



# *Σpi News*

*San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Inc.*

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August, 2013

Volume 38 Number 8

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## *Epiphyllum thomasiannum ssp thomasiannum*

Size: Petals- 4.75 - 5.25 inches (12-13.5 cm)

*Photograph by Jerry Moreau*





### President's Corner:

It is already August and our epies are enjoying the now fully-fledged summer heat. Keep a watchful eye on your plants to make sure they don't dry out too much during the hot weather. We have had a couple of rounds of monsoonal moisture and humidity here in sunny southern California that make things more uncomfortable for us, but the epies like it. Our days are already getting noticeably shorter, so it will not be long until fall arrives with the Autumnal Equinox in late September. By then, I will be ready for some cooler weather.

Speaking of late September, let us not forget about the Appreciation event at Jean Bonner's at the end of next month, September 28<sup>th</sup>.

We had two fun and very productive Work Parties at the Safari Park where there are quite a few off-season bloomers still producing beautiful flowers for us and for Park visitors.

We had another fun General Meeting in July with many new folks attending both the Workshop and

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Meeting. We had lots of good stuff on the Raffle Table and it seemed like most everyone who purchased raffle tickets won something to take home. I hope everyone enjoyed the evening.

Stay Cool...



*Ron*



## Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party



--Sandra Chapin

**COMING SOON!!!**  
**It's a PARTY!!!**

End of summer, no more blooms, let's get together and eat, talk, relax, and get to know each other better. The date is September 28th at 2:00 P.M. at the home of Jean Bonnor and Ron Ashman. There will be more information and directions to their house in the next newsletter. But for now, mark the date on your calendar. Everyone is invited. If you have been a member for a month or for many years, we want to see you all there.

### About the species bloom featured on the cover:

Epiphyllum thomsonianum ssp. thomsonianum also known as Epiphyllum macropterum var. thomsonianum is a white flowering, night-blooming species of epiphytic cactus whose native range extends from Southern Mexico to Nicaragua or Panama (depending upon what source is referenced). Within its range, it is found most commonly at elevations from 1,000 to 2,000 meters (3,000 to 6,500 feet).



## Safari Park Epi Display House

—By Sandra Chapin for Jerry Moreau

July was a warm month but the faithful crew worked on. At the first work party of the month the temperature hit a hundred and the second was close behind at 95. We are continuing to repot and trying to organize our new plants. This month we received collections from Dick France and Mel Horstman. Our fearless leader, Jerry Moreau, was off on a much-deserved vacation for the second session, but he left us in the capable hands of Ron Crain. Workers included Fred Savage, Laura Lasslo, Ron and Velma Crain,

Marie Dempewolf, Beth Jackson, Janice Wakefield, Bill Greene, Oliver La Puebla, Mildred and Gerry Mikas and Sandra Chapin.

If you are interested in joining the fun and learning a lot about epis in the process, come and volunteer at the Park. Information on how to sign up can be found on the website [www.SanDiegoEpi.org](http://www.SanDiegoEpi.org) click on the Safari Park tab or contact Jerry at [jerrysdca@cox.net](mailto:jerrysdca@cox.net).

### Pre-Meeting Workshop:

-Velma Crain

Okay so now you are “Hooked on Epies”. In last month’s pre-meeting workshop you learned about watering and fertilizing your current epi collection. In June Ron Crain demonstrated how to repot an older epi plant. What’s next? Well now you want to create your own hybrids, of course!!!! Join Ron in Room 104 at 7:00 pm to learn how You too can become an epi hybridizer!!!

**July Meeting Program:** In July we had the pleasure of viewing two different photo presentations of Epiphyllum flowers. The first one was titled “I like Big Buds”. It was designed by Linda Sinkovic, giving us many beautiful photos of “Extra Large” epies. The second group of flowers was from the Joyce Carr collection. She was the hybridizer of the “Liberty Series” epies. She also hybridized many *schlumbergeras* or ‘Christmas Cactus’.

**August Meeting Program:** Every month we discuss volunteering at the Safari Park. If you have considered volunteering, but would like to know more about the Zoo and Safari Park volunteer program, join us at this month’s meeting to learn everything you every wanted to know!! **Andy Schucker the Supervisor of Volunteer Services for the Safari Park** will be our speaker this month. He will have information on how you can become a volunteer and discuss the many benefits given to volunteers.

Please join us on Wednesday 8/14 at 7:30 in room 101 to find out more!!



## Epi Hybridizers

--Edited by Ron Crain

One of the most notable hybridizers of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was **Curt Knebel**. Considered by many to be the greatest German hybridizer, he was born in June 1871 and lived to age 81 when he passed away in 1952. In 1894, after some distinguished gardening appointments, he started his own nursery at Erlau in Saxony by acquiring a number of plants from other German hybridizers who were active during the nineteenth century. He soon had a very good collection of his own hybrids. Virtually his whole collection was lost as a result of the First World War after which he painstakingly started again, eventually producing more than 400 hybrids. During the Second World War, he again lost nearly all his plants but many of his hybrids are still available.

Knebel's name will long be remembered through his lovely hybrids, notably 'Professor Ebert', 'Stern von Erlau', 'Fredrich Werner Beul', 'Camillo Schneider', to name a few.

Knebel once wrote: "Every serious hybridizer must have a definite goal and not be satisfied with an occasional lucky shot. The work must be continued for years, at least up until the third generation. This means a period of 24 years, at least, in order to see if his efforts have been successful."

Knebel also wrote that temperature affected flower colors and advised: "I would generally advise placing plants in cool and airy places for fuller and deeper colors, while the warm locations with little fresh air favor the lighter colors."

Working to hybridize epis which grow compactly and bloom off season, Knebel attributed success to the introduction of a new strain in hybridizing - *Heliocereus cinnabarinus*.

## Now is the Time

- ✓ **Groom plants.** Remove dried up or scarred foliage. Keep debris out of branches and containers.
- ✓ **Protect plants from extreme sun and wind.**
- ✓ **Monitor humidity.** Mist when necessary.
- ✓ **Do not let soil dry out.**
- ✓ **Protect developing fruit.** Some birds love to eat them..
- ✓ **Bait for snails and slugs.**

Knebel freely distributed his seeds to American hybridizers and growers.

Peggy Williams wrote in a 1956 *ESA Bulletin*: "While on the topic of seed from Mr. Knebel, I feel our members might like to know that Mr. Knebel sent more seed to Mr. Wegener, Mrs. Steele, Dr. Poindexter, and others. The following are a few of the wonderful varieties produced: 'Bagdad', 'Blushing Angel', 'Buenos Noches', 'Choxoda', 'Chrissy', 'Concord', 'Curacao', 'Dolores', 'Golong', 'Harmony', 'Lynn Gilbert', 'Marina Special', 'Nellie', 'Orchid Supreme', 'Paradise', 'Party', 'Sleepy Hollow', and 'Wonderland'. Too much honor cannot be paid Mr. Knebel for his devotion to the epiphyllums. His careful selection of breeding stock over a lifetime of work and his understanding of plant genetics can alone be credited with the marvelous epiphyllums he developed. All that he has accomplished will have a great bearing on the work that will be done in hybridizing epiphyllums in the future".



An Afternoon with . . .

## Ron and Velma Crain

--By Oliver Ryan La Puebla

Both Ron and Velma Crain are San Diego natives and have lived here for most of their lives. Ron and Velma went through the Regional Occupational Program in Horticulture at Southwestern College in the 1970's. It was in that program that Ron and Velma first met. Through that program, as their interest in plants grew, the seeds of their love for each other were just being sown. On November 7, 1980, they exchanged their vows and have been happily married since for nearly 33 years with three children: Holling (21 years old), Megan (28 years old), and Erin (32 years old).

Ron, his brother Don, and his sister Joni are triplets. *On a side note, Don Crain is actually well-known for his expertise in photography and has taken breathtaking pictures of many epiphyllum hybrids that have been displayed at many epiphyllum shows.* Ron Crain worked many years in electronics manufacturing (outside of the horticulture industry) in the field of semiconductors (1983-'99). With his brother being an orchid grower, Ron wanted another other kind of plant to concentrate on as a hobby and to utilize his horticulture training. Having inherited an old *Epiphyllum oxypetalum* plant from his mother, who had passed away in 1987, and with his brother's suggestion to look into hybrid epiphyllums, Ron's interest in epiphyllum took root. After finding the San Diego Epiphyllum Society, he joined in November 1999 and has been a member ever since. He served on the SDES Board as a Director in 2001 and 2002 and again from 2009 through 2011. He served as Treasurer in 2012 and is currently serving as President. He has done the Pre-Meeting Workshops since the Fall of 2008, participated in numerous SDES sales events since 2000, given presentations on epiphyllums and California wildflowers at various garden clubs around Southern California for several years, and has been a dedicated volunteer at the Safari Park for over a decade.



Above: Ron and Velma at the ESA Show in 2008.

Velma Crain loves reading and listening to music. She has a strong passion for gardening and is well known for the wonderful and delicious dishes that she enjoys cooking. Velma was introduced to epiphyllums through her mother, who had one or two growing on their patio as she was growing up. She recalls that one of them was a red-orange *Ackermannii* hybrid. The first time she heard the often-used sales pitch, "Epis thrive on neglect!" she thought back to her mother's epiphyllums and knew it was true, as her mother didn't always have time for her plants but they bloomed nonetheless. Her involvement with the SDES began when Ron joined the society. Since joining, she has helped with providing refreshments during the monthly General Meetings, assisting at the numerous sales events, and offering her knowledge and skills at the Safari Park. In addition, she has served on the Board of Directors as Corresponding Secretary and as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Meeting Program Coordinator) and is currently serving again as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice

*See 'Ron and Velma' (Continued on page 7)*

From our Librarian:

## Outside of A Dog

*Outside of a dog, a man's best friend is a book. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read. -- Groucho Marx*



In this column I usually talk about books from the library, or when I'm really stuck for a subject, the "Free Stuff From The Internet" column.\*<sup>1</sup>

However, this month the subject is something that I'm dealing with right now, and hopefully it can be helpful to you as well.

First, all of us in this Society have an interest in epiphytic cactus. Most of us are also interested in other aspects of gardening to some degree. An important part of gardening is keeping records, whether said records are simply a list of which plants you own or more detailed entries tracking the first flower of each year. At some point in your gardening life you'll have to figure this out. As an epi-holic, it is even more important to keep records, just so you don't end up buying the same plant over and over again.\*<sup>2</sup> Or, even worse, missing out on a plant because it sounded a bit like something you thought you already had at home, but then you get home and you find out you don't have it after all.

So now that we've established keeping records is a good idea, what are your options for keeping these records? I can think of two methods: handwritten and electronic. Let's talk about the first option.

Handwritten records have a long history and the great advantage that you don't need any electricity to access them. You could write this information in a notebook, or even use index cards kept in a box. If you write these records legibly, other people can read them easily. And if someone finds your book in 100 years or so, there probably won't be any need for special technology in order for museums to display the information.

What are the downsides? Well, you have to write these records neatly, otherwise no one will be able to read them.\*<sup>3</sup> Paper is subject to deterioration over time. Paper records can be easily accidentally destroyed or discarded. In my opinion, paper records are not that easy to search through.

So maybe handwritten isn't the best way to go. How about the electronic option? There are at least three possibilities: a word processing document (i.e. something you'd write in Word), a spread sheet (i.e. an Excel document) or a database. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Let's talk about the easiest first.

The easiest way to go (a word processing document) is really only practical if you have a small collection. I mean like ten plants or less. Otherwise the document will soon balloon to a huge size. It is very easy to just type in the information, though.

How about a spread sheet? This option allows you to enter information about a lot more plants. They are pretty easy to set up and modify. But you are limited in the amount of data that you can put in individual cells, plus the reports you can generate are somewhat primitive.\*<sup>4</sup>

Then, there's the database option. This takes some thought at the start, because it's difficult to change the structure of the database down the line. You need to have the design pretty much finished before you start entering data. The advantages include almost limitless storage of data and sophisticated reporting. However, it's difficult to give the data to other people, or move it to different systems.

All that being said, I chose the database option.

*See 'As Linda Sees It' (Continued on page 7)*

## ***Ron and Velma*** (Continued from page 5)

President.

Ron's list of favorite epiphyllums depends upon what is currently in bloom and hence, changes frequently. However, he particularly loves the extra large flowers and is concentrating on collecting the hybrids of Evelyn Shiraki, Darryl Miyamoto, Don Patterson, Derek Obayashi and Don Burnett. His current favorite hybrid is 'Beijing' because it grows fast, blooms readily, and has huge flowers. He also likes the several of the new yellow and orange and "butterscotch" hybrids and seedlings that have been coming out recently which are mostly descendants of 'Chiba Lovely Dawn'. Evelyn and Darryl have hybridized many plants with this cross. Another one of his favorite hybrids is 'Radiant Fire', but he says that one is not easy to grow. On the other hand, Velma has no particular favorite nor does she have a specific kind that she collects. She first stated that she collected the off-season bloomers, small hybrids, and ones that have musical or

movie-related names, but realized like many of us, that our list of favorites keeps changing and/or growing, especially with the continuous influx of new hybrids. "Every time I see a new seedling that one of our local hybridizers has produced, I think, 'Another wonderful flower for our collections!'" she said.

As for tips for newcomers, Ron shares his thoughts: "'It's a hobby, so don't stress yourself out about it. Occasionally, a few of your cuttings might rot before they root, or a plant may develop spots. Who cares? That's all part of the learning process. Most of them will thrive. Concentrate on the plants that do well in your particular microclimate and don't worry about the ones that don't.'" Velma adds, "Epis are easy to care for and produce some of the most beautiful flowers I've ever seen. If you want to learn how to care for them quickly, join us as a volunteer at the Safari Park. We have lots of fun and it's the quickest way to get hands on experience in every facet of Epi Culture."

## ***As Linda Sees It*** (Continued from page 6)

Until recently I could print out reports sorted on plant name, flower size, hybridizer name... sadly, the application I was using is no longer supported. So now I'm designing a new database using a different application.<sup>5</sup> I'm looking at this as an opportunity to redesign my epiphytic cactus database exactly the way I want it to be.

Due to space limitations, this is a very cursory discussion. If you would like to discuss this with me in depth, please email me.<sup>6</sup>

Have a wonderful August, and enjoy any species and offseason flowers you might have.

1 Hmm, it's been over a year so maybe it's almost time to do another Internet column.

2 Raise your hand if you've also done this.

3 Including yourself, if it's particularly messy writing. Personal experience.

4 I am not very skilled with Excel or other spread sheets, so that limits what I can do with that particular piece of software.

5 I use a Mac with LibreOffice, which is a free open source MS Office equivalent. LibreOffice is also available for Windows and Linux. [www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)

6 You can find my email in the SDES and ESA rosters.

—By Linda Sinkovic, Librarian

## **Home-made Pesticides**

Check out this website which gives directions to control garden pests without poisonous chemicals:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/24/make-your-own-natural-pest-n\\_589347.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/24/make-your-own-natural-pest-n_589347.html) .

"Andy Lopez, also known as "The Invisible Gardener", discusses different store bought items you can use in your garden for chemical-free pest control. Discover how products like canola oil, sesame oil, and garlic oil can help you keep your plants free from white flies, ants, caterpillars, and more." Thanks to Janice Wakefield who brought this website to our attention.

## Visiting Mel Horstman

--By Mildred Mikas

Last month Gerry and I had another nice visit with long-time SDES member and friend Mel Horstman. He is in good health and feels fine. As we sat in Mel's shade house we talked about many things.....How he grew up on a farm and on Saturdays they would go to town and for 10 cents you could see 2 movies. (That was a deal!)

Mel spoke about returning from serving in World War II as a Medic. Mel said, "It was a long war. I saw things on the battlefield no young person should..." He then worked for Rohr Industries for over 40 years.

Mel talked about buying his first and only home in the Rolando, area of San Diego and watching as it was being built. He said, "They just don't build homes like his anymore, it's too darn expensive. Back then they used top quality products - not like today!"

We talked about today's young and old folks and cars (he doesn't drive anymore) Mel's son Skip was able to convince him that it wasn't safe on the roads with all those 'crazy drivers.'

Mel had been a hunter but he gave up that hobby some years ago. But he still has the epis he collected with his wife, Wilma. The first ones they purchased came from the SDES table at the Del Mar Fair. "Epi blooms are sure beautiful," Mel said. His only complaint was that no one told him not to plant the cutting in a huge pot, because that is exactly what he did. Then the epis took a long time to bloom. I told Mel that we now give instructions with each purchase and we also invite people to attend our June meeting for more advice. He thought that was a good idea.



*Pictured above: Gerry Mikas, Mel Horstman, Mildred Mikas*

Mel registered an epi seedling which was hybridized by Nate Ogden and called it 'Three KC's'. He named it after his daughter-in-law, Karen, and two granddaughters, Katrina and Kimberly.

I remember Mel and Wilma always shared cuttings with Society members and many of my favorite epis came from them. At the height of their collecting, they had over 160 different plants.

Mel mentioned that Karen had stopped by the other day and he had offered her some of his Epis. She always liked the big beautiful flowers. She only took two plants, 'Black Satin' being one of them. Mel said, "Won't she be surprised when it blooms..... it won't bloom black like its name!" He laughed with a twinkle in his eye. You see, Mel also grows black-flowering irises.

When Wilma passed away a few years ago, Mel mentioned losing interest in his epis but he wants others to enjoy his collection. So he is donating them to the SD Zoo's Safari Park, which is maintained by SDES volunteers.

Both Mel and Wilma were volunteers in the Epi House for years and I fondly remember Wilma always brought fresh, warm home-made goodies and Mel made fresh lemonade for all to share.

Thank you, Mel, for your generous donation of your Epi Collection. We will take good care of them.



## Late- Season Bloomers



**Sandra Chapin:** ‘Algiers’, ‘Alpine White’, ‘Aztec Treasure’, ‘Bernardo Paetz’, ‘Casper’, ‘Charlemagne’, ‘Cleopatra Paetz’, ‘Desert Evening’, ‘Diana’, ‘Donald Raymond’, ‘Elise’, ‘F.A. Haage Jr.’, ‘Fantasy Dragon’, ‘Flirtation’, ‘Garland O’Barr’, ‘Gypsy Doodle’, ‘Katrinka’, ‘Kona Coast’, ‘Lilli Paetz’, ‘Lloyd J. Pittman’, ‘Maiden Erleigh’, ‘Marlene Dietrich’, ‘Martinique’, ‘Menno Paetz’, ‘Michelle Davis’, ‘Orange Icing’, ‘Palatine’, ‘Ruth Wallace’, ‘Scott Thomas’, ‘Tropical Giant’, ‘Tulip Point’, ‘Wressy Cocke’, ‘Yellow Belle’

**Laura Johnson:** ‘London Emerald’

**Mildred Mikas:** ‘Acadia’, ‘Bertha Talbot Loose’, ‘Blushing Angel’, ‘Chiyo Matsu-miya’, ‘Crimson Arrow’, ‘David W Grant’, ‘Desert Evening’, ‘Fruhlingslaune’, ‘Royal Tapestry’, ‘Smokey Topaz’, ‘Wild Ginger’

**Linda Sinkovic:** *Epiphyllum hookeri* ssp *hookeri* aka *E strictum*

**Safari Park:** *Disocactus ackermanii*, ‘Alpine White’, ‘Beauty Queen’, ‘Chiyo Matsu-miya’, ‘Cinnabar’, ‘Cooperi’, ‘Cuzco’, ‘Dante’, ‘David Wayne’, ‘Dr. John T. Cox’, ‘Ernst Gündchen’, ‘Fantasy’, ‘Fluorescence’, ‘Front Runner’, ‘Gay Senorita’, ‘Gladyce Jones’, ‘Honey Bear’, ‘Hookeri’, ‘Ida Pearl’, ‘Imperial Majesty’, ‘Jersey Beauty’, ‘King Midas’, ‘Kiwi’, ‘Knebel’s Fabenwunder’, ‘Lemon Punch’, ‘Lynn Gilbert’, ‘Marvelous Mars’, ‘Orange Julius’, ‘Peach Melba’, ‘Pink Organdy’, ‘Pride of San Gabriel’, ‘September Song’, ‘Super Sonic’, ‘Taskamore’, ‘Tassel’, ‘Tetsuo Morisako’, ‘Vindobona’, ‘Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’



## Welcome To Our New Members!

Humberto & Gina  
Contreras  
Escondido, CA

Shirley Moore  
La Mesa, CA

Vernon & Judy  
Miranda  
San Diego, CA

Janet Sundstrom  
La Mesa, CA

Beverly Williams  
El Cajon, CA



## Details of How To Become A Volunteer at the Safari Park:

Can be found on our website:

[SanDiegoEpi.org](http://SanDiegoEpi.org)

Click on “Safari Park”, then click on “Epi House”, then “Volunteer”.

### Membership:



Single Membership \$15.00 per year

Dual Membership \$20.00 per year

(Dual is for two people, same address,  
one newsletter)

International Membership \$25.00 per year

*Epi News* is published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

( e-mail at [jillrowney@yahoo.com](mailto:jillrowney@yahoo.com) )

### Have You Moved?

If you have moved or recently changed your address, please let us know your new address so that you can continue to receive your newsletter without interruption. Send it to membership – USPS or email address : (PO Box 126127, San Diego, CA 92112-6127 or [sdes\\_roster@hotmail.com](mailto:sdes_roster@hotmail.com) )

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**General membership meetings** are held  
on the second Wednesday of each month  
at 7:30 p.m. in Room 101,  
Casa del Prado, Balboa Park

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING**  
**August 14, 2013**

**SDES Board Meetings** are held  
on the fourth Wednesday of each month  
at 7:00 p.m. in Room 104,  
Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

Next Board meeting :  
**August 28, 2013**