

FRANK HORWOOD BIOGRAPHY

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Horwood, Francis [Frank] Kenneth (1924–1987) — convert to succulent plants at an early age, a gardener in England, several trips to African habitats and an eminent specialist in rare succulent plants in USA.



Born in London, England on 31 July 1924, Frank Horwood, during his lifetime, became the eminent cultivator and master propagator of succulent plants—a propagating specialist of rare and new caudiciform and euphorbia succulent plants.

Frank's succulent plant collections began at the young age of 11. His working life with succulent plants began as a gardener in the botany department of the University of Leeds, Leeds, England where he grew rare tropical succulent plants and began his love affair with caudiciform plants. It was here that he became skilled at establishing and propagating new and rare succulent plants. Frank with Chris Pitcher (1906–1969) and Keith Mortimer (1932–2005) traveled to nurseries and botanic gardens world-wide in search of stem succulents (or TCP's which is England's reference to caudiciform plants as turnips, carrots and parsnips).

By 1959 Frank made his first three-month habitat expedition to South Africa, South-West Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya and Ethiopia. In 1972–73 he explored in Somalia and again in Ethiopia with John Lavranos (1926–), Peter Bally (1895–1980) and Ron Melville (1903–1985). His last trip to Africa was back to Somalia with Susan Carter (1933–), John Lavranos and Seymour Linden (1921–2005) in 1985. These expeditions brought many rare euphorbias and asclepiads to the world through Frank's propagation skills.

After meeting Charles Glass and Robert Foster in 1974 at the International Organization for Succulents (IOS) Congress in Santa Barbara, California, and falling in love of the area, Frank moved from England to Santa Barbara in 1975 along with three thousand plants. Frank worked part-time with Glass and Foster at Lotusland and part-time at Abbey Garden—full-time at Abbey Garden when it moved to Carpinteria, California in 1977 with most of his own succulent plants to use as propagating stock—working here with the unusual and rare succulent plants for the rest of his life.

Three succulent plants were named in his honor: *Euphorbia horwoodii*, *Pseudolithos horwoodii* and *Sansevieria francisii*. Along with *Euphorbia horwoodii*, Frank discovered *Caralluma vaduliae*, and with others he co-discovered *Aloe brunnoestriata* and *Dorstenia lavrani*.

Frank became a member of IOS in 1971 and received the prestigious Fellow award in 1976 from the National Cactus and Succulent Society of Great Britain with the comments, "Among the enthusiasts who have acquired an interest in rare and difficult succulents, Frank Horwood is well-known as the doyen of cultivators. His skill in cultivation and propagation, coupled with his generosity in distributing propagated material has ensured that many unusual plants are now established in our collections".

Frank was a well-known and respected propagator of rare one-of-a-kind succulent plants. Francis Kenneth Horwood passed away on 22 March 1987 after a short bout with lung cancer complicated by emphysema and a fungal infection.

References:

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