

# *Bromeliaceae*



VOLUME XXXIII — No. 2 — MARCH / APRIL, 2000



# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND INC.

P.O. BOX 565, FORTITUDE VALLEY  
QUEENSLAND. 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. Classes for Beginners commence at 7.30 p.m. and the General Meeting at 8 p.m.

DAY MEETINGS are held bi-monthly at the gardens of members as advised in this journal.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Family \$20, Single \$15—payable on January 1.

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**FRONT COVER: *Tillandsia fuchsii* "fuchsii" X *stricta***

TEN YEARS AGO, Barry Genn crossed *Tillandsia fuchsii* and *Tillandsia stricta*. From the five seeds in the original pod, only two grew to maturity and flowered for the first time in December, 1999. It is reasonably easy to grow and has a growth habit like *Tillandsia stricta* with many fine leaves like *Tillandsia fuchsii*. Barry said he will register his cross, probably with the name "Millennium".

Plant grown by BARRY GENN

Photographed by BARRY GENN

**BACK COVER: *Tillandsia fasciculata Hondurensis***

RATHER than being a true varietal name, *Hondurensis* refers to the plant's original location area. It was imported by Barry Genn from Pamela Koide in the US. This good looking silver form of *Tillandsia fasciculata* is often variable and easy to grow. The plant lays fairly flat with the ends of the leaves characteristically curving upwards.

Plant grown by BARRY GENN

Photographed by BARRY GENN

## Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc.

### BOOKS FOR SALE

<i>Bromeliads for Everyone 2</i> by Bea Hansen .....	\$11.50
<i>Growing Bromeliads</i> by Bromeliad Society of Australia .....	\$21.50
<i>Genus Tillandsia</i> by Paul Isley III .....	\$3.00
<i>International Check List of Bromeliad Hybrids</i> by B.S.I. ....	\$1.50
<i>A Bromeliad Glossary, 1977 Edition</i> , by B.S.I. ....	\$3.50
<i>A Bromeliad Glossary, 1998 Edition</i> , by B.S.I. ....	\$18.50
<i>Bromeliads—A Cultural Manual</i> by B.S.I. ....	\$4.50
<i>Distributional Checklist of the Genus Tillandsia</i> by Lloyd Kiff .....	\$20.00
<i>Die Bromelie—The Red Flowered Tillandsia from Brazil</i> by R. Ehlers .....	\$23.00
<i>A Guide to Beautiful Neoregelias</i> by S. Zaghini .....	\$20.00
<i>1985 Bromeliads III Conference</i> .....	\$10.00
<i>1993 Bromeliads VII Conference</i> .....	\$18.00

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ALL PRICES PLUS POSTAGE

## CONTENTS

Society Officials .....	Page 1
Cover Photographs .....	Page 2
President's Annual Report, BOB CROSS .....	Page 4 - 5
Balance Sheet.....	Page 5
Income and Expenditure Statement .....	Page 6
Notes from the Tropical North, ROB SMYTHE, M.Sc. ....	Page 7 - 9
<i>Neoregelia richteri</i> Weber, DEREK BUTCHER.....	Page 9 - 10
Tips on Preparing Plants for Show, OLIVE TREVOR.....	Page 11 - 12
<i>My Vriesea Philippo-coburgii</i> , JOHN GAMLIN .....	Page 12
How Good Are Your Plants? Part 4.....	Page 13 - 15
Society Diary: January Meeting Report .....	Page 16
February and Annual General Meeting Reports .....	Page 16
March 16 Meeting .....	Page 17
April 20 Meeting.....	Page 17
Study Group Meetings .....	Page 17
Bus Trip to Sunshine Coast .....	Page 17
Day Meetings .....	Page 18
Combined Show Committee Meeting .....	Page 18
Management Committee Meetings .....	Page 19
Display at "The Ekka" .....	Page 19
2001 Bromeliad Conference .....	Page 19
Competition Schedule Correction.....	Page 19
Editor's Mailbox: Canola White Oil .....	Page 20
Tills "Going Native" .....	Page 20
Cryptanthus.....	Page 21
Spiders and Webs .....	Page 22
Broms are Hardy Plants .....	Page 22
Naming of Cultivars .....	Page 23
Copper .....	Page 24
Advertisers: The Olive Branch .....	Page 18
M. J. Paterson.....	Page 19
Pinegrove Bromeliads .....	Page 20
Raemaur Plant Farm.....	Page 21
Brisbane Bromeliad Centre .....	Page 22
Bromagic Bromeliad Nursery.....	Page 23
Forest Drive Nursery .....	Page 24

**PUBLICATION DEADLINES for *Bromeliaceae***

May / June, 2000, Edition..... April 21, 2000

July / August, 2000, Edition .....

Please send all contributions to:

**The Editor, Ray Nicholson, 11 Malory St, Balmoral, Qld. 4171.****Phone (07) 3399 5296**

## President's Annual Report

**T**HE HOUR OF RECKONING is at hand — the time when we stop and look back at the year passed. Was it a good year? Did we improve? Did we fail somewhere? Can we improve that section? . . . Of course we can; there is always room for improvement. We must ever strive to move forward—he who marks time never gets very far.

It's been a busy year, especially the latter half with Bromeliad 10, shows, garden visits and bus trips. The society ran very smoothly during all these events. Great fellowship was had by all who attended.

Plant material has become easier to obtain year by year. When I first joined, it was difficult to buy any quality plants. Our sales tables now hold more quality plants than one can grow.

The year saw the formation of a North Coast Bromeliad Group. Let us try to help them grow and spread the word about our unique family of plants.

Looking ahead, this year sees the introduction of the society's day meetings. Many members had asked for this facility, so please try to support it.

I hope we will be able to proceed with the society's bromeliad shirts we were discussing before Christmas.

Our balance sheet shows that we had a good year financially. Even though our costs were more, our receipts were more and we came out ahead.

We survived the catered Christmas party.

Our *Bromeliaceae* standard has been maintained thanks to Doug and Ray, our new editor.

Our study group is as strong and as enthusiastic as ever.

New judges are being trained.

Several bus trips are already in hand.

I hope we will be able to upgrade the fine start we made on the planting at Mount Coot-tha. That was a particularly pleasing day and we had a wonderful response and attendance.

Of course, as president, I have been very lucky and give thanks in having a great back-up team: Dorothy as secretary; Noel as treasurer; Mavis (and Bob), as librarian, has done a fine job (our library system is excellent and is still being added to); a great committee; and all those who helped run the meetings, to get the hall ready beforehand and to provide cups of tea and biscuits; the judges and the stewards. All these

things happen without a hitch—like magic. The members who bring along their wonderful plants each meeting for us to admire and desire; those who donate plants for our raffles; those who sell tickets and those who buy those tickets . . . in fact all of you—each and every one—you make the society what it is today. You all have my thanks for your efforts.

To the new society's officials, my congratulations. I hope you receive all the help you need as you take up your new responsibilities.

To all members and the new members who joined during the year: it is your attendance which will keep the society alive and growing year by year. Thank-you.

*BOB CROSS, PRESIDENT.*

**THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND  
BALANCE SHEET As at 31 December, 1999**

	1999, \$	1998 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>		
Cash	6,919.03	3,584.23
Inventories	2,912.95	3,303.93
Other	<u>25,003.57</u>	<u>25,003.57</u>
Total current assets	<u>34,835.55</u>	<u>31,891.73</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	1,629.42	2,432.42
Other	<u>2,819.55</u>	<u>2,786.76</u>
Total non-current assets	<u>4,448.97</u>	<u>5,219.18</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	39,284.52	37,110.91
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	--	--
Borrowings	<u>390.00</u>	<u>270.00</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>390.00</u>	<u>270.00</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	38,894.52	36,840.91
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Accumulated surplus	<u>38,894.52</u>	<u>36,840.91</u>
Total members' funds	<u>38,894.52</u>	<u>36,840.91</u>



**THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

For the year ended 31 December, 1999

	1999	1998
	\$	\$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Trading profit	1,104.17	1,342.59
Adjustment—Treasurer's float	50.00	—
Advertising	210.00	180.00
Cairns fund raising	184.00	674.00
Bus trip	310.00	—
Combined show—equity increase	32.79	222.46
Donation	10.00	—
Interest—bank	5.36	5.97
Interest—term deposits	1,125.15	1,546.56
Other income	540.00	—
Plant sales commission	3,099.50	2,865.60
Raffles receipts	1,448.65	1,035.50
R.N.A. receipt	533.40	924.60
Subscriptions	<u>2,095.00</u>	<u>2,050.00</u>
Total Income	<u>10,737.02</u>	<u>10,847.28</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Audit fees	250.00	800.00
Bank fees and charges	70.80	103.90
Books for editor	—	97.68
Bus trip expenses	442.60	—
Cairns contributions	190.00	701.00
Depreciation	910.00	895.00
Floral tributes	—	127.00
Donations	50.00	50.00
Hire hall	540.00	440.00
Incorporation expenses	30.50	30.00
Insurance	345.00	355.00
Postage	506.03	1,067.86
Printing and stationery	3,425.25	3,602.28
Raffle expenses	638.00	725.90
Show expenses	443.62	131.00
Social costs	514.28	87.26
Subscriptions	116.38	226.03
Sundry expenses	16.50	200.19
Telephone	41.85	54.48
Trophies	<u>152.60</u>	<u>233.65</u>
Total expenses	<u>8,683.41</u>	<u>9,928.23</u>
Operating surplus before income tax	2,053.61	919.05
Income Tax expense	—	—
Operating surplus after income tax	2,053.61	919.05

## Notes from the Tropical North

By ROB SMYTHE, M.Sc.

**I**N NORTH QUEENSLAND when the wet comes plants can be deluged for months. This is no great problem generally as bacteria and fungal spores that land on the plants usually wash away quickly. As long as you have good drainage things go along fairly smoothly. Immediately the wet stops you start to see dead trees turning up in the streets. This is indicative that root rot fungi like *Phytophthora* are on the move. I saw trees progressively die from front to back of my yard over successive wet seasons.

A colleague who maintains the microscopes at the University told me that there were no problems with fungi if the relative humidity could be kept under 80%. In the home we use silica gel to keep fungi away. I have known people to store things in a cupboard with an incandescent light on continuously. This expands the air with its heat and keeps the relative humidity down. Cameras and leather goods are stored this way in the tropics. But what about the garden?

This is a different story as humidity is high for a month or more after the rain stops. Fungal spores that were previously washed away now germinate and pathogens attack the plants. If plants are kept in a shadehouse good ventilation is imperative. Fans are used in orchid houses. This hinders germination of spores as droplets dry out more quickly and as well spores can't settle as easily. What about broms in the garden?

Let me get the *Vriesea* alliance out of the way first before I get on to what I really want to talk about and that is offshoots. Plants like our beautiful *Vriesea gigantea* can look so well, but one morning you find it has a bit of a tilt. You know damn well it is dead but does not know it. You pick it up by its leaves and it looks perfect but comes away from its pot leaving all the roots and meristematic material necessary for survival rotting in the pot.

The other scenario is that the centres colour up more spectacularly than ever. You show it off to your friends but next time they ask, you say, "It has gone to the plant heaven". Yes, you have root rot in your pot. It is nearly as bad with the smaller green leafed *Vrieseas* but does not seem to bother the bigger ones now put into the *Alcantarea* genus. Any brom can be affected but *Vrieseas* suffer the most. Interestingly, my friend George Stamatis (from tropical South Africa) and I were swapping notes at the recent conference in Cairns and we both came to



the same answer for growing these large spectacularly marked Vrieseas. Grow them in a large pot with one big rock in the bottom to stop the plants falling over and nothing else. I lost three plants of *Vr. gigantea* 'Nova' before trying this method. I also, starting this year, have been spraying with a water-soluble systemic fungicide after a period of rain.

I have not said it all. Have you noticed sometimes when you pull a rotting dead brom apart and you say, "This thing has crown rot and it is putrid". Bacteria cause putrefaction so there is another agent at work. By the way, I don't believe crown rot is really crown rot. With my studies involving orchids crown rot is invariably the result of root rot of the surface roots which initially feed the new growth areas. Could be wrong with broms. If you keep the roots healthy and plants stay healthy, as George and I have found out, I am probably right. So now we have a new agent namely bacteria. So how do we treat it? Luckily for you folks I did some research in this field before retirement. I found that a solution of 3 ml of Alginox in 5 litres of water was safe for growing the smallest orchid plants. I would guess 10 times this strength would be safe for larger plants. All the same, when I use higher strength Alginox (most often to kill algae) I wash it off after a few hours. Alginox is found in the pool care area of your supermarket. I can recommend more expensive brand names from produce agencies, which chemically are identical. Being a chemist I hope you believe me. A friend was purchasing his chemical from USA until I showed him the chemical composition on the sides of the bottles. This chemical is bacteriostatic as well as being an algicide. That means it stops bacteria proliferating and also kills algae.

Hopefully now we can grow Vrieseas better: good to excellent drainage and a spray with Alginox and a systemic fungicide during humid weather. Also it is wise to have them off the ground.

Well, I have shared my interesting observations and research with you but I did want to talk about taking offshoots (pups). Here you also damage the tissue making entry of pathogens easier. Lots of these died during our hot humid summer months. This is what I now do and it has never failed me.

Get a broccoli box with a lid. Two-thirds fill it with crunched-up wet newspaper. Put a three-inch nail in each corner to hold the lid down. Turn it upside down. With a keyhole saw, drill as many holes in the uppermost side as you like. These need to be big enough to hold your offshoots. Take off your offshoots with a sharp knife. (Vrieseas: just turn the pup down 180 degrees and it comes away with a little crescent of

tissue at the base.) Whatever you please but don't bend or bruise the offshoot. Wash it clean; dip the wound into brickie's lime (hardware store), wrap a narrow strip of paper around the base so it fits snugly into the hole in the box. The wound should be protruding below the paper. Expect 100% success rate and beautiful roots. The lime is corrosive and seals the broken cells and kills any bacteria and fungi. The paper provides the high humidity to initiate root development. Now just forget about them.

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## ***Neoregelia richteri* Weber**

By DEREK BUTCHER

**T**HE DISCUSSION on this plant started in *Bromeletter* No.5 1996 when I asked readers to be on the look-out for this plant. While I got no feed-back I now have further information which I find intriguing.

In the late 1980s there was a plant being grown in Australia as *Neoregelia* 'Walter Richter' which was a strappy leaved plant and I did not take much notice of it. Nor had many others because I have only been able to trace a live specimen in one old collection in Adelaide

In 1983 it was being grown at the Adelaide Botanical Gardens having been sent to them by the Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens in Brisbane in January of that year.

In the 1990s I started searching for *Neoregelia* species growing in Australia. Harry Luther was a great help in supplying plant descriptions. I even made myself a key to help me narrow down my search because there were many imposters and hybrids around. One of these imposters which I thought was from a reliable source had *Neoregelia binotii* on the label but this kept keying out to *Neoregelia richteri*. I had taken the various parts of the inflorescence to pieces and I compared them with the description that I had now translated from the Latin and German. There was one odd factor not mentioned in the description which revolved around how the filaments were joined along their length (adnate) in two series. One set was wholly joined whereas the other was only joined for just over half the length.

What I found really intriguing was that this plant was compared to *Neoregelia spectabilis* by Weber where he found three significant differences. If he had compared it with *Neoregelia cruenta* he would have found very few differences. I found only 3 minor ones. *Cruenta*: Leaf blades 7 to 9 cm wide (*richteri* 5 cm); scape bracts entire (*richteri* spiny edges); inflorescence ? (*richteri* 3.5 cm diameter). My plant had spiny edges on the lower bracts but entire on the upper ones!

In 1993 at the Australian Bromeliad Conference in Queensland, Elton Leme showed slides of *Neoregelia cruenta* where there was great variation which had me thinking about *Neoregelia richteri*.

In May 1997 I was asked to identify a plant in the Townsville Botanic Gardens and felt sure it was *Neoregelia cruenta*. Luckily, I was able to obtain an offset and it is identical to the plant I had which had erroneously been named as *N. binotii*. Further investigation into this has revealed that the erroneously named *N. binotii* came in as seed from Richard Doering of Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1957 to Bill Morris, then of Warners Bay, NSW. It is shown in the letter as "*Neoregelia* sp. #2—light green leaves with beautiful red 'finger nails' at the end". Also in the letter was this comment "I have many plants which right names I could not find out. I have sent samples to specialists, photos to Mr Foster (no answer), colour slides to Germany (answer maybe) and so on. Mr L. Smith's latest book doesn't help, because it is purely botanical, explaining the differences by infinitesimal particularities of the flower. It is really disheartening".

Using Smith's recently published *Bromeliaceae of Brazil Smithsonian*, Misc. Coll. 126:1 - 290 (1955), Bill got close to *N. binotii* remembering that red tips to the leaves could easily become dark green in a dried condition. The yellowish wide-leaved *N. cruenta* was known in Australia as was *N. spectabilis* but this plant was different. This name stuck throughout the years until I started asking questions in the 1990s.

This year I contacted Doug Upton in Brisbane to follow up the lead at Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens because he knows the curator. There are no records of a *N. 'Walter Richter'* ever having been at Mount Coot-tha. We can only rely on the Adelaide Botanical Garden records.

*N. richteri* was named in 1982 and it is feasible that the plant was in Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens before that time as 'Walter Richter' pending formal description. Remember: Dr Richard Oeser had close ties with Walter Richter as well as having correspondents in Australia.

Checks have been made at the Townsville Botanic Gardens but no name of 'Walter Richter' can be traced so any link with the Mount Coot-tha plant would be very tenuous.

Where does all this get us? Nowhere really but I would love some Queenslanders to be wandering around Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens and see a narrow green-leaved plant, unnamed or with *N. cruenta* on the label, AND tell the Curator that the lost had been found!

There is another plant with a chequered career that could easily be linked with *N. richteri*. I refer to what is now known as *N. cruenta* 'Red Form'. This is narrow leaved too and started off being grown as 'Monstrosus' and had a spell being identified as *N. hatschbachii* until it was finally decided it was within the variable *N. cruenta*.

## Tips on Preparing Plants for Show

By OLIVE TREVOR

**S**TART NOW to select and groom your plants for the next show. Always select fairly mature plants with good shape, colour and markings. Select more than you intend to exhibit. You can reject those that don't reach a certain standard by the time the show arrives. Perhaps the plants you reject could be used for display plants.

Start by elevating those selected plants on upturned pots, bricks or other suitable stands above the other plants on the benches. They will get maximum light and will not be touched or shaded by other plants on the bench. In this position you can watch them closely. It will be easy for you to give them a quarter turn every few to help the plants to improve their shape and conformation.

Examine the pot and repot in a similar size if it is marked or scruffy. Sometimes a different coloured pot can blend or contrast with the colour of the plant to some advantage. Pot into a larger pot if the plant is top heavy or out of proportion with the pot. Never do this at the last minute or your plant could be unstable. While you are repotting the plant, remove any bottom leaves that are yellowing or marked. Sometimes after you have removed leaves, the plant can be buried a little deeper to cover part of the stem or trunk. Even if you are not repotting, but just removing old leaves, a "top up" to cover the stem may be beneficial to the appearance of the plant.

Trim the leaves if you wish, but this will have to be done again at the last minute to remove dead edges of the trim. Always copy the shape of one of the good leaves. A pair of very sharp scissors will be needed to do a good job. I have been told that Aloe Vera rubbed on the cut will stop it from drying and leaving those tell-tale edges.

Last but not least is cleaning the plant. So many beautiful plants lose points because they are dirty. A good flushing from a hose to remove debris and grime is a start — but a soft brush will be needed to

### **Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc.**

**Society BADGES** are available at **\$5** each

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Or Write to The Secretary, P.O. Box 565, Fortitude Valley, Qld. 4006

clean high water marks and markings from salts that collect in the plant's cup. You must be very careful, especially if your plant has a lot of silvery trichomes or scales. Clean your plants well in advance by all means, but a last minute cleaning on the day of the show will always be necessary. Make sure all water is emptied from the cups and dry them out with tissues or other soft material.

Finally, you must prepare the plant for transporting. Be careful when packing as damage in transit can ruin any show plant. Turn a box upside-down and cut a hole in the base. This makes a good stand to carry a plant. Space plants, so they do not touch while travelling to prevent leaf damage. Make sure you have extra labels, in case you lose some in transit and . . . don't forget your entry forms and schedule.

## My *Vriesea Philippo-coburgii*

By JOHN GAMLIN

**A**BOUT FOUR YEARS AGO a friend of mine, a keen gardener who also grows a few broms, arrived in one day with a *Vriesea* pup in her hand. She said "Look John, I have had this plant for years now and it's done nothing for me. Will you see if you can get it to flower? I don't know what it's called but give it a try."

The plant was duly potted and put out in the yard under the mango tree. As the years went by, nothing happened except that the clump continued to pup and grow to about a metre across. Then low and behold, before Christmas it showed signs of coming into flower.

The centres of three plants started to elevate and form a rosette about 15 cm in diameter. Thinking this might be one for Derek, at this stage a photo was taken to help aid in identification. The giver of the plant was informed, and duly paid a visit to admire this now-flowering plant.

Since that time in early January, the centres of the rosettes went skywards about 1.5 m pulling the bracts of the rosettes with it. Then from behind each bract a slender branch appeared and elongated to about 27 cm, with the flower buds starting to appear. At the time of writing, it's a dead ringer for the photo on the back page (Jan./Feb. edition). It also matches Bob's description of the plant and the colour. One point though—I can't stretch the leaves to 2.8 m.

But thanks go to Bob Paulson for his timely photograph and description. He may have named my plant for me—*Vriesea Philippo-coburgii* (Wawra) 1880.

## How Good Are Your Plants? PART 4

Edited extracts from the BSI's Handbook for Judges

### **Criteria for judging the Genus *Billbergia***

**T**HE GENUS *BILLBERGIA*, named for the Swedish botanist, Gustave Billberg, is often one of the first genera grown by the beginning collector. *Billbergias* are rapidly maturing plants that reproduce easily and quickly and have the ability to survive despite the beginner's mistakes. They reward the hobbyist with beautiful, exotic, though short-lived blooms, and encouraged by this early success, the beginner is tempted to venture on to more difficult genera.

While eastern Brazil is the home of most *billbergias*, they are found from Peru and Argentina up through Mexico. They grow on trees, rocks, stumps, or on the ground. *Billbergias* adapt easily to cultivation, and are readily identifiable as *billbergias*. Generally they have eight leaves or less and a form that is tubular. The foliage is usually banded with gray cross bars, although irregular spotting and blotching is common. The inflorescence usually appears dusted with white powder and is almost always pendant. The bracts are large and brilliantly colored and may be green, white, pink, or red. The tubular flowers have reflexed petals. Petal color can be white, purple, blue, yellow, or green, or a combination of some of these.

*Billbergias* range in size from one foot or less (*B. leptopoda*, *B. nutans*, *B. euphemiae*, *B. iridifolia*, and *B. lietzei*) to three feet or more (*B. brasiliensis*, *B. fosteriana*, *B. macrolepis*, *B. portearia*, *B. rosea*, *B. tweediana*, *B. venezuelana*, and *B. zebrina*). Some of the oddities among the *billbergias* are *B. leptopoda*, the "permanent wave plants" noted for its tightly curled leaf tips, and *B. fosteriana* and *B. meyeri* which uncharacteristically has a thin, whip-like shape.

*Billbergias* are extremely responsive to their environment. They are able to alter their shape and color radically and this often makes species identification difficult. Members of the same species, grown under different conditions, often bear little resemblance to each other. There are also many different forms or varieties of the same species. In her book, *Bromeliads*, Padilla lists five varieties of *B. amoena*, and each one looks very different from the other.

The application of the standard judging criteria for *billbergias* is as follows:

**Cultural Perfection:** When judging *billbergias* remember that they are tall, few leaved, tubular plants. Because they have few leaves, any



damaged, malformed, or badly trimmed leaves are very obvious and detract greatly from the plants' aesthetic appeal. A graver penalty is imposed here for damaged foliage than when judging a plant with many leaves; e.g., if a plant has only eight leaves and five of them are poorly and obviously trimmed, serious penalty (perhaps ten points) should be imposed.

Billbergias as a group are not prone to brown tipping and severely trimmed leaves usually indicate either horticultural neglect, or rough handling of the specimen. Even tough plants will bruise if traumatized.

Take particular notice of the plant and its container. The plant must be well centered in the pot and should sit vertically erect. The tall, tubular shape of the billbergias makes tilting especially objectionable. There should be a pleasing proportion between the plant and its container. Care should be taken to ascertain that the plant is not over-potted or the slender silhouette that is so pleasing to the eye will be distorted. The container should be clean, free of flaws, and filled with a neat potting mix. The foliage should be clean, bright, and healthy. The leaf tanks should be free of dirt, debris, and insects. Billbergias are particularly prone to scale damage and are usually the first plants in a collection to be affected. Carefully look for old scale damage such as pitted, discolored areas and also look for active, live scale. Be aware though that many billbergias have small, round, discolored areas naturally.

**Conformation:** Billbergias generally present a tubular, urn shape composed of few leaves. This makes overgrown, droopy leaves conspicuously offensive. Some species have a pronounced curl of the leaf tips. This desirable characteristic is enhanced by correct horticultural practices. The leaves should be evenly distributed on either side of the vertical axis so that the plant is not one sided. Leaves should not twist or pull to the light. Leaves should be of the proper width with no evidence of lank, stringy growth because of poor light conditions. In the tall tubular plant, carefully ascertain that the plant's profile as viewed from the side is not bowed or bent. When grown as a multiple, there should be a pleasing, balanced appearance with growth distributed equally around the container. Bare spots with obvious removal of the old mother plant or ill-concealed stumps should be penalized.

**Color and Marking of the Plant:** Foliage should be brightly colored and any markings such as bars, bands, spots or splotches should be bold and distinct. This is achieved in high light situations. Poor lighting is reflected as lanky, green, and uninteresting foliage. Be

particularly aware that there is great variation between varieties of the same species. It is important that the judge be familiar with all forms, so that he can assess color and marking development properly.

**Inflorescence — Size, Quantity, Quality and Color:** Most billbergias are grown as foliage plants for, as every grower knows, they are dishearteningly speedy in completing their blooming period. Their bloom, however, is exotically beautiful. They last such a short time that a specimen with a prime inflorescence should be accorded the recognition due such a rare and desirable event. Being photoperiod plants, billbergias require a long night situation and generally are winter bloomers. It is unusual to see many flowering billbergias in the spring or autumn shows. Much can be done to bloom them for show time with the growth and bloom stimulators. All old spent blooms and bracts should be removed and pollen carefully dusted off the foliage. Do not penalize a spent bloom that you know was open the night before the plant was entered. Note the size and amount of flowers and bracts present as well as the overall quality of the bloom. It should appear fresh and unspoiled with true, sparkling color. Usually the inflorescence is pendant, nodding, drooping, or cascading.

**Maturity of Plant:** The mature Billbergia should be of maximal size because billbergias are quickly maturing plants and a pup or half grown plant would be severely penalized here. Lanky, floppy growth deserves a stiff penalty and should not be rewarded. A robust plant of near maximal size is desirable.

**Point Scoring:** Refer to Part 3 (January/February, 2000) for the scale of point-scoring.

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## Report of January Meeting

**T**HE FIRST MEETING of the year was well attended. Details for the bus trip to the Sunshine Coast were announced (see separate article). A lively debate on the use of fertilizers was conducted by Noel Weir. Phyllis Hobbs, Olive Trevor and Barry Genn presided over the Show and Tell table. Neville Ryan gave the reasons for the judges' decisions for the Mini Show competitions which resulted:

NOVICE — Aechmea: R. Nicholson 1 (*Correia Araujoi*). Vriesea: R. Nicholson 1 (*Sucrei*). Any other bromeliad: R. Nicholson 1 and 2 (*Neoregelia Manoa Beauty* and *Guzmania Lingulata Purple*).

INTERMEDIATE — Aechmea: L. McKinnon 1 (*Recurvata*). Dyckia: L. McKinnon 1 (*Dodsonii*). Any other bromeliad: P. Crawford 1 (*Neoregelia Charm*), N. Weir 2 (*Tillandsia Lieboldiana*).

ADVANCED — Aechmea: M. Symmons 1 (*Bracteata*). L. and O. Trevor 2 (*Friederike*). Vriesea: M. Symmons 1 (*Elata*), B. Paulsen 2 (*Guttata*). Dyckia: B. Paulsen 1 and 2 (*Fosteriana* hybrid and *Lad Cutak*). Any other bromeliad: M. Symmons 1 (*Canistrum Seidelianum*), B. Genn 2 (*Tillandsia Creation*).

## Report of February Meeting and the A.G.M.

**O**NLY 33 MEMBERS, including Lyn Hudson from Cairns and two new members, attended. The meeting gave approval for the Librarian to spend \$2000 on new books for the library and on books for sale to members and at the June and October shows. See separate articles for matters discussed, the President's Report and Balance Sheet. Results of the election of officials appear on page one.

Bob Paulsen gave the Show and Tell plant commentary and the popular vote competition which resulted:

NOVICE: R. Nicholson 1 (*Vriesea Christiane*).

ADVANCED: B. Genn 1 (*Tillandsia ehlersiana*); L. and O. Trevor (*Tillandsia Creation*) and M. Symmons (*Aechmea marmorata*) equal 2.

No entries were submitted in the Intermediate section.

### **March 16 Meeting**

**M**EMBERS will be competing in a Popular Vote competition (any genus, any species) in the normal three sections of novice, intermediate and advanced.

Plants of the month for the show table are *Cryptanthus* and *Dyckia*. Plant roster: Len and Olive Trevor and Doug and Joy Upton. Bob Paulsen will give a talk and lead discussions on *Cryptanthus*.

### **April 20 Meeting**

**A**PRIL'S MINI SHOW classes are the species and hybrids of: *Nidularium* (Class 1); *Guzmania* (Class 2); *Pitcairnia* (Class 3); Any other bromeliad (Class 4). All classes are in the three sections for novice, intermediate and advanced growers.

Plant commentary by the judges. Members' show table: Open. Plant roster: Nancy Kickbusch, Don and Phyllis Hobbs.

The guest speaker will be Mr Alex Wrigley who will provide details of the comparatively new growing medium Absorba-stone with Silica.

### **Study Group Meetings**

**A**LL MEMBERS are invited to attend these informal gatherings at the home of Len and Olive Trevor, 232 Canvey Road, Ferny Hills, on March 25 and April 29 (breakfast at 7.30 a.m.).

### **Bus Trip to Sunshine Coast**

**D**ETAILS of the society's bus trip to the Sunshine Coast on Saturday, March 18: Depart Uniting Church, New Farm (usual meeting venue), at 7.30 a.m. Morning tea (provided) at Mavis and Bob Paulsen's garden. Catered light lunch in the beautiful gardens of the "Shady Tree".

After lunch, we'll meet the members of the Sunshine Coast Bromeliad Group at the garden of Lindsay Gerchow and Yves Daniel (afternoon tea provided). Arrive back at New Farm Uniting Church late in the afternoon.

If you have not pre-paid for the trip, please pay the Treasurer (Noel Weir) on the bus. The cost for the day is \$15 (including lunch) which is subsidised from society's funds.

Bookings may be made immediately on receipt of this issue of *Bromeliaceae* (phone Noel Weir 3266 1700) but no later than at the meeting on March 16. Members are requested to bring their own collapsible chairs.

## Day Meetings

**I**N RESPONSE to last year's questionnaire where about half the members requested day meetings, the committee has decided to hold four day meetings this year. They will differ in format from the normal monthly meetings — there will be no business discussed, the emphasis being placed wholly on all aspects of growing bromeliads.

Strictly informal, these gatherings at the homes of various members will feature inspections of the gardens and discussions on any bromeliad topic members may suggest on the day. Members are invited to bring any troublesome plants for the experienced growers of offer advice on; interesting plants with a story; unusual plants, etc. In some instances, the meetings' hosts may have plants for sale. The society will provide a "cuppa and bikkies".

These meetings are open to all members who are also invited to bring their family and friends and all others who are, or could be, interested in bromeliads.

The first of these meetings will be at the home of Don and Phyllis Hobbs, 2 Blake Street, Cleveland (phone 3286 4156), on Saturday, April 15, from 9.30 to 11.30 a.m. Please bring your own folding chairs.

Dates and venues for the remainder of the year will appear in the next issue of *Bromeliaceae*.

## Combined Show Committee

**M**EMBERS of the Combined Show Committee are reminded that the next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28, at the home of John and Marie D'Alton, 39 Agnes Street, Torwood (phone 3371 3707).

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## Management Committee Meetings

**B**OB CROSS (23 Queenstown Avenue, Boondall, phone 3265 4364) will host the next meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 15. The venue of the April 19 meeting will be announced later.

## Display at "The Ekka"

**F**OLLOWING our society's past successful displays, we have again been invited to enter an exhibit at this year's Royal Queensland Show in August. Details will be announced later in the year. Please arrange your visit to the Ekka so that you can help out as Steward for a time (shifts are usually 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 1 p.m.-5 p.m. and 5 p.m.-close).

## 2001 Bromeliad Conference

**A**N ARTICLE in the Illawarra Bromeliad Society's *Newslink* reads (in part) as follows: BROM-A-WARRA — Yes, we can make it official! We have taken on the challenge of hosting Australia's 11<sup>th</sup> Bromeliad Conference—"Brom-a-Warra"—which we have scheduled for October 12-15, 2001, in Wollongong. More details will be available later.

## Competition Schedule Correction

**N**ICKO MADE A BIG BOO-BOO! In the Competition Schedule for 2000 (Page 16, January/February edition), I said the competition for November was Popular Vote and there was to be no competition at the December meeting as that was the Christmas Party. Both these are wrong. Please correct your schedule to read there is no competition in November as that meeting is the Christmas Party and there will not be a meeting in December.

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## Canola White Oil

**C**ANOLA OIL is great stuff and I believe it works well. You won't see magic this time of the year (summer) but put it on your spray programme for spring and autumn. In summer the scales on your plant are live or dead females. Don't even try to tell the difference. The dead ones have probably been eaten out by the carnivorous juveniles last spring so would crumble easier. The ones you have killed now with oil you have no way of knowing whether they are alive or dead. The scientists have to remove them and place them on an agar plate containing indicator chemicals. They then pick them off and if the spot is clear they are alive; if coloured they are dead. What do I do? Before I spray an infested plant I physically clear the upper half of one of the top leaves. If no scale re-appears in spring or autumn your plant only has dead scale. — *ROB SMYTHE, MSc.*

## Tills "Going Native"

**I**'D LIKE TO TELL YOU a little about my first venture with Tillandsias. It is something like two years since I got the first Tillandsias — primarily off the "bric-a-brac" to which they were glued. Subsequently I learned they were, in the main, *bulbosas*.

Feeling botanically maternal, like an earlier contributor, about their

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obvious suffering, I tried to make them *go native* by tying them on trees where any daylight was heavily diluted. In time I added 20 or 30 more grey-leaved specimens with interesting pedigrees. They languished on the tree until one day, looking at them with an unloving eye, I realised they looked dreadful. Ultimatum: smarten up or go in the bin!

So I put them in the sun — into that glaring, blaring solar blast which flattened me like a frazzle. Did the Tills die? No way! In 48 hours a peachy bloom showed on the leaves. In a few weeks it was obvious growth rate had increased and inflorescences developed, as did pups.

This has been my treatment for the tough-leaved Tills — little or no cossetting and no fertilizers. In the wild they sup on the wind (no-one comes by with a squirt-gun of NPK). Their necessities are provided through solar plasma and whatever the wind, weather, leaf-fall, insect bodies and excreta provide.

So you see, despite my protestations, I am back to “going native” with my Tills! This time I hope I have it right. — JONI SIMPSON.

### Cryptanthus

**I** GROW CRYPTANTHUS and *bivittatus* cv. *Ruby* is one of my favorites (see Nov/Dec edition 1998). My other *Cryptanthus* produce flowers and I'm glad to read I'm not the only one who cannot flower *Ruby*. I don't hybridize so flowers are not essential but it would be nice to see it flower one day. I don't think our members grow many *Cryptanthus* believing them to be difficult to cultivate. They should take time to learn of the plant's needs. Bedding them at ground level in a sandy medium in the shade house is a good start. Let's have more in *Bromeliaceae* about Crypts.—BYRON BAY.

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## Spiders and Webs

**M**Y ONLY GRIPE with growing bromeliads occurs every morning as I take my first walk through my shadehouse and garden. Every day I get twisted-up in spider webs! And every day I have to untangle my broms from these darn webs.

Even though I believe most of the spiders are quite harmless, I know of one case where a grower suffered a severe bite. The number of times the daylighters have been frightened out of me when a large spider pops out of a plant is unbelievable. Can the experts suggest a spray or something I can use to get rid of spiders?—"TANGLED-UP"

*Tell me about it! But spiders do have their place in growing bromeliads as they provide natural fertilizers for the plants. I'm very loath to use chemicals to get rid of spiders but maybe some member has a solution to your problem which, I'll admit, can be very annoying.—Ed.*

## Broms are Hardy Plants

**D**URING A RECENT VISIT to Switzerland, I came upon some bromeliads growing in a most unlikely spot. This was in a south-facing window of a restaurant in a small village in the Jura (say Yura) region. I recognised a *Vriesea* with a long slim flower stem, a *Guzmania* (?) and a *Tillandsia ionantha*. Not in show-bench condition but surviving a very dry heated environment.

Bromeliads were available in a number of supermarkets at the equivalent of \$A8 to \$A10. Most were *Guzmanias* and appeared to have *G. lingulata* in their parentage.—PETER PAROZ.

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## Naming of Cultivars

**I** HAVE JUST ACCEPTED the position of Registrar for the Bromeliad Society International which will be a challenge! You will read more about this in the BSI Journal.

I have always praised the efforts of Australian hybridists in comparing their output with their American counterparts and we have some world-class cultivars. Due to the encouragement of Olwen Ferris, Grace Goode and Bill Morris in the 1980s, and in later years Margaret Paterson, Vic Przetocki, John Catlin and Geoff Lawn, I have persisted in the listing of cultivars of Australian origins. This activity in encouraging the naming of hybrids has not occurred in the USA and many of our imports have been by grex formulae. This has meant a disproportionate high representation of Australian hybrids in the World Bromeliad Cultivar Registry. My task will be to use the Australian success story as a lever to encourage Americans to write about their hybrids too.

But all is not rosy in Australia and I seek your comments.

Over the years in New South Wales and Queensland and to a lesser extent Victoria, there has been a distinct view among some sellers that the wholesale market is different to the retail market. This is contrary to all other plant groups, where you can buy a rose, a fuchsia, a begonia or an orchid by name in places like Woolworths. Bromeliads are invariably tatty looking and with wrong names or just genus names and more often just "Bromeliad" on the label. To my mind this is a marketing problem.

In Europe the major wholesalers only advertise 10 or so plants on offer. In the USA in recent years they have woken up to this idea and

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the major wholesalers now only offer a limited choice but of high quality. In Australia it seems to be a dumping ground and we can only try to educate those who indulge in the practice that it does little to lift the image of Bromeliaceae.

Secondly, they are more likely to make a larger profit if they join the drive to lift this image.

A similar situation applies with plants supplied for the landscaping trade which can include unwanted unnamed hybrids which should have been used as compost.

Plants from both wholesale and landscaping sources, and no doubt from other sources, have a knack of returning to a bromeliad meeting asking to be identified!

The reason I have written this article for *Bromeliaceae* is that you have a lively lot of correspondents and I would like their comments on my comments.—DEREK BUTCHER.

### Copper

**D**OES ANYONE know of any research proving copper is more poisonous to broms than to other plants? My orchid house has copper solution automatically added to all watering to kill fungi. Fungi concentrate copper 10,000 times and kills itself.

The only brom growing in my phalaenopsis house is *Tillandsia usneoides* and my best healthiest specimens grow there. I suppose the answer could be is that it grows upside down and does not concentrate copper in the minute vases. My question is purely academic, as I have no reason to use copper on broms. — ROB SMYTHE, M.Sc.

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