

SUMMARY

Rob Bregman

In this first 2023 issue Ben Wijffelaars brings sad news: 'Cactus Oase', a cactus and succulent garden in Ruurlo, in the province of Gelderland, had to close its doors due to exploded energy prices.

In his series of articles concerning the 'Verkade' books from the 1930s, Theo Heijnsdijk focuses on *Caputia tomentosa*, a leaf succulent from the West-Kaap, South Africa, perhaps better known as *Senecio haworthii* or *Kleinia tomentosa*. In 1803 Adrian Haworth described this plant as *Cacalia tomentosa* after a specimen of unknown origin, but transferred it to the genus *Kleinia* in 1812. After several different names, the German botanist Carl Schultz came up with the name *Senecio haworthii* in 1845. The latest nomenclatural change took place in 2012, when the genus *Caputia* was introduced. The plant belongs to the tribe Senecioneae of the Asteraceae family. Cultivars with banana-like upwardly curved leaves are known as 'Cass variety' and 'Mont Blanc'. The cultivar 'Hans Herre' has dented spatulate leaves. Cultivation is easy but the plants bloom very rarely. The 'Red List' status is 'least concern'.

Petra Romijn tells us about her experiences with a cactus collection in a small polycarbonate greenhouse. A couple of tea-warmer candles produced enough heat to protect the plants from frost damage.

Bertus Spee presents part 125 of his series 'In the spotlight'. This time 4 Euphorbia species are shown, viz. *E. quartziticola*, *E. itremensis*, *E. primulifolia* and *E. radians*.

Peter Knippels deals with the famous *Welwitschia mirabilis*, the only living survivor of an ancient extinct group of conifers. This dioecious plant from the South African Namib desert forms only 2 flat leaves, a look which is responsible for the popular African name 'Tweeblaarkanniedood' (two-leave-cannot-die). The plants flower in November till January and 2 months later the female plants produce thousands of winged seeds which are dispersed by wind. Peter describes how to grow these plants from seed, after details given by South African specialist Ernst van Jaarsveld.

Nadet Somers reports about an item which is not frequently dealt with in 'Succulenta': the use of succulents as medicine or food. In 1907, her relative Mrs. Kloppenburg-Versteegh ('aunt Jans') published a book on Indian plants, in which she described how to use plants growing or being cultivated in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). One of those was the still popular *Aloe vera*.

From 1990 on, Wolter ten Hove travelled more than 15 times through Mexico, to search for cacti in their natural environment. In those 30+ years, he noticed a serious decline of many populations. Causes are sometimes natural, such as severe frosts and heavy rain storms. But mostly it is all kinds of human activities as a result of the increased Mexican population. Illegal trade of cacti still exists, but control has improved in the past decades. In order to save endangered species, Wolter proposes a cooperation between the Mexican government and selected commercial cactus growers to set up a propagation program.

My contribution is about *Cleistocactus candelilla*, a cereoid species from the eastern Andes of southern Bolivia. The plants grow very slowly, and flowered for the first time 24 years after sowing. The red-lilac flowers are pollinated by hummingbirds. The dehiscent fruit shows a combination of red (fruit wall), white (pulp) and black (seeds), which attracts fruit and seed eating birds.

Wolter ten Hove summarizes the contents of other journals on succulent plants.

At the back cover, Tom Twijnstra looks forward to see how his recently bought *Amorphophallus* 'droppings' (tuber buds) will develop. After flowering these small buds can be stored in a box. Quite easy!

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