



East London Bromeliad Society South Africa

NEWS
LETTER

May
2024

Established: 25 July 2009

ELBSSA is an Affiliated Society of



Bromeliad Society International

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

From the Editor



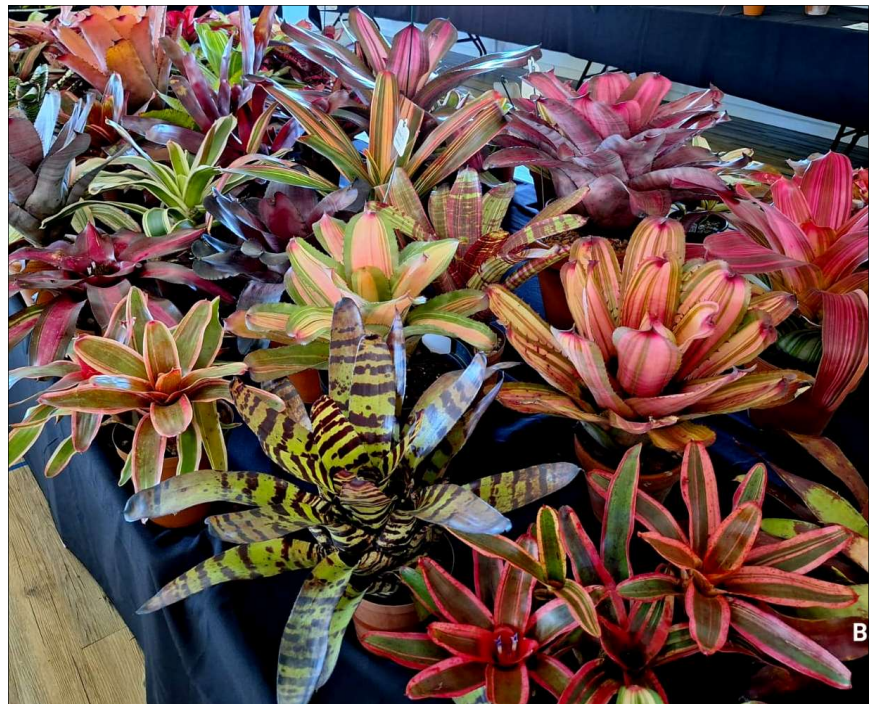
There was no newsletter last month due to the Bromeliad Magic Show getting plenty of coverage on Facebook and the Whatsapp group. I know

the show was thoroughly enjoyed by the visitors and all who worked to make it a success. Visitor numbers were down on previous shows, but the weather was really foul, so the visitors were blown away in more ways than one. Thank you to all involved. Till next year!

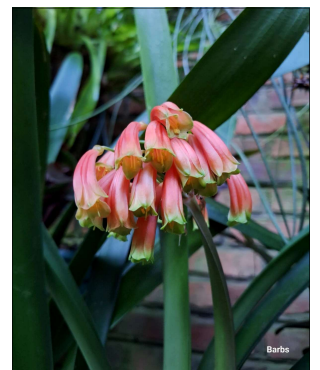
We met at Little Beacon's Pre-primary School hall for the April meeting which had an interesting topic, Bigeneric Bromeliads. Dudley gave an overview of the topic and Pete, Lyn and Dave chipped in with some examples and information of their bigeneric bromeliads.

What are they? Well we were all wiser after an interesting discussion which included some clivia cultivation comments too, which are always of interest, as many of us grow them too. I was shocked to learn from Glenn and Barbara Miles that the Chinese are raiding our country reaping clivia from their indigenous environments, especially *Clivia gardenii* and *Clivia nobilis*, the pendulous varieties. It is a great pity that there was such a poor show of members at the meeting, we missed you and hope to see you all next time.

On the topic of hybridising, I asked Dave Gower if he could mention those who have, or are currently doing hybridising with bromeliads in South Africa; Japie van



A flashback to the Bromeliad Magic Show held at the end of March. Photo: BK Black



This is *Clivia gardenii*, similar to *Clivia nobilis* blooming for me now. The leaf tips are different. Guard them with your life!

Next Meeting: Sunday 26th May. 2.00pm for start at 2.30pm. Our hosts for this meeting will be Mavis and Terence Downey at 64 Hallett Street, West Bank. We hope to see you all there!

der Westhuizen, Richard King, Christo van Wijk, Dennis Lutge, Trevor Brauckmann, Craig Nicholas, Mike Whitten and our local Robert Moss. If we have left anyone out, please let us know, we would love to connect with them. It takes a special kind of person to undertake these very time consuming endeavours of fascination and curiosity, you have my total admiration for your achievements and the mammoth task of getting a new hybrid to registration stage. Wow! We can be very proud of the spectacular examples of hybrids that have been produced in South Africa. Many of us have examples in our collections. Maybe a topic for another meeting?

Dave Gower impressed all of us with a demonstration of his new Husquarvana sprayer! As a result two more members are now new owners. Very effective for spraying your bromeliads and Tillandsia with foliar feed or spraying for scale prevention.

Enjoy this time of year, supposedly calm and warm, but we have had the odd high winds and hail storms just to add some fun to the mix. I know of three people who have had their broms shredded by the hail that we have experienced twice in the last month. It is mostly a wonderful gardening month, you can enjoy the colours and tidy up dead leaves as growth slows down for Winter. Not a great time to split broms as the pups might not flourish in these cooler months.

Until we meet at the end of May at Mavis and Terence Downey's garden in West Bank, happy bromming! We hope to see you all there!

Barbs .

What is a Hybrid and a Bigeneric?

Presented by Dudley Reynolds

A hybrid is a cross between two different species in a single genus.

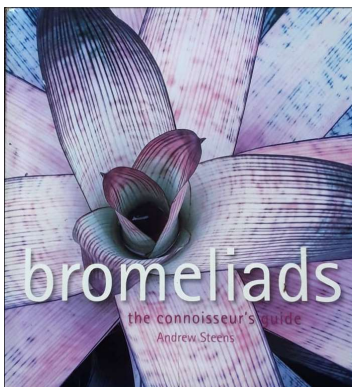
So, what is a bigeneric hybrid? It is a cross between two different species in two different genera.

The Bromeliad family is divided into 8 sub families. Previously there were only 3 sub families. There are 80 genera. Previously there were only 56 genera and currently 3700 found in the wild.

Can we hybridise one genus of bromeliad with all 80 of the other genera?

Most likely not. Two genera can only be bred from the same sub-family.

A bigeneric hybrid is named with a lower case 'x' before the new name, to indicate it is a cross between two genera. For example, a Neoregelia and Aechmea cross would be named xNeomea, followed by the species/hybrid name. An xBiltanthus (prev xCryptbergia) would be a combination of a Cryptanthus and a Billbergia.



A lovely reference book, available in our library, with stunning photos. LW

This kind of bigeneric hybridising has occurred naturally in the wild. xNiduregelia edmundoi is a natural bigeneric. xNiduregelia edmundoi was previously thought to be a Nidularium species. In comparison with the tens of thousands of bromeliad hybrids, there are not many



Pete discussed the bigenerics that he brought, xAechmea orlandiana var orlandiana x Canistrum seidelianum and Canistrum seidelianum x Aechmea correia-araujo. Photo BK Black



Dudley showing his example of a bigeneric, xBillmea 'Rosebud'. Parents are Billbergia pyramidalis and Aechmea recurvata. This cross keeps the good characteristics of both parents. The inflorescence resembles the Billbergia pyramidalis pink, torch like flower. Photo BK Black



xDyckcohonia 'Zebra' F2, the pedigree of this one is not known. The grower is Brian Windham. It has not bloomed for Dudley yet. Photo BK Black



Lyn Wegner showed bigeneric xQuesmea 'Nifty Nev' front left. Parents Aechmea disjuncta front right and Quesnelia edmundoi on the left. Photo B.K Black

bigeneric hybrids.

If we compare the bromeliad family with other families of plants such as tulips, roses or orchids for example, bromeliads have only recently been hybridised over the last 90 -100 years. The other families have a much longer history of hybridisation.

Quadgenerics (a cross between four genera) in orchids are quite a common thing to see now days. For reference, there is a nice chapter on intergenerics/bigenerics in Andrew Steen's book 'Bromeliads, The Connoisseurs Guide", pg 91. You can take this lovely book out on loan from our library. Just chat to Brenda Wegner.

Lyn Wegner showed xAnamea 'Scorpio' (Ananas x Aechmea)

I really like this bigeneric! It's an Ed Hummel hybrid so we unfortunately don't know which parents he used to make this cute little plant. It is obvious that one of the parents must have been an Ananas variety, as it forms

mini pineapples. The other parent we presume was an Aechmea. None of his hybrids

give us the parentage. This plant can be propagated by either growing the top of the mini pineapple, which enlarges as it develops, as you will notice in the photo, or by removing a pup from the main plant.

Lyn also showed us, centre, xCanmea 'Halawa', a Lisa Vinzant hybrid. The parents of this bigeneric are, left, *Canistrum seidelianum* and right *Aechmea orlandiana*.



xAnamea 'Scorpio'

Photo: L. Wegner



Centre, xCanmea 'Halawa', a Lisa Vinzant hybrid. Parents of this bigeneric are, left, *Canistrum seidelianum* and right *Aechmea orlandiana*.

Photo: BK Black

Dave Gower showed two stunning examples of bigeneric hybrids, with their parent plants. Both were placed in the Peoples Choice Plant of the Month.

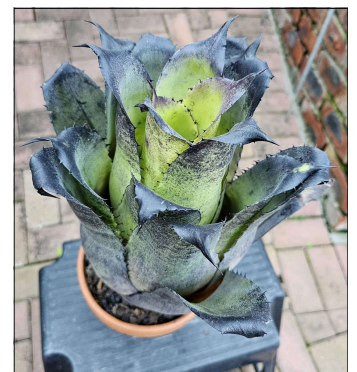


First photo left, is xHohenmea 'Enter The Dragon'. The parents of this stunning bigeneric are, seed parent: *Aechmea* 'DeLeon's Chantini' and pollen parent: *Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii*. If you look it up on the BSI Cultivar Register you will find a full description of the plant and you will note that the hybridiser is Richard King in Darling, South Africa. A splendid creation!



Aechmea 'DeLeon's Chantini'

Photo: D Gower

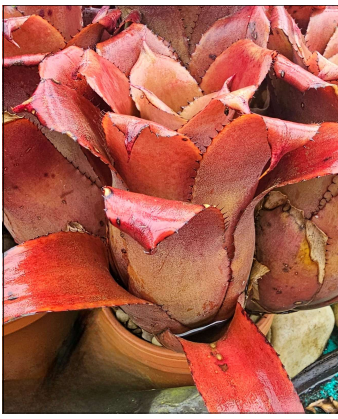


Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii

Photo: D Gower

xHohenmea 'Enter The Dragon'.

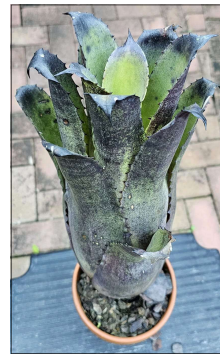
Photo: D Gower



A real little stunner, *xHohenelia* 'Ice Tea'



Photos: D Gower



Hohenbergia edmundoi
Photo: D Gower



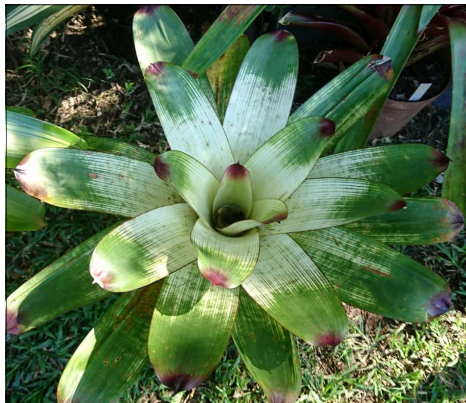
Hylaeicum mooreana
previously *Neoregelia mooreana*
Photo: D Gower

The next bigeneric from Dave showed us is *xHohenelia* 'Ice Tea'. The seed parent is: *Hohenbergia edmundoi* and the pollen parent is *Neoregelia mooreana*, which is now reclassified as *Hylaeicum mooreana*. Maybe it will now be renamed as *xHohenicum* 'Ice Tea'. It originates from Thailand, and we presume it is still to be submitted to Geoff Lawn for registration on the BSI Cultivar Register.

We hope you found the topic of bigeneric bromeliads as interesting as we all did at the meeting. Certainly some magnificent bromeliads were presented. Thanks Dudley, Pete, Lyn and Dave.

April Raffle Winners

- Dr Pete Pfister chose *Vriesea* 'Tasmin' hybrid.
- David Rathbone chose *Vriesea* 'Elfi'.
- Christine Kretzmann received a R200 voucher.
- Clint Gordon from Hoedspruit chose *Goudaea ospinae* var. *gruberi* clone ex Colombia.
- Michael van der Schyff from Pretoria chose *Goudaea ospinae* var. *gruberi* clone ex Colombia.
- Allan and Jolanda Nel from Pretoria chose *Neoregelia* 'Life Force'.



Vriesea 'Tasmin' hybrid

Photo: Dr P. Pfister

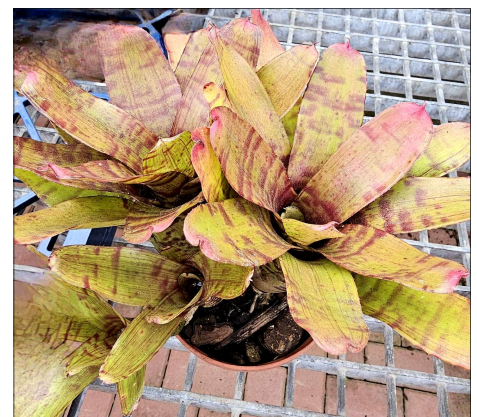


Vriesea 'Elfi Natascha'.

Photo: Dr P. Pfister



Goudaea ospinae var *gruberi* (clone ex Colombia)
Photo: D. Gower



Neoregelia 'Life Force'

Photo: D. Gower

Raffle tickets sold: Local 33 and Country 67.

Lucky Draw plants: There were numerous!

Give-away plants: There were lots of give-away plants for members to help themselves to.

- Members can buy their raffle tickets @ R10 from Lyn Odendaal at the door when you collect your badge from Betty Heunis.
- Members are welcome to supply quality bromeliads or Tillandsia for the raffle selection. You can claim the cost of your plant that is selected by a winner from the Treasurer, Lynn Friend.

Plant of the Month - People's Choice for April - Tillandsia



- 1st: xHohenmea 'Enter the Dragon' - Dave Gower
- 2nd: xSincoregelia 'Cosmic Blast' – Dave Gower
- 3rd: xHohenelia 'Ice Tea' - Dave Gower

Also in the draw: xAnamea 'Scorpio', xNeomea 'Flashdance', xVriesgoudaea 'Jags Hunua Fire', xDyckcohnia 'Zebra' F2, Name unknown

Thanks

- Dudley Reynolds for presenting the main topic of the meeting.
- Dr Pete Pfister and Lyn Wegner for give-away plants.
- Dr Pete Pfister and Lyn Wegner for lucky draw plants.
- David Gower and Lyn Wegner for Mini Auction plants.
- All the committee members for pitching in and making it another interesting meeting.
- Jean Rathbone for delicious eats at tea time.

Mini Auction

The mini auction raised R800 towards the society coffers at the April meeting. Thank you to the donors of the plants and to the bidders!

50/50 Draw

The 50/50 Draw raised R200 in April with David Rathbone winning half - R100. Lucky David! And on his birthday too!

Thank you for your support and good luck with our next draw. Lady Luck awaits!!

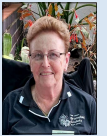
Member News

- Condolences to Roy and Lee-anne Botha on the passing of Roy's father. Our thoughts are with you and your family at this sad time.

Committee matters

- When paying the Treasurer, Lynn Friend monies at the meetings, please put it in an envelope, (which will be supplied) with your name and what it is for, written on the envelope. There are often many folks paying for things at the same time, and it gets a bit confusing to keep a record and try and write out receipts at the same time. Thank you, it will help Lynn a lot.
- We had our monthly committee meeting the Tuesday after the meeting at Lavender Blue as usual. We decided to fill you in on a few things, which we will continue to do after every committee meeting. Dudley has encouraged us all to continue with our roles on the committee. We couldn't find any replacements for those of us who wanted to step down.
- We are investigating doing talks at primary schools. Our first will be Selborne Primary who have a plant group. We will possibly be allowed to do talks at other schools too, Clarendon High School for Girls, Merrifield, Grens etc.
- What can we do to improve our meetings, encourage attendance, grow the society locally, country and international? Please let us know what your thoughts are.
- Does the last Sunday of the month suit the majority of our local members?
We would appreciate all feedback and comments, which can be made Lyn Wegner: 082 970 2293 or e-mail: brommiesfa@gmail.com or on our whatsapp group, EL Bromeliad Society SA.

From the Treasurer Lynn Friend



Are your subs due? You can pay me at the meeting or you can do an eft directly into the society account. Please put your name as a reference on the deposit so that I can identify the payee.

Standard Bank

Account Holder: East London Bromeliad Society South Africa (ELBSSA)

Branch: Vincent Park

Branch code: 051001 for efts

Cheque Account Number: 10169269351

You can contact me, cell: 083 318 1179 or
lynnfriend1@gmail.com

Upcoming Society Events

Sunday 26th May. Our hosts for this meeting are Terence and Mavis Downey at 64 Hallett Street, West Bank. We meet at: 2.00 for a sharp 2.30pm start.

Topic: All about Vriesea. An overview presented by Dudley Reynolds. Please bring any that you have to show or ask questions about to discuss. I have included some photos so you can see what Vriesea look like.

Plus we will have all the usual topics: Species Talk, Show and Tell and Wot is it? Local and Country Raffles and Lucky Draws will be held as usual.

Plant of the Month - People's Choice for May is Vriesea.

So please bring along yours from your garden or collection. Don't forget to place your plant as early as possible, before 2.20pm, to get more votes!

If you are needing an identity for your bromeliad or Tillandsia, please bring it along for 'Wot is It?'

The Mini Auction will take place after 3.15pm when electronic bidding closes. Dave Gower will post auction photos on our whatsapp group just after 2pm. All members, not present at the meeting, country and local, may submit bids to Dave's number by 3.15pm latest.

Don't forget to buy your 50/50 Draw R5 tickets from Lynda Gower when you arrive and pay @R15 for tea and collect your name badge.

Please bring your chair and a mug, spoon and plate for tea. There will be member sales before and after the meeting as usual.

Upcoming activities for the year:

- June:** Les and Andre Dry in Beacon Bay.
July: AGM and 15th Birthday Bash! We desperately need a venue for our annual celebration.
August: We need venues for August and the following two months.
September: We need a venue for September.
October: Kathy and Lindsay Wegner who live close to the Springbok Farm Stall on the Gonubie Road.
November: End of year Christmas Function, venue to be advised.

As you can see, we are needing venues for July, August and November. We are appealing to members, if you are interested in hosting a meeting, please contact Lyn Wegner. It need not be a daunting experience and it is so much nicer to meet in a garden environment than the hall, which we try to save as an emergency venue if the weather is bad. All we need is access to a plug point for the urn and the sound system.

Some notes on Growing Bromeliads

Many of our newer members have lots of questions about growing bromeliads. There is a lot to be learnt just by coming to the meetings, asking questions and sharing with other members during our very social tea time. So, for those who need to know more, over the next three months, I am including the following notes that I have adapted to our South African conditions. The article originated from the New Zealand Bromeliad Society Journal, authored by Graeme Barclay.

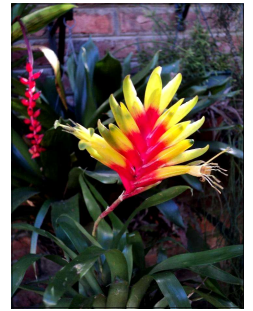
Growing Tips for Beginners – Part 1

The first step to growing great bromeliads is to identify what type (genus) of bromeliad you have, as some types require specific treatment and position in the garden or shade house to flourish and look their best. Below, are some groups of the more common genera available in South Africa and what conditions they generally like, to grow and look their best. Always watch the appearance of your bromeliads, that will tell you whether they are coping well where you have put them, too much or too little light, but we will get to that next month. It helps to keep your broms in their pots so that you can move them around easily as the seasons change and the sun becomes more intense in summer, or the shade to deep in winter. Do keep the name labels with the bromeliad, tucked in the side of the pot, it helps knowing what the bromeliad is, especially if you want to swap or find out more about it in the future. I find it a good way to learn the names.

Remember with winter approaching, don't water late in the day, especially your softer leaved varieties like Guzmania or Vriesea, they don't like being cold and wet, it will cause rot and a sad situation. In summer, don't water your bromeliads in the heat of the day, the sun will burn marks on the leaves.



Vriesea 'Strawberry'



Vriesea carinata



An example of a foliage variety Vriesea.
Photos: BK Black

Neoregelia, Aechmea, Billbergia, Quesnelia, Portea, Wittrockia

- Thick, stiff, spiny, darker or deep red coloured leaves - generally will handle very bright light, minimal shade to full sun.
- Soft, thin leaves, small or no spines - generally require dappled to semi shade, and especially need protection from harsh midday summer sun December - March.
- Free draining mix, with minimal or no fertiliser for best colour, keep centre cup and leaves and soil well watered in warmer months, drier in colder months. Many types are frost hardy, though overhead protection is advised to prevent marking.
- Most types are epiphytic and could be mounted in trees or on pieces of wood. Actually just about anything other than treated timber. If you pick up drift wood off the beach, you must leach (soak) the sea salt out of the wood before use.

Vriesea, Alcantarea, Tillandsia, (Green Leaf Forms)

- Stiff or plain green, grey, dark red colouring to leaves - generally will handle very bright light, minimal shade to full sun. Green Vriesea require shade.
- Patterned leaves (eg. Vriesea) - generally require dappled/semi shade, protection from midday summer sun. Foliage Vriesea require bright light to encourage good colour and patterning in the leaves.
- Free draining mix, fertilize in warmer months for larger size, keep centre cup and leaves and soil well watered in warmer months, drier in colder months. Keep roots moist, not dry or soaking wet (cause of browning lower leaves and leaf tips). Cup centers not a problem for East London.
- Vriesea and Tillandsia are epiphytic and can be mounted. Most Tillandsia should be mounted, mounted but also do well potted with a free draining mix.
- .
- Alcantarea are best planted in the ground or on or around rocks as they can become very large and the tall inflorescence needs good support. Some grow into big plants and can be fertilised, as they grow slowly.
- All must have frost protection.

Tillandsia (Grey Leaf Forms – 'Air Plants')

- These are epiphytic, do not plant in soil, they should be mounted on salt free driftwood, cork, trees, rocks, hanging baskets etc. (not tanalised poles as they contain copper which is deadly to bromeliads) or suspended from a branch using wire or fishing line.
- Many do not require any specific watering/fertilising to grow – good air movement, rain and humidity is enough. However, some are sensitive to cold and some DO require regular spray misting and/or feeding.

Nidularium, Guzmania, Cryptanthus, Vriesea

- Soft, thin leaves, small or no spines - require dappled or semi or full shade and protection from direct summer sun.
- Free draining mix, fertilize in warmer months for larger size, keep centre cup and leaves and soil well watered in warmer months, drier in colder months. Keep roots moist, not dry or soaking wet (cause of browning lower leaves and leaf tips).
- Generally not recommended for mounting.

Dyckia, Orthophytum, Puya

- Stiff, spiky leaves, most will handle full sun and frost.
- They like very free draining mix and large pots. Fertilize in warmer months for larger size, and keep soil well watered in warmer months, drier in colder months. Keep roots moist, not dry or soaking wet (cause of browning lower leaves and leaf tips)
- Must have very bright/direct light for best colour.

Remember: When in doubt, chat to someone who has loads of bromeliad experience to help you place your bromeliads.

You could enter each plant name into Google and you will get loads of images of what they look like or go onto bsi.org or fcbs.org and enter the names.

Please remember that we have a lot of interesting and varying resources available in the library to learn more about bromeliads. Please contact Brenda Wegner, cell: 082 743 2141

Next month we will deal with the basics of getting started with bromeliads in the garden or shade house.

Reference: Adapted from Bromeliad Society of New Zealand -Graeme Barclay

Glossary of new Bromeliad Terminology

We are maintaining a list of new terminology used during meetings when talking 'bromeliad language'.

Ageotropic	Ageotropic means growing in all directions ie not affected by gravity. <i>Tillandsia bulbosa</i> is an example of an ageotropic plant
Bigeneric	A plant that is the result of crossing two different genera. It will have an 'x' in front of its name, eg: x <i>Ananea</i> Scorpio. The bigeneric name will be a cross between the genera involved in the parentage, as in the above case: <i>Ananas</i> and <i>Achenea</i> = x <i>Ananea</i> .
Bract	This is a specialized leaf found below a flower or on the stalk of a flower cluster and sometimes brightly coloured
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
Discolor	Having two different colours. In a bromeliad leaf it usually means a green leaf with red underside
Epiphyte	An epiphyte is plant that grows attached to another plant/tree but it is not a parasite
Flavo	Yellow margin on the leaves
Grex	A group of plants with the same parents
Hemiepiphyte	This is a plant that spends part of it's life cycle as an epiphyte
Inflorescence	Includes the flower stem and the flower head with usually small, sometimes insignificant flowers
Imbricate	Overlapping sections eg, on the inflorescence of <i>Tillandsia concolor</i>
Lanceolate	Large at the base then tapering to a point
Lithophyte	A plant that grows on and/or between rocks and crevices
Mesic	A growing habitat containing a moderate amount of moisture
Myrmecophyte	Ants inhabit the base of bulbous <i>Tillandsia</i> varieties. An example <i>T. bulbosa</i>
Novar	A variegated or albomarginated plant that has lost it's variegation
Pedice	Flower stalk
Rupicolous	Living or growing on or among rocks
Semi sessile	Flowers on a short stem
Simple	A single un-branched inflorescence
Stolon	Long woody runner or stem from a mother plant that a new pup develops on
Stoloniferous	Pups/plants form at the end of a stolon
Saxicole	A plant that grows on and/or between rocks and crevices
Xeric	A growing habitat containing little moisture or very dry

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 R150.00 for individuals/families and R60 for students.

Committee Members

Chairman:	Dudley Reynolds		079 478 2338	dudleyreynolds1@gmail.com
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Mini Auction Convener	Dave Gower		063 694 1650	djagower@gmail.com



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

The new **BSD** or **BSI Bromeliad Species Database** is the 'go to' resource for bromeliad species info on line which can be accessed at www.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>