

Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group N.S.W.

Edition: January 2024

Agenda: General Discussion

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery
114 Pine Street Wardell 2477
Phone (02) 6683 4188

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

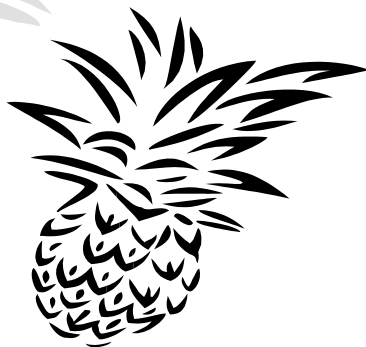
Next meeting February 15th 2024 at 11 a.m.

Editorial Team:

Ross Little
Helen Clewett
Lesley Baylis

pinegrovebromeliads@bigpond.com

Life Members: Gary McAteer, Coral McAteer
Debbie Smith, Shirley Smith
Ross Little, Helen Clewett



Statements and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Group.
Articles appearing in FNCBSG NewsLetters may be used in other Publications on request and provided that the source is credited.
Use of articles on social media platforms only with written consent for past present or future articles.

Meeting 21st December 2023

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
The 11 members were welcomed.
One apology was received.

General Business

Helen had started preparations for our Group's Christmas party a few days early this year due to the very hot days we were experiencing. It's Australia and it's summer, what else should we expect. Fortunately the weather was kind to us on the day being cooler and much more comfortable for all concerned in our small but merry Group.

It's been another good year for our Group with everybody sharing lots of tips and tricks about how they care for their plants, watering, fertilizing and shade cover requirements. That is what being part of a Group/Society is all about, sharing information and learning, it's great to see everybody helping each other.

Coral was full of Christmas spirit as she hung decorations up and handed out gift bags and lots of Christmas cheer. Thank you Mrs Clause.

After she got everybody seated and settled we briefly reviewed our Newsletter, then Gary got up to make an announcement calling both Helen and myself to the front of the Group. Unbeknownst to us this cheeky lot had been plotting for months to award us with Life Membership badges. What a surprise and thank you all very much, the honour is greatly appreciated.

We took this moment to thank everybody who have made donations of goods to help keep the Group running. Thank you to those who have supplied articles and photos for your Newsletter, keep them coming.

Next up was the Christmas Quiz, well scoring wasn't that great and the Wacky Words was a bit of a puzzle to some, but we had lots of laughs, thanks Helen.

A special thank you to the ladies for preparing a magnificent Christmas lunch and to everybody for bringing a plate of delights - that trifle was awesome!

After lunch the trophies and shields were presented to the winners of our 2023 Popular Vote Competition, photos and results are on pages 8 and 16. Each section was well represented during the year but hopefully in 2024 we'll see more of you challenge the 2023's winners.

To finish off a wonderful day we had our Gift Swap which was well supported by all. Thank you everybody for another great year at FNCBSG NSW.

Terminology

by Derek Butcher

Some growers do get concerned with understanding various terms used in naming plants and sometimes general writers wax lyrical on the subject without basing their comments on facts.

Plants found in the wild are covered by rules called the: **I**nternational **C**ode of **B**otanical **N**omenclature (ICBN) and taxonomists, as the name implies, deal with a taxon (plural taxa) which is defined as the international abbreviation for the "taxonomic group" or "taxonomic unit".

Plants arising in cultivation are covered by rules called the: **I**nternational **C**ode of **N**omenclature for **C**ultivated **P**lants (ICNCP) and horticulturalists act with a cultivar in the same way.

Let us look at some of the more common definitions used in the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated plants - Seventh edition 2004 because we should always refer to the official source (my comments are in [] brackets):

Clone - two or more individuals, originally derived from one plant by asexual propagation, which remain genetically identical.

Cultivar - an assemblage of plants that have been selected for a particular attribute or combination of attributes and that is clearly distinct, uniform, and stable in these characteristics and that when propagated by appropriate means retains those characteristics. [These can have originated either from the wild or from cultivation and are not covered by ICBN rules].

Group - a formal category denoting an assemblage of cultivars, individual plants, or other assemblages of plants on the basis of defined similarity (see grex).

Grex - a type of Group used in orchid nomenclature applied to the progeny of an artificial cross from specified parents. [note that this no longer applies to Bromeliads]. [[Ed: refer BSI Glossary]]

Hybrid - the result of a cross between differing plants or taxonomic units.

Mutant - an individual produced as a result of mutation.

Mutation - a spontaneous or engineered change in the genotype (genetic make-up of an individual), which may alter the phenotype (the sum total of all the characteristics of an individual plant). [in other words what the genotype actually looks like].

Sport - an apparent mutation which has occurred on part of a plant. [e.g. an offset].

If you as a writer want to explain these definitions further please do so but remember to always refer back to these definitions to make sure you are in fact explaining such definition and not your own perception of what you think it should be.

Reprinted from: Journal of the Bromeliad Society Vol.57, No.4, July-August 2007

From the **BSI Glossary** - 3rd Edition 2022:

Asexual: Sexless, without sex, such as in vegetative propagation. (Ed. offsets)

Grex: A group of species or hybrids: applied collectively to the offspring of a given cross; literally a flock or swarm. Generally identified by formula involving parents' names by hybridists before allocating a Cultivar name.

Grex name: A type of Group used in orchid nomenclature applied to the progeny of an artificial cross from specified parents.

Group name: (see Group).

Ed: Understanding terminology is a big help when reading articles which is why it's important to keep a BSI Glossary at hand. However correctly writing plant names is just as important especially when searching for details of a particular plant. If plant names are written correctly it helps narrow down your search.

Basic Rules:

- **Genus:** First letter capitalised. Maybe abbreviated
- **Species:** All lower case
- **Variety:** All lower case, preceded by "v" or "var."
- **Subspecies:** All lower case, preceded by "ssp."
- **Forma:** All lower case, preceded by "forma"
- **Natural Hybrids:** (Yes, there are a few of these) Given Latinized names, with the specific name [specific epithet] (all lower case) preceded by an "x".
- **Bigenerics** Two cross-pollinated bromeliads of two different genera are given their own name made up from letters of the two parents' genera, preceded by an 'X' — e.g. a cross between a *Neoregelia* and an *Orthophytum* would be *xNeophytum*.

Genus, Specie, Natural Hybrid names should be written in *italics*.

Hybrid names are written: Genus in *italics* e.g. *Aechmea*, the hybrid name itself is written within inverted commas ' ' and in regular text, each word of the name beginning with a capital letter e.g. 'Forget Me Not'. Correctly writing names helps direct one to the appropriate sites to do a search e.g. when written in italics we know it's a species, refer to the BSI - Bromeliad Species Database (BSD), when written in regular text we know it's a hybrid or cultivar, for these we refer to the Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR). Refer to page 16 for websites.

Vale: Derek Butcher OAM - January 4, 2024.
Bromeliad Society International Honorary Trustee 2008.
Wally Berg Award of Excellence 2012.

It was with great sadness that we received the news of the passing of one of Australia's, if not the world's, greatest source of information on Bromeliads we've had. Derek had devoted over 40 years of his life along with his wife, Margaret to Bromeliads. Derek compiled the most comprehensive resource files of Bromeliad descriptions, herbariums and photos which are now available on the Bromeliad Species Database. Derek was involved in many other resources available to us such as the BCR - Bromeliad Cultivar Registry, the Bromeliads in Australia website - look for Detective Derek, The New Bromeliad Taxon List and more.

He wrote articles that were published in Newsletters and Journals around the world and also some books he compiled and wrote are of note:

'Bromeliaceae Names and Synonyms'.

'The Amateur Guide to the Greyish Leaved Tillandsioideae'.

'Key to the Genera of Bromeliaceae'.

'Glossary of Terms'.

'Bromeliaceae and its Eight Subfamilies'.

'Checklist of Australian Bromeliads, Hybrids and Cultivars including Notes for the Hybridist - 5 editions from 1981 to 1997'.

Some cultivars honouring Derek in the BCR:

Aechmea 'Derek's Organensis Ha Ha'

Neoregelia 'Uncle Derek'

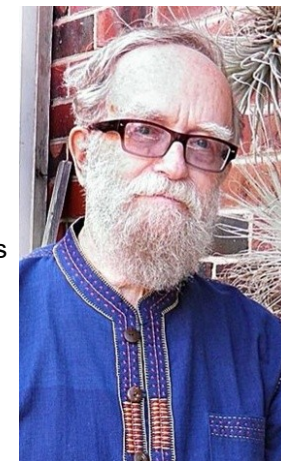
Tillandsia 'Derek'

Vriesea 'Derek's Dilemma'

Vriesea 'Butcher's Yuletide'

Neoregelia 'Butcher's Red Delicious'

Neoregelia 'Butcher's Treasure Island'



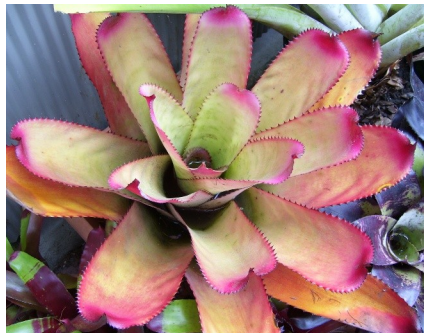
Tillandsia
'Derek'

Derek was always generous with his knowledge and shared written information readily. He often gave cryptic responses to queries that helped one to search in the right direction for answers - lessons were learnt from these experiences - he has been forever the teacher about everything Bromeliad to many of us in the Bromeliad world.

Through all his hard work Team Butcher will live on forever - RIP Derek.
His motto "Never Trust the Name on a Label"



Christmas display 2023



Neoregelia silvomontana



Neoregelia 'Crater'



Portea petropolitana

Alcantarea glaziouana ▶



Neoregelia 'Camelot'



Neoregelia 'Blackout' unreg.



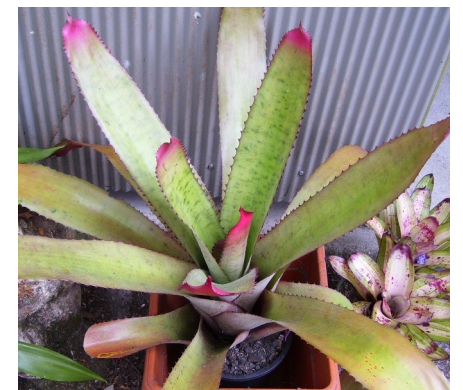
Neoregelia 'Tiger Head'



Neoregelia 'DeRolf'



Neoregelia 'Pink Blush'



Neoregelia silvomontana



Michelle Hartwell received trophies and shields for:
Open Champion and Judges Choice Champion 2023



Ilan



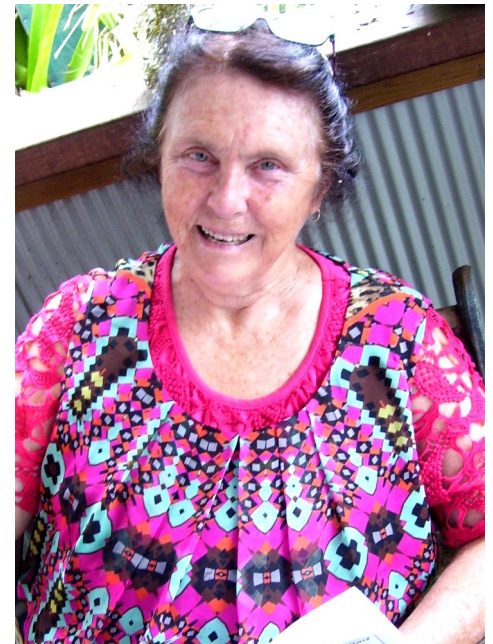
Kayelene



Coral McAteer Decorative Champion 2023
Gary McAteer Tillandsioideae Champion 2023



Mitch



Keryn



Shirley and Debbie



Helen and Ross
awarded Life Membership

Competitions are over for 2023 and they don't start again until January 2024, ending in November.

Unfortunately not all of our plants follow meeting timetables and flower when it suits them.

Keryn felt her *Billbergia* 'Showtime' had to be shared with us, as with all *Billbergias* their flowering period is very short and it would be all over and done with by next meeting.



Billbergia 'Showtime' is a hybrid created by Vic Przetocki of Western Australia. It's a hardy plant that can handle bright light to really bring out the *Bill. vittata* cream spotting influence in the foliage.

Billbergia sanderiana is very strongly portrayed in this hybrid by its large black spines, the pendant inflorescence with frosted mid-pink scape bracts and the blue tipped, pale green petals.

When you're thinking about dabbling in hybridising firstly consider the traits of each parent you are going to use and wish to pass on to your new creation. Hopefully you'll be successful just like Vic has been.

Remember assess your results, if you haven't succeeded in your goal, cull and try again perhaps with another parent.

Aechmea fendleri Andre ex Mez, 1896.

Named to honor Augustus Fendler, 1813-1883, who was a highly respected botanical collector.

The type plant/form Fendler 2454 (holotype, K; photo K 7447; isotype, GH) was collected near Colonia Tovar, Venezuela, 1856-57.

It grows epiphytically in humid forest at 500-1300 m altitude in Venezuela and Trinidad.



Grown in our garden as a terrestrial in dappled light, it gets to 1100 mm across by 1000 mm high including the inflorescence which is a lavender panicle 400 mm long. This plant when in flower is an impressive standout in the garden that catches one's eye easily. The leaves are armed but only with 2 mm spines which get smaller toward the leaf apex. So some care should be taken when carrying out any maintenance around the plant.

Aechmea fendleri has been reasonably popular with hybridizers over the years with 22 hybrids recorded on the Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR). Some often seen in our collections: Ae. 'Blue Tango', Ae. 'Buckwheat', Ae. 'Spring Beauty' and Ae. 'Yamamoto's Flamingo'.



Functions of Your Potting Mix

by John Catlan

Stop! And for the rest of this article think about what your potting mix should be, then compare it with what you use. Don't defend your mix because you use it. Everyone must take into account cost, time you want to devote to your hobby and also the availability of ingredients, but your plants have predetermined requirements that do not relate to these constraints. Over the years, our basic philosophies on the culture of Bromeliads in containers have changed and so has the potting mix. Viewed from this angle, the ideas are important as they motivate the evolving change for the improvements.

The Bromeliad growers belonging to any one affiliate have an enormous number of plants that are the same or require the same conditions but the soil mix for every grower is different and they all place their faith in the good/bad results they achieve with their personal mix. I believe that often the mix we prefer is based around a special group of broms that were grown during a particular season. The possibility that some factor other than the potting mix may have been largely responsible for the superior results is totally ignored because the potting mix is a tangible that we can touch. The intangibles such as temperature and its variables, humidity, shade or lack of it from a nearby tree, rain, watering program, wind or lack thereof, attention through having time or interest or keenness are all hard to define or remember, so we place our trust in our lucky potting mix.

There are four sections to this article: Support, Moisture, Aeration and Nutrients.

Support

Where do your plants grow? They may grow on cliff faces, attached to trees, rocks, deep litter and, yes, there are some that only grow in the ground, e.g. Pitcairnia, Bromelias and Ananas. How many of these terrestrials do you grow in comparison to the epiphytes such as Neoregelias, Vrieseas, Tillandsias, Billbergias, Aechmeas etc? The pot contains the growing medium and the growing medium supports your plant. The bromeliads that we normally grow do not grow in soil but in great clumps of roots and leaf litter attached to trees as well as the dead leaves (of the bromeliad) that fall down over the root ball.

Moisture

Living plants are largely composed of water that is normally obtained from the soil and it is usually the limiting factor in their growth. It seems to me a constant supply of moisture and/or water is so important to bromeliads that they have developed more adaptations for collecting, storing and conserving water than is

their due. For example:

- Pineapples and Bromelias grow in huge clumps that protect the ground from drying out and the shape of the plant channels rain and dew towards the base of the plant.
- Pitcairnia grow in moist shady locations along streams and soakages.
- Dyckias and Hechtias grow in open situations around and between rocks that collect and funnel rain to their edges. Rocks are great collectors of dew and also very good mulch. They keep the soil underneath moist. Although these plants are bromeliads they are classified as succulents because they have developed thick fleshy leaves to hold water.
- Billbergias are generally tube shaped and in the wild much more so than you find in collections. They grow in open conditions towards the tops of trees where they get maximum light. Their adaptation is a very tight tube that holds water and is subject to very little evaporation. This tube sheds and resists heat in the sun similar to a crowbar standing upright.
- Guzmanias grow in darker areas that are moist. This ability to grow in darker areas is a very important adaptation because as the temperature drops, the relative humidity rises and evaporation of moisture from the plant is slowed down. You can be pretty certain that plants growing under these conditions do not like to dry out.
- Neoregelias typify what people consider to be a bromeliad. A circular bunch of leaves with a cup in the centre that holds water, but the plants deceive you. They hold far more water in the outer leaves than they do in the centre. A lot of bromeliads that do not have a well-defined cup hold water in the outer leaves.
- Tillandsias, the silver scurf you find on the silver tillandsias helps to protect the plant from moisture evaporation and holds moisture in contact with the plant for a longer period of time so the plant has a better chance to absorb its requirements. Plants normally manufacture their food during daylight hours. This results in moisture evaporating but tillandsias have reserved this process by manufacturing their food at night when there is less evaporation of moisture.
- Brocchinias have adapted to survive under very wet conditions. The one thing that they do not lack is water but there is a downside to such a situation in as much that nourishment is leached from the soil, so to counteract this at least two of this group of bromeliads are carnivorous, *Brocchinia reducta* and *Brocchinia hechtiioides*. Their style of growth as a tube is a pitfall trap with waxed walls and a lower digestive zone.

- Aechmeas, big or small, seem to have developed the ability of holding a respectable quantity of water in their foliage but *Aechmea brassicoides* seems to have developed an adaptation to conserve moisture that is not found in other bromeliads (as far as I know). The pups form normally with a central cup that holds water. When more than half the leaves have developed, the last few leaves totally seal the cup and when you look down onto the plant, it looks like a small cabbage, hence the name 'brassicoides' (like a cabbage). Any evaporation from the cup is stopped. The flower spike punches a hole through the leaves when emerging. The flower is long-lasting and has a very delicate and pretty appearance.

Aeration

The roots of plants obtain water and nutrients which are carried upwards to the leaves. The leaves manufacture compounds required for growth and reproduction and in the process use carbon dioxide from the air. For the roots to function, they must be supplied with a source of energy and conditions suitable for using it. The top of the plant sends some of its energy back down to the roots to promote their growth. Roots need oxygen and expel carbon dioxide and because of the tiny air spaces in the soil through which the gases move, aeration of the roots can become a limiting factor. A good soil mix must ensure the best possible aeration consistent with its other requirements. Excess moisture retained by the mix in a container reduces the air space. This makes it important to have maximum porosity. It is primarily by diffusion that gases move into and out of the soil but with pots, water is effective in displacing soil air. If the soil pore spaces are very small, water will fill them and reduce aeration until the water content has been reduced by evaporation or by the plant's use. Bromeliads can exist without roots, but will they be vigorous enough to stand adverse conditions and reproduce and look good?

Mineral Nutrients

Nowadays with liquid feeding and slow release, this should not be a problem. It should only need slight adjustment for superior results - but how much is wasted by not having a good root system?

Reprinted from: Journal of the Bromeliad Society Vol. 49, No.3, May - June 1999.

For more handy hints, tips and tricks by John Catlan refer to his booklet:

Bromeliads under the Mango Tree

Open Popular Vote Champion - 2023

1st Michelle Hartwell

Tillandsioideae Champion - 2023

1st Gary McAteer

Decorative Champion - 2023

1st Coral McAteer

Judges Choice Champion - 2023

1st Michelle Hartwell

Web Links for Checking Correct Identification and Spelling ?

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR): <http://registry.bsi.org/>

Refer to this site for correct identification and spelling of your hybrid or cultivar.

Bromeliad Species Database (BSD): www.bsi.org/members/?bsd

Refer to this site for species identification, photos, descriptions and more.

New Bromeliad Taxon List : <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/>

Refer to this site for latest species name changes and correct spelling.

Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) <http://bromeliad.org.au/>

Refer to this site for its Photo Index, Club Newsletters many with
Table of Contents Index and there's Detective Derek Articles.

Keep these web sites set as desktop icons for quick reference access.

Where do I Find the Dates ?

www.bromeliad.org.au then click "Diary".

Check this site for regular updates of times, dates and addresses of meetings
and shows in your area and around the country.