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

Edition: February 2026

Agenda: General Discussion

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

Study Group meets 2nd Saturday of each month

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

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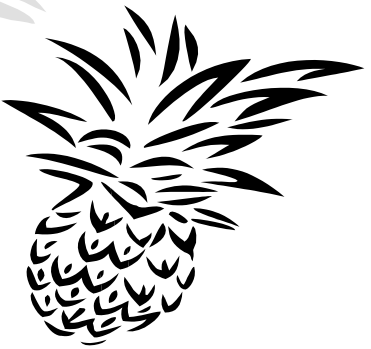
Life Members: Gary McAteer, Coral McAteer
Debbie Smith, Shirley Smith
Ross Little, Helen Clewett,
Keryn Simpson



Meeting January 10th 2026

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
The 11 members were welcomed.
One apology was received.

General Business

Helen has decided it is time for her to retire completely from our Group as she can no longer fulfil her duties to the fullest as she'd like to be able to. She feels the time has come to pass those duties on to the next generation of Bromeliad devotees. Helen, being one of the founding members has held leading roles in our Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group NSW (FNCBSG NSW) since its inauguration in 2008. We thank Helen very much for all the hard work she has done for the Group over the years and wish her all the best in her retirement.

Debbie, Kayelene and Shane have put their hands up to help take over many of Helen's roles in the future. We all need to do a bit to keep our Group functioning and running smoothly, many hands make light work.

Gary and Coral are not 100% sure if they will be able to continue coming to meetings due to other commitments on Saturdays. Gary's position as Popular Vote coordinator and point scorer may need to be filled when necessary.

Thank you Shane for presenting Coral with a bunch of flowers as thanks for all her efforts over the past year, they surely don't go unnoticed. ♥ ♥ ♥

Helen often scoured older Journals, Newsletters, magazines and the like searching for articles she felt might be of interest to others. Therefore if you come across an article you feel may be of interest to others please pass it on to our team for publication. This is your Newsletter and it needs your articles, this is a plea to help the editors keep as much original content, yours, in your Newsletter, so write us a short article if you can.

Discussion was had about our meeting day change. Some notices/adverts were posted on various community facebook sites to promote our Group and the change of meeting day with hope of attracting new members. One member who got caught up with changes to her weekday work commitments last year has rejoined our Group, welcome back Michelle. Where are all the others that have asked over the years for a weekend meeting because they work weekdays ??

We'll just keep promoting our Group on the local community sites and hope others Bromoholics will see it and decide to join us soon. This is only a trial and will be voted on in a few months if it's not terribly successful.

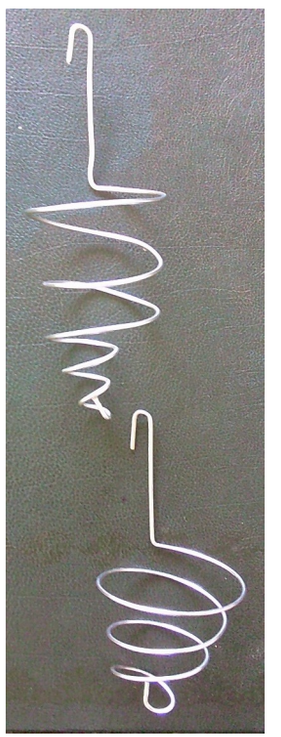
It has been Alcantarea flowering time as we noted in our FNCBSG Newsletter for January 2026. As many of our members have Alcantreas in their collections the question was raised "are they good for cut flower floral arrangements"? Yes they are, they will last for quite a long period of time once cut and stood in water.

However if you wish to try your hand at growing Alcantarea from seed it's best not to cut them unless you have plenty to spare as they do make a magnificent statement in the garden. Once the flowering has finished you may notice the green ovary start to swell and harden, this is a good indication that pollination has occurred. In around 12 months time that green ovary/seed pod will have turned brown, this is a sign that the seed within is ready to burst into life. As the pods split open one can collect the seed, spread it onto your seed raising mix, mist spray it with water and keep it moist to germinate the seed and begin the long process of nurturing your seedlings.

For safety sake use a stocking or mesh bag to cover the seed pods to prevent animals eating them and for just in case the pods burst open and you are not available at the time to collect the seed before it disperses.

Coily Things for Hanging Your Tillandsia In

These plastic jigs, the larger one is 90 x 50 mm, the smaller one is 60 x 35 mm were purchased on line and make it easy to make an aluminium wire coil cone to support a small Tillandsia in. Allow about 100 mm extra at the open/widest end to create the hanger and a bit extra at the bottom to turn upwards to chain hang them.



Kayelene brought along a large piece of cork and a Tillandsia asking how best to mount it on the cork.

Fortunately we had all the necessary hardware at hand to perform the task.
A pair of pliers.

Wire to create the hanger.

Plastic coated wire to secure the plant to the cork mount.

A drill and drill bits to drill the holes through the cork for the wire hanger and holes for the plastic coated wire.

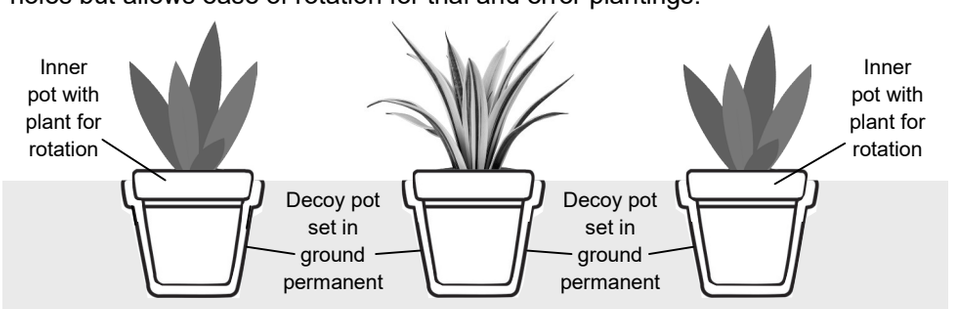
Firstly a little bit of gouging out the cork was done to create a nice niche for the Tillandsia to nestle into. Holes were drilled through the cork in appropriate positions for securing the plant. The plastic coated wire was tucked within the leaves of the Tillandsia to hide it a little, then poked through the cork and twisted firmly at the back. Job done.

Michelle has collected some driftwood, this needs to have all the salts leached out of it, soak well in fresh water and rinse several times before use.

Top left: cork bark, top right: piece of drift wood, below is a piece of Namibian mopane wood.

Plant Directly Into The Garden Bed or Into Decoy Pots

For ease of rotating your Bromeliads in the garden especially if acclimatizing them and unsure if a particular position will suit regards being too shady or too much sun, try setting a same size or one size up ‘decoy’ pot into the ground to set your preferred pot in. This not only saves continually digging new planting holes but allows ease of rotation for trial and error plantings.



Ian brought along a few plants for discussion to our January meeting, one being:

Canistrum seidelianum

This Canistrum was described by William Weber in 1986 and named in honour of Alvim Seidel from Corupi, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

Seidel, an orchid and Bromeliad hobbyist has made numerous botanical discoveries, many of which have been named after him in recognition of his important contribution to botanical research. Other Bromeliad species named after him can also be found in Aechmea, Billbergia, Canistropsis, Cryptanthus, Neoregelia, Quesnalia, Tillandsia and Vriesea. The Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (BCR) has 89 cultivars attributed to his name in one way or another.

Canistrum seidelianum can be found in the Itambe region in Bahia, where it grows as an epiphyte in the Atlantic forest at 400 to 700 metres altitude.

The region where it was found is slightly farther inland than where *Canistrum fosterianum* can be found which it is often confused with. The dense, dark-purple-ferruginous cross bands on the leaves helped perpetuate the error because *Canistrum fosterianum* also exhibits this leaf pattern, but it is much more intense and less irregular in *Canistrum seidelianum.*

Canistrum seidelianum
grown and photographed by Ian Pursey

Also *Canistrum fosterianum* (left) has white petals whereas *Canistrum seidelianum* (right) has yellow petals.

White and yellow flower photos from the Butcher Files.

Another of Ian's queries for confirmation was identified as:

Nidularium procerum

Heinrich Friedrich Conrad Sander introduced an ornamental plant into cultivation that flowered in Edourd Morren's greenhouse in 1882. This plant was described by Morren as *Canistrum purpureum*, Karl Axel Magnus Lindman described and proposed the new name *Nidularium procerum* in 1891 and placed Morren's plant into synonymy. Keeping up with name changes isn't always easy.

The name of this species comes from the Latin *procerus* meaning "tall" or "elegant" and referring to the inflorescence that is usually raised well above the leaf rosette.

Nidularium procerum has the widest geographic distribution of the genus. It ranges from Bahia, where it is found even at the western limit of the Atlantic forest to southern Brazil, passing the "Torres gateway" in Santa Catarina and penetrating into the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where it is much rarer.

It grows from sea level to nearly 1,000 metres altitude, sometimes forming large terrestrial populations or growing in patches on rocks or as an epiphyte in the lower layer of the forest.

Ian's next challenge for the day was for a clump of Dyckia of his to be divided.

Dyckia can be propagate easily by seed or vegetatively by means of short shoots or long underground rhizomes or self division.

Short shoots/offsets grow around the base of the plant and are generally easily accessible. If potted it is often best to remove the plant from the pot to enable one to work more easily around the base of the plant and under the spiney leaves. With a good stout blade gently pry the offset away from the parent plant and cut downward retaining as much roots as possible.

Some tools used in the division process that were found to be very helpful.

Secateurs

Small saw, gyprock/wallboard hole saw.

Solid/sturdy knife.

Wooden mallet.

After removing offsets from the base of the plant, one has clearer visibility to the central basal stump of the parent plant.

Using a sharp knife, tap firmly with mallet if necessary, make a cut just below each basal stump, cutting down toward the root base. Make cuts on each side of the plant base, these should be approximately half way in toward the centre of the basal stump until the division sections can be gently pried apart (← →).

Allow the offsets and cut sections to heal before potting in a good, free draining potting mix and add some fertilizer.

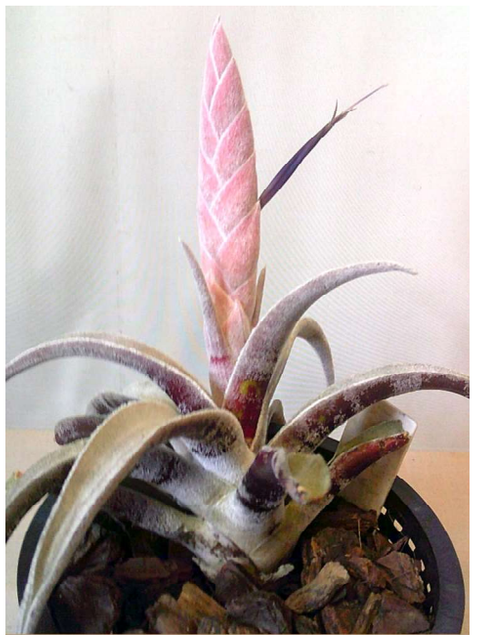
Large overgrown established clumps growing in the ground are often best dug out and attacked with a spade, gently of course. Use the spade to cut in and downward same as when using the knife and mallet.

Replant the divided sections into preferred locations or share some with a friend.

Sturdy leather gloves and armoured protection are optional !

Vriesea 'Ellen Cathleen Gardner' **
1st Open Michelle Hartwell

Neoregelia 'Tantilizer'
1st Open Michelle Hartwell



Tillandsia chicoasena
1st Open Shane Fitzgerald

Vriesea 'Philatoo'
grown by Ross Little

Tillandsaia 'Goomong'
1st Tillandsia
and
Judges Choice
Shane Fitzgerald

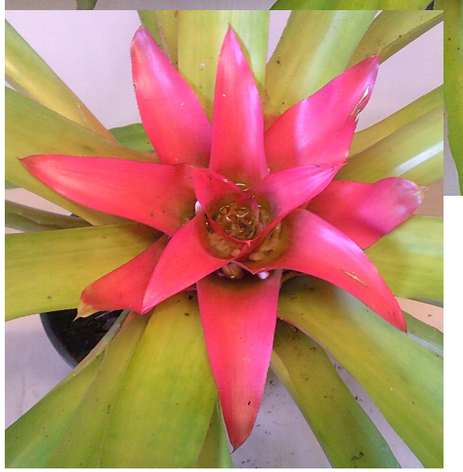
Tillandsia neglecta
grown by Michelle Hartwell

Tillandsia capitata (rubra)
grown by Gary McAteer

Alcantarea ‘Helenice’
grown by
Shane Fitzgerald

Neoregelia ’Julia’
grown by
Kayelene Guthrie

Neoregelia hybrid ??
grown by
Keryn Simpson



Keryn brought along this lovely Nidularium this month, unfortunately we just can’t quite put a name to it. Maybe somebody else can ?

Tillandsia leiboldiana
grown by
Keryn Simpson

Neoregelia pauciflora

The type specimen of *Neoregelia pauciflora* was found by Mulford Foster at 765 metres altitude in Espirito Santo State, Brazil, on 26 July 1939 and formerly described by L. B. Smith in 1955.

Mulford Foster was one of the co-founders of The Bromeliad Society Inc. and editor of its Journal from 1950 - 1959. He and his wife Racine found and discovered approximately 200 new species, besides making a number of hybrids and having the genus Racinaea and *Aechmea racinae* named after her.

Lyman B. Smith, the world's foremost authority on *Bromeliaceae* was a botanist, taxonomist, writer and traveller and wrote about the Bromeliads of those countries he visited. His monograph on the *Bromeliaceae*, in three volumes, is the definitive work on the family and the greatest study ever made of these plants.

Neoregelia pauciflora is a smallish plant growing to around 150 mm tall on elongated stolons. These long stolons are what give it the feature of a candelabra when allowed to grow en masse in trees, also lending itself to hanging basket culture. There are slight variations in size and colour to look out for, especially this darker more purplish coloured foliage form.

Photos from the Butcher Files, two taken by Derek at PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery in 2009.

Fertilizer

What slow release fertilizer is best for our plants was asked recently?

A preferred slow release fertilizer for many of our Bromeliads is one with high 'K' and lower 'N' e.g: Osmocote Exact High 'K' 8 - 9 month, NPK: 12 - 3.5 - 15.7 plus trace elements is one that was suggested.

A fertilizer high in nitrogen (N) will tend to cause Billbergias and Neoregelias to lose colour vibrancy until the fertilizer is completely used up by the plant. Another side effect of high nitrogen is foliage growth, long strappy leaves in plants that one would prefer to be stout.

A fertilizer high in nitrogen is good for your green leaf plants such as Vrieseas, Guzmanias, Alcantareas etc.

A fertilizer should contain the three primary nutrients essential for plant growth: **Nitrogen (N)**, **Phosphorus (P)** and **Potassium (K)**. The term "NPK" refers to the chemical symbols of these nutrients, which are critical for plant development.

Nitrogen (N) promotes healthy leaf and stem growth by stimulating chlorophyll production, which is essential for photosynthesis.

Phosphorus (P) supports strong root development, flowering, and fruiting, playing a key role in energy transfer within plants.

Potassium (K) enhances overall plant health, improving disease resistance, water regulation, and nutrient transport.

When slow release fertilizer is applied to soil, moisture in the soil/potting mix penetrates the resin coating of the prill. This water dissolves the nutrients inside the prill, creating a nutrient solution. Therefore best results are achieved if you mix the fertilizer prill into your potting mix rather than just sprinkling it on top.

A well fed and cared for plant will not only reward one with a larger, more well structured plant and it will often have a larger inflorescence. The later can be especially noticed in a plant that has a multibranched inflorescence by producing a larger inflorescence with a greater number of branches as opposed to a plant not fertilized with few branches.

A well fed plant will often produce a greater number of offsets.

When a plant has finished flowering and seed is not required, remove the spent inflorescence and add one or two fertilizer prill into each leaf axil for more direct, quicker fertilizer take up by the plant. This action will assist in producing more offsets to a well fed plant.

Prill = each small ball of fertilizer is a prill.

How to Make Your Bromeliad Bloom

Why force a Bromeliad to Bloom ?

Bromeliads are forced to bloom for various reasons. Growers force blooms so that the plants will be colourful for sale during certain seasons. Pineapples are forced by growers to bloom so that they produce fruit at the same time making harvesting easy. Horticulturists force blooms so that they can create crosses between varieties that would normally bloom at different times. Many hybrids would be impossible without forced blooming. Hobbyists force blooms to keep their Bromeliads colourful and beautiful as often as possible. Whatever your reason forcing Bromeliads to bloom is a simple and easy process, it only requires an apple and a little patience. With a few short steps you can have your Bromeliad blooming in 3 months instead of 3 years.

An Apple in a Bag

An easy way to try to force your Bromeliad to bloom is the 'apple in a bag' approach. First you need to find a clear plastic bag with no holes in it. It should be large enough to fit the entire plant container and Bromeliad inside. Remove any water that may be sitting on the plant. The central tank and leaf axils must be empty. Then place the whole plant in the bag with a ripe apple. Tie the bag shut at the top and make sure there are no openings. Let the plant sit in the bag with the apple for 7-10 days. Make sure the plant is kept in a shaded area as too much direct sunlight could damage it. Finally remove the plant from the bag. Six to fourteen weeks from when you remove it, the bromeliad should begin to show signs of blooming e.g. colourful bracts or inflorescence.

Ethylene

Ethylene gas is produced when the apple ripens that stimulates the Bromeliads to bloom. There are chemical versions of ethylene available, be sure to follow the manufacturers instructions and only mix what you will need. Spray the top surface of the plant's leaves with the mixture so they are just covered, but not dripping. Alternatively, you can add about 30ml of the mixture to the central tank.

Fertiliser

If you have been patiently waiting for your Bromeliads to bloom, there maybe a reason why they have not produced an inflorescence. Too much or too little sunlight may prohibit a Bromeliad to bloom. Bromeliads are often reluctant to bloom when fertilized with too much nitrogen. The excess nitrogen will keep the Bromeliad growing and producing pups, but it will delay flowering. It has been recommend to use a fertilizer with Nitrogen 3.0, Phosphorus 8.0, and Potassium 25.0 plus trace elements. This combination will put enough stress on the plant to produce colour and a bloom quickly.

The pH of Your Potting Mix Can Affect Plant Nutrient Uptake.

A variety of substances have been tested to ascertain their pH giving some varied results e.g:
PineGrove potting mix was found to have a pH of 6.0 which is ideal for the take up of plant nutrients.

A premium potting mix had a pH of 5.5.

How is your potting mix ?

Neoregelias - No Fertilizer by John Catlan

I carried out experiments on neoregelias by growing them in a mix that did not break down and supply fertilizer by decomposition and I added no fertilizer. The potting mix was lacking in nutrient to the best of my ability.

The plants lacked colour and leaves and grew very slowly. By feeling the texture of the leaf you got the impression that they were very thin. The big problem I found with a plant in this state of growth was that any adverse conditions resulted in damage to the leaves.

Ed: All plants need fertilizer but not all need lots to maintain colour and form.

Premature Pup Flowering by John Catlan

Shock can bring a bromeliad into flower. If the flower is initiated on the nominated date, the 1st August, the pup has six months to ready a mature take off size. If the first pups are removed on the 1st February, that has given mother the last three months to devote her full energy to the first pups.

If the second generation of pups come off after 1st June it is best if the pups do not flower, but the shock of removal may cause premature flowering. In this case, leave the pup on the premature flowered mother and repot so the new pup is centred in the middle of the pot and to the new pup's advantage. Mother will gradually disappear and the pup will usually not flower the next year and by skipping the first year's flowering, it will form a good plant before flowering the following year. My opinion is, the pups that miss the first year's flowering, form the best plants.

Good Advice from Genny

If you want to grow plants well, you should learn about your plants, both from where they originated and how they grow.

There are better ways than e-bay to acquire plants - talk to the growers, visit their gardens and talk to society members. Spend time in finding the plants in your collection and enjoy the journey of getting them into your garden.

Taken from: Bromeliads under the Mango Tree by John Catlan (and Genny).

Open Popular Vote

1st	Michelle Hartwell	*Vriesea* 'Ellen Cathleen Gardner' unreg.**
1st	Shane Fitzgerald	*Tillandsia chicoasena*
1st	Michelle Hartwell	*Neoregelia* 'Tantilizer'
2nd	Shane Fitzgerald	*Alcantarea* 'Helenice'
2nd	Kayelene Guthrie	*Neoregelia* 'Julia'
2nd	Ross Little	*Vriesea* 'Philatoo'

Tillandsia

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	*Tillandsia* 'Goomong'
2nd	Gary McAteer	*Tillandsia capitata* 'rubra'
3rd	Keryn Simpson	*Tillandsia leiboldiana*

Judges Choice

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	*Tillandsia* 'Goomong'

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.