

# 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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Dyckia 'Cabral' (Photo J. Batty)

**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.**

**MEETING & SALES 2015 DATES.** 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**

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### Roving Reporter July 2015

Cold weather but a fairly good roll up. Even though scheduled as a ‘slide’ meeting there were quite a few plants brought in for display. Some months ago we had a request in the Suggestion box that we could explain the intricacies of naming especially as how hybrids and cultivars fitted in. Well, I looked at the problem and thought it better to present it with images on a screen. With the help of Ross Little from Northern NSW we converted it to PDF which meant it was available over the Internet, Several questions were raised which showed not all fell asleep with one intriguing one being how do you pronounce Latin. Botanical Latin is only meant to be read not spoken which makes it a challenge if you start quoting names when in another Country or even another State but if you are understood the battle is won as long as you do not argue about it!

This was followed by a short presentation on *Hohenbergia* which follows

Talk on *Hohenbergia* by Butcher 6/2015

In 1830 we first saw this genus name used by Schultz and his son and was a name given in honor of his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wurtemberg [a former Kingdom, now part of Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany], who gave the glorious name of Hohenberg to this lovely science. Literally, it translates as High Mountain but links to titles coined for the aristocracy

There are two different sub-genera, one from the West Indies and the other from further south into Brazil. This talk is just about the Brazilians because this is where most of what is grown today comes from. In recent months I have been corresponding with a Japanese fellow who plans to produce a booklet on species in this genus. I would have thought it would be difficult to grow such large plants in Japan but I am assured it is a popular genus. What we did find was that it is very difficult to identify species and there is a lot of conflicting information by European botanists from the 1800’s.

From a layman’s point of view this genus is known for its hairy flowers and things called strobils that I liken to pinecones

It must be 30 years ago that I flowered my first plant in this genus. It was called *H. augusta* which means majestic. I leave you to decide on the worthiness of the name

The most wide spread is *H. stellata* which has been around since 1830 but comes from warmer climes to grow well in Adelaide. I wonder who may be growing it.

One that has been here for 30 years is *H. corriea-araujoii* thanks to a Len Colgan importation but is shy flowering in Adelaide. In fact many members seemed to have given up waiting.

One that has a lot of Adelaide history is *H. pennae*. In October 1988 the BSI seed list offered *Hohenbergia ramageana*. It was repeated in November but in December it had *Hohenbergia ramageana (pennae)*. The seed was successfully raised by Keith Bradtberg and flowered. Why was the name "pennae" suggested in December 1988? An intriguing puzzle. Did the seed come from Seidel? Coincidentally, Len Colgan imported a plant called *Aechmea pennae* ( note the Genus name) from Seidel in Brazil in October 1988 to Adelaide . This flowered 10 years later and yet seed grown plants of the same vintage flowered 4 years earlier! Clearly the seed grown plants are very similar to the imported plant.

Now to another importation by Len from Tropiflora namely *H. leopoldo-horstii* which is also a name in dispute. It was found by Rauh and Horst in 1986 when on Cactus expedition in Southern Bahia in Brazil. They found several plants and one was named *H. leopoldo-horstii* by Rauh in 1988.

Some of you may be growing an offset from Len's plant BUT some of you may be growing seedlings from seed I got from my Brazilian mate Oscar but it has not flowered yet. The problem is that it is said that collection in the wild was near Grao Mogul but in southern Bahia. These are many many miles apart.

Now we come to a problem with a plant found by Oscar on one of his trips to the Brazilian outback. From roughly the same locality that *H. leopoldo-horstii* comes from he stumbled across a new discovery. This was called *H. magnispina* by Leme because of its large spines. We now come round full circle because it seems that Rauh and Horst also collected this plant in the 1980's. All I know is that Oscar did not send me seed!

Finally there is one problem we have not been involved with but you should know about. Elton Leme brought over seed of *H. lanata* in 1993 which was grown on by Olive Trevor. 22 years later Queenslanders have started asking questions about why so many plants in Queensland with this label look different. So much so, several have been given cultivar names. The assumption has been that they all relate to that original seed batch. My view is that in 22 years there has been plenty of time for seed from adult plants from the original batch to be sown to muddy the water.

Now to the plants on display

The most popular plant was *Vriesea* 'Joyful Charm' one of the 'Glyph's' brought in by Adam but not yet registered. One observation by Julie Batty was that she feels these latest hybrids are flowering much earlier and therefore smaller, instead of growing quite large. Comments by others would be appreciated. Adam missed last meeting with his patterned *Vrieseas* and had brought in the various forms of *V. ospinae* var *gruberi* that he had. Peter Tristram is the one who has been growing the seed and it would appear that this variety shows lots of variability and I am reminded of *Vriesea fosteriana* where I first saw a batch of seedlings at John Catlan's in the 1990's. I even selected what I thought showed lots of white but alas they grew out so remember that the markings are not consistent over the years.



*Vriesea* 'Joyful Charm'

The following is also of interest

“SELLOWIA Nr.26 Ano XXVII Pgs.92-94 ITAJAI 15 Oct. 1975 \_

SEEDS FROM THE SAME INFLORESCENCE OF BROMELIACEAE PRODUCE MANY TYPES OF DIFFERENT PLANTS by ALVIM SEIDEL CORUPA - SC

An interesting fact has been observed in my culture of Bromeliads, where for many years I have reproduced the rarest of species by seed.

It happens that the seeds from the same inflorescence of *VRIESEA FOSTERIANA* VAR. *SEIDELIANA* (my discovery) produce several types of very different plants, as the interested will be able to verify the plants here presented in enclosed pictures and descriptions.

Most of the referred seedlings were similar to the plant mother, but about 40% were very different.

Among the many different forms that I have been observing in the total batch, I only separated eight that I present to you Members of Congress.”

In the 1980's we had problems of deciding what was 'Red Chestnut' and what was not. Most seedlings raised from self set seed from a species generally produce similar looking plants but as in life, there are always exceptions to the rule. So if you grow from seed always be on the lookout for oddities even if a species. We know that if you grow seed from a hybrid so can EXPECT differences. On the same theme you may remember the seed we got from *Neoregelia* 'Hannibal Lecter' and several members decided to give it a go. You can expect lots of differences but Julie Batty reports she has at least one plant that looks like mother. My advice was that she could use 'Hannibal Lecter' but only when it had flowered and had similar attributes to mother at that time.

**Roving Reporter July 2015 cont:**

Back to Vrieseas and *V. ospinae* var. *gruberi* First we had ‘Tiger Tim’ and the next generation ‘Sons of Tiger Tim’ and ‘Scaredy Cat’. ‘Sons of Tiger Tim’ suggests more than one clone but small differences did not suggest different names. Then there was the oddity ‘Smudge Grub’ with its stretch marks! I first noticed this in New Zealand when at their conference in 2003 when I noticed that some of their Vrieseas had leaf smudges where the leavers seemed to have grown faster lengthwise than widthwise. I put it down to irregular watering or feeding programmes rather than genetic. I also came across it in Australia with *V. fenestralis* sometimes misbehaving. This was confirmed by my mate Oscar in his nursery in Rio de Janeiro. When in Darwin I noticed this in several places but perhaps I was looking for such phenomena but there does seem to be some weakness somewhere. I remember when the Society was first started variegation was very rare. We were always optimistic that a chance variegated leaf meant the possibility of a variegated offset. We were always disappointed except in the case of *Billbergia* ‘Perriam’s Pride’. These days variegated plants abound! Could the same thing happen with stretch marks?



Vriesea ‘Smudge Grub’

Finally Julie Batty was very worried about to clump of *Tillandsia lorentziana*. It was not normal clump that might occur after many years of growing. They all looked about the same age and possibly seedlings and I suggest the Julie separate them and see what happens. Many *T. lorentziana* forms come from Bolivia and I know that *T. xiphoides* can behave oddly in order to survive the harsh conditions. Some offset prolifically to produce clumps well before flowering.

**OH DEAR! OH DEAR! .....**

In the Vol 39, Number 1, Gazette article it was indicated that two significant events occurred in 2014 that had major impact on our growing environment. The changes indicated from the first event were working well, the garden etc., was flourishing, so away we went again.

Across the rear of our house is a 12 mt long, by 6 mt deep pergola. Two thirds is covered by clear roofing with one third by knitted shade cloth. The hanging pots of ferns, begonias, bromeliads and native orchids are watered by a dripping and spraying system. On arriving home the back door to our home was opened and .. OH DEAR! OH DEAR!..... (plus other descriptive adjectives).

The (eastern) end of the pergola, under the shade cloth area, had collapsed. Two posts had given way, two beams and three rafters were badly twisted and broken, and the whole area precariously balanced. Pots were hanging at various angles, but luckily the watering system had not fractured. The 50 plus tillandsia’s hanging on the wire mesh at the eastern end were all askew (see previous article).

The only conclusion arrived at was to remove all pots, watering systems and replace this one third of the pergola by rebuild the whole area. To achieve this some of the railway sleeper retaining wall would have to be removed - which meant a rebuild of three levels of walls. This was eventually achieved by building three levels of 15mt long retaining wall stone work.

But where to put everything during the rebuild? The end result was placing tillandsias throughout the rear garden and shade house. Many were hung on the sides of existing pots of Australian native orchids which exposed them even more to full elements of weather (see photos). Other pots of *Billbergia* and *Aechmea* were placed where ever. The philosophy of ‘growing things tough’ really came to the fore. Watering regimes had to be changed.



Tillandsias’ hanging on pots (Photo G. Edwards)



Tillandsias’ hanging on pots (Photo G. Edwards)



Group of Tills (Photo G. Edwards)

**Article cont:**

Eventually the rebuilding was completed. The shade cloth replaced with clear roofing (causing a change to the watering regime), the watering system replaced and pots rehung. The wire mesh at the end of the pergola was replaced (see photo) and the tillandsias rehung.

All plants have now settled back into a permanent growing environment and are all flourishing.

As someone suggested, perhaps it would be better if we did not go away.

Geoff Edwards

**VALE Colin Anderson**

Colin passed away on Sat 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015 aged 73 after a long battle with cancer. I always knew him as the ‘Smiling One’. He joined the Society in the 1990’s about the same time as George Rudolph and helped us out at our sales at the North Park Shopping Centre. Many of us there will remember the frail little old lady who was Colin’s Mum. She was in her 90’s but used to boss Colin something awful and we always knew when Colin was a bad boy. We just had to smile! He was never a one-eyed bromeliad fancier preferring his collection of birds ( feathered) - parrots and finches of Australian extraction. He dabbled in native Orchids too and painted pictures but he will be remembered for scrounging mallee roots from me which he did not use to mount Tillandsias. They went on his wood lathe to be turned into works of art! To show his penchant for life he did ask that ‘Shutta ya face” be played at his funeral.

His forever smiling face will always be remembered.

Derek

**Garden visit.**

35 attended. Great day very social, excellent set up & in spite of the wintery conditions we were all lovely & warm in the enclosed verandah with several outdoor heaters reducing the chill factor.

The Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) hanging around the garden added to the tropical look, it was easy to see how it got its more common name perhaps you can spot the difference in the photo. (thanks to Hans & Derek). Jeanne’s garden was very colorful & the surrounding trees and sarlon gave shade and the whole area was one of peace and tranquility. Afternoon tea was enjoyed by all especially the pastries from Orange Spot bakery.

Thank you to Peter for his hospitality & sharing his inspirational garden with our members.

There were several inquiries about a Fuchsia which Peter investigated & found it is rare & difficult to grow from a cutting.



Hans & Derek (Photo. J. Batty)



**Roving Reporter August 2015**

Another cold day for our Annual Winter Brag where the plants seemed in better nick than the attendees!

Popular plant was won by Julie Batty with her *Vriesea* ‘RoRo’ which has a great history linked to Adelaide – namely Peter Huddy. In 2001 Peter had two variegated *Vrieseas* he had got from Queensland. They looked similar but had different parentage. Later investigation has shown that the quoted parentages are very doubtful with the only link to *V. saundersii*. How was it that two beautiful plants had not been named and properly registered. Investigation as to their source centred around Florida but nobody could assist. So ‘Highway Beauty’ and ‘RoRo’ came into existence. The last 14 years has revealed that these two plants are very close when flowers are compared AND the variegation is not stable. At the meeting we saw ‘RoRo’ with predominantly white stripes predominantly in the middle AND ‘Highway Beauty’ with predominantly white stripes predominantly on the outside BUT this is not stable. Do not change the name on the label because you could get an offset with a different variegation!



*Vriesea* ‘RoRo’

### ***Roving Reporter August 2015 cont:***

Yes, I love names because generally speaking you usually have something to refer to. I defer to others where they succeed in successful growing under difficult conditions. Such people are said to have green thumbs where they seem to be able to unconsciously know a plant's wants. That said, let's get into names. One plant that was extra bright was called *Neo carolinae* Super Red. This is a typical Nurseryman's name or NN in my jargon and will never be formally named as being different. *Neo carolinae* was found in the wild in the 1850's and Nurserymen in Europe quickly saw its sales potential and grew it from self set seed and selecting for the best. These seedlings were also stronger growing. And so through the years the same claims were made as to the latest batch being an improvement on the old. The old adage that if new it must be better. When the Society was formed in 1977 we even had 'Super Select' and how can you improve on that name!

What I like about our meetings is that with displays you get a chance to check up on names which is something that those who only come to our shows miss out on. You learn so much by talking to other humans. You only have plants to talk to if you are a loner!

Now to *Neo. concentrica* var *rosatina* as grown in Nairne. It was huge and reminded me of some of the Neos as grown in Singapore. They just grew and grew and didn't want to flower. Singapore is known for being hot and sweaty so there must be another reason for this phenomenon. Such a plant needed investigating because I knew that botanists did not recognise such a variety. Thus it had hybrid connotations. The Bromeliad Cultivar register reveals.

NEOREGELIA 'Rosatina' Australian, before 1990

*carolinae*(?) X *concentrica*(?) - (See 'Fuchsia') - Favored by Grace Goode in her hybridizing programs - Large yellow green broad leafed rosette w/rounded tips - red-purple center at blooming with reddish mottling, spotting and spattering in the upper leaves - redder in the most exposed areas - verbal commentary by Luther said, "Probable source from BSI seed from Seidel or Adda Abendroth - plants I've seen are *concentrica* X *carolinae* (cf. 'Amabilis)

So, the plant has been around for a long time.

Things cannot be as cold as the residents there try to convince us because we also saw another plant from Nairne under the name of *Aechmea gamosepala*. It was in bud so must be thriving. When it does flower Bob will be able to check the name. Gamosepala means joined sepals which form a tight tube and the blue petals squeeze out the top so that each individual flower looks like a match-stick. It really made my day because it was a species. In similar species mode Geoff Edwards asked me to identify his *Aechmea recurvata* var *benrathii* that he had bought as an unknown. He said the seller was intrigued by Geoff's selection which was only based on the number of offsets! Geoff is a true Bromeliad grower – always looking to the future.

On the theme that species are better than man made hybrids for the simple reason that it has taken Mother Nature some thousand years to create a unique species I had reason to discuss via Email, a recent find in Brazil. Most of us know about the 3 varieties of *Aechmea recurvata*, even though we might discuss which is which, because they have been around for years and years. We are not yet growing var *albobracteata* which as the name suggests has very pale floral bracts. It was named by Teresia Strehl in 2004 in Rio Grande do Sul, a State of Brazil. This latest find is different again and if Teresia were still alive I am sure we would have another variety.

In the July Report I mentioned about Julie Batty and her experiences with growing on seed from 'Hannibal Lecter'. This meeting we had Len bringing in two pots of his experience. Here the pots were full of offsets about the same size showing a throwback to one of its parents namely a variation with traits of a form of *Neo ampullacea*. Here we discussed a little about the problems with F2 and what it meant. F stands for Filial. If you cross a species with a species you get what is called an F1. You would expect the seedlings to look similar and have hybrid vigour. If you get seed from an F1 you get an F2 (next generation) and here you would expect to get a whole range of seedlings with some looking like grandma and some like grandpa and lots in between

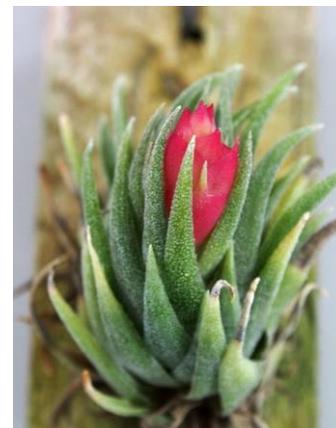


Neoregelia 'Hannibal Lecter'

I still cannot work out the good condition obtained for the various forms and hybrids of *Aechmea orlandiana*. Mention was made to 'polycarb' because they certainly do not like wet feet in Adelaide's winter. That is not the total answer because good husbandry is needed too

It was strange to see flowering Australian Native Orchids on display but if you looked closely you saw interplanting with Tillandsias. Sort of companion plants that Geoff promises to tell us about in an article for the Gazette

Now to the Tillandsia 'Ormesby' that Len brought in which has not been registered and is another example of an NN (Nurseryman's name) that I talked about at the July meeting. It also had *sprengeliana x kautskyana* on the label. These are very similar red flowered plants from Brazil and are very rare. I grow both species and a few years ago I had to ask Renate Ehlers how to tell them apart and she told me to feel the leaves! I still do this to help me identify when they flower. In fact *T. sprengeliana* is on the CITES list. It is over 20 years ago now that Rolly Reilly in Queensland grew these from seed and had many congratulatory comments from overseas as to his conservation efforts. For many years these were sold at \$50 each. As far as I am aware no one has repeated this seed raising but have resorted to hybridising. The only advantage that I see is hybrid vigour and yet if you are careful you can grow these species successfully in Adelaide.



Tillandsia 'Ormesby'

We also saw a couple of littlies with such a long subgenera name of *Diaphoranthema*. This group has always been of interest to me because of my belief that all good things come in little parcels. One that George will now be looking after is called *T. brealitoensis*. Len was exonerated – by most present – when he missed the plant when he visited Brealito. There was also some consternation about the name *T. rectangula* on the other plant. One of the meanings of rectangular is right angles and refers to the angle of the leaves to the stem. Not to be confused with *T. erecta* where the leaves are more erect!

Finally to *T. bella* that Len pointed out is not that common in Australia. It is linked to a group around *T. aeranthos* which is prevalent in Rio Grande do Sul. This State of Brazil has already been mentioned in this August report and shows that plants found here, like Adelaide weather. *T. aeranthos*, in turn, is linked to the *T. tenuifolia* group. In 1997 Renate Ehlers described *T. polzii* which, these days, is fairly common in Australia and she was aware of a smaller plant also collected in Rio Grande do Sul and which was described by Teresia Strehl in 2000. Len had been growing this plant so was able to use its proper name.

Teresia was a splitter and described many new species that seemed different but her death meant that several new potential species or varieties remain undescribed. We know there are at least 6 forms with different colour combinations in the flower without names which I believe should have Cultivar names – but alas!



*T. bella*

Article by Adam for Gardening & Outdoor living show.

The dazzling colours of bromeliads will be on display at the Gardening and Outdoor Living Show at the Wayville Showgrounds, October 9-11.

These plants which are native to the Americas, particularly South and Central America, are extremely adaptable and have flourished in many collections in Australia. The sheer brilliance and various colours of these plants will brighten up any garden or shadehouse setting. They also grow very happily with other plants such as ferns and orchids.

## Article by Adam for Gardening & Outdoor living show cont: Roving Reporter September 2015

One of the most popular and easy to grow genera is the Neoregelia, otherwise known as the 'blushing hearts', because of the glowing centre of the mature plants. These come in various eye-catching colours, from pink, red through to lilac and purple, and can be large or miniature plants suitable for any size garden or patio.

The wide variety of bromeliads can be seen also in the Vriesea genus which has spectacular sword like spikes as well as plants with patterned leaves that have variegated or hieroglyphic markings.

Closely aligned is the fascinating world of Tillandsias where plants attach themselves to tree branches, rocks and even telegraph lines.

Because bromeliads are extremely adaptable to almost any conditions they are also very 'water-wise', and in many cases, are drought tolerant.

Local growers will be available to provide advice on the best conditions for growing bromeliads in South Australia.

The Bromeliad Society Spring Show and Sales will be at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Jeanes Street, Beverley on October 24-25.



### Roving Reporter Sept 2015 meeting

There were only a few plants brought in for display probably because all were waiting for the main event – The workshop. Anyway, Sarka must have had a logistics problem in getting her plant to the meeting to secure the most popular plant – Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite'. Note there is no 'u' in favourite but that is American spelling for you. The following was written 15 years ago and makes interesting reading



Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' (Photo: J. Batty)

"Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' Complex in 2000 by Butcher

This all started in 1945 when Mulford Foster crossed *Aechmea racinae* with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor* to produce Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' which was patented in 1949 (see BSIJ 1988 #2 page 55 by Racine Foster). The interesting thing is that much trouble was spent in describing the plant but not the inflorescence and we do not know what it is supposed to look like! It is accepted that the inflorescence is pendant and is like *Aechmea racinae* but with a darker red ovary with dark purplish petals edged in white that we generally associate with *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor*. To add to the confusion Padilla says (Bromeliads 1973 page 123) petals are coral tipped blue, and Bromeliad Treasury (1983) as yellow! Baensch in Blooming Bromeliads (1994) page 79 shows dark purplish edged white.

Since that time I am sure that others have repeated the cross using different clones or have grown self-set seed from Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' while still calling them Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' or giving them a new name. 'Black Jack' and 'Perez' are just two examples. Variegation appeared in one plant in 1951 and was named Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite' by Foster in 1953. Shortly afterwards this plant sported again only this time in the collection of Hazel Mueller but with red stripes this time and was called 'Red Ribbon' Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite', Foster's Favorite Favorite', and 'Red Ribbon' got exported to Australia and no doubt Australians also grew on seed from these hybrids to add to the confusion. However, this traffic was not all one-way!

In 1996 Tropiflora offered the "famed" Australian clone for sale (see Oct 1996 edition of Cargo Report) and this has an interesting story that I will relate to you. Information is from the Australian Journal "Bromeletter" 1972 #5.

In the early 1960's Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite' was imported to Sydney and offsets were in demand even though the plant did not particularly like Sydney's winter weather.

A little while later it was rumoured that a more hardy form had come into being somewhere "Up North".

Olwen Ferris, these days known as the Grande Dame of Aussie Bromeliads, and a Trustee of the BSI, was then the Editor of Bromeletter and was apt to travel the "Country" looking for the odd Bromeliad. In 1970 on her way back from Queensland she found a vigorous Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite Favorite'. On discussing the plant with the nurseryman she found out that it was the alleged Australian Sport obtained from a person now deceased!

“Aechmea 'Foster's Favorite' Complex cont: & *Roving Reporter Sept 2015 cont:*

The trail was cold! But, was it? Olwen does not give up easily. She checked old membership lists and decided that "Up North" meant FNQ (Far North Queensland) and wrote to a lady who lived near Townsville. Yes, she did have the plant having bought it in Townsville. (Only some 1400 miles north of Sydney). BUT she understood the original plant came from Port Macquarie (Only 400 miles north of Sydney).

Olwen knew of a lady who did have a small nursery in Port Macquarie and Yes, the plant had originated there! The search had ended!

While everyone in the Bromeliad World knows of Mulford Foster few Australians remember Mrs Jean Cannon who started of the "famed" Australian clone. Apparently she had got seed of *Aechmea racinae* x *Aechmea victoriana* var. *discolor* from Germany{ I can't always blame Americans!} and grew on the plants. ONE became variegated!

Jean Cannon sold 3 offsets, all going "Up North" to Queensland but then her interest in Bromeliads faded as the nursery found Orchids more profitable. The original plant died through neglect. This is just one example that sharing plants around is their best chance of survival.

So if you did buy a plant from Tropiflora please think about Jean Cannon who started it all off.”

So where did Sarka’s plant originate. In America or Australia? I leave you to decide.

One *Tillandsia* that caught my eye was one that most thought was a *Vriesea*. This is understandable because the green leaved *Tillandsias* are hard to grow in Adelaide – not humid enough. Adam had at least got his plant to a flowering display and I can assure him that the flowers are blue. This plant got to Australia from Peter Bak and is a puzzle. The closest identification is *T. deflexa* but you never know, it may get a cultivar name.

In 2011, I got seed from Oscar, me mate in Brazil, from a plant he had collected in the Serra de Cabral which looked like *Dyckia marnier lapostollei*. I did get germination and distributed plants to a selected few with a request that when it flowered its photo be taken so we could find out its true identity. I had doubts on this as the plants grew and I convinced Oscar that it looked like a new species that he seemed to have the knack of finding. He had flowered his collection and so was able to send pieces to the local University. First reports were that it looked ‘new’ but as with anything botanical, things take a long time especially if it was not collected by that particular botanist. It seems they must themselves visit the area of collection. And so we wait. In the meantime if you do have this plant from me would you please delete the *marnier lapostollei* part and make sure that ‘Cabral’ is prominent. Remember that so many *dyckias* these days are man made hybrids with uncertain known parentage and here at least we have some provenance.

And so to a plant called *Aechmea caesia* which has been known since 1889 when John Baker described it.

Protologue from Baker 1889 36. *AECHMEA CAESIA* E. Morren, inedit. (M.D.).

Leaves about a dozen in a utricular rosette, lorate from an ovate base, 12-15 in. long, 1 ½ in. broad at the middle, plain green on the face, thinly white-lepidote, not banded on the back, rounded to a cusp at the tip, the marginal teeth middle-sized, deltoid-cuspidate, black, hooked. Peduncle slender, a foot long ; bract-leaves lanceolate, adpressed, pale. Inflorescence a dense deltoid bipinnate panicle 2 in. long; branches few, dense, erecto-patent, densely spicate, at most an inch long, subtended by small ovate pink branch-bracts; flower-bracts ovate, acute, pink serrated, 1/3 in. long. Ovary with calyx as long as the flower-bract. Petals reddish lilac, exserted ¼ - 1/3 in.



*Aechmea caesia* (Photo: J. Batty)

Hab. Probably South Brazil. Described from a drawing of Prof. Morren's made Dec., 1885.

Adam did say the colour was an odd blue but one wonders where Baker got reddish lilac from. If we look up the colour ‘caesius’ it translates as bluish grey. I leave the pronunciation up to you.

As an aside had you wondered what (M.D) stands for. Is it Doctor of Medicine ? The simple solution is Morren Drawing!

### ***Roving Reporter Sept 2015 meeting***

If you want to acquire this plant remember you want the one with the prickly inflorescence because there are two Aussie produced hybrids which may have a larger flower head but it is less prickly.

Finally, we just have mention *Tillandsia zecheri* var *cafayetensis* that George had brought in. Some of you may not be aware of aa Australasian chat group called ‘Tillnuts’ where we discuss *Tillandsias* and several of our members are members. There are several varieties of *T. zecheri* and George was not prepared to commit himself without a bit of prompting and a bit of botanical reading. Thus

***Tillandsia zecheri*** W. Till var. ***cafayetensis*** Palaci & G. Brown JBS 1994 p113-114

Synonym: *Tillandsia muhrii* Rauh.

**Leaves** 10-12 cm long, less succulent than in the typical variety, flat, appressed lepidote with somewhat symmetrical scales.

**Inflorescence** somewhat slender and narrower (to 2 cm wide), typically with (4) 6 (8) flowers.

**Flowers** not fragrant, purple-violet.

Type. Palaci 534 (MCNS); isotype (RM). Argentina, Salta, Dpto. de Guachipas, Garganta del Diablo, 15 mm elev. April 4, 1986.



*Tillandsia zecheri* var *cafayetensis*  
(Photo: J. Batty)

It transpired that George had got his plant from Chris Larson who did collecting in Northern Argentina with Marj MacNamara when this plant was known as *T. muhrii*.

And so to the main event – The Workshop, which had been specially set up centre stage. Bill Treloar started things off by showing an example of hydroponics where a year ago he had been given several plants of *Aechmea* ‘Glyn’s Matchstick’. I am not going to say that Bill could be accused of being lazy but he plonked them all in a bucket with a bit of water in the bottom. One year later he brought said bucket into the meeting with the plants in flower. The main thrust of this demonstration was to show that soils ain’t necessarily soils. When you have been growing plants for some time you tend to use mixes that suit you and your watering habits AND intensity of shade where the plants are placed. It is the plants that have to adapt and luckily Bromeliads being mainly epiphytes are tough and very adaptable. If you do want to grow plants that need extra care to survive, then you must go to the trouble of adapting the environment to their requirements.

Next on stage was Ron doing his maiden speech and performed well. Mind you when he put on his face mask I had to turn up my hearing aid. Seriously though, you can never be too careful when opening a bag of soil mix which should be moist to minimise the danger of inhaling pathogens. Dare I suggest that worse place to open a bag is in an enclosed shed. Many offsets were taken and repotted. Many alternatives were given as to what to use in potting mixes. We did hear a warning not to blithely use someone else’s mix just because they had success with it. To really have green thumbs you need to look, teach yourself and act. If you keep deferring action it can have mortal results!

The number that were clustered around the demo table suggested to me that lots of our members are keen to lift their game and give their plants the care they deserve.

Attached is:

**Bromeliad Society of South Australia 2015 – 2016 Privacy Consent or decline permission form.**



Bill & a group of interested members during workshop. (Photo: J. Batty)