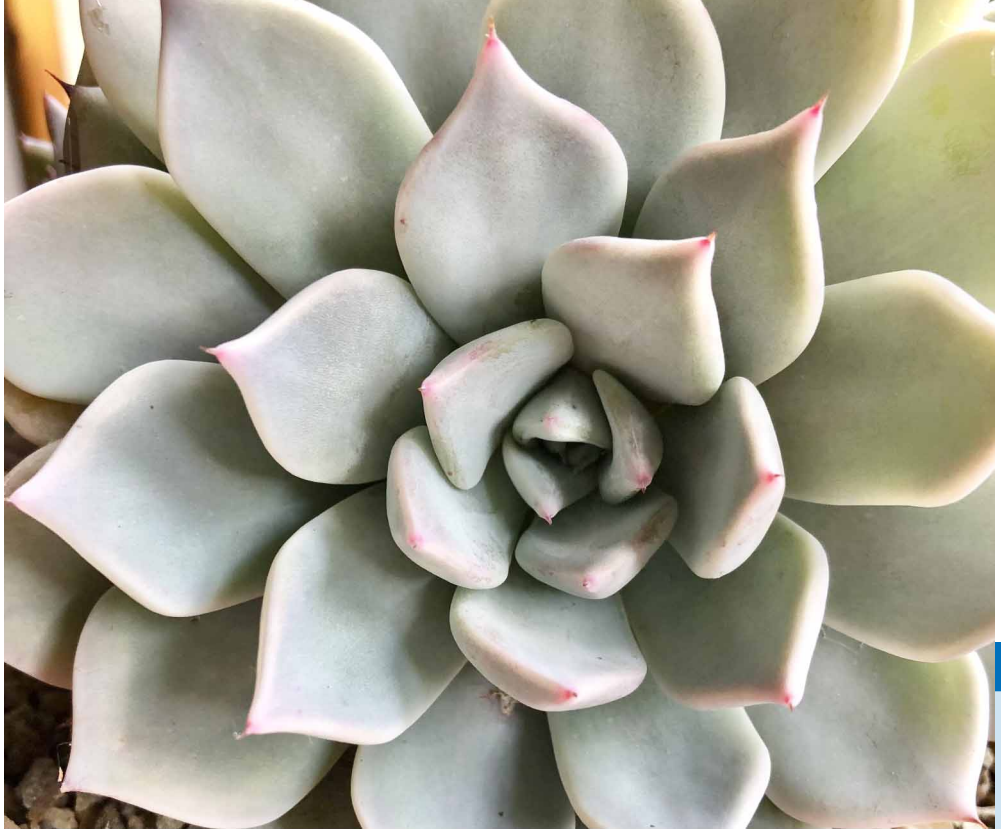

Fig 1

*Echeveria cuspidata* var. *cuspidata*

# Echeveria cuspidata

**by Colin C. Walker**

*Echeveria cuspidata* is a very attractive and relatively slow-growing species, so it is ideal for discerning collectors with limited space. It is also quite variable and three varieties have been named (Kimnach, 2005).

**Fig. 2**

*Echeveria cuspidata* var. *cuspidata* (SB1447) in a 20cm pot

The typical var. *cuspidata* was first described in 1903 but it is still far from common in cultivation. Along the way it has acquired one synonym, *Echeveria parrasensis* and has been confused with *Echeveria turgida*.

It usually forms a solitary rosette up to 15cm across (Fig. 1) with broadish glaucous blue-green leaves with prominent pointed tips hence the name '*cuspidata*' which means 'ending in a sharp point'.

My largest plant, however, (Fig. 2) is somewhat unusual in that it is now a clump of nine rosettes. This fortuitous occurrence resulted from the death of the centre of a single rosette, which was followed by offsetting to produce this rare clump with the largest rosette currently measuring 12cm across. To date I have not been brave enough to propagate this plant by removal of an offset.

The delicate glaucous covering to the leaves is readily marked, making the plant tricky to maintain in pristine condition for the show bench. Removal of dead leaves and the remains of dried up flower spikes, without marking the living leaves, is an especially difficult operation. Flower spikes (Fig. 2), readily produced in the spring between March and May, are up to 14cm tall bearing nodding pinkish-orange flowers each about 12mm long.

Var. *cuspidata* is recorded as being widespread in the Mexican state of Coahuila. My plant, however, has the collection number SB1447, which is a Steven Brack collection reported from near Ciudad Victoria in the state of Tamaulipas. Kimnach (2005) suggests that this record requires verification "because it has not been recorded from the intervening state of Nuevo León".

The range of variation in this species was significantly expanded when Kimnach (2005) described two new varieties. *Echeveria cuspidata* var. *zaragozae* (Fig. 3) is a really attractive dwarf form. My single rosette has yet to offset and is about 8cm across with universally smaller, more numerous leaves, more bluish-green than

**Fig. 3**

*Echeveria cuspidata* var. *zaragozae* in a 7cm pot

the typical variety, set off with prominent leaf tips. For comparison the two plants are shown together (Fig. 4). The flower spikes of the two varieties are very similar, although the flowers of var. *zaragozae* are more variable in length with the range of 10–13 mm.

Var. *zaragozae* grows on gypsum hills near the town of Zaragoza in the state of Nuevo León. It was apparently discovered in 1972 and has been recollected on a few occasions since then, but appears to have a very limited distribution near Zaragoza.

The third variety, var. *gemmula*, is a slightly smaller version of var. *zaragozae* with similarly arranged densely-packed small leaves and smaller flowers at 9–11mm in length. The “delicate beauty” of this plant (Kimnach, 2005) inspired him to name his new variety ‘*gemmula*’ meaning ‘little jewel’ which seems very appropriate for such an attractive small plant which, I regret to say, I have yet to grow in my collection.

Var. *gemmula* has a wider distribution than does var. *zaragozae* because it is recorded from localities in the states of Querétaro and Nuevo León with a 200-mile gap between them (Kimnach, 2005). ■

***Photos: Colin C. Walker***

**Reference**

Kimnach, M. (2005) Three varieties of *Echeveria cuspidata*. *Cact. Succ. J. (US)*, **77**: 28–33, 47.

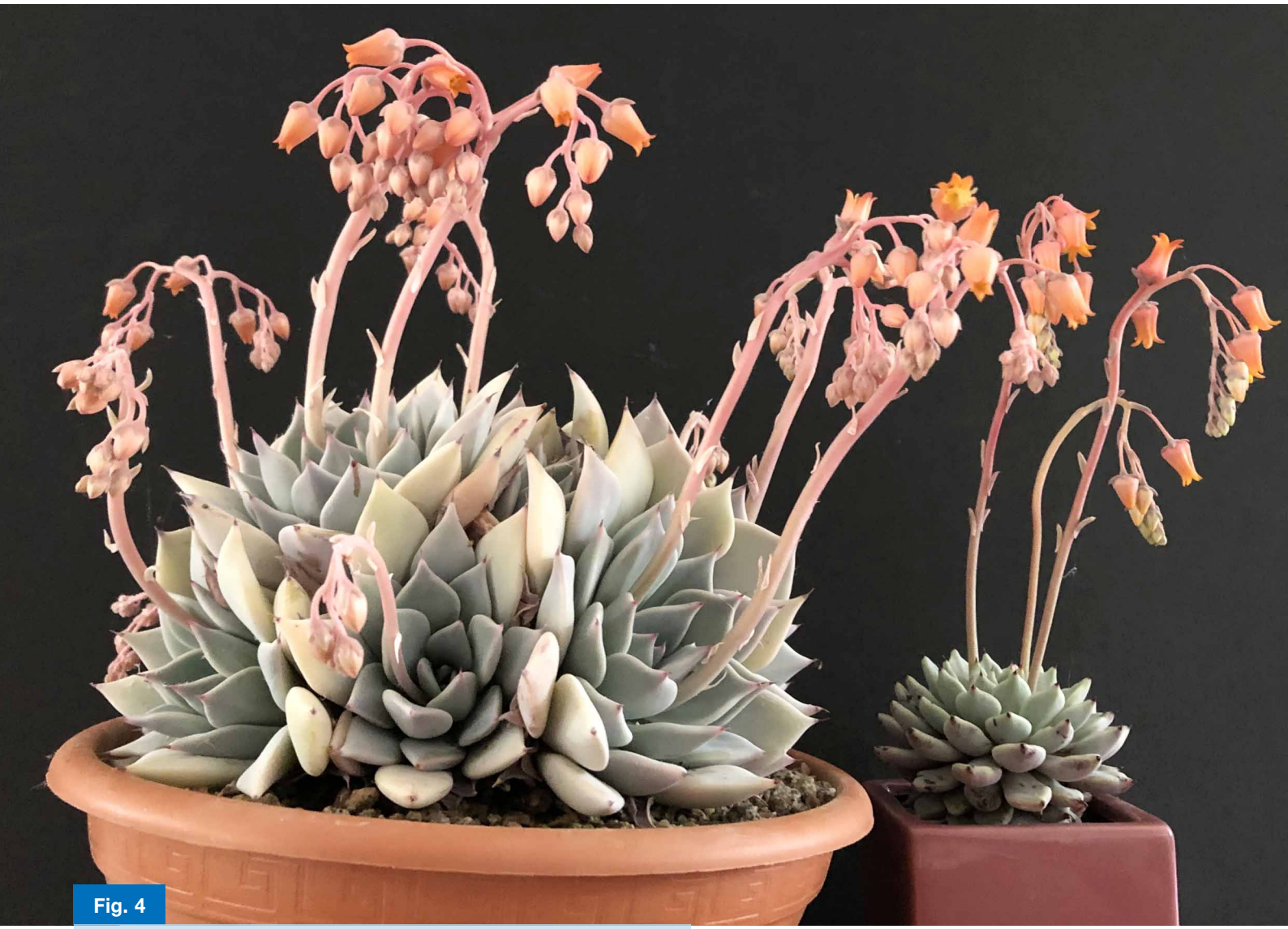

**Fig. 4**

*Echeveria cuspidata* var. *cuspidata* (left) and var. *zaragozae* (right)