

# The Hooked Spine

Newsletter of CoronaCactus Nursery LLC.

Volume 1, Issue 03

June 2010

## Arizona Habitat

*Echinomastus erectocentrus* var. *acunensis*

April 3, 2010

By: Darryl Craig

We set out on Good Friday travelling to one of the known locations near Florence, AZ in search of *Echinomastus erectocentrus* var. *acunensis*. These plants are not often seen in collections and are just as scarce in habitat. They require a specialized substrate composed mainly of DG (Decomposed Granite) and populate a very small area. In cultivation this can and should be replicated. An organic free mix using pumice, grit, sand, DG etc., will keep these plants much happier in a pot. Avoid any commercial "Cactus" mix as they all include organic material such as peat, bark, etc.

Our search wasn't an easy one! By the time we found the plants it was close to 3pm, but some did still have partially open flowers. However, even without flowers, the spines on these plants are incredible!

Check out the Plant of the Month article for more info on these plants. We will also have a photo gallery of all the habitat photos on our website. ❖

## The Hooked Spine

Summer Edition

May/June 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 03

Running a little late with this issue...the busy season has been extra busy for us, but in a good way!

We hope spring treated you and your plants well. Lots of flowers and bursts of new growth around here!

We've been extremely busy over the past few months. Expanding our nursery and building our new 20' x 40' greenhouse has taken a bit longer than planned, but it has turned out just the way we wanted it.

We travelled to Arizona for some more habitat exploration. We were specifically looking for the population of *Echinomastus erectocentrus* 'acunensis' near Florence, AZ. We found them and the photo album is on our website.

We also had two 2-day sales in April. The first was the 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 for Green Scene at the Fullerton Arboretum. The second was totally new for us, the Lancaster Poppy Festival. It's a very large festival with many different vendors and it also includes a Farmers Market with fresh local produce.

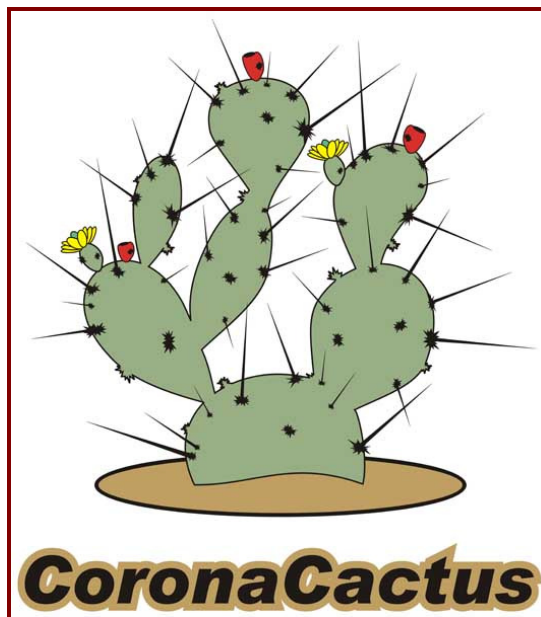
On May 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> we had the annual Gates C&SS Show and Sale at the Jurupa Mountains Cultural Center in collaboration with Green Faire. And on June 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> we were at the San Diego summer Show & Sale at Balboa Park. ❖

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Arizona Habitat - *Echinomastus acunensis*
- 2 Our new Shadehouse / Website Updates
- 2 Plant of the Month - *Echinomastus acunensis*
- 4 Article: Growing from Seed - Part 2
- 5 Photo Gallery

## REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 Calendar of Events for Southern California
- 3 Plant Specials / News



## Our New Shadehouse

June 2010

By: Jennifer Craig

We have finally completed our new 20' x 40' shadehouse! Our busy schedule made this project take a bit longer than we had hoped, but we're quite happy to have it completed now. More photos will be available on our website shortly.

We've loaded it with plants and seedlings, we're ready for the summer season! With this added growing space, we'll be able to offer many more plants. We have over 1000 seedlings growing and many more on the way. Look for some great new plants in the months to come. ❖



## Website Updates

We'll soon be launching a completely new website. The new site will be completely secure for direct online orders. A shopping cart, private customer login and updated plant lists.

Your private information will never be given to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties or used in any other way, this we guarantee 100%. The information is strictly for ordering convenience, as you only need to enter your info once. Future orders will automatically pull up your info, once logged in.

New photo galleries have been added and more will be added as the season gets going. Current new galleries are:

- CoronaCactus Collection: April 2010
  - Shadehouse Build 2010
- Coming soon:
- CoronaCactus Collection: May 2010
  - Arizona Habitat: Echinomastus April 2010

Another new section is the [Photo Contest Page](#). CoronaCactus sponsors the photo contests over at CactiGuide.com and we'll display the winning photos from each month and a link to view all the submissions.

Our seedling specials are going fast! Get them while they're hot. A new batch is being offered in this newsletter issue under *Plant Specials*.

## Plant of the Month

June 2010

*Echinomastus erectocentrus* var. *acunensis*



Read the article at: [www.coronacactus.com/PotM.htm](http://www.coronacactus.com/PotM.htm)

## CactiGuide.com

CactiGuide.com is quickly becoming the authoritative website on the net for the positive identification of the Cactus Family. With the vast number of plants out there, they are always looking for photos of plants to display in the guide. Due credit will be given to the collection, the plant and the photographer.

So if you see a missing photo on the guide and you have that plant in your collection (and it's been positively identified) please contact Daiv at, [daiv@cactiguide.com](mailto:daiv@cactiguide.com)

An archive page has been created on our website for viewing past Newsletters. Current Newsletters will be available a few weeks after release.

[www.coronacactus.com/newsletter.htm](http://www.coronacactus.com/newsletter.htm)

## Plant Specials

Subscribers can take early advantage of these newsletter only specials. Available until the Aug/Sept issue release or as quantities last.

<p><b>Ariocarpus fissuratus</b> (3 yr/old seedlings)</p> <p>Pot Size: 3" Price: <del>\$9.50</del> <b>\$6.50</b></p>	
<p><b>Turbincarpus schmeidickeanus ssp. andersonii</b> (2.5 yr/old seedlings)</p> <p>Pot Size: 2.25" Price: <del>\$8.00</del> <b>\$6.00</b></p>	
<p><b>Coryphantha recurvispina</b> (2 yr/old seedlings)</p> <p>Pot Size: 2.25" Price: <del>\$5.00</del> <b>\$3.00</b></p>	
<p><b>Pyrrhocactus bulbocalyx</b> (2.5 yr/old seedlings)</p> <p>Pot Size: 2.25" Price: <del>\$6.00</del> <b>\$4.00</b></p>	
<p><b>Sclerocactus uncinatus ssp. wrightii</b> (2.5 yr/old seedlings)</p> <p>Pot Size: 2.25" Price: <del>\$6.00</del> <b>\$4.00</b></p>	

### CSSA Annual Show & Sale at the Huntington Botanical Gardens

June marks the month for the CSSA annual show and sale. This is one of the largest events of the year. Many incredible show plants will be on display as well as many plant and pottery vendors. There is also a dinner and auction on Saturday evening. Of course, the Huntington Gardens are open all weekend, a tour you surely can't miss!

The event runs each year in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June.



### CoronaCactus Collection Photo Galleries

We've been working on monthly photo galleries of new growth and flowers from our collection plants. April and May have been uploaded and we're working on June's offerings. These galleries can be found on our website, as well as our Facebook page. Lots a great blooms, including many first timers for us.



### We're now on Facebook

We've recently gotten on the Facebook bus and set up an account. Come join us!

Send a friend request to:  
**CoronaCactus Nursery**



For more information, Plant Sales Lists,  
Cultivation Articles and more, please visit  
our website: [www.coronacactus.com](http://www.coronacactus.com)

Check us out on eBay!  
**CoronaCactusNursery**

Our listings generally start on Tuesday and end on Sunday.  
We offer lower than listed starting prices to give you a chance at some really great deals!



## An Introduction to Growing from Seed

Part 2 – After germination care

By: Darryl Craig

Ok, so we left off last time with getting your seeds sown into pots and getting them situated in your propagator or brightly lit growing area. We'll now discuss the reasons behind using the baggie and dome methods and the care needed to keep your seedlings happy.

### *The Baggie Method:*

By enclosing your pots in baggies it creates a mini-greenhouse for containing humidity and moisture. This is important for germinating seeds and is much easier to accomplish using a baggie. The eventual seedlings need constant warmth and moisture to survive this initial stage. A good starting point and general temperature for this is around 80 degrees F. Using the baggie is a great way to control this. A dedicated heatmat or warming chamber will accomplish this without any other interaction needed. It's a virtual trouble free method, as the pots can be left on their own in the baggies for months without the need to water them or even touch them. After sterilizing the soil and water used initially, it's best to avoid opening the baggies during these first few months. Trust us, we know this is difficult as peeking through the blurry water condensed baggies isn't always enough to curb our curiosity. So take precautions. It's not always devastating, but airborne contaminants can enter the baggies. Algae is not terminal, but can cause the tiny seedlings to slow down in growth. Allowing the baggies to air out and the top surface of the soil to dry out a bit for a few hours per day in a contaminant free environment will curb the algae issue.

The pots can be left in the baggies for 3-4 months for most species of cacti and then gradually acclimated to fresh open air by poking pin holes in the baggies. After about a week, larger holes can be made or simply open a corner of the baggie. At this stage, you'll need to watch them more closely, as you don't want the soil to dry out, but to stay moist (not wet, just moist) An occasional mist spray a few times a day will accomplish this. After another week or so, the baggies can be fully opened and then completely removed a few days later. For most species of cacti, strong, but protected sunlight will be needed. Moving the seedlings out to the greenhouse or windowsill, while still protected from any direct sun is your next move. Leaving the seedlings under lights in the propagator for too long will cause the seedlings to etiolate. Strong light will encourage good growth and spine development. Covering the pots with shade cloth, newspaper, tissue paper, etc. will keep them protected and avoid getting cooked by the sun. After a few weeks you can reduce the amount of shade. At this stage, day and night temperature swings are good for healthy growth. It is now more important than ever to keep the seedlings moist. Again, never wet, but a semi-constant moisture is important. Spray mist watering twice a day with a good soak watering once a week will do the trick. The soil surface can be allowed to dry a little more every few weeks and then the seedlings can be treated a little more like your other plants. This will be around the 6-8 month stage. At 9-10 months of age, the seedlings should be growing nicely and strong enough to go without constant moisture. Although careful attention should still be maintained.

### *The Dome Method:*

This method is for the most part, the same as the baggie method. Instead of placing the pots into baggies, you place them in a tray using a clear plastic dome to cover the entire tray. These tray/dome combos can be purchased at most good garden centers, usually from the Ziffy company. **DO NOT** use the peat pellets or peat pots these might come with, just the tray and dome. Same goes as with the baggies, place the tray in your propagator or windowsill using a heatmat or warming chamber to maintain a constant temperature. The dome will not be completely sealed to the tray, so some air will be able to enter/exit the tray, so maintaining a constant moisture level will require more attention. Depending on your environment, spray misting will be needed on a weekly basis or a little as a few days apart. This is where the extra maintenance comes in using this method.

Generally, you cannot just cover the tray and walk away for months, as you can using the baggie method. However, this method speeds up the acclimation process and less time is devoted to introducing the new seedlings to fresh air. As above using the baggie method, but instead of poking holes in the baggies, you simply prop the dome lid up about 1 inch to introduce fresh air for a few hours per day, slowly increasing the level at which the dome lid is propped up over a week or 2 until you are ready to remove it completely. Careful attention must still be made to ensure the seedlings have a constant moisture level and not to be allowed to dry out too much. Once the dome is completely removed, the tray can be moved out to your greenhouse and introduced to stronger light levels. Using some shade cloth, newspaper, etc for protection, as above still applies.

### *When do I repot these little guys?*

This question can have many different answers. Own thoughts on this is to repot soon enough so the seedlings do not get cramped or deformed, but late enough for them to be strong enough to survive the transplant. Depending on your germination rates and amount of seeds sown in the pot, this can certainly vary. Generally after 1 year the seedlings can be potted up in groups in larger pots with sufficient spacing to avoid crowding as they grow, or put directly into small individual pots. The roots of the seedlings are still quite fragile at this stage, so take extra care when removing them from their germination pots. Allow a few days to a week for recovery and then resume watering starting with spray misting and then moving on to your regular watering methods.

We hope this has been helpful and has enticed you to start growing from seed. Don't get discouraged with failures or mistakes, it's all part of the learning experience. Keep trying we're sure you'll get it!

In general, cacti can be grown from seed to flower in as little as 2-3 years. It may sound like a lot at first, but when you have several batches of seedlings at different stages, time flies by and you'll be proud as heck when that first flower bud appears. ❖

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS: SUMMER 2010

### **JUNE 25-26-27**

CSSA Annual Show & Sale  
Huntington Botanical Gardens  
1151 Oxford Rd. San Marino, CA

### **JULY 23-24-25**

Orange County C&SS Summer Show & Sale  
Fullerton Arboretum  
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton, CA

### **AUGUST 14-15**

25<sup>th</sup> Annual InterCity Show & Sale  
Los Angeles County Arboretum  
301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA

### **SEPTEMBER 4**

HBG Succulent Symposium  
Huntington Botanical Gardens  
1151 Oxford Rd. San Marino, CA

# Gallery Photos



*Echinocereus reichenbachii albispinus*



*Echinocereus viridiflorus corelleii* HK1527



*Echinocactus texensis*



*Eriosyce occulta*



*Pachypodium brevicaule x densiflorum*



*Gymnocactus beguinii*



*Mammillaria hutchisoniana louisea*



*Opuntia camanchica*



*Eriosyce aspillagae*



*Maihueniopsis subterranea*



*Opuntia paraguayensis*



*Cylindropuntia ramosissima*



*Mammillaria deherdtiana*



*Echinocereus coccineus inermis*