

**ILLAWARRA BROMELIAD SOCIETY
INCORPORATED**

NEWSLINK

October 2019



Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii

Photograph by Michael Drury

Winner of the Meri Stefanidakis Memorial Trophy

Award for 2018

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- The Society is, by the holding of meetings, displays and competitions, to provide a forum for the people of the Illawarra region who are interested in the culture and collection of bromeliads.
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BANK DETAILS FOR FEE PAYMENT, ETC: Illawarra Credit Union; BSB No. 802249; Account No. 249 039 602

MEETINGS - The Society meets at 12.00 noon on the first Saturday of each month (except January and December) in the Laurel Room* at the Ribbonwood Centre, DAPTO. *Scribbly Gum room for November meetings only.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS - Due 30th June each year: \$15 single/\$25 family.

NEWSLINK ISSUED QUARTERLY - January, April, July, and October and at <http://www.bromeliad.org.au>

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS: A very warm welcome to our new members: Pam Towers who joined at our July meeting; Lyn Wilke who joined at our August 3 meeting; and Morgana Harris and Amber Pascoe who signed up at our September Show. We wish you all a long and happy association with us!

MONTHLY RAFFLE PRIZE ROSTER

October - Neville Wood, Beth Clague, Lydia Chinnock, Suzanne Burrows
November - Pam Townsend, Val Miller, Steve Wain, Jørgen Jakobsen
February - Christine Stephens, Yvonne Perinotti, Elizabeth Bevan

ROSTER FOR CLEANING UP AFTER THE MEETING:

October - Rose Di Noro, Domenic Di Noro, Heather Thain, Les Thain, Anne-Marie Brun
November - Carol Burgdorf, Lisa Chambers, Isabella Chambers, Fran Parrott

GARDEN VISITS #3 - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19: Unfortunately these have had to be postponed until a later date. Details will be worked out at our committee meeting on Saturday and you will be advised.

WORKSHOP #4 – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 16: To be held at the home of Sharyn Baraldi – 25 Antrim Avenue, WARILLA (Phone: (02) 4296 2166) from 10.00 am to about 2.00 pm. This will be a Q & A session, so bring lots of questions about anything related to the Society. You may also bring bromeliads for identification as Graham and Noel will be present to help with this. Sharyn will provide tea and coffee for morning tea and lunch. All participants are asked to bring lunch and cake or slice to share.

CHRISTMAS PARTY – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7: Graham and Elizabeth's daughter and son-in-law, Leanne and Ken, have once again invited us to hold our Christmas party at their beautiful property in Buckley's Road, Dunmore. We will have it catered, with a selection of carved meats, salmon, roast vegetables, salads and desserts. Punch will be supplied but wine and beer will be on a BYO basis. Subsidised cost will be \$30 per person. Festivities will commence at 11.00 am, with lunch served at 12.30 pm. As in past years please bring a small gift for sharing (around the \$10 mark) with men bringing presents suitable for men and women bringing presents suitable for women—and bromeliads always welcome! Numbers and monies to Suzanne by our November meeting.

MARCH 14/15, 2020 SALES DAY AT WARILLA: Sharyn has booked space for our sales day at the Warilla Neighbourhood Centre over these two days in March. More details in the January Newslink and at our meetings before then.

VALE - HERB PLEVER

The Bromeliad World has lost another of its very special members—Herb Plever—who passed away on September 9 at the age of 95. A retired lawyer, he co-founded the New York Bromeliad Society, wrote its journal, '*Bromeliana*', for over 50 years, filling it with so many interesting articles (including one where he did an excellent job explaining all of the recent changes which came about due to DNA sequencing in the family *Tillandsioideae*) and was made an Honorary Trustee of the Bromeliad Society International in 2006. He also attended every World Bromeliad over several decades

I became fascinated quite early in my bromeliad days by this man who grew hundreds of bromeliads in his 8th floor apartment in New York City when he wrote of filling his bath tub with water and adding liquid fertilizer then soaking his tillandsias in it, usually on a weekly basis! I reprinted an article that he had written in my July 2000 Newslink, titled "The Fertilizer Revolution". His original article had appeared in the Journal of the BSI in December 1996 and at that time he had been carrying out extensive research for over five years while conducting experiments on his plants with high-strength fertilisers, with significant results. (See "*How to grow Bromeliads in a skyscraper in New York by Collector Extraordinaire Herb Plever*" at fcbs.org).

And while you might think that bromeliads might have occupied most of his spare time, he had a passion for social justice, Italy, opera, and folk dancing, which both he and his wife, Sylvia, enjoyed.

Herb, you will be missed!

UPCOMING EVENTS . . .

Oct. 17 - 20	GOLDEN BROMS – 20 TH AUSTRALASIAN BROMELIAD CONFERENCE – SEA WORLD BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA SPRING SHOW – FEDERATION PAVILION, CASTLE HILL SHOWGROUND – Saturday 9 am – 4 pm/Sunday 10 am – 3 pm. WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE 2020 – HYATT REGENCY, SARASOTA, FLORIDA
Oct. 26 - 27	
2020	
June 9 - 13	

July 6, 2019: Competition Plant Results

Open:

1 st	Ann Kennon	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Whirligig'
2 nd	Rhonda Patterson	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Peek-A-Boo'
3 rd	Rhonda Patterson	<i>Goudaea ospinae</i> var. <i>gruberi</i>

Novice:

1 st	Glenn Martin	<i>Aechmea weilbachii</i> var. <i>pendula</i>
2 nd	Glenn Martin	<i>Aechmea</i>
3 rd	Glenn Martin	<i>Vriesea carinata</i>

Tillandsioideae

1 st	Ann Kennon	<i>Tillandsia punctulata</i>
2 nd	Ann Kennon	<i>Tillandsia crocata</i> 'Copper Penny'
3 rd	Bob Stephens	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i>

August 3, 2019: Plant Results

Open:

1 st	Yvonne Perinotti	<i>Billbergia</i> 'Delicioso'
2 nd	John Toolan	<i>Vriesea hieroglyphica</i>
3 rd	John Toolan	<i>Nidularium</i> 'Ruby Lee'
3 rd	Michael Drury	<i>Billbergia</i> 'Fruit Salad'

Novice:

1 st	Ana Mallon	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Lucifer'
2 nd	Belinda Drury	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Madame Ganna Walska'

Tillandsia:

1 st	Steve Wain	<i>Tillandsia sprengeliana</i>
2 nd	Ann Kennon	<i>Tillandsia tenuifolia</i>
3 rd	Bob Stephens	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i>

August 31, 2019: Competition Plant Results

Open:

1 st	Graham Bevan	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Beefsteak'
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Novice:

1 st	Glenn Martin	<i>Billbergia vittata</i>
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Tillandsioideae

1 st	Graham Bevan	<i>Tillandsia recurvifolia</i>
2 nd	Graham Bevan	<i>Tillandsia sprengeliana</i>
3 rd	Graham Bevan	<i>Tillandsia disticha</i> 'Major'

SHOW RESULTS - 2019

CHAMPION BROMELIAD: OPEN

Freda Kennedy	<i>Billbergia 'Super Grace'</i>
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CHAMPION BROMELIAD: NOVICE

Belinda Drury	<i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia ssp. chlorantha</i>
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BEST SPECIES

Belinda Drury	<i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia ssp. chlorantha</i>
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DULCIE DOONAN MEMORIAL AWARD

Elizabeth Bevan	Creative Arrangement – 'Early Spring'
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CATHERINE (RENA) WAINWRIGHT MEMORIAL AWARD

Graham Bevan	<i>Tillandsia recurvifolia</i>
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CATEGORY I – DIVISION I: HORTICULTURAL - OPEN

Class A - Aechmea (8 entries)

1 st	Edwina and Steve Wain	<i>Aechmea racinae</i>
2 nd	John Toolan	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>
3 rd	Freda Kennedy	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>

Class B - Billbergia (11 entries)

1 st	Freda Kennedy	<i>Billbergia 'Super Grace'</i>
2 nd	Ann and Noel Kennon	<i>Billbergia 'Domingos Martins'</i>
3 rd	John Toolan	<i>Billbergia 'Hallelujah'</i>

Class C - Neoregelia (7 entries)

1 st	Sandra Carnie	<i>Neoregelia 'Fantasia'</i>
2 nd	John Toolan	<i>Neoregelia marmorata</i>
3 rd	John Toolan	<i>Neoregelia 'Painted Desert'</i>

Class D - Miniature Neoregelia (4 entries)

1 st	Ann and Noel Kennon	<i>Neoregelia 'White Rabbit'</i>
2 nd	Barbara Jones-Beverstock	<i>Neoregelia 'Zoe'</i>
3 rd	Barbara Jones-Beverstock	<i>Neoregelia 'Chocolate Soldier'</i>

Class E - Tillandsia (17 entries)

1 st	Ann and Noel Kennon	<i>Tillandsia recurvifolia</i>
2 nd	Ann and Noel Kennon	<i>Tillandsia punctulata</i>
3 rd	Edwina and Steve Wain	<i>Tillandsia sprengeliana</i>

Class F - Vriesea/Guzmania (12 entries)

1 st	Michael Drury	<i>Vriesea saundersii</i>
2 nd	Freda Kennedy	<i>Vriesea platynema var. variegata</i>
3 rd	Beverley Irvine	<i>Vriesea gigantea var. seideliana</i>

Class G - Other Genera (19entries)

1 st	Sandra Carnie	<i>Dyckia</i>
2 nd	Ann and Noel Kennon	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Don Garrison'
3 rd	Elizabeth Bevan	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Our Glad'

CATEGORY I – DIVISION II: HORTICULTURAL – NOVICE**Class H – Aechmea (5 entries)**

1 st	Belinda Drury	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>
2 nd	Judy Hunt	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>
3 rd	Judy Hunt	<i>Aechmea</i> hybrid

Class I – Billbergia (1 entry)

1 st	Judy Hunt	<i>Billbergia</i> hybrid
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Class J – Neoregelia (7 entries)

1 st	Jan Stammers	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Red Macaw'
2 nd	Jan Stammers	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Aussie Dream'
3 rd	Judy Hunt	<i>Neoregelia</i> hybrid

Class L - Tillandsia (2entries)

1 st	Judy Hunt	<i>Tillandsia</i>
2 nd	Judy Hunt	<i>Tillandsia secunda</i>

Class M - Vriesea/Guzmania (1 entry)

1 st	Judy Hunt	<i>Vriesea</i> hybrid
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Class N - Other Bromeliad (4 entries)

1 st	Belinda Drury	<i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia</i> ssp. <i>chlorantha</i>
2 nd	Belinda Drury	<i>Quesnelia</i> 'Tim Plowman'
3 rd	Belinda Drury	<i>Orthophytum</i> 'Warren Loose'

CATEGORY I – DIVISION III: HORTICULTURAL - DISPLAY AND MULTIPLE PLANTS**Class O Colony – Aechmea/Neoregelia/Vriesea (15 entries)**

1 st	Freda Kennedy	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Gympie Delight'
2 nd	Edwina and Steve Wain	<i>Aechmea orlandiana</i>
3 rd	John Toolan	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>

Class P - Mounted Tillandsias (2 entries)

1 st	Graham Bevan	Collection mounted on cork
2 nd	Graham Bevan	Collection mounted on wood

Class Q - Mounted Bromeliad (2 entries)

1 st	Edwina and Steve Wain	<i>Vriesea lubbersii</i>
2 nd	Edwina and Steve Wain	<i>Aechmea orlandiana</i>

CATEGORY II - ARTISTIC

Class R - Basket or Decorative Container (4 entries)

1 st	Elizabeth Bevan	'Bountiful Basket'
2 nd	Belinda Drury	Large basket containing mainly neoregelias
3 rd	Graham Bevan	Fancy terracotta pot with <i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia</i>

Class S - Bromeliad Garden (3 entries)

1 st	Elizabeth Bevan	'Frogs in Crypts'
2 nd	Suzanne Burrows	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Shimmer' in a pretty cup and saucer
3 rd	Graham Bevan	<i>Fosterella spectabilis</i> in a terracotta planter

Class T - Artistic Arrangement (3 entries)

1 st	Elizabeth Bevan	Artistic Arrangement – 'Early Spring'
2 nd	Freda Kennedy	Tillandsias in bromeliad pot arrangement
3 rd	Belinda Drury	'Fish tank and flowers'

COMPETITION STATISTICS

2014	22 nd Show	170 Entries	17 Competitors
2015	23 rd Show	166 Entries	14 Competitors
2016	24 th Show	153 Entries	18 Competitors
2017	25 th Show	126 entries	18 Competitors
2019	26 th Show	141 Entries	17 Competitors
2019	27 th Show	126 Entries	17 Competitors

THE AECHMEA RECURVATA FAMILY

By Gerry Stansfield

[Reprinted from *Bromeliad*, J. Bromeliad Society of New Zealand Inc., September 2006, Vol. 46(9)]

If you're looking for colour in your gardens, then the *Aechmea recurvata* family would have to be a very good choice. They are winter flowering after all and you not only get the flowers but also the colourful inflorescence, which is really the main attraction.

If you expect these beauties to be desert dwellers like the cacti family, you will probably be surprised to find that they are mostly epiphytic, sometimes terrestrial, and also saxicolous. They will grow at near sea level, to almost 2000 m altitude. Their distribution is wide, from Brazil in the north to Paraguay, Uruguay, and north-eastern Argentina in the south. Although there are only four varieties of this aechmea there are a number of selected clones. They have also become extremely popular with hybridists over the years.

Some of you will remember the name Charles Allen (now deceased) who played a very prominent role in the Bromeliad Society in the early days and was a well-known grower and hybridiser. Charles specialised in *Aechmea recurvata*, and made many very fine hybrids. I have collated 25 of them, but there would have been many more. Some of these have been crossed with *A. caudata*, some with *A. calyculata*. They all make a wonderful display in our gardens.

The four *recurvata* varieties that started the whole hybridising business:

- ***Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata***

There is no mistaking this largest of the *recurvata* species. It generally has a bulbous type base, giving it a rather bottle-shaped form. Its spiny leaves are much wider than all the others and are very curved or re-curved as they call them. At flowering time the spiny leaves become a crimson red colour. The lavender pink flower head in the centre rises up above the plant, and this is one of the distinguishing features, along with the much thicker leaves, between this variety and *ortgiesii*.

- ***Aechmea recurvata* var. *ortgiesii***

Depending on where you grow it, this plant can be quite large. The leaves are very long and spiny and although the lower leaves do tend to re-curve, the top leaves stand out like large prickles. The inflorescence is similar to the plant above at flowering time and is very showy with its scarlet to red colouring. However, the flower head does not protrude above the plant but is more recessed. Again the flowers are lavender pink.

- ***Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii***

This is a little cutie, the smallest of the four species, and a great favourite with growers. Generally it only grows to about 10 cm high, with the narrow leaves re-curved at the top. But in the same pot some will have a spread of about 20 cm.

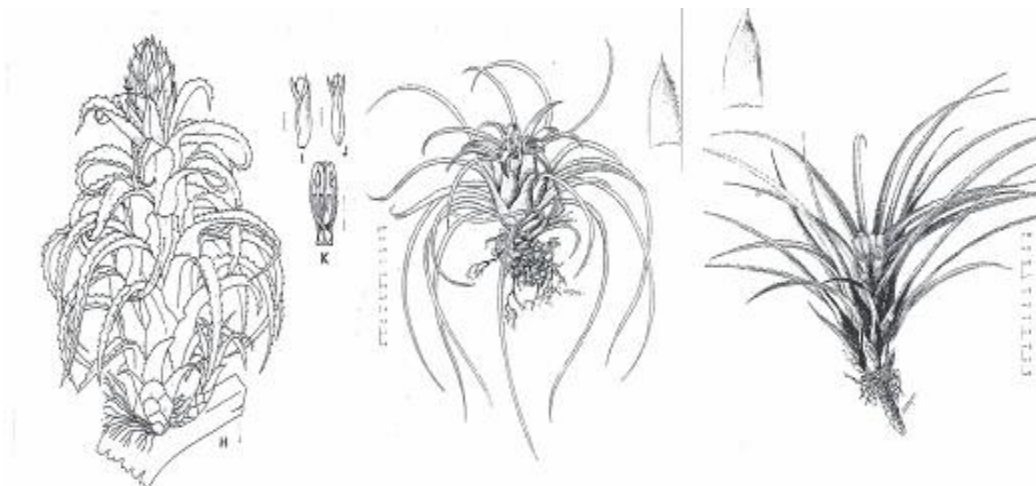
- ***Aechmea recurvata* var. *albobracteata****

I am not sure if this variety is in New Zealand. It is distinguished from the other forms by having white bracts. This plant would be considered rare here.

Herb Plevier, from the New York '**Bromeliana**' has this to say:

"It should be easy to distinguish the different varieties of Aechmea recurvata by observing the following. If most of the inflorescence rises above the leaf sheaths and its floral bracts have spines, then it is A. recurvata var. recurvata. If most of the inflorescence does not rise above the leaf sheaths and if the leaves and the floral bracts have spines, it is A. recurvata var. ortgiesii. If the spike is mostly included (meaning not protruding above the centre of the plant) and the leaves and floral bracts are without spines, or have less than the other forms, then it is A. recurvata var. benrathii."

I would add to Herb's comments that var. *benrathii* is the baby of the three main plants and very easy to distinguish because of this. Also my *benrathii* does have spines on the leaves, perhaps not as many as the others, but it could be confusing to say that the leaves are totally without spines.



Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata

Aechmea recurvata* var. *ortgiesii

Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii

*From a note in the South Australia Bromeliad Society's **Brom Gazette** of November/December 2007 Derek Butcher mentions that "We knew that nobody had the variety **albobracteata** which although found in the wild in 1989 was not named until 2004."

Now let's look at some of the other members of the *recurvata* family:

- ***Aechmea* 'Aztec Gold'**
This plant is not a hybrid, but a cultivar as it is the variegated form of *Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata*. It was developed by John Catlan in Australia in 1981 from a plant that had a leaf with one yellow stripe. This is quite a showy plant and really stands out in the garden.
- ***Aechmea* 'Pink Buttons'**
The parentage of this little beauty is unknown, but it soon forms a lovely clump of deep pinky-red foliage in the garden and is very popular.
- ***Aechmea* 'A l'Orange'.**
This one is an *A. recurvata* x *A. 'Light Rays'* hybrid and it stays orange all the time.
- ***Aechmea* 'Paraguay'**
We don't know much about this lovely form except it came as seed marked (from Paraguay) from the BSI seed bank some years ago and is scarlet-red all the time and a stunning plant.
- ***Aechmea* 'Flaming Fire'**
As the name suggests, this plant is a flaming red colour all year round and this intensifies at flowering. The cross was *Aechmea* 'A l'Orange' x *Aechmea* 'Tokuri'.
- ***Aechmea* 'Tokuri'**
Derek Butcher, the BSI Registrar [past BSI Registrar, now Geoff Lawn—Ed.] is currently discussing this plant to try and find out its origin. It was said to be of Japanese origin. Derek Butcher is not able to find any reference to this name or this plant in any known writings or references. But don't let this stop you from growing this beauty. The plant is scarlet in colour all the time.

Two more that you should look out for are ***Aechmea* 'Big Ben'** and ***Aechmea* 'Inky'**—both made by Grace Goode of Australia from the crossing *Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii* X *Aechmea orlandiana*. I think 'Inky' is particularly nice.

You may be thinking what is this name '*ORTGIESIA*' all about? Derek Butcher recently wrote about this subgenus as follows:

"The name '*Ortgiesia*' was first used by von Regel* in the 1860s to cover his *Ortgiesia tillandsioides* which we now know as *Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata*. The word '*Ortgiesia*' was the name of a botanist but one wonders what von Regel thought a tillandsia looked like because the literal meaning of the species name *tillandsioides* is 'like a tillandsia'. How things do change over time! Since that time, the name '*Ortgiesia*' has been on the lips of many botanists. Only recently we saw it resurrected to genus status, but only for a short time. The genus *Aechmea* is the dumping ground for many of the 'odd-bod' species in the *Bromelioideae* sub-family, but we believe that the species in the sub-genus *Ortgiesia* are sufficiently distinct from the others to be treated as a separate genus. However, we aren't botanists. The complete article on this subject can be referenced on the website

<http://fcbs.org/articles/Ortgiesia.htm>

GS. *August von Regel (1815-1891) was a German botanist who was superintendent of the Imperial Botanic Gardens, St Petersburg, in Russia. The name '*Regelia*' was the first name given to the bromeliad, in the genus of plants we know as *Neoregelia* by 'von Regel'. That name was later changed in 1934 to *Neoregelia* by Lyman B. Smith, Curator of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, USA. It was changed because von Regel had named other species in the *Myrtaceae* with the same name, *Regelia*.

At the start of this article I mentioned that the *A. recurvata* family were mostly epiphytic, sometimes terrestrial but also saxicolous. That tells us some very important things. They prefer well-drained or dryish conditions. I am sure that, like me, a lot of our members have experienced what we call central or crown rot from *A. recurvata* plants. This is where the whole of the top of the plant can be pulled out and the bottom part is rotting and very smelly. In New Zealand we get a lot of rain which this family does not like. You will overcome this problem if you grow them as saxicolous plants. On or around rocks you are less likely to have a problem. Good drainage is essential. If you want to grow them in pots and baskets, just use mini bark and do not overwater. Grow them hard, in full sun.

RUNNING OUT OF ROOM? NEVER!

By Robert Meyer (Reprinted from the Bromeliad Society of South Florida's *BromeliAdvisory*, June 2019 issue)

Often people keep planting on the ground and reach a point where they proclaim: "No more buying of plants! I am sated! The gills are filled! No more room in this yard!" Nonsense!

Ever wonder what a palm tree was good for? Not for shade, right? And those fronds are pesky and hurt many things when they drop, only to make a large brown nothing. Leave them on the grass too long and the lawn becomes a yellow nothing. Their one redeeming quality is that they bend and don't litter your yard after hurricanes or wind storms. Or, is there another trait?

Yes! Palms are ideal hosts for the absurdly engrossed hobbyist who has stuffed his/her yard like a French goose. Palms to the rescue! Palms, you will learn, are especially good for hosting bromeliads. Who knew, right?

Now, for those of you who have shy ways or others who do not want to read dirty literature, go to the next paragraph. The rest of you—you know who you are—read on. This is when we talk about strapping on plants, sometimes in their crotches, or at their openings. Okay, back to the clean stuff.

Get the necessary tools and you will find that palms can be the cure for growing clean plants. Okay, not clean. Less dirty.

What tools do you need? Here is a list: String (masons string suffices); thin wire (even soldering wire works); metal cutters or pliers; baskets; basket holders; U nails or staples; Superglue or Gorilla glue or Liquid Nails; nylons or hose clamp or plastic stays; and a hammer.

Question 1: Do I hammer a nail into a tree? Some people say never. Others say in limited fashion. I go with the latter. A royal palm can take a small nail in the gut. A thin palm cannot. The obvious answer is—how do you say?—obvious!

Question 2: If I cannot use a nail, how do I hold up a plant? Oh, let me count the ways. Panty hose does the job without any other items. Hose clamp does as well, but may rust or not expand as easily as panty hose. Plastic stay is a little worse than hose clamp because it WILL NOT expand. Green garden tape—the stretchy stuff sold at nurseries or Home Depot—is a little worse, but can be used. Twine too.

Question 3: Are you hanging on another thing? Or just sticking the hanging item onto the tree and temporarily using pantyhose, hose clip, plastic stay or U nail until the glue sets? This question must take into account the size of two things: (a) the size of the tree—see above; and (b) the weight or size of the plant. Big trees and big plants may require the use of the U nail PLUS a holding item—hose, hose clamp. Small plants may work on glue alone or with temporary use of hose, hose, or clamp. Awkward or very large plants probably have to be hung. See hanging lesson in [the following] separate article. In short, light items can be hung on very little hardware or even no hardware or hose. Heavy things may require the U nail, hose or more, in addition to the gluing agent.

Question 4: How many plants can I hang with the devices? You will be surprised, especially with tillandsias. You can hang dozens on one tree. And they proliferate! As the air gets into the bottom of the plant the proclivity to propagate increases. Almost geometrically! And, amazingly, if you have a large tree encircled by one clamp, you can hook numerous not so heavy plants onto the clamp. This makes the circumference below the clamp fuzzy with specimens.

Question 5: What do I do after the plants are glued or hung? Nothing. This is all about keeping the day job. Ignoring plants and visiting them once-in-a-blue-moon fashion makes that surprise encounter wonderful. You may find yourself talking to the plants: "Haven't seen you in months—when I hung you!" "My, how you have blossomed, and all those pups below—you look great!"

In the end, no ground space used. The plants multiply faster—especially tillandsias. Which means: break off a pup and bring it to the meetings. Deal? Of course it is!

HANGING THE PLANTS

By Robert Meyer (Reprinted from *BromeliAdvisory*, June 2019 issue)

When you own tillandsias one thought comes to mind: Who conceived such a plant that needs little work and delivers such a beautiful inflorescence? Some god of the laborers! Union god, I would imagine. Pick it, glue it to a tree (see article above) and ignore it. And it still produces flowers. And pups! If only it could produce more pups so my \$10 investment would be worth that much more. But, wait! It can!

The secret is to do what the experts do. Imitation is not only the best form of flattery, but a really wise thing to do when you know so little about the concept. I look at Steve Correale's plants. They seem mighty happy to me. So I bought one, then another—now I have more of his plants than I know what to do with them. I took on the put-them-on-the-tree mentality (see article above) and they continued to take over. I now have trees that are hard to identify because so many of his plants are thriving in their shade.

So, one day, about two decades after I bought his plants for the first time, I asked myself what is the something there in common with his plants? And I discovered they all hung from a relatively simple string tied onto the inflorescence. No \$1 a pop plastic pot/No \$2 a pop metal hanging quads to affix to the pot. Just a string with a handmade metallic piece at the end to hang onto a not-so-large limb of a friendly tree in your yard.

Then I looked at those older ones: string still good; hanging item a little rusty, but still good; and while some of the baskets I bought about the same time and next to these plants were decaying, his stringed plants thrived. Hmmm! And the bottoms—yes, I checked their bottoms! Pups! Bundles of pups coming out where the air had swept upon them. No plastic or other restrictions. Hmm!



So one day this past month I bought the string (masons string), found some old wire, bought some soldering wire and went to work. Making my own knots, and making different lengths of string attachments, I soon had 15 more plants hanging off the front yard. Splitting up already busting-at-the-seams pots or other ignored-for-years tillandsias, I quickly had many new plants which would be presentable—maybe even show-worthy when the time arrives.

Think about that! Show worthy plants with no costs, a simple creation made with scissors, string and wire. Pennies contrasted to the dollars for baskets and associated metal hangers. Having so many plants cheaply! And growing off the string makes them grow more prodigiously than the already impressively pupping basket plants. Think about this for yourself! Think about the Show!

Here is an Outline of How to Hang Your Plants:

- Find a plant which needs rescue—like a plant leaning off after being bashed by storm debris. (See photograph on left below.)
- Go get your string and wire.
- Loop the string at both ends and into various lengths as plant sizes differ. Same for the hooks. Heavier plants need more wire because probably they will be hung on larger sized branches.
- Then bend the wire to make the hooks. (If you use wire, get cutters.)
- Attach the hook on one end of the string and the plant to the other end (of the string--slip knot through to make it last).
- That cinch of the knotting system holds very well for plants with some weight. The little bitty plants need more, so give a tug to assure the knot will remain there. As time passes, rains and other events will naturally make the cotton or other fibres maintain their place and the knot is everlasting.
- Now you can hang the plant!

Here I used a plastic tie once sold by the now-defunct Radio Shack. These ties were great as they could be adjusted, and with the large holes they provided great space for putting in the homemade hanging end.



The result is a beautiful hanging plant. Hopefully this *Tillandsia capitata* straightens out as the inflorescence bent when it fell from the erect position it once held on the tree. Now hung, even if hit by debris, the plant should continue to be vertical and not encounter the problems previously affecting the curvature of the flower.

Rescued *Tillandsia capitata*

Even bigger plants can be hung. A *Tillandsia novakii*, no shrinking violet and with an inflorescence over two feet in length, is easily three pounds of dead weight. But the string and the simple homemade hook, all attached to the Radio Shack tie, remain happy. Now I wait for the pups to come out from the bottom. (Photos can be viewed in colour at our website: www.bromeliad.org.au and on the *BromeliAdvisory* site)