

BROMELIANA

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MY ADAPTABLE BROMELIADS

by Herb Plever

Last year, from mid-April to the end of October, the relative humidity in was at 60% or higher, and my Bromeliads flourished as if they were in habitat - but even more protected. The temperature in my apartment is set at 73° F. during the daytime and at 70° at night.

As it got much colder in January when the temperatures frequently dropped down single digits, and my apartment was quite dry despite my running a small humidifier on high. (I have to refill it almost every day.) My broms, however, didn't seem to mind. I'm growing potted plants on three extended window sills and on two shelves of a plant stand lighted with LED lights. There was no quilling or browned leaf tips, and my potted plants all look perfectly healthy. They get watered once a week.

I grow many Tillandsias on two large cork logs that I hang in the back of each shelf of the plant stand, so they get the good spectrum LED light. I have mounted LED lights under three extended window sills where I grow even more Tillandsias mounted on six cork logs hung under them. The Tillandsias get watered every week by placing them under the shower for 30 minutes.

In my former apartment I used to soak them for an hour in fertilized water in the bathtub for an hour, and they thrived and bloomed in that optimum condition. Now all I have is a large shower stall (but no bathtub), and they have adapted well and are healthy under the new setup. I spray them with 5-12-26 fertilizer when I remember to do so, but I will have to wait much longer for them to bloom. I still have many clumps of *Tillandsia argentina* that used bloom

2 to 3 times a year, but so far not a single one has bloomed. I had a few pieces from a large clump of *Tillandsia mallemonitii* that bloomed, and the blooming *Tillandsia disticha* that I wrote about in the last issue of Bromeliana. But that has been all the flowering I have seen so far, and I'm not used to this and not happy about it.

It is likely that my plants are semi-dormant given the fact that it is winter and the humidity is low. I'm hoping to see some blooms once we get to the late spring and summer and much higher humidity.

Once the weather gets warmer I will place many plants on my glassed-in terrace with the windows open, so the plants will get much needed moving air and higher direct western sunlight. Still, I will have to spray them with fertilizer much more frequently to get them to bloom.

Two groups of plants that have thrived in my new setup are the Dyckias and Sincoreas. I would like to acquire more Sincorea species. I am growing *Sincorea navioides*, *S. ophiuroides* and *S. hatchbacchii*, and all of these plants have good sized pups. I would be happy to swap for some other species of that genus.

Of course I'm still growing many Guzmanias, Cryptanthus and Vrieseas as well as *Aechmea chantinii*, *A. 'Morgana'*, *Hohenbergia corriea-araujei*, *Billbergia 'Strawberry'* and about 16 Guzmania and Vriesea tissue cultures acquired in the past few years that are now quite large plants.

All these bromeliads, species and cultivars, from different genera and habitats have adapted to their new environment. □

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, March 5th, 2019 **promptly** at 7:00 pm at the Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 - 8th Avenue (betw. 36th & 37th Ave) **Room 16N**.
PRIZE WINNERS in recent judged shows in Australia and New Zealand.

MY TOUGH TISSUE CULTURES

by Herb Plever

I had bought a bunch of tissue cultures in my plant order in 2017. They were delivered at the May meeting. When I took them home I didn't get around to repotting them for a few days, and then came the tragic news that that my wife had Stage Four cancer.

I potted them quickly, four in a pot, just to keep them going and out of the way. They stayed that way after Sylvia had died in January, 2018 and I had moved to my new digs in South Setauket way out in eastern Long Island. I didn't get around to potting them individually until June.

When I got them, the tissue cultures came in thimble sized peat pots; they were 6-7 inches tall, scrawny with only a few leaves. I had concerns about their survival in a new environment, but I needn't have worried. Their scrawny looks belied their toughness to survive and grow. Now they are 21 months old; they have many leaves and are growing well under LED lights and on a west window sill.

They had to adjust to dry conditions when I moved to my new apartment in February, but by early

April the relative humidity zoomed to 50%-70%. For my broms it was a jungle heaven. The good humidity lasted through December, but real cold, dry air descended on us in January, frequently in single digit temperatures. So it has been generally dry (usually around 30% - 35%) in my apartment despite my running a humidifier full blast and filling it every day. However the temperatures are starting to rise and the outside humidity has also risen.

For my broms, including the tissue cultures that are growing on the window sills, the above description is irrelevant, because they have kept crisp leaves in their semi-dormant states. The plants that are growing under LED lights (13 hours a day in the winter) are still growing, but more slowly than they will when the warm, moist weather returns.

We have been buying tissue cultures because they are reasonably low priced, compared to buying larger plant from nurseries. The down side is they will take some years before they are mature enough to bloom.



Aechmea chantinii. I got this plant as mini *A. 'Rebecca'*, but it turned out to be a full sized *chantinii*. It has grown rapidly and after 21 months it is 18" across and 15" high. It also has a big pup coming up.



Tillandsia 'Vincent' with many leaves. It came with just 4 or five scrawny ones. It has a large, pink, cyanea type paddle bloom on a tall scape.



Guzmania 'Joyce'. Small plant, wide yellow bracts, reddish below.



Guzmania 'Deseo White'. A small plant with a white inflorescence low in the cup on a short scape - not registered in BCR.



Vriesea 'Carly'. This tiny 5"-7" gem produces a bloom with 5 to 7 red/yellow spikes.



Guzmania 'Charlene'. A small plant with a large, low, purple/pink bracted inflorescence. It is not registered with the BCR.



Guzmania 'Hope'. A small plant with bright red bloom on a small scape. The red bracts have white tips that are erect and closely attached to form a capitate head. It is not registered on the BCR.



Guzmania 'Kay'. A small plant with a tall many-tiered inflorescence. The lower bracts are red, changing to red/white and then finally snow white at the top of the bloom.



X *Barfussia* 'Antonio'. A Skotak hybrid originally released by Deroose as a *Tillandsia*, but it is a bigeneric under the recent changes in *Tillandsioideae*. It has many strong pink spikes closely attached at the top of a tall stem, like a small version of *Tillandsia* 'Creation'.



Guzmania 'Marcella'. A medium/small plant with a tall many-tiered inflorescence. The lowest bracts are red; it changes to red/yellow and then yellow. It is not registered

OFFICERS

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Victoria Ehrlich

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