



EPIFLORA

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EPIFLORA

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From the President

Dear fellow epiphyte growers,

This year has certainly flown; here we are marching swiftly into spring .. with the white Cheerfulness jonquils already well out and my sweet little petticoat daffodils starting to flower. I am not sad to see the end of winter because I think it was one of the coldest we have had for many years. I had tried to get an early start propagating some hoyas but it was too cold for them to do anything. Even the broad beans in the garden refused to germinate in the usual couple of weeks and it was a good month before they poked through the soil.

But as I look outside I can see our dual plum tree bursting with blossoms; the Billington side is slightly ahead of the Black Doris but it is a real picture. Also our neighbour's camellia is making a better show than usual so must really like the colder weather; we get to enjoy it as it hangs over our fence.

A good sign that it is starting to warm up is that our fish are showing more movement at the top of the pond; I guess they will be breeding soon. So maybe I should start trying to propagate my hoyas again. I am also increasing the watering on most of my plants as the temperatures are starting to climb.

I have received an e-mail from an unknown source containing lists of Seeds and Plants available from Willowburn in the South Island. I have added links to these lists to our website for anyone who is interested in browsing them.. If anyone who doesn't have Internet access would like these lists please don't hesitate to ask me to print out a copy for you.

Kind regards,

Virginia Hayler.

The Programme for 2009

Meetings are at Johnsonville Union Church (Dr. Taylor Terrace) and start at 2.00 pm. Sales, 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.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| September 12th | Talk on Stapeliads
<i>On Duty: Virginia & Jim Hayler, Jennie Heath</i> |
| October 10th | Topic : Rhipsalis
<i>On Duty: Jane & Roy Griffith, Isobel Barberly</i> |
| November 14th | Wainuiomata trip to Moores Garden Centre;
Bring picnic lunch.
<i>On Duty: Kaye & Merv Keighley, Ruth Finlay</i> |
| December 12th | AGM and Christmas meeting
<i>On Duty: Dianne O'Neill, Lois Bond, Vicky Gibson</i> |

Schlumbergeras (and other things)

At our June meeting Leita Crystall talked about the plants she grows and how she grows them. She also brought a fine collection of photographs...

Leita joined the Auckland Epiphyllum and Hoya Society in 1985 and remembers being visited by Von Cross and Betty Gross who were trying to assist a group to start in Feilding. A meeting was held in Palmerston North - but that was all. She produced a letter dated October 1990 inviting her to join the fledgling Wellington Society and has been a member ever since.

She still has her copies of all the Auckland Society newsletters and noted that they are a mine of good information about Schlumbergeras.

She has a large collection of Schlumbergeras (as those of us who have visited her can vouch for) which are kept in both her glasshouse and her house. Every morning she takes some plants outside for the day and finds this avoids problems with mildew. She uses a mix made up with leaf-mould, peat and sharp sand with some charcoal. She applies a sprinkle of Diazanone to control fungus-gnats and worms. She uses Magamp and also applies orchid fertiliser just before flowering.

The World of the Orchid

Scientists now believe that the planet's most prized plants are up to 85 million years old. Simon Osborne, writing in "The Independent", celebrates the exotic blooms that fuel a billion-dollar industry

Generations of botanists and florists seduced by the orchid's natural beauty have long known there is something special about the "supermodel of the plant world". Now, the history of the floral pin-up will need to be re-written; a new discovery suggests that orchids bloomed when dinosaurs roamed the earth - far earlier than previously thought. A team of American scientists in the Dominican Republic found, perfectly preserved in a lump of amber, grains of orchid pollen attached to the wings of a 20-million-year-old bee. Until now, plant historians were forced to rely on scant fossil records to chart the origins of the plant, but the

new find, detailed last month in the science journal *Nature*, suggests that orchids arose as long as 85 million years ago.

The naming of names

The orchid, or orchidaceae, family gets its name from the Greek orchis, which means testicle, a reference to the plants suggestively-shaped bulbous roots. "Orchis" first appeared in a natural history book by Theophrastos, the ancient Greek "father of botany". The orchid family is the largest and most diverse of the flowering-plant kingdom, with more than 25,000 species observed so far. Each year, as many as 300 new species are added to the list and some scientists estimate that more than 5,000 orchids remain undiscovered. A further 100,000 hybrids have been cultivated by dedicated horticulturalists.

Orchids are grouped according to the way they retrieve their nutrients. Most are perennial epiphytes, which put out roots on other plants, mostly trees. Lithophytes grow on rocks, deriving nutrients from the air, rain and even their own dead tissue, while terrestrial plants grow in soil.

Hardy Perennials

While they might look fragile, orchids are very tough and have evolved to thrive in all but aquatic and desert habitats, and on all continents except Antarctica. *Schomburgkia tibicinis* is a rock-dwelling orchid with flower stems that rise up to three metres in height in order to attract pollinators. The plant also supports armies of ants in its hollow bulbs, where the insects defend the plant against leaf-eating pests and herbivores in exchange for nectar. The Australian species *Rhizanthella gardneri* is fertilised underground, where it lives and flowers, never seeing the light of day.

Sex and the species

Eighty-six per cent of orchids are pollinated by insects; others are fertilised by bats or birds. *Cymbidium* sports a yellow beacon that appears to offer parcels of tasty pollen to pollinating bees. While they struggle to chew the decoy treat, the orchid deposits the real pollen on the insects' backs. The bumblebee orchid (*Ophrys bombyliflora*) has evolved to look and smell so like a female bee that males attempt to mate with it. It isn't only bees and botanists that have been seduced by the orchid. The male crestless gardener bowerbird of New Guinea decorates the entrance to its nest with orchid blossoms.

Alternative medicine

The ancient Chinese were among the first to use orchids in medicine. They considered them to be aristocrats among plants, their perfume thought to symbolise virtue and wisdom. The

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philosopher Confucius once said, "The association with a superior person is like entering a hall of orchids." The writings of Englishman John Parkinson in 1640 showed that orchids were among the drugs dispensed in London to cure conditions as diverse as fever, swellings and sores.

Orchids have also long been held to possess powerful aphrodisiac properties. One ancient Greek philosopher reported that the ground root of a species, named after the fertility god Priapus, allowed a man to perform 70 consecutive acts of sexual intercourse. Tempted by the perhaps improbable claims, optimistic lotharios almost ate the plant to extinction. In his book, *Theatrum Botanicum*, Parkinson wrote: "If a man ate a large orchid tuber, he would begat many children." But the 17th-century English botanist Nicholas Culpeper warned against over-indulgence. Writing in the *British Herbal*, he said: "The roots are to be used with discretion... they... provoke lust exceedingly which the dried and withered roots do restrain."

Charles Darwin

The evolutionary theorist and orchid enthusiast was ridiculed by his fellow naturalist Thomas Huxley when he correctly described how *Catasetum saccatum* launches its viscid pollen sac in the direction of insects. Many also doubted him when he predicted that there would exist a moth with a proboscis long enough to penetrate the 30cm nectar-producing spur of *Angraecum sesquipedale* (also known as Darwin's orchid), which is impenetrable to other insects. Twenty years later, scientists discovered the hawkmoth whose appendage was a perfect fit.

Big Business

Orchid dealers and collectors spend millions every year on exotic species, and the worldwide retail business is estimated to be worth in excess of £2.5bn. The largest recorded payment for a single plant was £1,500 in 1890 – equivalent to almost £100,000 today. In the Netherlands, buyers at auctions hand over £37m each year for cultivated moth orchids alone.

According to a survey by the UK's Flowers and Plants Association, orchids are the most popular houseplant in the UK. Most cut orchids, which can survive up to six weeks in water, are imported from Taiwan, the Netherlands, and Thailand. Taiwan is the world's biggest exporter of orchids and is home to a state-of-the-art, 200-acre orchid plantation. The country hosts an international orchid show, where many growers display species from the *Phalaenopsis* family.

The Hunters

When the British naturalist William Swainson sent a box home from Rio de Janeiro in 1818, Victorian London was astounded by the orchids he had used as packing material. The plant, called *Cattleya labiata* after the botanist who rescued it, William Cattley, was brought to

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flower and did much to trigger a mania for ever-more exotic specimens. Many nurseries sent orchid hunters on years-long missions to collect plants from remote jungles and mountain ranges.

In the mid-19th century, the Prague-born hunter Benedict Roezl toured the world in his quest to collect more than 800 species of orchid. Today, over 40 plants bear his name. At around the same time, the botanist John Day devoted his life's work to the plants, creating a series of more than 50 scrapbooks containing nearly 3,000 exquisitely detailed drawings and watercolours. Orchid hunting is still big business. In 2001, a team in the Peruvian Amazon jungle discovered a new species (*Phragmipedium kovachii*) whose stunning purple flowers caused a sensation in the orchid fraternity, making headlines in The New York Times. Soon, specimens were being smuggled out of Peru, and changing hands among unscrupulous dealers for tens of thousands of dollars.

Food for thought

Vanilla is a rare example of an orchid used for food. The seeds and pulp found in vanilla pods are used to make vanilla extract, most of which is produced in Madagascar. The island churned out three million tons of the stuff in 2005, much of it destined for Coca-Cola – the US drinks maker is the world's biggest consumer of vanilla extract.

In Turkey, an ice cream made from salep (flour produced from the tubers of dried wild orchids) is so popular that trade is threatening the plants' future; a thousand orchids are required to make every kilo. The dessert is called salepi dondurma (fox-testicle ice cream).

Epiphytic Cacti for Hanging Baskets

*This article, by **Dick Kohlschreiber**¹ was first published in the November 2006 edition of the Cactus and Succulent Journal. Most of us have some epies, maybe some hoyas and perhaps one other epiphytic species. In this article Dick seeks to enthuse us to grow some of the other fascinating genera in this family.*

There are few succulent plants more suited to hanging basket culture than the epiphytic cacti. Imagine a cactus hanging from a treetop in the jungles of Central America or from the crotch of a pine in the Mexican highlands, and the same effect can be created at home in a hanging

¹Reprinted with the consent of the author

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basket, because most epicacti (as they are collectively known) are easy to grow. You can choose from a wide variety of species, hybrids and cultivars to fit an array of cultural conditions, so most growers will be able to accommodate at least a few-and many growers specialise. The list of available types is staggering, with many thousands of gorgeous hybrids sold and shared the world over.

Not all epiphytic cacti will make for an attractive hanging basket, but many of them can be very showy, especially when they are in flower. One of my first choices for newcomers is *Disocactus flagelliformis*. (Note that this species, widely known as *Aporocactus flagelliformis*, now finds itself in another genus as part of the consensus reached in The New Cactus Lexicon). This plant is commonly called the Rat Tail Cactus, a name that aptly describes the short-spined stems. It is found in Oaxaca and Hidalgo, Mexico, and can be purchased from almost any plant nursery. The 8-13-ribbed stems are slender and grey-green and may get up to three feet long. Though attractive year round, it is truly spectacular covered in its shocking, purplish-pink flowers, which usually appear in April or May. This species and its many hybrids make good, easy hanging basket subjects.

My second choice is a plant that goes around as 'Deutsche Kaiserin' or 'Empress'. Widely thought to be an epi hybrid, it is probably a variant or selected clone of *Disocactus (Nopalxochia) phyllanthoides*. The light green stems, to a foot or more in length, are flattened and scalloped along the edges. The plant usually blooms in May, and when the buds develop they are as attractive as the pink flowers that follow. The flowers are 2-4 inches in diameter, and a mature plant will produce hundreds of them. Between the buds and blossoms you can have colour for almost a month. Many such hybrid epicacti make wonderful hanging basket plants, with choices ranging from those with small flowers to those sporting blooms 10-12 inches in diameter-and they come in nearly every colour but blue. Many of the small-flowered epi hybrids will bloom more than once a year and can be kept in a smaller pot than the large flowered varieties.

No collection of hanging cacti should be without some plants of the tribe Rhipsalideae. The majority of *Rhipsalis* and *Lepismium* species come from Brazil; some are found in other countries in Central and South America; and *Rhipsalis baccifera*, the only cactus known to occur in the Old World, is found in Madagascar and parts of Africa. Many rhipsalis will fill a hanging basket wonderfully, but one of my favourites is *Rhipsalis burchellii*. It is found throughout Mexico, where it is seen hanging in the branches of trees. It can take full sun but

Fruhlingsgold

Disocactus (aporocactus) flagelliformis



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grows more luxuriantly-and longer with some shade. The two forms shown here were once considered separate species, but these days they are thought to represent only natural variations of a single species. It has almost hair-like stems that form branches two feet long, and the plant is enchanting when bespeckled with its white to light pink flowers. Other rhipsalis that make a good hanging basket display include *R. cereuscula*, *R. pilocarpa*, *R. baccifera* and *R. clavata*. From small cuttings beautiful specimens can be grown in just a few years. All are pretty in or out of flower, and their fruits, in white, red green and black, are often as attractive as the flowers.

And don't forget what Americans term "the holiday cacti", *Schlumbergera* (Christmas Cactus) and *Hatiora* (Easter Cactus). These make great hanging baskets that tolerate indoor growing conditions and bloom over winter. Perhaps the easiest to grow is one of the oldest of the group *Schlumbergera x buckleyi*, the traditional Christmas Cactus, which reliably flowers in early January. These attractive plants are among the most resilient of houseplants and have been passed down through generations. Almost all of the *Schlumbergera* hybrids make good hanging baskets, and if you choose carefully from among the many varieties, you can have blooming plants in your collection from September through February, a time when few other plants are performing at all. *Hatiora* have growth similar to the *Schlumbergeras*, and they grow under similar conditions, but their bloom period is usually March through May, so your hanging basket plants can provide delightful flowers year round!

Epiphytic cactus culture

The majority of epiphytic cacti take shade or morning sun, but will suffer under full sun or with too much heat Their soil requirements are similar to other cacti, though there are some differences. Epies prefer a well-drained growing media that is slightly acidic. Two parts of any good potting soil or azalea mix to one part perlite is fine, and many growers add some orchid bark, perhaps out of tradition, for better drainage. Another popular mix involves equal parts of coir and perlite, the latter preferable to sand or pumice because it does not add significantly to the weight of the pot.

Plants are usually watered weekly during the summer and as needed during the winter to keep them slightly moist. They do not like to be wet all the time, but they should not be allowed to dry out completely, either. Evenly and lightly moist conditions produce the most handsome plants. For best performance and growth, fertilisers should be applied monthly during the summer. You can use a natural liquid fertiliser, like fish emulsion, or a chemical fertiliser like "Miracle Gro" at half-strength, though an easier way to fertilise plants in hangers is with a slow release pellet like Osmocote 14-14-14, which can be applied once in June and again in September. Apply a "Hi-Bloom" fertiliser (for example, 2-10-10) in February or March to stimulate good spring flowering.

Most growers propagate epies from stem cuttings. (The stems can tend to *look* like leaves,

but don't call them leaf cuttings. Remember, these really are cacti, and cacti are stem succulents). Cuttings should be 8-10 inches long, and once hardened off for a few days in a cool, shady spot, they can be planted upright, the base buried 2-3 inches in a normal epi potting mix and kept lightly damp and frequently misted until new growth forms within 6-8 weeks. (Newcomers have been known to attempt rooting cuttings in water like with other houseplants, but that is not recommended.) New growth signals that roots have formed below the soil, and a regular watering regime can begin. Many will flower on new growth the following year, and as the plants fill out, increased bloom can be expected until the plants are full sized in about three years.

Great fun can be had in attempting new crosses and growing the resulting progeny from seed. The outcomes can vary widely, especially between hybrids of complex heritage, making every seed batch wonderfully surprising. The time from seed to flower may be long, but the challenges are irresistible to some growers, and we have them to thank for the many wonderful new varieties that continue to be produced. And if your plants prove desirable, you can name and distribute them as cultivars, too!

Most epies must be protected from frost. Some can take temperatures into the 40s, but much colder and you invariably get ugly dead spots on the leaves, leaf-tip dieback, bud abortion and the like. I prefer to plant them in hanging, 6-8 inch diameter plastic pots. A wire basket lined with green moss makes for an attractive container for hanging cacti, but you do have to water those more frequently. There are ceramic hangers available, but they do tend to be heavy, and so must be hung securely. But combining the wide array of pot styles, growing conditions and epicactus varieties need not be approached carefully. This way to a never ending path of aesthetic delight -enjoy!

Delightful Dendrobiums.

At our August meeting Phyllis Purdie spoke on Dendrobiums. Robyn Gibson reports..

These are the second largest group of approximately 1400 species. They grow in many places, from India, around the Pacific coastal region, Australia and one in New Zealand. Their growing range covers both warm and cool climates. Most grow on trees as epiphytes but some grow on rocks and are known as lithophytes.

They are also divided into soft cane and hard cane types but this is fairly hard to distinguish. Some are evergreen, and some deciduous.

Dendrobiums are often imported from Singapore as floral spikes to be incorporated in florists' bouquets, particularly white varieties used in wedding bouquets. Most New Zealand growers

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have varieties from Australia in their collections. Many are grown on slabs of wood or in pots in orchid bark.

To grow dendrobiums successfully it is important to keep them fairly dry in winter. If the cane shrivels, mist only. In summer, water. When buds appear put plants into more sun to harden the buds. The appearance of kiekies on the ends of the canes is an indication of overwatering. They may be removed and planted when there are plenty of roots showing. Spring to early summer is the time for the application of fertilisers, being a weak solution of phosphate or nitrate.

Hybrids do not come true to colour from seed, however kiekies will come true to the parent colour. Canes can be used for propagation by cutting either side of a joint and laying the piece horizontally on top of the growing medium.

Lithophytes use their roots to cling to rocks, usually near streams or waterfalls to take advantage of the higher humidity.

The flowering period is usually early spring to early autumn. Only water when dry and on warmer days using water that is not too cold. Do not let the plant stand in water. They do not like draughts. Coloured flowers will intensify in sunlight but white flowers need shadier conditions.

Repotting: soak orchid bark in hot water to hydrate then drain and let cool. Remove all dead leaves and dead roots from the plant. Put some mix into the bottom of the pot. Spread out the roots, placing the last formed growing cane near the centre of the pot. Do not cover the base of the canes. Place plant label away from the direction of growth. When tidying the plant, remove old canes and cut off old flower stalks.

Phyllis brought in many orchid books to show us photos of these beautiful flowers, including several which were written exclusively about dendrobiums. I suspect many club members were encouraged to hunt for plants so they too might own these beautiful orchids.

the pictures opposite...

Rhipsalis mesembryanthemoides - photo by Jane Griffith

Dendrobium #9903 - photo by Jane Griffith

Tillandsias.

Andrew Flower spoke at our July meeting and, as always, brought a wonderful array of plants to show and talk about.

Andrew noted that in the wild Tillandsias can grow in the most amazing places, they grow on power-lines and on cacti and branches. In cultivation they can be grown on sticks or pieces of driftwood or cork or polystyrene. In fact they can be attached, using glue, to any surface you fancy.

They are very easy care. They are frost tender - but will take cold temperatures. They need water periodically - but only when the leaves start to shrivel. In winter they may go for a month or two without needing watering but in summer they will need it more frequently. Andrew reminded us that it is important only to water in the morning and never to water at night. Tillandsias do not have functioning roots so take in both water and carbon-dioxide through their stomata. They take in carbon-dioxide at night. If the plant is wet - it will prevent this.

Andrew propagates plants from seed and described his technique for doing this. He also brought along samples of plants at various stages in their development.

As always many thanks Andrew for a most interesting talk.

Further reading

Our Society receives journals from a number of other societies with similar interests. These journals are all available from our library. In the last few months a number of interesting items have been published. Here are some snippets that you might find interesting. (Of course you really should go and read the articles for yourself!)

In the June issue of "Epi News" published by the San Diego Epiphyllum Society is a series of colour photographs of displays and floral arrangements taken at their annual Mother's Day sale and show.

The September issue of "Epi News" published by the San Diego Epiphyllum Society is almost entirely filled with articles, fond reminiscences and photos of George French. George had been an active member of the society from its inception until his recent death and had made an enormous contribution to its success in all manner of ways..

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In the June 2009 issue of "SFES Journal" - published by the San Francisco Epiphyllum Society there is another article in their series on People involved in the growing and supply of epies. This month's subject is a Northern California epi grower Don Cravalho, owner of Epiphyllum World.

In the July issue of the Epi-Gram (published by the South Bay Epiphyllum Society) Dick Kohlschreiber writes about the problem of misnamed epies - something that we have all encountered. Dick suggests that the first time a new epi blooms for you - you check the flower against the description in the ESA directory. In some few cases you will find that the same name has been given to more than one hybrid.



In the latest (April-June) issue of *Fraterna* - volume 22, number 2 (published by the International Hoya Association) there is a beautiful article by Ann Wayman on various hoyas from the Philippines with comments on how they should be looked after. The accompanying photographs are magnificent.

Finally - in the September issue of the NZ Gardener is an excellent article entitled "Thought for Food" in which Neil Ross discusses what nutrients various plants need and when it should be applied. He then lists his "top 10" fertilisers and talks about the benefits and applicability of each. Go and read it in your local library.

Happy reading.!

Now is the time

Well after one of the coldest winters we have had in a while - there are now signs of spring.. However it is probably unwise to think that there will be no more cold nights so it is a good thing to play it very safe - if you water do so in the first part of the morning before the sun gets too hot and early enough that the plants will absorb the water before nightfall! As always pay great attention to what the weather is doing at your place. Here are some suggestions for Wellington growers - if you live in the north or the south you may need to adjust things a little.

Epicacti - You really should have done your pruning and repotting by now - but if you have not - do not despair, it is not too late; just try not to cut off too many buds. You should start regular watering now - but do it early in the day. Now would also be a good time to fertilise your plants lightly.

Hoyas - As the days warm up water a little - particularly if your plants have protection from the night time temperatures. Soon you may start trying to unravel last years growth and take some cutting in the process. If you do not have a heat pad to start your cuttings on - wait a little longer before taking any. Start checking for mealy bugs (and other pests) and deal with any you find.

Schlumbergeras - Most flowers should be over now - so now is a good time to repot. Put slow release fertiliser into the mix. Water sparingly when the plants seem dry.

Rhipsalis - These will be coming into flower soon (if they are not flowering already). Water regularly but very sparingly - you may also give a little fertiliser.

Aporophyllums - Buds should just be appearing. Start watering a little and provide a little fertiliser. Increase the amount of water you give as days and nights get warmer..

Ceropegias - Many of these plants will be looking as if they are dead. Resist the urge to throw them out. There is not a lot for you to do with them - but you should probably begin watering your plants soon (start now if they are kept in a warm location). When it gets warmer you can start to untangle last years growth and take cuttings. Continue to check for pests (they never rest) and deal with any you find immediately.

Orchids- Cymbidiums which have been outside will be producing flower spikes now. Watch out for snails - and bring the plants inside when the flowers are nearly ready to open. Most other orchids can be watered a little more, and you can increase the amount as the weather gets warmer. Watch out for surprise spring frosts. Keep *Phalaenopsis* and *Masdevallias* watered all the time.

Bromeliads - There is still nothing to do with plants that are growing outside (except to continue to watch out for frosts). If you suspect a frost may occur - put frost cloth over the plants. If you have plants indoors once temperatures are getting over 20 degrees you can start to water lightly - however be sure there is sufficient air movement to enable the plants to dry out before nightfall. A number of *Tillandsias* will be initiating flower buds so give them full-strength phostrogen a couple of times a month.

Species Epiphyllums - a correction.

I recently got a letter from Dick Kohlschreiber in which he commented:

"I do have to object to one of your statements. You write, 'Species epiphyllums are, in part, the parent plants of the epicacti plants we grow and enjoy today.' To me you are inferring that Epiphyllums are one of the main parents. I think that only about 10% of hybrids have any Epiphyllum in their heritage and that is almost only from *Epiphyllum crenatum*, although we are seeing some *Epiphyllum anguliger* crosses. The only reason that I think the founders of the Epiphyllum Society of America decided to call them epiphyllums was because the stems of the hybrids often resembled the stems of *E.crenatum*. They didn't take into consideration the fact that the Nopalxochia also had flat stems. I always cringe when ..<some people>.. start using Scott Haselton as a reference. Haselton was not a botanist and many of the things he wrote are questionable."

Dick is the compiler of the "Directory of Species and Hybrids" published by the ESA, so I will defer to his view on plant ancestry .. Thanks for the comment Dick... Ed

Odd cuttings and seeds

George French

George French, 94, came to the end of a full and beautiful life on August 11. He is survived by daughters Judy Kammerer and Kathy Elliott; granddaughter Jennifer Rosile; grandsons Bill, Shawn and Steven Kammerer; great-grandson Frank Almond; and sister Irene French.

George grew up on a farm in North Dakota with eleven brothers and sisters. He moved to San Diego in 1941 and began a lifelong career as a cabinet maker. He was a man of many talents: naturalist, taxidermist, bowler, and artist. In 1949, he married Madeline Smith and they enjoyed 58 years together. They made a happy home in Point Loma for their two daughters and all who visited. George was a founding member of the San Diego Epiphyllum Society and internationally known hybridiser of beautiful epiphyllum flowers such as "French Gold" and "Jennifer Ann".

Obituary written by Jerry Moreau

Some plants grow in the most amazing places ..

Recently an article was published on the BBC website in the "Earth News" section entitled "How Cacti became rock-busters". It is a species of cactus from the Baja region of California that grows on rock. Just sheer rock! It has recently been discovered that the cacti have developed a symbiotic relationship with a type of bacteria that has the capability to break down the rock and release the minerals for the plant to use. The bacteria are not only present in the roots of the plant - but also in the fruit and seeds - and are so passed on to the next generation of plants. You can read the full article at this address:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/default.stm

Lime sulphur for pest control

Lime sulphur is believed to be the earliest synthetic pest and disease control product dating back to the 1840's when it was used to control powdery mildew in grapes. The fungicidal and insecticide activity of lime sulphur is now well documented and proven. It is organically acceptable and can be used to control fungus problems like black spot - and various mite and scale pests. For further informatio see: www.skeltons.co.nz

Spring garden tips ..

Not strictly epi related - but here are three:

don't waste banana skins - place them around roses as they contain awesome nutritional value

and still on roses - plant parsley in rose beds to enhance the scent of the roses and help combat black spot

those who came visiting gardens last November may remember one greenhouse we saw containing (amongst other things, tomatoes - and never a greenfly or whitefly in sight. The answer in a couple of pots on the ground were some healthy feverfew plants . Plant some now.

Have you got a tip you want to share? - tell the Editor!

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 (March 1993) onwards. Ask the editor for details.

Future Publication Dates.

EPIFLORA is published quarterly by the Wellington Hoya and Epiphytic Plant 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 WHEPS, Epiflora and the author.

Please address correspondence to:

*249 Te Moana Road,
WAIKANAE.*

Or: griffith@globe.co.nz

Closing dates for contributions:

Summer 2009 Edition - 14th November 2009

Autumn 2010 Edition - 13th February 2010

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