

## Martin Doorbar

### Bio Update – October 2014.

I have been collecting cacti since I was around 8 yrs old, I cannot remember exactly when this all started. I saw a picture of some plants in flower in a gardening book of my grandfather's and told my parents I liked these wired looking things. A couple of weekends later and I am visiting a collection of a work colleague of my father's who lived locally and as you would expect I left his greenhouse with a tray full of small plants. I am glad to report that I still have a few of them today, nearly 40 years later. A Trichocereus (in the old sense of the species) a Ferocactus cylindraceus (acanthodes) and 2 Neporterias (sorry Eriocyce)

I grow a bit of everything and at the end of 2013 finally got my [dream greenhouse](#), a 20ft by 50ft Dutch Light style following a move to what will be our main family home for the foreseeable future while the family grows up.

*New Greenhouse external view*



*Internal view from door*



My interests have not changed too much over the past 10 years and are still very much cantered around cacti with *Ferocactus*, *Stenocactus* a growing interest in the smaller Mexican species and a strong leaning towards anything South American. I mentioned a growing interest in columnar cacti back in the 2004 bio and that's still the case today with quite a few of them now getting to a reasonable height and the odd one starting to flower. The collection has examples of most genera but I did say back then that there was a notable absence of *Opuntia* and its allies. This has funnily changed quite recently as I have started to acquire a small, but rapidly expanding, selection of these spurred by an interest in growing in an unheated cold frame. Within the succulents I continue to have a wide range of interest and will try anything but I specifically like, caudiciform plants and the smaller *Agaves* along with a recent swing into *echiverias* and *aeoniums*.

*Echiveria cante*



My main obsession is Thelocactus for which I was awarded [National Plant Collection](#) Status in 2007 by [Plant Heritage](#), the collection now has over 600 plants with around 80% of them being material with known provenance. I try to ensure I grow 2 plants of each accession and plan to start to produce controlled pollination seed at some point for the less available species / forms but have not been able to do this as yet. In addition this summer I picked up around 300

I mention in the last bio 10 years ago that I found difficulty in growing Notocacti and Haworthias thinking that the issues with Notocacti were that I kept them too dry. I must say this past few years I have watered all the collection more than I used to which during hot summers like Aug / Sept 2013 and this past summer of 2014 has resulted in much better growth on all plants. I cannot specifically comment on the effects on Notocacti as I was out of the country for the best part of 4 years living in the USA from 2008 – mid 2011 so I will see how they perform over the next couple of years. As for haworthia anyone who knows me knows how I feel about those. I am usually one of the crowd around the coffee machine at Rob Wellens Tissue Culture nursery on the continental trips mumbling about wasted bench space and glyphosphate being a cure !

I have been a member of a society since I started growing the plants, initially with the NCSS, attending the Congleton Branch in Cheshire, and then the Stoke-on-Trent Branch for a good number of years, apart from a short break during my 20's. We moved south to live in Oxfordshire in 2004 and I joined the Oxford Branch at that time, joining the committee from 2005. I had a sabbatical during our residence in the USA (Feb 2008-June 2011) but on return re-joined the Oxford team despite moving from South Oxfordshire to northern Hampshire in 2012.

Our time in the USA did enable me to visit a few habitats of our beloved plants for the first time and I have to agree this is very addictive and I can't wait to be able to again. I was able to see Joshua Tree National Park, large parts of Arizona, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in California alongside a number of the desert botanical gardens in the South West, most notable of which was Huntingdon Botanical Gardens and Tucson Desert Garden. I am hopeful that a work trip will take me to Northern Baja California in early 2015 to be able to continue with the incredible experiences of seeing these plants in habitat can bring.