

# BROMELIANA

PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK BROMELIAD SOCIETY

(visit our website [www.nybromeliadsociety.org](http://www.nybromeliadsociety.org))

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## THE 21<sup>st</sup> WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE IN HAWAII

by Herb Plever

The World Bromeliad Conference was hosted by the Hawaii Bromeliad Society at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii in September 9 - 14. The hotel is large and upscale and was an excellent venue.

There were more than 200 attendees including 4 New Yorkers - Pres. Mimi Gussow, Nadine Baker, Sylvia and me. The number was down from previous conferences - but it is not bad considering the distance and cost and the fact the Hawaii Bromeliad Society has a very small membership. The weather was wonderful as it always is (year round). Hawaiians have a pervasive Aloha spirit of cheerfulness and friendship that affects everyone they meet, so we were all smiley and had lots of fun.

That spirit seems to have infected the BSI; the new Board of Directors meeting held the day before the conference was very productive. We have some new, energetic and involved directors on the Board; there is more transparency and cooperation and the Board took first steps to address some difficult issues. I am confident that the BSI is making a turnaround.

I will report on the first day, Wednesday, which was crammed with interesting talks and videos; I am reserving the plant sales and displays for dessert.



*Werauhii* 'Edna Shiigi' - show plant

Proceedings began the next morning with greetings from Pres. Jay Thurrow. Two seminars followed:

1 - Geoff Lawn (Australia), BSI's Cultivar Registrar, described the function of the Cultivar Register and spoke on the need and benefits of registering new hybrids. The recognition of the new BCR as the official cultivar register of the BSI puts us in compliance with the requirements of the International Code of

Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, and the respect accorded our Registrar will help overcome some of the foot-dragging toward the BCR we have seen in some regions. The BCR can be accessed on line at [registry.bsi.org](http://registry.bsi.org).

2 - Next, Alan Herndon (South Florida) gave an interesting seminar on the many "Shades of *Aechmea Chantinii*", with photos clearly demonstrating the variability of this species.

After a good box lunch for all attendees, seminars resumed with :

3 - Nigel Thompson, who runs the Dandaloo Valley Nursery in Queensland, Australia, spoke on "To Feed or Not To Feed: The Good, the Bad or the Ugly." Nigel is firmly in favor of fertilizing, and he showed with photos of the same plants the results of No Feed-

**NEXT MEETING** - October 7, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. sharp at the  
[Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. \(between 36th & 37th St\) Room 16N](#)

**THE WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE IN HAWAII** - Reports and video of the plants, people, nurseries, and sights in Oahu and on the Big Island of Hawaii. Please bring in plants for show and tell, and for sale. There'll be more give-away pups, so be sure to come.



Hawaii Bromeliad Society display



HBS Tillandsia table

*Tillandsia stricta* clump

ing, Proper Feeding and Wrong Feeding in the context of the health of the plants, seasonal temperatures and light. Nigel feeds both with bottom watering and foliar spray.

Over-cautious and minimal feeding advice from “experts” has continued to be pushed long after the publication of my 1996 Journal article on “The Fertilizer Revolution”, but with Nigel’s talk I no longer feel like St. John the Baptist.

4- Andy Siekkenen (San Diego, Cal.) gave a fascinating talk on “The Bromeliads of Oaxaca”. He is interested in Tillandsias and Hechtias, but he also showed photos and discussed other broms found there. Andy conducts collecting tours under the name of *Eagle Eye Adventures*.

5- Pamela Koide-Hyatt (Encinidas, Cal.) gave the last symposium on “Tillandsia Hybridization: Natural, Artificial and Accidental.” Her talk stressed the importance of relating the cultivation of tillandsia to the conditions of their habitats. She has collected, cultivated and hybridized Tillandsias for many years in her Bird Rock Tropicals facilities. Two of her recent, outstanding hybrids are *Tillandsia* ‘Samantha’ and *T.* ‘Queen’s Delight’.

Wednesday evening was open, and many attendees opted to spend \$75 to attend a luau dinner at the nearby Willows Restaurant. The place was crammed with brom people; there was a line at the open bar so after awhile the place was really hopping and joyous. The food was good and the hula dance entertainment was performed by two young girls instead of the usual extravaganza. When they invited all women to come up and join them, the stage was jammed with brom hula “dancers”.

On Thursday morning we were taken to the Lyon Arboretum (with

disappointingly few bromeliads) and to historic Nu ‘Nuanu Pali, a windy mountain overlook of the lush valley below. Back at the hotel, a few hours later the Plant Sale and Exhibits area opened, about which more below.

Friday morning there were 3 seminars:

6 - Jay Thurrow and Alan Herndon discussed the BSI Journal and Website. Alan is our new Journal editor, and he has been working to quickly bringing the once-laggard Journal up to date. He explained that next year the Journal will be published quarterly instead of bi-annually - but with same number of annual pages.

7 - Bromeliads - Hawaiian Style: A Roundtable Discussion with Hawaii’s 4 outstanding hybridizers, David Fell, Sharon Peterson, David Shiigi and Lisa Vinzant and a with Tillandsia specialist Peter De Mello. David Fell specializes in large tank type Vrieseas, David Shiigi mainly grows tank type Vrieseas and Neoregelias, Sharon grows Neoregelias and Lisa hybridizes just about everything she can get her hands on.

All of the participants were vendors at the conference. They spoke about how they came to grow broms in Hawaii, about hybridizing and gave horticultural tips and strategies. One tip resonated with me: Sharon Peterson said she believed that her Neos produce an enzyme in their cups and axils which can prevent base rot, so she places hard to root pups in the cup or an upper axil and finds they quickly produce roots without rotting.

In the afternoon we took the Nursery tour to David Fell’s Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery and to Sharon Peterson’s Sharon’s Plants nursery where we saw many beautiful new hybrids. In one of Sharon’s shade houses I found 2 examples of pups sit-



Roots on pup sitting Neo cup



Vriesea 'Abigail Jean' - David Fell



N. 'Talk of the Town'- Sharon Peterson



Neo. 'Island Beauty' - Lisa Vinzant

ting with firm bases and roots growing in the water of a Neoregelia cup or axil. (See photo on page 2.)

8 - Heidi Leianuenu Bornorst, a Hawaii University horticulturist, spoke on "The Pineapple and its Effect on the Culture of Hawaii."

There were optional \$100 tours to Dole Plantation & Polynesian Cultural Center on Saturday, and on Sunday to David Shiigi's and David Fell's nurseries in Hilo on the Big Island and to Volcano National Park. We didn't take those tours because we were traveling with our daughter and son-in-law and we spent 4 days driving around the Big Island.

The Saturday night banquet gave us the chance to socialize and to say hello and goodbye to many old and new friends from around the world. It was followed by the Rare Plant Auction. Nat DeLeon of Miami, Florida won the annual Wally Berg award.

Now for the dessert! There was a veritable mob assembled at the door to the Plant Sale and Exhibits room when it opened at 4 pm on Thursday. Registrants rushed into the room to quickly gobble up all the goodies on vendor's tables. Lisa Vinzant's Olomana Nursery table was virtually empty by Friday and all other vendors were selling out fast. Pam Koide-Hyatt had brought some of her highly awarded

*Tillandsia* 'Samantha' that were all sold 15 minutes.

Because of the difficulty in bringing in plants there was no judged show. There were exhibits mounted by the Hawaii Bromeliad Society, and there were very beautiful plants in displays by growers David Fell, David Shiigi, Sharon Peterson and Lisa Vinzant. The range of genera displayed was very narrow: Mostly big Vrieseas, Neos and some Tillandsias. I saw no Cryptanthus and only a few Guzmanias in my travels - perhaps it gets too hot for Guzmanias in Hawaii.

Early Sunday morning Sylvia and I and my daughter and son-in-law flew to Kona on the Big Island. As we had done on Oahu, we had a rented car and were able to drive around to visit local areas, towns and beaches. Hawaii has very democratic laws which mandate that hotels that have bought up prime beach property must also provide public access beaches and parking lots, and Terry and Paul took advantage of this to swim wherever they went. We explored Kona and drove the southern route on small local roads near the coast to Volcano National Park and then to Hilo.

We visited the Big Greenwell Coffee Farm and Mill outside Kona. There I found two small *Guz-*



Vriesea 'Hawaiian Ruby' - Shiigi



Vriesea 'Pink Chestnut' - Fells



Neoregelia 'Golden Idol' - Peterson



*Guzmania lingulata v. minor* on an old coffee tree stump. See story below



*Aechmea blanchetiana*



Bromeliads Etc. See below

*m a n i a*  
*lingulata v. minor* plants growing on some no longer used, very old stumps of coffee trees; one was in bloom. Our guide was unable to explain this surprise, but later we found the answer. (See below.) I nominate *Aechmea blanchetiana* as the Hawaii State Bromeliad. It is the most commonly grown bromeliad we saw in homes and gardens in both islands, visible in glowing orange from the road.

A great example of six degrees of separation came to us while driving toward the famed Painted Church and then the Volcano. On Napoopoo Road we saw a sign that read "Bromeliads, Etc. Please Call 876-6373" (it's 808 area code). We turned in and drove up a driveway to a large collection of broms on benches and mounted on coffee tree stumps, rocks and trees - but there was no one there. When I called the number, a lady answered who said she hadn't expected to come down until 11 am (it was 10 am then), but if we couldn't wait it was ok to look at the plants and take pictures.

We didn't have time to wait so I photographed the place and we left. When I got home I called the number again to advise the lady that a group of plants that were all in bloom was mislabeled. They were labeled *Canistrum aurentiacum*, but they were really the yellow-bracted form of *Canistropsis billbergioides*.

It turned out her name is Joan Darvey; she is a retired nurse, and when she was recuperating from an illness a friend told her she needed to be occupied with a hobby and gave her two bromeliads. Like many of us she became addicted! I mentioned the fact that she was growing broms mounted on coffee tree stumps, and that I had seen two *Guzmanias* growing on stumps at the Greenwell Coffee Farm. She said that she knew Tom Greenwell and had persuaded him not to throw old stumps and give them to her. In return she mounts broms on stumps around the place

to enhance its image - and those two *Guzmanias* were ones that she had mounted.

Both sides of the small roads were lush with foliage and flowers of the many different trees and plants that grow densely, side by side and tangled together. We drove a few miles past Volcano National Park to have lunch at the excellent Café Ono with its gardens, trees, flowering shrubs, etc. including bromeliads. The proprietor proudly showed me a blooming clump of *Vriesea erythrodactylon*.

We had a wonderful time in Hawaii, and we look forward to attending the 2016 World Bromeliad Conference in Houston, TX.



*Vr. erythrodactylon*



Brom painting at Café Ono

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