

Bromeliaceae



VOLUME XXXIV — No. 3 — MAY / JUNE, 2001



The Bromeliad Society of Queensland INC.

P.O. Box 565, Fortitude Valley
Queensland, Australia, 4006

GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the Third Thursday of each month except December, at the Uniting Church Hall, 52 Merthyr Road, New Farm, Brisbane, commencing 8 p.m.

Classes for beginners commence at 7.30 p.m.

FIELD DAYS are held regularly in the gardens of members as advised in the Program

MEMBERSHIP FEES Family \$20, Single \$15 — payable on 1st of January

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all information in their articles

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COPY DEADLINES for *Bromeliaceae*

July / August 2001.....June 14, 2001

September / October.....August 14, 2001

Please forward all copy to

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Phone 07 3265 1547 Email pparoz@powerup.com.au

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Cover

Aechmea pubescens 'Potts'

The photographed plant was given to me by Bob Smythe as an old mother. Rob's description in Bromeliaceae Jan/Feb 2001 p4 said it all, and I would recommend readers reread his article. The old mother produced a healthy offset and eventually a very interesting bract.

Plant grown by Olive Trevor. Photograph by Doug Upton

Rear Cover

Alcantarea regina (Vellozo) Harms

A. regina is a terrestrial which grows on the cool humid slopes of the Organ Mountains in Southern Brazil. The fresh glossy green leaves of my plant, about 80 mm wide tapering to 40 mm are always attractive and graceful. The 1100 mm inflorescence is branched with red bracts and bright yellow flowers emitting a jasmine like fragrance; and lasted about six months. From the meagre information available, it appears that *A. regina* does grow larger. It is now developing plantlets from the lower axils and smaller adventitious offsets lower on the plant.

I obtained a 350 mm offset in 1997 from a fellow grower as a swap and grew it under a tree fern in a reasonably cool area. As it matured, it was potted up, fertilised with nine month Osmocote (NPK 18, 4.8, 8.3) and transferred to the shade house (70%), where it received a 15 minute misting every second day. It thrived, and flowered in the latter part of 2000.

The area where we live is close to the sea (about 250metre). It never ceases to amaze me how bromeliads adapt to conditions so very different from their natural habitat.

A. regina is worthy of its name (Queenly) providing much delight. I will wait until an offset has gained size and strength from the mother before planting it, and hopefully next time it will be larger and even more beautiful.

Plant grown and photographed by Bob Paulsen



February Meeting Popular Vote

- Novice 1. J & V Duncan, *Aechmea nudicaulis*
 2. Meryl Windsor, *Aechmea fasciata*
- Intermediate 1. C & D Cutcliffe, *Tillandsia capitata* 'Peach'
 2. Perry Crawford, *Aechmea nigra*
- Advanced 1. Mike Symmons, *Guzmania peacockii* x *Vr. rubens*
 2. O & L Trevor, *Aechmea* 'Burning Bush'
 2. D & J Upton, *Neoregelia marmorata*

The plant commentary was given by John Higgins. We don't often hear from John, but his comments and knowledge were much appreciated.

March Meeting Popular Vote

- Novice 1. Keith Dawson, *Aechmea tillandsiodes* v *kienastii*
 2. Jay & C. Jacobs, *Aechmea* 'Ensign'
- Intermediate 1. C & D Cutcliffe, *Guzmania lingulata* v *broadview*
 2. C & D Cutcliffe, *Aechmea* 'Burning Bush'
- Advanced 1. Bob Cross, *Quesnelia marmorata* 'Tim Plowman'
 2. Neville Ryan, *Tillandsia stricta*

Barry Genn gave the plant commentary, and we enjoyed his knowledgeable remarks.

April Mini Show

- Novice
- Class 1 2nd *Guzmania* 'Candy Corn', Meryl Windsor
 Class 2 2nd x*Ananea* 'Scorpio', Merly Windsor
- Intermediate
- Class 1 1st *Nidularium innocentii* 'Nana', Dorothy Cutcliffe
 Class 4 1st *Tillandsia* (fasciculata x brachycaulos), Dorothy Cutcliffe
 2nd x*Guzurisea* 'Martin Oppertiemer', Dorothy Cutcliffe
- Advanced
- Class 1 1st *Orthophytum* 'Brunswick', Bob Paulsen
 2nd *Orthophytum* Sp., Doug & Joy Upton

- Class 2. 1st *Guzmania* 'Christine', Mike Symmons
 2nd *Guzmania wittmackii*, Mike Symmons
 Class 3. 1st *Pitcairnia smithiorum*, Bob Paulsen
 2nd *Pitcairnia carinata*, Mike Symmons
 Class 4. 1st *xCarnea* 'Galaxy', Doug & Joy Upton
 2nd *Tillandsia ionantha* Giant Hyb., Neville Ryan

An informative commentary was provided by Bob Paulsen and included comments on preparing plants for the show bench and the reasons for not awarding firsts in the novice section. The editors choice from the show bench was Bob Paulsen's *Pitcairnia smithiorum*, a particularly fine specimen plant with three flower heads.

Meeting May 17th

Popular vote at this meeting. Two plants per member are allowed in the competition, and it would be great to see the tables loaded with plants in all sections. The plant of the month any genus starting with "A", so please bring your Aechmea, Alcantaria, Ananas, Aerococcus, etc. and don't forget to vote at the break! The plant commentary will be given by Des Andersen.

Danny Yves & Lindsay Gerchow will tell us all about landscaping our gardens.

Combined Show 9th and 10th of June. Hall set up and judging of the competition table Friday 8th June. Now is the time to start the final grooming of plants for the competition. A lot of plants are required for the general display. Stewards required for the plant sales and display areas; Contact Joy Upton at the May meeting or phone 07 3378 3511.

Meeting June 21st June

Popular vote.. The plant of the month is any genus starting with "B": Bromelia, Brocchinia, Billbergia

Doug Upton will give the commentary

Meeting July 19th Mini Show

- Class 1. Billbergia species & hybrids
 Class 2. Pitcairnioideae other than Pitcairnia or Dyckia
 Class 3. Neoregelia; mature plant 200 mm minimum diameter

Meeting August 16th

Popular vote.. The plant of the month is any genus starting with "C": Cryptanthus, Connellia, Canistrum, Cottendorfia, Catopsis, Canistropsis

Roma Street Parkland

At the April meeting, Bob Dobbs, curator of the Roma Street Parkland, addressed the meeting summarising developments since the recent opening. Points of interest from the presentation were:-

Rotational plantings to maintain colour in the 'Spectacle Garden' section,

Hire of plants, Possibility of a one to two week Bromeliad feature with provision for market sales, Improved signage in the parkland, Improved security especially in the Spectacle garden, and the use of Voluntary Guides.

The committee will consider these options.

Notice to Advertisers

The Editor apologises to Advertisers for the reduced size of advertisements in this issue. This was caused by a "hic-up" with his computer.

Brom-A-Warra

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ORIGINAL articles on all aspects of bromeliad culture are required by the editorial committee to maintain the quality of Bromeliaceae. Each page is approximately 500 words, so each edition requires about 8000 words of cultural information.

Copy can be submitted in any format, but an Email is preferred as it saves me a lot of work. pparoz@powerup.com.au The text should be in MS Word 7.0 or earlier, or an RTF file (Rich Text Format). Printed text should be at least 12 point for accurate scanning.

Photographs are also required for the front and rear pages and with six editions each year, only the very best photographs are selected. Photographs are chosen for the obvious beauty and rarity of the plant, or a plant new to cultivation are. These should be single plant photos, in focus with a plain or uncluttered background, in portrait format, approx 150 x 100 mm, with the subject filling the frame. The photo should be accompanied by a two or three paragraph description of the plant (age, size and culture). Enlargement of smaller photos is not economic.

In future, 'Letters to the Editor' will only be published with the name of the author who must be a financial member of BSQ.

Discussion at the March meeting indicated that some growers had experienced substantial losses of *Tillandsia usenoides*. The symptoms are suddenly drying off with death of plants in quantity. BSQ Inc is conducting a survey to determine the extent of the problem. Readers are invited to contact the editor with cultural details:- growth or loss, form of *T. usenoides*, where grown (bushhouse or outdoors), water source, fertilizer practice, postcode, etc. If there is sufficient response, I will collate the information to see if any common factors can be identified.

Perry Crawford pointed out an error at the end of 'Living With Bromeliads' last issue; 'symbolic relationship' should read 'symbiotic relationship' or perhaps 'commensal relationship' !!

The editor is collecting odd, interesting, or unusual facts about the plant family Bromeliaceae. Contributions invited.

My cup runneth over. Due to the great response by members for copy, we have a 24 pages with some carry over for the next issue. Please bear with me if your contribution is not published straight away.

Letters to The Editor

Members Wish List

The Member's Wish List section in Bromeliaceae provides members with one means of obtaining hard-to-find plants. Plants of some species are very rare and, in some cases, stay that way for long periods of time. For example, plants of a species which is slow to flower, produces one or few offsets, and requires a fair amount of space, will often stay in short supply. Examples of such species include many *Werauhia*, and *Alcantarea imperialis*. However, the plants of many such species can produce large quantities of seed. I suggest the member's Wish List section of Bromeliaceae be expanded to include requests for seed. I envisage requests would be handled in the same manner as is currently the case for plants.— *Bob Reilly*.

See the *Trading Post* for the requested changes — *Ed*

Questions & Answers



OR NewBs New Bromelians

Not to be confused with Internet newbies.

Do bromeliads need fertilisers ?

All bromeliads need some mineral elements for normal growth. Bromeliads do not need large amounts of fertilizers as they are relatively slow growers; but most will benefit from a regular application of fertiliser. For potted plants, one of the slow release fertilisers can be added to the potting mix and will last 6-8 months depending on watering schedule. Many growers use a soluble fertiliser which can be sprayed on and is an excellent way of treating a large number of plants. A rate of 3 grams/litre is safe and should not cause any problems. Choose a fertilizer which is fully soluble, preferably containing both calcium and magnesium. Some years ago, there was an article which recommended fertilising 'weakly and weekly'.

Excess fertiliser can build up in leaf axils and may cause leaf burn, which appears as a horizontal discolouration as the leaf grows out. With heavy fertilising, a regular flush of the leaf axils with water is recommended.

With mounted plants, regular fertilising is essential as the availability of nutrients is otherwise very limited. A regular treatment is recommended otherwise the plant will show some evidence of stop/start growth.

Fertilising does not "make" plants flower. Regular fertilising ensures that lack of nutrients will not limit the plant growth. A sound nutrient plan allows a plant to develop to its full potential which is determined by its parentage and genetic make up.

Can bromeliads be grown indoors

This is not recommended for a long period as the inside of most houses has too low humidity and most people grossly underestimate the level of light. Bromeliads are mostly very hardy plants and can be kept indoors for several weeks while in flower or colour without any ill effects.

What is a bromeliad

"Let us play the old guessing game of 'Twenty Questions': only we shall not need that many answers to locate the Bromeliaceae. First, it is a plant, a member of the Vegetable kingdom.. Second, it is a seed plant and not one reproducing by spores. Third, it is an Angio-sperm, or plant with seeds enclosed in an ovary, and not a Conifer. Fourth, it is a Monocotyledon with one leaf on the sprout, like corn, instead of a pair like the bean. With this goes a character that is much easier to see, namely leaves with parallel veins, like grass.. Fifth, it has showy flowers with real petals, and not a lot of dry scales like grass.. Sixth, its petals are all alike as in a lily, but there are only three of them, while there appear to be six in a lily.

Finally flowers are scarcely necessary (for Identification), for if you see parallel-veined leaves with scales on them somewhere, there is little else the plant can be but a bromeliad.. However, within these limits, you can find such tremendous diversity as that between the pineapple and the Spanish moss.

—*Lyman B. Smith, Senior Botanist, Smithsonian Institute* (L. B. Smith -dec'd- was the world authority on bromeliad taxonomy for many years)

(The scales referred to above are correctly termed 'trichomes' and are tiny mushroom shaped outgrowths of the leaves. Size and density vary from plant to plant as also does the location on the leaf surface. The trichomes are associated with the absorption of water and nutrients).

Bromeliads are not subject to many insect pests but can be attacked by some scale insects. The two common ones are a relatively large off white scale to about 1 mm; and the fly speck scale, black in colour and about the size of a full stop. Previous information suggested that only plants of the Bromelioideae sub-family were affected but more recent observations suggest that other genera can become infested.

Scale insects are not a major problem in the pineapple industry. When they occur, the control is via the use of Diazanone or Clorpyrifos sprays. These insecticides are of moderate toxicity to humans and animal life and all precautions regarding use should be adhered to; **including care in measuring the concentrate.**

Caution: There are no safe insecticides, *but there are safe ways of using insecticides.*

Random Observations

I recently came across a diatomite gravel for use in potting mixtures as a replacement for sand, perlite or vermiculite. **Absorbalite** is a granular diatomite and is sold in four size grades from 0.5 - 2.0, 2-7, 7-15 and 15-25 mm. Diatomite is the light, porous, chalky rock formed from the skeletons of tiny fresh water animals called diatoms which flourished millions of years ago. These skeletons are made of silica and anyone using this material should take precautions not to breathe in the dust from the granules. When handling Absorbalite, I recommend that it be thoroughly wetted to avoid any dusting.

I have commenced a few trial plantings of offsets to see if this material has any particular benefit for bromeliads. I would be interested to hear from other growers experimenting with this material — *Ed*

New Plants

When adding new plants to a collection, it is a good idea to keep them separate from the main collection just in case they may harbour fly speck scale.. This applies especially to plants from an unknown source. Fly speck scale is not always immediately detectable, and if you are unlucky, it can quickly spread to the rest of the collection. A few weeks of close observation in Quarantine should give you the all clear *or else !!*
— *P O'Dea*

Abnormal Colour

Watch for abnormal colour in plants which do not have a central flush of colour at flowering. Some time ago, I noticed a pinkish blush on the central leaves of a large seedling *T. xerographica*. I did not pay much attention at the time only to find later that the leaves had rotted at the base and were slowly dying. Sometimes, the plant will recover and offset but some corrective action is desirable. The best first aid in this case is removal of the decayed tissue, dusting the area with a fungicide and drying out of the affected area. There is a fair chance of rescuing a plant with a large stem, but small stemmed plants are usually beyond help by the time any abnormality is noticed. A suitable fungicide for this application can be made from a mixture of one part sulphur mixed with four parts slaked lime (not agricultural lime). ---*Ed*

Fertilizer Terminology

In Queensland, all fertilizers are required to be labelled with certain information regarding the nutrient content. This includes the N P K and the various forms in which the elements are present.

N P K is the percentage of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium present in the fertilizer.

Plants can only absorb nutrients that are dissolved in water.

For bromeliads, a fertilizer containing soluble calcium and magnesium is desirable with the potassium preferably present as the sulphate.

Nitrogen can occur in several forms :-

Urea A concentrated and soluble form readily absorbed from foliar applications

Ammonia A soluble form usually in the form of ammonium sulphate

Nitrates A soluble form usually as ammonium nitrate, potassium nitrate or calcium nitrate.

Organic forms of nitrogen have to be converted to one of the above forms, usually nitrate, by soil bacteria for assimilation by plants. Blood is fairly quickly converted but hoof & horn slowly.

In both cases conversion is dependant on the presence of suitable bacteria, moisture and temperature.

Potassium sulphate and potassium chloride are both soluble and readily available.

Phosphorus is sometimes listed in two forms depending on the source. Water soluble phosphorus is that fraction which is readily soluble and therefore readily available. Citrate soluble phosphorus is the slow release portion. The usual source of soluble phosphate is mono- or di-ammonium phosphate

Trace Elements While the trace elements iron copper, zinc and boron have been shown to cause identifiable deficiency symptoms in commercial pineapples, I am not aware of any similar situation in ornamental bromeliads. Over use of trace elements may lead to toxicity. I have used a number of fertilizers containing trace elements for some time, and they have not caused any noticeable problems at the concentrations listed.

Chelation / Chelated Trace Elements A number of the trace elements form insoluble compounds with phosphorus rendering the element unavailable to the plant. Chelation refers to a type of chemical compound which will not form insoluble compounds but where the trace element can still be absorbed by the plant.

Peter Paroz

Photographing Bromeliads

by VIC PRZETOCKI

Reprinted from The W A Bromeliad Society Inc Bromeliad Newslink Oct/ Nov

The September meeting had a round robin talk about photography with some interesting tips being offered.

Cameras — The best is the SLR with a 50mm lens and a 2 times macro converter for close up shots. What you see is what you get. Good results were also obtained using a 200mm zoom lens and standing well back from the subject to get a good photo.

The automatic camera is not suitable if you want to get close to the subject; they are limited to about 1.5 metre depending on the camera type. What you see in the viewfinder is not always what you get.

The digital cameras can vary in cost; the camera quality will affect the reproduction of the picture on paper. The camera I bought was reasonably cheap at a little over \$300 but has a pixel rating of 76,000 and printing DPI of 660 x 480. Good quality print requires around 1000 x 600 DPI. A camera offering that and featuring good zoom qualities will probably set you back about \$1200-\$1500. My camera, like the automatic camera has limitations of distance to the subject as well as not being able to blur out the background.

The beauty of the digital camera is that there are no developing costs and photos can be down loaded onto your computer immediately, edited and printed. The downside is that printing your own pictures on photo quality paper is expensive and a colour ink cartridge for your printer can cost from \$20 - \$50

Light — The best type of light is natural daylight with the best results being obtained in the morning or evening light. It was suggested that the silver lining of a wine cask can be used to make a make-shift reflector to bounce sunlight onto your subject. This can be especially useful to carry around in your pocket when in the bush. Doing a winery tour and sampling the wines is required to source nothing but the best quality of reflectors.

Depth of Field — Blur the background to make the subject stand out, use F2 or F2.5. If the subject dominates, a higher stop F11 to F22 will give a good depth of field. If you have gone to many winery tours, a blurred background may not be a problem.

Exposure Compensation — Exposure compensation is used if your background material is either white or black. It will require a bit of experimenting: I'm still trying to get the hang of it.

COMPETITION SCHEDULE

All plants must be lodged with the Bromeliad Competition Steward between 4.00 PM and 7.15 PM on Friday 8th June, 2001.

1. Tillandsia (a)
(b).....
(c).....
2. Tillandsia in Flower or Spike (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
3. Vriesea in Flower or Spike (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
4. Vriesea -- Decorative Foliage (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
5. Guzmania (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
6. Other Tillandsioideae (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
7. Other Tillandsioideae (a).....
 In Flower or Spike (b).....
(c).....
8. Cryptanthus (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
9. Billbergia (a).....
(b).....
(c).....

10. Aechmea (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
11. Neoregelia (a).....
200 mm Minimum Diameter (b).....
(c).....
12. Miniature Neoregelia (a).....
200 mm Maximum Diameter (b).....
(c).....
13. Nidularium (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
14. Any Intergeneric (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
15. Other Bromelioideae (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
16. Other Bromelioideae in Flower (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
17. Hechtia or Dyckia (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
18. Pitcairnia (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
19. Other Pitcairnioideae (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
20. Specimen (a).....
Any genus - 3 or more connected (b).....
mature plants (c).....

21. Novice -- Any Genus **Mary Grasselli** (a).....
Award; Entrant never won a first place (b).....
in any class at a Combined Show (c).....
22. Bromeliad -- **Decorative Pot** (a).....
If more than one plant, must be (b).....
connected by an intact rhizome (c).....
23. Bromeliad -- **Decorative Mounting** (a).....
If more than one plant, must be (b).....
connected by an intact rhizome (c).....
24. **Minature Display** (a).....
Not to exceed 1 metre in any dimension (b).....
Includes terraria (c).....
25. **Novelty Display** (a).....
Not to exceed 1 metre in any dimension (b).....
(c).....
26. **Floral Display** (a).....
Cut Bromeliad flowers, berries, bracts or (b).....
leaves. Accessories permitted (c).....
27. **Floral Display** (a).....
Making the most of one inflorescence (b).....
Foliage accessories only (c).....
28. **BEST TILLANDSIOIDEAE** **Nez Misso Memorial Trophy**
29. **BEST BROMELIOIDEAE** **Hudson Perpetual Trophy**
30. **BEST CRYPTANTHUS** **Grace Goode Perpetual Trophy**
31. **BEST PITCAIRMIOIDEAE**
32. **RESERVE CHAMPION BROMELIAD** of the SHOW
33. **CHAMPION BROMELIAD** of the SHOW
34. **TOM SCHOFIELD MEMORIAL AWARD** -- Chairman's Award
(Awarded at the discretion of the chairman of the Combined Show Committee)
- ENTRANTS NAME**

NOTES

1. Classes 1 to 20 inclusive may consist of multiple plants in one container or on one mounting, but must be connected by an intact rhizome.
 2. Class 24 – Theme may be display or educational. Other plants, natural or artificial adjuncts are allowed, but judging will be on the basis of plant quality and effective presentation of bromeliads.
 3. Classes 2, 7, and 16 **must** have flowers (i.e. Petals) or unopened buds evident. Plants in other categories may show bud, bract, berry or capsule.
 4. The **Nez Misso Memorial Trophy** will be awarded to the Best Tillandsioideae on the competition table.
 5. The **Hudson Memorial Trophy** will be awarded for the Best Bromelioideae on the competition table.
 6. The **Grace Goode Perpetual Trophy** will be awarded for the best Cryptanthus on the competition table.
 7. The **Tom Schofield Memorial Award** will be made at the discretion of the Chairman of the Combined Show Committee: Plant selected from the BSQ Inc. display.
 8. Plants eligible for Classes 32 and 33 will be the first and second place winners from Classes 28,29, and 31.
-

CONDITIONS of ENTRY

1. Plants must be correctly labelled, free of disease, established in the pot or on the mounting, and in show bench condition.
2. All water must be emptied from the plant and the pots dried off before the plants are placed on the show bench.
3. Plants must be the property of the exhibitor and have been in his or her custody for the previous three months.
4. A limit of three (3) plants per class per financial member of BSQ or QSS will apply.
5. The eligibility of plants in various classes will be determined by the Chief Bromeliad Competition Steward, whose decision is final.
6. The Judging Panel's decision as to the quality of the plants is final.
7. Specimen Plants (Class20) *must* be connected by an intact rhizome.
8. Entries will be received between 4.00 PM and 7.15 PM on Friday 8th June 2001.

Judging will commence at 7.30 PM sharp.

White background — Shooting against a white background will require your camera to be adjusted with exposure compensation. Use either a 2x or 4x exposure compensation. If the subject is dark, use less exposure compensation otherwise the subject will be under exposed.

Black Background — Shooting against a black background will require for your camera to be adjusted with exposure compensation. Use 1/4x or 1/2x exposure compensation.. If the subject is dark, use less of the exposure compensation otherwise the subject will be over exposed.

Tripods — A tripod allows you to take photos at speeds slower than 1/60 second; hand held below this speed will result in a blurred photo because of camera shake. The tripod also gives you a chance to compose your photo; look all around the frame to make sure that there are no objects that will detract from the main subject.

Special Lens Affects — There are a lot around offering multiple images, colour fragmentation, split colours etc. The close up diopter lenses can be used for close up work but doesn't offer good depth of field; these are pretty old technology now. I wouldn't bother with these.

Indoor photographic lights may require a blue lens filter to counteract the lights giving your photos an orange tinge. There are even filters around to counteract the effect of fluorescent lights.

To soften or diffuse a subject, an impromptu diffusion screen can be made from a piece of stocking material held over the lens by a rubber band.

A good photographic book can be a useful source to get tips on how to take better photographs.

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Ants *By* PERRY CRAWFORD

FURTHER on ants, specifically **Fire Ants** (*Solenopsis invicta*) native to Brazil and Argentina. Growing to 2-6 mm and reddish brown, and living in a high dome earth mound with up to 500,000 per colony. This little Fire Ant (it is little, no longer than the common brown ant) has a sting in its tail equivalent to a bee or wasp. It has no natural predators in Australia.

Think about it ; unbeknown to you their colony is disturbed and lets say just a few (perhaps 1000) of these very aggressive Fire Ants swarm over your hands or feet, or worse into your clothing, each ant multi stings; each sting like a wasp. An adult may survive but a child or ailing person, family pet, livestock, fauna, etc ?? Hope for a fast ambulance.

The cost in the USA is counted in BILLOINS of dollars. The Fire Ant is now in S E Queensland, possibly in your own yard ! By reports I've read, it could / would exceed the introduced ferals - camels, rabbit/hares, cane toad, prickly pear, in seriousness of danger, damage and dollar costs to Australia. So far a major factor in their spread is by the transporting of plants / growing media / packaging/ freighting etc, by gardeners / horticulturalists / landscapers, amateurs and professionals alike. As bromeliad and general plant fanciers, we have a very important part to serve in the increased vigilance that is now required to eradicate thi pest before it becomes established. As the speed of international transport and quantities of freight increase, Australia is all too quickly losing the quarantine advantage of its island isolation, we must now be more alert to unwanted imports.

The distinguishing features are the small size, orange head and body and dark abdomen. If there is a possible sighting of Fire Ants phone your local D P I or the D P I Hot Line 132523

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Vriesea 'Van Ackeri' M.J.VanAcker 1930

Belgian cultivar with several different descriptions.

By PETER HUDDY and DEREK BUTCHER

Part 1 of 2

In 1930, M.J. Van Acker, after having taken over the nursery of his father in law M.L.Poelman, had made numerous crossings and seed propagations of vrieseas. In that year, he displayed a group of these at the Centennial Exposition in Ghent. To one with a branched inflorescence, he gave the name *Vriesea* 'Van Ackeri'. Here is our first clue 'Van Ackeri' is compound; ruling out the plant that circulated in Australia in the early nineties with a simple dark red, almost purple, sword shaped spike from the Brisbane Bromeliad Centre. It doesn't however rule out the other plant with a compound inflorescence coming from Queensland with the same name attached.

The parentage of 'Van Ackeri' in the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (1998) is ('Van Geertii' x *jonghei*.) Here we are willing to put our foot in our mouths and say this cannot be right. With recent arrival of an abstract, sent to us with thanks, from 'Revue Horticole' 74:27.1902, *V.*'Van Geertii' x *Encholirion* (now *Vriesea*) *jonghei* appears as "un joli *Vriesea* *Flammea*".

'Van Geertii' came into existence from the crossing of *V incurvata*, a simple red spike, and *V duvaliana*, simple with bright red with green tips and margins. Being a primary hybrid, the resultant offspring would have a simple red spike, possibly with some green or yellow involvement. This would indicate that the description in the BCR (1998) is correct. " A dwarf plant developing a stem that is quite short, terminated by an oblong narrow spike formed of bracts that are yellowish at the base and on the interior edges, red on the exterior side." The short stem helps to verify the parents as both have scapes equal to or shorter than their leaves.

On to the next stage of 'Van Ackeri'. If the next ingredient in the formula was *V. jonghei*, a plant with a simple, many flowered, green, lax at anthesis spike and leaves with faint irregular transverse lines. XXX There would not be any indication of the progeny being other than a simple, likely with a dark red or brownish spike, with marked leaves, certainly not compound. If compound could be spontaneous, there would have been some appearing prior to the entry of *V. saundersii* and *V. rodigasiana* into the breeding arena. So here we rule out *V. jonghei* and look for another plant.

Cont'd

Trading Post

MEMBERS, especially country members and those who cannot attend meetings or field days, are invited to list their hard-to-find plants in the wish list. This is a free service, just forward the details to the editor. This section has been expanded to include seed as well as plants and a plants/seeds available section. If you have any of the plants listed please contact the member concerned.

Name	Wanted Plant /Seed		Phone
Dorothy Cutcliffe	<i>Neoregelia carcharodon</i> (reddish)	P	07 3386 0505
Dorothy Cutcliffe	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Pamelae'	P	07 3386 0505
Dorothy Cutcliffe	<i>Hohenbergia catingae elongata</i>		07 3386 0505
Dorothy Cutcliffe	<i>Hohenbergia intermis</i>		07 3386 0505
Michael Pascall	<i>Aechmea tayoensis</i>	P	07 4098 8253
Michael Pascall	<i>Bromelia scarlatina</i>	P	07 4098 8253
Ray Nicholson	<i>Quesnelia</i> 'Tim Plowman'	P	07 3875 2272
Keith Pohlman	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Absolutely Fabulous'	P	07 4151 5395
Keith Pohlman	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Bob'	P	07 4151 5395
Keith Pohlman	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Bailey'	P	07 4151 5395
Keith Pohlman	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Aurora'	P	07 4151 5395
Doug Upton	<i>Aechmea retusa</i>	P	07 3378 3511

After you have obtained your plant, please notify the Editor to delete your entry from the list

Name	Available Plant / Seed		Phone
Peter Paroz	<i>Tillandsia funckiana</i>	P	07 3265 1547
Peter Paroz	<i>Tillandsia pruinosa</i>	P	07 3265 1547

After you have disposed of your plant or seed, please notify the Editor to delete your entry from the list.

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How Good Are Your Plants ? PART 10

Edited extracts from the BSI Handbook for Judges

Criteria for Judging Genera of Tillandsioideae

Catopsis: This genus is not as showy as the vrieseas nor as interesting as the tillandsias. Nineteen species make up this genus, many of which are dioecious. *Catopsis* form soft leaved spineless rosettes of light green leaves, scaled on the undersides, of small to medium size and bloom with white, greenish white or yellow; with small flowers on a rachis that is often branched. The inflorescence is generally insignificant with flowers that are often are imperfect. The soft green, tender foliage is easily bruised and sometimes shows brown leaf edges toward the base.

Guzmania: The Genus *Guzmania* was named for Anastasio Guzman, an eighteenth century Spanish naturalist. There are over 125 known species and many hybrids. In old writings and books, you might see it referred to as *Caraguata*, *Sodiroa*, *Schlumbergera*, *Thecophyllum*, *Massangea*, and *Devillea*.

Guzmanias are similar to tillandsias and vrieseas in many ways. The main difference is that most species of *Tillandsia* and *Vriesea* have distichous flowers. In *Guzmania*, the spikes of the flowers are always polystichous, meaning the spikes radiate from all sides of the axis. If the plant is not in bloom, identification is not so easy. However, guzmanias differ from most tillandsias in that guzmanias have very few scales on their leaves and possess a shiny, glossy colour. They differ from most cultivated vrieseas which have a "bird claw" shaped leaf tip, while most guzmanias have leaves that are strap-like and come to a smooth point. To identify each species correctly, the plant must be in bloom.

The majority of guzmanias are found in the Andean rain forests of Colombia and Ecuador, but a few are found in south Florida, the West Indies, and Central America, through western Brazil. *Guzmania* is numerically a smaller genus than *Tillandsia* and *Vriesea*, and even though guzmanias are quite beautiful, there are not many in cultivation.

Guzmanias grow from sea level up to 10,000 feet. In their natural habitat, they thrive on high humidity, and warm temperatures, filtered light and good air movement. Most guzmanias are epiphytic, although there are a few that have acquired terrestrial habits such as *G. lindenii*. Guzmanias vary in size from the very small *G. dissitiflora*, to the very large *G. lindenii*, with leaves three feet in length. Usually, however, guzmanias are medium to medium-large bromeliads.

In general, all guzmanias have smooth-edged, glossy leaves. Most have green foliage. There are also many colours and combinations. *Guzmania lingulata* var *splendens* has maroon leaves and *G. berteroniana* var. *rubra* (in hort.) has reddish green leaves. Guzmania foliage can be bicolour (*G. erythrolepis*) and it can be variegated (*G. monostachia* var *variegata*). Some guzmanias have horizontal bars in zigzag patterns such as *G. vittata*, *G. lindenii* and *G. musaica*. Many guzmanias have longitudinal stripes or pencilling in red or brown. *Guzmania patula*, *G. zahnii* and most forms of *G. lingulata* are examples of this. There is at least one guzmania in which the leaves change colour as it comes into bloom, *G. sanguinea*. The leaves vary from one-quarter inch to three inches wide and five inches to four feet in length. Most guzmanias are vase shaped.

Most guzmanias have long lasting inflorescences. However, some last only a few weeks (*G. melinonis*). The majority of the guzmanias have raised flower heads. Rarely, they have a sunken flower head (*G. sanguinea*), usually conspicuous. The bracts vary in shape and colour. Most guzmanias have colourful bracts, which are bright yellow, orange, brilliant red, rose or pink. However, there are always the exceptional few with green bracts. The inflorescences come in many shapes -- the star shape of *G. lingulata*, the cigar shape of *G. berteroniana* and the clustered branches of *G. zahnii*. The flowers are yellow or white.

Usually, guzmanias have green leaves and are grown for their long-lasting, beautiful inflorescences, but there are a few that are grown only for their foliage (*G. lindenii*, *G. vittata* and *G. patula*). Some, such as *G. zahnii* 'Omer Morobe', *G. musaica*, and *G. 'Symfonie'* have both beautiful bloom spikes and lovely foliage.

Guzmanias may be divided into three general groups for judging. Group 1 is the largest and includes the species and varieties with rather plain foliage that are grown for their spectacular inflorescences. Included in this classification are *G. berteroniana*, *G. donnellsmithii*, *G. lingulata* var. *lingulata*, *G. lingulata* var *minor*, *G. melinonis*, *G. monostachia*, *G. nicaraguensis* and *G. sanguinea* var. *sanguinea*.

Group II guzmanias have rather plain inflorescences and are grown for their outstanding foliage. This small group include *G. lingulata* var. *splendens*, *G. patula* and *G. vittata*.

Group III contains the plants which combine the best features of Group I and II, beautiful inflorescences and gorgeous foliage. Found here are *G. danielii*, *G. fuerstenbergiana*, *G. gloriosa*, *G. monostachia* var. *variegata*, *G. musaica* and *G. zahnii*. The hybrids 'Symfonie' and 'Exodus' are also good examples of this classification.

In judging Group I guzmanias, those with plain foliage and gorgeous bloom spikes, will be most attractive at the start of the blooming cycle. As the production of flowers progresses up the spike there is a gradual loss of colour and brilliance. The foliage guzmanias of Group II should be healthy and robust. The rosette will ideally be symmetrical and of good size. The foliage must have good colour and appear bright, healthy and undamaged.

In judging Group III guzmanias, the foliage and inflorescence carry nearly equal weight. The foliage must be bright, healthy and well marked. The rosette should be of appropriate size and possess both vertical and horizontal symmetry. The inflorescence should be large and brightly colored. *Cont'd*

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Bromeliad Study Group

 On 24 March, the Bromeliad Study Group of the Queensland Bromeliad Society held its third meeting for 2001. As is normally the case, the Study Group met at Len and Olive Trevor's house at 232 Canvey Road, Ferny Grove. 14 members attended.

The Study Group provides an opportunity for members to meet in an informal setting to discuss a range of issues connected with growing bromeliads.

Topics covered at recent meetings include: hybridising bromeliads (which is a major focus of the Study Group); growing bromeliads from seed; how to best grow variegated bromeliads (for example, how much light is needed to "bring out" a plant's variegation); pests and diseases of bromeliads; bromeliad potting mixes and fertilisers; and rare bromeliads and bromeliads showing unusual growth patterns.

The bromeliad-growing experience of members ranges from beginners to people who have been growing them for many years. Some participants have very large collections, while others have only a few (but usually not for long!)

Meetings start informally with breakfast around 7.30 am. At about 8.30 am the more formal part of the meeting commences. It consists of a series of short (mainly five to 10 minutes) discussions led by individual members who have volunteered for this task, on some bromeliad-related topic. The discussions are usually "illustrated" with plants eg punnets of seedlings which have grown well (or, at the other extreme, are in the process of all dying!).

The discussion items usually conclude about 10.30 am, at which time some members may leave while others stay on to try their hand at hybridising some of the wide range of species and hybrids which Olive and Len Trevor have growing.

Some "snippets" from the March meeting are: Mike Symmons brought along a beautifully flowering specimen of *Tillandsia multicaulis*. He sought members' views as to whether rust-like markings on the plant's lower leaves were evidence of some type of disease. The general view was that this is not the case, as plants of this species usually show these markings when grown in Brisbane. (However, plants grown in cooler climates, which are more similar to *T. multicaulis* natural habitat, may not show such markings).

Sometimes you can finish up with more seedlings than you have any immediate need (or space) for, if you obtain good germination. One way of dealing with this situation is to take a few plants out of the seedling container and leave the rest there. The remaining seedlings, while not growing in size, will still be suitable for "potting-on" several years from now.

Bromeliad seedlings like the company of each other. Keep them together in "community pots" while they are small as they prefer this situation compared with each having their own pot.

Plants of the following species and hybrids were crossed: *Neoregelia* 'Debbie' and *N.* 'Kaola Dawn'; *Portea elatasepala* and *Aechmea* 'Burning Bush'.

You're welcome to come to Study Group meetings. The Study Group coordinator is Olive Trevor, telephone (07) 3351 1203. Olive can tell you the topics which will probably be covered at the next Study Group meeting and its location. Meetings are held on the second Saturday after each bromeliad Society of Queensland meeting. The next meeting will be on 26 May 2001.

Bob Reilly

Q. *When is a potting mixture not a potting mixture?*

A. *When its fresh air !!*

Bob Cross reported problems growing *Tillandsia rothii* having tried a number of different growing media until Nev Ryan suggested putting the plant in an empty pot !! One terracotta pot and some time later and Bob has one very healthy *T. rothii*,

Bromeliad Society of Queensland Inc.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Bromeliads -- Next Generation by Shane Zaghini	\$33.00
<i>Tillandsia</i> Handbook by Hideo Shimizu and Hirouli Takizawa.....	\$58.00
Bromeliads for Everyone 2 by Bea Hansen.....	\$11.50
Growing Bromeliads by Bromeliad Society of Australia.....	\$21.50
Genus <i>Tillandsia</i> by Paul Isley III.....	\$3.00
International Check List of Bromeliad Hybrids by B.S.I.....	\$1.50
A Bromeliad Glossary, 1977 Edition, by B.S.I.....	\$3.50
A Bromeliad Glossary, 1998 Edition, by B.S.I.....	\$18.50
Bromeliads -- A Cultural Manual by B.S.I.....	\$5.00
Distributional Checklist of the Genus <i>Tillandsia</i> by Lloyd Kiff	\$20.00
A Guide to Beautiful <i>Neoregelias</i> by S. Zaghini	\$20.00
1985 Bromeliads III Conference	\$10.00
1993 Bromeliads VII Conference.....	\$18.00

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What's Killing The Spanish Moss?

By ARNO KING

I've always been very keen on growing spanish moss or old man's beard (*Tillandsia usneoides*). I guess it's because I grew up in New Zealand. As a kid, I remember going into the tropical house at the Auckland Domain. It was an adventure. Spanish moss hung from the roof of the large conservatory, along with baskets of sinister pitcher plants and beautiful orchids. This environment was incredibly exotic compared to the temperate plantings outside in the cold. I think the spanish moss helped give it an eerie jungle-like character.

Coming to Brisbane was a great shock for a bromeliad grower. Bromeliads grew so easily and so fast here and you could grow spanish moss outside. The birds and possums may pinch a bit of it but the plants grew so fast that there was always more to go around.

In 1993, I moved to Indooroopilly. My house and garden is near the top of a hill, faces north and is very breezy. The spanish moss took off like never before. Soon there was spanish moss hanging from all the trees. Birds and possums placed strands high in the branches where I could never have reached. Soon it hung along my fence then along the shadehouse and finally all along the banister of the verandah. It was easy to direct people to the house – just look for the Spanish Moss.

Despite having so much of the stuff, I still looked after it. Every week piles of the moss would fall to the ground. Instead of letting it rot I would hang it up each morning from the clothesline until I had time to rehang. There were always people who were keen to try some in their garden so I had plenty on hand to give away.

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During summer particularly after rains the evening air would be perfumed with the smell off the millions of chartreuse flowers in the garden. The perfume has been likened to that of carnations.

I was fascinated with the way the seed pods would sit and then suddenly swell and pop after heavy rain. It practically happened in 24 hours. Every now and then I would find plants germinating on the branches of trees and forming a new colony.

It also interested me to see roots forming from mature strands and attaching themselves to the branches. It appears to be a very rare occurrence but it does occur, despite articles from overseas saying otherwise.

Spanish Moss responds dramatically to the climate conditions. When the air is dry (particularly during the drying winds in late winter here in Brisbane), it curls up on itself like a spring. The strands shorten and form curly clumps.

The plant appears to huddle in on itself, and it takes on a greyish look. Add water and the strands turn grey green. The weight of the moisture forces them to drop down and stretch out. The fine hairs on the leaf stand to attention.

I soon learned, that with plenty of air movement, this plant thrives on water. As noted above, you soon can see when it is thirsty. Watered well the clump thickens up and eventually dies towards the centre as the central plants are overshadowed. To speed up growth of your clumps, you can pull out these central strands and start up new clumps elsewhere in the garden. They easily pull out.

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Spanish Moss in the Wild

Spanish Moss has an extremely wide distribution in the wild. It grows from the Southern United States, right down through Central America and through South America to Argentina and Chile in the South. It is obviously a very successful plant. As with any plant with such a broad distribution, it does vary in its growth habit within its range.

During 1989, I travelled through Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. I saw many beautiful bromeliads in the wild including spanish moss. What I remember most was that it always seemed to grow best in dry or seasonally dry areas. It was always in breezy open areas and usually associated with large open trees, cliffs or power poles. I particularly remember seeing it doing really well in the drier northern provinces of Argentina where it grew on giant cacti, peppercorn trees (*Schinus areira*) and the tipuana tree (*Tipuana tipu*). I never remember seeing it in the moister or shadier areas.

Growing it here in Brisbane supports these observations. My plants always grew best in breezy, bright or sunny conditions and languished in shady stagnant areas. While they enjoy water, they like to dry out between soakings.

News of the mystery disease

About two and a half years ago I was told by my friend Bobby Powell from the Gold Coast that Grace Goode had told her there was something killing the spanish moss up on the Sunshine Coast. At the time we were having quite wet weather, so I just assumed it was a case of overwatering, or some other climatic problem.

At this stage I would say that 95% of my moss (and I have a lot) is dead. Cont'd

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