

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

Vol 34

Number 2

March/April 2010

PUBLISHED BY:

The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Meetings Venue:

Maltese Cultural Centre,
6 Jeanes Street,
Beverley

Time: 2.00pm.

Second Sunday of each month
Exceptions – 1st Sunday in May, &
August & no meeting in December or
unless advised otherwise



Neoregelia 'Reynella Rebel' photo by D Butcher

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS
WELCOME**

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

Dates for 2010

Meeting dates:- March 14, **Apl 11th** (Garden visit & meeting – see note page 8, plants in flower)
May 2nd, June 13th, July 11th, Aug 1st, Sept 12th, Oct 10th, Nov 14th

Special Events:- Bromeliad Extravaganza's March 27th & 28th. Nov 13 featuring Displays & Sales

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb.

Several reference photos courtesy of "fcbs.org"



January meeting from the Secretary's desk

To some people 43C is hot but 20 braved the elements to hear Len give his talk. This is covered later. At Committee we did resolve some of the problems we face every time we organise a Sales day. we will be trying out a new plant payment arrangement and changing the time we are 'open' to 9am to 2pm.

One 'hardy' soul by the name of Warren Thompson even brought in plants for display. I should have got at least one plant photographed as proof but was thinking of other things! The best was undoubtedly a variegated *Aechmea caudata* (in flower to boot) Mind you, he did look stunned when I suggested he select from his offsets the best variegated one for growing on to the next generation.

But then I was a bit stunned too because we had brought in a dubious *Vriesea dubia* which has been in Australia for the past 30 years only to find out that nobody present was growing it in Adelaide. So my intended grand announcement that it is now being called 'Goldfinger' fell on stony ground!



Vriesea dubia



Len's 10-day trip to southern Ecuador last August

The remainder of the meeting involved a presentation by the president on his short 10-day trip to southern Ecuador last August. The purpose of this venture was to see and photograph bromeliads in their natural habitat, and to acquire some plants (e.g. from a nursery, etc) to bring home in two boxes inside his suitcase. Len was accompanied by an ex-German now living in Ecuador.

He began the presentation by explaining how he needed to fill out countless AQIS forms to get a number of plants from this region added to the official Australian Government's list of plants permitted entry into the country. This exercise began many months beforehand. Upon arrival home in Adelaide, Len transported the sealed boxes to AQIS, where the plants were inspected, placed in a gas chamber filled with noxious methyl bromide for hours, and then held in quarantine for three months.

In November, the final result was that 40% of the plants had died, 40% came through in good condition, and 20% were released in awful condition with an unpredictable future. This is a terrible comparison with Len's shipment carried back from Germany in the previous year where only one plant out of seventy died. But that is partly an indication of the more sensitive bromeliads from southern Ecuador

Len stated that he only brought back plants from three genera, namely Tillandsias, grey Vrieseas (these particular species recently reclassified as Tillandsias anyway) and Racinaeas. He had brought in a selection for the members to inspect, pointing out that few Racinaeas are grown in Australia. Before everyone moved into the ante-room for the computer presentation, he spent a short time on three species that would get frequent mentions. They were

- *Tillandsia stenoura*: there were a number of very similar plants having upright bright red branched inflorescences that came into this general category.
- *Vriesea cylindrica*: again, a number of grey-leaved plants with upright red to yellow cylindrical inflorescences, often dried, but with different forms from different locations. They have green and purple flowers.
- *Racinaea tetrantha*: there are many different official varieties of this beautiful species with yellow-red-orange pendent flower spikes. Unfortunately, not one of them survived the gassing.



Tillandsia stenoura



Vriesea cylindrica



Racinaea tetrantha

Len's 10-day trip to southern Ecuador cont:

Len then illustrated his itinerary, having spent the first two nights in Giron, then three nights in Loja, two nights in Zamora and the final three nights around Cuenca. All of those regions are at high altitude in the Andes Mountain Range, over 2000m, except Zamora is lower and a bit more tropical as one heads partially downwards in the direction of the Amazon basin. These were the bases for expeditions into areas where bromeliads abound.

Heading west from Giron is an expansive dry river valley where, amongst cacti and Puyas, were *Tillandsia latifolia* var *divaricata*, *T. mima*, *T. lymanii* and *T. tectorum*



T. mima



After taking a side-road north, the vegetation quickly became greener, semi-tropical and more luxurious. Seen were various flowering Pitcairnia and Guzmania, as well as numerous different Tillandsias such as *T. fendleri*, *T. hamaleana* and *T. confinis*.

After returning to Giron, a trip was made to a nearby waterfall. The trees beside the hike were adorned with countless bromeliads



T. fendleri & *T. complanata*



T. hamaleana



T. confinis.

From the main road south to Loja, they took various side-roads, finding plants they could not identify, as well as the enormous *T. secunda* var *major*. One such side-road led to the village of Santiago where spectacular scenery was featured in the *New Tillandsia Handbook* by Shimizu and Takizawa. Included amongst the bromeliads covering the trees were *T. sceptriformis* and *Vriesea* aff *cylindrica*. Later, Len and his companion spent a couple of hours walking through rolling meadows admiring many desirable plants, including *T. stenoura*, *T. tovarensis*, *T. confinis* and various *Racinaeas*. One plant with a bright red, almost lacquered, multi-branched flower spike was about 2.5m tall, towering above the adventurers. It fits somewhere in the *T. stenoura* complex.

Unfortunately, on the first day out of Loja, Len had a spectacular fall onto boulders, ripping off two tendons in his right shoulder. They had been climbing up a boggy track barely passable by donkeys for more than an hour, in an effort to reach an outcrop of virgin forest on top of a hill. But, before the fall, severable beautiful plants had been observed, including the spectacular *T. biflora* with its yellow-green leaves heavily spotted in red. The mud was washed off Len by his lying in a running stream. The bleeding was blocked; sterilization performed and healing commenced all using a stinking, brown-black thick liquid known as Dragon's Blood. It is available from the jungle Indians and always carried by Len's companion. The amazingly rapid healing supported its claim to be a miracle producer.

After the fall, a local Indian used a machete to cut a branch from a tree, and shaped it into a large heavy walking stick. This was vital for Len's trekking during the remainder of the trip, but it ruled out any difficult climbing. That was left to his companion.

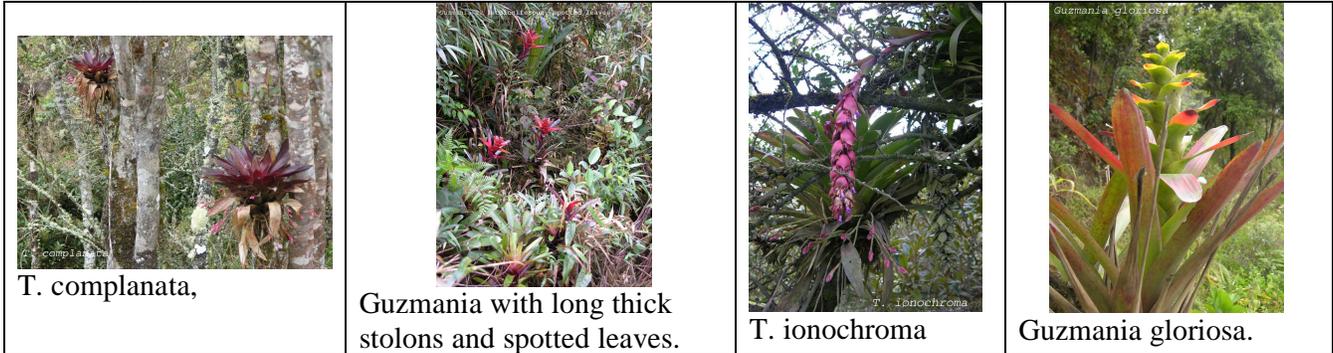
After a couple more days delving into regions radiating in various directions from Loja (which, by the way, has fantastic pork dishes and ice-creams), they headed to Zamora. Along the way, another trek led to a small lake isolated in thick forest. This is a habitat of *Vriesea fragrans* and *Vriesea tequendamae*



Vriesea fragrans

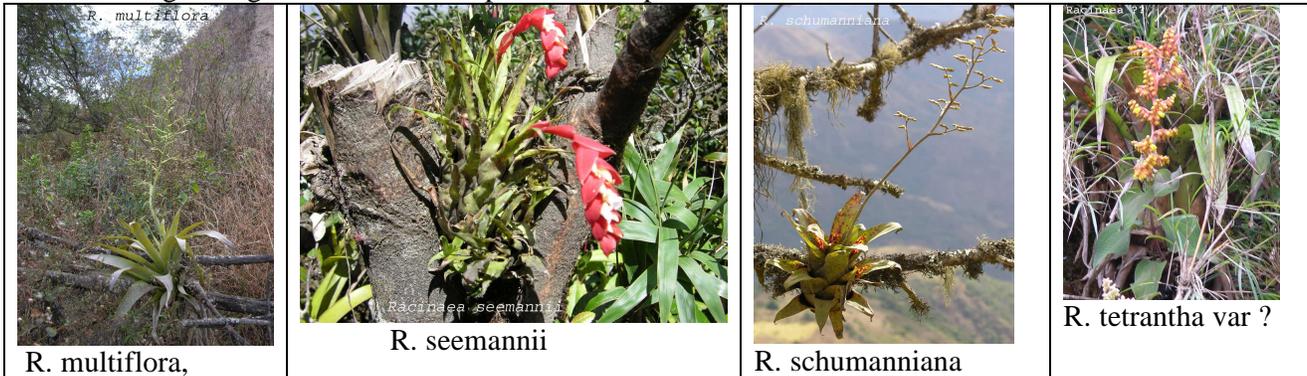
Len's 10-day trip to southern Ecuador cont:

Their original plan was to travel next a very long distance west to the region of Zaruma before finishing in Cuenca for the start of Len's sequence of flights home. However, there is only one road going west, and on that particular day it was completely closed by the police for 24 hours to allow thousands of pilgrims to parade along, wearing brightly coloured clothing and carrying statues, crosses and other religious icons. Len was not willing to stay put for a day, and so they drove immediately to Cuenca, using that area as a base for the remainder of the trip. Whole day excursions were taken to misty Gualaquiza and foggy Molleturo respectively. On the first day, a couple of the most memorable plants were large red-leaved *T. complanata*, and an unidentified flowering *Guzmania* with long thick stolons and spotted leaves. The highlights of the second day were *T. ionochroma* in front of an unusual form of *T. complanata*, and *Guzmania gloriosa*.



During the trip, Len learnt a lot about *Racinaeas* from his companion who is a self-proclaimed aficionado on that genus. They come in many shapes and sizes, some with beautifully coloured and marked leaves, and with quite different inflorescences.

R. multiflora, *R. seemannii*, *R. schumanniana* and another which is probably a variety of *R. tetrantha* are shown here growing in habitat for comparison. The president is determined to return to Ecuador soon.



Feb meeting from the Secretary's desk

Time flies when you get old and another Annual General Meeting has come and gone. Len Colgan has already flagged his intention to retire next year and feels that with over 20 years in the same job we need new blood. The same applies to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary who have been in those positions for even longer! Maureen Hick has moved to the 'bush' near Greenock near Tanunda and has retired from the committee

Anyway,

Office bearers for 2010 are

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| President: | Len Colgan |
| Vice President : | Adam Bodzioch |
| Secretary: | Derek Butcher |
| Assistant Secretary: | Margaret Butcher, |
| Treasurer: | Bill Treloar |

Committee members:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Bev Masters | Lainie Stainer |
| John Murphy (Welcome to our new office bearer) | Colin Waterman |

Feb meeting cont - Office bearers for 2010 cont

Auditors:

Librarian:

Afternoon Tea Convenor:

Door/Raffle Tickets:

Host/Hostess:

Pots and Labels:

Name Tag Makers:

Editor:

George Rudolph received his OBE (Over B Eighty) award complete with cake, which he shared with the rest of us!

Keith Bradtberg, Adam Bodzioch

Lainie Stainer, Colin Waterman (Assistant)

Bev Masters, Sue Skrabei (Assistant)

George Rudolph, and other helpers on the day

Colin Waterman/ Eileen Mullins.

Ron Masters

Ron and Bev Masters

Derek Butcher/ Bev Masters



Whoever reads the many newsletters we get from other clubs around Australia and the world may have noticed the rosters that so many have for Raffle prize donors. The trend seems to be for flowering plants which to my mind is a waste when you are providing for the converted. Sometimes we have more raffle prizes than attendees BUT they usually only win offsets to be grown on. This is what I see as our strong point because each winner has a challenge and satisfaction when they get their prize to flower. This meeting was no exception.

I have always been a 'species' man and I am pleased in a way that no South Australian has really jumped on the hybridising bandwagon. We have enough trouble identifying other people's work. This leads me to *Neoregelia* 'Reynella Rebel'. (Refer to photo on 1st page) This had been grown in Adelaide for some 20 years as 'Olens hybrid from Bill Morris' and looked like so many hybrids in this group that nobody bothered to officially name it. In the last year or so offsets started to variegate and Sue Skrabei said it deserved a name and called it after her suburb! There also seems hints to motorcycles. Anyway the deed has been done and we show you its photo. I am sure offsets will be in demand.



Adam spoke on the plants brought in for general display. If you don't want to grow *Tillandsias* mounted on a bit of wood, you could try George's way with 3-inch clay pots. These are heavy enough to stop falling over, and seem an ideal size. You must remember to secure the plants with glue or something, to stop them falling off.

We saw a couple of *xNeophytum*. These are great to grow in Adelaide, even though they are variations on a theme. The *Orthophytum* used in these bigeneric hybrids would never grow here!

Then there was a selection of *Dyckia* hybrids originating with John Catlan in Qld but variable enough to suggest that at least one of the parents was a hybrid. At least we know where they come from because those emanating from Sydney are invariably 'Sons of Warren'. The problem is that taken by themselves they are very attractive plants and will no doubt replace the hybrid *Dyckias* found growing in the Adelaide Bot Gardens and gardens of lots of Cactus growers.

This origin of these hybrids led to another bigeneric – *xNiduregelia* 'Pelican Pink' that Bill Treloar was allowed to take home.

Feb meeting cont:

Bill was justly proud of his *Edmundoa lindenii* var. *rosea* which as he pointed out is a tough plant despite the fragility look about its leaves



Edmundoa lindenii var. *rosea*

Someone has brought in a mature *Neoregelia* without a label. All we could suggest was that it was a *N. concentrica* hybrid of sorts. When you lose a label of a *Neoregelia* you have a great challenge on your name to identify it if you are a person that way inclined. Bring it to a meeting and we will see what we can suggest. Please DON'T put any cultivar name on it because this only confuses growers in the future. In this case it would be better just to call it *Neo concentrica* hybrid

Adam was proud of his *Guzmania* 'El Cope' which has links with 'Fortuna' and was found in the wild some 20 years ago and was always linked to *Guzmania lingulata*. But I have it from reliable sources that this will become *Guzmania speciosa* but you can bet that the name 'El Cope' will continue to be used.



Guzmania 'El Cope'



Guzmania lingulata.

And so to the main talk

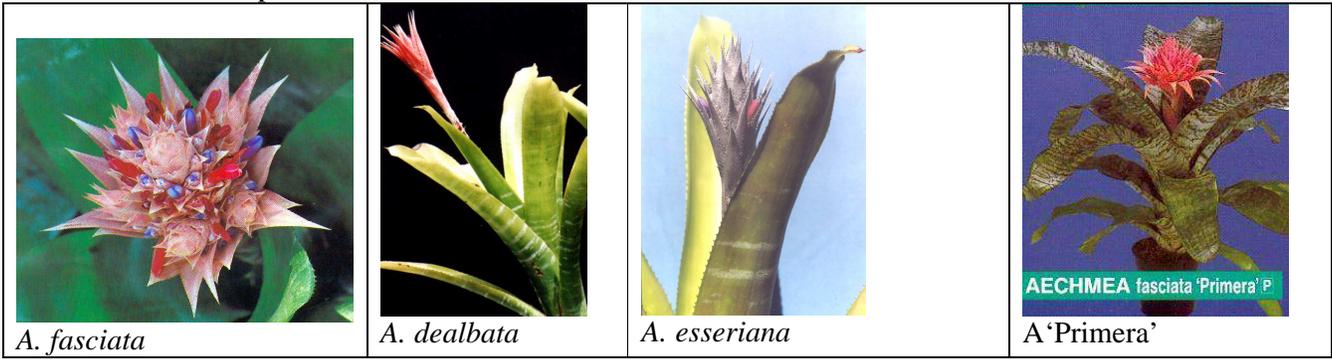
First Derek gave a rundown on what keeps him happy these days – T's the Internet looking for historical records of Bromeliads. For example taxonomy relies on herbarium specimens which an Australian, in the old days, had no chance of viewing because they were in herbaria in the USA and Europe. These days many of the larger institutions realised that grubby hands tended to mutilate 200 year old dried specimens where a digital copy of say 2 megabytes gave most what they wanted to see. So you get the likes of me looking at a specimen and saying – why didn't Baker see this in 1880?!

These names are recorded in the IPNI (International Plant Name Index), which you can also refer to on-line. This leads to the exciting bit where we enter botanical nomenclature, which covers plants placed in synonymy and where the arguments start. For example we have *Nidularium makoyanum* named by Regel in 1887 which Mez put into *Neoregelia* in 1935 but Smith in 1967 said was doubtful and so it did not appear in the great reference books we know as Smith & Downs published in the 1970's. Another problem was that a *Nidularium makoyanum* was also named in 1888 (a year later) by Makoy that eventually became *Nid. innocentii* var *striata*. Needless to say these two taxa got mixed up!

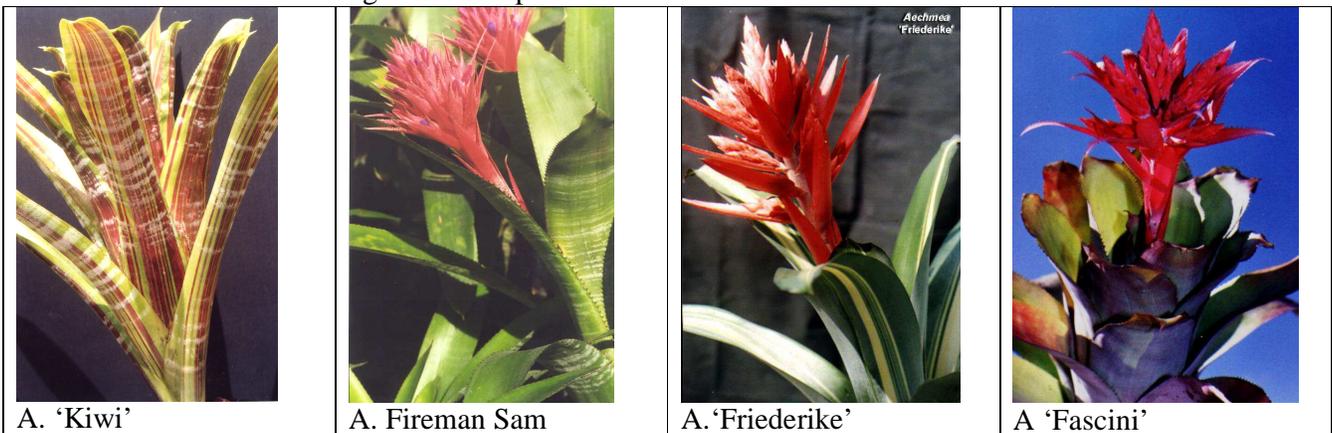
This led to the main topic *A. fasciata* where Baker in 1889 had placed several names under synonymy, Mez had gone further in 1935 and then Smith and Downs gives the detail we accept to this day. Members could see the various prints of paintings from days of yore to give them an idea of what to look for. *A. dealbata* was not as complicated but had a blip in 1955 when Smith considered the similarity with *A. fasciata*. Luckily by 1979 they were separate species! Mind you, in 1986 Werner Rauh described an *A. esseriana*, which was considered to be the same as *A. dealbata* in 1997. Most of the plants we grow today seem to be linked to the *A. esseriana* find in Paraguay rather than Rio de Janeiro. Twenty years ago we grew a spindly type plant that could be traced to a Foster collection. (See reference photos next page)

Feb meeting cont

Aechmea reference photos:



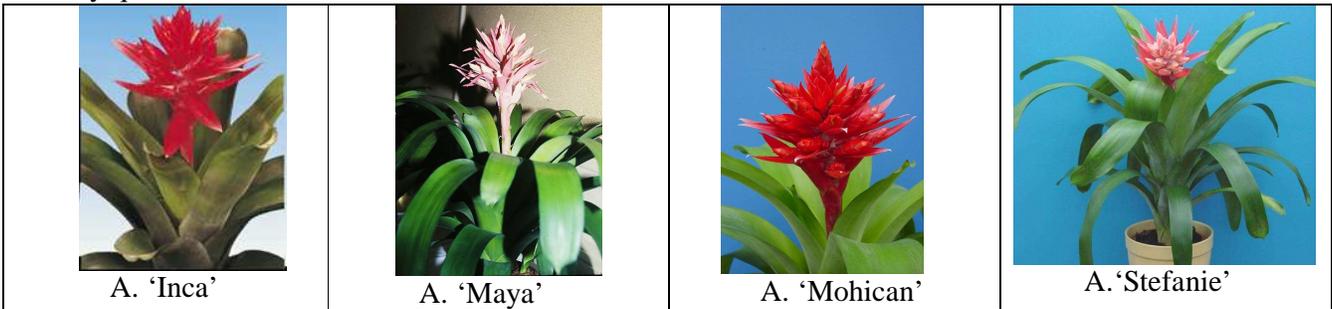
And so to the plants where Bill Treloar came in handy. We had several examples of the species, which showed small flower heads. This is in line with what Adda Abendroth from Rio de Janeiro told us in the 1960's – they bought plants from Germany because the inflorescences on the native plants were too small! As an example of breeding and selection for the plant trade we had the spineless 'Primera' with a large flowerhead AND strong side branches not normally associated with the species *A. fasciata*. There was also 'Kiwi' to see with its red longitudinal stripes.



On the species side of things we had *A. dealbata* (a-la- esseriana) and one called 'Fireman Sam'. This latter one is a beauty that had been found in the wild by Sam Smith and Olive Trevor was growing it. It was thought to be either a *A. dealbata* or a *A. fasciata*. In any event it left the *A. dealbata* as we knew it for dead and needed a special name. So through Aussie pushing it became known as 'Fireman Sam'!

Hybrids were well represented with some in flower. The oldest one would have been the 'Friederike' This name is often spelled incorrectly (I wonder why?!) and George can now check if his Auntie with a similar sounding name spelled it the same way! This is the spineless form of A 'Fascini' with parents that we now know are quoted as (*chantinii* x *fasciata*)

Next we know that 'Inca', 'Maya', and 'Mohican' came on the scene via Skotak and Deroose as spineless Aechmea and supposed to be different but nobody advised petal colour etc so you could get some sort of identity. The plant we saw had 'Mohican' on the label! 'Stefanie' (note spelling) hit the market a little later but still without much detail so when plants got released in Queensland from tissue culture stock where it is said the name on the flasks got removed in error, there were lots of guessing names including the 3 names already quoted



Feb meeting cont

Adam was worried about the quoted parentage of his *Aechmea* 'Eileen'. This originated from DeLeon in 1988 and is said to be [(*serrata* x *fasciata*) x *serrata*] AND spineless. I feel sure he would have used the spineless *fasciata* in his first cross but I doubt the *A. serrata*. If you get a chance to look at Baensch's book you will see that even he doubts the identity of the Florida 'serrata' suggesting *A. smithiorum*. In recent years, thanks to the internet I have been able to establish contact with a Bromeliad Society on the island of Martinique. Yes, *Aechmea reclinata*, *A. smithiorum* and *A. serrata* grow on the island AND yes they look very similar. My query (still unanswered) was how they retained their identity and did not cross-pollinate. Was it flowering time, pollinators or what? We know that *A. serrata* is spiner than *A. smithiorum* so having two *A. serrata* to one spineless *A. fasciata* makes me wonder about a spineless 'Eileen'. One thing we will have to warn Adam is not to sell an offset called 'Eileen' if he ever goes to the USA. You see there was (is?) a patent on the name over there!



Aechmea 'Eileen'

April meeting & garden visit info

- Topic:** Flowering plants
Meeting, garden visit & afternoon tea
- Venue:** 6 Eric Street, Plympton. (See map below)
Cream tubular fence & lots of Palms around garden
- Time:** 2PM

