

BROMELIANA

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USEFUL TIPS FOR GROWERS

(Some recent local society Newsletters had some useful tips to solve problems and help us grow better plants. They reminded me of an article I had written many years ago with a kind of New Year's resolutions of tips. I found it in the January 1988 Bromeliana entitled "Arsenal Check-List Updated". I will update and reprint here some of the items from that article for indoor growers and from the other Newsletters for everyone. I'll try to fit in a few jokes from abroad to liven up this issue. Editor)

FROM BROMELIANA January, 1988

Things you should have in your "Arsenal":

Watering Cans with long necks to water hard to reach plants.

Hand Sprayers for spraying fertilizer or chemicals such as Safer's Soap. I wrap the spray bottle with aluminum foil to slow the development of algae. After a time you'll have to clean out the gunk.

Fertilizers - Commercial and professional growers use an assortment of fertilizers. Take my word for it, a fertilizer regimen will help your broms grow better and bloom faster.

Safer's Soap - This is a very useful prophylactic spray for insects, spider mites, some fungus and bacteria. Every indoor house or apartment harbors many millions of spider mites which are barely visible to the naked eye.

They just love to suck out the chlorophyll from green Vriesea leaves. The mites weave fluffy white nests on the undersides of the leaves. A thorough spray of Safer's Soap on the leaves and in the leaf axils will cure the problem.

Potting Material - Be sure to have enough potting material to pot up your pups when spring comes, and have a list of suppliers ready to order material.

FROM FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY BULLETIN - FEBRUARY, 2018

Correcting floppy leaves: Use a twist tie to hold a floppy leaf in its typical U-shape (pictured below) and leave it for a few weeks to allow the plant to re-establish the leaf's proper contour. Use a plastic tie and not a paper one with a metal insert because the paper will disintegrate and leave only a rusting bit of wire that will probably cut into your leaf.



floppy leaf corrected by plastic tie

Dick Dailey showed us two Cryptanthus (see page 2) that were growing in a product called **Grodan Stonewool (aka rockwool)** that he had bought at a

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, March 6th, 2018 **promptly** at 7:00 pm at the Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 - 8th Avenue (betw. 36th & 37th Ave) **Room 16I**

1. Each member's plants or plant will be discussed by those present. 2. We'll discuss what plants you want on the April plant order and what is available. 3. What programs do you want presented in May and in the fall.

local hydroponics store. It is made from molten rock spun into cotton candy-like fibers and then compressed into cubes, blocks, or slabs. It is used in hydroculture to grow plants without soil, just water and the mineral nutrients in water. Dick stated the plants have doubled their growth since he put them in the Grodan product, stay moist for a week, and are more secure in the product than in soil.



Crypts growing in rockwool

Barb Gardner showed us one of the photo albums she uses to keep records of her bromeliads, complete with pictures, labels, and pertinent information about each plant. She also shared a tip she learned from Helga Tarver about using plant labels: place two labels in the pot, one that sticks up above the soil and one under the soil that will serve as a backup should the top label fade, fall out and get lost (how often does that happen!).

FROM AUSTRALIAN TOURIST WEBSITE

The questions below about Australia are from potential visitors. They were posted on an Australian Tourism Website and the answers are the actual responses by the website officials, who obviously have a wry sense of humour.

Q: Does it ever get windy in Australia? I have never seen it rain on TV, how do the plants grow? (UK).

A: We import all plants fully grown and then just sit around watching them die.

Q: Will I be able to see kangaroos in the street? (USA)

A: Depends how much you've been drinking.

Q: I want to walk from Perth to Sydney - can I follow the railroad tracks? (Sweden)

A: Sure, it's only three thousand miles - take lots of water.

Q: Is it safe to run around in the bushes in Australia? (Sweden)

A: So it's true what they say about Swedes.

Q: Are there any ATMs (cash machines) in Australia? Can you send me a list of them in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Hervey Bay? (UK)

A: What did your last slave die of?

Q: Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Australia? (USA)

A: A-fri-ca is the big triangle shaped continent south of Europe. Aus-tra-lia is that big island in the middle of the Pacific which does not... oh forget it. Sure, the hippo racing is every Tuesday night in Kings Cross. Come naked.

Q: Which direction is North in Australia? (USA)

A: Face south and then turn 180 degrees. Contact us when you get here and we'll send the rest of the directions.

Q: Can I bring cutlery into Australia? (UK)

A: Why? Just use your fingers like we do.

Q: Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule? (USA)

A: Aus-tri-a is that quaint little country bordering Ger-man-y, which is...oh forget it. Sure, the Vienna Boys Choir plays every Tuesday night in Kings Cross, straight after the hippo races. Come naked.

Q: Can I wear high heels in Australia? (UK)

A: You are a British politician, right?

Q: Are there supermarkets in Sydney and is milk available all year round? (Germany)

A: No, we are a peaceful civilization of vegan hunter/gatherers. Milk is illegal.

Q: Please send a list of all doctors in Australia who can dispense rattlesnake serum. (USA)

A: Rattlesnakes live in A-meri-ca, which is where YOU come from. All Australian snakes are perfectly harmless, can be safely handled and make good pets.

Q: I have a question about a famous animal in Australia, but I forget its name. It's a kind of bear and lives in trees. (USA)

A: Rattlesnakes live in A-meri-ca, which is where YOU come from. All Australian snakes are perfectly harmless, can be safely handled and make good pets.

Q: I have a question about a famous animal in Australia, but I forget its name. It's a kind of bear and lives in trees. (USA)

A: It's called a Drop Bear. They are so called because they drop out of Gum trees and eat the brains of anyone walking underneath them. You can scare them off by spraying yourself with human urine before you go out walking.

Q: I have developed a new product that is the fountain of youth. Can you tell me where I can sell it in Australia? (USA)

A: Anywhere significant numbers of Americans gather. □

from Queensland Bromeliad Society Newsletter-
BROMELIAD ODDITIES by Peter Paroz

1. Bromeliads are the only plants where flowering can be induced by chemical treatment. (There are other plants can be induced. Ed.) The first report was the effect of smoky grass fires on pineapples. Locally in spring with the burn off of fuel for bush fire control, smoky grass fires have caused occasional premature flowering in my ornamental bromeliads. The active agent is minute traces of ethylene in the smoke.

2. Most bromeliads have terminal flower spikes but a few plants such as *Tillandsia complanata*, *Quesnelia lateralis* and some *Dyckias* and *Hechtias* flower laterally.

3. All bromeliads produce seed and most are perennial by way of producing offsets. However, a few bromeliads such as *Puya raimondii* and *Tillandsia utriculata* are monocarpic; flowering once with no offsets. Such plants produce copious flowers that are self fertile and seed very freely.

4. At maturity, the fruit of *Ronnbergia explodens*, spontaneously explodes and squirts the mature seeds away from the mother plant.

5. *Tillandsia bryoides* (recently redescribed and renamed as *T. minutiflora*) is reputedly the smallest bromeliad and can flower from a plant only 15mm long and 5mm in diameter. The name derives from its similarity to some mosses.

6. The pineapple *Ananas comosus* 'smooth cayenne' (no longer a valid species and now treated as the cultivar *Ananas* 'Comosus', Ed.) develops interfoliar roots in the lower whorls of the leaves. These roots have copious root hairs and readily absorb any moisture from dew enabling the plant to survive in dry climates. These root hairs also readily absorb nutrients and foliar fertilising is common in commercial pineapple plantations. □

From Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group
Newsletter - September, 2017

CINNAMON POWDER

John (Crawford) showed an *Orthophytum burle-marxii*. (This species was recently transferred to the genus *Sincoraea*. Ed.) After flowering John removed some pups from the mother plant which was not in very good condition; by this stage it was showing some signs of rot. John put a spoonful of **cinnamon powder** in the centre of the plant which helped dry the rot out, due to this action the plant produced another four pups. John highly recommends dusting with cinnamon powder when you cut off a pup or if you have centre rot, clean it out, dust with cinnamon and put aside for a month.

John also brought along a *Goudaea ospinae* var. *gruberi* he was a little cautious about removing the pups from himself so asked for some advice. Ross can be a bit brutal with such matters at times, so rather than assault John's plant he acquired one of his own and showed how to remove the pups. The first method demonstrated is to remove the lower leaves and basically tear the pup off the mother whereby you will have roots come with the pup. A safer less drastic method is to cut it off. One pup was left on the plant base because with repotting and feeding one may get more pups.

John was feeling a little more confident now to remove pups from his *Goudaea*, however he wanted to save the leaves on the mother plant in the hope of getting more pups. John split leaves nearest to the pup to be removed exposing its base. With a very sharp knife the pup was cut free of the mother plant successfully Allow the cut to dry then fertilise the mother plant well and also add some fertiliser to the potting mix around the plant base and give it a good

watering. Then re-pot the pup. □

A Bit of Humor From Bromletter, Journal of the Australian Bromeliad Society, May-June, 2006

ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY

After digging to depth of 10 metres last year near the ancient city of Novgorad, Russian scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 1000 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network one thousand years ago.

Not to be outdone, in the weeks that followed American scientists dug 20 metres and headlines in the US papers read: “US Scientists found traces of 2000 year old optic fibres of Maya and have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech digital telephones 1000 years earlier than the Russians.” One week later the Greek newspapers reported the following: “After digging as deep as 50 metres, Greek Scientists have found absolutely nothing. They have concluded, therefore, that 3000 years ago their ancestors were already using wireless technology.”

COMPREHENDING I.T. PEOPLE

Two Info Technology guys were walking across the park when one said “Where did you get such a great bike?” The second I.T. guy replied: “Well, I was walking along yesterday minding my own business when a beautiful woman rode up to me on a bike. She threw the bike to the ground, took off all her clothes and said: ‘Take what you want’.” The first I.T. guy nodded approvingly. “Good choice; the clothes wouldn’t have fitted anyway.” □

WHIPKEY’S WORDS - Houston BS Bulletin 8/17

The other day I was reading The New Bromeliad Taxon List (my subscription to Better Homes & Gardens expired), and I got to thinking about the difference between a form and a variety. For example, *Aechmea weilbachii* var. *albipetala* and *Aechmea weilbachii* forma *pendula*, why is *albipetala* a variety while *pendula* is a form?

I sometimes confuse the two terms. I need to be reminded about the difference; therefore Whipkey’s words this month are **variety** and **form**. This should be easy as both words are defined in A Bromeliad

Glossary that is published by the BSI. **Variety:** A plant having slight but distinct differences which distinguish it from the type of the species. **Form:** A sub-group within a species displaying a minor character, but not great enough to be called a variety. In taxonomical order, species outranks variety and variety outranks form. In other words *Aechmea weilbachii* forma *pendula* differs from the plant that was used to describe the species *Aechmea weilbachii* in some minor aspect. But, it is not different enough to be considered a new variety. On the other hand *Aechmea weilbachii* var. *albipetala* differs from the plant that was used to describe the species *Aechmea weilbachii* in several obvious ways. But it is not different enough to be a considered a new species.

Got it? I hope so. □

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

2018 DUES - are now past due and payable. Single and joint memberships are \$25.00; the domestic subscription rate for BROMELIANA is \$8.00 and an overseas subscription is \$12.00. If you have not paid your dues, please mail your check payable to N.Y. Bromeliad Society to Barbara Lagow, 54 West 74th Street, #603, N.Y.C. 10023. If you have not paid your dues, do so immediately or this will be the last issue of Bromeliana that you will receive.

If you have not paid your dues you will not be able to participate in our April plant sale. So if you are in arrears, please write a check and send it to Barbara or bring it to the March 6th meeting.

CLUB LIBRARY - I have given 40 bromeliad books to NYBS. A list of the titles will soon be available and you can request a book on loan for 2 months. Editor.

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