



“You cannot be Cereus!”

What’s in a name?

The Macclesfield & East Cheshire branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society have been exhibiting at the annual RHS Tatton Show for over 20 years and achieved considerable success over this time. This year they will be striving for a 5th consecutive Gold Medal, with an exhibit comprising over one hundred mature cacti and succulents from just six member’s private collections. The exhibit will again be judged under the Lindley criteria; an educational exhibit, encompassing elements of Overall Impression, Endeavour, Information/Interpretation, as well as the quality of the plants used.

The theme for this year’s exhibit is ***“You cannot be Cereus!”*** - *What’s in a name?*

Many people have wondered why plants often have the seemingly, unintelligible and unpronounceable names they have. This is particularly true with cacti and other succulents. Etymology is the study of the origin of words, and Botanical Nomenclature is the formal naming of plants. The latter is related to, but distinct from taxonomy which is concerned with the grouping and classification of plants. The plant Kingdom comprises phyla, classes, orders, families, genera and species, and the naming of many genera of succulent plants is clear. For example, the cactus *Copiapoa atacamensis* gets its generic name from a town called Copiapo in Chile, and the Atacama desert region where it is found. The unique cactus *Leuchtenbergia principis* is named after the 3rd Duke of Leuchtenberg (1817-1852) and The succulent genus *Haworthia* is named after Adrian Howarth, a British botanist, and Fellow of the Horticultural Society (1767- 1833).

Taxonomy does not remain static, and modern scientific DNA techniques using genetic markers have enabled taxonomists to determine the relative proximity of one genera or species to another genera or species. Consequently, a new genus might be identified, or an existing genus reclassified. Many cacti and succulents have subsequently lost their historical identities and there have been many name changes. Once there were supposedly 10,000 different species of cacti, which over time and reclassification have been slimmed down to, the generally accepted, 2500 species, and 139 or so genera that we have today.

Find us at PS16, Main Floral Marquee

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