

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

Editor- Derek Butcher. Assist Editor – Bev Masters



Born 1977 and still offsetting!'

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Adam Bodzioch

58 Cromer Parade Millswood 5034 Ph: 0447755022

Secretary: Bev Masters

6 Eric Street, Plympton 5038 Ph: 83514876

Vice president: Peter Hall

Treasurer: John Murphy

Committee: Warren Thompson

Geoff Jarrett

Colin Waterman

Jackie Thompson

Jeanne Hall

Life members: Margaret Butcher, Derek Butcher,
Len Colgan



Email address:

Secretary – bev.masters@bigpond.com

Web site: <http://www.bromeliad.org.au>

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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.**

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

For special orders/ larger quantities call Ron Masters on 83514876

MEETING & SALES 2012 dates: 8/7/12,(Derek's presentation) 5/8/12(Winter Brag), 9/9/2012
(Guest speaker- Neutrog presentation), 14/10/12 (Yongs nursery visit – Mt Compass) 27/10/12 & 28/10/12
Sales, 11/11/12 Pup auction, special afternoon tea- bring a plate of finger food to share ,earlier start
(Committee 1230PM. -General meeting 130PM)

Advance notice: 23/2/2013 & 24/2/2013 SALES DAYS

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb

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***Deuterocohnia* ‘Little Marj’ named by Chris Larson**

In ‘Uncle Derek says’ on the FCBS.org website you can read the following:

“Meanwhile, I had a friend Chris Larson from Melbourne who was doing a trip to NW Argentina in 1988 and I asked him to keep an eye open for the smaller *Deuterocohnia*. He reported seeing many mounds (or polsters) of plants where individual plants in the same clump varied in size depending on shade etc. BUT he and Marj MacNamara did find in one area very small plants, one of which I was also lucky to acquire from him.”

They were growing in what could be called a niche environment. The usual dry rolling hills up the top of this valley were observed at the start of the dry period and again at the end of the dry. No mosses or peperomias were up on the hills no more than 30 metres away - 20 metres up the cliff and 10 metres back from the edge. But the river valley contained an abundance of these plants. This totally different life zone, with ferns, begonias, *T. tenuifolia*, *T. australis* & of course *T. albertiana* (as this was the type locality of this species), was where ‘Little Marj’ was collected. The valley was probably no more than 40 metres across the river valley, at the widest – with totally different vegetation to what surrounds the valley. This plant did not appear to form mounds, or grow in the “typical” caulescent manner usually associated with this group.

Here the plants were only 3 cm in diameter and closer to Lyman Smith’s interpretation.

This says ‘Leaves not over 22mm long’ = ‘brevifolia’ and ‘Leaves 50-150 mm long = ‘lorentziana’. What happens to plants with leaves from 23 mm to 49 mm long is a puzzle. The most common form of *D. brevifolia* in Australia has leaves 25mm long which puts it in limbo land but closer to *D. brevifolia* than *D. lorentziana*! Clearly this latest collection was at the smaller end of the scale



Derek Butcher’s plant has been forming a bigger and bigger clump. So much so it has been attracting attention from other Bromeliad growers. Offsets had been sold by Chris and Marj so it must be quite widespread in Australia.

***Deuterocohnia* ‘Little Marj’ cont:**

The time has come to bite the bullet and give this particular clone a Cultivar name because it is different. The only one that is close in size is *D. brevifolia* ssp. *chlorantha* but that has leaves with many whiskery spines. Marj died in 2011 and what better way to commemorate her than naming this plant after her
Reg Doc 5/2012



Roving Reporter at June Meeting

We saw the new banner to be used at shows displays etc and is admittedly striking BUT no committee member has told me how you stop the water from falling from the *Neoregelia*

At the May meeting Len was very magnanimous in handing out berries from *Billbergia mohammadii* and several members took them home to sow the seed. I have grown Bromeliads from seed for years and would rarely sow seed in the wintertime but did not convey this thought to the innocent novice grower. Consequently the only one to get success was Hans Wallfried who put his trials on top of his heated aquarium. The enclosed photo shows his success where he used separately sand, seed-raising mix, and 10 days later sphagnum moss. He had taken some precautions by sterilising container and medium before sowing! To create sustained humidity he used a plastic bag.



Seed raising results @ 1 month (Photo J. Batty)

The revelations from this occurrence have prompted me to be a bit more specific in our proposed booklet on Cultural notes. If you are a regular grower of seed you soon get your own preferences but there are traps you can be warned about if you are a real novice. You can buy special seed raising kits with bottom heat but you need to be a regular seed raiser to get this involved. If you after a little bottom heat then the top of your fridge at the back is probably the warmest part (and darkest) of your kitchen. Yes, I have tried this, and it worked but you do not leave your seedlings there for long. You will note that Hans tried 3 different sorts of medium but you soon find your favourite. Keith Bradtberg was one of our more prolific seed raisers and he preferred soil mix rather than seed-raising mix. I have always had success with sphagnum moss! The quicker you can get germination the better but sometimes you can get germination after several months. So do not despair. The seeds do need to be in a moist environment so keep the plastic bag closed. Just remember that the seed from this species *Billbergia mohammadii* were self set and should breed true.

We now move to the challenge that Adam made regarding the ? hundred seed pods that were in a *Neoregelia* ‘Hannibal Lector’. He was hoping that John Murphy would bring in this plant to the July meeting so that these seed pods could be handed out for all to try. If this does happen I would suggest that most should hang on to their berry/ies until September before sowing. Now, ‘Hannibal Lector’ is basically a primary hybrid (species x species) and seed from it will be the second generation which is where the fun starts, because seedlings produced will be a motley crew. You may be very lucky to get one that looks like ‘Hannibal Lector’ but most will range from the small *ampullacea* type right through to the prickly leaved *carcharodon* type. Because bromeliads are very promiscuous there could also be foreign pollen involved too, with father unknown. Every seed pod has the potential to be different to the adjacent seed pod so there could be exciting times ahead. By now there would be several thousand seedlings involved if all survive or the owner bothers to pot them all up so that decisions can be made as to which is the best. Because you brought these plants into the world you can call yourself a hybridist!

Roving reporter June cont:

And so to the plants on display where Adam presented us to Skotak hybrids. While Skotak has hybridised throughout many Bromeliad genera we only really know about his work with *Neoregelia*. Chester Skotak sort of outgrew his Florida nursery and soon moved to Costa Rica and most of his hybrids are Costa Rican born.



Neoregelia 'Hannibal Lector' (Photo J Hall)

It was out of this secondary market we got *Neoregelia* 'Predator' named by Peter Tristram which was voted the most popular plant. Supposed to be albo-marginate the photo shows this does not occur with every leaf so care must be taken as to which offset you wish to keep. This variability in variegation is to be expected. What is interesting is that variegation may appear stable when growing under the same conditions but if moved to someone else's garden things are not so stable.



Neoregelia 'Predator' (Photo J Batty)

We did have three tables full of hybrids for Adam to talk about and he had done his homework as to how complicated some of the parentage could be, and even with different parentage there were challenges in trying to see how one differed from another. But all were impressive.

This leads me to another problem. Adam was able to do his homework because these hybrids had been recorded. There has been a bad habit creeping into Bromeliads and that is the giving of names to plants and not recording pedigree. To my mind it is caused by Ebay where a plant only sells if it has a name and any name will do. Can I make a plea that if you do buy this way you check the name in the records and if you cannot do this, you could check with me. I police this by looking at photos that both Jeanne Hall and Julie Batty take at meetings. This last meeting we had 'Groucho', 'Harpo' and 'Half Pint' – all unregistered names with no history recorded. One that did get me really groucho was 'Aussie Red Tiger'. There is already a registered 'Red Tiger' and it is an Aussie hybrid already so think of the confusion this will give us.

AND yes, there was enough space for plants that members thought worthy of bringing in. There were TWO *Aechmea weilbachii* var *weilbachii* plants brought in that were flowering. Admittedly the owner had two different tags to try to confuse us but we all knew what the plant should look like in flower, even though many of us have to wait years for it to do its deed. Adam who lives near a railway line also reports this reluctance. But none of the successful growers have yet convinced me of the secret of their success.



Aechmea weilbachii var *weilbachii* (Photo J Batty)

Roving reporter June cont:

Never trust the name on the label has different connotations and we had a *Vriesea* ‘Delphi’ (I think that was the name and it could well be correct) in flower, but as Adam pointed out, it could well be *V.* ‘Annie’ or ‘Tawi’. I have already pointed out the problems with Skotak hybrids but here is another. I assume you are aware that Rose growers consider it ‘legal’ to have the same hybrid given different names depending which country you are in. I can understand this if you live in say China because they write ‘funny’ but would you expect a French name for sales in France, a Pommy name in England, a Yankee name in the USA etc. Let us now look at the huge sales for flowering Bromeliads in Europe with the likes of *Vriesea*. The name depends on who is releasing it and nobody bothers to register the name with the Bromeliad Cultivar Register. Only by astute monitoring by the Registrar do these names get grandfathered into the system. To add to Adam’s comments you could also include look-alikes ‘Charlotte’ and ‘Marjan’.

Talking of labels, again, we had an *Aechmea orlandiana* with a label showing that back crossing with the species had been made. There are 13 cultivar names that have been given to non variegated forms and registered, being supposedly different and many would have come from seed. All would be within the broad description of the species so to my mind it is not worth the bother to record what alleged parents are involved and just call the plant *Aechmea orlandiana*.

It was good to see a *Vriesea bituminosa* at the meeting in flower. The species name conjures up the thought of asphalt or black tar but where would this apply? The Romans would not have known about this stuff so the word must have been coined by the botanist in 1862 for Botanical Latin possibly because ‘glutinosa’ was already in vogue. It seems it was given this name because of the sticky substance you sometimes find in the flower. The problem is that it occurs in other species too. Anyway, it had typical ‘Glyph’ flowers which are generally dirty cream with brown or purplish blotches which are just the thing to attract bats. This is what those who spent big money on Glyph hybrids can expect at flowering time! Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.



Vriesea bituminosa

Finally there was the challenge I made to both sexes at the meeting. Could they smell any scent from the ‘super duper’ hybrid I had brought in? The answer was ‘No’ even though one of the parents was *T. xiphioides*. Perhaps the weather was too cold. Some years ago Paul Isley had crossed this species with *T. stricta* hoping to get a red bracted *T. stricta* type flower head with huge *T. xiphioides* petals. Alas, he got the pale bracts from *T. xiphioides* and a much smaller pale blue *T. xiphioides* type petals. This plant had been imported by GardenWorld in Victoria under formula and this was how I acquired it a couple of years ago. We now know it will be registered as ‘Tilly Delight’ which makes grumpy me say “What adjective would you use for a really good hybrid?”



Roving reporter July meeting

July meeting from the Roving Reporter

It must have been the cold weather because there was a list of apologies – whatever, all present had their happy faces on.

The few plants on display still gave Big Len lots to talk about and I’ll even expand on what was said – as usual!

Roving reporter July cont:

First up was *Aechmea gamosepala* which Len thought was large - from memory. He was going back 30 years when this plant was watched over and bragged about, and we had two or three forms. Generally called the match-stick plant but Brom people have got used to calling it by its proper name 'gamosepala'. Some even knew it had been given this name of gamo from the Greek word meaning united. You see the sepals are united in a tight tube and the petals squirt out the end like a match head.

If the bromeliad chat forums are anything to go by, these sorts of Heritage Bromeliads may be making a comeback. Yes, a comeback from the neglected back row to a place of prominence in the garden. We covered this species quite extensively in the first edition for this year. There are different versions – out there – if you want to look. Others that are around are: 'Adolph's White', 'Blue Cone', 'Chas', 'Chinook', 'Lucky Stripes', 'Mardi Gras', 'Raymond Rocket', and 'Sockeye'.

Len was somewhat shy about showing us the only *Guzmania* (a hybrid!) that he had grown from an offset from the original plant, to flowering only to be surprised by the spontaneous applause it caused. He was even too shy to let our official photographer record this event.

Strange that Len was not over elated over *Vriesea elata* and yet it is a regular winter flowerer. Perhaps we will have to teach it to flower in the warmer months so it keeps its red bracts instead of these quickly turning to light grey. As for it being a Colombian *Vriesea* that is different from the *Vrieseas* from further south in Brazil that is a problem botanists have to face in deciding how close a relative it is to what. We all like to group like with like but there is always the odd one out. The in-word regarding what is related to what in DNA and yet this is also subject to discussion. The only constant in life is change! What we do know is that in the wild most if not all its energies are spent on providing seed with very little spent on a second chance. By second chance I mean offsetting which produces a second flowering much quicker than by seed. Here, you can confuse a *Vriesea elata* very easily by cutting off the flower stem BEFORE it flowers. Self preservation tells it to offset! But from a gardener's view you grow a plant to see its flower. I suppose this is the difference between gardener and a vegetable grower. Anyway, a *V. elata* generally only produces one offset and is what we call an upper-pupper. This subject will be covered in our soon to be published "Bromeliad Culture in South Australia"

And so to Big Len's purchases on Ebay. According to Len, Shiigi's *Vriesea* 'Snows of Mauna Kea' is quite common in Queensland. This is a hybrid made by David Shiigi in Hawaii in 1989 (some 23 years ago) from *V. 'White Lightning'* and *V. 'Royal Hawaiian'* so it is possible that a plant got to Queensland and offsets distributed in recent years. If we look at the pedigree of *V. 'Snows of Mauna Kea'* we will see it is at least 3 generations from species status.

Each of the 4 plants that Len bought as *V. 'Snows of Mauna Kea'* F2 was different as can be expected. How authentic is the identity of the *V. 'Snows of Mauna Kea'* AND was it truly self set seed or was it foreign pollen? These are the sorts of questions a conscientious hybridist would be asking but history tells me this rarely happens. As one example from the same nursery we had *V. 'Royal Hawaiian'* distributed in the same fashion some years ago where the alleged F2 had been dropped by Queensland growers. At the same time another *Vriesea* had been called *V. 'Royal Hawaiian'* by a Queensland grower which did not link to Shiigi's plant. To get some sensibility to this problem we decided to call it *V. 'Aussie Royal Hawaiian'* as mentioned in our last Gazette. To try to solve the problem of the seed that had come from Hawaii as *V. 'Royal Hawaiian'* and seedlings sold we decided to give the unofficial name of *V. 'Basic's Royal Hawaiian'* to warn growers that they could easily have the wrong name on their plant. The same fate will arise with *V. 'Snows of Mauna Kea'*. As you know I am one who believes that if a plant has a name it should be an indicator of its identity and I see no difference in whether it is a species found in the wild or a hybrid found in a garden. These *Vriesea* hybrids without pedigree should be called *Vriesea* hybrid or *Vriesea* 'Glyph' but alas they cannot sell this way so any name will do.

Roving reporter July cont:

Just a quick mention about *Aechmea weilbachii* forma *pendula* which shows we can grow both the erect (see June Meeting report) and drooping forms of this species. In similar fashion to *Vriesea elata* you can get redder bracts if you can convince it to flower in the warmer month



Aechmea weilbachii forma *pendula*

Finally to the tillandsias where Ray Clark had a problem or two. Not only were we confused to see a *T. filifolia* (a large *T. fuchsii*-look- alike) and a couple of *T. fuchsii* v. *gracilis* on the same chunk of wood but there was a spare plant. One of the *T. fuchsii* had decided to leave mother! In the wild, *T. fuchsii* seem to prefer to grow on twiggy branches and rarely form clumps. In other words it is a plant that grows well and quickly from seed and is not known for its longevity. In this case the plant had started offsetting and would be susceptible to moisture in the cooler weather. *T. ionantha* have a similar habit, only in this case the entire base dies off. This is what Walter Till warns: “It should be noted that *Tillandsia fuchsii* is endangered since it is over-collected for commercial purposes. Thousands of plants are ruined each year in florist shops where they are stuck on pieces of wood or stone. They are completely unadaptable to the average apartment climate. Trade in this species should be limited exclusively to material grown from seed by horticulturists.”



T. filifolia

Leaving the best until last we come to *Tillandsia recurvifolia* v. *subsecundifolia* which is a bit of tautology because it means a plant with recurved leaves with recurved leaves. Anyway, it got the most stars and thus Popular plant of the month and had been brought in by Sarka Laznicka. While Len was trying decide if the floral bracts were orange or just reddish I am more interested in its history.

It all started in 1974 when Pereira described *T. leonamiana* from a plant collected by Seidel and which was considered to be a blue petalled plant similar to *T. meridionalis*. Renate Ehlers was keen to get one of these but whenever Seidel sent her a plant it did not link with the description. Over the years she got somewhat frustrated but it did appear that the type locality was in an infrequently visited area. Was it a natural hybrid? We don't know. Yes, we do have *T. leonamiana* in Australia but most seem to have got here via Germany. Discussion continues as to its validity!

In 1977 *Flora Neotropica* we saw *T. meridionalis*.

Roving reporter July meeting cont:

In 1983 Renate Ehlers and Weber published *T. meridionalis* var *subsecundifolia* which differed from the type by have a more open inflorescence and floral bracts that were orange/red instead of pink. It could be found throughout Brazil.

In 1995 Luther & Till considered the name should be *T. recurvifolia* and so we had *T. recurvifolia* and *recurvifolia* var *subsecundifolia*.

Meanwhile the Americans had considered that *T. meridionalis* var *subsecundifolia* was really *T. leonamiana* and it was on Rainforest Flora plant list for years. In fact it featured in Paul Isley's first Tillandsia book but luckily not in 'Tillandsia II'

Back to the popular plant where I let you decide if the floral bracts have orangey tones!



T. recurvifolia var *subsecundifolia*

AND so to the event that all were looking forward to seeing – The Butchers' nostalgia captured on digital. Yes, 30 years of memories. Never having had the opportunity to collect in the wild, they did their collecting from others' collections in Australia and the USA. The winter months, when there was no demand for watering, would see them holidaying in warmer climes. Contacts made at these times created friendships that lasted for years or as long as the acquired plants survived.

Whenever you were potting up offsets you went down memory lane on a short holiday. Something you never get if you buy at Bunnings or Ebay. Bromeliad talk opens lots of doors and what is a common plant in your own area is in many cases rare elsewhere so swapping plants is just one advantage. We can recommend this type of collecting to anyone, but please make sure in earlier correspondence that your contact knows what your intentions are.

The photos shown were not in any particular order but we jumped from one place to another. Luckily Margaret was there to give me prompts although another old timer – Big Len – was able to chime in now and again. From Queensland and Grace Goode's garden we crossed the ocean to California and back to NSW. Confusing to some but it kept me on my toes. I'll mention just a few of what I call highlights. California in 1982 was when I was going to bring back species plants never been seen before in Australia only to find about half were hybrids I had to name them myself! 1987 Bromeliad Conference in Adelaide was the last time you were given the chance to see how Herb Plever grows his plants in New York and how New York puts on Bromeliad Shows. But then how many of you were around at that time. When you grow Bromeliads in every room in the apartment in some sky-scraper you are really keen. With this in mind no wonder Macy's department store lends a few artistically arranged 'rooms' to show off Bromeliads as indoor plants. Talking of shows we saw how our own Society put on displays at the Royal Ag and Hort Shows at Wayville. How did we convince the Orchid man to get us an almond tree from McLaren Vale so we could stick bromeliads on it? We must have taken the edge off the Orchid exhibits because it only happened the once! We also saw other shows we had held around Adelaide – all to promote the growing of Bromeliads.

We saw photos of how the Bromeliads grew in the Singapore Bot gardens some 10 years ago when Margaret and I had been invited to try to check the imports from Shelldance Nursery in California that had occurred some years before. So with a manifest list in one hand we tried to find living material with the other hand so we could tick off survivors. Some had grown exceedingly well but many, like tillandsias, had just disappeared in their hundreds. Those left looked very healthy and colourful but flowers were few and far between. Because there are no real seasons in Singapore there was nothing to trigger flowering in say neoregelias. Plants that we would see as pot culture in Adelaide were epiphytic here. Who would imagine *Aechmea* 'J C Superstar' growing epiphytically on a fence? I had never heard of green walls until I saw what they had done with a long wall which they had covered with wire mesh and tied on bromeliads. No elaborate watering system which is unnecessary when it seems to rain every day! One advantage with this method of growing Bromeliads is that you can quickly make an inventory!



Roving Reporter Aug 2012

Roving Reporter Aug 2012

Some members may have noticed that the roving reporter was off roving in NSW and was not available for pithy comments. I am sure you would love to hear a short version of the exploits of Big Len and Derek in Albury which is a short 10 hours' drive away. Both are members of the Tillnut gang who are one eyed Tillandsia fans similar to Crows supporters. There are 4 Adelaideans so bitten but only 50% braved the weather, and interstateers who claim to have better conditions for growing tillandsias. The discussions last for 2 ½ days where each segment of 45 minutes is led by each of the attendees in turn. In other words EVERYBODY has to do some preparation before the event. Perhaps the most worried are those doing their first stint at the helm but not one has broken down at the starting gate. In fact they promise 5 minutes and we have trouble in shutting them up after the allotted time. Subjects ranged from Growing plants and having problems in Melbourne, Sydney, Gladstone and Cairns. Maurice Kellett importing 96 plants over 30 years ago and expecting us to help him work out where they are now. We heard how difficult it is to identify the various forms of *T. tectorum* from South America and the smaller green petalled forms from Mexico which are fondly called "Little Green Mexicans". Then there was much mention made about the advantages and disadvantages of feeding and whether food is a four letter word. We tried to solve Len's problems of finding so many plants in Ecuador up trees with no labels in sight. We found out there is more to roots than just rooting. We also learnt that *T. schiedeana* is more promiscuous than thought possible BUT also learnt that it been proved innocent in another alleged previous misadventure. Wood got a mention with one fanatic going out of his way to collect pieces ALL around Australia in the most unexpected of places. This was countered by one who bought mounting pieces of all shapes and sizes, and material from all sources, and saved for the time when he retires and can start mounting and he is 80 odd now! Needless to say there were many tables filled with offsets which were either sold or traded. In between all this we got fed and watered and evening meals were a strain on the local restaurants that would not have been prepared for the invasion of 20 foreigners who all wanted to sit at the same table.

For the special raffle Margaret took in an *Aechmea pabstii* so the winner took something special home with them. Bill is especially keen about this plant. Why special? If they have the space every member would be growing the common *A. bromeliifolia* and will quickly know that this plant is huge and prickly if grown in too much shade but if given more light can be grown into an impressive bottle shape. In 2010 the Brazilians reviewed the *A. bromeliifolia* complex and made some dramatic changes with a certain amount of controversy. Needless to say *A. pabstii* was involved! And it has white flowers which are rare for the group. In fact there were only two with the other one being called *Aechmea alba* named in 1892. Yes, you have guessed it, they are now considered the same and *Aechmea alba* should be on the name tag. There are concerns about this species in the wild so keep the offsets spreading around AND don't lose the label.



Aechmea alba (Photo D. Butcher)

While I may have been away for the meeting I did have my spies out so I can report on the Winter Brag compared by Bill Treloar. I am not the only one to comment that we have just had an 'odd' winter and no doubt will get an 'odd' Spring. I am sure that every winter is getting colder and I am sure that you will tell me it is because I am getting older. I do know that the same sort of plants die each winter although this not usually happen until October when the weather really starts to warm up. They are in the category of those where we say we will try them again and we will not make the same mistake as we did last time! It was pleasing to hear that it was not just the stalwarts who brought in plants. But then if anyone knows the magic formula that changes a lurker to a participant please let me know.

Roving Reporter Aug meeting cont:

The popular plant went to Warren Thompson with his *Guzmania* 'Lolita' from Bunnings. Adam felt the colour of the floral bracts did not seem right but the plant seemed to have links to *Guzmania* 'Fortuna'. If we look at the Bromeliad Cultivar Register we see a similar looking plant sold by Deroose in 2002 in Europe. Why was it different? Adam blamed tissue culture for the difference and here comes the crunch because he could be right. If this sort of propagation was taking place in say Europe there would be quality control where the likes of Deroose would be weeding out plants not according to specifications because of competition with other growers. As far as I am aware this does not happen in Australia. Remember it is not the customer who has any influence nor the Government who grants plant breeding rights! So what is at Bunnings could well be different to what is at BigW. The other interesting point about 'Fortuna' is that it came to growers notice 22 years ago when it was thought to be a form of *G. lingulata*.



Guzmania 'Lolita' (Photo J. Batty)

We even had 'El Cope' with slight differences but all named in the eye of the nurseryman, not the botanist. Now we know that it probably has species status and may even be called *G. speciosa* but we must wait. A species will cover a range of attributes whereas a cultivar name like 'Fortuna' is much more restricted. I'll always remember 1992 because that was the year Philcox retired from Kew Gardens and there were some 10 new species described, some were 20 years after being discovered. I can well imagine Philcox being told to clean up his drawers before he retired! He did not really need to have described them because Leme had described many in the intervening period and Philcox had a load of synonyms!

Another interesting point to remember is that most of the nursery industry producing mass production are only interested in survival of their sales not how plants might produce offsets. That is why gardeners form plant societies and try some form of plant conservation.

A plant in great colour was *Neoregelia* ('Passion' x Grace'). Nobody likes to be known by your parent's names but this 'name' has stuck and to give it a PROPER name would be futile. Many have given proper names to Grant Groves' hybrids but this one has slipped through. You can generally pick a *Neoregelia* with a Grant Grove flavour and it is a pity we can't convince him that if a plant is worth growing it is worthy of a name. Talking of names there was a Neo 'Dear Bill' which does not refer to our very own Bill, but Bill Paterson!



Neoregelia ('Passion' x Grace') (Photo J. Hall)

Neoregelia 'Vulkan' was a favourite old *N. concentrica* hybrid that had originated in Eastern Germany some 57 years ago when things could get over the 'Wall' when the Yankee dollar was offered. Anyway, it was in Australia by the 1970's. Meanwhile, in about the same period, seedlings were being grown by Olwen Ferris and others obtained from Burbank Nurseries in Qld and where many had red longitudinal stripes. The plants seemed to have links to a *N. carolinae* hybrid and to differentiate them they were called 'Burbank'.



Neoregelia 'Vulkan' (Photo J. Hall)

Roving Reporter Aug cont:

This was the first reported case of this sort of variegation in Australia. What is interesting is that this variegation is inherited by progeny at a much higher rate than the more accepted white variegation. So 'Burbank' was a favoured parent and we saw lots of red striped hybrids around. Grace Goode created the more favourable 'Jet Age' but others must have crossed 'Vulkan' with 'Burbank' because this is not Grace's way. She went out of her way to give her hybrids proper names. So those who have a plant with the grex name of ('Vulkan' x 'Burbank') will have to live with it because there is no way you can link it to all the other names in this grouping that were created in this period. Names like 'Rhubarb' and 'Fireworks' spring to mind.

We also had a few *Billbergias* of the 'amoena' type either directly linked to the species or via hybrids. There was even one where a clump of 4 plants was flowering simultaneously.

A blast from the past was seeing *Aechmea* 'Mirlo' which goes back 50 years to the time of Hummel. Perhaps the owner can either photograph it when in flower or bring it to a meeting so our official photographer can do the deed. By the way 'Mirlo' is Spanish for Blackbird! Why the interest? Well, this hybrid is being grown in the USA in its variegated form and Herb Plever of the New York Brom Soc is trying to sort out the problem. It seems we have the pure form in OZ and ours has not degenerated into the yuk form.

This leads me into the pros and cons of variegation. Variegation is not a natural thing used in nature. It is a man/woman selection for what they see as beauty.

After saying that, what a great *A. caudata* var *variegata* it was, on display. My advice is to take its photo NOW. The chances of getting an offset of similar standard are remote. The next best time could well be in 5 offsets time! The only thing constant with variegation is change.

Finally to the hope for variegation. Older members will tell you that many a time they have seen an offset get a variegated leaf, only for the variegation to disappear. A better way is to get a plant that may not look variegated but has an unstable history.

This was what Peter Hall did when he bought an *Aechmea* 'Samurai NOVAR'. You see, sometime in the distant part someone was the proud owner of a 'Samurai' a brilliant variegated *Aechmea chantinii* that had its origins in Japan. It would not have been a South Australian because 99% of Adelaide growers can only grow this species for 2-3 years at most. Anyway, it started to produce offsets without variegation. Do you call these *Aechmea chantinii* or do you try to advise the purchaser there is a good chance it could Sport a variegated offset? All the NOVAR (No variegation) does is give a certain amount of hope.



Aechmea chantinii (Photo J. Batty)

Everybody who had it hot and wet grew *Aechmea* 'Samurai' or 'Shogun' so it was a surprise to me to hear that there was going to be a big 'killing' at the World Conference in Orlando this year with – guess what – variegated *Aechmea chantinii*.

The moral of this story is that when someone tells you that the variegation is permanent take it with a pinch of salt

Article by Derek Butcher

Quesnelia 'Red Face'

Many of us grow the smaller *quesnelias* that look so much like *billbergias* and in fact are in *Quesnelia* subgenus *Billbergioides*. In fact, if you really want to find out the difference you will have to butcher the plant just like a botanist. We often see *Q. liboniana* with its blue tubular flowers. You will see from the painting that in 1851 it was known as a *Billbergia*. Other species you will see around Adelaide include *Q. humilis* and *Q. indecora*.

Quesnelia 'Red Face' *cont.*

Now to a story about a plant we got in the 1990's from Queensland and it had *Quesnelia imbricata* on the label. Has it flowered in the intervening years? I don't know but it has offsetted and others must be growing this plant so read carefully.

In January this year I thought I had flowering plant that looked like an odd looking *Q. liboniana* until I saw the label showing *Q. imbricata*. Now you know why I am calling this plant – 'Red Face' as well as the fact that it has red blotches on the leaves. Other differences from *Q. liboniana* are the absence of stolons and red scape bracts. In fact, much closer to *Q. liboniana* than *Q. imbricata*. It is therefore possible that when the person collected seed from a *Q. imbricata* they did not guess that *Q. liboniana* was around, but that is only supposition. It is safer to call the plant a *Q. liboniana* hybrid. So if you have a plant called *Q. imbricata* just remember a 'Red Face' Plant is about 15cm wide and 20cm high, flowering to 35cm high.



What intrigues me is that grower of all oddities, Ross Little of Pinegrove Nursery denies all knowledge of this plant and admits that this plant may well be an improvement on the ubiquitous *Q. liboniana*.

Some of you may well be growing a plant called *Q. imbricata* but if it flowers like this you too may blush with embarrassment.

Interestingly, I have no photo of a *Q. imbricata* growing in Australia.

REMINDERS.

- No meeting 14/10/2012- Yongs Garden Visit
- Oct sales days 27/10/2012 & 28/10/2012
- Christmas break-up, pup exchange & auction 11/11/2012 early start 1.30PM, please bring a plate of finger food for special afternoon tea.

If you have a Bromeliad on your wish list our "Wanted" section may be able to help, please contact Derek or Bev with details

"WANTED"

