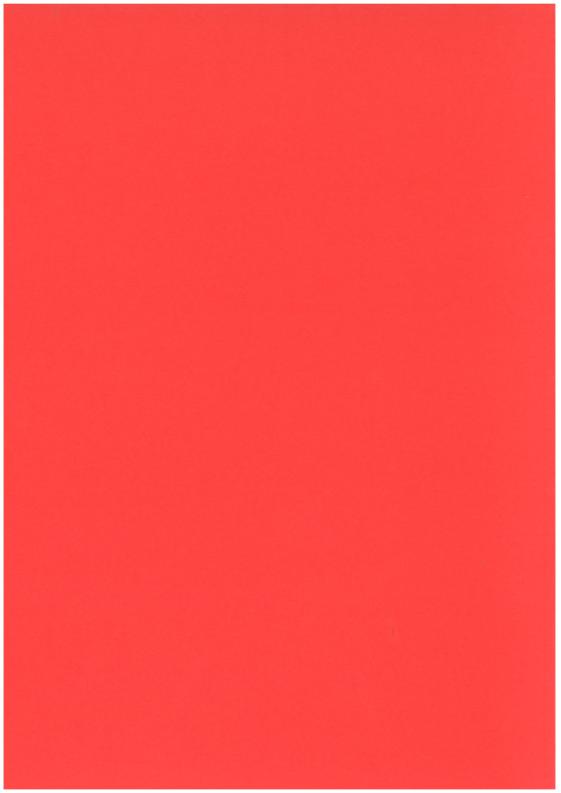


EPIFLORA

Volume 12 No. 1 March 2003





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From the President

Dear fellow epiphyte growers

It may be a bit late - but this is the first issue of Epiflora for 2003 - so let me start by wishing you all good health, good luck and good growing during this new year.

I noted in the last issue that summer had just arrived - now it almost seems that winter is on its way. We noticed that at Waikanae the outside temperature dropped to 5 degrees on Saturday night - which presents a challenge for those who have warm-growing hoyas which do not like temperatures below 12 degrees. Mercifully the temperature last night was back to something a little more normal for this time of year.

Our December trip to Taranaki was a great success (you will find an account of this if you read on) - again we must thank Andrew, Yvonne and Jane for all the work they did to organise it. Yvonne and Andrew have now sold the property at Stratford - and will shortly be moving to a new place near Bell Block. We hope the move goes smoothly and that they will be very happy in their new home. We also hope that their plant collection will enjoy the move and be very happy in its new home! Those who have moved collections will have special feelings for Yvonne and Andrew at this time!!

The trip last meeting to three gardens in the Hutt Valley was also a splendid event. Thanks go to Anne Goble for her efforts in organising it. You will notice in our programme we have another trip planned for later this year. If anyone has any suggestions of other places to which we might organise visits - please pass them onto me - or indeed to any member of your committee.

This year you elected: Robyn Gibson, Anne Goble, Alice Hannam, Mary Hardgrave, Kaye Keighley, and Penny Luckens to the committee. I would like to thank them all, on your behalf, for agreeing to stand.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Happy growing and kind regards

Roy Griffith

26th February 2003

The Programme for 2003

Meetings are at Johnsonville Union Church (Dr. Taylor Terrace) and start at 2.00 pm. Library books etc. are available at 1.30 pm.

Those on duty are responsible for preparing the room, assisting with tea and tidying the room at the end of the meeting and bringing a plant or other item for the raffle. If for any reason you are unable to do your allocated duty please arrange for someone else to do it.

March 8 th	Beginning or Renewing a Collection On Duty: Aynesley Taylor, Marion and Lewis Struthers	
April 12 th	Talk on Aporophyllums On Duty: Mary Hardgrave, Anne Goble, Beryl	
	McKellar	
May 10 th	Schlumbergeras On Duty: Keith Greer, Virginia Stead, Penny Luckens	
June 14th	Visiting Speaker	
July 12 th	"Midwinter" meeting - with visiting speaker	
August 9th	Other People's Pictures - slide presentation	
September 13th	Field trip to the Wairarapa	
October 11th	Workshop on Hoyas	
November 8 th	Rhipsalidopsis and Rhipsalis	
December 13th	. AGM and Christmas Function	

News about People.

Tom Curtis

We are sad to report that Tom Curtis, Colleen's 21 year old son died in late December as the result of a motorcycle accident. We extend our sympathy to Colleen, Brian and Doug.

AGM - 2002.

This took place at our December meeting. As well as electing the committee for the coming year and enjoying afternoon tea together - the president reported on the year just past.

President's Report for 2002

It gives me great pleasure to present this report on the twelfth year of our society. This year, as always we have had a wide variety of programmes at our meetings. Some of these have been directed at helping us understand and grow our chosen plants better — and some have been on topics of more general interest. As always the discussion that has been engendered has been almost as valuable as the material presented. Thank you indeed to those who led (or were encouraged to lead) or were involved in these sessions.

We have had three outside speakers this year – the topics could hardly have been more varied. Mary Grey came to tell us about her experiences in China, Max Willacy-Kuhn talked about tissue culture – the techniques and the possibilities – and last month Neville Glasgow sought to help us understand how to take "better" photographs..

I hope that you all have enjoyed the programmes as much as I have. The committee always puts a lot of thought into the preparation of the programme – with the objective of providing interesting and stimulating meetings.

The society has been involved with two shows this year. In February we were at the Hutt Valley Horticultural Society show – and in September we put on a display at the Kapiti Horticultural Society. I would like to thank all those who were involved in both these events – those who planned the displays and set them up; and those who joined the roster of people to "man the stall". We sold plants and attracted interest from many people – but, as always, our prime purpose was to attract new members.

It is always good to welcome new members to our society – and this year we are again able to report that new people have joined. This does not translate into a growth in membership though – as we also have lost a couple of members.

One of the most exciting things about our society is the way in which everyone is involved in some way. Whether it be making the tea and preparing the room for our meetings, writing articles and reports for Epiflora or helping with raffles, bringing (and buying) the things for Kaye's Korner; bringing others to the meetings with you.. for doing all these things and more – let me say thank you. It is this willingness of everyone to be involved and lend a hand that makes this society such a pleasure to be part of.

As I close this, the first of my two presidents reports, I must also express sincere thanks to those who have worked with me on the committee this year. I would like to thank our secretary Mary Hardgrave, our treasurer Alice Hannam, Anne Goble who has looked after our library and Jane Griffith, Leone Neil, and Penny Luckens, Two of this years committee are stepping down and I would like to thank them both: Leone – for the new ideas she brought during her one-year term and Jane for all that she has done for the society over the years since it was started.

I wish you all happy holidays and successful growing during the coming months.

Roy Griffith - December 2002

Not Hands Up - but Hands ON.

Merv Keighley reports on the first meeting of the new year when Dianne O'Neill, Jane Griffith and Penny Luckens had been asked to assist those with "problem plants in need of attention".



The first meeting of 2003 was held in a different venue to our normal meeting place - in the Johnsonville Community Centre. The room we use at the Johnsonville Union Church was being renovated.

There was a good turn out for the first meeting of the year. Some had come prepared with tarpaulins for the floor, potting mix, secateurs, pots, scissors etc. and of course plants - that needed

TLC. Some needed just a prune, some needed dividing, some repotting - and some throwing out.

Various experts - appointed or self-proclaimed were on hand to guide - remember it was a "Hands ON" meeting.

A hoya pauciflora - quite a large plant, was given a prune and cuttings taken of the prunings were available to anyone who wanted them. I experimented and found the best way for me was to put a cutting of about 6 inches (150mm) in a deep container of 3mm pumice which is kept quite damp and is on a hot pad. This way the cutting rooted in less than four weeks and is now potted up and doing well. The other cuttings have either rotted or are still thinking.



An epi was attacked. It was rather rank, overgrown and had a lot of old growth. The worried "mother" of the plant was told to cut back to the new growth shut eyes, grit teeth then cut. The plant looked very pleased - the "mother" fainted!



A tip on using potting mix was given. If the mix is dry, pour on hot water. This wets the mix more effectively than using cold water. Working with dry mix is to be avoided as you may inhale the dust - which can have serious consequences.

There were many raffle prizes this month - so everyone went away with a prize. In short - a good time was had by all.

Taranaki Trip.

Just before Christmas - a large group of members visited Taranaki, Marion Struthers writes about the places we went to and the things we saw...

On Friday 6th December sixteen members of the Epi Society commenced their two night stay at a motel in Hawera and shared a most enjoyable evening meal together. Saturday morning saw us all ready at nine o'clock to be led by Andrew Brunton for a wonderful day of visiting private gardens and nurseries.

The first garden was a real joy. It had been only seven years in the making and every corner

was full of intrigue among the flowers. There was even a sunken room reached by a set of steps that was filled with many potted plants and lots of memorabilia collected from yester-years.

The extensive farm garden belonging to John and Phyllis Malcolm at Kapuni covered several acres and was complete with its own lake. The area was beautifully planted with flowers, shrubs and many mature trees. A herd of young Jersey cattle over the fence watched our wanderings with much interest.



Next a visit to Yvonne and Andrew Brunton's home where we all appreciated and enjoyed a lovely lunch. By then the weather decided to treat us to its method of "how Taranaki is kept green".

The heavier the rain the longer we stayed in their nursery – a converted dairy unit – and added yet another few plants to our growing collections.

Telfars perennial nursery at Midhurst contained many plants which interested us as most came away with a treasure, although gum boots would have been more practical than shoes as foot wear.

Under cover for the next step for the visit to Lavender Lane which was full of interest. We were shown the machinery for extracting lavender oil and also a demonstration of wood turning. The shop was full of beautifully made and attractive gifts.

Again we joined for a shared evening meal supplied by members. Yvonne and Andrew joined us.

Sunday morning our guide was Yvonne. The garden designed, planted and cared for by Mary Dickson was a real treat. So full of colour and the quality of plants and care of the garden was most impressive. I'm sure we all left feeling we ought to aspire to greater results in our own gardens.



The visit to Taranaki ended with a stop at Tawhiti Museum. A great collection of history, many exhibits presented with a humorous twist. Those who wished to enjoyed lunch at Mrs Badgers Café adjacent to the museum. From there we made our various ways home. A great weekend, full of interest, fun and friendship.

A big thank you to Jane, Yvonne and Andrew who put it all together

March 2003



Hoya arnottiana

This is a fast growing Indian species with smooth light green leaves which readily produces creamy yellow flowers. The flowers are strongly fragrant and, although liked by some, the smell is not to everyone's liking! The plant comes from the tropical mountainous Himalayan region and is found growing at altitudes of 305 to 915 metres (1000 to 3000 feet). It is a strong vigorous grower, climbing high on supporting trees.

Three Hutt Valley Gardens.

We went tripping again in February - this time we went to three gardens in the Hutt Valley. Anne Goble organised this outing for us - if you did not make it - this is what you missed.

Our first call was at the garden of Pam McDowell. Pam has a quarter acre garden in a well established area of Lower Hutt. She has won the "small farmer of the year award". If that does not strike you as an interesting combination - skip the next paragraph.

Pam grows a most amazing variety of fruits, herbs and vegetables in her garden - and as well



she keeps bees, hens and ducks. The vegetables range from asparagus to yams - and the fruit from bananas to strawberries - oh - and she has pawpaws and plums and rhubarb and raspberries. The trick seems to be to plant and arrange things in combinations - so that each square inch of space is used and produces to its utmost. She does not have a lawn! We were all enthralled and overawed as we wended our way round the plots and enclosures - and then bought large amounts of her pickles and jams and other preserves.

After this visit - which makes me feel tired even in recollection Dianne O'Neill's garden was as beautiful and tranquil as it always is. People scattered in different directions - to admire the

hanging baskets, the pots and tubs, the cacti and other plants in the greenhouse - and the epi's, ceropegias and tillandsias in the shadehouse. The kaleidoscope in the centre of the back lawn fascinated many - it provides a unique way of viewing a colourful plant. We sat in the courtyard and enjoyed afternoon tea - and then, refreshed, went to explore another corner of the garden. Even a visit to the loo became an encounter with a magnificent hoya with an abundance of flowers.

Our last visit was to Jill and Graham Bond who live some way along the Akatarawa Road. They are still developing their 22 acre property -of which some 10 acres is covered with mature pines. They built their house using logs harvested from the property over a period of many years and have been developing their garden over the same time frame. The result is delightful - a dwelling and garden partly set amongst bush with a large pond (complete with ducks and eels) partly surrounded by gunnera and miniature cordylines. Lawns and flower beds are set off by banks of grasses. There were swathes of day-lilies under mature trees - and little miniature native gunnera growing beside the vegetable garden. Gardening in a place like this presents its own challenges - we contend with mealy bugs, they with wild pigs - but in the quietness the birds sing.

Thank you Anne (and Lois) for arranging such a delightful afternoon - and thank you to Dianne and Pam and Jill and Gordon for allowing us to visit your gardens.

Small Flowering Epicacti or Jewel Cacti.

This is another in our series of occasional articles on the subject of hybridising. This article was written by **Rex Hardy** and was published in **EpiGram** - an admirable publication which is in our library - which is produced by the **Epiphytic Cacti and Hoya Society of Australia**.

Introduction.

Small flowering epicacti or miniature epicacti are exact replicas of the larger epicacti except that their branches (phylloids) are only half to one third the size. The flowers too have been scaled down from bread and butter plate size to those that are now smaller than the diameter of a teacup. In fact to qualify as a small flowering epicacti the flower must be no more than 130mm across.

These flowers may be smaller, but nothing, nothing of the silky irridescent, jewel-like beauty of the epicactus has been lost. In fact many of the small flowering epicacti bloom more profusely, sometimes several times a year, and their flowers tend to last longer. You could say it is as if the epicacti have had their best features sharpened and refined by being reduced in

size.

With smaller backyards and areas in which to grow plants, miniature epicacti are the ideal answer and can take their rightful place among the most beautiful and carefree plants it is possible to grow. Their graceful cascading form and dazzling blooms make them ideal for hanging containers.

The Development and Growth of Small Flowering Epicacti

These small flowering epicacti or miniature cacti are not found growing naturally anywhere in the world. They have been developed over a period of some 150 years by careful selective breeding and hybridising of epicacti by a group of very dedicated people. When we look at the small flowering epicacti of today - the finished product, if you like - it is difficult to imagine the journey that has taken place to get to this stage.

Hybridisation of Early Epicacti

It is very hard to write about the hybridisation of small flowering epicacti in isolation. This is because the development of these plants, like the development of the multi-petalled epicacti, has only happened as paths have led off the main road from the hybridisation of epicacti in general. I will, therefore, particularly at the beginning of this article, be writing about the hybridisation of epicacti in general.

The first recorded hybridisation of epicacti took place in England in the year 1811. Unfortunately very little is known about this effort as no records were ever kept, not even of the person involved. (This shows the importance of keeping records).

The next account recorded of any hybridisation of epicacti was by another two Englishmen with the surnames of Jenkinson and Smith. This was in the year 1830 and in this case records were kept. It appears they used plants from two different genera of epicacti. These plants were *Nopalxochia phyllanthoides* (which we call today German Empress) and *Heliocereus speciosus*.

It is worth noting here that hybridising of epicacti using a true specie epiphyllum did not take place until the year 1845. Two French breeders, Charles Simon and Lorenzo Courant were the first to use an epiphyllum species in their hybridising which in this case was *E. crenatum*.

Aims of Early Hybridisers

By the beginning of the 1850's hybridising of epicacti had really begun in earnest and spread to other countries in Europe. It is worth noting here that the aims of early hybridising it seems, were to create day-flowering epicacti with larger, different coloured flowers. This they did by crossing the pink and red flowering epicacti, which were day bloomers, with day and night flowering epiphyllum species. The idea of creating small flowering epicacti had not begun at

this stage.

Hybridisers of Small flowering Epicacti.

1. Kurt Knebel - The first person I want to mention and pay tribute to is a man by the name of Kurt Knebel. Although he was not the first German hybridiser, he is regarded as the father of epiphyllum hybridising. This name was given to him because of the work he did in hybridising and the results he achieved. Perhaps a little about the man might be interesting. He was born in 1871 and started his own nursery in 1894. Kurt Knebel's nursery, even by today's standards was a large nursery. His interest was not in epiphyllums at first but the interest developed when, like so many of us, he was given a few cuttings by a friend. He started hybridising epicacti in 1901 and in his book "Phyllocactus" he describes some 429 hybrids which are recorded and registered, many of which are still grown and cherished by epicacti growers today.

In his book Knebel gives us his aims as follows:

"... By careful selection of the parents, I came very close to my aim, namely to create Phyllos (epiphyllums) with a better flower structure, better colours and greater strength and endurance. My efforts have been finally crowned through the originating of double flowers. "(page 22)

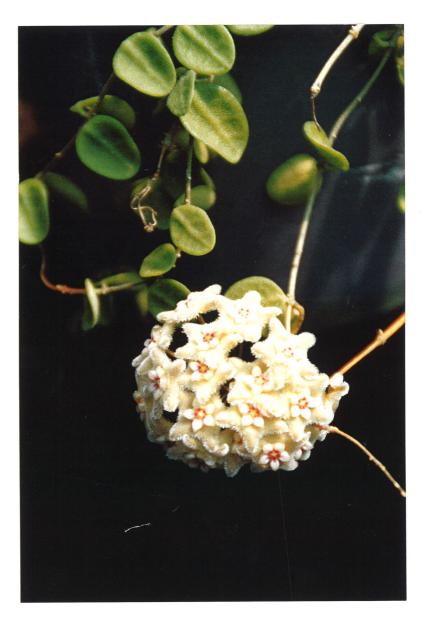
Another of his aims was to produce small flowering epicacti:

".. My desire was to cultivate a new variety which would have stout branches, not too big and tall, but one that would bloom freely." (page 18)

To do this Knebel introduced two new species of epiphytic cacti which were not previously used in hybridising epicacti. They were *Heliocereus cinnabarinus* and *Disocactus nelsonii*. Thus began, if you like, the development of the modern compact and small flowering epicacti.

Hoya serpens

This tiny leafed Indian species from the Himalayas is a real gem. It is a true creeper, branching readily and forming dense plants. The flowers, large in size relative to the small round hairy leaves, are beautifully textured and change colour as they age. This wee creeper was named for its habit of creeping along the ground and along the branches of trees and shrubs. It has travelled about in collections under a lot of different wrong names and continues to be mislabelled in some collections. It is a bit difficult to grow but is well worth the effort; many people report success in terrariums. The flowers begin greenish white and change colour with age, from white to green and finally pink.



2. *Theresa M Monmonier* - I would now like to pay tribute to the second of our hybridisers, an American lady named Theresa Monmonier. She owned an Epiphyllum Nursery named "Ventura Epiphyllum Gardens" in Ventura, California. She was involved in hybridising epiphyllums in the mid 1940's and produced several small flowering epicacti.

Monmonier first used Deutsche Kaiserin (German Empress) to develop small flowering epicacti. I would like here to quote a few lines from her descriptive catalogue.

"... Over twelve years ago we chose this lovely lady to be the mother of a new line of hybrids and today we have many of her children coming into flower. These new Deutsche Kaiserin crosses were made with great consideration given to the retention of the small graceful flower and compact growth. These hybrids have retained many of her fine qualities, her floriferousness, fine growth and delicate formation, to which has been added fine combinations of colour and greater vigour of growth."

Some of Monmonier's hybrids were Rosetta, Bambi, Ballerina, Dragonet and Gay Senorita. She also advertised in her catalogue seeds of her German Empress hybrids at \$1.00 per packet.

Later she used another small flowering epiphytic cacti, *Chiapasia nelsonii'* and produced many more choice small flowering hybrids. She used *Chiapasia nelsonii* crossed with epiphyllum hybrid Fairybell. From this cross and others were produced epicacti hybrids such as Angels Trumpet, Spring Cheer etc.

Discovery of Disocactus Macranthus.

I want to digress for a moment to tell you of the discovery in 1939 of *D. macranthus*. This epiphytic cacti was discovered by a Thomas M MacDougall in the high altitude rain forest in the state of Daxaco in Mexico. The discovery of this plant has revolutionised the hybridisation of small flowered epicacti. The use of this specie has produced in modern hybridising of epicacti some remarkable and spectacular results such as the ability to produce plants that are still small when mature and are literally covered with flowers. Again plants that flower at other times of the year, sometimes twice or more in one year. Many of these small epicacti, unlike the larger ones, have flowers that are strongly perfumed.

Chiapasia nelsonii is now	known as Dis	ocactus nelsonii
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Ed.

- 3. Wressey Cocke Moving on, I would like to return back now to pay tribute to the third of our hybridisers, this time another American called Wressey Cocke. Like the previous hybridizers and many others not mentioned, he also hybridized both small and large epicacti. One of these beautiful large flowering epicactus bears his name E. Wressey Cocke. I have chosen to mention this man and pay tribute to him because he chose to use the recently discovered D. Macranthus in the hybridising of his small and miniature epicacti. Some of his results have been spectacular and he is very well respected and much noted for such hybrids as Tiny Flame, Mary K, George's Favourite, Gold Coin, Vista Flame, Vista Star, Lollipop, Petey Kelley, Cloud Nine, Bloomin' Luck etc. As I have mentioned their names, I am sure pictures of these exquisite flowers have sprung to your mind.
- 4. Barry Stevenson The fourth person I want to mention, who has done some specialising in producing small flowered epicacti is Australian Barry Stevenson. Up until recently he was the President of our sister society in the Eastern States (Epiphytic Cactaceae Asclepiadacae Society of Australia). Although he has only produced a small number of epicacti, all are small flowering, and all that I have seen are very impressive. He has told me that all his hybrids have resulted from crosses of E. George's favourite x E. Naranja and Delicate Jewels x unknown epicacti. Some of his resultant hybrids are Robyn Joy, Robyn May, Sharryn Lee, Mary Helen, Barbara Jill etc. I particularly like Barbara Jill, which has orange outer petals with a distinct fuchsia stripe down the petals. The sepals are also a deep fuchsia. The orange and fuchsia make the flowers really stand out. What impresses me about these is the good strong clean growth they have and the fact that some of the flowers have a strong perfume.

It is difficult when writing an article such as this not to mention other well-known epicacti hybridisers, especially those whose names are like legends. Such people as Australians, the late Joyce Carr and Des Ellery, have I know bred some small flowering epicacti, yet I understand they did not deliberately decide to go down this road of specialisation in this field.

Conclusion

I trust that you too, as you have read this article, have been awakened to the possibilities of growing and hybridising some of these small flowering epicacti which only need a small area to grow in, yet produce flowers that sparkle like jewels.

References.

Knebel, Kurt, Phyllocactus

Monmonier, Theresa, Ventura Epiphyllum Gardens Descriptive Catalogue,

Chidamian, Claude, <u>Jewel Cacti - The Miniature Epiphyllums</u>(Cactus & Succulent Journal (US) Vol 51 - 1979)

Now is the time......

Things are a bit late this year for all plants and now autumn seems to be coming early!

Epicacti - it is "work time" prune and repot if necessary

Hoyas - enjoy the flowers (and check for mealy bugs and other pests).

Schlumbergeras - fertilise and water carefully

Rhipsalis - reduce watering and prune/repot if you wish..

Aporophyllums - Water less. Prune lightly and repot (with care!)

Ceropegias - again- enjoy the flowers (and check for pests frequently).

Now is also the time.....



To pay your subscription for 2003 if you have not already done so. A renewal form is included in this issue for those of you whose renewal has not yet been received. Please send your money soon - we would hate to lose you. Send your subscription to: Mrs A Hannam, 6 Kaka Street, Waikanae.

Odd Cuttings and Seeds

Plant labels that do not fade...

I have seen a lot of discussion lately on ways to avoid plant labels becoming illegible, some of the points made in the conversations bear repeating here.

There was consensus that the plastic labels produced by machines like the Brother P-touch series are pretty well sunshine proof - provided you avoid colours like yellow or orange (black is the best). There was absolute agreement that any pen

guaranteed not to fade will. The old-style embossed dymo labels were well regarded - because even if the colour fades - you can still read the raised words. Pencil got an honourable mention - as did the practice of writing the name twice - once at the top of the label where it shows, and once at the bottom where it is protected by being under the potting mix.

Of course none of these methods will help the correspondent whose small grandchild went through their glasshouse collecting every label they could see.....

Karen Panek

At one time Karen (who at that time lived in Wanganui) was one of the few suppliers of epicacti in New Zealand. She moved to Hamilton about a year ago - and is now getting organised to resume selling in the near future. She writes:

We have just moved into our new home after renting by the beautiful Hamilton Lake for a year, and my large Epi and related genera plant collection has now been catalogued, and fresh cuttings taken. These will become my new collection so do hope they all take ok. (We could not bring the older plants with us.) My postal address now is:- PO Box 1495, Hamilton. Phone/Fax: (07) 8509055

I have updated my small webpage on Epicacti, and put my listing there. Some people around NZ have enquired about my plants so this is for your reference only at this stage. The link is http://www.angelfire.com/id/goldenkiwi/Epicacti.html

Heat Pads

Many people like to use a heat pad to provide bottom heat when starting delicate cuttings - or trying to grow exotic plants from seed. While small ones are available in many garden centres - decent sized pads are hard to procure. We have recently found that Otaki Hydroponics has a good range of heat pads. You can contact them by phone on (06) 3642206 or by fax at (06) 3647206. They do a lot of business by mail-order.

South African Environmental Maps Website (ENPAT)

ENPAT is an on-line Environmental Atlas, written in plain English, aimed at

educators and tourists. It provides a wide range of quite detailed maps, either A4 or A3 size, including topography, geology, biomes, vegetation, rainfall for South Africa, both nationally and each province individually. This is wonderful background information for growing SA succulents, but beware - A3 maps can take many minutes to download via a 28kbps modem! The address is: http://www.environment.gov.za/Enviro-Info/Intro.htm

For those smitten by Stapeliads

While these are not strictly plants within our ambit some of our members (not to mention Merv) are keen on them. Here is a link to a site with some really nice pictures - why not look - you might get hooked too - www.cactus-mall.com/stapeliad/index

Looking at labels....

It is such a simple idea really - why don't we all do it? If you have an epi (or other plant) in a hanging pot - that is hanging down above you - why not hang the label down from the pot instead of sticking it in the pot in the usual way? You can then see and read it easily!

Back Numbers of "Epiflora"

The first edition of Epiflora appeared in March 1992. We have limited stocks of back-numbers for most issues from Volume 2 - issue number 1 (March 1993) onwards. Prices are 50c per copy plus postage (if applicable) - contact the Editor ..

Future Publication Dates..

EPIFLORA is published quarterly by the Wellington Epiphyllum and Hoya Society.

Comments and contributions are most welcome. The society aims to encourage discussion and debate; opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the society. It is the policy of the society to publish corrections of fact but not to comment on matters of opinion expressed in other publications All material in Epiflora may be reprinted by non-profit organisations provided that proper credit is given to WEHS, Epiflora and the author.

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