



BROMELETTER

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

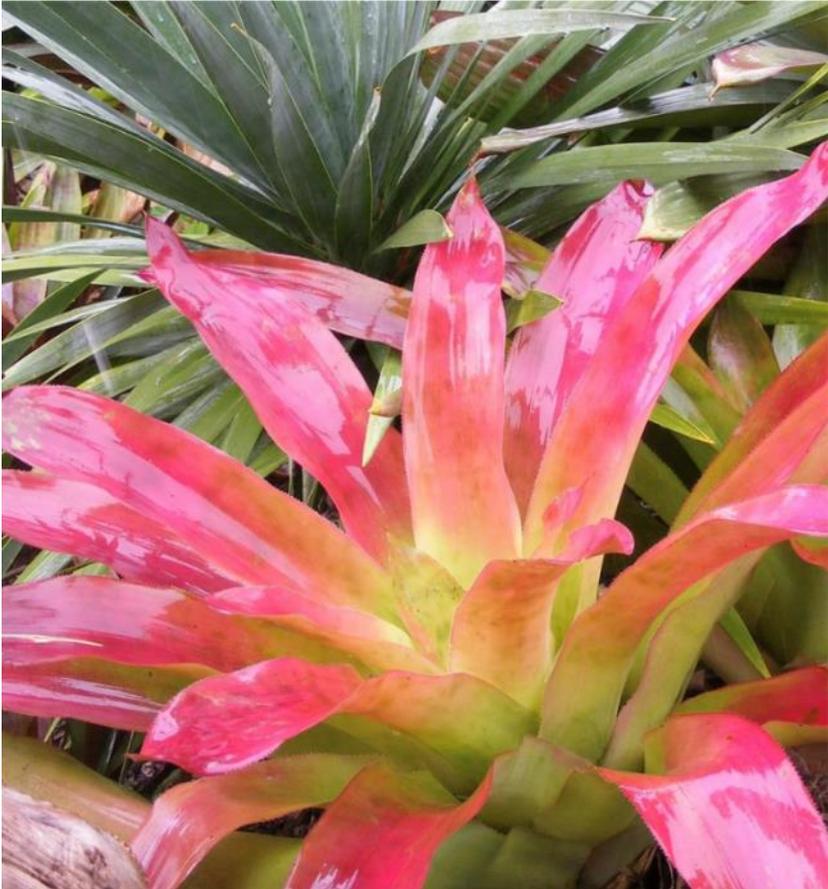
bromeliad.org.au



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COMMITTEE

President	Ian Hook	(president@bromeliad.org.au)	0408 202 269
Vice President(1)	Kerry McNicol	(membsec@bromeliad.org.au)	0439 998 049
Vice President (2)	Joy Clark		0409 717 794
Secretary	Todd Cameron		j.tbsasecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer	Alan Mathew		0430 806 636
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**Photo Front
Cover**

***Androlepis
skinneri***

**Photo
Ray Henderson**

Greeting BSA members,

Hope you are all well and have been enjoying the Bromeletters in lieu of our monthly meetings. Some good news. We received refunds from the Council for the rent for our meetings and show that we could not hold. Our website has been upgraded to increase storage.

Unfortunately, our July meeting is cancelled and August is also in doubt. We are required to get the written green light from the Council and must adhere to their guidelines. Ian has been in regular contact with the council re possibility of resuming meetings. Obviously, we will have some changes at our meetings some of these being:-

1. use of hand sanitisers
2. no food or drink will be served for the first few meetings, so please bring your own or purchase at the café near station
3. the set up of our meetings may need to be altered, so please abide with instructions given
4. ensure you maintain required distance between each other
5. **PLEASE** do not attend if you are unwell in any way.

Life Members:

Ron Farrugia
Graham McFarlane
Bill Morris
Ian Hook
Allan Beard
David Scott

The committee feels our group would benefit from more member participation and encourages everyone to enter the competitions as well as judging the entries. To aid this, each member will be given a voting ticket for each category on entry to the meeting hall. We encourage you to look at the entries and judge according to the criteria which was outlined in Issue 3 (April 2020) as this will help us all learn more about bromeliads.

Meanwhile check the website for notification on when meetings will resume, keep well and enjoy your brom time.....from Larissa (Editor)

WEBSITES

Bromeliads in Australia

<http://bromeliad.org.au>

Encyc of Bromeliads

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

BSI Cultivar Register

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

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

<http://fcbs.org/>

Bromeliario Imperialis

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



WHO SAYS LOCKDOWN IS BORING!

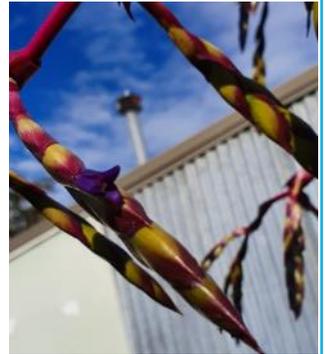
Text and photos by Kerry McNicol - 2020

The closing of borders caught us caravanning in South Australia and, with only two days notice, it was a frantic pack-up and bolt back across the border to avoid a two



week isolation period. Little did I realise what a recluse I really am, and didn't need to worry about the boredom of staying home . . . **I have my bromeliads!**

It was a long hot summer so there was PLENTY to do! I can't get out in the heat any more so my garden suffered, both with the heat and drought water restrictions and my tank water getting seriously low. I decided to 'sacrifice'



the front garden and not water, keeping a 'maintenance lifeline' going in the shade houses. So now was the time to tackle the front garden. To my delight these hardly plants not only survived, but some I'd had for many years, **FLOWERED!**

To be fair, this **Tillandsia krukoffiana** has been spiking steadily for quite a while, but still worth a mention. The flowers are quite insignificant but the whole spike will give me pleasure for months to come. This was one of the first plants I purchased when I first found time to go to bromeliad sales. I bought many plants from well known collector and grower, Ellen Sloss, this was just one of the 'lovely little' plants she offered, it was around 1995. It has had many grass pups, but I doubt I will be around to see any of these flower!

Another one I 'found' (funny how they flower when you have given up expecting anything), a watched pot...was a **Wittrockia Superba** in photo right (purchased in 2007), one that I have had difficulty keeping the pink tips on the mature leaves.



I have since put pups in a more protected environment, and despite the lower light, the tips seem to be holding . Now I await my **Witt. Lepardinum** to flower, probably NO chance as it sits outside my lounge window where I see it every day!



Aechmea Mexicana (acquired 2007) is yet another plant that has done NOTHING over the years, growing steadily but I gave up on watching it many years ago. It had fallen over and grew sideways out of the pot along the ground on its short stolon, where it is now happily flowering. Don't like my chances of seeing any future pups, if any appear, flowering, but am still pleased to see it! (photo left)

My next 'find' was **Pitcairnia smithorum**, with not one but two flowers

emerging. This, too, is susceptible to cold , so had to be keep warm in amongst a grouping of other plants. One of the more tropical 'grassy' varieties, and I must confess, I did sneak it a few extra drinks during



the summer, as it seems to need more than its thicker leafed cousins.

The leaves can get yellow and spotty and you might think to

give up on it but after once experiencing the brilliant orange bracts and sunny yellow flowers, it is well worth the extra effort in colder areas.

This plant was purchased in Queensland in 2013.

Last of the 'shy' flowerers is yet another Aechmea that I have had since 2010, *Aechmea azurea*, flowered shortly after I purchased it then threw half a dozen pups. It seems to be struggling in the cold frosty conditions of my winters and needs to be protected. Brown spots still appear, but will take what I can get, as the flower is quite spectacular with its scarlet bracts and bright blue flowers. It too, is worth the effort.



Photos - *Aechmea azurea* left and above.



As a post script to my frosty story of two winters ago, it is amazing how few plants were actually lost. It took a lot of molly-coddling for some (mainly mini neoregelia) but the numbers actually killed were less than ten.



Some of the most surprising were the alcantareas. The pictures of the same plant speak for themselves.

July 2018



June 2020





Left photo: - Alc. Silver Plum several days after the frost. Some hope!

Below right photo: - then the same plant two weeks later....seems like there is no hope...but



Left photo: - the same Alc. Silver Plum June 2020. The frost cloth is out and ready to go! It will be in place well and truly by the time this issue goes to print!

A bit more about Kerry (our vice president and purchasing officer)

Kerry has always been interested in plants. While living in Adelaide a friend who collected broms gave her a Quesnelia...that was it, Kerry was hooked. On returning back to Sydney (35 years ago) she started attending the BSA shows and finally the meetings. Kerry lives in Hawkesbury region, NSW which has a drier climate than the rest of Sydney.

ANDROLEPSIS



Source: Wikipaedia; Encyc of Bromeliads

Photo Ray Henderson, fchs.org/pictures

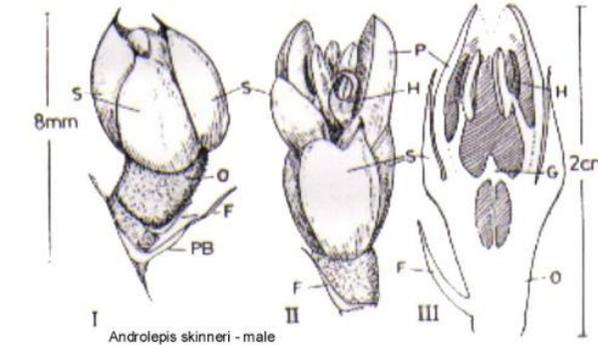
Androlepis skinneri is a terrestrial bromeliad that is native to southern Mexico and Central America. In Sydney, NSW it will tolerate a heavy soil but is also fine in a pot. It is a popular landscape plant because it tolerates full sunlight becoming a very intense red colour with exposure. However colours can include pink and orange as well as red. Be aware that it can scorch in the worst of the Australian summer sun.

Although it is a large bromeliad it produces normal pups. A small clump might flower every few years, then the plant will die slowly and produce pups like many bromeliads.

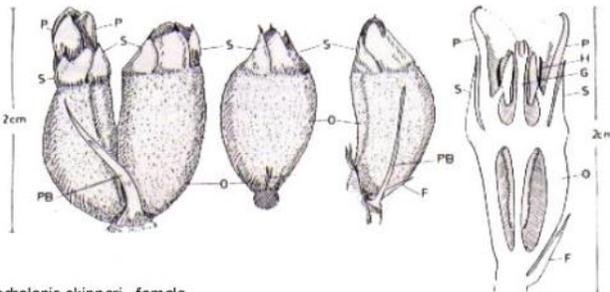
While it is quite hardy and even drought tolerant and can grow to an extreme size, as large as 5'

across, in the Sydney climate it mostly reaches 2-3' across, thus being a more compact brom. The flower spike can reach up to 4' in length and tends to be snow white in colour.

This is one of the few Bromelioideae species that is



Androlepis skinneri - male



Androlepis skinneri - female

dioecious; meaning that it has distinct male and female individual parts. **Dioecious reproduction** is biparental reproduction. **Dioecy** ([Greek](#): διοικία "two households"; adjective form: **dioecious**).

MORE NIDULARIUMS

Source: GCSBS Nov-Dec 2019 #6. Photo Bromeliad Therapy with Natalie

Following Annamari's article on Nidulariums in our last issue, here are some more beautiful Nidulariums..

Nidularium camposportoi (photo right) (previously campos-portoi)

The hyphens are being removed from many names including *Nidularium camposportoi*.



Left: Nidularium 'Red Queen' photo by Herb Plever at WBC Orlando 1980



Right: Nidularium atalaiaense

TWO CONFERENCES POSTPONED

Graeme Barclay (Conference Convenor) regrets to inform everyone that due to uncertain travel restrictions for guest speakers coming from around the world, the 'Kiwi Broms' Conference in April 2021 has been postponed to **April 7th-10th 2022**, and will be held at the same venue in Auckland.

All current registrants have been emailed, and can ask for a refund if they are no longer able to attend in 2022. Any hotel rooms booked have been transferred to the same days of the week in 2022 but can be cancelled or amended.

~

Also the World Bromeliad Conference scheduled for June 9-13, 2020 in Sarasota, Florida, has been rescheduled to **June 8-12, 2021**.

My Love Affair with Mini Neoregelias

by Joy Clark - 2020

As I get older, I find the smaller size of miniature neoregelias more appealing for their ease of handling. Plus, mini neoregelias have such a lot going for them. Not only are they cute and colourful but are fairly easy to grow and propagate. They can be grown in hanging baskets (if there is a space shortage) and because of their smaller size, you can fit more on your shade house benches - which is a good thing!

There are so many hybrid minis with vibrant colours available these days that we are spoilt for choice on what to collect but my favourites are still in the older varieties. I have found they are more stable with their colours and markings. Having said this, I still snave up any new releases that come my way.

After all I am a one of those addicted collectors.

I leave most of my stoloniferous (long stemmed) plants to grow and multiply in their pots or baskets. These types are also great

for tying to trees or creating displays on pieces of wood.

Some of my favourites are Chiquita Linda, Night Spot, Cayenne, Midget, Ritzzy, Small Fry and the brilliant Fireball.

Neoregelias happily grow without a potting medium. Many grow in the wild by attaching their roots to trees and relying on moisture and rotten leaf litter for their nutrients.

So, if you have a good tree candidate at your place that will afford some dappled sun and is protected from frost, give it ago. The crook of a branch is an excellent position and will give some support for the plant. If that isn't an option, try placing and tying onto the trunk with jute string or stocking. I place a small amount of sphagnum moss around the base of the plant to keep it moist to encourage root growth. Don't tie your plant on trees that shed their bark otherwise all your efforts will end up on the ground when the bark flakes off.



Shamrock



Chiquita Linda



Mini Skirt

The short stoloniferous minis are better grown in pots and as single specimens. That way they form a nice even rosette formation. I find pups from these are better taken off as soon as they reach about a third of the size of the mum so you can keep the even growth of leaves and avoid elongated leaves. Some examples with these are Little Faith, Pheasant, Shamrock and Mini Skirt.



Neo. abendrothae

Let's not forget the species. I prefer the long stolon minis in the species. Species may not be as colourful as hybrids but they all have unique qualities that have been passed on to the making of many, many wonderful hybrids. Some of my favourite here are: abendrothae, taropotensis, dungsiana, pauciflora, ampullacea and the ever popular lilliputiana.



Neo. dungsiana

My "love affair" with these little beauties is such that I have phased out my collection of



Neo. lilliputiana

medium to large bromeliads and now concentrate on growing miniatures only. They are attractive in shape and have brilliance in colour, all of what you would get in the larger bromeliads but in a compact size that is easier to handle.

A bit more about Joy....Kerry and Joy knew each other at school, then later became sisters-in-law. Joy was always interested in plants and like Kerry grew ferns. Once Kerry was back in Sydney she introduced Joy to bromeliads and they have been encouraging each other ever since. Joy has been a long serving BSA committee member and currently is the second Vice president, assists the catering and is responsible for the show displays.

[Report from Treasurer Alan Mathew for June 2020](#)

Opening balance at bank 1.6.20	\$17,916.88
Income:	642.00
Less Expenses:	857.71
Closing balance 30.6.2020	<u>\$17701.17</u>

Uses for Spanish Moss - *Tillandsia Usneoides*

by Larissa Victoria - 2020

Source: Wikipedia; richmond.com/news; holisticlivingschool.org; Floridata.com; elmaskincare.com



We are all familiar with *Tillandsia usneoides* commonly known as **Spanish moss** and have seen how birds often use this tillandsia as nesting material, spreading it far and wide. At our December 2019 meeting, Joy Clark showed us a nest built into a bromeliad with Spanish moss incorporated into it. In the Americas, species that prefer tillandsia usneoides include Yellow-throated warblers

Photo: Bromeliads in Australia

and northern parulas, two Texas bat species (northern yellow and Seminole) and one jumping spider (*Pelegrina tillandsia*). This last one lives only in Spanish moss. However Spanish moss has had many other uses apart from those in the wild.

Claims that Spanish moss tea has amazing properties have existed for many years and include enhancing glandular functioning, reducing fatigue, confusion, senility, depression and hyperirritability, as well as aiding libido! It is mostly ingested in the form of brewed tea.

This tea was given to expectant mothers, to promote the production of breast milk and to make childbirth easier. In folk medicine, the tea was consumed to treat rheumatism. In Mexico it was used to treat epilepsy in infants. In southern Louisiana, Cajun healers used tillandsia tea for treating diabetes.

Aside from its various therapeutic applications, Spanish moss has been used for various purposes, including building insulation, mulch, packing material (for fruit), mattress stuffing, fiber and as an ingredient in the traditional wall covering material called **bousillage**. In the early 1900s it was used commercially in the padding of car seats and in 1939 over 10,000 tons of processed Spanish-moss was produced in the USA for this purpose. Some writings show it was used to stuff voodoo dolls!



**x20 magnification
(Photo Wikimedia
Commons)**

In the desert regions of the south-western United States, dried Spanish moss plants were sometimes used in the manufacture of evaporative coolers, colloquially known as **swamp coolers** and in some areas as **desert coolers**. These are used to cool homes and offices much less expensively than using air conditioners. These days this



tillandsia is used in small quantities in arts and crafts, and as mulch in flower garden beds, as it retains moisture.

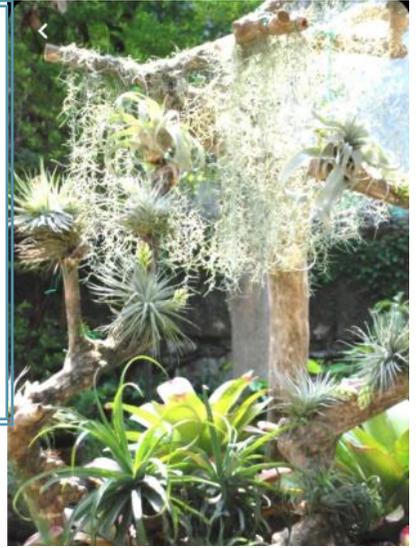
As Spanish moss grows prolifically and has a light texture and a soft grey colour, it is being used in floral, architectural and garden displays more frequently. Enjoy these examples and be inspired.



Photos this page:
Pinterest

NAME ORIGIN

Native Americans called this tillandsia "Itla -okla" meaning "tree hair", but the name came from the French, who were reminded of the Spanish conquistadors' long beards, so they called it Barbe Espagnol, or "Spanish Beard." The Spaniards got back at the French by calling the plant Cabello Francés, or "French Hair." The French name won out, and as time went by Spanish Beard changed to Spanish moss.



INSTRUCTIONS

If you have an excess of Spanish moss and decide to use it as a mattress filler or a packing material it is best to get rid of insects (bugs and lice) and other miscellaneous animals prior to use. Microwaving works well as does heating or boiling in water. (**HINT-** remove bats, lizards and snakes before microwaving!)



IN THE WILD



Source:
 R. Freitas - Planet Bromeliad;
 James Pion - Facebook;
 Pinterest; On the go with Lynne – WordPress;
 Eduardo Laporta (bottom right) Deuterocohnia brevifolia- BSSF Facebook



Guzmania hollinensis

Source: R.Little FNCBS April 2020; bromeliads.info; fcbs.org. Photos:- Encyc of bromeliads; K.Marks

'hollinense' Pronounced: oy-yeen-en-see



Quoting Luther (J. Brom. Soc. 42(4): 168-9. 1992)
 “This very tall guzmania is locally abundant near streams and flooded areas where it grows both terrestrially and as a low epiphyte. Plants within a single population may have concolorous green leaves or some, usually a minority, may have striking bronzy red foliage. Sun exposure is not a factor as red plants may be lightly or very densely shaded. The general aspect of the plant resembles a large, coarse grass or sedge especially when growing terrestrially in swampy areas. Except for its impressive size, this plant has no qualities recommending it as a horticultural subject”.

The foliage is a shiny deep green with prominent ridges running the length of the leaf. The flower stalk

can grow up to 9', the inflorescence is greenish grey with a grey-purple flower that emerges close to the stalk. Due to the reduction of its habit *Guzmania hollinensis* has been placed on the Red List of threatened species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is also rare in cultivation.



Chemicals that can kill Bromeliads

Source: BSA - Vol 56 No 4 - July / August 2018

Heavy metals and their salts – found in treated timber, like pine, that contain salts of heavy metals such as copper, lead, chromium and cadmium. Many outdoor play equipment and out-houses, before 2006, were built wholly or partially from ‘treated timbers’. Copper may be found in fungicides, ornamental copper watering cans, pots and ornaments.

Lead - found in lead based paints which may be present in older buildings and paintwork. Any lead flashing on rooves which drain to collection tanks may contaminate water.

Silicon - present in sealers and some glues

So take care when buying any products that you may use in your yard even if not specifically on bromeliads.

If you have seed to donate please contact Terry .

Below is the list of seeds in our Seed Bank.

<i>Neoregelia kautskii</i>	5.10.19	Terry Davis
<i>Al. imperialis rubra</i>	15.10.19	Terry Davis
<i>Pseudalcantarea viridiflora</i> (red under leaf)	23.10.19	Terry Davis
<i>Tillandsia fasciculata</i>	28.5.20	Steve Molnar
<i>Tillandsia setacea</i>	22.5.20	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**

Congratulations to **Olive Trevor** who was awarded **The Order of Australia** in the Queen’s Birthday 2020 Honours. The Order of Australia recognises Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. Olive is a Patron of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland and has received this award for her service to horticulture through the cultivation of Bromeliads. We congratulate Olive Trevor OAM on this award, and thank her for her tireless work over the decades in the cultivation of Bromeliads.



INSPIRATION

Source: Pinterest, My Tasteful Space, Facebook

In our last issue Joy Clarke showed us how to use branches to display bromeliads.

Here are other ways to make the most of your space and display your bromeliads.



We would like to welcome our most recent bromeliad enthusiast:

Terry Gower

If you would like to become a member, please see details below.

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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