

Literature Review



News and views on recent publications from the world of succulents

Haseltonia II

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Pahrump, 15 Dec 2005.

152 pages, softbound. Edited by Dr. Michael Hawkes and D. Russell Wagner. Price in USA \$40; elsewhere \$45 (£26).

Haseltonia, like *Bradleya*, is a refereed periodical: that is, each proffered paper is subjected to peer review and vetted by one or more experts before acceptance. This gives it a certain status in the academic world, and ensures wide circulation and a permanent place in science libraries.

In the new issue, editor Michael Hawkes contributes a welcome biographical study of E. Yale Dawson (1918-1966), famed in the dual worlds of cacti and algae, whose action-packed life was cruelly curtailed at the age of 48 when he drowned while diving for algae in the Red Sea.

For mesemb lovers there are three papers. Dold, Hammer and Barker contribute the first monograph of the genus *Bergeranthus*, with ten species, two of which are new, but no infra-specific taxa. All are illustrated and there is a key for identification. Two weighty papers on *Conophytum* by Opel cover leaf anatomy and its relevance to the classification of 83 taxa.

James Mauseth has been scrutinising and expounding cactus anatomy for over thirty years, and manages to make it all sound exciting and readable. His latest utterance concerns the subfamily *Opuntioideae* and its probable phylogeny as revealed by anatomical features. *Pereskioopsis* emerges as basal to the group on this evidence.

The illustrious senior triumvirate of Charles Uhl, Reid Moran and Myron Kinnach cover the cytotaxonomy of *Echeveria* series *Spicatae*. Included is

one new species that grows mainly on rooftops in Veracruz and is named *E. tencho* after the local name for epiphytic plants. Another new *Echeveria* is *E. andicola* Pino, from central Peru. Pino, Klopfenstein and Cieza describe four new peperomias from northern Peru: one species and three varieties. All are succulent: three with windowed leaves, and one a tuberous geophyte.

Other first descriptions are the *Hylocereus undatus* ssp. *luteocarpus* Calix de Dios ('yellow-fruited'), from the Yucatan Peninsula, and *Euphorbia erythroculata* Mangelsdorff ('red-hooded'), a semi-succulent, prickly shrub from Madagascar.

Flowers of *Echinopsis* (alias *Helianthocereus*, *Trichocereus*) *atacamaensis* are visited by bees, wasps and giant hummingbirds by day and hawkmoths by night, which differ in their relative frequency and timing, in two contrasting habitats, one humid and one dry. The white flower is a typical long-tubed hawkmoth bloom. Schlumpberger and Badano have made a survey and conclude that an unspecialised pollination syndrome works best in this case: safety in numbers.

Gordon Rowley

Pilbeam, J. & Bowdery, D. *Ferocactus*

2005. British Cactus & Succulent Society. 116 pages, 127 colour photos, 42 maps, hardbound. ISBN 0-9020-9976-0. £32 (£35 or US\$65 export)

The authors should be commended for putting together an extraordinary book. This is largely an account for the amateur reader of Nigel Taylor's more technical work and of George Lindsay's much earlier dissertation.

Pilbeam and Bowdery's new book is very accessible and in a very nice format. In many ways, it will become people's first reference, even possibly for professional botanists, before delving into more technical literature on *Ferocactus* taxonomy and distributions.

The book consists of a series of chapters, some of which are merely lists, such as lists of collection numbers and herbaria where *Ferocactus* spp. have been deposited. However, three-quarters of the book consists of an extraordinarily nicely done "species commentary" section in which the authors cover each recognized species, in alphabetical order. Recognized subspecies are also covered. This book contains an incredible set of good quality photos for each taxon, most from habitat, taken by several photographers. The photos not only show typical forms, but the authors also treat us to variation, such as a yellow-flowered *F. wislizeni* and a yellow-spined *F. pilosus*. The photos alone justify purchase of this volume.

Occasionally the authors pepper the text with points of interest, such as that *F. gracilis* subsp. *coloratus* and *F. peninsulae* have much brighter red spines after being wetted. However, *F. cylindraceus* subsp. *tortulispinus* can show this effect even more effectively, and it is also evident to some extent in *F. emoryi* and *F. hamatacanthus*. The authors also provide reasonable hints on cultivation of the genus in the UK.

Habitat photos were all of mature specimens. It would have been nice also to see photos of juveniles. *F. wislizeni* often starts its life as a very low growing plant, somewhat less than 10cm tall and 40cm in diameter, and hidden in the dried grass and forbs (herbaceous flowering plants) like *F. latispinus*. Juveniles of *F. emoryi* subsp. *emoryi* often have a beautiful purplish epidermis that

hybridisation to explain the extreme variation at places like Detras is also not considered here.

Schulz, L. & Kapitany, A. *Echeveria cultivars*
Schulz Publishing, Teesdale, Australia, 2005. ISBN 0-9585167-7-4. £25 from Keith's Books.

208 pages, 543 colour photos, hard-bound in colour photo d/w.

Pictorial identification guide to over 129 different cultivars of *Echeveria*. The classic rosette form of echeverias and the seemingly infinite range of colours puts them in the forefront as growers' favourites. The natural species are varied and interesting enough, but the cultivars open up a whole new dimension of leaf shapes and colours that are hard to resist.

This unique book takes the most comprehensive look yet at these garden selections, propagated from leaves and cuttings. Each cultivar is illustrated by an average three photos, and usefully shows the diversity resulting from differing conditions of cultivation. On balance the colour profiles of the photos are fairly accurate, but there are also a few with unnatural hues.

There is plenty of confusion here regarding the rules for naming cultivars. The authors refer to "validity", when actually meaning 'establishment'. They seem to believe that there are varying degrees of what they call "validity", whereas in reality the first name to be published with a description establishes a new cultivar, as long as the name is formed correctly.

The advice on pests is sketchy. The biggest problem with echeverias is the magnetic attraction that they have for mealy bugs, and suitable pesticides also damage the waxy surface of the leaves. This presents something of a dilemma. Natural predation on mealy bugs by domestic spiders is sometimes effective, especially in winter, but resorting to physical removal is more often necessary, a chore to combine with the regular husbandry of removing dead leaves.

ISBN 1-91766-41-3 (standard edn), 2000 copies published, of which 66 are special edns). Published Jan 2006. xii, 156 pages, 45 graphic colour plates, mainly full-page, 22 graphics, 27 coloured distribution maps; 32.9 x 22.8cm, hardbound in publisher's decorated cloth, in colour illus. d/w, and enclosed in cloth-covered slip-case.

Guide to the 27 recognised species and one variety, portrayed in glorious technical colour. This large, coffee-table-style book is produced to a very high standard, and a work of art in its own right.

Ohr, M. & A. Eine Reise zu mexikanischen Standorten von *Echinocereus pectinatus*/A tour to Mexican habitats of *Echinocereus pectinatus*
Jan 2006. German & English. 84 pages, 220 colour photos, softbound. Plus picture CD-ROM. £26

A travelogue and pictorial record of the variation in *Echinocereus pectinatus* throughout its geographical range. Omits the northern-most forms in Texas, outside the study area, and does not attempt any sort of subspecies classification. The implication is that the authors simplify things by regarding *Echinocereus pectinatus* as a single, very variable taxon, rather than as a group of taxa including *E. dasyacanthus* and *E. roetteri*, which have been segregated by other authors. The possibility of



the variation in *Echinocereus pectinatus* throughout its geographical range. Omits the northern-most forms in Texas, outside the study area, and does not attempt any sort of subspecies classification.

Other recent titles of note:
Craig, C. *Grass aloes in the South African veld. Paintings by Gillian Condy. Drawings by Murray Raffe*
Umदास Press, Hatfield, [Jan] 2006. ZAR795 (=£70).

I found only a few problems with this book, the most disturbing being distribution maps of too low a resolution and in colours that make reading difficult for colour blind people. On the initial map on p.14, showing where the Mexican states of Campeche and Yucatán are located, there is an unfortunate typographical error. In the list of names of the state of Campeche (37 on the map) has been omitted, leading to a misnumbering of Yucatán.

Despite its minor problems, this is a marvellous book that any cactus enthusiast should have on their shelf.

Root Gorelick