

THE NATIONAL CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY - MANCHESTER BRANCH

NEWS BULLETIN - JUNE ISSUE

Dear Members,

Hello again, the summer is here so they say, we hope that all the plants in everybodys collection which have survived the winter are now growing well and flowering to your own satisfaction.

If everyone in the Manchester branch co-operates they will have a busy time during July. On the eleventh of July there will be an afternoon meeting at the Parrswood Horticulture Centre at 3pm. If members board the bus numbered either 95 or 96 at Market Street or the number 40 in Albert Square and ask for Parrswood Centre, one should arrive quite safely. In the evening there will be a Plant Identification Session and a Quiz.

The Summer Outing will be on July the twelfth and members will be able to travel in luxurious comfort to the Rhyl Botanical Gardens, which we understand are very interesting. From there we are going onto a large Cactus collection in Colwyn Bay. If any members who wish to go on the Summer Outing would give their names to Mr. K. Robinson as soon as possible, he will do all the necessary things to ensure a successful trip.

This is the second Bulletin and has just managed to get into print with just the correct number of articles. We would like to appeal to all the members of the Manchester Branch for contributions to their own Bulletin on any subject concerned with the growing of cacti and succulents.

Colin and Carole Harper

All correspondence for the Bulletin to;- 9 Woodlands Avenue, Higher Inham  
Nr. Manchester.

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The following article was received from Mr Ginns and is self-explanatory;

I am sending this to welcome the birth of the Manchester Branch Journal under whatever name it appears. I hope its span of life is longer than that of others I have known. They have lasted from one to several years but in the end they have succumbed to one or other of two fatal diseases; lack of energy on the part of the editors or failure of branch members to keep up a flow of articles. As I have experience of both of these perhaps I may be allowed a few words.

The task of editor is an exacting one and should not be combined with another office in the Branch. He or she, will be kept busy chasing after contributions but must persevere and make sure that dilatory writers submit their efforts in time even at the risk of making him/herself most unpopular. Nothing kills a branch magazine quicker than failure to appear when due. I doubt whether sufficient material will be available for a Journal appearing more than quarterly but it should unfailingly appear at every third branch meeting so that members can look forward to it. If they are told they must wait for another month they will lose interest.

A branch journal should be an intimate affair concerned with the

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doings of the branch and its members. Scientific articles are more suited to the National Journal. All the affairs of the branch should receive attention and all members should be pestered to contribute, even if only a paragraph. It is a mistake to rely on the same three or four contributors every quarter. This leads to a stereotyped production and eventually to repetition.

Many members find difficulty in thinking of something to write about so it is up to the editors to think of a list of titles and farm them out to those whom he thinks are most suitable to deal with them.

Those who do not think they can provide a full length article will probably find a statement which they agree with except for a particular piece in it. This should give them an opportunity to write for the Correspondence Column, always a popular part of a magazine. Writers can often drop in a controversial statement with the object of drawing fire in the correspondence. They may even over-emphasise their views for this purpose.

Some of the things I should like to see in branch journals are as follows;

- 1) A precis of talks given at meetings for the benefit of those not able to attend and for reference purposes.
- 2) Short character sketches of prominent branch workers to put on record the Branch's appreciation of their efforts.
- 3) Descriptions of the better collections in the area with special reference to the more striking plants.
- 4) Descriptions of any rare or interesting plants shown in monthly competitions.
- 5) Notes from those members with shares in chemical companies justifying the use of plastic pots, polythene sheeting, artificial manures and other abominations. Controlled experimental results are needed, not just personal opinions. For example, what are the lengths of spines on *Eulychnias* of equal size grown in plastic and clay pots.
- 6) Comparisons between Dutch imports grown in peat and plants grown from seed in John Innes Compost in this country.
- 7) Reports from delegates on Executive meetings.

This list could be extended indefinitely but I must leave room for other contributors.

So good luck to this new venture for one of the Society's most vigorous branches. Long may it flourish.

Mr. Ginns.

Thank you Mr. Ginns for your most illuminating article, your comments are noted by the editors and we hope that our readers take note also.

Eds.

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#### An Obituary - Mr. Binns.

The death occurred in early April of Mr. Binns. He was a very active member of the Manchester Branch, dearly beloved by everyone for his readiness in furthering the cause of the Society. He bequeathed his collection to the Manchester University Botanical Experimental Grounds to which Mr. Binns made frequent visits.

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How I raise my seedlings - Mrs. J. Hayes.

The following description of how I raise my seedlings may be of interest to some of the Cacti fraternity and most probably those who have not the facilities for fancy up-to-date propagators may find a few useful hints from these notes.

My seed is normally sown at the end of February or the end of March and each variety is sown seperately in small pots containing Eclipse No-Soil Compost which has been thoroughly moistened. Each pot is correctly labelled and placed in a polythene bag, the top of which is closed by means of either a clothes peg or a metal garden label twisted round the top of the bag.

The pots are then placed into a wooden frame covered with polythene sheets and having a roll-back polythene top for access. The size of this frame would obviously vary with individual conditions and requirements; mine is approximately 15" long, 12" wide and 9" high.

This frame stands on the wooden top to the expansion tank of the greenhouse heating system, which is a coke fired hot water boiler and I find that sufficient heat from this source is retained in the frame to give an adequate temperature for germination, and I am of the opinion that the moist atmosphere from this tank is beneficial to germination. It may be interesting to note that I have had 95% germination with this method, in three days with some varieties.

After germination has taken place the pots are removed from the propagator, taken out of the polythene bags and after making sure that the Eclipse Compost is still moist, transferred to another section of the greenhouse where they are again placed into frames, similar in construction to the propagating frame standing on moist gravel, very fine in texture, on the staging. Here the pots are kept in ideal conditions, ventilation being given as required by rolling back the polythene cover for a few inches and most important of all, never letting the Eclipse Compost get dry, and giving a little shading against strong sunshine for about the first six months.

When the spine formation is visible, pricking out into trays containing John Innes Compost, which had been sieved to remove any excess lumps or stones, is done at once and the surface of the compost is then sprinkled with fine grit and the trays moved to a slightly cooler section of the greenhouse.

After about six months in these trays the seedlings are again pricked out into similar compost to which had been added one part of 'Dentona' to three parts of compost and sufficient small grit added to make an open mixture. The seedlings in these trays being spaced about one inch apart each way.

I find that very early pricking out of the seedlings from the seed pots, followed by the second pricking and then potting on singly when the plants are ready, to have given excellent results. Watering, of course, must not be forgotten and I normally keep the seedlings moist and watered through the first winter in a temperature of 55-60°F.

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Presentation to Mr. Parkinson.

The Committee wish to thank all members who contributed to the appeal. Mr. Parkinson received the Three Volumes of H. Jacobsen - Succulent Plants. Mrs. Parkinson received a stainless steel fruit dish.

Mr. K. Robinson received Mr. Parkinson, and then proceeded to give an account of his life with the Manchester Branch and Mr. Partington made the presentation.

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Private Collections

The owners of the following collections are prepared to receive visits from members;

Mr. A. Fitzjohn. 8 Pearn Road. Burnage. Manchester I9	X
Mrs. H. Richardson. Woodville Road. Bowden. Cheshire.	X
Mr. C. Partington. 38 Kingsway. Worsley. Manchester	June 28th. July 26th. Sept 6th
Mr. A. Hanson. I60 Newcarth Road. Walkden. Lancs.	X
Mr. W. Bevin. 3 Westover Road. Davyhulme. Manchester.	X

X - Would visitors please go to these collections only by previous appointment please. Thank You.

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The rest of this page is reserved for a Correspondence Column.  
So let us have your letters please !