

Succulents contained

Sansevieria subspicata

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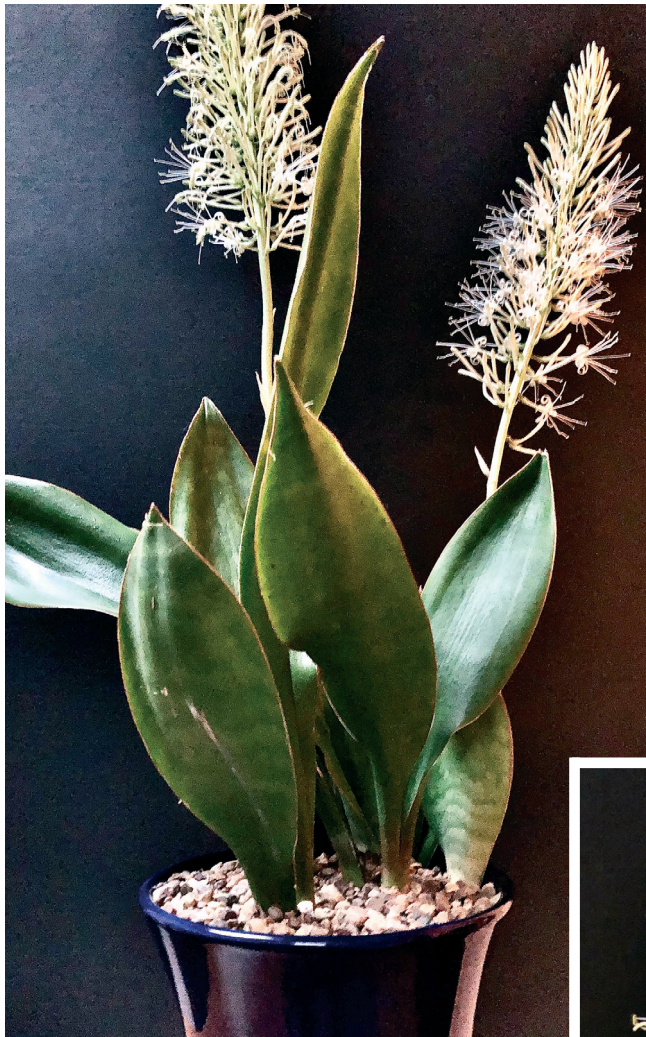


Fig. 1 *Sansevieria subspicata* in a 16cm diameter pot

Sansevieria is a genus with a widespread distribution throughout Africa and Arabia, then eastwards to Myanmar, in which around 90 species are recognised along with a large number of cultivars. Many have thick underground rhizomes whilst others produce stolons above the ground. Leaves vary from flat and barely succulent to thick and very succulent.

Sansevieria subspicata (Fig. 1) is flat-leaved and branches underground without a visible above-ground stem. Its leaves are up to 40cm long and 7cm across at the widest mid-point, tapering above and below. The surface is roughened like very fine sandpaper, mid

green in colour with slight darker cross-banding and a distinct channel, especially towards the leaf base.

My plant has been in the collection for 27 years and has grown steadily, making a handsome plant deserving an attractive container. Its current dark glossy blue pot contrasts well with the green foliage. It won a prize at the 2022 Glasgow Branch Show and part of the appeal for the judge was likely the fact that it was in flower with two stout spikes (hence the name *subspicata* meaning 'more or less spike-like'), the tallest of which grew to 78cm. As with all sansevierias the flowers are nocturnal (Fig. 2), each lasting a single night but since large numbers are produced the plant was in flower over the course of a week. Flowers are arranged mainly in pairs, each flower being 5cm long of which the tube is 3cm long. As is typical for sansevierias, the scent is strong, being hyacinth-like and is most fragrant late in the evening, receding by the following morning. Copious nectar is produced by extra-floral nectaries at the flower bases which can drip leaving sticky patches on the leaves.

This species is recorded as endemic to Mozambique, from where it was first collected at Delagoa Bay on the south-east coast.

(Photographs by the author)



Fig. 2 Close up of the flowers of *S. subspicata*