

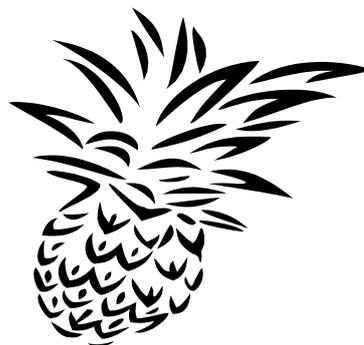
Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group N.S.W.

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month
Next meeting 16th May, 2013 at 11 a.m.

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery
114 Pine Street Wardell 2477
Phone (02) 6683 4188

Discussion: April 2013
General Discussion
Writing Formulae
Zeolite

Editorial Team:
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Meeting 21st March 2013

Ross opened the meeting at 11:15 am, and welcomed 30 members and guests. Guests included Alan Phythian and partner Dorothy, and Doug Binns from Coffs Harbour. Apologies were received from six members.

General Business

Ross mentioned the upcoming bromeliad show for the QBS, which is to be held on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th April. Shane also handed out flyers advertising the Gold Coast Bromeliad Society show to be held on Saturday 13th April. Ross commended both shows to the members, and suggested those wishing to visit either or both should arrange some form of car-pooling.

Ross mentioned that the BSI Journal for August 2012 contained an article on *X Biltanthus*, with some of the photographs in this article being taken by Don.

The FNCBSG NSW has joined the Australian Bromeliad Society and received its first Bromeletter. These newsletters will be kept in the library, and are available for borrowing. The Australian Society has offered a reciprocal arrangement for newsletters for next year.

José Manzanares, who recently gave a talk at the New Zealand conference is intending to make a similar presentation in Brisbane on 27th March at the Queensland Bromeliad Society venue in New Farm. It was suggested that those wishing to attend, should organise their own transport.

Because of the number of new members and because it's time for a revision, there are competition guideline notes in March's newsletter (page 15). We are also seeking from the membership any fresh ideas regarding the competitions and their rules, particularly regarding clumps or multi-plantings. Perhaps there needs to be an additional section (decorative) in the competition. However, it should be kept in mind that standardised or universal rules are for the benefit of all, particularly for those who show at a number of different shows and venues. Please put your ideas in writing, so that eventually a ballot can be held to decide the form and applicable rules for the competitions.

It was pointed out, particularly to new members, that the group's source of funding includes raffles, commission on plant sales, and sales of fertiliser. Because of this funding, the group is able to publish the monthly newsletter, sell plants at reasonable prices, maintain a library, and buy equipment essential to aid in discussions. This funding also provides a super raffle, guest speakers, cheap fertiliser, and tea and coffee. Of course many friendships are built at the monthly meetings, and generally, a good time is had by all. All this from these limited

sources. Let us, as members, ensure that the good times continue to flow. Please support these funding mechanisms. Regarding the plant sales commissions: Please pay the plant sales price, which includes the commission of only **\$1.00** per plant, to the salesperson, currently Trish. Do **not** pay the seller direct, and remember car park sales are **not** allowed as this is not within the spirit of being part of the Group.

Kay alluded to the poor response in the Novice Popular Vote section in this month's competition. **Two entries**. It was pointed out that some novices might think their plants cannot compete with the fanciest plants or the priciest plants. This is not so. It was mentioned that in many, more major competitions, the Grand Champion of the show, turns out to be a simple but well grown specimen. By way of example, at the recent Australasian Conference in New Zealand, the Grand Champion was a *Tillandsia tectorum*. Best *Aechmea* was *Ae.* 'Pickaniny'; best *Neoregelia*, *Neo.* 'Garnish'; best mini *Neoregelia*, *Neo. lilliputiana*; best *Billbergia*, *Bill.* 'Domingos Martins'; best arrangement, a clump of *Ae. orlandiana*. All going to proving the point that a well grown inexpensive brom could well win you the blue ribbon. Come on you novices, get active, give it a go!

In 2015 the Australasian Conference "Bromsmatter" will be held in Parramatta, Sydney from the 16th - 19th April. The Queensland Sunshine Coast Bromeliad Society was voted as the venue for the 2017 Australasian Conference.

Another successful raffle raising \$122.00; thank you to all participating members and guests.

Jan Mountford, who after a number of years of dedicated service has recently retired from the position of group's treasurer, was thanked by Ross on behalf of the members, and treated to a round of hearty acclamation.

Members' Show and Tell

Ross presented a *Vriesea* which he doubts the identity of, even though it has been around since the early 1990s in Australia known as *Vriesea biguassuensis* imported by The Olive Branch. (photo p.9)

After some discussion, Margaret Butcher believes it may be *Vriesea taritubensis*, more investigation required.

The reasoning for this being that the true *Vr. biguassuensis* belongs in the *Vriesea corcovadensis* Group along with other similar vrieseas often seen in our collections e.g.: *Vr. lubbersii*, *Vr. correia-araujoii*, *Vr. poenulata*, *Vr. flammea* and of course *Vr. corcovadensis*.

Can anyone help with a firm identification?



Vr. biguassuensis
painting by D. Fossari

Dawn brought in one of the mass produced/tissue cultured *Tillandsia cyanea* for identification. The plant needs to be re-potted into a larger pot, and watered.

Shane, having recently attended the Australasian Conference "Cool Broms" in Auckland, New Zealand, gave a brief summary of the show. He indicated it had been a great conference, with the Kiwis being exceptionally hospitable. The venue in Auckland was capable of holding up to 400 people. Some 255 members and partners attended, 130-140 of which were Australians. Numerous famous names were in attendance. Interestingly, sales were held prior to the conference on the Friday night. Unfortunately many Australians appeared depressed, primarily because of the difficulty in bringing any purchases back to Australia. Saturday and Sunday were the main conference dates, with a total of 12 presenters. Elton Leme, though he couldn't attend, provided several videos. José Manzanera gave a technical presentation proposing a restructuring and renaming of genera in the subfamily Tillandsioideae based on DNA sequencing. He gave a second presentation on Ecuador, "Land of Bromeliads" describing a variety of plants interspersed with many habitat shots. Nigel Thomson, along with his dancing, gave an excellent presentation on "Bromeliads Light up your Life". Dennis Cathcart spoke on different sized Tillandsias (one 14 feet across). In addition to the presentations, a variety of excellent garden tours were conducted.

Meg brought in an arrangement or multi-planting of Neoregelias, along with a clumping or singularly connected group of *Vriesea*. This being a good example of the new sections contemplated for the monthly competitions. Les brought in a stunning bowl containing an arrangement of *Cryptanthus*.

Laurie displayed a number of plants. A single plant and a clump of *Tillandsia* 'Laurie' (*Till. brachycaulos* X *Till. schiedeana*). A lovely ball about 40 cm across. Also he had a 30 cm ball of the sweet smelling *Tillandsia malleontii*. A *Billbergia* 'Hallelujah', which appeared to have been overfed. It was suggested that the excess fertiliser be washed off the plant, then repotted in fresh potting mix and given more light and NO fertilizer. A *Billbergia* 'Laurie Mountford' which was No.2 in his grex of *Bill. 'Hallelujah' X Bill. vittata*.

Examples of *Till. schiedeana* (small), *Till. juncea*, and *Till. funckiana* all as clumps grown on corks. To get the seed to attach to the cork, Laurie wets the cork and smears the seed around it, no glue is necessary. Once attached, he waters them twice a day.

Ross introduced Alan Phythian, a Queensland grower and hybridiser of foliage Vrieseas. Alan spoke on *Vr. 'Red Chestnut'* and its related problems (see article on page 6). In the early to mid 1990s Alan set seed on his first *Vr. 'Red Chestnut'*. With careful selection he finished with 48 *Vr. 'Red Chestnut'* plants ranging from some dark to some very light in colour which he interbred for three generations thus establishing a good base of coloured plants for hybridising. In about

2005 Alan got into hybridising foliage Vrieseas. He was loaned any plant he wanted from several good collections. The end result is some 14 or 15 registered plants with *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' in them.

Alan has only ever used one *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' plant in the crossing of these plants. It is a dark form and a very large plant. No one has ever used this plant apart from Alan himself. By way of examples, Alan brought a number of these hybrids with him, viz. a *Vr.* 'Vista', a *Vr.* 'Snows of Mauna Kea' (note the stripes/lines need to be across the leaf for the plant to be *Vr.* 'Snows of Mauna Kea'), a *Vr.* 'Gulz', and a *Vr.* Angela, all crossed with *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut'. All the plants had received little sun and a lot of fertiliser. Even so, the plants were exquisitely coloured.

Alan indicated his breeding business is still pretty hard work given these flowers all open late at night, and the pollen may only last for an hour or so. After pollination, the seed develops for a period of approximately 12 months. The seed pod can be taken off when it is just opening at the end. The seed germinates in one to six weeks, and the seedling grows to about an inch in 12 months, and then takes another few years to mature. At the moment, Alan has quite a few hybrids under development, with a general trend towards producing more reds and darker pinks.

Some general information from Alan included: he uses Peters slow-release high potassium fertiliser, which he buries a few inches under the surface of the potting mix. He only uses foliar feed on small seedlings (Horticultural Solutions' HSO 10). One piece of advice from Alan, is that if you're going to hybridise it is helpful to know the background and the breeding of the plants you're going to cross. Without that history, some surprises are inevitable.

Mentioned by Ross, and arising out of Alan's talk, was information regarding plants known and sold as *Vriesea* 'Erotica'. It has been noticed that there are several variants of this hybrid in circulation, confusion being by similar appearance in foliage, however it is the inflorescence where the differences should be looked at to separate them. One plant that often gets misidentified with this confused group is the registered *Vr.* 'Jarrah'. It differs from *Vr.* 'Erotica' by having a much darker, almost blackish floral bracts as opposed to the lighter mauve/pinkish purple bracts of *Vr.* 'Erotica'. (photos p.9)

Moral: don't try identifying foliage/glyph type vrieseas by the foliage alone.

A hearty congratulations to Warren Hulbert for his efforts at the Royal Easter Show, Sydney 2013, gaining a 2nd and a 3rd placing in two Floral Art sections. Remember Warren from our August 2011 meeting, again at our October 2012 meeting where he gave very informative talks and demonstrations on floral art. (photos Sept. 2011 and Nov. 2012 Newsletters)

Bit of History of *Vriesea* 'Red Chestnut' by A. Phythian.

This article wouldn't have been possible without the research of Derek Butcher and some comments by Robert Larnach and my own observations.

If we look at the BSI Registry it is stated that Alvim Seidel of Brazil registered *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' in 1973, Derek doubts this because Seidel's Nursery didn't offer any seed for sale in his 1976 catalogue but did offer seed from several different *Vr. fosteriana*. Also there is nothing written to confirm this happened.

According to Derek it was named by Eddie Waras, a Danish expatriate, in the late 1960's when he sent a plant to Ervin Wurthmann. This collected plant (unknown location) was more compact than the normal species *fosterianas* and had reddish-brown markings. Apparently the late Harry Luther remembered this clone as not being robust and being difficult to grow. At the same time a plant was sent to Hans Gulz in Germany.

Derek also states that this cultivar first rated a mention in the Journal Brom. Soc. in 1973 in an article by Ervin Wurthmann as a form of *Vr. fosteriana* no mention of the variety *seideliana* (discovered some 9 years earlier) though other varieties were described. In the late 1970's *Vr.* 'Red Chestnuts' were imported into Australia from Germany possibly from Gulz Nursery. For this to have happened the Germans must have found the plants too large for the European markets. In the USA, a Dr. Morris Dexter obtained an offset and later on many plants were grown from seed, and as in Australia these were all called *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut'. Jeffrey Kent of Kent's Nursery advised Derek that they also obtained seed from Gulz. Enfield Nursery in Sydney also grew plants on from seed and I believe Olive Trevor introduced them to Queensland not long after.

So although the name *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' is not a cultivar name in the strict sense because plants are not all true offsets from the original plant obtained by Wurthmann or Gulz, it will remain in the Register.

I obtained my first plant (a small pup) of *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' in the early 1990's and set seed on it in 1996 and germinated a large number the following year but as with backyard hybridisers I quickly ran out of space when the plants had to be re-potted into 100mm pots. I selected out about 25 of the darkest marked seedlings and about 25 of the whitest ones and grew them on until the two darkest and the two whitest flowered, which I again crossed. I have done this for three generations and this gave me some good coloured plants for hybridising. I still use them and have only shared them with Robert Larnach.

I have had a bit of success breeding *Vr.* 'Red Chestnut' with the likes of *Vr.* 'Angela', *Vr.* 'Gulz', *Vr.* 'Snows of Mauna Kea', *Vr.* 'Kilauer' and Cheryl Basics *Vr.* 'Royal Hawaiian' series.

Of the thousands of seedlings I have grown I have never produced a plant that looks like *Vr. fosteriana* or *Vr. fosteriana* var. *seideliana*. Over the years I have made inquiries to Jack Koning, Robert Larnach and many others who have bred a lot of 'Red Chestnuts' and they have had the same results. You can get a big difference in colour and markings but no *fosterianas*.

An Ode to the NZ Conference by Shane Weston

Here I sit at Auckland Airport feeling a wee bit down & blue,
'twas a great Cool Broms 2013 Conference, almost too good to be true.

The efforts of Peter, Jocelyn, Dave, Graeme, Jeanette, Devo and ALL,
Were far from cheap and nasty and definitely not small.

Right from day one, when all were a meeting,
We did a lot of chatting and heaps of eating!
(...and DRINKING, rum of course)

We queued at the sales event and when let in; it was civil and calm, yet our
heads did spin.
So many Aussies looked gloomy and sad, why didn't we organize an import
permit to allow us to grin!

The show plants were up to world class,
But the Vrieseas really sat me on my arse!

So much plarnt beauty from Maloy, Coyle et al,
Even Mitchie had some to show, he's such a good pal.

Pirate was in usual form - charming and cheeky yet suitably dressed,
At his cottage we did stay on Totara Waters, a pace of the best!

The presenters were awesome and cool, with amazing info, facts and ideas,
I await the Brom world's response to Jose's DNA 'splitting' paper, please.

As for the Gangnam Style of the Dandaloo King,
I and many others are still larf-fing.

Right throughout the friendship and hospitality were second to none,
And to Sydney in 2015 we go for Bromsmatta, sure to be even more fun.

My plane awaits to whisk me back home, I will survive I spose with little grief,
But tis such a pity that Hot Water Beach now has my teeth!





Neoregelia 'Whirlwind'
1st Open - Shane Weston



Tillandsia lindenii
1st Novice - Trish Kelly



Vriesea fenestralis
Judges Choice - Marie Essery



Tillandsia 'Laurie'
brachycaulos x schiedeana



Neoregelia 'Perfection'



Guzmania unknown ??



Neoregelia 'Paula'



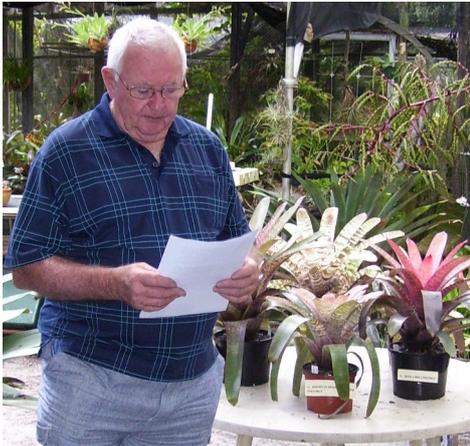
Plant acquired as *Vr. biguassuensis*, possibly *Vr. taritubensis* ??



Vriesea 'Erotica'



Vriesea 'Jarrah'



Alan Phythian delivering his talk on foliage vrieseas.



Vriesea 'Maroochy Mauve Star' unreg.



Vr. 'Maroochy Pink Pleasure' unreg.



Vr. 'Maroochy Lolly Pink' unreg.



Vr. 'Maroochy Arctic Star' unreg.

Photo's and the painting p.3 supplied by: Ross Little and Derek Butcher

Nidularium longiflorum or is it Nidularium innocentii ?

by Derek Butcher, November 2012

You can thank Kiwi, Peter Waters for this. He is a regular viewer of the Bromeliads in Australia web site and pointed out the misidentification of photos purporting to be *Nidularium longiflorum*.

We all know we must keep an eye on Botanists who place species under synonymy with another species and change our labels accordingly. In *Nidularium -- Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest* p.144-153, 2000 by Elton Leme we saw an in-depth review of this genus and many of us noticed that he had placed *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* under *Nid. longiflorum*. Many of us had been growing *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* for years and here was a chance to write a smaller label. But things did not quite fit, *Nid. longiflorum* is said to have an uniutriculate inflorescence. Translated this means a single inflorescence without the usual flowering in the side primary bracts so often seen in 'ordinary' *Nidularium*.

The next question I asked myself was how did our *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* get identified as such. Looking at Smith & Downs 1979 it seemed the closest fit.

Key to Varieties of *Nidularium innocentii*

1. Leaves dark red beneath or on both sides; primary bracts red or with the apex green. --> var. *innocentii*.
1. Leaves, or at least their blades, green. --> 2
2. Primary bracts wholly or mostly red-purple. --> 3
2. Primary bracts red near the apex and green elsewhere. --> 4
3. Leaf-blades wholly green. --> var. *wittmackianum*.
3. Leaf-blades marked with longitudinal white lines. --> var. *striatum*.
4. Leaf-blades with numerous longitudinal white lines. --> var. *lineatum*.
4. Leaf-blades with a single large median white stripe. --> var. *paxianum*.

These days you can get access to original descriptions via the internet and I find it great fun checking up on these. Mez's original description of *Nid. paxianum* in 1895 does not refer to any variegation and yet in Smith & Downs 1979 it clearly states "Leaves with a single large median white stripe".

If we ignore this part of the description then the plant we used to call 'wittmackianum' is very close to *Nid. innocentii* var. *paxianum*.

If we look at *Flora ilustrada Catarinense - Bromeliaceas* by Raulino Reitz (1983) and translate the Portuguese we also see no reference to a large median white stripe. So where did the stripe come from?

We know that Leme placed this taxon as a synonym of *Nid. innocentii* so you can change your labels to this species if it has flowers in fascicles around the central inflorescence. Have a careful look next time. Some may say we have a hybrid here but our plant can be traced back to the days when species were being grown in collections!

What does intrigue me is that Leme in 2000 did not mention the error in Smith & Downs 1979.



Nid. longiflorum Leme 1776



Nid. longiflorum Leme 782

▲ Showing flowers in central uniutriculate vase/cup only ▲
Originally as *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* now as *Nid. longiflorum*.



Two variants of *Nidularium innocentii*, the left photo showing the white petalled flowers in the central cup as well as in the outer bracts, unlike the uniutriculate inflorescence of *Nid. longiflorum* where the flowers are only in the central cup.

Photos supplied by Ross Little and Derek Butcher

MY HOBBY TAKES OFF

by Neville Wood 2006

After deciding that my hobby would be bromeliads, I decided to start by renovating my old shade house in which I had grown orchids for many years. Originally I had built the shade house framework from galvanised pipe which I thought would last forever. However, I underestimated the effects of salt air on steel (even galvanised steel) and living only one street back from the ocean, after a couple of years, corrosion soon became apparent. By the time I was ready to start growing broms, the framework needed totally rebuilding and I decided to use CCA treated pine for the framework as it was guaranteed to withstand weather and insect damage for 20-30 years, plus it was easy to work with. So after quite a bit of work, the shade house was finally renovated to my satisfaction and I started to stock it with various ferns and indoor plants to compliment my half dozen bromeliads.

One day while driving around nurseries we were looking through Swain's Nursery when I spotted an 8" pot of *Aechmea gamosepala* which although in flower was quite untidy and pot-bound. When I asked the price, I was told it was waiting to be divided and cleaned up and wasn't really for sale but if I wanted to take it as it was, I could have it for five dollars. I quickly produced the five dollars and duly made my first bromeliad purchase. That same plant is still one of my favourites but unfortunately it can become quite invasive and that original plant which I planted beside the trunk of a peppercorn tree eventually expanded to a clump about eight feet across and took over the whole of the garden bed.

My next big purchase was at a market near Umina where a grower was selling bromeliads which he had displayed on a tarp. I selected four reasonably priced, well advanced plants which were; *Aechmea winklerii*, *Neoregelia concentrica*, *Billbergia 'Kip'* and a yellow *Vriesea* with no name which I have since been told, is probably a *Vriesea barilettii* hybrid. They were paid for and loaded into the car for our trip home, I had finally been bitten by the "Bromeliad Bug" and after that I started collecting whenever I had the chance. My purchases were usually from the various markets and garage sales as I couldn't afford the prices often asked by the large nurseries and I didn't know of any other collectors.

I was driving past a house at Barrack Heights one day when I spotted a sign, "For Sale Pot Plants Cheap" so I went into the yard and discovered most of the "pot plants" were bromeliads. They belonged to an elderly gentleman who had been growing them for years and was now selling them all for very reasonable prices as his health was deteriorating and he wasn't physically able to maintain his large yard and collection any longer. During this period I became a frequent visitor and although his plants had been "let go" a bit they were still very reasonably priced and I spent quite a bit of money buying plants I didn't have. He told me he had previously dabbled in a bit of hybridising and quite a few of the

plants he was selling were his own hybrids and although not officially registered, carried the names of both parents. I bought several of these which at that stage were small un-flowered seedlings and it was a bit like buying a lottery ticket as I wouldn't know what I had until they matured and flowered. After flowering a few of these seedlings I became interested in having a go to grow some from seed myself as I saw it as a cheap way to acquire more plants with little financial outlay and so the wheels started to turn about how I would start out on this different venture sometime in the future.

THE NEXT PHASE OF MY HOBBY & PITFALLS ALONG THE WAY

by Neville Wood 2007

One morning when reading the local newspaper I came to a section called "My Club" where members from different clubs and organizations gave a brief run down about their particular club and this day it was about the Illawarra Bromeliad Society. After reading the article I made up my mind to join as I had found with my previous hobbies such as orchid growing and finch breeding that the knowledge you pick up and the friends you make in these clubs is very worthwhile. I made a phone call to the secretary and was informed when and where the next meeting would be held and arranged to attend.

When I attended the first meeting I was given a very warm welcome and immediately found that I knew two of the members. The president I knew from my latter years working at the steelworks and another member I had worked with when I started my apprenticeship with the carpenters dept. at the steelworks sixty years before, so I guess there maybe some truth in the saying that "what goes around comes around". The routine of the meeting was almost identical to the Orchid Society I was once a member of i.e. there were plant sales, a monthly point score, a raffle, a library, guest speakers etc. and it didn't take me too long to fit in. During my time in the society I have made many friends and found there are many very knowledgeable members who are only too happy to pass on their knowledge to anyone willing to listen. I also found another member who was interested in growing plants from seed and we now bounce ideas off each other and swap seed and plants. My collection has grown considerably as the plants offered for sale at the monthly meetings are of good quality and very reasonably priced. I am now able to swap plants with other members as well as purchase often hard to get plants.

I suppose bromeliads are like most things in as much as the more you learn the more you find you need to learn and I regularly attend meetings and question my grower friends in an attempt to quench my never ending thirst for knowledge about bromeliads. What with all of the new plants I have bought, won in raffles

and swapped I now find I need to expand and build suitable accommodation for them and they are gradually taking over the grassed area of the back yard. I have constructed a couple of shade cloth shelters (roof only) using the fences as back walls as well as converting an old bird aviary into an area to house some of my seedlings.

Like most things in life just when everything seems to be going well there is a hitch in things and after the problem with the CCA treated timber the next hitch I was confronted with was a hail storm with hailstone the size of golf balls and larger. Fortunately my best plants which were under shade cloth weren't affected but the ones in the garden were shredded and ended up looking like green confetti scattered all over the grass. Just to see all those beautiful plants so badly damaged was enough to make me want to give it all up, but when I realised I was much better off than a lot of other people I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself and just get on and clean everything up and see what could be salvaged. After everything was cleaned up I decided to give the broms. a helping hand so to speak and late that afternoon everything got a really good dousing with Seasol. I had read where Seasol isn't a fertilizer as such but more like a "tonic" which was supposed to be good to help plants overcome all sorts of stress and build up their resistance to disease. I used the spray pack that just clips onto the hose fitting and sprayed the whole lot on every brom. in the yard.

What really amazed me was the ability of the bromeliads to survive and after a couple of months, even plants that were almost devoid of leaves were putting up at least two pups each.

Maybe this is nature's way of ensuring the survival of the species or maybe it was the result of the drenching with Seasol, I didn't know nor did I care what it was, all I cared about was that my broms. were going to survive. At about twelve months after the hail episode, everything was growing beautifully; we were well into summer and then came January and the horrible New Years Day heatwave. I did my best to protect what broms. I could and when inspecting them a few days later everything looked OK. However after a week the effects of the heat were becoming apparent with burn marks seeming to appear daily. Here I was with my collection going backwards once again. I cut off all the damaged leaves and this left a very sorry looking lot of bedraggled plants almost as bad as they had been after the hail storm. Once again I got a container of Seasol and gave them a good drenching just on sunset. Again after a couple of months things were again starting to look up with no more signs of the heat damage and also evidence of new pups starting to emerge once again.

No sooner did things seem to be back to normal when we had a week of really severe westerly winds. I thought I was pretty safe from westerly winds as our house protects the western side of the back yard where my broms are. How

wrong I was to be proved as the winds funnelled between the house next door and a block of flats on the north of that and when it came up against a group of large trees in the back yards of these places it swung around and came at my yard from a northerly direction. Once again I suffered from the effects of nature with plants blown out of trees, off benches and leaves stripped of some of the others. I must say the damage wasn't as severe as my previous encounters with Mother Nature but the worst thing was that all of the plants I had been preparing for our show were blown off their bench onto the floor. The end result was mainly broken leaves, not on the bottom of the plant where they could have been removed unnoticed, but right in the middle of the plants making them unsuitable for showing. Once again the tidying up began and out came the Seasol once more. A few months down the track and once more the plants were showing signs of recovery with new growth visible again.

The following year the plants suffered damage from the cold as it was the coldest winter I had experienced in sixty years living in this area. I thought I was pretty safe from the cold as I live on a hill only one street back from the sea and we usually have reasonably mild winters but for two days in a row this winter my dog's water dish had ice on the top, something I had never witnessed before. Subsequently the plants suffered also with the odd cold damage here and there on the Neoregelias but the plants to suffer the worst were my Guzmanias and almost without exception they all had some degree of cold damage to their leaves which made them also unsuitable for exhibition. Again after I had cleaned up the damage I drenched them with Seasol and again after a few months they began to show signs of recovery with new growth evident.

So after all of the pitfalls I have had while growing broms I have learnt two very important lessons; one that broms are the most amazing plants with resilience beyond compare and what ever Mother Nature throws at them, they seem to be able to make a come back and I guess you could say they are the great survivors. To give an example, I had a plant of *Aechmea* 'Royal Wine' which had suffered badly with rot after contact with CCA treated timber and after I cut off all of the rotten leaf parts I decided it was beyond help and threw it on the rubbish heap. Sometime later when I was loading up some rubbish for the local tip I again spied the remains of the plant devoid of leaves and covered with the other rubbish, grass clippings and other bits and pieces. When I looked at it more closely it had a small pup growing from the side and a small flower spike coming from the top. Amazingly this was nature's way of a final attempt at plant survival. The second thing I have learnt is that in my opinion Seasol assisted greatly in the recovery of my broms from their various setbacks. I think it is a wonderful product that can assist in turning failure into success and I recommend it for all types of plants, even ferns.

Novice Popular Vote

1st	Trish Kelly	<i>Tillandsia lindenii</i>
2nd	Dawn Dennis	<i>Tillandsia cyanea</i>
3rd		

Open Popular Vote

1st	Shane Weston	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Whirlwind'
2nd	Kay Daniels	<i>Guzmania</i> unknown
2nd	Marie Essery	<i>Vriesea fenestralis</i>

Judges Choice

1st	Marie Essery	<i>Vriesea fenestralis</i>
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Comments from the growers:

Shane's *Neo.* 'Whirlwind' ([*Neo. carolinae* variegated x *Neo.* 'Hannibal Lector'] x *Neo.* 'Tiger Cub') X *Neo.* 'Punctate Red' was purchased from Peter Tristram some 12 to 18 months ago. Named and registered by Chester Skotak in 2005. Very similar to *Neo.* 'Groucho' and *Neo.* 'Zeppo'. Maybe a little bigger and the red may be a little stronger, but difficult to tell apart. Grown under 70% sand-stone shade cloth. Only water is rain. No fertiliser. No pests or diseases.

Kay's *Guzmania* hybrid was purchased a year ago from the Mclean markets. This is the first time it has flowered, a nice orange flower. A well grown plant, kept in the shade house, fertilised when flowering. Receives only rain water. No pests or diseases.

Marie's *Vr. fenestralis* was purchased from PineGrove some 12 months ago. The plant is beautifully shaped, and the leaves marked with the desirable stretched look. Grown in a shade house, under 50% beige shade cloth. It receives sun all day. The only water is rainwater. Only fertilised once when a pup. No diseases and only the occasional grasshopper.

Trish's *Tillandsia lindenii* was acquired from a 2011 raffle (donated by Laurie). Each of the paddles has acquired flowers at the same time. A well grown plant, grown in a shade house. No pests or diseases.

Dawn's *Tillandsia cyanea*, has been with her for many years. The plant needs re-potting, and some TLC.

Another set of well prepared plants for competition. Keep up the good work, but let's have more effort from the novices.