Bromeliad Newsletter

May Meeting

POPULAR VOTE RESULTS

ADVANCED :

1ST. L.& O. Trevor GUZMANIA Amaranth var.

2nd. L. & O. Trevor Guzmania Sanguinea

INTERMEDIATE

1st. Mal & Michelle Cameron Neoregelia Alcatraz

2nd. Mal & Michelle Cameron Vriesea Bianca x gulz

NOVICE

1st. Jenny Ittensohn Vriesea Favoriet

2nd. Betty Shepherd Neo. Pink Fairy Floss

Persuading bromeliads to bloom; a South Australia experience- some observations -**Adam Bodzioch**

Adam had also given this presentation to " Bromeliads on Arafura" the 16th. Australasian Bromeliad Conference at Darwin to provide some observations and discussion about some trials, conducted by the author in S.A., about the relative success of using the chemical Ethepon [more commonly known as Ethrel] to induce bromeliads to flower.

It is common knowledge that bromeliads can be induced to flower by placing the plant inside a clear plastic bag containing an apple or slice of apple. " Apples are known to be strong producers of ethylene ,a plant hormone that is increasingly produced by plants as they age or if they are injured. If a plant or its flowers is exposed to ethylene, aging can actually be speeded up. Ethylene as a gas is a most effective inducer of flowering of bromeliads but that flowering is not directly due to the gas but its enhancement of the effect of growth hormones. Simply put it can be argued that ethylene stimulates the flowering hormones instead of the leaf growth hormones. Therefore, it is important to select mature plants to be treated. After application of Ethrel the plant leaves will not continue to grow but all plant growth will happen in the inflorescences. Failure to select mature plants will result in small ,weak inflorescences. Also ,the flowering effort takes up much energy from the parent plant with the end result being limited or no ability to produce offsets if it is too immature .It is also essential to select plants that are not connected to pups. It doesn't matter how careful you are in applying Ethrel ,because if the plants are connected, the ethylene is also applied to the pup. The end result will be that the pup will flower as well.

The length of time taken for the plant to bloom will depend on many factors:

1. Genera– Billbergias will bloom within a few weeks, Neoregelias,Guzmanias a little longer ,but Vrieseas and Tillandsias can take 3mths or more to even initiate a spike [although some will flower much quicker].
2. Time of the year– Summer and Winter conditions are vastly different for the initiation of flower spikes.
3. Cultural conditions– the amount of daylight ,average minimum and maximum temperatures ,humidity ,timing of rainfall are all very important factors in bloom development.

Why apply Ethrel?- It can be argued that if a plant is healthy let it make its own decision about when it wants to flower. However, that time will be vastly different for different areas of Australia. For instance, the cultural differences between growing bromeliads in South Australia and Queensland ,for example, are such that many plants will flower in 2-3 years in QLD. while the same plant will take at least twice that time to reach maturity and flower in STH.AUS.,VIC.and Western Aus.

The use of Ethrel can be recommended and even justified in the following areas:

1. to address the influence and effects of culture on bromeliads
2. To address impatience when one has had a plant for years that doesn't even look like flowering
3. To initiate spikes for shows and sale events.
4. To accelerate the growth of plants in order to harvest pups.

There are many factors to be considered before applying Ethrel.

1. What is the best application rate ?
2. Does culture require different concentration rates?
3. Is it important to use a stronger rate for South Australia than Queensland for instance?
4. Is it important to use a stronger rate for winter inducement than summer?
5. When is the best time of the day to apply Ethrel?

The presentation will provide some discussion on the above factors and others when summarising data and results from trials conducted in South Australia over summer and winter between 2007 and 2011 and in particular:

—comparison of summer and winter growth after inducement to flower

—summary of relative success/failure rates with different genera

—-impact on the generation of pups

- hazards/mutations
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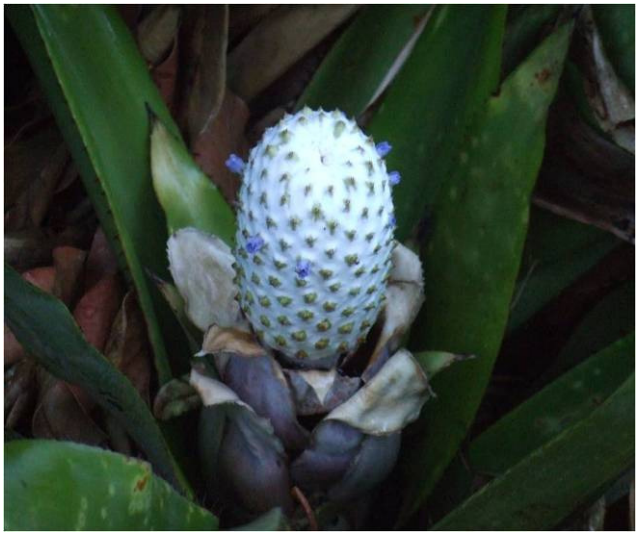
Photo of Guz.. monostachya

After inducing the plant with Ethrel

Photo of Aechmea perforate after inducing with Ethrel



BEGINNERS GROUP—19 MAY 2011

Len Trevor reported on the success of the recent Cryptanthus workshop. Of the 43 attendees, only 14 were members from our club. Olive then also commented on the great social aspect of the day and hopefully there would be 2 held each year. She also mentioned the list of GRACE GOODE hybrids that she has and ROB MURRAY offered to print these out so that all members would have a copy.

Olive thinks that Cryptanthus are great in a clump, especially in a hanging basket. She starts her pups off in cell trays and then, when rooted, it is just a matter of lifting the plant out and potting on. Cryptanthus have different needs to other epiphytic bromeliads—she grows hers in a mix of sand and composted bark. This mix is also ideal for other exotic plants. Pitcairnias, Dyckias and other terrestrial bromeliads also do well in this type of mix.

It is important not to let the plant dry out as it will soon go backwards—some growers are sitting the pot in a saucer. Prepare your mix ahead, and once the warm weather comes, start the potting

Watering once a week in winter ,more often in summer. Nutricote and foliar feed.

Other Business

After supper ,lucky doors and raffles ,Adam acted as commentator for our competition, once more shaking his head on the size and colours of our entries, lots of laughs and suggestions for Adam to move to QLD. for better results with his bromeliads.

Mention of the Autumn Show, that the committee was pleased with the comments on the WOW factor as you started to walk down into the centre and all the wonderful eye-catching display.

Bruce, Cheryl and Nigel are to speak at our next meeting on

WINTER CARE FOR BROMELIADS.

SELGA asked if we could have a talk on how to recognize when seeds are ready for propagating, also workshops on the different varieties of bromeliads.

CRYPTANTHUS QUERY

I bought a Cryptanthus Red Prince in the Bromeliad show 2008. My dog knocked it flying soon after I bought it, Red Prince didn't like what my dog did to it, so it died. I haven't seen it again at any of our bromeliad shows or meetings. I am wondering if anyone still grows it. It was a pretty little cryptanthus that I really liked. I thought as I bought it at a Bromeliad Show someone might know about it. I can't see it on the net. It is not on Grace Goode's list either. I didn't notice it at the Cryptanthus day. I know more about growing Cryptanthus now, what a good day that was. My Cryptanthus are looking happier now they are in water. I hope we have a day for Orthophytums, I have lost quite a few of these, really don't know what to do with them.

SHARON BORN

LUCKY DOORS Malcolm Cameron Betty Shepherd

RAFFLE WINNERS Cheryl Basic Peter Ball Glenn Bernoth Clarke Allen Maxim Wilson[2]

CRYPTANTHUS WORKSHOP 7 MAY 2011

On a beautiful crisp Saturday morning, 43 enthusiastic growers met at the home of Olive and Len Trevor to discuss the growing of Cryptanthus. The gathering was led by Greg Aizlewood and got off to a prompt start at 9.00 a.m. He explained the proceedings and thanked Olive and Len for offering the use of their home for the event. Many had travelled some distance to attend and a surprising honoured attendee was Grace Goode OAM.

During the course of the day, some dedicated speakers would give a presentation, there would be plant sales, silent auction and open discussion.

Olive welcomed the group, and reminisced on the early days of growing Cryptanthus in SOUTH East Qld. And paid homage to Mavis and Bob Paulsen and Grace Goode who were responsible for the early hybridising. The mix Olive uses is a blend of pine bark and sand. She stressed the importance of fertilising—they use 12 mth. Nutricote slow release. She finds the pups fall off and she starts them off in an 8-cell hard tray and when rooted, it is a simple matter of transferring them ,usually waiting for the warm weather.

Greg showed us 2 plants of the same variety which had been grown in completely different conditions. One green and lush and the other, which had been grown harsher and with less fertiliser, was quite red. He uses Nitrophosca Blue, the PH made a lot of difference-reading of 5-6 being ideal. He is starting to grow his in deeper pots and is allowing them to clump making their own micro-climate.

Cheryl Basic had bought in a variety of lovely plants which she spoke about, aided by input from the members. One of interest, was Cryptanthus Silver, which was believed to have come from Bob Paulsen.

Margaret Paterson ,a grower for over 50 years, spoke about her experiences of growing and hybridising. Cryptanthus were one of the first bromeliads she collected and are still her favourite. In nature, they are found growing in leaf litter and even on rocks. She had some C. Beucheri crosses as examples of her work. When she does a cross, she always does it both ways. She showed how to do this with the male and female flowers. Seed does not take long to set, some quicker than others. The seed generally turns yellow when ripe. She stressed how important it is to fertilise. When the new plants are developing, she gives them a number and only names the special ones to be registered. She does not remember ever seeing Cryptanthus self seed. One plant of particular interest was C. Warasii-it is silver and grows quite large, has been used in hybridising. C .flowers are mostly white, some pink or mauve. She has not tried storing pollen.

Most of her Cryptanthus are grown in hanging baskets due to lack of space or on the edge of benches so as to gain the most light. She keeps them warm in winter and moist in summer.

Margaret Cross showed some of the ones she bought back as tiny pups from the conference in New Orleans. Some looked better when grown in stronger light than others.

Steve Flood added his opinion to those already expressed on potting media and fertilising. Osmocote slow release was one he recommended as it is higher in nitrogen. Foliar feeding not so good as Cryptanthus do not have as many trichomes on leaves. Charcoal works but needs to be powdered. Other suggestions from those present, were weak Thrive on a weekly basis, dilute worm juice.
Bob Reilly stands his pots on moistened river sand. In winter he only waters in the morning. By keeping moist in winter, the plants seem to fare better. It was suggested wicks might be used.

Roly Soegaard showed a huge specimen of Cryptanthus Rainbow Star. He adds a handful of 6mm blue metal to the pot and has had good results. To get really good results he does not remove the pups until the mother is dead. If taken off before this ,the pup flowers prematurely so does not get to its full size. He buries the mother deep in the pot. The new plant then will grow to its full potential.
Len Waite puts Saturade in the mix, this does not swell ,as well as ground coconut shells.

After lunch plant sales began and the silent auction completed. There was discussion on forming a Cryptanthus Study Group which received favourable response.
NORMA POOLE