was a gorgeous looking plant.

With *Chamaelobivia* hybrids - without the flower, the plant resembles some grafting stock or a raffle prize. The original *Chamaecereus silvestrii* is a boring little thing which attracts mealy bug and is not very vigorous although it did have a decent red flower. There are much better hybrids available now, and Bryan from Southfield Nurseries does have lots. If you don't know which are the goods ones when not in flower, go by price, because the good ones are the more expensive plants at £7.50 vs £4 or £5. Some of these are just as good as the American *Echinopsis* hybrids which are large plants with pretty flowers - these by contrast are small plants with pretty flowers, and you can grow 20-30 in a small space. They are also very easy to propagate and he recently sent off some to the States. They were mentioned in the American Journal recently. The plants may look dull, but wait till you see it in flowers in the slides in the second half of the talk.

Gasterias are one of those things where it takes a while to realise that there are some stunning gasterias around. There are a lot of boring Gasterias that you might grow under the stage, but this new one - *Gasteria polita* - comes from Whiskey Creek Nature Reserve in South Africa and it grows like *Gasteria excelsa* but stays relatively small. It has nice angular leaves which grow as a rosette. It is not common at present - it will grow from leaves, but takes 4 years to produce a decent sized offset. Another one which is lovely has matt green leaves with very slight streaking on the leaves - it was grown by Cok Grootsholten - and named after him and his wife Ine. It's like a *Gasteria armstrongii*, is very slow growing, has matt leaves and is nice and flat and remains small. He gives a talk on hybrids and he says there's no point in creating a hybrid unless it's better than the parents. Another plant which was new to him and which he got at Southend branch last year was labelled *Mammillaria shiedeana* - but he couldn't see that in there anywhere. It was attractive, had no spines, and fluffy white areoles. It was starting to offset, and had a ring of dead flowers. Someone suggested it is a large form of *Mammillaria gracilis*. *Mammillaria* cv "Arizona Snowcap" is like a small version of this and it offsets but does have spine clusters. Charlie Hayter said he had a plant similar to this and had grown it for 15 years but it had a paler body and it fell to bits regularly - it was like *Mammillaria gracilis*. This one was like a giant *Mammillaria*

lutheyi. One thing you can do by creating hybrids is show a close relationship between the parent - *Thelocactus* will cross with *Ferocactus*, and *Ferocactus* will cross with *Leuchtenbergia*. He showed some of these crosses, plants he had obtained in the States - a *Ferocactus glaucescens* crossed with a wavy-ribbed *Stenocactus* was starting to form the wavy ribs, and looked halfway between the two. The problem with lumping *Leuchtenbergia* into *Ferocactus* is that all the names would need to change since *Leuchtenbergia* was established prior to *Ferocactus*.

The next plant wasn't in a pot - it must have got wet in the winter. There's a nursery in Holland which puts aside variegated plants for him - and he buys a dozen of them for 5 euros each - there were some nice variegated *Echeverias*. This year, the nursery man insisted on paying Stuart for identifying and naming some plants for him. This one was *Echeveria chihuaensis*, with yellow variegation, and pink tips to the leaves - but it probably won't grow from leaves. A plant he didn't have here is *Echeveria* "Compton's Carousel" - it is probably one of the best variegates to turn up for years, but it can't be propagated from leaves. One more plant was a *Crassula coralita* cross. New plants turn up each year and some are as good as *Crassula* cv "Buddha's Temple". He described that the ELK conference is something which you could almost do as a day trip - there are no charges for parking or to go in or to listen to lectures, it's a good trip out and for him, more important than the National Show.

After the mid meeting break, we resumed with a digital presentation. When you search for Cacti on the internet, you don't just get plants. The Citroen Cactus is a car, which uses very little fuel, and we also saw some beer featuring an *Opuntia* from the Avery Beer Company. To find What's New with cactus, just type "cactus" into Google and click on the news tab. On the morning he did this, some of the hits were to do with an article from the Daily Mail, from a few years ago, saying that cactus was the new superfood - full of fibre and pectin and vitamins and electrolytes, and it supposedly fights off cancer and diabetes. Some of the benefits of eating cactus are that it is loaded with beneficial minerals, anti-oxidants and fibre - but it doesn't say which part of a cactus provides all those benefits!

Some of the latest things are in fashion - who'd wear a multi-coloured Cactus shirt like that? Actually, if you go to Arizona, it's not that easy to find a shirt with a cactus there. Geoff Penrose reminded Stuart about an incident at the Judges course where Stuart was wearing a blue shirt he had bought in the USA and the dye was coming out and

turning his skin blue! Apparently cacti are a problem in Australia - they were used in place of fencing - but they are invasive plants and so they imported *Cactoblastis* and sap-sucking bugs, to be sent out to Queensland farms to attack the cactus plants.

If you really want to know what's happening in the hobby, attend a meeting, like this one. It was good to see such a well-attended meeting - he liked the information on our website and also the name stickers we use at the meetings. One other way is to look at the *Cactus Mall* website - there's a search option to look for recently updated pages - but the most recent seems to be a year ago. The format hasn't changed much in 20 years but it is nice and straightforward to use, and is one of the best places to find details of nurseries.

The BCSS has a website which has a nice and friendly welcome on first page, but it is difficult to navigate - you have to click on "Taking Part" to get to a list of events. Some of the information is useful - you can find out that there are 80 branches, but some of the other pages are out of date since there are references to a convention which will be held in 2014 and the next Show will apparently be in 2012(!) so that needs updating as well. You do eventually get to the Calendar of Events and that does tell you what's happening around the country and it is accurate and up to date, and he showed us the entry for the Herne Bay Cactus Mart in April.

Bits of the website are good and the most up to date thing is the forum. Once someone mentioned that LIDL had stock of steel greenhouse heaters, so he went and got one and was so impressed with the build quality and the accuracy of the thermostat that he went back and got three of them. He's never worked out why greenhouse heaters cost so much, compared to normal household heaters. He's got 4 greenhouses and each of them has 2-3 fan heaters. With the Internet, you can also learn about new plants at nurseries etc. Websites such as those of the Huntington Botanical Gardens in California publish a plant of new plants they have propagated every year, although last year was the first time that it was a let-down. Usually there's about 30 plants - new species or cultivars - listed each year, but last year they only had a handful of things of interest to him. There were new forms of *Mammillaria gracilis*, *Mammillaria plumosa* and also *Mammillaria chionocephala*. There were also examples of *Pilosocereus magnificus*, and a *Myrtillocactus*. The one thing that was different was a new *Echinopsis* from Bob Schick, who had decided to release new hybrid after a pause of many years. He normally calls at the Huntington each year to collect plants

he's ordered from their lists, but last year was the first when he didn't find anything worth getting. In the past they've had some of the fancy new Aloes and one of the plants he showed had a fantastic set of teeth along the edge of the leaf. There are some variegated Aloes around and we saw a plant with a lot of yellow offsets, but might not survive and the plant would not be easy to propagate without cutting the middle out. He showed some more new things from the Huntington from a couple of years ago – an *Agave potatorum* with variegation in the centre - these normally can't be grown by tissue culture, and also a form of *Agave Zebra* called “Superspiny” - which he thought he'd get just to see what it would look like when it was larger. There was a fancy version of *Agave victoria reginae* which wouldn't get more than 6" across and which clusters around the base - the Japanese name translates as “Snow Princess”.

Every so often, there's something new which turns up which is decidedly different, and an example of this was the recently discovered *Agave albopilosa*. When young, it looks rather like an *Agave stricta*. When in 3 inch pots, the only thing that looks different is a dried up tip at the end of the leaf. We saw an established plant in habitat, and Stuart said it looked like someone had stuck a *M. plumosa* on the end of every leaf tip. What happens is that the tip degrades into a fluffy mess. He still hasn't seen a good example in the flesh. He was given a plant of it by a Czech nurseryman and this is now 5 years old. He has got some more young plants from the States - these were tissue cultured plants which might be ready to sell at the National. The plants are slow growers and they start to grow the fluffy tip when in a 4 inch pot. It's amazing that a plant which grows to that size and which grows near to *Agave Victoria reginae* hadn't been discovered earlier.

Crossing an *Agave* with the closely related genus *Manfreda* (which are often spotty, and many are deciduous) produces a plant with spots which isn't deciduous. These are called *Mangaves*, and we saw an example with variegation, which had been grown from a parent called 'Macho Mocha', it was called 'Cappuccino', but he lost it in the winter. He would need to get a replacement from the States. Something else he's been after for ages is *Agave bracteosa*, which is a spineless agave with long curled leaves which looks like a weedy spider plant. He stayed with Cok Grootscholten and was promised bits of one where the centre had been cut out, but he had not got anything yet. It sells for the shocking price of 100 euros (£80) and he decided to ahead and buy one a couple of years ago. They don't offset naturally until they get quite large, so the only way to force it to offset is to cut it into halves or

quarters and hope the growing point is not damaged and will throw up multiple new plants. Of course it is a bit of a gamble to chop up an expensive plant like that!

Next was a picture of a plant we saw in the tray in the first half - this was the *Hesperaloe parviflora* called “Brakelights”. The normal form has a pale pink flower and grows quite large but this one is compact and has red flowers. It's from the *Yucca* family and doesn't have anything to do with Aloes, although the flowers do superficially look like an aloe flower. It will produce the lovely red flowers at a relatively small size.

There are some fresh *Aeoniums* which have turned up recently, and one from the West Country is “Cornish tribute” which is a pretty hybrid which colours up well. The one he saw on the website of the Huntington - *Aeonium* “Mardi Gras” looked too good to be true but he ordered 2 for around \$15 each - John Trager had taken the pictures for the Huntington and he wondered whether it really looked like that. After he got them home, they did look like the picture in due course. He later got a tray-full from the wholesale nursery that supplies the Huntington and one or two had reverted but there was still a good mass of variegated ones. A plant from his collection started to elongate just before winter and the centre swelled out, which meant it was going to flower, it actually is doing so now. Fortunately it had produced a couple of offsets before it flowered. Sometimes *Aeoniums* will have a whole mass of young plants mixed in with the flowers but sometimes they won't. Sometimes it will just produce one flower and then dies after flowering. “Mardi Gras” usually offsets before it flowers. It has fantastic colours and is easy to grow. He took some to ELK last year, and priced at 18 Euros, they all sold within half an hour of being put out. We saw a picture of the flower bud on the “Mardi Gras” and also another cultivar called A. “Velour” which offsets freely and is easy to propagate. Cacti need relatively little maintenance - you just have to water them occasionally and repot every few years, but things like *Aeoniums* do need a bit of work doing to them. They can look really nice initially when you get them, and then in a short time they can grow a lot of new leaves, and the old ones die off, so it needs sprucing up from time to time, and in general they will need more attention than your cacti.

Something he came across a year ago was an *Adenium* - he just can't grow these, because they need to be grown all year around, and if you let them go dry in the winter they are very slow to come back into growth and by the time they have

leaves and start to grow, it's autumn and then too late for them to flower. They seem to prefer being treated as houseplants. If you were to grow them on a sunny windowsill and water all year round, they'd probably be fine or if you were to keep the greenhouse warm in the winter then it might be OK as well. We saw a variegated example which had a variegated leaf. Sometimes you find new versions of ordinary plants and we saw a monstrose version of the money plant, *Crassula argentea*. There are also variegated forms too, although they tend to be quite weak with a lot of white in the leaf. He found one that had good streaky leaves which was quite easy to propagate. Another new variegated *Crassula* was a form of *Crassula nudicaulis*, which he brought back from the States last year. It colours well and has creamy leaves with pink and green bits on the leaves. It is very attractive and seems to be quite an easy plant to grow, and should also be easy to propagate.

Back to species - one of the newest *Crassulas* is gradually getting around and Terry Smale had some for sale. It's called *Crassula fragarioides* - the name means "looking like a strawberry". If in the winter it is kept dry, the leaves go deep red and it does look a little like a strawberry when in that state. It can easily grow in a 2 inch pot so it is a real miniature. It is not difficult to grow but it is slow growing. It makes a good show plant and will flower at this time of the year or a little earlier. It will offset and grow from leaves. Stuart said he gets a parcel of bits and pieces from Steve Hammer each year and these are mostly *Gasterias* and *Haworthias* - but in last year's parcel was a variegated form of a *Crassula* called "Moonglow". It should offset really well.

Another variegated *Crassula* he had was originally a plant of *Crassula* "Morgan's Beauty" from a collection that he split up. This is a plant that everyone should have - it flowers at this time of the year, and forms lovely clusters of pink flowers. He kept a piece for himself and for some reason it turned into a variegated version. A *Crassula* in the tray was a hybrid of *Crassula* "Coralita" - but here was one he got from ELK last year - it was a variation on *Crassula* "Buddha's Temple", but this had sharp pointed leaves. We saw an image of the seller's display plant - it really deserves a cultivar name, but for now it's called *Crassula pyramidalis* x *Crassula congesta*. It's like a spiky "Buddha's Temple" and is very easy to grow from offsets.

He saw another desirable *Crassula* in Holland three years ago - it was a variegated *Crassula* "Buddha's Temple". It was at a nursery that most of the British coach trips visit. The owner keeps anything unusual on the side, and he had about a dozen of the

variegated "Buddha's Temples". Stuart asked if they were for sale - and was told the price was 500 euros! Unfortunately, a wealthy Japanese collector had been there a couple of days earlier, and he had paid that sort of price. Eventually the price will drop when there's no wealthy collectors who still want to buy them. He mentioned there's also ridiculous demand for *Echeverias* from people in Korea.

Echeveria "Compton's Carousel" - seems to be found under three different names depending on where you get it from. It was originally called "Lenore Dean" after the lady who grew it in her garden, she then called it "Serenity" and sold it on. One came to England to Compton Street Nurseries - and eventually Bryan Goodey found it and called it "Compton's Carousel" after the nursery. They are quite freely available in the USA now and are easy to propagate. The plant has fantastic symmetry and flowers OK. You sometimes get die back in the winter but it's not difficult. 2 weeks after cutting the centre out, you will get 3-4 offsets and within a month, you might have 10 offsets. You can't propagate it from leaves though, you won't get the variegation. If you cut the centre out then it will offset quickly. There should be some for sale at Havering, apparent Doug Sizmur has some. Next we saw two of the plants he got from the Dutch nursery who keeps the variegates for him. A variety of *Echeveria* "Perle von Nurenburg" was called "Rainbow" - however it doesn't have stable variegation and so it seems to be out of favour, although David mentioned he had recently seen a load of them in Holland and they had been presold. *Echeveria agavoides* cv "Lipstick" has deep red colouring to the edge of the leaves. A new cultivar called "Bordeaux" has deep red colouring all over the leaf. The new growth emerges green but it soon colours up with the wine red colour. People have created hybrids between the two plants and there are also some with streaky leaf markings. Hopefully by this time next year, some of these creations will be on sale. Next, Stuart showed us some rather unusual uses for *Echeverias* in the horticultural trade. You take a tray of some nice *Echeverias* such as *E. purpusorum*, *E. cuspidata* and cut off all the roots, clean them up and then insert a long pointed stick up the back of the rosette. These are then mixed with flowers and sold in flower arrangements. These "plants on a stick" were also being exported to the USA. Would someone perhaps join the cactus hobby as a result of receiving one of these?

The next plant was something he showed at the Judge's course - it was a cristate *Pachypodium* which consisted of two pieces grafted to each other - he wondered if it would be thrown out for being 2 plants in a pot, but that didn't seem to be the case.

Haworthia groenewaldii is a new plant which is meant to be difficult to grow, and it's something new to try. *Sedum adolphii* can be found with some fancy cultivar names and it's an attractive species to try. Next were some very red lithops plants which Steve Hammer had grown these command a high price in China where people were willing to pay \$500 for them. They will come true from seed. We also saw a variegated lithops. The next picture showed the *Faucaria* plant which he had in his tray at the front. The plant was only an inch square but it shows what you can do with selective breeding. At this time of the year it gets nice and purple coloration on the leaves. Variegated kalanchoes are now turning up in the Dutch flower actions and these may eventually turn up at garden centres. These days there are some new *Stapelia* hybrids with fancy flower colours. These are mainly *Huernias*, which are generally the easier *Stapeliads* to grow. Most were from Miles Anderson in Tucson. Stuart said he hasn't grown that many species so doesn't know if these hybrids are really better than the species. A new one he found in Holland was called *Stapelia* "Great Star". There is also a new version of *Ceropegia woodii* which is variegated. These days, grafted *Euphorbias* are turning up from China. These are grafts of *Euphorbia lactea*. Unfortunately they seem to be impossible to keep through the winter - they will just rot.

Finally some new cacti. In theory we won't be seeing these at ELK because they've decided to ban the sale of newly discovered plants from Mexico - because they shouldn't be available. The new *Aztekium valdezii* looks a bit like *A. ritteri*, but it has distinct chins along the ribs. We saw how it looked in habitat and it did look different from an *A. ritteri*. These were being sold last year. The most remarkable of the new plants is *Mammillaria bertholdii* and this was also available on a graft. It looks like a pelecyphora, and the grafted plants were on sale for about 15 euros. The plants seem easier than *M. luthelyi* - and he's kept it alive through the winter and it was about to come into flower. The feathery areoles really make it look like a *Turbincarpus* or a *Pelecyphora*. Another new cactus is *Digitostigma (Astrophytum) caput-medusae*. We saw a picture of a large specimen that was on display at ELK - it's basically like an *Astrophytum* with a caudex! It doesn't look like any of the existing *Astrophytums*, but the flowers are very similar to *Astrophytum* flowers. Or if you don't want that - a chimera is available from a Czech nursery, where *Ferocactus glaucesens* had been chimaera'd with the *Astrophytum caput-medusae*. A few more *Astrophytums* which Doug Sizmur may have for sale - these are green in the winter and

bright red in the summer because they are short of chlorophyll. There are also some nice *Sulcorebutia* hybrids turning up. Next we took a look at some of the plants Bryan Goodey is growing. The plants look boring, but the flowers are fantastic. When *Chamaecereus* is crossed with *Lobivias*, you quite often get 2-3 colours in the flower. All of Bryan's hybrids are named "Lincoln" something and we saw "Lincoln Gem" and "Lincoln Curls". We finished with one or two new cacti. *Mammillaria perezdelarosae* ssp. *andersoniana* has neat spination.

Pygmaocereus are little cerei with pretty flowers and a "new" one *Pygmaocereus bieblii* was apparently described 30 years ago but is only just making it into our collections. It is a miniature, flowers well, and is relatively easy to grow and should be at Havering. And Stuart ended the talk with a picture of *Mammillaria bertholdii*.

Vinay Shah

Table Show Results

There were 21 entries in the March table show, and 9 entries for "Plants in Flower".

	Cacti – Opuntia	Succulents – Haworthia
Open	(1) T Smith <i>Sulcorebutia xanthoantha</i>	(1) G Penrose <i>G armstrongii</i> x <i>G pillansii</i>
	(2) T Smith <i>Sulcorebutia hoffmannii</i>	(2) B Beckerleg <i>Gasteria liliputana</i>
	(3) B Beckerleg <i>Sulcorebutia canigueralii</i>	(3) T Smith <i>Gasteria glauca</i>
Intermediate	(1) T Smith <i>Sulcorebutia glomerispina</i>	(1) G Penrose <i>Gasteria armstrongii</i> <i>variegata</i>
	(2) B Beckerleg <i>Sulcorebutia hoffmannii</i>	(2) B Beckerleg <i>Gasteria baylissiana</i>
	(3) T Smith <i>Rebutia heliosa</i>	(3) T Radford <i>Gasteria armstrongii</i>

Cacti/Succulent in Flower
(1) A Bailey <i>Pachyphytum oviferum</i>
(2) G Penrose <i>Mammillaria lasiacantha</i>
(3) T Radford <i>Pelargonium oblongatum</i>

Ivor Biddlecombe

Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be on 7th June and will take the form of a mini-show. During the first half of the meeting, members will get a chance to judge 1st/2nd/3rd places across 10 classes of plants. In the second half of the meeting, David will act as a show judge and tell us what he would have placed and people will get a chance to compare that with their choices. There is a form detailing the 10 classes on the front table, so please collect this and do consider bringing along some entries for the show.

Because of the Mini-Show, there will no table show in June.

Forthcoming Events

Sat 14 th May	Isle of Wight	Mexico: Autumn in the Sierra Madre Orientale (Cliff Thompson)
Sat 14 th May	Southampton	Branch visit to Havering Cactus Mart, Romford, Essex RM5 3QJ
Sat 21 st May	Portsmouth	Ariocarpus (Paul Klaassen)
Sat 21 st May	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ Sparsholt College (Countryside Day)
Tue 4 th Jun	Portsmouth	Summer Show at St. Colman's Church Hall, Cosham, PO6 2JJ
Tue 7 th Jun	Southampton	Branch Mini Show & Judging Explained
Sat 11 th Jun	Isle of Wight	Asclepiads (Slide Show, prepared by the late Chris Moore)
Sat 12 th Jun	Southampton	Branch visit to Lullingstone Castle Gardens Kent DA4 0JA
Sat 18 th Jun	Portsmouth	Our Mammillarias (Kathy Flanagan)
Sun 19 th Jun	Southampton	Summer Garden Party & Open Day, hosted by Dot England
Tue 5 th Jul	Southampton	Southern California (David Minnion)
Sat 9 th Jul	Isle of Wight	What I Did Last Winter (Paul Klaassen)
Sat 16 th Jul	Portsmouth	Caudiciforms (Bob Potter)
Sat 23 rd Jul	Southampton	Branch visit to Oxford Branch Show - Old Mill Hall, Grove, Wantage
Sun 24 th Jul	Southampton	Garden Party - hosted by Alice Jankovec, West Moors, Dorset
Tue 26 th Jul-	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
Thu 28 th Jul		

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

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