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

Edition: May 2025

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 June19th 2025 at 11 a.m.

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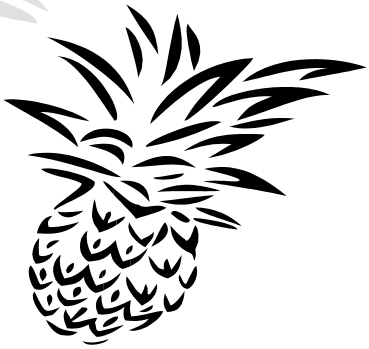
**Life Members:** Gary McAteer, Coral McAteer
Debbie Smith, Shirley Smith
Ross Little, Helen Clewett



## Meeting April 15th 2025

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
The eight members were welcomed.
Six apologies were received.

## General Business

It was our Easter meeting, so Happy Easter to all with some chocolate eggs shared around, thank you Coral and Gary.

Helen was welcomed back after a spell of serious rest was required.

Our FNCBSG flyer was distributed by members to local Garden Clubs, response has been low. We just need to keep pushing 'the good word of Bromeliad' as it may take some prospective new members time to adjust their schedules to fit our little group in as well.

## Show, Tell and Ask!

Kayelene and Clive attended the Melbourne International Garden Show in March. "We were the only ones from our Group who went this year unfortunately and it was a really great experience. The setting was beautiful in and around the Royal Exhibition Building where there were many exhibits and stalls with garden items and plants for sale. The built gardens were interesting and very good, however we only saw one lot of bromeliads in the whole place! We splurged on the high tea experience and enjoyed a gin!! However be sure to take good comfortable shoes as it was a huge day of walking, I ended up with a wheelchair ride to the tram station at the end of the day! It was offered, so I took it up! Clive, being a golfer was used to walking so he was fine and refused the offer.
A great experience all up".

With some guidance from Gary, Kayelene is getting the hang of mounting Tillandsias, her latest triumph was a *Tillandsia bulbosa* mounted on timber. It was glued as an upright attachment which should do just fine although I have seen them seemingly happily growing upside down in habitat. This is often referred to as ageotropism:- the absence of any tendency of an organ to grow in a particular direction relative to the force of gravity. Upward growth is negative geotropism, downward growth is positive geotropism. Tillandsia bulbosa has been known to grow in all directions, up, down and even sideways. This is a species that is relatively easy to grow only requiring a bright, sunny position with high humidity. It is found growing as an epiphyte near sea level to 1350 metres altitude from Mexico and the West Indies to Ecuador and northern Brazil.



Autumn is upon us, the days have got much shorter and cooler now, however this does not mean that our beloved Bromeliads have stopped growing. Look around your collection to see how many of your plants are beginning to produce an inflorescence, yes you'll see many are starting to flower now. Those that have finished flowering are beginning to produce offsets, new life is emerging to create the next generation. So what does this mean, our plants continue to remain active year round which means they need feeding year round.

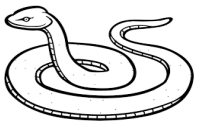
Many plant species have a dormant period, a period of slowed growth, a rest period but it doesn't seem so with many of our Bromeliads. They may not all flower or produce their offsets at the same time of the year as each other but they are always at different stages of productive growth. Therefore one must maintain ones fertilizing regime as growing plants need to be fed. Rotate your fertilizers, don't keep using the same one year round. Observation is the key.

Now is a good time for some plant maintenance, clean dead leaves from around the base of plants to help prevent fungal issue. Cleaning your Tillandsia clumps is well worth the effort, clearing dead debris/leaves from within the clump will improve air circulation within the clump allowing it to dry faster preventing rot.

I know it might sound a bit silly for us in the Northern Rivers to say you can ease up a bit with your watering regime with the amount of rain we've been getting this year. However it's not going to rain like this forever so when it does stop, a good watering of your plants once a week should suffice.

If you have cold sensitive plants start thinking about moving them under cover.

**Warning:** Snakes alive, just because the warmer months have passed and now winter is nearing doesn't mean the snakes in our general area are in rest mode. It has been cool and wet for some time now so they've not been as active as per normal, however, I have encountered several brown snakes over the past week or so. One was a little aggressive, I think I frightened him as much as he did me, but off we both went in opposite directions and all is well. Another just recently was under a tray when it was picked up to be moved, care should be exercised when moving your pot plants. At least wear suitable footwear, clothing and a good pair of leather gloves, use a rake or similar to lift trays and *look first* before picking up by hand. Keeping your lawns mown and growing areas clean and tidy is a help but don't get too complacent, snakes will still seek a sunny location to warm up. Keep your eyes open, stay alert and take care at all times.



Remember snakes are protected by law, so don't kill them.
They're not all bad, they do help keep rodents under control.
Respect them, step away and you generally won't have a problem.

## Open Popular Vote

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | Mitch Jones | *Sincoraea albopicta* |
| 2nd | Helen Clewett | *Neoregelia* 'Deep Space' |
| 3rd | Shane Fitzgerald | *Aechmea* 'Black Amazon' |

## Tillandsia

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | Gary McAteer | *Tillandsia* 'Fuego' |
| 2nd | Helen Clewett | *Tillandsia dura* |
| 3rd | Shane Fitzgerald | *Tillandsia tectorum* (filiform) |

## Monthly Genus — Canistropsis and Edmundoa

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## Judges Choice

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | Mitch Jones | *Sincoraea albopicta* |

## 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.

Bromeliad Species Database (BSD): www.bsi.org/members/?bsd
Refer to this site for species identification, photos, descriptions and more.

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.



## Monthly Genus for April was Canistropsis and Edmundoa

The genus Canistropsis was originally a subgenus of Nidularium, placed there by the German botanist Karl Mez in 1891. After this it had a very chequered history until Elton M.C. Leme's revision of the Nidularioid Complex in 1997 which allowed him to raise Canistropsis into a distinct genus in its own right. There are 11 accepted species and five infraspecific taxa (forms/forma).

Canistropsis means "resembling Canistrum", from the Greek *kanos* for basket and the Greek suffix *opsis* = "resembling or like", together we have Canistropsis. All species of Canistropsis are small to medium sized plants and are usually propagated by long slender stolons. The genus is found in the Atlantic Forest of eastern Brazil, from Bahia in north eastern Brazil to Santa Catarina and all other south eastern states of Brazil where they grow saxicolous and or epiphytically.

*Canistropsis billbergioides* is the more common Canistropsis in collections, it is the most variable of the genus and has the widest range. Billbergioides (oides) means like a billbergia. There are 20 colour variants, most given a cultivar name indicated by fruits closest to their colour: Apricot, Blood Orange, Citron, Cola, Guava, Lemon, Mandarin, Mulberry, Persimmon, Plum, Tamarillo, Tutti Frutti.

*Canistropsis* 'Cola'

*Canistropsis* 'Sugar Fig'

*Canistropsis* 'Citron'

Other Canistropsis less often seen in collections are:
*Canistropsis albiflora, billbergioides* forma *azurea,* forma *billbergioides, burchellii, correia-araujoi, elata, exigua, marceloi, microps* forma *bicensis,* forma *microps,* forma *pallida, pulcherrima, seidelii, simulans.*

*Canistropsis burchelii*

*Canistropsis exigua*

*Canistropsis microps*

*Canistropsis seidelii*

Photos for this article by Ross Little and from the Butcher Files.

Edmundoa is a relatively new genus created by Elton M. C. Leme, it was named to honour the Brazilian botanist Edmundo Pereira in his 1997 revision of the Nidularioid Complex. The three species and two varieties were raised to genus level in their own right based on similarities they have with each other but differ to those in their previous assignments in Nidularium and Canistrum.

The three species are relatively easy to identify having broad leaves with softish spines that are not particularly aggressive.

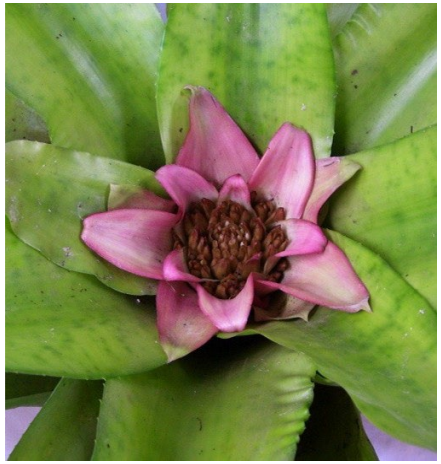
The inflorescence is easily identified as belonging to the Nidularioid Complex by its structure, it can be distinguished from other members of the complex by being densely lanate (woolly) and the inflorescence is raised from within the centre of the rosette.

It can be found growing in the Atlantic forest from Rio Grand do sul to Espirito Santo with *Edmundoa lindenii* having the widest range distribution throughout southern and south eastern Brazil.

Edmundoa can be grown as terrestrials, epiphytes or as saxicolous plants, they have been found growing from 400 to 1000 metres altitude.

*Edmundoa lindenii* var. *rosea* is quite variable as can be seen in these photos, above with green sepals and green leaves, below left with white sepals and reddish leaves, right is seed grown ex Peter Tristram has red primary bracts.

*Edmundoa lindenii* var. *rosea*



*Edmundoa* 'Rosea' (Brazil seed)



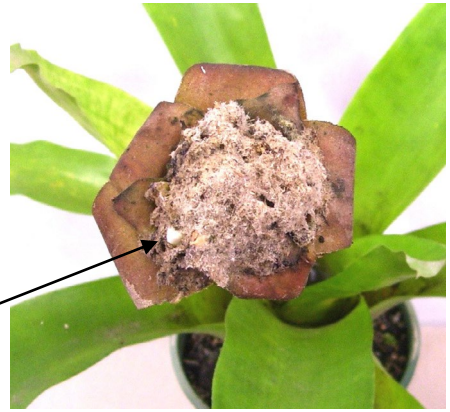
There is also a marginated and a variegated form of *Edmundoa lindenii* that were given cultivar names as variegation is not recognized in formal descriptions

*Edmundoa* 'Alvim Seidel'

*Edmundoa* 'Brazil'

*Edmundoa ambigua* found by L.C. Gurken in Rio de Janeiro in the Serra da Bocaina in 1973, it can also be found in Sao Paulo State. It grows as an epiphyte in the moist Atlantic forest above 800 metres altitude.

The inflorescence has a light brown or pale lanate (woolly) appearance and could be mistaken for being post floral - dead, until one notices the white petals of the flowers when they appear.



*Edmundoa perplexa* found by F.C. Hoehne February 1934 in Jardim Botânico de São Paulo. It grows at the higher elevations than *Edmundoa ambigua* and is found in the Serra do Mar in Sao Paulo state.

This species is larger than *E. ambigua,* its leaves are more rigid and sometimes has wine red blemishes toward the leaf bases. It also has transverse venation (pattern) on the leaves and the red primary bracts of *Edmundoa perplexa* also help distinguish it from *Edmundoa ambigua*.

Information gleaned from: Canistrum, Canistropsis and Nidularium - Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest by Elton M.C. Leme

Photos for this article by Ross Little and from the Butcher Files.

*Sincoraea albopicta*
1st Open
and
Judges Choice Mitch Jones

*Neoregelia* 'Pink Sensation'
grown by Kayelene Guthrie

*Neoregelia* 'Deep Space'
grown by Helen Clewett

*Aechmea* 'Black Amazon' unreg.
grown by Shane Fitzgerald



*Tillandsia* 'Fuego'
1st Tillandsia
Gary McAteer

*Tillandsia* 'Fuego'
grown by
Mitch Jones

*Tillandsia ionantha* is quite a variable species that grows terrestrially and epiphytically over a range of habitats. It can be found growing from Mexico to Nicaragua from 450 - 1700 metres altitude.

*Tillandsia ionantha* was found as early as 1838, var. (variety) *ionantha* was described in 1855 by Jules Emile Planchon.

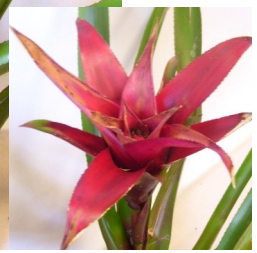
The Taxon List shows five varieties and one forma (has minor characteristics but not enough to be called a variety), however there are now well in excess of 100 hybrids and cultivars. A cultivar is one produced in cultivation as opposed to growing in habitat.

*Tillandsia* 'Fuego' is a variable cultivar as can be seen with these two presented at our April meeting. It was originally found in a Guatemalan mangrove forest along the Pacific Coast. It's reported to be the reddest of the ionantha clones making it very popular with hybridizers. There are 35 hybrids registered on the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (BCR) either as a pollen parent or the seed parent.

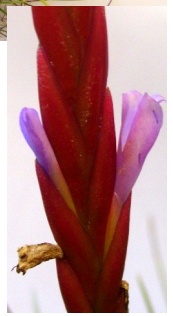
A Pitcairnia hybrid that Mitch Jones had to show us that he grows in his shade house seems to prefer more deeper shade than most of his other Pitcairnia he grows. He feels it also prefers the wet conditions in that location. The grass hoppers appear to enjoy grazing on it too.

It was acquired with no tags, so it's of unknown origin, although appears similar to John Catlan's hybrid *Pitcairnia* 'Rhubarb'

Ian brought a plant along for identification confirmation. We agreed it is *Nidularium procerum*



*Tillandsia dura* grown by Helen Clewett



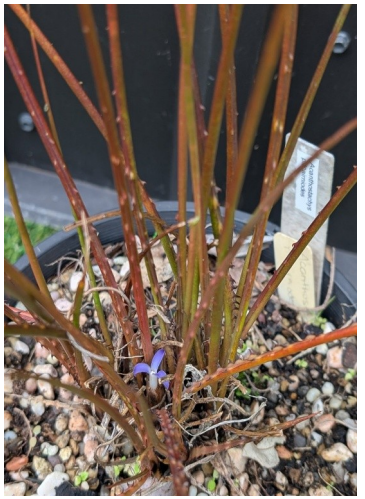


*Tillandsia tectorum* (filiform) grown by Shane Fitzgerald.

This is a variable species due to the wide range of habitats it's found growing in from southern Ecuador to Peru as an epiphyte or as a lithophyte on rocky - stony slopes and on steep rock walls at altitudes from 950 to 3400 metres.

The term 'filiform' refers to the slender, thread like, attenuate leaves narrowing to a point.

Mitch talked about two Acanthostchys, a genus of plants which consists of only three accepted species: calcicola, pitcairnioides and strobilacea.



*Acant. pitcairnioides* has blue flowers that are sunk in the centre of the rosette. It was discovered by the collector Blanchet in the State of Bahia, Brazil and described by Mez in 1896.

*Acant. strobilacea* has yellow flowers within a strobilate, pinecone shaped inflorescence. It was described by Schultes in 1830 as a Hohenbergia then transferred by Klotzsch (1841) into the genus Acanthostachys. It grows as an epiphyte and as a saxicole from 750 - 800 metres altitude in eastern Brazil, Paraguay and north eastern Argentina.

*Acanthostachys pitcairnioides* photos by Mitch Jones, *Acanthostachys strobilacea* photo from the Butcher files.

## Bromeliads - Houseplants for Today and Tomorrow Part 8

by Walter Richter (Translated by Adda Abendroth, Teresopolis, Brazil)
From: BSI 1969 Vol. 19 (3)

### Vegetative Reproduction

It is the side shoot or pup that carries the life of the mother-plant into the future. To a certain extent the mother plant even foments development of the pups and their growth. Compared to reproduction by seed the off-shoot process is by far the shorter and more rapid means of reproduction. Although the roots of the off-shoots appear comparatively soon, it is always wise to leave them on the old plant as long as possible. Removing the pup too soon is of no advantage to the pup, it interferes with its development and does not benefit the mother plant in any way.

We can distinguish two different ways of pup formation:
The majority of bromeliads have the pups very close to the old plant. They sprout directly from the much compacted main stem. As they develop, they tend to crowd the mother plant so that it gets crushed and dies after seeds have matured. At this point pups are often ready to bloom. In cultivation we often interrupt the natural cycle, detaching the off-shoot when they have three to six leaves of their own. With a sharp knife slice the shoot off close to the old stem using a downward movement and draw it sideways. Be careful not to injure new roots if they are present. A cut too close to the soft part of the new shoot may kill it. No pampering, not even drying it for a few days, will revive it. The expedient would be to no avail, especially if rootlets are present. Their tender points would dry and lose their ability to function. It is most difficult to make a perfect cut in very small, that is very young, offshoots. For this reason alone it is unwise to carry out the operation too soon.

Some species of bromeliads have a different style of pup formation. The new shoot quickly outgrows the mother plant in height, or in width sideways over the trim. The pup forms on the end of a rapidly hardening stem. A clean cut with a pair of garden shears, or with a strong knife, through the stem disconnects the pup from the old plant. Enough of the woody part of the stem that will not issue roots should be cut off, rootlets or signs that they are about to sprout can often be detected near the base of the pup. That part should never be severed. In doubt it is better to leave a little more of the woody section than to cut off too much.

The condition of the old plant after the pups have been removed can be the determining factor whether the plant should be thrown out or kept to see if additional pups will form. As said before, only a limited number of side shoots are produced. *Vriesea splendens* and its hybrids have the new shoots arising directly along the mother plant's spike. As the new funnel develops, it presses



the old spike out of place. It would be impossible to detach the old spike and it is not necessary because only one, rarely two, offshoots appear and develop into independent new plants without outside help. Intervention would most likely endanger the plants.

The huge *Vriesea imperialis* and *Vriesea reginae* have a ring of new plantlets encircling the base of the older plant early in life long before maturity. They can be easily taken away because they are only loosely connected with the old trunk and should be treated as seedlings.

Another form of pup production can be seen in Cryptanthus:
In most of the species the young plants develop in the axles of the mother plant's close-set leaves. As they grow they make their way out of the axle and become independent. Some species, as *Cryptanthus zonatus*, which produces only a few pups, develop in addition stolons that set root fast and are a sure guarantee of perpetuation, at least in nature.

The dismembered pups should be planted into relatively small pots. The small pot makes roots grow sooner and in turn favours growth of the plant. As a precaution the cuts may be dusted with charcoal, especially where tissue has been injured. The pups should not be planted too deep, otherwise they might rot. On the other hand, if they are not planted deep enough, they will become unstable, a situation which will deter root formation. For this reason it is necessary to compact the potting mix around the young plant.

The point of using a porous mix is to coax roots to form soon. This is important especially for the epiphytic species. I use a mix of good peat, pine-needle soil, half rotted leaves and sand. In the case of extra valuable species the porosity can be increased by adding a little chopped sphagnum and cracked brick.

The newly planted pups should be placed in a warm glass house. For plantlets belonging to Group 1, a temperature of 18 - 20°C is enough in sufficient shade. Plants in Group II, such as Vriesea and Guzmanias, appreciate warmth, and the temperature for them may be as high as 22 - 25°C or more. The funnels should get water at once, but the potting mixture only needs spraying that will keep it moderately moist to the touch. The condition described should be maintained for the first weeks until roots are formed, generally it does not take long. If the mix happened to get very dry, good root growth may be impeded, but too much moisture may induce rotting or give rise to other complications.

The grower handling small lots will of course want to keep his seedlings of both groups in the same compartment, but he should remember the extra requirement of Group II and give it more warmth and shade. During the first period no bad effects on the species that require less warmth and more light need to be feared. But as roots increase, development factors become active, and it is well

to think of segregation, at least by giving the brightest location in the house to the hardier kinds that need more light.

Plants raised from offshoots can be easily distinguished from seedlings. They are a little higher and have fewer leaves, of which more are larger than smaller. Gradually increasing leaf size, a greater number of leaves, and these harmoniously disposed, these are the marks of seedlings. Correct care keeps all leaves alive until adulthood. No additional distinctions can be noticed.

There is no change in the flowering period. Maturity can be gauged by the development of the single plant. If a single plant is weak, another year of care is required before it will bloom when its season comes. In practice this means that it makes no difference at which time of year the pup was detached from its mother plant and that vegetative reproduction may be carried out the year round. One may avoid doing it during the darkest months in our latitudes, November and December, but it is not a necessity.

By the way, it is not essential that pups be removed from the old plants. They may be left on if an exhibit of a many funnelled plant is desired. Especially Neoregelias with broad, short leaves lend themselves for this purpose. The slender Billbergias and Aechmeas can become eye-catching specimens. Less pleasing are the bromeliads with close narrow-leafed rosettes, their blades overlap and the specimen lacks rhythm.

If you want to obtain more pups before the time they are due, cut away the heart leaves of the adult plant before it blooms. Do it by taking hold of the youngest leaves in a firm grip and pulling them up with a firm jerk, leave the funnel empty for a few days to keep it from decaying. Pups will appear a little later. A similar process takes place if the water in the funnel is dirty and the leaves become rotted. The spoiled leaves come out easily. The rest of the plant remains sound and will rejuvenate by producing one or more pups.

## Further steps in Cultivation

Proper arrangements for the development to adulthood should allow for the growth rhythm to adapt to the change of season prevailing in our northern latitudes. The annual dry period which has considerable influence on the plants in their homeland coincides in Central Europe with the cold and sombre months. The counter part is our warm summer when vegetative growth proceeds, corresponding to the rainy period in the tropics. It is therefore essential to promote growth in every possible way while our summer lasts. Our winter conditions practically suppress growth, yet a total standstill, as some other tropicals have, is not a characteristic of bromeliads. The two periods and their opposite characteristics dictate the rules of cultivation.



Description of the generative and the vegetative ways of multiplication in back chapters ended with the plants having reached a certain stage of development including an assortment of leaves and roots of their own. Successive steps will also take into account as well the work rhythm and general routine. Methods of cultivation in pots and transplants are already familiar. Cultivation in pots gets preference when seedling lots are small, or if the plants have to be moved frequently. My own experience, however, is that the plants develop faster and more evenly in beds of soil. Also, nursing takes less time, including watering. Haphazard drying-out, inevitable in pots, is no problem in the soil. A dry spot in a bed can be corrected in a jiffy, the whole watering process takes less time.

An in-between step before definite transplanting to the soil can be transferring the seedlings into boxes, which can be placed on suspended boards. The plants will profit from the surrounding air and light and will progress nicely. *Vriesea splendens* or its hybrids can stay in such boxes until the bud appears. Then each plant gets a pot of its own. A few weeks later, after the inflorescence has grown and coloured, the plants are ready for sale. Containers made of cement are better than wooden boxes because they last longer. The beds can be on the ground, but then they must have a heating device, otherwise it would be to cold. Fifteen centimetres between the ground and cover allows sufficient space to install piping. The empty space between acts like a layer of insulation, provides a certain amount of warmth, and absorbs surplus humidity that may rise from the ground or come from above. This kind of bed can be surrounded by a low brick or cement wall. The soil for planting should be porous and fairly coarse. The combination depends on what may be available. Many possibilities can be made use of, for success does not depend on a particular fixed formula. Half decayed leaf mould, heather soil, pine-needle soil, chopped or ground peat can all be used profitably. The pH value should be around 4 - 4.5. More acid is not so good. Sand should be added. Group 1 needs a larger proportion of leafmold and the addition of a complete fertilizer. Group II, that is Vriesea and Guzmania, does not get fertilizer, its roots are too sensitive to contact with chemicals. To induce the latter to root, loosen the mix with sphagnum, chopped brick, cracked crockery, etc, in order to increase porosity. The layer of soil should be about 8 cm high, in proportion with the size of the seedlings and well compacted.

When planting, remember that growth will be slow in comparison with other plants. The ground occupied is not to be worked over for 6 to 10 months, a fact that sufficient space between plants should be allowed, although one should always remember that close proximity favors growth. So closer planting has its advantages, but it may become necessary to transplant earlier. Care in transplanting is important. Too high is as bad as too deep. Don’t compact downwards, press sideways towards the plant with both hands.

Transfer to pots can take place any time. A general recommendation is to do it shortly before, or right after bud formation. Cultivation in pots has its advantages over planting in a bed when a certain stage of development has been reached or when the plant is about two years old. The purpose of the transplant is to accelerate development. But it pampers the plants considerably. Species native to the rain forest can take transplanting without harm. We know, however, that many bromeliads live a hard life in their native land. Cultivation must take this into account. We must give the plants what they are used to if we want to bring out their particular characteristics.

Cultivation in pots is the only correct procedure for them, at least a combination method should be applied. So we plant our bromeliads in the bed and let them attain half their final development there. Then we transfer them to pots and put the plants on a starvation diet. This will provoke them to develop their characteristic traits in shape and colouring. Cultivation pots should be small. Only the final container may be in proportion to the size of the plant. It should be stable enough to keep its balance when the plant is heavy from holding water. An over large pot is of no advantage, in fact, it handicaps cultivation. The grower likes to see the roots permeate all of the mix, he knows then that his plants are in healthy condition.

Ordinarily one transplanting a year is enough. The term varies, however, with prevailing conditions. Mostly transplanting should be done at the beginning of the growth period, in the spring. But the term is not a must, any time will do as long as the plants get adequate surroundings after potting. The mix is the one described above. Offshoots that may have rooted in the pot should be left there, they can be moved whenever it is desired.

A transition of one method to the other is cultivation in boxes, so called “double boxes,” where these are still in use. They are deep boxes and get a packing of dung or cotton scraps in the bottom to produce warmth. A layer of peat goes on top of the packing and in it the pots are sunk. This is a good method for Aechmeas, Billbergias, Neoregelias and Nidulariums, it is less convenient for green-leafed Vrieseas and their hybrids, or for Guzmanias. These need more of the uniform warmth that only the glass house can give. The warm packing has a good effect on the bromeliads that can stand the method, but they also need aeration and sometimes shade. The air warms up rapidly in the smaller space when the sun shines and it may get too hot. The plants can stay in the boxes from the beginning of May to the end of September. Then they must be returned to the greenhouse.

To be continued ……...