



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

# THE BSGC NEWS

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Lori Weigerding

Our next meeting is August 9<sup>th</sup> 2 pm in Annex 1 at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We will discuss the upcoming August 28<sup>th</sup>-30th Show. I will give out index cards so if you want to prepare them for your plants for the show, you can do so ahead of time. I will bring some specimens so you will know how to do it. We will have a sign up sheet for the August 28<sup>th</sup>-30th Show. If you can't make the meeting please call or email Martha with the day and time you would like to work. We will also have a slideshow of the 2015 Australasian conference. The majority of the raffle plants will be billbergias. Anne was at Kew Gardens and sent us the following picture of a Hechtia Argentea.



### *President's Column*

*Wow another wonderful meeting. So happy you all could join us. That was a wonderful raffle that was provided by Martha! She must have been a busy beaver. We all got a couple of plants or more each and she had a few left over.*

*We also voted on how many plants to buy for the show. We'll buy the \$300 from Michael's and \$500 from Russels. The one's from Michael's will give us some different variety of plants to offer the public. We also came up with a plan for the setup of the area and it looks really good. We'll be selling the plants in the same corner we have been and Anne will be selling some items too. A video which has been created and produced by Marjorie will be running in the opposite corner and a hanging area in the opposing corner. I hope you're getting as excited as I am for the show to be here! I'm sure that we'll have a bang up show!*

*Next month we'll be setting up the schedule for setup and working at the show. We'll also be discussing if we'll be going to dinner that Saturday like we did last year and if you have any suggestions of a restaurant to go to, please bring it along.*

*Looking forward to seeing you all again in August!*

*Lori Weigerding*



Pictures of Gardens by the Bay in Singapore

Since we will be having our Show next month, we are including two articles about getting your plants ready for the Show. The first article is by Ted Johnson of the South Bay Bromeliad Associates.

## How to Prepare Your Plants for the Show

by Ted Johnson

1. Give it a bath. Unpot the plant and hose out the center and leaf axils. I use a spray head with fine needle-like sprays that can flush out debris and algae, and blast off scale, mealy bugs, spider webs, etc. Fill and dump the plant several times to get out snails, slugs, and debris. Lay on a sidewalk or flat surface to support leaves that are being water-blasted. Be careful not to get the spray heavy enough to damage scurf or to tear and break the leaves or inflorescence.

2. Look for damaged or unsightly leaves. If there are leaves that will cause the judge to downgrade the plant, remove them or trim them to remove the blemish. Look at the plant from the top and side as you work to make the best judgment between the blemish and the overall plant conformation and symmetry. Hide the damage with your hand to get an idea of how the plant will look with the leaf cut or removed, to decide your course of action.

3. Repot the plant in a clean pot once the plant is washed and major damaged leaves trimmed/removed. Pick a pot that is appropriate to the size of the plant and a color that goes with the plant color. Dark green and black are neutral colors that can go with most plants. Look at the plant from two orthogonal directions to check that it is in the center of the pot, and straight. Press the potting mix down firmly to make the plant stable in the pot. Lightly spray or wipe the plant to remove potting mix debris. Do final leaf trimming. Try to make your trims match the original shape of the leaf end.

4. Do final cleaning with small artist brushes and long tweezers to remove trimmings, and potting mix that has fallen in the leaf axils. If possible, ask someone to help you do the final cleaning, as a second set of eyes often uncovers a miss in earlier preparations.

5. Finally, **lightly** mist the leaf axils to put a **small** amount of water in the bottom of the axil so the plant will not dry out during the show. Don't heavily water your plants just before bringing them to the show. It makes a mess at the show as water leaks out on the tables and destroys the entry slips for your plants. If you must water heavily, do this several days before the show, then dump the water out a day or two before the show and replace with a small amount of water in the axils. Do a touch-up cleaning after dumping the excess water.



6. Add top dressing to the pots to cover the mix and make a clean display at the show. I use seedling orchid bark, but turkey grit (available at feed stores) or small pea gravel also looks good. Choose your top dressing to complement your plant, not compete with the plant.

7. Gently pack your cleaned plants in flats or carrying containers for transportation to/from the show. I use flats and put plastic “protectors” you can get from nurseries or Home Depot/Lowe’s to cover car seats or trunk before packing the plants in the car. Sleeve plants with delicate leaves, or plants with sharp thorns that can damage other plants on the way to the show.



More pictures of Gardens by the Bay

The other article was in the January, 2014 Bromeliad Society of South Florida’s Newsletter.

### Preparing Bromeliads for Show from BSI

[http://www.bsi.org/webpages/sbba/Preparing\\_Bromeliads.htm](http://www.bsi.org/webpages/sbba/Preparing_Bromeliads.htm)

Tools needed:

- Flat end surgical hemostat (pulls out large leaves and debris)
- Long needle nose hemostat (pulls out small leaves deep in the plant)
- Long tweezers (pulls out material deep in the plant)
- Artist brushes with long handles (various sizes, for finer cleanup)
- Scissors and Exacto knife (for trimming leaves)

Pair of old calf-length cotton sports socks (poke holes in toes, wear like gloves to protect your arms from prickles)  
Bar of Ivory soap (to clean leaf surfaces)  
Safer's soap (to remove scale)  
Spray bottle (for pineapple/citrus juice or club soda)

## Cleaning:

Remove trapped large leaves and debris by hand. Use a hose with a nozzle that will give a good spray without too much pressure to wash out remaining dirt and debris. After the first wash, examine the deep parts of the plant for missed debris.

Use hemostats to remove this material. Be careful not to dig around too harshly so you don't break or tear a leaf. Loosen stubborn dirt at the base of leaves with artist brushes. Wear gloves to avoid scratches.

Rinse the plant again to remove loosened material

Clean the surfaces of leaves individually. Cleaning intensity will depend on the delicacy of the leaves and amount of scurf. If scurf is present, be careful not to remove any of it because it will not regenerate, and the bare patches will be obvious to the judges. Suds each leaf with soap solution and a heavy artist's brush. If leaves aren't prickly, pull each leaf through your bare fingers to loosen any stubborn surface dirt. This should also remove any dead scale that might be attached to the leaf. If the scale doesn't rub off quickly, apply Safer's soap. Scale is a big no-no for a show plant.

Rinse the plant with clean water using the hose and gentle spray. Set the plant aside to dry and process the next one. You can't really tell whether some plants are really clean or not until they are dry. You may have to go back and touch up missed spots, and rinse again. Be sure to get all the soap out.

If you have salt deposits, sometimes another soaping of the salted area will do the job. Let the soap stay on for a little while and work on another plant. Then rub the salted area lightly being very careful not to damage the leaf. Pineapple juice or any citrus juice can be sprayed on leaves to remove salt deposits. Just be sure to rinse the juice off well or it may leave a sticky, shiny film on the plant that the judges will penalize. Try club soda. Some gardeners say it does not leave a film on leaves.

Some procedures may have to be repeated. It is almost impossible to completely remove the residue from some darker leaved plants, but you can take a chance and enter them if only faint traces are visible. Repotting:

It is usually easier to repot a plant than to clean the pot. This is a good time to select a pot size in proper proportion to the plant. A larger pot makes it easier to

center the plant and cover any exposed caudex caused by leaf removal. Don't pot the plant too deeply unless you are trying to hide a flaw, because that is what the judges will assume. Be aware of the show rules about what constitutes a "standard" pot. A pretty or unusual pot should be entered in the Artistic, Decorative Container division.

#### Trimming:

Leaf damage is a common problem but judges will certainly notice where you have trimmed. But if you have done a good job they may not take off points unless they observe too many trims. Before you cut, analyze the effect the cut will have on the plant's overall appearance. Cutting a leaf too far back it could change the natural shape of the leaf and the plant's conformation. Trimming a plant with a brown/damaged fingernail tip is tricky. You may decide not to trim at all if it will do more harm than good. Cutting leaf edges very close to the base can be done where there are no spines, but try to keep a smooth leaf edge. Judges can usually see your dilemma and be lenient if there is little else wrong with the plant.

#### Final evaluation before show entry:

View the plant from all sides and from the top. Straighten the plant if needed and firm the soil around it. Be sure the mix on top of the soil is neat. You can use a special top dressing, but this is optional. Neat appearance counts. Ask: Does the plant appear healthy and properly grown? Does its foliage have the appropriate sheen and/or scurf? Are the colors rich? Are the markings clear? Is the symmetry appealing and appropriate? Is the size close to maturity? Is the leaf damage inconspicuous? Does the plant need more grooming? Don't be overly critical. Fix what you can, but remember that there are very few, if any, perfect plants.

**Transporting plants:**  
Take extra time packing your plants to be sure they don't damage each other or topple over in transit. Take your tools and extra potting mix with you just in case there's a mishap along the way.





