

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

The warm weather has continued for most of the last month, although temperatures have thankfully eased off a little. I think in that time we've had one day of rain and a few smaller showers in between.

My hardwood conservatory was about 25 years old and falling to bits in places so I have decided to have it rebuilt in brown UPVC. Currently all the plants have been evicted and are sitting out in the back lawn. A few did get damaged by scorch since they were moved from a shady spot in the conservatory into full sun, but nevertheless right now most of the plants will be cooler than they would have been in the conservatory.

## Announcements

Since the last meeting, Alice hosted the **branch Garden Party** at her home in West Moors. The Branch also had a stand at the **New Forest Show** where we seemed to do as well as last year, although the warm weather did make it somewhat uncomfortable for visitors as well as people manning our stand.

Dot England sent me a message saying that some of her Mammillaria plants are getting too large for her to handle and she would like to get these re-homed. Plants available include *Mammillaria geminispina* in a 16" pot and *Mammillaria bombycina* in a 14" pot. She also has other Mammillarias in 10 and 12 inch pots. She will be sending pictures to Robin to put up on our facebook site, and she mentioned she was looking for perhaps £10-£15 per plant.

## Last Month's Meeting

### Plants of Interest

Peter Down mentioned he had collecting plants since 1952, and he in that time he had assembled various sub-collections. He had amassed 300 Mammillarias and eventually passed these on to Eric Greenaway. He then collected Rebutias, followed by Lobivias and Echinopsis and then Sulcorebutias, and eventually Parodias, amassing almost a national collection of those plants. In the last few years he has been collecting Agaves, especially the variegated ones. He had brought some of these to show us.

*Agave* "Snowglow" doesn't get too large, and decent sized plants can go for 100 euros. *Agave guineola* "Creme Brulee" has a pink tinge with light margins – and there was also another form of this plant "mediopicta" with yellow in the centre of the leaf. *Agave parryi* is a popular plant and there is tremendous variation in these, including variegation in the centre. Peter mentioned that Keith Flanagan (Reading) has some excellent agaves in his collection. *Agave* cv "Kichijokan" is a desirable Japanese cultivar of *A. potatorum* – Geoff Card has a larger specimen of this. Next were a couple of *Agave victoria-regina* variegates – "Kizan" with yellow variegation to the side of the leaves and v. *marginata* - these were small plants at the moment but in 2-3 years they will turn into decent plants and it's cheaper to buy them while they are small. *Agave leopoldtii marginata* is an attractive plant – David Neville has the standard one and Ted also has a big clump of the standard plant. *Agave schidigera* "Shira ito no ohi" is another Japanese cultivar, with curly hairs like fish-hooks growing from the sides of the leaves. It can eventually get quite big. Peter also advised against growing *Agave americana* unless you have lots of space – it can get to 6 foot across and 6 foot high! He suggested people take a closer look at the plants during the interval – he had also brought along John Pilbeam's recent book *A Gallery of Agaves*, which is an excellent read and is available in our library.

## **Cultivation of Succulent Plants**

Terry Smale didn't really need an introduction to the branch, since he's a regular visitor – and he's also been on TV recently! Towards the end of last year, he appeared on an edition of *BBC Gardener's World*, where they visited him to film a programme dedicated to his cultivation of cacti and succulent plants. Terry mentioned that one of the best things about hosting the TV show was that it forced him to clean up his greenhouses! He also congratulated the meeting audience for deciding to miss the England vs Colombia world cup game which was on at the same time as the meeting – he personally isn't turned on by 22 people kicking a ball around for 90 minutes.

Terry said this talk started out as something he could give to horticultural societies, but there also was lots of demand amongst BCSS branches for information on cultivation, so he had modified it to make it more suitable for this sort of audience. He would start off by talking about different aspects of cultivation and then if time allowed, also discuss propagation. If anybody wanted to contradict him about any of the points he would make, please do so during the talk. He mentioned that some of the slides had images of plants on them - these were there to add some colour and they may or may not relate to the item being discussed on the slide. The first slide featured *Echinocereus triglochidatus* and it defined what a succulent plant was – it's a plant which has its stems or leaves modified for storage of water so that it can survive in areas where the rainfall is unpredictable. You won't normally find any plants growing in real desert conditions, they are more likely to occur in semi desert areas where rainfall occurs but is unpredictable. The next slide had a picture of the spiky bark of *Ceiba speciosa*, the kapok tree – it's an example of something which is a borderline succulent. With Cacti and Mesembs, everything in those families are succulent plants. But there many other genera e.g. Geranium where the majority of plants are ordinary non-succulent plants and a small number are succulent.

He proceeded to show a map of the world, marked up to show where the main semi-desert areas were. Starting in South Africa, up through East Africa and into the horn of Africa and Arabia was one major area. The western side of the USA, Mexico and the western side of South America, including Bolivia, Uruguay Argentina plus parts of Brazil was another area. We saw a picture of the old man cactus *Cephalocereus senilis* growing in Mexico, alongside deciduous trees. In the dry period the trees shed their leaves and the cacti would store water in their stems. We saw a shot of South Africa and the

Orange River, and some plants which were growing in a natural rock garden – these were Aloe, Pelargonium, and Euphorbia, all growing on rocks and actually surviving on fog. There's hardly any rainfall here, but every night a fog bank rolls up from the coast and up the valley, and this sustains the plants.

Next were two examples of stem succulents - if you want the minimum surface area for a given volume, then a sphere is the answer, and we saw examples of plants from the cactus family and the succulent family which had both evolved into a spherical shape, so these were examples of convergent evolution, both plants had developed similar forms. The plants were *Astrophytum asterias* and *Euphorbia obesa*. We also saw examples of leaf succulents, from the Mesemb family and the Aloe family (Asphodelaceae / Xanthorrhoeaceae) - the plants were *Nelia meyeri* and *Haworthia sordida*.

Then, there are also other plants with storage organs at the bottom of the plant, often below the ground. In the dry season they have no growth and in the wet season they produce stems and leaves which are non-succulent. These are really geophytes and one example is *Dioscorea elephantipes*. The other variant on this theme is the Pachycaul succulents - with this group you have got a stem which is modified to store water. In the damp season the plants produce non-fleshy leaves for photosynthesis and then in the dry season those leaves dry up. The example here was *Pachypodium namaquanum*. In a cactus, the leaves have largely disappeared, although some species have residual leaves. Cacti have a few spines where the leaves might have been on a normal plant and they also feature a lateral meristem which produces the spines and flowers.

Next was the topic of where do we grow the plants. On a windowsill was one possibility. Terry said he was talking to David Neville and at plant fairs, sales of succulents are soaring – they are flavour of the month as houseplants, and lots of people are now growing them. For the BCSS, the question is how do we persuade these people to join the society? Terry showed some pictures of plants being grown on a windowsill. These included Aloes, *Euphorbia milli* and some tender succulents like Adenium which wouldn't like low temperatures in the winter. There are actually lots of things you can grow on a windowsill. Ideally you also want good light for the plants. If the light isn't too good, then consider growing genera such as Haworthias or Gasteria or Asclepiads too, as long as they are not the stinky ones. Avoid trapping the plants between curtains and the window. Normally you would not water plants in the winter months, but if the temperature is

high, as it probably would be indoors in a house, you might need to. You don't want them growing because they will become etiolated - but they need enough water to prevent them shrivelling too much. He uses radio controlled thermometers so that he can check what's happening out in the greenhouse, without having to go outside. On one particular thermometer – there's a graphic of a lady who takes off items of clothing as the temperature rises - but she does keep her bikini on even at 40°C. It's a rubbish thermometer since it's not very robust. Search for the "Conrad WS-9750-IT" on Amazon if you want to check out this wonder of technology.

Another place to grow the plants is a greenhouse, and we saw his first greenhouse - an Alton Cedar. It was built in 1972, and is now falling to bits - there was rot on the eaves where the nails go into the wood. It was a delicate balance deciding whether to repair it – is he going to live longer than the greenhouse? Red cedar is long lived, but for long term usage, wooden greenhouses are not ideal even if they look quite nice. In 1996, when he retired, he had an aluminium greenhouse put up, and this should last a lot longer. Greenhouses, when you buy them, do not come with enough ventilation - something that size (20'x8') would only have a couple of vents as standard, but he got a lot more fitted. Each side of the greenhouse has 5 low level louvre vents and 5 roof vents so there are a total of 20 vents. Even with the door open, it goes to 40°C in the summer. These 2 greenhouses contain most of his plants. Only half the ventilators are automatic - the roof ones on one side and the louvre ones on the other side. When they open, there is a natural airflow from the bottom of one side to the top of the other side. He does want some manual control. He sets them to operate at 20°C - and in the winter, it's desirable to ventilate at lower temperatures. In the summer he wants low temperatures at night, so he leaves the manual ones open all the time in the summer. High temperatures such as 35°C can scorch your plants in the summer, even cacti. Conophytums would also suffer if not protected and we saw a picture of *Conophytum stephanii*. He leaves the ventilators open at night. Most succulents use CAM (crassulacean acid metabolism) so rather than the pores opening during the day to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, they stay closed and they open at night when the temperatures are lower. The CO<sub>2</sub> is absorbed and fixed within the plant as an organic acid at night, and then the next day the organic acid goes into the photosynthesis cycle. With CAM, you want the stomata to open at night. Research done on Arizona cacti shows that 10-15°C is the ideal temperature at night for the stomata to open, to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. If the temperature stays above these levels, the plants stop growing and you will see a lack of new spines. In

fact, you can kill plants by overwatering in the summer because you're still watering them but they've stopped growing. In the greenhouse where he has the Conophytums, he uses "coolglass" painted on the outside of the roof and the sides to help shade the plants. He puts this on in April and removes it in September. It is resistant to rain but hail will take it off. To remove it, you just get an old cloth and wipe it off. It might now be off the market and he's not sure there's a replacement available.

With a greenhouse, you want to site it away from trees but you probably don't have a lot of say in which direction it's orientated. You want a sunny spot which would be particularly valuable in the winter, especially if you grow a lot of winter growing plants. If you want a dry atmosphere inside, you want concrete or slabs for the base. He uses insulation to reduce his heating bills. He puts polythene bubble wrap in the roof of the greenhouses in the summer and winter, but doesn't bother with the sides. Warm air rises, so it's the roof which is important. The air gap between the plastic and the glass keeps the insulating effect. He uses green alliplug clips to clip the plastic to the frame. His conservatory has a triple skinned polycarbonate roof. Different wavelengths of light are transmitted through glass vs plastic but he doesn't think it makes a large difference. The greenhouses are all heated – he keeps the temperature at 5°C in the winter, the far ends probably go down to around 2°C, this seems to be OK for the things he grows.

He uses Parwin fan heaters - they are fantastic and go on forever but the company no longer exists and the heaters can't be bought now. The remote thermostats are better than the ones fitted to the heaters. Also the electronic thermostats do seem to pack up a lot compared to the old thermocouple types. His greenhouses are 20 x 8 feet and he thinks he probably pays around £200 per greenhouse each year to heat them. That's not too much considering what some of the plants are worth. David thought those bills sounded quite low. Terry said his garden is quite well sheltered. Electric tube heaters are another alternative. If you can't run electricity to the greenhouse, you can use gas heaters too. If you have plants which need extra heat (such as Melocactus or Dorstenias) you can take them indoors for the winter – or you could set up a mini-enclosure, using some bits of plastic and wood and a heating pad in the bottom (e.g. 42W) which can raise the temperatures in a small part of the greenhouse (2 feet square) to 5-7°C above the rest. In the summer this structure can be taken apart. Most succulents can tolerate temperatures down to a few degrees if kept dry - but there are just a few things that need more heat, such as plants from Madagascar, North-East Africa,

Arabia, the Caribbean and Eastern Brazil - examples include *Uebelmannia* or *Pachypodiums*. Some succulent plants do grow in quite cold areas and some can survive frosty conditions if they are kept dry.

He showed us the remote thermometer he does recommend – it was made by Oregon Scientific, it uses ordinary AA batteries, and can run 3 external sensors from one main unit and the operating range is 30m. You can also set an alarm to go off at a particular temperature. In the greenhouses he keeps min-max thermometers and at present they show the temperature ranges from 15°C to 40°C - that lower value is good for the CAM. If you are going to bed plants out, then prepare the soil well, and use good quality compost. Think about the water table, you may also need to put a membrane down. You also need to space them according to how much they might grow in 10 or 20 years. Tall plants may need some additional support. His *Alluardia* eventually went to Wisley and it's now supported by a chain from the roof in their large greenhouses. We saw an example of a collection in Holland being grown in a professional Venlo Greenhouse by Aad Vijverberg – he had an amazing bedded-out collection. His water table must be quite high – there's a drainage ditch with frogs croaking just outside the greenhouse. For less than a euro you can buy some nice seedlings from him.

You can put some plants out in the garden in the summer months and take the pots back in, in the winter. With shrubby mesembs, take cuttings in the autumn, grow in the greenhouse in winter and plant them out in the spring. Tim Miles is the head gardener at Cotswold Wildlife Park - he grows plantings which are sympathetic to the animals nearby. We saw some succulents near the meerkats. He uses a mixture of techniques - plants in pots, some with shelter, and also heating cables in the ground. Very often the roots of a plant are sensitive to being frozen, more so than the top of the plant so stopping the roots from freezing is quite an effective strategy.

After the break, we moved on to watering. Some people complain about tap water, but at least it's clean. If raising something from seed, he always use tap water because it won't have micro-organisms in it. It is usually slightly alkaline - pH 7.5 and he's not that keen on alkalinity for plants. So you can acidify the water, but he hasn't ever done so. Rain water is brilliant for watering our plants - it is slightly acidic due to absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> as it falls. Apart from that, it's fairly pure. If however you collect it and store it in water butts then all sorts of things can develop, so he would never use it for watering plants being

propagated or for seedlings. For older plants, rain water is good. Mike Shaw said his rain water was pH 7 - so a lot depends on the sort of roof it comes down on. He asked about using vinegar to acidify the water – well acetic acid was listed on the slide. It's a fairly weak acid so may be some buffering problems in getting the right pH.

Most of our succulent plants are summer growing, but not all. For these summer plants, he starts watering in March and the exact timing depends on the weather and temperatures. This year it was a bit later. He has frost-free greenhouses, so waters until mid-October. In an unheated greenhouse, he would stop earlier. Do try and allow the plants to dry out in between waterings. A plant in a small pot would need watering more frequently. As for watering from above or below – it doesn't really matter. Watering from below is more thorough - if you water from above, it can drain through without wetting the soil. He has so many plants, so has no choice except to water from above. You also need to feed the plants from time to time. He uses Chempak No. 8 – which is higher in potassium than phosphate or nitrogen. The nitrogen in the fertilizer can be in various forms – such as urea or nitrate ions or ammonia ions. Plants cannot absorb urea – they can only absorb nitrate or ammonia, but soil bacteria can convert the urea into a usable form. He's not sure if enough of those bacteria are present in the compost, so he prefers to use a feed which doesn't use urea, such as Chempak. (Phostrogen does use urea and so with that, the plants may not get enough nitrogen). He doesn't use the feed at full strength (usually only half strength) and also only feeds in one watering every 2-3 times. That's for the cacti - for mesembs he feeds a lot less. He showed a picture of a plant *Escobaria minima* which had shrunk in the winter months and then 1 month after he had started watering (so between 14<sup>th</sup> March to 11<sup>th</sup> April). The stems quickly elongate just by absorbing the water - it hasn't really started growing in that time. Some plants can also split if they are over watered.

One exception to this watering regime is the plants which come from the Mediterranean areas, such as the southern and western parts of South Africa. Here, most of the rainfall is in the wintertime - as it is in the Mediterranean basin – the summers are hot and dry - most of the plants from here will be winter growing. You have to water these in the winter months. He usually starts watering in July or August (depends on the genus) and stops sometime in the spring - when the plants have stopped growing and have produced sheaths or the annual leaves have withered away. In addition, plants from Baja California such as *Dudleya* and plants from the Canaries such as *Aeonium* also prefer the

mediterranean cycle. For plants from these areas which keep their leaves all the time, he does give them some water in the summer, but their main growing will be in the winter. Since we have very poor light in the winter, we have to make sure we give these plants the brightest possible spot in the winter.

What sort of pots should we use? Plastic is common but clay is also available. All of his cacti are grown in plastic pots. He grows his Haworthias and Gasterias in clay pots. The reason for this is that these plants have thick fleshy roots which are prone to rotting off. Most haworthias do most of their growing in the winter months. Also haworthias will tolerate being grown on the floor of your greenhouse underneath the staging where there is less light. If he waters these in the winter, he doesn't want them staying wet for too long. So he uses clay for these plants and plastic for everything else. Next, he showed two rectangular sponges of different heights saturated with water and stood on a draining board. We could see that the water runs out of the sponges to the same level, irrespective of the height of the sponge. This mimics the conditions in your pot - think of the sponge as the soil in your pot - gravity pulls water down, capillary action draws the water up and there is an equilibrium point. People may grow plants in shallow pots because they don't want too much water around the neck of the plant - but in fact they should be growing those plants in deep pots. And if you do have a deep pot, it's probably better to water from the top since it will wet the soil at the top of the pot.

Moving on to composts, we have to pot our plants in something. It has to retain moisture but also drain well, and to do that, you need plenty of air spaces in the soil because the roots like to breathe. If the soil is waterlogged, that's when you get into trouble. The compost has to be a suitable pH - neutral to slightly acid and you need the macro nutrients (N, P, K) as well as various trace elements. If you don't have those in the soil, you'll need to supply those when you feed. Some people now grow their plants in inert mineral media and they will need to supply the nutrients when they water. He showed us the type of compost he grows his plants in - John Innes #3, and Arthur Bowers coarse grit mixed together. John Innes compost is a very variable beast - although supposed to be made to a formula, some of it is absolute rubbish. He used Westland once and that caused his plants to lose their root system. He is now using a brand called "Clover" because his local allotment society stocks it - it is made by an Irish peat company, so the organic content is peat. Some people may not like that, but it's better than some of the stuff others put in. Brighton branch recently

bought a pallet load for their members. The 4mm grit is available under various names - Arthur Bowers, Silvaperl, Westland. We saw close up pictures to the same scale of the compost and the grit. For easy-growing things, he uses 2 handfuls of J I to 1 handful of grit. For Conophytums and winter growing plants, he uses 1 handful of each. There is a tendency for people to use inert minerals or mix these into their compost - part of the reason may be the inconsistency of John Innes. Examples are pumice (Bims), perlite - available in various grades, and moler earth which is mined in parts of central Europe. It's a diatomaceous earth like Fullers earth which is calcined into granules. They have air in them and can retain moisture and nutrients. Seramis is the original brand, but some of the cat litters are made from it e.g. Sanicat cat litter and Tesco's low dust cat litter. You can also buy it from the bonsai suppliers. Pediocactus is an example of a cactus which benefits from growing in this material. Akadama is another granular clay mined in Japan and used by Bonsai growers, but it is ferociously expensive. The harder grades are the better ones and even small bags of it cost £5 - he'll leave Stirling Baker to use it - it's more or less the same as moler anyway. Perlite is basically a volcanic glass which has been heated to "pop" like popcorn. If you use these materials, you have to think a lot more about nutrition. David Neville mentioned some people use these materials instead of grit. A lot of cacti grow in limestone areas - e.g. Ariocarpus in the Chihuahuan desert in Mexico, and some people swear that these plants grow better if you put limestone in the compost. He doesn't believe it - alkaline soil tends to stop plants from growing, and if they put limestone chips in the compost, the amount of calcium carbonate that would dissolve out would be minimal. Perhaps the plants are growing better due to more frequent repotting. Even when plants grow in alkaline regions, they are often growing in humus pockets which may be a lower pH, so it's arguable if their roots are actually in alkaline media.

Top dressing around a plant can look nice, and if you are into showing your plants, you will have to consider using it. It also reduces loss of water due to evaporation, so if you are meagre with your watering then it might be beneficial. If you have winter growing plants then top dressing can be detrimental because you want the soil to dry out quickly. He does not top dress his plants. Also - if you can actually see the compost, you have a better idea of what's going on. When repotting - don't put crocks at the bottom for drainage - just some fine mesh gauze will do. He does use crocks just to cover any large holes in the base of the pot. Various tools can be quite useful. Knock your plant out of the pot

- if it's spiny then use rolled up pieces of paper to hold the plant - sharp spines can easily penetrate gloves. If the plant has been in the same compost for a long time, you will need to remove the old compost, and a plant label or a stiff brush can help with that. A dibber helps to press down the new compost. He keeps tweezers and soft brushes on hand to clean up plants.

He uses plastic labels and Staedtler lumocolor pens. There used to be Staedtler pancolor which lasted forever, lumocolor does fade after a few years. There are various computer or hand held tape machines which can print labels - stick that on to aluminium and you have something that should last a very long time. If stuck on plastic, the label might outlast the plastic.

With pests - mealy bug is a common problem. When nesting, they produce wool and the young are protected by that. He often finds small outbreaks of mealy from time to time. There are very few pesticides that we can legally buy which control mealy - you have to look at the small print and the formulations keep changing from time to time. There are 2 classes - the neonicotinoids - the name ends in "prid" and the synthetic pyrethrins which end in "rin". Acetamiprid and Imadocloprid are used under glass commercially, but the latter is banned for domestic use now. It is persistent in the soil and supposedly affects bees. Use it as a drench and it then gets drawn up into the plant. Deltamethrin is included in the latest formulation for Provado - this is used as a spray and is not systemic. Biological control is also an option - Cryptolaemus is a type of ladybird that eats mealy bugs, but it is not easy to use by amateurs.

We saw an Echinocereus damaged by red spider mite - this is a minute insect which is hard to spot - the mite eats away the epidermis and you'll usually see the damage well before you see the mite. It used to be controlled by Methiocarb which has been withdrawn and no chemical control is now available to the amateur. Some of the neonicotinoids claim to control it. For biological control, try Phytoseiulus but this again is difficult for an amateur to use. He uses SB Plant Invigorator, which is not a chemical but basically a brew which is not toxic to any animal but it asphyxiates the bugs and once on their skin it stops them taking in oxygen. So it's also something they can't become immune to. It is also a foliar feed. It will kill adults but not the eggs. He treats his plants every 3-4 weeks during the summer using a spray - you have to cover the plant thoroughly since it works by contact only. It kills red spider and all other bugs as well and he highly recommends it.

Some people are still buying organophosphorus compounds from Germany via Ebay - he doesn't recommend this - it's a nerve poison, and quite harmful to humans. Scale insects are soft insects with a hard covering on top. The only time he's seen it is when he's bought a new plant which was infected. Neonicotinoids used as a soil drench should work on it - or you can use soapy water and brush it off. Wineweevil is a pest on Echeverias - watch for white grubs in the soil and a black beetle with a pointy snout when adult. A drench with a neonicotinoid such as Acetamiprid will do the trick. Or you can use nematodes - dissolve these in water and then water onto the plant - these are more effective than trying to release beetles. Sciara fly are fungus gnats - the larvae are like transparent threads 1/4 inch long - they will eat roots and can devastate seedlings. Neonicotinoids will deal with them or you can use sticky fly paper to trap the adults.

Something which affects his Lithops is western flower thrips. They don't cause a problem to his other plants - but when the Lithops flower - the thrips attack the area where the flower emerges and this area is effectively next year's leaf - you'll see a mark at right angles to the fissure when that leaf does eventually emerge. Blue fly paper is supposed to attract the insects compared to the more common yellow paper. SB Plant Invigorator will also kill the adults. Specific insecticides are only available to commercial growers, such as abamectins, spinosin/spinosad. David asked if sciara and thrips would be controlled by the synthetic pyrethroids - his father used these at a commercial nursery where they used to spray every three days for a fortnight, since those insects have a fast breeding cycle.

If a plants rot off on you, it is probably a problem with your compost or your watering regime. Viruses are not common but can affect Echeveria - tobacco mosaic virus causes brown streaks on the plants. It can't be treated - and if you see it, you have to get rid of the plant ASAP since there is no cure and insects can transfer the virus between plants. For slugs and snails - they tend to creep into the greenhouse in the autumn months and always seem to find the most valuable plant to take a nibble from (Ian Acton mentioned mice do the same). Terry uses slug pellets which he puts between the plants, nothing other than slugs or snails would eat them.

There wasn't time available to start on the propagation part of Terry's talk, so we ended with a few comments and questions from the audience. Ian Acton mentioned he grows African marigolds in his greenhouse and they seem to deter bugs and aphids. They used to say the same about French marigolds

too. Carnivorous plants are an interesting proposition too. Mike Shaw asked about using ericaceous compost for South American plants which like acid conditions. Terry said he had not measured the pH but expected it to be around 4.5 to 5 – it was important to find a good compost. He has used a loam-based compost for some of his South African bulbs which grow in a pH of 4 or so and they didn't fare too well. Ben asked about using hydrogen peroxide for pest control - you have to be careful with the concentrations to get the pests and not harm the plants but no one in the audience had tried it.

*Vinay Shah*

**Table Show Results**

There were 14 entries in the July table show, and 2 entries for “Plants in Flower”.

	<b>Cacti – Gymnocalycium</b>	<b>Succulents – Stapelia</b>
Open	(1) I Biddlecombe Gymnocalycium saglionis	(1) T Radford Fockea angustifolia
	(2) B Beckerleg Gymno. sanguiniflorum	(2) T Smith Stapelia hirsuta
	(3) -	(3) B Beckerleg Huernia penderformis
Intermediate	(1) B Beckerleg Gymnocalycium occultum	(1) T Radford Pseudolithos eylesis
	(2) I Biddlecombe Gymno. castellanosii	(2) B Beckerleg Hoodia gordonii
	(3) I Biddlecombe Gymno. baldianum albiflorum	(3) I Biddlecombe Caralluma hesperidum

<b>Cacti/Succulent in Flower</b>
(1) B Beckerleg Gymnocalycium hybopleurum
(2) A Grech Epiphyllum sp.
(3) -

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on September 4<sup>th</sup> and it will feature a talk by John Foster (of Gloucester BCSS) on "Succulent Senecios". I think this is going to be the first time we'll have had a talk on this group of plants, so I am sure there will be something new to learn.

The September Table Show will consist of **Mammillaria Group** (cacti) and **Mesemb Group (excluding Lithops)** (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 *Mammillaria* group includes *Bartschella*, *Cochemia*, *Dolichothele*, *Krainzia*, *Mamillopsis*, *Mammillaria*, *Mammilloidia*, *Pseudomammillaria* and *Solisia*.

Mesembryanthemum is a large grouping and covers dozens of genera from Argyroderma Subgroup, Cheiridopsis Subgroup, Conophytum Subgroup, Faucaria Subgroup, Nananthus Subgroup and Othonna Group. Note that the Lithops subgroup is excluded in September since it will feature in October - hence Dinteranthus, Lapidaria and Lithops are excluded.

## Forthcoming Events

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)
Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Southampton	Gasterias in Habitat & Culture (Tony Roberts)
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Portsmouth	Portsmouth Autumn Show, Christ Church Hall, Widley, PO7 5AU
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Isle of Wight	To be confirmed
Sat 20 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Portsmouth	Thelocactus - The Forgotten Genus (Martin Doorbar)

Branch website: <http://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk>  
 Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>