

NEWSLETTER



APRIL/MAY 1993

THE GOLD COAST SUCCULENT AND BROMELIAD SOCIETY

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LIBRARIAN	John Catlan	
CATERING SUPERVISOR	Irene Small	
RAFFLES SUPERVISOR	Roy Wenzel	

MEETING DATES AND VENUE

Our meetings are always held at the Red Cross Rooms, 11th Avenue, Palm Beach on the second Saturday of each month starting at 1.30 pm.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MAY

8 Talk by Phyllis Hobbs on growing bromeliads

JUNE

5 & 6 Rotary Landscape and Garden Fair

12 Our regular meeting at the Red Cross Rooms, Palm Beach

JULY

10 Committee Meeting at 12.30 pm

10 Our regular meeting at the Red Cross Rooms, Palm Beach

AUGUST

14 Our regular meeting at the Red Cross Rooms, Palm Beach

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are the contributor's own and are not necessarily those of the Committee or the Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our March meeting was attended by 26 members. The Lucky Door Prize was won by Jeanette Henwood. A good time was had by all who attended and there were several hundred plants on offer for our first Cent Auction.

Roy, our hard-working Raffle Supervisor, was kept very busy which makes him a happy man and our society funds richer. We are endeavouring to build up our Library and the proceeds from this Cent Auction will be going to this project.

With the growth of our Society it has become necessary for someone to take control of the Sales Tables at our meetings. Doug Reilly has been approached to take on the position and he has accepted. Thank you, Doug. Our thanks also goes to Bev for standing in as our Secretary again as Genny was doing shift work.

We were invited to Mullumbimby for a Field Day on 24 April. We will have a report on that day in the next newsletter.

The Cent Auction was the idea of John Catlan and most of the plants were supplied by him and Genny. Our next Cent Auction will be held on 12 June. Please help by supplying plants so that we can keep up the good work started at our March meeting. The plants do not have to be bromeliads or succulents. The bromeliads do not have to be potted up as many of us have our own special mixes anyway. Please have a name on them if known - on a tag firmly tucked between the leaves or written on an outside leaf with a marking pen.

Our later Cent Auction will be held on 11 September. We will still have our Lucky Door Prize and Special Raffle on those days as well.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Cont)

Some of the plants at Show and Tell were:

Vriesea philippocoburgii, rodigasiana, saundersii

Guzmania Grapeade, petula

Hoya in hanging basket winding around a carnation trainer

*Neoregelia Fireball, Burbank, Prince of Darkness, red
concentrica, olens hybrid, olens*

Dyckia brevifolia

*Aechmea woronowii, fasciata albo-marginata, purpurea
variegata, Shining Light*

Cryptanthus Cascade

Tillandsia ionantha, tectorum, Nashville

DISPLAY

Rotary Landscape and Garden Fair is to be held at Carrara on 5 and 6 June. We will be having a display and selling plants there. Please prepare your plants now. There will be a 20% commission on sales, so price your plants with this in mind. As the display is over two days, would you let me know if and what time you can help man the display.

Mary

PLANT SALES

You can bring in your excess plants for sale at our meetings. They must be healthy plants and be named, if possible. They can be any kind of plant, not just succulents and bromeliads. There is a 10% commission to the Society on all sales.

Please see that you have a tag with your name and the price of the plant attached to each pot. The tags are available through the Society now. Make use of them and make Doug's work easier for him.

FRAGRANT TILLANDSIAS: TWO EXAMPLES

Mulford Foster wrote about fragrant tillandsias in the *Bulletin* for January-February 1956 and mentioned half a dozen species but gave special praise to Spanish moss. Dr Richard Oeser followed in 1967 with another such article and mentioned the same species but added *Tillandsia myosura* "group" and noted that *T. crocata* has "almost orange coloured flowers". Mr Foster called them "yellow". It would be useful to have a more recent list and discussion of these pleasant plants and we are working on one.

World Bromeliad Conferences are interesting events for many reasons. There are opportunities offered and opportunities taken. The observer who is not dashing around gets to see and compare people, speakers, events, and particularly to observe how the commercial dealers present their plants. One of the unexpected displays at the recent conference was a table full of fragrant *Tillandsia* species, an almost irresistible collection. The problem was to remember what one already had or which of several had survived. We bought five species with Jerry's smiling advice, have mounted some on cork and have others standing in clay pots waiting for the spirit to move. Other conferees seemed to have no difficulty in selecting plants. They bought anything and everything: high altitude, low altitude, desert, tropic, they all went. Back to the fragrance.

In the May 1992 Bromeliad Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of New South Wales there are two short items about fragrant tillandsias: *T. diaguitensis* and *T. richenbachii*. Paul Isley's book *Tillandsia* includes both photographs and discussions of these species. Now, is the time to review the home conditions of these plants and to consider their preferences. The following material is somewhat condensed from the original and where there are differences the Isley notes are preferred especially when one opinion says dry and the other says humid. They may both be right.

Tillandsia diaguitensis. Alberto Castellanos, one of our honorary trustees, described this plant in 1929. This somewhat slow-growing species is named for the pueblo Diaguitas, Argentina. It is a rock-grower found at 200-1600 metres above sea level in a temperate climate. It is a hardy plant with long, stiff stems of 12-25 cm (you must get acquainted with metric). When mounted, no matter in what direction, the plant will grow toward the light source. It likes bright light. Isley says that the white and fragrant flowers will develop only when given substantial humidity.

Tillandsia reichenbachii. J.G. Baker described this species and name it for the German botanist Reichenbach, a prolific 19th century orchid taxonomist who is not otherwise identified. This is another native of northern Argentina, and also of Bolivia. It is an epiphyte found at 200-2,000 meters growing on acacias or other bushes in company with *T. myosura* in wooded areas. It is like *T. duratii*, but smaller, in that its leaves grasp the branches of the host. The flower consists of three, pale violet petals with white centres. The inflorescence is upright and after flowering an offset forms beside the inflorescence gradually pushing it aside and taking over. The offset appears difficult to divide from the parent and Vic Prezetocki (who wrote the culture note) says he hasn't tried for fear of damaging the plant. It is a hardy plant that grows well under average conditions of bright light, frequent watering and consistent fertilisation during the growing season. Vic says that it should be allowed to dry out between watering.

We acknowledge with gratitude this information from the Bromeliad Society of West Australia, the Bromeliad Society of New South Wales, and P.T. Isley's book cited above.--TUL

*Reprinted from Journal of the Bromeliad Society
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GROWING CRYPTANTHUS

By Bev Collins

I thought I would write about my experience with growing Cryptanthus. Now I have always had a fascination with plants but they have always beaten me.

They don't like winter and everyone says "don't water over the top", but being the stubborn person that I am, I kept trying. Well I am finally winning the battle.

We built a bench in one area of a bush house on the western side. John was offered a lot of pots from a Nursery that was being torn down and among those pots were a lot of low wide pots that had been used for African Violets each Mothers Day. So I decided to try these pots for the Cryptanthus. Then I put a board on the ground at the front edge under the bench and lined all the plants along the board. This was done not long before last winter.

They have not had any special treatment. I probably broke all the rules. They were watered overhead when the Neoregelias were watered and had an occasional feed and except for one or two they thrived. For the first time, I had some very nice plants.

Now I have another problem, what do I do with all the offsets as some had six or seven at the last count and when I take those off I will get more.

So the moral of this story is: if I can do it, anyone can.

PHOTOGRAPH APPEAL

If you have an additional copy of photos of your Bromeliads in bloom, why not donate them to the Society's Library.

The goal is to have a compilation of photos in albums to help with future identification of plants.

So bring in those photos, please.

BROMELIAD CONFERENCE VII

9-12 April 1993

By Olwen Ferris

The Conference, held at the Robertson Gardens Motel, Brisbane, Queensland, has been a wonderful success.

One hundred and thirty delegates attended from USA, Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, West Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland along with speakers from the USA, Brazil and Australia.

The Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society members who attended were Genny Vaukonen, John Catlan, Rolly and Doug Reilly, Wendy and Graham Besgrove, Irene Small, Olwen Ferris, Terry Vogt and Jeanette Henwood.

Elton Leme, from Brazil, and Dennis Cathcart, from Florida, USA, gave very interesting colour slide illustrated talks on collecting plants in the wild and both have helped with some plant names.

John Higgins (Bromeliads in the Bush), Patricia Odea (Slide Show and Commentary) and Len Butt (Photographing your Bromeliads) of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland each gave talks on their respective topics and again showed many colour slides to illustrate their talks. John Catlan filled us in on his method of fertilising and inducing flowering in plants and also showed us a few slides.

The interstate speakers were Peter Tristram from Repton, NSW, with an interesting and amusing insight into bringing the plants from their habitat into cultivation. Bob Larnock, also from NSW, gave a very interesting talk on some of his hybrids.

On Saturday night, there was an official banquet where we had the opportunity to get better acquainted with fellow collectors and enthusiasts. During the banquet, a Rare Plant Auction was held with some lively bidding for the plants offered. This was followed by an interesting talk by Dennis Cathcart on Collecting Bromeliads in Central America.

Sunday was the bus trip firstly to the Brisbane Bromeliad Centre where the Mullers showed us around their varied collection. Later we were driven to the Glasshouse Mountains and up into the hills. We had lunch

at Maleny and then continued on to Grace Goodes. What a feast for our eyes and bargains to be picked up in the For Sale section. Dinner was held at the Big Pineapple and we arrived back at our Motel at about 9.00 pm.

At the end of the Conference, Len Trevor, President of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland officially closed the Conference and handed the Attendance Book, along with a cheque, to Len Colgan of the Bromeliad Society of South Australia as they will be organising Bromeliads VIII.

!! AMBUSHED !!

Life membership of a society, association, etc is usually bestowed on only a few for exceptional service, dedication and so on. Therefore, Evelyn and I were very surprised and greatly honoured to have received ours. Although we both feel that we have not yet begun to reach that station, so in the future years we will both endeavour to do so in our Society and elsewhere.

With all respect
Rolly and Evelyn Reilly

WELCOME

A big welcome to some new members:

Peter Ludswici
Dawn and Hank Roosen
Diana Lobb

Jeanette Henwood
Phyllis King

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due in October of each year. If you require postage of your newsletters, please forward 11 (eleven) current-price stamps.

Family - \$6.00
Single - \$4.00

LIBRARY BOOKS

Library books are available on loan for one (1) month only. Please return them so someone else can take the book out.

We are trying to build up our Library. The money raised by a cent auction in March will be of great use for this purpose. John is trying to get the old magazines together in folders as many of you are asking about them. They will soon be in the Library for your use.



IN THE NEWSPAPERS

Our lively 79 year old Cath was seen hopping around in her bunny suit bringing smiles from her Happy Group.

In the same paper, new member, Phyllis King, won a pennant at her garden club for her wonderful display of mixed produce.

ORDINARY RAFFLE

This is one way of making money for the Society. It is up to all of us to help by bringing in some plant/s when we have extra ones. It doesn't have to be a bromeliad, just something you would like to win yourself. Let us see if we can make this one good continuous raffle.

THE UNSEEN ROLE PLAYED BY THE JUNGLE ANT

Jack Percival

Of considerable interest to the plant scientist and hobbyist is the role the forest ant plays on the jungle floor as well as in the canopy high above in the tropical trees. While this relatively unnoticed creature has numerous interesting functions in the forest, we here in this short space shall restrict our observations and comments to the curious relationship of the ant and several bromeliads. As a postscript, the author will describe his Latin American experience in actually witnessing the ant and its explosively violent defence of the ant Acacia tree. The tropical ant has two small groups of collaborating bromeliads: one, a cluster consisting of several tillandsias, and the other, a few aechmeas.

The ant chews a small opening in the bulbous base of the tillandsia and moves in the chamber conveniently ample for storing food, resting, breeding, and raising young. It does not harm to the tissue of its host. Common it is to observe more than one kind of ant occupying the plant, each living in harmony but in separate sections. Also of benefit to the ant are the protection from predators the hardy tillandsia tissue structure furnishes, and the dry shelter from the severe rain storms, moisture and cold temperatures. On the other hand, the ant, in return for these benefits, not only provides nutritional supplements (from excrement of the colony and minerals from decayed insect victims) to the tillandsia but also furnishes physical protection from plant-eating insects such as the caterpillar, the worm, and the beetle. This is truly a partnership to excite the curiosity.

In the case of a few aechmeas such as *Aechmea mertensii* and *A. brevicollis*, it appears that they frequent the site of the ant nest in the ground floor of the forest and in the high canopy. One possible explanation for this rather odd teaming-up of a few select aechmeas and the ant-nest inhabitant is the fact that ants collect seeds of these aechmeas and carry them to their nest with the result that some of these seeds are not actually eaten by the ant but later germinate sending their roots deep into the nest securing permanent residency of the aechmea. In this co-operative setting, the bromeliad consumes nutrition from the nest and the ant benefits by having the large plant and its roots as a protective cover for its nest. This is a curious episode of the mysterious jungle and is unseen by the casual observer.

In the jungles of Costa Rica, the author actually witnessed another remarkable event of plant-ant united effort between a diminutive ant and the typical Ant Acacia tree. The very tiny ant bores a hole in the base of the acacia's sharp thorn on the branches and moves in as a permanent guest. The branches are literally covered with these menacing spikes. The ant is drawn to the acacia to feed upon a nutritional fluid the tree provides. In return for this favour, the ant assumes the role of a permanent guardian and is very efficient in its performance as such. If a branch is every so lightly touched or disturbed, the guardian ants burst forth from the thorns by the thousands and with the shocking speed of lightning literally cover a hand or leg and inflict devastating pain to the intruder. They not only have a stinging bite but they cling to the skin. If a growing vine approaches the tree or if a seedling sprouts nearby, the ants attack savagely and devour the culprit. All vegetation is eliminated from the area surrounding the tree thus assuring it good air circulation, adequate light and sunshine. It is a common sight to observe an acacia tree in the thick forest residing all by itself in a small clearing with no trace of vegetation nearby. This acacia oddity and the rarity of the plant-ant mutual co-operation are pictures of nature at its fascinating best.

*Reprinted from Journal of the Bromeliad Society
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PLANT ROSTER

We are now operating a roster to share the responsibility of bringing in plants for the Lucky Door Prize and the Special Raffle. If anyone other than the people rostered for that month would like to donate a plant, please feel free to do so. The plants do not have to be succulents or bromeliads.



JUNE

Lucky Door Prize: Cath Chumbley
Special Raffle: Roy Wenzel, Nez Pearce, Noelene McLauchlan

JULY

Lucky Door Prize: Graham Besgrove
Special Raffle: Pat Carpenter, Evelyn Reilly, Bev Collins

If you are unable to attend the meeting, either get the plant to someone to take it in for you or swap with someone else.

!! CONGRATULATIONS !!

Congratulations to new Grandparents. Grandsons to Bev and John Collins, and Athol and Mary Nicholson.

Belated Wedding Anniversary for Wendy and Graham.

Happy Birthday to Graham who is having a birthday on 10 June.

If you would like to have a birthday message put in the Newsletter, please just let us know. You don't have to tell us the year. This is your newsletter, make use of it.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*The absence of flaw in beauty
is itself a flaw.*

Henry Havelock Ellis

TRAVEL BUG

Irene, our Catering Supervisor is off to the Red Centre. Lucky girl!

Mack and Audrey McAlister are just back from Norfolk Island and have gone off to the family for a holiday to recover.

Graham and Wendy are heading of to Sydney again to help at the Autumn Show held by the Bromeliad Society of Australia. It won't be all work, because they'll be buying some more plants, of course.

WANTED URGENTLY

Could you please get pen to paper and write us a story, long or short on how you began collecting bromeliads, or your first attempt to grow bromeliads, or even the way you grow your favourite bromeliads.

There are many members who have a long distance to come to meetings so this is one way you can participate. This is your Newsletter. Let's try to make it better.

THE NO-PEEL PINEAPPLE

By Olwen Ferris

A new packaging technique keeps the sliced fruit in good condition with a shelf-life of three weeks.

Twin View Farms have started the processing plant. The pineapple can mature a little longer in the field, giving a sweeter fruit, that is much easier to serve.

The first fruit is now being sold down south. It does not involve any additional preservatives or chemicals.

HELP?

If you have a plant that you are not happy with the way it is growing, bring it in and our panel will help with ideas on what you can do different.

BUY AND SELL

If any members have plants they are looking for or plants to sell, tell us. We will put it in the newsletter for you. This is your newsletter, make it work for you.

ITEMS FOR SALE

POTS	125 mm squat pot	25c
	140 mm	30c
	165 mm	40c
LABELS	10 for	50c
PENCILS	\$2.50	each
SALES STICKERS	5¢ each or 10 for 50¢	
	Available from the	Treasurer, Jum Daniels
SOCIETY BADGES	\$3.00 each	
	Available from the	Treasurer, Jum Daniels
BOOK	"Bromeliads for Everyone" by Bea Hanson -	\$3.50

WHO AM I?

Don't forget, anyone who has a mature plant or one in flower but doesn't know it's name, our experts are here to help identify it for you.

Did you know that, after working in the garden, a way to get your hands clean is to pour a little sugar and olive oil into your hands, rub vigorously and then rinse.

Hints by a Non Grower