

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

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Born 1977 and still offsetting!'

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Join us on Face book



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.**

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

MEETING & SALES 2012 dates: 6/5/12 (Billbergia) 10/6/12 (Skotak hybrids), 8/7/12,(Derek's presentation) 5/8/12(Winter Brag), 9/9/2012 (Guest speaker- Neutrog presentation), 14/10/12 (Jongs nursery visit – Mt Compass) **27/10/12 Sales**, 11/11/12 Pup auction, special afternoon tea ,**earlier start** (Committee 1230PM. -General meeting 130PM)

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb. – **NOW DUE**

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International Ladies day

Bunnings Woodville invited a variety of organisations including our Society to participate in a Ladies night as part of this special day .

Chicken & chips, with a range of cold drinks were provided for evening meal, then a range of sandwiches & coffee etc offered for supper . Various staff members ensured that there was appropriate support if we needed it.

It was a successful evening & great exposure for our Society with many stopping to admire the Bromeliads on display and quite a few sought solutions to problems they encountered growing them in their gardens. There was interest in our coming sales and many flyers & leaflets were handed out.

Bunnings have also invited us to be involved in other similar events such as Car Park sales (the next is on our sales day) & if we are unable to attend our flyers / leaflets etc can be available for customers



View of Bromeliads on display



Another view of display



Roving Reporter March 2012

Lots of people and lots of plants to brag about in Summer Brag. This is annual event that was originally meant to cover plants that had survived our obligatory 40C plus heat waves which were thankfully missing this Summer. So what was there to brag about? Our compere, Adam seemed to think so.

Roving Reporter March cont:

First I must mention those members who see stars at every opportunity and will deal with the Popular Choice. 6 stars appeared next to Julie Batty's *Aechmea nudicaulis* 'Zebra' but much fewer against mine with the same name. This is the second month this has happened. What is it that Julie has that I don't? *Aechmea nudicaulis* is a great species for a collection because there are so many forms. Some growers get technical by deciding which of the formal varieties (there are 10 to pick from) but because this species has a wide range of territory from Mexico and the West Indies down to the southern parts of Brazil I always found my plant seemed halfway between two forms. It seemed much simpler to use cultivar names because of leaf markings. 'Zebra' is but one and was a name given to an unusually barred specimen by Peter Tristram from Coff's Harbour in 2006



Aechmea nudicaulis 'Zebra'
(photo J Batty)

. Next, running a close second was *Guzmania* 'Firecracker' from Adam. I usually check up on Adam because in many cases he shows a plant which is so new it has not been registered. In this case it is a real oldie having been 'grandfathered' into the system in 2001 by Herb Plever who has been the Editor of the New York newsletter – Bromeliana' – since the year dot. He always seems to attend World Bromeliad Conferences and religiously takes photos. In this case his photo was so old he could not remember which year it was taken although he did remember that Jeff Kent had started it all. We do not know parentage or if it has a non-variegated sister. At the same number of stars was a *Canistrum seidelianum*, but we do not know who bragged about it. The genus *Canistrum* seems to have got a bad reputation for ease of growing in Adelaide and yet if kept on the dry side in Winter they will give satisfaction. They may be shy in flowering but who worries about that when you can have the black blotched leaves to look at.



Guzmania 'Firecracker' (Photo A Bodzioch)

Everybody likes a good sport but in gardening parlance it means something totally different and relates to a plant's ability to mutate without the help of sex. In other words an offset can look completely different to the 'mother' plant. The most common example is variegated leaves and one example was *Neoregelia* 'Reynella Rebel'. From the same stables we all saw an odd looking *Neoregelia* 'Pepper' or should I say half odd because Sue Schrahei maintained the red leaved plant in the same pot was a sport too. Most present agreed that Sue had been sampling Cab Sav or something similar. The challenge is for Sue to remove the plant from the pot and send us a photo to prove they are joined like Siamese twins.

On the same vein can you remember Adam holding up Neo 'Predator'? I think it had a creamish centre line to the leaf. Neo. 'Predator' first came on the market from Peter Tristram with a creamish edge to the leaf and when it sported to show a reverse variegation he called it 'Predatress'. To me this shows instability and growers have to remember where the stripes are, so they can give it its proper name. On the same vein we had Len Colgan showing us a hybrid he had got from Herb Hill in Florida which had flowered but produced an offset with red edges to the leaves. Had he borrowed someone's lipstick? Time will tell if it is a true sport. It seems to be nature's way to produce these varying sports by the hundreds and many a time I have watched this phenomenon disappear in the next offset. As I have said, ad nauseum – a bromeliad grower must learn patience.

Roving reporter March 2012 cont:

As to be expected there were many *Neoregelia* hybrids on show and it was pleasing that most had proper names on them. And the owners had tried to get a maximum of colour by exposing the plants to as much sunlight as they could. This can mean the odd leaf having its surface with a bit of skin peeling which even human beings get when there is a sudden burst of heat. To me it is nothing to worry about as long as the whole plant does not go brown because a newcomer had been advised they need full sun. This generally means a knee-jerk reaction when plants are then planted under the lemon tree and you get a *Neoregelia* without colour and with strappy leaves. For example I am trying to get Rose – you know the one with the candid camera – to give her neoregelias more light. A blast from the past was Penny's (*spectabilis x marmorata*) which originated in Florida in the 1960's when Julian Nally sold them by the thousand. 12 years ago I felt it needed a proper name and called it 'Julian Nally' – wasn't that clever?! I had hoped that Australians, at least, would have heeded the call. Perhaps we can get Penny to check the Cultivar Register and decide if my guess is right as to its name.

Julie Batty took the photo of *Edmundoa lindenii* var *rosea* because she wanted me to write about this plant, how difficult was it to grow and why I called it the hairy *Nidularium*! It was introduced to the botanic world in 1869 and nobody really knew what genus it belonged to. It was variously linked to *Nidularium*, *Guzmania*, *Canistrum*, *Aechmea*, and *Billbergia*. Its final resting place was in *Edmundoa* by Elton Leme in 1997. It can be found up to 300m in the Atlantic Forest in Brazil in the states of Espirito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, so it is quite widespread. There are not many genera that have woolly inflorescences. You can understand *Puya* being that way because it can be so cold up in the Andes and you may ponder over *Hohenbergia*, and of course there is Maureen Hicks pride and joy *Aechmea mollis* which when it flowers looks like cat's furball. So for *Edmundoa* think of a *Nidularium* with a furry inflorescence. This is best seen when the plants starts to flower. Both *Edmundoa lindenii* var *lindenii* with its green primary bracts and var *rosea* with its pink primary bracts grow up to 1.5 metres in diam in the wild or in Queensland and probably Adelaide under the lemon tree. Usually you can keep them to about 1m diam so you don't grow many. They like shade that you give to *Nidularium*. So, Julie, get rid of half a dozen of your Neo's and get one *Edmundoa*. They are great to grow.



Edmundoa lindenii var *rosea*
(photo J Batty)

What do you do if you have a *Vriesea* whose leaves have wriggly lines on them and you have no label? That was a dilemma that Bev Masters was in but the plant was good enough to brag about. First you can put *Vriesea* on the label. Next you can add Glyph Group. Now for the tricky bit. If it is in flower you can try to identify it because much has been written about what various measurements you can look for. Now for the guessing game. Species plants were prevalent 20 years ago because you exchanged offsets. This was not fast enough for some so hybrids were done, either intentionally or unintentionally.

About 5 years ago it seemed that everybody was on the bandwagon with purchasers not really aware that the colour of the leaf could change several times to when it actually flowered. So what might have looked vibrant when young, it sort of lost this as it aged – something like humans!

We know that you are supposed to look for a narrow range of similarities when trying to identify a hybrid or Cultivar but with a species you can expect some variation. This is why we can suggest to Bev that she puts *Vriesea* aff. *platynema* on her label. This is how botanists identify a plant when they don't know the answer because aff. stands for affinity. If she is really daring she can drop the 'aff' and check things out when the plant flowers.

Roving Reporter March 2012 cont:

Wow, did you see that *Aechmea* 'Pickaniny'. Huge to my mind and yet the name was given in Florida in 1959 for a plant that was supposed to be dwarf as the name implies. When you look up the Bromeliad Cultivar Register you will see some 14 names (non-variegated plants) said to be stand out selections of *Aechmea orlandiana* in the 1960's and some seem to be around some 40 years later.

Who is the potterer up in your household? Do they get complaints when they lose a label? Well, we had problems with a *Nidularium* which was next to an almost identical plant called Nid 'Krakatoa' so called by the Vics because this form of *Nid. innocentii* had ultra red molten lava coloured primary bracts. With a name like that, everybody wanted it. Yes, the primary bracts were a stand-out colour but reference to the Bromeliad Cultivar Register made us realise the name was really 'Orange Innocent'. This has an interesting story in that it had been grown in the Brisbane area for some 29 years as 'Nidularium from Brazil' Because all *Nidularium* come from Brazil it was not a good distinguishing name which is why 'Orange Innocent' came into being.



Nid 'Krakatoa' (Photo D Butcher)



Nid. 'Orange Innocent' (photo J Batty)

Adam showed a flowering *Fascicularia bicolor* which is a rare event for most of us. What happens on most occasions is that you have a clump in some forgotten part of your garden and for some reason you do not get many to flower. As we saw, this wait is worth it when a drab green prickly plant decides to go red in the centre. This plant was around and offsets exchanged when our Society was formed in 1977 and had various names given to it. In 1999 a learned paper (and complicated!) was published on this Chilean plant and it was shown that only one species name was needed and that was *F. bicolor*. If you want to take cross-sections of leaves you may get to identify the two subspecies. So if you have a rockery, this may be worth growing. Coming from Chile it does not mind our chilly winters.



Fascicularia bicolor (photo J Batty)

There were several *Tillandsia* in flower which was a bit of a surprise because usually *Tillandsia* shut up shop in the hot summer days. One that did catch the eye was a *Tillandsia oropezana* that Len had obtained from Lotte Hromadnik in Austria. The problem is that it does not tally entirely with the description and discussion is continuing on these variables

Yes, there were many plants on display such was the interest of members most stayed to the bitter end, but luckily did not miss the last bus home.



Tillandsia oropezana (photo J Batty)

EXTRAVAGANZA- DISPLAY & SALES DAYS.



Section of display plants (photo by J Hall)



Tillandsia display (photo by J Hall)

Trophy & Prize winners

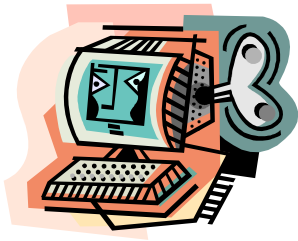
Margaret Reppin Trophy	1 st M Butcher 2 nd T Seekamp	<i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia</i> <i>Hechtia</i> sp
Presidents Trophy	1 st J. Batty 2 nd M. Butcher <u>Highly commended</u> B. Treloar A. Bodzioch	<i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> 'Zebra' <i>Billbergia</i> 'Touch of Grey' <i>Billbergia</i> 'Hallelujah' <i>Orthophytum glabrum</i>
Gummow Trophy	1 st J. Batty 2 nd M. Butcher	<i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> 'Zebra' <i>Deuterocohnia brevifolia</i>
Marie Robinson Trophy	1 st A. Bodzioch 2 nd A Bodzioch	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Tiger Tim' <i>Tillandsia cyanea</i> var <i>tricolor</i>
Josie Tonkin Trophy	1st D Butcher 2 nd D. Butcher	<i>Tillandsia straminea</i> <i>Tillandsia pseudomacbrideana</i>
Neoregelia Trophy	1 st A. Bodzioch 2 nd M Butcher	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Captain Moxley' <i>Neoregelia</i> 'Grace Darling'
Artistic Merit	1 st T Seekamp 2 nd W Thompson	<i>Tillandsia</i> grouping on Mallee root <i>Cryptanthus</i> grouping
Ede Schaefer Best in show	J Batty	<i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> 'Zebra'
Auntie Margaret & Uncle Derek Novice award	Warren & Jackie Thompson	<i>Cryptanthus</i> grouping



Raffle Prize table overseer Bob (Photo J. Hall)



Winners table (Photo J. Hall)



Roving Reporter April 2012 meeting

Another great roll-up with lots of plants to discuss. That is the sort of thing that really impresses me because my view is that if you get involved you learn. AND you are never too old to learn.

Before I get on to the plant discussion there was a point brought up as to plant identification and the suggestion that our Facebook page could be involved. My view was that these sorts of things are better directed to Florapix, which is run by the Utrecht University in Holland, because here you had input from world authorities and that some reference should be made to this. I have now had more time to think about this and agree with Adam that the best approach is for members to bring in their unnamed flowering plant or a print, or even the digital camera, to a meeting or even our Show to discuss possibilities. Plants obtained in South Australia are a local problem best answered by locals. Plants obtained from interstate especially from Queensland are a different problem because here, plant identity tends to be swept under the carpet. This attitude is also common amongst general gardeners. You have only got to attend a few different garden club meetings to see this. We also drift that way with unlabelled plants in our raffles.

Len Colgan spoke on a few tillandsias coming into flower, he had brought in, not so much to brag about but to show members that there some rare tillandsias in Adelaide. These were *T. esseriana*, *T. oropezana*, *T. milagrensis*, *T. copalaensis*, and *T. winkleri*. We have already talked about *T. oropezana* where both Julie Batty and myself consider this plant is really *T. aff. oropezana*! If you ever get hold of *T. esseriana* you will have to be extra patient. It needs to form a sizeable clump before producing a flower reminiscent of *T. cyanea*. With this sort of flower you would expect the plant would come from the tropical rainforest rather than the backblocks of Paraguay. There seems to be two forms in Australia – one that we have in Adelaide and a reddish leaved form that Peter Tristram in NSW grows. We all thought it was easy to grow but not flower until Tillnuts got the following information from the person who originally collected it “It grows on steep rocks of sandstone (interglacial sandstones of the Tubarao series of upper Carbon), but only on north, northeast or northwest facing rocks. That means (southern hemisphere) towards the sun. On the south-facing walls are no Tillandsias, but Philodendron.

On the natural sites, the plants are about 10 inches high, often branching and forming clumps. I think for a good growth the plants should be kept extremely hot and sunny, in open and rather dry air. No damp atmosphere. Frequent watering over the leaves (that means once every 2-3 days). Dew at night would be good.

The climate at Sydney is much colder than that at the natural sites of *T. esseriana*. In Paraguay, during the growing season, you have 30-40C during the day (at the *T. esseriana*-rocks much more) and 20-25C at night. The coldest month has about 25C during the day and 10-15C during the night. You have precipitation throughout the year, i.e. no dry season. So keep *T. esseriana* at the hottest and sunniest place you have in your garden. Never put it in a greenhouse, except at low temperatures in winter.

I do not know very much about the nutrient requirements of this plant. Since it grows on sandstone rocks their nutrient requirements may be higher than that of other species, but you should test this.

Hope I could help you. Regards, Gerd Esser

Bill Treloar and Adam had the daunting task of tip-toeing through the Pricklies of which there was a large number. Traditionally this has meant those Bromeliads you put in the garden because they are too prickly to keep growing in pots and can grow in a bit of direct sun. Some are prickly but also need shade!

Roving reporter April cont:

First I will mention the Popular plant again won by Julie Batty but this time with a *Dyckia niederleinii* on the label. Years ago, I worked with Trevor Christiansen at the Adelaide Botanic garden trying to identify the dyckias there and finding so many were unidentified hybrids because they had come from seed from Huntington Gardens in California. This set me on the trail of trying to find true species and shuddering every time I found unidentified hybrids or the lackadaisical approach to seed raising. As far as I could recall this species was not in Australia so I started asking questions and when I got home it was off to the computer! I am fairly sure this plant is 'Port Wine' which seems common in Australia and was actually named by Geoff Lawn in Western Australia. We know it was growing in the Adelaide Botanic gardens but whether it is a hybrid or a cultivar is not known.



Dyckia marnier-lapostolle (Photo J Batty)

Anyone who talks about Bromeliads in SW England or Ireland will be talking about either *Ochagavia* or *Fascicularia*. These had lots of different names where the gardener reigned supreme. 10 years ago we finally had agreement with Pommie gardeners, Chilean botanists and collectors, and German taxonomists. Aussie gardeners are as stubborn as their Pommie counterparts and names do not get altered. As far as I am aware the only *Ochagavia* being grown in Australia is *O. littoralis* NOT *O. carnea*. Similarly there is only *Fasciculata bicolor*. Other species names are just names!

Another name we just cannot get rid of is *Bromelia balansae*. Yes, 30 years ago I grew a plant with this name and it is still around in Adelaide, but it is really *B. serra*. Years ago Harry Luther directed me to Dennis Cathcart's nursery and we saw this species in the raw. It was huge. Kerry Tate from northern NSW a couple of years ago went to her first World Conference and I said you must not miss Marie Selby Gardens. Here she bumped into *Bromelia balansae* in flower! She took many photos. The flower spike was taller than her and the leaves almost reached the sky. She agreed with me that this species is not in Australia.

Now to *Dyckia* 'Paulsen's Puzzle' which all looked different but one label had Paulsen's Puzzle F2 on the label. Adam asked me to explain the F2 and I waffled on from the geneticist point of view. You see if you cross a species with a species you get an F1 generation which has hybrid vigour but less virile! If you get seed from an F1 you get F2 and so on. To call seed from 'Paulsen's Puzzle' as F2 is misleading especially if the owner does not see the significance of the F2 and deletes it! A much better way is to treat seedlings in human terms like 'Son of Paulsen's Puzzle' or if this is too sexist then 'Child of Paulsen's Puzzle'. That way you can proceed to Grandsons and Great-grandsons because of the laziness in naming by the seed raiser. The whole system of naming hybrids is based on separate names for individual plants and the destruction of unwanted mediocre plants in the seed batch. Alas, many seed raisers ignore this philosophy.

Trevor Seekamp asked me a curly question. "Was his *Neoregelia* 'Parasol' correctly named?" I then noticed the cause of his concern because the inflorescence was partly enclosed by hooded floral bracts which are one way to tell the difference between a *Neoregelia* and a *xNiduregelia*! There are always exceptions to the rules! For many years the Floridians were growing *Neoregelia carolinae rosea striata* (Even our own Adam was doing the same!) but as Harry Luther pointed out the outer floral bracts hooded part of the inflorescence and any self-respecting *N. carolinae* never does this. BUT *N. farinosa* does! This was how the name of 'Rosea Striata' came to be in the Cultivar register.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, if you look up the pedigree of 'Parasol' you will find it has some genes from 'Rosea Striata'. Was Trevor's plant correctly named? – dunno. What I will say is that it is a *Neoregelia* and looks like the official photo on the Bromeliad Cultivar Register!

Roving reporter April cont:

It was great to see that *Dyckia* are so popular and in pot culture. Yes, they can be planted out in the garden but because of their hybrid vigour in many cases they soon grow huge. Margaret said there should be a RSPCD (Republican Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dyckias) when she saw that SOMEONE had trimmed one plant with garden shears

Our very own Judge, Judge trainer, Judge representative, Judge dog's-body, Peter Hall owned up but pointed out he had done this to show what not to do AND he, at least, had a plant next door that was in unadulterated condition. *Dyckia marnier-lapostollei* is certainly one of the more impressive species and luckily does not seem to have been greatly hybridised. Some have reported difficulty in growing this and I keep mine on the dry side in winter. Growing from seed can be a challenge. At the moment I am growing green leaved specimens said to be *D. marnier-lapostollei* from seed collected in the wild by my mate Oscar. He even sent me photos of the plant in the wild and he has me accusing him of taking a white-wash brush with him on his expeditions!



Dyckia 'Port Wine' (Photo J Batty)

The next most popular genus seemed to be *Orthophytum* with the 'scape' section more prominent for the simple reason they are easier to grow. Yes, you can try to grow them from the adventitious offsets that occur where the flowers were, where the best success is by layering. After all, this is what happens in the wild where the scape dies and the old flower head bends to hit the ground! But, also the plant will send out offsets on long stolons which have more oomph because they are attached more securely to mother! The non-scape section are much more desirable but much harder to grow. It was nice to see that Adam and Len had brought in their specimens. In habitat most are in the endangered list.

Finally a non-prickly by the name of *Aechmea* 'Little Harv'. Yes, it is an *Aechmea chantinii* AND a big one. It started off in Florida over 30 years when it was said to be an apomictic. Harvey Bullis, who it was named after, must have been a huge bloke! What on earth is an apomictic? Dandelions are apomictic which means they can reproduce from seed without interference from a male! How boring! In other words a clone from seed whereas we expect this in bromeliads to be by offset. So I feel sure the use of 'apomictic' was used as a sales gimmick and all that happened was a sort of mutation which often manifests itself in variegated seedlings.

Sunday Mail Home & Garden Expo April 2012

The 3 day Sunday Mail Home & Garden Expo was well attended and each day interest in Bromeliads was steady with many compliments given on the range of plants on display.

Early Saturday morning a visit from a well known TV personality & presenter at an associated show stopped by and chatted with Ron, telling him that he is going to start a collection of Bromeliads in his garden interstate.

There were several membership forms given out to & there is an addition to the mailing list.



Display Sunday Mail Home & Garden Expo

Triabon Fertiliser

Trobon (70% Crotonur) Production method condensation of urea and crotonaldehyde. Forulation colourless; fine crystalline powder.

Triabon CDU Crotonylidene diurea. Crotonur(R)

Triabon is unlike any other slow- release fertilizers. Trabon has a balance of immediate and slowly available nitrogen, it ensures an adequate supply of essential nitrogen throughout the plant's life.

Approximately 70% of the nitrogen in Triabon is in the form of Crotonur (CDU), which provides the slow release of nitrogen for around 90 days, even at temperatures as low as 4 degrees C.

CDU performs well over a wide range of pH conditions. It also has better stability at extreme temperatures over 35 degrees C.

Each and every Triabon granule contains a homogenous combination of all nutrients, in correct proportions required for plant growth.

Triabon's well tolerated low salt index ensures minimal impact on the substrate throughout the cultivation period.

How CDU works

In contrast to other slow release nitrogen fertilizers, the release of nitrogen from CDU comes from two different processes.

N1 Chemical hydrolysis releases the nitrogen attached via the side chain; releasing half of the nitrogen at any temperature, allowing CDU to perform well in winter and summer.

N2 Microbial activity realises the nitrogen contained within CDU's stable ring structure, allowing CDU to synchronise nitrogen availability to plant requirements.

<p>Primary Nutrients</p> <p>16% Nitrogen (N)</p> <p>5.0% NH4 nitrogen</p> <p>11% Crotonylidene diurea nitrogen (Crotonur)</p> <p>3.5% Phosphorus (P) soluble in neutral ammonium citrate.</p> <p>2.6% P water soluble</p> <p>10% Potassium (K) as potassium sulphate, water soluble.</p>	<p>Additional Secondary Nutrients</p> <p>2.4% Magnesium (Mg)</p> <p>1.8% water soluble</p> <p>9.0% Sulphur (S) as sulphates</p> <p>0.02% Boron (B)</p> <p>0.04% Copper (Cu)</p> <p>0.1% Iron (Fe)</p> <p>0.1% Manganese (Mn)</p> <p>0.015% Molybdenum (Mo)</p> <p>0.007% Zinc (Zn)</p>
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Application Rates

Pot Size

100mm

0.38g

150mm 1.13g

200mm 3.38g

I use Trabon just below the potting medium when repotting and I use about one tea spoon per 150mm pot. I think that it will work better when it has access to constant moisture. I do use it around the top of the pots if the plants have been in the pots for some time. I also use it on my cymbidium orchids and again I place it below the top of the potting medium when repotting and on top of the pots that do not need repotting.

Peter Hall



Roving Reporter May 2012

Couldn't help but notice a few more empty chairs than usual. Could this be because members forgot the date was different to usual? For those who are digital they must have an electronic diary which could be filled up from details on the newsletter. For the oldies that rely on calendars with scenes there must be space in between doctor's appointments etc. If all else fails there is one room in the house that is frequently visited and the newsletter could well be pinned to the back of the door.

Roving Reporter May cont:

Anyway, there was more than sufficient to enjoy the Len & Derek Show on Billbergias. We decided to talk first on species. I wonder why? Over the years both of us have braved the problems faced in importation regulations and both of us have seen the necessity of bringing in species rather than hybrids. After all, we have enough Australian hybridists doing their thing.

Those with stars in their eyes must see things differently to the 'BIG' two, because the popular plant vote went to a Don Beadle hybrid by the name of Billbergia 'Delicioso'. I don't know what Adam had on his label but the Society photographer picked it up as 'Deliciosa'. Don often uses Spanish names to his hybrids and this could well be caused by the Spanish influence in Florida. Australia on the other hand seems to have more Italian influence and we spell accordingly. Anyway, 'Delicioso' is correct! The next best was another hybrid from Peter Hall of a well grown *Aechmea* 'Burning Bush'.



Billbergia 'Delicioso'. (Photo J Batty)



Aechmea 'Burning Bush' (Photo J Batty)

Back to the talk, where I asked the learned ones in the audience the three main areas where Billbergias come from. Many quoted Brazil but then things went quiet until Len mentioned Mexico and I had not even primed him on this! The other area was Colombia and surrounding area where the helicoid forms mainly come from. I say mainly because there always exceptions to the rule!

What species did we have on display? First up was *B. alfonsi-joannis* which is awful to spell but is based on the two Reitz brothers both in the religious sense as well as kinship. Any way Len imported this in the late 1980's the same time I got in *B. iridifolia*. There were many others in the same shipment with wonky names which adds to the excitement of importation.

B. iridifolia is one of the smaller billbergias although how it got the name which translates as leaves like an iris is anyone's guess. There is a var *concolor* where the petals are totally pale yellow. Of similar ilk, we had *B. leitzii* which does not officially have a form with concolorous petals and yet there is one. It was described by Morren as variety *chlorantha* but ignored by Lyman Smith. This was one of the first Billbergias I obtained and it came from an old gardener at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. It didn't quite fit any description but I kept growing the plant. Then, in my delving into OLD literature whatever the language, I chanced on a contact in Liege, Belgium and obtained copies of paintings of a *B. lietzi* with totally greenish yellow petals. Translation revealed it was very close indeed to the plant I had been nurturing for many years.

Roving Reporter May cont:

Next was a *B. pallidiflora* which hails from Mexico. As far as the Mexican botanists are concerned there are only two billbergias from Mexico where the other one is *B. viridiflora*.

My plant has a bit of a history because it also came from Len several years ago. Len had got the seed as *B. chiapensis* and this is a very rare species. So when it flowered there was great excitement until we noticed that the floral bracts were almost non-existent and after discussion with botanists we had to be satisfied we really had the more widespread *B. pallidiflora*.

Billbergia fosteriana is an odd plant with only 3 leaves curled into a narrow tight tube and is certainly distinct. From a flower point of view it is very close to *B. saundersii*.

Is *B. Hoelscheriana* a species? With a Latin name like that you would think so but alas it was a hybrid made and named in 1898. What is interesting is that this was 35 years after De Candolle started pushing for man-made hybrids to be given non Latin names. It took over another 50 years for England to start moving on this suggestion on an International Level. This was around about the time the American Brom Society was formed and they must still have been thinking of the Boston Tea party because they ignored this International plea! Nowadays, names are Anglicised but even so this does not stop the indiscriminate use of words like 'rubra', 'variegata' etc.

Then to *Billbergia vittata* in the form of 'Domingo Martins'. In 1988 this was published as *B. domingosmartinsis* by Elvira Gross in Germany. It did not take long for the plant to be in Floridian collections but they were somewhat dismayed in 1994 when it disappeared into synonymy under *B. vittata*. Meanwhile, Don Beadle had started on his hybridising programs and Don did not want the 'domingos martins' name to disappear. My suggestion was to use the name as a cultivar and this happened.

Many may consider me to be an amateur sort of taxonomist whereas I am more a historian or archivist and look for consistency of approach to problems. It is here that botanists and I do not always see eye to eye. There are numerous instances in Bromeliaceae where a variety is created because of differences in leaf colouration but there is no consistency and in this case the name 'Domingos Martins' could have disappeared. We then had a look at 'Hallelujah' which we assume was what Don Beadle said when he say his hybrid growing up to maturity. In itself it is an interesting name because in the biblical sense it means the greatest on high and yet Cultivar names like 'The Best' are considered taboo! Although the parents are ('Domingos Martins' x 'Ed McWilliams') the first is a form of *B. vittata* and the second is a form of *B. amoena*. These two names might ring a bell because they were favourite parents used at the end of the 1800's. In fact one of these 'old' hybrids is growing at the Wittunga Bot Garden in Blackwood probably *B. 'Breautiana'* and very closely allied to the unknown *Billbergia* from Sydney way called 'Chas Webb'.

If you compared flowers you would find little difference between the old (*amoena x vittata*) and the new. The problem comes from the fact that there are many forms of *B. amoena* in the wild and if you are a good hybridist you use the right one! This is, strictly speaking a primary hybrid where you expect vigour in the progeny. What has happened in recent years in both NSW and Queensland is hybridising using 'Hallelujah' as father or mother and none, to my mind, are an improvement. Because we are now dealing with the next generation we can expect many with slight differences making it hard for the hybridist to tell what is better which leads to all being grown and very few registered. If there is an upside it is the fact you can generally tell which of these unknowns has 'Hallelujah' traits.

You rarely see berries on the 'normal' billbergias because they seem to be self sterile. This means that if a hybridist starts playing they are almost certain to get a hybrid. As Grace Goode said, she started her hybridising career on *Billbergia* because both male and female parts were easily seen and accessible. The 'Helicoid' billbergias are different and readily self-set seed even though it may take several months for them to ripen.

This leads us to Len's *Billbergia mohammadii* which was named after a benefactor to the Bolivian Conservation Organisation called F.A.N. He was in Bolivia at the time the locals were bragging about this new discovery and Len scrounged some seed. He managed to germinate seed and the resultant plant eventually flowered. I can tell you it does not like Adelaide's winter. Anyway, Harry Luther decided it was very similar to *B. kuhlmannii* and considered the plant to be a synonym of it. To my mind, if a botanist takes this action he should merge the descriptions of both taxa so that both are included. Alas this was not done.

Roving Reporter May cont:

The problem as I see it is that *B. kuhlmannii* is also similar to *B. brasiliensis*! So my solution is to keep the name *B. mohammadii* as long as you know how to spell it. YES it had several berries and ‘everybody’ wanted to try to grow them. You should soon see ‘grass’ appear even in this cold part of the year but if you can give them a little extra warmth and don’t let them dry out you could be on the road to success.

The final species to get a mention was *Billbergia* ‘Kyoto’ which is an albomarginate form of *B. pyramidalis*. Here we had both mother and offset flowering at the same time. While it has been around for years it never fails to impress me with its inflorescence

Of the hybrids we had both old favourites and newbies with the newbies all showing the influence of *B. ‘Hallelujah’*!

You would have noticed the loose leaves in the centre of *B. Groovy*’ (a great name but unregistered!). This sometimes happens with billbergias but do not despair. It just means the centre leaves have rotted off. If you are really keen you can tip out the water and put in a bit of fungicide and keep water out of the tube. Without intervention the plant will generally produce an offset although you would have lost out on the flowering.

By the way, you will have noticed that if Margaret’s notes reveal an odd looking name I check it up. Well, *xNeomea* ‘Purple Moon’ is a new one to me and if the owner wants to legitimise it they could do some investigations and contact me.

There were several Aechmeas in flower on display as well as George’s unknown Vrieseas. They all looked the same to me and if I were to have a punt I would say *V. ‘Nissa’*. Why am I indecisive? Well, first there was a ‘Hawaiian Beauty’ in Australia which was not the same as Shigii’s ‘Hawaiian Beauty’ so we ‘cleverly’ changed the Aussie plant to ‘Aussie Hawaiian Beauty’ and this plant looks close to ‘Nissa’. AND THAT IS NOT ALL because a plant in Australia as ‘Elvira’ does not look like the American plant of the same name and should have its name changed to ‘Nissa’. If there is a moral to this story it is that if you are into hybrid identification it pays to check the flower!

And so to the Tillandsia stand where we must mention the large ‘Druid’ brought in by Ray Clark. First a bit of reading:

Introducing *Tillandsia ionantha* ‘Druid’ by Eloise Beach in J Brom Soc 34: 19. 1984



Tillandsia “Druid’ (left) & *Tillandsia* ‘Sumo Size White’ (Photo R.Clark)

About fourteen years ago, Drew Schulz of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, collected a large quantity of *Tillandsia ionantha* near the city of Vera Cruz, Mexico. Nothing unusual appeared until 1971 when Drew was surprised to find a plant that turned bright yellow in the center and produced flowers with white petals, in contrast with the plant that blushes red and has violet flowers (the name *ionantha* refers to the color violet).

One by one, more of the unusual yellow plants appeared in that original group until six were found. Those six were given lots of tender loving care.

Roving Reporter May cont:

The cultivar name, 'Druid' was selected to give an aura of mystery, while incorporating the collector's name. When not in bloom, *T. ionantha* 'Druid' looks like the common *ionantha*: it is a miniature rosette, only two-three inches tall, and the leaves are covered with silvery scales. It should be mounted, not potted, and can be grown in shady to nearly full sun locations. Spring is the usual blooming time.

While *Tillandsia ionantha* has many different sizes and shapes, few tillandsias in bloom command more admiration. Now, *T. ionantha* 'Druid' joins this variety-filled group and introduces a strikingly different color. Nature is full of surprises!

Apopka, FL

As Eloise said, *T. ionantha* comes in many different sizes and it was inevitable that another would mutate into something like an albino. Well, it has happened and Paul Isley with eyes on a SE Asian market called his plant 'Sumo Size White'. Tillandsias are not known for liking rain and more rain but they do thrive in Cairns AND SE Asia.

Tillandsia winkleri named by Teresia Strehl has finally flowered for Len and this time we had a *T. polzii* named by Renate Ehlers brought in by Ray to compare. Both plants come from Rio Grande do Sul State in Brazil and both looked very similar to me.

Finally, who went home determined to find out what 'strepto' means because it had both speakers lost for words! Well, one speaker considered that 'streptophylla' meant bent leaves so 'streptocarpa' must mean bent seed pod. We know that many tillandsias have bent leaves or bent seed pods so the only explanation is that *T. streptophylla* was the first *Tillandsia* the botanist had seen with bent leaves and *T. streptocarpa* with similar happenings to the seed pod.

A Tale of two labels by Ray Clark

Tillandsia 'Cooroy' & *T. Pomona*'

Vee & I finally made it to our first Brom meeting for the year & I had several *Tillandsias* in bloom for show & tell!

It was not long before someone whispered that Len Colgan did not agree with a label on one of my plants. I was showing the plant in the upper part of the attached photo with an accompanying label; 'Pomona'.

Len very correctly stated that the plant in question appeared to have been very strongly influenced by *T. stricta*. How had I not seen this before?, What does Uncle Derek say - Never trust the label, (even if it is my own doing!)

This afternoon I did some detective work & came to the conclusion that I had swapped the labels for 'Pomona' & 'Cooroy'! All's well that has ended well - I hope



Tillandsia 'Cooroy' & *T. Pomona*' (Photo R.Clark)

Reminder

Meeting as usual 9/9/12 – Guest speaker

14/10/12 -Please note the changed date for our visit to Jongs Nursery at Mt compass.