



# East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

NEWS  
LETTER

April  
2021

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 - Dudley Reynolds



Our host, David Gower in one of his shadehouses chatting to Dudley Reynolds.

mother plants will be in a state of shock, inducing them to reproduce quickly. Everything of the best for the month to come. I hope to see you all at our show.

## A Visit to David and Lynda's Fabulous Bromeliad and Fairy Haven

Our hosts for the March meeting were David and Lynda Gower in Beacon Bay. Our first, of hopefully many more meetings this year. We met outside as prescribed by Covid regulations. Thirty one members attended including two visitors and we gained two new members! Those of you who were not there, we missed you and hope you will join us at our upcoming Bromeliad Magic Show at the end of April.

Our first visit to David and Lynda's garden was in October 2018 and a lot has changed since

A big thank you to David and Lynda Gower for hosting the first meeting of the year. I am sure everyone present enjoyed viewing David's impressive collection of bromeliads and also Lynda's fairy gardens. Both are clearly serious collectors.

With the Bromeliad Magic Show around the corner on the 24th and 25th April I am sure you are all very busy like myself preparing plants for this event. The main objective of this event is to showcase bromeliads to the general public and promote our Society, which we are very proud of. It is quite difficult to find show class plants after the devastating heat wave which caused so much damage last month. Some of us were unfortunate to have up to 50 percent damage to our collections. Unfortunately we cannot do much about it, just wait for new undamaged pups to arrive. Hopefully the



**Bromeliad Magic Show: 24th-25th April at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School. Bring your family and friends to visit the show.**



then! David has erected state of the art shadehouses for his amazing collection of bromeliads and Tillandsia. He now also has a sales area, which was inevitable taking into account how bromeliads pup, some more prolifically than others. There is still a small section at the back that is garden area with its meandering paths, featuring amongst many other bromeliads some large *Alcantarea* species. Truly an eye popping collection, a sight to behold, quality plants grown in optimum conditions. These photos do not do justice to seeing the real thing. The bromeliad garden grower need not be intimidated; there is lots to be inspired by in terms of layout and odd quirky additions to the garden area. David is a fund of information with regard to potting mixes and fertilising should you wish to ask him, he is only too happy to share what he has learnt along the way.



Lynda's fairy gardens and dragon garden are also tucked away in the back garden, they have also expanded since we last visited! Charming collections for little people to enjoy. A mission to maintain with the East London wind and all the trees around the property, but so appealing!!!

David told us a bit about how he got involved with bromeliads. He has always been involved with plants throughout his life. He collected among other plants, *Haworthia* (succulents) and cycads, which he still has dotted around the garden. When they bought the current house after retiring from pineapple farming, David needed to sort out a part of the garden which had a few bromeliads in it. He visited Pioneer Nursery to get some plants for the garden, Tracy Moss pointed out to David that the bromeliads all had different names. That was a huge enticement to the collector in David!!! He bought some.... he was then introduced to Lyn Wegner and of course who can resist after seeing Lyn's collection! Well, that was just



David and Lynda Gower, our super hosts for the March meeting.



My personal favourite *Neoregelia* 'The Hulk'





the beginning of the very varied collection you see today under the protection of the two shadehouses that he has constructed and the garden area. The shadehouses cover 360 sq m and the back one 200 sq metres Lynda started collecting Tillandsia, but David looked after them and named them so he has taken them over too !

David likes to know where the plants come from, the breeder, the parentage and everything about the plants he collects. To him, it is as important as the plant itself. Everything is meticulously labeled. His knowledge and passion for bromeliads is extensive. He likes to collect different breeder's varieties, Chester Skotack being a favourite and Ray Coleman and Liza Vinzant would be his top three. He also enjoys our local South African breeders, who in fact have bred some world class plants among them; Japie Esterhuizen, Richard King, Christo van Wijk, Adrian van Rensen, Dennis Lutge and Craig Nicholas. He cannot say he has favourite bromeliads as he loves them all!

If you weren't at the meeting and would like to visit David and Lynda to see the collection please contact David at 063 694 1650. Thank you so much David and Lynda for hosting the meeting and kicking off 2020 on a really positive and inspiring note.

Text and photos BK Black

## Show and Tell



*Tillandsia 'Samantha'*

**Mavis Downey** brought her *Tillandsia* 'Samantha' (*T. mooreana* X *T. kalmbacheri*) which has started blooming. It is not easy to grow and prone to rot. Mavis grows it bare rooted standing in the pot. It is a Pamela Koide-Hyatt plant which was nominated as a finalist for 'Plant of the Year' at the 2012 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. 2013, it was the winner of FloraHolland Glass Tulip Award In January 2017, It also won the Most Unusual Plant Specimen and Favorite New Flowering Pant at the TPIE 2017.

**Dr Pete Pfister:** showed his *Aechmea fasciata* with lots of lovely scurf on the leaves and another *Aechmea* of unknown identity with heavy banding on the underside of the leaves but a similar inflorescence. Any one know the name?



A bigger plant overall, *Aechmea fasciata*



An *Aechmea* with a very similar inflorescence but very different

It is possible they are both *Ae. Fasciata*. Pete found them in the garden in fairly deep shade while tidying up his bromeliads after the scorching heat we had a few Saturdays ago where the temperatures reached 43.9\*c in town. Shushu indeed! It is thought that it was the heat that almost scorched the plants rather than sunburn itself as some plants in shade also got burn. Some member's bromeliads were badly affected by this record breaking heat wave.

**Lyn Wegner:** The plants in the photo are both *Cryptanthus* 'Moon River'. This gorgeous 'earth star' is a Carol Richtmyer hybrid. It is a cultivar of *C. 'Earth Angel'* x *bromelioides 'Red Form'*. I am sure you can guess which one is growing in brighter light conditions?

It is amazing how the light you grow your plant in affects the foliage colour. You can have the same plant positioned in various areas in your garden, some shady some sunny etc. and they will all look like different plants!

Text and photo L. Wegner



*Cryptanthus* 'Moon River'



**Dudley Reynolds** brought along an interesting example of his Artistic Expression to inspire members to create something for the show. This one was made for last year's show and still looks great.

## Species of the Month - Lyn Wegner



*Neoregelia smithii* This is an attractive small species which was collected by Amanda and Michael Bleher somewhere in Brazil in 1977. The leaves are light green, fairly stiff and very lightly spined. The flowers are pale violet. The attractive purple mottling increases with the more light it receives. It has been used to make many hybrids.



*Neoregelia smithii*

Mine is growing in a sunny spot and of course I like it!

We have lucky draws for *Neoregelia* 'Purple Gem', An Australian hybrid made by Shane Zaghini, which has *N. smithii* as it's pollen parent and surprisingly, the huge *N. 'Gee Whiz'* is the seed parent!

Some info ex The Bromeliad Encyclopaedia website (Eric Gouda, Derek Butcher and Kees Gouda).

A note on the correct way to write your labels:

A **species** is written in lower case – eg. *Neoregelia smithii* and the genus and hybrid name is in italics when typed.

A **hybrid** name starts with a capital letter, has no italics but is in inverted commas - *Neoregelia 'Purple Gem'* and again, the genus name (*Neoregelia*) is typed in italics.

Text and photo L. Wegner



Dudley's creation using *Tillandsia bulbosa*.

## Member News

- A big welcome to locals Gavin Ferreira and Sandy Baxter to our merry throng! We hope that you will enjoy a long and rewarding association with us.
- We are very sad to hear that Sue and Prakesh Pema will be leaving us as they move to Johannesburg soon. Sue we hope that you will continue to enjoy creating another beautiful garden, growing bromeliads and become a country member.

## Thanks

- David and Lynda Gower for hosting a wonderful meeting and donating plants for the Raffle Draws.
- David Gower, Dr Pete Pfister, Lyn Wegner and Barbara Black for plants for Lucky Draws.
- Dr Pete Pfister for giveaway plants.
- Marianne Hillstead and Dr Pete Pfister for providing delicious goodies for tea.
- Many thanks to Danie Taljaard for all the work put in to set up our new website. Please go to [www.ELBSSA.co.za](http://www.ELBSSA.co.za) and request membership and you will be able to access all the many previous years newsletters plus in time, our events and What's Happening.

## Raffle Winners for March

- Althea Weyer *Neoregelia* 'Frankengator'.
- Mavis Downey chose *Neoregelia* 'Baby Skotak'.
- Lyn Odendaal chose *Hohenbergia correia-araujoii*.
- Dr Pete Pfister chose *Neoregelia* 'Derrumbe'.
- Richard Johnstone in PE chose *Neoregelia* 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.
- Christo van Wijk in Pretoria chose *Neoregelia* 'Wisteria'.
- Mike Whitten in Durban won two raffles and chose *Neoregelia* 'Talbot Sands' and *Neoregelia* (4910 x AAA) x (4873 x 'Tiger') RC158.



Local raffle winners: Althea Weyer, Lyn Odendaal, Mavis Downey and Dr Pete Pfister.

If you don't see a plant that you would like to choose as your raffle win you can choose to take a Raffle Voucher for R120.00, save them up and buy a nice plant from one of the society members, or you can choose a 'Membership for a year' Voucher to pay for your upcoming membership fees.

### Attendance Lucky Draw Winners:

There were loads of lucky draw winners this month!

## Committee matters

- Don't forget to check out your bromeliads and Tillandsia and begin prepping suitable ones for the show. You can bring your plants to the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School hall on Friday 23 April, any time from 9am onwards. We are hoping to wow the East London community with a sight to behold!!! Plus there will be 15 vendors selling an amazing array of 'must have unusual plants and garden related goodies, refreshments too.
- If you have not put your name down to assist at the door over the two days, please contact Brenda Wegner who is co-ordinating the door roster. We need people at the door and to move around the display assisting visitors. If you cannot answer a question there will be plenty of experienced growers around to ask for assistance. You will also surprise yourself with what you already know!!!! There will be sanitiser and a register to fill in at the door as per Covid regulations. Please wear your mask.
- Society members with a badge will not pay to enter. Badges will be available at the door. Country members will also have free entry to the Show. Just introduce yourselves.



**East London Bromeliad Society South Africa** Established July 2009  
**BROMELIAD Magic**  
R10 Entry Fee  
Bromeliad & Tillandsia Displays & Sales Plus Many Other Exciting Plant Vendors too!  
**24th - 25th April**  
at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School  
45 Avalon Road, Beacon Bay  
Sat: 9.00am - 4.30pm  
Sun: 9.00 - 3.30pm  
Refreshments will be on sale

## Upcoming Society Events

- **24th and 25th April:** We will be holding our **Bromeliad Magic Show** at Little Beacon's Pre-Primary School in Avalon Road. We look forward to seeing you all there to help us showcase bromeliads and Tillandsia to the East London community!!!!
- Would you like to host a meeting later this year? Please contact Lyn if you are keen to share your garden space with the society and thank you to those who have opened their gardens, it is greatly appreciated by all of us.
- 30th May: We are needing hosts for meetings. Please contact Lyn Wegner if you are interested.
- 27th June:
- 25th July: **ELBSSA AGM and 12th Birthday Celebration** to be hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 'Bromeliads for Africa', Wentworth Road, Sunnyridge. Details to follow.

## Upcoming International Conferences

**2021: The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary WBC2020** Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic this conference has been rescheduled. It will now take place on the 8 - 12 June 2022 in Sarasota, Florida, USA.

The following conference has now been postponed to **7 to 10 April 2022** due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. This biennial **Australasian Bromeliad Conference** will again be hosted by The New Zealand Bromeliad Society, 'Kiw Broms'. To be held at, Waipuna Hotel. Exciting news! 5 of our members have already registered for this conference! Plenty time to get saving!

## From Our Members

### Christo van Wijk - Pretoria

#### Winter 2020 – The Aftermath

As some people may remember, we decided to move our BromMadness Nursery to a new and bigger location at the beginning of 2020, this all happened in March, just about a week or so before Lock Down was announced by the government.

We knew very little about the new environment in Pretoria, but we had a look at the existing vegetation and decided it can't be that cold in the area as there are some huge *Aloe baensii*, Hibiscus, *Aloe marlothii* and



even some cannas in the garden that showed no damage from previous winters.

Well; it just so happened that in 2020 the area experienced the worst winter (apparently) since 1982! We had black frost five times in three weeks over the month of July 2020 and the lowest point was -14°C outside in the garden and -6°C inside the plastic tunnels!!

Since we were not allowed to go anywhere or open the nursery during the first few months of lock down and we – me, Willie and our worker at the time, Jonathan – started getting really bored so we decided to start planting up the garden with stock we had in the nursery.

I had lots of my bromeliad mother-plants available for this purpose too, since there is too much sun and too little water on Calvin's property, where we do most of the growing of bromeliads. All the soft green type bromeliads like *Vriesea*, *Guzmania*, *Catopsis*, *Edmundoa*, etc... were always kept at BromMadness, as they are my personal favourites and I usually had excess to shade and water – both things these plants love- the whole *Tillandsia* collection stays on the BromMadness site too.



The newly planted gardens created before winter arrived.



We ended up planting all the mother stock and some sales stock of the bromeliads, and tons of other plants in the garden, in the end just the bromeliad count was over 2000 plants!

We had some of the really tough *Tillandsia* like *T. fasciculata*, *T. xerographica*, *T. tectorum*, *T. queroensis*, *T. bergeri*, *T. novakii*, *T. seleriana*, *T. crocata* etc.... in the trees in the garden, along with all our orchids and staghorn ferns. It was a sight to behold!

We have covered in a previous article what happened to the potted bromeliads and the nursery, but this time it will be more about the aftermath of the devastation, as well as what occurred to all our *Tillandsia*!

The mostly green *Vriesea* were completely dead, like brown paper, but some of them made a triumphant return! Out of the roughly 2000 bromeliads, about 400 recovered!

### About the *Tillandsia*

In the outdoor conditions only *T. bergeri* and *T. tricolor* made it. First to go just from the initial cold was *T. xerographica* and *T. chiapensis* this was at around 0°C. At about -5°C *T. rotundata*, *T. crocata* and *T. tectorum* went, and when the black frost hit all the rest died, including the hardy *T. fasciculata* that nothing can kill!

The majority of the *Tillandsia* were in the plastic tunnels though and this is where it got really interesting: In the beginning of the cold spell *T. xerographica*, *T. chiapensis*, *T. 'Steve'*, *T. 'Marvellous Masterpiece'*, went rotten very quickly, potted specimens, free standing ones and mounted ones alike. When the temperatures in the tunnel went into the minuses, I saw lots of damage on the leaves of the potted plants, but all the ones mounted with tilly wire, and in wire baskets started falling apart. The same variety of plant in a different location would be perfectly fine..... and others that have never done well for me - like *T. bergeri*, *T. bulbosa*, *T. butzii*, *T. funckiana*, *T. intermedia*, *T. streptophylla* and all the ones now listed as *Lemeltonia* went insane with new growth and roots! The potted varieties, now mostly renamed *Wallisia*... didn't get better or worse... some had some burnt leaf tips, but nothing serious.

By the second week of minus temps I had lost nearly 60% of my epiphytic



A resilient *Vriesea*. This plant looked dead but still had the energy to produce an inflorescence and pups.



x *Walfussia* 'Creation' suffered damage in the tunnel.



collection and not a single potted plant, this was very strange to me, as the potted ones are generally thought of as being soft. And the grey epiphytes are considered indestructible!

I decided to rather sell the remaining mounted plants so I could get something back instead of just losing all of them. (They are all fine now, someone in the north of Pretoria bought them and it's almost tropical there.)

Obviously I kept a few of the duplicates back and some of my favourites to keep trying to grow them. I lost even more, but then I noticed plants like *T. tillandsioides* of which I have two specimens: the one touching the plastic was dying and the one in front of it was fine... I immediately put two and two together and realised that it was the plastic that was cold and it was killing the leaves touching it, same happened with *xWalfussia* 'Creation' and *T. ampla*.

On the same day I thought to myself, maybe the mounted ones died because the wire got too cold? So I took a large clump of *T. bulbosa* and split it in half, keeping one half on the stump it was growing on and placing the other half in a wire basket. The one in the basket was completely dead within a week. I then realised that all the potted Tillandsia that got damaged were the ones on the wire shelves, and the good looking ones were the ones on the wooden shelves!!!

I took all the mounted Tillandsia down, and put them in wooden baskets with some Spanish Moss in the bottom, I moved all the potted ones from the wire shelves to the wooden shelves and voila! Problem solved!!! The Diaphoranthema types I grow on lava rock, were all fine, so I just left them as they were. I didn't lose a single Tillandsia further. In the end I did not lose a SINGLE potted variety, not even the really tender ones like *T. dudleyi*, *T. leiboldiana*, *T. multicaulis* etc.... they were all perfectly fine and exploded with blooms and pups as soon as Spring arrived and they are now lovelier than ever. The ones that got damaged by being against the plastic are struggling to recover though, they still look crappy and it's almost winter again! But at least they didn't die!

All in all, what I realised is that Tillandsia are tough, but far from indestructible, and



Some of the potted mesic type made it through the cold and a lot are still in bloom like these *Wallisia cyanea*.



*Tillandsia tillandsioides* that was against the plastic of the tunnel is still recovering.



*Tillandsia tillandsioides* that was away from the plastic in the tunnel.



*Tillandsia ampla* died but has since produced two pups.



*Tillandsia capitata* 'Peach' has now produced a pup.



The diaphoranthema types of Tillandsia that are grown on lava rock all made it through.



The few potted plants that needed to recover are all looking good now.



The new baskets I am using are working very well.



These are the bromeliads that recovered after winter out of about 2000 plus.



one should never judge a book by its cover, 'soft' plants may surprise you and 'hard' plants may disappoint you in certain growing conditions. With our ever changing climate you will never know what the next year holds.

Potted Tillandsia now form the majority of my collection and I plan to keep it that way. I am now experimenting with a lot of the grey, xeric types by trying to grow them in baskets and pots, so far it is looking good. I will update you again on their progress in a year or two! Happy growing!

Photos and text C. van Wijk



The only part of the garden that is planted up now.



In the meantime the 'garden ladies' were donated to a friend. I have abandoned the garden and we moved over to a smaller place on the same farm.

## From the Editor



What an absolute blast it was to see David's bromeliads, I hope that the garden bromeliad collectors were not daunted by the magnificence! ... while we are all still trimming the burnt bits off our bromeliads in the garden after the recent scorching heat, well I certainly am anyway.

Growing bromeliads appeals to all of us in many different ways, some are serious collectors, most of us like to grow quite a variety in our gardens, it is a very individual thing. I have also gotten over wanting to have every bromeliad I can lay my hands on, which is a huge step.... to know what I have space for and can care for properly, has been a wake up call. We concentrate on the ones we really enjoy growing now, which is still a lot!

Our next meeting will be the show! We are all eagerly looking forward to it and the committee are very busy organizing helpers, tables, various plant related vendors and everything else this mammoth task entails. You will be able to get a bite to eat when there as well. This is not a judged show, just a planned fabulous display of bromeliads and Tillandsia to knock the East London communities socks off!!!! So please could you look through your garden and find some specimens that are looking great, spruce them up and bring them along on Friday 23rd April to the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School hall, we will be there all day setting up. Time to show off!!!!

Please remember our special Category, Artistic Expression! The sky is the limit just so long as you have something bromeliad/Tillandsia represented in your masterpiece. We have so much to enjoy, there is always something blooming when you grow bromeliads, aren't we lucky?

I have included a poster on the back page of the newsletter. If you can, please print it and put it up at your local shopping centre, pharmacy etc.... Spread the news far and wide.

See you soon!

Barbs.



World Earth Day - 22nd April 2021: Worldwide support of the environment and to raise awareness for the environmental protection and care of our amazing planet earth.

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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.

**Committee Members**

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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](http://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](http://bsi.org)

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: [fcbs.org](http://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!



**East London** Established July 2009

**Bromeliad Society**

**South Africa**

# BROMELIAD Magic

R10 Entry Fee

Bromeliad & Tillandsia

Displays & Sales

Plus Many Other

Exciting

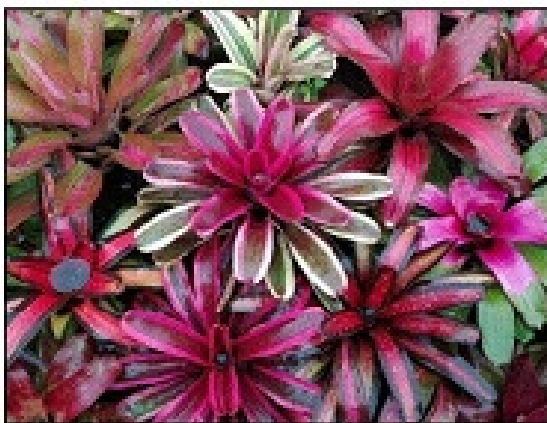
Plant Vendors too!

**24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>**

**April**

**at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School**

45 Avalon Road, Beacon Bay



Sat: 9.00am - 4.30pm

Sun: 9.00 - 3.30pm

**Refreshments will be  
on sale**

BK Black