



# Bromelcairns



Bimonthly Newsletter of Cairns Bromeliad Society Inc. 2009 # 2

P.O. Box 28 Cairns Queensland 4870 Australia.

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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 1pm 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 [LynnHudson@BromeliadsDownUnder.com](mailto:LynnHudson@BromeliadsDownUnder.com)

Club Activities & Around the Members



**JULY:** Monica & Brooky hosted our meeting. Attendance was excellent and included four visitors, three of whom have since joined. It was a happy meeting with great reports on our Learning Weekend.

\* We started a little late as Thomas, Bob & Barry were requested to help a maiden in distress - Karen had straddled her car over a cement garden edging while attempting to turn around as she had gone too far (up the road)! Luckily our men are strong & Bob has 50+ years driving!

\* **New Members:** Welcome to **Pina Russo, Joan Cleland** and **Frances Boyd**. We hope your bromeliad adventure with us will be rewarding.

\* Our mini show of "Your Favourite Bromeliad" again provided an array of beautiful bromeliads, it was full-on soul food. Brendan's *XNeophytum* 'Galactic Warrior' was huge, perfect and with lustrous colour. A *Tillandsia stricta* in flower is always beautiful, and it was double, and it was Darryl's. I never thought I would write that our neoregelia expert scored with a tillandsia! Karen's bowl of dainty cryptanthus was a huge favourite. The neoregelias were outstanding as is usual, Bill's *Quesnelia marmorata* was perfect and Dave's *Dyckia* 'Betty Farnhill' was still very spiky!

\* Members saw many well grown beautiful bromeliads and as the growers explained how they grew their plants it should be a good learning exercise for members to copy.

\* Members discussed the June bromeliad learning weekend (see pages 6-9)

### \* Mini Show – My Favourite Plant

<i>XNeophytum</i> 'Galactic Warrior'	Grower – Brendan Leishman
<i>Tillandsia stricta</i>	Grower - Darryl Lister
<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Marion Oppenheimer'	Grower - Karen Stevens

### Popular Vote

<b>Novice:</b> <i>Neoregelia</i> 'Jaws'	Grower - Beryl Watson
<b>Open:</b> <i>XNeophytum</i> 'Galactic Warrior'	Grower – Brendan Leishman
<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Marion Oppenheimer'	Grower - Karen Stevens
<i>Tillandsia stricta</i>	Grower - Darryl Lister



Club Activities & Around the Members



**AUGUST:** It was our first visit to Beryl's garden and what a treat it is - and a Garden Competition Awarded Garden! Congratulations Beryl, certainly well deserved. Many plants from a variety of families, all well cared for and placed to give an active riot of colour. The members looked quite comfortable wandering around feeding their curiosity.

- \* **New Members:** Welcome to our happy group **Maria Grant, Jan Tillett and Moyneen Charlton.** You may be confused now but it will all slowly unravel and suddenly you will find you know stuff you did not know that you knew!
- \* Wow, what a sight our mini show was, so many great plants. You certainly should be proud of your efforts - I am proud of you.
- \* Barry Osborne will be out of Cairns for the rest of our 2009 meetings. Greg volunteered to be our Concierge, thanx Greg. Take any problems to Greg and be ready for a chat.
- \* We look forward to finally getting up the Range to Kuranda to see Elaine & Bill - a cyclone threat should not keep us down here this time.
- \* We had Carol & Graham Allen visiting from Victoria - they did bring the rainy sleety weather with them, but it has been postcard picture perfect since they left! Graham spoke on what they grow. After the heartache of having plants die, they have settled for what grows successfully for them in their area. They have given up persevering with guzmanias and have found neoregelias are best. They get slugs but beer traps catch the slugs! To our disgust, they do not have flyspeck scale problems as the cold of winter seems to sort them out - we still prefer our warmth!

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**Mini Show – Vriesea & Guzmania**

<i>Vriesea</i>	'Tiger Tim'	Grower – Dave Weston
	'Highway Beauty'	Grower - Brendan Leishman
	'Tiger Tim'	Grower - Darryl Lister
<i>Guzmania</i>	'Mango'	Grower - Darryl Lister
	'Symphony'	Grower – Barry Burke
	'Alii'	Grower – Marguerite Sexton



**POPULAR VOTE:**

<b>NOVICE:</b>	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Takemura' hyb	Grower - Bill Asher
	<i>Tillandsia seleriana</i>	Grower - Beryl Watson
<b>OPEN:</b>	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Tiger Tim'	Grower – Dave Weston
	<i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Elaine'	Grower – Marguerite Sexton
	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i>	Grower – Thomas Jones



**Bromeliad Scale** - those little black dots. ....



Flyspeck, pineapple, pinspot, blackspot, whatever you call it, Grace Goode said it best: "It is the scourge of bromeliads".

*Gymnaspis aechmeae* is only found on 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. These usually hatch in Spring. One can hatch 100 babies! If you scratch them off, these babies will be released into the plant!

Most plant scale is treated with white oil but bromeliads respire through the top of their leaves and straight white oil will choke them. Some growers use the very toxic Rogor, I use Chemspray brand 'Antiscale', which is also toxic. Abide by the manufacturers' safety instructions, use gloves and a mask.

You will need to treat your plants on a regular basis.

You should quarantine plants when you bring them into your collection to first ensure they have no scale. (See p.23 Cultivation Notes)

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**Guzmanias & Vrieseas**

Guzmanias & vrieseas are available in a varied range of forms and colours. Some guzmania have coloured and/or patterned foliage eg *musaica*, but the majority are green whereas vrieseas have many foliage patterns and a few different coloured forms, eg *ospinae* var. *gruberi*. Tissue culture has given us variegated plants and hybridists have aimed for and succeeded in producing more colour in progeny.

The majority of both of these genera have entire (no spines) soft, thin leaves and they need 'soft' care – they cannot tolerate Cairns summer sun; for best results they need to be foliar fed and as they also feed through their roots, they need a softer mix and respond well to a slow release fertilizer. The mix must feed their roots but drain well. In our climate 10mil scoria for drainage, fine pine bark and a good potting mix works well in a 1/3 ratio. They enjoy a cool home with a gentle breeze and good light. In habitat they grow in a vast range of locations.

The inflorescence of most guzmanias rises above the foliage and is usually formed in a star shape or a knob with the flowers among the bracts. The inflorescence of vrieseas is usually flat paddle shaped, rises above the foliage and can be simple or branched with yellow flowers. Both inflorescences maintain their coloured bracts for several months after flowering. Some species of these two genera self pollinate and readily set seed but the balance wholly rely on offsets to maintain their survival.



## 2009 Cairns Show



Firstly, Thank You to the helpers for collecting, delivering and carting the plants and props, then assisting with the assembly of the backdrops, in Bob's absence. We certainly put on a show to educate the public that bromeliads really are breathtaking. I should have charged 5 cents for each photo as cameras were clicking fast! The public were amazed at the variety of shapes, colours and sizes. Last year we had a multitude of *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman', this year it was patterned vriesias and *Tillandsia xerographicas* and they were exquisite examples.

Eleven Members entered over 100 plants for judging and Neville Ryan had to be very judgemental with some of the excellent plants. Elaine and Beryl entered for the first time and with success - congratulations. There was a good range of tillandsias but I would have been happier to have had more to tease the interest of the public. Next year we will concentrate on what goes in each class, as some found that puzzling.

Champion Bromeliad was my *Vriesea ospinae* var. *gruberi*, with four heads and Runner Up was Bob's *Tillandsia xerographica*. Congratulations to all the section winners and to each Entrant - you are each winners for entering well grown and well presented plants, and for "having a go".

What drew the most comments? 'That pot of grass is not a bromeliad!' (*Pitcairnia sanguinea*), the patterned vrieaseas, the various *Aechmea chantinii* hybrids, the huge neoregelias and the minis, the spiky dyckias and xneophytums, the pretty cryptanthus, the tall, fat hohenbergias, *Tillandsias xerographica* and of course the flowering ones.

Karen's 'Wild Child' drew much comment - a black face mask with *blanchetiana* inflorescences as hair. It was stunning - a few people told me they hadn't seen a bromeliad like that before! I also had an expert attend who told me she grew her plants better than what we had there. When I queried her, she told me the plants were grown too dry and the result was the leaf ends of *Neoregelia* 'Red Macaw' were red and *Vriesea ospinae* were curled under!

Email from Brendan: I have had several emails and calls from people who went to the Cairns Show and especially looked for the bromeliad display and were blown away. Most saying it was the best display there. Good on ya!!

Of course it was, bromeliads do all the display work!!



**Barry Osborne:** I really gained a mass of information at Bloomin Brooms. The speakers were informative and easy to understand, the venue was excellent as was the company, and the food was sustaining. A bonus is John's book *Bromeliads under the Mango Tree* - a wealth of data at my fingertips. Here is the result of my asking a question:

### A simple question leads to a complex set of responses

It all started at Bloomin' Brooms or at least because of it and then at it. Some of our guest speakers visited our community garden at Woodward Retirement Village and in preparation for their visit, I tidied up a bit. I noticed that one of my neos had two central leaves with dried up tips. I had seen this on my *Aechmea blanchetianas* before, but they live in full sun and my neo (incognito) was in good shade.

So at Bloomin' Brooms I asked John Catlan, whose prior talks had been full of all sorts of information (as had the talks of Peter Tristam), what causes leaf tips to "dry". He motioned me to take a seat, took out a paper and pencil and proceeded to explain in considerable detail that there are four possible causes. I will summarise what I took from his explanation without diagrams - apologies to John if I oversimplify and/or distort what he said. First cause - **Lack of water**. Water enters through the roots/tank and transpires out through the leaves. The further away from its source of water the drier the leaf becomes. If not enough water gets to the tip we get- tip drying.

Second cause - **Roots!** If the roots have rotted, then the uptake of water is reduced even though the plant is being watered regularly. More about rotting comes later.

Third cause - **Too much fertiliser**. If the plant is over-fertilised, the fertiliser concentrates towards the end of leaves as transpiration uses water. Tips dry out.

Fourth cause - **Periods of heavy rain followed by long periods of dry weather** can exacerbate the lack of water cause.



## Bloomin Broms 6th – 8th June 2009

**President Thomas:** An excellent event, for me it was even better than the BSI conference. I found the talks on colour-banding in bromeliads to be very interesting as well as the information on mosquitoes. I would have liked Peter's sessions to be less classification/confusing biological names and more hands on or specimen demonstration type sessions. I loved his photo's of tillandsias though - lots of yummie additions to the wish list. I can't believe how well we got Bob with his life membership - well deserved too.

**Darryl Lister:** I really learned a lot in one day - more than I learned in in Adelaide at Easter - those days were far too drawn out. We should do it again.

**Annie Valentine** from Hervey Bay: Just a short note to firstly say thank you for having me at your Workshop. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Your guest speakers were very informative and I learnt heaps, also brought many more beautiful bromeliads and made many more contacts. The whole 3 days were very enlightening. The catering was superb and I wish to thank all the Members who gave their time to make this a very memorable time for myself and others.

The bus trip was the high light...thank you Bob for your very professional trip...you certainly know how to drive a bus. Apart from the Workshop...I felt very privileged to have seen the Ponderossi, Sue's bromeliads and last but not least Peter's magnificent setup of rare fruits and vegetation etc.

Thank you again, the memories and hospitality of this trip will stay with me for a long, long time. Everything was just perfect...including the weather...reality has now hit home, and I now wonder why I ever left Cairns and Pt Douglas. I was up at 4am this morning. 3 degrees and freezing cold, watering down the frost from my bromeliads before the sun came up, so that would not burn.

Please take care and extend my thanks to you and all your Members who helped to make the weekend so good for us.

**Bob Hudson:** This was a great way to allow the public and members to see and hear what bromeliads are all about. and to gain the know how to grow them. This type of get together should be held on a regular basis. I just love my badge, thanx.

**Karen Cross:** What a wonderful weekend I had with everyone at Bloomin Broms, great to see old and new faces there. The talks by John Catlan and Peter Tristran were very educational, learning lots of helpfull ideas on bromeliads and mossies. A big thank you to Lynn for all your hard work that went into getting this weekend up and running and to the other members who helped during the two days. Bob did a great job at the workshops, I am always learning more about bromeliads every day, so it doesn't matter

how times I sit in on a workshop or one of our mettings I always leave with more



knowledge.

The bus trip on the Monday was great, it is always wonderful to get out and see other places and their plants and to be with my other bromeliad friends again. Again I had a great time and for those who couldn't make it this time you should really try to come next time if more weekends like this are put on for us here in Cairns, as you will have a blast of a time and be enriched in your bromeliad knowledge.

**Rose Webber:** Bloomin Broms was the best thing that I have ever attended. It was awesome to be amongst people of like minds. I learnt so much in such a short duration of time. Your guest speakers were so informative and very approachable and helpful during the breaks. It must be bromeliads that make people just want to be so helpful. Being a newie has its drawbacks, but with so much info there for the asking in one place is a big drawcard. Thanks Lynn and all involved in Bloomin Broms, for the mutual love of broms and wanting to share your knowledge with me and others.

**Karen Stevens:** For me the bloomin broms weekend was great success. I found all the lectures most imformative and enjoyable to listen to. It is always interesting to hear other peoples take on how they grow their plants or tillandsias, how they got started, where they acquired them etc.

It was also good to catch up with our country members and other people from sister societies further on down the coast that we don't get to see very often.

I was very proud to read in the last Bromelcairns all the nice things the garden tourers had to say about my garden - I also love it.

The weekend was well organized, well catered and I think it was a hit wth all. The plant sales were fantastic - that is always a blast and as always Lynn and Bob put in 100% as did all the other members who pitched in to make it all come together, and not to mention all the new members we recruited from that weekend and as Thomas, our president would say "brought over to the dark side".

**Dave & Brendan:** Bloomin Broms was a great weekend in every respect, the presentations from John and Peter, were informative and expansive, each had something to offer for either new or established enthusiasts. It was a valuable opportunity to network with other members and experts alike. Indeed, we felt we gained more from this event than the recent biennial Australian Bromeliad Conference. It was wonderful to see the support from others far afield who travelled great distances to support the event. The plant sales were very well supported by sellers and buyers, an excellent and diverse selection of quality bromeliads were offered at competitive prices for local collectors.... So what about a Bloomin Broms 2010?



Yes, there is more .....

Welcome to my Garden



Monica: There were bloody bromeliads all around the place when I bought this house but they took all the good ones and left me just the @&\*% ones. Bromeliads are no bother, as you can see they just climb up the palm trees. They look after themselves pretty much and they are like me – they just do their own thing. I have been collecting some nicer ones and I have them in pots where I can enjoy them up at the back patio. Ed. The garden is quite shady, the palms are large and *Aechmeas nudicaulis* var. *nudicaulis*, 'Foster's Favourite' and 'Shining Light' climb the trees that skirt the pool.

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**Beryl:** I bought this house seven years ago. I have always enjoyed playing with plants. When I see an empty patch I just have to put a plant there, that is why there are so many different plants. I really like colour around me and the plants and flowers provide me with soul food.

A few years ago I saw bromeliads at the Cairns Show and thought they were pretty cool and last year Rita and I decided we would join the Bromeliad Society to learn more about these amazing plants. Many of my bromeliads I have put into the ground but I have found they are also very versatile in pots as I can easily move them around, changing the whole appearance of the garden. Being in pots also means I can place them on my workbench making it is easier to work on them. I am lucky to have my daughter Sharon, her husband and my grandson move here to share my life, pool and garden.



**Root rot** can be caused by the break down of the medium in the bromeliad's pot which can result in the medium harbouring excess fertiliser. The break down of organic material is much more rapid in Cairns than in the southern states. Indeed the breakdown of the potting medium in Victoria is lower than in NSW than in Brisbane. John suggested Melbourne's organic material in the potting medium can last 2 years, Brisbane's 6 months and here in Cairns it can breakdown quickly in just 2 months.

I have seen the bottom third of some of my pots made of decomposed organic material, even with soil and worms in it. I wonder, too, if soil is sometimes transported up into the pots by the worms and other small creatures in the soil from outside the pots.

So firstly water bromeliads regularly in the tank and around the roots – Herb Plever and Joyce Brehm (in *Bromeliads a Cultural Manual* 2003, p 7) say "when you water, flush the central reservoir and leaf axis and also water the pot medium... so that the medium does not dry out and it stays damp but not soggy". No, I had not read this booklet that carefully on that page before. Then secondly Lynn's *Bromeliad Cultivation Notes*, (p 10) stresses the potting mix "must drain well... your mix must be porous enough to allow the plant to drain and bromeliads enjoy an acid mix – pine tree products are acidic".

A final suggestion - perhaps it is worth checking the mix in our 'most precious' bromeliads to see that there is not too much soil and/or decomposed organic material clogging the bottom third of the pot and hence increasing the risk of root rot.

Accordingly if we took these three sets of advice we would head off causes one, two and four. Washing heavily could also leach out excess fertiliser, but if the base of the pot is clogged with broken down organic material, then the leaching may not be completed.

Repotting periodically might be the only solution – and perhaps a little less pine bark in the potting medium?



Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement center were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: 'Slim, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?'

Slim says, 'I feel just like a newborn baby.'

'Really!?' Like a newborn baby!?'

'Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants.'



**The Family Tree of Vincent Van Gogh**

- His dizzy aunt ----- Verti Gogh
  - The brother who ate prunes----- Gotta Gogh
  - The brother who worked at a convenience store -Stop N Gogh
  - The grandfather from Yugoslavia ----- U Gogh
  - His magician uncle ----- Where-diddy Gogh
  - His Mexican cousin ----- A Mee Gogh
  - The Mexican cousin's American half-brother ----- Gring Gogh
  - The nephew who drove a stage coach ----- Wells-far Gogh
  - The constipated uncle ----- Can't Gogh
  - The ballroom dancing aunt ----- Tang Gogh
  - The bird lover uncle ----- Fla Min Gogh
  - The fruit-loving cousin ----- Man Gogh
  - An aunt who taught positive thinking ----- Way-to-Gogh
  - The little bouncy nephew ----- Poe Gogh
  - A sister who loved disco ----- Go Gogh
  - And his niece who travels the country in an RV -- Winnie Bay Gogh
- I saw you smiling . . . there ya Gogh!!!!!!



A senior citizen said to his eighty-year old buddy:  
 'So I hear you're getting married?' 'Yep!'  
 'Do I know her?' 'Nope!'  
 'This woman, is she good looking?' 'Not really.'  
 'Is she a good cook?' 'Naw, she can't cook too well.'  
 'Does she have lots of money?' 'Nope! Poor as a church mouse.'  
 'Well, then, is she good in bed?' 'I don't know.'  
 'Why in the world do you want to marry her then?'  
 'Because she can still drive!'

Ha Ha Ha!



To get something you never had, you have to do something you never did.



When the Universe takes something from your grasp, they're not punishing you, but merely opening your hands to receive something better.



**Megan & John Welch**

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19th World Bromeliad Conference - New Orleans July 26 - 1st August 2010

Bromeliad Society International - bsi.org

Greater New Orleans Bromeliad Society - GNOBromeliads.com

*"Bromeliads Under the Mango Tree"*

*notes of John Catlan*

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

The best \$10 you will spend. Available in bulk at reduced price.

Contact **John & Genny on phone 07 5546 1401** or Lynn on 07 40533913

