

The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the
San Diego
Bromeliad Society

April 2017

VOLUME LII

NUMBER 4

President's Corner

By Scott Sandel

Blooming at Home

Happy Spring, fellow gardeners! I trust many of you have been entertained by seeing some of your prized bromeliad blooms. Let me share a few of the plants blooming in my collection so far this spring.

Some of the Billbergias are spring-flowering, and while fleeting, they can be showy.

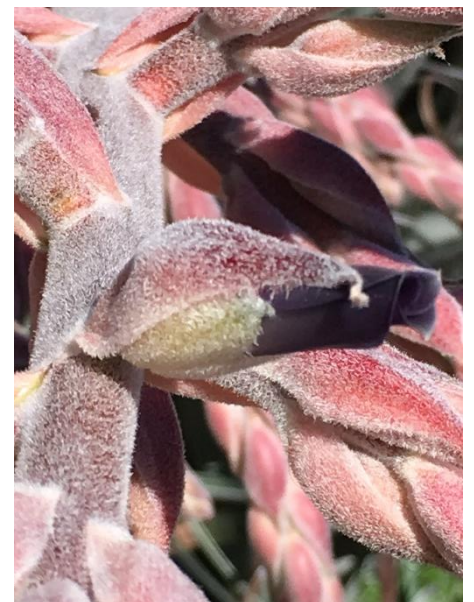
(Check out a photo later in the newsletter).

Several Dyckia species and hybrids are flowering now. A small clump that I have planted in the ground in full sun is blooming again. I really like the bright orange color of both the scape and the



flowers. (See the photos later in the newsletter).

A silver Puya that I planted in the front landscape five or six years ago has sent up its first inflorescence! In the past few years, it has grown and produced several large offsets that have created a broad, tightly growing clump. Just one of the plants is flowering, but is exciting to see. As you can see below, the triple-branched inflorescence is very large – almost reaching into the public sidewalk. The blackish-purple flowers barely open, but have an opening that would be well-suited to a hummingbird.



When purchased, the plant was labeled by San Marcos Growers as *Puya coerulea* var. *coerulea* (Silver Puya), and their very informative website reports that the identification comes from Huntington Desert Garden curator John Trager. The inflorescence looks much different than other *Puya coerulea* photos that are posted on the terrific website of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, so I will have to check for verification. I am hoping that some of you will share your blooming beauties by bringing an interesting flowering plant or two to April's meeting for Show & Tell.

World Bromeliad Conference Updates

By Scott Sandel

May 29 - June 3, 2018

Nancy Groves and I are conference co-chairs, and we would love to hear from you about the conference.

On our web page, www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org you can look for updates and keep abreast of new developments. The big news is that **early-bird registration rate of \$350 has been extended until the end of this May 2017**. Conference registration will include admittance to the events at Paradise Point including speaker lectures and presentations, a seminar/panel discussion or two, entry to the plant show, the

Welcome Opening Luncheon, home tours, Dinner at the San Diego Botanical Gardens, the Saturday Banquet and Rare Plant Auction and early entry into the huge plant sale. Plus, there will be a couple of fun elective tours that will be open to registrants only.

Several members have volunteered for key committees: Robert Kopfstein (plant show chair); Dave Kennedy (plant sales chair); Ed Doherty (speakers committee chair); George Long (exhibits & displays chair); Stephen Zolezzi (food & beverage chair). In addition, I have a running list of locals and out-of-towners who have said that they will

volunteer for as-needed jobs during event week. We are off to a great start, but we would love for some others to help make this a success. I can describe the job descriptions to you personally if you are even mildly interested. These functions are as follows:

- 1-Plant Show Co-Chair
- 2-Plant Sale Co-Chair
- 3-Publicity
- 4-Welcome Bags & Conference Mugs
- 5-Registration/Welcoming Center Desk
- 6-Plant Packing/Shipping
- 7-Full-Day Tour to San Diego
- 8-Botanical Gardens
- 9-Home Tours

Some Tips on Prepping Plants for the June Show

By Robert Kopfstein

One of the best ways that the SDBS can promote bromeliads, educate the public about bromeliads, and perhaps encourage people to join the club is through our annual show and sale. Plus, it is a good way to show off some of your better specimens, or perhaps demonstrate your creative abilities in making a horticultural display or artistic arrangement. Throughout the year the officers and the board work hard to make the SDBS a worthwhile organization, and they try to make your club experience both

educational and entertaining. Now is your chance to contribute to those worthy goals:

1. Groom ten entries. In your collection there are broms just waiting to make their stage debut, and it is surprising how quickly you can assemble a group of ten.
2. Don't ignore what you might think is an ugly duckling: remember the story of Cinderella.
3. Not all plants have to be blue ribbon winners. If a plant is

interesting but has a few flaws it still is show worthy. Remember that perfection is a bore.

4. Check the show schedule ahead of time. Deciding which category fits your plant best is very important—say I have a group of 3 billbergias: two have serious flaws, but the third looks good. Split the clump and enter the best one as a single.
5. Perhaps no plant is 100% perfect; over that you have no control. But you can show it off to its best advantage:

Upcoming Events

Highlighted Meetings

April 8, 2017 at 10 AM
 SDBS Monthly Meeting
 Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

May 13, 2017 at 10 AM
 SDBS Monthly Meeting
 Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104
www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html

World Bromeliad Conference 2018 - San Diego

May 29 - June 3, 2018

Early Bird Rates Extended to
 End of May! Register at:

<http://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner/>

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, 5:45 PM
 San Diego Horticultural Society
 Congregation Beth Israel (CBI)
 9001 Towne Centre Drive
 San Diego, CA 92122
www.sandiegohorticulturalsociety.org

Clean, Clean, Clean

Use a new pot whenever you can. If you have to clean an old one, do it thoroughly.

Clean the plant. The judges don't take kindly to entries that obviously have not been groomed. There is no excuse for schmutz.

Put new top dressing in all your pots.

Trim if Necessary

If you have to trim leaves to remove brown tips, be sure to use sharp scissors, and sculpt the trimmed leaf to match the others.

Camouflage Attachments

For mounted specimens, be sure to hide an obvious glue, wire, or filament attachment. The plant should look as if it were naturally growing on the bark, wood, or stone.

6. Don't feel intimidated. The whole purpose of a show is for the entrants to strut their stuff. In your garden there are now broms who would love to dazzle the public. Don't be timid about showing them off.

7. Enjoy. Remember that bromeliads are our hobby, and hobbies are for pleasure.

We'll see you on Friday, June 9, 2017—plant entries begin at 11:00 am and continue until 4:30 pm. If you have entries and cannot make it on Friday call Robert Kopfstein for arrangements to have your entries picked up.

Save The Date!

You are invited for a visit to Wanda Mallen and Gary Vincent's botanical wonderland in Fallbrook on Sunday, May 21. We will be joined by the Saddleback club as well. Details to follow in the May newsletter. You are invited for a visit to Wanda Mallen and Gary Vincent's botanical wonderland in Fallbrook on Sunday, May 21. We will be joined by the Saddleback club as well. Details to follow in the May newsletter.

Renew your SDBS Membership!

If you haven't yet. The 2017 directory is already out. Send in your renewal fees to:

San Diego Bromeliad Society
 PO Box 83996
 San Diego, Ca 92138-3996

Or send it to the treasurer:
Kerry Nelson
 1725 Myrtle Avenue
 San Diego, Ca 92103

General Membership
 1 year - \$13 single / \$17 dual
 2 years - \$22 single / \$30 dual

USPS Membership
Grandfathered Members Only
 1 year - \$28 single / \$32 dual
 2 years - \$52 single / \$60 dual

February Meeting

Our own Scott Sandel entertained us with a beautiful presentation about his adventures in Peru. In this travelogue, he took us to isolated spots in Northern Peru with incredible photos of landscapes, archeological sites and yes, bromeliads. Best of all, most of the broms in the slideshow are only found in nature, so what a treat! Plus, Scott included a 360-degree vista and special effects that drew ooohs and aahs from the crowd!



Above: Plant table by Bird Rock Tropicals. Below: *Tillandsia* 'Curly Slim' one of the items for auction



Show and Tell

Bob Wright

The Show and Tell Hero. While many of us find too much trouble hauling a big brom all the way to Balboa Park, consider Bob. He thinks nothing of bringing over his hechtias, dyckias and the like. All are armed with more spines than it's safe to handle. Plus, they are terrestrials and vegetate in heavy soil containers. How do you take those beasts for a ride without drawing blood from yourself is the question that comes to mind.

Thankfully he will bring them every time, and they are never boring. This time, we saw a *Hechtia* cross, angry red and sporting a piece of Styrofoam at the tip of the developing inflorescence – Bob's way to not gauge an eye ball from a distracted viewer.

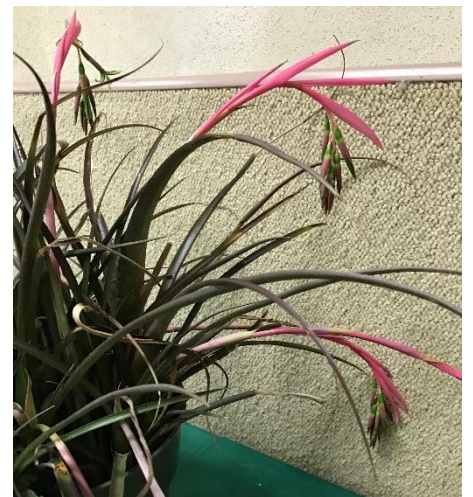


Hechtia hybrid

Then he surprises everyone with a pitcairnia with broad, floppy leaves – *Pitcairnia undulata*. I was unaware that such thing existed. Bob posed for a picture with this oddity:



Next, he shows a big tub of *Billbergia nutans* – an unusual form, with cute short leaves and a tall inflorescence that stands high above the foliage. A common plant with an uncommon presentation. Bob collected the plant in Paraguay. Very cool.



Finally, there was his *Orthophytum lemei*, the trendy plant that few people have, starting to bloom. Thanks for sharing, Bob!



February Show and Tell
Al Evans

Al always delights with his elegant plant presentation. He is apparently not a fan of the plastic pot. He treated us to a chunky clump of Tillandsia juncea mounted on red lava rock, plus another one growing in a decorative ceramic upside-down container. Then we saw his picture-perfect Tillandsia xerographica in full bloom.

Andrew Wilson

Brought us a Tillandsia delicata.

Left: Some of the Show'n'Tell plants: Tillandsia xerographica, Tillandsia juncea 2 ways, Orthophytum lemei



SAN DIEGO BROMELIAD SOCIETY
BOUNTIFUL BROMELIADS!

- **SATURDAY & SUNDAY** June 10th & 11th
- **10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.**
- **BALBOA PARK - CASA DEL PRADO, ROOM 101**

An affiliate of Bromeliad Society International

for details, go to: www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org



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April Meeting

Our speaker for our April 8th meeting is Cristy Brenner, who will give us a presentation on a recent trip that she made to Ecuador. Cristy is a Geography professor at Saddleback college and is the President of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society in Mission Viejo.

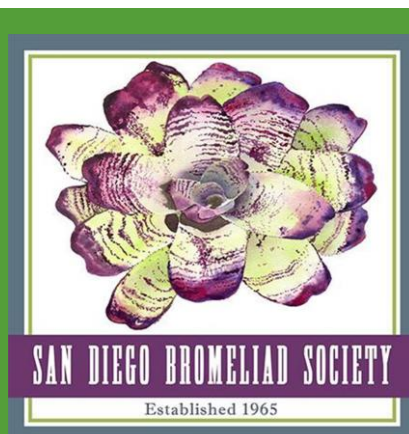
In July 2015, Cristy returned to Ecuador for her third "Guillermo Bromeliad Tour," along with Nancy Groves and several other Southern California Bromeliad lovers. Because Ecuador is a small country located at the equator, with altitudes ranging from sea level to over 19,000', it offers the opportunity to see the greatest number of bromeliads within a short period of time. The group enjoyed many different species in a wide variety of environments. Included were Guayaquil botanical gardens, misty cloud forests, coastal dry regions, Amazonian forests, the high Andes mountains, and desert canyons.

Opportunity Table

by Al Evans

The April plant table will feature plants from the collection of member, Liz Butler. There will be a pretty diverse group of bromeliads. The highlights will be a number of John Arden Vriesea hybrids. These plants have the original John Arden tags specifying the particular cross. There will be a couple of neos, *Dyckia platyphylla*(?), and several Orthophytums (Starlights, x gurkenii, and Stardust). On the auction block will be 2 good size hechtias ("Aztec Sun" and an un-named Hechtia from the Dorothy Byer collection.) Also for auction will be good sized *Fascicularia pitcairniifolia*.

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To send material for publication, please contact Juliana at julianadraposo@gmail.com

Make sure to submit your contribution before the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter.

SDBS MEETING

The club meets on the second Saturday of the month at 10am in Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104.

SDBS WEBPAGE

www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

April Meeting Highlights

The talk

Cristy Brenner – Ecuador Travelogue

Covering yet another bromeliad -rich South American country, this presentation will be the perfect follow up on Scott's talk on Peru. Expect wonderful shots of elusive bromeliads in habitat. Right, *Tillandsia lymanii* and *tectorum*, below, *Aechmea manzanaresiana*.



Book Review

By Eloise Lau

Life in the Treetops, Adventures of a Woman in Field Biology

by Margaret D. Lowman

Published in 1999 by Yale University Press

Library Journal— Best Books of 1999
New York Public Library — Book for the Teenage 2000 New York Times Book Review — Notable Book of 1999

It's a Jungle Up There, More Tales from the Treetops

by Margaret D. Lowman, Edward Burgess and James Burgess

Published in 2006 by Yale University Press

Books chosen for the SDBS Library by Robert Kopfstein.

Both books make interesting reading of life experiences of a woman making her way in a male-dominated field of botanical research and at the same time parenting two young boys. There is little mention of bromeliads however some of Ms Lowman's observations involve epiphytes in the canopy of the rainforests.

The first half of *Life in the Treetops* is about her challenges as a wife and mother in Australia and the book ends with her adventures as a scientist doing research in the treetops in tropical rainforests. A few adventures include her children.

Between her two books Ms Lowman became the director of Selby Gardens in Sarasota, Florida.

However, she left when Selby's focus became bromeliads and orchids rather than plant conservation and education. At this time she returned to the field which resulted in more adventures and experiences, this time with her teenage sons.

It's a Jungle Up There continues her treetop experience; it is coauthored with her sons. There are more family experiences and adventures in far off rainforests in some remote parts of the world. Also included after each chapter are comments by her sons of their opinions of the adventures.

Books for those interested in the study of the rainforest canopy and the life experiences and adventures of a scientist who has studied them. Easy reading for those who love the rainforests, their habitats and the plants that grow there.

Blooming at Home

By Scott Sandel



Dyckia and Puya together in the garden, Aechmea Racinaea var. tubiformis – plants by Scott Sandel