

BROMELIANA

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MY BROMELIADS ARE TOUGH

by Herb Plever

In May, I usually put out many broms on my terrace for the spring, summer and fall to enjoy the moving air and good light, even if the May temperatures are still in the low 50°s. When the nights start turning colder in September, the plants begin to get cold hardened and they can take low temperatures without damage, so I keep them outside until it gets down to about 33-34°.

This year, however, my co-op has been doing major repairs and refacing of the brick and concrete facade. The workmen on scaffolds do a lot of power drilling which creates clouds of dust, and since I was not sure when they would reach the area of my terrace, I only put three plants outside so I could easily take them inside before any drilling started there:

Chester Skotak's mini pineapple (*Ananus comosus*), a spare *Guzmania* 'Nacho' and a big, mature *Tillandsia* 'Creation' (*T. platyrachis* x *T. cyanea* by Corn.Bak).

I hoped they might bloom upon receiving outdoor sunlight for many months. Sometime in September the pineapple and *G.* 'Nacho' looked like they were starting to bloom, but the *T.* 'Creation' just kept growing. I got this plant in May of 2013, and I am disappointed to see it getting bigger and bigger but not blooming. It is now a full three feet in diameter.

Sometime near the end of October I was awakened at 8:15 a.m. by the sound of



Mini pineapple (Skotak) *A. comosus*



T. 'Creation' 3 ft. across

very loud hammering and drilling outside my window. I saw that the workmen were working right next to my terrace and ran to take in my three terrace plants, but the terrace was covered with a cloud of dust so thick I couldn't see through it. The work continued for the better part of the day, so I had to wait until the next day to check the plants. The next morning I inspected the plants, and I found they were completely covered with a thick coat of grout and brick dust. I put each plant in my bathtub and hosed them down with the shower head until all of the dust particles were flushed out and the leaf axils were clean and free of dust.

All three plants were placed in my south facing window unit; they are healthy and appear to be unaffected by the dust coating. The mini *Ananus comosus* put up a mini pineapple that flowered in the Thanksgiving week (when I couldn't photograph it because I was occupied with family company).

The *Guzmania* 'Nacho' is slowly blooming, but the *Tillandsia* 'Creation' is still growing and shows no sign of blooming. If it hasn't bloomed on

my terrace by next summer, I'll start treating it with repeated doses of Ethephon. The plant is strong and healthy, and it should respond to a good bloom stimulant.

THERE WILL BE NO MEETING IN JANUARY.

BEST WISHES FOR a JOYOUS HOLIDAY and a HAPPY NEW YEAR

MY GROWING ENVIRONMENT

by Pauline & Geoff Edwards

(Reprinted from the Bromeliad Gazette, Oct-Dec '14 newsletter of South Australian B.S.)

Whatever plants one grows, be they Roses, Vegetables, Orchids, Bromeliads, etc., the elements of water, air movement, growing medium and light play an important role in their successful growth. The challenge is to get a good balance of those four correct for the environment in which you grow. Nutrients could also be added to these elements.

Within those elements some basic features always apply to the genera being grown, and should be adopted every time, e.g., certain plants should not be fertilized; some should not be given direct summer mid-day sun; some should not be over watered, yet some should be kept completely dry; while some should be placed on a mount and not in a pot. These generalities can always be provided in cultural notes to assist growers (especially for those inexperienced) as they cope with the challenge. Then comes the practical fact that two plants can be adjacent to each other, one will flower, one will not (one will fruit, one will not – and often we can only guess why) !!!!

Tillandsia 'Moonlight', *T.* 'Houston' and *T.* 'Cotton Candy' were all obtained in Queensland in January 2013. I mounted them on pieces of hard wood that gives good drainage in the winter (which is needed in my growing conditions in the Adelaide Hills – but gives a requirement of more watering attention in the summer - another story). They hang with many of my other Tillandsias on a wire mesh at the end of a pergola facing the the south east. There is no covering above them.

This gives them full morning sun all year round (until approx. 11am), then part shade till mid afternoon and full shade for the remainder of the day.

Being open to the natural elements, ample air movement is provided and natural rain can fall on them if coming from a general easterly direction. Unless they receive natural rain they have not been watered during winters and are sprayed when I think they need it in summer. No fertilizer has been applied to any of these (or the other plants). I have a simple philosophy, 'grow them tough' – that is what happens in their natural environment.

The end result is that *T.* 'Moonlight' and *T.* 'Houston' have flowered, but *T.* 'Cotton Candy' (which was hanging between the flowering two) has not. Same treatment, same environment, slightly different end result – why is this so??? Approximately 10 other Tillandsias on the same mesh have flowered. *T.* 'Moonlight' is particularly pleasing for me – to see the stem with open seed pods and fine silky hairs, along with three further flower stems emerging – this being a first for me... Perhaps this result is why the collection grows – buy two of each and then one can grow them in different positions and compare the end result!

(Editor' note: 'Moonlight' is a commercial designation for Tillandsia 'Moonlight' - its hybridizer and parentage are unknown, though clearly it is derived from T. schiedeana. T. 'Cotton Candy' is a cultivar of T. 'Houston' (T. stricta x recurvifolia); Mark Dimmitt is the hybridizer of both plants. There no discernable difference between the two plants - some 'Cotton Candy' may be slightly larger and more rosette shaped than 'Houston'.)



Tillandsia 'Moonlight' (phBCR)



Tillandsia 'Cotton Candy' photo by Pam Koide Hyatt

Tillandsia 'Houston' photo by PamKoide Hyatt

TILLANDSIA SALMONAE



Tillandsia salmonae
photo by Renate Ehlers



T. salmonae ph Ehlers



T. salmonae ph A. Boeker



T. salmonae



T. salmonae

T. salmonae was discovered growing on a rocky surface in Chiapas, Mexico by Renate Ehlers in 1989. This brief note on that plant was prompted by a comment by Derek Butcher in his Roving Reporter in the Oct-Dec 2014 issue of Bromeliad Gazette, newsletter of the South Australia Bromeliad Society. Derek reported that Len Colgan had proudly displayed a flowering *Tillandsia salmonae* at one of their meetings, but that Len was critical of the color of the floral bracts which were not as salmon as he would have liked. In her description Renate said the spikes were brightly colored, but she also later complained that the bracts lose color in the winter in line with Len Colgan's lament.

Judging from the photos of isotype specimens at the herbariums in Selby Gardens and the University of Vienna and from different photos of live plants, it appears to be very variable in size, in the number and spread of its floral bracts and perhaps in density of its

trichomes. It can be medium-small to medium-large in size; the inflorescence has a range of a single to 8 salmon colored flower spikes.

The photo of the plant in habitat shows it has 2 widely spread floral spikes, and the four photos of live plants show a single spike, 2 spikes, a 6 spike and an 8 spike inflorescence. The 6 spike plant in the photo by Renate has strictly upright spikes close to the rhachis, while the habitat and 8 spike plant have fully spreading spikes. The single spike plant shown here is small and has a more lepidote trichome coat, and the 8 spike plant is large with more greenish leaves. The photo of *T. salmonae* by the German Tillandsia expert, Andreas Boeker, shows a medium small plant in bloom with the inner leaves turned to red on anthesis. It is a very attractive plant that makes me frustrated because the plant is not on any nursery list and is hard to obtain. (I have a nudging suspicion that such variability portends we might be dealing with different species.)

ANOTHER GREAT HOLIDAY PARTY

On December 18th we partied past 11 pm at the beautiful home of Michael Riley and Francisco Correal who once again generously hosted NYBC's end of the year celebration. And they provided a succulent turkey with a delicious stuffing, cole slaw, salad, cheese, home-baked limoncello sponge cake and delicious wines. Members brought whitefish salad, baked zucchini pie,



The Dining Room and centerpiece with *Deuterocohnia meziana* and some Crypts

sausages and vegetables, cake and coffee. Unfortunately a number of members missed out due to illness or were out of town. We all spent time inspecting the broms, orchids, aroid, ferns, etc. growing epiphytically on the floor to ceiling cork wall that is lit with fluorescent lights that have now been converted to T8 tubes. The plants are frequently sprayed with water; both lights and spray are con-



Giant *T. streptocarpa*



small lemon tree with fruit



Aechmea 'Ensign'



Michael and Francisco's study



Huperzia (Lycopodium) squarrosus and Spanish moss

trolled by a timer and the water is caught by a trough at the base of the wall and is recirculated by an automatic pump. *Aechmea* 'Ensign' is a variegated sport - its genes that control chlorophyll cells are unstable, so pups may have wide white variegation or be albomarginated as are the 5th generation pieces shown above.



Enjoying a sumptuous holiday meal



Left half of epiphytic wall



Mimi Gussow, Carol Smith, Jennifer Shovlin, Michael, Nadine Baker and Stephanie Kmetz

N E W S and N O T E S

2015 DUES are due and payable. Single and joint memberships are \$25.00; the domestic subscription rate for BROMELIANA is \$8.00 and an overseas subscription is \$12.00. Please mail your check payable to N.Y. Bromeliad Society to Barbara Lagow, 54 West 74th Street, #603, N.Y.C. 10023.

NO JANUARY OR FEBRUARY MEETINGS - Please make a note that we'll have no meetings for those months, as members find it difficult to cope with the anticipated nasty winter weather.

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