



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

August, 2016

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Lori Weigerding

Our next meeting is at 2 pm in the Annex at the Chicago Botanic Garden, August 14. Paula met with Stephanie Lindeman of the Garden and discussed the possibility of the Bromeliad Society having a Show there next year. She will lead a discussion on this topic. After this we will walk over to the visitors center where we will get the tram for the Bright Encounters tour at 3:15.

President's Column

We had a wonderful meeting where we got to get a look at some lovely plants from the conference in Houston. They were some beautiful and exciting photos. We also had a raffle of some plants that Martha picked up at the conference. Priscilla also brought along some voodoo bulbs and several of us took them home. Well they certainly grow fast, I have 2 of them and know that Anne has three growing well also. They are an interesting plant, even if it isn't a Bromeliad.

We'll be taking a tram ride again during this upcoming meeting. The ride thru the Garden is so much fun and you get to see places that you may not have visited before. Hoping that the weather remains on the cooler side, I'm certainly tired of all this heat!

Look forward to seeing you all there for the ride and to new discoveries. In the meantime, stay cool.

Lori Weigerding

At the July meeting we discussed the possibility of selling tillandsias at a farmers market. We decided not to pursue it for this year but to keep it in mind for the future.

Oakton College was mentioned as a possibility for a Show. The Orchid Society had their Show there one time.



Catherine's Graduation!

Anne brought in Tillandsia xerographica with a bloom stalk. She mentioned that the bloom stalk started when they were going out of town to her daughter's graduation. Her daughter wore it on her hat.

Paula mentioned her Tillandsia duratii has been growing like crazy but it still hasn't flowered. Marjorie mentioned that she only has a north window and her plants aren't blooming. She said her dyckia has grown very big though.

Priscila mentioned she has an LED Grow-Light which works well. She suggested that Marjorie look into obtaining some type of Grow light. Priscilla brought corpse plants for everyone. She says it produces more bulbs. She takes it inside in the fall and puts it in the basement and does not water it.



In the July 29th issue of the Wall Street Journal, there was an article by Beckie Strum about the Corpse Flower. She said that this year there are five botanic gardens where they are blooming or about to bloom. It is one of the largest flowers and it usually takes about ten years from the seed to the first flower. Then it blooms again for only a day or two about every two to three years. The plant originated in Sumatra. The plants were rare in the U.S. before the 1990's. A number of seed distributions occurred between 2002 and 2008.

This summer several of my tillandsias are blooming. (At least they don't Stink!)



Til. Sweet Isabel which is the cross of *tectorum* and *paleacea*



Til. *Chiapensis*

Til. *Chiapensis* I got this at the BSI conference in Houston. The Tilli-card from Bird Rock Tropicals says that it is indigenous to limestone canyon walls in Chiapas, Mexico at 600 meters (1,968 feet) It has scurfy, leathery pink leaves covered with dense trichomes. The pink inflorescence produces dark

violet flowers but rarely branches. The spike can last up to one year. It should produce several offsets. It prefers bright light and plenty of air movement.

Unfortunately, I lost the tag to these 2 tillandsias.



Anne sent me the following tillandsia picture and asked if I could identify it.



I forwarded it to Bob Hudson who is a tilly expert in Australia and he said that it looked like *tillandsia harrisii*. Anne sent me a picture from the next day of it.

The tilli card has this to say about it: It grows above a river at 500 meters (1,640 feet) which provides abundant humidity. The leaves are soft, semi-succulent and densely scaled. They grow in a spiral habit. The inflorescence is a glossy red and has a spiral shape and dark violet petals: It pups well and can be grown in bright light.



From the April 2016 South Bay Bromeliad Associates letter

The April 2016, South Bay Bromeliad Associates had the following article on ways to Display Tillandsias
Suggested Ways to Display Tillandsias
Left: Five assorted tillandsias glued with Tilly Tacker glue to a 10 x 16 cork panel. The entire panel can be dunked weekly. Mist mid-week in hot weather. Hang in semishade.

Right: dig out a small hole in a wine bottle cork, glue mount a small Tillie. With a magnet glued to the back of the cork it can stick to the refrigerator door or any metallic surface. Caution: NEVER put a magnet near your computer!



Left: Tillandsia juncea sits on tumbled stones and a bit of moss in bright but indirect light. The sides of the bowl offer stability and keep the plant upright. Mist frequently or take the plant out of the bowl and dunk it once per week. Do not pour water into the bowl, else the roots of the Tillie will rot.

Right:
an assortment of colorful
Tillandsias can be tied onto
the wire grid of a rustproof
metal frame. You can dunk
the entire thing—plants and
all—overnight in water once
a week, let it dry, and hang
it right back up.



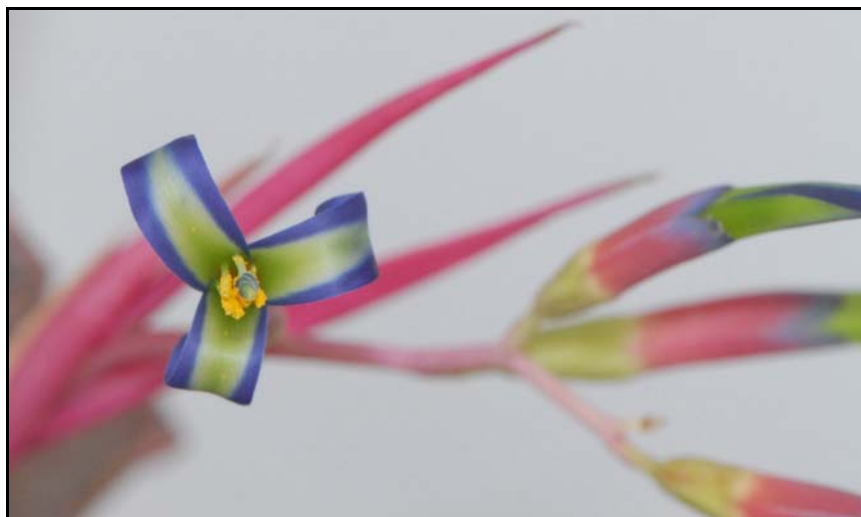
Jack Reilly sent us a picture of his *Billbergia simpatico* blooming.



Jack Reilly's *Billbergia simpatico*

The Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (BCR) says it is a cultivar of *Amoena* “R L Frasier’ X *vitata* ‘Colores’. Don Beadle said that it is a large *Bilbergia* up to 24 inches with a base color of scurfy reddish brown uniformly with silver scurfing and some silver banding. He said it is typically slow growing with red bracts and green petals tipped in blue.

My *Bilbergia* ‘Pixie’ also bloomed. I received it last year from Jack after our Show. The BCR says that it is of unknown parentage. It says it is an indestructible plant that is highly variable in appearance depending on cultural conditions and food availability. It can be from 5 inches to 24 inches and grassy green to red.



Martha's *Bilbergia* ‘Pixie’
Just the right name for this Flower don't you think?

In the #3 Cairns Newsletter from 2012, there was the following article.

Billbergias

Billbergias flower in winter & spring. Blink & and you will miss the whole blooming thing. John Catlan

Billbergias were named after Gustov Billberg a Swedish botanist. They are usually cylindrical tubes ranging from green to deep red; many have spots or cross bands or both. They need strong light to obtain good colour. The inflorescence rises from the centre then usually cascades down the plant as the flowers open-flowering is spectacular but does not last long.

The colour of the foliage intensifies as the plant matures but is adversely affected by too much nitrogen-it can remain green. At exactly the flowering time there is a slight increase in colour especially if the plant should happen to be throwing a pup at the same time. After flowering the colour of the mother intensifies rapidly if it is throwing pups. If you use little fertilizer the colours can become brilliant by the following winter. The colour of the foliage billbergia will be at peak perfection during the year after flowering.

Billbergia 'Hallelujah' ('Domingos Martins' X 'Ed McWilliams') is one of the most beautiful bromeliads available and I can almost picture Don Beadle exclaiming, "Well, hallelujah, just look at that!" when he saw the developing colours, then finally the outstanding inflorescence. Just one sighting and a grower will usually include 'Hallelujah' on their 'Wish List'. I complained to Olive Trevor that I could not keep up with demand and she advised me "fertilize it". I replied that she had taught me not to fertilize billbergias and her answer was "If you want plenty, fertilize them." I was obedient and a few months down the track I phoned her and said, "My Hallelujahs are green". Olive laughed and replied, I bet you have plenty, now wait for the next generation".

This was a great learning curve as I found I could have a range of colours in the one plant, depending on the age and the amount of light given to each plant. They range from quite dark green, almost black, through deep purple to palest pink, all with spots and dots of cream and white.

It is also popular for hybridizing and now we have many dark billbergias available. There have been many crosses but 'Hallelujah' usually dominates.

In the October, 2014 Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand, they had the following article. Editors note: This is from New Zealand so their seasons are opposite to ours.

Getting the best out of your tillandsias

At the Society's September monthly meeting Lester Ching gave an informative talk on looking after tillandsias. Here, in summary form are key points from Lester's talk.

LIGHT

Tillandsias need high to direct sunlight May to October to generate photosynthesis to enable the plants to grow strong. During November to April they like more filtered light, as our sun can burn the plants. The way I look at it is, 'if I burn the tillandsias can burn too.' The 'green leaf' tillandsias are especially prone to burning. Summer greenery on trees can provide too much shade and without enough light the tillandsias may suffer and not flower.

WATER

Wet your tillandsias two to three times a week, less often in the cool of winter, under 5°C (41°F.) . In the summer months, water more often, depending on where they are kept. In a glasshouse, where it is more humid, or in a shade house, even outside more watering is required. Importantly, tillandsias need to dry out within 4 hours of watering or they can rot.

AIR CIRCULATION

This is very important so plants can dry out and minimise pest problems.

FERTILIZER

Fertilizer can be used in granule form for potted 'green leaf' tillandsias and/ or in water soluble form at 20% of recommended doses. Remember – all tillandsias feed through the leaves, and some through the roots as well and over fertilizing can damage your plant. Better to liquid feed with weaker solutions more often. Liquid fertilizers are best used Spring and Summer to March. Tillandsias will not absorb much in the way of nutrients in cold months. Fertilizers used for air plants: Blossom Booster. 3-18-27 to bring the plants into flower Plant Fol. 20-20-20 to

provide leaf growth and roots.

TEMPERATURE

A favourable temperature range for tillandsias is 10°C(50°F.) to 35°C(95°F.).

MOUNTING

You can mount your plants on almost anything that is firm e.g. scoria, cork, ponga, driftwood, seashells, coral, crystals, rock (be careful of burning!) by using a water based glue. e.g. 'NO MORE NAILS', tie and/or staple plants until glue dries. Note: petroleum based glue will kill the plant.

TERRARIUMS

I fear not best suited for tillandsias as they cannot sit in water and they also need air movement, watering and enough light to generate photosynthesis without burning. However my final judgement is still out on terrariums until I have seen the long term effects.

Anne bought Tillandsia tectorum from the Chalet Nursery. It is doing well and has babies around the bottom of it. Our September 11th meeting will be at Chalet Nursery where Bonnie will demonstrate how she mounts tillandsias.



Beth Palmer's Neo

Beth Palmer's Picture

I received a picture of the plant I gave to Beth who brought some girls from Inspired Youth last year to visit the Show.

