

Epi News

PUBLISHED BY THE SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY

November-December 1977 Volume 1 number 9

CONTRIBUTIONS-COMMENTS-ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM GLADYS HARPER-Our second annual San Diego Epiphyllum Society Christmas Party will be held on Wednesday, December 14, 1977 at 6:30 PM in the Casa del Prado in Room 101, Balboa Park. Reservations should be made to me no later than December 1. My phone number is 488-8440.

FROM GENE LUND-Anyone who plans not to attend our Christmas Dinner because they feel they cannot afford the \$4.00 donation, contact or see me privately. The club will waive the donation in the Christmas spirit upon my approval. The party would not be the same without you.

FROM FERN LABORDE-This year at the Christmas Party, everyone who brings a special, rooted cutting or a small Epiphyllum, Zygocactus, Rhipsalis, etc. plant in a clean four inch pot; will get another from someone else at random. Any extras will be appreciated also.

FROM FRANK GRANATOWSKI-Looking ahead to January, our scheduled speakers will be Everson/Williams of the Rainbow Gardens Epiphyllum Nursery. Jerry Williams is the ESA Librarian and Chuck Everson is the ESA Corresponding Secretary and Associate Editor of the ESA Bulletin. They will show slides belonging to Paul Fort and Garland O'barr. These slides are twenty years old and are only recently released for a limited time.

FROM KEN MOSS-Following the ESA's suit, we will begin offering advertising to our members at \$1 for a 1/16th of a page ad. More details will be forthcoming.

FROM THE KELLY'S-Culture Calendar-1. Allow your plants a resting period but do not let the soil remain dry for a prolonged time. 2. Protect from wind and frost.

ZYGOCACTUS, EPIPHYLLANTHUS, SCHLUMBERGERA, AND RHIPSALIDOPSIS

As we all know, there are Thanksgiving (*truncatus*), Christmas (*bridgesii*), and Easter (*gaertneri*, *rosea*) Cacti. The *truncatus* is also known as the Crab Cactus. Ladislaus Cutak felt that it should have been called the Lobster Cactus. I have always been partial to Shrimp Cactus. I suppose we could be all encompassing and call it the Crustacean Cactus! However, at least presently, the *Epiphyllanthus* specie (not to be confused with *Epithelantha*) have no holiday of their own. Harry Johnson has referred to them in his catalogues as the Fuchsia Cactus.

The plants in this genus are described of as having similar flowers to *truncatus*, only slightly smaller and purple or white. The plants are the same general size as the other Holiday Cacti, but the branch segments resemble minute *Opuntias*! The plants reportedly bloom in late Spring. I guess that means that they are too early to be named Forth of July Cactus (perhaps *Cinco de Mayo*). The reason this plant is generally not grown is not because it is stickier than the others, but because it has the reputation of being hard to grow and simply because it is rare. The only known natural locality is Mount Itatiaya in Central Brazil.

My only experience with this genus was begun when I found one at a garage sale. It was labeled *E. obovatus*. I had it on my top shelf in the lathhouse. One day my Siamese Cat thought this one to be particularly cute, reached down with claws extended, and pulled it out of its pot. This was, at least, a good excuse to investigate the potting soil used. The previous owner had potted it in almost pure sponge rock! I tried grafting the plant onto *Selenicereus macdonaldiae* three times. (I have never performed a successful graft.) Each time I later found a mealy bug between stock and scion. In desperation I tried water rooting the pads, but they all just withered away. Perhaps the plant was dormant at that time of year. At any rate, I will be looking for new ones.

According to the old arrangement of Britton and Rose (1923), the genera *Zygocactus*, *Epiphyllanthus*, and *Schlumbergera* were placed in the *Epiphyllum* subtribe (with *Epiphyllum*, *Chiapasias*, etc.) and *Rhipsalidopsis* in the *Rhipsalis* subtribe. Since then there has been some much needed reorganization. Instead of musical chairs we have 'musical' genera. Reid Moran (1953; of the San Diego Natural History Museum) pulled out the *Zygocactus* 'chair', placed *truncatus* into *Schlumbergera* on the lap of *bridgesii*, and displacing *gaertneri* into *Rhipsalidopsis*. In 1953 Buxbaum put *Epiphyllanthus* into *Schlumbergera* also. I always felt that *gaertneri* was very close to *rosea*. (Remember I just found out about all these rearrangements!) However, I was sad to see *Zygocactus* go, but only for sentimental reasons. *Schlumbergera* must have won over *Zygocactus* because of priority regulations. As of now, I still feel that *Epiphyllanthus* is a distinct genus, because the branches are so different from *truncatus* and *bridgesii*.

I consider all of these Holiday Cacti (*Epiphyllanthus* included) to be somewhat closely related. They all have the same peculiar ovary. However, I disagree with any attempt to place all of these Holiday Cacti in the *Rhipsalis* subtribe. I do not recall all of the arguments or upon whose authority this judgement rests,

TO BE CONTINUED