

Bromeliaceae



Volume XXIV. Number 2. March / April 1996



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC

P.O.Box 565,
FORTITUDE VALLEY,
QLD. 4006
AUSTRALIA

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

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LIFE MEMBERS	:	Mr. Len Butt, Mrs. Grace Goode, Mr. Peter Paroz, Mr. Bert Wilson,	

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Advertising in 'Bromeliaceae'

Available to members and interested persons at the following rates:

Annual Rate: \$30.00 (for six issues of 'Bromeliaceae')

Casual Rate: \$15.00 (for two issues of 'Bromeliaceae')

Size of advertisements is restricted to one third of a page of 'Bromeliaceae'

Applications for advertising should be in writing, should include all required copy for the advertisement, and should include payment in advance by cash or cheque.

The first advertisement will appear in the next available issue of 'Bromeliaceae' after payment is received.

Copy may be updated at any time if supplied in writing, otherwise last available copy will be used.

It is regretted that no photographs can be included in advertisements at this time.

The Society reserves the right to refuse publication of any advertisement.

Publication Deadlines for 'Bromeliaceae'

All articles, competition results, programme details and other items of interest for publication must be in the hands of the Editorial Committee by the following dates -

May - June, 1996 Edition

18 April, 1996

July - August, 1996 Edition

20 June, 1996

September - October, 1996 Edition

15 August, 1996

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Guest Editorial: What is There Left to Write About
Doug Upton

At a recent General Meeting it was mentioned our journal 'Bromeliaceae' is in need of articles from members. From observation, it would seem the main reason many find it difficult to submit an article is the time factor. How often have we heard it said "I would like to but I just do not have the time". Our Editorial Committee has to accept this as a legitimate statement from a percentage of our members. On the other hand, our Committee has the right to expect a reasonable flow of material enabling them to continue presenting our Journal as an informative and entertaining bi-monthly segment of our Society. Obviously when articles are not forthcoming our Committee is forced to use material published in previous 'Bromeliaceae' issues.

How can we remedy this, what can be done? In past issues we have read about problems with pests and diseases, potting mix, watering procedures, fertilise or not to fertilise, descriptions of species and hybrids, general culture, etc. etc. What is there left to write about? One could also argue it has all been written before so what can one contribute that is original and newsworthy? Unless you plagiarise an article, your writings will come from your personal growing experiences, therefore it is original and newsworthy. Let me explain. Last year I submitted an article and among my ramblings I gave a formula of my potting mix. Earlier in the year Phyllis Hobbs wrote an article and she also gave her formula for potting mix. There were differences between our mixes and should you need to ask why, let me quote from 'Back to Basics', Phyllis Hobbs, July-August, 1995 "The final make up of mixes becomes a matter of grower experience and preference". Here we have two different versions of the one subject (potting mix) and there are probably two dozen more. If two dozen is an exaggeration there would have to be at least enough for several articles. What then of the other items mentioned (pests and diseases, watering procedures, fertiliser, etc etc). Considering most of us have our own growing techniques and should we decide to write about them the number of articles received by the Editorial Committee would be enough to fill 'Bromeliaceae' for several years. When we stop to think about it, the phrase "What is there left to write about, it has all been written before" must have been spoken by a person with little or no interests.

Cover Photograph - Front

Tillandsia tectorum

This translates to 'plants of the roof', where, according to L.B. Smith, this species has been cultivated on roofs in Peru and Ecuador. *T. tectorum* is highly variable - from miniature plants 5 - 8cm, to large plants 25 - 30cm. Grown in bright light, the plant shown in the photo is watered at least every second day, and in the very hot summer weather sometimes every day. It grows under white alcinite on the north eastern side of the house. It grows in company with many other Tillandsias and receives good airflow.

PLANT GROWN BY: Patricia O'Dea
PHOTOGRAPH BY: Don Hobbs

Cover Photograph - Back

Tillandsia duratii var. saxatilis

This plant was named for an Italian, Durat, who was the first to cultivate this species in Europe.

This is one of my favourite plants. It likes my conditions which are under white alcinite on the north eastern side of the house. This enables me to offer the plants bright light and good air flow. It is watered every second day usually, maybe less in the really cold weather, and perhaps every day during stretches of very hot dry weather. The other variety, *T. duratii var. duratii*, differs in the shape of the inflorescence. The spikes are erect and strict (tight against the rachis) while the spikes of *T. duratii var. saxatilis* are curved-spreading. *T. duratii* grows high in the tree tops and moves along by using its curling leaves much the way that monkeys use their prehensile tails. The pale mauve flowers of *T. duratii* are very sweetly perfumed.

PLANT GROWN BY: Patricia O'Dea
PHOTOGRAPH BY: Don Hobbs

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President's Report for 1995

Patricia O'Dea

Presented to the Annual General Meeting 15th February, 1996

1995 was an interesting year. Our biggest step forward was the New Look Journal. Our thanks to Don Hobbs for all his work bringing this project to fruition. Don's talent in photography produced beautiful colour plates for the cover and Don is always looking for photographs from members for consideration. He is also interested in any suitable plants you may have to be photographed.

John Higgins and the Editorial Committee have done an excellent job in upgrading the contents of the journal. John also uses his computer to set up and print the very professional publication you receive every 2 months. Your responsibility now is to support this excellent journal by writing articles or interesting snippets if you can't manage anything big. As bromeliad growers you should all have something of interest to contribute, and we want to hear about it.

The Combined Show in June went very well as usual. The Combined Show Committee tried something new in the form of Spot Raffles, organised very ably by Jan and Viv Duncan. These proved very popular, offering first class plants - one specimen bromeliad and one specimen succulent - and adding a welcome boost to the weekend takings. The competition bench was the very best ever staged and I thank all members who participated. If you have not involved yourself in this Society activity I would recommend you do so. It is great fun and you will not regret it.

Once again our display at the 1995 R.N.A. offered the public a feast of colour and variety. However this display is provided by only a handful of members. This puts a big burden on our larger growers, and I know that they would appreciate having some of that burden lifted by more members bringing in a few plants. This also adds more variety to the display. Where are all the Billbergias and other older style plants? If you are concerned that your plants are not as "showy" as others in the display, so much the better. It gives the public a more realistic coverage of the bromeliad family and many viewers are delighted when they can identify

President's Report (cont)

some plants as those they have in their own gardens. As Show Organiser, Bob Cross would be very happy to include your plants in any display the Society stages.

Our third display for the year is the Garden Spectacular in October, presented by the R>H>S>Q> Inc. Although this is a smaller display it is another opportunity for us to show our plants to the public and offer them for sale. Once again this is left to just a few.

Another innovation this year was a new criteria for the appointment of Judges, the grading of exhibitors for our Mini Shows and Popular Vote. This new system was devised by John Higgins who spent many hours working it all out. In my opinion it has worked very well. Some very nice trophies were awarded at the end of the year and some members will move up a grade. It is also providing a permanent record for the future. Once again, to make it all worthwhile your participation is needed in all Society activities - Mini Shows, Popular Vote, etc.

This year has seen Bob and Mavis Paulsen doing a wonderful job in the library and the ordering of new books. Please make use of the Library. There is so much knowledge to be gained and this also adds to the enjoyment of your plants.

We were all saddened by the death of Life member Ruth Wilson. Ruth and Bert were great workers for the Society, starting out as the 'supper people'. Remember that delicious coffee Bert used to Make? Eileen and Eric started out with them. Then Bert went on to the start the 'convenience shop' at meetings where members could buy pots, fertiliser, etc. Eventually Yvonne and John Boorman took on this job until Yvonne died in 1994. Eileen Eisentrigger and Eric Turner eventually took over as the supper people but last year they both retired as they can no longer attend evening meetings. They will be missed, Now there is no one to take their places. How about you?

A few changes have been made in the field of finances. All fixed deposits have been brought to one bank instead of being scattered in several different banks. This makes it much easier to manage. We changed to

Presidents Report (cont)

Society's Insurer. We were paying almost \$700 per year and we now pay \$141 per year for a much better coverage. Committee meetings have been changed from Mt. Coot-tha to New Farm at half the cost, and for many members it is a more convenient venue. So, as you can see, your money is being well cared for.

In October we were very pleased to have a visit from Mr. Bill Morris. Bill is a very pleasant man with a great deal of knowledge, not only of bromeliads but many other plants as well. The Seed Raising/Study Group were very happy to have his advice, and everyone at the General Meeting enjoyed his talk. The R.H.S.Q. Inc even took advantage of his visit to have him speak to their evening meeting.

The Christmas Party was a great success. Nev Ryan chose a lovely selection of plants for the raffle and members proved to be very enthusiastic ticket buyers, all hoping to win that special plant they had their eyes on. A great supper was supplied by members and the beautiful Christmas cake was made by Jan Duncan.

As you can see, the theme of my report has centred around your participation in all areas of Society activities. This Society cannot exist without your active interest and participation. If you feel shy and uncertain there are many friendly and willing long term members who would be only too happy to help you overcome this. You come to meetings because you love bromeliads! Well, I can tell you from experience that you will love them even more when you become involved. to all members I say - don't just sit on the outer edges of the meetings, become a real member, not just a 'paying visitor'.

I would like to thank the Committee for all their work in making meetings interesting informative. My thanks to all members who do the hundred and one jobs which help the meetings to run smoothly - the raffle people, the door attendants, the plant sales, etc. My sincere thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement during my term of office.

VALE: NITA WILKINS

Society members were saddened to learn that Nita Wilkins has passed away.

Nita and her husband John were long standing members of the Society during its formative and developing years. Both Nita and John were regular attendees and supporters of all the Society's activities. At monthly meetings, on the Show and Sales tables, at the Society displays, there were always plants supplied to support the activities of the time.

The Society made many visits to their garden to view the well tended and rare plants grown by them. Their hospitality and generosity was evident in the many plants given to members, especially to new members as encouragement in the hobby. Offers to pay for these gifts were greeted with the request to pass on the offsets to new members in the future. Many of these plants are still being passed on in this way.

The Society mourns the loss of Nita and we will always remember her with fondness. Our condolences are extended to John in his loss.

Remembering Nita Wilkins

Phyl & Don Hobbs

The trips to the garden of John and Nita and the wonderful display of bromeliads!

Don and I were new in the Society and John was a fund of information on watering, fertilisers, potting mixes, the size of pots, every question patiently answered. Nita's love was African Violets. What a wonderful display she had, set up with artificial light and so beautifully grown. We shared a love of begonias and swapped plants. It's a pleasure to see them still growing, planted in old brom mix on the floor of the bush house. They are wonderful companion plants for the Guzmanias. I also have a large pot of a beautiful grey Sansevieria that was a plant taken from a clump in the front garden, which was full of callistemon, with Billbergias in the trees and on stumps - beautiful! We feel privileged to have known this gentle lady.

NEWSLETTER

~ Forthcoming Events ~ Members' Forum ~ Show Reports ~
~ Society News ~

Forthcoming Events:

Monthly Meetings:

21st March::

- Popular Vote: Members' choice.
- Plant Commentary: Patricia O'Dea
- Plant of the Month: 'L,M,N' Genera.
- 'Seed Raising': Bob Cross.

18th April

• Mini Show:

CLASS 1: *Neoregelia* species and hybrids (medium to large; rosette over 200mm diameter at maturity).

CLASS 2: *Guzmania* species and hybrids.

CLASS 3: *Dyckia* species and hybrids.

- Plant Commentary on Mini Show by Judges.
- Members' Show Table.
- NO plant of the month because of mini show.

Show Reports:

Mini Show:

20th January:

Advanced

CLASS 1: *Billbergia* species and hybrids

1. B. Golden Joy N. Rowe/
G. Aizlewood

2. B. Escaffrei N. Rowe/
G. Aizlewood

CLASS 2: *Vriesea* species & hybrids

1. V. splendens cv. Juno x
glutinosa. L. & O Trevor

2. V. Pahoia Beauty x
hieroglyphica L. & O. Trevor
CLASS 3: *Pitcairnia* species and
hybrids

1. P. smithiorum L. & O. Trevor.
2. NO ENTRY

Intermediate

CLASS 1:

1. B. Dr Oesers hybrid P. O'Dea
2. B. Fred Gerber P. O'Dea

CLASS 2:

1. V. Gunther J. Henwood
- 2 V. petropolitana J. Henwood

CLASS 3

1. P. atrorubens B. Paulsen
2. P. heterophylla B. Genn

Novice

NO ENTRIES

Study Group:

Meetings: 7:00am, 30th March.
7:00am, 27th April.

Venue: 232 Canvey Rd., Ferny
Grove.
PH: (07)33511203

Study Group Report

27th January 1996

Our first meeting for 1996 concentrated on setting our program for the forthcoming year. Following is a list of the aims of the Study Group.

1. Have a good time.
2. Purchase seeds
3. Mixtures and fertilisers
4. Garden Visits
5. Hybridising

QUEENSLAND INC.

1ST DECEMBER, 1995

ASSETS

\$

CUPBOARDS	•	61.28	
DISPLAY EQUIPMENT	•	651.58	
SLIDE LIBRARY	•	89.64	
PROJECTOR	•	280.72	
SLIDE CAROUSELS	•	195.84	
LAPEL MICROPHONE	•	80.16	
TABLECLOTHS	•	-	
BADGE MAKER	•	144.45	
TYPEWRITER	•	225.00	
TAPE RECORDER	•	190.00	1,918.67
LIBRARY			<u>2,551.91</u>

GOODS FOR RESALE

BOOKS	4,604.57	
SALES STICKERS	28.50	
GREETING CARDS	632.50	
BADGES	<u>1,502.85</u>	6,768.42

BANK ACCOUNT

AS AT 31.12.95	2,797.39	
SUBS IN ADVANCE	(145.00)	
BOOK DEPOSITS	(570.00)	
UNPRESENTED CHQS	<u>(344.56)</u>	1,737.83

TERM DEPOSITS

WESTPAC	4,898.01	
N.B.A. #1	5,000.00	
N.B.A. #2	<u>12,000.00</u>	21,898.01

ADVANCES

TREASURER	50.00	
PLANT SALES	<u>50.00</u>	100.00

SHARE EQUITY COMBINED SHOW

1,545.48

36,520.32

LESS: DEPRECIATION - 20% OF ITEMS MARKED *

383.73

36,136.59

BROMELIAD SOCIETY C
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPE

EXPENDITURE	\$
RENTAL	680.00
BROMELIACEAE	530.91
MEETINGS	2,811.01
POSTAGE	363.38
PRINTING ETC.	447.70
STATIONERY / PRINTING / PHONE	51.38
POSTAGE	49.15
SUBSCRIPTIONS	237.60
B.S.I.	200.00
CRYPTANTHUS SOCIETY	51.00
SOCIAL COSTS / XMAS PARTY (NETT)	178.60
GUEST SPEAKER	226.00
INCORPORATION EXPENSES	444.85
COMBINED SHOW EXPENSES	14.50
INSURANCE	4,349.81
PURCHASE OF:	70.00
TROPHIES / PRIZES	850.00
DOOR PRIZES	17,000.00
BOOKS	50.25
CONFERENCE TAPES	
GREETING CARDS	
TERM DEPOSITS	
F.G.T.	
EXCESS INCOME / EXPENDITURE	150.38

28,756.52

QUEENSLAND INC

EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31.12.95

INCOME			\$
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1995		1,139.00
	1996		145.00
			<u>1,284.00</u>
PLANT SALES COMMISSION	MEETINGS		207.40
	COMB SHOW		2,893.40
			<u>3,100.80</u>
RAFFLES	(NET)		487.40
SALE OF:	SOCIETY BADGES		-
	BOOKS		3,355.05
	BOOK DEPOSITS		570.00
	SALES STICKERS		273.50
	GREETING CARDS		217.50
			<u>4,416.05</u>
ADVERTISING			255.00
R.N.A. SHOW CONTRIBUTION	1994		450.00
	1995		450.00
			<u>900.00</u>
RETURN FROM TRADE TABLE			1,772.03
RETURN OF FLOATS	SECRETARY		150.00
RETURN OF EQUITY FROM COMBINED SHOW			600.00
RETURN FROM TERM DEPOSIT			14,747.20
INTEREST	BANK		170.07
	TERM DEPOSITS		873.97
			<u>1,044.04</u>
			<u>28,756.52</u>

(Study Group Report contd)

Len Trevor always ensures the group has a good time, so we don't need to set priorities on that item.

When the group was originally formed, its initial aim was seed raising and this will continue as a priority. More hybridising and attempting to overcome the losses encountered when growing-on seedlings is uppermost on the agenda.

The purchase of seed from other Societies, both local and overseas will be a regular feature. It is hoped that the seedlings produced will eventually be distributed to members of our Society.

Mixtures and fertilisers are so varied that they are regularly discussed within our group and it is generally accepted that a growing medium which suits one grower is a problem for another. Nevertheless we will continue to experiment and be willing to listen to any advice given.

The next meeting of the group which was on 24 February was our first outing of the year. We visited Denis Hundtscheidt's garden in Sunnybank. Denis's garden was open as part of the 'Open Garden' series.

We welcome Perry Crawford and Cheryl Basic to our Study Group and invite all members of the Society to come along. The dates are published in each issue of the Newsletter.

Liz Weir

Letter to the Editor

Dear Michael,

With reference to the article by Phyl Hobbs (Guest editorial) in November Bromeliaceae, 'Be Involved' to country people'.

This is how I grow my Tillandsia cyanea.

I live in Gladstone, just above sea level. I have an annex off my fernhouse, The annex is 3 metres wide and 6 metres long, it has 80% shade cloth on the roof, on the other 3 walls I hang Spanish Moss. The long side faces east.

I have 2 types of T. cyanea: one with green leaves and pink bracts, the other type with reddish green leaves with darker pink bracts.

The bracts are about 1.5" (35cm) high at Christmas and start flowering in March.

I grow them in a mix of 3 parts quarter inch (6mm) slash pine bark,, 1 perlite, 1 charcoal, 1 rice hulls, 1 polystyrene, 1 pea gravel, 1 coir peat (is this O.K., I have never tried anything else?). I add blood and bone, mixed fertiliser and soak the mix in a root growth hormone.

I use standard 4" (100mm) pots with 3/4" (19cm) polystyrene cubes in the bottom quarter of the pot. The pots have aluminium wire hooked up through the drainage hole which is hooked onto fence palings placed horizontal, hanging from the roof in a staggered formation. This method houses 500+.

I water once a week and mist every other day.

Hoping this is of some interest to other growers.

Maurice Featherstone

(Our thanks to Maurice for his response to Phyl Hobb's Guest Editorial. Ed.)

Disliked Defensive Darling Dyckias

Bob Paulsen

If there is more than one cinderella in the bromeliad family I suppose the genus *Dyckia* would have to qualify as one of them.

I began to collect and grow these plants in 1987. There was something of a challenge to grow them well and to get them to flower (I had not seen one in flower up until then). I was attracted by their rugged, hardy tenacity and by the pretty and intricate patterns and lines especially on the foliage of better grown succulent types. The underside leaf patterns are particularly intriguing.

There are still only about twenty *Dyckias* in my collection. they range from the small *Dyckia minarum*, about 10cm in diameter, to *D. encholinioides* 75cm across which bears a branched inflorescence two metres tall with pretty yellow bell-shaped flowers. This shape is typical and the flowers come also in a few shades of orange.

The principle adopted in collecting was to choose a representative variety of plants having colour, distinctive foliage or growth habits in mind. Examples are *D. Suntan*, *D. Silver King*, *D. platyphylla* and *D. Betty Fennel*.

My plants are grown in 180mm squat pots out in the garden, about 250 metres from the sea shore where they get plenty of sunshine. The pots are filled to the top with the growing mix because they remain there for 2 or 3 years or more and the mixture settles fairly quickly. During the growing period the plants are lifted from the pots when the root system is established and more mixture is added. Use a pair of good leather gloves. There is better growth when the bottom leaves, as far as is possible, clear the outer rim of the pot. It is natural for the bottom leaves to dry out but they tend to spoil more easily when touching the rim of the pot.

Other reasons I grow *Dyckias* in wide diameter pots are that they provide a more suitable environment for a strong healthy root system which is essential for this terrestrial genus and, contrary to commonly held ideas, they grow much better when they are watered thoroughly and regularly.

Disliked Defensive Darling Dyckias (cont)

Dyckias grow very dense layers foliage and a larger pot allows for better water penetration. Some hand watering will be necessary when larger plants mature. Shrivelled and dehydrated leaves are the result of too little moisture and furthermore dry conditions in the potting mix encourage the proliferation of root aphids.

One of the daunting tasks is breaking up the clumps and repotting offsets. Leather gloves are needed of course. I usually do this job when the warm weather comes but remember that Dyckias flower in spring so it is probably better to wait until they finish flowering. I must confess however that I have broken up plants at all times of the year and have had little trouble with rotting off. Mind you we have a very mild winter on the Sunshine Coast. After removal from the pot the whole plant is cleaned up, dead leaves removed with long nosed pliers and the offsets are carefully broken, cut or sawn off, sprayed with fungicide and allowed to dry. I have not yet had to resort to the practice of one brother bromeliad grower, who shall remain nameless, who chopped off the pups with an axe.

The potting mix used is simply fifty percent of my recipe for Neoregelias and Vrieseas etc consisting of fine pine bark, peat moss, foam granules and charcoal, and fifty percent good quality commercial potting mix (meeting Australian standards). I also recycle my old bromeliad mix. When potting offsets from other bromeliads I use new mixture but keep the used mix, provided it is not completely broken down and that it is clean. I use this half and half with the commercial potting mix as above. Slow release fertiliser is added at the time of potting the offsets.

In the last few years almost every one of my Dyckias has flowered. They have provided much satisfaction and pleasure. They need to be allowed to clump for two or three years for better flowering results, although recently I divided one variety early in winter and each potted offset flowered. Pot cultivation of dyckias gives me work aplenty. If I had the room I would plant them in the ground. With a little care they thrive. Come on now, collect a few Dyckias and 'ave a go!

Navia

Patricia O'Dea

Navia was discovered in 1820 by the German botanist Karl von Martius and named by Martius and Schultes in 1830 to honour Bernard S. von Nau, a student of natural history and physics.

The *Navia* falls into the sub-family Pitcairnioideae. Schultes called it the 'quaintest and most singular of the Bromel genera'. *Navia* is indigenous to the area known as the Guyana Highlands, centred in Venezuela but extending into Surinam, Colombia and Northern Brazil. This area has often been called the "lost World" and "The Land that Time Forgot" and as it is largely unexplored who can say how many marvellous plants and animals are waiting to be discovered. This territory has been described as 'a bewildering and tantalising maze of isolated sandstone mountains of grotesque shapes arising out of impenetrable jungles and sandy savannas'.

Karl von Martius, who dared to make his way through the forests of Amazonian Colombia brought back w species. Seventy four (74) species have now been gathered and described. Many of these are only of botanic interest but some are very beautiful and worthy of a place in collections.

Navias are either terrestrial (growing on the ground) or saxicolous (growing on rocks). They seem to cover all growing conditions. some grow in the cool moist areas along the banks of streams, or bathing in the misty spray of waterfalls. Some grow in the open scrub savannas, while others prefer clinging to cliffs and rock crevices where it may be moist or dry. Mostly they are stemless plants often forming large colonies and vary in size forming rosettes of several inches to several feet in diameter. The flowers may be sessile (attached directly by the base, not stalked), flower rests directly on the stem deep in the rosette, stalked, or in a series of small clusters spaced along the stem. Like all the bromeliad family it displays GREAT VERSATILITY. This trait leads one to believe that some *Navias* would grow quite well in cultivation.

This was proven by Josef Bogner who several years ago collected *Navia splendens* and *N. arida* and brought them to the Botanic Garden in Munich, Germany where, after a time of acclimatisation, became

Navias (cont)

established and received the same care as was given to the other bromeliads

They are a most interesting group of plants about which very little is known and because of the inaccessibility to all but the most zealous of plant explorers, as far as can be determined, none have been offered in the trade.

The two *Navias* described in Victoria Padilla's book "Bromeliads" *N. fontoides* (L.B. Smith 1955) the 'Fountain Navia' has orange or scarlet centred rosette and long thin gracefully arching leaves, and *N. nubicola* (L.B. Smith 1957) has a medium sized symmetrical rosette with long narrow pointed leaves that are reddish at the base, and the petals are white. It is found in moist soil or on rocks in forests in Venezuela at elevations up to 5100 feet (1700 m).

N. splendens is also a native to Venezuela and Guyana where it grows at 3000 feet (1000m) on vertical cliffs. It has also been found at the foot of Angel Falls. a lovely species, it consists of a rosette of 20-30 leaves about 14 inches (35cm) long appearing at the end of an 8 inch (20cm) stem that is covered with the remains of old leaves. The dark green slightly fleshy foliage makes a fine foil for the colourful inflorescence with its orange-red flowers. This species does not like to have water kept in its centre cup as in its natural habitat (steep cliffs) the water drains immediately.

(Researched by Patricia O'Dea)

*That Sunday Last September**A Poem by Doug Upton*

*I stand before you shattered and broken,
judge me not till you hear of my pain.
I have suffered a catastrophe the cruellest of blows,
a lesser man would now be insane.
Let me tell you my story it's a horrible tale,
even now, it grieves me to remember,
That cloudy day I planned a brief rest,
that Sunday last September.*

*I had drifted peacefully into slumber,
ah! sweet dreams were filling my head.
Then all at once that infernal knocking,
had shaken me out of bed.
What is it I asked, who makes that noise,
and awakened me from my sleep.
Should it be the devil himself, he shall feel my rage,
my anger wild and deep.
But the knocking continued, so now up and about,
I swiftly opened the door.
And there, with an arm upraised to knock again,
stood a child not more than four.*

*You wretched boy, what is it you want,
you have disturbed my afternoon.
Well it's like this mister, he was clearly afraid,
I've got news of doom and gloom.
It was me mother, she sent me to talk to you,
and tell you what she saw.
That's why I loudly knocked and knocked,
till you opened up your door.*

*I had seen this child out wandering the streets,
he's the youngest of the Murphy brood,
As he stood there trembling there were tears in his eyes,
was it me was I so rude.
Now my dear boy, let's have a dry face,
come in, please take a seat.
For I have mountains of lemonade and cake,
and it's all there for us to eat.*

*An hour had passed and still the child ate,
at least now he held no fear.
And that last piece of chocolate cake pushed into his mouth,
must surely come out of his ear.
But no, it disappeared with a gulp,
and after another glass of lemonade,
He stood up slowly and thankfully said,
oh! boy I'm glad I stayed.
That was truly the greatest chocolate cake,
that I have ever had.
I just can't wait to tell me brothers and sisters,
me mother and me dad*

*With that he turned, ran out of my house,
down the stairs, and opened the gate.
I screamed at him, have you forgotten why your here,
a moment more, now wait.
An hour has passed and still you've not spoken,
about this gloom and doom.
I am angry with you, you have tried my patience,
and destroyed my afternoon.
You wretched child so bloated with cake,
one would think should now be dead.
I ask you now, before another hour has passed,
what was it your Mother said.*

*It was me Mother, and she told me to hurry,
gee whiz, I should have told you before,
The reason why I had to wake you up,
with that banging on the door.
Me Mother said to introduce myself,
so g'day, me name is Lance.
She also said, there are hundreds of grasshoppers
in your brom house, and they're eating all your plants.*

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