



Superb Succulents

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▲ ***Echinocereus stramineus*** (Engelmann) Seitz lives up to the common name for the genus, hedgehog (*echinus*) with *Cereus* as the Latin word referring to a columnar cactus. Occurring normally in April and May, flowers are up to 15 cm (6") long and wide. This is truly a spiny plant wherein the straw-colored spines (hence the specific epithet, *stramineus*) are long enough to often prevent the enormous flowers from opening completely. When they are fully open, the pinkish-magenta flowers often have a contrasting white throat. This is a wide-spread taxon ranging from Texas and New Mexico in the USA, through the Mexican states of Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo León, and San Luis Potosí. Pat Swain showed this prize plant shortly after the flowers had morphed into fruit.

◀ ***Lithops pseudotruncatella*** (Berger) N.E.Br. subsp. *pseudotruncatella* var. *pseudotruncatella* (1908) was the original name for this slow-growing taxon. Tom Vermilion entered this award winner — Best Lithops — as a variety, and there are a nimety of subspecies, varieties, and cultivars of this species. What they have in common is their slowness to mature and to mound symmetrically as seen here. The habitat is extensive and seems to emanate from a central point around Windhoek, Namibia. The genus name comes from the Greek word *lithos*, meaning stone. These plants often grow among similar colored stones where they blend in to an extraordinary degree. Although watering recommendations are trickier than room here permits for elaboration, it should be withheld in early winter, and especially when these plants are receiving adequate moisture while living off of the withering remains of old leaf pairs.