

EDITORIAL

Hello again! I'm pleased to be able to tell you that some interesting articles have come in this month. They will make enjoyable reading, particularly as some come from the opposite side of the planet.

It has been a busy month for many of us. The show has been and gone, more of that later. For those who were able to visit Ray Alcock's collection it was a veritable eye-opener in more ways than one. Hopefully someone will grace these pages with an article about the day. The plants are at their most demanding as I try to keep up with the watering and repotting schedule amidst the busy work programme.

This Sunday 11.07.99 provides a counter attraction for those of you who are not going to the event at Ness Gardens. Four collections are open to the members if they wish to attend. We are being the hosts to a visit from some members of **Sheffield Branch**. The day starts at **STUART RATCLIFFE'S** collection at **11.00** (location and details available on a map). The next venue is **GEOFF BAILEY'S** greenhouse. If you are in at the start I will be leading the way otherwise ask for details. Approximate time of arrival is **13.30 - 14.00**. After leaving here at about **16.00 - 16.30** the journey wends its way to **HARRY MAK'S** smallish but very interesting collection (one not to be missed). Finally at **18.00ish** the last call is at **PETER BINT'S** mountain range

where a buffet will be available upon arrival and the visit will terminate at whatever time you wish to leave. You are free to join or leave this tour at any time whatsoever you please. However, to facilitate the catering arrangements, I would appreciate information this evening that you wish to participate in the buffet. It's a grand opportunity to socialise and to meet members of another branch. The previous visit by Bradford Branch was a rousing success.

HISTORY OF THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

This article appears by permission of the above Society.

Our Society was formed by Dr. Vic Murray in February 1963, when, as a member of the Royal Horticultural Society, he approached several people whom he knew who grew some succulents. The first meeting, which was attended by fourteen, was held at Dr. Murray's home in Ascot.

Our first public display in the Horticultural Pavilion at the Brisbane Exhibition (an annual event drawing tens of thousands through its gates) was in August, 1963. This display has appeared yearly since then, with various moves around the Pavilion in that time. These displays were our only means of reaching the public until we commenced our Combined Show with the Bromeliad Society of Queensland in 1978. For many years, extra displays have been held in various shopping centres, City Hall, and the Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens by a team of Members from the Society. We have staged two

“Succulenticons” (biennial Australian C & S Conferences held in different cities each time) successfully, and Easter 1998 was our third.

Our Journal, Dinteranthus, was commenced in May 1965, and has been issued on a more or less quarterly basis ever since. Membership has at times reached over 300, but seems to steady at around 150 in most years.

During all these years, we have had some well-known overseas growers and book writers visit us – John Pilbeam, Bill Maddams, Des Cole and John Lavranos. All have contributed to our Knowledge and whenever possible we seize the opportunity to welcome overseas visitors.

In the past, due to the law in Queensland forbidding the sale of cacti (after the infamous Opuntia plague), we only sold these plants at the field days so these were well attended if you wished to increase your collection. Cacti have only just started to be sold at our Combined Show, the first time in 1991.

When you read the last paragraph of this history it makes you realise how lucky we are to have such freedom to purchase the plants we love. Ed.

PACHYPODIUMS

This is the second article to come from Australia via the Internet. For this we are indebted to the author, Rudy Waanders, who has graciously permitted it to be printed directly into our newsletter.

Pachypodiums were first collected at various places in the **Madagascan Highlands** by the **Reverend R. Baron** in the latter part of the 19th. Century. The first Pachypodium to reach Europe came from the southern-most end of the range in the Eastern Cape Province. This is where the two allied caudiciform species, *P. succulentum* and *P. bispinosum*, were collected by the great Swedish explorer, Carl Peter **Thunberg**, during his travels sometime between 1771-75.

These are some of the many Pachypodiums:

MADAGASCAR GROUP

geayi
lameri
rosulatum
rosulatum v. gracilis
densiflorum
densiflorum v. brevicalyx
baronii v. baronii
baronii v. windsorii
decaryi
horombense
brevicaule

AFRICAN GROUP

lealii v. saundersii
namaquanum
lealii
bispinosum

Their growing conditions vary. The following are a few selected examples:

GRANITE

densiflorum v. brevicalyx
rosulatum
rosulatum v. gracilis
namaquanum
lealii ssp. saundersii

QUARTZ AND QUARTZ-MIXED GRANITE

brevicaule

LIMESTONE

baronii v. windsorii
decaryi

My growing conditions:

You may have other ways of growing and my way may not suit you, so please just use it as a guide. I do not allow my plants to dry out too much even through winter. I believe the roots should not dry out for any length of time. All my large plants grow in all kinds of weather as they are too large for my shed. The collection ranges in size and maturity. *P. rosulatum* and *P. horombense* in 200mm pots, with the plants branching out to 600mm wide and 600mm high. These will split the pots soon. *P. lealii* spp *saundersii* in a 400mm pot with a base of 180mm round and stems branching out to 1200mm wide and 600mm high. This plant is grown from seed collected from my own plants, sown in December 1987: 9 years old (at the time of writing! Ed.)! I also have these two stems which are side cuttings off my largest *P. lealii* spp. *saundersii*. In one piece the base got yellow rot through it. Each stem is 150mm at the base and the branches spread 1200mm wide and 900mm high. This is starting to fill a 500mm pot. This was the first Pachypodium I ever grew. It started off in my collection as a seedling from Tarrington Exotics in 1987. It is nearing the middle of September and my *P. lealii* spp. *saundersii* are coming

out of their winter rest. Signs of leaves are forming.

The *P. horombense* did not drop all its leaves during our so-called 'winter' but new shoots and leaves, plus some flower stems are coming forth. *P. rosulatum* did drop about half its leaves and they are now showing some new growth and flower stems. The *P. densiflorum* v. *brevicalyx* are also responding to the coming of spring. It is good to see the new growth forming after the winter rest because then you can say, "Well, I may have them for another year (I hope)." Two years ago, I had two *P. brevicaule* which each filled 5 inch pots and were doing so well. September of that year, they started to bud and for some reason they turned up their toes. It was a sad day in my life as they went so quickly.

But on a brighter note....well, it was nearly not a brighter note! In January 1996, my *P. lamerei*, which is 3' 8" high (1120mm), started to rot up one side, about half way up. I scooped out the rot and coated it with sulphur powder to help heal the wound. Luckily it started to do so! Then a stem started to form on the crown. "Yes!" I thought. It was a flower stack forming. What a sight, all these blooms. So I pollinated as many as I could. I was lucky to have 10 pods, but only four of them reached any size. The rest dried up. The remaining ones, at about 120 x 50mm, are still putting on size.

My Pachypodium potting mix is just my normal cactus mix with some scoria (I guess that means grit to us) added to it. It must be very open - they do not like 'wet feet'.

REBUTIA

This article was written for the journal Dinteranthus in 1998 by DOUG SNELL and he has kindly consented to it being reproduced here. Our thanks.

The genus *Rebutia* was established in 1895 by Karl M. Schumann (1851 - 1904). Schumann was a German botanist at the Botanical Museum of Berlin. The name *Rebutia* honours P. rebut, a 19th. century French cactus expert and dealer.

As with many South American cacti genera, there is much discussion about the make-up of the genus *Rebutia*. It really depends on your position as either a splitter or a lumper. Merv. Whitehouse summed up the situation very well in his presentation on *Parodia* - you will tend towards either the 'Old Testament' or the 'New' (see article in *Dinteranthus* 13[8]).

The CITES Checklist recognises 29 accepted species and 9 provisional ones (it appears there might be a couple more which were left out by mistake). In reaching these figures, five previously recognised genera - *Aylostera*, *Digitorebutia* (sometimes called *Mediolobivia*), *Rebutia*, *Sulcorebutia* and *Weingartia* have been merged to form the presently recognised genus of *Rebutia*. I am sure the battle of names will continue but as a Society we have accepted the CITES classifications so for our purposes, all the aforementioned genera will be regarded as *Rebutia*. From a collector's point of view, they are all very similar and originate from the same general geographic area and

have similar cultivational requirements.

The plants come from Bolivia and Northern Argentina, growing in mountainous country on the eastern side of the Andes mountains at altitudes of between 1500 - 4000 m. AMSL, a situation which subjects plants to a wide diurnal temperature range and fierce sunlight high in ultra violet rays.

Plants are described as small globular cacti, many of which form large clusters. It would appear that in cultivation they grow larger and cluster more vigorously than in habitat. There is a variety of body forms and spination. Plant body characteristics can be from densely spined to less densely spined and warty tubercled. The crowns tend to be devoid of spines and wool. The spines are usually soft to touch - not your classical vicious cactus. The sap is never milky. Most of my *Rebutias* show a tendency towards being short columnar plants. This may be due to a reduction in light intensity with the ageing of my plant roof material.

As with other genera, subdivisions have been established within the main classification but even here there are disagreements between various authors. Those who are interested in this aspect should refer to the appropriate texts.

Rebutias across the board have flowers which are relatively large in relation to their bodies. Flowers are borne low on the body and are in the brilliant red, orange or yellow range. However there are some which are white or near white (*R. leucanthema* and *R. heliosa* v. *narvaecensis* [syn *espinosae*])

Flower width is in the 1.5 - 4cm range.

According to most writers, cultivation is easy and the genus is recommended for beginners. This is not my experience and I have found them difficult to keep going. This does not surprise me that much though, when we consider their habitat conditions compared to those we have here in Brisbane. It would be interesting to hear from other members about how their Rebutias have fared in their particular conditions. A short article or perhaps a letter to the Editor of *Dinteranthus* would be valuable.

GO ON HAVE A GO by PETER HENDY

As some of you may know, I like to travel round to other meetings in the area and hopefully glean some of the wealth of knowledge that is on hand from members of our Society.

The title of the May meeting intrigued me: "Where Angels Fear to Tread" and the speaker was Rodney Sims who, in my ignorance, I did not know (for those like me, he is the National Shows Secretary).

Expecting the usual talk accompanied by slide projection, I was rather surprised to find a table set out with a dozen or so cacti and succulent plants and a notice board. However, once Mr Sims commenced with his talk, any thoughts of slides became irrelevant, such was his enthusiasm. He explained how judges award points for various features of the plant but the message was "relax, it's a hobby and meant to be fun". And with regard to showing, "Go on, have a go."

As a fairly recent 'returnee' to the hobby, I did not think there was a much in my collection that was up to Show standards until I looked at the categories in the Fylde Coast Branch's Show Schedule. The Show was to be held in Lytham on May 16th. and there were Novice Classes for both cacti and succulents.

After much "shall I, shan't I", I finally decided to "Have a Go" on the evening of the closing day for entries and, much to my surprise, (and prompting not a little trepidation), my telephone entry was accepted.

Come the morning of the Show, there we were fully equipped (as Rodney Sims had suggested) with spare plants, top dressing, water spray, new labels etc, etc. and off we went to Lytham. On entering the hall I was 'gobsmacked': some of the plants looked as though they had come straight from habitat. However, I was met by the Lytham Show Secretary and shown the relevant table.

At the time there were no other entries in the Novice Class, so I set about displaying my plants, trying to look as inconspicuous as possible, before making a quick exit and going on to Fleetwood for the rest of the day. The Show Schedule advised that plants could be collected after 4.15pm so we duly arrived back about 3.45pm, not knowing what to expect. This was the day for being 'gobsmacked': my plants had won 1st. and 2nd. in both classes and also my entry had won the Witt Trophy for most points gained by a Novice!

However, my elation soon changed to a rather deflated feeling when I realised that mine were the only entries! Still, as someone pointed out<

at least I had entered and it had been fun!

So there we are another Trophy added to Manchester's collection! The Premiership Trophy, the F.A. Cup, the European Cup, Manchester City's Promotion Trophy and now the Witt Trophy! Like City, I also declined a parade through the city, due to holiday commitments! So fellow hobbyists, no matter what level you're at, "Come on and Have a Go", it can be fun!!!

BRANCH SHOW AT DAISY NOOK

a review by Christopher Leather

The last Show I attended was, for one reason or another, the Wythenshaw show in 1995. I didn't think I was going to be able to exhibit any plants, as I usually work on a Saturday. However a rather fortunate change in staff duties meant I was able to have a Saturday off instead of a day during the week.

The map supplied to get us to the venue served quite well, but due to an error on our part we got lost, though we eventually found our way to Daisy Nook. I did wonder on our way there if the Garden Centre was a bit out of the way, but on our return on Sunday it wasn't as far as I thought.

I was quite impressed with the layout of the garden centre. Both plants and sundries were well set out and there was certainly plenty to choose from. (It must take forever to water them all.) The prices could have been cheaper though!

The Show seemed to have more exhibitors than in previous years, however there did not seem to be as

many plants on show. Having said that. The plants there all seemed to be in excellent condition. One that springs to mind was the Notocactus that was in flower. I knew I should have taken a picture on Saturday when the sun was shining ~ Sunday was overcast and the flowers didn't open. Also nice to see were the *Gymnocalyciums* (my favourite genus) and the *Mammillarias*.

The only down side to the show being held in a greenhouse became apparent on Sunday as the greenhouse leaked. This spoiled many of the certificates, though most were rewritten. A possible suggestion for future shows is to invest in some polythene sheets that can be used to cover the plants during the night to keep off the rain. Hopefully none of the plants have suffered damage as a result.

During the time I was at the show there seemed to be quite a few members of the public showing an interest in the plants. I think the plants sold quite well, even at the more expensive prices. The cacti in the Garden Centre seemed quite well looked after ~ which makes a change, though a couple were incorrectly labelled.

Finally, our thanks must go to Daisy Nook Garden Centre and all the branch members who organised and attended the show.

I would like to echo Chris's final thought by offering to the staff at Daisy Nook and especially Richard who went to such pains to help us get it right. A hearty cheer of gratitude to Vic for his handling of the secretarial duties for the first time. It gets easier each time Vic. Ed.