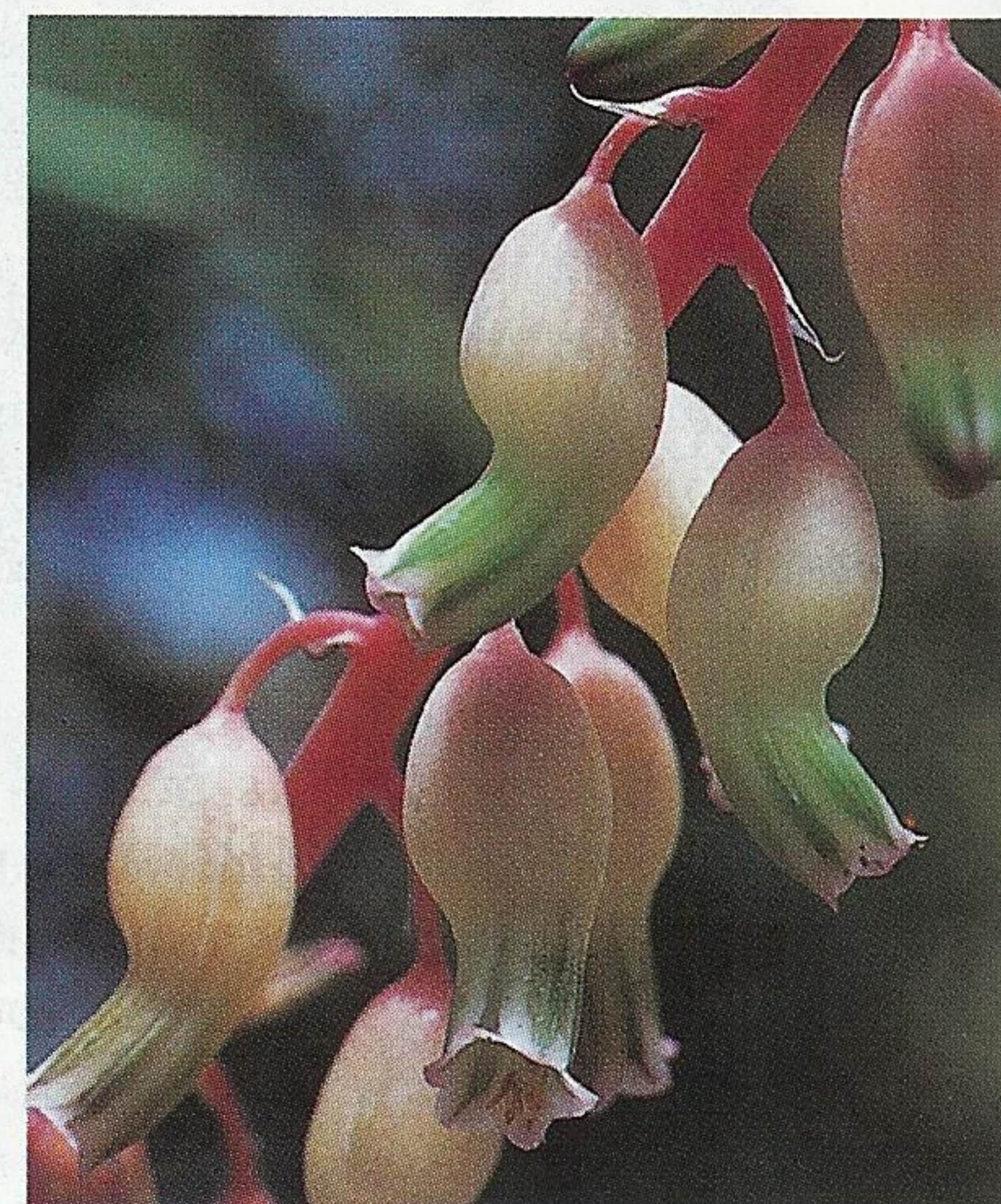
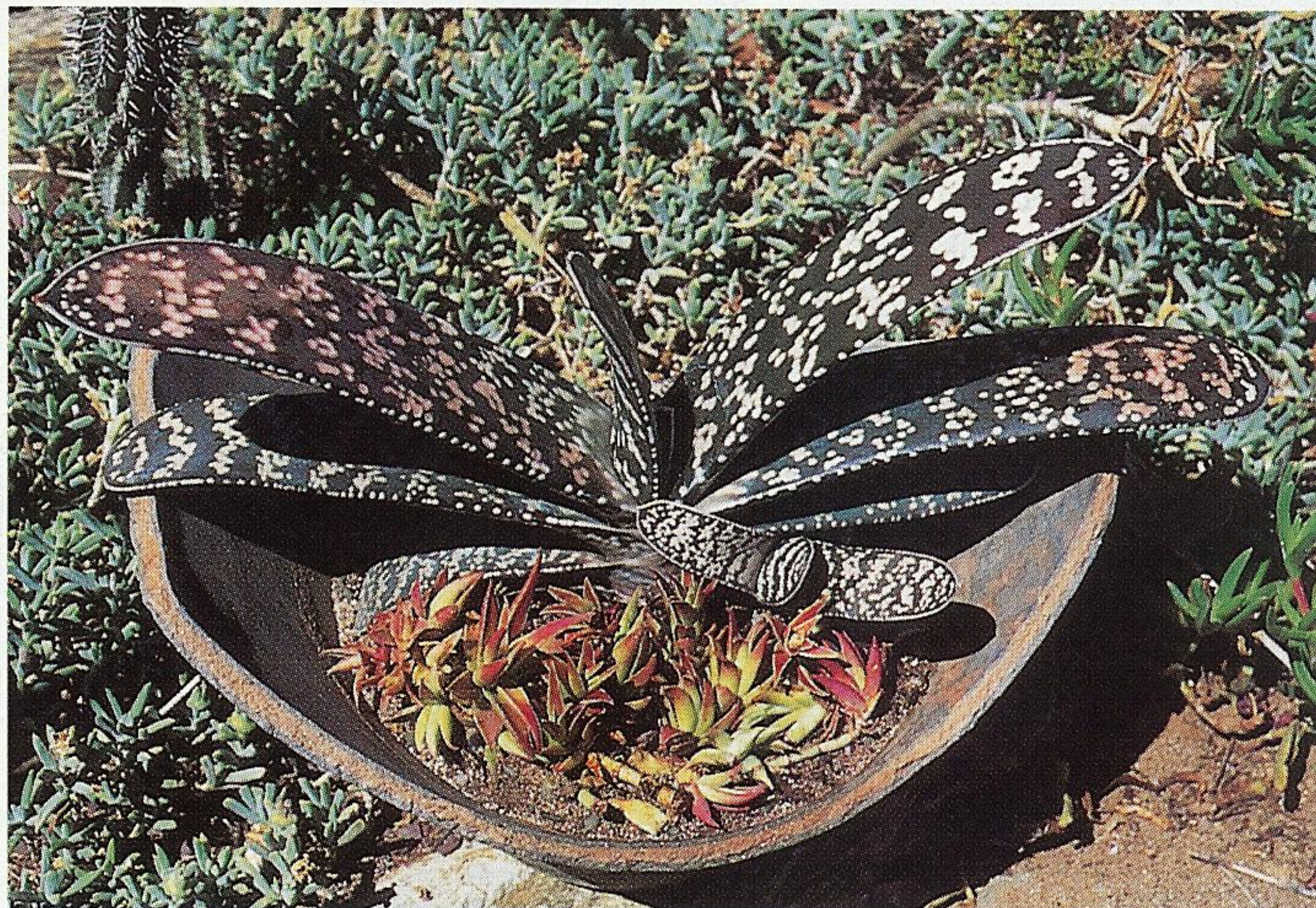
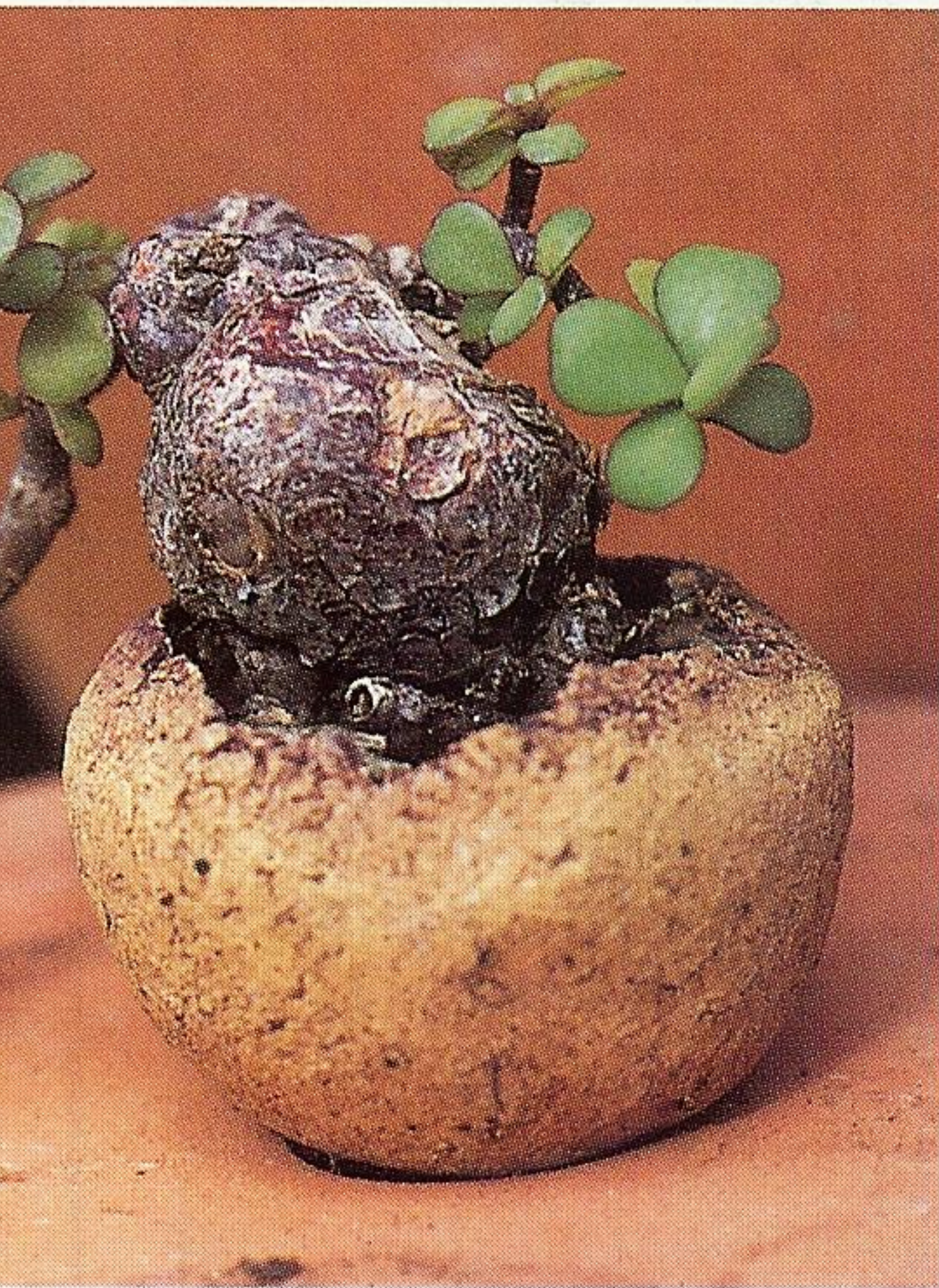


INDIGENOUS HOUSE PLANTS

The fourth in a series of articles by Ernst van Jaarsveld of Kirstenbosch on indigenous plants for indoor use.

SUCCULENT INDOOR PLANTS



Above left. Spekboom, *Portulacaria afra* on a window-sill. Also a good bonsai subject. Above centre. A *Gasteria bicolor* cultivar with striking mottled leaves. Above right. *Gasteria bicolor* var. *liliputana* flowers. Photos: E. Van Jaarsveld.

Succulent plants are very popular indoor plants and there is a wealth of species from which to choose. These range from the dwarf cluster forming, creeping types to larger robust solitary species. Many are well adapted to shady conditions and have been popular in Europe for the past three centuries. Some of these include *Aloe variegata*, *Gasteria*, *Haworthia* and *Sansevieria* species. There are also many small succulents for creating miniature gardens on window-sills or balconies.

To create a miniature succulent garden, look out for these small species of crassula – *Crassula expansa* subsp. *fragilis*, *C. socialis*, *C. pellucida* subsp. *marginalis*, *C. setulosa* subsp. *deminuta* and *C. orbicularis*. Small gasterias, haworthias and aloes are also

perfect for miniature gardens – *Gasteria bicolor* var. *liliputana*, *G. glomerata*, *Haworthia cymbiformis*, *H. turgida*, *H. retusa*, *H. tessellata* and *Aloe aristata*. In the December 1998 issue of *Veld & Flora*, the bonsai-mint *Plectranthus ernstii* was pictured – another good succulent for the miniature garden. The beautiful tiger jaws *Faucaria britteniae*, *F. felina*, *F. tigrina* and *F. tuberculosa* thrive on window-sills, as do the small mesembs like *Delosperma pruinosum*, *D. esterhuyseniae*, *D. rogersii* and *D. dolomitica*. I can also recommend *Sansevieria hyacinthoides*, *S. aethiopica*, *Cotyledon tomentosa* and *C. elisae*, both cotyledons with hairy leaves and orange tubular flowers. And don't forget our one and only indigenous cactus – *Rhipsalis*

baccifera. *Senecio rowleyanus* is an interesting plant with round ball-shaped leaves and pendant stems. These succulent species require little attention but care should be taken not to over-water them. They can remain happy in the same container for years.

For larger pots, *Crassula streyi* has broad succulent leaves, purplish on the lower surface and *C. multica* 'Purple leaf' is another useful house plant especially when grown as a groundcover with the larger tree container plants. The larger *Sansevieria* species (mother in law's tongue) with their attractive mottled, leathery strap-shaped leaves are one of the hardiest house plants. I recommended the indigenous *Sansevieria hyacinthoides*, *S. aethiopica*, and *S. hallii*. The leaves of the mother in law's tongue are extremely fibrous and are used for making rope, fishnets, string cloth and paper. Weavers often strip off the leaf margins for making their nests. The Afrikaans name of maagwortel refers to the medicinal properties of the plant as the roots, if chewed, are said to expel intestinal worms.

Remember that most succulent species require a well drained, sandy to gravelly soil.

For inspiration, visit the Botanical Society Conservatory at Kirstenbosch for a truly wonderful selection of succulents.

In the next issue Ernst looks at bulbs and discusses common pests and diseases that trouble the indoor gardener.

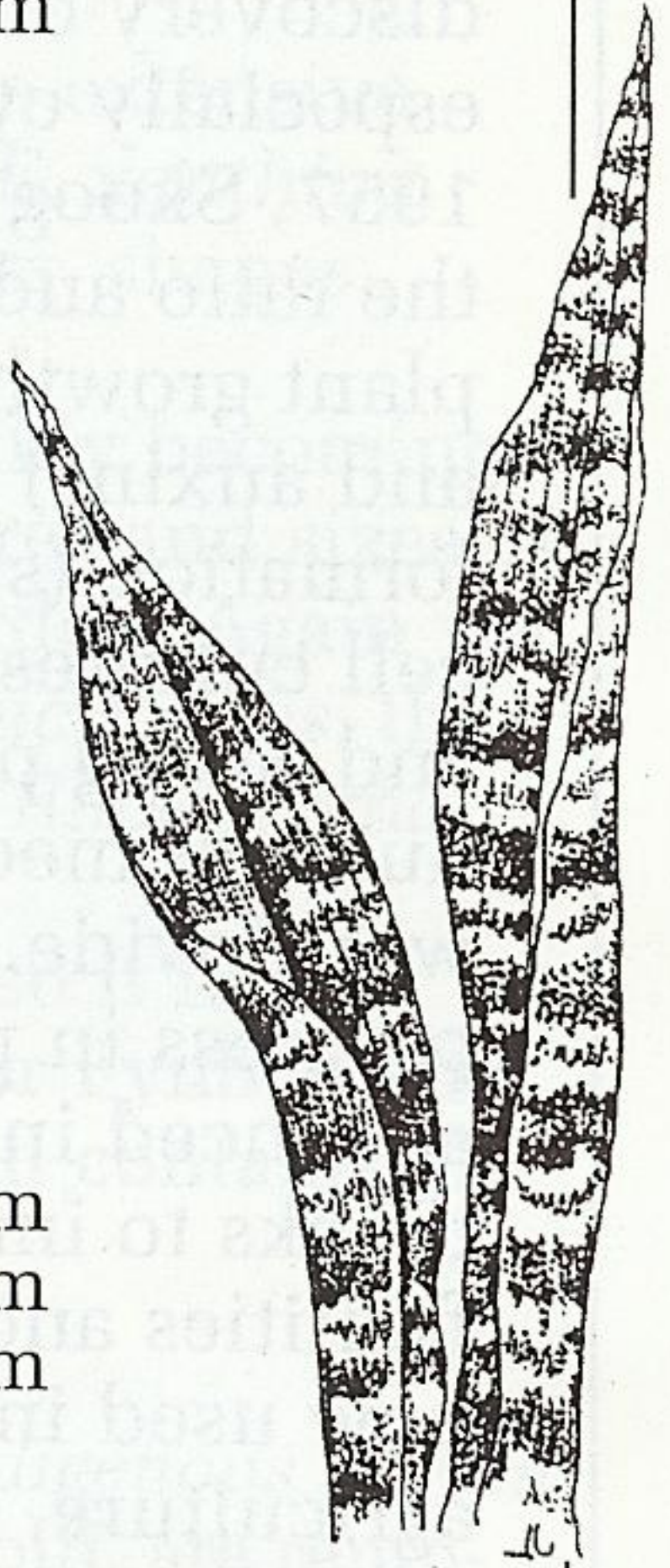


A miniature garden of succulents: *Haworthia translucens*, *H. radula*, *H. angustifolia*, *Gasteria rawlinsonii*, *G. glomerata*, *G. carinata* var. *thunbergii* and *G. batesiana*.

Photo: E. Van Jaarsveld.

INDIGENOUS SUCCULENT PLANTS FOR INDOORS

Name	Shape	Height (cm)	Flower colour	Time of flowering	Growth rate
<i>Aloe aristata</i>	tufted	10	orange	Nov	fast
<i>Aloe variegata</i>	tufted	10	orange	Aug-Oct	slow
<i>Cotyledon elisae</i>	rounded	20	red	Oct-May	medium
<i>Cotyledon tomentosa</i> subsp. <i>tomentosa</i>	rounded	10	red	July -Sept	slow
<i>Crassula expansa</i> subsp. <i>fragilis</i>	spreading	5	white	Jan-Dec	fast
<i>Crassula multicava</i>	spreading	15	white	May-Aug	fast
<i>Crassula orbicularis</i>	spreading	5	white	July-Nov	medium
<i>Crassula pellucida</i> subsp. <i>marginalis</i>	spreading	5	white	Sept-Dec	fast
<i>Crassula perforata</i>	spreading	10	yellow	Sept-Apr	medium
<i>Crassula setulosa</i> var. <i>deminuta</i>	tufted	5	white	Sept-Jan	medium
<i>Crassula socialis</i>	mat-forming	5	white	Sept-Oct	fast
<i>Crassula streyi</i>	spreading	10	white	May-June	slow
<i>Delosperma pruinosum</i>	spreading	5	yellow	Sept-Apr	fast
<i>Delosperma esterhuyseniae</i>	spreading	5	pink/white	Oct-Apr	fast
<i>Delosperma rogersii</i>	spreading	5	purple	Oct-Mar	fast
<i>Faucaria britteniae</i>	tufted	5	yellow	Mar-May	medium
<i>Faucaria felina</i>	tufted	5	yellow	Mar-May	medium
<i>Faucaria tuberculosa</i>	tufted	5	yellow	Mar-May	medium
<i>Gasteria batesiana</i>	tufted	10	pink	Oct-Feb	slow
<i>Gasteria bicolor</i> var. <i>bicolor</i>	tufted	30	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Gasteria bicolor</i> var. <i>liliputana</i>	tufted	5	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Gasteria carinata</i> var. <i>carinata</i>	tufted	10	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Gasteria carinata</i> var. <i>verrucosa</i>	tufted	10	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Gasteria glomerata</i>	tufted	5	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Gasteria pulchra</i>	tufted	20	pink	Sept-Nov	slow
<i>Haworthia cymbiformis</i>	tufted	5	white	Aug-Sept	slow
<i>Haworthia tessellata</i>	tufted	5	white	Oct	slow
<i>Haworthia translucens</i>	tufted	5	white	Nov-Dec	slow
<i>Haworthia turgida</i>	tufted	5	white	July-Aug	slow
<i>Kalanchoe alticola</i>	tufted	5	yellow	Jan-Mar	fast
<i>Kalanchoe decumbens</i>	tufted	5	red	Jan-Mar	fast
<i>Kalanchoe neglecta</i>	tufted	10	orange	Feb-Apr	fast
<i>Plectranthus ernstii</i>	rounded	15	light blue	Mar-Apr	medium
<i>Rhipsalis baccifera</i>	spreading	10	white		medium
<i>Senecio articulatus</i>	tufted	10	white	Apr-June	medium
<i>Senecio rowleyanus</i>	trailing	5	white	Apr-July	fast
<i>Sansevieria hyacinthoides</i>	tufted/erect	50	white	Jan-Feb	slow



Please note that not **all** these plants are available at the Garden Shop at Kirstenbosch, although there will be a few of the species mentioned available there, and at various nurseries and shops attached to botanical gardens. Many plants are not yet in general cultivation. Some seeds are available from the National Botanical Institute, tel (021) 762 1166, and other seed suppliers (see classified advertisements).



Balconies or stoeps (verandahs) are ideal for growing plants and you can choose succulents that require more light than their indoor relatives do, and which will provide some colour. They too will require very little attention. The summer-flowering crassula cultivars (red *Crassula perforata* and white *C. dejecta*) are good choices. The blue-green leafed *Senecio ficoides*, *S. crassulaefolius* and the grey-leafed *Cotyledon orbiculata* are rather striking and will provide a contrast to the green foliage plants. Vygies (mesembs) should do well provided that the balcony or window is sunny enough. I recommended *Lampranthus deltoides*, *L. roseus* and *Delosperma lehmannii*. 🌱

Left. *Lampranthus roseus* cultivars in a container on a sunny, bright verandah. Photo: E. Van Jaarsveld.

HAVE YOU GOT A WILD GARDEN?

The Editorial Committee of *Veld & Flora* will be voting for the best article by an amateur botanist appearing in the magazine during 1999. The winner will be announced in the March issue of 2000, and the prize will be a year's membership of the Botanical Society. The competition runs on a yearly basis. The article can be about your wild garden or anything to do with southern Africa's indigenous flora. Please include original drawings or photographs (slides or prints) as these really make a difference when it comes to voting! The winner of the 1998 best article by an amateur botanist was **Ralph Peckover** for his article '*Brachystelma*, an unusual and threatened succulent' on p. 128 of the December 1998 issue of *Veld & Flora*. Details for submission can be found on the contents page of any issue, and instructions for authors on page 5 of the March 1999 issue.

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