The cultivar ×*Graptoveria* ‘Fantome’ Aubé ex Gideon F.Sm. & Bischof. is the most commonly cultivated representative of the Crassulaceae in southern Africa

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**Summary:** The most commonly cultivated member of the Crassulaceae in southern Africa is a hybrid between representatives of the genera *Graptopetalum* Rose and *Echeveria* DC., in the nothogenus ×*Graptoveria* Gossot. However, to date there has been doubt as to the name that should be applied to this hybrid. Plants form distinct stems that are unable to retain the rosettes in an erect position, so becoming pendent, or creeping when grown on flat ground. The leaves of this ×*Graptoveria* are borne in dense, apical rosettes, have an obovate-spathulate shape, and are sometimes obscurely keeled. They are light glaucous-grey and pink-infused in full sun, and the margin is a lighter, whitish blue colour. The flowers are light yellow, with the central section of the petals longitudinally light greenish infused. The combination of these characters clearly separates this hybrid from any Crassulaceae taxa indigenous to southern Africa. The parentage of the hybrid has been postulated as *E. elegans* Rose and *G. paraguayense* (N.E. Br.) E.Walther. This hybrid is exceedingly common in southern African horticulture; however, it has not become invasive after many decades of cultivation, and shows no signs of becoming problematical. The history and nomenclature applicable to the hybrid are clarified, and the cultivar name ×*Graptoveria* ‘Fantome’ Aubé ex Gideon F.Sm. & Bischof. is established for it.


**Introduction**

With c. 1500 species in about three dozen genera, the Crassulaceae are one of the largest families of succulent plants globally. The family is near-cosmopolitan, with significant centres of diversity in, especially, South Africa and Mexico (Thiede & Eggli, 2007). In the *Flora of Southern Africa* (FSA) region [Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, South Africa] about 250 mostly indigenous Crassulaceae taxa are recognized (Tölken, 1985; Smith *et al*., 1997). Most of these—more than 150 taxa—belong to *Crassula* L., but *Adromischus* Lem., *Cotyledon* L., *Kalanchoe* Adans., and *Tylecodon* Toelken, have also diversified extensively in the subcontinent.

Apart from the species of *Crassulaceae* native to southern Africa, a number of exotic representatives of the family, notably Madagascan repre-
sentatives of the genus *Kalanchoe*, have become established in the subcontinent (Crouch & Smith, 2007; Walters *et al.*, 2011; Smith & Figueiredo, 2017). Numerous other indigenous and non-invasive exotic species are very popular in waterwise amenity and domestic horticulture (Goodwin, 2000; Smith & Van Wyk, 2008; Botha & Botha, 2009; Celliers, 2012; Smit, 2015). In other parts of the world, including those with non-arid climates, species of Crassulaceae are also increasingly planted as garden subjects (Duncan, 2001).

Representatives of several genera of the Crassulaceae are known to be interfertile, *Echeveria* DC. and *Graptopetalum* Rose being two New World, predominantly, but not exclusively, Mexican examples of such genera (Walther, 1972: 51; Rowley, 1978: 120, figure 10.2; Van Keppel, 1980, 1981; Schulz & Kapitany, 2005: 12, 38). Hybrids created between species of the variable and heterogeneous *Echeveria* and *Graptopetalum* are necessarily very diverse, but often closely resemble true *Echeveria* species in basic vegetative morphology; however, once such plants flower there is usually no doubt about their status as hybrids and the genus parentage. The nothogenus name ×*Graptoveria* Gossot [not G.D.Rowley; see Smith *et al.*, 2018] is in use for hybrids between these genera; a partial list of known ×*Graptoveria* enti-

**Figure 1.** The most commonly cultivated crassuloid plant in southern Africa is the intergeneric hybrid ×*Graptoveria* ‘Fantome’. Photograph: Gideon F. Smith.

ties / taxa is provided at http://www.crassulaceae.ch/de/artikel?akID=63&aaID=2.

In southern Africa, by far the most commonly cultivated crassuloid plant (Figure 1) is such a hybrid between representatives of the genera *Echeveria* and *Graptopetalum*. The Afrikaans common names ‘Kliprosie’ [English: rock rose], ‘Mexikaanse sneeuabal’ [English: Mexican snowball], ‘Skaamrosie’ [English: shy rose], ‘Vaalrosie’ [English: grey rose], ‘Vetrosie’ [English: fat rose], and ‘Woestynroos’ [English: Desert rose] are applied to the hybrid, while it is also simply and rather confusingly known as ‘*Echeveria hybrida*’ or ‘*E. ×hybrida*’ (Pienaar & Smith, 2011). The name ×*Graptoveria* ‘Africana’ is also sometimes informally applied to this hybrid. It has not become invasive after many decades of cultivation, and shows no signs of becoming problematical in southern Africa.

*Echeveria* (c. 180 species; about 40 taxa have been described since the publication of Kimnach, 2003: 103, where 139 species and 28 infraspecific taxa were catalogued) includes small, medium-sized, or very large species with their leaves arranged in terminal rosettes, with some species being subshrubs. The flowers are usually colourful (orange, red), and urn-, cup-, bell-, or bowl-shaped (Walther, 1972: 43; Pilbeam, 2008: 11) (Figures 2...
Graptopetalum (c. 16 species; see Thiede, 2003: 128) includes small to medium-sized, stem-forming species (Figures 4 and 5) as well as small almost stemless ones that also have their leaves arranged in rosettes (Acevedo-Rosas et al., 2004). The flowers are flexed open at anthesis making them appear star-shaped, and the petals are often adorned with reddish to brownish blotches on a white or pastel (yellowish to greenish) background (Figure 6).

To date there has been doubt as to the name that should be applied to the ×Graptoveria hybrid with its bluish leaves arranged in tidy rosettes at the ends of short, initially erect, but later creeping to pendent stems that is cultivated in southern Africa. We here discuss aspects of the history of the hybrid and clarify its nomenclature; the name ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ Aubé ex Gideon F.Sm. & Bischofb. is established for it.
Background

Some of the earliest references we could trace to material today referable to the hybrid genus ×Graptopetora were published in the 1930s, some 80 years ago, by Pierre Gossot of Corbeil in north-central France, just south of Paris. He described a number of interspecific and -generic crassuloid hybrids from his collection in a little known journal called Notre Vallée, a name that translates as ‘Our Valley’. Note that ‘Notre Vallée’ was a popular journal title at the time, and several journals had this name.

Shortly before World War II broke out, Gossot (1938) invalidly published the name ‘Echeveria caerulescens’ from material he had in cultivation at Corbeil. In the text under this name he noted that “…(parents inconnus. Mais comprenant probablement l’Echeveria Weinbergii Rose…”). Although he did not explicitly use the multiplication sign, ‘×’, or an equivalent, in the name to indicate the hybrid origin of the material, he clearly regarded this entity as an intraspecific Echeveria hybrid given that he referred to its possible parentage. However, he published this name without a Latin description or diagnosis, at the time a requirement of the International rules of botanical nomenclature (Briquet, 1935: 11, Article 38) for nothotaxa, which is now covered by McNeill et al., 2012: 85, Article 39.1., and 150, Article H.10.1., in today’s equivalent rules (see also Brickell et al., 2016 for the nomenclature of cultivated plants in general). Interestingly, the second time this name was published (in Marnier-Lapostolle, 1949: 24) the designation ‘Echeveria caerulescens’ was not furnished with an authority and therefore not ascribed to Gossot. Gossot assisted with compiling the Crassulaceae included in Marnier-Lapostolle (1949) and the names of other entities that he had earlier described in the family were mostly followed by “Gos.”, so indicating him as the author (see Smith et al., 2018).

From the descriptions of the hybrids that Gossot published in Notre Vallée in the 1930s it is clear that he had a good knowledge of the crassuloid genera recognised at the time he conducted his hybridising work in France; at least representatives of Echeveria, Urbinia Rose (Britton & Rose, 1903: 11) [nowadays included in the synonymy of Echeveria], and Pachyphytum Link, Klotzsch & Otto (Klotzsch, 1841: 9) were in cultivation in his collection. In contrast, members of the genus Graptopetalum Rose (1911: 96) are not mentioned in Gossot’s publications, and we were unable to trace any reference to this genus in his work. We believe that the reason for this apparent omission is that the species today known as G. paraguayense (N.E.Br.) E.Walther at that time was widely referred to as ‘Echeveria weinbergii’, with “[J.N.] Rose” sometimes given as the author of the name (see for example Gossot, 1938: 36). However, as far as we could establish this ‘name’ in fact was not published by Rose. The annotation ‘Echeveria weinbergii’ was used in horticulture in the first few decades of the 20th Century, and is generally considered to have been validly published in 1912 by “T.B.Shepherd” in a catalogue issued by the Theodosia B. Shepherd Company. For instance, The International Plant Name Index (IPNI) cites the name as “Echeveria weinbergii” (ICN) (1912: 37), has recently tended to revalidate the name to have been a nomen nudum. It has also been argued (Kimnach & Moran, 1986) that in the Shepherd catalogue the name was “‘mentioned incidentally’ in the sense of the ICBN” [of 1983]. Although this diagnostic / descriptive statement might seem too cryptic and inadequate to satisfy the requirements for valid description, the Nomenclature Committee for Vascular Plants, when applying the present International Code of nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN) (McNeill et al., 2012), has recently tended to regard very brief, comparative statements as adequate for the valid publication of a name (see for example Smith, 2015, 2017 on the name A. gustaviana J.N.Haage & E.Schmidt). Therefore, even though the diagnosis associated with the name Echeveria weinbergii in Theodosia B. Shepherd Company (1912: 37) might appear to be insufficient to render the name validly published, we here follow the IPNI citation, noting though that Theodosia B. Shepherd (as T.B.Shepherd), who was deceased by 1912, could not have been the author who validated the name.

A cross such as “Echeveria caerulescens” between ‘Echeveria weinbergii Rose’ and a true
Echeveria species, for Gossot, was simply an interspecific Echeveria hybrid and not a ×Graptoveria. Significantly though, from Gossot’s description of ‘E. weinbergii Rose’ (stellate, white flowers with some red dots) it is clear that he was indeed dealing with G. paraguayense, and not with an Echeveria species. Rose (1922) published a new genus, Byrnesia Rose, based on Echeveria weinbergii Hort. ex T.B.Shepherd. Byrnesia was described as being close to the genus Graptopetalum (that Rose had described 11 years earlier), but resembling Echeveria in habit and leaves.

Byrnesia is now considered a synonym of Graptopetalum (but see Heath, 1994: 132).

Graptopetalum paraguayense has a chequered nomenclatural history, and was also at one time treated as a species of Sedum L., as Sedum weinbergii (see Berger, 1930: 446).

It is not known what eventually happened to Pierre Gossot, and the ultimate fate of his plants kept at Corbeil remains unknown. However, it can be safely assumed that in the occupied northern part of France his plants did not survive World War II. Given that several of the names that he used for hybrids he created in the Crassulaceae appear in Marnier-Lapostolle (1949), he obviously furnished at least Les Cèdres in Mediterranean France (see Smith & Figueiredo, 2013) with some...
of the plants he cultivated and propagated. It is not known to whom else, and to how many people, he sent material.

Gossot’s name is mentioned in Marnier-Lapostolle (1949), but whether Gossot ever worked as Curator at Julien Marnier-Lapostolle’s garden, Jardin Exotique ‘Les Cèdres’, in St.-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, as suggested by Van Keppel (1980: 28), could not be substantiated. Mr Marc Teissier (personal communication) informed us that Gossot indeed probably worked at Les Cèdres after World War II, from around 1946 / 1949 until 1955 or 1956, and that he perhaps held a position as Head Gardener. However, information about the staffing structure at Les Cèdres at that time is scant. Gossot’s major contribution to horticulture remains his work on creating interspecific and - generic hybrids in the Crassulaceae.

**History and possible parentage of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’**

The ×Graptoveria material grown in southern Africa corresponds more or less with ‘Echeveria caerulescens’ (Gossot, 1938: 36). However, our hybrid differs in some respects from this entity. Most importantly, the flowers of the representative of ×Graptoveria grown in southern Africa often do not open, with the petals apparently remaining ‘fused’ along the margins from bud through to wilted flower stage. Flowers that generally do not open is such a distinctive character that Gossot, who originally published the designation ‘Echeveria caerulescens’, would not have overlooked it if it had been true for his [Gossot’s] hybrid, but significantly, he did not mention this feature.

On the other hand the southern African hybrid corresponds fairly well to a plant J.C. (Joop) van Keppel (1964) described and which he called ×Graptoveria ‘Caerulescens’ because he erroneously assumed that it was identical with Pierre Gossot’s hybrid. Discrepancies that exist between Gossot’s ‘Echeveria caerulescens’ and Van Keppel’s ×Graptoveria ‘Caerulescens’ include:

**Gossot:** Rosette généralement unique [English: Rosette generally single].
**Van Keppel:** Offsetting in the leaf axils with a long stalk.

**Gossot:** Feuilles aigues mais non aristées [English: Leaves acute but not aristate].
**Van Keppel:** Leaves with apical mucro.

**Gossot:** Hampes florales simples [English: Inflorescences simple].
**Van Keppel:** Inflorescence a single or forked cincinnus.

In the introductory text to the entity that Van Keppel (1980: 29) regarded as ×Graptoveria ‘Caerulescens’ he noted that plants “…form[-ing] a stem with offshoots higher up…”, and confirmed this in the description as “…offsetting in the leaf axils with a long stalk”. In some instances this is true for material found in cultivation in southern Africa (Figure 7), but in our view it is not a character of any diagnostic value.

It is therefore clear that the way in which the designation ‘Echeveria caerulescens’ was applied by Van Keppel (1964, 1980) is incorrect. The plant described by Van Keppel is evidently not identical to Gossot’s ‘E. caerulescens’, which may no longer exist in cultivation. Notwithstanding the fact that Gossot’s name has not been validly published, the cultivar name ×Graptoveria ‘Caerulescens’ cannot be applied to the material described by Van Keppel, nor to the southern African material that to date lacks a name. We here establish the cultivar name ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ for it. This name was proposed by Ms Emmanuelle Aube, with ‘Fantome’ spelled ‘Fantomé’ [English: Ghost]. We adopt this name, but with the “ö” replaced by “o”, for ease of transcription. This is an appropriate cultivar name to establish given the ghost-like, bluish grey colour of the leaves of the cultivar. Incidentally, one of its possible parents, Graptopetalum paraguayense, is also commonly and widely known as ‘Ghost Plant’ (Kimnach & Moran, 1986).

While the hybrid from southern Africa is undoubtedly the result of a crossing event between representatives of Echeveria and Graptopetalum, it is not certain which species of these genera are involved. While Gossot believed that the Graptopetalum parent was probably Graptopetalum paraguayense (as ‘Echeveria weinbergii’) and that the Echeveria parent was completely unknown, Van Keppel had no doubt regarding the Graptopetalum being G. paraguayense (Figures 4–6) and postulated that the Echeveria parent had been E. elegans Rose (Figure 8) (Van Keppel, 1964: 180). The existence of a hybrid between these two species was also reported by Knobloch (1972: 100). Selected characters of these two species and ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ are compared in Table 1.

It seems quite plausible that G. paraguayense is one parent, given the shared stem-forming habit of the hybrid (Figures 7 and 9), star-shaped flowers (Figure 10), bluish white leaf colour (Figure 11), and lighter leaf margins (Figure 11). However, if E. elegans is indeed the other parent, the pink colour evident in the lower ¾ of the petals of this species has been largely lost in the hybrid. It is common for flower colour in ×Graptoveria hybrids to not exactly reflect the colour of
the Echeveria parent, which complicates postulating that parent. The flowers of Graptopetalum species are mostly white (sometimes yellowish or greenish), with no to numerous scattered or aligned red or reddish brown dots. The influence of the Echeveria parent is at most only manifest in tingeing the white to yellow, or other mostly pastel shades.

Plants very similar in vegetative and reproductive morphology to ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ are also in cultivation in other parts of the world. However, it is worth noting that the origin of the hybrid grown in southern African is not necessarily the same as that of clones with a similar appearance—likely even of the same parentage—present in, for example, the northern hemisphere. Either deliberate or coincidental hybridisation events of Echeveria elegans and Graptopetalum paraguayense may well have occurred in several places worldwide, and at different times and with different parental clones of the same species involved. Such crossing events necessarily would have resulted in hybrid progeny with somewhat different appearances.

**Nomenclature of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’**

×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ Aubé ex Gideon F.Sm. & Bischofb. **cult. nov.**

**Parentage:**
Graptopetalum species [likely G. paraguayense (N.E.Br.) E.Walther]
Echeveria species [possibly E. elegans Rose]

**Note:** For a discussion of the nomenclature of the nothogenus name ×Graptoveria Gossot, as well as the names ×Graptophytum Gossot and ×Pachyveria Haage & Schmidt, see Smith et al. (2018).

**Description of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’**

The following description is based on material grown in Pretoria, South Africa.

Perennial, solitary or sparsely branched, stem-forming succulent herb. **Stem** 10–50cm long, 8–15mm in diameter, light greyish brown, lacking leaves lower down, scars of abscised leaves distinctly darker brown, erect at first, later creeping to pendent, too weak to support rosette in erect position unless staked, developing short, brown aerial roots. **Branches** 10–15cm long, usually developing higher up on stem, ultimately pendent, light grey. **Leaves** 35–40 × (20)25–30mm, densely rosulate, obovate-spathulate, adaxially concave, abaxially convex and sometimes obscurely keeled, spirally arranged, restricted to terminal 1⁄3–¼ of stems and branches, shed lower down, exposing the stem, thickly succulent, light glaucous-grey, pink-infused in full sun, old leaves drying pinkish, papery; **margin** lighter whitish blue; **tips** acutely pointed, mucronate. **Inflorescence** a lateral, occasionally branched cincinnus, sometimes several carried simultaneously or successively, with terminal part recurved when young, ultimately straightening to a horizontal or somewhat erect disposition; **peduncle** bracteate, pinkish green; **bracts** small to very small, light pinkish green, drying and abscising early on. **Flowers** 9–12mm long, nectariferous, somewhat campanulate, upper parts flared open at anthesis, sometimes opening imperfectly or not at all, prominently pedicellate; **pedicels** 6–7mm long, 48 mm long.

### Table 1. Comparison of selected characters of Echeveria elegans and Graptopetalum paraguayense, and the usually intermediate status of these characters in ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Echeveria elegans</th>
<th>×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’</th>
<th>Graptopetalum paraguayense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Habit</td>
<td>Rosettes stemless</td>
<td>Rosettes at ends of decumbent or pendent stems</td>
<td>Rosettes at ends of decumbent or pendent stems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corolla</td>
<td>Urecolate</td>
<td>Intermediate*</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Petals</td>
<td>Always bicoloured (pinkish red, with greenish or yellowish at the tips)</td>
<td>Light yellow, central section longitudinally light greenish infused, sometimes pinkish outside** unspotted</td>
<td>White with a few mostly scattered red dots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stamens</td>
<td>Included in flower</td>
<td>Positioned between and against petals the ante-sepalous stamens curved outwards at anthesis</td>
<td>Positioned between and against petals curved outwards at anthesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that flowers of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ often open imperfectly (Figure 12). In instances where they do open (Figure 13), the flowers are morphologically intermediate between those of Echeveria and Graptopetalum.

**The pinkish colour on the outside of the petals is not consistently observed in material in southern Africa.
light pink; *buds* ± tear drop-shaped; *sepals* five, 4.5–6.0mm long, basally fused for ± 1mm, elongated-deltoid, slightly flared open in bud stage, uniformly light glaucous green to pink infused, lighter towards margins; *petals* five, 8–10 × 3.5–4.5mm long, slightly united at the base, free for the rest of their lengths, light yellow, central section longitudinally light greenish infused, light pink infused along margins, at anthesis erect to distinctly curved outwards towards the apices, apiculate; *stamens* 10, inserted at ± lower ⅔ of petal or at that level between petals, 5 of the 10 strongly curved outwards and distinctly exserted between free petals, other 5 closely adpressed to petals; *filaments* 4–6mm long, flattened, whitish, glabrous; *anthers* somewhat ovoid, black; *pistil* consisting of 5 carpels; *carpels* 4–5mm long, basally light yellowish; *styles* 2mm long, stout, pink, more intensely so than base of carpels; *stigma* minute; *scales* ± 1 × 1mm long, square to slightly transversely oblong, indented above, tooth-like, light yellowish green. *Follicles* unevenly produced, light green, enveloped in dry, light pinkish brown remains of corolla, brittle and grass spikelet-like when dry, 6–7mm long. *Seeds* 0.2–0.5mm long, light brown, viability in doubt. *Chromosome number*: unknown.

**Flowering time**

Plants flower in spring and early summer (southern hemisphere).
Cultivation and propagation of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’

Plants of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ are exceedingly easy to cultivate. Plants do well in full or partial shade (Figure 11), as well as in full sun (Figure 14). They will grow in thin layers of virtually any soil type, and flourish in open beds, free-standing containers (Figure 15), or hanging baskets. They do well in both winter- and summer-rainfall regions; they can tolerate very low temperatures of well below 0°C, and very high temperatures of over 40°C. In time plants form stems that are devoid of leaves lower down, and will eventually creep along the ground. This can make specimens appear unsightly, but by simply cutting off the rosettes and re-establishing them in the spot where they are intended to grow, a fresh crop of healthy rosettes can be easily obtained.

Propagation of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ is by removing rosettes and re-establishing them directly in the place where they are intended to grow. A further easy method to multiply plants is to place detached leaves on top of the soil; the leaves will soon develop roots basally, and small, but rapidly developing rosettes that can be grown on. Firm, detached leaves of Graptopetalum paraguayense will similarly strike root very easily where they are placed on a growing medium (Figure 16). The leaves of Graptopetalum paraguayense are very weakly attached to the stem and often break off from slight disturbance. The leaves of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ are fortunately more firmly attached to the stems.

Harvested leaves of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’ that are to be used for propagation purposes should ideally not be placed in the soil as the leaves are then prone to rotting; placing them flat on the soil is a safer and easier way of ensuring the development of healthy plantlets.

Seed production has been observed in some clones of ×Graptoveria ‘Fantome’. However, most seeds appear to be unviable.

A number of named ×Graptoveria cultivars have become very popular in domestic horticul-
mild-climate parts of the world (Hewitt, 1993: 125; Anderson, 1998: 171; Stockwell, 2017: 229–230). The long-known × Graptoviera ‘Fantome’, which is here finally formally established as a cultivar, is an excellent addition to the growing list of × Graptoviera cultivars that can serve as a groundcover, specimen plant, or subject for hanging baskets in waterwise and other gardens.

Acknowledgements

Mr Marc Teissier of the Jardin Exotique ‘Les Cèdres’, in St.-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, France, is thanked for kindly checking the employment records of the Jardin for information on Mr Pierre Gossot. Messrs Michael Greulich (Germany), Anton Hofer (Switzerland), Roy Mottram (United Kingdom), and Chuck Staples (USA) are thanked for kindly checking for, and providing, hard-to-find literature from their personal botanical libraries and archives.

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