



East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

NEWS
LETTER
July
2019

Established: 25 July 2009

Our aim is to promote and encourage awareness and interest in Bromeliads in East London and all of South Africa!

ELBS SA is an Affiliated Society



of Bromeliad Society International

June Meeting

There was quite a crowd at the June meeting, loads of super raffle plants for the lucky winners to choose from and lots of gorgeous bromeliads and succulents to buy in the members for sale area as well. We met at the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School Hall so that we could show the BSI PowerPoint slide show of the A– Z of Bromeliads Part 1. Another motive is to get our members acquainted with this meeting place in case there is ever a change of venue due to rainy weather and not being able to meet at a planned garden venue. This will always be our alternative meeting place on days like that.

Dudley Reynolds welcomed everyone and after a few announcements Lyn Wegner and Tracy Moss proceeded with the slide show. Dudley then did a talk on Cryptanthus cultivation, which, as always was very interesting especially as he brought along a stunning array of 'Earth Stars' from his collection to discuss.



Some of the interesting Cryptanthus Dudley Reynolds brought to the meeting from his collection.

A review of Bromeliads A to Z Part 1.

Lyn Wegner reviewed the showing of the slide show for us: Developed by Keith Smith, BSI Media Library Chair. There are currently 8 programs which will be available free of charge to BSI affiliates. We thank Keith Smith for these interesting and informative programs. We don't have access to Speakers (besides our members) for our meetings so these will come in very handy, especially for rainy days when we are unable to meet at a garden venue.



We presented the first program to our members, Bromeliads A to Z, Part 1. Thank you Tracy and Rob Moss, Des and Chantelle Haschick for all your assistance making it possible for this to happen. We saw some species we will never have in our collections, but saw some that we do have and are familiar with although they have gone through a name change as a result of DNA testing to ensure plants are in their correct genus, which has resulted in the formation of many new genera. Of course we found many to put on our wish lists, if only! All the new genera and name changes are a bit overwhelming. Many having only one species in a genus. I think it will take some time to absorb all the 'technical' stuff but the more we are exposed to it the less scary it will become.



**Next Meeting: Birthday Bash! Sunday, 28th July at 2.00 for 2.30 pm.
To be hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 18 Wentworth Road, Sunnyridge.**

Cryptanthus - Dudley Reynolds



These little terrestrial (growing in the ground) bromeliads which are also known as 'Earth Stars' are found in Brazil. There are about 50 species found in nature and many hybrids which have been created. They have a strong following of people who specialise in this genus and even have their own international society, The Cryptanthus Society, to which we are affiliated. We receive their very informative journal which is available in our library should you wish to read them.

I am sure that most of us have a few of these little plants in our gardens and collections. Being terrestrial these plants need soil around their roots to survive. A free draining medium with some humus, similar to African Violet mix is required. They do benefit from regular feeding during the growing season. When potted they do prefer wider rather than deeper pots as the roots tend to grow more sideways than downwards.

Cryptanthus grow mostly in low altitude areas and much prefer a warm climate with high humidity. As in many other genera, some are shade loving, some like filtered light and a few will grow in direct sunlight. Monitor if your Cryptanthus gets leaf die-back as this might indicate that your mixture is losing too much moisture and growing too dry. Adjust the growing medium accordingly.

The best temperature for Cryptanthus is between 10 and 28 degrees c. Anything under 10*c has an adverse effect on some of them.

When potting your Cryptanthus you might find that the leaves are rather stiff and curl under, making it difficult to stay in contact with the soil surface. This can be remedied by using elastic bands to hold the plant securely in the pot until the root structure has formed.

So how can we adapt these little terrestrials to our garden situations? They could be used for those little areas amongst rocks and other shrubs in medium light situations. A few of them planted together certainly won't go unnoticed growing with other ground covers in those special little places in our gardens in pockets of peaty soil featuring their vivid leaf colourations.

One could also use them in an ornamental container eg. a tea pot, which has found its way into your garden. Of course one could use the stiff leaf, hardier types for a full sun situation. Let your imagination run with you when collecting Earth Stars!

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Species Talk - Lyn Wegner



Orthophytum glabrum and *O. vagans*. I find both of these species easy to grow but I find *O. vagans* more exciting, so I will start with this one. I only have the variegated form in my collection although I suspect I used to have the 'plain' form too.

O. vagans is found in the Atlantic forests of South East Brazil. It has a trailing long branched caudex (stem) with narrow triangular softly spined leaves. It roots as it travels over hanging rocky ledges forming large mats. It must be quite a sight to behold! In 2017 Derek Butcher of Australia registered the form, previously referred to as *O. vagans variegata* as *O. 'Roberto Menescal'*, after a Brazilian nurseryman. When this plant is grown in bright light the leaves and stems colour an attractive pinky/red. My bowl is growing in a shady spot so the foliage is green with a white edge, still attractive! It would look



Dudley Reynolds and some of his stunning collection of Cryptanthus.



The minute and slow growing *Cryptanthus* 'Aunt Beulah' is struggling a bit.



Cryptanthus 'It' and C. 'Ti' which is a mutation of C. 'It'. The story goes that it went through the scanners at the airport and after that C. 'Ti' produced these different looking pups.



Top, *Orthophytum glabrum* and below, *O. 'Roberto Menescal'*.

great in a hanging basket too. When Googling for info I found this apt comment, 'a wonderful walking beauty'. *O. glabrum* is also found in Brazil and has the same growth habits so it is also suitable for a hanging basket. Mine are both grown in shallow bowls as I just don't have an abundance of suitable places to hang plants.

Show and Tell

Lyn Wegner: I love this *Cryptanthus* 'Crazy Moon'! Imported from Australia last year, a Grace Goode hybrid, parents C. 'Caboose' x C. 'Goldie Langdon'. The plant on the left has some cold damage which I will trim once the weather warms up. It is potted in a bowl and is growing in bright shade in the garden. The gigantic plant on the right is a potted pup which is growing in a bright warm area in our home. It blows me away! Enormous, super spectacular! No sign of damaged leaf tips either!

Lyn Wegner: This is not for sensitive viewers! I decided to split my *Vriesea* 'Candy Stripe' and was devastated to find the base was rotting. The plant looked the picture of health so it was a really unpleasant surprise.

The core of the plant was mushy and smelly and some of the outer leaves pulled off easily.



Vriesea 'Candy Stripe' and a photo of the base of the plant.



Orthophytum 'Starlights'

hanging baskets. They get full sun for the mornings, even the summer sun which is quite harsh. The leaves grow in a flat rosette pattern, quite spiny. The foliage on mine is a pink/brown colour, clearly from lots of exposure to the sun. The long inflorescence scape is covered in silvery trichomes. At the end are a lot of clustered green bracts out of which tiny white flowers appear. I think this is what gives it the starlight effect. Out of these, the pups develop. Pups also develop from the base of the plant and can be removed and planted up in free draining soil mix.



Lyn's *Orthophytum glabrum* and *O.* 'Roberto Menescal'



Left, *Cryptanthus* 'Crazy Moon' with leaf damage from the cold. Right A pup grown indoors!

Luckily the pup was

unaffected although I have left it to dry just in case! I dipped the stem into a solution of 'Rosecare', a systemic fungicide. I poured some into the centre of the plant too. It is doing surprisingly well and just maybe I will be lucky! It seemed there was absolutely no hope when I discovered the problem about a week ago. I will probably leave it unpotted but propped upright, on the dry side, in a pot for a while.

Barbara Black showed *Orthophytum* 'Starlights'. Hybridised and registered by Margaret Paterson in 1995. A cross between *O. gurkenii* and *O. sucrei*. I do like this family of amazing plants with their long slender scapes that develop and the cluster of green bracts at the end that look like leaves. A single circle of white, tiny flowers pop out at blooming time. I grow mine in the driveway in



Miriam Kennard showed her magnificent unnamed *Guzmania*.

Dr Pete Pfister showed two Vriesea. The one on the left Pete obtained as Vr. 'Chocolate Box'. As it developed it got short flower spikes and the flower spike flattened out and got broader. The real Vr 'Chocolate Box' I have on the right, has long slender flower spikes. It seems these plants were incorrectly named and are actually V. 'Rosette Heart'.



Vriesea 'Rosette Heart'



Dr Boots Horsfall showed a magnificent xSincoregelia Firecracker



Lyn Wegner showed an example of cold damage. I will eliminate this plant from my collection. When you have a space problem it is easy to be ruthless!

Thanks

- Albie Reynolds and the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School for the use of the hall.
- Lyn Wegner, Dr Pete Pfister, Lynn Friend and Eddie and Barbs Black for lucky draw plants.
- Dr Pete Pfister and Lyn Wegner for give-away plants.
- Peter Cross from Australia for so kindly mailing us the SunnyBroms Conference proceedings booklet for our library.
- Des and Chantelle Haschick for assisting with the projector.
- Marianne Hillstead and Dr Pete Pfister for catering tea and organising scrumptious goodies for all to enjoy.

Congratulations to the June Raffle Winners

- Gale Kockjeu chose *Aechmea bromeliifolia* var *bromeliifolia*.
- Lyn Odendaal chose *Neoregelia* 'Flama'.
- Anne Holder chose *Vriesea mariae*.
- Sue Pema chose *Neoregelia* 'Raphael'.
- Eugene Ernest from Durban chose *Tillandsia streptocarpa*.



Our lucky Raffle winners for June, Sue Pema, Lyn Odendaal, Anne Holder and Gale Kockjeu.

- Graham Watts from Durban chose *Tillandsia* 'Feather Duster'.
- Carolie Pouwels from Pretoria still to choose.
- Philip Visagie from Pretoria chose *Tillandsia xrectifolia*.

If you don't see a plant that you would like to choose as your raffle win you can choose to take a Raffle Voucher for R120.00, save them up and buy a nice plant from one of the society members.

Attendance Lucky Draw Winners: There were a few lucky winners at the meeting!

From the Committee

- **ELBSSA AGM and Annual Birthday Bash at the July meeting!** The AGM will be held first as a formality, this is your last chance to nominate a new member to the committee, everyone is up for being replaced!! Ten years is a long time in the same job, hehehe!! We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible, plus as many of our founding members as possible.

Upcoming Society Events

28th July: ELBSSA AGM, 10th Birthday Celebrations and Fun Quiz!!!

Hosted as always by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 18 Wentworth Road in Sunnyridge. You will enjoy 'Fizz Ananas' on your arrival and then the necessary formality of the AGM which will be dispensed with swiftly! Then on to some fun! Our usual fun Quiz, so be ready for lots of laughs, then the usual Country and Local Raffles, Lucky draws, then tea and scrumptious birthday tart and eats and time to chat and explore Lyn's extensive collection of plants in the gardens.

There will be no Member Plant Sales at this meeting.

25th August: To be hosted by Irene Manthe in Nahoon Valley Park. Topic: Bromeliads; to divide or allow to clump? by Brenda Wegner.

29th September: To be hosted by Mark Bradfield at The Gift Garden, Topic: Artistic Expression with Bromeliads.

27th October: Venue to be advised. Topic: Bromeliads Seldom Seen.

24th November: End of year Bring and Braai to be hosted by Dr Pete Pfister and Marianne Hillstead in Beacon Bay.



Upcoming International Conferences

2019: 'Golden Broms' 17 - 20 October 2019 Hosted by the Gold Coast Succulent and Bromeliad Society Inc. at the Sea World Resort on the Gold Coast. This will be the 20th Australasian Bromeliad Conference. For contact information go to the conference website at www.goldenbroms.com

2020: 9 to 13 June, **70th Anniversary WBC2020** will be held in Sarasota, Florida, USA. For exciting information and pictures go to bsi.org, Conference Corner! It would be great to have a group of South Africans at this World Conference!

2021: This biennial **Australasian Bromeliad Conference** will again be hosted by The New Zealand Bromeliad Society. **'Kiwi Broms'** April 8 - 11 2021, venue, Waipuna Hotel. Start saving now!



This was ELBSSA in July 2009 in Lyn Wegner's garden at 'Bromeliads for Africa' in Sunnyridge!!

From the Members

Chris van Zyl in Somerset West recently hosted Stan Schab and Terese Leber from Hawaii Bromeliad Society who have been on a wonderful trip to Southern Africa. Lyn organised that Chris would host them for a day showing them some of the Cape's finest in a very limited amount of time.

From Stan: "Great day with Chris and Zelna yesterday - they did the East London Brom Society proud. Loving

Cape Town; wish we had more time here. We've been in tent camps in Hwange (Zimbabwe) and Kruger and Stellenbosch. Stan and Terese." Thank you Chris and to Japie, Danie and Jean who also volunteered to host them.

The article below which appeared in the Cape Argus recently, is about one of our ELBSSA country members, Gabriel Scholltz. Besides having a conservationist's heart, we are so happy he loves bromeliads and Tillandsia too! Just look what else he has been up to!

A Bit of Paradise with Gabriel Scholltz Cape Argus 2 Jul 2019 Sukaina Ishmail

Gabriel Scholltz at his nursery in Sedgefield. The public should focus on growing community gardens, he says. Tucked away along the Garden Route – midway between Knysna and George – is the oasis of Gabriel Scholltz, who escaped the hustle and bustle of Bonteheuwel to set up a nursery in Sedgefield.

Scholltz created his nursery garden in the hope of inspiring and educating the youth about plants, and to show people the essence of nature and its impact on the planet.

Scholltz, 37, is conscious of the need to protect the environment, and said that placing too much focus on industrialisation could potentially lead to a shift away from nature.

"Robotics and coding in terms of South Africa's future on the global scale should definitely be compulsory in the educational curriculum because they can help put us in the mindset of competing with the best. However, we are lacking the education in terms of biodiversity."

Scholltz grew up in Bonteheuwel and Kuils River, and lived with a family that would often go camping. He often spent time playing outside and in his backyard garden during his childhood, which he feels had a significant effect on his perception of the environment today. "If the educational system can incorporate environmental elements into subjects which should be compulsory for all learners, then young kids can grow up with a whole new understanding of how the environment works.

"It's important to teach children while they're young. The public should focus on growing community gardens because it will help enrich the lives of kids, and teach them what's long been forgotten and that the environment comes first," said Scholltz.

He began digging the soil in his nursery early last year, and opened it in September that year at BK Garden route in Sedgefield.

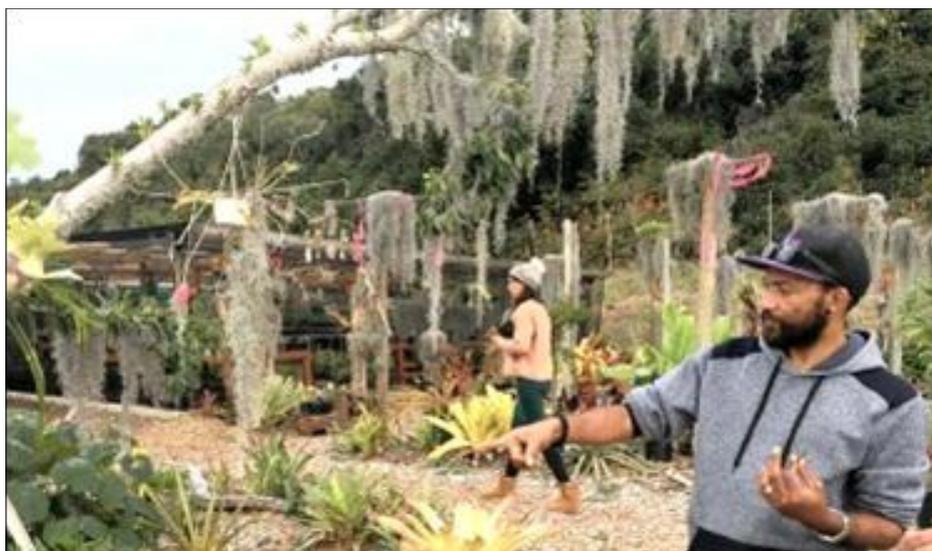
Scholltz said South Africa and the Western Cape were wealthy in terms of biodiversity, and if the government and people ignored the significance of the natural habitat, the human race would be left in the dark because of its ignorance of nature.

For those interested in Gabriel's gardening experience, visit his YouTube channel, <https://youtu.be/7606O1QgqzQ>

BB: We proud of you Gabriel!



Chris van Zyl has been creative again! He and Zelna rescued a huge tree stump and decided to turn it upside down so they could see the magnificent roots better and mounted it with some Tillandsia.



Gabriel, in his nursery that he has created from scratch!

I recently asked **David Gower**, one of our local members, if he had a current favourite in his amazing and extensive collection of stunning bromeliads? (We visited David and Lynda last year for the September meeting.) By far his favourite he says, is *Tillandsia hildae*. "As I had acquired two identical plants and I saw photos of many plants potted on Facebook as well as in their natural habitat on sloping hillsides in the ground, I decided to experiment with the second plant and potted it. So far, no difference in growth between the two. I would describe *T. hildae* as a majestically sculptured plant, the queen of Tillandsia. A rare plant and not easy to grow, I am told. It doesn't like cold, wet winters. Any bromeliad collector who sets their eyes on a *T. hildae* must surely fall in love at first sight. I definitely did. I regard it as the No. 1 bromeliad in the world."

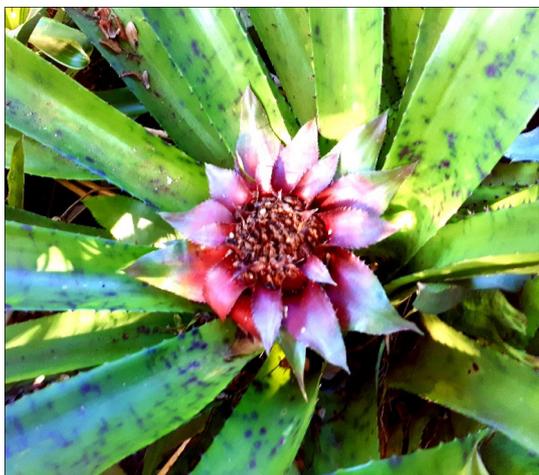


Two of David's *Tillandsia hildae*, one bare root, the other potted. One is nicknamed 'Lol'!

Second current favourite is *Neoregelia carolinae* x *johannis* x 'Bobby Hull' x 'Silver' x 'Spines'. David has nicknamed it 'Hulk' referring to its enormous size. "Hopefully it will be named as such one day. It is already over a meter wide and 60cm high. The plant was imported from Michael's Bromeliads in Florida, USA by the late Ray Chandler of Durban. It is not registered yet and I have been told it is an unregistered Chester Skotak hybrid. Perhaps it is one of the largest *Neoregelia* in South Africa? I grow it hard in sun in a 43cm clay pot in Amalinda Nursery potting soil. No fertiliser. I have had it for three years and it has produced four pups but no sign of flowering yet."



Above and right, David's spectacular *Neoregelia carolinae* x *johannis* x 'Bobby Hull' x 'Silver' x 'Spines'.



Left, **Dr Pete Pfister**: "Look what I found in my 'Squatter camp'! *Wittrockia* 'Leopardinum', a cultivar of *W. gigantea*. This is the second flower I have had from these plants I have in my collection. They can take up to 13 years to flower. "

From the Editor



Don't let anyone tell you your winter plants cannot be colourful on these cold and pinchy early mornings especially if you have bromeliads!

In East London, we have been experiencing cold nights but the most wonderfully warm, sunny days. I gravitate outdoors most days and enjoy working with our plants in the garden. Besides, it's warmer out there!!! Everything else can wait.

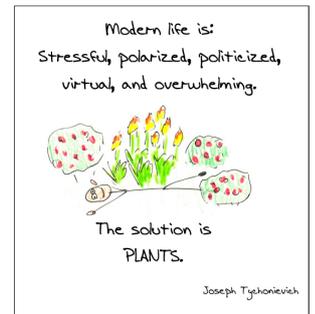
So, ELBSSA enters another new year of existence at the end of July with our Birthday Bash! We all hope to see lots of you there for what promises to be a fun afternoon of celebrating our achievement. We can reflect back on TEN busy, wonderful years, making awesome 'plant' friends and learning about bromeliads, (I knew absolutely nothing!!!!!! No Google back in the mid 1980's when Eddie started collecting them).

I thank each one of you, local, country and International for what you bring to the society as a network for bromeliad lovers. It is up to you how much you want to get involved. It is because of each of you that we exist and continue to try and do our best to provide relevant information and interaction that will promote your knowledge, culture and the pleasure of growing these weird and wonderful plants we all love.

To see what we get up to at meetings, do check out the photos that Mark Bradfield and Brenda Wegner put on our East London Bromeliad Society Facebook page straight after every meeting.

See you all soon at the Birthday Bash!
Happy bromming !

Barb.



Actually we know the solution is bromeliads!

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Any opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Society.

When submitting items for inclusion in this newsletter, please ensure that all facts and information, including spelling, is checked and accurate.

ELBS SA is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International.

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We meet on the last Sunday of every month at 2.00 for 2.30pm, January to November, at various venues around East London. We have a topic for each meeting and Show and Tell where members are encouraged to bring along their brag or problem plants. There are member raffles, lucky draws for those present, tea time, library and member plant sales, plus a monthly newsletter sent out via e-mail only. Visitors are always welcome and can attend three meetings before they will need to join the society in order to continue attending. Annual subs are R120.00 for individuals/families and R60 for students.

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You will find ELBS on Facebook: type 'East London Bromeliad Society' into the fb search bar. You can request to join the group and will then be able to upload your photos and comments on the wall. The ELBS SA page and other bromeliad related sites are a useful and informative forum to share and 'meet up' with other like-minded bromeliad folks.

You can view most of all the bromeliads mentioned in meetings or in the newsletter at the following websites:

The BSI's official Bromeliad Cultivar Registry www.registry.bsi.org which is maintained by Geoff Lawn, the BSI Cultivar Registrar. Plus other information regarding the Bromeliad Society International is found at bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: fcbs.org This is a very useful site to reference many bromeliads where you can clarify identification or just trawl through the site and add to your wish list!

Encyclopedia of Bromeliads - <http://bromelia.club> (Bromeliad Taxonomists and Growers Society) has photographs. It also now has keys for the genera and sub-genera. If you like to be informed what is happening, just follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia> Just type in 'Encyclopedia of Bromeliads' into the Facebook search bar.

For internet resources you can also go to TAXON (The New Bromeliad List) for the most authoritative and right up to date list of genera and species, accepted and new names and taxonomic keys - <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php> or just type in 'New Bromeliad Taxon List', it's much easier!