

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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<b>Editorial .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Last Month's Meeting.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Past and Mostly Present.....	1
<b>Next Month's Meeting .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Forthcoming Events.....</b>	<b>6</b>

## Editorial

June set some temperature records but July proved to be a bit of a washout. I am grateful for the rain since all the outdoor plants were suffering badly but the seasons do seem more prone to extremes these days.

## Last Month's Meeting

Previously at a meeting, we had shown the metal Sempervivum Trophy that Ivor had made. Ivor was also a member of the local wood carving group and he was very skilled and today, Ted had brought in Ivor's carving of loggerhead turtles made from teak wood. For Plants of Interest Ted had also brought in an *Echinopsis* hybrid called "Daydream" which had flowered just in time for our meeting. It is one of the Schick hybrids and it had bicoloured orange / yellow flowers.

If you have visited the branch website, you might have seen details of the branch badge which was designed some 15 years ago. These are available from Vinay (price is £2 each).

The **Portsmouth Autumn Show** will happen on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Carrie Hands has recently sent out a show schedule for the event and it will be well worth attending. If you would like a copy of the schedule, let David or me know.

### Past and Mostly Present

Adrian introduced Trevor Jackman who made a start on his presentation. Trevor mentioned that he was unable to attend last month as originally planned, due to ill health.

He started by showing some overall shots of his collection. He mentioned he had bought a second-hand Hartley greenhouse and it was 20 foot in length but it had to be reduced to 14 feet to conform

with his neighbour's wishes. It was full of plants and we saw some Sedums and Trevor mentioned he also grows a lot of Echeverias and he also likes Dudleyas, although the latter are not easy to come by. He mentioned he did try growing some of the Echeverias in the roof space, but they dried out too much.

Next we saw the cactus house. One of the plants was *Echinopsis (Trichocereus) tarijensis* and he mentioned that this was 4 foot high and 6 inches across and it was in a 9 inch pot, but it looked ugly after repotting, because it had started to grow out of character. There were also two large plants of *Notocactus (Parodia) leninghausii*, but one of these had since died, although the other one was fine and growing well. With *Opuntia pachypus*, he had two of these plants and gave one away to a friend. The one he gave away proceeded to grow like a weed, but he struggled with the one he kept. Next was *Opuntia pycnantha* which he had flowered and which we would see again later in the talk.

Next we saw another Hartley greenhouse which he bought 10-15 years ago. This contained some plants he had collected from a lady 30 years ago whose husband had died, but he didn't name the species - some of the plants were a few feet high. There were several Cleistocacti in here and he said those flowered well for him. We also saw a Dutch-made Polytunnel type greenhouse which had large hoops over which you put plastic sheeting. The plastic is surprisingly strong and it also lasts for many years, and he mentioned he has had this greenhouse for 8 years now.

With his succulents, he does not leave them in the same position for more than a few weeks. We saw an *Agave victoria reginae* with a flower spike and we would see more of this plant later. *Agave attenuata* was photographed a few years ago. *Aloe plicatilis* was in a 9-10 inch pot, and at that size it was getting too heavy for him to handle. We saw *Opuntia pycnantha* in flower - it unfortunately died over one of the winters. He had left it outside because it was too heavy to move into one of the greenhouses. David Neville said it comes from Baja and is not that hardy.

*Echinocereus rigidissimus* was a plant he had been growing for a few years and David said it can be grown for a long time, eventually reaching a height of 10-11 inches. *Cereus jamacaru* was a 3 foot tall plant – however, it got knocked over when a big *Mammillaria spinosissima* fell down - this plant would not stand up straight after that, the stem went all rubbery and he eventually had to throw it away.

Next we saw the top of the *Echinopsis tarijensis* plant, before it was repotted - it subsequently started to grow out of character. We also saw *Trichocereus spachianus*, which produces 7-8" white flowers which open for 24 hours. These pictures were taken last year but Trevor mentioned the plant currently had flower buds on it and he gets a few flowers on it each year. *Eriosyce senilis* was a plant he had kept for a few years and it also flowered well, with the pink flowers being produced every year. Next we saw a large *Schlumbergera* (Christmas cactus) with a lot of flowers on it. We also saw *Echinocereus coccineus* which is spiny and which produces red flowers. Trevor mentioned that he used to take pictures with an SLR camera - but he has switched over to using an iPhone since it is much more convenient to use, and the image quality is more than sufficient for his needs. We saw another *Schlumbergera* hybrid with pink flowers, he mentioned that you can also find white and yellow flowered variants in the garden centres but those colours do need higher temperatures (a minimum of 15°-16°C) to maintain their colour, otherwise they will develop pink colouring.

*Astrophytum caput-medusae* is a plant he has tried growing three times, and he has never kept it for very long. The ones on sale all appear to be grafted plants. Next we saw *Aporocactus martianus* and this is a plant which lives in the roof of the cactus house in a 10-11" hanging basket - for him it produces large pink flowers which are 4½ inches across. With *Hildewintera aureispina*, he had three of these plants all grown outside in the summer but on checking them in the spring, he has since discovered that two of the three now have dead patches, so he has had to take new cuttings from those two.

*Cleistocactus winteri* grows as a couple of forms and one of these is also known as *Cleistocactus winteri* ssp. *colademono* (or *Cleistocactus colademononis*). Some of the plants have longer spines and others have softer spines. It tends to form red or salmon pink flowers. *Cleistocactus strausii* forms pink flowers and his plant produces hundreds of flowers each year. Two of the stems are approaching a size where they may need surgery.

*Mammillaria zeilmanniana* is for him a relatively short lived plant which survives a few years. If you go to Holland there is a Dutch nursery called Van den Linden who grow them by the millions and they supply companies like B&Q. There is also a white flowered form which is variety "alba". You can also get cristate versions too - some of his normal *zeilmanniana* plants turn into cristates quite readily. *Mammillaria bocasana* v. *splendens* was growing in a 10 inch pan.

We saw *Opuntia pycnantha* again with its yellow flowers - it reached a size of 3 or 4 feet high with flowers 2½ inches across. *Puna clavarioides* was 10-15 years old and in a 4¼ pot hanging basket pot. It flowers every year for him and as far as he is aware it is on its own roots - you can see some of last years flower remains on there. *Stenocactus* (*Echinofossulocactus*) is a genus which people were reluctant to grow because mealy bug seemed to get in between the ribs – he mentioned he had watered all his plants with an insecticide and this year the mealy do seem relatively rare for him. The *Stenocacti* form pink-purple striped flowers and they like full sun, and he has around a dozen of them.

We moved on to *Ariocarpus* and Trevor mentioned that he uses limestone chippings in the pots which the plants seem to like. People used to top dress all their plants but some people don't do that anymore to prevent insects hiding in there. We saw *Ariocarpus agavoides* and *Ariocarpus bravoanus* ssp. *hintonii* with several flowers. This was followed by *Ariocarpus trigonus* and *Ariocarpus retusus* in a 5½" pot. *Ariocarpus scaphirostris* was originally called *A. scapharostrus* but it was renamed by Hunt – this was also in flower. In 2018 he had 8 different *Ariocarpus* plants in bud and flower so he decided to take a group photograph.

*Echinopsis mirabilis* comes into flower late in the day and the flower is over by the next day. According to David Neville, the flowers smell of germolene! Trevor also has a few *Astrophytums* and we saw some of these. One of these had lost its roots and so he had placed it on one of the lower benches but it managed to flower last week despite not having been potted up. We saw a couple of different plants of *Astrophytum myriostigma*. *Astrophytum asterias* is globular in shape and "Super Kabuto" is a well known hybrid with dense white flecking. We also saw *Astrophytum ornatum* and another *Astrophytum myriostigma*. *Astrophytum capricorne* has longer spines and the flowers on this had a red centre to them. *Astrophytum myriostigma* v. *nudum* is a nice form which lacks the flecks and also doesn't have any spines. The ones with 4 ribs look

the best but you can also get 3 ribbed and 5 ribbed variants.

*Acanthocalycium violaceum* was one of the plants which survived in his coldest greenhouse but all the Rebutias in there succumbed, apart from a few Sulcorebutias. Other growers have also reported this for the last winter. We saw an Echinopsis hybrid – he has had this for many years - when not in flower they are quite boring, but the flowers can be spectacular. A friend of his has over a hundred of the Schick hybrids and he is trying to get the full set – the Huntington website in the USA shows pictures of around 140 of these and they were responsible for distributing many of the cultivars.

Next, we saw some mammillarias. We started with *Mammillaria spinosissima* - this was the culprit which fell onto the *Cereus jamacaru*. It was now in a 10" pot and was raised from seed in 1987. It is probably one of the oldest plants he has grown from seed. *Mammillaria guelzowiana* was in a 3½ inch pot and was also grown from seed. It has magnificent magenta flowers. *Mammillaria magnifica* was also raised from seed and was now 3½ inches across - it has hooked spines which seem to catch on everything. *Mammillaria longimamma* has yellow flowers and another one was in a 10" pan. *Mammillaria surculosa* also produces yellow flowers.

*Escobaria duncanii* was a tiny plant and its flowers were less than ½ inch across - so he needed to take some close up photographs. *Denmoza rhodacantha* was a plant which had been infected with spider mite some years ago which marked it, but it is OK now. It has peculiar flowers which never really open fully. He grows a few Chamaelobivia and he mentioned some of the hybrids sold by Southfield Nursery. The nursery is apparently up for sale by the owner, Bryan Goodey. We saw one of the "Carnival" hybrids which had yellow flowers - when they choose names for their hybrids, they tends to pick a theme and then add various names for the different varieties which they produce. With Ferocactus species, some can develop a sooty mould on the areoles. To deal with this, you need to water with an appropriate fungus treatment (as used for roses) and it will get rid of the black markings.

His plant of *Notocactus lenninghausii* produces lots of woolly buds and flowers and it is an impressive sight when multiple flowers open together. *Borzicactus icosagonus* is a plant which he grows in an upright manner but it probably prefers to grow horizontally along the ground. *Notocactus roseoluteus* produces glossy pink and yellow flowers, but he mentioned that he gets different

shades of flower colour on the same plant, based on how long the flowers have been open. *Mammillaria elongata* is a variable plant and many different forms exist, with different coloured spines. *Escobaria minima* was around 5 years from seed, and the picture was taken just last week.

We moved on to the Echeveria house and started with *Aeonium nobile*. He had two plants and both had flowered, and both were 18 inches across. They were from the same seed sowing but the flowers were different colours - one was brick red/orange, the other one was much paler. The Dudleyas were at the back. *Aeonium tabuliforme* looks like a flat disc or plate. We also saw *Agave attenuata* - it had two heads and it eventually broke the pot. He mentioned he was growing a few Tradescantias and used them as display and sale plants

Another picture showed the Echeveria house from a few years ago. Trevor mentioned that some of the plants unfortunately mark themselves as they flower and develop the flower spike. Some of Dudleyas are covered with a waxy talcum powder and this can require some cleaning up when it is shed. We saw *Echeveria laui* which remains solitary and is a choice plant. *Dudleya brittonii* needs a lot of maintenance due to the old leaves which need to be removed regularly. We saw another example of this species and another un-named species which had a flower ¼ inch long and which was not very showy. *Dudleya gnoma* is the smallest one he has grown and he doesn't have it at present - the head grows to a size of around 2 inches across. It is a magnet for mealy bugs.

We continued with more succulents after the mid-meeting break. *Graptopetalum pentandrum* ssp. *superbum* has pink-grey leaves and spectacular flowers. The plant is nice enough but the star shaped flowers add extra appeal. Pachyphytums can be propagated from single leaves. *Pachyphytum viride* has flowers which are in shades of green and red and which hang down - they do drip nectar so do be careful what they are positioned over. *Pachyphytum* cv "Captain Jessop" has some nice purple colours to the leaves. The leaves of *Pachyphytum oviferum* are covered in a white bloom so this is a plant which you need to be careful when handling since the leaves will mark up and the bloom only forms once. *Pachyphytum bracteosum* is related to oviferum and it also has bloom on the leaves. *Tacitus bellus* (*Graptopetalum bellum*) is not a long-lived plant for him but some people do manage to grow them to a size of 12 inches or more, and they do put out some spectacular red flowers.

*Greenovia aurea* is now called *Aeonium aureum* - his dried out in the summer last year and died. In the summer months it forms a tight bud which will eventually open up and it might even flower. Like most Aeoniums, it is monocarpic so it will die after flowering.

*Kalanchoe pumila* was a plant he inherited from someone, and it was in a 12 inch hanging basket. It forms attractive pink flowers. He gave up on it when it got to a size of 18 inches across, it's a lot of work every year with the removal of dead leaves and all the flower stems to keep the plant tidy.

*Sedum suaveolens* looks like an Echeveria but it is a sedum and you can see this when it forms the white flowers. *Sedum burrito* is distinguishable from the related *Sedum morganianum* with its shorter, fatter, rounder leaves. *Sedum morganianum* is another plant which drips nectar so you have to be careful where you place it. It has red or orange flowers.

He has two greenhouses filled with Echeverias and some Dudleyas. We saw a yellow flowered Echeveria which he did not identify. Another Echeveria had hairy leaves and he was not sure of the origins of that one. *Echeveria retusa* is a difficult plant - it looks better if grown outside, so it might prefer more water. With *Echeveria agavoides* lots of different forms exist. The bigger they get, then you have to be more careful with the watering, especially as you approach winter time. They have pink flowers. If you lose the roots, use a top cut with a short piece of stem on the cutting and use some sulphur dust, let the stem dry out and then pot it up in the spring.

*Echeveria* "Doris Taylor" is one of the hairy ones. It has pointed leaves. *Echeveria bombycina* is supposed to have grown from the same seed as the previous plant but this has a rounded leaf - it has red flowers. *Echeveria* "Son of Pearl" is a plant which he got to 12-14 inches across - it is a hybrid of *Echeveria* "Perle Von Nürnberg". He saw the latter in a garden centre recently, but they were not being looked after properly at all. *Echeveria gilva* "Blue Surprise" does have bluish leaves which turn red in the autumn. *Echeveria pulidonis* is one of the few Echeverias with yellow flowers. We saw *Echeveria setosa* - some of these are quite hairy and it has been used for hybridising - it has bicoloured red/yellow flowers and 30 years ago, he had one in a 16 inch pan. Unfortunately he lost a whole load of Echeveria plants in the past due to being attacked by wine weevils which no one knew of as a pest at that time.

*Echeveria cante* makes nice plants which produce large pink flowers - this plant marks itself as it grows unfortunately. *Echeveria laui* is something he waters at half the rate of the other Echeverias since it is a bit touchy. It flowers every year for him. An Echeveria labelled as "Crinkles" had wavy leaves. *Echeveria setosa* v. *minor* is not as quick or large growing as the regular *E. setosa*. He mentioned that he had written an article for the Cactus & Succulent (search for Issue 32, March 2022) Review which was proof read by Al Laius and he was told that *E. albicans* is a variety of *elegans* so he now calls it *Echeveria elegans* syn. *albicans*. Similarly *Echeveria elegans* syn. *potosina* is a distinct looking plant but is also supposed to be a type of *E. elegans*.

*Echeveria colorata* f. *lindsayana* can get a big and easily get to a foot across. Some plants look better if grown as a single rosette and this is one of them. *Echeveria* "Comptons Carousel" is a green and yellow variegated plant - he bought it in a 2½ inch pot for £16 years some 15 years ago but he has got his money back from the offsets he has managed to propagate. He showed us the biggest one he managed to grow - some of the offsets were all yellow and these will not survive because they have no chlorophyll. *Echeveria gibbiflora* v. *carrunculata* is not the easiest of plants to grow and propagation is also difficult. He had some which were 4-5 feet tall and 18 inches across - he kept it dry in the winter and lost them. He takes new cuttings in the spring but the only way to do this is to behead it above the flower stem, the top may root and it may also form new offsets on the lower part of the stem. Many of the plants do benefit from being beheaded and restarted every couple of years and it is also a way of getting more plants as spares or to sell on.

*Echeveria* "Paul Bunyan" is a hybrid of *E. carunculata*, but in comparison it's a weak growing plant. *Echeveria derenbergii* is a beautiful looking plant with light blue leaves and it tends to put on a good show of red/yellow flowers. *Echeveria pallida* suffers from some die back in the winter if kept dry. *Echeveria oliveranthus elegans* is now called *Echeveria harmsii* - like most of the *elegans* plants it's a worthwhile plant to grow. *Echeveria shaviana* is a mealy favourite. It has pink flowers. *Echeveria ciliata* does have some hair and it is considered to be a variety of *E. setosa*. *Echeveria* cv "Rainbow" is a plant he got from ELK, where lots were on sale - it must have been propagated in bulk - it has multicoloured leaves but it didn't survive very long for him.

An unknown sedum was identified by David Neville as *Sedum torulosum* - it comes from Mexico. *Crassula* "Morgan's Beauty" gets scruffy and needs

to be restarted but it is capable of producing a cluster of attractive pink flowers.

Now for some aeoniums. *Aeonium davidbramwellii* comes from the Canaries. It was a small plant parked on the bench, but it had managed to send out roots from the bottom of the pot to establish itself – it has typical Aeonium flowers. *Aeonium nobile* is one of the largest growing species and his plants were growing in an 18 inch wide tray. It is native to La Palma in the Canaries. The two plants put up a spike each but they were slightly different flower colours. It is monocarpic so the plant will die after flowering. *Aeonium tabuliforme* was photographed last week – it is easy to recognise due to its flat saucer-like appearance. *Aeonium glandulosum* has small hairs on the edges of the leaves. *Aeonium* "Mardi Gras" features red, green and yellow colours – it was created as a hybrid in the USA. *Aeonium* "Zwartkop" has dark, almost black leaves and is also easy to recognise due to its unique appearance. He previously had a plant of this with around 60-70 heads on it but he couldn't get it into the greenhouse and decided to chopped off the heads to root them and the bottom pieces all produced new heads from the leaf axils. *Aeonium* "Kiwi" has green and yellow rosettes and he hadn't flowered it until last year. It seems to go under various names, including *Aeonium tricolour* or *Aeonium haworthii* "Dream Colour". We ended this section with *Sinningia leuchttricha* which comes from Brazil - it forms a caudex and has furry leaves, and it can make a nice plant.

We moved on to a few Agaves. *Agave attenuata* was a plant which flowered at Wisley recently. It has reflexed leaves and forms a curved flower spike. He had a problem with low temperatures in the winter and he wasn't sure if his plant would recover. *Agave nickelsiae* – also called *Agave ferdinandiregis* is a plant he got from a collection. He had to cut the root ball and repotted it in a 50cm bowl, and it went on to produce a 4 metre flower spike. *Agave victoria reginae* is a deservedly popular plant – he had two, but one died and the other one carried on. It developed a kink in the flower spike due to it having been grown under the bench and him not noticing that it needed more space – it went on to produce a spectacular flower spike, around 4m tall. We also saw *Agave parryi* and *Agave* "Cream Spike" – the latter is also known as *Agave applanata* "Cream Spike" and it has yellow margins on the outer edges of the leaf. *Mangave* "Moonglow" is a plant he got from a Dobies garden centre - it had been reduced and had not been looked after properly. He took it out of the pot and it was really wet, so he dried it out and repotted it in cat litter. It produced 3 foot flower stems in the last week or

two. *Agave macroacantha* is an attractive plant which forms dark spikes at the tips of the bluish-green leaves.

We went on to see some Crassulas. *Crassula* "Tom Thumb" is a miniature but it was in dire need of re-propagation. *Crassula* "Buddha's Temple" is a nice looking plant but mealy bugs love it - the crevices are ideal for them. It dies after flowering but hopefully it will have produced new offsets before then. *Crassula mesembryanthemopsis* forms dense rosette and it needs tidying up from time to time. *Crassula tecta* was a nice plant which flowers every year. *Crassula ovata* "Hummels Sunset" was bought as a tiny piece in a plastic cup from Ray Jeffs – but it can form a large plant in due course. The sunnier side gets the best colours - the other side tends to remain green. *Crassula capitella* "Campfire" develops nice red colorations if given enough sun in the summer. *Crassula* "Morgans Beauty" develops a head of pink flowers in due course. *Crassula falcata* ends up with red marks on the leaves - but these occur naturally in habitat as well - Ian Acton said they were horrible plants in habitat. *Crassula susannae* is a nice plant if you get a decent sized clump. We ended with an unnamed plant - *Crassula* sp. – Trevor was not sure of the origins of this one.

Trevor ended with some Mesembs – he said he used to grow a lot of them, but he had lost some of his interest in them. A Cheiridopsis species featured yellow flowers. We also saw *Pleiospilos nelii* which can produce either yellow or pink flowers. *Lapidaria margaretae* has pale green bodies and it was raised from seed. We saw *Glottiphyllum oligocarpum* which can produce large yellow flowers. *Conophytum herreanthus* is large for a Conophytum – it can produce white or purple flowers. *Titanopsis calcarea* is quite photogenic as close ups. We also saw *Titanopssis primosii* and another close up of *Titanopsis calcarea*. This marked the end of the talk.

Adrian thanked Trevor for his talk – we saw some good photographs and also got to see some immaculate greenhouses packed with a wide range of plants.

Vinay Shah

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday September 5th and will feature Keith and Kathy Flanagan, from Reading & Basingstoke Branch.

They will be presenting the second part of the talk which they gave us last year -- the presentation is entitled '40 Years of Growing Mammillarias, Part 2'.

Keith and Kathy have a very large and varied plant collection, but one of their very favourite genera, and one which represents a large part of their collection is Mammillaria. Kathy is also an active committee member of the Mammillaria Society.

This is probably the most popular genus of all cacti, with a large number of species which come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny miniature species to large clumping types. One of the many attractions for Keith and Kathy is that new species are still being discovered and described, often from remote corners or isolated canyons in Mexico - and most of them gradually find their way into cultivation and into our greenhouses.

## Forthcoming Events

Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Isle of Wight	Open House Meeting - members only
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Portsmouth	No meeting
Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Southampton	Mammillarias Part 2 (Keith & Kathy Flanagan)
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Isle of Wight	to be notified
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Portsmouth	Smaller South American Opuntias (Tony Roberts)
Sat 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sep	Portsmouth	Portsmouth Autumn Show at Christ Church Hall, Widley, PO6 3NB

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