

BROMELIANA

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OUR SPRING PLANT ORDER

by Herb Plever

In opening my article on our Spring plant order last April, is said:

“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.)” This year was worse than last year with much snow. We got another 6 inches on March 2nd, expect another 3-5 inches of snow on March 20th and the cold and very high winds make conditions even worse - and more snow is being forecast.

So to cheer you up, we have our annual spring order on April 7th. 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.

Here is a summary of what you can expect in the order: Among the Aechmeas we'll repeat *Aechmea* 'Lucky Stripes' the small albomarginated form of *A. gamosepala*, and we've added four very nice cultivars: *A. 'Echidna'* - like *chantinii* smaller (*A. chantinii* x *A. recurvata*), *A. 'La*



Aechmea 'Echidna' fr. BCR

Tigre' (an *A. nudicaulis* cultivar), *A. 'Rainbow*' (an *A. orlandiana* cultivar) and *A. 'Sangria*' (a purpurea form of *A. chantinii*).

Pursuant to interest expressed at the March meeting we'll have 6 *Canistropsis* including four forms of *billbergioides* and *Canistrum fosterianum*. There are six lovely *Cryptanthus* on the list, all either barred and marked or intensely pink.

We're repeating *Cryptanthus* 'Elaine', and I digress here with a suggestion about growing it. *Cr. 'Elaine'* tends to spread long on its horizontal axis; if treated too well it can reach 17-18"

horizontally across. I suggest growing 'Elaine' in your maximum light in a 4" pot or smaller and rotate the pot 90° at each watering.

It doesn't like to dry out, so a smaller pot means you will have to water the medium once twice a week, or grow it wick-watered as I do. Even when wick-watered, 'Elaine' will empty the reservoir quickly. Fertilize it only once or twice a month with a spray of low nitrogen fertilizer



Cryptanthus 'Anne Collings'



Cryptanthus 'Michael Andreas', cultivar of 'Brittle Star' - ph. Michael Kiel

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, April, 7th, 2015 promptly at 7:00 P.M. at the [Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. \(between 36th & 37th St\) Room 16M](#)

PLEASE COME EARLY SO WE CAN START ON TIME.

VIDEO OF PLANT ORDER - Photos of the bromels on the spring order including closeups of their inflorescences to help you make your choices and buy great plants at bargain prices. Please bring in plants for sale and for Show and Tell.



Neoregelia 'Palmares' (Skotak), BCR

T. 'Mora' Bak cultivar of T. leiboldiana

Vr. ospinae v. gruberi ph by Michael Andreas, shown by David Shiigi

such as 5-12-26.

We're repeating C. Menescal' and C. 'Thriller' and bringing back C. 'Anne Collings', and adding C. 'Chill Factor' and C. 'High Voltage. All these Crypts are dramatic and beautifully marked; you should add a few to your collection.

The dramatic Dyckia 'Michael Andreas' with its dark foliage and whitish spines is for our spiny plant lovers. In addition to Guzmania sanguinea and G. 'Magnifica' we're added the beautiful G. 'Superb', a cultivar of G. lingulata.

The Neoregelia list has six small plants and one small/medium sized plant - all well marked and colored. I've included Chester Skotak's Neoregelia 'Palmares' show at the top left. We know N. 'Gespacho' is very light responsive and will color up well indoors. The four very small neos have strong markings and color, and they will create clumps when grown well. Neoregelia 'Blushing Tiger' is very light responsive and will develop bright red stripes even when grown in an east window.



Vriesea 'Rosita' from Victoria (AU) B.S. Newsletter June, '14 (Black background by Editor)

We are repeating Orthophytum gurkenii, O. navioides and Quesnelia 'Tim Plowman', very beautiful plants that we urge you to try. We'll discuss cultural practices for these plants and for all the plants you order at the May meeting.

We have expanded our usual long Tillandsia list to 37, still at decent prices. Five are fragrant: Tillandsia graomogolenis (see photo below), T. malleontii, T. purpurea, T. streptocarpa, and T. xiphioides. And we've added Tillandsia 'Mora', a T. leiboldiana cultivar with an upright inflorescence made by CornBak of the Netherlands. (See photo on top.)

We are listing six Vrieseas we encourage you to buy. Vrieseas are low altitude plants that do well in indoor light. New on the list is the striking Vriesea 'Rosita', whose leaves are strongly albomarginated. 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 edithae



Tillandsia ehlersiana Dimmett



Tillandsia graomogolenis



T. streptophylla ph D. Butcher

HYBRIDISTS AND CULTIVAR STANDARDS

by Herb Plever

For a many years I have voiced my concern in BROMELIANA about the growing number of look-alike cultivars that have been registered in many genera such as *Neoregelia* and *Cryptanthus*. This issue has apparently concerned other growers and bromeliad activists. In the February, 2015 issue of the Newsletter of the Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group (Australia), its knowledgeable editor, Ross Little, has reprinted a 2002 article by Derek Butcher which I have excerpted here:

“Notes for the Hybridist by Derek Butcher 2002. Is your hybridising really necessary? There are hundreds of true species of Bromeliads that have been found in the wild and many of these or their progeny are in collections. However, they will evolve in a different pattern to their "brothers" and "sisters" in habitat. There are some very beautiful true species and you could have a varied collection just from these. You can have 1cm midgets to 10 metre giants. You can have green, spotted, or striped leaves. You can have an inflorescence of 100 flowers or just one. What a variety! Are you still toying with the idea of hybridising "just for fun" ? **Think Twice...** Remember that in the wild the birds and the bees do exactly what the flowers want them to do!...What do you want to achieve? ...A good hybridist has a definite goal. Are you looking for: Hardiness, compact growth, broader leaves, better markings, larger inflorescence, scented flowers? Simply crossing two plants that happen to be flowering simultaneously, and hoping for the best, is a hit and miss operation but practised by many.”

In the February issue of the Newsletter of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, H. Alton Lee, a long-time activist in the BSI and the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, wrote an excellent article on the problem which is worth an extended excerpt:

“... the goal of a new plant hybrid—bromeliad or any other variety of plant—should be an honest effort to create something that is genuinely different and new - unique even. And this is where the big problems begin to aborn because too many would-be hybridists lose all their personal objectivity when they look at their batch of new seedlings.

This lack of true discrimination and a careful and demanding eye means that far too often yet more

‘same old same old’ items get introduced and registered...Indeed, the situation has spun wildly out of control with the end result being a flood of plants that are not very distinguished or with any lasting merit. And the situation is getting even worse.

Hundreds of new plants keep being introduced, which look exactly like what is already widely available. Only the plant names are different. There are now so many thousands of bromeliad hybrids that even someone with unlimited resources and space the size of Montana could not hope to collect them all; and if they actually did, they could never discern many from one another because the differences are so subtle and marginal...The bromeliad world is long overdue trying to address this situation, which is definitely not going to go away.

A serious dialogue needs to get under way about how to solve the problem NOW - and the registration process is probably going to need to be updated top to bottom with much more rigorous and specific standards for what can and should be registered, if the whole process is not to collapse into utter uselessness...It may be necessary to set up some sort of panel of “experts” with very good eyes and very tough standards. Obviously such a panel could not just be limited to actual hybridists, who might not be inclined to be thoroughly objective when faced with potential market competition from other hybridists.”

I want to add some specific data to heighten and enhance the above description. Consider the fact that in genus *Neoregelia* there are only 123 recognized species, while there are more than **4,000** registered neo cultivars. In genus *Cryptanthus* there are only 79 recognized species, while there are almost **500** registered cultivars. And if we were to add the many hundreds of named but unregistered neos and crypts plus the many hundreds of plants sold just by the formula names of both parents, the number of neo cultivars would be close to **5,000** and for cyptanthus it would be more than **600** cultivars.

The problem is both technically and politically complicated, but honest, open discussion is a way to start. A panel designated by our Board of Directors should include our current and former Registrars, Geoff Lawn, Derek Butcher and Don Beadle. □

SOME RECENT BLOOMINGS

by Herb Plever

The adjacent photo is of *Aechmea* 'Morgana' was sent to me by Mimi Gussow because she had lost the label of the plant and was unsure of its identity. 'Morgana' is still my favorite *A. fasciata* cultivar; it grows quickly and compactly, matures and blooms in about two years after a pup is established and its spines are inconspicuous.



Aechmea 'Morgana'



Guzmania 'Nacho'



Neoregelia 'Blushing Tiger'

Cryptanthus 'Strawberries Flambe' was grown under fluorescent lights; in flower it was only 10" in diameter compared to its grandparent which was 14" across. The 9th to 12th flowers recently came up (see adjacent photo), and two more are coming up now. The parents put up 12 pups so I'm expecting a lot of offsets. *Cryptanthus* 'Betty Ann Prevatt' also has recently flowered.



Crypt. 'Strawberries Flambe'



Billbergia 'Colores' is a very tall cultivar by Don Beadle; its seed parent is *B. vittata* which has much more pronounced silver bars and color. I gave 'Colores' away after it flowered. Two pieces in a pot of the beautiful *Billbergia* 'Fantasia' also recently bloomed; I've grown and flowered this plant for many years; it is a permanent part of my collection.



Billbergia 'Colores'

Guzmania 'Nacho' is a Skotak hybrid tissue cultured by Deroose. Its leaves are heavily pencil-striped and it sports a gorgeous inflorescence. I also recently bloomed *G. mini* 'Lois' from a Deroose tissue culture. It's not really a mini, as it has a diameter of 14"-16". (See photo above right.)

Neoregelia 'Blushing Tiger' is one of the few Lisa Vinzant crosses that is actually light responsive.

It grew compactly in an unobstructed east window and colored red in the center when it flowered. Most of Lisa's beautiful hybrids need the strong Hawaiian sunlight to color up as her photos show.



Tillandsia argentina



Tillandsia andreana

Tillandsia argentina is a favorite tillly; it grows really rapidly into clumps. It has stiff, tough leaves and matures and flowers fast. My clone of this plant has a branched inflorescence with 2-3 strong pink flowers. The clumps quickly get huge so I've often been able to bring small clumps to meetings. I've also bloomed *Tillandsia andreana* and 4 other tillies and *Vriesea guttata*.

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