

BROMELIACEAE

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Canistrum aurantiacum

THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC.

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 pm.

POSTAL ADDRESS: P O Box 565,
Fortitude Valley,
AUSTRALIA Q 4006

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PATRON: Mr. H. Caulfield

PRESIDENT: Mr. Len Trevor

SECRETARY: Mr. Paul Hunter

ASST. SECRETARY: E. Masters

TREASURER: Ms. Lorraine Wilton

EDITOR: Mr. Len Butt

SHOW ORGANISER: Mr. Don Hobbs

COMMITTEE: Mrs. Olive Trevor; Mr. Neville Ryan;
Mr. Paul Bird; Mrs. Phyllis Hobbs;
Mr. Michael O'dea; Mrs. Patricia O'Dea;
Mr. Bob Paulsen.

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PROGRAMMES: January - Beginners Talk by Lorraine Wilton
subject - Tillandsias.
Plant Commentary - Neville Ryan
Speaker - Mr. John Higgins, Bromeliad Safari
February - Annual General Meeting - election
of Officers.
Beginners talk by Len Butt - Bromeliad
Growing Mixtures.
Plant Commentary by Lorraine Wilton.

All SUBSCRIPTIONS are due from the 1st January, 1992. Please pay promptly to assist the correct running of your Society.
Subscription fees - \$7.00 - Single; \$10.00 - Family.

Twenty-five Year badge clips are now due to be presented to those members who have been in this Society for a quarter of a century!!
Congratulations.

EDITORIAL TWENTY-FIFTH SILVER ANNIVERSARY YEAR

1967-1992 marks a period of real achievement for bromeliad growers in the State of Queensland. From humble beginnings this Society has made quite an important organisation in its own right, and many of its members have done much to promote and improve the plants that are so important to all who love the Bromeliaceae.

In the field of plant crossing and intergeneric hybridising we can hold our own when one recognises such important field work that has been done by Grace Goode of the Sunshine Coast, Mr. & Mrs. Patterson of Gympie, and Olwen Ferris of the Gold Coast, being merely three of our plant pioneers striving to bring better and more colourful plants among us. At this point I must also mention, Mr. Wasley of Coopers Plains and his work in the field of the *Bilbergia* genus.

Although the prime movers in this Society's foundation were Nes Misso, Mary Grasselli, Ivan Phillips and yours truly, members that followed close after have, in many cases devoted much of their time, dedication and personal effort to making this Society just what it stands for today.

Many of these are still with us, some have left us and again, some have rejoined our ranks, I feel it is only proper at this occasion to give them a mention, and to apologise if I miss anyone out.

Peter Paroz, Barclay Binnie, Mr. & Mrs. Hyde, Mr. Harold Caulfield (Patron), Morris Jones, Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins, Mr. & Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Audrey Coley, Mrs. Joan Imray, Mr. Nick Kemp, Mr. & Mrs. O'Dea and Mr. & Mrs. Wilson.

As the Society progressed, names like Noel Joyce and Walter Slezak become evident, each adding their endeavour to help us. We have had at least six changes of meeting place and although each was thought at the time to be the ultimate, each change has been for the better.

In our first decade as a specialist group, new members joined who have been a great boost to our popularity and a promotion to our plants. Among these are names like Mr. & Mrs. Trevor, Mr. John Sax, Stan Collover, and this is to mention but a few.

This is not meant to be a diary of members and only mentions of a few with outstanding service to us. It would be remiss at this point not to mention the period of about twelve years ago when Greg Stewart joined us because society work became an obsession with him. At this time many growers were importing bromeliads and despite the heavy hassles that we all know are associated with the practice, huge

quantities of new species and hybrids and cultivars became available. Mary Grasselli now confined to a wheel chair still made her presence felt when it came to society matters. Later this was replaced by a bed in her Moorooka home, and from there her pen was seldom idle until she passed away a few years ago. Her last work was to just about half finish writing a book on the flowering habits of bromeliads in Queensland.

In the last ten years many new faces are with us and our present band of enthusiasts speak for themselves. The Society is in good hands and our current Committee has given such good service it augers well for the future and our coming Conference here in 1993.

Apart from other great things that have sprung from this Society, one that is surely worth a mention is our judging school and the able way it was conducted by Peter Paroz. As the first appointed judge of this Society, I feel it only right to congratulate all judges who came from this school. We have also always had a member who might be referred to as the Tillandsia man, I guess that title now is with Mr. Rowie Riley, but it first rested on the head of our first President, the late Mr. Neslie Misso. Many others have deserved it, such as Peter Paroz, Greg Stewart, and the newer nursery members Steve Golinsky and Laurie Muller. Even in our Society they appear to dominate as a genus.

Now it becomes my pleasure to say just what we have achieved as a society in the last 25 years!

Firstly, an understanding and friendship with all other groups of the same interest, as is evident in our participation in the bi-yearly State Conferences, a yearly exhibition stand in the R.N.A. annual August Show, the annual June combined weekend display and sales with the Qld. Succulent Society, our association and involvement with R.H.S. of Qld.s Show weekend and last but not least, in the bromeliad education field, our long association with the American body and Lyman B. Smith and Mr. Harry Luther. Also we still enjoy the same Patron, and Harold Caulfield's involvement in bromeliads goes way back before his arrival in Brisbane in 1959.

Len P. Butt (Editor)

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The following article is a reprint from "Qld. Garden", February, 1974.

BEAUTIES FROM BRAZIL - by L.P. Butt

Many people ask me as to what bromeliad will suit a landscape rockery best of all.

First and foremost, to my mind, comes the pleasing sight of *Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa* with its clumping habit, yellow-green leaves, and tall, beautiful, multi-flowered inflorescences at the late November-December periods.

This is truly a noble plant and the long life and utility uses of its flower stalks are with us for months.

In the *Portea* group there are only five species and two varieties according to Mulford B. Foster, a noted American authority.

The origin is from Brazil, and it is named for Dr. Marius Porte, a French scientist of many fields, also believed to be the first person to introduce it to cultivation in 1885.

Dr L.B.Smith of the Smithsonian Institute gave the latest naming of the species that concern us here, and especially the variety *Extensa*.

The species *Portea silveirae* (Mez) and *Portea filifera* (L.B.Smith) are virtually unknown here in Queensland, and the species plant *Portea petropolitana* var. *petropolitana* is rarely seen.

However, here below is the description given by Mulford Foster, which leads me to suspect that somehow or other plants of the species are sometimes sold as Var. *extensa* and vice-versa.

It is a very robust plant, the stiff rosette of prominently spined leaves often reaching four feet high when in bloom, the flower head is a rather compact, much branched, cylindrical panicle about 12 to 18 inches long. Flower petals are lavender, and sepals and ovary are pink-orange in shade.

The two *Porteas* that are here to stay are the variety *Extensa* as first described and the rarer version *Portea lepanthe* which was only discovered in 1929.

This latter *Portea* is very like *Extensa* in growth habit and clumping ability and makes a good companion plant in a rockery or landscaped terrace. Actually, it is in terraces that I believe *Porteas* excel.

P. lepanthe, or at least the form in my collection, has a tall (up to 5 feet) open panicle inflorescence with pink bracts. The flowers are definitely orange in shade, and the ovaries (or berries) are

yellow to pale orange. As the little orange tip flower is short lived this leaves the yellow berries for the same longevity as the other *Porteas*.

In contrast to this, the *Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa* exerts a 6 foot rose pink inflorescence, pink stemmed and pink bracteated. The grey green ovaries are purple tipped and the emerging florets are deep lavender blue. As the florets die the ovary turns from apple green to blue and is very long lived.

Indeed, they stay on the plant long enough to be used as dry arrangement material for floral artists months later.

I have seen some really fine specimens as rockery plants here in Brisbane. My own clump is planted on a fence line and has ten inflorescence spikes this season.

It is worth noting that the leaves become long and strappy if grown in shade positions, but this does not really deter the flowering habit. If grown in sunny situations the leaves are stiffer and more erect, the leaf colour being yellow-green.

To my knowledge, up to the present date, this variety does not appear to set seeds, and the berries are always fleshy and solid. Only hand pollination may eventually produce seed. Apparently humming birds do the job in South America, so this could be the reason for no seeds here. However, I am hopeful that my own native bees may finally pollinate this *Portea* as their diminutive size and probing habits may be the answer.

Incidentally, the ovaries (berries) of the *Porteas* are not harmful even if eaten. This important fact seems to be true also for the berries of all bromeliads.

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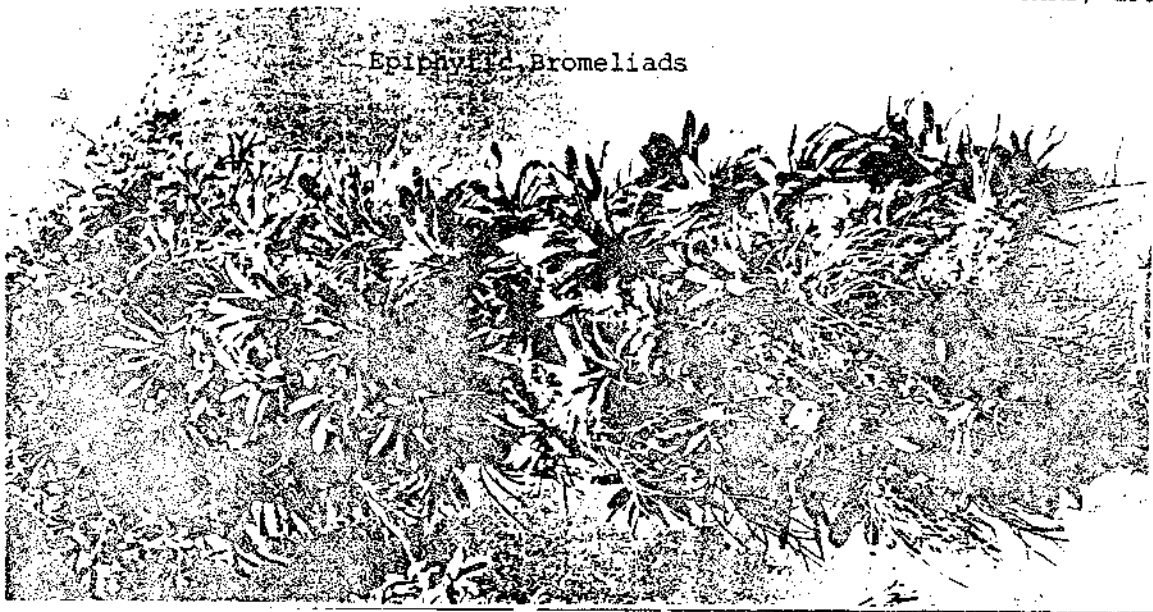
L.P.BUTT DISCUSSES BROMELIADS "Qld. Garden" May 1974.

Two strange and fascinating members of the extensive bromeliad family can be seen in most collections in Queensland today.

Both species are truly epiphytic and will adapt marvellously to basket culture in the bush house or as epiphytes if placed in the crotch of a tree.

To study each species separately, the *Acanthostachys* (pronounced

Epiphytic Bromeliads



a-cantho-steak-is) has only one plant in the genus and this is named *Acanthostachys strobilacea*.

A rain forest plant, denizen of Brazil and Argentina and the thin arching leaves of this bromeliad can be often seen cascading over branches of a jungle tree at elevations of over 2,000 feet.

The arching leaves are extremely thin, olive green in colour in shade conditions and copper-brown in sun conditions.

Generally the inflorescence forms from a fork in the leaves and is shaped like a tiny pineapple of orange bracts with yellow florets.

I have found that cymbidium mixture, used as a growing medium in a plant basket, produces a group of arching stems and often several flower heads from the one plant.

As this delightful bromeliad produces new plants on stolons, it is not very long before a specimen plant is produced filling the basket and becoming quite an acquisition to its owner.

As the inflorescence ages, seeds can be easily extracted and if planted immediately are generally viable and soon form new plantlets.

In the *Aereococcus* genus there are about four species, but the one known mostly in Queensland is *Aerococcus flagellifolius* with its

bronze-red colouring, semi-bulbous base and thin upright whip-like leaves forming quite close clumps as a basket specimen or as a potted plant.

The flower head of upright small pink flowers is quickly followed by small black berries.

Although *Acanthostachys* can be a beautiful plant even grown just as a rockery plant, perhaps secured to a tree stump the *Aereococcus* is generally thought of as collector's item and bromelians generally add it to a collection mainly for botanical interest.

The seeds of the latter are few and also very small. So far I have not raised this plant from seed.

Another method that can be used to present both of these species in an attractive setting is to set them up on a small bromeliad tree as is sometimes done to display Tillandsias.

This can be made by moulding a quantity of cement in a 2 gall. plastic bucket and then setting a shapely tree branch with appropriate shape, centrally in the mixture.

For a more permanent tree an arrangement of main stem and branches manufactured of metal rods welded together is a first class alternative.

The "tree", either wood or metal, is then covered, by winding fibre material up the stem and along the branches.

This can be coconut mattress fibre, coir rope, or palm fibre.

Secure this medium with strong nylon fishing line, then attach your plants firmly to the fibre.

If secured rigidly both species will adapt well, the former to send cascading leaves downward and the latter to sit erect and possibly become a real attraction on your "tree".

In our Anniversary Year another 1974 article on species...

AECHMEA .. THE BEST BET FOR ANY BEGINNER - by L.P. Butt

Possibly the best beginner's species, because of its easy cultivation, and adaptability to any situation. Correctly pronounced (eek-me'a) these plants have been in cultivation for about 150 years now so many varieties and hybrids are available.

As in *Billbergia*, these plants have spines along their leaf margins, though quite often they are so small as to be hardly discernible.

In shape they conform to either the loose tubular or open rosette formation and the inflorescence often has colourful berries which can be the most prominent part of the plant.

This is not always so, as in a few species the berries are completely concealed in the bracts that form the flower head.

Such is the case in *Aechmea fasciata* which was the most favoured in England for many years.

The habitat of the *Aechmeas* is extremely wide from Southern Mexico down into Argentina where they grow on jungle trees, adapt to the mulch covered forest floor and can also be found growing on rock formations.

Several of the *Aechmea* species have been put into other sections of the family for many years as in the leaf shape and pattern alone they are very variable being either hard leathery and stiff or soft and delicate.

The leaf pattern can be dull or vivid depending on the amount of light given the plant, but not even the lovely *Billbergia* can boast of the range of colour given the *Aechmeas*.

Bi-colour, barred, bottled, striped, and often coloured in rainbow hues is quite the pattern of *Aechmea* make-up, and as a contrast many are just plain clear green in texture.

(For many years, *Aechmea fasciata* was referred to in English garden books as *Billbergia rhodocyanea*).

I have found that like the *Billbergia*, the *Aechmea* species adapt well if securely tied to tree trunks or to branches.

The stoloniferous types will quickly take hold of the host and once more become epiphytic.

If kept in containers it is best to stake or firmly secure the plant initially and in a short time you will have a multi suckering plant with a firm root system.

As in all bromels firm planting is desired for faster growth and for pot specimens the best medium seems to be the cymbidium mixture as sold by orchid nurseries.

There are a few hundred *Aechmea* species and many crosses and hybrids, so only a selected few can be mentioned here.

Aechmea fasciata, I mention again, because it is an outstanding bromel and its several varieties also have real charm.

Generally a broad leafed rosette of pale green and heavily banded silver varieties which are self explanatory are *purpurea*, *albo marginata*, *variegata* etc., all with the central spike and star like cone of pink bracts and blue flowers looking all the world like a jewelled ornament to be worn rather than put in a vase.

Here in Queensland we get forms that are nearly all silver scales on the reverse (Silver King) and others with green spotting on a silver leaf (Storm King) these are merely forms of *Aechmea fasciata* and not really different types to be listed as such.

Next in preference is *Aechmea orlandiana* a very popular and highly colourful plant and one that makes a fine addition to even the most select collection. Toothed on the leaf margins, this bromel is generally apple green with zig-zag burgundy banding and dark spotting.

However, variations of light can cause highly coloured mottling also and quite often if viewed against the light the effect is like Venetian glass. The leaf is glossy and leathery to touch.

Aechmea fosteriana, another similar plant is tall and tubular with dark plum barring on green base. Has an arching habit if grown epiphytic mainly because of its shape and weight.

A cultivar between the two last mentioned produces a beautiful *Aechmea* known simply as X Bert.

There are several *Aechmeas* with plum red leaf reverse and green frontal leaf. All of these cannot stand full sunlight and will burn readily if placed to receive it. Most of these have heads of brilliant red berries and a short-lived blue floret from each berry.

There are *Aechmea mineata discolor*, *Aechmea fulgens discolor* and *Aechmea fulgens magnificum*.

Two others with similar construction but having beautiful semipendant and pendant inflorescence are *Aechmea victoriana* and the cross *Aechmea* X "Royal Wine". The pendant berries of X "Royal Wine" are like a string of orange to tangerine beads sometimes slightly branching. The inflorescence is long lived.

Aechmea chantinii is my last choice because of its vivid painted effect of bright silver banding on green foliage. One form has silver banding on a black-green leaf. Forms of the inflorescence I have had are pink stemmed and pink bracted heads of orange fan shaped flower heads and yellow tubular flowers emerging from the fan like heads. Many more colour forms have been reported.



BROMELIAD SOCIETY QLD. INC. AUGUST SHOW

PLANTS WANTED

<i>Aechmea caesia</i>	<i>Hechtea stenopetala</i>
<i>Abrometiella brevifolia</i>	<i>Ochogavia lindleyana</i>
<i>Eromelia antiacantha</i>	<i>Hechtea argentea</i>
<i>Bromelia serra</i>	<i>Hechtea glomerata</i>
<i>Eromelia balanse</i>	<i>Hechtea podancha</i>

Des anderson, 25 Esplanade, Golden Beach, Caloundra Ph.074 922379.

BOOKS FOR SALE

<i>Colorful Bromeliads</i> by V. Padilla	15.00
<i>A Bromeliad Glossary</i> by Brm. Society Inc.	3.50
<i>Eromeliads - A Cultural Handbook</i> by Brom. Soc. Inc.	3.50
<i>International Checklist</i> by Brom. Society Inc.	3.50
<i>Eromeliads for Everyone</i> by Bea Hansen	2.50
<i>Eromeliads</i> by Seaborn	3.50
<i>The Beauty of Bromeliads</i> by Tony Lea	4.50
<i>Eromeliads</i> by Walter Richter	2.50
<i>Bromeliads in Australia</i> by Brom. Society N.S.W.	2.00
<i>Growing Bromeliads</i> by Brom. Society Australia	11.00
<i>Hybridist's Handbook & Check List</i> by D. Butcher	6.00

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC.

NOMINATION FORM

1992 Election of Officers

I hereby nominate Mr./Mrs./Ms.

for the position ofon the

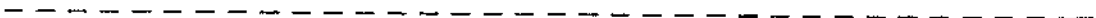
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the year 1992. Proposed by

Seconded by

I hereby agree to stand for the above position.

Signature of Nominee



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