

The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the
San Diego
Bromeliad Society

November 2017

VOLUME LII

NUMBER 11

President's Corner

By Scott Sandel

I hope you all are enjoying the waning days of fall. With the weather getting cooler, we are supposed to look for tasks in the garden and with our bromeliad collection, such as cleaning, sorting and preparing for our plants hardening-off for the season. But no – of course not! Some of us hopped on a bus and went shopping for new plants. Who wants to conventional, well-behaved and judicious anyway? Some of the coolest new plants were those I saw in others' shopping carts. Funny how that works, isn't it? At any rate, I did come home with a couple of new plants from Larry Tabling's LiveArt Plants, including my first species of Wittrockia – Wittrockia 'Leopardinum'. (Yes, it is very spotty, like its feline namesake.) It is a cultivar of Wittrockia gigantea, which grows in the Atlantic Forests of Brazil. Another new plant from Larry is Neoregelia 'Casablanca', which has an overall yellow tone with green edges to the leaves.



Then finally, after an over-sized lunch at Hometown Buffet, we continued plant hunting at Rainforest Flora, where I picked up a few interesting Tillandsia hybrids. The fun part, of course, was spending quality time with the members of our society who were on the bus. It was a lot of fun, and special thanks go out to Eloise Lau for arranging the bus, researching the route and the best place to eat, and for bringing Halloween-themed Tillandsia raffle prizes for the ride back to San Diego. Further thank-yous go to Al Evans Jr. and to Dave Kennedy who will fill in for me at the November meeting, since I'll be in Nicaragua. Thanks guys! Have a great November meeting with the presentation by Andrew Wilson on the arid Tillandsias of Argentina. It's an interesting program, and I am sad to miss it.

From top: Wittrockia 'Leopardinum'; Neoregelia 'Casablanca'; Tillandsia 'Best in Class' - all acquired in the October nursery tour.

Nursery Hop - 1st stop: LiveArt Plantscapes

The bus trip was so much fun! What a great opportunity to finally go visit LiveArt and Rainforest Flora without dealing with the drive! Plus, it was great to hang out with our brom friends along the way (and eat Scott's yummy scones and Dan's cookies). Thanks Eloise for the perfect orchestration, including the goodie bags and Halloween treats!

First stop: LiveArt Plantscapes. We were welcomed by Larry, the owner, appearing here next to a gigantic *T. fasciculata* hybrid (pic 1). They had many interesting things in the showroom including this wall garden with neoregelia (pic 2). I wasn't expecting to find a variety of colorful dyckias, at a great price (pic 3). The greenhouse contained gorgeous specimens, notably *Aechmea* hybrids like the hanging variegated ones shown here (pic 4). Did people buy a lot? Well, look at the fella with the handcart (pic 5). Guess who that is?



Nursery Hop - 2nd stop: Rainforest Flora

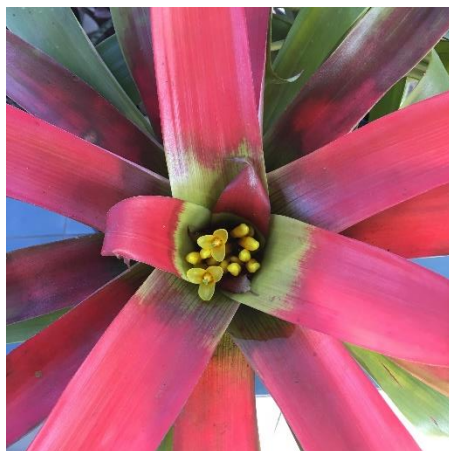
If you haven't been to Rainforest Flora yet, be advised: it looks even better than the pictures. The Torrance showroom is designed to awe. I spent endless minutes cranking my neck to look at the immense chandeliers of tillandsia – and marveling at the beautiful waterfall bejeweled with tillandsias, tillandsias, tillandsias in every nook and cranny. Plant shopping in a setting like this is quite an experience. It is bromeliad Disneyland!



October Meeting

Talk

We had a presentation by our own Pam Hyatt on her visit to the cork growing region in Portugal. It was fun to learn about this incredible natural product, a prized medium for bromeliad growers.

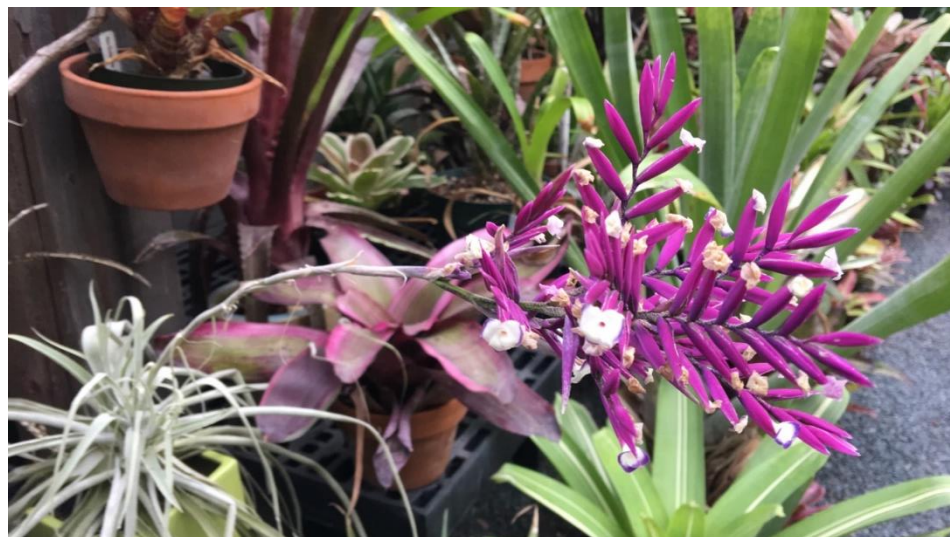


Show & Tell

Scott Sandel: *Guzmania sanguinea*, *Tillandsia straminea* dark purple form, *xCanmea* 'Nani Ko'olau' (*Canistrum seidelianum* x *Aechmea correia-araujoii*) *photos on the right*

Morlane O'Donnell: *Catopsis morreniana*, *Hohenbergia penna*, *Tillandsia zacapanensis*

Al Evans Jr.: *Portea* 'Candy' *photo on bottom right*, with *Aechmea* 'Blue Tango'



Bob Wright: *xNidumea* 'Midnight' (*Nidularium innocentii* x *Aechmea fasciata*), *Billbergia* 'La Vie en Rose', *Orthophytum* 'Copper Penny', *Aechmea hildebrandtii*

Nancy Groves: *Tillandsia heteromorpha* Peruvian form

Lucia Velazquez: *Tillandsia tectorum*, *Tillandsia crocata*

Pam Koide-Hyatt: *Wallisia lindenii* (formerly *Tillandsia lindenii*), *Tillandsia polita* v. *elongata*, *Tillandsia* 'Samantha', *Tillandsia* 'Queen's Fiesta' (*T. subtrees* x *T. flabellata*)



Upcoming Events

SDBS Meetings

November 11, 2017 @ 10 AM
SDBS Monthly Meeting
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

December 9, 2017 @ 10 AM
SDBS Holiday Party
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

**World Bromeliad
Conference 2018**
San Diego



May 29 - June 3, 2018
fiesta de las bromelias

Price drop: Now only \$290!
Register at:
<http://www.bsi.org/new/conference->

Monthly Meetings

1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM
San Diego Orchid Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101
www.sdorchids.com

2nd Saturday, 10 AM
San Diego Bromeliad Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 104
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

2nd Saturday, 1 PM
San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101
www.sdcss.net

2nd Monday, 5:45 PM
San Diego Horticultural Society
Congregation Beth Israel (CBI)
9001 Towne Centre Drive
San Diego, CA 92122
sdhort.org

November Meeting

Argentine Bromeliads on the Dry Side



This month our speaker, Andrew Wilson, will tell about the bromeliads that grow in the dry areas of northern Argentina as well as in some of our gardens in San Diego.

These include not only tillandsias but dyckias, deuterocohnias, puyas and a few others - including the plants in the photos.

On account of the mountain topology of northern Argentina, with alternating steep slopes and deep valleys, with high mountain rocky *prepuna* and shaded *yungas* vegetation, he will not try to lead us on a confusing tour of 'up the hills and down the rushy glens'. Instead, he will show the environments (plant type zones characterized by altitude, rainfall and terrain) and the bromeliads that are found in them. Some bromeliads will be familiar to most of us while others, discovered this century, may not be. How they grow in their natural environments should help us understand why they take on unusual forms.

Whether your garden is in a coastal, inland or mountainous area, but not on Mount Laguna, you will see bromeliads worth trying.



SDBS 2017

November Plant Table

By Al Evans



The November (and December) plant table will be provided by Wholesale Tillandsias which is owned and operated by one of our members, Chris Davis.

Dave Kennedy, Al Evans and Chris Davis all had input to the selection so there should be quite a diverse collection of plants available for the table. Hope to see you at the meeting!

*Top: unpacking the plants.
Bottom right: Auction plants will be T. hildae, straminea deep purple, large thick leaf straminea, large duratii, novakii.*



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An Insider Look at Wholesale Tillandsias

By Juliana Raposo

Chris Davis is an SDBS member and owner of [Davis Farms Wholesale Tillandsias](#). Like the name implies, it's wholesale and online only. Luckily, the club will have a taste of Chris' offerings in the November and December meeting. So read on!

The nursery was born out of an overgrown collection. Chris started selling plants online out of his backyard some 15 years ago and expanded to a second location in North County in the last seven years. His curiosity as a collector resulted in a rich and diverse tillandsia inventory. He has all the crowd pleasers, plus odd things like variegated *T. xerographica*, *velutina* and *scaposa*.

On my walk in to visit the nursery, I was greeted by a mix of perfumes: *Tillandsia duratii*, *crocata* and *straminea* in bloom, in large quantities, enough for the smell to reach me in the driveway. The aroma was coming through a slit in the shade house plastic siding. Chris welcomed the Blade in the growing facility, while some busy employees tended to the plants and prepared online orders. The business is scaling up thanks to intense seed production.

At the current pace, he is adding 30 new varieties a year. Chris estimates that there are about 150 different offerings in the online store, all germinated and grown in house. The plants are pampered to reverse

these plants! The mother plants are absolutely enviable. I was impressed by the amount of big *T. duratii* hanging from the beams. A solid wall of maybe more than 200? The combined visual effect of all the curly

plants hanging together is hard to describe.

Then I learned that some tillandsias grow very well piled up. For example, *T. butzii* production stock was growing in an accumulation at least 3 plants deep, and the plants at the bottom looked as fresh as the top layer. I observed the same thing with thriving heaps of *T. funkiana*. Wait a minute, wasn't this one supposed to be hard to grow? As Chris explained, it's easier to keep these plants hydrated if they are close together, as long as you have excellent ventilation. Ok, then. Thanks Chris

for having the Blade over. Enjoy the photo tour!

Next page: T. brachycaulos burgundy select and chameleon. There are a few of these lovely creatures helping the nursery keep the bugs in check; the exquisite T. xerographica variegated; the majestic T. duratii



Chris Davis and *Tillandsia tomasellii*, now treated as a synonym of *T. xerographica*

osmosis water and watered by hand. A proprietary fertilizer blend is diluted in the water. The growing environment is bright and breezy. No heating. No humidifiers. The plants are visibly thriving. Layers upon layers of tillandsias in varying stages of development in chickenwire panels. For the San Diego hobbyists who grow plants outside, it's great news - no acclimation is needed for





From the top left:
tillandsia germination and seed production; T. coerulea x purpurea; T. carrilloi mother plants; hybridizing



Now Blooming!



Dan Kinnard's *Aechmea saxicola*. This big plant sat in the shadehouse for a long time and finally bloomed this fall. Upon checking with Elton Leme in Brazil, its identity was confirmed.

Notes by Elton Leme in Bromelia 4(1): 40. March 1997

Aechmea saxicola L. B. Smith is rarely seen in cultivation because of its size (leaves over 1m long ending in a sharp point) which makes it awkward to handle in a home setting. This bromeliad is endemic to Espírito Santo state where it is found at low altitudes in Cachoeiro de Itapemirim and Serra municipalities. It is saxicolous, growing in the interior of the Atlantic forest, especially where light is more abundant such as near the forest edge. Although it is definitely not the most ornamental species of the subgenus *Chevaliera*, to which it belongs, it does have a certain charm with its attractive inflorescence, which is mostly green, including the petals.

Aechmea saxicola is easily confused with *A. hostilis* E. Pereira, also found in Espírito Santo, in the mountainous areas of Domingos Martins and Santa Leopoldina. However, among the few visual traits that distinguish the two species are the long floral scape in *A. saxicola* which raises the inflorescence well above the rosette and the green floral bracts, which are orangish in *A. hostilis* (a photo of this species appears in the book *Bromeliads in the Brazilian wilderness* by Leme & Marigo, p.52).



Juliana's Wallisia cyanea naturalized pretty good in the epiphyte community of the king palm tree. It's the ubiquitous Kent plant, which holds a deep fuchsia all the way to the bottom of the inflorescence, and the plumpest blooms. Been enjoying it for weeks!



Billbergia pyramidalis 'Kyoto' puts on a show at Charles Oelsen's house

Book Review

By Eloise Lau

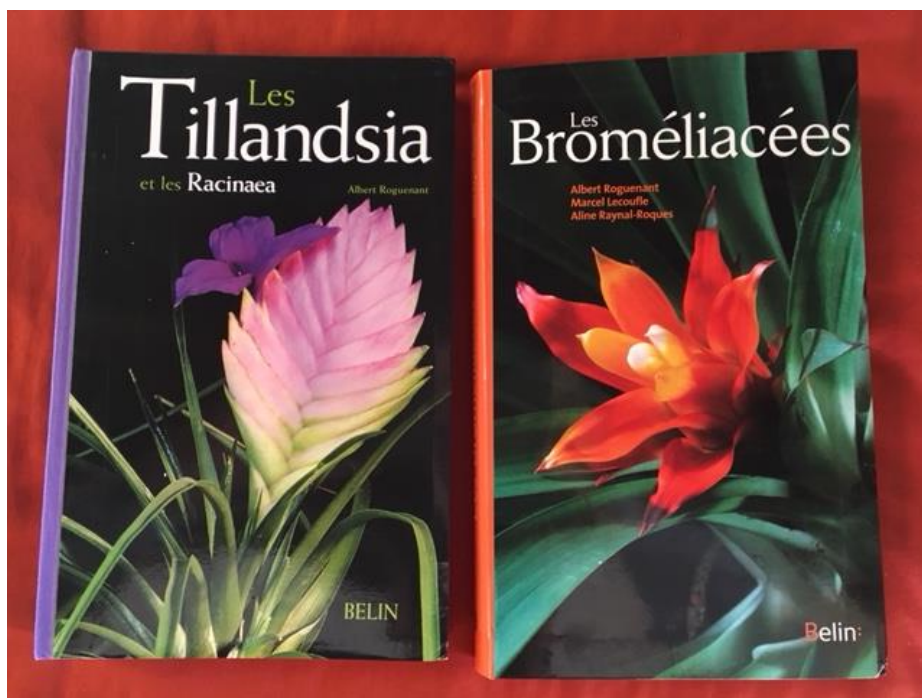
Two new books on Bromeliads in French, **Les Broméliacées** (651 pgs) and **Les Tillandsia** (815 pgs) both by Albert Roguenant.

Pam Hyatt was able to procure these copies for us while she was in Paris and visited the author.

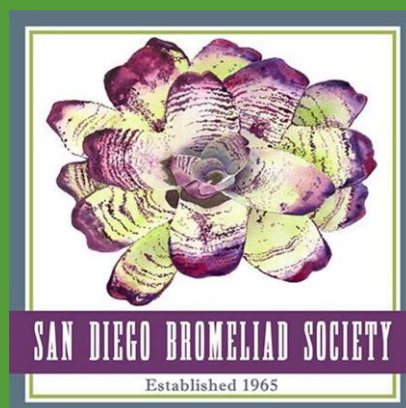
Beautiful photographs, many taken at Birdrock Tropicals over a period of 3 years. Even if you don't read

French the photographs speak for themselves. A page is dedicated to each species with descriptions in French but those familiar with reading other books on bromeliads should be able to get through easily.

These books would be very helpful for those of you looking for books to help you identify your bromeliads.



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Make sure to submit your contribution before the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter.

SDBS MEETING

The club meets on the second Saturday of the month at 10am in Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, room 104.

SDBS WEBPAGE

www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org