

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.

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COMMITTEE: Mr. Neville Ryan, Mr. Bob Paulsen, Mr. Bob Cross, Mr. Michael O'Dea, Mrs. Patricia O'Dea, Mr. Paul Bird, Mr. Barry Genn, Mrs. Olive Trevor.

PROGRAMMES JANUARY - Plant Commentary Len Butt
Beginners' Class - Attaching bromeliads
epiphytically - Len Butt

FEBRUARY - To be decided.

Remember the date - EASTER, ROBERTSON MOTEL:
BROMELIADS VII, QUEENSLAND - NOT TO BE MISSED.

EDITORIAL Greetings to all members and all bromelians who read this Bulletin, may your 1993 be as pleasant and enjoyable as I would have my own! First and foremost comes a duty that needs saying and that is that in this new year your annual fees are now due. Individual membership is still \$7.00 and Family membership \$10.00 payable to our TREASURER, BOB PAULSEN. It would be very greatly appreciated if you will forward your subs as soon as possible. There has been no increase for this year, and as this is an immensely important year for our Society, prompt payment will certainly help the administration of your Society.

This being the year of the bi-ennial Australian Bromeliad Seminar, held at Robertson Motel at Easter, let us all strive to put our best foot forward to make this, the seventh, the best ever. Your Conference Co-ordinators are doing an efficient and massive job to put together a very worthwhile agenda, but it is up to each participating member to also do their part. If you are a Conference speaker, your notes are now due, mine are already in the Co-ordinator's hands. So the very vital Conference book can be compiled on time. EARLY bookings are also appreciated, and if you are still only considering attending, remember that so far the past six have all been successful, and only your presence can make this one so. Come along, renew friendships, make new friends, and enjoy any new knowledge about our plants that is being imparted.

L.P.Butt (Editor)

P.S. Please note that your Bromeliaceae is only as good as you make it, and not a one-man-band. I will be requiring much more of this co-operation in 1993, REMEMBER, just a letter of 100 words on how you grow your bromeliads, given by every member, even once a year would vastly improve this Bulletin.

L.P.B.

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TILLANDSIA LUCIDA AND TEMPERATURE by N.J. Catlan

April '89 we acquired *T. lucida*, one of the green leaf tank type, in October '90 the bract began to emerge. Over the following six months the bract developed to 45 cm with 8 branches approximately 25 to 30 cm long. The bract was a shiny pale pink with flower petals lilac and quite prominent. *T. lucida* flowered for the whole summer and I diligently cross pollinated with another *T. lucida*, a much smaller plant, that I acquired straight from quarantine that

was at the same stage of development. Results nil.

During May '91 the inflorescence on the first *T. lucida* began to grow again, in the end each branch grew approximately 10 cm. with 7 flowers and had selfed seeded.

Both plants eventually died without throwing any offsets, it felt a bit like stuffing twenty dollar notes into a compost shredder.

Conclusion Regarding *T. lucida*

1. Plant is self pollinating.
2. If plant is subjected to conditions that are too hot it will not set seed.
3. If *T. lucida* does not set seed under adverse conditions and it is a strong and vigorous plant it may start to flower again when conditions are more conducive to pollination.

Temperatures in the fernery were excessive during summer but since then better ventilation and shading has resulted in cooler conditions. Although temperatures were taken on occasions unfortunately records were not kept. The seed was later lost by neglect.

November '91 we acquired two more *T. lucida*, the fact that one had an emerging bract and the pink flush of colour could be visualized through rose tinted glasses must have overshadowed any thoughts of shredders and twenty dollar notes.

We have a small garden fernery 3 m by 3 m which is heavily shaded and cooler than the now cooler modified fernery, this became the home for *T. lucida*. Although it was during summer it is now completely covered with seed.

Observations The first two *T. lucidas* were covered with brown spots, hundreds of them, whereas with the second pair the flowering plant has a few spots. The non flowering plant which is growing in an area that is so dark it appears unsuitable for growing plants, is a perfect plant, not a mark to be seen.

John & Genny

Mango Mansion 4208

"Scurf", Nature's Humidistat Greetings to all you "Down Under" folks, as we call you. Or, do I have that backwards? We're not strangers as Grace Goode and I have been corresponding for quite a time and Marjory McNamara was here with friends. Their group was on its way to the Miami Show. Mrs. Velick and I tired them out showing them around our cramped but full "Digs". They were welcome and any more of you folks that come thru Los Angeles will be welcome too.

I am going to write a short piece on "Scurf". Do you Tillandsia lovers still use the word? I don't hear it used much around here. Thirty five years ago no meeting was complete without a discussion of "Scurf".

How about you young folks? Do you know the word? Do you understand the function? Do you know what bromeliads it occurs on? Do you know what country it is most common in? Conservationists are forcing growth of bromeliads in Nurseries which is nice but they are wiping out knowledge of natural habitats. I guess I am too old to conserve. I love "Jungle Junk".

To business! I presume you Aussies have pin ball machines to play. If so, you must have the one with little beasties that dash around eating the other beasties. The last one is the winner! Alright, "Scurf" is similar. When the "Scurf Cells" are dry, they are grey. When they get a drink, they fill up and turn green. Simple! but efficient!

All Tillandsias are not "Scurfy". In fact, many are smooth and green leaved. They get their water and food thru their "wells" just like Neoregelias and Achmeas. A few of this type are *T. imperialis* and *T. brachycalos*. A few "Scurfy" varieties are *T. velickiana* and *T. cacticola*. *Aechmea fasciata* is "Scurfy" in bands. It is a bit freaky!

I have one bromeliad that can't seem to make up its mind. It grows epiphytically just fine. I plant it and it keeps doing fine. Maybe it is a balloon?

Gerson Jules Velick
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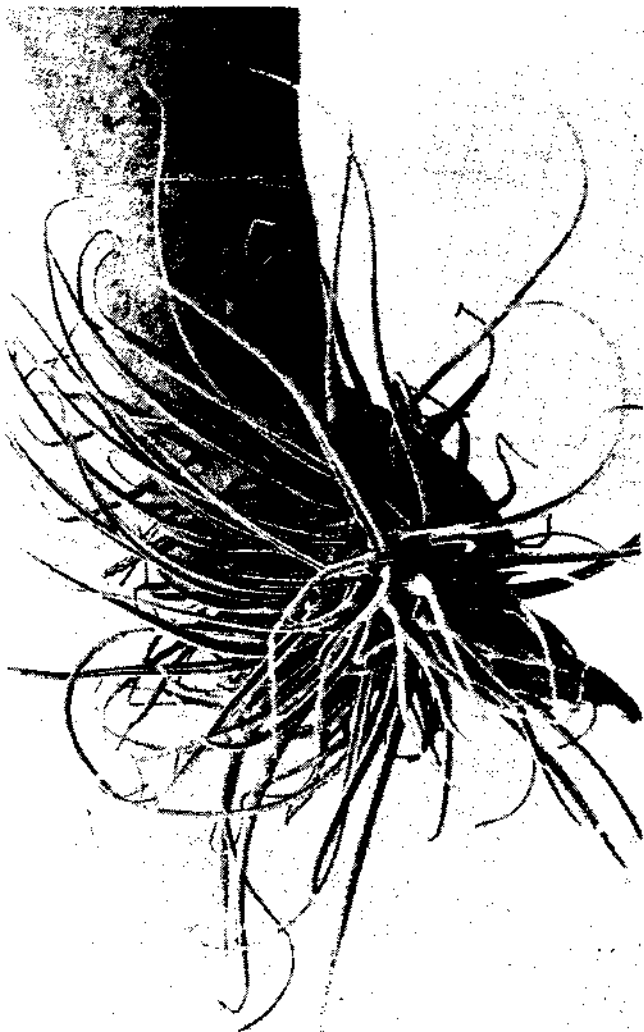
Exotic Plants by Gerson J. Velick*Tillandsia paxacana* - Mexico

Photo by G.J. Velick

I am a collector of exotic plants; mostly from Central and South America. Some are from Hawaii, some are from Australia, some are from Puerto Rico and some are from Texas and Florida. There are a great variety and I can never get enough.

A large number of my exotic plants are Bromeliads. Some are 'dry growers' and live in the trees. Others are 'terrestrials' and live in the earth. The terrestrials have a water tank in the center and are always filled with water.

Snails don't bother my Bromeliads and, of course, my plants don't bother the snails either. The snails eat my strawberries but strawberries aren't really exotic, are they?

Hohenbergies and Porteas awed me with their size and were avoided, therefore, I have no personal data on indoor growing of these.

Orthophytums adapted very fast and I quickly had pots full of *Orthophytum saxicola*, both varieties, and *Orthophytum vagans* wandered everywhere, but did not flower. This genus made a most satisfactory house plant.



Tillandsia paracana - Mexico

Photo by G.J. Velick

I found Tillandsias to be a most unsatisfactory houseplant. I know some people do grow them indoors, but they must have a greener thumb than I can provide plus better conditions.

Other than *Quesnelia humilis* and *Quesnelia marmorata*, the majority of the Quesnelias are rather large for houseplants - unless you have a VERY large home. *Quesnelia marmorata* has both foliage and inflorescence to make a very attractive houseplant.

Vrieseas proved to be a source of satisfaction. They grew, flowered and reproduced on a regular basis. Some of my favorites for this type of growing are *Vriesea splendens*, and some of the hybrids using this species, *Vriesea carinata*, *Vriesea glutinosa* (needs more light at time of coming into inflorescence to produce good color in inflorescence), and many of the small, but attractive Vrieseas.

I do not feel that any of the Dyckias, Hechtias, Deuterocohnias or any of this type are good houseplants. First of all, they require larger containers to grow properly - or even better they prefer to be grown in the ground. They have extensive root systems. I have seen a number of Dyckias stuck in small pots among 'window' collections, but I have yet to see one that really looked happy or flowered.

Some of the things that I learned to do or to avoid when growing Bromeliads indoors were: Empty the vases of the plants on a regular basis and flush well before filling again. This is necessary for several reasons. If you are using tap water, which most of us do, it is necessary to avoid an overdose of an accumulation of salts found in the water that is detrimental to the plant. To avoid an odour that is obnoxious, but sometimes occurs in Bromeliads when they are not flushed. I found it more necessary to carefully flush the plants grown in the home than the plants grown outside, for them to grow more successfully.

Fertilize on a regular basis. When the plants are grown outside, they at least have a chance of something falling into their cups and helping to fertilize the plant. The only thing that could possibly fall into the cup in the home is perhaps a little dust and that is not particularly nutritious. Also, we are more inclined to keep the plants in the house more 'perfect' and by removing the old plants quickly we eliminate any help from them.

Take the plants outside quite often (at least every two weeks and preferably every week) and wash and flush the plant. This not only

improves the appearance of the plant, but helps to keep it appearing good. During the warm months, this is particularly necessary. Also, during the warm months, leave the plants outside during the day occasionally.

Don't try to crowd too many plants into an area, it cuts down any air circulation, the amount of light received and encourages pests. One good point about growing Bromeliads indoors is that there is less likelihood of pests. I never had snails or slugs - as long as I carefully checked every plant I added to the collection. It also helped to keep any scale at a minimum. It was quickly discovered and could be taken care of immediately.

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BOOKS to Interest You

"Margaret Mee in Search of Flowers of the Amazon Forests". 1988
Hardbound, 302 pp., 93 coloured illustrations, 20 of bromeliads.

This is a beautiful book of the travels, adventures and art of an English artist in Brazil in which bromeliads are emphasised. A most attractive and fascinating book for any library. Price approximately \$81.00 plus postage, subject to rate of exchange. If a number of members order this book the price will be less. Deposit of \$30.00 required with order. Approximately 8 weeks delivery.

"Bromeliaceae of Venezuela" by F. Oliva-Esteva and J.A. Steyermark. 1987. 9½" x 10½", 397 pp., 457 colour photographs, many black and white drawings.

An important book featuring native species as well as others cultivated in Venezuela. Most of the excellent colour photos are close-ups but they also depict habitats including some of the "lost world" or island plateaus on which many endemic bromeliads are found. Photos include such little-grown terrestrial genera as *Navia*, *Ayensua*, *Brewcaria*, *Brocchinia* and *Steyerbromelia*. Price approximately \$90.00, plus postage. Price would depend on rate of exchange at time of ordering from overseas. \$30.00 deposit required with order. Approximately 8 - 10 weeks delivery.

"*Bromeliads*" a Wisley Handbook by Bill Wall, softbound 5½" x 8½", 64 pp., 45 colour photos and others black and white.

This is an attractive booklet, an introduction to bromeliads, with good colour photos and notes on cultivation (available from stock \$10.00 each plus postage and packing \$1.70).

"*Bromeliads - A Cultural Manual*" edited by Mark A. Dimmitt and published by the Bromeliad Society Inc. U.S.A., 44 pp., softbound, well illustrated.

The booklet gives notes on basic culture including light, temperature, watering, potting and feeding etc., and also includes brief but very helpful cultural notes on 17 genera. This manual is destined to become a very well used and widely distributed handbook for hobby bromeliad growers. A good gift for interested friends. Only \$4.00 each plus postage and packing \$1.00 from stock.

Bob Paulsen
Book Purchasing Officer
B.S.Q.Inc.

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