

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE



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THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

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Web site: <http://www.bromeliad.org.au>

Meetings Venue:

Maltese Cultural Centre,
6 Jeanes Street,
Beverley

Time: 2.00pm.

Second Sunday of each month (unless advised otherwise)

President: Mr. Len. Colgan,
1 Ailsa Avenue, Warradale, 5046 82969426

Secretary: Mr. Derek. R. Butcher
25 Crace Road, Fulham, 5024 83567728

Pots: Available all meetings
83514876
Call Ron Masters for special orders/ larger quantities or pick-up.

Dates for 2009

Meeting dates:- Apr - no meeting, May 3rd (**1st Sunday**), - Adam *Bigenerics* presentation showing off our new computer projector .

June 14th, July 12th, Aug 2nd (**1st Sunday**), Sept 13th, Oct 11th, Nov 8th.

Special Events:- Nov 7th Sales day

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb. to Feb.

Several reference photos courtesy of "fcb.org"

First, I must point out that we have no meeting in April so you will have nothing to read about! There will be reading about the Australia Conference in the 'Proceedings', which will be issued sometime after the conference to attendees. We hope to be as fast as we can but there are always speakers who are quick to speak but slow to write!



March meeting from the Secretary's desk

What a roll up! Not just in people but in plants! AND little evidence of burnt plants although lots of tales about the heat. Some bragging about how 'they' won, some commiserations, and some vowing to take precautions – next time. The ideas of precautions took many paths varying from increased shade cloth, bringing down plants from higher positions, to watering techniques. I did ask for those who had strong views about success to write down their views for others to cogitate on, otherwise they would only get the Secretary's 'watered' down views in these writings!

Most of the meeting was taken in discussing final details for the Easter Conference and I think we all know what is expected of us. Len Colgan can stop worrying on Tuesday April 14th

And so to Summer brag with Adam presiding as per usual. The very hot weather we had at the end of January seemed to spur members to look at plants that survived well and we were swamped with plants. I am told we had 5 tables full of plants and our tables at 8ft long are not small. So Adam had to work fast! To digress a bit. some Societies on the eastern coast of Australia seem to believe that the only way you can encourage growers to grow a good plant is by a plant competition. I have never been of this opinion because such competitions are based just on good looks and do little to teach growers about their plants or even if they are correctly identified. We prefer to discuss the plants in total, not just their looks and I think we have less grumbles and more participation because of it. Perhaps eastern sea-borderers are more Americanised than us. I always think that if 3 or 4 Americans are together they say – Let's have a competition, what are the rules? If there are 3 or 4 Aussies they say – I bet that fly on the wall ----

What a mixed bag! Starting with the pricklies. I still believe that the species are hard to beat and we saw *Dyckia marnier-lapostollei* var. *estevesii* and a plant close to *D. fosteriana* as you could get. Regrettably there are lots of plants called *D. fosteriana* and yet are hybrids and much inferior in looks. It pays to look out for one closer to the species.



Dyckia marnier-lapostollei var. *estevesii*

A smaller than usual *Encholirium* was in flower. It had #4 on the tag so we still have to work out a name. It is just one of those whose seed was collected by Rudi Schulz in Victoria from one of his trips to Bahia and other dry places in Brazil. It is here that I regret to announce that also in these seeds was one plant that has been identified as *E. heloisae*. I say regret, because we do have the plant but the Sandgropers beat us to it in the flowering stakes! What I like about it is that it is small! Name-wise, it has an interesting history because for many years it was known as a *Dyckia*. Some smart botanist then said that all *Dyckia* flower from the side of the plant (not common in Bromeliads) whereas all *Encholirium* flower from the centre of the plant (like a good bromeliad should!)

And now to Bill Treloar's puzzle. He couldn't find the name *Pseudananas sagenarius* (translates as? arrow heads) in my listings of bromeliad names. The problem is that there is dispute in that some (including me!) want to call it *Ananas macrodontes* (big teeth) because it is an *Ananas* with stolons whereas some want to call it a *Pseudananas*. My view is that if you can have *Neoregelia* with and without stolons why not the Pineapple! When this Society was in its infancy I will always remember a member whose front garden was ALL *Ananas macrodontes*. Admittedly it was one of those houses you used to see back of Norwood with small front yards but I didn't volunteer to do any gardening. You would have noticed that Bill kept his plant in a pot!

March meeting cont:

Orthophytum glabrum is one of the rarer species in collections so I was pleased that Keith had brought it in. So too his *Orthophytum* JG32113 on the label. I like to see the use of such numbers because you can trace back the plant to its origin – in this case John Catlan.



Orthophytum glabrum

Is *xNeophytum* ‘Galactic Warrior’ better white and green, or white, red and green? To each his own, although reasons for the difference were not the same!

There were a few tillandsias present and these seem to have been the worst hit by the heat wave probably because they are usually hung up high and you can’t bring all of them down when it gets hot. The John Arden hybrid Tillandsia ‘Aristocrat’ did not seem to know if it should flower like a *T. ionantha* or a *T. bourgaei*. George had brought in a large *T. secunda* about a metre high. This species can be grown smaller by mounting on wood! As the name implies the flowers are secund – they point in one direction, which in this case is downwards. The flower is almost black and the inflorescence can be impressive. These are followed by numerous offsets which is an odd place to get offsets but it means you get lots of plants. To think that 30 years ago when I got called into the Adelaide Bot Garden to identify this ‘odd’ flowering *Tillandsia* it was very rare in collections. Now you can’t get rid of them. To think that we would have an inflorescence plus lots of offsets on the raffle table. Someone went home with lots of options about how to grow this plant! As I understand it, it is quite rare in the USA. Nobody noticed that the *T. tectorum* had totally blue petals where we all know that a ‘proper’ species would have blue and white petals!

There was a nice clump of *Neoregelia pauciflora*. This is not an easy plant to grow in Adelaide because the cold winters. Many times you are left with growing the plant, as a single specimen whereas you hope the offsets will cascade!

A clump of *Vriesea sucrei* caught attention to show that species *Vriesea* can still turn the eye. It was pleasing that several members grow this species because it is treated as being critical in its native land. *Vriesea* ‘Jolly Green Giant’ was looking quite unmarked by the weather and yet it was one of these ‘Glyph’ type vrieseas that really copped it in the hot weather. Peter Hall put his success down to using ‘foggit’ nozzles on his irrigation system. A short burst of this spray can dramatically drop the temperature. As for moisture you only get wet eyebrows! Peter Huddy used to use this system in his small shadehouse when he was known as our *Vriesea* man. Apparently these foggers can be bought from Virginia Irrigation. The vrieseas from Colombia did not seem to worry about the heat, which was why the *Vriesea ospinae* var *gruberi* looked in such good shape



Vriesea ‘Jolly Green Giant’ photo by D Butcher



Vriesea sucrei



Vriesea ospinae var *gruberi*

The same applied to *Cryptanthus*. We tend to think of this genus growing on the forest floor but you need to define forest. Some can come from Catinga, which is a forest of thorny shrubs where there is not much shade but lots of heat. The only advantage is that *Cryptanthus* are at ground level.

March meeting cont

There were two plants with a formula on the label. This shows that the hybridist was indecisive as to whether he/she thought it was worthwhile naming and does not identify the plant – only its parents. One was a *Pitcairnia* said to be *Pitcairnia sanguinea* x *burle-marxii* a hybrid done by John Catlan. Because it is a plant well established pressure has been put on John to name it so it can be registered. It is hoped this will soon be done because there are doubts as to whether *P. sanguinea* or *P. undulata* was used as the parent. Such are the problems faced when you are trying to seek accuracy in identification. The other one was a *Neoregelia* 'Fireball' x *Aechmea recurvata* which Olive Trevor had imported from Lisa Vinzant in Hawaii several years ago. Recently, Lisa has registered her hybrid as x*Neomea* 'Munchkin' but the photo of her plant looks different to what we are growing. We knew that Lisa had several of these bigenerics using different mothers but pollen from *A. recurvata* and has, so far, only registered one. Could there have been a mix-up? We have been reassured that the difference could be explained by cultural differences, So if you got this plant from either Adam or Maureen check the name.

One plant you will not be able to check the name was *Guzmania* 'Delores'. *Guzmania* have a huge trade in Europe where they are sold in the same market as cut flowers. People there buy if a plant has a name and the producers supply this demand! World trade has meant that the Philippines and China are now growing plants for the European trade and are close to Australia. So these hit our shores for the general plant buying public. Needless to say these plants also get into bromeliad growers hands that oft ask me to confirm identity. Alas, they get disappointed

Billbergia 'Domingos Martins' is a plant every bromeliad fancier should grow. Just think it is a fancy form of *Billbergia vittata* with its dark leaves and pronounced spotting. The intensity of the spotting can vary from offset to offset to add to its mystique. Needless to say it has been used in many hybrids, which to my mind only dilute its differences. Remember too, that this cultivar can be grown from seed and with proper selection some outstanding clones have surfaced. A variegated form of *B. vittata* is 'Ralph Graham French' which holds its variegations quite well through its offsets. Generally speaking the *Billbergias* saw the heat wave through with a minimum of fuss



Billbergia
'Domingos Martins'



Billbergia Ralph Graham
'French'

Finally Adam moved to the neoregelias where we had many represented. It is interesting how the newer members are getting plants from the Eastern States to add to the variety we already have here. This will give challenges to me and others of my ilk because few over there seem interested in plant identity. Just one example was *Neoregelia* 'Lunar' an unregistered hybrid by Shane Zaghini. Shane is known for his *Neoregelia* books.

I was pleased to see N. 'Rosella' holding its own. This has so many memories for us older ones because we remember the heated meeting when we decided its name!



Neoregelia 'Rosella'

Those watching would have quickly picked Adam's preferences in *Neoregelia* – Variegated ones! But all showed good colour. Over the years, looking at Margaret's Neos I have always felt that the end of March was the best time to see the contrasts that only Neos can give. There is a short period in November but when the hot weather starts you seem to get bleaching. This bleaching was apparent with the N. 'Absolutely Fabulous' but I am sure it will return to its brilliant best in the cooler period



Neoregelia . 'Absolutely Fabulous'

A BURNING ISSUE or HOT SUBJECT

I posed the question to the committee about member's bromeliad collections being burnt, some badly burnt and consequently we had to cancel our biggest show and sale in March 2009. We all need to do something about the situation because last summers temperatures will be the norm. I asked the question because without our March sales the club becomes less financial.

I was asked why my Vrieseas didn't show any signs of burn and to most members horror I said that I watered my plants morning and evening. This goes against what we know about not watering plants when it is extremely hot. I grow my plants under white poly-carbonate cover 2 600mm high. If I grew my plants under 50% shade-cloth I would not water them that often because we know that it will damage the plants.

At the ABC Gardening Australia Expo I spoke with Barbara and Lorraine from the Brisbane Bromeliad Centre and they grow under 80% shade-cloth and at the end of October they add another 80% over the top. I guess that should tell us something because Brisbane does not get temperatures into the 40s plus, they have a higher humidity.

I grow most of my collection in totally different conditions to most members. My yard has lawns, trees, ground covers and fishponds. It is many degrees cooler than most other properties.

I grow about 250 cymbidium orchids and a few other genera, most of which are in a shade-house. The shade-house has 50% white shade cloth @ 2 400 mm high and two summers ago I added another 50% green shade cloth. I also installed a series of foggers at 800 mm apart along with automatic timers and during the hot weather I ran them for 3 minutes every hour. The foggers use approximately 7 litres of water per hour. These foggers when turned on reduce the temperature by 10°C within 60 seconds and the longer they run, the cooler it gets. It's even better if there is a slight breeze. A big advantage with using foggers is that I do not have to water my pots as often *eg* if I water on Monday and then use the foggers, I don't have to water again until Thursday. It is a big water saver. I used to water morning and evening. None of the plants in my shade-house have suffered burning in the past two summers.

I have also changed my potting medium from all pine bark chips to 50% pine bark, 40% medium coco husk chips, 10% (mix) perlite, carbon, a product called OF10 which contains humate and fulvic acid, canundra shell and 3mm marble chips. This mix holds moisture longer without being soggy. I use this mix for my bromeliads, except for the marble chips.

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BROMADELAIDE2009



Conference photos courtesy of Darrel Whelan

Displays in the foyer of Adelaide Meridan



April at the Conference

This is just a report from the Secretary, who as you may know, was at the sharp end for the previous two Adelaide conferences and felt that someone different should run the third one.

Now you know why Len, newly retired and with plenty of time on his hands was 'el Supremo'. I was employed as a consultant but was paid much less than a Consultant to the SA Government! So I knew about the panic when Ron Masters fell crook and Lainey Stainer was called into hospital for a back fix.

Such was the enthusiasm of all the 'workers' that these two managed through on 5 cylinders. No wonder the Conference was a great success with even Bill showing a smile as to monies earned. Being on the outer, meant I was likely to hear about any grumbles – and guess what – all was praise for the friendly attitude of the locals!

If you want to learn about what happened you will have to get hold of the 'Proceedings' (including candid camera photos) scheduled for the end of June, but I will run through a few things that I did see.

It was good to see 'local' members there from time to time but those who attended throughout Easter will tell you it was ALL enjoyable and new friends made.

You will be pleased to hear that our decision to purchase a computer and projector at our March meeting was a great one and there were only a few hiccups in its operation.

Friday morning was scheduled as 'setting up' time and yet by the time I arrived at 9.30am there were lots of lots of people around with many already registered! So I was able to creep up to the lecture room grabbing a 'visitor' by the name of Ross Little to help us. You see we had 58 A4 sized (laminated, thanks to Bev and Ron) paintings etc of Bromeliads to stick on the walls so attendees had something to learn, in between lectures! A quiz was held later to see who had learnt anything.



Section of Sales area



Conference presentation area

The afternoon was the first time we had heard Jason Grant pontificate on how he needed to take young aspiring female botanists to Ecuador. Bromeliads were included in these adventures. What was enlightening was that a Professor of Botany need not be boring! Something else you may not be aware of was that Jason was still preparing for his 3 presentations on the Friday morning, Friday night and Saturday night. Not like poor old Mick Romanowski who had got his speech going a couple of months ago and spent so many hours practising on others in the polishing process. Oh, for the advantages of talking to students day after day! *Alcantarea* are the 'in' plant as far as landscaping is concerned in eastern Australia and New Zealand and we can thank Jason for resurrecting this name to cover a group of large Vrieseas with large floppy flowers. *Werauhia*, another of Jason's inventions was also covered in his Saturday morning presentation. What did disappoint me was the fact that the fate of *Vriesea alta* (*Alcantarea*?) was still unresolved despite being promised a year ago that this answer would be revealed at THE Conference. Admittedly Jason had photographed the meagre line drawing of the plant from archival records. My problem was that *Alcantarea* come from Southern Brazil but 'alta' came from the Caribbean!

Conference cont:-

In his presentation, Mark Paul confused us even more by showing photos of Alcantarea as they grow in Brazil. Just think of boulders, half size of Ayers rock, where you feel plants must surely slide off, just covered with Alcantarea. His use of 'probably' in his species names confirmed what Jason had already told us. There are still a lot of unnamed species out there in the wild!

Kerry Tate had us all crying about the effects of what a heavy heavy frost can do to wipe out your Bromeliad collection, especially with us lot whingeing about a few hot days in February. But in the end we were shown the great resilience of Bromeliads and were all able to join in, in 'singing' "Look on the bright side of life"!!

The afternoon saw Michael Romanowski give his final rendition (he had so many practice runs!) After a sound system glitch he sailed through how to take Bromeliad photos both at home and in the wilds of Peru. I was pleased that he advocated the use of a tripod to all and not just us oldies with shaky hands. Nigel Thomson with his 'Out of Africa' to cover his migrating to Australia showed the resilience needed to be a nurseryman on the east coast of Australia when the storms follow you and markets fluctuate. Afternoon tea was great because half the registrants were queuing for the Plants sales grand opening. The workers are to be congratulated for their sterling effort.

Plant sales area



And so to the dinner which I can only report on half because I was Clancy of the Overflow and was supposed to keep those downstairs in order. Such was the popularity of the overflow that overflow of the overflow had to be sent back upstairs! Perhaps they had heard there was a special door prize downstairs. Sam Wade was on our table and wine bottles seemed to be everywhere. I eventually worked out that you did have to fold up the ticket butts for a door prize to work. First, photos of a flowering *Tillandsia erici* with orange flowers were circulated and then we had the great draw. Guess what, Sam won one of the plants and we await reports of flowering in two years time because he said they were small after 10 years of life AND he is going to water his! We had a mixed crew on our table and when Jason let slip he was probably the youngest at the Conference at under 40 one of the Darwinians thought she would like a Professor of Botany as a son-in-law. She offered her daughter aged 39. Such were the effects of SA wines!

The door prize episode was rudely interrupted by Big Len waving his arms around to announce the winners of the Super Duper raffle where it appears our very own Colin Waterman had won two prizes. The overflow did not miss out because the Bunnings voucher was won by a Sandgroper who spends so much time at Bunnings that he must be a major shareholder by now.

The rare plant auction had 32 items where some \$9000 was raised. Not many got beaten down to impoverished South Aussies!

Sunday saw us entertained by Andrew Flower who was much less restrained when last he performed here in 1995. This time he showed the beauty of Tillandsias even though the colour of the background was a topic for discussion throughout the presentation. Repartee was invited and reciprocated giving us many laughs. His classification was simple and no more will we refer to *Diaphoranthema* but Diapers where he showed a rude photo. He finished up by showing what his 'guard' dogs' thought of other Bromeliads known as cabbages!

Conference cont:-

Greg Aizlewood took us on a world trip of bromeliads growing in captivity in public gardens, hotels etc and gave prizes to those who knew which city they were in. No South Aussies won prizes because Adelaide was not included.

Margaret Paterson was last up showing how she has succeeded in her hybridising career and subsequent seed raising. She is well known for her great output of Neoregelia hybrids but here she concentrated more on her success with F1 Tillandsia hybrids

The afternoon was THE bus trip to wineries personally selected by Len. Adam and Lainie were bus captains so you will have to speak to them if you want to find out how that part went. Bill T and Margaret and I chose to bypass the tour but not miss out on the eats because the Barn is known for its cuisine.

We were the first to arrive and found the proprietor hiding behind a pillar. He was worried about more enquiries from Len who had been ultra cautious that we would be fed properly. We calmed him down by saying we only carried the chequebook. We now know that Len need not have worried because the meal was the highlight of the conference. I did notice that Margaret Draddy from NSW and a benefactor to so many Aussie Conferences could not eat all her chips. However, she liked her pudd of 'Eton Mess' so much she nearly crawled inside the glass container. If you want to know about 'Eton Mess' you will have to visit the Barn yourself.

Winery tour scenes



While we were off for the afternoon, some workers stayed behind to help out with the Sales area, which was open to the public. As I understand it this was not a mad rush because many receivers of the letter invitation decided to go elsewhere for Easter.

Early morning Monday saw the delegates have their meeting and all agreed that Darwin should have a go at the next Conference in 2011. We told them it was easy – after we had finished!!

Jason Grant then gave his final talk on two greats in the scientific Bromeliad world. Edouard Morren from the late 1800's and Lyman Smith from the 1900's. When Jason had hair he worked for some time under the eye of Lyman Smith. What enthralled most of us was the botanical paintings which are mainly housed at Kew Gardens in London. Jason is planning a book on Morren's work in collaboration with Kew and one worry is finance. You will no doubt hear more about this where Bromeliad Societies around the world can help if we can convince those responsible that this is feasible!

Mark Paul was a bit overgenerous with the volume of photos where he showed how epiphytic plants grow in the wild in cascading gardens, but he got through in the time allotted. Why not grow plants in similar cascading gardens in cultivation? Many of us already do this in our own small way but here we saw how it can be done on a large scale as long as you have a few thousand of suitable plants. So the landscaping as 'Green walls' is popular mainly in the eastern states although our own Zoo has such an example.

Finally, our very own Adam presented the last talk. You may recall how he and I performed at one of our meetings on the subject of Bigenerics. Here, he had spent much time collating photos to use and it created much comment from an attentive audience. I'll say no more because you will enjoy the same presentation at the May meeting.

So we went our various ways. The only problem I saw was that the Meridien tried too hard at the catering for an older clientele. Us oldies seem to like things basic with little care for the variables of modern cuisine but that is a thing of the times

We all had a great time and to think the Butcher household entertained some 27 people on and off, over the WHOLE period it was just part of what we all did to make our visitors feel at home