

# HINTS ON CACTI



A. BLANC & CO.

OFFICE  
100 N. 11TH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
AND  
100 N. 11TH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
PRICE 10 CENTS

A. Blanc. 'Hints on Cacti'

Ed. 6, pp. 31-7, 1892.

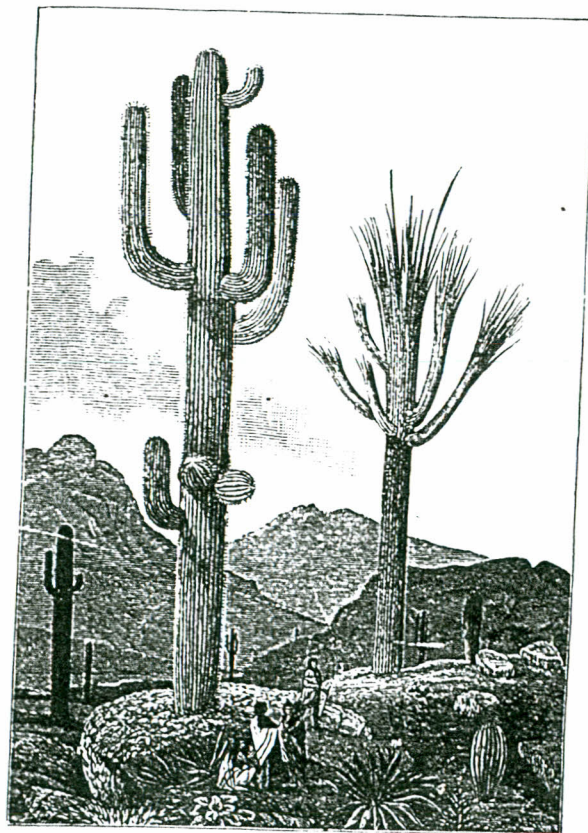
Sorry about the lousy copy.

120. **CEREUS GIGANTEUS.** In the lower part of the valley of Santa Cruz, the gigantic columnar Cactus, *Cereus Giganteus*, is first seen upon the road. The inhabitants of the country call it Saguaro.

The Saguaro presents a thick, fluted column, the size of a man's body, and 30, 40, even 50 feet high, with sometimes three or four branches at its top, the whole looking

like a gigantic candelabrum. The fig-shaped edible fruit grows at the edge on the top of the columns; and from the great height of the latter it would be difficult to get at them did not this remarkable plant itself afford the means of reaching it. The old stems, when decayed, split into a number of thin poles, standing in a circle the height of the entire column, enveloped in a loose network; and by the aid of these the traveller is enabled to knock down the fruit. These poles form an article of export from the port of Guaymas, and in Europe are made into walking sticks, and sold under the name of Spanish canes. The Pimas, at the old Mission of San Xavier del Bac had a large store of Saguaro fruit, which is used as food in various ways. "It is eaten fresh; the sap is boiled to a syrup, known throughout Sonora by the name of Miel de Saguaro; and a flower is prepared of the cleaned and dried seeds, which have some resemblance in appearance and taste to poppy seeds, and are contained in the fruit in great quantities. This flour is made partly into bread and partly into a chocolate-like drink, called Atole. The fruit of the

Both are of great importance to the population of Sonora. In some bad harvests, occasioned by the want of rain, portions of the inhabitants are obliged to live on these and other wild Cactus fruits. Young plants are remarkably stout and heavy and when tall enough form valuable specimens for the lawn or conservatory, making a rapid growth when well established. Plants 1 to 3 feet high, \$3 to \$15; these plants are very heavy and must be sent by express. Larger plants at from \$15 to \$30. Seed at 15 cents per packet.



120. *Cereus Giganteus*.

## CEREUS GIGANTEUS CRISTATA,

The accompanying engraving represents a plant of *Cereus giganteus*, of which the main stem has assumed a cristate or fasciated form. The normal condition of the plant is shown by the side branches. We had a curious experience trying to secure one of these fasciated giants which our collector discovered in the southwest. It was

impossible to transport the whole plant owing to its bulk and enormous root; so we organized a force of hands, with teams, derrick and paraphernalia, to secure the top. After many miles of travelling and tiresome climbing our collectors arrived on the spot, when lo! they were too late! Someone else had taken possession of the plant, and left them in the lurch. A woodpecker had actually hollowed out the head and built himself a home in it, not knowing what a valuable prize he had utterly ruined; for the head had decayed, until nothing but a mere shell remained of it. We were fortunate, however, to secure the flattened head of another giant, who probably was "Monarch of all he surveyed," for he carried his head forty feet high. It is now in the company of our "Old Man" Cactus where it attracts much attention. This is undoubtedly the only living severed head of a giant in the world, and already many foreign Cactus collectors are clamoring for a slice of it.

These giants, by the way, are wonderfully tenacious, too, of life. We have some plants 6, 7 and 8 feet high, 3 feet or more in circumference, which were lost on their way from our ranch in New Mexico for a period of nearly 9 months. When at last they were found and sent home, they presented a skeleton-like appearance. We cut the dry roots off, planted in tubs, and in less than 3 months they were growing and blooming. The giants are beautiful specimens for the lawn, but their weight make them difficult to handle. Many plants shipped by us to Florida have proved perfectly hardy; indeed, we are informed that in their native home they grow at an elevation where the thermometer reaches 10 degrees above zero. Last year we shipped a 12-foot giant direct from New Mexico to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England. This plant weighed nearly 1,500 pounds, and was received without a broken spine.

