

IOS Euphorbiaceae Section Report

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There has been much activity in recent years, though mostly arising from individual initiatives. After the last of the 10-volume set of *The Euphorbia Journal* was published in 1987, Herman Schwartz continued to care for his large collection at Bolinas, north of San Francisco, but his health gradually declined and he died earlier this year. Sadly, the collection also declined and now what was saveable has been dispersed, many going to Arid Lands Greenhouses in Tucson, Arizona. There, the very large collection of succulent *Euphorbia* species, many of wild collected origin, is now under the care of IOS member Dr Robert Webb, the recent new owner of the nursery since Chuck Hanson retired to Iowa a few years ago. In 2001 Daphne and Albert Pritchard published the last issue of the *Euphorbiaceae Study Group Bulletin* of which they were editors and which no-one came forward to continue. However, it was not long before a group of enthusiasts, mainly from the Continent, set up the International Euphorbiaceae Society, and in 2005 the first issue of *Euphorbia World* appeared, edited by Volker Buddensiek. As with *The Euphorbia Journal*, good illustrations play a large part in its production, but it has attracted authors not only of popular articles, but also scientific publications, venturing into the field of molecular studies. Academic research has now turned firmly away from classical taxonomy to molecular analysis in establishing relationships, with controversial results. The genus *Euphorbia*, with approximately 2000 species, has very recently been increased considerably by absorbing all smaller related genera, such as *Monadenium*, *Chamaesyce*, and *Pedilanthus*, etc. It remains to be seen to what extent this radical system will be accepted — a case, perhaps, of not being able to see the trees for the wood?