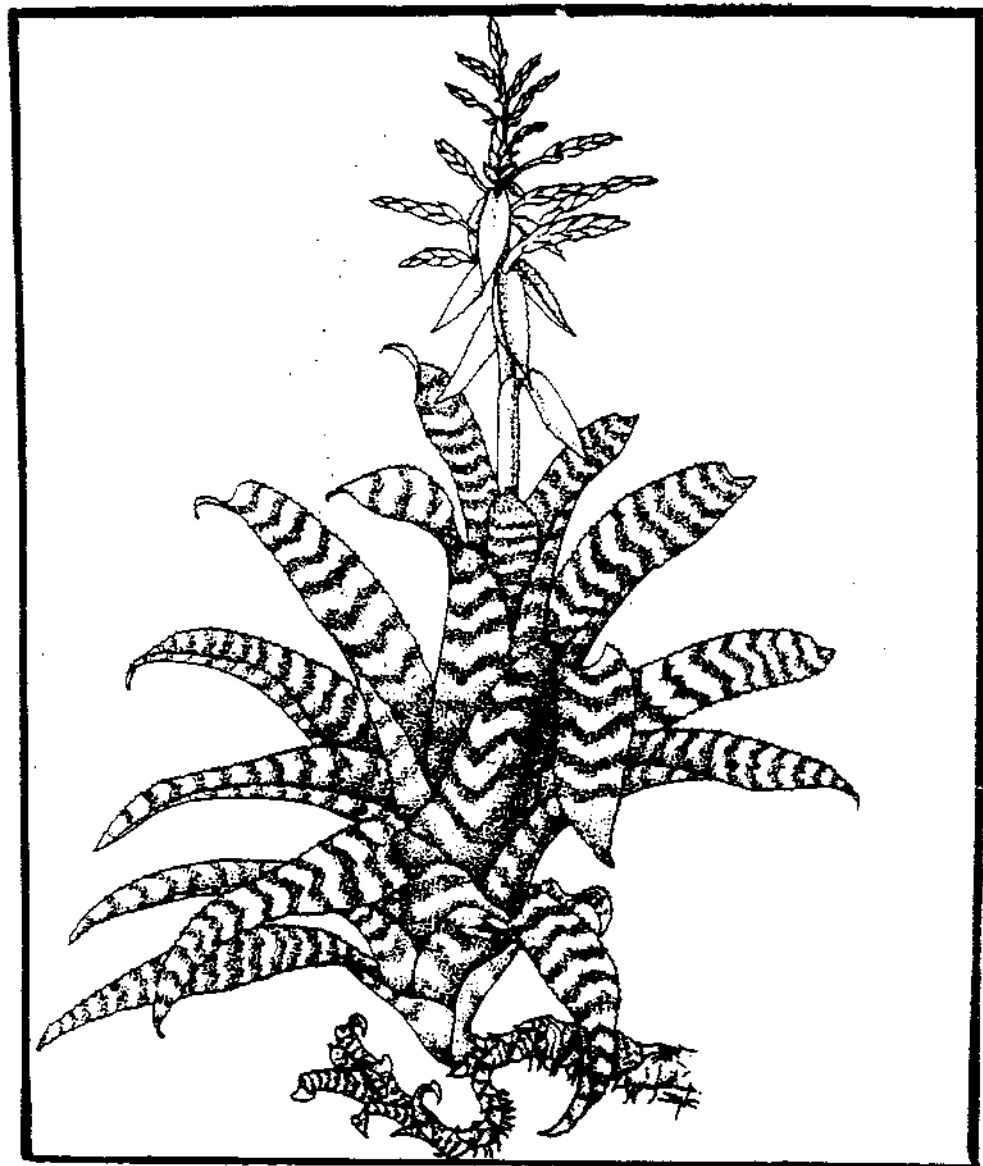


BROMELIACEAE



Aechmea chantinii var. *chantinii*

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1995

VOLUME XXVIII No. 1

— 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 7.30pm.

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 565
Fortitude Valley
QLD. 4006
AUSTRALIA

PRESIDENT:	Mr. Len Trevor	Ph. 351-1203
VICE PRESIDENT:	Mr. Len Butt	Ph. 848-3515
SECRETARY:	Mrs. Val Urquhart	Ph. 824-0627
TREASURER:	Mr. Greg Aizlewood	Ph. 800-1751
EDITOR:	Ms. Narelle Rowe	Ph. 800-1751
ASSISTANT EDITOR:	Mr. Len Butt	Ph. 848-3515
SHOW ORGANIZER:	Mr. Bob Cross	Ph. 265-4364
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:	Mr. John Higgins	

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LIFE MEMBERS: P. Paroz, L. Butt, G. Goode
and B. & R. Wilson.

DISCLAIMER:

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are the contributor's own and are not necessarily those of the Committee or the Bromeliad Society of Qld. Inc.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY
OF Q'LD. INC.

WE HOPE 1995 IS A GOOD YEAR FOR YOU AND
THAT YOU ALL RETURN WITH ADDED ENTHUSIASM
IN OUR COMMON INTEREST -- BROMELIADS.

MEMBERSHIP FEES.

MEMBERS ARE HEREBY ADVISED THAT THE MEMBERSHIP
FEES APPLICABLE FOR 1995 ARE:

***** SINGLE \$10.00.

***** FAMILY \$15.00.

FEES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE BY 1ST JANUARY 1995.

EARLY DAYS WITH VARIEGATED ANANUS. By Len Butt.

Among collectors of the variegated pineapple, as far back as those who exhibited on our show benches around 1956/57, were W.F. (Bill) Kurth and Tom Schofield. Their version was the very first I ever saw, and how I longed to own one.

Ananus comosus variegata was the given name - the plant having serrated edges along the leaves. It was heavily coloured with a green centre and reddish pink to yellow edges. If one was lucky an offset sold for one pound, which does not seem much, but if you consider the basic wage then was twelve pounds, you can see what it really cost to own one. Today's rate - about \$25.00. The only source we knew to get this plant was Mr. Charley from N.S.W. and Charles Hodgson of Victoria, both of whom were cactus collectors. No one to my knowledge at that point of time, did much in the way of checking the vast sources of our own pineapple industry except perhaps Nick Kemp, a very early grower, Peter Paroz, who worked within the industry, or Mr. Harold Caulfield who came to Queensland in 1959.

The first variant I ever saw at the Field Day at Nick Kemp's home at Coopers Plains. Nick had been interested in Bromeliads for as long as Peter Paroz and myself. His entire garden was a huge slat bushhouse, consisting of various alleyways connected by doorways. It always reminded me of a racing stable. It worked efficiently, as he varied the light by having removable aluminium slats

as parts of his roof.

Pride of place that day were his specimens of variegated Ananus. The difference being they were not tricolour, but rather bi colour having broad cream leaf edges. He was naming this, Ananus bracteatus variegata and it was a smooth leaf pineapple type. Questioned regarding this he merely stated that the offsets came from Sunshine Coast pineapple farmers, who quite often found this "sport" growing among their crop.

Usually they destroyed it thinking it was a virus. I had often heard of this practice, but this was my first encounter with this particular Ananus. Mr. Peter Paroz now confirms that this was not really bracteatus. Peter also reminded me of the ananus curiosity that came his way. This was where every segment of the fruit became a small plant in the fruiting crown. Early members will remember his "Crowning Glory" as being one of these. The resulting crested top was something to see.

Let me say we are trying to rekindle interest in Ananus with this article and others are now invited to talk on their variegated Ananus.

oOo

SUGGESTIONS: Please feel free to use the Suggestion Box for any thoughts or suggestions that would help us in the programs for your meetings and also the running of your Society for 1995.

WE NEED YOU!! to supply Questions for our Problem Corner segment, so please get pen to paper to be part of our Newsletter.

VALE.

All members of the Society were saddened by the passing of Yvonne Boorman after a long battle with cancer. Yvonne will be remembered for her support of the Society and her involvement in Society activities. For many years, Yvonne and her husband John, together with a willing band of helpers, managed and conducted the catering for the Combined Show at Mt Coot-tha. The suppers provided to workers during show setup on the Friday evenings was always a welcome break and enjoyed by all. The catering for shows at Mt. Coot-tha included Shows for other Societies and all were handled in the same dedicated and professional manner. At the Bromeliads 3 Conference in 1985 Yvonne and John arranged the morning teas and lunches for delegates on the bus trip and this was one of the highlights of the conference. For a number of years at our monthly meetings, the supper was provided by Yvonne with John and a dedicated band of helpers. Upon retirement from the catering Yvonne took over the Trade Table at the monthly meetings. At the Bromeliads 7 Conference in 1993, Yvonne served as Registrar. Her involvement and attendance at our meetings continued until her illness became advanced and she was forced to limit her activities. For as far back as I can remember, Yvonne and John were doing something in their quiet and dedicated way to help the Society. We are saddened by her passing but we will remain enriched for having known her. The members of the Society extend their sympathy to Yvonne's husband John daughter Cheryl, son Kenneth and family, and to her Mother and Father.

Dedicated by John Higgins.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A TILLANDSIA.

The genus *Tillandsia* is the largest and most widespread of all the genera in the bromeliad family. More than four hundred species are known to be native throughout North and South America and nearly one third of them are native to North America.

The plants may vary in height from one half inch to twelve and fourteen feet; some are small rosettes, some are large urn-shaped plants, or they may be rather bulbous in form. The compact and rosette forms are generally small and often have twisted leaves. The flat leaf types which are generally smooth, if shade loving, or growing in moist, high locations, are usually the larger plants.

1. *Tillandsia* belongs to the subfamily Tillandsioideae; all of them have fruits composed of three carpels which are dry at maturity and burst open to release their seeds.
2. The seeds are narrowly cylindrical with a plumose (feather-like) appendage which is straight at maturity. Seeds are carried by air as on a parachute.
3. The leaves are always entire (smooth edged), and are either glabrous (smooth) or lepidote (fuzzy). Most of the dry climate or tree-top species are covered with tomentose scales, whereas those in a moister climate have a smoother and broader leaf.
4. The petals are naked (no nectar scales at the base) and are free (not joined to each other near the base).
5. The flowers usually appear on one or more distichous (arranged in two rows) spikes but rarely simple (one row) or polystichous (many rows) and even one flowered as in

T. usneoides.

6. In habitat most of the species are epiphytic but many of the larger species are terrestrial or saxicolous. Many species of Tillandsias and Vrieseas may appear to look so much alike that they could easily be confused. The one salient feature which is most evident and easily determined is the absence of nectar scales at the base of the petals of Tillandsias and the presence of such scales on the Vrieseas.

The xerophytic Tillandsias, heavily covered with tomentose scales, are rarely confused with Vrieseas. However, some of the more glabrous (smooth) and flat leaf types of Tillandsias may be confused with Vrieseas if the petals are not examined.

Written by Mulford B. Foster

Article was copied from the Bromeliad Society Bulletin
Volume VI January - February 1956 NO. 1.

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HOME REMEDIES FOR PLANT PESTS.

Red spider mites: four tablespoons of dishwashing liquid or one-half cake of yellow soap dissolved in one gallon of water. Spray weekly until mites are gone and then monthly to keep them from returning.

Hardshell scale Mix one-fourth teaspoon olive oil, two tablespoons baking soda, one tablespoon mild liquid soap in two gallons of water. Spray or wipe on once a week for three weeks. Repeat if necessary.

Mealybugs: wipe with cotton swabs dipped in alcohol.
Spray larger plants weekly with a solution of one part alcohol to three parts water until the bugs no longer hatch.

Copied from the B.S.I. Journal Volume 38

September / October 1988 No.5

oOo

A VISIT TO JOHN CATLAN AND GENNY VAUHKONEN'S GARDEN.

John and Genny live at Jacobs Well which is situated south of Brisbane and located in the Albert Shire Council. Their property of 1½ acres has a northerly aspect and has native and exotic trees growing which are a haven for different varieties of birds and wildlife. A multitude of different birds can be seen every day including different species of parrots and owls at night. Hare, kangaroos, different sorts of snakes and goannas are also a relatively common sight.

Watering is by underground spear/bore water and rainfall, and John runs a complete sprinkler system throughout the property.

When asked his favourite genera of bromeliad, John stated that he has changing interests in genera from time to time. Presently he is interested in variegated *Neoregelias* but as he said "That will change".

His favourite plant are different forms of *Aechmea chantinii* and the various *Platyaechmeas*, because whilst some people find these plants difficult to grow due to cold and other element effects, John finds them reasonably easy to grow. He considers that they give a good floral

display for a long time. He maintains the mix should be very open with all material 1 inch in diameter and or bigger with no peat moss or any fine material.

John and Genny have all their plants under shade.

The majority of their shade is by tree or shadecloth with no sides on the sheds thus allowing maximum benefit from the sea breezes, and also the birds seem to help keep down the flying pest population when they are able to fly in and out of the shade covered areas without restrictions. John seems to encounter no pests, no grasshoppers and no frosts mainly due to the closeness to the sea.

John has been growing bromeliads for approximately thirty two years and has been in and out of the Society for about twenty of those years. He was introduced to bromeliads by his Father who grew *Billbergias* and *Cryptanthus* as these were about all that were available then.

His first plant was *Bromelia balansae* which he purchased as an unnamed plant from northern New South Wales. Might I interject to say that John no longer has this particular plant in his collection.

Being a true collector, John also has a fine collection of Whisky jugs and crocks and beer cans.

General comments: John felt that with so many plants coming into the market that people will become more selective as to what they grow , and that growers are probably leaning towards growing smaller plants.

Genny's preference for a certain genera is *Billbergia* and *Cryptanthus*, because she has seen *Billbergias* grown well and as an example she quoted Josie Tonkin in South Australia. The shape and banding on the *Cryptanthus* are

to be compared with starfish and marine life and with this she can relate to her other love of collecting rare shells of which she has the most fabulous variety in her collection. It needs to be seen to be believed.

Genny also likes the very spiny bromeliads where the spines are one of the main features, an example of these being Billbergia elegans and Billbergia sanderiana.

Tillandsia cacticola is Genny's favourite plant of which she now has about seven plants and she maintains that they have to be grown in bright and dry conditions. This is a small plant with a flower spike of about 12 inches. The flowers are white and blue and are perfumed. This particular Tillandsia is best mounted on cork.

Her first bromeliad was Billbergia nutans which she bought at the Freemantle Markets, and she was drawn to this particular plant because of the colours in the nutans flowers.

On reading the publication of "Broms for Modern Living" she saw the plants but couldn't find where to buy them. She hunted high and low, and so began her love of these particular plants. Numerous telephone calls got her in contact with the Cactus Society in South Australia where she made contact with Josie Tonkin who grew bromeliads in South Australia.

For about the past twenty years Genny has been interested in growing and collecting bromeliads. She has been a member of the Western Australian and South Australian Societies and has been a member of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland for approximately six years. Both John and Genny are very active members of the Gold Coast Society.

As mentioned previously Genny's other interest is collecting shells and as she explained - a lot of names of the shells also compare with the names given to Bromeliads. As always our visit to John and Genny's ended too quickly and with the day drawing to a close we said our farwells and headed on home. Not enough time to sit and talk of plants. Oh! Well I guess there is always another day.



Pictured is John and Genny, pensively sitting and John accompanied by one of the many variegated Neoregelias he enjoys growing.

SCHEDULE

for Mini Shows

for

January and April.

BSO MINI SHOW

January 19__

CLASS 1. NEOREGELIA - species and hybrids (including miniatures ; rosette to 200 mm diameter at maturity)

i) _____
ii) _____

CLASS 2. VRIESEA - species only

i) _____
ii) _____

CLASS 3. DYCKIA - species and hybrids

i) _____
ii) _____

MEMBERS' NAME : _____



BSQ MINI SHOW

April 19__

CLASS 1. BILLBERGIA - species and hybrids

i) _____
ii) _____

CLASS 2. GUZMANIA - species and hybrids

i) _____
ii) _____

CLASS 3. PITCAIRNIA - species and hybrids

i) _____
ii) _____

MEMBERS' NAME _____



THE WATERING OF BROMELIADS.

The following quote is from the Summer 1994 newsletter from Tillandsia International, California:-

Frank says

Q. What is the number one cause of Tillandsia "Death"?

A. Not enough water!

In travelling around the states and observing various Tillandsia displays one thing stands clear. Hardly anyone waters the plants enough!

In the summer months Tillandsias should be thoroughly watered on a DAILY basis. By dunking, wetting with Hudson Sprayer or hosing down. Forget what you have heard about spray misting these plants - SOAK THEM.

Consider this. Most plants gather their water through their roots and excess water is stored in the soil to be used when needed (like a reservoir holds our drinking water) Tillandsias have no soil, so they are depending on your daily watering to keep them hydrated and looking good!

"Whilst I do understand what Frank is saying and generally agree that this is often the case, I would also like to add my tuppence worth". says Keith.

I find it is difficult to generalise with any Bromeliads including Tillandsias. In our climate here in Queensland, the humidity seems to be sufficient to provide moisture for most to survive and although some do obviously benefit from regular watering, there are other varieties that appear to do better when out of reach of the water. I often hear people say that watering should be less in winter and more in summer. I find the opposite here as our

winters are often laced with drying westerly winds and this is the only time I see the two best indicators of dehydration i.e. Tillandsia bergeri and Tillandsia aeranthos, "pinch up" and scream out for a drink.

I have seen as many problems caused by overwatering in places where plants are unable to dry properly between waterings, particularly clumps which trap and hold moisture... As with most things in Bromeliad growing, my advice is "observe and experiment".

Article by Mr. Keith Golinski.

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— BOOKS FOR SALE —

"Colourful Bromeliads" by Victoria Padilla.....	\$15.00
"The Beauty of Bromeliads" by Tony Lea.....	\$ 4.50
"Bromeliads" by Bill Seaborn.....	\$ 4.50
"Bromeliads" by Walter Richter.....	\$ 3.50
"Bromeliads For Everyone" by Bea Hansen.....	\$ 2.50
"Bromeliads For Everyone 2" by Bea Hansen.....	\$11.50
"Bromeliads In Australia" by Brom. Soc of N.S.W.....	\$ 2.00
"Growing Bromeliads" by Brom. Soc of Aust.....	\$11.00
"Genus Tillandsia" by Paul Isley 3rd.....	\$ 3.00
"International checklist of Brom Hybrids" by B.S.I.....	\$ 3.50
"A Bromeliad Glossary" by B.S.I.....	\$ 3.50
"Bromeliads- A Cultural Manual" by B.S.I.....	\$ 4.00

THE NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF BROMELIADS.

I have used the words 'Nutritional Requirements' in the title because I want to comment on two factors which are essential to plant growth, but which are outside the list of essential mineral elements. I will be considering light and carbon dioxide as essential inputs for plant growth and I'll be happy to debate this proposition with disbelievers.

If we take a rough analysis of a bromeliad, we get the following result:-

Water 80 - 85

Dry matter 15 - 20 %

Mineral matter 2 - 3 %

We see that the dry matter is the major non-water component and exceeds the mineral component by a factor of 7 - 10 times. The dry matter has a high carbon content which is derived solely from carbon dioxide fixed from the air.

It is essential that you understand the importance of the uptake of carbon dioxide in relation to plant growth, as this is the ultimate factor which governs the rate of growth and over which the grower has only partial control. All plant growth originates from the energy of the sun. The green pigments in the leaves use this energy to combine carbon dioxide with water and form sugars, which are then used as a source of energy in other parts of the plant for tissue growth.

Within the bromeliaceae, plants have evolved two distinct ways of using the sun's energy. One mechanism, which I will call 'day carbon fixation' requires that the stomata (pores)

in the leaf are open during the day and take in carbon dioxide which is converted by sunlight directly into sugar. Because the stomata are open during the day, moisture loss can be quite high. This type of carbon fixation is found in many tank forming bromeliads or mesophytes, i.e. those plants which can afford the moisture loss that is a consequence of this type of carbon fixation.

The other mode is crassulacean acid metabolism - C.A.M. - or 'night carbon fixation'. The stomata are closed during the day, but open at night, take in carbon dioxide, convert it to malic acid and store the acid in the leaf. During the day the malic acid is broken down to carbon dioxide which is retained in the leaf and is converted to sugar by the sunlight. This is not a very efficient way of trapping the sun's energy, but because the stomata are closed during the day, moisture loss is minimal. This type of carbon fixation is found in Ananas comosus and many of the silvery leafed tillandsias. The trade-off is a slower growth rate for the ability to colonise and / or survive in moisture deficient environments.

It is important where a mixed range of species are grown that there is a good movement of fresh air both day and night, particularly where plant density is high. If carbon dioxide levels are depleted, then growth rate will be reduced. In addition for plants with night carbon fixation, it is essential that the night temperature is 8 - 10 C less than the day temperatures. In bushhouse culture fresh air and temperature fluctuations will be assured. In a heated

glasshouse, night temperatures and carbon dioxide availability may be far from optimum.

For optimising plant growth, it is essential that attention be given to the appropriate light intensity and carbon dioxide availability before considering the mineral fertilizer requirements. The art of determining the optimum fertilizer programme consists of balancing the supply of mineral elements with the optimum light intensity and carbon dioxide availability.

The major elements required for plant growth are:- Potassium, Nitrogen, Magnesium, Calcium, Sulphur, Phosphorus, and Iron, approximately in that order. Trace elements such as copper, zinc, boron and molybdenum are probably also necessary, but I have not seen any references to deficiency symptoms for these elements in ornamental bromeliads.

The role of the essential elements in plant growth is complex and often interrelated, however for some of the major elements dominant effects can be listed :

Nitrogen is one of the most important elements and its most visible effect is the formation of chlorophyll and the stimulation of growth. With an imbalance of other elements, this growth is weak and soft.

Potassium is found in the cell sap and appears to enhance hardiness and cold tolerance.

Phosphorus is involved in the energy reactions of the plant and appears to be related to flowering and seed development.

Magnesium is essential for the formation of chlorophyll.
Calcium is a major constituent of cell walls.

Sulphur is essential for the correct assimilation of nitrogen.

From a practical point of view, a fertilizer program starts with an assessment of light intensity and air movement. I believe that plants should be grown in the strongest light they will tolerate, as this gives maximum growth rate and hardy plants. The next consideration is the reason for fertilizing the plants. If the topic were pineapples, then the object would be to maximise the yield of fruit with a diameter between 100 and 150 mm, over the crop cycle. It is essential to fertilize with a goal in mind. For ornamental bromeliads, the goals are somewhat nebulous but still definable... faster growth... larger plants... improved shape... better colour... larger inflorescences... more offsets. Improvement/better growth is very much in the eye of the beholder (or the showbench judge).

Some multiple goals may be self conflicting i.e. shape, size and colour. However for some genera, such as Neoregelias and Billbergias, it is possible to develop a two-tiered fertilizer programme. A nitrogen deficient fertilizer prior to flowering to promote a compact shape and good colour, followed by increased nitrogen to promote offset formation. However, if this procedure is overdone, the offsets may remain green through their growth cycle.

The watering schedule needs to be considered as part of the fertilizer programme. It is the vehicle by which all

mineral nutrients are absorbed into the plant, whether by root, tank or leaf trichome. Water may also contain useable nutrients -- calcium and magnesium in Brisbane water -- or deleterious substances such as salt or excess alkalinity.

When we get to examining the nutrient content of fertilizers, nitrogen content should be considered first. For green leafed plants, colour can be a useful guide to the balance between light and nitrogen, although this has to be assessed for each species. It is important to distinguish between excess nitrogen and too little light, for while the symptoms are similar, the cultural remedy is quite different. For plants such as some of the Billbergias and Neoregelias where a pink/red coloration is desired then the application of nitrogen must be restricted.

For epiphytes, I prefer half the nitrogen in the ammonium form (sulphate or phosphate) and half as urea. This is satisfactory for terrestrial also, but half from ammonium and half as nitrate would probably be better. The next element I look at, is potassium. I prefer to use potassium sulphate rather than the chloride as the latter tends to upset the calcium balance in soil culture. Bromeliads do not seem to need a lot of phosphorus, so I use only a little ammonium phosphate in the mix.

When I mix my own fertilizer, the composition comes out at approximately 10, 3, 15, 2, 1 (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and calcium). I cannot claim that this

is optimum for any genera, or even any species, but it is complete in regard to the major elements and does give good results on a wide range of species.

I like the idea of varying the type of fertilizer, especially the occasional organic one. However, these generally have too little potassium and little calcium or magnesium, so I adjust the composition before use. The organic fertilizers contribute some of the minute quantities of trace elements required. For growers who don't want the trouble of mixing their own fertilizers Phostrogen is probably the commonly available fertilizer most suited to bromeliads, but I still prefer to add a little extra magnesium sulphate.

Osmocote has a useful role for potted plants. I have not been able to get any manufacturers information as to the rate of release of the nutrients. Osmocote provides only N.P.K. and needs to be supplemented with calcium and magnesium.

I prefer to spray my plants with a weak solution, about two teaspoons per 10 litres, sufficient to just wet the leaves. **This** avoids any appreciable run off into the vase of the plant and possible fertilizer burn on the leaves.

Fertilize WEEKLY and WEAKLY while the plants are in active growth, and ease back the frequency if growth slows in winter.

Whatever practice you choose to follow, be CONSISTANT.

Occasional 'slug' doses of fertilizer cause bursts of growth which are likely to spoil the confirmation of the plant. Since bromeliads are at best slow growers, allow a reasonable time for the plant to respond before passing judgment on a fertilizer programme.

The old adage that bromeliads do not NEED fertilizers is largely true. These plants have evolved growth strategies to enable them to colonise nutrient poor habitats, one of which is the ability to slow their growth to suit the availability of mineral nutrients.

If you have not been feeding your plants, then a regular addition of a balanced fertilizer will give one or more of the following effects:-

- Faster growth
- Larger flower heads
- More offsets

Paradoxically, sometimes it can lead to smaller plants ??? This I believe is due to the fact that the plant needs to accumulate sufficient nutrients to support flowering and seed development and this will occur when the plant is physically smaller, if the plant has an adequate nutrient supply

Two final cautions:

Extra fertilizer does NOT make plants grow bigger / faster / or flower better. Adequate nutrients will allow a plant to achieve its own growth potential.

A little fertilizer is good, twice as much may be better

but for all elements there is a point where extra will have a detrimental effect on the plant growth.

Reference:- Benzing D.H. The Biology of Bromeliads.

Article by Mr. Peter Paroz.

oOo

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.

Perry CRAWFORD - WYNNUM WEST

Phillip O'MALLEY - NEWFARM.

oOo

PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT TWO MEETINGS.

JANUARY:

MINI SHOW: See Schedule attached to centre of Newsletter.
Judges to do a commentary of competition plants.

ITEM: John Higgins to speak on the format of the
1995 Show Calendar.

FEBRUARY:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Nomination forms are available from the Secretary and will be on hand at the January meeting.

PLANT COMMENTARY: by Patricia O'Dea.

ITEM: Slide Presentation by Don and Phyllis Hobbs.

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BROM GROUP - News snippets.

Our Brom Group wound down for the year with a social breakfast at Len and Olive Trevor's home on Saturday 3rd. December 1994.

Members attending were Joy and Doug Upton, Liz and Noel Weir, Ossie and Lorna Sibbles, Len and Olive, Bob Cross, Nev Ryan, Val Urquhart, Dianne Feeney - suitably dressed in sleep/over gear, Arno King, Narelle Rowe, John Catlan and Genny Vauhkonen, Nancy Kickbush and Jo Ketelaars. Apology was received from Greg Aizlewood who unfortunately had work commitments.

Everyone contributed a plate of goodies towards the breakfast table. Food was shared and members also supplied a plant for a plant exchange.

Slides taken by Greg Aizlewood were shown together with a collection of slides taken by Ossie and Lorna Sibbles, after which members then did a customary tour of Len and Olive's garden.

Members of the Brom Group felt it was a very worthwhile year, and I feel everyone attending would have gained extra knowledge about the plants we all try to grow well. Our Group goes into 1995 with added enthusiasm, and we hope more interested members will attend. All members of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland are more than welcome to join our group and we always welcome along any visitors.

Happy Growing in 1995.

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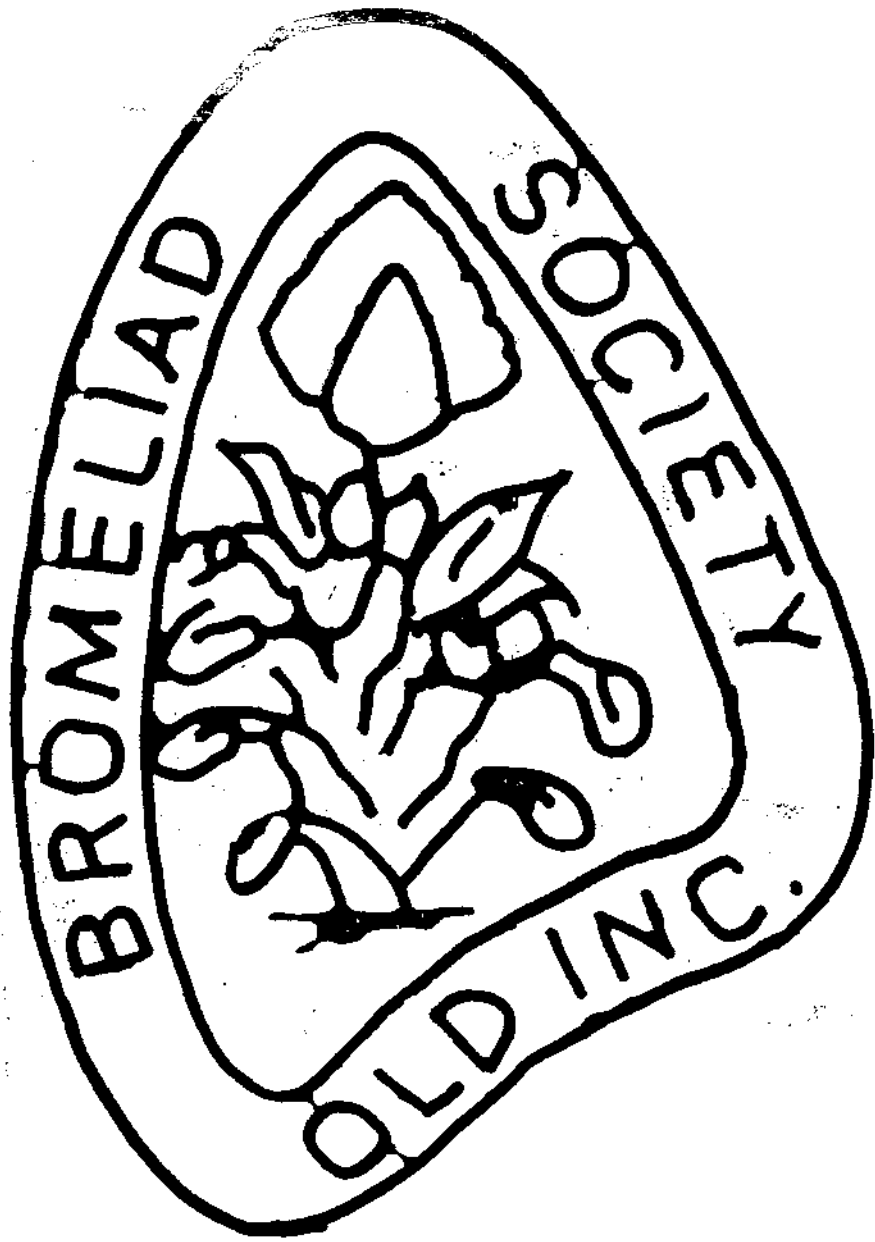
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