



THE BROMELIAD BLADE

Newsletter of the San Diego Bromeliad Society

Volume L, Number 9

September 2015

September Meeting

Our September meeting will be a series of short talks by two members and a member of the staff of Mira-Costa College. The theme could be loosely termed "Bromeliad Visuals". Each speaker has submitted a brief statement about the presentation:

Al Evans: One of the most fascinating things about bromeliads is that with the exception of the terrestrials, they can be mounted on almost anything, without soil. Methods of mounting tillandsias to rock, wood, and ceramics are well established but what you can mount them on is limited only by your imagination. I'll present some of the methods I have used to mount tillandsias as well as a variety of mounting mediums. I'll also discuss a method for mounting neoregelias to tree limbs for use in outdoor landscaping.



The President's Corner

by Robert Kopfstein

The deaths in the last month of John Arden and of Jim Wright point up an important issue in the world of plants: the key role that an individual can play in the knowledge and promotion of horticulture as well as of the art of gardening.

Even though both of these men are now gone, they have left us all with a rich legacy. John's decades long devotion to hybridizing produced scores upon scores of beautiful plants that delight the eye and awaken our appreciation for color and form. He made what seemed to be improbable crosses, not only within the genera vriesea and tillandsia, but between the genera of vriesea and tillandsia. Some of his genera vriesea hybrids are:

- V. 'African Queen'
- V. 'California Orange'
- V. 'Charm'
- V. 'Elvira'
- V. 'Gold Rush'
- V. 'Maroon Dream'

His favorite tillandsia cross was T. 'Wildfire' but he also was responsible for:

- T. 'Sea Urchin'
- T. 'Mayan Torch'
- T. 'Hidden Charm'
- T. 'El Primo'

John's vrieslandias included:

- x Vrieslandia 'Inca Chief'
- x Vrieslandia 'Nedra'
- x Vrieslandia 'Red Dawn'
- x Vrieslandia 'Swampfire'

September Meeting (cont.)

Lucia Velazquez: Hmm, I don't really know what else to say, but I will present 2 or 3 different ways to string up a tillandsia.

Jason Kubrock: Floral Arranging with Bromeliads. - Bromeliads make excellent floral arrangements! See how to put together attractive, long-lasting, and easy to make arrangements from your own garden.

Along with the interesting program comes the usual features of Show and Tell, the wonderful opportunities just waiting on the Opportunity Table, and, of course, the Refreshments and Conversation.

See you at the meeting! Don't forget to bring your Show and Tell plants. □

You need only two tools in life - WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does, use the duct tape.

I took the shell off my racing snail, thinking it would make him run faster. If anything, it made him more sluggish.

And what is listed here is only a small sample of John's prodigious output.

Jim Wright's contribution to the plant world was more eclectic. While he was keenly interested in bromeliads, and was a faithful contributor to the San Diego Bromeliad Society meetings with his (usually stunning) show and tell tillandsias, he also enhanced our bromeliad shows with plant entries that regularly wound up on the head table.

But Jim did not confine his interests to bromeliads alone. He was a veritable renaissance man of the plant world. He was an expert palm grower, and he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of the various genera of palms. His garden showcased which palms could be grown successfully here in San Diego.

There will be a Celebration of Life for Jim Wright on Saturday, September 26, 2015, from 9:00 am – 11:00 am at the San Diego Botanic Garden. Participants in the Celebration will be admitted free to the garden. The various plant societies to which Jim belonged will be sending representatives, and I hope that we in the SDBS will be able to participate in numbers at this event.

We may have lost John and Jim, but because of their interest, enthusiasm, and commitment to plants and to gardening, their legacies will endure.

The "making of a mark" is a key component of what the bromeliad society is all about. The society exists to enable people who love plants to learn more, to associate with other plant lovers and to build excitement and appreciation over the amazing complexity of the world in which we live. And the best thing that we, as members of the SDBS, can do is spread that excitement and appreciation around, especially to the young. □

Jim Wright

Again with great sadness we note the passing of one of our members. Jim Wright passed on August 8, 2015. Jim was a very active member in SDBS, the Palm Society, the Orchid Society, the Rose Society, and the Fern Society.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday, September 26th at the San Diego Botanic Garden ("SDBG").



Editor's Notes

This is the September edition of the Blade. WOW! Where did the year go?

There is a new item this month: **Cultivation Thoughts**. I'm starting it off with some thoughts about the potting mix we have changed to. Please send in your thoughts – a paragraph or two – about some cultivation methods you use or have seen used. Perhaps these thoughts will help our members grow better plants by exchanging methods or ideas about cultivation.

Remember that elections are coming up. Don't wait for the nominating committee to corner you – corner yourself by volunteering for an officer position, as a board member, or to serve on one of the committees. Your participation makes the society function. Each job, no matter how small, is important.

We certainly will need a volunteer for newsletter editor. The current editor is retiring. The job is not hard but does require dedication and a little work. Give it some thought and volunteer. I can give a few pointers perhaps help a little with the first issue. After that I will be just another contributing member.

□

Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes; come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller!

The celebration will commence promptly at 9 AM and run till about 11 AM. Attendees will need to be out of the event venue by noon since the gardens staff will be setting up a wedding afterwards.

Those that want to socialize or enjoy the garden can stay as long as they like outside the celebration venue.

There will be no parking or entrance fee. Attendees must mention that they have come for Jim Wright's Memorial Service. □

Meet our Members

Andrew Wilson

SSDBS: Where do you live?

AW: In San Diego for 45 years, on a site never to be picked to grow the plants I once wanted to grow. Bromeliads were not my choice for tenants then but nature has trained me.

SDBS: When and how did you get started growing bromeliads?

AW: The process was gradual and slow. First, about thirty ago years I found myself after winter storms fixing up fallen tillandsias that Beatrice had been growing. Later, while working on the landscape at Quail I decided that the tree canopy had to be thinned out to give those glazouiana puyas more light. Over ten years ago at the Huntington I noticed bright purplish red plants growing in dry shade and even bought a few of them, billbergias, to try out in my garden. Then, on a trip to northern Argentina in search of cacti I was amazed to see the large mountains there covered for hundreds of miles with low growing silvery plants called deuterocohnias and the deep valleys with trees festooned with aechmeas. That did it; on returning, I joined the bromeliad society.

SDBS: If you could be a bromeliad which one would you be? Why?

AW: I enjoy living in a beautiful place with a pleasant climate, no windblown mountaintop nor soggy shade for me. A hillside above and outside Rio de Janeiro would suit fine. As such, I'd join the Alcantarea club probably as *A. glaziovii* and expect to have a long-lived, undisturbed existence. You wouldn't find me at many shows!



Cultivation Thoughts

From Dan Kinnard:

After several years of having problems with our mix – staying too wet in winter, decomposing rapidly into mush, and requiring repotting too frequently – and passing through many different blends of mix to try to correct the problems, we have finally found a mix that seems to work (so far) for us.

We had tried various blends of bark, coir (or peat), and perlite. In the process of changing one product for another while trying to improve our mix, we used lava rock (about ¾ inch) instead of the perlite. That didn't seem to help the mushiness but when we removed plants from the pots, the roots were all clinging on to the lava rock. Interesting.

The next step was to move to using only lava rock and bark with only a handful of coir for some plants that want more moisture around the roots or a handful of cactus mix for some terrestrials. The plants seem to be much happier now that the roots almost dry out between waterings. I that suspect this may mimic the natural (epiphytic) conditions from nature.

Nothing is perfect. Now we have to water more often but with less water each time. Part of the watering task has been offset by an overhead mist / sprinkling system that we run for a few minutes when the humidity is low or the days are particularly breezy. This seems to be enough to preserve the necessary humidity. Hand watering is required only every 2 weeks now instead of each week.

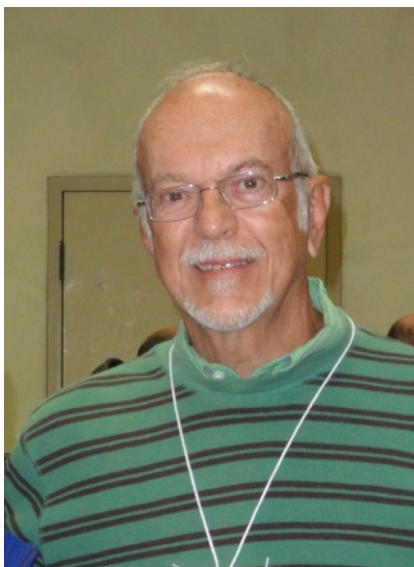
This seems to be working for us. Perhaps this method may be useful to others. □

SDBS: Tell us a little about yourself:

AW: My interest in plants began at the age of four after cutting down the branch of a cherry tree my grandfather had grown. Like George Washington I did not lie about it but the reward some three years later was to be given the job of mowing huge lawns. Except for the years spent studying and trying to solve the riddles of the universe (not always successfully), the study and growing of plants has always been a major motivator, a less demanding one. Besides, hiking in remote areas and traveling to faraway lands were thereby justified. Avid reading, of both great literature and junky catalogs, and the personal computer (as distinct from the behemoths I once used to do calculations) have encouraged me write as well as read on matters of the soil, if not of the soul.

Meet our Members

Bob Walters



SDBS: Where do you live?

BW: In a neighborhood called Azalea Park located just east of downtown San Diego near the intersection of highways 805 and 94.

SDBS: When and how did you get started growing bromeliads?

BW: Over the years I'd acquired a few Bromes and found them colorful and relatively easy-care. I attended my first SDBS meeting around 6 years ago and was hooked from then on. Let's hear it for the opportunity-table because my

plant collection has expanded markedly as a result.

SDBS: If you could be a bromeliad which one would you be? Why?

BW: If I had to choose a Brome-To-Be it would be *Quesnelia marmorata* as a thing of beauty is a joy forever. However, living that intimately with spiders is not a life's goal.

SDBS: Tell us a little about yourself

BW: Short-and sweet bio: Having been raised a farm boy in Wisconsin with its bitterly cold winters and its hot and humid summers, once I discovered the perpetual summers of the Golden State, I got the hell out of there. A person can garden year

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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round here. But, you knew that. Having retired as an R.N. seven years ago I expected to then be on top of the weeds and pruning needs of the yard. That hasn't happened yet but I'm working on it. Wish me luck.

August Non-Meeting (Picnic)

Below are some comments and photos from those who attended the picnic at the gardens of Eloise / Dan and Robert / Karen.

from Andy Siekkinen

I only really took one photo...the sacrificial lambs lined up to feed Robert's Hechtias.



from Gary Vincent

We were blessed with a beautiful day for our picnic and everything else contributed to a wonderful day. The food was delicious, the gardens beautiful and the company delightful. We could not have had more gracious hosts — maybe we should make this a permanent location for the picnic!

The highlight may have been when a bunch of us sat on Bob and Karen's front patio enjoying the scenic vistas and the ocean breezes and getting to know each other a little better.

from Debra Mitchell

What a fabulous garden lunch! Fantastic views, lovely plants, incredible edibles and great company! Made for one fine day.

from Dan and Eloise

It was our pleasure to host the group and the picnic this year. It was all the members, great food and great company that made the day enjoyable for us.

SDBS 2015

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Web Page

www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

The Bromeliad Blade

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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

September 12, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
A collection of local presenters (details later)
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

October 9 - 10, 2015 37th ANNUAL SOUTHWEST BROMELIAD GUILD SHOW and 14th INTERNATIONAL CRYPTANTHUS SOCIETY SHOW
The Crown Plaza New Orleans Airport
Kenner, LA.
Contact: Bryan Windham at (504-) 722-2808 or email: brykool69@yahoo.com

October 10, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Paul Isley III - New Tillandsia Species And Hybrids
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

November 14, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Bruce Holst of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

December 12, 2015 at 10:00 AM San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Holiday Party, details pending
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

From Andrew Wilson:

A Picnic on the Hill

In Wikipedia we read that “a picnic is an excursion at which a meal is eaten outdoors (al fresco or en plein air), ideally taking place in a beautiful landscape”, a description that dates back to the nineteenth century yet remains accurate today. So it was at our last meeting where, on an inland hill in Vista, we could look out toward the Pacific while enjoying the delicious renderings from many kitchens. The adjacent gardens of Dan and Eloise (D&E) and of Robert and Karen (R&K) provided the scenic hilltop setting. Each year our picnic is held at a different site, often at places within Balboa Park but occasionally in private gardens where, it is fair to say, the event is especially enjoyable and distinctive. That tradition was fulfilled.

Both gardens possess impressive collections of bromeliads that are quite distinct from each other both in the range as well as in the character of the plant presentation. Most specimens are grown in large shaded areas through which stiff onshore breezes blow as they did during the afternoon, keeping both plants and members pleasantly cool. Large terrestrials (Hechtia, Dyckia, Deuterocohnia and Acanthostachys) at R&K complemented epiphytes (especially Tillandsia) and bench-tops of Billbergia and Neoregelia species and hybrids at D&E. Tall trees (Bauhinia, Brachychiton and Spathodea) bloomed while massive koi lumbered lazily and, unobtrusive to many of the feasting friends, a Dutchman’s Pipe (Aristolochia) twined overhead.

The plant selection (by Dave) of gift plants for members was interesting as well as diverse, including some delightful orthophytums and plants not often seen here such as the bigeneric xCanmea and *Edmundoa lindeni*. There were plants for all and afterwards Dan showed us a new bigeneric (xBillya = *Billbergia Halleujah* and *Puya mirabilis*) created in Florida by Nick Bethmann and now enjoying life planted out in Vista.

The picnic was an enjoyable one. For the courage to prepare the amenities for invasion by over fifty members and the foresight to cover details such as

computer-generated name tags our hosts deserve compliments. It may have been less of a picnic for them. Members had been warned of the risk of rattlers by straying far into the chaparral and cautioned about the need to be able to walk up steep slopes to avoid parking congestion. Snakebites did not occur, joints were not dislocated and almost everyone took guidance on parking. Cooperation by all is necessary for such an event to be enjoyable, particularly in the perfect picnic surroundings.

from Scott Sandel

I forgot to take photos during the picnic. Dang!

I did really well at the raffle table by taking home a *Tillandsia krukoffiana*, which is a high-altitude species from Bolivia. Its inflorescence can be two meters, but that is several years away (if I don’t kill it)!

from Joanne / Jim Dossett

What a terrific turnout for our yearly picnic. Made for a really great array of delicious dishes and desserts! To top it all off we got to enjoy two wonderful gardens.

from Wanda Mallen

Wonderful food, beautiful gardens, fellow plant nuts and a gorgeous day — what could be better?

from Tim Panzl and Stephen Navadel

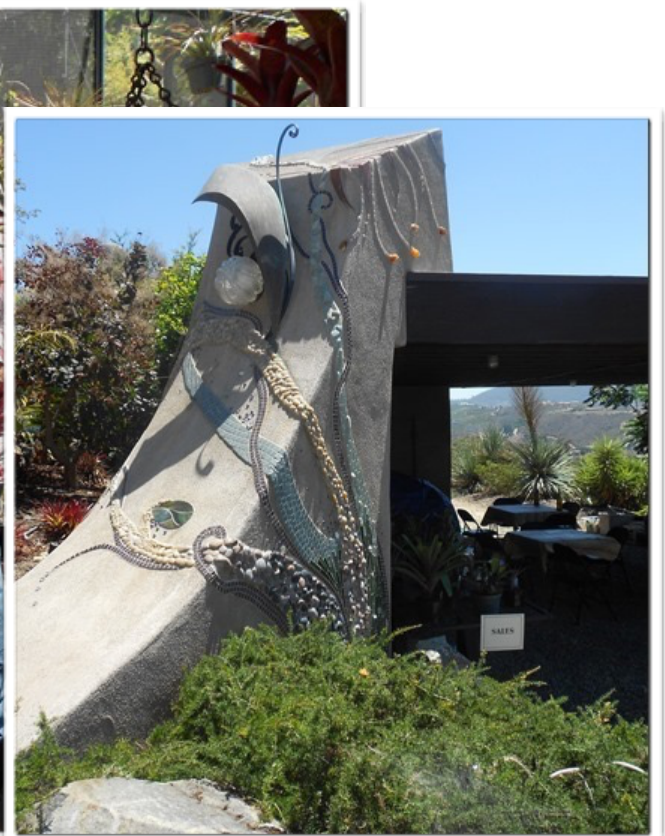
The food was fantastic, the views were breathtaking and what an array of bromeliads as well as other amazing plants for us all to enjoy. Plenty of sale plants and a great opportunities table. Plenty of places to hang out and eat, sit and socialize, tons of room, beautiful vistas. This garden party was a WIN WIN EVENT. I vote we have it here next year too. I give u both a five star review***** includes the Kopftsteins as well.

from Ruth Dorn (with photos)

What a lovely day and beautiful home. Many of us were feeling “Bromeliad inadequate” after seeing your amazing collection.

The view from your hill top is spectacular and your home is one of a kind. Everyone had a

wonderful time and felt very grateful to be invited to see your home and collection. Thank you.



from Dave Kennedy (with photos)

The only problem with taking advantage of Eloise and Dan's awesome hospitality is that one may contract a wicked case of garden envy.



Couldn't Show and Tell

from Scott Sandel

We fared fairly well during the short heat wave during the weekend of Aug. 15-16 here in Mission Hills. High temperatures were in the mid-80's. Plants were watered twice daily! Last month was the last hurrah for *Vriesea* and *Neoregelia* flowers. However, my *Neoregelia* 'Wild Rabbit' is flowering happily in the heat. It is a particular favorite hybrid from Chester Skotak. According to the BSI Cultivar Registry, the seed parent was carolinae variegated x



Hannibal Lector, and the pollen parent was Tiger Cub. 'Wild Rabbit' seems to me to have the best characteristics from its many parents. It is from the same grex as 'Palmares', 'Irazu', 'Bachata' and 'Ozone'. *Neoregelia* 'Palmares' (also pictured) is another of my favorites, but it is only half the size



of 'White Rabbit', and 'Palmares' has more prom-

inent stolons — both characteristics from the *Neoregelia ampullacea* half of the 'Hannibal Lector' part of the complicated cross.

Also of Note:

In flower this month is an *Aechmea nudicaulis* that is a small form with a reddish-plum flush to the leaves. I bought it on eBay with the name *Aechmea* 'Telephone Hill' but I suspect it is actually *Aechmea* 'Telegraph Hill'. A *Tillandsia roland-gosselini* that is growing in a hanging teak basket is flowering; its corolla is a long, tubular shape, and the petals are an interesting light green color.



from David Kennedy

Earlier this year John Arden gave me a post-bloom *Tillandsia* 'Mayan Gold' (*latifolia* v. *divaricata* x *leucolepis*) that he had been unable to produce offsets from. I had all but given up on it myself, but a



mere two days before I heard of his passing, I noticed the first of several pups peeking out. I sure wish I could tell him of my success.

My *Tillandsia eizii* has its massive Peking-duck style inflorescence gaudily draping ever-further down. Will it eventually hit the ground?



Quesnelia marmorata 'Lyra' is another form of this classic brom.



xNeophytum 'Galactic Warrior' is a show-stopper when it blooms



And my quick test of Aaron Sedivy's Tillandsia seed starter works! Shown are some ionantha seeds that all germinated within days. Do try it!



from Andrew Wilson

You don't have to be an Ecuadorean puya to go asleep. This is a *Tillandsia achrostachys* cross.

