



THE BROMELIAD BLADE

Newsletter of the San Diego Bromeliad Society

Volume L, Number 11

November 2015

November Meeting

Bruce Holst will take us on a trip to an unusual and remote cenote (sink-hole) in an area rich with bromeliads and the presence of the ancient Maya. It is also one of the most floris-



tically diverse locations in the country.

Bruce Holst has studied plants of the American tropics for over 30 years and has participated on more than 20 international expeditions, most recently to Belize, Costa Rica, and Venezuela to conduct botanical inventories. He has participated in Conservation International's Rapid Assessment Program and served in the Peace Corps in Honduras. He currently edits Selby Gardens' research journal, *Selbyana*, and was editor of the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society*. Some of his work in the past decade has involved both basic floristic inventories in SW Florida, and applied conservation work in Miami-Dade County and Everglades National Park.

The President's Corner

by Robert Kopfstein

In mid-October Tim O'Reilly passed away. He was husband for more than 60 years to Thelma O'Reilly, a founding member of the SDBS. Tim was president of the SDBS in 1989, a fact that tickled his Irish fancy because he knew next to nothing about plants. But, being a member of Toastmasters, he not only knew how to run a meeting but how to keep it lively. For those of us who knew him he will be best remembered for his outrageous Christmas punch (which was perhaps more than 100 proof). The Christmas parties have not been the same since Tim has been gone.

And speaking of the Christmas party, it is not too far off. As usual there will be a feast with the club providing the meat entrees; the rest will be pot luck dishes brought by the members. And there will be a gift exchange, the details of which will be published in the December Blade. This year there will be detailed instructions on how to choose and wrap your gift, and how the actual exchange works—this will save us from having to go over all this at the meeting. And this year we need to concentrate on how to reduce the large volume of trash that we generate every time we have one of these shindigs.

At the SDBS board meeting on Nov. 1 the June show/sale was discussed. This year the problem lies in the timing: our show closes on Sun. June 12, and the BSI World Conference begins the following Monday. Several key show people plan to attend the conference so one suggestion was to cancel our show. Several bromeliad societies back east have local shows only on the off-years when there is not a world conference. But the board voted to have the show, and we are checking with the Botanical Foundation to see if we can move the date up to the weekend of May 21-22. We will see how this turns out. Even if we have to use the June 11-12 dates we will be able to put on a show/sale.

On Oct. 19, Nancy Groves and Robert Kopfstein attended a meeting for the 2016 San Diego County Fair. The theme this

Editor's Notes

A very special thanks to Scott for the second part of his two-part article on their trip to Brazil. It makes one want to check the airline schedule to see when the next flight leaves.

The Bromeliad Society International World Conference will be in Houston in June 2016. If you have or haven't been to a conference, try to attend -- Houston is not that far. The conference is a collection of all things bromeliad. There are speakers on many subjects related to bromeliads, tours to member gardens, plants sales where you can get that special plant you have been looking for or even one just released into the market, the plant auction where one can outbid others for (or steal for a song) that very special plant, a tremendous show, and a chance to spend a few days immersed in bromeliads while making lots of new friends from all over the world. Check out what will be happening at bsi.org and click on Conference Corner for the details and registration forms.

Don't forget to send in your items for the December newsletter. A photo for "Couldn't Show and Tell", an article about anything bromeliad related anywhere from one paragraph to a couple of pages would be nice and help make a great end of the year issue. I would like to make the last issue of the year and my last newsletter produced a little special. Your help will make this possible.

Why does a round pizza
come in a square box?

year is based on Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and Through the Looking Glass. The horticultural displays will have the theme "Adventures in Wonderland," and our site this year will be different from last year's. We have an exterior triangular corner spot up against the Pat O'Brian building. We should be able to do a "wall of tillandsias" as a backdrop to our display. This is something not done before at the fair, so it should be very exciting. The fair set-up will be the week of May 23, 2016. And we were informed that the trophy premiums have been doubled for next year. In our category we could earn \$2000 or more. Last year we earned a little over \$700.

At the Nov. 1 board meeting the board also voted to sponsor a \$100 prize to be given at the San Diego Fair for the creative use of bromeliads in a display. Both this award and our display will be seen by the approximately 1.2 million people who visit the horticultural area at the fairgrounds; it is the most visited area of the fair.

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Bylaws Update & Officer Elections

There will be a vote to approve / reject the **bylaws changes** that were presented at October meeting. Afterwards, **the election of officers** will be held.

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Meet our Members Tyler and Kayla Vits

Photo by Dan Kinnard

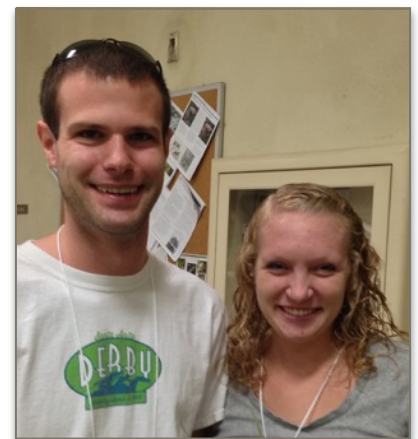
SDBS: Where do you live?

T & K: Scripps Ranch

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

T & K: A little over two years ago we stopped at Rainforest Flora on our way back from LA and got our first few tillandsias. We've been hooked ever since and our collection has been growing exponentially.

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



Zoo Nuz

With completion of the Wegeforth Bowl [the zoo's amphitheater] remodeling, the Kent Bromeliad garden has a nice new perspective for visitors and some awesome wood for more new epiphytic displays than we ever dreamed possible. The garden volunteers are excited about the potential for the garden and the chance to participate in a project that entails something other than just weeding and thinning the garden. The overall looks of the garden have improved lately but just wait until next year as the new plan takes shape.

With the extra workload comes another plea for help. What else are you gonna do on Saturdays at 7 am . . . sleep? Contact Dave Kennedy (thedavekennedy@gmail.com , (858) 278-6532) for information on volunteering.

Below: Debbie Kennedy helps clean the bromeliad garden. Photo by Dave Kennedy.



Why?

T & K: *Tillandsia bulbosa* for no particular reason. It was one of the first tillandsias we bought and continues to thrive.

SDBS: Tell us a little about yourself:

T & K: We both grew up in Wisconsin but moved to San Diego in 2013 after Tyler's job was transferred. Tyler studied genetics in college with hopes of becoming a plant breeder but ended up in the biotechnology industry and Kayla teaches kids with learning differences at a small public / private school in Del Mar. Prior to moving to California, we had virtually no knowledge of tropical plants and had never even heard of bromeliads or tillandsias. We are still novices, and have to admit we've killed a few along the way, but enjoy the beauty and diversity of such unique plants. When we aren't working or messing around in the garden you can usually find us at the beach or enjoying the beautiful Southern California weather.

Kerry Nelson



SDBS: Where do you live?

KN: I live in the Hillcrest neighborhood of San Diego, just north of Balboa Park and the zoo.

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

KN: When I retired three years ago, I decided to take up gardening as a hobby. I went to the Cactus and Succulent Society's sale in the park, and bought some bromeliads there. I proceeded to plant them in the wrong location and medium. Needless to say, they didn't do too well, although they survived.

It was then that I decided to learn first how to properly care for any future plants that I purchased.

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

KN: I would want to be one that I just learned about, a *Puya raimodii*, nicknamed the "Queen of the Andes". Native to the

Cultivation Thoughts

One good thing about being editor of the Blade is that we exchange newsletters with several other societies. I have clipped some cultivation notes from them below:

From an article on Billbergias in Bromelcairns (Cairns, Australia).

Billbergias enjoy growing in a well draining mix, quickly form a clump and most flower in the cooler months. Excess fertilizer will result in green offsets, but these can regain their colour when fertilizing is ceased. They attract fly speck scale but respond well to 'Confidor' spray.

As Don Beadle said, "Take them home and put them up high in good light where you can see and appreciate their wonderful colours".

From an article on Neoregelias in the East London Bromeliad Society (South Africa) Newsletter

When planting or potting your Neoregelia ensure that the soil line reaches the base of the leaves; if too high, the plant may not be stable; if too deep, the plant may rot. A pot near the diameter of the plant is usually selected: a smaller pot can restrict root growth; a larger pot allows roots to spread. If under potted it can become top heavy and fall over.

From Growing Tips in Pup Talk of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society (Orange County, CA)

Copper in any form such as telephone wire, certain fungicides, and paints can cause serious damage to Bromeliads.

The chemicals used in pressure-treated wood may be leached out by rain or watering and drop on Bromeliads resulting in leaf damage.

highlands of the Andes in Peru and Bolivia, its leaves can grow to nine feet tall, and it produces a flower spike up to thirty feet tall. It can live to be well over one hundred years old, and it doesn't even flower in its natural habitat until it is at least eighty. I like that concept.

SDBS: Tell us a little about yourself.

KN: I am a Professor Emerita of San Diego State University, where I was Chair of the Interior Design Program for twenty-four years. I finished my career there as Interim Director of the School of Art and Design. Traveling has been my lifelong passion, and currently I am planning my third around-the-world excursion beginning in late May. I have a personal goal to ride elephants in every country where they still exist in the wild. So far I've done so in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, India, Thailand and Zimbabwe. Next time I hope to ride in Indonesia and Tanzania.

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Opportunity Table

By David Kennedy

Photo by David Kennedy



This month's opportunity table features tillandsias from SDBS member Chris Davis's Wholesale Tillandsias. The wide selection of plants will make for an interesting table.

October Meeting

Show and Tell Plants:

Aechmea distichantha

Billbergia 'Domingo Martins'

Billbergia pyramidalis

Tillandsia brachycaulos

Tillandsia crocata

Tillandsia 'Charles McStravick'

Tillandsia fasciculata

Tillandsia hybrid

Tillandsia intermedia

Pam Peters

Esther Sivila

Robert Kopfstein

Rhonda Smoot

Lucia Velazquez

David Kennedy

Robert Kopfstein

David Kennedy

Pam Peters

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 ionantha X fasciculata

Tillandsia jalisco-monticola

Tillandsia reichenbachii

Tillandsia xerographica

Vriesea phillippo-coburgii

Vriesea 'Pink Gusher'

xUrsumeia 'Ma Williams'

(Aechmea fendlerii X Ursula tuitensis) Bob Wright

Rhonda Smoot

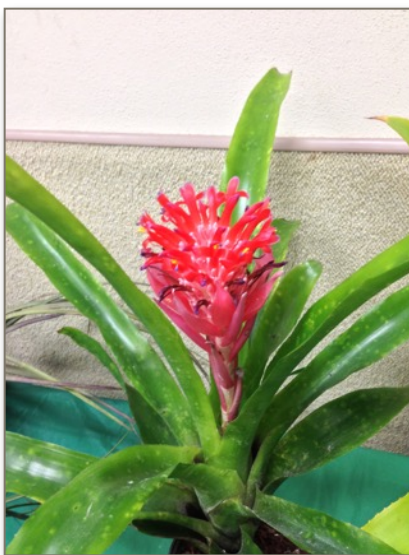
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Rhonda Smoot

David Kennedy

Bob Wright

Bob Wright



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

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

December 12, 2015 San Diego Bromeliad Society
at 10:00 AM Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Holiday Party, details in the December Blade
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

January 9, 2016 at San Diego Bromeliad Society
10:00 AM Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104
Our own Pam Peterson on Brazil
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

Dave Kennedy sent in this text copied from a Chinese website advertising pruning shears. This certainly clarifies how to use the shears.

Notice: The shear blade is extreme sharp. If the operation or use undeserved, can cause serious bodily harm. Whether to use or store, the various parts of the body should keep a safe distance with cutting edge.

In order to reduce the damage to the eyes, don't forget to wear eye protection. As with other tools, to put the pruning shears in children's reach.

Couldn't Show and Tell

From Alex and Mary Lee:



From Dave Kennedy:



Rio de Janeiro State - Part II

by Scott Sandel; Photos by Scott Sandel

After staying a couple of days in Rio de Janeiro, we headed out to see some countryside. Driving out of Rio was quite something; I can only imagine what it would be like during rush hour! First on the itinerary was Itatiaia National Park (Parque Nacional do Itatiaia), specifically the mountain town of Visconde de Maua, which is on the border with Minas Gerais State. Along the way we saw so many grassy hills and low mountains - all of which were at one time epiphyte-laden Atlantic Rainforest. Luckily, the national park at Itatiaia was established back in 1937. I read about it in Mulford and Racine Foster's great bromeliad travel-adventure book, *Brazil, Orchid of the Tropics*. After reading about the many species there of bromeliads, I set about to include it on our itinerary that included Namibia. Don't be puzzled. A week in Brazil after being in Africa was a good device for breaking up the jet lag.

We stayed at a small pousada at the edge of the rainforest. It was recommended by a Brazilian bromeliad acquaintance, and the small inn where we stayed, Jardins do Passaredo, was a good base for our stay there. The owners have established over an acre of bromeliad gardens, with cottages and a pool that are set on the edge of the rainforest. Huge *Alcantareas* and other bromeliads are planted in the ground and on low tree trunks in a light canopy of palms and native *Araucaria* trees. One morning, while photographing bromeliads, I watched a Toucan pick and eat palm seeds like they were popcorn.



Eating Palm Seeds, not Fruit Loops

Here in the moist, relatively cool mountains, there are many different bromeliads - *Guzmania*, *Aechmea*, *Canistrum*, *Canistropis*, *Nidularium*, *Billbergia* and *Quesnelia*. But the most prominent and numerous are the many different species of *Vriesea*. And while there were plenty of mesic bromeliads, there were also a few *Tillandsia*. While we were visiting, in mid-September, we saw hundreds of blooming *Tillandsia chilensis*.



Tillandsia globosa inflorescence

After Itatiaia, we traveled east to our next destination, and along the way, we stopped at a couple of granite formations that were dramatically encrusted with *Alcantarea imperialis*. All were growing on sunny slopes, yet some were green and others were red, so I was able to see the variation that is intrinsic to this species. A favorite, *Alcantarea imperialis Rubra*, is a natural selection of a plant with red on both leaf surfaces.



Alcantareas on Granite

Our drive took us onward to the Serra dos Órgãos, which translates (oddly) to "Range of the Organs". According to Wikipedia, "The origin of the unusual name is credited to early Portuguese settlers who thought the ensemble of the hill tops resembled the pipes of organs in European cathedrals." Indeed, the mountains have jagged formations of steep granite. We stayed at the outskirts of Teresópolis at a chalet-style B&B that was right on the border of the national park, and there was a path that led down from the chalet to a mountain stream and cool swimming hole. After getting out of the water, I hopped over a few boulders to find this flowering clump of *Pitcairnia flammea* var *pallida*.



Vrieseas Everywhere You Look!

We barely scratched the surface of seeing what this huge country has to offer the plant lover. We'll be back!

[ed: This article started in the November 2015 issue of the SDBS Bromeliad Blade.]



Pitcairnia flammea var *pallida* at night

At the Serra dos Órgãos national park, we hiked an all-day trail that started at 3,000 feet with dense jungle and went up to about 4,500 feet where there was a more open canopy with steep rock faces. Along the way, we saw blooming orchids, begonias, Christmas cactus and lots of bromeliads.

Definitions that should be in the dictionary:

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes, and wastes hours.

MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

SKELETON: A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

WRINKLES: Something other people have, Similar to my character lines.

How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?