

CCSS Newsletter

Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

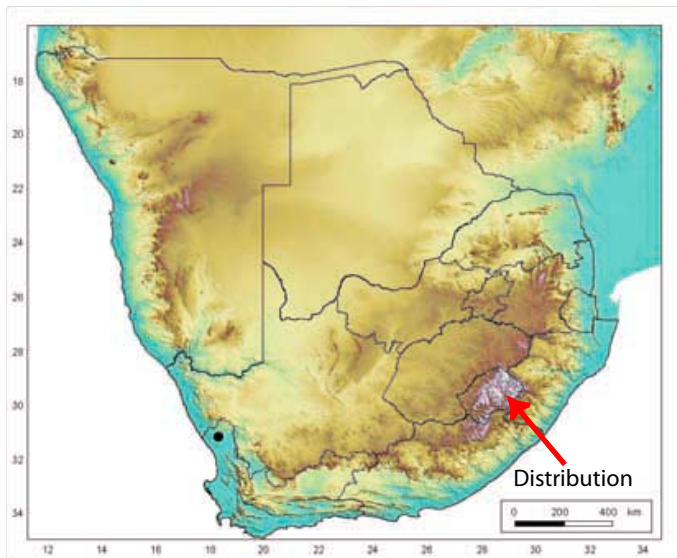
November 2011

Matt Opel Discovers New Species: *Tylecodon opelii*

Matt Opel, Ph D, President of the Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society, while in South Africa in 2000, discovered a new species of *Tylecodon*. The new species is named for Matt.

● *Tylecodon opelii* is a new, obligate quartz-gravel dwelling species endemic to the northern Knersvlakte in the northern part of the Western Cape Province of South Africa. It was discovered by Matt while on an expedition to and is named for, *Conophytum* expert **Matt Opel, PhD** on

ing season, bearing a few pointed trichomes. The corolla of *T. opelii* is cylindric to slightly funnel-shaped, 12–14 mm long, with tapering squamae at the base. .



Known distribution of *Tylecodon opelii*.

an expedition to the Knersvlakte July 2000. The species is related to a group of dwarf, quartz-dwelling, geophytic species growing mainly in Succulent Karoo vegetation: *Tylecodon nolteei*, *T. occultans*, *T. pusillus* and *T. peculiaris*.

● *Tylecodon opelii* is immediately distinguished from other species by its oblong tubers, and its irregularly mold-
ed leaves, which are intensely dark green during the grow-



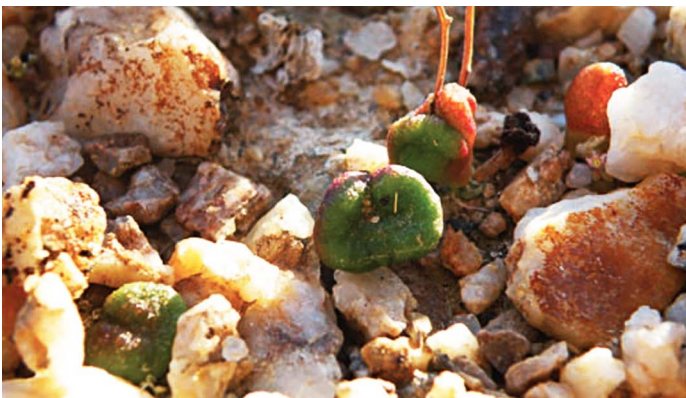
Tylecodon opelii. Artist: Lisa Strachan.

Continued on page 2, left column

Tylecodon opelli continued from page 1



Tylecodon opelli in its habitat at Bakoondkolk.



Tylecodon opelli towards the end of the season, becoming yellowish and wrinkled (Bakoondkolk).



Tylecodon opelli seen in its natural habit, quartz gravel, just before its leaves are shed.

Tylecodon opelli continued on page 4

From the President

The autumn season so far has been dominated by Indian summer weather and tropical downpours, but heavy frosts and snow flurries are probably not too far off. Now is the time to rescue indoor plants that have been spending the summer outside, taking advantage of sun, rain, and the pest control services of local ladybugs.

● We are down to just four regular meetings between now and the **Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference**. In order to facilitate conference planning, interested persons will be meeting for one hour just before each monthly meeting. Everyone in the club is encouraged to come early and see how they can help.

● We are also signing up volunteers to staff registration, security, the sales table and other conference responsibilities. In order to encourage participation, it has been decided that any CCSS member who agrees to devote five or more hours to conference volunteer work on Saturday

From the President, continued from page 5

The Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

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Society Website: www.ctcactusclub.com

The CCSS Newsletter is published each month except January. Annual membership of \$12.00 includes subscription to the newsletter. This membership includes all members of an immediate family residing at the same residence. Payment is payable to the Treasurer, Mr. Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Road, Andover, CT 06232.

Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society
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From the Bookshelf

By David Schultz

At the Seventeenth Eastern Cactus and Succulent Conference, we will have a book-signing booth for the speakers who have published books. These include:

Colin Walker, co-author of *Aloes: The Definitive Guide*

Jon Rebman, co-author of *Baja California Plant Field Guide* which will be published in January 2012, flexi-bound. This new edition is 30% larger and is entirely revised with much more information and many more plants featured. Plants are described and shown in color.

Edmund Snodgrass, co-author of *Green Roof Plants and Small Green Roofs*

Jason Eslamieh, author of *Cultivation of Boswellia*.

● We will offer copies of their books for sale at the conference, but will also place a group order which you can join in on for a bigger savings.

● *Aloes: The Definitive Guide* was published by Kew Gardens and the details can be checked on their website. The hardbound edition, about an 800-page book, lists for \$160.00, but with our group-order price, it is \$100.00.

● *Baja California Plant Field Guide* will be published in January, 2012. It will be the third edition and is completely revised and 30% larger than previous editions, with much more information and plants featured. It is flexibound for carrying out in the field. The list price is \$34.95 but our price is \$24.50.

● *Green Roof Plants* and *Small Green Roofs* were both published by Timber Press. Details can be checked out on their website.

● We will place a group order in early March for ANY books in the Timber Press and StoreyBook catalogs, so plan ahead and put your list together.

● *Cultivation of Boswellia* was published in 2011. The book is softbound, 200 pages long with beautiful photographs and was reviewed in the Cactus and Succulent Journal. It lists at \$32.99; our price will be \$24.50.

● If we order enough, we can get a larger discount and I will reimburse the over payment. Check out Jason's website at miniatree.com to see the plants. If you definitely want a copy, please add you order to the group order. I will not have an unlimited supply of these books—especially the *Aloes*—so do not procrastinate and be disappointed.

● **John Pilbeam** will have a new book, *Echinocereus* published in November 2011. It is being published by the British Cactus and Succulent Society and the insert in the *Cactus World* indicates that there are nearly 200 photo-

graphs in habitat or cultivation. List price will be £38.00, with our price figured at \$55.00. If the exchange rate varies much, we will adjust later. I am making arrangements for the books to be autographed. _____ ○

Conference Update

By David Schultz

The committee meeting which was held in October has come to a consensus VERY important to society members. It was decided that members who sign up on the **Tasks Sheet** for a minimum of five hours work on Saturday and Sunday during the conference— helping with the show and sale—will be able to register for the conference at half-price—\$55.00. They must register before February 1, 2012. We will still need volunteers for the set-up on Friday, but this does not interfere with the conference activities.



● **Helen Pritchard** will be preparing the sign-up sheet and will keep track of the members who have signed up. She will then transfer the names to LeRoy Saucier and Ken Mosher for the registration at the conference. This list of names will verify that you are eligible to register at half-price. If you are un-

able to attend meetings, contact Helen directly to put your name on the Tasks Sheet.

● We encourage all the members to take advantage of the reduced registration price which will allow them to attend as many of the lectures as possible. We have assembled a very strong lecture schedule for the conference.

● The banquet on Saturday evening is an additional expense and all who wish to attend need to sign up. Following the banquet is a rare plant and book auction, the proceeds of which will be donated to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America.

● The committee also discussed the speakers and I have added at least one more, so far. We have the conference bags almost ready to order and the materials for the conference pamphlet are being assembled.

● There are only four more regular meetings of the society before the April events, so it is closing in on us quickly! There will be a conference committee meeting before each of the remaining meetings at noon, one hour before the regular meeting begins. Anyone interested may sit in on the discussion. _____ ○

Welwitschia Seeds

By Matt Opel, PhD

The *Welwitschia mirabilis* (Tumboa) plants at UConn produced a bumper crop of healthy cones this summer, for the first time. When mature, the female cones produce droplets of nectar, called pollination drops, at the end of hair-like extensions of the ovules. Pollination drops are exuded in mid-afternoon, and disappear in the evening. The male cones have nectaries, as well, which probably attract insect pollinators in the wild in Namibia and Angola.

I placed pollen from the males into the pollination drops of female cones for several days running, back in July, and more than two months later the seeds were starting to mature. Some of the seeds are very light and thin, and are probably duds, but quite a few look like viable *Welwitschia* seed. I may plant a few now to see what happens, though it probably is not the best time of year. ○



Welwitschia mirabilis (Tumboa) plants at UConn. They were planted from seed and produced a bumper crop of healthy cones this summer.

Photo by Matt Opel, PhD

Dr. Matt Opel, the president of the CCSS, is the Horticulturalist at the UConn EEB Plant Growth Facilities in Storrs, Connecticut.

Tylecodon opelii continued from page 2

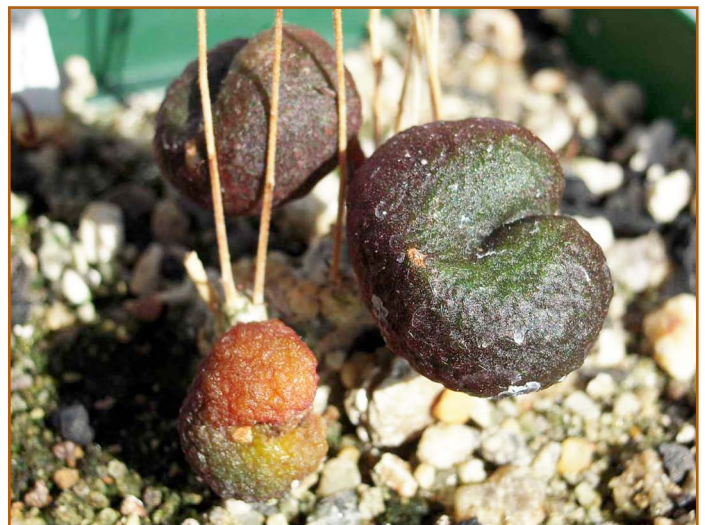
Tylecodon opelii is known only from the farm Bakoondkolk in the northern Knersvlakte. This farm is somewhat removed from the main body of the Knersvlakte and harbors a number of unusual species and unusual forms of usual species.

● The vegetation consists of Knersvlakte quartz vygieveld (Mucina et al. 2005) growing at an altitude of 119 m. The plants grow well-camouflaged among the thick gravel. They are not very abundant, sharing their living room with other quartz-gravel species.

● Rainfall in the region is roughly between 75–125 mm per annum, supplemented by fogs from the cold Benguela current of the Atlantic Ocean. Ignatious Matimati and his co-workers (Matimati et al. 2010) recently measured fog deposits in the Knersvlakte and found that fog and dew deposits exceed the rainfall by 70%. They also found that *Argyroderma pearsonii* channels even greater amounts of precipitation by fog and dew—more than twice the annual rainfall. They have shown that these dwarf succulent plant species are highly effective fog and dew interceptors.

● *Tylecodon opelii* is a rapid grower—it has not much mass to attain—it can mature a year after sowing seeds. It develops a carrot-like tuber early on and after five years the tubers still lack the potato-like broadness seen in its sisters.

● *Tylecodon opelii* seems more difficult to hand pollinate than its relatives. Plants are best grown in a lean, well-drained soil. Water well from late autumn—coinciding with the appearance of the new leaf—until mid-spring, when the plants should be weaned off. The species is best for the greenhouse, grown under a myopic specialist's care. ○



Some of the *Tylecodon opelii* grown from seed by Matt Opel in one of his green houses at UConn.

Photo by Matt Opel, PhD.

This article contains text excerpts and some photos that originally appeared in the *Cactus and Succulent Journal*, 2011, Volume 83, #4 with the kind permission of the editor, Tim Harvey, the business manager of the CSSA, and Ernst van Jaarsveld for granting the use of his photos.

Treasurer's Report

Income:	
Dues	\$12.00
Auction	7.00
Expenses:	
October Newsletter	180.68
New Stapler for Show/Sale	62.65
Refreshments (Four Months)	52.72
Total Income (Expense)	\$ (277.05)
Bank Balance	\$11,375.83

Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 6: At the November meeting, Fred Kattermann will present a slide show on the cacti and succulents of Mexico. We will meet at the Torrey Life Sciences Building in room 154, 75 North Eagleville Road, UConn, Storrs.

1:00 PM

Do Not Bring Chairs

Entrées: H-S

Appetizers/Sides/Salads: T-Z

Desserts: A-G

Sunday, December 4: Our December meeting will be held at Yale's Marsh Botanical Garden in New Haven, Connecticut.

No meeting in January

Directions to Life Sciences Building at UConn

1. Take I-84 East to Exit 68 and take Route 195 South.
2. Follow Route 195
3. Stay on Rt 195 for about 7 miles to UConn.
4. Turn right onto North Eagleville Road (White church at intersection)
5. Torrey Life Sciences building will be on your left in about 2 blocks. (A cemetery is across the street) *See map on right.*

From the President, *continued from page 2*

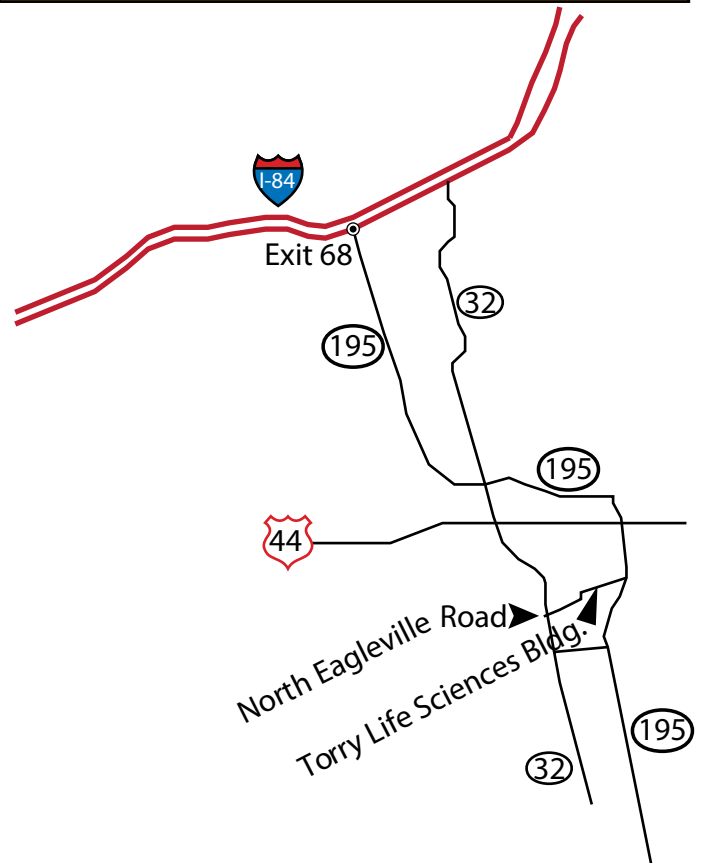
and Sunday, will be able to register for half price. This discount is intended to compensate those who are helping out for missed opportunities to attend the lectures.

● At the November meeting, **Fred Kattermann** will be traveling up from New Jersey to give a presentation on the cacti and succulents of Mexico. The meeting will be held in room 154 at the Torrey Life Sciences building at UConn, Storrs, and there will be opportunities to tour the biology greenhouses, as well. In December, we are heading to New Haven and Yale's **Marsh Botanical Garden** for the annual holiday party. As usual, there will be no January meeting, so plan on resting up after the New Year for the final push towards the conference!

Thank you,
Matt Opel
President



Map to Life Sciences Building at UConn



17th Eastern C & S Conference

Friday, April 13, 2012 – Sunday, April 15, 2012

Coco Key Water Resort - Hotel - Convention Center, Waterbury, CT
3580 East Main Street
Hosted by the Connecticut Cactus & Succulent Society

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Early Incentive Registration by January 31, 2012 \$ 110.00 _____
After January 31, 2012 \$ 135.00 _____

Registration includes Friday Night Mixer, and Private (Attendees only) Sales, Saturday and Sunday Lectures, Judged Show.

Saturday Banquet \$ 40.00 _____

Total paid (check only) \$ _____

Speakers include Colin C Walker, author of the new *Aloes: The Definitive Guide*, and editor of *The Bradleya* for the British C & S Society: "Aloes Through the Ages" and "Macronesian Memories": Succulents of the Canary Islands, Madeira, and Morocco", Dr. Matt Opel, speaking on Succulent Pelargoniums and Mesembs, Jon Rebman, author of the forthcoming *Field Guide to Plants of Baja California*, Edmund Snodgrass, co-author of *Green Roof Plants* and *Small Green Roofs*, on Succulent Plants for Green Roofs, Guillermo Rivera (South American Nature Tours): "An exploratory trip to Northwestern Argentina" and "Cactus of Peru: Land of the Inca", Jason Eslamieh, author of *Cultivation of Boswellia*", on the Burseraceae..., and others

Name _____

Please print

Address _____ Phone _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

E-Mail _____

Confirmation of Registration will be sent to you by e-mail if checked () Yes

Send Registration form & check payable to CT C&SS, c/o Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Rd, Andover CT 06232

FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Coco Key room rate: \$99.00 (plus 15% Occupancy Tax). Cut off date: Friday, March 23, 2012
Call 203-706-1000 or 800-446-1449.

Reference the **Eastern Conference for the Cactus & Succulent Room Block**.

Or visit www.cocokeywaterbury.com, click on blue button which says "Book Hotel Stay", click "Groups" at top of page, enter code ECS, and "sign in". Groups reservation dates and rate will be available