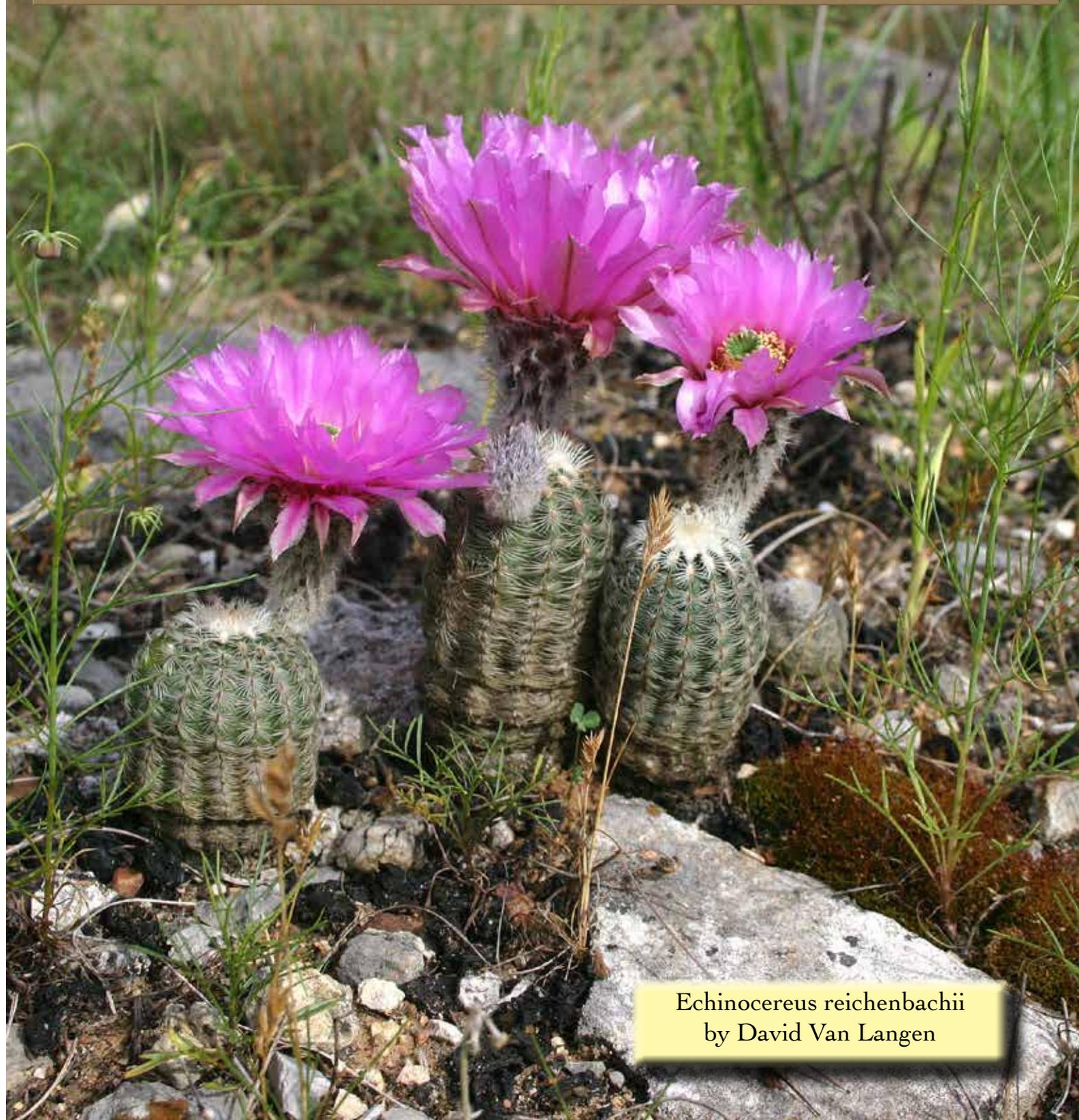


VOL. 56
NO. 2

MARCH-APRIL 2019

Kaktos Komments

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



Echinocereus reichenbachii
by David Van Langen

Membership

Kathy Fewox

Twenty-five members attended the January 23, 2019 meeting of HCSS. Among those attending were three brand new members: Julie Gallington, Chris Gallington, and Sara Ramirez. Also attending were two guests, Ana McDonald and Victor M. Newton. Several great door prizes were given away. Dave Thomas donated two nice pots, which were won by David Van Langen and Cherie Lee. Guest Ana McDonald brought in a book, "Digging Deep," which was won by Sara Ramirez. Paul Strickland donated two Aloe Zanzibar plants, which went home with Milton Pierson and Cindy Gray. Thanks to all the generous donors, and congratulations to the lucky winners!

In addition to Julie and Chris Gallington, and Sara Ramirez, we gained two more new members at the Home and Garden Show. They are Shirley Bukwa and Anja Duvenhage. Welcome to HCSS, everyone!

The HCSS meeting of February 27 was attended by fifteen members. We were joined by four guests: Marites Madrid, Chris Sejman, and repeat guests Ana Maria McDonald and Victor M. Newton. Several very nice door prizes were donated. Guest Marites Madrid brought in a "Bunny Ears" Opuntia, which was won by visitor Victor M. Newton. Cindy Gray donated a beautiful book, "Succulents, The Illustrated Dictionary," which was claimed by Cherie Lee. Milton Pierson won two issues of "Cactus and Succulent Journal," also donated by Cindy Gray. Cherie and Frank Lee brought in two nice Sansevieria plants of unknown species, which were won by Pinke Neck and Anna Maria McDonald. Paul Stricklin donated a Sansevieria Harwoodii, which was claimed by a delighted Cindy Gray. Congrats to all the winners, and thank you to those donating the door prizes.

As I mentioned in the last KK, July Olson has agreed to be Membership Chairperson or Co-chairperson (we haven't exactly worked out the details). She did a great job when handling the Membership duties in January. July had minor surgery that forced her to miss the February meeting. As I write this she is resting and recuperating, and plans to be at the March meeting.

Liliana Cracraft has recently been the invited speaker at the Piney Woods and the Olde Tower Oaks Gardening Clubs in Houston. She spoke about the ABCs of growing cactus and succulents in Houston, and the Prickly Pear Cactus, the State Plant.

Please email any news of HCSS members and their families to Kathy Fewox at kathyfewox@aim.com, or July Olson at saint.juniper@gmail.com.

Calendar:

March 13, 2019	7:30 pm Board Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.
March 27, 2019	7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Program: "The Prickly Pear Cactus, the State Plant" by Liliana Cracraft, HCSS.
April 24, 2019	7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Program: TBA
May 1, 2019	Deadline for submitting articles for the KK.

2019 Letter from the President

January 5, 2019

Dear HCSS Members,

I'd like to welcome our many new members who have joined us this past year. It is always exciting to meet new people with different interests and perspectives. We are happy to have you. Please let us know your interests, bring plants you need help with, and join in our many activities.

I'd also like to thank our older members for their continued participation and support. The club could not exist without ongoing participation, support, and input from you.

This is my fourth and final term as president. I don't think our founders meant to have a king or queen, but to have leadership and ideas from many people. I think our club is doing well as we enter this new year, but I would like to return to some of the things that have fallen by the wayside of late. These suggestions are very simple, but important to the fun factor, as well as the sustenance of the club. My first priority is that we be more proactive about bringing plants for the plant exchange. We have gotten some wonderful and interesting plants for 50 cents through the years. It's especially wonderful when you are new because you can make inexpensive additions to your collection. The second thing is to have at least one, hopefully two local field trips so that more people can attend and begin to feel a part of the club. We have plans to visit one nursery this spring, and are open to requests for another one. The third thing is to have either a potting party or get-together at someone's house. I will be glad to offer our place for that one.

Please share your questions, concerns, ideas, etc. to members of the Board of Directors so that we can be responsive to everyone's needs and wants.

Also, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, and am very glad HCSS will be a part of it.

As always,

Josie Watts,
President, HCSS

It's not too early to start planning a trip to the CSSA Biennial Convention entitled Succulents: "Conserving Our Treasures." It will take place July 17-20, 2019, at the Veterans Memorial Hall, San Louis Obispo, on the beautiful central coast of California. Hotel headquarters is the Kinney Hotel. Group rate \$163 per night.

Excellent speakers, field trips, and many vendors.

For more information visit CSSA 2019 Convention

March Cactus of the Month**Liliana Cracraft****PACHYCEREUS MARGINATUS: "THE MEXICAN FENCE POST CACTUS"****SYNONYMS**

Cereus marginatus, *Lemaireocereus marginatus*, *Lophocereus marginatus*, *Marginatocereus marginatus*, *Stenocereus marginatus*

OTHER COMMON NAME(S)

Central Mexico Organ Pipe, Organ Cactus, Jarritos, Organo, Chilayo.

HISTORY

Originally described as a *Stenocereus* by Augustin Pyramus de Candolle, a Swiss botanist (1778-1841). Later reclassified as a *Pachycereus* by Britton & Rose. For many years, *Stenocereus marginatus* plants have been widely used as barriers, often becoming living fences throughout México.

HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION

Central Mexico including San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Puebla, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Morelos, Michoacán, and Mexico City.

DESCRIPTION

The plants are tall, tree-like. They can be solitary or sometimes branching. Upright and clumping, stiff and imposing, columnar cactus with unbranched stems from the base. In the wild it grows up 9-16 feet (3-15 m) in height. Cultivated plants can grow up to 12 feet (4 meters) tall or more.

Stems: Erected, basally branching dark green in color. The surface is slightly rough to the feel, like sandpaper.

Ribs: 5 to 7 (or more).

Areoles: White, glandular, mostly about 0.4 inches (1 cm) apart, confluent forming an uninterrupted longitudinal line.

Spines: One yellowish central spine up to 0.4 inches long with 5-9 short radials. The spines are longer in the juvenile specimens, while are very short in the mature branches. Some plants have no spines.

Flowers: The flowers are diurnal, appear in the summer, and are white, pink or reddish. They measure 1-2 inches long.

Blooming season: Spring.

Fruit: Globose, somewhat dry, spiny, yellowish to reddish, up to 1.6 inches (4 cm) in diameter, with many black seeds. They appear in late spring to early summer.

CULTIVATION/GROWTH:

Cultivation and Propagation: It is easy to grow, but not very cold hardy. Outside requires full sunshine. Indoors needs bright light, and some direct sun. Need a well-drained soil mix. In the summer water the plants well, and allow them to dry before watering. During the winter months, put them in a bright

place and withhold water and fertilizer. Otherwise, they will etiolate, or become thin, due to lower levels of light. They are susceptible to fungal diseases if overwatered, but are not nearly as sensitive as many other cacti, especially in warm weather. If kept damp through cold periods, they will invariably suffer. Plants grown outdoors in the ground produces exceptional amounts of growth, often more than 39 inches (1 m) each year, if kept well fed and watered throughout the warmest months.

Propagation: Cutting or from seed. The seeds are quite easy to germinate and grow. Their main requirements consist of high humidity levels, free-draining soil mix, and enough water, light, and nutrition.

AVAILABILITY

Inexpensive. Plants and seeds available for sale in the U.S. through e-bay or some nurseries.

REMARKS

Because the stems are exceptionally straight, in México, where they are extensively cultivated, they are often used to make live fences (a wall of these is hard to get through and/or see through). It is also useful to build an effective wind break barrier. They are also used in desert landscape design themes, similar to Organ Pipe cactus, but with a cleaner, sleek appearance. Not for use in small spaces.

My plant is about 5 years old. I collected a small pup from a relative's huge plant growing in McAllen, Texas. I have to watch for scale, which I carefully remove with Q-tips from the stems, and with toothpicks around the areoles.

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- Cullman, Götze & Gröner. 1984. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon.
- Innes, C. and Glass, Ch. *Cacti*. 1991. Portland House, New York, N.Y.
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March Succulent of the Month

David Van Langen

Dudleya saxosa subs. collomiae is a perennial succulent that is closely related to Echeveria. Its common name is Gila County Live Forever. The plant forms basal rosettes of narrow pointed leaves that are up to 5 inches tall but less than one half inch wide. The leaves are a powdery green to almost white and quite pretty. The small yellow flowers are borne on a reddish colored stalk and while not big and beautiful- they are most unique and attractive.



While there are over two dozen different kinds of Dudleya in the western United States, this sub species of Dudleya can be found only in central to southern Arizona. Most of the other "Duds" are found in coastal California and the adjacent Baja peninsula. Dudleya saxosa subs. collomiae inhabits cliffs, ledges and outcropping from 2,000 ft to 5,000 feet elevation and is often found in the same habitat as Agave and some cactus, including the large Barrel cactus and Mighty Saguaro. They can be found in open boulder strewn hilltops to sheltered cracks and crevices. They are usually found in locations where rain water will flow through but will not pool or collect. They are also known to live to be well over 50 years old. It is not often seen but can be fairly common when the conditions are right. While several species of Dudleya can be found in the Big Box Stores, I have never seen this Arizona native on the C&S racks. The only ones I have seen, and bought and killed, were native to coastal California and detest hot weather. They are used to cool temps with winter rain and lots of fog coming off the cool waters of the Pacific. They are also winter growers and need to be mostly dormant in our hot summers. This plant, Dudleya saxosa subs. collomiae, is native to the hot desert of Arizona with wet seasons in the hot summer and mild winter. This is the only Dud I have had that looked good after a year or more here in Houston. Miles To Go is the only grower I know of that offers this Dudleya. Some growers in California most likely sell this and several other species of Dudleya but I will not mess with the west coastal species anymore. I am a slow learner but will only grow this Arizona native from now on! This plant gets a very rocky loose mix and small amounts of water at a time. This plant will rot quickly if kept moist too long- especially when we have those forever wet and humid spells !! Try this one-- You might not kill it !!!



April Cactus of the Month

David Van Langen

Echinocereus reichenbachii

Echinocereus reichenbachii is a short cylindrical shaped cactus found over most of Texas and adjacent states.

The stems are typically under 12" in height and 2-3 inches across. Some stems remain single while most produce at least an offset or two. Many will produce multiple branches and can create an impressive clump over time. The green stems are typically covered with many short spines that mostly obscure the stems. The spine colors range from white, brown, red to reddish

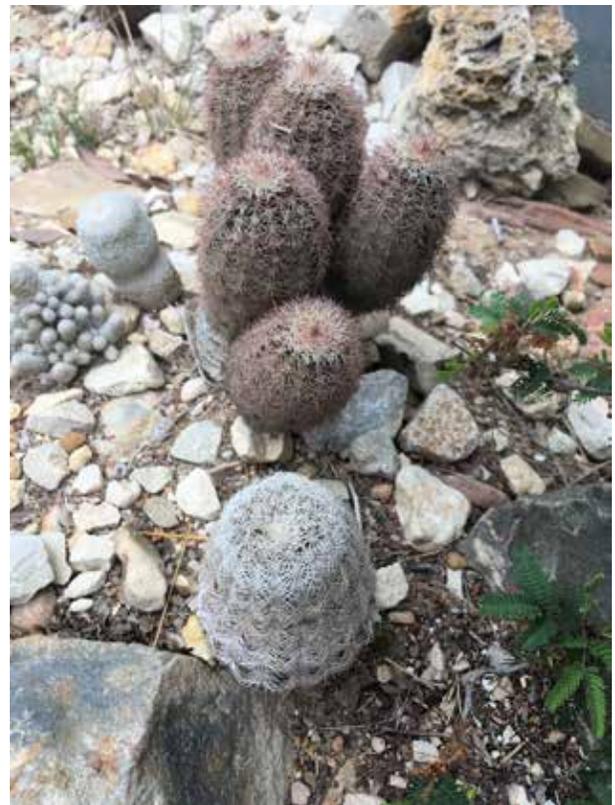


brown and even dark purple to blackish. Many of the different varieties are specific to a certain location and substrate and have certain identifiable traits. The majority of these plants, commonly called the Lace or Comb Cactus, can be handled easily as the spines are comb shaped and held close to the stems. A few varieties has shaggy spines that point away from the stem. The flowers of the Lace Cactus are large and showy at 2-3 inches across. The petals are typically pink to purple with a darker center and are very fragrant. The juicy fruits that follow are covered with loose spines and split when ripe. Birds and other critters eat the fruit and "spread the love" as they perch !! *Echinocereus reichenbachii* is a common cactus of the Texas Hill Country and is found in Texas from near Columbus to Fayetteville in the east up to around Fort Worth and westward to near the Pecos River up through the Texas Panhandle and down to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Varieties can be found scattered through central Oklahoma and west to the eastern third of New Mexico and up into southeast Colorado. There is also records of these in a couple of counties in far southwestern Kansas. *Echinocereus reichenbachii* also grows in northeastern Mexico. Most of Central Texas is limestone and the bulk of the Lace Cactus found on limestone have white spines that are held tight to the stems. Many locales there have short squatty stems that are mushroom shaped. In the center of the state is the Llano Uplight where granite and gneiss prevails. Here you will find the variety "castaneus" which has longer and shaggier spines- from white to reddish brown. The plants in this habitat seem to make large clumps and can be seen growing on slopes and outcrops covered with boulders and crevices. Inks Lake State Park and Enchanted Rock State Park are great places to



see this fine variety of the Lace Cactus. North of Wichita Falls-- just north of Lawton, Oklahoma is another wonderful place to see long, shaggy and red spined Lace Cactus. Here on pink granite hills similar to the Inks Lake area one can find the *Echinocereus reichenbachii* var. *baileyi* ! These nice plants form good sized clusters growing on granite outcrops covered with Spike Moss and Lichens. In the western part of the Lace Cactus range is found the variety named "perbellus". It is a creature of the High Plains of Central West Texas up through New Mexico, into Colorado and western Oklahoma. Here it is found in short grassland mixed with small *Yucca* and plenty of Wind !!! The spines here tend to be darker with blackish to purple most dominate. The Lace Cactus in this harsh environment also tend to be smaller and clump less but are still a nice compliment to the Cactus Family ! There are also a couple varieties in South Texas- the "fitchii" var found scattered through much of the Rio Grande Brush Country and the endangered "albertii" found near the Corpus Christi coastal areas.

All in all--the *Echinocereus reichenbachii* group is one that is a must to grow in a collection. They have colorful spines with beautiful flowers and are fairly easy to take care of. Except for the far South Texas varieties, they are very cold hardy and less rot prone than cactus found in the true deserts of the West. Many vendors offer these for sale and they are a common cactus in most of the Hill Country Deer Leases so many are brought back from hunting trips. With a sharp draining mix full of rock chips and gravel, this is one of the very best selection of cactus to grow in Houston but even then it needs some protection from our endless periods of constant rain!!!



April Succulent of the Month

Paul Stricklin

Kalanchoe Family: Crassulaceae, Subfamily: Sedoideae, Tribe: Kalanchoeae, Genus: Kalanchoe

A wide ranging family of familiar as well as unusual shapes, colors, and reproduction styles. Members of this Tribe are listed as originating from India, through Africa to Yemen and even Brazil. Two samples with different growing patterns.

Kalanchoe Laciniata / *Kalanchoe carnea*

(Christmas Tree Plant, Cathedral Bells, Lace Leaf Kalanchoe)

A fleshy short lived perennial, growing to over 3 feet.

The plant may lose its leaves and die back to an underground tuber (tap root) under dry conditions. Easy to grow in full sun or partial shade forming light green, evergreen, lacy leaves. Small orange / yellow showy blooms form in late winter or early spring. Plant in well drained containers, that can be kept away from plant chewing pets. The leaves and roots are listed as poisonous with the flowers the most toxic part of the plant. An alternative growth pattern previously reported as.



Kalanchoe Tigrina (*Humilicis*)

A fleshy low growing shrub to 3 feet in height, when it is growing upright. Leaves are variable in coloring entity and patterns. Light intensity appears to affect structural growth and coloring. This specimen has been blooming for several weeks all though the flower brackts are thin, lacy, and lacking in strong coloring.

Several sources indicated a need for temperatures above 55 degrees, yet these specimens are regularly exposed to long periods of 50 degrees without harm. The garden store flowering Kalanchoe regularly survive in wetter soils and near freezing temperatures. Hybridization has produced many variations. Well drained growing media seems to bring out the strongest coloring and sturdiest growth patterns.

All in all a tribe that is well worth searching out unusual leaves, colors, and shapes. Although you might wish to avoid “The Mother of Many”, which is prone to rapidly sheading new plants. Do a little “digging” to learn why and how.



Andy Voelkle was a member of HCSS in the late 80's to mid 90's. He recently passed away. He wrote this article for the KK Vol 51, No 3.

DRY WORDS

THE VOCABULARY OF XEROPHYTIC PLANTS

by Andy Voelkle

(NL *Andreas Voelklaeus Scripsit*)

#1 In the Series



INTRODUCTION (*L introductus*)

This column (*L columna*) will try to study (*L studium*) while having some fun with the *words* used to describe *xerophytes*, those dry and interesting plants that Webster defines as being “*structurally adapted for life and growth with a limited water supply especially by means of mechanisms that limit transpiration or that provide for the storage of water.*”

Our plant naming system was originated (*L origo*) by a collector from Sweden, Carl von Linné (NL *Linneaus*), around 1750, and consists of two or more *latinized names* that describe the plant uniquely. *Genus species* are the two most important, and the rest describe subtle varieties or forms of the basic “unique species”.

Most plants are put into groups because of little details of how the flowers are constructed, instead of something more “obvious”.

Plant names written in the antiquated tongues (*L antiquus, lingua*) of the Romans and Greeks are often the names of people, or mean something like “prickly spiny plant from Texas”. *Echinocactus texensis* might be understood anywhere in the world, while the “common” name (*horse crippler*) might be uncommon outside the vast reaches of the southwestern USA.

LATIN IS NO SECRET

Nor is *Latin* a secret code. Its purpose is to survive as it did through the *Dark Ages* (476-1000 AD) and to be understood by all, whether drenched in modern accents or lifted once again from the crumbling pages of time.

Latin names free and unite us. Whether it is a “coir”, a “car”, or a “kaah” in your part of the country, you can still drive it, and however you pronounce a plant’s name you can study and love it. Pronunciation is not critical; you can always write it down. Every accent has its certain beauty, just like every xerophytic plant.

HISTORY (*L historia*)

Latium was an area of ancient Italy which united against the warlike *Etruscans* and *Samnites* by 500BC. They came under the domination of the city-state *Rome* in 338BC, and were granted Roman citizenship after the *Social War* of 90BC. Their *Italic* language is now called *Latin*, and forms the basis of the *Romance Languages* of today, underpinning *English* to a major extent. *Latin* takes many words from the *Greek* (G γραικος).



“Julius Caesar never even heard of a cactus, so why are cactus names in *Latin*?”

BOTANICAL VOCABULARY

“*What happened to the list of Latin words?*” inquired my puzzled Editor, who can speak in **bold italics** *** well, there are thousands of really succulent botanical words, and we’ll try to look at a few hundred of them soon.

The definitions will be all original wordings rather than plagiarism (*L plagiarus*, even then archaic for plunderer), though *good* definitions *will* converge to an unmistakable *concept*.

The squiggly little *diacritical* marks found in the dictionary (like â ã ä å) are a lot of trouble, and I still have to look to see how they are pronounced, so the guide I will write for you will just use common words and syllables.

SMART QUESTIONS

Whether you become my harshest critic (*L criticus*) or my most loyal fan (*L fanaticus*), your suggestions for my text (*L texture*) are most welcome. Take up your pen (*L penna*), write your letter (*L litterae*), and post (*L ponere*) it. Send me a PC-compatible 5¼”  or 3½”  disc with ASCII text files if you wish.

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DRY WORDS

THE VOCABULARY OF XEROPHYTIC PLANTS

by Andy Voelkle

(NL *Andreas Voelklaeus Scriptist*)

#2 In the Series



REAL LATIN VS REAL WORLD

Let's see how we pronounce *Latin* twenty centuries later in the modern *Americas*. Take the very common word *Cereus*, which many of us would sing out something like SEAR-ee-us or SEER-ee-us or SAIR-ay-us.

I promise you, here and now, that I will never pronounce *Cereus* as the ancients might because it would sound like say-RAY-uss.

Technically correct is technically better than everyday colloquial speech, but it is less understandable to most people I know.

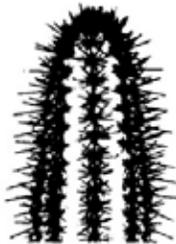
It may be a mistake trying to look at the oddly *latinized* dry words of the xerophytes in the tongue-twisting ancient lingo. If so, it is a mistake that I might be able to avoid somehow.

English has rapidly become the *lingua franca pro tempore*, the common tongue of the age, and the way we pronounce things in America is about as close to a global standard as we have.

The purists may indicate that my attitude is shallow, and that my education must be lacking. They will be correct to some extent, but they aren't in old *Linnaeus' Europe* or *Caesar's Rome* and I am in *America*, and we all know what we hear everyday. You know by now that I think *pronunciation* is a lot less important than *understanding*, on the big scale of things.

Imagine how an *English-speaking person* of different ethnic origins might pronounce *Cereus*; how different from the way you might say it. Imagine an *Hispanic* accent with the beautiful rolling of the letter *r*, a *Southern* or a *New England* accent, or your venerable Latin teacher who could have charmed the ancients.

"Why is this called a *Cereus*, when an *Opuntia* is really a serious cactus?"



BRIEF LATIN PRONUNCIATION

Or as the Romans might say, *Locutio Linguae Latinae Paucis Verbis Explanatur*. Every *Latin* word in the title has an *English* equivalent- *Locution, Language, Latin, Paucity, Verbiage, Explanation*. *Latin* lurks in our words.

The vowels in *Latin* sound similar (*L. similis*) to those in modern *Italian* or *Spanish*:

- A is pronounced "ah" as in "Father"
- E is pronounced "ay" as in "They", but in short words like *est* (is), as in "Best"
- I is pronounced "ee" as in "between", but in short words like *id* (it), as in "kid"
- O is pronounced "oh" as in "Row"
- U is pronounced "oo" as in "Crude"; in word endings like *um* (it), as in "Room"
- AE as "Eye"; AU as "Wow"; OE as "Soy".

LATIN WORDS AND SYLLABLES

Latin words are pronounced in short syllables just as in English, but each vowel (a e i o u) and each two-letter *diphthong* (æ au oe) makes a new syllable in Latin, and each syllable is pronounced separately. *Latine loqui non est difficilium* (E *Speaking Latin is not difficult*) would be pronounced *Lah-TEA-nay LOW-quee NON EST dee-fee-KEY-lay-uss*.

The basic rule of *stress* is to emphasize the first syllable if it has two, or the next-to-last syllable if the word has more than two syllables. If the last two syllables are both vowels, then stress the third from the last. *Etcetera*. Whew!

- Cereus* say-RAY-uss
- Echinocereus* a-KI-no - say-RAY-uss
- Echeveria* h-uh-VER-e-ah

LABEL MIX-UP

All the letters fell off a plant's label ...
 CUNAEIOICSHCT INSTSEEX
 ----- is hard
 skinned, very spiny, and native to the Americas.

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Stamp Collection

Tom Cardinal

Collecting cactus and succulent postage stamps is a fun hobby that fits right in with collecting real cacti. Hundreds of countries have issued cactus stamps worldwide. Our United States Post Office has issued over a dozen different stamps with cactus. The first being the 1953 Gadsden purchase stamp which celebrates the acquisition of land from Mexico we know today as Arizona. This February 2019 the post office is issuing a booklet of ten different stamps with cactus flowers. These are sure to be popular with collectors.



Arizona statehood 1964



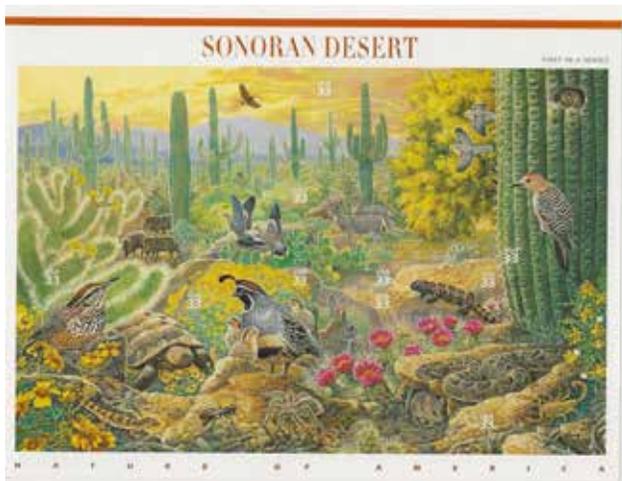
Gadsden purchase 1953



US desert plants 1981



Pollination 2007



Sonoran desert 1999



cactus flowers 2019



cactus stamps 2002-2008

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