

Johannes Cornelis van Keppel

We report with sorrow the death of Feb. 13 of Europe's leading expert on the genus *Echeveria* and allied genera at the age of sixty, following a year of bad health and an unsuccessful operation.

I first came to know and respect Joop van Keppel through editing his articles for the National C. & S. Journal, and was immediately struck by his love of accuracy and the meticulous care that spared no pains in researching and checking. He was unduly modest and self-effacing, and wrote appreciatively that he accepted the small grammatical changes I proposed: "I hope to have elucidated my article." When one familiar *Echeveria* was found to be without a name, he dismissed the suggestion that it should be named after him: "I mean other people have priority over me. I have done something about succulents, but many others did more than I." This modesty unfortunately deprived us of a book on *Echeveria*, because he thought that the need had already been covered by Walther and Ginns. In addition to many excellent articles in Succulenta, the National and American Journals, he translated Rauh and other works into Dutch, and was co-author of the colourful "Groot Cactussen en Vetplanten Book" in 1976. Still unpublished is his checklist of *Echeveria* names of 1969: I have a carbon copy of this and find it very useful. At the time of his death he was working on a dictionary of commemorative names of succulents, a task that he took over from J. A. Janse who also died before completing it. I hope it will eventually be published: it could be a fitting memorial to two great Dutch botanists, whose number has been sadly depleted in recent years.

Joop van Keppel was unusual among specialists in the attention that he paid to cultivars, which are norm-



ally shunned by botanists. Realising that many well-known *Echeverias* had no recorded origin and were probably garden hybrids, he set about trying to recreate them through a long and laborious series of cross pollinations. In this he was very successful, as his articles attest, and many puzzles were finally solved. Praise is also due for his fine accounts of *X Pachyveria* and *X Graptoveria*.

A visit to his home was a highlight of my trips to the Netherlands: a small but neatly laid out back garden that did credit to his profession as landscape gardener, and a unique glasshouse that in 1974 enclosed over 100 accepted species of *Echeveria*, 10 each of *Graptopetalum* and *Pachyphytum* and about 250 hybrids, as well as a few other succulents: his knowledge and interest was by no means confined to the one small group. He visited England several times from 1968 onwards and was made a Vice President of the National C. & S. Society in 1980 (N.C.S.J. 35: 5, 1980). His numerous English friends will join in lamenting his passing.

G.D.R.