

“The Exotic Collection”

A short history of the collection of Edgar and Brian Lamb.

by Christopher Leather

Do you know who this man is?



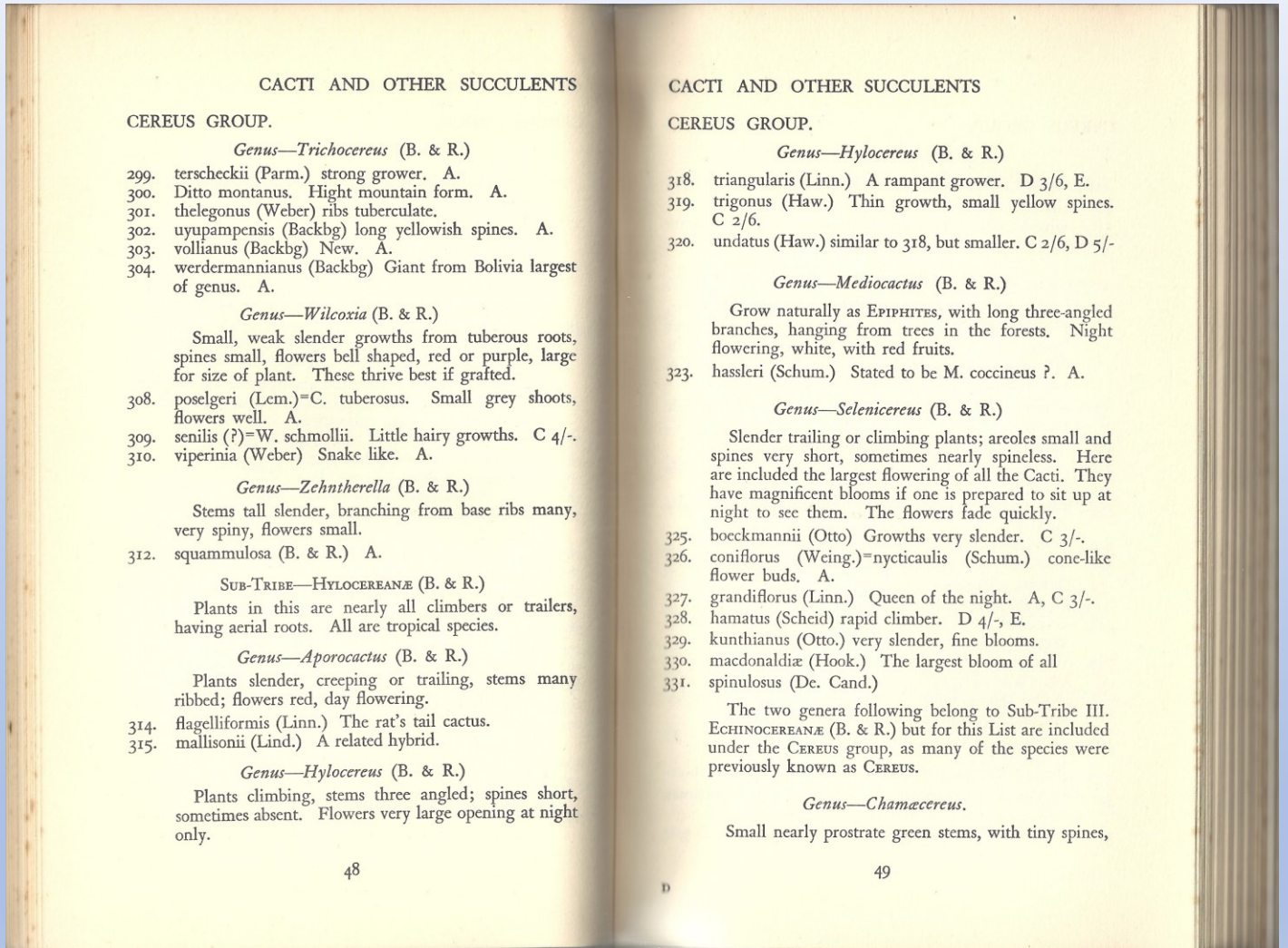
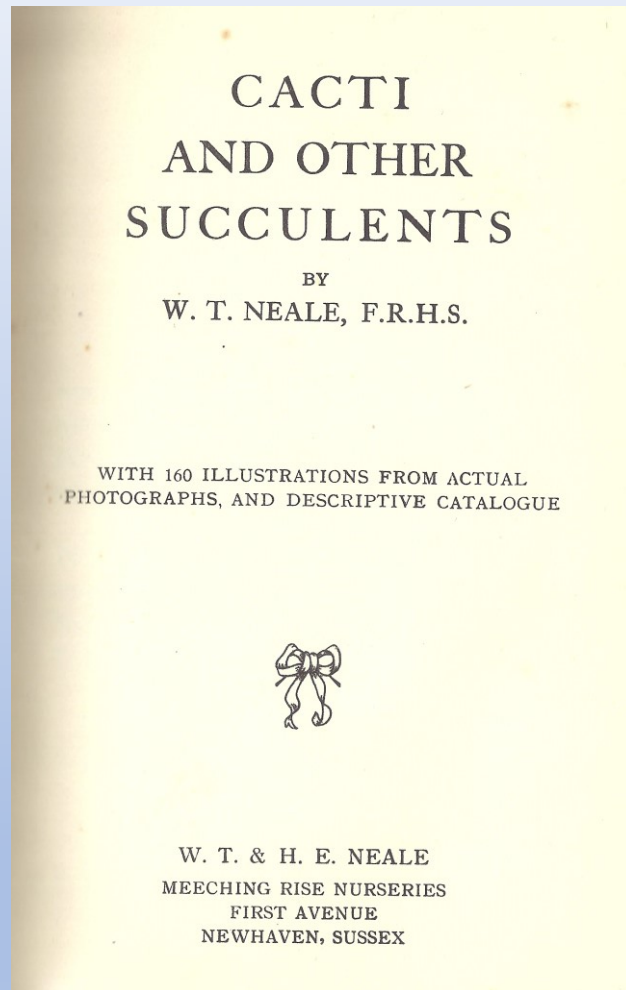
THE AUTHOR AMONG EUPHORBIA CANARIENSIS IN ITS NATIVE HABITAT.

Do you know who this man is?

He is in fact W. T. Neale – original owner of the nursery which became as “The Exotic Collection” owned by Edgar and Brian Lamb.



He produced a book in 1935 which was based on his catalogue of plants for sale in his nursery. Note the numbers next to the plants – more of that later.



The nursery was somewhere on First Avenue in Newhaven, probably within this circle. Now of course it is all residential property and no sign of the nursery will remain.



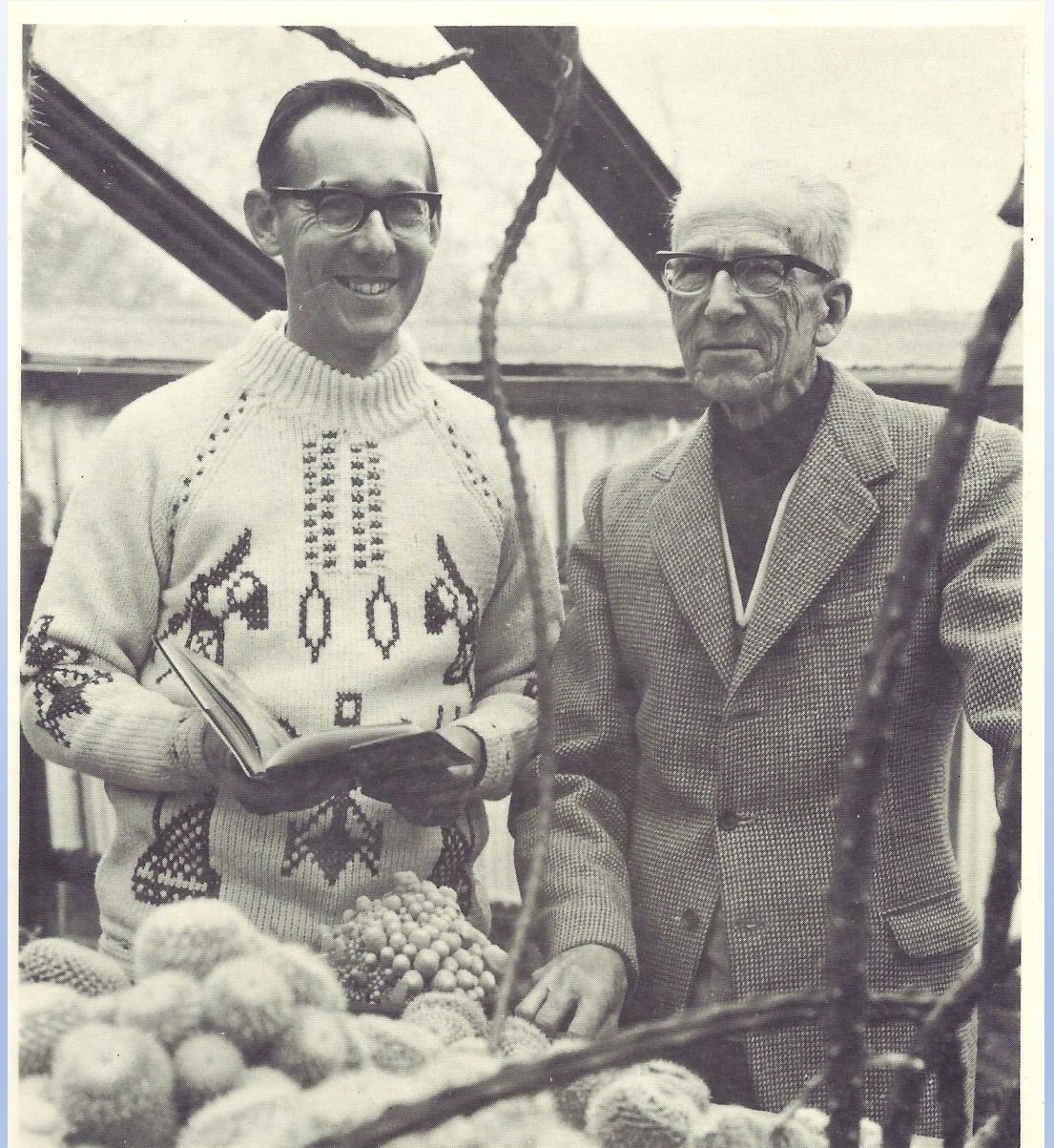
Edgar Lamb was a regular visitor to the nursery as a youngster.

Due to a serious illness when he was 21 he was looking for a job in the open air and not an office job.

In 1933 he managed to raise enough money to buy the nursery, though W. T. Neale carried on working there despite being past retirement age.

One of Edgar's jobs was to help catalogue the plants, using its numbering system, which eventually resulted in the book shown previously.

Edgar is the gentleman on the far right, shown with his son Brian.



The authors, Brian Lamb (left) and his father Edgar Lamb, in one of their greenhouses at 'The Exotic Collection'
(Photo: *Worthing Gazette*)

This picture shows Doris (wife of Edgar) on the right and Sally (wife of Brian) on the left.



Hubert Earle showing Sally Lamb the distinctive features of *Stetsonia coryne* at the Desert Botanical Garden at Tempe, Arizona.

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In February 1936 Edgar became Managing Director of the Neale nursery.

Shortly before the retirement of W.T. Neale some land became available in Worthing next to Edgar's property. The land had been used as a chicken farm.

By the middle of 1936 all the plants had been moved from Newhaven to Worthing (some 30 miles) and "The Exotic Collection" was born.



PARODIAS to be seen at The Exotic Collection in Worthing.



Rare plants in "The Exotic Collection"

This illustration depicts another part of the raised bed in the centre of the main showhouse. Some large Mammillaria clusters further North in this bed appeared on the centre pages last month. A Key to many of the plants shown here can be found on page 120 of this issue.

But just as they were getting settled in to their new home, the Second World War started.....

Greenhouses had to be put over to food production. They were only allowed to keep one greenhouse. Somehow they managed to squeeze 2000 species of plants in to it. Some of the remaining plants – amounting to nearly 2000 species – had to be quickly re-homed at Compton Acres Gardens near Poole, owned by Mr Compton.

Many of the remaining plants had to be destroyed.

Sadly, just four weeks later the order for the destruction was rescinded by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Fortunately Edgar had managed to amass a large seed bank of some 2000 species and these were kept until after the war.

Early spring 1947 saw them sowing a lot of this seed, which filled a 60ft greenhouse. Most of these were cacti, but also many were mesembs.

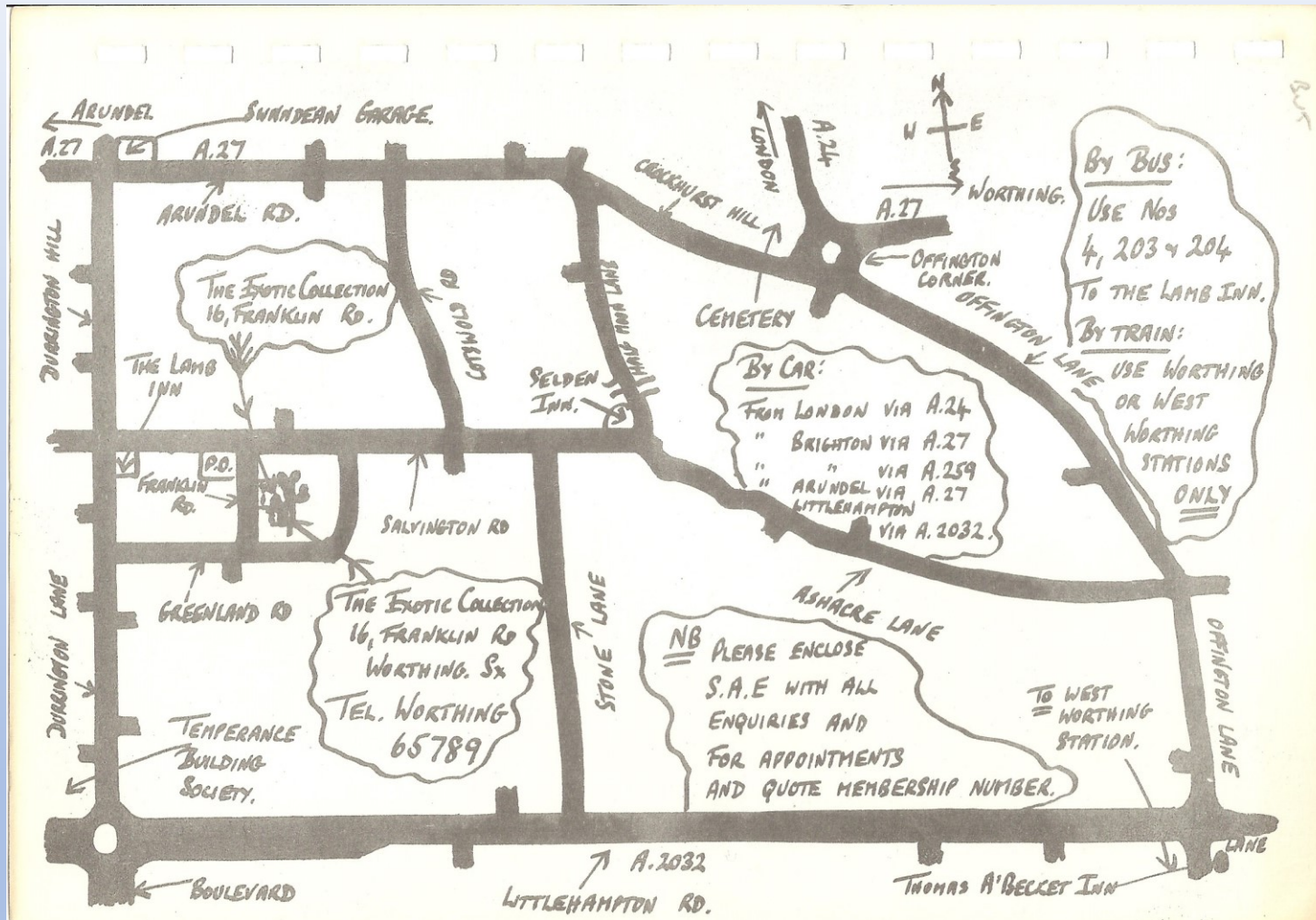
In the late 40's and early 50's all the greenhouses were constructed. In one case the new greenhouse was built over the top of two of the old ones which were dismantled from the inside.



A NOVALUX GREENHOUSE.

This is part of a propagation house at "The Exotic Collection", showing the usage of corrugated NOVALUX as a roofing material. In addition to the hanging pots of some of the larger flowered Ceropegias, you can see some of the actual plants that appear on our monthly offers.

Where was the Exotic Collection? It was based in Worthing in East Sussex.



The collection was off Franklin Road in Worthing. Nothing remains of the collection now and the site has been built on, but it is still possible to work out where it was and approximate size.

Interestingly the site now is named Palm Court, which if you invert the "p" to make a "b" and rearrange you get Lamb.

This is the approximate location of the site today. If you think I am exaggerating the size, I might be, but not by much.



'THE EXOTIC COLLECTION' (Pages 52 - 53.)

This house is over 100 feet in length and some 30 feet in width, running north to south. The view is shown looking north, with a 12 feet wide centre bed running almost the entire length of the greenhouse.

Beyond the trellis are to be found mostly African species of Euphorbias and Aloes, plus a few of the dwarf Gasterias, shrubby Mesems' which add colour when in flower. Even in winter many of these Aloes start to produce many dozens of flower spikes. In fact we always have some species of this Genus in flower. With this free root run, much more flower is produced.

This side of the trellis is mainly for cacti, such as various Cleistocacti, Cerei, Trichocerei etc, plus such interesting items as *Dracaena draco* (The Dragon Tree from the Canary Islands) and the yellow variegated *Yucca aloifolia*.

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GREENHOUSE VIEW. (Pages 60 & 61)

This view is taken from near the south end of our largest greenhouse which measures some 150ft, (50 metres) long. It only shows the eastern side looking north. As mentioned earlier the *Gymnocalycium*s can be seen in their raised beds beneath the 5 white struts (top right). The raised bed (bottom right) contains mostly S.American Tephrocacti or (dwarf growing *Opuntias*). The shelf above contains pots of *Ariocarpus*, *Neogomesia* etc.. The raised bed (bottom left) contains *Echinocacti* and *Ferocacti* while beyond this are sundry cacti prior to the mixed planting of *Euphorbias* and *Aloes*.

As a rough guess It would appear that the greenhouses filled much of the tarmac area shown here. Figures of 6000 square feet are mentioned in the magazines.



A few shots showing the inside of the greenhouses as they are shown in the magazines.



This picture is taken in our main showhouse towards the north end. The bed below contains *Notocacti* and *Lobivias* whilst the shelf obscured by the 'hanging pots' contains larger flowered *Mammillarias*.

112.



SOUTH AMERICAN CEREI. This group includes a range of *Cleistocactus*, *Espostoas*, *Oreocerei*, *Trixanthocerei* & *Cleistocactus strausii*.

12.

M O N T H L Y N O T E S 1.

on
"The Neale Collection" of Cacti & other Succulents.

January 1955.

SUCCULENTS with Colour.

The really colourful succulents with their beautiful pastel shades of pinks, purples etc, have a place in many a mixed private Collection.

Often I find Collectors who have avoided these plants in the belief that they are delicate and need a lot of winter heat to keep them as such attractive plants.

This is not so, in fact, I have kept about 500 of these in a cold greenhouse, without any warmth whatsoever for some five years with hardly a loss, and only a few plants slightly marked by cold.

But first let me mention a few of the points of interest or attraction of this type of plant.

In a slightly warmed greenhouse they can be kept growing well into the winter if you wish, and growth may begin much earlier in Spring also. This makes possible a much larger plant in a short time.

In the cold greenhouse without any heating, they may be allowed to dry out in late autumn or early winter and watered again somewhere around the end of February or early March.

A few of these succulents give colour to a collection at all times of year, this being appreciated perhaps when nothing else is growing or in bloom.

In 1947 (or 1949, I am not sure) Edgar started to produce both the Monthly Notes and the Reference Plate collection. The latter with be covered later, but for now we'll cover the magazine.

Subscribers received twelve issues a year, initially containing just one A4 page folded in half, later becoming two A4 pages folded in half.

As you can see they were typed on a typewriter and there are very few mistakes.

2. Most of them flower well, the flower spikes may be cut off if desired and used in vases in the house where they will last perhaps two months in rooms where no other flowers would survive.

They do not seem to mind changes of temperature and will stand any amount of room heating.

The plants will also stand the same conditions if brought indoors for decoration for a few weeks, after which they should go back to the greenhouse as the colouring in the leaves is bound to fade indoors after say 2 or 3 weeks, but once back in full daylight in the greenhouse their colour will return.

Perhaps the best types for this purpose are Echeverias and Graptopetalums, many of these are hybrids which have been enhanced in colour by hybridisation. Pachyphytums and Cotyledons come into the same class of plants with colour but the first two mentioned seem to have the most appeal for being so easy to keep in good condition.

Whether you have a small amount of space or or not, a few will not need much room as with growth, they develop a main stem which can be taller than most of the small cacti, giving both height and background to set off your other plants.

The leaves which form on top of the main stems vary in size with the types of plant but they can attain 12" or over as a 'head' of leaves, if given plenty of sunshine, their colouring in many pastel shades needs to be seen to be fully appreciated.

In this Collection, I have had many of them for 15-20 years and through lack of space they have not all been grown to best advantage, now,

with the extra space being given over to the 3. Collection as mentioned last year, I should have some very fine specimens to show you when you come down to Worthing.

I am repotting most of these during the winter as they do not mind it at this time of year so long as they do not have to be out for rooting new stock. In a few weeks time they may have water and should be an added attraction to visitors by the summer of this year.

THE COLLECTION.

I have been quite surprised at the amount of interest Members have shown in the alterations I mentioned recently regarding the housing of this Collection. Many of you have not been down here due to distance, this applies in particular to overseas Members, yet you seem to like to hear of the changes in layout etc.

Most of the structural alterations have been completed for the present so that the whole area of about 5,000 sq. ft. of growing space, plus a number of stagings for small plants at various heights can be visited without coming outside.

When we start moving the potted specimens to their new quarters, and planting up the new Stapeliad House, I can give you rather more details.

WINTER WATERING.

I have received many letters asking about watering certain plants in winter when they appear limp after the mild weather of recent weeks. The globular types of cacti should NOT be watered and particularly if they are species which should bloom well, but Opuntias having thin pads may need

4. moisture, also a number of the Euphorbias and Stapeliads.

It is a fairly general rule that the type of cactus or succulent with thick stems or thick fleshy leaves will stand without water much longer than those with thin stems, pads or leaves.

Opuntia argentina has thin pads (or joints) this may need water, particularly if in a warmed greenhouse. Euphorbia alopecuroides, having thin branches may also need water for the same reason, whereas Euphorbia resinifera and types similar being sturdy types can be left without any for months on end.

Pans of young seedlings will possibly require a little water throughout the winter, but here again it rather depends on the type or size of these, and if kept nearly cold or very warm.

A word of warning about young seedlings may be worth mention now as I often find those who are new to the hobby rather anxious to prick out seedling cacti too early with consequent losses.

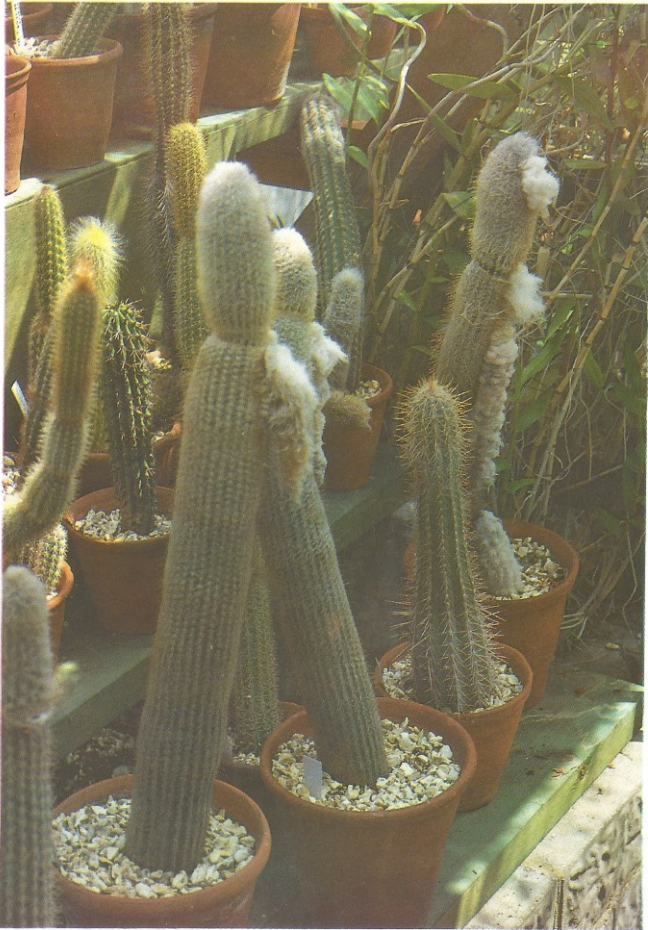
If the seed pan is crowded, do NOT disturb the young seedlings until they have been growing well for several weeks. If you await April or May for this, you may find your young plants will hardly notice the move as they can be watered regularly after pricking-out without the fear of too cold nights which always check them earlier in the year.

I have been busy with some winter seed tests about which I hope to write some notes later.

E. Lamb. F.R.H.S.

W.T.Neale & Co.Ltd.,Franklin Road,Worthing,
(England.)

A few shots showing the inside of the greenhouses as they are shown in the magazines.



A GROUP OF PILOCEREI, including Arrojadus, Austrocephalocereus and Cephalocereus in "The Exotic Collection"

32.



25 year old specimens of *Pilocereus palmeri*, *Cephalocleistocactus ritteri* and *Trichocereus cuscoensis* which have been grown here from seed.

100.



TROPICAL EUPHORBIAS: This includes true Euphorbias as well as Monadeniums, mostly species from East Africa, India and Madagascar.

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A few shots showing the inside of the greenhouses as they are shown in the magazines.



FREE FLOWERING PARODIAS.

The plants in this picture are all Parodias growing under corrugated Novalux, which was the subject of an article last month. The main species in this illustration are varying forms of *P. penicillata*.



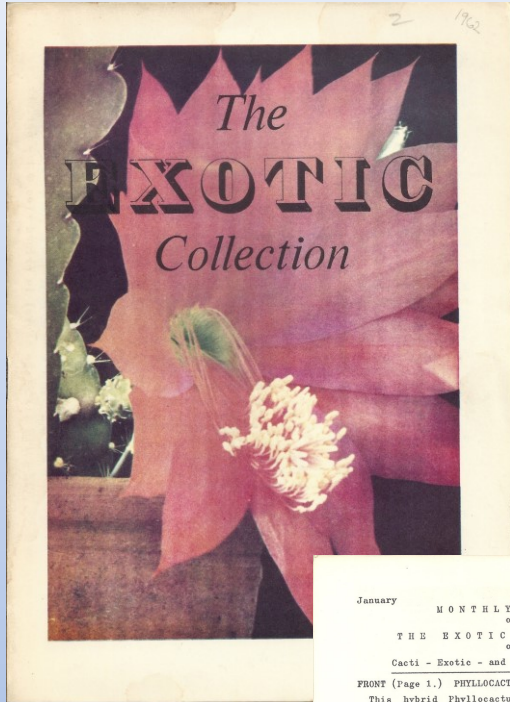
ESPOSTOAS & OREOCEREI growing here in "The Exotic Collection", all of which have been raised from seed.

12.

From 1962 to 1966 the magazine was produced in colour on matte paper. From 1967 to 1987 it was printed on glossy paper. Even though it was twice as many pages as those early pre 1962 issues, the actual writing inside was the same, as the covers and a photo on the centre pages (not shown) took up half the magazine.

Issues contained cultivation notes and travelogues, the latter being serialised over many issues.

The later issues also contain a history of the collection, upon which these notes are based.



January 1962
MONTHLY NOTES
on
THE EXOTIC COLLECTION
of
Cacti - Exotic - and other Succulent Plants.

FRONT (Page 1.) PHYLLOCACTUS HYBRID.
This hybrid Phyllocactus is one of the many popular kinds found in the average collection, noted for its almost fluorescent tinge to some of the inner petals. As with all epiphytic cacti, a rich leafmould growing mixture, partly shaded position and plenty of water during the growing season, should produce masses of flowers during May and June. E.L.

INSIDE (Pages 4-5) ECHINOCEERUS STAGING. B.M.L.
(See also pages 3 & 6.) M.L.

BACK (Page 8.) AEONIUM CANARIENSE.
This species was illustrated in half-tone as a Ref Plate (No 2566) in August 1957. It is a magnificent species and may produce a rosette up to two or more feet in diameter, noted for its velvety leaves. In summer most of our specimens are grown out in the open when they take on these wonderful rich colours mainly due to the ultra-violet light from open sunny conditions. This specimen was originally collected in habitat from the north coast of the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands, where it grows on the cliffs.

PHOTOGRAPHIC REFERENCE PLATES issued this month.
Sarcocaulon coccineum. Plate No 343.
Sarcocaulon multifidum. Plate No 2610a.

Photographed & produced by the authors - BRIAN M LAMB
EDGAR LAMB. Worthing, Sx. (Eng.)

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INTRODUCTION.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the NEW style of MONTHLY NOTES on The Exotic Collection in FULL COLOUR.

Few will fail to appreciate the tremendous scope for future photography which COLOUR ALONE can give to the hobby, and we look forward to giving you all some very 'impressive' photographs in widely varied forms.

Our present plans are to keep the size of pictures for the front and back pages - the same as with this issue - the two middle pages each month may vary to suit the subject or subjects to be shown.

We are sure that all of you will agree the staging of our Echinocereus in FULL COLOUR is impressive, this size of picture will be used for this type of scenic picture. To go to the other extreme, a very young plant or seedling may be enlarged to as much as 9 x 6 1/2" (23 x 16 1/2 cm approx) to show some special feature, or on some occasions, a single picture may occupy each of the two middle pages, perhaps similar in size to the cover pages.

We are investigating some simple, easy form of folder or container to house the NOTES, but this can await our further investigations and will be announced later.

THE ECHINOCEERUS STAGING.

This colourful scene was filmed during the early part of May 1960. Needless to say only a part of the Echinocereus collection is shown here, as it now runs to some 60 distinct varieties.

Prominent in this view is ECHINOCEERUS DASYCANTHUS with its large yellow flowers, which often stay open up to 3 weeks. The two specimens of this species in flower here, were originally collected from their wild

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habitat in the Franklin Mountains, in the south of the State of New Mexico.

Also prominently featured in our Echinocereus group are specimens of ECHINOCEERUS FENDLERI, showing the various forms that this purple flowered species may take. Our plants show considerable variation in flower size and colour as well as spine formation, and come from many different localities in Arizona and New Mexico. This particular species will withstand quite low temperatures in winter, when in the dormant state.

These species, which will withstand freezing in dry conditions, tend to shrivel as winter approaches, and in this state come to no harm. Other species which will take the same freezing conditions are E. TRILOCHIDIATUS and E. VIRIDIFLORES. One form of this first named is shown in this view, and can be seen with orange flower at bottom left. The latter named species is probably the most widely dispersed species, being found as far north as Wyoming and as far south as Southern Texas.

Towards the right of this scene, please note 4-headed ECHINOCEERUS PECTINATUS, the actual plant shown as a colour photograph in Vol 1-illustrated Reference book by E.Lamb. This is one of the many species found in this genus, possessing pectinate spines. The tall specimen in the centre of this view belongs in this section, its name being ECHINOCEERUS BRICHBACHII with 3 buds being visible near the top.

Also visible in this view are a few grafted specimens including two fine plants of the brown spined form of ECHINOCEERUS PECTINATUS as cristate plants. We have found that both Trichocereus and spineless type Opuntias are ideal as grafting stock for this genus.

All our Echinocereus plants are grown in a sandy leafmould mixture to which we add a small amount of bone meal, gypsum and superphosphate. Certain of the slower growing species, such as the pectinate-spined kinds, prefer a mixture of approximately 60% sand to...

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40% leafmould by volume. Ideal growing conditions in temperate climates, means under glass, which is shaded throughout the hottest months of the year, when these plants will flower profusely.

SEED SOWING for 1962.

Many of you will now be deciding on the species of seeds to be grown this year. To the newcomer to the hobby in particular, I do urge you to follow the method and instructions for seed raising as set out in the small book 'CACTI from SEED'-The-Easy-Way.

From the many letters I have received since writing this small book, many of you have had success where in previous years you had not been so successful - the few who have run into trouble and have written to me has enabled me to trace most of the causes of failure.

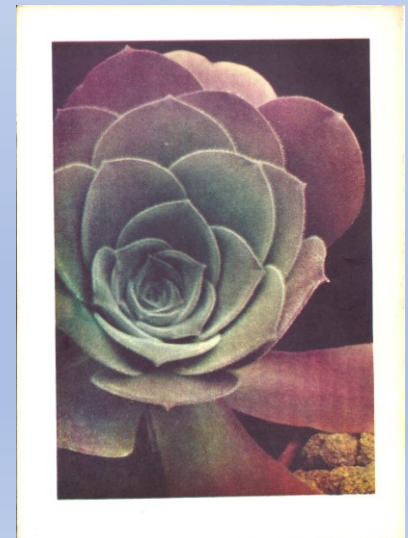
Perhaps the most common has been the actual mixture of finely sifted leafmould and sand being changed.

NOTE: The proportions given in the book as roughly one-part of fine leafmould to eight or nine parts of gritty sand is CORRECT. After mixing and after sowing the soil must look 'sandy' - remember tiny roots on a slow growing cactus seedling MUST have a very sandy soil for the first few months after germination.

A few people wrote to say their soil looked too sandy and so had added extra leafmould to make it stronger, in a few weeks their soil was green on top and the new seedlings had damped-off. REMEMBER - 1 to 8 or 9 is the correct mixture so do not be tempted to alter it, you will regret it if you do.

Do not be too hasty to sow your seeds either unless you are already expert at seed raising. The beginner who waits until spring weather is with us will find his or her results far quicker and more uniform. E.L.

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A few shots showing the inside of the greenhouses as they are shown in the magazines.



THE EXOTIC COLLECTION.

This is a view looking North on one side of our main showhouse. To the left are Mammillarias and climbing Selenicerei and the columnar stems of Pilocereus palmeri. On the right, Lobivias below, the slower growing Mammillarias on the top-shelf and sundry succulents in the hanging pots.

MAMMILLARIAS in THE EXOTIC COLLECTION.



Forms of *M. candida* at bottom left, with forms of *M. geminispinosa* behind including the cristate one, plus *Selenicerei* at the base of the post.



Another view depicting the same species, plus a large clump of *M. compressa* to the right of centre and *M. hahniana* v. *werdermanniana* at bottom right, with one plant also in flower.

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GREENHOUSE VIEW. (Pages 60 & 61)

This view is taken from near the south end of our largest greenhouse which measures some 150ft, (50 metres) long. It only shows the eastern side looking north. As mentioned earlier the *Gymnocalycium*s can be seen in their raised beds beneath the 5 white struts (top right). The raised bed (bottom right) contains mostly S.American *Tephrocacti* or (dwarf growing *Opuntias*). The shelf above contains pots of *Ariocarpus*, *Neogomesia* etc.. The raised bed (bottom left) contains *Echinocacti* and *Ferocacti* while beyond this are sundry cacti prior to the mixed planting of *Euphorbias* and *Aloes*.

January

1962

MONTHLY NOTES

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Photographed & produced by the authors -

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16, Franklin Road.

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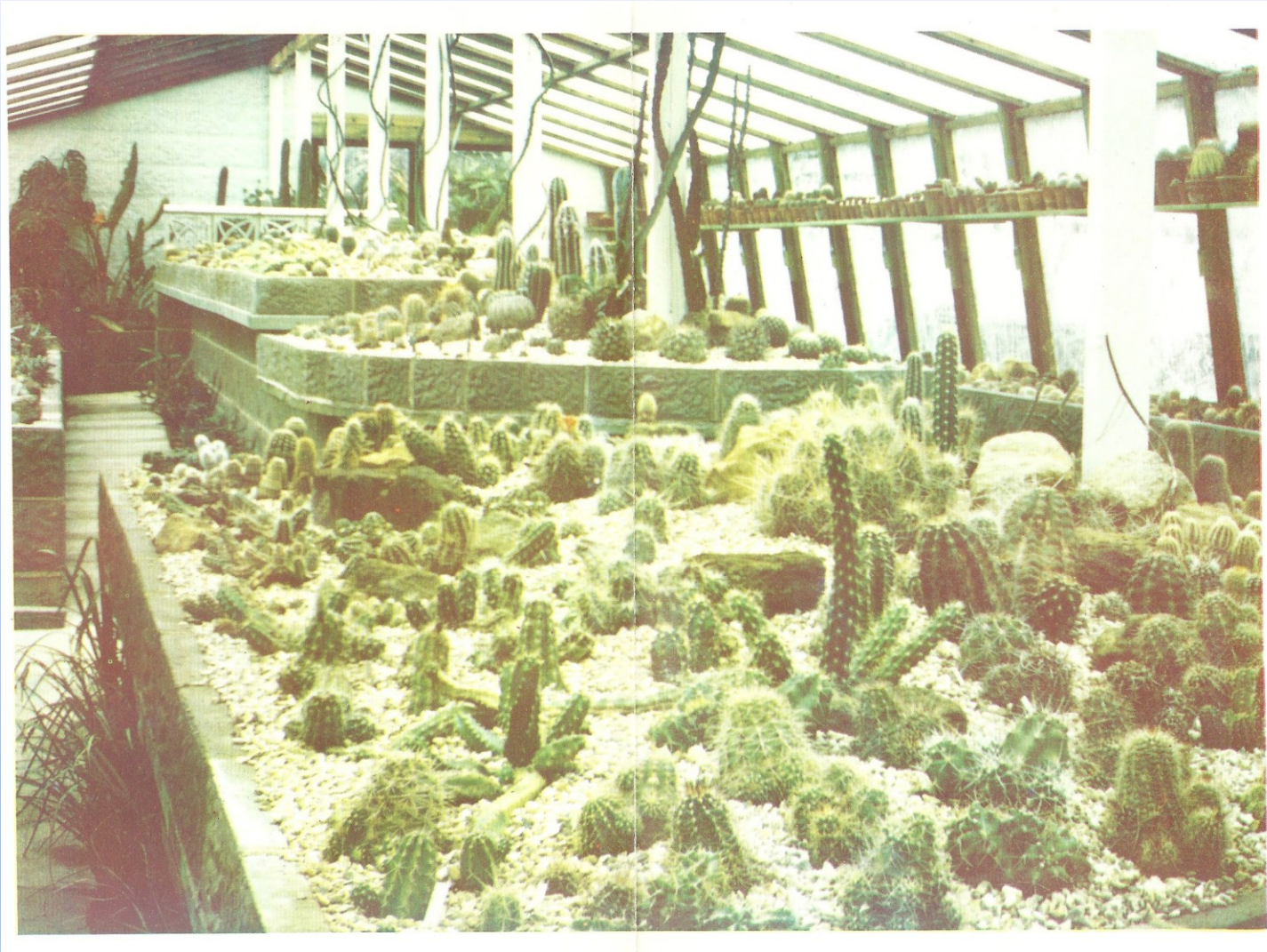
The inside of the front cover of each issue followed a similar format giving details of the front, centre and rear colour plates and included for the first time the names and numbers of the reference plates issued that month.

Many of the articles included in the magazine were autobiographical in relation to what they were doing at the Collection throughout the year.

There was also a lot of plain and straight-forward advice for cultivating a wide variety of plants that were illustrated in the magazine.

Edgar also had a quaint style where he would CAPITALISE words that he wanted people to REMEMBER. Some words were underlined as well for added EMPHASIS.

A few shots showing the inside of the greenhouses as they are shown in the magazines.

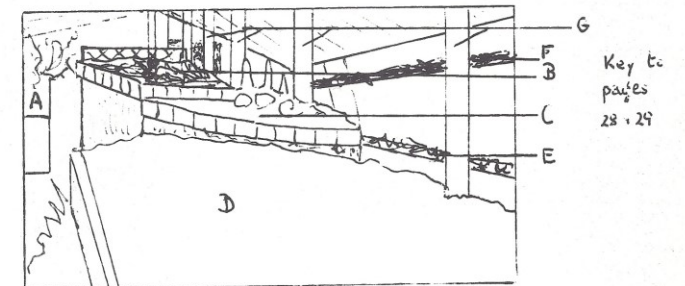


Our MAIN SHOWHOUSE.

The centre page this month shows just over a quarter of this house, some 150ft (50 metres) long, the picture being taken from the south side of the centre Echinocereus staging bed looking north towards the main entrance doors. One flower only is visible as the photograph was taken in April 1969.

The following Key to the illustration may be found useful, also members who may wish to know more about constructing raised beds should refer to February Notes last.

- A. Only the edge of this 3'6" wide bed can be seen with its *Astrophytum*s at the southerly end, and mainly *Echeverias*, *Dudleyas* and some tree *Crassulas* to the north.
- B. Raised staging bed housing almost our entire collection of *Mammillarias*, *Dolichotheles* etc.
- C. Raised staging bed, containing *Copiapoas* on the west side and *Coryphanthas* in the centre with a few *Cephaloceri*, also-*Stetsonia coryne* and *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*.
- D. An island staging bed containing almost our complete collection of *Echinocerei*, with a few *Cephalocerei* and also *Monvilleas* etc as taller growing kinds in the centre.
- E. A raised bed built on the greenhouse floor as with (A) and containing *Lobivias*, *Notocacti*, *Parodias*, *Thelocacti* and *Neolloydias*.
- F. Shelf housing a few additional *Mammillarias*, *Pediocacti*, *Stenocacti* (*Echinofossulocacti*), *Echinomastus*, and various fine specimens of the Genus- *Melocactus*. These latter plants are housed in our warmest house for the winter.
- G. The centre posts support various species of *Selenicerei*.





The December 1970 issue saw Brian starting out on his epic “16,000 miles in search of cacti” travelogue that ran to 36 parts.

October 1974 saw a more restrained travelogue that just covered Florida, followed by travelogues around Mexico and then the Netherlands Antilles.

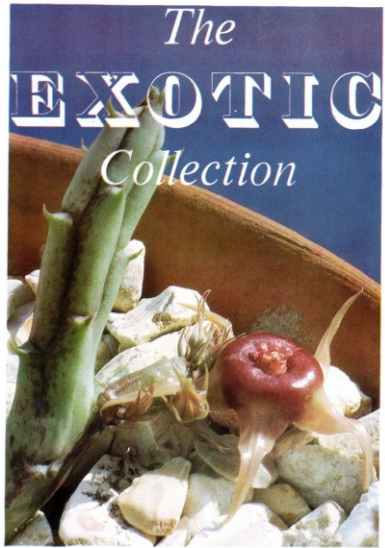
These were followed by tales of similar travels to the Canary Islands and one about the west coast of the USA, another epic of over 30 parts.

Edgar passed away in 1980 and Brian and Sally continued to run the Collection and magazine until mid 1987.

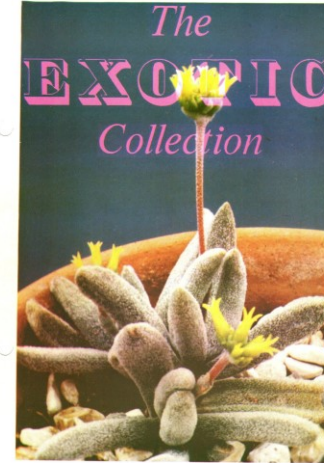
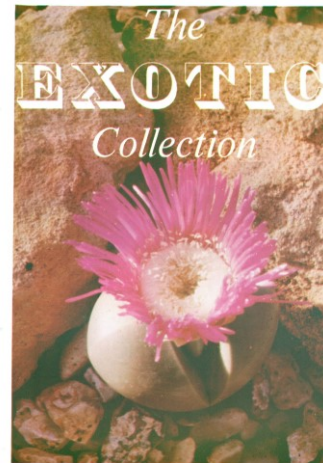
After that they moved to Gibraltar taking with them most of the plants which formed part of the collection in the Botanical Gardens on the Island.

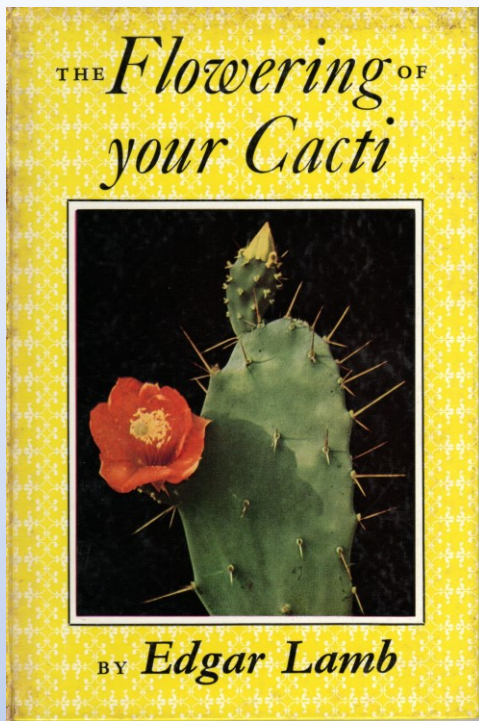
Brian passed away in 2015.

The magazines are quite hard to find, so should you see any they are worth purchasing and reading. They may be a little naïve by modern standards of production but they have a charm all of their own.



JANUARY 1986



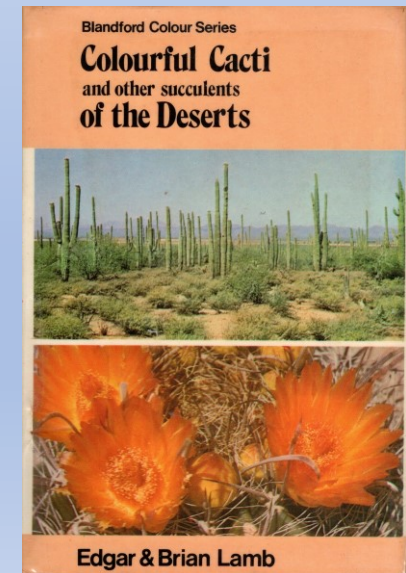
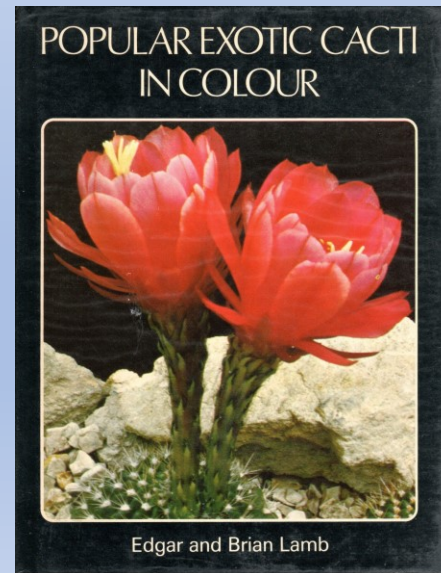
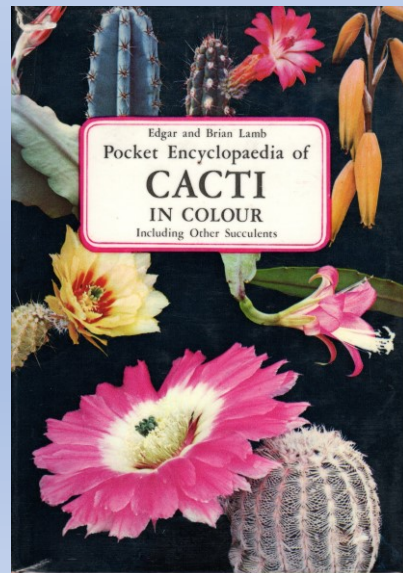
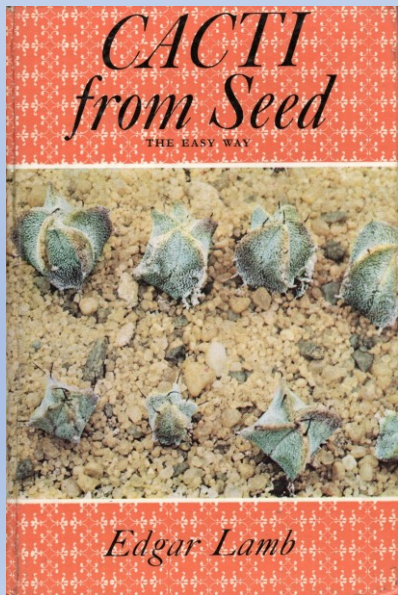


Since the Exotic Collection closed Edgar and Brian Lamb dropped out of the limelight in the Cactus World and some may say they fell out of favour.

At the height of their fame, however, they would have been known by every collector in the country and indeed throughout the world.

Many may consider them out-dated and not worth bothering about, but if it wasn't for the Lamb's and the Exotic Collection many of us would have never got into the hobby in the first place.

They did a huge amount to popularise the hobby in the 60's and 70's and their high quality colour photography in their books was way ahead of its time.



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