

Summary

Rob Bregman

As usual, this first 2025 edition is opened by Ben Wijffelaars. He had read that a Dutch tourist had been apprehended by the police in a south Chilean nature reserve. Actually, he was just making a cup of coffee on a gas burner.

As part of his continuing publications about the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s, Theo Heijnsdijk discusses *Echinocereus longisetus* subsp. *delaetii*. After the first shipping of plants from Coahuila, Mexico, to the Frans De Laet nursery in 1908, this plant was identified as another 'old man cactus' (*Cephalocereus senilis*), and consequently described as *Cephalocereus De Laetii* by the German Max Gürke. Soon thereafter, he corrected the name to *Echinocereus De Laetii*, later spelled *Echinocereus delaetii*. In 1997 Nigel Taylor changed the taxonomic rank to subspecies of *E. longisetus*. Subsp. *delaetii* differs from subsp. *longisetus* in having more ribs, less slender stems, more and shorter radial spines (hairs). In 1981 *Echinocereus freudenbergeri*, a related plant but without hair-like spines, was described as new species by Gerhard Frank, later also degraded to a subspecies of *E. longisetus*. Many hobbyists feel that cultivation of these plants is a little tough, perhaps because older stems dry up and die rather soon. At present, subsp. *delaetii* is not threatened in nature.

In Bertus Spee's series entitled 'In the spotlight' *Echeveria subrigida*, *Echinocactus polycephalus*, *Epithelantha bokei* and *Ferocactus chrysacanthus* are depicted and briefly discussed.

Roelof Salters finally found the perfect spot in Monument valley (Arizona, USA) to take his most wanted picture of the majestic rock formations with a cactus (*Sclerocactus parviflorus*) in the foreground.

During his visit to Gran Canaria, Theo Heijnsdijk went searching for the famous dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*). He found the most monumental specimen in Santa Brigida, 16,8 m tall with a crown diameter of 13,1 m. Its age can be estimated by counting the number

of ramifications of the branches multiplied by 15, which is the number of years between two flowering periods. The outcome was 252 years!

Henk Ruinaard presents part 2 of his germination experiments with hybrid *Echinocereus* seeds. He now publishes the results of his germination tests with seeds sown in normal compost covered with gravel. When compared to the results of the same experiment (with the seeds sown on moist mats), germination was considerably worse in all cases, averaging 69%. This indicates that coverage of seeds by gravel hampers germination.

Petra Romijn draws our attention to some interesting xerophytic plants in the Rotterdam zoo Blijdorp, such as *Dioscorea*, *Beaucarnea* and several myrmecophylous (ant loving) *Hydnophytum* species.

Ruud Tropper publishes part 8 of his observations as to the frost resistance of cacti, now with focus on the genus *Astrophytum*. Not only in the Netherlands but also in other locations, *A. asterias* and *A. capricorne* scored the best results, surviving temperatures of -10 °C.

Nicolas Samyn reports about his tour through the Coquimbo region in coastal Chile. Accompanied by his friend Luc, he came across several cacti such as *Eriosyce chilensis* var. *albidiflora*, *E. aurata*, varieties of *E. subgibbosa*, *Eulychnia acida* and *Trichocereus chiloensis*. *Eriosyce aurata* is threatened by illegal collecting.

Wolter ten Hoeve summarizes the contents of other journals on succulent plants, this time 'Cactus World', 'Cactus and Succulent Journal' and 'Euphorbia World'.

Tom Twijnstra acquired a little agave with spined leaf tops, which he determined as an echinoagave. Such taxonomic changes puzzle him a bit, so for the time being he does not intend to change the label.

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