



Manchester Branch

Newsletter February 2001

EDITORIAL

February has started with a cold snap that for many of us must have been unexpected after such a mild start to the winter. Whilst being one of the quietest months of the cactus calendar it is also exciting as it is not long now before the start of the growing season. For me the season always starts with Warrington Cactus Mart when people start to emerge from hibernation. I say hibernation because I've heard from no one since the last meeting. I have checked my phone and e-mail at regular intervals but the usual deluge of copy for the newsletter has dried up. Someone must have something to say about Mammillarias.

Tonight we experiment with something different at our meetings. At the last committee meeting we agreed to experiment with a "one plant-one minute" talk at the end of the half-time interval. Please let us have your thoughts on this - you may even want to volunteer to give next months!

DIARY

12th February
Macclesfield Branch
Members slides and plants

7th March
Mid-Cheshire Branch
Northern Peru
M Williams

10th March
Manchester Branch
A seed-raising experience
David Rushforth

12th March
Macclesfield Branch
To begin at the beginning
Alasdair Glen

17th March - Saturday
North West Cactus Mart
Woolston Leisure Centre
10am to 3pm

4th April
Mid-Cheshire Branch
A Cactophile finds other Succulents
Alasdair Glen

Editor - Ivor Crook. Phone or fax

or e-mail

COMMENT ON JANUARY MEETING

One thing that stuck in my mind was the fact that you mentioned certain plant leaves go brown when they are cut, but not if they are pulled off by hand. Of course I know absolutely nothing about growing Bonsai, but when I was at college I worked in a Chip Shop part time. We sold burgers with salad on them and we found that we had to tear the lettuce by hand. If we cut it with a knife it went brown. It was the metal of the knife that caused that to happen. My point therefore is that it could be the metal blades that cause the leaves of the plants to go brown in the same way as the lettuce. Then again it might be something else completely - I don't know.

Christopher Leather

ONE PLANT - ONE MINUTE

Tylecodon paniculatus

A member of the family Crassulaceae this plant was first described in 1782 as *Cotyledon paniculatus*. It was transferred to the newly erected genus *Tylecodon* by H.R. Tolken in 1978. Incidentally, *Tylecodon* is simply an anagram of *Cotyledon*.

In habitat the plant can attain a height of up to 1.5 metres and a diameter of 0.6 metres. It is widely distributed throughout South-West Africa, Namibia and Namaqualand. It grows on the sheltered rocky slopes of the Great and Little Karoo in sheltered valleys and also on the sandy slopes along the coast.

Its most alluring feature is the yellowish brown peeling bark present throughout the year.

In my collection, like all other members of the genus *Tylecodon* it is most definitely a winter grower flowering at the end of the winter growth period. It can be deciduous during the summer though more mature plants rarely drop all or even most of their leaves. It grows well in a well drained soil based compost, that is not allowed to dry out completely in the summer months. I keep my plants frost free at +5 Centigrade throughout the winter.

BOOK REVIEW

Vygies - Gems of the Veld by E van Jaarsveld and U de Villiers Pienaar.

Cactus and Co libi

February 2001.

Hardback

£20 + £3p&p from Whitestone Gardens

At long last it has arrived. First promised last July then November it was finally published this month - and worth the wait, apparently to facilitate the inclusion of more photographs. Those familiar with Ed van Jaarsveld's previous works will know what to expect and should not be disappointed by his latest offering. The book is large by modern monograph standards; over 13 inches tall and 9 inches wide and running to 240 pages. The text is bilingual, Italian and English. 180 pages of text and lush photographs of every genus of the succulent mesembs are sandwiched between sections on biology and cultivation. Many of the genera are illustrated with photographs of both cultivated and habitat plants showing the differences between the two. This book will surely find its way to the book-shelves of all serious mesemb growers in quick time and will be admired by many others too. My advice would be to order your copy now whilst it is still available. It's excellent value.

Ivor Crook