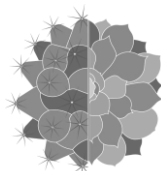


# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

September saw cooler weather and also quite a bit of rain. I think the outdoor plants all appreciated that after the dry spell earlier in the year, even if it meant that the summer was washed out. We are now into October and the evenings are beginning to draw in. The clocks will change in three and a half weeks.

## Last Month's Meeting

David mentioned the "Cactus at the Castle" event (which was due to be held in the middle of September.) The Portsmouth Autumn Show would happen a week after that. David mentioned that there were some old ceramic pots available (for a which a donation would be welcomed) and also Ben had brought in some spare BEF pots. According to Mark Roberts, BEF stands for "British Engineering Foundry". BEF pots are liked by the cactus community because they are sturdy and will last for decades. The new BEF pots are made in a smaller range of sizes and they are slightly thinner than the older pots, but they are still more robust than conventional plastic pots.

Amelia Herbert has had a change in her circumstances and she has had to move to Wareham, and hence she will no longer be able to attend our meetings. Although she will remain in touch with us, she intends to stand down as a committee member at the end of the year. Her move also means that she will also have to give up her collection of plants.

## Mammillarias Part 2

We restarted from where Keith and Kathy had ended part 1 of the Mammillaria talk which they gave to us last year. Keith said they were always pleased to visit Southampton and Portsmouth branches and give talks here since we were a friendly bunch. We started with *Mammillaria*

*lasiacantha* SB500. This forms heads which get to just over an inch across, and they are covered in fine spines. Keith mentioned that the appearance of the plants has changed over the years in terms of what is available for collectors to grow these days. They are quite widespread in northern Mexico and southern western USA. The flower variations can be dramatic and the body shape and spination are also quite variable. They are difficult to pollinate and are a challenge to grow, and a good specimen is worthy for the show bench. This one looks like a new plant called *Mammillaria hermosana*, although the flower is almost identical. *Mammillaria lasiacantha* ssp. *egregia* is quite beautiful too, very similar to *M. humboldtii* in spination. You could see the seed pods on these plants and some had spination similar to *M. schiedeana*. Next was *M. hermosana* out of flower on a graft and they do pup when grafted, with beautiful flowers which come out at Christmas. They do also flower again later in the year. We also saw one of these its own roots. We also saw SB500 (from Coahuila) in flower, with a cream coloured flower. *Mammillaria magallanii* looks very similar to *lasiacantha* and is easier to grow and more willing to pup from the base. It can grow tall and then droop and then want to grow sideways.

Next was *Mammillaria laui* ssp. *dasyacantha* which will make a handsome plant in a 7 inch pan. One of the last plants Lau found was numbered Lau 1496 and was found in Nuevo Leon but it wasn't even formally named. It grows quickly and needs a good amount of water. You don't see this much now - *M. laui* v. *subducta*. It has stiffer and more robust spination.

*Mammillaria lenta* is not easy and is one of the slowest growing Mammillarias. Some forms have a white flower, others have a pink midstripe. Some are scented and some are not. We saw a general shot of the many white spined plants in their collection. *Mammillaria lindsayi* was not the same as the original plants described by Dr Craig. They tend to be yellow flowered. *Mammillaria lloydii* has wool between the tubercles when young.

The white spined form of *Mammillaria longifilora* can be difficult to grow. Kathy said she always considered it an annual because it died after you

took the dead flowers off. One year she left the dead flowers on, and the plant survived and grew quite well, and eventually grew to over a foot tall. *Mammillaria longiflora* ssp. *stampferi* was found by Repenhagen. You have to be careful with the watering, they don't like being wet near the neck. *Mammillaria longiflora* ssp. *tepexicensis* was found in Oaxaca in the early 1990s. It forms nice seed pods. They are also very easy to grow from seed. One plant was injured in the growing point, and it formed a series of pups around the base.

*Mammillaria longimamma* is a robust plant - it prefers to grow outside in a clay pot but it succumbed after 20 years, due to soft rot, although the pups survived. The seed pods are as large as the tubercle and hard to spot because they look just like a swollen tubercle. It is in the Dolicothele subgroup and has yellow flowers which have a citrus smell. It also forms a huge taproot.

*Mammillaria luthelyi* is a recent discovery (1996) which is much sought after. It starts to open up after watering and forms buds and flowers early in the season and it has very nice purple flowers with a white centre - it flowers profusely despite its small size. The spination is very neat on the dark bodies.

*Mammillaria magallanii* looks like *M. lasiacantha* and makes a nice clump but it is easier than *lasiacantha*. There is a form with biscuit coloured spines, many of the plants available now are more whitish. They do get rust coloured spines when the growth starts in the spring. The next picture featured a plant in a 12 inch pan grown by their friends in the USA. However, one winter they had a problem when their polytunnel broke due to the weight of water sitting on them, the water fell onto the plants and they were subsequently lost. The hooked spined form of *magallanii* is *M. hamatispina*. It's a plant which attaches to you very easily.

*Mammillaria magnimamma* was in a 32 cm bowl. Keith mentioned that around 65 different plants have been described under this name. It has creamy white flowers with a midstripe. Some of the plants he showed were grown from seed brought back from habitat. They tend to stay solitary. The pink flowered *M. compressa* has now been moved under *M. magnimamma*. The *vagaspina* form has long twisted central spines. These plants can take some cold and frost. The new spines are brittle - so take care to avoid them coming loose. *Mammillaria rioverdensis* (Repenhagen 1123) was about 23 years old now. Do try and grow these outside they since prefer that compared to the summer heat inside a greenhouse. If you puncture the epidermis of a *magnimamma*, a latex fluid comes out from the

wound. Next was a beautiful form of *M. priessnitzii* - it is very fluffy but all that hair between the tubercles can hide mealy bug and the plant eventually succumbed. Keith said you should get a spray gun with some BugClear and spray it between the offsets and crevices to keep mealy in check. They flower for a long period in summer. *M. zucchariniana* is now also placed in *M. magnimamma*. Another Repenhagen plant is *M. saxicola* - the flower is similar to *magnimamma*. With the early examples of these, the tubercles used to turn deep red in the sun, but the replacements they got did not develop the colouring. We saw *M. compressa* with a cerise flower.

*Mammillaria mainae* is from southern Arizona and northern Chihuahua. It is difficult to grow. Derek Bowderi described it a plant that couldn't be kept - if you water it, it dies, and if you don't water it, it also dies. It has hooked spines and is a plant that attaches itself to you very easily. *Mammillaria manana* was discovered in 2006. It has a long flowering period. The pink flowers emerge from in between lots of white spines. *Mammillaria marcosii* is not seen much these days. It gets big quickly and does not like being overwatered. *Mammillaria marksiana* (Lau 636) has an apple green plant body colour, and a golden hue to the spines. *Mammillaria mazatlanensis* is a plant he thought was cold hardy since they have been growing them for 20 years. but they died last winter. He thinks this was caused by the warm November followed by severely low temperatures in December.

*Mammillaria melaleuca* has a lovely citrus smell to the flowers, and all the flowers tend to bloom at once creating an intense smell. Keith described it as a star performer. *Mammillaria melanocentra* is from Neuvo Leon - it is a solitary plant but can form dinner plate sized plants. Next was *Mammillaria melanocentra* ssp. *linaresensis* (a white flowered form). Keith said *Mammillaria melanocentra* ssp. *rubrograndis* is the prince of flowering Mammillarias. It is solitary in habitat but does pup in cultivation. You have to take all the seed pods off at the end of the year - otherwise they can rot back into the plant and kill it - they lost one of their biggest plants due to this, because they failed to spot a late seed pod which had developed.

*Mammillaria microhelia* used to be very popular a few decades ago but is less common now, although it remains an attractive looking plant. This was the purple flowered form. *Mammillaria miegiana* is a solitary plant which looks like *M. heyderi*. *Mammillaria mieheana* loves being grown outside until the end of September / October and will grow happily from an offset. His plant needs repotting

into a larger pot and it's barely liftable at present. We saw a cultivar between *M. elongata* and *M. mieheana* - Keith said it was beautiful in the spring with ginger spines and heads covered in flowers.

*Mammillaria molleriana* will get big in time. *Mammillaria multidigitata* has white flowers and is endemic to San Pedro Nolasco Island. It is quite slow. *Mammillaria mystax* was from northern Oaxaca - mystax means moustache and this is because between the axils it has a whiskery appearance. We saw the long spined form of *M. mystax*. It does make pups, given time. *Mammillaria nana* is beautiful when young. *Mammillaria napina* has a lot of growth in the soil compared to what was above the soil and Keith showed a picture of the root. Use a deeper pot for these and it is also not tolerant of being overwatered. *Mammillaria neopalmeri* is from the San Benito islands just west of northern Baja. It has a green stigma. *Mammillaria occidentalis* is now considered a form of *Mammillaria mazatlanensis*. They had grown this for many years, but it died last winter.

*Mammillaria orcuttii* is a foot high now - it has a cerise flower in the crown and a nice pristine growing point. *Mammillaria parkinsonii* is a plant given to him by Derek Bowder 20 years ago. It never makes the show bench for some reason. It was originally grown by John Pilbeam back in the 1950s. It was in flower when grown outside last summer. The flowers of *M. parkinsonii* are a deep cream colour. *Mammillaria pectinifera* is a beautiful plant but it is painfully slow growing. You sometimes get a yellow flowered form. In habitat it grows flat to the ground, but in cultivation it does grow taller.

*Mammillaria peninsularis* is another plant from southern Baja but he lost this. David Lloyd from Woking branch grew it from seed, and he was unaware of how difficult it is and he found it easy. The seed pod is unusual - when they get wet, the top of the seed pod snaps off and reflexes back, allowing the seeds to come out - these are dehiscent seed pods.

*Mammillaria pennispinosa* is another old favourite. The white spined form is *v. nazasensis* which is easier to grow. *Mammillaria perbella* is a beautiful plant but it dichotomises eventually - this is a feature of some plants from west of Hidalgo to eastern Queretaro. It is a beautiful plant. Next was an accidental cross between *M. perbella* and *M. microthele* (which has an insignificant flower) - the cross did combine the best aspects of both species and it produced a soft shell pink flower.

*Mammillaria perezdelarosae* was a discovery from the 1980s. People went crazy for this when it was first found because it is attractive, with the dark central hooked spine standing out against the other white spines. You hardly see it now. It grows quite tall and then may fall over. A nice way to grow it is to cut the head off and cultivate the stump as a cutting - the original plant will form a nice clump. *Mammillaria perezdelarosae* ssp. *andersoniana* is a straight spined form of this species.

*Mammillaria petterssonii* will get enormous, given time. *Mammillaria petrophila* is from central Baja - it is painfully slow. It has lovely lemon flowers on a dark green body, with bronze spines. *Mammillaria pilispina* was bought as *Mammillaria odehnalii* - it forms lots of white flowers in the summer months. It was untouched in the winter last year. There was no perfume but it is in flower in the summer months and produces a lot of flowers.

After the mid meeting break, Keith said was he was often asked about how they deal with pests in the greenhouse, so he would discuss some of the insecticides they used.

SB Plant Invigorator comes in 500ml and 1 litre sizes and Keith said it seems to be very good for dealing with mealy bug. However, don't spray it on anything with white spination like *M. lasiacantha* or *M. gemminispina* or *M. plumosa*, because the spray will make the plants turn Bismarck grey in colour. It will spoil the appearance, until the plant grows out of it. He said because of this, he also wouldn't use it on Echeverias. It is a soap based agent and used as a drench. It is perfectly fine for green bodied plants.

Another insecticide is Provanto Ultimate Bug Killer, which is deadly for mealy bug. You can buy it ready to use (which is expensive) or buy it as a concentrate, although the dilution rate is 1ml per 2 litres so quite hard to measure. A 30ml pack (which costs £9.99 in Wilko and a bit more at other stores) would make 60 litres. He uses a tiny syringe to measure out the concentrate. The livery is the same as the old packs of Provado (which is banned these days due to it using imidacloprid, which is harmful to bees).

SMC (spider mite control) is soap based and has been especially developed to kill spider mites. "Used as directed, SMC will kill spider mites and their eggs. SMC is pesticide free, 100% natural and completely safe." Keith said it should be used between March and April. Kath said she doesn't spray everything with this, but just plants that she knows are susceptible. You can use it in other

seasons as well, but red spider usually attack early in the year. Also do not spray it when the sun is out.

Bugclear controls red spider if bought as a ready mixed spray gun, but the concentrate does not handle spider mites. 200 ml of the concentrate makes 20 litres of spray. It is "a contact and systemic action insecticide offering pest control, including whitefly, greenfly, blackfly, aphids, scale insects and mealy bug".

Resuming with the plants, *Mammillaria plumosa* is the prince of Mammillarias. This was an old plant with pink flowers. This was another plumosa. Ted said he had never seen one in flower like that and Keith said certain clones don't flower too well. Some have a heavenly fragrance. It makes "cauliflower heads" which are tennis ball size - in the old days there also used to be a "golfball" form. This was a variety from Derek Bowderi which was incredibly floccose and with a white colour to the spines. Keith wondered how it was able to photosynthesize with such a dense coverage of spines. Derek had said you'd be lucky to keep it more than a year, but they only watered it from the base and they do still have it. It is a rock dweller. This was one they bought from the Maces in the 1980s - it used to flower well in a hanging basket - it is now in a 12 inch saucer (2 inches deep) but it flowers less than it used to. Next was a golden spined form which was one of the plants handed out to the Southampton branch membership a few years ago. Keith mentioned that some clones are very shy at flowering.

Next was *Cochemiea pondii* from Baja. Kathy mentioned that the Mammillaria Society had a zoom talk on September 21st where Peter Breslin (editor of the American Cactus Society Journal) would be saying that many Mammillarias were indeed Cochemieas. This plant had a lovely zygomorphic flower. Kathy said Bill Darbon had brought back the next plant from ELK for her. It was labelled as a Coryphantha which she was looking for - but when it made buds in the spring, it formed red buds and flowers - and she found it wasn't a Coryphantha - it was *Cochemiea phitauiana*.

Next was *Mammillaria pottsii* - this had an unusual coloured flower (red) - they are normally yellowish. It comes from a big distribution (northern Coahuila and northern Nuevo Leon). *Mammillaria psuedocrucigera* had flowers with reflexed petals - this was a tall plant and it was around 20 years old. *Mammillaria psuedoperbella* has beautiful flowers against a background of white spines.

*Mammillaria rekoii* ssp *leptocantha* performs well with flowers but it's a highly social plant due to the hooked spines. *M. rekoii albrechtiana* was from Ken Scales. Repehnagen found *M. rekoii krasuckae* which was named after a Mexican female botanist - it has magenta flowers.

*Mammillaria rhodantha* has heads which will dichotomise. Some authors call it *M. pringlei*. *Mammillaria roemeri* has white flowers. It is a relatively recent discovery from the early 1990s. It is not an easy plant to grow and becomes tatty with age and also gets marked as well. *Mammillaria roseoalba* is rarely seen now. *Mammillaria saboe* is a favourite with collectors - and it puts an amazing amount of energy into flowering. It has beautiful flowers and lacy spination. This is the pin-headed form of *M. saboe* - the heads are very small. We saw *M. saboe* v. *goldii* followed by *M. saboe* v. *haudeana* - it produces one flower per head but has a deeper colour to the flowers. *M. saboe* v. *roczekii* has a beautiful flower, like *M. therasae*. With this species, the seeds tend to be semi internal.

*Mammillaria sanchez-mejoradae* remains small - and it is quite easy to root offsets if you let them let them dry. If the white spines change colour to tan, that might indicate problems - tip the plant out, hose it down, dry it out and then repot in fresh compost. Perhaps the soil does become sour or too acid for it. It is one of the first to flower each year - the buds form after Christmas and it will flower in March.

*Mammillaria sartorii* has long spined and short spined forms - it is frost hardy despite coming from the coastal part of Vera Cruz. It is small in habitat but can get larger in cultivation. The short spined form is v. *brevispina*. Next was one of their favourites - *Mammillaria scheinvariana*. This was collected by boat, from the walls of a canyon which was flooded for the Zimapan dam. He is very careful with the watering. The other plants they have got since seem to be slightly different in appearance.

With *Mammillaria schiedeana* some forms have spination like *M. humboldtii*. There is also a plumose spined form. *Mammillaria schiedeana* ssp. *giselae* is another one in the series - it comes into flower in mid-March and flowers into May or even mid-summer. Next was a golden spined form (the original ones were white spined), and we also saw the plumose spined form.

*Mammillaria schumannii* is from Baja, and it's a plant which he saw in habitat earlier this year. It is not an easy plant - try and keep it pot bound. It has magenta flowers. This one came from Dave Appleton - it had a pale lilac-pink flower. It forms

chilli pepper type fruits. The form v. *globosa* from Cabo San Lucas has a nice rounded shape to the plant and the flowers are a deeper shade of purple. It makes internal seed pods.

*Mammillaria schwarzii* is from San Luis Potosi - there are white spined and red spined forms. *Mammillaria sempervivi* SB91 (Stephen Brack collection number) forms rust marks on the tubercles. Kathy said she got a plant from a friend, who grew it from BCSS-supplied seed - it had a pink flower, it dichotomised and now is up to 6 heads.

*Mammillaria senilis* is a true alpine cactus from Durango which forms distinctive red flowers. The white spined form is v. *digueti*. *Mammillaria solisioides* is very hard to keep alive. it is one of the 2% impossible-to-grow Mammillarias. *Mammillaria sonorensis* is reliable for flowering and will clump with age. v. *bellisiana* has a white flower or two toned flower, and v. *craigii* is cold tender and can mark up in the winter.

*Mammillaria sphaelata* from Oaxaca has a lovely cerise flower. *Mammillaria sphaelata* ssp. *viperina* is quite lengthy in growth. *Mammillaria spherica* has a lovely citrus smell to the flowers – it has no peers. *Mammillaria spinosissima* "super red" was from the C&J cactus nurse - it's a red spined form.

*Mammillaria standleyi* is from Chihuahua and Sonora. *Mammillaria standleyi* f. *hertrichiana* has longer supination. *Mammillaria stella-de-tacubaya* exists in many forms. It has a central hooked spine but in some cases, the central spine is absent. *Mammillaria supertexta* is beautiful when young. *Mammillaria surculosa* was considered by Keith to be top of the heap for scent - it has an intoxicating lemon perfume. *Mammillaria tayloriorum* is from the San Pedro Nolasco island. *Mammillaria tetrancistra* is another of the 2% impossible plants and Keith described it as a bad-tempered plant. This was Ian Woolnough's plant and we also saw a photo from Ian of a crested plant in habitat.

*Mammillaria tezontle* is named from the stone it grows on. *Mammillaria therasae* can be teased into a 7" pan. It produces funnel shaped flowers and they are large compared to the size of the stems. The flowers are subtle shades of purple and pink. The seed pods grow in the plant body. If you have a plant which dies, it is always worth taking it apart to see if there are any seeds stored inside the body.

*Mammillaria thornberi* has berry shaped fruits and a purple stigma it tends to grow under bushes. *Mammillaria thornberi* ssp. *yaquensis* has thinner

stems. These plants have a nice scent. They fragment easily, so it's a difficult plant to transport. *Mammillaria uncinata* comes from 14 states in Mexico but there is only one variety with yellow flowers. Normally the flowers are white with a red vein. *Mammillaria variabilis* has pink flowers but some consider to be *M. crinita* which has pink or white or yellow flowers. *Mammillaria vetula* is variable and we saw a form from Hidalgo. There is also a white spined form. *M. gracilis* is now placed under this species.

*Mammillaria weingartiana* has a big tap root – there is a nice scent to this plant and it is early flowering. *Mammillaria winterae* can get to dinner plate sized with yellow flowers and it's easy to grow. One of their favourite plants is *Mammillaria winterae* ssp. *aramberri* (*Mammillaria crassimammillis*) from Nuevo Leon. It has a lovely display of flowers and will make a huge plant eventually. *Mammillaria wrightii* makes large grape sized fruits. *Mammillaria wrightii* subsp. *wilcoxii* is a white flowered form.

*Mammillaria zeilmanniana* is a plant that had disappeared for many years but has recently been rediscovered in habitat. It is a quite a performed and forms lots of magenta flowers – and there is also a white flowered variety. *Mammillaria zephyranthoides* is something he doesn't find it hard to keep, but it is painfully slow growing. It has white flowers and a green stigma. *Mammillaria zeyeriana* is from Durango – it is now placed under *M. grusonii*. *Mammillaria zuberana* is from Tamaulipas – it grows in forests and likes tree cover, and it doesn't like full sun at all.

We ended with an overall view of their central bench, showing all the white spined plants. Adrian thanked them for their talk and how much they knew about the plants and how well synchronised they were.

Vinay Shah

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday November 7<sup>th</sup> and will feature a talk by our very own **Ben Turner**. Ben will be giving a talk entitled "Inspiration from Tresco Abbey Garden". This famous garden on the Isles of Scilly, 28 miles off the coast of Cornwall, is renowned for the range and number of succulent and subtropical plants that grow here, unprotected, amid the ruins of a Benedictine abbey.

Having worked there in the past, Ben is well placed to tell us more about the incredible variety of plants that grow successfully in the garden. I am sure that by the end of the evening we will all be very jealous about the range of plants that can be grown outdoors in the unusual climate of these isolated isles.

## Forthcoming Events

Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Isle of Wight	Preparing Plants for Over Wintering
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Portsmouth	A Bit of This and That (Ralph Martin)
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Southampton	Inspiration from Tresco Abbey Garden (Ben Turner)
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Isle of Wight	Plants and Animals of the Western Cape. Part 2 (Hazel Taylor)
Sat 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Portsmouth	Agaves, Aeoniums and Haworthias (Stuart Riley)
Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Southampton	Annual General Meeting, followed by Christmas Social
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Isle of Wight	Annual General Meeting followed by American Supper
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Portsmouth	Annual General Meeting & Christmas Social

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