S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

Vol 34
Number 6
October / November 2010
PUBLISHED BY:

The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
President: Len Colgan
1 Ailsa Avenue, Warradale, 5046. Ph: 82969426
Secretary: Derek Butcher.
25 Crace Road, Fulham, 5024. Ph: 83567728
Vice president: Adam Bodzioch
Treasurer: Bill Treloar
Margaret Butcher
John Murphy
Colin Waterman
Lainie Stainer
Bev Masters

Email address:
Secretary - tillands@bigpond.com
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 –1st Sunday in May, & August & no meeting in December or unless advised otherwise

VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Len's Racinaea (photo by J.Batty.)

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

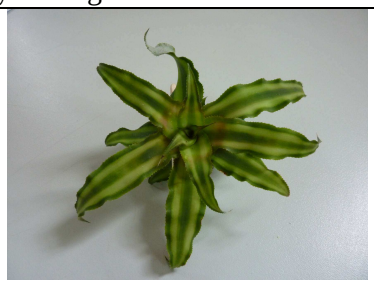
Dates for 2010

Meeting dates:- Nov 14th **Plant swap and Auction** starting 30 minutes early. Special afternoon tea - bring a plate. **Special Events:- Bromeliad Extravaganza**. Nov 13 featuring Displays & Sales
2011 dates:- Jan 16th (Cannot get in on Jan 9th!!!- SEE REMINDERS P.8), Feb 13, Mar 13, Mar 26 & 27 Show, Apl 10, May 1, June 12, July 10, Aug 7, Sep 11, Oct 9, Nov 12 Sales day, Nov 13

Applications for membership always welcome.
Subscriptions $10.00 per year Feb to Feb.

September Meeting from the Secretary's desk

You all know that I am always saying 'Never trust the name on the label' ad nauseum! With emphasis on plants on the raffle table. I know that a high percentage of members do not really worry about correct names but if you are a stickler for names you can get a warm fuzzy feeling when you find the correct (or nearly correct!) name on your plant. In fact if I didn't worry about names then we would only need a one page Gazette every two months! Anyway, the special Raffle is not immune to this problem where we had a plant called *Cryptanthus lacerdae*, which even our 'special visitor' picked up on. So I got Julie Batty to take a photo so we could investigate further. Her view was that it was close to a pale Cryptanthus 'Ruby' (in other words a plant grown in too much shade due to winter protection) and I referred it on to Geoff Lawn, the only one left in Australia who takes a keen interest in this genus. It was music to my ears when he agreed with Julie's idea. He also dropped the hint about the Australian website http://www.bromeliad.org.au/ because there was nothing on my beloved official Cultivar Register website http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/bcr/index.php On the Australian website I found out that the webmaster Ian Hook had had similar problems identifying 'Ruby' and he had ALL the answers. My query is now whether the winner of this *Cryptanthus* did query the name or if our reporting's will mean they missed out on a warm fuzzy feeling.



Crypt Ruby at meeting (photo by Julie Batty)

Crypt Ruby (photo by Julie Batty)

We had a special visitor all the way from the Hunter district in NSW who goes by the name of Mark Supple. Len didn't tell you that Mark is a Tillynut and we had nothing on display for him to observe on our plant display! Mind you there was one *Racinaea* of Len's that was a *Tillandsia* in the 1970's. In fact in those days Len's plant was considered to be the same as *Tillandsia adpressa* Andre, so it is no wonder that Len was dubious as to the name he had on the label.

Other plants that Len talked about that formed the secondary display included a puzzle from Bill from Bute. Many of his *Aechmea* subgenus *Ortgiesia* alleged species were flowering at the same time. In his experience they all had set flowering periods and he could not understand my pontificating about how easily they hybridised. All he had to get was a winter like this last one! I hope you all noted that Bill is trying so hard to find what might be considered as true species in this group of aechmeas that grow quite easily in South Australia. We had *Aechmea* 'Comata Too' which Len was able to point out was a combination of the parents *A. comata* and *A. recurvata*. Mind you there was still the problem of why the inflorescence was nestled in the leaf cup and not sticking out! The ubiquitous *Aechmea* 'Mary Brett' in flower clearly showing its links to *Aechmea recurvata.* This came into being over 30 years ago when we had 3 distinct types so our view is there must be more than 3 types around these days. Then there was a non-flowering plant that could well be A. 'Foster's Favorite' where the owner was asked to bring in again when it is flowering if she can't work out a name in the meantime. Someone else had brought in one of my favourite Billbergias. namely *B. sanderiana*, in full flower which lasts when the weather is cool (cold?). This was another with naming 40 years ago when the great Lyman Smith led us astray. Finally I must mention *Canistrum fosterianum* which by all rights should not survive in Bute, but is does and it flowers. That is if you look down the leaf tube to see the flower which says it is too cold to come out any further.

We had Pitcairnioideae plants coming out our ears as a challenge to Bill and myself. When Len was in New Orleans he overheard someone saying about Len's proposed talk that they hoped he was not going to talk about all those ioideae thingies. Well, we in Adelaide take ioideae in our stride because we know it is just a grouping of certain allied genera. So Pitcairnioideae just means genera that can be related to the genus *Pitcairnia.*

September Meeting cont:
Things started with a bang because the audience had to imagine what 500 million years might be like because that was when plants started on this earth. 300 million years ago we saw flowering plants, 70 million years ago Bromeliads started but would not be really recognizable as such because it was only until 20 million years ago that recognisable genera came into being. This is rather young when compared to the starting date but let us put it into perspective. This was the time when the Amazon river reached the sea just to the right of where the Panama canal is today. The famous tepuys of Venezuela that we think as ancient were still open plain. It was their being forced upward that made the Amazon find its current route. It is on these famous tepuis that our more ancient bromeliads are found. So we have Brocchinioideae, Lindmanioideae, Hechtioideae (this is an odd one because how do get separate male and female plants to have sex when they cannot walk?), Puyoideae, Navioideae, and last but not least Pitcairnioideae where we had all genera represented.

And so to the plants where Pitcairnia was dealt with first. This is genus that likes it warm and does not mind boggy conditions in Summer. Consequently, lovers of this genus like Bill treat many as annuals and if you cannot find replacements you go without. We had Pitcairnia 'Hartwig' which is really a species from Mexico. In 1971 Maurice Kellett from Melbourne found this plant in Mexico, which Dr Matuda said was *Pitcairnia harwigii*. This plant was happily growing in Melbourne until 10 years ago when I started asking questions because the name was nowhere to be found. We could only guess that this WAS going to be described but it is too late now. Anyway, we knew the exact locality but could not get one Mexican taxonomist keen enough to visit. So in the meantime we call it 'Hartwig'. This has only one sort of leaves even though they are deciduous. Our other example P. heterophylla (as the name suggests) has two sorts of 'leaves'. Normal ones and ones that are a bunch of prickles so you take care when weeding. This species comes from an area where there are two main seasons. One wet and the other dry. I leave it to you to decide which sorts of leaves are produced when.


Pitcairnia 'Hartwig'

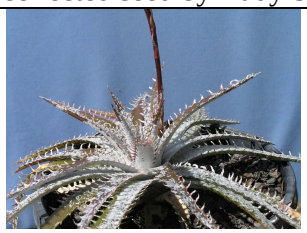
Then we had *Fosterella*, which was once a favourite of Big Len's when he tramped around Bolivia but what with importation problems he seemed to lose interest. They seed very easily so anyone should be able to get hold of a plant if they are genuinely interested in this genus. I prefer them to species *Cryptanthus* even though they need similar growing conditions, have less colourful leaves and much smaller flowers! In the wild you find them in nooks and crannies where humidity and moisture may be more available. I showed a photo of what the plants are like at the end of the dry season when they are covered with dust. Not an ideal plant for the competition bench but I find them fascinating.
Next was *Encholirium*, which is Len's favourite. Botanically speaking there is very little difference between this genus and Dyckia. The main difference being in the inflorescence, which emerges from the centre of the plant in Encholirium but off centre in Dyckia. For those into the flowers these are mainly coloured white or greenish in Encholirium to yellow or orange in Dyckia. We saw Encholirium #4 that has yet to flower so we can investigate its name and a depauperate E. subsecundum (in a pot) where we had worked out the name for it to be confirmed by Rafaela Forzza, the Brazilian expert on this genus. This gave both Len and myself a warm fuzzy feeling!
And so to *Deuterocohnia* where there are two main groups. One that used to be called *Abromietiella* with inflorescences without scapes and the other group with inflorescences on long scapes. It was only when they found a species with a medium sized scape that they decided that *Abromietiella* should disappear under *Deuterocohnia.* It is the ones with long scapes that are rather unique in the Bromeliad world as Bill pointed out. With his *D. longipetala* he knew that in Bute it flowered every year for 7 years. Each year at flowering time the flower spike would send out another branch and start flowering again. Notice to tidy gardeners. "Do not prune your 'dead' flower head on your *D. longipetala*!" We only saw representatives of *D. brevifolia* and *D. lorentziana* because the long scaped forms are best grown in the open ground or large pots!
Finally we had the dyckias, which were clearly the more popular but are not that easy to grow if you are one for the species. Hybrids have that get up and go. Bill is still trying to get the right soil mix where the general feeling was that if he must change from his general Brom mix he should be looking towards a proprietary

cactus mix. In the wild we know they have it tough. Thanks to the chap who runs http://dyckiabrazil.blogspot.com/ I have lots of habitat shots, which shows the extremes of conditions they can endure in the wild throughout the year from high on a rock in the merciless sun to being submerged on the rainy season. His website, however, concentrates on close-ups mainly of species but some of his own hybrids. If you are a Dyckia lover just look and drool because the chance of getting a plant into Australia is virtually zilch.

Over the years we in Adelaide have been successful in getting in new species from seed collected in the wild and if you ever get hold of an offset of such a plant hang on to it like grim death! Hybrids abound so make sure of your source. Ebay is notorious for offering hybrids masquerading as species. If you want to check authenticity of *Dyckia* names check the species data base on http://fcbs.org/ where Constantino (Mr dyckiabrazil (see above) has been very helpful in providing photos.

Species on display included *marnier-lapostollei, marnier-lapostollei* var. *estevesii, choristaminea, lindevaldae* (from frozen seed from Heidelberg Bot Gdn via big Len), *doeringii,* (same source), *platyphylla,* and *fosterianum* (from habitat collected seed by Rudy Schulz in Victoria).


D.marnier-lapostollei


D. marnier-lapostollei var. estevesii


D. choristaminea


D. lindevaldae

If you grow *Dyckia* from seed collected in a botanical garden or a private collection you can expect hybrids. 50 years ago *D. fosteriana* distributed as such were in fact hybrids. Of more recent claims we know that the species *D. dawsonii* as grown in California acts like a hybrid and yet was supposed to have been used as a quoted species in registered hybrids. I have already espoused my views on the problems with 'Warren' but point out it has no relationship to our own member called Warren! In other words you treat 'Warren' as you would rabbits! Another Australian problem involved seedlings taken up to the Central coast by Ruby Ryde, which the locals gladly accepted. The plants needed a name and they came up with 'Ruby's Soft Spot' and duly registered it under that name.

October meeting from the Secretary's desk

Another great roll up, not only in people, but also in plants for the raffle table AND the display table. Some may have noticed that the raffle tickets are now 50c instead of the 20c. The price rise was not to increase funds but to save time for poor old George. He said he was spending 'hours' folding tickets and his fingers these days are not so bendy. The strategy worked because we only sold half as many tickets but anyone mathematically minded will note we still made a profit because the number of tickets sold should have been about 40%. The wise old owl we have as Secretary did suggest that members be given two tickets. One for the door prize and one for the raffle but the committee seemed to think that members needed their gambling urge to be assuaged by buying more tickets than their neighbour, should be allowed to do so! This price rise meant a price rise in the special raffle that is after all, a special raffle because we look for rarer plants here AND the name on the label gets argued about!

Adam had arranged for another batch of Neoregelia hybrids from Margaret Paterson to be available at the meeting and everyone was eager not to lose their door prize ticket because this went into the sales lottery. Such was the overall standard of the plants that even the lucky last to pick their purchase went away satisfied. THERE was one exception with El Presidente spitting the dummy because by the time his turn came the plant of his choice with orange spots and red flecks on a sea green background had already gone. Many members offered to buy Len a can of Rainbow paint so he could create one for himself, but he turned down the offer. He did make a fast recovery to talk to us about the plants brought in for the general display,

October meeting cont:

First we had an oldie from the 1980's called *Billbergia* 'Royal Vase' which was one of the first plants that proved to me that you did need such a thing as a Cultivar Register to check up on identity. You see, in the American Journal in 1962 Mulford Foster told us all about this hybrid he had called 'Gerda' which was a hybrid between *B. horrida* var. *tigrina* and *B. amoena* var *viridis* . Both these species are spectacular in plant shape and colour of inflorescence with the hybrid somewhere in between. There was even a black and white photo to show us what it looked like. In the 1980's there were two plants called 'Gerda' both imported from the US and Bill Morris who at the time was probably the only one in Australia who had back copies of the American Journal, pointed out this problem. After consultation with Olwen Ferris we decided to call the plant that was called 'Gerda' but looked like a *B. vittata x amoena* hybrid should be called 'Royal Vase'
Here we split into two directions because crossing *B. vittata* with *B. amoena* has been a favourite with hybridists ever since they were discovered in the wild and in the late 1800's the Europeans really had fun with these two with lots of names and lots of writings. Only recently with the help of internet I have been able to get hold of these writings and although in a foreign language are fantastic archival material. I feel sure that some of these hybrids got to Australian shores many years ago with German migrants where South Australia had its fair share. It did not surprise me that the Botanic Garden at Weetunga has this hybrid there only it has been known for many years as the species *B. vittata*. Anyone who has grown the true species will see the inferior colouring of the inflorescence despite its hybrid vigour.


B. horrida var. *tigrina*


B. *vittata*


B. *amoena*


Billbergia 'Royal Vase'

Let us now return to 'Gerda' where in the 1990's there were two forms under this name being grown in Florida! It was a different problem to the Aussie one 10 years earlier. Here, with a bit of prompting from me, Don Beadle solved the problem by calling the imposter 'Grande'
So whoever has this plant now knows a bit of its history!


B. 'Gramde" was 'Gerda'

It was good to see that old favourite Aechmea recurvata is still being grown and we had 5 different plants brought in. One has yet to flower for a more or less positive identification. One problem is that it has been hybridised with many other Aechmeas, although on the plus side it has strong genes so you can generally see the influence of A. recurvata in any of these hybrids.
One was variegated and which we fondly call 'Aztec Gold'. Why fondly – well although this originated in Qld we were the first to officially release it, as Len said, at the Australian Conference held in Adelaide in 1987. Len Butt brought the plants down for John Catlan and we had to have a draw as to who had the privilege to buy a plant. Perhaps a little bit about this plant by John himself will interest you.
"Aechmea recurvata `Aztec Gold' by John Catlan
`Aztec Gold' is really the story of trying to produce a desirable plant by swinging the odds in the grower's favour.
One day in 1981 a friend of mine, Ian Sellars, found a plant in a group of my *Aechmea recurvata* plants with a good, clear yellow stripe on one of its leaves. The variegated leaf appeared on a fully mature plant that had failed to flower that year.
It was the unanimous lament that many plants of friends as well as our own had shown partial variegation that had not been passed on to the pups. The low averages were definitely against success, but with this plant we hoped it was possible as the variegated leaf was low down in the butt of the plant where the pups originate.

October meeting cont:

After researching the material available, looking for a magic wand, I found that there was none, or more precisely, none that I could find. Now was the time to put into action three lessons learnt while observing our plants.

One day while sitting on an old stump, with a shovel in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, trying to get inspiration, I noted just how hardy bromeliads really were. There were dozens of discarded plants lying on their sides with their pups happily sitting up ready to grow into new clumps.

LESSON 1. If a plant falls over and a pup forms, nine times out of ten the pup will start on the top side of the plant.

Like most bromeliad growers, being short of room, I would take pups off and sit them in a pot in a very open mix to keep them upright till I had time to tend to them. If you are too long, you would wind up with a solid ball of roots. This resulted in tearing them apart and damaging the roots. Gradually it dawned on me that the root system initiated from one side of the pup. The opposite side from the heel piece from the mother plant. The rule became: face the wound side to the centre of the pot. The roots all grow to the outside of the pot and are easier to separate. This explained to me why in a clump of bromeliads the pups are generally grown on the mother plant farthest from the grandmother. I reasoned that the roots on that side absorbed the nourishment and gave slightly more food to that side of the plant. I foliar fed the plants on one side only and this resulted in a very high percentage of pups from that side.

LESSON 2. If you liquid feed a plant, by foliar feeding it on one side, you increase your chances of getting a pup from that side.

I remembered one year, there being not enough bench space for all the plants, that some were placed under a bench. Being winter, the sun was low in the sky and light penetrated very well in under the bench as it faced north. Spring arrived and busy-busy-busy then, well into summer. Lo and behold! There were the plants with all their pups, like soldiers, facing the path. At the time I thought it was rather convenient for the removal of the pups.

LESSON 3. If the slant is denied light on one side, it will throw its pups on the side facing the light source.

The time had come to bite the bullet. We laid the plant at an angle of 45 degrees facing away from the sun with our yellow stripe being on top facing the sun. A few weeks later at an angle of 90 degrees to the yellow stripe appeared a green pup. This was removed with a sharpened screwdriver. Our theory was that the pup had started its growth cycle prior to our meddling with nature. Be patient and wait. Success immediately followed by disaster. The pup was there but it was pure yellow. We had only the one variegated leaf and the pup was right under it. So all we could do was leave it as an interesting experiment.

A few months later and the pup had grown and we looked and wondered for there on the upper side of the leaves was a solid green stripe. A phenomenon of this plant is: all pups appear as plain yellow, but as the leaves develop the green stripe improves and it turns into a sturdy, vigorous grower for a variegate. To promote the growth of `Aztec Gold' we left it attached to its parent. This promoted vigorous growth resulting in a mature plant that produced 10 pups over three years. Any pups appearing on the green side were cut off so the `Aztec Gold' received all the energy.

Over the years `Aztec Gold' has never produced a pup for me that has reverted to green. In the first couple of years we had to destroy only about six plants that did not grow strong enough for me.

Our climate is described as subtropical but `Aztec Gold' has not been adversely affected by our heat. In 1985 our winter produced 16 frosts in a row and that year the flowering was the most spectacular we have ever witnessed."

Aechmea `Aztec Gold'

Lainie had brought in some specimens of *Aechmea nudicaulis* including a couple of variegates. We had been discussing variegations over the phone and here we had just a sample. As Len pointed out you can have a garden full of 'forms' of this species and still find differences in them so it is very difficult to hang your hat on a 'correct' name. Botanically speaking there are 10 varieties including 2 variegates and they can be found in Brazil, northwards to Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands and west to Central America. There at least 2 taxonomists who believe it is better to treat them as just one very variable species.

October meeting cont:
But you know what Bromeliad growers are like and there are some 24 cultivar names to choose from including 6 variegates.
Trying to define a variegate is very difficult because it is not a stable condition. Many think that if you get two or three successive offsets with the same variegation that has stabilised.

Recently we had an instance with *Cryptanthus* where change occurred after 15 years. Does this mean that the one plant that sported is the only unstable one or is this inherent to the others?
The only reference in the ICNCP rules is in Section 17.15, which states: "The words 'variety' (or var.) and 'form' may not be used in new cultivar epithets. However, when var. denotes variegated the epithet is established with the word 'variegated' written in full". This is not that informative perhaps because variegation plays a very small role in the general world of plant cultivars. Variegation is much more specialised in the Bromeliaceae where the following non-Latin adjectives could apply

marginate (outside stripes)
mediate (solid median stripe)
variegate (varying width of stripes)
striate (fine lines)
There are, of course, other adjectives that could be used but regrettably, I do not see us getting a general consensus on what ones to use.

And so to *Orthophytum* 'Blaze' where Len fell for the 3 card trick in assuming it was a bigeneric x*Neophytum*. It came into being 35 years ago when a Floridian crossed *Orthophytum vagans* with *O. navioides*. We do not know who actually did the hybrid, which makes me wonder how we know parentage is correct! I did make a cursory check of the sex parts to see if they were the same as Foster's drawing in 1958 of x*Neophytum* and could not see any great difference. Anyway, we know that the plant is more difficult to grow than the 'normal' x*Neophytum* that is the reason why it is still rare.


Ortho Blaze 2

We had a nice showing of tillandsias in flower. One of especial interest was a recent import by Len from his collections made during a recent trek in Ecuador. Admittedly he kept calling the plant *Racinaea* without a species name but this genus is very difficult to identify because so much emphasis is how the flower is attached to the inflorescence. You would not think there so many options to look for. Strictly speaking we are dealing with a separate part of tillandsias, in fact in the 1970's they were just *Pseudocatopsis* within the *Tillandsia* genus. *Pseudocatopsis* was coined 120 years ago. These days with genetic profiling you wonder how it could have been linked because the genus *Catopsis* has been found to be very elusive as to how it evolved. The jury is still out! Anyway in 1993 it was decided to consider *Pseudocatopsis* as a genus in its own right and it was called *Racinaea* after Racine Foster who was the one who kept Mulford Foster on the straight and narrow! Most species of this genus follow the Andean chain in Equatorial regions so they like it cool and wet for most of the year. Because they are found so high ultra-violet light seems to give them spots. These are delightful spots that attract collectors but very hard to keep when closer to sea-level. So make the most of it while you can. Len enjoys challenges!

October meeting cont:


Neoregelia' Takemura Grande' CENTRE in Grande 1:18. 1978

And so to Bill's segment on neoregelias where he had plenty to discuss. May I say that the standard was high and we were pleased with the number of members who actually brought plants in, even though it meant more talking for Bill!!! Being of the old school I was impressed how well some of the 'oldies' and species stood up to the newby hybrids to the scene. Just one example was 'Takemura Grande' where we think we may have the 'true' plant in Adelaide because throughout the World there are many masquerading under this name. One thing to remember about neoregelias under Adelaide conditions rarely give consistently high quality plants. Something always seems to happen so you miss out on getting perfect plant. BUT if you persevere as happened with the 'Takemura Grande' you get a warm fuzzy feeling without anyone else needing to comment.


Neo Wurthmann's Midnight (Photo by J. Batty)

Philosophy on changing names is an interesting one. Being the purist that I am and the wealth of material to refer to I prefer to deliberate before deciding. In fact I have something to hang my hat on. Some may see a plant at a meeting, which superficially looks like their plant at home. Remember a plant side by side is the best way to do this because memory is an odd element of human life. Your next concern is whether the plant with the label is itself correct. In other words be a doubting Thomas before you decide. We are showing you a photo of N. 'Wurthmann's Midnight' that has been wrongly known as 'Voodoo' for years, If you want to find out the whole sorry story then check http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/bcr/index.php

STOP PRESS

SPECIAL REMINDERS

January meeting date change	**16/1/2011**	**Topic-** L. Colgan on Bromeliad genera
February meeting:	**AGM**	**President** **Secretary** **& Assistant Secretary retiring.** **Topic -** Cryptanthus & Orthophytum