

# 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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Tillandsia rodrigueziana (Photo J. Batty)

### MEETING & SALES 2013 DATES:

14/7/13, 4/8/13 - **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday**, (Winter brag), 8/9/13, 13/10/13, **26/10/13 & 27/10/13 SALES**, 10/11/13 (Pup auction, special afternoon tea- bring plate of finger food to share, **earlier start** Committee 1230PM, General meeting 130PM

**Applications for membership always welcome.**

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb

**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.**

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### ***Williamstown Uniting church Garden Club***

A pleasurable scenic drive through Lyndoch was surpassed by country hospitality which included the friendly welcome from the members of the garden group & the very tasty homemade soups offered at morning tea.

A shortened version of the power point presentation was well received and many of those present spent time checking out the display.



### ***Roving Reporter July 2013***

There is always something not planned at our meeting which is why you should always come along unless you are the sort that just waits for the Gazette, but then any news is old news.

This meeting we had a visit from a Carnivorous man – well that was how he was introduced. He was no different to all other plant lovers only this time it was Carnivorous plants and because he had a bromeliad he felt he should see the experts regarding growing techniques. There are very few Bromeliads that have evolved to have a taste for flesh. One is *Brocchinia reducta* and he brought one in to show us. It has leaves formed into a tube like a *Billbergia* only the top of the tube has a waxy coating making it slippery and allows insects to fall in to the water at the bottom of the tube. He quickly found out that this particular plant is not widely grown by the Bromeliad fraternity in Adelaide. In fact his best place to see one would be with Bill from Bute. Bill grows it and never flowers it and gets replacement stock from Melbourne. So we were not that helpful in giving advice as how to grow the plant. Carnivorous plants have evolved to be able to survive in an environment where they get very little nutrient from the strata to which they may be attached. Plants generally get their nutrient from decayed matter whether flora or fauna and generally take this up via their roots. We know that with our Tillandsias, especially with the more furry leaved sorts they also get food through their leaves – it just blows in or drops down because of a bird flying above! Plants will do anything to get a feed! Carnivorous plants may be considered even cleverer because they might realise that there is more nutrient in dead fauna than dead flora. Let us now look how Broms got involved. Remember we are considering how bromeliads evolved millions of years ago, when North and South America were separated, when the Venezuelan highlands were lowlands ready to be pushed up, and when the Amazon drained through Lake Maracaibo!

### ***Roving reporter July cont:***

Well, these lowlands did get pushed up to form the tepuis that we know today. Imagine plants growing there had the ground beneath their feet going upwards with the inevitable change in climate. It was a case of die or evolves. Many Bromeliads grow up there today but try to grow them in your backyard. You see they have evolved to such an extent relying on specific natural conditions that they cannot survive unless those conditions are replicated. There are a few exceptions and *Brocchinia reducta* is one. Not only is it used to harsh wet conditions but survives by being able to digest beetles and things. It doesn't actually trap them like the Venus Fly Trap but grabs any spare meal that might pass by.

So we were not much help in giving life-saving advice to our Carnivorous man whose best course of action would be to do the same as he does with his other carnivorous plants which have evolved in the wild due to similar restrictions in habitat.

What was a very nice touch was that he brought in a box of Camellia flowers for us to share. May he come again!

The main part of the meeting was Jeanne Hall and me showing photos from Brazil. Mind you we had a bit of trouble setting things up but eventually different helpers got us started. It was all about my mate Oscar who I have known for over 10 years because of the Internet. I have many such friends around the world whose common interest is Bromeliads and luckily they all speak English better than I do their native language.

We had some 140 photos to show and covered a wide range of Oscar's interests. Oscar is an intense conservationist and is always sending me instances of land abuse by his fellow countrymen. My favourite photo is of Helenice, Oscar's wife, sitting on a rock next to an *Orthophytum burle-marxii* in full colour. Such a contrast in such rugged surroundings. I just had to show a photo of me in New Zealand in 2003 at the Conference with the famous tie. It was famous because Lynn Hudson said anyone wearing a tie was overdressed and cut it off with a pair of scissors. When Oscar found out he gave me the nickname of BT (Broken Tie) and this has continued to this day. So we saw plants in the wild, up trees, in dry rocky areas and in his nursery. Yes, he has a nursery back in hills in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro.



Helenice sitting near *Orthophytum burle-marxii* (Photo O. Ribeiro)

An accountant by profession he has this hobby. It is a hobby because sales locally are not great because of the adverse publicity Bromeliads get, by being the harbinger of Dengue fever and yet it has been proved that Bromeliads should only get 5% of the blame. You may be aware that Alcantarea have been flavour of the month in Landscape gardening in Queensland and northern NSW for some years now and several of the nurserymen from this area have had pilgrimages to Oscar's place. We saw the reason for this especially with the variegated *Alcantarea imperialis* that he grew.

*Cryptanthus* were a bit of an eye opener especially the ones found in dry areas on rocks so you do not take the normal advice to grow *Cryptanthus* on the wet side. There are always exceptions to the rule. The shot of *Cryptanthus* 'Menescal' put this form on 'wanted' lists but the problem is that Oscar's photo is the best I have seen of this form which is somewhat clouded in mystery. We had many shots of dyckias in the wild which showed their harsh environment but also comparisons could be made because we also had shots of how they grow in Adelaide. Some plants featured had seed pods and some seed had found its way to Adelaide! One extreme case was a silvery *D. marnier-lapostollei* in the wild but quite green under captivity. We also saw a few shots of *Encholirium*, a genus very closely related to *Dyckia*.

Just as I love to go to the dry Flinders Ranges, Oscar prefers the dry areas in Brazil and we saw many forms of *Hohenbergia* which seems to be his pride and joy – possibly because he has found several new species. I have often chided him in how he picks out one prickly beast from another and decides if one is really different. He says it is luck but I think it is more than that. One that is currently very popular in the USA and Europe because of its spines and bulbous growth is his *H. magnispina*.

Things became less prickly as we moved to the Neoregelia as found in the wild. But the most intriguing problem was from his nursery where 10 years ago one Neo. hybrid decided to produce leaves instead of flowers in the centre and this tuft of leaves was brightly coloured. He called his plant 'Tour Eiffel'. The offsets reverted to normal and I told him to wait for it to happen again which he did. 10 years later, this year, it happened again.

### ***Roving reporter July cont:***

So I started asking around. Some of you may have Neo 'Van Dourme' a variegated plant with close links to *N. carolinae* but its creator Franz Gruber ( you must have heard of *Vriesea ospinae* var *gruberi*) said that on one occasion he got a tuft of coloured leaves but, alas, that was as far as it went. Surely this phenomenon must have happened in the past and sure enough in 1896 Carl Mez used the term phyllanthidea for a similar occurrence in the gardens in Europe. Why hadn't it been reported in the intervening years? It must be very rare indeed. It is said that lightning never strikes twice in the same place.

Well, at the meeting Jackie Thompson had brought it a Neo 'Medusa' with a red 'tuft' instead of an inflorescence! Members must have been impressed because this plant got the popular vote. But members are warned that N. 'Medusa' is not usually like this and you can expect a normal *Neoregelia* flowering. Jackie has the job of watching to see if the offsets perform similarly and from current experience it will be a fruitless wait. She got her plant from Garden world and enquiries there have revealed that plants are from Deroose and are tissue cultured. Some are odd looking which is to be expected with tissue culture but investigations are continuing!



Neo 'Medusa' (Photo J. Batty)

We saw *Orthophytum* we don't normally see especially the ones that go brilliant colours in contrasting red and white. We also saw a somewhat wizened clump of *O. schulzianum* that had been named after its collector Rudi Schulz who lived in Victoria at the time but now is somewhere in New Zealand. As far as I am aware this plant is not being grown in Australia.

We saw a few tillandsias but then to what Brazil is really known for – *Vrieseas*. Not only do we get ordinary green leaved forms but leaves with squiggly lines AND ones that really stand out with their green leaves covered with a white waxy coating as a protection against the sun. These latter ones are not common in collections and despite me sharing around the seed throughout Australia to see who is a champion seed grower it will be some time before we see any around.

Finally there were photos of Oscar's latest find together with habitat shots making us realise how difficult it is to pick out anything new!

Finally, finally a few shots of Bill from Bute spreading the gospel in Melbourne. Yes, we send them anywhere. Apparently, Melbournites don't bother to check scents from *T. caerulea* as Adelaideans are wont to do, but then they don't have Big Len to prompt them.

There were a few minutes left for Adam to talk about the plants brought in, with several billbergias, *Aechmea* and *Vrieseas* in flower. One that took longer to discuss at the insistence of Bill from Bute was a *Tillandsia tricolor* hybrid he had brought back from Melbourne. He went to great lengths to point out that he saw no *T. tricolor* in its makeup to which we all agreed. To think that there was a surprise for me in my emails on the following day from Chris Larson. Yes, it was this plant which is apparently cropping up all over the world so Bill is not unique after all. The flower petals were bicolored. Mainly white at the top and purplish below suggesting that *T. schiedeana* was involved somewhere. After discussing things with Chris it was decided we should push for a more identifiable name than *T. tricolor* hybrid and agreed on Margaret's suggestion of *Tillandsia* 'Moonlight'. Let us hope we can convince growers to use this name.

### **Be Aware ~ Peter Hall**

I have had a persistent cough for a few years and have been short of breath when working or doing even menial tasks.

I have over the last 3 years had numerous blood tests, stress tests, lung function tests and some x-rays. 12 months ago I had an MRI on my chest and it showed some scarring and fibrous tissue in both lungs.

My GP sent me for another MRI recently and it showed an increase of fibrous tissue. He then sent me to a lung specialist and he reviewed the MRI results and suggested that it looked mostly likely to be Mesothelioma.

### **Be Aware ~ Peter Hall cont:**

The specialist said to confirm his finding that he would need to take a biopsy out of both lungs. The outcome of the biopsy was that I have two different types of mycobacteria infections in both lungs.

#### *MAC*

One is called MAC (Mycobacterium Avium Complex) and M Intracellular (the M.A. complex – MAC) are saprotrophic organisms present in soil and water; entry into hosts is usually via the gastrointestinal tract, but also can be via the lungs.

The MAC causes fever, diarrhoea, mal-absorption and anorexia and can disseminate to the bone marrow. Therapy for MAC is typically resistant to standard mycobacteria therapies.

MAC is the most commonly found form of non-tuberculosis mycobacteria.

Patients with MAC infections, unlike those with pulmonary tuberculosis, are not contagious.

#### *Nocardia*

The other infection is Nocardia.

Nocardia infection is a disorder affecting the lungs, brain and skin.

Again Nocardia infection is a bacterial infection that usually starts in the lungs. It may spread to other organ systems, most often the brain and the skin. It may also involve the kidneys, joints, heart, eyes and bones.

Nocardia bacterial are found in soil around the world. You can get the disease by inhaling contaminated dust or soil containing Nocardia bacteria gets into an open wound.

#### *Symptoms*

Symptoms may vary and depend on the organs involved.

#### **Lungs (pulmonary Nocardiosis)**

- Chest pain when breathing (may occur suddenly or slowly)
- Coughing up blood
- Fevers
- Night sweats
- Weight loss

#### **Brain (cerebral Nocardiosis)**

- Fever
- Headache
- Seizures

#### **Skin**

- May become chronically infected (mycetoma)
- Ulcers or nodules with infection sometimes spreading along the lymph nodes

#### *Outlook (prognosis)*

How well a person fares depends on the overall health and the parts of the body involved. Widespread infection (disseminated Nocardiosis) has a significant death rate.

#### *Possible Complications*

Complications of Nocardial infections depend on how much of the body involved.

- Certain lung infections may lead to scarring and chronic shortness of breath
- Skin infections may lead to scarring or disfigurement
- Brain abscesses may lead to loss of neurological function.

#### *Treatment*

Treatment involves antibiotic therapy. There are four different types of antibiotics for the treatment of MAC and another different type of antibiotic for the Nocardia infections.

I guess I'm like most people. I don't use a suitable dust mask or use gloves when handling potting mediums *eg* general potting mixes, pine bark chips, coconut chips and pelletized organic fertilizers. I will now use a N95 rated mask and gloves.

Please Note: The medical profession originally believed that to get this problem, one had to be in poor health or have a suppressed immune system. In my case, I haven't been in poor health and my immune system is good.



### ***Roving Reporter August 2013***

First I have to mention the lanyards have been made available to all members who have problems pinning on their name badges. Bright red with Bromeliad Society of SA printed on them just in case you got yourself lost. Such were their popularity it would seem that most members had been having problems in pinning on their badges! We hope that this extra reminder will mean fewer members forgetting their name badges. The clever ones amongst us quickly twigged that the clip at the end resembled a dog's lead which is attached using some dexterity to the dog's collar but in our case the name badge. The intelligent ones amongst us quickly saw that they did not dangle properly and started whinging. "No! No ! No!" said Ron Masters, you are supposed to put the name badge pin through the cloth of the lanyard and he was right and the angle of dangle was just right. Weather. We have been told that this winter has been warmer than usual. I spoke to several of the older members and they agreed with me. The weather reporters had it wrong unless the older you get the more you have to rug up. Are our plants the same where only the seedlings and young offsets brave the cold and wet? This prompted me to ask many members why they had not brought in brag plants for the meeting. Most looked sheepish with the excuse they had nothing to brag about but promised better participation in the future. So for our pessimistic members I am going to suggest to Committee that we call these meetings 'Winter Survivors'.

Admittedly, if these had brought in plants, Bill would have been talking forever! Yes, Bill from Bute had the honours of telling us how good we were in growing our plants. And, yes, he was impressed and told us so.

John Murphy must have used a wheelbarrow to bring in a very large, un-damaged *Vriesea fosteriana* which members decided should have the popular vote. An interesting observation is that it had *Vriesea fosteriana rubra* on the label and yet this name has not been used in any formal description of this supposed different form. We know it is just a nurseryman's name supposedly referring to a reddish leaf but I saw no evidence of any redness. Compare the leaf colour with the red on the *xNeophytum* next to it on the photo. Anyone who has grown *V. fosteriana* from self set seed will see how varied the progeny are but all come within the description of *V. fosteriana*, I quote "Leaf blades ligulate, broadly acute or rounded and apiculate, to 7 cm wide, green and glabrous above, beneath obscurely lepidote and marked with wavy purple transverse lines." In my research *Vriesea fosteriana rubra* has not been officially recorded. There is a *Vriesea* 'Rubra Broadleaf' but we have no photo to see what it is supposed to look like!



*Vriesea fosteriana rubra* (Photo J. Batty)

To those of you who think they have *V. fosteriana* var *seideliana* the following may be of interest: SELLOWIA Nr.26 Ano XXVII Pgs.92-94 ITAJAI 15 Oct. 1975.

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

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;

### ***Roving Reporter August cont:***

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.

Plant 2 - Leaves wide, green, rosy beneath with longitudinal nerves and traverse red lines.

Plant 3 - more narrow Leaves, green-copperish and on the underneath purple/violet; darker tips.

Plant 4 - Variety more vividly colored; green-rosy, with beautiful dense white stripes.

Plant 5 - green wide leaves, with a few red grooves; tips recurved, dark.

Plant 6 - green leaves, with regular areas of violet/purplish transverse stripes.

Plant 7 - Leaves narrow, clear green, with traverse dark green nerves.

Plant 8 - darker variation; wide leaves, green-violet/purple, marbled in green-ivory.

Plant 9 - wide leaves, silvery-green, rosy underneath, with countless nerves and dark grooves.

First we were into the neoregelias and it was surprising how many had retained some colour in their leaves. One had the odd name of *N. forestiana* and the only name you could possibly link it to, is *Neo fosteriana* which is a very rare plant and not in Australia. So what could it be? I am sure it is related to the following saga.



*Neo 'Purple Haze'.* (Photo J. Batty)

#### ***“Neoregelia ‘Purple Haze’ alias fosteriana* By Butcher 2004**

This is a medium to large plant, say 60 cm diameter, with leaves 8-9 cm wide, maintaining a purplish colour (#39 in Isley’s chart) with a hazy covering. There is a hint of a reddish tip that is rounded and apiculate. The scape is 5 cm long and 1.5 cm wide, greenish white bracts, the uppermost becoming red lined. The pedicels are about 1 cm long. The inflorescence is simple. The floral bracts are similar to the upper scape bracts but narrower. The sepals are green with red lines, 3 cm long, slightly asymmetric but with a very long acuminate tip. This is sometimes bent and sometimes hooked. The petals are white with a pale violet platte.

Why have I gone to the trouble to measure and detail parts of a hybrid? In the 1970’s this plant got to Australia as *Neoregelia fosteriana* and was used to produce hybrids such as ‘Fost Prince’. However, when Smith and Downs (1979) was printed Olwen Ferris (A BSI Trustee here in Australia) realised that this plant did not have a compound inflorescence and could not be the TRUE *Neoregelia fosteriana* and called the plant ‘Purple Haze’.

This plant has been known in the USA as *Neoregelia fosteriana* since at least 1973 because it was accurately described by Victoria Padilla in her book “Bromeliads” page 52. I quote “An attractive, dense rosette, 18 inches to 2 feet in diameter, with broad coppery leaves that are lightly dusted with grey. The tips of the leaves are burgundy red; underneath, the leaves are purple and marked with grey lines. Pale blue-petalled flowers are sunk deep in the heart of the rosette” This must have been the plant that Foster used to produce ‘Morris Henry Hobbs’, ‘Fosperior’, ‘Dexter’s Pride’, ‘Foster’s Giant Red’, etc. What is strange is that Foster was not aware what his own *Neoregelia fosteriana* was because he did not use it in at least these hybrids.

*Neoregelia fosteriana* has been shrouded in mystery for many years and an excellent article by Harry Luther appeared in the Brazilian Journal “Bromelia” in June 1995 page 5. The photo is from that article. In correspondence with Harry Luther it appears that Elton Leme cannot find living specimens in the area of Foster’s original collection but did find *Neoregelia chlorosticta* and the newly described *Neoregelia lactea* (Compound inflorescence, hooked sepals - see Bromelia June 1995 page 8) growing in close proximity. Could *Neoregelia fosteriana* have been a natural hybrid between the two?

This does not solve our problem because we have a totally different looking plant which could be a hybrid that occurred in Foster’s garden without him being aware of it, or was an F2 of *Neoregelia fosteriana*. We know that the TRUE *N. fosteriana* is surviving in Florida in at least two collections. In 1996 I was at the World Conference in Orlando and after a series of phone calls I felt I had traced at least one source of this true *N. fosteriana*. "Yes, I have the true species" was the reply.

### ***Roving Reporter August cont:***

Later I was shown said plant but things didn't seem right and in a lull in my photographing the plant, I was able to quickly check the spent inflorescence and clearly it was simple. No one noticed that I had dropped my urgent plea for purchase! Harry has since pointed out that the flower may not necessarily be compound, so I may have missed out. So, although I think I now know what a *N. fosteriana* looks like, I haven't got one and as far as I am concerned, it has never been in Australia.

Its hybrid status could easily be confirmed by self set seed raising but I do not know who these lucky owners are OR if they are aware of the treasures they hold.

Is the 'impostor foster' the next generation from this true *Neoregelia fosteriana* or does it have yet another father, albeit accidentally? I feel sure that the Padilla 'Fosteriana' is still alive in California – somewhere. In 1999 when Pam Koide attended the Bromeliad Conference in Cairns, Qld, AU she saw a *Neoregelia* 'Purple Haze' but with *N. fosteriana* on the label. She had never seen the plant before and took one back to California to investigate further. I feel sure this plant is alive in Florida - somewhere!

If you are the curious type would you please check around and let us know whether hooked sepals are present on any of the plants you have that are mentioned in this article. **By the way, I have given up trying to link this plant with a natural species!"**

After all that, I feel it would be safer for Penny to put Neo 'Purple Haze' on her label rather than Neo 'forestiana'

Julie Batty was a bit worried about her 'Wow' because it did not look like the photos of the plant taken 15 years ago. The current plant could be seen as an improvement as to what was around so long ago. Then it was a straight albo-margined plant with a few red spots. I suppose it would have had 10 successive offsets in that time, sometimes with variations and sometimes looking like the original 'Mother'. Now you will see how the latest plant has all sorts of striped leaves plus a colourful centre of non-striped leaves. In fact if I were looking for a 'Wow' factor this would be it.



Neoregelia 'Wow' (Photo J. Batty)

*Aechmea* 'Cardinalis' is still being grown and is always a colourful plant to have around in winter. Nobody knows how it got that name and is generally linked to *Aechmea recurvata* with extra long narrow leaves. Here we saw the variation in leaf length in a clump of plants. I now have Julie looking for prickles on the sides of the floral bracts to ascertain which variety it might be linked too. But alas in the winter light neither Julie nor I could discern this factor and I'll bet the owner has not even tried!

Many of you are aware that I consider a formula on a label is a necessary evil and should be converted to a proper name as soon as possible. Well, Rob Smythe from Townsville is of the same mind. A hybrid had been created in the US using the rather large *Neoregelia* 'Morris Henry Hobbs' and *N. 'Fireball'* but was being grown only under formula even though it was an attractive hybrid and worthy of a proper name. Yet another lazy hybridist! In 2004 he bit the bullet and we told as many growers as possible that it should be known as 'Tree Tops'. This takes a much shorter time to write a label *Neoregelia* Morris Henry Hobbs x Fireball and I hope that all readers of this article that do have this plant to change its name.



Neoregelia 'Tree Tops' (Photo R. Smythe)



## Roving Reporter August cont:

A couple of queries about x*Neophytum* that grows so well in Adelaide and yet we cannot grow its parent the non-scape or sessile forms of *Orthophytum*. While any species of *Orthophytum* and *Neoregelia* can be used to create a x*Neophytum* only the non-scape or sessile form of *Orthophytum* have captured the imagination. This group is known for its narrow leaves and the leaf rosette has a centre that becomes a brilliant contrasting colour when flowering. Cross this with a *Neoregelia* that also goes red in the centre at flowering and you have a brilliant bigeneric. The trait is narrow leaves seems dominant so all worthwhile x*Neophytum* have narrow leaves. We all know that many *Neoregelia* make a flattish rosette of leaves at flowering but there are always exceptions to the rule. Therefore, do not be too worried if your x*Neophytum* sometimes has more-or-less erect leaves or even a rosette that is green in the centre and red at the tips or vice versa.

There was a nice clump of *Aechmea* 'Belizia' with one coming into flower which reminded Bill of the *Aechmea miniata* complex which it should because that is said to be one of its parents. Its other parent *A. orlandiana* is a bit harder to follow. It is a Hummel hybrid created some 50 years ago in the US. Why 'Belizia' is anyone's guess and we don't know where the name originates so no wonder it is so often misspelt. Some of us did notice that the judicious use of pebbles can open up a clump of plants so they do not seem so crowded.

Sarka had brought in a delightful ceramic pot planted with *Tillandsia stricta* in flower. Usually you see these mounted where the inflorescence naturally bends downwards but here they were more erect. Bill was proud of his *T. belloensis* in spike. This species could be called a *Tillandsia polystachia* with a little bit extra. *T. polystachia* has been known to science since 1703 where it was discovered in the West Indies. Since then it has been found in Mexico and all places south to southern Brazil. It was then in the 1980's that Renate Ehlers got involved with an improved version of *T. polystachia*, and *T. belloensis* came into being. Derek was pleased that his *T. callichroma* was in bud after some 18 years. He is resigned to the fact that this plant will die after flowering and give no offsets. The exciting bit has yet to come because on flowering he will be able to find out if it has the right name!

Geoff was pleased to show off his Tilly bag which he finds solves rotting off problems caused by living on the southern slopes of Bellevue Heights and having cold wet winters. Perhaps it is better in his own words. This is how he makes his Tilly bag:

"The standard width of the plastic mesh gutter guard I use is 17cm wide. Cut a piece approx. 25cm long (although I have used longer or shorter pieces) and fold to form a rectangular bag. Bind up the two longest sides (can use thin wire, twist ties, etc) and one shorter side. Partly fill the bag with a mix of bark chips, scoria, gravel and foam pieces. Poke the end of the tillandsia stem through the lattice into the inner part of the bag and then completely fill the bag (may need to snip open the mesh to allow the plant stem to completely enter the bag). Bind the top of the bag. Tie the tillandsia to the bag so as to secure it into place (I use pantyhose strips). Attach a wire hook to the top of the bag and hang it in a position so as to get plenty of direct winter sunlight, air movement and if possible some natural rainfall.



Geoff's Tilly bag (Photo J. Batty)

Attach a label showing the name of plant, where and when purchased, and when mounted. For my conditions on the southern slopes of Bellevue Heights, and down below the range ridge (with temperatures and weather conditions more akin to Mount Barker) I find that this method gives good drainage, dries quickly and allows for good air movement, yet holds sufficient dampness in the summer. By getting my plants in a situation to more easily cope with the winter conditions, it means a little extra work in the summer (eg, more watering, moving plants to get greater shade or early direct sunlight with cooler air movement), however that is one of the joys of living in the peaceful hills environment."

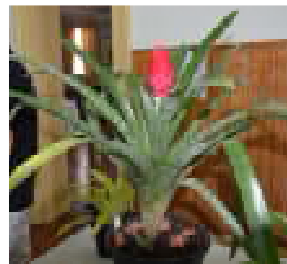


### *Roving Reporter September 2013*

Something you should have noticed on TV was the appearance of one of our members in Port Adelaide colours raving about how good her team was and not one word about Bromeliads. And then there was the spread in the MurrayValley Standard of the trio Bev, Ron and Peter who did great works in preaching the word of Bromeliads amongst the heathen. (see article page 14) I don't know if I should mention the other football supporter who had the belief that if she had both halves of the raffle ticket it doubled her chances. First we had Bill Treloar and his two partners in crime Trevor Seekamp, and Peter Hall who looked and commented on the plants brought in for display from a judging point of view. I will give my interpretation of what was said or inferred and they always have the right of reply! In summary there is nothing magic about entering plants into a competition. We do have a popular plant competition every month and I have never seen a plant that was ragged, in a dirty pot or whatever being given a red star. ERGO members already know what is required to enter. I put non-entry down to laziness or where the mind is concentrated on something else. In the Butcher household you hear – Did you comb your hair? Did you brush your teeth? Did you clean your shoes? There is one member who does not believe in judging plants and there is one who does! I don't consider myself lazy! In other words a plant needs to be spruced up and as Bill pointed out anyone can participate. Why participate? There are at least three reasons for participation.

1. The owner of a plant should be keen enough to care for a bromeliad otherwise they would not be a member of our Society
2. Growing a plant to reach its potential should be the aim of every gardener.
3. Showing plants at their best, at Shows prove to visitors the potential of Bromeliads and you are perhaps converting the heathen!

One thing did confuse me was Bill's comment that names are not that important and yet throughout the later talk he was referring to names. At a minimum, if you are a Judge you should know the difference between an Aechmea and a Billbergia and a ----. Your knowledge can then extend to species and hybrids with some knowing more than others. What I think he was referring to, was the problems you have with names. Sometimes plants have a clear cut identity but many times you will get a "Yes, but!" In these cases you have to start somewhere so you at least talk about the problem. In many cases you go on memory but sometimes if you are like me you get Julie to take a photo and you go home to cogitate! There is always something to refer to, if you are keen enough. Well, almost and now to my gripe that is over 30 years old and is still a gripe. It is about that august body the Bromeliad Society International but because our own Society is not an affiliate Society just a humble member, I feel I can have an open gripe and we will see if you agree with my logic. It is about having a reference point where you can check spelling and identity of plants. About 30 years ago the BSI applied for and were rewarded with becoming an ICRA. (International Cultivar Registration Authority) proceeded to appoint a Registrar and just sat back. No attempt was made to encourage members to actual register their hybrids by putting restrictions on what plants could be entered in a BSI sponsored Show ( This includes affiliates so we don't qualify!) Each of the Registrars in the past 30 years has tried to explain that if only registered hybrids were allowed to be entered in Shows we would have somewhere to check spelling and possible identity of such entries. AND people who had a good quality plant would have this recorded for posterity. A current Board decision in not promoting this change means they are not cognisant of the fact that it is the BSI that is the ICRA not the appointed Registrar. After all that, the popular plant was won by Ron Masters with his large flowering *Quesnelia quesneliana*. He had a large grin which he can now do with his new teeth!



*Quesnelia quesneliana* (Photo J. Hall)

***Roving Reporter September cont:***

And so to the real reason for the plant display of *Nidularium* and Adam started things off by bringing in a couple of *Canistropsis* and I will forgive him because prior to 1998 they were known as *Nidularium*. Even when the Society was formed in 1977 I was an inquisitive lad and kept complaining that my *Nidulariums* never flowered properly so I could take a photo. The petals remained demurely as a hood over the sex parts and when I asked if others had noticed this everyone seemed surprised. Even Bill asked, 'But how does it pollinate?' As I said they open just enough for some bird to stick its beak in. On reading what technical books I had at the time I realised that this phenomenon was to be expected. However, I realised there were some other *Nidulariums* that did open their flowers wide and they were called *Nidularium billbergioides* of which there were several variations. I felt these had to be identified in some manner and this was solved as follows: NIDULARIUM BILLBERGIOIDES by Derek Butcher, Sth. Australia in Bromelletter 35(5): 12. 1997 Plants with this name have been popular for many years and come in various colours. They grow and flower at their best in northern N.S.W. and most places north. They are not particularly keen on growing further south but are hardy enough to grow and flower. So all Australians should be able to grow this species. The name *billbergioides* means like a *billbergia* which seems strange when we envisage what we consider a *billbergia* should look like. However, it first made its appearance in the botanical world in 1830 under the name *Hohenbergia billbergioides*. At that time known bromeliads would have only numbered a few hundred which puts things in a different perspective.

We know there are many forms of this plant and the keen ones will know that in Smith & Downs page 1611 it was decided not to use the varietal names because "It does not seem possible to distinguish the colour variations in this species and to apply them to all the names involved".

Therefore names like var. *citrinum* or var. *purpureum* are incorrect unless you want to resurrect their status with good argument and write up a description in your best LATIN with herbarium specimen!

This does not stop us trying to do the impossible from a horticultural point of view. With the aid of Diana Hughes and Robert and Melissa Dilling of the northern N.S.W. coastal area we have come up with a solution. The Dillings have been growing this species from seed for many years. We will call each of the cultivars by the name of a fruit that is roughly or even suggests the colour of the primary bracts.

For more precise colours we have referred to numbers in the colour chart in Isley's book "Tillandsias" or Grafts "Exotica" that way we would be consistent. Problems occur in nature where colour is not a "solid" colour but seems flushed with another colour. Therefore, whenever "flushed" appears in the description you'll know what to expect.

Another problem lies in leaf colour so you could have a plant with the same primary bract colour but different leaf colour. This is covered by a different fruit name! Some plants are variegated and in these cases a match can be made and then "variegated" added to the fruit name, e.g. 'Citron' variegated.

To start the ball rolling we have come up with eight names which are as follows:

Those added later have a \*

APRICOT - Primary bract deep yellow orange #12;	Leaf green.
BLOOD ORANGE - Primary bract reddish orange #24;	Leaf green.
CITRON - (was <i>citrinum</i> ) Primary bracts yellow #3;	Leaf green.
*GUAVA - Primary bracts rose #38	Leaf green
LEMON - Primary bracts light yellow #2;	Leaf green.
*MANDARIN - Primary bracts Mandarin Red #24	Leaf maroon #42
MULBERRY- Primary bracts dark orange/mulberry #19;	Leaf reddish both sides #28.
PERSIMMON - Primary bracts orange #18;	Leaf green.
*PLUM - Primary bracts apricot #11	Leaf maroon both sides #42
TAMARILLO - Primary bracts orange flushed mulberry #12;	Leaf rusty both sides #21.
TUTTI FRUTTI - Primary bracts orange flushed mulberry #12;	Leaf green.

I feel sure I have seen *Nidularium billbergioides* with very dark primary bracts and sometimes very dark leaves where the colour is in the purple range, e.g. #47, so there must be others to add to the list and we have lots of fruit left!!

If you have any suggestions or plants to add to the list please contact me.

### ***Roving Reporter September cont:***

Back to the present. *Canistropsis* do not like Adelaide winters so are not that common here but should be grown easily in areas northwards from northern NSW although probably are not the current fashion. Anyway, Adam had brought in two different variegated *Canistropsis* for us to see. Adam loves his variegates even though I point out that a variegate is a second class citizen that would never survive in the wild. Here we had one with a label 'Plum' and it came from Victoria so it must be correctly named but it had green leaves. If we read what was said in 1998 the leaves should be maroon! This now has me asking the question of how stable these colours that I so carefully worked out are. Do they easily 'sport' to a different colour? We do know they sport to variegation but these variations can only be picked up by observation of offsets. I can assure you that looking for deviational behaviour in plants is acceptable as normal. Just let me know when you see deviational behaviour.

There were several 'normal' *Nidularium* on display and as Bill pointed out they are ideal for that shady place in your backyard. They don't need the sunlight like *Neoregelia* to get that vivid red centre and you can be certain to get sharp contrast in the primary bract colour and the green leaves.

One final word on *Canistropsis* because it is a genus accepted throughout the Bromeliad World but not by Kew Gardens. One reason for this is that Kew does not specialise in any one plant family and another may be because they are at least 10 years behind the rest of us!

There were several plants brought in that prompted my attention and I will give my comments. One such that caught my eye was an *Aechmea* hybrid in full flower but when I saw the label had 'Blue Bonnet' on it I started to ponder because 'Blue Bonnet' should have the inflorescence almost hidden in the leaf rosette. I know I am always doing this but when you check up on a name in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register on your computer you get a warm fuzzy feeling if it is right. If you don't believe me, try it sometime! Anyway I thought it had some likeness to a plant/s we used to know as 'Ruby'. Excerpts from *Aechmea* 'Aussie Ruby' by Derek Butcher in *Bromeletter* 33(4):13. 1995 follow;

"Those of you who have Baensch's 'Blooming Bromeliads' would have immediately noticed the mistake on page 69 where an alleged *Aechmea seideliana* is pictured. Those who read 'Bromeletter' will know that the 'true' plant is in Australia, albeit with bluish red petals compared to white in the original description. The illustrated plant is a vigorous form of *A. warasii*.

Now to Ruby Ryde who had a plant also raised from seed allegedly from Seidel which was more robust than the *Aechmea seideliana* and had a large inflorescence. This plant raised the temperature in Adelaide with yours truly saying it was a hybrid and Len Colgan maintaining it was a species. Eventually Len could stand it no longer and six months ago sent pieces to Elton Leme in Brazil. Both of us were on edge until a letter arrived. Elton had never seen such a plant and could only assume it was a hybrid. However, seed raising from this plant has produced fairly consistent progeny. In the meantime, I believe it should be given a Cultivar name because it is distinct, it is an attractive plant, and what better name than *Aechmea* 'Ruby'. (Now called 'Aussie Ruby' because there is already a 'Ruby' in existence in the USA) This will identify the plant and also indicate its source for future reference.

The inflorescence is 10cm long. It is 60 flowered. The ovary and base of the sepal yellow compared to whitish pink. The top portion of the sepal still carmine red and petals bluish red."

Now to the plant in question that Julie has photographed for us, which is very close to this description but whether it has a yellow ovary I cannot see. In any event we know that 'Aussie Ruby' came from a seed batch and we do not know the range of plants that escaped from Ruby's collection. I leave the decision up to the owner of said plant.

And what about the deciduous leaved *Pitcairnia* by the name of *P. heterophylly*. It was just a pot full of prickles with just one inflorescence just opening. However, there was evidence that seed was on its way. So anyone who wants to grow their very own quaint *Pitcairnia* just reminds me about free seed.

One blast from the past was an *Aechmea* 'Red Ribbon'. An excerpt from *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' Complex in 2000 by Butcher follows: This all started in 1945 when Mulford Foster crossed *Aechmea racinae* with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor* to produce *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' which was patented in 1949 (see BSIJ 1988 #2 page 55 by Racine Foster).

The interesting thing is that much trouble was spent in describing the plant but not the inflorescence and we do not know what it is supposed to look like!

## *Roving Reporter September cont:*

It is accepted that the inflorescence is pendant and is like *Aechmea racinae* but with a darker red ovary with dark purplish petals edged in white that we generally associate with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor*. To add to the confusion Padilla says (Bromeliads 1973 page 123) petals are coral tipped blue, and Bromeliad Treasury (1983) as yellow! Baensch in Blooming Bromeliads (1994) page 79 shows dark purplish edged white.



Aechmea Red Ribbon (Photo J. Batty)



Aechmea 'Red Ribbon'(Photo J. Hall)

Since that time I am sure that others have repeated the cross using different clones or have grown self-set seed from Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' while still calling them Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' or giving them a new name. 'Black Jack' and 'Perez' are just two examples. Variegation appeared in one plant in 1951 and was named Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite' by Foster in 1953. Shortly afterwards this plant sported again only this time in the collection of Hazel Mueller but with red stripes this time and was called 'Red Ribbon'."

Something Julie Batty was able to point out to me was that the style and stigma turn white shortly after flowering. What astounds me is that a plant named 60 years ago looks so good when the catch cry seems to be "New is best!"

Len had brought in several plants of the *Tillandsia cyanea/lindenii* complex and said he was confused as to which was which, and which was hybrid! He was confused? Well what about in the 1890's when Wallis found both species in the wild and sent specimens back to Europe. It was a sensation having such large flowers and scented to the bargain. It had Morren in Belgium and Regel in Russia almost at war (was this linked to the Franco-Russian conflict?!) over what was what and it was not solved until Lyman Smith in more settled times in 1951 gave some sort of solution. There had been at least 12 different forms described in this period. Just think how many so called improvements have hit the market in the next 60 years. So no wonder Len was confused in deciding a name!

One perennial problem we have is a plant that was called *Tillandsia fasciculata* in Len Cork's days but it offsetted so well that it spread around. When not in flower it looks like a *T. fasciculata* but when it does and finds its way to a meeting, which it does because it is impressive, I get grumpy. Two things to look for

1. The inflorescence is much taller than a 'normal' *T. fasciculata*
2. The flat side of the branch faces to centre axis

Len did well with his *T. foliosa* but we wait proper flowering to see if the label is correct.

Finally, I must mention Len's *T. schusteri* which had been referred to in a previous Roving Report, only this time it was flowering and confirmed that the petals were yellow/green which a colour is not expected in a Mexican *Tillandsia*.

Murray Bridge presentation



Peter, Bev & Ron (Murray Valley standard article 31/8/13)

The Murray Bridge Social Garden Group August meeting was well attended in spite of the wet, cold day and we (Peter, Ron & Bev) were given a warm welcome.

Peter surprised everyone by starting his introduction informing that Bromeliads were one of the oldest plants in the world, grasses being the oldest.

After the introduction a shortened PowerPoint presentation was given wowing all present with the magnificent array of colour from different species & hybrids.

Several members' gardens at Glenelg, Christies Beach, Strathalbyn & Plympton emphasised the benefits of mass planting & displays.

Many questions were answered & the pieces of a Tillandsia from Peters collection were distributed and greatly appreciated.

During the very tasty morning tea many of those present checked out the Bromeliads on display.

If you have a Bromeliad on your wish list our "Wanted" section may be able to help, please contact Derek or Bev with details



## *"Wanted"*



Genera	Requested by	Contact details

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