BROMELIANA

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BROMELPHILES AND GENDER

by Herb Plever

A brief article entitled "Being Involved" by Kay Daniels in the last issue of the excellent newsletter of the Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group in New South Wales, Australia, raised the issue of how active women are in comparison to male members. This sparked in me a recollection of an event in the distant past.

In the article Ms. Daniels said, in part: "Congratulations to Marie for winning the Open Popular Vote for the third year in a row! Trish is also to be congratulated for winning both the Novice section and Judges Choice. Helen had a well-deserved win in the decorative section which has only been going since June. What do all these winners have in common besides growing beautiful plants? They are all female! With a few exceptions, notably Shane, most of the entries in the competitions are from women. Why?! Men make up half of our group so let's see more of you entering."

The event in my distant past occurred about 35 to 40 years ago when Sig and Flo Sussman and my wife Sylvia and I were traveling in Europe. We arranged to meet in London to visit the famed Chelsea Flower Show at the Kew Botanical Gardens. There we made a beeline for a bromeliad exhibit put on by the then British Bromeliad Society (it has long since been defunct) headed by Clive Innis. We met Clive there, and he invited us to attend a meeting of their Society the next evening at Royal Albert Hall.

We got to the hall early, and watched as members of the Society arrived. Except for one member they were all wearing bowler hats, business suits and ties and were carrying umbrellas.

There was a speaker for the evening - I regret I've forgotten the topic - and after he spoke he asked if there were any questions. Immediately, Flo Sussman stood up and in her pronounced Bronx accent inquired: "Yeah, how come there are 29 members at this meeting and only one is a woman?" The speaker was stunned for almost a minute as he tried to gain his composure. Finally, in a faltering voice with a few ahems he replied: "Well you see medam, we've always thought of the bromeliad as a sort of male plahnt." He then went on to explain defensively that he meant to say bromeliads present a strong image that is attractive to men whereas women in garden clubs tend to like african violets.

Such a strange view of reality may not have been responsible for that society's demise, but it sure didn't help keep it going. This was 25 years or more after BSI's formation in 1950 and most affiliates had active women in leadership and membership.

I think certain people, regardless of gender, just have an innate esthetic appreciation for architectural forms, for bold color and exotic shapes that attract them to bromeliads. This includes women and men of all sexual preferences, races and regions.

Over the many centuries of our history, societies

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, March 4th, 2014 promptly at 7:00 P.M. at the Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. (between 36th & 37th St) Room 16K

A FUN PHOTO QUIZ - Try to identify the genus and species or cultivar of a series of photos of some popular and some not so well known plants in most bromeliad genera. **PLUS** tissue culture photos for an early order to permit plants to be grown for an additional month for larger stronger plants. If it is warm enough, please bring in plants for Show and Tell, and for sale.

have always been dominated by men. In the United States, women did not receive the right to vote until 1920. That victory (for men as well as women) was due in large part to the long years of courageous agitation by Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and other heroic women. While they have not yet achieved full equality in the workplace, women now play key and often leading roles in all phases of society activity.

I do not mean to downplay the important contributions of men, but let's give women their due respect for the vital, unsung role they played and play in building our bromeliad world, and for the activities and fun they bring to our societies today.

The first Board of Directors of BSI were all men except for Victoria Padilla, but that changed over the following two decades with the inception of many new society affiliates around the world, and those societies soon had about equal numbers of men and women. Early on many women played key roles in building and strengthening BSI and its affiliated societies and in brom education and hybridizing.

Racine Foster of Orlando, FL. was Mulford B. Foster's wife and partner in the exploration, discovery and description of hundreds of bromeliad species. She was also an editor of the Bromeliad Bulletin, and wrote many articles for the Bulletin and for the Journal. If Mulford was the "Father of the Bromeliads", then Racine certainly was its Mother.

Victoria Padilla of Los Angeles, Cal. was one of the founders of the BSI in 1950 and its Secretary in its early years. She is a noted author of books on bromeliads and was for many years the editor of the Bromeliad Society Journal.

Muriel Waterman of New Zealand, an early brom pioneer and collector in the 1950s, was the mentor of Bea Hanson who was one of the founders of the New Zealand Bromeliad Society in 1963, editor of its journal for about 25 years and a BSI Trustee.

In 1969 Olwen Ferris became the first women president of the Australian Bromeliad Society which was founded in 1963. From 1969 to 1980 all of the presidents of the society were women. Olwen was editor of BromLetter from 1971 to 1988; she wrote many articles for that publication and for the BSI Journal, and she was an Honorary Trustee of BSI.

Margaret Mee was an important botanical artist of rainforest plants. She illustrated Lyman Smith's book "The Bromeliads". Ruby Ryde of Sydney, Australia was an early collector of broms in South America and was a president of the Australian Bromeliad Society. Renata Ehlers of Germany was an early explorer, collector and describer of Tillandsias in Central and South America. She is one of the most important taxonomists for the genus *Tillandsia*, and has published many valuable books on tillandsias. Lieselotte Hromadnik and Elvira Gross of Germany, Amy Jean Gilmartin in Washington State University and Sue (Gardner) Sills at Texas A & M made valuable contributions to bromeliad taxonomy. These women also wrote many important articles for the Bromeliad Journal that contributed to its quality and standing.

From its inception in 1962 to 1970 our New York Bromeliad Society had all male officers. Its membership was mostly men at the start but women soon joined and became active; within about 5 years we had equal numbers of both sexes. When I became President of the society in 1970, the wonderful Theresa Begley became our Secretary, a position she retained for many years until her death. Happily we've had and still have women presidents, treasurers, directors, and good, active female members. (On a personal note, I salute my loving wife Sylvia who for 50 years has put up with hundreds of broms growing in our apartment, plants in every room and hours of weekly to bi-weekly soaking tilllandsias in our bathtub.)

In Oahu, Hawaii, May Moir wrote many horticultural articles for the BSI Journal in late 1960s through the 1980s. Together with her husband Goodale Moir she was one of the founders of the Hawaiian Bromeliad Society. In Cairns, Australia, Lynn Hudson was and still is the dynamic force in the organization and growth of the Cairns Bromeliad Society.

There have been and are many more important female contributors to the administration of their societies and to bromeliad education:

In Florida, Connie Johnson, Carol Johnson, Moyna Prince, Helga Tarver, Dorothy Berg, educator and lecturer Dr. Terrie Bert, Maureen Frazel, Karen Andreas, Calandra Thurrott and Vicky Chernside.

In California, Thelma O'Reilly in San Diego, Kathy Dorr, Margaret Case and Pamela Koide Hyatt in northern California, brom collector and intrepid explorer Christy Brenner of Saddleback Valley.

In New England, Doris (Dee Dee) Bundy. In Texas, Sue (Gardner) Sill in San Antonio and Carol Richtmeyer in Houston.

In Hawaii, Hatsumi Mertz, and in Queensland, Australia, Narelle Aizlewood. In South Africa, Lyn

Wegner was the organizer of the energetic and still growing new East London Bromeliad Society.

We've had important bromeliad nurseries founded and run by women: the late Sally Marz's Marz Bromeliads, the late Carol Johnson's Pineapple Place, Elizabeth Naundorff in Quito, Ecuador, Pamela Koide Hyatt's Bird Rock Tropicals, Lisa Vinzant in Hawaii and Betsy McCrory in Central Florida. Patricia Bullis ran the big Bullis Nursery after the death of her father, Harvey Bullis. Annick Gyselinck in the U.S. and Marjolein Deroose in Belgium are important officers for Deroose Plants which specializes in tissue cultures. Linda Cathcart is a C.E.O. for the Tropiflora Nursery.

Among the talented bromeliad hybridizers were or are Grace Goode, Margaret Paterson and Olwyn Ferris of Australia, Margaret Peterson and Lisa Vinzant in Hawaii, Carol Richtmeyer in Houston, Texas and Patricia Bullis of Princeton, Florida.

Many of BSI's local affiliates have had women presidents, editors and other officers in the past. At the present time 11 society presidents are women, and 10 editors of society newsletters are women. There may be others; current information is not available on some societies.

No doubt I have omitted the contributions of some women in this too brief account. I apologize in advance for any inadvertent omissions. ❑

GENUS CANISTROPSIS

by Herb Plever

CANISTROPSIS has a confused history in taxonomy. It has been a subgenus of *Nidularium*, then transferred to *Neoregelia*, then transferred back as a subgenus of Nidularium. In 1997, Elton C. Leme, in his study of the Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest and his book, "CANISTROPSIS", classified *Canistropsis* as an independent genus. Canistropsis means "resembling a *Canistrum"*. Its pups propogate on long stolons. It is native only in moist areas of Brazil, mostly on the southeast coast and a few in wet, montane forests. Its species grow both epiphytically and saxicolous on rocks (usually near waterfalls).

Canistropsis is included in Leme's Nidularium Complex. Its species vary in size (small to medium), leaves, and inflorescence. For instance, 7 of its species: *C. marceloi, C. burchellii, C. simulans, C. albiflora, C. correia-araujoi, C. microps* (three varieties), and *C. pulcherrima* have inflorescences down in the cup which do not exceed the tops of the leaves. The blooms of 5 species: *C. seidelii, C. billbergioides* (2 varieties), *C. elata, C. exigua* and *C. selloana* rise on mostly subfoliaceous scapes much above the leaves.

The primary bracts of the inflorescence are mostly red, but *C. seidelii* has both bright yellow and red bracts. The holotype of *C. billbergioides* has bright yellow bracts, but the species can be found with bracts that are very varied in colors ranging from shades of yellow, orange, red, and bicolored.

The flower petals are mostly white, but *C. correia-araujoi's* petals are mauve and the petals of *C. billbergioides var. azurea* are blue. Given its variability and its affinity to *Neoregelia, Nidularium* and *Canistrum*,we may see further changes in the classification of its species when new DNA data becomes available.

The Bromeliad Cultivar Register of the BSI lists 11 cultivars of *C. billbergioides,* based on their diverse bract or leaf colors. These are described by Derek Butcher as follows: APRICOT - Primary bract deep yellow orange. Leaf green; BLOOD ORANGE – Primary bract reddish orange. Leaf green; CITRON – (was citrinum) Primary bracts yellow. Leaf green; GUAVA- Primary bracts rose. Leaf green; LEMON - Primary bracts light yellow. Leaf green; MANDARIN – Primary bracts Mandarin Red. Leaf maroon; MULBERRY - Primary bracts dark orange/mulberry. Leaf reddish both sides;PERSIMMON-Primary bracts orange. Leaf green; PLUM - Primary bracts apricot. Leaf maroon both sides; TAMARILLO ------

Canistropsis burchellii

Canistropsis correia-araujoi (fcbs)

Canistropsis billbergioides Pink form
ph by D. berg, fcbs. Like *C.* 'Guava'

Canistropsis billbergioides ph Leme
Yellow bracted form in habitat

Canistropsis seidelii ph Berg, fcbs

Primary bracts orange flushed mulberry. Leaf rusty both sides; TUTTI FRUTTI – Primary bracts orange flushed mulberry.

Having seen only a few of these cultivars, I hesitate to pass judgment just from the photos on how distinctly they differ from the species and from each other. But problem is moot because none of them seem to be available in the U.S. Michael's Bromeliads has many species of *Canistropsis* available; for *C. billbergioides* his list has yellow, orange and pink bracted forms, a rubra-leaved form and *var. azurea.*

C. burchellii is a small plant, *C. seidelii* of medium size and the rest are medium-small, so they are rewarding and easy plants for us to grow. ❑

NEWS and NOTES

THE PHOTO QUIZ - In preparing some identification tips for the Photo Quiz at the coming March meeting, I realize that members will be limited by their experience and memory in trying to identify a plant when all they have in front of them is a video image. They will not be able to see leaf spines or flower parts such as floral bracts and sepals and other characters that are used in identification. It helps to have the live plant in front of you, and it is useful to be able to examine and take apart the flower parts. I will orally provide some details; this will be neither scary nor boring. I promise it will be lots of fun.

Experienced members will be familiar with the essential identification structure of the *Bromeliaceae* (the Latin botanical name for the Bromeliad Family). They should know that there are now eight recognized sub-families. Each sub-family is divided into genera and sub-genera into which the species are placed. There are 58 recognized genera, and each genus has species which have been assigned to it by the taxonomists. There are 4,291 valid species. There are about 10,000 registered hybrids or cultivars which are assigned to the different genera in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register. Photos and information about these can be obtained on line at bsi.org. Information and images of the species is available on line at fcbs.org.

You can enjoy growing beautiful plants, and you can be a good grower without knowing much about identification, provided that you make sure that every plant you grow has a correct label.

UNPAID 2014 DUES are overdue. If you haven't paid your dues by the time the next Bromeliana is ready to be sent, your name will be stricken from our rolls. Please mail your dues check payable to N.Y. Bromeliad Society to Barbara Lagow, 54 West 74th Street, #603, New York, NY 10023 or pay it at the March meeting. Single and joint memberships are $25.00; the subscription rate for BROMELIANA is still $8.00, and an overseas subscription is $12.00.

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