

# Gaultonia

Newsletter of the  
**Manchester Branch**  
of the  
British Cactus and Succulent Society

Spring 2006.



*Crassula suzannae*  
Photo: Peter Bint

## **Diary Dates 2006.**

**Bradford Branch Show**  
Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Branch Visit to Mr Alan Hart,**  
Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire  
Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June

**Bradford Branch Open Day**  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June

**Sheffield Branch Show**  
8-9<sup>th</sup> July

**Bridlington Branch Open Day**  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July

**Hull Branch Open day**  
Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August

**York Branch Open Day**  
Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August

### **British C&SS International Convention**

August 17 - 20, 2006 at Loughborough University in England. Speakers from Argentina, Australia, South Africa and the USA already confirmed. For further details contact David Kirkbright, England, or e-mail at

**Oakdene Nursery (Gordon Foster) Open Day**  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August

**For details of all Branch Open days see Peter.**

## Epiphytic Cacti !?



Parodia growing epiphytically  
Photo from Frank Bowden



Melocactus ernestii  
Photo Ivor Crook

Frank recently sent me this photo he found on the internet of a group of *Parodia* plants growing epiphytically on a tree trunk. This reminded me of a similar situation I have seen in Eastern Brazil of a *Melocactus ernestii* on the trunk of a palm tree.

I was informed that the *Melocactus* fruits are eaten by parrots and the sticky seeds stick to the sides of the trees when the parrots wipe their beaks on the tree after feeding. This may explain one plant but a cluster of eleven plants?

John Miller from Warrington also informs me he has seen this situation of mature, normally ground growing plants, on the side of trees several times in Mexico. It seems it may not be as rare as we imagine.

Does anyone have any ideas as to how so many *Parodias* inhabit the trunk of this tree.

Ivor

## **Growing Rhipsalis in Orchid Compost**

By Ivor Crook

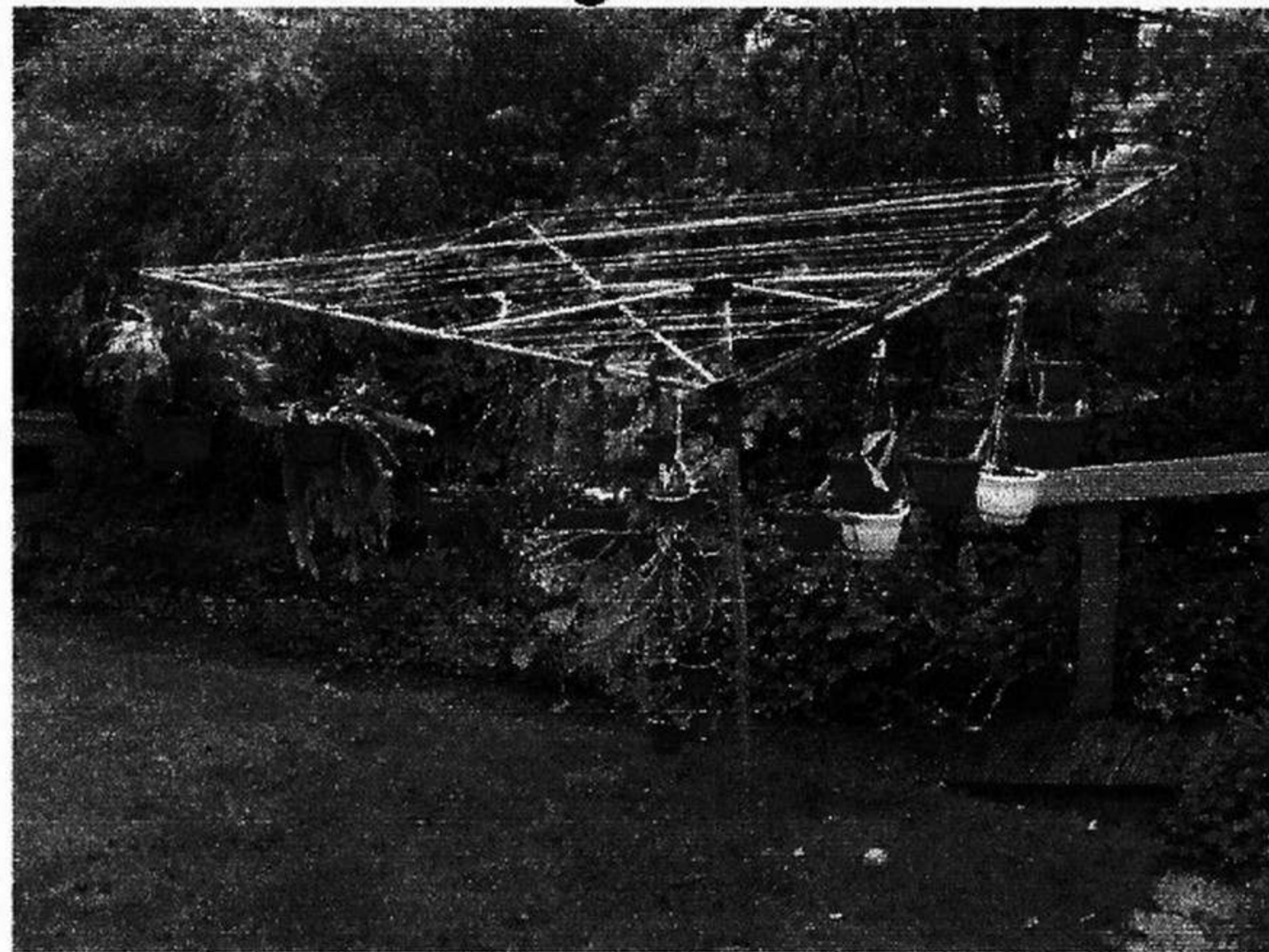
I reported my early attempts to grow rhipsalis in orchid compost about 12 months ago. I tried to emulate the natural habitat of the plants by using chipped bark as a growing medium in hanging baskets.

Early results were very good but problems have arisen over this winter. I am not sure too many of us are as eager to enter the greenhouse in the depths of winter as we are in the warmer months. Therefore, enthusiasm to take the plants outside and water them on a cold winters day and put them back in the greenhouse before they freeze was never going to be a priority task. Once a fortnight watering meant that the compost often dried out completely between waterings.

Although the vast majority of plants survived, those in compost tended to do better in drier soils over the winter than those in orchid compost. The addition of some sphagnum moss did help to retain some water and plants in a bark/sphagnum moss mix flowered best.

I think that when I next repot I will probably go with a traditional mix of John Innes or coir and gravel in the bottom half of the pot and bark/sphagnum moss mix in the top half.

As for fertilizer, my rhipsalis seem to appreciate Miracle Grow at full strength in alternate waterings.



The latest design in display stands for my rhipsalis!

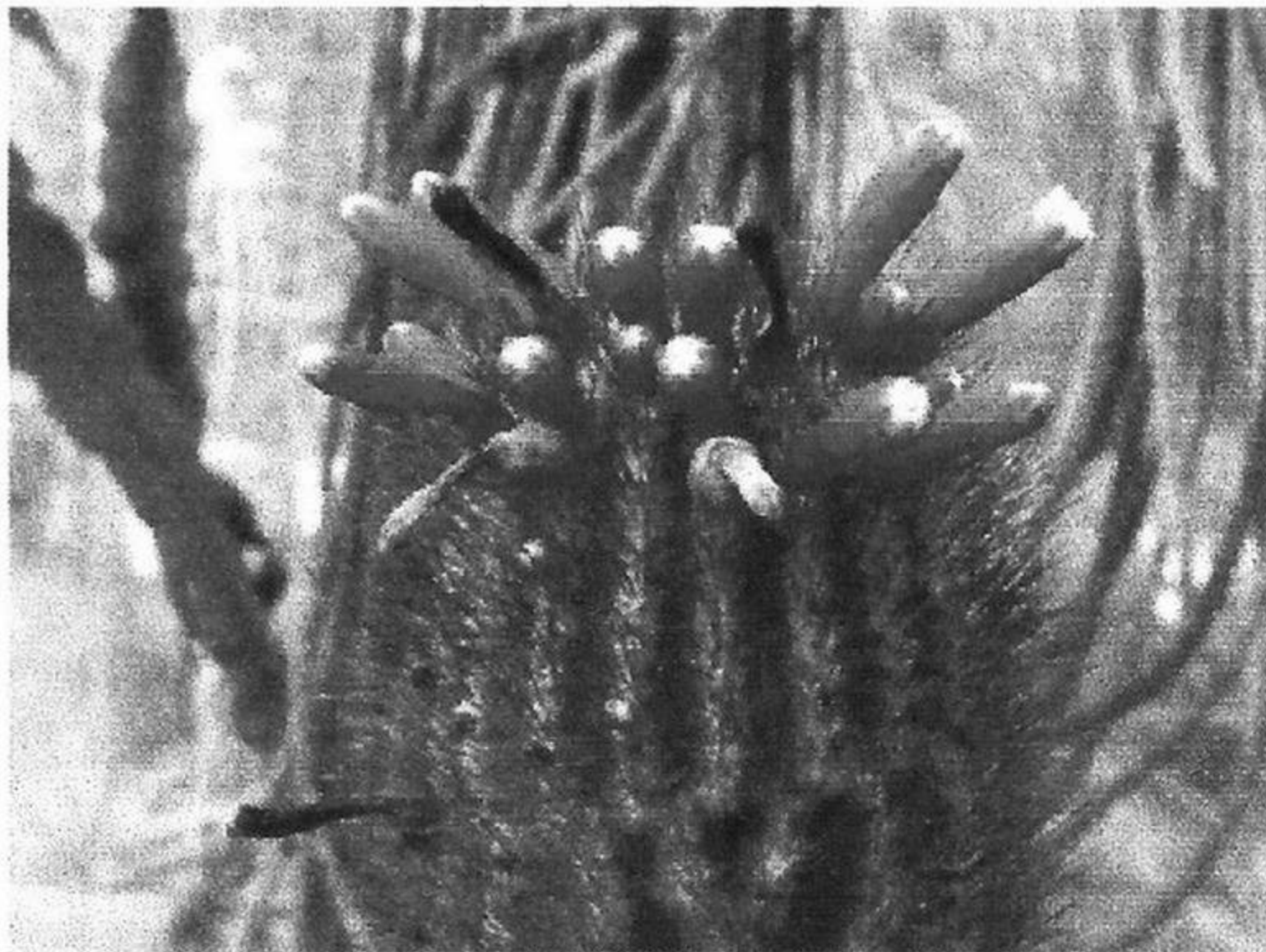
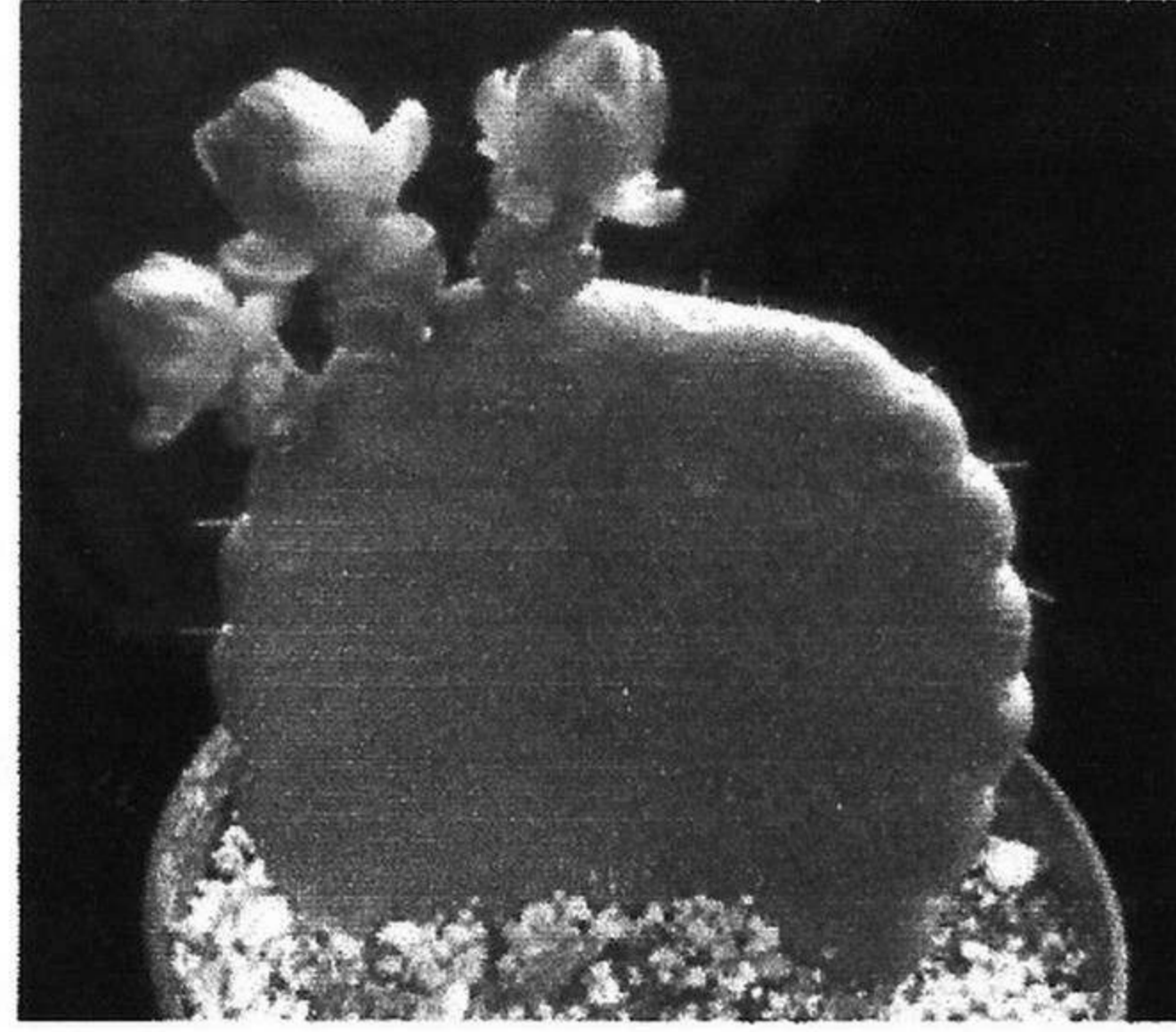
## Gallery

Thanks go to Frank Bowden who provided all these photos whilst surfing the net.



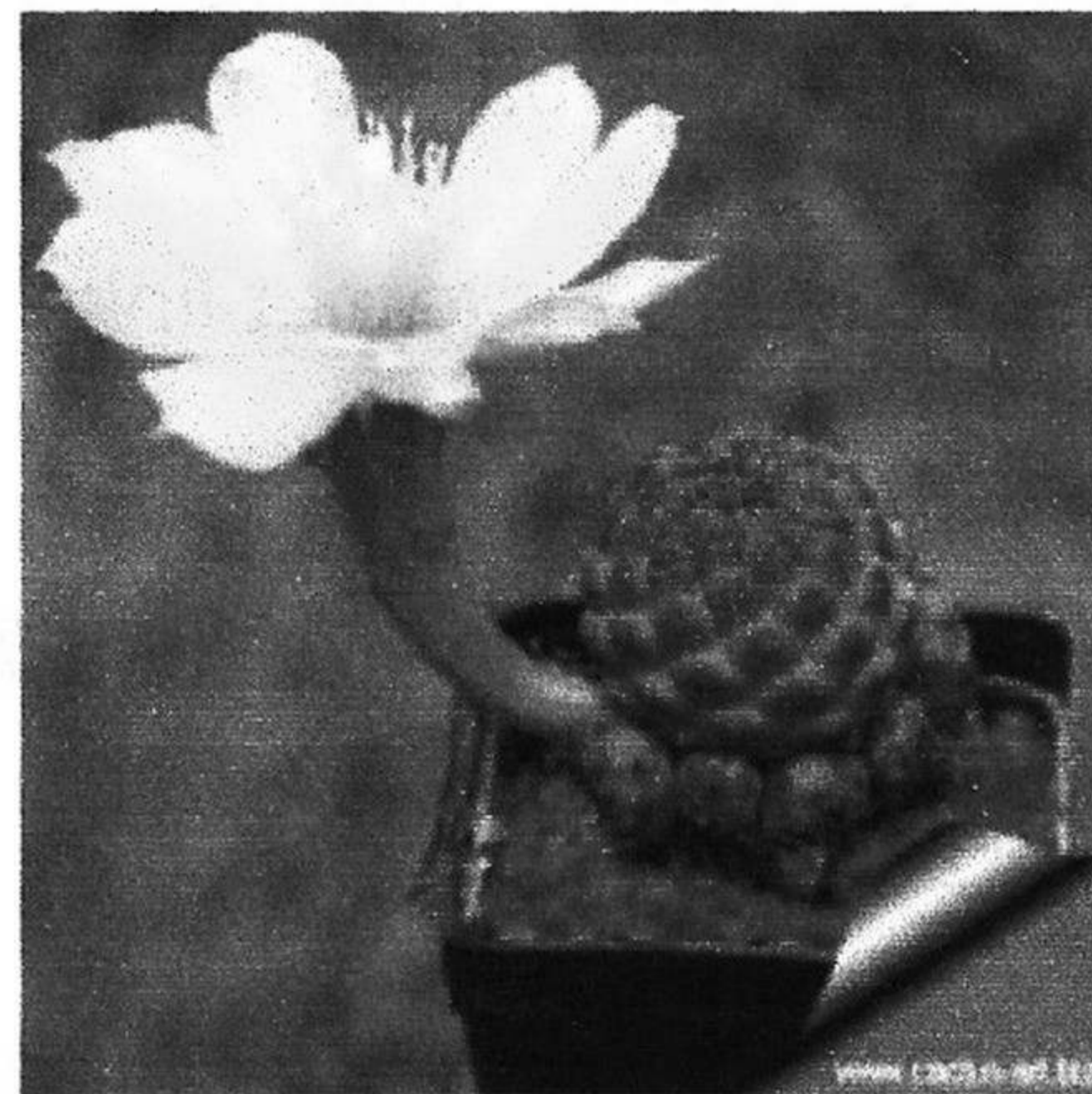
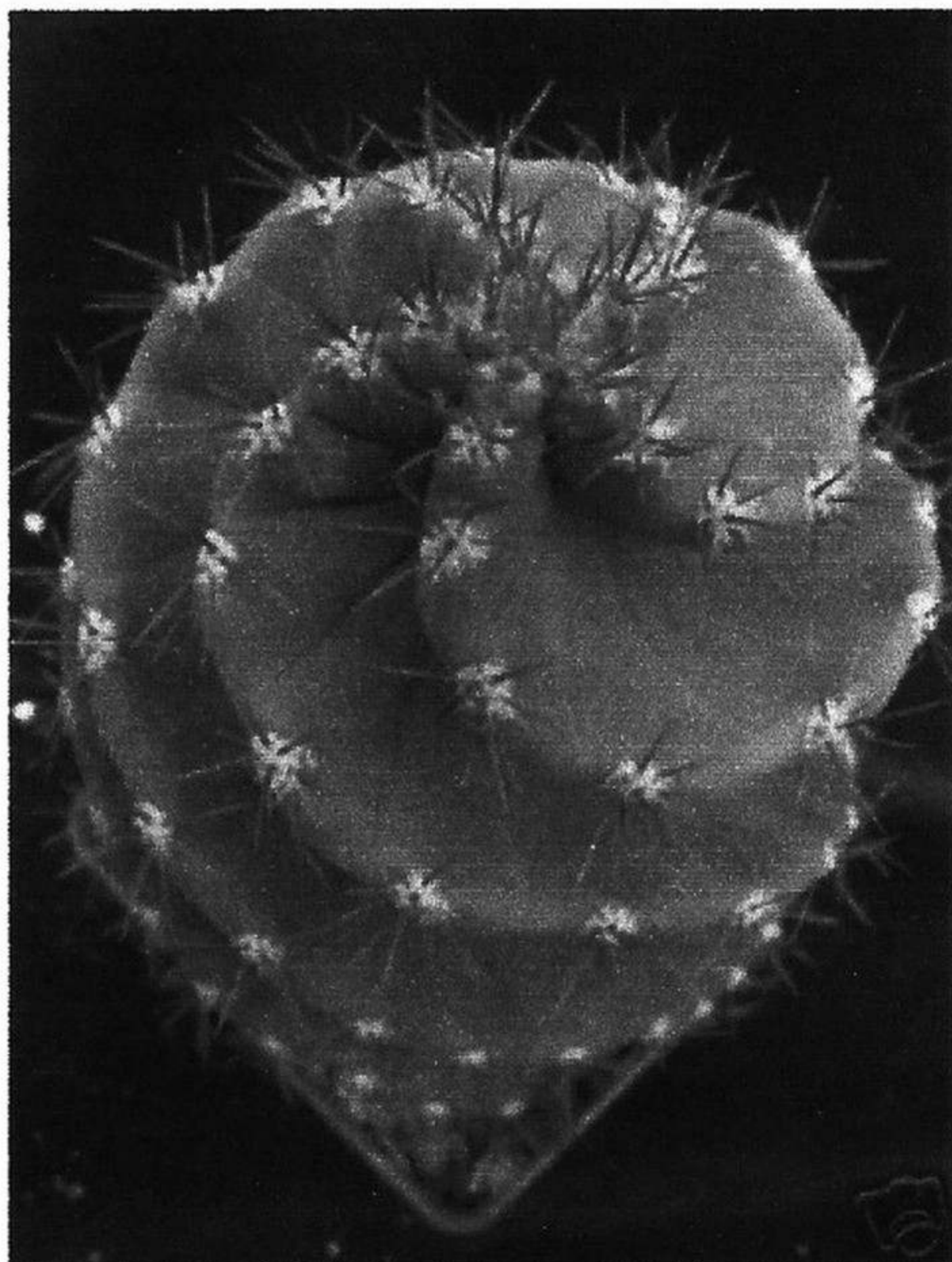
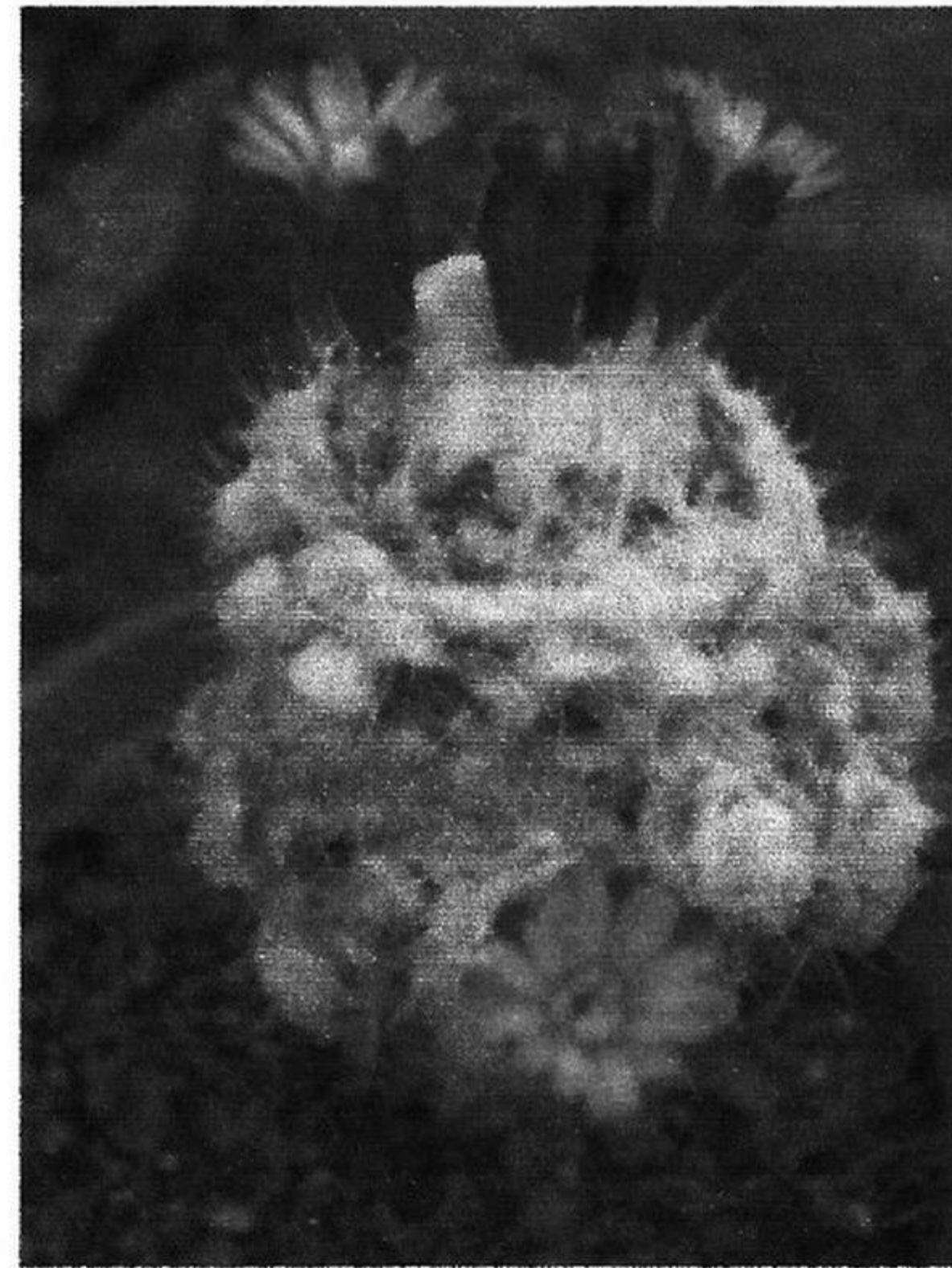
*Gymnocalycium vatteri v spiralis*

A crinate flower!?



*Pierrebrounia bahiensis*

Pierrebrounia bahiensis



An opuntia flower on a sulcorebutia – any ideas!?

## **Growing Cacti Outdoors**

Bt Ivor Crook

A couple of years ago I visited a friend in the Midlands, Alan James. I met Alan through the Tephrocactus Study Group. He has a mixed collection of plants, not just Tephrocacti and a particular interest in trying plants outdoors in the summer months.

He had constructed a plant trough in the garden from some lengths of garden decking, two planks deep. This was filled at the base with large gravel then a very open mix of John Innes and medium sized gravel near the top and finally dressed with small sized gravel. The extra drainage is essential to allow run off of the excess rain of an average British Summer.

Normally, Alan plants out the trough in late spring and repots the plants in autumn before taking them back into the greenhouse for the winter.

On my travels around various cactus meetings I hear that more and more people are trying plants outside in the summer and often find they grow better than in the greenhouse. With confidence some can even be left out all year round provided protection from rain is made available. I understand many people have found that some of the African Aloes prefer this kind of treatment often growing faster with the extra water than they would under glass and the small South American Mahuenia's prefer the cooler air.

So, why not build or buy a small plant trough and try some cuttings or spare plants outside for the summer months. Let's take advantage of global warming!

Below are some internet links that may help in deciding what to try outdoors:

<http://www.sci.fi/~cubase/hardycacti.html>

<http://www.bennyskaktus.dk/>

<http://www.cactus-mall.com/bookshop/hardy.html>