



# The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the  
San Diego  
Bromeliad Society

April 2023

VOLUME LVIII

NUMBER 4

## President's Message

By Steve Zolezzi

Please plan to attend this month's meeting. Juliana has arranged for a great program - Guillermo Rivera from Argentina, presenting Bromeliads of Peru in person. During the presentation be thinking of climates bromeliads live in. It's as varied as possible from the sea shore to 10,000 feet up the mountains and from just above freezing to the 90ies and low humidity to the rain forest. Now think about your growing areas and general climate and all the microclimates within that area due to tree cover, topography, soil types, proximity to the ocean and a host of other influences that will determine good growing for plants to prosper.

With a little research, all the knowledge needed to succeed is at our fingertips in the SDBS book lending library open during each meeting in the back of the room. Now why wouldn't we all want to check out a book or two? Just talk to Eloise Lau, SDBS librarian.



*Tillandsia neglecta* enjoys living outdoors by the coast in SD county. Blooming now.

Photo Juliana Raposo

SDBS field trips are back! Be sure to read up on the May meeting change of location to North County, Bonsall. We will tour two bromeliad nurseries not open to the public – Rainforest Flora and Hula Tropicals. More info in the newsletter and at the April meeting.

A great feature of our meetings is Show and Tell. It's open to all members. Plan to bring in a plant of yours to educate and learn.

The June 10th Show and Sale is fast approaching, and we will need volunteers to help pull it off. This year's non-judged show will limit each member to display one plant on a table setting as opposed to past show display set up. For show info contact Juliana Raposo [julianadraposo@gmail.com](mailto:julianadraposo@gmail.com) and for sale info contact Morlane O'Donnell [morlane.odonnell@att.net](mailto:morlane.odonnell@att.net).

I am honored to announce that at the most recent board meeting board members unanimously voted to honor past Treasurer Al Evans as a Life Member of the SDBS in appreciation for his many services to the society over many years. Thank you, Al.



Life Member Al Evans in a recent club meeting

# April Meeting

Saturday, April 8, 2023 at  
10am in Casa del Prado, room  
104, Balboa Park.

*This program will be broadcast on  
Zoom. Invitations will be emailed  
separately.*

## Bromeliads of Peru: Land of the Incas, with Guillermo Rivera

The talk will cover a voyage through the whole country of Peru: from the dry, deciduous forest in the North around the cities of Chiclayo and Jaen, to the lower slopes of the Andes and into the Amazon region. We will explore the habitats around Huaraz, a beautiful town nestled in the valley between the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Negra. In the end we will cross the Andes once again heading towards the Sacred Valley of the Incas to finish our voyage in Machu Picchu. We will see amazing Tillandsias in flower, high elevation Puya, spectacular Vrieseas and the most incredible bromeliad Puya raimondii growing at 4400 meters, with its inflorescence of over 20 feet!



*Habitat of Puya raimondii, photo by speaker*

## About the Speaker

Guillermo Rivera was born in Argentina. He is a former researcher and PhD in Botany by the University of Cordoba, Argentina. Owner of [Plant Expeditions](#) (former South America Nature Tours) a company dedicated to the organization of tours for the last 17 years, throughout South America (Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador), Mexico and South Africa, Madagascar, and Namibia, with emphasis on plants: bromeliads, orchids, cacti, and other succulents.



# Auction Plants

After reading this, I swear you are going shopping. The plants are from Birdrock Tropicals. First, the exciting auction plants:

## **Tillandsia Flamenco** (photo)

A Koide hybrid. Tillandsia deppeana x Tillandsia flabellata var. flabellata. This is a beautiful hybrid.

## **Tillandsia Pocky**

Tillandsia fasciculata var. densispica (a Florida native) x schusteri. A

rosette with narrow upright white leaves which are softer in texture than either parent. It produces a multi branched pink-red colored inflorescence.

## **Tillandsia Shashu**

This is a natural hybrid that Pam Koide found in Mexico in the 90's. It has thick semi-succulent leaves and produces a colorful spike.



# Raffle Table

## ***Tillandsia jalisco-monticola* x *rotundata***

This was made using a superior clone.

## ***Tillandsia fasciculata*** (Costa Rica)

This small, compact *T. fasciculata* has a large, colorful bloom. The inflorescence is large for the size of the plant and is orange.

## ***Tillandsia hitchcockiana***

Another of the grey-leaved *Tillandsia* species, this one is from Peru. Its leaves are stiffer than those of *T. cereicola*.

## ***Tillandsia straminea***

Fragrant species from Peru and Ecuador. The tall inflorescence produces several lavender colored branches.

## ***Tillandsia* x *Zacapa***

*T. brachycaulos* x *caput-medusae*, from Guatemala

Thought to be a natural hybrid of *Tillandsia brachycaulos* by *caput-medusae*.

## ***Tillandsia paleacea* Enano**

Rare miniature form of *paleacea* from Peru. Reaches maturity at only a few inches and can form beautiful compact clumps.

## ***Tillandsia purpurea* 'Shooting Star'**

This species is found growing on the western coastal regions of Peru and Ecuador. Its semi-succulent leaves grow at right angles.

## ***Tillandsia Queen's Marvel***

A Koide hybrid. *Tillandsia concolor* x *pueblensis*. Multi-branched, red-bracted spike with purple petals.

## ***Tillandsia harrisii* x *chevalleri***

We acquired this hybrid from Bak nurseries in the Netherlands in 1990's; Plants are 30 cm plus when blooming.



## ***Tillandsia flabellata* x *subteres***

Koide hybrid. This cross is the reverse of *Tillandsia Queen's Fiesta*.

## ***Tillandsia cereicola***

This *Tillandsia* species used to be one of the grey leaved *Vriesea* species; It is from Ecuador and Peru.

## ***Tillandsia* Curly Slim**

*T. intermedia* x *streptophylla* Dimmitt Hybrid. Another one of Mark Dimmitt's great *Tillandsia* hybrids.

## ***Tillandsia capitata* 'Old Gold'**

This cultivar, from Jalisco Mexico, was first introduced into cultivation and named by Bill Baker. Easy to grow, the green foliage turns an old gold color when in bloom.

## ***Tillandsia capitata* 'Peach'** (Mexico)

Beautiful thick silver foliage. I found this cultivar in Mexico in the 1980's growing with another species which was new.

## ***Tillandsia* x *floridana* by *fasciculata* var. *densispica***

This is a cross of the natural hybrid

*Tillandsia* x *floridana* by *T. fasciculata* v. *densispica*. It has narrow, silver-white foliage.

## ***Tillandsia hammeri***

We discovered this plant in March 1984, and it was described by Rauh and Ehlers, dedicated to my collecting companion Gary Hammer.

## ***Tillandsia capitata* 'Pochutla'**

Of the many forms of *Tillandsia capitata* this one, from near Pochutla, Oaxaca is light red until blooming when it turns bright red.

Plus, *Fascicularia pitcairniifolia*, *Billbergia* 'Fiesta', *Billbergia* *Lambada*, *Aechmea gamosepala*, *Hohenbergia vestita* (green clone), *Tillandsia Queen's Torch*, *Tillandsia Jalisco-Monticola* cross, *Tillandsia tectorum* var. *tectorum* (Peru), *Nidularium innocentii* (dark purple form), *Billbergia* (Greg) 'Mandas Othello' x 'Pink Champagne', *Fascicularia pitcairniifolia*...

AND – a bonus of an additional 10 plants, given to the Society for the large order amount.

# Know your Bromeliads

by Juliana Raposo

Even if you are not a methodical collector, you will have questions about bromeliad identification from time to time. Let's say you saw the list of raffle plants above and you are baffled. You want to strategize and figure out which plants you will pounce on when your number is called. You want to know what to bid on in the auction. Maybe you want to make a wish list.

If you rely on google searches, chances are you will get outdated names and even the wrong information. The best resources we have available for bromeliad identification are the databases maintained by the BSI – Bromeliad Society International. Unfortunately, this precious resource rarely pops up in the top searches on Google and Yahoo, if it appears at all.

First thing you need to know - Is your plant a species or a cultivar? That will determine where you will search.

Species names are latinized binomials. The capitalized plant genus name, followed by the non-capitalized species name that is usually Latin or Greek. (There are exceptions, but still). Examples from above:

Tillandsia straminea  
Tillandsia hitchcockiana  
Tillandsia cereicola

If it's a species, go to BSD – Bromeliad Species Database <https://bsi.org/members/?bsd>. Here you will find all you can possibly want to know about a species, and it's constantly maintained and revised by the experts. To access in-depth information, you have to log in

as a BSI member, but I find that most of what we want to know is accessible for free. You can

look up photos, have an idea of the growing conditions.

Now you want to search the cultivars (which include hybrids). You go to BCR – Bromeliad Cultivar Registry <https://bsi.org/registry/>. This one is 100% free to access.

What's the difference between hybrid and cultivar anyways? It gets tricky. Hybrids are crosses, made by humans or natural agents. Still drawing from the list above, Tillandsia Curly Slim was made by Mark Dimmitt and Tillandsia x Zacapa was made by nature.

Cultivars are individual plants that are good looking enough to be propagated by clones and be registered, whether they are a species plant or a hybrid. Tillandsia Curly Slim is not every plant that resulted from the Dimmitt cross of intermedia and streptophylla. Rather, it's one outstanding individual plant in the batch that was chosen to be registered. It was propagated and sold; the others discarded. Which means, if you come by a random plant named T. intermedia x streptophylla don't assume it's Curly Slim. Now you know, Curly Slim is both a hybrid and a cultivar.

Tillandsia Zacapa is also in the BCR. This one is a natural hybrid, thus the x before the name. You would assume that the Zacapas in circulation are propagated out of the cultivar registered by Cathcart, but I don't know. Maybe Pam Koide also collected it herself, a different cultivar.



*T. Shashu, one of the auction plants this month. This cultivar is a natural hybrid. This photo and the one on pg 3 by Pam Koide-Hyatt for BCR.*

An example of a species cultivar is Tillandsia "Shooting Star", a *T. purpurea* registered by Isley for its peculiar leaf configuration. Tillandsia Old Gold is another example of a species cultivar.

Don't just assume that plants with given names are hybrids, ok?

Back to our list, you'll see plants that only bear the name of the cross, like *Tillandsia flabellata* x *subteres*. Go to BSD and look up the parents to imagine what it may look like. Why is it not registered? Maybe Pam is still waiting for the plants to develop before she registers a cultivar. You know her standards are high.

So, next time you want to learn about a plant, do what the pros do.

## March Meeting Recap

In our March program, SDBS members Andrew Wilson, Robert Kopfstein and Scott Sandel reported on their horticultural experience with *Hohenbergia*, *Dyckia* and *Vriesea*, respectively. It was a down to earth program that helped San Diego growers expand their knowledge of these popular genera.

### Show N Tell

#### David Kennedy

*Tillandsia Perfect Blend* (Isley)  
*Tillandsia Don Walsh*

#### Andrew Wilson

*Hohenbergia leopoldohorstii*

#### Matthew Jerde

*Hechtia gayorum*

#### Scott Sandel

*Vriesea Bonfire* (Arden)  
*Vriesea Tasman*  
*Vriesea Huana Ranges*



*Lucia Velasquez with a lovely *T. chiapensis*. She also brought *T. Eric Knobloch*.*

## Handling a Hohenbergia

By Andrew Wilson

At last month's meeting, together with Dan and Eloise, I showed images of *Hohenbergias* grown in San Diego to develop interest in them among newer members. However, the most challenging question came from Juliana, hardly a newcomer, who asked whether one of the specimens shown could be repotted easily. It was a *Hohenbergia castellanosii* and occupied a 9 inch (inner diameter) ceramic pot.

*Hohenbergias* are generally bulky plants, adorned with unhelpful spines. They also have foliage that does not bend easily, at least not without breaking. When I described the repotting of such a plant from a

heavy ceramic pot without causing harm to any of participants involved, pot, plant or planter, some doubts remained in the mind of the questioner and perhaps of others in the audience. So, to provide evidence that repotting was not difficult we will run through a description of the doubtful deed enacted today (April 2, 2023) with the evidence of a few still images. Before repotting the plant above seems fine. However, the roots are squeezed against the rim and new pups are emerging. If repotting is postponed the plant may not be removable without breakage of the pot and damage to the specimen.



*The rim was struck against a firm surface, in this case the arm of a sturdy wooden chair. The plant, popped loose by the blow, was then lowered gently into the container.*

While heavy, the pot and plant are still manageable. Though armed with spines, this *Hohenbergia* is one of the less vicious species and gloves were not used to lift and turn it upside down. Its rim was struck against a firm surface, in this case the arm of a sturdy wooden chair. The plant, popped loose by the blow, was then lowered gently into the container. In this case there was no need for a sponge, a cushion, or a more drastic measure to prevent leaf damage. The next step was to place several inches of potting material (fast draining with pieces of lava rock or lumps of diatomaceous earth, either mixed with organic material) in a layer at the base of the pot. The plant now sits on that layer with material added to hold it in place (right). It took less than 15 minutes.

*Photos show the plant before and after repotting.*



## SDBS Events 2023

[www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org](http://www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org)

### Field Trip to Rainforest Flora and Hula Tropicals in Bonsall

May 13, 2023. No meeting in Balboa Park, we will have the field trip instead. 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



## Field Trip to Rainforest Flora and Hula Tropicals

**May 13 @ 10am** – We will do a nursery tour instead of the monthly meeting. First, we visit **Rainforest Flora** in Bonsall. The growing grounds of Paul Isley's nursery was devastated by a wildfire a few years ago and, as you will see, it bounced back beautifully. Isley is one of the top experts in Tillandsia, with many years of hybridizing and collecting all over Latin America. Then we move on to Steve Salley's **Hula Tropicals** a short ride away. Salley is a SDBS member. His nursery is known for a multitude of colorful Neoregelias, Aechmeas and Billbergias.

Given the short distances involved, there will be no bus for this trip. Members are encouraged to carpool. A carpool interest spreadsheet will be emailed soon. Stay tuned!



Steve Salley

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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

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## THE BROMELIAD BLADE



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Bromeliad Society

Juliana Raposo, Editor

### Invitation

We are in constant need of material for publication. Please contact Juliana at [julianadraposo@gmail.com](mailto:julianadraposo@gmail.com)

Make sure to submit your contribution before the 20<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org)

### SDBS Facebook Group

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