

Succulent Karoo

Chronicles

A Newsy Letter from Calitzdorp, South Africa
for Succulent Plant Enthusiasts Everywhere

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Namibia is a land of startling contrasts. Only a stone's throw from the arid Namib desert, flamingoes by the thousands wade in the shallows of Walvis Bay along with several other species of shore birds.

Upcoming Events in and near Calitzdorp

October 30 – Next meeting of the Calitzdorp succulent club.

November 26 – Apricot Harvest Festival at The Station.

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Editors' Message

Our trip to Namibia started out great. Buck and I visited the famous locality for *Welwitschia mirabilis* in the Namib desert and saw several other interesting succulents in the same area. On our way over the mountain pass from Windhoek to Swakopmund we spotted several very large, stubby trees growing near the road. When we stopped to check them out we discovered they were *Cyphostemma currorii* about to come into leaf. We came across *Moringa ovalifolia* in the same manner.

But plants in habitat were not the only exciting finds. Our B&B hosts in Windhoek (Roswitha and Sigi Horsthemke) introduced us to their friend, the well-known succulent guide Inge Pehlemann-Brase. We spent several hours with Inge in her fabulous garden and greenhouse, looking at picture albums full of blooming succulents (especially stapeliads), and going through her vast collection of seeds to select some to bring home and propagate. Inge says "Hello" to her many friends in California.

However there is one bad memory we will have for some time. Walking back from dinner to our guesthouse in Swakopmund, I was mugged by a couple juvenile delinquents. One of them cut the strap of my purse and they took off running, jumped into a waiting car and were gone before we could do anything about it. There I was in Namibia with no passport, drivers license, bank cards, etc. What a disaster! We spent the next week in Windhoek waiting for my temporary passport to be processed so I could get back into South Africa and home. Our two-week trip turned into three.

On the way home we stopped in at a nursery in Vanrynsdorp to pick out some new succulents for the garden and buy a selection of seeds for our upcoming seed workshop at the next succulent club meeting. Summer is heating up and so far has been very dry. However our gardens - veggie, olives, and grapes - are growing well with supplemental water. Our succulent garden is beginning to go into estivation for the hot summer months, but several plants such as *Aloe karasburgensis*, *Tylecodons*, and *Sarcocaulons* are sending out their summer blooms.

Buck and Yvonne Hemenway



This is one of the iconic plants we travelled to Namibia to see. *Cyphostemma currorii*.



The strange and other-worldly *Welwitchia mirabilis* grows in the Namib desert sand, relying on ocean fog to survive. These plants are actually conifers and one particularly large one is estimated to be over 5,000 years old!



One of two *Hoodia* species we found growing on rock outcrops in the "Welwitchia plains".



Dry riverbeds sometimes hold desert jewels like this *Helichrysum roseo-riveum* - "Namibia edelweiss".



A view of Swakopmund ocean front from the jetty.