



East London Bromeliad Society South Africa

NEWS
LETTER

July
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



Another super, busy meeting was held at the end of June at the home of Les and Andre Dry in Beacon Bay. It was lovely to welcome a visitor, who became a member, Gerda Wagner from Chintsa, and also some out of town members too, nice to see you, Ken and Rosalie Hillstead from Kei Mouth.

Those of you who were not there, really missed out on a stunning array of some of the most awesome looking *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties, brought by members to show for discussion, and enter into the People's Choice, Plant of the Month competition.

I am including the last three 'Growing Tips for Beginners' in this issue of the newsletter, as I will be away for a month, and then taking a much needed break. I hope that our newer members have found these notes full of useful information about growing your bromeliads.

I will be on holiday from early August. I am off to England and Scotland with my son and family. How lucky is this Nana to be a first time explorer with our granddaughters? I will be meeting my mother's family that I know from corresponding and Skype, but have never met before. My cousins will take me to where my mom grew up and where my father worked during the war etc, in Yorkshire. This trip has been top of my bucket list since forever. I cannot believe it is truly going to be happening in two weeks time. I will be traveling solo for the last two weeks and just before I come home I have planned to spend a day at Kew Gardens with a friend I have not



Some of Robert Moss's amazing hybrids grown from seed. As yet unnamed *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties.

Photo: BK Black

Next Meeting: Sunday 28th July. BIRTHDAY BASH! 2.00pm for start at 2.30pm. Our hosts are Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 18 Wentworth Rd, Sunnyridge. We hope to see you all there for some fun and games!

seen for over 30 years. A week with another old friend in Lincolnshire who loves gardening and wishes she could grow bromeliads like we do! You can be sure that I shall have bromeliads on my radar while away. So, there will be no newsletter from me till next year and that depends entirely on how things work out for me physically.

A big thank you to Les Dry for hosting us solo this last month,

(because Andre was ill in hospital, but is thankfully well now!), with Great Danes, Archie and Bijou joining us in her beautifully landscaped garden setting. A perfect meeting place under the branches of two sprawling big trees. Les has created the gardens from scratch over the last 23 years or so, with the foresight to plant trees which now provide shade and balance to the landscape. Besides being an avid gardener, Les is also a dog behaviourist and a keen golfer. Thank you for sharing your special place with all of us again Les!

It was with great sorrow that we learnt of the passing of our valued member, committee member and bromeliad friend and enthusiast, Dave Gower, who passed away on 10th August. Our sincere condolences go out to Lynda and their children and granddaughters. What a shock for his family and for so many in the bromeliad world. Dave had been a member of the society since October 2018, and had been collecting bromeliads for a few years before that. He went to the Kiwi Broms conference last year with a group of society members and got to meet some of his hero hybridisers. A more passionate, knowledgeable collector will be hard to find around our neck of the woods. I'm sure he had a photographic memory, remembering the names and hybridisers of practically all his plants. He also had extensive knowledge of indigenous plants, and he had a fascination for *Lophophora* and had been collecting them as well. He was so generous in sharing his knowledge and if he knew you wanted a certain plant and he had a few, he would see that somehow, one pitched up on your doorstep. He didn't call himself a collector, he said he was a bromeliad farmer. He also liked to pull your leg from time to time! He will be greatly missed by so many; his family most of all, colleagues from his business life and the bromeliad community, many people, not just in South Africa, but far further a-field in Africa. He grew his bromeliads to absolute perfection in his state of the art shade houses. He leaves a legacy of learning, sharing, and a passion for growing bromeliads. He certainly did things "My Way". We will all miss you Dave, you will not be forgotten.

We have our AGM, Birthday Bash to look forward to at the end of the month with LOTS of Fizz Ananas, champagne and pineapple juice, the Annual Quiz, Raffles, the Mini Auction and plenty of fun and camaraderie, plus a scrumptious birthday tea. The committee look forward to seeing you all at Lyn and Trevor's home, 'Bromeliads for Africa' in Sunnyridge. Cheers for now.

Barbs



Part of Les's beautifully landscaped garden in the late afternoon sun. Photo BK Black



Our hostess, Les Dry with one of her Great Danes, Archie, who charmed everyone! Photo BK Black



Dave, as we will remember him, amongst his amazing collection of bromeliads, in the shadehouses he designed and created. Our hearts go out to Lynda and the family as they come to terms with their immense loss. Photo: BK Black



Dudley's crate full of gorgeous *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties. They truly were a feast for the eyes! Photo: BK Black

The June Meeting

The topic of the meeting was all about *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties, Wow! Dudley gave a short introduction, then showed the examples of his bromeliads that he brought to the meeting. Members also showed some stunning *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties, which elicited much interesting discussion.

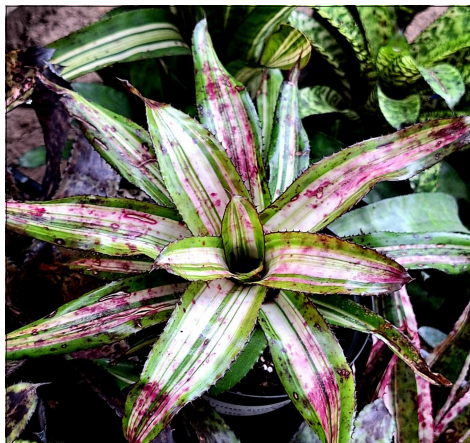
Aechmea orlandiana and Cousins

Dudley Reynolds



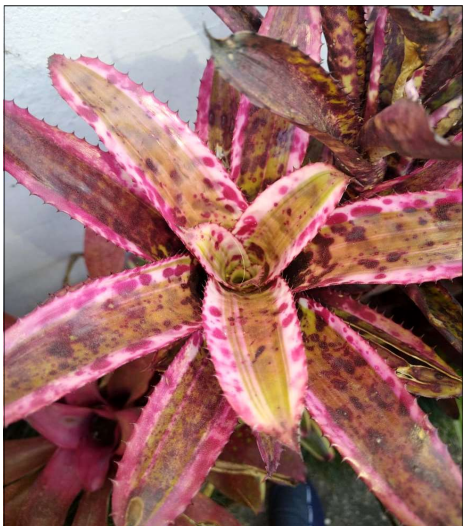
Aechmea 'Medio Picta'

Photo: BK Black



Aechmea 'Reverse Ensign'

Photo: BK Black



Aechmea 'Gold Tone'

Photo: D Reynolds

The first *Aechmea orlandiana* species was collected by Mulford and Racine Foster in 1939, in Espirito Santo, Brazil. He went on to discover over 170 species of bromeliads during his lifetime. He also served as President on the Bromeliad Society International board from 1950-1959. You will notice Mulford and his wife's names cropping up in the naming of hybrid bromeliads, as a mark of recognition for their service towards bromeliads.

Dudley showed some of his plants. They are his favourites, (it's not hard to guess why!) and he even self published a little book about them. If you are interested in acquiring a book, please chat to Dudley or take it out on loan from our library.

First up; *Aechmea* 'Medio Picta' is a cultivar of *Ae. orlandiana*. The term medio picta means painted middle. This plant leaf has a white underlay with the center of the leaf darkening to a maroon/brown mottled colour. The white areas which are green when immature, tinge with pink in good light.

Aechmea orlandiana 'Ensign'. This form was found among seedlings grown by Edgar W. Ensign. It is an albo-margined form of *Ae. orlandiana*. It has green leaves with white/cream leaf edges, which are speckled and blotched with pink when grown in strong light. The prominent spines are maroon in colour. This plant does battle in winter for me. As with most of the *Ae. orlandiana* varieties, it will lose the pink colour if grown in a shady spot.

Aechmea 'Reverse Ensign'. A variegated form of *Ae. 'Ensign'*. This one seems to be a bit more cold tolerant for me.

Aechmea 'Gold Tone'. is a yellow variegated sport of *Ae. 'Ensign'* which should be described as flavo margined. It seems to be a little more cold tolerant.

Aechmea 'Charcoal' is a sport of *Ae. 'Black Beauty'*. It has strong concentrated marbling with dark pink/red appearing through the gaps in the black.



To explore and enjoy this topic more, place an order with Dudley for a copy of his book, *Dramatic Leaves of Aechmea orlandiana*.



Dr Pete Pfister's example of *Aechmea* 'Ensign'.

Photo: BK Black



Aechmea 'Charcoal' is a sport of *Ae. 'Black Beauty'*.

Photo: BK Black



Aechmea 'Jean Merkle' Photo: D Reynolds



Aechmea 'Black Beauty' Photo: D Reynolds



Aechmea 'White Knight' Photo: D Reynolds

Aechmea 'Jean Merkel' can also be regarded as having a medio picta type of variegation. The dark central markings are more concentrated towards the centre reservoir.

Aechmea 'Pink'. The pink colour intensifies when grown in strong summer light.

Aechmea 'Pickaninny' is a cross between Ae. orlandiana, Ae. 'Bert' and Ae. fosteriana. Three seedlings were selected from this crossing, being Ae. 'Black' Marble', Ae. 'Shadow' and Ae. 'Pickaninny', which were chosen because of their increased black markings on the green leaf. It is also noted that the leaves are narrower on Ae. 'Pickaninny' and have more trichomes on the leaf surface than its relatives.

Aechmea 'White Knight' is a cultivar of Ae. Orlandiana named by Jim Irvin. A white leaf on which there is green banding, combined with maroon to brown banding, blotches and speckles. The underside of the leaf having the more prominent brown to maroon banding. The intensity of the pink hue and blotching depends on how much strong light the plant receives.

Aechmea 'Afterburner' has two healthy pups. It has amazing colour, just like the after burn of a rocket in take-off mode.

Aechmea 'Skid Marks', hybridised by Michael Kiel. Mine has no longitudinal dark markings. Maybe a little. Dave Gower brought a good example of this plant to the meeting with very clear markings.



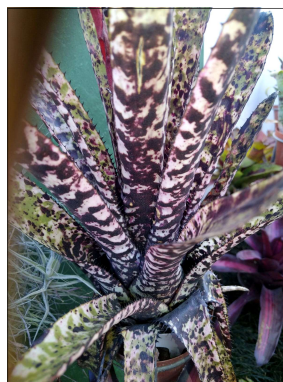
Aechmea 'Pink' Photo: D Reynolds



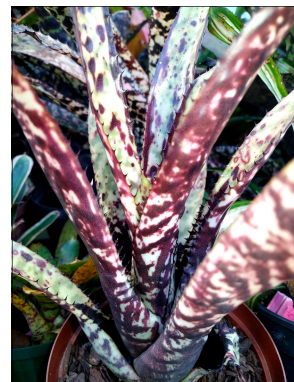
Aechmea 'Pickaninny' Photo: D Reynolds



Aechmea 'Afterburner' Photo: BK Black



Dudley's Aechmea 'Skid Marks', first import of this plant. Photo: D Reynolds



Dudley's Aechmea 'Skid Marks' with slight longitudinal lines. Photo: D Reynolds



Dave Gower's Aechmea 'Skidmarks' Photo: BK Black

Show and Tell

Robert Moss spoke about his stunning collection of hybrids of *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties. He has created some spectacular ones amongst his plants. One day, one or two will be registered, I am sure.

Dr Peter Pfister showed some of his *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties, then he and Dudley compared their *Aechmea orlandiana* 'Pink' bromeliads to illustrate the huge difference that light makes to the colouration and markings on the leaves. Winter is not always the best time for bringing out the best colours in most bromeliads.

Pete also highlighted how important it is to label our plants, especially when it is difficult to tell them apart.

Dudley showed Barbs' *Aechmea* 'Gold Tone', an old mother plant, which has a large albino pup. It has a few tiny green markings at the base of some leaves. It will be interesting to see if it produces an inflorescence while still attached to the old mother's rootstock and a pup, and what it will look like? Will it revert to normal? If it is separated it will more than likely die off, as there is not enough green in the leaves to sustain the production of chlorophyll, which the plant needs in order to continue growing. I will keep an eye on it,



Dudley and Pete compared their *Aechmea orlandiana* 'Pink' bromeliads. Photo: BK Black



Robert Moss shared about his passion for hybridising with *Aechmea orlandiana* varieties, Photo: BK Black

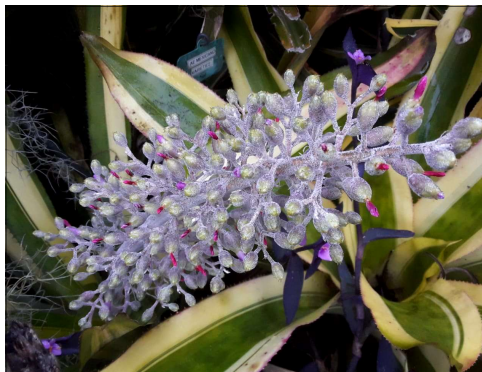


Aechmea 'Gold Tone' with an albino pup. Photo: BK Black

Species Talk

Lyn Wegner

***Aechmea mexicana*:** This tough, slow growing, albomarginated, beautiful sport of the species *Ae. mexicana* is found in open areas of forest, bush and sand dunes in Southern Mexico to Ecuador. Its origin is unknown. It reaches 3 feet across with an inflorescence of white berries and cerise flowers. I find it a shy bloomer and the flowers just don't seem to like to open! A beautiful plant for a sunny spot in the garden.



Lyn's *Aechmea mexicana* with its eye catching inflorescence.

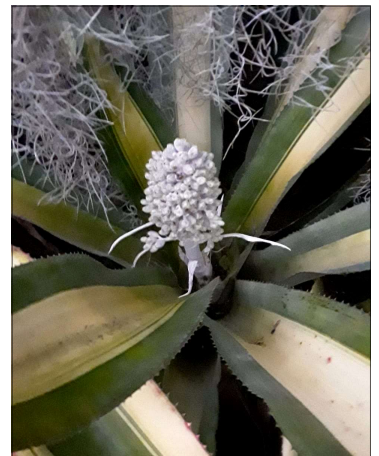


Photo : L Wegner

June Raffle Winners

- Les Dry chose *Neoregelia* ((*carolinae* variegated x 'Hannibal Lecter') x 'Norman Bates') x 'Tiger'.
- David Rathbone chose *Guzmania* 'Amethyst'.
- Lynda Gower chose a voucher to the value of R200.
- Christo van Wijk from Pretoria chose *Quesnelia tubifolia*.
- Roelf Coetzee from Aliwal North chose *Vriesea* 'Tasman' hybrid.
- Ruth Mathias from Munster chose *Alcantarea* 'Mellow Yellow'

Raffle tickets sold: 45 Local and 59 Country .

Lucky Draw plants: There were numerous!

Give-away plants: There were loads for members to help themselves to.

- Members can buy their raffle tickets @R10 from Lyn Odendaal at



June raffle winners; David Rathbone, Lynda Gower and Les Dry. Photo: BK Black

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 June

Aechmea orlandiana and Cousins

- 1st: *Aechmea* 'Skid Marks' - Dave Gower
- 2nd: *Aechmea* hybrid variety - Robert Moss
- 3rd: *Aechmea* 'Charcoal' - David Gower

Mini Auction

The mini auction raised R595.00 towards the society coffers at the June meeting. We will never forget Dave Gower for instituting this item on our meeting agenda and running all the Mini Auctions to date. Thank you to the donors of the plants and to the bidders!

50/50 Draw

The 50/50 Draw run by Lynda Gower raised R150 in June with Dave Gower winning R75 this month.

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

Member News

- A big welcome to Gerda Wagner from Olivewood Estate, Chintsa. We hope that you will have a long and happy association with all of us!
- It is with profound sadness that we lost our bromeliad friend and committee member David Gower on the 10th July. We all extend our very sincere condolences to Lynda and all the family. He will always be remembered.

Committee Matters

- Anything you feel needs discussing, please let Lyn Wegner know or come and join us at a committee meeting, we would love to welcome you. It is held the Tuesday after the meeting at various spots around EL, eg, Lavender Blue, we order a bite to eat afterwards, chat and solve the worlds problems!

Upcoming Society Events

Sunday 28th July: AGM and 15th Birthday Bash! To be hosted by Lyn and Trevor Wegner at 18 Wentworth Avenue, Sunnyridge at 'Bromeliads for Africa'. We will meet at: 2.00 for a sharp 2.30pm start.

There will be Festive Fizz Ananas, AGM, the Annual Fun Quiz, Mini Auction, Raffles and a scrumptious Birthday tea and much camaraderie and laughter.

Please remember to bring your chair and plate, mug and spoon for tea.

Upcoming activities for the year:

August: Deanne and Theo Karshagen .

September: We need a venue for September please.

October: To be hosted by Kathy and Lindsay Wegner who live close to the Springbok Farm Stall on the



Decisions, decisions, which one to choose? Robert Moss, Ken and Rosalie Hillstead choosing their favourite Plant of the Month.
Photo BK Black



1st: *Aechmea* 'Skid Marks', 2nd: *Aechmea* hybrid variety, 3rd: *Aechmea* 'Charcoal'.
Photo BK Black



Gerda Wagner with the Treasurer, Lynn Friend.

Photo BK Black

Gonubie Main Road.

November: End of year Christmas Function, venue to be advised.

As you can see, we are needing venues for September 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.

Thanks

- Les and Andre Dry for being hosts for the June meeting.
- Dudley Reynolds and members who spoke about their plants and brought so many gorgeous examples.
- Lyn Wegner and Dave Gower for Mini Auction Donations
- Lyn Wegner, Dr Pete Pfister, Dave Gower, Andre Eybers for lucky draw plants.
- Eddie and Barbara Black, Lyn Wegner and Dr Pete Pfister for give away plants
- Jean Rathbone for a delicious tea.
- Everyone who brought their special brand of magic to the meeting just by being there!

From the Treasurer Lynn Friend

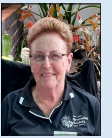
Are your subs due? You can pay me at the meeting or you can do an eft directly into the society account. Please put your name as a reference on the deposit so that I can identify the payee.

Standard Bank

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

Branch: Vincent Park **Branch code:** 051001 **for eft's** **Cheque Account Number:** 10169269351

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



Some More 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, I am continuing with Part 3, 4 and 5 of Some Notes on Growing Bromeliads which 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 3

Following on from Part 2, where we covered light, potting mix and planting, we now look at the basics of removing pups and watering.

Removing offsets (pups)

Most bromeliads self-propagate by producing offsets, commonly known as 'pups' from around their stem or root areas. This normally happens when they mature near or after flowering, as they attempt to create offspring that will continue to grow after the mother plant slowly dies, post flowering. However, they can also produce pups when the plant is stressed or has a change in environment that triggers the plant to produce pups or flower before maturity. Basically all pups can be removed either by cutting or pulling them gently off the mother plant. As a general rule, wait until the pup is around half the size of the mother before removing it. They will grow much faster when still attached, so the longer they are left on, the better.

There are four main types of pups you will have to deal with as follows.

1. Basal

If the pup is emerging from the basal root area or inside one of the bottom leaves, firstly remove the plant from the pot or ground. If the pup is joined to the root ball, remove any soil and cut off the pup as close as possible to the mother, trying to retain any small roots that have formed on the pup's base. For pups that emerge within the lower leaf axils, remove the leaves BELOW the pup by splitting and pulling them to the sides to expose where the pup joins the mother. These types of pups often have a natural 'joint' where the pup's base forms very close to the plant. If



Basal pup on a *Vriesea fosteriana* x *seideliana*.
BK Black

the pup can be gently pulled downwards and twisted without squeezing its stem, it will often come off quite easily without using a knife at all. However, this may be difficult with very large pups that are tightly connected to the mother. In this case, a thin serrated knife or saw can be inserted between the pup and mother and a cut made down towards the roots, taking care not to cut through the stem of both mother and pup.

2. Stoloniferous

If the pup has long, woody stolons, they can easily be cut close to the mother using secateurs, or a sharp serrated knife or saw. The stolons can then also be trimmed further close to the pup if required, before planting or mounting.

3. Axial

Some bromeliads form their pups very high up the stem of the plant in the central leaves close to the inflorescence. These must be removed with great care, also using a sharp knife with minimal cutting into the stem of the mother. Most of these plants only produce one or two pups before dying, so it is sometimes best to leave the pups in-situ, so they eventually grow through the mother.

4. Adventitious

Other varieties (mainly in the *Vriesea* and *Alcantarea* genera) produce tiny adventitious or 'grass' pups from the basal area. This normally occurs when the mother plant is very young and sometimes these are the ONLY pups the plant will have. Therefore, it is a good idea to remove them when the grass pups are quite small (between 8-12cm long) and grow them on as you would a seedling in fine mix, with regular water and fertiliser in a warm and sheltered area or place them in the cup of another bromeliad which has water in it.

The critical point to remember when removing any type of pup, is NOT to cut into or damage the soft white tissue in the base or stem of the pup or the mother, as this is the 'live' growing tissue that forms roots and leaves. Rotting and/or infection of the base or centre of the plant is highly likely if this occurs, or it may take a long time to recover – so take extreme care!

Watering

Most bromeliads like humidity and moisture to grow well, so it is important to look at their growing environment to ensure they are getting regular water. Broms growing in the garden will normally only need watering during hot summer months. Never water in the heat of the day, this will cause leaf burn. Check the centre cups and soil moisture each week to ensure they are not dried out. Rain during the cooler seasons is all they will need to survive, so there is no need to water them at this time unless direct sun is drying them out. For broms in pots, inside or in greenhouses that do not get rain, again regular checking is necessary and some prudent watering may need to be done during the colder months as well – but DON'T overdo it especially in the winter rainfall areas of South Africa! Too much water in cold weather can exacerbate fungal growth and rot around the base and promote 'cold damage' marks on the leaves. In winter, keep water in the centre cups and leaves to a minimal level and try to let the pot soil dry out between waterings. As a general rule, water each plant until the cups and leaves just overflow and water runs out the bottom of the pot. Soil should be moist, but not soaking wet and the pot should never sit in water.

One other thing to remember in Summer, is to **run your hose well before watering**. The water in garden hoses can get very hot in summer and will badly scald and even kill broms.



Neoregelia punctatissima pups growing on woody stolons, still too small to remove. They look good allowed to grow in a clump.



Axial pup can be seen growing from the centre of *Vriesea splendens*.



Adventitious 'grass pups' growing on *Alcantarea nahoumii*.

Growing Tips for Beginners Part 4

Now we will look at the basics of controlling common diseases and pests – and also protecting your broms from the elements.

Disease Control

Thankfully, bromeliads are relatively hardy and generally not susceptible to a wide range of problems, though there are a few common ones you are likely to experience. The 'disease' or 'rot' we normally see is actually fungal growth that thrives on high humidity and poor air circulation around the plant. Therefore as a general rule, firstly ensure plants are not planted or kept jammed too close together - and they always have a good air flow around them. Broms in the garden normally do not suffer from this problem as much as those indoors or in greenhouses, where the air circulation can be vastly reduced.

The most common fungal disease (normally *phytophthora*) will often attack a weak spot in the plant where damage to the leaf has occurred from such things as sun scorch, cold spotting or heavy metal poisoning.

As mentioned in part two, bromeliads do not like ANY contact with treated timber (tanalised poles), and also exposure to copper and zinc, where the smallest doses can cause severe burning to leaves.

Secondly, always ensure any water run-off from treated timber, galvanized shelving and nails etc, does not land on plants below. The galvanizing process used in South Africa, including the galvanised wire appears to be different from what is used in other parts of the world. Trevor Wegner uses the SA galvanised wire for the wire baskets he makes which many of us use for our Tillandsia without any problems. The imported wire is available (at Burmeisters – hardware store) but it rusts and could cause problems when dripping on broms. After damage occurs, that part of the leaf will die and quickly start to rot, which is where the fungus can attack, enter the leaf and quickly spread. This is very common in the vase (cup) of the tank forming broms, near the base of the outer leaves and sometimes in the very base of the plant at or below the soil surface (known as "Foot-rot"). The diseased tissue looks brown, grey-bluish, black or transparent in colour and often has a distinctive bad smell. For treatment, tip all the water from the plant, cut out any rot and completely remove all loose and rotted leaves. You might need to remove it from its pot. Thoroughly clean and rinse the plant with clean water a few times so no rotted tissue is left behind. You can then generously spray with a fungicide eg Rosecare at the recommended mix rate for ornamental plants. Cinnamon generously sprinkled onto the problem area also helps with rotting issues. Allow the plant to dry out for a few days before repotting and watering, then monitor for further attacks and to ensure new undamaged growth is occurring.

Pest Control

Scale sucking insects will attach themselves to any part of a leaf, often on the sheltered underside. They can be fluffy white, grey or small and black and cause yellow/brown spots, which permanently damages the leaf and can look very unsightly. Scale can be physically scraped and wiped off with a cotton ball soaked in methylated spirits, which will kill the eggs and microscopic "crawler babies" that are hard to see. You can also spray any part of the plant with eg Koinor, Imidor systemic insecticides that will be absorbed into the root and leaves and kill the scale. This needs to be repeated periodically. Check the product you use for the ingredient imidacloprid which will tell you the product is systemic.

- **Mealy bug** can also attack the leaves and is sometimes also seen around the roots if a bromeliad is removed from a pot or the garden. This is also fluffy white in appearance and can be treated as for scale above if on a leaf. For root attacks, it can only be treated by spraying with a suitable insecticide, or alternatively cutting the roots almost completely off and starting the plant again as if it were a pup. Ensure that any infested potting mix and root material is carefully discarded, so it is not spread to other plants. For more widespread infestations of scale and mealy bug on leaves, mix a little Sunlight dishwashing detergent or baby shampoo with water and thoroughly spray the infected areas. The soap coats and suffocates the insects. After a while, rinse the plants off with clean water so pores on the leaves can be open, as these can often clog and choke the plant, then it cannot take in moisture to thrive.
- **Slugs and snails** do not normally cause major damage but will often use the leaves for a place to hide and breed. However, they have been known to gain "appetites for destruction" all of a sudden, especially on new leaf growth, flower spikes and pups that are forming. So, the best precaution is to simply get rid of them when they are seen. Slug bait usually does the trick.

Sun and Frost Protection

Overhanging trees and shade cloth are your best protection for summer sun, where some bromeliads can be badly scorched if there is not adequate cover. Using 50% to 70% beige, white or black coloured shade cloth appears to give the best results for most broms to gain and retain their best colour.

In winter, exposed areas of the garden may be susceptible to frost – most bromeliads DO NOT handle frost and extreme cold that well. If the bromeliads cannot be relocated to a more protected area, pegging up 2 metres x 5 metres lengths of frost cloth on string or wire over the plants is a good idea the night before a frost is forecast. All the preventative effort is worth it, as frost damage on prize bromeliads is a sickening thing to see. However, DO NOT throw heavily frost-burnt plants away if you are unfortunate enough to become a

victim. Fertilise them well in spring, use SeaGrow or VitaBoost in the soil and cut off all the burnt leaves. The plants will look terrible after trimming them, but within a year the new growth from the centre cup should have emerged and you will have new bromeliads to enjoy again.

Growing Tips for Beginners Part 5 - Fertilising

Fertiliser for bromeliads is a much debated and complex issue, as it can have such a huge effect on the appearance of the plant – both good and bad. Most bromeliads grow perfectly well **WITHOUT applications of any artificial fertiliser**. Remember, the 'tank' types are well adapted to collecting nutrients in their cups and leaf axils.

However, it is generally accepted that some fertiliser does help young pups grow roots and get well established - and also helps maturing plants to look their best. The trick is to find the right methods and type of fertiliser for your plants – as many of them have different nutrient requirements and growers have differing preferences as to how certain plants should look.

Without getting too complex, the more fertiliser that is applied - the larger and greener the plants will normally be. Depending on the type of bromeliad, this is not always desirable. The leaves will probably also be longer and thinner, than if no fertiliser is used. As a general rule, plants with soft, green leaves respond well to fertiliser, whereas shorter, darker/coloured leaves will normally look better with NONE at all. Therefore, look carefully at your types of bromeliads, the colours, sizes and form that they have – and decide which ones would benefit from fertiliser and which ones wouldn't. One size (amount of fertiliser) does not fit all ! If in doubt, ask an experienced grower in your society or area. Large bromeliads such as *Alcantarea* will respond well to some consistent fertilising due to their size and growth requirements.

If you are going to fertilise your bromeliads it should be done during the active growing period in the warmer months and you need to be consistent.

The best method of fertilising for beginners is to use 6-12 month slow release pellets. Select a type which is medium/low in Nitrogen (N) very low in Phosphorus (P) but quite high in Potassium (K). Look for the 'NPK' ratio, which should be something like 14 : 4 : 24 (that is N=14 / P=4 / K=24), where the 'K' ratio is near twice that of the 'N'.

Simply mix a small teaspoon of pellets into the soil when planting a pup and from then on a small teaspoon around the soil surface each spring. This is normally sufficient for most broms to look good and grow well throughout the year. The slow release method is less likely to cause problems with form, colour change and burning of the plant, than if regular 'foliar spray' feeding is done. The foliar method is best left for more experienced growers or until you are sure how your plants respond to fertiliser in your growing environment.

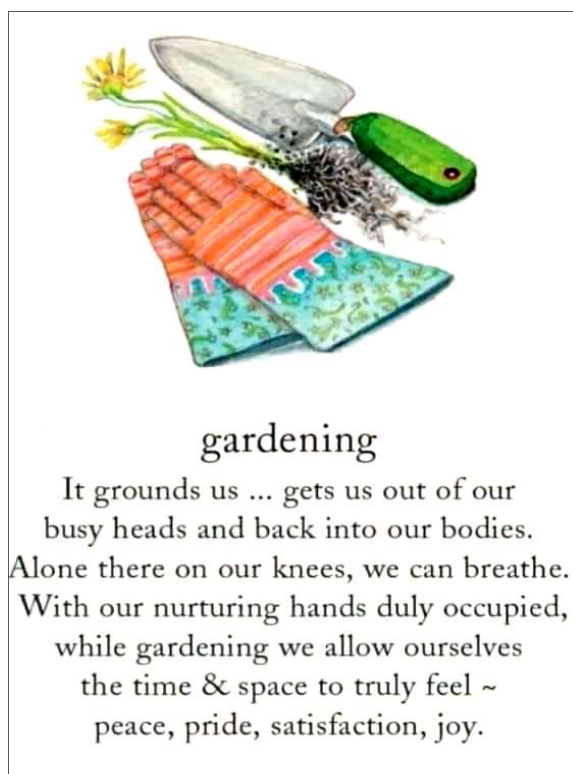
Please Note:

This is a difficult topic and there are sad lessons to be learnt if not done properly and consistently. We appreciate any input from experienced growers on this topic.

**Adapted to the South African context from articles written by
Graeme Barclay for the New Zealand Bromeliad Journal.
www.bsnz.org**

ELBSSA Library Resources

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 and she will bring along a selection of what interests you.



Glossary of new Bromeliad Terminology

We are maintaining a list of new terminology used during meetings when talking 'bromeliad language'. The Annual Quiz is coming up, so take a glance through this list, I bet you Dudley will ask some questions relating to a few of these words!

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
Fenestration	The white spaces between the coloured markings on foliage <i>Vriesea</i> that let the light into the leaf, like little windows
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 for educational purposes 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 by whatsapp or e-mail, 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.

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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

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: 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 **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>