

# HARRY HALL BIOGRAPHY

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**Hall, Harry (1906–1986)—a skilled horticulturist and succulent plant authority who made many discoveries of succulent plant species in South Africa—and who had many more succulent plants named in his honor.**



Born in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England on 22 May 1906, Harry Hall became a horticulturist and a succulent plant specialist. He attended college at Cheshire Agricultural College one year (1925–26), a year at Reading University (1926–27) and two years at the John Innes Horticultural Institute in Wimbledon (1927–29). Harry then enrolled for a three-year course in horticulture at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, from 1930–1933—was an exchange student for one year (1931–1932) at the Hanbury Botanical Garden in La Mortola, Italy. It was here at La Mortola that his interest in succulent plants was born—requesting upon his return to Kew be placed in charge of their cactus and succulent plant collection.

Upon completing his training at Kew in 1933, Harry was appointed curator of the Darrah cactus and succulent plant collection at Alexandra Park in Manchester, England. It was here that his interest in South African succulent plants became his major work by adding some 600 South African species to the collection. He spent four years in the Royal Air Force during World War II. Wanting to start somewhere new after the War, he decided to contact the director of Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens in South Africa, Professor Dr Robert Harold Compton (1886–1979), for a job. Dr Compton created a horticultural succulent plant post at Kirstenbosch for Harry upon his arrival with his spouse and 12-year-old son in August 1947. From just a few succulent plants to start with at the garden Harry spent the rest of his life building a succulent garden at Kirstenbosch that became world renown by the time of his death.

Harry made some 140 exploration and collecting trips in southern Africa by himself and with numerous succulentists over his many years in Africa: Professor Compton; Gilbert Westacott Reynolds (1895–1967) the Aloe specialist; Bernard Carp (1908–1966) a nurseryman and sometimes a sponsor for Harry on some of his collecting trips; Siegfried Triebner (son of Wilhelm Triebner (1883–1957) nurseryman); Dr Edmund André Charles Louis Eloi [**Ted**] Schelpe (1924–1985) professor and curator of Bolus Herbarium at University of Cape Town, South Africa; Dr Leonard [**Len**] Eric Newton (1936–) professor at Kumasi Univeristy in Ghana; and Gordon Douglas Rowley (1921–) horticultural botany lecturer at Reading University, England and doyen of the succulent plant hobby.

Harry was a good artist with pencil and camera. He wrote numerous articles for the National Cactus and Succulent Journal in England and other journals — in addition to one book "Common Succulents" in 1955. He worked with Dr Harriet Margaret **Louisa** Bolus (1877–1970) from the Bolus Herbarium on the *Mesembryanthemum* family of plants — with genera *Lithops* and *Conophytum* being two of his favorites.

The genus *Hallianthus* was named in Harry Hall's honor by Dr Heidrun [**Heidi**] Elsbeth Klara Hartmann (1942–2016) in 1983. Many species were also named in his honor from the following genera: *Adromischus* (*A. marianiae* var), *Argyroderma*, *Argyroderma framesii* ssp), *Astridia*, *Cephalophyllum*, *Conophytum pellucidum* var *neohallii*, *Cotyledon* (*Tylocodon*), *Cylindrophyllum*, *Delosperma* (*Hartmanthus*), *Dorotheanthus*, *Drosanthemum*, *Erepsia*, *Euphorbia*, *Huernia*, *Jacobsenia*, *Lampranthus*, *Lithops*, *Othonna*, *Ruschia* (*Antimima*), *Sansevieria*, *Schlecteranthus*, *Senecio*, *Stoeberia* (*Phiambolia*), *Trichodiadema* and *Tyleconon*.

Harry became a member of the 'International Organization for Succulent Plant Study' (IOS) in 1953. He received the prestigious Cactus and Succulent Society of America (CSSA) Fellow award in 1981. His death occurred in Kirstenbosch on 15 February 1986.

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