**Discocactus horstii is Cactus of the Year 2016**  
The German Cactus Society has named Discocactus horstii the Cactus of the Year 2016. The rediscovery of this small and most attractive Discocactus caused a stir for experts; but the potential of having this quite demanding species in cultivation created excitement in everyday cactus lovers.  
  
The genus name Discocactus refers to the ancient Greek "δίσκος" discos, meaning "throwing disc" and alludes to the depressed spherical morphology of the plants. The species name honors the Brazilian cactus explorer Leopoldo Horst, who discovered the species. The Dutch botanists Albert F.H. Buining and Arnold J. Brederoo published the 1973 scientific description of Discocactus horstii.  
  
Only two years earlier, in 1971, Horst and Buining discovered this species for the first time in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais in the landscape conservation area Parque Estadual de Grão Mogol. Measuring only two centimeters high and up to seven centimeters wide, this cactus grows at around 1,000 meters above sea level on a hill on and between quartz and coarse gravel. Because the plants are living in dry conditions below the surface, the significantly ribbed, brownish-green body with its bright, short thorns appressed to the white wooly areoles are nearly impossible to see under the white rock.  
  
At flowering age, Discocactus horstii forms like all Discocactus species in the apex region a cephalium that is a circular, vaulted flowering zone covered in white wool. The bristling spines can penetrate through the white wool of the cephalium. In the summer, the flower buds appear from the cephalium. The white, funnel-shaped flowers, as large or larger than the dwarf cactus itself, open at night and smell pleasantly like vanilla.  
  
Since the habitat of Discocactus horstii is now part of the state park Grão Mogol, the population which was previously threatened by the mining of minerals has apparently recovered for the time being. The other members of the species indigenous to Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay are currently under threat. Therefore, all Discocactus species are listed in Appendix I of CITES and are thus subject to international trade regulations.

After selecting popular and easy to cultivate cacti in recent years, the German Cactus Society honors Discocactus horstii is a delicate plant that is definitely not one to be grown on the window sill. Compared to other cacti, the higher winter light and heat requirements and the extreme sensitivity to moisture excess make this Cactus of the Year recommended primarily for experienced cactus growers. Typically grafted, it usually reveals its flower magic only in winter when kept at a minimum of 15 degrees Celsius in a greenhouse.