

## EDITORIAL

For the first time in three years I have had to apply shading to the windows of my greenhouses to prevent scorch. I tend to wilt in hot, humid conditions so that nothing gets done in the plant world during the hottest hours of the day. However I suspect the plants are revelling in the desert like conditions provided they are kept moist at the roots, especially those in small pots that can easily dry out in a day. It's strange how amateur forecasters can predict heatwaves whilst the professionals prevaricate about such conditions.

By the time you read this letter the Branch will have announced itself to a new audience at the Worsley Garden Centre. To any of you who came and helped in any capacity, a hearty thank you. Hopefully we will have found some new members from the venture.

To those of you who were able to visit David Rushforth's collection during July, I trust you enjoyed the experience. I was unable to go on the appointed day and called on the Sunday before and had a pleasant hour or so browsing this very interesting collection.

Sheffield Branch, in the guise of three members, visited Manchester on the Sunday after the July meeting and they were very impressed with what they saw and the hospitality afforded them. Though it was a pity so few people were able to make the trip, it was a

worthwhile exercise in Branch relations. A sincere thanks to those Manchester members who were able to join the tour at whatever stage they managed. It is expected that a return journey will be made to Sheffield by any members who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity. Watch this space!

## REBUTIA

*This is a continuation of the article by DOUG SNELL that was started in the July issue. If you were not at that meeting copies are available.*

Recommended growing conditions call for a gritty, porous mix with a PH slightly on the acidic side. Strong light is essential. Plants will accept heavy watering during warm weather but do allow the pot to dry out between waterings. Remember that the most common cause of trouble with growing Rebutia is overwatering. In habitat they grow on steeply sloping ground where water rarely stands for any length of time. Rebutia will take low temperatures when dry and do require a winter rest period.

Although Rebutia will survive infrequent repotting, it is better that they are repotted regularly (particularly when the plants are young). Repotting will increase the number and size of stems and will increase the number of flowers produced. Half pots (where the width is greater than the depth) are recommended, even for the thick rooted species which rarely push their roots down more than 100 mm (4 inches) or so. Repot yearly until reaching about 100mm in size, then every two or three years will suffice. Be guided by the size of the plant in relation to the pot. Repotting is best

done at the end of winter but it can be done at other times. Do not water for a couple of weeks after repotting to reduce the risk of root rot via broken roots.

Propagation is by seed or vegetative methods. Seeds germinate readily but be aware that viability drops rapidly when the seeds are more than 12 months old. Rebutias hybridise readily so it is possible that your treasured plant may not be true to the name on the label. This has been noted in wild populations and has given rise to a great many names for plants which are essentially the same species.

Rebutias are subject to the same range of pests and diseases as other cacti; mealy bug in particular, fungus and rot problems brought on by overwatering and high humidity. On this last point, I think we need to be particularly careful about watering during the period of high humidity which we experience here during mid-summer. (*The same could be levelled at our climate. Ed.*)

John Pilbeam has recently published a review of Rebutias but has confined himself to the pre-CITES Checklist sense. The book is recommended as a first class reference for that group of plants which made up the old genera. Unfortunately, the book is expensive in Australia, being about \$110 (softbound) and \$130 (hardcover) after postage and packaging. The illustrations are very good and Pilbeam brings together the many new plants found over the past thirty odd years. There is a good reconciliation of collector's field numbers with other named species. There is a mention of *R. haagei* and its varieties, its relationship with *R. pygmaea* (*R. haagei* is one of those omitted from CITES). This species also receives

much attention from the Preston-Mafhams in their book, *Cacti—The Illustrated Dictionary* (see p. 198).

To me, all Rebutias are attractive plants, especially when in full flower. I feel it would be hard to single out recommended species but there is one which, judging from photographs, would be nice to have. This is *R. spegazziniana* with its dark, blood-red flowers and white stigma which bends over and lays along the petals.

## SURFING THE NET

*Following previous months' information from the web here are two more offerings that may prove interesting to read. Once again we are indebted to Ivor who has passed the fruits of his 'travels' on to me for publication.*

## WEB PAGE OF THE GERMAN CACTUS SOCIETY

The Deutsche Kakteen-Gesellschaft e. V. ("German Cactus Society") was founded in Berlin on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1892.. At that time, cacti were still imported in large numbers on freighters from the New World and then displayed in Botanical Gardens as "exotic plants" and offered for sale in numerous garden centres as "botanical rarities". Cacti were considered big hits at that time!

As a matter of fact, a highly fascinating and rewarding form of desire for these bizarre creations developed and the growing of cacti experienced an unprecedented rise.

The curator of the Botanical Garden in Berlin-Dahlem at that time, Professor Dr. Karl Schumann, realised the trend

of interest and founded the cactus society. Nobody would have anticipated that this association would have led to such a large union of fanciers as our present day Deutsche Kakteen-Gesellschaft e. V.

Nowadays we have approximately 7000 members here and abroad. They are botanists, hobby experts and lots of window sill collectors. The Deutsche Kakteen-Gesellschaft e. V., named DKG, supplies the members with a cactus magazine on a monthly basis, containing tips for cultivation, travel reports and lots of coloured photographs and information on meetings.

Specialist interests are catered for by a number of specialist groups or Arbeitsgruppe, some of which have their own web pages;

- Arbeitsgruppe Echinocereus
- Arbeitsgruppe Echinopsi-Hybriden
- Fachgesellschaft andere Sukkulente e. V.: (FGaS)

**\*As a matter of fact, we attach great importance to passing on our knowledge such as cultivation experience and the like.\*** The DKG has an extensive library where our domestic members can take out copies free of charge. And we make available to our members a valuable slide library with tens of thousands of interesting plant slides.

Whoever wants to learn more about cacti and other succulents near his home location, is welcomed by one of our 123 local groups distributed all over Germany.

We also make it our duty to give information as regards preservation of species to ensure that all members and interested persons are brought up to date. As you see, we are a society of plant lovers without borders and perfectly organised.

Our aim is the promotion of actual knowledge relating to cacti and other succulents as well as passing such knowledge on to our members.

*The starred and underlined sentence is, I believe, the most important one in the whole passage. I have been asking you to pass on such tidbits since the induction of this newsletter. You may hold the key to someone else's success with a plant that they find difficult. You may have found a way to solve a variety of problems. Nobody, I repeat, nobody is a complete expert and you will have something, no matter how small, to add to the reservoir of knowledge.*

#### **WEB PAGE OF THE PEPEROMIA & EXOTIC PLANT SOCIETY**

About a thousand species of Peperomias have been described, mainly from South America, although a few (17) are found in Africa. Many of these plants are perennial epiphytes growing on rotten logs and they have thick stems and fleshy leaves, some with leaf windows. Most Peperomias have tiny flowers which are packed into a characteristic greenish or brown conical spike like an inverted catkin. A few species have more attractive flowers such as the white scented clusters of spikes produced by *P. fraseri*.

Many species are non-succulent and a few of these (eg. *P. caperata*) are popular house plants. A variety of



cultivars of *P. caperata* with attractively marked foliage are widely available through the horticultural trade, and a variety of compact *Peperomias* can sometimes be found among selections of plants intended for bottle gardens.

Succulent *Peperomias* are not as commonly available as they deserve to be, even from specialist nurseries, and this probably reflects their low profile in cactus and succulent society shows and plant sales. They include several species which form tubers, and although these are said to be difficult in cultivation this is also true of many widely grown succulent plants. *P. campylotrapa* is a deciduous, tuber-forming plant from the cooler regions of Mexico. After flowering, the aerial growth dies away and the tuber can survive long periods of drought. *P. pachypodioides* from Mexico forms a large caudex and could be of interest to collectors of caudiciform plants.

#### CULTIVATION.

*Peperomias* are best cultivated in a light, well drained compost containing plenty of humus and do well in shallow containers. Coming from tropical rain forest habitats, they love warm, humid conditions and most need a minimum temperature of 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit (10-13 deg. C). However, the stems and foliage can be prone to rotting and *Peperomias* should be watered sparingly from below (especially in winter) with soft water, avoiding wetting the crown of the plant. In warm climates *Peperomias* can be grown outside as ground cover or as epiphytes on tree trunks, but beware of slugs which enjoy the fleshy foliage.

Apart from the tendency to rot if overwatered, *Peperomias* can also suffer from ringspot which is manifested as distorted foliage with chlorotic or necrotic rings on the leaves (chlorotic means: lack of chlorophyll leading to a sickly yellow colouring; and necrotic means: decay or rot, cancer like degradation of plant parts). This disease may be caused by cucumber mosaic virus and the only treatment is to destroy infected material.

*Peperomias* can be propagated from leaf or tip cuttings, although the variegated species grow mainly from tip cuttings.

*In spite of the doom and gloom of the penultimate paragraph, I can tell you that any Peperomias I have grown, or seen grown by others, have fared well in normal cactus and succulent growing conditions. The only requirement essential, as stated above, is to keep them warm in winter.*

#### THE CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY of New South Wales Inc.

*Following last month's information about Queensland here is another offering from Australia. Those of you who are linked to the web will be able to gain immediate access and if you would like to know more but don't have the means of access I'm sure help will be forthcoming.*

*It is amazing just how the following Society can be likened to our Branch. It would be a really good idea if somebody would like to align themselves with the Society and possibly provide regular feedback.*

Founded in 1957.

Patron: Mr Frank Howarth, director,  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

#### **Mission Statement**

**The objects of the Society shall be to promote interest in and disseminate knowledge of Cacti and Other Succulents and of horticulture generally.**

The Cactus and Succulent Society of New South Wales is based in Sydney, on the East coast of Australia. Australia is noted for many things but none more so than our world famous Opera House.

**Our origin:** On the afternoon of May 11<sup>th</sup>. 1957, some 30 enthusiasts met at a private house in Sydney, formed a society, elected a Committee, and an Editor, and immediately set about publishing a Journal. So began the said Society.

**Journal:** Since June 1957 the Society has published, quarterly, the "Cactus and Succulent Journal", which is posted to all members. It contains details of meetings and visits and a number of articles on C&S subjects. It is illustrated with b/w drawings and photos as well as colour photos.

**Meetings:** Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month, excluding January. The venue is open from 7.30pm for plant, book and pot sales. There is an extensive library from which members who attend meetings may borrow. Refreshments are provided. Visitors are welcome. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in our membership and it is our aim to pass this on to new members, particularly junior members. Speakers and subjects are chosen with considerable thought being given to

the needs of all. Workshops are also a feature, the most popular being our Grafting Workshop.

**Visits to collections:** Every month the Society visits members' collections throughout the State. Plants are for sale at most of these visits.

**Shows:** The Society stages two competitive shows each year; an Autumn Show in May and a Spring Show in November. Only members are entitled to enter plants in these shows. Trophies and certificates are awarded to the winners. Many plant sellers attend so there is a wide range of plants to purchase.

**Membership:** Membership of the Society is open to anyone, of any age, interested in studying and growing cacti and the other succulents. An application form can be posted to you by contacting our membership secretary or you can download and print one.

**Australian C&S Societies:** The Cactus and Succulent Society of New South Wales is the largest C&S Society in Australia with almost 300 members throughout Australia and overseas. (*A list is available should you be interested-just ask, especially if you are intending visiting the area.*) The list will be updated periodically as valid information comes to hand.

**This Web Site:** It will, periodically, have pages added or changed; some will be of local interest whereas others will be of general interest and include photo galleries together with supporting text. The 'other succulents' will be given their fair share of attention!  
(31May99)  
[Cactus and Succulent Society of New South Wales, Australia, Home Page]

<http://cactus-mall.com/cssnsw/index.html>

The C&S Soc. of NSW is grateful to Dr. Tony Mace for hosting this page on the **Cactus Mall**.

### EVENTS OF LOCAL INTEREST

#### September

1<sup>st</sup>. Mid Cheshire: Favourite Succulents. Alan Hart.

3<sup>rd</sup>. Chester & N. Wales: Plants & Gardens of the French Riviera. Mrs. J. Davenport.

5<sup>th</sup>. City of Stoke on Trent Show, Hanley Park.

8<sup>th</sup>. Stoke: Some Magnificent Mammillarias. Bill Keen (Soc. Vice-Chairman).

8<sup>th</sup>. Shrewsbury: India. Keith Grantham

8<sup>th</sup>. Warrington: Euphorbias I have met. Dr. P. Downs.

13<sup>th</sup>. Macclesfield & E. Cheshire: Mesa Gardens. John Miller.

23<sup>rd</sup>. Liverpool: A cactophile finds Other Succulents. Dr. A. Glen.

23<sup>rd</sup>. Southport: Wonderful Ariocarпусes. Dr. G. Bailey.

#### October

1<sup>st</sup>. Chester & N. Wales: Ariocarпус. Dr. G. Bailey.

6<sup>th</sup>. Mid Cheshire: Mesembs. Ian Robinson.

11<sup>th</sup>. Macclesfield & E. Cheshire: Succulent Geranaciae.

13<sup>th</sup>. Shrewsbury: Collections in the Czech Republic. David Rushforth.

13<sup>th</sup>. Stoke: Conophytums. David Porter.

13<sup>th</sup>. Warrington: Sansevierias. Alan Butler.

26<sup>th</sup>. Southport: Travels with yet another John. John Miller.

### A FIRST AT MANCHESTER

**DATE: FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup>, OCTOBER.  
TIME & VENUE: TO BE  
ANNOUNCED SOON.**

**ULRICH HAAGE** will be visiting friend's in Scotland and talking to the Glasgow Branch. Whilst there he has agreed to come south and give the same talk at Manchester. His English is said to be good.

The world famous Haage junior 1796-1866 (F. A. Haage jnr.) who founded the well known plant business in Erfurt is an ancestor of Ulrich. I am given to understand he now manages the above nursery. His talk will be about the nursery, from 1822 to the present day. He will also be bringing plants from the nursery for sale.

This will be an excellent chance to see something that may well never be repeated. Cost, time and venue will be announced as soon as details have been finalised. **BE SURE NOT TO MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY.**

Whether he is related to the famous Walther Haage, born 1899, the well known writer on cacti and other succulents, I am unsure.