

# BROMELIANA

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## OUR SPRING ORDER

by Herb Plever

Our daytime temperatures are still in the 40's, but we're optimistically looking forward to our Spring plant order even though "Spring may be a little late this year". It *should* come in time for you to pick up your plants when they are delivered at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

After several years of successful tissue culture orders, we are going back to buying a range of close to mature broms from different genera. With a few exceptions they will all be small, indoor sized plants at maturity.

My measurement for a "small" plant is that it will fit on my window sill. The plant order sheet is a pdf attachment to the email in which this issue came. For the benefit of our newer members it includes some great plants that many of us have grown but no longer have - and you may want to go back to growing them.

There are seven very attractive Aechmeas, including *Aechmea recurvata* which is small enough to fit on a narrow window sill. All of them will fit on an average width sill.

Among the Billbergias I have included my favorite: *Billbergia* 'Fantasia', one of the earliest



*Sincorea navioides*

cultivars made by Mulford Foster (*B. pyramidalis* x *B. saundersii*.) See photos on page 3.) Of course you'll have a choice of some of Don Beadle's great *Billbergia* crosses.

I have selected some of the top indoor species and cultivars from *Canistropsis*, *Cryptanthus*, *Dyckia*, *Guzmania*, *Neoregelia*, *Orthophytum*, *Pitcairnia*, *Sincorea* and 6 small *Vrieseas*. *Sincorea navioides* grows very

well and blooms for me on an east or west window sill. It stays a brilliant red at flowering time for many months and produces lots of pups.

The *Vrieseas* are all beautiful and easy to bloom in moderate light provided you keep them moist and don't let them dry out, especially in the winter. You have to watch out for the tiny spider mites; millions of them infest every home, and they thrive in warm and dry air - as occurs in most heated homes during the winter. They are sucking bugs and particularly love the *Vrieseas*.

They are barely visible to the naked eye, but you can spot their cottony nests on the undersides of the leaves or in the leaf axils, or you'll notice the areas on the leaves that are no longer green because

***NEXT MEETING*** - Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 **promptly** at 7:00 pm at the Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 Eighth Avenue (betw. 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Sts, **Room 16N.**

***PLEASE COME EARLY AS WE WILL START ON TIME***

**VIDEO OF PLANT ORDER** - Photos of the bromeliads on the order with closeups of their inflorescences. Please bring plants for Show and Tell and sale.

their chlorophyll has been sucked out by mites. Once they infect and take hold in a *Vriesea*, it will not survive after a week or two.

You must be on the alert for mites in the winter and prepare to treat infested plants immediately. I use a spray of Safer's Soap as an all-purpose sanitizer every 2-3 weeks in the winter, or sooner if I spot the presence of mites. Of course it helps to keep the air in your home humidified with a cold water humidifier. I try to attain a relative humidity of at least 40%, but it has been hard to do in our long, current cold and dry winter. (The upside is that so far we haven't had much snow.)

The strong preference of spider mites for *Vrieseas* is strange. If you have *Vrieseas* and *Guzmanias* close together with their leaves overlapping, you will find the mites on the *Vrieseas* but not on the *Guzmanias* - unless the infestation has become so widespread that they have sort of run out of *Vriesea* chlorophyll.

There are thirty-seven beautiful *Tillandsia* species on the list, seven of which (such as *T. caerulea* shown below) are fragrant flowering; you should order many at those bargain prices. If you don't have cork to mount them they will do just as well placed on the leaves of a potted plant or mounted on salt-free drift wood.



Spider mite nest

You can also grow them in a pot with a well-draining potting mix. We are (slowly) coming into the growing season; temperatures and relative humidity should begin rising. It is a good time to buy lots of tillies. For instance it is a good idea to buy several clumps of fragrant flowering *Tillandsia mallemonii*; this plant will soon begin to put out many fragrant flowers if you keep it moist.

As soon as it is comfortable for you, open some windows or your terrace door to get fresh, moving air into your home - and put lots of plants out in

the yard or your terrace. Moving air is quite vital to the health and growth of your broms.

If you plan on mounting your *Tillandsias*, try mounting *Tillandsia bulbosa* upside down; I think it grows better that way. (Years ago when we were able to buy *Tillandsia reclinata*, I killed several of them before I discovered they liked growing upside down.)

*Tillandsia filifolia* is finicky - you can't let it dry out, so until the really humid weather comes, spray it frequently. But it will give you great satisfaction when you get it to bloom its pretty, staminate flowers. (See photo on page 3.) If you are growing *Wallisia cyanea* (formerly *Tillandsia*) indoors, be sure to grow it in a pot with a well-drained medium. It does not do well growing epiphytically



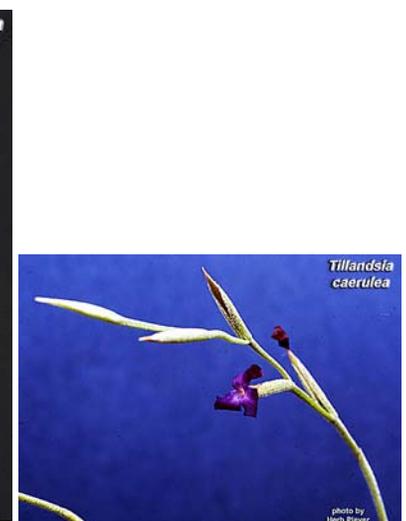
*Vriesea flammea*



*Tillandsia caerulea*



*T. caerulea* lilac flowers



*T. caerulea* dark blue flowers

indoors.

*Tillandsia brachycaulos* is easy to grow indoors even it has green leaves. When it is ready to bloom, the leaves turn a brilliant red and then it puts up many finger-like blue flowers from the center. See photo below.

Another great Cryptanthus cultivar by J. Irvin is *Cryptanthus* 'Absolute Zero', as you can readily see from the photo in the middle of this page. A new Dyckia for us is *Dyckia* 'Betty Garrison', also shown immediately below.



*Tillandsia filifolia*

Don Beadle made many beautiful *Billbergia* cultivars, that I've catalogued and shown in previous issues. Yet, when I come right down to it, my favorite *Billbergia* still is Mulford Foster's great *Billbergia* 'Fantasia' as shown in the photos at the bottom of this page.

Former *Tillandsia cyanea* is an attractive indoor plant for small pot; it is now classified as *Wallisia cyanea*. (See photo by Bromagic of Australia below.)



*Dyckia* 'Betty Garrison'



*Dyckia* 'Betty Garrison'

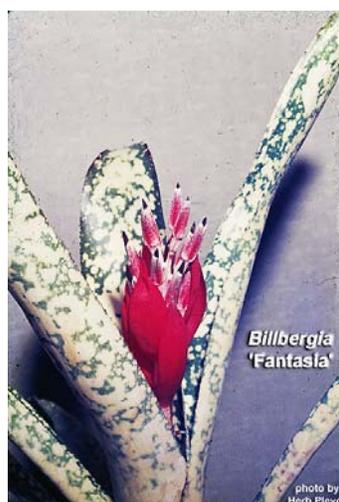


*Cryptanthus* 'Absolute Zero'

Take advantage of these bargain priced plants which will be delivered to you at the May meeting, and buy a bunch.



*Tillandsia brachycaulos*



*Billbergia* 'Fantasia'



*Billbergia* 'Fantasia'

## OH THOSE FORMULA NAMES!

by Herb Plever

I seem to be the only carping about the continued, widespread admission to BSI shows of plants with only formula names. (Derek Butcher has all but given up the fight in disgust.) It is not merely that this practice is in violation of international rules to which the BSI is bound. I don't know whether the Show Classification Committees don't understand the issue, or if they are just cowed by local hybridizers. And the same goes for all the Directors and Officers of the BSI. They have the responsibility of mandating that plants with formula names be denied entry to BSI shows, and so far they have avoided acting on this issue.

I will risk giving yet another explanation of what should be a simple issue. A formula name is properly only used to identify a grex, ie., an entire batch of seedlings resulting from a cross of two plants. And in every grex, many seedlings are vastly different from each other. Therefore no individual plant should have a formula name. If it is worthy of being selected out and grown on (by tissue culture or otherwise), it should be given a name and registered with the BCR.

If I hybridizer sells plants by formula name, he or she will definitely be misleading brom buyers who might think all versions of the plant they see will look the same - when that is clearly untrue. It is up to smart buyers to end this shoddy practice by buying only named (and preferably also registered) cultivars.

Take a look at the photos of three plants on this page with the same formula name: *Neoregelia* 'Grace's Avalanche' x *N. smithii*. (They were taken from the May, 2018 issue of 'Bromeliad', Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand which had the simple comment: "Diversity...three different looking plants from the same cross.") I might add that undoubtedly there were many more than three different looking plants in that grex.

You can see just by looking at the photos that each plant should have been given its own individual name. Yet Show Classification is generally so lax that it is possible all three could be entered in the a show with the same formula name.



*Neoregelia* 'Grace's Avalanche' x *N. smithii*



*Neoregelia* 'Grace's Avalanche' x *N. smithii*



*Neoregelia* 'Grace's Avalanche' x *N. smithii*

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