

# *The* BROMELIAD SOCIETY BULLETIN

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The giant *Tillandsia Grandis*, flowering in the garden of the Society's president. Native of Mexico, it flowers when about thirty-five years of age. The flower stalk is eleven feet high.

## A Message From the President

### *In the Beginning*



The seed has germinated! A new horticultural society has been born. *The Bromeliad Society* came into being in the State of California where there are no native bromeliads growing, but where there are many natives growing bromeliads.

It takes more than wishful thinking to start a real living and growing society, and it took a live, earnest group of Southern Californians to bring this idea into being.

A preliminary meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, May 21, 1950, by a group of bromel boosters, whose only communication on bromeliads up to that time was a Round Robin started some time previous. This meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Dorothy Behrends in Los Angeles; and after a luncheon and a meeting, called to order by Miss Victoria Padilla, it was decided to hold an organizational meeting in September.

It was on Sunday afternoon, September 17, 1950, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Overton in Glendale, California, that a small but enthusiastic group of plant lovers met and organized a society, not just a local society but an international society for the benefit of bromeliad enthusiasts all over the world.

Much to my own surprise, as well

as to that of the Southern California group, I flew from Orlando to Los Angeles and arrived just in time to enjoy a delicious luncheon which preceded a harmonious discussion on the problems involved in forming a Bromeliad Society.

With the guidance of Mr. David Barry, Jr., acting as temporary chairman, it was decided upon to ask twelve members to serve on the Board of Directors. The following were chosen:

Dr. Lyman B. Smith  
Dr. H. B. Traub  
Mr. Mulford B. Foster  
Mr. Ladislaus Cutak  
Dr. Russell J. Seibert  
Mr. David Barry, Jr.  
Mr. Elmer Lorenz  
Mr. Morris Schick  
Miss Victoria Padilla

Officers were duly elected in the following order: Mr. Mulford B. Foster, President; Mr. David Barry, Jr., First Vice President; Dr. Russell J. Seibert, Second Vice President; Miss Victoria Padilla, Secretary, and Mr. Frank H. Overton, Treasurer.

A Board of Honorary Trustees was selected, all of them from different countries. They will be introduced later.

Matters concerning the constitution, the publications, the dues, memberships, and affiliated groups were discussed and agreed upon.

A number of bromeliads that had been donated by members of the group were auctioned off, making a

nucleus of \$87.00 for the first bank account of the treasury.

Three months have passed and already that group has grown with surprising rapidity. It has grown from a local group of less than thirty Californians to an international group of nearly one hundred charter members representing the following countries: Argentine, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Canal Zone, Costa Rica, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the U. S. A.

### FROM ABROAD

The great wealth of knowledge and experience stored up in the first period of the bromeliad popularity in Europe should be better known to the bromel connoisseurs of the Americas; and, likewise, the Europeans should have the opportunity of learning more of what has been and is being done now in the Americas, for during the past decade most collecting and introduction of new species into horticulture has been done by Americans. First it was almost entirely Europeans who carried on the interest, although all the collected material came from the Americas. Then the Americans became interested and took an active part in the work. Two world wars temporarily stopped a great deal of the activity in Europe and depleted the collections to a great extent, but there is still definitely the sustained interest. Now we will strive for an international cooperation and interest.

We feel there is no better way to encourage this international cooperation than to have a Board of Honorary Trustees consisting of members who represent several different countries.

#### The Honorary Trustees

We are very fortunate to have as one of our honorary trustees M. Charles Chevalier, formerly director

of the famous Liege Botanical Gardens in Belgium. It was here that many of the most beautiful bromeliads ever discovered were first grown and exhibited. M. Chevalier has been a devotee of bromeliads for at least fifty years.

Another honorary trustee is a famed horticulturist, M. Jules Chantrier of Paris. He is still an active grower of bromeliads after a half century of growing them. He is noted for his very fine hybrids.

Mrs. Muriel Waterman, though born in Iowa, has been "down under" in Auckland long enough to be a "native" of New Zealand. She is a devotee of bromeliads and has a greater number of genera represented in her collection than possibly any other private collection outside of the U. S. A. We are pleased that she will be an honorary trustee.

Dr. F. C. Hoehne, Director of the Institute of Botany in Sao Paulo, is Brazil's foremost botanist and conservationist of native flora. His monumental work with orchids and his great cooperation in the works on bromeliads and other outstanding plant families place him among the peers in the botanical world. We welcome him as an honorary trustee.

Mr. C. H. Lankester of Costa Rica has been for years one of the most indefatigable plant collectors that Central America has ever known. A Britisher, who has lived in Costa Rica for forty years, knows, grows and loves his bromeliads, orchids and other decorative plants, as few persons do.

Dr. A. Castellanos, of the National University at Tucuman, Argentine, has been an ardent worker in the family of bromeliads. His work on this family in "Genera et Species Plantarum Argentinarum" 1945 is most outstanding. Volume III, which

contains his monograph on the Argentinian species, is the most elaborate and artistic treatise ever done in the family.

Dr. David Fairchild, world wide plant explorer and writer, is admired and revered throughout the plant world for his enthusiastic and tireless work in plant introduction. He was one of the first in Florida to interest others in using bromeliads in naturalistic tropical plantings.

Mr. Charles G. Hodgson of Melbourne, Australia, has been growing bromeliads for many years. His collection is the largest in Australia; he has done much to interest and introduce his pet family of plants to many others in that great country.

Dr. Henry Teuscher, Director of the Montreal Botanical Garden, in Montreal, Canada, is a very thorough plantsman. By his keen interest in bromeliads, the family is well represented in that institution.

### GENERALLY SPEAKING

For many years bromeliads have interested scientist and botanist. Possibly one of the first recorded attempts to give them scientific classification was in 1623 when Banhius gave the pineapple the scientific name of *Cardus brasiliensis folius aloes*. Then in 1737 Linneaus called this same pineapple, *Bromelia folius spinosis fructibus connatis*. Now we call it *Ananas comosus*.

When the first white man arrived in South America the Indians called it *abacaxi*. Today most of us know it as just pineapple. After all a pineapple with any other name tastes the same.

Most of the scientific classification has been done on the bromeliads since 1840. Between the years 1870 and 1900 the bromeliads were enjoying a great popularity in Europe. Most of

the collections of living plants, of course, were in the principal botanical gardens such as Kew, in England, Liege in Belgium, Paris in France, Berlin in Germany, and St. Petersburg in Russia. Soon the plants came to America to private estate greenhouses and to botanical gardens in New York, St. Louis and Philadelphia. Now they may be found not only in the Botanical Gardens everywhere, but in the small private gardens, in my home and yours.

Through all these years bromeliads were still not very commonly known, but their "day" has come and plant lovers everywhere are more and more interested in these oddities.

While possibly the greatest number of bromeliad growers will be found, at first, in the southern United States, because of the more favorable climatic conditions to growing them outdoors, the number of enthusiasts is spreading to northern climes in this country and abroad. Even the orchid fans are realizing the decorative quality of bromeliads and are more and more, finding that they make a splendid addition to any collection of orchids. This is nothing new, for, certainly, mother nature has been growing them together, side by side, in the trees for quite some time.

The flowers of orchids are the goal for every orchid connoisseur. Generally speaking, the plants of orchids are not especially decorative plants that can be used in the home; they are grown almost exclusively for their flowers. Bromeliads, on the other hand, have a prominent place in the world of decorative plants.

Many species would be most decorative even if they never produced a single flower; in fact, their flowers in many cases are really "extra dividends," and some of them pay off unusually well. Some of the *Vriesias* are

adorned with striking inflorescences for a period of six months. Many of the *Aechmeas* and *Neoregelias* put on an exciting show from six to ten months. In fact, I feel that every orchid fancier should have some bromeliads in his collection and, of course, every bromeliad fancier should have some orchids in his collection. They are both beautiful and attractive because of their contrast to each other. It is a matter of cooperation, not competition in beauty.

Just as I find bromeliads, orchids and aroids all growing together in the same jungle trees, I find the loveliest collections of plants where there is that same symphony of color and form of plant combinations.

The orchids have been glamourized. Everybody knows what an orchid is, just as does everyone know the rose. The orchid has not pushed the rose off the market nor will it ever. Styles change, but no useful plant or thing is lost or thrust away—we just use more of them.

Bromeliads, then, are coming into their own. There have been but few commercial growers, so there have been but few plants available; this is rapidly changing. Today they are pictured in leading garden, home, and fashion magazines. We are learning how and where they can be used.

More books will be written, more articles published, and greater exchanges made of information and experiences in growing them.

Yes, we are on the threshold, just entering the House of Bromeliads and you members will be responsible for the work ahead. The compensation will be a hundredfold because of that greater understanding and communion with the indefinable through association of beautiful bromeliads.

You, the members of this new organization, The Bromeliad Society, will

be the pioneers who will do much of the missionary work. There is no greater joy than that which is experienced by one who finds himself in a growing hobby. It strengthens his feeling of kinship with the Infinite. His interest grows keener and finer as he finds others interested in the same work.

The new Bromeliad Society will be made up of plant-conscious folks, who will exchange experiences and strive for greater knowledge concerning these bizarre but beautiful members of Bromeliaceae.

This first Bulletin is little more than a heart-to-heart chat. Our future publication, we hope, will be a bi-monthly bulletin with worthwhile material in it for every reader. There will be something for both the professional and amateur, but it must not be done in an amateurish way.

## OBJECTIVES AND AIMS

The aims and objectives of the Society are numerous. They will grow and become more obvious as we develop and as each individual broadens in his experiences. There must be active contributions from many, not just from the few.

### 1. Conservation

Every effort will be made to form a conservation program in order to preserve the native bromeliads in the different countries where they grow in the wild. Florida already has a state law protecting its bromeliads and orchids as well as other wild plants. Our honorary trustee, Dr. F. C. Hoehne has done much along this line in Brazil.

### 2. Hybridizing

Much more hybridizing can and will be done. Up until the past ten years practically all the bromeliad hybridizing was done in Europe, principally in Belgium and France. Only

a few of these hybrids reached the collectors in America and no doubt many of them were lost during the two world wars.

Most of the crosses made in this country, until recently, have been billbergia hybrids; with but few exceptions they were the same crosses that had been previously made in Europe. Now, we stand on the threshold of really doing a fine work in developing this great family of plants. Their decorative qualities alone, which are becoming more and more appreciated, will place them well in the front with the more commonly known "decoratives." They will be grown in greater quantities, and it follows that the demand will increase as they are better known.

### 3. Publications

Our Bulletin and our Society will die aborning unless we continue to breathe life into it. It may need several transfusions to start out with, but to progress into maturity there must be a definite life-interest for its very survival.

Therefore, it is essential that we have members who will not only pay their membership dues but members who will contribute written accounts of their experiences. If you have had little experience with bromeliads, we solicit your questions so as to help form the nucleus of articles which we will write for the benefit of the readers. Our most successful writing will be when it helps you understand bromeliads and bromeliad problems. The only way we can help you know bromeliads better is to answer your questions which we shall be glad to do through the medium of the Bulletin. It will be impossible to answer personally all the letters that will come. We will welcome good photographs and accounts of personal experiences from any of the members.

We already have a very fine article, written in French, by one of honorary trustees, the famous horticulturist, M. Charles Chevalier. It is a fine report on hybrids in Europe and it will be used in a coming Bulletin.

Those of you who can translate French and German could make a distinctive contribution to our publications by translating a number of articles that have been published in Europe.

We will make the Bulletin a source where the published description and the registration of new hybrid bromeliads can be placed on record.

One of our publication plans can include the reproduction of many of the botanical documents which the writer has on microfilm from the Library of Congress. For several years Mrs. Foster has been working on this and has accumulated the bibliography and titles of a large mass of publications on bromeliads. Much of this material will be of great interest to the members so that they and future generations may know more of this history. The Bromeliad Society Bulletin is the logical organ for this work.

### 4. Nomenclature

One of the most urgent and practical aims of the Society is to straighten out the nomenclature. It is our sincere hope that we can all get together and earnestly work for an agreement as to nomenclature not only within the U.S.A. but internationally. We need the help and cooperation of every botanical garden, botanist, grower, and amateur enthusiast. This is no small undertaking, for many bromeliad enthusiasts have gone for years without any authoritative source or very little attempt to try to correct the misnamed plants. This applies to every country, including Europe where the plants were first introduced. Much of this confusion, however, in

the earlier days is quite understandable, for there were many botanists and collectors who named the plants without very much reference or knowledge as to whether or not a certain plant had been named before. It was a sort of "free-for-all" condition that existed. Enthusiasm was high. Actual research was in its infancy. Communication was slow if not lacking. Agreement was wanting. One needs only to look back over some of the records published in the past to realize this.

If it were not for the recorded facts, it might be difficult to understand how one species of a bromeliad could receive so many different names over a period of years, as for instance, our common Spanish Moss, *Tillandsia usneoides*. It has had not less than twenty-two scientific names, not to mention its numerous common names.

Another outstanding instance of a plants receiving a name which was changed many years ago by the recognized authorities, but not by the horticulturists and enthusiasts in Europe, is the very beautiful and popular bromeliad *Aechmea fasciata*. This species introduced into cultivation in 1826 was first described from plants that flowered at Kew Gardens in Oct. 1878. It is undoubtedly the most popularly known and grown bromeliad in all of Europe today, as well as during the past thirty or forty years. In Belgium where it is grown by the thousands and used as a decorative house plant, it is still known as "*Billbergia rhodocyanea*."

This particular plant was named *Billbergia fasciata* by Lindley in 1828 in the Botanical Register, but in 1830, Schultes considered that it belonged to another genus and named it *Hohenbergia fasciata*. Then in 1847 Lemaire described this same plant as *Billbergia rhodocyanea*. Ten years later in 1857

Beer described it as *Hoplophytum fasciatum*. A few years later in 1883 Wawra renamed it *Aechmea rhodocyanae* but soon decided he had made an error by so doing and then renamed it the following year *Quesnelia rhodocyanea*.

Baker in 1879 finally gave it the present name *Aechmea fasciata* after he had seen it flower for the first time in the Kew Gardens in 1878. This latter name has been accepted ever since by botanical authorities although, unfortunately, it is still grown and sold commercially in Europe as *Billbergia rhodocyanea*.

Thus, it may be quite possible that the mistaken name of *Billbergia rubrocyanea*, listed and sold by the late Richard Atkinson of Leucadia, California, derived its name from the nearness to the original European name *rhodocyanea*. Unfortunately this mistaken name was applied to the true species of *Billbergia saundersii* now sold all over the United States as *Billbergia rubrocyanea*. There never has been a billbergia with this species name in any bromeliad botanical work that I have ever seen.

Before the misnaming gains any greater momentum, it is hoped that the Bromeliad Society can and will extend every effort to keep this nomenclature as accurate as possible.

Today there is little disagreement as to which is the recognized authoritative taxonomic botanist on the family of bromeliads. This authority is none other than one of our directors, Dr. Lyman B. Smith, formerly of the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University, but now of the National Herbarium of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

Dr. Smith, in his extensive work, has followed at great length the late Dr. Carl Mez of Germany, the botanist who did the most comprehensive work

that had ever been done on the Bromeliaceae up until that time.

These taxonomic botanists must have an exhaustive wealth of material at hand, not only herbarium specimens of types but photographs, publications, records, and descriptions of species that have been recorded ever since the scientific study of this family began.

As a part of the clearing-house plan on names I would like to offer, for the time being, an *Identification Service*. If any member of the Society who wants a name of a bromeliad ascertained, will send to me a plant or an entire blooming inflorescence and two full leaves (taken from all the way down at the base), with photograph if possible, and with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, I will attempt to return the proper name. Please do not, however, expect me to enter into a correspondence concerning every specimen that might be sent to me, having now more than I can attend to.

As another way of helping members name their bromeliads correctly we will, from time to time, publish a list of the meanings of the descriptive terms used in describing bromeliads, as well as the meanings of the Latin names of the species. This is an attempt to maintain a constant use of the proper name of each bromeliad, even though we are well aware that the layman loves to have a pet name in lieu of the scientific name.

Finally, as president I wish to say that it will be a pleasure to help guide this new Society into its initial steps of development. I hope that each charter member can and will make every effort to send in at least one new member just as soon as possible. Remember this Society can breathe only through the life blood of its members.

With enthusiasm, interest, and a desire to assist the other fellow, our journey will be a success.

Mulford B. Foster.



### Note From the Secretary

Our Bromeliad Insignia used on the stationery, membership cards, etc., was designed by our president. This design is made up of significant parts of bromeliads. The outside circle with jagged edge represents the spiny margins found on the leaves of most of the genera of the two sub-families called Pitcairnioideae and Bromelioideae, such as the genera *Billbergia*, *Ananas*, *Dyckia*, *Puya*, etc. The plain inner circle represents the smooth-edged leaves found in the sub-family Tillandsioideae such as the genera *Vriesia*, *Tillandsia*, *Guzmania*, etc. Two heavily inked spots on either side of the words "organized 1950" represent the microscopic peltate scales formed on the leaves of all bromeliads. In the center the epiphytic *Vriesia* growing on a tree limb represents one of the most recurring types of inflorescence formation throughout the two largest genera of the family, *Vriesia* and *Tillandsia*.

Victoria Padilla.

### OUR FIRST LIFE MEMBER

We are highly honored by having Mr. Franklin M. DeVoe of Gulf Hammock, Florida, join the Bromeliad Society as our first life member. This means much to our young, struggling society.