

***Tillandsia* Symoisum**

Review and discussion of a Bromeliad genus in transition.

To be held: June 7, 2006
World Bromeliad Conference, San Diego, California



There is more interest in the study and classification of Tillandsia at this time than at any other time in history. Scientists on several continents are working on the ecology and taxonomy of this challenging group. At the same time, a large following of enthusiastic commercial and hobby growers devote their interest and energy to growing these interesting plants as horticultural specimens.

The Problem and the Opportunity

The genus, as currently recognized, is being examined by scientists around the world, who use a variety of tools and techniques--and often reach very different conclusions. *One thing is for sure, Tillandsia, as we currently know it, will change over the coming decades.* Whether the new taxonomy will be a stable classification that reflects the total of what is known about the species and species groups, or will suffer an extended state of flux, with little agreement among scientists, may depend on the degree to which they communicate during the process.

Your or your Bromeliad Society's contribution in support of this symposium will facilitate communication among *Tillandsia* taxonomists and inform *Tillandsia* enthusiasts of the reasons behind taxonomic changes. We have commitments for nine presentations by established scientists, as well as by several students who will impact the future of *Tillandsia* classification.

We need your contribution to help defray travel and lodging expenses, so it can happen.

Please mark your donation as "for *Tillandsia* Symposium" and mail it to Ed Doherty, 3533 Milton Ave, Dallas TX 75205-1221.

If there is enough interest in this symposium, the BSI may organize a larger symposium in the future that would allow more *Tillandsia* experts to participate.



CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:

Dr. David Benzing is author of *Bromeliaceae, Profile of an adaptive radiation*, and two other books on bromeliads, as well as dozens of scientific research papers. Dr Benzing, a Biology Professor at Oberlin College, has produced a massive body of work on the physiology of bromeliads, with a special emphasis on *Tillandsia*. Not only has Dr. Benzing been a frequent speaker at former World Bromeliad Conferences, he is considered an international authority on epiphytes and has delivered addresses to 15 international symposia around the globe. Although his work has not focused on taxonomy of *Tillandsia*, his extensive research on members of the genus and their relatives give him a perspective on the group's systematics that few taxonomists can equal.

Dr. Adolfo Espejo Serna is Professor of Botany at Universidad Autonomia de Mexico, Iztapalapa, Mexico. Dr. Espejo has published numerous studies on *Tillandsia* over the past decade, including the circumscription of *Viridantha* as a new genus for a group of species that are indigenous to Mexico, including the former *Tillandsia atroviridipetala* and *T. plumosa*. Dr. Espejo's students also contribute to the systematic study of *Tillandsia*.

Dr. Walter Till is Professor of Botany at the University of Vienna. Dr. Till is exploring the relationships among the Tillandsioideae by using modern molecular techniques, including DNA sequencing. These techniques are providing exciting new information about the relationships among all living organisms and are expected to play an important role in defining natural groups within *Tillandsia*.

Tania Chew Taracena, a doctoral student at Instituto de Ecologia, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. – The genus *Tillandsia* L.: a phylogenetic exploration of its internal relationships.

Carolina Granados Mendoza, an undergraduate student at Universidad Autonoma de Mexico, in Mexico City. – Systematics of the *Tillandsia macdougallii* complex (Bromeliaceae)

Brian Soditi, formerly assistant to Harry Luther, Director of the Bromeliad Identification Center at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, and currently a master's student at Florida International University, in Miami, Florida. – Systematic Study of *Tillandsia fasciculata* by testing current classification of the complex using morphological data and microsatellite data.

Lucia Hechavarría Schwesinger, Doctoral student, Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática. Dpto. Plantas Vasculares-Herbario Nacional Academia de Ciencias, Cuba. – Topic to be announced.

Renate Ehlers, a passionate amateur *Tillandsia* specialist who has explored much of Latin American in search of *Tillandsias*, has published many accounts of *Tillandsia* in its habitat, and described many new species. Stuttgart, Germany – Variation in *Tillandsia makoyana*/T. *dasyliroiifolia* complex.

Dr. Sue Gardner-Sill has published several research papers dealing with the systematics of *Tillandsia* and is currently Executive Director of NABA International Butterfly Park in Mission, Texas. – Adaptative radiation in *Tillandsia utriculata*.