



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

June, 2013

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Lori Weigerding

The next meeting is July 14th at 2PM in the Annex at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We will have discussion of any more details of the Show, July 20th and 21st, set up on Friday afternoon, the 19th. Steve and Martha will also have part 1 of their New Zealand trip.

President's Column

Well we certainly had an interesting meeting! I'm glad so many of you could make it and share your ideas! Anne brought a few craft ideas that we did decide to pursue and see if we can get more people interested in our wonderful plants. Martha has been looking into purchasing some rings and baskets for us to assemble and have at the show for sale. Thank you again Martha for all your hard work!

She also talked to the Cactus club and we anticipate setting up the same way we did last year. I hope you all can come to the meeting on July 14th! I expect the shipment to arrive on the 12th and will be adding in the extra requests on Monday. If there's a problem with anything I'll let the person know.

Please keep Roberta and her family in your thoughts and prayers as Roberta's having some medical problems.

See you at the next meeting.

Lori Weigerding



Chain of Tillandsias

We had a great meeting on June 9th. Marjorie suggested we order new shirts. Paula is ordering blue ones with a white logo.

Larry brought in his tillandsias which he had mounted on cork. He obtained the plants from Tropiflora. He donated the extra pieces he had to anyone in the Society who was interested in them. He will be bringing a plant stand to the show that he made with 2" X 4" and 1" X 4"’s for us to hang plants on. He used silicone glue to attach his plants to the cork. Someone else said that you can also use E6000. He has his plants in a northwest window. He will be bringing a stand that is 6 ft tall and about 7 1/2" wide to the show. The base covers an area approx. 20 x 20.

Anne demonstrated the grapevine rings to which , she had attached tillandsias. She had decorated them with buttons, sea shells and many other items. Several things she got from the Oriental Trading Company. The wreaths and baskets were from www.factorydirectcraft.com She also used hemp, beads and a binder clamp to hold tillandsia. She had a lot of creative ideas for displaying tillandsia. She left some with us to display at the show since she will be unable to attend. She showed us a recycled plastic container we could use to hold tillandsia; it was the top of a bandaid container!

Marjorie said that she gets glassware from secondhand shops to use to display her tillandsias. She doesn’t glue hers on. She also brought a rock that she had picked up on the beach which she sets her Tillandsia xerographica on. She also suggested getting driftwood at a pet store to use.

The Chalet Nursery will again be donating plants for our Show. Those who work at the Show will be able to pick from these as well as one plant from the sales table. All the other sale plants may be purchased at cost by our members.

We thank Paula for bringing in the cream cheese brownies.

We heard that Roberta will be having heart surgery soon and we wish her well.

In the May 2007, Houston Newsletter, Odean Head wrote an article on cultural tips for Tillandsias..

Tillandsias
by Odean Head



Cute as Buttons!

More and more plant lovers are adding tillandsias to their collections. Some are even making them their favorite bromeliad genus. The cultural needs for this genus are quite different from the other bromeliad genera. We never seem to disseminate as much information about tillandsias as they deserve, so we are fortunate to have Dennis Caathcart to give a program this month on 'Epiphytic Tillandsias'. Dennis has probably seen more different kinds of tillandsia species growing in habitat than anyone else in the world. There are others who have done more scientific research on tillandsias

than Dennis but it would be hard to find anyone who is more knowledgeable on how to grow them. Don't miss this one. This article is to get you tuned in on tillandsias and formulate any questions for Dennis in case he has not already answered them. It's an article that I wrote several years ago and have modified for this time.

Epiphytes

By far the largest percentage of the plants in this genus are epiphytic. This means that they live on other plants or objects as their hosts and take no nutrients from them. Mostly you see them in trees but I have seen them growing on Utility lines, poles, fences, roofs, walls, etc. I guess they would grow on just about anything that would stay still long enough.

We have two species growing in habitat here in Texas. They are Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) and Ball Moss (*Tillandia recurvata*). Since there is some confusion among nonbromeliad growers about these plants damaging the trees, I want to emphasize again that they will not kill trees. I suppose that the plants could become so concentrated they they could restrict the carbon dioxide to the tree and cause some damage. Usually when we see a dead tree full of

bromeliads, the tree has died from other causes but is still serving as an acceptable host. Mistletoe, on the other hand, is a parasite that takes nutrients from the tree and will kill it when heavily infested.

Basic Needs

We will first cover the largest grouping of the genus that are normally grown in arid climates as epiphytes and have stiff, gray leaves. This covers most of the tillandsias that we grow here. The basic needs for this group are adequate water, good air circulation and strong light. Usually, they require very little care if you can find the proper spot in your yard to grow them.



By the Sea!

Water

These plants have good water storage capacities in their leaves and can withstand longer periods of dry weather than most other plants. Under our humid conditions with heavy morning dews, they can usually meet all their water requirements. However, if we are growing indoors, under shelter or even during long hot, dry spells, these storage capacities can become dry and we may find it necessary to perform some drastic first aid measures to prevent complete dehydration of the plants. So what kind of first aid are we talking about and how do we know when this treatment is needed?

The first aid can be applied by soaking the entire plant in a container of water for a few hours. In this condition spraying with water is not effective because it will probably evaporate before it can penetrate the leaf structure. If you are accustomed to observing your plants as they grow, it will not be hard to recognize its stress when such treatment is needed. The leaves will become shriveled and the whole plant will look dehydrated. If caught soon enough, the treatment will usually provide good recovery. You may suffer some premature loss of outside leaves.

A regular watering program during times when adequate water is not available to the plant will prevent this kind of stress. When setting up a watering program, try to do it early enough in the day (mornings are preferable) so that the plant's exterior will dry before night.

Air Movement

Good air movement is essential to tillandsias in order to provide them with

their carbon dioxide requirements. They will adjust to extreme wet conditions the same as they do to extreme dry conditions. However, they need the carbon dioxide in order to breathe and extended wet conditions can cause them to suffocate. They will perform better with regular wetting and drying periods. Increased air movement can help control problems caused during extreme wet conditions.



Children will like this One!

Light

The group of tillandsias that we are discussing will perform better in strong light. The strong light will add strength to the plant, giving it a healthier look and allowing it to reach its top potential. This includes enhanced color and conformation and a more dependable triggering of the blooming cycle. Remember that when you add increased temperatures to the strong light, the plant's water requirements are also increased.

Adaptable to Pot Culture

Most of the tank type tillandsias and those with soft green leaves will adapt to pot culture. These will grow wetter and in lower light than the ones that we have been discussing.

The February 2013, Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society newsletter had an article on how to mount tillandsias.

1. Select proper mounting material such as cork or a piece of a hardy wood. Do not use wood that has been treated with preservatives.
2. Cut the wood to a desired size for the plant that will be mounted.
3. Drill a hole in the top of the wood piece for the hanger or an S-hook (use 14-gauge) and insert the hook/hanger into the mount.
4. Put a hole in the plant's nametag and slip the tag onto the hook. Secure it so that it does not slip off.

5. Fasten – staple, glue, and/or tie -- the plant to the mount. It is important to secure the plant when mounting it so that it can better establish roots.
6. If using staples, use stainless-steel staples and not copper. Copper can damage the plant.
7. Suggested adhesives include wood glue, Liquid Nails, Ducco cement, and Goop. Do not use a hot-glue gun because, as Helga told us, if it can burn you, it can burn the plant.
8. Suggested tying materials include cable ties (black not white because white will degrade quicker), plastic-coated wire (do not use bare copper wire), Velcro, lace, and nylon stockings. Tying works well on plants with a rosette form, upright growth, and those with a small stem at the base.
9. The plant should be positioned on the mounting material relative to its growth pattern. For example, if the plant tends to grow downward and along a long stem like *Tillandsia funkiana*, place it at the top of the mounting material. And if the plant tends to grow upright like *Vriesea espinosae*, attach it to the bottom of the mounting material.
10. Tillandsias that tend to clump and have no apparent up or down growth pattern, such as *Til. bulbosa* and *Til. ionantha* var. *vanhyningii*, can be placed in any position on the mount.
11. Not all Tillandsias need be mounted for display. Those that grow in a 'ball' form, such as *Til. intermedia* and *Til. aeranthes*, can be hung on a wire such as nylon monofilament. *Til. fasciculata* can be placed in an empty pot or net basket (on the right). The net baskets are typically hard to find locally but can be found on the Internet.

In the #2 issue of Bromelcairns, the Cairns Bromeliad Society Newsletter, Bob Hudson wrote on how he mounts some Tillandsia.

To Pot or to Mount & How To... Bob's Way.



Pictures from Bromelcairns 2013
#2
Tillandsia ehlersiana



Tillandsia rothii x bradeana

Some tillandsias grow better on plate mounts rather than hanging, especially those that grow large and heavy. When hung the leaves at the rear of the plant will not grow as long as the others, so the plant will have a 'flat' side. This spoils the wonderful natural shape of these beauties. When mounting an already large plant firstly he attaches a small block of timber to the mount, then glues the plant base up against the block. A tie of craft ribbon around the back of the plant to the front of the block will hold it steady until the plant sets. Some southern growers prefer to pot these, if you pot them ensure the mix is very open. Bob plate mounts *capitata*, *xerographica*, *rothii*, *streptophylla*, *fasciculata*, *jalisco-monticola*, *rolandgosselinii*, 'Amigo', 'Padre' and 'Madre'.



Anne Coughlan's Mobile of Tillandsia Jellyfishs
from Anne Coughlan



Anne's closeup of a Tillandsia in Bloom



Larry Clever



Tillandsia on Cork



Tillandsias on Cork
on an iPad Easel

