



Bromelcairns

Bimonthly Newsletter of Cairns Bromeliad Society Inc. 2015 # 3
P.O. Box 28 Cairns Queensland 4870 Australia

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Honorary Life Member - Grace Goode O.A.M.

Honorary Life Member - Kay Edington

Life Member - Lynn Hudson

Life Member - Robert (Bob) Hudson

Aims of the Society

**Promote and Develop Interest in Bromeliads through Friendship
To Co-operate with similar Clubs throughout the World**

Membership Fee: \$15 Single, \$25 Family, Country Member \$25.
\$7.50 junior (if not in family membership)

Meetings start at 1.pm sharp first Saturday of the month.

Please bring a cup and a chair.

Library: All books & magazines borrowed are to be returned in good order to the following meeting. If not on wait list, they may be rebooked.

Plant Display/Sales: To participate, a member must be financial and circumstances permitting, have attended at least three meetings in the past six months.

Where the society is charged a stall fee - 20% of sales are deducted for club funds.

No charge venue & meetings - 10% of sales is deducted.

All plants to be clean, free of disease, named and price tagged.

Show Plants: Must be the property of and in the custody of the entrant for the past three months. For Society Shows the entrant must be financial and have attended at least three meetings during the past six months.

Pens, Plant Tags & Pots: available at each meeting.

If reprinting article, wholly or in part, please acknowledge Author & Newsletter.

Any article &/or Bromelcairns will be Emailed on request to

lynnie@ledanet.com.au

or lynnhudson@bromeliadsdownunder.com



Club Activities & Around the Members

MAY from my excellent Assistant Jo: This month we had Cairns Botanic Gardens Curator, David Warmington speaking of the new Conservatory being constructed where the Fernery and the George Watkins Orchid House was situated. He invited input from the society on how the bromeliad collection will be displayed and genera selection. He discussed the possibility for there to be site recognition for any input offered from the society and a site visit was organised for any interested members.

MINI SHOW

Cryptanthus

- 1st *Cryptanthus* 'Arctic Storm' Dave Weston
 2nd *Cryptanthus* 'Elaine' – Marguerite Sexton
 3rd. *Cryptanthus* 'Imposter Red' – Brendan Leishman

POPULAR VOTE:

NOVICE Bromeliad

- 1st *Neoregelia* 'Alley Cat' – Matt Wilson'
 2nd. *Neoregelia* 'Painted Magnificence' – Kelly Knight
 3rd. *Neoregelia* 'Red Macaw' – Janie O'Brien

Cryptanthus

- 1st *Cryptanthus bueckeri* – Kelly Knight

OPEN - Bromeliad

- 1st *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman' – Brendan Leishman
 2nd. *Neoregelia* 'Bill Morris' – Darryl Lister
 2nd. *Dyckia* 'Taniwa' – Dave Weston

Cryptanthus

- 1st *Cryptanthus* 'Arctic Storm' Dave Weston
 2nd. *Cryptanthus* 'Elaine' – Marguerite Sexton
 3rd. *Cryptanthus* 'Imposter Red' – Brendan Leishman

Tillandsia

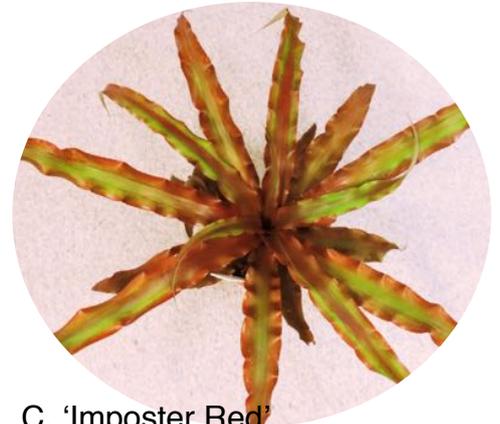
- 1st *Tillandsia velutina x fasciculata* – Marguerite Sexton
 2nd. *Tillandsia* 'Sumo' – Paul Venturi
 2nd *Tillandsiacapitata* yellow – Bob Hudson



C. 'Arctic Storm'



C. 'Elaine'



C. 'Imposter Red'



Till. velutina x fasciculata



Till. 'Sumo'



Till. capitata yellow



Quesnelia 'Tim Plowman'
Morris'

Neo.

'Sabbath' x 'Maya'

Neoregelia 'Bill

* Brendan's *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman' is really attractive. He said his secret is really good light but under shade cloth. The original plant is two years old, he let it grow and offset and it will lose the curls if over fertilised, with age the leaves widen.

* Darryl's *Neoregelia* 'Bill Morris' is 3-4 years old, huge with good colour and will develop more red markings as it nears anthesis. In 1958 Bill Morris grew *concentrica* seed he received from Adda Abendroth and one seedling was variegated. By selecting the strongest seedlings Bill produced this stable plant that was known for many years as *Neo. concentrica albomarginata*, to honour Bill, Derek Butcher named it in 1997.

* Dave showed *Dyckia* 'Taniwah' he brought back from New Zealand in 2013. It is really black with silver spines and receives afternoon sun, he grows it in an 8 inch pot and keeps the root system cool by placing it in a 10 inch pot.

* Steven showed *Neo.* 'Sabbath' x 'Maya' glowing and beautiful.

* Again the tillandsias were incredibly well grown, 9 entries with yellow predominating but Marguerite's *velutina x fasciculata* was the most popular. Members could not decide between Paul's perfect flowering 'Sumo' & Bob's *capitata* yellow. Nalda's *ionatha* was on fire and the delicate *straminea x malemontii* was flowering.

*It was excellent to see 5 well grown entries from the Novices. Each had good colour and were well presented.



Neo. 'Painted
Magnificence'



Neo. 'Ally Cat'



Neo. 'Red Macaw'



Crypt. buekeri.



Alcantarea - the wonderful, the beautiful, the sometimes very large bromeliad, has changed my life.

I did grow many bromeliad genera, all of which I found rewarding, but over time I found that it was the few *alcantarea* I grew that gave me most pleasure. I don't think it was only the delightful, luxury-leather feel to the leaves of mature *imperialis* types, or the fact they were spineless and didn't draw blood. What plant lover could resist the prospect of a beautiful inflorescence, possibly several metres tall and more than a metre wide, which may be delightfully perfumed as it produces massed flowers that drip the sweetest nectar that attracts birds to the garden over a period which may last months?

I will never forget seeing photographs on an internet plant forum taken by Rick Cairns of his small, potted, grass offsets and thinking to myself that I really wanted to raise baby *alcantarea* in the way Rick was doing. The next Saturday I went to the markets and bought a pair of cheap, old *Al. extensa* with around twenty-five large and small grass offsets on them and hurried home to get some practice at removing offsets.

With my newly purchased serrated-edged knife, I easily removed three or four of the largest and I proudly said to myself, "Hell you're good at this!" Of course I soon found that removing small pups intact from between and under the roots of the mother plants was much more difficult. But I was hooked and I still love removing grass pups. I have learned that if I plant my *alcantarea* high in the mix, they often produce more pups and that the pups don't have to be dug out from beneath the trunk of mother.

One day, I saw photos taken in New Zealand by Andrew Devonshire of his glossy-red, flowering specimen of the Andrew Malloy bred *Alcantarea* 'Red Ensign' (*Al. vinicolor* x *Al. imperialis*). It was love at first sight! I was sure that I had never seen a bromeliad more beautiful than this one, and then I realised I was going to have to learn about pollinating, because I just had to try hybridizing.

Now in 2015 I have few bromeliads that are not *alcantarea*. I have three-year-old 'Red Ensign' seedlings - my own - the seedlings raised from my first flowering and pollinating season of 2012-13, they are looking very promising with their early colour.

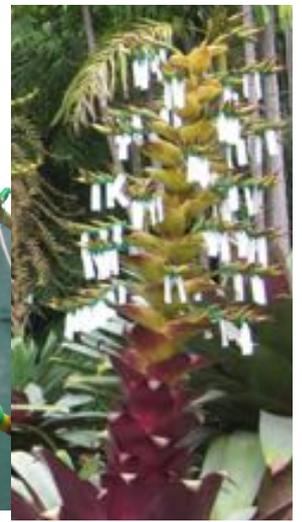




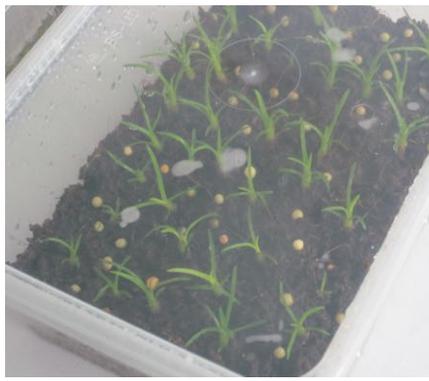
Alcantarea flower



Seed pods pollinated & tagged with parents name (John's Christmas Tree)



Seed



Seedlings



Grass pups = Adventitious offsets

Pots - I regularly repot seedlings and small grass pups through 75, 100, 150 and 200mm flat-bottomed, squat pots. I can flower grass pups of some of the large forms in 300mm pots in three years. Alcantarea develop a 'momentum' when re-potted. When re-potting is delayed they slow their growth rate and risk becoming pot-bound.

[When a bromeliad is potted or repotted it grows new roots and these force feed the plant. Ed]

Fertilizing - I believe that I am out of step with most growers because I like a high a N:P:K ratio (approximately 2:1:1) soluble fertilizer when plants are relatively small in 75mm pots. Once potted on I use the same ratio slow release fertilizer every 10 weeks.

Watering - Ensuring the free-draining potting medium is thoroughly wet is critical to keep plants looking good - the roots will then grow throughout all of the mix. This lessens the chance of burning which is a symptom of water stress, i.e. the plant's inability to match water loss from the leaves with water uptake by the roots.

It is not enough to water the leaves and to fill the tank and leaf axil reservoirs with water, as even semi-advanced alcantarea will most often 'spill' water beyond the rim of their pot or container, leaving the potting medium dry.

For your alcantarea to thrive, all the potting medium and slow-release fertilizer must be thoroughly wetted, as it is only when in solution that fertilizer is absorbed through the roots.

I grow my advanced specimens in 300mm pots, and water those growing in the yard twice a week in hot weather, less when it's cooler. Plants in the shade house are watered less, unless the shade house becomes very hot. The potting medium in smaller pots may dry very quickly in hot and windy weather and require watering more often.

The 'skirt' of dead leaves will reduce air movement around the trunk but whilst it may

shade and cool the trunk and the mix, it also encourages ant and spider communities. Regular removal of skirts makes adequate watering much easier and cleanly removing leaf-bases can stimulate the production of grass pups, which grow more vigorously with good light and air movement.

Colour - alcantarea colour best during the cooler months, but generously fertilizing and generously watering a coloured form will speed its growth and is likely to 'green' it.

'Growing hard' - reducing fertilizing and watering will reduce the speed of growth but it will intensify the colour. Photographs of alcantarea in habitat will often demonstrate the wonderful colour that can be achieved when plants receive a lot of light but are not being fertilized and not receiving much water.



A few more pics of John's plants



V Around Bloomin Broms V

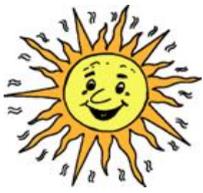
Nigel Thomson

John Byth

Centre - Karen Kelsey with lucky door prize

George Stamatis





Tillandsias for the Tropics *Speaker* **George Stamatis**

Many tillandsia species hail from warmer regions, so focus on those that prefer tropical conditions. They come from mainly dry-tropics or moderately-wet tropics (wet-dry seasons). They enjoy warmth and humidity but not excessive water. Whilst they thrive in the tropics they can be grown very successfully outside the tropics with some modifications to cultivation.

Cultivation Methods

Tillandsias can be mounted or potted. Choose your potting media according to the plant habitat. A combination of large scoria and hard orchid bark nuggets works well (talk to local growers about what works well in your area).

It is essential to provide good air-spaces and free-drainage both when potting or mounting. They also need excellent air-circulation around the plants and possibly some rain-cover for some species if in wet tropics.

Feeding is essential if you want outstanding results. Even in the tropics these plants will perform well with little or no feeding compared to subtropics.

HOWEVER consider this: In the subtropics we feed these and other tills to get them to grow well and we enjoy amazing results. If you feed in the tropics, you could potentially get results even more superior than ours - huge, healthy and colourful plants, more offsets on stingy plants and huge, colourful flowers.

Bottom feeding is easiest with potted plants & very effective.

I use a controlled release fertiliser with balanced N and K [N=nitrogen & K=potassium] 12-18 month release period is best, I recommended 'Lo-Start'.

Foliar feeding once per fortnight for mounted plants with a balanced fertiliser, I recommend 1/2 strength 'Cal-mag' finisher. If in doubt ... speak to experienced local growers.

When you feel safe to do so, experiment with different methods.

Experimental methods will fail - or deliver amazing results.

About a decade ago we had the 'feeding revolution' with our tillandsias, it started as an experiment and proved very successful.



[From top - *Tillandsias xerographica*, *xerographica*, *dyeriana*, *roland-gosselinii*]

The no-no's

The following species are reputed to not flower or perform reliably in the tropics, unless you live at elevation *australis*, *punctulata*, *multicaulis*, *depeana*, *kirchoffiana*.

Species that prefer the Tropics.

Remember, these species prefer the tropics but that doesn't mean they won't grow successfully in cooler climates. The majority of tillandsias will grow well in a very wide range of climates. The focus here is on those that actually prefer tropical conditions. Collectors in the tropics will enjoy superior results with these: *rothii*, *jalisco-monticola*, *xerographica*, *tomasellii*, *chiapensis*, *flexuosa*, *paraensis*, *kegeliana*, *pamelae*, *praschekii*, *pruinosa*, *bulbosa*, *dyeriana*, *adpressiflora*, *subulifera*, *buchlohii*.

Hybrids that prefer the Tropics

Generally any hybrid with *Tillandsias.rothii*, *jalisco-monticola*, *xerographica*, *tomasellii*, *roland-gosellinii*, *utriculata* or *bulbosa* as a parent prefer the tropics, so we have many wonderful options. (Use their parents as a guide to cultivation methods.)
T 'Silver Queen'; 'Amigo'; 'Bahia'; 'Lucky Strike'; 'Silverado'; 'Silver Trinket' and 'Fireworks'.

Getting Creative

How can you use tropical tillandsias in your home garden in creative ways? Make exciting epiphytic displays with other bromeliads, orchids, ferns, aroids, nepenthes, etc.

Hanging displays

Tree stumps / drift-wood / timber mounts

Dramatic and breath-taking displays with other tropical material ... Endless options, get creative and enjoy!



Tillandsia duratii



Tillandsia flexuosa columbia



^ *Tillandsias xerographica*, *seleriana*
> 'Silver Queen', *duratii* v *saxatilis*, *flexuosa*, *ionantha* & *ionantha* Druid

BLOOMIN' BROMS - 2015 by Lynn & Some Participants.



Lynn: We had 64 attendees and there was a happy friendly feeling all weekend. It is always good to catch up with friends and this time the Facebook friends put faces to names - yes there were a few surprises! The Speakers were professional and delivered their seminars for registrants in easy to understand language.

John amazed us with pictures of *alcantareas* from habitat to his hybrids and how to get there the slow or fast way. Nigel entertained us with a twist on apartheid - the good & bad results of hybridizing. Later he educated us on the disappointments, trials and successes of importing plants to Oz. George encouraged us to persevere with *tillandsias* and intergenerics as the inflorescences are exquisite.

There was a mad rush to the sales tables - we did not have an official closing! Pity as we had gifts for the Speakers. Each one received a clay pot and bottle of chardonnay. Lyn Bartolo had painted the pots with frogs and birds and they were really attractive and appreciated. Next 'Bromelcairns' will include more topic notes.

President Bob: What an organiser, another beaut Bloomin Broms, what a great weekend. I would like to thank the the speakers for making themselves available to teach and entertain the participants. There was great feedback after closing time. The speakers all got a mention but there are some workers who were overlooked - Kay the kitchen worker, (without them you would have gone hungry), Karen S our OIC Raffle Tickets and all who assisted in setting up thank you each and all !!!!

Dave & Brendan: The weekend was once again a fabulous event. The topics were varied and the speakers delivered knowledgeable and informative presentations. It was readily apparent that the speakers had a lot more content to deliver if only the time was available. The attendance from visitors was very encouraging. As usual Bob mastered the cooking of 150 kebabs with flair and delivered to schedule. The plant sales were very popular, a few people left a little disappointed - however sellers were able to take orders for supply of in demand lines. Special mention really should be made for Lynn who once again planned and arranged for the speakers; Kay Eddington, who slaved in the kitchen; Olive Frakking for handling the cantankerous cash register and sales takings; Harry Frakking for the ensuring the data projector faithfully reproduced the presentations; Bob Hudson for the BBQ chef, MC role and finding a place to put the bell other than the anatomically inappropriate repository suggested by one of the attendees! To all the sellers, volunteers who assisted in any way and not the least the attendees who made it a great interactive learning weekend we extend our sincere appreciation for your time, interest and friendship.

Karen S: I thought this years Bloomin Broms was fantastic. John's talk on *alcantareas* was very informative and visually mind blowing - I wish I had that many different ones. Nigel and George well what can I say? they always knock it out of the ball park, George is very passionate about his work with bromeliads and you hear it in his talks, and I love that amusing and different take on the bromeliads that Nigel works into his talks. Lynn and Bob you have pulled it off again another great conference, they just keep getting better.

Oh can't forget the great catering - yummo.



**BBBB = Bloody Brilliant Blooming Broms**

Frances Boyd: I would really like to extend my thanks to those who were involved in organising this year's BBBB. The talks were so interesting and it is great to see and meet these people. I particularly appreciated John's painstaking expose of the propagation of *alcantarea* grass pups. It made the process so clear and easy to understand and carry out oneself. George's talks were clear and straightforward, very good educational opportunities. The humour Nigel's presentations, really made them sing. He detailed his tribulations and trials with the quarantine services. Biosecurity officers are caught betwixt and between, having to keep horticultural pests and diseases out of Australia, at the inevitable risk of raising the ire of plant breeders wishing to import into the country. And of course it is great to see plants brought in for us to purchase. I limited my spending money which meant that I really had to agonise over my purchase/s with great care. Lynn, I am very glad I picked up the *Aechmea contracta* from the raffle, thanks Greg. It was the delicate flowering plant that you brought to a meeting.

Kelly: This was my first “Bloomin Broms” and definitely will not be my last ... if Lynn has anything to say about it. My love of bromeliads started many years ago when my mum had in her garden *Neoregelia compacta* and *Billbergia pyramidalis* “Fool Proof Plant”, then I fell in love with the flower of *Aechmea fasciata*. Now so many years later, I have a very slight addiction to bromeliads, like most of us do. I enjoyed listening to the speakers at the conference – their talks and tales were interesting. I now have a little understanding in regards to *alcantareas*; definitely have decided I do not wish to import these absolutely stunning bromeliads and take the chance on losing them; and also now understand the entirely different group that can occur - intergenerics. Thank you to those amazing people that made me feel welcome .. see you at the next meeting.

Wendy Luscombe: Congratulations on a great show, I loved it..

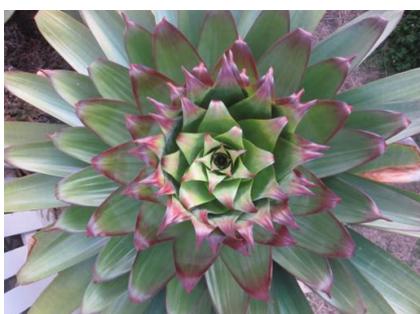
Sue Loughran: It was an awesome weekend, everybody learned something and lots of goodies for sale.

Aaron: Had a great day at Bloomin Broms in Cairns today. Only took a couple pics as I was too busy chatting. Thanks to Lynn and the team for organising the day. Learnt something, met people and came away with some broms what more could you ask for !! (Thanx for the pics Aaron. Lynn)

Ross Draper: It was a great day for all & lots of nice broms for sale.

Karen Kelsey: Was a great day lots of pretty people & plants.

[Good score on Lucky Door Prize Karen, lots of green eyes around - hybridized & donated by Ross Draper, thanx Ross. Lynn]





“Exposure to soil bacteria *Mycobacterium vaccae* is like a natural antidepressant, activating brain cells that improve mood, reduce anxiety and facilitate learning.”

David Suzuki

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” - Margaret Atwood



More from Grace's Blue Book ...

- * Parents wanted a quiet wedding - bought a silencer for the shotgun.
 - * The Devil back on earth, lost his tail, caught it in a mower. He went to a hotel where they retailed spirits.
 - * Priest visited a parishioner and was shocked to hear her budgie saying “I’m a harlot, I’m a harlot”. “Give it to me Mrs Maloney” he said “I will put it with my birds and they will teach it to say the Lord’s Prayer.”
- A week later Mrs Maloney called at the priest’s aviary to see how her budgie was going. There were all the birds saying the Lord’s Prayer and then her bird said “I’m a harlot” and all the other birds said “Thank You Lord”.
- * A man was charged with fraud for selling pills which gave eternal youth. Magistrate asked “Has he any previous convictions?” “Yes your Honour, in 1868, 1902 & 1940.” *Ha Ha Ha!*
 - * Fellow opened a cheque account and was outraged when the bank wrote to say he had overdrawn. Told his wife “I still have 6 cheques left”.
 - * Where do you get hessian aids? Sleeping with an old bag.
 - * An Irishman wore condoms on his ears - he was afraid he would get hearing aids.
 - * Man was hit by a golf ball, shoved his hands between his legs groaning. Woman golfer, a nurse, offered to massage him. Took his trousers down and massaged him. He said “Thank you I feel better, but it is my thumb that is broken”.
 - * Bowler wrote to an advertiser “Please send me a set of bowls you advertised. If they are any good I will send a cheque”. The firm wrote back “Send the cheque and if it is any good we will send you the bowls”.
 - * Small lad was told by his father he must say ‘penis’ instead of ‘dick’. Father asked him next day what he had learned at school. “Oh all about Penis Whittington and his cat”.
 - * Paddy had a heart transplant. He told the reporters the first thing he would do is thank the donor.
 - * Paddy bought a \$500 woollen suit from Mick. He took it back because it had a 100% cotton tag on it. “Don’t worry” said Mick “that is just to fool the moths”.



Time is like a river. You cannot touch the water twice, because that flow that has passed will never pass again. Enjoy every moment of life.

Nothing just happens or just gets done,
Someone has to make it happen or do it.





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BSI World Bromeliad Conference

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- * Learn from the Best
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Information & Registration Form
www.bsi.org



"Bromeliad Cultivation Notes" by Lynn Hudson

A little 'how to' book. Cultivation made easy. Basics in language anyone can follow.

John Catlan's notes - *"Bromeliads Under the Mango Tree"*

Booklet prepared by Lynn Hudson

A 'must have' book to help you think and grow your bromeliads better.

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