

## SUMMARY

Rob Bregman

Ben Wijffelaars opens this Succulenta issue with the current nitrogen crisis in this country (in fact: agricultural and industrial deposition of ammonia), which hinders several public services. For example, his flight to La Palma was cancelled.

In his series on the 'Verkade' handbooks from the 1930s, Theo Heijnsdijk deals with *Astrophytum ornatum*. This well-known Mexican cactus was first described in 1828 by Augustin De Candolle as *Echinocactus ornatus*. Ten years later, the plant was redescribed three times: *Echinocactus holopterus* by F. Miquel, *Echinocactus Mirbelii* by C. Lemaire and *Echinocactus tortus* by M. Scheidweiler. The genus *Astrophytum* was raised in 1839 by Lemaire. The combination *Astrophytum ornatum* was first published by A. Weber in 1896. The plants may reach 1.80 meter in height and up to 25 cm across. The dehiscent fruits mostly open starlike, exposing the large seeds to wind and rain. The natural habitats can be found in the western basin of the Moctezuma river. Many hybrids are known (already 59 different ones in 1907!), for the greater part created in Japan. Cultivation is easy but growth is relatively slow.

In the 123rd part of his series 'In the spotlight', Bertus Spee pays attention to 4 interesting succulents, viz. *Ferocactus diguetii*, *Thelocactus conothelos* subsp. *aurantiacus*, *Hoodia alstonii* and *Plumeria rubra*.

Ruud Tropper reacts to a previous article by Ben Wijffelaars, who called frost-proof cacti "dull". For many years, Ruud has been cultivating cacti from many genera (for example *Mammillaria*, *Escobaria*, *Echinomastus*, *Astrophytum*, *Lobivia*, even *Schlumbergera*) in an unheated greenhouse without problems. Many of such plants can survive temperatures down to minus 6 °C.

Petra Romein reports about the caudex plants in the Rotterdam zoo 'Blijdorp'. Impressive specimens of *Agave*, *Dioscorea*, *Calibanus*, *Bowiea*, *Myrmecodia* and *Hydnophytum* can be admired.

In our recently introduced column 'Memories', Cok Grootsholten remembers a nameless seed sample that he received from Steven Brack in 1980. This turned out to be *Echinocereus parkeri* subsp. *gonzalezii*. He exchanged one of these plants for 3 leaves of an unknown *Sedum* species, which was later described as the new species *Sedum hernandezii*.

Instead of *Echinocereus*, Henk Ruinaard focuses this time on cylindropuntias in the southwestern USA, commonly known as 'chollas'. Most cactus lovers do not like them very much because of their nasty spines. Ten species occur in Arizona. *C. acanthocarpa*, *C. bigelovii*, *C. fulgida*, *C. imbricata*, *C. kleiniae*, *C. leptocaulis*, *C. spinosior* and *C. versicolor* are depicted and briefly discussed.

Louis Van de Meutter deals with *Ceropegia ampliata*, a climbing succulent from the Apocynaceae family, native to the Oost-Kaap province of South Africa. Leaves are rudimentary and deciduous; flowers are white. On the inside, the floral tube is provided with downwardly directed hairs which prevent pollinating flies from escaping too soon. Cultivation is most successful in hanging baskets, in a pure mineral substrate since the roots are quite sensitive.

Luc Vandecaveye interviewed Nicolas Samyn who outlines what the ideal compost is for our plants. The main component is black peat. Calcium carbonate is added to reduce the acidic nature of peat. To improve permeability, several mineral additives can be used. Coconut fibres should be avoided because of its high salinity. For plants with root tubers it is advised to add clay or loam.

Wolter ten Hoeve gives an abstract of the most important articles in recent issues of 'Avonia', 'Piante grasse' and 'Kakteen und andere Sukkulenten'.

Tom Twijnstra demonstrates that plants from a single seed sample may differ considerably, such as his *Mammillaria candida* var. *estanzuelensis*.

rob.bregman@icloud.com