



Epi News



NOVEMBER 1989 SAN DIEGO EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY VOL. 14, NO. 11

NOVEMBER MEETING HAS ELECTION AND THE TULIPS OF SPRING

The November 8th Meeting of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society will feature the election of officers for the new year and a special program on Tulips.

SDES Vice President Gus Schlapfer will present a special program of historic tulip slides taken in Holland in the late 1940s. These are outstanding photos that you are sure to enjoy.

Just as the chill of autumn hits the air we can enjoy all the colors of spring.

The premeeting workshop will feature the topic "Getting Your Garden Ready for the Cold". The speaker will be SDES President Sean Minogue. We'll discuss the various things that you can do to protect your plants from freezing temperatures. Avoid the set backs and pit falls of bad weather. Be an informed gardener.

The program of slides by SDES member and hybridizer, Don Patterson, has been postponed due to illness. Epi News will keep you posted on the new date as soon as possible.

Meeting time is 7:30 p.m. with the premeeting workshop at 6:30 p.m.

AWARDS AND INSTALLATION BANQUET UPDATE

Preparations are well under way for the annual gala Awards and Installation Banquet. The event returns this year to the Casa del Prado for a bountiful sit down catered dinner.

Your hosts Gus and Marge Schlapfer and John Noble have arranged a delightful evening of food, friends, honors and music that is sure to please.

The event will be held Saturday, December 16th with social hour commencing at 6:00 and dinner at 7:00, in our usual meeting place room 101.

John, who owns Noble Design and Set Construction, (a major supplier of scenery and sets used in television, film and live events) is in charge of decorations. He promises that you will be transported to a Holiday Wonderland. (If you would like to volunteer to help decorate the room contact Gus or John.)

Tickets are on sale at the November meeting (they are going fast, ticket sales end December 1st.) Prices are \$10 for members (as of 9/30/89) and \$20 for guests.

Don't miss our big event for the year (and our only December meeting.)

ELECTION SET FOR NOVEMBER 8th

The November 8th General Meeting will feature the election of officer and directors for 1990 our Society's 20th anniversary year.

The candidates as announced previously are...

President
Sean Minogue

1st Vice President
Jean Gray

2nd Vice President
Pat Barrett

Recording Secretary
Jeanette Dutton

Corresponding Secretary
Gene Schmedding

Membership Secretary
Margaret Pethley

Treasurer
Marge Schlapfer

Executive Board Members
Charles Coons
Kirsten Pellemounter

Officer serve a one year term.
Executive Board members serve a two year term.

Many chairmanships are available and ANYONE who would like to serve SDES is welcome to participate. Big jobs and little jobs and some in between are available. Do you fair share. PARTICIPATE IN YOU SOCIETY.

DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER ISSUE:

NOVEMBER 22nd

WHO WILL BRING THE TREATS THIS MONTH ?

Curt Hammel
Elsie Raphael
Dorothy Ogdon
Toini Wainwright
Margaret Fickas
Jean Gray
Betty Klumpp
Marge Schlapfer
Sean Minogue

ABOUT THAT POST OFFICE BOX

As you know our society keeps a post office box in downtown San Diego so that there will be a consistent address to which you may mail dues, inquiries etc. You may not know that this box is located in a place convenient to none of your officers. As a result sometimes the mail gets picked up less often than it should be. Don't despair. It does get collected eventually. If you have immediate need or questions contact any officer (you'll find addresses and phone numbers in the new roster) or call President Sean Minogue. His phone number appears on the back of every issue of Epi News.

THANKS ARE DUE

Thanks to all the Beauty and the Beast volunteers.

Thanks to those who braved HOLLYWOOD MANIA and came to the October meeting.

Thanks to Helen Barkdoll for the article that fills the rest of this news letter.

Christmas Cactus

Helen Barkdoll

In a recent survey of SDES members it was found that most epi enthusiasts grew other plants along with their Epiphyllums. Those plants that grew well, thrived in similar cultural situations and did not need much special attention were soon named "Companion plants", that is, plants to grow along with, under, besides, or around the perimeter of your epi enclosure. These plants are mostly other epiphytic cacti, including Aporocactus, Aporophyllum, Chiapasia, Cryptocereus, Heliocereus, Hylocereus, Nopalxochia, Rhipsalis, Schlumbergera, Selenicereus, and Zygocactus.

This month we will concentrate on Z for Zygocactus, a name better known in the nursery trade than in taxonomy. Now is the time to purchase plants in full bloom. Since they are carried only at this season of the year, they are often a featured plant in your chain grocery store's plant section, in the K-Mart or Target nursery, or in your local nursery. These stores get a limited number of plants, usually of the common varieties which may or may not be named. When they are sold they are gone. But luckily you can always get a good selection of the latest new creations of properly named hardy plants by going to a nursery specializing in epiphytic cacti such as Rainbow Gardens, or to buy them through the mail order catalogs. A very fine collection can be gathered locally between now and the new year.

Botanically named Schlumbergera, this group of plants has been taxonomically bounced around more than most. Many of the first descriptions were made from herbarium specimens, drawings and notes made by the discoverer or his/her friend. Simultaneous discovery elsewhere often complicated matters. The first person's description published in a scientific journal was considered the originator and was allowed to name the plant. Many discoverers named plants after themselves, friends, and even geographical locations, ie hookerii after Hooker, orssichiana after Orssich and amazonicus after the Amazon River. Subsequent findings were relegated to confirmation of habitat or to add additional data not covered in the original description.

Confusion arose when the same plant was found in habitat in several diverse locations and described differently by different authors. (Remember the story of seven blind people describing an elephant by what they felt. One felt the trunk and thought it was like a snake. One touched the ears and thought it was like the leaf of a large plant. One felt the tail and exclaimed it rope-like, etc.) Plants found in the juvenile growth phase could differ considerably from the adult growth. Flowers are changed by age, some reflexing more as they mature. Thus all the information gathered during different seasons has to be integrated chronologically to produce a correct picture. Many flowers and fruits of epiphytic cacti were unknown until grown in a botanical garden or in someone's glass house.

Botanical Taxonomists, those rare group of scientists interested in naming and classifying plants in their relationship with other plants, have a

serious puzzle with cacti. These relatively recent new world discoveries have a diversity of form, extended habitat and differing cultural requirements that tend to make a clear cut classification very difficult. When gene and chromosome studies are made and with the use of the electron microscope, additional corrections have to be made. New species are continually being found in the interior of the rain forests. As our knowledge grows and changes, so must we adjust.

Christmas Cactus is the common name used in the United States where the plant flowers during the holiday season, November through January. In habitat on the other side of the equator, in Brazil near Rio De Janeiro in the Organ Mountains, they bloom during May, June, and July, making the U. S. common name highly unsuitable. Therefore a universal scientific name is needed to identify such a plant.

Some taxonomists living in Brazil, able to watch the plants develop in their natural habitat, have written their own monographs on the subject. These reports have to be integrated with those obtained in the field and in the glass house. Knowledge is accumulated and taxonomy changes.

Originally in 1840, Hooker placed Christmas Cactus in the genus *Epiphyllum*. This being unknown to him at the time, Lemaire in 1858 created a new genus *Schlumbergera*. Thereafter, Professor Schumann reinstated *Epiphyllum* but created *Zygocactus* for those flowers that were highly zygomorphic or irregular. But some flowers were atinomorphic or regular and this furthered the confusion. In addition, some taxonomists even

included in the same genus those similar plants we commonly call Easter Cactus .

In summary, the classification of the Christmas Cactus has traveled through many a genus. Currently it has been returned to Schlumbergera, with *S. x bridgesii* established as a cultivar, and *S. x buckleyi* replacing it. Easter Cactus have been moved to *Rhipsalis*. Nomenclature states that hybrid Schlumbergera plants should be designated as *S. x* given name in lower case letters, but to most people they are still Christmas Cactus or *Zygocactus* and your local green nursery clerk is more apt to know what you are asking for if you use those terms. A Christmas Cactus by any other name would be just as beautiful.

All this interesting information and more can be gleaned from the following books available in the SDES library.

Britton & Rose, THE CACTACEAE

Loefgren, Dr. Alberto, ABOUT THE GENERA SCHLUMBERGERA AND ZYGOCACTUS

McMillan, A. J. S., CHRISTMAS CACTUS

NOW IS THE TIME

To watch for snails more closely than usual. Damp weather makes them active and cool temperatures allow them to stay out longer. Snails love epis more than humans do.

Avoid over watering. Epis require less irrigating during the rainy seasons. Let Mother Nature do her part of the work, but make sure your plants get enough water when nature fails.

Monitor plants for root fungus diseases. Discoloration of branches just above the soil level may well indicate problems below the soil. Problems that can prove fatal and spread to other plants in your collection.

Keep plants and containers free of debris. Trim back any unsightly branches.

BOOK FUND IS ADDED TO GENERAL FUND

SDES Membership voted unanimously at the October to place monies (\$443.35) in the mostly inactive SDES Handbook Fund in the SDES General Fund.

The SDES handbook committee, which had originally solicited these funds, was disbanded more than one year ago.

Some money from the Handbook fund was used earlier this year to publish the guide "Epi Basics". Revenues from the sale of this booklet are placed in the general fund. Epi Basics is available for purchase at the supply table at all SDES General Meetings.



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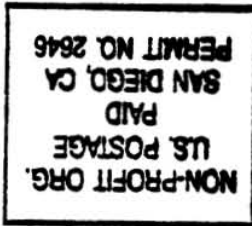


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SDES MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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GENERAL MEETINGS ARE HELD THE
SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 101 OF THE
CASA DEL PRADO IN BALBOA PARK.
PRE-MEETING WORKSHOPS ARE HELD
REGULARLY BEFORE THE GENERAL
MEETING AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM
104. ALL ARE WELCOME.

MEETINGS OF THE SDES EXECUTIVE
BOARD ARE HELD THE FOURTH
WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH IN C&P
ROOM 105 AT 7:30 P.M. ALL ARE
WELCOME.