

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

Edition: May 2026

Agenda: General Discussion

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

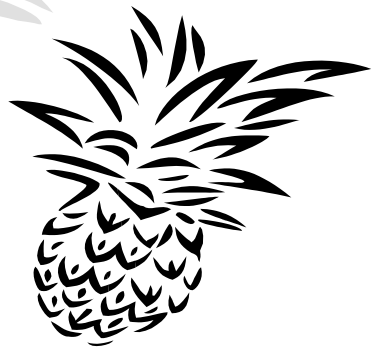
Study Group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month
Next meeting June 18th 2026 at 11 a.m.

Editorial Team:

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



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Meeting April 16th 2026

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

General Business

Ross discussed the Tillandsia Day to be held by The Bromeliad Society of Queensland and promoted everything the day has to offer for the avid Tillandsia collector. He explained how easy it was to register through the Trybooking link and he has booked four of our members to attend again this year. So if you wish to learn more about Tillandsias and mingle with other like minded enthusiasts don't leave it too late to book your seat. Date: Saturday 20th June 2026. Oh did I forget to mention sales, yes there are always lots and lots of plants for sale. Hopefully we will see you there.

We briefly discussed the *Tillandsia mooreana* complex. If members wish to know more about the changes which are occurring then Pamela Koide Hyatt's presentation on this complex at the Tillandsia Day should not be missed.

Talking about Tillandsia Day reminded Gary about those 'coily' things we had been discussing recently. We know he is always on the lookout for Tillandsia mounting materials be it cork, old fence palings or Ecodecking boards and now objects to make those 'coily' things around. This month he found some old lamps/lampshades that are a better size for some larger sized Tillandsias than the previous 'coily' things we acquired which were more suitable for ionantha, fuchsia etc. This new size will better suit some of those medium sized Tillandsia that we grow.



Kayelene asked about fertilizing large Alcantarea growing in pots in shady areas that are not looking as bright as they used to. It was suggested to plant directly into the ground and yes of course feed them. A slow release fertilizer will help for long term feeding, however a regular foliar feed is very beneficial, regular being weakly weekly. Alcantareas can hold quite large amounts of water in their leaf axils, if foliar feeding take that into account when mixing your fertilizer solution. Perhaps make it stronger than recommended as it will be diluted even more when added to the water within those leaf axils. Dynamic Lifter pellets around the base of the plant and watered in will give a quick lift, short term only.

Worm castings are a good safe alternative and will help improve your soil, as with using Dynamic Lifter pellets be careful not to get any in the central cup. Worm pee, wee, whatever one wishes to call it was said to be beneficial as a foliar fertilizer. Use it with care was suggested as it can be quite strong, around 1 worm pee to 10 water ratio and as with all fertilizing adjust accordingly if you feel your plant can handle more. Worm pee can provide essential nutrients and microorganisms that improve plant health. No harm in trying it, err on the lighter side if in doubt. Most Alcantarea grow in full all day sun and will benefit from regular fertilizing, however soft leaves burn more easily than those of a hard grown plant so don't over fertilize.

All Bromeliads growing in the garden under trees benefit from leaf litter lodging in their leaf axils, as it breaks down it feeds the plant as do dying insects and bird droppings. Soft leaves of most rainforest trees break down within two to three months, while harder eucalyptus/gum tree leaves can take 18 months to two years to break down. It is only the harder leaf stem/petiole that may irritate over time and cause damage to the plant within the leaf axil. Thought - do the fallen leaves aid in preventing mosquitoes from getting to the water to breed, excess leaf build up also helps save water evaporation.

Moral here is don't rush around cleaning fallen leaves from the central cups of your Bromeliads as they benefit your plants in many ways especially with the nutrients gained during decomposition.

Ross was asked about an inflorescence he had sitting in a vase of water on his work bench. It was there for discussion about its identity hoping someone might be able to shed some light on its provenance, is it *Aechmea distichantha* or *Aechmea phanerophlebia* or a hybrid of the two. In trying to sort it out he had cut parts of the inflorescence up to create a herbarium to help compare it to the written descriptions. If hybrid and you know who created it, please let us know.

What is a herbarium?:

A herbarium is a permanent archive of dried plant specimens used for scientific research, identification and education, acting as a library of plant life. It is for tracking species distribution over time and exploring plant evolution through DNA analysis.

A herbarium provides physical, validated references for identifying, classifying, and naming plant species. It assists in tracking range shifts as more plants are discovered they can be compared to a herbarium, if a match is found an identity can be confirmed.

Herbariums are time capsules recording where and when plants grew and serve as a source to extract DNA to study plant evolution, genomics, and biochemistry.

Edmundoa ambigua vs Edmundoa perplexa

The genus *Edmundoa* was created to bring together these species that have no affinity with the genera in which they have been included up to now:

Edmundoa ambigua was in *Nidularium*.

Edmundoa perplexa was in *Canistrum*.

The creation of the new genus *Edmundoa* provided an ideal opportunity to recollect and to honor Brazilian botanist Edmundo Pereira (1914-1986).

Professor Edmundo, as he was known, was undoubtedly the greatest authority of his time on the taxonomy of Brazilian bromeliads. This new genus, *Edmundoa* was separated from *Nidularium* and *Canistrum* due to various morphological traits e.g. differ in the densely lanate (woolly) floral scape and inflorescence by Elton Leme in his revision in *Canistrum - Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest* 1997.

Edmundoa ambigua is morphologically very similar to *Edmundoa perplexa*, both in overall aspect and in rosette and inflorescence form, with which it is easily confused. Both have flowers in which the petals remain erect and open very slightly at anthesis.

The sepals of *Edmundoa ambigua* are covered by a dense wool while those of *Edmundoa perplexa* are larger and always visible above the woolly layer, a trait that helps to distinguish it from *Edmundoa ambigua*.

The scape bracts of *Edmundoa ambigua* are reddish or rose and are densely white lepidote toward the apex and are entire to sub-entire. The primary bracts of *Edmundoa ambigua* have entire margins, no spines.

The scape bracts of *Edmundoa perplexa* are reddish and densely brown lepidote and densely serrulate toward the apex with spines ca. 0.5 mm long. The primary bracts of *Edmundoa perplexa* are also reddish and have densely and minutely serrulate (spined) margins toward the apex.

Edmundoa ambigua has more delicate leaf texture, with green blades, they are sometimes dotted with irregular dark green spots, the margins are nearly entire or provided with inconspicuous, sparsely scattered spines, and the leaf apex has a much smaller apiculus (small point or tip). In addition, the primary bracts have entire margins.

The leaves of *Edmundoa perplexa* are more rigidly textured, the blades are sometimes with wine coloured blemishes toward the base and irregular, dark green wavy transverse venation more easily seen against the light.

Information gleaned from: *Canistrum - Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest* by Elton M.C Leme 1997 as a follow up to a recent discussion about the difference between these two species.

Edmundoa ambigua (Wanderley & Leme) Leme, 1997.

Etymology: A problem at the generic level, the unusual traits of this species gave rise to its name, from the Latin *ambiguus*, and the "doubtful" and "uncertain" character of the taxon became fixed in its nomenclature.

Edmundoa ambigua is endemic to the moist Atlantic slope forest in southern Rio de Janeiro state and neighbouring areas of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

It is an epiphyte of the forest understory, but also grows on the trunk and branches near the canopy, it is more common at altitudes over 800 metres.



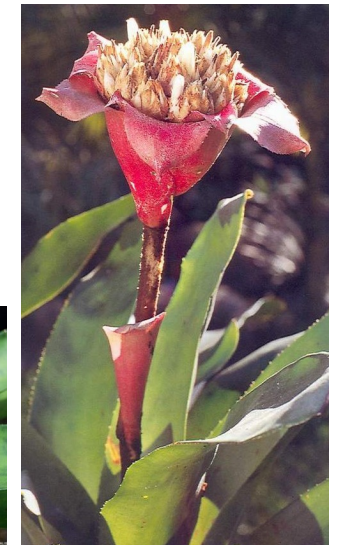
Edmundoa perplexa (L. B. Smith) E. Leme, 1997.

Etymology: The name of this species is a reflection of the confusion engendered by its unusual morphology, which is very far removed from the parameters of *Canistrum* to which it was originally assigned.

Edmundoa perplexa is restricted to higher elevations of the Serra do Mar in Sao Paulo state, Brazil at 800 to 900 metres altitude.

It is similar to *Edmundoa ambigua* in habit, but it grows in the upper layer of the forest, especially in large trees, although it is not a heliophyte (a sun lover). Because it is very hard to find in the wild, this species is rarely seen in cultivation.

The populations of this species are concentrated more to the south, at higher elevations than those of *Edmundoa ambigua*.



Photos top by Ross Little, photos bottom from the Butcher files.

Tillandsia reuteri Rauh 1976

An inflorescence of *Tillandsia reuteri* was brought along to our meeting for **Show, Tell and Ask** by Shane, he described it as having: “A lovely pink flower spike with dark blue to violet tips to the floral bracts. It never grew nicely for me, always tatty looking - brown leaves etc. I couldn't find a spot it liked, then it flowered, I would have binned it, but the flower is just too nice. I did some research and read about water quality impacting this plant. My water is town supply and treated??”.

Tillandsia reuteri was found growing as an epiphyte in northern Peru by Werner Rauh in 1970, he named the plant in honour of Dr Gerhard Reuter who was a German microbiologist that financially supported Rauh's 1970 trip.

Tillandsia reuteri is found growing in southern Ecuador and northern Peru from 1200 to 1800 metres altitude. It is a tank type, water impounding Tillandsia that grows to around 500 to 600 mm across and flowers to around 1 metre high.

From BSI Journal 69 (3) 2019:

Grow Something Uncommon - *Tillandsia reuteri* by Jerry Raack

“This plant has such a large inflorescence, that the stout peduncle has trouble holding the spikes upright, so it bends with a slight arch, and the plant tends to tip the pot it is growing in over with the weight of the inflorescence.

This is one of many soft-leaved Tillandsia with silvery appressed scales on the bottom side of the leaves. It is easy to grow coming from a somewhat lower elevation than many other soft-leaved Tillandsia with similar foliage. I grow it in my standard bromeliad potting mix in about a 15 to 17 cm pot. It requires bright indirect light to grow well, but otherwise, no other special requirements.

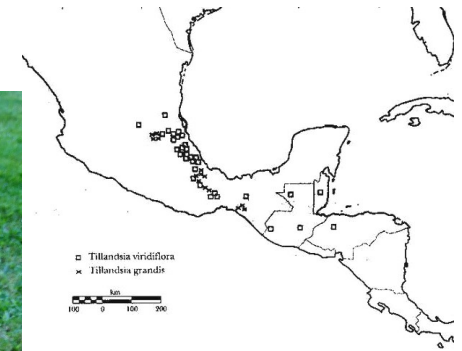
Unlike some other soft-leaved Tillandsia, it does pup from the base of the plant rather than from off-centre of the old spike. This allows for easy removal of the offsets that can be potted up separately. The inflorescence lasts in colour for at least three months.”

Appressed: Closely and flatly pressed against; adpressed. (From the BSI Glossary)



Pseudalcantarea viridiflora (Beer) Pinzón and Barfuss, 2016.

Previously known as *Tillandsia viridiflora* (Beer) Baker in 1888.



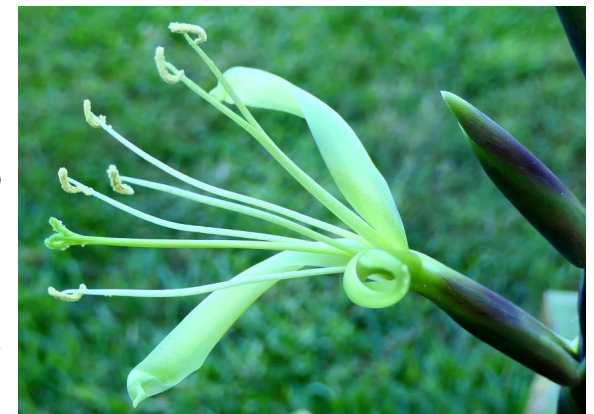
This species has a wide distribution being from the central and southern states of Mexico to as far south as Nicaragua.

It predominantly grows as an epiphyte in moist pine-oak forests from 670 - 1830 metres altitude and rarely found growing terrestrially.

The leaves are discolored, green and occasionally purple spotted on top while the underside of the leaves is purplish. *Pseudalcantarea viridiflora* flowers open at night, nocturnal anthesis but are still open the next morning allowing bats and moths to pollinate them at night and possibly hummingbirds in the morning.

The flowers of *Pseudalcantarea* are quite large hence the name because they resemble the flowers of *Alcantarea*.

This a relatively easy species to grow, this one was under 70% shade cloth and also under tree cover receiving sunlight mainly after midday. Being from the moist forests it does like regular watering/misting.





Neoregelia 'Maria'
1st Open Shane Fitzgerald



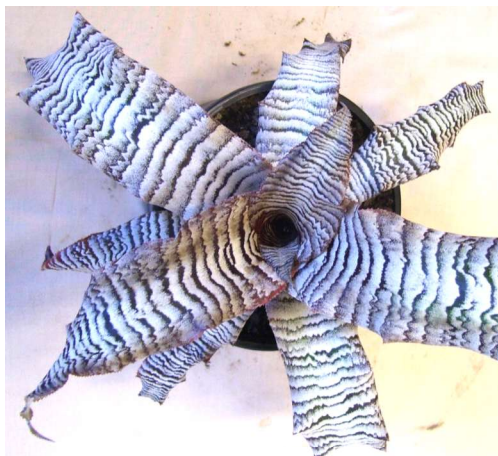
Guzmania 'Daniella' unreg
grown by Ross Little



Vriesea 'Maroochy Twinkle'
grown by Kayelene Guthrie



Neoregelia 'Bob's Baby'
grown by Kayelene Guthrie



Cryptanthus 'Squiggles'
1st Open Shane Fitzgerald



Tillandsia 'Silver Queen'
1st Tillandsia Ross Little



Tillandsia ionantha var. *vanhyningii*
1st Tillandsia
and
Judges Choice
Gary McAteer



Tillandsia 'Rex'
1st Tillandsia Shane Fitzgerald

Nidularium angustifolium Ernst Heinrich Georg Ule, 1898.

Ule found *Nidularium angustifolium*, a native of Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil in 1896 and made a brief description in 1898.

He was known for his extensive travels in Brazil, including work in the Serra da Bica which is located in the suburb of Cascadura that lies in the heart of Rio de Janeiro where this plant may no longer be found.

Today its populations are more common in southern Rio de Janeiro where it can be found



growing on the forest floor or as an epiphyte in the Atlantic slope forests from 50 to 500 metres altitude. It can be distinguished by its narrow serrated leaves and long primary bracts that can be completely green or red toward the apex and conspicuously spined. There is also a variegated form to look out for.

Nidularium is divided into three complexes: “Blue”, “Red” and “White”, this is a trait to look at when trying to identify an unknown Nidularium to help guide one to which complex to begin your research.

Nidularium angustifolium is in the blue complex, the petals of this group come in several shades of blue that become more intense toward the apex, the petal margins are sometimes white.

Some other Nidularium in the “Blue Complex” we often see in our collections are: *angustibracteatum*, *antoineanum*, *atalaiaense*, *cariacicaense*, *fulgens*, *kautskyianum* and *scherevietii*.



From the “Red Complex”, some that we see in our collections are: *purpureum* and *rutilans*.

From the “White Complex”, some that we see in our collections are: *albiflorum*, *amazonicum*, *campos-portoi*, *innocentii*, *longiflorum* and *rubens*.

Photos by Ross Little.
Information gleaned from: *Nidularium - Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest* by Elton M.C. Leme.

Aechmea smithiorum var. longistipitata by E. Gross 1985.

A variety of *Aechmea smithiorum* not often seen even though it's been in the collection for over 20 years. It can be grown as an epiphyte or terrestrially in the garden in a semi shade/dappled light position. It is distinguished from the typical species by having longer, more pronounced stipes on its inflorescence.

It was found in the Windward Islands at the Baleine Falls, at 100 - 250 metres altitude.

Aechmea smithiorum, described by Mez in 1896, is distributed on the Lesser Antilles. There, on the island of St. Vincent in 1972, Clive Innes collected some plants of which he sent live material to the Botanical Garden of Heidelberg.



Aechmea smithiorum var. *longistipitata* grown by Ross Little.



In January 1985, one of the plants (collection no.30 845a) came into flower. The determination of this plant, helped by the keys of Smith and Downs (1979) led to *Ae. smithiorum*.

The plant no.30 845a differs, however, in so many characters from the type that we consider it a new variety and name it: *var. longistipitata* Gross.

Aechmea smithiorum var. *longistipitata* photographed by Ross Little in 2015 at: Jardín Botánico de Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Guzmania roezlii (E. Morren) Mez, 1896.

Previously described as *Schlumbergeria roezlii* by E. Morren in 1878, which was the type specimen collected by Roezli in the upper Rio Maranon, Cordillera of Peru, August - September 1873, later assigned to *Guzmania* by Mez in 1896.



Benedikt Roezli (13 August 1824 – 14 October 1885) was from a small village near Prague in Bohemia, Czech Republic.

He was a traveller, a gardener and a botanist and was probably the most famous collector of orchids and many other plants of his time.

Guzmania roezlii grows to around 1 metre tall in spike, it is native to: Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and the State of Amazonas in western Brazil. It grows both epiphytically and terrestrially in forests from 80 to 1350 metres altitude.

This is a relatively easy *Guzmania* to grow either in the shade house under 70% shade cloth or in the garden in dappled light.

Granted, it is not as pretty as many of the preferred very colourful, ornamental type *Guzmanias* grown in collections today like: *Guz. blassii*, *conifera*, *lingulata*, *sanguinea*, *wittmackii*, *zahnii* and their many hybrids, but it is a species and well worth growing for its own uniqueness.

We need to keep all species going not just the pretty ones, this species can be grown from offsets or like this plant was, grown from seed collected in 2015.

Long Live the Species Grower !!!



Guzmania - What Makes it a *Guzmania* ?

The genus *Guzmania* was established in 1802 based on *Guzmania tricolor* Ruiz and Pavon (now known as *Guzmania monostachia* forma *monostachia*) being the type specimen for the genus consisting of 223 accepted species and 23 varieties, May 2026.

Hipólito Ruiz López and José Antonio Pavón Jiménez were both botanists from Spain who were sent to South America (Peru and Chile) in 1777 by the Spanish monarch, Charles III (1716 -1788) to explore the region for botanical specimens. The genus name *Guzmania* is to honour the 18th century Spanish pharmacist and naturalist Anastasio Guzman who died in 1807 whilst exploring the jungles of Ecuador.

Guzmanias are mainly epiphytic and can be found growing in Florida, the West Indies, southern Mexico, Central America, and northern and western South America. They are found at altitudes of up to 3,500 metres (11,483 ft) in the Andean rainforests of Colombia and Ecuador.

Guzmania have entire leaves, no spines, most, not all, have reddish brown maroon lines running along the length of their leaves, while some have banded patterned leaves.

The inflorescence may be borne on a tall peduncle e.g. *Guzmania wittmackii* or sunken in the centre of the rosette like *Guzmania sanguinea* or even a cone shape much like *Guzmania conifera*. Some *Guzmania* have a simple spike, not branched while others are branched like *Guzmania roezlii*. Most noticeable is *Guzmania* flowers are usually spirally arranged, rarely distichously arranged in two ranks like the flower spikes of a *Vriesea* are.

The petals can be white, yellow or green, more than 1/4 of their entire length conglutinated/connate - glued together, united or joined into a short or long tube, but not fused. The petal tips can be recurved or occasionally cucullate - hooded, curved inward, rarely with enlarged blades and without basal appendages - no nectar scales.

Be inquisitive, pull a flower apart and have a look for yourself.



fused sepals



"glued petals"



petal with nectar scales

Vriesea versus Tillandsia.

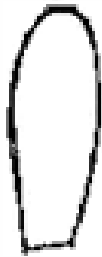
How do we tell the difference? That's easy, Vrieseas are green or banded, Tillandsias are those grey fluffy things. At the moment ...wrong. Unfortunately there are grey fluffy Vrieseas and green Tillandsias.

The difference is:

Vrieseas have a pair of nectar scales on each petal (these protect the nectar and the basal flower environment).



Tillandsia petals are free, naked, no nectar scales.



However this does not appear to be a good enough reason for separating genera, particularly since the nectar scales or appendages are near to the last parts of the Bromeliad to develop and have had no influence on the plants make-up until that time when the petal is constructed. Many scientists believe that a number of characteristics should be used in combination when defining the genera, which are currently delimited using that one character ... presence of nectar scales.

Revision by DNA of this situation has already started and is continuing to gain momentum.

The genus *Vriesea* was created by the English botanist John Lindley in 1843 to honour Willem Hendrik de Vries (1806-1862) who was a Dutch botanist and physician. *Vriesea* is a genus of tropical, epiphytic, or terrestrial flowering plants in the Bromeliaceae subfamily Tillandsioideae, native to Mexico, Central/South America, and the West Indies.

The genus name *Tillandsia* was created by Carl Linnaeus in 1753 to honor Dr. Elias Tillandz (1640–1693) who was a Swedish physician and botanist. This genus also has the greatest range in size from less than 12.70mm (1/2") to over 4.25 metres (14'). *Tillandsia* can be found growing in forests, mountains, and deserts from southern United States to Argentina.

Who was Carl Linnaeus ? (1707–1778)

He was a Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist known as the "father of modern taxonomy". He formalised binomial nomenclature, the modern scientific system of naming organisms using two Latin names (genus and species), and established a standardized classification system for plants and animals.

An Example of the Order in which Plants are Divided and Named:

Family Bromeliaceae
Subfamily Bromelioideae
Genus *Tillandsia*
Species *aeranthos*
Variety *aemula*

Basic Rules:

Genus: First letter capitalised. Maybe abbreviated
Species: All lower case
Variety: All lower case, preceded by "v." or "var."
Subspecies: All lower case, preceded by "ssp."
Forma: All lower case, preceded by "f."
Natural Hybrids: (Yes, there are a few of these) Given Latinized names, with the specific name [specific epithet] (all lower case) preceded by an "x".
Bigenerics Two cross-pollinated bromeliads of two different genera are given their own name made up from letters of the two parents' genera, preceded by an 'X' — e.g. a cross between a *Neoregelia* and an *Orthophytum* would be *xNeophytum*.

Plant names are written genus first, followed by species - then sometimes by variety, subspecies, or forma. Sort of like, "Last name, first name, middle name last" on government paperwork. "Variety is seen frequently, "subspecies" and "forma", seldom.

Some Examples:

Genus = *Tillandsia* (*Till.*)
Species = *Tillandsia aeranthos*, or *Till. aeranthos*
Variety = *Tillandsia aeranthos* var. *aemula*
Subspecies = *Tillandsia schiediana* ssp. *glabrior*
Forma = *Tillandsia fuchsii* f. *gracilis*
Natural Hybrid = *Tillandsia xsmalliana*
Bigeneric = *xNeophytum* 'Galactic Warrior'

Among bromeliads more than half the genera are names for people or places. If a person is male his name is latinized and will finish in 'i'.

eg: *Tillandsia bergeri* after A. Berger, a German succulents researcher.

If a person is female the name will usually finish with 'ae'.

eg: *Neoregelia carolinae* after Caroline, wife of Edward Morren.

If the epithet is geographically derived, it will usually terminate in 'ensis', 'insus', or 'icus' e.g: *Hectia guatemalensis*, occurring in Guatemala.

Open Popular Vote

1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Maria'
1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Squiggles'
2nd	Ross Little	<i>Nidularium angustifolium</i>
2nd	Kayelene Guthrie	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Maroochy Twinkle'

Tillandsia

1st	Ross Little	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Silver Queen'
1st	Gary McAteer	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i> var. <i>vanhyingii</i>
1st	Shane Fitzgerald	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Rex'

Judges Choice

1st	Gary McAteer	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i> var. <i>vanhyingii</i>
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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.