

BROMELIANA

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THE 23rd WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO

by Herb Plever

The 23rd World Bromeliad Conference was held in San Diego, California, the third time the San Diego Bromeliad Society has hosted the WBC.

The 2006 WBC in San Diego, was attended by 270 registrants and at that time we complained that the high costs of airfare, hotel room and food had kept attendance down. This conference, dubbed “fiesta de las bromelias”, was attended by 200 registered attendees, not bad when you consider the worsening global economy (for most people) and the much higher cost of airfare, hotel room and food for four days. Despite that, a small profit of about \$5,000 was made.

Co-Chair Scott Sandel had kindly reproduced in the Conference Program Guide the obituary for my wife Sylvia that had appeared in the February 2018 issue of Bromeliana. So when I arrived, I was greeted with many much-needed hugs from old friends and from many attendees I did not know. Scott had asked me for a jpg of the photo of Sylvia in the obit that was taken at the Hawaii WBC. A month later I came across a photo of Sylvia surrounded by broms taken on Mothers Day, 1970 and I sent it to him, but it was sent too late to be used.



I reproduce it below for the benefit of the many people who knew Sylvia.

The conference was held in the Paradise Point Resort and Spa which provided cottages only. These were adequate as accommodations, but they were spread out in concentric circles the rear of which was more than a half a mile from the large tent where the show plants and vendor sales took place. This

was an inappropriate facility for a WBC because there was no place where attendees could hang out and socialize. The cost of a cottage came to \$220 a night (including hotel taxes). In choosing this site co-Conference Co-Chairs Nancy Groves and Scott

Sandel wanted to keep hotel costs down to maximize attendance, but they were caught between a rock and a hard place. Hotels such as the Hilton, Marriot, Hyatt that have the several ballroom facilities we would need and lobbies and bars where we could socialize cost \$320 to \$400 per night and even more.

San Diego B.S. members were helpful and engendered a happy spirit in all attendees despite the site problems. Nancy and Scott and the talented Juliana Raposo (editor of the S.D.B.S. newsletter) coordinated the events.



Sylvia and our broms

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, September 4th, 2018 **promptly** at 7:00 pm at the Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 - 8th Avenue (betw. 36th & 37th Ave) **Room 16M**.

THE WORLD CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO - Complete photo coverage and discussion of the show plants and bromeliad personalities. Please bring in a plant for Show and Tell and for sale.

Juliana interviewed me for the Program Guide, and at first she was quite skeptical about why I wanted to keep my record of attending all the WBCs. She thought it was egoism on my part until I acquainted her with history of BSI for its first 28 years when it was run by the exclusive Los Angeles Guild with no input by the affiliates, domestic or foreign. This history was new to her as it likely would be to most active BSIs today. I will have to repeat that history in a coming issue.

Most popular genera were at least minimally represented, but there were no *Guzmanias*, *Hechtias* or *Nidulariums* - some *Orthophytums*, only a few *Vrieseas* and no *Sincoraeas*. A red-bracted *Guzmania* was sold by one vendor, but the show floor was decorated by many blooming *Guzmanias*, and by a nice display of blooming *Guzmanias* and *Tillandsia* 'Creation' (or 'Antonio') donated by Tony Godfrey of Olive-Hill Gardens nursery. *Guzmanias* should thrive in California, so their absence in the show must be due to some cultural preference.

Plant entries in the judged Show, displays and vendor's sales tables were all in a huge, high tent, and the meeting rooms for the seminars were adjacent to the tent. The show entries were all of high quality; *Tillandsia* entries dominated instead of the usual *Neoregelias*, though there were also many of them.

There were many lovely displays. I was very taken by the display with really beautiful *Tillandsias* mounted by Pam Hyatt for Bird Rock Tropicals (shown on page 1). The two long, many-spiked, pendant *T. eizii* inflorescences flanking a huge, blooming *T. australis* were really dramatic as shown below.



Tillandsia eizii

Tillandsia australis

A large display with many beautiful broms was presented by the San Diego Bromeliad Society



San Diego Bromeliad Society Exhibit

A beautiful exhibit was mounted by the Saddle Back Valley Bromeliad Society. It featured a large, round sun-dial surrounded by a 4 inch thick ring of many hundreds of blooming *T. ionantha*.



Saddle Back Valley Bromeliad Society display



Tillandsia ionantha

Three tables were needed for the winners of best plant in each category. The prize for the Best In Show was awarded to the huge mound of *Deuterocohnia brevifolia* shown on page 3.



Best in Show - *Deuterocohnia brevifolia*

Out of several hundred conference photos I have I have selected about 100 to show at the September meeting. I will include some of my favorites in this issue. The best artistic arrangement was a wooden harp on which were mounted tillandias and neoregelias. I also liked a huge clump of *Tillandsia juncea*.

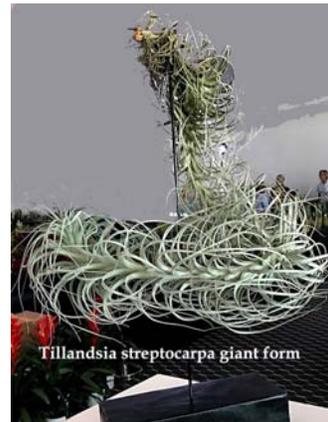
The best non-flowering multiple was a large, spectacular clump of *Neoregelia punctatissima*.



Neoregelia punctatissima



Artistic Arrangement with Tillandsias and Neos
 Best Artistic Arrangement *T. juncea* photo M. Gussow

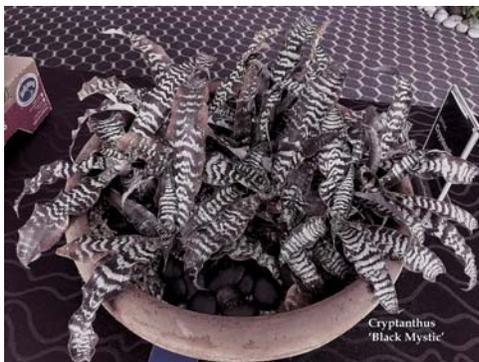


T. streptocarpa giant form



Tillandsia deppeana

There were only a few *Vrieseas* entered in the show, but surely the most outstanding one was *Vriesea* 'Jamie Smithie hyb.' made and entered by David Fells of Hawaii.



Cryptanthus 'Black Mystic'



Vriesea 'Jamie Smithie hyb.' (David Fells, Hawaii)

New to me was a clump of small, sparky neos labeled *Neoregelia* 'Heat Wave'. It is a registered cross of (*Neoregelia carolinae* x *N. fluminensis*) x *N. fluminensis*.



Neoregelia 'Heat Wave'

There was a nice double clump of *Tillandsia* 'Cotton Candy', a cultivar of *T.* 'Houston'.



Tillandsia 'Cotton Candy'

and a blooming *Canistrum triangulare*.



Canistrum triangulare

Attendees had no trouble finding plants to buy as there were 25 vendors selling plants.



Neoregelia 'Super Steve'



Vendors tables

Tillandsia 'King Cobra'



Neoregelia 'Creamsicle' unreg



T. 'Best In Class'



T. streptophylla

A good commercial plant was a blooming, double *Tillandsia* 'Curly Slim', by Mark Dimmett of *Tillandsia intermedia* with *T. streptophylla*. This was a perhaps too robust compared to my indoor-grown 'Curly Slim' that is really slim with more curly leaves.

It was nice to see the inflorescence, but perhaps it detracts from the shape of the plant and leaves.

Another really beautiful plant from a commercial vendor was the red bracted form of *Tillandsia streptocarpa* shown by Pam Hyatt of Bird Rock Tropicals.



Tillandsia 'Curly Slim' (M. Dimmett)

carolinae variegated x *N.* 'Norman Bates') x *N.* 'Norman Bates' made by Chester Skotak.

A tour bus also took attendees to visit the collection of Eloise Lau and Dan Kinnard and also to the terrestrials garden of Robert Kopstein. These are located outside San Diego, high up at the top of a very steep hill.

Jacqueline and Ted Johnson kindly gave me a ride near enough to the Lau/Kinnard collection that I was able to climb up to it despite my bad knee. This is a broad collection of broms and cultivars of different genera and bi-generics on benches in a number of screen houses. They like *Billbergia* 'Muriel Waterman' (Foster) as they had a bunch of them and of course many *Neoregelia* species and cultivars.



red bracted form of *Tillandsia streptocarpa*

Bus tours to were available to visit the Botanical Conservatory in Balboa Park and to two local growers. The first was to a beautiful Spanish Style house and gardens set along a canyon, so there were a lot of steep steps to walk down which my bad knee precluded my trying. Most of the plant material was of cacti and succulents.

The second visit was to the collection of San Diego B.S. president Scott Sandel. Scott had a nice collection of broms, the most outstanding of which was a spectacular *Neoregelia* 'Hypnotic', a cross of (*Neo*.



Neoregelia 'Hypnotic' (Skotak)



There were many other interesting plants.

Of course in that environment there were lots of Tillandsias.



Orthophytum glabrum

Sincoraea rafaellii

As you would expect in that paradisaical environment, there were benches full of colorful neo species and cultivars. (Dan says when it gets very cold on winter nights, he throws blankets over the plants.)



Wall of Tillandsias - Kinnard/Lau

And there were large beds of different cactus species.



Neos at Dan Kinnard/Eloise Lau



Large bed of different Cactus species

There was a marvelous view from the hilltop.



Dan Kinnard/Eloise Lau

Tillandsia tectorum and Cacti, Lau/Kinnard
photo courtesy of True Grant, Gold Coast B.S. Australia



There is a long wall around the area covered with colorful mosaic tiles that feature a long sea-serpent that runs along the top and face. It was made by Eloise Lau.



Mosaic tile wall with sea serpent made by Eloise Lau

Because of my bad knee I elected not to climb up to Robert Kopstein's terrestrial cactus, succulents and bromeliad garden. I am indebted to True Grant, editor of the Gold Coast B.S. of Australia newsletter for the photo of that garden.



Robert Kopstein's cactus, succulent and bromeliad garden
Photo courtesy of True Grant, Gold Coast B.S. Australia

There were 8 interesting seminars given by an array of experts. First off was Dennis Cathcart whose collecting trips with his wife Linda and with Wally Berg in 28 countries over many years is always fascinating. Li Ping, Chief Horticulturist of the Shanghai Chenshan Botanical Gardens is new to the U.S. (and the language) described her passion for ornamental bromeliads which are almost unknown in China. She hopes to introduce more bromeliads and

horticultural information about them into the Shanghai Botanical Garden.

Pamela Koide Hyatt is a long-time specialist in genus *Tillandsia*, and she has been collecting *Tillandsia* seeds in Central and South America, and particularly in Mexico for many years. In her Bird Tropical nursery she grows only from seed - she does not collect live plants. Pam has made some outstanding, prize-winning hybrids such as *Tillandsia* 'Samantha'. She has been leading tours throughout Mexico which are very popular.

Jose Manzanares gave a seminar entitled "Understanding the new taxonomic classification of subfamily Tillandsioideae" which changed the subfamily from 9 genera to 21 genera. It was based on a multilocus DNA sequence phylogeny and morphology. Many species were moved into different or new genera; there are many new names that will have to be learned which "will give us a headache".

Jose wanted to ease our concerns about the changes and give assurance that "everyone will be able to recognize them and differentiate the species". He explained that a meristem contains the DNA tissue of a brom and described how it is removed, sliced, pulverized and analyzed. He presented a graphic showing two xerox-like machines; the sliced meristem being put into one of them and the pulverized meristem funneled into the second machine - and, *presto chango*, out came an analysis of the four chemical bases of the double helix (adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine) in the proper positions that identified a particular species.

It is not so simple in a molecular lab where the material has to be subjected to different chemical formulae to be able to get a result that at least weakly supports a species identification. Then the researchers attempt "to provide a stable classification based on monophyletic established genera", ie. all species in the genus must have only the same common ancestor and no other. Jose's attempt to popularize the results is a misleading over-simplification of a complicated process.

Paul Isley, co-owner with Jerry Robinson of the Rainforest Flora *Tillandsia* nursery, presented a video that described the terrible fire that destroyed one of his large facilities in North County San Diego - and how it has been slowly restored. Paul is the author of the authoritative books *Tillandsia*. and *Tillandsia II*.

Jeffrey Kent's talk was on "Searching for New Columbian Bromeliad Species". He has made more than 70 collecting trips in Central and South America, and has especially concentrated his explorations in Columbia. He has discovered 30 new bromeliad species. Jeffrey and his two brothers, Larry and Michael, operate a huge bromeliad nursery comprising 850,000 square feet at three locations in San Marcos and in Vista, California. Jeffrey has made over 10,000 hybrids.

That business was started by their father, Leonard Kent, in a nursery located in Los Angeles. Leonard later moved his nursery to Vista, and when his "boys" matured they took over the business in 1975 and significantly expanded it over the years to its present size. (Leonard was a good friend who I visited often, and I knew Jeffrey, Larry and Michael when they were young fellows. It was nice to meet Jeffrey and Larry again in San Diego.)

Peter Waters presented "The Bromeliad Scene in New Zealand". Using a good video, he discussed the geography of New Zealand, its climate and bromeliad growing areas. Peter reviewed the work of important growers and hybridizers, including Andrew Flowers - who he kindly indicated had made a tillandsia hybrid named *Tillandsia* 'Herb Plever' (*Tillandsia peiranoi* x *T. streptocarpa*) and he showed photos of that cultivar.



Tillandsia 'Herb Plever' flowers, *T.* 'Herb Plever'

In 2009 the BSI Board elected Peter Waters as an Honorary Trustee. He has twice served as a BSI director for 5 year terms, and as President, Treasurer and Membership Secretary of the New Zealand B.S. Peter Waters is an expert in taxonomic and horticultural matters, and has been instrumental in organizing an annual competitive show.

Ivon M. Ramirez Morillo presented a program of "Studies in *Hechtioideae*: a story of love and hate". Born in Venezuela, she first worked with orchids in the Venezuelan Guyana. She received a Master's degree working with *Neoregelia* subgenus *Hylaeicum*, and a Ph. D. working with *Cryptanthus*.

Ivon started her career traveling in Mexico where she became hooked on the genus *Hechtia* which was poorly known and difficult to collect. She has been working with the genus for 15-20 years; her current work has resulted in the clarification of many species circumscriptions and a phylogenic and evolutionary understanding of the *Hechtioideae*.

She has authored or co-authored 12 new *Hechtia* species as well as 30 new species in other genera. She is particularly interested in the biogeographical and evolutionary forces associated with the "invasion" of and the diversification of the *Hechtioideae* within Megamexico.

Although her talk dealt with Hechtias, Ivon managed to show similar problems in understanding the evolutionary history and the relationships in other subfamilies and genera. This gave her talk an added interest for most of us who have no place to grow or even acquire a Hechtia. (Note that subfamily *Hechtioideae* has only one genus: *Hechtia* with 62 species. Editor.) Ivon is an excellent speaker and her comments were so lucidly presented that it was easier to understand the difficult, technical phylogenic issues involved in new classifications.

The BSI Board of Directors voted to elect the great *Billbergia* hybridist, Don Beadle ("Mr. Billbergia") an Honorary Trustee of the BSI. Don was the first Bromeliad Cultivar Registrar who wrote the comprehensive first Cultivar Register. The BSI Board voted to give the Wally Berg Award to Eric Gouda.

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