

BROMELIACEAE

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NAVIA GRAFII

The Bromeliad Society of Queensland

General Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month except December, at the Uniting Church Hall, 52 Merthyr Road, New Farm, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

*Postal Address: P.O. Box 565,
Fortitude Valley,
Australia, Q, 4006*

Patron: Mr. H. Caulfield

President: Mr. John Higgins Phone 800 2561

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Committee: Mrs. P. Hobbs, Mrs. P. O'Dea, Mrs. O. Trevor,

Messrs. D. Hobbs, M. O'Dea, D. Upton, L. Trevor, L. Butt.

PROGRAMME

- NOVEMBER, 15th: General Meeting
Christmas Break-up and Rolling Raffle
- Please remember to bring in plants for
main display
- NOVEMBER, 17th: Field Day commencing at 10.00 p.m.
- Val Urquhart
23 Thirlmere Rd
ALEXANDRA HILLS
- DECEMBER, 20th: No meeting - Society in recess
- JANUARY, 17th: General meeting
- EASTER, 1991 6th AUSTRALIAN BROMELIAD CONFERENCE

EDITORIAL

Another Christmas season draws near, and I look forward to seeing you all at the Christmas party on Thursday night.

We still have not found someone who will be our permanent Secretary, and the Society once again appeals for your help. Michael O'Dea and Bob Paulsen have kindly offered to fill in, but both have large workloads with other Societies and commitments, and also both are already on our Committee in other positions.

I have done the Secretary's job over a large number of years, and I can assure you that it is not a tedious or time consuming job. The actual writing and correspondence work would probably take 2 hours in the week after each general and committee meeting, and nearly anyone with a legible hand and general commonsense could do the job. Volunteers to take this position through 1991 will be accepted at the November meeting.

As many members of the Queensland Society as possible are urged to attend the Sydney Conference next Easter, as it will not be cheaper to get to an Australian Conference (except our own) for another 8 years due to distance. Sydney is our closest Capital City and prices on their pre-conference dodger are very reasonable. Any member in our Society who has travelled interstate to a Conference will tell you what a great time they have and all the new friends they meet.

See you in Sydney at Easter 1991.

Greg Stewart.

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THE HYBRID DETECTIVE

Part 2

We know that the parentage of *Billbergia Kahibah* was given as (*B. saundersii* x *B. amoena*) x *B. "nutans"* in 1963.

Later on in 1967 we found that the seed parent was that plant called *B. glimiana*. So how did the confusion start.

In Bromeleter Vol 1 Jul/Aug 1963 which was before the date of registration, there was an article by Bob Agnew. Anyone who has read the early Bromeleter letters will realize how astute Bob Agnew was. What did happen to him? He and I would have had marvellous discussions!

*NOTES ON A PLANT KNOWN AS BILLBERGIA GLYMIANA

For some time now this plant has been seen in limited numbers in a few collections, and is prized as an attractive specimen. This plant grows well, but not overly fast, in an acid, open mix and shows creamy spots on a medium green leaf. The leaf edges are serrated, the plant rather openly tubular, and does not appear to grow much more than 10-12 inches high. Light, and moving air seem to have a direct relationship to the intensity of the pink to reddish overcast seen on the few plants available. Some interesting facts have been unearthed about this plant which are worth noting, and further illustrate the need for more enquiry and less acceptance. The chase began in March 1962 with an enquiry addressed to Lyman B. Smith re *B. glimiana*. Soon after a reply was received pointing out that *B. glimiana* was a synonym for *B. morelii* and was spelt with a 'y' anyway! Reference to Smith's 'Bromeliaceae of Brazil' quickly showed something was amiss, since the plant here certainly did not tally with the reference, i.e. "inflorescence densely covered with scurfy scales, except the petals" and further, "lower floral bracts bright red, large, ample, concealing most of the inflorescence, leaves concolorous". A flower was obtained in April 1963 and forwarded to the United States. The results justified the original doubts since the plant is now known to be a hybrid with at least one part *B. saundersii* but the other part, or parts, vaguely like *B. amoena*.

It is all too frequently that hybrids, made "Heaven knows where" without any published records, go under an astonishing number of names, and in truth remaining in part unknown. It is suggested in the light of this new

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information that members having this plant in their collections alter the name to *B. saundersii* X."

This undoubtedly was the reason for the name *Billbergia saundersii* x *b. amoena* being used by Win Reid because the article appeared before her registration. I think that I laid to rest the problem of *B. glymiana*/*B. saundersii* X by calling the plant *Billbergia Gem.* At least it isolates the clone concerned. Secondly we don't have to worry too much about *B. saundersii* being really *B. chlorosticta*. I believe that Bob Agnew was also worried about that *B. "nutans"*. Why the quote marks? Was it a true species or a hybrid?

Six months later in May/June 1964 Bromeleter we find the following article -

"BILLBERGIA NUTANS

Many of the species of *Billbergia* have not been used overmuch in hybridising, but *B. nutans* is the reverse, with so many plants in collections today with at least one part of *B. nutans* in their make-up that it is almost impossible to trace the exact parentage. The plants that are *B. nutans* crosses, almost invariably, call the telltale blue border to the petals.

B. nutans - leaves serrulate; petals green at extreme apex
- *v. nutans*

- leaves entire; petals blue at apex as well as margins - *v. schimperiana*

B. nutans is a dominant parent and frequently the shape and form of many seedlings. The original *B. nutans* is suspected to be not well known and narrowly tubular form so often seen in gardens. It should be a broader, darker, wavy-leaved plant loosely tubular, the leaf blades serrulate with the petals green at the apex, as described above. It should have the inflorescence nodding, but on such the larger scale to our commonly accepted *B. nutans*. The *B. nutans* that is in such plentiful supply is almost certainly a very old hybrid, possibly one of Theodore Meade's (an early U.S.A. hybridist) who was very fond of *B. nutans* as a parent for many crosses. It has often

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occurred to me that the form in sight in Australia may be a cross between the type and the variety.

B. nutans v. *Schimperiana* is a relatively short and broad leaved variety that has ;no marginal spines and with floral characters as above".

If you have access to Fossari's painting in 'Bromeliaceas' by Reitz you will see that *B. nutans* petals have a hairy tip almost as though they have a goatee beard! Have you looked at your *B. nutans* flowers lately?

The doubt of the authenticity of *B. nutans* continues to the current time. Perhaps we may spend some time at a Convention deciding whether that common old Bromeliad is not so common after all.

Perhaps we may ponder on knowledge we have of our very own and which we have kept to ourselves. Share it around so that in another 17 odd years someone else can play Dick Tracy. Write to your own Editor or to the writer at 25 Crace Rd., Fulham. 5024.

Derek Butcher,
with thanks to Peter Johnston

REMINDER:

Membership Fees are due on 1st January, 1991, and we ask members to remit their payment as soon as possible.

Family Membership	\$10.00
Single Membership	\$ 7.00

Payment can be made either direct to the Hon. Treasurer at the meeting, or by post to the Society address.

THE DISHDRAINER

Being brought up in the depression when everything had to have an after-life and nothing could be thrown away because it was too useful, I still possess a lot of that philosophy, or is it the plain adventurous inventor spirit.

What to do with a 'worn out' dishdrainer. Well, line it with hessian, or shade cloth will do but hessian is the best. Next put in a lining or layer of peat from the elkhorn, or if you wish, coir from an old mattress. What? You haven't an old mattress. Well chaps, haven't you taken your wife for that walk along the northern tip of Bribie yet. I warned you in a previous article and I'm sure she'd enjoy the view.

Back to the dishdrainer. Next, add a little potting mix. I know you'll tell me it won't hold much as the drainer is very shallow and almost full already, but that does not matter. All you need is enough mix to hold the roots of the plants in place. Attach four lengths of wire, one to each corner of the drainer so as to form a hanging 'drainer', I mean basket.

Into this masterpiece of an invention you can plant any stoloniferous *Neoregelia*, viz *Neoregelia ampillacea*, *Neo pauciflora*, *Neo punctatissima*. I think the small leafed specimens give the best result in these conditions. There is only enough mix to hold the plants, but in no time the roots attach to the peat or fibre and the plant enjoys the situation. In a few years the plant will multiply to such an extent that it will cover the whole of the 'drainer' basket and form itself virtually into a big ball. Of course you could do this with any shallow hanging basket but think of all the fun you've missed along the way.

p.s.: If you are modern and use a dishwasher, I haven't thought up any schemes for non-functioning dishwasher or parts thereof, but give me time, I may come up with an idea.

Des Andersen

THE BROMELIAD CULT IN AUSTRALIA 1961

When I look back over the past few years and reflect on the difficulty of getting bromeliads into this country from overseas and compare it with the position today, which, alas, was much more difficult, I feel that, taking all the factors into consideration, the effort was well worth while.

Today there are over one hundred varieties in the country, with a good representation of genera. I am indebted to Mulford Foster in particular and other friends in general for the ultimate collection of my plants. As fast as I have been able to get stock, however, the bromeliads have gone out to other collectors, who have in turn, obtained plants from other sources and who also have raised a few plants from seed. The botanic gardens in four of the states are giving attention to the cult and are getting seed from overseas.

Seven years ago I raised a number of seedlings, most of which have gone to various fanciers. *Vriesea splendens* and its hybrids are still only half grown. A critic of mine once remarked to me that it was 'cranks' like me that kept the cactus family from dying out. Today, if that same individual was about, he would say that it as cranks like me that keep bromeliads in existence. That is the essence of the situation. We are indebted to the enthusiasts for the further interest of our hobby. Nurserymen also are now giving attention to their culture. Once the ball gets rolling, it gathers momentum.

Recently I visited a nurseryman who had a nice batch of seedlings six inches high, which included *Vriesea splendens*, Billbergias, Aechmeas, one or two other Vrieseas, and full grown specimens of *Vriesea hieroglyphica* and *Billbergia "x Fantasia"*. I enquired where he obtained them and he told me that he had received them from a grower in New South Wales. Recently I have received from other fanciers a few new plants to add to my collection.

As I have stated above, the bromeliads now in this country are an average representation of the genus. We have both the smooth and rough leaved *Ananas*, which are grown extensively in Queensland, also the variegated form; *Bromelia serra*: Puyas; Dykias (5 varieties); Hechtias;

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Pitcairnias (4 varieties); **Tillandsias** (including *T. usneoides*, *T. ionantha*, *T. butzii*, and several others); **Billbergias**, **Guzmanias**, **Aechmea racine**, **A. orlandiana**, and several others; **Neoregelia marmorata**, **N. spectabilis**, etc; **Nidularium** in variety, **Canistrum roseum**; **Cryptanthus** in variety; **Cryptobergia**; **Quesnelia** (4 varieties) and **Acanthostachys** with pendant growths four feet long.

Some of our favored bromeliads are *Aechmea miniata discolor*, *Tillandsia cyanea*, *Vriesea carinata*, *Vriesea splendens*, *Nidularium striatum*, *Nidularium fulgens*, *Neoregelia carolinae*, *Aechmea racine*, *Aechmea fasciata*, *Billbergia vittata*, *Vriesea hieroglyphica*, *Cryptanthus zonatus*, *Quesnelia liboniana*.

The quarantine division of the agricultural department is building a quarantine glasshouse in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and it is to be hoped that in the future we will be able to get better treatment of the plants we wish to import, although unfortunately at the present time we are restricted to about five plants.

Charles G. Hodgson

(from the Journal of the Bromeliad Society Incorporated, 1961.

The situation has certainly changed since then hasn't it? (Ed)

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6TH AUSTRALIAN BROMELIAD CONFERENCE

The 6th Australian Bromeliad Conference will be held in Sydney over the Easter weekend of 1991.

These conferences are a wonderful opportunity to make and renew lasting friendships with like-minded people, to learn an enormous amount about our hobby, and to have a very enjoyable time.

The prices being charged for the Conference and accommodation are very reasonable, and I urge ALL members to consider attending. The only time you may get one cheaper is at our own.

Those members who attended our last conference in Brisbane will remember Harry Luther who is speaking, and there is also a number of other eminent speakers.

Registration Forms are available from the Secretary.

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