



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

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WEB SITE

<http://bromeliad-chicago.org>

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Lori Weigerding

We will be having our June 13th meeting at 2pm in Annex 2 at the Botanic Garden. Come early and see what is blooming at the Garden. There is a wine festival so you may want to stay for that. (I'll drink to that!) To find out more information about this event go to their web site www.chicagobotanic.org and click onto their events calendar.

President's Column

Well Spring time is upon us and for the most part the weather has been cooperating. I'm wondering what or if that massive dust cloud from the volcano is going to mess up our Summer weather. Only time will tell I guess. Soon it should stay warm enough for us to put our beloved plants outside, so they can drink up the warm sunshine, fresh rain and gentle breezes. It will also give us some needed space in our houses for a time!

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2010 in Annex 2 (trailers). The Goode's will be showing us photographs of their visit to the Florida Extravaganza that they went to in November! I'm sure we'll see a lot of interesting plants, arrangements and more. Steve is a very good picture taker and their slide show is one of the best around! We hope to see you there, if you haven't been to a meeting in a while, if you've never been to one or you regularly attend, think about coming to this one!

The members voted and the vote was overwhelmingly to lower the cost of membership to our Society. Even though our costs were very low to begin with, many of us are struggling to meet our obligations, so we thought it prudent to assist our current members and possibly attract others who couldn't afford the dues.

To all the Mothers, we wish you a Happy and Safe Mother's Day. May it be a great and wonderful day with your family and friends!

We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting! As always if you have a problem or success that you want to talk about, please feel free to bring it along. We will also be discussing what our plans are for the show, which is 2 weeks later June 26 & 27, 2010.

Lori Weigerding

The June slide program will be on the Florida Extravaganza which Steve & Martha Goode attended in Orlando in November. In addition, we have some pictures of baby hummingbirds and house finches which we photographed while they were growing up in our bushes in Arizona. One of the flowers the hummingbirds like is the Dyckia flowers.

After the slide show presentation, we will discuss the upcoming Flower Show and Sale which is scheduled for June 25th (set up) to June 27th. The time for set up is from 1-6 pm. We hope everyone will be able to bring a few plants for displaying. This is a non-judged show. We do want you to make sure that your plants are pest free and your plants and pots are cleaned up. The hours we will be working at the show are 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. If you can work during any of these hours please contact Martha Goode by email at stevegoode1@ameritech.net

With the warm temperatures and more sun, your plants should be growing again. This is a good time to repot. There are many kinds of mixes you can buy or make yourself. This article is from the 1998 Houston Bromeliad Society Newsletter. As you can tell from Don Garrison's article, there is no "right" mix. Experiment and find out what works best for you.



2 kinds of Spanish Moss

Cultural Tips: Potting Mixes by Don Garrison

Most of the bromeliads you pot are found growing in their native habitat as epiphytes, although some can be found as both epiphyte and terrestrial: while some are only terrestrial. (It's great to begin an article with such hard and fast rules.)

For bromeliads that occur primarily as epiphytes, the mix must be permeable or porous. The mix should be able to remain damp but not soggy. A soggy mix will cause the roots to rot first then the caudex will follow. You can check the permeability of your newly potted mix by watering the pot from the top and seeing how long before the water begins to drain out of the bottom.

Aechmea, Billbergia, Canistrum, Hohenbergia, Neoregelia, and Nidularium are the most common genera that require what I call, for lack of a better term, a normal epiphytic mix. This mix should take about 10 seconds before the water begins to drain. Probably the 10 second mix is also good for Alcantarea, Racinaea, Vriesea, and Werauhia. I think that Catopsis, Guzmania and Tillandsia need a somewhat more porous mix, say, 5 seconds.

At least two components are needed for the mix, one to hold the moisture and another to ensure porosity. The most prevalent ingredient to maintain moisture is , of course, peat. Other water absorbers include vermiculite, sphagnum moss, potting soil, sand, worm castings, compost, shredded osmunda, rock wool and other exotic materials. For roughage there is perlite, pine bark, redwood bark, cypress mulch, coconut fiber, coarse compost, tree fern, rotary kiln expanded clay or shale called hadite or Sol Pro, lava, turkey grit which is very small granite rocks, Styrofoam, plastic pellets, and many other curious substances.

In twenty-two years of growing bromeliads I've used more than fifty different mixes, and I'll continue to try new formulas. You should try to devise a mix or mixes from items that are readily available and that your plants like. This could be a little trial and error experiment. If you have a few identical pups, try different mixes to see what happens. The best ingredients for beginning to create a mix are two parts of a soil-less commercial blend of peat, perlite and vermiculite such as Pro Mix or Jungle Growth and one part small orchid bark (fir or redwood). Check the fertilizer you plan to use and add to the mix any elements missing such as the trace elements or calcium. The items in this mix will all decompose and reduce in volume over a period of time (several months) so fresh mix will have to be added.



T. capitata

At the present time, I'm using a blend of one-half fine tree fern (available at Teas) and one-half Jungle Growth (available at Home Depot). This is a very expensive mix but I can completely recycle the tree fern.

Now a few words about terrestrial mixes. The most common bromeliads that like a terrestrial mix (in a large pot) are Ananas, Cryptanthus, Dyckia and Orthophytum. Obviously the Ananas needs a large pot or tub because of its size, but I have found over the years that these other three like a lot of root room as well as a relatively wet mix. I'm not saying like a swamp but continuous moisture. Some growers are setting these potted bromeliads in saucers of water. I supplement my mix with Agrosoke which is little polymer beads that hold water. When I unpot a bromeliad with Agrosoke in the mix, I find all the roots covered with the beads like a string of pearls.

For Ananas and Orthophytum, I use straight Jungle Growth with only broken crockery in the bottom of the pot for drainage. For Dyckia I use Jungle Growth with a tablespoon of Agrosoke per six inch pot. For Cryptanthus, I use Jungle Growth with two tablespoons of Agrosoke per six inch pot. If you use Agrosoke or other brand, be sure to thoroughly wet the mix before potting because the beads swell considerably.



T. pseudobaileyi

Growing Cryptanthus or Dyckia in all sphagnum moss is okay, but getting the moss wet and then keeping it wet is difficult. Vermiculite alone is not a good mix, but perlite alone is okay. I especially like to pot "wounded" (cut the pup off too high or their roots were rotting away) bromeliads in straight perlite.

So try different mixes and additives and vitamins and elixirs. You might grow an award winner.

We are getting the tillandsias for our sale from Russells. One that we are getting is *Tillandsia Pseudo-baileyi*. Larry Giroux wrote an article about it in the March 1997, CBS Newsletter.

Bromeliad Expose' by Larry Giroux

Tillandsia pseudobaileyi means "false-baileyi". This plant was confused

with the ostentatious *T. baileyi* for over 3/4 of a century. *T. baileyi* was found in our own backyard, in Texas by V. Bailey in 1900. Sue Gardner, while researching her thesis, identified the new specie, *T. pseudobaileyi* which up to that time (1984) had been referred to with its cousin's name. *T. baileyi* has an extremely limited range of southern Texas and the extreme northern Gulf coast of Mexico, while *T. pseudobaileyi* extends from western Mexico to Nicaragua at higher altitudes of 1000-3000 ft.



Mr. Salvi on Tillandsias

The obvious differences are the smaller size (6" across and 9" tall) and the simple inflorescence with pale rose floral bracts of *T. baileyi* in comparison to the large size (9" across and 12" tall) and the compound inflorescence with up to 5 branches with flushed blood red floral bracts of *T. pseudobaileyi*. Closer examination shows the grey-green scaled foliage of *T. baileyi* and *T. pseudobaileyi*'s contorted leaves are green with fine purplish longitudinal striations. The flowers are indigo color.

Both of these tillandsias are easy to grow. They prefer bright outdoor areas and need extra watering during dry weather.

Tillandsia pseudobaileyi is one of those "sleeper" we often see at a nursery piled upon a bench. Next time you are tempted to walk by, pick one up and really look at the delicately colored patterns of the leaves. For the amount of care required, you get much more in return from this tillandsia.

We visited one of the Arizona cactus members' garden. We were impressed with Lee Brownson's labels. I have had trouble with many of mine getting lost or being moved around by animals. His labels were stainless steel attached to pieces of flagstone with pop rivets or screw and plastic anchor. This is a good way of keeping track of your plant names.

We purchased a Dymo M1011 metal label maker (\$200.49) along with stainless steel tapes from www.amleo.com You can request a catalog from them. They have quite a few different items that you will feel that you must have. They vendor to the nurserymen. The label maker is expensive but will last a lifetime with proper care. The squirrels and pack rats will not be able to move the labels or destroy them.

You emboss the name of the plant onto the tape and punch a hole in the tape for the screw or pop rivets. You either cut or break the flagstone into the right

shape for the tape. You drill two holes (one in each end of the tape) through the flagstone. A variable speed hand drill with a masonry drill bit (1/8th inch for pop rivets or larger for screw anchors). You insert the anchor into the stone and put the screw through the label hole into the screw anchor (or a pop rivet through the label hole into the stone and then pop it). If you have a drill press, it becomes very easy. Place the label with the stone near the plant. After a while, everyone will remark on how sharp your garden is.



PopRivet Gun in Action
Note Pop Rivet on right side

It sounds like a lot of work and it is when you go to label every plant that you have planted. Do a few at a time and you will get done until you get a new plant! A side trick is to put the date and/or common name on the other side of the stone. Our visitors tell us that our place is like a resort with the plants having labels.

Pictures taken by Steve Goode except for the last one by Martha Goode



Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

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