Bromeliaceae

Volume XXVIV. Number 4. July/August 1996

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC

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

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

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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:

September - October, 1996 Edition	15 August, 1996
November - December, 1996 Edition	17 October, 1996
January - February 1997 Edition	21 November, 1996

Contents

Guest Editorial

Bob Paulsen

The Objects of The Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc.

(a) To promote good fellowship among all people interested in Bromeliad culture and horticulture generally.

(b) To further the knowledge and advancement of all that pertains to Bromeliads, including their natural history, cultivation and hybridisation.

(c) To disseminate knowledge of Bromeliads and carry out educational and research activities into all aspects of Bromeliaceae.

Greetings to all our members and friends. The above objects express the very worthwhile aims of the Society. During my fourteen years association with the B.S.Q., I have been impressed with the way these goals have been pursued. It is true, of course, that aspects of these objects have received more attention than others, however, one achievement deserves comment.

In the early 1980's as I participated in Shows and Displays, the majority of the public had little or no knowledge of Bromeliads. But in the past few years I have noticed quite a significant change. Most people who grow plants now cultivate one or more Bromeliads and more are collecting them. What is more important, they are using them creatively in their homes, shade houses, patios and landscapes. There is an increasing awareness of their potential and a growing knowledge of this unique family of plants.

Now the Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc. cannot take all the credit for the increase in the appreciation of the Bromeliads, but I believe the Society has made a very significant contribution to this achievement through its many activities which include its Monthly Meeting, Bromeliaceae magazine, sale of books, the Combined Show, Royal Horticultural Show at the Botanical Gardens Mt. Cootha, the Royal National Show and the Study Group. By these means and others the members of the Society have demonstrated their commitment to the objects outlined above.

But we have not yet arrived! There is much to be learned and more that can be done. There are exciting and challenging possibilities and projects ahead for those who love Bromeliads, who are willing and who have the heart to accept the challenge, especially in the areas of the advancement of knowledge of the Bromeliaceae, cultivation and hybridisation and education and research activities.

I am encouraged that there are a number of people in the Society who are capable of rising to the challenge and will continue to find a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction not only in the pursuit of the Society's objectives, but also in helping to bring a great deal of enjoyment to many more people as they encourage them to grow the beautiful Bromeliads.

Cover Photograph - Front

Tillandsia Jaliscomontecola

This species is found in Mexico in the state of Jalisco. The habitat is both tropical forest areas and higher in the oak/pine forests. It has a large inflated spike up to 25cms tall, the lower half red and the upper section green. In ageing the whole may turn to a burnt orange to yellow.

The plant resembles the Tillandsia Fasciculata variety in both size and leaf form. The inflorescence is very long lasting.

The photographed plant was grown in a 12cm squat pot in moderate light under 70% shade cloth.

Readers will note the spectacular branched clone in the centrefold photographs of the June Combined Show, grown and displayed by Laurie & Thelma Muller.

PLANT GROWN BY: Don & Phyl Hobbs
PHOTOGRAPHED BY: Don Hobbs

Cover Photograph - Back

Guzmania Sanguinea - Fortuna

The word Sanguinea describes the colour of the inner leaves at bloom time, when they turn to a blood red and sometimes yellow. The habitat of the general species ranges through Costa Rica, Trinidad, Ecuador, Venezuala and Panama. It grows in dense wet forests at altitudes of 100metres to 1000 metres. This particular species was collected from Fortuna, Panama and is notable for the numerous leaves forming the rosette, and the intense blood red colouring of the inner leaves at bloom time.

The photographed plant was grown in soft light under 70% shade cloth at sea level in Cleveland, Qld.

PLANT GROWN BY: Don & Phyl Hobbs
POHOTOGRAPHED BY: Don Hobbs

VALE
Evelyn Reilly

Members of our Society were saddened at the recent passing of Evelyn Reilly.

Evelyn, her husband, Rolly, and son Doug have been staunch, long serving members of our Society. Daughter Cheryl and grandson Matthew Stewart have more recently joined, forming a family group membership that is quite unique.

Evelyn had always given her time selflessly to assist in all aspects of our Society's activities. In particular, she loved the action to be found in the sales area of our Combined Show at Mt. Cootha. When the pressure was on and work was hardest, Evelyn was in the thick of it. Getting her to break away for lunch and tea breaks was never an easy task. Her enthusiasm for this work has been a very special part of the atmosphere of our Show and our memories of her will always be linked with the Show.

In the last few months, although confined to a wheelchair, Evelyn was still able to attend some of our meetings and to enjoy contact with the members.

Evelyn was a special member and a special person and all Society members are saddened at her passing.

The Society extends its condolences to Rolly, Cheryl and Doug and their families.

Cultivating Guzmania Species

Peter Tristram

The Genus 'Guzmania' was first established in the early 1800's, being separated out from the rest of the Tillansdioideae with identifying characteristics such as: perfect, polystichously arranged flowers; symmetrical (or nearly so) sepals; and naked petals fused into a tube. The plants are all spineless and species vary from long caulescent to stemless. They are common in predominantly rainforest habitats extending from Central America to the Andes, reaching their peak in Ecuador.

Like most Bromelaid genera, Guzmanias come in a vast variety of colours, shapes and sizes, with these variations frequently extending to within a species itself. In horticulture, they are grown for their often brilliantly coloured stems and bracts, longevity of inflorescence, tolerance of low light conditions, and leaf conformity and symmetry. With Vriesea, they have been the subject of the hybridiser's brush for many years with outstanding results.

In their rainforest habitat, the genus is found from sea level to around 3000m, from deep shade to full sun, from canopy and tree trunk to mossy rocks and clearings, with the greatest abundance in the mid-range where the climate is mild, well-watered and consistent. With around 150 species, the genus Guzmania has a lot to offer the collector. Most of their habitat range suits our temperate to sub-tropical climate, both in the garden or in the greenhouse, their size and water requirements are also amenable, and, of course, their foliage quality, rosette symmetry and inflorescence brilliance can be exemplary. (Obviously Guzmania is a favourite of the author!)

Horticulturally, the genus is cultivated by the million, mainly from the tissue culture of outstanding hybrids old and new. Seed-raising is mainly used as a means to select special qualities in species to be used for hybridising although some species have enough desirable qualities to warrant their own mass production. Naturally, the new hybrids are all grown from fertile seed following successful cross-pollination. It is quite a sight to see the propagation areas of large overseas nurseries with tray after coded tray of seedlings or clonings each containing as many as a thousand plants - no wonder the nurseries cover acres!

Examining the cultural requirements, most of the easier to grow members of the genus are also easy to please given a few basic requirements:

1. A well-drained, moisture-retentive mix preferably containing a little peat moss and slow release fertiliser all best in a squat plastic pot.
2. Shelter from extremes of hot and cold, and from full sun
3. A regular watering program especially during dry times
4. A regular foliage fertilising program - preferably 'weekly and weakly' as a notable Queenslander would say
5. Plenty of good quality, slightly acid water - preferably rainwater - just like all of the other Bromelaids!

Unlike other genera such as Aechmea and Neoreglia, Guzmanias do not form tubes nor do they usually have large inflated sheaths to conserve water. Most hold less water and have softer, thinner leaves, so, with the above-listed factors in mind, it is important to provide a suitable microclimate for optimum growth and appearance. Here, experience and observation are essential especially with the less hardy species. Below, a few contrasting groups of Guzmania species are dealt with in detail. Many of the species have been the subjects of detailed articles (and taxonomic descriptions) in the B.S.I. Journal - these are well worth referencing. I also strongly recommend that serious growers subscribe to this outstanding, colour publication as a definative reference.

1. Hardy - suitable for outdoors and landscaping in bright dappled light to shade:

G. Variegata - a large and spectacular plant with many forms, it generally grows in a spreading, leafy rosette of arching, crisp green leaves averaging 1 metre in length from which emerges a tall bipinnate inflorescence to 1 metre consisting of a stout stem and a large, imbricate, foliaceous primary bracts reducing in size, but increasing in brilliance towards the top. Colours vary from intense reds to orange and pink. These enclose the short branches which sprout white flowers intermittently during the long flowering period. Finally, the plant produces strong pups.

G. pennellii - smaller, clumping species with narrow green leaves and long, red and white, bipinnate inflorescence.

G.teuscheri - large plant with tough, broad leaves and stout, dense, pyramidal, golden inflorescence.

G.sqarrosa - a large plant with spectacular pink-tipped primary bracts - featured in previous issue.

G.condensata - medium-large, more tubular plant clumping before flowering. Inflorescense bipinnate to 1 metre - thin, red rachis and bracts and yellow flowers.

The remainder of Peter's article on Cultivating Guzmania species will appear in the next edition of Bromeliaceae. *D.H.*

NEWSLETTER

Forthcoming Events Member's Forum Show Reports Society News

Monthly Meetings

18th July
Mini Show - Commentary by the Judges.
Class
1. *Aechmea* species, hybrids
2. *Vriesea*, hybrids only
3. *Pitcaimcoideae* (excluding *Dychia Hechtia, Pitcairnia* but including e.g. *Deuterocohnia, Brocchinia, Cottendrfia Fosterella, Puya* etc.)

Please also bring plants for the display table. Commentary by Len Trevor.

15th August
"Night of the Earth Stars"
- Interview with Doug Reilly on growing *Cryptanthus* followed by a discussion.
- If you grow *Crystanthus* please bring some to the meeting.
- Popular vote
- Display table for other plants
- Plant commentary - Patricia O'Dea

Show Reports

Popular vote results

16th May

Advanced

(1) Tie *Aechmea Fasciata* Nat De Leon O.Trevor
Guzmania Lingulata Broadview O.Trevor

Intermediate

(1) *Tillandsia Bulbosa* Variegata B.Genn

(2) *Tillandsia Exerta* x *Chiapensis* B.Genn

Novice

(1) *Neoregelia* Rosella I.Hole

(2) Tie *Orthophytum Naviodes* P.Crawford
Neophytum Ralph Davis P.Crawford

20th June

Advanced

(1) Tie *Tillandsia Purpurea* N.Ryan
Vriesea Eva O.Trevor
Guzmania Gisela O.Trevor

Intermediate

(1) Anamea Scorpio N.Weir

Novice

(1) *Tillandsia* (Unknown) V&J Duncan

Competition Steward's Report

The combined show for 1996 has come and gone and once again has proven quite a success. The competition tables were full of plants, species and hybrids, beautifully grown and presented and in such numbers as to make the judges job a pleasurable difficulty.

One hundred and six plants were entered in total with the largest number of entries in Class 8, *Neoregelia* and Class 2a, Foliage *Vriesea*. Bob Paulsen won first place and Reserve Champion of the show with his *Neoregelia* Amen, a beautiful, large, dark plant, while Len and Olive Trevor won the foliage *Vriesea* section with the beautifully patterned *Vriesea* Pahoa Beauty x hieroglyphica.

Our noted *Cryptanthus* grower, Doug Reilly, was awarded the Grace Goode trophy for his well-grown Cloud Cover, a frosted plant with lovely markings.

An outstanding example of *Tillandsia xerographica* exhibited by Laurie and Thelma Muller, was named as Champion Bromeliad of the show. Congratulations to B. Coble who won the Mary Grasselli Medallion for her *Vriesea fosteriana*.

Many attractive plants were displayed, drawing favourable comments from the viewing public. The Novety Section is always entertaining and Doug Upton's 'Carnival' and Des Andersen's 'Three Generations' continued the tradition.

Billbergias seem to have returned to favour with seven entries this year. Greg Aizlewood and Narelle Rowe displayed some very pretty plants in this class. Olive Trevor's entries in the floral display classes combined vibrant colour combinations of red and yellow vriesea bracts with attractive foliage from other plants.

The tables needed re-arranging several times to do justice to the number of plants and this shows the tremendous effort put in by the members to provide quality plants for the competition bench.

Well done everyone!

Jeanette Henwood
Chief Bromeliad Steward.

Competition Results

	CLASS		PLANT	ENTRANT
1.	TILLANDSIA	(1)	T. Xerographica	L & T Muller
		(2)	T. Fasiculata	D & P Hobbs
		(3)	T. Caput-Medusaea	D. Upton
2.	VRIESEA	(1)	V. Charlotte	L & O Trevor
		(2)	V. Carlsbad	D. Reilly
2a.	VRIESEA FOLIAGE	(1)	V. Pahoa Beauty x Hieroglyphica	L & O Trevor
		(2)	V. Hieroglyphica x Pahoa Beauty	L & O Trevor
		(3)	V. Saundersii Albo Marginata	B. Paulsen
3.	OTHER TILLANDSIOSDEAE	(1)	Guzmania Guinn	L & O Trevor
		(2)	G. Guinn	L & O Trevor
		(3)	G. Lingulata v. Cardinalis	L & O Trevor
4.	TILLANDSIOSDEAE IN FLOWER	(1)	Guzmania Musaica (Panama)	L & T Muller
		(2)	G. Watermelon	L & O Trevor
		(3)	T. Fasiculata	D & P Hobbs
5.	CRYPTANTHUS	(1)	C. Cloud Cover	D. Reilly
		(2)	C. Charmain Price	B. Paulsen
		(3)	C. Black Power	B. Paulsen
6.	BILLBERGIA	(1)	B. Glory Be x Amoena	D & P Hobbs
		(2)	B. Golden Joy	G. Aizlewood/N. Rowe
		(3)	B. High and Mighty	G. Aizlewood/N. Rowe
7.	AECHMEA	(1)	A. Orlandiana Ensign	D. Upton
		(2)	A. Mulfordii 'Peaches & Cream'	L & O Trevor
		(3)	A. Orlandiana	P. Crawford
8.	NEOREGELIA	(1)	N. Amen	B. Paulsen
		(2)	N. Aussie Dream cv. Big Pinkie	L & O Trevor
		(3)	N. Carolinea x Concentrica x Concentrica	D & P Hobbs
8a.	MINIATURE NEOREGELIA	(1)	N. Pepper Royal	P. Crawford
		(2)	N. Meyendorfii x Fireball	G. Aizlewood/N. Rowe
		(3)	N. Hybrid	G. Aizlewood/N. Rowe
9.	NIDULARIUM	(1)	N. Species	L & O Trevor
10.	INTERGENERIC	(1)	Ananus Comosus x Aechmea Luddemaniana	D. Andersen
		(2)	Neotanthus Firefoam	D. Upton
11.	OTHER BROMELIOIDEAE	(1)	Canistrum Lindenii Albo Marginata	L & O Trevor
		(2)	Ananus Comosus Variegata	R. Reilly
		(3)	Ananus Comosus Variegata	R. Reilly
12.	BROMELIOIDEAE IN FLOWER	(1)	Billbergia Curly Top	G.Aizlewood/N.Rowe
		(2)	Aechmea Fasciata Nat De Leon	L & O Trevor


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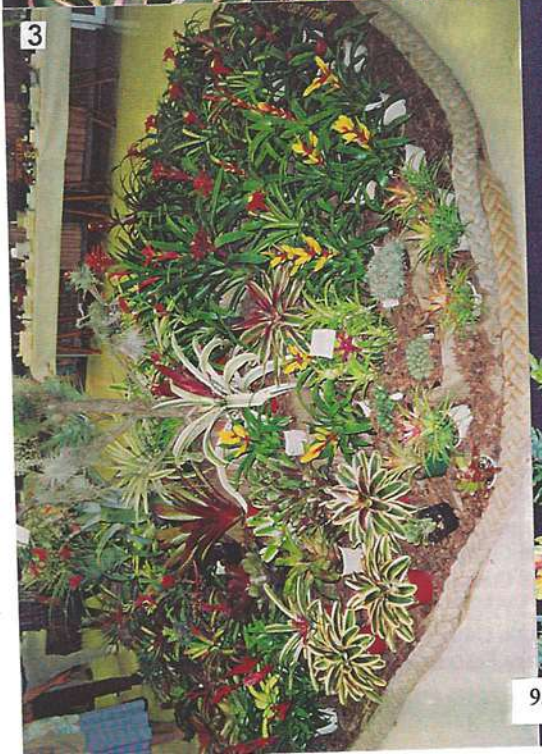
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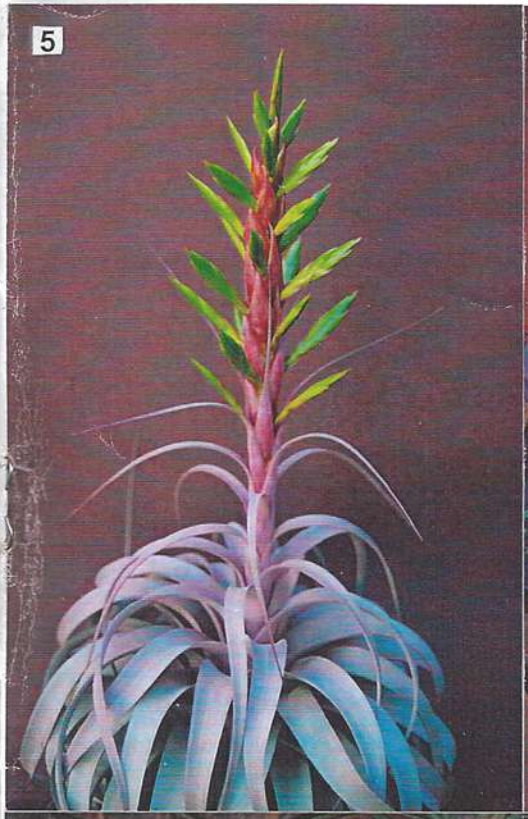
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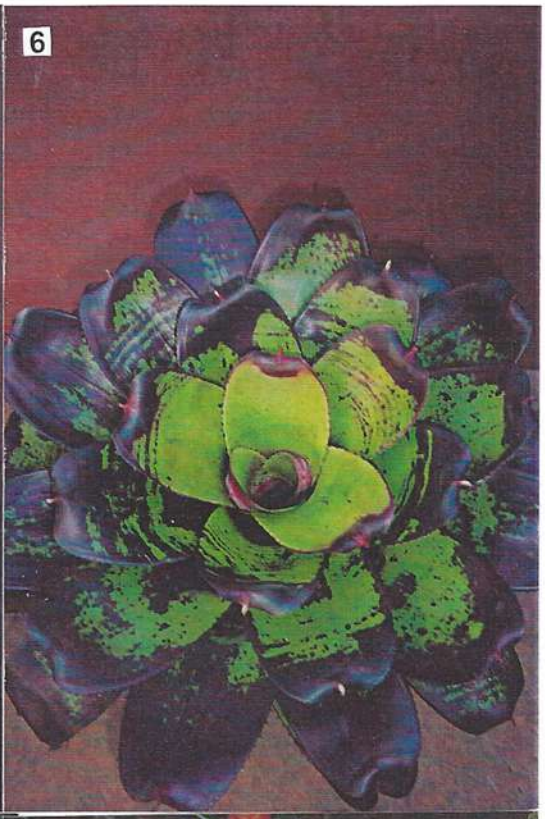
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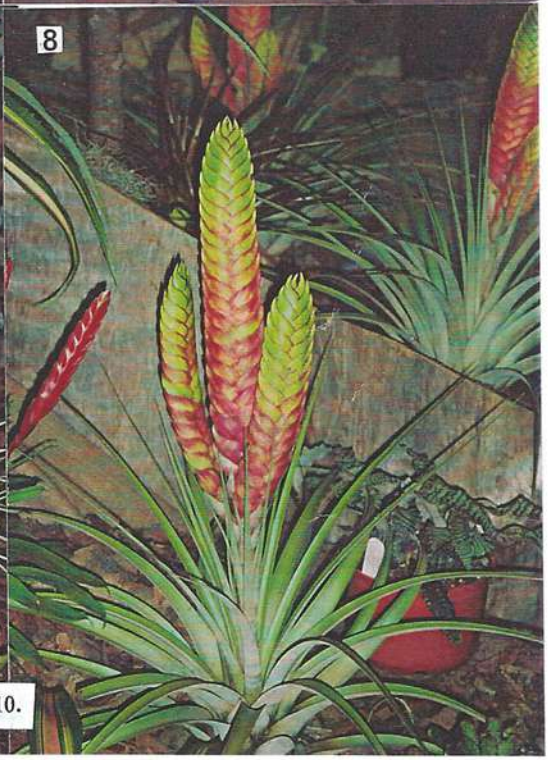
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13.	HECTIA / DYCKIA	(1)	Dyckia Brevifolia	R. Reilly
		(2)	/	
		(3)	/	
14.	PITCAIRNIA	(1)	P. Riparia	B. Glenn
		(2)	P. Smithorium	L & O Trevor
15.	OTHER PITCAIRNIOIDEAE	(1)	/ (No Entries)	
		(2)	/	
16.	SPECIMEN Any genus, 3 or more connected,mature plants	(1)	Neoregelia Fireball x Ampullacea	D. Reilly
		(2)	Neoregelia Punctatissima v. Rubra	D. Reilly
		(3)	Neoregelia Fireball x Ampullacea	L & O Trevor
17.	NOVICE Any genera..	(1)	Vriesea Fosteriana	B. Coble
		(2)	Neoregelia (Ampullacea x Pauciflora) x Princeps x Fireball	N & E Weir
	Mary Grasseli Award entrant never won a first prize	(3)	Tillandsia Ionantha	Lorna Sibbles
17a	BROMELIAD IN DECORATIVE POT	(1)	Vriesea Charlotte	L & O Trevor
		(2)	Vriesea Splendide Albo Marginata	L & O Trevor
		(3)	Guzmania Lingulata Cardinalis	L & O Trevor
17b.	BROMELIAD ON DECORATIVE MOUNTING	(1)	Tillandsia Fasiculata	G.Aizlewood/N.Rowe
		(2)	Neoregelia Meyendorfii Minor	G.Aizlewood/N.Rowe
		(3)	Tillandsia Bulbosa	G.Aizlewood/N.Rowe
18.	MINIATURE DISPLAY Not to exceed 1m in any dimension.	(1)	Tillandsia on driftwood in pot	N & E Weir
		(2)	Multi Planted Pot	L & O Trevor
		(3)	Stricta in pot setting	N & E Weir
19.	NOVELTY DISPLAY Not to exceed 1m	(1)	'Carnival'	D. Upton
		(2)	Three Generations	D. Andersen
20.	FLORAL DISPLAY Cut Bromeliad flowers and/or berries and bracts	(1)	Painter's Delight	O Trevor
		(2)	Tropicana Basket	O Trevor
		(3)	/	
21.	FLORAL DISPLAY	(1)	Purple Haze	O Trevor
		(2)	Kapoa Fire	O Trevor
22.	BEST TILLANDIOIDEAEA		Tillandsia xerographica	L & T Muller
23.	BEST BROMELIOIDEA		Neoregelia Amen	B. Paulsen
24.	BEST CRYPTANTHUS		C. Cloud Cover	D. Reilly
25.	BEST PITCAIRNIOIDEAE		Dyckia Brevifolia	R. Reilly
26.	RESERVE CHAMPION BROMELIAD OF THE SHOW		Neoregelia Amen	B. Paulsen
27.	CHAMPION BROMELIAD OF THE SHOW		Tillandsia Xerographica	L. Muller
TOM SCHOFIELD MEMORIAL AWARD			Vriesea 'Intermedia' x 'Red Chestnut'	O. Trevor

Centrefold Photographs
(Previous pages 9 & 10)

A Selection of Plants from the Combined Show

1. Section of Display
2. Novelty Display - 'Carnival' (In Competition)
3. Centre Display of Bromeliads
4. Floral Display (In Competition)
5. *Tillandsia Xerographica* (Champion Bromeliad)
6. *Neoregelia* Amen (Reserve Champion Bromeliad)
7. Tree adorned with *Tillandsia Tectorum* in section of display
8. *Tillandsia Jalisco Montecola* in display

Combined Show Display

We arrived at the Mt Cootha Auditorium at about 4.30 to a hive of activity, with our centre display partially completed. Tillandsias predominated on the tree with a good variety of plants taking in most genera being used on the floor. Tillandsia bulbosa (L & T Muller) Neoregelia elutheropetala x pendula brevifolia (P. Hobbs) Guzmania gisela (O. Trevor) Aechnea biflorus (L & T Muller) attracted the eye of the judges in the display and all achieved Highly Commended Awards whilst J & G Catlan received 2 Highly Commended Awards for Neoregelias in the Gold Coast Display.

The Tom Schofield Memorial Award for the best plant in the display was awarded to O & L Trevor for Vriesea intermedia x vriesea hieroglyphica.

A feature of the display were three hollow logs cut on an angle and set in with three Tillandsia Jalisco Montecola.

The Combined Show was very ably opened by Mr. Dennis Hundscheidt of Sunnybank who spoke on Bromeliads - their diversity of colour and their use as landscaping plants. 522 people visited the show on Saturday - these included a busload from the Gold Coast Bromeliad & Succulent Society and also a bus of Garden Club people from Beenleigh, whilst 655 patrons attended on Sunday.

The sales area was well stocked with plants and well supported with sales. Thanks to Nev Ryan, Nancy Kickbush and all the sales stewards for the smooth running and control of this area.

Cultural demonstrations were given throughout the weekend by both Bromeliad and Cactus growers and these were well received by enthusiastic patrons.

Thanks go to Bob Cross - our Show Organiser - for a great job very well done, and to all the members, old and new, who gave of their time to help in some way to make the 1996 Combined Show the success it was.

Narelle Rowe.

Study Group Meetings

7.00am 27th July
7.00am 24th August

Venue - 232 Canney Road, Ferny Grove
Ph: (07) 3351 1203

Study Group Report
25th May, 1996.

This month the study group were eager to inspect those plants cross-pollinated some months ago. Inspection of the now

fading bracts for tags (denoting the particular cross) was thorough and methodical. It was indeed pleasing to discover quite a number of swollen pods, hopefully developing seed. On several bracts, the only significant pods were those marked with a numbered tag, this would surely suggest some successful pollinating. As the pods mature, seed will be collected and distributed to interested members. What follows is always of interest to the enthusiast. The raising of seedlings to adult bromeliads is a lengthy programme. There is no guarantee the mature plants will be superior to the parents. On the other hand, the splendour of both parents could be produced, offering improvements in shape and colouration, with perhaps a different infuson of colour.

Seed obtained from sources outside the study group produced results that were either good, slow, or non-existent. It has been suggested the freshness of the seed might account for this, or perhaps low viability in some varieties. Overall best results are, Dychia platyphilla, Aechmea tessmannii and Billbergia rosea, with Vriesea nephrolepsis failing to germinate.

As Vrieseas produce dry seed, it is important to harvest the pods at the correct time. If taken too early, the seed within these pods have not had sufficient time to ripen, and therefore will not germinate. If left too long the pods will burst and scatter seed, it is then difficult to collect. One method adopted by growers wishing to gather seed, is to secure a paper bag over the bract, when its colour has faded. The pods will then open naturally when mature, filling the paper bag with a mass of silken gossamer like material, almost concealing an equal mass of seed.

During the last six months of this year the study group will organise day trips to various growers. Dates of these field days will be published in Bromeliaceae and mentioned at general meetings. All members are most welcome to join these activities.

Doug Upton.

General Meeting Reports

The May meeting had an unusually small attendance with very few plants on the table, but as always some caused a lot of interest. They were all Tillandsias that were getting the attention; one, a Tillandsia Ionantha, a hybrid that was quite huge. it was too early for it to be colouring so I hope Nev brings it in again when it is. I wonder what it was crossed with? Nev couldn't tell us but it was really spectacular. Also, a variegated form of T. Bulbosa. The other plant that was interesting was a hybrid between T. Chiapensis and T. Exerta, it threw very strongly to T. Chiapensis but the inflorescence was a deeper pink. Nev Ryan had made the cross and Barry Genn raised the seed. It had taken seven years to flower. Patience and Bromeliad growing go hand in hand.

After a break for a cuppa and a chance to buy plants and socialize, the program was 'Preparing Plants for Competition'. Len Trevor was our speaker and all I can say is that anyone who didn't attend the meeting really missed out. He had renamed his talk 'Playing the Game'.

I had always been led to believe that competition is a deadly serious business. Well, Len gave it a whole new concept. He approached it from the angle of putting it over those beady-eyed judges. With arms waving and non-stop talking he attacked what must be the worst looking lot of plants he could find and proved that

no matter how initially unimpressive it looks, any plant can be worthy of competition.

The highlight of the performance was a spotted Neoregelia. Long strappy leaves but the middle looked all right. He attacked it and by leaving most of the leaves on the floor and reducing the root system with a large rusty saw, then repotting it in an attractive squat terra cotta pot, he had a plant ready to be entered as a miniature. He had everyone laughing and making suggestions and I think it was the first time I had not seen anyone going to sleep. I'll be looking very closely at the competition plants to see who was using his very inventive preparation techniques.

June General Meeting

Attendance was down again, but apologies had been received. I hope all those on the poorly list are feeling better.

The main part of the programme was a panel of volunteers answering questions from the floor. General questions were fielded with quite a lot of time being taken up with fertilizers. An article on this subject would be appreciated for the magazine.

Phyl Hobbs

Western Bromanza Bromeliads IX Australia, International Conference.

Perth W.A.
26-29 September 1997

Preliminary planning is underway for the conference and expressions of interest are being sought by the Conference Convener, Mr Kim Clipper, 94 Jarrah Road, East Victoria Park, West Aust. 6101.

An international speaker, interstate and local speakers and bus tours are being arranged. A post-conference wildflower tour is being planned.

The registration fee will be $170-$195 and accommodation can be organised (around $95 per night) for those who require it.

Western Australia is a delightful place to visit in the spring time.

Write to Kim Clipper for details. Tell him if you are interested (before 31st July if possible).

RNA Show Display
Wednesday 7th to Saturday 17th August

Members are requested to assist with plants for the display. Set up commences from 4pm on Wednesday 7th. Members are also needed to Steward the display. If you can assist please contact the Roster Steward, Joy Upton at the July meeting or phone 3378 3511.

Member's Questions

Extracts from letters received from R. Symonds, Bundaberg:

(1) Are Guzmania Linguata Cardinalis variegata and Guzmania Lingulata Broadview variegata the same or different?

(Answer)

Linguata Cardinalis and Linguata Broadview are cultivars of Lingulata and have slightly differing characteristics. Cardinalis variegations have yellowish appearance compared to the white of Broadview variegata. The latter is a De Leon cultivar and registered by him as Lingulata 'Superb'.

(2) Are Neoregelia Carolinae 'Orange Flush' and Neoregelia 'Prinsler' the same or different?

(Answer)

We are unable to trace the parentage of these hybrids and can only say that they appear to be very similar.

(3) Question to John Higgins.

What potting medium did the Tillandsia Imperialis grow in and what size pot? When one talks of 'bark' is it untreated or boiled, as used by orchid growers. Is Tillandsia Imperialis rare and/or where would it be available from?

(Answer)

Refer to article by John Higgins in this issue.

(4) Question for Peter Paroz.

The article on 'Aqua Bromelius' was half an answer to a question for us - really excellent Peter - but the other half an answer - What does one do when the water is not perfect? Can it be altered? What would be the signs of bad water on Bromeliads?

(Answer)

We are not able to give complete answers in this issue, but hope to do so at a later date.

Fly Speck Scale Insecticide Use

B. Paulsen

It is probably true to say that most Bromeliad growers in Queensland have had problems with 'fly speck scale'. A fellow member suggested some time ago that I use an insecticide called LORSBAN. This product is normally available from produce merchants or specialist nursery suppliers who service primary producers, hobby farmers and the like. However the quantity a hobby Bromeliad grower would have to buy may be a problem.

The active ingredient in this effective chemical is chlopyrifos and it has become available in smaller quantities from hardware stores, nurseries and gardening shops at supermarkets under the brand name PESKIL'C' and GRUBKIL. Look for the active ingredient chlorpyrifos indicated on the label. This insecticide is used to control a number of insect pests and is proving to be successful in killing the scale insect we know as 'fly speck'. It is suggested that the spray be used at the onset of the warmer weather.

Instructions for the use of this chemical and others should be strictly followed. Cover your skin with overalls or long slacks, wear long sleeves and a washable hat; use gloves and an efficient face mask. Wash your face and hands thoroughly and the clothes you use. It is important and wise to always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Tillandsia imperialis

John Higgins

The following comments are offered in response to a request for more information about the plant featured on the front and back covers of the May/June 1996 edition of 'BROMELIACEAE'.

The plant featured was one of two acquired from the Collector's Corner Nursery at Garden World in Springvale, an outer suburb of Melbourne. Whether it was grown by the Nursery staff or purchased from an outside source is not known. From its appearance it was grown for some time under local conditions (Victoria) and was not imported, at least in recent times. The featured plant flowered approximately 7 to 8 months after being acquired and was kept amongst large leaved Vrieseas under 50% shadecloth at Hillcrest on the south western side of Brisbane. The plant received protection from excessive exposure by the larger plants surrounding it and from the microclimate they provided. Bearing in mind the habitat conditions which accompanied the photographs in the May/June edition the plants grow in '.. the cloud forest of central and southern Mexico, between 1400 and 3000 metres. Damp, cool, cloudy conditions prevail'. These conditions should be borne in mind if attempts are made to grow this plant in more humid conditions. At the present time the offsets produced by the plant continue to make progress whilst still attached to the parent. The second plant was not as mature as the plant featured but it contiues to grow and I am hopeful that it will flower in due course.

Both plants were grown in 150mm pots in a milled or crushed pine bark with no apparent additional ingredients. They remain in the original mixture. The condition of the mixture suggests regular watering in its early life but the bark remains in good condition, with an open fresh texture and no excessive breakdown. The exact nature of this bark and its source is unknown. Some phostrogen was applied as a foliar spray during the spring months prior to flowering. In the case of the featured plant the bulk of its condition should be credited to the original grower. T. imperialis is generally considered to be rare, and difficult to grow in cultivation.

Cryptanthus Experience

G.M. Goode

Cryptanthus are endemic mostly to Brazil where it is summer all the year round, so their first requirement is warmth. They are terrestrials and are rarely found as epiphytes. they will grow well in shade houses, if the humidity is well maintained, perhaps by automated mist or sprinkler system.

The most helpful guide to good growing is information about the habitat from which the species came and try to simulate the same conditions. They are sometimes found in full sun, but mainly prefer the filtered light or shade in coastal regions and forests of East Brazil. The temperature there ranges from 20 degrees to 28 degrees celsius.

They will grow in most types of soil, but in culture, African violet mixture is recognised as most suitable. There are many mixtures used for Cryptanthus, but my preference is for mainly peat moss with added charcoal and coarse river sand. They will grow in just peat moss but need foliar feeding and granular feeding at the base of the plant. The best medium for getting roots on offsets is pure peat moss.

It is very difficult to find squat pots suitable for growing Cryptanthus. Preferably they should be no more than 8cm deep and 10 to 15 cms in diameter. The nearest to this I have found are the round squat tubs used by the margarine manufacturers. Some African violet growers obtain pots ideal for growing Cryptanthus, but I do not know the source. Growers of our 'Earth Stars' are not many so the plastic pot manufacturers see no necessity to make these pots for a small clientele. The smaller Cryptanthus, such as that little charmer, 'Ruby', 'Bivittatus', 'Cafe Au Lait', 'Coffee Royal', 'Acaulis' and others do well in large saucers which are used under big pots, about 30 cms or more in diameter and 5 cms to 7.5 cms deep. I have used the large terracotta saucers with some success, (after having them suitably modified for drainage holes) but they are inclined to dry out too quickly. They are most suitable for growers with automated sprinkler systems.

Cryptanthus root systems usually extend out to the extent of the leaves. The roots grow laterally, that is why I like a wide pot. I have not seen a well grown Cryptanthus without a good rrot system. I have seen average crypts without roots, only because the plant was kept damp and foliar fed.. I guess the plants felt no need for a large root growth when the feeding was from above and absorbed by the leaves.

Initially I tried to grow my Cryptanthus in the garden. I cleared an area under a calliandra tree, sheltered from the westerly winds and getting filtered morning sun. I was at a loss to understand why they looked miserable. An experienced grower said "Pull them up and you will soon find out". I did so and was appalled to find

their roots covered in mealy bug. Some had no roots at all. If Cryptanthus are too dry, mealy bugs thrive. I dipped them all to remove the bugs, then I placed corrugated fibrolite roofing on the ground and placed the potted plants on top. Reasoning that the mealy bugs came out of the soil, I sealed off the ends of the fibrolite, hoping to keep the channels filled with water. This was a failure too, as the fibrolite soaked up the water in no time. At that time we had no reticulated water system and all the plants had to be hand watered. With only tanks, one had to be careful with the water. The mealy bug infested the pots again, much to my disgust. New horizons opened up when reticulated water was laid on.

On my north facing verandah, I nailed 6 inch wide boards to the railings. On this I placed foam troughs, which are sold by nurseries and big stores. The longer troughs are the best, as they have a reinforcing bridge across the centre. I used old fence palings, cracked and worn from years of service as a fence. I made a platform from a paling, cut to fit down in the trough, with two small pieces nailed on each end, the bridge in the middle being the middle foot of the platform. I poured water to the level of the platform, which readily absorbed the water. The crypts in their pots were placed on the platform and they thrived. The trough will take from 5 to 6 plants depending on their size. The veranda was enclosed with 50% shade cloth. The sun streamed in at winter time, and in summer, when they did not need the hot sun, the overhang from the roof, sheltered them. I found it an ideal way to grow my crypts. With over 100 pots to water on the verandah, the task of carrying buckets of water up 12 steps became a chore. I could not use the hose as the verandah boards would deteriorate and as it was, and careful as I could be, they were already showing signs of rot. I commend this method to growers who can use the hose to fill their containers and keep the water to the level of the platforms. This method will do equally well in shade and in glass houses.

I tried the wick system used by African Violet growers. At last, I thought I had found the ultimate. I used clear plastic tubs as the water containers, so I could watch the water level. The potted crypts were placed on top of the water container with the wick, supplying the water. It should have been successful, but life was not meant to be easy. The algae grew in the water pots, a slimy mess. I was forever cleaning the slime off the tubs, even using steel wool, as the algae just loved living in that water. I tried fungicide, but even that could not stop the algae. I do not know what the African Violet growers do, to overcome this problem. So, another great scheme went the way of all schemes.

I saw a nursery in Florida which grew their plants on a slightly slanted bed of underfelt. Old carpet would do as well. This was watered from the top, the water permeating to the bottom. This method looked great to me, but I did not stay around long enough to find out the drawbacks, if any.

A most commendable method is Bob Whitman's treatment of Cryptanthus. He has a very large shade house, reinforced in winter with a covering of thick plastic or bubble plastic. It can get fairly cold in Texas, USA and Bob told me in the years he has been growing Bromeliads, they have had a few sprinkles of snow. Large boulders are laid on the ground, marking the pathways. The beds are built up to the height of the boulders, with rich dark soil. The Cryptanthus were in their element, growing with their earth mother. They were a delight to behold, Australian hybrids in one bed, species in another and hybrids by USA in another bed, not hard to find when a customer wanted a particular plant. So if Bob Whitman can grow his Cryptanthus so well in Texas, we should be able to grow them better in warm and sunny Queensland.

One of the best methods I have seen was used by Robert Reilly of Buderim, some years ago now. In his large shade house, the centre was taken up by a large table waist high and from memory about 12 ft long and 6ft wide. On this was laid flat sheets of galvanised iron, with a lip of about 2 inches or so all around. This bed was filled with coarse river sand, always kept damp and the Cryptanthus loved it. If I were young again and had the wherewithal, this is the way I'd go.

Crypts on the average grow about 10 inches across, but who of us (the oldies I suppose), can remember that C. 'Goldie Langdon' of some years ago, when John Catlan took Champion of the Bromeliaceae at the Mt Cootha Show. It must have been 3 feet across. I asked John how he grew it to such dimensions and perfection. He said he could only attribute it to an employee, who used to throw the residue of fungicide over the end of the bench, when she had finished spraying other plants.

Maybe Crypts like fungicide occasionally. I did not have a camera at the time, but if any member has a photo of that phenomenal cryptanthus, I'd be most grateful of a copy.

Under artificial light, crypts respond very well. Because of the cold, some of our USA members have to grow their plants in cellars, lit and warmed by fluorescent tubes. They grow them as well as those who grow them under natural conditions.

From these methods which I have recounted, I hope there is one which appeals to you. I hope this article will induce more members to take up the challenge and grow these beautiful plants. I look forward to seeing a whole array of captivating cryptanthus, gracing the tables at the next Mt Cootha Combined Show.

The Earth Stars are not the lowly relations of the more flamboyant genera of the Bromeliaceae. They are given to us to gladden our days, as their counterparts, the heavenly stars, do at night.