



EPI NEWS

DECEMBER 9, 1987

Vol.11, No. 12

the monthly newsletter of

SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY, INC.

SDES HOLDS ELECTIONS

Elections were held at the November General Meeting of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society.

Serving the Society in 1988 will be:

President
Milton D. Turner

First Vice President
Kathie vanArum

Second Vice President
Rick Latimer

Treasurer
Blendina Boyle

Recording Secretary
Margaret Pethley

Corresponding Secretary
Helen Barkdoll

Membership Secretary
Marjorie Marshall

Elected to two year terms on the SDES Executive Board were:

Ernest Angus, Pat Barrett,
Jean Gray, Vernon Hook,
Gene Schmedding

At the November Executive Board meeting Jeannie Burger was named to serve out the Board vacancy left by the election as First Vice President of Kathie vanArum.

MEMBERS DINE DECEMBER NINE

Thanks to Vernon Hook, the first to report that last month's Epi News had the wrong date for the upcoming SDES Christmas Awards and Installation Banquet. The correct date is December 9th, the regular meeting day for SDES.

The banquet will be held at Tom Ham's Lighthouse Restaurant on Harbor Island. No host beverage service will begin at 6:30p.m and dinner will be served at 7:00.

Members are invited to join in a plant exchange, a good quality rooted cutting in a 4" decorated pot is all you will need to participate. (Plants must be named and labels hidden.)

To find the restaurant enter Harbor Island (across from the main airport entrance) and drive west past the hotels to the end of the island. The Lighthouse Restaurant is clearly marked and is something of a landmark in its own right.

Event Chair Pat Barrett promises fun and many surprises.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

TO ALL

JANUARY ROUND TABLE PROMISED

The program at the January 13th General Meeting will feature a round-table discussion of Epi culture, with the emphasis on the effect of micro-climates on our cultural practices.

In a report to the Executive Committee at their Special November 18th meeting, First Vice President elect Kathie vanArum announced the topic for the first program of the new year.

Participants were not announced but vanArum promised that they would reflect our area's climatic diversity.

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**BOTANICAL FOUNDATION NEEDS
VOLUNTEER WORKERS**

The San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. has issued a plea for volunteers to assist them in their efforts.

Needed are helpers for the sales counter and the newsletter staff, in addition to many other positions.

Contact Dr. Herbert A. Markowitz, at 224-8552 for more information or see SDES's Representative to the foundation, Kathie vanArum.

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DEADLINE FOR JANUARY ISSUE IS

DECEMBER 16th

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**OUR ROVING REPORTER AT
THE NOVEMBER MEETING**

by Gene Schmedding

Our speaker of the evening was Helen Barkdoll. She gave a most interesting talk and slide show on how to plant and grow our favorite plant, the Epiphyllum.

Helen is a very knowledgeable person, and I am sure that I am not the only one that left the meeting knowing a little bit more about seedlings than I knew when I came in.

Helen also showed us some of her own lovely crosses. Her goal is to get blooms that open slowly as a rose does or as "Empress" does (but with good sturdy growth). She showed one particularly lovely one that does just that. I hope to see that one in the nurseries in the future.

I am sorry to report that our good friend and reliable worker, Penny Bunker has retired as SDES Refreshments Chair. We will miss her. Any volunteers for kitchen help should contact President Turner.

Our joint board meeting with E.S.A. and the South Bay Epiphyllum people at Quail Botanical Gardens in Encinitas on November 1st was a huge success. The weather was a bit uncertain but, the sun cooperated and the weather turned out to be perfect.

Event Co-chairs Kathie vanArum and Elinor Latimer did a great job. It was not an easy task to get together a pot luck for 40 people. Those SDES Board
(continued on page 3)

The Schmedding Report (cont.)

members unable to attend missed a wonderful meal. We hope to make the joint board meeting an annual affair, with each society taking a turn to host the meeting.

The Home of Guiding Hands operates a nursery and garden shop in Lakeside and they currently have about 1000 nice, named epis.

Call Terry Willodt 448-3700 ext. 339 for information.

Home of Guiding Hands is a care facility for retarded adults. Proceeds from their nursery operation go to help cover operating expenses.

The nursery operates weekdays only between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and is located at 10025 Los Ranchitos Rd., in Lakeside.

Now is your chance to help yourself and someone else at the same time.

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BULK RATE A REALITY

Starting in January 1988 Epi News will be sent to you at bulk postal rates thanks to SDES postal rate coordinator Margaret Pethley.

Some money will be saved and accommodations made. One which may affect you will be an earlier deadline for submission of materials for a specific issue. We regret that we will be unable to accept any materials past the deadline.

- Sean

GROWING EPIPHYLLUM FROM SEED

by Helen Barkdoll

You may have heard that growing Epiphyllum from seed is difficult and that it takes about 10 years to produce a flower. At one time this may have been true, but with the new knowledge we have accumulated, growing epis from seed is now faster, easier and fun!

Epiphyllum, like other jungle cacti, change their growth forms as they mature. As with every dicot, epis sprout two (very succulent) leaves at germination. Soon the epis start to look like small spiny cactus. This is a time of slow growth, you may start to worry that you are doing something wrong. Relax. Enjoy this small cactus garden for about a year. Finally the 4 to 6 angled seedling will eliminate one or two angles. This is an exciting phase. The seedling develops a ski-jump-like projection from which the flat adult growth will form. The seedling now grows rapidly and will need room to expand. Small flowered epis bloom earlier and may blossom in three years or less.

Most of the difficulties in growing epis from seed occur in the juvenile phase. Getting them started right is very important.

Seed may be sown in any season but must be kept warm, sprouts should be fed well to accelerate growth. Left outside seed may not germinate and sprouts may hibernate until the warmth of spring

(cont. on page 4)

BARKDOLL on SEEDLINGS cont.

arrives, a delay which may cost 6 months growth potential.

Place about 1 1/2 inches of a good, preferably sterile, potting soil in a shallow pot. Saturate the soil with water. Sow the seeds on top of the soil. Seeds may be covered with a thin layer of sand about the depth of the seed, or they may be left uncovered.

Here is the secret of rapid germination: put the pot in a transparent, air tight container to keep up the humidity. A plastic shoe box, a glass jar or even a plastic produce bag will do. Place the container in a warm location but out of direct sunlight. Keep moist. Do not let the soil dry out. When watering use a fertilizer such as Miracle-Grow or K-Mart plant food 15-30-15 a 1/4 strength to increase plant growth. (Editors note: Always use garden chemicals with care and never deviate from label instructions.)

Seedlings should be watered from the bottom or with great care from the top.

Because excessive heat is easily trapped in the sealed container avoid direct sun.

When the seedlings are 2 to 3 inches tall, gradually harden them off by allowing an increasing amount of air to circulate around them until they are at last growing uncovered.

As plants grow move them to individual pots. A 4"

container is sufficient until the epi blooms.

At the November meeting many of you took home both seeds and the plastic bubbles in which to grow them. Remember to punch drainage holes in those plastic bubbles you will use as pots but not in those you will use as covers.

A dozen of these bubbles fit well in a sweater-box when they are trimmed along the rim.

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AN ARGUMENT FOR DORMANT
EPIPHYLLUM

Dick Chadwick took exception to something in my November article about dormant epis. Coastal growers (like myself) usually don't need to be concerned, but it may be a problem in your area.

Epis should not be encouraged to grow if there is a chance that the tender new growth will be damaged by freezing. If there is a danger of frost where you live, you should either protect the new growth or discourage your plants from growing by withholding food.

You can allow your plants to grow only if you monitor the weather forecasts closely and react properly (that is move your plants to a warmer location or protect them with a plastic or other type of cover).

Remember that your garden has tiny areas of warmer and cooler temperatures, make sure you know what the temperature is in the coldest location.

- Sean

FROM THE EDITORS DESK

I want to thank the people who have made Epi News possible during 1987. I will not list the names, you know who they are.

I do encourage you to go back and re-read the articles. I bet you'll find a nugget of knowledge or lore that you may have missed the first time through. I know you'll find the time is well spent.

I think that those who helped Epi News to grow this year (and it did) already know how grateful I am for their help. But one more reminder can not hurt. I am quite proud of Epi News. Its high quality reflects a lot of hard work by all of the contributors both major and minor. Thanks to all.

Many times each year your comments are invited, but please remember they are always welcome. Aside from personal satisfaction, this job's only rewards come in the form of your comments.

In January, in order to accommodate the new postal bulk rate that will whisk Epi News to your home, we will begin using a new computer program for the newsletter mailing list. This new list will be based on the most up to date information available, in the hope that it will be exactly correct.

As long as I am putting all of the data (names, address, etc.) into the computer I may

as well get it right the first time. Please advise me of any changes or corrections that should be made to your mailing label now.

As you probably know, each SDES member in good standing is entitled to receive their own copy of the news letter, however to reduce costs it is preferred that only one copy go to each address unless there is a real need for individual copies to be sent.

The new mailing label will list the month of membership expiration. It will not list the year. If you choose to renew for more than one year, chances are you will remember on your own. Our Membership Secretary will be glad to check for you.

Once the new system is in operation I must rely on your comments to iron out any problems.

As far as I know Epi News and I will continue to haunt your mail boxes during 1988. I trust you will find the experience as enjoyable as I do.

In 1988 you can look forward to more epi culture and general horticultural tips and advice, more historical and epi background articles, more articles on the related species. Of course you will find the latest in Society news and events information. In January you can read the results of the Members Interest Survey taken in November. There's always plenty to read in Epi News.

- Sean Minogue

ODDS AND ENDS OF INTEREST

Do you know why leaves turn colors in fall?

Member MARY-ALICE BUAAS sent me a news clipping that explains all.

Think of each tree as a small chemical factory, when the sun is at its peak during summer the leaves are busy producing chlorophyll, that very familiar green substance that plants use to produce sugars.

As days shorten in fall this green pigment fades revealing other color pigments in the leaf. In cottonwood we see the yellow pigment of carotenoid.

Red and purple pigments, called anthocyanin, are found in maple, oak and dogwood trees. These are caused by the breakdown of plant sugars.

The article by Terry VanderSar (from an uncredited newspaper) even explains how and why deciduous trees shed their leaves.

When drained of nutrients each leaf forms a corky layer at each petiole to prevent that leaf from receiving new nutritional materials (the major factor here for the plant is to cut down loss of water). The attachment of the leaf is thus weakened.

What causes the leaf to fall? Why gravity of course, aided by the wind.

Member LEO KIHM tells me that scientists in England are hard at work developing the first blue rose, thanks to a \$10 million dollar research grant.

Rather than the usual hybridizing techniques these are bio-technologists using the latest in genetic engineering methods.

Today roses, tomorrow epis.

SNAIL WARS may be on hold for the winter, but now is a good time to plan for next years battle. Two methods that you may not have tried are "Killer Snails" and copper banding.

"Killer Snails"(or decollate snails) can be a benefit. They are much less particular what they eat in the garden. They will scavenge and may eat an occasional small plant, but they are just as likely to eat decaying matter and other types of snails as anything. Eventually they will replace the brown garden snail within your garden's ecosystem. You benefit because they are less interested your plants than their unpopular cousins. You can buy decollate snails from Pacific Tree Farms in Chula Vista, (619) 422-2400.

Copper banding can work if your plants are off the ground in trees or hanging from posts or post held supports. Wrapped around the trunk or post the copper is bent to create a barrier. When snails come in contact with the copper they receive a non-lethal shock. Et viola! Copper banding can be purchased by mailorder from Natural Gardening Co., 27 Rutherford Ave. San Anselmo, CA 94960, (415) 456-5060.

Next month, a snail trap you can build yourself, that really works.

EPI NEWS AD PAGE

LICENSE PLATE FRAMES
FOR EPI LOVERS

A license plate frame that reads "I LOVE EPIS" is now available according to Jean Gray.

Jean has a supply of them ready for delivery in time for Christmas.

Cost for the frame is \$8.00 which includes p&h and sales tax.

Call Jean at (619) 448-2540.

Or order by mail:
Jean Gray
2338 Valley Mill Road
El Cajon, CA 92020

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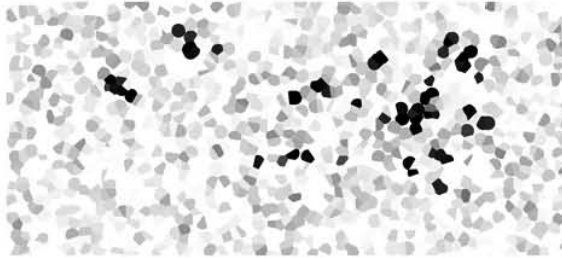
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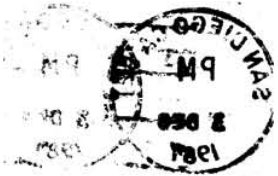
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Membership in the San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc. is open to persons with an interest in epiphyllum and their related species.

Membership is \$3.00* per year for individuals and organizations.

Membership privileges include reduced cost for some society events and a subscription to EPI NEWS, the monthly newsletter of SDES, in addition to other benefits.

General meetings are held each month on the 2nd Wednesday in Room 101, Casa del Prado at 7:30 p.m.

Checks made payable to San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc., may be sent to

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* Contact the society for international rates.