

# A Brief History of PACHYCEREUS MILITARIS

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This cactus species was first collected by the explorer from Antwerp, Belgium, **Joseph Vandick**, around the year 1836 along with other specimen species of cacti in Mexico. These cacti were sent to the collector Monsieur de Jonghe in Brussels, Belgium. The plants are observed by the French horticulturist Monsieur Cels (possibly horticulturist **Jean Franç Cels** (1810–1888)) who gives them their first names (?). However, it is the French horticulturist **N Audot** who writes the first description of the species, *Cereus militaris*, in 1845.

1. In 1847, not recognizing the species described by N Audot, French botanist **Charles Antoine Lemaire** (1800–1871) writes a new description of the species, *Pilocereus chrysomallus*.
2. In 1880, British botanist **William Botting Hemsley** (1843–1924) includes Pilocereus chrysomallus in the genus Cereus, describing the name *Cereus chrysomallus*.
3. In 1894, German botanist and taxonomist **Dr. Karl Moritz Schumann** (1851–1904) recombines the Lemaire and Hemsley species into *Cephalocereus chrysomallus*.
4. In 1909, USA botanist **Dr. Nathaniel Lord Britton** (1859–1934) and botanist and taxonomist **Dr. Joseph Nelson Rose** (1862–1928) combined the Lemaire, Hemsley and Schumann species under a new genus Pachycereus, *Pachycereus chrysomallus*.
5. In 1942, partly based on the erroneous description by Britton and Rose, German horticulturist and classifier **Max Ferdinand Heinrich Curt Backeberg** (1894–1966) places the species under *Mitrocereus chrysomallus*.
6. In 1953, rediscovering the species after about 106 years, Mexican botanist and taxonomist **Dr. Helia Bravo-Hollis** (1901–2001), lacking 4 days of becoming a centenarian, created a new monospecific genus Backebergia, *Backebergia chrysomallus*, due partly to its unique cephalium at the top of branches of this tree species. The genus name honors Curt Backeberg.
7. In 1961, renaming the species according to the rules of nomenclature, Austrian botanist and taxonomist **Dr. Franz Buxbaum** (1900–1979) used the specific epithet 'militaris' in the species name, *Mitrocereus militaris*.
8. In 1973, Mexican botanist **Hernando Sanchez-Mejorada** (1926–1988) decides due to errors of others that the species name should be *Backebergia militaris*.
9. In 1975, USA botanist **Dr. Harold Emery Moore** (1917–1980) lumps this species back under the genus Cephalocereus but keeps the specific epithet 'militaris', *Cephalocereus militaris*.
10. In 1987, British botanist and taxonomist **Dr David Richard Hunt** (1938–) recognizes Britton & Rose's inclusion of the species in their genus and Audot's specific epithet, *Pachycereus militaris*.

Common names for this species of cactus might be: Teddy-Bear Cactus, Grenadier's Cap, Grenadier's Helmet, Military Cap, Golden Fleece.

References:

Britton NL, Rose JN. 1920, Vol II. *The Cactaceae*. 68.

Anderson EF. 2001. *The Cactus Family*. 534.

Hunt DR. 2006. *The New Cactus Lexicon*. 216.



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