

# S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!



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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  
Exceptions - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in May, &  
August & no meeting in December  
or unless advised otherwise

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS  
WELCOME**



*T. aeranthos*

**Pots, Labels & Hangers** - Small quantities available all meetings.

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

## Dates for 2009

**Meeting dates:-** Nov 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Special Events:-** Nov 7<sup>th</sup> Sales day

## Dates for 2010

**Meeting dates:-** Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, Feb 14<sup>th</sup> - AGM, March 14

**Special Events:-** March Show 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Applications for membership always welcome.**

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb. to Feb.

Several reference photos courtesy of "fcbs.org"



## September meeting from the Secretary's desk

It was a bit of a change to have Adam in the Chair while Len was trying to get home from Melbourne after a somewhat sorrowful visit. He was not in mourning from the Crows loss.

Margaret and I were giving the main talk on a visit to northern NSW and these days when we do such visits we are often asked for advice on names, never on culture. I wonder why? As such the meeting was on a querying note, where members had to have their brains in gear.

Even the minutes were suspended for a while we 'discussed' the advantages of seed raising and the pitfalls.

You see there was plant called *Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii* in the special raffle. I felt it was a hybrid especially as we learnt it had been grown from seed. Bill Treloar eventually won the plant but we show a photo of what it should like at maturity and wait to see what Bill's comments are in a couple of years time. As I pointed out seed raising of supposed species plants is fraught with danger and I believe they should be treated by a grower of such seed the same as they should do with hybrids. You don't allocate names until they reach maturity OR you have made an analysis of the results. John Catlan had raised the seed but where had he got the seed? Our plant had come from Jan Townsend in NSW. On the good side we have many species plants linking to the description in Australia having been brought in by seed but there have also been hybrids. I often get requests over the Internet as to where somebody can get seed as though everybody was busy collecting seed, either in the wild or even in their backyard. This is not the case. In the wild you may find a certain plant but did it have ripe seed? In the backyard was any other Bromeliad in flower at the same time? All good fun but you must keep your wits about you.



*Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii*

Adam spoke on the plants on display of which there were more than several. To show he was not biased he even started with the *Tillandsia* stand. Worthy of mention was a *T. bulbosa* in spike and an unnamed that we felt just had to be *Tillandsia recurvifolia* var *subsecundifolia* with its orange bracts. Not only does the latter plant have a name hard to remember but also has a species name that means leaves curved in one direction but a variety that means the same thing! If you go back in history this plant was called *T. meridionalis* var. *subsecundifolia*, which is still a mouthful! At least Adam did own up about his *T. gardneri* var *rupicola* in spike, having got it at our Conference in April. *T. gardneri* is not easy to grow in Adelaide and Adam was advised to make sure he took a photo so he held bragging rights!

*Billbergia distachia* v *straussiana* was in flower and being a species at least has a pedigree. So many of these 'old' species are not grown because hybrids are thought to be 'better'. Talking of pedigrees we also saw a *Billbergia amoena*, which has a myriad of forms and Cultivars where some are really stunning. The hard problem is knowing which one. The owner could browse the photo files in a search for a name or just call it *B. aff. amoena*.

Several guzmanias were in spike

This leads to the aechmeas AND seed raising. You see, Bill had brought in both *Aechmea piment-velosoi* ( finished flowering) and a 'Grace's Blue' ( with blue flowers). The following is what I wrote in 2001

### ***Aechmea caudata* v. *eipperii* or 'Grace's Blue'**

It must be 5 years ago that I wrote in Bromelletter about this plant and shortly after the article I received an offset from Olive Trevor and seed from Grace Goode. The plant flowered and the seed germinated. Grace had got the seed from a plant that Harry Luther had verified was in fact *Aechmea caudata* var. *eipperii*.

Anyway, photographs of the now flowering offset from Olive were investigated by Peter Franklin and myself and linked in very closely with Grace's plant that Harry had verified. Peter Franklin and myself's only gripe was why it was not called *Aechmea eipperii* in the first place! Reitz said the plant looked like an *Aechmea caudata* but Lyman Smith thought it looked like *Aechmea organensis*!

September meeting cont:

You may be interested to know that photographs on the Internet Web Sites suggest that the Americans do not know what a true *Aechmea caudata* var. *eipperii* looks like (except Harry Luther!)

I digress. This year, Grace's seedlings flowered and it appears that pollen from an *Aechmea recurvata* has sneaked into the floral bed and done naughty things. Clearly they are F1 hybrids because they all look alike and I have decided to call them *Aechmea* 'Grace's Blue'. One reason for this is the blue petals and another reason will make Grace smile because she is known for her jokes!

I certainly handed out seedlings to growers around Australia with the comment that "these look a bit *Aechmea recurvata* - ish to me but tell me what you get at flowering time!" So if you have this plant please change its name. Grace may also have sent seed to others as well as me so beware.

Still, as I say, ad nauseam, on the Internet "Never trust the name on the label. Always check it out. Its fun!"

I got Julie Batty to take a photo of *A. pimentivelosoi* to show how easily you can misidentify a plant when you do not have the petals to look at. In this case imagine yellow because Bill said so.



A pimenti-Velosoi plant Treloar by Batty

Another trap for beginners is a plant thought to be a spineless form of *Aechmea fasciata*. The inflorescence is much too big and the petals the wrong colour. They are all part of a Skotak hybridising program where these plants hit the European market under such names as 'Inca', 'Mohican' etc. None were formally described. Rumour has it that a batch of phials of meristemmed plants had the label lost and were offered at cut price to some Queenslander!

Another plant that our budding taxonomist was involved with, was an *Aechmea* 'Red Ribbon' which Julie Batty had identified, having acquired it in Queensland as a hybrid of 'Foster's Favorite'. Not really a hybrid but at least a cultivar. The following is pertinent



A Red Ribbons

*Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' Complex by Butcher in 2000

This all started in 1945 when Mulford Foster crossed *Aechmea racinae* with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor* to produce *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' which was patented in 1949 (see BSIJ 1988 #2 page 55 by Racine Foster). The interesting thing is that much trouble was spent in describing the plant but not the inflorescence and we do not know what it is supposed to look like! It is accepted that the inflorescence is pendant and is like *Aechmea racinae* but with a darker red ovary with dark purplish petals edged in white that we generally associate with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor*. To add to the confusion Padilla says (Bromeliads 1973 page 123) petals are coral tipped blue, and Bromeliad Treasury (1983) as yellow! Baensch in Blooming Bromeliads (1994) page 79 shows dark purplish edged white.

Since that time I am sure that others have repeated the cross using different clones or have grown self-set seed from *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' while still calling them *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' or giving them a new name. 'Black Jack' and 'Perez' are just two examples. Variegation appeared in one plant in 1951 and was named *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite Favorite' by Foster in 1953. Shortly afterwards this plant sported again only this time in the collection of Hazel Mueller but with red stripes this time and was called 'Red Ribbon'

*Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite', Foster's Favorite Favorite', and 'Red Ribbon' got exported to Australia and no doubt Australians also grew on seed from these hybrids to add to the confusion. However, this traffic was not all one-way!

In 1996 Tropiflora offered the "famed" Australian clone for sale (see Oct 1996 edition of Cargo Report) and this has an interesting story that I will relate to you. Information is from the Australian Journal "Bromeletter" 1972 #5.

In the early 1960's Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite' was imported to Sydney and offsets were in demand even though the plant did not particularly like Sydney's winter weather.

A little while later it was rumoured that a more hardy form had come into being somewhere "Up North". Olwen Ferris, these days known as the Grande Dame of Aussie Bromeliads, and a Trustee of the BSI, was then the Editor of Bromeletter and was apt to travel the "Country" looking for the odd Bromeliad. In 1970 on her way back from Queensland she found a vigorous Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite'.

On discussing the plant with the nurseryman she found out that it was the alleged Australian Sport obtained from a person now deceased! The trail was cold! But, was it? Olwen does not give up easily. She checked old membership lists and decided that "Up North" meant FNQ (Far North Queensland) and wrote to a lady who lived near Townsville. Yes, she did have the plant having bought it in Townsville. (Only some 1400 miles north of Sydney). BUT she understood the original plant came from Port Macquarie (Only 400 miles north of Sydney). Olwen knew of a lady who did have a small nursery in Port Macquarie and Yes; the plant had originated there! The search had ended!

While everyone in the Bromeliad World knows of Mulford Foster few Australians remember Mrs Jean Cannon who started of the "famed" Australian clone. Apparently she had got seed of *Aechmea racinae* x *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor* from Germany{ I can't always blame Americans!} and grew on the plants. ONE became variegated!

Jean Cannon sold 3 offsets, all going "Up North" to Queensland but then her interest in Bromeliads faded as the nursery found Orchids more profitable. The original plant died through neglect. This is just one example that sharing plants around is their best chance of survival.

So if you did buy a plant from Tropiflora please think about Jean Cannon who started it all off.

Finally there were a few plants we had selected from those that we had brought back from PineGrove Nursery. So many were challenges in naming because they grow differently up there. We measure our rainfall in points whereas they seem to think in feet in wellies. We were very pleased to acquire a *Vriesea* 'Galaxy' which is a variegated form of *V. glutinosa* and which we have been hankering for, for at least 15 years.



Vr galaxy jr

The other was a 'Glyph' *Vriesea* called by the unregistered name 'Eten' which I think is short for 'E 10' to show that if we started at 'A' there have been lots of hybrids done in the past. I suppose hybridising with the squiggly leaved vrieseas started over 20 years ago using about 6 species but there was no mass demand then. Ebay and specialised marketing has brought an unprecedented demand for them at appropriate prices. They will continue to be a challenge under our hot summer sun.



*And so to the photo session.*

Adam was on the Computer and I was on the pointer. Adam apologised for the projected photo having top and bottom borders that both he and Len had been unable to delete. As it turned out, it was a bonus to those who had good eyesight because the photo code was on display. This may have been disconcerting to me if I wanted to ask questions but we all know that only 20% of the spoken word is absorbed whereas if you add visual this jumps up to 80%. So the sharp eyed ones amongst us learn the most!

The rain they get in northern NSW means their plants grow twice as big and you are often looking at a jungle and if you ever visit Ross Little or Peter Tristram just expect this. Ross has a few neat areas whereas Peter's are hard to find.

*Photo trip cont:*

We first went to Pinegrove where we showed just how outside plantings and tree plantings should be made. But it was inevitable that we would get to plant identification and desirability. For example who would want a bigeneric by the name of *xAechopsis* (*Aechmea x Canistropsis*) other than Lainie and me wanting to get its correct name. Such are the foibles of Bromeliad Growers. We know the photo was not of *xAechopsis* 'Lioness' but what was it? Next was a non-descript Neo with the posh name of *Neoregelia uleana*. If you check the records on this name you find it was described from a plant found in Botanical Garden in Rio de Janeiro in 1896 never to be seen since. Needless to say this was a 'spare' name that anybody could attach to any unknown *Neoregelia*, which they did!



The next Neo you will all remember because there was a name dispute between the Secretary and Assistant Secretary where the assistant won out. The plant concerned looked like a narrow leaved *N. cruenta* but went under the name of *N. richteri*. We first came across this plant in the Adelaide Bot Gardens as *N. walter-richteri* who said they had got it from the Brisbane Bot Gardens who denied all knowledge! Neither Bot Gardens are currently growing this plant. Admittedly Wilhelm Weber named it after Walter Richter but it was published as *N. richteri*



*Neoregelia. richteri*

We saw plants singly (having been extracted from the jungle) as well as plants photographed in situ with the inevitable name discussion. For example, who would want the bland, almost totally green hybrid between two alleged *Neoregelias* only to produce a compound inflorescence expected in a *xNeomea*. This will have the unregistered name of *xNeomea* 'Mad Allan' which may even crop up on Ebay in the future as being unique.



*xNeomea* 'Mad Allan' (Unreg) photo by D Butcher

We saw several guzmanias, large alcantareas, many 'Glyph' vrieseas, and full-grown pitcairnia's but few grey tillandsias – but then you can't expect everything.

We spent virtually 3 days roaming round the formal and informal sections of the property and could have spent more. The back portion is a sandy Banksia forest where the ground is covered by Bromeliads, which regrettably you had to walk on to see the next bromeliad. Ross must be after excitement because he bought Pine Grove nursery, which was known for its vast amount of Bromeliads but little regard for correct names. Some naming problems will never be solved but Ross will have a good time trying. He does have a Ledger listing all the plants that were acquired by Pine Grove over the years and the challenge is to link them to actual surviving plants. He also has a book detailing the hybrids that had been done by the Buchanan's over the years that is also a help even though very few of the hybrids were registered. We sampled Ross's attempts at the Barbie, which were regrettably not up to the standard of Helen's. She was allowed to, when Ross was too busy – talking. **It did not rain once** while we were there and we had a fabulous but tiring time

*Photo trip cont:*

And so to Repton which is tucked away, off the main Pacific Highway. Everytime we have visited Peter the main road has been changed which is traumatic the older you get. We made it and were greeted by a smiling Peter. He must be used to rain and can keep smiling but we saw where rushing water had been and gone, luckily leaving behind plastic houses and plants. Things are even more chaotic here with every space utilised. While Peter does run a nursery and sells plants I see it more as a private collection plus. If you want rarities, they are there somewhere that only Peter knows! So you came across rare flowering plants in the most unexpected places and you couldn't ask for a plant to be put in a photogenic place because there wasn't one. So, really, everything was an adventure. Perhaps it was because of the crowding but Peter's main interest seems to be in the Tillandsioideae with their spineless leaves. Mind you, he did have his favourite *Neo. carcharodon* forms in a separate area. He is at the forefront in trying to make sense of this group as more and more get imported to this country from the USA. The problem with identification is that we know what is found in Brazil but few are actually finding their way directly here. We seem to be relying on what is available in the USA where seed raising is clouding the issue.



Tristram's place

Another area that Peter is involved with, is the genus *Alcantarea* and there were many to see AND using plenty of space. These can be used successfully in the Northeastern parts of Australia as landscape specimen plants, not only because of their imposing shape when not in flower but a talking point when they do eventually flower. Here the naming problem is different because only recently have the Brazilian taxonomists been taking an interest in this genus where every inselberg (like a smaller version of Uluru) seems to have a different form but are they the same species or natural hybrids? Many of the *Alcantarea* we grow in Australia came here some 30 years ago and guesses were made as to their identity. So anyone who is buying *Alcantarea* species by name at this time could well have the wrong name. Remembering that they take over 10 years to flower under Adelaide conditions you may have a wait!



### ***October meeting from the Secretary's Desk***

Len had the privilege of talking about the display plants.

Certainly the most impressive was George Rudolph's mounting of *T. aeranthos* where 3-4 years ago he had patiently attached some 30 plants to a single mount. In that time they had each acquired say 3 heads and each was budded up for flowering where we gave up counting. October is the flowering month for this species and others had brought in plants that were ahead of George's effort so we were able to guess the potential. Next year the plants will be removed and re-attached to start the cycle again



*T. aeranthos*

There were several flowering Tillandsias for Len to talk about.

We also saw a few of the pricklies. It may be difficult to pick a *Dyckia* from an *Encholirium* when not in flower but here we saw the clear differences when they are in flower. In *Encholirium* the flower stem emerges from the centre of the plant and the flowers have small, generally pale green petals. With *Dyckia* the flower stem emerges from the side of the plant and the flowers have larger petals that are in the yellow to orange range.

October meeting cont:

Of the other not-so-prickly one did stand out. It had been brought in by the Thompsons and was a flowering *Aechmea distichantha*. Few realise that it is related to *Aechmea chantinii* in that it is as tough as old boots in Adelaide. What the Thompsons had done, quite correctly, was to give it morning sun so that the plant grew compactly. If you grow it in too much shade expect a large strappy plant!



*Aechmea distichantha*

Adam brought in his favourite *Guzmania* 'Soledo' to show us. He remains the most successful grower of this genus in Adelaide and if you do want to venture into this area please take it slowly to find out if you can succeed.



*Guzmania* 'Soledo' photo by Adam Bodzioch

***And so to the Problems, Questions and answers where Derek, Bill and Adam joined in with Len.***

Bev must be more shy than most because her plants were on the table with the Pots man! Here Bev had a finished flowering *Aechmea* that we thought could be *Aechmea coelestis* and a *Neoregelia* with kinky leaves. It was named 'Sunset' (number 2) although how different it is to 'Sunset' (Number 1), I don't know. Anyway, it had horizontal ridges in the leaves where the sheath part changes to the blade. For the uninitiated there is generally two parts to a leaf on a bromeliad the bottom part is at the base! and is usually wide, and when this narrows it is called the blade. Funny things happen in this area and sometimes you see a knuckle as in *Aechmea nudicaulis* because the leaf portion is trying to bend outwards at this junction. In Bev's case I believe that the leaf was old when the blade tried to bend outwards and thus caused wrinkles just like us oldies.



Sunset

Back to the proper area where we saw shredded leafed plants which we felt had been done by the extinct Tasmanian tiger.

Adam assured it was caused by common or garden hail that came at 1 am in the morning with appropriate gusts of wind. These blew said hail into his shadehouses causing certain whiteness. Such is his zeal for his bromeliads he even roped in the services of his understanding wife in removing most of the hail residing in the leaf cups at that early hour.



*Guzmania* 'Kapoho Fire' J Batty.

There were several examples of sunburnt leaves due to our hot summer and which had not yet grown out.

One query was about a *Neo* 'Michi' bought at the Conference in April. Grant Groves hybrids are known to colour up early in their growing cycle – they don't wait for flowering. We all know that bromeliads are monocotyledons that grow from the base upwards. So if the centre leaves start growing in less light the bottom part will be less colourful. Whether this brown band will eventually change to red only Julie can tell us when the time comes for Adelaide to get some warm weather.



*Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman' is an impressive plant in Queensland especially when they get hair curlers to enhance the curl to the top of the leaves. First we have to acclimatize the plant to our conditions and most of us are finding this will take several years. So we saw a 'mother' on its way out but clearly wanting to produce offsets to carry on the genes.



Vrieseas will flower even without roots. The only problem is that the plant keeps falling over!

We had several examples of the problem if you let a plant offset for too long in the same pot or bit of wood. Not only do you get congestion and reduction in size but also when you do get to do the job you have to convince the offsets that there is a reason for living. Another problem as with the rare *xNeobergia* 'Noddy' the offsets can flower and no one wants to offset!



*xNeobergia* 'Noddy'

Finally I was going to show how you mutilate a *Vriesea glutinosa* to get the offsets that are stupidly produced next to the dead flower stem but we ran out of time. I was able to prise off some of the many grass-like offsets produced in profusion at the base. These were handed out to those who like a challenge in rooting them and growing them on to maturity



*Vriesea glutinosa*

Seasons greetings to all