

adults or young plants) This made us think it's a spontaneous mutation with difficult or impossible sexual reproduction. Due to this, its propagation is being made by hardwood cuttings taken during the last weeks of August (late winter in Southern Hemisphere), planted on hot benches (65F) after IBA treatment. So far, the progress is good. The cuttings have rooted and they seem to be healthy. But the final results and conclusions will come at the end of this next summer.

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## Los Verdes Prados — I.P.P.S. 1998 in Argentina

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The I.P.P.S. motto, "To seek and to share," translates "Investigue y Comparte" in Spanish. This was certainly the attitude among 75 enthusiastic participants at the Second South America Area Meeting in Argentina, August 1998. The first Area Meeting was held in Buenos Aires in 1996 and served to "launch" I.P.P.S. among the growers and horticulturists of South America. In 1997, several members and others from South America got a glimpse of I.P.P.S. at the International Tour and Western Region Annual Meeting in Vancouver. This year's meeting was a continuation of our expansion plan.

The 3-day conference in Tucuman, a northern province in Argentina, included 14 presentations, two field trips, and a wonderful banquet at the closing. A 5-day postconference tour to the northern province of Salta into the desert valleys of the Andean foothills was absolutely perfect in every way and made the whole experience "the trip of a lifetime."

Western Region I.P.P.S. has been actively involved with I.P.P.S. expansion in Latin America for 5 years. We have seen the most notable progress in Argentina, largely due to the consistent efforts of Graciela Barreriro, who runs our South American office in Buenos Aires. This year, she was assisted by Daniel Dieguez and his organizing committee, in planning a conference as complex as any Regional annual meeting. In fact, when you consider the planning, travel arrangements, accommodations, and activities on the tour, the meeting starts to look more like an International Board tour. And not unlike previous International tours I have attended, the food in Argentina was fantastic!

Several of you attended the International tour, hosted last year by Western Region and planned by President Bruce Macdonald. We had a chance to meet and interact with 25 members from South America and see their enthusiasm and dedication at each tour stop in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia and throughout the conference in Vancouver. As you recall, we provided simultaneous Spanish translation. Many who had traveled last year to the Northwest participated in their own area meeting, this year greeting and hosting a few visitors from North America. It was great to see so many familiar faces!

Traveling from North America to Argentina for the 1998 conference were, from Southern Region, David and Suzanne Tankard (David's Nursery), and from Western Region, Martin Grantham (U.C. Berkeley), Wilbur Bluhm (Secretary-Treasurer), and Mike Evans (Tree of Life Nursery) with wife, Hilda and daughter, Debbie. English translation was provided for each presentation and tour stop. Each member

funded their own expenses entirely. No I.P.P.S. funds were used for travel or other expenses. Travelling from Uruguay (30 h on a bus!) was member Tomeu Gelabert. All the other attendees came from different parts of Argentina.

At this time, there are 75 members in the Western Region Area of South America and Graciela is the Area Director on the Executive Committee. As a result of the meeting in August, members in Argentina have formed an "Area Committee" which enables them to function similar to a Region. The committee members are Graciela Barreiro (Buenos Aires), Daniel Dieguez (Tucuman), Patricia Tesone (Buenos Aires), Eduardo Alberto Flachsland (Corrientes), Rafael Kreibohm (Tucuman), and Tomeu Gelabert (Punta del Este, Uruguay).

Since new member recruitment and membership services are key issues in this emerging region, and there is much work to do, Graciela and Daniel certainly welcome the assistance of the new committee members. One of the immediate tasks is to follow up on all the attendees at the recent conference.

The subjects of the talks at the conference included propagation media, use of peat, alternative media components, mycorrhiza, root systems, citrus germplasm, in vitro propagation of orchids, propagation of Restonaceas, greenhouse coverings, description of the Andean foothill forest vegetation, native cactus species, and new plants for southern Argentina. Our tours took us to nurseries growing citrus, flowering perennials, foliage, ornamentals, and a natural area with stops at a mountain resort and an old monastery. In a matter of a few days, we were introduced to all aspects of the horticultural, botanical, and scenic resources of the area.

The level of involvement at the conference and on tour was incredible. When three speakers, who had just given back-to-back papers on growing media got up after their presentations to clarify their points (seemingly contradictory in one instance), and the audience became engaged in a 15-minute discussion on pH, ion exchange, nutrient availability, and the finer details of root systems, you could say that you had witnessed the epitome of the I.P.P.S. purpose! Every seat was occupied for each speaker's talk, and the questions and comments were numerous throughout the conference. Most attendees could be seen taking copious notes.

It is noteworthy that while this I.P.P.S. conference had the assistance of a couple of related sponsors, the meeting stood on its own. It was not tied to a horticultural industry trade show, or similar event, yet growers from all over the country flew in or drove to Tucuman to attend. This shows the good planning and organization that went into the meeting, and proves the enthusiastic acceptance and desire for I.P.P.S. in South America, particularly in Argentina.

For the 20 or so that took the postconference tour, the following 5 days were filled with unbelievable scenery, fantastic accommodations, and botanical/historical/cultural resources beyond description. We traveled through mountain passes into high, desert valleys on the eastern slope of the Andean Range. The landscape looked much like parts of the arid southwest of North America, but our average elevation was 2200 m above the level of the sea. Numerous species of cacti and unusual xeriphytic plants comprised the vegetation in valleys where the sun shines more than 330 days a year. The surrounding mountains are spectacular.

In Tafi del Valle, we caught a glimpse of ranch (estancia) life reminiscent of "old" Argentina and stone artifacts of an even earlier era. In Amaicha we saw ruins of the Quilmes people, an ancient civilization which broke away from the domineering Incas, and in Cafayate we experienced wine tasting at a vineyard which has been



operational for a hundred years. As a finale, we drove through a pass (Quebrada de Cafayate) with red rocks and formations which compare to the colors and majesty of attractions such as Bryce Canyon or Zion National Park in southern Utah... a photographer's dream. Our tour ended in the lovely town of Salta, known as "The Beautiful" in Argentina. We had a couple days for sight-seeing in and around the town. The colonial style architecture, lovely churches, convents, parks, and flowering street trees provided the perfect spot to appreciate the actual beauty while recalling the incredible time we had spent at the conference and on the road and to genuinely appreciate the people who had made it all possible.

All our Argentine hosts, not only showed us a remarkable part of their country, but also a wonderful, friendly spirit which made it hard to say good-bye. We had spent nearly 2 weeks together and I'm sure we made friendships that will last a lifetime. I could go into detail on each person who made the conference and tour, but this paper would soon grow very lengthy.

I believe that Graciela Barreiro, Daniel Dieguez, and all the members in Argentina deserve special recognition at this time for the fantastic job they are doing to promote I.P.P.S. in South America. I.P.P.S. is made up of hard-working, dedicated members like them, and each and every member should be proud that our Society is so competently represented on a new continent.