



East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

NEWS
LETTER

September/
October
2020

Established: 25 July 2009

Our aim is to promote and encourage awareness and interest in Bromeliads in East London and all of South Africa!

ELBSSA is an Affiliated Society



of Bromeliad Society International

From the Chairman



What can give you more pleasure than to walk through your bromeliad garden or collection and just appreciate the different markings and colours on the leaves, the mottling, spotting, banding, blotching and zonations, just to mention a few. That is without talking about the longitudinal lines and "variegations" which I will talk about at another time. Absolutely amazing!

Well, we are very eager to resume our meetings again at the end of October. Obviously all the safety protocols will be followed. If the weather permits we will gather on the veranda of the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School hall, which we normally use. This should provide us with a nice open air environment.

Looking forward to 2021, I am confident that we will have a bumper bromeliad year to make up for all the time we have lost out on this year due to Covid 19.

Thankfully the rains have come at last to get Spring kick-started. Everything in the garden seems to have responded so quickly. It is a good time to resume the gardening chores, so enjoy. Happy Bromming to you all.

Hopefully the Last Social Distancing Issue !

So we find ourselves still on Level 1, lots of activities are thankfully starting to get going again, remembering to keep our distance and sanitise, sanitise, sanitise. I'm afraid I am guilty of a hug or two! As long as common sense prevails we should be ok.

We are planning to hold a meeting at the end of October, so watch your e-mail and our Facebook page for details.

The Eastern Cape has had fantastic Spring rainfall in some areas. What a wonderful sound to wake up to last Saturday morning. East London seems to have averaged around 60mm with more to come. So



A lovely clump of an *Aechmea nudicaulis* hybrid, from Lorraine Parathyras's lovely garden.

Next Meeting: Sunday 25th October at 2.00 for 2.30pm, at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School, Avalon Rd. Beacon Bay. Don't forget your chair and own refreshments.

welcome after such a long dry patch during winter. As always we hope for much more, if not for our gardens, for the drought stricken areas and the dams.

Did you know?

Should there always be water in the cups of my bromeliads?

The short answer is NO, not always. Sometimes instructions that come with your bromeliads say it is a must to always keep water in the cups. Many times when these instructions are followed to the letter the centre rots out. The reason for this is, unless the bromeliad is in active growth it is not able to breath properly, or it may become congested with too much fertiliser. Temperature is probably the most important ingredient in the determination of growth. In any event, most if not all bromeliads do enjoy rest periods. A drop in temperature or a dry period will tend to induce dormancy or a rest period, and at this time it is beneficial to have the cups go dry. This is a needed cyclic change that is essential for many bromeliads to initiate the blooming phase. This is certainly a much more desirable condition than to have the centre of the plant rot out.

In nature, even at somewhat elevated temperatures, there are times when there is a no-rain condition which allows the cups to dry out completely and they survive. Tropical rains, on the other hand, sometimes come down in such torrents that the cups are completely flushed out.



My *Neoregelia xcorreia-araujoi* with its cup full of rainwater recently.

If we take a leaf from nature's book, the following guide lines should be helpful:

- When you water, do a lot of it; be sure to flush all of the water from the previous watering from the cups.
- When temperatures are much below normal, do not water.
- Do not be afraid to let your bromeliads dry out completely between waterings.

Reference: BSI Journal

Species Bromeliad - Lyn Wegner

Tillandsia intermedia: What a fascinating plant, an artistic masterpiece! It happily grows upside down and is found growing epiphytically in Mexico at altitudes ranging from sea level to 1500 metres. The leaves are tough and leathery and channelled. What is the correct term for this?

I struggled to grow this plant for many years. I am pleased it is now doing so well. I think this is due to it being mounted in a sunny spot and grown fairly dry. The drier the conditions, the curlier the growth. I grow it for the form rather than the flower.

This particular photo was taken for Andrea Oldrini, our member from Italy, who has requested we send him photos of our *Tillandsia* for the Italian newsletter. Andrea would like you to be included in the photo with your plants. Andrea's email: andrea.aldini76@gmail.com



Lyn holding two examples of her *Tillandsia intermedia*.

Member News

- A big welcome to our new country members: Tanya Visser of the Gardener magazine and tv programme has rejoined us, Suren Moodley from Durban who has also joined BSI, Dot Procter from Kenton-on-Sea and Allan Tait from Pretoria. We hope you enjoy your bromeliads and *Tillandsia* as much as we do, spread the love!
- The La Ballona Valley Bromeliad Society in Florida have again very kindly invited any of our members to join in with their Zoom meetings. Lyn will e-mail the forthcoming joining dates and links. The Zoom app is free, so it would be a good idea to download it from your Google Play store or off the internet if you don't already have it.
- Lyn will also e-mail information on other Zoom meetings being held by societies in countries where they cannot meet. It is wonderful of them to think of us and I find it interesting to join in. We all talk the same language: bromeliads!!!!

- We were very sad to learn of the passing of Jay Thurrott, a past President of the BSI and a name we will all be familiar with. Condolences to his family and friends as they come to terms with their loss.
- We send our heartfelt condolences to Gabriel Scholtz and his family in Sedgfield on the loss of his grandmother and wish them all a speedy and complete recovery from Covid 19.

Monthly Raffles

Good News, our monthly raffles will be resuming at the October meeting. You can buy your tickets from Lyn Odendaal at the door when you collect your badge from Betty . Plus we will be having a BUMPER RAFFLE Draw at the November meeting, 10 local and 10 country draws, as it will be our last meeting for 2020! Please contact Lyn if you wish to buy raffle tickets ahead of the draws.

Committee matters

- At meetings we ask that you adhere to the Covid 19 protocols - so please wear your mask and bring your own hand sanitiser. Bring your own chair and refreshments if you would like to have something after the meeting as we will not be providing any tea or eats till everything is back to normal. Place your chair one metre from the person next to you, unless it is your dearly beloved! If you feel at all unwell, please rather stay at home and get better, so you are able to attend the next meeting.
- We would love to try a Zoom meeting at some stage especially to encourage our country members to be able to participate in a 'virtual meeting'. We need a tech person to set up and control the meeting (to handle any glitches), they need not be a local member! Anyone out there willing to embark on a trial run for us?
- The Bromeliad Magic Show that was meant to be held at the end of March and was cancelled due to lockdown, will be rescheduled for early next year. Never too early to earmark some potential plants in your collection for the show and to start working towards an Artistic Expression creation for the show.

Are any members interested in a day trip to Kenton-on-Sea to see gardens in the area? If you are please let Lyn Wegner know so we can plan an outing.

Upcoming Society Events

25th October: We will meet at 2.30 at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School in Avalon Road, Beacon Bay. If it is a nice afternoon we will meet on the veranda. Please bring your own chair. We will not be serving any refreshments etc... until Covid protocols change, so please bring your own should you want to have something after the meeting.

Topic: Spots, Dots and Stripes presented by Dudley Reynolds.

Please bring any plants that you have in your gardens that have these markings in the leaves and any interesting plants for Show and Tell.

7th November: The Border Clivia Society will be holding a clivia and plant fair. Do support them, you will not only be able to see some stunning clivia but also purchase plants and seed, plus there will be other plant vendors there as well: bromeliads, orchids, herb and vegetable seedlings, succulents, cactus, lithops and more.

29th November: Venue tba. This meeting is traditionally our end of year Christmas Bring and Braai, but this year we will hold a meeting instead with BUMPER RAFFLES, ten for local and ten for country members, seeing as we have missed out on so much this year.

Upcoming International Conferences

2021: 70th Anniversary WBC2020 Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic this conference has been postponed. It will now take place on the 8 - 12 June 2021 in Sarasota, Florida, USA. The host hotel will still be the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Sarasota. You will have to change your reservation dates with the hotel. The registration that you paid for the conference will apply to the rescheduled conference with no changes in the rate. The bus tours will not change. We are in the process of verifying all the speakers. We hope that you still plan to attend the rescheduled conference.

The following conference has now been postponed to **7 to 10 April 2022** due to the Covid 19 virus.

This biennial **Australasian Bromeliad Conference** will again be hosted by The New Zealand Bromeliad Society. **'Kiwi Broms'**. To be held at, Waipuna Hotel. Exciting news! 5 of our members have already registered for this conference! Start saving now.

From Our Members

From Mark and Beth Brewer in Zimbabwe:

Beth.... "Mark is the collector and until I met him, I didn't even know what a bromeliad was ;) but since then, I've loved watching his collection grow. When we went to Australia last year to see his Dad, we visited a couple of bromeliad nurseries there and were literally blown away. We were living in Harare, but have now moved to Odzi Farm, which is about 30km from the town of Mutare in the Eastern Highlands. His best friend owns the farm and has managed to keep it through all the land invasions etc... so that's a whole other story. They are now working on a few different projects on the farm, one of them will be an indigenous tree nursery in the future and of course we'll keep growing Mark's bromeliad collection out here too."

Mark's bromeliad collecting story.... "My Bromeliad collecting journey started when my mother bought two bromeliads from a nursery in Zimbabwe in 2009. Up until then, I had an interest in collecting succulents but decided that bromeliads would make a good addition to my collection as they are generally water-wise too. From there my interest grew to now, where I currently have several thousand plants. We were based in Harare and a few years ago had given a friend a few bromeliads to take back to their farm in Odzi, which is near the town of Mutare in the Eastern Highlands. It was quickly evident that her plants grew far faster and larger than mine did in the Highveld area of Harare city. We were offered the chance to join them out on their farm to do a few different projects, so two days before lockdown, we made the move to the farm. At that stage, we only had enough space in the vehicle for essential belongings and ourselves, so my bromeliads

remained in lock-down in Harare with my very able, right-hand man, Collen Chinyama, who kept them alive for us in my little home-nursery set-up in the city. A couple of months later, lock-down eased slightly, and with us being on a farm and providing the "essential service" of maize delivery to the city, we managed to get two 30-tonne lorry loads of bromeliads to the farm. They arrived a little 'travel-weary' and scarred but will recover nicely with the humid conditions and high temperatures of the area, complemented by the good quality of the water coming out of the Eastern Highlands river system. Wheat delivery will hopefully commence soon with another back-load in the lorry so that the rest of my bromeliad collection (and Collen....) will finally be able to arrive in their new home on the farm. My favourites are Tillandsia, Neoregelia and Aechmea species as they are the easiest to grow in our climate. It is not easy to get new varieties, there are lots of folk interested in new varieties and in bromeliads in general in Zimbabwe. "



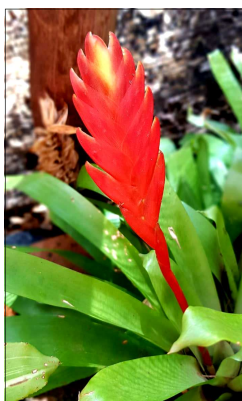
Mark Brewer, international member from Zimbabwe with part of his collection of bromeliads.



Aechmea lueddemanniana 'Mend'.



One of the latest additions to Mark's collection.



One of Mark's first bromeliads, a *Vriesea* variety.

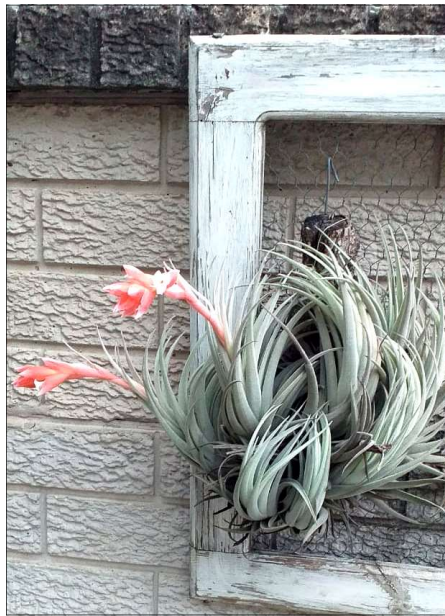


A *Cryptanthus* variety growing well.





David Gower: One of Christo van Wijk's hybrid plants he named *Neoregelia* 'Pete Pfister' is looking good in my collection.



A mounted *Tillandsia recurvifolia* var. *subsecundifolia* grown by Lorraine Parathyras.



Dr Pete Pfister: A first flower spike for me on *Goudaea* (previously *Vriesea*) *ospinae* var. *gruberi* x 'Poelmanii'.

This is the first time this bromeliad is blooming for me, so it is exciting. I have had *Vriesea guttata* for many years and it has never bloomed, so when I saw that *Vr. pardalina* had a very similar inflorescence I thought, let's give it a try. I love the look of the plant. It has well shaped, deep green spotted leaves out of which the pendulous pink inflorescence has grown which I think is so interesting, with its pale pink colour and almost fuzzy appearance with the pale yellow flower bracts beginning to peep out. It is unusual and beautiful at the same time. It is indigenous to Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. It is terrestrial, saxicolous, and epiphytic. It grows at an elevation of 1300-1330 m.

Barbara Black: *Vriesea pardalina*.



Vriesea pardalina



My *Tillandsia secunda* has sent out its impressive flower spike. Do look forward to lots of baby give-aways at a future meeting!

From the Editor



Wow, the prospect of having a meeting at the end of this month is encouraging indeed! I hope many of you are going to be brave and come and join us. Dudley will be giving an interesting talk on Spots, Dots and Stripes, please bring any plants you would like to show that have those markings in their leaves.

I recently came across "LeafLine" products in a community craft shop. It is the brand name of products made from the fibre of pineapple leaves here is South Africa. The leaves are processed into a cotton wool type substance known as 'pulp fibre'. All the Inners of Leafline products eg. Sanitary wear, nappies, bed and chair liners etc.. are made from this, which makes them environmentally friendly. The products are reusable making them cost effective which was one of the main reasons for



LEAFLINE
* Washable Sanitary Wear *

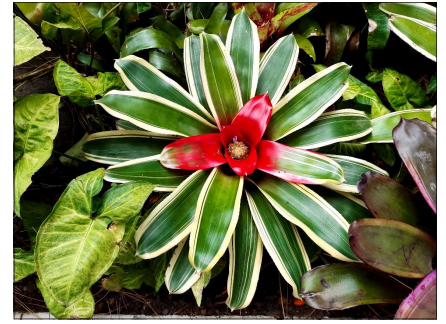
developing the products. Leafline won the Gap Green award last year awarded by the Innovation Hub in Gauteng.

So the leaves of the Ananas plant we all know and love to eat are useful too.

Right now, everything seems to be greener, brighter and it is especially warmer, which is awesome for plant growth and humans! Lets hope this positive change and the coming summer bode well for all of us getting back to normal.

Keep safe everyone, we are looking forward to seeing all the local members soon!

Barbs



This was one of our very first 'fancy' Neoregelia that we bought from Lyn around 2007 after we moved back to East London. Now I wish I had kept the label. Can anyone identify it for me? It is quite compact and about 32cm in diameter. We had no idea then that collecting these plants would get so out of hand!!! Familiar story hey?

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Any opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Society.

When submitting items for inclusion in this newsletter, please ensure that all facts and information, including spelling, is checked and accurate.

ELBSSA is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International.

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We meet on the last Sunday of every month at 2.00 for 2.30pm, January to November, at various venues around East London. We have a topic for each meeting and Show and Tell where members are encouraged to bring along their brag or problem plants. There are member raffles, lucky draws for those present, tea time, library and member plant sales, plus a monthly newsletter sent out via e-mail only. Visitors are always welcome and can attend three meetings before they will need to join the society in order to continue attending. Annual subs are R120.00 for individuals/families and R60 for students.

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You will find ELBSSA on Facebook: type 'East London Bromeliad Society' into the fb search bar. You can request to join the group and will then be able to upload your photos and comments on the wall. The ELBS SA page and other bromeliad related sites are a useful and informative forum to share and 'meet up' with other like-minded bromeliad folks.

You can view most of all the bromeliads mentioned in meetings or in the newsletter at the following websites:

The BSI's official Bromeliad Cultivar Registry www.registry.bsi.org which is maintained by Geoff Lawn, the BSI Cultivar Registrar. Plus other information regarding the Bromeliad Society International and bromeliads is found at bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: fcbs.org This is another very useful site where you can also reference many bromeliads, clarify identification or just trawl through the site and add to your wish list!

Encyclopedia of Bromeliads <http://bromeliad.nl/encyclopedia/> (Bromeliad Taxonomists and Growers Society) has photographs. It also now has keys for the genera and sub-genera. If you like to be informed what is happening, just follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia> Just type in 'Encyclopedia of Bromeliads' into the Facebook search bar.

For internet resources you can also go to TAXON (The New Bromeliad List) for the most authoritative and right up to date list of genera and species, accepted and new names and taxonomic keys - <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php> or just type in 'New Bromeliad Taxon List', it's much easier!