

# Joop van Keppel

A prolific author who has been publishing articles on succulents for over twenty years, and a regular visitor to Britain since 1968, Joop van Keppel is no stranger, particularly to those who share his enthusiasm for *Echeveria* and related genera.

Born in 1922, the sixth child of a builder, Joop was from a very early age interested in natural history, collecting and studying butterflies, spiders and beetles even before he began school. Later his interests expanded to embrace fungi and dune flora and so he came gradually to his lifelong interest in plants. His mother grew a few cacti and succulents on the windowsill which first aroused his interest. Discovering that a biscuit manufacturer offered, as a publicity promotion, the splendid cactus and succulent albums by van Laren, he consumed great quantities of biscuits and gingerbread and soon possessed the albums which, he says, opened a new world to him. While undergoing training in horticulture he saw more succulents and began to collect books on the subject and, at the end of the war, the first few plants.

At first he had a general collection of cacti and succulents, but lack of space forced him to specialise. His interest in *Echeverioideae* brought him in touch with Dr B. K. Boom of Wageningen, who encouraged the study of the genus *Echeveria*. This study led to the publication of a large number of papers on *Echeveria* and related genera in *Succulenta* and other journals, and to the establishment of an important reference collection of plants.



Through his membership of the British societies Joop has made many friends in this country and makes regular visits here. He mourns the passing of such close friends as Ron Ginns, Harry Watson and Garnett Fuge, all of whom shared his interest in echeverias, and regrets the demise of the *Echeveria* Robin which flew to and fro for ten years. However, he was able to visit the National Show last August, where he renewed friendships made during a lecture tour of this country in 1972.

Joop continues his studies with enthusiasm and vigour. Currently he is writing a paper on the hybrid genus *x Graptoveria* which we hope to publish later in the year.