

The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the
San Diego
Bromeliad Society

March 2023

VOLUME LVIII

NUMBER 3

From the Editor

By Juliana Raposo

On a sad note, our friend Don Nelson passed away last month. There's a service this Friday – see the details on pages 3 and 9.

I leave you with this lovely image that comes to us from member Scott Sandel, showing his family of vrieseas. They seem to rejoice

in the rain and get even more colorful in the wintertime.

I hope you all get much happiness and connection with the natural world through growing bromeliads.

See you Saturday!!!

Don't you love March? The garden perks up, the weeds explode. Take note of all the plant events happening this month and early April, here in the Blade. The Birdrock sale, the Saddleback Society show, and also the Orchid Show at the Botanic Garden that [opens this weekend](#).

We will see you Saturday in Balboa Park with an exciting program on 3 very popular bromeliad genera. Plus, a raffle table packed with tillandsia.



March Meeting

Saturday, March 11, 2023 at
10am in Casa del Prado, room
104, Balboa Park

Requests for talks to help newer members (and maybe some older ones) learn about the bromeliad family of plants has resulted in a program this month consisting of three short talks on dyckias, vrieseas and hohenbergias. They are not the most commonly grown bromeliads, but you will occasionally see them on the plant table or on the auction block. They are beautiful plants with characters all their own. In each talk you'll hear about their background information including how to recognize them.

Robert Kopfstein will entertain us with his knowledge and tales of encounters with the Dyckia guys. He will talk about the care and successful growing and showing of these fearsome but elegant beauties.



Dyckia Naked Lady (pronounced 'dick ee ah')

Scott Sandel, our erstwhile champion of Neoregelia, will show and discuss his successes with the Vriesea clan, how to keep the plants immaculate and ready to show and where to find these foliage queens.

Andrew Wilson, aided and abetted by **Dan Kinnard** and **Eloise Lau**, will introduce you to the Hohenbergia crowd and to the styles of living they expect whether sunning on the beach, hiding out in the forest or getting by in the hard places. He will indicate how to treat these diverse but assertive characters.



Vriesea Cool Moss
(pronounced 'vreeze ee ah')



Hohenbergia correia-araujoi
(pronounced 'hoe hen burg ee ah core ay ee ah are ah oo gee eye')

Farewell to Don Nelson

Our beloved SDBS member Don Nelson died on February 25. Don was an active member of the San Diego Bromeliad Society and served on the board of directors for a time. An avid contributor to Show n Tell – he brought us a blooming *Aechmea recurvata benrathii* just this last January meeting. Don will be remembered by us by his warm smile and his readiness to help with the club's activities. We will miss you, Don! Services will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church in Escondido on March 10th at 11am with a light lunch to follow. See obituary for full details on page 9.



Gift of Bromeliad memorabilia from Thelma O'Reilly

Who was Thelma O'Reilly?

Thelma O'Reilly was a plant enthusiast from San Diego who dedicated much of her life to growing bromeliads and a lifetime of the study of them. She passed away in 2021 at the age of 103.

Originally from the East coast where she grew begonias Thelma discovered bromeliads and cactus and succulents, plants she found she could grow outside in her garden in San Diego when she moved here in 1961.

She is one of the founding members of the San Diego Bromeliad Society. In 1965, May 10 to be exact, she along with Cleovis Hardin, his wife Jackie and a small group of bromeliad lovers formed the SDBS. They met at the Hardin's nursery.

She was also a member of the Bromeliad Society International and served on the board for a number of years. Among the large collection of her papers, I found the original letter

from the SDBS applying for affiliation to the BSI written in 1967.

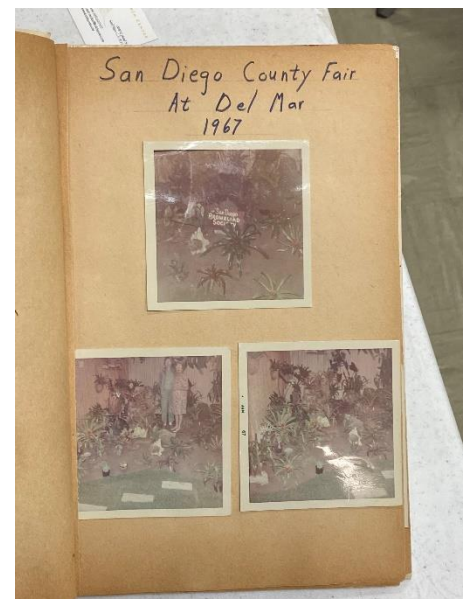
Michael Ludwig, Thelma's begonia friend is going through her lifetime collection of plant related memorabilia to sort out bromeliad related items for us. He brought us 4 boxes of a lifetime of collecting and saving information about bromeliads. Included are correspondence, newsletters from local societies and those throughout the United States and from as far away as Australia, and journals in Portuguese. There is a collection of BSI Journals and Journals from the Cryptanthus Society, as well as books pertaining to bromeliads in Portuguese and German.

Michael says that he still has things he is going through so he will bring us more items in the future.

We cannot keep all of the materials, some are duplicates, so items will be available at meetings for interested members to adopt. Perhaps, someone will find some interesting information that they would like to

share with the rest of us via an article for the newsletter or a short information blurb at a meeting.

You can learn more about Thelma O'Reilly by reading an article by Robert Kopfstein in the Bromeliad Journal, Vol 65, no.1, 2015.



Thelma was a committed record keeper. This is a scrap book page showing the club's display at the San Diego County Fair of 1967, 2 years after SDBS was started.

January Meeting Recap

The January program was an unusual and exciting treatment of the bromeliad topic. Our speaker, Kristen Jepsen, Director of the IGM Genomics Center at UCSD, expanded our knowledge of genomics and how it applies to the study of bromeliads.

Her presentation was a Genomics 101 type of talk where she inserted bits about the papers that were recently published on the topic of DNA analysis of bromeliads and how it changed the taxonomic treatment of lots of species – and those pesky name changes. Dr Jepsen explained in layman terms how the gene sequencing is done, and how it brings to light a lot of information that can't be gauged by observing morphological traits alone.

As the speakers committee said, "This marks a significant departure from the type of speaker we invite to our meetings". A round of applause goes to Andrew Wilson, Dan Kinnard and Eloise Lau, who brought us this informative talk and so many others over the years. They are about to pass the baton to a new speakers committee, and it will be a tough act to follow!



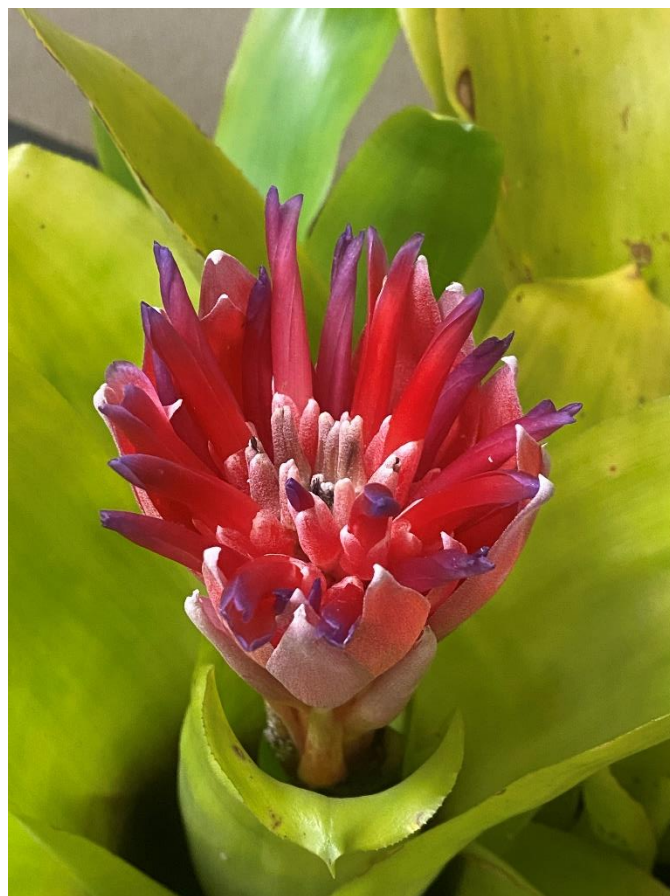
Matthew – *Dyckia platyphylla*

Steve Spencer – *OrthoPHYTUM gurkenii*

Sandy Valone – *Billbergia pyramidalis* (photo)

Juliana Raposo – *Neoregelia ampullacea*

Lucia Velasquez – assorted tillandsia



Show and Tell

Dave Kennedy – *Tillandsia Mayan Gold*

Morlane O'Donnell – *Tillandsia ionantha*, 3 varieties (photo)

Don Nelson – *Aechmea recurvata benrathii*

SDBS Events 2023

SDBS Monthly Meeting

February 11, 2023 @ 10am
Casa del Prado room 104, Balboa
Park, San Diego.

www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

Bus Trip to North County Growers

Coming up in May. More details
coming soon.

SDBS Display at SD County Fair

June 7 – July 4
Del Mar Fairgrounds
The theme this year is "Get Out
There" Adventure Awaits

SDBS Summer Show & Sale

Setup June 9
Show & Sale June 10 - 11

SDBS Winter Sale

December 9 -10



Birdrock Tropicals Spring Sale

March 31 – April 2 - Enjoy 20% off with flyer. Unique opportunity to learn from the best with free demonstrations and a chance to view one of the best collections of Tillandsia in the world. See flyer for details.



Bird Rock Tropicals

Spring Open House

March 31 – April 2
9-4 Fri & Sat, 10-3 Sun

- 20% off entire purchase
 - Free mystery box with \$250 purchase (\$50 value)
- Daily hands on demonstrations
 - 10:30am – How to mount and display air plants
 - 1:30pm – Air Plants 101: Proper care for air plants
- Greenhouse open for viewing
(normally not open to public!)
 - See one of a kind plants and view the collection of world-renowned grower Pam Koide Hyatt

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook or sign up for our newsletter at birdrocktropicals.com for more info

Saddleback Bromeliad Society Show and Sale

April 1 – 2 - This is one of the nicest bromeliad outings of the year. Sherman Gardens is totally worth a visit in its own right, and our friends at Saddleback always put on a great show with irresistible plants for sale. See all details in the flyer.

BROMELIAD PLANT SHOW & SALE

Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society

Saturday & Sunday April 1-2, 10:30 am-4:00 pm

**Sherman Library & Gardens
2627 Pacific Coast Highway
Corona Del Mar, CA 92625**

Admission \$5.00



Meetings 7:00 p.m on the first Thursday of the month @ Norman Murray Center in Mission Viejo



Come and see our lovingly home-grown BROMELIADS, including Tillandsias (air plants), and also receive growing information.

Bromeliad 101 with Mission Hills Garden Club

Our friends at the Mission Hills Garden Club are sharing an account of the intro on bromeliads they had with two of our own most knowledgeable SDBS members. Reminding all that the Mission Hills Club has their annual garden walk happening on May 13. Tickets go on sale on March 15. Visit the club's website to learn more - [Save a spot before they sell out.](#)

Rebecca Long helped to coordinate this event. After joining the Bromeliad Society, she attended a meeting where she heard David's booming voice and witnessed his passion and expertise. As former president of the Mission Hills Club, she made the connection between MHGC, David, Scott, and the Bromeliad Society. A fine example of multi club collaboration!



Jim and Scott hosted the event in their home.

The Bromeliad 101 Coffee in the Garden Saturday, January 28th went really well! David Kennedy and Scott Sandel made the presentation. At the end Scott gave folks a tour of his back garden filled with great bromeliad and tillandsias. Thanks to Debbie at the food table, Tony for helping to ensure we all had plenty of coffee/tea, Linda for being a pleasant greeter, Ann and Ken for being great leaders and making sure everyone felt comfortable. We also received many positive compliments from the community!



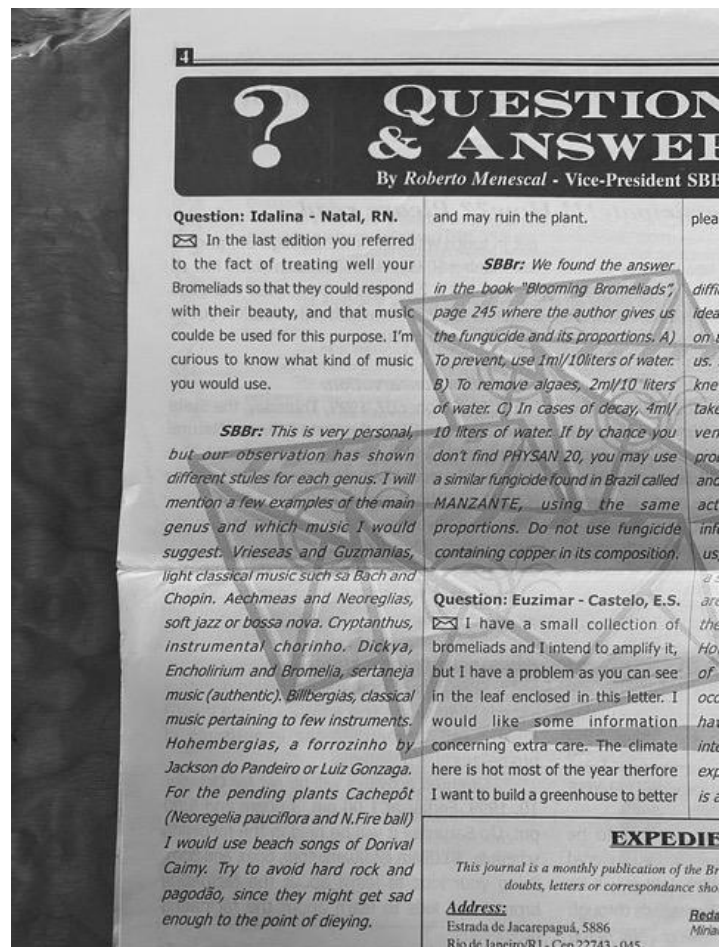
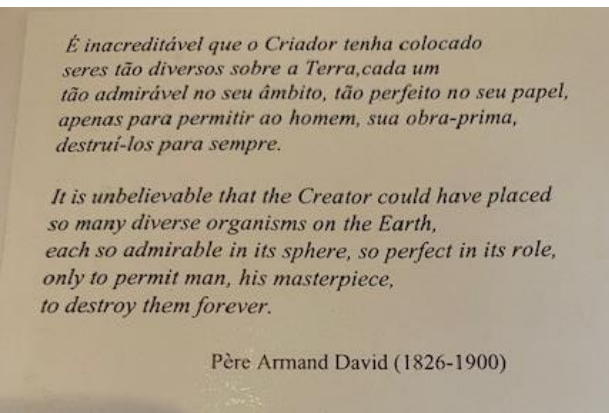
Dave Kennedy speaking for MHGC.

More from Thelma O'Reilly's Treasure Trove

Eloise Lau has been going through the bromeliad archives left by Thelma and found these interesting clips. They came from the Brazilian Bromeliad Society many years ago. The first one is a quote found in the back of a postcard showing a *Portea fosteriana*. (photo)

The second, on the right, is the Q & A section of the Brazilian society's bulletin where Roberto Menescal, then vice-president of SBBR, gives the advice. Menescal is a world-renowned musician and a founding

father of bossa nova, still going strong today. Combine that with a lifetime of study and cultivation of bromeliads and you can be sure that he really knows what bromeliads want to hear!



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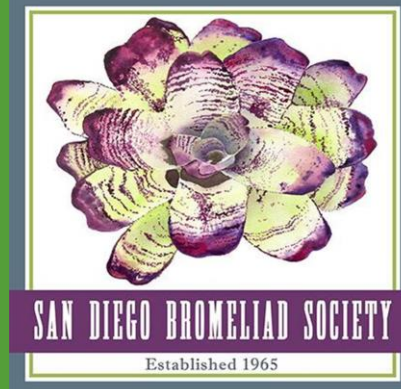
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THE BROMELIAD BLADE



Newsletter of the San Diego
 Bromeliad Society

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To send material for publication,
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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

DK ORNAMENTALS

BROMELIADS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

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Donald D. Nelson

December 11, 1934 - February 25, 2023



Donald (Don) Nelson was born in Rockford, Illinois to parents Einer, a Swedish immigrant, and Ferne Nelson on December 11, 1934. Donnie, as he was often called by his family, grew up in Rockford where he lived with his older brother Roger, and younger sister Janice and where several of his extended family still reside.

He joined the Air Force in 1954, spending almost 4 years in the service. He recalled fondly his travels across the world during that time. Throughout his life he enjoyed activities such as backpacking and camping. He and his wife, Mary Carolin occasionally traveled within California, often exploring the central coast and state and national parks featuring the sequoias and redwoods. A weeklong backpacking trip to the Sierra Nevada mountains that Don and Andrea took together is

an experience that both treasured. More recently, Don joined on a trip to Williams, AZ with his grandchildren to take the Polar Express train, where many laughs were enjoyed and lifelong memories created.

Don was innately and insatiably curious and loved learning about many different things - all things plants, of course, but also history, architecture and model trains to name a few of his interests. After his retirement as a salesman from Frazee Paints in the late 90s, Don leaned into his enthusiasm around plants and nature and

became an active member of local organizations such as the Palomar Cactus & Succulent Society, Quail Gardens (now the San Diego Botanic Garden), the San Diego Bromeliad Society, Alta Vista Gardens, and others. He enjoyed being a docent, serving on the board, meeting people and attending events associated with these organizations.

Don met his wife of 55 years, Mary Carolin, in 1965 and they were married in 1967. They moved to Escondido in 1970 to raise their family. They shared a love of nature and of gardening, as well as of their dear friends and their families. They also shared their strong faith and in recent years were engaged with the people and events at Trinity. Don was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Carolin and is survived by daughters Maria and Andrea, son in

law Tory and two grandchildren, Katrina and Alyssa. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, Jean and several family members who reside in Illinois.

Services will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church in Escondido on March 10th at 11am with a light lunch to follow. The family welcomes donations to the Escondido Creek Conservancy in support of the Elfin Forest reserve, as an expression of sympathy, and in lieu of flowers through this personalized link

<https://escondidocreek.org/news/honoring-don-nelson/>