

SUMMARY

Rob Bregman

Columnist Ben Wijffelaars was impressed by a TV documentary film about the isle of Socotra (south of Yemen) and its amazing endemic flora, for instance its dragon blood trees (*Dracaena cinnabari*). A nature protection project called 'Friends of Soqotra' has been set up. The broadcast can still be reviewed on Dutch television.

Mammillaria candida is the subject of Theo Heijnsdijk's series of articles about the 'Verkade' cactus handbook from 1931. This cactus was first described in 1838 by the German/Belgian pharmacist Michael Scheidweiler, after material that was collected in Mexico by the Italian/Belgian botanist Henri Galeotti. Because of the black verrucose seeds, a feature not shown by all other mammillarias, Franz Buxbaum introduced the new genus *Mammilloidia* in 1951, indicating that *M. candida* should be placed at a position between *Mammillaria* and *Neolloydia*. Later, it turned out that there are also *M. candida* plants with smooth seeds. *M. candida* occurs in at least 6 Mexican states and so exhibits a great variability, not only in seed morphology but also in spination and the color of anthers and pistil. Consequently, many local forms have been described as species, such as *M. sphaerotricha*, *M. ortizrubiona* and *M. estanzuelensis*, all of them now considered synonyms. In culture, the plants grow slowly; the roots are very sensitive to a wet soil. Fortunately, the plants are not threatened in nature ('least concern' in the IUCN plant list). Bertus Spee continues his series 'in the spotlight' with notes on *Pterocactus fischeri* and *Turbinicarpus valdezianus*.

Echinocereus specialist Henk Ruinaard visited Fort Lancaster, in mid-west Texas. While exploring a hill closeby, he found *Echinocereus dasyacanthus* ssp. *crockettianus*, with its typical dense and white spination, as well as *E. enneacanthus* ssp. *brevispinus* and *E. coccineus* ssp. *transpecosensis*.

Paul Klaassen presents part 2 of his contribution about the importance of sea fog for vegetations in coastal arid areas. In some years this phenomenon is amplified by an 'el niño', a warm sea current from the western Pacific that replaces the normal cold Humboldt current along the coast. In Chile, even nets have been set up to collect condensed mist droplets.

Henk Ruinaard reports the results of his germination experiments with *Echinocereus* seeds in different substrates. As substrate, he used normal compost, sand, loess, 'seramis', grit, tissue paper and the inert volcanic materials 'bims' and 'flugsand'. In most substrates germination was good, but growth was slower on inert substrates, possibly due to lack of nutrients. Covering the substrate with inert matter was beneficial, but only when the particle size was not too small, thus improving contact with the seeds. Loss of young plants due to destruction by sciara fly larvae may be substantial in compost containing mixtures but that was much less in inert substrates.

Tonnie de Rijke reacts to a previous article by Henk Ruinaard about constructing a system to water a large cactus collection. He gives additional information about the equipment he used for watering and air circulation.

Peter Knippels describes the growth of his plants (mainly South African bulbs and euphorbias) during late summer last year. He succeeded in germinating seeds of 2 Baobab species (genus *Adansonia*) and *Welwitschia mirabilis*.

Ludwig Bercht brings part 4 of his overview of the *Weingartia* populations (with his LB field numbers) he found during his 2008 voyage in Bolivia. This time, *W. kargliana*, *W. cintiensis*, *W. neumanniana* and *W. pygmaea* are dealt with.

A new book on the genus *Aztekium* is reviewed by Henk Viscaal. This is a special release by the Czech journal 'Kaktusy' (in English).

On the back page, Tom Twijnstra admits that he likes to watch the plants on other people's window-sill. Sometimes he comes across special plants, such as a gymnocalycium as big as a child's head.

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