

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

July 2018



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## Editorial

We've been in a "heatwave" for a good couple of weeks now, and the dry weather is supposed to continue for two more weeks. It has been quite stressful for the garden plants though, since the last drop of rain was 3 weeks ago.

I've not spent too much time in the conservatory, but a few of the usual plants have been flowering. *Notocactus roseoluteus* managed to produce a glossy pink flower. I've had to increase the frequency of watering to twice a week due to the recent warm spell.

## Announcements

On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, Alice will again be hosting the **branch Garden Party** at her home in West Moors. A leaflet with directions of how to get there is on the front table.

Immediately after the Garden Party, the branch will be participating at the **New Forest Show** (24-26 July). The rota for who will be manning the stand on each day of the show has provisionally been arranged, and luckily we did not have the drama of last year as regards potential restrictions on the number of car passes.

A form for car-sharing to attend the **Oxford Show** at the end of the month is the front table – please write your name on this if you would like to attend

the event and need a lift – or if you plan on going and can give others a lift.

Next month we will be holding a new format of meeting called a **Focus Evening**, where we will discuss plants from the genera *Euphorbia* and *Mammillaria*. Further details of that meeting are included on page 6 of this newsletter. Please read those notes, and as per David's request, do bring along plants from those 2 genera to that meeting.

## Last Month's Meeting

### Plants of Interest

Tom Radford had brought along some *Conophytum* plants. He mentioned this wasn't really the right time of year to show them at their best, but they are still quite interesting as they come into growth. They come from the western Cape in South Africa and also Namibia, where they receive winter rainfall. Some succulents from South Africa can adapt and change to the UK seasons (e.g. *Lithops*), but *Conophytums* just don't like being watered in the summer – in his experience, *Conophytums* die off quite quickly if you water them in the summer. With *C. flavum*, he had taken a picture of it 2 months ago and he was now keeping it completely dry – the single head was going to split into 2 heads. They like to be watered in their winter, so he waters them from July / August onwards. *C. wiggettae* is one of the miniature-headed ones and the old bodies were drying off, he'll give it some water at the end of July. With *C. bilobum*, the new heads were coming through quite well – it has a nice yellow flower. *C. elisae* was further behind, but the new heads were starting to show. Water them from the end of July onwards, and also through the winter - but they only need small amounts of water in the later months when the temperatures are lower. Then stop watering completely in the spring. Tom had had brought along a list of the mesembs, and which were summer and winter growers - if your mesembs are not looking good in the summer - they might be winter growers.

## Travels in Ethiopia

Bob and Beryl Potter had travelled down from Woking. They used to run the Toobees Exotics Plant nursery, but that was closed down in 2016. Bob mentioned that the trip took place in November 2013. Every September, he goes to the ELK Conference in Belgium and there he meets up with other cactus explorers, and so this trip was probably first discussed in 2012. Bob started the talk with a 2½ minute video showing a variety of images from the trip accompanied by music from the song "What a Wonderful World" - this gave us a small taster of the country and its people and what we were going to see.

Bob mentioned that he may have to consult his notes from time to time - they had encountered a lot of Aloes which were difficult to identify, and he wasn't sure of the names for those. The capital of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa, and Bob showed a map of their planned excursion. They would head north east towards Djibouti - then head across towards Somalia, and then to the south west of the country, and then back past Addis. The people who went with him were Wiebe Bosma (mainly interested in Stapeliads), Rikus van Veldhuisen (chairman of the Euphorbia Society) and dutchman Leo Van der Hoeven who is well known in the UK and often goes on trips. Normally when they go overseas, they'll book flights and rent some vehicles and work out their own itinerary but this time, because they were visiting a place which none of them had been to before, they used the services of a tour company (Yama Ethiopia Tours). They booked a package which included 2 vehicles, 2 drivers and with all the food and accommodation included. We saw a picture of them in the Yama Tours office. They told the tour company the places they wanted to visit and then relied on the drivers and their local knowledge to guide them safely round the country. At the time they were there, there were some problems in the country. e.g. a possible threat from Boko Haram terrorists - there was some tension because there was the possibility of attacks being carried out.

Looking out over Addis Ababa, the scene showed a mix of high rise buildings as well as tin sheds. They started off and found *Aloe pubescens*. It is sometimes hard to identify between juvenile and adult plants, and also due to differing growth conditions. Colin Walker did the Aloe identification for them, but even he wasn't 100% sure about some of them. We saw a picture of a flower spike and Colin had claimed that was enough to identify the plant, even though no hairs were visible in the flowers. We saw a seed thistle, followed by *Kleinia grantii* which were creeping sprawling plants -

when they do flower, they have red flowers. Sansevierias seen during the trip were also difficult to identify, but Alan Butler named them for him. This was *Sansevieria aethiopica*. Plants of *Euphorbia candelabrum* were seen now and again, some were as large as 4m-5m high. An asclepiad had a 5 lobed flower - it was a species of *Calotropis* and was a fleshy shrub. The seed pods were tennis ball sized. In the jungley undergrowth, was *Cissus quadrangularis*. Stapeliads were Wiebe's specialty and he named the next plant as *Orbea sprengeri*. Bob mentioned that of all the different countries he's visited, Ethiopia was one of the easiest places to find plants - you just stop somewhere, get out of the car and walk a short distance and you will find something - usually stapeliads. The plant had mottled stems - it has orangey-red flowers, but they didn't see it in flower. *Caralluma acutangula* is now usually called *Desmidorchis acutangula*. These were beautiful large plants in excellent condition, and quite abundant. They came across a few more *Euphorbia candelabrum*. Sometimes these plants were found in graveyards, where they have been specifically planted by the families of the deceased. He also saw this practice in Madagascar. The nicest Euphorbias they found had yellow flowers on the tips of the stems - this was *Euphorbia nigrispinoides*.

In amongst all the scrub, they found an adenia stem but they couldn't see the top of the stem - it was probably *Adenia venenata*. *Caralluma peckii* has slightly different markings on the stem. *Echidnopsis montana* has quite structural stems. *Desmidorchis acutangula* here had flowered and the plant was 3 feet across. The seed were not ripe but they found more later, which Wiebe collected. These were fantastic plants and nice to see. They walked past one of the most impressive plants here - *Caralluma socotrana* - and this was one of the biggest plants of this he's seen in habitat, having also seen them on Socotra. He advised people to google the pictures of the flowers - they are bright orange flowers which grow on top of the stems.

They undertook their first lake crossing to go to Awash National Park - they were going here to see *Euphorbia awashensis*, which they did find. The individual stems were 10 inches high, and the plants were a plant foot and a half across. They were growing in between the lava rocks - this must have been a volcanic region in the past. We saw a cristate version of the *Desmidorchis* - it was quite a spectacular plant. At the Awash National Park, there were little sheds and huts out where you can stay - people go there for the hot springs, although they didn't see any people while they were there. We saw an umbel of the *Desmidorchis* before the flowers

had started to open – it is quite a sight when it does open - but the smell is also something else!

Dik-dik are miniature antelopes which are only 18 inches high – they are quite inquisitive animals. In the distance they saw an Oryx, these are majestic animals. There were baboons here as well. They headed off on the next segment of their trip. Many of the main roads are pretty good, thanks to the Chinese who have built the roads in many parts of Africa in return for trade deals. *Caralluma peckii* was growing in a dark spot, but you could see the striations on the stems. A picture showed them poised trying to get a spine out of Wickus's bum – he had backed onto an *Opuntia* pad! We saw the flower of *Caralluma peckii* – it grows on a large stalk which comes out of the top of the stem and then a flower appears on the end of this and waves around in the breeze. *Euphorbia nubica* is found all over the place, growing alongside the roads. They also saw *Euphorbia mauritanica*, which is a thin stemmed plant. *Sansevieria ehrenbergii* is a thick stemmed plant with sword type leaves, and it's very prevalent in the areas they visited.

Ethiopia is currently landlocked, and their nearest sea port is in Djibouti, which used to be called TFAI - the "French Territory of the Afars and the Issas". Before the civil war, Eritrea and Ethiopia were all one country but in the 1990s Eritrea claimed independence. This means goods destined for Ethiopia are flown in or come into Djibouti and then taken by road into Ethiopia. Consequently, the road between Ethiopia and Djibouti is like bandit alley and trucks are subjected to hijacks etc. They were advised not to go too far towards Djibouti - or also to travel too far towards the Somali border since there are large numbers of Somali refugees who have headed into Ethiopia. They did go to Jijiga and relied on their drivers who were in contact with other drivers who were keeping an eye on the situation in the surrounding regions.

The next plant looked like *Desmidorchis acutangula* but it's actually *Desmidorchis speciosa* – they are very similar, but the stems are a little shorter. *D. edithae* and *D. penicillata* are two other similar looking plants. An aloe looked like *Aloe somaliensis* but it was *Aloe pubescens* again. When you find something, you can be alone but in a few minutes you can be surrounded by dozens of kids - and when they see you are interested in plants they'll disperse and come back with things they have dug up! *Echidnopsis dammaniana* is fairly common in cultivation, and there are different forms with green flowers, red flowers, or a brownish flower. *Aloe trichosantha* is a large growing aloe.

We saw a picture of a typical dirt road – it was fairly level and smooth. At a rocky site, they saw several plants of *Desmidorchis* sitting around. *Desmidorchis edithae* was a beautiful little plant in perfect condition. It's quite hard to grow them well in cultivation. We saw *Echidnopsis dammaniana* again – it likes growing under rocks, and if you turn over loose rocks you often find the stems underneath. An old man came up to them and asked if he could help with anything! Next was an interesting and rare plant - *Pseudopectinaria malum*. He has grown this in the past, it's not an easy plant to grow, but it has one of the most spectacular flowers you can imagine – do look it up. It is a very rare plant, so they were lucky to find a few of these. They found a hillside of *Desmidorchis* – these were now *Desmidorchis speciosa* and there were lots of them around. A *Scilla* (*Ledebouria*) had nice spotty/speckly leaves.

They went up the road towards Djibouti to find the next plant and eventually found it, hiding in the bush there. It was *Euphorbia xylacantha*, with orange-yellow flowers, well marked stems and with spines. In cultivation, it comes as grafted material since it's difficult on its own roots, it almost forms a caudex. Once you find one, you tend to see more. They saw *Desmidorchis speciosa* again, with the umbel of flowers still in bud. A picture of *Adenia venenata* was better than the one he took before. They were now at Dire Dawa – and due to tension, every hotel you go to wants to search your bags – we saw a picture of the bag search. However, they don't seem to bother checking back packs! We saw plants of *Aloe megalacantha*, and *Euphorbia nigrispinoides* aff. *nigrisponoides*.

After the break we resumed with *Euphorbia rosenii*, which is an *E. nigrispinoides* look-alike and forms quite large shrubs. *Kalanchoe marmorata* had lovely markings out there – he took some cuttings of this, brought them home but they all grew pale green leaves so the spotting and patterning must be caused by the light out there. We saw a picture of 2 of the party – "2 old geezers" resting after a bit of a climb. They arrived at Harar now. This is a walled city which he found fascinating. We also saw some nice rock structures. On the road to Djijiga, the further you go along, you find places like this, with tin sheds sprouting up everywhere – these were Somali refugees. They arrived at Djijiga and Bob showed us a picture of toilet seat which had been fitted upside down – "spot the deliberate mistake"!

Breakfast in Jijiga was a nice cup of coffee. Looking at the buildings there, it was hard to work out if they were in the process of being built or being knocked down. They found *Aloe megalacantha* just outside the town of Jijiga as well as *Echidnopsis scutellata*,

which was growing on the rocks. Next they saw *Orbea sprengeri* - or it was possibly *Orbea gemugofana* - it was a nicely marked plant. *Echidnopsis dammaniana* is found in many locations. They also saw *Huernia macrocarpa*. *Euphorbia rosenii* was seen again – it is not as floriferous as *E. nigrispinoides*. Another *Kalanchoe marmorata* had a speckled leaf.

The next picture was titled “stairway to heaven” – it showed some haphazard scaffolding without too many supports and guys walking up and down with buckets of concrete. It’s not sunshine every day there - they woke up one morning to very thick mist. A *Euphorbia candelabrum* lookalike was a hybrid, it had distinctive segmented stems compared to *E. candelabrum* which has straight stems. With *Desmidorchis edithae* we saw the flower umbel at the top of the stem, and another picture with just one or two buds open. We saw Wiebe searching for his stapeliads again, and *Echidnopsis dammaniana* with a thick stem, as well as *Huernia macrocarpa* again.

Lunchtime meant a banana and samosa - if you’re lucky. We saw the flower of *Huernia macrocarpa* – Stapelia flowers have 5 lobes – and if they have intermediate lobes, then it’s a *Huernia*. *Huernia somalica* has a lifebuoy type flower, featuring a ring all around the flower. Someone in the audience asked if all these plants were temperature sensitive? Bob said yes, most of these will require it quite warm. They had some rain and we saw Leo in a pac-a-mac which he pulled out from somewhere.

We saw a small example of *Edithcolea grandis* – he still hasn’t seen one of those in flower in habitat, either here or in Socotra. We saw some women gathering firewood – they tend to wear colourful clothes. It has rained and the mud road’s state was a lot worse – it was muddy, slippery, and the damp wet conditions were quite treacherous. *Caralluma turneri* also had flowers hanging on the end of long stalks. With *Aloe megalacantha* he brought back a small cutting which looked great in habitat but it wasn’t so good when it filled up half a greenhouse. *Aloe mcloughlinii* is quite an attractive thing – it is similar to *A. somaliensis* with the leaf patterns. We saw *E. rosenii* again. We saw a view overlooking the plain they were going to drive across – there was some fantastic scenery here, as they went through a chasm in the rocks, it was the location of a large river gorge. The car needed a good clean after being entirely covered in mud.

*Adenium somalense* had some baby plants growing alongside it. One plant had the top chopped off and it was sprouting again. At their luxury hotel in Jimma the next morning, breakfast consisted of a

lady in a corner using a primus stove to make some coffee and scrambled eggs. Because of the wet roads accidents do happen and they saw a truck which had overturned lying by the roadside. They learnt that most of the people involved had died. It was misty and quite chilly. Rickus wanted to find a *Euphorbia* here and they eventually found it – it was *Euphorbia intricata*. The flower is a typical *Euphorbia* flower, but it’s not the type of plant anyone would want to grow no one would want to grow it apart from Rickus perhaps, and they spent a lot of effort just to go and find it. This was the only stop where they found a *Ceropegia* – it was difficult to identify it without a flower.

We saw a picture of people selling khat – this is a narcotic herb which looks like privet leaves. Bob had encountered it before, in Yemen. They stick the leaves in their mouths and chew it and suck the sap. Another image showed Somalian refugees with a camel herd – some of them set up businesses herding camels and selling the babies. *Pyrenacantha malvifolia* forms huge caudexes – he was amazed when he first saw a couple of these plants in a field. They form giant caudexes, which are white and look like giant boulders. We saw more pictures of these and Bob mentioned you can find the big ones, but it’s hard to see any small ones – perhaps they have all been collected. *Aloe somaliensis* was greener than we might be used to. It was lunchtime again, this time in the presence of monkeys. We saw a hornbill and Bob mentioned that Ethiopia is a good place for birding tours – when they were in Addis, they met people who were on a bird spotting trip. At a typical village, they were greeted by the local children, who loved having their pictures and videos taken. And with digital cameras you can show them the images right away.

They stayed at the Goba Wabe Shebelle Hotel, at the edge of Bale Mountains National Park. The leafy green views meant that you could be forgiven for thinking you were driving though the English countryside. It really was very weird conditions with spectacular scenery. The Bale Mountains National Park features giant lobelias - *Lobelia rhynchopetalum* which look like palm trees – they are several feet tall! There were loads of these fantastic looking plants. The altitude here is 4000m. An Abyssinian wolf was spotted – it’s a very rare animal. As you leave this area, there’s a mossy area with moss growing on the trees and it’s all very spooky. They came across more giant lobelias, which were a different species and not quite as the other ones, but still quite large – we saw them with the flower stalk poking up. It was wet here. We also saw a road crew fixing the road because it had been washed away.

With *Caralluma priogonium* we saw the stalk at the top of the stem again. They came to another place where they found *Pyrenacantha malvifolias* again – there were hundreds of them, and you could see them as far as you could look. *Euphorbia boranensis* is a boring sort of plant so it's an apt name. We saw *Sansevieria ehrenbergii* and *Adenium somalense*. The place was littered with termite mounds – there were 1000s of these there. We again saw a good quality Chinese-built road. A watchmen's hut at one of their hotels at Negele – it was a woven leafy thing. An unidentified *Sansevieria* was a low growing flatish one. Just outside Negele, they found *Echidnopsis jacksonii* which is an extremely rare plant, perhaps only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time it's been found. It's a beautiful thing. *Dorstenia crispa* looked like it was just emerging from the ground – there's a lot more going on under the ground.

*Echidnopsis brownii* looks like the *E. jacksonii* stem. We saw their hotel in Negele. Breakfast. Was a scrambled egg. They went down track and across the field to *Aloe megalacantha* in full flower. A little scilla had a nice broad leaf. One of the things they want to find is *Euphorbia gymnocalycioides*, and they found just one plant after looking for 3 hours – it might be collected out. There are other locations it might grow at. *Dorstenia crispa* was growing in grassy scrub here. We saw *Sansevieria aethiopica* and *Echidnopsis babizani*, and more *Dorstenia* and *Sansevierias*. *Euphorbia glochidata* had quite a characteristic bifurcated spine.

Next was a *Ornithogallum* bulb – this was huge, football sized. The sun was coming out. They found *Pterodiscus* but there were no flowers to give them a clue as to species. Outside Bittata they found *Euphorbia brunelli* – which is a geophytic plant with small tubers underground. It produces a rosette of leaves above the surface. Some had a lovely coloured pattern to the leaves, compared to the usual plain green leaves. At Bittata Rocks, they found *Euphorbia boranensis* and *Caralluma arachnoidea*.

At one place, strips of meat were being cooked in clay pots with charcoal underneath. This was probably safe to eat due to being thoroughly cooked. Some *Sansevierias* stems were 2.5 to 3 metres high. *Ornithogallum* flower stems were waving in the breeze, they had large bulbs underneath in monster-sized clusters. They were coming into the *Adenium obesum* belt. They found *Caralluma speciosa* with the flower head fully open – a spectacular sight, but the flowers do smell bad. They found lovely clumps of *Euphorbia actinoclada*. They found *Monadenium ellenbeckii* f. *caulopodium*, growing in the grassy area they had just walked across, these were 10-12 inches tall. A

bit further down the road they become quite sprawly. The birds are quite nice, he managed to photograph a bustard. The hotel they stayed at looked quite nice, but Leo got violently sick eating something here. We saw *Caralluma arachnoidea* again, with the flower. There were *Ipomea* vines everywhere, and there must be tubers underground too. They saw more little beehive huts in a village. A flowering bulb was identified by Ben as an *Albuca*. He found a *Cotyledon* and got a cutting of it, it looked nice there but it's horrible in cultivation as it gets large. A nice *Dorstenia crispa* was quite large. The local markets are very colourful - lots of interesting things and people to look at. The cattle and donkey market was a kilometre from the road so he got a lift on a motorbike. We saw *Adenium obesum*, and a bird – a blue starling. We saw an *Aloe somaliensis* type aloe and *Adenia melanata* and *Euphorbia boranensis*. There were more *Adeniums* and *Caralluma priogonium* - one of the stalky ones.

At a village just outside Negele, there's a place called Konso, and there's a "king of Konso". We saw some of the plants growing in his garden. There was *Desmisorchis*, *Aloe somaliensis*, *Adenium obesum*, *Kalanchoe*, and *Euphorbia ampliphylla* - the plant he showed before is a hybrid between this and *E. candelabrum*. We also saw *Huernia recondita*. The King of Konso's palace was a straw Hut. And we got to see the King – he spoke very good English and claimed he was educated in Cambridge.

We saw a small *Adenium obesum* and *Euphorbia boranensis*. Strange shaped beehives were hanging up in the acacia trees. We saw *Euphorbia ampliphylla* x *E. candelabrum*. The *E. arachnoidea* flower was spider like with thin petals. *Edithcolea grandis* had some nice seed horns on it. A bit further north, they went past Addis – to the Blue Nile Gorge. We saw *Euphorbia abyssinica* which grows here – it has segmented upright stems. *Kniphoffia* was also present here. We ended with a picture of Aspari and Shittu, the 2 drivers who drove them everywhere during the trip.

Vinay Shah

## Table Show Results

There were 21 entries in the June table show, and 6 entries for "Plants in Flower".

	<b>Cacti – Parodia</b>	<b>Succulents – Euphorbia</b>
Open	(1) I Biddlecombe Parodia maxima	(1) T Radford Euphorbia groenewaldii
	(2) B Beckerleg Parodia escayachensi	(2) B Beckerleg Euphorbia valida
	(3) T Radford Parodia magnifica	(3) I Biddlecombe Euphorbia suzannae
Intermediate	(1) T Radford Parodia erinacea	(1) B Beckerleg Euphorbia cylindrifolia
	(2) B Beckerleg Parodia penicillata	(2) I Biddlecombe Euphorbia stellata
	(3) I Biddlecombe Parodia procera	(3) G Penrose Euphorbia gottlebei

<b>Cacti/Succulent in Flower</b>
(1) R Caddy Echinopsis "Bourne Dash"
(2) B Beckerleg Sarcocaulon peniculinum
(3) I Biddlecombe Echinopsis (by Mark Wilson)

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

## August Plant Focus Evening

At our August meeting on Tuesday 7 August we are going to trial a new idea, by holding a Plant Focus Evening at which we will focus on two very popular genera, Euphorbia and Mammillaria.

We would like everyone to bring along as many of these plants as possible from their collections, large or small, and we will have a detailed look at the many species available and hold discussions about them. We will talk about which are the fast and easy species, and which are more of a challenge in cultivation. We will talk about the slow growing types, and the best cultivation techniques for the more difficult and demanding ones. Minimum temperatures, compost preferences, watering requirements and all other aspects of cultivation will be discussed. We will also talk about the best places to acquire plants or seeds, the best nurseries in the UK and elsewhere, whether you plan to visit or to

order by post or online. We will also look at the range of literature available that covers these plants, and will have a large selection of books etc. at the meeting for everyone to look at to decide if they want to seek them out, or maybe just to borrow some of the relevant titles from our Branch library.

The success of the new Plant Focus Evenings will largely depend on whether everyone brings along enough plants from their collections, and obviously the larger the number and selection of plants at the meeting, the better! So please make a special effort to bring along as many plants of Euphorbia and Mammillaria as possible to the August meeting, so that we have a broad selection of species to talk about. If this first Focus Evening is a success and is enjoyed by the membership we will consider holding further such meetings in the future.

*David Neville*

## Branch Committee Meeting

A branch committee meeting was held at Chilworth Village Hall on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Branch finances remain healthy. Despite what seemed like a quiet day at Sparsholt, we had actually sold the same number of plants as last year.

The committee agreed to buy the book on Aeoniums which Ben had recently offered to the branch. We currently charge 20p per month for library loans and this is quite low, given the replacement cost of the books. It was agreed that the charge should be increased to 30p from October.

The monthly raffle at meetings is reasonably well supported, but we would ask for more donations of prizes from the members. Ivor has taken over the provision of cakes for the meetings, following the departure of Alec Mant.

Recent and future meetings were discussed, Bob Potter's recent talk on Ethiopia was felt to be very good. Arrangements for the Open Day at Alice's, and the New Forest Show were also discussed. David reminded us that there was a Mesemb Study Group show at Banstead, on 29<sup>th</sup> September.

A list of the secretary's duties was reviewed to see if any of the tasks could be taken on by other committee members. Robin agreed to handle arrangements for the Branch Annual Dinner.

*Vinay Shah*

## Books and things

Let's get the bad news out of the way first. At its meeting last Tuesday, the Southampton Branch Committee decided to raise the library borrowing fee from 20p to 30p per book per month, with effect from the October 2018 meeting, which is when our branch financial year begins. One way to look at this is to note that several branch members had commented on how low the current charge is, and no-one said it was too high, so the Committee is responding to the wishes of branch members! Even if you're not convinced by that argument, I hope you'll agree that borrowing books from our library is still good value, especially compared with the cost of buying your own copy of a book.

### ***New books in the library***

We've recently acquired another book for the library:

- "Aeoniums in Habitat and Cultivation" by Rudolf Schulz (2007), 216 pp. This well illustrated book follows a recent move to include the four species of *Greenovia* in *Aeonium*, bringing the total number of species included to 34. If you don't think there's enough to know about Aeoniums to fill a 216-page book, then obviously you need to read it, when you will find that it is a mine of information. There are chapters on the ecology and distribution (why they grow where they grow), the species (grouped by the islands they come from, which might help visitors to the Canary Islands identify the plants they see there), hybrids, cultivation in pots and in the garden (for those of us with very sheltered sites), and other topics. Rudolf Schulz, who used to run a nursery, wrote a few other books, on *Haworthia*, *Copiapoa* and about cultivation methods, and is one of the authors of "Succulents: Propagation" which we already have in our library.

A strange quirk of the book is that the first word of the title is spelled "Aeoniums" on the title page (which I have therefore assumed was the author's intention) but "Aeonium" on the dust-jacket and on the spine of the book itself. While musing on this, I noticed that the name *Aeonium* contains one each of all the usual five vowels in English (AEIOU, not including Y), and the only two remaining letters are the middle pair in the English alphabet, MN. The name *Aeonium*, from a Greek word meaning 'ageless', seems to have been coined by Webb and Berthelot when they first described the genus in 1836, writing in French, so it may be hard to

discover whether they had some cryptic message in mind.

### ***Flora of North America***

While browsing with Google and Wikipedia to check the above, I discovered something completely different (as one does). A major scientific work on the plants of the USA and Canada is the "Flora of North America" project, based at Missouri Botanical Garden, which produced a multi-volume *Flora of North America*. Not all the planned volumes appear to have been published. Because I used to work, in another life, with one of the editors of the FNA, Jim Zarucchi, he gave me a copy of volume 4 (2003), which includes the Cactaceae, together with the distantly related families of Aizoaceae, Chenopodiaceae, Portulacaceae and others in the order Caryophyllales. The volumes exclude Mexico, by the way, so the number of cacti included is thereby greatly reduced, but they do include Greenland and the French territories of St. Pierre et Miquelon off the coast of Canada, none of which do anything to increase the cactus content.

The book concentrates on detailed technical descriptions of the genera and species, with identification keys and line drawings, so it's not exactly an easy-reading coffee-table book. However, if you want to dip into it, the published volumes are available online. The Cactaceae section is here:

[http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora\\_id=1&taxon\\_id=10141](http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=1&taxon_id=10141)

To find the description of a genus, and then its species, you have to scroll down to find the name in the key. Most of the species have distribution maps and drawings of plant parts.

### ***Read All About It!***

Terry Smale will be speaking about the cultivation of cacti and succulents in the July meeting. If you want to know more, we have several books on cultivation in the branch library, plus a number of introductory books and encyclopedias, which generally include cultural notes.

At our following meeting, in August, we have a new departure – a "Plant Focus Evening", which will, er, focus on plants in the genera *Euphorbia* and *Mammillaria*. Both are very popular and we have several books on these plants in the library. We also have volumes 1 to 10 of the "Euphorbia Journal", which I don't usually put out on display, but I'll try to remember to do so. If you want to do some

preparation in advance of the meeting, let me know today and I'll get them out of the cupboard for you.

*Richard White*

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on August 7<sup>th</sup> and it will be a "Plant Focus Evening" discussing plants from 2 genera – Euphorbia and Mammillaria. Please refer to David's notes on page 6, and do bring along plants from either genus to the meeting.

The August Table Show will consist of **Echinopsis Group** (cacti) and **Agave 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 10<sup>th</sup> Edition* (contact me if you don't have a copy of this).

The *Echinopsis* group includes *Acanthocalycium*, *Chamaecereus*, *Denmoza*, *Echinopsis*, *Helianthocereus*, *Hymenorebutia*, *Leucosteles*, *Lobivia*, *Pseudolobivia*, *Pygmaecereus*, *Soehrensia* and *Trichocereus*.

The *Agave* Group includes *Agave*, *Beaucarnea*, *Calibanus*, *Dasylyrion*, *Dracaena*, *Furcraea*, *Hesperaloe*, *Hesperoyucca*, *Manfreda*, *Nolina*, and *Yucca*.

## Forthcoming Events

Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Isle of Wight	Keith Grantham Slide Show – SW USA 3
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Jul	Portsmouth	Mexico 3 (Cliff Thompson)
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Jul	Southampton	Garden Party - hosted by Alice Jankovec, West Moors, Dorset
Tue 24 <sup>th</sup> Jul–	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
Thu 26 <sup>th</sup>		
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Southampton	Branch visit to Oxford Branch Show - Old Mill Hall, Grove, Wantage OX12 7LBW
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Southampton	Plant Focus Evening – Euphorbia & Mammillaria
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Isle of Wight	Open Evening (Members only)
Sat 18 <sup>st</sup> Aug	Portsmouth	No meeting
Tue 4 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Southampton	Succulent Senecios (John Foster)
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Isle of Wight	Post Cards of the Isle of Wight (Richard Salter)
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ Romsey Show, Broadlands
Sat 15 <sup>st</sup> Sep	Portsmouth	Cultivation of Cacti & Succulents (Terry Smale)

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

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