



BROMELETTER

***THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA INC.***

bromeliad.org.au



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**HAPPY
EASTER**

Please send articles for Bromeletter to
editor@bromeliad.org.au
and all other correspondence to:
The Secretary, Bromeliad Society of Australia Inc.
PO Box 340, RYDE NSW 2112.

CONTENTS

Management Details	Page 2,3,18.19.20
Plant of the Month - March	4,5,6
March speaker—Quirky Birds	6,7,8
Show and Tell - March meeting	8,9
Hechtia changes	10,11,12
Albino Pups	13
Tips on plant labels and entering BSA competitions	14
Unstable variegations	15
New Life Member	16
Canistrum Vania Leme	17
Financial reports	18

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**Photo Front
Cover
Happy Easter
May the brom
bunny be kind
to you**

As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic like many things our regular meetings and our autumn fair have been cancelled.

To help us all stay in touch, we have produced the bromletter early and will continue to do so in lieu of cancelled meetings. The format of our bromletter will obviously change during the next few months.

While we can't meet and exchange ideas and tips, I ask members to send in items for 'show and tell' to put into the newsletter. Please send items big or small to
editor@bromeliad.org.au

I will be including some member profiles so we can get to know each other despite not meeting up.

May this isolation time have the benefit of more time with your beloved broms and an increased appreciation of how fortunate we are to have gardens and beautiful plants to enjoy in our own space.

Wishing you all health and well-being.

Larissa - Editor

**BROMELIAD SOCIETIES AFFILIATED WITH THE BROMELIAD
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WEBSITES

Bromeliads in Australia

Encyc of Bromeliads

BSI Cultivar Register

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

Bromeliario Imperialis

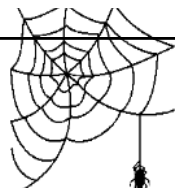
<http://bromeliad.org.au>

<http://encyclopedia.florapix.nl/>

<http://registry.bsi.org/>

<http://fcbs.org/>

<http://imperialia.com.br/>



Plant of the Month - March 2020

Open	Judges Choice	
First	Tillandsia 'Samantha'	David Scott - No3 + pg 16
Second	Tillandsia 'Nellie Rose'	Harold Kuan - No 1
Third	Vriesea platynema x saundersii	Helga Nitschke - No 2
Open	Members Choice	
First	Tillandsia 'Samantha'	David Scott - No 3
Second	Tillandsia exserta hybrid	Harold Kuan - No 4
Third	Tillandsia 'Nellie Rose'	Harold Kuan—No 1
Novice	Judges Choice	
First	Guzmania 'Torch'	Annamari Kilpinen—No 6
Second	Neoregelia 'Bobby Dazzler'	Janet Kuan - No 7
Third	Neoregelia 'Fanfare'	Janet Kuan - No 8
Novice	Members Choice	
First	Guzmania 'Torch'	Annamari Kilpinen
Second	Neoregelia 'Bobby Dazzler'	Janet Kuan
Third	Neoregelia 'Fanfare'	Janet Kuan
Margaret Draddy Artistic Competition		
First	'Autumn'	Janet Kuan - No 9
Second	'Gone but not Forgotten'	Larissa Victoria - No10
Third	'Bromeliads For Background'	Christine Johnson - No11

No 2



No 7





No 6



No 3



No 8



No 1



No 9



No 4



March Meeting Talk

QUIRKY BIRDS

Photo Sources: <https://en.wikipedia.org>; Toby Hudson/Wikimedia; <http://birdlife.org.au/bird>; zebra finch - Photo by dgward55 on flickr

Alan's interest in birds began at a young age, and was encouraged by his father (who kept canaries) who built him an aviary. Alan's talk on 'quirky' birds, covered many birds, some extinct and some endemic to Australia.

The Providence Petrel (*photo right*), lives at sea and breeds on Lord Howe Island. Its tube nose takes in salt water, which it converts to fresh water by excreting a salty substance.



The dodo, was in fact a pigeon, found in Mauritius. Up to 1 metre tall, and weighing up to 170 kg it was discovered in 1598 and was extinct by 1662.



The Moa, a giant, extinct, flightless bird of 3.6 m and 230 kg was extinct by 1440 (*photo left*). It was estimated there were 58,000 in NZ on the arrival of the Maoris in 1280. The Moa's only predator was the Haast's eagle, the largest eagle in existence. Weighing up to 14 kg with a wingspan of 2.6-3 m, it only preyed on the Moa and also became extinct around 1440.

QUIRKY BIRDS cont

The Channel Billed Cuckoo arrives in September to our shores from Indonesia and lays her eggs in Magpie and Currawong's nests. It then returns in March, takes back its young and flies them back home to Indonesia. For some reason magpies and currawong's nest that are used have shorter lifespan.



We are fortunate to have 19 species of Finches in Australia, 14 of which are endemic. These lively, colourful birds are ground feeders, which need dense low bushes for cover and native seed grasses. *(photo Zebra finch left; Channel Billed Cuckoo above right)*

Any emu you see with chicks in tow will be the male. The female lays eggs in various nests, which are incubated by the male while she's off on R&R.

It was clear this was a topic of great interest to many members who spend much time outdoors and are aware of nature and its beauty.

Kerry heartily thanked Alan, and presented him a most precious and rare gift.



A BSA member for 12 years Alan was invited by friends to a meeting held at the Burwood RSL. When treasurer Dawn Williams resigned due to poor health his friends strongly encouraged Alan to volunteer. Alan has now been treasurer for almost 9 years and remembers the task of counting the \$91K takings from the 2015 conference. On entering the room and seeing the money laid out on the beds and table his friend remarked "this looks like a drug deal!" Of his 300 plus potted bromeliads most are Neoregelias and Nidulariums which Alan loves for their coloured leaves, he doesn't collect Bilbergias as their flowers last such a short time.

TAKING CARE OF BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN

The general consensus from bird societies is **not to** feed wild Australian birds, but currently due to drought and bushfires, there is an increase in the number of birds coming into the city. So for those of you that will feed birds, in these circumstances, here are some tips from Alan:-

1. Only use wild bird seed or parrot seed as appropriate.
2. Where cats are not a problem, scatter seed on ground to avoid birds crowding and possibly contacting beak and feather disease.
3. Do not feed bread to any birds
4. Change water regularly.
5. Hang watering containers in trees to allow birds to drink away from cats. These containers should contain a perch for smaller birds.
6. All bird baths should be shallow and have a rock or stick for sitting on.
7. Bees also need very shallow water.
8. All bird water containers need to be rinsed and cleaned regularly to avoid the spread of disease.



Show and Tell

Having missed our last meeting, on Alcantareas, Mark Belot bought in a number of his variegated Alcs (left) to show. Alcantareas are Mark's favourite broms and he has more than 70 different types, many from Peter Tristan and Bruce Dunstan.

Members commented that his Alcantareas were more upright than theirs and Mark explained this was due to him always clearing off the bottom leaves as this provides more light and

air around the base and promotes the plants to produce more grass pups. He added when buying from QLD or North NSW, there is a tendency for broms to go backwards, due to weather variations. They take about 1 to 2 years to settle into Sydney's climate and to grow well again.

Alc Moray





Alc Yellow Strap



Alc White Star



Alc Mellow Yellow

We were sorry to hear of Mark's shoulder injury and wish him a full and speedy recovery after his shoulder surgery, he'll need a strong dominant arm to lift all those wonderful large broms.

Aechmea Victoriana

Photos : wikipediaia

Kerry donated several plants of Aech. Victoriana to the raffle table and pointed out this is a variety that likes tropical type growing conditions and hates the cold.

This bromeliad is endemic to the State of [Brazil.Espírito Santo](#) and to the [Atlantic Forest biome \(Mata Atlântica Brasileira\)](#), located in southeastern Brazil.



HECHTIA changes—Bakerrantha and Mesoamerantha

Source : taken from Mike Wisney text and photos—SFVBSN– Dec 2019

Prof. Ramírez-Morillo and seven other authors broke seven species out of Hechtia and put them in one new genus and one resurrected genus. Ivón M. Ramírez-Morillo, Katya Romero-Soler, Germán Carnevali, Juan P. Pinzón, N. Raigoza, C. Hornung-Leoni, R. Duno, And J. L. Tapia-Muñoz, in *Harvard Papers in Botany*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2018, pp. 301–312 (the “Hechtia Paper”).



Photo above is a typical Hechtia species – *H stenopetala* with fairly stiff leaves and nasty spines - at the Huntington Botanical Gardens (HBG).

Depending upon who is doing the counting, there are roughly 75 Hechtia species. A few grow in the U.S. and a few more in Central America, but most are in Mexico.

Unlike the vast majority of bromeliads, Hechtia are unisexual, ie individual plants have either male or female flowers. Most bromeliads have perfect flowers, which means they have both male parts (stamen producing pollen) and female flowers (pistils producing egg cells).

Interestingly, the flowers also have non-functioning and smaller parts of the other sex – for example, female plants don’t have stamen but have staminodia.

The changes were based primarily on a DNA study...The most important point may be that Hechtia species are monophyletic. This means it is a good genus – no other species of different genera show up in the group and no Hechtia species show up in different genera.

Photo below is a male *Bakerrantha tillandsioides*, formerly *H tillandsioides* at the Huntington Botanical Gardens.



However, the species fell within 3 different fairly well resolved clades – the *H. tillandsioides* clade (4 species), *H. guatemalensis* (3 species) and the rest.

The first clade includes the well-known *H. tillandsioides* and *H. lundelliorum*, as well as the less well-known *H. caerulea* and *H. purpusii*. Unlike most other Hechtia, they have almost grass like leaves – long thin green (on top) and white lepidote (on bottom) and not very

HECHTIA changes—cont

spiny. The flowers are pedicellate, and relatively large (for Hechtia), and white, pink or purplish. They all grow in the same geographical area, often on cliff walls.

“Because of its distinctness and ease of diagnosis, here we propose its recognition at the generic level in Hechtioideae, reestablishing the name *Bakerantha* proposed by L. B. Smith (1934).” Id at 302-3.

Photos below left - close-up of the inflorescence of B tillandsioides.

Photo to below right - close-up of male flower of B. tillandsioides.



Each flower is on a small stalk called a pedicel. The yellow pollen on the anthers at the top of the 5 stamen identifies this plant as a male. I presume that the small darker purplish conical structure at the base of the flower is the so-called pistillode of the male flower.

Below- Close up of the female flowers of H lundelliorum and a male

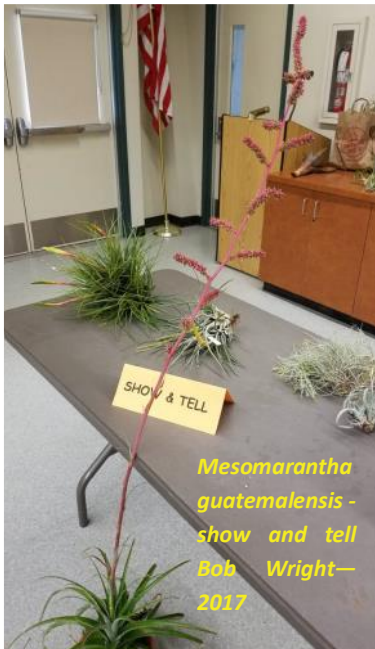
flower of H. tillandsioides. (no I didn't cross them, maybe next time!)

A bit of history. Eduard Andre first described *H. tillandsioides* as *Bakeria tillandsioides* in 1889. But *Bakeria* was already used for another genus, so Smith changed it to *Bakerantha* in 1934, but then later moved *Bakerantha* into *Hechtia*.



HECHTIA changes cont

Of note, in 2010 Espejo-Serna and others (including Prof Ramirez) treated *H. caerulea* as synonymous with *H. tillandsioides*. “An analysis of the complex of taxa related to *H. tillandsioides* (Romero-Soler, 2017) required and morphological space of the group. This analysis also strongly supported the notion that *H. tillandsioides* was more closely related to *H. lundelliorum* than to *H. caerulea*.” Id. at 307. The later DNA study by Ramirez and others supported this conclusion.....



Ramirez has indicated that many populations seem to have a lot more males than females.... this is advantageous since it maximizes the chances that there will be pollen available for pollination if a female blooms.....most *Hechtia*, but not all, have a superior ovary. This means the petals attach at the bottom of the ovary and ovary sits atop the petals. As noted in the above quote, *Mesoamerantha* have a 3/4 inferior ovary, which means 3/4 of the ovary is below the base of the petals.....

These species have the longest blooms, often up to a month while most *Hechtia* bloom for about a week. The individual flowers usually only bloom for a day.

While DNA studies show which particular taxa belong in a group, the genus or subgenus (or some other taxa) are for the botanists to determine, based on the particular features of the various clades. I had wondered if *H. epigyna* was closely related to *H. tillandsioides* and *lundelliorum*. It has similar soft green leaves, though they have many spines. It also has a rose/white flowers. But the DNA study found it is rather distant. It grows to the north of the *Bakerantha* species and has a lateral inflorescence, while the *Bakerantha* species have terminal inflorescences.



Photo right- flowers of a male *H. epigyna* at HBG.

ALBINO PUPS

Source : Source JBSNZ vol 59 No 11: photo albino pup by Ron Farrugia - <http://www.bromeliad.org.au/news/BSA1006b.htm>

Rarely a bromeliad will produce an albino pup, one where the leaves are completely white because they are completely devoid of the green chlorophyll colour.

The pup remains quite healthy if attached to the mother and while the mother is alive. The absence of chlorophyll means the pup is unable to produce energy from sunlight on its own, so it is totally dependant upon the mother plant, and dies if removed. Such pups do not produce flowers, are more vulnerable to the cold and grow more slowly. Removing such a pup allows the parent plant to have energy to produce more pups, hopefully ones without the defect.



Below is the list of seeds in our Seed Bank.

Al. extensa	27.11.19	Terry Davis
Al. imperialis rubra	15.10.19	Terry Davis
Pseudalcantarea viridiflora (red under leaf)	23.10.19	Terry Davis
Puya mirabilis	24.07.18	Ross Hutton
Neoregelia kautskii	3.10.19	Terry Davis
T. loliacea	5.10.19	Steve Molnar
T. paucifolia	7.10.2019	Steve Molnar
T. ionantha	7.10.2019	Steve Molnar

Seeds cost 50¢ per packet (plus postage) for Members and Seed Bank supporters
or \$1 per packet (plus postage) for all other enquiries:

Contact **Terry Davis (02) 9636 6114 or 0439 343 809**

For a full list please go to bromeliad.org.au

if you have seed to donate please contact Terry in order to send them to him.

PLANT LABELS

SOURCE: FNQBSG - December 2019

Drew Maywald, like many bromeliad collectors, first used plastic plant labels and a permanent marker. He found that after two years many of the labels had faded and the names could not be read.

What has worked for Drew is writing the name with a 4B pencil then spraying with two coats of clear lacquer. The product he had success with is 'Rust-Oleum 2x Ultra Cover Clear', available in a spray can from Bunnings and made for outdoor applications. Coats take 15 minutes to dry and Drew left two hours before putting the tags into the soil/pots. This lacquer comes in matte or gloss and Drew chose the gloss finish because he could tell which tags he had re-done.

For cleaning old tags, he used orange oil (available from most supermarkets) which removed all dirt, pencil and permanent pen marks.

TIPS FOR ENTERING BSA COMPETITIONS

When scoring a bromeliad entry the judges start with 100 points, then take off a point for each mistake. Here are 12 things you would lose points for.

1. Pot dirty or old looking.
2. Pot not plain but decorative, pots must be plain black or dark green plastic or terracotta, cannot be any other colour.
3. Brom not in the middle of the pot.
4. Brom not growing straight.
5. Distribution of leaves uneven.
6. Bromeliad dirty or has debris, on or in between the leaves.
7. Damaged leaves eg by fall, insect or sun.
8. Old leaves not trimmed.
9. Flowers not at their peak.
10. Incorrect number of broms in one pot in entered category. Must only have single specimen in pot only if entering in 'Single Specimen' category, otherwise can have multiples.
11. When entering 'Colony' category, the plants are not joined.
12. Colony not having overall good shape.

Additionally

- Only financial BSA members can enter competitions.
- New members can enter Novice section; anyone can enter the artistic Section.
- Financial BSA members can cast one vote, in each section.

UNSTABLE VARIEGATIONS

Source : by K. McNicol

On a bromeliad Facebook Page, a member denoting his displeasure of the unstable variegations on his Neoregelia. He could 'toss it' or, alternatively grow it on with the hope of getting more stable pups from it.

Pups grow from a bud on the meristem inside the protection of the leaves. Pups will often show characteristics of that leaf's markings. So a non variegated leaf will often throw a non variegated pup (but MAY give a variegated one), and a variegated leaf will often throw a pup according to the variegation on the leaf.

The photo shows a bromeliad with unstable variegations. A very broad suggestion of what pups could be expected from each bud is below. In order to 'encourage' a pup to grow on one side or another of a plant, it is necessary to expose it (tilt the pot) to more light.

The grower should wait until this plant is mature, to expect pupping to commence.

If you would like an albo-marginated plant, tilt the albo marginated leaves to the light.

If you would like a variegated plant, tilt the variegated leaves to the light. If you get a NOVAR pup (no variegations) you should remove it and discard, to encourage the mother to throw more pups.

Or you could just try your luck and hope for a spectacular pup growing without any help.



BROMELIAD CLASS SIZES

Small: 100 cm

Medium-sized: 31 cm-70 cm (1-2 ft)

Med-large 71-100 cm (2-3 ft)

Large: > 100 cm (>3 ft)



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW LIFE MEMBER DAVE!

Congratulations to our newest life member David Scott, who has been an active participant of BSA from the 1990s.

David was invited to a BSA meeting by Richard and Diane Cornale and

while David does not recollect the exact year, he knows it was a long, long time ago. David collects everything and particularly Neoregelias, he grows everything undercover with a soil mix of 50% orchid mix and 50% plain soil, with no fertiliser. He especially recommends no fertiliser on coloured Neos.

In the 90's David recalls how difficult it was obtaining new and varied bromeliads especially anything a bit different. When he first joined, he and other members went on road trips out of Sydney to source different bromeliads particularly from growers like Peter Tristan.

David also won the open section this meeting. His Tillandsia 'Samantha' was obtained more than 10 years ago, for \$6, and had been grown by Chris Larson. David recalls looking at the tiny plant and thinking "why on earth would I pay \$6 for that?" However other members assured him he would be happy with his purchase and 10 years and a lot of patience later, this is a spectacular bromeliad with a tall inflorescence, the flowers haven't opened yet. The above photo show it growing beautifully in David's shade house.

Canistrum Vania Leme

Source: JBSNZ May 2015 Vol 55 No 5 - G Barclay

Peter Walters of the NZ bromeliad society was responsible for registering this cultivar and was part of the original collection party in Peters words (2008 BSI Journal Vol 58)....

A bromeliad species rare in cultivation is *Canistrum auratum* Leme. In Elton Leme's 1997 book 'Canistrum - Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest' it says about this plant.... 'At today's deforestation rate it has become increasingly difficult, or even impossible, to find this species again in the wild. There are very few specimens of *C. auratum* in cultivation. All arose from the original clone, which does not guarantee the survival of this species *ex situ*.'

On an expedition to Bahia, Brazil in 2003, our teamdiscovered a new population of *Canistrum auratum* in the county of Barra do Choca near the city of Vitoria da Conquista and the same day, a few kilometres away in a small fragment of Atlantic Forest at about 600 m elevation made an even more dramatic find of a new cultivar of the same species. This new and striking plant has wonderfully marked and banded foliage in shades of purple and dark-brown in addition to its attractive orange and yellow inflorescence, and is sure to be highly sought after in the horticultural world.

Because leaf colour is not recognised as sufficient reason for varietal status, it is intended to assign a cultivar name to this new introduction, and it gives me great pleasure to name it *Canistrum* 'Vania Leme' after the beautiful wife of our friend Elton Leme, the foremost authority on Brazilian Bromeliads. Vania fully deserves the recognition for the many years of support of her husband's work.

That says it all and gives you a clear idea of the diversity of bromeliad genera and how many different plants are likely being lost to the deforestation in South American countries - many unfortunately before they are even discovered.

This lovely cultivar is quite compact at around 25 cm high and 20 cm wide when fully grown. It is now becoming well established in New Zealand collections and is proving to be an excellent and vigorous grower. It likes warm conditions, protection from winter cold and needs bright light all year round to attain and maintain the dark brown tones to the leaves and an optimal bottle-shape form. With these conditions, if placed in a reasonably large pot with adequate fertiliser in the warmer growing seasons, it will readily put out new pups on woody stolons and form a beautiful clump within only two to three years.



Report from Treasurer Alan Mathew for February 2020

Opening balance at bank 1.2.20	\$21592.64
Income:	\$ 1121.50
Less Expenses:	\$3808.34
Closing balance 29.2.2020	<u>\$ 18905.80</u>

Report from Treasurer Alan Mathew for March 2020

Opening balance at bank 1.3.20	\$18905.80
Income:	\$1235.17
Less Expenses:	\$864.70
Closing balance 31.3.2020	<u>\$19276.27</u>

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:

Renewal is due **1st January** for membership year January to December.

Annual Membership (Single/Family):	Australia	A\$25
Overseas Membership:	Asia/Pacific Zone	A\$40.
	Rest of the World	A\$45.

New Membership requires a \$5 joining fee, plus Annual Subscription.

(Those joining after our spring Show are covered for the following year.)

Note: Un-financial members must add \$5 rejoining fee when re-applying for membership.

MAIL ORDER PAYMENTS BY MASTERCARD/VISA.

(Subject to A\$10.00 minimum.)

Members using Mastercard or Visa mail order facility should provide the following details, printed clearly in block letters, on a separate sheet of paper:

- Name and address of **MEMBER**.
- **TYPE of card** (Visa, Mastercard)
- **CARDHOLDER** name details, as shown on card.
- Mastercard/Visa **number** and **expiry date**.
- **CARDHOLDER** signature (essential).
- Payment details (membership renewal, book purchase, postage, etc.)

LITERATURE for Sale

<http://www.bromeliad.org.au/Contacts/BSALibrarian.htm>

TITLE	AUTHOR	PRICE
Bromeliads for the Contemporary Garden	Andrew Steens	\$20.00
Bromeliads: A Cultural Manual (Rev. ed. 2007)	BSI	\$ 6.00
Bromeliad Hybrids 1: Neoregelias	Margaret Paterson	\$25.00
Bromeliads Under the Mango Tree	John Catlan	\$10.00
Bromeliad Cultivation Notes	Lyn Hudson	\$10.00
Growing Bromeliads – 3rd Ed. by BSA IS BACK!		\$20.00 (member price)

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