

Summary

Rob Bregman

Ben Wijffelaars went through some old *Succulenta*'s. His eyes fell on an article on *Caralluma burchardii*, a species that sometimes pops up in unexpected places due to broken-off subterranean stem segments.

Theo Heijnsdijk continues his series on the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s with *Orbea variegata*, a stem succulent from South Africa. This well-known plant was first noticed in 1624 by the Dutch East-Indian traveler Justus van Heurne at the Cape of Good Hope. In 1737 Linnaeus published the generic name *Stapelia*, in honor of Johannes van Stapel who published Van Heurne's notes. In 1812 Adrian Haworth transferred the plant to his new genus *Orbea* under the name *Orbea variegata*. Thereafter, *Orbea* was considered a subgenus of *Stapelia*. In 2017 Peter Bruyns transferred all *Stapelia*-like species to the genus *Ceropegia*. The former Asclepiadaceae family is now part of the Apocynaceae. The flower has a nasty smell to attract carrion-flies for pollination. The base of the 5 petals is swollen, forming a sort of ring (annulus). The fruit is a double follicle; the flattened seeds are provided with hairs to promote wind dispersal. The plant is easy to cultivate. In southern Australia it has become an invasive exotic weed.

In part 138 of his long series 'In the spotlight', Bertus Spee discusses *Agave utahensis*, *Gymnocalycium baldianum*, *Echinocactus texensis* and *Thelocactus hexaedrophorus*.

Nicolas Samyn reports about his trip to the Huasco valley in Chile, which is part of the Atacama desert. He and his friend Luc found several beautiful cacti, among which *Eriosyce napina*, *Copiapoa coquimbana*, *C. fiedleriana*, *Eulychnia breviflora*. His favorite is *Copiapoa griseoviolacea*, with coal-black spines.

Theo Rengelink obtained a large *Echinopsis (Trichocereus) pachanoi*. This tall columnar species contains mescaline, a drug substance which makes the plant popular in the hippy scene, so Theo could sell some cuttings. In nature the large white flowers are pollinated by bats. In its 75 liter pot the plant is surrounded by several different fern species.

Herman Vertongen remembers Leo van der Hoeven, a recently deceased Dutch cactus explorer. In 1990 Walter Rausch had found a new *Lobivia* species in Argentina, which he described as *Lobivia hoevenii* in 2009. By doing so, Rausch dedicated this plant to Leo, to express his thanks for saving his life after a field accident. Although it soon became clear that this new lobivia was in fact an acanthocalycium, it had never been described in that genus. In 2007 Leo told the author about this plant and Herman found it later that year.

Petra Romijn discusses the caudex plant *Beaucarnea hookeri*, also known as *Calibanus hookeri*. A caudex is the swollen base of the stem or tap root, which is usually subterranean and serves as storage of water and nutrients. This Mexican species is dioecious, which means that an individual plant is either male or female. Cultivation is easy but the plants grow slowly.

On a market Theo Heijnsdijk bought a little cactus labelled *Frailea centrispina*. This plant was discovered by Marion Machado in 2007 and is now degraded as subspecies *machadoi* of *F. gracillima*. As most *Frailea* species Theo's plant is cleistogamic (self-pollination in closed flowers). The only known natural habitat in Brazil is small and the plants are critically endangered.

Ruud Tropper reviews a new book on the epiphytic cactus genus *Schlumbergera* written by Frank Süpple and published by the Italian succulent plant society. The language is English and Italian.

Tom Twijnstra promised himself to pay more attention to conophytums.

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