

BROMELIANA

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3 MONTH CHECK ON SOME NEW PLANTS

by Herb Plever



Pot 1 - front L. *Guzmania* 'Desio White', fr. R. Vr. 'Carly', Rear L. G. 'Marcella', Rear R. G. 'Joyce'



Pot 2 - fr. L. *Till.* 'Sandy', Rear L. *mini Aech.* 'Rebecca', R Side *Guz.* 'Charlene', not visible *Till.* 'Samantha'



Pot 3 - fr. L. *Tillandsia* 'Vincent fr. R. *Guz.* 'Hope', Rear L. *Till.* 'Anthony', Rear R. *Vriesea* 'Davine'

TISSUE CULTURES

I ordered 13 tissue culture plants in our Spring order. This time the 10 week old tissue cultures were strong and robust instead of the scrawny plants we have received in the past. To save time and space I found it convenient to put 4 plants in a 4" square pot as shown above. The 13th plant, *Guzmania* 'Kay' was planted in a 4" pot. These tissue cultures come rooted in a 1/2" fiber basket, so it is easy to make a small hole in the mix and drop the plant into it.

My current mix is 65-70% chunky peat moss mixed with shredded coconut fibre. (I mix two handfulls of the peat to one handfull of the coconut fibre.) It's seasoned in pots by soaking in the sink in hot water for 20 minutes.



Guzmania 'Kay'

Then I mix into the damp medium some Dynamite slow release pellets (10-10-17).

All of my potted plants are grown wick-watered in 1 quart yogurt containers. These tissue cultures are being grown in an East-South-East unobstructed window (on the 8th floor) where they receive 2 to 4 hours of good morning sun and strong horizon light. The containers are covered with aluminum foil to inhibit the growth of algae.

You can see from the above photos taken only three months later, the tissue cultures have taken off and have put on a surprising amount of growth. On each plant the leaves have broadened and lengthened and several new leaves have come out.

They have been growing so strongly that they suck up all the water in the reservoirs in 5 or 6 days

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, September 5th, 2017 **promptly** at 7:00 pm at the Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 - 8th Avenue (betw. 36th & 37th Ave) **Room 16M**.

1. How have your new plants fared? Please bring in one or two of them to report on their growth or problems. **2. Photos and discussion** of name changes of plants we have grown. Please bring in some plants for sale and for Show and Tell.

and I have had to water those plants earlier than my usual 8 to 10 days. I foliar spray them with fertilizer (11.5-9-21.5) at a strength of 1/4 tsp. to 2 quarts of water plus 1/8 tsp. Magnesium sulfate from Epsom Salts at every watering or second watering.

Guzmania 'Marcella', mini *Aechmea* Rebecca', *Tillandsia* 'Sandy', *Guzmania* 'Hope' and *G.* 'Kay' have put on more than 50% growth, and the growth of the other plants is close to that. The plants are ready to be separated and placed in their own pots. I will try to get this chore done within the next few months.

CRYPTANTHUS



One-half of Cryptanthus fluorescent light unit. L to R - Cryptanthus 'Elaine', *Cr.* 'Absolute Zero', *Cr.* Strawberries Flambe', *Cr.* 'McDreamy'. Note the hanging whisper fan on the upper right side of the unit.

I assembled and wired the fluorescent light unit 51 years ago and it is still running well. Of course it is the old-fashioned T12 type. I could increase the lumen output by changing to a new T6 fixture, but the work would take a toll on my ancient back and knees; I have to conserve my energy for other activities.

The converter ballasts are remoted on the floor away from the fixture so their heat doesn't affect the plants under the lights. The minimal heat from the tubes is dissipated by the hanging 6" whisper fan.

The tubes are a mix of Verilux and Duro Test fluorescents that produce an excellent color temperature of 5850° kelvin with weight on the red/blue end of the spectrum like sunlight. They are kept on for 12 to 14 hours a day by an electric timer.

The crypts shown above are normally perched

on top of a pot or a stack of pots to reach an optimum distance from the tubes for best color and markings. In the photo they have been placed inside of a pot, angled to get the best camera angle. They are fertilized with a foliar spray at every watering.

I purchased the *Cryptanthus* 'Absolute Zero' (*Cr.* 'Sweet Tooth' x 'Ice Age' and *Cr.* 'McDreamy' (*Cr.* 'Ebony Beauty' x 'Roseus') shown above in our Spring plant order. Both plants are growing 5 inches below the lights. In 3 months these plants have grown larger and have put up new leaves. *Cr.* 'Absolute Zero' is a stunning cross by the talented Jim Irvin, one of his best.



Cryptanthus 'Absolute Zero'

Cr. 'McDreamy' is a big, bold cultivar by S. Hoppin with a current diameter of 12 inches. When I



Cryptanthus 'McDreamy'

got the plant it had only faint white cross-barring, but grown under the fluorescent tubes the white bars are strong on most of the leaves.

The *Cryptanthus* 'Strawberries Flambe' is a 5th or 6th generation plant about 2 years old and a little more than half-grown. It will reach a diameter of about 10-12" at maturity. I have been able to get its color to a strawberry red when grown under fluorescent lights (3" below the tubes); on my sunny south window it gets greener and paler. It puts up many large flowers and is a prolific pupper.



Cryptanthus 'Strawberries Flambe'

The *Cr.* 'Elaine' (*Cr.* 'Diverse Pink' x 'Cascade') is also 2 years old. It is grown 2 inches below the lights to bring out the hot pink margins and to heighten the



Cryptanthus 'Elaine'

white in the bars.

DYCKIAS AND SINCOREAS



L. to R. *Sincorea navioides*, *Dyckia* 'California', *Sincorea rafaellii*, *Dyckia* 'Icicle', *Dyckia* 'Cherry Coke'

Dry-growing genera with spiny leaves such as *Deuterocohnia*, *Dyckia*, *Hechtia*, *Orthophytum*, *Sincorea* etc. are a natural fit for most indoor environments which have only moderate humidity. Of course, most *Deuterocohnias* and *Hechtias* are too large for our window setups. When I stopped using humidifiers, I set up the tray shown above for dry-growing plants in an east-south-east window which gets 2 to 4 hours of good morning sunlight. The plants are growing well; handle with care to avoid being punctured by the spines or use gloves. *Dyckia* 'Icicle'



Dyckia 'Icicle'

was one of three dry-growing plants that I purchased in our Spring plant order. In 3 months it has put on 50% growth, and it has added a pup which is almost as large.



Dyckia 'Cherry Coke'

Dyckia 'Cherry Coke' has also grown larger and has put up two pups. I saw the plant on line with red leaves, but there was no hint of cherry when it came and I doubt I'll be able to produce anything but dark green leaves in my setup.



Sincorea rafaellii

Sincorea rafaellii is growing well, but a bit more slowly than my other dry-growing plants. This is one of eleven former species of genus *Orthophytum* that were transferred to the new genus *Sincorea*.

Sincorea navioides is a great plant that I've grown for many years. When it matures and flowers the leaves turn a brilliant red that highlight the white flowers in the center. The plant shown on the top of column 2 was potted in early November. It has almost doubled in size since then, and in addition, it has put up a strong pup that is almost as large as the parent.



Sincorea navioides

I got *Dyckia 'California'* at the WBC 2 years ago as a gift from a generous friend from Australia. It was shaped like a small ball with recurved red leaves and big white spines. Although it was growing in a sunny unobstructed window, by the late fall the leaves turned dark green. During the summer last year the leaves acquired a dark maroon color and then turned green again when winter came. It also put up another plant. The dark leaves accentuate the white spines.



Dyckia 'California'

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