

Summary

Rob Bregman

Columnist Ben Wijffelaars had to be hospitalized on the Canary Island of Lanzarote because of a strange illness. Meanwhile, he read about a local initiative to set up a program to protect the rare *Caralluma burchardii* against extinction.

Theo Heijnsdijk continues his series on the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s with the snowdrop cactus *Lepismium houletianum*, an epiphytic species from southern Brazil. It was first described by Charles Lemaire as *Rhipsalis Houletiana*, in honor of Jean-Baptiste Houlet, an employee of the Paris Museum of natural history who accompanied Jean Baptiste Guillemin on his expedition to Rio de Janeiro. In 1890 a related species *Rhipsalis Regnellii* was described by the Swedish botanist Anders Lindberg. The generic name *Lepismium* was introduced already in 1835 by Louis Pfeiffer. *L. houletianum* is easily recognized by its broad and flattened stems with serrated margins. Dozens of small white flowers can be produced, followed by white berries. At present, the taxonomy of epiphytic cacti is rather confusing, as a result of the work by several specialists with different opinions. The result is many (sub)genera and (sub)species. *L. houletianum* grows on tree branches in humid forests. They can be best cultivated in hanging baskets, planted in an organic compost, in shady places. They are not doing very well in the dry atmosphere of our homes.

In part 139 of his series 'In the spotlight' Bertus Spee discusses *Aloe pearsonii*, *Conophytum pageae*, *Coryphantha longicornis* and *Mammillaria albiflora*.

Jean Bonnefond visited the habitat of *Echinocactus horizonthalonius*, a globular cactus from the southern US and northern Mexico. Jean studied the variability among specimens from different locations. In 1838, probably for the first time, this species was brought to Europe by the French naturalist H.G. Galeotti. One year later, it was first described by the French botanist C.A. Lemaire. Local forms are known as *E. equitans* (Scheidweiler, 1839), *E. pachycornis* (Förster, 1846), var. *curvispinus* (Salm-Dyck, 1850), var. *laticostatus* (Whipple, 1856), var. *centrispinus* (Engelmann, 1857), var. *obscurispinus* (Meyer, 1911) and var. *nicholii* (Benson, 1969).

Freddy Delabarre gives an overview of succulent plant illustrations distributed by (mostly) food concerns during the first half of the 20th century. Customers who bought their products could collect these plates, often in combination with books.

Theo Heijnsdijk deals with *Aeonium smithii*, a leaf succulent from Tenerife. This member of the Crassulaceae family is distinct for its pubescent stems (and even petals and peduncles!). The plant was dedicated to the Norwegian botanist Christen Smith who collected these plants in 1815. A year later he passed away during a second expedition to Africa.

Ruud Tropper presents part 9 of his series on the cold resistance of cacti, this time the genus *Epithelantha*. *E. micromeris*, *E. bokei* and *E. greggii* survived in unheated (but not below -8 °C) greenhouses at 3 Dutch locations.

Wolter ten Hoeve summarizes the contents of 3 other journals on succulent plants ('Avonia', 'KuaS' and 'Cactus and Succulent Journal').

Tom Twijnstra finally discovered the beauty of Japanese *Astrophytum* hybrids.

r.bregman@contact.uva.nl