

Summary

Rob Bregman

Columnist Ben Wijffelaars leads things off with his comments on a newspaper article entitled 'readers help readers', about people (also plant lovers) offering superfluous things.

Theo Heijnsdijk discusses *Euphorbia balsamifera*, a stem succulent from the Canary Islands, and coastal western Africa. A subspecies (subsp. *adenensis*) occurs east of the Sahara desert. Probably, birds have dispersed seeds from Africa to the eastern Canary Islands Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, then further to the western islands. This species can be distinguished from more or less similar species by its unbranched terminal inflorescence. It was first described in 1789 by Kew director William Aiton. The plants grow very slowly, the growth rate being increasingly influenced by a hotter and drier climate. Cultivation is rather easy, but it seems difficult to make the plants adopt their natural appearance.

In part 140 of his series 'In the spotlight', Bertus Spee deals with *Bursera filicifolia*, *Fouquieria fasciculata*, *Idria columnaris* and *Pachycormus discolor*. All these four species are xerophytic deciduous bushes or trees from the southern USA and Mexico, with a thick trunk for storage of water and nutrients.

Jean Bonnefond brings part two of his study on *Echinocactus horizonthalonius*, a globular cactus from the southern USA and adjacent Mexico. He supports the recently published taxonomic treatment of this species by Mark Baker who distinguished three geographically separated subspecies: subsp. *horizonthalonius* (Chihuahua desert), subsp. *nicholii* (Sonora desert) and subsp. *australis* (central Mexican plateau). The differences concerning four morphological features (ribs, plant height, number of radial and central spines) between the three subspecies are listed together in a table. Some plants show a peculiar characteristic in having vertically split abaxial central spines. This has been already observed in 1911 in Germany (var. *obscurispina*).

Luc Vandecaveye deals with *Copiapoia solaris*, a globular cactus from the Atacama desert in northern Chile. This species was first described in 1961 by Friedrich Ritter as *Pilocopiapoia solaris*. During many years (sometimes centuries (!), according to the author) the extremely slow-growing plants form large groups of two meters across with dozens of up to 90 centimeters tall individuals. On the IUCN Red List this species is critically endangered in nature. Largely due to climate change no rain did fall in the past two years, which was probably the reason why Luc was not able to find any young plants.

Andre van Zuijlen presents part 19 of his series entitled 'A special place'. This time he reports about his visits (in 2009, 2020 and 2023) to the Quebrada de Cafayate in northern Argentina. He pays attention to the cacti he came across, such as species of *Parodia*, *Acanthocalycium*, *Echinopsis*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Cereus*, *Cleistocactus* and *Tephrocactus*.

In his series on the frost resistance of cacti, Ruud Tropper discusses the genus *Maihuenia*. The two species *M. poeppigii* and *M. patagonica* normally survive the Dutch winter period without problems, provided that they are kept dry. In Washington State, USA, *M. poeppigii* survived minus 20 °C.

Wolter ten Hoeve went through the recent issues of 'Cactus World' and 'Mammillaria' and selected the most important articles.

At the back page, Tom Twijnstra looks back at the time when he had a collection of caudex plants. One time he decided to repot all these plants but after cleaning the roots he let them dry up far too long. So he had learned another lesson.

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