

Epi News

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EPIES AND RELATED PLANTS IN NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Articles in national magazines on epiphyllums are so rare that when they appear, it's news.

Flower and Garden, in its August issue, gave its readers a "look into the world of the orchid cacti."

While there are those who still object to the reference to "orchid cacti," the name has been around long enough to identify the plants we are all so familiar with to those who have difficulty even pronouncing epiphyllum. So we can't be too critical.

Incidentally, the nursery pictures which illustrated the article were taken at the Hurst's this spring. We thank F&G for going to some real experts for information before writing the article.

Holiday cacti and epies are related in that both are epiphytes (as are orchids and bromeliads). The differences are vast as collectors and growers know, something which frequently seems to escape the editorial writer who is neither hobbist nor grower.

Despite committing this obvious error, House Plants & Porch Gardens provided a beautifully illustrated article on holiday cacti in its September issue. Popular Gardening Indoors, in its

FRED BOUTIN TAKES MEMBERS TO BRITISH HONDURAS VIA SLIDES AT JULY MEETING

Armchair travelers had a treat at the July meeting as guest speaker Fred Boutin took them through the jungles of British Honduras where he and other members of Huntington Gardens journeyed in search of palms and other tropical plants.

George and Madeline French hosted Mr. Boutin overnight after which George took him on a tour of the gardens of Dr. and Mrs. Troxell, Frank Granatowski and Gene Lund.

ABOUT "GOOD SPORTS" IN EPI-LAND

Mutations or "sports" are interesting. Something fouls up the chromosomes and an entirely different species may develop.

Sometimes the "offsprings" are so different looking that they don't resemble the parents at all. This is nature's way of producing another branch on the family tree.

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August/September issue, went to an internationally recognized expert on holiday cacti, Stephen Griffith of the B.L. Cobia nursery in Florida, for beautiful pictures and information on growing these popular plants.

AUGUST MEETING TO FEATURE SLIDE PRESENTATION OF FRED SHAMBLLEN

Fred Shamblen, whose expertise has earned him the assignment as the Society's official photographer, will present a program of slides and commentary at tonight's (August) meeting.

MORE DETAILS ON VELMA FEATHERSTONE'S PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING

Your editor and his wife were pleased to be paid a visit on a recent Sunday by Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone of Newhall. Velma, who is editor of the Epiphyllum Society of America's Bulletin, will be our guest speaker at the September meeting.

The visit gave us an opportunity to ask Velma what she was planning for this meeting. And while we didn't want to pin her down at this early date to a specific subject, she mentioned the fascinating range of correspondence she receives from all over the world as editor of an internationally circulated newsletter and wondered if this might not be of interest to all of us. We assured her it would and think this will make an excellent subject for the meeting. We look forward to Velma's program in September.

ABBREVIATING NAMES IN MARKING CUTTINGS FRUSTRATES BEGINNER MEMBER

The following letter from a new member who is also new to the collecting of epies deserves our attention:

"I have enjoyed a wonderful first year as an epiphyllum member. This includes the new friends I have made and all the lovely plants everyone has shared on the cutting table.

"It is this sharing that I have found a very frustrating pitfall and (other) new members may be experiencing it. Some of the epiphyllum names are long and difficult to spell. Each month on the cutting table there is amplification of this situation. What is a "Hermy?" I hope it is a "Hermosissimus." For you newcomers, a "F.W. Buell is a Frederick Werner-Buel" and a "Hekermannii" turned out to be a "Ackermanii."

"It is very frustrating for us novices to go to the BIG BOOK for a description and not find it because someone didn't take the care to print clearly or pick a cutting long enough to spell out the name completely. The misspelling can only be stopped by taking the time to look it up BEFORE labelling the cutting.

"Experienced members speak often of not sharing unnamed plants, but isn't it just as important to spell and correctly label a cutting even if it takes a little more time.

"Thank you all for your generosity and patience with us."

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Keep a close watch on your plants because sometimes a very common Epiphyllum will produce an extremely beautiful and unusual "child."

The branch on which a sport occurs should be cut fairly close to the stock and then planted after allowing to dry for a few days. (Dipping cut end in hormone powder such as Root-tone helps.) Allow your new plant to bloom for at least three seasons to make sure you have a plant that will remain "true," as occasionally blooms will change from one season to the next.

Good examples of mutations are "Mon Cherie," a sport of Amber Queen, and the full petaled double Chrysanthemum type such as "Tassle" and "Ruby Snowflake."

If there is a great difference between the mutation and the parent, you have a new "specie." Otherwise, you have just "another epi."

-- Gene Schmedding

GEORGE FRENCH TO REGISTER TWO NEW SEEDLINGS

Two new names to look for among epies in the near future are "Radiant Fire" - cross of Radiant Light on Fire Devil - a medium-size waxy red flower with good lasting qualities; and "Voltaire" a Genghis Khan cross - extra large dark red flower with purple mid-stripe which bloomed 23 flowers the first year. Both are George French seedlings.

NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME

Bruce and Lynn Albee
8442 Jordan St.
San Diego, CA 92123

Belinda Boyle
572 Douglas St.
Chula Vista, CA 92010

Marie A. Luhr
388 West University
San Diego, CA 92103

Phillip and Joyce Norris
815 Corte Entrada
Chula Vista, CA 92010

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President - Gene Lund
Editor - Warren E. Kelly
Assistant Editor - Rick Latimer
Researchers - Gene Schmedding and Ken Moss

Next issue will feature an article by Assistant Editor Rick Latimer in where epies fit into the cactus family, one of several articles Rick has promised for the near future. News and articles are urgently needed from members. Send them to the editor at

141 Quail Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024
714 / 436-3191