



East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

Established: 25 July 2009

NEWS
LETTER

November
2020

*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

Well at last we were able to meet after such a long period of lockdown. It was nice to see all those who attended, especially our dear friend Miriam, now a country member.

I enjoyed talking about variegated bromeliads which is one of my favourite subjects. No matter how long you have been growing bromeliads, it is never too late to learn something new. I certainly did while preparing for the presentation.

I have been busy building a long table at the back of the house to accommodate my new favourites, the mini Neoregelia. I have quite a few as you can see in the photograph (right). I am always looking for more, so if you have any which I don't have, I will gladly swap or buy from you. After 30 years I am still eager to get a new bromeliad! One would think the madness would not last that long but it seems to get worse. I am sure that many of you will have to agree!

Summer has arrived and new growth is evident everywhere in the garden. Every morning a walk through the garden always reveals something new and beautiful. How fortunate we are to live where the climate is conducive to growing beautiful bromeliads.

If the pandemic does not worsen over the next few months, we are looking forward to hosting our first Bromeliad Magic Show at the end of March 2021. Preparation for such an event does not happen overnight, therefore we must start thinking about it now. We will provide more details as the time gets closer.

We are at the moment looking into having our meetings on Zoom as an additional extra every month, which we are very excited about. More details to follow in the near future. Until next time, happy bromming !



October Meeting

It was good to see 22 members at the October meeting, including Miriam Kennard who is thinking of moving back to East London, no place like home Miriam! It was great to see familiar faces again after such a long, enforced break. The new normal is not so bad, we can still chat and mingle, but be careful and aware!



Last Meeting for 2020: Sunday 29th Nov. at 2.00 for 2.30pm. Host: Irene Manthe at 27 Epping Road Nahoon Valley. There will be Bumper Raffles!!!

I hope that you will all support the Clivia Show on Saturday the 7th November. Plant collectors usually don't only collect one type of plant, we are suckers for many; Cactus, Succulents, Clivia, Lithops and of course bromeliads and Tillandsia, to mention a few, you will find them all there, just waiting for you to take some home! Haha!

Thanks to Dudley for the super display of plants he brought along to illustrate his interesting talk on Variegations in Bromeliads. It was a fairly short meeting due to the fact that there was no tea and eats served, which definitely encourages members to linger, chat and get to know each other. Hopefully it won't be long till we can get this tradition back on track. I know some men will be thrilled when muffins and cake appear back on the after meeting agenda!

Variegation in Bromeliad Leaves Dudley Reynolds

The term variegata is broadly used in bromeliads; it means two colours, normally green and white/yellow. It occurs in many plant families, in some it is a very desirable trait. A few variegated plants that I have growing from other families: *Spathiphyllum* variegated - Peace Lilly, *Monstera deliciosa* variegated - Delicious Monster and the Boston Fern - Tiger and *Hoya carinosa* variegated – known as the Wax Flower.

When we think of variegated leaves in bromeliads we refer to the longitudinal lines, striations, lineations and bands of different colours. Sometimes included with these markings are barring, splotches, dots, patches and zonations etc. which enhance the visual effect of the bromeliad foliage.

Chimera variegation is the most common type of variegation which is caused by a genetic mutation. In this type of variegation, plants show two chromosomal make ups in a single plant - where the tissue is able to produce chlorophyll through photosynthesis and the other not.

I remember from when I was a parrot breeder, we used to play around with genetic crossing of one colour bird with another to

produce a different colour mutation in the offspring. This also occurs in humans and animals, eg. Albinism. I am sure that medical professionals could elaborate on this.

What causes variegation? There are several theories. Bromeliads host several viruses, most of which do not have much effect on the plant, unlike some other plant families. It is thought the most likely scenario is that the virus attacks the meristem of the plant (which is the growing point). This infected tissue then grows out as the plant develops and as bromeliads have parallel veins running down the leaves, this is exhibited as clearly defined lines. In laboratories chemical and radiation can also be used to induce genetic mutation.

Examples of some variegation in my plants:

- Albomarginated / flavomarginated, white/yellow stripe around the edge of a leaf
- Medio picta - painted centre
- Linneatum - many thin stripes



Dudley and his magnificent collection of plants to illustrate his talk.



Spathiphyllum - 'Peace Lilly' variegated and *Hoya carinosa* variegated - 'Wax flower'.



Monstera deliciosa variegated and a variegated form of the Boston fern.



Neoregelia 'Linda Cathcart', variegated.



Aechmea 'Gold Tone', albomarginated.



Neoregelia 'Pin Stripe', striated.



Aechmea 'Medio picta'.

- Striata - multitude of broader stripes and thinner stripes
- Bivittatus - two lines of colour in the leaf
- Tricolour - stripes of three colours in the leaf

Most plants and bromeliads produce most of their new growth on the position on the plant where the light levels are the highest.

To encourage a pup of good colouration to develop, manoeuvre the plant into a position where the variegation in the strongest part of the plant is facing the highest level of light through the day.

If the mother plant produces a pup with no variegation (called a novar) remove it, to encourage a new variegated pup to grow.

You could fertilise the mother regularly to encourage pup growth.

Exercise caution removing albino pups, they have no green pigment in them at all, their chances of survival on their own are very slim without the green pigment in them, they will most likely starve to death without being able to photosynthesise light to feed the plant.

Photosynthesis is the process by which plants use sunlight to synthesize nutrients from carbon dioxide and water. This involves green pigment containing chlorophyll which generates oxygen as a by product.

Text and photos Dudley Reynolds. References: Bromeliads The Connoisseurs Guide by Andrew Steens, Growing Bromeliads by the BS of Australia, Planet Bromeliad - Barry Landau



Cryptanthus bivittatus



Cryptanthus 'It', albomarginated.



Cryptanthus 'Ti', variegated.



Ananas 'Tricolor'



Neoregelia 'Rainbow Nation', variegated.



Billbergia 'Dorothy Berg', albomarginated.



Neoregelia 'Fantabulous', albomarginated.



Neoregelia 'Bachata', variegated.



Aechmea 'Jean Merkel', medio-picta.



Aechmea 'Ensign', albomarginated.



Cryptanthus 'Thelma O'Reilly', variegated.



Neoregelia 'Cris Cross', striated, variegated.



Neoregelia 'Unraveled', variegated.



Neoregelia Annick', albomarginated.

Species Bromeliad - Lyn Wegner

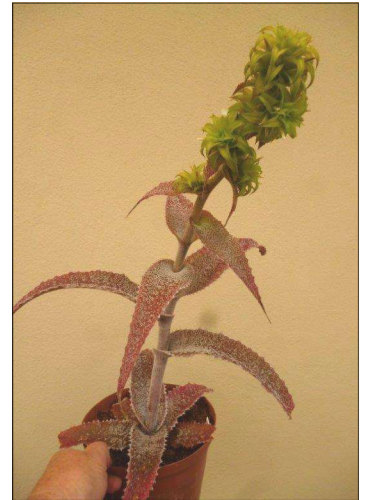


Orthophytum magalhaesii is a species found growing saxicolously (on rock) in the Atlantic forests of Brazil where they can be found growing between rock crevices and high up on granite cliff faces with constant seepage which

keeps their roots damp.

The genus name, *Orthophytum* comes from the Greek word 'ortho' which means straight and the Latin word 'phytum' which means plant. The name refers to the long straight inflorescence bearing leaves forming an attractive 'flower' head of green bracts which almost hide the small white flowers. Pups develop from these flower heads as well as from the base of the plant. The long flower spikes bend onto the ground or rock where they grow naturally and these pups will root, spreading the plant in this manner. It has thick stems with lanceolate foliage, meaning the leaves are wide at the base and taper to a point. The leaves are scurfy meaning they are covered with trichomes giving them that white fuzzy appearance. The leaf edges are softly spined or spiky. They grow up to 2 feet tall. They can be grown in full sun on the coast but inland where it is very hot, a morning sun or semi shady position would be required. They are unhappy in low light conditions. They like a free draining mix and are fairly dry growing, preferring to become fairly dry between waterings. I water mine every one or 2 weeks or when I remember! Mine are potted in bowls in a fairly sunny spot. They are nice in hanging baskets too.

Photographs and text Lyn Wegner



Lyn's *Orthophytum magalhaesii* and *Orthophytum* 'Iron Ore'.

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Show and Tell

Dr Pete Pfister brought his *Goudaea ospinae* var *gruberi* x 'Poelmanii' to show the progress of the flower spike that was featured in the October newsletter. Better seeing it in real time, thanks Pete, it is magnificent!

Pete also brought along two *Neoregelia* 'Blade Runner' which he acquired from different sources. They get morning sun and then shade. Hopefully the variegation will become more dominant as they mature. I will put a pup in more sun eventually to see what happens.

This led to some discussion over the combined efforts in getting it registered just in the last month. It was created (hybridized) by Chester Skotak in Costa Rica. Chester hybridizes many plants that often don't get registered. It was imported into South Africa

and sold under the formula name by Ray Chandler some years back. Trevor Brauckmann in Pretoria acquired a plant and asked Chester's permission to register it with the BCR. He named it



Goudaea ospinae var *gruberi* x 'Poelmanii'



Pete's *Neoregelia* 'Blade Runner' plants.

Neoregelia 'Blade Runner' after Oscar Pistorius. Trevor made blades for the young Oscar. Trevor asked Christo van Wijk in Pretoria to do the registration and David Gower's plants were used in the photographs on the BCR site. This plant varies greatly according to the environment it is grown in. It is now on the BCR site. Well done to everyone involved!



Andre Eybers brought along what is left of his clump of *Tillandsia usneoides*. He came up with the idea of putting what he had left in an old fan cover to prevent the birds from taking all of it for building their nests!

Lyn Wegner showed her examples of *Aechmea fasciata* with spines and a non spined variety called *Aechmea* 'Smoothie'.



Left: Andre's tilly fan. and above Lyn's *Aechmea fasciata* and the non spined variety *Aechmea* 'Smoothie'.

Member News

- We are so happy to welcome new member Zelna van Zyl, wife of Chris, who has been a longstanding country member, who many of you must know from his frequent visits when working in East London. They live in Somerset West. They have named their lovely, very creative bromeliad garden 'Living Walls' and regularly open it to visitors to raise funds for the local Hospice and Cancer Association. Keep up the awesome work that you do.
- Big thanks to Chris and Zelna who have initiated and got us (the committee) 'Zooming' at last. We are practicing our skills before we plan to open meetings up to our county members.
- Thanks to Lyn Wegner for give away and lucky draw plants at the meeting.

Monthly Raffles

- Andre Eybers chose *Neoregelia* De Roos var 'Norman Bates'.
- Lorraine Parathyras chose *Neoregelia* 'Harlequen'.
- Dudley Reynolds won two raffles and chose *Billbergia* 'Felicity O' and *Neoregelia* 'Mai Tai'.
- Nico Koegelenberg from Rustenburg still to choose.
- Peter Moulang from Port Elizabeth still to choose.
- Philip Visagie from Pretoria chose *Tillandsia* 'Spring Frost'.
- Suren Moodley from Durban still to choose.

Committee matters

- Thank you to everyone who pitched at the October meeting with their masks and sanitiser, it was awesome to see you all again.
- Lyn will continue to e-mail information on forthcoming Zoom meetings to which we have been invited to by various societies in the US who are unable to meet. You can join in with the link provided or take your chances if it is in our wee hours and wait for it to be on their fb or web page. It is wonderful of them to invite us as we don't have access to hearing such experienced growers share their journey and knowledge of growing bromeliads and *Tillandsia*.
- We would like to get some feedback from county members; who would like to join in a monthly meeting via zoom? Please let Lyn or myself know. It is an ideal opportunity to include country members even if just for the main part of the meeting when there is an interesting presentation. We need you to feel like you really belong!



Local Raffle Winners: Dudley Reynolds, Lorraine Parathyras and Andre Eybers.

- The Bromeliad Magic Show that was meant to be held at the end of March and was cancelled due to lock down, will be rescheduled for end of March next year. It is never too early to earmark some potential plants in your collection for the show and to also begin working towards an Artistic Expression creation as well. This is open to local and country members as well.

Upcoming Society Events

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: Our host will be Irene Manthe at 27 Epping Road Nahoon Valley. 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 members and ten for country members, seeing as we have missed out on so much this year.

Please bring any interesting or problem bromeliads or Tillandsia for Show and Tell.

We will not be serving any refreshments etc... until Covid protocols change, so you are welcome to bring your own should you want to have something and a chat after the meeting. Don't forget your chair.

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

I don't know about you but we have been plagued with mosquitoes even during winter this year. Clearly it doesn't get cold enough in East London. Here is a homemade trap to help keep you and the family from becoming blood donors this summer!

And just in case you are wondering, bromeliads don't attract more mozzies because they have water in their cups.



Anne Holder shared a photo of her Cryptanthus blooming.

Homemade Mosquito Trap

Items needed:

- 1 cup of water
- 1/4 cup of brown sugar
- 1 gram of yeast
- 1 x 2 litre cooldrink bottle

How:

1. Cut the plastic 2 litre bottle in half.
2. Mix brown sugar with hot water. Let cool. When cold, pour in the bottom half of the bottle.
3. Add the yeast. No need to mix. It creates carbon dioxide, which attracts mosquitoes.
4. Place the funnel part, upside down, into the other half of the bottle, taping them together if desired.
5. Wrap the bottle with something black, leaving the top uncovered, and place it outside in an area away from your normal gathering area. (Mosquitoes are apparently also drawn to the colour black.)
6. Change the solution every 2 weeks for continuous control.





Mavis Downey has her stunning *Guzmania* 'Kapoho Fire' in bloom.



Neoregelia lilliputiana



Barbara Black: *Neoregelia lilliputiana* is one of the smallest species of bromeliad from Brazil's Atlantic Forest. This 4cm to 6cm tall mini has green leaves with reddish brown striping and mottling. It makes a nice full basket of low growing plants on 2 to 3cm stolons. The cute little flowers appear now, in spring and are blue with white centres. I keep my clump in full sun all morning

together with all my other minis. It has grown into a nice clump over many years. I really love this dainty little bromeliad. They appear to me to be quite hardy though. I want to try and mount a few of the ones on wayward stolons, as I have read they will do well growing like that too.

From the Editor



It has been a difficult year and I know it has affected everyone in many different ways. BUT, it will end, one day. So I keep telling myself. We are fortunate to be able to get back together as a group but still need to remain cautious as we are still on Level 1.

We have discovered a label thief in our midst and hoping she grows out of it soon. Rosie, who else? Very confusing for me at times and thankfully up to now I have managed to know which ones belonged to which plant! I find it important to know what the plants are called besides the main reason, knowing what its called if you want learn more about it, or swap or sell the offspring, the main reason for me is to test my memory! Haha!!!!!!

She has thankfully stopped selecting a bromeliad every few days to crunch to bits, which broke my heart on occasions! Life with puppy.

Thank you to all those of you who have contributed information and photos etc ... for publication in the newsletter this year. Please keep it up. We all enjoy reading and learning about what is happening in our members collections. Spread the love!

Hoping to see you all at the last meeting of the year at the end of November, lets make it a blast off for the end of 2020, a diabolical year!

See you soon.

Barbs



The label thief doing some evening bundu bashing!

This is a publication for the **East London Bromeliad Society, South Africa** for the interest of its members. Articles may be used by non profit societies with acknowledgement to the author where applicable and East London Bromeliad Society South Africa. Please use the photos that accompany the article used. If you require higher resolution photos please request them from the Editor.

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: fcb.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!