

Epi News

San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc.

PUBLISHED BY THE SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY
P. O. Box 2174, La Mesa, California 92041-0780

December 12, 1984
VOLUME 8, NO. 12

Meeting: 2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM, Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park

PRESIDENT: Gene Lund (619) 469-1677

CORRESPONDING Debbie Capp (619) 469-4784

SECY: 4132 Charles St., La Mesa, California 92041

SEND ALL NEWS ITEMS TO EPI NEWS EDITOR: DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

Pat Stebbins (619) 279-8026

10404 Orozco Rd., San Diego, California 92124

7th Dec. 28

MEMBERSHIP:

Jeannie Burger (619) 287-9193

4583 Altadena, No. E, San Diego, California 92115

Check or money order payable to San Diego Epiphyllum Society,
MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR ONE YEAR \$6.00 SINGLE, COUPLE, OR FAMILY,
U.S.A. \$12.00 INTERNATIONAL (Note: number in parentheses on
mailing label indicates dues month. Please check and keep current.



A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL!

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE SAN DIEGO
EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD.

DECEMBER MEETING, Dec. 12

REMEMBER - there will be no
December meeting in Room 101...

Our Christmas Dinner Awards Ban-
quet is at the Scottish Rite Cathedral
Corinthian Room, 1985 Camino del Rio
South, at 6:30 PM.

Those members who will be attend-
ing - don't forget to bring your
rooted cutting in the 4" pot for the
plant exchange (wrapped in holiday
decoration?).

SEE YOU THERE!



WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Maxine Gavett, San Diego

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE...

If you have any garden related
item suitable for the Epi News (or
something you've written), I'd really
appreciate it - any questions, call
Pat, 279-8026.



THERE WILL BE NO SDES BOARD MEETING IN
THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1984.



JANUARY MEETING, Jan. 9

A note to remind you that our
January meeting will really be a
special one. If you haven't been to a
meeting recently, this is the one...

Our speaker will be member
Phyllis Fleschig, who is an active
hybridizer (remember CLOWN, the hit of
the 1984 Mother's Day Show? I
understand Phyllis grew CLOWN from a
seed from Beahm's.) Her program will
be full of epis, including her own
registered hybrids.

PLAN AHEAD TO COME TO THIS ONE.

SDES INTRODUCTORY BULLETIN

At the November meeting, we introduced our new "Introductory Bulletin" to the SDES. It contains a synopsis of the purpose and origin of the SDES, the calendar of events, the committees necessary to keep us rolling, and some very fine epicultural notes. This is a nice little pamphlet and will be given to all our new members on joining the club.

If you're an "old" member who would like to have one too, call or write Membership Secretary Jeannie Burger and she will mail you one.

Jeannie Burger
4583 Altadena, No. E
San Diego, CA 92115
(619) 287-9193

CLASSIFIEDS

ALL NEW 1985 FULL COLOR "FLOWERING JUNGLE CACTI" CATALOG \$1.00. 114 COLOR PHOTOS. \$3.00 Early Bird coupon included. Hundreds of epiphyllums, Christmas and Easter cacti, rattail cacti, rhipsalis, hoyas and more. Society members who order the catalog will also receive a list of 90 additional epiphyllums from which cuttings are available. Due to ever increasing printing costs, we will not be able to send complimentary catalogs to anyone except 1984 customers, who will automatically receive the 1985 edition free of charge. Remember, we're open by "appointment". Please call, and if we're here, you're welcome to come by. CALIFORNIA EPI CENTER, P. O. Box 1431-SD, Vista, California 92083 (619) 758-4290

New 1985 all color plant catalog (91 color photos) now available, including new Bookshop Catalogue. Send for your copies today. Only \$1.00. Includes \$2.00-off special for Directory of Epiphyllums, and other book specials. Remember, plants and books make great presents! RAINBOW GARDENS, Box 721-ESA, La Habra, California 90633.



This is an article written by member Lois Burks and published in the November 1984 issue of "Flower and Garden" magazine (reprinted here with permission of the publisher to Lois).

"GREAT BASKET PLANTS WHERE SPACE IS DEAR: RATTAIL CACTI
By Lois Burks

"Rattail cactus" is an unfortunate name for this otherwise very attractive group of plants, and I only hope that the person who dubbed them that did so affectionately. Such was probably the case, because rattail cacti are among the most rewarding and least demanding plants.

There are only a few true species of these, all of which form cascades of cylindrical stems flowering abundantly in early spring. Like orchids, they are epiphytic; that is, in nature they are tree dwellers, growing in the forks of branches and feeding on natural debris such as rotting leaves and bird droppings collected there. All come from Mexico, and most are varying shades of crimson. The five species of Aporocactus are conzatti, flagilliformis, flagriformis, leptophis and martianus.

The one most widely distributed and known, A. flagilliformis, has been raised as a houseplant for 200 years. Easily cared for, it can produce a large plant with a dazzling display of hundreds of iridescent crimson blooms.

Recognizing this easy-going, free-flowering nature, plant fanciers have worked to develop rattail cacti with a wider variety of colors. They did this by crossing aporocacti with other types of tropical cacti such as hybrid epiphyllums, disocactus, and heliocereus. The resulting hybrids combine the best characteristics of the parents, with flowers in a wide range of colors and sizes. They have received "synthetic" names such as aporophyllum (Aporocactus x Epiphyllum) and disapora (Disocactus x Aporocactus) to indicate their hybrid status. The largest of hybrid groups is the aporophyllums, and what a group it is!

They include flowers of marvelous colors - "Moonlight", soft cream suffused with pink; "Evita", dark orange; "Odalisque", deep rose; "Fairy Dancer", raspberry-purple; "Temple Glow", lavender-pink, to mention a few. There are reports of a yellow one in England. Some have flowers five inches across, in contrast to the modest little one-inch blooms of the parent Aporocactus

One of the good points of aporophyllums is their longevity. They live for years, becoming more beautiful with more blossoms, but still not taking up much space. I'll not claim that they thrive on neglect, but they are among the easiest plants to care for.

With naturally pendent growth, rattail cacti are best grown in hanging pots or baskets. If in sitting containers, they should be on a raised perch where the hanging growth and flowers are well displayed.

Generally, the more spines on a cactus, the more light it tolerates. As aporocactus species have stems well covered with spines, it follows that they tolerate a lot of sun, and in fact require it to produce strong stems and maximum blooms. On the other hand, aporophyllums reflect their epiphyllum parentage by forming much smoother stems with fewer spines. They require proportionately less sunlight. They do well raised under lath, shade cloth, a leafy tree, on a shadowed patio or near a window with early morning or late afternoon sun rather than direct noonday sun.

Although any will freeze if kept below 32 degrees more than a few hours, there seems no upper limit to the heat they tolerate. Our plants have endured over 100-plus degrees many times with no evidence of stress. During extreme heat we do try to shade them more than usual. Wintered in the house, rattail cacti prefer an evenly cool location (between 45 and 50 degrees) with no artificial light at night. Cool winter temperatures and long winter nights are necessary for bud formation.

Packaged cactus potting soil mix is ideal, as it is coarse and fast draining with substantial organic

matter. You can make your own mixture from two parts packaged indoor plant mix and one part washed builders' sand.

In watering, never allow plants to dry out completely. Check every few days for the need to water. Let the top one to three inches of soil - depending on pot size - dry before watering. When you water, be thorough, so water flows freely from drain holes. Clay pots dry out quicker than plastic pots, and during summer need checking frequently. We prefer plastic pots as they don't require attention so often. If you tend to overwater, stick to clay pots.

Rattail cacti go through natural growth cycles in spring and fall. They need more water at these times. Plants usually rest after flowering and again in winter months. During those periods, give them just enough water to stay moist.

Fertilize plants once a month, starting in April and ending in fall with a mild balanced fertilizer containing no more than 10 percent nitrogen. Once in February, to promote blooms, and again in November, to harden off tender young growth for winter, feed with low nitrogen fertilizer such as 0-10-10 or 2-10-10.

The most common pests on rattail cacti are scale (small, round, tannish insects) and mealybug (whitish insects with a cottony residue), both controlled by spraying with 50 percent malathion diluted 1 tablespoon per gallon of water. Malathion also controls ants, which spread scale and mealybugs.

Blooms usually appear during April and May, in a two to three year old rootbound plant. A few of the aporophyllums, notably "Odalisque", "Moonlight", "Temple Glow", and Disapora "Brilliant" will bloom younger. Occasionally even freshly rooted cuttings will bloom.

As seeds collected from aporophyllums will not come true, the rattail cacti cultivars are usually propagated from four-inch cuttings. Dip the bottom of cuttings in rooting powder, then let them cure for a week in the shade before potting them just deeply enough to be held upright in barely moist cactus mix. Rooting

takes about eight weeks in warm weather. To raise a specimen quickly, put several cuttings evenly spaced into a pot in which you want to display the plant. Use one cutting for each two inches of pot diameter - that is, three cuttings per 6-inch pot, four per 8-inch, and so on. The results will be an evenly balanced planting.

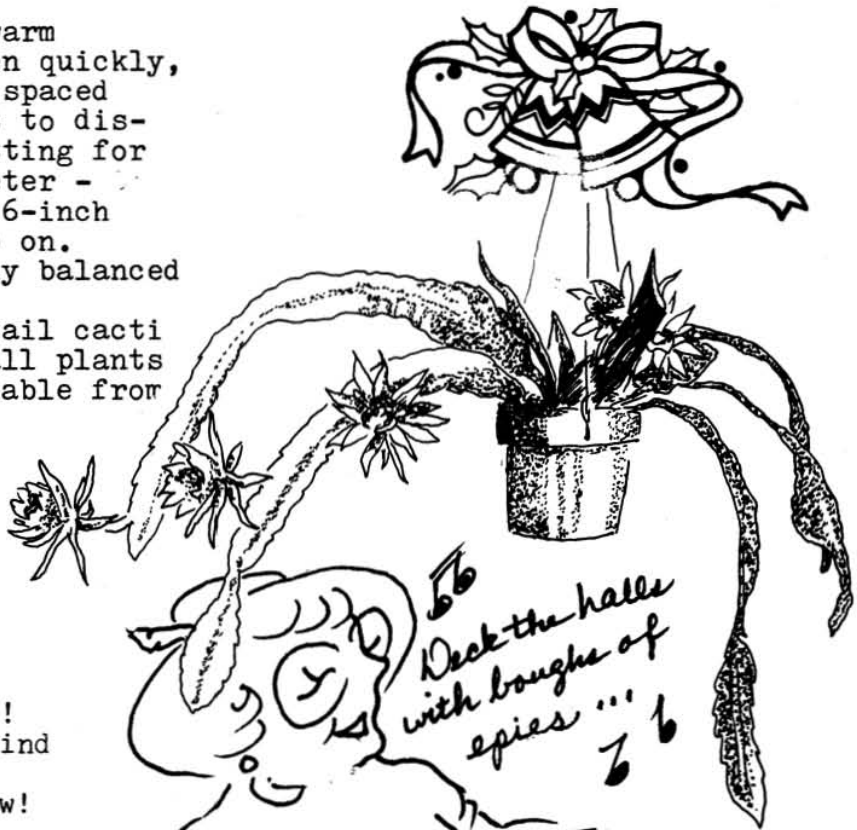
If you cannot find rattail cacti in your local nurseries, small plants or rooted cuttings are available from mailorder sources.

..."



Look at the candle!
What a hungry wind
It is...
Hunting in the snow!

Seira



TO: S.D.E.S.
FROM: THE
EPI LOVER

