



The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the
San Diego
Bromeliad Society

December 2023

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Editor's Notes

By Juliana Raposo

In this last newsletter of the year, we say THANK YOU to the outgoing SDBS president Stephen Zolezzi. The club is grateful for your dedication, Steve! Kerry Nelson will be taking over in January as SDBS president along with the newly elected board of directors.

On a sad note, we say goodbye to our member Lee Baker. Lee passed away on November 4. Forty of Lee's plants were donated to the club and will be gifted to members in attendance at the Saturday Holiday Party.

A huge thanks goes to Nancy Groves and team for keeping the SDBS Christmas tree tradition alive. This year's tree looks better than ever with lots of colorful guzzies and very impressive décor.



Christmas Tree team 2023: Bob Vitacco, Sonja Wicker, Jessica McGee, Bob Walters, and Nancy Groves. She made the gold topper with Dan Kinnard's dried Puya bloom spikes.

Ronee Kozlowski— got the plants from United Plant Growers. Shout out to the owner Zach Herrill who bought Kents Bromeliads Nursery and donated about 40 guzmania for the tree!

Large plants around the tree: Sonja Wicker, Ronee Kozlowski, and Nancy Groves

Thanks to Al Evans who will move the tree to the library on Sunday where it will rest until our Saturday party.

December Holiday Party and Gift Exchange

We hope to see you all at our annual Holiday Party on December 9th at 10am for fun and fare!

The Club will be providing the main dishes of a Roasted Turkey and Ham and are looking forward to members bringing a dish, snack or anything edible or drinkable to enjoy.

To RSVP, please go to the link: <http://evite.me/uc1aA92hvG> or email to Nathalien71@gmail.com.

Why is it important that you RSVP?

We are looking for a head count by December 7th so that we have the tables and chairs set up properly for everyone.

We will also be having our usual Bromeliad related gift exchange. To participate we ask that you bring a Bromeliad, or Bromeliad related gift, in the \$20/25 range in a bag or box so that the gift is a guessing game. If you do not have a plant to share, you are welcome to bring a nice pot, bromeliad tools, orchid bark or?

Also, if anyone has any cuttings, seeds, excess fruit or produce or plant related items of any kind they would want to share, please feel free to bring and add to the spirit of the Season.

We will also be auctioning our Decorated December Nights Christmas Tree! (photo, tree on the right). The all-natural Douglas fir comes lovingly decorated with glass icicles, ribbons, and lights and an impressive golden Puya spike at the

top. The Guzmania on the tree will be gifted to members in attendance separately, along with bromeliad cuttings from Scott's collection and plants donated by the estate of SDBS member Lee Baker.

To increase the Holiday mood please consider dressing festively. Be it Ugly

sweater, dressed to the Nines, Garden Related or just all out festive or silly.

In addition, please let us know if you can help clean up after our event. We thank our dear member Nathalie Nguyen for organizing the party this year!



November Recap

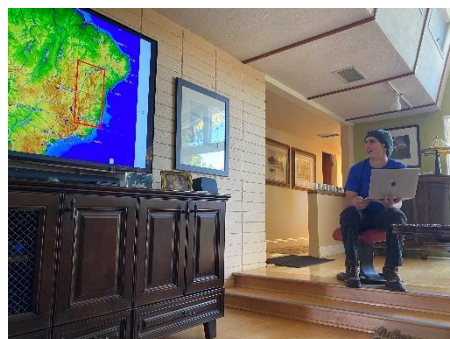
Thanks, Sandy Valone, for opening your beautiful home to the club!

The ambiance was set from the moment attendees stepped foot into the meticulously crafted Hawaiian-style house in Point Loma.

In between sips of coffee and bites of a delectable lunch provided by the club, conversations flowed effortlessly. The ambiance of the tropical gardens provided the perfect backdrop for discussions that ranged from gardening tips to travel anecdotes, creating an atmosphere of warmth and conviviality.

Central to the meeting was the presentation by Dylan Zoller, whose passion for botany shone through as he delved into the captivating world of Brazilian bromeliads from arid regions of Minas Gerais and Bahia. His expertise and enthusiasm illuminated the room as each slide revealed the diversity of these resilient plants, adapted to survive in dry climates. Attendees were captivated by the beautiful photos displayed, renewing our appreciation for these unique botanical wonders.

Below: Stephen, Kerry and Sandy at the buffet table; presenter Dylan Zoller; Dan, Kerry and Juliana.



Androlepis fragrans

by Andrew Wilson

Only the second species in the genus; *Androlepis fragrans* was described from material first collected in Veracruz, Mexico by Alfred Lau Jr in 1993. He recognized it as something different and forwarded a plant to Aechmea expert John Anderson in Corpus Christi, Texas who in turn sent it to the Bromeliad Identification Center at the Marie Selby Botanical Garden in Sarasota, Florida. The wheels of science do turn slowly and finely but eventually this plant was given full attention by Elton M.C. Leme and Harry E. Luther who described it as a new species and published it in the German Bromeliad Journal; *Die Bromelie* 2011 (3). Anytime a new species is discovered it is pretty exciting, but when a formerly monotypic genus adds a species it is real news.

An epiphyte in nature, this species is smaller than the typical form, with rosettes of stiff leaves to about 16 inches long and 3 inches wide. To the layman, the inflorescence is immediately noticeable as different from *skinneri* in that it is much more prominently branched, having a pyramidal shape as opposed to the almost simple or cylindrical shape of *skinneri*. The rachis is red and the branches white. In cultivation we have not seen the tendency to blush red in strong light or at anthesis, rather remaining a light green at all times. The flowers are monoecious and very fragrant, pedicellate, pale blue and spreading. Culture is like that of a typical large *Aechmea* or *Hohenbergia*, bright, warm and moderately moist.



Androlepis fragrans, photos by Tropiflora.com



A Bromeliad Garden in Cape Town

Scott Sandel

The main attraction to South Africa for us this past September was the super bloom. The North and West Cape provinces received rain earlier in the year in June and July, their winter. After many dry years, this year was a wet one. When flooding made the news, we booked tickets.

The west (Atlantic) coast is a dry somewhat Mediterranean climate, but there are unique conditions of topography and soil that yield one of the world's most interesting regions for horticulturalists. For example, one third of the world's succulents are home here. The fynbos and succulent Karoo plant communities are of particular interest to gardeners with only 10 inches of rain that falls in winter. Cape Town is a bit wetter in places, as compared to further north along the Atlantic coast. Conditions at the Cape are similar, in fact, to San Diego. A bonus in Cape Town is the good quality municipal water.



Japie (left) and Scott, surrounded by bromeliads -- and orchds, and one of his staghorn ferns



A thoughtful bed of pink and red Neo's



A particularly handsome red Vriesea foliage hybrid



Vriesea hybrids occupying a protected area in high shade



A Neoregelia hybrid with consistent stripes

The garden has a pool and a water feature and different seating areas and nooks and crannies for plants of all kinds. Palms and special trees provide a good mix of shade and filtered sun. Japie was very kind and showed us his many hybrids. We're glad we brought umbrellas.

I hope that you enjoy a sampling of the photos I took.

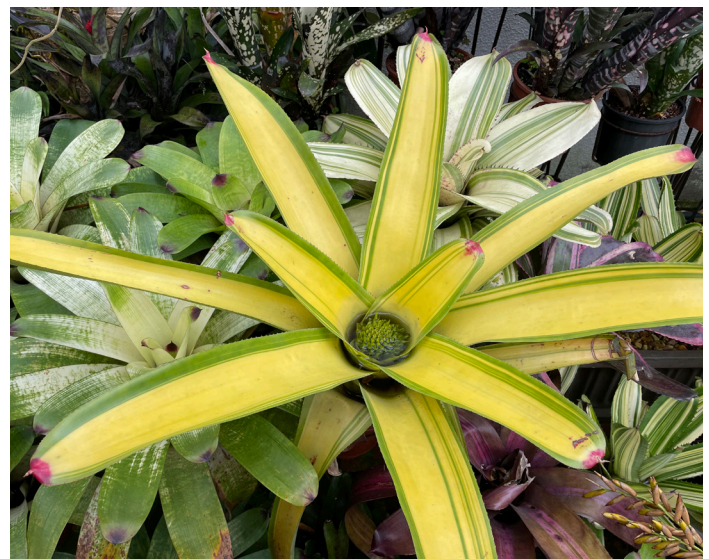
In the weeks leading up to our September trip, I made inquiries with BSI members who I knew. One of these kind South African bromophiles is Japie Esterhuysen, a longtime resident of Cape Town. Japie cordially invited us to come and visit his garden and have tea. He apologized that things weren't in proper order in the garden and that it might be raining during our visit. We were pleasantly surprised when we found that Japie's garden is absolute bromeliad perfection. (Like some of us, Japie must be somewhat of a perfectionist, as the garden is very chic and pulled-together!)



Alcantareas like this imperialis grow well in Cape Town in filtered sun, and they don't readily sunburn like in San Diego.



Neoregelia carchardon hybrid grex by Japie



Fantastic Neoregelia yellow variegation!

SDBS Events 2023-24

www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

SDBS Monthly Meetings

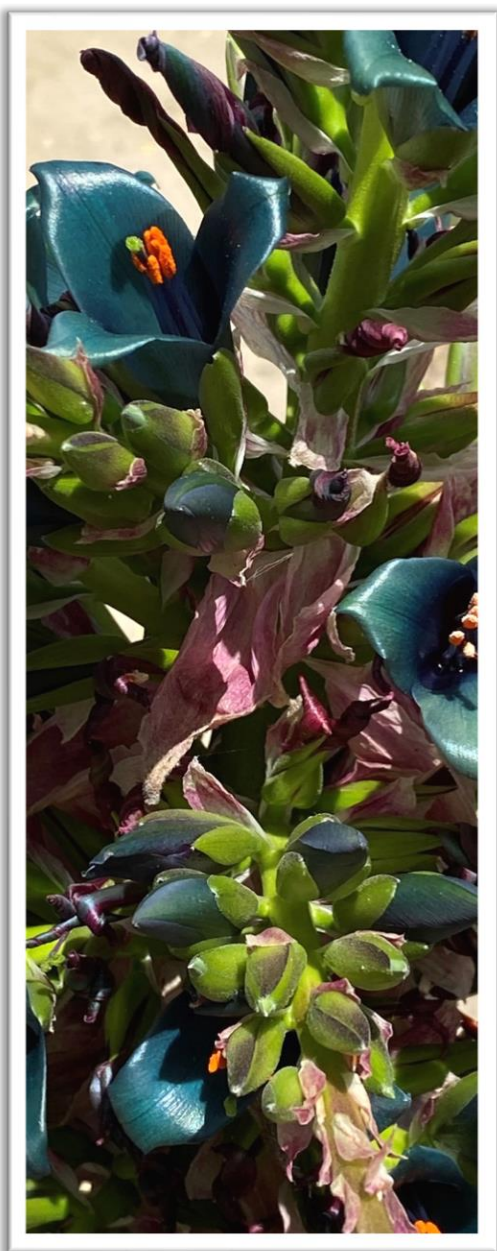
December 9, at 10am
Holiday Potluck
Casa del Prado room 104
Balboa Park Loma, San Diego

January 13, at 10am
Casa del Prado room 104
Balboa Park Loma, San Diego

An additional note on *Acanthostachys pitcairnioides*

by Dan Kinnard

Rainer Ziermann got an *Acanthostachys pitcairnioides* some time ago at a SDBS meeting. He grows the plant in full sun and has attained the red coloration of the leaves mentioned in the article in the seedling trial information. Good job Rainer.



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Essential Bromeliad Resources

Bromeliad Species Database – <https://bsi.org/members/?bsd> Species names keep changing due to new research. Consult the BSD for identification, photos, distribution, and spelling names of bromeliad species. For more granular information, log in as a BSI member.

Bromeliad Cultivar Registry – <https://bsi.org/registry/> The BCR lists information on bromeliad hybrids and cultivars. Here you can check the parentage of a bromeliad hybrid or the species of a sport that goes by a registered name. This is a free resource.

SDBS Library – Our bromeliad-specific library contains titles you won't find anywhere else. Contact our librarian, Eloise Lau, and check out a book.

DK ORNAMENTALS

BROMELIADS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

Tillandsia
Neoregelia
Vriesea
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grower

To make an appointment email David Kennedy
thedavekennedy@gmail.com or find him on Facebook

THE BROMELIAD BLADE



Newsletter of the San Diego
 Bromeliad Society

Juliana Raposo, Editor

Invitation

We are in constant need of material for publication. Please contact Juliana at julianadraposo@gmail.com

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

SDBS Meetings

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

SDBS Website

www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

SDBS Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sandiegobro>