

# **East London**Bromeliad Society

Established: 25 July 2009

NEWS LETTER

December 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

South Africa



of Bromeliad Society International

# From the Chairman - Dudley Reynolds

We had a wonderful day of warmth and sunshine for our final meeting of the year at the end of November after having a week of inclement weather.

The spirit of the crowd attending was as good as the weather. After a short AGM, we auctioned off many bromeliads, other plants and garden accessories.

This year it was decided that the proceeds would go to a charity chosen by the society members. A significant amount of money was raised and the CHOC foundation was drawn to receive the proceeds of the auction. Denise O' Hagan nominated CHOC as her charity.

The Society supplied boerewors and rolls, not forgetting the 'Fizz Ananas' which is champagne and pineapple juice. A massive thank you to all who contributed towards this successful closure of 2021. You are too numerous to name individually.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a safe, happy and prosperous New Year.

If all goes well we look forward to holding an informative, enjoyable year to come with plenty of opportunities to share the joy of growing bromeliads.



Dudley, delivering his AGM speech.

# End of Year Christmas/AGM and Birthday Bash!



Our awesome hosts for the event, Dr Pete Pfister and Marianne Hillstead. Photo: BK Black

What a fantastic day we had at the end of November for our annual gettogether. Thank you to all 46 members and partners who arrived for a fun filled day in Pete's lovely garden. I am sure you all had a wander around



Part of the crowd that joined us for a wonderful end of year function.

Photo: B. Wegner



Pete's wonderful, abundant aarden and shade houses, overflowing with a worth lifetimes collecting and nurturing the most amazing collection of plants over the last +- 40 years! Many, many thanks to Marianne Hillstead too, who together with Pete, did all the plotting, purchasing and planning in order to host a wonderful function for all of us

to enjoy. You are an awesome team! The sun came out and all was well for an end of year function that was missed last year. So we more than made up for it! with plenty of Fizz Ananas on tap and lots of laughter, camaraderie, fun and good food. I think a splendid, relaxed day was had by qll.

The annual auction was very well supported by m e m b e r s donating items to auction and members bidding furiously for the items they had their eye on! R5460.00 was raised for a charity of the members choice. The charity drawn out hat the was East CHOCLondon.



#### From our Chairman, Dudley Reynolds:

Our AGM normally occurs in July our society birthday month. Due to the effects of Covid, It has been postponed twice until November this year.

We had an inactive year and only managed to organize two month end meetings and our Bromeliad Magic show which was held in April and of course our end of year function.

The members and the committee members were commended over this difficult time. We pray that 2022 will come along with more positive opportunities. Attending members were asked if there were any nominations for any of the existing committee portfolios, of which there were none.

There has been one change to the committee over the last year. Xenia Winther resigned from her position of sound co-ordinater and was replaced by Gavin Ferreira. A big thank you to Xenia for the work which she did so willingly and a very warm welcome to Gavin, who has been a source of good, sound advice as well.

Our Treasurer Lynn Friend, gave a financial report, if you have any queries please contact Lynn and she will email you the current balance sheets.

Our Secretary and PRO Lyn Wegner was called on to say a few words, "wishing you, our members and your families, in South Africa, Africa, USA and Italy a magic festive season. May it be a healthy, happy and safe time for us all."

A round of applause was given to our Editor Barbara Black for providing us with a top quality newsletters during these difficult times.

A huge thank you to all our committee who help to make the society run effectively, eat well!! especially on meeting days and at other functions.





Facebook page for some more super photos and a video o f memories of the day and other some special times, put together by Mark Bradfield. Thank you so much Mark!

check

o u r

Please

out

Part of our merry group with Lynn Friend, our Treasurer in the foreground.



On Friday 10th December, some members the of **ELBSSA** committee were very happy to hand over the money raised by ELBSSA local members at our year end Christmas function by donating

garden and plant related items for the annual auction, then bidding on items in support of their nominated charity. The Auction raised R5460.00 and an annymous donor added another R600, which was very kind and generous of them! The winning charity drawn out the hat was CHOC! Nominated by Denise O'Hagan.

Well done to the donors and bidders on the day!
What an awesome gesture for us to make in supporting such a deserving local charity. They do so very much in providing invaluable support to the families and children who suffer from cancer and life threatening blood related disorders in the wider community of the Eastern Cape.

BK Black



Dr Pete Pfister, Gavin Ferreira Lynn Friend and Dudley Reynolds handed over the donation to Debbie Kleinenberg of CHOC.



Pete's Guzmania 'Hope'.

Photo BK Black

# Show and Tell

**Dr Peter Pfister** showed his clump of *Guzmania* 'Hope' which he saw blooming in his garden in March this year with three inflorescences. Look at it, it is still looking fresh and absolutely magnificent all these months later. Many Guzmania flowers are very long-lasting, so you will always have colour in your garden. Where as Billbergia have some amazing foliage but the flowers last a week. We love all these plants for their many different characteristics.

Text and photo BK Black

**Lyn Wegner** More on 'novars': We spoke about novars last month. A novar is a plant that has lost it's variegation. In other words it now has no variegation.

I have another example today but in this case the novar plant has been named and registered!

The spectacular Aechmea 'Roberto Menescal' sometimes



Aechmea 'Roberto Menescal'



Aechmea 'Black Zombie'

produces pups with none of the beautiful variegation, although the novar is attractive, black with grey banding. It has been named and registered as Aechmea 'Black Zombie'.

I am a little nervous of Aechmea 'Roberto Menescal' as it would seem prone to developing novar pups if the novar has actually been named.

The Aechmea 'Roberto Menescal' photographed is a recent import and will be a beauty once it settles in and grows.

Text and photos L. Wegner

# Species Talk - Lyn Wegner



I walked around the garden, as I do before each meeting, looking for a bromeliad or Tillandsia for our Species Talk. Tillandsia concolor seemed just perfect! In bloom and looking

rather festive for our last meeting of the year.

Tillandsia concolor grows as an **epiphyte** and is found in Mexico and El Salvador. An **epiphyte** is a plant that grows attached to another plant/tree etc. but it is not a parasite. It is an easy grower, and tolerant of shady or sunny positions. The more light the plant receives the more water it requires. This does not seem to apply to my specimen!

It forms a stemless, spreading rosette, producing many pups. The leaves are brittle and colour beautifully when grown in a bright spot. The inflorescence is stunning! Beautiful colour combinations of pinky-red, yellow and tiny white flowers. The flower spikes are lanceolate shaped ie widening above the base and tapering to a point. They are digitate ie fingerlike with the 'fingers' starting



Tillandsia concolor.

L. Wegner

at a point. Each 'finger' has **imbricate** sections ie overlapping sections. This particular cluster is looking spectacular I think! I have others not looking nearly as good and I presume it has to do with the position it is growing in. Lots of sun and not lots of water. I love *Tillandsia concolor!* 

Some info taken from the book, Tillandsia II by Paul Isley

# **Thanks**

- Dr Pete Pfister and Marianne Hillstead for hosting the end of year function and organizing just about everything!
- Everyone on the committee who contributed in so many ways to ensure a good day was had by everyone.
- Brenda Wegner, Barbara Black, Lyn Wegner, and Marianne Hillstead for supplying yummy puddings.
- Eddie Black and Gerald Vogt for manning the fires and doing the braaing for us.
- Dr Pete Pfister, Lyn Wegner and Barbara Black for Tilly Toss plants.
- To all our wonderful members who donated items and stunning plants for the Auction.
- To our Auctioneer, Dudley Reynolds and his very able assistants, Gavin Ferreira and Dr Pete Pfister.
- To the wonderful members who kept up the festive and tireless bidding to get what they wanted and raise money for a worthy cause in the process.
- Mark Bradfield and Brenda Wegner who took photos on the day.

# Raffle Winners for Christmas / Birthday Bash!

- David Gower won three raffles and chose Quesnelia 'Tim Plowman', Neoregelia 'Milagro' and Neoregelia 'Margaret'.
- Vilma Muray chose Guzmania 'Diana'.
- Lee-anne Botha chose Neoregelia 'Luna' variegated.
- Brenda Wegner chose a Voucher.
- Denise O'Hagan chose Neoregelia



Our twelve local raffle winners!

BK Black

- 'Marble Throat' hybrid.
- Iola Saayman chose Neoregelia 'Razzberry Ripple'.
- Dudley Reynolds chose a Voucher.
- Eddie Black chose a Voucher.
- Marianne Hillstead chose Neoregelia 'Apricot Pearl'.
- Carol Gregory chose Aechmea pectinata.
- Mike Whitten from Durban chose Hechtia caerulea.
- Eugene Ernest from Durban chose Neoregelia 'Hawaiian Golden Tiger'.
- Rob Hazell from Swellendam won two raffles and chose Neoregelia 'Sriracha' novar and Neoregelia 'Mister Odean'.
- Penny Cammons from Port Elizabeth chose Neoregelia 'Sriracha' novar.
- Graham Watts from Durban chose Neoregelia 'Casoba'.
- Carolie Powels from Pretoria chose Neoregelia 'Gator'.
- Philip Visagie won two raffles and chose Tillandsia 'Rosalie Mavrikas' and Tillandsia domingoensis.
- Christo van Wijk from Pretoria won three raffles and chose Hechtia argentea, Neoregelia 'Koloho' and Neoregelia 'Talbot Splash'.

if you don't see a plant that you would like to choose as your raffle win you can choose to take a Raffle Voucher for R120.00, save them up and buy a nice plant from one of the society members. Or you can choose a 'Membership for a year' Voucher to pay for your upcoming membership fees.

#### **Attendance Lucky Draw Winners:**

There were loads of giveaway plants and a 'Tilly Toss' during the days proceedings. We hope everyone got plenty to take home to add to their collections.

#### **New Members**

A very big welcome to Les Biggs from Queensburgh, Durban. We hope you enjoy a long and rewarding association with the society. Les's favourites are Neoregelia!

### **Committee Stuff**

Please Remember: Plants that are brought by members for the Raffle selection MAY NOT be put aside or bought by anyone before the Raffle winners have made their choice at the end of the meeting. They deserve first choice of the best on offer for winning the raffles.

After that the plants that are left may be bought from their respective owners during member plant sales after the meeting. Thank you for your co-operation.

# **Upcoming Society Events**

#### If anyone is interested in hosting a meeting in 2020, please contact Lyn Wegner to book your spot.

Please let the committee know if there are any particular topics you are interested in and would like discussed or demonstrated at a meeting.

30th January: To kick off the New year we will be hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 'Bromeliads for

Africa' at 18 Wentworth Road, Sunnyridge.

27th February: Irene Manthe in Nahoon Valley

27th March:

24th April: ELBSSA 'Bromeliad Magic Show' at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School. To be confirmed.

29th May: 26th June:

31st July: 13th Birthday Celebrations at 'Bromeliads for Africa'.

28th August:

25th September: Artistic Expressions at Little Beacons Pre-Primary School. To be confirmed.

30th October:

27th November: Annual Bring and Braai end of year function, Auction and BBB Surprise Lucky Dip.

# **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

Mavis Downey: Seed propagation: How I grow bromeliads from seed.



Squeeze the seeds from their pods onto a sheet of paper towel and wash the clear sap off them, (if there is any). Allow to dry.



I use shallow trays with no holes in them. I put small stones at the bottom to aid the micro-climate I want to create for germination. Fill with a good seedling mix.



Sprinkle the seed around over the soil. Water well then cover with a sheet of glass to trap the moisture. Place in a shady area.



These plants are about 2 weeks old. The strangest thing of all was I was given some seed from a friend, which turned out to be A c a n t h o s t a c h y s strobilacea, which Dudley had brought to a recent meeting.



It's the 3rd December 2021 and the seedlings have grown considerably. I planted these on the 15th November.



Once the seeds started touching the glass, Terence cut a collar which I put around the tray, and replaced the glass again. You have to keep an eye on them to ensure that the seeds don't dry out. Spray if needed.



The micro-system I create to germinate my seed: I use a square of glass to cover the planted seeds and when they germinate I use a cake base and clear covering to



create a micro-climate. I never leave them uncovered at this stage.



Some seedlings I germinated a while back and once large enough will get planted out into pots.

Original text and photos taken by M. Downey.



I have successfully grown a Vriesea variety, above, (not sure of the name) I have also successfully grown Hohenbergia stellata and Aechmea 'Mexicana'.



These three rows in my shadehouse are my seedlings that are now approximately two years old.



for an ID of this Aechmea. It is not Aechmea 'Malva'. I have had it for many years, the name tag has disintegrated and it has only decided to bloom now. It is quite a large plant. Blackish/purple leaves covered in scurf.

Barbara Black: A highly

paniculata is blooming

It has a very delicate

appearance, with very

soft leaves with a downy

gorgeous sunny yellow

I grow it mounted and it

hangs in a shady spot on

the patio. It has two nice

pups and clearly survived

the East London winter.

with tiny white flowers.

them.

for us right now.

including Mexico.

to

inflorescence

natural habitat is

anticipated

neotropical

Central

feel



Christo van Wijk in Pretoria is looking Flower spike is about 60cm in length.

Catopsis

areas

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Holder has also Ann embarked on the exciting journey o f growing bromeliads from seed. "I got some Acanthostachys strobilacea seed from Dudley at the October meeting. As you can see they have aerminated successfully." and Ann now has them hardening off on the window sill in the kitchen with the lid off. Growing from seed can be so rewarding! Well done Annie!

#### **New BSI Group** on Facebook! - Lyn Wegner

This new BSI Facebook group was only recently established and the aroup is growing rapidly.

You are welcome to join the new BSI Group and to encourage others to do so as well.

Share your pictures and videos for the world to see what we grow in South Africa.

Go into bsi.org and scroll down the first page to 'Recent News', New Facebook Group by the Webmaster (Eric Gouda) dated 5<sup>th</sup> December.

Click on the photo and scroll down to the caption under the photo where you can click on 'Facebook Group'

y o u can go www.facebook.com/groups/ bromeliadsgroup where you can join by clicking on the Join Group button at the top.

#### **BSI** Membership

The BSI Membership Directory lists only 17 South African members. If you are not already a member please consider joining. A brand new first time electronic membership costs only 15 USD which at today's rate of exchange is only R240.25. If you are a returning member or wish to renew your subs the cost for electronic membership is 25 USD BSI issues 4 or only R400.42. journals annually and you will have access to these and every journal published from 1951. You will be supporting bromeliad research, education and conservation efforts. You can join BSI at bsi.org, Bromeliad Society International: BSI, but should you experience any problems I will be happy to assist you. I challenge you! Join BSI today!

Barbara Black: Alcantarea glaziouana. Yes I am obsessed with these

incredible members of the bromeliad family. This one is blooming for the first time for us. The flower lasts a few days in our heat and they are slightly perfumed. For some reason it is listing over somewhat. Not through lack of direct light. It is truly amazing how strong that stem is and boy, it holds a lot of water in those vases between the leaves. The weight probably saved it from blowing over in the crazy winds we have been experiencing. It is one of the largest Alcantarea species (tallest, if it was upright! haha!).

Origin and Habitat: Brazil, State of Rio de Janeiro, it is endemic to a small area near Copacobana. It a lithophytic plant (a plant that grows on bare rock) that grows on rocky cliffs near sea level mostly in cracks on the rocks with little organic matter around the root system which anchors the plant. Each plant establishes

its own micro-habitat, with the gradual build up of humus, mosses and lichens around the root system providing a store of water and nutrients in addition to the reserves held in the large leaf bases and vases. Three other large rupicolous (living or growing on or among rocks) species are often

found in the same mountains, A. nahoumii, (another absolute favourite), A. imperialis, and A. regina. However, each of these species occupies a different part of the ecosystem.

They are often pollinated by bats that fly between the isolated populations, but also attract a profusion of other flying animals like bees, butterflies and birds.



When you see this, its time to get excited. Taken on 11th October 2021.



Alcantarea glaziouana, showing off in the late afternoon sunlight outside the back door!

I am in love with Alcantarea! We grow it in a huge cement pot from Amalinda Nursery filled with Eddie's special potting mix. It gets full sun for most the day and the only water it gets is what collects in the vases between the leaves from the rain. The appearance outside the back door is of this ghostly pale form, almost like an upside down chandelier! So beautiful.

# From the Editor

This newsletter was supposed to get to you before Christmas, but stuff happens, so here we are, at the tail end of 2021. I refuse to feel a spot of negativity about

the coming year, so lets hope we go full steam ahead, back to meetings

and holding another 'Bromeliad Magic Show' around the end of March/April depending on the dates for the Easter school holidays, so that we can have the use of the Little Beacons Pre-Primary School hall again.

Start grooming a special plant or more than one. We would really like to encourage our local members to participate more this time round. Country members, also, please do the same, we

would love to see you represented and I hope that we see more of you coming along with your show plants and to 'ooh' and 'ahh' with the rest of us! It will be a bumper weekend like last year with possibly a judged section as well. We also love to meet our country members!

Thank you so much to all of you that have contributed to the newsletter this year to share your amazing plants with all of us and spreading the love at the few meetings we have been able to hold. Keep it up! I hope more of you will send me photos and a few words of whatever is currently blowing your socks off in your garden or collection. The alternative is to post your photos on our Facebook page for all to see and the new BSI Facebook page.

Thanks to really good rains along the coast the last month or so, East London is green and thriving, including, the weeds unfortunately! But there is much to keep us busy! I have really enjoyed the solitude of our garden this Christmas season as we decided not to go away this year, it has been a very welcome respite from the craziness out there. Time to potter and reflect on the year and get a few chores done, like removing the dead leaves and flower heads and splitting some broms really cramped in their pots. I find it is a very therapeutic pastime and time to stay connected and grounded in nature. Also a time to plan some changes!

Best wishes and a happy New Year to all of you and your families from all of us. We wish each one of you a wonderful, healthy and bountiful 2022!

We hope to see all the locals and maybe some country members at the end of January at 'Bromeliads for Africa' for our first meeting of the year, depending on what is happening Covid-wise around that time.

Cheers for now!

# **Glossary of new Bromeliad Terminology**

Something new that we will be adding to meetings from now on, new terminology when talking 'bromeliad language'. Look at it as keeping that grey matter ticking over haha!!!

Some of the words have been covered in previous meetings so the list is growing. Three new ones at the bottom this month. Might come in handy for the Birthday Bash Quiz in July!

Bract	This is a specialized leaf found below a flower or on the stalk of a flower cluster and sometimes brightly coloured.			
Novar	A variegated or albomarginated plant that has lost its variegation.			
Inflorescence	Includes the flower stem and the flower head with usually small, sometimes insignificant flowers.			
Grex	A group of plants with the same parents.			
Aegeotropic	Ageotropic means growing in all directions ie not affected by gravity. <i>Tillandsia bulbosa</i> is an example of an ageotropic plant.			
Caulescent	Stem-like growth.			
Compact inflorescence	Branched inflorescence.			
Digitate inflorescence	'Finger-like' with 'branches' coming from one point. <i>Tillandsia disticha</i> has a digitate flower spike.			
Myrmecophyte	Ants inhabit the base of bulbous Tillandsia varieties. An example T. bulbosa.			
Pedicel	Flower stalk.			
Stolon	Long runner or stem.			
Stoloniferous	Pups/plants form at the end of a stolon.			
Epiphyte	An epiphyte is plant that grows attached to another plant/tree but it is not a parasite.			
Imbricate	Overlapping sections eg, on the inflorescence of Tillandsia concolor.			
Lanceolate	Large at the base then tapering to a point.			
Digitate	Finger-like.			
Lithophyte	A plant that grows on and/or between rocks and crevices.			
Rupicolous	Living or growing on or among rocks.			
Saxicole	A plant that grows on and/or between rocks and crevices			

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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.

#### **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: <u>fcbs.org</u> 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: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia">https://www.facebook.com/bromeliadsencyclopedia</a> 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