



# East London Bromeliad Society

## South Africa

NEWS  
LETTER  
June  
2018

Established: 25 July 2009

*Our aim is to promote and encourage awareness and interest in Bromeliads in East London and all of South Africa!*

ELBS SA is an Affiliated Society  of Bromeliad Society International

## The May Meeting in a Lovely Bromeliad Garden

What a wonderful venue we had for the May meeting held at the home of Brenda and Bryan Wegner in Nahoon Valley. It is always an extra special treat to visit Brenda's garden, it has been one of the Pam Golding Gardens of East London Show gardens and deserves all the oohs and aahs it gets! Beautifully landscaped and packed with loads of many varieties of stunningly maintained bromeliads laid out in areas requiring sun or shade. There are also some cycads and aloes featured. Brenda told us all about how she got started with bromeliads and built her garden up over the last 14 years into the showpiece it is today. Enjoy some of the photos included here and enjoy reading Brenda's Bromeliad Journey, I like the way she has called it My Journey so Far... there is always lots more gardening to do and broms to collect. We also had a few species for Show and Tell this month and the usual draws and announcements and then an opportunity to enjoy tea and an interesting time looking at the many varieties of bromeliads in the garden.



Our hosts for the meeting, Bryan and Brenda Wegner in part of their lovely front garden.

## My Bromeliad Journey so Far - Brenda Wegner

The year was 2003 and Bryan and I would usually go for a Sunday afternoon drive. We would often stop and look at houses that were on show and for sale. It was something I really enjoyed doing. We had met an agent who called us on occasion and showed us a few properties. One day in April 2004 she phoned



to say that there was this house in Nahoon Valley that a chap wanted to sell urgently, as he wanted to buy a Spur in Botswana. On walking up the driveway we were immediately impressed. There was no garden as such, as the house had been rented for quite a while. It had some large trees around the boundary so there

**Next Meeting: Sunday 24th June at 2 for 2.30pm. Hosted by Dr Pete Pfister at 113 Beacons Drive, Beacon Bay. Don't forget to bring your chair if you want a seat.**



was something to work with. There were no boundary walls and no gate. The only walls were between us and the neighbour and at the back of the property around the swimming pool area.

I could visualise all the changes that I wanted to make inside and out and we were both excited about moving and starting a project as we were feeling a bit bored. We put in an offer, which to our surprise was accepted and we moved in at the end of June 2004.

We lived in the house for almost a year to get the feel of what we would like to change. Then the hard work began. The cement floors in the first bedroom (now the TV lounge) and the lounge had dropped by a few inches so these had to be dug up and re-laid. We took out klinker brick walls between the lounge, dining room, kitchen and first bedroom to make the area open plan. Then the new kitchen went in. Three nights were spent without a front door, just a security door leaning against the frame with pots and pans hanging on it as a warning, hopefully. Then eventually came the walls and palisade fence and gate. It was tough living in the house while these alterations were taking place, never again.

In the first year I put pots around the pool area as there was so much paving. They were planted with petunias, impatiens and other flowering annuals. (Today they are filled with bromeliads). We had brought a lot of the very popular bromeliads like *Billbergia pyramidalis*, *Neoregelia* 'Fancy Free' and a few *Aechmea* varieties from our previous house and these went into the front garden and into what is now my *Guzmania* section. I decided to go water-wise and started putting in aloes and succulents. My dad passed on a few cycads as well. There were still a lot of gaps that needed filling and this is when the bromeliad bug really started to bite.

Having Lyn Wegner as my sister-in-law and seeing all the fascinating and stunningly beautiful bromeliads in her garden over the years can only inspire one to become addicted. I always get so excited when I know her imports are going to arrive. We can spend an hour or two walking around her garden. So usually when visiting I don't go away empty handed. Bryan always says 'You're not going to buy any more today, are you? we are running out of space.' But when you see a new one flowering, who in their right mind can resist. The form, colouration, banding, spots, stripes are enough to send one into a tizz.

Some bromeliads multiply very quickly and I just couldn't part with them so that's when I started mounting/ attaching them to trees and palms. I could go higher but it gets a bit scary up the ladder and I'd hate to fall and injure myself, not fun landing in a bed of thorny broms. The beds are getting wider and wider to accommodate my addiction. I've tried to group my *Guzmania*, *Vriesea* and *Nidularium* together in the shadier parts of the garden. I have mixed the sun loving bromeliads all together to give a colourful display. Most of them are in pots which makes it easier to split or move them around.

Just some of my bromeliad highlights were attending the World Bromeliad Conference in New Orleans in 2010 and then going on to Florida and visiting Michael and Donna Kiehl's fabulous nursery in Venice, Dennis Cathcart's Nursery, 'Tropiflora' in Sarasota and Grant Groves Nursery, 'Color Zone Tropicals' in Winter Gardens.



How things have changed, before and 14 years later photos of the house and looking down towards Brenda's garden next to the gate area.



Members enjoying the garden. Right, a stunning display of *Guzmania* in the shady area of the back garden.





His stunning *Guzmania* hybrids made a lasting impression.

I went to the 'Cool Broms' Conference in Auckland, 2013 and meeting and mingling with some world renowned bromeliad collectors and hybridizers was really special. On the way to Auckland we stopped over in Thailand and visited 'Nong Nooch' and their bromeliad garden was fabulous. This is where I got the idea of raising my pots on poles. I was blown away at 'Gardens by the Bay' in Singapore with their two huge domes housing plants and trees from around the world and huge vertical structures called Supertrees, which had bromeliads, orchids and other epiphytic plants attached to their 'trunks'.

Much to my delight, my daughter Tara and son in law Tim have also become bromaholics and my birthday, Christmas and Mother's Day gifts are now some special bromeliads. What more could a mother wish for!!!!

I was never that interested in gardening but right from the beginning when we first got married and moved into our first house, Lyn would encourage me to plant in pots and the garden. Now if I don't manage to get into the garden or potter around, I start having withdrawal symptoms and start feeling a bit glum. 14 years ago I did not imagine I would become so involved with bromeliads let alone join a society. I have learned so much and there are still many miles to go. The passion keeps you motivated.

## Show and Tell

**Dr Pete Pfister** showed a hybrid, *Wittrockia* 'Leopardinum' discovered in late 1800 near Rio de Janeiro. Grows up to 1.5m wide and 80cm high. Takes up to 15 years to flower!!!! It is cold hardy, tolerant of tropical conditions and adaptable to a range of light levels. It has never been rediscovered in a natural habitat!! A cultivar of *Wittrockia gigantea*. The variegated form is very rare. It has a dark blood red flower. There are seven species in this genus.



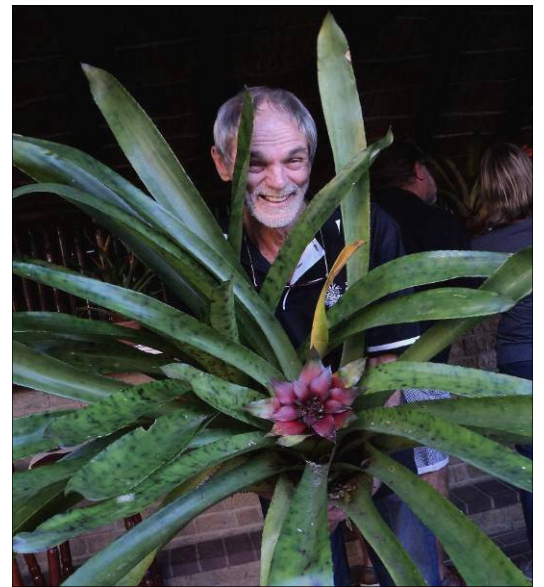
The inflorescence of Pete's *Wittrockia* 'Leopardinum'.

**Barbara Black** showed *Vriesea ensiformis* var. *bicolor*. A lovely medium sized plant which I have had for many years and grow in shade with bright morning light. It likes high humidity and subtropical conditions. Distribution: Native to Brazil: Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. Habitat: It is epiphytic and found in rainforests. (Epiphytic: a plant that derives its moisture and nutrients from the air and rain through its leaves and grows usually on another plant/tree, the roots being used to anchor it onto the host.) This variety of *Vr ensiformis* var. *bicolor* has orange/red bracts shading to yellow at the tips, it is slightly more tender than *Vr. ensiformis* which has only red bracts, so it says in the book I used to get the information. The actual flowers emerge from each bract, they are yellow and tubular.

Bicolor – refers to the inflorescence bracts which have 2 colours instead of the *Vr ensiformis* which has just a plain red inflorescence. The flower spike colour lasts for a long time in the garden. I don't fertilise my plants. I like to let them grow into clumps in a pot.



Brenda in discussion with some of the committee members after the meeting, Xenia Winther, Marianne Hillstead, Dudley Reynolds and Dr Pete Pfister.



Pete with his *Wittrockia* 'Leopardinum'



Barbs' *Vriesea ensiformis* var. *bicolor*.





Brenda's *Aechmea constantinii*

**Brenda Wegner:** I was so thrilled to receive this *Aechmea constantinii* as one of my Mother's Day gifts, but have not been able to find much information on it. Originally named *Aechmea stelligera*. From Brazil. Flowers can reach over 1 m high, leaves over 1m long. From a study it is suggested that *A. constantinii* is pollinated by Hummingbirds since these birds execute direct frontal visits to the flowers touching the reproductive structures. The identification of pollen on the bodies of bees and butterflies is an indication that these species may exert an influence as secondary pollinators too.



Dudley's *Deuterocohnia brevifolia*

**Dudley Reynolds** showed *Deuterocohnia brevifolia*. (maybe *D. abstrusa* formerly *D. lorentziana*) It is a species native to Bolivia and North Western Argentina. The small, spiny succulent rosettes eventually grow into big clump shapes or mounds called: 'pollster'. This plant enjoys strong sunlight and must be grown in a free draining medium. Small green flowers emerge throughout the winter. I need to move mine into more sun.



Dudley's mounted *Aechmea correia-araujo* with more pups developing.

**Dudley** also showed the species *Aechmea correia-araujo* which is endemic to the rainforests of Bahia Brazil. The amazing leaf foliage of dark green to purple markings are well defined on glossy green leaves which are visible on both sides of the leaves. A long slender inflorescence is on a long spike emerging from the cup. A strong epiphyte which resembles *Ae. orlandiana*. I brought an *Aechmea orlandiana* cv. 'Gold Tone' just to demonstrate the difference in the inflorescence from the short inflorescence of the other *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties to the long slender one of *Aechmea correia-araujo*.



The Unlucky Draw winners to do tea duty this month went to Val Nel and her daughter Caryn Dunlop, thank you ladies !

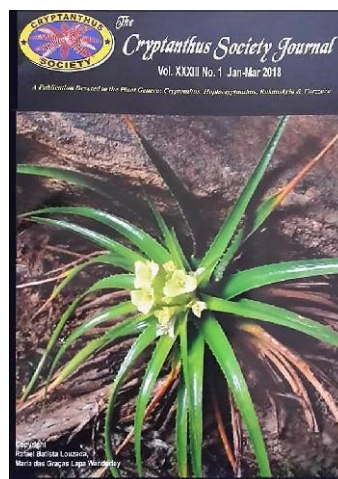
## Library Book Review - Brenda Wegner



**The Cryptanthus Society Journal** - Vol. XXXIII No.1  
Jan – Mar 2018

An interesting little booklet produced four times a year packed with interesting information about *Cryptanthus*. Some of the topics in this edition: "Cryptanthoid Complex" Part III; "Planet Cryptanthus"; Affiliate Show Reports; New Cultivar Registration; Earth Star Exchange; Photos of Habitat-*Lapanthus duartei*.

If you are interested in taking out any of the resources we have in the library please contact Brenda and she can bring a selection to the meeting for you to take out on loan.



The selection of plants supplied by members for the local raffle winners to choose from.



## Member News

- A big welcome to new local members, Marianne Hillstead and Terrence and Wendy Reynolds.

## Thanks

- Brenda and Bryan Wegner for hosting the May meeting.
- Val Nel and Caryn Dunlop for winning the 'Unlucky Draw' and being on tea duty.
- Barbara Black for Lucky Draw plants.
- Dr Pete Pfister for Give-away plants.

## Congratulations to the May Raffle Winners!

- Elna Smit chose *Vriesea fenestralis*.
- Lynn Friend chose *Guzmania lingulata*.
- Dr Pete Pfister chose *Neoregelia* 'Red River'.
- Bev Reynolds chose *Vriesea hieroglyphica*.
- Phillip Visagie from Centurion chose *Tillandsia leonamiana* x 'Houston'.
- Kathy and Allan Botha from Port Elizabeth chose *Neoregelia* 4873-18 x 'Victory'.
- Danie Taljaard from Cape Town chose *Neoregelia* 'White Wedgewood'.
- Adele and Beurich Groenewald from Cape Town chose *Neoregelia* 'Big O'.

- **Lucky Draw Winners:**

- Xenia Winther
- Gordon and Vilma Murray
- Sue Pema



The 'olive lady' was in business at tea time, Lorraine Parathyras with new member, Marianne Hillstead.



Above, Elna Smit and Lynn Friend and below Dr Pete Pfister and Bev Reynolds with their raffle wins!



## From the Chairman Dudley Reynolds



Thank you to Brenda and Bryan Wegner for hosting a well attended May meeting in your magical garden. A big thank you to Brenda for sharing your Bromeliad Journey with us.

When I got home after the meeting I noticed that one of my plants, *Neoregelia*

'Groves Red Tiger' was missing from my For Sale area. If anyone saw this plant or has any information with regards to its where-abouts, please let me know.

One would expect a gardening magazine to research and give its readers accurate information on plants in its articles. I purchased a copy of 'The Gardener South Africa' June 2018 edition. I was pleased to see quite a few bromeliad photos in various articles in the magazine. However, the information in the paragraph on *Neoregelia* was incorrect. It read as follows: '*Neoregelia* is the largest genus of bromeliads with around 90 species, each varying in colours and combinations of colours.' Well, that made me very irritated, as the genus *Neoregelia* is the 7th largest genus in the bromeliad family with approximately 120 species. When I pondered on this, I thought they might have meant that the genus is large, having more than 7000 hybrids. But they couldn't have, as they mentioned 90 species. Well for what it's worth, I will send them an e-mail with the correct information. I thought I must set the record straight. I just feel sad for those readers who are often misinformed about bromeliads in this magazine. Until next time, happy bromming !



It was good to see Danie Conradie popping in to the meeting.

## From the Committee

Our 9th Birthday Bash and the AGM are coming up at the end of July. The meeting is guaranteed to be FUN! We are hoping to welcome some new blood onto the committee, with some fresh ideas to assist us in continuing to remain relevant, fun and interesting as we all learn about these wonderful plants together. Any members interested in standing, please chat to one of the existing committee members! It is NOT an arduous

job. We hold the committee meetings outdoors most times at Lavender Blue the Tuesday morning after each meeting where we plan, talk and order a delicious brunch afterwards! You do not have to be a committee member to attend these meetings either! All ELBS SA members who are interested, are very welcome to join us. The more the merrier as far as ideas and information are concerned to assist with valued content at the meetings for you, the members. Just remember, if you wish to nominate someone onto the committee, please ensure you discuss it with them before nominating them. Don't hold back!

## Upcoming Society Events

**Sunday 24th June:** Dr Pete Pfister will be our host for the meeting at 113 Beaconhurst Drive in Beacon Bay. 2.00 for 2.30pm. Please bring your own chair if you want a seat and a mug and spoon if you don't want to use our styrofoam variety. Topic: Lyn Wegner will be giving feedback on her trip to the WBC 2018 in San Diego.

**29th July:** ELBS SA 9th Birthday celebration hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner in Sunnyridge.

**26th August:** Mike and Mandy Godfrey in Beacon Bay.

**30th September:** Travelling meeting, David Gower and Paul Webb, both in Beacon Bay.

**28th October:** Michael and Zena McClaren in Vincent.

**25 November:** End of year Christmas Bring and Braai. We are looking for hosts for this event.

## Upcoming International Conferences

**2019: 'Golden Broms'** 17-20 October 2019 Hosted by the Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society Inc. at the Sea World Resort on the Gold Coast. This will be the 20th Australasian Bromeliad Conference. For contact information go to the conference website at [www.goldenbroms.com](http://www.goldenbroms.com)

**2021:** This bi-annual **Australasian Bromeliad Conference** will again be hosted by The New Zealand Bromeliad Society. **'Kiwi Broms'** April 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> 2021, venue Waipuna Hotel. Start saving now!

## From the Editor



I don't know about you, but it has been decidedly pinchy around the Eastern Cape the last while, with some particularly ferocious days/nights with cold fronts coming up from Cape Town and snow falling on the high lying mountains, we have certainly felt it in East London. It is good to know that the Cape has finally had some seasonal rains to begin to relieve the drastic drought situation. Lets hope there is much more over the winter months.

Lots of large *Aechmea* varieties have sent out colourful flower spikes as well as *Guzmania* making a happy display. I am most happy to see the inflorescence on what was known as *Aechmea ornata* var. *nationalis* and now named *Aechmea* 'Nationalis' Marginated. This is only the second time I have had this bromeliad flowering in our garden after many years. It originates from Brazil and I grow it in full sun and boy, it has a lethal spike on the end of each leaf! It is a super brom to have, for its eye catching variegated foliage, so the inflorescence is like a bonus! The colour show doesn't last long as the tiny flowers open row by row and move up towards the top. It is fascinating to watch. I know Brenda has one blooming now too, so the conditions must be just right for it.

I would love to hear from members about what is happening in your bromeliad collections wherever you are in South Africa or further afield. Do consider sending some photos of your current favourites to share with the members in the newsletter. By sharing we all learn something.

The next meeting we will be welcoming Lyn Wegner back from her trip to the WBC in San Diego!!! She will be doing a presentation of her trip! It will be the first time we will be using our new projector too, so that Lyn can show photos as well as tell us all the news. See you in Pete's garage and lovely garden for a super interesting and entertaining Sunday afternoon later this month. In the meantime, happy bromming....

*Barbs*



*Aechmea* 'Nationalis' Marginated

*Aechmea ornata* by Derek Butcher - Sept 2017. Was *Aechmea ornata* var. *nationalis*. "Now is the time for var. *nationalis* to bite the dust and be replaced by the cultivar name of *Aechmea* 'Nationalis'. This is in line with my crusade to treat plants found in the wild with variegated leaves as cultivars which I started in Die Bromelie 2: 62. 2013"

It is listed on the BSI Cultivar Register as *Aechmea* 'Nationalis' Marginated. There is also *Aechmea* 'Nationalis' Median which has green edges on the leaves with white in the centre.



This is a publication for the **East London Bromeliad Society, South Africa** for the interest of its members. Articles may be used by non profit societies with acknowledgement to the author where applicable and East London Bromeliad Society South Africa. Please use the photos that accompany the article used. If you require higher resolution photos please request them from the Editor.

Any opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Society.

When submitting items for inclusion in this newsletter, please ensure that all facts and information, including spelling, is checked and accurate.

**ELBS SA is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International.**

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*We meet on the last Sunday of every month at 2.00 for 2.30pm, January to November, at various venues around East London. We have a topic for each meeting and Show and Tell where members are encouraged to bring along their brag or problem plants. There are member raffles, lucky draws for those present, tea time, library and member plant sales, plus a monthly newsletter sent out via e-mail only. Visitors are always welcome and can attend three meetings before they will need to join the society in order to continue attending. Annual subs are R120.00 for individuals/families and R60 for students.*

**Committee Members 2017/18**

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Peter Cook from Sunnybroms (Australia) has very kindly created a link to ELBS SA newsletters on their web page: <https://bromeliadnewsletters.wordpress.com/east-london-south-africa/>

- You can access all the back copies from 2016 of the ELBS SA Newsletters
- The first of the BSI BCR genus changes and cultivar changes generated via DNA studies compiled by Derek Butcher the BSI Cultivar Registrar.

 You will find ELBS on Facebook: [eastlondonbssa@groups.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/eastlondonbssa/) or type 'East London Bromeliad Society' into the fb search bar. You can request to join the group and will then be able to upload your photos and comments on the wall. The ELBS SA page and other bromeliad related sites are a useful and informative forum to share and 'meet up' with other like-minded bromeliad folks.

You can view most of all the bromeliads mentioned in meetings or in the newsletter at the following websites:

The BSI's official Bromeliad Cultivar Registry [www.registry.bsi.org](http://www.registry.bsi.org) which is maintained by Geoff Lawn, the BSI Cultivar Registrar. Plus other information regarding the Bromeliad Society International is found at bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: [fcbs.org](http://fcbs.org) This is a very useful site to reference many bromeliads where you can clarify identification or just trawl through the site and add to your wish list!

Encyclopedia of Bromeliads - <http://bromelia.club> (Bromeliad Taxonomists and Growers Society) has photographs. It also now has keys for the genera and sub-genera. If you like to be informed what is happening, just follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia> Just type in 'Encyclopediad of Bromeliads' into the Facebook search bar.

For internet resources you can also go to TAXON (The New Bromeliad List) for the most authoritative and right up to date list of genera and species, accepted and new names and taxonomic keys - <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php> or just type in 'New Bromeliad Taxon List', it's much easier!