

## One Plant - But Many Names

### Rob Cole

Some years ago we visited the garden of Philip Aubury (ex Birmingham Botanical Gardens), in Alvechurch. His wife Elisabeth used to run a small nursery and still does a little growing for pleasure. On the open day she had a stall with some interesting plants and amongst them my wife spotted, and bought, a beautiful variegated succulent named as *Echeveria* 'Persnore Cream'. It spent the rest of the summer in a pot on our patio where it attracted much admiration from our garden visitors. It has formed a large single rosette of pale green leaves with a wide cream margin to each leaf. We decided we needed to know more - easier said than done!



It would appear that Philip and Elisabeth bought their original plant from the Plant Centre at Persnore College. However, Margaret Shewell at the College tells us that they didn't give it the cultivar name 'Persnore Cream', selling it as *E. glauca* 'Variegata'. Their original plant came, via a colleague, from California in 2006. They only propagated a few, by leaf cuttings, which were sold in the Plant Centre. We couldn't find anything on the internet, it wasn't in the Plant Finder, and no-one else had heard of anything

like it. We tried a few leaf cuttings which failed miserably, but then noticed that there were two tiny baby rosettes forming at the base of the stem, perfect as propagation material. Both cuttings rooted well and over the years have themselves produced offsets which have enabled us to produce many more plants.

The mystery of the correct name was finally solved one evening whilst watching a television coverage of the Chelsea Flower Show. One of the featured display stands was a collection of succulents - and there in the middle was what looked very much like our *Echeveria*. We noted the name of the nursery, contacted them and found that the true and correct name of our plant is in fact *Echeveria* 'Compton Carousel'.

Since discovering the correct name, I have been able to source much more information. The Californian connection is now confirmed as it was apparently found by David Sheppard, a horticulturalist and garden designer, as a mutant amongst ordinary *Echeveria secunda* in a garden at Compton, south of Los Angeles owned by an elderly lady named Lenora Dean. The plant was originally known as *Echeveria secunda* DS-2009 and sometimes distributed as *Echeveria secunda* 'Lenora Dean' or as 'Lenore Dean'.

Apparently the plant was eventually given, in 2003, to Southfield Nurseries, near Spalding, 'to help propagate' it, and the donor who was a landscape gardener said it had no name, but that 'Compton Carousel' would be appropriate in the light of its origin. In 2008 the plant was awarded the RHS Award of Merit.

Plants offered for sale on the internet seem to command very high prices, and are the Holy Grail of enthusiasts, so our purchase at a local 'open garden' turned out to be not only an interesting detective story, but also a good investment!