

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

Edition: December 2021



Agenda: Christmas Party  
Trophy Presentation

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery  
114 Pine Street  
Wardell 2477



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Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

Next meeting 20th January 2022 at 11 a.m.

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## Meeting 18th November 2021

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am  
The 11 members present were welcomed.  
A total of four apologies were received.

### General Business

This month's mail consisting of Newsletters was received and passed on to our librarian for processing before they can be loaned to members. Members were reminded to make good use of our library, not forgetting all books must be signed out when borrowed and don't forget to have them checked off on return.

Our Christmas get together was discussed and organised with everybody to bring a plate and the Group to organise cold meats and drinks.

Everybody agreed to keep the same trophy arrangements as previous years, these will be presented at our Christmas meeting.

### Show, Tell and Ask!

Continuing on from last month's discussion of best location to grow particular plants several examples of *Neoregelia* 'Carrone's Black Knight' were shown. The three plants being shown and discussed were of the same age, pups cut and potted at same time, but, grown in different locations. The largest of them at 630 mm across was growing in an area under 70% black shade cloth with good light all day but only a couple of hours of bright light due to surrounding trees. The second plant shown was in the same area but receiving bright light for several hours more than the previous plant and had only grown to 450 mm across, a little stouter. The third plant of the group shown had been growing in a different area under 50% black shade cloth with no other overhead obstructions receiving very bright light from sun up to sunset. This plant was a very stout plant with broad leaves and only 380 mm across. The three plants maintained reasonable colour with little noticeable difference to each other except for size and shape confirming that light hours received can make quite a difference.

For those who like tall flowering plants Ross had a *Vriesea neoglutinosa* to show off that has flowered for the first time in over five years. This is one that is not often seen these days but is worthy of a place in any collection. Its thick, rigid leaves are not particularly showy unlike its cousins, the patterned leaf *Vrieseas* such as *Vr. hieroglyphica* and *Vr. fosteriana* but it sure does make up for it with its reddish scape and vibrant yellow flowers. Photos and additional info page 12.

During lunch break we wandered around the grounds of PineGrove Nursery to look at some of the flowering spectacles. It is certainly Bromelia season with the very large *Bromelia karatas* in full bloom in the side garden and the smaller *Bromelia pinguin* in full colour with two more in the clump beginning to colour up.

There were Puya, Encholirium, Hohenbergia, Alcantarea and more flowering however the main plant discussed was a flowering *Deuterochonia meziana*. The perennial woody peduncle was sporting an inflorescence panicle made up of 30 plus branches. Each branch with a cluster of flowers made up of reddish orange bracts and sepals supporting the green petals. The main point of interest was that some *Deuterochonia* are **polycarpic**, this being one of them.

Polycarpic plants are able to flower multiple times from axillary bud offshoots each following year. This is due to at least some portion of its meristem being able to maintain a vegetative state so that it may continue flowering again and again for often up to or more than five seasons. With this information we know not to cut the 'dead' inflorescence off when it finishes flowering at seasons end. Iteroparous also means polycarpic: producing flowers and fruit more than once before dying.

Distribution and habitat: *Deuterochonia meziana* grows in Bolivia (Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija), Brazil (Mato Grosso do Sul) and Paraguay (Alto Paraguay, Amambay, Boqueron, Concepcion). It is a sort of xerophytic colonizer of slopes or rocky outcrops between 150-2200 m s.m. (Schuetz, 2014). It comprises five subspecies, one of which is described as a new entity to Argentina (Jujuy) which is: *Deuterochonia meziana* subsp. *vallegrandensis*.

After lunch break we had a practical potting demonstration showing how to correct plants that had fallen and grown at right angles to the pot. Best practice is to select a much larger pot than the plant was originally in. Centre the plant in an upright position, cut any excess roots off to allow the plant to be set down into the pot at an appropriate level.

Next was a plant that had grown a trunk and didn't look balanced in the pot, appeared too tall for its pot. One possible solution is to set the plant in a larger, taller pot to cover up some of the trunk. If that is not practical then cut two thirds of the root ball off and reset lower into its original pot or a preferred larger pot.

During the demonstration comments were made of how useful the potting mix scoop being used was. Kayelene sent this photo in of a scoop she found at a local thrift store for only \$3.99.



## Bromelia

photos and text compiled by Ross Little

The genus Bromelia gave its name to the entire family called: Bromeliaceae.

The French botanist Charles Plumier (1646 - 1704) described some of the first bromeliads known to European science in *Nova plantarum americanarum genera*, 1703: "Bromelia" (2 sp.), "Caraguata" (4 sp.), "Karatat" (1 sp.).

When Swedish naturalist and botanist Linnaeus (Carol von Linné 1707-1778) established binomial nomenclature in 'Species plantarum' (1753), he presented a conservative generic treatment.

Linnaeus only adopted the name Bromelia from Plumier, while describing the new genus Tillandsia. This is unfortunate because it effectively relegated to synonymy two bromeliad names derived from the languages of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Caraguata and Karatats. Linnaeus (1753) named five species of Bromelia: *B. ananas* = *Ananas comosus*, *B. karatats*, *B. lingulata* = *Aechmea lingulata*, *B. nudicaulis* = *Aechmea nudicaulis*, and *B. pinguin*.

The genus name Bromelia as used by Linnaeus in 1737 was given to honor the prominent Swedish medical doctor and botanist, Olof Ole Bromell (1639 - 1705), latinized as Olaus Olai Bromelius.

The genus Bromelia, of which there are 70 species, grows widely throughout Mexico, Central America, the West Indies and parts of South America where it grows in the understory of tropical deciduous forests. These large terrestrial plants are noteworthy for their heavily armoured, vicious marginal spiny leaves, strong leaf fibres and edible fruits. They have both forward and reverse curved spines letting one know not to enter to harvest their fruits, if you do venture too far in the inward facing spines grab you and won't let you back out easily.

During our travels throughout Mexico and Central America in 2016 and 2018 we observed some of the common uses of Bromelia as protective barriers and impenetrable hedge fence plantings. One barrier use of note that we saw was a planting in the narrow strip of a main road traffic island, the island nature strip between roads. When the Bromelia are in flower they would be a much more colourful and decorative barrier than a plain steel fence.

Because of their size they are mostly suited to large gardens or pot culture, our largest, *Bromelia karatas* grows to over 5.00 mts across and is not for the faint hearted to remove a pup from. A pup we removed from it recently was 2.20 mts tall and grows on a very short stolon which meant we had to get right into the thick of it. Most Bromelia pups grow on long stolons and are easier to access and safer using a pair of long handled loppers.



The local name of pinuela in Oaxaca, Mexico, is a derivative of the Spanish word for pineapple, pina (Bennett 2000).

This generic epithet, used throughout Mesoamerica, refers to the edible fruits coming from several Bromelia that taste like pineapple, or whose leafy structure resembles the spinose-serrate blades of Ananas.



A colourful Bromelia used as a centre of road traffic island, nature strip barrier planting in Oaxaca, Mexico.



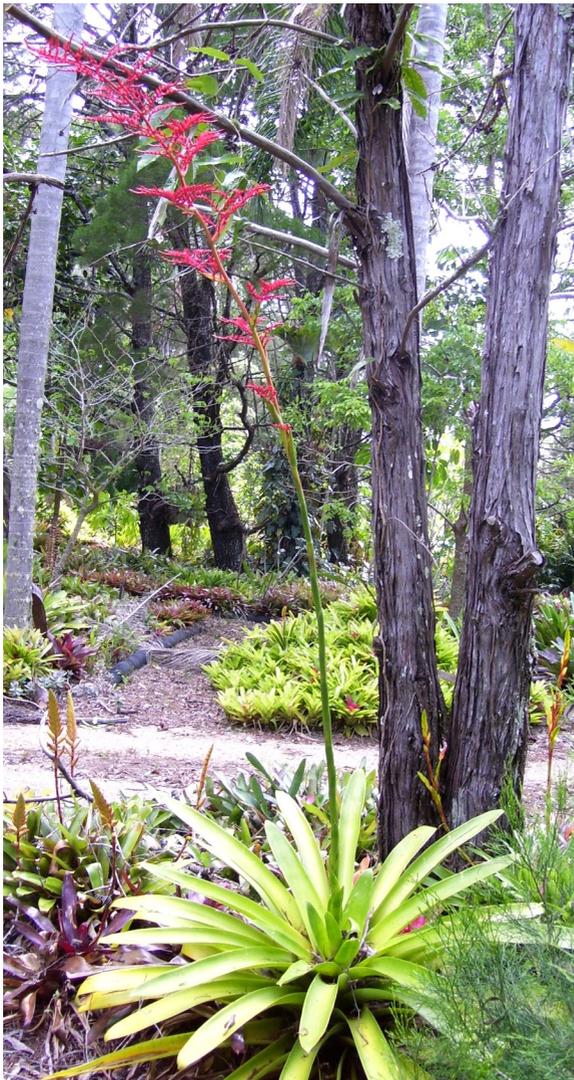
Bromelia used as impenetrable hedge fence planting.

***Racinaea fraseri*** (Baker) M.A. Spencer & L.B. Smith, 1993.

Previously named *Tillandsia fraseri* by Baker 1889. This is a relatively easy plant to grow in good bright light and a well draining substrate.

DISTRIBUTION. Terrestrial, saxicolous, and epiphytic in forest, 750-3000 m alt, southern Colombia to northern Peru.

Here at PineGrove it's in our gardens growing in a sandy substrate where it's attained 1.50 mts across with an inflorescence at 2.90 metres tall. The panicle of the inflorescence is around 1.00 mtr long, it is made up of many coral red



branches to 230 mm long, it has flowers with white petals when fresh, turning yellow when dry which are relatively tiny at 9 mm compared to the overall size of the plant itself.



An easy species to grow from seed, it self pollinates, one only needs to wait for the ripe pods to burst and gather the fluffy (plumose) seed.



While in Ecuador in 2015 we went to Alausi to ride the Devil's Nose Train, a unique zig zag, switch back rail line down into the Chanchan River gorge. On our return to Guayaquil we saw many Bromeliad species, *Racinaea fraseri* was one growing in a wet forested valley, as indicated in the photo above. We also saw *Rac. fraseri* growing as an epiphyte in the dry arid Rio Guayllabamba valley, near Perucho, Province of Pichincha at 1700-1800 metres altitude while on our way to Otavalo markets. Yes we were a little off the beaten track, lost one could say, turned left instead of right but ended up being a fantastic mistake anyway.





*Billbergia* 'Domingos Martins'  
1st Open Helen Clewett



'Spikey Christmas'  
1st Decorative Mitch Jones



*Neoregelia* 'Pink on Black'  
Judges Choice Mitch Jones



*Neoregelia* 'Lady Leonie'  
shown by Kayelene Guthrie



*Neoregelia* unknown  
shown by Michelle Hartwell



*Neoregelia* 'Maggie' ???  
shown by Dave Boudier

*Tillandsia velutina*  
1st Tillandsioideae  
Keryn Simpson



x*Sincoregelia* 'Galactic Warrior'  
shown by Keryn Simpson



'Duck Pond'  
shown by Kayelene Guthrie



*Tillandsia fuchsii*  
shown by Helen Clewett



*Tillandsia fasciculata* var. *densispica*  
shown by Dave Boudier



'Our Till Christmas Tree'  
shown by Keryn Simpson



'Kitty's Till in Boot'  
shown by Dave Boudier

*Tillandsia streptophylla*  
shown by  
Gary McAteer



'Till Christmas' shown by Helen Clewett

**Vriesea neoglutinosa** Mez, Pflanzenreich IV. Fam. 32: 636. 1935.



*Tillandsia glutinosa* Martius  
ex Schultes filius in  
Roemer & Schultes,  
Syst. 7(2): 1225. 1830.

*Vriesea glutinosa* Wawra,  
It. Sax.-Cob. 167.1883;  
non Lindley, 1856.

*Vriesea neoglutinosa*  
grows as a terrestrially  
and saxicolous, from  
near sea level to 500  
metres altitude in  
Rio de Janeiro State  
to Santa Catarina in  
Eastern Brazil.

The inflorescence of the plant pictured here is supported by the screen door (for scale) is 2.20 mtrs tall, the plant itself is 1.00 mtr across.

This has been a relatively easy to grow species not requiring any special care on my behalf. It has thicker, more rigid leaves than most Vriesea we grow which seems to allow it to enjoy a bright light situation. It's been noted that this species grows in the hot, white sands of the restinga of Brazil.

Perhaps I should try growing a pup from this plant in full sun conditions and see how it responds.

If you like these taller growing Vrieseas, similar ones to look for that are relatively easy to grow that you may have a bright sunny position for, are:

*Vriesea procera* and *Vriesea friburgensis*, both these also come from Rio de Janeiro, southern Brazil.

Photos and text compiled by Ross Little

**Christmas Quiz**

- What did the other reindeer not let Rudolph do because of his shiny red nose?
- How many ghosts show up in A Christmas Carol
- Where was baby Jesus born?
- The movie Miracle on 34th Street is based on a real life department store. What is it?
- What are the two other most popular names for Santa Claus?
- Elvis isn't going to have a white Christmas he's going to have a....
- What do people traditionally put on top of a Christmas tree?
- In Home Alone, where are the McCallisters going on vacation when they leave Kevin behind?
- In which modern-day country was St. Nicholas born in?
- In the movie It's A Wonderful Life, what happened every time a bell rang?

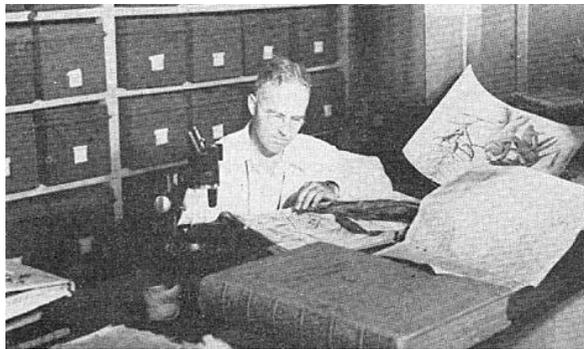
- ♦ An angel got his wings
- ♦ Turkey (originally Patara, a city in the ancient district of Lycia, in Asia Minor)
- ♦ Paris
- ♦ An angel
- ♦ Blue Christmas
- ♦ Kris Kringle and Saint Nick
- ♦ Macy's
- ♦ In Bethlehem
- ♦ Four
- ♦ Join in any reindeer games

**Answers**

## **Know Our Taxonomist Better**

by Mulford B. Foster (1888 - 1978)

Lyman B. (Bromel) Smith, the botanical father of bromeliads in the Americas, needs no introduction to a bromeliad audience, but an appraisal of his twenty-seven years work in the Bromeliaceae is long over-due.



He has been a tireless and indefatigable worker on the taxonomy of the bromeliad family which presents many discouraging and conflicting confusions in nomenclature. His sincere efforts in clearing up these confusions has been an inestimable work of merit. His enormous production of the descriptions of new species has enriched bromeliad literature extensively.

Out of Dr. Smith's 135 publications, 80 have been on the subject of Bromeliaceae, seven of these have been in *The Bromeliad Bulletin*, plus that major contribution, "The Subfamilies and Genera of the Bromeliaceae" in our *Cultural Handbook*.

Space limits a description of these works but a major portion of his work has been in a series of "Studies in The Bromeliaceae" started in the *Contributions of The Gray Herbarium* when he was a member of that staff and continued since 1947 in the U. S. National Herbarium publications when he became associate curator at the Smithsonian Institution.

A long list of significant contributions to the Floras of Latin American countries gives his work extensive scope. The "Geographical Evidence on the Lines of Evolution" in the German *Botanische Jahrbucher* was a significant answer to the theories of Carl Mez in his monograph. Dr. Smith's section on Bromeliaceae in *The North American Flora* is a valuable record for those who strive to know the family better.

He reads and writes in five foreign languages, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin, and not a few of his publications have been written in these languages.

He has visited and gathered data in most of the large Herbaria of Europe and in North and South America. As pictured above (photo by Raulino Reitz, Brasil) he is working in the Herbario "Barbosa Rodrigues", Itajai, Santa Catarina, Brasil as a guest of Director, Raulino Reitz.

The horticultural world often neglects the work of the taxonomic botanist but it is the purpose of this *Bromeliad Bulletin* to bring the two worlds together in a mutual appreciation of the significance of each others work.

While it may be known that Dr. Smith has spent a large portion of his time "wrestling" with herbarium material, particularly in the Bromeliaceae, which has made him famous in the botanical world, it is much less known that he has won many medals and cups for his unusual ability as a wrestler in the sports world during his younger days.

And now, it might be said, he has won his letters in the "aquatic world" during a bromel hunt in Florida's Fakahatchee Swamp, often called Big Cypress, where we had to wade in waist or chest high water for miles through muck, water, brambles, grasses and roots. This trek into the heart of Florida made quite a strenuous Christmas holiday for Dr. Smith and his son, Christopher, as well as a party of young college students including John Bechner, *Bromeliad Society* member.

Few white men have ever penetrated the depths of this fast disappearing jungle land now being destroyed by the lumberman's axe and saw. Nostalgic memories, back to 1926, made the present devastation a heart-tearing sight to the writer. It is the last great tropical jungle in the United States. Twenty-eight years ago this had been virgin Florida with its vast area of the centuries old cypress trees, (*Taxodium distichum*) and its several miles of stately giant Royal Palms, some reaching 135 ft. in height. Dr. Smith and our party could scarcely visualize this magnificent former grandeur since we had such a devilish time cutting our way through a new second growth, saw grass, cane break, poison ivy, and brambles; floating logs, twisted fern roots, fallen trees and oozing muck did everything to impede our progress while trying to hold cameras and food high out of the uncertain depths of water.

Bromeliads, orchids and other epiphytes are putting up a battle for survival there. Every species of *Tillandsia* (except one, *T. incurva*), *Catopsis* and *Guzmania* native to Florida are still there but some of them are difficult to find. They have had to be satisfied with whatever kind of tree - dead or alive - they could find for survival. Even the smooth trunks of the few remaining Royal palms had a share of epiphytes which, in spite of an unfavourably smooth trunk for clinging, sought out the scarce shade afforded by the north and east sides of these palms. It was a rare but pathetic sight of bromeliads in a last stand for survival which greeted Dr. Smith's eyes, but it was a memorable one as well.

Reprinted from: *BSI Journal*, 1954, Vol.4, No.1



### **Open Popular Vote**

- |     |               |  |
|-----|---------------|--|
| 1st | Helen Clewett | <i>Billbergia</i> 'Domingos Martins'     |
| 2nd | Keryn Simpson | x <i>Sincoregelia</i> 'Galactic Warrior' |
| 3rd | Dave Boudier  | <i>Neoregelia</i> 'Maggie'               |

### **Tillandsioideae**

- |     |               |  |
|-----|---------------|--|
| 1st | Keryn Simpson | <i>Tillandsia velutina</i>                           |
| 2nd | Gary McAteer  | <i>Tillandsia streptophylla</i>                      |
| 3rd | Helen Clewett | <i>Tillandsia fuchsii</i>                            |
| 3rd | Dave Boudier  | <i>Tillandsia fasciculata</i> var. <i>densispica</i> |

### **Decorative**

- |     |             |                      |
|-----|-------------|----------------------|
| 1st | Mitch Jones | 'A Spikey Christmas' |
|-----|-------------|----------------------|

Happy  
New  
Year

### **Judges Choice**

- |     |             |                                   |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st | Mitch Jones | <i>Neoregelia</i> 'Pink on Black' |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------------------|

### **Web Links for Checking Correct Identification and Spelling ?**

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR): <http://registry.bsi.org/>  
Refer to this site for correct identification and spelling of your hybrid or cultivar.

New Bromeliad Taxon List : <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php>  
Refer to this site for latest species name changes and correct spelling.

Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) <http://bromeliad.org.au/>  
Refer to this site for its Photo Index, Club Newsletters, Detective Derek Articles.

Keep these web sites set as desktop icons for quick reference access.

### **Where do I Find the Dates ?**

[www.bromeliad.org.au](http://www.bromeliad.org.au) then click "Diary".

Check this site for regular updates of times, dates and addresses of meetings and shows in your area and around the country.