

Echeveria 'Hoveyi' and Echeveria 'Zahnii'

a problem in nomenclature

by J. C. van Keppel

Photos by the author

Echeveria 'Hoveyi', the well-known variegated *Echeveria* hybrid (Fig. 1), was first described and pictured in *Horticulture* (Boston) 11:849, 1910 under "Foreign Plant Introductions" (without author):

"*Echeveria Hoveyi* hort. (Crassulaceae) 28673. Plants turned over to the Department for distribution, by Dr. J. N. Rose, Associate Curator, Division of Plants, U.S. Nat. Mus. Usually stemless, but when old developing a short stem; leaves forming a loose spreading rosette, pale green with broad pinkish or white margins, and these more or less wavy or sometimes coloured throughout; flowering stem a second raceme bearing 6 to 12 flowers; corolla pinkish. The origin of this form is unknown, but it is probably some horticultural sport or hybrid but does not closely resemble any of our cultivated forms, although it may be said to belong to the group of species in which *E. secunda* and *E. glauca* are found."

The same description is mentioned in *U.S. Dept. Agric. Bur. Pl. Industr. Bull.* 223:39, 1911 and considered as the original description by Dr. Rose (I could not check the exactness of the originals mentioned). According to Brown (*Desert Plant Life* 8:100, 1936), *E. 'Hoveyi'* can, with good culture, reach a foot in diameter, at least when grown in a Californian garden. In European collections they reach no more than 15-20cm in diameter. The size of the leaves is 5-10cm long and 2-2.5cm broad at the widest point.

For many years *E. 'Hoveyi'* was considered as a true species, although it is now clear that it must be a plant of chimaerical origin, possibly originating in the collection of Hovey at Boston, U.S.A. H. Hall, in "Abnormal Behaviour in *Echeveria Hoveyi*" (*Cactus Journal* VI:52, 1938), was the first to draw attention to reversion of *E. 'Hoveyi'* to a normal, non-variegated plant. Vegetatively this reversion was identical to a plant known in England as *E. 'Zahnii'* hort. Cambridge (Fig. 2). Because he had never seen flowers on either plant, he could not determine for certain their possible relationship. I, however, could make such a comparison as both cultivars flower freely in my collection year in and year out. They have the same inflorescence and flowers, except that those of *E. 'Hoveyi'* are sometimes malformed.

But I was also able to check the relationship between the two forms because my 'Hoveyi' reverted to the normal form, which was quite identical to *E. 'Zahnii'*. According to how it is grown we find different leaf-forms in *E. 'Zahnii'*. Slow-growing plants have short, nearly cordate leaves, whereas stronger growing plants have longer leaves, up to 10cm long. Also the pinkish spots, characteristic of 'Zahnii', are not always visible.



Fig. 1. ECHEVERIA 'Hoveyi'

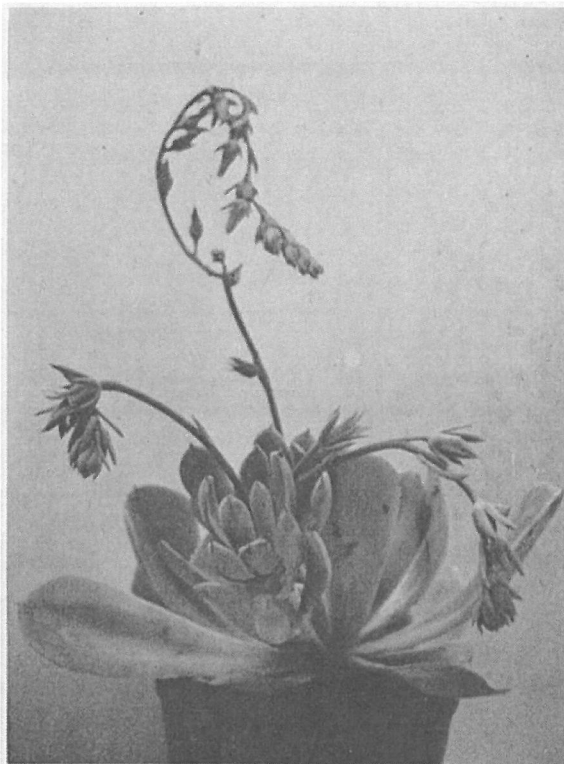


Fig. 2. ECHEVERIA 'Zahnii'

The 'Zahnii'—'Hoveyi' situation is interesting from a nomenclatural viewpoint because the somatic mutant 'Hoveyi' has a validly published name, whilst the plant from which it is derived—'Zahnii'—is a *nomen nudum*. As far as I know, there are no records of its origin, but I am sure that it is a hybrid. I believe that it is a hybrid of *Echeveria secunda* with a larger species, e.g. *E. rubromarginata* or *E. gigantea*. As there is no urgent reason to validate 'zahnii' as a specific epithet, I will describe and picture this as a cultivar, thus preserving the name for garden usage.

Echeveria 'Zahnii' van Keppel nov. cv.

Syn. *E. zahnii* hort. Cambridge. Parentage and originator unknown.

Type: van Keppel no. 6437, derived in 1964 as a somatic reversion of *E. 'Hoveyi'* in my collection.

Habit shortly caulescent, stem 1.5cm thick, erect, with a loose rosette on the top, branching at or near the base below the leaves, 10-20cm in diameter.

Leaves fleshy, 7(-10)cm long, 3.5cm broad at the widest point, spatulate-oblongate, margins whitish to reddish, sometimes wavy, channelled on the upper part, top slightly incurved, apiculate, back side convex, slightly keeled, colour blue-green, sometimes mottled with darker and lighter spots or pinkish colouring.

Floral stems 10-40cm long, single or branched, purplish,—8mm thick at base.

Inflorescence part a cincinnus, 10-20cm long, lowest flowers far apart, floral bracts 0.5cm long, lowest leaves few or many, and then as a pseudo-rosette, up to 4cm long.

Flowers 12-20, at first nodding, later erect, the lowest at intervals of 4-5cm on pedicels 2-12mm long, sepals spreading-ascending, unequal, corolla pentagonal, sharply keeled, 12mm long, 6mm broad at base, pinkish red outside, narrowly yellow-edged in the upper part, yellow inside, petal tips curving outwards, carpels yellow, stigmas purplish, stamens white with red tips. Flowers in July and August.