

The Bulb Garden



~Gardening with Bulbs ~

Board of Directors

Nhu Nguyen, President
xeranthem@gmail.com

John Wickham, Vice President jwickham@sbccglobal.net

Kathy Andersen, Secretary
ksa2006@verizon.net

Arnold Trachtenberg, Treasurer
arnold140@verizon.net

Jane McGary, Membership
janemcgary@earthlink.net

Albert Stella, BX Director
amstella1017@gmail.com

Jennifer Hildebrand, Publications
theotherjen8@yahoo.com

Volunteers

PBS list: David Pilling (List Administrator), Eugene Zielinski, Diane Whitehead

PBS wiki: David Pilling (Wiki Editor) Martin Grantham, Mary Sue Ittner, Nhu Nguyen, David Pilling,

The Bulb Garden: Robin Hansen, Editor; Jennifer Hildebrand, Co-editor

The PBS Directory: Jane McGary, Editor

Publications Distribution: Arnold Trachtenberg

What's Inside...

- > *Habranthus sanavirone*: Environmental Study of a Rare and Endangered Species from Central Argentina, by Mariano Saviello, p. 2
- > Growing *Albuca* species: A Compendium, p. 5
- > New BX/SX Director Albert Stella, p. 11

BX/SX Director Dell Sherk Retiring

Mary Sue Ittner

Mary Sue has been with PBS since its beginning and served as list administrator for more than ten years, helping to create and administrate the Wiki during that time as well. She continues to help with the Wiki.

The BX, short for the Bulb Exchange, originated in 1998 on the International Bulb Society's online forum as a way for members of the forum to share their excess bulbs and seeds with other members in a timely fashion. Dell Sherk was in charge of that distribution from 1999-2002. In 2002 the Pacific Bulb Society was created. In July of that year Dell took on the management of the BX for the new organization. Since the PBS list was available to anyone regardless of whether they were a member of the Pacific Bulb Society, it was determined that Pacific Bulb Society members should have a benefit for joining and participation in the BX became one of the benefits. Dell continued to remain in charge from then until the end of 2017, 15½ years, making changes along the way, learning from his experience.

Dell once explained how it worked. He asked for the plant material (bulbs, seedlings, seed, cormels, bulbils, etc.) to be clean and clearly labeled and sent to him. There was no need to separate things into portions because when he distributed them he determined the quantities by the demand for each item. When he received donations, he would wait until he had enough for an offering.



Photo of Dell Sherk provided by Mary Sue Ittner.

He made every effort to assure that the plant material was kept happy and alive both when it was in his possession and while it was traveling to its new home. Once he felt he had accumulated enough items he would list them and send out an email. Interested members were to send an email to him with the number of the BX in the subject line, the items they requested, and their mailing address. Since the supply of offerings was often exhausted very quickly with multiple requests frequently for the same item, he tried to offer items on different days of the week at different times so more people would have a chance to get what they wanted. And he tried to divide the bounty fairly, not just give everything to the first person who responded.

Continued on page 3

Habranthus sanavirone*:*Environmental Study of a Rare and Threatened Species from Central Argentina**

By Mariano Saviello. A Mary Sue Ittner Grant recipient, he is a biotechnologist (molecular biologist) who works in the pharmaceutical industry in Argentina. Mariano's preferred field of study is bulbs and he is focused on South American species.

Habranthus sanavirone Roitman, J. A. Castillo, G. Tourn & Uria (Amaryllidaceae) is a very rare and endangered *Habranthus* species described in 2007, where it is found in sandy soils of central Argentina. This unique species resembles *H. robustus* in size, but can be easily distinguished by the absence of bulblets (vs. presence of bulblets in *H. robustus*), by its glaucous leaves and by its recurved light yellow tepals with purple bases (vs. pink flowers in *H. robustus*), features not found in any other species of the genus. Aside from these, the distribution of the two species is also

completely different: While *H. robustus* inhabits southeastern Brazil and northeastern Argentina, *H. sanavirone* is endemic to the hills surrounding San Marcos Sierra, in the central Argentina province of Córdoba, at 700 to 900 meters (2200 to 2800 feet). The specific epithet is taken from the indigenous tribe, the "Sanavirones", (also known as "Salavinones") that used to inhabit this area in the province of Córdoba (Argentina) during the 15th century. This ethnic group was part of the "Pámpidos", aboriginal inhabitants with a very interesting mixture of Amazonian and Andean genetic and cultural elements.



Fig. 1a: *Habranthus sanavirone* (Amaryllidaceae): bulb, leaves (glaucous) and flower. **Fig. 1b:** Frontal view of the flower with the characteristic recurved light yellow tepals with purple bases. **Fig. 1c:** Side view of the flower of *H. sanavirone*. Pictures: Germán Roitman.

The genus *Habranthus* belongs to the family Amaryllidaceae with ca. 25 to 35 species (Herbert, 1837; Baker, 1888; Sealy, 1937; Arroyo-Leuenberger, 1996) that are primarily from Argentina, Chile, southern Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay; however, five of these species are from Mexico and one is from the United States (*Habranthus tubispathus* (L'Heritier) Traub, probably introduced from South America). *Habranthus* belongs to the tribe Zephyrantheae (Traub, 1963), but Meerow et al. (1999) classified *Habranthus* in tribe Hippeastreae based on phylogenetic relationships. Additionally, Meerow et al. (2000) presented cladograms (diagrams showing relations among organisms) that showed *Zephyranthes* Herbert and *Haylockia* Herbert as sister genera to *Habranthus*.

Habrathus sanavirone is known to be a very rare species in the wild and even rarer in private collections, due to its highly difficult growing conditions. It inhabits sandy soils in open areas close to *Schinopsis marginata* (Anacardiaceae) and *Opuntia elata* (Cactaceae), with the big bulbs inserted among rocks and scattered individuals in the shade of young trees of *Acacia caven* (Fabaceae). It blooms in a very short and variable period from November to January, corresponding to when rainfall occurs.

As for the climate, in this region arid and semi-arid conditions predominate, especially in the western foothills, with soils that are infertile due to their low content of organic matter. On the other hand, the high slopes are always affected by some degree of stoniness or

(continued on page 4)

Dell Shirk retiring cont'd

Once he had enough or sometimes too many responses for the items offered, he would send out an email closing the BX. After determining who was to receive what, he would package the items and include a slip for the amount owed and mail them out. If a package was going out of the country an additional step of filling out custom forms was needed.

To encourage donations, anyone who took the time to grow, harvest, clean, label, and package seed or bulbs for the membership would receive a credit for the amount of the postage paid to send the material to Dell. Credit could be used for BX purchases or for membership in the organization. So in addition to keeping track of how much people owed, Dell also kept track of how much credit the donors had. Communication about this with the treasurer, Arnold Trachtenberg, became frequent.

Over the years Dell thanked donors and dealt with the occasional disgruntled customer. And he also looked for new sources of material. Sometimes he traded leftover PBS seed for leftover seed of other organizations, and sometimes he purchased items that he thought people would be interested in obtaining. Seed that was not requested was stored and once a year a list of it would be mailed to members who were not online before it was announced to the list in an annual sale. That list was often much longer than a regular BX offering and sometimes others helped Dell with those distributions.

From September 2014 through February 2016 Steve Marak was in charge of sending out seeds in the SX (seed exchange) while Dell continued to send out bulbs and short-lived seed. After Steve was unable to continue, Dell sent out SX offerings as well. Karl Church has packaged the submitted seed for Dell in the last few years and Marilyn Pekasky has checked the names of the offerings submitted to make sure they are spelled correctly and that a plant with the name supplied exists.

During the time he was in charge of the BX there were 433 BX offerings, yearly seed sales, and 9 SX offerings. Without including the SX and sale offerings, that averages almost 28 a year and about 8,660 items (number of items based on analysis for BX 100-300 of an average of 20 items offered per BX). Dell reported for the last BX he received 150 responses which seemed about normal. Based on this we estimate that Dell may have sent out 64,950 packages, not counting annual seed sales and the seed he distributed through the SX!

The BX has been an amazing benefit for many members of the Pacific Bulb Society who have had the opportunity to grow a diverse group of bulbs and seed,

often at a fraction of what it would have cost to obtain them through commercial sources. This never would have been possible without the generous contributions of members who cleaned seed and bulbs and sent them to Dell for others to enjoy. But it also would not have been possible without the incredible gift of Dell's time. He obviously deserves to retire, but he can do this knowing that he made a big difference to the Pacific Bulb Society and to all those people who received the benefit of his efforts.



From Arnold Trachtenberg, Treasurer:

AS THE KEEPER OF THE FUNDS THAT ALLOW THE SOCIETY TO PROVIDE THE EXCELLENT BENEFITS THAT WE ALL HAVE ENJOYED OVER THE PAST YEARS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE REMAIN SOLVENT AND KEEP ADEQUATE FUNDS ON HAND.

WE HAVE CONTINUED OUR POLICY OF FUNDING GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR STUDIES PERFORMED BY PROFESSIONAL BOTANISTS IN THE AREA OF GEOPHYTIC PLANT SPECIES; YOU HAVE SEEN SOME OF THEIR WORK HIGHLIGHTED IN PAST ISSUES OF THE BULB GARDEN. AND WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT BULB AND SEED EXCHANGE QUITE UNLIKE THAT OF ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION. WHILE DELL SHERK HAS RETIRED, ALBERT STELLA HAS STEPPED UP TO RUN THE EXCHANGE. HE IS AS PLANT CRAZY AS THE REST OF US AND IS READY FOR THE CHALLENGE.

PBS COULD NOT EXIST AND PROVIDE THESE WONDERFUL BENEFITS WITHOUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANY VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK UNSEEN TO KEEP THE SOCIETY FUNCTIONING AND GROWING.

TO CONCLUDE, WE NEED YOUR HELP IN CATCHING UP ON OVERDUE BX/SX PAYMENTS AND DUES FOR THE NEW YEAR. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT YOU OWE OR IF YOU OWE, PLEASE CONTACT ARNOLD AT ARNOLD140@VERIZON.NET. HE WILL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER YOUR INQUIRIES.

WHEN YOU DO SEND FUNDS, PLEASE ADD THE BX/SX NUMBER TO THE NOTE SECTION ON THE CHECK OR PAYPAL NOTE SECTION. IT WILL HELP IN CREDITING THE PAYMENT TO THE CORRECT MEMBER.

***Habranthus sanavirone* cont'd**

rockiness in addition to soils with a clayey subsurface, deep and well developed over considerable thicknesses of sediments of loess origin. In general, the high geological dynamics of the landscape produces young soils of poor composition, which do not work out well to establish a richer and more complex substrate, but in the foothills the original materials consist of very varied textures. The water table is deep and does not affect the profile of the soils, but the processes of water erosion are intense, with wind



Above: Rocky slope in Cerro de la Cruz (San Marcos Sierra, province of Córdoba), showing the arid conditions and the infertile soils affected by some degree of stoniness or rockiness. **Right:** Plants of *Habranthus sanavirone* growing among rocks in San Marcos Sierra.

Photos: **Mariano Saviello.**

activity becoming more important to the south of the region.

After four expeditions to the area in March 2016, November 2016, January 2017 and November 2017, where this species was originally described, we were able to evaluate the behavior of *Habranthus sanavirone* and the botanical native genera that co-exists with this *Habranthus* species. However, we did not manage to find this species in bloom in any of the expeditions during its flowering period on two oppor-

tunities (November 2016 and January 2017), despite visiting several hills apart from the one where the type species was originally collected. We were able to find two very small populations at altitudes between 700 and 900 meters (2300 to 3000 feet) in Cerro de la Cruz and one very tiny population with less than ten individuals at 900 meters (3000 feet) in Cerro Alfa, growing in full sun on a rocky slope.

After the four trips, we were able to determine the presence of at least twenty botanical families with



more than thirty botanical genera, that include *Abutilon* (mostly *Abutilon grandiflorum*); *Solanum*; *Pfaffia* (mainly *P. gnaphalioides*); *Janusia* (e.g. *Janusia guaranitica*); *Stenandrium*; *Dyckia*; *Encholirium*; *Mitracarpus*; *Stevia*; *Melochia*; *Tripogandra*; *Evolvulus*; *Commelina* (e.g. *C. erecta*); *Sida*; *Lantana*; *Rivina* (mainly *R. humilis*); *Cosmos*; *Argemone*; *Bidens*; *Aspilia* (e.g. *A. montevidiensis*); *Vernonia*; *Zinnia* (mainly *Z. peruviana*); *Justicia*; *Ipomoea*; *Flourensia*; *Mimosa*; *Jatropha*; *Anemia* (mainly *A. tormentosa*); *Trixis*; etc. The flowering period

(continued on next page)

Habranthus sanavirone cont'd

of most of these genera is contemporaneous with that of *Habranthus sanavirone*, providing an unparalleled flower show in the mountain landscape during the late spring months.

As well as these several native species sharing habitat with the three scattered populations studied, we were able to notice a worrying increase of exotic species, probably escaped from the old gardens of San Marcos Sierra. Among these species, we were able to identify a high prevalence of *Dahlia* spp. and *Chrysanthemum* spp. (both Asteraceae); and the disturbingly invasive *Melia azedarach* (Meliaceae) and *Ligustrum lucidum* (Oleaceae).

On one of our last trips, we were finally able to see two plants showing two big seed pods already opened, which let us confirm there might be a pollinator involved in the dissemination of this rare species. This species seems to be self-sterile, consistent with what was afterwards confirmed by Germán Roitman, who described and studied this *Habranthus* species in 2007. It is already reported that at least two *Hippeastrum* species from Northern Argentina, not too far away from San Marcos Sierra (*Hippeastrum argentinum* and *H. parodii*), are pollinated by a couple of species of *Bombus* (Apidae), a type of bumblebee which usually plays with the white trumpets of both *Macropodastrum* species. In any case, there are reported to be at least four *Bombus* species in the Córdoba area: *Bombus atratus*, *Bombus bellicosus*, *Bombus morio*, and *Bombus opifex*. Although it was possible to notice many individuals of *Bombus* spp. during two expeditions, we are unable to confirm whether these bumblebees might be involved in the pollination of *H. sanavirone*.

As was already concluded in the original publication of *Habranthus sanavirone* and after seeing the scattered individuals reported in an extremely limited area, surrounded by an increasing percentage of exotic species with a potentially high rate of expansion, this *Habranthus* species can be considered an endangered species (EN B2a), according to IUCN criteria (IUCN, 2001), which will need a detailed and careful conservation program to guarantee its prevalence for future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to Andres González for his invaluable help in identifying the coexisting native species of more than twenty botanical families photographed during the four expeditions to San Marcos Sierra, to Marcos Cirulli for his pleasant company and support during all the trips, to Flavia Garbarino for her geological support, to Lee Poulsen for the preliminary revision of the

article, to Germán Roitman for his always valuable contributions and the pictures provided of *Habranthus sanavirone* blooming under his personal cultivation in Buenos Aires and to the Pacific Bulb Society (PBS) for giving me this rewarding opportunity and the financial support for the expeditions.



Growing *Albuca* species: A Compendium

A request on the PBS forum for help in growing *Albuca spiralis* 'Fizzle Sizzle' produced many helpful responses about a genus of bulbs that may not be commonly available, but whose species have intensely fragrant flowers and in the case of 'Fizzle Sizzle' may have interesting leaves. The responses from PBS members covered various species of *Albuca*: *A. shawii*, *A. pulchra*, and *A. spiralis*. And responses from forum members were scattered around the world – Portugal, California, Washington state, Germany, Phoenix, Arizona, British Columbia, Canada, and New York. The spread of comments among a number of climates should prove useful to anyone attempting to grow these interesting plants.



Albuca spiralis. Photo by Martin Garak of first-year flower.

Albuca species are members of the Hyacinthaceae family, closely related to *Ornithogalum* and are bulbs exhibiting some period of dormancy. Most are winter growers, producing a stalk of flowers and in some species having two different types of flowers on a single stem. None are particularly hardy and most need full sun. Offsets do not always occur so seed is typically the means of reproduction. From the responses, *Albuca* are often grown in pots, more rarely in the ground.

Thanks to the PBS Forum, a number of members shared individual and

(continued on page 6)

Growing *Albuca* species cont'd

specific experiences in growing *Albuca*. The PBS Wiki has a good photo collection of various species and seed is occasionally available through the PBS Seed Exchange.

The request for help came from Robin Hansen in Southwestern Oregon: I was given an *Albuca spiralis* 'Fizzle Sizzle' months ago and thought I was doing the right thing.... I kept it on the dry side (but not totally dry) in my propagation house which gets mostly full sun. It produced a flower stalk which didn't progress but slowly so I brought it into a west-facing window in a house that varies from 60-70 degrees. I watched it and much more quickly it appeared that the flowers would be opening within a few days but all the leaves died and the flower stalk was leaning. I touched the stalk and it was not firm, felt loose and I observed mold so I tugged gently and it came away in my hand and was clearly rotting, so I cut off the bad part and stuck it in a glass of water. Then I discovered the bulb had completed rotted.

From Lin Eucalyptus near Santa Cruz, California (CA) - I am not sure if cultural requirements are similar (to *Albuca spiralis*), but I have *Albuca shawii* in a small pot outdoors (Zone 9 CA central coast). It gets sporadic water most of the time, is in leaf about nine months of the year and blooms in July. I don't water when not in active growth. It has increased in volume very slowly, but blooming has always been good. The flowers do have a lovely fragrance and are sweet-looking, too.

I move it around, depending on what it's doing. For awhile now it has been shaded by



Albuca shawii. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

some other pots because the sun is so low and to the south, but it's starting to produce foliage so I'll move

it into the sun now. It's been getting watered because we had a small rain and the pots around it are being watered. When I say sporadic watering, I mean I might or might not be paying attention to it after the foliage dies off. Usually I would let it dry out for the fall after flowering and it would be in the sun then. I



Albuca spiralis. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

looked up *A. spiralis*. *A. shawii* is definitely a shy and simple country cousin of *A. spiralis*.

From Mike Rummerfield in western Washington - For what it's worth - like Lin, I grow *Albuca shawii* and have for years. I grow it in pots in a lean mixture but with heavy fertilization (organic) during its active growth in spring and summer and grow it in full sun or it becomes too etiolated. As it starts to go dormant I cease watering. When fully dormant during winter it goes into the minimally heated greenhouse (where it does get below 32° F at times) and gets no water, zilch, all winter. The bulbs tend to grow very near the surface. As tiny green nibs begin to show, I start watering again. I've found that I can prolong the bloom season by delaying the start of watering in successive pots. The last pots to receive water in the spring tend to be the most compact in growth, blooming equally as well as those receiving water earlier, but at a later date. I tend to get repeat blooming in the most heavily fertilized pots.

Growing *Albuca* species cont'd

Rummerfield cont'd *Albuca shawii* increases easily for me by offsets and seed and it has been a trouble-free, rewarding bulb. I am also growing *Albuca spiralis* from seed, at least that's what I bought it as. It is only in its second year in a lean, well-drained medium and has not gone fully dormant, always green, but I would say it went into a strong "regeneration" this autumn. New growth vigorously emerged and grew before the older leaves withered. It does its 'spiralis' thing only on the ends of the new growth, then straightens out for the remainder of its growth. Its growth tends to be lanky for me, not like the photos on the PBS website, perhaps (it's) due to my latitude of 46.6°N and growing in (the) aforementioned greenhouse over winter. I do keep it watered year-round but try to keep it on the drier side. Fertilizing has been minimal so far. No rot yet. No bloom yet. I think I have two more years for that to happen.

From Martin Garak in Germany - I've started *Albuca spiralis* from seed last winter, as too often for me I had only one survivor - two thin leaves under LEDs in that first phase, so I thought it wouldn't do much. I kept it dry after those leaves started wilting, and watered it in September; shortly after new leaves emerged which were much more than I expected. It has been outside in full sun till the end of October - not too much sun, as September was awful in Germany, but still some curls - and had to rescue it from a slug attack.

Since then I've got it on a south window in my bedroom (~18° C or 65° F) - not too wet, since the soil I use is quite sandy and doesn't hold water well. The single flower it started producing in the beginning of December is about to open - it's a bit weak for too little light here at 48.7°N, but for now it seems to do well. (Martin then adds) that his *Albuca spiralis* just opened up due to some terrific winter sun, and even though it's not a big flower, the scent is hard to miss - it's intense and I'd place it somewhere between Hyacinthus and Jasmine - it actually could get too much if I had more flowers. I've attached a close-up of the single flower - as I mentioned before, this is only a little bit over a year since it germinated, so I'm more than happy with this little thing. (See photo, p. 5.)

From Uli (Johannes-Ulrich) Urban in Portugal - *Albuca spiralis* is a winter rainfall species and *A. shawii* is a summer rainfall species with a fairly short dormant period, though. So their cultural requirements are different.

I have once grown *Albuca spiralis* but lost it, too. I do not remember a particular scent. Is it possible that your plant received too much water accidentally while it

was in the greenhouse (in reference to Robin's bulb which she rotted out)? Too high humidity might have encouraged fungal infection? I have lost winter growing plants that way more than once.

But your question makes me also think of my failure with commercial *Ornithogalum dubium* hybrids which I have found impossible to keep alive. Was your *Albuca* of commercial origin? These kind of bulbs may be micro-propagated and then grown on in the most unsuitable substrate for fast commercial results. Sold as plants in bud or flower they seem to spend all their energy and then die. Or are fragile and prone to disease at least.

From Leo Martin, Phoenix, Arizona - *Albuca* includes summer growers, winter growers and evergreens. What is sold as *A. spiralis* is a winter grower. I can imagine it might stay evergreen in a cool climate; here in Phoenix, it goes dormant when temperatures rise in the spring. *Albuca shawii* is reported to be a summer grower.

Albuca spiralis is hysteroanthous (a plant whose leaves expand after flowers open) here in summer, usually August. After flowering, the leaves emerge. I water heavily, fall-winter-spring, beginning when stalks are well up. I stop when leaves begin yellowing in the heat. I don't water again until flower stalks are emerging.

It easily tolerates overnight temperatures into the upper teens F / -8C. My winter days are always above freezing. The leaves require full sun from the time they emerge to achieve the desired curlicues. A series of cloudy days during leaf emergence can turn them into floppy spaghetti.

I have seen online photos from people in cold-winter climates who grow various winter-growing *Albuca* species on their windowsills, with warmth and water all year. The plants adhere to their proper flowering cycle, if they flower, which is uncommon. The leaves are floppy and stringy due to insufficient light. The posters usually are asking why their plant doesn't look like the photo at the online auction site.

I might suggest you try to get seed, now, and sow it now (December). They are fast and easy from seed. They will self-sow, lightly, in nearby pots for me, but not in the open ground. You might get flowers next fall. A sunny spot that is above freezing during the day, and not too far below freezing at night, is ideal. Use a sandy soil mix, without organic matter, for best growth and dormancy.

From Nikki Doherty in British Columbia, Canada - I just wanted to chime in as I have 6 mature bulbs and

Growing *Albuca* species cont'd

also grow from seed. As others have said, fast draining soil is key (except seedlings under one year seem to like more moisture), and bright light. The curling



Albuca spiralis 'Fizzle Sizzle' (or 'Frizzle Sizzle'). Photo: Robin Hansen. It would appear that growth of upper flower buds was arrested as these top buds have not opened while the two lower buds have opened due to the bulb rotting.

has to do with stress in my experience - more water deprivation and direct light means more curling. If shaded or watered frequently they go leggy or almost straight. They are winter growers from what I've read, but in practice mine periodically go dormant with no rhyme or reason, and the blooms are May - July for mine.

There seems to be variation from plant to plant as to what its dormancy looks like. Some seem to remain almost evergreen whereas all but one of mine completely die down to the soil. Particularly they die back after new growth spurts up rather quickly. I give diluted fertilizer at that time. I have wondered at times due to variations not only in dormancy but also the presence of fine hairs on 2 of mine, if possibly they were crossed with *Albuca namaquensis* at one point.

Like you, info on the net was sparse when I first obtained mine so I've just developed a routine based on paying attention to what the plant seems to want, which has been successful. I collect African bulbs with oddball characteristics, so my experience comes

from *Albuca spiralis* and *A. concordiana*, *Trachyantra tortilis*, and *Bulbine torta*.

From Toni Rizzo, northern California coast - I've had an *Albuca spiralis* for almost a year. It went dormant last summer, so I stopped watering it. I've read that these can rot very easily if watered during dormancy. In about late October it started growing again and now the leaves are about 5 inches tall and are starting to "spiral" at the tops. It has not bloomed yet. I also have *Albuca namaquensis* which also went dormant in the summer but has not awakened yet. It's still alive and I give it a little water occasionally. I have also just sown *A. namaquensis* seeds. And I have *A. setosa*, which never went dormant so I kept watering, although sparingly in the summer. It bloomed profusely last winter and early spring but has not yet bloomed this year. It has grown and produced many offsets. I keep all my *Albucas* in an unheated greenhouse also full of succulents and cacti on the northern California coast.



Above: *Albuca namaquensis*. Note wider less-spiraled leaves. Below: *A. namaquensis* in flower. Photos: Wikimedia Commons.



Minutes of the Oct. 15, 2017 Board Meeting

Officers: President Nhu Nguyen, Vice President John Wickham, Secretary Kathryn Andersen, Treasurer Arnold Trachtenberg, Directors Dell Sherk and Jane McGary, Director and Co-editor Jennifer Hildebrand, Editor Robin Hansen.

All officers were present when the meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.; we approved the minutes from our June meeting. We began with the treasurer's report. In addition to the numbers included in the P&L, Arnold provided a brief overview of the current Portfolio Management Program. He also provided an update about the group buy of *The Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa*, which didn't turn a profit but provided a valuable perk for our members. Finally, Arnold updated us about the Mary Sue Ittner grant disbursements, the need for more bookmarks (maybe we'll have a contest to pick the best design!?!), and reported that because of our tax filing extension, PBS will be filing our taxes in October.

Dell reported that the BX/SX is busy. We all love Dell, so we are sad to report that he has decided it's time for him to step away from managing the BX/SX. But we are so grateful for all of his hard work over the years! The board is considering replacements and making arrangements with Dell to make the transition as smooth as possible.

On the membership front, Jane reported that we now have 343 members, which is a little higher than this time last year. Arnold will send out renewal reminders in February.

We continue to explore the possibility of additional publication opportunities. Jane is exploring on our behalf.

Robin continues to work hard on *The Bulb Garden*. Because *TBG* is generally the largest cost associated with PBS, we continue to discuss the possibility of online publication. Over the next year or so, Nhu will look into software and we'll get a sample online for our members to evaluate.

John posted the slate for elections for the Board on October 15, 2017. He suggested, and Jennifer supported, creating a new "member-at-large" position on the board. It would allow us to recruit new board members to a position that allows them to "get their feet wet" as a member of the board without requiring substantial knowledge about PBS or a significant time commitment.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm. The next meeting was set for January 14, 2018, at 12:00 noon EST.



Treasurer's Report for 2017

3rd Quarter 7/1/17-9/30/17

U.S. Members	\$ 660.00
Overseas Members	\$ 625.00
BX Receipts	\$ 3,491.31
Investment results	\$ 1,013.62
Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa	\$ 445.00
INCOME	\$ 6,234.93
BX/SX Postage	\$ (1,139.05)
BX/SX Supplies	\$ (164.29)
BX/SX helpers Expenses	\$ (43.12)
Board Conference call	\$ (219.10)
Treasurer's Supplies	\$ (249.30)
Publications	\$ (1,335.00)
Publication postage	\$ (637.20)
PayPal expense	\$ (142.04)
MSI Grant	\$ (500.00)
Bulb Garden editing	\$ (500.00)
Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa	\$ (475.00)
Accountant Expense	
EXPENSES	\$ (5,404.10)
Net Change in Account	\$ 830.83
	\$ 41,653.71

ATTENTION

PBS Members

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2018 MARY SUE ITTNER GRANT FOR BULB STUDIES

This grant is set up to support anyone interested in learning more about bulbs. It may be used to support any type of research, including field-work, and education. It is available to paid PBS members world-wide, and you may apply for membership when you submit your application.

Last year we awarded three applications to study Floral Traits and Pollination Syndrome in *Thalictrum*, Umbel-viable Diversity in *Allium*, and Phylogeography and Trait Evolution of the Ethnobotanically important *Bomarea edulis*. You will find the reports of these studies in future issues of *The Bulb Garden*. For more information, visit the link to the grant page below.

The award amount is \$500 USD.

The deadline for this year is March 14, 2018.

The complete announcement, conditions, and additional information are found here:

<http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/grant.html>

Growing *Albuca* species cont'd

From Mary Sue Ittner in Northern California - Cape Plants (Goldblatt, P. and Manning, J. 2000) lists the flowering times for *Albuca spiralis* (in South Africa) as August to October (translating to February to May in the Northern hemisphere). It is described as found on sandy and stony slopes in the Northwest and Southwest Capes. *Albuca namaquensis*' flowering time is September to October and is found on stony sandstone slopes but over a wider distribution (Namibia to the Eastern Cape.) The flowering time for Leo's plants is very curious. Some of the places that both of these species grow in nature get very little rainfall and what they get is mostly in winter so they should be able to survive a dry dormancy. I have grown *Albuca namaquensis* for years in the same pot. I expect I haven't even fertilized it much. It generally comes into growth in September or October and flowers anytime between February and May. After it dies down I don't water until I see signs of life. Sometimes the leaves curl and sometimes not, but I don't have a lot of light in my winter garden because of all the trees. Some people think that people who think they are growing *A. spiralis* are really growing *A. namaquensis*. According to the key in the Color Encyclopedia: 1 leaves hairy or glandular hairy, at least on the margins and often twisted or coiled. *A. namaquensis* leaves are eglandular. *A. spiralis* leaves are glandular.

There is another plant in this category, *Albuca hallii*. It has glandular leaves, but they are relatively short and obtuse with more or less sessile glands and a smooth peduncle whereas *A. spiralis* has a hairy peduncle and tapering leaves with slender stalked glands. Interestingly *A. hallii* flowers March to May (September to November in the Northern Hemisphere.) It is also found on stony slopes from southern Namibia to Little Karoo. So all three species grow in a similar habitat and the same area. It would seem easy to mix them up.

From Charles Powne in Portland, Oregon - I know this isn't on-topic, but like a few others on this list, I also grow *Albuca shawii*. However, mine stay outdoors and in the ground year 'round. They bloom in the summer, set seed and then go dormant until the next spring. They're in rocky, gritty soil in my front yard. I'm in Portland, in 97212, which oddly enough may be the zip code with the largest number of PBS members. So there's that.

From Jane Sargent - I have two pots of *Albuca* 'Fizzle Sizzle' that I got a couple of years ago from Logee's Greenhouse in Connecticut. It is unclear that

this plant is really *Albuca spiralis*. It certainly had the little spiral springs when I got it. One was a split bulb, and the other was a single bulb. The leaves, not unwinding the spirals, were about 8 inches tall. That year, we got 3 flower spikes, greenish-yellow flowers, fragrant. They live on a west-facing windowsill, but it is in a corner right next to a south-facing window and under a big skylight, so light isn't a problem. I was busy (and stupid) and didn't put them outdoors to be fertilized, so no seeds. The next year, one smaller spike. Their windowsill is behind a huge clump of papyrus growing in a fish tank, so, out of sight, out of mind. They might have gotten a cup of fish tank water every couple of months, and no fertilizer. Now they are in active growth, 19 inches tall with several turns at the end of the stalks but no impressive spirals. They look pretty happy, actually, and have gotten a cup of fish tank water about once a week for the last four weeks. Obviously, I have no idea how to grow this plant, and my experience with it should not be considered as advice. Perhaps I have just found a way for it to die slowly. I have underwatered rather than overwatered.

From Lola Horwitz in Brooklyn, New York (snowy and cold) - I am also a grower of *Albuca spiralis* 'Fizzle Sizzle'. This is its first winter with me and it's decided to send up a flower after flowering a few weeks after I bought it last summer. I appreciate all the comments, especially Jane's, who throws fish tank water on her bulbs and orchids.

Speaking of which, The Lady of the Night (*Brassavola cordata*) opened her flowers (one stem only, alas) after years of waiting and watching. If *Albuca*'s fragrance comes close to this Lady's I will be quite happy. We need such delights during the dark season.

REFERENCES: PBS Wiki information on *Albuca*
<http://pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/Albuca>

Cape Plants, a conspectus of the Cape flora of South Africa, P. Goldblatt and J. Manning.

Ed.: These communications from the PBS Forum discussion have been edited for clarity and length while maintaining the information gratefully contributed.

All comments reference *Albuca spiralis* 'Fizzle Sizzle' but it appears the plant is correctly called *A. spiralis* 'Frizzle Sizzle'.



Welcome to New SX/BX Director by Board President Nhu Nguyen



The new year brings transition to the Pacific Bulb Society in the form of a new SX/BX director, Albert Stella, who will replace our long-time director Dell Sherk. Dell is transitioning into an exceedingly well-deserved retirement after managing the seed and bulb distribution for 15 years. Dell accomplished this amazing work

with diligence, a great deal of patience and a firm knowledge that has been of huge benefit to PBS.

Albert comes to us with great enthusiasm for plants and a willingness to ensure that the seed and bulb exchange of this society continues on. Indeed, he says that he is not aware “of any other organizations or societies with such a wonderfully managed member-sharing program”. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, and has volunteered to take on this crucial task which is so important to our members. He will also replace Dell on the Board of Directors.

Just a brief biography to introduce Albert to our members -- He grew up in Brigantine, New Jersey, a tiny barrier island just north of Atlantic City, and moved to Raleigh to attend North Carolina State University from which he graduated with a degree in zoology. While his plant interests are quite varied, he has a particular interest in plants from equatorial alpine communities (predominantly Andean) and he has acquired a large selection of these plants. He has a particular interest in amaryllids but more recently has been discovering some South African Iridaceae and rare *Crocus* species, its naturally occurring hybrids, varieties or forms.

Albert says that unfortunately summers in Raleigh are much too hot and winters too cold to grow many of those bulbs he is interested in, so he grows these indoors. Any bulbs he really wants to plant out go into his father’s garden in Brigantine, N.J., which although small he has filled with “cool” plants such as *Musa velutina*, *Hymenocallis imperialis*, and several *Amorphophallus* spp..

According to Albert, there will be no immediate changes to the exchanges since Dell has spent 15 years working to make sure the process of donations, ordering and shipping runs smoothly and “keeps everyone as happy as possible”. He will work with various members of the society to continue this successful program.

For seed and bulb donations, please send them to Albert Stella, 4403 Graceland Court, Raleigh, NC 27606. Email correspondence should go to bulbexchange@gmail.com. This email address was created specifically for the seed and bulb exchange and all requests should go to this address, not to the PBS Forum address.



**It's time to renew
for 2018 !**
**We appreciate your
support—
we would hate to lose you!**

Renewing is easy. You can renew **ONLINE** (\$20 U.S., \$25 international) via PayPal. Just use the button on our membership page, <http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/membership.html>.

You can also mail in your renewal. Please direct it to Arnold Trachtenberg, 140 Lakeview Avenue, Leonia NJ 07605

Whether renewing online or by mail, please contact Jane McGary (janemcgary@earthlink.net) if any of your contact information has changed.

**Thanks again for your continued support of
the Pacific Bulb Society!**

Arnold Trachtenberg
140 Lakeview Avenue
Leonida NJ 07605

www.pacificbulbsociety.org

Pacific Bulb Society, *The Bulb Garden*, Volume 15, No. 4

Gardening with Bulbs



Albuca humilis. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Inside This Edition:

BX/SX Director Dell Sherk Retiring
by Mary Sue Ittner

Habranthus sanavirone: A study
by Mariano Saviello

Growing *Albuca* species: A Compendium
by PBS Forum

New BX/SX Director Albert Stella
by PBS President Nhu Nguyen

The Bulb Garden © 2018

The Bulb Garden is the newsletter of the Pacific Bulb Society (PBS). It is published, if enough articles are submitted, around the third week of each quarter and is available to PBS members. This newsletter provides gardening or bulb related articles, news of interest to members, and announcements of the PBS organization.

Editor: Robin Hansen, robin@hansennursery.com; Co-Editor: Jennifer Hildebrand

Visit us online! www.pacificbulbsociety.org