

12. ROCKERY VIII



This is an important landmark in the development of this garden. It is a medium sized, sausage shaped feature about twenty-five meters long and ten meters wide. At its bend in the middle on the eastern border is a marble slab, stating that this rockery has been developed to commemorate the generous donation of Cacti and other Succulents by MRS. G. C. JAIN in the memory of her beloved husband MR. G. C. JAIN (4. 12. 1927 – 6.11. 1991). MR. G. C. JAIN was a multifaceted business tycoon. He had actively participated in the Indian Independence movement under MAHATMA GANDHI. He was a great plant lover and also had a collection of rare

exotic birds. He developed a large Cactus and Succulent Nursery named KALPATARU BOTANICAL GARDEN at AMBERGAON in Southern Gujarat. MR. R. SRINIVASAN was in-charge of that nursery. More than fifteen hundred species of cacti and other Succulents were grown and propagated there. MR. SRINIVASAN was an expert grower and had very good knowledge about Cacti and other Succulents. He was also growing a very large number of orchids. It was in this nursery that I first saw successful grafting of *Dideria madgarcanesis* tubercles on *Pereskiopsis*. This nursery apart from meeting the requirements of Indian cactophiles exported a lot of plants. After the death of MR G. C. JAIN in 1991 this nursery gradually fell apart as MR. SRINIVASAN also left this job. MRS G. C. JAIN was not much interested in Cacti and Succulents. She visited this garden in 1993 and expressed her desire to donate plants from Kalpataru Gardens provided the donation is acknowledged in the memory of her late husband, MR. G. C. JAIN. I readily accepted the offer and told MRS. JAIN that the plants will be landscaped on a large feature in memory of MR. G. C. JAIN. I visited the Kalpataru Botanical Gardens in 1994, and I was given a free run of the Nursery and told to collect any plants which were suitable for the Botanical Garden at Panchkula. I spent an entire day uprooting and packing a large number of specimen size Cacti and other Succulents.



This included two very large *Pachypodium saundersii* var. *saundersii*, two large plants of *Pachypodium lamieri* and one of *Pachypodium geayi*, and a very large number of specimen size Cacti. By the evening I had a load for one large truck and dispatched the same to Chandigarh-Panchkula. One of our garden workers, MR. HANS RAJ, accompanied this truck. He was given instructions about the care of plants on the way, as the journey involved passage through hot arid climate zone of Rajasthan. They were advised to drive mainly at nights. I was to stay in Bombay for a few more days. When I returned to Chandigarh, I found that all plants had been properly housed in glass houses. Except for two beautiful palm trees, which

did not survive the hot journey, all others were safe. Subsequently Rockery VIII was developed in another couple of months. Most of the plants suitable for this landscaped garden were planted outdoors during the coming months while about 40% of the plants were absorbed in our indoor Botanical collections.



Starting at the Northern end, I will like to point out some outstanding plants. Near this end is a large, two and half meter high *Euphorbia cooperi* plant. Several *Agaves*, mainly *Agave americana* and *Agave sisilana* are at this end. There are a few large *Kalanchoe behariensis* plants in the background. A very big *Cereus peruvianus* var. *monstrose* plant also grows here. Several plants of *Ritterocereus prunosus*, *Cereus peruvianus*, *Cephalocereus palmeri*, a large plant of branching *Espositoa lanata*, *Opuntia*

mamillata monstrose plant, and several plants of other *Opuntia* species are also in this region.

A large plant *Trichocereus spaccianus* and two plants of *Hertrichocereus beneckeii* grow in the background near the middle. Three small plants of *Pachypodium lamerei* have been planted in the mid zone of this section. Three species of *Echinocereus* are also here. One of these is *Echinocereus papillosus* on a graft and the other two are *Echinocereus procumbens* and a group of *Echinocereus engelmannii*. *Echinocereus papillosus* flowers profusely during the summer and when in flower, is very attractive. Near the middle in the background is a grouping plant of *Cereus weberi*. Two large *Ferocactus herrerae* plants are in front near the middle. The skyline of this rockery in the middle is dominated by a tall *Alluaudia procera*; about four meters tall and next to it a taller branching *Dideria madagascarensis*. The three plants of *Pachypodium geayi* and two *Pachypodium lamieri* are in the middle. The white flowers of the *Pachypodiums* during summer and rainy season make the skyline very attractive. Just behind the commemorative stone is a couple of smaller growing *Opuntias*. Two very big *Adenium obesum* plants are in front of the *Pachypodiums*. One of these has deep red flowers. Cuttings from this deep red flowering plant have been planted extensively on other rockeries.

Another most precious landscaping gift from Kalpataru Botanical Gardens is the *Akersia grandiflora* x *Borzicactus aurispinus* hybrid. This plant with five to seven cm thick, one to two meter long stems clothed in a thick coat of golden spines is the most attractive landscaping plant. During the entire summer every two to three weeks the entire column is covered with hundreds of small three cm long orange flowers. The plants are a photographer's delight. A big grouping plant of this hybrid is just behind the marble slab. Just near the *Adeniums* and in front of *Pachypodiums* is a large plant of *Echinocactus grusonii* var. *albispinus*.



Behind the *Pachypodiums* is a beautiful group of an unidentified *Cereus* species with thick ribbed branches, about nine to ten cm thick, with bluish-green colour. A group of ten *Echinocactus grusonii* and another large

