

# S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

Vol 34

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PUBLISHED BY:

The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**President:** Len Colgan

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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**



*Guzmania 'Pink Nova'* photo by J Batty

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

## Dates for 2010

**Meeting dates:-** May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Glyph Vrieseas, June 13<sup>th</sup> – DVD Nostalgia, A garden of Grace , July 11<sup>th</sup>,  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, Sept 12<sup>th</sup>, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>, Nov 14<sup>th</sup>

**Special Events:- Bromeliad Extravaganza.** 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"



### ***March meeting from the Secretary's desk***

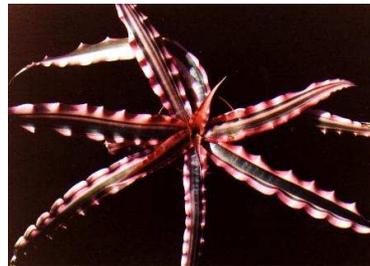
Maureen Hick has moved up country to live with her daughter and will soon have a shadehouse. This move has meant that Maureen had to retire from Committee. In appreciation of her efforts over the years, the President amidst a loud round of applause presented her with a framed Scroll.

***And so to Summer Brag*** where it was good to see some plants in from members who had seemingly not been willing to brag before! Adam, as usual, led us. This year we did not have the excessive heat to worry about but it could well have created a change in approach. I am sure that more shade is being used to combat the heat that we didn't get. This becomes the \$64,000 question. Some plants did not have the colour to the leaves you expect for certain genera like billbergias. I remember challenging Don Beadle 'Mr Billbergia on the world stage' some 20 years ago as to why his billbergias did not form tight leaf tubes in Florida. They always looked floppy whereas ours in South Oz formed tight tubes to help them through summer. It must have been 30 years ago that I visited the Queensland Mr. Billbergia (How is it there never seems to be a Ms or Mrs Billbergia?) It was Clyde Wasley who was Grace Goode's brother-in-law and he grew billbergias better than she did! You see, he grew under cover so they did not get direct Queensland rains! Some growers whine about the fast flowering of Billbergia and yet the emphasis is on leaf colour. This is exactly the same as hybrid neoregelias and yet nobody complains about their flowers!! I rest my case!

### ***Now to the plants.***

First we saw *Aechmea dealbata* in flower from Adam. You may recall it was at the previous meeting as a 'Lady-in-waiting'. I know it is hard for the newcomer to realise that this plant's inflorescence is a shiny gunbarrel-grey due to trichomes on the primary bracts is the same species as the one with red primary bracts. You have to be a butcher to find out the significant similarities!

For a change of scene we had 2 pots of *Cryptanthus* from Julie Batty that reminded us oldies of how well we used to grow these 30 years ago! It goes to show that fresh interest means good presentation. A few of these hybrids such as 'It' are easily recognised by name but once you lose a label, the name is forever lost!



*Cryptanthus* "It"

*Billbergia* 'Hallelujah' was looking its proud best. This is only a recent phenomenon that originated with Don Beadle in 1988. He had done hundreds of hybrids and here was his best in his opinion because of colour and hardiness. As soon as a good hybrid hits the marketplace such is the ego of hybridists that they maintain they can 'improve' on the plant by using it as a parent. To my mind they have all failed with mediocre replacements. What they should have been doing is to repeat the cross to see what happens! I think we are lucky in not having active hybridists here in Adelaide although we do have seed raisers of alleged species, which is to be encouraged.



*Billbergia* 'Hallelujah'

Next was an oddball from Peter Hall. How could he grow such a plant? It was a *Hylaeicum*! This is easy to remember if you realise that 100 years ago everybody worth their salt knew that Hylaea was a part of the upper reaches of the Amazon. Wet and hot! Anyway, these days it is included in the genus *Neoregelia*. It had *eleutheropetala x pendula* on the label and no doubt was one of the many hybrids that Chester Skotak has done leaving them with a temporary formula. How permanent is temporary? AND you have to be a good speller!

**March meeting cont:**

How much easier it would be if it had a proper cultivar name that could be recorded. Anyway, Peter had been successful in being able to brag about his achievement. It had flowered and sent off these two offsets on long stolons. In the wild these would be drooping and continue to flower eventually forming a very large clump. My view was that Peter should leave the offsets where they are and bring the plant in again at our winter brag.

Next was a superbly grown clump of *Aechmea fosteriana* from John Murphy who has been hiding his talents under a bushel. This plant may be ideal for tree culture in Queensland but is a challenge at the best of times in Adelaide. I also think we have the true species in Australia, having probably come to Australia in the 1960's from Foster. As such we should cherish it. As an aside, Florida Bromeliad growers are on a mission. They want to preserve clonal links to old plants grown in Florida. They are trying to sort out the problems started by Mulford Foster when he crossed *A. fosteriana* with *A. orlandiana* to create 'Bert'. Much indiscriminate hybridising has been done since, to create lots of 'cultivars' of *A. orlandiana* as well as growing on seed obtained from 'Bert'. Seed from 'Bert' would give progeny ranging from *A. fosteriana* to *A. orlandiana*. I think they will have problems finding an authentic 'Bert' that is if we knew what it should look like!



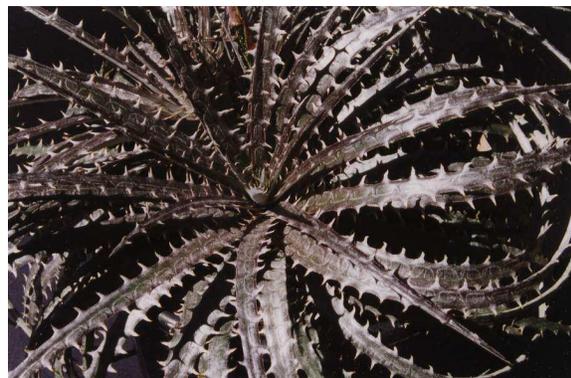
*Achmea. Fosteriana* (Photo by J. Batty)

John Murphy also had a *Quesnelia marmorata* growing on a rock, yes; it did not seem glued either!



*Q. marmorata* (Photo by J. Batty)

I had brought in my pride and joy from my batch of species *Dyckia*. These days I am concentrating on species rather than the inevitable hybrids you find around Australia. These got here years ago from the Huntington Botanic Gardens in California before it was realised that dyckias loved to accept whatever pollen was flying about. These days I get my seed from Brazil. Anyway, it was a *Dyckia fosteriana* I had brought in which has links to Rudy Schulz of Victoria who brought back seed from Brazil. I still have to wait for flowering to check how authentic it is.



*Dyckia fosteriana*

Len had brought in dyckias he had bought from the Adelaide Bot Garden that showed hybrid tendencies. Now for a few *Neoregelia* hybrids that showed great colour. "Never trust the name on the label", has been my motto for years even if it is in my writing. There are many ways these days to check and it gives you a warm fuzzy feeling if you find the answer.

**March meeting cont:**

So we saw a Neo 'Voodoo' rather than its correct name of 'Midnight'. This sort of mistake was made years ago before we had photos in the Cultivar Register. When we started using photos it was evident that 'Voodoo' by Elmore should be red with small light spots! 'Bobby Dazzler' was certainly living up to its name. Many of you will not know that it arrived in Adelaide as Neo. *acanthocrater x proserpine*, names that nothing to do with the possible parentage and just as difficult to write as *eleutheropetala x pendula*. Luckily the name 'Bobby Dazzler' caught on and everyone changed their labels!



Bill Treloar had a bit of a brag – not really a brag but more a search for confirmation. This prickly variegated plant had been bought for the princely sum of \$6 in Darwin and had already survived 14 days living in a suitcase! We all agreed it was well grown and was probably a variegated *Ananas* (Pineapple to the uninitiated) but Bill had to bring in the plant again in 5 years time when it was flowering where we would get closer with our collective guess.

Adam has been experimenting with Ethrel where a little dab will do you. I think he was bragging more about the flowering guzmanias he had brought in and was hoping that his *xAnanea* Raspberry Ice' would offset at the top from the inflorescence as he had been promised. You see he had been experimenting with bigeneric to get it to flower but was it really past puberty? We keep our fingers crossed for Adam's sake as to regeneration.

And so to the tillandsias. Maureen had brought down a *Tillandsia xbergiana* all the way down from Greenock to show she still knew how to grow Bromeliads. But then she spoilt it by also putting a formula parentage on the label! As you would have read so far, I never trust the name on a label, especially parentages! It does have a large impressive inflorescence and will offset.



*Tillandsia xbergiana*

I think Len was chuckling to himself about his well-grown *T. xerographica* that was also in spike confirming it was not a hybrid. It is very difficult to bring through Adelaide winters where you do not dare even let it sniff water! And yet it grows really well in our hot weather. In the wild it tends to grow on the top side of branches and therefore does not keep its shape if mounted on the side of a piece of wood. While it is very rare in the wild and is on CITES it is being grown from seed.



Finally, I just have to mention the *Tillandsia mexicana* I had obtained from Paul Isley in 1996. Yes, it was a fairly large plant even then! It was coming into flower and we know it will die after flowering. Perhaps it may set seed! The grass-like offsets that did occur over the years had been removed and treated as seedlings. Excitement is ahead because when it does flower I can check to see if it is really a *Tillandsia dugesii*. You see, the Americans say they are the same and the Germans say they are different.



*Tillandsia mexicana*  
photo by Renate Ehlers



*Tillandsia dugesii*.

### **March Show from the front 'Check-in' desk**

Well, lots of people came and went. So it seems our publicity went well. It started off with an article in the Sunday Mail by Sophie Thompson a fortnight earlier. Then there was our infamous Ad in the Advertiser a week before plus ABC radio. Then the Messenger newspaper, and finally mentions on various radio stations on the actual weekend. When you saw a 'new' face and asked where they heard or read about the Show some answers were vague! Our new time slot of 9am to 2pm seemed to go off well and we only had one complaint from a Lady who rolled up at 4pm on the Saturday to find everybody had gone. She is an avid reader of our Gazette online on Bin A website which did not specify times!

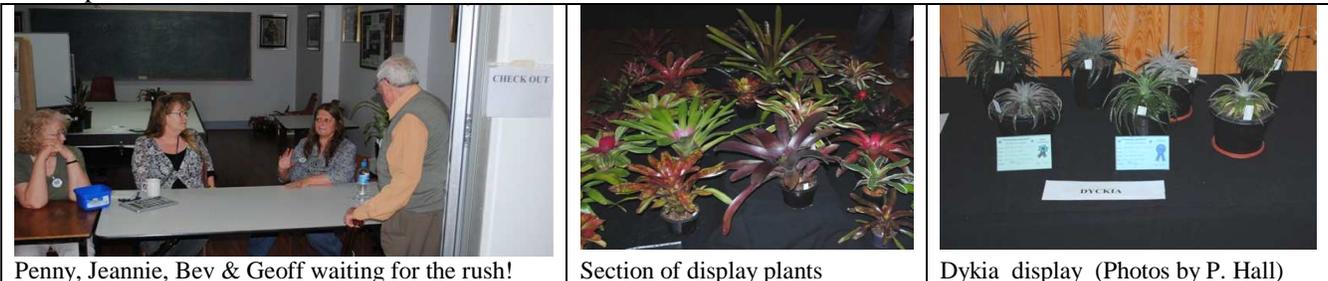
Having the centralised 'Check-out' in the Foyer opposite to the 'Check-in' ( see photos at beginning of article per favour of Peter Hall) seemed to work out well with only a few times when queuing occurred. So my crew had a change of scenery where we either saw the backsides of purchasers or the smiling faces of the checkout chicks. The Check-in staff has always been aware of the small step into the main hall where you would think that trippers on the way in would remember on the way out. Years ago the Maltese people did have a 'movable' ramp there which was good for wheelchair riders but not for pedestrians who always seemed to stumble on the way out! Wheelchair riders came out quicker than when they went in.

The number of 'newbies' through the door meant lots of book sales. With the education of plebs in our minds the actual profit we make on books is quite low, meaning we cannot have discount sales!

Raffle tickets were a hot item showing we had the right sort of prizes to be won. My grumble was that I was asked too many times for a fresh book of raffle tickets from our secret supply. Don't tell our normal Raffle man - George!

When I did get the chance to venture into the main hall I noticed that the sales tables were chock-a-block at 9am both days. By noon on the Saturday, helpers well outnumbered plants for sale and this occurred by 1pm on the Sunday. This was good because it meant fewer plants to take home. The fact we were able to restock on the Sunday was partly due to closing Saturday at 2pm, which gave sellers a chance to get home and do a survey of their collection.

The only disappointment to me was the number of people entering plants in the display that is a great standby for visitor attention when there are few plants left on the sales table! We know the standard of plants is there because of what was brought into the Summer Brag, so next March I expect to see us swamped in this area.



Penny, Jeannie, Bev & Geoff waiting for the rush!

Section of display plants

Dyckia display (Photos by P. Hall)

Prize-winners were:

**Pitcairnioideae (Margaret Reppin trophy)** The first prize: *Dyckia frigida*.- Len Colgan. Highly commended :

*Dyckia fosteriana*,- Derek Butcher

**Bromelioideae** : First prize:*Aechmea nudicaulis* 'Albomarginate' -Bill Treloar

Second prize *Billbergia* 'Domingos Martins'. Len Colgan

**(The Gummow Award)** in the Specimen Bromelioideae First prize :*Neoregelia* 'Cougar'- Len Colgan,

**Marie Robinson Trophy** Vriesea Complex : 1st prize *Vriesea* 'Annie'- Adam Bodzioch. 2nd prize *Vriesea gigantea*

var. *seideliana* -Len Colgan. Highly commended *Vriesea sucrei*. -Margaret Butcher

**Tillandsioideae** Josie Tonkin Trophy. 1st prize *Tillandsia tectorum* -Adam Bodzioch

2nd prize *Tillandsia xerographica*- Len Colgan

**Neoregelia Trophy** 1st prize : 'Birdrock' -Adam Bodzioch..

Highly commended : 'Burning Embers'- Bev Masters

**Artistic Merit Trophy** : *Tillandsia crocata* - Derek Butcher

**Ede Schaefer best in show** : *Neoregelia* 'Birdrock'- Adam Bodzioch

Our Treasurer was happy despite us only seeking 10% from Sales that amounted to just over \$8000. While I appreciate our selling books at virtually cost price it does spread the word to the plebs but it also means we have to replenish stock. This effort raised another \$300. Finally the Raffle, which brought in \$237. May I add that the names of Jackie and Warren now join Colin Waterman in being put on a handicap when buying tickets in the future!!!

## *Uncle Derek Says*

Julie Batty a member of the South Australia Bromeliad Society recently bought the plant pictured on the front cover from a Queensland grower as just *Guzmania* and started investigating because she was pleased with her effort in flowering it. Surely, it had a name, and she found out that it was very similar to 'Pink Nova'. We now know that John Catlan was growing this plant 15 years ago and no doubt sold offsets as they occurred. Somehow the label got lost as labels often do. Can we suggest that such a great plant like this, with a *Guzmania sanguinea* flavour and should be easier to grow, should be recognised by its proper name. So if you have this plant please change the label accordingly.

Derek

### ***2010 TPE (Tillandsia participation event) Albury by Secretary***

It all started when an Electric Blue 380 arrived at my front door at 7am Good Friday morning. It had the number plate LEN 999. This is the highest number you can get for a Len so this is one of the reasons he is called 'Big Len'. Anyway, I was designated navigator and allowed to take 3 boxes of Tillandsias plus my sleeping attire and pills. My job is also to keep Len awake and we discussed the talks we had planned to give at THE event. That was quickly disposed of. Most of you know that Len compiles Cryptic crosswords for the University of South Australia even though he is officially retired. Previous trips to Albury have been a testing ground as to the understanding of clues by an ordinary reader. Recently he joined the Australia Crossword compilers group. Yes, there are sufficient of them to form a group. They have regular crossword solving projects and many are discussed for improvements. There are grades from 1 to 8 and Len tells me he regular gets his crosswords assessed at 8. I think this not I think thou it should be at least 9 with the help I give him in not being able to solve the clues even with his assistance. Perhaps I could say they are too technical which is the excuse so many Bromeliad growers give when they get involved with plant identification. I say they are being too technical when they talk about seed raising, soil mixes or fertilising. Our first real stop was the Ouyen bakery that is our favourite. For Lunch, Len has his health food of the likes of Pizza and I have mixed sandwiches and chips. Cross the border at Toolibuc where we sweep past the usual Good Friday appeal for Sydney Hospital tin waverers. We take the fast route to Albury on a quiet road north of the river Murray. Some 80kms from Moulamein we encountered raining small locusts or large grasshoppers. Len's 'Electric Blue' car got more and more yellow at the front end. By Deniliquin we just had to stop and luckily found a carwash facility where we could have a hose down. From then on it was a fairly non-eventful trip to Albury by 6.15 pm and ready for the evening meal scheduled for a 7pm walk up the main street. This time it was a Thai restaurant where we all enjoyed great cooking. I did not have Thai fishcakes because of unfortunate events from 2 years previously. All present reminded me to take care! 8am Sat morning was starting time where we sold or bartered Tillandsias. By 9am we were ready to start. Here I must add that Chris Larson from Victoria is the Convenor and we are lucky to have him. He seems so unflappable when things go wrong, starting times for sessions need changing, and stepping in when order needs to be declared! A TPE IS different to most get-togethers because EVERYONE must chair a session on a topic of their choice. This means homework has to done BEFORE you get there and there are no lurkers! We always start with an 'oldie' so that the newbies see what is in store for them and they can see that we have no 'experts' as such. Everybody has something valuable to add and if you do learn anything it is usually that there is even more to learn and clear-cut decisions are rare indeed! Newbies are always saying " But I can only talk for 10 minutes". When the time is up we have problems shutting them up! We stop for coffee breaks and a sit down luncheon. By 5pm we are ready to pack up for the day and have a brush up before dinner at 7pm. This time we went Italian and when you have a large table with some 18 people it takes time for the chef to do his thing. So drinks oiled the throats! Our only New Zealand representative ordered quail but when so many pointed out it looked like a Kiwi, Bertie lost his appetite. Sunday was spent having even more talks and computer presentations. What would we do without computers?! The Italian restaurant was so popular on the Saturday we had to try again on the Sunday.

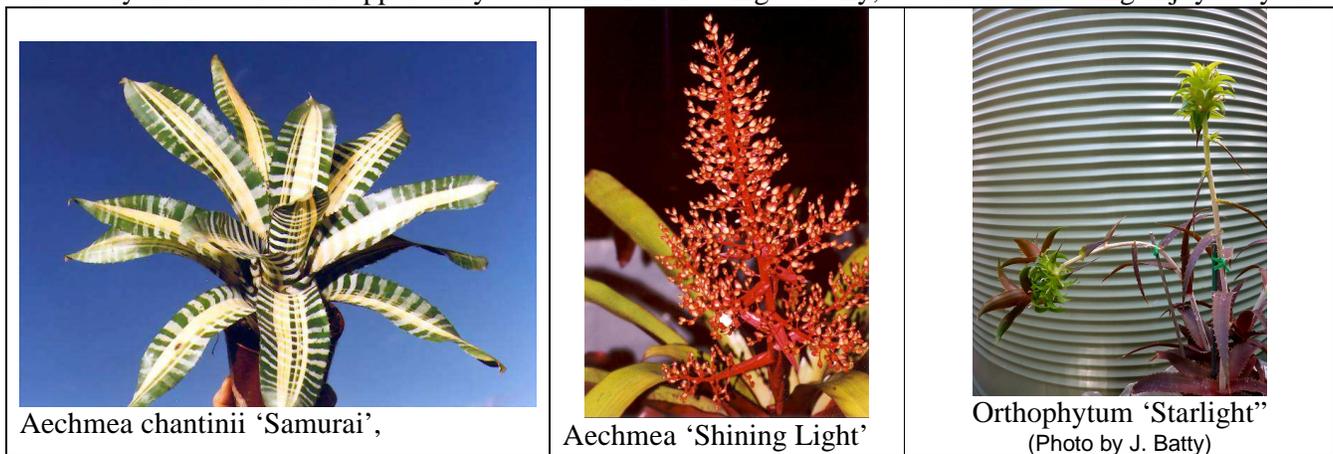
### **The April Meeting**

On a pleasant autumn day, about 40 members converged on the home of Bev and Ron Masters. There was plenty of opportunity to wander throughout the superb garden, dominated by bromeliads. The entrance pathway was conveniently set out in genera, but it was the rear of the property that drew the nods of admiration with a palette of brightly coloured neuroglia's and exquisite vrieseas.

### ***April meeting cont:***

Notebooks were evident as future wish-lists were assembled by the optimistic. Other members spent time checking the labels at the tillandsia corner. Eventually everyone was prised away from the visual delight of plants for the meeting itself to take place. With the secretary and assistant secretary being apologies, most official business was held over until the May meeting, but some time was spent by Adam describing the picture book of Margaret Paterson's personal neoregelia hybrids, accompanied by a number of plants that he had recently purchased from that source. Margaret has arranged the plants according to size and parentage, often with names indicating that the different hybrids emanated from the same crossing. It seemed that many people were impressed, and it was clear that a considerable number of these plants from Gympie in Queensland would find welcome homes in the collections of members. Even though this book does not cover horticultural aspects, it was decided to order 20 copies at \$20 each, much less than the RRP. In the future, the society might order a shipment of these neoregelias.

After a yummy afternoon tea and further opportunities to admire (or, more likely, crave) plants, the trophies from the March Show were presented, and the display plants discussed. The president was clearly surprised but impressed by a flowering *Aechmea chantinii* 'Samurai', from Peter and Jeanne Hall, which is not easy to grow during our winters. They also brought along *Aechmea* 'Shining Light' which has been displayed at the show, and a perfectly grown group of *Orthophytum* 'Starlight' which drew admiration. The president showed three slightly different forms of *Tillandsia floribunda* from Peru, together with a plant collected in Ecuador last year that was possibly coming into spike. The foliage was certainly different, and whether or not it is another form of that species will keep him anxious. Afterwards, grateful applause acknowledged everyone's appreciation for the work and time clearly expended by Bev and Ron to prepare the afternoon, and everyone had a further opportunity to drool before leaving. Clearly, a wonderful meeting enjoyed by all!



### ***Meeting & garden visit update from Julie***

Adam had purchased not only a copy of Margaret Paterson's book on her Neoregelia's, but also a number of her plants - some of which he brought along to explain the hybridizing process. The variety of colour was stunning and I think everyone was busy taking note of the ones they'd like to acquire.

Len talked through the small collection of flowering plants members had brought in for discussion. They included an *Aechmea chantinii* 'Samurai' which the Hall's had managed to grow and flower successfully. They had also brought in *Orthophytum* 'Starlight' in flower, with offsets both at base and on the flower head. (I'd taken along the G. 'Pink Nova' which was already past its best, but provided curiosity value).

Adam brought a *Tillandsia* in flower - another that Len hadn't got to that stage. (I didn't get its name - it was grey, prickly, and attached to a bit of dead wood - what more is there to know??!!)

Ron was busy keeping an eye on his super-sized flowering *Tillandsia* - a knockout and which anyone present would have quite happily taken home with them.

It was a very good afternoon and particularly helpful for us beginners to see how the experts manage their plants and the growing conditions.

NB The *Tillandsia* was Easter gift to Ron.

### **Exercise - Article by Peter Hall**

The medical specialist told me that I should walk 2km each day. Whilst walking and driving around the suburbs and looking at all the dead lawns, trees and shrubs *etc*, I felt disgusted! The local, state and Commonwealth governments have brainwashed householders about water use. They treat people like criminals if they use water on their gardens. I am not advocating wholesale use or waste of our precious water. I have written about the water crisis in a previous newsletter. All governments in the past 40 years have done next to nothing about the catchment; storage and re-usage of water and we the ordinary people bear the brunt of their incompetence!

Lawns provide oxygen to the air, more than we are led to believe. Every lawn, plant, shrub and tree that dies from lack of water has a huge effect on the quality of the air that we breathe. What is the use of water if the hot, polluted air that we breathe is going to affect our health? I get quite distressed listening to the chainsaws around the district cutting down trees. Another one of my pet hates is these artificial lawns made from one of the poly vinyl groups of plastics. All plastic material gives off toxic fumes into the air we breathe especially when it is hot. It is not cool because it looks like grass; it is as hot as pavers and from what I've read it also contains formaldehyde. I don't see the advantage of these hot, fuming patches of green if all the worms and biological life beneath them die. In the event of heavy rain, the water runs off and goes into the storm-water, especially the artificial lawn laid over a bitumen base.

I urge people to spend a bit more time and rejuvenate their lawns and gardens and help provide a better quality of air. It also keeps the air a lot cooler. When all the lawns are dead and there is bare soil it becomes hydrophobic and when it does rain, the water runs straight off and into the storm-water. If we keep our lawns and gardens green it keeps the area cooler, more oxygen is released and when it rains the water soaks into the ground and tops up the aquifer. Also, let all your overflow from your tanks run into the ground rather than out into the storm-water that pollutes the sea. I'm also critical of the Parklands Preservation Society, which constantly complains about events that are run in the State using part of the Adelaide parklands. The Adelaide parklands are a disgrace! What's good about them – there is no grass, most of the parklands are a dusty dry desert with trees dying. The city of Melbourne has emerald green lawns and beautiful healthy trees and they have had water restrictions for a lot longer than Adelaide. We need to get our parklands back to what they used to be. We should be using recycled water and reclaimed water, create wetlands within the parklands and dredge the Torrens River so that it is much deeper in the middle and use it to store water for use in the parklands. If it is deeper the problem with blue green algae would be reduced because it would not heat up as much. We should be ashamed of our parklands and do something about rejuvenating them.

### **ABC Gardening Expo – Wayville Show Grounds update from Peter Hall**

I was disappointed with the last Expo. Firstly, the event was organised by an eastern states company that clearly, in my opinion, know very little of the monetary difference between South Australia and the eastern states. In the past, I have dealt with a local company going back several years and they were extremely good. They always notified all the plant societies well in advance of the gardening events, did not charge for our Expo sites and were very easy to deal with. They were excellent organisers and very helpful.

The last Expo, March 2010, to me was reduced in size; you paid money to park then the entry fee just so that you could spend money in the venue. It was difficult to find the one and only place to use 2 ATMs. It took Jeanne 40 minutes to purchase something for lunch. There wasn't enough food outlets or rubbish bins available. I was astounded when I was told how much it was per square metre for a site – unbelievable!

To me, the exorbitant cost of the site must have made it difficult for the small business people to make any profit and to me that means that the event may not be a viable option. The current organisers did not notify the various plant societies in time. The notification arrived by post in, I think, February 2010 and that is too late. Once the notification arrives it is then presented to the committee and then to the club members and some clubs, like ours, finish the year in November and some don't resume again until February. Also the organisers charge the not for profit societies \$120.00 per site and to me that is not on. I know these companies have to make a profit to stay in business, but the last Expo was to me a huge monetary windfall for the organisers. I do enjoy gardening expos but the last one was not up to scratch!