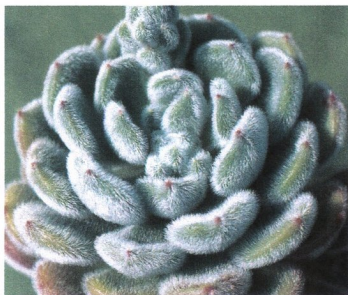


MANCHESTER BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012



Forthcoming events
Saturday August 11th
Some Interesting Mammillarias
By Chris Davies

Chris has apparently been to Mexico, the home of the greater majority of Mammillarias, on two occasions in the last ten years. It is always a pleasure to see wild plants through the eyes of a person who loves the plants and the medium of the lens. We have visited Mexico on many occasions but never deliberately to see the Mammillarias of this fascinating country. We have often been treated to the 'choicer' species such as Ariocarpus, Lophophora, Leuchtenbergia, Turbinicarpus, Aztekium and other such species. It will be a treat to see this large and popular genus on the screen. We must remember that Mammillaria was one of the first Discoveries to be introduced into Europe all those centuries ago by the intrepid explorers of the time. It had not been too long before that no seaman would venture far from his home shoreline for fear the vessel would 'drop off the edge of the world'.

ALSO: THE SUCCULENT MINI SHOW. 10 CLASSES DEVOTED TOTALLY TO THE OTHER SUCCULENTS.

Schedules available from Peter



An Echeveria flower in close up



Dudleya viscida in full colour

More interesting facts about cacti and succulents

Did you know any of the following facts? Ocotillo, *Fouquieria splendens*, is a succulent herb known by many names among the indigenous peoples—coach whip, vine cactus, slimwood, candlewood and flamingsword. It naturally attains its maximum height of about 20 feet in about 30 years so it is not a plant that will outgrow space in the greenhouse quickly and grown as a bonsai in a pot will be even slower. It is well used to drought growing, as it does, in the semi deserts of the North American south west at elevations below 5000 feet. It is cold hardy down to freezing but will not tolerate long periods well below freezing. Its normal flowering period is spring after heavy rains. From this we learn that growth is initiated by watering. Leaves are somewhat ephemeral, appearing quickly after watering but dropping during periods of drought. In the greenhouse they can be induced to grow more than once in a season if for any reason the plants are left to dry out for too long. The flowers are a stunning and vibrant red and appear at the tips of branches with natural pollinators being humming birds, bats and orioles. Other birds, such as finches, are attracted by the intense flower coloration but in their assiduous search for nectar will actually destroy the flower instead of pollinating it. It will propagate from both seed and stem cuttings with ease.

Ocotillo has a long history of use among many native Americans. The Cahuilla Indians used its flowers to make a summer drink and its seeds were pounded into flour to make cakes. The Hualapai Indians would crush the roots into a powder which were then mixed in water to make a footbath for the relief of swollen feet. They would use the fibres of the plants to build huts. The Papago Indians would press the nectar out of the flower and allow it to harden into a candylike sweet. The flowers are also edible and were used as an ingredient of a winter salad.

It also had medicinal uses. It was often used as a means of dispersing fluid on the pelvis, a cure for haemorrhoids, a means of dealing with benign prostate enlargement, for bladder infections and curing tonsillitis. Finally it was found helpful in formulas for glandular and lymphatic swellings and pleurisy.

Harvesting Ocotillo for medicinal use is not for the faint hearted as the thorns are a great defence for the plants. Bark from older stems is a necessity, taking no more than a two foot section which should then be cut into smaller workable pieces. The outer bark needs to be removed from the inner core, cut into small pieces and tintured.

This is done by placing the bark into a Mason Jar and pouring distilled water, glycerol or vinegar over it. The jar is sealed and placed in a darkened place. The mixture has to be shaken on a daily basis. The preparation time varies from six weeks to three months according to the use for the tincture. It is sieved through a cheese cloth, when ready, into the selected bottle and labelled to avoid confusion. The bark is thoroughly squeezed to remove all liquid before being discarded. The mixture should last for up to two years. If an alcoholic tincture were required 80 to 100 proof rum or vodka should be used.

Ocotillo, *Fouquieria splendens* in flower



RECIPES. *Taken from Google*

Yes, you can eat cactus! There is a long history of firstly indigenous peoples, then colonial settlers, making use of the fruits and flesh of cacti and other succulent plants. In a number of areas in the world today, cactus food is still consumed by both humans and livestock.. The cactus pads (or 'leaves') of the Opuntia (or Prickly Pear) are a popular ingredient in Mexican dishes. They have a crisp, fresh flavour similar to green beans. They are a good source of vitamins A and C.

But be careful! Spines have to be carefully removed to avoid distress. If in doubt, don't swallow it! However, with suitable simple preparation, cacti and other succulents can provide a both nutritious and enjoyable eating experience.

Below are two introductory articles on cactus food. The article by Neil Barraclough gives both a historical background and practical information. (Further historical background is given on our [Cactus Culture](#) web page.) The article by Joylene Sutherland shows you how to prepare and process opuntia fruit and make some great little food treats.

RECIPES

Here is a sampling of tasty cactus delights to prepare in your home kitchen. All these recipes use the Prickly Pear (Opuntia) - either its pads or fruits. The Spanish term, Nopalitos, refer to the cactus pads.

The recipes have been provided by the Texas Cactus Council: www.texascactuscouncil.net who have kindly given permission to reproduce them here. The recipes are selected from their excellent cookbook, *The Art of Cooking with Cactus*. This book contains over 100 recipes and is available from the Council.

Preparation Tips.

The pads

Wear heavy gloves and use metal tongs to handle.

Generally choose small, young pads of medium, green colour and firm crisp texture. Avoid dry, limp or soggy pads.

Use a knife or the tip of a potato peeler to remove 'eyes' or spines. Always scrape away from yourself. Pull out large spines with tweezers. Peel off the shin and any fibrous areas.

Rinse thoroughly to remove any stray spines as well as the sticky fluid that exudes from the pads.

Boil or steam the whole pads till tender, about 5 to 10 minutes. Alternatively dice the pads into bite sized pieces and sauté in butter or oil, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes.



The fruits

For the best flavour and colour, pick the fruit using gloves and tongs, when it has attained maximum redness. Slightly or fully green fruits will be sour.

Prepare small quantities, only as much as is needed at a sitting.

Spines can be singed off by holding the fruit on a long handled fork over a flame or on the gas stove. Then wash the fruit thoroughly under running water.

To prepare juice cover the fruit with water and simmer for 30 minutes to an hour. The fruit will cook down leaving about 2/3 juice. If necessary mash the fruit with a potato masher. Strain through a colander or sieve, and then a second time through cheesecloth (or nylon stocking/tights). This will remove all seeds and pulp.

To prepare juice with pulp, remove the skins of the fruits, cut in half and remove the seeds. Cover in water and simmer for 20+ minutes. This can be pureed in a blender.

ENTREES

Nopalitos and Bean Soup

2 cups of Pinto beans—boiled	6 cups of water	2 tablespoons of butter or marger
Half a purple onion	5 tender cactus pads—chopped	
2 tablespoons chopped Coriander	salt and pepper to taste	

Sauté the pads and onion till tender—add the beans and water—season with salt, pepper and coriander

10 minutes to prepare and 10 minutes to cook

Bill Brodnax, (Riviera, Texas)

Cactus Salad

1 onion	2 tomatoes	half a handful of coriander
2 cups of cactus	salt to taste	

Steam the diced cactus and mix with the tomato, onion and coriander

For a variation Tuna can be added

Ester Quiroz (McAllen, Texas)



OPUNTIA FRUITS for sale and in the wild.

RECIPES

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PREPARATION TIPS

The Pads

- Wear heavy gloves and use metal tongs to handle.
- Generally choose small, young pads with a medium green colour and firm, crisp texture. Avoid dry, limp or soggy pads.
- Use a knife, or the tip of a parer or potato peeler, to remove 'eyes' or prickles. Scrape spines off away from you. Pull out large spines with tweezers or pincers. Pare the skin and trim any dry or fibrous areas.
- Rinse thoroughly to remove any stray prickles as well as the sticky fluid that the leaves exude.
- Boil or steam whole pads till tender, about 5 to 10 minutes.
- Or cut pads into bite-sized pieces and sauté in butter or oil, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes.

The Fruits

- For best flavour and colour, pick the fruit (with gloves and tongs) when it has attained maximum redness. (Slightly green fruits can be sour.)
- Prepare only small quantities at one time.
- Spines can be singed off by holding fruit with a long-handled fork over a flame or on the gas stove. Then wash fruit under running water.
- To prepare juice, cover fruit with water and simmer on low heat for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The fruit will cook down leaving about 2/3 juice. If necessary, mash the fruit with a potato masher. Strain through colander or strainer, then through cheese cloth (or nylon stocking!). This will remove the numerous seeds and pulp.
- To prepare juice plus pulp, remove the skins of the fruit, cut in halves and remove seeds. Then cover in water and simmer for 20+ minutes. Can be pureed in a blender.

*British Cactus and Succulent
Society
National Show
Saturday August 18th*

**Wood Green Animal Shelter, Godmanchester near
Huntingdom, Cambridgeshire.**

Would you like to visit the show but have no means of getting there? Are you unsure of how to get there or is it too far for you to drive? See Peter if that is the case as there will be people going who may have a spare seat.

Have you bought some raffle tickets to support the show and the Society? The prizes are substantial. Books of 5 available this evening at the July meeting for £1.



Plants from previous National Shows.



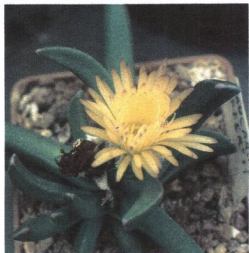
SATURDAY OCTOBER 13TH NORTH WEST MESEMB SHOW

This show will be judged by Derek Tribble who will also provide the talk for the branch meeting which is entitled 'Conophytums and other mini Mesembs'

This talk will commence at 2pm. Apart from being in the afternoon it is the normal branch meeting with all its usual trimmings.

Please come and see all the wonderful array of mesembs that will be on show.

Refreshments will be available as soon as you arrive, the raffle will be as normal but a larger selection of prizes because of the visitors present. The talk will be over for about 3.30pm but the show stays open a further half hour.



*Faucaria
(left) and
Pleiospilos
(right) in
flower*

