

Bromeliad  
of South Australia

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B R O M E L E T T E R

Vol.1, No.1.

May-June, 1963.

A series of papers devoted to Bromeliads, their culture, botany, and their hybridization, published by the Bromeliad Society of Australia, which is affiliated with the Bromeliad Society of California. U.S.A.

Secretary and Treasurer: 31 Empire Street, Haberfield,  
Sydney. N.S.W. Phone 71-6877

Editor: 56 Kulgoa Road, Pymble, Sydney. N.S.W.  
Phone 44-5182

OUR PURPOSE: If you are reading these papers you must be a Bromeliad collector and interested in learning more about these plants. You probably started growing Bromeliads when someone gave you a small piece of B. Nutans. The plant sat on your greenhouse bench amongst many other types of plants and you noticed one day, that a strange flower was showing from this plant. Day by day you came to be more and more interested. This little descriptive would apply to many of us, and our purpose in forming our Society and producing this paper, is to enable each member to share in the pleasure of learning more about Bromeliads.

For many years there have been Bromels in Australia, mostly to be seen in odd collections of specially imported plants, at other times a few would be seen in various gardens of the fine old homes that we see ageing today. Billbergia Pyramidalis and the variant B. Pyramidalis Concolor, can still be seen aplenty in these places.

Today the picture is much changed, and we find that in keeping with a fast growing world, Bromels are growing in favour and being much sought after for a number of purposes; whether it be for a club or for a banking house's decoration or in an enthusiasts collection, Bromels have arrived.

Early in 1962, a small group of Bromel fanciers started the initial work in Sydney which has culminated in the formation of this Society. At the time no other information was available to collectors except the Bulletin, published by the original Bromeliad Society with which we are affiliated.

The feeling grew on us that whilst this Bulletin was most interesting, it did not serve local interests and give local ideas with an accuracy that enabled a collector in Australia to adjust growing conditions to suit a given plant, also, to those of us who had a few books on the subject, it became apparent that many Bromels in circulation were wrongly named.

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The Bulletin could not remedy this. The Society, now that it is in existence, can help those interested in identifying the plants, and give valuable clues to a suitable environment.

THE FIRST STEP: A letter was sent to the Bromeliad Society in California, requesting that in the event of our formation of an Australian Society, that we be affiliated, pointing out that the number of people interested in Bromels was rapidly growing, and some local interest was needed. The Californian Society replied most cordially, and agreed that an Australian group was desirable, also mentioning that there were advantages in the affiliation.

THE SECOND STEP: A circular was finally mailed out to all known Society members, inviting their attendance to a meeting aimed at the formation of an Australian Society.

THE MEETING: The meeting day arrived and was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Duncan, themselves Society members and keenly interested in the project ahead.

The meeting was well attended by the leading collectors and commercial people, some 36 in number, all interested in the proposed Society.

The meeting was opened, and after a vote was taken on the question of formation of The Bromeliad Society of Australia, and passed, the proceedings began.

### OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY:

- (a) To achieve the highest standard in methods of cultivation of the Bromeliaceae.
- (b) To assist members in the understanding of botanical nomenclature.
- (c) To distribute to members such Bromeliad seed as may be available.
- (d) To faithfully record all information made available to the Society members relative to the hybridising of Bromeliads.

The following subjects are that which was agreed by the foundation members:-

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP:

All present at the inaugural meeting and financial, to be recognised as foundation members.

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2. NEW MEMBERS: Candidates for membership to be nominated and seconded by financial members, and when approved by committee, recommended to General Meeting.
3. ASSOCIATES: An associate member may be accepted, but will not receive the Society's publication. (designed for family membership).
4. ASSOCIATE JUNIOR: Shall be deemed to mean a person under 16, and not to receive the publication.
5. MEMBERSHIP DUES:

An annual full membership shall be	£1.10.	0
Associate	"	"
"	"	"
Junior	"	"
		15. 0
		5. 0
6. OFFICE BEARERS: The office bearers to consist of President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor/Librarian.
7. TRUSTEE: This is a position which carries no voting power in the Bromeliad Society of California but as their trustee represents them in the Australian Society and supplies information.
8. PRESIDENT'S DUTIES: To preside over all meetings of the Society.
9. SECRETARY'S DUTIES: The secretary shall keep full and correct minutes at all meetings, and preserve all correspondence.  

Correspondence dealing with policy shall be acknowledged, and submitted for committee consideration at first meeting.
10. TREASURER'S DUTIES: The treasurer shall keep the Society's financial records, receive all monies, and deposit same in an approved bank. The treasurer is to pay all accounts by cheque, to be signed and counter-signed by any two of the following:- president, secretary, treasurer, librarian.  

The treasurer shall produce a financial statement when requested by committee of president.
11. EDITOR/LIBRARIAN: To produce and edit all articles received for publication, which is to be produced at regular intervals. As librarian, is responsible for the care of all books, and publications belonging to the Society.
12. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS: All office bearers must be elected annually, the maximum period of consecutive service of president shall not exceed three years, notwithstanding the rule on retirement, an officer may not vacate the position until a successor has been appointed.

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13. ABSENCES: The committee may grant an office bearer leave of absence.
14. COMMITTEE VACANCIES: The committee at any time in the year may fill any vacancies caused by resignation or decease.
15. ANNUAL MEETING: To be held annually seven days before or after Easter. The date to be decided. Office bearers at annual meeting shall submit a written report of their activities during the year, these reports to be published in the Society's paper.
16. GENERAL MEETINGS: There shall be a general meeting at least every thirteen weeks.
17. SPECIAL MEETINGS: A special meeting may be called by any three financial members, providing four clear weeks notice of intention is given.
18. QUORUM: A quorum at the General Meeting shall be not less than seven active members, including office bearers.  
  
A quorum at a committee meeting shall be not less than five active members.
19. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS: All meetings to be presided over by the president or the vice president available, or in their absence, a financial member of acceptable standing.
20. CASTING VOTE: The Chairman shall have a deliberate and casting vote excepting at the election of officers.
21. FINANCLL YEAR: The financial year to end at 31st December.
22. CONSTITUTION: The constitution of the Society may only be altered by two thirds vote at annual meeting. Notice of intention to alter must be in the secretary's hands four weeks prior to Annual Meeting.
23. BY-LAWS: The committee may make such by-laws as may be necessary to aid administration of the Society, but cannot be effected until first approved by a General Meeting.
24. PENALTIES: Any member after receiving special notice from the secretary and remaining unfinancial, three months in arrears, will be struck from the roll.
25. WITHDRAWING AND REJOINING: Any member who has withdrawn, and wishes re-entry, must be nominated and seconded afresh.
26. STATUS: It is agreed that the Society shall operate as a non-profit making organisation, for the mutual benefit of all

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INTERSTATE MEMBERS: It was agreed that in each state where an interested collector could be found, they be proposed as Associate Vice President, representing their fellow members, and accepting the duties of enrolling new members, convening meetings of collectors to discuss their plants, and generally acting as a local representative. All monies received to be forwarded to the Treasurer of the Society, and an allowance to be made to these Associate Vice Presidents for out of pocket expenses relating to stamps and stationery used on the Society's behalf.

SOCIETY'S PAPER: It was proposed at the inaugural meeting that the Society needed some means to get the message across to its members who would be very far flung indeed, in fact it was pointed out more than once that without a means of expressing themselves there was little point in forming the Society. The name "BROMELETTER", was proposed as being suitable, and was accepted, so henceforth the Society's official voice is known as "Bromeletter".

The Society wants contributors from all over Australia, no matter how small the collection, write a few lines as often as you like, telling of your experiences with your Bromels, growing conditions, and ask by all means, remedies for plants that are not happy.

PLANT IDENTIFICATION: Much work has been done on this point, and in many respects we will echo the work already under way by the American society, with one major difference, that being, an effort to put in plain language, the meanings and differences in our climate, and how a given plant may be cultured in Australia.

The differences from state to state, and climate to climate are great, so it can be seen how important it is that we hear from you and learn about your area's climate, rainfall, average winter and summer temperatures, humidity, quite apart from how you grow.

### THE U.S. SOCIETY'S RELATION TO THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY:

The U.S.A. Society was inaugurated in 1950, from just such a group of enthusiasts as have recently formed your Society, and their aims are similar to our own, to promote the better knowledge of Bromeliads, and in general draw all of the interested together to enjoy the advantages of mutual discussion. The Australian Society's paper is not intended to be a competitor with the "Bulletin", but will rather, we feel, prove to be complimentary.

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REGARDING SUBSCRIPTIONS TO BOTH SOCIETIES:

The general feeling in this case is that any person has a right to buy wherever they wish, and to this end we suggest that you retain your membership in the overseas society, on the other hand we need your membership to make a success of this venture so the decision rests with you. The Australian Society has certain natural advantages as were mentioned in "Plant Identification" and in your "Paper" headings, and lastly, we feel that the keen Bromel grower will get as much information via the printed work as is available from whatever source is offering anyway.

ADVERTISING: At the first Society committee meeting it was decided that advertising is a desirable service to all members, it allows the collector to air his saleable stock, and the commercial plantmen, a place to effectively offer his Bromels to all members. The Society will benefit by the proceeds of the rates charged, and in turn benefits will go back to the members in improved services.

NOTICE: All collectors and commercial plantmen who are subscribers to the Society are invited to place advertisements also indicating the appropriate rate.

THE RATES ARE: Any advertiser agreeing to place advertisements in "Bromelletter" on each issue (bi-monthly) to be charged at a flat rate of 16/8 each issue and allowing twenty lines (approximately half page).

Casual: to be charged at five lines for 5/- and thereafter 1/6 per line.

This last will be particularly suitable for those who want to buy a rare plant, or exchange plant for plant.

A column will be started next issue called "Swap Shop" the exchange advertisements to appear in it. We think it should be popular, so place an advertisement and test the results.

Remit order and cash to:-

The Editor,  
Bromeliad Society,  
56 Kulgoa Road,  
PYMBLE. N.S.W.

At all other times remit payments to the Treasurer.

The following are the Society's officers elected at the inauguration of the Society:-

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President	Mr. J. S. Martin
Vice Presidents)	Mr. I. Scott
	Mr. W. O. Morris
Secretary	Mrs. C. Phillips
Treasurer	Mr. A. Phillips
Editor/Librarian	Mr. R. Agnew
Registrar of Cultivars	Dr. D. Johnston
Committee Members)	Mr. W. Megier
	Mrs. E. J. White
	Mr. S. Watt
Display Stewardess	Mrs. E. J. White
Identification Officer	Mr. P. Reedy
Financial Promoter	Mrs. M. Martin
Seed Fund	Mr. R. Agnew
Trustee	Mr. W. B. Charley

The following members have been nominated and accepted as Associate Vice Presidents.

IN AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Dr. D. Johnston, 9 Drummond Row, Yarralumla, Canberra.

Doug is a Dr. of Philosophy of Science, specialising in Botany. He is also the Society's "REGISTRAR OF CULTIVARS". This means that when a member makes a hybrid, the proposed name and details of the parents used are to be communicated to the Registrar. In this way all hybrids made in the future will be known and providing they do not clash with existing hybrids, be accepted and gain standing in the Bromeliad world. It is requested that two of the hybrid plants be sent to the registrar, pending recognition, for study.

Doug is to be found busily working on many different projects in the Forestry Commission Laboratory in Canberra and is an ideal choice for this position. He is one of the new breed in botanists and is keenly interested in Bromeliads. We hope we see you Doug at all of the meetings.

IN VICTORIA:

Mr. John Himmerman, 19 Kerford Street, North Essendon.

John is well known in the Cacti fanciers world and his handiwork is known to many of us who read "Your Garden" a colourful magazine, dealing with plants of all descriptions.

John Himmerman is one of the many people who indicated his interest in the formation of your Society in its earliest stages.

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We look forward to many interesting "Bromel" articles from you, John, and may we hope to meet you soon?

John has a number of Bromels, and recently flowered Aechmea Pineliana and tells us the specimen of Ochagavia Lindleyana, just flowered, drew quite an admiring audience. The Bromels are housed in a fernery during the summer months, the more tender species are withdrawn to a warmer climate in the winter, in a glass house nearby.

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Its happened! That which was hoped would happen, is now a fact. The enterprising N.S.W. North Coast members of the Society have formed a discussion GROUP. Limited naturally, to members of the Society, Mr. Wal Hudson of Sawtell is the villain of the piece and is a very keen member indeed. Backed by Mrs. Powell and Mr. Patterson. Quite a few others will join the ranks of our mutual Society.

This GROUP will be written up in future as "The Beautizone Group". "Beautizone" because this part of N.S.W. north coast has major tourist attractions and is recognised for its beautiful scenery.

We want to see other Groups start in the more distant areas, the only provision asked, is that it be limited to Society members, any person joining the group to be financial member of the National Society. Groups that start in this way and are members are entitled to send in their "reported" notes, which will be published in the Society's paper "Bromeletter".

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER FOR 1963:

General Meetings:

Saturday, 6th July  
Saturday, 5th October

Committee Meets: Last Friday in each month. Details can be obtained from the office of the Secretary, 31 Empire Street, Haberfield. Sydney. Phone: 71-6877 for all meeting places.

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A little general information about the background of modern Botany is no load to carry and will serve to inform the uninitiated with a meaning to all of the information yet to come.

Many of the botanical "handles" tacked on to the Bromeliads in your collection have a deeper meaning than most realise,



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e.g. "Bromeliad" is a shortening of the scientific name Bromeliaceae, and indicates a member of the Pineapple family.

Why do we not call all of the various differently named Bromels in our collections simply "Pineapple"? The reason for all of the different Generic terms is to avoid confusion, this is easily understood when you view a Puya, amongst which, is to be found the giant of all the Bromeliadeae, Puya Raimondii as against tiny forms that are found in the Tillandsia family.

Nobody knows for certain who coined the word "Bromeliad", but it is felt that it was in fairly modern times, and almost certainly by one of the "New School" of botanical thought, who tired of referring to what we call a Bromeliad, as "Species of Bromeliaceae".

The next step in finding the origin of Bromeliaceae is clear to read, since in 1805, a French botanist, Jaume Saint-Claire, defined the Bromeliaceae and formed the family name from the genus BROMELIA.

Next, we go further back in time to Carl von Linne, a tireless Swedish doctor and scientist, born in 1707, who became one of the most distinguished of naturalists and fathered modern botany.

Linnaeus, for such was his Latinised name, was the first to expound the true principles for defining Genera and Species, and it was he who established the Genus Bromelia in 1754 according to the rules he established and those that we follow today.

Olaf Bromelius, yet another Swedish botanist, died before Linnaeus was born, and in his lifetime was famous for his fine writings from his home city of Goetheborg. It is by no means certain that Linnaeus knew whether Bromelius had ever seen a Bromeliad, but he is credited with naming our favourite plants after Olaf Bromelius.

Bromeliads have flourished well since those days and are to be found in choice collections all over the Western world today, and, as is usual the term Bromeliad has been shortened still further to that known as Bromel. The feeling overseas is that we should agree on one common name, and this thought is shared by both Dr. L. B. Smith and Mulford Foster, particularly as the family was named after Bromelius, it seems appropriate to coin the word "Bromel".

The Bromeliad Society's paper was named "Bromeletter", also in honour of Bromelius, so we hope you will adopt this term.

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Some well known people will keep cropping up in our references in the future and it seems advisable to mention a little about them now.

Dr. L. B. Smith, Curator of Phanerogams, Smithsonian Institute U.S. National Museum. This learned gentleman has devoted himself to years of research in the Bromeliaceae, and has systematised the once terribly mixed-up botany of the Bromeliaceae into the much clearer position of today. How may you ask, is it possible for this to happen when Linnaeus laid down certain rules? It happened this way, take this as an example. The specie known today as Billbergia Zebrina, was known in 1826, as "Bromelia Zebrina", because somebody mistook the characteristics of this typical Billbergia as those imperfectly known to Bromelia. Later in 1897, this same Billbergia was called "Billbergia Canterae" by Andre. Obviously this was botany gone mad, so our learned Doctor Smith has been knocking down fences and in other places erecting new ones where there were none before.

All of the various Genera of the Bromeliaceae have certain family characteristics, and Dr. Smith has been busy, and promises to be busy for years to come sorting out the pros. and cons.

Under systematic botany the Bromeliad family has its position in the vegetable kingdom in the division of "Phanerogams" (plants producing flower and seed), is in the subdivision "Angiosperms" (plants with pistil consisting of a closed ovary containing the ovules or seeds) and in class No.1 of "Monocotyledons" ( a plant with an embryo having a single leaf; parts of the flower usually in threes, never in fives; leaves mostly parallel veined).

The order is "Farinosae" (having a mealy endosperm, i.e. starchy and nutritive material found outside or around the embryo in a seed)

Flowers lily-like with an ovary of three carpels (from which the fruit arises), but usually contrasting sepals and petals.

The family is "Bromeliaceae". Differing from the other families of the Farinosae, on the basis of their leaves, which have their sheaths always open, and almost always bearing scales; sepals always contrasting with the petals; stamens always six in number, ovary three celled. This family is then sub-divided into three (3) sub-families:-

- (1) Pitcairnoideae
- (2) Tillandsioideae
- (3) Bromelioideae

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BROMELIAD SEED:

Many of the present members of the Society will have received by this time the Questionnaire re seed requirements. We now bring to your notice the availability of a particularly fine batch of the genuine "Billbergia Zebrina". This Billbergia is one of the best known and original discoveries, frequently hidden under the name of "B.Rosea", and worse still being called "B.Hybrid".

"B.Zebrina" is not a highly marked plant, although by the description one would look for a Zebra marking, so it is probable that quite a few B.Vittata's bear an incorrect name, whilst the real Zebrina languishes in a forgotten corner.

B.Zebrina is one of the easiest to grow and thrives on a policy of "no pampering", growing to its best shape in fairly strong light, and in a well drained compost. B.Zebrina boasts a brilliant rosy red scape bract, and a snow white furry covering over the inflorescence; the green to yellow petals are interesting as they are tightly coiled as in a watch spring, in fact, this is a definite identifying trait peculiar to the "Helicoid" Billbergias.

The seed pods of B.Zebrina are also of special interest, because of the turban shaped ovary, at first covered entirely with white fur, later on ageing and ripening, bare, almost black areas appear on the wart-like bumps on the top of the ovary, giving the appearance of a ring of black spots.

B.Zebrina is a native of Eastern Brazil, is one of the musts in a new collection, and well worth growing.

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