

BOOK REVIEW: STARTING WITH BROMELIADS

Starting with Bromeliads: A Guide to the Growing of Bromeliads was produced by members of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland. It was published by the Society in 2006.

This book fills a “gap” in the range of bromeliad books. Most such books are written for cool climate conditions, not the sub-tropics or tropics. A number of societies operating in these regions have “cultural notes” that are two to four pages long. However, until now there has not been an inexpensive book, “pitched” at the introductory level, on growing bromeliads in sub-tropical and tropical conditions.

The book is 100 A5 pages long and has over 200 high quality, colour photographs. The photographs illustrate a range of plants and, importantly, cultural information, e.g. how to remove a small bromeliad from the parent plant, as well.

The book opens with a brief overview of the range of plants covered by the term “bromeliad”. It then discusses the growing conditions and gives examples of a large number of genera (or groups of bromeliads) including the lesser known ones. Genera covered are: Aechmea, Alcantarea, Billbergia, Guzmania, Neoregelia, Nidularium, Pepinia/Pitcairnia, Portea, Tillandsia and Vriesea.

The book then covers, in detail, the key topics connected with growing bromeliads in sub-tropical and tropical conditions. Topics covered include: light/temperature/watering requirements, potting mixes, fertilising, pests and diseases.

A detailed section, including a “how to guide”, is then presented on propagation. Vegetative propagation, as well as growing bromeliads from seed, are both covered.

The book concludes with sections on landscaping with bromeliads, buying bromeliads and where to get more information on growing bromeliads (including a list of bromeliad societies located in sub-tropical/tropical Australia).

Overall, this book fulfils its purpose. It would have been desirable to have more colour photographs in the book, but this would have increased the book’s price significantly.

Year of Review: 2006