

# ***Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group N.S.W.***

Edition: March 2024

Agenda: General Discussion

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery  
114 Pine Street Wardell 2477  
Phone (02) 6683 4188

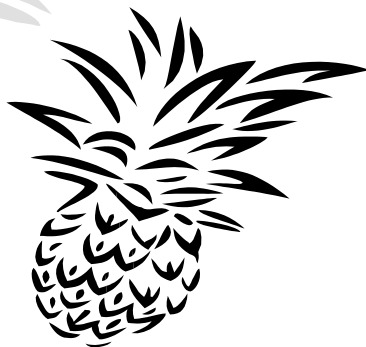
Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month  
Next meeting April 18th 2024 at 11 a.m.

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## **Meeting 15th February 2024**

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am  
The 9 members were welcomed.  
Three apologies were received.

### **General Business**

Our main point of business this month was the election of officers. In a small Group such as ours there is usually very little change but it's a formality that must be undertaken each year just in case somebody offers to take over the Newsletter or .....!! Position of officers is printed on page 15 of this Newsletter.

### **Fire Ants Located in Wardell**

compiled by Helen Clewett

On January 19 a cluster of five fire ant nests in a 60m area was discovered by a keen gardener at Wardell Pod Village, the cluster counts as one infestation. The fire ants like disturbed soil and because of landscaping work, the ants could have been brought in through mulch, soil or some other way.

At a community meeting hosted by the Department of Primary Industries, about 35 people attended the Wardell Memorial Hall with questions. The village is now under a Fire Ant Biosecurity Emergency Order covering a 5km radius of Wardell.

#### **What does this infestation discovery mean for Wardell and the Northern Rivers area of NSW — is there any way to stop it getting worse?**

There were two representatives from the NSW DPI - Chief Invasive Species officer, Scott Charlton and the National Fire Ant Eradication Program Chief Operations officer, Graeme Dudgeon.

"As of February 1, there have been no new fire ant infestations discovered in Wardell and surrounds. The Emergency Order and 5 km exclusion zone will remain in place. It could be up to two years before Wardell has its Proof of Freedom papers and is free of fire ants" Mr Charlton said.

"No one in southeast Queensland has been cleared," he said.

"The metric for success is stopping the spread."

"The ants are difficult to get rid of."

Sniffer dogs, drones and helicopter spraying are part of the approach to stop the fire ant spread. So too, is consultation with the community on eradication and educating residents on how to spot a nest. Mr Dudgeon said a typical sign to look for is "there are no obvious entries to a fire ant nest". Fire ants don't seem to like natural bushland, they like to nest along curbs and guttering.

### **What is the fire ant bait made of?**

The fire ant bait is made up of corn grit soaked in a mixture of soybean oil and a Insect Growth Regulator, either S-methoprene (widely used in mosquito control programs) or pyriproxyfen (commonly used in dog and cat flea collars).

The bait treatment is used in accordance with the product label and permit from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority to ensure safety to humans, animals and the environment. The aim is to make the queen infertile and then the nest dies of old age. "Sometimes the baiting is done six times to make sure we get rid of every queen out there" Mr Charlton said.

### **What can I do?**

Everyone needs to keep an eye out for nests, anyone who discovers a fire ant nest should call 1800 680 244 and report it immediately. If possible, take a photo or video for confirmation that it is fire ants. They are a danger to the community because they kill native plants and animals and can damage ecosystems beyond repair.

For information on the movement of material and about fire ants go to the DPI website - <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/report-a-pest-or-disease>

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Unfortunately just a few days after our January meeting the alert was issued regarding the detection of the red imported fire ants in Wardell. This detection was within 300 mtrs of our meeting venue at PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) issued a Biosecurity (Fire Ant) Emergency Order 2024 - meaning we're now in a *'fire ant movement control area'* of a 5 kilometre radius of where the nest was found. This lockdown order is to prevent the movement of fire ant carrier materials from the fire ant movement control area (5 km radius).

**How did this affect us at PineGrove** - restriction of potted plant movement, we are only allowed to move bare rooted, thoroughly washed plants.

**How did this affect our FNCBSG NSW meetings** - restriction to members to bring potted plants to our February meeting for Popular Vote Competition, Show and Tell and sales of potted plants. Any potted plants brought along were basically to be confiscated and held at PineGrove until DPI notification that they could be released. Members were only allowed to bring bare rooted plants, thoroughly washed and free of pests. The restrictions have been reflected in our February Popular Vote entries in that bare rooted plants only were allowed to be tabled, so we had very few plants entered. Thank you to all our Group members for abiding by these restrictions.

Restriction of movement of *fire ant carrier* materials is in place on: organic mulch, compost, **growing media**, manure, hay, chaff, silage, soil and anything with soil on it, silage, **potted plants**, turf, agricultural equipment, earth moving equipment, mining and quarrying materials, grass or vegetation and clippings.

Results since the Emergency Order was invoked are that PineGrove had around 50 people from DPI Biosecurity spread corn grit bait over the entire property. No fire ants were detected and we have been issued a Fire Ant Activity report.

Always use chemicals responsibly considering bees and our native wildlife.

Since no further infestations have been detected in Wardell, we are now allowed to bring five potted plants per person to our meetings under section 38 of the Biosecurity (Fire Ant) Emergency Order 2024. However no potted plants brought to our meetings are at any time to be placed on the ground. They should be taken from the vehicle and placed directly onto the Popular Vote tables and returned directly to the vehicle at the end of the meeting. There is no restriction on the number of bare rooted plants allowable.

Bear in mind the five potted plant restriction encompasses Popular Vote, Show and Tell and sales plants, five plants only in total over all sections NOT each section.

### **Show, Tell and Ask!**

Safety, safety, safety when working in the garden, wear correct footwear as Kayelene found out when she slipped over again in recent months.

Work safe, use good quality tools when working on your plants in the garden, be it when repotting or removing offsets. Shane discussed the tools of trade he prefers while Ross showed the 'big guns' for cutting thick stolons with. Wear good quality leather gloves and watch out for snakes.

### **Slips, Trips and Falls in the Garden**

by Kayelene Guthrie

After experiencing several slips, trips and falls in the garden over the last couple of years, I would like to share some basic information relating to care and sensible footwear when gardening, in the hope of preventing injuries to parts of the body including hips, knees, backs and our heads.

On three occasions I actually slipped on a wet slippery lawn on slightly sloping land, as well as on dry mowed grass causing me to do the "splits" on each occasion. This then resulted in me landing hard onto one buttock. A couple of weeks after each incident I developed a painful bursitis of the offending hip joint.

On these occasions I was wearing unsuitable footwear. Twice I was wearing a pair of well-known gardening shoes (covered clog type) and on the other occasion I had on a pair of thongs.

The issue in both of these instances related to the slippery surface on the sole of the footwear.

Any tread that was originally on the thong had worn down. Thongs of course do not encompass the whole foot, and for this reason provide no stability, and are a risky non-sensible option for gardening footwear.



Despite the clog type shoe possessing a form of tread, their sole was made of a smooth plastic, hence making them extremely slippery particularly in wet conditions.

As a result of these incidents and injuries, the search was on for a suitable non slippery option for gardening footwear. I could find nothing locally that sold as a gardening shoe, and to order something on line was a considerable 'unknown' both for sizing and form.

In desperation, I ended up purchasing a \$6.00 pair of covered breathable shoes from Big W, which actually **fully encompassed my foot**, and possessed a **RUBBER sole with good tread**. These have been extremely reliable and not at all slippery.



Here's hoping I have reduced my risk of slipping and falling in the future.

#### **Please remember:**

*If you have collapsed and fallen anywhere, and have not tripped or slipped – or you have fallen and hit your head with loss of consciousness, please seek medical advice. In a collapse situation we need to exclude a medical event as the cause of the collapse / fall. A head injury with loss of consciousness also needs to be medically managed and monitored.*

Kayelene Guthrie - Registered Nurse, March 2024.

Shane discussed the tools he uses when working on his plants explaining that knives are not an uncommon tool for many gardeners. However, who uses a toothbrush, tweezers and scissors?

Best knife for me is a Victorinox Steak knife with a serrated cutting edge. Most importantly I never get a green or black handled knife. These are not easily spotted if and when left around the yard. The serrated edge gives a great cut when removing Bromeliad offsets. It can be used to split a bromeliad leaf down the centre before pulling off in two directions also. Just be careful, they are VERY sharp!

As to the toothbrush, I use that to clean plant leaves for show or when photographing the plant, it helps to get rid of that dried white sludge.

Scissors (garden grade) are great for general leaf cutting or tip pruning dead bits.

Tweezers — long bladed, well, they are ideal to get leaf litter from down in the leaf axils, and extra great for weeding around cacti!



Ross brought out for **Show and Tell** this mini chain saw he had recently purchased explaining how handy it is as a pruning saw. He has found it useful for cutting thick often hard to cut stolons such as those of *Aechmea blanchetiana*.

Long handled loppers are a very useful tool for this purpose also.



## **Snakes Alive !!** Yellow Faced Whip Snake (*Demansia Psammophis*).

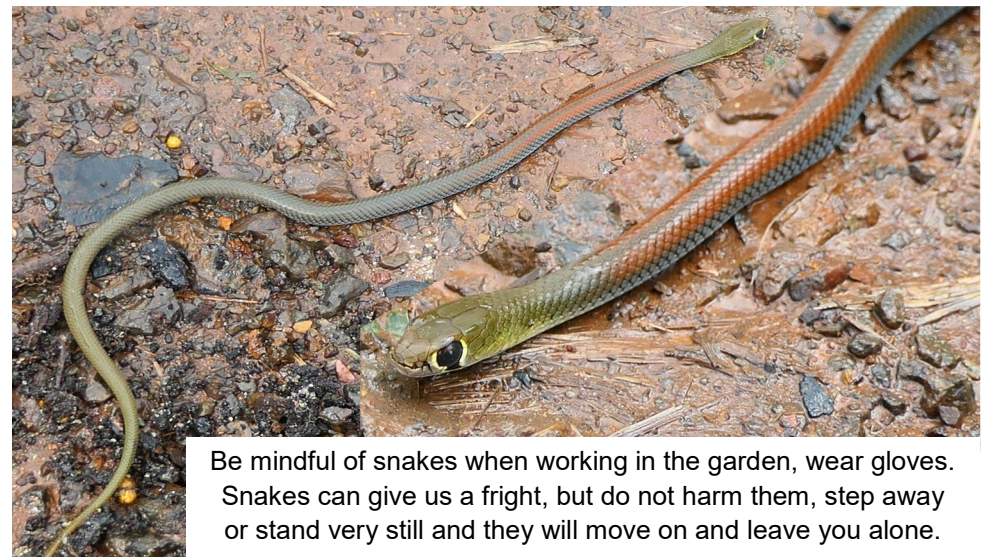
Wide spread in New South Wales and relatively common in our gardens. They are fast moving and generally of little concern to gardeners as they'd rather flee than bite - venomous - capable of causing marked local symptoms.

They can give you a bit of a fright, like this fellow gave me when I was dividing a large clump of Tillandsias recently.

He jumped out of the clump almost hitting me in the face, slid across my hand and back into the clump he went, trying to hide.

I think he was as frightened in that moment as much as I was.

All was good in the end, we coaxed him out of the clump and back into the bush safely.



Be mindful of snakes when working in the garden, wear gloves. Snakes can give us a fright, but do not harm them, step away or stand very still and they will move on and leave you alone.

Other snakes to watch out for are: left is a juvenile Brown Tree Snake - *Boiga irregularis* regarded as relatively harmless and right is a juvenile Eastern Brown Snake - *Pseudonaja textilis*,



second most deadly snake in the world even as a juvenile. Both these were in our work shed recently, they were removed carefully to safety.



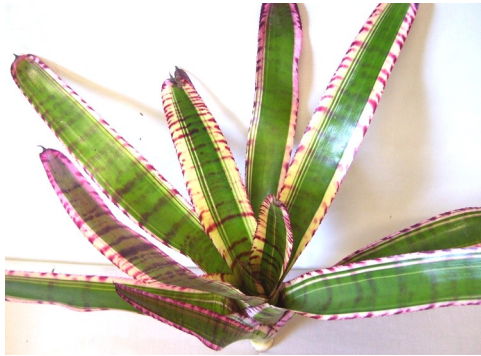




*Neoregelia* 'Cheeky Pink'  
1st Open and Judges Choice  
Michelle Hartwell



*Tillandsia ionantha*  
1st Tillandsioideae Helen Clewett



*Neoregelia* 'Banshee'  
grown by  
Kayelene Guthrie

'Valentine Love Birds'  
1st Decorative  
Coral McAteer



## From Around the Gardens



*Aechmea ramosa*  
growing in the garden at PineGrove



*Aechmea flavorosea*  
growing in the garden at PineGrove



*Tillandsia* 'Samantha'  
grown and photographed  
by Lesley Baylis





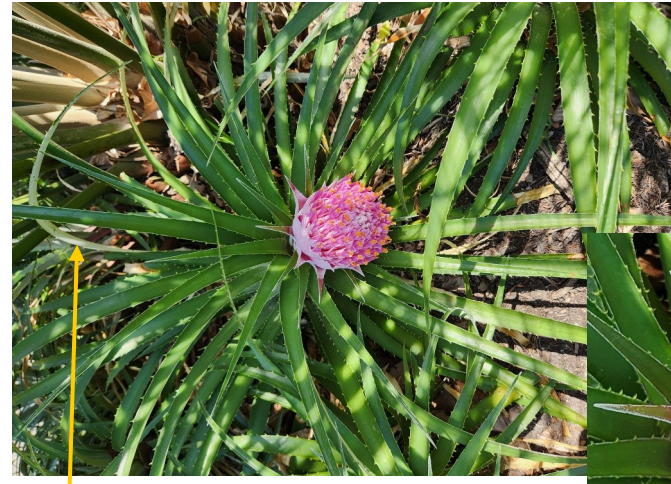
*Aechmea sphaerocephala* photo on left published in FNCBSG NSW Newsletter December 2022 being a 140 mm diameter ball. The photo on right is the same inflorescence taken 17-3-2024, the inflorescence is still developing / maturing and is now 370 mm long and still growing.



*Aechmea blanchetiana* form a barrier / hedge along a fence at PineGrove.

## *Ochagavia carnea* or is it *litoralis* ?

Seen growing in Melbourne Botanic Gardens recently by Peter Entwistle who thought it might be of interest to other readers of FNCBSG NSW Newsletter. Yes it is - as this is a plant we can grow in our area of Northern NSW but it's a very shy bloomer, not often seen flowering up here, it needs cold winters.



The genus *Ochagavia* was described by Philippi (1856), the genus is endemic to Chile with only four accepted species.



If this leaf is considered densely whitish lepidote below and we refer to the following key - 2 takes you to 3 suggesting that this plant is *Ochagavia litoralis*.

**Lepidote:** Surfaced with small scales (trichomes). The scales may be fine and scarcely visible to the naked eye, or they may be coarse and spreading and highly visible.

**Glabrescent:** Slightly glabrous; tending to become glabrous or smooth.

**Glabrous:** Smooth; glossy; without pubescence or hairs or scales.

Taken from: BSI Glossary

Using this Key to the species *Ochagavia*, work out where your plant fits in.

1. Epigynous tube more than 10 mm long, stamens not or barely exceeding the petals (style distinctly exceeding); endemic to Isla Robinson Crusoe . . . . . 1. ***elegans***
- 1a Epigynous tube up to 5( - 7) mm long, stamens (as well as style) exceeding the petals; endemic to continental Chile . . . . . 2
2. Leaf blades 15-45cm long, densely whitish lepidote below . . . . . 3
- 2a Leaf blades (40-)50-80(-120) cm long, sparsely lepidote to glabrescent below.. ***carnea***
3. Leaf blades 15-40 x 1-3cm . . . . . 2. ***litoralis***
- 3a. Leaf blades 30-45 x 0.9-1.7cm . . . . . 3. ***andina***



## How Does My *Ochagavia* Differ to my *Fascicularia*

Both are genera in the family Bromeliaceae subfamily Bromelioideae:

*Ochagavia* has 4 accepted species: *andina*  
*carnea*  
*elegans*  
*litoralis*

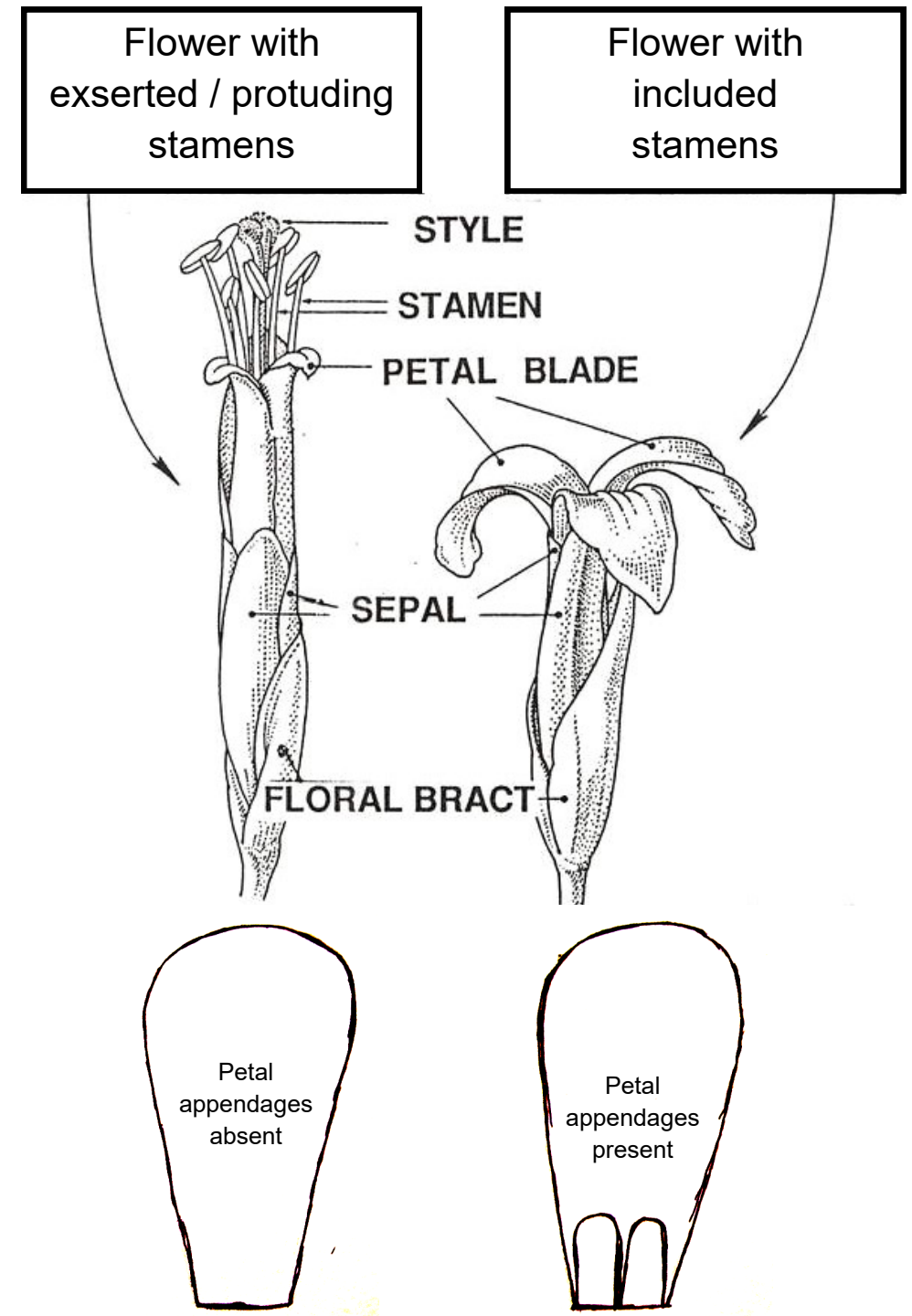
*Fascicularia* has 1 accepted species and 2 subspecies: *bicolour*  
 subspecies *bicolour*  
 subspecies *canaliculata*

**Subspecies** - often written as - subsp. or ssp:  
 A category below the level of species; a group within a species united by geographic or ecologic distinction. Often used as a synonym of variety. Sometimes used as a higher ranking than variety.

The genus *Ochagavia* is best distinguished from the vegetatively similar, genus *Fascicularia* by the following features:

- Relative length of style and stamina: *Ochagavia* - exserted.  
*Fascicularia* - included in the flower.
- Shape of sepals: *Ochagavia* - acute with pungent apex. Sharp pointed.  
*Fascicularia* - retuse or premorse, rounded or obtuse with short inconspicuous mucro -: a short and sharp abrupt tip.
- Colour and appendages of petals: *Ochagavia* - petals rose, appendages absent.  
*Fascicularia* - petals blue to violet, appendages present.
- Pollen characters: *Ochagavia* - monocolpate.  
*Fascicularia* - irregularly monocolpate.

**Monocolpate** - refers to pollen grains that have a single germinal furrow.



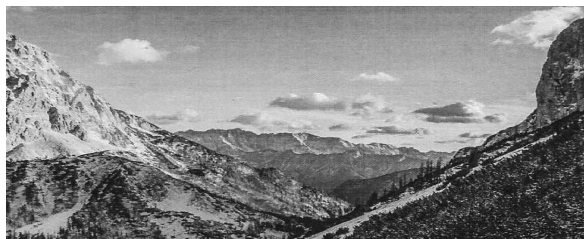
## **Carbon Dioxide — ‘The Gas of Life’**

Dr. William Happer

Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola

### **Story at a glance**

- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is commonly mischaracterized as a harmful waste product of respiration and is falsely blamed for disrupting the planetary climate.



- CO<sub>2</sub> is an essential gas necessary for life. Moreover, its impact on Earth's temperatures is negligible and will remain negligible even if the current concentration in the atmosphere were to double. A 100% increase in CO<sub>2</sub> from 400 ppm to 800 ppm would decrease radiation into space by just 1.1%, resulting in a 0.7° C increase of the average earth temperature.
- A 0.7° C difference means there's no climate emergency and no matter what we do to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it's not going to impact global temperatures. To fabricate an emergency where there is none, it is assumed that massive positive feedbacks are involved.

However, most natural feedbacks are negative, not positive, so isn't it likely the 0.7° C increase is an overestimation to begin with.

- There's no single temperature of the Earth. It varies by location and altitude. For every kilometre of altitude, you have an average cooling of 6.6° C.
- Higher CO<sub>2</sub> levels will green the planet, making it more hospitable to plant life. The more CO<sub>2</sub> there is, the better plants and trees grow. CO<sub>2</sub> also reduces the water needs of plants, reducing the risks associated with droughts.

Reprinted from: The Village Journal, January February 2024, Edition 388.

<https://villagejournal.wixsite.com/thevillagejournal>

Ed: The moral here is - grow more trees and especially more Bromeliads. If you have run out of room / floor space - go vertical, grow your Bromeliads in your trees as epiphytes. Stockings are a good, long lasting material for tying plants in trees. Cable / zip ties or baling twine are very good, however these have no give or stretch so can choke a growth tree. Once your plant has attached itself to the tree it's best to snip the tie to allow the tree to grow normally. A new temporary tie can be applied if necessary.

Epiphyte: An airplant; a plant growing on another plant as a means of support only, deriving its needed moisture and nutrients from the air. It is not a parasite. From the BSI Glossary, a must have publication.

## **Annual General Meeting Election of Officers for 2024**

Election of officers was conducted swiftly, all positioned held with no changes.

Meeting MC	Ross Little
Newsletter Editors x 3	Ross Little, Helen Clewett
Treasurer x 2	Helen Clewett, Debbie Smith
Librarian x 1	Kayelene Guthrie
Popular Vote x 2	Gary McAtter, Keryn Simpson
Raffle x 2	Coral McAtter, Debbie Smith
Sales - pots, potting mix, fertilizer etc x 1	Helen Clewett
Sales for Group - plants	Helen Clewett
Kitchen (month about)	Keryn, Michelle, Kaylene
Kitchen (month about)	Coral, Debbie, Helen, Pam



## **Open Popular Vote**

1st	Michelle Hartwell	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Cheeky Pink'
2nd	Kayelene Guthrie	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Banshee'
3rd		

## **Tillandsioideae**

1st	Helen Clewett	<i>Tillandsia ionantha</i>
2nd		
3rd		

## **Decorative**

1st	Coral McAteer	'Valentine Love Birds'
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## **Judges Choice**

1st	Michelle Hartwell	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'Cheeky Pink'
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### **Web Links for Checking Correct Identification and Spelling ?**

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR): <http://registry.bsi.org/>

Refer to this site for correct identification and spelling of your hybrid or cultivar.

Bromeliad Species Database (BSD): [www.bsi.org/members/?bsd](http://www.bsi.org/members/?bsd)

Refer to this site for species identification, photos, descriptions and more.

New Bromeliad Taxon List : <https://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/>

Refer to this site for latest species name changes and correct spelling.

Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) <http://bromeliad.org.au/>

Refer to this site for its Photo Index, Club Newsletters many with  
Table of Contents Index and there's Detective Derek Articles.

Keep these web sites set as desktop icons for quick reference access.

### **Where do I Find the Dates ?**

**[www.bromeliad.org.au](http://www.bromeliad.org.au)** then click "Diary".

Check this site for regular updates of times, dates and addresses of meetings  
and shows in your area and around the country.