



# East London Bromeliad Society

## South Africa

NEWS  
LETTER  
February  
2020

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

### From the Chairman

Another year has begun. It seems unreal that two decades have already passed in this century. I am positive that we will have a good year growing bromeliads.

On a personal note, it could never be as bad as last year. My bromeliads did not fare too well with the house move. Most of them have frizzled and burnt badly. I have only now had the opportunity to start creating a shadier environment and I hope the pups will be more tolerant of the brighter light. We are well into the planning stages of our Judged Bromeliad Show to be held on the 28th and 29th March. We will be opening the doors to the public this time round and are hoping for an overwhelming response. That's all from me for this month. Until next time..... Happy Bromming.



Dudley welcoming everyone to the first meeting of the new year.

### January Meeting

Our first meeting of 2020 took place on the 26th January at the home of Bryan and Brenda Wegner in Nahoon Valley. Dudley welcomed everyone and thanked Brenda for opening her garden for us to enjoy. What a splendid garden Brenda has, evidence of all her hard work and dedication can be seen around the garden packed with a large variety of bromeliads all in super condition. They have lived in the house for about 15 years and as we all know, you start from scratch when you move into a new home, especially if you are a keen gardener with an addiction! There was much to see and admire. Brenda's garden has been on the Pam Golding Show Gardens of East London and I know that quite



Brenda and Bryan in the front part of their amazing garden!



Above, Brenda's owl collection recently displayed all together and views of the garden.

**Next Meeting: 23 February at 2.00 for 2.30pm. Hosted by Dr Boots and Alison Horsfall at 22 Vincent Gardens Road , Vincent. Remember to bring your chair and a plant for Show and Tell.**

a few visitors to the garden were inspired to become bromeliad enthusiasts as a result. There was a good crowd of 45 at the meeting. We originally planned to walk around the garden and discuss some of the plants but that happened between the members anyway. There were quite a few Show and Tell plants to discuss.



A view of part of the Guzmania collection.

## ELBSSA Bromeliad Show 28th - 29th March

Dudley spent some time telling us about the upcoming show, which will be open to the public to view this year as so much interest was shown last year. We hope all this will generate some excitement amongst members in terms of your potential entries into the different classes. There are many more than last year. So take a browse around your garden and look to see what you could possibly groom to enter on the show or get creating, sewing, crafting, painting or mosaic-ing!! The sky is the limit!

Thursday 26 March at 2pm the committee will begin setting up the hall at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School. Society member plants /entries can be brought to the venue on Thursday from 4 to 6.30 and on Friday 9.30 to 1pm.. That is the cut off time as everything will then have to be placed in the correct classes and the judging will take place. No late entries will be accepted after 1 pm on Friday.

Saturday morning we will be open to the public from 9.00 - 4.00pm. Sunday from 9.00 till 3pm. R10 entry fee. There will be refreshments and eats available to buy and enjoy while you are enjoying the displays and vendors who will be selling their goods too. Members are also welcome to take a stand at R50 and sell homemade goods/bromeliads too. Please speak to Brenda Wegner should you wish to participate.

Entry forms, guidelines for entries in the different classes and posters will be available at the next meeting plus they will be e-mailed to you. You just need to list your plants on the numbered list and we will assist you with names and Classes if you are not sure when you bring your plants to the hall. More information will be available at the next meeting. This is going to be fun and we are hoping for a bumper show to help spread the love and beauty of this diverse plant family!!!

**East London** Established July 2009  
**Bromeliad Society**  
**South Africa**

**BROMELIAD**  
**Magic**

R10 Entry Fee

Judged Show, Displays

Sales, Bromeliads,  
 Airplants, Succulents  
 Orchids, Clivia  
 Lithops, Veg seedlings

**28th - 29th**  
**MARCH**

**at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School**  
 45 Avalon Road, Beacon Bay



Sat: 9.30am - 4.00pm

Sun: 9.30 - 3.00pm

**Refreshments**  
**will be on sale**

## Species Talk - Lyn Wegner

*Aechmea* (pronounced eek-me-uh) *dichlamydea* var. *trinitensis*. The reason I chose this species for today's meeting is due to a dead tree, heavily laden with these *Aechmea*, hanging baskets, an enormous platycerium (staghorn fern) and more fell over in the garden after endless days of rain! At the time, only a couple of days ago, it seemed to be a disaster! Miraculously the pool filter and bench which it crashed down onto were undamaged. I only had a couple of pups broken off as well as a plastic pot of *Cryptanthus* squashed but the plants were fine! Amazing! This forced a change in the garden but I must say I am rather pleased with the 'new look'. I have struggled to find info on this species so I took the following from Baench's *Blooming Bromeliads*, a book I love. "This majestic species is a true jewel to the horticulturist. It thrives in semi-shade as well as in full sun. The flowering period, including the development of the widely branched inflorescence, lasts over 2 months". It is found in Northern Trinidad and adjacent Venezuela at 60-800m above sea level. I find that due to the pendulous habit of the inflorescence it is best to mount the plant. The foliage colours nicely if it receives a fair amount of sun.



Lyn with her *Aechmea dichlamydea* var. *trinitensis*

## Show and Tell

**Zena McClaren** brought an *Aechmea orlandiana* hybrid to show. She thinks it might be *A. 'White Knight'*. The *A. orlandiana* varieties are her favourites and grown for the colourful foliage; green, pink and white variegation and strong dark banding. The plant has an upright growth habit, they like bright light, full sun in milder climates. It needs good drainage, generally grown in bark. It makes a great specimen for mounting or grown in baskets where the stolons have room to develop their new pups. *Aechmea orlandiana* is not only a standard in the bromeliad world, it is also one of the most spectacular in the hobby of collecting bromeliads. A species collected by Mulford and Racine Foster in 1939 in Brazil. Named for the city of Orlando, Florida, Foster's adopted home town. The orange bracts and white flowers, being the colours of Orlando. Zena discovered bromeliads as a result of seeing Brenda's garden in 2016. Because they had a problem with dassies eating everything they planted, Zena got her husband Michael to go and see the garden too, thinking these spiky plants won't appeal to dassies! Well, they have been hooked on broms ever since, with a wonderful garden and collection of their own.

Zena also came up with some points to ponder..... 😊

- the more bromeliads you buy, the more you need...
- the flowers were beautiful when you left home for the show, by the time you arrived, the sun dried them to a crisp....
- after you spent what feels like forty years carefully labelling bromeliads and learning how to pronounce the names, some idiot changes them....
- the longer you grow bromeliads the less you know about them...
- the more raffle tickets you buy, the less you win....
- bromeliads grow over and under the benches. It doesn't matter what size greenhouse you have, it is never big enough; but... there is always room for more....
- you put a high price on your favourite bromeliad, hoping that no one will buy it, it sells...
- the greater the bromeliad passion, the flatter the wallet!

**Robert Moss** brought three small bromeliads to show, he has grown them from seed, the largest one in the photo above being *Aechmea bracteata*. He offered them up as Lucky Draw plants. Robert has been very busy doing some hybridising and growing from seed with some very interesting results, watch this space!

### **Dudley Reynolds**

I noticed that one of my *Tillandsia bulbosa* plants produced a pup on top of the plant from where the inflorescence would normally emerge. It would normally produce pups from the base of the plant. From what I can see and feel there are pups developing at the base as well. I don't recall this happening in the past. Have you experienced this as well, is it a common occurrence? I would be very interested to hear from anyone if it has occurred with one of your plants and if the plant is able to develop an inflorescence. My email address is: dudleyreynolds1@gmail.com

**Lyn Wegner:** I think these should be referred to as Show and Brag! I walked around the garden looking for something to bring to the meeting and decided I would brag with these four *Tillandsia*!

*Tillandsia buchhlochi* - I imported this beautiful species which is found in Paraguay, from Dennis Cathcart of Tropiflora Nursery. It is growing as many of mine are, positioned in a metal stand in a sunny part of



Zena McClaren and her *Aechmea*.



Robert's bromeliads grown from seed.



Dudley's *Tillandsia bulbosa*



*Tillandsia buchhlochi*

the garden. The foliage is an attractive bronzy pink colour and the inflorescence is really nice, red with white flowers!



*Tillandsia capitata* 'Rubra'

*Tillandsia capitata* 'Rubra'. Oh wow, don't you just love the colour! Also imported from Tropiflora. I just had to bring two of these, a double wow! They are growing in wire baskets in a shady spot.

I also have *T. capitata* 'Red' and *T. capitata* 'Roja' which are all red forms but differ from each other. There is much to read on these if you go into Google, and go into *Tillandsia* 'Roja' - Bromeliads in Australia.

I don't know what it is about *Tillandsia disticha* that appeals to me. I just love the interesting inflorescence with the small yellow flowers which seed prolifically so I am never in a hurry to remove the finished spike. I just learnt the flowers are fragrant in the morning as per Peter Tristram from Australia. I will need to check mine! It has upright thin leaves which have lots of trichomes at the bulbous base. The plants are stoloniferous ie. the pups form on the end of a stolon (long runner or stem). The flowers are digitate which means finger-like with 'branches' coming from one point. I have various forms and this one is supposedly *Tillandsia disticha* 'Green'. This must refer to the foliage colour. Mine is growing in a wire basket in a sunny spot and although it is doing well I think it would prefer a shadier spot, the greenish foliage being an indicator.



*Tillandsia disticha* green



*Tillandsia capitata* 'Silver Rose x streptophylla'

*Tillandsia capitata* 'Silver Rose' x *streptophylla* has a beautiful form, with arching foliage which has coloured a beautiful pink as an equally beautiful inflorescence is developing! I imported it some years ago from Paul Isley's Rainforest Flora. It is now referred to as *Tillandsia* 'My Sweet Rose' but I prefer to leave mine named as I imported it. I am not 100% sure it is the same plant. This one is positioned in a metal stand in a fairly sunny spot in the garden.

**Barbara Black:** My *Tillandsia capitata* x *xerographica* twins are looking just splendid and I had to bring one to the meeting to show it off. I grow them in full sun, no special treatment but clearly happy where they are situated hanging in full sun with lots of air movement. There is a lovely pink tinge to the very stiff, curved leaves very much like *T. xerographica*. The top bracts look like the *T. capitata* parent. These were pups taken off an original mother plant that bloomed about 4 years ago, worth the wait! A younger pup will no doubt bloom next summer. This hybrid is the result of cross between *T. capitata* as the seed parent and *T. xerographica* as the pollen parent.



*Tillandsia capitata* x *xerographica*

I was not aware that if the cross is made the other way round, ie. the seed parent is *T. xerographica* and the pollen parent *T. capitata*, you end up with a *Tillandsia* with slightly different characteristics, in this case, *Tillandsia* 'El Rancho' which is thought to be a natural hybrid from Guatemala. An 'aha' moment for me! Or am I just blonde?! Ha!

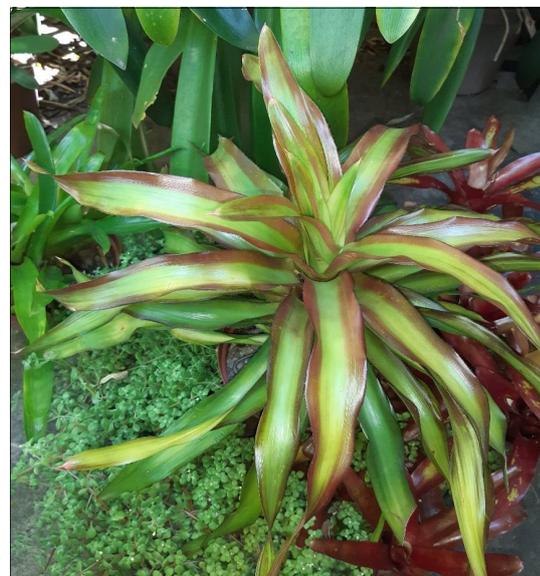
Seeing as we saw all Christo van Wijk's Neoregelia hybrids at the meeting last year, and some got to win one in the Raffle, I thought I would show one of the parents of those plants that is a particularly graceful and

pretty, but unusual *Neoregelia*; *Neoregelia* 'Shelldance'. It forms a rosette of fairly narrow, slightly twisted or undulating leaves that are reddish with a lighter greenish band up the centre. Strange but pretty. Apparently very slow to bloom. I grow mine in full sun. It has two pups now. It originated at Shelldance Nursery in California some years ago. Registered by D. Wood in 2000. Thought by some to be a possible x *Neotanthus*.

An interesting tidbit: From Shelldance Nursery, note added 2/2012: Questions asked at a Bromeliad Society of South Australia meeting about the odd looking inflorescence of *Neoregelia* 'Shelldance' suggests this may be a x*Neotanthus* hybrid. There is no proof but doubt was expressed in Andrew Steen's book 'Bromeliads - the Connoisseur's guide', published 2007 - "some people think it may be an intergeneric cross



Above: *N. Shelldance* blooming, from fcbs.org.



Barbara's *Neoregelia* Shelldance.

between a *Neoregelia* and a *Cryptanthus*. However, I suspect that it is simply an extreme variation of *Neoregelia* 'Fairy Paint'.

While this is unusual, it is not unheard of, with *N.* 'Burnsie's Spiral' being one fairly common example. These types of plant almost never flower but continue to put out new leaves, eventually forming a stem that may reach 50cm or more in height. I have a tissue culture sport of *N.* 'Purple Star' which is almost identical in form and appearance to *N.* 'Shelldance', the only difference being in the colour." We will leave this as a *Neoregelia* because that is how it appears in collections throughout Australia.

## Glossary of interesting words!

Some strange words that come up at meetings and what they mean. Will probably come up in the annual quiz at some stage!

Ageotropic	<i>Tillandsia bulbosa</i> is an example of an ageotropic plant. Ageotropic means growing in all directions ie. not affected by gravity.
Caulescent	Stem-like growth
Compact inflorescence	Branched inflorescence
Digitate inflorescence	'Finger-like' with 'branches' coming from one point; <i>Tillandsia disticha</i> has a digitate flower spike
Genus	A group of related plants in the bromeliad family, eg. <i>Aechmea</i> , <i>Neoregelia</i> , <i>Guzmania</i>
Inflorescence	The flower stem and flowers all make up the inflorescence
Myrmecophyte	The structure of this type of plant provides ants with food and or shelter. An example would be <i>Tillandsia bulbosa</i> with it's bulbous base which is ideal for accommodating ants.
Pediceal	Flower stalk
Species	A group of plants which have similar characteristics that separate it from another group.
Stolon	Long above ground runner or stem on which a pup will develop at the end
Stoloniferous	When pups/plants develop at the end of a stolon the plant is said to be stoloniferous

## Member News

- A big welcome to new local members Eldon and Althea Weyer and new country member Maggie Vergottini in Mossel Bay. We hope you have a long and rewarding association with us!
- The annual draw for the BSI Membership for local and country members took place at the meeting. The winners this year are Mavis Downey and Danie Taljaard (Cape Town)! They are the lucky recipients of an electronic BSI membership for the year and will access the Journal on the BSI website. Congratulations!!

- Lyn - I am excited that Maggie has also joined the Bromeliad Society International! This brings the total South African BSI membership to 15!

## Thanks

- Brenda and Bryan Wegner for hosting the January meeting.
- Christo van Wijk for donating his Neoregelia hybrids to the society which were used as raffle plants again this month.
- Dr Pete Pfister, Lyn Wegner and Robert and Tracy Moss for lucky draw plants
- Brenda Wegner, Dr Pete Pfister and Lyn Wegner for give-away plants.
- Dr Pete Pfister and Marianne Hillstead for catering a delicious tea.



New member Eldon Weyer.

## Congratulations to the January Raffle Winners

- Margaret Baker chose *Neoregelia* 'Goode for Grace' x 'Shelldance'.
- Sue Pema chose *Neoregelia* 'Goode for Grace' x 'Shelldance'.
- Mavis Downey chose *Neoregelia* 'Goode for Grace' x 'Shelldance'.
- Bev McGregor chose *Neoregelia* 'Goode for Grace' x 'Shelldance'.
- Philip Visagie from Pretoria chose *Tillandsia dura* 'Giant'
- Len Moriarty from Port Shepstone still to choose a plant.
- Nico Fouche from Pretoria still to choose a plant.
- Calvin Coetzee from Pretoria chose *Neoregelia* 'Battle Cat'.

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.



January local raffle winners Margaret Baker, Sue Pema, Mavis Downey and Bev McGregor.

**Attendance Lucky Draw Winners:** There were numerous lucky winners this month!

## Upcoming Society Events

**23rd February:** The meeting will be hosted by Dr Boots and Alison Horsfall at 22 Vincent Gardens Road, 2.00 for 2.30pm. Please bring along any bromeliads or Tillandsia you wish to share with the group for Show and Tell. Remember you get a free raffle ticket if you do a 'Show and Tell'! Don't forget to bring your chair to ensure you have a seat plus your own mug to help cut back on creating waste.

Topic: Tracy Moss will give a short talk with examples on how to prepare a bromeliad or Tillandsia for show. Plus you will see lots of other super broms too!

**If anyone is interested in hosting a meeting in 2020, please contact Lyn Wegner to book your spot.**

\* We are extremely grateful to anyone who hosts a meeting. We realize the society is growing in numbers and it can be quite a daunting prospect for some of us to prepare our gardens for a mass invasion. So a big thank you to those who have hosted over the years and those who will in the future! It is, believe it or not, a rewarding process, plus you can sit back and enjoy your garden afterwards because all the hard work is done!

Please let the committee know if there are any particular topics you would like discussed.

28th - 29th March: ELBSSA Show 'Bromeliad Magic' at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School.

26th April: Bev McGregor to be confirmed

31st May:



After the meeting.... Nancy Brindley, Roy Anderson and Vilma Murray. Below: Iola Saayman and Lee-Anne Botha.



- 28th June:
- 26th July: 11th Birthday Celebrations at 'Bromeliads for Africa'.
- 30th August:
- 27th September: Artistic Expressions at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School.
- 25th October: Hosts Michael and Zena McClaren in Vincent
- 29th November: Annual Bring and Braai, Auction and BBB Surprise Lucky Dip.

## Upcoming International Conferences

**2020:** 9 to 13 June, **70th Anniversary WBC2020** will be held in Sarasota, Florida, USA. For exciting information and pictures go to [bsi.org](http://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. Exciting news! 4 of our members have already registered for this conference! Start saving now! !

## From the Members

Country member, **Rob Hazell** is looking for a *Neoregelia* 'Big Pink'. You can contact him on 072 177 6004 if you have one to sell or swap.

**Chris van Zyl, Somerset West:** All my *Dyckia* are doing extremely well in Cape Town weather. I have planted up a length of guttering with young *Dyckia* plants which I propagated from seeds I ordered from



the 'Dyckia King' of South America', Constantino Gastaldi. In May 2013 I bought approximately 100 seeds, 20 different species and had a 73% growth success rate. After 4-5 years the plants started giving flower spikes as well as plenty of pups.



'Dyckia King of South America', Constantino Gastaldi.



One of the *Dyckia* plants grown from seed in May 2013. Now a fully mature plant.

I grow *Dyckia* seed in peat in a sealed plastic container, and as Constantino told me 'Do not open the lid for at least 3 weeks.'

Then when they were small plants approx 1 year, I re-potted them in a gutter on the window sill inside the kitchen (northfacing, morning sun but humid.)

Now the mature plants are all against the western elevation side of the property, but under semi shade trees. I water them at least once a week, a good wetting. They need good drainage.

I have a *Tillandsia* I acquired, but I'm not sure that the name I was given is correct. The flower spike is approximately 1m tall. The name given was *Tillandsia utriculata*. If anyone can confirm or can identify it for me I would be grateful. You can e-mail me: [chris.vanzyl@eoh.co.za](mailto:chris.vanzyl@eoh.co.za) or Whatsapp: 081 462 3282.



*Tillandsia utriculata* ?

Dr Pete Pfister has an *Aechmea ornata* var *hoehneana* blooming at last. A nice compact, smallish, green leaved Aechmea, rather spiky on the tips of the leaves! Quite a few members have this plant and it has never bloomed for them, so it is really interesting to see this inflorescence. It is growing in a semi shady area.

## From the Editor

Wow we have had super Summer rains through January into February but boy, has it been hot and humid for days on end over the last 3 weeks! Perfect for the broms and tillies but not so good for humans!

There is lots of colour and new growth in our garden thanks to the rain which has gone a little way towards saving us from the drought in the Eastern Cape. I am so thankful for every drop. The dams however, that supply East London, are not doing that great, so no celebrating and easing off of water saving measures till further notice. It's a good habit to get into anyway as we have all come to realize, water is a precious resource which we have taken for granted for far too long. Look at your municipal water bill and that alone will make you save water!!!! Lol!



A softly coloured inflorescence on *Aechmea emmerichiae*, which bloomed for the first time in our garden last month.



Pete's blooming *Aechmea ornata* var *hoehneana*

Do remember you can post your photos on the ELBSSA Facebook page. If you are not already a member, request to join the group and you can post your photos and comments. A nice way to share what is happening in your garden and for anything too big to bring to the meeting for 'Show and Tell'. You can also send news and photos to me for inclusion in the newsletter. Send them to [blacket@telkomsa.net](mailto:blacket@telkomsa.net) or whatsapp: 072 1787 421. After every meeting do check out Mark and Brenda's photos on the fb page, you just might see yourself!

A huge thank you in advance to Dr Boots and Alison Horsfall for saving the day and offering to host another meeting, so soon after the last one at their home. We truly do appreciate it. Hope to see you all there!

Barbs.

This is a publication for the **East London Bromeliad Society, South Africa** for the interest of its members. Articles may be used by non profit societies with acknowledgement to the author where applicable and East London Bromeliad Society South Africa. Please use the photos that accompany the article used. If you require higher resolution photos please request them from the Editor.

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.

**ELBSSA 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.

## Committee Members

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You will find ELBSSA 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](http://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](http://bsi.org)

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: [fcbs.org](http://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://bromeliad.nl/encyclopedia/> (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!