

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!



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Meetings Venue:

Maltese Cultural Centre,
6 Jeanes Street,
Beverley

Time: 2.00pm.

Second Sunday of each month
Exceptions – 1st Sunday in May, &
August & no meeting in December or
unless advised otherwise

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS
WELCOME**



Tillandsia 'Uluru' (Photo by J. Batty)

Pots, Labels & Hangers - Small quantities available all meetings.

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Dates for 2010

Meeting dates:- July 11th **Ecuador trip** - Len, Aug 1st **Winter brag**, Sept 12th **Pitcairnioideae**, Oct 10th,
Nov 14th

Special Events:- Bromeliad Extravaganza. Nov 13 featuring Displays & Sales

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb.

Several reference photos courtesy of "fcbs.org"



May meeting from the Secretary's desk

What a roll up! So many smiling new faces which if not accompanied by a non-Latinised name badge go unremembered. Now if they had Latin names I would remember them so easily. Raffle plants/offsets keep rolling in and seem to keep pace with the numbers who turn up.

First we had Len speak on the miscellaneous plants. Tillandsias featured strongly with many in flower or nearly so. From the small *T. bandensis* to the larger *T. xerographica*. Plants called *T. stricta* are so difficult to identify because not only is the range so widespread in the wild but many man-made hybrids have been done. In any event the flower is always showy with its large pink floral bracts. George brought in a flowering *T. bermejoensis* that is rare in collections around the world. We are lucky we have close ties with Renate Ehlers because we have plants here that are not to be seen in the USA. Anyone venturing to Bolivia and seeking out Rio Bermejo should be aware that there at least two rivers with this name!

Adam purposely brought in a yellow/orange flowering plant that had got to Australia via Germany. It looked very similar to *T. crocata*, which is a favourite with any new convert to *Tillandsia* because of its scent. Anyway, there was this orange flowered *T. crocata* that was collected in Brazil and brought back to Germany. Both Len and I were able to scrounge an offset from Renate so we know where it was collected. In recent years the market in Germany has been flooded with a similar orange flowered *Tillandsia* grown by seed by Holm where he had *T. caliginosa* and *T. crocata* growing next to each other. Holm is known as a person who does not worry about names but loves to hybridise with anything close and handy. In the wild *T. caliginosa* and *T. crocata* are about 1000kms apart and pollen does not travel that far. So you have Len and I acting like pedigree dog owners.

Another from Adam had even more meat because he had flowered Nev Ryan's hybrid. I don't know if you know that Adam is playing with his Bromeliads like Pineapple growers in Queensland play with their pineapples. Pineapple growers want to reap their crop at the one time and use artificial means to make the poor pineapple think about reproduction. Sometimes Adam succeeds and sometimes he doesn't. In this case he had succeeded. 10 years ago I had got the same sort of plant from Neville and I am more patient than Adam. I have this plant near our *T. ionantha*, which flower regularly, in the hope that it either gets clucky or is shamed into acting as a proper tillandsia should. Now Adam's plant has flowered we can be a bit more positive in giving it a cultivar name because I am sure this plant is widely grown around Australia.

Another talking point revolved around George Nieuwenhoven's *T. xerographica*, which has featured on the Internet under Tillnuts. The consensus was that it was a hybrid but I was able to poke around and consider that it had been stunted by some heat wave it was not expecting and then 3 months later it decided to flower. I have had this happen on a couple of occasions in the last two years where the plant has flowered and bore no resemblance to what it should be. For the technically minded *T. xerographica* is on CITES which restricts trade but you still see them around in fairly good numbers. This may be because Rolly Reilly in Queensland some 30 years ago grew this from seed with the possibility of hybridity, which may not show itself until flowering and we know many growers are not interested in reporting anomalies! Add to this the fact that the names *T. tomasellii* and *T. kruseana* persist although considered by most to be the same plant. Are they just Nurseryman's names used to confuse the authorities regarding CITES? If you ever are lucky enough to acquire such a plant remember it does not like Adelaide winters. Long standing members (I won't say old!) will remember Len Cork bragging about the 20 offsets he got from his flowering *T. xerographica* and all went quiet the following Spring! Even a hint of excess water will get a reaction (or should I say non-reaction!)

Of the non-tillandsias it was good to see flowering *Billbergia pyramidalis* and *B. macrocalyx* as well as *Aechmea purpureo-rosea*. To think these are species which gets me on my hobby-horse. We should be growing more species if we are interested in plant conservation. We must remember that their natural habitat is fast disappearing. I know that for example Brazil say they have reserves but do not say that farmers on the edge of these reserves use fire to clear their own lands! We also know that reserves elsewhere may look like reserves but the middle has been depleted of trees for the forest industry. So things are not rosy in habitat. One way we can help is to grow species. Nature has taken thousands of years to produce a species and yet hybridists are breaking the species barriers in tens of years. Some may say that if they only grow hybrids they are not putting pressure on plants in habitat, which is a great theory while plants have some habitat to live in!

May meeting cont:

Another of my soapbox issues revolves around the permanent use of the temporary name that is concocted from a formula of the parents. This does not identify the child only who its parents are and they could have lots of kids. So I was intrigued that such a good-looking plant was on the display as Neo. (Painted Lady' x 'Magnifica'). This sounded yet again as an American hybrid where the hybridist did not think his work merited a proper name. Hey Presto, on returning home I checked in the records and found out its name is 'Magic Lady'. So if you have this plant please note the correct name.

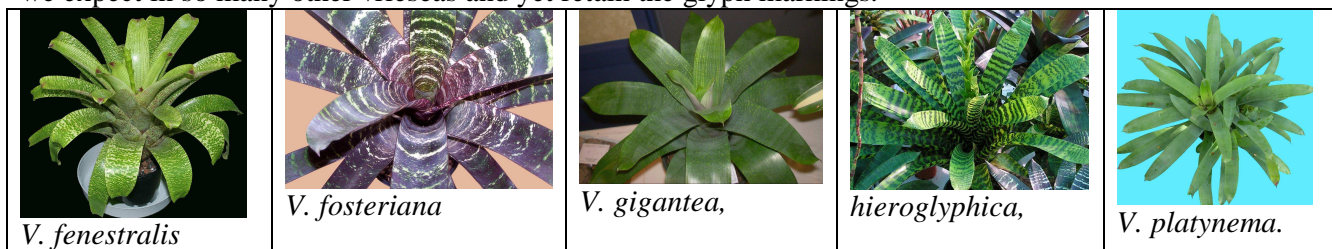


Neo. 'Magic Lady'.
(Painted Lady' x 'Magnifica').

Now to the Glyph Vrieseas presented by Bill Treloar and myself. Bill is good at picking up things I have forgotten. I coined the word 'Glyph' for a group of Vrieseas irrespective of their parentage. It was based on Egyptian hieroglyphs or those squiggles you see but cannot interpret unless you have a Rosetta stone. Sometimes I wish we had a Rosetta stone to help in plant identification. Regrettably this concept of a Cultivar Group went out with the bath water when the BSI dismantled the Cultivar database in June 2009. Stubborn may be the word to use while I continue to promote the name 'Glyph'!

In the early 1900's European hybridists were trying to create 'different' hybrids that had these prized glyph markings on the leaves and found that the only species that transmitted this facet readily was *Vriesea pastuchoffiana*. Never heard of it? It seems that the demand was such that soon they could not find it in the wild. Only recently has this species been rediscovered. The fact that none of the *V. pastuchoffiana* hybrids survive to this day should give food for thought on hybridising just for the sake of hybridising!

I took a punt and felt that most of the Glyph hybrids around these days had some input from five species – *V. fenestralis*, *V. fosteriana*, *V. gigantea*, *V. hieroglyphica*, and *V. platynema*. My hunch paid off because the records show some 200 Cultivar names. Some are just variations on a theme regarding the night flowering tendencies and lack of colour in the floral bracts. Some had attempted to capture the bright bracts we expect in so many other vrieseas and yet retain the glyph markings.



I like to have belt and braces for our meetings and felt that many would not have these sorts of vrieseas. So I decided on a back-up of photos to show on the screen. How wrong was I? There were as many plants as there were attendees! It didn't seem to matter that I had left my notes at home. The standard was very high even though we had had some nice rains to brighten up the plants. You see, these sorts of plants like water especially if it comes from the heavens. This is one reason why they grow like weeds in New Zealand where if it has not rained for three days they are in a drought!

So the removal of brown leaves and judicious use of scissors can work wonders.

The number of plants called 'Kiwi' reminded us of the New Zealand connection and that astute marketing and tissue culture can bring these sorts of plants at reasonable prices. This is different to the boutique market from northern NSW where so-called unique clones attain unique prices. Those of us who were into these sorts of plants in years past, knew the wisdom of waiting because offsets are rare and the only way to get a number of plants was to grow from seed. Luckily in those days we mainly grew species.

Species plants that had been brought in were *V. fosteriana*, *V. gigantea* and *V. hieroglyphica*. Even with the hybrids around the king is still *V. hieroglyphica*. We also saw the variation you get within the species *V. fosteriana*, which includes the supposed 'Red Chestnut'. For example even Seidel wrote about this situation in 1975, which I duly translated to English. This reads as follows

"SEEDS FROM THE SAME INFLORESCENCE OF BROMELIACEAE PRODUCE MANY TYPES OF DIFFERENT PLANTS by ALVIM SEIDEL CORUPA - SC

May meet cont.:

An interesting fact has been observed in my culture of Bromeliads, where for many years I have reproduced the rarest of species by seed.

It happens that the seeds from the same inflorescence of *Vriesea fosteriana* var. *seideliana* (my discovery) produce several types of very different plants, as the interested will be able to verify the plants here presented in enclosed pictures and descriptions.

Most of the referred seedlings were similar to the plant mother, but about 40% were very different.

Among the many different forms that I have been observing in the total batch, I only separated eight that I present to you Members of Congress, and whose characteristics are as follows;

Plant 1 – *Vriesea fosteriana* var. *seideliana* - This plant was discovered by me and described and published by P. Raulino Reitz and Dr. Lyman B. Smith, and that it produced the seeds of the variations that I will start to describe. etc.”



Vriesea fosteriana var. *seideliana*

Do not be too quick in saying hybrid seed because these are at supposedly F1 level where there is little difference in progeny. It is the next generation – F2 - when the fun starts with differences!

Despite the number of cultivar names given to *V. fosteriana* sellers will always think up another name because they see their clone is unique. The flavour of the month is currently *V. fosteriana* ‘Rubra’ on ebay. If you were prepared to grow seed from any *V. fosteriana* you can get your own variables in say 4 –5 years and you could even give them nurseryman’s names well before they reach maturity.

As for hybrids on display we had ones that originated in Qld, northern NSW, Sydney, New Zealand, and Hawaii, all using the same range of parents so it was difficult to tell them apart. Someone had brought in *V. ospinae* var. *gruberi*, which has blotches rather than glyphs on the leaves.

And, so to the photos where we could see how these plants can be grown under better conditions than we can provide. For example, *Vr. gigantea* var *seideliana* grown in Brazil. *V. platynema* var *platynema* (the true one!) as grown in Melbourne. *V. ‘Bianca’* as in New Zealand and ‘Red Chestnut’ as grown in Florida. We also saw how seedlings can vary from a supposed ‘Red Chestnut’. The last one revolved around *V. hieroglyphica* var. *zebrina* which was last seen in the wild in 1946 but was said to be happily growing in Queensland. Investigation of the flower parts in 2009 revealed that this plant bears no relationship to the formal description but is probably a hybrid of *V. hieroglyphica* and *V. fosteriana*. The original plant (or was it seed?) that got to Australia some 30 years ago is now being called ‘Hunter’ by discerning growers. What is interesting is that the same source, Seidel in Brazil, is still offering *V. hieroglyphica* var *zebrina* at a cheap price whereas officially this plant is probably extinct in the wild! Am I a doubting Thomas?



Vr. gigantea var *seideliana*



Vriesea 'Bianca'
photo by Derek Blucher



V 'Red Chestnut'



V. ospinae var. *gruberi*,



June Meeting from the Secretary’s desk

Bill tells me that nearly 50 people were at the meeting, which is an astonishing amount in view of the cold weather. They did not know either that Adam had obtained over 40 plants from Margaret Paterson. We knew there would be interest because of the number that had copies of Margaret’s book and had seen photos of her hybrids. Admittedly the offsets came in during winter instead of our warmer months but beggars cannot be choosers and if you are careful with the plants you should have no worries. Very little water and in the warmer part of your garden should do the trick.

June Meeting cont:

Putting them in a foam box is another idea. Remember they have come from Queensland. There is an incentive for the plants to succeed because I asked that they be brought in to the March 2011 meeting for the summer brag! Everyone was asked to retain their door ticket because they would be drawn again when they then had the option of a purchase. The system worked well.

We knew we had a DVD show coming up so there were not as many plants on the table as usual. Even so they gave some challenges to Bill and Derek who helped discuss them.

Our resident photographer Julie Batty took some photos and these will be dealt with first. We had two *Aechmea recurvata* plants with different names that needed a bit of research. Yes, I love this sort of enterprise and to show you I am not alone I quote from an article written by a Texan nearly 30 years ago "Bromeliads With A Touch of Texas by Edgar L. Smith in J Brom Soc 31(1): 36-7. 1981

We are all aware that some bromeliad growers are not interested in the "background" of their plants and sometimes, not even interested in the names. The nomenclature of hybrid bromeliads has certainly become confused and little can be done to eliminate the situation inherited from the past. Even though we are unable to trace the genealogy of our bromeliads, there are some bits of information about some plants - hybrids and particular clones - that can be gathered and passed on in an effort to add a bit of help or information on their background.

There are at least four plants, which I can readily think of which have a bit of Texas in their backgrounds. While the names of these plants well may be illegitimate, they do appear in collections and a few commercial plant listings. I offer these background notes only as a bit of interesting information."

All four plants are now in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register.

One plant in our display was called *Aechmea* 'Big Beauty' and is the first time I have had a photo of it for the records! Now for the history. In the early 1980's Grace Goode took pollen from her *Aechmea orlandiana* and put it on *Aechmea recurvata* var *benrathii*. She harvested the berries that were the result of the hybridising, grew the seed and called the progeny *Aechmea* 'Big Ben'. At that time she had too much seed so she sent some to Maureen Hick here in Adelaide. Maureen grew the seed on and for some reason decided to call her plants 'Big Beauty'. Were they different? I know at the time I could see no influence of *Aechmea orlandiana* and saw no reason to want a plant. Yes, 'Big Beauty' did have odd black markings on the leaf that may have come from the *A. orlandiana* but *A. recurvata* var *benrathii* can have odd markings on the leaf too as the painting by Fossari of a plant from habitat shows. I don't think that 'Big Beauty' has escaped from South Australia but I do know 'Big Ben' is in New Zealand. A photo is shown here and you can judge if you see differences because the Cultivar Register is noted that there are strong links between the two.



Aechmea 'Big Beauty'
(Photo by J. Batty)



Aechmea recurvata *benrathii* painting

AND so to the other *Aechmea recurvata* only here we had 'Suave' which had come from Queensland and I thought it was the Queenslanders up to their tricks again of just changing a name so they could sell their plant as new. The Bromeliad Cultivar Register online is a great source of information because I was able to find out that it originated in the US before 1976 as a special form of *Aechmea* v. *benrathii* and Don Beadle made the comment in 1998 "with appropriate personality?!". Julie Batty tells me she is going to grow her 'Suave' on to see if she can find significant differences. All I do know was that in the 1980's we were all in competition with each other to grow just one with black centre leaves. You achieved this with exposure to light. Too much sunlight and it turned brown like a herbarium specimen!



Aechmea 'Big Ben'



Aechmea 'Suave' (Photo's by J. Batty)

June Meeting cont:

It was good to see a different way of growing the small stoloniferous neoregelias other than a hanging pot but in a ceramic dish. It was all the more pleasing to see the label saying June Bennett and a collection number indicating a species. As Bill pointed out the closest we can get is *N. dungsiana*. You may also like to know that June Bennett was a livewire in the 1980's from Cairns having a flourishing Sugar Cane property. As far as I know she still grows broms.



N. dungsiana.

And there was Colin Waterman's unknown Billbergia, which had us stumped (and still stumped after looking at THE records). Bill thought 'Fantasia' and I am wondering if it is one of those masquerading under the species name of *B. saundersii* but is in reality a hybrid.



Colin's Billbergia (Photo by J. Batty)

Didn't *Neoregelia* 'Dream Baby' look colourful especially for winter and I was somewhat surprised it was around here even though it came via our Conference. You see this plant has its origins in Toowoomba where a variegated seedling appeared in a batch vaguely called 'Aussie Dream'. I say vaguely because nobody knows what an 'Aussie Dream' looks like because it is a term used for plants that came from Bob Larnach in NSW in the 1990's



Neoregelia 'Dream Baby'

photo by Rob Smythe

Is there going to be resurgence in *Cryptanthus* growing in Adelaide? If so, then I hope new growers heeded my warning. Keep them warm and on the dry side in the winter months. I suppose you will always get keen growers and not so keen growers but 20 years ago the keen ones made glass terrariums (coffins?) and were able to grow a wide range of species and hybrids in this genus. On extra cold days they even put blankets over the top of their terrariums to keep off the chill. Watering was also a delicate matter because problems could arise if any water stayed in the leaf axils over-night. I know that Maureen Hick for one would have a stamp collector's puffer to blow out excess moisture. On the other hand we had those who said that *Cryptanthus* easily grew in the shadehouse under the benches where they were protected somewhat from the driving rain. Needless to say these carefree types only really grew the more common hardy types. So if you are prepared to go that extra yard you will be rewarded.

It was good to see *Deuterocohnia brevifolia* with its green tubular flowers and also that old favourite *Orthophytum* 'What' is still around.



Deuterocohnia brevifolia



Orthophytum 'What'

June Meeting cont:

As I said, *Vriesea* 'Yellow Tail' has a tale to tell, with worldwide implications. If you are interested, read on!



Vriesea platynema

Vriesea 'Corralina' by Derek Butcher 2002

This name has intrigued me for some years now and had me thinking originally that it was a species. The problem was that the plant bears no relationship to the *Vriesea platynema* that it is supposed to look like! In 1870 *Vriesea corallina* (note one 'r' and two 'l's') came into being. While I do not know who actually decided that it was synonymous with *Vriesea platynema* this information is shown in Flora Neotropica Monograph No. 14 Tillandsioideae by Smith and Downs 1977 page 1126.

In 1900 there must have been an extra special clone because *Vriesea corallina rubra superba* was named (Refer International Checklist of Bromeliad hybrids by Padilla 1979). Regrettably no reference was given and I have been unable to trace this naming. I have also been unable to trace how a plant of this name originating in Europe but not currently being grown there, got to the USA seemingly 60 to 70 years later! In the Preliminary listing of all known cultivar and grex names for the Bromeliaceae by Don Beadle 1991 this had become 'Corralina Rubra Superba' (note two 'r's and one 'l') and this spelling persisted into the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry 1998.

In May 2000 John Arden of California pointed out that the photograph we had on the Website <http://fcbs.org> for 'Corralina' from Ed Doherty of Texas was a plant that the late Charles Wiley, also of California circulated as 'Yellow Tail' in the 1970's. This is the best lead yet as to the true identity of this plant because clearly there are no links whatsoever with *Vriesea platynema*. So I have entered 'Yellow Tail' in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register and if your 'Corralina Rubra Superba' or even 'Corralina' looks like the photograph of 'Yellow Tail' we suggest you change its name.

The problem does not end here because there appears to be another 'Corralina' in New Zealand thanks to advice received from Andrew Flower. It seems safer to treat this as 'Corralina Kiwi' even though it may have had its origins in the USA.

Another interesting development is that there is another plant, which is identical in all respects to *Vriesea* 'Corralina' except its scape is at 90 degrees and not 70 degrees. We do not know this plant's origins but it has been called *Vriesea* 'Yellow and Orange'

This is yet another instance of lack of attention to naming of hybrids and trying to trace origins by hearsay. Now we have easy access to a Register, information should be added to it while it is current and not 30 years later.

No questions were asked so we were all ready for the presentation by Lainie Stainer. My word, the new Librarian has been busy. 30 years ago we were very keen and we had a video cameraman by the name of Ken Robinson. Those were the days when the camera was so heavy you really needed a wheelbarrow. Anyway, there would be me getting Ken to follow me around Bromeliad gardens around Australia with him huffing and puffing behind me. We played at trying to make good tapes by deleting out of focus photos etc and copies were put in the Library. These were just tapes which you could only play on your TV so to have them at a meeting was a "no no" because we did not want to bring in say 6 TV sets so that all present could see what was going on. Now we have a projector linked to a computer and Lainie had the 'mad' idea of transferring the tapes to DVD that can be played on either a TV or Computer. We saw the prototype of her efforts and despite being 30 years old I think the photos and colours stood up well.

Grace Goode's garden in those days was a Mecca although you had to be on your best behaviour if you expected to be invited! Admittedly I had more nostalgia than most but many saw the sort of plants we grew then are still fashionable today.

June Meeting cont:

We even saw how we used to sell plants at Shopping Malls when they allowed us to do so and I still do not know why we had the laughs about short shorts and white legs that were the vogue so long ago. Time ran out otherwise you would have been treated to a plant identification disagreement where a plant is still being grown in Australia as *Aechmea* 'Derek's Organensis Ha Ha!'

Lainie is continuing to transfer detail to the new medium so they will be available on loan from the Library. Now we have the facilities we may even repeat the 'medicine' but on a different topic some time in the future.



A section of Grace's garden in the 1980's



Grace Goode.

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