

FIG. 83

Overhead view of a specimen of *Crassula* 'Morgan's Beauty' in Dr. Morgan's collection.  
Photo by the author.

## NEW SUCCULENT CULTIVARS

By MYRON KIMNACH

### 2. *Crassula* 'Morgan's Beauty'

Most of our popular hybrids, whether of roses and other garden plants or of such succulents as *Epiphyllum*, are the culmination of long-continued line-breeding, selection or back-crossing; few worthy hybrids grown today are primary crosses, i.e., the first generation offspring of two species, for it is usually necessary to carry out a breeding program through a number of generations to eliminate the faults of a hybrid series and to encourage the development of its more attractive qualities.

A notable exception is *Crassula* 'Morgan's Beauty', perhaps the most successful succulent primary hybrid, as it possesses nearly all of its parents' virtues and few of their faults. Its thick,

silvery leaves closely crowd the short stems, and in spring the center of each rosette, whether single or clustered, is filled with a nearly stemless tuft of dark pink, sweetly fragrant flowers. When in bloom there are few hybrids, or even species, which are more appealing, and a specimen is admired equally by collectors and those who dislike succulents. It is also easy to grow and propagate and therefore doubtless will become widely grown for many years to come.

The history of this hybrid is a rather confused one. About 1940 the late Dr. Meredith Morgan of Richmond, California, crossed *C. falcata* with the very dwarfed *C. ausienseis*. The seedlings matured into low clustered plants with whitish



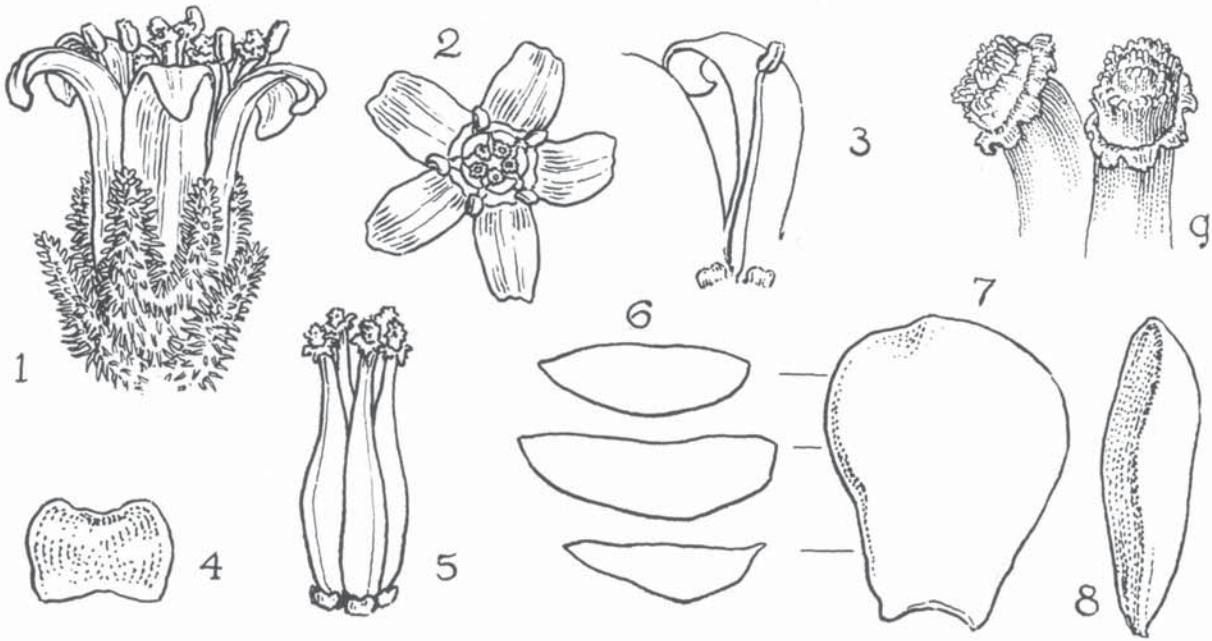


FIG. 84

*Crassula* 'Morgan's Beauty', UCBG 51.974. 1. Flower, x 6.5. 2. Flower, apical view, x 5. 3. Stamen insertion, x 4. 4. Squama, x 24. 5. Gynoecium, x 6. 6. Leaf sections, x 1. 7. Upper face of leaf, x 1. 8. Leaf, side view, x 1. 9. Stigmas, x 18. 1-8 of drawing by Mary Barnas, 1952; 9 by Mrs. M. Blos, 1959.

leaves, rather spindly inflorescences and pale pink flowers. Though fairly interesting, this cross had obvious faults and, although still grown in a few local collections, it hardly deserves naming or wide distribution. Dr. Morgan felt that it would be greatly improved if the growth and inflorescences were more compact, and he considered crossing it with a species possessing such characters. A *Crassula* with extremely compact growth and inflorescence, *C. mesembryanthemopsis* (see Fig. 85), was flowering about 1945 in his collection along with his hybrid and *C. falcata*. Unfortunately there is now some uncertainty as to which of these he crossed at that time, although he later told me that the parents of *C.* 'Morgan's Beauty' were *C. mesembryanthemopsis* and his earlier hybrid. However, in 1954 I pollinated a plant of *C. mesembryanthemopsis* (UCBG 49.1968) with pollen of *C. falcata* (UCBG 47.546, Rodin 1237); the three seedlings raised are nearly indistinguishable from *C.* 'Morgan's Beauty', though their leaves are slightly smaller and the flowers paler red. As they are inferior to Dr. Morgan's clone they will not be distributed, but they do more or less prove, as he himself finally believed, that the parents of *C.* 'Morgan's Beauty' were actually *C. falcata* and *C. mesembryanthemopsis*.

Dr. Morgan raised two seedlings which differed only in stamen length and in their lighter or darker flowers. The one with deeper red flowers he propagated and sent to Hummel's Exotic

Gardens and Johnson's Cactus Garden, both of which later distributed the hybrid under the names "Morgan's Pink *Crassula*" or *Crassula x morganiana*. The latter was a tentative name originated by P. C. Hutchison of the U. C. Botanical Garden, but later he chose the name *Crassula* 'Morgan's Beauty'. In 1956 the latter name was mentioned by Mrs. H. A. Delap in an English journal,<sup>1</sup> and as this antedates the appearance of the two catalog names it must be considered the only correct one. Mrs. Delap showed a photo of the hybrid growing in the outdoor rockery of the U. C. Botanical Garden, and incorrectly stated the parentage to be *C. falcata* x *C. deceptrix*. As a result, Dr. B. K. Boom, who is doing excellent work in describing succulent hybrids cultivated in Europe, also gave this parentage in an article in a Dutch journal.<sup>2</sup> He suggested that the best name would be *Crassula morganiana* cv. 'Morgan's Beauty', the Latin name applying to all F<sub>1</sub> seedlings derived from crossing these two species and the cultivar name to Dr. Morgan's clone. However, as already mentioned, the Latin portion of this name is antedated by the one used here and there is also no point in distinguishing clones when only one is in cultivation.

Dr. Morgan later tried to obtain F<sub>2</sub> seedlings from this hybrid, particularly by crossing it back

1. Nat. Cact. Succ. Journ. 11: 54, 1956.  
2. Succulenta 1957: 122, 1957.



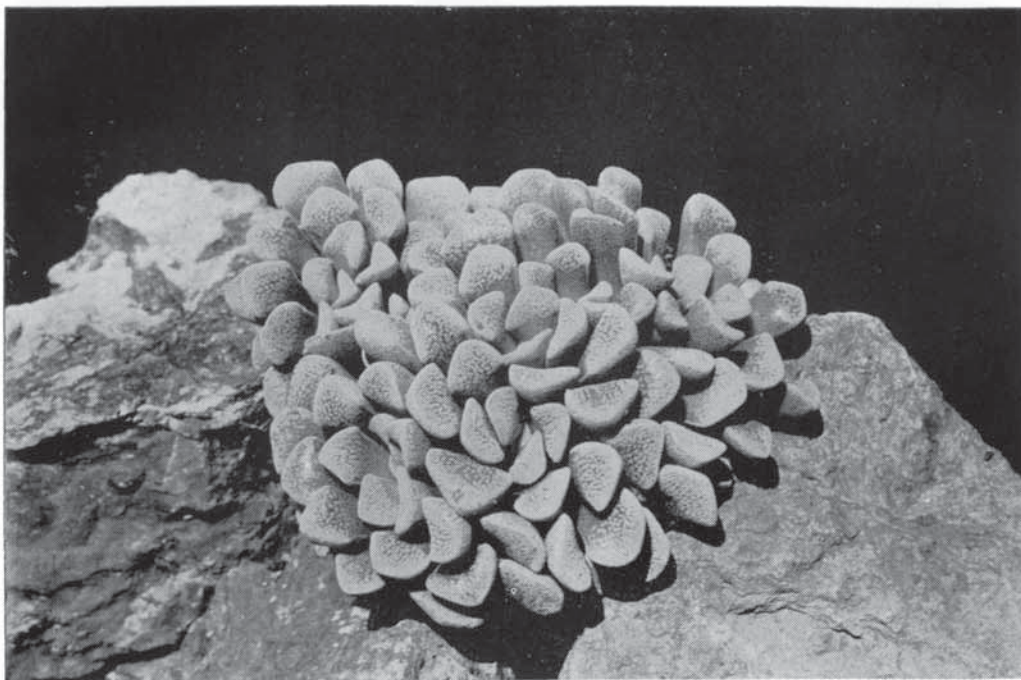


FIG. 85  
*Crassula mesembryanthemopsis*. Photo by P. C. Hutchison.

with *C. falcata*, for back-crosses usually produce more variable offspring than primary ones. No seed was obtained, however, and apparently the hybrid is sterile.

This is an unsatisfactory plant for an outdoor garden, at least in central California. A large planting at the Botanical Garden grew well during summer, but the winter rains caused the leaves to become spotted with brownish orange and finally rotted. A similar affliction sometimes attacks *C. falcata*, which, however, generally does quite well outdoors in this area. The other parent, *C. mesembryanthemopsis*, is strictly an indoor plant with us, being easily killed by excessive moisture, and this species is probably responsible for the sensitivity of *C. 'Morgan's Beauty'* to moisture. Neither should this hybrid be grown in a humid, shady greenhouse, for the leaves become greenish, less compact and sometimes orange-spotted. Under shady conditions the flower color is pale pink, but if the plant is kept in a sunny position the flowers are red. The specimen shown in Fig. 83 was grown during winters in Dr. Morgan's glasshouse on an airy, well-lit shelf and during summer on his patio. The plants are dormant during and for some time after flowering, but watering may be increased when new offsets appear. A fairly rich soil and thorough but rather infrequent waterings seem best, and water should be kept off the leaves. Stem or leaf cuttings root easily.

*Crassula 'Morgan's Beauty'*

Hybridizer: Dr. Meredith Morgan, ca. 1945.  
Parents: *C. falcata* x *C. mesembryanthemopsis*.

Plant forming a compact, many-branched mound up

to more than 20 cm. wide and 10 cm. high; branches 3 to 6 cm. wide, narrowest at apex, in cross-section square with incurved sides; stems hidden by leaves, ca. 6 mm. thick; leaves in four slightly spiralled ranks, in nearly opposite pairs, barely connate, contiguous, obliquely obovate-oblong, ca. 3 (1 to 4) cm. long and 2 (1 to 3) cm. wide, ca. 5 mm. thick near middle, the upper ones smallest, obtuse or rarely subacute, the upper surface near apex with a diagonal, truncate plane, the entire leaf thickly covered with white, usually contiguous, globose papillae which nearly obscure the green epidermis, the leaf-color silver-grey tinged greenish; inflorescences appearing in January and February, terminal, hemispherical, cymose, sweetly fragrant, 2 cm. high, ca. 3 cm. by 2 cm. wide, the peduncle usually hidden, less than 1 cm. long, the bracts ovate, fimbriate-papillose, the pedicels nearly lacking, the sepals fimbriate, the flowers 7 mm. long, the limb 6 mm. wide, the petals dark pink.

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