



THE BROMELIAD BLADE

Newsletter of the San Diego Bromeliad Society

Volume L, Number 5

May 2015

Editor's Notes

The bus trip to the Huntington was a success. There is an article on beginning on page 7 with comments and photos from some of the folks that were on the trip. There are more photos in the monthly activities collage at the end of the newsletter.

The printed version of the newsletter for our few that don't have computer access includes only the first six pages. The full newsletter (this time 19 pages) with all the additional information and photos is posted on the web page. One can often get free computer access to email and the web pages at your local library or senior center.

Our Spring Show and Sale is coming up soon. The theme is **SDBS at 50: Our Golden Anniversary**. A lot of work has already been done to prepare for it and lots more remains to be done before and at the show. Volunteers are needed in many areas. Volunteer today and avoid the rush! Also, don't forget to begin selecting plants to enter in the show. Even with enough volunteers, it takes many plants to make a nice show. □

April Meeting

The program by Betty Patterson was incredible. We learned much about the paramos region of Ecuador and a little about the differences in growing conditions of the Puyas in Peru and Chile. Who would have thought they were so different. In all the wonderful photos and species, there were a couple of plants that seem to have caught our eyes. She was kind enough to furnish photos to jog our memories (and our desire for things that probably won't grow well here). They are:

Puya eryngioides ⇒

and *Puya nutans* ↓□



A Resting Place

by Andrew Wilson

In the past few weeks we have heard about and seen some of the floral highlights of the bromeliad world, the puyas. During our recent visit to the Huntington Botanic Gardens the puyas of Chile were in bloom and last month we heard from Betty Patterson about the paramos regions of Ecuador. Did you notice any major differences between all these puyas? If not, the botanists have. They have broken the species into two groups, the *Puya* and the *Puyopsis*. In Ecuador we saw only members of the *Puyopsis*. At Huntington we saw members of both groups. Any guesses as to what they were? If not, here are two examples of the *Puyopsis*.

Puya hamata, described last month by Betty Patterson, is from Ecuador.



[continued on following panels]

May Meeting

This month we celebrate our 50th anniversary. Who would've thought that we would last so long?

Items for the refreshment table should feature bromeliads (read: pineapple since that is just about the only bromeliad we eat). There will be a few stories about SDBS as well as some of the founding members to chat with.

There will be a short reminder about the June show and sale as well as a call for volunteers for some of the tasks that need to be done for the event.

The program will be given by Nels Christenson who says, "The title of the talk could be Bromeliads and other Tropicals in the Canary Islands although my title slide says CSSA Trip to the Canary Islands."

He will tell us about bromeliads growing in different parts of the Canary Islands off west Africa. Bromeliads do not occur there naturally but due to cross-Atlantic business over the centuries between there, Venezuela and north-eastern Brazil, plantings are present on the islands. For reference, the climate resembles that of coastal southern California.

Nels furnished the following about his background:

I am a native of Merced, California where my maternal grandparents owned and operated the Hotel Pyrenees, a boarding house that catered to Basque sheepherders.

I am retired since 2012 from UCLA Medical Center where I had a career in administration and international relations for 37 years. I am fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.

I am a member of La Ballona Valley Bromeliad Society, San Fernando Valley Bromeliada Society, the BSI, Sunset Succulent Society, Culver City Gesneriad Society and I am president of the Westchester Chapter of the American Begonia Society. In addition, I am a board member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America as well as of California Poets in the Schools, a non-profit organization bringing poetry composition classes to 25,000 K-12 school children each year.

Although I lived and studied in Brazil for 18 months in 1976-77 I didn't develop an interest in bromeliads until about 15 years later. I came to bromeliads by way of the genus Dyckia. Being a cactus and succulent enthusiast, as well as an enthusiast for all things Brazilian, I began collecting Dyckias purchased from Bill Baker. Later my interest expanded to Orthophytum, Aechmea and Tillandsia.

Following is a picture of a Vriesea hieroglyphica growing in a botanical garden in the Canary Islands. □

and (next) a *Puya venusta*, which we saw at Huntington, is from Chile.



From the *Puya* group here are specimens we saw at Huntington: *P. chilensis*



and a green form of *P. alpestris*. This plant used to be called *P. berteroniana*.



The President's Corner

by Robert Kopfstein

On this our golden anniversary as a bromeliad society it might be in order to reflect on what the SDBS has achieved during the past 50 years.

Founded in May 1965 at a nursery in Lemon Grove by a group of plant enthusiasts, the club has done much to promote bromeliads and the Bromeliad Society International.

- We have assisted at two World Conferences in California, one in 1984 in Los Angeles, one in 2000 in San Francisco.
- We have hosted two BSI conferences here in San Diego in 1994 and again in 2004.
- We are the only California club that puts on a standard BSI show – and we do this every year.
- One of our members, Joyce Brehm, was the BSI president for two terms.
- Several of our members have served on the BSI board of trustees – currently Nancy Groves and Andy Siekkinen are serving in that position.

One of our members, Dan Kinnard, is an honorary trustee (along with many notable Bromeliad society contributors like Elton M. C. Leme of Brazil, David Benzing, a renowned biologist, Elmer Lorenz, the last surviving founder of BSI, and several others.

- Dan also served as BSI membership secretary, keeping track of the members worldwide.
- For eight years Robert Kopfstein has served as BSI publication chair, overseeing the Journal archives and selling print material from the BSI online store.
- Nancy Groves has been serving as judges chair for the western region of BSI and before her Jennie Wisley held



By now you may have it worked out. The Puya group has those spikes in the flower-head, (inflorescence) whereas the *Puyopsis* does not. The ends of the spikes are just unopened, sterile flowers in the Puya group; in the *Puyopsis* group none of the flowers remain closed. Nobody knows for sure what their purpose is. A plant would seem to be wasting its energy by producing flowers that cannot be pollinated. Some botanists think that the sterile flower spikes do serve a useful purpose: they entice their hummingbird pollinators to perch there. Maybe that's a fanciful idea, although during a few quiet minutes during our visit I watched a rufous hummingbird come to perch upon the unopened end of a *P. chilensis* flower spike. □



that post.

- On several occasions San Diego has hosted both judges' schools and judges' symposiums.
- Since our merger with the San Diego Bromeliad Study Group, we have been taking care of the Leonard Kent Bromeliad Garden at the San Diego Zoo.

As you can see we have been a very active and involved organization. And of course it is you the members, with your enthusiasm and commitment, that make us what we are.

With good fortune we can look forward to another 50 years of enjoyment of good company and learning even more about the world of bromeliads.

--A Quick Note on Our Upcoming Show--

Now is the time to begin grooming the plants you want to enter in our June show. We will have new pots for sale at the May meeting. Cleaning up your entries is of prime importance. Make sure that the plants get optimum light so that their color is at its best. Top dressing the pot with bark, gravel, or other suitable material will put the finishing touch on each of your entries.

If you can do it, groom ten entries for the show. Once you practice doing this it is really not all that difficult, and a positive side effect is that you will have ten really good-looking plants when you bring them home and put them back in your collection.

Don't be shy. Here is your chance to show off your best stuff. □

April Show and Tell

Plant	Brought by
<i>Aechmea distichantha forma albiflora</i>	Bob Vitacco
<i>Billbergia pyramidalis</i>	Al Evans
<i>Hechtias</i>	Bob Wright
<i>Hechtia</i> (from Santiago de Lachiguiri).....	Robert Kopfstein
<i>Tillandsia</i> ?	Lorraine Cypher
<i>Tillandsia</i> ?	Joann Dossett
<i>Tillandsia</i> ? (pups nicely).....	Joann Dossett
<i>Tillandsia</i> ? (stays in color for a long time)	Joann Dossett
<i>Tillandsia</i> ?	Scott Sandel
<i>Tillandsia</i> ?.....	Scott Sandel
<i>Tillandsia argentina</i>	Jim Wright

SDBS 2015

Meetings

Meetings are held at 10 AM on the second Saturday of each month at Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 104.

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Tillandsia deppeanaAndrew Wilson
Tillandsia fuchsiiLucia Velazquez
Tillandsia hamaleanaScott Sandel
Tillandsia ionanthaNancy Hoyt
Tillandsia ionantha (arrangement)Robert Kopfstein
Tillandsia ionantha 'Druid'Lucia Velzaquez
Tillandsia 'Show Time'Jim Wright
Tillandsia stramineaJim Wright

Please fill out an information Form for each plant and leave it on the display table after the meeting. A little research could reveal interesting facts to share about your plant and also will indicate the correct spelling of the name



□.

SDBS 2015

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Items for publication are welcomed and should be received by the editor by the 25th of the preceding month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WHEN WHAT, WHERE

HIGHLIGHTED MEETINGS

May 9, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Program: Nels Christenson
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

June 12-14, 2015 SDBS at 50: Our Golden Anniversary
SDBS SHOW AND SALE
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

July 11, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Program: Aaron Sidvey, Denver Botanic Gardens
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

August 8, 2015 at 11:30 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Annual Picnic at the gardens of Robert and Karen Kopfstein and Eloise Lau and Dan Kinnard
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

June 13-19, 2016 Bromeliad Society International World Conference
Houston, Texas

MONTHLY MEETINGS

1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM San Diego Orchid Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101
www.sdorchids.com

2nd Saturday, 10 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

2nd Saturday, 1 PM San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101
www.sdcss.net

2nd Monday, 5 PM San Diego Horticultural Society
Surfside Race Place at the Del Mar Fairgrounds
www.sandiegohorticulturalsociety.org

Although Sarah had an abnormal fear of mice, it did not keep her from eeking out a living at a local pet store.

Meet our Members

Al Evans

by Al Evans

I live in the Serra Mesa area of San Diego, just up the hill from Qualcomm Stadium. It has a nice blend of weather...not as hot as the inland valleys in the summer nor as cold in the winter. We're just far enough inland to avoid much of the 'June gloom' or 'May gray' so it is overall a good place to grow most bromeliads.

I discovered bromeliads during the summer of 2005, just before I retired. My dad and I went to all the garden show & sales at Balboa Park that summer and we were both most intrigued by the Bromeliad Study Group of Balboa Park's Show. A lady named Lynn Dielman introduced me to the diverse world of bromeliads and I was hooked. I later found out that there was another bromeliad group called the San Diego Bromeliad Society, and I joined both groups. (Unfortunately for me, I was tagged with being the Study Group's treasurer before I even knew what a Tillandsia was!) Although I attended both meetings, I became most active with the Study Group which was merged into the Bromeliad Society several years ago. Although I had been growing *Ae. fasciata* for some time (not knowing it was a bromeliad), the first bromeliad I brought home from the 'opportunity' table was a bunch of bare root *Bilbergias*. I laid them under an orange tree and mostly forgot about them as I was still busy with work. I was amazed to re-discover them in February, still laying mostly on their side, under the tree but sending out numerous blooms!

The Huntington Trip

Our excursion to The Huntington was a great success. The trip up and back was uneventful, traffic wise. Maybe the coffee, Scott's scones, and the yogurt helped pass the time on the way up with cheese, nuts, chocolate, and Robert's wine doing the same on the way back.

We were fortunate with the blooms of the Puyas also. The early bloomers still had a few blooms, the late ones had a few beginning to open and the rest were just about in full bloom. It was easy to find good places to eat and, of course, shop at the used-to-be-bookstore that now has become a shopping experience.

The desert garden with the Puyas was magnificent and could have required much more time than we allowed it but we kept on moving. There was even time to catch a glimpse of the Japanese garden, cut through the Chinese garden, and spend some time in the conservatory before catching the bus back.

Thanks to Eloise Lau, Andrew Wilson, Scott Sandel, Robert Kopfstein, Dan Kinnard, and all the others the helped make the trip a success.

Below are some comments and photos by some of the members that went on the trip.

Lorraine Cypher: I can honestly sum it up with one word
WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOW

Bob Vitacco: Thanks for all the time you put in, to have the trip come out so great. You did a perfect job of thinking of everything. Thanks to all the people that worked with you. The problem is that you did such a good job, now we will come to you for the next trip.



In 2006, when I retired, I became a regular volunteer at the Dr. Leonard Kent Bromeliad Garden in the San Diego Zoo. It was a good way to learn landscaping ideas with bromeliads from long time bromeliad enthusiasts. Robert Kopstein introduced me to the *Cryptanthus* genus at a member to member sale. They seemed a good fit for a yard with limited space, although I have found them more demanding than most bromeliads. When I learned that Crypts were not generally available and seldom seen at shows or sales, I became even more determined to find some. I did find occasional groupings of Crypts available on ebay for a reasonable price and started my collection. Crypts do seem to be more available now and better represented at shows. Andy Siekinen and Dave Kennedy sparked my interest in *Tilandsias* and I have been slowly building up a collection with a special interest in various techniques of mounting them on various substrates.

My *Aechmea*, *Vriesia*, *Hohenbergia*, *Portea* and *Neoregelia* plants are mostly used in landscaping. The challenge is finding the right place for each one, trying to insure a location



Robert Kopfstein: It has been a few years since the club has had a bus trip, and this one more than made up for the deficit. Special kudos to Dan, Eloise, and Andrew for the excellent organization, and a hats off to the group, who was interested, interesting, and convivial. (This however is no surprise, considering that it was comprised mainly of SDBS members.)

Nancy Groves: ...great trip to the Huntington; really enjoyed it and will try to send you some pics but probably others have better pictures.

Debra Mitchell:



Meet our Members

JIM WRIGHT

by Jim Wright

I live in Bay Park, about 2 miles south of Clairemont. I have been in the same house for 51 years.

Palms were my first love. I discovered how wonderful bromeliads were after 20 years or so. I started growing Neoregelias for a few years. I got tired of being stuck all the time from the spines and then graduated to Vrieseas. I still grow many Vrieseas along with my Tillandsias.

In answer to the question: "If you could be a bromeliad which one would it be? and why?" I would be a Vriesea. To me they are gorgeous and easy to handle.

I am a true plant nut, not only bromeliads but numerous flowering plants, trees, shrubs etc. I am in the orchid, palm, bromeliad and horticulture societies. □



Bromeliads in art:
Orthophytum Gurkenii
by Eloise Lau

Stephen Navadel, SDBS member, has an interesting story to tell us about a painting he owns of *Orthophytum Gurkenii*.

First, a little history about the plant itself and about Mr Paul Hutchison, who described the plant.

As you all know *Orthophytum gurkenii* is a striking plant, a wonderful addition to any bromeliad collection. The first reference to this plant in the BSI Journal was in 1982 in an article about a trip to Brazil written by Jeffrey Kent. There is a picture of an un-described species (*Orthophytum gurkenii*) found in Brazil.

According to a reference in Paul Hutchinson's 1983 description of this new species, it was collected in September 1981 on an expedition organized by Roberto Burle Marx of Rio de Janeiro. *Orthophytum gurkenii* was found on rocky outcroppings in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

[continued in next panel]



Nancy Hoyt: It was so much fun!.....it was a great day.....a lot to see!!

Lee Baker: It was a beautiful day and an enormous thanks ... for all that you did to make the trip enjoyable. That is from the Peet's coffee to the wine and cheese on the way home.

I've been there many times, but it is always enjoyable again. Lovely red bromeliads; have no idea as to name.

Alex Lee: I'm so glad to have been persuaded by my friend, Ruth, to join SDBS, and to sign up for this tour as an "initiation"!!!

I think the first attached picture said it all for my joy!

The plant subsequently flowered in the gardens of Burle Marx and Luis Carlos and Sergio Gurken. Mr Hutchinson described *Orthophytum gurkenii* in 1983 and named it after Luis Gurken, along with Burle Marx an avid explorer and bromeliad collector in Brazil.

In 1982 a single specimen was growing in the United States at Paul Hutchinson's Tropic World.

A later reference to *Orthophytum gurkenii* in the BSI Journal was made in 1999 in an article about *Orthophytums* written by Carol Johnson in which she says that *Orthophytum gurkenii* made quite a stir in 1983 when it was introduced into cultivation. She was offered a tiny plant for \$220.00.

[Steven's article begins on the next page]

Evidence has been found that William Tell & his family were avid bowlers.

Unfortunately, all Swiss League records were destroyed in a fire, so we'll never know for whom the Tells bowled.

Not enough words can express my gratitude to you all to have organized such a nice "flight" with the best "stewardess" and "steward" service I've ever seen!! A very special THANKS to Andrew for arranging this tour and as our knowledgeable guide to the new (at least for me) world of puyas!!



□

Orthophytum gurkenii: The Beran Affair

By Stephen C. Navadel

We have here a story that starts out simply enough with a discovery by the late Paul C. Hutchison in 1983. I was but a young boy and just becoming acquainted with the wonders of the Bromeliaceae. This discovery, an exhilarating nova indeed, was none other than the terrestrial *Orthophytum gurkenii* and which was named in honor of the Gurken brothers, Luis Carlos and Sergio of Brazil. It was then, and still remains to this day, one of the most remarkable of finds. So spectacular a find this was in fact, that Mr. Hutchison, being the eccentric he was and great lover of botanical art, enlisted the talent of British painter, and five-time Royal Medal winner, Mrs. Dorothy Beran to illustrate the plant in all its astounding glory!

The painting, which measures 24" x 30" framed, was brought to the United States as a gift for Mr. Hutchison by Mrs. Beran herself. Said to be the most challenging of her career (Beran's personal comment), the triumphant, awe inspiring result, which took three months to create, was printed on the cover of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America Journal Vol. 58 January-February, 1986 No. 1. Now being known as one of two bromeliad paintings of Mrs. Beran outside the U.K. (the other being of a *Dyckia* sp.), it was sold to a collector during Mr. Hutchison's demise and in turn had become lost along with the template used in its debut printing.

Then as it so happened in 1998 (by divine miracle, I proclaim) the portrait said by Mr. Hutchison himself to be "better than a Pierre Joseph Redoute" (Hutchison's personal comment) was found hanging in the hands of an antique dealer by myself, Stephen C. Navadel. Having been an employee and friend (1992-1997) to Mr. Hutchison, I recognized it immediately on site as the picture that Mr. Hutchison raved about and that at one time hung in the boardroom of the now defunct Tropic World Inc., formerly of Escondido, California. Intrepidly making an inquiry as to how this portrait

arrived into the possession of this store owner, it was said to have been purchased at an estate auction. I, being dazzled by the genus *Orthophytum* and longing to be close with my dear departed friend, bought and thus inadvertently inherited the painting.

Knowing that I had come upon a stupendous and incredibly lovely find, I proceeded to conduct a persistent and laborious search for a way to find and contact Mrs. Beran, a lady of whom I have had the pleasure to meet back in 1992. Striking a viable lead in 2004, I wrote Mrs. Beran and corresponded with her through the mail. Remaining dubious that the image I now possessed was in fact the real Beran (as this painting has always been affectionately known), Mrs. Beran and I arranged to meet later during the spring of 2005 when she would be back in California visiting family and friends. You can just imagine the excitement and delight I witnessed that day as I unveiled "The Beran" now twenty-two years old to its creator. For I know that I shall never forget the words spoken that day as Mrs. Beran grasped the gold frame with astonished surprise. "By God, it is the original. And, darling, when you wrote, I really didn't believe you."

Having been identified and acknowledged as to the trail of acquisition (and which Mrs. Beran kindly helped to fill in the few gaps that remained, along with its authenticity), we sat down for tea. As we chatted about Paul (Mr. Hutchison, respectfully), botanical art, and the creation of this "rediscovered" masterpiece, memories and friendships were made that I'll cherish forever. Since that afternoon and the enchantment of that memorable meeting, I have come to learn about other paintings, which are more than likely destined for the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew depicting Bromeliads, by my friend Mrs. Dorothy Beran of England. These paintings are...*Orthophytum glabrum*, (at the time of painting un-named and known as "sp. Nova") *Puya alpestris* (already of U.K. fame), and *Dyckia* sp., now lost somewhere in California, I believe.

Take a look at the images printed here for all Bromeliad enthusiasts to enjoy. For this "Beran" has been reported to be desired by not only the

Huntington Gallery of California, but the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. as well. It is here I choose to share it with all of who have appreciation of such things. For it is truly a sensational piece of art and a unique treasure worthy of its acclaim and infamy.

Orrhophyrum gurkenii ▷

Steven and Dorothy ▽



Couldn't Show and Tell

In last month's article, there were photos of a xBilya. Some apparently thought it was an April Fool's prank. No, it is not a prank. There is really a xBilya. It lives, breathes, and even blooms in the garden and it can be found in The Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (click here: registry.bsi.org)

From Dan and Eloise:

Billbergia 'Titan' blossomed with a short-lived flower that didn't coincide with a meeting, much less the show.



From Juliana Raposo:

Billbergia 'Brimstone'



Portea alatisepala



From Wanda Mallen and Gary Vincent:

On a recent trip to Green Thumb nursery in San Marcos, I spotted a large tree stump for sale and immediately wanted it. The nursery had pots of succulents adorning it but I knew it would be a perfect home for bromeliads. After returning home to measure and make sure it would fit through the gate to the area behind the greenhouse, we called and placed the order. A couple of days later three strapping young men arrived to deliver our new acquisition and wrestle the 500-pound behemoth into place. It fit perfectly and has been lots of fun to decorate with neos, tillandsias and even an epiphytic orchid. Companion plants in the area include rhipsalis, philodendron, ferns, hoyas, and many other bromeliads. It looks right at home as if it's always been there. We were told it was from a 200-year-old tree and have affectionately named it "the stump."

Before:



After:

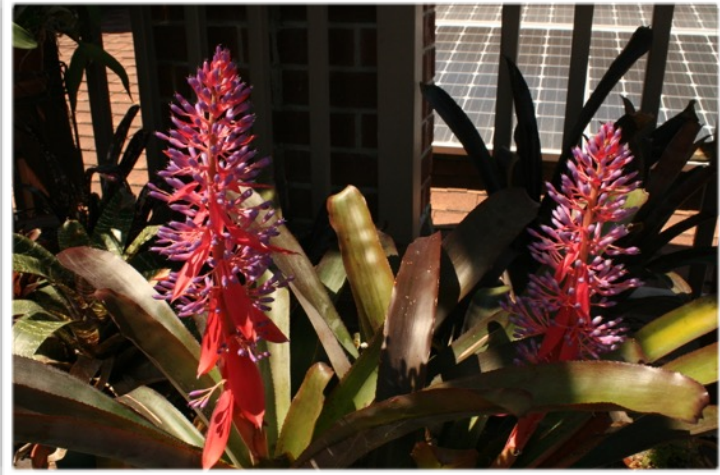


From Andrew Wilson:

Some plants are just too bulky to bring in to show; some are not only bulky but are too likely to be damaged by the move or to cause damage to the mover. *Aechmea blanchetiana* belongs to the second class. This specimen of 'Orangeade' has thick foliage and colors up well in the sun but that foliage is easily damaged when moved. I got it as pup from Steve Salley two years ago. In the garden it has been trouble free. Why try to move it?



From Al Evans:



The left photo is of *Portea* 'Candy', my favorite *Portea* that I originally bought from Live Art Plants and have bloomed for several generations. The other is of one of my neo gardens with 'Treasure Chest', 'Raphael', 'De Nada' and an unknown hybrid. (from left, counter clockwise)



The first photo(left) is of my shade cloth area covering an upper deck where most of my potted bromeliads reside. The other (below) is of a small shade cloth area of *Cryptanthus*.



From the trip:



From the Meeting:

