

# 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. 4006

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PATRON: Mr. H. Caulfield  
 PRESIDENT: Mr. John Higgins Ph. 8002561  
 SECRETARY: Mr. Michael O'Dea 3992669  
 TREASURER: Mrs. Lorraine Wilton 3901226  
 EDITOR: Mr. Greg Stewart  
 COMMITTEE: Mesdames Phyllis Hobbs, Patricia O'Dea,  
 Olive Trevor, Messrs Don Hobbs, Doug  
 Upton, Len Trevor, Len Butt.

PROGRAMME

JANUARY, 17th: General Meeting  
 Slide showing by Myles McGregor-Lowndes  
 of overseas trip.  
 Commentary - P. Paroz

FEBRUARY, 21st: Annual General Meeting and  
 Election of Officers  
 Preparation of Plants for Show Bench  
 by Patricia O'Dea and Phyllis Hobbs  
 Commentary - Nev Ryan

EASTER, 1991 BROMELIADS VI CONFERENCE  
 March 29 - National Conference on Bromeliads,  
 April 1 Sydney, Australia.

JUNE, 8 & 9th: Combined Show, Mt. Coot-tha Gardens

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC.

Notice is given that the Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc. will hold its annual general meeting for all members at the Uniting Church Hall, Merthyr Rd., New Farm, at 8.00 p.m. on the 21st February, 1991.

The agenda for the annual general meeting will be as follows -

1. Presidents opening remarks
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. Correspondence
6. President's Report
7. Treasurer's Report and presentation of audited financial statement
8. Election of Office Bearers
9. General Business
10. Date of Next Meeting
11. Close

M. O'Dea,  
Secretary,  
5th February, 1991

SOMETHING OLD - SOMETHING NEW

A few species of orthophytum will add interest to any bromeliad collection.

The genus orthyphytum comes from the dry mountainous areas of Eastern Brazil. They grow in rocky ground, sometimes in full sun and can tolerate extreme dryness.

In the early eighties, I was given seed of the then very rare Orthophytum navioides. I sowed them in the usual way with good germination resulting. As the little seedlings progressed, it was obvious damping off was a problem, so they were moved to a dryer and airier position. They seemed to thrive on neglect. I find Orthophytum navioides and others of the genus do well for me in hanging pots as this allows more drying out of the plants than benches, or on the ground. Being tropical, their main growing period is summer and during that time they should be repotted into an open mixture with lots of drainage, and watered freely. Restrict water during the really cold months.

Orthophytum vagans has been a favourite for years, and a plant in full colour and flower is very attractive. However the variegated version of this plant is even better, and is quite beautiful with its pink edging. O. vagans can be propagated easily by cutting off the top few inches of the plant and replanting into a new mixture. A few cuttings into a five inch pot will soon grow into a nice plant. this should be done early in the summer to give it the full benefit of the growing season. It also stops the old plants from getting too leggy and falling over.

One plant that I have is called Orthophytum sucrei by some growers. I have had this plant for some time without a name and I have been unable to find a plant listed under this name. It is a quaint plant of soft green with a flower head similar to a miniature Nidularium. It colours in good light and at flowering time is a lovely bronze shade. It has the habit of producing pups from the flower spike. Their weight bends the spike over and I can imagine it taking root when growing in the ground.

Another with a similar habit is the very beautiful O. gurkenii. It is a brown banded plant which could be

cont.

mistaken for a *Cryptanthus* during its early life. When it starts to mature the centre rises to form an unusual lettuce green inflorescence with the usual tiny white flowers. This whole thing lasts many months and ends up producing pups on the old flower spike. As well as pupping at the base of the plant, *O. gurkenii* can be easily grown from seed and the demand for this plant should be easily filled. This plant does not appear to be as cold sensitive as some of the others in the genus.

*O. 'Copper Penny'* is the only hybrid that I have. It is not listed in the International Checklist of Bromeliad Hybrids. The only hybrids listed are crosses between *O. navioides* and *Neoregelias*, one is *O. navioides* with a *Nidularium*, and the last is *O. saxicola* x *Cryptanthus* It, The old plant called *O. 'What'*. I have not seen one for years. Grown well, it is a very pretty plant.

Last of my *Orthophytums* is *O. rubrum*, a plant I've had for years, and is flowering for the first time. It is larger and more spiny than the others. The plant itself is not as interesting or colourful, however when in flower is quite beautiful with flesh red bracts and tiny white flowers. Anyone not knowing what this plant is like will find it featured on the cover of the book 'Bromeliads' by Werner Rauh. The plant propagates by stolons and often through the drainage holes of its pot.

In the supplement to 'Flora Neotropica Monograph' by Smith and Downs, the following *orthophytums* have been listed. These are all plants collected and described since the monograph was printed -

<i>O. gurkenii</i>	1983	Minas Gerais, Brazil
<i>O. Burle-marxii</i>	1979	Bahia, Brazil
<i>O. burle-marxii</i> var <i>seabrae</i>	1985	Bahia, Brazil
<i>O. lemei</i>	1985	Bahia, Brazil
<i>O. lymaniana</i>	1983	Bahia, Brazil
<i>O. alvimil</i>	1986	Bahia, Brazil

An interesting article concerning some of these new plants is to be found in the Journal of the B.S.I., Volume 38 Jan/Feb 1988, entitled 'Bromeliads of the Chapada Diamantina National Park' by Elton M.C. Leane and Ruy Funch.

cont.

One of the reasons collecting bromeliads is such an interesting hobby is because these new plants gradually filter through to you and I. It will be interesting to look forward to some of the new Orthophytums in future years.

GOOD HUNTING FELLOW BROMELIANS.

Olive Trevor.

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GROWING TILLANDSIAS IN ROMA

I have been growing tillandsias in Roma for the past 3-1/2 years. The climate is very dry compared to Nerang on the Gold Coast where I grew them for approx. 14 years before moving out here.

The temperature ranges from 15 to 45 C in summer and -3 to 25 C in winter. We live up high out of the frost. Even though it's flat to undulating country it is on top of the range. The average rainfall is 24" per year.

I find the climate very pleasant for 9 months, and too hot for 3 months. The tillandsias are housed in a bush house of 50% shade cloth with plastic covering the floor and up 12" round the sides and filled with pine chips. This stays wet for a while and creates humidity.

Inside the bush house I have sheets of weldmesh facing North-east and covered completely with Spanish Moss. All the plants nestle in the moss. The moss grows prolifically and I have to watch it doesn't engulf the tillandsias. Plants that are hanging free of the moss don't do as well.

I feel on the whole the plants are thriving out here. Tillandsia tectorum and T. crocata are outstnading. The green leaved varieties, e.g. T. multicaulis, T. complanata, etc. died the first summer.

Summer is the worst for them as it's just too hot. I have recorded 45 C in my bush house. During summer they go very dormant. Any varieties that flower in December, January or February are a non-event as they get bleached out. T. brachycaulis grows but does not go red at flowering time. Autumn, Winter and Spring they thrive and colour up beautifully.

I don't water very often. Once a month in winter and once a week in summer or less. What I do that I think is important is leave the sprinkler on them for 1 to 2 hours in summer in the later afternoon. I think the length of time they are wet is more important than how often they are watered. I would never water them during the heat of the day. Apart from the rain to which you can almost see them responding, they are watered with dam water that has been tested alkaline.

We don't get weeks of wet humid weather like you do on the coast. If it's wet for a week running that is a long time for out here. I feel this is to their advantage.

Seedlings germinate here but on the first hot summer's day they perish immediately. Some 2 year old ones I brought out with me are surviving but very slow growth. I must admit I haven't fertilized at all.

Below is a list of how some of my plants are doing in Roma

## DIED

complanata  
multicaulis  
leiboldiana  
bandenses  
bandero  
funebri  
flabellata  
flexuosa

## SURVIVING

gillesii  
brachycaulis  
funkiana  
butzii  
paucifolia  
cyanea  
recurvata  
venexuelana  
didisticha  
pruinosa

cont.

## GOOD GROWTH

bergerii  
 meridonalis  
 baileyii  
 chiapensis  
 carlsoniae  
 cacticola  
 loliacea  
 caput-medusae  
 streptophylla  
 edithae  
 ionantha  
 araujii  
 capitata  
 latifolia  
 argentea Fine Leaf  
 lorentziana  
 seleriana  
 magnusiana  
 paraensis  
 streptocarpa  
 setacea  
 bulbosa  
 albida

## OUTSTANDING GROWTH

tectorum  
 crocata  
 albertiana  
 palacea  
 argentea thick leaf  
 spherosepala  
 gardneri  
 leomaniana  
 juncea  
 xerographica x  
                   brachycaulis  
 hondurensis  
 duratii v decomposita  
 duratii v duratii  
 filifolia  
 hetermorpha  
 mima  
 publensis

Heather Sullivan,  
 'Turramurra', Roma

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TILLANDSIA GIGANTICA

Above is a photo of Tillandsia gigantea which is in full

cont.

flower at Rolly Reilley's hideaway.

I purchased the plant from Mr. Rolf Rawe, South Africa, in 1981 and the plant was approx 2 foot across when purchased, so I presume about 6 years old at that stage as it was seed grown.

The plant now spreads 6 foot across and has a flower spike of some 10 feet tall. The plant started to flower in early November and is still in flower at the present time. It has pale cream flowers which get copious amounts of nectar on them to attract pollinators.

The odd thing however is that the plant has not thrown any adventitious offsets nor has it shown any sign yet of throwing a conventional offset. Perhaps it may just set large amounts of seed. I have not heard of any other grower in Australia flowering this plant, but if they have, I would be glad to hear from them.

Greg Stewart.

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