



# Kaktos omments

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE HOUSTON CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY  
TO PROMOTE THE STUDY OF CACTI AND OTHER SUCCULENTS

Volume 49 No. 1

January-February 2012



**Candelabro espinoso (*Pachycereus weberii*) growing in Oaxaca, México**

**FROM THE EDITORS**

Happy New Year! We are happy to return as your editors for another year. Congratulations to our new president, Bruce Moffett, and all the new and/or returning officers. We thank our contributors for this issue of the KK. We hope that you enjoy it and hope to continue to receive your articles.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**MEMBERSHIP** **KATHY FEWOX**

The November 2011 meeting of HCSS was attended by twenty-five members.

Our December 4th holiday party at Spaghetti Western Italian Cafe was great! We had the back room to ourselves, and the atmosphere was most pleasant. The food was excellent, the drinks generous, and the company wonderful. Who could ask for more?



Please remember to send news of HCSS members and their families to [kathyfewox@aim.com](mailto:kathyfewox@aim.com), so I'll have more to say in the next KK.

\*\*\*\*\*



If you have not paid your 2012 dues, please pay at the next meeting (Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>) or mail your check (made to HCSS) to Richard Stamper, 1904 Whitney, Houston, TX 77006.

Annual dues are \$20.00 for individuals, and \$25.00 for families. Still the best bargain in town.



This may seem a little strange, but I feel like I should start this message by introducing myself. Many of you have probably noticed that, until the last few months, about the only time you have seen me is catering food at some HCSS events or going on a field trip.

Some of you probably wonder why, since I didn't come to the meetings until recently, I would be able to be president. Truth be told, for the last 5 or 6 years I have had to work "every Wednesday night". Before that I was very active in HCSS as president for 2 years, treasurer for 3 years, built the original website, and worked the plant exchange with Marty and Milton for more years than I can remember. Last Spring my work situation changed, so I no longer work on Wednesday nights and can finally ("big smile") get to be an active part of my favorite organization again.

As far as having an agenda for the year: it will be fairly simple. First, get to know many of you better. Second, find out what is going well for the club and how to have more of it. Third, through input from members, find ways to make HCSS more fun and interesting for everyone.

As always another goal is to get more people to increase their participation in club activities. Thinking back to the first time I wrote a President's message, it was about getting involved, written in a kind of literary fashion. I told how, when first asked to take an office, I was hesitant but soon found that the more I got involved, the more fun and interesting HCSS was. For me that is still true and I wish it would be for everyone.

An organization is not a group of people. A group of people create an organization by being involved in it.

Well, here we go on to another year. Let's have fun and make it one to remember.

*-photograph by Kathy Fewox*

\*\*\*\*\*

**TEXAS HOME & GARDEN SHOW**



Once again, our club will have an exhibitor's booth at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Home & Garden Show. The event will be held at Houston Reliant Center on February 10-12, 2012. If you would like to volunteer, our ways & means chairperson, Leroy Kellogg will be taking names at the January meeting. You can also call Leroy at (281) 376-9812.

## 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Elected Officers

President	Bruce Moffett
First Vice President	Wally Ward
Second Vice President	Cindy Gray
Recording Secretary	Paulette Patterson
Treasurer	Richard Stamper

### Standing Committee Chairpersons

Education	Richard Holland
Affiliate Director	Josie Watts
Analysis	open
Conservation	open
Special Events	Josie Watts
Librarian	Wray Page
Membership	Kathy Fewox
Orientation	Tony Beekenkamp
Parliamentarian	open
Publicity	open
Webmaster	Karla Halpaap-Wood
E-mail Notifications	Karla Halpaap-Wood
Social Director	Cherie Lee
Ways and Means	Leroy Kellogg
Plant Exchange	Milton Pierson
Show & Sale	Jeff Boggan

### Kaktos Komments

Editor	Liliana Cracraft
Assistant Editor	Mike Cracraft
Publisher	Richard Stamper

If you are interested in one of the open positions, please talk to Bruce Moffett at one of the meetings. You can also give him a call at 713-645-9320, or send him an email to: [bmoffett@mindspring.com](mailto:bmoffett@mindspring.com)



## ARUBA, JAMAICA, OOH I WANT TO TAKE YOU ON A CACTUS SAFARI"

by Karl Schulz

For Christmas 2011, my fiancé Jane Rosenberg and I visited the Caribbean island of Aruba. It's a terrific place to visit and I recommend it to anyone. Aruba was long a Dutch colony and today it retains a loose association with the Netherlands. The island lies just off the coast of Venezuela, outside the hurricane belt, and (via Atlanta) it's about a 5½ hour flight from Houston. The climate is warm and windy with occasional afternoon showers.

While much of the Caribbean is lush jungle, Aruba and its sister Dutch islands of Bonaire and Curaçao are characterized by desert scrub. Almost as soon as we got out of the airport, I noticed that the island's rolling terrain is absolutely covered in cacti and succulents— often thick clumps of tall “candle cactus” (some local sources identified it as *Stenocereus griseus*) with a type of prickly pear (some local sources identified it as *Opuntia ventiana*) tangled in the undergrowth with something that looks like a type of mesquite.

As we walked and drove around the island, I continued to comment on the beautiful and formidable cacti and succulents we found. Finally, Jane made the outstanding suggestion that I write up an article with pictures for KK to share what we had seen, so here goes!



This beautiful landscape is adjacent to the Alto Vista Chapel that was built by Spanish missionaries in 1750. As you can see, the terrain is rocky and rolling with thick undergrowth punctuated by stands of candle cactus.



Here is a landscape shot taken inside Arikok National Park. The park is home to wild donkeys, goats, and iguanas. Again, note the clumps of candle cactus. We did not see it when we were there in late December, but apparently these plants produce a fruit that is reddish in color.

The California Lighthouse is located in the northwest corner of the island. The lighthouse itself isn't much to look at, but the views from the lighthouse are great, as is this magnificent stand of candle cacti.



This beautiful stand of cacti was also located adjacent to the California Lighthouse.



I never learned what this plant was called, but it was a very hardy ground cover found all over the island. If anyone knows what it is called, please share with the group.

The spines on these cacti reached about two inches long. The spines were very thick and sharp.



Look but don't touch! The locals use these cacti to form walls and property dividing lines.

## JANUARY CACTUS OF THE MONTH

JOSIE WATTS

### NAME: *Mammillaria lenta*

This plant's origin is in México, in Coahuila, Viesca, and Cuatro Ciénegas. The recommended USDA temperature zone is 9-11. It has a frost tolerance of at least 25 degrees Fahrenheit; however Houston is very humid and rainy most winters, which is hard on most desert plants.

The plant prefers light shade for sun exposure. It should be watered sparingly. The plant is propagated from seeds, offsets, or stem cuttings. It is globular to columnar, woolly, and can be single or clustering. It has soft radial spines (30-40) which are close together and no central spine. This plant blooms in mid-spring. The blooms are 1" in diameter. The flowers are white with pinkish stripes, and are followed by bright red fruits. The seeds are black. My plant has lived in my greenhouse for approximately 5 years and has been repotted once in a well-draining cactus mix. It is not a stranger to most club members, who have seen it in the annual show on several occasions.



### REFERENCES:

Preston-Mafham, Rod and Ken. Cacti: The Illustrated Dictionary. 1991: Timber Press. Portland, Oregon.

Cullman, W., Gotz, E., and Croner, G. The Encyclopedia of Cacti. 1987: Timber Press. Portland, Oregon

<http://www.desert-tropicals.com>

<http://davesgarden.com>

<http://cactiguide.com>

## JANUARY SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH

MARIO RIZO

### NAME: *Pachypodium eburneum*

This plant is part of the *Apocynaceae* family that grows in the central part of Madagascar. The *Pachypodium eburneum* can grow up to 25 centimeters high and the caudex up to 25 centimeters in diameter.

My plants are placed in a sunny place, about six to eight hours either morning or evening. I use a mixture of soil which contains 50% soil and 50% fertile. I only water them when needed; this means that I let the soil get almost dry before I water them again.

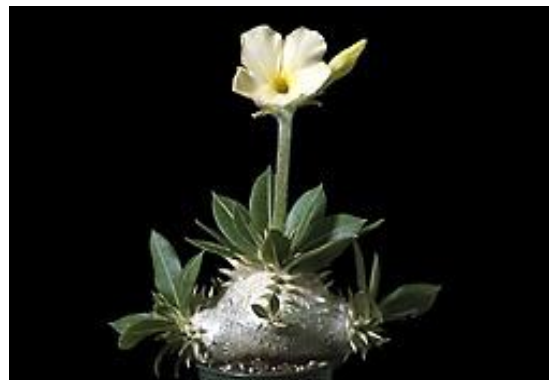
As for the flowers, these can go from a white to light yellow color. According to some books, the plants that have white flowers are called *Pachypodium cf eburneum* and the plants with light yellow flowers, just *Pachypodium eburneum*.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Genus *Pachypodium*, Werner Rach
- A guide to Growing Pachycaul and Caudiform Plants, Philippe de Vosjoli
- Bihrmann.com/caudiciforms, article on line



*P. eburneum*  
photo by Mario Rizo



*P. eburneum* flowers  
used with permission from  
Highland Succulents  
<http://highlandsucculents.com>

\*\*\*\*\*

PARKINSON'S LAW – Plant collections expand to exceed the space available (no matter how large the space to fill).

PHYLLOTRON LAW – Under the most rigorous controlled conditions of light, temperature and humidity, a plant will do as it damn well pleases.

(As published in the KK May-June 1987)

## HOW TO MAKE AN ADENIUM MULTIFLORUM BLOOM

FRED HAASE

During the past 10 years, my *A. multiflorum* bloomed sparingly from early December until late March. At most, about 12 flowers may be open at the same time. More often the number of flowers had been from 3-8.



The plant usually opened 3-8 flowers at a time



At most 10-12 flowers may be open at the same time.

Last January, my plant had more than 50 flowers opened at the same time.



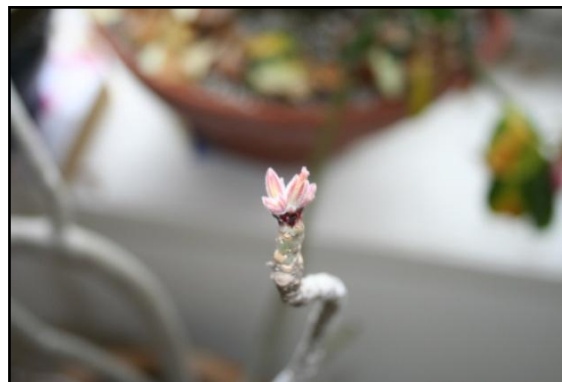
### What caused this difference?

During the 10 years before the winter of 2009 – 2010, I would begin cutting back on watering the plant in late October. By early December, I would stop watering the plant entirely. Additionally, I did not allow the temperatures to drop below about 15°C or 59°F during the entire winter.

During this time, the plant would slowly defoliate. By early December the plant would be leafless and begin blooming sparingly. The blooming would continue until late March and by early April, the remaining buds would blast and new leaves and stems would begin growing.

The fall of 2009 was cloudy, cool to cold, and wet. It became so cold by December that I was afraid that power outages would allow my plants to chill enough to cause some of them to rot. In the past, power outages during severe freezes had cost me about one third of my plant collection. Therefore, I kept my greenhouse warmer than usual. Thus, hoping that if a power outage occurred, it would come back on before the greenhouse became chilly enough to cause my plants to rot.

During mid-January 2010, outside temperatures dropped to -9°C. Because of possible power outages, I moved my Adeniums and other cold sensitive plants from my greenhouse into my kitchen near a 5 X 10 East-facing window



It was in this location that flower buds on *Adenium multiflorum* started developing (see above). As the weather warmed, I moved my plants back into the greenhouse.

The Adenium buds stopped developing and blasted during February 2010. The plant resumed normal growth in late March. This was the first winter that the plant did not open any flower after blooming sparingly during the previous winter.

Early in the fall of 2010, I planned to follow the watering schedule that I used during the previous years. What I was going to try that was different, was to expose the plant to temperatures near or just below 10°C (50°F) during the late night and early morning hours - from the middle of November through early March. However, nature imposed her will.

The first three weeks of September started out warm and humid with the minimum temperatures remaining above 20°C. The *A. multiflorum* was nice and leafy. Then it turned cool and very dry. The last 7 days of the month had minimum temperatures near or below 10°C. The plant began to defoliate and flower buds began to develop. I did not water any of my Adeniums because of fear of causing rot during the cool nights. By the first week of November only two leaves remained on my *A. multiflorum*, and the first two buds opened. By the third week, 12 flowers had opened, and then nature changed again. During the last week, a strong warm southerly wind began. Winds gusted up to 35 knot, but the night time temperatures did not drop below 20°C. The wind did mechanical damage to the opened flowers and the buds stopped developing. I thought that all of the unopened buds would blast, but by Dec. 1st the strong wind stopped and cool nights returned.

The buds resumed developing and by December 12th, twelve flowers had opened. Then I moved the plant from the outside into the greenhouse. By Christmas the plant had over 30 flowers. By the middle of January 2011, over 50 flowers had opened.

During the first week of February, the number of open flowers was still greater than 50. However, their size diminished to about ½ the size. By March 13th, only one rather sick and small flower was still open, and the plant began developing leaves. In June, the plant began to grow normally. However, the plant still had fewer leaves than normal. During the remainder of summer, which was exceedingly hot, the growth was strongest since I bought the plant. I watered my Adeniums growing in 15" pots once every three days. They grew in full sun and acted like the heat was no problem.

As previously, I diminished watering during October and November. The plant defoliated as before and was leafless by the 1st of December. However, this time the flower buds developed much slower. By mid December, three flowers opened on one of the twigs. While small buds were developing on all of the twigs, they were weeks from opening.

As of January 3, 2012 I have two flowers blooming on two twigs. All of the remaining buds are now obviously developing. However, the 4 flowers that have opened during past month were or are about ½ normal size. I am wondering if the high temperatures during this past August and early September delayed the bud development and caused the subpar size of the 4 flowers that did open. I believe that I will have the answer by February.

Some people may think that the fact that my *Adenium multiflorum* produced more than 50 open flowers at the same time during January 2010 was good. However, if one ever saw an *A. multiflorum* blooming in their habitat during the Austral winter, one will know that this species is the most florific of all Adeniums.

**From now on I will try to stimulate my *A. multiflorum* to bloom more by:**

1. trimming the plant to cause more branching.
2. keeping the plant cool and dry from late fall until early spring. Water only enough from soak the upper 1/4th of the soil only on days with low humidity about 1-4 times per month.
3. watering frequently during hot weather during the summer months.
4. fertilizing with about 1/3 the recommended concentration of fertilizer with NPK ratios of 1-2-3, 10-20-30, etc. (best). However, ratios of 1-1-1, 10-10-10, or 20-20-20 are good enough.
5. not using a fertilizer from late summer until early spring.
6. using a free draining substrate that holds water about like a sieve.

## FACES IN THE CROWD: LEROY KELLOGG



Leroy Kellogg is a long time member of the club. He first became interested in cactus while visiting his deer lease in Doss, Texas in the 1960's. He joined HCSS in the late 70's after his wife Joyce read an article about the club's meeting in the Houston Chronicle.

He grows cactus and other succulents and owns more than 300 plants. He keeps them in two greenhouses; one is 7 x 27 feet, and the second one measures 16 x 18 feet. Additionally he keeps plants in a shaded area in his back yard. He is an expert grower of Ariocarpus, and has about eight different species. He grows them in a really loose mix composed of 35% potting soil and 65% of pumice, gravel, and haydite (fired clay).

Over the years, Leroy has grown many award-winning plants. One of the favorite plants of the show and sale judges is his *Euphorbia francosii*, which has won the "Best Succulent Plant Award" several times, most recently in 2011.

Leroy enjoys making money for the club. He has held many leadership positions, such as coordinator of special events and ways and means chairman. He was also the club's president in 1992. His favorite part about being a member of HCSS is the field trips to observe plants in their natural habitat, and because it is much harder now to have access to private properties.

His advice to novice growers is to start out with plants that are known to be easy to grow. He also recommends experimenting with watering techniques and soil mixes. As far as his secret for cultivating award-winning plants, he mentions that is very important to provide constant care and monitoring the plants. He says that the plants "tell you when they want something they need." A fertilizer he recommends is called BR 61, which it's water soluble. Leroy uses it at ¼ strength.

Leroy has been married to his wife Joyce, a great supporter of the club's activities, for 50 years. They have one daughter, Pamela Joe Strangefellow, a son in law, and two grandchildren, Regan and Riley.



## FEBRUARY CACTUS OF THE MONTH

DICK McEUEEN

**NAME: *Pereskia aculeata* var. *godseffiana***

Two or three years ago Noreen Tolman gave me several cuttings from a vine-like *Pereskia* which had peach-colored young leaves. She didn't know the species name so we looked at the *Pereskia* pictures in *The New Cactus Lexicon*.(1) Only one plant appeared to have the same leaf color and it had the wrong color flowers. Noreen searched for information on the plant and found the plant in the book *CACTI*. (2)

The past fall my plant finally bloomed. Because of the plant's uniqueness and Noreen's persistence, I decided to make it my cactus of the month for 2012. I have treated it like all our cactus plants so I have no special information on cultivation. Included here are pictures of the plant, a flower close-up, a flower cluster and seed pods. The notes from the *CACTI* book are reproduced below.

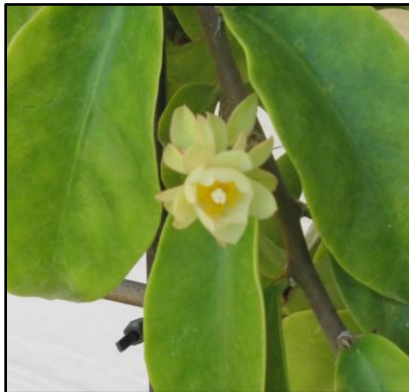
### ***Pereskia aculeata* Miller**

A climbing, trailing plant with stems 26-33 ft in length to ½ in. thick and dark green leaves up to 3½ in. long, 1½ in wide. The areoles have 1-3 spines but no glochids. Flowers appear in late summer and are diurnal. They are up to about 1¾ in. across and whitish yellow shading to pinkish at the base. Requires very bright light; normal cactus compost; minimum temperature 50 degrees F.

USA(Florida), West Indies, Brazil, Paraguay.

### ***Pereskia aculeata* var. *godseffiana* (Sander) Knuth -**

This differs from the species in that the young leaves are all peach-colored, with the under surface often slightly reddish. Cultivation requirements are the same as for the species.



*Photos by the author*



**REFERENCES:**

1. Hunt, David et al. 2006. The New Cactus Lexicon. Dh Press.
2. Innes, Clive and Glass, Charles. 1991. CACTI. Portland House.

\*\*\*\*\*

**FEBRUARY SUCCULENT OF THE MONTH**

**PHYLLIS MCEUEN**

**NAME:** *Agave polianthiflora* Gentry



**DISTRIBUTION:** *Agave polianthiflora* occurs on rocky outcrops along the Sonora-Chihuahua border in México at elevations between 4,000 and 6,000 feet.

**DESCRIPTION:** Polianthiflora is a small rosette agave 4-8 inches tall and 8-12 inches wide. Its leaves are widest in the middle and are 4-8 inches long with white bud imprints. Widely spaced filaments appear along the leaf margin and minute teeth appear near the base of the leaf. The inflorescence is a 4-6 feet spike with rose-red

flowers above the middle of the spike.

**PROPAGATION:** Propagation is by seed or removal of offsets.

**CULTURE:** *Agave polianthiflora* is best grown in full sun. It requires little water to keep the plant small and compact. This agave does well in a container or rock garden.

**RELATED SPECIES:** *Agave polianthiflora* is vegetatively identical to *Agave parviflora*. The two can only be distinguished by observing the bloom which is rose-red for polianthiflora and yellow for parviflora.

**REFERENCE:** Agaves, Yuccas, and Related Plants, Mary & Gary Irish, 2000, Timber Press, Inc.

*-Photo by the Author*

