



# Bromelcairns



Bimonthly Newsletter of Cairns Bromeliad Society Inc. 2010 # 3

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

Life Member - Lynn Hudson

Life Member - Robert (Bob) Hudson

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## Aims of the Society

**Promote and Develop Interest in Bromeliads through Friendship**

**To Co-operate with similar Clubs throughout the World**

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**Membership Fee:** \$15 single, \$25 family,

\$7.50 junior (if not in family membership). Country Member \$25

**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 will be Emailed on request to [lynnie@ledanet.com.au](mailto:lynnie@ledanet.com.au)

## 2 Our MAY meeting day was filled with "Bloomin Broms 2010"

Details & comments begin next page.

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Club Activities & Around the Members



**JUNE:** We were thoroughly spoiled with a bus trip to

Moresby, firstly our meeting was at Marie and Robs, then we went to Greg's for shopping. As most members have sent me notes I will allow them to share their delight with you. There were no plant competitions.

\* **New Members:** Welcome to Chrystal & Paul Venturi of Mareeba, Gloria & Max Smith of Burrum Heads and welcome back Ken Reed of Cairns. You had a good start with the crazy friendliness of our group on a bus trip and we hope you enjoy our future meetings.

\* We had a Special Visitor - Ann Giddins, Rob's mother. Ann was a member in 1984, Cairns Society inaugural year, the Attendance Book shows Ann attended from the third meeting! Cathy, Les and their two children also attended, Les was bitten by the Bromeliad Bug.

\* Bob showed us some forms and hybrids of *Tillandsia ionantha*, all attractive plants, some were flowering and some were flushed with colour prior to coming into flower. He showed how the hybrid flowers do not protrude beyond the leaves just like the *ionantha* parent. One exception is the natural hybrid *rectifolia*, where the yellow petals are above the leaves.

\* We had a good raffle table including 5 patterned vrieseas from members who cannot attend meetings. Three from Jacquie Stocker and two from Harold Cooper. Thank you to each of you, they are treasured.

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**Tillandsia Participation Event Easter 2010** by Bob Hudson

The T.P.E. is the brainchild of Chris Larson of Melbourne and Chris is the organizer. The Tillnut Group are tillandsia enthusiasts who get together biennially at Easter. Each attendee is required to give a talk or lead a session of not less than 20 minutes. This year there were 17, with 3 for the first time. I selected *Tillandsia ionantha* and Sturt Gibbs selected *funciana*. Other topics were *fasciculata*, *capitata* and *tricolor*. There is always an identification section and participants saw some hybrids by Andrew Flower from New Zealand. There is usually an identification exercise by dissecting the flowers and plants.



## Bloomin Broms 2nd - 3rd May 2010

Our second Bloomin Broms event was another successful two days. The 47 attendees were enthralled by our Speakers, Steven Flood and Barry Genn. Steve said it was a bit strange having 'students' hanging on every word, and he wished his TAFE students showed that much interest. Our members gained invaluable knowledge and we thank Steve and Barry for sharing with us.

Thank you to each of the Helpers who produced great results, especially Brendan who made potato salad, cooked scones and prepared Sunday lunch.



This is how some who attended saw it:

Speaker, Barry Genn: Hi to all like minded Bromeliad growers in North Queensland. I would like to congratulate the organizers of Bloomin Broms, and society members - what a great weekend. Bloomin Broms incorporated all the things that people expect and hope for when they join a society - friendship, information, encouragement and plant sales.

I would also like to thank the members for the opportunity to speak on my favorite subject Tillandsias, and I hope it was of some benefit. I can't help but think that if some of the struggling plant society's did something like this that they would be in a much better position to grow.

Wendy and I thank you for the hospitality we were shown and don't hesitate to contact to contact me if I can assist.  
Regards, Barry and Wendy Genn.

Jan Tillett: Lynn and her band of hard working members are congratulated, to my eyes everything went off without a hitch. The speakers Stephen and Barry, were interesting and informative, and for a beginner like myself very easy to understand. Both of these speakers were well qualified having been interested in gardening at an early age and eventually specializing in bromeliads and tillandsias.

Stephen spoke on landscaping with bromeliads and the varying conditions required by different varieties; use of colour to obtain maximum impact in plantings; what influences the colouring of plants and the use of different types of fertilizers. This talk was highlighted by powerpoint presentation and white board. I think I will be making some changes to my garden layout.

Barry followed with a talk on tillandsias - growing requirements and raising from seed. I am only just beginning to become interested in tillandsias so I found this very interesting as I am sure did so many people, but I don't think I will worry

about growing them from seed as I think I will have passed on before I see a great deal of results.

Stephen gave a short talk on Cryptanthus accompanied by wonderful pictures. Barry spoke further on tillandsias - mounting, growing in the tropics, pests and diseases and hybridizing. Both speakers were only too willing to answer questions in a very helpful and easy to understand way.

The Sales - an amazing array of plants, I am sure everyone overstepped their budget as did I, but who could help it with so much from which to choose?

Sunday more sales and most of us who had said we had finished buying went back for more. Bob gave a very interesting workshop covering many aspects of growing bromeliads and tillandsias that I am sure was very helpful to all those who attended.

This was followed by a plant auction which was very interesting and just a little bit humorous.

Lunches, morning and afternoon teas were Chicken Kebabs and salad; cake; scones with jam and cream; filled French bread.

I thoroughly recommend this weekend to everyone and I sincerely hope it continues for many more years to come. Once again congratulations to all those concerned.

Moyneen Charlton: Bloomin Broms - wow I loved it! A big thank you for the experience & for all the information shared by both Stephen & Barry. I really felt for Stephen with the Roma Street Gardens, to have achieved so much & then see it destroyed in that huge storm. It is a credit to all that they are re-doing it. Stephen & Julie's home/nursery appears a real joy. Bit by bit I am being won over to the tillandsias & the cryptanthus and I really enjoyed the powerpoint presentation.

I have to admit when I saw the sales room my first thoughts where, lock the doors don't let anyone else in! I have to keep reminding myself I can collect them slowly, I don't need them all at once, I don't believe myself though! Prior to joining the club I never realized I had such a problem with decision making.

A big thanks to all the members who so freely share their knowledge.

Judith Walsh: I enjoyed Bloomin Broms much more than last year - and yes it is well worth having again. Not only were the lectures of excellent quality, it was lovely to meet other people from other clubs and swap information. And then the sales table just put the ice cream on the pudding. Thanks again for the wonderful job Lynn, Dave, Brendan and Bob played in making it all possible.

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Who I am makes a difference. Who you are does make a difference



Karen Stevens: Blooming Broms just gets better every year. I thought the speakers were brilliant and their talks very informative and presented in a manner the common lay person could understand, even if you were a newcomer and not up with all the bromeliad jargon. There were lots of plants to buy and tempt us into taking them home - which we did. The caterers excelled themselves:) and Brendan as always those Lemonade scones are to die for. I had a wonderful weekend as I'm sure most members did - bring on BB 2011.

Maria Grant; What a great event! My first time and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Great guest speakers, and Bob's workshop on Tillandsia and damaged plants, was very informative. I was blown away by the plant sale. My credit card took a beating, and I think the ladies at the payment area just sighed every time I came back. I was overwhelmed by what was on sale - could have re-mortgaged my home if I had the space for more (all of them if I could) - Yes! I am one addicted bromeliad lover.

An event like this every year is a must for both novices (like me) and experienced growers to learn from others - to have other growers input - there is always something we find out that others are doing that can help us to grow and enjoy our bromeliads. Organizing efforts with this event are very much appreciated by this little Brom Addict.

Barry Burke: I still cannot decide the my favourite topic of interest at this meeting. The colour co-ordination, the growing techniques or the fertilization that was so interestingly presented by persons utterly conversant with their subject. Steve explained scientific terms so a layman could understand. I also learned that these Zinc coated steel are as harmful as copper logs. Darryl and I discussed this and I noticed that the old galvanized pipes were okay, but where I had the new rubbish the plants deteriorated.

Stuart Howe: Bloomin' Broms was blooming marvelous. It had something for everyone, from fertilizers to hybridizing, landscaping to pests. Barry and Steve were interesting and informative and very open to the myriad of questions thrown at them. There was a huge showing of sale plants of every shape and form and everyone managed to limit themselves to one box, (though I did notice one person walking out with at least five. Good on them). It was a very easy going, relaxed atmosphere and I look forward to the next one. Kudos to Lynn for organizing it and to everyone who helped out.

Bob Hudson: Another great weekend. It was really good to see so many Members attend, eager to learn and share their friendships.

Marg Sexton: Thanks for such a friendly weekend. Even though sales were low the members pulled together as one and enjoyed the friendships

Karen Cross: Another great weekend with my bromeliad friends, I met some new people and we were all enriched by the event. The seminars were a delight, I enjoyed the tillandsia talks and am not even a tilly girl. (One day Bob I may cross to the 'dark side'!) In Stephen's talks I found myself in a new world of horticultural science wrapped in his knowledge of bromeliads. The science behind colours was just fascinating and as I was a home schooled girl and we did not really touch the science area. To Stephen I say a big thank you, your students at TAFE are very lucky to have a great teacher. I value the notes booklet as I can return to it for refreshing my learning.

The 'Checkout Chicks' (sorry Harry) did a great job and I did not plan to buy - no won't power! The food was great and plentiful, thanks to cook Bob and his lovely side kick Kay, my Mum, who was also the event kitchen slave. Thanks also to Brendan for delicious scones and yummy rolls. In simple words to describe the whole event "A Bloomin Great Weekend"

Dave & Brendan: Another successful weekend where members got a chance to hear other ideas from two excellent Speakers. The sales area had a wide range of well grown plants. Our input was rewarded by the appreciation of the members, and knowing they had learned more about and had taken home more of our favourite plants. Roll on BB3.

Marie & Rob: We actually learned a lot and found Steve Flood's presentation to be really, really interesting. The tillandsia talk interested Rob no end and he was enthused with the few that he does have and now (thanks a lot) thinks he should have more. Bob was OK with his talk when he wasn't telling me to be quiet! Well he did ask what I do with a pot bound plant with a thousand pups - my answer, "give it to Rob of course" - silly question!

The plants were like chocolate with soft centres - you know you want one but it was so good you just had to eat the whole, or nearly, box. I know we all just pigged out and had a great time picking out stuff we didn't already have. Myself and others - I saw you - kept going back into that room, we are so weak. With Some things SOME people were just too slow and some other people scooped up the goodies. Yay, sorry Mr President :>) ...And darn you Brendan, I had my eye on that *Vriesea* 'Galaxy', but it is alright I have since found one for myself and you are forgiven :>) It was a great experience for Rob and I as our very first selling of plants and Rob's brother Les is now also hooked on bromeliads. Such a sad end to a normal man.

It was a great weekend with very good company and the rolling Raffle was a beaut idea and lots of fun.

Really the best of all was the interaction of the club members (Lynn's elves) who just worked so wonderfully and made the whole show possible.

Thanks again to you all for all the hard work that went on that we never see.



Prepared by: Stephen Flood (B.App.Sc.(hort)) MAIH

Soil life influences nutrient uptake and protects from pathogens. Many soils are lacking key beneficial organisms. Using the right ingredients the beneficial microbes which are generated and multiplied in the production of microbe tea can regenerate tired soils and enhance the potential of soils that are already considered healthy.

The beneficial micro-organisms produce metabolites which include plant growth promoters, vitamins and compounds which help maintain a healthy balance of organisms.

The tea is diluted with water at the rate of 1 litre of tea to 10 litres of water and these 10 Litres of diluted solution is sufficient to treat 10 square metres of soil. The recommended frequency of application is monthly. For trees an area that extends from the trunk to approximately 1 metre outside the drip line should be treated.

Microbe tea can also used as a foliage spray to prevent certain leaf, flower and fruit diseases. Spray the foliage to visible wetness with the undiluted product at 2 to 4 week intervals. Be aware that solids in the tea may block fine nozzles.

Microbe tea has also been found to be a beneficial additive for septic systems and home sewerage treatment plants.

The ingredients used to make the tea include:-

Liquid microbe food which contains:-

- Chelated calcium
- Amino acids
- Vitamins
- Plant extracts
- Bio-stimulants
- Natural growth promoters
- Over 70 minerals
- Complex carbohydrates
- Enzymes

A blend of specifically selected strains of:-

- Bacillus subtilis
- Azobacteria vinelandii
- Pseudomonas fluorescens
- Pseudomonas pudida
- Rhizobium japonicum
- Pseudomonas stutzeri
- Trichoderma harzianum
- Trichoderma viride
- Pseudomonas cellulose
- Azobacteria chroococcum
- Azospirillum brasilense
- Polyangium cellulose
- Cellulomonas cellosea



These are the additional notes Steve promised us at Bloomin Broms 2010.

Thankyou Steve

## **SEAWEED EXTRACTS**

A Commentary by Stephen Flood (B.App.Sc.(hort)) MAIH.

A number of products exist that contain extracts of seaweed. These include Seasol, Natrakelp and Maxi-crop. The first thing growers need to understand about these products is that they are not fertilisers and are in no way a substitute for balanced nutrition based on a mix of macro and trace elements best suited for the particular plants being cultivated. The naturally occurring levels of the mineral elements in seaweed products are too low to make a significant difference to the nutrient regime of any plant. There are, however seaweed products available that have mineral elements added which give these products the status of a fertiliser.

Seaweed extracts are useful and powerful tonics which correctly used assist with the cultivation of high quality plants. Seaweed or kelp is the richest natural source of a plant growth regulator or hormone called Cytokinin and this hormone exists in a concentrated form in the seaweed extracts. All plants produce Cytokinin in the root tips and translocate the Cytokinin in the sap flow to all parts of the plant where it is involved with many of the essential functions which promote plant health and vigour.

Cytokinin is involved in many internal plant functions including:-

- Cell division; for plants to remain in active growth which is a result of continued cell division a minimum level of Cytokinin is required, the speed with which wounded plant tissue heals is directly related to levels of Cytokinin.
- Mobilization of mineral nutrients; plants with high levels of Cytokinin are able to use nutrients more efficiently, are less likely to develop deficiencies and hence need less fertiliser.
- Floral development is to an extent controlled by this hormone and plants with a high level usually produce larger and longer lasting flowers.
- Seed germination and seedling growth is strongly influenced by Cytokinin.

When plants enter a state of stress which is usually caused by sub-optimal growing conditions, the production of root tips is compromised and the subsequent level of Cytokinin in the plant tissues is reduced. Plant stress can be caused by many factors such as too hot or cold, too wet or dry, too much or insufficient nutrients, too much or inadequate light etc. Artificially applying Cytokinin in the form of seaweed extract will boost the internal levels and assist stressed plants survive and reduce the likelihood that healthy plants will enter a state of stress. Appropriately diluted seaweed extracts can be applied to the growing media and/or foliage, however avoid applying the product to dry media.



## VARIEGATIONS



Albino plants lack chlorophyll, the green colouring in plants, they usually appear cream but sometimes they are white. In a few cases the chlorophyll could be latent and develop later. Albino plants are dependant on the mother plant to supply food and as they put great strain on the mother plant, it is better to cut them off and allow the mother to give you a normal offset. An albino plant seldom flowers and can weaken and even kill the mother plant.

Marginated – margins differing in colour to the main colour of the leaves.

Albo marginated leaves have white margins

Flavo marginated leaves have yellow margins,

Lineated – leaves have thin lengthwise lines covering most of the leaves.

Medio -picta – literally means ‘painted centre’ and the centre is usually pink.

Tricoloured – the leaves have three colours; usually green, cream and rose.

Quadricolor – the leaves have four colours: white, yellow red and green.

Variegated – the leaves have lengthwise lines, which usually are not uniform.

Genetic mutation or a virus probably causes variegations. The seeds can carry a virus caused by the previous infection of the seed producing plant, even before ovule fertilization, or by the infection of the pollen. The virus is often no longer present when symptoms (eg variegation) appear.

It is not proven but mutation and virus in bromeliads could be caused by one or several factors. Sudden changes in microclimate, temperature, humidity and light could have a strong influence. Biological stress such as prolonged dehydration or poor nutrition and ecological disturbances such as fire, flooding, freezing and cyclones can produce outward changes we can see, therefore they could also induce variegation. Chemical substances are capable of causing variegation and flower- inducing substances have produced types of variegation in lateral buds.

So we find variegation may be caused by genetic mutation, climate, virus infection, or a combination of factors. Bromeliads are monocotyledons, their seeds are in a closed ovary and they produce seeds of a single seed leaf. They have parallel veins running lengthwise along the leaves. If they have tissue with infected cells, as the leaf grows the problem is transmitted down the entire leaf which produces clearly defined lines or bands.

Variegations are rarely found in the subfamily Pitcairnioideae.

In the subfamily of Tillandsioideae, they are hardly found in Tillandsias, but are enjoyed in the genera of guzmania, vriesea and alcanterea.

In the subfamily of Bromelioideae variegation is common. We have beautiful variegated aechmeas, ananus, billbergias, cryptanthus, canistropsis, canistrums and nidulariums.

Because it is a mutation, a variegated plant can produce variegated, green & albino pups. Some variegated plants are harder to care for and some have a slower growth rate.

At the World Bromeliad Conference 2002, at St. Petersburg, the esteemed Nat DeLeon spoke of bromeliad variegation and how he treats these plants to get as many pups as possible :-

- \* Overpot the mother plant before she flowers and feed her both from the top and bottom. The bigger the pot, the more plants you will get.
- \* When the spike emerges, cut it to release the hormone that induces offsets.
- \* Trim and even remove the outside leaves to allow more light to the buds and therefore make more room for the pups to grow.
- \* If you are feeding heavily and your plant loses variegation, UR over feeding.
- \* Cut off any green plants and keep only the variegated pups.
- \* Place all variegated plants in as much bright light as the plant can stand to produce stronger variegation contrasts.
- \* Drill the meristem to produce more pups - yuk.
- \* On seeds - he finds they usually come up albino, then flake and die.
- \* He said “As rules are meant to be broken and nothing surprises me about bromeliads”, he suggested we try anything, like self pollinating variegated plant flowers to see if they would produce viable seed.

Most people like variegated plants as they tantalize our senses with their beauty. Isn't it just amazing that we have them because something went wrong! We search for mutated plants but do not like mutated persons!

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### Variegated Plants reverting to Plain.

Some variegated plants revert back to plain plants and some of these can produce variegated pups. The most common one is *Aechmea* ‘Bert’. Bert is a great plant, it is tough, grows well both epiphytically and terrestrially and suddenly you can have a variegated plant. *Aechmea orlandiana*, ‘Bert’s mum and *Aechmea chantinii* variegated can revert.

*Aechmea fasciata* varieties *albo marginata* and *variegata* sometimes throw plain pups that can produce a variegated pup.

*Aechmea* ‘Samurai’ is beautiful, but is frustrating to the grower who has a list of persons wanting one! One plant will be true, the next two or three will be without the yellow stripes. A grower is lucky to get three good plants. Luckily, the plain one is a beauty.

*Neoregelia* ‘Meyendorffii’ (cv. of *carolinae*) can give variegated plants from albo marginated plants and vice versa. *Neo*. ‘Mother’ is a cultivar of this plant and has been used widely in hybridizing in Australia.

When a variegated bromeliad produces a non-variegated pup or “sport”, the epithet ‘NOVAR’ is added to the nametag eg. *Neoregelia* ‘Imperfecta’ NOVAR = no variegations





## June bus trip to Moresby



For many members this was their first bus trip. Some were a bit apprehensive until they boarded the bus. There was an enveloping feeling of bonhomie pervading the bus. Then there were 20 different conversations going at once. I thought "Now we have opened a can of worms - they will want more". It is a happy way for members to get to know each other. Lynn Dave & Brendan: Another wonderful Cairns Bromeliad Society excursion. Our Bus trip south was blessed with a beautiful Cairns 'winter' day, or 'dry season' day. For many of us this weather is one of the reasons we live in one of the most beautiful locations of this great country.

Rob and Marie Giddens home and garden provided an excellent location for our monthly meeting and place to have our lunch. Their garden was extremely well maintained and offered a great display of various bromeliads, and all of their other healthy plants like the eye catching blooming azaleas and rhododendrons. Their slice of paradise offered a shade house that everyone envied and displayed a great assortment of well grown broms. Their seedling nursery amazed and had a few of us wondering (and wishing we had some more room at our own home) where the next lot of shade houses were going to be built to accommodate them when they get growing. Thank you very much Rob and Marie for making the Bromeliad Club feel so welcome and at home.

Our bus moved on to Greg Oldano's place where we were let loose into the shade hoses where we were able to find bromeliads and other plants that we could not resist but really needed to add to our collections. A big thanks to Greg for his hospitality in accommodating everyone who wanted his attention.

It was a great day and good way to spend time with other bromeliad lovers and enthusiasts.

Kay Edington: Another great bus trip as they always are. Really lovely home and gardens at Marie & Rob's place, plenty to keep them busy. As usual Greg's place has so many plants I didn't know where to look first. Thanks Bob, good driving once again.

Karen Cross: Wow, another great bus trip and at a new venue. How wonderful Marie and Rob's place was, thank you for having us there. Your hard work shows in your lovely gardens and shadehouses, Since my last visit Greg's shadehouses have extended in size and they are chock full of plants. Of course I did buy new ones, it wouldn't be a bus trip if I didn't!

Fay Copland: We enjoyed our day, it was a great trip and Giddins property was amazing. Would have spent more at Greg's place but no prices meant we didn't know how much we had spent. Anyway, a great day and Lisa enjoyed it as well.

Barry Burke: Words seem superfluous when describing the wealth of vegetation so magnificently cultivated at the Giddens Eden. Not only were the bromeliads displayed in all their glory, but the profusion of other plants, fish, etc maintained interest around every corner. A good day.

Rita Mc Kenzie: Thank you for a very enjoyable day out as I know these trips do not organize themselves in my opinion it was a very successful day

Beryl Watson: Had a great day, good bus driver, good weather, good company and great bromeliads - what more could you ask for on a Sunday outing.

Maria: Just wanted to say - WHAT A GREAT DAY.

I thought it was one of the best days & just to enjoy it with such nice people. Thank you for organizing it, and also to Bob for driving us there - was really nice to sit back and enjoy the scenery for a change and chat with the others in the bus.

That was a big plus on the annual meeting Agenda. Hope we do it again next year. I'll be there with bells on! (We will hold her to that! - Lynn)

Gloria & Max Smith: What a wonderful day, full of laughs, good new friends and lots of great information. We bought some bromeliads we had been seeking and they will have a good home at Burrum Heads. Thank you for inviting us.

Frances: I just want to say how very much I enjoyed the trip. One reason was being able to travel in such cushy conditions, in a new, clean, well-sprung and comfortable bus, and by such a safe considerate driver. My thanks to Bob for doing such a fantastic job, and making the trip so safe and smooth.

At this stage, I am most interested in bromeliads from a landscaping point of view, and I was absolutely enthralled by the bromeliad garden behind Bob and Marie Gidden's home. Wow! Whoever put this in place certainly has an artistic flair with the plants, juxtapositioning the different sizes, and colours, while getting the plants into their preferred growing conditions. When I asked myself how come the heavy palm fronds didn't batter the plants I then noticed the nets between the palms.

Being new to bromeliads I had to admit to being overwhelmed and awed by Greg Odano's nursery. What I really needed was an encyclopaedia on the subject in my pocket. Thank you everyone for a lovely day, in the best weather the Far North could have offered.

Bob the Busdriver: It was very pleasing to have a bus almost full of happy bromeliophiles who were laughing and chatting all the way. At both Giddins and Greg's place the plants were a pleasure to wander through and admire so many colours, shapes and sizes. A very good day.

Bus Trip Cont.

Karen Stevens: Well what can i say I always enjoy our field trips even though I get bus sick, great day, great people, great bus driver. A good chance to catch up with all the members and spend a day together.

It is always a treat to go somewhere new and Rob and Marie's is certainly that and more, I'd never want to leave if that was my place, beautifully grown bromeliads and tillandsias - just magic, a lot of work there.

On the way home we stopped at Greg's, always a pleasure, i don't know where he finds the time. He always says its a mess but it always looks good to me. I'm sure the first timers to Greg's had an eye feast, I don't think anyone was disappointed. All round a good field trip, already waiting for the next one.

Maria Grant: What a fabulous day - great venue for the meeting, blown away by the "hobbyist factor". I couldn't get over how many bromeliads I saw. The visit to Greg's topped it off. The bus trip was perfect for everyone to socialize- want to do it again - put it on the 2010 programme!

Stuart Howe: An early start to a Sunday morning and we headed south. The wheels of the bus going round and round - thankfully. We had nearly a full bus with everyone chatting eagerly. First stop was Giddens beautiful garden and shade houses. I was amazed by the variety and placement of their broms. How Rob finds the time for anything is incredible with the broms, water plants, ferns, the Rhaphis, etc, etc, etc.... No wonder Marie set him up in the BBQ area. there were also a huge selection of plants for the raffle and most people seemed to go away happy.

Just down the road is Greg Oldano's incredible nursery. With quick instructions from Greg, we were all off in a bee line for the sale plants. This lasted about two minutes before everyone scattered to all ends of the extensive shade houses filled to the brim with all kinds of wonders. From the rare to the sublime, Greg seemed to have it all and every request, usually 10 at once, was met with a quick search and the required plant. The best way to describe it was "disorganized chaos".

Once again everyone walked away happy. I certainly ticked some major boxes off my list. All in all it was a great day spent with good company. Thanks Bob for keeping the wheels turning and making it a quick and comfortable journey. See you all at the next one.



## SCALE - *Gymnaspis aechmeae*



The common name is fly-speck scale. Grace Goode calls it "The scourge of bromeliads" and we agree once we have had our plants infested.

- \* This fly-speck scale has not been found on other plants, only bromeliads.
- \* They are insects that can crawl; they attach themselves to the plant and suck. They secrete a black hard protective cover and lay eggs. In spring and summer they hatch - one female can release up to 100 eggs!!
- \* Do not scrape them off, you will release the eggs into the leaf bases and come summer you will have hundreds of them on your plants.
- \* It is irresponsible to scrape them off and sell, or even give, a plant away.
- \* Bromeliads are different to most other plants - they feed through their leaves.
- \* Scale sprays available at supermarkets are not suitable as they contain large quantities of white oil - this will block the stomatas on bromeliads and choke them, your plant will die. Do not use white oil.
- \* If you have just a few insects, you may choose to kill them by touching each one with a cotton swab dipped in insecticide or rubbing alcohol. If you have lots you have more work. You need to smother the insect.
- \* Toxic Sprays - Some members choose to use 'Rogor'; others have good results from the very expensive Disulfoton 50 in 10kg drums and some use 'Natrasoap'. I use 'Chemspray' Antiscale, made by Garden King.
- \* If you use any toxic spray or granules remember it is designed to kill insects so it can also kill you! Abide by the manufacturers safety instructions, use gloves and a mask. Do not inhale the gas produced when the granules are watered.
- \* Whatever you use remember **safety first - you can always get another bromeliad but we cannot get another You - You are unique!**
- \* Sometimes it is best to donate the infested plant to the council, via the wheelie bin, just cut the mother off and you will get a pup from the stump - but watch it for hatchlings.
- \* Before treating, empty out the plant, clean out any debris and allow it to dry. Spray thoroughly and leave it for 24 hours without watering. Check it after 10 days, it may need to be retreated.
- \* Get the plant in good light to test it. If you wear spectacles, have them on!
- \* It is dead when you scrape it with a fingernail and it does not leave a wet trail behind.
- \* Quarantine all scaly plants away from your others. Keep infested plants away from your collection - they spread by attaching to clothing, crawling, falling, and they get blown around by the wind.
- \* Keep checking your plants, one infested plant can spread through the lot.
- \* Set yourself a scale regime. Spray now in Winter, suffocate it before Spring.
- \* Quarantine all new plants you take home.

\*



## DID I READ THAT CORRECTLY?

Toilet out of order please us the floor ???

In a Laundromat: Automatic washing machines: Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

In a London department store: Bargain Basement Upstairs

In an office: Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or other steps will be taken.

In an office: After tea break the staff should stand upside down on the draining board.

Outside a secondhand shop: We exchange anything – bicycles, washing machines, anything – why not bring your wife along and get a bargain?

Notice in health food shop window: Closed due to illness

Spotted in a safari park: Elephants please stay in your car.

Seen during a conference: For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a Day Care on the first floor.

Notice in a farmer's field: The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free but the bull charges.

Leaflet Message: If you cannot read this leaflet it will tell you how to get lessons

On a repair shop door: We can repair anything. (Please knock hard on the door – the bell doesn't work.)

**Frog gets a bank loan** A frog goes into a bank and approaches the teller.

He can see from her nameplate that her name is Patricia Whack.

"Miss Whack, I'd like to get a \$3,000 loan to take a holiday."

Patty looks at the frog in disbelief and asks his name.

The frog says "My name is Kermit Jagger, my dad is Mick Jagger, and that it is all okay, I know the bank manager."

Patty explains that he will need to secure the loan with some collateral.

The frog says, "Sure. I have this," and produces a tiny porcelain elephant, about an inch tall, bright pink and perfectly formed. Very confused, Patty explains that she'll have to consult with the bank manager and disappears into a back office.\*

She finds the manager and says, "There's a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you and wants to borrow \$3,000, and he wants to use this as collateral."

She holds up the tiny pink elephant. "I mean, what in the world is this?"

The bank manager looks back at her and says...

"It's a knickknack, Patty Whack. Give the frog a loan, His old man's a Rolling Stone."

(You're singing it, aren't you? Yeah, I know you are.....)



**Nothing just happens or just gets done – Somebody has to do it**



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