British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

May 2015

Branch Secretary
David Neville
6 Parkville Road
Swaythling
Southampton
Hampshire
SO16 2JA
davnev@btopenworld.com
(023) 80551173 or
07974 191354

Newsletter Editor
Vinay Shah
29 Heathlands Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO53 1GU

vvshah@clara.co.uk
(023) 80261989

Editorial

Over the past month we've had some sunny days and it's amazing how quickly our plants respond to these, in terms of budding up and proceeding to flower. Many of my cacti have flowered, and succulents such as Haworthias and Echeverias are also beginning to flower.

Announcements

On Saturday May 16th, the branch will be putting on a display and sales table at the *Sparsholt College Countryside Day*. This is quite a fun day out, with various activities put on by the college.

At the last meeting, David Neville mentioned that Portsmouth Branch will be holding a 65th Anniversary Open Day and Garden Party / Social at Sandy Wooller's and we are all invited. The event will be on Sunday 9th August.

Last month the branch handed out the latest in the series of plants for members to collect and cultivate. The plant handed out was *Frithia pulchra* – if you did not collect the plant last month, then please check whether there are left any left overs at today's meeting.

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

Ben Turner had brought in some Lachenalias in flower. Although these are bulbs, they grow in the same habitat as the succulents in the winter rainfall area of the Cape. These were selected cultivars and hence quite bright and blousy compared to the basic species. The plants were *Lachenalia aloides* var. quadricolor and *Lachenalia aloides* 'Nelsonii'. These plants are easy to grow and do well in the average succulent collection. Exbury has a good collection of Lachenalias. (Some of Margaret Corina's bulbs went there.)

Mexico 2014

Paul said he would be showing us pictures from two trips to Mexico from 2014. He had also brought along a hardcopy book featuring some of the pictures which he has published and this can be bought on the Internet. In March 2014, he went with Cliff Thompson and Ian Woolnough - particularly to see Thelocactus. We started with a map showing the rough outline of the trip. Routa 57 is the main road heading north from Mexico City, and it ultimately goes to Austin, Texas. They would be travelling North as far as Cuatro Ciénegas, Coahuila and then to Galeana. Factoring in some side trips, this was a total distance of about 2000km and would take just over 2 weeks.

They flew into Mexico City, with Cliff and Ian arriving from Heathrow and Paul flying in from Los Angeles. Their Hertz rental car was fitted with a "NeverLost" satnav device but Paul said this didn't exactly live up to the name. However he did also have a Garmin with him. *Opuntia lasiacantha* featured yellow flowers, and they also came across huge plants of *Agave salmiana*. Lichen growing on rocks is always a good sign of moisture and the potential for plants to be growing nearby. The cacti tend to be on rocky outcrops, some areas were marshy and probably too wet for cacti. They found the usual array of Mexican cacti, including Mammillarias and Ferocactus. The route also follows the Sierra Madre Oriental - a mountain range in north eastern Mexico. We saw a view along the edge of an outcrop and Paul mentioned they were at an altitude of about 2000m. At Embalse Zimapan they found some Mammillarias along with young plants of *Echinocactus grusonii.* This plant has become almost extinct in habitat because a large dam was built here - but the cacti had left a seed bank in the soil and so there were signs of regeneration. There were probably more plants in the hills in the area. Near the Zimapan reservoir they found *Thelocactus hastifer* - it tends to grow under

shrubs. There was more calcite in this area, and they also found *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus elephantidens*. They also had information about a brand new strombocactus - *Strombocactus corregidora*, so the next day they tried to find it, but it was raining heavily. They arrived at the co-ordinates - and Ian did find it eventually. Strombocacti are usually very squat plants, but these plants were taller. At the bottom of the hill are proper *Strombocactus disciformis* - so perhaps it's not really a different species. Their pictures were the first to be published on the internet of this species in flower. It was not growing in a friendly place and we saw a picture of him at a precarious angle, holding on to the leaves of an agave - it was quite dangerous terrain really.

There were some nice pictures of *Astrophytum ornatum,* first a young plant with dense flecks on the body and then a much taller and older plant. The next day was driving, past Xichu, to a spot where *Turbinicarpus alonsoi* is found. *Coryphantha erecta* is quite common - but it grows in tall grass so is hard to spot. They found *Echeveria xichuenysis* and eventually *Turbinicarpus alonsoi*. It's a plant that likes to grow on vertical walls and sometimes the plants do fall off. A number of the plants bore the magenta flowers. We saw *Mammillaria schiedieana* and growing nearby was the resurrection plant, *Selaginella lepidophylla.* Other plants of *M. schiedieana* were in bud and flower - they always grow in the bottom of narrow canyons, so might not like a lot of sun. *Mammillaria muehlenpfordtii* has not been a really popular cacti, perhaps because it is yellow spined - white spined Mammillaria species seem to be more popular. Travelling from San Luis de la Paz to Matehuala, they would pass the famous radio mast at El Huizache, on Route 57. Throughout this area, they found Neolloydias, and we saw *N. matehualensis* which comes from this area only. They also found lots of flat mammillarias, which he thinks might be *M. heyderi*. *Thelocactus bicolor* was in bud, so they were a few days too early. *Mammilloydia candida* is believed by some to be a hybrid between a Mammillaria and a Neolloydia. A plant of *Ariocarpus retusus* was one foot across and another *M. heyderi* had split dichotomously. *Lophophora williamsii* was in flower. The species of Lophophora contain different alkaloids (depending on the species) and this property was valued by the local Indians since it produced effects similar to LSD.

Now they travelled from Matehuala to Doctor Arroyo, to look for *Pelecyphora strobiliformis*. In 2010 they were in this area with Eunice Thompson and had found 6 plants - this time they drove further on, and found hundreds. However later in the year they were refused entry to the same location, with the owner not allowing them on the farm. We saw a seedling of the Pelecyphora and when young, the seedlings are similar in appearance to *Turbinicarpus pseudopectinatus*. There were also lots of Ariocarpus around - how rare are they really? They found a large *Echinocactus platyacanthus,* which must have been 5 feet tall. Cliff got a spine cluster in his foot which Ian helped remove. They also found *Thelocactus conothelos*. Then from Doctor Arroyo they headed for Iturbide. *Thelocactus buekii* dotted a hillside with pink/magenta flowers. They found *Echinocactus horizonthalianus* in bud but not in flower. The ground was also covered in plants of *Ariocarpus retusus,* mimicking the grey rock quite well - they were so dense, it was hard to avoid standing on them. The hillsides were also covered in *A. retusus,* including several large, multi-headed plants. On the other side of these hills are the Geohintonia and *Aztekium hintonii* populations and they would see those later. *Thelocactus beukii* is another plant that grows on vertical faces.

On towards Montemorelos, the Selaginella were green and wide open, indicating rain had fallen recently. One plant on the hillside bemused them - it was some type of Coryphantha. They were now at the Geohintonia site and the terrain consists of pure gypsum or gypsum rocks, covered in a thin layer of mud. The terrain is unstable and plants do fall out when it rains. When these plants were first discovered in the 1990s, a lot of plants were taken from habitat, but they didn't see anyone here during this trip. The *Aztekium hintonii* which is found here is remarkably similar in appearance to the Geohintonia. They headed on to try and find *Astrophytum caput medusae* in the state of Tamaulipas. They were at an altitude of 200m now, so it was hot and sweaty, and the acacia being in flower gave him hayfever problems. *Sclerocactus scheeri* also grows here and many of the cacti plants were growing under dense vegetation. They found *Escobaria emskoetteriana,* and *Echinocereus pentalophus* in full flower. The pink flowers are great but the plants themselves are badly scarred by the flowers. An unknown Mammillaria in flower had red seed pods. The electricity pylons are near the type locality for the Astrophytum, but they didn't see it, although they did find other obscure cacti. Along the ground were seedlings of *Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*. It's not a nice plant, tending to staple your jeans to your legs!

To do a fingertip search you have to worry about the spines from these as well as snakes, tarantulas and scorpions. They did see *Echinocereus (wilcoxia) poselgeri* and *Coryphantha nickelsiae* but they did not find the Astrophytum plants. They headed for

Saltillo and then Parras. They found *Thelocactus bicolor* in flower, as well as *Echinocereus pectinatus.* Paul recommends growing Thelocactus - they are not difficult to grow and reward you with lots of flowers in the spring. They seem to have few pests as well - there was no mealy on his Thelocactus plants. *Thelocactus bicolor* ssp. *bolaensis* is said to be more densely spined and has smaller flowers. A plant he labelled *Echinocerus longisetus* might possibly be *E. stramineus* - the two are remarkably similar and hard to tell apart. Everywhere was *Agave lechuguilla* and their sharp leave tips attack your shins and ankles. *Coryphantha durangensis* was the first Coryphantha they had seen in flower. In nature they seem to flower later in the year compared to our collections. There were large plants of *Ferocactus hamatacanthus* but these were not in flower. They did see fruits later in the year in October so they must have flowered in between.

They decided to take a shortcut to Cuatro Ciénegas. They found *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus* here - grows on sill flats - in autumn get a fair amount of water - but dry and cracked in the spring and summer. *Ferocactus hamatacanthus*. Forest of yuccas in flower. At Cuatro Ciénegas (which means four marshes) - they found *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus.* They also wanted to see *Thelocactus lausseri*, but it grows on private property and the owners don't like strangers - a gate to the property was locked. The Ariocarpus was growing in the hundreds – these were supposedly rare plants! They also found *Echinocactus texensis*, although the plant was very dehydrated. You tend to see Fouquierias in most deserts, but *F. shrevei* - the coachman's whip - is relatively rare. It flowers in the axils and is bee pollinated. *Thelocactus wagnerianus* seems to be the same as *T. bicolor* ssp *bolaensis*. At one location they found a crested *Ariocarpus retusus*. They stopped where they hoped to find more Thelocactus and found lovely examples of *Epithelantha micromeris*. *Leuchtenbergia principis* was also found here - they mimic the vegetation very well and are hard to spot. A large plant of *Lophophora williamsii* consisted of 7 heads. They wanted to see *Echinocereus knipellianus* and had co-ordinates, but where were the plants? An impressive plant of *Ferocactus pilosus* with a dozen heads was photographed with their hats positioned on three of the heads! Eventually they spotted *E. knipellianus* in flower and found more, the grass hiding the dark green bodies. They also found *Gymnocactus beguinii* here. A view showed several small flowers distributed across the ground and this proved to be the flowers of *Stenocactus obvallatus*.

Now on to look for the rarest of the Ariocarpus - *A. scaphirostris,* a plant he had found in 2010. They also found *Thelocactus buekii* 'matudae' in flower. The Ariocarpus plants were found, with just the leaf tips visible, it was a bit of a miserable plant and not much better when in flower. Using a paintbrush to brush aside some of the rocks, they cleaned up the Ariocarpus to take a picture. They found a gypsum hillside and found *Aztekium ritteri* here - it mimics the surrounding rock very well.

Now heading to Jaumave. *Ariocarpus trigonus* looks more delicate than the other Ariocarpus species. The local village was sometimes hostile to foreigners, but there was no one here. The plants seem to have leaf tips chewed by animals, but the new growth was recovering. *Astrophytum asterias* is nearly extinct in nature and the plants they found were about the size of a 50p coin, so these were quite young. Around Jaumave, they found cultivated *Aloe vera* in full flower. A lizard was a mexican plateau horned lizard. They found *Obregonia denegrii* in large numbers, despite the previous location having been lost due to the building of roads. They moved on. *Thelocactus conothelos* was in flower, these were beautiful and large plants, almost 50cm tall. A Coryphantha was immature and difficult to identify. *Mammillaria baumii* was in flower. A Neolloydia had nice pink flowers. *Mammillaria klissingiana* had formed a large clump.

Plants of *astrophytum myriostigma* were nicely patterned and they also found *Thelocactus tulensis.* A large and bulky *Echinocactus platyacanthus* was nicknamed "michelin man". Nearby was a very large Ferocactus hysterix. Another even larger Echinocereus platyacanthus was 3 metres tall and christened "My Old Friend". Plants of *Turbinicarpus lophophoroides* had shrunk into the soil. They also found *Ariocarpus retusus* form "scapharostoides". They stayed the night at Rio Verde, and he wanted to see *Turbinicarpus rioverdensis.* Despite having location information, the plants would have been difficult to find if they had not been in flower. *Lophophora diffusa* had a yellowish cast to the body, this might be a sign of stress. On their way back now, around Vizarron they found *Strombocactus disciformis. Mammillaria elongata* ssp. *echinaria* was a form with a central spine and seemed quite common, compared to the one we see in nurseries. *Thelocactus leucocanthus* v. *schmollii* had magenta flowers. There were lots of *Strombocactus disciformis* plants, again suitable for growing on a vertical wall.

They were now back to their starting location and it was the last day before they flew home. *Thelocactus leucocanthus* ssp *leucocanthus* had yellow flowers but the plants look identical to the schmollii they had found before, apart from the

flower colour. The last of the Ariocarpus, a thousand miles away from the furthest ones they had seen was *Ariocarpus kotschubeyanus elephantidens*. They visited a hamlet called Bellavista, and arrived at 9am and found 100's of *Turbinicarpus leucocanthus* in flower. By midday it was 36°C. Right next to the car was *Turbinicarpus pseudomacrochele* in flower. They must have missed the plant in the morning, when the flower was still closed. They also found *Thelocactus hastifer* in flower. The bramble across the plant needed to be photoshopped out. At the end of the trip all the pressure was off. They found some dehydrated Mammillarias and Coryphanthas. The conclusion from this spring trip was that Ariocarpus really aren't rare. We ended the first half with pictures of 3 little statues which had appeared on the windowsill of their hotel - appropriate for the three of them who had been on this trip.

After the break, Paul mentioned this was the first time he'd been asked to give the same talk twice in one evening. We would follow exactly same route as the earlier trip in March, but now it was late October and the number in their party had increased to 6 - the original three were joined by Ian's wife Sarda, Bart Hensel from Holland and Alain Buffel from Belgium. They set off from Mexico City and headed for the hotel in Vizarron De Montes - the road out of Mexico City is filled with tension, and is busier than London in the rush hour.

They found *Coryphantha octacantha* and *Mammillaria perbella*. *Ferocactus glaucscens* was growing in the shade in a rock crevice - when growing in full sun it doesn't look as pretty. *A. kotschoubeyanus elephantidens* was now in bud. They spotted a dark snake but it slithered off without troubling them. Plants of *Turbinicarpus lophophoroides* were looking a lot healthier and emerging from the holes they had drawn themselves into. We saw another large plant of *Echinocactus platyacanthus* - this one was called "Belly Laugh". Sometimes, when you look in the trees you will see interesting plants, and we saw *Selenicereus spinulosus* and some Tillandsias. Ian was all excited because he had got some co-ordinates for *Lophophora viridiscens,* but the co-ordinates proved to refer to the middle of a reservoir! Looking around, they found *Coryphantha maiz-tablensis*, the *Lophophora viridiscens* that Ian had been hoping to find, and also *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus* v. *sladkovskyi*. We saw more *Lophophora williamsii* and Paul mentioned that when grown in the UK, it doesn't make the same amount of alkaloids as it does in the US.

We saw the "michelin man" Echinocactus platyacanthus again, and Alain posed with the nearby Ferocactus hystrix. Another plant growing in trees in the distance might be an epiphytic cacti such as Disocactus or Hylocereus. *Neolloydia conoidea* was now in flower. *Leuchtenbergia prinicipis* was also in flower. They found *Turbinicarpus schiedickeanus* ssp. *jauernigii.* Plants of *Astrophtytum asterias* were looking much like the plants you might find on sale at ELK - these were growing in mud!

Astrophytum myriostigma growing with *ferocactus glaucescens*. The texture of the Astrophytums showed some similarities to the Japanese hybrids one sees on sale. We also saw nice plants of *Obregonia denegrii* and *Ariocarpus trigonus* with yellow flowers. Going from Jaumave to Matehuela, they performed a 2nd search for *Astrophytum caput medusae.* They had been given additional options on where to look for it. They found *Ariocarpus retusus* with white flowers and *Ferocactus pilosus* with orange flowers – these were large plants, but they don't need to be that large before they flower. At El Huizache there were some nice plants, including *Ariocarpus bravoanus* ssp. *hintonii*. Juan Acosta from Chile had given him some lessons on how to spot terrains where you might encounter interesting cacti and this education came in useful here. They moved to a second location for *A. bravoanus* ssp. *hintonii* and here the plants were in flower. Also here were plants of *A. retusus*, with the tubercles on some individuals being different. They also found *Ariocarpus retusus* "horacekii", *Turbinicarpus schmiedickeanus ssp* macrochele. *Pachycereus marginatus* is the fencepost cactus, forming tall columns of angular stems. He had taken so many pictures of the cacti in flower, he produced a composite image showing 15 of the *Ariocarpus retusus* plants. On the way to Galeana - they went to the hill where they had seen *Thelocactus buekii* - expecting to see it in full flower now, but it was slightly disappointing, perhaps because some of the plants must have finished flowering earlier. They found the Geohintonia plants again - these pictures don't tell you that you had to stand on narrow ledges of very slippery material covered in pine needles to take the photographs. *Aztekium ritteri* was growing in a narrow ridge. This gypsum hillside can be traced all the way to the Geohintonia site - so there are some 50 miles of type of terrain. *Ariocarpus scaphirostris* was in flower now, but it was still a miserable plant. There were many plants but they only found half a dozen in flower. They repeated their search for *Astrophytum caput medusae* but again they had no joy.

From Saltillo they headed north. We saw some typical Fouquieria plants. *Lophophora williamsii* had shrunk away into the mud. *Opuntia microdasys* (or was it rufida) was growing with *Echinocereus stramineus*. We also saw *Mammillaria heyderi* and the tightly spined *Astrophytum capricorne crassihamatus*. In 2010 they had found a dozen or so cristate Ariocarpus plants near Estacion Marte (El Pilar). We saw flowering plants of *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus* and a 2010 picture of a crested *Ariocarpus retusus sladkovskyi*. He hopes one day to see a crested plant in flower. Near Cuatro Ciénegas, they found *Ariocarpus fissuratus* in flower. Within 2-3 weeks, the plants go from no buds visible to flowering. They also found *Astrophytum capricorne* and different forms of *Echinocereus stramineus,* and *Echinofossulocactus zacatensis. Thelocactus hexaedrophorus* also pulls itself into the soil. At Doctor Arroya, a Mammillaria was probably *M. formosa*. There were huge Dasylirions, some were flowering. They are building electricity works here and he thinks a windfarm might follow too. *Ariocarpus confusus* is so named because it looks like *A. retusus* but has magenta flowers (not white). We saw a collage of pictures of these too. They came to a fast flowing river, and some crossed this on foot, and captured video footage of Cliff driving from one side to the other. The pictures of Ariocarpus plants in flower suggested that something had eaten the flower petals – tortoises perhaps? Some of the Ariocarpus were growing in shade, almost overwhelmed by the surrounding vegetation. Finally he found a *Echinocereus platyacanthus* in flower, and a clump of *Echinocereus pectinatus. Neolloydia conoidea* is quite variable. The plant they had come to see was *Thelocactus conothelos* ssp. *argenteus*. They came across a "diversion" road sign which was upside down – so was the diversion to the left or to the left?

Just outside Tula they had a location for *Ariocarpus agavoides.* It was not the prettiest or most dynamic of plants but it completed their set of Ariocarpus. The excitement was over now they had achieved their aim. Some Germans staying at their hotel were also looking for cacti and they followed them out to a hill and politely waited while they were taking pictures. On the way back they found an unexpected group of *Ariocarpus retusus* - but with the confusus type flower. There were also some nice plants of *Astrophytum myriostigma*, with differing rib counts – for some reason, there's something magic about the one with 4 ribs. Some of the markings on these rivalled the choice plants on sale at places like ELK. They found the skin shed from a snake, and one section was about 2m long, so it must have been a decent size.

"My Old Friend" was the 3m *tall Echinocactus platyacanthus* plant they had seen earlier in the year. A Mammillaria looked like *M. geminispina* and it was still in flower in November. "Super Ario" was an amazing Ariocarpus plant with 19 white flowers. They also found *Echeveria gigantea*. A nice collection of cacti growing upon a hollow in a tree included *Mammillaria decipiens* ssp. *camptotricha.* Ian and Sarda had to return to the UK early, so the group was now down to a single car. They found *Turbinicarpus alonsoi* at Xichu, along with *Echeveria xichuensis,* and *Ferocactus macrodiscus* ssp. *septriniformis*. Near San Miguel de Allende, they saw the botanical garden which Charlie Glass had helped set up (El Charco del Ingenio). Apparently Brian Thompson from BCSS Oxford spent 6 months there, training young Mexicans how to graft cacti. San Miguel de Allende is one of the most Americanised towns in Mexico. Paul tries to always buy a hat which reflects the country he's in, and we saw a hat seller with 30 hats stacked on his head. We ended with a video featuring a band playing a serenade at one of the local cafes.

Vinay Shah

Table Show Results

There were 17 entries in the April table show, and 7 entries for "Plants in Flower".

	Cacti – Rebutia	**Succulents – Echeveria**
Open	(1) B Beckerleg Rebutia cv Apricot Ice	(1) B Beckerleg Dudleya brittonii
	(2) I Biddlecombe Rebutia pygmaea v. mudanensis	(2) I Biddlecombe Echeveria laui
	(3) -	(3) S Wilson Echeveria sp.
Intermediate	(1) B Beckerleg Sulco. hoffmanniana	(1) S Wilson Echeveria laui
	(2) I Biddlecombe Rebutia cv Striped Peach	(2) G Penrose Echeveria laui
	(3) -	(3) D England Echeveria longissima

Cacti/Succulent in Flower
(1) D England Mammillaria senilis
(2) G Penrose Mammillaria lasiacantha magallani
(3) B Beckerleg Pelargonium incrassatum

Ivor Biddlecombe

Bookworm Corner

The weather seems to change from hot and sunny to chilly from one day to the next at the moment. It just means that you never know what to do with the pots of seedlings and all those bulky over-wintering garden plants that have been cluttering up the greenhouses all winter.

The garden is growing at a rapid rate with the hosta leaves emerging and unfurling, flag iris sending up flower spikes, potato foliage romping away and the flower beds filling up with lovely new growth and flowers. I grow my hostas in pots and many of these are now in desperate need of dividing as they have completely filled up and are pushing themselves out of the pot. The hostas need to be divided before the leaves emerge too much and start unfurling so already I have missed my change with some of them. I split one last week and ended up with 5 plants from one pot and now have more hostas than I know what to do with, so if you like hostas have a look at the raffle table !!

The cacti house is full of colour, although my beloved *Turbinicarpus* have slowed down on the flowering stakes after a wonderful show last month, with a maximum of 20 different plants flowering at one time. The *Stenocactus, Mammillaria, Astrophytum, Thelocactus, Neoporteria* are in now in full flower with *Copiapoa, Rebutia* and *Parodia* just starting. In succulents we have a few *Gasterias* with the *Echeverias* displaying a rainbow of colours in the combination of flowers and leaves.

I am pleased to say that we have a brand new book in the library, just in the nick of time to tie in with this month's cultivation and propagation workshop. The book '**Succulent Propagation**' by Kapitany and Schulz was brought along by one of our guest speakers last year and proved to be very popular with everyone who looked at it during the tea break. The branch has now purchased our own copy and I am sure it will be of great interest to most of our members.

Do come and have a look at the **Books For Sale** down in the library corner.

'ENJOYED THE LECTURE? THEN ENJOY THE BOOK!'

April

Paul Klaassen from neighbouring Portsmouth branch gave a presentation on '**Mexico 2014**'. Books in the library covering genus in Mexico include '**Mammillaria**' (Pilbeam J.). This book covers the distribution of species, cultivation and lists all the recorded cristates. Each species has a distribution map, photograph (sometimes including a habitat shot), description and recorded locations. Another book well worth a read is '**Ariocarpus et cetera**' (Pilbeam J. & Weightman B.). This book also briefly covers cultivation before covering 17 genera in more detail, all of which include plenty of photographs with species in cultivation and in habitat. Some of the genera, in addition to *Ariocarpus*, include *Astrophytum, Leuchtenbergia, Lophophora, Stenocactus* and *Turbinicarpus*. These books can be found in **Featured Book Corner**.

May

May is of course the annual cultivation and propagation workshop so do come over and have a look at some of the following books. As mentioned above we have a new book '**Succulent Propagation**' (Kapitany & Schulz) which I will review at a future date (when I get my hands on it!). Other books worth looking at include '**The Complete Book of Cacti & Succulents**' (Hewitt T.). This book has a chapter at the rear of it on 'care and cultivation' which illustrates growing mediums, potting, nutrients, watering, light levels and temperatures etc. In addition propagation by cuttings, seed, grafting and division are covered including plenty of photos. A good book for those having a go at propagation for the first time. Another book, '**Growing Cacti and Other Succulents in the Conservatory and Indoors**' (Bell S.) has a chapter 'care and maintenance' with topics including composts, watering, pests and diseases. The next chapter 'plants for free' goes into detail on propagation by offsets, cuttings, seed and grafting. The section on seed raising, is I think helpful by having illustrations of stages in seedling development. The two small books by John Pilbeam '**How to care for your cacti**' and '**How to care for your succulents**' although now quite dated, are still a valuable read for newcomers in particular.

Hopefully these books will give you some ideas but do come over to the library corner as other cultivation books will also be out on the shelf this month.

Sue Wilson

Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 2nd June and will feature a talk by Chris Eyers on the plants and animals of Namibia. We only seen glimpses of this country in previous talks so hopefully we will get to see some interesting material.

The June Table Show will consist of the **Parodia Group (cacti)** and **Mesembryanthemum Group (succulents)** classes. 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. In addition there is a class for any flowering cactus or succulent plant.

The *Parodia* group includes Blossfeldia, Brasilicactus, Frailea, Notocactus, Parodia and Wigginsia.

The *Mesembryanthemum* Group contains over a 100 genera, and includes the following subgroups :
Argyroderma, Cheiridopsis, Conophytum., Faucaria, Lithops, Nananthus.

From 2015, the table show classes will now use the classifications from the *Guide to Shows 10th Edition.* (contact me if you need a copy of this)

Forthcoming Events

Sat 9th May	Isle of Wight	Mexico: Spring & Autumn in the Sierra Madre Orientale (Cliff Thompson)
Sat 16th May	Portsmouth	Practical Demo on Grafting Cacti (Cliff Thompson)
Sat 16th May	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ Sparsholt College (Countryside Day)
Tue 2nd Jun	Southampton	Namibia - Plants & Animals (Chris Eyers)
Sat 6th Jun	Portsmouth	Summer Show at St. Colman's Church Hall, Cosham, PO6 2JJ
Sun 7th Jun	Southampton	Branch visit to RHS Wisley & Mammillaria Society Event
Sat 13th Jun	Isle of Wight	Big Bend (David Minnion)
Wed 17th Jun	Southampton	Branch Committee Meeting
Sat 20th Jun	Portsmouth	Baja California (David Minnion)
Sat 27th Jun	Southampton	Branch visit to Bristol Cactus Mart, Portishead, Bristol
Tue 7th Jul	Southampton	Our Collection (Keith & Kathy Flanagan)
Sat 11th Jul	Isle of Wight	What I Did Last Winter (Paul Klaassen)
Sat 18th Jul	Portsmouth	Echinocereus (John Pilbeam)
Sun 26th Jul	Southampton	Southampton Branch Garden Party - hosted by Alice Jankovec

Branch website: http://www.southampton.bcss.org.uk
Facebook : https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcss