

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

July 2019



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
sotonbess@gmail.com
(023) 80261989

Editorial	1
Announcements	1
Last Month's Meeting	1
Plants of Interest	1
Columnar Cacti	2
Table Show Results	5
Plant Focus Evening – August 2019	5
Branch Committee Meeting	5
Next Month's Meeting	6
Forthcoming Events	6

Editorial

June has seen record temperatures in some parts of the country, but so far this has only been for a couple of days. My haworthias continue to do well in the conservatory, and a few more cacti have flowered over the last month. I think the highest temperature I have recorded in the conservatory (with a couple of windows left open) was 35°C.

Announcements

I am sad to have to report that our ex-chairman **Geoff Card** passed away 9 days ago. Geoff had used to attend our monthly meetings until about a year ago, and he had been unwell for a while. Geoff had helped run the New Forest branch for many years, prior to its merger with the Southampton Branch. He had a large collection of plants and was interested in growing many different genera. He was always friendly and pleasant with everyone and he will be missed. His funeral will be held on 8th July.

Alice Jankovec will be hosting our annual **Summer Garden Party** at her home on Sunday 28th July - if you would like to attend and need directions, there's a map on the front table.

The branch will have a stand and display at **the New Forest Show** for 3 days, at the end of the month.

Portsmouth branch have invited our members to their **Summer Social**, which will be held on 11th August at Maggie Maddock's house. Maggie will provide soft drinks, tea, coffee and cakes, and you can also take along any other food you want to share. There will be some seating but please bring

along any folding chairs you have. The address is: 37 The Thicket, Widley, Waterlooville, PO7 5JL (2pm – 5pm).

If you are interested in attending the Oxford Show, and are willing to car-share with others, please put your name down on the sheet on the front table - we shall try and arrange car shares for everyone who wants to go.

Next month we will hold a **Plant Focus** meeting and we need members to bring in plants of *Gymnocalycium* and *Aloe* for that – please read David's note on page 5.

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

Bruce Beckerleg had brought along some plants of interest. *Adenium arabicum* was a plant he had purchased at the Oxford Show last year - it was a splendid plant (which came at a splendid price!). It had been in flower when he got it and it has now leafed up, and he wasn't sure when it would flower again, perhaps next spring. It had produced a seed pod and he now has some seedlings coming along, and these may be ready for sale in a few years' time.

Next were some *Aztekium ritteri* plants. These had been grown from seed, sown some 20 years ago and they were still in 3 inch pots, so the plants are not exactly fast growing! You could see the difference in size between some of them. Another plant he had brought along was *Aztekium hintonii* – this is a relatively new discovery, and it had been sown 16 years ago. It was perhaps slightly faster growing than the *A. ritteri*. Most cacti are synchronised in their flowering, to maximise the chances of plants cross pollinating each other, but with these plants, they did not seem to flower at the same time (and also the flowers don't last very long) so although he had 4 plants, he had not managed to set seed as yet.

With Lithops, Bruce said he had planted various Lithops species in a pan and he took a look at them after many years. Some had died, most were still there and many were around the same size as when first planted, with just an extra head or two. Just two

of the plants had become enormous - these were *L. dorotheae* and *L. marmorata*. Two or three years ago, he's replanted the pan to repeat the experiment. He mentioned that he had put some polystyrene at the bottom of the pan to make the pan more shallow and also reduce the overall weight. Bruce mentioned that he also once had a *Lithops karasmontana* that grew quite large.

Sulcorebutia helisoides is a fairly new discovery (it was first described in 2008) and Bruce said he had obtained a plant of it on a graft. This plant is quite sensitive about watering and is often grown on grafts because of this. However Bruce said he had taken an offset from the grafted plant and let it grow on its own roots and so far, this was growing quite well.

Columnar Cacti

Adrian introduced Tony Mace and wife Suzanne. Tony is secretary of Brighton and Hove Branch. He mentioned that people who grow any cacti tend to acquire a few Cerei but then their interest stops. He hoped to show us some of the available types and encourage people to try and grow a few more types - not all of them grow to enormous sizes.

For him, things started after he had read a book on Notocactus 45 years ago - a lot of new Notocacti were coming into the country from Southern Brazil and surrounding areas, and he had also acquired a few plants from a nurseryman in Switzerland called Uhlmann(?). He and Michael Martin went on a continental trip to visit Uhlmann, and they saw all sorts of plants they had never seen before, including columnar cacti from Brazil. He bought one or two and subsequently bought more. Coming from Brazil, they are not the easiest cacti to grow - they need fairly warm conditions - but he did keep many of them for 10-20 years or more, but not so many of them are still left now. This phase spurred his interest in cacti. At the time, one side of his greenhouse didn't have any staging at all, so the taller plants could be placed on the floor and allowed to grow tall. He extended the greenhouse after marrying Suzanne. Some plants were being grown in a sand bed containing a soil heating cable and they rooted well in that. Eventually he also extended the greenhouse upwards which was a challenging exercise! Steve Hammer was staying with them at the time and he helped with this work.

That greenhouse was at their house in Brighton. They moved to the village of Ansty around 27 years ago, and decided to have a much larger greenhouse (50' x 20') put up. When it was empty, they could never imagine filling it. but of course they did, and

indeed have put up more greenhouses afterwards. We saw a few pictures of the plants growing there. Tony said he eventually realised that there is also a need to provide some support for the large Cerei - plants grown in a greenhouse are never as strong as ones growing out in habitat since they don't get to experience outdoor conditions and the wind - this means greenhouse plants can snap or topple over relatively easily.

We saw a shot of the central bed in the Ansty greenhouse, featuring plants of *Cleistocactus*. There was also *Opuntia galapageia* in there - it's from the Galapagos and one that grows more and more spines on the trunk as it grows older, to discourage the turtles from eating it - they managed to give this away. Of course they also received many plants from people who had grown plants which had become too large for their own greenhouses. As for literature, Tony mentioned a couple of books. David Yetman has written a book called "Great Cacti" which covered some of the more spectacular cacti of Mexico and USA. Another book worth finding was "Pilosocereus - The genus in Brazil". This was written by Daniella Zappi (Nigel Taylor's other half).

We saw some pictures from the Botanic Gardens in Monaco, of plants being grown on the cliff sides. We saw *Pachycereus pringlei*, *Neobuxbaumia polylopha* and some *Trichocerei*. Tony mentioned they were also growing some younger Cerei plants in a separate greenhouse there. A plant you rarely see in cultivation is *Acanthocereus pentagonus*, the "barbed wire" plant. It is widespread, growing from the coast of Mexico to the Caribbean Islands. and also Southern Texas. It's not that easy in cultivation since it likes warm conditions. A chap in Cardiff called Paul Bond has a good collection of *Cereus*, and we saw his plant of *Acanthocereus pentagonus*. Next was an interesting plant which had been obtained from Clive Innes at Holly Gate - it was *Anisocereus gaumeri*. It has interesting looking flowers - but they stink - the flowers need to attract bats, which pollinate them.

Arrojadoa are plants that grow best in a bed with a free root run and with some soil heating cable. *Arrojadoa albiflora* has a red/white two-tone flower - it might possibly be a natural hybrid between *A. rhodantha* and *A. multiflora*. *Arrojadoa* form ring cephalia and they will flower from previous cephalia as well as the latest one. If you can't keep your greenhouse heated in the depths of winter, then consider taking the plants indoors between November and February. We saw *Arrojadoa aureispina* demonstrating the capability to flower from lower cephalia. Another interesting species is

Arrojadoa eriocalis, which has a two-tone yellow/red flower – it has thinner stems and tends to scramble around, and is often only found grafted. *Arrojadoa rhodantha* is the most common species in cultivation – it has glossy tubular pink flowers, which don't open very wide – they also turn black after flowering.

Arthrocerus microsphaericus is a Brazilian species with nicely scented 4" long nocturnal flowers. *Arthrocerus spinosissimus* is a bigger growing plant. We saw a slide of a plant of *Austrocephalocereus lehmannianus* (now called *Micranthocereus purpureus*) grown by Brian Chudleigh, a grower from New Zealand – it was 2 feet tall. We also saw it in habitat, growing in fractured rock. *Azureocereus (Browningia) herlingianus* has a nice blue skin. It flowered after being moved to Ansty - but then the plant broke under its own weight. It needs a 5°C minimum temperature. We saw the same plant being grown on Gran Canaria – it has a lovely blue colour and it is not difficult to grow. *Backebergia militaris* is a interesting plant with golden or dark cephalia atop tall stems – it was very popular when first introduced to cultivation and whole lot of plants came into Hollygate, but the cuttings rarely established themselves – and if they did, then they grew through the cephalium, spoiling the appearance. Tom Radford mentioned there was a nice plant of this growing in the gardens in Monaco. It grows to a height of around 30 feet Mexico, and we also saw one being cultivated in a garden in Oaxaca.

Buiningia purpurea can be grown in cultivation. There are 3-4 species and none get very big, they can be grown if given enough heat. This has a purple flower and a side-cephalium. We saw plants at C&J, the cactus wholesalers in California. *Buiningia brevicylindrica* has a yellow green flower and it can flower on plants 5 inches across. *Bolivicereus samaipatanus* is very floriferous with its red flowers. It can easily be grown in a 4-5 inch pot, and is also good for hanging baskets. We saw *Carnegiea gigantea* growing in Arizona. It's a classic plant and some specimens are magnificent – but it's not easy in cultivation. Derek Bowdery managed to get one to flower in the UK. We saw a crested plant at Dan Bach's nursery in Tuscon, Arizona. Tony mentioned that *Carnegiea* is closely related to *Neobuxbaumia*. We saw a close up of the flower buds atop one of the stems.

Calymmanthium substerile is a Peruvian shrub and considered to be a primitive form of cactus. We also saw *Castellanosia caineana* growing at the gardens in Monaco – it is a night flowering plant - but

unusually, it has a coloured flower. *Cephalocereus hoppenstedtii* is rare in cultivation and is slow growing. We saw it in habitat in Mexico – it can grow to a height of 6-8 metres tall and is usually solitary. *Cephalocereus senilis* is very widely grown for it's attractive appearance when young - but seed is increasingly difficult to get these days. We saw it growing in habitat in Barranca de Metztitlan in Mexico. We saw a seedling in habitat, and a plant growing in Gran Canaria. We also saw *Cereus aethiops*.

Carrying on after the mid-meeting break, we saw the monstrose form of *Cereus jamacaru*. It can get large if you give it the room. On the monstrose plant, the various nooks and crannies are great hiding places for mealy bug. We also saw *Cleistocactus ayopayanus* and *Cleistocactus chrysocephalus*, which forms a cephalium. *Cleistocactus dependens* has a pink flower and is free flowering. *Cleistocactus strausii* forms handsome plants but it needs good light for decent flowering. *Cleistocactus viridiflorus* is a green flowered plant. *Cleistocactus brookeae* is free flowering and it does well in hanging baskets – it has purple pollen. *Cleistocactus flavescens* has yellow flower. *Cleistocactus vulpiscauda* (= foxes tail) has soft spines and it is a strokeable plant. *Cleistocactus baumannii* is a good flowerer and produces red flowers. A cross between *Cleistocactus strausii* and *Espostoa lanata* has been done a lot of times. This is a cross between a night flowering plant and a day flowering plant and the flowers tend to open in the afternoon. We saw some flowers and Tony mentioned that Cok Grootscholten in Holland has the same cross, but with different flowers.

We saw *Coleocephalocereus goebelianus* with a rare black cephalium - the normal colour is brown. Seedlings in cultivation have hooked spines. *Coleocephalocereus fluminensis* grows in Brazil, near Rio di Janiero. *Coleocephalocereus estevesii* was a splendid plant in a nursery in Tenerife, some 4-5 feet tall – it goes under other names too. We saw the same plant at C&J being used for seed production. *Jasminocereus thouarsii* is from the Galapagos and is extremely rare in cultivation. This was the only example of this plant that he's seen of this. We saw plants of *Erdisia erecta* which looked neglected – they do have nice flowers – the plants need to be pruned, to cut out the old non-growing shoots. We also saw *Escontria chiotilla* growing in Phoenix.

Many years ago, de Herdt produced seedlings of *Espostoa* – and these were eventually named as *Espostoa calva*. He had these and they struggled in Brighton but they really liked the new greenhouse in

Ansty. It forms a forms cephalium at 2m, and needs 10°C, since it comes from a hot valley in Peru. *Vatricania guentheri* (also called *Espostoa guentheri*) forms a ginger cepahlium at 2.5m. We saw top cuttings of *Espostoa lanata* being grown at the Freshacres nursery where Suzanne used to work. We also saw *Espostoa lanata* growing in Gran Canaria. Another picture of *Escontria chiotilla* growing in the wild featured fruits. *Eulychnia saint-pieana* was flowering at 3m – it grows in Chile. We also saw *Eulychnia breviflora* and *Eulychnia acida*.

Gymnocereus microsperma from Bolivia was photographed at Monaco. *Haageocereus decumbens* forms seed pods 2" across. *Harrisia* can form lovely 8-9" flowers, and we saw *Harrisia fragrans* flowering on a 9" plant. *Hildewintera aureispina* forms orange flowers and these days, there are also nice hybrids of this to chose from. A *Leptocereus* from Cuba is rare in cultivation, it was from Dr Edward Anderson's collection in Phoenix. *Lophocereus schotti* forms a bristly cephalium, and we saw the monstrose form at Dan Bach's nursery in Tucson. It is prone to red spider. We also saw *Lophocereus schotti* flowering at Derek Bowdery's Eau Brink nursery. We saw *Micranthocereus polyanthus* growing at Tenerife, followed by *Micranthocereus streckeri*. *M. violaflorus* is difficult in cultivation, and *M. flaviflorus* has yellow flowers.

Nyctocereus serpentinus has beautifully scented flowers and easy to grow. *Morawetzia sericata* can flower at a small size and has flowers in shades of red, orange and pink. We saw an attractive form of *Myrtillocactus cochal* (from Baja) in Ed and Betty Gay's collection, and also saw *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* in Mexico. These plants can produce multiple flowers from the same areoles. David mentioned during his travels in Mexico, he had seen large groups of these plants which had been killed by frost. We also saw *Escontria chiotilla* in Oaxaca and *Neobinghamia climaxantha*. He managed to get a cross between *Espostoa* and *Haageocereus* to flowering size. *Neobuxbaumia euphorbioides* was bought from Woolworths in the days when they used to sell cacti for a shilling or two. We saw *Neobuxbaumia polylopha* at 3m, this had to be cut down after getting too large. These last two plants have extra-floral nectaries so ants climb up the plants to get at the nectar. We saw *Neobuxbaumia scoparia* at Moncao, this is rare in cultivation.

Neobuxbaumia squamulosa is Mexican and he had not seen it in cultivation. *Neobuxbaumia tetezo* forms large forests in Oaxaca and some specimens are impressive – it is difficult in cultivation. *Neobuxbaumia macrocephala* can form 10-12m plants and it has a ginger-red cephalium.

Neodawsonia apicicephalium had been obtained at Hollygate. We saw it growing in the Phoenix Botanic gardens, and also in habitat where it grows to 5-6m. We saw *Oreocereus celsianus* flowering in their collection – the flowers have a long thin tube – it's not heat sensitive but it doesn't like humid conditions. We saw *Oreocereus fossulatus* at van Donkelaar's nursery and *Oreocereus celsianus* in habitat, followed by a hybrid *Oreocereus celsianus* x *Cleistocactus strausii*.

Next was a photograph of Derek Bowdery's greenhouse within a greenhouse, as a solution to growing some of these temperature sensitive plants. We saw *Pachycereus pringlei* and *Oreocereus fossulocactus* growing on Tenerife, and *Pachycereus pringlei* growing at Phoenix, with *Idria columnaris* in the background. We also saw *Pachycereus pringlei* in Baja. *Pachycereus pecten-aboriginum* also comes from Baja – it's harder to grow in cultivation, and it has distinctive fruits. *Pachycereus tepamo* has blue stems - he imported plants from Arturo Anaya in Mexico but most didn't survive. One person who does have a nice plant of it is Colin Norton in Hull, and he's got it to 4-5 feet tall. Next was a proper sized cactus - *Pachycereus weberi*, which grows much bigger than *P. pringlei* and has a magnificent candelabra shape.

Peniocereus is a neglected genus – *P. greggi* is perhaps most famous but it's not the best to grow. *Peniocereus maculatus* has nicely scented flowers and it does need pruning from time to time. *Pilosocereus palmeri* grows in Mexico and forms handsome plants with woolly tops, they flower readily. *Pilosocereus arrabidaei* is a Brazillian species which was photographed at Zurich. The nocturnal flowers smell, and according to Suzanne, can induce tears. Tony recounted how he once took a plant of *Pilosocereus fulvilanatus* in flower to a meeting and he was asked to remove the plant due to the smell! *Pilosocereus bradei* was quite an ugly plant. *Pilosocereus chrysoatele* was more attractive and had a bristly cepahlium. We saw *Pilosocereus glaucochrous* and *Austrocephalocereus dybowskii* – the latter grew to 8 feet but it didn't form a new cephalium - the thick stemmed form is scarcer. We saw *Pilosocereus pachycladus* at C&J and the blue stemmed *Pilosocereus gounellei* at Ed and Betty Gay – it seems more temperature sensitive than others. *Pilosocereus luetzelburgii* has strange growth patterns and needs 15°C minimum. We saw *Pilosocereus magnificus* at C&J. *Pilosocereus nobilis* from the West Indies needs 10°C. We saw *Pilosocereus palmeri* in Mexico with woolly tops – some of the seed pods had opened, revealing red pulp. We also saw *Pilosocereus superfloccosus* at C&J. A crested *Pilosocereus tillianus* at C&J had

yellow spines, it's a very temperature sensitive plant.

We were running out of time so Tony rushed through some more pictures. One of the European trips involved a visit to De Herdt and also to Alfred Buining – we saw an unnamed plant in his collection with a gold cephalium. After his untimely death, his vast collection of several thousand plants went to a university but few people knew how to look after his plants.

We ended with pictures of *Rathbunia alamosensis* in Peter Collards collection (Isle of Wight) and also images of *Selenicereus seticereus*, *Stenocereus eruca* (the creeping devil), *Stenocereus gummosus*, *Stenocereus marginatus* with a crest, *Stenocereus pruinosus*, and *Stenocereus thurberi* (the organ pipe cactus).

Vinay Shah

Table Show Results

At the June meeting, there were 17 entries in the table show, and 6 entries for "Plant in flower".

	Cacti – Parodia	Succulents – Euphorbia
Open	(1) B Beckerleg Parodia escayachensis	(1) B Beckerleg Euphorbia valida
	(2) I Biddlecombe Parodia commutans	(2) M Stevenson Euphorbia sp.
	(3) -	(3) I Biddlecombe Euphorbia suzannae
Intermediate	(1) I Biddlecombe Parodia maxima	(1) I Biddlecombe Euphorbia stellata
	(2) B Beckerleg Parodia penicillata	(2) M Stevenson Euphorbia obesa
	(3) T Radford Parodia erinacea	(3) M Stevenson Euphorbia platycephala

Cacti/Succulent in Flower
(1) P Klaassen Glandulicactus uncinatus
(2) B Beckerleg Adenium obesum
(3) M Stevenson Jatropha podagrica

Ivor Biddlecombe

Plant Focus Evening – August 2019

After the success of our first Plant Focus Evening last year, at our next meeting on Tuesday 6 August, we will hold another such Plant Focus Evening at which we will focus on a further two popular genera, **Aloe** and **Gymnocalycium**.

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 ongoing success of these Plant Focus Evenings largely depends 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 Aloe and Gymnocalycium as possible to the August meeting, so that we have a broad selection of species to talk about. If this, our second 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 on June 11th.

Branch funds remain in a healthy state. Our meetings this year have seen very good attendances, with the average number being over 40 for the last few meetings.

In preparation for the New Forest Show, Robin Caddy will get some colour publicity leaflets designed and printed, with Alan Bromley's help.

Last year the BCSS society paid for these leaflets, but this year, we will have to fund this ourselves.

For the August "Plant Focus" meeting we'll need to remind members to bring in plants of *Gymnocalycium* and *Aloe*.

David will be away at the time of the New Forest Show, but Ben Turner has stepped in and will organise arrangements for the show, including the tickets and passes. Hopefully we will receive these in good time.

Alice will be hosting the Summer Garden Party at the end of July, and this will be on the weekend immediately before the New Forest Show.

The branch has agreed to subsidise entry costs for those people from the branch who will visit the Cactus World Live event in September, by paying half the entrance fee.

Vinay Shah

Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on August 6th and this will be a plant focus evening, where we will discuss two popular genera – ***Gymnocalycium*** and ***Aloe*** – please read David's notes on page 5 and if you grow these genera, please do bring along some examples to the next meeting – we are relying on audience participation!

There will be no table show at the August meeting.

Forthcoming Events

Sat 13 th Jul	Isle of Wight	Mexico, Winter 2017 - Cliff Thompson
Sat 20 th Jul	Portsmouth	Cacti in Northwest Argentina - Hazel Taylor
Sat 20 th Jul	Southampton	visit to Oxford Branch Show, Old Mill Hall, Grove, Wantage OX12 7LBW
Sun 28 th Jul	Southampton	Garden Party - hosted by Alice Jankovec, West Moors, Dorset
Tue 30 th Jul - Thu 1 st Aug	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
Tue 6 th Aug	Southampton	Plant Focus Evening – Aloe and <i>Gymnocalycium</i>
Sat 10 th Aug	Isle of Wight	Open Evening @ Peter Collard (Members only)
Sun 11 th Aug	Portsmouth	Summer Social @ Maggie Maddock, 37 The Thicket, Widley, PO7 5JL
Sat 17 th Aug	Portsmouth	no meeting
Tue 3 rd Sep	Southampton	Gardening with Succulents - Paul Spracklin
Sat 14 th Sep	Southampton	Display / Plant Sales @ Romsey Show, Broadlands, Romsey
Sat 14 th Sep	Isle of Wight	Adventures into Borneo - Hazel Taylor
Sat 21 st Sep	Portsmouth	Succulent Senecios - John Foster

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

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