Years ago I was inspired by a small, rock garden filled with cacti and succulents on the patio of a Mexican food restaurant, in San Diego. I came home with the notion that I would like to have a cactus and succulent garden. I knew about sedums and sempervivums that were tolerant of cold climates, and having grown up in eastern CO I knew there were at least a few native cacti. At the time almost no one in the CO nursery industry was familiar with cacti as garden plants, in fact most of them referred to sempervivums and sedums as cactus. I might have given up on my garden plans had it not been for a book that I found at the local library, “Colorado Cacti”, written by Charles Boissevain and Carol Davidson. This book, which was published in 1940, gave me all the hope and information that I needed to begin the kind of garden that I wanted. It would not be an overstatement to say that this book changed my life.

For the last several years Don Barnett and his son Donnie have spent a great deal of time and energy traveling to all parts of the state researching the cacti of CO with the goal of updating Boissevain’s and Davidson’s work. It really needed to be done; there have been important, new species, such as *Pediocactus knowltonii* that have been recorded since 1940, and accepted taxonomy has also changed. The result is a book that lives up to the standards set by “Colorado Cacti”. The Barnett’s book covers some interesting tidbits about the history of the early plant explorers and others who have been involved with the state’s native cacti. The book pays tribute to Boissevain and Davidson, as well as figures that have been involved with the state’s cacti, from the first explorers to more recent times. It also covers all of the various vegetation zones within CO and has a great deal of detail about the natural habitats and climate data for each species. They have also found *Mammillaria meiacantha* in southeastern CO, a species that had never been reported growing in the state.

Donnie is a masterful photographer and the quality of the photography in this work shows his skill and experience. All of the state’s cacti are captured flowering in habitat, which is no small achievement. Also there are photos of the type of terrain where each cactus species is found. To compliment the beautiful photographs there are dozens of high quality drawings that show flower details of many opuntias. Maps showing the natural distribution for each species are also included. The Barnetts have also given cultural information about how to care for each species, and how to establish a cactus garden using Colorado’s native cactus species.

This work is the first to be published by the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society. The foreword was written by Panayoti Kelaidis, the senior curator of the Denver Botanic Gardens, and gives some insight into Don and Donnie. Between Donnie’s youth and energy, and Don’s long-term interest in the study of native plants, in the field, this was the perfect team to bring attention to the state’s cacti. I met the Barnett family around the year 2000 when I managed a garden center in Colorado Springs. They drove from Pueblo on a regular basis to check the cactus selection. Even all those years ago their excitement about our native succulent flora was evident. They may have been the first people I ever met that shared my appreciation for our native cacti.