

## *Crassula tecta*

Normally seen in collections as the "thick leafed" form, *C. tecta* is a popular miniature crassula. The leaves have a thick covering of papillae which gives it a grey-green coloration. In the thick leafed form the leaves are very swollen and lack any pronounced edge while in the flat leafed form the leaves have a sharp edge to them. White flowers are produced in autumn and these resemble miniature pompons on a short stem. If grown with too much shade the flower heads tend to be tall and liable to bend over and touch the ground but in intense light they are held erect.

Like most miniature crassulas *C. tecta* is summer dormant. My plants grow most during March and April when buds are produced. In Victoria, winter growth slows down but spring again sees new leaf growth. During summer I try and water the plants only infrequently but they are not damaged if watered regularly so long as the humidity is low.

I find that the thin leafed form is the more vigorous grower. It develops a larger root system in my potting mix and does not develop the rust like scarring on the older leaves that is often seen on the thick leafed form. This rust (I believe it to be a fungal infection) is most often seen on plants that are watered too much or those grown under humid conditions. If possible give *C. tecta* lots of air and avoid wetting the leaves when watering. If older infected leaves are removed it will be noticed that the rust is on the lower surfaces which are in contact with the potting mix. Using a non-porous potting mix covering such as quartz pebbles can reduce this leaf damage.

Propagation of *C. tecta* is usually by leaf cuttings or by division of larger multiheaded plants. This is best done at the end of summer if by division and in spring if by leaf cuttings. *C. tecta* can also be grown from seed but the clones appear to be infertile and cross pollination is required. Last year I collected cross polli-

nated seed and the seedlings show mostly an intermittent form between the two illustrated forms. They flowered when only 10-15mm in diameter. If you have both forms of *C. tecta* then perhaps natural pollinators have already crossed them so why not collect the dried heads for sowing in early spring? The dried seed heads are best crushed and put through a tea strainer. The seeds themselves are so small as to be unseen with the unaided eye so sow them on the surface of a fine potting mix. Water gently with a fine mist and then cover with plastic for a few days. If fertile seed was present tiny seedlings should be visible in a week at which time the plastic must be removed. Seedlings hate humidity and grow slowly so they are a challenge to grow. Just the sort of challenge that readers of ASRAN relish!



*Crassula tecta*  
Thin leafed form.  
(P. Turcsak)