

Cactus Comments

New York Cactus and Succulent Society

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June
2012

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 21st, 2012
6-7:45 pm
331 Madison Ave (near 43rd St)
7th Floor New York, NY
www.nycss.org
The Summer Reading Project

Research has shown that children who don't read during the summer can lose up to three months of reading progress and that loss has a cumulative, long-term effect. While I'm not sure what adverse effects our small summer intermission may have, its certainly worthwhile to discuss which plant books are worth reading and which should stay home. We encourage you to bring a list of succulent books you love and those you hate to our June meeting. Guests are always welcomed!

Membership

Joining NYCSS gives you information packed monthly meetings, talks from experts and amateur enthusiasts, demonstrations, slide shows, trips, and our monthly newsletter, Cactus Comments. The 10\$ annual dues covers everyone in your household, from September to June.

Mail membership checks payable to
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Attend our June meeting and you could win one of two copies of What A Plant Knows by Daniel Chamovitz.

This is our last regular meeting until we reconvene in September. If you've been thinking about joining or haven't come in awhile, we would love to see you.

ACCLIMATING INDOOR PLANTS TO THE OUTDOORS

Spring is here! Barbeques are in full swing and many of us are thinking of ways to take advantage of the great outdoors by moving our plant collection outside for the summer. Brighter light, more air exchange, and more room often helps boost a specimen's size over one growing season outside. Don't be too zealous in your endeavor to put your prized specimens out into the full summer sun just yet.

People commonly misconceive that cacti and succulents can handle any amount of sun without issue. It's hard to imagine that the local springtime sun can damage plants that can withstand the sun and heat of some of the harshest environments on earth.

Plants are much like people in their ability to handle sunlight. After a winter of staying indoors, many people need to protect themselves from the sun by applying sunscreen. Cacti and other plants find themselves in the same situation. Plant are just as suseptible to sunburn, often burning in only a matter of minutes when exposed to too much sun. While most human skin will recover from sunburn, cacti in particular will have serious permanent scaring from such exposure. To prevent this from happening, a few precautions must be taken.

Start your plants with minimal exposure both in time and intensity and gradually increase it over time until your cacti reach their desired location. While this process may seem simple, it really requires alot of patience and a watchful eye. It is best to start this process early in the season when the sun is less intense but late enough when cool night time temperatures do not cause damage to your collection. Be aware of rain and drainage when bringing plants out in early spring. The New York area often experiences long periods of cool, wet weather that can be detrimental to succulents.

Find a shady spot under a deck or tree and slowly expose your plants to higher intensities of light. If you notice your plants lighten or change color at all, bring them in immediately. Gradually increase the duration of light or intensity until the plants are able to handle your desired spot. This process will likely take two weeks or longer.

If you have a lot of plants to bring out, consider purchasing shade cloth and plastic tarps to better control their new environment. Shade cloth can be purchased relatively cheaply from supply companies such as Gemplers. Shade cloth comes in a variety of weaves which will take some of the guess work out of plant acclimation. Plastic tarps can be useful in keeping succulent collections dry in periods of heavy rains.

With a little work you can increase the size of your collection and get that specimen that collectors will drool over.



SEED IMPORT

So now that your plant collection is acclimated to the outdoors, you might find yourself wanting to start some new plant seeds inside with all of the extra room you have. For years I have gone to flower shows and I've been amazed at collections of cacti and succulents that I have never before seen in the trade here in the United States. I've ogled at over sea seed collections wondering when I'd see those varieties domestically. I've always assumed that seed imports required the lengthy accusation of a phytosanitary certificate.

Apparently that isn't the case at all. The importation of small lots of seed can be authorized by a written permit. Permits are valid for three years and cover multiple importations. There are limitations against noxious weeds, GMOS, and endangered species but in most cases import will be granted.

The seeds must be labeled and meet the following criteria.

- (ii) There are a maximum of 50 seeds of 1 taxon (taxonomic category such as genus, species, cultivar, etc.) per packet; or a maximum weight not to exceed 10 grams of seed of 1 taxon per packet;
- (iii) There are a maximum of 50 seed packets per shipment;
- (iv) The seeds are free from pesticides;
- (v) The seeds are securely packaged in packets or envelopes and sealed to prevent spillage [Note: we recommend that seeds are packed in resealable, clear plastic envelopes to facilitate inspection];
- (vi) The shipment is free from soil, plant material other than seed, other foreign matter or debris
- (vii) At the time of importation, the shipment is sent to an approved port of entry listed in the permit.

Application is easy and free and can be completed online at:

<https://pws.sc.egov.usda.gov/login/login.aspx?TYPE=33554433&REALMOID=06-a2f0fac1-469b-46f8-b00c-c8eb2b368206&GUID=&SMAUTHREASON=0&METHOD=GET&SMAGENTNAME=-SM-YxvrP8wlrk9RAQSBuz2%2f36mvsowtNeEp7v1rwcpk29q0cUbsHBq5xx6DzM4LBLxj&TARGET=-SM-https%3a%2f%2feppermits.aphis.usda.gov%2feppermits%2f>

Be sure to apply for the group heading "Eligible taxa" if you are interested in ordering different types of seeds abroad. Remember that each order must include a copy of your small lot seed permit so a copy of the permit will have to be mailed before the order can be shipped domestically. Otherwise your order will not pass customs.

HAPPY GROWING

GENUS SPOTLIGHT

HATIORA

The genus name *Hatiora* was created by taxonomists Britton and Rose in 1923 to honor the botanist Thomas Hariot. The genus includes 5 or 6 species within the genus. All members are epiphytic and may have either flat or round leaf cross sections. Some growers prefer to use the genus name *Rhipsalidopsis* for the species with leaf-like stems. Flowers range in color from yellow-orange to pink to bright red and the fruits are fleshy round or angled.

Hybrids of *H. gaertneri* and *H. rosea* are among the most popular of all cactus species in cultivation. These varieties are often sold as "Easter Cactus" because they often bloom in spring. With proper care these plants will often flower 2 or more times within a year. In the wild, this genus is restricted to Brazil in the southeast of the country.



1. *Hatiora epiphylloides*: Stems are very flat resembling seaweed. Flowers are yellow. This plant is very difficult to keep and often dies in cultiva-



2. *Hatiora gaertneri*: Wide, flattened green stems. Flowers are red but many new hybrids and cultivars exist with flower color variation. Often referred to as Easter Cactus for its showy spring blooms resembling those of *Rhipsalis*.



3. resembles *H. salicornioides* and also grows upright but it doesn't have the same little stems segments. It has deep rose-pink flowers.



4. *Hatiora rosea*: Flat, wide green stems with pink flowers. Many hybrids and cultivars are popular in cultivation.



5. *Hatiora salicornioides*: Often referred as Drunkard's Dream. Bears small, rounded, green stems and yellow to orange flowers.

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS FOR THE NEWSLETTER OR SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS, ETC.
Comments, stories or information for our newsletter can be submitted to webmaster@nycss.org

SPECIAL THANKS TO PHIL ELENKO FOR SUPPLYING COPIES OF WHAT A PLANT KNOWS.