

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

Edition: January 2026

Agenda: General Discussion

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

Study Group meets second Saturday of each month

Next meeting February 14th 2026 at 11 a.m.

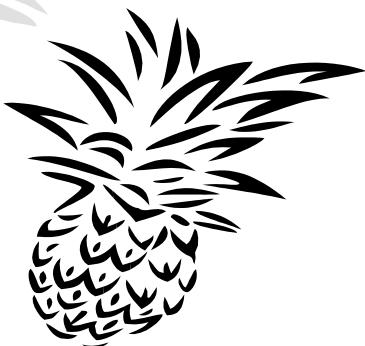
Editorial Team:

Ross Little

Helen Clewett

pinegrovebromeliads@bigpond.com

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



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Meeting December 18th 2025

The Christmas get together got underway at approximately 11.00 am
The ten members present were wished a Merry Christmas.
Two apologies were received.

General Business

This years Christmas gathering was a small group of some good friends but hopefully with the change to a weekend (Saturday) meeting we may see our numbers increase. Shane produced a wonderful advertisement in 2025 that some of us have been posting on local community social media but to no avail. A new advert for 2026 has been produced promoting the day change, lets hope this encourages a few new members to attend our meetings.

The rewards a new member has to look forward to by joining our Group:
From Kayelene - It has been a good year, I've learnt a lot again this past year, enjoyed some good company. We had some great food and festive activities at the Christmas party. Thanks to Ross for hosting the monthly events for the year and for imparting his knowledge.

Thank you to Coral for her festive cheer and generosity.

From Debbie - Thanks for another good year. Mum and I look forward to our monthly gatherings and appreciate the support of the Group. It's always good to relearn things I've forgotten and to learn new things from the collective wisdom. Of course I love to admire all the stunning competition plants too !

Thanks to all for a fantastic Christmas party with good food and great company. Looking forward to 2026.

From Shane - I would like to thank all involved for a great year with the FNCBSG. I have really enjoyed the meetings. The ease and relaxed nature of the meetings and of all participants with an openness to sharing information and asking questions about Bromeliads is just great. Thanks to all who participated and extra thanks to Ross. Your knowledge and passion is outstanding and leads the Group to learning and understanding on how best to grow these plants. And as for the Christmas party - a special shout out to Coral who makes the best Mrs Claus ever. I look forward to next year.

From Ross - it's been a pleasure meeting with all of you each month and sharing not only my knowledge but you sharing yours with all of us as well. It has been wonderful to see the keenness of all in our Group to share their growing tips and openness to ask questions. I'm sure if we can attract new members they won't be disappointed in the collective camaraderie of our Group.

Many thanks to those who supplied articles and photos for our Newsletter, they are greatly appreciated as it is your input that helps make our Newsletter what it is today. We had some wonderful practical demonstrations in 2025 from our members, well done guys, keep asking questions and somebody will show you how it's done, like making those Tillandsia mounts etc. That brings to mind the wonderful 'Gift Swap' that Shane put together - a surprise package containing cork mounts, ties, glue, pot hangers etc. that Kayelene selected. This package opened a question from Kayelene about cork - the answer is on p.14 and 15, and your Nidularium query about 'Morobe' is answered on p.11, 12 and 13.

Overall the 'Gift Swap' was well supported again this year, thank you to all for supporting it.

Feedback from our greater community that receives our Newsletter via e-mail gives us the strength to carry on just when we wonder if all the effort is worth it. Thank you everybody for the wonderful supportive comments throughout the year. Thank you to the Eagle Eyed Observers, Eric, your corrective comments have helped us learn more about our wonderful hobby. To the cheeky Observers when I make a spelling mistake or slight name error, thank you for pulling me into line. BUT, remember we can't keep up to name changes all the time and I do throw in the occasional 'error' to see if anybody is taking any notice/actually reading the Newsletter, Graeme (GB) gets me nearly every time, thanks mate.

Helen's 'Christmas Quiz Questions' were great fun again and didn't some of them have us stumped, but we had a good laugh. I think it was a tie between Debbie and Pam this year. The 'Quiz' is on the back page so try your luck before reading the answers. No cheating.

Some special thanks:

Helen, for all your efforts during the year maintaining the attendance records, the point scores and all the other little things you do to keep our Group running.

To everybody for the morning tea refreshments and kitchen prep and tidy up.
Loved all the cakes etc

To Mrs Claus - Coral, you make our Christmas get together so special, your generosity throughout the year is absolutely amazing, thank you to Gary also. Kayelene, without your meeting notes each month I'd be lost, a huge thanks once again.

Last but not least CONGRATULATIONS to Shane for his Popular Vote wins - results next page.

Great work by all again in 2025 with your Popular Vote entries, the point scores were very close, maybe it will be your turn this year, 2026.

Open Popular Vote Champion - 2025

1st Shane Fitzgerald

Tillandsia Champion - 2025

1st Shane Fitzgerald

Monthly Genus Champion - 2025

1st Shane Fitzgerald

Judges Choice Champion - 2025

1st Shane Fitzgerald

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.

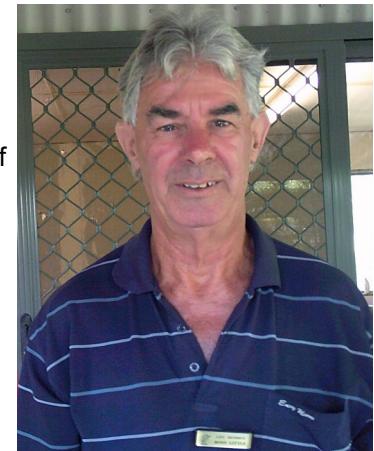


Congratulations Shane on a point score clean sweep of all categories for 2025.



Unfortunately our photographer missed a couple of member's photos, so I've recycled last year's.

Haven't changed much anyway, the parrot is still visiting.





Keryn
received her
Life Member Badge
after 10yrs of regular attendance.
Congratulations Keryn



Debbie
always smiling



Always nice to see Shirley
at our meetings.



Coral always looking after Gary



Kayelene who has been doing a
wonderful job of taking down the
minutes of our meetings.



Alcantarea geniculata (Wawra) J. R. Grant, 1995.

Originally as *Vriesea geniculata*, it was first collected by Heinrich Wawra and Franz Maly probably in 1860, in the Serra de Petropolis, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil "in praecipiis saxosis nudis superpendentibus", no known type specimen exists. The species was therefore typified based on the original description, dated 1862 and on a colored plate that was published in 1866.



Alcantarea geniculata is easily recognized by the following characteristics:

Branches of the inflorescence with sterile bracts on the basal peduncle.
Rhachis clearly geniculate (bent abruptly, joined) even at the beginning of anthesis.
Floral bracts distinctly carinate, especially those at the base, not completely enfolding the calyx.
Golden yellow petals.

Natural populations of this species are found mainly on granite cliffs in the Serra dos Orgaos National Park, from 700 to 1,700 metres altitude, especially in Petropolis, Teresópolis and Mage municipalities.



It also ranges to the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, where it is found on rocky slopes at higher elevations, such as the Pico da Tijuca in the heart of Rio de Janeiro.

Every year around Christmas this beauty, *Alcantarea geniculata* brings joyful colour to the garden and when it rains it lights up like a sparkling Christmas tree.

These two together are 1700 mm across and 1600 mm tall each. There is five of them making a statement at the entrance to the home this year.

Alcantarea glaziouana (Lemaire) Leme, 1997.

Charles Antoine Lemaire described *Vriesea glaziouana* in June 1867 based on a specimen from the rocky cliffs near Rio de Janeiro sent to him by Auguste Glaziou who was a French botanist and landscape architect.

This is another easily recognisable *Alcantarea* with its grey green leaves with white cretaceous (chalky) cross bands. Reddish peduncle bracts and strongly fragrant flowers of whitish green sepals and white petals.



Some *Alcantarea glaziouana* growing along the driveway stand out looking like they have a light blanket of snow covering them.

This cluster featured here is 1500 mm wide by 1550 mm tall including the flower spike. The single plant in the background is in shade hence it has grown larger to 1700 mm wide by 2000 mm tall overall.

From Vriesea to Alcantarea

Jason R. Grant re-established the genus *Alcantarea* in 1995, previously it was a subgenus in *Vriesea*. Some characters that were used by Grant to resurrect *Alcantarea* to the generic status are the linear-long (ca. 10 – 15 times longer than wide), ephemeral, distinctly flaccidescents, and spiralescent petals, and seeds with both basal and apical comas. In Grant's 1995 circumscription, *Alcantarea* has a narrower geographical range, being restricted to the North eastern (Bahia) and South eastern (Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro) states of Brazil. The genus was rediscovered in the state of São Paulo (Versieux and Wanderley, 2007).

Tillandsia riohondoensis

Tillandsia riohondoensis was described by Renate Ehlers as a new species and published in *Die Bromelie* in 2015.

The type specimen was found in Guatemala by Uwe Feldhoff in the Department of Zacapa, in the valley Rio Hondo growing saxicolously on cliffs at 200 - 500 metres altitude near the waterfall in 1989.

It is similar to *Tillandsia capitata* but differs by forming long stems and its offsets not only form at the base of the plant but also along the stem.

The multi-headed clump featured here is potted in a very free draining mix with slow release fertilizer added, it is also foliar fertilized regularly and is grown in full, all day sun year round.



Morobe Mess

by Derek Butcher - 2009.

At the very end of April I was at PineGrove Nursery discussing problems with Ross Little. We must have got on well because I spent two whole days there and didn't get kicked out. Anyway, we found this label called *Nidularium 'Souvenir de Casimir Madame Morobe'* which I thought very strange indeed and needed investigating from my files at home in the den. It opened a can of worms and I asked Ross if he would look at the famous Buchanan Ledger, sometimes referred to as BBK. Under BBK #2017 he found (Dutrie) *Neolarium 'Souvenir de Casimir Morobe'* 8/85 from Sax (Qld member from way back) *Nid. rutilans* x *Neo. caroliniae 'Marechalii'*.

Now this name links up with the registered name when you realise that x*Neolarium* are now called x*Niduregelia*. You can blame this name change on me because the BSI had blithely accepted x*Neolarium* for years purely because they did not like a chap called Alex Hawkes who was publishing his own papers. Regrettably rules are rules and x*Niduregelia* predicated x*Neolarium*!



xNeolarium 'Souvenir de Casimir Madame Morobe' photo by D Butcher

Alas, someone had added 'Madame' to the label. Because this is not the first time I have come across misnamings in these Morobe hybrids I felt I should write something on what we know or don't know. The article would be too complicated for the American Journal so I am planning it for <http://fcbs.org> under Uncle Derek Says so we can link to the various photographs held on file.

I also feel that keen Queenslanders will be interested in this problem and details should be in their Journal with a few photos to show the dilemma we are in.

The following is what is intended for Uncle Derek Says!

Ever since the BSI offered seed in the 1970s as *Nidularium 'Madame Robert Morobe'* I have wondered who is growing the correct plant of any of the Morobes. Such was their belief in their own esteem all the hybrids were named after themselves. It is a pity this has not continued because the nursery is not defunct and the remaining family will not answer my emails. Perhaps they could not understand my schoolboy French! So we are on our own as to trying to check on identity. First we must refer to the Bromeliad Cultivar Register 1998 where Don Beadle did a great job extracting data from all sources. I say 'extracting' because Don did say that getting information was like extracting teeth.

This information follows:

Nidularium 'Casimir Morobe' by Morobe <1964 cv. of unknown parentage - Padilla said, "A large plant - vigorous grower - generous with offsets - wide green leaves faintly dotted with darker spots make a handsome background for the rich rose rosette". Cole said, "Pale green rosette with darker green splotching - erect inflorescence in rosulate deep rose red".

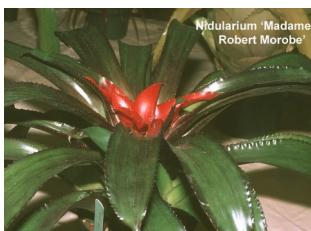
JBS 14:14; 27:134; 30:275, Plt Shop Cat 1976, TF 1981, Kent Cat 1972.

Nidularium 'Madame Robert Morobe' by Morobe, R. 1940 cv. of *Nid. innocentii* x *fulgens* - (See 'Digeneum', 'Francois Spae' & 'Chantrieri') - Dutrie said, "...frankly superior to 'Chantrieri'..numerous leaves, strong but without stiffness, well displayed ...a beautiful bright brown color above - lustrous dark brown below..at bloom time, the center becomes scarlet over a diameter of 25 cm. Notable in every respect". Jungle Gardens said, "A vigorous plant with the underside of the green leaves a beautiful purplish maroon - In flower the central rosette is a long lasting bright cerise".

Registration Documents 1966, JBS 4:51,55; 14:14; 38:21, Zimmerpflanzen: Br.279, JG1973. Butcher's note – Although Registration documents are said to have been lodged in 1966 none of the description comes from Morobe.

Nidularium 'Sir Charles Morobe' <1978 cv. of unknown parentage

BSI-ICBH-1979, FL1978 "Butcher's note – does not appear to be in circulation".



Photos from the Butcher Files



Nidularium 'Chantrieri' plant in WA, AU, 2004, photo by G Lawn



Nidularium 'Francois Spae' from Grande Mag. 1978

Nidularium 'Souvenir Robert Morobe' <1979 cv. of unknown parentage
BSI-ICBH-1979 "Butcher's note – does not appear to be in circulation"

x*Niduregelia 'Souvenir De Casimir Morobe'* by Morobe, M. <1945 cv. of *Nidularium rutilans* X *Neoregelia 'Marechalii'* - Large wide leafed rosette of bright green faintly mottled with inner rosette of brilliant shiny red. Dutrie said, "The appearance of this plant is that of *Nidularium rutilans* with the inflorescence well above the center. The bracteate leaves become colored with a beautiful cerise shade and are long lasting" - Bromeliad Treasury 1983 said, "The 18" open rosette is composed of 2" x 16" leaves that turn a light lavender on the upper surfaces and a deep lavender on the lower if grown in 70% shade".

BSI-ICBH-1979, Broms Padilla 126, JBS 33:73; 38:21, NJB 1976, Kent Cat1972, FL1978.

We have a photo of *Nidularium 'Casimir Morobe'* from Florida which seems to agree with Padilla's description.

We have a photo of *Nidularium 'Madame Robert Morobe'* from Florida that also seems to agree with Dutrie's description if you smile regarding the use of the colour brown and the fact that the centre flowering is 25cm in diameter. Also have a look at 'Karamea Morobe' where there seems to be tenuous links with 'Madame Robert Morobe'.

We now move to the puzzle of the parents of 'Madame Robert Morobe' which link us to 'Digeneum', 'Francois Spae' & 'Chantrieri'. 'Digeneum' came into being in 1893 but nobody seems to be growing a plant under this name. 'Francois Spae' came into being in 1930 and photographs of this plant around the world seem consistent. 'Chantrieri' originated in 1895 and we have a painting of this plant on record, but has it survived two world wars? 'Madame Robert Morobe' originated in 1940 and it was not until after the War, in 1946, when Dutrie wrote about it. He said that this hybrid was more robust than 'Chantrieri' and I would suggest that it is most likely that the more vigorous form would have survived especially if the plant was then known by parentage! Thus, to my mind 'Chantrieri' and 'Madame Robert Morobe' are interchangeable names!

And now for the crunch where there are lots of questions to be asked. All x*Niduregelia* hybrids registered so far have shown that the *Neoregelia* parent has greatly reduced the size of the primary bracts but please check our photos. The photograph from Singapore has links to 'Shelddance' and thus California. This shows clear traits of *Nidularium rutilans* but is it a watered down bigeneric having been grown from seed from the true x*Niduregelia* 'Souvenir De Casimir Morobe'? The photo also from California shows a plant without strong links to *Nidularium rutilans* but looks typical *Nidularium*. In fact it looks awfully like what is currently being grown as 'Chantrieri' and 'Madame Robert Morobe'.

Could Morobe have back crossed *Nidularium rutilans* x *Neoregelia 'Marechalii'* with *Nidularium rutilans* so the hybrid shows more *Nidularium* traits? Dutrie's description hints to this. We know that *Neoregelia 'Medusa'* as sold by Deroose has *Aechmea* in its make-up and should be a x*Neomea*, but such are the hazards of a Registrar accepting names without quoted parentage.

Because of so many doubts, we must leave this **name** as a x*Niduregelia* 'Souvenir De Casimir Morobe' but are the **plants** more likely to be *Nidularium* 'Chantrieri' or 'Madame Robert Morobe'? I leave that for you to look at and decide. However, there are still problems when writing labels. Please note the names as registered and please don't add other combinations or delete words like 'Souvenir'. Things are bad enough as they are!

Cork - Where it Comes From:

From Bark to Tillandsia Mount

Cork is the bark taken from the *Quercus suber* tree which is grown from an acorn in the forests of southern Portugal, Spain and other countries from around the Mediterranean. Being the only tree in the world that allows its bark to be cut off whilst not doing the tree any harm. This process can be repeated every nine years which makes this a very special and valuable tree.

These trees can live for 200 years or more, however the first cut known as 'virgin cork' can only be taken after the tree is 25 years old. This is the cork slabs that we get and use for mounting our Tillandsias and other small bromeliads on. The next cut is often referred to as the 'second cut' or 'best cut'.

Cork trees absorb three or even five times more carbon dioxide than other trees. In Portugal alone which provides about 55% of the worlds cork production the cork tree offsets almost five million tons of carbon every year. Spain provides about 30% whilst other countries including Algeria, France, Italy, Morocco and Tunisia provide the remaining 15%.

Cork trees grow in other parts of the world but commercial production comes mainly from the Mediterranean region, where the cork tree grows naturally.

Burley Griffin's Cork Oaks

reprinted from: The Lanes, Canberra.

Centred in Canberra at the base of Black Mountain next to the busy Glenlock Interchange, is a cork oak plantation *Quercus suber*.

The plantation was initially established with acorns that Walter Burley Griffin, landscape architect and designer of Canberra, had imported from Spain in 1917. Walter Burley Griffin (1876 - 1937) had a vision for the new city of Canberra to be self sustainable and a cork plantation was included in his original plan for Canberra. The plantation was established by Thomas Weston (1866 - 1935).

The plantation is comprised of nearly 4500 ninety-year old trees established on 8 hectares (20 acres). It is the largest mature commercial plantation of cork oak in the Southern Hemisphere.



Cork oak is a species native to southern Europe and has been harvested for centuries. The harvest, which involves the delicate stripping of cork tree's out of bark, can initially be carried out when the tree is about 25 years old and requires 3 'cycles' of harvesting (1 cycle every 10 years) before it produces cork of a high quality.

The plantation was left untouched until 1948 when harvesting or 'stripping' was commenced and the cork was found to be of both high quality and commercially valuable. In 1981 the plantation was harvested by Australia Capital Territory (ACT) Forests by professional cork strippers from Portugal and again in 2001 when two Portuguese 'cork strippers' - Manuel Silva and Manuel Graça, helped harvest the plantation.

Alternative Mounting Substrates - by members past and present

Cork has been the go to material for mounting many of our epiphytic Bromeliads such as some of the smaller Aechmeas, Catopsis, 'mini' Neoregelias, Vrieseas and of course Tillandsias.

Over the years our members have shown off and often explained why they prefer certain mounting materials e.g: cork - cork slab and wine corks, old fence palings (untreated), drift wood (washed), pine cones, casuarina tree branches can be long lasting and many other materials have shown to be popular.

Laurie showed a number of his Tillandsias and the variety of mounting bases he used which was usually cork or natural wood. He explained after cutting back on the roots, which doesn't seem to set the plant back any, he often used gel grip and held the plant in place with wire. A lot of other glues are suitable including "Liquid Nails" (not silicon or water based glues). He disguised the glue with a sprinkling of fine potting mix or soil. Depending on the plant size he used pins or wooden skewers instead of the wire. He explained the mounting should be accomplished so that the plant can drain freely and look natural on its mount.

Gary has been experimenting with various materials for mounting his Tillandsias on. Firstly he explained the issues he had using cork which is a good natural material which the plants readily attach to, except it attracts a wood grub which was eating everything. He tried using banksia cones and pieces of melaleuca branches with good success until the dreaded wood grub arrived again. Various treatments he tried were unsuccessful so Gary turned to composites, sawdust mixed with recycled plastics forming 'timber' decking boards e.g: Ekodeck and Ekologix. These materials are easy to cut and drill for mounting Tillandsias on. Results so far have been good, no grubs, no deterioration of the material and best of all the plants are happily attaching themselves to these materials with healthy root growth.

Christmas 2025 Quiz Questions

General Christmas Trivia:

1. What popular Christmas song was actually written for Thanksgiving ?
2. Which country is credited with starting the tradition of decorating Christmas trees ?
3. What is the best-selling Christmas song of all time ?
4. What colour were Santa's clothes before Coca-Cola popularized red ?
5. What holiday movie features a boy accidentally left home while his family travels to Paris ?
6. In the Polar Express, what word is punched into the conductor's ticket ?
7. What plant is traditionally kissed under at Christmas time ?
8. Which Christmas beverage is also known as "milk punch" ?
9. What animated character learns the meaning of Christmas after being visited by three spirits?
10. Which US state was the first to declare Christmas a holiday ?

Christmas Around the World:

1. In what country do people traditionally eat KFC for Christmas dinner ?
2. What European country is credited with creating the first gingerbread houses ?
3. What is the name of the Italian Christmas witch who delivers gifts ?
4. In which country is Christmas celebrated during summer ?

Fun and Lighthearted:

1. What Christmas decoration was originally made from strands of silver ?
2. Which reindeer shares a name with a famous Christmas movie about a dentist elf ?
3. What snack is traditionally left out for Santa ?
4. What was the #1 most-searched Christmas song in AL in 2024 ?

1. Tinsel, 2. Hermey (from Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer), 3. Cookies and Milk, 4. "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree".

Fun and Lighthearted - Answers:

1. Japan, 2. Germany, 3. La Befana, 4. Australia

Christmas Around the World - Answers:

1. "Jingle Bells", 2. Germany, 3. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby, 4. Green (and sometimes blue or brown), 5. Home Alone, 6. "Believe", 7. Mistletoe, 8. Eggnog, 9. Ebenezer Scrooge, 10. Alabama.

General Christmas Trivia - Answers:

Christmas 2025 Quiz Answers