Fig. 1. S. *glomeriseta* is a dependable plant with a long flowering period. Flowers yellow.

MY FLOWERING SULCOS

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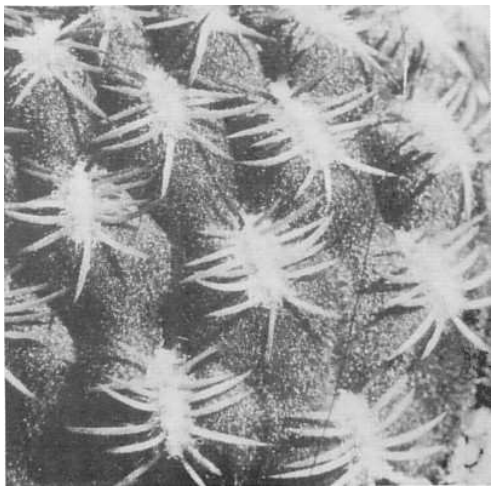
The genus *Sulcorebutia* Backbg. has a large number of species with beautiful flowers. After observing and photographing them at Tegelberg's Cactus Garden, I began collecting sulcos. The trouble was that in my collection they refused to flower. Why bother with sulcorebutias, even though the plants are attractive, when their close cousins from the genus *Rebutia* flower so profusely. Besides, the flowers resemble each other.

If the flowers are similar, is there sufficient difference to separate them into two genera? Backeberg thought so, proposed the genus *Sulcorebutia* and transferred some rebutias to the new genus. *Sulcorebutia steinbachii* (Werd.) Backbg. was chosen as the type plant. There are morphological characters which are readily discernible and make it easy to distinguish between the two genera (Fig. 1). Sulcos have areoles that are long, narrow and sunken and tubercles that taper obliquely upwards and are elongated, or at least not uniformly circular. Rebutias have round tubercles and round or elliptical areoles. There are other differences which are less obvious. One characteristic that works for me is flowering. If it is flowering, it is not a sulcorebutia.

Two species restored my faith in the genus. They are S. *glomeriseta* (Card.) Ritt. (Fig. 2) and S. *menesesii* (Card.) Buin. & Don. (Fig. 3). They flower profusely, their yellow flowers heralding the final onslaught of winter and the coming of spring. One plant of S. *menesesii* flowered in December, 1978, while the other waited until Jan. 28, to begin its show. March had not seen the end of flowers and new buds were growing rapidly. S. *glomeriseta* began flowering in January last year but has decided to wait until the end of March this year.

Culture is easy. They are in a one combination of commercial potting mix and coarse decomposed granite. Their position in the greenhouse is next to the glass on the south side. (This is in Riverside, California.) More water is given during their growing period and occasionally in winter. For the most part, watering is irregular and fertilizing is infrequent. In spite of, or perhaps, because of this neglect, they are doing quite well.

Fig. 2. Note the narrow, elongated, sunken 1/8 ” long areoles of S. *arenacea* (Card.) Ritt. The tubercles taper upward. These are typical characters of the genus *Sulcorebutia* Backbg.



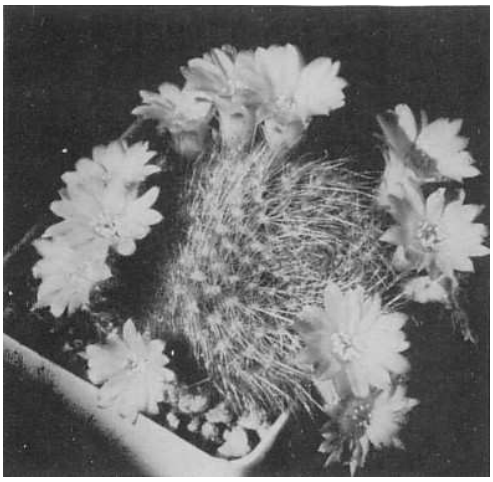


Fig. 3. S. menesesii is also dependable as these 13 flowers will attest. Flowers yellow.

Both were acquired only a couple of months apart in 1974. S. *glomeriseta* was one inch in diameter and ¾'' tall. It has now (1970) formed a nice oval clump that is 4 X 3 ½" and 2 ¼" high. The largest head is 1 ¾" in diameter and 2 ¼" high. S. *menesesii*, when acquired, was one inch tall and 1 ¼" diameter. Its oval clump is 5 ½ x 3 ¾" and 2 ¾" high. The largest head is 1 ½" in diameter and 2 ¾" high. With my crowded conditions, that growth is rapid enough.

Sulcorebutias are ideal for anyone with limited space. They are small, globular or short cylindrical and form offsets readily. For many they flower without difficulty. It appears that this year even mine are going to put on a worthy display . . . probably to repay me for repotting.

With approximately 54 species and their varieties to choose from, it is difficult to decide which ones to get to start a sulcorebutia collection. If you like yellow flowers, I recommend you start with S. *glomeriseta* and S. *menesesii*.

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