

## Notes on the 2007 Seed Distribution

By Bill Maddams

The Society's remit in the coverage of genera other than *Mammillaria* has never been clearly defined although, in the early days it was taken, tacitly, to be *Coryphanthae*, as defined in Professor Borg's book which was the "bible" in those halcyon days when taxonomy was a seldom heard word. We continue to use this loose definition, in view of its practical convenience, for our annual seed distribution and I will begin by discussing the four species from the allied genera that are listed.

The genus *Ancistrocactus* is not well represented in U.K. collections; *A. scheeri* appears to a limited extent and the remaining species infrequently. To a degree this is because they are intolerant of over-watering; but the use of a well drained compost and a warm, bright position under glass overcomes this problem. As is the case with some *Coryphantha* species sooty mould can occur, but regular spraying with water in the growing season should prevent this problem. A little extra effort with their cultivation will be well rewarded. They are quite strongly spined and, as the generic name implies, at least one of the central spines is hooked. The flowers are greenish yellow and appear in the spring. *A. scheeri* SB 460 comes from Monoclova, Coahuila and will, at maturity, have formed a clump of globose stems. *A. megarhizus* SB 597 from Llera, Tamaulipas has, as the name implies, a very thick tap root and care must be taken to avoid damaging it when re-potting it. For the more faint hearted, both species will grow readily when grafted.

*Thelocactus lloydii* is a very rewarding plant and deserves to be more widely grown. It is one of my favourite species, my mature plant having given me much pleasure over the years. It remains solitary and will eventually reach five or six inches in diameter. The flowers white, tinged pink, appear freely in the spring. This species will tolerate a range of cultivation conditions. SB 113 comes from Salinas, San Luis Potosi. *T. rinconensis nidulans* is often found bearing the name *T. nidulans*, the "Bird's Nest cactus", on account of the strong spines which curve over the apex. Some impressive imported specimens were to be seen in collections twenty or thirty years ago but, happily, have been succeeded by plants raised from seed. The flowers, opening in April and May, are white to pale yellow.

Moving on to the genus *Mammillaria*, all the items are documented seed and come from north western Mexico, many from the river basins on the western slopes of the Sierra Madre Occidental that drain into the Gulf of California. The area was explored somewhat superficially sixty to seventy years ago, because of transport problems, by Howard Gentry and Robert Craig and has subsequently been sadly neglected until very recently. Happily, German *Mammillaria* enthusiasts are greatly interested in the area and are undertaking detailed studies; which are of value to both plants-persons and botanists. Foremost among them are Helmut Rogozinski and Wolfgang Plein, leading members of the German *Mammillaria* Society and we are greatly indebted to them for the gift of the seed now on offer.

*M. canelensis* was quite readily available in my earlier days as a *Mammillaria* enthusiast, although that does not appear to be the case at present. My plants suggested three well defined variants, namely plants with yellow spines and yellow flowers, with yellow spines and carmine flowers and red-brown spines and carmine flowers. The available information for three of the four Rogozinski plants relates solely to flower colour, with no details on the spination. Rog 648 with yellow flowers comes from Témán-Chinepas, Chihuahua and Rog 649, also with yellow flowers, but probably different spination, from south east of Chinipas. Rog 654, with red flowers, is from 8 km north east of Canelas, Chihuahua. Rog 651, without flower details, is from Chinipas-Santa Ana, Chihuahua. Wolfgang Plein tells me that he has also seen plants in the wild with orange and with pink flowers, so Rog 651 might prove very interesting.

*M. craigii* comes from the southern end of the distribution of the straight spined species in the Sonora-Sinaloa-Chihuahua triangle and it is clearly allied to the *M. sonorensis*, not the *M. standleyi* group of species. It is distinctive, although the variability has yet to be established. My two plants bearing this name do differ somewhat. The larger one, undocumented, is about seven inches in diameter and some twenty years of age, and remains solitary. The radial and central spines are not well differentiated, except for their length, as both are dark brown and strongly ascending. My second plant, about six inches in diameter is R 1585, from Samachic, Chihuahua. The centrals and radials are easily distinguishable; the former are dark and the latter white, and almost horizontal. Both plants produce carmine flowers freely in April and May. Rog 637 hails from Kivare-La-Bufa, Chihuahua, and may well provide more useful information on this species.

I always tend to associate *M. densispina* with the central region of Mexico, north of the capital, but it does have quite a wide distribution area encompassing the states of San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Durango and Jalisco. In his monograph John Pilbeam shows a plant, with reddish brown central spines, he saw in Jalisco, without giving any locality details. Rog 506 comes from near Las Canoas, Jalisco and should be very useful in providing more information on the variability of this species.

*M. floresii* is little known and, possibly because of this, has suffered at the hands of conservative taxonomists. Helmut Rogozinski and Wolfgang Plein are prepared to defend it until a fuller assessment of the taxa of this area is available and my view is similar. From the viewpoint of the plants-person it is worthy of a place in any collection on account of the white axillary wool, which acts as a perfect background for the pinkish-magenta flowers. There is an excellent illustration on page 660 of the two volume Reppenhagen monograph. Rog 230 comes from the Rio Mayo, near San Bernardo, Sonora, and Rog 690 from

San Bernar-do-Los Algodones, Sonora.

*M. gasseriana* has featured in several articles in recent issues and I don't pro-pose to add to what has been said except to say that the plant Helmut Rogozin-ski regards as *M. gasseriana* he now accepts is the same as the one called *M. stella de tacubaya* by W.A. Fitz Maurice. Hence, members should attach the Rogozinski field numbers to their labels and which epithet they add is their own choice! Do not be dissuaded from growing them on this count. The plants are very charismatic, with interlacing white radial spines and one or more brown or black hooked centrals, shown to perfection in Fig. 365 of the Pilbeam mono-graph. Rog 006 comes from Mina Navidad, Durango and Rog 620 from Villa Insurgentes, Zacatecas.

In his description of *M. lindsayi*, in 1940, Dr Craig reported the central spines as golden brown to somewhat reddish. More recently, in his monograph, John Pil-beam has added 'or dark brown', quite justifiably in my view, as this seems to be the prevalent colour of plants now in cultivation. This species should be in every collection, as it produces its yellow flowers in April and May. Rog 676 is from Minas Sancillo, Sinaloa and Rog 681 from Guiro Cobra de Los Molinas, Sinaloa, the type locality.

*M. longiflora* needs no introduction. What is interesting is that earlier reports have noted its occurrence at various sites in the State of Durango, whereas Rog 707 comes from Tomachic, Chihuahua, which is appreciably further to the north.

*M. marksiana* has been rather readily available for quite some years and for much of this time plants from various sources have been alike as two peas in a pod, with their bright yellow spines. However, more recently, nursery men have offered plants with spines of a more orange hue, Lau 635 being an example. This variability is undoubtedly a consequence of this species having been located over a wider area. Whereas the original Schwarz plants came from the western Sierra Madre Occidental in Sinaloa, Lau 635 is located at Topia, in Durango. Alfred Lau commented that the spines of L 635 are very different to those of plants at the type locality and as Rog 515 also come from that area it should be closer to Lau 635 than to the familiar yellow spined species, and should prove very attractive.

*M. maycobaensis*, an unpublished name, is something of a mystery plant. It was mentioned very briefly by Professor Shreier in an article on page 40 of Vol-ume 27 of Kakteen und andere Sukkulente (1976). He provides a black and white illustration of a rather large globular plant with long central spines and abundant white axillary wool. In a brief note in 'A new review of Mammillaria names', David Hunt attaches the Lau 782 field number to it and the plant that I have had for about fifteen years is so identified. However, in the lists of Lau field numbers given by the German Mammillaria Society and John Pilbeam the name *M. wrightii* v. *wilcoxii* appears against this number. My plant, about six inches in diameter and solitary, has two or three dark brown centrals and occa-sional weaker light brown radials, but very little axillary wool, possibly because it has not been in a bright enough position. My provisional verdict is that it is fairly close to *M. sonorensis*. Hopefully, Rog 222, which comes from Maycoba, on the border between Sonora and Sinaloa, will shed some light on the situation.

Leaving aside taxonomic matters, *M. meridiorosei* is an interesting taxon be-cause of its range of distribution. It grows at a number of sites in New Mexico and reappears much further south, at Yecora in southeast Sonora, close to the border with Chihuahua. My experience is that this outlier presents fewer prob-lems in cultivation than its northern siblings, but produces its charismatic flow-ers equally freely I commend Rog 698 from Yecora. In the absence of detailed knowledge about *M. sp. aff. miegeana*, I will comment on the basis of *M. miegeana*, which I know well. It is the most northerly of the straight spined Sonoran species which was described as recently as 1972. It is distinctive and at-tractive, with a globular body. The tubercles are quite tightly packed and are largely obscured by the whitish radial spines, which are more prominent than the two shorter and darker central spines. It flowers well with attractive carmine blooms given a bright position in the greenhouse. The seed, collected by Wolf-gang Kruger, is from Preso Novilla, Sonora.

Twenty or thirty years ago *M. pringlei*, *M. rhodantha* ssp. *pringlei* for the con-servatively minded, was much sought after but, more recently, it seems to have lost its popularity. This is to be regretted as, with its long bright yellow spines which curl over the apex, it is by far the most charismatic taxon of the *M. rhod-antha* complex. The seed, from Konnie Schatthe for which we do not yet have a field number, is from plants at Ocotlan, Laguna Chapala, Jalisco, away from the main distribution area.

*M. senilis* needs no introduction and will always be sought by enthusiasts, de-spite its disinclination to flower for many of us. Rog 514 comes from Santiago Papasquiaro-Topica, Durango and Rog 565 from Las Canoas, Jalisco, a well documented locality.

Rog 641 and Rog 642 are probably related. The former from El Divisadero, Bar-ranca del Cobre, Chihuahua has red flowers and has been given the name *M. lindsayi* v. *rubriflora* by Hills. Likewise, Rog 642 from Areponapuchi, Barranca del Cobre, Chihuahua, with yellow flowers has been named *M. lindsayiv. cobrensis* by Hills but a degree of uncertainty attaches to these taxa, particularly the one with red flowers and its relationship to *M. craigii*. This is probably why Hel-mut Rogozinski does not attach names to his two field numbers. Leaving aside the matter of the precise names, the two plants in my collection with Hills names are attractive, with white axillary wool and quite strong central spines, those of *M. lindsayi* v. *rubriflora* being reddish brown and those of *M. lindsayi* v. *cobrensis* are of a darker brown hue. This may provide a guide to Rog 514 and Rog 565.

The two lots of seed of *M. sp. Temoris* are, undoubtedly, the highlights of what is a very good list. The plants in question were first seen by Marion and Rudi Schumacher, and described in MAMMILLARIA AfM 1/2003, with an English translation in this Journal of November 2004, from which I quote "After a few hours drive [along a road from Bahuichivo to Temoris, and then on to Chinipas] and passing through the river several times, we saw, about 20 km northeast of Temoris on a high rock massif overgrown with pines and Agaves, large clusters of dreamlike, beautiful Mammillarias. The bodies appeared almost white with copious wool in the flowering area. The colour of the flowers was bright red". The colour plates on page 43 of this issue show two superb examples of these dreamlike plants, one solitary and the other a magnificent clump. I find it difficult to add to this recommendation. Rog 645 comes from between Temoris and Chinipas and Rog 653 from between Bahuichivo and Temoris, Chihuahua.

*M. standleyi* is the doyen of the straight spined species in the Sonora-Sinaloa-Chihuahua triangle, having been described by Britton and Rose in 1923 from plants collected on the slopes of the Sierra de Alamos, near La Aduana. Plants are of a pleasing appearance, compact globular (it can make large clumps in habitat, as I saw in May 1969), and of somewhat slow growth. The dozen or so whitish radial spines plus the white axillary wool, almost conceal the closely packed tubercles. There are one or two reddish brown central spines, but they are not particularly conspicuous. The carmine flowers appear in April and May. So far so good. When Helmut Rogozinski and Wolfgang Plein visited the area they found one shallow valley containing plants of this species, some with carmine flowers and some with white blooms and Rog 646 is from this population. What proportion of plants will produce pale blooms, hitherto unrecorded so far as I am aware, should emerge in, probably, four years, given the co-operation of those who acquire the seed. You are part of an interesting experiment!

In my judgement the standing of *M. tesopacensis* in relation to *M. sonorensis* has yet to be resolved unequivocally, and the field studies of Helmut Rogozinski and Wolfgang Plein could well provide important information. The two are certainly related, but I find *M. tesopacensis* easy to identify on account of its one long, strong central spine, dark brown tipped black. The flowers may be cream or carmine which lead Dr Craig to describe the variety *M. tesopacensis v. rubriflora*. I suspect that this latter is now the more common in cultivation. Rog 693 is from between Rosano de Jesopaco and Movas, Sonora.