

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

Edition: October 2022

Agenda: General Discussion

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

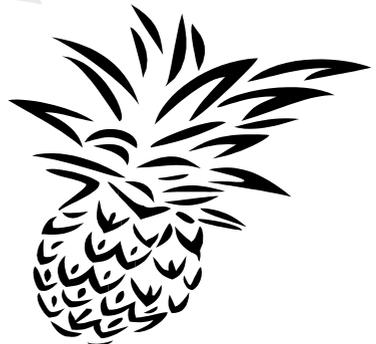
Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month
Next meeting November 17th 2022 at 11 a.m.

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Meeting 15th September 2022

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
The 10 members present were welcomed.
Two apologies were received.

General Business

Last month we advertised John Crawford's Bromeliad collection was for sale, we hope it goes well for him. John is down sizing and preparing to relocate so he is passing on his library of books, Journals and Newsletters to our FNCBSG NSW library. We thank him greatly for his generosity and kindness. He is hoping to be able to get to at least one more meeting before he retires to his new home.

Over the years John has had a keen eye for objects that he could use as the base for his decorative entries in our Popular Vote competitions. He had some that he had not used yet and thought to pass them on to the Group to encourage members to get involved and also keep himself involved. The objects have been shared for a round robin competition to be judged by John. Each object to be passed/swapped with the next competitor until everyone has used each of the objects. The winning entry for each individual object will get to keep that object at the end of the year. We'll work it out as we go, remember it's just a bit of fun.

Keryn has the 3 ball glass planter.

Kayelene has the hanging glass tear drop.

Debbie has the 2 holed rectangular glass tube planter.

Coral secured the bike with a basket planter.

Keep them tidy and not too big, as with any decorative embellishment the object is to be part of the entry but not the main focal point. Have fun and enjoy.

Show, Tell and Ask!

In reviewing our Newsletter - cultivars, sports, reverting variegation and throwing out the reverted variegates were discussed again to clarify a couple of points from a previous discussion on these subjects.

What happens when my variegated plant sports an albomarginated offset and its offset reverts back to a variegate. The albomarginated offset when proven to be stable by consistently reproducing albomarginated offsets can be given a cultivar name in its own right. However the offset that reverted to its original variegated form would retain its original variegated plant name. If either of these two plants gave a non variegated/albomarginated offset it would get the term 'novar' after its name, meaning 'no variegation', best bet is to cull/bin them as inferior quality.

An unnamed plant had been brought in for identification by Keryn, unfortunately our photographer slack in his duties on the day, didn't get a photo. The plant Keryn brought along occasionally gets mistaken for *Nidularium* 'Madonna' which has white petals, our plant in question had golden yellow petals.

Peter Waters in New Zealand has referred to 'Madonna' as being a possible *Wittrockia* in the NZ Journal in 2009 due to, from Derek Butcher "the fact that it has what I call 'Gerry's Whiskers'. Regrettably 'Gerry's Whiskers' also appear in other 'species' Nidularioids. In case you are wondering what 'Gerry's Whiskers' are, they are bristle-like hairs that you sometimes find on offsets in this group. Next time you are removing offsets, look out for them. This phenomenon seems to interest some growers but not taxonomists! These whiskers occur in a plant called *Nidularium* 'Francois Spae' in New Zealand but whose photo Gerry used but said came from 'Madonna'!!!!."

Back to the golden yellow petalled plant of Keryn's, one suggestion was that it may be *Canistrum cyathiforme* which is now an old defunct name. Referring to the New Bromeliad Taxon List: <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/> for clarification we could see that this plant had been reclassified from *Canistrum* in 1997 to *Wittrockia cyathiformis* by Elton Leme and it was a good match to Keryn's plant.

Wittrockia cyathiformis (Vellozo) Leme.

Refer: *Canistrum* – Bromeliads in the Atlantic Forest, pages 67-70, 1997.

Distribution and Habitat:

Wittrockia cyathiformis is a mesophyte from the states of Bahia, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Parana, also occurring in Santa Catarina near the border with Parana, in Campo Alegre and Garuva municipalities (Reitz, 1983; personal observation). It is an epiphyte or a terrestrial or saxicolous plant in the Atlantic forest, growing at altitudes of 800 to 2,000 m. This plant is mainly terrestrial or saxicolous in cloud forests, and is also found in gallery forests within the high-altitude grasslands or, farther inland, in the grasslands on rocky soils of Minas Gerais. It is protected in areas such as the Serra dos Orgaos and Bocaina National Parks. It flowers from November to April.

Etymology:

Botanically, the Latin word *cyathus* refers to cup-shaped organs, *cyathiformis* has this meaning. This word was applied for the first time to this *Wittrockia* species by the mineiro* from Sao Joao Del Rei, Frei Josc Mariano da Conceicao Vellozo (1741-1811), clearly alluding to the cup-shaped inflorescence, which would come to characterize many of the nidularioid complex bromeliads.

*Mineiro feminine: Mineira, also called Brazilian mountain dialect, is the Brazilian Portuguese term for the inhabitants of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais.

Next plant up for identification most likely is *Aechmea* 'Brillig'. An article written by Derek Butcher to help guide the grower to identifying this group of plants is reprinted here this month on pages 10 through 13 with some added glossary. Most species in this group are difficult to identify even at the best of times, we know even the experts have differing opinions finding it hard to agree. Add in the hybrids created within this group and the confusion could be compounded. Best practice with ones collection is always retain your label regardless, until proven wrong. Include as much information on your label as reasonably possible or keep a book with your plant details recorded in it.

The issue of plants rotting due to all the wet weather we've been experiencing of late was raised. Rotting can be the result of overcrowding which is causing poor airflow around the plants. Improve air flow by spacing plants apart, a good guide is leaf tip to leaf tip. Air flow around the base of plants can be improved by basal dead leaf removal and also by deadheading, removing old dead parent plants or 'old mothers' as they are often referred as.

Cold sensitive plants need to be raised off the ground above the temperature inversion layer, which is the cold air trapped under a layer of warmer air.

It is normal for vase/urn shaped plants to be holding water in their centres so tipping it out won't solve the problem. Check your potting mix, as it ages it may not be free draining enough anymore, add coarse bark or chunks of styrene to open the mix allowing air flow through to the roots. This also applies for potted terrestrial plants such as *Dyckia*, *Hectia*, *Puya* and *Pitcairnia*s etc, make sure their roots are not waterlogged causing root rot and the eventual demise of the plant. Worms are good in the garden and very large pots for aeration but not in the average smaller sized pots used for our Bromeliads, so a good healthy, free draining potting medium is essential for plant health.

The answer here is: keep your plants clean and tidy to improve airflow around them and check potting medium at least annually.

While that chore is being taken care of and with Spring in the air adding a little fertiliser to the pots will help keep your plants healthy and strong. Foliar fertilising regularly promotes strong healthy foliage, do this weakly, weekly and you will notice a difference in the growth rate of your plants, especially seedlings. Place plants up onto raised benches if in cold wet areas.

If some of your plants have been Wintered in sunnier positions that do need Summer sun protection now might be the time to start moving them back into a more protected location. Some plants can handle the summer sun, now is also a good time to start acclimatising them into a sunnier position allowing them time to harden up before the summer sun strikes. If in doubt, use your 'old mothers'.

Aechmea burle-marxii Pereira, 1979

This species is endemic to Brazil, known from Bahia and Minas Gerais states.

Quite a stunning plant when in flower with its pyramidal inflorescence of yellow sepals and white petalled flowers. As it ages/matures the inflorescence turns orange/red. Unfortunately this species is not often seen in collections.

It's not a large plant growing to only 55cm across x 40cm high including the inflorescence. The edges of the green leaves are armed with dark purple spines, 1mm long and 5mm apart, it's not a particularly vicious plant to handle.



It grows quite happily here in the garden at PineGrove as a terrestrial, it's not a full sun loving plant, preferring morning sun in a dappled light position where it flowers every year. It will also take quite happily to being grown as an epiphyte.



Aechmea burle-marxii with yellow inflorescences and older orange/red berries.
Grown by Lesley Baylis photo by Ross Little.

Mitch brought along a selection of Dyckia hybrids for discussion this month that he had acquired from Helen at PineGrove who had gathered quite a collection herself over the past two and a half decades. Dyckia are a very promiscuous group of plants that tend to self set seed, be it from their own or a neighbouring plants pollen. Each year there are many Dyckia in flower at the same time here at PineGrove, therefore pollen parent is an unknown factor when seed collection is done unless a careful, controlled pollination is carried out. With so much seed available each year it was inevitable that Helen should try her hand at raising some. Success germinating the Dyckia seed was easy but culling wasn't easy, however many 1000s of seedlings have been culled over the years keeping only the standouts.

The first to be shown and is now registered was:

Dyckia 'Helen's Ruby'

Grown from seed collected from *Dyckia* 'Ruby Ryde' by Helen Clewett circa 2008.

The mature, open rosette grows to 30cm. diameter x 20cm. high with arching, bronzed maroon leaves each tapering to a point with white spines and the foliage reverse is scurfed white and lined.

It has an erect/leaning simple spike to 40cm. tall with burnished black / orange floral bracts, bell-like, amber orange flowers (each 1.5cm. long x 9mm. wide) with golden anthers.



Dyckia 'Helen's Silver Shadow'

Dyckias p.6 - 7 grown and photographed by Mitch Jones

Next to be shown was also grown from seed collected by Helen in circa 2008.

The vibrant yellow petals of this hybrid made it a stand out saving it from the cull.



A few more selected that need to be sent for registration:

Dyckia 'Helen's Verde'
unreg.



Dyckia 'Helen's Black Night'
unreg.



This one is a John Catlan hybrid JG72268.

Dyckia 'Dragons Blood'
unreg.

Named for its red spines.



Aechmea recurvata var. *ortgiesii*
1st Open Helen Clewett



Tillandsia bulbosa
1st Tillandsioideae Keryn Simpson



Neoregelia 'Larnach's Glorious'
grown by Kayelene Guthrie



Neoregelia 'Baker's Tiger'
grown by Keryn Simpson



Tillandsia 'Cotton Candy'
1st Tillandsioideae Helen Clewett



Tillandsia 'Cotton Candy'
grown by Gary McAteer



Neoregelia 'Skotak's Laser' unreg.
grown by Michelle Hartwell



Dyckia 'Helen's Ruby'
grown by Mitch Jones



'Basket
of
Broms'
1st Decorative
Helen Clewett



'Ray of Light'
Mitch Jones' Decorative entry

It's been a few years since we've seen a similar Aechmea to this one brought along to **Show, Tell and Ask!** wanting identification.

When a plant not in flower is brought in for identification we ask for details because not all plants are easily identified in their vegetative state.

Helpful aids for identification are:

- a photo of the inflorescence.
- note the colour of the flowers/petals.

If these questions can't be answered, best advice to the grower is:

'Wait Till It Flowers' (WTIF), read the following article to help make an informed decision and bring the plant back in for discussion when in flower.



Aechmea bromeliifolia, 'Brillig', 'Red Bands' & Allied Hybrids

OR

Get to know your Aechmea maculata!

by Derek Butcher

In 1986 Geoff Lawn attended the Bromeliad Conference in New Orleans. In Bromeleter 25(2):15, 1987 we read, "Depending on the source, another winner is variously labelled *Aechmea triangularis* 'Red Bands' or *Aechmea maculata* or *Aechmea triangularis* x *maculata*, its cross banding more pronounced towards the rosette base."

We know that the plants that resemble *Aechmea bromeliifolia* or the Aechmea sub-genus Macrochordion* are difficult to identify. One has only to read Harry Luther's comments in J. Brom. Soc. 48(6): 244-5. 1998 to find out why!

Aechmea triangularis has blue flowers and *Ae. maculata* has yellow flowers so why the various linking to 'Red Bands'. Since 1986 we have had the Bromeliad Cultivar Register published and we find that *Ae.* 'Red Bands' seems to be a Seaborn hybrid of *maculata* and *triangularis*. I quote from the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry 1998: "cv of *maculata* x *triangularis* – formula from verbal commentary and diagnosis by Harry Luther in 1996 – sometimes known as 'Seaborn's Red Bands' – Medium upright rosette with sharply tapered pale grey green leaves distinctly marked on outer leaf surface with red maroon thin cross bands –

originally thought to be a form of *Ae. triangularis* – Thelma O'Reilly attributes the cultivar to a sport of *triangularis* for Alice Quiros which was refined and given to Seaborn – the cultivar is listed in 1977 Kent as *triangularis* (banded leaves) and Belton in 1983 as *triangularis* (red bands) – Bromeliad Treasury 1983 said: "The new hybrid adds a touch of color to *triangularis* – the inflorescence is the same as *triangularis* except the flowers are blue-green."

We know that a yellow petalled plant crossed with a blue petalled plant can give odd coloured petals in the progeny. In this case blue-green is quoted but in my experience the plants I have seen seem to vary between a dirty yellow to blue green to what I call a dirty grey. BUT never the bright yellow you associate with a true *Ae. maculata*.

In about the same period as the catalogues quoted above, namely 1984, I saw in California what I thought to be an "*Ae. bromeliifolia*" but with beautiful cross banding. Paul Isley said he thought it was *Ae. maculata* and this name remained on the tag until Harry Luther's article in 1998 as above. The plant keys out to be an *Ae. bromeliifolia* with its very short flowers – in fact the sepals are usually only 5mm long - except for the leaf markings. This sort of leaf markings is not mentioned in any of the descriptions of any of the species in this group! Even if we look at *Ae. maculata* we find that only spots on the leaf sheath are mentioned!

Because of its unique banding it should have a cultivar name and I'll be calling it *Ae.* 'Crossbands'. Could this plant have been a parent to 'Red Bands' and supplied the leaf markings?

Now to the mid 1990's in Australia when Peter Franklin and I discussed a plant we had each got at separate times from Bill Morris. It had *Ae. maculata*? on the label but Peter and I could not get past the greyish flowers. We were almost going to call the plant 'The Old Grey Mare' but we chanced upon *Ae.* 'Red Bands'.



Aechmea triangularis



Aechmea maculata



Aechmea 'Brillig'

We wondered what colour the petals were on the *Ae.* 'Red Bands' in Bird Rock Tropicals Catalogue in 2001 because ours were not really blue green. Pam Koide could not remember so we were not much more forward. No other similar hybrids had been reported with *Ae. triangularis* as a parent so we felt we must be looking at 'Red Bands'.

If there is anyone in California that has this plant we would like to hear more about it because of the confusion about its creation!

Now to another hybrid from this group namely 'Brillig' which seems to have had a similar stormy past and similar identity problems. Peter Franklin got a plant (PAF1105) called 'Brillig' from Bill Morris and which luckily still had CJ 3/84 2/86 suggesting it came from Carol Johnson of Pineapple Place Florida. Reference to the Bromeliad Cultivar Register shows its parents to be *maculata* x *bromeliifolia* var. *albobracteata*. On page 207 in the Journal of the Bromeliad Society Vol 33 No.5. 1983 we read "has strongly banded foliage which is apple green and red brown (in other words apple green foliage with red brown bands). The pink scape bracts are banded as on the foliage. The inflorescence is cylindrical and stands 20-25cm above the foliage. The yellow flowers turn black as they age."

Alas, the scape bracts are not banded as expected. Peter also obtained an *Ae. maculata* (PAF 1229) from another source in New South Wales and this turned out to be the same as the 'Brillig'! But where do the leaf markings come from? We do know that Pineapple Place did grow an *Ae. bromeliifolia* (Banded form). Could it be the case of foreign pollen?! By the way, you do not identify *Ae. maculata* just by the spotting on the leaf sheath but rather on the bright yellow petals, the sepals at least 8mm long and the retuse floral bracts (a 'v' cut at the tip). It is also interesting that on the very page in Bromeletter where Geoff Lawn was expounding the virtues of 'Red Bands' in 1987 'Brillig' was on offer in the Seed bank! 'Brillig' is an alleged F1 hybrid and its



Aechmea 'Red Bands'



Aechmea 'Brillig'



Aechmea lamarchei

F2 generation would have produced a motley crew including throwbacks to *Ae. maculata*!! Is anyone still growing seedlings from 1987 that do NOT have banding?! Did they wonder if they were wrongly named?

Alas there are no original photographs in the Bromeliad Register for either 'Red Bands' where the detail was gleaned well after the event with conflicting information or 'Brillig' where the photo has been lost. We know that *Ae. maculata* is in Australia because it was grown for years as *Ae. lamarchei* 'Rubra'. Harry Luther's article in 1998 prompted me to this. It may also be grown in its non rubra form! Remember it has notched floral bracts not long papery ones as in *Ae. lamarchei* and has bright yellow petals.

We think that *Ae.* 'Red Bands' is in Australia – just look for an odd coloured petal. If your plant has this then please change the name.

We surmise *Ae.* 'Brillig' is in Australia but there will also be seedlings around to cloud the issue.

* *Aechmea* subgenus **Macrochordion** is distinguished from other subgenera by the simple, strobilate inflorescence with sessile, polystichous flowers, entire / unarmed, carinate floral bracts densely covered by trichomes and by unarmed sepals; more or less connate. Petal-appendages well developed.

strobilate: in the shape of a cone; conical in form.

sessile: attached directly at the base; not stalked.

Flower rests directly on the stem.

polystichous: arranged in several rows; attached all the way around the axis.

entire: margin not in any way indented; whole.

Entire leaves have smooth edges.

unarmed: without thorns, spines or barbs.

carinate: carin-: referring to a keel (carinata, carinate = keeled, like a lobster claw, having a single central ridge).

trichomes: the scale or hair found on the leaves and other organs of most bromeliads; an absorptive organ.

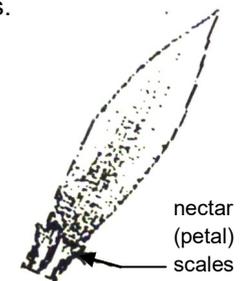
sepals: one of the separate parts of a calyx; the flower parts that surround or contain the petals. In bromeliads there are three sepals.

connate: united or joined; in particular, like or similar structures joined as one body or organ.

petal-appendages:

nectar scales: spurs or pockets at the base of the petals that contain nectar.

petal scales: the tiny flaps of tissue present on the inner surface of each petal.



Roots - How to Get Roots on Rootless Bromeliads!!

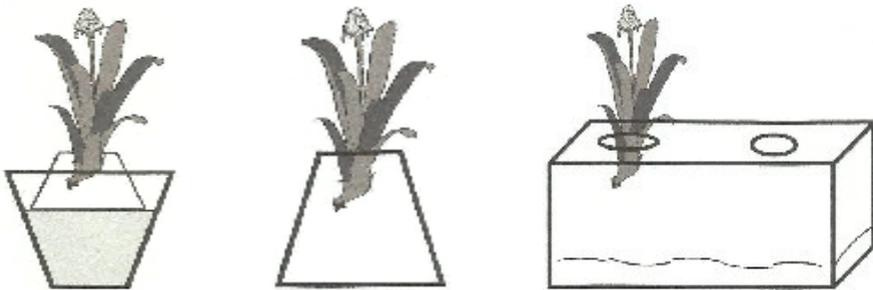
In 2013 Jeanette Henwood demonstrated a method for growing roots on rootless bromeliads. It involved cutting a hole in the base of a styrofoam cup, inverting it and pushing the plant through the hole. Then screw the cup with the bromeliad firmly down into a larger pot containing potting mix (this is for stability). Water when needed. Fig.1.

An alternative method suggested by Ross for larger plants without roots is to use an inverted terra-cotta pot with a hole in the base. This drainage hole may need enlarging to accommodate the bromeliad. Fig.2.

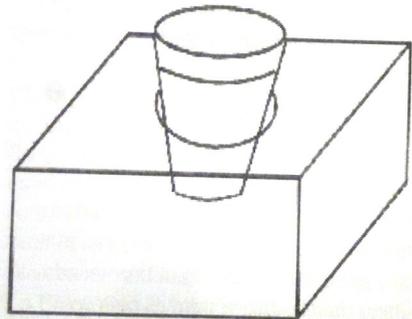
Another method incorporates plants pushed through holes in a styrofoam box lid so that their base rests just above a thin layer of moisture/water inside the box. The use of sphagnum moss in any of these instances is not recommended as it retains moisture and thus assists rotting. Fig.3.

Placing bare rooted offsets in the leaf axil of a larger plant like an *Alcantarea* can assist in getting those 'difficult to set root' plants off to a good start.

John Crawford places his *Alcantarea* 'grass' pups in a split thick-shake straw, which he then pushes into the potting mix. This of course provides stability while the roots grow for these difficult to handle smaller plants.



Polystyrene boxes are also very handy when you want to transport an awkward size plant to a meeting or a show without causing any plant damage. Simply turn



the box upside down and cut a hole slightly larger than the diameter of the base of the pot but smaller than the diameter of the top of the pot. Insert the pot into the hole so that it goes in about half of its depth and you will find the polystyrene will grip the sides of the pot and hold it firmly in place with the leaves clear of any other obstacles which could cause damage to the plant.

Fly Speck Scale (*Gymnaspis aechmea*)

- Grace Goode called it the scourge of Bromeliads.
- I call it unsightly and inconvenient (a pest).
- Fly Speck scale does not infect other plants, it's confined to Bromeliads.
- It's different to all other scale.
- Check your plants in sunlight.
- They are insects that can crawl, they attach themselves to the plant and suck.
- They secrete a black, hard protective cover and lay eggs.
- In spring and summer they hatch, one female can lay up to 100 eggs.
- Do not scrape them off, you will release eggs into the leaf base and they will multiply.
- Bromeliads are different to most other plants, they feed through their leaves.
- Never use white oil or copper spray on Bromeliads, they will kill them.
- Amgrow Chemspray Antiscale has been suggested to control them.
- Malathion has also been suggested as an effective control.
- Spectrum 200SC helps control fly speck scale and other sucking insects.
- As these are toxic chemicals you must read the labels and take care.
- Before spraying, empty out the plant of water and clean out debris and allow to dry.
- Spray and leave for 24 hours before watering.
- Quarantine new plants and any of your existing plants with scale.
- Check your plants for scale regularly.
- Rob Smythes canola oil based white oil can be used safely, refer to: FNCBSG Newsletter October 2019 for recipes for Canola based white oil. FNCBSG Newsletter April 2011 Canola White Oil "Oils ain't Oils Soll!". FNCBSG Newsletter July 2014 "How to Make Canola Oil Spray"



Back issues of FNCBSG NSW Newsletters can be found in **Club News** at: Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) <http://bromeliad.org.au/>

Open Popular Vote

1st	Helen Clewett	<i>Aechmea recurvata</i>
2nd	Mitch Jones	<i>Dyckia</i> 'Helen's Ruby'
3rd	Kayelene Guthrie	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Larnach's Glorious'
3rd	Keryn Simpson	<i>Billbergia</i> 'Baker's Tiger'
3rd	Michelle Hartwell	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Laser' unreg.

Tillandsioideae

1st	Keryn Simpson	<i>Tillandsia bulbosa</i>
1st	Helen Clewett	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Cotton Candy'
2nd	Gary McAteer	<i>Tillandsia</i> 'Cotton Candy'

Decorative

1st	Helen Clewett	'Basket of Broms'
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Judges Choice

1st	Mitch Jones	<i>Dyckia</i> 'Helen's Ruby'
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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 : <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/>

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 many with Table of Contents Index and there's 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 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.