

Round Robins report

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The Mesembs Robin has a new member and is continuing to fly. One new member would enable the *Crassulaceae* Robin to take off. Anyone interested in sharing knowledge, asking questions and swapping cuttings?

There are many cacti and succulents that we grow for their spines, their architecture or their leaf colour, but flowers are always welcome. You might expect flowers to feature in most of the Robins, but would you expect it in the *Agave* Robin? If, like me, you have never had an *Agave* flower, you cannot but admire Geoff's collection. In the *Agave* Robin, Geoff included photos of his *A. bovicornuta* in flower, but was disappointed that the only other agaves flowering were two *A. parrasana*, earlier on in the year.

Tina particularly likes variegated *Agaves*, and has her plan for looking after them: "With regard to variegates and light I'm quite careful now and leave the bubble wrap up all year, the weather is just too variable for it to be safe to leave them whilst I'm at work. Some of the light-sensitive variegates need bright sun to show their colours but it takes a while to figure out their needs, some have just reverted to green on me – waste of money." "I finally managed to get a variegated *utahensis* – it's LOVELY. It was a chap on Facebook who helped me get it and someone I really didn't know so I suppose I was lucky he wasn't dodgy."

Both Tina and Geoff exhibited *Agaves* at last year's National Show, but paid a price, as Tina wrote: "I had similar damage to one of my plants after the National, it lost all its leaves as it was just too hot. It's recovered now but a difficult choice as if you water large plants too freely before a show they are HEAVY (or should it be heavier) to move and if not enough they get damaged."

Less surprisingly, lots of flowers in the other Robins. In the *Aloe*, *Gasteria* and *Haworthia* Robin, Gareth was rewarded with a couple of flower spikes after repotting his *Aloe ciliaris*.



Fig. 1 *Opuntia cymochila* (Photo: Charles Hope)



Fig. 2 *Opuntia 'Pony'* (Photo: Rob Huntley)

Charles (Cold-Hardy Cacti) included a great selection of photos of his outdoor planting in Canada, including *Opuntia cymochila* (Fig. 1).

Rob (also in Canada), has *Opuntia 'Pony'*, a Jean Wieprecht hybrid, flowering well in his garden (Fig. 2).

In the General Cacti Robin, Mary has the advantage of growing her cacti in Mexico. "This week I was greeted by a display of yellow cacti flowers: *Mammillaria longimamma*, *M. sphaerica* (lightly scented), *Astrophytum myriostigma*, *Leuchtenbergia principis*, *Weingartia longigibba* and *Parodia warasii* were all in full bloom. Also creating a beautiful bouquet of greenish-white flowers was *Mammillaria multidigitata*, 17 stems ringed with blossoms with five more stems loaded with buds." In the same Robin, Neil had cause to be pleased with *Ferocactus pilosus* which has half a dozen buds (Fig. 3). "It's in a nine inch pot and has never flowered before." I am hoping for a photo of the flowers in Neil's next contribution.

I am certainly looking forward to more flower pictures in all the Robins. If you are interested in joining one, let me know. See above for contact details.



Fig. 3 *Ferocactus pilosus* (Photo: Neil Southward)