

# BROMELIANA

PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
(visit our website [www.nybromeliadsociety.org](http://www.nybromeliadsociety.org))

December, 2015

Vol. 52, No. 9

## FROM TISSUE CULTURE TO BLOOM IN 2 YEARS and 4 MONTHS

by Herb Plever



*Aechmea* 'Del Mar'



*Aechmea* 'Del Mar' inflorescence



Inflorescence 6 weeks later

In New York we've been fortunate to have had wonderful, sunny weather from the Spring up to November. The temperature is 70°F. as of this writing on November 4<sup>th</sup>. My plants have responded well with crisp, increased growth and blooms. Among the many plants that have bloomed is *Aechmea* 'Del Mar' which is the subject of this article.

I received a 5" high, 10 week old tissue culture

of *A.* of Del Mar' at the end of April, 2013 as part of our Spring plant order. It came growing in a tiny peat pot; I planted it in a 4" azalea pot, ran a wick strip through the mix and set it in a yoghurt container that I use as a water reservoir. The container is wrapped in aluminum foil to cut down on the formation of algae. Then I placed the plant on an east-south-east facing window sill.

**NEXT MEETING** - **Tuesday, December 15th**, 2015 at 6:30 P.M. at the home of Michael Riley and Francisco Correal, 101 West 104<sup>th</sup> Street, corner Columbus Avenue. (Take the 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. #1 train or the Independent A, B, or C trains to 103<sup>rd</sup> St.)

**HOLIDAY PARTY!** - Once again Michael and Francisco have graciously offered to host our annual party at their beautiful home. The party is open only to members and their spouses or significant others. Michael and Francisco will provide the main courses; please RSVP them at 212-666-2395 if you plan to attend. AND let him know if you will bring a side dish, salad, fruit or dessert. Michael has added new plants to his collection of bromeliads, orchids, aroids, ferns, etc. growing epiphytically on his living room walls.

The plant was fertilized every 7 to 10 days, (less frequently in the winter), and it grew quite vigorously. After 15 months, I transplanted the plant to a 5½" pot (I can't use 6" pots because they won't fit into the top of the container). After a brief adjustment to the transplant, *Aechmea* 'Del Mar' continued to grow rapidly. It became too big to sit on the window sill so I had to move it back from the window.

By the end of April, 2015 it was a big plant (for indoor spaces), so I put it out on my south facing

terrace - even though it was still a bit cold at night. With increased light and lots of moving air, A. 'Del Mar' responded well with more growth.

The moving air frequently became gusty; 3 or 4 times the plant was knocked over despite the fact it was anchored. Still it continued to grow and spread to about 2½ feet and then near the end of August it began to put up a big, many branched inflorescence.

With favorable cultural conditions of good light and fertilizer we can grow tissue cultures to bloom in 2 to 3 years. □

## LONG LASTING BLOOMS WITH CHANGING COLORS

by Herb Plever

Many bromeliad species will produce colorful blooms which can last as long as six months. During that period changes take place; the flowers and their petals can dry, twist, change color and darken. In many bromeliad species the fertile flowers will turn into colorful berries, and the berries sometimes change color over time.

Those changes are evolutionary devices that have evolved to produce colorful petals to attract flying insects such as bees, wasps and moths in plants that don't self-pollinate. Bromeliad species that do self-pollinate produce fertile, colorful berries. The berries attract certain birds who will ingest them. See comment on *Aechmea tillandsioides* on page 3.

You can quickly see a good example of this by looking at the photos of two *Aechmea* 'Del Mar' inflorescences on page 1. Here are a few other examples of the exciting color show broms can put on:

*Aechmea fasciata* and its cultivars



The photo below shows the inflorescence of A. 'Morgana' - my favorite *fasciata* cultivar because it grows to maturity rapidly and compactly. The pink bracts stay in color for 5 to 6 months and there are more than 60 flowers in this 6" inflorescence. The blue petaled flowers remain in color for 2 or 3 days and then turn bright red. The plant keeps its red on pink coloration for a long time.

*Aechmea tillandsioides* - small form



The above *Aechmea tillandsioides* is a variegated, small plant and it is self-pollinating. The flowers have yellow bracts topped by reddish sepals (see upper flowers). They become fertile berries that turn blue and attract birds that swallow the berries whole. The berries have a hard coating and are not digested; instead they are deposited on tree branches in bird poop. The seeds in the berries germinate inside the nutritious poop and produce a colony of seedlings that grow on the tree branches.

### *Aechmea weilbachii* forma *leodiensis*



The flower petals of *Aechmea weilbachii* are mauve; the sepals are white and the floral bracts are bright red. The petals stay in color for many days and then they turn black, while the white sepals, and bright red bracts, scape bracts and rhachis (inflorescence stem) remain in color for many months.

### *Aechmea fulgens* and *Aechmea mineata*



*Aechmea fulgens* and *Aechmea mineata* produce inflorescences that last in color for many months. Even after 3 - 6 days (depending on humidity) the purple petals dry to dark purple with red tips and the flowers turn to bright red berries. Note that the inflorescence on *A. fulgens* is compound only at its lower 1/3 and the rest of the spike is simple. This is characteristic of *A. fulgens*, and it is one of the major characters that distinguishes it from its look-alike cousin *Aechmea miniata* whose bloom is compound, globular throughout right to the apex.

### *Guzmania* 'Ultra'



*Guzmania* 'Ultra' is a *G. lingulata* v. *minor* cultivar by Corn.Bak of the Netherlands. It is a medium-small plant with easy culture. The bright orange inflorescence stays in color for many months, and then the bracts turn darker in color to a vibrant purple as shown in the photo below. The new color will last for another 3 or more months before the inflorescence bracts fade.

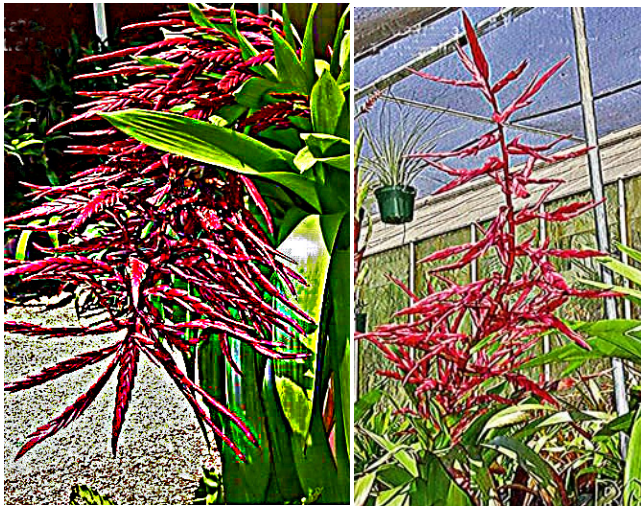


*Guzmania* 'Ultra' in purple bracts phase

**THE PROBLEM WITH FORMULA NAMES**

by Herb Plevner

**BSI directors and Affiliate Show Chairpersons please take note!**



V. 'Sundance' x *T. australis*    V. 'Sundance' x *T. australis*

The above plants with the identical formula name of **V. 'Sundance' x *T. australis*** can hardly be more different. How can this be? Well, they both were selected from the same, very diverse batch of seedlings (GREX) that were created by the cross of *Vriesea* 'Sundance' by *Tillandsia australis*. Actually, they were selected, named and registered by the principled John Arden as **x *Vrieslandsia* 'Arden's Fireworks'** (plant on left) and **x *Vrieslandsia* 'Twin Brother'** (plant on the right).

But some hybridizers sometimes do not get around to naming seedlings that grow to sellable size, and some nurseries sell many plants by formula name only. So suppose that the above plants had not been named, and that Grower A and Grower B both bought a plant with that formula name before it had bloomed - or if they both saw only one plant in bloom. Suppose that both plants then bloomed and were entered by Grower A and Grower B in an affiliate or BSI standard show under that formula name.

Think of the headache the Show Entry Admissions person would have under the present rules which permit the entry of plants with only a formula name. Think of the confusion and embarrassment that would be created if the two, very different plants were displayed in the same section. This situation is not a unique, freak coincidence. In

fact we know that hybridizers have selected 7 or more diverse plants from a grex to produce commercially. If such selections were not named other than by formula, there is a reasonable chance that this awkward situation could occur many times.

It is for this reason that the international rules that govern shows prohibit the entry of plants with only formula names. Entry rules should not be decided by opinion polls; it is time that the BSI Board of Directors and Affiliates raises the standards for shows and adopted by-laws that bar the entry in shows of plants with only a formula name. This might encourage hybridizers to name and register their plants.

*N E W S* and *N O T E S*

**2016 DUES** - will be due and payable at the end of this month. Single and joint memberships are \$25.00; the domestic subscription rate for BROMELIANA is \$8.00 and an overseas subscription is \$12.00. Please mail your check payable to N.Y. Bromeliad Society to Barbara Lagow, 54 West 74th Street, #603, N.Y.C. 10023 or pay your dues at the Holiday Party on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**NO MEETING IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY** - This is advance reminder that we will not meet in January and February in consideration of the low attendance due to anticipated nasty winter weather.

**MATERIAL FOR BROMELIANA** - I earnestly solicit articles, paragraphs, letters and plant photos of your opinions and experience on growing bromeliads.

<b>OFFICERS</b>	<b>DIRECTORS</b>
President.....Mimi Gussow	Cynthia Percarpio
Vice-Pres..David McReynolds	Victoria Ehrlich
Treasurer.....Barbara Lagow	
Editor.....Herb Plevner	
<p><b>BROMELIANA</b> is published 9 times a year by the New York Bromeliad Society, c/o Herb Plevner, 172-34 133<sup>rd</sup> Avenue # 8A, Jamaica, NY 11434. email addr:</p>	