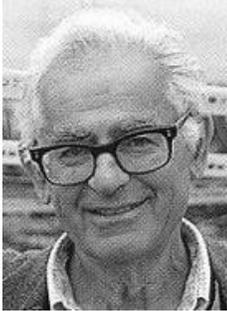


# HERMAN SCHWARTZ BIOGRAPHY

Chuck Staples, CSSA Historian

**Schwartz, Dr. Herman Arthur (1920–2008)—succulent book editor and publisher dedicated to the genus *Euphorbia* and supporter of Cactus and Succulent Society of America.**



Born in New York City on 25 May 1920, Herman Schwartz became a physician, oncologist, natural scientist and succulent book editor and publisher.

Herman's mother died when he was almost 10 years old, and he and his sisters became wards of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in New York City. It was at the orphanage during his primary school years that Herman became interested in books and natural history. He received a full scholarship to attend Cornell University in Ithaca, New York at age 17, and in 1941 he received his Bachelor of Science degree, with majors in zoology and botany. Moving to California, he became an instructor and later assistant professor of zoology and botany at University of California, Berkeley. Between classes Herman studied plants of the coast ranges of California, specializing in ferns and fern allies.

Herman decided to continue his education in the medical field. After being accepted by the medical schools of Harvard, Columbia and Cornell, he chose Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At Harvard he became interested in cancer and cancer research. He received his Doctor of Medicine in 1950. After completing his residency at Mount Sinai in New York City, Dr Schwartz moved back to California and became an oncologist at Kaiser Medical in San Francisco, where he worked from 1954 until his retirement in 1985.

Herman became interested in succulent plants in the early 1970s, after visiting one of his patients who had a large succulent plant collection. After retirement his concentration on succulent plants produced a collection of over 20,000 plants, concentrated on euphorbias, aloes and stapeliads.

Dr Schwartz's exploration and collecting trips took him into Mexico, Rhodesia, South Africa, Kenya and Madagascar. He was founder and creator of the Marin-Bolinas Botanical Garden in Bolinas, California. At the time of his death there were six greenhouses of succulent and other plants on 14 acres of his property in Mill Valley, California.

Due to his interest in succulent plants, Herman founded the publishing firm *Strawberry Press* in Mill Valley. He was co-editor, with Ron LaFon, of the 10-volume *Euphorbia Journal*, published from 1983 to 1997 by his *Strawberry Press*. He also published *Caudiciform and Pachycaul Succulents* (Rowley, 1987), *Succulent Compositae (Senecio and Othonna)* (Rowley, 1994), *Succulent and Xerophytic Plants of Madagascar Volume 1* (Rauh, 1995) and *Volume 2* (Rauh, 1998), and *A History of Succulent Plants* (Rowley, 1997). His firm also published the autobiography and paintings of his spouse, Leah Schwartz, in 1992.

Dr Schwartz received the prestigious CSSA Fellow award in 1989 for publisher of 'Euphorbia Journal' and 'The Caudiciform Book' and establishing a world-renown Euphorbia collection. Due to the success of *Strawberry Press*, he established an annual travel fund for CSSA members to visit Madagascar, India, or southern Africa beginning in 2000. He provided \$2000 to each of five CSSA members each year, simply to share the pleasure of seeing succulent plants growing in habitat.

Living in the Strawberry neighborhood of Mill Valley for over 50 years was "A little slice of heaven." for Herman. His outlook on life: "It is a wonderful world because I have done everything I have wanted to do."

Struggling with Alzheimer disease the last few years of his life, Dr Schwartz died on 12 January 2008.

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