

Summary
Rob Bregman

Columnist Ben Wijffelaars read about the dermal disease 'cactus dermatitis', which made him think of the nasty itch after touching the glochids of the 'Mickey Mouse cactus' *Opuntia microdasys*.

With another part of his ongoing series on the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s, Theo Heijnsdijk deals with *Tephrocactus articulatus*, formerly known as *Tephrocactus papyracanthus*. Surprisingly, nothing is known about how, by whom and when the first specimens arrived in Europe. The first mention in the literature was in an 1833 plant list from the hortus of Berlin, Germany, under the name *Opuntia articulata*. 1872 saw the first publication of the name *Opuntia papyracantha*. Since then, many different synonyms have been published, at least more than 30. The natural habitat is northwest Argentina. By many specialists *Tephrocactus* is considered a subgenus of *Opuntia*; both genera are closely related. The only difference can be found in the woody funicle around the seed. The plants are easy to cultivate but flowers do not readily appear. Vegetative propagation takes frequently place by detached stem segments. A North American look-a-like is *Sclerocactus papyracanthus*.

In part 144 of his series 'In the spotlight' Bertus Spee discusses *Hesperoyucca whipplei*, *Welwitschia mirabilis*, *Ferocactus echidne* and *Thelocactus heterochromus*, with short descriptions and pictures of plants in their natural habitat.

Henk Ruinaard reports about his visit in 2016 to Arches National Park, in Utah, USA. Long erosion processes have created spectacular rock formations. Several beautiful landscape and plant photos illustrate the article, with *Echinocereus triglochidiatus* subsp. *mojavensis* also adorning the front cover of this edition.

Ruud Tropper presents part 12 of his series on cold tolerant succulents. This time he deals with two *Ceraria* (also named *Portulacaria*) species (*C. namaquensis* and *C. pygmaea*), stem succulents (family Didiereaceae) from southern Africa. When kept dry from mid-September till March, Ruud's plants survived only a few degrees below zero, but foreign hobbyists report survival down to minus 18 °C.

Nicolas Samyn brings another report of his visit to the Atacama desert in northern Chile, the driest place on earth. In the Quebrada Botija he and his companion could admire *Copiapoa conglomerata*, *C. solaris* and *C. atacamensis*. These plants are being critically endangered due to mining industries.

Nadet Somers interviewed Wim Alsemgeest and Gerrit Melissen, both long-time succulent lovers and Succulenta members. Wim's favorite plants are agaves; he has been in Mexico many times. Gerrit buys complete plant collections and sells plants in different European countries as well. Close to Utrecht he hires a large greenhouse, in which Wim also cultivates his agaves.

Maarten van der Meer outlines the story of the popular names of *Maihueniopsis clavarioides*. This *Opuntia*-like species looks like an upright hand. Also because of the grey-brownish colour, it was called 'nigger's hand' (a term made up by a German in 1892), or similar words in other languages. In order to avoid any term referring to racism, Maarten suggests the name 'dead man's fingers'.

Aiko Talens reports about cultivating *Parodias* outdoors. He put two plants (*P. leninghausii* and *P. penicillata*) in a tray on his balcony. With very good results!

Wolter ten Hoeve selected the most important articles in some foreign journals on succulent plants.

Theo Rengelink reviews a new version of the well-known four books 'Kakteen in Südamerika' published by Friedrich Ritter in 1979-1980. Most plants were depicted in black-and-white, but originally these photos were colour slides. So Paul Hoxey and David Hunt scanned 1800 slides for this new book 'Ritter in colour'.

While on vacation, Tom Twijnstra passed by the Kakteen Haage nursery in Erfurt, Germany. He came home with a nice specimen of (what else!) *Mammillaria haageana*.

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