

# S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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## The Bromeliad Society of South Australia Inc

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**Born 1977 and still offsetting!!**

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List for species names <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php>

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Tillandsia incarnata (Photo J. Batty)

**MEETING & SALES 2015 DATES.** 12/7/2015 (Slideshow), 2/8/2015 (1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY) Winter brag, 6/9/2015 (1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY) Workshop, 11/10/2015 ("Show & tell"), [24/10/2015 & 25/10/2015 Sales](#), 8/11/2015 130PM start, pup exchange, special afternoon tea – bring a plate of finger food to share, plant auction.

Applications for membership always welcome.

Subscriptions \$10.00 per year Feb to Feb

**Meetings Venue:**

Maltese Cultural Centre,  
6 Jeanes Street,  
Beverley

**Time:** 2.00pm.

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

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS  
WELCOME.**

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**Neoregelia** ‘Wild in Oz’ by Derek Butcher 12/2014

In recent years there has been an upsurge in Chester Skotak’s hybrids of the variegated small *Neoregelia* kind. Many have been registered by Eloise Beach in Florida but some have escaped to Australia. This is a similar scenario to what happened in the early 1990’s with variegated *N. carcharodon* hybrids. Some were registered in the USA but many similar ones were registered in Australia.

We are now talking about only one such hybrid circulated by the Olive Branch under formula (carolinae x HL x Tiger Cub x punctatissima). There are immediate problems here because it only takes two to make a hybrid so where do the brackets go? The carolinae would have to be a variegated form because where does the variegation come from. The HL stands for ‘Hannibal Lector’. It has been known since the 1970’s that *N. punctatissima* is not in cultivation and even Elton Leme has been unable to find it. The plant that is in cultivation is a form of *N. ampullacea* and was given the name of ‘Punctate’. It is understood that the punctatissima in the formula has been changed to Punctate Red.

Undoubtedly Chester would have given a grex number to his original crossing but we are unaware of this so we cannot confidently link it to the many registered hybrids. I had thought that I could get a proper name for Margaret’s plant by waiting for something similar appearing in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register. First I came across ‘Whirlwind’ registered by Eloise Beach in 6/2012 which had a similar parentage (carolinae variegated x Hannibal Lector) x Tiger Cub as seed parent and Punctate Red as pollen parent but our plant did not quite match. The grex could well have been the same but selecting had been done of this complicated hybrid. Then in 11/2014 ‘Unraveled’ appeared only this time with a different variegation. Whether this was a Sport of ‘Whirlwind’ we do not know. In any event it still did not look like our plant which has narrower leaves. The Registrar, Geoff Lawn, has pointed out that there are 10 other registered hybrids by Eloise Beach with the same complicated parentage namely, ‘Aftershock’, ‘Esperanza’, ‘Hot Embers’, ‘Hot Flash’, ‘Mambo’, ‘Mojo’, ‘Moondust’, ‘San Jose’, ‘Teriyaki’, & ‘White Hot Embers’. Perhaps a Cultivar group name could be coined to link all these names for similar looking plants with the same pedigree. Little attempt has been made to differentiate the names which have been registered from July 2011 to the current date. The first crossing seems to have been made in 2006 but we do not know how many repeats were done.

It would appear from the use of ‘punctatissima’ in the formula that this import to Australia was early in the piece and we hope that nobody else has imported any hybrid with a similar formula so we are only dealing with the same clone. Please advise me if you are aware of any other importation. I have checked the photos on the BCR and OUR plant still seems unique. Any that have been sold under formula in the USA is their problem. Further investigation has revealed that we are not the only people growing this plant with its complicated formula in Australia and it does need a name, and Ross Little has suggested we use ‘Wild in Oz’.

So if you are growing a plant with this formula on the label you will save time by using the name ‘Wild in Oz’. It is interesting that it seems some growers have become tired of writing the formula and you may encounter this plant just called ‘Skotak Hybrid’

Plant is 21 cm wide, 19cm high, leaves 2 cm wide, variegated.



### ***Roving Reporter April 2015***

Perhaps because we had the meeting on the third Sunday instead of the second may have been the cause for a drop in attendance. We can't blame Bromsmatta – The Australian conference held in Sydney, because only 3 of our members attended. No doubt they were on a sharp learning curve because there seemed to be lots of learned overseas speakers. We wait for words of wisdom to come our way at some later date.

By all reports it seems that the venture to Gilles Plains for the Festival of Flowers was a success. These sorts of activities make Bromeliads known to the wider gardening fraternity and Bev and her crew are to be congratulated.

It was great to see the number of plants in the 'Special' raffle but I mention this because of what I consider is extra-special. It was won by Chair Peter and was in the form of a small seedling that I had grown on from seed from my mate Oscar in Brazil. Oscar has a unique knack of finding new species in his travels and this we know to be an *Encholirium* and thus prickly. None of the Brazilian botanists can identify it and it is scheduled to be a new species. So Peter has responsibilities! The last time we had such excitement was some 10 years ago when we were flowering *Encholirium* whose seed had been collected by Rudy Schulz (from Victoria) in his Cactus jaunts in the drier areas of Brazil and of course without names. Len Colgan and I had great fun checking names with Brazilian botanists. Another genus involving Len is *Hohenbergia* and in particular *Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii* and some of you are growing this from offsets from Len. My Brazilian mate Oscar also sent me seed which some of you are growing on, but as far as I am aware has not flowered yet and alarm bells are ringing so please let me know if you are the first to get flowering. Why the panic? Well, my Japanese mate Atsushi is intending to publish a booklet on *Hohenbergia*. You might even ask why this genus for Japan where you would think tillandsias would be more popular. Anyway, Atsushi has decided that the plant he had, called *H. leopoldo-horstii*, isn't. *Hohenbergia* are known for the flowers to be on strobiliform branches (I call them pinecones). In Atsushi's case these pinecones were on stalks but they should not be. This had us looking at the description of *H. leopoldo-horstii* in 1999 where it says the plant is found in the State of Bahia near Grao Mogol. You can come across this as Gran Mogol or even Gran Mogul but the really interesting point is that this place is over 700kms from the border in Minas Gerais. I would not call that, near! Why am I telling you this? I believe it is more interesting than growing hybrids because there is more to investigate. You may have guessed that I would prefer to grow species than hybrids.

While on the subject of hybrids I am lucky to be in receipt of Newsletters from around the World. Recently, concern has been expressed in at least two, the number of so many look-a-like hybrids where the only difference is the name. This reminds me of my plea in 2002

”NOTES FOR THE HYBRIDIST by Derek Butcher

#### **IS YOUR HYBRIDISING REALLY NECESSARY**

There are hundreds of true species of Bromeliads that have been found in the wild and many of these or their progeny are in Collections. However, they will evolve in a different pattern to their “brothers” and “sisters” in habitat.

There are some very beautiful true species and you could have a varied collection just from these. You can have 1cm midgets to 10 metre giants. You can have green, spotted, or striped leaves. You can have an inflorescence of 100 flowers or just one. What a variety!

Are you still toying with the idea of hybridising “just for fun”?

#### **THINK TWICE**

It can put you in the class of the Ginger Tom next door OR even worse put you in a class BELOW the birds and the bees. Remember that in the wild the birds and the bees do exactly what the flowers want them to do!

Do you still want to hybridise? What do you want to achieve?

The good hybridist will go down in history and a good hybridist has a definite goal.

Are you looking for?

Hardiness -Compact growth-Broader leaves-Better markings-Larger inflorescence-Scented flowers

Simply crossing two plants that happen to be flowering simultaneously, and hoping for the best, is a hit and miss operation but practised by many.”

## ***Roving Reporter April 2015 cont: 2***

If a botanist finds a plant in the wild he may decide it is new to science and he takes vigorous steps before deciding to publish a new name. If other botanists decide it is not really new the name can disappear into synonymy under a previously published name. With hybrids you do not have this safety valve because you do not have synonyms and can only comment that it looks like so and so. If hybridists think their progeny is the greatest, they then name it and may even register it in the BCR (Bromeliad Cultivar Registry) Here the photos give the discerning grower a chance to compare and decide for himself for possible differences. But there is a darker side to plant naming – those not registered.

**Nurserymen's names: In short - N.N.** which means the same as *nomen nudum* or *n. n.* in Botanical parlance - names used by nurserymen or sellers of plants, for plants that are said to be different but not described under the ICN rules nor on the BCR.

Anyway, the theme for the meeting was 'Artistic Arrangements' and there were many to choose from. I suppose it is a matter of interpretation but these were living arrangements and not what you would expect from a Florist. Here it would have a short life span unless a dried arrangement. Material had been brought in for artists to show their skill but alas those at the meeting were too shy to perform. As further proof of the living concept, the plants concerned were mainly *Tillandsia* although we did see one almost hidden plant of a miniature *Neoregelia*. Many had been the work of Ron showing his inventiveness but the one that got most stars was by George Nieuwenhoven. It was nice to see *T. incarnata* presented growing upwards which is how it grows in the wild where it clammers in the bushes. Too often you see this species hanging because that is its natural tendency when it has nothing to hang on to! The purist in me got a slight shudder when seeing a Mexican plant on the same branch as a Brazilian but that is artistic licence.



Talking of artistic licence reminds me of the lady who brought in a ceramic frog to the March Show which had a live *T. ionantha* on the base AND a dead *T. bulbosa* next to it. It had clearly been a 'Present' bought at Bunnings. I showed her how we grow Tillandsias but she was not impressed preferring the artistic effect of the Frog! Bev came to the rescue by suggesting that Bunnings did give refunds on dead plants. This reminds me of my hobby-horse that there should be a RSPCT (Republican Soc for the Prevention of Cruelty to Tillandsias). This reminds me of the article in recent issue of a Melbourne Newspaper where it was revealed that Tillandsias had been kept in wire cages on the top floor of Melbourne's tallest building. Guess what – some survived!

Back to more pleasant thoughts. There were 3 colourful non-grey plants brought in and two were really old, having been around for some 50 years. I refer to Neo. 'Brilliant Guy' a Hummel hybrid, and Vriesea 'Purple Cockatoo'. You would think that with a name like 'Purple Cockatoo' it would have Aussie origins but alas it came from Florida. The other was a clump of Neo. 'Freddie', where three plants were flowering simultaneously. What intrigues me is that this came to Australia from the Philippines and one wonders how common the name 'Freddie' is there, let alone a plant name! I have suspicions that its true origins are linked to the European trade. There were several tillandsias on display not directly linked to artistic arrangements. One in particular that must be mentioned was a natural hybrid *T. ionantha x paucifolia*. I brought it in because it was recently discussed on the Tillnuts forum. While I may be known to some as Detective Derek there is now a Detective Constable Ray Clark. It goes something like this. Adam acquired some unnamed Tillandsias from an old collection and Ray had the privilege of resurrecting some. When this particular plant flowered he worked out that it was very close to 'Humbug' as in the BCR and I am proud that we have another inquisitive member in our midst. I have a feeling that said plant has links to GBH – George's Bloody hybrids which were sold over the years without names! I was somewhat intrigued with a miniature *T. ionantha* brought in by George N. All the offsets were miniature. Plants that Margaret had obtained as 'miniature' have produced offsets not so miniature! There are now some 34 names for allegedly different forms of *T. ionantha* but when I look at Margaret's wall of *ionantha* I am lucky if I can pick out 2 or 3.



## ***Roving Reporter May 2015***

Adelaide Brom growers must like it hot because the May meeting saw more plants than people. It was a meeting with a difference because we had the Annual presentations and those who had won were present too.

You should have seen Margaret Butcher's face when she received her OBE award (Over Bloody Eighty) PLUS a cake but minus the 80 candles. She had wanted it to be a secret



Adam with Margaret (Photo J. Batty)

Then who should roll up but Phyllis Rudolph. She will always be remembered for her cream puffs that George used to bring to the Christmas afternoon tea. She was there to present the inaugural winner with her late husband's trophy the George (Gerd) Rudolph Artistic Trophy – Teresa Wood with 'Candelabra of Bromeliads'. For those who do not know, Teresa is the artistic twin who does not come from Nairne. The other twin, Pam Whisson, does come from Nairne

#### VALE

I know our motto is "Born 1977 and still offsetting" but that relates to our plants not our mortal human members. I have just heard that Keith Ryde passed away on 3rd May, aged 85. Keith and his better known wife, Ruby, were interstate members of our Society for many many years. In fact we have never had many interstate members. Keith was a Bank Manager and held many top positions with the Australian Society. I will always remember the Bromeliad Conference held in Sydney in 1983. Keith thought so highly of my prepared speech that he put it in the Bank's vaults for safe keeping! Condolences have been sent to Ruby

Reports from our attendees at BROMSMATTA, The 18<sup>th</sup> Australasian Bromeliad Conference, indicate it went off well without any major hiccups. I well remember the first in 1981. It is always a relief to organisers when it is all over! Thanks to Julie Batty I am now the proud owner of the formal proceedings booklet. No doubt a copy will go into our Library. To think they had 4 overseas speakers whereas in the good old days we could only afford one. This was about the time when I started encouraging hybridists not only to keep a 'stud book' but to record their better efforts in a central register. A 'Stud Book' is of little use to heirs and gets lost. I am reminded of the time when I found out that Mulford Foster had left lots of notebooks and I asked Racine if she could help me with some problems I had. She said she was willing to do so but nobody could understand the cryptic notes. So I was disappointed to see that Doug Cross had presented a paper on hybridising *Cryptanthus* but he has never registered one.

Pleased to see that Big Len gets the Advertiser and checks for Bromeliad stuff. You see he noticed an article on the acclaimed South Australian painter Robert Hannaford. I quote, "Inside the studio is a stand with a potted plant on top, a bromeliad he's looking after for his 97 year-old mum, Vera. He's organised a system of roof panels so that a single shaft of daylight pierces the gloom to illuminate the bright red flower at the centre of the long green leaves. It's a striking image and the next time I see it, on the wall of the gallery, it has already sold for \$25,000" A bromeliad grower would say but it does not have a red flower and it is really a *Neoregelia* but that is artistic licence. I cannot see a South Aussie brom grower paying that much for a fully grown plant let alone an offset, however rare it may be!

Popular plant was a Glyph Vriesea 'Expresso' shown by Julie Batty which was an Aussie hybrid in line with the theme for the meeting. The problem is that I do not know if it looks like Coffee or a fast train in Brazil. When our Society was formed there were 3 main hybridists, Grace Goode, Bill Morris and Olwen Ferris. Bill was reluctant to name his hybrids so the 'Girls' gave them names like 'Bill's Beauty' which had him quickly changing his mind. Mind you, Bernard Stonor was doing things on his Dairy farm in Western Australia. At that time very few hybrids were registered with the parent body Bromeliad Society Inc in the USA because it was such a hassle to do so. You had to use a special form and lodge 2 photos / coloured slides. It took perhaps 12 months to get acknowledgement – if you were lucky. I started up a recording system for Australian hybrids so at least data was captured. These days it is so easy to register AND is free but there is great reluctance to do so.



Vriesea 'Expresso'  
(Photo J. Batty)

This may be a blessing in disguise because you see so many new look-a-like hybrids which disappear just as quickly as they appear. The problem is, as I see it, that in the 'old' days you had mainly primary hybrids (species x species) whereas these days it is hybrid x hybrid. It is odd that nature over thousands of years has fine-tuned plants to get distinctive species whereas in the last 50 years humans with hybridising intent seem hell bent to break all boundaries so they all look alike. This is not only happening in Australia but also in New Zealand and the USA. What is interesting is that SE Asian countries are getting in the act. You would think they have a surfeit of various orchids and other plants native to the area but perhaps they are looking for exotic material too. Back to the theme.

When Australians first started taking a real interest in growing Bromeliads, say 50 years ago they were few in number so you could remember the names of those keen on hybridising but this increased over the years as the number of plant growers were converted to Bromeliads. They will only be remembered by the hybrids that have persisted to this day. These can only be traced if they were registered and if you are really keen you can trace them and their hybrids on the Bromeliad Cultivar Register <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/bcr/index.php> While we are on the subject of using the internet to solve many of our naming queries perhaps we should add them to the front page of the Gazette. We already have the Australian Society recorded there and there are only 3 others I would recommend

1. New Bromeliad Taxon list for species names <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php>
2. More detail on species <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/brom-1/>
3. Alternative site <http://imperialis.com.br/>

Perhaps the oldest hybrid on display was Bill Morris's Billbergia 'Aussie Rose' which goes back to the 1960's when *B. pyramidalis* was crossed with *B. saundersii*. You may well ask why was this hybrid done when it had already been done by Mulford Foster in 1942 to produce 'Fantasia'. But you could also say the same thing that happened in 1887 for *B. 'Gireaudiana'*. All could be different because the parents used are known to have quite distinct forms and we don't know which ones were used. The true art in hybridising is 'Select the best and destroy the rest' This may have happened in the past but these days hybridists seem to sell the lot and leave it up to the buyer to select!



*Billbergia* 'Aussie Rose'  
(Photo J. Batty)

Another oldie was *B. 'Josie Tonkin'* named after one of our founding members and having some sentimentality. This was ('Catherine Wilson' x 'Bobtail' and done by Olwen in 1982

Of the newer ones we had Neo 'Little Ipswich' NN which as far as we know is an Allan Freeman hybrid. In the 1990's when Allan was starting his dabbling we had long letters discussing what was good and what was bad but then the letters stopped and he was spending more time with his hybridising – an obsession I suppose. The next I heard was from Keith Golinski who had thousands of Allan's seedlings and we just kept registering them as they matured and Keith had sufficient stock. Because of the volumes involved Keith devised a code which could be used to identify the seed batch concerned. This code sometimes comes up and I have had to explain it to our current Registrar. Alas, in this case the plant came to us without a code so we are not in a position to register the name.

Yes, we have had South Aussies that have hybridised but luckily none caught the bug and knew when to stop.

One of Bill Morris's better hybrids, if only because it differs from the run of *Neoregelia* hybrids is 'Purple Princess' named by Margaret Butcher in 1997. It was yet another unnamed hybrid that went under the formula (*abendrothae* x *pauciflora*) for many years.



*Neoregelia* 'Purple Princess'  
(Photo J. Batty)

### ***Roving Reporter May 2015 cont: 4***

Of the hybridists of recent we can't go past Margaret Paterson where we saw Neo. 'Strawberry Lace' but how different was it to the impressive 'Jewellery Shop' created in 1996 and to which it is related. A referral to the BCR shows that there are 137 registered hybrids that have 'Jewellery Shop' in their parentage. Was Margaret trying to improve on 'Jewellery Shop'? I leave you to decide. We saw the same sort of problem with Olive Trevor's hybridising with *Billbergia* 'Hallelujah'. When Don Beadle created B. 'Hallelujah' in 1988 by crossing B. 'Domingos Martins' with B. 'Ed McWilliams' ( a form of *B. amoena*) he waxed lyrical as to its beauty and the best he had ever done. Were the registered 75 names using this as a parent attempts for improvement? And what about the 129 tries with B. 'Domingos Martins.' Are hybridists really trying to create something different or improvement?



Neo. 'Strawberry Lace' (Photo J. Batty)

Whenever I see *Aechmea roberto seidelii* on a label I shudder and such was the case at this meeting. Roberto Seidel did a lot of collecting in the wild and had several species named after him all with slightly different spelling and I easily get confused in such situations. It all started in 1981 when several of us grew seed from the USA seed bank. We got them to flowering size and got confused because Smith & Downs had *Aechmea roberto seidelii* as a synonym of *A. pineliana*. You see our plants were flowering like *Aechmea* 'Foster's Favorite' with a hanging inflorescence. There was also an *A. seideliana rubra* (note spelling) that was like our plant but growing in the Eastern States. One of our plants I called *A. 'Hiccup'* after Maureen Hick because she had produced a plant that was not following what we expected, but the main batch was called by the cultivar name *A. 'Roberto Seidel'*.

Now for phase 2. In the 1980's Len Colgan imported *A. triticina* from Brazil. In the 1990's I started getting photocopies of descriptions of Brazilian species from Harry Luther at Marie Selby Gardens. Needless to say, they were in Latin and needed translating. When Len's plant finally flowered it did not link to *A triticina* but I was sure it was *A. guarapariensis*. This had been described in 1984. In general terms it was a white petalled *A. pineliana*. Needless to say, our *A. guarapariensis* does not flower often but offsets like mad. In 1999 Silva and Leme wrote about the rediscovery of *A. triticina* and the photos showed it was nothing like what Len had imported so we were correct in doubting its name on the label. In 2007 Tania Wendt in Brazil decided that *A. guarapariensis* was really a synonym of *A. roberto seidelii* to my dismay but I told members to change their labels if they had got this plant from me. Some changed the name and some didn't.



*Aechmea. guarapariensis* (Photo J. Batty)

Then in Feb 2014 I discussed the problem of *A. roberto seidelii* versus *A. guarapariensis* with Eric Gouda. His view was that it is unclear how to look at the description in Smith & Downs of *Aechmea triticina*, but he will keep *A. roberto-seidelii* as well as *A. guarapariensis* as separated species. Both are from a totally different biome and much different in size, one epiphyte and one terrestrial and the large apical coma in the inflorescence of one of the species are good differentiation. In other words we only seem to have *A. guarapariensis* in Australia. This information is on the Australian Society website <http://www.bromeliad.org.au/> so remember the name *guarapariensis* even though it takes ages to write out a label.

Finally it must be 3 years ago that I gave Peter Hall a challenge in flowering *Tillandsia incarnata*. Well he did it and brought the plant as proof. Must be the hot air in his backyard!

*Notes from Gilmartin 1972*

The length of the plant may vary from as short as 15 cm to as tall as 75 cm including the well developed stem in *T. incarnata* H.B.K. However, the inflorescence parts, the leaf dimensions, and shape are much less variable. The altitudes at which this species has been collected to date in Ecuador are from ca. 2000 m to 3000 m. The stamens are included as is the stigma but often the anthers reach the apices of the petal blades. Vegetative propagation in its natural habitat is common. The above 32 specimens bear witness to the abundance of *T. incarnata* in portions of the northern and central Ecuadorian Andes.

**Harry Luther comment** 30/3/1993

*T. incarnata* seems to intergrade with *T. queroensis*. Your photo appears to represent something along this line.



## Roving reporter June 2015

The topic for the meeting was 'Patterned leaf Vrieseas' and it was interesting to note that most assumed this meant the 'Glyph' hybrid Vrieseas coming from the species that I call the *V. fosteriana* complex. The Butchers had to be different and brought in those from northern Brazil and Colombia.

Ron Masters won the popular plant award with his 'Speckles' x 'White Line'

Great plant but just a few comments about the label.

We know the alleged parents names but how different is it to its brothers and sisters in the same seed batch.



Vriesea 'Speckles' x 'White Line' (Photo J. Batty)

The seed parent 'Speckles' was selected from a seed batch of *V. fosteriana* and pollen allegedly came from a variegated form of the hybrid *V. 'Poelmanii'*. Now this is a great combination because you should get SOME with the beautiful flowers of 'Poelmanii' AND the leaf markings of *V. Fosteriana*.

Thus the hybridiser had some selecting to do. BUT has he? Has anyone analysed the result? Some hybridists believe that if they used pollen from another that must be father. But alas it could be self pollinated. In human terms we used to blame the milkman. So Ron has another challenge. I could see no influence of a concolorous green leaved plant (variegation does not transmit via pollen) so Ron will have to wait for flowering and report back. So there were several of these beautiful and beautifully grown 'Glyph' plants on display. There is just one problem if you wanted "one just like that one there" it would be an almost impossible wish unless you were to wait for the possibility of a spare offset. So many are grown from seed with slight variations and it depends on how finicky you are! But then, if you have the inclination you only have to collect your own seed from one of these 'Glyph' hybrids and grow them on, to get your own variations on a theme.

Now to the other patterned leaf forms of which *V. ospinae* and its variants are popular and despite coming from Colombia seem to like it in Adelaide if given a bit of rain protection in winter and shade protection in Summer. There was also *V. saundersii*. Just as with *V. fosteriana*, if you grow from self set seed you can still expect variations in the progeny and if there is demand for such variants you can expect different names.

To slightly digress for a moment. I am currently translating from the Portuguese a book on *Alcantarea* called *Bromelias Gigantes do Brasil*. Yes, it is great little book but not for the faint hearted. The most popular seems to be *A. imperialis* which flowers up to 5 m tall and would be hard to accommodate in Adelaide because it would need protection from our Summer sun. You would have to be dedicated because in habitat it is said they take 40 years to flower. Anyway, *A. imperialis* is very variable much to the nurseryman's delight and many of us know about *A. imperialis rubra* (a nurseryman's name for the red leaved form). 20 years ago Brazilians would extract plants from the wild but things, these days, are much tougher. My friend Oscar who calls his nursery Bromeliario Imperialis, is a conservationist at heart went against the trend by sowing seed. He now has a large field of different looking plants which I assume he does sell before they get too big!

Back to the Vrieseas from Colombia. In the wild they much grow amongst bushes and clamber to reach the light. They have this habit of just growing upwards and fall over in the pot before even flowering. Thus the plants we brought in were top half cuttings in dry soil. As Bill pointed out, don't throw away the stump because this can sprout offsets.

Bill was quite proud of his flowering *Quesnelia humilis* which as he pointed out could be confused with a Billbergia. Very few members seemed to be growing this plant or in fact any species. When the Society was formed we grew species rather than hybrids. We got used to Latin names. We also knew that we could get someone to go back to habitat and find a fresh supply. These days' countries where bromeliads are found are much more conservation minded and this source for plants is drying up fast. Coupled to the fact that humans seem to think that new is best we are inundated with hybrids with little pedigree. In ten years' time I can hear the cry "Where have the species gone?"



*Quesnelia humilis*

**Roving reporter June 2015 cont: 2**

The advantage with growing species is that you can find details about it

***Quesnelia humilis*** Mez, Mart. Fl. Bras. 3(3): 386. 1892.

Plant propagating by short horizontal rhizomes, flowering 3-4 dm high.

Leaves few in a tubular rosette, 20-56 cm long, sometimes exceeding the inflorescence, minutely lepidote on both sides;

sheaths narrowly elliptic, usually elongate, often dark purple;

blades ligulate, rounded and apiculate, 25-45 mm wide, laxly and minutely serrulate.

Scape slender, erect, densely white-lanate;

scape-bracts erect, slightly to strongly imbricate, narrowly elliptic, the highest rarely to 8 cm long, the others much smaller, entire, membranaceous, rose, slightly araneous especially toward base, soon glabrous.

Inflorescence simple, few-flowered, densely corymbiform; rhachis very short, densely white-lanate.

Floral bracts entire, membranaceous, rose, dimorphic, the lowest large, like the scape-bracts, about equaling the flowers, the others narrowly triangular, exceeded by the sepals;

flowers erect, sessile.

Sepals connate for 2 mm, slightly asymmetric, narrowly lanceolate, obtuse, ca 2 cm long, membranaceous, red, glabrous or the apex lanate;

petals erect, 35 mm long, the linear claw bearing 2 fimbriate scales at base, the blade elliptic with incurved margins, obtuse, red to red-purple;

stamens included at anthesis, filaments of the second series highly adnate to the petals; pollen ellipsoid, biporate;

ovary ellipsoid, slenderly costate, epigynous tube large; placentae apical.

Type. *Glaziou 16434* (holotype, B; photo F, 11346; isotype P), Brazil.

Distribution. Rainforest, ca 800-900 m alt, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

You never find such detail for a hybrid!

Now to bit about my observations on how Billbergias are grown these days. I remember when we used to holiday in a tent in Queensland in the winter with the kids and sometimes called in to Brom growers! In the 1970's we chanced to visit Clyde Wasley, Grace Goode's brother-in-law but also known as Mr Billbergia even before Don Beadle earned the title. Anyway, I was shown his collection where the plant were in pots on shelves totally under plastic. No direct Queensland sun for them AND no Queensland rain. As he said "I get better colour and tighter tubes this way." Bill Morris was of the same opinion "The older the plant and less fertiliser the better". I even had the cheek to write to Don Beadle and ask him why his Billbergias were floppy and not tight tubed! It is just a personal opinion but I leave you to judge from these two photos of B. 'Elegant' and B. 'Golden Joy'



Billbergia 'Elegant' (Photo J. Batty)



Billbergia 'Golden Joy' (Photo D. Butcher)

### ***Roving reporter June 2015 cont: 3***

Now to finish with Tillandsias.

You would have seen Ray Clark's minima which started out its life in Adelaide some 32 years ago Detail follows  
*Tillandsia 'Minima Latifolia'* by Derek Butcher 11/2014

In 1982 I imported a plant from Karel Knize called *T. latifolia minima* and it was indeed very small. I was aware of *Tillandsia 'Enano'* from the Bromeliad Cultivar Register 1998 and named by Paul Isley and assumed my plant was the same. Note here that 'Enano' is from the Spanish for dwarf and if it had been 'Enana' which from the Latin would mean 'not dwarf'! Over the years I kept seeing plants from Isley being grown in Australia that were bigger than mine. What was happening? Was my plant unique? Certainly the plants called 'Enano' were much bigger than the 6 cm high quoted in the BCR. Height is difficult to define on a caulescent plant and did it include inflorescence?

There is a slight twist in that there are, according to Paul Isley, two forms of 'Enano Latifolia' with nothing official as to the difference. If we refer to New *Tillandsia Handbook* 1998 by Hiroyuki Takisawa on page 67 we see 'Enano Red form' for a fairly large caulescent plant said to have reddish leaves so I am a bit confused! If we read Isley's *Tillandsia* book 1987 page 70 we see 'There is a slightly different form of *Tillandsia latifolia* 'Enano'. It is similar in size and appearance to *T. latifolia* 'Enano' but it is found in a different geographical location. The blades are broader – often 2 cm in diameter. Also, the plant is browner and lighter in color.' Back to 'Minima' which for me flowers at 10cm high including flower and with leaves 4 cm long. In 2011 I sent an offset to Bruce Dunstan who flowered this in 2014 and came up with the same size as mine. It seems sufficiently different to be called 'Minima Latifolia.

Botanists show us a wide ranging forms and sizes and although it is fairly easy to identify the species, *T. latifolia*, it is very difficult to identify the varieties and to pore through the many synonyms. Nurserymen, namely Dennis Cathcart and Paul Isley have named 7 forms but not formally registered them and the garnered descriptions in the BCR are somewhat vague. We can only use photos as a guide to identification. There are also pet names used that are also difficult to identify like Knize's *T. skinneri*!

Now to *Tillandsia stricta* which is very wide spread in the wild - Epiphytic in dry or wet forest, from near sea level to 1680 m alt, Venezuela, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, northern Argentina. You would expect it to be varied with some not liking Adelaide weather. We saw *Tillandsia stricta* var *violacea* which is not recognised by the botanists because it has not been described and we do not know where it is found in the wild. I assume it has this name because of the dark leaves but it is fairly easy to grow in Adelaide

### ***Festival of flowers***

The new venue St Pauls College at Gillies Plains was considerably larger & the event was well attended both days.

At the wind up meeting after feedback and suggestions from their committee and members about the show the majority were in favour of returning to St Paul's tentatively 15 – 17 April 2016 depending on availability.

There are two expressions of interest to join the group in 2016.

Thank you to those who helped & it was great that other members supported the event.



Peter, Bev & Ron at Festival of Flowers (Photo J. Batty)

Happy gardening but take care -keep warm & healthy.