

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

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

Next meeting 18th August 2016 at 11 a.m.

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery  
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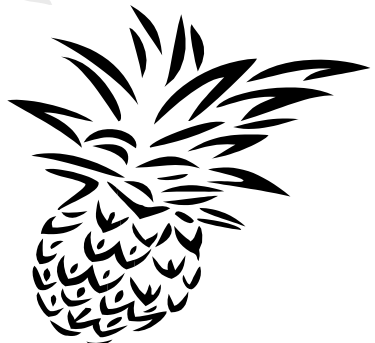
Discussion: July 2016

General Discussion

## **Editorial Team:**

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## Meeting 16th June 2016

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am  
The 22 members and two visitors present were welcomed.  
A total of one apology was received.

### General Business

We had a good roll up to our June meeting with several members back again after bouts of ill health. Ross welcomed everyone and distributed our Newsletter.

Helen and Jeanette spent some very valuable time recently recording onto a USB stick all of the Library books, Journals and other publication titles held in the Group's Library. We discussed making our library more accessible to members with suggestions offered to improve displaying the books at our meetings.

Jeanette, in conjunction with Ross, has kindly agreed to receive any e-mails from the Council of Australian Bromeliad Societies.

Topics for discussion included articles from the Newsletter such as, the group naming of the pink flowering forms of *Tillandsia cyanea* and *Till. lindenii*. The correct naming of Laurie's *Tillandsia* that he showed at our May meeting, a photo of the plant is in our June Newsletter on page 9. Hopefully many members find the article on the *Tillandsias* growing in the Atacama Desert interesting.

### Show, Tell and Ask !

Gloria drew our attention to the booklet of Lyn Hudson's on hints for growing bromeliads and how useful and informative it is.

Gloria showed her multi paddled *Tillandsia* 'Josie' bought as a seedling from Ross and now giving an interesting display. Gloria also encouraged everyone to allow their bromeliads to clump, explaining how she feels when rewarded with magnificent multi-headed floral displays.

Also recommended by Gloria is using rubber bands to anchor small *Cryptanthus* pups in their pots until they have established roots. This method of holding pups in place also works for the difficult *Orthophytums* that have a tendency to curl their leaves under themselves constantly pushing them up and out of the mix.

Marie brought in her *Guzmania sanguinea* which had quite a trunk. Being an upper pupper and having kept growing after each successive pup, when the lower foliage was removed quite an extensive trunk was revealed. Ross suggested that Marie repot her *Guzmania* into a taller pot covering the trunk where it would form roots along the trunk and more pups may be produced.

Trish showed two lots of *Alcantarea* 'Silver Plum' seedlings she had raised. The first lot were from seed Gloria and Tom had kindly given out last November. These had been raised in a closed system, a large, deep, translucent plastic storage box with a slightly elevated floor onto which the potted seed sat, water placed under the pot platform and the lid sealed. The seeds germinated and continued to "look" after themselves for five months where upon they were potted off at 50mm tall into community or individual pots.

The second lot of seedlings were an experiment, using the same technique as the first, the only difference being, is that the seed was considered to be very immature, having been cut from the plant by an inexperienced grower well before drying and splitting. Not being able to waste the seed or the opportunity Trish took some of the seed capsules before the rest were thrown on the scrap heap, only to ring Ross several weeks later saying retrieve that seed head they have germinated!! Ross has been equally successful!

John brought in his orange *Guzmania wittmackii* with its yellow petals, stating it was so unlike his others and had no idea how he obtained it. (refer note p.11)

Gloria shared her experiences with the last lot of very heavy rain and how her bromeliads fared, fortunately everything survived without damage, even her *Alcantarea* which had a saltwater bath when the canal/river flooded. Some of our members commenting that they had received in excess of 300mm of rain over the same week-end, one member receiving 465mm in a 30 hour period.

Jeanette brought in her *Billbergia leptopoda* which was unfortunately near the end of its flowering. It was at its peak earlier in the week but still shows that wonderful contrast of the red bracts and blue tipped green petals against the spotted white and green foliage. This is the sad fact regarding *Billbergias* that they are stunning and yet their flowering is so brief in duration.

Jeanette's *Billbergia* reminded us of an issue we came across several years ago with pots of *Bill. leptopoda* we were growing. The following note in part is taken from FNCBSG Newsletter June 2014, *Billbergia leptopoda / lietzei* :

#### Additional comments by Ross Little 2014

This month saw some of our *Billbergias* flowering again. When I first came across these two flowering here at PineGrove they were mixed together with the tag as *Bill. leptopoda*. The two different coloured petals had me searching for identifications, the result being the green petal plant is *Bill. lietzei var. chlorantha* and the blue tip petals are of *Bill. leptopoda*. The problem being is that they were virtually indistinguishable if one was trying to identify them by foliage alone as both are of similar size, shape and colour, also both have spots on the leaves. Grown together in a basket showed no difference between them until flowering.

Several months ago Keryn and Dave suggested we have a quiz as one of the monthly topics - offering to create one. The idea being to help us understand which direction our Group needs to take in the future regards learning more about our favourite plants, Bromeliads and their related problems. The quiz showed the gaps we need to concentrate a little more on where we may not be fully explaining various growing issues, tips etc. that help us all learn. Keryn and Dave arrived to the meeting early to set up, our white board at the ready for Keryn to write out her list of multiple choice questions. Dave had lots of plants in hand, these were to try and confuse us, with many looking very similar but from different genera to see if we could pick the difference e.g:

- Aechmea from a Neoregelia or a Quesnalia at a glance.
- Mealy Bug or Scale or rat damage.

Dave showed the plants etc. as Keryn asked the questions with scores being added at the end, not surprising it appears we are all learning quite well with few gaps needing to be filled.

Since the meeting we have received a couple of responses from members....

**“A very big thank you to Keryn and Dave** for all the hard work, plants and detail they went to in preparing the quiz for the June meeting. A lot of fun, sharpened the knowledge bank and enjoyed by all who participated. Well done to you both and thank you again”.

**“And now for something completely different.....!**

We were confronted with a QUIZ....which means (oh no !) we had to THINK...! We don't come to these meetings to THINK...!! We come to eat, drink (tea or coffee of course) and be merry, talk to friends, admire plants, buy plants, wish we could buy plants....wish Ross and Helen did not have so many plants we wanted to buy...but definitely not to THINK. (Speaking for myself only....) However, we sat down and started the process....slowly but surely....we got the idea....a lot of muttering and suggestions were casually being offered ....oops....we were supposed to write the answers down quietly.... Dave kindly came around with the plants to be identified and we all nodded knowingly as he had unwittingly turned the plants to face us with their labels....loud and proud...!!! Now this is the kind of quiz I like, getting the questions along with the answers but smiles of relief must have alerted him and from then on he was a little more discreet...! We wouldn't make good poker players...! It really was a lot of fun and Dave and Keryn put in a huge effort to keep us guessing and learning. We were all winners at the end (somehow or other...!) and a great big thanks from everyone must go to Dave and Keryn....this really was the highlight of the meeting - very well done and when is the next one PLEASE....? !!”



Dave Boudier and Keryn Simpson conducting their quiz.

### From the Registrar - BCR — *Vriesea* ‘PineGrove Giant’

Mature, huge, open rosette to 1.5 mtrs diameter x 60cm. high. Arching, broad, moss green leaves with lime green narrow cross-banding and an overall bronze red flush to the foliage in strong light. Erect, simple, pink stemmed spike to 2.4 mtrs tall with red speckled floral bracts and hooded cream flowers. A species variant of *Vr. fosteriana* var. *fosteriana* grown at PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery which breeds true from self-set seed.



Seed collected ca. 2008 and tagged as *Vr. fosteriana* (giant form at PineGrove), seedlings from this collection were sold by this name. However at a later stage interpretation of the tag was changed/shortened to *Vr.* ‘PineGrove Giant’. Perhaps for ease of writing or to sensationalise a name for sales, either way it is different to other forms of *Vr. fosteriana* and deserves a cultivar name of its own.

**Is Your *Billbergia nutans* Decorated with Whiskers**

Derek Butcher 2016

For the inquisitive ones:

*Billbergia nutans* is a very common plant but who has looked at it closely?

I have never been able to find the elusive *Billbergia* var. *schimperiana* in Australia.

Does it exist?



*Billbergia nutans* var. *schimperiana*  
painting



*Billbergia nutans*  
painting

With all the *Billbergia nutans* plants I have looked at the outer leaves are faintly spined but the inner leaves are spineless.

I have had to go to Reitz 1983 to find out that var. *nutans* has petals with blue edges AND tips. It is just a wider blue in *schimperiana*! Also Reitz will tell you that both plants have whiskers at the end of the petals. You need a magnifying glass but I have found them on every plant I checked in Australia.

Any comments welcomed.



Whiskers on *Bill. nutans*

◀ sepal  
and  
petal ▶



Photos by Lesley Baylis

Some of the decorative entries being imaginative, well done to all who entered.



'SS Groucho'  
by Ted Devine



'Cockatoo Haven'  
by John Crawford



'Happy Birthday Gloria'  
by Keryn Simpson



'Christmas in June'  
by Dave Boudier



*Neophytum 'Galactic Warrior'*  
1st Open and Judges Choice  
Lesley Baylis



*Vriesea fosteriana*  
1st Novice Ted Devine



*Guzmania 'Tricolor'* novar  
grown by John Crawford



*Billbergia vittata* hybrid ?  
grown by Kay Daniels



'Flaming Ball of Stricta'  
1st Decorative Lesley Baylis



*Tillandsia albertiana*  
grown by Jeanette Henwood



*Ananas 'Tricolor'*  
grown by Keryn Simpson



*Hohenbergia 'Karla'*  
grown by Gloria Dunbar



'Bamboozled'  
grown by Jeneatte Henwood



*Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii*  
grown by Dave Boudier



*Cryptanthus 'Marimist Kay'*  
grown by Les Higgins

Photo's supplied by: Ross Little



*Aechmea orlandiana*  
grown by Laurie Mountford



*Vriesea* hybrid ??  
grown by Marie Essery

### **Vriesea 'Eva Sunspot'**

In the FNCBSG September 2015 Newsletter we published a photo of *Vriesea* 'Eva Sunspot' (unreg.) grown by John Crawford which led to a query and further discussion regards the identity of this plant. This photo has been added to the BCR entry as this plant is now registered.

Greg Aizlewood imported it in 2009 under reverse parentage from John Arden as *Vr.* 'Sunspot' x 'Eva'



*Vriesea* 'Jan's Gem'  
grown by Laurie Mountford



*Tillandsia bulbosa* 'giant form'  
grown by Jeanette Henwood

### **Guzmania wittmackii - yellow corolla (petals)**



*Guzmania wittmackii* - orange form  
grown by John Crawford

Scape 8 mm in diameter, curved; scape-bracts suberect, foliaceous, densely imbricate, red distally.

Inflorescence laxly, bipinnate; primary bracts spreading, foliaceous, to 4 dm long; fascicles few-flowered.

Floral bracts oblong, obtuse, ample, enfolding and exceeding the sepals, 6-8 cm long, the edges scarious.

Sepals linear, acuminate, 4 cm long, free, membranaceous.

Corolla white, 7-9 cm long.

**Note.** Harry Luther advised (11/2003) there is a form with yellow corolla found in northern Ecuador and southern Colombia AND has been selectively bred.

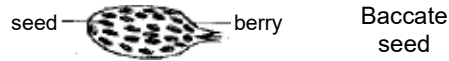
Photos by Ross Little

## Bigeneric Hybrids

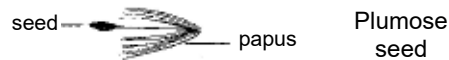
by Vic Przetocki

These hybrids have been created by crossing two different genera within the same subfamily group. Bromeliads are divided into three subfamilies:

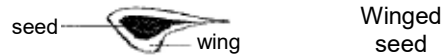
1. Bromelioideae (pronounced bro-meel-oy'dee-ee) which contains the popular genera such as *Aechmea*, *Ananas*, *Billbergia*, *Cryptanthus*, *Neoregelia* and *Nidularium*. This group can be recognised by their berry like fruit.



2. Tillandsioideae (pronounced til-land'see-oy-dee-aye) this group contains *Guzmania*, *Tillandsia* and *Vriesea*. The seed from these genera is found enclosed in a capsule type fruit which when dry springs open to be released in a similar fashion to dandelion seed which looks similar.



3. Pitcairnioideae (pronounced pit-cairn-ee-oy'dee-ee) most often cultivated members are the *Dyckia*, *Hectia*, *Pitcairnia* and *Puya*. These genera have a winged fruit which is similar to a *Hippeastrum*.



*xAnagelia* 'Frost Bite'



*xNeomea* 'Twilight'



*xBillmea* 'Red October'



*xBiltanthus* 'Tiger Eye'



*xNeomea* 'Pasha'

Five Vic Przetocki bigeneric hybrids

From the description of the seed one can see the futility of trying to cross genera from one subfamily to another, it just won't work, not with normal pollinating techniques. There have been many combinations made with some very interesting results and this is the attraction, the unexpected. A *Cryptanthus* crossed with a *Cryptanthus* will basically give the same shape as the parents but cross it to a *Billbergia*, *Aechmea* or *Neoregelia* and the size and shape will be different. Unfortunately a side effect of creating a bigeneric is that most are infertile and therefore are unable to pass on any special attribute in further hybridization.

If cross pollination has been successful the chances of abundant quantities of seed is slim and in many instances the seed is not viable. If the seed does germinate then you can expect to have a mature plant in about 3 - 5 years depending on growing conditions.

*xNiduregelia* 'Surprise' - a hybrid by G. Goode crossing *Neoregelia concentrica* with a *Nidularium* species, it has yellowish green leaves splashed with purple.

*xNeomea* 'Exquisita' and 'Nebula' - both Hummel hybrids with unknown parentage, these both have bicoloured leaves.

*xNeomea* 'Strawberry' - a plant with stiff red leaves.

*xNeophytum* 'Lymanii', 'Firecracker' and 'Ralph Davis' - are the result of crossing a *Neoregelia* with *Orthophytum navioides*, all have been strongly influenced by *navioides* but are much hardier.

*xNeotanthus* 'Firefoam' and 'Cardboard' - small plants with good leaf colour.

*xAnamea* 'Scorpio' - has green leaves spotted with red, the inflorescence forms as normal but later develops a crown like a pineapple.

*xBiltanthus* 'Topaz' - one of my own favourite hybrids crossing *Cryptanthus marginatus* with *Billbergia pyramidalis* var. *concolor*. The recurved leaves are green with longitudinal stripes like *marginatus*. The inflorescence is upright with flower petals white and tipped with blue and later forming large berries. Another of my hybrids which is showing promise is *Cryptanthus beuckeri* x *Billbergia vittata* which was made on the 19/6/88.

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Editors Note: some *Nothogenus* have been updated to keep this article current.

## Novice Popular Vote

|     |              |  |
|-----|--------------|--|
| 1st | Ted Devine   | <i>Vriesea fosteriana</i>                      |
| 2nd | Keryn Simson | <i>Ananas 'Tricolor'</i>                       |
| 3rd | Dave Boudier | <i>Aechmea recurvata</i> var. <i>benrathii</i> |

## Open Popular Vote

|     |               |                                     |
|-----|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st | Lesley Baylis | <i>Neophytum 'Galactic Warrior'</i> |
| 2nd | Marie Essery  | <i>Vriesea 'Inspiration'</i>        |
| 3rd | Gloria Dunbar | <i>Hohenbergia 'Karla'</i>          |
| 3rd | John Crawford | <i>Guzmania 'Tricolor' novar</i>    |

## Judges Choice

|     |               |                                     |
|-----|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st | Lesley Baylis | <i>Neophytum 'Galactic Warrior'</i> |
|-----|---------------|-------------------------------------|

## Decorative

|     |               |                           |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1st | Lesley Baylis | 'Flaming Ball of Stricta' |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------|

## Comments from the Growers:

Lesley originally obtained her plant when small from Bob Grant at The Pocket. Lesley has grown her *Tillandsia stricta* in a fishing net sock, filled with coco peat and has it hanging in a tree. It is regularly fed with "Powerfeed" a liquid fertiliser.

Lesley has grown her *Neophytum 'Galactic Warrior'* outside on a stand, this allowed the *Neophytum* to form the beautiful, full curved shape it has, the intense colour is a result of the position and amount of light it receives. In the hotter months Lesley places her plant back in the shade house. It is nourished in the same way as her *Tillandsias* and other *Bromeliads*.

Gloria obtained her *Hohenbergia 'Karla'* as an early birthday present, the plant coming from Peter Tristram's nursery. It is growing in standard bromeliad mix under 70% beige shade cloth and is fertilised when potted.

John's *Guzmania 'Tricolor' novar*, grows in his shade house under 50% white shade cloth and 30% green shade cloth, it receives full sun until 10am, watered when deemed necessary and fed slow release fertiliser.

Marie has grown her *Vriesea* hybrid under 70% brown shade cloth on the top shelf. Marie originally purchased her *Vriesea* from Bob Grant at The Pocket. The *Vriesea* was fertilised only when first potted.

Ted originally bought his *Vriesea* from Bob in Lismore, he has it growing in a temporary shade house and is keen to get a new shade house built.

Keryn was originally given her *Ananas 'Tricolor'* at a Gold Coast Society meeting, being a smaller species it is easier to handle. Growing in the full sun gives the little pineapple great colour and it has fruited and was very edible.

Dave has several clumps of *Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii* electing to plant this one in a small log. It has grown well, is flowering and makes an interesting display. Dave spent considerable time making the log a suitable home and the *Aechmea* has rewarded him for his efforts. It is growing in some shade otherwise self sufficient.

## An Unusual Discovery

A small crab only 3cm long that climbs 4mtr up a tree just to feed on *Bromeliad* leaves, in contrast to its relatives who prefer the leaves of mangrove trees or organic detritus. Certain species are becoming endangered because this voracious animal eats only *Bromeliad* leaves. Population numbers are falling due to this factor and also because of habitat destruction.



This crab has a special taste for *Bromeliad* leaves, in contrast to its relatives who prefer the leaves of mangrove trees or organic detritus. Certain species are becoming endangered because this voracious animal eats only *Bromeliad* leaves. Population numbers are falling due to this factor and also because of habitat destruction.

Eric Fischer, Andrea Araújo and Luiz Duarte made this unusual discovery and are studying the effect of this crab on plant reproduction. Scientifically known as *Metasesarma rubripes*, it prefers the flower petals, stigma and pollen and feeds for an average of 40 minutes.

Extract of information from the Bulletin of the Brazilian *Bromeliad* Society (SBBR), May 1997 at their internet address.



## Species Variation

by Harry E. Luther

In regard to the use of variety and form in a botanical sense, I would like to emphasize that, unfortunately, there is no clear consensus or consistency in their use. Several of the 'varieties' used in Smith and Downs, *Flora Neotropica* Monograph 14, are what I consider to be forms, cultivars, subspecies or even species.

There are three subspecific categories generally used for wild plants:

**subspecies, variety and forma.**

**Subspecies** is generally used to designate a population of a species that has a distinct geographic distribution and significant morphological and/or ecological attributes that can be used to distinguish it from all other populations of the species.

**Variety** is used to designate a population that has a distinct geographic distribution and morphological attributes that are less different, but can still be used to distinguish it from all other populations of the species. As you can see, the difference between these categories are of degree and not kind, and since these terms have never been consistently used for Bromeliads, it is difficult to find good examples of each. *Tillandsia schiediana* and its subspecies *glabrior* are, perhaps, good examples for subspecies; the two varieties of *Guzmania sanguinea* (var. *sanguinea* and var. *brevipedicellata*) may similarly serve as models for varieties. The former represents discrete populations with distinctive habits and habitat preferences; the latter appear to be biological / ecological equivalents, but with differing ranges and minor morphological differences.

I note here that the term "variety" has most often been used to designate a biologically minor, but horticulturally important colour variation of species. These, if of wild origin, should probably be treated as "forma".

**Forma** is used to designate biological trivial variations of a species that occur sporadically within a natural population\*. These may be giants, dwarfs, colour variants, variegations etc.

We must realise that all of these categories represent evolutionary changes at an instant in time. They represent a new species at various stages of development or dead ends.

\* These variants, if in a cultivated population, should be designated as 'cultivars'.

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