NEW ZEALAND INTRODUCTION

Recently New Zealand hosted the biennial Australasian Convention in New Plymouth on the south east of the North Island. There were representatives from all States of the mainland present and a wide range of topics had been arranged for the talks over two days. Formal visits to collections were arranged and there were many, many informal visits after it was finished. Our hosts did a wonderful job with the programme, the food and the accommodation all with friendliness and good fun at the core. I could write more of what we did and what we saw but I will let the pictures at the end of this edition tell the story. Our thanks go to all the organisers and helpers and we look forward to all gathering again in Perth in 2018.

FRONT COVER

Aloe polyphylla in flower in a garden in New Zealand. This was quite a popular plant in nearly all of the gardens we visited during the NZ convention. Not only popular but quite common.

Photo by Editor

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by Wayne Robinson
Pachyphytum species cultivated in Australia

by Noelene Tomlinson with thanks to Margrit Bischofberger of www.crassulaceae.ch

The Greek words “pachys” means thick, stout, for the usually thick, rounded leaves, and “phyton” means plant. There are only about 20 species, from rocky areas in Mexico. Some species have leaves covered with a powdery coating called farina, which conserves moisture and protects them from intense sun. They can be slow-growing. Their flowers were probably pollinated by hummingbirds. Scale-like petal appendages are a characteristic of Pachyphytum flowers. You have to cut a flower to find them inside at the base of the petals. Sometimes the appendages are passed on to the hybrids, sometimes not. Pachyphytums are related to Echeverias, but they tend to be more heat and cold tolerant, frost hardy if kept dry.

P. bracteosum has chunky rosettes of elongated slightly pointed leaves to 3 x 2 cm, covered with a greyish-white bloom. P. bracteosum is closely related to P. oviferum. Young plants of the two species can only identified correctly when you compare the flowers, otherwise they cannot be told apart. Older plants of P. bracteosum differ from P. oviferum by longer stems as well as bigger leaves. The Latin species’ name refers to its conspicuous bracts.

P. caesium is a much smaller plant than P. bracteosum, it has chunky rosettes of silver-grey leaves to 4 x 2 cm with rounded ends. The Latin species’ name refers to its habitat, in the Mexican state of Aguascalientes (state of the “hot waters”), in a canyon with the Spanish name “Arroyo Agua Zarca” that means “bluish water canyon”. “Zarca” is Spanish for “bluish”, and in Latin this colour is called “caesium”. Local people told visiting botanist Bill Baker about the plants and led him to them in July 1989. He took some back for study by Kimnach and Moran, who published the species in 1993 in the Cactus and Succulent Journal (U.S.) Vol 65.

P. coeruleum is known only from cultivation. It has decumbent stems, sometimes branched at the base, leaves are densely clustered, thick, almost cylindrical, and pointed. The Latin name refers to the bluish colour of the frosted leaves. This is a small plant, rosette only to 5 cm diameter, with yellowish green flowers.

P. compactum has densely clustering rosettes of glaucous blue-grey cylindrical leaves and red to orange flowers on 40 cm long stems. The Latin name refers to the growth habit of the plant. It is distinguished from all other species in the genus by the markings on the upper leaf surface resulting from the pressure of neighbouring leaves, a feature passed on to its hybrid, xPachyveria ‘Bea’ (see Spinette June 2012).
P. fittkaui has thick yellow-green cylindrical leaves, and deep pink flowers. It was named to honour Catholic Father (Padre) Hans Fittkau who loved succulent plants, and was a great help to botanists in finding them in the wild, especially in central Mexico. This is one of the tallest species of the genus, stems often go prostrate; it branches from the base. Inflorescences are over 30 cm tall! This Pachyphytum grows on south-facing cliffs east of San Luis de la Paz, and was described by Reid Moran in 1971.

What is called "P. fittkaui" in Australia is not the true species, above all because of the bifurcate inflorescence which is impossible in genus Pachyphytum and also because of the uniformly red petals, and the too greenish sepals and bracts. Whether it is a hybrid is doubtful because there are no features clearly indicating the influence of another species. My plants measure to 23 cm diameter, leaves to 10 x 3 cm. Reid Moran’s description of the species has rosettes of 10 – 20 cm in diameter and leaves 3 – 9.5 x 2 – 4 cm.

P. glutinicaule (ISI 604 in 1969, and 92-57 in 1992) has chunky rosettes 7 – 12 cm diameter of glaucous silver-grey leaves about 5 x 2 cm, glutinous (sticky, whence its name) stems to 30 cm tall, and pink flowers, its habitat is in Hidalgo, Mexico. The leaves of this species somewhat resemble those of the more difficult to grow P. oviferum, differ in having tiny, sharp tips, and are less thick. Like most species in this genus, you can propagate it from detached leaves. This plant was labelled P. oviferum at RBG Melbourne, but it is not that, even the leaves show it is not that species, and the flowers are quite different.

P. hookeri (ISI 550 in 1968) has grey-green pointed leaves to 3.5 cm long, 1.5 cm wide and 1 cm thick, and pink flowers in early summer. The name honours Sir William Jackson Hooker (1785 – 1865), the first director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1841 to 1865. He collected specimens from all parts of the world, and made Kew a focus for the collection of botanical specimens from Australia.
P. kimnachii was described and published by Reid Moran in 1967; the name honours Myron Kimnach. It is a big and attractive Pachyphytum with a rosette diameter of 15 cm, leaves to 8 x 3 cm. Flowers are pink inside, distinguished from all other species of Pachyphytum by the longer and more acutely pointed petals. It is from the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí where it grows on moss-covered rocks in pine-oak forest; only known from the type locality.

P. longifolium - the "long leaved" - but the name is rather misleading, this species has by far not the longest leaves, they are only to 4 x 1.5 cm and may show a violet hue. Inflorescences, and flowers are white to rose-coloured, similar to those of P. bracteosum, to which it is closely related. It is from eastern Mexico (Hidalgo) growing on steep rocks of the gorge. Dr. Carl Purpus found P. longifolium in 1904 and took plants to Dr. J. N. Rose in Washington.

P. oviferum: The Latin word “ovum” means “egg” and “fero” means “to carry”. Common names are Moonstones or Sugared Almonds. The egg-shaped leaves are to 3.5 x 2.5 cm, closely congested and covered in a white bloom. The flowers are white outside and red inside, flowering time is November here. It is frost-hardy if kept dry, and slow growing. Avoid water on its leaves, otherwise the white bloom is washed off. Its habitat is rock cliffs in San Luis Potosí, northern Mexico; closely related to P. bracteosum. There is also a variegated form. It is a parent of the hybrids xPachyveria ‘Elaine’ and Pachyphytum coeruleum x P. oviferum which are grown in Australia, both with yellow flowers.

P. viride: The Latin name of this species means “green” and refers to leaves of a light green-yellow, with no farina on them. This is a large species, stems to 50 cm long or - if pendent - to 1 m long, leaf size is variable, 6 - 10 x 1.5 - 3 cm and to 17 mm thick. The flowers resemble those of P. bracteosum.
P. werdermannii was discovered in 1933 by Dr Erich Werdermann (1892 – 1959, German botanist in Berlin), described by Dr Karl von Poellnitz in 1937, and distributed as ISI 551 in 1968. Long, creeping stems with fleshy glaucous-pruinose leaves are arranged in loose rosettes to a diameter of 15 cm, inflorescences are to 25 cm long. The flowers resemble those of P. bracteosum but the petal tips are slightly more outcurved. P. werdermannii is variable in leaf shape, leaf colour and overall habit.

Some Pachyphytum hybrids grown in Australia

P. ‘Blue Haze’ has a rosette diameter to about 11 cm, leaves are to 5.5 x 3.5 cm the pink flowers are produced in spring. It has been sold as P. bracteosum, however it is not this species but a hybrid of the latter with P. glutincaule, hence its somewhat sticky stem.

P. coeruleum x P. oviferum has densely clustering chunky rosettes of glaucous silver-grey leaves, and yellow flowers. In Queensland sun at Paul Forster’s, it is a lovely blue colour.
**xPachysedum ‘Franz Venz’:** This hybrid of *Sedum lucidum* x *Pachyphytum werdermannii* has loose rosettes of pale green leaves 5 x 1 cm, and pinkish cup-shaped flowers, in October or November. The thinner form of *Sedum lucidum* would have been used.

Paul Forster said: “This was an unnamed hybrid (of the cross as indicated), probably made by Charles Uhl and grown by David Cumming in Brisbane. Frank Venz obtained the plant from David when he emigrated to South Africa in 1994. I obtained it from Frank who was in ill health at the time and is now deceased”.

**xPachysedum ‘Ganzhou’** can have several stems to 25 cm long from the base, thick pink leaves to 6 x 1.5 cm, and pink flowers in spring. The probable *Sedum* parent – *S. craigii* – is much smaller.

I only describe a few of our *xPachyverias* because I included most in 2012, published in the January 2013 Spinette.

**x Pachyveria ‘Calypso’:** Origin and parentage unknown; named and described by Margrit Bischofberger, published in the Sedum Society Newsletter of January 2009. Rosettes are to about 11 cm diameter.
‘Flambeau’ would probably be an Echeveria with orange or yellowish flowers. Pachyphytum fittkaui is a smaller plant than xPachyveria ‘Flambeau’, which means the Echeveria (species or hybrid) involved must have been a fairly big plant. It is named ‘Flambeau’ after a torch, especially of thick waxed wicks.

xPachyveria ‘Glaucia’ with rosettes to a diameter of 14 cm, leaves to 7 x 1.5 cm, is an old hybrid, first sold in 1926 by Friedrich Haage and Karl Schmidt, the parentage given as Pachyphytum hookeri x an unknown Echeveria species. Probably it had originated in their German nursery. In his article “Echeveria Hybrids” (CSJ US, 1934, pages 53-56), Eric Walther listed it with this parentage.

xPachyveria x Scheideckeri ‘Albocarinata’, described by Joop van Keppel in 1962, has irregular, often cylindrical shaped leaves which are shorter and smaller than those of xP. ‘Scheideckeri’, somehow misshapen and strongly pruinose (has a whitish bloom). The flower colour is paler than with xP. ‘Scheideckeri’ and the flowers too are mostly misshapen. This plant can only be propagated from offsets.

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