

VOL. 54  
NO. 2

MARCH-APRIL 2017

# Kaktos Komments

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



*Haworthia pseudogranulata*  
by Wally Ward

## Membership

Kathy Fewox

Twenty-four members attended the January 25, 2017 meeting of HCSS. Among those were new member Leah Herskowitz, who joined at the meeting. Also attending were three guests: Michelle Herskowitz (Leah's mother), Clara Chan, and Teresa Garcia.

Our February 22nd meeting was attended by twenty-seven members. We were joined by repeat guest Teresa Garcia. There were five door prizes given away. Bruce Moffett won a Euphorbia, Fred Haase took home some sort of cactus, Cherie Lee got a Euphorbia, Cindy Gray won a Huernia, and Ron Chadick took home the last door prize given away, but I somehow didn't write down what he won.

Longtime member Leroy Kellogg passed away the morning of February 22. Leroy was a constant presence in the club until his move to Giddings, and even after that he continued to do a lot, especially in arranging and coordinating the various sales and our fall show (until recently handing the reins over to Daryl Rebrovich). This involved passing around endless signup sheets, running interference with the powers that be at the venues, keeping track of what needed to be done when and by whom, and doing a huge amount of the work himself. Leroy took his duties very seriously, but when the work was done and he was able to relax, he was a lot of fun to be around (especially on field trips). We're definitely going to miss him, and our thoughts and prayers are with Joyce.

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

### Calendar:

**March 8** 7:30 pm Board Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.

**March 22** 7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.  
Agave is Life unveils the 10,000 year-old story of man kind's symbiotic relationship with the agave plant.  
ArcheoProductions, Inc. | Austin, Texas



**April 20-24** Field trip to Big Bend Area

**April 26** 7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.  
"Jardin de Piedras: Cohabiting with Plants" presented by Liliana Cracraft



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## January Succulent of the Month

Josie Watts

Plant Name – *Tylecodon wallichii*

Family – Crassulacea

Genus – *Tylecodon*

Species – *wallichii*

Aka – *Cotyledon*

Description – Described as a deciduous shrublet with warty tubercles left at base of old leaves. Plant loses leaves in summer and is dormant until cool weather.

Origin – Namaqualand to Little Karoo in South Africa. Also known to grow in Arizona and California.

Size – 6 to 18”

Hardiness Zone – 9B to 11, and best not below 40\* according to Dave’s Garden. Cold tolerance 25 to 30\* per Cacti.com



Water requirement – very drought tolerant in summer, but requires light watering when not in dormancy. I only water mine when it has leaves.

Light needs – Sun to partial shade. Grows in shade of other plants in Africa where sun is very intense.

Blooms – Puts on yellow tubular flowers, and flowers just prior to losing leaves

Other plant information - Propagated by seed germination. Seeds should be sowed on coarse sand with a soil base underneath. Also, do not plant too deep when repotting. It is suggested that you only cover the roots.

Note – Poisonous, is removed from livestock fields. Cardiotoxic and neurotoxic.

References: Dave’s Garden.com, Cacti.com

## March Cactus of the Month

David Van Langen

*Echinocereus viridiflorus* var. *correllii*

*Echinocereus viridiflorus* var. *correllii* is a variety of the large *viridiflorus* / *chloranthus* complex that has a range from northern Mexico up through Wyoming . The *Echino virid-* var. *correllii* has a very limited range in habitat and is only found in two locations in Trans Pecos Texas. The main population is found south of Marathon in Brewster County on low hills and desert grassland on substrate of Caballos Novaculite. The Caballos Novaculite is an orangish/ white hard rock and is a remnant of the Quachita Mountains found in Arkansas. The two locations of this ancient mountain range in Texas are just south of Marathon and in Big Bend State Park west of Terlingua. The only other known locale of *Echino virid-* var *correllii* is north of Ft. Stockton growing in limestone.

The body of *E. virid-* var *correllii* is cylindrical in shape with 14 to 17 vertical ribs and is about 4-6 inches tall when mature. It is usually a single stem but can have one or two branches. The one physical thing that sets var. *correllii* apart from the other cactus in the *viridiflorus*/ *chloranthus* complex is the spines are almost always a clear yellow or a mix of yellow and white. There are normally about 20 to 27 radial spines and 1 to 2 centrals that are less than 1 inch in length. The epidermis can be seen under the spines. The lemon scented flowers are formed up and down the stem and seem to be produced on 2-4 year growth but not on the growth of the previous year. The flowers are funnel shaped and mostly yellow to yellowish green but some can have a bronze color mixed in. The ½" long fruit is covered in many bristles and spines.

The location south of Marathon is an interesting area. Besides being the home to *E—correllii* it is also the only location for several other cacti. The Caballos Novaculite is home to the very minute and rare *Echinocereus davisii* and *Escobaria minima*. The *Echino. davisii* is often placed as a sub species or variety of the *Echino viridiflorus* group. Both are on private land making it difficult to observe in habitat. These two small cactus are often covered in spike moss and shrink to ground level or below in extreme drought. Other cactus found in this location are *Thelocactus bicolor* var *flavidispinus*, *Escobaria varicolor* and *Coryphantha hesteri*. Most all of the cactus found here can be seen within a short walking distance from each other and many are found growing very close to each other—but are mostly hidden under the blanket of the small spike moss that is so common here.

This is my first time to grow *Correllii's* hedgehog but it seems to be one that will do well when covered from rain. It is not well known and few have ever heard of it. Most would never notice it and a few would not care !! I plan on ordering at least one or 2 more this year. The one I have now was purchased from Miles to Go and so far every plant he has sent me are absolute winners. If interested in this plant – or many others – go to Miles to Go on the internet and take a look. Also go to the Cactus and Succulent Plant Mall on the web and search through the nurseries and information found there.

Long Live Cacti !!!





## March Succulent of the Month

Wally Ward

NAME: *Haworthia pseudogranulata* (old name); M. Bruce Bayer, the premier *Haworthia* expert, has apparently changed the name to *Haworthiopsis* [!] *venosa* in 2009 (see online his “All You Want to Know about *Haworthia*, *Gasteria* and *Astrolaba*”). Earlier Bayer had noted the lack of type specimens for *H. pseudogranulata* and placed it as a variant of *H. venosa tessellata* in his 1999 book *Haworthia Revisited* (you can now find this discussion online). *H. pseudogranulata* originally was described as a South African species from Cape Province (V. Poelln., *Fedes Repert Spec. Nov.* 41: 208 (1937)). There are major changes underway in *Haworthia* classification supported by genetic analysis. Bayer in his 2009 *Haworthia* species list has dispensed with naming varieties; “instead, notable variants of unspecified rank are listed . . . there is no pretension to a full understanding of relationships beyond a primary order.”

SYNONYMS: *H. venosa tessellata* and *Haworthiopsis venosa*.

COMMON NAMES: None.

HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION: Originally reported from Oudshoorn in Cape Province, South Africa. *H. venosa* extends into Namibia according to Llifile and is also widespread in South Africa. Given the turbulence in the classification of this genus and species, I cannot further define a geographical range.

DESCRIPTION: stemless with mature leaves reaching a length of 4 cm; many small tubercles cover the leaves. The leaves grow in a counterclockwise spiral and are strongly curved in a clockwise direction. The plant offsets when mature. The flowers are small, unremarkable *Haworthia*-style flowers which I have not observed closely borne on a spike that can reach around four or five inches in length. The leaves have a subtle keel. Leaf color is a deep green. I have not seen any fruits on this plant.

CULTIVATION/GROWTH: i have grown this plant with infrequent waterings in a mix of about 30% Miracle-Gro Seed Starting Mix and 70% perlite by volume in a plastic pot, repotting only when the slow growth of the plant necessitates it. Benign neglect summer and winter seems to suit my plant. In summer the plant is on a shaded but indirectly-brightly-lit porch and gets watered by a rule of 10 (10th, 20th, 30th of month) in warm weather and twice a month during the brief Houston winter indoors.

AVAILABILITY: I obtained an *H. pseudogranulata* from Huntington Gardens by mail in the early 1990s but do not know if it still available as *H. pseudogranulata*. I obtained the plant presented here from the HCSS Exchange Table circa 2002-2004.

REMARKS/COMMENTS: Benign neglect and occasional doses of 15-30-15 plant fertilizer, diluted to 25% of the concentration for house plants recommended in the directions on the container seem to work quite well with this plant. A little direct sun with lots of good, indirect light have given me slow but steady growth and flowers in the spring for many years.

#### REFERENCES:

\*Jacobsen, Hermann. *A Handbook of Succulent Plants*, vol. 2. London: Blandford Press, 1960

\*Bayer, M. Bruce. *Haworthia Revisited* (1999), online excerpt.

\*Bayer, M. Bruce. *All You Want to Know about Haworthia, Gasteria and Astrolaba* (2009) (website), online excerpt.

\*Llifle: *Encyclopedia of Living Forms* (online excerpt on *H. venosa*).

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### April Succulent of the Month

Richard Holland

NAME: *Gasteria batesiana* Rowley

SYNONYMS: *Gasteria transvaalensis* Rowley

*Gasteria carinate* Rowley

*Gasteria subverrucosa* var. *marginata*

COMMON NAMES: (English) Cow Tongue, (Afrikaner) knoppies-beestoring.

ORIGIN: South Africa, this species has the most northerly distribution in the genus, occurring from north of the Tukhela (Tugela) River in northern KwaZulu-Natal to the Olifants River Valley in the Limpopo Province



HABITAT: It is a cliff dweller, found in savannah at elevations from 500 to 700 m, in hot dry, frost free river valleys in mountainous terrain. Its habitat consists of shady southern and eastern aspects where it occurs in shallow humus-rich soil (pH 6.8 – 7.1). *Gasteria batesiana* is pollinated by sunbirds. Its fruiting capsules becoming erect after fertilization, opening from the top only to release its flattish seed by gusts of wind, this ensuring a sufficient dispersal distance. Its fleshy leaves store water making it a drought tolerant and ideal water wise garden plant. In spite of its habitat on cliffs becoming bone dry during winter, the plants have enough water-supply for survival. Due to its medical use, it is becoming rare.

**DESCRIPTION:** Small rosette succulent that proliferates from the base forming small groups. It usually larger than tall and grows 30 to 100 mm tall and 80-300 mm in diameter. The plant is nearly stem less (acqui-  
escent). The roots are thick with little branching and endowed with the ability to contract, physically pulling the plant down into the ground during dry weather. The leaves are 50-180 cm long, 15-40 mm wide, very firm with translucent, smooth epidemics, strap-shaped, ascending spreading becoming recurved. The upper surface becoming channeled during the drought. Young leaves are initially in two opposite rows then spiral with age becoming roseate. Both surfaces are dark almost black-green taking on a reddish colour in strong light. They are mottled with dense white spots arranged in transverse bands and distinctly densely tuberculate, with larger and smaller green or white pearly, raise, tubercles. The fruit is a 16-20 mm long veering black flattened seed 4-6 mm long, 2-3 mm large. It flowers in the spring.

**CULTIVATION:** they are slow growing but long-lived plants of easy culture which makes them a good houseplant and can be an excellent subject for the beginning grower. They need light shade to shade, but will take full sun part of the day (with some sun exposure the leaf develops a nice reddish tint and remain compact. They are tolerant of a wide range of soils and habitats, but prefer a very porous potting mix to increase drainage. During the hot summer months, the soil should be kept moist but not overly wet. The plants are fertilized only once during the growing season with a balanced fertilizer diluted to ½ the recommended strength. During the winter months, water only when the soil becomes completely dry. Frost hardy to -1 deg. C.

**PROPAGATION:** Gasteria is easily propagated by the removal of offshoots or by leaf cuttings in spring or summer. To use offshoots it should stay intact in the pot though ever head will have its own root system and it could easily be split for propagation.

To propagate by leaf cuttings, remove a leaf and let it lie for about one month (e.g. in a cool window sill, giving the wound time to heal. Then lay the leaf on its side with the basal part buried in the soil. This leaf should root within a month or two and small plants will form at the leaf base. Young plants can be harvested the following season.

**REMARKS:** I got my first plant from HCSS in October 2008.

**REFERENCES:** [http://www.cactus-art.biz/schede/GASTERIA/Gasteria\\_batesiana/Gasteria\\_batesina/Gasteria\\_batesiana.htm](http://www.cactus-art.biz/schede/GASTERIA/Gasteria_batesiana/Gasteria_batesina/Gasteria_batesiana.htm)



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**April Cactus of the Month****Bruce Moffett**

Hamatacactus Hamatacanthus

This plant is also known as Ferocactus Hamatacanthis

It is native to southern Texas and New Mexico and northern Mexico mostly in the Chihuahuan Desert from the low desert up to the mountain woods.

It is a green globular-to-cylindrical cactus to 2' in height in habitat. Ribs are arranged in a loose spiral, with whitish radials and dark reddish hooked central spines. Flowers are fragrant, to over 3" in diameter, lemon yellow with a red throat. It grows solitary, or double or triple branched after injury, occasionally even uninjured plants may form clusters with more than tree heads, particularly plants growing in rock crevices. The stem can be 2 to 10 inches in diameter. It may have 10 to 13 ribs often poorly defined.

The spines are somewhat variable in number, diameter, and position, mostly brownish, reddish or a mixture of red spines and yellowish, especially near the stem apex, sometime variegated, turning grey as they ages. In some plants, particularly on the upper one-half or one-third of the stems, the collective dominant colour of the spines is red. The areoles of immature plants have fewer and shorter central and radial spines than is typical in adult areoles.

Hamatacactus Hamatacanthus is a summer grower not too difficult in a greenhouse, although grows quite slowly. Requires porous cactus soil with adequate drainage. Bright light with ample airflow. Water thoroughly when soil is dry to the touch. Protect from frost. It grows much faster with a low nitrogen content fertilizer in spring and summer. Potassium helps maintaining the plants compact and healthy. It needs to be repotted often.





## Hilltop Gardens

Liliana Cracraft

Down in the heart of the Rio Grande Valley, about 45 miles northeast of McAllen, there is a little town called Lyford where the largest public collection of Aloe plants in the United States is found. The 720-acre property, known as Hilltop Gardens, houses 200 of the world's ±500 documented species of Aloe plants grown to eventually be used in commercial and/or medicinal products.



Founded in 1939 by Lee Ewald and her husband Sherman, the initial 100-acre property became the main source of Aloe vera plants as a consumer product. This was the first farm to make ointments and other skin care products using Aloe vera as the main ingredient. In 1959, their daughter Phyllis Schmidt developed and sold cosmetics for many years until the plant was sold in 1988 to a company called Aloecorp of Seoul, Korea. This company was owned by Mr. Yunho Lee, who many consider as a pioneer in the medical uses of aloes. He expanded the plantations of aloe to a farm in Mexico.

Since 2010, the farm has been growing aloes following the USDA's guidelines for good agricultural practices, which include growing these plants as a commercial vegetable. They are considered to be organic.



In 2012, Hilltop Gardens was opened to the general public for tours, and in January 2014 obtained a historical site designation from the State of Texas as the first commercial Aloe vera farm in the United States.

The long list of products manufactured with the plants grown here can be found at [www.newunivera.com](http://www.newunivera.com).

These include tablets or drinks to improve bone density, the liver, the heart, the immune system, and digestion. Other products include lotions to soothe and moisturize the skin, and shampoos and conditioners.

There are 3 main gardens to visit in this place; The Memorial Aloe Garden, a Healing Garden, and a Children's Garden. The Aloe Garden contains an extensive collection of plants that have been selected and obtained mainly from private collections and nurseries across southern Africa where aloes originated. There are tree aloes, grass aloes, and the most familiar types. Since there is a large variety of plants at these gardens, blooms can be seen almost any time of the year.

This place is a favorite for birders, photographers, plant and nature enthusiast, and travelers who enjoy observing the plants, and a myriad of migratory birds and butterflies.

Group guided tours are available Monday-Friday from 9 am – 3 pm. A minimum of 10 people in a group is required, as well as reservations. The cost is \$8 per person, and the tour is 1.5 h long. Self-guided tours cost only \$3.

Hilltop Gardens is located at 100 Lee Lane, Lyford. Their phone number is (956) 262-2176. They also offer a four bedroom, Mexican-style colonial farm house for rent.

## REFERENCES

Going Places. AARP Texas Journey, Jan-Feb 2017

<http://www.hilltopgarden.com/content/index/0122/0129>

## CDRI Cactus Sale - March 13-18, 2017

The CDRI Annual Cactus Sale, only one of two fundraisers for the year, will begin Monday, March 13, 2017, with gates opening at 9:00 a.m. The sale will run through the week or until all are sold. Last year, we increased the amount of large cacti, and we sold out by mid-week. We've doubled our large cacti this year, but *Word to the Wise: Arrive early and get 'em while they last!*

Liliana R. Cracraft



**2017 Annual Show & Sale**  
 April 27, 28, 29  
 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
 San Antonio Garden Center  
 3310 N. New Braunfels Avenue

**WHAT TO SEE AND DO:** Cactus & succulent vendors, Educational Displays, SACXS Fiesta medal sales, raffle plant drawings, silent auctions (Thurs./Fri.) plus unique & landscape plant auctions (Fri./Sat.) Official Fiesta Event!

## The Home and Garden Center Show 2017

Daryl Rebrovich

This year the Home and Garden Show was held at the NRG Arena instead of the usual NRG Center. This was due to conflicts from the Super Bowl the week before. Sales for the HCSS were down slightly however, a large sale by a member last year is what made the difference between the two. The club did gain a new member at the sale. We were short handed especially for setup and tear down. It would be nice to see more people volunteering. If you sign up and can't make it please call and tell me so that I may make adjustments.

A very special thanks to Dick and Phyllis McEuen who have volunteered their seventeenth consecutive setup in a row. They were just recuperating from illness, yet managed to lend a very helping hand. Another special thanks to Richard Holland who has helped in every setup and tear down since I have been Events Coordinator and before that. Richard stays to help until everything is loaded. He has also volunteered to man tables at each event. Another special thanks goes to Karla Halpaap-Wood who works so much behind the scene as well as on site. We all know how much she does when she is there but, I doubt few know how hard she works for the club at home in so many ways.

Other thanks go out to Wally Ward another top contributor, also Kathleen Canty, Ron Chadick and Craig Hamilton. It is people like you that keep the club rolling.



Photos by Daryl Rebrovich, Ron Chadick, Richard Holland

## Cooking With Cactus

Liliana Cracraft

### Prickly Pear Cactus Salad Tostadas

6 prickly pear cactus (nopales) pads – must be fresh  
 1 Roma tomato cut in small cubes  
 1 small (red or white) onion cut in small cubes  
 ¼ cup of chopped cilantro  
 The juice of 2 small limes  
 1 teaspoon olive oil  
 Salt  
 1 teaspoon of baking soda  
 1 package of tostadas  
 Fresh Mexican cheese

Cut the cactus pads in small strings. Cook them in 6 cups of water with baking soda for about 20 minutes. Rinse in cold water. Mix them with all the rest of the ingredients in a bowl, and add salt to taste. Fill the tostadas when ready to eat with the salad, and sprinkle with shredded cheese. You can add cooked shrimp if desired.

Enjoy!



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