

S.A. BROMELIAD GAZETTE

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Born 1977 and still offsetting!

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Deutercohnia 'Chlorantha' (Photo J. Batty)

MEETING & SALES 2016 DATES

9/10/2016 (Billbergia) [22/10/2016 & 23/10/2016 Sales](#) 13/11/2016 130PM start, pup exchange, special afternoon tea – bring a plate of finger food to share, plant auction.

Applications for membership always welcome – Subs \$15 single \$25 Dual

Meetings Venue:

Maltese Cultural Centre,

6 Jeanes Street,

Beverley

Time: 2.00pm.

Second Sunday of each month
Exceptions – 1st Sunday in March
May, June & August & 3rd Sunday
September- no meeting in
December or unless advised
otherwise

**VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS
WELCOME.**

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Roving Reporter July 2016

Yes, we have had our share of wetness this year but at least it is cold and not mosquito breeding weather. I have just read ‘Bromeliadvisory’ a newsletter from Florida where the Zika virus is on everyone’s lips. Anything new and mysterious usually gets the Press involved demanding immediate solutions without really assessing the true risk. So Bromeliad growers bear the brunt of accusations even though they may be only 5% of the problem and even that is subject to challenge. The following is just one paragraph.

“And, more importantly, the page tells the reader, "The good news is you can keep your bromeliads from breeding mosquitoes with just a little effort."

But, just when the county delivers methods to keep your beloved bromeliads, the Miami Herald writes "Mosquito breeding sites can be in the most simple and smallest of places at the average home, and bromeliads are often a hidden danger zone." Affiliating bromeliads with the term "danger zone" makes the plant less attractive in any sane person's eye.

Heck, the above-described mosquito guru-Miami-Dade's Vasquez - has told the Miami Herald that in his perfect world, he would dig up every bromeliad. But, he says little about destroying every bird bath, shredding every tire, crushing every water- containing convex-moulded yard item, or more. Bromeliads, it appears, implanted a fear culminating into a phobia to Mr. Vasquez. Vasquez probably fears clowns with balloons as well - for reasons which we dare not to ask.”

From my own experience with mosquitoes here in Adelaide I got more buzzing around when I grew Cactus many years ago. Bromeliads seemed to keep them in check!

Christmas in July. I rolled up at 1.30 pm to deliver a few Tillandsias and found everyone eating and eating. I did notice there was a table full of wrapped presents which I assumed was for later on. But I could not stay for long, having to get home to look after Margaret. I recommend not to get old because things come and go without warning! Kallam must have heard me because he presented me with a piece of gluten-free banana cake for Margaret. It looked so delicious she ate some at her afternoon tea but did not finish her proper cooked tea at 5pm. Who would volunteer to be a carer?!. As least we share such responsibilities in our household if you ignore the dog.

Bev was ecstatic about the Christmas’ bit’ and I will let her report on this. Thanks to Ian Cook I know there were several plants brought in and as is my wont I will make a few comments.

I brought in 3 plants that I thought were somewhat unusual and I understand they were auctioned so the recipients have what I call a challenge. The first was a set of *Tillandsia albertiana* which I am fairly certain has the right name.



Tillandsia albertiana (Photo I Cook)

Roving Reporter July 2016 cont:

Let us go back 16 years when I wrote; “In Adelaide, Len Colgan has *Tillandsia albertiana*, *T. argentina*, and *T. dorotheae* on the same piece of cork hanging in his backyard and wondered why *T. dorotheae* flowered later in the year than both the other two. *T. dorotheae* does look midway between *T. albertiana* and *T. argentina* and some botanists are of the opinion that it is a natural hybrid between the two. Eric Gouda from Holland pointed out that in his experience both *T. albertiana* and *T. argentina* were spasmodic flowerers in cultivation and that he has yet to be convinced that *T. dorotheae* was, in fact, a hybrid.

Walter Till from Austria, who believes that *T. dorotheae* is a hybrid pointed out that in his experience the flowers of *T. dorotheae* do not open, or if they do, only imperfectly. This disturbed flowering could explain the flowering period being independent from its parents.

This fascinating problem may never be solved because there are so many unknown factors but this should not stop us discussing it.

On the face of it I would tend to agree with Eric Gouda and say *T. dorotheae* is an intermediate species or at least on its way to becoming one. Clearly, if it doesn't flower with either of its parents it cannot back-cross and be brought back to the fold.”

So *T. albertiana* is a spasmodic flowerer and its new owner can expect the unexpected. It was only described in 1969 so is fairly new. This is what was said at the time: “Recently construction of a new road has made accessible a section of the Rio Grande del Sauce that had not been explored. Here on its rocky banks, I found dense masses of a beautiful little tillandsia that was quite unlike anything in Dr. Castellanos' work in the "Genera et Species Plantarum Argentinae." Also Lyman Smith has compared it with the herbarium material in the Smithsonian Institution and found nothing like it.

I am sending out living specimens of this tillandsia to encourage its cultivation and thus further commemorate Professor Alberto Castellanos, the teacher who greatly stimulated my interest in botany. Since his family name has already been used for another species of *Tillandsia*, I am dedicating this new species to him.”

The other two were in the closely related *Dyckia* and *Encholirium*. It was only in 2001 when Rafaela Forzza did her thesis on the genus *Encholirium*. It was in Portuguese and took me a long time to translate and she transferred a few *Dyckia* species to *Encholirium* because she maintained that all *Dyckia* should flower from side branches. All *Encholirium* flower from the centre of the plant and thus are terminal flowerers. Now to the two plants I brought in which have weird ‘species’ names because they have yet to be formally described. These names are where they were found and Oscar had sent me seed he had collected. Let us look at *Dyckia* ‘Serra de Cabral’ which Oscar thought was different to *D. marnier-lapostollei* and the local botanists thought so too. Here you have wait for formal naming because botanists are very cautious creatures and must go to the place of discovery to investigate further and this can take years. Meanwhile impatient Oscar keeps dropping hints! The next was *Encholirium* ‘Ourlandia’ which has a similar story to tell. So the recipients have a challenge to flower these plants and send me photos so I can check to see if they look like the plants found in the wild. Dare I suggest they do need potting up to bigger pots when the weather warms up!

Popular plant

Was won by Peter Hall with his 6ft stick of Tillandsias. Yes, there were some 7 species stuck to said stick but I think it was the flowering ‘Cotton Candy’ that caught the eye



Peter with his stick of Tillandsias (Photo I. Cook)

Roving Reporter July 2016 cont:



Orthophytum 'Stardust'

(Photo I. Cook)

The plant theme was 'Uncommon genera' which is difficult to cover when you realise that what is uncommon one year is common the next. So you do not see much new stuff for the likes of myself to get out the books of reference to investigate identity and find out if such Bromeliad has a story to tell. One photograph that did catch my eye was *Orthophytum* 'Stardust'. This is one of the easier to grow in Adelaide because it puts out a long peduncle (stem) before flowering. I say easier to grow because it is not a shadehouse plant used to all weathers. The ones that do not have a peduncle would only survive in a heated glasshouse in Adelaide although the bigeneric *Neophytum* does quite well here. As I understand it this group may well be transferred to its own genus. One annoying factor with the long stemmed ones is that an offset seems to have that urge to flower when they look better at the juvenile stage!

In the last Gazette I mentioned Herb Plever's penchant for using his bathtub. Well, he straightened me out and his comments follow: On 5/07/2016 Herbert Plever wrote

Thanks, Derek. Lots of good material in this issue.

I want to clarify my practice of soaking my tillandsias in the tub. They are mounted on cork logs.

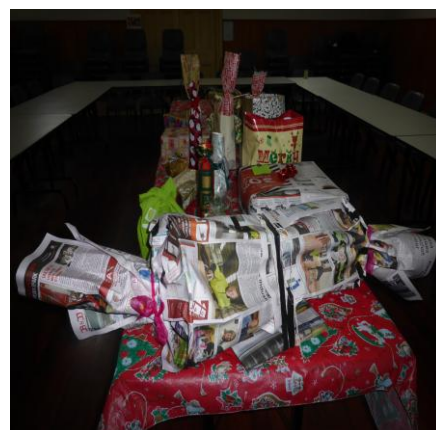
1. It is done every 9 to 10 days, not weekly.
2. It is misleading to use the general terms of feed or fertilizer. You need to specify the quantity of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, and the strength you are using (proportion of fertilizer to water).
3. I add a very low nitrogen fertilizer to the bathtub water with a formula of 5 parts nitrogen, 12 parts phosphorus and 26 parts potassium. My bathtub holds about 28 gallons of water, and I add 2 to 3 tbs of this fertilizer plus 1.5 tsp of magnesium sulfate (from Epsom Salts) from March through mid-December. From mid-December through February I add the fertilizer once every 3 or 4 weeks at a strength of 1 to 2 tbs.
4. In the drier air of an apartment the tillandsias need to take in lots of water to store in their capillaries. Soaking them for 60 to 75 minutes keeps them hydrated. When I remove the logs from the tub, I first shake out the plants over the water to remove the water that has collected in the leaf axils to avoid rotting and get them to dry off quickly. Then I hang them on rods in the windows.

Herb

Christmas in July

Many thanks to all who supplied the terrific spread of food for lunch. It was a taste temptation especially for those of us who I love soup. After the tasty meal a version of 'kris kringle' motivated the majority of members participating into a feeling of light heartedness. The fun of either keeping or swapping (Stealing) a preferred unwrapped or a replacement present kept the friendly banter and goodwill flowing smoothly. In fact one of the guidelines was set aside because of these entertaining interactions.

After an enthusiastic vote from those present this event will be included on our 2017 calendar. *Bev*



Section of presents



Roving Reporter Aug 2016

I was sad to hear about the death of Thomas Ulysses Lineham Jnr at the age of 97. He told me he was aiming for the ton but just missed out! You may well ask who was Tom Lineham who had a great influence on my quasi-botanical career. You see he was editor of the BSI Journal from 1984 to 1994. He was one of the better editors because his journals always contained something different and unexpected.

Roving Reporter Aug 2016 cont:

I was a budding 'journalist' at the time and wrote lots of articles for 'his' journal. It was in the days of Snailmail! Anyway, he kept trying to change me from writing Aussie English to Yank English. He didn't win because I explained that the BSI was international! He never did tell me why he was Tom Lineham jnr when he was the oldest surviving Tom in his immediate family. Those who went to the Adelaide Brom Convention in 1987 will have met him. His thirst for knowledge was such that we were asked to take him to see the Herbig Tree at Springton. Here, Herbig and his wife did spend a few years in the tree but his growing family forced him to move out. Such was his fecundity there are lots and lots of descendants of which our past member the late Joy Carr was one. Tom had a *Nidularium linehamii* named after him and it is growing in Adelaide.

I was very pleased to see so many of our newer members bringing in plants for the winter brag. Our compere Bill Treloar ran over time covering all plants brought in. All plants were in good shape so there was not much to brag about but it did give us a chance to discuss growing conditions and names. 40 years ago we were only a Study group but EVERYONE had a notebook on which they scribbled notes as we shared experiences. Very few seem to do this these days and you wonder if their memory is better than it was 40 years ago. Or do they rely on my pithy comments in the Gazette!

Popular plant

The winner of the popular plant award was again Ron Masters with a double headed bigeneric *xCanmea* 'Majo'. Name-wise it is yet another interesting challenge because anyone who has looked at the genus *Canistrum* must ask where is the influence of the alleged pollen parent *Aechmea fosteriana*. It is said to have a longer peduncle (flower stalk) but I have also seen the species *Canistrum fosterianum* with a longish peduncle! Anyway, the plant seemed to like living with Ron.



bigeneric *xCanmea* 'Majo' (Photo J. Batty)

First plant to be discussed was *Aechmea* 'Shelldancer'. This was also part of the raffle where it was a game of cat and mouse to the amusement of all present. Anyway, this hybrid is tough and has surprisingly adapted to Adelaide (and Bute) winters. Both parents *A fendleri* and *A dichlamydea* come from the shores of Venezuela and the hybrid started out life in 1962 in Japan of all places. We assume it was named Shelldancer after the nursery Shelldance who sold their collection in 1994 to the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Why do I mention this? Well, they lost quite a few labels in the move and in 2001 Margaret and I spent a week there having great fun arguing names. As an amusing aside, it was here I was called Uncle Derek by all these Chinese!

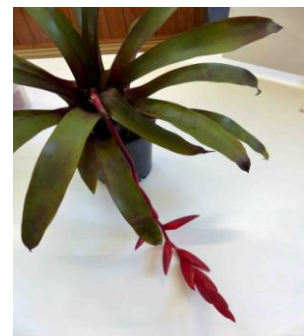
And now to Margaret's brag called *Tillandsia* 'Silver Candelabra' which had been given to her by Mick Romanowski a few years ago as variegated *Tillandsia viridiflora*. It almost died on her but the extra wet winter we got this year revived it! Can this be called a winter brag?

In the time it took to struggle the botanists had been having a go at this species. Dare I say the flower looks more like an *Alcantarea* than a *Tillandsia* but that is another story! It was decided that the branched spike plant called *Tillandsia viridiflora* was really *T. macropetala*.

There was a variegated form but Botanists these days seem to ignore variegates. So here was a plant without a name and Margaret came to the rescue with 'Silver Candelabra'. Dare I say the brag could well be that it is the only one in Adelaide!

On the same theme there was a *T. viridiflora* on display that Kallam took home to flower. Julie Batty did flower hers a few months back so Kallam has a challenge.

Why do most Vrieseas stand up to flower and yet the Butchers had brought in a droopy one by the name of 'April's Fire'? This was a question asked and heeded a quick King Solomon answer but alas I am getting slower these days. We know that the flower stalk, or scape is now called a peduncle should be strong enough to hold the flower part erect. Sometimes a plant is given a weak peduncle and the weight of the flowers pulls it over. That is evolution and even King Solomon wouldn't have the answer. This plant had come to Adelaide from Queensland to Peter Huddy with (scalaris x Red Baron) on the label although we think its origins were in the USA. Peter was the same ilk as me and detested formulas so he gave it the name 'April's Fire' and registered it.



Vriesea of 'April's Fire'
(Photo J. Batty)

We still do not know who the hybridist was or whether the parents are correct. All we can say is that the droopy habit would have been inherited from something like *V. scalaris*. Any hybridist selling under formula is either too lazy to give it a proper name or does not think the progeny is worthy of a name. Those of us who buy such plants only encourage lazy habits. If they think their purchase is worth growing then it is worthy of a name. Once they have got themselves 5 or 6 offsets they can register a name in their own right. If they don't want to do this they can lose the label and just call it hybrid. A formula may sound prestigious and botanical but because it has no recorded history it is worthless. We still have yet to fathom why Peter used the word 'April' when it seems to prefer flowering in any of our colder months.

Buying from Queensland. Just beware that they will need a period of acclimatisation. This can be as long as 2 years and some are easier than others. The problem is that you do not know which is which. 40 years ago I made money to pay for my trips to Queensland by taking up Cactus seedlings which had to acclimatize to the Queensland conditions and many didn't. This meant I could do the same thing the next year! I brought back Bromeliads and had the same experience! Ron seemed more worried about why his Vriesea hybrid had produced offsets when so young rather than the formula name. This was a clear case when mother could not adapt to conditions and decided to offset to survive. The offsets are the ones to concentrate on.

Talking about observations we had the instance of a member seeking naming of a Billbergia that the owner had claimed never to have flowered but had allowed to make a huge clump by neglect. If you are in this situation when offered an offset dare I suggest you do not select the biggest plant but an offset from the outside? I have had plants for more than 20 years that have not flowered and because of growing conditions they do not perform. A change of scenery can work wonders. Despite the strappiness of the plant both Bill and myself agree that it could well be *Billbergia amoena* var *viridis*.

Talking about strappy plants, Bill had brought in a couple of *Aechmea maculata* where the 'maculata' means spotty (on the leaf sheath) but Harry Luther told me years ago that these come and go! As Bill pointed out it is in the *A. bromeliifolia* group which seems to have gone out of favour in the last few years. If grown properly the plant forms an attractive bottle shape and usually in winter you can get the red bracted spike emerge giving you a blast of colour. Mind you the plants were not in full flower so we could not check whether Bill had to right name and should be looking for "Floral bracts suborbicular, retuse and then apiculate, 10 mm long, thick and bicarinate with thin apex and margins, dark brown." This is an odd shape and is distinct when you know what you are looking for! This was one of plants I imported from California in 1982 and which I later found out had suspect names. This I got as *A. lamarchei* var *rubra* but when it flowered I was puzzled so I contacted my Guru, Harry Luther. He pointed me towards *A. maculata*.

There was yet another formula that caught my eye only this time I know a bit its history. First I must remind you that plants, the same as humans, only need one mother and one father to produce babies. Here is the formula Vriesea Royal Hawaiian series x var gigantea. There is a species called *Vriesea gigantea* so we can guess father but what about mother? Now she is interesting as the following will show Vriesea 'Basic's Royal Hawaiian' We do not have a definitive photo because they were raised from seed sent by Sharon Petersen in Hawaii obtained from her 'Royal Hawaiian' and the seedlings raised by Cheryl Basic were a varied bunch as can be expected. Some keen purchasers realised that they could not be called 'Royal Hawaiian' and registered their clone under a different name. There are currently seven of these on file. Many others ignored the problem so there are many plants being grown in Australia called 'Royal Hawaiian' but are not. Some have the name and a clone number which should alert the grower to the fact it is not the David Shiigi's hybrid.

If you have a plant called 'Royal Hawaiian' that has broad strap-like glyph leaves but does not look like David Shiigi's photo on the BCR and you consider it was Australian born, then consider 'Basic's Royal Hawaiian'. On the other hand, if your plant called 'Royal Hawaiian' has pointed (attenuate) discolored leaves with faint glyph markings and looks very similar to 'Nissa' then this is now recorded as 'Aussie Royal Hawaiian'

While we are on the subject of formulas and parents what is more important, the cultivar name or its parents?



Vriesea Royal Hawaiian series x var gigantea

There were two showy Tillandsias on display one called 'Cooroy' and the other 'Cooran' - both Margaret Paterson hybrids- and one had its photo taken and I got it as T. 'Cooroy' and another photo which had (jucunda x stricta) on the back of the label and you may say, what is wrong with that? The problem is that these parents lead us to 'Cooran'. As is usual with such problems I do not rely on memory and check. The owner assures me that the right parents are on the right labels for both plants. Such is the problem of growing hybrids with similar sounding name and similar inflorescences. In the old days when species were more common you had some chance of identifying from the botanist's description.



Tillandsia 'Cooroy'

We talked about CITES which many of you would be unfamiliar with. In 1973 it was felt that destruction of native flora and fauna could be curtailed by restricting world trade in certain endangered species. At the time I could understand how this could protect wild animals but was critical on including plants because plants produce seed by the thousand. In 1992 plants were being looked at very closely and due to the efforts of Harry Luther and others only 7 Tillandsia species out the whole Bromeliaceae were on the restricted list. In contrast to this, all species of Cactaceae were restricted. Both these families are widely cultivated and Bromeliaceae is a bit larger in a count of species. I have to smile because in Cactaceae they love to change definitions of what comprises a genus. This was even before DNA became a buzz-word. So these days it is almost a yearly event to see a new list of Cactaceae that are on the restricted list.

What brought this up? Well, Ray Clark had brought in a Tillandsia sprenzeliana. This species had been grown from seed in Qld some 25 years ago and were considered somewhat of a rarity and you could get a plant for \$50. It was even suggested there were more of these plants in Australia than could be found in Brazil mainly because its habitat at that time was part of a spreading metropolis. T. sprenzeliana was on CITES and all the more reason to look after it carefully. T. sprenzeliana and T. kautskyi were taken off CITES in 2013 at the request of Brazil. To me, it seemed a strange request because both species are still rare but an answer may be national pride. We know that these days to get a plant out of Brazil officially is a near impossibility and they do have many areas designated as floral reserves so why do you need CITES as further protection?

The only Bromeliads currently on CITES are *T. harrisii*, *T. kammii*, *T. mauryana*, and *T. xerographica*. All are from the Mexico/ Guatemala area. CITES has applied for 24 years but has it succeeded in conserving these species compared to those not on CITES. Because of my interest in conservation you can see why I encourage all seed raisers to concentrate on propagating species. Ones who have great ability in this area regrettably have a conviction that any hybrid is automatically better than a species.

Finally, I heard the name *Neoregelia* 'Dirty Gerty' mentioned which not only is a strange name for a *Neoregelia* but one I had not remembered from the past. Nobody came to the rescue by saying that was a Margaret Paterson hybrid and had me muttering to myself all the way home! We do know now that Gerty did not tell us who father was.

Adelaide Royal show

After many years absence our Society again participated in the Royal show with a garden themed display of Bromeliads. There were many compliments given especially the range of shapes, sizes & colour variations on show.

Over 500 sales flyers were distributed and it will be interesting to see how many maintain their enthusiasm and come along to our sales weekend. There were numerous questions from those already growing 'hooked' on Bromeliads with some relieved to have details on where they can purchase more. Many thanks to the volunteers supporting this. *Bev*



Our display from one angle (Photo Bev)



Roving Reporter September 2016

Before the meeting even got started I was in heavy discussion with the Kadina lot. Does the bromeliad offsetting technique mean they last forever, or do they have a lifespan. We know that in the wild there is nobody around to take off offsets and plant them elsewhere and that plants rely on seed to continue the genetic pool. The parent plant gets bigger until it eventually falls to the ground and dies. We know that humans do not all live to the same age and then fall off the twig. Are plants the same? We thought about hybrids and how some kept cropping up over the years but others seemed to disappear for ever. We thought about *xCrytbergia* (now *xBiltanthus*) which has been around for over 70 years. You would have to beat it to death with a stick. We thought about *Tillandsia* 'Nez Misso' where we do not even know its parents or whether it originated in Germany but it has been around Australia for say 50 years with its exciting grey flowers but it still survives.

We could have thought of *Billbergia* 'Chas Webb' which goes back 90 years! But then what happened to the many Margaret Paterson hybrids that were sold off at our meetings some 5 years ago. Did they die from natural causes or by human neglect or just disappear from sight.

Following on from this you may recall during 'Business' our President commenting on the problems of running an exhibition with another plant group. Yes, they can bring in Broms to help out but these come, of necessity, from the back of their shadehouse. They know their priorities!!

Knowing your priorities is also evident where newly purchased plants are given the best positions in your shadehouse. In our consumer world if it is new it must be good. This has my Margaret grumbling because plants that she got in the heydays of Grace Goode are just as good if not better than their 'new' replacements. So many of the oldies are relegated to the back of the shadehouse and inevitably have a loss of colour and vibrancy. Not only do these oldies get relegated they are the first to be sold off. This can manifest itself on our sales tables where you would expect the plants to sell themselves rather than having to be sold!

The popular plant went to Mike from Kadina with his well grown Neo 'Blushing Zebra'. For those interested this said to have a pedigree of great grandmother (carolinae variegated x 'Hannibal Lector') x Grandfather 'Norman Bates' to get mother which was crossed with 'Joao Marao'. Many of these names occur in different combinations to produce other Skotak hybrids of these 'mini' variegated cultivars, so you are expected not to lose the label if you try to understand their supposed differences.



Neo 'Blushing Zebra' (Photo J. Batty)

Growing from seed can be great fun but if you grow from seed from a hybrid you can expect a myriad of differences from the mother who produced the seed pod. If you do this you must select the best from the resultant seedlings if you are tempted to let them loose to others. Otherwise chaos will rule. Hans from Aldinga is one who likes to grow from seed and was asking about seed raising boxes. I am trying to convince him to get a computer because there is much data on the internet. Growing Bromeliads from seed means you inevitably have a pot full of grasslike seedlings which you can leave for years in the same pot. Only when you transplant and give them room to grow will anything happen. So you can have say 50 seedlings or a few ready for maturity and subsequent flowering.

The main talk was lead by Adam on Mini's. Any mini's, from *Tillandsia* to *Guzmania* to *Neoregelia*. One that caught my eye was a large clump of *Deuterocohnia* which some might say was not mini but each plantlet in the clump was very small. If I was a splitter I would have called it 'Chlorantha' because the leaves had many 'feathery' spines.

Adam had brought in a few 'Mini' guzmanias. In recent years there has been a rage in Europe for smaller colourful pot plants and hybridists rose to the challenge by producing small guzmanias. In fact there are 42 names in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register with Mini in front such as 'Mini Alexa'. But Adam's plants did not have 'Mini' in their name. Are they really mini?

Roving Reporter September cont:

They looked smaller than those that Adam generally brings in to get his share of Oh's and Ah's. But are they true 'mini's'? I do know that Herb Plever in New York has had problems with those called Mini. Herb kept getting medium sized plants which he put down to his feeding habits (plant feeding!). I also have suspicions that they use gas to set off premature flowering.

Adam did ask what constituted a mini *Neoregelia* and Peter Hall said we looked at 200mm diam as a guide. To me some brought in what looked bigger than a mini but who had an engineer's eye. I am reminded in my early days at the age of 10 when I showed Chrysanthemums and the judges had hoop things. If it failed the hoop test you were disqualified! We know that Peter can make a thingie called a Praying Mantis on which he had attached tillandsias so perhaps he could make a couple of hoops for us unbelievers. Margaret had brought in 3 plants that she felt were examples of these 'mini's' and all had substantial stolons. One in particular sprawled all over the place. Interesting reading follows

Neoregelia 'Perdita' by Derek Butcher and Geoff Lawn Journ Brom Soc 59(1): 32-33. 2009.

The search for the true *Neoregelia punctatissima* continues.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave when trying to identify current collections with 'old' names. *Neoregelia punctatissima* is just one. This is a long name and easily mis-spelt but continues to be used to breed all sorts of small neoregelias

It all started in 1954 when Ruschi described this species originally as a *Nidularium!*

Problem one

In 1974 there was a *Neoregelia punctatissima* based on the photograph in the Journal of the Bromeliad Society 24(6):197. 1974 that had been taken by W. W. G. Moir of Hawaii.

In 1979 in Flora Neotropica Lyman Smith says 'doubtfully in cultivation'

In 1983 in J. Brom Soc 33(5)191-4, 223-4. 1983 Harry Luther said "All cultivated material is referred to *N.*

ampullacea

Prior to 1984 plants started coming from the USA to Australia as *N. punctatissima* and as Bill Morris pointed out in the Australian Journal - Bromeleter #2 p.8 (1984) there appeared to be no similarity between this plant and the formal description in Lyman Smith's Monograph. This misidentification remains to this day as evidenced by photographs sent to <http://fcb.org> for the Photo Index. All claims to having used this 'species' in hybrids has been covered in the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry by putting a?punctatissima as the parent. You cannot even use the Cultivar convention by using single quotes and starting with the name with a capital letter such as 'Punctatissima' because of homonym problems. This is why it was recorded in the Register as 'Punctate' from 2006 and appeared in J. Brom Soc 58(1): 20-21. 2008. There was also a 'Punctatissima Black' from those days in the 1980's. Again it could be better linked to *N. ampullacea* and is in the records as 'Punctate Black'

Problem two

Everyone growing *N.* 'Hannibal Lector' assumes that *N. punctatissima* was used as one parent – wrong! The plant used by Chester Skotak had been received from Rafael Oliveira in Brazil and appears to be yet another form of *N. ampullacea*. This particular clone is now known as 'Rafa'

Problem three

Just before 2000 Elton Leme acquired a plant from near Santa Teresa (Espirito Santo, Brazil) which he believed to be *N. punctatissima* and this got to the USA via Karl Green, then in turn got to Wally Berg and thence to Marie Selby Gardens. It was recorded as Selby 2000-089A with the provisional name from Wally Berg of 'punctatissima black'. The problem was that the plant did not seem to be the long lost *N. punctatissima* and is being treated by Selby Gardens as *Neoregelia* sp. In 2004 Geoff Lawn, our new Cultivar Registrar, was in the US for the World Conference and on the lookout for authentic species plants he could bring back to Australia. He brought home a Selby 2000-089A which survived the rigors of treatment and quarantine AND I was able to acquire an offset from him.

In December 2008 my plant flowered. I could see no link to the sparse information and drawing we had on *N. punctatissima* so I wrote to Harry Luther for advice. I got lots of 'probables' in his answer which did make sense because after all the only truly identified species is the herbarium specimen!! Collections made 50 years after the event have to be checked thoroughly.

Roving Reporter September cont:

Harry sees similarities with *N. tigrina* as long as we keep an open mind as to what we grow as the white-petalled *N. tigrina* (originally *N. albiflora* of Hort!). But there still seemed something odd as though Harry was talking about a different plant. Comparison of photographs gave us a shock because our plant bore no relationship to the photo of Selby 2000-089A. We have since found out that when AQIS supervised the ‘treatment’ they decided that the labels did not need to be fumigated too. So they became separated and we cannot link OUR plant ‘Selby 2000-089A’ to any sort of provenance. It does need some identity and Geoff feels that ‘Perdita’ meaning lost, is an apt name.

So the name Selby 2000-089A survives –see fig – and may eventually be given a proper species name. Our plant has no provenance and will be grown in Australia as *N. ‘Perdita’*.

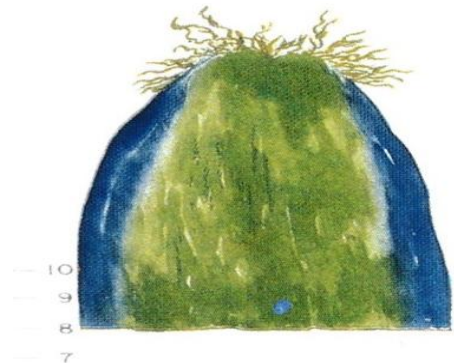
We did see a miniature *Billbergia* called B. ‘Poquito Mas’ but I still wait to see it in flower. So the challenge is out to owners and photographers to get your act in order. Kadina Mike wanted an immediate translation of the name which I had to decline but now know it means ‘More Little’ and perhaps Kadina might be the right place to flower it!

As far as mini *Tillandsias* go you cannot go past the subgenus *Diaphoranthema* and we had several on display. One unnamed plant could well be *T. tricholepis*. One that intrigued our photographer (and others) was called ‘Pitchfork’. It had been given this name by Paul Isley of Rainforest Flora for what he considered to be a unique form of *T. capillaris*. If you grow this with lots of water (and fertilizer) the stems will elongate and the stiff leaves at 45° may conjure up the similarity to a pitchfork.



T. capillaris ‘Pitchfork’ (Photo J. Batty)

Finally we return to where this article started out – Longevity. *Billbergia nutans* has been with us forever but how many realised it has whiskers at the end of the petals. We had a plant in flower at the meeting as part of the raffle so there was an opportunity to check out my claim. Julie, our photographer took a photo, which if you enlarge it on the computer, said whiskers can be seen. AND there were whiskers on the sepals too. Alas you would not be able see what I saw so you will have to make do with a painting! But then, if you have your own plant you can check for yourself!



GARDENING DATES FOR YOU DIARY

- ✓ Burra & Districts Open gardens 1/10/2016-2/10/2016
- ✓ ADELAIDE GARDENING & OUTDOOR LIVING SHOW 7/10/2016-9/10/2016
- ✓ Baroona Open garden in aid of Variety children charity 15/10/2016-16/10/2016
- ✓ S.A. Bonsai Society Exhibition & show 15/10/2016- 16/10/2016
- ✓ S.A. Geranium & Pelargonium Society Spring show 15/10/2016-16/10/2016
- ✓ South Australian Begonia Society Spring show 22/10/2016
- ✓ S.A. Iris Society Show 22/10/2016 – 23/10/2016
- ✓ Bromeliad Society of South Australia 22/10/2016-23/10/2016
- ✓ Spring Salvia Sale 30/10/2016
- ✓ Herb day 6/11/2016

REMINDER

It is that time again our Bromeliad extravaganza on 22/10/ & 23/10/2016. Come and help if you have some time or pop in & see what temptations there are.

NEXT ISSUE:

Look out for Len’s crossword on Bromeliads. Answers will be listed in our 1st Edition of 2017.

