



**MANCHESTER  
BRANCH  
NEWSLETTER**

**Winter 2018**



## North West Mesemb Show 2017

Another year, another show; the time flies by at an incredible rate. My thanks to the stalwart band who turned up on the Friday afternoon to set up the hall. With half a dozen people to do the job it gets done incredible quickly. Also well done and thanks to the food providers led by Jim who did a brilliant job. Thanks are also due to the people who entered the show because without them there would not be a show.

So bright and breezy people started arriving around 8am, some to set up their entries, some just to provide assistance for anyone who needed this. As we were missing a couple of major entrants I knew the volume of plants would be curtailed so I cut the third single row of tables leaving just two double rows to house all the exhibits and this worked well. It also meant we could have space for a display of the beginnings of a major study into the effect of the last Ice Age on the genus *Lithops*. Many people looked at it and two or three people spent a long time talking to Ivor and myself about the implications of the study, new directions we could take and sites to look at on the computer.

Space was also eaten up by all those who wanted to sell at the show and there were many interesting plants to buy.



*A few images of the sales area before the crowds arrived*

Mesembs are unique in the succulent world in that they provide different genera that grow at different times. With cacti, almost to the point of 100% they grow through our spring and summer into autumn a short way. Some cacti in the south west states of America will start into growth quite early in late winter as the snow melts begin but the only cacti that grow outside this prescribed time are Epiphytes such as the 'Christmas Cactus' which will be showing its blooms through December and January. In the non mesemb succulent world there are many genera that follow the cactus cycle but there are a significant number of plants that grow in the winter rainfall areas of South Africa and Namibia, so they rest in summer and come into growth in September/October and continue through the 'dark' months. Mesembs, however, are very diverse and are to be found in all the different weather regions in southern Africa. On my list of Mesemb growing periods I have eight different growing times: winter/spring, spring/summer, spring/summer/autumn, summer/autumn, summer/autumn/winter, autumn/winter, autumn/winter/spring and finally all year. This may seem to be rather extreme and there is opportunity for overlapping but it shows you how specific plants can be as to when they want to grow and, more importantly, when conditions are right. Try, as people have, you will not shift that cycle. The thing you must remember is that our northern hemisphere season cycle is not only the reverse of the southern one but also our daylight hours are less in the depths of winter due to our latitude compared to those in southern Africa and midsummer daylight length is greater. Our winter sun is nowhere near as strong and warming as that received in habitat.

The upshot of this cycle is that we can have plants in growth and possibly flowering throughout twelve months of the year. Admittedly it is more of a challenge to get plants flowering in winter but a joy when it happens. Thus we have the mesemb show when as many of the plants can be caught in growth as possible and October is that time. There are a few genera that struggle to be in peak condition but the show caters for 91 named genera in the 37 classes provided. This is not the total number of mesemb genera but it only omits around 15 of them that would be hard to find in collections anyway. Not every one of the 91 genera will be found on the tables because some are extremely hard to find for sale anywhere and seed is difficult to obtain leading to lack of popularity. I like to grow as many plants as I possibly can but you quickly find out which ones do not like our northern climes, which ones grow to large in diameter so that room cannot be spared or those that are genuinely uninteresting. We also have a few classes that give the grower a challenge because they ask for multiple plants, sometimes from a single genus, at others from different genera and even from a whole subgroup. All this makes for an interesting spread of plants for the gathered spectators to admire and photograph. Many attendees do indeed take photos with specialist cameras and with their mobile phones. We are lucky to have Chris Leather, who has a deep interest in photography, to record our shows and he has done this for this show ever since we took over the mantle of host branch when Mid Cheshire Branch folded many years ago. You can find photos of the plants in the show through the years on our website and this year for the first time he has done three videos of the plants in the show, all viewable on the web site whenever you want by going to:

<http://manchester.bcsc.org.uk/home/videos>

So now to the show itself, the schedule for which was created more than 20 years ago by Ray Allcock from Liverpool Branch. That must have been a massive labour of love because he will have had to study where they grow, when they grow, how big they grow, their

relationships to one another and several other factors. This schedule has stood the test of time and little has changed to how it was first produced. I have taken advice from other specialist growers and it has been tweaked a little through the years I have been arranging the event, but it is largely as it was.

## SHOW SCHEDULE

CLASS	CLASS DESCRIPTION	
1.	Acrodon, Aloinopsis*, Deilanthé, Khadia, Nananthus, or Rabiea	1 plant
2.	Titanopsis	1 plant
3.	Argyroderma, Nelia or Schwantesia	1 plant
4.	Astridia, Erganthe, Jensenobotrya or Namaquanthus	1 plant
5.	Bergeranthgus, Bijlia, Cerochlamys, Ebracteola, Hereroa, Machairophyllum Marlothistella or Rhombophyllum	1 plant
6.	Cheiridopsis, Ihlenfeldtia, Odontophorus or Vanzijlia	1 plant
7.	Conophytum	4 plants
8.	Delosperma, Ectotropis or Hartmanthus	1 plant
9.	Conophytum, pots not exceeding 2¾" (70mm)	6 plants
10.	Dinteranthus or Lapidaria	1 plant
11.	Conophytum, pots not exceeding 2" (50mm)	9 plants
12.	Dracophilus, Juttadinteria, Namibia or Psammophora	1 plant
13.	Conophytum, pots not exceeding 4½" (115mm)	2 plants
14.	Faucaria or Orthopterum	1 Plant
15.	Conophytum	1 plant
16.	Fenestraria or Frithia	1 plant
17.	Antegibbaeum, Didymaotus, Gibbaeum, Muiria or Vanheeridia	1 plant
18.	Glottiphyllum	1 plant
19.	Aridaria, Drosanthemum, Eberlanzia, Erepisia, Lampranthus, Oscularia, Scopelogenia or Stoeberia	1 plant
20.	Lithops	1 plant
21.	Pleiospilos	1 plant
22.	Tanquana	1 plant
23.	Lithops (more than 1 species)	1 pan
24.	Chasmatophyllum, Mossia, Neohenricia, Rhinephyllum, Stomatium or Vlokia	1 plant
25.	Lithops, pots not exceeding 3½" (90mm)	6 plants
26.	Brownanthus, Dicraulon, Diplosoma, Jacobsenia, Meyerophytum, MitrophyllumMonilaria, Oophytum, Pseudobrownanthus, or Psilocaulon	1 plant
27.	Lithops, pots not exceeding 5" (130mm)	4 plants
28.	Trichodiadema	1 plant
29.	Mestoklema	1 plant
30.	Conicosia, Dactyloopsis, Phyllobolus, Prenia or Sceletium	1 plant
31.	Antimima, Braunsia, Hammeria, Ruschia or Ruschianthus	1 plant
32.	Carpobrotus, Carruanthus, Cephalophyllum, Cylindrophyllum or Esterhuysenia	1 plant
33.	Plants from different genera, pots not exceeding 3½" (90mm)	6 plants

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|---|-----------|
| 34. Plants from different genera  | 3 plants  |
| 35. <i>Faucaria</i> subgroup, plants from different genera                        | 4 plants  |
| 36. Plants from a single genus  | 3 plants  |
| 37. A collection of one genus of plants to fit entirely within a 21" sided square | n/a       |
| 38. Any unnamed Mesemb which you would like named                                 | notjudged |
- Aloinopsis*\* class 1 includes *Prepodesma*

The above will be the schedule for the 2018 show. If you go on the internet you can find pictures submitted by a number of different people and you can get a good idea of what the plants look like, especially in flower, and there are stunning pictures to see. Some classes are popular and the first 6 classes often attract quite a few extremely splendid specimens. Lithops and *Conophytum* are always popular. There are many genera that provide the opportunity to show small growing species that will never eat up the space in the greenhouse. Then there are those, especially in *Ruschia*, *Lampranthus*, *Oscularia*, *Trichodiadema*, *Mestoklema* and *Carpobrotus* that can achieve bush like proportions in time or spread widely providing ground cover in time. Also there is a group of plants that I enjoy growing, they are a bit of a challenge, that are true winter growers. They often sheathe their new growth with the remains of the previous year's growth or in some cases completely shed their leaves. These latter ones look as though they might be dead in their non-growing period, our summer, but you cross your fingers and trust them to revive come autumn. I usually prod them with a little water in August to remind them that it is close to growing time. Just occasionally you discover an odd dead one but most burst forth resplendently. The plants I talk of are to be found in class 26.

*Aloinopsis*



*Rabiea*



*Titanopsis*



*Schwantesia*



*Argyroderma*



*Astridia*



*Bergeranthus*

*I hope this insight into the world of mesembs will encourage you to grow a few. Start with the ones that grow the same as cacti. I can let you have a list of the ones that are worth growing.*



*Top Row : Cheiridopsis, Delosperma, Lapidaria, Conophytum*

*Second Row : Psammophora, Faucaria, Frithia, Muiria*

*Third Row : Glottiphyllum, Oscularia, Lithops, Rhinephyllum*

*Bottom Row : Dicraulon, Monillaria, Trichodiadema, Mestoklema, Antimima*

I hope you have enjoyed looking at some of the plants That were present at this year's show. I absolutely love their endless variety, the challenge they bring and the pleasure they give. I believe we all need to appreciate that mesembs are more than just Lithops and Conophytums. This is said even though I have a couple of thousand Lithops in my collection. There are many more choice little gems as well as the somewhat larger growing ones. There are only a few that I would advocate as being "best viewed in habitat only".

*By Peter Bint*                      *All photographs by Chris Leather*

## 2018 Programme

January 13th	Peter Berresford	Texas 2011—Extraordinary Echinocereus
February 10th	Martin Lowry	Travels in Argentina: part 1
March 10th	Andy Young	Namibia
April 14th	Peter Bint	Sunstroke not in vain
May 5th	n/a	North West Mart
May 12th	Maurice Williams	The Genus Matucana
May 19th	Zn 19 Symposium	Harald Jainta,
June 23rd	Branch Trip	Bill Hildyard, Ralph Martin & Brenda Williams
June 30th**	David Rushforth & John Miller	Grafting: how and why it's done: your chance to try
July 21st**	Ludwig Bercht	Paraguay: 30 years of exploring including the latest new descriptions of Frailea and Gymnocalycium
August 11th	Neil Oakman	The Wild West
September 8th	John Foster	Succulent Senecios
October 13th	John Watmough	North West Mesemb Show
November 10th	Ivor Crook	A history of copper mining in Namaqualand
December 8th	AGM	
2019 January 12th	Ian Robinson	M is for .....

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6 OVERSEAS SPEAKERS. WHOLE WEEKEND £260.

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## Information about our speakers this year

January: Peter Berresford is well known to us nowadays as he has spoken here many times. He will be continuing his favourite theme of 'the Hedgehog' but we are in Texas this time. He usually brings sales plants with him amongst which you will find a good selection of Echinocereus plants for a reasonable price.

February: Martin Lowry, now resident in Macclesfield rather than Hull is much more accessible for us. He has travelled in South America both extensively and regularly. We will enjoy his travels round Argentina with part 1 of this theme. This is a country of very variable cactus life and it will be instructive.

March: Andy Young makes a welcome return visit to our Branch with his talk about Namibia.

April: A homespun speaker in Peter Bint who will explain the dangers of too much sun whilst plant viewing.

May: We start this month with our regular mart which will have at least one new stall this year. Graham Charles has requested space to sell. He always has a very interesting selection of seed raised plants which are from authenticated habitat seed. All our usual visiting nurseries are booked in for this event. Maurice Williams visits us the following Saturday to talk about the genus Matucana and there are not many people with more knowledge of these plants than him. He has grown some absolutely splendid examples in his greenhouse. June: This is another two event month. We are booked in to visit three different collections belonging to people who live in north Wales, Bill Hildyard, Ralph Martin and Brenda Williams on Anglesey. I only discovered her this year at the Southport Flower Show.

David Rushforth & John Miller come to give us their talk from 2017 which had to be transferred to this year due to David's unavailability. You will get a chance to try this essential form of growing the plants which helps promote new discoveries and enables us to grow plants that prove very difficult on their own roots.

July: Ludwig Bercht comes from Holland and is another of our 'imports' to provide you the members the opportunity to listen to people you would not normally be able to do. He is a well travelled enthusiast and as his title shows he has much knowledge and expertise. This is a not to be missed opportunity.

August: Neil Oakman is a new speaker to Manchester Branch but I have every confidence he will provide an interesting evening. Cowboy hats, spurs, Indian headdresses and wigwams will be allowed but all guns and tomahawks will be confiscated at the door.

September: John Foster is yet another newbie for the branch. His talk has been chosen for a number of reasons. How many of you grow any Senecios? It is important from time to time to look at different genera of plants and forego the travelogue route. His talk has had great reviews.

October: Mesemb Show time again with humorous John Watmough to judge and provide a witty talk in the afternoon. He is a man with an enormous amount of knowledge about Mesembs.

November: Ivor needs no introduction but you will have to think about the talk title. Misleading as it may appear it will be about plants so don't miss it.