

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

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

Next meeting 19th January 2017 at 11 a.m.

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

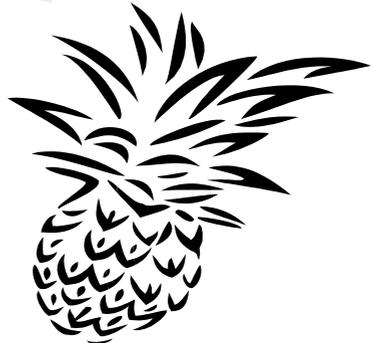
Discussion: December 2016

Christmas Get Together

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## Meeting 17th November 2016

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am  
The 16 members and one visitor present were welcomed.  
A total of four apologies were received.

### General Business

It appears as though there wasn't any business discussed while I was away on my trip, a talk on this at a later date. Reports at the meeting just seemed to ramble on with discussions regarding what talks may interest members in 2017.

### Show, Tell and Ask!

Trish showed a number of *Alcantareas* which she acquired from Gloria as small pups earlier in the year, many remarks on their growth were made, they seem to be thriving growing in their new environment. A general discussion of the hardiness of *Alcantareas* highlighting the toughness of these plants took place. Gloria has some *A/c.* 'Silver Plums' planted on the banks of the canal, which had a short spell under saltwater during a king tide. This has not affected them adversely so far.

Seed raising was mentioned as a future topic - some people have no desire, space, time or reason to cultivate thousands of plants using this cultivation method, but some people showed an interest. A suggestion was made as a way to make seed raising more appealing is by having each member bring a take away food container or other suitable type container and actually complete the process of sorting the seed, sowing it and labelling the container before taking it home to wait for results! Much patience required. A workshop which is hands on and gives the participant something to take away is a proven teaching method. Says one, who managed not to get any seed to strike once on their bed of moss, because one let them dry out!! An inexpensive, easy to install automated misting tap timer may help resolve this problem and increase ones success rate.

Field trips to individual gardens was mentioned as a possible inclusion to our meetings, either instead of, or as an extra event. John Crawford kindly offered his garden as an option, possibly in March 2017 as the summer heat begins to cool off by this time. Members could car pool as John lives on the Gold Coast Qld. which means up to a 2½ hr drive each way for some members. John has recently created large shade houses for his plants and has designed a specific watering and growing system that suits his location. He certainly grows some lovely plants which he regularly shows at our meetings. Many members have expressed interest in visiting John's garden.

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*Aechmea* 'Roberto Menescal'  
1st Open John Crawford



*Tillandsia streptophylla*  
1st Novice Gary McAteer



Decorative Bowl Arrangement  
Equal 1st Decorative Dave Boudier



*Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii*  
Judges Choice Jeanette Henwood



'Simply Beautiful'  
by Ted Devine



'A Christmas Countdown'  
by Keryn Simpson



'Gecko Heaven'  
by John Crawford



'Dyckias need Feeding'  
by Laurie Mountford



*Billbergia* 'Canvey Black'  
grown by Gloria Dunbar



*Vriesea* 'Bernice'  
grown by Ted Devine



*Vriesea fosteriana*  
grown by Laurie Mountford



*Cryptanthus* 'Florence Wasley'  
grown by Les Higgins



*Neoregelia* 'Lilac Dream'  
grown by Dave Boudier



*Vriesea* 'Honolulu Beauty'  
grown by Coral McAteer



*Tillandsia paucifolia*  
grown by Jeanette Henwood



*Billbergia* ???  
grown by Keryn Simpson

Photos by: Jeanette Henwood

## How to Ease Sunburnt Bromeliads

by Paul Turvey 2015

A response by Paul to a sunburnt Bromeliad query on a forum:

I reckon you've done extremely well to only get that much damage!! Well done indeed. Apart from a bit more misting, the only other thing I can suggest is a bit more nitrogen in the fertiliser, or, if the pH of your water is alkaline, something added to it to bring the pH back to neutral or slightly acid. This is something I'm trying myself, since I have a few Vrieseas that routinely do this.

Low nitrogen levels can increase susceptibility to burning (established scientifically for at least some bromeliads) and this would occur especially in leaves that don't produce a red/purple sunscreen e.g. plenty of foliage Vrieseas. Nitrogen shortage in older growth can result if a plant is pushing all of its nutrients into new growth (which is what they seem to do) and there isn't enough nitrogen available to support the whole plant. This overall shortage might just be because there isn't much nitrogen fertiliser in the medium or in the water, but it can also occur if there is plenty of nitrogen fertiliser but the pH is also high i.e. up above 7.2 or so, because as the pH gets up much above that (my tap water has pH = 7.8), the bromeliads mechanisms for taking up nitrogen fertilisers do not work. So, they get starved of nitrogen by the high pH, even though there is plenty of nitrogen fertiliser around. I have no idea if this might apply to you or how it might work in your situation, but I thought I'd mention it since it's something I'm giving a go for my bromeliads.

Certainly in my case, I've established that I get much more growth using the same fertiliser mix and concentrations if I acidify the water to bring it down from 7.8 (quite alkaline) to about 6.5 (slightly acidic). I think I've made a few good inroads on the leaf-tip burning and die-back, but I'm still getting a bit.

Calcium hardness of the water is also something that has been linked to leaf damage in Vrieseas. My current plan (just starting) is to use citric acid rather than other acids to bring the pH of the tap water down, since citric acid also chelates the calcium in the water so it can be used to eliminate calcium hardness. Do you have hard, limey water, which is very possible in your area? That could also be a contributor affecting just some Vrieseas.

Hope this helps  
Paul

## **Novice Popular Vote**

1st	Gary McAteer	<i>Tillandsia streptophylla</i>
2nd	Coral McAteer	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Honolulu Beauty'
2nd	Keryn Simpson	<i>Billbergia</i> ???????
2nd	Ted Devine	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Bernice'

## **Open Popular Vote**

1st	John Crawford	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Roberto Menescal'
2nd	Gloria Dunbar	<i>Billbergia</i> 'Canvey Black'
3rd	Les Higgins	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Florence Wasley'
3rd	Laurie Mountford	<i>Vriesea fosteriana</i>

## **Judges Choice**

1st	Jeanette Henwood	<i>Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii</i>
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## **Decorative**

1st	Dave Boudier	Decorative Bowl
1st	Ted Devine	'Simply Beautiful'

**Growers Comments** have been very repetitive and not always enlightening as many members already grow their plants as described i.e. under 70% cream shade cloth, irregular watering, pests managed when necessary etc. As our meetings are recorded with a dictaphone it can be tedious for those listening to these recordings to decipher them and write into legible notes. While the idea of suggestions on a card to prompt growers with their comments is useful, perhaps a little more research about the plant and its origins would be helpful. Of course, if there is any remarkable treatment/s or events resulting in an interesting plant, only these need to be discussed and recorded here in your Newsletter.

Cutting off pups was mentioned again - this could be demonstrated to mainly the newer members/growers that feel they require some help in this area. Those who feel they have pup removal under control can assist the novices in smaller groups / one on one. Once this is mastered we can move on to the next session - mounting tillandsias on cork, wood, rock or decorative container? Once again, we encourage members to bring their own bits and pieces to work with so that they have a finished project at the end of the session. Also members are encouraged to bring along to meetings plants they need divided but don't feel confident enough to tackle the job solo. We all learn from these exercises.

It sounds like our members are wanting to learn lots of new things in 2017.