

# S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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Editor- Derek Butcher. Assist Editor – Bev Masters



**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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in May, &  
August & no meeting in December or  
unless advised otherwise

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS  
WELCOME.**



Aechmea burnt torch Peter Franklin

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

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## Meeting dates:-

**2011 dates:-** Oct 9 (Garden visit), Nov 13 Plant exchange, Special Afternoon tea, Auction & display plants.

**Special Events:-** Sat. **October 29** Bromeliad extravaganza – Show & Sales

**2012 dates:** 8/1/2012, 12/2/2012, 11/3/2012, [31/3/2012 Sales](#), [1/4/2012 Sales](#), 8/4/2012, 6/5/2012,  
10/6/2012, 8/7/2012, 5/8/2012, 9/9/2012, 14/10/2012, [27/10/2012 Sales](#), 11/11/2012,

**Applications for membership always welcome.**

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb.



### Roving Reporter Sept.

Because of the internet I was able to recently help solve a naming problem of a species *Neoregelia* being grown in Russia. I doubted the name and referred the matter to Elton Leme who was able to confirm it is as *Neo. odorata*. Vitaly told me it had the scent of Lily of the Valley and many of you will wonder what this is and yet it is a fairly common flower to expect after the snow has melted in Europe. What intrigued me even more was that here was a person growing and flowering a species in cold Moscow and that as far as I am aware has not been on the wanted list of Australian importers who seem to prefer hybrids.

And so to the plants on display where attendees were lucky to be entertained by the Roving Reporter. Yes, there were a few species to keep him satisfied. You must have noticed my different approach to Adam regarding the plants on display. Mine is more towards plant identification and names which I find fascinating and I think we had a bit of a laugh and learnt something along the way!

First we will start on species. I wonder if Penny Seekamp went home and checked on her *Billbergia distachia* to see which of the 4 varieties it really was. You may recall I said it had blue tipped sepals and totally green petals. This means that the name var *straussiana* is correct but Penny only gets 9 out of 10 because -----! Neo 'Tunisia' is one of the better hybrids from 'Hannibal Lector' because it does not offset prolifically. Some may say that frequent offsetting means lots of plants for sale but to my mind a crowded pot means the plants are out of shape. Anyway, if you do chance to look at the Bromeliad Cultivar Register you will see that the parents are quoted as 'Hannibal Lector' x 'Punctate' whereas I was raving about 'Rafa'. The interesting thing here is that Chester Skotak did not want his 'special' plant to be linked to the common or garden 'Punctate' and wanted to call it 'Rafa' after the chap who found it in the wild. The problems of 'Punctate' or its alleged name *Neo. punctatissima* goes back 40 years when it was wrongly linked in Hawaii with a form of *Neo ampullacea* and has been confused ever since.

And then to a species called Neo. 'Fireball' – yes it is species with a cultivar name. We just have to wait for the taxonomists to give it a Latin name! It got to Florida from Brazil over 50 years ago and it took many years for hybridists to get it to mate with other species. Remember that it is in a hybridists blood that they can improve on nature. When Nat DeLeon was growing on his offsets he got one offset to show evidence of variegation. Anyone who has been growing Bromeliads for a few years will know that they can get very excited when first they see whitish stripes on the leaves of an offset. All is excitement but then everything stops! This plant with very pale variegation got to Australia in the 1980's with everyone who grew the plant hoping for more pronounced variegation. Alas NO. Meanwhile the hybridists had broken the fertility barrier and a myriad of hybrids occurred. Some wanted to create a variegated 'Fireball' and they succeed in name only because it was a hybrid not a species!



Neoregelia Fireball variegated  
(Photo Ross Little)

So brightly coloured variegated 'Fireball' are available by the dozen but the 'true' one is still rare. I think only mad Aussies are growing this clone because even Nat DeLeon in Florida has forgotten its existence. We saw 'Fallan' which is derived from the 'F' in 'Fireball' and Allan from Allan Ladd.

We saw an *Aechmea bromeliifolia* from George that looked a bit too squat for me but then it is variable having a wide range of habitats around South America. There are also species that look similar and where there is great discussion as to what is synonymous with what. Add to this the fact that hybridists have also been playing with this group. So to my mind George's plant is either a squat *A. bromeliifolia* or 'Burnt Torch'. All of you must know by now that the flowerhead for *Aechmea pineliana* is like *A. bromeliifolia* but with whiskers!



Aechmea Bromeliifolia (Photo J. Batty)

**Roving Reporter Sept cont:**

And so to the mystery object which I said reminded me of Ivy Kirby of 'Ivy's Root' fame and I think I was right because if Warren's plant flowers blue then I think it is *Aechmea* 'Lalinda'  
I wonder whether Warren's problem is caused by him not feeding the local blackbirds. This means they scratch around knocking over labels. Whatever it is, it gives us something to discuss.



Mystery object J. Batty

*Aechmea recurvata* has been given many names in the past by taxonomists, which are treated by Lyman Smith as synonyms and I find the history of each interesting even if it means translating from the German or Latin. Carl Mez, another great Bromeliad taxonomist who was ending his career just as Lyman Smith was starting up, wrote his Monograph on Bromeliaceae in 1935. Even though it is in Latin I treat my copy with kid gloves. He looks at this group differently with all at species level. We all know that *Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata* has an inflorescence with a scape which means it is above the leaf rosette but Smith includes in his synonyms a plant without a scape. Confused? Well, I am! One thing I did pick up was that you follow Mez you can stop checking whether the floral bracts are prickly or not because the base of the leaves is dark violet in var. *benrathii* but green in var. *ortgiesii*

In this scenario it is inevitable that *Aechmea recurvata* has lots of cultivar names. Because it is very variable growers like to think that their particular form is different and needs a cultivar name. One goes back to earlier than 1973 when it was named by Hummel as 'Cardinalis'. Hummel did not really describe this form and we can only go on information written by others in the same period. The 'Cardinalis' is said to come from the red inflorescence and linked to var. *benrathii* and not the red leaves you often see in *Aechmea recurvata*. All this data has only been recently gleaned by checking old Journals and plant lists. So mistakenly, the name has been given to any *Aechmea recurvata* that has red leaves. It must be 40 years ago that Gwen Haebich, one of our first members, had Bromeliads with peculiar names from her mother down Mount Gambier way. She resisted any name changes! Anyway, she had this 'Cardinalis' which never really coloured up and we just grew the plant for nostalgic reasons. Guess what? Our plant does not have prickles on the floral bracts in line with var. *benrathii* and is proof of its closeness to previous records. So what do we do with the 'Cardinalis' that was all red and had an inflorescence like var. *recurvata* We know it is grown in Sydney under this name and they are not going to change their name so if you are a purist you could say 'Cardinalis ex Sydney'.



*Aechmea Cardinalis* (Sydney) J Batty



In Adelaide, South Australia  
*Aechmea Cardinalis* D Butcher

We also saw a very large *Aechmea recurvata* that Julie Batty had tentatively called 'Big Mama'. Was this the correct decision? In these sorts of cases I suggest that reference be made to the Bromeliad Cultivar Register and here is what is said:

"AECHMEA 'Big Mama Recurvata' named by persons unknown before 1983

Cultivar of *recurvata* v. *ortgiesii* - Bromeliad Treasury said, "Our clone ..turns a brilliant orange earlier in its maturity than the ordinary species and maintains it longer when grown in 80-100% sun - no fertilizer and frequent watering in summer - 12" tall" - Large and succulent becoming yellow-orange in full sun in cooler climes - used in California landscaping - very attractive. Originally in Register as 'Big Mama' but name amended to differentiate from the other 'Big Mama'. Recurvata Group"



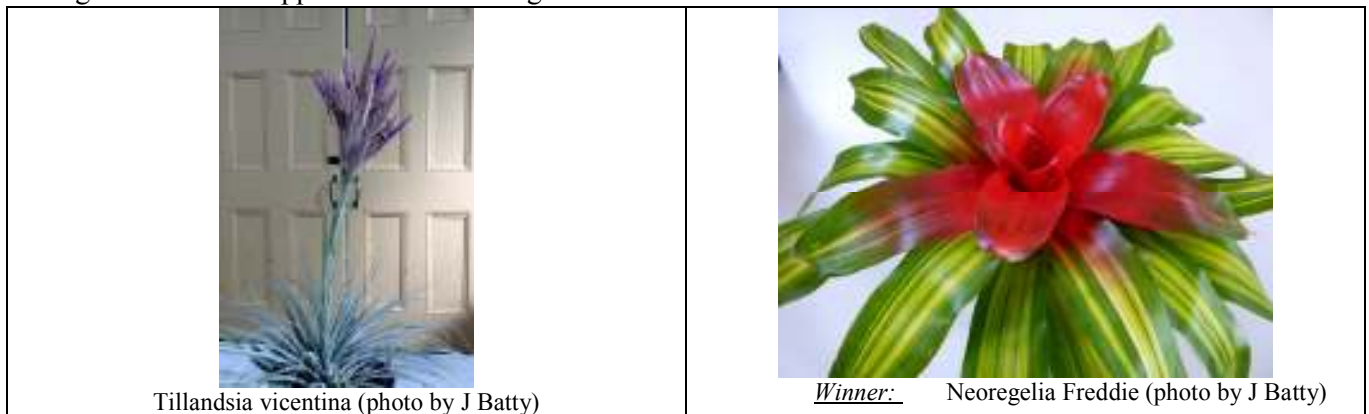
**Roving Reporter Sept cont:**

Because of the history of this plant it is possible it got to Australia and if the plant flowers like a var. *ortgiesii* I see no reason why the name 'Big Mama' cannot be used.

Now to a bit of controversy which is a fantastic way to remember correct names of plants. It all revolved around *Tillandsia* 'Nez Misso' one plant correctly named and one way out! If you have a plant you think is *Tillandsia aeranthos* and it has grey petals then think 'Nez Misso'. Here the female members when asked said "Lavender" but at least two male members said "Grey". Perhaps the problem was a trick of the light streaming in through the windows. In any event it was an odd colour. Details are given in a separate article on a bit of history.

Big Len was raving over a flowering *T. vicentina* on display and I told him to wait until I got around talking about it. To me there were two surprises about the plant. 1. Why was it flowering at this time of year? 2. How is it that it got missed in Adam's penchant of playing with Ethrel that we found about in the main talk.

Finally, I was warned I must mention the winner of the popular vote otherwise Bev would do horrible things to me! Lainey made the 'Gold' stars available – one per attendee – and even counted them after they had been lodged against the plant of choice! The winner was 'Freddie' – a variegated *Neoregelia* hybrid brought in by Adam. You may not know that the European nurseries are finding it cheaper to get Asian countries to do their propagating and shipping back plants ready to flower. This plant seems to be among these because the name was given in the Philippines before coming to Australia.



Main talk by Adam Bodzioch on the trials and tribulations of inducing flowers (and offsets) but using the chemical Ethrel. I found it fascinating and dare I say better than what Adam did in Darwin. Perhaps he was more relaxed in his second presentation but then I may have been more relaxed too! I am always telling new members that a TRUE Bromeliad grower is one with patience where the plant may well outlive the grower before flowering. Adam is more impatient and tries experiments.

***Tillandsia* 'Nez Misso' or the *T. aeranthos* type with grey petals!**

By Butcher 2004

For some time now this plant has caused raised eyebrows as to whether it was a hybrid made by Nez Misso and if so what were the parents?

At the *Tillandsia* 'Conference' at Albury, Australia, Easter 2004 we were all agreed that 'Nez Misso' was the non-caulescent, sturdy leaved, grey petalled plant and was what Ken Woods was calling 'Grisea'. THE caulescent one with finer leaves and more bluish petals was known as 'Nez Misso' by Ken Woods but known as 'Bergeranthus' by Chris Larson! Clearly some action had to be taken!

Maurice Kellett said he can remember as far back as his 'Nez Misso' days in the 1960's when the plant was known as seed from Oeser to Nez Misso. So the plant did not originate as a hybrid made by Nez Misso. Is it a hybrid? Why the link to 'grisea'?

There was a *Tillandsia dianthoidea* var *grisea* described by Guillaumin in 1947



*Tillandsia* 'Nez Misso' by D. Butcher

118. *Tillandsia dianthoidea* Rossi var. *grisea* Guillaum. var. nova.

The scape bracts and the floral bracts are noticeably the colour of those of the type, the petals, instead of being an intense purplish blue (cfr. LOISELEUR - DESLONGCHAMPS: *Herbier general de l'amateur*, V, t. 304, *Botanical Register*, XVI, t. 1338, *Revue horticole*, LXXVII, p. 463), they are a dull slate grey, which if viewed in minute detail, shows many, and minuscule purple dots on a white base very lightly tinted with blue. Marnier ( f. 15, 1947) had it at the Villa Thuret in Antibes for 7 or 8 years

This variety was treated in Smith & Downs as a synonym of *T. bergeri*. BUT *T. dianthoidea* var. *dianthoidea* was treated as a synonym of *T. aeranthis*! I cannot understand the reasoning for this because the difference between *T. aeranthis* and *T. bergeri* is not just the petal colour but also the wavyness of *T. bergeri* petals. This is not strange when you read the following;

***Tillandsia bergeri*, a Many Splendored Species** by Robert W. Read in J. Brom. Soc. 38(4):147-9. 1988  
“..... *T. bergeri* keys out next to *T. aeranthis* (Loiseleur) L.B. Smith on page 689 of Smith and Downs (1977) where it is distinguished solely on the color of the floral bracts ("pale rose" in the former, "dark red" in the latter) and the petals ("dull blue to white" in the former, "dark blue" in the latter). However, in the text description, *T. bergeri* (p. 837) is said to have stamen "filaments faintly plicate," while *T. aeranthis* with its nine synonyms of species and varieties has stamen "filaments plicate." In the three specimens illustrated here I found no indication of plications immediately after full anthesis, with only a suggestion of plications in a couple of buds. In his new book on tillandsias, Paul Isley (1987) also makes a point of stressing how indistinguishable these two species are in the vegetative or non-blooming state.  
.....Michael Rothenberg, who supplied the plants for this study, suggested that a comparison of the wavy versus rigid character of the petals of the two species might provide some useful information.”



#### **Roving Reporter Oct 9 Garden visit**

I don't know about you but I had a chauffeur by the name of Trevor Seekamp to take me to the grand garden party at Strathalbyn. Colin Waterman was another chauffeur who took down two Ladies. Including all other chauffeurs I say "Thank You.". You were so successful some 50 people attended the garden of Rhonda and Geoff Jarrett. I do not know the exact figure. Usually I rely on a head count by Colin Waterman but this time he had a moving target.

If there is one thing that is certain about Spring it is the unpredictable weather. It was sunny in Adelaide when we left, with a few clouds. We had a few showers on the way and things looked promising as we drove into Strathalbyn. Alas, it soon clouded over and any who has been to Scotland will know what a Scotch mist is. Those into derivation of names will be aware of the Scottish connection with Strathalbyn meaning that is why they can get Scotch mist. Anyway, some got wet but the weather did improve by early afternoon. Those who sheltered under the marquee can thank Hon Sec. Bev for her other life before Broms when she needed such things.

Lunch was served at 12.30. Not quite up to the Bute standard (who could beat that?) but lots to eat and nobody went hungry. I am sure that Rhonda was pleased that outside caterers were involved with such a hungry horde. It was interesting to note that some brought their own chilled white wine with which to dine in style. Ron said the Orange juice has Vodka in it but I could not taste it nor feel the effects.

Wasn't it great to see Pam Whisson there? AND also to hear the news that Bob is progressing well.



Bali section of garden. (Photo by J. Batty)



A covered walk through section (Photo by J. Batty)



***Roving Reporter garden visit cont:***

No doubt many of you would have seen Len proudly showing off his flowering *Tillandsia confertiflora* that he had collected a year ago in his travels and adventure in Ecuador as we saw in the recent talk he gave us. Yes, it had survived quarantine and had been ready to flower in the Autumn but halted due to winter. What usually happens in such cases is that the plant forgets its intentions and just dries up, so Len was extra lucky. Mind you, he got a bit of ribbing on the internet on Tillnuts regarding its name but then when you find plants in the wild it is very rare to find them with a name tag. Like some members at our meetings!



Perhaps a word about neoregelias that have predominant red lines on the leaves of which there were several in the garden. There is no known species that has this trait – all are of hybrid origin and have been around for as long as I have been interested in Bromeliads! I put these markings in the same category as the more common white stripes where very very few have offsets that retain the same markings. In many cases, even the one plant can have different markings on each leaf. In other words it is erratic and cannot be planned. Years ago, Len had an ‘Amazing Grace’ where more leaves were solid red for one half and the other half green. A photo really got the Queenslanders and Floridians concerned that such a thing would happen in Adelaide. We did not tell them it has not happened since!

How many went to the Glyph corner? It is where Geoff seems to grow all his Vrieseas with the wiggly lines on the leaves (hence Glyph). Where were the brown tips? Where were the basal dry leaves you expect, coming out of winter? AND who was growing TWO *Vriesea hieroglyphica*. *V. hieroglyphica* has been considered king for some 100 years but hard to get hold of because the trend these days seems to be hybrids, and yet none can capture the markings on the leaves. You may have noticed that one of the other vrieseas was putting up a spike that was green with darker spots and things will not improve when it gets to flowering. The spike will elongate and at night the dirty yellow flowers will emerge. It is definitely a hybrid with a bit of flavour from *V. fosteriana* but as to a closer identification Geoff will have to check all the photos on the BCR database! But then, it may be ‘Speckles’ which Julie Batty suggests it may well be. The problem here is that although this plant is widespread in Australia, the name has not yet been registered so there is no official photo! Anecdotal evidence suggests it has links to *V. fosteriana* but also ‘Honolulu Babies’. ‘Honolulu Babies’ does not link to Hawaii but SE Queensland! Such are the problems of hybridists naming hybrids and doing no more. The beauty in these Glyph Vrieseas is in the leaf patterns not the flowers or bracts. Many mentioned how well the *V. ‘Kiwi Sunset’* was growing.



Did you notice the *Aechmea ‘Ensign’* without blotches or dead bits on the leaves? Can you remember the auction a couple of years back when Geoff spend his weekly pension in out-bidding others and some mumbled, “That won’t grow down Strath way!” Is the secret in growing all your hard-to-grow all together to shame those that under-perform? Or does Geoff speak to them sternly? Some were intrigued by the 4-wheeled carts? Does Geoff hitch them to his motorised chair to pull them to a better position depending on the weather? The many signs showed that bromeliads were there to be found if you looked, and did not get confused.

***Roving Reporter garden visit cont***

The difference between the Jarretts' garden and say the Butchers' is that they have other plants AND Bromeliads in planned positions, whereas we have Bromeliads on benches in serried rows and not looking for aesthetic balance. Where were all the dead leaves and weeds so necessary for a 'Bromeliad' garden? Surely these are indicators used by the Bromeliad grower to know when to start work or start watering!

Thank you Geoff & Rhonda for enticing us into the countryside and letting us look at your garden.

**THANKS RHONDA & GEOFF**

**Member article**

**Strathalbyn Home Garden Visit.**

What a great day we had at Jeff and Rhonda's home and garden. These home garden visits are great for a number of reasons. We get to see how we each grow our plants and I guess more importantly it is a more social atmosphere where we get to chat with all our members and spend more time together.

I think we have a pretty nice garden and I also think that I am pretty good with my hands and can make most anything out of metal or timber but after seeing Jeff and Rhonda's handiwork and garden I felt a little wanting.

The garden was incredible and Jeff's shed was amazing. I would dearly love to be let loose in there.

Jeff and Rhonda's talents have to be seen to be believed. Jeff's furniture building is incredible; chairs, tables, wardrobes and an electronic organ all with ornate carving; just fantastic!

Rhonda's knitting, crocheting, quilting and other craftwork was also amazing. What a talented couple.

Jeanne and I thoroughly enjoyed the day at Strathalbyn. The Cymbidium Orchid Club that we belong to used to have these hobby grower visits at least once a year but haven't for some time now.

I would like our club to have at least one home visit each year because it's a good social event as well as seeing how we each grow our bromeliads

**Peter Hall**



**"WANTED"**



Vriesea Bianca  
Vrieseas Ro Ro

Bev  
Bev

83514876

Purchase

**Message from happy members.....**

Many thanks to all that responded to our request for plants under the "Wanted" segment in the last gazette. It is a great concept and has helped to expand our 'species' section of our outdoor brom. garden.

Pauline & Geoff Edwards.'

## General reminder

The gazette will be published 3 monthly in 2012, we would like to increase the content and it is your publication so we encourage all members to share their “Bromaholic” growing experiences.

### Thoughts from a couple of not so newbies

My wife & I have always been collectors of plants. In the past it has been mainly ornamental conifers & Bonsai. When we moved to Adelaide, these cold weather lovers did not travel with us and the Bonsai took too long to get a result.

And so it turned out that my wife started to collect Bromeliads, first there were “living air plants” & then all sorts of other bright & sometimes outrageously coloured plants. At first my involvement was limited to how to fix these little plants to bits of timber. And where can we put a shelf for these plants, and can you make something to hang this on!?

Then I started to take an interest in these peculiar little plants called Tillandsias! Here started the problem! I’m told it’s like many forms of addiction, one is too many, and a thousand is not enough!!!!

At first, it’s a bit like John Catlan describes it in his book under the Mango tree: you’re happy to collect almost anything, you don’t have a wish list, there’re all great! And then quietly but very very surely the obsession begins. Firstly we managed to fill an 8 metre by 4 metre pergola, then there were more shelves and then some hanging rails and then we needed a shade house. The shade house is 12 m long & can easily accommodate 2000 plants. (We’re already planning how to expand along the next fence with more shelving!)

Now we have entered what Mr. Catlan calls the second phase, we both have lists of must haves and we are actively seeking out people who have the objects of our desires.

But wait, there’s more, the Crypts have a demountable hot house for winter, it’s heated, via a digitally controlled fan heater, which also allows us to buy in pups from Qld in the middle of winter and they don’t go into shock.

The questions, the endless questions, how do I grow this, what do I do about that, the answers are almost the same; you largely work it out as you go. It takes a while to believe the advice that yes you are the best person to judge the environment that you share with your plants.

One of the better aspects of the Brom world, are the great people that we are starting to meet, I suppose it helps when you have a common addiction!

Where do we go from here? Who knows, the direction of the collection is continually evolving, we are merely passengers on the journey of the Brom!

Ray Clark



### Membership renewal

Membership renewal forms are attached to this Gazette for your convenience and are due in Feb 2011.