

# BROMELIANA

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## OUR SPRING PLANT ORDER

by Herb Plever

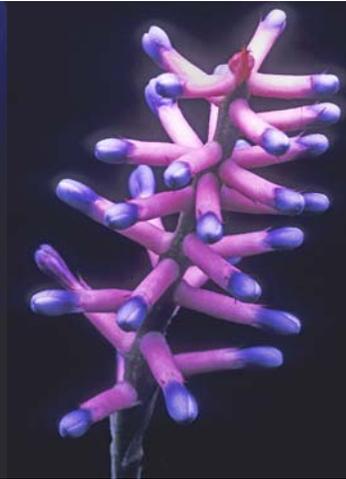
After mostly freezing temperatures and high winds that have afflicted us since mid-November, I had hoped to be writing this article for our Spring plant order with signs of Spring weather. (We have to live in hope.) But it is very windy now and the temperature is 30°F. and it is expected to go down to 25°. This is incongruous with the fact that both 2012 and 2013 were the hottest years in 4,000 years. What seems to be a contradiction is part of a natural dialectic, and it is patently and scientifically clear that global warming and climate crises will be impinging on our life styles with increasing severity.

So to cheer you up, we have our annual spring order on April 1st. At the next meeting you will see pictures of the plants on the order in bloom. Since the nasty weather cut down on our attendance in March I have added the tissue culture plants to the general order; you'll have a second chance to order these plants. I have cut down on the size of the order to make it easier for you to make choices, and most plants listed are of small or small/medium size.

Among the small Aechmeas I have added a dwarf form of *A. chantinii* (not a tissue culture but a close to mature plant. I have also added *A. recurvata*



*Aechmea* 'Lucky Stripe'



inflorescence

*var. recurvata* and brought back *A. 'Lucky Stripe'*, a marginated cultivar of *A. gamosepala*. Four forms of *Canistropsis billbergioides* and *Canistrum fosterianum* are on the plant list pursuant to interest in these plants expressed at the March meeting.

There are eleven lovely *Cryptanthus* on the list, all either barred and marked or intensely pink. Five of them are new to the order:

'Dianne Molnar', 'Elaine', 'Menescal', 'Racing Stripes' and 'Thriller'. Held over from last year is the very pink 'Arlety' that caused members to ooh and aah when they saw it delivered at the May meeting. By special request we are repeating *Cryptanthus beuckeri*, *C. fosterianus* and *C. 'Strawberries Flambe'*. All these Crypts are dramatic and beautifully marked; you should add a few to your collection.

The colorful *Dyckia* 'Cherry Coke' and *D. 'Red Ripper'* and the tiny *D. remotiflora* are for our spiny plant lovers.

In addition to the many beautiful *Guzmanias* available as tissue cultures, I have added an old favorite - *Guzmania* 'Fiesta' as it is small enough to fit on a window sill. Seven of the highly marked

**NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 promptly at 7:00 P.M. at the [Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. \(between 36th & 37th St\) Room 16M](#)

**VIDEO OF PLANT ORDER** - Photos of the bromels on the spring order including many closeups of their inflorescences to help you make your choices. Take advantage of this chance to buy great plants at bargain prices, delivered to you in May.



Neoregelia 'Big O' photo by L. Vinzant



Neoregelia 'Wisteria'



Neoregelia smithii

and colorful Neoregelias are tiny to small plants that can fit on a window sill. Two Neos by Lisa Vinzant on the list are new to us: the exquisite *Neoregelia* 'Wisteria' by Lisa Vinzant with a spread of 14" to 16", and the small, red-dotted *N. 'Big O'*. Lisa's *Neoregelia* 'Blushing Tiger' is a repeat from last year, because it is very light responsive and will develop bright red stripes even on a good east window. The small *N. smithii* is back because members oohed and aahed at its attractive lilac center - and the price is right!

By request, the mini *Neoregelia lilliputiana* and mini *N. 'Palmares'* are back. Members gawked at the large number of stoleniferous plants put out by a single mother of *N. lilliputiana*, and *N. 'Palmares'* by Chester Skotak is striking with its white longitudinal stripe, green margins and red barring.

New on the list of Orthophytms is the red *Orthophytum* 'Brittle Star'. *Orthophytum gurkenii* and *Oftophytum navioides* are repeats that you should try.

We have our usual long list of about 25 Tillandsias still at decent prices. In addition and long absent from recent lists are: the fragrant *Tillandsia bandensis*, *T. dura*, *T. edithae*, *T. funckiana*, *T. heteromorpha*, *T. leiboldiana*, *T. macbrideana v. atroviolacea*, the rubra form of *T. neglecta* and the and the bushy form of *T. tectorum* from Ecuador.

In addition to 8 beautiful Vriesea tissue cultures, were are listing *Vriesea guttata* (first time in a long time), *V. racinae* and *V. 'Splendriet'*. It is a great list of plants from which you can revitalize your collection. You'll be convinced when you see the photos of these plants. □



Tillandsia leiboldiana



Tillandsia heteromorpha



T. ionantha 'Huemalula'



T. heteromorpha Ecuador



Vr. guttata ph. Pam Hyatt

## DEUTEROCOHNIA MEZIANA and MY MINI PINEAPPLE

Readers may recall my report last spring that my *Deuterocohnia meziana* was growing rapidly, and that I had put it out on my terrace in May in the hope that it would bloom. Well, it didn't bloom but just grew there even more vigorously, so by August it spread to a diameter of 31"! Now I had a real dilemma - I would have no room and it was unsafe to bring that spiny monster back indoors.

I took the bull by its horns and tried to force bloom chemically. The plant had no cup so I couldn't use ethylene pills, but I still had some Ethephon left from experiments to force bloom I did many years ago. I prepared a spray of extra strength, put on protective gloves, a hat and a mask, stood up-wind of the plant and sprayed all the leaves of my *Deuterocohnia meziana*.

(I was so concentrated on this job that I failed to observe that one of two mini pineapple plants I had growing on the terrace was only 2 or 3 feet down-wind of the *D. meziana* - about which more, later.) Well, the spiny monster did not bloom by the time it was close to the first frost in mid-November when I usually bring in my plants from the terrace. Even tender species can stay outside until then because they have become fully cold-hardened.

I made the decision to leave the *Deuterocohnia meziana* out on the terrace for the winter, in the hope that we might have one of those moderate winters we've had in the past. I thought it would be a good test of the plant's cold tolerance and would make a good subject for an article. Unfortunately we had a very cold winter with freezing

temperatures and high winds, and the plant slowly started to show brown leaves and finally died.

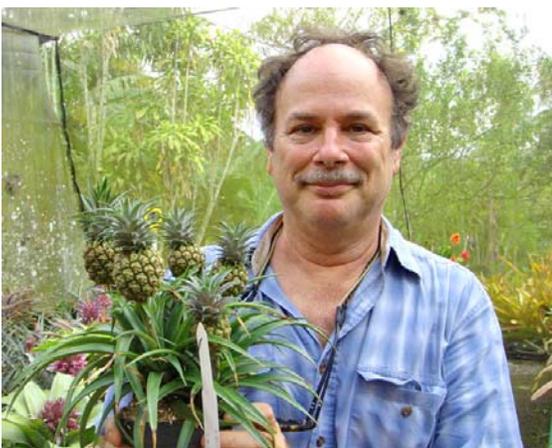
I lamented its demise as well the beautiful yellow flowered inflorescence I had hoped to produce. But I did in fact manage to inadvertently induce a very different bloom on that mini pineapple.

In May, 2011 I had bought 2 tissue cultures of a miniature spineless *Ananas comosus* created by Chester Skotak. (Chester is really a genius at hybridizing, and he grows literally millions of plants on his property in the mountains of Costa Rica outside of San Jose. It used to be a coffee plantation, so he has lots of room to create and grow hybrids.)

My pineapple plants grew very well wick-watered in a 5" pot, and did especially well in the fresh, moving air on my sunny terrace during the spring, summer and fall. Still they had far less light than sunny Hawaii or Puerto Rico, and I didn't believe they were mature enough to bloom.

It is now apparent to me that the mini pineapple plant in close proximity to the *Deuterocohnia meziana* received some of the Ethephon spray, because right after Christmas last year I noticed a swelling in the center of one of the mini pineapples. This was only 2-3/4 years after the tissue cultures had been first put in tiny peat pots.

The inflorescence did come up and produced a miniature pineapple. The plant is larger than the plants in the clump held by Chester, still as an indoor grown plant it was likely immature; normally they will be larger than ones grown in the outdoor sun because of the difference in light. It is possible that



Chester Skotak with clump of mini pineapples  
pineapples all in fruit



my two miniature pineapple plants



my mini pineapple

Chester forced blooms on the clump shown on p. 3.

As it grew, the fruit on my plant shown below produced blue, closed flowers from each node, but it is a little smaller than the fruits on Chester's plants. Perhaps it will get larger - I'll wait and see. In the meantime my other mini pineapple plant has wintered in a south window and is growing well. (Maybe too well.) Compare the sizes of the two plants in the photo on p. 3.

Remember that these are miniature versions of the edible pineapple, *Ananas comosus*, that we all love to eat. Once I'm convinced it has stopped growing, I'll cut it off and test it for taste and juice.

I think that my plants are too over-grown for

minis. This is due both to the reduced indoor light and to my high-strength fertilizer regimen. I probably should reduce fertilizer and exercise more patience rather than push the plants to maturity.

I know that fruiting a pineapple plant indoors is a challenge, but I hope I will be able to produce a mature, fruiting miniature pineapple without forcing it - just as I have been able to grow and flower many other "difficult" plants.

Regrettably this plant is no longer available, but both of my plants already have 2 or 3 pups that I plan to bring in to a future meeting when they have grown enough to be safely potted. After these have been removed, the plants will produce more offsets.

## ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO BROMELIADS - AN UPDATE

by Herb Plever

My article on the contribution of woman in the March issue of Bromeliana has drawn much favorable comment. In the conclusion I recognized that I may have omitted the contributions of some women, and I apologized in advance for any inadvertent omissions. I take this opportunity to make a correction, and to add the names of woman who have done and/or are doing important work.

First, with respect to the organizational work I said was done by Pam Koide Hyatt and Margaret Case in northern California, I was thinking of their organizing the North County Bromeliad Society. But I received several emails from members in southern California noting that Pam and Margaret had also been very active in the San Diego Bromeliad Society.

I owe an apology to my friend Eloise Beach of Apoka, Florida for having inadvertently omitted her in the article. Eloise has made contributions in a number of areas. Certainly she has done valuable work in bromel horticulture and education, and in the Central Florida Bromeliad Society. But I also want to recognize Eloise's role in a critical event in BSI history; in May, 1980 new BSI by-laws were adopted, that gave representation to local bromeliad affiliates world wide. This was after two years of intense work, organized and led by Sue Gardner Sill, Eloise Beach, Racine Foster and me.

In my March article I alluded to the work of many women in the fields of taxonomy and molecular

DNA research. I add here the names of other women who made and are making important contributions: Carolina Granados Mendoza of Mexico, Lucia Hechavaria Schwesinger of Cuba who gave seminars at the 2006 World Conference in San Diego

At the Bromeliad Symposium at the Monocots V Conference at the New York Botanical Gardens I attended last July, I met a number of women scientists who are doing molecular research on bromeliads and are now part of a new international organization that was organized there. This work is clarifying the evolutionary history and the taxonomy of the *Bromeliaceae*. Its leader is Prof. Dr. Ana Maria Benko-Iseppon of Pernambuco, Brazil. Other women active in this work are Clarisse Palma-Silva of Brazil, and Katharina Schulte and Nicole Schuetz of Germany. There were other woman scientists there, but I regret that I've misplaced their names.

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