

## FROM THE EDITOR

*Haseltonia* has never contained its own autobiography, which I suspect is due to the humility of our first editor, Myron Kimnach. Roy Mottram has recently obviated the need. His editorial comment in the September 2008 issue of *Cactus World* beautifully and succinctly explains our genesis.

Although *Haseltonia* has been around for 15 years (a decade ago we did miss one year in our publication schedule), this is first time we have offered a thematic issue. The first half of this issue is devoted to early cactus evolution, with papers that address what the first cacti or their ancestors looked like, using inferences from morphological, molecular, and biogeographical perspectives. We want to understand whether cacti evolved from tall, woody, spiny ancestors such as *Pereskia* or, as one of many other alternatives, a short, succulent, spineless ancestor such as *Avonia* or *Blossfeldia*. Despite being a topic that will interest many of our readers, early cactus evolution is an important unanswered biological problem, and our hope is that these papers will become the standard reference on this subject.

We intend to produce issues featuring a thematic grouping of papers in every other volume. *Haseltonia* 15 will contain our usual assorted panoply of articles, and then we will get geared up for a *tour de force* assemblage on the systematics of the stapeliads in *Haseltonia* 16. Stapeliads, little understood but universally admired in the amateur succulent world, have been a hotbed of scientific enquiry, which has in recent decades seen ever-shifting modalities of thought. In the past few years, classification of these quixotic plants has been controversial, with experts even unable to agree on whether these plants are milkweeds or dogbanes. I encourage each of you with expertise in this area to consider contributing a paper to suggest others who might. And, looking to the future, I would like to hear your ideas for other thematic issues, remembering that we are looking for active research areas for which there is not yet consensus but where a convergence of thought is coming, be it years or decades away.

Having a volume on succulent stapeliad systematics might also serve to mitigate the skewed distribution of papers in the issue you are now reading, which is almost exclusively focused on cacti—especially with a large portion of the cactus papers on the non-succulent genus *Pereskia*. I can at least reassure succulent-oriented readers that material in the pipeline for the next volume will feature more “other succulent” material.

I owe many thanks to our subscribers, readers, authors, CSSA board members (especially Leo Martin, Dan Mahr, Lee Miller, Kevin Barber, and Dick Weidhopf), managing editor Russell Wagner, and former editors Myron Kimnach and Michael Hawkes, without whom this journal would not exist, let alone be of such quality. Please join me in thanking them and a legion of reviewers who selflessly gave their valuable time and energy toward this effort. Each paper, including those on early cactus evolution, is reviewed by at least two experts, some by three or four. The following list includes all of our reviewers for this volume, some of whom reviewed papers whose publication we rejected. One of the greatest joys of being editor of such a unique journal is interacting with such talented and dedicated cactus and succulent enthusiasts, systematicists, ecologists, naturalists, and evolutionary biologists. Thanks!

Philippe Bisseret  
Charles Bomar  
Charles Butterworth  
María del Carmen Mandujano  
Susan Carter Holmes  
Erika Edwards  
Exequiel Ezcurra  
Urs Eggli  
David Ferguson  
Carol Furness  
Patrick Griffith  
Diego Gurvich

Wendy Hodgson  
Andreas Hofacker  
John Hubstenberger  
Enrique Jurado  
Brian Kemble  
Roberto Kiesling  
Myron Kimnach  
Beat Leuenberger  
James Low  
Gary Lyons  
Ulrich Meve  
Detlev Metzinger  
Roy Mottram

Pablo Ortega-Baes  
John Pilbeam  
Darrel Plowes  
Michael Powell  
Jon Rebman  
Glenn Rink  
Daniella Roth  
Steven Saupe  
Svetlana Shishkova  
Lara Strittmatter  
Martin Terry  
Tom Van Devender