

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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Editorial

Do I really need to say anything about the weather we've just experienced? Last Friday lunchtime it was still snowing and it seemed rather unlikely that today's meeting could go ahead - and yet the weekend produced a big thaw and things are almost back to normal. Anyway we can look forward to the thoughts of starting to water our dormant plants and the days getting longer day by day.

Announcements

Copies of the **Branch Programme for 2018** are available from the front table.

Don't forget to **renew your BCSS membership** – this can be done using the form included with the CactusWorld Journals which were sent out to members in December. You can also renew using Paypal or credit card at the BCSS website, at: <http://society.bcsc.org.uk/index.php/subscriptions.html>

At last month's meeting Adrian mentioned that that the Branch had got a National Gardens Voucher for our previous chairperson Dot England, to thank her for her work on the committee over the preceding years. Since Dot hasn't been able to come to the last three meetings, Adrian mentioned he would post the voucher to her.

Last Month's Meeting

Brazil - The Land of the Uebelmannia

Our speaker Cliff Thompson mentioned that he was going to talk about an exciting area of Brazil. Four

years ago, he had talked to us about Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul. This time he would talk about the central Atlantic state of Minas Gerais and there's a quite marked contrast in the plants which are found here. Minas Gerais produces nearly half of Brazil's coffee. Cliff mentioned that Paul Klaassen had made all the arrangements for the trip, and they spent almost a month in this region in Nov/Dec 2009, as part of an overall three month trip. They had no problems with language - Google translate helped of course. He showed a map of Brazil, showing its position in South America. It's the third or fourth largest country in the world, depending on which authority you pick, and around 2¼ thousand miles across by 2½ thousand miles long. With those distances, you really have to fly between the states. After they landed, he showed a few of the things they saw on the way from the airport to Diamantina, where they would stay for a few days. We started with a Begonia. There were a lot of other plants in flower, and he hadn't been able to identify many of them as yet. A lichen was the first of many, and we also saw a large termite mound. A house plant with purple flowers was identified by Ben as *Tibouchina urvilleana*, this was followed by an Ipomea and a compositae, followed by another compositae which actually looked like an agave. One of the plants was covered in mealy bugs and also beetles which were either feeding on it or on the mealys. We saw a general view of the countryside as they were driving along. The first cactus they came across was an epiphyte. Some seed pods on a tree were photogenic.

Next, we saw some pictures of the town of Diamantina, along with a picture of the church/cathedral there. Cliff mentioned that the churches were often the best maintained buildings in the various towns they visited. The town itself has been around for a few hundred years and it was "improved" by the Portuguese colonists. Showing a flooded bridge, he mentioned that if it rains, you just stay in the town. Most of the roads were laid by slaves and they are still intact to this day. We saw the old market. Some of the houses are quite remarkable. With the town being in a closed valley and surrounded by high hills, some of the roads in the town are very steep. Minas Gerais is famous for its minerals (and the town is named after diamonds),

and we saw a large piece of amethyst. On their first foray in to the wilderness, they encountered a wasps nest. There were limestone outcrops and they spotted a tall cactus with dark blue fruit – it was a *Cipocereus*. There were several wild flowers and a yellow flowered orchid which looked like a *Laelia*. They encountered some wonderful *Uebelmannia pectinifera* plants, which were growing in nothing but about ½ to 1 inch of detritus. You could just lift the whole plant up since it was growing in hardly any soil and the roots weren't anchored to anything. They also encountered *Pilosocereus*. You could see the granite outcrops in many surrounding areas and you could see cacti growing on these. At another town, we again saw a well maintained church. The next plant was either a *Sinningia* or perhaps a *Jatropha*? This was followed by another *Begonia* and a wonderful lichen some 9 inches across. Some of the rock formations here almost looked like they had been sculpted by someone. We saw more *Uebelmannias* and *Bromeliads* - it was constantly humid here - there is a dry season, but it's still relatively wet. A rosette plant with heavily armed leaves was a *Hechtia*. A termite mound enveloped a cactus and Cliff wondered which came first. We saw more lichens, and another spectacular church. They stopped while waiting for a bridge to be repaired and found some *Vellozia* in flower. They waited some more time since they wanted to see someone else go over the bridge before they dared to use it.

They came across *Discocactus*, and these plants had been damaged by fire - it turns out this was quite a common occurrence. Quartz had eroded out from the granite, leaving depressions in the rocks. The black colour of the limestone was due to a cyanobacteria growing on the rock - if you chipped a piece off you could see the normal colour underneath. Lichens had formed an infinity sign a foot across. The *Discocacti* here were 9-10" across and some were in a much better condition than others. There were dozens of them here, but they didn't see any other cacti. An enormous black bee was 2" long – they make a lot of noise by revving up before they take off! They came across a new (rebuilt) bridge. There were pockets of detritus sitting on rock and plenty of *Uebelmannias* to be found. Some were growing in cracks in the rocks. He saw a 4" long grasshopper, and some wonderful orchids. The quartz sand when eroded out of the granite creates pans – it is harder than the limestone and remains as sand. Cliff said they didn't find many plants in flower - they might be opportunist flowerers, deciding to bloom just after good rainfall. We could see all the quartz sand washed down from the hills and deposited near the river. The temperature was 90°F and it felt like 115% humidity that day – he pitied the people working on repairing

a bridge. An epiphyte was probably an *Epiphyllum*. We saw scaffolding “brazillian style” with poles just stuck into the structure and no planks – it seemed rather dangerous. They found *Pilosocereus floccosus* - most of these were not in good condition. However, there were beautiful plants of *Discocactus placentiformis* growing in the shattered limestone, including a nice 4 inch specimen. They happened to meet “melocactus man” Thomas Wegelin – a Swiss cactophile who was to prove their undoing later during the trip. Some of the *Discocactus* plants were nearly football sized. There were thousands of seedlings here and the ground was permanently wet. A *Cipocereus bradei* had blueish hue to epidermis. He also saw tree ferns here. A horizontal rock formation looked like a crocodile. They found a *Uebelmannia pectinifera* plant bearing a yellow flower – again the ground was sodden. It had rained and then the water hangs around, due to the high humidity. One of the plants was 18" tall. It was good to see there was plenty of regeneration here. It was time to call it a day and head back to the hotel and get a beer. Cliff mentioned the erosion is really bad because forest has been stripped. They saw another *Vellozia* in flower.

Another rock formation looked like an Indian chief's head. They found a member of the *Eriocaulaceae* – these are herbaceous plants which prefer moist tropical conditions. Another *Vellozia* had red flowers. Another form of *Discocactus placentiformis* had a darker epidermis and really strong spines. He came across a grasshopper which was a kaleidoscope of dark body colours mixed with bright colours – it was the most beautiful grasshopper he'd ever seen. *Uebelmannia pectinifera* v. *flavispina* wasn't really yellow spined – but a lot of material was sent back to Europe just after the seedlings had germinated, and the young plants do have golden yellow spines – but within a year or two the spines lose their colour. So basically it was named from seedlings. We saw a millipede and a highly magnified shield bug. A young plant had more ribs than he had ever seen on any *Uebelmannia* seedling. A member of the *Eriocaulaceae* looked like the *Austrocylindropuntia floccosa* that you find in other parts of the continent. A *Vellozia* had huge white flowers 4-5" across - this was the only white-flowered one they saw. They also found *Melocactus levitestatus* - each *Melocactus* plant produces many seed pods and the seeds gets everywhere – it was great to see the amount of regeneration.

The limestone here was knife edged and it is called “bambui” – it is found in various parts of the world. You have to be careful walking on it, a fall will lead to a nasty graze. He saw a huge tree – it was a

massive mango tree. He mentioned that the infrastructure in many South American countries is non-existent and at a town called Rodeador we saw a pre-2nd world war railway station had been taken over by locals for accommodation and whatever else. A plant looked like it might be a member of the Erythrina family. *Annona reticulata* is a shrub which forms custard apples as fruit. We saw tall plants of Eucalyptus – these are grown on millions of acres across Brazil. They are used to make charcoal but the wood is not good for structural use - it splits easily. We saw more *Pilosocereus* again followed by *Uebelmannias* with white epidermis: *U. pectinifera* v *pectinifera*. There was also the naturally occurring purple form. This has been propagated en-masse so it is much more common in our collections than it is in the wild. In the shade you don't get much growth of the spines. It was difficult to work out if a group of three plants was a three headed clump or three seedlings growing close together. A *Tigridia* had a yellow flower. There were some remarkable limestone formations with phenomenal plants growing on there. *Cipocereus crassisepalus* had huge flower buds. A grasshopper was unlike the previous one he had shown - most are quite dull in colour, in order to remain camouflaged. Ananas is the pineapple plant. There were some cacti plants with roots hanging out of rock. A *Philodendron* had rooted onto the rock and was forming a ladder. Wasps had built a nest on a pole.

A plant from the Eriocaulaceae had a pink flower. In a field of quartz grit, they found that a fire had gone through here since the plants showed signs of damage. The *Discocacti* mainly survive as does the cephalium. The whole population appeared to be badly burned but many had survived, and the damage will eventually will grow out. They came across another amazing church. They decided to stop for a beer and get something to eat – the restaurant seemed to consist of individual accommodations which had been knocked together. With *Pilosocereus aurisetus*, the seed pods can produce thousands of seeds each. They came across a different population of *Uebelmannia pectinifera* v *flavispina* which was more yellow-spined when young. The new spines were drab yellow on more mature plants, so here perhaps was some justification for the name. One plant was found with an offset at the base, but it was the only one he found. There were plenty of *Tillandsias* around, mostly growing in the clefts of the limestone. The upturned limestone forms gullies, allows detritus to collect and allows the plants to grow. He heard some cicadas – there were not many here but he could easily hear them. We saw more Eucalyptus being intensively farmed. An old car sitting in a year

would probably be worth £35,000 here as a collectible. He saw *Pilosocereus* again, with wonderful lichens in background. A *philodendron* this time featured a typical aroid flower. A lichen patch was 3-4 feet across. They had used up their time in Diamantina and decided to move on to Grão Mogol, where they wanted to see *Discocactus horstii*. Unfortunately the Swiss guy who they had seen before had got someone to take him to see the plants and that had caused a dispute between the State who run the national park versus the local municipality, so no-one was willing to take them to the plants, and they didn't get to see it. They did look around and found *Pilosocereus* with fantastic blue stems. *Portulaca* is found all over South America and it can have white through to dark purple colours, but this one was yellow. *Micranthocereus auriazureus* is fantastic when young, they are stunning plants. When they age, they get a bit manky and become marked. David said the flowers are small but brightly coloured. They saw more orchids, and grasshopper nymphs decimating some poor plant. *Colocasia* forms a large flower and they are grown as yams. They also found a fairy ring of *Vellozia* plants. A picture of a native mother and daughter was “a study of humanity”. Cliff said they did eat very well, and we saw a rather large plateful of food. At some restaurants they had to pay before the food was prepared.

They found *Pilosocerus flocossus* and *Discocactus pseudoinsignis* but it turns out that they had strayed inside a National Park without a permit so they were turfed out. Down the road they went over a fence to look for more plants and it turns out this was also inside the park, so they got thrown out again. There was an abundance of *Discocactus pseudoinsignis* growing in quartz sand. *Melocactus ernestii* was also found here, away from its usual known range. After getting the right paperwork, they were finally escorted inside the park for a visit. Some of the plants were quite beautiful. *Discocactus* are night flowering - so a bud had formed and was ready to flower but it would open much later that day. The flowers are highly perfumed and pollinated by hawk moths. The quartz sand is highly reflective and you eventually get dazzled by the reflected light, although his sun glasses darken automatically. A multilevel termite mound seemed to include a penthouse – it was 3 feet across. And then something very rare - *Arrajadoa eriocaulis* ssp. *albicoronata*. It seems to be an insignificant little plant with thin stems but it forms a big tuber underground. He did get some seed and they germinated but they didn't survive.

Restarting after the mid meeting break, Cliff said he had been asked during the break about how to

cultivate the plants we had seen. Basically they need a lot of heat and you need to keep the plants at 50°F (10°C) minimum to allow them to survive and not get marked. One grower he knew, the late Tony Butler, used to take all his sensitive plants into the house for the winter and they survived very well.

We re-started with a lizard - you see them everywhere, followed by an asclepiad, recognisable by the flower type. Bromeliads are very abundant and they form nice plants. Next was a member of the Solanaceae (tomato family). Vellozia have adapted to the flash fires and were sprouting again. The outer casing is fibrous but it protects the inner core. With the Discocactus plants, it seemed that many of the plants were damaged perhaps 2-3 years ago but they were growing back well. There is also deliberate burning sometimes by the local farmers, to clear the ground. We saw a singed Micranthocereus. A termite mound was enveloping a cactus plant. There was a microwave tower in the background. He finally found the plant he wanted to see in this area - *Colecephalocereus (Buiningia) aureus*. These were phenomenal plants, growing on limestone in clearings, or on top of granite bosses. They were tall plants – some were almost 3 feet tall. They did vary in habitat – there were many seedlings growing here too. Detritus traps other things including the seed, giving them a chance to germinate. Growing alongside were plants of *Melocactus ernestii*. When the rock breaks up, it often forms pans a few feet across, and then everything starts growing in these. Some of the plants prefer to grow in the shade. *Pilosocereus pachycladus* had wonderful blue epidermis. A termite mound was 3-4 feet across, and another colony was the size of a small car! Man-made structures are also used by the termites to build mounds, e.g. poles. We saw a mound way up a pole and they had created a covered walkway leading from the ground to the entrance. A *Melocactus concinnus* had some seed pods in the cephalium, it's one of the more squat Melocacti.

Cliff said he had tried to grow Micranthocereus here in a frost free greenhouse, but that's still too cold for them, it disappeared after 9 months. Giant Vellozia plants were adapted to handle the forest fires - the outside is like coconut fibre and burns off, but the central part of the plant is protected. He saw *Pilosocereus pachycladus* again - you can grow here as long as you are prepared to spend a fortune on heating. Once the habitat is destroyed it's very hard to get it back to original state, due to the soil microstructure. He found *Colecephalocereus* again. More seedlings were growing in the pockets on the rocks. A plant from the Apocynaceae group seemed

like an oleander-related plant. We saw another lichen.

At the town of Pedro Azul, they were accosted by a couple of drunk women (mother and daughter) and were surprised by this. It's a Portuguese colonial town and we saw some of the back streets and the residential area, with a huge granite boss in the background. It had a modernistic church. Tillandsias were growing on the overhead wires. Eventually they discovered why the women had been talking to them - a 1000 people had gathered at an aids awareness grouping. Paul actually got up and did a speech, they probably had no idea at what he was saying but they cheered anyway.

They found *Melocactus ernestii* - some of these plants were producing split cephalia. Buiningias were producing pseudo cephalia on small plants. They found more wonderful Bromeliads, Melocati and some Opuntias. Cliff photographed a burrowing owl - they are very curious birds who like to watch what you are doing. They occur from the Southern USA down to central Argentina. He found a big clump of Buiningia including the hairiest/spiniest seedling he's seen. These were producing pseudo-cephalia at just 2-3" across. Huge granite domes dominate the area - it was 1km to the top of a hill and there must have been 1000s of plants there, mostly cacti. There were also loads of bromeliads. The cacti consisted of the odd Melocactus and mainly Buiningias. We also saw a cristate Buiningia. There was a slightly different shape to these plants and the flowers also seemed to have more green in the eye of the flower. We saw beetles and ants doing a "smash and grab" on a flower even before the flower had a chance to open. Each seed pod holds a thousand seeds and each stem has 50 seed pods so a single plant can produce a lot of seed. *Euphorbia sipolisii* forms a thicket and you can't walk through it, especially if you have an allergy to the sap/latex. Next was a plant which has only recently been discovered - Paul said it was a Dyckia or Encholirium, depending on where flower stalk emerges from. It's scarce and they only grow in a few places - the pictured plant was 1 foot across but they had also seen one 6 foot across. They are like beacons and you can see them from a long distance away.

We saw a member of the Apocynaceae again, and beetles doing a "smash and grab" on an unopened flower. Butterflies abound, but there were not as many as he had expected. They were seen on the ground, collecting moisture and minerals. Next was Poinciana, which is a legume. He then came across the biggest grasshopper he's ever seen - it was 6" across and he saw it walking across the road. A

Passion flower plant was growing in a ditch along the road. More flowering plants might be from the Ipomea and Pea families. He saw a large millipede but didn't feel like handling it. *Ceiba jasminodora* was growing as trees with roots on the surface of the ground. When they got to the top of a hill, they found nearly full sized palm trees growing on top. The night jar is a bird that doesn't move even when you get close - it thinks it is invisible. Ants were damaging a seed pod, not for the seed but for the pulp, which is used to cultivate fungi in their nests. On the side of a rock he found wonderful bracket fungus and umbrella type fungi, growing next to each other. They also found a *Ceiba* tree which had blown over. There was an abundance of orchids growing here.

The vegetation at the bottom was too thick to go into - he had wanted to take pictures of the hummingbirds, but had to give up. Paul mentioned they had actually bought machetes just for this purpose, but couldn't travel with them through the airports. Plants of *Melocactus (ernestii) azulensis* were quite old mature plants. Another *Ceiba* was leaning over, showing the roots were not actually in the ground - they were sitting on the rock surface. A telephoto shot captured a butterfly some distance away. It was one of the few days they got rained on. They travelled 90 miles to see one plant - *Coleocephalocereus purpureus* and were happy to find it. It was only a small population. The owner of the land was trying to sell it off to granite mining companies so the locality can be considered endangered. *Cereus jamacaru* was beautiful after the rain, especially since the plants were young and vigorous. We saw an example of cow pat culture, with seedlings poking through a cow pat - so if you have a problem germinating seeds try sticking them in a cow pat! These were probably *Acacia* seedlings which had been through the digestive system of the cow. Next was a picture of a something that didn't look like a cactus - it was a *Pereskia*, which is the most tree like of all the cacti. We saw a close up of areoles and spine clusters and the fruits as well of *Pereskia aureiflora*. The fruits mature to a tennis ball size. *Pilosocereus magnificus* was the only one he saw in flower. Tillandsias were growing on the plant. They had previously gone a long distance to find *Arrojadoa penicillata*, but these were present here as well. With *Melocactus ernestii v. multiceps*, many of the cephalia were double or quads. An "epiphytic" one was growing half way up a rotten tree. Paul said the highest number of cephalia was 7 on one plant. We saw another example of cow pat culture again, along with a few fungi. A lizard had lost its tail but it was growing a new one.

The owner of this tract of land had tried to clear this slope of land which was at 45 degrees and all the soil then just slid down into the base of the valley. They found more surface growing *Ceiba* - the whole root system was on the surface, with just a few feeder roots going into the rock. We saw some *Ceiba* fruits - when they open, they reveal a soft fluff, which Cliff said used to be used for pillows. We saw *cereus* cacti being used for hedging. *Coleocephalocereus decumbens* only grows in a small area and these happened to be on a 45 degree slope - and he had to go up the hill bum-first! We had seen bridges earlier - and here we saw examples of previously damaged ones that had not been built correctly. We could see the round support pillars of the old bridge, which had just been sat on lumps of concrete - a flash flood had just washed everything away. The dutchman's pipe, *Aristolochia gigantea* is a weird plant which forms large flowers with huge sacs - he couldn't figure out what they were for. We saw the ubiquitous *Eucalyptus* - some of the cultivars can grow at the amazing rate of 22 feet in a year. However, when the wood is cut and dried, it splits. So it is used for charcoal (used by the rural population) and also exported to China for making paper. They came across *Uebelmannia milensis* and walking up the hill, some giant *Vellozias* and *Pilosocereus aurisetus*.

They also found *Uebelmannia gummifera*, with 1000s of them growing in glistening quartz. The quartz forms mini-greenhouses for the seedlings. An individual seedling was quite spiny. David Neville mentioned that the quartz grit is used for building so it is being dug up, unfortunately reducing the habitat for these plants. Some are more spiny than others, and there were a large number of ribs on some seedlings. One was trying to go cristate, it must have been damaged at some point and was forming offsets round the crown of the plant. The biggest of the plants was 2.5 feet tall and was a sight to behold. They found one in bud, but no flowers on anything else. They are opportunist flowerers. When these were first found, Backeberg thought they were *Parodias*. If you grow it in Europe, the juvenile spination persists for a lot longer. One termite mound was an amazing 40 feet up. He also found a bright orange lichen and a very hairy *Portulaca*. After a while in this weather, your skin starts to suffer - the UV content is quite high.

Cliff finished his talk with some typical views of the town of Itamarandiba. It seems to be a mixture of buildings from the 50s 60s 70s etc. A lot of towns in the state have expanded due to the eucalyptus industry, but the natural vegetation is being decimated. It had narrow streets and we saw a car dealership. They went on to spend a couple more

days in the hotel they first stayed in. Concrete reinforcing bar seems to be used in just about everything – we saw gates, stools, drain gates, bar stool foot rests made from it. It is cheap and easy to get hold of.

Paul said he didn't have any good sunsets from Brazil so cheated with one from Baja, California and a picture of Paul Klaassen and Marlon Machado.

Vinay Shah

Table Show Results

There were 10 entries in the February table show, and 2 entries for "Plants in Flower".

| | Cacti – Erioseyce | Succulents – Crassulaceae |
|--------------|--|---|
| Open | (1) B Beckerleg Neoporteria microsperma | (1) B Beckerleg Dudleya brittonii |
| | (2) - | (2) B Turner Pachyphy. Compactum |
| | (3) - | (3) I Biddlecombe Echeveria agavoides cv. "Red Edge" |
| Intermediate | (1) B Beckerleg Neoporteria laniceps | (1) B Beckerleg Crassula susannae |
| | (2) - | (2) B Turner Kalanchoe tomentosa |
| | (3) - | (3) I Biddlecombe Echeveria laui |

| Cacti/Succulent in Flower | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (1) B Beckerleg Aloe haworthioides | |
| (2) M Stevenson Euphorbia stellata | |
| (3) - | |

I forgot to include the January table show results in last month's newsletter, so here they are:

Table Show Results - January

There were 11 entries in the January table show, and 3 entries for "Plants in Flower".

| | Cacti – Echinocactus | Succulents – Aloe |
|--------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Open | (1) B Beckerleg Leuchtenbergia principis | (1) B Beckerleg Aloe haworthioides |
| | (2) M Stevenson Ferocactus stainesii | (2) B Turner Aloe haworthioides |
| | (3) M Stevenson Leuchtenbergia principis | (3) I Biddlecombe Aloe perfoliata |
| Intermediate | (1) B Beckerleg Ferocactus fordii | (1) B Beckerleg Aloe longispina |
| | (2) M Stevenson Leuchtenbergia principis | (2) I Biddlecombe Aloe variegata |
| | (3) I Biddlecombe Echinocactus grusonii | (3) - |

| Cacti/Succulent in Flower | |
|--|--|
| (1) B Beckerleg Crassula susannae | |
| (2) I Biddlecombe Zygocactus (Schlumbergera) truncata | |
| (3) A Bailey Gymnocalycium mihanovichi | |

Ivor Biddlecombe

Books and things

List of books in the library

No new books in our library to mention this month, but (unless I've lost them) there will still be a few printed copies of the list of library books on the front table for you to take away. If they've run out or you prefer to de-clutter and eliminate random bits of paper from your life, you can see the list at:

<http://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk/library.html>

Read All About It!

Most of you will remember the Zone Quiz which used to be held once per year (and the unique Mealy Bug Trophy awarded to the winning branch team), and those who are have been members of Southampton (or Portsmouth or the Isle of Wight) branch for long enough may remember one year's Quiz in which it seemed that, if one was in any doubt as to the answer to a question, the best guess was "Peru", even though none of the questions were about Paddington.

We are now about to learn much more about Peru because, assuming that the Beast From The East and Auntie, sorry, Storm Emma have retreated, our speaker for today's meeting is Ian Woolnough, secretary of Exeter branch, who will be speaking on "Peru 2017". After Cliff Thompson's talk on Brazil last month, we will probably feel we are learning a lot about South American cacti, but should you be interested in finding out even more about Peru and its cacti, my advice is much the same as it was last month: we have many general books on cacti in our library which will include species from Peru. Many Peruvian cacti are tall cereus types which many growers avoid, such as *Armatocereus*, *Browningia*, *Corryocactus* and so on through the alphabet! Some *Cleistocactus* and *Echinopsis* are more manageable, and then there are the much more collectable low-growing genera such as *Matucana* and the smaller *Opuntias*. We have in our library "*The Genus Matucana*" by Bregman (1997) and "*Small Opuntias*" by Pilbeam & Partridge (2016), which may cover genera which occur in Peru, such as *Austrocylindropuntia*, *Cumulopuntia* and others.

On the Internet, CactiGuide.com has a web-site which one can search by country, so that browsing to http://cactiguide.com/distribution_display/?country=Peru will produce an illustrated alphabetical list of 201 cactus species spread over 21 pages; clicking on an image will bring up more pictures of that species. Also worth a look is: <https://worldofsucculents.com/?origins=peru> (with several succulent *Peperomias*).

If you understand a little Spanish (that is, a lot more than I do), or just to look at the pictures, try *La Sociedad Peruana de Cactus y Suculentas* (SPECS) at <http://specs.pe/> (one of the shortest URLs I know of, although I have ice9.tk). This web site also drew my attention to a couple of books in Spanish which one can download in PDF format free of charge from the web, courtesy of the Peruvian Ministry of the Environment:

- *101 cactus del Perú* by Carlos Ostolaza Nano (Ministerio del Ambiente, 2011. 256 pp.) which is much meatier than the title suggests, and full of excellent photographs. For the linguistically challenged, at least the distribution information looks intelligible. <http://bibliotecavirtual.minam.gob.pe/biam/bitstream/handle/minam/865/BIV00369.pdf>
- It appears that, having done half the species in the book above, the same author went on to finish the job, so you might prefer the following even more comprehensive publication: *Todos los cactus del Perú* by Carlos Ostolaza Nano (Ministerio del Ambiente, 2014. 538 pp.) which looks very authoritative, with descriptions, distribution maps and lots of pictures. <http://www.minam.gob.pe/diversidadbiologica/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2014/02/document.pdf>

Richard White

Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on April 3rd and will feature Paul Klaassen talking about his trips last year to Mexico and Madagascar. Both countries feature large numbers of interesting genera, so I am sure we will see a lot of interesting plants during the talk.

The April Table Show will consist of the **Rebutia** group (cacti) and the **Gasteria** group (succulents), along with "plant in flower". Please note that members can submit more than one entry in any of the classes, and that points will be earned for each placed entry.

The table show classes use the classifications from the *Guide to Shows 10th Edition* (contact me if you don't have a copy of this).

The Rebutia group include *Aylosteria*, *Cintia*, *Cylindrorebutia*, *Digitorebutia*, *Mediolobivia*, *Neorebutia*, *Rebutia*, *Setirebutia*, *Spegazzinia*, *Sulcorebutia* and *Weingartia*.

The Gasteria group includes only *Gasteria*.

For committee members, a reminder that the next **Branch Committee meeting** will take place at 7:30pm on 26th March, at the Chilworth Village Hall (situated next to the Chilworth Arms).

Forthcoming Events

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| Sat 10 th Mar | Isle of Wight | Nature in Close-up #5 - Colin Haygarth |
| Sat 17 th Mar | Portsmouth | Lithops - In Captivity East to West - Dr Jonathan Clark |
| Mon 26 th Mar | Southampton | Branch Committee Meeting @ Chilworth Village Hall SO16 7LD |
| Tue 3 rd Apr | Southampton | What I Saw Last Winter - Mexico & Madagascar - Paul Klaassen |
| Sat 14 th Apr | Isle of Wight | Show & Tell |
| Sat 21 st Apr | Portsmouth | Bring and Buy Auction |
| Tue 1 st May | Southampton | Cultivation & Propagation Workshop, with demonstrations and discussions |
| Sat 12 th May | Isle of Wight | What I Did Last Winter (Paul Klaassen) |
| Sat 12 th May | Southampton | Display / Plant Sales @ Sparsholt College (Countryside Day) |
| Sat 19 th May | Portsmouth | How to best show your plants and an insight into judging - Bill Darbon |
| Tue 5 th Jun | Southampton | Travels in Ethiopia - Bob Potter |

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

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>