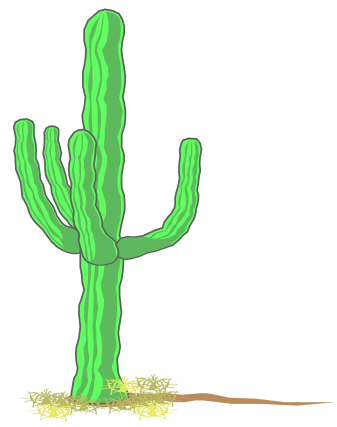


Oxotica

The Newsletter of the Oxford Branch of the
British Cactus and Succulent Society

June 2019

Volume 24, Number 1



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Hi Folks. It's normally around this time of the year that I do a half yearly chat about what we have been up to. It does not seem that 6 months have passed since my last chat - well I am pleased to say that the number of members at meetings is still good and we have had some visitors from our friends at Reading and High Wycombe, as well as some new faces. So thanks for supporting us and I hope that you continue to enjoy the monthly programme. The talks from our speakers so far have featured Euphorbia around the world, Eriogyne in Habitat in Chile, Animals and Plants from Namibia and how to move and build a new greenhouse (with all the plants as well).

I have been quite busy spreading the word around local gardening clubs as well as attending the BCSS Workshop and the International Euphorbia Conference in Belgium. John continues his circuit of talks around other branches so we try and spread the word when and where we can. We have a busy June and July with events that we are attending with our sales tables, in particular our three-day display and sales at Blenheim Palace Flower Show in June.

The main event is of course our joint show with The Haworthia Society at Grove **on 20th July** so please enter if you can, but anyway do come along and support us on the day as IT'S FREE to get in (I can smell the bacon rolls already!!). Plants will be for sale and hopefully some wonderful exhibits on the show bench.

There is plenty more to look forward to in the months ahead, especially the BCSS Cactus World Live event on 21st/22nd September at Lullingstone Castle; we are hoping to get a car share for anyone thinking of attending, so if you are then give me or one of the committee a call.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your plants no matter how many you have.

Good growing

Bill Darbon.

INTERNATIONAL EUPHORBIA CONFERENCE

Meise Botanic Garden- Belgium 18th - 19th May

The conference was held at Meise Botanic Garden which is located in the grounds of Bouchout Castle, a 12th century building for the Berthout family who were lords of Grimbergen. I was privileged to travel with Bob Potter, Al Laius and Susan Carter-Holmes to the town of Grimbergen where overnight accommodation had been arranged for Friday & Saturday. We spent a pleasant first evening with other members who were attending.

The conference was held over the weekend with lectures and some plants sales and displays within the castle building and was opened on Saturday morning by Rikus van Veldhuisen who welcomed everyone. The first lecture by Ricarda Riina from Real Jardin Botanico de Madrid on geographical disjunction within Euphorbia was a little technical but well presented. Members then walked a short distance to a buffet lunch in the Orangery of the Garden and were then given access to the collections in the plant palace - a very impressive building - with guidance

by Thomas Cammaerts one of the curators.

The afternoon was started by Thomas Haverermans from France who had stepped in due to illness and spoke about Euphorbia lacanthus – a section with a legacy of taxonomic confusion - which related to species from Madagascar. After a short break we were treated to a presentation by Joel Lode on Euphorbias around the world (if any of you attended the BCSS Convention you will have seen how professional his presentations are). He travelled a lot on his bicycle (similar to Anthony Mitchell in South Africa) but covered most of the world in particular Socotra; this was a splendid way to round off the first day. The evening was again spent with fellow attendees.

Saturday's first presentation was by Rolf Becker (Namibia National Commission of Research and Technology) on the Euphorbia of Southern Africa. This was a wonderful presentation and brought back memories for me of my trip in 2016.

Lunch was again served in the Orangery (traditional Belgium food) and we returned for the second lecture of the

afternoon by Alain Rzepecky (Portugal) on Euphorbia diversity of Oman, this was not an area that we see described very often and was very interesting. After a short coffee break Susan Carter rounded off the weekend with a presentation on classification of pair-spined Euphorbias. Her knowledge of this species of plants is second to none from all the years that she has been involved in the study of these plants.

The weekend was very relaxed in good company of people with a like interest and I learned a little more about this diverse species of plants. Whether it will improve my cultivation is another thing as everyone has their own method that works for them, but overall an enjoyable experience.

Bill Darbon

The orangery



The castle

BLenheim PALACE FLOWER SHOW 2019

Thanks to the weather holding out and some sunny days the Show attracted a large number of visitors again this year - it was held in the wonderful grounds of Blenheim and this year was run in conjunction with Nocturne Live (4 nights of concerts) which I think swelled the crowds. This was the 7th year of the show, which appears to be one of the main floral events in the year's calendar. The Branch again attended the show and staged a display and sales within the Grand Floral Marquee and received a Silver Gilt Award from the judges for the stand. Succulent plants were again well featured with ourselves, Simply Succulents and Craig House Cacti trying to interest folk in the hobby. We had many visitors show more than a passing interest in the plants and hopefully may have encouraged some to either come to our meetings or to the show. Let's hope so!

Bill Darbon

OTHER JUNE SALES EVENTS

Sunshine and showers at Headington Festival in Bury Knowle park; we had many interested buyers all day, so it was well worth doing. An event I always enjoy.

Also, we were invited to sell plants at Whichford Pottery again, so three of us braved a shower or two and a very gusty wind to sell plants. Three other sellers (non-succulent) were also managing under their gazebos.

DSG



Whichford Pottery back-up store

BRANCH MEETINGS JULY-NOVEMBER 2019

*4th Thursday in month, 7:30 pm for 8:00 pm
Please bring plants for the Table Show if you
can - each of these meetings except November
We are always open to suggestions for the
programme so if there is someone or something
that you would like us to arrange please speak to
one of the committee.*

July 25 TREVOR WRAY Mexican Highlights

Trevor hails from our neighbours at Northampton and has travelled to Mexico on a number of occasions. Tonight's presentation will feature some of the highlights he has encountered in Mexico. He is well known as the succulent equivalent of "David Bailey"
(have camera will travel!)

August 22 GRAHAM EVANS Gymnocalycium in cultivation

We welcome back Graham for tonight's talk on another of his favourite group of plants. Graham is a pure Cactophile (only grows the "Prickly Plants") he has a good knowledge of the cultivation of this and other groups of cacti, so I am sure we will all learn something.

September 26 JONATHAN CLARKE Ferocacti

Jonathan is a member of our neighbours at Reading and has travelled with a number

of other Cactus folk to South America. He is probably best known for his 3D and video presentations. Although his first love are Lithops he has a good knowledge of Ferocacti, I am sure we will see some impressive plants in habitat.

October 24 Derek Tribble In my new Greenhouse

No this is not about our furry friends! Derek has a vast knowledge of Cotyledon, Adromischus and Tylecodon. He has travelled to many parts of South Africa in search of these plants in habitat and he cultivates a great number of them

November 28 Branch Annual General Meeting

Followed by a social get together with Xmas nibbles

Bill Darbon

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The Branch meets 7.30pm for 8pm on the 4 th Thursday of each month (except December) at the Rose Hill Methodist Church, Rose Hill, Oxford OX4 4JP.		
President:	Alan Ilott	01235 519543
Chairman:	Bill Darbon	01993 881926
Vice-Chair:	Nick Boden	07876 693021
Secretary:	Steve Williams	01367 718944
Treasurer:	John Watmough	01865 772709
Committee:	Martin Doorbar	01635 268005
	David Greenaway	01235 762761
	Mary Stone	01865 774268
Editor: David Greenaway		
(e-mail: david@phonecoop.coop)		
Branch web site: http://www.oxford.bcsc.org.uk/		

VEGETATIVE PROPAGATION

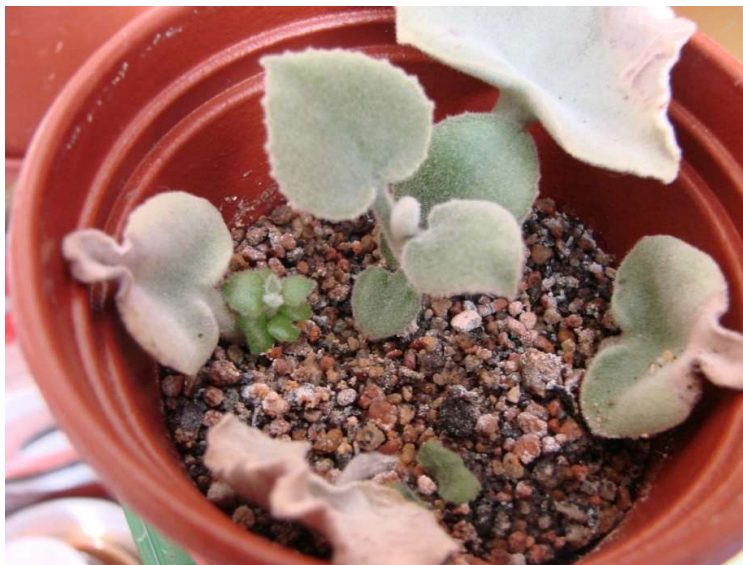
It all began when the kitchen sink waste pipe blocked, back in the spring. In clearing stuff away from the outlet pipe in the adjacent little conservatory, I accidentally broke a short stem off a pereskia.

No, I am going out of order: it started with the Kalenchoe. Begin again.

Kalenchoe

Some years ago, at the American conference, I bought a copy of 'SUCCULENTS: Propagation' by Attila Kapitany and Rudolf Schulz (Keith Larkin has it for sale at the moment). I have just started to apply their principles, and this was the first experiment.

I have two tall, leggy plants of *Kalenchoe beharensis*, just bare stems with a tuft of small leaves at the top; last year I pulled a couple of leaves off each plant, retaining as much of the leaf base as possible. As far as I can remember, I let them callous for a few days and then stood them in a pot half filled with damp compost. In a warm, lightly-shaded place they rooted and produced a plantlet each:



Incidentally, one of the parent plants has a couple of plantlets growing in its pot, a result of natural leave-shedding.

Graptopetalum

The second experiment was to gather the leaves of my *Graptopetalum paraguayens* (hardy to -16c in our garden) that had fallen off, and put them in a warm place, an indoor window, not in full sun, and kept dry. They each grew a plantlet with roots:



Pereskia

So, back to the pereskia:-

I accidentally broke a short stem off my *Pereskia grandiflora ssp. violacea*, and knowing that it was not succulent I removed all but two leaves and popped it into a small glass vase half full of tap water to counter dehydration. Kapitany and Schultz say that pereskia cuttings require no callousing, though I don't think they say anything about rooting in water. But root the stem did, and quite readily, and new leaves grew at the top.



Potted up it grew away well.

I then sliced up – leaving at least two leaf-nodes per cutting - a long vining stem of *Pereskia aculeata* cv. *godseffiana*, a pretty plant that has leaves that are yellow above and pink below. I stood the leafless cuttings half-way into water, and four cuttings rooted readily and grew leaves. Two did not root, but I noticed that I had plonked them in the water upside-down. I could tell, because the two short, stout central spines of this cactus point downwards – from crown to root. I reversed the cuttings and they romped away, rooting and leafing up.

Orientation apparently matters.

I have recently noticed that rooting pereskia cuttings in water was mentioned a couple of times over the years in the BCSS Forum.



Hoya

Hoya carnososa is always producing long vining stems, and Kapitany and Schultz list them as not needing callousing for their cuttings - along with pereskias, aeoniums and some species of ceropegia, sedum and senecio. The usual advice for propagating a hoyo plant is to layer it, but I stood (three) cuttings in water, and at least two of them have produced a tiny new leaf. I am beginning to suspect that the layering method is better, though I have yet to try it. The jury is out.

Non-succulents

Encouraged by the pereskia rooting, I took a cutting of a variegated *Schefflera arboricola* (better known as the umbrella tree or parasol plant) and stood it with its stem in water: it rooted easily. I had previously failed to root a cutting in compost, though I later succeeded in rooting one. My excellent indoor plant book (by John Evans) says that propagation of this plant is 'quite difficult and best left to the professional'. My advice is stick it in water! Potted up it grew away well:



I have tried to root *Bougainvillea glabra* cuttings for many years, without success. The plant book says that this is a difficult plant to root. My friends have a large plant in their conservatory; it is in flower as I write but recently they let me take some pieces, short non-flowering branches which I pulled off rather than cut. As soon as possible I removed most of the leaves from these, stood them in a small glass vase half full of tap water.

I am optimistic, as every cutting has a cluster of little new leaves growing.

As far as the succulent rootings are concerned, the plan is to give plants to the branch for sale; like most of you I have no room in which to house them for long.

David Greenaway