

# ***Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group N.S.W.***

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month  
Next meeting 17th, July 2014 at 11 a.m.

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery  
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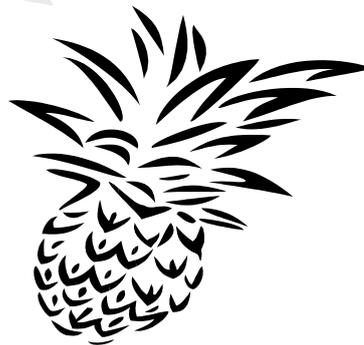
Discussion: June 2014

General Discussion

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## **Meeting 15th May 2014**

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00am.  
The 27 members and two visitor present were welcomed.  
A total of 3 apologies were received.

## **General Business**

The Editorial Team thanked those concerned for supplying articles as again we have had good feed back, so keep the articles coming. A good mix of articles is required for all levels of readers, both technical and practical, hopefully we have been getting this balance close to your satisfaction. For those who find Les's articles a little difficult to understand Ross indicated that the next couple of parts to the article should help readers get a better understanding of it all. All will be revealed in the final parts of the article in the next few Newsletters.

Ross mentioned he gave a talk at the Bangalow Garden Club during the month which went well. He is going to the Maclean Orchid Club next month to try and spread the good word of Bromeliads and perhaps get some new members.

The Queensland Garden Expo is on in July, 11, 12 and 13 at Nambour. This is a good show, also there are lots of bromeliad nurseries in the area worth visiting whilst up that way. Expo details can be found on the website.

Discussion on whether to have Judges Choice comments again or not was raised as some members have asked for this segment to be brought back again. This segment was not implemented last year because some people took it as criticism / personal affront rather than constructive criticism. It was a segment to help growers learn about how to best present a plant to its maximum advantage for competition and or improve their growing conditions. If some people take offense and don't come back to meetings, the general feeling was don't enter unless you are prepared for criticism. It's these constructive comments that help us learn about such things as centring your plant in the pot, your plant is too high in the pot, these things are fairly obvious and easily remedied. Plant growing off centre only needs to have a section of the root ball removed to allow the plant to be centred in the pot again and refilled with fresh mix. A plant sitting too high (too much stem above the mix surface) only needs some roots removed from the base allowing the plant to sit lower in the pot and a top up with fresh mix to cover the bare stem. Some people like to dress up the top of their pots by adding fresh bark. A recently heard of situation at another Group where a member added some *Tillandsia usneoides* to the top of a pot of *Neoregelia* and then wondered why it was penalised. This created a multi-planting which didn't comply with the category the specimen plant was entered into.

It has been agreed to implement Judges Choice Comments again. Judges are Ross, Meg and Dave with fill in Judges being Gloria or Jeanette as required when one of the three elected Judges wish to enter a plant in the competition themselves or are unavailable.

Attention was drawn to Doug Binns article in the May Newsletter as Doug had only just returned home from his trip to Mexico a fortnight or so prior to our May meeting. He decided to put pen to paper whilst the trip was still fresh in his mind. Thank you Doug, hopefully we will see you in the near future when you can tell us first hand of your travels and about some of those magnificent Hectias you saw and photographed.

A note to plant sellers - could you clearly mark the price and your name on the pot, this will assist in keeping sales plants, discussion plants and plants for the raffle from getting mixed up. One wouldn't like us to add your sale plant into the raffle by mistake would you. All care but no responsibility by the Sales Person.

### **Show and Tell**

Laurie brought in a *Vriesea* tentatively identified as *Vr.* 'Barbara', photos were taken for further investigation. It was later identified as *Vr.* 'Cathy' (photo p.9).

Jeanette asked about *Vriesea inflata* :

“Is this the same as plants tagged as *Vr.* 'Goldfish' on the sales table ?”

**NO**, *Vr. inflata* is a different species altogether.

However Derek Butcher suggests - “First you have to decide what is *Vr. inflata* and whether it is in Australia. But were we growing *Vr. heterostachys* ?

*Vr.* 'Goldfish' is a nursery name used for the species *Vr. heterostachys*.

Another nursery name used is *Vr.* 'Koi' which is often seen on the slightly larger, more up-right flowering plants that were previously known as *Vr. petropolitana*, if you have plants with this later name change your labels to *Vr. heterostachys*. (photos p.9)

We came across reference to this nursery name in the 1994 publication of the book 'Blooming Bromeliads' by Baensch, text page 224, photo page 225.

***Vriesea heterostachys*** - The otherwise green leaves of the small rosette have reddish brown sheaths. The inflated inflorescence resembles a fish. It is therefore often referred to as the 'Goldfish Bromeliad'.

H: Southern Brazil; mist-forest; up to 1300 m.

John Crawford had an article on food grade zeolite which people took orally to remove heavy metals such as arsenic, barium, tungsten and others out of their bodies. The article was given to Don to read and perhaps comment on later.

Winter is nearing but this does not mean we stop fertilising, the more observant gardener will notice many of our *Tillandsias*, *Vrieseas*, *Aechmeas* etc. are now flowering. This means they still need a little feeding as mum will burn up all her food stores to push up that flower spike then she will begin to produce pups, its this you need to keep feeding these plants for. Only hold up on the fertilising and watering to those plants that are noticeably in their winter dormancy.

Two plants flowering in the garden at the moment were brought to the Groups attention, one being *Ae.* 'Macfoster', the other being *Ae. macrochlamys* (the real one). This was the first time in six years that this plant had flowered, this event had been eagerly awaited so that the floral parts could be inspected and description comparisons could be made to be sure the name was correct. We are confident after some discussion that we do have *Ae. macrochlamys*. (photo p.8)

### **Practical Demonstrations**

**Removing Upper Pups** — For our practical demonstration a rather large, 1.20 mtrs across *Vriesea elata* hybrid (pollen parent unknown, possibly *Vr. ospinae var. gruberi* ?) was selected as it had two good sized upper pups ready for removal. These particular hybrids by Allan Ladd only ever gave a single pup after the first flowering, the second flowering generally gave two pups as was the case with this plant. Others from this grex have given two and three pups after the third generation of flowering. However it is this particular plant that we are most concerned with to gain as many pups as possible due to its size being much larger by up to 50% than its grex mates.

To manage this we need to remove the pups causing as little damage to the mother plant as possible by stripping off all the lower leaves nearest the pups to gain a safe access to their bases. (For some unknown reason this stripping of leaves reminded Ross that the 1st of May was 'Nude Gardening Day', he was disappointed that no-one turned up to help with the gardening on that day!). Try to leave as many leaves as possible so hopefully she will be able to produce another crop of pups. Once you can see the base of the pup use a sharp knife to work your way in carefully, cut down each side of the pup taking just a little of the mother plants stem. Repeat this action for the second pup, leave the pups to heal / dry for about 24 hrs before potting and most importantly label each plant, don't leave it to memory as we too often forget later on. Give the mother plant a top up of mix if necessary and definitely a feed to help her recover. We have named this plant 'Ladd's Elation' (yet to be registered) as it is a hybrid created by Allan Ladd using *Vr. elata* as the seed parent.

Ross encouraged Members to bring along their 'upper puppers' if still unsure about removal and he would walk them through the process.

**Potting Mixes** — A few Members brought in their preferred potting mixes and all were quite different — it appears there is no single mix that will suit everyone. We all live in different areas and ingredients that are easy to obtain and are cost effective in each area may differ greatly. Potting substrates that we have seen used over the years vary from rock wool, rice hulls, large bark pieces, milled bark fines, raw pine bark, seasoned/composted pine bark, coal ash, coarse gravel, scoria, pieces of styrene cut into approx. 20mm squares (for high rainfall areas), coco peat chips and other materials also.

Several of the Members of our Group recently visited Go Grow, a local potting mix supply company who will mix to your specifications. Go Grow will neutralise the mix by adding lime and dolomite if required. We wanted to see what raw materials are readily available to our area, some of these include raw pine bark of various sizes, basalt crusher dust, coal ash, coarse river sand/gravel, various grades/sizes of seasoned pine bark and of course Go Grows own potting mix and garden soil blends.

The staff at Go Grow were extremely helpful and knowledgeable, we thank them for their assistance on the day.

#### **Some of our Members Mixes**

**Kay** uses pine bark fines, coal ash, PineGrove Bromeliad Mix, coco peat, zeolite and coarse sand.

**John** has 50% pine bark, 25% coal ash, 25% coco chips, he also adds zeolite, perlite, coffee grounds and basalt crusher dust.

The coffee grounds keep scale at bay.

**Trish** uses composted pine bark, coco peat chips, coarse sand and zeolite.

**Lesley** uses composted macadamia nut husk, cow manure, quality potting mix, wood ash from the fire box, PineGrove Bromeliad Mix, zeolite, Dynamic Lifter and waters the plants with Power Feed after potting — a very rich blend indeed.

**Dave** uses coco chips, pine bark fines, coarse sand and zeolite.

**Les** is using coarse perlite, mushroom compost, wetting granules, diatomaceous earth (DE), monocalcium phosphate (soft rock phosphate) and '5 in 1' organic plant food. Les doesn't like coco peat which he has been told is good for orchids but not for bromeliads. For his next mix he is also going to add egg shells.

This goes to show that as long as the mix holds the plant upright and you are happy with the growth, the specific ingredients are probably not that important. As an exercise try growing two of the same plant, pot one in your preferred mix and the other in a totally different mix, report the results in one years time.

## How to make Canola Oil Spray      compiled by Aaron Smythe

I thought I would simplify my father's "oils ain't oils" document so everyone can understand it more easily with added pictures and corresponding instructions so you can "see" what has to be done.

The below measurements are for a 2ltr bottle. If you have a 4ltr bottle double the measurements and if you have a 1ltr bottle halve the measurements and so on.

Mix in a 2lt jug  
Canola oil 750ml  
3tbsp detergent  
1250ml water

Blend with a stick blender (if you don't have one a whisk would do the job) for about 30 sec (make sure you put a lid partially on top to avoid spillage).      See picture 1 ►



Once blended it should all be white.  
Pour into an empty milk/juice bottle and let it sit for half an hour or so until oil and water have separated as per  
◀ picture 2.

At this stage get something pointed and sharp and poke a hole in the bottom of the bottle as per picture 3 ►



Pull out and let the water part on the bottom drain out controlling flow with a tightening or loosening of the lid.  
◀ See picture 4



When the water drains off and it gets down to the oil part only, screw the lid on tight.

◀ Picture 5 is of the oil part only left in the bottle.

This mixture makes about 1ltr of white oil. Transfer this to another storage container to use when required. You will find it fairly quickly separates back into oil and water layers. It should be used fairly promptly when fresh. You will find with time that the white oil left behind will stay as an emulsion longer and longer. The message is make big batches and store it. Each time you use it shake it well.

With this white oil you can add vinegar or ammonia.

For a 2ltr spray bottle

add

150ml white oil mixture just made

add

150ml vinegar **OR** ammonia

add

Water to fill the 2ltr spray bottle to the top.

Apply this in the late afternoon when sun is down and then early in the morning before the sun comes up hose the oil off the bromeliads you sprayed. If you have a few bromeliads do one section at a time as you might not have enough time before the sun comes up!!

Don't mix ammonia and vinegar together as one destroys the activity of the other. Remember when plants (Neoregelias) are coloured up use vinegar (actually enhances red colour and cleans calcium deposits off the leaves as well). When plants are in their greener stage use the ammonia. You can use the vinegar spray just to brighten up the plants when expecting brom visitors. The other positive thing is that vinegar prevents mosquitoes, strangely adult larvae don't appear bothered too much, but immature larvae don't survive.

Hope this helps and good luck.

Remember scale are active at season changes so they are the times to apply.



*Vriesea ospinae* var. *gruberi*  
1st Open and = Judges Choice  
Trish Kelly



*Vriesea plartynema* var. *rosea*  
Equal Judges Choice  
Marie Essery



*Cryptanthus* 'Ti'  
1st Novice Les Higgins



*Neoregelia* 'Groucho'  
1st Decorative Trish Kelly



*Ae. macrochlamys*    *Ae.* 'Macfoster'  
grown by Ross Little



*Cryptanthus* 'Marian Oppenheimer'  
grown by Flo Danswan



Before and after root cropping, lowers plant in pot for better presentation



*Vriesea* 'Cathy' identification for Laurie Mountford



Two variants of *Vriesea heterostachys* bought in the 1990s as *Vriesea* 'Goldfish'



*Vriesea heterostachys* bought in the 1990s as *Vriesea* 'Koi'



*Vriesea inflata*  
Bromeliaro Imperialis  
Oscar



*Vriesea inflata* painting by Margaret Mee

Photo's supplied by: Ross Little, Jirri Stiller, Lesley Baylis and Derek Butcher

*Billbergia leptopoda / lietzei*

by Derek Butcher 2004

In January 2004 Mike Andreas added a photograph to the FCBS photo index of a *Billbergia leptopoda* with totally green flowers. This rekindled my interest in the supposed differences between *Billbergia lietzei* Morren 1881 and *Billbergia leptopoda* L B Smith 1945.

What were the differences that caused Lyman Smith to describe this collection by Mulford Foster ? These species are side by side in Flora Neotropica and according to the key the main differences are leaves spotted for *Bill. leptopoda*. The sepals for *Bill. leptopoda* are narrowly elliptic, rounded and minutely apiculate compared to oblong, broadly acute and short apiculate for *Bill. lietzei*. When looking at petal colour this is quoted as being green except for dark blue apex for *Bill. leptopoda* compared to blue toward apex and the remainder greenish-yellow or sometimes wholly green for *Bill. lietzei*.

How could a totally green petalled plant be linked to *Bill. leptopoda* when it linked closer to *Bill. lietzei* ?

*Bill. leptopoda* differential by Smith

This species is distinguished from the closely related *Billbergia Lietzei* E Morr. by its spotted leaves and broadly rounded sepals.

**Additional comments by Ross Little 2014**

This month saw some of our *Billbergias* flowering again. When I first came across these two flowering here at PineGrove they were mixed together with the tag as *Bill. leptopoda*. The two different coloured petals had me searching for identifications, the result being the green petal plant is *Bill. lietzei* var. *chlorantha* and the blue tip petals are of *Bill. leptopoda*. The problem being is that they were virtually indistinguishable if one was trying to identify them by foliage alone as both are of similar size, shape and colour, also both have spots on the leaves. Grown together in a basket showed no difference between them until flowering.



## Finding a Home For My *Ursulaea*

by Jeanette Henwood 2014

My *Ursulaea mcvaughii* has been growing in the fork of the she-oak for the last three years. It was a struggling offset when I first placed it in the tree.

The plant was bought maybe a year or so before we moved to Wardell in 2009. It didn't grow well, the leaves marked, it suffered through a hail storm, the leaves have spines which are hazardous to my skin and I couldn't seem to find the right position to locate it. We also had a lot of rain in the first two years, the excess water seemed detrimental to the plant as well.



I needed a spot in the garden where it didn't pose a threat to my person, and more importantly, where it could grow into the beautiful flowering plant I had seen some years previously at Gloria and Tom Dunbar's place when we went on a field trip with the Gold Coast Bromeliad Society. The memory of the glorious pink bracts and pendulous white, mealed flowers is what made me persevere with the plant.



It was tied onto the tree with stockings and I placed a few prills of slow-release fertiliser around the base of the plant, where I had also tucked some coconut fibre. The plant made holdfast roots and started to look a bit better, but it took maybe twelve months or so. No offsets have been produced as yet.

It faces east, but doesn't really get direct sun at any point, because of the shelter of the trees. It does, however, get very bright light, so I was surprised when the inflorescence first appeared, as it was very pale, not the vivid pink I remembered.

The flower spike seemed to lengthen each day, and the bracts turned a brighter pink. The tips of the white, scurfy bracts were a delicate pink. The purple flowers when they emerged had the three-petal form of all bromeliads.

The emergence of the inflorescence completed over a number of days and each day, one or two flowers opened. The flowering was completed over a period of just over a month.



***Ursulaea***; A New Genus of Mexican Bromeliads by Robert W. Read and H. Ulrich Baensch in J. Brom. Soc. 44: 205-211. 1994

There can be no question that *Aechmea*, as treated by Smith & Downs (1979), is not a natural genus. As demonstrated in erecting the genus *Lymania* from elements among the species of *Aechmea* subgenus *Lamprococcus* and the genus *Araeococcus* (Read 1984), groups of species have been placed together traditionally because they exhibit characters of convenience such as petal appendages, mucronate sepals, simple, branched, or strobiloid inflorescences etc. that have not proven to be of taxonomic significance. The question then is how to realign and group species in a more natural arrangement.

The "subgenus" *Podaechmea* is a case in point. Not only did Smith & Kress (1989) continue to include the anomalous species *Aechmea macvaughii* in their new genus *Podaechmea*, they neglected to mention even the closely allied species *Ae. tuitensis* which was published since the monograph. The Smith and Downs key (1979: 1494) to genera was clearly artificial in which only one of the species in our new genus would key to the genus *Aechmea*. *Ae. tuitensis* would not key to *Aechmea* lacking or greatly exceeding the characters stated. Had they examined either species more closely they would have found (on the basis of the sepals) that neither species would fit in the genus *Aechmea* in the broad sense, especially in light of the most recent definition by Smith (1988).

A major division in Smith's latest keys to genera distinguishes *Aechmea* by its asymmetric sepals. Both *Ae. macvaughii* and *Ae. tuitensis* exhibit sepals that are "symmetric or nearly so," and both species of *Ursulaea* would key to an area between *Billbergia* and *Neoglaziovia*. Therefore, it becomes necessary to erect a new genus to accommodate two species that not only do not fit in the subgenus *Podaechmea*, but do not belong in the genus *Aechmea*.

ETYMOLOGY. This genus honors Ursula Baensch, superb horticulturist and co-author of the book BLOOMING BROMELIADS.

Key to the Species of *Ursulaea*

1. Inflorescence pendulous, compound; leaves ligulate, stiff, erect to about 120 cm long by about 16 cm wide, forming a water-impounding tank; floral bracts ca. 1 cm long; sepals serrulate .....

***U. macvaughii***.

1. Inflorescence erect, simple; leaves triangular, succulent, spreading, 28-56 cm long by 2-7 cm wide, not usually impounding free water; floral bracts ca. 4.5 cm long; sepals entire.....

***U. tuitensis***

## **My First Bromeliad**

by Marie Essery 2014

It was about 54 years ago that I got my first bromeliad from my mother but back then we didn't know it was a bromeliad. My mother probably got it from a friend or relative as this was the way we got most of our plants or cuttings then. I have since found out it was a *Billbergia pyramidalis* and I still have some of it today growing up a hibiscus shrub.

Nearly 22 years ago my daughter-in-law Janelle who loves her bromeliads asked me if I would like to go to some bromeliad nurseries with her, which happily I did and enjoyed. Now I have that terrible disease called Bromeliaditis. I have four shade houses full and many more growing in my gardens.

I met a woman in Ballina years ago in Big W, I was carrying a lovely purple guzmania and she stopped to admire it. We chatted on and found we both loved bromeliads and we became good friends often visiting each other and swapped a lot of bromeliads. Her name was Barbara, one day she mentioned to me that PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery was trying to get about 15 people together to form a bromeliad club, she asked if I was interested in attending, I said yes. This was the best decision I ever made, I am one of the original members and there is no way I would ever miss a meeting unless it was absolutely necessary as I enjoy it so much plus I have learnt a lot about my bromeliads.

I thank Ross and Helen and everybody else concerned with its establishment and their effort put into it. My most enjoyable day of the month.

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As a new member to the study group, Marie always fascinated and inspired me. Month after month she would quietly bring in yet another outstanding plant and of course be justifiably awarded 1st place in the Open section of our competitions of 2011, 2012 and 2013 also winning 'Judges Choice' in 2011 and 2012. Marie definitely set a very high benchmark and on the strength of seeing some of her plants I found myself nagging and cajoling Ross into selling me "one of those please" !! taking it home and telling it to grow as quickly as possible into a Marie plant... Fortunately Marie often brings her own surplus plants in for our sales table and I have bought many from her to add to my collection. It is obvious that Marie has developed a clear understanding over the years of their required growing conditions. She is a very modest and gracious member of the group and always looks so surprised when the competition votes are announced. I was extremely excited to visit her garden one day and could see that her passion has transformed her garden into an inspiring place to be.

Anon

## **Nutrient Requirements** Part 2 of 4 by Les Higgins 2014

A liquid nutrient mix for bromeliads in Northern N.S.W should be very dilute and simultaneously supply:

**Potassium** — promotes strong stems and roots, looks after the plants health and can be 1.5 times the amount of Nitrogen.

**Nitrate** — makes good carbohydrate store, sturdy growth and increases cold resistance.

**Calcium** — builds the skeleton and stimulates roots. It governs the strength of the cells and cell division.

Calcium needs to be balanced with magnesium and potassium.

**Magnesium** — is the central atom of chlorophyll and aids in phosphate up-take.

**Phosphate** — can be half the amount of Nitrogen.

Vital for functions on a cellular level, develops roots and speeds maturity.

**Sulphate** — is often supplied only as a trace element companion.

Sulphate atoms are crucial in the inner working of plants.

Micronutrients include:

**Boron** — the most unstable of the trace elements, critical for reproduction and is synergist for silica.

**Molybdenum** — is the catalyst for Nitrate.

**Nickel** — is the catalyst if Urea and Ammonia are incorporated.

**Sodium** and **Chloride** — together balance the cells water.

**Cobalt** — enables the utilization of atmospheric nitrogen.

**Iodide** — is needed in the chloroplasts.

**Silica** — stiffens the plant structure.

**Selenium** — may improve the cuticle.

Never hesitate to manipulate growth by combining straight chemicals. Flakes of insoluble compounds are the worst that can happen. As winter approaches mix 'home made' Magnesium Nitrate and Mono-Potassium-Phosphate each at 3g/10 litres. In this combination the Magnesium assists Phosphate up-take increasing cold resistance. Nitrate makes sturdy carbohydrate tissue and Potassium protects the plants well-being.

pH is the term describing acidity in multiples of ten times. pH5 is 100 times more acidic than pH7. Acidity profoundly effects nutrient up-take. Nitrate is most soluble at Ph7.0 and Ammonium is most soluble at pH5.0. Problems with Potassium up-take are often pH related due to inherent alkalinity with Potassium being most soluble at pH7.5.

Before using a fertiliser it is prudent to check the pH.

To lower pH use lemon juice, orange juice, vinegar or citric acid.

Correct a low pH by using bicarbonate of soda.

Substrate pH is checked by placing a saucer under the pot and testing the last drops of water that appear after watering.

Simple to use pH indicators are sold by Laboratory Supply Shops also easy to use Soil Test Kits are available from most garden supply centres.

Cryptanthus are endemic to Brazil and this may suggest that all species need the same pH. Plants that grow in the decaying litter of a forest floor are probably non-cam plants and maybe thrive in a low pH. Plants of the coastal fringe are most likely cam plants in a high pH environment. To successfully grow them together requires compromise not only with pH but also water.

To be continued: Part 3 of this article next month

### **Having Another Go — Never Giving Up Trying #13 plus**

Having read the *Racinaea crispa* article written by Peter Waters of New Zealand last year, Herb Plever of New York has decided to do just that - have another go. It just goes to show it doesn't matter how long one has been growing bromeliads there is always something to learn for those willing to take on new ideas.

"In the past I had tried to grow *Racinaea crispa* both mounted epiphytically and in a pot, and I only managed to kill more than a dozen of them. Now I'm growing two in a pot using Elton Leme's tip that I learned from BROMELIAD, Journal of the New Zealand Bromeliad Society: you have to keep the pot constantly moist by sitting it in a saucer full of water ". Herb Plever

Taken from:

BROMELIANA — Vol. 51, No. 5, May 2014  
published by The New York Bromeliad Society

### **Novice Popular Vote**

1st	Les Higgins	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Ti'
2nd	Flo Danswan	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Passion' x 'Grace'
2nd	Kevin Jones	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Mary Hyde'

### **Open Popular Vote**

1st	Trish Kelly	<i>Vriesea ospinae</i> var. <i>gruberi</i>
2nd	Marie Essery	<i>Vriesea platynema</i> <i>rosea</i>
3rd	Shane Weston	<i>Quesnelia edmundoi</i> var. <i>rubrobracteata</i>

### **Judges Choice**

1st	Trish Kelly	<i>Vriesea ospinae</i> var. <i>gruberi</i>
1st	Marie Essery	<i>Vriesea platynema</i> <i>rosea</i>

### **Decorative**

1st	Trish Kelly	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Groucho' colony
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### **Comments from the Growers.**

**Les** bought his *Cryptanthus* 'Ti' in October of 2013 as a very spindly plant which took 4 months to produce roots. It needed lots of nutrients and Les is trying to get more carbohydrate into it.

**Flo's** *Neoregelia* 'Passion x Grace' was bought at Grafton markets 2½ yrs ago. Grown under 50% beige shade cloth, it gets watered with Seasol once a month.

**Kevin** won his *Aechmea* 'Mary Hyde' in our raffle 2 yrs ago, kept under beige shade cloth and fertilised with Osmocote it has now turned into a rather nice specimen plant.

**Trish** bought her *Vriesea ospinae* var. *gruberi* from PineGrove and now grows it under 50% green shade cloth. When a pup is removed it either flowers immediately or sends up another pup from the centre.

**Marie** acquired her *Vriesea platynema rosea* from Dave about 12 mths ago, it is grown under 70% beige shade cloth with all day sun, fertilised with Osmocote.

**Shane** grows his *Quesnelia edmundoi* var. *rubrobracteata* in a very loose mix and does not water as he has lost a few to rot in the past.

**Trish's** *Neoregelia* 'Groucho' colony entry into Decorative this month is grown hanging about 30cm below the 50% black shade cloth roof of her shade house. This colony was only fertilised once when first potted and only gets rain water.