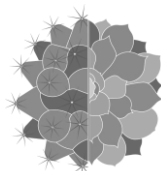


# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

The evenings are beginning to draw in and it's already dark by 8pm – and of course we have passed the point when the days are longer than the nights. Hopefully the cold weather will hold off for a bit and allow us to turn the heating on a later point in the year!

## Announcements

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the “Handbook of Shows” has been purchased by the branch and is being made available to all members - Amelia Herbert has copies so please ask her if you need a copy. The booklet defines which species of cacti and succulents are eligible for the different classes and groupings that are accepted by the BCSS for its shows - and hence it's a very useful guide, especially if you have any interest in plant nomenclature and showing.

You may notice that Glenn Finn sometimes takes pictures of members at the branch meetings. He sends me these pictures for use on the branch website and although I've not used any recently, the intent is to give new members an idea of the atmosphere of what a branch meeting is like. I will not name any individual members on any pictures I happen to use without asking them first, but if you do have an objection to any pictures featuring you to be used on our web pages, please do let me know.

## Last Month's Meeting

We will have a talk about the National Show at the November meeting. Tom Radford will be the speaker for the October meeting. David mentioned the National Show said it was and lovely to be there, some 6 years after the last one.

Our speakers for September weren't at the show due to not being well. And problem with a burst pipe on the A34 caused a diversion on the way back for the return journey from the show.

Richard mentioned that Keith and Kathy are frequent visitors to our branch and have given a number of talks about a variety of species including Sulcos and Agaves, and other things, but they are particularly well known for their interest in Mammillarias. They are committee members of the Mammillaria society and Robin Caddy is also on that committee. Kathy is responsible for being the chairman, secretary, membership secretary and seed distributor for their society!

### **40 Years of Growing Mammillarias.**

Kathy started growing Mammillarias in 1983 and Keith got into them in 1986-87. Keith mentioned that we have seen many changes in the plants that are available to grow since that period and there's also been a change in which forms of a particular species are in widespread distribution. On the whole, 98% of the species are straightforward to grow - but 2% are a challenge and will seem to die if you water them or if you don't water them.

We started with a general overview of the white fluffy Mammillarias in their middle bench, and then proceed to walk through the plants in alphabetical order.

We started with the island form of *Mammillaria albicans* (which is found in Baja, California) and Keith said this had also been found on the mainland. It is one of the most beautiful plants of the ancistracanthas. *Mammillaria albicans* f. *slevinii* also shares the dark purple stigma. Plants from this series have large flowers compared to the size of the plant. *Mammillaria albicoma* is another gem – it can be confused with other plants but it has a thin needle-like spine. It can tolerate temperatures around freezing but not much below. It forms a mound eventually and is well thought of on the show bench.

*Mammillaria albiflora* used to be considered as part of *M. herrerae* but it is now considered a species in

its own right. It is very slow growing. Keith mentioned he wasn't sure not sure how easy it will be to get some of these plants going forwards, following Brexit and the difficulty of importing plants from Europe.

*M. albilanata* was a cracking plant, there are no problems growing this and it flowers in May. It is a very progressive grower and the main heads make more pups on them. It's quite a big group from Oaxaca and Puebla / Colima and some of the plants have dense hair. The variety *Mammillaria albilanata ssp. oaxacana* has nice large purple flowers and is slow growing. *Mammillaria albilanata fauxiana* is another form with darker purple flowers. It never makes seed pods and sucks the flower remains back into the body. They make a ring of pups around the base of the flower line. Another form of *albilanata* was an outcross with *Mammillaria dixanthocentron* and it has stiff golden central spines. A rare form is *Mammillaria albilanata ssp. tegelbergiana* – it is less woolly and has less central spines than radial spines. *M. albilanata* has quite a fragmented distribution - from Oaxaca to Colima and Chiapas.

*M. amajacensis* was discovered in 1952 but was only described in 1994. They went to see it in habitat when they went to Mexico. They have grown some from seed and every one which came up was different. It has striking flowers. A trip made by David Neville and John Pilbream and Derek Bowdery in 2010 suggested that a lot of the plants had been plundered from the habitat in Hidalgo. *M. armillata* is rarely seen now. It comes from Sea of Cortez area and the dark bands of spines which encircle the plant give it the appearance of a raccoon's tail.

*M. aureilanata* is a beautiful plant which can be found in extremely woolly forms. Keith has only seen white spined versions but there are some golden spined plants out there. When you repot, it makes a collar around the neck and this is 5 star accommodation for mealy bugs and it should be removed when repotting the plant.

*Mammillaria baumii* is an example of the dolicothele series and many of these have scents and have a beautiful citrus smell to the flowers. There are different intensities of yellow flower colour and it is quite hardy. *M beneckeii* is considered impossible to keep, and it requires warmth in the winter and you also need to give it some moisture in the winter. It grows over a 2000km stretch in Mexico. It is a surface rooting plant and they found the best way to grow it was in a saucer and they eventually filled a 56cm saucer. It doesn't like frost

at all – it needs to be cosy and warm. It is also not that floriferous - usually only producing one flower per head. It propagates vegetatively easily. It goes a cherry red colour in the early spring sunshine but reverts to green eventually. Keith likened the growth pattern to *Sedum acre* – it likes to grow as a ground cover plant.

*Mammillaria berkiana* is a hardy plant from Jalisco. Kathy considered it to be an annual because she kept losing it but Alice van den Bon had a really large pan of it in her greenhouse. It makes rows and rows of greeny white seed pods - and these can rot back into the plant so these should be removed. *Mammillaria bertholdii* is a relatively recent discovery, having been found in Oaxaca in 2013. It has gorgeous comb-like supination. The early plants were on grafts and the grafts used to rot, but a few people have managed to grow it on its own roots.

*Mammillaria blossfeldiana* is from northern Baja - some forms have sumptuous pink flowers, others have much smaller flowers. Form *shurliana* has weak flowers. It is winter hardy and will be able to handle a cold spell. It has a "pyjama striped" flower. A species known since 1830, *Mammillaria bocasana* isn't as common these days as it was back in the 80s – you don't see it much now. There's also the *multilanata* form. It is quite a soft bodied plant and it can rot easily. There was a pink variety back in in 1990s. *Mammillaria bocensis* is from Nayarit in Western Mexico and the yellow flowers have no cent. Some plants they had seen were 40 years old. The plants taken on a lovely body colour in the sun. If you can, remove the fruits in September since they can rot back into the plant. Form *rubida* was a form which Lau had found.

A plant which has recently been re-discovered but was originally found 40 years ago is *Mammillaria boelderiana* - from Zacatecas. It forms a huge parsnip tap root. A milky latex comes out of the plant if you puncture the body – some mammillarias are like this while others have a different composition.

*Mammillaria bombycina* used to be a very popular plant – and in the early 80s, people used to grow huge pans of these. There was also a form which had split spines. *Mammillaria boolii* grows on the mainland opposite the sea of Cortez and it comes from Sonora. *Mammillaria brandegeei* is from further up Baja - and form *Mammillaria brandegeei ssp lewisiana* is heavily spined and has acid yellow flowers.

*Mammillaria candida* can grow to quite a size and then tends to collapse on itself. Keith mentioned that

the flowers used to change colours as they aged, and used to transition from pastel pink to yellow. A plant from south of Baja is *M. capensis* – it can have hooked spines or straight spines.

*M. carmenae* used to be more popular, and when it first entered circulation, the varieties were golden in colour but these days they seem to be much paler in colour. *Mammillaria carnea* doesn't like the cold - it comes from the Puebla / Oaxaca border. Another of the dolicothele members is *M. carretii* (it used to be called *Mammillaria saffordii* before) – it has yellow flowers and has a citrus smell to the flowers. It is a tender soft bodied plant.

Another plant from Isla Cerralvo in the sea of Cortez (now called Jacques Cousteau island) is *Mammillaria cerralboa*. It has an awful knack of never fully reflexing or growing properly. *Mammillaria chionocephala* is from Coahuila - it becomes columnar as it ages. It has pink flowers or white flowers. Variety *ritteriana* has black spines and whiter flowers.

*Mammillaria coahuilensis* has a tiny body and it has to put real energy into the flower. It has a tap root and hence needs a deep pot. It is placed by some people in the heyderi group because it has a heyderi-type flower. *Mammillaria compressa* is from Hidalgo – it can get to a metre across and is a really tough plant. They brought one seed pod back and grew plants from it. It has milky white spines and gorgeous flowers. *Mammillaria crucigera* - likes a lot of water and people are frightened to grow it - if you withhold water it goes crispy and crunchy in the centre of the plant and goes dormant. It flowers along the waist flowering. If you touch the plant body, it feels like velcro due to the short spines. *Mammillaria crucigera* ssp *tlalocii* - very old plant - pups from the base and forms black spines in the crown of the plant.

*Mammillaria decipiens* ssp *camptotricha* has white flowers and the supination can vary considerably. *Mammillaria camptotricha* cv. Madam Marnier is a special form with better spination. *Mammillaria deherdtiana* forms attractive plants and they had an example obtained from Southfields, with lovely brown supination. It has a pink/purple stigma. We saw an example from the 1980s – obtained from Deherdts and this remains smaller headed. It makes internal seed pods. Next was the variety *Mammillaria deherdtiana* ssp *dodsonii* – it is a very heavily spined plant. It grows in the Sierra Juárez at altitude. *Mammillaria densispina* was a plant that Keith found at a garden centre. The forms that are available these days have changed from the plants available previously.

*Mammillaria dioica* is from Baja and it varies in appearance. It has a green stigma and has slight mid stream curl to the flower petal. *M. discolor* is from Hidalgo and this was quite a spiny form. There is a cultivar *Mammillaria* cv. Ginsa Maru - from Japan which may have this as one of the parents. *Mammillaria dixanthocentron* is from Puebla and it always seems to stay solitary. It has a knack of wanting to lean over. The length of the central spines can vary considerably. *M. duoformis* was a plant found by Reppenhagen. In the 1980s, there were 3 principal collectors who discovered many mammillarias in habitat – and these were Reppenhagen, Lau and Brack.

*M. elongata* has central spines these days but the early plants did not feature these centrals. *M. elongata* ssp. *echinaria* has the centrals. A plant called *M. elongata* cv Pinky has tiny heads and shell pink flowers was created by Derek Bowdery and it seems to be a cross between *M. microhelia* and *M. elongata*. Keith showed another plant which was a cultivar between *M. elongata* and *M. miegiana* – it had big heads and a deep yellow flower.

*Mammillaria estebanensis* is from Baja, and the isle of Tiburon in the Sea of Cortez. *Mammillaria evermanniana* is also from Baja. Keith had a picture of *Mammillaria formosa* but he mentioned he had missed the opportunity to take a picture when the plant had flowered. *M. microthele* has been placed into *M. formosa* – Kathy mentioned she had got her plant from Tom Jenkins in 1984 and it had cost 30p at the time. They don't always dichotomise. The next plant was labelled as *M. microthele* but it may be a cross with something else. A pink flowered form from Stuart Riley was probably obtained from Woody Minnich in California. We also saw his own cross between *M. perbella* and *M. microthele*. and also *M. pseudocrucigera*.

*Mammillaria fraileana* from Baja. now been placed below *M. albicans*. Some have a dark purple stigma and it is easy to propagate from cuttings. Just place the offset on some soil and eventually it will draw the roots down. Next we saw *Mammillaria gasseriana* from Torreón in Durango, and also form "Chica" from Reppenhagen. *Mammillaria geminispina* can be shy flowering. It is a prolific plant but different forms with different flowering abilities exist. The western form used to be called *M. leucocentra*, and in Robert Craig's book you only see this form. You may sometimes get a late flush of flowers on it and the seed pods do need to be removed if they do form late. The form *albata* was also from Reppenhagen – it has darker and longer spines. *Mammillaria gigantea* was bought

from the Hollygate nursery as *M. wagneriana* - it has beautiful acid yellow flowers.

Restarting after the mid-meeting break, next was another discovery by Reppenhagen of *M. glassii ascensionis* - but the flower is not consistent. *M. glassii* has much smaller white flowers. A form was found by Lau on a different (nearby) hillside and he called it *Mammillaria ascensionis* var. *nominis-dulcis* - it had a darker pink flower. Next was the island form of *Mammillaria goodridgei* - from the island of Cedros and with a green stigma.

*Mammillaria grahamii* occurs over a wide range and most of the plants in Sonora in Arizona are placed under this name. There is a sumptuous flower form called *M. grahamii* ssp. *sheldonii*. This used to have a used to have a "pyjama stripe" flower but is now corrupted in cultivation and the striped forms are rare. The most northern plant from this group is called *Mammillaria swinglei* and there are island and mainland forms. We also saw the original *M. sheldonii*.

*Mammillaria grusonii* is from Durango and there's also a plant called *Mammillaria grusonii* f. *papasquiarensis*. *M. guelzowiana* is also from Durango and it is one of the more sought after plants with magnificent large glossy flowers. It will flower 2-3 times a year and the flowers also have a nice scent. You have to be careful with the watering, it can rot off easily. Keith again showed us the "collar" in the soil - a ideal home for mealy bugs and something that has to be removed whenever you repot the plant.

*Mammillaria guillauminiana* from Jalisco forms white greenish fruit and these need to be removed from the plant to prevent rot. *Mammillaria haageana* is a highly variable plant. from Veracruz. *Mammillaria haageana* var. *schmollii* forms nice clusters of golfball pups. *Mammillaria hahniana* was thought not to exist in habitat but has been relocated recently. this one was a white flowered form which David Neville had given him many years ago. Next was a very old *hahniana* - some plants do this - they have no option but to dichotomise in the crown. Another plant was very tall and had suddenly decide it want to split down the side to let an offset emerge. *Mammillaria hahniana* subs. *woodsii* is more upright in its growth. *Mammillaria hahniana* ssp. *bravoae* had formed spherical golfballs and was in a 32 inch bowl. It is hard to find the space to repot these large plants. They buy their soil from Westlands (John Innes No. 3) and they add 50% of mineral to this soil. *Mammillaria halei* is another beautiful plant from Baja - it has stiff central spines which are

straight. has a reputation for being difficult to flower but it tends to flower late in the year, and for them it has flowered every year since first flowering. In habitat it can have a black appearance due to the strong sun.

*Mammillaria heidiae* is one of the 2% plants – you just lose this plant regardless of what you try to do with it. It rarely survives more than 2-3 years. *M. hernandezii* was found in the 1990s and it's a very beautiful plant. This plant wanted to flower at Christmas time and you have to do whatever you can to encourage it to form the flowers since otherwise it might lead to rot. There is also a white variant of *Mammillaria hernandezii* which is not quite as robust as the type but which also flowers at the same time.

*Mammillaria herrerae* comes from the central volcanic belt of Mexico. It is very much sought after. Some plants in *M. herrerae* have also been placed in *M. albiflora*. *Mammillaria hertrichiana* is quite a robust plant and it is also considered to be a synonym of *M. standleyi*. Next we saw *Mammillaria heyderi* ssp. *gummifera*, *Mammillaria heyderi* ssp. *hemisphaerica* has tight lacy supination, and a northern form, *Mammillaria heyderi* ssp. *macdougallii* has acid yellow flowers.

*M. huitchalipotchlii* was found in Tomellin Canyon, in Oaxaca. It is similar to *crucigera* in some ways. with great age some split the growing point. Ten years later, Lau went back to the canyon and found *Mammillaria huitzilopochtli* var. *niduliformis* on the northern side of the canyon. The form "Excelsior" is a plant that prefers to lay down.

*M. humboldtii* is like *M. herrerae* but more open in spination. It is a beautiful plant which he doesn't find easy. It has beautiful flowers. This was a plant from Elton Roberts' collection in California – they had asked him to bequeath the plant to them but he sold it! Elton has two or three other forms including one with larger heads. The next plant was bought as *Mammillaria hutchisoniana* and it seems related to *Mammillaria hutchisoniana* ssp. *louisae* with typical berry fruits. *Mammillaria jaliscana* is a hugely variable plant. *Mammillaria johnstonii* comes from Sonora – it is highly variable and a very robust plant. We also saw *Mammillaria johnstonii* v. *sancarlensis*. *Mammillaria johnstonii* var. *guaymensis* is a plant that we don't see at all now.

*M. karwinskiana* is large group of plants which includes *Mammillaria nejapensis*. Other related plants include *Mammillaria voburnensis* (= *Mammillaria karwinskiana* ssp. *collinsii*) which has light sensitive bodies which go red in the spring at

the start of the season. *Mammillaria voburnensis* subs. *eichlamii* has a mass of ginger hair in the axils and has a beautiful lemon yellow flower. It can be shy flowering.

*Mammillaria multiseta* was named by Reppenhagen it also has a mass of hair in the axils and is considered the same as *M. karwinskiana*. *Mammillaria klissingiana* from Tamaulipas was obtained from Ken Burke and is now in a 45cm bowl. *Mammillaria kraehenbuehlii* from Oaxaca - one of the 2% of plants which you can't keep - it is prone to mealy attack or rotting off.

*Mammillaria lasiacantha* SB500 is a sought after plant. It is not one of the easiest to keep and tends to be shortlived for them. The lasiacantha group is variable. *Mammillaria lasiacantha* ssp. *egregia* SB30 is another sought after plant, with an unusual flower colour. *Mammillaria hermosana* is a recent addition to the lasiacantha group, and it was growing on a graft. It flowers in Winter time and the winter flower colour is stronger than the summer colour. We also saw *Mammillaria lasiacantha* v. *denudata*.

Keith and Kathy had only covered about half of the alphabet so it seems that a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will need to be organised in the future, to cover the remaining plants. At the end of the talk Richard asked how they handle cultivation of some of the more sensitive plants. They drape bubble wrap over them in the winter and also use a heater to keep their greenhouse frost free. With some of the plants they take them indoors, to give them access to higher temperatures.

*Vinay Shah*

## Next Month's Meeting

At our next meeting on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November**, we will be showing a selection of pictures taken at this year's National Show. This is to give people a chance to see the scale of the event, some of the key members of the Society and see the stunning plants that are in some of the classes.

### Forthcoming Events

Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Isle of Wight	TBA
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Portsmouth	A personal choice, cacti and succulents (Tom Radford)
Tue 1 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Southampton	Plants and People at the 2022 National Show
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Isle of Wight	Tales of a Christmas Tree Salesman (Richard Ridley)
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Portsmouth	Cactus and succulent oddities, variegates, crests etc (Stuart Riley)

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