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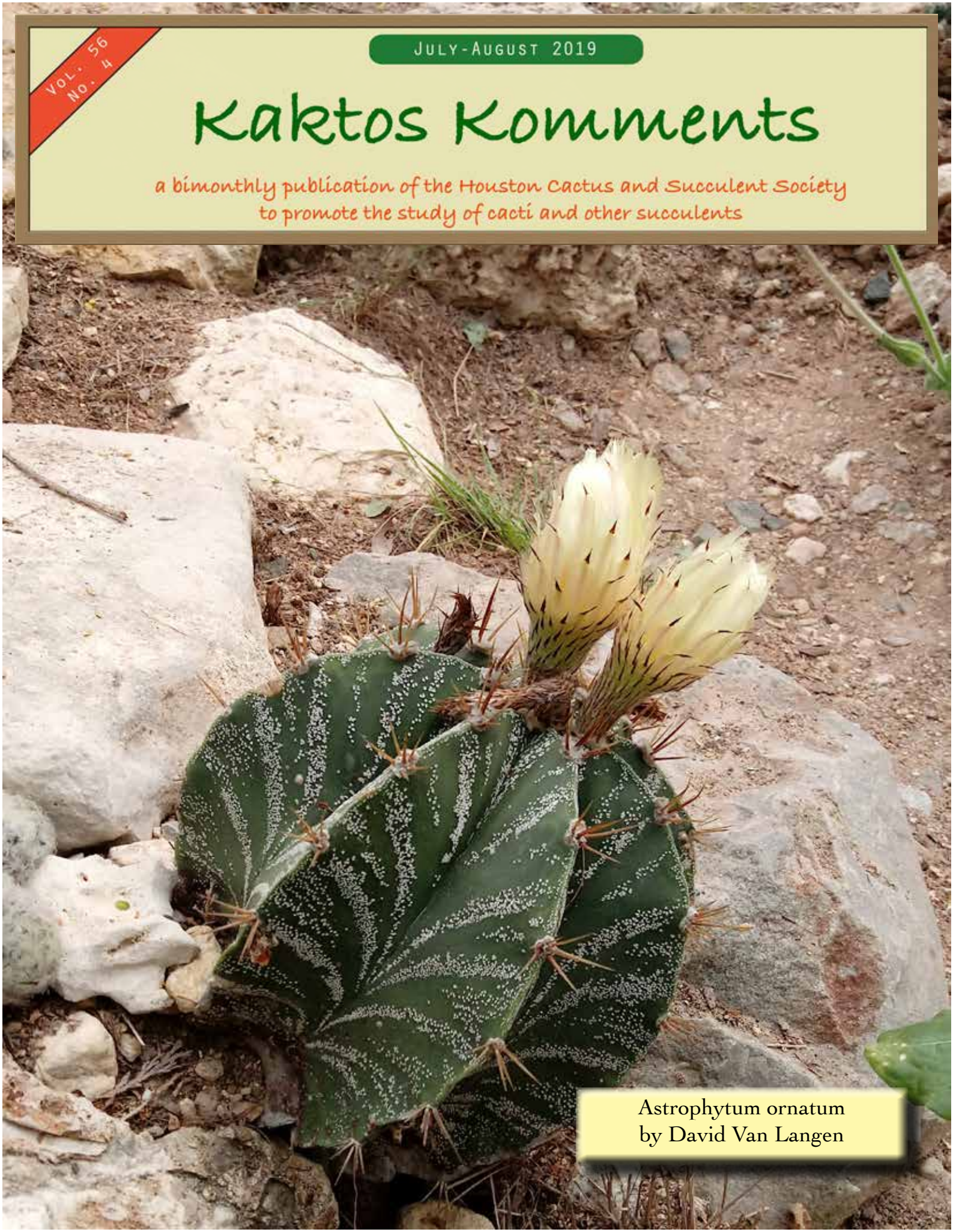
July-August 2019

Kaktos Komments

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



Astrophytum ornatum
by David Van Langen

Membership — Kathy Fewox

On May 22, twenty-five members attended our meeting. Among those were two brand-new members: Dawn Marks and BonnieJean Grady. Welcome to HCSS, BonnieJean and Dawn! Also attending were guests Chyanne Free, Terry Free, former member John Stansell, and Virginia Gutierrez. Two wonderful door prizes were given away. Paul Stricklin donated a Gasteria "Green Ice" with an Echeveria species hitchhiking along in the pot, which was won by guest Chyanne Free. Dave Tomas donated our other door prize for the night, an Adenium obesum, won by Paul Stricklin.

The June 27 meeting of HCSS was attended by 17 members. Among them was Andrea Varesic, who had been a member long ago and has rejoined. Welcome back, Andrea! Eight visitors also attended the meeting. Joining us were Nairovy (Nairo) and Alan Schachter, Simone Nickle, Mary and Bob Vacek, Candi Clement, Patti Brackett, and Angela Hoang. Three very nice door prizes were given away. Josie Watts and Bruce Moffett donated an Opuntia, which was won by guest Patti Brackett. Two Spring Sale door prizes which had not been picked up by their winners became door prizes at the meeting. Teresa S. Garcia won a very nice Jatropha. Taking home a beautiful Echeveria was guest Nairo Schachter.

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

Calendar:

July 10, 2019	7:30 pm Board Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.
July 24, 2019	7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. no program - anniversary dinner
August 28, 2019	7:30 pm Membership Meeting at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Program: "Backyard Transformation" by Dick and Phyllis McEuen
September 1, 2019	Deadline for submitting articles for the KK.
September 7-8, 2019	Show and Sale

Jul 17-20: CSSA 39th Biennial Convention
- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Optional field trips July 21
- Excellent speakers, plant and pottery vendors, a live auction and silent auction, and more!

http://cssaconvention.com

July Succulent of the Month **Bruce Moffett**

Agave Gypsophilia (Blue Wave)

The latest addition to my collection is Agave Gypsophilia which has a common name of Blue Wave. Josie found this plant during the field trip at Fred Reyes Nursery. This is an attractive Agave that forms an open rosette of thick recurving leaves with beautiful, wavy edges. The marginal spines on the leaves are unique in that they are same thickness and material as leaves themselves, not projections from them of a different quality. Some have a tiny needle at the tip. Young emerging pale gray-green leaves clasp together in a tube-like manner before expanding out and turning more wavy and grayer in color.

Agave gypsophila was so named as it is found naturally growing on gypsum hillsides and also on calcareous soils in the Mexican States of Colima, Jalisco, Michoacan and Guerrero. In cultivation it is best suited to tropical and some milder warn temperate climates. It is a tropical Agave not a desert plant and appreciates a warm spot in filtered light and plenty of water in summer.

It will grow to about 3' x 3' and its growth is affected by soil and other growing conditions. With age will produce a few offsets at the base of the plant. Plants in cultivation tend to produce more offsets than plants in the wild. Propagation can be by offset, seeds or cuttings. The bloom stalk is 5' to 7' and the bloom is yellow orange color. It is said to be hardy to about 25 degrees.

There is a hybrid variety of Agave Gypsophilia this variegated and named Ivory Curls. Also there is some information about Agave Gypsophilia into 4 different varieties but that is still in discussion.

Information for this article is from the following websites:

Dave's Garden
Cactus King
Urban Xeriscape

July Cactus of the Month — Josie Watts

Mammillaria elongata var. cristata

Some of the common names are brain cactus and star cactus.

The mammillaria elongata is from Guanajuato, Hidalgo, and Quetario, Mexico. It is a succulent ground cover forming clumps of erect, ascending, prostrate, recumbent stems. I assume this means that it grows upright, then some stems fall over onto the ground and it can self-root into new plants. Author, David Mosquin, describes the cause as "an apical meristem gone awry". He also describes the cristate form as the apex growing laterally rather than vertically. Authorities have not been able to determine the cause for the cristate form in this species as it does not always evolve from damage to the plant. Also, on occasion, a regular M. elongate will emerge from the cristate form. Furthermore, they have not found a genetic mutation. Some people grow the cristate form as a grafted cutting.

It is a clustering mammillaria with thin, elongated, cylindrical form with bare axils. There are about 20 radial spines, either whitish to yellow, or fox-red to brown. It grows 15 cm (6") tall and 30 cm (12") wide. It flowers in spring, and will sometimes rebloom later in the year. The flowers are white, yellow, or white flushed with pink, bell shaped. The berries are red and the seeds are brown. The seeds are not fertile and the plant is propagated by woody stem cuttings. The plant is a slow grower.


mammillaria elongata montros


mammillaria elongata normal


mammillaria elongata both

Mammillaria elongate prefers a fast-draining medium with little organic matter. Water sparingly, especially in winter. Some sources recommend withholding water in winter. It is prone to rot. It can be fed lightly, but not from September to March. It is commonly said to tolerate cold temperatures down to 30*, but one author states it will tolerate temperatures to 15* if "perfectly" dry.

As for my experience with the plant, this is my first time owning one. I have one m. elongate which I inherited. It is very large and has beautiful red spines. I also have a smaller one with less spectacular spines which I keep because it is growing, but it is a rather unsightly plant with extensive corking. My cristate form has very attractive white spines.

References:
Cullman, W; Gotz, E;, and Groner, G. The Encyclopedia of Cactus. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1984.

Mosquin, Daniel. Botanyphotobotanicalgarden.ubc

Dave's Garden website.

Llife.com (Llife encyclopedia of living forms) The Encyclopedia of Cacti and Succulents.

August Succulent of the Month — Wally Ward

NAME: Haworthia emelyae var. emelyae (accepted name)

SYNONYMS: Haworthia blackburniae Poelin. nom. illeg. (ambiguous synonym)
Haworthia breueri M. Hayashi (synonym)
Haworthia correcta Poelin. (synonym)
Haworthia correcta var. lucida M. Hayashi (synonym)
Haworthia janviokii (Breuer) Breuer (synonym)
Haworthia marxii Gildenh. (synonym)
Haworthia multifolia var. breueri (M. Hayashi) Breuer (synonym)
Haworthia picta Poelin. (synonym)
Haworthia picta var. janvlokii Breuer (synonym)
Haworthia picta var. tricolor Breuer
Haworthia tricolor (Breuer) M. Hayashi

COMMON NAME(S): None.

HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION: Western Cape Province, South Africa, at multiple localities between 33.5 and 34 degrees S. Lat. and between 21 and 23.1 degrees E. Long. My plant, grown from seed purchased from the Haworthis Society in 2003, bears collector's notes stating the seeds were collected "NW of Herold," a hamlet on the Montagu Pass halfway between George and Oudtshoorn. The seasons are opposite to the Northern Hemisphere; Worldweather.com reports maximum temperatures around Herold occur in December-March, which is summertime in that region. Rainfall appears to be mainly focused in the austral spring and summer (fall/winter in the Northern Hemisphere). Looking generally at the species, it grows in 9-15 scattered locations on mountain tops in a variety of geological formations but mainly among quartz stones. Llifle Encyclopedia

of Living Forms cautions that H. emelyae has a total population in habitat of around 10,000 individuals and is threatened by over-collecting by the horticultural trade as well as habitat degradation through livestock grazing and trampling, although it does not now appear on the IUCN Red List or the SANBI (South African National Biological Institute) Red List.

DESCRIPTION: H. emelyae is retuse: its rosette of succulent leaves are turned back to present triangular windows to capture light, presenting a flat and level horizontal face while most of the plant is buried in the ground. The windows are often strongly flecked. My plant has a smooth leaf surface with some pinkish color along the veins,, although specimens from other localities can get more scabrid, i.e., rougher. These plants are slow-growing and do not offset readily.

CULTIVATION/GROWTH: H. emelyae var. emelyae is a good, low-maintenance, windowsill plant that can tolerate a variety of soils but is best grown in a very porous and well-draining soil mix. Too much watering and water retention are to be avoided. I have been growing my plant since 2003. A little more frequent watering in spring and summer on the windowsill with some dilute 15-30-15 at 1/4 the concentration recommended by the manufacturer and in a slightly-acid and chlorine-free water combination (1/2 teaspoon white vinegar per gallon of water) works for me every 10 days in summer with less water in the winter. I let my plant completely dry out between watering. I have not tried to grow it outside in the Houston heat and humidity. Some light on the windowsill through window screen and glass seems to suffice.

REMARKS/COMMENTS: My plant has not bloomed, but a large H. emelyae I purchased at retail in 1992 bloomed for me in the late 1990s and generated seeds after being pollinated by H. turgida; I still have several of the hybrids some 20 years later.

REFERENCES:

1. Llifle article on H. emelyae Poelin. (http:www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/SUCCULENTS/Family/Aloaceae/13363/Haworthia_emelyae).

2 . Bayer, M. Bruce: Haworthia Revisited: A Revision of the Genus (Singapore, 1999: Tien Wah Press).

3. Catalogue of Life: 2019 Annual Checklist by Kew Gardens: Intraspecific Taxon Details: Haworthia emelyae var. emelyae (http://www.catalogueoflife.org/annual-checklist/2019/details/species/id/bac319971bfe0b6eacb2221bff122b68

4. SANBI, 2017. Haworthia emelyae Poellin. var. emelyae. National Assessment: Red List of South African Plants version 2017.1 (http://redlist.sanbi.org/species.php?species=2215-45

5. IUCN Red List: no information on H. emelyae or H. emelyae var. emelyae

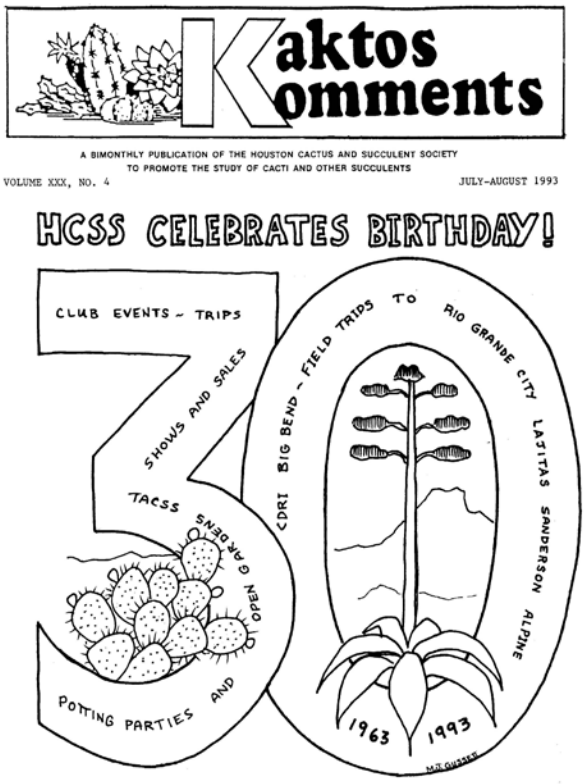
August Cactus of the Month

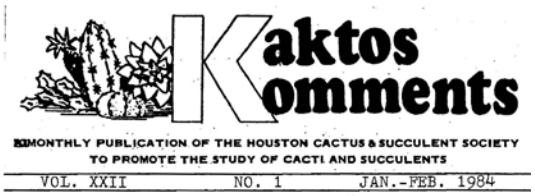
Dave Thomas

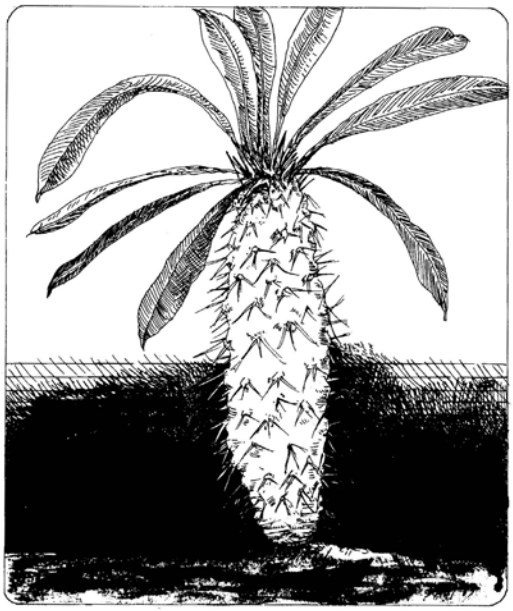
NAME: Tephrocactus geometricus
SYNONYMS: Tephrocactus alexanderi var. geometricus
Opuntia geometrica
Origin and Habitat: Argentina and Bolivia @ 2200-2900 meters above sea level. It grows exposed to full sun in an extremely arid habitat, among rocks and gravel in flat or moderately steep and very drained clay like sandy soil. The areas where they grow usually do not support other or at least very little other vegetation.
DESCRIPTION: It is an extraordinary species that shows a strong adaptation to extreme desert habitat, with dwarf growth and geophytic habit. It is one of the showiest species there is and one that is highly sought-after by cactus lovers.
The plant is a small low-growing globular segmented cactus loosely branched into small clumps. Each segment is 4-5 cm in diameter, and is a cloudy blue color that reddens to purple with full sun exposure. A new off-set can come from almost any where on the older segment.
The segments can show no spine growth or very few solitary thin spines sporadically present in the upper areoles. Another characteristic of this plant is the hexagonal configurations of stem-segments making up the surface of the plant. Two rare examples of this are the 'Inner City' and the 'Mark Dimmitt' form both hard to come by and expensive to acquire.
CULTIVATION/ GROWTH: Use an extremely loose mix up to 50/50 potting soil / large inert material. Best grown outside with slight shade. Full sun in Houston in July and August will burn the plant. Water sparingly, if in doubt less is more when it comas to water. Do not go too small on the pot size or your plant will stay small. Not good. Small pots dry-out fast outside in Houston. When removing segments, use a razor blade or very sharp blade and cut right @ the connection to the previous segment, then re-cut the re-moved segment to expose more area for roots to drop. Set aside or place on top of a good growing medium until you see roots.
REF: The Encyclopedia of Cacti

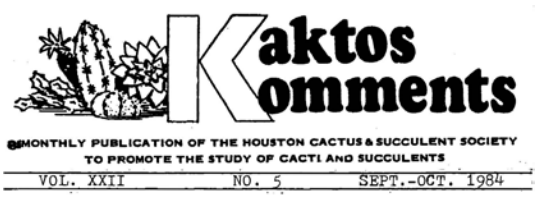
GOOD LUCK AND GOOD GROWING!!!

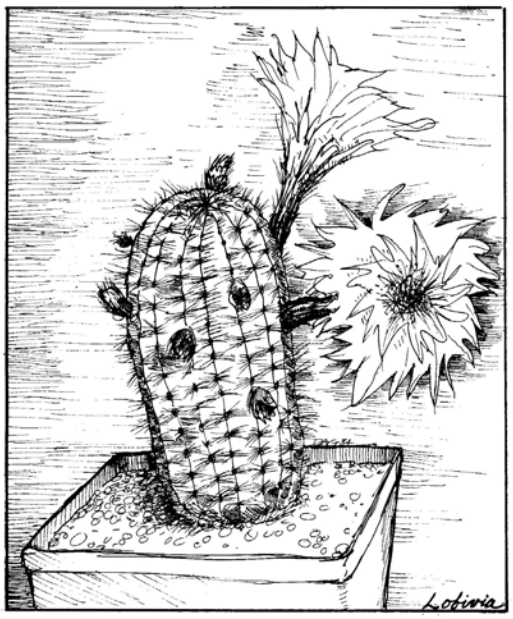
In July we celebrate our 56th anniversary. HCSS was founded in 1963. This made me look through the old KKs. The early newsletters had very fine illustrations done by some of our artist members. Here are a few.









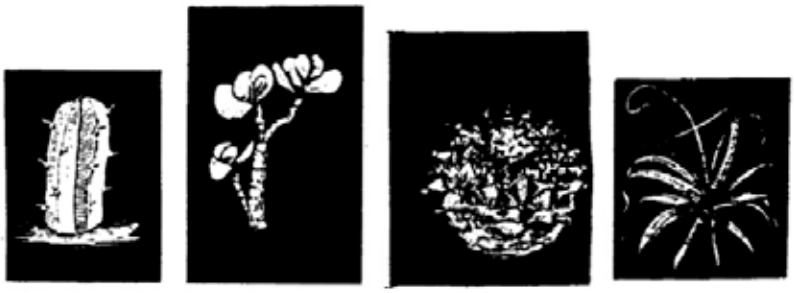


Artwork for the covers was done by Marge Parmely, David Green, Audrey Staples, Ken Gardner, Gwen Pennington and Mary Jo Gussett. Following is artwork done for plant of the month.

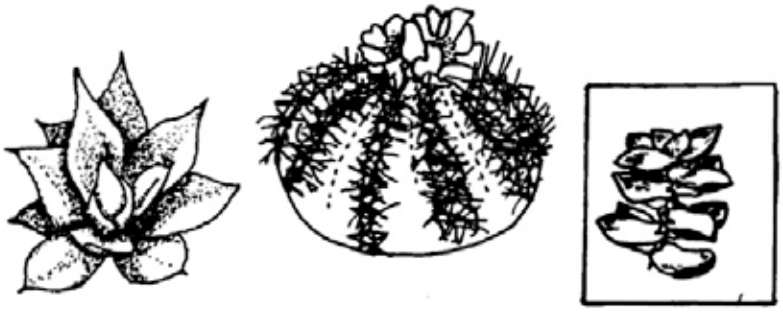
KAY CLARK
1966 & 1967

CHARLES BLANTON
1968-1969-1970

GUS HOMANN
1971



CAROLINE PICKENS
1977-78



Agave parrasana Copiapoa echinoides Crassula lactea

TONI SEABOLT
7/1974-1975-1976-7/77

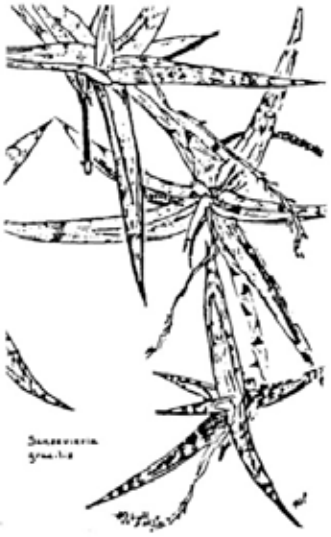
Casteria armstrongii Echinocactus asterias Echinocereus fitchii

MARY JO GUSSETT
1986-1987

ENRIQUE RICO
1972-73
1978-79-80-81-82

GWEN SUE PENNINGTON
1983-1984-1985

MARGE PARMELY



KEN GARDNER

SEED BANKING IN THE ARCTIC

PHYLLIS MCEUEN

Today, there are approximately 1,750 seed banks worldwide. All together, they contain more than 7.4 million seed samples. In 2008, the Norwegian government built the Svalbard Global Seed Vault to preserve duplicate samples of seeds held in other seed banks as a backup in case seeds are lost during large-scale regional or global disasters. Norway provides space for seeds from all countries free-of-charge.

Svalbard is an archipelago north of the Arctic Circle. The seed vault is carved 300 feet into a solid rock, permafrost covered mountain which can withstand earthquakes, bombings, and sea level rise. The temperature inside the vault is a stable 25 to 27 degrees F. Three seed storage halls can accommodate 1.5 million seed samples. Currently, the facility houses 900,000 seed samples from 5,000 plants.

REF: Scandinavian Airlines Traveler Magazine, May 2018

Vault entrance with "Perpetual Repercussion" fiber optic art by Norwegian Dyveke Sanne

Seed sample vials

Did you know...MEXTENOCHTITLAN, MEXICO CITY "is the cactus city".
Here is a 1906 post card showing the OPUNTIA FICUS-INDICA CACTUS PLANT (NOPAL in Mexico) and stamp with Mexico's national emblem with a cactus.
According to the legend an eagle with a snake in its mouth appeared on a prickly pear cactus on the spot where the Aztecs built their capital city Tenochtitlan we know today as Mexico City. The word Tnochtli in Aztec language means (Opuntia) prickly pear cactus.

Thomas Cardinal

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