ILLAWARRA BROMELIAD SOCIETY INCORPORATED

NEWSLINK

APRIL 2025

Guzmania

Photograph by Rosetta Di Noro
2024 Entry in Meri Stefanidakis Memorial Trophy Award

Articles appearing in this issue of *NEWSLINK* are for information purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Committee or the Illawarra Bromeliad Society.

- The Society is, by the holding of meetings, displays and competitions, to provide a forum for the people of the Illawarra region who are interested in the culture and collection of bromeliads.
- Under the provision of the Privacy Act use of names and references to private details, such as illness, holidays, birthdays, and items of a similar nature, may only be published with the written permission of the person concerned.

ILLAWARRA BROMELIAD SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT	**DAVID HASTINGS***	0402 523 064
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	**CAROL BURGDORF***	0419 409 939
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	NINA WOODCOCK	0488 089 374
SECRETARY	**ROMINA Di NORO***	0402 523 064
TREASURER	**GLENN MARTIN***	0416 286 704
ASSISTANT TREASURER	SUZANNE BURROWS	
MINUTE SECRETARY	**ANN KENNON***	0424 923 795
SHOW SECRETARY	**EDWINA WAIN***	0424 713 130
ASSISTANT SHOW SECRETARY	**EILEEN KILLINGLEY ***	(02) 9544 4726
SHOW-CO-ORDINATOR	STEPHEN WAIN	0416 008 295
LIBRARIAN	MICHAEL DRURY	
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN	GRAHAM BEVAN	
EDITOR	**EILEEN KILLINGLEY***	(02) 9544 4726
PUBLICITY OFFICER	**ROMINA Di NORO***	0402 523 064
COMPETITIONS OFFICER	SHARYN BARALDI	
ASSISTANT COMPETITIONS OFFICER	BELINDA DRURY	
PLANT SALES OFFICER	**MONICA De CLOUETT***	
ASSISTANT PLANT SALES OFFICERS	BETH CLAGUE	
GENERAL SALES OFFICER	**DAVID HASTINGS***	
ASSISTANT GENERAL SALES OFFICERS	**DENIECE CRUTCHLEY***	
	Christine Stephens	
WELFARE OFFICER	MAADI McKENNA	
REFRESHMENTS OFFICER	**CHERYL MATHEWS***	0438 612 971
PROGRAM OFFICER	**BOB STEPHENS***	0412 834 985
PROPERTY OFFICER	**DAVID HASTINGS***	0402 523 064
LIFE MEMBERS	SHARYN BARALDI	
	MARGARET BARTLEY	
	ELIZABETH AND GRAHAM BEVAN	
	BETH CLAGUE	
	SYLVIA CLARE	
***COMMITTEE MEMBERS**	MONICA De CLOUETT	
	VAL DIXON	
	BARBARA JONES-BEVERSTOCK	
	ANN AND NOEL KENNON	
	EILEEN KILLINGLEY	
	JARKA REHAK	
	PHILLIP ROBINSON	

CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO: The Secretary, Illawarra Bromeliad Society Inc.
Email: illawarrabroms@gmail.com

FACEBOOK PAGE: http://www.facebook.com/IllawarraBromeliadSociety

BANK DETAILS FOR FEE PAYMENT, ETC: GREAT SOUTHERN BANK; BSB No. 814 282; Account No. 50997160

MEETINGS - The Society meets from 12.00 noon to 4.00 pm on the first Saturday of each month (February to November) at the Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre, Winnima Way, Berkeley

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS - Due 30th June each year: $20 single/$30 family + $2 joining fee/rejoining fee.

NEWSLINK ISSUED QUARTERLY - January, April, July, and October and at http://www.bromeliad.org.au

NEWSLINK: After June 30, 2023 a copy of Newslink will be emailed to members; however, after that date should you like to receive a hard copy then there will be an additional cost of $10/year.

NEW MEMBER: A very warm welcome to Lyn Brown who signed up at our March meeting. We wish you a long and happy association with our Society.

MONTHLY RAFFLE PRIZE ROSTER: Each rostered member is asked to bring up to five bromeliad plants--or goods related to the cultivation of bromeliads--for the raffle. The quality of plants should comply with the requirements of 'Plants for Sale' and should you be unable to provide items for the raffle on your rostered day please contact the Program Officer (Bob Stephens 04 1283 4985) so that appropriate re-arrangements can be made.

April	-	Noel Kennon, Barbara Jones-Beverstock, Christine Stephens
May	-	John Toolan, Bill Homer, Pam Townsend
June	-	Michael Drury, Nina Woodcock, Deniece Crutchley
July	-	Carol Burgdorf, Sandra Carnie, Katie Chin
August	-	Stephen Wain, Eileen Killingley, Dawn Harvey
September	-	Bob Stephens, John Boyd, Maadi McKenna
October	-	Cheryl Mathews, Anne Mobbs, Sandra Southwell
November	-	Suzanne Burrows, Beth Clague, Noel Kennon
February 2026	-	Graham Bevan, Sharyn Baraldi, Monica De Clouett

CLEANING ROSTER: Those people listed for the monthly raffle are also asked to help with the final tidy up on the day as well**.** While our members are very good with helping to stack and store all of the tables and chairs, it's just the last-minute chores of making sure that the floor is clean, etc. before we lock up for the day.

GARDEN VISITS MARCH 15 – A happy group at the home of Ann and Noel Kennon!

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2025 - COACH TRIP TO COLLECTORS' PLANT FAIR, PENRITH SHOWGROUND: A 57-seater Executive coach has been booked with the cost working out to be $50 for the trip, including entry into the Fair. For any further information contact Bob Stephens on 0412 834 985. Pick up times below:

7.30 am – Depart from Oak Flats Railway Station
7.45 am – Pick up from Dapto Railway Station
8.00 am – Pick up from Corrimal Park
8.50 am – Pick up from Waterfall (Opposite Station on Highway)
9.00 am Morning Tea at Heathcote (Depart 9.30 am)
Arrive Penrith Showground between 10.30 am – 11.00 am
Leave for home around 3.00 pm

PLANT SALES DAY – SATURDAY, MAY 31 AT THE BERKELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE: Entry to hall for setup available from 7.00 am. Please see Steve at one of our meetings or contact him to book a table.

GARDEN VISITS #2 – SATURDAY, JUNE 21: Three gardens to visit with the first being at Sandra Carnie's home in Albion Park Rail (Phone: 0414 454 179) where we will meet at 10.00 am for morning tea. Tea and coffee will be provided but please bring cake/slice/fruit to share. At approximately 11 am we will then travel to the home of Beth Clague in Horsley (Phone: (02) 4261 6537). At approximately 11.45 am we will then travel to the home of Deniece Crutchley (Phone: 0439 500 591) where we will view her garden and have lunch. Deniece will provide tea/coffee but please bring your own lunch and perhaps some sweet items to share. Details and addresses will be provided at our June Meeting.

OUR CHRISTMAS IN JULY MEETING – SATURDAY, 5TH JULY – SOUP 'N SWEETS – 12 noon – 4 pm.
Raffle and monthly competition will be on but no sales plants. We will also run our Plant of the Month—*Vriesea*—so please bring along your plant and be prepared to talk about it. When we get a little closer to the time we will be calling on members to supply soup/sweets (usually 4 of each).

February 3, 2025 – Competition Plant Results

Open:

1st	Suzanne Burrows	x*Sincoregelia* Firecracker
2nd	Bob Stephens	*Vriesea* 'Splenriet'
2nd	Suzanne Burrows	x*Sincoregelia* Firecracker
3rd	Ann Kennon	Terracotta pot of *cryptanthus*

Novice:

1st	Graham Kohler	*Billbergia* cv3
1st	Graham Kohler	*Aechmea* Larnach's Enchantment
1st	Perry Avnell	*Billbergia* Talbot Fandango
2nd	Graham Kohler	*Billbergia* cv1

Tillandsia

1st	Elizabeth Bevan	*Tillandsia edithiae*
2nd	Ann Kennon	*Tillandsia leiboldiana*
2nd	Barbara Jones-Beverstock	*Tillandsia mallemontii*
3rd	Suzanne Burrows	*Tillandsia tenuifolia*

March 2, 2025 – Competition Plant Results

Open:

1st	David Hastings	*xVrieslutheria* Kent's Sunset
2nd	Edwina and Steve Wain	*Neoregelia* Painted Delight
2nd	Bob Stephens	*Neoregelia* Amazing Grace
2nd	Bob Stephens	*Neoregelia* Predator
3rd	Graham Bevan	*Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman'
3rd	Bob Stephens	*Billbergia* 'B A Bubblz'
3rd	Suzanne Burrows	*Billbergia pyramidalis*

Novice

1st	Ines Ryde	*Dyckia*
2nd	Ines Ryde	*Dyckia* Little Joy
2nd	Philip Snowden	*Vriesea* Jungle Carpet
3rd	Philip Snowden	*Neoregelia* Fireball

Tillandsia

1st	Edwina and Steve Wain	*Tillandsia confertiflora*
1st	Ann Kennon	*Tillandsia karwinskyana*
2nd	Edwina and Steve Wain	*Tillandsia leiboldiana*
3rd	Suzanne Burrows	*Tillandsia crocata*

APRIL MEETING TOPIC – GROWING FROM SEED

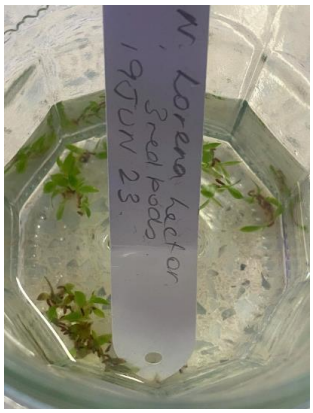
Notes from Nina Woodcock's presentation and reprinted from *Bromeletter*, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Australia's October-November 2024 Vol. 62(4) issue after her presentation at their meeting in October 2024.

This talk covered different methods for growing bromeliads from seed. I had originally wanted to hybridise hoyas but the procedure for pollinating the flowers was too fiddly, so I didn't pursue that.

After discovering some beautiful neoregelias at a local market (sold by Steve and Edwina) I was hooked and I went and bought as many as I could find, and I am still doing that. I found some amazing bromeliad communities on FACEBOOK that sold bromeliads and I bought lots, but I wanted more because I was so curious about these plants. They are just so different and there are so many varieties.

Then something happened—I saw some videos about growing bromeliads from seed and I had to know everything. I wanted to see how these amazing plants grew from tiny seeds into huge plants. I asked around for seed and started with neoregelia seeds and started to experiment with techniques. Soak the seeds in water, then plant them in coco peat—that didn't work so well so I tried the normal potting mix I use and that worked. I put the cups on a heat mat in winter and so far that method has been successful.

I leave the seeds in the water until they germinate. When they have two leaves I transfer them to the potting mix cups. This method works with neoregelias, billbergias and aechmeas.





These photos show: 1) six-week old seed growing in water; 2) seedlings transferred to soil; 3) and 4) seedlings at 2 years old.

For the other varieties I needed to do something different. With vrieseas, puyas, dyckias and alcantareas I soak the seeds for a few minutes then put them on top of the potting mix in the cups and keep them warm on a heat mat.


I have tried many methods to grow tillandsias but the most successful way in Sydney is just putting the seeds in gauze bags and hanging them out among my plants. So far using this method I have had success with tillandsia hybrids of *ionantha*, *gardneri, butzii, velutina, fasciculata* and *streptophylla*.

Once the plants look strong enough to pot up I leave them together in a clump and pot them onto a bigger pot. Once the pot fills out, I separate them into size—large into a pot together and medium and small. That way the larger plants don't get to take over the smaller plants, and the smaller plants get a chance to develop better roots so they can take in more nutrients and grow bigger. In most cases they catch up to the large plants eventually.

To cross-pollinate just transfer pollen from one flower to another when the pollen is loose; that means you can see yellow on your finger or matchstick. For neoregelias a matchstick works well—Chester Skotak has a video on YouTube demonstrating this technique. After pollinating the flower base will swell up and change colour when the pods are ripe. Then you can squeeze the seeds into a cup of water. The water needs to be changed every few days to prevent algae from taking over. For tillandsias I transfer pollen with another tillandsia leaf. The seeds are ripe when the seed pod splits open and the seeds pop out. This is the same with alcantareas and vrieseas. Images below show a vriesea flower open, green seed pods, and dried seed.

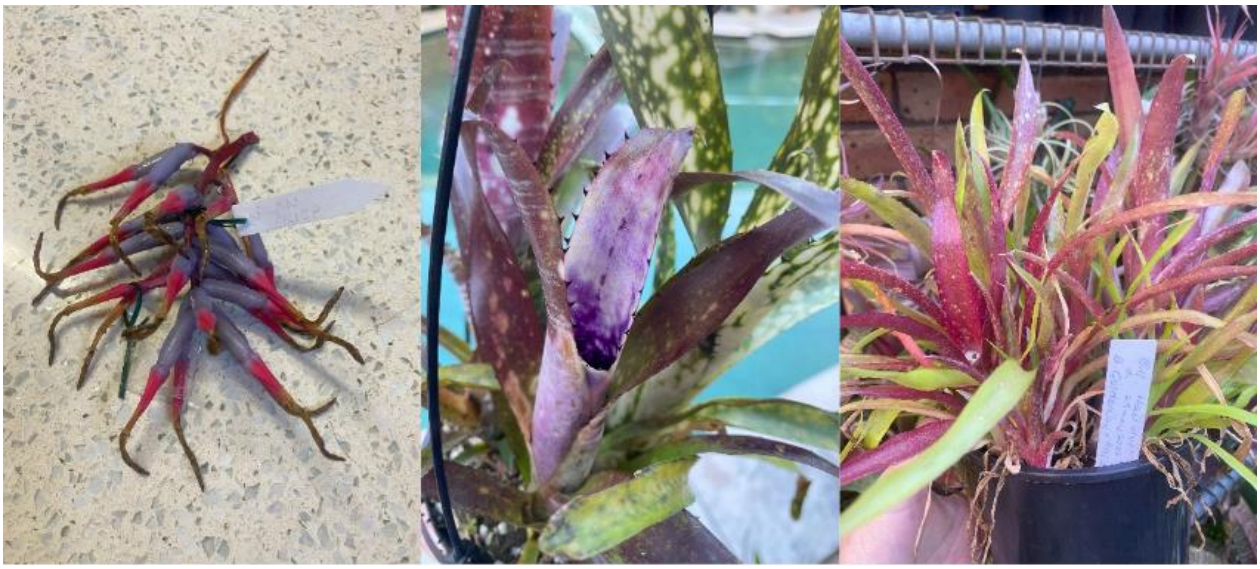


Where to start? To start with I would recommend you just cross whatever is in flower at the same time because seeds are what you need to start experimenting with. Everyone's conditions are different. I live near a river so even in the middle of summer there is some humidity in the air. If you live away from water your conditions will be different. That doesn't mean that you can't grow from seed. Bromeliads grow in a wide range of conditions. Start by growing bromeliads that grow in similar conditions to your own in the wild. Desert, cliffs, rainforest, treetops, on the forest floor there is a bromeliad for every position—except in the dark cupboard under the stairs: that's for the mushrooms. The easiest and fastest bromeliads to grow from seed are billbergias. Find two different billbergias in flower and cross the pollen. For me they don't seem to self-pollinate, so you need two different ones to cross. Add a label to both plants with the name of the mother plant, the date that you pollinated them, and the name of the plant the pollen was from. Once the seeds develop this label can then follow the seeds.

Once you have some success with getting seeds and growing them it's time to think about what you want to grow. One of my aims was to grow some medium-sized pink neoregelias. I wanted a good shape so I chose *Neoregelia* Broken Heart and *Neoregelia* Homage to cross—unfortunately, I have not had these two plants in flower at the same time and I haven't had much success using pollen from neoregelias. With billbergias it is much easier. Just cut the pollen anthers off and store in the freezer until the other billbergia you want to hybridise it with is in flower. Defrost the pollen for a few minutes and pollinate the flower with a brush or cut off the anthers and pollinate the stamen (image 6).

How do you know if the seeds are ready for neoregelias, billbergias, hylaeaicum and aechmeas? When the pods change colour you know to start testing by pulling the top gently; they are ready when you pull

on the tops and they come out easily. If you really have to pull they are not ready. If you want a feature such as a white stripe or variegation, use a neoregelia that has striations rather than variegation on the middle or edge of a leaf (image 4).



Images above: 1, above shows ripe billbergia seed pods, with 2 and 3 showing maturing seedlings at about two years old.
Images below: 4 is a *Neoregelia* Firehorse hybrid, followed by an almost ripe seed pod on an aechmea, then a collection of pollen in my freezer that I use to pollinate a plant that I want to hybridise but have nothing else in bloom to cross it with.

Please give it a try as it is so rewarding to see the big clumps of seedlings growing up to suit your conditions. They will grow the best in the place where they originally grew from seed, which is another reason I want to hybridise in Sydney. Most bromeliads have been hybridised in Queensland so they suit the longer days and hotter, humid conditions. Remember there are no bromeliads that are native to Australia, but they have adapted to our conditions easily. I think that there's always room for more!

The following three articles I have reprinted from the fcbs.org website (Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies newsletter, Volume 43 Issue 1, February 2023, Carol Wolfe, Editor).

BROMELIADS – THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

By Tom Wolfe

When rooting N*eoregelia* Fireballs or other small neoregelias, try placing them in a tray of moist perlite for about a month. By doing so they very seldom lose their color. Then place them in your regular bromeliad mix and don't shake off the perlite that clings to the roots. This will maintain foliage color which is essential for neos.

The best time to root bromeliads is in early spring when days are beginning to lengthen. However, some plants are bloomed out and spent in the fall or winter months and are busy producing pups. There is no problem taking the pups off and potting them when they are one-third the size of the mother plant or larger. Add a small pinch (1/4 teaspoon) of fertilizer on the surface of the potting mix. But don't expect much growth to start until March or the first part of April [September/October here in Australia].

If you have a rare plant that is spent and the pup or pups have been removed, try the "empty pot culture". Place the spent plant upright in an empty clay pot for ballast and hopefully it will produce another pup or two. Place the pot in normal conditions for light, air, and water and check periodically for new pups.

Sometimes a plant, especially a neoregelia, will continue growing without blooming, thereby producing a trunk 'caudex' which may look unattractive. If you cut off the plant at ground level and place the plant in new mix, the plant will produce new roots and continue to grow. I had an *Alcantarea imperialis* that had been growing for about fifteen years, producing a 24" trunk. One cold night the bottom portion of the trunk froze. I removed the frozen part, dug a new hole and planted the good portion of the trunk in the hole. It continued to grow as if nothing had happened.

If you decide to mount a plant, select one that is one-third to one-half grown with no roots or very few roots. When the plant begins to root, it will root to the mount. A fully grown plant has already produced all of its roots; therefore, it will never attach to the mount until the pups are mature enough to do so.

BROMELIAD FAQ WILL MY BROMELIAD BLOOM AGAIN?

Most of the bromeliads that people grow only bloom a single time. As the plants grow by adding new leaves from the centre, it becomes impossible to continue growth after flowering since the inflorescence blocks new leaf growth. The plants direct their energy into growing new vegetative offsets (pups) from growing buds at the base of the leaves.

Some species of *Dyckia* and *Hechtia* grow lateral inflorescences (from the side rather than the centre of the plant). These plants are free to add leaves from the centre of the original plant continuing its growth (they also pup freely).

Some plants in the uncommonly grown genus *Deuterocohnia* can actually re-bloom on an existing inflorescence. Some can bloom for up to six years on one of these perennial flower spikes.

THE INFLORESCENCE

By Jay Thurrott (Reprinted from September, 2007 *Orlandiana*)

As a general rule, a bromeliad's inflorescence rises from the centre of the rosette of leaves that make up the plant. The group of "embryonic" cells in the centre of the cup is referred to as the meristem. This meristem tissue it the source of new leaves as the bromeliad grows but becomes altered in some way when the plant reaches maturity and produces an inflorescence instead of leaves. This is the reason often offered for why most bromeliads only bloom once in their lives. Once the inflorescence is produced there's no longer meristem tissue to form new leaves and the plant slowly dies.

A bromeliad inflorescence may take a number of different forms. The form alone may be distinctive enough to aid in identification of the plant. This can be erect (upright), pendent (dangling), semi-pendent (leaning), or even reflexed (pendent and then recurving back toward the upright). A simple inflorescence would be a single, unbranched stalk, like *Tillandsia bartramii*. *T. utriculata* is an example of a compound inflorescence—one that branches. A digitate inflorescence is one where the attached structures arise from one point and fan outward like fingers. If the inflorescence has loosely attached structures on either side of the stalk, we may say that the inflorescence is pinnate—resembling a feather. This type of bloom is often seen in members of the *Vriesea* genus.

Vriesea
Pinnate inflorescence

Tillandsia barthlottii
Digitate inflorescence

Tillandsia utriculata
Compound inflorescence

Tillandsia bartramii
Simple inflorescence
(Single unbranched stalk)

SPLITTING BROMELIADS

Reprinted from The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society's newsletter, *Meristem*, March-April 2024
Originally published in East London Bromeliad Society's newsletter of South Africa, March 2024.
By Barbara Black (editor).

(Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Editor's note: For many years I have been involved in an unofficial newsletter exchange with a few newsletters throughout the World. This article caught my eye from the East London Bromeliad Society of South Africa. I have made a few minor notes to enhance and clarify information. Barbara Black is doing a superb job as its Editor.)

Dr Peter Pfister brought a big clump of *Lutheria* (formerly *Vriesea*) *glutinosa* to be split. It had developed quite a few pups, this genus tending to produce axial pups coming out of the centre of the plant which are difficult to separate from the mother. There were also a few grass pups growing around the base which were saved too. Another option is to allow your bromeliad to form a nice clump to make an attractive display. This does not usually suit neoregelias with their rosette form, for instance, which are best grown separately to let the plant grow to its full potential without squashing the leaves. If you want more pups to grow, separate your pups from the mother only when they are at least more than half the height of the mother to ensure survival and good growth. The old mother, if not in too bad a condition—or a very special plant—might continue to produce one or more pups. For our newer members, a brief recap on splitting bromeliads: when you are planning to separate your bromeliads you will need to decide whether you are going to plant them in the garden, mount of pot them. You will need pots, potting medium (which needs to be free-draining), labels (which you can make out of yogurt or ice-cream containers (CBS editor: I use 1 inch window blind slats cut into 6 inch pieces), use a permanent marker (CBS editor: lead pencils tend not to fade as much) to write the details. Try to keep your plants labelled if it comes with the correct name and you will thank yourself much later! You will need secateurs, loppers, even a small saw for some of the thick, woody stems or a sharp old knife to do the job. Bromeliads can start forming pups (also called off-shoots or offsets) at any time, but most start 'pupping' after they bloom; and then the mother plant slowly dies off over the next year or so, having replaced itself with the pups. You can choose to leave the plant in a clump and just remove the old mother. Most pups grow off the side of the mother plant at the base or on long, woody stolons. Some varieties, like *Lutheria glutinosa* that was split at the meeting, have an axial pup coming out of the centre of the mother plant's leaves. You do risk losing the mother trying to remove these kinds of pups, so wait until there is more than one of decent size. By removing pups from most bromeliads you speed up the process of the mother plant perhaps producing one or more pups. The other type of pup seen on *Lutheria glutinosa* were grass pups. These grow around the base of the mother and in the case of some alcantarea varieties they are the only type of pup the mother produces. When big enough they can be carefully removed and grown on. A tip: these grass pups can be placed in the water of the cup of another bromeliad where they root easily before potting them on. 'Normal' pups are ready to be separated when they reach about half to 2/3 the size of the parent plant. If the pup is starting to form roots that's a good indication that the plant can survive on its own. They do not necessarily need to have roots in order to survive and begin life. They will form roots. Remember that (many) bromeliads take in moisture and nutrients through their leaves and most can survive as epiphytes and can be mounted. (CBS Editor: The terrestrial bromeliads absorb their nutrients and moisture through their roots and should be planted in media.) Roots are mainly to anchor the (epiphytic) plants, to provide stability when potted, or on a host—e.g., a tree trunk. Pups may be removed by cutting with a sharp knife or secateurs as close to the mother plant as possible. The bigger varieties may need a small saw to cut through the woody stem. Try not to damage the mother plant as it might produce more pups. Some pups can be pulled away from the mother by hand. The longer you leave the pups on the mother plant the quicker they will reach maturity (taking nourishment from mom). Feel free to trim back the leaves of the parent plant if they start interfering with the growth of a pup. To encourage the pup to grow, position the plant with the pups facing towards the light. Alternatively, removing the pups a bit smaller will encourage the mother plant to throw more pups sooner. Just remember that pups removed when they are too small struggle to develop and will result in inferior plants. It depends on whether you want a bunch of plants

(for bedding or to share with friends) or if you just want a few that will mature faster. If you live in a colder climate you may want to wait until springtime to remove pups that would otherwise be ready to remove in the winter as pups don't usually root well when it is cold. Once pups are separated you can leave them for a few days in a shady spot for the 'wound' to heal or pot them up straight away, but don't overwater them. Best to keep them on the drier side till roots form to prevent any rot setting in. Alternatively, if you have a number of pups around the mother, you may choose to cut away the mother plant and let the pups form an attractive specimen group (clump) of that particular bromeliad. Still too small to remove, I like to let them grow in a clump. You can separate or leave the pup on the mother to form a nice clump. Some bromeliads, like neoregelias, look better separated so that the rosette form of the plant can be appreciated. Other genera—e.g., *Billbergia*, some *Guzmanias* and *Tillandsias*-- often look much better as a clump of specimen plants. HAPPY SPLITTING!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 3 – 4	**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AUTUMN SHOW – CASTLE HILL SHOWGROUNDS** Saturday, May 3, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm/Sunday, May 4, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

Nina's Fence Forest
Photo by Nina Woodcock