

Talking about Sulcorebutias - 3

The collections of Sulcorebutia enthusiasts have been enriched in recent years by a range of plants introduced under the collection numbers of Heinz Swoboda. John Pilbeam takes a closer look at a few of these newer introductions. Photography by Bill Weightman.

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**Sulcorebutia
mariana HS 15
collected by
Heinz Swoboda in
Department
Cochabamba,
province Mizque,
Bolivia**

Another spring has sprung, and this year most of my Sulcorebutias responded with abundant flowers to the clearest and cleanest glass they had had for some years. This came about because last year I replaced my old, collapsing cedar wood greenhouse where they are kept with a new aluminium one. The effect on the spination and colouring of the bodies has been



dramatic too, the extra light bringing out darker body colouring and stronger spine development all round. I do not really recommend such drastic action to improve the quality of your Sulcorebutias, but maybe the glass could do with a clean?

Some of the more interesting of recently acquired species have flowered too, and some are starting to show their individuality. In particular some Heinz Swoboda collection numbers have produced some beautiful, different looking plants, apart that is from all those numbers I have acquired which have been merely repeats of former collections by others, which are many. But I am not cribbing about this, as the reward for taking the risk of them being the same, is worth it when some turn out to be so good. HS 151 in particular has produced flowers which match well the dark body colouring and tight, fine spination. They are deep magenta-purple with a depth of colour I have seen only in some of the small forms of *S. crispata* (KK 1266 and the like).

It is unfortunate that this extremely collectable find by Swoboda has as yet been undescribed. Its companion HS 152, from Bolivia, Department Cochabamba, province Campero, was described as *S. augustinii* by Hentzschel in the journal of the Dutch and Belgian society, *Succulenta* 68 (7/8):145-153(1989). *S. augustinii* is too a beautifully dark coloured plant with neat, fine pectinate spines (cream compared with the black of HS 151) and with the same dark magenta-purple flower as HS 151. Reference is made in the original description to the neighbouring HS 151 and also to the larger growing, longer spined HS 100, which has a lighter coloured flower with white throat. All three of these are worth looking out for from a collector's point of view, but with four years gone by now since the description of *S. augustinii* it seems as though the other two may languish as the eternal bridesmaids; they deserve better.

But not so with HS 15, a much earlier collection, from Department Cochabamba, province Mizque, which was described by Swoboda as *S. mariana* in the same journal earlier in the same year (*Succulenta* 68(1):1,3-8.1989). This also has dark body colouring and short, pectinate spination, but with clear red flowers. It has just flowered too, and it is another very individual looking plant.

There are white flowered versions available or reported of a number of species, including *S. crispata*, *S. flavissima*, *S. breviflora* and *S. cylindrica*. The last two are already known with both magenta and yellow flowers of course. I have yet to be rewarded with blooms on my white-flowered plants of *S. flavissima* and *S. breviflora*, but *S. crispata* and the so-called white flowered *S. cylindrica*, HS 44a, have obliged in abundance. The plants acquired of HS 44a have proved to be anomalous, and the application of this name to them is at least questionable. I have also seen it referred to as a

**Sulcorebutia sp.
HS 151 - affiliated
to *S. augustinii***



white-flowered *S. vizcarrae*; it forms a larger, more globular, early offsetting body than normally seen in *S. cylindrica*, and the spines are a lot stronger too.

I have two distinct versions of HS 44a. The first, which has grown powerfully to 10cm tall and 8cm wide and is already offsetting, has strong, white spines very much in the habit of *S. vizcarrae*, and it has produced a wealth of clear, pearly-white flowers, with no hint of any other colouring in the petals. The other is a darker

spined plant, slower and smaller growing, so far anyway, with flowers in a delicate shade of pale pink. Either is worth house room.

Coming back to HS 152, *S. augustinii*, I would dearly like to have included a picture of this species in flower too, and will do sometime. My plant of this is now in a 5" dwarf pot and growing well with some 50 heads, but I have had nary a flower as yet - am I the only one having trouble blooming this species?



**Sulcorebutia sp.
HS 44a
distributed as a
white-flowered form
of *S. cylindrica*
or is it possibly a
form of *S. vizcarrae* ?**

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