



East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

NEWS
LETTER

June
2021

Established: 25 July 2009

Our aim is to promote and encourage awareness and interest in Bromeliads in East London and all of South Africa!

ELBSSA is an Affiliated Society



of Bromeliad Society International

From the Chairman - Dudley Reynolds



Now that winter is here it is a good time to do the tasks that we avoid during the hot summer months. That is, once the sun is out and warms up the chilly mornings. I have taken on the mammoth task of splitting the 'big boys' which are now overcrowding their pots. So out with the saw and I have the Band-Aids handy to cover the bloody arms from the vicious spines. I just love the *Neoregelia carcharodon* varieties.

Two months to go and we have our twelfth birthday bash. Looking forward to a fun filled afternoon that is always a bubbly occasion with our traditional champagne and pineapple juice and loads of laughs. As usual this will be held at Lyn and Trevor Wegner's home in Sunnyridge where it all began!

A massive thank you to Colleen and Carl Swartz for allowing us to gather at their amazing property in Amalinda for the May meeting. It was a real treat to be able to meet next to the large, attractive dam area, with abundant bird life and explore her impressive garden. Another big thank you to Adrian and Tersia van Rensen for donating a set of prints of Tersia's beautifully executed paintings of *Neoregelia* to be used as raffle wins.

If there are any suggestions regarding the functioning of the society, topics discussed etc... we would really appreciate your input. This would contribute to making our society more relevant and informative. Please feel free to contact either myself or anyone on the committee in this regard. In the last committee meeting we discussed that more attention will be paid to the need to follow Covid protocols more rigorously in future meetings. The spacing of chairs needs to be adjusted and the wearing of masks will be adhered to. The speakers will only remove masks when participating in the meeting. Sanitiser will be available at all times if you do not bring your own. The third wave is here, so extra vigilant precautions need to continue to be taken seriously. Enjoy the lovely mild weather in your gardens. Until next time, happy bromming.



Our awesome hosts for the May meeting, Colleen and Carl Swartz.

May Meeting

How lucky we were to be able to hold a meeting outdoors in relative safety in these dodgy times we are living in. We all do need



In light of the country being put onto Level 3 Covid protocols this week due to rising levels of infections, the committee has taken the decision to cancel the next meeting.

to take personal responsibility for our own safety. If that means many of our members miss the meetings, we miss you!!!! but do understand. There were thirty five folks at the meeting, which was a splendid turnout!

Our hostess, Colleen very kindly gave us some background to her garden/property where they have lived for the last three years after leaving a stunning property and garden on the banks of the Nahoon River in Dorchester Heights. The huge property with the dam was once owned by Mr Bill Hempel. It was subsequently subdivided and he built a beautiful Spanish themed home and garden for himself inspired by a trip to Spain with bougainvillea walkways and stunning gardens. It has had other owners since and the gardens and trees all got over grown. When Colleen and Carl bought the property you could not see the house for all the huge trees. A lot was cleared out to try and establish gardens once again and Colleen has also inherited all the cycads which are dotted around plus lots of planting of many different types of salvias, which I particularly like. Nothing like indigenous plants that Colleen has planted to survive this continuing drought we find ourselves in. Colleen is very organised with decent sized potting and work areas where slips are planted up, a colourful planting of annuals also has a place in this rambling large piece of land with the dam in the centre which is supplied by a natural underground spring. Early on, graders were brought in to level grounds and a vegetable garden is in process at the top of the property, plus a parking area. Sharing the grounds is also a club house, which is utilised by the bikers, where we held our meeting on the deck overlooking the dam. A labour of love on behalf of Carl and Colleen and it shows. A wonderful calm ambiance is created by the large expanse of water with the bird life flying skywards with views of the house from the club house side and vice versa. Truly a wonderful venue with wonderful colourful gardens to explore and enjoy. Colleen's mosaic work is dotted around the garden, she is a born gardener, Everything she turns her hand to, responds and looks wonderful. Thank you to both of you for sharing your spot of paradise with all of us. We hope for a revisit in the future now that you have whetted our appetites with all your plans. Please look on fb for Brenda Wegner's photos of this lovely meeting and venue.

Text and photos BK Black



Members enjoying a walk around the extensive gardens after the meeting, Malcolm Stoltz, Dr Pete Pfister, Marianne Hillstead, Pam Stoltz, Eddie Black and Odette Degenaar.

Right: Terrence and Wendy Reynolds have the right idea - social distancing, away from the crowd in the sunshine .



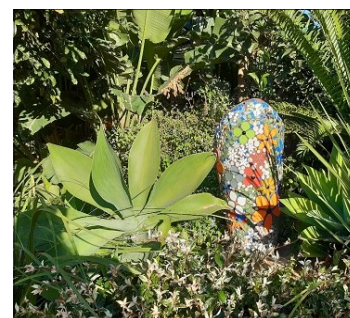
Xenia Winther, Denise O'Hagan, and Althea and Eldon Weyer enjoying the rambling gardens.



One of Colleen's mosaic items dotted around the garden. With one of the salvia varieties we all know and love.



A view across the dam towards the club house where we held the meeting.



Some bromeliads for a shady spot in the garden.

Your Magic Bromeliad Ride Begins! Lyn Wegner

Welcome to the wonderful world of bromeliads. The varieties are endless, the growing conditions and their requirements are endless

and your passion, once ignited will be endless!

Bromeliads originate from Central and South America, and are found growing in a variety of habitats, from the rain forests to the deserts, growing in the soil, on rocks and between crevices, mounted on trees and fallen stumps. You will even find some growing on the desert sand. This means there is a plant suited to every position in your garden.

Bromeliads come in all shapes and sizes, from really tiny, (a couple of millimetres) to gigantic, the largest reaches a height of 12 metres when flowering! (*Puya raimondii*). The form of the plants varies from upright, tubular to rosette shaped in a variety of sizes. The foliage can be black, grey, green and every colour of the rainbow! They can be one colour, spotted, striped, banded or squiggly. The leaves can be soft. They can be leathery. They can be smooth-edged, slightly spiny to dangerously spiny and extremely prickly. Some bromeliads develop a variety of flower spikes (inflorescences) and some develop small flowers in their centres eg. the *Neoregelia* varieties. Plants flower once only and then develop pups from the mother plant which will eventually die. The *Neoregelia* genus is the most popular amongst gardeners and collectors due to their colourful foliage and mostly flat rosette shape. The pineapple (*Ananas*) and the air plant (*Tillandsia*) are just two of many other varieties (genera) found in the Bromeliad family.

Most bromeliads can be mounted, ie. attached to trees, rocks, logs, actually to just about anything, but we will talk more about mounting and splitting plants at another meeting. Air plants (*Tillandsia*) will also be discussed at another meeting.

It is very important to grow your plants according to their light requirements eg. a sunny plant needs bright light to sun, and a shady plant needs a shady spot. How do you know what your plant requires?

It's actually very easy. The plant is your guide:

- A soft leaved plant which will have no spines (thorns) or very slight spines along it's leaf edges tells you the plant needs a shady position. If you plant these in too much sun the leaves will burn and develop ugly patches.
- If the leaf is leathery and prickly the plant can manage a far amount of sun.
- A plant needing bright light will grow in the shade but the bright colour of the foliage will fade and the leaves will become long and strappy.
- Too much sun will cause yellowy or bleached markings on the leaves.

Again, by looking at the condition of your plant, you will learn if you have it in a good spot.

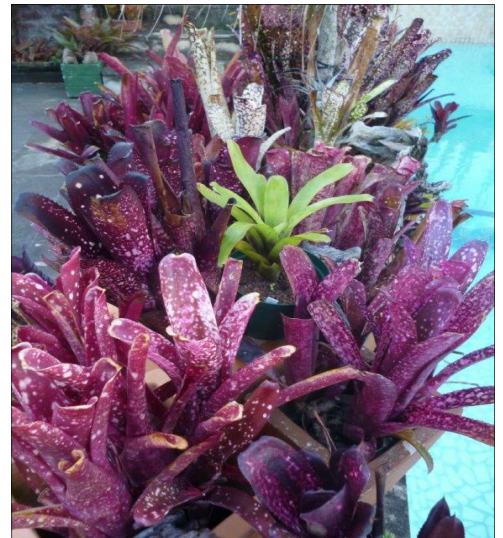
The best time of year to plant bromeliads in lots of sun is during the cooler months so that the plant adjusts as the sun gets stronger and stronger as Summer approaches.

A burnt plant won't die, it is just unsightly. The pups (new plants that develop from the mother plant) will adjust to the brighter light conditions.

You can plant straight into the garden soil or into pots. The potting soil needs to be free draining. It's important not to plant it too deeply which can be tempting as you don't want the plant to topple over before it is rooted. You can support the plant with sticks or rocks if necessary. The pot should not be too large, it just needs to be in proportion to the size of the plant. If you decide to pot your plants before positioning them in the garden you can disguise the pots using rocks or driftwood, even ground cover that is manageable!

Most bromeliads don't need too much water. They collect water between their leaves so even a little rain will be funnelled into the plant. Water between the leaves is not harmful to the plant. They enjoy humidity. A light sprinkling in hot weather will be enjoyed, either in the morning or late afternoon. Don't water plants positioned in sunny spots during the heat of the day as the sun acts as a magnifying glass and will cause unsightly damage to the foliage.

Some people are nervous of bromeliads, believing them to be mosquito breeding grounds. Some of us have



A sunny grouping of Billbergia.



A tiny bromeliad, *Neoregelia* 'Totara Butterfly'.



Too much sun has bleached the colour from some of the leaves of this *Neoregelia*.

heaps of bromeliads and we don't have heaps of mosquitoes! We don't have any more than someone who has no bromeliads in their garden.

Scale on the leaves is the main pest problem. This is caused by plants being positioned too closely together so there is lack of air movement, which they enjoy, and another cause is when the plants are too dry. We use a systemic poison to rid the plants of scale. Systemic meaning the plant will absorb the poison, you don't actually spray on the scale which is usually found on the undersides of the leaves.

It is very important to keep your plant labels. It may not seem important when you start out acquiring your first few, but you never know, these plants can become very addictive and you just might become a passionate collector! Text and photos Lyn Wegner

Aechmea that have been around for many years - Brenda Wegner

I found an article in one of the Australian newsletters about The 'Common Bromeliads'. (Ed, I can hear Lyn saying... 'there are no common bromeliads...' LOL!) This refers to bromeliads

that have been around for many years and have been in most bromeliad gardens at some time or other. I chose *Aechmea gamosepala* as there are many in the flowering stage at the moment. It is commonly known as the matchstick plant with pink and blue berry like flowers at the end of horizontal type pink bracts. It is endemic to Brazil and is a winter bloomer. It is a prolific pupper and looks amazing grown en masse. Grown in a shady spot the leaves become long and strappy, whereas grown in the sun the leaves are shorter. After flowering the spike turns dark pink for a long period.

- *Aechmea* 'Lucky Stripes' – a variegated variety
- *Aechmea* 'Gympie Gold' – yellow tip
- *Aechmea* – (I have no name) pale green tip
- *Aechmea gamosepala* var *nivea* – white tip, Interesting as I came across A. 'nivea' on the bromeliad.org.au site and then looking at the BSI site there is one named A. 'Adolph's White' with red bracts and white tips.



Aechmea varieties that Brenda spoke about.

Text and photo Brenda Wegner



BK Black

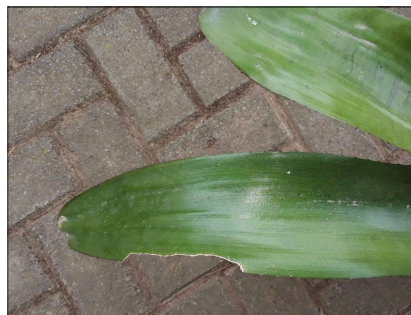
Show and Tell

There was some discussion in the meeting as to what has been munching on members bromeliad leaves, especially the tougher *Aechmea* and *Neoregelia* leaves. Lyn brought a *Neoregelia* that had been eaten. Locusts? The big brown variety are very much around right now. Eddie caught one of the blighters with long tweezers and I quickly got a pic of what we think is the nasty culprit! I suspect it is responsible for munching part of one of my large *Alcantarea* leaves. Grrrrrrr.....

Any hints as to combating them, do tell, although I think personally catching them is your best bet.



BK Black



L Wegner



For Show and Tell **Dr Pete Pfister** showed a branch that fell off one of his trees that has accumulated a host of self seeded wonderful *Tillandsia* over a long period of time.

Photo BK Black

Species of the Month - Lyn Wegner



Neoregelia guttata. I imported this little species from Nigel Thomson in Australia and I loved it from the minute I unpacked it!

It is endemic to Brazil, which means this is the only place you will find it growing naturally and as an epiphyte attached to trees. It is a stoloniferous grower. You will notice the pups are attached to the mother plant by short stems or stolons. Mine has taken a few years to develop into a nice clump.

The word 'guttata' is Latin for spotted or speckled. The foliage is a beautiful lime green and the leaves are very spotted. The red spots are irregular and sometimes quite dense. The plants are 15cm high and they have an upright slightly flared form.

Mine is potted and positioned in a metal stand where it receives mainly morning sun and no other special treatment. It's ever so

Cute! Text and photo L Wegner



Neoregelia guttata.

Member News

- A very big welcome to returning country member Japie Esterhuysen from Cape Town. We hope you will enjoy being part of the society once again. Those of you who belong to the BSI will have seen Japie's articles and photos of his stunning garden and collection of bromeliads in Cape Town in two recent journals.
- If you would like to join the BSI (Bromeliad Society International) please contact Lyn Wegner.
- Our country member Gabriel Scholtz who lives in Wilderness and has his own nursery, Bromeliad Kingdom, did a Zoom presentation for the La Ballona Valley Bromeliad Society in San Diego last weekend. Lyn and I watched and we were very proud of one of our own local members putting South Africa out there! I am sure an edited version will be made available soon and I shall post it on our fb page for members to check it out. I do post their other recorded presentations by well known figures in the bromeliad world. It is one small thing we can thank Covid for, this marvelous opportunity to be invited to watch their Zoom presentations. There is always something to be learned from others experiences.

Thanks

- Colleen and Carl Swartz for hosting the May meeting in such a wonderful setting.
- Lucky draw plants, Dr Pete Pfister, Eddie and Barbara Black, Brenda Wegner.
- Adrian and Tersia van Rensen for donating a set of prints of Tersia's beautiful paintings of *Neoregelia* to be used as raffle wins.
- Marianne Hillstead and Dr Pete Pfister for organising tea and eats, which goes a long way to members getting to know each other over a cuppa!

Raffle Winners for March

- Gavin Ferreira chose *Neoregelia* 'Milagro'.
- Dudley Reynolds chose a voucher to the value of R120.00.
- Marianne Dorothy Hillstead chose Tersia van Rensen's donated print of her painting of *Neoregelia* 'Dorothy'. Small guess in the name why she chose it!
- Leon van Niekerk chose *Aechmea mend.*
- Philip Visagie from Pretoria chose *Tillandsia paleacea canta*.
- Kathy and Allan Botha from PE chose *Neoregelia* 'Roy's Special'.
- Clint Gordon from Johannesburg won two raffles and chose *Neoregelia* 'Balboa' and *Tillandsia* 'White Star'.

Attendance Lucky Draw Winners:

There were quite a few lucky draw winners this month!



May raffle winners! Gavin Ferreira, Dudley Reynolds, Marianne Hillstead, who chose the print of *Neoregelia* 'Dorothy' and our new member Leon van Niekerk.

Committee Stuff

- We are appealing to all our members to submit photos of their bromeliad gardens and or bromeliads in their collections to our webmaster, Danie Taljaard at photos@elbssa.co.za. He will then upload them to the ELBSSA website as a wonderful showcase of what is happening in South Africa. Time to show off!
- Great news: We are also going to host a 'Bromeliad and Tillandsia Vendors' list on the ELBSSA website. Any of our members who wish to have their businesses or names on this site as sellers of bromeliads and Tillandsia and prepared to deal with customers around the country, please send your details to Lyn or to me: where applicable business name/private name, physical address/location, e-mail address, cell number, landline where you can be contacted.
- We often get queries on facebook for vendors. As you know there is no buying and selling permitted on the facebook site, it is for the learning, love and appreciation of bromeliads and Tillandsia only. These queries can now be directed to the ELBSSA website by the administrators.
- Look for our developing website, just type www.elbssa into your search bar and you will find our web page.

Upcoming Society Events

27th June: Due to Covid Level 3 regulations, this week it was decided it would not be advisable to meet this month. Keep safe and keep gardening!

You will be advised via e-mail with regard to the holding of further meetings on the calendar as listed below. Although disappointing for many of us, it is not worth jeopardizing the safety of all our members.

25th July: **ELBSSA AGM and 12th Birthday Celebrations, Annual Quiz, Tilly Toss, extra Raffles and Fizz Ananas** hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 'Bromeliads for Africa', 18 Wentworth Road, Sunnyridge.

29th August: Irene Manthe in Nahoon Valley

26th Sept: Please let a committee know if you would like to host us!

31st Oct: Carol Gregory in their new farm garden.

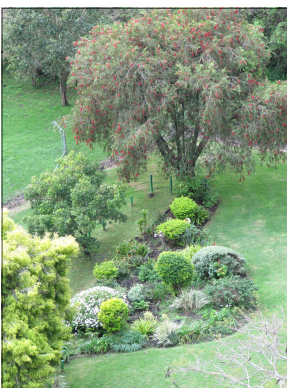
28th Nov: **Christmas Bring and Braai**, Auction, BBB and loads of fun!!!!!!!!!!!!!! To be hosted by Dr Pete Pfister and Marianne Hillstead in Beacon Bay.

Upcoming International Conferences

2021: The 70th Anniversary WBC2020 Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic this conference has been rescheduled. It will now take place on the 8 - 12 June 2022 in Sarasota, Florida, USA.

The following conference has now been postponed again to March 22nd to 26th, 2023 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. This biennial **Australasian Bromeliad Conference 'Kiwi Broms'** will again be hosted by The New Zealand Bromeliad Society and held at the same venue, Waipuna Hotel. Five of our members have already registered for this conference.

From Our Members

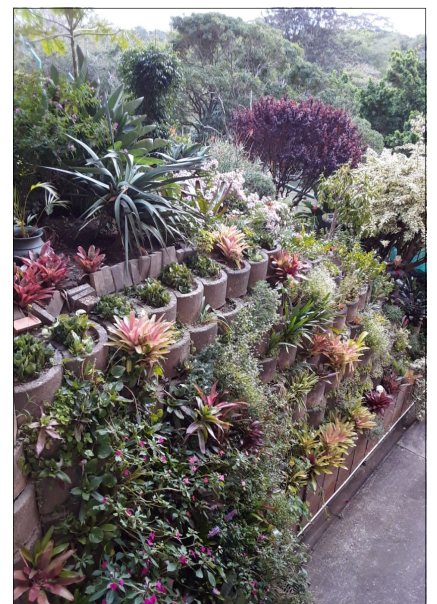


A before photo from Andre of the garden he inherited at Parklands.

Barbara Black: On a recent guided tour of Parklands cottages and gardens in Jarvis Road Berea, we saw our members, Maureen and Andre Eyber's bromeliad garden. I took some photos and we were standing admiring it and along he came to see who was showing interest in his super, colourful display! I asked him to share some information about it. Andre was one of ELBSSA's founder members nearly twelve years ago. It will be a good ten years plus though, till we might join them..... they don't take Beagles in with the old folks and all their plants, haha!

Andre Eybers: My Parklands Bromeliad Journey

Late in 2015 we were offered a flat at Parklands Retirement Complex, which we could not turn



Bromeliads have crept into many of the gardens around the complex.

down. But then the nightmare started; what to do with all my bromeliads collected over many years. On accepting the flat we enquired about access to a bit of garden, as I had all these bromeliads. They were overjoyed, as they had this stand-alone communal garden that was not cared for. I was overjoyed as they even offered to transport all my plants from our Bonza Bay garden because the Pam Golding East London Garden Show was coming up in 2016.

I then surprised everyone by mounting some of the bromeliads in all the trees surrounding my garden. Mounting bromeliads is something that not many people know can be done.

The biggest challenge in the garden was drainage, as it is in the lower section of the property and bromeliads won't survive in wet ground. Some funds were made available to rebuild the top manhole and clean existing drainage pipes and to extend them.

Second challenge was too much shade, we trimmed the big Bottlebrush tree to allow for more sun into the garden. The lopped off branches were trimmed and planted in the garden and I mounted bromeliads on them. Now 5 years later my garden is the envy of all the residents as it is visible to all the flat residents from above.

Photos A Eybers and BK Black



From the Editor



We went to visit family in Port Elizabeth last month and took the opportunity to visit Richard Johnstone, one of our new country members who came from PE to visit our Bromeliad Magic Show. It was great to meet on his home turf, together with his lovely wife

Debbie and his gorgeous pet, Jasmine, yes a pet rat, I just loved her!!! Took me right back to high school days when I had two white pet rats, Gilkeny and Goonash, much to my fathers disgust!

Having been a clivia collector and now into bromeliads and Tillandsia, Richard's collection is growing, with good quality plants. He has even planted bromeliads out in the communal gardens together with well established indigenous trees he planted many, many years ago.

Richard is pushed for space, he collects succulents as well, so you can imagine, space is a priority in a townhouse complex. The only way is up and he has begun the first part of his plan to use some lovely sneezewood posts rescued from his grandfather's farm, which have tremendous sentimental value to Richard, mounted with sun loving bromeliads against a wall.

Much progress has been made since we were there and I can truly say the brom bug has bitten deep here! Go for it Richard!

Winter chores should have been long done to protect your special bromeliads from the cold,



Eddie with Richard and the very charming Jasmine.



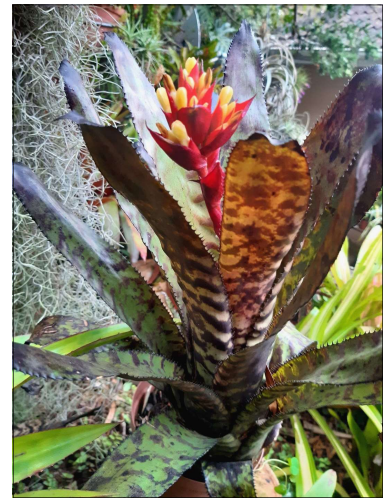
although erratic weather. The *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties continue to show off in our garden with some pushing flower spikes which is just an added bonus, because I think most of us grow them for the remarkable foliage markings that are so variable, depending on your light environment.

I want to encourage all of you to continue to post your photos on our fb page, it will help to grow our ELBSSA community and awareness of our society and this amazing family of plants. Do you have a growing project on the go? Please consider sharing it with us in the newsletter.

With Covid 19 spiking again in South Africa, we find ourselves this very week suddenly back to Level 3 Covid 19 rules and regulations to try and contain the spread of the virus. That means the committee have made the decision that meetings are on hold till further notice.

So, I cannot say 'see you soon', but please take good care of yourselves and those around you. We are blessed and fortunate to have our plants and gardens to keep us fully engaged and grounded in the natural world.

Barbs.



My Aechmea 'Glowing Embers' grown in full morning sun all year.

This is a publication for the **East London Bromeliad Society, South Africa** for the interest of its members. Articles may be used by non profit societies with acknowledgement to the author where applicable and East London Bromeliad Society South Africa. Please use the photos that accompany the article used. If you require higher resolution photos please request them from the Editor.

Any opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Society.

When submitting items for inclusion in this newsletter, please ensure that all facts and information, including spelling, is checked and accurate.

ELBSSA is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International.

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We meet on the last Sunday of every month at 2.00 for 2.30pm, January to November, at various venues around East London. We have a topic for each meeting and Show and Tell where members are encouraged to bring along their brag or problem plants. There are member raffles, lucky draws for those present, tea time, library and member plant sales, plus a monthly newsletter sent out via e-mail only. Visitors are always welcome and can attend three meetings before they will need to join the society in order to continue attending. Annual subs are R120.00 for individuals/families and R60 for students.



Committee Members

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You will find ELBSSA on Facebook: type 'East London Bromeliad Society' into the fb search bar. You can request to join the group and will then be able to upload your photos and comments on the wall. The ELBS SA page and other bromeliad related sites are a useful and informative forum to share and 'meet up' with other like-minded bromeliad folks.

You can view most of all the bromeliads mentioned in meetings or in the newsletter at the following websites:

The BSI's official Bromeliad Cultivar Registry www.registry.bsi.org which is maintained by Geoff Lawn, the BSI Cultivar Registrar. Plus other information regarding the Bromeliad Society International and bromeliads is found at bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: fcbs.org This is another very useful site where you can also reference many bromeliads, clarify identification or just trawl through the site and add to your wish list!

Encyclopedia of Bromeliads <http://bromeliad.nl/encyclopedia/> (Bromeliad Taxonomists and Growers Society) has photographs. It also now has keys for the genera and sub-genera. If you like to be informed what is happening, just follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia> Just type in 'Encyclopedia of Bromeliads' into the Facebook search bar.

For internet resources you can also go to TAXON (The New Bromeliad List) for the most authoritative and right up to date list of genera and species, accepted and new names and taxonomic keys - <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php> or just type in 'New Bromeliad Taxon List', it's much easier!



Colleen Swartz our awesome hostess for the May meeting took this photo of most of those attending the meeting for her records.