



CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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"A REMARKABLE ALLOE" by MELVIN FIRESTONE.

I have recently returned from a sabbatical year spent in England. For most of the period my wife, two sons and myself lived in Hallsands, a village on the south Devon coast, where I was studying the local crab fishermen. The countryside was, after six years in Arizona, overwhelmingly green and lush. Despite the relatively heavy rainfall we found many large yuccas growing and blooming as well as the occasional agave. The public park in Dartmouth has a particularly large stand of tall yuccas with two very large agaves near the entrance.

My impression is that a greater percentage of Englishmen grow cacti and succulents indoors than do Americans. Everyone seemed to have at least a pot or two. The maid who worked in the hotel in which we stayed had an Echinopsis multiplex that was fifteen years old. Plants could be obtained cheaply in local shops: a large blooming rosette of an Echeveria could be purchased for the equivalent of about 40 cents. Plants were, however, mislabelled very frequently; one might find a haworthia put down as an aloe or an aloe as an agave.

The mild climate of the south Devon coast, as the coast of Cornwall, has enabled tropical and semi-tropical plants to be grown outdoors for many years. A volume published in 1819 and entitled Kingsbridge and Salcombe, with Intermediate Estuary, Historically and Topographically Depicted, contains an account of the following handbill advertising the showing of a flowering agave in 1774.

Now to be seen at SALCOMBE, near
KINGSBRIDGE, in full blow,

A Remarkable ALLOE

Supposed to be the largest that was ever seen in this Kingdom; and altho' continually exposed to the Weather, it hath grown to the following Dementions.

In Height.	20 Feet	0 In.
Length of the leaf	9 Feet	0 In.
Thickness of Ditto	0 Feet	6 In.

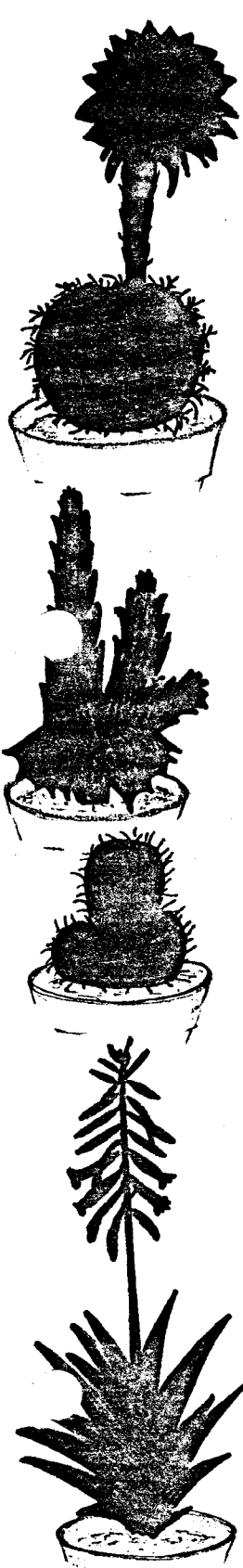
As the Proprietor hath been at great Expences to keep it for the Inspection of the Curious, the Terms of Admittance are, for Ladies & Gentlemen 2s. 6d. each; all others at one shilling each person, & to be paid at the Door.

The words "2s. 6d. each, all others" were struck out with a pen in a short time, as even one shilling more than people in general were disposed to give.

A TRIP BY MINIBUS TO THE TIP OF BAJA CALIFORNIA by WILLIAM TUCKER.

Having never driven in Mexico and having read so much about the narrowness, etc., of Mexico #1 from Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas, we elected to sign up on a minibus tour out of San Diego. It is about 1100 miles from San Diego to the tip of the Baja. Those that are AAA members can obtain an excellent road map and a good tour book of the Baja. For the most part, only standard leaded gas was available. At a maximum of about 200 miles and generally less, there was a new luxurious government-owned and operated El Presidente Motel. There were other motels as well except for the backbone area from El Rosario to Guerrero Negro. The run from Guerrero Negro to San Ignacio was also without accomodations. From what we saw, there seemed to be plenty of camping facilities, some with services and others beautiful but very primitive.

Generally the highway traverses the areas of prime interest to the botanist, geologist, anthropologist and just plain tourist interisted in hiking, fishing, etc. Although we moved much too fast (1100 miles in three driving days) for good touring, we did see an excellent cross section of the larger flora. Unfortunately we did not have a chance to venture more than a few hundred feet



from the road and did not get to see any of the smaller plants.

We had no language trouble although we did not have even a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish. Reasonably good English was spoken at all El Presidente Motels and at the seven or eight other resorts we were at.

Mexico #1 was a jewel of a road to anyone familiar with the average state highway in Kentucky or West Virginia. There was light traffic on the highway, but we were told that there was considerably more in the cooler season, that is October to May (it was late June).

We headquartered at Loreto at the Flying Sportsman Lodge. We went fishing one full day with Mrs. Tucker winning the fishing title going away. The Sea of Cortez abounds with life and we saw several hundred dolphins, many sea lions, several huge blue marlin, several manta rays, and thousands of fish on the shoals.

We saw a few Cereus in belated bloom, oddly enough south of La Paz.

We are looking forward to going back on our own.

THE LATH HOUSE CAPER by PHILOMENA HENNESSEY

From out of nowhere a pile of sticks and stones materialized in the back yard. Was somebody dumping his left-overs on us? Were the neighborhood kids going to build a fort? No!

Frank came home and calmly announced that he was about to replace the lost shade of the old plum tree which had expired. After all, it is hard to hold a parasol over a bunch of potted cacti.

Every spare moment for many an evening and parts of Saturdays and Sundays were devoted to measuring, sawing, hammering, leveling and "admiring" what had been accomplished. There was even a session of tearing down after an observer reported to Planning and Zoning that something illicit was going on at the Hennessey's. That lost us 128 square feet of area in order to conform to the minimum for which a building permit would not be needed.

All of this resulted in a structure 16' wide, 15'9" long, and 7'10" high. It has two benches 32" wide and 16' long and a center bench 48" wide and 12' long. The benches are supported by pillars of cement blocks and have a surface of 2 by 4 lumber treated to prevent fungus rot.

The season was rather advanced when the plants were moved in, so there followed a period of shifting them around until they appeared fairly happy.

Even though, the space between the laths was 1" and there seemed to be too much sunlight from above. A covering of nylon screening from the level of one bench, over the top and down to the level of the opposite bench seemed to solve this.

Hopefully, a covering of plastic will keep an appropriate temperature this winter.

And so, the plants seem to be happy, the Hennesseys are happy, and we hope the interested observer is happy.

UNDER THE LIGHTS by LEE TOLLESON

Fran and I have been growing cacti and other succulents indoors under fluorescent lights only since the first of the year, so any remarks I make here must not be taken as expert or conclusive. If that is understood, I will share some of our experiences with you.

For a number of years, we have used small fluorescent light stands to supplement light for house plants in dark corners, and for growing African violets. This led by natural progression to moving indoors some of our cacti which did not thrive in the heat of our Phoenix summers.

The first set of shelves I built (and if I can, anybody can) were six feet high, and contained three shelves 18 inches deep and 48 inches long, to accommodate the two-light, 40 watt lighting units. We read that the Brooklyn Botanic Garden had good results growing cacti and other succulents under vita-Lite full-spectrum fluorescent light, so that is what we use. I can't say from personal experience that these lights are the best, because we haven't tried any other, but I can say that the plants seem to like them. They grow, they bloom, they look healthy and happy, and they do not etiolate.

The first set of shelves was soon filled with plants, so I built another set. This time I made the shelves wider in order to hold more plants and to accommodate four lights per shelf.

This shelf was also soon filled with thriving plants and seedlings. We turned one shelf into a nursery and have been successful in germinating seeds from the Society's seed project, and also in germinating seeds from our own plants. We have experienced practically no damp-off.

I plan to build a third set in the near future.

The lights are hung on chains and the distance from the lights to the shelf can be varied to suit the size of the plants. We burn the lights about 16 hours a day. We are growing a variety of genera under the lights and haven't found any that don't thrive. Mammillaria, Notocactus, Gymnocalycium, Oroya, Neochilenia, Aztekium, Rebutia, Melocactus, Obregonia, Matucana, Frailea, Echinocereus, Hamatocactus, Wilcoxia, all have done well. Also Euphorbia, Sempervivum, Greenovia, Titanopsis, Lithops, Crassula, Haworthia, Jatropha, Dioscorea, Adenium, Iberivillia, Faucaria, Beaucarnea, Sedum, Hoya and others.

There are a number of books available on the subject of growing plants under lights, and many books with chapters on the subject. Some of these become technical with discussions of footcandles and spectrum, and I am only beginning to understand some of these aspects of our project. Such things as light meters and timers would make it more simple, but at this point in our development we let the plants tell us what they want. It has been interesting and the results have been encouraging. We are eager to learn more and experiment further.

SUCCULENT SCRIPT by KENT NEWLAND

One of the best publications to hit the cactus and succulent world in sometime is Ashingtonia. Ashingtonia is the bimonthly journal of the Ashingtonia Botanical Trust, Surrey, England, which is devoted to the study of cacti, succulents and bromeliads. Under the skilled editorship of John Donald, Ashingtonia features lavish full color layout and excellent comment. The current issue is a case in point why I recommend you subscribe to this publication. Dr. Werner Rauh presents an excellent article on the Didieraceae. The Didieraceae is one of seven endemic families of the botanical paradise of Madagascar. Rauh believes that this woody succulent family is cactus family of the Old World. Alluadia ascendens, largest member of this family, resembles a boojum tree. Alluadia procera, the most common member of this family in cultivation, looks somewhat like an ocotillo and seems perfectly hardy in the lath house at the Desert Botanical Garden. Decaryia madagascariensis has incredible zigzagging branches. Strangest of all the members of this family is Didierea madagascariensis which creeps along the ground. The article features four full pages of Rauh's outstanding color photography on this amazing family.

John Donald's article on the history of Rebutia taxonomy makes interesting reading. The Rebutia line stems directly from Echinopsis and not via Lobivia. Sulcorebutia represents a cases of parallel evolution, but stemming from Lobivia rather than Echinopsis. Therefore Sulcorebutia is dissociated from Rebutia. Ashingtonia is a must at \$9.50 a year from Abbey Garden Press, P.O. Box 3010, Santa Barbara, California 93105.

BOOK REVIEW

A Field Guide to the Common and Interesting Plants of Baja California by Jeanette Coyle and Norman C. Roberts. 1975. [Reviewed by RODNEY ENGARD]

The title and price (\$8.50 paperbound) of this lavishly printed handbook might imply a more complete treatment of the Baja California flora than it in fact is. This does not mean that the book is a disappointment. The price is necessary to pay for the color photographs which appear opposite the text concerning each plant. Many of these are excellent and a great help to the amateur in determining the plant in hand. No keys are provided beyond the family level. The families are numbered and appear in order in the book. A list of the plants included in each family aids in locating the text and illustration concerning each plant. A phytogeographic list is given for each habitat. Two pages of illustrations of basic botanical terminology will be helpful to the non-specialist while interpreting the text descriptions. A glossary of botanical and Spanish words will also be helpful in this respect. A bibliography and general index are included.

Other helpful features for the traveling naturalist in Baja California are sections on

physiography, climate and geology, and descriptions of phytogeographic regions. Short discussions of endemism and regions of origin and distribution are presented as an introduction to the flora. Many of these headings also include short bibliographic references.

The text is clear and readable. A short description with ecological, distributional and ethnobotanical notes is presented. Some large groups, such as *Opuntia*, are dealt with under the genus with notes on only a few species.

LECTURE IN TUCSON: KENT NEWLAND addressed the Tucson Garden Club on September 17th. He spoke on growing introduced cacti in the Tucson and Phoenix areas. The talk was accompanied by demonstration plants and slides.

IN ARIZONA HIGHWAYS: MARGARET CALDWELL is mentioned in the March 1975 issue of Arizona Highways. "When Arizonans decide to become involved, they really become involved! Dr. Hayes Caldwell and his wife Margaret saw a painting of an isolated Indian trading post at a gallery showing. It brought back a nostalgia of days gone by that could never be recaptured. The picture haunted them and they pondered the fate of the old posts. Couldn't something be done to preserve the atmosphere of the old posts so that future generations could enjoy part of this lost Americana?" The Caldwells and another couple, Dorothy and Oscar Thoeny, became involved in the trading post project, commissioning artists to research and restore as many of the old posts as possible on canvas. The March issue of Arizona Highways contains many illustrations of the old trading posts.

HUNTINGTON SALE: KENT NEWLAND attended a plant sale at the Huntington Botanical Gardens on September 20th. The profits from this sale will help Huntington in the construction of its new jungle garden.

GARDEN SHOW: The Valley of the Sun Men's Garden Club is holding its annual Fall Garden Show at Christown on November 22nd and 23rd (Saturday and Sunday). Any Male (sorry ladies) may enter the Cactus and Succulent Section. He need not be a member of the Garden Club. Entry forms may be obtained from committee member HENRY TRIESLER. BILL TUCKER is the Chairman of this Section.

C.S.S.A. NEWS by KENT NEWLAND

Cynthia Giddy of Natal, South Africa, an authority on South African Aloes and Cycads, will speak at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum (L.A.S.C.A.) in January, 1976. An excellent speaker and grower of these plants, this event is strongly recommended.

The C.S.S.A. Slide Library has two new programs. The first is "Those Blooming Stamps" by Ted Taylor. It features cacti and succulents on stamps from many countries. The second is "Cultural Secrets of Commercial Growers", a one hour tape of a symposium held at the San Diego convention conducted by David Grigsby, Hans Britsch, and Paul Hutchison.

Charles Glass, editor of the C. & S. Journal, reports that the journal is rapidly approaching the 5000 subscribers mark.

There are now 45 affiliates of C.S.S.A.

A research grant was passed by the C.S.S.A. Board on July 5th for yet another John Lavranos research expedition. Anyone wishing to make monetary contributions to this fine botanist's work may send them directly to: Mr. John Lavranos, P.O. Box 4603, Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa.

The 1977 Biennial Convention will be held May 16-20, 1977, at the Braniff Place Hotel, 180 W. Broadway, Tucson, Arizona. This is the third C.S.S.A. Convention to be held in Arizona. The two previous ones were held at the Desert Botanical Garden in 1949 and Phoenix-Tucson in 1965. Ted Taylor is the Chairman of the Convention and Richard Wiedhopf, President of the Tucson Cactus and Botanical Society is C.S.S.A. local coordinator for the convention. We should be thinking about how our society can help Tucson with the convention.