Vol. 56
No. 6

November-December 2019

Kaktos Komments

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

Graptopetalum rusbyi
by David Van Langen

From the editor

Karla Halpaap-Wood

I want to thank everybody who contributed to this issue of the KK, especially Liliana for her article that will be published in several parts. I want to encourage all members to participate actively in the club. One way can be by sending pictures or articles for the KK.

MEMBERSHIP

KATHY FEWOX & JULY OLSON

HCSS enjoyed a large turnout at the 2019 Show & Sale, held September 7 and 8. We gained eighteen new members! Joining our club are Laura and Eric Bank, Kristin Reyes, Monica Dupré, Yvonne A. Morris, Kingslea von Helms, Katrina and Val Cadena, Ellis Reyes-Montes, Sergio Menchu, Andrea Leger, Sarah Leger, Betty da Silva-Draud, Chaden Yafi, Jennifer Perry, Nichole Ridgway, Aditi Nabar, and Jesus Pineda. Everyone was impressive in their knowledge of cacti and succulents, and their enthusiasm for wanting to learn more. You will be wonderful additions to our club. Welcome, everyone!

We had two door prizes at the Show & Sale. Chaden Yafi's entry slip was drawn first, and she chose the beautiful Cereus peruvianus monstrose. Jesus Pineda won a very nice Aloe marlothii. Congratulations to both of them!

Our monthly meeting on September 25 was attended by twenty members, including five members who had joined at the Show & Sale: Chaden Yafi, Monica Dupré, Betty da Silva-Draud, Jennifer Perry, and Jesus Pineda. Also joining us were three guests: Issam Sabri (Chaden Yafi's mother), Susan Torney, and Paulette McNeese. We gave away several door prizes. Dave Thomas donated a Carnegiea gigantea, which was won by Betty da Silva-Draud. Pinke Neck donated two very nice pots, which were won by Chaden Yafi and Josie Watts. Congratulations to all the lucky winners!

Our October 23rd meeting was attended by 17 members and 4 guests- a great turn out for it being a game night, and early voting! Our guests included the returning Issam Sabri, our member Chaden Yafi's mother, and Paulette McNeese, and a new guest Scott Amundsen. Our member BonnieJean Grady brought a beautiful Firebird Aloe which was won by Paul Stricklin. Thank you to all who attended, and congrats to the winners!

Please send news of HCSS members or their families to kathyfewox@gmail.com or Saint.juniper@gmail.com

Calendar:

November 20, 2019	7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Program: Terrestrial bromeliads by Andy Siekkinen
December 8, 2019	Christmas dinner
January 1, 2020	Deadline for submitting articles for the KK.

November Cactus of the Month — July Olson

Cereus forbesii cv. Spiralis

This plant has a bit of a mysterious origin, but was thought to be originally collected from a propagation in either Brazil or Peru. The spiral cereus is a shrubby or treelike species dubiously thought of as a mutant Cereus forbesii, though there doesn't seem to be a complete consensus.

A few branches from the original plant were imported in Europe around 1980, and it was said to have short spines. However, most modern specimens are grown from cross pollinations with Cereus peruvianus or Cereus stenogonus. These hybrids have slightly different characteristics such as longer spines, and more of a blue green hue, where the parent plant was described as somewhat grayish green.

This columnar plant can grow up to 5 meters high, and reach about 10-12 cm in diameter. It produces a waxy bloom over its surface, and has five to nine widely spaced ribs. It grows fairly quickly, and blooms profusely in white flowers with pinkish outer petals, leaving behind purple fruit when it's been cross pollinated. They are self sterile. They can be propagated easily by cutting a stem and letting it dry, or scab over, before placing it in moist soil to root.

They are hardy, but don't overwater, especially in the summer. Just enough to keep the soil moist, but let it dry out completely between watering. It enjoys bright full sun, but it isn't tolerant of cold temperatures, and should be kept above 50F. Reporting is recommended every other year, just tap the old soil off the roots and place it in fresh moist soil.

A fairly easy plant, if you have a place to overwinter them, they are a funky edition to your columnar collection with their wild twists, and turns!

(Photo of the original parent plant of unknown origin)

November Succulent of the Month **David Van Langen**

Graptopetalum rusbyi

Graptopetalum rusbyi is a little known and even less talked about member of the Stonecrop family. It is a fairly small clumping plant with small succulent leaves shaped like a rose petal. Each leaf is about 1" long and 1/2" wide and the color of leaves can be from green to yellowish green and if exposed to full sun-- reddish to purplish. It is found over the southeast quandrant of Arizona in the desert elevations around 2,000 ft to upper middle elevations of 5,000 ft above sea level. It is also found in the adjacent states in Mexico. It is one of only a couple of Graptopetaliums that grow in the United States-- the others grow mostly in Mexico. It is one of the succulent plants commonly called Ghost Plant or Leatherpetal.

In habitat this plant is found in scattered locations amoung boulders and crags in canyons and sheltered areas The type locality is in the San Francisco Mountains of southeatern Arizona. In the lower and hotter part of its range it is usually found on the north side in partial shade along with mosses and ferns. It is also normally found close to areas that will either hold extra moisture and runoff from rain. In the spring flower spikes will emerge to about 6 inches tall and are topped by a cluster of small pale flowers with banding and dots of yellow and red. It is said to smell "Evil" !!

Graptopetalum rusbyi is an easy plant to grow in a well drained soil. It will do fine if left dry for extended amounts of time -- once a good root system has been established. Here in humid and muggy Houston I have a couple of these- some in mostly sun and some in quite a bit of shade. The main problem I had was watering in winter when it was cold and damp and dreary for several days in a row. Water would remain on the leaves and many would turn black and mushy and rot. The plant did not die but looked it had been to that "Place Down Under" ! Cutworms will also do a number on it as will Pill Bugs and other plant eating critters !

All in all I would recommend growing this cute little succulent -- mainly because it grows in the United States and because very few people know about it !! I bought mine from Miles to Go-- and I am not sure if anyone else in the C&S trade offer it for sale! I have NEVER seen this in habitat but there are some backroads in Arizona that are on my bucket list !

December Cactus of the Month **Cindy Gray**

Neoporteria multicolor

SYNONYMS:

- Eriosyce senilis var. multicolor
- Eriosyce kunzei 'multicolor' (Ritter)
- Eriosyce kunzei var. multicolor
- Echinocactus senilis Phillipii
- Neoporteria multicolor F. Ritter
- Neoporteria nidus Britton & Rose
- Neoporteria nidus v. multicolor (F Ritter) Hoffmann
- Neoportia nidus var. gerocephala
- Neoporteria senilis Backeberg 1935
- Neoporteria gerocephala Y. Itô (Nom illeg.) 1957
- Neoporteria multicolor F. Ritter 1963
- Neoporteria robusta F. Ritter 1963
- Neoporteria coimasensis var. robusta

COMMON NAMES:

- Neoporteria multicolor
- Neoperteria multicolor
- Eriosyce senilis var. multicolor

HABITAT / DISTRIBUTION: Endemic to Chile (Coquimbo, Valparaiso and Metropolitan regions, from Elqui Valley to the north of Metropolitan). In an altitude of 350 - 2000 meters above sea level. The plants live among small valleys and traverse to the sea. The species is frequent but not abundant in sclerophyllous forest and thorny scrub on rocky soils, the populations are severely fragmented, as illegal collection is causing

a continual decline in the number of mature individuals. Furthermore, land conversion for agriculture and urbanization is degrading the habitat surrounding the species.

DESCRIPTION: Solitary cacti with dens covering of bristly, flexible spines, it hybridizes easily in habitat and in cultivation too with other species of the genus Eriosyce. Stems are purplish and solitary, globose to short columnar, 6 18 cm tall, 5-8 cm in diameter. Ribs 13 to 21 notched somehow depressed between the areoles. Root is large, tuberose yellowish. Areoles are wooly. Spines 15 to 40 radials very dense, glassy, variable in color from blond/white, yellow, brown to almost black, with darker tips; straight to strongly curled and tangled, some hair like soft and flexible, other needle-like and stiff, of variable length, obscuring the plant body and becoming longer with age. About 20 central spines, 30-60mm, with 15-40 radial spines20-60 mm long.

Flowers 1-5 or more long and in diameter, borne at plant apex on young areoles, tubular to narrow funnel-form, showing various shades of purple-pink with clearer throat in the spring, 2.5-5 cm, 1-3 cm wide; floral tube with tuffs of white wool. Fruits elongate to clavate, reddish opening by basal pores at maturity, curled and tangles, some hair like soft and flexible, other needle-like and stiff, of variable length, obscuring the plant body and becoming longer with age.

CULTIVATION: Is a summer-growing species. Water regularly in summer, but do not over-water as it is rot prone. It needs good drainage and a very porous potting soil. Keep dry in the winter. Feed with a high potassium fertilizer in summer. Need full sun to bright shade, frost tolerance to -4°C or 25°F. Propagation is seeds, seldom produces offsets.

I purchased mine from the TACSS Seminar from vendor Cactus Data on October 5, 2019. I have not repotted my plant yet, so far it is doing well, plan to report in the spring. The plant is also available online at Planet Desert, Mesa Gardens, Miles2go, Amazon, and eBay. May also be available from the vendors at Cactus Show and Sales in Austin, Houston or San Antonio or the TACSS Seminar is held every year in October.

REFERENCES:

- Cactus-Art Biz https://www.cactus-art.biz/
- Desert Topicals www.desert-tropicals.com
- Encyclopedia of Living Forms http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae
- Planet Desert Cacti, Succulents and More… https://planetdesert.com

December Succulent of the Month

Sarai Ramirez

Bryophyllum Fedtschenkoi

Name: Bryophyllum fedtschenkoi
Synonyms: Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi
Common Name: Verigated Lavender Scallops, Kalanchoe Stonecrop, Gray Sedum
Family: Crassulaceae
Genus: Bryophyllum
Habitat/Distribution: Native to Madagascar
Description: Bryophyllum fedtshenkoi is a perennial, shrubby succulent, with upright flowering stems and decumbent spreading, its sterile stems take root wherever it lies on the ground. The leaves are thick and fleshy, oblong and scalloped. It is native to Madagascar where it is a prolific grower and can reach up to 20.0" tall. When it grows taller, it will bend to touch the soil where it can cultivate new roots. It also spreads by producing new plantlets along its leaf edges. It can grow an orange reddish flower that is bell shaped and hangs loose in clusters, attracting pollinators. Blooming often takes place in the winter.

https://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/showimage/373955/

Cultivation/Growth: Zone 9-11, Full Sun, Sun to Partial Shade. This is a very low maintenance plant that can grow in most soil and can survive long periods of drought. They thrive in sunlight; the edges of the scalloped leave can become hot pink in the summer which is its growing season. Try to fertilize bi-weekly in the summer with liquid fertilizer or use slow release pellets. Water moderately throughout the summer and reduce watering in the winter. Let the soil surface dry out between watering's and in the winter the plant can almost dry out. They prefer warmth, so try to keep inside if the weather fall below 55 F.
My Experience: They look amazing in arrangements, but I warn people to take the plant out the succulent arrangement eventually because when it starts growing bigger the stems become hard like branches of a tree.
Reference: https://worldofsucculents.com/bryophyllum-fedtschenkoi-kalanchoe-fedtschenkoi-lavender-scallops/
https://mountaincrestgardens.com/kalanchoe-fedtschenkoi-marginata/

Show and Sale

September 7 and 8

BEST OF SHOW

Mammillaria gemnispina 'Big Red'
Josie Watts

BEST CACTUS

Mammillaria bombycina
Josie Watts

BEST SUCCULENT

Euphoria francoisii
Richard Stamper

SWEEPSTAKES FIRST PLACE

Haworthia bayeri
Richard Stamper

NOVICE BEST SUCCULENT

Senecio cylindricus
Pinké Neck

Judging

Show Chairma	Rolando Ontiveros	Clerks	Kathleen Canty
Head Clerk	Cindy Gray		Sarai Ramirez
Judges	Stan Russ		Andrea Varesic
	Jeff Boggan		
	Noreen Tolman		
	Karla Halpaap-Wood		

PREHISPANIC USES OF CACTUS & SUCCULENTS AMONG INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN MEXICO

by Liliana Cracraft

Part 1

There are multiple sources of information about the relative importance of cacti and succulent plants (C&S) for the primitive groups of México. Anthropological evidence has been obtained from archeological excavations in the Valley of Tehuacan in the State of Puebla and other sites in the State of Tamaulipas, as well as from the examination of coprolytes and semi-fossilized stems, flowers, and fruit remains found at Indian dwelling sites. Additionally, the chronicles of the Spanish conquerors and their letters to their superiors, the documentation by early historians, including friars, ethnobotany, and some traditions passed on through generations, have provided additional information to illustrate the importance of these plants in the process of settlement and civilization of many indigenous groups.

SOURCES OF FOOD.

In their quest for food, the early nomadic groups from eastern Siberia that reached México encountered many cactus stems, flowers and fruits that were not only edible, but sweet, juicy and palatable. Therefore, their dependence for such nourishments became very important for their survival.

The migrating tribes wondered over Mesoamerica, probably following seasonal changes, and some of them slowly became semi-sedentary in certain areas, especially those with and abundance of cactus and succulents. The plants that were not good were eventually eliminated, leaving only the useful ones that eventually were cultivated once these groups settled in chosen places. These places were those where nature offered them shelter, food, and water.

Opuntia pads (called nopales) were consumed raw, although this was not a generalized practice. They were mainly cooked by many tribes of central, eastern and southern México. Some plant remains found in excavations have been dated to be 8500 years old. The pads were eaten alone, or mixed with insects or the meat of many animals including monkeys, deer, wild boar, turkey, iguanas, snakes, lizards and frogs. They were also seasoned with chili peppers, chocolate, pumpkin seeds and tomatoes. Nopales are still used today in the same way they were used hundreds of years ago. In addition to the prickly pear, other cacti were consumed as food. Indians from the Sonoran Desert chewed the bitter pulp of Saguaros. They also cooked the stems of some chollas (O. bigelovii, O. fulgida) underground. Although these cacti contain few proteins and fats, they are quite rich in fiber and carbohydrates.

A great number of fruits from cacti were consumed raw by the Chichimecs, Otomíes, Toltecs, Tepehuanes, Aztecs, Coras and other Nahua groups. Those from O. ficus-indica, O. streptacanta, and O. imbricata were the most common. The fruits, called tunas by the Spaniards, are low in calories, and have a high content of water, vitamins A & C, calcium and phosphorus. They were also used to prepare a variety of products, including

syrup (miel de tuna, melcocha), or a soft paste (queso de tuna), or sun dried for storage. Tunas that were not sweet, such as Xonocostle, were used in soups and stews. Consumption of nopales and tunas continues to this day, with nopales being a main staple during the fasting Lent season days for Mexican people.

Other edible fruits for groups in Central México included those from Garambullo (Myrtillocactus geometrizans), Mammillaria spp., Pitayas (Stenocereus pruinosus, Stenocereus thurberi), and Cardón (Pachycereus). The Seri, Yaqui, and Papago Indians of Sonora collected the fruits of Saguaros, but their consumption was associated with religious ceremonies.

It is well known that the gardens of Emperor Moctezuma grew many types of cactus for their flowers, an important decoration in many dishes. Many cactus and succulent flowers were also consumed as food. Those from Pachycereus pringlei were eaten fresh. The petals of O. versicolor flowers were used by the Papago and Seri in their water to give it color. Many other flowers from Stenocereus, Myrtillocactus, Ferocactus, Yuccas and Agaves, as well as the buds from Echinocactus (called cabuches) were also used as vegetables.

Also edible were the sweet potato-like roots of Peniocereus (Neoevansia) striata, the larvae of a moth (chinicuiles) that infest the roots of some Agaves, and the seeds of Pachycereus, Carnegia, Stenocereus and Ferocactus, rich in oil and proteins, were consumed fresh; as a powder called Pinolli" in Nahuatl; or mixed with water as "atole."

Texas Association of Cactus and Succulent Societies 2019 Fall Seminar

by Cactus Boy

The TACSS Seminar was held on Saturday, October 5 at the San Antonio Garden Center. Well over 100 attended this very well organized event.

4 speakers presented excellent presentations with the common theme of Cacti in Texas. Jim Weedin and Alice Lyles showed many images of familiar and not so common plants. Jimmy Black introduced the crowd to the pharmacological aspect of some of our cactus species. Finally our great friend Woody Minnich discussed the ever-growing problem of cactus and succulent poaching.

It was delightful to see Josie, Kathy, and Cindy at the seminar. The Cactus Shack was one of the vendors along with Cactus Data Plants, Paul's Desert, Sharon Woody Pottery and A Bug's Home Nursery. Sales were pretty good. The auction took in about $2,500 which is really great for TACSS as it defrays the cost of the event.

The 2 Sunday field trips were excellent. Paul's Desert in Schertz was one. Paul's is a regular business and always worth a stop. Mandy Bulmer's front and back yard tour was fabulous.

TACSS is in Austin next year. TACSS President will be Sara Sturdevant (presently President of the Austin Society) and Vice President will be Tori Rosser (also from the Austin Society).

HCSS name badges

If you want to have a HCSS name badge you can order it here:
http://www.customnames.com/shop/HOUSTON.html

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