

SUMMARY

Rob Bregman

Columnist Ben Wijffelaars leads it off with some notes on sexual differences in succulents. He recently purchased a female specimen of *Euphorbia obesa*. Given the present gender discussions, a photo of the rainbow cactus, *Echinocereus dasyacanthus*, is an appropriate illustration.

Theo Heijnsdijk continues his series of articles dealing with the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s. This time he focuses on *Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus*, a spineless flat-globular cactus from Mexico. This species was discovered in 1844 by baron Karwinski, who sent a few plants to the Russian prince Vassili Kotschoubey. Soon thereafter, it was described as *Anhalonium kotschoubeyanum* by the French botanist Charles Lemaire. The generic name *Roseocactus*, introduced by Alwin Berger in 1925 in order to distinguish the *Ariocarpus* species with grooved tubercles as a separate group, is now considered a synonym. The natural habitat of *A. kotschoubeyanus* covers a large area in 6 Mexican states. Consequently, quite a number of local ecotypes are known, which have been described as varieties and subspecies. The northern plants are smaller than the southern ones; The flower color is mostly deep purple, but pink and even white flowering specimens can also be found. The plants mostly grow in loamy and sandy soil. During the dry season, the plant body shrinks and becomes covered with sand, which renders the plants (without flowers) very difficult to find. Despite its large distribution area with an estimated number of appr. 100.000 adult individuals, *A. kotschoubeyanus* is placed on the IUCN Red List in the 'near threatened' category. Although the plants grow slowly, they are not difficult to cultivate.

In his series 'In the spotlight', Bertus Spee pays attention to *Crassula corallina*, *Melocactus peruvianus*, *Sarcocaulon herrei* and *Islaya islayensis*.

Stan Oome explains why he became a cactophile. Important for him was the tingling of his senses: visual aspects such as color of the flowers and symmetry of the plant body, the sweet smell of night-blooming species and *Pereskia* fruits, the quietness inside the greenhouse, the sound of the spines when you touch them, etc.

Henk Ruinaard reports about his visit to the habitat of *Echinocactus polycephalus* south of Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. After a rain shower the spines turn beautifully red. The small flowers are yellow; the fruits are densely covered with wool (popular name: cotton top cactus). In 2018, as a result of molecular work by American scientists, *E. polycephalus* was transferred to the genus *Homalocephala*.

Peter Knippels presents his final report about the way he cultivates his plants (South African bulbs, euphorbias, aloes, agaves and some cacti). In his house he has 3 places where the plants can be set: the greenhouse, a window-sill and a cool loft room that he uses to hibernate some sensitive species.

André van Zuijlen traveled to the Richtersveld in south Namibia, SW Africa, primarily to look for *Aloe pillansii* and *Pachypodium namaquanum*. The vegetation in this region clearly suffered dramatically from a lack of rain for a long time. *P. namaquanum* dominates the landscape just like the Saguaro cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*) does in the Arizona desert. *Aloe pillansii* is very rare in Namibia; north of the Orange River still only 7 locations exist. André also found *Aloe dichotoma*, another tree-shaped species. Other than *A. pillansii*, this species has smaller and olive-green leaves; its inflorescences are borne from the upper leaf

rosettes. Based on recent molecular studies, both *Aloe* species are now placed in the new genus *Aloidendron*.

Wolter ten Hove brings his usual summary of the most important articles in other journals on succulent plants.

Tom Twijnstra closes this Succulenta edition with a short story about his *Agave attenuata*. This plant has grown so big that in the near future it will no longer fit in his greenhouse. Fortunately, the plant will survive in Tom's collection by means of its many offsets.

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