

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

Edition: October 2025

Agenda: General Discussion

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery  
114 Pine Street Wardell 2477  
Phone (02) 6683 4188

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

Next meeting November 20th 2025 at 11 a.m.

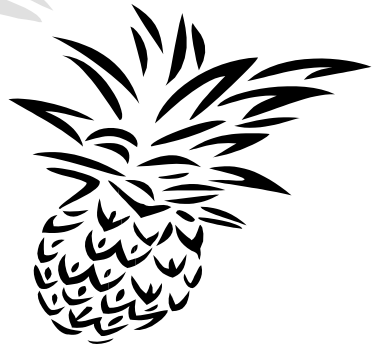
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## **Meeting September 18th 2025**

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am  
Ten members were welcomed.  
Three apologies were received.

### **General Business**

How timely was it having a fire ant discussion last month and praising NSW DPI for their continued efforts of keeping the fire ants at bay. Since last meeting the NSW DPI contacted us to advise they are undertaking another preventative round of fire ant baiting in our area and were requesting permission to enter our property again. Fortunately there has been no sign of fire ants on our property even though they were found within 300 metres from us in January 2024, the NSW DPI have done a great job of containing the pest. We need to stay vigilant though.

### **Show, Tell and Ask!**

"When is a pineapple at its best for picking" and "do they have offsets like any other Bromeliad"? These were two questions raised from our Ananas article in last month's Newsletter.

A pineapple will be sweet and juicy if picked when it's yellow to bright yellow. A small amount of green is OK but not totally green as it will not be ripe and taste quite tart.

Apart from propagating the crown of a pineapple, the plant itself will produce offsets (suckers) from around its base or it can produce slips from the base of the fruit itself, the pineapple.

Offsets or suckers grow from between the leaves, when big enough, one third to half the size of the parent plant, they can be removed quite easily with a twist and a tug or use a sharp knife and cut them off. You should be rewarded with multiple suckers.

Depending on the variety of Ananas you are growing you may get slips, small plantlets that form around or near to the base of the pineapple on the stalk/peduncle. Slips can be removed when small, try growing them in community pots until large enough to pot them on their own or directly into the garden.

Some pineapples may have multiple crowns, these can be divided and treated as individual plants.

Generally, offsets (suckers) will grow and produce a fruit quicker than slips or crowns, try all three methods yourself and let us know your results.

A query about the production of offsets from tissue cultured Aechmea, Vriesea and Guzmania was raised. Some plants found to not be very giving of offsets, often only getting one offset per plant. These offsets also seem to take many years to flower again as opposed to a usual flowering of annually or at least every two years. It had also been noticed when an offset from a tissue cultured plant does flower the inflorescence can often be much smaller. It is felt that the tissue culture process itself is not the issue. The cause of the problem may lie with the fact that many commercial growers manipulate the plants regular growth cycle by chemically inducing it to flower prematurely. Reason being is that a commercial grower needs to fulfil orders, therefore they need all the plants to flower at approximately the same time. Some growers do this to help clear floor space early for greater turnover. The use of these chemicals may cause an upset in future growth of offsets which may take several cycles to get back to more normal growth patterns and sizes. Only your own personal observations and record keeping can confirm this over time.

Chemically inducing plants to flower early or those not flowering in a preferred time frame does have its advantages for the hybridizer. By using a chemical like Ethrel to induce flowering, a hybridizer can get two plants of different flowering cycles to synchronize their flowering for pollen transfer from plant to plant.

Alternatively pollen can be collected and stored in a refrigerator for a short time or frozen for later use.

From Mitch Jones in FNCBSG Newsletter October 2021:

"For future hybrids mature anthers with pollen can be stored in centrifuge tubes with silica gel bead in the freezer and taken out when the anther/pollen is required to create other hybrids. Do not take out and thaw all the pollen unless you are going to use it all at once".



Remember patience is a virtue when it comes to waiting for a plant to flower naturally, don't rush a good thing.

While one of our members was away on holidays she missed a topic that would have answered a query for her, 'How to tell the difference between a Guzmania and a Vriesea' see FNCBSG Newsletter March 2025, pages 6 and 7. Deb received a plant she was assured to be a Guzmania. When this dubious plant flowered, concerns were raised as to its authenticity, it had distichous flowers (Vriesea) not the spirostichous arrangement one would expect for a Guzmania. With a back copy of the relevant Newsletter and plant in hand a correct identification was sorted, her plant is a Vriesea.

Moral: it pays not to miss a meeting...!!!

Gardeners often ask “which Bromeliads can grow in full sun?” Before answering one should ask “where in Australia is the person from?” This is a vast country with extremely variable growing conditions across it, unless one is very familiar with all areas of the country it is difficult to give an exact answer. At best a guide is all that can be offered of one’s own personal growing experiences.

The following taken from: BSI 1972 Vol 22 (3).

**Question:** Have you ever ascertained at what light reading bromeliads do best ?

**Answer:** The question is entirely too broad for a specific answer.

Dyckias, Orthophytums, Hechtias and other similar types of xerophytic and saxicolous bromeliads thrive in full sunlight. For the most part they have thick succulent leaves and are heavily covered with peltate scales. If they are grown in the shade they are weak and soft. Such plants would require a high light.

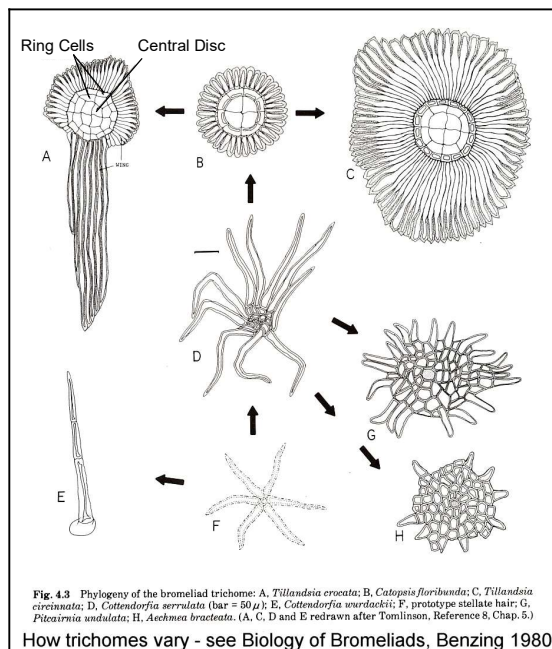
Much more important than to read a light meter would be to read the “leaf-meter” what the leaves indicate. Glossy, thin leaves require diffused light and shade. Leaves with spines and thick leaves which are generally covered with peltate scales in most cases will take much light and a good percentage of direct sun. These plants, such as the giant Aechmeas, Hohenbergias, Tillandsias and Vrieseas are generally growing on mountain sides or in rocky desert locations with considerable sun.

In or near the tropics where bromeliads are most abundant the light hours are of nearly equal length throughout the year. Generally speaking, the greater the altitude the higher the moisture content of the air and it will be found that the resistance of the plant to the sun is greater. A sun loving bromeliad can exist in a fairly shaded condition, but the real character in form and colour will suffer. The same goes for the shade plant in the opposite condition.

**Peltate:** having a structure consisting of an expanded top and a slender, centrally located attachment, as in most bromeliad trichomes.

Taken from:

The Biology of the Bromeliads  
by David Benzing



**Monthly Genus** for September was Dyckia, Deuterocohnia, Encholirium, Hechtia and Puya.

The genus Dyckia was named by Schultes in 1830 to honor Prince von Salm-Dyck, 1773–1861 who was an authority on succulent plants. Dyckia are terrestrial in habit and is one of the most diverse genera of Bromeliaceae. Currently there are 188 species and 11 varieties distributed from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The majority of the genus is found in Brazil where it occurs from sea level to over 1000 metres altitude, usually in sun exposed areas.

Dyckia differ from other genera because it produces a lateral inflorescence, not one coming from the centre of the plant. A Dyckia peduncle, by coming from the side, allows the plant to continue growing.



A couple of Dyckia hybrids by Helen Clewett

Dyckia flowers



*Dyckia goehringii*



*Dyckia* 'Yeti'

Deuterocohnia was first described in 1894 by Carl C. Mez to honor the German botanist Ferdinand Julius Cohn (1828 - 1898). The genus name is derived from the Greek *deuteros* = second, meaning second Cohnia as Cohnia had already been used to describe an orchid. There are 17 species, 2 varieties, 5 subspecies and 2 cultivars of Deuterocohnia.

Deuterocohnia grow in the Andes and adjacent areas of southern Bolivia, northern Argentina, some are endemic to the north of Chile and spread from Bolivia into the lowlands of western Brazil and Paraguay. They grow on bare rocks, stoney slopes and in crevices in dry valleys from sea level to 3000 mtrs.

Most Deuterocohnia have a central inflorescence that is perennial, which means it becomes woody and is then able to flower for several years. Every year for five to seven years flowers form along secondary branches.

Deuterocohnia petals can be greenish, yellowish, reddish, pink or of orange shades in different combinations with the sepals, the dominating colour is yellow.



*Deuterocohnia* 'Chlorantha'



*Deuterocohnia longipetala*

*Deuterocohnia abstrusa*

Photos by Ross Little

Encholirium is a genus endemic to Brazil that grows in rocky landscapes - saxicolously.

The type specimen for the genus is, *Encholirium spectabile* was found by Dr. Von Martius in Bahia, Juazeiro, Ilha do Fogo, in September - October, 1818.

There are 48 species attributed to its name which comes from the Greek "enchos" for spear and "leiron" for lily, meaning "sword lily" in reference to the 1.8 metre tall flower spike.

Due to their very spiky nature this genus is seen in very few collections.



*Encholirium pedicellatum*  
1st Monthly Genus Ross Little



*Encholirium spectabile*  
painting by  
Margaret Mee



*Encholirium spectabile*

Photos by Ross Little



*Tillandsia bergeri*  
1st Open Shane Fitzgerald



*Tillandsia recurvifolia* var. *subsecundifolia*  
1st Tillandsia Shane Fitzgerald

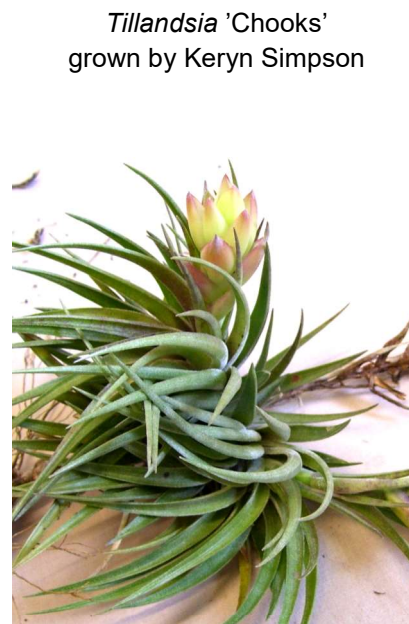
= Judges Choice  
Shane Fitzgerald



*Tillandsia neglecta*  
grown by Kayelene Guthrie



*Tillandsia* 'Cotton Candy'  
grown by Helen Clewett



*Tillandsia* 'Chooks'  
grown by Keryn Simpson



*Tillandsia* 'Holm's Rose'  
grown by  
Deb Baker

Hechtia is a xerophytic genus of 100 species that are found from southern Texas to northern Nicaragua. Most of the species are endemic to Mexico, occurring in seasonally dry, frequently calcareous - chalky, limy regions through the country where they often form large, populations that may represent a major element of the vegetation.

This genus was named by Klotsch in 1835 to honor Julius Gottfried Conrad Hecht, German councillor to the King of Prussia.

Hechtia are mostly a dioecious genus, meaning it has male and female flowers on different individual plants.



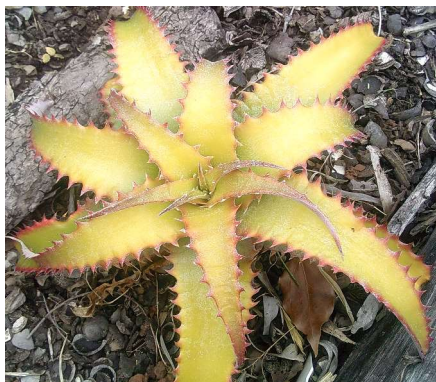
*Hechtia marnier-lapostole*  
1st Monthly Genus Helen Clewett



*Hechtia glomerata*



*Hechtia caulescens*



*Hechtia lanata*



*Hechtia liebmannii*

Puya - the name comes from an Indian term meaning "point". The 230 species, 14 varieties and 3 subspecies come from the high Andes Mountains of South America and southern Central America.

The botanist who named the genus Puya in 1782 was Juan Ignacio Molina. He was an Italian-born Jesuit priest and naturalist who spent many years in South America.

Puya are of terrestrial or saxicolous habit. Like many of the plants discussed in this group, Puya like a very well drained potting mix and to be grown in a very sunny position. They also like to be well watered in the hotter months and kept on the drier in the cooler months.



*Puya vasquezii*  
grown by Shane Fitzgerald



*Puya floccosa ??*  
grown by Keryn Simpson



*Puya nutans* - in Ecuador



*Puya hamata* - in Ecuador



*Guzmania sanguinea*  
grown by  
Keryn Simpson



*Nidularium* 'Orange Bract'  
grown by Helen Clewet

*Vriesea* 'Amandine'  
grown by Deb Baker



*Vriesea fosteriana* var. *seideliana*  
cultivar 'Red Chestnut'  
grown by  
Kayelene Guthrie



## **Bromeliads - Houseplants for Today and Tomorrow** Part 13 by Walter Richter (Translated by Adda Abendroth, Teresopolis, Brazil) Continued: BSI 1970 Vol. 20 (4)

### **Animal Pests**

The most frequent animal pest is scale. Scale can be spotted by the flat or rounded shield which covers the animal's small body. A relative, the "wool-louse" has very fine waxy hairs in place of a shield. Scale lice are site bound, whereas wool-lice move about.

The damage inflicted on the plants is through sucking. The first signs are ugly spots on both faces of the leaf caused by the sucking act. A severe attack will weaken the plant so much it will pine away and eventually die. Certain species of scale exude a noticeable amount of honey-dew. It attracts the kind of fungus that causes the so-called "black mildew", it spoils the appearance of the plant and reduces its value.

Certain species of lice specialize on bromeliads. One is *Gymnaspis aechmeae*, with a very flat pale shield, another is the pineapple scale, *Diaspis bromeliae* an addict of pineapple plants. Some Aechmeas, like *Aechmea tillandsioides* and others that have a shiny leaf surface, are often infected by *Coccus hesperidum*, the "soft brown scale". A heavy attack of it spoils the appearance of the plants. A further species of scale, *Diaspis boisduvali*, seeks out bromeliads with smooth leaves, *Vriesea*, *Guzmania*, *Tillandsia*, but is also known to threaten *Quesnelia marmorata* and certain *Billbergias*. On *Aechmea fulgens* especially I found a coma-scale of the genus *Lepidosaphes* that has an assymetric, longish shield. It is apt to settle in such quantities on the leaves that they stop functioning and die. Most resistant and hard to extinguish is the very small "dot scale" which has an extra hard shield. Lice of the species *Pseudococcus* settle exclusively on smooth-leaved bromeliads such as *Vriesea*, *Guzmania* and *Tillandsia*. Ants sometimes take young lice up into *Vriesea* spikes, they develop well in the sugary juice that often fills the bracts. If they multiply fast, too many of them will detract from the plants good looks and also interfere with seed setting. They kill the spikes.

To combat any of the pests listed is quite a problem when it comes to bromeliads. Many of the available preparations cannot be used on these plants, especially if they contain mineral oil. A thin film of oil will keep the scale from breathing and kill it, but it will also injure the plant. In spraying it cannot be avoided that some of the liquid gathers in the funnel and stays there long enough to inflict damage.

Some of the newest sprays are said to be safe for plants but deadly for beasts. I have not tried them as yet, but I recommend caution, in any case a preliminary trial. The result of the trial can be evaluated only 4 to 10 weeks after application. If leaves that were sprouting at the time of spraying are by then in good condition, free from blemishes, it may be assumed that the drug is safe and total spraying may be resorted to. I have not tried systemic pesticides, nor do I know of any published report about their application. It would be worth while to try them out.

It is interesting to note that collectors who gather bromeliads in the wilds unanimously state that they seldom find any scale infestations. The presence of the pests on plants in cultivation indicates a typical cultivation ailment. Corners and nooks sheltering warm air escaping the spray are places scale first appears. The wool-louse follows a little later. The later will also settle between close-set leaves where the spray does not reach. Neglected lots can become so infected that rescue is hopeless. Mechanical clearance by scraping or scrubbing is dubious. It is impractical on bromeliads covered with breathing scales. The wool-louse can be washed off easily.

It is entirely possible to preserve developing plants and keep them free of scale of any kind until bloom. As long as the pests are not brought in from outside, contamination is guarded against. Ability to resist infestation can be achieved by correct cultivation. Correct cultivation consists foremost of maintaining normal temperature, sufficiently high air humidity, but no permanent super-humidity, for the species that can take it, and more or less aeration suitable to the season.

Other animal pests are snails, mostly small slugs. They are a real menace to young plants. Soft-leaved *Aechmea*, *Billbergia*, *Neoregelia* and *Nidularium* seedlings are choice victims. To get rid of snails it is best to lay out poisoned bait or to pick the animals off by hand. Larger slugs may threaten *Vrieseas* planted for seed, the slugs go after the blossoms and show special preference for stigmas and anthers which they consume over night. Although they only eat species and hybrids whose flowers become viable the day after eclosion, repeated attacks may cause loss. Generally this kind of slug spends the day in the water held in the leaf axil where it can be readily spotted and eliminated.

Assemblies of bromeliad seedlings sometimes attract "mourning mosquitoes" which mean danger to plantlets in the first stages of life. Generations of the insect come forth in rapid succession. Only repeating spraying 3 times within 10 days with a poison that upsets their breathing mechanism will be effective. One single spraying will kill only the recently hatched adults but not the larvae that live in the soil. For this reason spraying must be repeated. Like the "mourning

mosquito" the glass house locust *Tachycines asynamorus* sometimes called simply "hopper" or "jumper", may harm or even destroy germinating seed or very young plantlets. Also this pest is active at night only. During the day they often gather beneath tables in the house or in corners and nooks. Spraying or dusting the hiding places with a stronger Ester or Hexa preparation is an effective means of getting rid of them. They like ripe fruit, peelings put in a pail and left overnight is a sure bait for them.

Compared with other ornamentals bromeliads have as yet few enemies and sicknesses. Let us hope that this condition will continue as cultivation increases.

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This was the final part of this series of articles reprinted from the:  
Bromeliad Society International, Journal Archives.

The articles might have been from the 1970s, however the information is still quite current and useful especially to some of our novice growers. The only difference today is some of the plant names have changed.

There are many many more very interesting articles in the BSI Journals, not only cultural information, there's collecting trip articles, plant descriptions and more.

Go to the BSI website, refer to the main menu at the top of the page to see what is available for public (non member) access by opening the menus.

Non members can access the Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR) and the Bromeliad Species Database (BSD). However one must be a member of the BSI to access the "Description and Resource Files" of the BSD. Non members can access all online issues of the BSI Journals except the most recent ten issues.

In the main menu at the top is "**Join the BSI**" open the menu, fill out the form and join the BSI to be able to access the members only sections.

**Available to members only:**

The last ten issues of the BSI Journal  
"Description and resource files" section of BSD  
Binomials List  
Membership directory  
New articles  
Key to the genera of the bromeliaceae  
Bromeliad culture brochure  
Media library

Join the BSI now and access a whole new world of Bromeliad information.

## **Open Popular Vote**

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Tillandsia bergeri</i>
2nd	Helen Clewett	<i>Nidularium</i> 'Orange Bract'
2nd	Keryn Simpson	<i>Guzmania sanguinea</i>

## **Tillandsia**

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Tillandsia recurvifolia</i> var. <i>subsecundifolia</i>
2nd	Helen Clewett	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Cotton Candy'
2nd	Deb Baker	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Holm's Rose'
2nd	Keryn Simpson	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Chooks'

## **Monthly Genus**

1st	Ross Little	<i>Encholirium pedicellatum</i>
1st	Helen Clewett	<i>Hechtia marnier-lapstole</i>

## **Judges Choice**

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Tillandsia bergeri</i>
1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Tillandsia recurvata</i> var. <i>subsecundifolia</i>

### **Web Links for Checking Correct Identification and Spelling ?**

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR): <http://registry.bsi.org/>

Refer to this site for correct identification and spelling of your hybrid or cultivar.

Bromeliad Species Database (BSD): [www.bsi.org/members/?bsd](http://www.bsi.org/members/?bsd)

Refer to this site for species identification, photos, descriptions and more.

New Bromeliad Taxon List : <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/>

Refer to this site for latest species name changes and correct spelling.

Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) <http://bromeliad.org.au/>

Refer to this site for its Photo Index, Club Newsletters many with  
Table of Contents Index and there's Detective Derek Articles.

Keep these web sites set as desktop icons for quick reference access.

### **Where do I Find the Dates ?**

**[www.bromeliad.org.au](http://www.bromeliad.org.au)** then click "Diary".

Check this site for regular updates of times, dates and addresses of meetings  
and shows in your area and around the country.