

TWO MORE CEPHALIUM-BEARING CACTI

Esostoopsis dybowskii and *Facheiroa cephaliomelana* ssp. *estevesii*

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Many cephalium- and pseudocephalium-bearing cacti described in this issue are closely related to either *Melocactus* or *Pilosocereus*, but there are two striking taxa that are considered to be distantly related: *Esostoopsis dybowskii* and *Facheiroa cephaliomelana* subspecies *estevesii*.

Esostoopsis dybowskii is an enigmatic monotypic genus. With cream colored spines and pure white hairs, its four-meter-tall stems branch only from the base and start growing a cephalium when about 1.5–2.0 meters tall. While similar in appearance to the Peruvian genus *Esostoia*, it may not be closely related. While both genera are known for their densely hairy stems (not true in all *Esostoia* species), longer-haired woolly lateral cephalia, off-white funnel-form flowers, and tall stems that seldom branch except at the base, these genera live thousands of kilometers apart from one another. Molecular systematists have yet to publish a phylogeny incorporating the DNA of *Esostoopsis*, but when one does we may finally understand where this cactus sits on the family tree. Whatever the case, it is a gorgeous plant in habitat and a fast grower in cultivation.

Facheiroa is a genus of three species: *F. cephaliomelana*, *F. ulei*, and *F. squamosa*. Unlike *Esostoopsis*, *Facheiroa* is now considered a relative of *Esostoia/Vatricania* by biologists, although hobbyists tend to disregard them as straggly weeds. The first two species have long lateral cephalia, which the third lacks. Despite the bad rap this genus receives, *Facheiroa cephaliomelana* subspecies *estevesii*, which we saw atop a large hill of bambuí limestone near Iuiú, Bahia, was the prettiest plant I saw in eastern Brazil. Even without these magnificent columnar cacti, this would

have been a fantastic habitat with *Euphorbia attastoma*, succulent Bombacaceae in the genera *Cavendishia*, and *Ceiba*, fantastic bromeliads, *Melocactus levitestatis*, *Quiabentia zehntneri*, and the ubiquitous *Pilosocereus pachycladus*.

◀ *Facheiroa cephaliomelana* subspecies *estevesii* atop a bambuí massif near Iuiú.



▲ *Esostoopsis dybowskii* on the quartz massif at Serra Escura, Bahia, but one of many isolated *Esostoopsis* populations.

