

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

November 2018



### Branch Secretary

David Neville  
6 Parkville Road  
Swaythling  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO16 2JA

davnev@bopenworld.com  
(023) 80551173 or  
07974 191354

### Newsletter Editor

Vinay Shah  
29 Heathlands Road  
Eastleigh  
Hampshire  
SO53 1GU

sotonbcss@gmail.com  
(023) 80261989

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## Editorial

Our clocks changed a couple of weeks ago so the evenings are definitely drawing in now. The temperatures are dropping as well, and we've had a couple of frosts, although nothing too severe as yet.

My conservatory did get rebuilt in October, before any of the frosts showed up, so that was quite fortunate. The installer had recommended "Heatguard" polycarbonate roofing (with the promise of lower temperatures in the summer and higher temperatures in winter) but I don't think that choice was wise since it's reduced the amount of light coming in through the roof by probably 50% - I will definitely need to install a large amount of LED lighting.

## Announcements

Nomination forms for the **branch committee for 2019** are on the front table – if you like to join the branch committee, please discuss with David or any of the existing committee.

The first meeting in January 2019 will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup> and it will be a **members evening** – if you have some slides or plants that you want to talk about for a few minutes, please let David Neville know. David is also putting together the **programme** of meetings for **2019**, so if there are any topics or speakers you would like to see featured, let him know right away.

Next month is our **AGM** followed by a **Christmas social** – as usual, the branch will supply the drinks,

but we would appreciate people bringing along a variety of food to share with everyone. Glenn will have sheets where you can write down what food you can bring. There will be no bran tub this year.

David has a few copies of the **BCSS 2019 calendar** available at the discounted price of £5.50 – please see him if you would like a copy.

For **branch committee** members, I will want to publish your **annual reports** in next month's newsletter – so please send me your write ups by the end of November.

## Last Month's Meeting

### *Gasterias in Habitat & Culture*

Our speaker in October was Tony Roberts, who is the chairman of the Dartford BCSS Branch. He said this was his third visit to our branch and he loved coming to speak to us – we are probably the best attended branch in the country these days. He had sent a sheet of information classifying Gasterias to David and this had been printed out and circulated to the audience.

We did have a talk called "Growable Gasterias" given by Derek Tribble, but it was many years ago. Tony said he would be talking about both plants in culture and in habitat – he had spent a few weeks in South Africa a few years ago. He had also brought along a selection of Gasteria plants which were arranged on the table at the front. We saw a picture of a gasteria plant in habitat, looking very dried up but surviving - and the same plant in cultivation, looking a lot happier. The introductory slide showed him at the reference collection of Gasterias at Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens, when it was still managed by Ernst van Jaarsveld. Many of the plants needed repotting and re-labelling and only Ernst knew what some of the plants were. Ernst then took early retirement and moved elsewhere, so the situation probably got worse. Another slide gave credit for the photos in the talk to people such as Paul Klaassen, Derek Tribble, Chris Rodgeron, Al Lais and a few others from South Africa. Tony asked how many people had been to South Africa – several hands went up.

In land area, South Africa is 5 times the size of the UK. He proceeded to show where the Gasterias grow. The most primitive is reckoned to be *G. rawlinsonii* and it grows in the middle/south of the country. The genus spread from there - some went up along the eastern coast up to the Limpopo, e.g. *G. batesiana* v. *dolomitica* - and others went up along the western coast, such as *G. pillansii*. Gasterias are totally endemic to South Africa, apart from 2 exceptions – *G. pillansii* creeps across the Orange River into Namibia, and *G. batesiana* creeps into Swaziland. There are one or two nice clones of *G. batesiana* in Swaziland which we don't see very often.

The list which he handed out was based on the article "The genus Gasteria: a synoptic review" by Ernst van Jaarsveld published in "Aloe" in 2007. Tony also showed Ernst's book on Gasterias which is held in our branch library. Published in 1994, it was Ernst's first review of the genus and it is quite a rare item, worth something like £120 these days, although if a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition ever comes out, then the price of the first edition would drop sharply. In the Aloe article, 34 taxa (species, subspecies and varieties) were described, and since 2007, 4 more have been described. So if you did fancy growing a complete collection of Gasterias, you would only need to grow 38 plants. However there are many geographical clones and variations - Tony has over 700 Gasterias in his collection!

Tony also referenced another article: "A molecular phylogeny and generic classification of Asphodelaceae subfamily Aloioideae" – this performed DNA analysis of the Aloes and related genera, and Gasterias and Astroloba emerged as good genera. Haworthia was split into three genera - Haworthia, Haworthiopsis and Tulista, and Aloe was split in 6 genera (Aloe, Aloiapelos, Aloidendron, Aristaloe, Gonialoe, Kumara). It seems Gasterias are closely related to Haworthiopsis. Some of these genera do interbreed - there are several Gasteria x Aloe hybrids - but there aren't any Gasteria x Kumara - the closer the genera are in the clade diagram, the more likely it is that they could produce intergeneric hybrids.

The latest classification for Gasteria indicates 26 species, divided up into two sections - Gasteria (10) and Longiflorae (16). Section Gasteria consists of series Gasteria (9 species + 5 varieties) and series Namaquana (1 species + 2 varieties). Section Longiflorae consists of series Longifoliae (6 species + 1 variety + 2 subspecies) – these have long leaves and series Multifariae (10 species + 2 varieties) – which have branching flower spikes. Section Gasteria has typical bulbous flowers that look like

stomachs - hence the name given to the genus - and the leaves are typically rounded at the tips. With Section Longiflorae, the flowers are longer and more slender and there is no stomach-like swelling, and the leaves are mostly pointed or acute.

He said he would cover the genus species by species, and we started with *Gasteria baylissiana* - in an 11cm pot. It is slow growing, forms clumps, there is a nice texture to the leaves and it is marked with white spots. It does well in a restricted class in a show, and the plant will grow larger. It also produces fantastic flowers, early in the year – these are red and green in colour. We saw Stirling Baker's prize-winning plant. The best way to propagate Gasterias is from the leaf – we saw a leaf of *G. baylissiana* - 2.5 years after it was potted up, and it had produced 6-7 young plants. These young plants of course will have DNA identical to the parent, whereas plants produced from pollinating flowers and then growing the seeds will be more variable. Next we saw a plant of *Gasteria bicolor* v. *bicolor* in habitat, at Lower Waterford. This was quite a popular plant, even in Victorian times. It starts off with a distichous habit, so the leaves come out on opposite sides. Some gasterias will stay like that even as they age. But others, as they mature, will start to form a spiral / rosette and the leaves change from being flat to being triangular in cross section. This species does form spirals eventually. We saw more plants in habitat, and the typical flower. We saw a little one in his collection which was still distichous. The plants are spotted so it used to be called *Gasteria maculata*. There are two other varieties of bicolor – the long slender leaved form is called *bicolor* v. *fallax* and it can have 6-7 inch leaves. *G. bicolor* v. *liliputana* is the smallest of all the Gasterias. It is hard to spot in a habitat picture until you get closer. The leaves are just 3-4 cm long. We saw plants just beginning to start their spiral phase of growth. The young offsets are all distichous when juvenile, but the adult plants will spiral.

*G. brachyphylla* is distichous all its life – it is a distinctive plant with shiny leaves. He went to look for it at Willowmore (along the Pierre Ferreira walking trail) and looked for it for a couple of hours, expecting to find it under a shrub. He didn't see it and was walking back to the car feeling disenchanted, when he saw it growing out in the open. It is slow growing and as new leaves grow, the old ones tend to fade so it doesn't get much larger over time. We also saw *G. brachyphylla* v. *bayeri* – the picture featured Al Laius and Derek Tribble at Gerhard Marx's homestead at Leepoort Farm – with the plant growing there. In some of the clefts in the rock, the plants were larger and about 2.5 inches across. If they are larger than this, it's

probably not *G. brachyphylla* v. *bayeri*. We saw a plant with 6 leaves and this was a 10 year old plant in a 3 inch pot and this is as big as it gets – it was a nice clone, collected by Bruce Bayer near Calitzdorp (MBB1751). There are some Japanese cultivars of *bayeri* and *G. brachyphylla* v. *bayeri* cv YO823 has curved leaves which touch the ground - these can eventually cause the entire plant to lift up out of the ground!

*Gasteria disticha* was found near Robertson in the Western Cape and it was in fruit. The tri-local seed pods have three rows of flat black seeds stacked on top of each other in the capsule. When mature, the capsule suddenly peels open and the seeds blow away. If you want to collect the seed, you need to put a bag over the flower spike or cut off the inflorescence before the seeds are fully ripe. Another plant was a little bit behind and was still in flower, showing the stomach-like flowers. We saw another example in a collection in South Africa, followed by his juvenile plant of *G. disticha*. It is now in a 6 inch pot. There are 2 more varieties of *G. disticha* – v. *langebergensis* from the Langeberg Mountains has narrower thinner leaves. The third variety is from Beaufort West, a couple of hundred miles away. This is a distinct chunky robust form and it is called *G. disticha* v. *robusta*. The plants they found at Lombardskraal were all in flower. The flowers on a *Gasteria* inflorescence open in sequence, so a single plant can be in flower for several weeks. They saw some seedlings and other spectacular plants growing under a shrub. They stayed at a guest farm and found more examples of *robusta* at a nature trail, growing in cracks in the rock. There were some amazing plants growing on the cliffs, which were hard sandstone. We saw plants in cultivation, both early in the season and later on when it had plumped up a bit. We also saw one of Stirling Baker's plants in a 7 inch pot.

*Gasteria doreeniae* is named in honour of Doreen Court who discovered the plants, and it is found growing on cliffs at Swartwaterspoort in the Eastern Cape. There were plants with lots of white spots and others with a just a few spots – both these clones have made it to collections in Europe.

*Gasteria glomerata* (EVJ 11054) was discovered when the lake behind the Kouga dam was flooded. We saw a picture, as painted by Ellaphie Ward-Hilhorst with the original description in the American Journal. Some of his plants get a little etiolated due to being grown on the ground. This species has some of the best *Gasteria* flowers, and they are produced early in the spring. *Gasteria koenii* is a new species which was found south of Calitzdorp. It is named after Kevin Koen who

discovered it and showed the locality to Ernst van Jaarsveld. It was described in 2017. Tony said he has a tiny plant of it, which was just about surviving.

Next was one of his favourite plants, *Gasteria rawlinsonii*. This was the distichous form, growing one leaf a year. It grows upright as a young plant but later becomes a pendulous / trailing plant and it grows from the sides of cliffs and trailing down cliff faces. He showed pictures of some of the habitat plants they encountered. They couldn't get close to some of them, due to where they were growing, but the longest stems probably had 250 leaves and were 2.5 metres long. These must have been very old plants. There were some wonderful plants, especially when growing in the shade. The typical *G. rawlinsonii* forms from Gert Smitskloof in the Eastern Cape remain distichous. Some other clones do grow in other nearby ravines - there is a spiral form, and another spiral form called "Staircase" has teeth on the leaves. The flower is quite distinctive. The plant he had on the table was 15 years old. This is the hardest *Gasteria* to grow from leaves, and he propagates it using old stems, which can be cut into small sections and these will eventually produce small offsets after a few years.

*Gasteria retusa* is the first plant he saw in habitat, at Philipsdale. It has nice verruca markings on the top, bottom and edges of the leaf. *G. pillansii* is found in 3 varieties. v. *pillansii* is big, v. *ernesti-ruschii* is average sized and v. *hallii* is a miniature. Some of the plants have nice white edges to the leaves and we saw one in Cok Grootscholten's collection. In the spring the leaves can become turgid and swell up. We saw v. *ernesti-ruschii* EVJ 21090 in the Somberg Mountains in Namibia. The same plant growing in Kirstenbosch looked quite different. v. *hallii* was found at Augrabies – these were Chris Rodgers's photographs and also Paul Klaassen's. There was a nice natural mini-collection of a *Gasteria*, *Crassula* and *Haworthia* growing together. CR1890 were tiny little plants, unrooted offsets which Chris had sent him. The young plants grow on stolons, and it is one of only two *Gasterias* which grows in this way. We saw some fully mature plants, 10 years old and 12 years old.

It was now time to move to the Longiflorae – the plants with long flowers. *Gasteria acinacifolia* has dagger-shaped leaves. It starts off as a distichous plant and then forms a rosette. We saw a bit of self-propagation going on in habitat – a leaf end must have been chopped off by an animal and new plants were forming from the cut section. The plants had produced two great big flower spikes, some 3 feet tall and we saw nice examples of the longiflorae

flowers, which were 1.5 inches long. They went to near Port Alfred where the plants were known to grow, and found some young plants and tried to find the parent – this proved to be hard but they did eventually find the adults. The small offsets will be distichous at first and will eventually grow a triangular leaf and then all the subsequent leaves will be like that. *Gasteria barbae* is one of the newest ones, found in 2014. It grows in one steep coastal valley in the Western Cape. In 2016, the valley was devastated by fire, so the plants may have been wiped out, although some material was collected.

*Gasteria batesiana* was known since the 1920s but it was not described until 1955, by Gordon Rowley, who named it after John Thomas Bates, a trolley bus conductor in London who was a keen collector of South African succulents. The plants are varied and often labelled with the location they came from - e.g. Klipwal Goldmine, Pongola Poort plants and Paris Dam (now Bivane Dam). We saw an example of the typical *G. batesiana* which is the one you'll commonly see. It is one of the easiest plants to propagate – you just break a leaf off near the bottom of the plant, let it callous over for a week or two and then put it in some moist John Innes compost and grit, and in a few weeks you'll see roots forming, and in a few months you should have young plants growing on the leaf. You can take those off and repeat the process a few times over. It is quicker to propagate than many of the other *Gasterias*. The Barberton form was collected from Barberton in Mpumalanga and it's a nice and attractive plant with a tuberculate texture. In full sunshine it can go red and purple and black but it will go green again when the light level drops. We saw some nice Barbertons at Cok Grootsholten's nursery. We saw some in the winter, showing how green it becomes at that time. It changes colour in the spring and summer months. We saw a Swaziland clone and also *v. dolomitica*, which grows on dark grey dolomite rocks / cliffs in the Olifants River valley near Penge. The leaves when grown well are almost circular in cross section. We saw some little seedlings. It is a slow growing plant and produces one leaf every other year. Unusually, it can grow plants on the underside of the leaf, between the leaf and the dolomite rock. He held up the plant he had brought in to show us this happening on his plant. He said he would take the offsets off in the spring and root them on. It is the only *Gasteria* which does this. He gives these plants no water from October to March and grows it in an unheated greenhouse. Another gorgeous clone had been grown from habitat seed, it was a cultivar which Sean Gildenhuis had picked out. *Gasteria batesiana v. dolomitica* "Inyoka" is a selected clone. At Gerhard Marx's collection in the Western Cape,

Tony happened to mention that one of the *batesiana* plants was his favourite, and as they were about to leave, Gerhard gave him two tiny offsets from the plant he had liked. These had nice markings and the plants had grown on and turned into rosettes.

*Gasteria croucheri* forms a big plant, with big chunky triangular leaves. A clone which Ernst wasn't sure about was forming lime green clones from the leaf cutting. With *ssp. croucheri*, we saw the form common in this country – it looks like a distichous plant and needs to be really old before it will form a rosette. Roger Mann in Colchester has had his for 50 years and it's only now formed a rosette. *ssp. pendulifolia* has nice pale flowers. This plant was tatty a few years ago but it has now improved in appearance and Tony said the photo needed to be updated. Another *ssp.* of *croucheri* was discovered by Neil Crouch of Durban near the Mtentu River in Pondoland. It has the longest leaves of any *Gasteria* and has been named *ssp. pondoensis*. He hasn't seen it in cultivation as yet.

*Gasteria loedolffiae* is another new plant discovered in 2014 – Tony mentioned he had brought along one for sale – it had been propagated from a leaf sent to him by Ernst, which had produced 8 plants. It is like a slender *excelsa*. *Gasteria tukhelensis* is also a fairly new plant. It's his third favourite plant and Ernst found it growing in the region between *G. croucheri* and *G. batesiana* - he was convinced there would be another species to be found there, so he went up the Thukela/Tugela River and eventually found the plant. We saw some photos taken by Sean Gildenhuis at the type locality. Probably only 5-6 people have been to see the plant in habitat, which is not very accessible. We saw more of the plants (EVJ17996). Tony said Sean never goes exploring on his own – he goes with helpers - and he also doesn't like heights so Sean had one of the helpers climb up and take the photos. We saw an example at Kirstenbosch – it had been collected in 2003 and described in 2005. When Tony visited Cok Grootsholten a few years ago, Cok was quite excited to show him an offset growing on his plant – it was probably the first time an offset had grown on a plant of *Gasteria tukhelensis* in Europe. His own plant now has 3 offsets, and a smaller plant was sold for £420 at the Haworthia convention last year!

*Gasteria armstrongii* is a nice plant, and you can see good clumps of it. It grows almost underground – it grows in fields where sheep and goats graze. The leaves look they have splits in them, but these are actually marks from the prior year's flower spike. His plant had a single chunky head. There was a nice texture on a plant from habitat and we also saw a large example of a fast growing "Hollygate" plant

owned by Tony Morris at one of the BCSS National Shows. Brian Plunkett was seen in the background of the picture. *Gasteria carinata* and *Gasteria verrucosa* were both called Aloes in the 1700s. *G. carinata* v. *glabra* is from the coast on the Western Cape. With *G. carinata* v. *verrucosa*, you can get big ones and little ones. *G. ellaphieae* is named after the artist Ellaphie Ward-Hilhorst and this was his very first *Gasteria*, grown from Haworthia Society seed some 25 years ago. We saw a greener clone from the type locality. A nicely marked plant was one of John Bettley's plants, at a National Show.

South of Grahamstown, he had gone on a trip to a glade - used to seeing large Aloes, he realised the plants he had walked by were actually 7 large plants of *Gasteria excelsa*. These plants were 1 metre from tip to tip and some were just transitioning from juvenile to adult and growing triangular leaves. We saw Ernst's attempt at propagating *G. excelsa*. His largest plant is 60 - 65cm across and is a plant from Warren Withers' collection. We saw a smaller growing clone and also a dark one from the Cala pass, east of Grahamstown. *Gasteria glauca* (EVJ14670) was found in 1995, just after Ernst's *Gasteria* book was published.

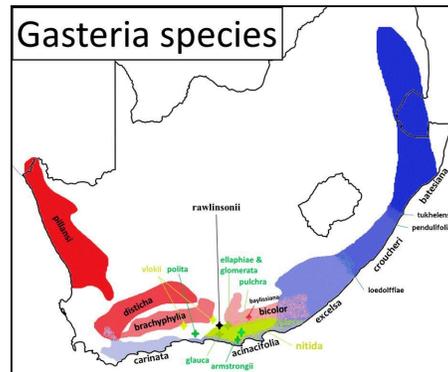
We saw *Gasteria nitida* at RietRiver - the juvenile plants look like *G. armstrongii*. Having found the young plants, they looked for the adult and found it. The leaves become smooth and shiny as it becomes adult, and the plants look different from the young ones. We saw *G. nitida* in Gerald Marx's collection and also an adult and youngster in his collection. With *G. polita*, they went to see it at Whiskey Creek. It's a rare plant, with distinctive little white blisters along the edge of the leaves. One in his collection doesn't have the distinct white markings yet. A new locality has been found recently near nature's valley. The flowers are nice. *G. pulchra* is very old plant, grows amongst the grass, longer slender leaves and huge flower spike to extend above the grass so that the sunbirds can get to the flowers. *Gasteria thunbergii* was growing next to *Aloe ferox* which was acting as a nurse plant. It is like *G. verrucosa*, but it has a deep channel in the leaf - when it gets dry, the leaf edges curl, almost forming a tube. It's one of the only two *Gasterias* that spreads by using stolons.

*G. vlokii* is another of his favourite plants. It was discovered by Jan Vlock, and the featured picture was taken by Jan himself. It grows in a forest, in rocky clefts. It's the most sensitive *Gasteria* to sunshine - he managed to scorch one by just leaving it in the car for an afternoon. We saw some green ones in habitat, photographed by Sean Gildenhuys, and also a Peter Bruyns clone in Gerhard Marx's

collection. It's a plant which does well in a restricted pot size class.

We ended with a few photos taken at Cok Grootsholten's greenhouses. Sadly in recent years, Cok has not been well and he is going to donate all his *Gasteria* plants to a Belgian botanic garden next spring. It was a fantastic collection, probably the best in Europe at one time, due to Cok having taken good care of the plants in years gone by.

Vinay Shah



**Table Show Results**

There were 13 entries in the October table show, and 5 entries for "Plants in Flower".

|              | <b>Cacti – Echinocereus</b>                | <b>Succulents – Lithops</b>                 |
|--------------|--|---|
| Open         | (1) P Klaassen<br>Echinocereus delaetii    | (1) B Beckerleg<br>Lithops dorotheae        |
|              | (2) B Beckerleg<br>Echinocereus brandegeei | (2) I Biddlecombe<br>Lithops hallii         |
|              | (3) -                                      | (3) I Biddlecombe<br>Lithops olivacea       |
| Intermediate | (1) B Beckerleg<br>Echinocer. rigidissimus | (1) B Beckerleg<br>Lithops gracilidelineata |
|              | (2) P Klaassen<br>Echinocer. dasyacanthus  | (2) I Biddlecombe<br>Lapidaria margaretae   |
|              | (3) -                                      | (3) I Biddlecombe<br>Lithops olivacea       |

| <b>Cacti/Succulent in Flower</b>             |
|--|
| (1) B Beckerleg<br>Lithops marginata         |
| (2) B Beckerleg<br>Aloe cv "Christmas Carol" |
| (3) M Stevenson<br>Jatropha podagrica        |

Ivor Biddlecombe

## Branch Committee Meeting

A branch committee was held at Chilworth Village Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

Events such as the garden party in July and recent meetings and shows were discussed. The New Forest and Romsey Shows had both gone well, with Romsey setting a record for the amount of plant sales on a single day.

Alice is in the process of putting together the balance sheet and sending it to our accountants.

The library had bought three books during the year and Ian Acton has also donated books to the library.

David has started to assemble the programme of meetings and events for 2019. We will again have a cultivation evening, and also hold a plant focus evening.

Arrangements for the AGM and Christmas Social were discussed. We will need some volunteers to present at the Member's Evening in January.

Vinay Shah

## Books and things

The title above reminds that there are Things to remember when borrowing Books from the Southampton branch library: There is a list of the books in the library on our web-site at <https://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk/library.html> Not all our books are put out on display every month, mainly for reasons of space (but also sheer laziness on my part), so if there is a book that you would like to borrow that is not on the display table, just ask me, either at the meeting or in advance by email (mailto:bcsc@rjwhite.tk).

Last month, the library borrowing fee was raised to 30p per book per month. Usually books are borrowed for one month, but there is normally no library service at the December meeting and so books borrowed today can be returned in January at no extra charge. Otherwise, books kept for more than one month attract further charges of 30p for every additional month. Only BCSS members (including members of other branches) are permitted to borrow books from the library. Please support your library, look after any books you borrow, and don't forget to read them and return them!

## New books in the library

Ian Acton has been doing some more spring-cleaning in his bookshelves, even though it was October, and as a result through his generosity we've acquired another book, or three, depending on how you count multi-volume works:

- “**A Handbook of Succulent Plants**” by Hermann Jacobsen (1441 pp., 1960). This is a revised and enlarged English edition of the original German version (*Handbuch der sukkulenten Pflanzen*, 1954), in three volumes. Volume I includes *Abromeliella to Euphorbia*, Volume II includes *Ficus to Zygochloa* and Volume III covers the *Mesembryanthemums*. Cacti are not included. The first volume also includes a short (33-page) account of the history, uses and cultivation of succulent plants.

It is a monumental work of great historical importance, providing a descriptive survey of every plant considered to be succulent, with notes on their place of origin, distinguishing features, and cultivation. The introduction shows the age of the book in statements such as “Like all other plants, succulents should only be grown in clay pots” and the assumption that heating is carried out with hot-water pipes under the staging. I was overcome with a sense of nostalgia, which may be unknown to many of our younger members, having been “brought up” on The Observer's Book of Cacti and Succulents and Borg's “*Cacti*”. I should say that I kept my first plants, in the early 1960's, in a mixture of clay pots and the new-fangled plastic pots in a range of garish colours.

On browsing through the book I inevitably found some things I didn't know before. For example, I've noticed that some *Aloe vera* plants are relatively large and have plain leaves, while others are smaller and have somewhat spotted leaves. Apparently the former might be the typical form from the Atlantic islands (Cape Verde, Canaries, Madeira) and the latter might be var. *chinensis* from India.

Jacobsen later published a more compact single-volume book in 1970, followed by an English translation “*Lexicon of Succulent Plants*” in 1974. We have the 2002 edition of the latter in our branch library. Compared to the earlier “*Handbook*” recently donated by Ian, you may find the “*Lexicon*” more up-to-date and more manageable, and with slightly more recent taxonomy, but with somewhat less detail.

One needs to bear in mind that many taxonomists have been working and publishing their findings and changing the names of plants quite a lot since 1960. For example, dipping into my copy of the latter (1977 edition), I noticed that the *Guillauminia albiflora* of the earlier book has been reinstated to *Aloe albiflora* as one might expect to see it nowadays. On the other hand, *Aloe vera* has become *A. barbadensis* and its description does not distinguish between the varieties. So you might find more information in the “*Handbook*” if you are really keen to dig out as much detail as you can.

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

Stuart Riley will be speaking on “Around the Collection” in the November meeting. As sometimes happens, this gives me little clue as to which books to recommend. Feel free to visit the library table and browse for any Books which might expand on Things which Stuart talks about. There you are, I’ve harked back to that title again.

*Richard White*

## **Next Month’s Meeting**

Our final meeting of the year will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>. This will be our **Annual General Meeting** followed by the **Christmas Social**.

After receiving reports from some of the branch officers, electing next year’s committee, and handing out the Table Show trophies, it will be time to dig into some food and refreshments! Drinks will be provided by the branch, but please do bring along some items of food for the buffet table.

In order to give the Committee members a chance to participate in the festivities, there will be no plant sales, sundries sales, table show or library at the December meeting.

## **Forthcoming Events**

|     |                  |     |               |  |
|-----|------------------|-----|---------------|--|
| Sat | 10 <sup>th</sup> | Nov | Isle of Wight | Eastern Cape (Rodney Sims)                           |
| Sat | 17 <sup>th</sup> | Nov | Portsmouth    | Aloe! Aloe! (Rodney Sims)                            |
| Sat | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Dec | Portsmouth    | Annual General Meeting & Christmas Social            |
| Tue | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Dec | Southampton   | Annual General Meeting, followed by Christmas Social |
| Sat | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Dec | Isle of Wight | Annual General Meeting followed by American Supper   |
| Tue | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Jan | Southampton   | Members' Mini Talks - short talks by branch members  |

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

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