

# *The* BROMELIAD SOCIETY BULLETIN

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*Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa*. L. B. Smith.

A very beautiful bromeliad that is native to the seacoast of Brazil in the state of Espirito Santo. This branched inflorescence of tubular flowers presents a lovely symphony in pastel shades of rose-pink, apple-green, blue-green and lavender; it lasts for several months. The tall semi-tubular rosette of glossy, light green leaves edged with black spines makes the plant attractive even when not in bloom. *Portea* is a small genus of half a dozen known species, found only in Brazil.

# THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY BULLETIN

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## Editor's Notes

In keeping with the desire of the members of our fledgling organization to make The Bromeliad Society a truly International Society we are pleased to have already received more contributions in written notes from our members abroad than from those in the United States. Because of this really gratifying spirit we have decided to make this issue predominantly concerned with other lands.

## Three New Directors

At the last meeting of the Bromeliad Society which was held in Hollywood, California, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Drummond on March 9th, three new Directors, all from Florida, were elected; Mr. Wyndham Hayward, Winter Park; Mr. Julian Nally, Gotha, and Mr. E. W. Ensign, Orlando.

The complete list of the twelve directors now holding office is as follows:

Mr. David Barry, Jr.	Mr. Morris Schick	Mr. Julian Nally
Mr. E. W. Ensign	Dr. Lyman B. Smith	Miss Victoria Padilla
Mr. Wyndham Hayward	Mr. Ladislaus Cutak	Dr. Russell J. Seibert
Mr. Frank Overton	Mr. Mulford B. Foster	Dr. H. P. Traub

## Hortus III

It will be very welcome news to learn that Dr. H. Emery Moore, Jr., and three associates of the Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University have spent three days in M. B. Foster's garden at Orlando, Florida, gathering herbarium material, photographs and drawings of the bromeliads, new introductions, and old which are to be listed in Hortus III, now being readied for publication. Possibly the greatest changes and additions to any one plant family in this new issue will be that of the bromeliads, and we are very happy to know that at last this great American family will be well presented in Hortus, the gardeners recognized and standard horticulture reference work in this country.

## Charter Membership

It has been rather difficult to decide just how many Charter Members The Bromeliad Society should have, but after due consideration of the subject it has been decided that all persons joining the Society during the first year of its organization shall be listed as Charter Members.

## Advertising Rates in the Bulletin

Our membership grows steadily. Already there are twelve countries represented and we are but a few months old. Soon we hope to increase the size of The Bulletin, and to help make this possible we solicit advertisers. We have already had requests for advertising space. Here are the rates until a greater circulation indicates a change.

Full Page \$20.00

Quarter Page \$6.50

Half Page \$12.00

Eighth Page \$4.00

## WHY BROMELIAD?

*Lyman B. Smith*

Obviously "Bromeliad" is simply a shortening of the scientific name "Bromeliaceae" to indicate any member of the Pineapple family. We might call them all pineapples since they are members of that family, and not bother to find a new term. However, it would cause confusion to associate such diverse forms as the giant Puya and the Spanish moss under a name for which we have already a sharp and narrow concept. As the Bromeliaceae were unknown before the discovery of America, we did not have any such ancient general term for the family as there was in the case of grasses, sedges, lilies or orchids, and one had to be manufactured.

It is not possible to say now who first coined the word "Bromeliad" but it was probably some fairly recent botanist or horticulturist who was tired of having to use the phrase "species of Bromeliaceae" after the cumbersome and stately fashion of the old school. French and German botanists of the nineteenth century regularly used such single words for members of one family, had a standard way of making them, and seemed to find nothing undignified in the process.

The second step in tracing our genealogy is to find the origin of "Bromeliaceae", and this is very clear. With few exceptions the scientific name of a plant family is derived by combining the name of one of its genera with the ending "aceae." Thus in 1805 the French botanist, Jaume Saint-Hilaire, defined the Bromeliaceae and formed the family name from the genus Bromelia.

Our next step takes us back to Linnaeus the father of systematic botany for he it was who established the genus Bromelia in 1754 according to the rules we now follow in making scientific names. The name was taken from the family name of Olof Bromelius, a Swedish botanist. Since Linnaeus also was Swedish, we might at first suppose that he had named the genus for a friend, but Bromelius died before Linnaeus was born.

Actually it was Plumier, the early French explorer of the West Indies, who first had the idea of renaming for Mr. Bromelius the genus that previously had gone by the Indian name of Karatas, and Linnaeus so credited it. Plumier was on familiar terms with the genus Bromelia in the West Indies. Bromelius, on the other hand, was famous mainly for the fine Flora that he wrote for his home town of Goetheborg and it is by no means certain that he ever laid eyes on a single plant of the great group that was to bear his name.

*Associate Curator, Div. Phanerogams, Smithsonian Institution.*

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A few years ago, in a conversation with Dr. Lyman B. Smith, the matter of a common or nick-name for bromeliad came up. It was his feeling that we should agree, if possible, on the use of *one* common name. After considering them all he thought that if the word bromeliad was to have a more simple form it should be "bromel." As the family was named for Bromelius, so the word bromel seemed the most apropos as the abbreviated form.

M.B.F.

## Notes From England

William Lea

My small collection, (although I believe it is large for this country), consists mainly of epiphytic species, grown in company with a small collection of orchids—Phalaenopsis, Vandas, Cattleyas, and Cypripediums, in a small glasshouse which has an average winter temperature of around 60°F, stepping up in summer to as high as 90° with sun heat. The humidity is kept fairly constant at about 78-80 percent.

The bromeliads are mostly grown in pots, but I have a few in hardwood baskets. For compost I have been using the old orchid compost, but with increasing propagation of bromeliads, I cannot repot orchids often enough to keep pace with the demand, so am now using very rough bracken peat, sphagnum moss, charcoal, and sand. I have not used any manures yet, but am going to do some experimenting. I give very little direct watering at the roots, mainly filling up the center of the plant.

I try to do all my propagating when I have worked the hot water pipes for the winter, so as to take advantage of the bottom heat I can obtain. I put offshoots in a mixture of 50% granulated peat and 50% sand. By spring they have made enough root to enable them to be potted in their final pots.

My chief difficulty here is to name the various species, but I have made good progress with the help of the American Plant Life publication of 1945 and a re-printed Bulletin from the Missouri Botanical Garden. As a result, I have been able to give names to the few plants one finds in the various Botanic Gardens.

In most of these municipal gardens, if they have any bromeliads, they are usually very old clumps and are usually referred to as "Billbergias," no matter what they really are!

Here and there old plants can be obtained from the nurserymen mostly relics of a bygone age. The naming of them is fantastic. For example, one of the leading nurserymen sold me his only bromeliad which he called *Tillandsia pscittaciae*, but which turned out to be *Billbergia saundersii*!

I am afraid that interest here in bromeliads has fallen to a very low state, but I am doing what little I can to revive it, and have given many plants to municipal gardens, which they seem to appreciate. My 109 species include twelve genera in this most interesting family.

The great obstacle is, and will be for some time, the almost complete lack of plants, as there are no stocks in the country.

However, I am hoping that the formation of our Society, with, I hope, a branch in this country, may be the means of stimulating interest, and I wish it every success.

*The Homelet, Freshfield Road, Formby near Liverpool, England.*

## BROMELIADS IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

David Barry, Jr.

The pineapple is the most important crop raised in the Islands, with the exception of sugar cane. Modern scientific methods in the fields and laboratories have improved the volume and quality of the fruit. The annual gross income runs into millions. Control of pests, particularly mealy bugs, has been a continuing problem. To protect such a valuable crop from the introduction of other insects such as the pineapple borer, and thrips, and from diseases of pineapples and other bromeliads, the Board of Agriculture and Forestry of the Territory passed on July 29, 1947, a quarantine regulation (No. 1.2 of the Territorial Division of Entomology) against the entry of bromeliads into the Islands. The quarantine reads, "Concerning the introduction of pineapples and other bromeliads, plants or fruits or parts thereof are prohibited entry into Hawaii . . ." However, the seeds of bromeliads are not prohibited entry.

There are no bromeliads native to the Islands. In the old trading days, pineapples were the only bromeliads brought in. When the writer was in the Islands in 1949, he saw few bromeliads other than pineapples. Some plants were in Foster Gardens, a city park in Honolulu, comprised of some billbergias and a mutation of *Aechmea bracteata*, in which the scape bracts were white.

Here lies an almost untouched plant activity—to enrich the Islands with the beauty of bromeliads by growing them from seed. As seeds grow readily, let us waste no time in sending them to our Hawaiian friends.

Within a short period of the last ten to twelve years, orchid culture in the Islands has reached a new and greatly increased importance. Many orchid societies are active. Hundreds of beautiful new hybrids have been produced. The contribution to orchid culture has been especially valuable in the general *Vanda* and *Dendrobium*. A group of nurseries grow only orchids. The orchid shows are notable and beautiful attractions.

It would be interesting to have a small part of the enthusiasm for orchids extended to bromeliads. In most parts of the Islands, climatic conditions would make their culture simple. Some of the species should become naturalized. This has taken place with several genera of terrestrial orchids, such as *Phaius* and *Bamburanta*.

Horticulturally, the Hawaiian Islands are young in development. Many kinds of lovely tropical plants are unknown there. True, the Islands are "this side of Paradise," but this repute is achieved with surprisingly few kinds of plants. The coconut palm, hibiscus, gingers, dracaenas, the flowering *Cassia* trees, the plumieras, to mention a few. Bromeliads would do much to enrich the scene, and they should be common sights.

As an example of the rewards in store for efforts put forth in this connection, the queen of the Aechmeas, *A. Mariae-reginae*, the robust terrestrial from Costa Rica, could conceivably be found on every hand. This would be an effective way to generate and disseminate new enthusiasm for bromeliads as the Islands are an important crossroads of the world.

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Our Australian Trustee Mr. Chas. G. Hodgson in one of his plant houses examining a young plant of *Portea Petropolitana* var. *extensa* which he raised from seed.

## BROMELIADS IN AUSTRALIA

*Chas. G. Hodgson*

My object in writing these notes is not to pose as an authority on bromeliads, but merely to give some indication as to the extent these beautiful and interesting plants are grown in this country.

Looking back over a number of years of my association with private and commercial growers the number of bromeliad species distributed among them could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Over a long period of years hundreds of other exotic plants have been introduced into this country mostly by wealthy private growers who, in some cases, had large heated glass houses and a staff of gardeners. These exotics were housed more or less under the same conditions. A gentleman once remarked to me that he could not understand why some of his plants were thriving, while others were not. He said, "They all get the same treatment."

I said, "Yes, that is the trouble. You have plants collected from various parts of the world, from various conditions, all requiring different treatment; here you expect them to thrive under one condition."

I then suggested that he divide his house into three sections and to vary the heat and shade in each section, which he did with marked results.

That has been my observation, also, in regard to bromeliads in those that have been introduced here. It has been, truly, a matter of the survival of the

most fit to put up with the conditions provided for them. This became very evident to me when I started to gather some of these plants. I already had a few plants of *Aechmea miniata discolor*, *Nidularium innocentii* var. *striatum*, *Nidularium amazonicum*, *Vriesia tricolor* (\*) with an unidentified *Neoregelia*. These were the five species referred to above, and represented the range of bromeliads in the various private collections under glass throughout Australia.

Aside from the conservatory or glass house collections the most common bromeliad here is *Billbergia nutans*. This species has survived the test of time. It is blessed with a hardy constitution. One sees it growing in all sorts of conditions, from humble tin dishes to teak orchid baskets, in the ground, in the sun, in the shade; known under various names from "Cactus fuchsia" to that "Pineapple Thing!" It is the "poor man's" bromeliad.

Looking at the few "broms" that I had growing with my orchids, I got an inspiration that I would like to get more of these plants and not being fortunate, like our worthy president who lives in a country where these plants are indigenous, I had to, as it were re-discover, or rather muster up the plants that were scattered about the country. My first objective was the Melbourne Botanic Garden. In their large hothouses were the familiar five, but here and there amongst the other foliage plants were strangers such as *Aechmea fulgens* which was in bloom with its glorious long lasting flower spike. There were two different billbergias under the one label of *B. zebrina*. I was able to point out that one of them was *Billbergia vittata*. The billbergias were not happy, whereas the nidulariums and aechmeas were doing fairly well under the shade and moisture. The poor billbergias were rotting and for lack of light and a more airy condition, were open and colorless. Then I came across a few plants of *Tillandsia Lindenii*.

After coming to terms about an exchange with the man in charge, who is both a friendly chap and a keen grower, I secured *Aechmea fulgens*, *Tillandsia Lindenii*, *Billbergia zebrina* and *B. vittata*. Next day I visited the gardens again, in order to comb over the outdoor bromeliads. There I saw *Ochagavia lindleyana*, *Pitcairnia* sp., *Puya alpestris*, *Dyckia rarefolia*, *Dyckia sulphurea*, *Hechtia texensis*, all of which I had but I did not have *Bromelia serra* which I soon spotted. Although it was not doing too well I secured a small plant of it; since then it has developed into a fine specimen in my glass house where it seems to do better than on the outside because of our rather cold climate.

My next objective was to get some literature pertaining to bromeliads. Since my friend in the gardens was librarian to the Field Naturalists Club, I asked him to keep an eye open for any such literature. He eventually sent me a copy of a Smithsonian Institutions' Annual Report in which was an article by Mulford B. Foster. I said to myself that I would write this fellow. He might be a nice chap. And reply he did.

The fraternity among true plant lovers is stronger than Freemasonry. To make a long story short, as a result of contacting friend Foster, the exchanges of literature and plants added considerably to my knowledge and plant collection.

Then, fortified with a larger collection, and some surplus plants to barter with, I went to the Sidney Botanic Gardens where I received an introduction as

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(\*) Editor's Note—There is no legitimate species such as *Vriesia tricolor* but this name has been a synonym of *Pitcairnia maidifolia*.

an interstate visitor to the propagator. Naturally, we talked easily about the broms. He had, in the houses, *Bilbergia vittata*, doing well; *Aechmea Weilbachii*, *Billbergia Morelii*, *Tillandsia lindeniana*, *Cryptanthus zonatus* and another unnamed *Cryptanthus* with chocolate colored leaves; *Quesnelia liboniana*, and nice plants of *Nidularium innocens* var. *striatum*, and *Neoregelia tristis*.

Out of doors, he had *Puya dasylirioides*, *Pitcairnia tabuliformis* and *Ochagavia* var.

My next objective was the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. The city of Adelaide is much warmer and drier than Melbourne (where I reside) and is more subject to drought, during which time bore water is used (Australian for well water). This is fatal to some plants because of the lime content.

The Gardens in Adelaide had been very much neglected for some time. At one time they possessed a number of bromeliads but they had gradually died from time to time, until only the hard leaved varieties such as billbergias, quesnelias, neoregelias had survived. The Gardens are now under a curator who has been given a grant of money to make necessary improvements and he expressed the hope that he would be able to provide the proper accommodation to grow bromeliads. I supplied him with some of my surplus plants and in return received *Billbergia pyramidalis*, *Neoregelia carolinae*, *Quesnelia liboniana*, and some unnamed billbergias which I shall have to grow in order to identify them.

Queensland is the state where the "King of Bromeliads" (pineapples) has been made to feel at home and this delicacy is raised to the extent of supplying all the southern states with this fruit. Owing to the favorable tropical climate, (they have little need for glass structures, most tropical plants will grow luxuriantly) there should be some good collections of broms in the state, but so far as I can learn they are scarce. The Curator of the Queensland Botanic Gardens wrote me that they have growing there *Tillandsia Lindenii*, an unnamed *Puya*, *Billbergia nutans* (which will cover a large area of ground if not checked), several unidentified billbergias and one or two aechmeas. We have agreed upon a favorable exchange of bromeliads.

I have sent a few bromeliads to a friend in North Queensland and he said that they are doing well.

West Australia has no Botanical Garden, but many parks and public gardens. A friend to whom I have sent a dozen broms has said that only *Billbergia nutans* is there.

After combing over the five states here in Australia I have come to the conclusion that, generally speaking, the bromeliads can be favorably adapted to Australia, especially in Queensland, and that there are probably not more than thirty or forty varieties in this country. There is a vast field for trade in bromeliads here, if and when the dollar embargo is lifted.

My increasing interest has lead me to possess, now, about forty species of broms as well as having created considerable interest in them in the four of our five states in Australia. Apart from the private growers, I have introduced new bromeliads to the Botanic Gardens where the general public can enjoy them, and in doing this I have made many new friends.

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