

Epi News

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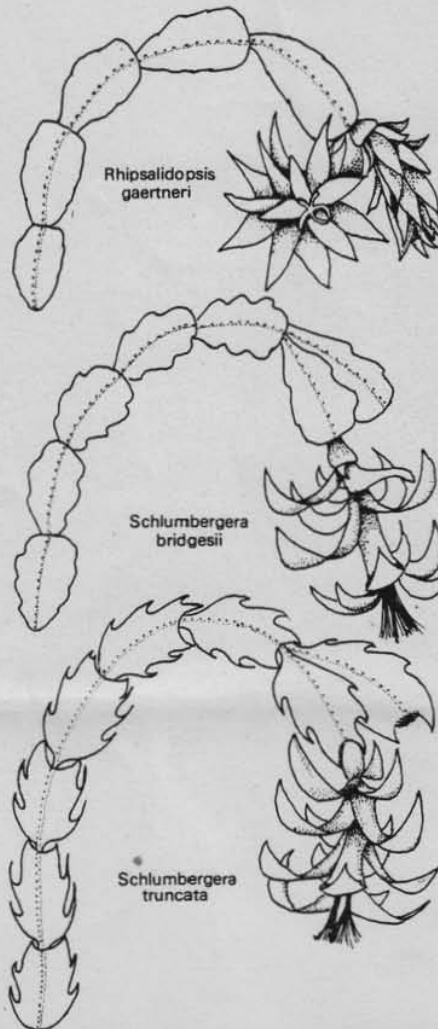
SEPTEMBER, 1977

BRIGHTEN UP THE WINTER MONTHS WITH COLORFUL HOLIDAY CACTI

Among the closely related epiphytes to bridge the flowering gap between the annual blooming seasons of hybrid epies are the delightful holiday cacti. To unscramble the nomenclature, the most common botanical name for the Christmas variety is Zygocactus but is now correctly identified as Schlumbergera bridgeii. The earlier blooming Thanksgiving cactus is Schlumbergera truncata. Both are commonly referred to as "crab's claw" cacti. The drawings at the right will help you identify them. Thanksgiving: stem joints with very pointed teeth; Christmas: jointed stems with less pointed teeth. For Easter, we have Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri with hair-like bristles at the areoles. All three varieties bloom at the tips of the stems.

The longer hours of darkness from Thanksgiving to Easter account for the budding of these epiphytes. Once started, they will flower regardless of the amount of daylight. Night temperatures also control budding with 50° to 55° being ideal. Over- or under-watering as well as cold drafts will cause bud drop. New growth will start right after blooming (is there more than

Finally, if you know how to take care of epies, you should have no trouble with holiday cacti.



"OH, THOSE POOR ORPHANS"

Proper identification of an unnamed epi can only be made by following certain procedures. The plant must be in bloom and certain details must be noted: the length of the ovary and tube, the number of sepals and petals and their shape, general and overall color (is there more than one color?) size and shape of the flower, color and number of stigma lobes, color of stamens and pistil.

WELCOME, VELMA

Editor of Epiphyllum Society of America Bulletin
Tonight's Guest Speaker

Velma Featherstone, who does such a marvelous job of putting out the monthly Bulletin from our headquarters to the north, is our honored guest and speaker tonight. Her subject (and she may have expanded on it since we talked with her) is the letters she has received from epi enthusiasts all over the world.

NATE OGDON AND CONNIE AZHOCAR TO HEAD PROGRAM AT OCTOBER MEETING

Look for some fascinating pictures taken by the Ogdons and Connie Azhocar who have just returned from a 9-day trip to Yucatan. Connie assures us the scenery was as spectacular as the many epiphytic plants they captured on film. They'll be showing their pictures at the October meeting and it promises to make for an exciting evening.

Only then can a correct name be given a plant. Sometimes, what seems to be a small detail will prove to be the one that identifies the plant for you. Even the shape of the plant and branching habit have the character that can help in giving your "orphan" a regular "Family name."

-- Gene Schmedding

THE CACTUS FAMILY, WHERE THE EPIES FIT IN

by Rick Latimer

If you have ever wondered how the Epiphyllums tied in with the rest of the cacti, this is the most recent (at least 30 years old) division of them. It is about due for amending, but data is still being collected and debates are still raging. Species are joined into genera, genera into subtribes, subtribes into tribes, tribes into families and families into orders.

What order does the cactus family fit into? Taxonomists have had a problem fitting the cacti into a suitable order. Some suggest Rosales which includes the Rose and Crassula family. Others prefer Centrospermae which includes the Portulacaceae and Aizoaceae (iceplants). It has even been suggested that the cacti are in their own order. Take your pick.

Above the correct order is the subclass Diotyledon. This subclass includes the Daisies, Geraniums and Delphiniums. The Dicotyledons join the Monocotyledons (the Lilies, Orchids, Bromeliads, Grasses, and true Palms) to form the Angiosperms or the flowering plants.

Getting back to the cactus family, we pick out those that concern us in the Epiphyllum Society. The genus *Heliocereus* is important because many of the Epiphyllum hybrids have their ancestry traced to one or more *Heliocereus* species. We all grow *Hylocereus* and *Selenicereus*. Important hybrids made with *Aporocactus* (rattail) and *Epiphyllum* are called *Aporophyllum*. Then, of course, there are the *Rhipsalis* and the *Epiphyllums*. Nothing more need be said.

CULTURE CALENDAR

September-October

1. Now is the time to overhaul plants. Trim out all dead growth. Some dieback is natural.
2. Spray mist to provide moisture during a warm spell and to keep stems clean and free of dust.
3. New growth is normal now. Protect from breakage.
4. Spray with an insecticide such as malathion for control of insects over winter months.

(Thanks to Kelly's Epiphyllum Collection)

FAMILY

TRIBE

Sub-TRIBE

GENUS

SPECIES

