

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Born 1977 and still offsetting!



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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

VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME



T. salmonea (Photo by J. Batty)

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

Meeting dates:-

2011 dates:- Mar 13, (Summer brag) Apl 10, May 1 (Bus trip to Bute), June 12, July 10 (Len's talk),
Aug 7 (Winter brag), Sep 11, Oct 9, Nov 13

Special Events:- Mar Sat 26 & Sun 27 Bromeliad extravaganza Sat. **October 29 Bromeliad extravaganza**

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb.



From the Roving Reporter Jan 2011.

Yes, it is still I but I'll be vacating the Secretary's desk pretty soon. We'll still take notes while the talks are on, or should I say that Margaret would do so because my notes are getting so bad I cannot read them myself. To think that this will be another job that the new secretary will not have to do.

In recent months there have been certain changes to our collection, the plants still grow and offset but we are getting slower in our husbandry. We have found that the pink flowered *Oxalis* really loves pot culture and despite our extracting the thousands of bulbils we have found it useless to try to rejuvenate potting mix. These bulbils are so similar to fertilizer pellets that my eyes have given up trying to tell them apart. So we now use pristine potting mix and offsets!

That was decision number one. Decision number 2 saw us looking at overloaded leaning benches and overhead structures. Gone are the days when Harry Bamford who lived a couple of blocks away knew it was morning tea time because he heard the saw starting up for new construction work. Nowadays I find that wire does almost as good a job. Anyway we had to drastically reduce numbers and here Margaret has even allowed me into the potted plant area. In the 'old' days we always kept two of the same just in case one died and kept spares for sale. AND we remembered what we had. Slowly we started to get duplicate duplicates and even triplicate duplicates at various points around the garden. Nowadays we only keep one of each sort and Margaret follows me around with pad and pen doing an inventory. We even found plants we had forgotten we still had. Now the work is finished we can enjoy fewer, but more easy to manage, plants.

We must remember that there are so many Bromeliads that look alike (even when they have different names!) and you must be selective. I know it is easy when you first get into Bromeliads in taking off as many offsets as you can to increase your collection but then you soon have a collection of sameness where variety is the spice of life! If you do not have the right light conditions you will quickly learn that your Bromeliads will grow very well as green plants looking like ferns. This may satisfy some but I think the challenge comes when the right amount of light is rewarded by a brightly coloured leafed plant with the flowers an extra bonus. One way to cheaply add variety to your collection is by careful selection at raffle time. I have always been critical of those who bring in un-named plants which I suppose is better than wrongly named plants but we often see plants brought in that have been grown with the ferns. The problem here is that there sometimes is good material – it is just bad presentation. The optimist in me says that the recipient can resurrect such a plant to its proper glory by judicious pruning or even waiting for a good offset.

To my mind, your greatest warm fuzzy feeling is when you get flowering on a plant that is colourful and sturdy. Remember, just one, - not 10 of the same.

AND so to the plants brought in for discussion. First there was Adam, who at short notice, gave us examples of Margaret Paterson Neoregelia hybrids he had recently acquired. He had hoped to have a few more available to members but the Queensland floods had deferred that and it is hoped that Feb meeting we may see more. Clearly, an outstanding hybrid is 'Jewellery Shop' which started out its life in 1996 by crossing 'Hades' with 'Mercury', where it had 8 named siblings. Even so Margaret had a problem because she had 3 or 4 plants that stood out from the rest and could only be given the collective name of 'Jewellery Shop' such were their similarities. These days I think many could pick out a 'Jewellery Shop' even without a label. Such are the aims of hybridists she just had to use 'Jewellery Shop' in more crossings but none have its vibrancy. For example it was used 45 times as mother and 36 as father. Adam was able to point out similarities in the various 'greges' or in human terms brothers and sisters. Margaret calls them 'Series' So we have 'Love' series, 'Gympie', 'Dear Ones' and 'Cooloola' to mention a few This was not only in looks but in Margaret's choice of names. Certainly, her registration of some 494 hybrids shows her commitment to seed raising. Others of us did bring in some of Margaret's older hybrids to show that there are others still around that have not been tossed out because they are old!

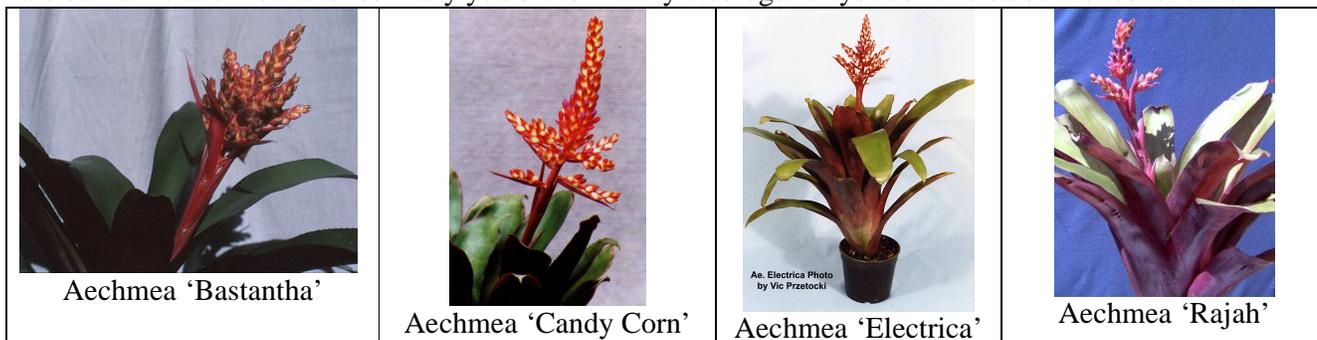
Bill Treloar then took over by talking about the other plants brought in. Peter Hall is still bragging about his *Hylaeicum* but at least he can get it to offset. In habitat it is used to hanging around in the tropical rainforest hoping for a bit of wind to dry it off a bit. In Adelaide it would appear that offsets have more oomph and are thus more or less erect but Peter tells me he is taking the plunge and removing two so they can be rooted and grow by their own steam.

Roving Reporter Jan 2011 cont:

The clever clogs amongst you no doubt know what a *Hylaea* is and it took me a bit of fossicking. If you are an ecologist you will know it means tropical rainforest and when Ule coined the name *Hylaea* in 1907 he was referring to the tropical rainforest of the upper reaches of the River Amazon. He treated these as being *Nidularium*! While it resides in *Neoregelia* like a sore thumb at least it is now treated as a separate subgenus of *Neoregelia*. The challenge for Peter will be to flower his offsets. Why am I pleased with the husbandry ability of Peter? Over the years I have seen lots of this subgenus on our sales tables having come over from Victoria via Mick Romanowski who has Melbourne water, extra heating in winter and a fertilising regime. Some have even imported batches from Queensland. All enjoy the pleasure of growing these as annuals because nobody makes mention of their plant the following Spring.

I know I always have an opinion as to the name of a plant brought in without a label but how many of you are inquisitive enough to give it an independent check. This is a bit harder with species but checks can be made with photos on <http://fcbs.org/> if you have access to a computer. Even more detail can be obtained in the case of cultivars on <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/bcr/index.php>

I refer to two perennial queries that started some 40 years ago with that prolific hybridist, Ed Hummel producing many *Aechmea* hybrids and not disclosing parentage. The first name we suggested *Aechmea* 'Bastantha' could well be true but then there are also 'Candy Corn', 'Electrica', 'Popcorn', or 'Rajah'. We think that Hummel was at the time playing with *Aechmea fasciata* and those around *Aechmea fulgens/miniata* that have the discolor leaves. Alas we are unable to nail them down. What is astounding is that these hybrids are still alive and well after so many years. How many *Neoregelia* hybrids have stood the test of time?!



The other one where Hummel could well have been playing with *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' was one we felt could be 'Bill Barrett' but then there is also 'Can Can', and 'Jackson' to consider.

Bill was surprised to see a *Canistrum fosterianum* with the flower exceeding the leaf tube because in Bute it stays hidden. Either too cold or too hot he does not know but he does find this genus fairly easy to grow in Bute if only for the black blotches you get on the leaves. Mind you, he did mention that 'other one' that became an *Edmundoa*. An easy way to think of *Edmundoa* is that its inflorescence is full of brown hair! Others are not so easy especially those that went from *Canistrum* to *Wittrockia* where the Brazilians seem to be having a great time moving species around. In this case I follow Elton Leme because his reasoning seems more logical. I can assure you that translating such articles from the Portuguese is fun!

Everyone must have noticed the 'small' *Aechmea* 'Ares' that George brought in and didn't want to take home. BUT, someone loved it and it is now happy in its new home. For 'outdoor' plantings in Adelaide we have few plants we can recommend other than say, *Puya* and *Dyckia* and the species *Aechmea distichantha* or its hybrids is as tough as old boots. AND they need to be grown tough to keep their shape otherwise too much shade and you soon have a strappy prickly bush! If you want to get any of these you must ask around because they are not items seen often on our sales tables! *Aechmea* 'Ares' is a bit of a disappointment because its inflorescence is smaller than the species.



Aechmea 'Ares' (Photo by J. Batty)

Roving Reporter Jan 2011 cont:

We finished up with Tillandsia and here Bill excelled himself by bringing in a great selection all the way from Bute, if only to show us they do grow up that way.

One little puzzle was *T. utriculata* subsp. *pringlei* and *T. karwinskyana*. It must be 30 years ago in Australia where I was growing plants that looked the same but had either of these two names wherever I bought them. This was mighty confusing but clearly growers were not checking floral details with written descriptions. Mind you, these descriptions were a lot harder to find than they are these days. It was when I was able to get a 'true' *T. karwinskyana* from Dennis Cathcart at Tropiflora in Florida that I began to see the light. Since then I have had great correspondence with Renate Ehlers because these two species are but the tip of the iceberg when looking at this complex. Anyway, have a look at the photos of both species so you can try to remember their differences.



T. karwinskyana



T. utriculata subsp. *pringlei*

Bill was a bit worried about his *T. harrisii* whose spike was either red or green and didn't know what caused it. I have noticed similar happenings but generally the floral bracts go red when it is ready to flower. I must mention here that this species is very rare in the wild and is protected under CITES. Luckily it grows well in Adelaide so if you have it then cherish it.

When you start collecting plants you are not that interested in names or plant identity. The second phase is one where you try to fathom out individual names. The third phase is where you ask questions about similarity but different names apply and logic seems to go out the window. Bill is up to phase 3 and had brought in examples of the *T. paleacea/streptocarpa* complex, which includes *T. reichenbachii* and a lot of other species. If you have an idea of where your plant was found in the wild you have a chance at identifying. Otherwise it is like having a 500 piece jigsaw with 40 pieces missing! Anyway, we had great fun discussing.

The same applied to *T. lorentziana* especially the white petalled form where we were able to show that it should not be confused with *T. vernicosa* whose floral bracts shine like they have been varnished.

There was a small flowering hybrid there with supposed parents of *T. albertiana* and *T. bandensis* but nobody present was prepared to say these must be correct. This is being investigated further and may well get a cultivar name.

Finally, there was one plant I was surprised to see in flower by the name of *T. salmonea*. You see I have had this plant for years but narry a flower. It is Renate Ehler's favourite because in the Mexican sun its floral bracts are salmon coloured. Impatient Adam had managed to induce flowering by artificial means and dare I say that the salmon colour was lacking.



T. salmonea (Photo by J. Batty)



From the Roving Reporter Feb 2011.

Overheard in the car park, “What I like about this club is that there are no politics! “ or words to that effect but which got me thinking. By politics I read person versus person without the common denominator of plant. We still have our spats but our aim for many years has been plants and people. From a personal point of view, the problem with plants is that it needs people so you can talk about plants which is why you may think I am way up in the clouds and deaf as a post – I am conversing with nature. Margaret on the other hand is a people/plant person but perhaps that it a female trait. Whatever way it is you cannot argue with a plant. If it loses the argument it just dies – quietly!

Mind you the reason may have been we had so much on the agenda that we did not have time to argue! Over 50 members rolled up for the AGM, which must be a record because usually members stay away for fear of being dobbed in for a job. Aren’t we lucky to have Geoff Jarrett as Returning Officer? No messing with him and he seems to have the knack of getting volunteers. It was certainly the changing of the guard with 3 executive members with some 75 years service between them deciding to retire. By retire I do not mean making no comments because Margaret and I will still be supplying bits for the Gazette.

Anyway, here are the winners.

PRESIDENT	Adam Bodzioch	new
VICE PRESIDENT	Peter Hall	new
SECRETARY	Bev Masters	new
TREASURER	Bill Treloar	
COMMITTEE	Vee Clark Jeanne Hall John Murphy Lainie Stainer Colin Waterman	new new
AUDITOR	Vee Clark	new
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	may not be used – Committee to decide	
ASSISTANT TREASURER	Committee to decide	
LIBRARIAN	Lainie Stainer	
AFTERNOON TEA ORGANISER	Bev Masters	
DOOR TICKETS	George Rudolph	
RAFFLE TICKETS	George Rudolph and other helpers on the day.	
HOST/ESS	Colin Waterman/ Sue Skrabei	new.
POTS & LABELS	Ron Masters	
NAME TAG MAKER	Ron and Bev Masters	
GAZETTE	Derek & Margaret Butcher/ Bev Masters	

Colin Anderson ‘turns’ old wood into objects of great use and had spent some midnight oil in making a pen for the ‘Retiring’ Len, a finger bowl for Uncle Derek, and a vase for Auntie Margaret. I do not know who was more embarrassed at the presentation, the donor or the recipients! In any event, everyone joined in the acclamation. We even had quiet Sue saying a few words of appreciation.

The three raffles took ages to deal with. Yes we have three raffles. It is a good job Nick Xenophon is not a member! Why were we impatient? We knew that we had to keep our door prize tickets for the lucky chances to buy from the final batch of plants from Margaret Paterson. So Adam went off to organise that.

Len quickly followed by talking about the other display plants brought in and what a lot there were! There was the huge flowering *Aechmea caudata* that did not know whether it was variegated or not. Now, a keen Brom grower would decide whether he wanted a variegated plant or a non-variegated plant and select from the offsets to achieve his aim. The best-variegated offset comes from the axil of the best-variegated leaf. If the first offset is not variegated then remove it early in its life and turn the plant so that the best leaf is on the sunniest side of the plant. We are told this position encourages the production of offsets on that side.

Roving Reporter Feb 2011 cont

Grow on the best offset and DESTROY the rest. When this offset matures again select the most variegated and so on until you are satisfied. By then you will be fed up with variegated plants so you can start selecting to remove the variegation. By then you can retire from being Secretary! You can also do nothing and just complain that the plant is not doing the right thing and I can assure you that the plant won't listen!

Sue had brought in some very well grown *Neoregelias*, which really took my interest because they were mainly oldies like 'Johannas Purple' and 'Porphyry Pearl'. While Len and Adam can rave about the newbies from Margaret Paterson I rave about the oldies. Oldies have got used to the vagaries of Adelaide (and Bute!) weather whereas newbies are yet untried. Len and Adam may brag about the success they have acclimatising their purchases but some of you may well get the Margaret experience. If you do feel your plant has been damaged by your conditions do not despair because the offsets will be much stronger. You just have to be patient.

Sue was justifiably proud of her flowering a hybrid *Guzmania* and this made Adam happy.

Who looked at *Neoregelia* 'Panama Queen' and thought it was an odd name? Well, it is an odd name because according to the records it is supposed to look like the small *N. chlorosticta*. As it got to us from Maurice Kellett we are now following this lead. By the way I do like people who put on their labels where they got their plant. If you ever query a plant in a Botanic Garden they always go back to their records of where it came from. This is called its provenance. With a species this is generally where the plant was collected in the wild but any reference is better than none. EVEN if there is no other name on the label but please put 'ex' or 'from' because there is always the danger that the plant gets lumbered with it as its proper name!!!



Neoregelia 'Panama Queen'
(Photo by J. Batty)

Who looked at the plant that had leaves like cardboard with a red tip? The plant had been brought in by Penny Seekamp and she was after its name. She had got it from Bev so now two people can add a label to their plant. Perhaps there are others in the same boat because it was a frequent visitor to our meetings 20 years ago but I had thought it had disappeared forever. You may now have guessed that its name is 'Cardboard' but be like me had forgotten its bigeneric name which is *xNeotanthus*. It is a hybrid said to have been done in the USA by Mulford Foster some 40 years ago and even he could not remember the parents. Looking at the plant you could guess that *Neoregelia spectabilis* and *Cryptanthus zonatus* may have been involved!



xNeotanthus. 'Cardboard'
(Photo by J. Batty)

While talking about label writing please try to keep the spelling as correct as you can. Don't worry about capitals or italics or even quote marks, just the spelling. Some of us are even suggesting a Label howler listing in the same vein as schoolboy howlers that occur in written examinations. For example *Billbergia velutatta* for *vittata*, *Tillandsia utiflulata* for *utriculata* only the plant was *Racinea pugiformis*, and finally which is more explainable because it is possibly the way Queenslanders would pronounce it – *Neoregelia* 'Red Wave' instead of the correct 'Red Waif'!

There were many *Tillandsias*, as usual but I will only speak about a couple. First I must congratulate George on his growing *Tillandsias* even though he loses labels! I refer to his way of using minute terracotta pots to grow *Tillandsias* in because they certainly grow more robust under these conditions. A plastic pot may do the job but I bet the whole thing will keep falling over. So remember terracotta pots if you want to experiment. The other was Len's pride and joy – and flowering too – under the odd name of *Tillandsia coalcomanensis*.

Roving Reporter Feb 2011 cont

We all know that Coalcoman must be in Mexico, so why all the excitement? This plant was first found in 2005 and was described by Renate Ehlers in 2008, which is fast work to a taxonomist! 10 years ago the only way any of Renate's plants got to Australia was either through Len or me. These days Tillandsia growers from NSW and Queensland make trips to Germany to bring back plants. So, these choice newbies are not unique to South Australia. Needless to say the warmer weather in those parts of Australia means larger plants when they flower. To Big Len, if it is big it must be good but as I say "Best things come in small parcels!"

AND so to the main talk which Adam and I scooted through but these notes will cover some of the items glossed over.

Why did we pick *Orthophytum* AND *Cryptanthus* because they need different growing conditions anyway? I must confess that my favorite bedtime story book is one of the three tomes on Bromeliaceae by Smith & Downs. Here in the genera key they have *Orthophytum* and *Cryptanthus* right next to each other so there must be a link.

First you have to appreciate where the Tropic of Capricorn is in relation to Australia. If you want to find out it is on your closest Atlas!

Orthophytum was named because the first plant to be given this name had a straight erect inflorescence but things have changed since then. They grow mainly north of this Tropic line in Brazil in more open areas. Botanically speaking that has sepals not joined together to form a tube and they have bits at the base of the petals. If you don't believe me just butcher a few plants.

Cryptanthus means hidden flowers. You can still see them but they do not poke out! They mainly grow below the line where it is more humid and more trees. The sepals are joined in a tube and the petals do not have bits at the base.

Now, there was one plant, which could be called either *Cryptanthus duartei* or *Orthophytum supthutii*. In other words, taxonomists did not know where it belonged. In doing his Doctorate on the group of *Orthophytum* without tall inflorescences my Internet friend, Rafael Louzada thought he would treat this oddbod under the genus *Lapa* (The name of his supervising Professor!). As an aside, I am often asked by taxonomists around the world for ideas about what the common man thinks about their views! It is great fun! Anyway, his thesis had *Lapa* in it. But his thesis was not published so the name was not even legitimate but it did not stop the Americans accepting it as gospel. I was perhaps the first to hear from Rafael that it was whoops because there was already a seaweed called *Lapa* and it is a no-no to use the same name twice. The new genus was to be *Lapanthus* but it took some two years of suspense before it was published! Needless to say very few people are growing this genus because the plants are very rare in the wild and they need specialised growing conditions to survive. You enjoy them by looking at photos.

Now to the plants on display

We had several species of *Orthophytum* to look at, to show they can be grown successfully in Adelaide. You just have to keep them on the dry side though winter. When watered in the warmer weather they grow very quickly. In fact our grumble is how to stop them deciding to flower at an early age. A plant not in flower has certain character but then this long spike emerges and spoils it all! Perhaps the most popular species is *O. gurkenii* (with its almost twin 'Warren Loose'), which has been used in a supposed hybrid program to produce the likes of 'Brunswick'. NOW if the variegated form could be made stable, now that would be something! I was surprised to see 'What' is still around and in a vigorous clump too. Its seed parent was said to be *O. saxicola* and that is what I feel it still is but have no proof. These days any sign of variegation seems to have been lost. The piece-de-resistance was a thriving plant of *O. burle-marxii* that Adam had brought in. This is in the same section that Rafael Louzada, mentioned above, works with and where I admire the photos. Here we saw it in the flesh – so to speak. What is the sixth or is it the seventh deadly sin?

And so to a quick look at the *Cryptanthus*, which seems to be a current interest of Adam's and we saw lots of hybrids. Adam was a bit jealous of how Vee Clark is growing her plants but she is lucky in having an Electrician for a husband to do heating coils and other technical things. In any event, Ray Clark is on a promise to reveal all at a later date! Yes, there is more wailing with survival of *Cryptanthus* during Adelaide's winter months than any other genus! I smile when we have had a mild winter and the bragging starts but if the next winter is colder and wet the bragging stops. I still keep growing my 'species' but they are not the 'in' thing. Nor are the Australian hybrids from what I saw on the table. But that is life! So those who have been discouraged from growing *Cryptanthus* remember that perseverance and adaptation wins the day.

Sample of *Orthophytum* & *Cryptanthus*, photographs



O. gurkenii



O. burle-marxii



O. saxicola var *saxicola*



O. amoenum



O. sucrei



O. heleniceae



Cryptanthus bahianus



Cryptanthus 'Warren Loose'



Cryptanthus marginatus



Cryptanthus whitmanii

photo by Hiroshi Yabe



C. acaulis SEL #1983-0058



Cryptanthus correia-araujo

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