



East London Bromeliad Society

South Africa

Established: 25 July 2009

NEWS
LETTER
September/
October
2021

*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



We are all waiting with bated breath, to hear whether we are going to see some normality return in the near future. The rumour of less Covid restrictions and going down to Level 1 is strong, we will have to wait and see.

Spring has brought us pleasant weather to do what we love most potter around with our favourite plants. Being out in the garden is certainly excellent therapy to lose yourself and the perception of time. Good food for the soul!

I hope that we will resume our meetings at the end of October and have something very special by the end of November. The committee will keep you posted on this matter.

I hope this message finds you all in the best of health and I look forward to seeing you all soon. Best wishes and happy bromming.

*'Gardening is the art that uses
flowers and plants as paint and
the soil and sky as canvas.'*

Elizabeth Murray



A wander around David Gower's shadehouses always produces many oooh's and ahhh's from me! Eddie and I visited on Monday morning for a bromeliad 'fix' and this one jumped out at me: *Neoregelia* 'Tears of Fire Median'. A Ray Coleman hybrid. David told me the plant pictured is the first pup from the imported mother he got from Lyn some time back. It grows well in full sun under 50% white shade cloth. It is a vegetative sport off N. 'Tears of Fire'. Country of origin: Florida USA. Registered by Michael Kiehl in 2012. One of many stunning Ray Coleman hybrids which happen to be David's favourites.

Text and Photo: BK Black

Next meeting: Sunday 31st October at 2 for 2.30 pm. To be hosted by Carol Gregory at her farm garden. Confirmation and directions will be e-mailed to you the week before the meeting. Hope to see you there!

Species of the Month - Lyn Wegner



I have chosen *Tillandsia somnians* for this month's species. Of course another one of those plants that I love! This species originates from Lima in Peru. It has beautiful soft, brightly coloured, pinky foliage and grows so easily for me. There is a red form too.

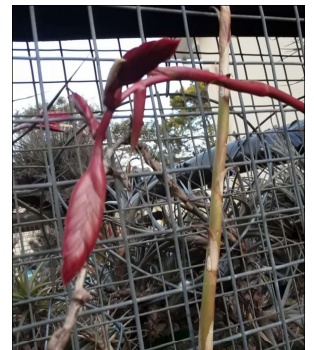
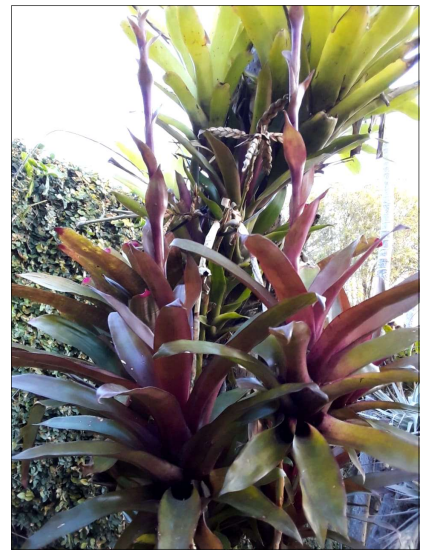
While Googling for information I discovered that this plant likes moisture and prefers to be grown terrestrially (in the ground or potted). I have them growing very successfully in various positions and they are all growing as epiphytes (no soil) and I don't find they need extra moisture. Maybe with soil and more water they could be even more beautiful?

T. somnians grows to about 2 meters in height and has an inconspicuous inflorescence, dare I say it is rather feeble. The attraction for me is the fascinating growth habit and the colour of the leaves. I notice it is also classed as monocarpic, which means the plant blooms and then dies. I'm not sure that is correct as mine go on forever producing more and more new growths along the thin woody stem. Maybe the mother eventually dies but don't be discouraged from growing the plant, as you just need one plant to start with and you will soon have heaps. I mounted a whole lot of these on a free standing section of wire mesh that has other *Tillandsia* growing in baskets hooked onto the other side of the mesh. This new feature is only about two months old so it will look spectacular (I believe!) once they have established themselves and multiplied with lots of colourful new plants which are already developing. Watch this space! I will send another photo in a few months time.

Text and Photos L. Wegner



Tillandsia somnians planted along a wire mesh trellis and climbing up a palm tree. I love the foliage colours.



Tillandsia somnians inflorescence.

Member News

- A very big welcome to Penny Camons from Port Elizabeth. We hope you enjoy a long and rewarding time belonging to our society.
- Thank you very much to Xenia Winther for being on the committee and being our sound system co-ordinator over the last few years.

Committee Stuff

- Betty Heunis is now the lady to pay for your tea when you arrive at a meeting. So when you arrive, collect your name badge from Betty and please pay her for your tea. Thanks Betty for volunteering for the extra task!
- We are very happy to welcome Gavin Ferreira to our merry throng on the committee, he will be taking over the Sound System Portfolio for us. Many thanks Gavin!
- Any ideas for topics to be discussed or ideas for meetings, please contact one of the committee, we really do want to meet your needs in terms of what you would like to know more about in order to get the most out of growing your bromeliads and *Tillandsia*.

Upcoming Society Events

31st October:

To be hosted by Carol Gregory at her farm garden at 2.00 for 2.30pm. Lyn will e-mail directions and more information before the meeting. Don't forget to bring your plants, queries and problems for Show and Tell, plus your mug and a chair if you want a seat.

28th November:

End of Year Function, guaranteed to be lots of fun seeing as we have missed out on so much this year. 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

Lyn Wegner: Scale on Bromeliads - Any thoughts or comments?

I was working (or is it playing?) in a Vriesea section of the garden a few weeks ago and was devastated to see the amount of scale on some plants. It got me thinking.

I was under the impression that when spraying our plants for scale they had to be drenched with the insecticide but recently learnt that when spraying with a systemic insecticide this is not necessary. I am using Imidor 350 SC which is classed as a 'Systemic suspension concentrate for the control of agricultural as well as house and garden pests as indicated' (on the pamphlet). The magic ingredient that makes this a systemic insecticide is Imidacloprid, I was amazed to see this is one of the ingredients in the Seresto flea collars I use on my cats!

'Systemic' means you just need to spray over your plant, covering some of the foliage and the leaves will absorb the poison. You don't spray on the actual scale which is mostly underneath the leaves so it is really easy peasy! I would repeat the process again a week or so later.

The scale once killed doesn't fall off the foliage unfortunately but you could pick it off easily if you wanted to and if you have the time! I have noticed the new growth and pups will develop free of scale.

This is what I am wondering..... How about we pour a little of the diluted Imidor (or whatever systemic insecticide you are using) into the cup of scale infected plants instead of spraying the foliage? Maybe it would be more effective? Maybe it would take up less time?

I look forward to your comments which you could email to brommiesfa@telkomsa.net. We will publish them in the next newsletter.

Lynn Friend: In 2017 I decided to do something with a bed in the garden that was looking very bare. I had a few bromeliads to place in the garden and decided to use some spare roof tiles as paving stones to make a pathway and place these new bromeliads there. I also had a tyre rim that I put at the back to give some height. Here are some before and current pictures of that spot. The tyre rim is completely covered now by the leaves of the bromeliads.



Before and after photos of one of Lynn's flourishing garden beds.

Photos L. Friend

Brenda Wegner: Extremely Trying Time!!!! March 2020 and we were all aware of Covid 19 and not knowing what to expect. South Africa went into lockdown on 26th March and everything came to a standstill. We were looking after our two small grandchildren when Mom and Dad went back to work. When play school re-opened Logan returned but we decided we would keep Ty at home with us which ended up being a long eight months. It was an extremely busy time and our days were fully occupied trying to keep both boys happy and entertained. Something had to take a backseat and unfortunately, it was my garden that suffered. I didn't manage to work in it at all during this time.



Brenda's step by step photos of the process of revamping a bed against the front of the house.

Photos B. Wegner

Finally getting my mojo back, I started looking around and found that the bromeliads had multiplied so much. I was really delighted, but on closer inspection most of the *Vriesea* were covered in scale. This was due to the extremely dry weather and being compacted together for such a long period of time. It was so bad that I had to get rid of most of them, such a crying shame. A lot of the other varieties were also affected with scale. These I sprayed with Imidor, which is a systemic insecticide.

I planned to revamp a section that was looking rather sad and started to remove all the existing bromeliads. I had so many *Neoregelia correia-araujoi* and thought it might make a nice change to group them all together and see the effect. While I was clipping off dead leaves I was stung twice on my finger by a hornet. During the night my hand and arm swelled and turned red and felt hard, so off to the doctor I went. I was able to get back into the garden two days later. Was so excited to dive back in and finish the section which I knew would take a week or two to complete.

Then disaster struck, while out walking our dog Fern, I slipped and fell, fracturing two bones in my ankle and had to wear an Aircast Walking Boot/ 'moon boot' for eight weeks. This was such a frustrating time for me because I could see what needed to be done but not being able to do anything. Back to square one, and longing to get back into the garden. Time heals all things and at long last I was back doing what I enjoy most. I finally finished that section and managed to revamp two more sections. There is still so much splitting and repotting to be done, a challenge I'm looking forward to doing now that Spring is in the air.



More garden beds that Brenda has been busy re vamping, the above garden has a mass bedding of the always lovely *Neoregelia correia-araujoi*
Photos B. Wegner.



Dudley Reynolds: *Quesnelia seideliana*. *Quesnelia* is a small genus of the bromeliad family comprising of around 20 species. They are found growing endemically in the Atlantic forest eco region in Rio de Janeiro, South Eastern Brazil. The main attraction to this genus is the beautiful flower spikes. Although short lived these are something to behold. I would be incorrect not to mention the variety of shapes to the foliage of some, like the large tank rosettes or the tight tubes not to forget the unusual tubes curled on top of the leaf of the famous sport of *Q. marmorata*, *Q. 'Tim Plowman'*.

Quesnelia seideliana is unique within the bromeliad family because of its unusual turquoise bloom on a cream and dusty pink inflorescence. It has long thin serrated leaves, tapering to a vicious spiky tip. One does not really notice these plants amongst the other bromeliads until that flower opens..... then WOW!! I grow mine hard, in strong bright sun and it can tolerate a reasonable amount of neglect. Mine are grown into large specimen plants so that I am able to enjoy them over a longer period of time.



Quesnelia seideliana Photo D. Reynolds

From the Editor



Spring has definitely sprung in our part of the world with all the tender new growth full of potential for new beginnings during the forthcoming Summer months. *Neoregelia* are colouring up already with the extended daylight hours and warmth from the sun. Now we need lots more rain, lots of it. Our local dams, combined are sitting at just 23%. We have been blessed with rain in the last 48 hours, and every bit of the 68 mm we received on our patch was

Dirt tired:
a condition that occurs
after spending all
day in the garden.


FROM SCRATCH
[life on the homestead]

very welcome. Our two tanks are overflowing and everything is sparkling this morning. A glorious sight.

Many thanks to members who have contributed to the newsletter this month, it is greatly appreciated by all of us and it is good to share and see what other bromeliad lovers are up to on their patch, always inspiring and a springboard for ideas for someone else. So members far and wide, lets hear from you too. You can e-mail or whatsapp me words and photos. I look forward to hearing from you.

There are two plant shows coming up locally, the Gonubie Orchid Society (entry is free) is this weekend and the Border Clivia Society will be having their show on the 9th October. You will be able to purchase plants! We just cannot help ourselves, can we? Plant people tend to have a love of more than one variety!

All being well we will meet at the end of October. Yay!!!! It has been such a long time, so sure to be good to see each other, catch up and learn something new. In the mean time, to those of you who have been affected by this malicious Covid virus, get well, we are thinking of you.

In spite of not being able to meet over the past months, we are all still feeling the love and joy of our favourite plants going by the snippets of news and happenings I have been hearing from our members. We are mostly home-based and it has become a way of life, so what better than to keep busy in the garden or amongst your collection of gems! Take good care of yourselves and those around you. See you soon!

Barbs.

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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.

Address: c/o 18 Wentworth Road, Sunnyridge, East London 5201 South Africa, brommiesfa@telkomsa.net

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.

Spring Orchid Display

Gonubie Orchid Society

Venue:

Beacon Bay Crossing
Next to RocoMamas

Times:

Saturday 2 October
0900 - 1600

Sunday 3 October
0900 - 1300

Orchids for sale



CLIVIA SHOW



& PLANT FAIR

2021

Saturday 9 October 09h00 - 16h00
Beacon Bay Country Club, Beaconsburg
Drive, Beacon Bay

Enquiries:

Barbara: 072 025 4682
gmls@live.co.za

Peter: 083 463 6229

ENTRY FEE: R10, RAFFLE: R 10, SALES &
DISPLAYS OF CLIVIA & OTHER PLANT SPECIES,
EXPERT ADVICE, REFRESHMENTS

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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 ELBSSA 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: fcb.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 **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 developed by Eric Gouda - <https://bromeliad.nl/encyclopedia/> or permanent URL for species names: <https://bromeliad.nl/species/<species name>> eg: <https://bromeliad.nl/species/Tillandsia/ionantha> Taxon list: <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist>