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

Edition: December 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 January 15th 2026 at 11 a.m.

Editorial Team:
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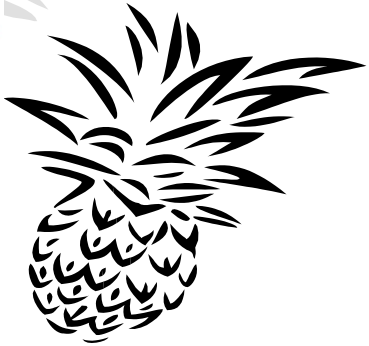


Life Members: Gary McAteer, Coral McAteer
Debbie Smith, Shirley Smith
Ross Little, Helen Clewett

Meeting November 20th 2025

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
Nine members were welcomed.
Five apologies were received.

General Business

The change to our Popular Vote Competition to drop the Monthly Genus section had been discussed at our October meeting, the proposed change was voted on at the November meeting and carried unanimously.

Starting from our January 2026 meeting the Popular Vote sections will be:

Open: two plants per entrant.

Tillandsia: one plant per entrant.

2025 end of year Christmas Party: all the necessary arrangements have been finalized. Lets have a wonderful day celebrating not only Christmas but all that we have learnt during this past year about our wonderful Bromeliads.

Planning for 2026 presentations, things/topics/tips you would like to learn about needs to be discussed and decided upon or do we just continue to wing it which has been reasonably successful to date ! Discussing issues regarding plant health and other cultural problems as they arise each month seems to keep us rolling along nicely as opposed to a set plan. However give it some thought for further discussion at our January meeting.

Topic Suggestions

Difficult to divide clumps.

Mounting plants in trees.

Preparing plants for show and competition.

Photographing your plants for the Newsletter.

Back to basics - plant terminology.

Setting up a terrarium.

Collecting and growing seed.

Wing it. ???

Further planning for 2026 is a meeting day change from Thursday to Saturday in the hope of attracting more members. It is believed there are quite a number of people that say they would attend if meetings weren't held on a week day. So far most members have been in favour of a change, however it's a trial only, the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of the month is yet to be agreed upon.

Show, Tell and Ask!

I'm bewildered, recently I have seen the following comment made again: "showing some Bromeliads and Tillandsias."

Can somebody please explain to me what the difference is between a Bromeliad and a Tillandsia as I've always thought a Tillandsia was a Bromeliad. Too often we see them written as though they are two separate plant families.

It should be written as: 'showing some Bromeliads:- Tillandsia, Alcantarea, Bromelia, Dyckia, Vriesea, Neoregelia etc.' which reads correctly.

The word "bromeliad" comes from the scientific family name *Bromeliaceae*, which honors Swedish botanist Olof Bromelius (1639–1705), with "-ad" added to his name as a suffix to denote members of that family, first appearing in English in the 1860s as a simpler term for the complex scientific name.

Bromelia is the type genus (a group of related species) within the family, named by Linnaeus in honor of Olof Bromelius.

-aceae: is a standard botanical suffix indicating a plant family - Bromeliaceae.

-ad: is an English suffix meaning "belonging to" or "of the kind of," which makes "bromeliad" mean "of the Bromeliaceae family".

The family of Bromeliaceae (Bromeliad family) is divided into eight subfamilies:-
Brochinioideae

Lindmanioideae

Hechtioideae

Navioideae

Pitcairnioideae

Puyoideae

Tillandsioideae — Tillandsia is a genus within this subfamily.

Bromelioideae

For the current genera list for each subfamily, refer to 'A Bromeliad Glossary' from the Bromeliad Society International (BSI), Appendix II, pages 61 and 62.

What all this means is that a Tillandsia is a Bromeliad.

Know your suffix:

-escens, becoming but not fully achieved, tending towards
e.g. erubescens - becoming rosy red, blushing.

-foli- (-us, -a, -um) leaves.

-opsis, looks like; appearance.

-oides, resembling, like, similar to e.g. tillandsioides - looks like a Tillandsia.

-oideae, ending added to the stem of a subfamily within a plant family
e.g. Bromelioideae

-phylla, pertaining to leaves, foliage.
Strepto- twisted e.g. streptophylla = twisted leaves.

-stichos, a row or line e.g. distichous - arranged in two ranks (rows) like the flower spikes of many Vriesea.

A Question Asked This Month

What is the jelly (musilage) like stuff covering my flower for ?

It protects the flowers in very dry conditions by helping the plant retain moisture and prevents the flowers from drying out. It is predominantly found on Vriesea, Guzmania and Alcantareas.

It also defends the flowers from unwanted nectar or pollen thieves that collect food but do not assist in pollination of the flowers.

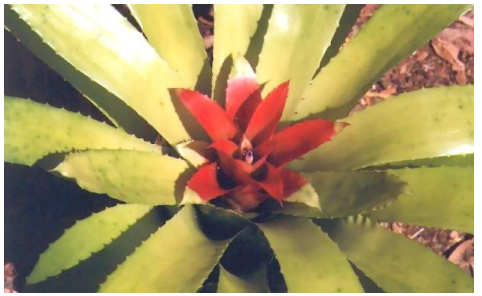
It doesn't stop all the thieves though as some may simply chew their way into the base of the flower to access and steal the nectar.

On the November Popular Vote table we had two entries tagged as: *Quesnelia* 'Curly Top', this is not a registered name and we can't find any record of who first coined this name. One can only assume it was a pet or nursery name for a Quesnelia with leaves that are curly at the top. This brings to mind the registered *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman' a cultivar of *Quesnelia marmorata* found in Brazil with symmetrical, distichous growth habit, punctated with dark brown cross-banding and very regular recurled leaves. The plant was wild collected by D. Sucre at Rio Bonito, Rio de Janeiro in 1983 and given number Plowman12968. Named by Harry Luther in honour of the U.S. ethnobotanist Timothy Plowman (1944-89).

The two plants tabled appear to be grown a little soft hence the leaves aren't as 'curly' as much as they could be, if grown harder the leaves may curl more. Therefore it's consider the labels should be changed to 'Tim Plowman', but keep the name 'Curly Top' on the reverse side of the label for reference.

Monthly Genus for November was Nidularium

The genus Nidularium which was established by the French botanist Charles Lemair in 1854, the type for this genus was *Nidularium fulgens.* Currently 47 species are in the genus.



Nidularium 'Bahia Variegated''
1st Monthly Genus Shane Fitzgerald

The name Nidularium created by Lemair comes from the Greek - nidulus meaning small or little nest, referring to the nest form that the flower fascicles are arranged in within the floral cup.

Nidularium are endemic to the rain forests of Brazil and the Atlantic Coast area of South America. From Bahia in the north to Santa Catarina in the South, even into the Rio Grande do Sul, and all the States in between, especially Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and Sáo Paulo, with the largest concentration and most richest of the species found in Rio de Janeiro.

Most species are epiphytes but can also be found on the lower parts of the trees and are happy to grow as terrestrials on the forest floor, denoting that the genus, are shade lovers.

Nidularium procerum

Nidularium innocentii
grown by Kayelene Guthrie

Nidularium atalaiaense
E. Pereira, E Leme, 1984.

Type locality is Morro do Atalaia in small clumps of plants scattered over the forest floor or on rocks in rather shady spots of the arboreal restinga vegetation near sea level.

Nidularium angustifolium
Ernest Ule, 1896.

It was found in Rio de Janeiro State, Rio de Janeiro City, Cascadura, Serra da Bica. This plant lives on the forest floor or as an epiphyte in the lower layer of the Atlantic slope forest, at altitudes of 50 to 500 metres.

Nidularium antoineanum
Heinrich Wawra, 1880.

Named in honor of the botanist Franz Antoine. It grows as a terrestrial or epiphytically in the lower layer of the Atlantic slope forest at altitudes of 800 to 1,800 metres in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Nidularium cariacicaense
Wilhelm Weber, 1986.

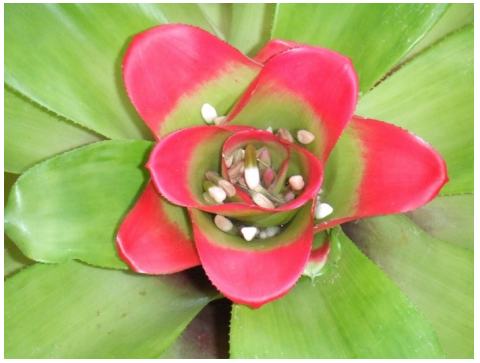
From Espirito Santo in the Atlantic forest from 80 to 700 metres altitude.

Nidularium scheremetiewii
Eduard August von Regel, 1858

From the Atlantic slope forest of Rio de Janeiro state growing near sea level up to 1,600 metres altitude.

Neoregelia has a simple inflorescence of many flowers in a cluster nestled low in the rosette. Each flower has its own floral bract. The petal-blades are spreading, acuminate - tapering to a long narrow point, they are violet, blue, white or rarely red.

Nidularium has a compound star shaped inflorescence that sits like a nest on a short peduncle. The flowers in groups of two or more are fascicles within each bract. The erect petals present as tubes like light bulbs, they are white, blue, reddish, white/green.



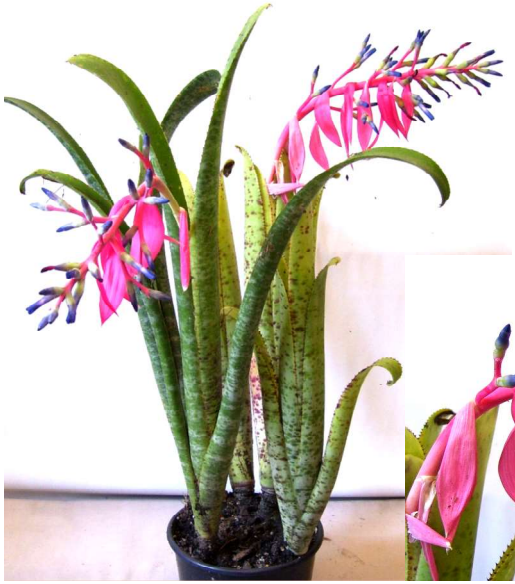
Nidularium innocentii flowers are in fascicles within each bract.

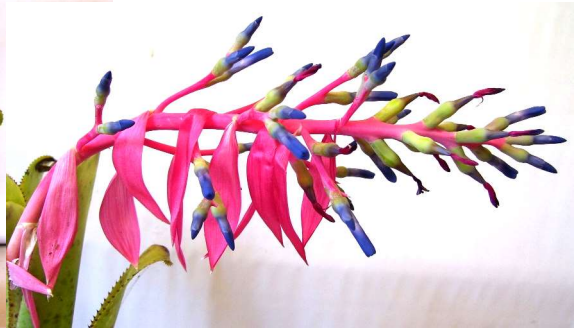
Nidularium longiflorum flowers are uniutriculate - a single inflorescence without the usual flowering in the side primary bracts so often seen in ‘ordinary’ *Nidularium*.

Nidularium ‘Striatum’ is a striated form of *Nidularium innocentii.*

Aechmea servitensis var *exigua* 1st Open Helen Clewett

Neoregelia 'Mum's Tiger' grown by Shane Fitzgerald





Quesnelia 'Curly Top' unreg grown by Ross Little

The name 'Curly Top' is most likely an erroneous pet name of unknown origin for *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman'.

Quesnelia 'Curly Top' unreg grown by Kayelene Guthrie

Tillandsia unnamed grown by Kayelene Guthrie

Tillandsia 'Fuego'
1st Tillandsia
Gary McAteer

Tillandsia chicoasena
grown by
Shane Fitzgerald

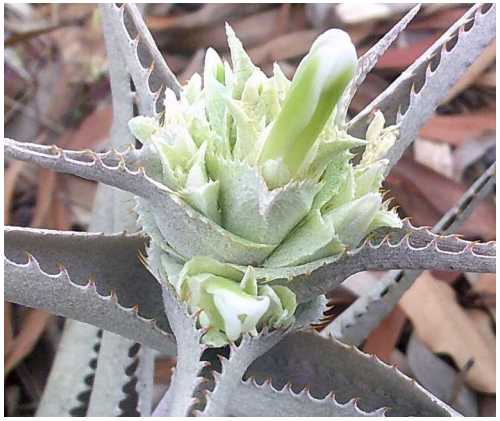
Tillandsia fasciculata var. *densispica*
grown by
Ross Little

Orthophytum glabrum

The type specimen for this species found in 1820 by Austrian botanist Johann Baptist Emanuel Pohl was described by Carl Mez in 1892 as *Prantleia glabra*. Mez realized in 1896 that Pohl's plant was cited into Orthophytum by Beer in 1854, therefore Mez synonymised *Pratleia glabra* under the genus Orthophytum (Mez 1896) as: *Orthophytum glabrum* (Mez) Mez.

It can be found growing as a terrestrial on slopes in north eastern Minas Gerais, Brazil.

It is an easy species to grow that requires little care when planted in the garden. When grown in full, all day sun it gains a vibrant coppery colour, a little greener if grown in a shadier location.



Orthophytum piranianum Leme and C. C. Paula, 2007.

The type specimen was found growing as a terrestrial on sandy soil among quartzite outcrops of the Campos Rupestres in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Named to honor the botanist Jose Rubens Pirani.

It's being grown here in a dappled light position in nut husk and leafy compost.

Photos by Ross Little

Eagle Eyed Observer

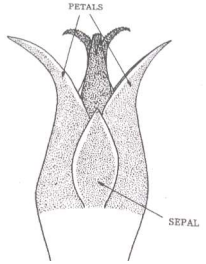
In our FNCBSG NSW November 2025 Newsletter, page 15 is an article written by John Catlan, The Fibonacci Sequence and Pineapples:
In paragraph one John states “Plants don’t like four.”
In paragraph two John states “We do not have four leafed clover or a four leafed anything else.”

From Eric Gouda: “This is not true, there are several plants with four leaflets in a leaf, like some Oxalis and several climbing Bignoniaceae.”

Oxalis, also known as wood sorrel or shamrock, is a large genus of flowering plants with heart-shaped leaves, often growing as common weeds in lawns and gardens (like Creeping Oxalis or Soursob), some species are toxic to livestock.

Bignoniaceae is a family of flowering plants in the order Lamiales commonly known as the bignonias or trumpet vines. Nearly all of the Bignoniaceae are woody plants, but a few are subwoody, either as vines or subshrubs. Wikipedia

Bromeliads are distinguished by their three-parted flowers. The female part is a three chambered ovary topped by a style with a three lobed stigma. There is always three petals and three sepals. (Gleaned from: Biology of the Bromeliads by David Benzing)



However one will occasionally find a flower with four petals, some Neoregelia hybrids are known for it and Mitch Jones recently found this four petal oddity in one of his Sincoraea.

Sincoaea species nov. Licuri, Brazil grown by Mitch Jones

Photos by Mitch Jones

Kayelene was concerned about one of her Tillandsia that is shy at setting roots. It has been potted in a regular mix for around one year with no sign of any roots.

Her query was “would it be better mounted or set it into a wire hanger ?”

Some recommendations were to mount it either on cork, old untreated fence paling, Ekodeck (composite decking board) or repot into a mesh/orchid pot. The later have been very successful for many growers having similar issues.

One could also try drift wood or pumice stone, both can be found washed up on our beaches, soak thoroughly in fresh water before use to leach out any salts.

A nice piece of bush rock covered in moss or lichens with a Tillandsia or any other Bromeliad on it can make quite a showy centre piece on any table.

Pots and Plant Physiology

by Les Higgins 2015

One classification in taxonomy is Angiosperms, this embraces Monocotyledons and Dicotyledons. All Bromeliads are monocotyledons (abbrev. to monocots).

Some of the characteristics associated to monocots are:
1) The embryo is a single cotyledon (hence the name), usually hypogeal.
2) Floral whirls are trimerous.
3) The vascular system is scattered bundles (best described as having no cambium layer.
4) Linear leaves with parallel venation.
5) Thickened basal stems known as rhizomes.

Very important, monocots have a fibrous root system that is best accommodated in pots that have a large surface area and shallow depth. However, there are various monocot root forms that need a specific style of pot for best accommodation. A shallow pot with slotted sides is a good design for a small monocot.

Dicotyledon (dicots) differences compared to monocots include:
1) Embryo with epigeal cotyledons.
2) Floral parts pentamerous.
3) A cambium layer. (I’m sure that you have at sometime twisted the bark on a young branch and caused it to rotate on a wet surface under the bark, the wet is the cambium layer).
4) Dicots have a tap root and branched primary roots. (The standard pot gives depth for the tap and primary roots to descend).

Bromeliads are classified according to their original habitat and may be Mesophytes or Xerophytes.

There is a belief that plants breathe out oxygen during the day and carbon dioxide at night. The term breathing is incorrectly used. Breathing is the inhalation and exhalation of air by lung action. Plant equivalent to breathing is to respire by gaseous diffusion across a semi-permeable membrane. The skin of a plant is a semi-permeable membrane and can be described like a rubber sheet riddled with tiny holes. Leaves, stems and roots all have the semi-permeable membrane and respiration is continuous day and night. Confusion is caused by mesophytes (non-cam plants) using all their CO_2 production along with atmospheric CO_2 to photosynthesis. During the day only oxygen is released. At night, with stomates closed, only CO_2 is respired.

Root respiration is very basic. As the oxygen in the pot diminishes more is required to enter into the root area. As CO_2 becomes more concentrated it flows out of the pot. The pot should not just hold the plant it should be carefully selected to allow adequate respiration and drainage. To compliment the pot the potting mix must be below pH7, be of open texture and have good drainage while remaining moist. If respiration is limited then the growth never reaches its full potential.

There are better pots for growing Bromeliads than pots with holes only in the bottom. Water can drain away but placed on a solid flat surface air movement is limited. Net-pots are excellent for monocots in that they allow adequate air diffusion but their disadvantage is in rapid drying out. Putting a net-pot into a plastic pot solves the problem and increases root humidity.

Wire baskets lined with onion bag are good containers. Shallow, large diameters are best for monocots. Leave the deep bellied baskets for dicots. Exposure to summer sun has potential to make the wire very hot. Stolons and leaves that contact the wire are liable to be cauterised. Insulate the wire with a sleeve of rubber or plastic tube.

An earlier FNCBSG Newsletter (May 2014, p.9) shows a Tillandsia in a net-pot with roots growing through the net. This is a good way to grow roots on an epiphyte. Big chunks of bark or polystyrene can jamb an epiphyte into a net-pot, then put the net-pot into a standard pot. Wet substances such as paper, rag, rockwool etc. in the bottom of the standard pot will, as they dry, increase the humidity around the plant and stimulate root production.

There are pots in varied shapes, materials and sizes, all have their ideal uses. Outstandingly best for Cryptanthus is the plastic Vanda slotted basket available as 100 mm square, 200 mm square and 300 mm square, mesh lining is needed to contain the potting mix. Second and third choice could be either the net-pot or the wire basket. All three styles of container have the potential for good root aeration and excellent drainage. As a fourth choice there are plastic squat pots that have slots extending from the base to well up the side of the pot. A glazed pot is very low on the list of being a desirable container for plant growth.

It is said that Bromeliads have a preference to be under-potted rather than over-potted. This may be true but more logical is Bromeliads, as monocots, should be shallow potted rather than deep potted. The larger the surface area the more extensive the fibrous root can become. Ultimately what type of pot is selected affects the growth and appearance of the plant.

Ross stated that the net pots are ideal for growing Tillandsias in as they prefer good root ventilation being mostly epiphytic.

Roots of a Tillandsia can be seen growing through the net/orchid pot.

Glossary

Angiosperm: A seed-bearing vascular plant of complex reproductive structure containing a flower, ovule and anthers.
Cambium layer: Continuous sheath-like layer of meristem.
Epigeal: The two germinating cotyledons carry the Testa (seed coat), as a cap covering them as they break through the ground surface.
Mesophyte: A plant of optimum growth between the conditions required by Hydrophytes and Xerophytes. Temperature and moisture gradients should be moderate and reliable.
Respiration: The energy releasing oxidation of biosynthesised products to simpler compounds.
Xerophyte: A plant that evolved by modification of form and/or function to survive in hostile conditions.
Vascular system: The arrangement of water and solute-conducting tissues.

Open Popular Vote

1st	Helen Clewett	*Aechmea servitensis* var. *exigua*
2nd	Shane Fitzgerald	*Neoregelia* 'Mum's Tiger'
3rd	Ross Little	*Quesnelia* 'Curly Top' ?? unreg.

Tillandsia

1st	Gary McAteer	*Tillandsia* 'Fuego'
2nd	Shane Fitzgerald	*Tillandsia chicoasena*
3rd	Ross Little	*Tillandsia fasciculata* var. *densispica*

Monthly Genus

1st	Kayelene Guthrie	*Nidularium innocentii*

Judges Choice

1st	Kayelene Guthrie	*Nidularium innocentii*

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
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 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.