

BROMELIANA

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THE 22nd WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON

by Herb Plever

The bi-annual World Bromeliad Conference this past June was hosted by the Houston Bromeliad Society at the Westin Galleria Hotel. This was the fourth time that Houston hosted a WBC, the earliest being the very first World Conference in 1972.

I have attended all of them; they were, among other pluses, very well organized and run, and this one, perhaps, was even more so. Conference Chairmen Steve Reynolds and his experienced staff managed every aspect of the conference: scheduling, registration, quality lunch and supper and at the banquet, garden tours, the judged plant show, plant sales, and 8 seminars without a hitch. Kudos again to Houston.

The BSI Board of Directors held its annual meeting in Houston before the conference opened and it should be credited for a most important important decision: Lyn Wegner of East London, South Africa was elected to be the new BSI President! This is an historical event



Aechmea miniata var. *discolor*
variegated form - show entry



A. fulgens
inflor. (see page 2)

- Lyn is the first non-American BSI President! We have, finally, truly become an international society. Rick Royles of Florida was elected as Vice-President and we have a number of newly elected Directors.

In the past year there has been good participation and continual correspondence and exchange of views by Directors and Officers, confronting the task of (re)building our

membership and finances, and I'm confident that they will do the job.

There were only 179 attendees - a too low figure that no doubt was affected by the costs of airfare, the hotel, registration, food, etc. that many members could not afford in the current economic turndown. On the plus side were the 342 show entries that were mostly of high quality and interest. Moreover, there were plants in a good range of genera, broader than in any recent conference shows.

As expected there were lots



Hechtia 'Aztec Sun'

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, September 6th, 2016 promptly at 7:00 P.M. at the [Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. \(between 36th & 37th St\) Room 16M](#)

THE WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON - a report and video of the plants, displays, gardens and people at the conference. Please bring in plants for Show and Tell and for sale. We'll give out 5-12-26 fertilizer.

of beautiful Neoregelias and Cryptanthus; but there were also Aechmeas, Araecoccus, Billbergias, Dyckias, Edmondoa Guzmanias, Hechtias (!), Hohenbergias, Lymanias, Neophytums, Orthophytums, Quesnelias, Aechaeas, Tillandsias and Vrieseas.

We rarely see Hechtias at WBC shows but thanks to Andy Siekkinen there were 6 beautiful Hechtia entries.

The award for Best In Show went to an *Orthophytum benzingii*, for Best Commercial entry to

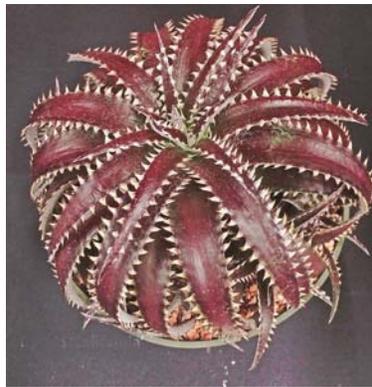


Cryptanthus 'Anne Collings'

Michael Kiehl's *Dyckia goehringii*, for Best Aechmea to *Aechmea pectinata*, for Best in the Aechmea division to a variegated form of *Aechmea miniata* (misnamed *A. fulgens* - see photos on page 1), for Best in the Cryptanthus division

to *Cryptanthus* 'Ken Vinzant', for Best in the Dyckia division to *Dyckia* 'Kestwick', for Best in the Guzmania division to *Guzmania* 'Kapoho Fire' cv. 'Red Streak', for Best in the Tillandsia division to *Tillandsia pedicellata* (?). There were many other outstanding entries. In this report I will show some of the plants I liked best. I include an entry for *Racinaea crisa* which did not get a special award. Most judges don't appreciate how difficult it is to grow that plant well, and the entry was finely grown.

The plant sales area was huge and well stocked with broms by 9



Dyckia 'California'



Dyckia 'Kestwick'

commercial vendors. In addition, Sue Sill had a booth with many of her beautiful paintings for sale.

As in all WBCs (especially since Harry Luther is no longer with us) there were a number of misidentified or misnamed plants.

Thus *Racinaea fraseri* was identified as a *Tillandsia*, *Guzmania* 'Magnifica' was named as *G. lingulata* var. *magnifica*, and a lovely variegated form of *Neoregelia elutheropetala* was called var. *variegata*.

Cryptanthus 'Ruby Star' was named 'Rubin Star' and a Crypt entry called *Cr.* 'Strawberries Flambe' was not that cultivar.

The awarded entry labeled *Aechmea fulgens* was really *A. miniata*. See the photos on page 1; *A. miniata* has an elliptical or globose inflorescence that is compound from its base to the apex. The inflorescence of *A. fulgens* is compound for the lower 1/3 and the top 2/3 is simple.

The entry that was awarded Best in the Tillandsia division was wrongly identified as *Tillandsia pedicellata*. This is no cause for the Classification committee to be embarrassed; this error would have slipped by every other BSI Show Classification Committee except in Australia and New Zealand. Every club Down Under has some Tillnut members who would have spotted it. See my comment at the end of this article to learn about this identification



Cryptanthus 'Ken Vinzant'



Guzmania 'Kapoho Fire' cv. 'Red Streak'



Best Artistic Design- "Houston We Have A Problem w *T. lindenii* and *Neoregelia* 'Thelma Hodge'

problem. With so many entries, it's not easy for the classification committee to get it all right. Many errors could be avoided by using our TAXON and BCR sites as references.

I have included a photo below of the entry *Racinaea crispa* that did not get special mention. Most judges have not had experience in growing this plant and may not know how difficult it is to grow it well like this specimen.

Rule 38 governing eligibility for show entries opened the way for many entries with formula names in violation of international show entry rules and of common sense. SubSec 3 allowed plants "subsequently registered" (?) and Subsec 4 flat out said "listed by formula". It is time the BSI Board of Directors acted to bar the entry of plants with only formula names in all standard BSI shows.

I attended and enjoyed all of the 8 seminars: Eric Gouda and Renate Weaver presented a video of their exploration of the Peruvian Andes. Dr. Gregory Brown (U. of Wyoming) presented his argument for more research in the morphology and anatomy of the bromeliads to complement the work that is being done in molecular biology - instead of just waiting for the results from the DNA labs. Jose Manzanaras, the author and leading expert on the bromeliads of Ecuador, presented a video of broms in that environment.

Dr. Thomas Givnish (U. of Wisconsin) gave a fascinating review of 100 million years of Bromeliad evolution - its origins, ecological adaptations,

geography and species diversification.

Pamela Koide-Hyatt, a *Tillandsia* expert, collector and hybridizer reported on what she has learned in 30 years of hybridizing. Bruce Holst of Selby Gardens reported on his annual exploration of epiphytes in Belize, especially bromeliads, with a fascinating video.

Elton Leme from Brazil is one of our leading taxonomists, and he presented a provocative proposal for the (re)organization of what he calls the "Cryptanthoid Complex" that includes *Cryptanthus*, *Orthophytum* (with 5 new sub-genera), *Lapanthus* and 3 new genera: *Hoplocryptanthus*, *Rokautskyia* and *Forzzaea*. I will report on the data he presented to support this proposal in a subsequent issue of BROMELIANA.

Journal Editor Alan Herndon and Webmaster Eric Gouda reported on the status of the Journal and our websites.

We were fortunate in being able to have so many scientific experts give seminars at this World Conference. Still, I repeat my usual plea to conference organizers that we should have at least a few seminars on standard and controversial horticultural issues of great interest to most growers. Topics such as watering and fertilizer regimens, water quality and purification systems, humidity tools, light and shade for particular groups of plants are just a few items of horticultural interest.

Bus tours were conducted to the homes and gardens of David Klein, Malcolm McQuorcdale, John Edmunson and Carole & Rick Richtmyer. The range and quality of the Richtmyer collection



Seminar speakers l. to r. - Elton Leme, Gregory Brown, Alan Herndon, Tom Givnish, Renate Weaver, Eric Gouda, Pam Koide-Hyatt, Bruce Holst and Jose Manzanaras



Neoregelia elutheropetala
variegated form



Neoregelia 'Wild Rabbit'



Racinaea crispa

was impressive.

The Wally Berg Award of Excellence was awarded to Odean Head of Houston. At the age of 90 Odean is still active and going strong. His leadership and contributions to horticulture, to the BSI and the Houston Bromeliad Society are legend, and he well deserves receiving the Wally Berg Award.

The Rare Plant Auction followed immediately



Tillandsia ehlersiana



Tillandsia hamaleana

after a substantial and excellent hors d'oeuvres supper. This is a neat innovation which guaranteed there would be large group of people who would participate and stay for the Auction.

The next World Conference will be held May 29 to June 3, 2018 in San Diego. Start saving so you will be able to attend.

San Diego is a marvelous place to make the Conference part of your vacation. □

IDENTIFICATION DETAILS ON PLANT LABELED *TILLANDSIA PEDICELLATA*



Tillandsia pedicellata

As soon as I saw the big clump of Tillandsias labeled *Tillandsia pedicellata*, I knew the clump was not that species. I am familiar with *T. pedicellata*; I started growing it in the early 1970s. It looked like what was then called *T. bryoides* (now *T. minutiflora*), but it had one terminal flower with open purple petals in contrast to *T. bryoides* which had at least a few flowers with upright yellow petals and no visible stalk or pedicel (peduncle) holding the

inflorescence.

When Lyman Smith's Monograph on the *Tillandsioideae* was published in 1977 I immediately bought it, but I found that *pedicellata* had been put in synonymy with *bryoides*. I asked Lyman for an explanation and he told me that about half of the herbarium specimens he examined were not pedicellate. It was apparent to me he had not seen the flowers in any specimens..

I told him that my *T. pedicellata* had open, purple flowers, and that it forms a pedicel only **after** the flower becomes fertile so that the seed pod is on top of the pedicel. Lyman immediately expressed interest and ask me to forward a photo of the plant - which I did. He later agreed that *T. pedicellata* was a valid species..



Houston Tillandsia clump

Tillandsia tricolepis

I think that the *Tillandsia* clump in the Houston show is *T. tricolepis*, but that is just an educated guess. We need to examine the flower parts, especially the floral bracts for size, shape, whether or not they have scales, etc. to properly key out the plant in subgenus *Diaphoranthema*. (The key uses the term peduncle in place of pedicel.)

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