



Berkhamsted and District Branch

Editor's Comments

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Forthcoming Branch and Zone Events in 2017/2018:

- 11 November 2017— David Traish—The beauty of our plants
- 09 December 2017— Xmas Get-together— David Minnion on Orchids
- 13 January 2018— Derek Tribble—South Africa 2014 Part 2
- 10 February 2018— AGM
- 10 March 2018— Hazel Taylor—Galapagos and Ecuador

Another year has flown past and winter is fast approaching. I hope your plants are all safely tucked up in your greenhouse(s). Since the last newsletter the Branch hosted a successful Zone 6 Show at the Great Missenden Memorial Centre. on Saturday 3 June 2017.

The Branch has been entertained by talks from David Kirkbright (Society Treasurer), Rodney Sims (our Chairman), David Minnion, Chris Backhouse, a new speaker for us, and Tony Roberts. Their topics included 'Peru 2014', 'Sundry Succulents No.1', 'Utah', 'CSSA 2015 Convention & Calizonia' and 'Gasterias in Habitat and Culture'. Once again, the annual Branch Mini Show took place in August and was judged by Bill Darbon, who also led the discussion afterwards.

Zone 6 Events

Zone 6 events were well spaced out across the year, with the Zone Show, hosted by the Berkhamsted Branch, being the first on June 3. My thanks to all those who so willingly helped out at the event and made it a great success.

On Friday 13 October. The Branch celebrated its 70th Anniversary with a lunch at the Chartridge Park Golf Club, near Chesham.

Our last speaker of the year will be David Traish (a new speaker to the Branch) talking about 'The Beauty of our Plants', in November.

With the end of the year rapidly approaching we are looking forward to Christmas and the days getting longer. Before then however, we have the Christmas get-together in December, which is always a relaxed affair. David Minnion will return to tell us about 'British Orchids'. Don't forget to bring your donated prize for the Grand Raffle.

January brings a welcome return by Derek Tribble who will be giving us 'South Africa 2014 – Part 2' and in



March Hazel Taylor will be telling us about 'Galapagos and Ecuador'.

Once again the February meeting will be the AGM and members' entertainment.

The Branch will be hosting the 2019 Zone 6 International Convention and your committee have started to plan for the event.

Northampton and Milton Keynes Branch had four collections open to Society members on 25 June. Members of Berkhamsted Branch visiting on the day reported a pleasant event.

The Zone 6 International Convention on 14 October,

had talks from Dr Ernst van Jaarsveld ('Succulents of Southern Africa' & 'Expeditions from Cape Agulhas to Angola'.

Ian Woolnough (Exeter), a new speaker to the London area, presented 'Some Mexican Highlights'.

Luton Branch Show 2017 *by David Wilson*



Over the years' Gill and I have supported the Luton Branch Show, originally at Brag End Garden Centre, near Stevenage, then at St Margaret's Church in Luton, and now at their present site at Pirton, near Hitchin. This year Ian Sharpe also showed at Luton and Julian has done so in the past. Once all the plants were on the show benches the judging com-

menced, ably carried out by the two judges (Tony Morris and Alan Brown) from Leicester Branch.

The venue consists of a large hall and a smaller area for the refreshments. The catering for the show is always of a high standard. Late afternoon, the cups and trophies were presented, with Martin Hyams having the most points in the show.



My Favourite Plants #8: *Matucana oreodoxa*

by Julian Cooke

Present here is another gem of a plant that was fairly recently discovered in Peru by Graham Charles on one of his many field trips. It comes from Peru and was found at 2500 meters in valleys east of the Marañon river in a pretty remote spot.

Matucana oreodoxa is familiar to collectors having been known for many years. It produces globose stems and offsets gradually. Not especially spiny, *Matucana oreodoxa* produces red-orange some-

times slightly zygomorphic flowers in summer. They appear from the very centre of the plant from late June onwards.

However Graham Charles discovered a subspecies that has the most gorgeous lilac flowers and is now known as *Matucana oreodoxa* ssp *roseiflora* and is the plant featured in the accompanying photographs.

Like the type plant it has globular stems that are deep green with small dark spines at the areoles. In summer it produces successions of lilac flowers about 3cm long and 2.5 cm across. I only have two small seedlings but these readily flower in a 2.5 inch pot. Habitat photographs suggest that the plant will offset even-

tually and produce small clumps.

Like most *Matucana* species it is best to give just that little extra warmth in winter or the plant body tends to mark. Other than this cultivation is straight forward.

The plant is new to cultivation and currently quite scarce. However seedling plants are now becoming available and it is well worth keeping an eye out for *M. oreodoxa* as it is a lovely little gem of a plant that is a worthy addition to any collection.



Photo: Julian Cooke



Photo: Julian Cooke

Branch Mini Show 2017 by David Wilson



Once again the August meeting was the Branch Mini Show. Over recent years it has become a firm favourite, allowing members to have a chat and enjoy the plants on display. Another plus is that we get cakes to go with our cups of tea.



As in previous years there were some interesting and desirable plants on display.



We should thank Bill Darbon, our judge, for his sterling effort in judging the show and then leading a general discus-

sion about the plants. Bill wanted to take a couple of the plants home with him, which is quite an accolade.

Gill and David gained the most points in the show.

Julian had the most points for cactus classes and Gill and David the most for succulents.



Forthcoming Meetings

November—The Beauty of our Plants

David Traish is Secretary of the North Surrey Branch of the BCSS.

December—Christmas Get-Together

The Branch will be celebrating Christmas at our December meeting, with entertainment provided by David Minnion in a talk about 'British orchids'. Don't forget to bring your prize for the Grand Raffle.

David is a regular, entertaining speaker who has given lots of talks over the years.

January 2018—South Africa 2014 – Part 2

Derek Tribble has been a regular visitor to South Africa over a great many years. His encyclopedic knowledge of the succulents of Southern Africa, including Haworthias, Gasterias, Tylecodons, Mesembryanthemums, Adromischus and many others, means that Derek's talks should not be missed.

Apart from the plants, Derek is an excellent photographer, a subject on which he gives an interesting talk.

Zone 6 Show

by David Wilson



The 2017 Zone 6 Show was held at Great Missenden Memorial Centre on Saturday 3 June 2017 and was hosted by Berkhamsted Branch.

13 exhibitors, from 5 branches, made 277 class entries which contained 355 plants, with the most exhibitors coming from Berkhamsted and Harrow. Two trade stands supported the Show

The day was a great success which was entirely down to the hard work of Branch Members, who pitched in and

helped on the Friday evening and throughout the day of the show; manning the door, assisting exhibitors, judges runners and selling raffle tickets. And most importantly who helped with the catering (especially Carolyn Clayton and Lesley Hyams and Liz Sharpe). Who helped with the catering. The donations of cakes and other foodstuffs, plus prizes for the raffle were greatly appreciated.

Thank you one and all for all your support and efforts.



Oxford Show 2017 by David Wilson



The 2017 Oxford Branch Show was held at Old Mill Hall, Grove on Saturday 12 August 2017. As usual it was well attended and supported by exhibitors and visitors. There were plenty of plants on display and they were of a high standard. Many of the cups and awards went to Gill Evison.

Ian Sharpe received an Award of Merit

Oxford show is probably the biggest show in Southern England and is regarded as a mini National show. It is always an amazingly high standard. In 2017 the show was held jointly with the Haworthia Society show, so there were many classes for Haworthias, Gasterias and Aloes.



Berkhamsted Branch

We meet at:-

Lower Hall
Christ Church
The Nap
Kings Langley
Hertfordshire WD4 8ET

Meetings are held monthly, except for April and start at 3 PM.

www.berkhamsted.bcsc.org.uk

The principal objectives of the BCSS are to promote the study, conservation, propagation and cultivation of cacti and other succulent plants.

