

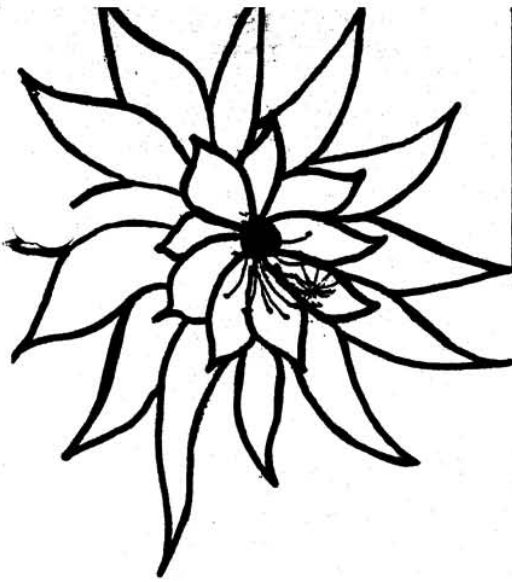
EPI NEWS

FEBRUARY
11, 1987

The monthly publication of

vol.11, no.2

SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY, INC.



LOOKING TO MOTHERS DAY

Dorothy Breining, SDES Vice President in charge of the Mother's Day Flower Show, has made several announcements regarding the much anticipated event.

The theme for this years show will be "South Pacific".

Co-charing the show will be Ernest Angus. Dick Chadwick will chair the cutting sales at the show.

In case you didn't know, this year Mother's Day is May 10.

Watch Epi News for more details about the show as they become available.

WELCOME NEW (& not so new) MEMBERS

Welcome to new members...

Sue Bachrach

Marjorie Marshall

and a special belated welcome to ...

John Wenzel

EPI EVENTS FOR 1987 ANNOUNCED

SDES will sponsor or participate in 7 majors shows and sales according to a plan proposed by SDES President Milton D. Turner and accepted by the executive board at their Jan. 28th meeting.

The first major event will be the 2nd annual San Diego Home/Garden Magazine show at Del Mar. The three day event will be held April 24, 25 & 26.

The SDWAP/SDES Epiphyllum show will be held at the Wild Animal Park on May 2 & 3.

The SDES Mother's Day Epi Show will be held Sunday May 10th. (See related article in this issue.)

May 17th is the date for the ESA Show at the L.A. County Arboretum in Arcadia, Calif. As usual the SDES will sponsor a bus tour to this special and beautiful event. Other stops for the bus tour will be announced.

SDES Open Garden Tour will be bigger and better than ever this year. Many new ideas are in the works for this May 23rd event.

San Diego Botanical Foundation Inc. will hold its annual sale May 30 and 31. As usual SDES will be represented with both cutting sales and SDES members.

The last show of the year is SDWAP's Beauty and the Beast Show and Sale, October 10 & 11th. SDES sells cuttings from

(next column)

FLECHSIG TO SHOW NEW HYBRIDS

Phyllis Flechsig will present the program at the February 11th General Meeting of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society.

Noted for her award winning Epi hybrid Clown, Phyllis will show slides of her latest hybrids as well as their parent plants blossoms.

In addition to her activities as a hybridizer Phyllis operates Phyllis Flechsig Cacti & Succulents in Encinitas. Her latest mail order catalog contains over 50 genera of cactus and a section of other succulents plants starting with Adenium and ending with Yucca.

Phyllis is also frequently tours Baja California and presents programs about both her travels and her botanical discoveries.

Phyllis' reputation for excellent programs and her knack for hybridizing make this a much anticipated program.

members and the SDWAP collection to benefit the park. Displays and flowers for display are encouraged.

In addition to these events the May 13th General Meeting will feature a mini-show.

INSIDE SNAILS & SLUGS

SNAILS AND SLUGS INVAID CONTROLS SUGGESTED

The most common and voracious pest facing many epi growers are the brown garden snail *Helix aspersa* and his cousin the slug (California gardeners are so lucky to have 20 slug species chomping away in the state).

Snails and slugs are active at night or in the dark. During the day they hide in dark cool places such as wood piles, water meters and under low-growing plants.

Control is a four part program including removal of hiding

places, handpicking (daily at first), application of bait and in extreme cases the use of barriers (ammonium sulfhate, lime, ashes and sand have been used successfully).

Night-time raids with a flashlight are the most effective method for early control. It is necessary to be diligent but after a few days you will see big results and soon can reduce your raids to a weekly basis. (You may want to water the lawn in the afternoon to draw them out.)

Snails and slugs live several years and snails can seal themselves inside their shells and endure long periods of drought by going 'dormant' for up to 4 years.

(Thanks to the University of California Cooperative Extension for leaflet #2530, which was used to prepare this article.)

FEBRUARY SNACKS

Thanks to those that always jump in and make our refreshments so wonderful. I appreciate all assistance.

Here is the list of folks signed up for the goodies in Feb...

Madeline French
Jack Graham
Jean Gray
Marjorie Marshall
Louise Newman
Jean Seile
Toini Wainwright

Thanks for you help in all ways.

Penny Bunker

NEWS BRIEFS:

Ron Miller was presented with an honorary life membership in the San Diego Epiphyllum Society at the Awards banquet held in December.

Ron has served the society in various capacities over the years, including Society Photographer and of course as our President from 1985-1986.

(Belated) congratulations Ron on this much deserved honor.

Past Member Leo Khim is reported to be on the mend, after recent heart surgery. All of our best wishes go to Leo for a speedy recovery.

Last years trophy winners are asked to return their trophies to the society as soon as it is possible. See Vice President Dorothy Breining at the Feb. 11th General Meeting.

NOW IS THE TIME

TO REMOVE FROST DAMAGE

Continue to feed with 'high bloom' fertilizer (0-10-10).

Watch for freeze warnings. Epis can be severely damaged by exposure to prolonged periods of freezing temperatures.

(Helen Barkdoll suggests careful inspection of plants and reccomends removal now of damaged branches [indications are translucent white or blackish green color]).

Watch for snails and slugs.

Collect rainwater for later use.

Do not move plants during the early budding phase. Even well established buds may drop if moved too soon.

Make plans for your display at this years show. Plan now for the best show ever!

SDWAP LISTS 1987 SHOWS

The San Diego Wild Animal Park has announced their schedule of flower shows for 1987. This list may be changed slightly, watch future issues for the latest information.

March 7&8 Arbor Day

May 2&3 Epi & Fuchsia Show

July 12 Hibiscus* Show

Aug. 9 Hibiscus Show

Oct. 10&11 Beauty and the Beast show/sale

Teri Basta of the SDWAP Horticultural Dept. promises more show will be added.

DEADLINE FOR MARCH ISSUE IS

FEB. 25, 1987

THE WHYS AND WHENS OF REPOTTING

by Sean Minogue

When does an epi need to be repotted? How can I tell whether my epi needs a bigger pot or not?

This is the first in a series of articles inspired by a question asked by member Bob Breining, at the January General Meeting.

The topic this time is container fatigue. No the pots don't get tired, the things in them do.

When that popular Epiphyllum handbook was first published forty years ago, the most practical containers were metal cans.

The cans had a short life span, usually by the time the epi was ready to move to larger quarters the can had pretty well rusted through and repotting was an obvious necessity.

Today most growers use plastic containers. These pots have the advantage of lasting a very long time, an advantage to you but not necessarily the epis.

As a result sometimes our epis are forced to sit far too long in pots too small in soils that are not at all the kind of potting medium we started out with.

The root system of any plant serves two purposes. First is absorption of water and nutrients, second is anchorage.

In habitat epis use their roots to anchor themselves to trees (and sometimes rocky crags). We say then that they are epiphytes. But in cultivation they are grown in the same manner we use to grow terrestrial plants (with their roots in a container of potting medium). By contrast we can see that most Staghorn Fern are grown epiphytically (mounted to a board with their roots loosely laced in a damp moss).

We have forsaken the epiphytic traits of the Epis because we get better performance from our plants when they are potted. We compensate for this by using a special potting medium that approximates the conditions that the root systems find in nature.

Remember that in habitat our epis are high up in trees. Their roots attached to the bark or crevices. Here the roots find a rich organic mixture of dust and plant debris caught on the surface of their host. The damp air of the rainforests and the immediate drainage of rainwater keep the roots moist but never soggy.

In cultivation epis are firmly rooted in their pots and needn't cling as they do in habitat. Thus more of the roots surface area is devoted to absorption (uptake) of water and nutrients.

Cultivated epis are grown under 'ideal' conditions. Roots that are cramped and pushing into the sides of their pots are losing surface area that could be used for uptake. Thus the plant is not reaching its optimum performance level.

Many epi lovers believe that cramped roots ensure prolific blooms. Many disagree. For the overall health of the plant it would seem that cramped roots should be avoided regardless of seeming increases in yield. (A healthy plant should produce plenty of blossoms. Crop yield is effected by many other factors. Most often the quantity and quality of the blooms from a healthy plant are a result of temperature and light levels.)

By discarding the 'cramped root theory' we also gain because now we have a standard by

which we can determine when to pot up.

Now let's turn our attention to the interaction of potting medium and water. We'll come back to the size of the root ball in a moment.

We'll start our discussion of soil with a look at a familiar potting mixture.

DICK CHADWICK'S recipe #1
(converted by Bob Stroberger)

- 10 gals. commercial potting soil
- 10 gals. ground redwood bark (use only horticultural type)
- 4 gals. perlite (coarse)
- 1 gal. charcoal

- 25 tbs. "Superphosphate"
- 25 tbs. "Sulphate of Potash" (use 20%, if 50% use half)

Yield about 25 gals. stores nicely in 30 gal. trash can.

Commercial potting soils often are made from things like forest products, sand, peat moss, perlite and many even have things like composted sawdust blended and ready to go. As we would if we were amending our native garden soil we then amend this premixed product to suit the special needs of our epis.

First we add the redwood bark to make the soil coarse.

Perlite is added, it absorbs no water and forms air pockets in the soil. Oxygen is used by the roots of all plants in the uptake of water and soluble nutrients.

We could stop here and use the mixture as is with good results.

(cont. page 4)

A smart optional ingredient is charcoal. Used to keep the soil smelling sweet, charcoal is very helpful in an environment where, almost like a science-fiction movie, nutrients are broken down into micro-organisms and then sucked out of the potting medium by the roots.

The last two ingredients in our recipe are nutritional and may be omitted by frequent feeders. (A future issue will discuss nutrition in more detail.)

Our potting medium is a conduit through which we give the roots the things they need.

We water the plant, the water races through the mixture (done correctly this should take seconds) and some water is left in the form of moist organic material. The roots use the moist material for daily survival until once again we add water.

It sounds ideal but as we can see by looking at the escaping water trouble is at hand. The escaping water isn't clear it's brown and gritty. Some of the elements of our medium are escaping (indeed some of the valuable nutrients are washed away with each watering).

Many container gardeners try to slow this downward flow by blocking the drain holes with small stones, pot shards and/or mesh screen. Because the decomposition of the soil elements and their downward flow will continue, blocking their exit from the pot can result in a silty bog at the pot bottom. This type of concentration of very wet organic materials is the reason we amended our potting soil in the first place and should be avoided.

So we accept the fact that the potting medium is going to wear out and the nutrients must be replaced.

We feed our epis a 'complete' fertilizer during the growing season and a 'bloom' formula just after the new year. But the complete formula contains only 3 and the bloom only 2 of the 13 mineral elements essential for plants.

So we accept the fact that the fertilizers aren't enough, we must repot sooner or later.

Epis grow at different rates, it would be impossible to say exactly when a plant must be placed into a larger pot. Different micro-climates make us water our plants at different intervals so no rule of thumb would be accurate. We must unpot our plants on a regular schedule and decide for ourselves the best course of action.

Most growers realize that for optimum performance plants must be either repotted (the plant is removed from its pot and placed in fresh potting medium either in the same pot or another pot of the same size) or potted up (planted into fresh medium in a larger pot).

But when ?

If you wait long enough the roots will be visible through the drainage holes, is that the right time ?

A single cutting in a 4" pot will tell you whether it should be repotted or potted up at a glance. For larger pots you should remove the plant at least once every two years and make these determinations...

Does the soil look nice and coarse or is it fine and silty?

Are there heavy concentrations of salt deposits in the soil or around the drain holes?

If yes to either discard the potting medium. (You might use it in a flower bed or vegetable garden.)

Are the roots too large for the container? Now that you've seen how much the roots grow in two years you can determine the potential growth for the next two years. If roots are pressed against the wall of the container, or you suspect that they will be in the next year or so, use a larger (one size larger) pot.

Next time we will discuss other problems confronting epis, and other container plants including pH and plant stress.

Special thanks to the people that made this article possible. Dick Chadwick, Bob Stroberger, Helen Barkdoll, Gus Schlapfer, Bob and Lois Burks, Chuck Everson and the University of California Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener program.

EPI NEWS POLICY STATEMENTS

To simplify information, Epi News sometimes uses the trade names of specific products. No endorsement of named products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

It is not the purpose of this publication to provide directions or cautions for the use of chemicals or pesticides. These items are always packaged with complete information regarding their use and any other use constitutes a violation of Federal law. Always use care and follow label instructions to the letter.

Ads for garden related items are accepted at no charge from SDES members and are printed on a space available basis. Ads from non-members will be printed at the discretion of the editor.

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Our all new FULL COLOR 1987 "Flowering Jungle Cactus catalog is \$2 (refundable). We'll include our \$3 Early Bird Coupon which is good through March 15th, and which may be used with any purchase totalling \$15 or more, either from the catalog or at the nursery. We've increased the catalog size substantially to 48 pages...and it includes epiphyllums, Christmas/Easter/Rattail Cacti, rhipsalis, night blooming jungle cacti, hoyas, ha-worthias and more. All plants mentioned above are also offered at the nursery as well as a large selection of reasonably priced (starting at \$6.00) basket size epiphyllums, many of which will flower this spring. We are open by "appointment"...please call, and if we are here you'll be welcome to come y. Wholesale is available to dealers. Please send wholesale inquiries on nursery letterhead and include nursery number and resale number. California Epi Center, Box 1431-SDES 1444 E. Taylor St., Vista, CA 92083 (619) 758-4290.

NEW ENGLAND AND EPIS

FRENCH SHOWS THE COLORS

Our new President, Milt Turner, presided over our first meeting of the new year.

We had an even hundred in attendance.

Among those present was a returning member, moved away several years ago now back in town. Welcome back Hazel Jacobs.

George French gave the program. He showed some of his new seedlings in slides and also had a bowl of his seedlings and other hybrids on the flower table.

The other portion of George's slide program was an assortment of slides taken of the trip to New England he took with his wife Madeline, last October. Beautiful trees with leaves all turned different colors, picturesque fishing villages, and beautiful clean shores. What a wonderful program.

Please send an article in to our editor once in awhile. It's pretty hard to provide a good newsletter when there isn't much to print. This is your newsletter folks, so get with it.

Gene Schmedding

APPOINTMENTS MADE MORE TO FOLLOW

At the January 28th Executive Board meeting President Milt Turner made several appointments which were confirmed by a vote of the board.

Helen Barkdoll will fill the Executive Board vacancy created by Milt Turners election as SDES President. Helen also will serve as chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Other appointments include: Parliamentarian, Margaret Pethley; Librarian, Ernest Angus, Hospital-ity, Nate and Dorothy Ogdon; Kitchen, Penny Bunker; Plant Table/ Photographer, Charlie Coons; Registration of New Hybrids, George French

CACTUS SEEDS ANYONE ?

Cacti enthusiasts are learning in ever greater numbers about the joy of raising cactus from seed. But where can you find a selection of cactus seeds? New Mexico, of course.

New Mexico Cactus Research offers a "mini seed list" to those who send a first class stamp to:

New Mexico Cactus Research
P.O. BOX 787, Dept. 110
Belen, New Mexico 87002

According to the American Edition of Harrowsmith Magazine, NMCR offers seeds for over 1000 cacti and succulents.

BOTANICAL EVENTS

Feb. 21&22 Orchid Show
SD Co. Orchid Soc'y. Mini-show
Sat. noon to 4:30 Sun. 11-4:30
CdP/101

Feb.28 Mar. 1 Ikebana Show
Ohara Chapter of SD 10th Show
Sat. 11-4:30 Sun. 10-4:30
CdP/101

Mar. 7&8 African Violet Show
SD Daytime Af. Violet Soc'y
Sat 1-5 Sun 10-4
CdP/101

Mar. 13,14,15 Orchid Show
SD Co. Orchid Soc'y 41st Show
Fri 7p-10p Sat 9-9 Sun 9-5
Scottish Rite Bldg.
Admission \$3.00



SAN DIEGO, CA 92112-6127
P.O. BOX 126127
SDES - EPI NEWS

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc. is dedicated to promoting
the growing, displaying and collecting of Epiphyllum,
and its related species.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month.
7:30 pm, Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park

Individual memberships are \$3.00 per year domestic, \$12.00 per year international
Organization memberships are \$3.00 per year (domestic).

Checks payable to the San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc. should be mailed to:
SDES-Membership

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