

EPI NEWS

January 1989

The monthly publication of the



SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY, INC.

At the January Meeting...

Tineke Wilders will be the guest speaker at the January 11th General Meeting of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society.

Tineke keeps busy as both a garden writer and broadcaster (her weekly radio program of gardening information is heard Tuesday afternoons at 4:00 on KPBS, FM 89.5 and her articles appear regularly in the Sunday Union, California Garden Magazine and others) in addition to her duties as Horticultural Therapist with Sharp Hospitals.

Tineke will present slides of her recent trip to Africa in search of unusual wildflowers and other plants.

In addition President Sean Minogue will present THE MISSING SLIDES OF '87, a group of photos of our Mother's Day Show "South Pacific" which have never been shown before.

The meeting will also feature the long anticipated By-Law election (see Epi News Vol. 12, No. 12 for complete details) and of course the early information about our Mother's Day Show and the many other activities planned for 1989.

Meeting time is 7:30 PM at Casa del Prado room 101. Don't forget to bring refreshments if you signed up in November.

A NEW TREASURE FOR THE LIBRARY

Our library has received a treasure of books donated by Gene Schmedding. Rubies of knowledge are to be found in the COMPLETE collections of EPI NEWS and E.S.A. Newsletters. There are books on how to grow exotic house plants (the plants we can often grow outside, but elsewhere are considered exotic) and many how-to books. a wealth of information is available. Come browse through the new books

before the General Meeting.

Books may be checked out for one month. They should be returned the following meeting to avoid fines. Check out privileges are extended only to members and your SDES membership card will be used as a library card. (If you have lost or misplaced your membership card see Membership Secretary Marjorie Marshall.)

Many thanks are due to Gene for the generous addition she has made to the library. Gene spent many years systematically collecting and cataloging the information, now it is available for all members to use. All thanks to the kindness of one of our active charter members.

It sure is nice to have members like you. Gene, we salute you.

Helen Barkdoll, SDES Librarian

EDITORS COLUMN.....

What a busy few weeks these have been. Starting with the Epi Awards and Installation Banquet, then the Epi House Winterizing and finally my first issue of the newsletter, I even found time to fit the Holidays in there somewhere.

First off I'd like to thank the folks that helped me with the Banquet, Gus and Marge Schlapfer, The Alexandersons, Sean Minogue, Dorothy Breining, Richard Pentico, Milt Turner and those indispensable Pat Barrett and Margaret Pethley.

The Epi House at the WAP is now covered in plastic and according to Dick Chadwick the stuff seems to be working. Which is good because it sure was tough getting it up there. Thanks are due to the following for their help in the project. Dick Chadwick and Vernon Hook provided the (Cont. next page)

Inspiration and Vernon did most of the shopping and materials schlepping. Other workers were George French, Gene Lund, Gus Schlapfer, Sean Minogue, Pat Barrett, Linda Hammer, Michele Davis and Jean Gray. The job itself involved lots and lots of time spent on the roof and running back and forth along the sides pulling rope and dragging plastic sheeting to make a snug fit. We actually screwed the plastic into place with wooden braces along a wooden frame that George French installed. Of course the Santa Ana winds came along when the day after we put up the first half. When we returned the next week to finish we had to start with a major repair job to the plastic on the first half. Oh, the things we learn too late.

Anyway the plastic is in place and the Park has provided a heater that will add some measure of protection against "normal freeze" conditions, although most agree there isn't much we can do to protect against the severe cold we experienced in 1987.

Stay tuned for information about taking the plastic down come spring. I'm sure you'll want to be on hand to help since the job of putting the plastic in place provided so many minutes of high comedy.

As mentioned this is the first time I've put out this (or any other) newsletter and I will need your help to make it happen. The first batch of contributions was great as you can see. So many in fact that it was necessary to bump Sean's articles about repotting and using herbicides until a later issue. I'm sure he won't mind and we can all use the break. Thanks to Helen, Gene, Joe and Jim Monahan. Your help is much needed. Please send all contributions to me at the following address:

EPI NEWS EDITOR
John Noble
808 Ethel Place
National City, CA 92050

PLEASE REMEMBER this newsletter needs you! A full time editor is needed, I'll do it for a while but I can commit the time that is necessary. Please see me or Sean if you are interested. ALSO deadlines are important to note. Copy received after deadline will be printed in the

next possible issue. Thanks again for your help and patience...
John Noble, acting editor

DEADLINE FOR FEB. ISSUE IS 1/26/89

AT THE AWARDS BANQUET

My sincere sympathy goes out to the unfortunate members of our Society that were unable to attend our annual Awards and Installation Banquet held December 7th at Tom Ham's Lighthouse.

The meal was wonderful. A steak you couldn't believe. Never, never had I or any one else at our table had a large, thick fillet so tender that it could be cut with a fork. My guests said that they never had a meal as nice as that anywhere. And they go to many of the so-called "finer restaurants". Gosh, I'm getting hungry just thinking about it. I must say John Noble outdid himself planning this party.

The room was beautifully decorated in the Christmas spirit. Coming down the steps John had placed "snow drifts" sparkling with light. Beautiful. John and his helpers decorated the room just for us. In fact Lighthouse employees asked John if the restaurant could rent the decorations!

Dorothy Breining installed the new officers. She did an outstanding job as usual. The theme was each new officer representing a Christmas tree decoration. Very clever.

This year's Richard Latimer, Sr. Memorial Award went to a very deserving Dick Chadwick for his many contributions to the society.

Outgoing President Milton D. Turner was awarded both Honorary Life Membership in SDES and Honorary Directorship. Milt also received a potted cycad as a small token from the Society, presented by outgoing First Vice President Kathy vanArum.

Other awards included the first ever President's Award (to Sean Minogue for his work on the newsletter), the Epi News Awards and a special recognition of Charlie Coons fine (Cont. next page)

work keeping the cutting table stocked. Sorry that Charlie wasn't able to be with us.

John presented several important awards a lighter vein. These included awards to the Alexandersons (Warren, Maryann and their daughter Gloria) as our Society's cutest family and awards to Jerry Plaisted, Dorothy Ogdon, Marie Chadwick and Madeline French not only for their own works for our society but also as "Women Behind the Men". George and Jerry Plaisted were acknowledged by John's "George" award, which he explained was for the biggest goof-up of the year. For overstocking the supply table with "I LOVE EPIS" license plate frames the Plaisteds received their very own "I LOVE EPIS" license plate frame to the delight of all.

There were over 130 members attending the dinner. It was so nice seeing old friends that we don't get to see to often. Some live out of town, some had been ill and were not able to attend our regular meetings but now have recovered enough to get out and about a little.

Since John Noble is the one who planned our awards dinner and he is also the new newsletter editor, I hope that he will print my raves about the dinner. He deserves all the hurrahs he can get.

Gene Schmedding

(Editors note- Thanks for the nice comments Gene, it was great fun to do. I'm glad everyone seemed to have a good time.)

NOTES FROM THE NORTH

(Editors note- Many of you had the chance to meet Jim Monahan and his wife Pat at the Epi Conference in Oct. They live in Aptos, Calif. near Santa Cruz and came to the Conference eager to learn from us and quickly learned that sharing our experiences is the best way to learn what to do next. Here Jim shares some insights, experiences, and observations with us. I think it's fair to say the Monahan are "hooked" on Epi.)

NOVEMBER 1988
Santa Cruz County, California

In late October we asked Chuck and Jerry at Rainbow Gardens to include a bottle of insecticidal soap in our most recent order. We were having a severe aphid problem with our Epi blooms. "Aphids? On blooms? Now? Northern California? You should be so lucky!" They were amazed that we are still enjoying blooms. At Epi Conference One, a most remarkable and rewarding experience, many participants kindly asked us about our 'artichoke country' collection. We began to realize that despite being "seat of the pants/on the job trainee" members operating on the fringe of a group of extremely knowledgeable people, we did have experiences to report. Pat was carrying, and showing, a shopping bag of, to us, strange looking branches (some sealed in baggies) that we suspected might be diseased. Almost without exception we got solid expert opinions of the reason and cure for the blotches, blemishes and disfigurements. Due to the many kindnesses we soon opened up and started to tell of our experiences with epis on Monterey Bay. Our growing climate is ocean influenced (2-3 miles), sees five to six frosts (26 to 30 degrees) annually, and despite two severe droughts, averages 26-35 inches of rain between October and April. We have warm (rarely hot) weather in the spring and fall, with cool summers.

At the time we were introduced to named hybrids via visits to Henrietta's Nursery in Fresno we did have some unknowns; a Padre, an *Epiphyllum strictum* and a hardy old full blooming *E. Ackermanii* brought north from Pat's father's garden in Rancho Bernardo. The unknowns were principally white and pink with a few beautiful yellow. Most had been with Pat's father throughout his Navy career and into retirement; likely in his garden since the early sixties or long before in the case of his beloved "nightbloomer". The next additions to our collection came from two rockhound friends: one, leaving the area to move closer to family, gave us plants that in time revealed themselves to be Padres. The other friend (an Epi Society member now) shared part of his collection (all in Santa Cruz county for over forty

years at a minimum). In time we identified a "Prof. Ebert" and a "Tele" among his mostly pinks and whites. In addition to the plants mentioned above we have in our area a ubiquitous medium-sized deep red. This plant was extensively marketed in Northern California as "the orchid cactus". It does remarkably well, has been widely traded and is a favorite of plant lovers. In three informal collections we found a beautiful large bloom, red with purple stamens and anthers, and also a plant with a bloom we described as purple with a florescent throat.

E. Crenatum and E. Strictum do well and bloom in our area as does a fine example of E. Macropternum var. Thomsonianum. Sad to say with the exception of the Crenatum, the other two have horribly splotchy spotted branches and add little to the garden in the off season. The bloom in early fall. Equally sad to say we have had zero success with other species mostly due to frost. E. Chichicastango grows like a weed but has yet to bloom. In the middle is E. Chrysocardium which grows abundantly, hates temperature changes and never blooms, takes up lots of space and visibly suffers from the lightest of frosts.

On a happier note, three of our Epis bloom approximately ten months of the year: "George's Favorite", "Muneca" and "Naranja". Despite the joy of their small blooms we had little success (close to 99% failure) trying to grow small and mini bloomers identified by growers as exhibiting unusual colors, particularly in their stamens, anthers, etc.

We like to share and make gifts of plants to our non-epi friends and with few exceptions use named plants and known species.. Plants that have rooted well and provide the bulk of our gift-giving are "Feather Queen", "George's Favorite", "Persian Tiger", "Professor Ebert", "Tip Top", "Padre" and the lovely florescent purple I mentioned. We would like to see this plant identified and failing this, registered.

A last note; In addition to the kindnesses, sharing of expertise and well prepared presentations by Sean, Gus, Dick, et al, we were fortunate to take a slight detour on Sunday A.M.

and visit Wressy Cocke in his home and Epi House. In 1992 be prepared to see new initials on the hybridizer list: JLM or PCM or perhaps the team of JPM. That is if Dick Chadwick can stand the phone calls. We have picked the apples, filtrated the seed and purchased the see through sweater and shoe boxes.

I suspect the knowledge we will come seeking at Epi Conference Two will revolve around green houses for the neophyte hybridizer trying to find a way to return the dining room, hobby room, living room, bathrooms and garage shelves to their original uses and free of seedlings.

Jim Monahan

SEARCHING FOR EPIS IN CHINA
part one
by Joe Quang Tran

When I was a very young boy in VietNam, there was a special occasion when my grandfather had many friends come to meet him in the evening. They gathered in the front yard where my grandfather grew different kinds of flowers: roses, camellias, peonies and Epiphyllum oxypetalum.

They drank tea, smoked, recited poems and waited for the oxypetalum to open its blossoms and to inhale its heady perfume. I heard that the plant had come from China.

I have grown Epiphyllums for many years and I have asked friends and looked in many books, but find nothing about Epiphyllum in China. I was told they had been introduced in 1875, but have not been able to verify this date. Also, I knew that during Mao's regime, all plants that were not used as food were supposed to be destroyed.

With the desire to find the truth, and with the hope that I might find some different epis than those that we have in the U.S.A., I asked my wife to take a trip with me to China.

Checking with travel agencies, we found a good deal for a visit of 21 days to 9 cities.

After a long exhausting flight, we (cont. next page)

arrived in Hong Kong where we had to take a Soviet flight to Shanghai. The plane was old, very noisy and the hostesses were like robots, they never smiled.

Shanghai which is among the two or three largest cities in the world, is China's most urban. We visited the "People's Government" of Qi Bao town, Shanghai County, agricultural community. They produce rice, all kinds of vegetables and fruits, not only for their own use, but to be sent to the Shanghai markets. They also grow flowers, we saw roses and many easy to grow annuals that flower abundantly and require little care.

We met the officer in charge of the community and talked about episcas and orchids. I gave him some seeds and explained how to care for them.

We left Shanghai for Hangzhou where there exists a long stone bridge built by Marco Polo in the 13th century. Hangzhou is a splendid city with tea plantations, silk factories and the famous West Lake full of spectacular lotus flowers.

There we visited the Hangzhou Nursery. It is huge: 160 acres with many rows of glass houses and a botanical laboratory. They hire some 230 employees. We met Mr. Lin Zhen Ming, the Director. He invited us to visit the different areas: the bonsai, the roses, the orchids, and the cacti in two large green houses. There were aloes, *hylocereus* and four different episcas: E. Ackermanii, E. Darrahii, E. Oxypetalum and E. Strictum.

He was astonished when I showed him photographs of our hybrid episcas. "I never realized that they came in such a variety of shapes, sizes and colors." He was especially interested in those with fragrant flowers that looked like their legendary Lotus blossoms. I promised to send him an episcas catalog.

Their episcas are a little different from ours in the U.S.A. The E. Oxypetalum has narrow thin stems, the Strictum has stems almost like ours but the mid-rib is pink-red. The stems of the Ackermanii and the Darrahii are small and thin.

We gave them seeds and got some

cuttings from their plants to bring back to San Diego.

They promised to let us know how their seedlings grow and develop.

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P.O. BOX 126127

San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc.

EPI NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in SDES is \$3.00 per person or organization per year. International rates are \$12.00 (U.S.) per year.

All membership inquiries should be sent in care of the Membership Secretary at the SDES Post Office Box.

ADVERTISING POLICY

EPI NEWS will accept camera ready or other ads at no cost for garden items and epiphyllums from SDES members.

MEETING TIME/PLACE

Meetings of SDES are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Casa del Prado in Balboa Park, in room 101. Meeting time is at 7:30 P.M. ALL ARE WELCOME.

Meetings of the SDES Executive Board are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. in the First Floor Seniors Lounge at the Casa del Prado. ALL ARE WELCOME.