

El Paso Cactus and Rock Club  
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**Affiliated with the Cactus and Succulent  
Society of America**

Promoting interest in our desert environment through demonstrating the beauty and uniqueness of the native cacti and the Chihuahuan desert!

## Newsletter

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### CONTACTS

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(No admission charge to cactus club members). Northeast gardens will be at 3008 Titanic and 8937 Eclipse. Westside gardens will be at 7534 Kingsfield and 417 Valplano. We still have opportunities to help with the club garden tour. Please call Jim Hastings at 240-7414 to sign up for a 10:00 – 12:30 or 12:30 – 3:00 shift at one of the four gardens.

**Reminder for 2008 membership dues**

The membership fee for our club is \$10 for single members and \$15 for families.

### Special Announcement!

**Sunday, April 6, 2008**, The El Paso Cactus and Rock Club will open four cactus and succulent gardens to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Admission is \$5.00 per person or \$8.00 per family to visit all four gardens

### Meeting Notices

**Saturday, April 5th:** Transmountain Clean-up with Master Gardeners and Franklin Mountains Wilderness Association. Please meet at 7:30am for the orientation to the clean-up. Both sections are marked through the Adopt-a-highway plate. After the clean-up we will join the El Paso County Master Gardeners and the El Paso Master Naturalists for a presentation on the Use of Native and Adapted Plants, by Jorge Gomez, Texas Department of Transportation landscape designer for the El Paso District. The program is part of the TxDOT Earth Day celebration.

**Saturday, May 3rd:** Cactus give-away, only for members of the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club at 10:00 am at the El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant, in Memorial Park.

**Saturday, June 7th:** Constructing a recycling garden fountain. Presented by Jim Hastings. El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant, in Memorial Park.

**Special Events:** A Copper Canyon trip is in the planning for Sunday, May 4 to Wednesday, May 7. Please contact Peter Beste for more information (755-3558).

## Miniature Cacti of the Franklin Mountains

By Gertrud Konings

Another famous inhabitant of the Franklin Mountains is *Coryphantha sneedii*. It was named after J. R. Sneed by Britton & Rose in 1923 with the type locality of the Franklin Mountains. The type specimen was sent to them by a Mrs. S. L. Pattison, who mentioned as sites of occurrence the McKelligon Canyon and limestone cliffs north of El Paso in the Franklin Mountains. (Britton and Rose, 1963) A type specimen is kept at the National Herbarium of the United States at the Smithsonian Institution. You may search the museum's collections for it online, if interested. Sneed's Pincushion was at that time reported to be very rare, but over the years that followed its scientific description many specimens were collected until Clark Champie, a local plant dealer, began growing them from seeds to prevent further collections in the wild. (Weniger, 1970) Champie worried about their extinction through overcollection, as he mentioned in his booklet: *Cacti & Succulents of El Paso*, 1974. The cactus was placed on the endangered species list on 11/07/1979 (Texas Park and Wildlife) and is still very rare. So far, my husband Ad and I could only spot them at two locations in the Franklin Mountains, and at one location we only saw two plants. The Franklin Mountains State Park is to praise for its conservation efforts that enable us to still to enjoy this small cactus in the wild. The park honored

direct and reflected sunlight. While the Button Cactus looks very neat and perfectly shaped, Sneed's Pincushion has a very irregular spination, a continuous bad-hair-day. We observed a population of Sneed's Pincushion during the year 2002, a year of severe drought, when El Paso received only about 4 inches of rain during the whole



year. We visited the habitat in regular intervals, expecting to take photos of the flowers. The cacti had developed nice buds, but never actually opened their flowers. As the time passed, the buds were gradually reabsorbed. The extremely low humidity was obviously a threat to them, and they did not want to risk more water loss through a bloom. Even the year later they still only produced a few flowers and it took us quite some time to find a clump with a nice collection of open flowers.

Happy Hiking!

### References

- Britton N.L. & J.N. Rose: *The Cactaceae*, Vol IV, 1963.
- Champie, C.: *Cacti & Succulents of El Paso*, Abbey Garden Press, Santa Barbara California, 1974
- Weniger, D.: *Cacti of the Southwest*, University of Texas Press, Austin & London, 1970.
- Texas Park and Wildlife Department: *Endangered and Threatened Species found in Texas*. @ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/?c=endangered>; retrieved March 20, 2008.

National Herbarium of the United States at the Smithsonian Institution @ <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/botany/>; retrieved March, 2008.



this cactus through naming a trail and rock climbing site "Sneed's Cory". The Sneed's Pincushion grows in the company of *Epithelantha micromeris*, the Button Cactus, another miniature cactus of our mountains. Both flower in the spring - we found the Button Cactus flowering in March and Sneed's Pincushion from April into May. Since they are both very small and their flowers not very showy, they remain inconspicuous even during their bloom. However, Sneed's Pincushion has the tendency to grow in rock crevices and spread along these crevices, and then it becomes more obvious and is easier spotted, which can lead to predation by man and animal, especially when they are also easily reachable. Both cacti are completely covered with white spines, since they prefer open limestone and thus endure an intensive sun exposure from

