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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2016

# Kaktos Komments

a bimonthly publication of the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society  
to promote the study of cacti and other succulents



*Ariocarpus agavoides*  
by David Van Langen

## From the editor

All old copies of our KKs are now scanned and available for download here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B0EDs8prM6ykNVFMTTZVRVRfdlk>

They are searchable pdfs, sorted by year, but also as large files covering 10 year blocks. This should make finding some old article very easy.

Karla Halpaap-Wood



## Calendar:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>September 10-11</b> | Show and Sale<br>9-5 at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.  |
| <b>September 14</b>    | 7:30 pm Board Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.   |
| <b>September 28</b>    | 7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Josie Watts will present on preparing soils for cacti and succulents.  |
| <b>October 14-15</b>   | The TACSS Fall Seminar will be hosted by the San Antonio Cactus & Xerophyte Society • San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 North New Braunfels, San Antonio, TX  |
| <b>October 26</b>      | 7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.<br>Anna Strong, Endangered Plant Biologist at Texas Parks & Wildlife, will speak on her Master's degree work on cultivating the endangered <i>Astrophytum asterias</i> and status of other endangered cacti in Texas |

## Membership

Kathy Fewox

The July 27th meeting of HCSS was attended by twenty-four members. We were joined by one guest, Raymond Gonzalez. We gave away two wonderful door prizes. Noreen Tolman won a *Cereus peruvianis*, donated by Bruce Moffett. Karla Halpaap-Wood donated a *Kaktos Komments* CD (all the KK's ever, on one CD), which was won by Mike Cracraft.

Twenty-six members attended our August 24th meeting. Also attending were three guests: Carson Parenti, his father Mark Parenti, and Ray Gonzalez. Karla Halpaap-Wood donated an *Echinopsis* hybrid, which was won by Ken Gardner. Richard Stamper donated several issues of "Cactus and Succulent Journal" and "Haworthiad," which were divided up (by me) into sets of two and won by Jeff Boggan, Phyllis McEuen, Richard Holland, and Carson Parenti.

Richard and Gloria Stamper announced at the August meeting that they are moving to Georgetown, Texas, where they will be closer to children and grandchildren. HCSS without Richard and Gloria is almost unimaginable, but I know they are looking forward to their new home, and Richard to his retirement. We wish them nothing but the best, and hope they will occasionally be able to join HCSS for a meeting, sale, or field trip. We're going to miss you, dear friends!

Please remember to send any news of HCSS members and their families to [kathyfewox@aim.com](mailto:kathyfewox@aim.com).

## Cooking With Cactus - Nopales and Garbanzo Soup

LILIANA CRACRAFT

### Ingredients

- 1 large tomato
- 1 medium onion
- 2 medium size potatoes
- 1 cup of tender prickly pear (nopalitas), in squares (purchase a small bag).
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 1 cup of ham cut in small squares (optional)
- 1 can of organic garbanzo beans (15 oz.)
- 2-3 liters of water or broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable) - One liter is approximately 33 ounces
- Shredded cheese to decorate –fresh, Cotija, aged (optional)



Remove the tomato skin and cut in small squares. You can remove the seeds if you want. Chop the onion finely. Remove the skin from the potatoes, cut them in small squares in a size similar or bigger than the ham squares. Rinse the prickly pear pieces well and boil them for 10 minutes. Open the garbanzo beans can, discard the liquid, and rinse them using a strainer.

Place the butter in a medium casserole and sauté the onion for about 6 minutes until it turns transparent. Don't let it get fried. Add the ham and potatoes and sauté for about 10 minutes or until any liquid disappears. Add the garbanzos, the tomato pieces, and the broth to the mix.

Let the soup boil at medium heat for about 15 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked. If you wish to have a thicker soup, you can press the potatoes and garbanzos against the bottom of the casserole using a potato masher. Finally add the nopalitas and cook for an additional 5 min.

Serve on bowls and decorate with shredded cheese. Enjoy!

## September Cactus of the Month

Wally Ward

### *Melocactus curvispinus* ssp. *caesius* (H.L. Wendl.) N.P. Taylor

Synonyms: *Melocactus caesius*  
*Melocactus griseus*  
*Melocactus curvispinus* f. *caesius*  
*Cactus caesius*

Habitat: Authorities differ a little, but the plant is said to be native to Trinidad and coastal areas of Columbia and Venezuela to 2300 feet altitude. *Melocactus* is a tropical genus and was the first plant returned to the Old World by Columbus.

Description: I have provided a photo of an immature plant grown from seed purchased as *Melocactus caesius* from Mesa Garden as catalog no. 973.4 The Mesa Garden catalog entry summarily describes the plant as having a “globose blue body. There is a blue tinge to my plant. *M. curvispinus caesius* grows often as a solitary to a height of around 12 inches and a width of 11 inches. It is sometimes found in cracks in bare rock exposures. There are six radial spines described as being straighter than in the case of the main species, although there is noticeable and strong curvature to spines in my plant. My plant also lacks the central radial spine described by the authorities, although I cannot say whether a radial will come on with more growth. A mature plant has 10-15 deeply furrowed ribs, and a cephalium, the development of which stops vegetative growth except for lengthening of the cephalium, itself, over time. Although I started this plant from seed in 2005, I have grown it “hard” because of at-times lengthy travel and involvement with various organizations such as the Katy Prairie Conservancy. I did repot the plant a few weeks ago with fresh soil mix and may see some growth before the onset of the Houston winter.



Plant Care: Innes & Glass (see References) call for a well-drained soil mix with regular watering in summer and less in winter. I have watered more on the “less” end during much of this plant’s tenure with me. The subspecies *caesius* needs partial sun, a minimum temperature of 45 degrees, and an average temperature of 60 degrees; my own specimen has not seemed to balk at Houston summer temperatures with several hours sun per day in the earlier afternoon.

Miscellaneous: I photograph my plants wet with a Fuji Finepix S700 purchased in 2008. A wet epidermis seems to make a better picture. I learned the trick from an advertising man at J. Walter Thompson, who showed me an ad by that agency of several items of fruit that had been wetted before being photographed on a neutral, white background.

References: I consulted several Internet sites including ones I found after a Google search and maintained by IIIfe; Desert Tropicals.com; and Cactiguide.com. However, the specific web addresses yielded in each hit failed to return me to the page; so I recommend a general Google search by species name and general reading of several authorities. I also consulted:

Clive Innes & Charles Glass. *Cacti*: New York: Portland House, 1991.

## September Succulent of the Month

Paul Stricklin

**Kalanchoe Tigrina** (humicis), Family: Crassulaceae

Synonyms: *Kalanchoe figuereido*, *Kalanchoe figueiredoi*

Related cultivars: *Kalanchoe humilis* 'Desert Surprise' – a darker banded plant

Description: General described as a low growing perennial succulent with decorative leaves forming a small shrub. Leaves are moderately thick and slightly rounded showing shades of green with darker red/brown markings. Size 6 inches average, 8 inches across; Coloration: powdery green with light red/brown bands across mature leaves; Light: Sun to Partial shade, Blooms abundant Pinkish blooms leaving fine stalks and possible seed pods.

Cultivation: regular watering with good drainage (A very porous loose soil has kept the plant happy and growing on a partially shaded top shelf in a small greenhouse with watering once a week); Temperature: Above 10 DF

The specimen used for this photograph was obtained at the Houston Garden Show and has since bloomed at the "wrong time of year", but all my *Kalanchoe* grown in outdoor beds bloomed late this year. Temperatures have occasionally exceeded 100° F without causing any signs of distress. Added growth has occurred with the limited watering schedule and high in the green house. All in all a very nice plant that I plan to move to my bay window later this fall, construction permitting.

*Kalanchoe humilis* is a much larger plant 1-3 feet tall with 4 inch long leaves. Initially this plant was very popular in 2010 when the clone 'Desert Surprise' first hit the market. Would be interesting to grow the two plants side by side and see the effects of light intensity.

Origins: Tanzania, Malai, Mozambique at elevations between 4,000 and 4,600 feet.



## From the Web

In April Mike and Rosario Douglas of the Central Oklahoma Cactus & Succulent Society gave a presentation for us on their travel to Madagascar. You can find the talk here: [https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMEQyZtPaZZ-BJddzfBZmRXFuR3Emq8htH-HmwKTHmeWeIQjTG\\_qEwW\\_esFSozLoGw?key=bU1jYWpSaHpGUktnNz-JoTlBRUFlfZHMwWUHfaXpR](https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMEQyZtPaZZ-BJddzfBZmRXFuR3Emq8htH-HmwKTHmeWeIQjTG_qEwW_esFSozLoGw?key=bU1jYWpSaHpGUktnNz-JoTlBRUFlfZHMwWUHfaXpR)



They also have a very interesting and well made website about their travels, "The Naturalist's Travel Page" <https://thetravelingnaturalist.org>

**October Cactus of the Month****Richard Stamper**

Family: Cactaceae

Genus: *Hamatocactus*Species: *setispinus* v. *setaceus* (Britton & Rose 1922)

Most references say that *Hamatocactus* are merely synonymous with *Thelocactus*. There are discussions on-line going for and against this assertion. In common terms most *Hamatocactus* are called miniature barrel cactus.

I got this plant from the Mesa Garden specimen list in November of 2015. It is SB851-seed grown. It is usually found growing at a lower altitude under or around mesquite in Jim Hogg County, Texas. Translated, “*Hamatus*” means fish hook and “*seta*” means bristle or with stiff spines. The flower is yellow; fruits are red. This plant is in the CITES Appendix 11.



It started out in the studio room on a plant stand in an east-facing window. Later I moved it into the shade house along with various *Haworthias*, *Aloes*, etc. So, it has been in light shade although the candlepower in the shade house must be tremendous. It has the fish-hook spines and is a fairly modest looking cactus. I planted it in *Haworthia* soil, which is very coarse. I water it along with all the rest twice a week. It is recommended to be kept dry in the winter. So far there has been no corking on this one.



## October Succulent of the Month

Ron Chadick

### *Euphorbia tithymaloides* ssp. *Smallii* 'Embraceable You'

#### Common names:

Devil's Backbone 'Embraceable You', the "Seashells Devil's Backbone"

Part of a larger family of *Euphorbia tithymaloides*.

*Euphorbia tithymaloides* has a large number of household names. Among them:

redbird flower, devil's-backbone, buck-thorn, Christmas candle, Jacob's ladder, Japanese poinsettia, red slipper spurge, redbird cactus, slipper flower, slipper plant, and zig-zag plant.

#### Characteristics:

The "Seashells Devil's Backbone" have vertical zigzagged stems and extremely concave (cupped) leaves like tiny sea shells. A succulent growing up to 6~8 foot tall and 18~24 inches diameter. Stems grey-green, zigzag and very upright with limited branching, exude milky sap when cut or bruised.

*Euphorbia tithymaloides* is native to tropical and subtropical North America and Central America.

The first record of it growing in a garden was in Amsterdam. It is primarily used as an outdoor garden border plant, but certain varieties do well indoors.

#### Cultivation:

Propagate by stem cuttings. Milky sap from damaged leaves, stems and roots may irritate skin, toxic if ingested. Withstands drought, and sheds leaves under extreme dryness. Prefers well-drained soils with medium fertility but tends to do well if it is well watered. The plant requires a sunny area to thrive.

#### Remarks:

The roots, stems, and leaves of the plant are known to be toxic. The milky sap is reported to have powerful emetic properties (induces vomiting). In folk medicine, tea has been brewed from the leaves, which has been used to treat a wide variety of ailments. The *Euphorbia* is used in homeopathic medicine.

#### References:

<https://florafaunaweb.nparks.gov.sg/special-pages/plant-detail.aspx?id=3755>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphorbia\\_tithymaloides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphorbia_tithymaloides)



**THE DICK GREGG AWARD****LILIANA CRACRAFT**

As announced at the August meeting, the Dick Gregg Award, given to the best cactus of show since 1988, has been renamed to honor Leroy Kellogg, a long-time member of our club. This article about Mr. Gregg was written for historical purposes. A special article about Leroy Kellogg, and his many contributions to our organization will be featured in the next KK issue.

Mr. Richard Harrison Gregg, also known as “Pedro,” was born in 1895. He was an Aggie who lived in several parts of Texas following engineering work and real estate development. He and his wife Ruth moved to Houston in 1948.

On March 20, 1963, he and a group of enthusiasts got together at the Houston Engineering and Scientific Society Building, to plan the creation of a club for people interested in cactus and succulent plants. According to an article entitled “Remember When, published in the KK Vol. 35, No. 4, Mr. Gregg is considered to be the founder of HCSS. Mary Jo Gussett, HCSS Life Member and president 1975 and 1984, said that Mr. Gregg was the most knowledgeable member of the group who started the club.

Mr. Gregg was a very active member of the club from the very beginning. He was involved in writing the by-laws, and was the first co-editor of Kaktus Komments. Throughout the years, he held many positions; he was the editor, associate editor, and distribution manager of the newsletter. He was also the parliamentarian for many years, even in his late eighties.



Several articles were written about his life and work in the KK, and many wonderful adjectives were used to describe him; a gentleman, dynamic, owing a wealth of experience, enthusiast, and very generous with his time and knowledge. He was also described as “colorful,” possibly related to the story on how he became interested in cactus. According to an article written by C.V. Kirkpatrick (KK Vol. 18, No.1), Mr. Gregg was hunting deer in a ranch in an area what is known now as Big Bend National Park in 1929. He stumbled and fell onto a cactus and spent a night removing thorns and glochids. He returned to the site of his accident the

next day, and discovered about 30 different varieties of cacti in the area, and became hooked.

Mr. Gregg and his wife Ruth were very friendly folks and welcomed visitors into their home in Bellaire. They hosted many open yard parties, but welcomed friends anytime. They also loved to travel. Hunting cactus and rocks for their collection was something they loved to do with other members of the club. In the early years of the club, they combined their vacations with field trips in south Texas, many places in México, Arizona and Texas. They also attended many of the CSSA biennial conventions.

Beginning in 1966, Mr. Gregg published a column in the KK for many years entitled "Say That Again." This was a glossary of botanical terms, and the proper pronunciation of generic and scientific names of cactus and succulents. He also wrote many articles of general interest and reports from the Club's field trips.

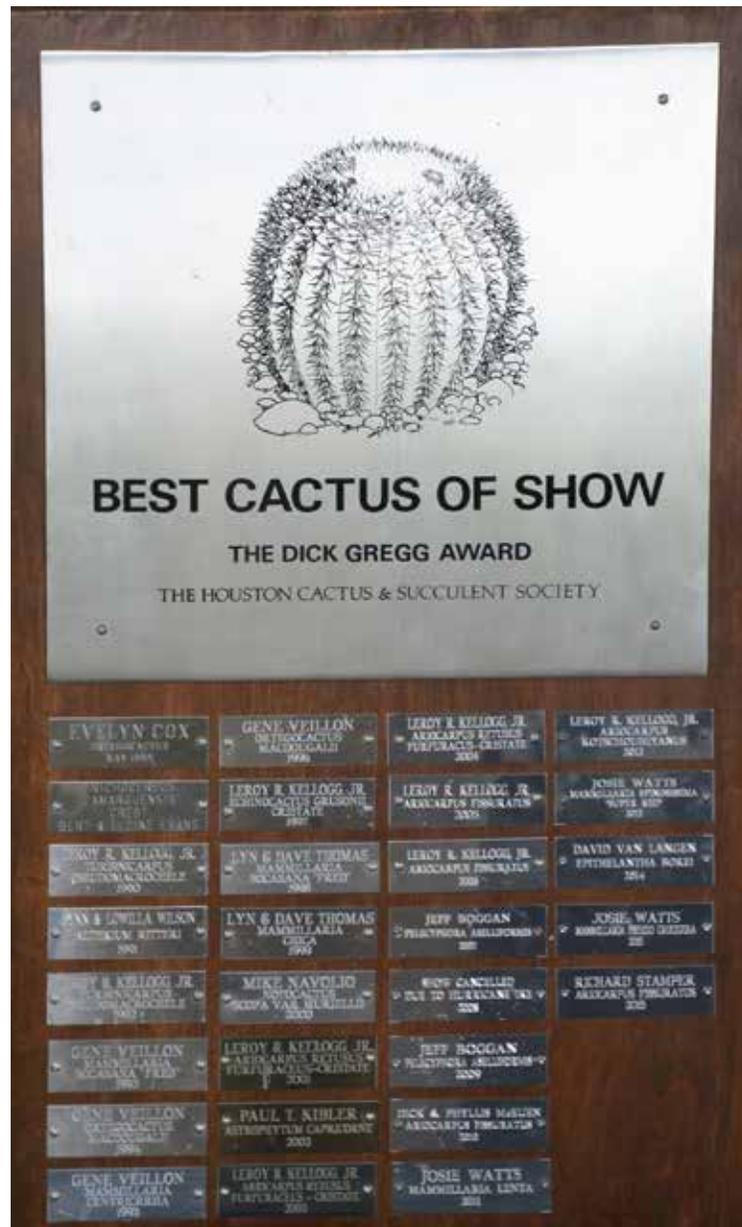
Over the years, the Greggs acquired a large collection of plants containing over 3300 specimens. It is mentioned several times in the KK how generous they were, donating many of their plants to friends and members (novices and experts) of HCSS.

Another interesting thing about Mr. Gregg, was his large collection of rare and valuable books. His library was named one of the most complete private libraries in the Southwest and included catalogs dated back to 1929, many of those published in German and Japanese. His library was featured in an article in 1965 (KK Vol. 3 No. 3). He corresponded with other cactus collector and book authors. The favorite books in his collection were Marshall & Bock's Cactaceae, Borg's Cacti, and Britton & Rose's The Cactaceae. Mr Gregg was also a big supporter of the HCSS library, donating many books and funds over the years.

Because of his many contributions to HCSS, Mr. Gregg was designated as Life Member, and later an Emeritus President. He continued to be involved in the club until his death in 1987.

One thing I didn't find reviewing the KK's collection. Why he and his wife were called "The Pedros."

From 1988 through 2015, the Dick Gregg Award was given each year, except in 2008 due to Hurricane Ike. Leroy Kellogg won this award more times than anybody else (9). He is followed by Gene Veillon (4 times), Josie Watts (3 times), Lynn & Dave Thomas and Jeff Boggan (2 times)



The Dick Gregg Award was donated by John and Mary Jo Gussett after Dick Gregg's death.

Here are the winners of the Dick Gregg Award.  
1988-2015

Evelyn Cox Ortegocactus May 1988	Mike Navolio Notocactus scopa var. muriellii 2000	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus 2012
Bert and Elzine Evans Trichocereus Camarguensis Crest 1989	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus retusus furfuraceus- cristate 2001	Josie Watts Mammillaria spinosissima "Super Red" 2013
Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Turbinicarpus Pseudomacrochele 1990	Paul T. Kibler Astrophytum capricorne 2002	David Van Langen Epithelantha bokei 2014
Lynn and Lowilla Wilson Aztekium ritteri 1991	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus retusus furfuraceus- cristate 2003	Josie Watts Mammillaria pseudo crucigera 2015
Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Turbinicarpus Pseudomacrochele 1992	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus retusus furfuraceus- cristate 2004	Richard Stamper Ariocarpus fissuratus 2015
Gene Veillon Mammillaria bocasana "Fred" 1993	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus fissuratus 2005	
Gene Veillon Ortegocactus Macdougalii 1994	Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Ariocarpus fissuratus 2006	
Gene Veillon Mammillaria centricrha 1995	Jeff Boggan Pelecypora aselliformis 2007	
Gene Veillon Ortegocactus Macdougalii 1996	Show Cancelled Due to Hurricane Ike 2008	
Leroy R. Kellogg Jr Echinocactus grusonii cristate 1997	Jeff Boggan Pelecypora aselliformis 2009	
Lyn and Dave Thomas Mammillaria bocasana "Fred" 1998	Dick and Phyllis McEuen Ariocarpus fissuratus 2010	
Lyn and Dave Thomas Mammillaria Chica 1999	Josie Watts Mammillaria Lenta 2011	

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 Visit participating stores across the street offering discounts!  
**4:30pm - 7:00pm**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2016**  
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