By the time you are reading this the heat of summer will most likely be bearing down on us in the northern hemisphere. Last year, like the year before that was a record breaking year for heat. All through the late winter and well into the spring the mesembs have been putting on an amazing show of color in our gardens, especially all of the vibrant delospermas. Anyone growing a few of these wonderful species in a rockery, or in the case of most delospermas, between rockeries, will tell you that mesembs are among the earliest plants to bring color to the garden, other than bulbs. They also produce some of the most intense colors that exist, but by now the only mesembs still blooming with regularity in my garden are *Chasmaphyllum musculinum, Prepodaema (Aloinopsis) orpenii*, an unidentified Rhinephyllum, along with a few delospermas. Nothing is blooming with the intensity that it showed a few weeks ago when most mesembs had foliage that was totally hidden. The cacti have been showing off through late spring and early summer, but they too have slowed down now that we have reached the season of intense heat. Everything in the garden dries out much more quickly. Flowers mean using water for any type of plant, and for cacti and succulents any moisture that has been stored over the last few months has to be used to survive the drying heat. But, when most people think of gardens it is flowers that come to mind. One way to keep the cactus garden in bloom is planting wildflowers, small trees, and bushes. These are plants that grow with cacti in nature and can help to give us a longer blooming season while adding a variety of textures (Fig. 1).

Before my book went to the publisher, my friend Panayoti Kelaidis was kind enough to read the manuscript through, with the intention of making suggestions. One of the ideas that he recommended was a chapter on companion plants to cacti and succulents. In a cold hardy cactus garden they really can help to bring things together. In nature, there are not many situations that cacti grow where there is not a variety of flora. Generally they are found with grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers, sometimes even small trees. In a succulent garden, thin-leaved plants can be valuable, not only for the color and the contrast they provide; they also tell us when the soil has become too dry much more quickly than the succulents do. Panayoti was right, a cold hardy cactus and succulent garden is more interesting with a variety of complimentary plants. It also gives us a way to present our cacti and succulents more like they would be seen growing in nature. In a small bed filled with miniature cacti and other succulents there is no need for leafy plants, but a quick look at rock garden nursery sites will tempt most plant lovers to try a few miniature wildflowers. There are so many outstanding species in cultivation. A collection of cold hardy succulents can be used to create an outstanding garden that can be quite beautiful with no companions, but if the right leafy plants are added they might make it even better. In a larger garden that combines beds and rock