



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

September/October 2018

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Lori Weigerding

Our last meeting of the year is Oct. 14th at 2 pm in the Lakeside room at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We will show you pictures from the Southwest Guild Show which was held September 14-16 in Baton Rouge, LA. If you have any pictures or plants to share bring them with you. Hope to see you there.



Aechmea 'Yellow Berries'



Close Up taken in July at CBG

President's Column

Leaves are turning colors, falling on the ground, cool air is coming from up North, and soon we'll have that white fluffy stuff on the ground. Soon we'll have to be bringing our plants in, if not already, the nights are getting quite cool. Hopefully you have room for all those lovely's back in your house to keep them nice and toasty warm.

We'll be having our last meeting on October 14, 2018 at 2:00pm in the Lakeside room. Martha will be showing pictures from the Southwest Guild Show that was held in Baton Rouge.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

Lori Weigerding



Tillandsia at the Garden Shop at CBG



In the Garden Shop at Chicago Botanic Garden

The Southwest Guild Show was great. There were a great deal of blue and purple ribbons given by the judges because the exhibitors did a first class job. The auction was fun with many wonderful plants up for bid. I looked in the room where the banquet and auction were to be held and noticed the lovely centerpieces. I suggested to Charlie Birdsong, the auctioneer and organizer of the show that they be auctioned too. After thinking awhile he agreed to have those sitting at each table come up with a high bidder. I surprised everybody (Including me!) By bidding \$80. After all it was partly my idea and that is why I sat at that particular table.



From The Bromeliad Blade, Newslettterr of the San Diego Bromeliad Society, August 2018.

Tillandsia ionantha - One or many

By Andrew Wilson

At our July meeting, Juan Pablo Pinzon Esquivel from the University of the Yucatan, gave us an interesting discussion on what is probably the favorite Tillandsia species, ionantha.

Using several maps he showed where it is found in Mexico as well as further south in Guatemala and Costa Rica.

It is unusual for any Tillandsia species to have such a wide range of occurrence, with climate conditions ranging from seasonally cool and dry to hot and mesic. It is excluded from the central high plateau of Mexico as well as from the densely forested region between Oaxaca and Chiapas.

In spite of those areas of exclusion, it occurs on both eastern and western sides of the plateau and on each side of the forested region that transects the country from the Gulf of Tehuantepec to the Gulf of Mexico. Is it the same species through out?



From the Bromeliad Blade

Juan Pablo described the many forms in which it appears (Fuego, Druid, Vanhyningii etc.) and the many species that do seem to be similar (kolbii, scaposa etc.) He described the scientific methods being used to see if those forms and similar species are indeed all ionantha or share most of its important DNA components.

The jury is still out but it may not be surprising to see one day some renaming within one of the most popular Tillandsia species. It was reassuring to hear several people after the talk say that they had enjoyed the scientific discussion.

We have had some nights in the 40's so I repotted all my plants that were in the shade house and brought them inside. This year I used the mix from Orchids by Hauserman. We will see how they do in that mix. It has small bark, sphagnum moss and peat moss. Let us know if you have had good or bad results with a particular potting mix. I noticed that a cactus mix that I bought recently had more peat moss than anything else so I added some gravel that I got from the pet store.

It is always great to go on the house tours at Bromeliad Conferences to see other people that are addicted like you. (It makes us seem "normal"). Here are a few pictures from visiting.



From the Fontenot's Garden in Baton Rouge

From the Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Houston, Inc. August 2018
Confessions of a Tillandsia Addict
Theresa Sandberg

I remember my first purchase. It was a driftwood arrangement of several unlabeled whimsical plants from a grocery store florist in 2010. Of course, being totally ignorant of what these plants were, I quickly killed most of them.



T. Ionanthus from the Houston
newsletter



T. bulbosa , Houston Newsletter

Along the way, I purchased a handful more plants that were sold as low maintenance ‘just needs air’ airplants. I killed those also. Fast forward to 2015. I finally learned that these are tillandsias!!! I was completely fascinated by the many shapes, textures, colors and personalities of these plants. With some starter plants from friends, a trip to Jimbo’s, the discovery of Facebook’s Planet Tillandsia and mail order sources, I became hopelessly addicted. And my husband was my enabler...urging me to shop and coming up with solutions to plant care challenges.

Now 3 years later, I still madly love everything tillandsia, but my kill rate has drastically decreased as I have learned so much from BS/HI members, Planet Tillandsia and from the plants themselves. Even though there are many resources for tillandsia care, I have learned that everyone’s environment and growing practices are different.

Following are lessons from growing my tillandsias outdoors. Adjust them for your tillandsias as you will discover your experiences will be different even if we live in the same area.

- Start with cheaper plants, because you will kill some in the learning journey.



T. usenoides,
T. recurvata

- Know your plants. Tillandsias come from so many different habitats and I am doing an unnatural thing by making them all live outdoors in the Woodlands. This is relevant to watering, temperature and light requirements.

- Mail order the plants in the spring, so that they are not totally shocked with the transition from their perfect nursery to our Houston summers. I have a staging area for new plants, with extra ventilation and shade to slowly acclimate them.

- Ventilate, ventilate, ventilate. I have not met a tillandsia who doesn't like ventilation from a fan or natural breeze

- Know seasons, when our wonderful winter sun changes to scorcher. That's when I go from full all day sunshine to using the shade cloth on zip lines or retractable awning for a few hours.

- Watch the weather forecast. If I know we'd have several days of constant rain, I bring certain xeric plants under the covered patio or indoors. But if it's wet and cold, I bring all the plants in.

- Use a water filter. Rain water is always best, but the plants are happier since I added the filter to the hose. And always clear the water in the hose first...in case it's too hot from sitting in the sun or too cold in the winter, although I water much less in the winter.

- Have a winter plan. Long cold spells are miserable times for me and the plants, as they have no where else to shelter except in my quilt room. I'm learning which plants can tolerate cold so that I can leave them outside. It matters how quickly the temperature changes; a gradual change is more forgiving allowing plants to adjust versus a sudden drop in temperature. I'm also learning how much humidifier to

use. Last winter, I manage to destroy a large Wonga clump with too much humidity and not enough ventilation.

- Practice tough love vs too much love. Err on the side of less water. Most tillandsias are surprisingly resilient, and I still have 2 of the original plants from that first driftwood purchase!
- Have fun. This is the most important lesson. I have discovered that everyone's definition of fun is also different; some of us like to show and compete, some like to judge and teach, some like to shop, some are inspired by the plants to create art.

Me? I love to photograph the plants and to create ceramic vessels for them. Do what makes you happy.



T. lorentziana



T. aeranthos amethyst* and *T. elissa