SAN DIEGO BROMELIAD SOCIETY
Established 1965

The Bromeliad Blade

Newsletter of the San Diego Bromeliad Society

July 2020

VOLUME LV NUMBER 7

President's Message

By Morlane O'Donnell

Hello fellow members. I hope you are managing to maintain your sanity during this long stay-at-home period. Keep in mind this is temporary. It will end eventually. Looking at it from the positive side, there has been a benefit in that social isolation has given us an opportunity to spend more time with our plants.

SDBS would like to welcome new members Ray and Bonnie Brooks, John Jensen, Brian Glasgow, Marcia Buchalter and Beth Jackson. They have joined our club since the stay at home order was issued. We are looking forward to meeting you in person hopefully sooner than later.

Some of you have asked me when we will be able to resume our face to face monthly meetings. Unfortunately, I don't have a satisfactory answer for that. We'll be able to meet whenever the powers that be deem it safe for a large group to gather together. Casa del Prado is not open for meetings at this time.

Scott Sandel's Billbergia 'Zinger'.

Staying in compliance of the city and state mandate for social distancing, sadly the annual picnic in August is cancelled as well. Beyond that, who knows?

Don't forget there is still the BSI World Conference which has been postponed until June of 2021. More information as to the registration fee and hotel reservations can be found on the BSI website.

Did you know that you can place a small ad for bromeliads and/or bromeliad related items free in our newsletter and web page? It's a good way to announce a sale or arrange a trade among fellow members. It's a resource that is not often used. Send details to Juliana or Scott and they'll let you know what else is needed.

The Board will be meeting soon probably via Zoom. If you have any items you feel should be brought to the attention of the Board, please email me by July 13th. Are there any kinds of demonstrations you would like to see? What are some of the subjects you'd like to have discussed?

Stay well and please follow all health mandates and guidelines to the letter. Wash your hands, cover your face, and maintain social distancing. May your plants flourish. Keep sending Juliana pictures for the Blade. Happy and safe growing.

Upcoming Events

SDBS Meetings

SDBS July Meeting
CANCELLED
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

SDBS August Picnic
CANCELLED
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

SDBS Events

SDBS Annual Show & Sale
November 2020
Location TBD
www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org

Other Monthly Meetings

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

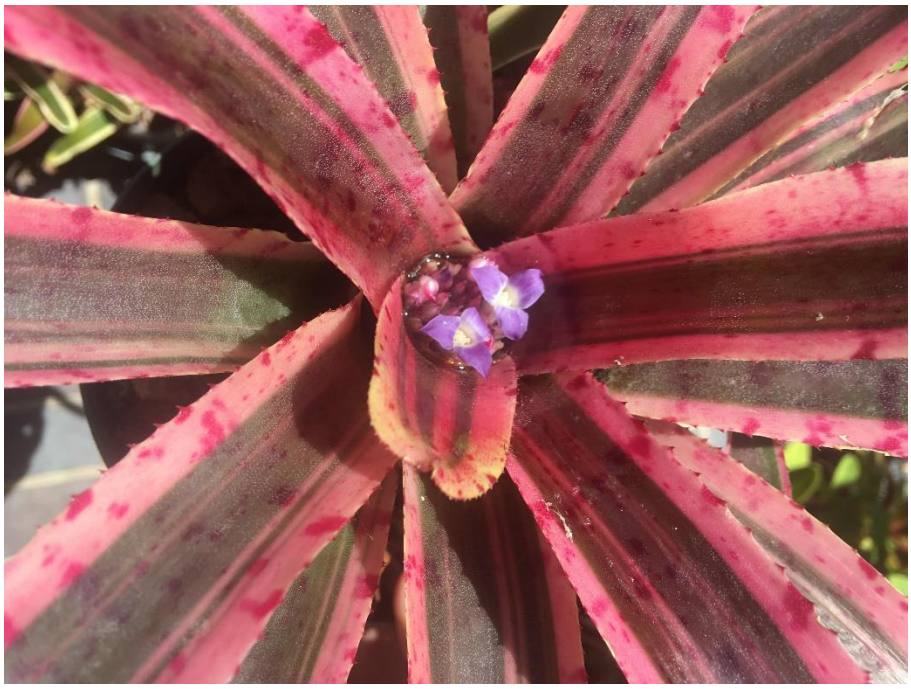
2nd Saturday, 1 PM
San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101
www.sdcss.net

2nd Wednesday, 7 PM
San Diego Epiphyllum Society
Balboa Park, Case Del Prado, Room 101
www.SanDiegoEpi.org

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

Coffee in the Garden Online

with Scott Sandel & Jim Marich



Neoregelia 'Amoroso', a mid-size neo.

Following last month's success, Coffee in the Garden is back **this Saturday, July 11, from 10-11:30am**, hosted by our own Scott Sandel.

Look for an email by Scott with the invitation. All the details are there. You can join us this Saturday morning for another chat with video – with Show-N-Tell, plant Q&A, and general bromeliad topics discussion. Hosted by Scott Sandel & Jim Marich. Log on with your computer that has video/camera and microphone/speaker capability. Or on your smart phone. There is NO NEED to download the Zoom program. You can join on the Zoom app or just click on the link below or type it into your browser. You'll need the Meeting ID number.

Here is a YouTube video that describes the easy process of joining Zoom meetings without downloading the app. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDZOx-N39EU

If you are a Zoom newbie, shoot Scott email for help in advance of Saturday.

Helicodea Billbergia

by Eloise Lau

This past spring with the COVID-19 lock down I have become an amateur photojournalist of sorts. Armed with the camera on my iPhone I have begun recording the flora and fauna here at home. Two of the most interesting subjects I've photographed this spring are 3 sets of baby horned owls, the first sightings in 20 years and 3 helicodea billbergias, B zebrina, B alfonsi-joannis, and B stenopetela. Helicodea blooms are fascinating with their long petals curled back like springs.

Since this is the newsletter for the SDBS my little research project I'm sharing is on the helicodea billbergia and not horned owls.

The genus Billbergia is divided into 2 sub-groups, Billbergia and Helicodea Billbergia. One of the characteristics that set the helicodea apart is the petals on the blooms. The petals on Billbergia are curved back and those on the Helicodea are long and coiled up like watch springs.

Other distinctive characteristics of helicodea are their long tubular rosette with few leaves and large beautiful rose-colored scape-bracts on pendent inflorescences. Many have ovaries that are grooved and ridged. The seed pods are as fascinating and beautiful as the flowers. (See below)

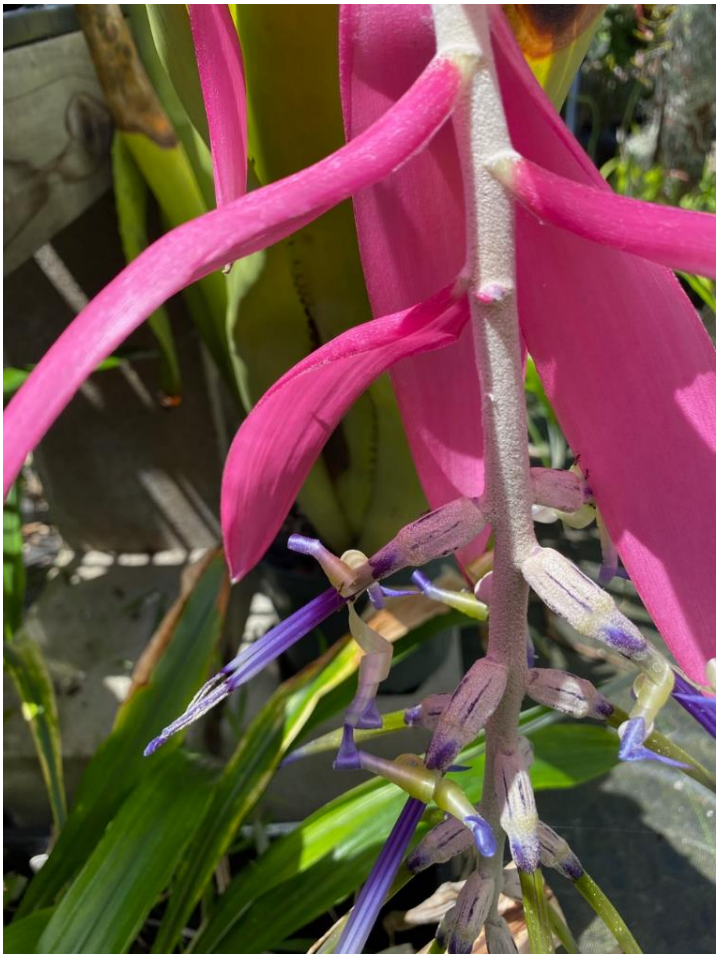
The first helicodea recorded is B zebrina in 1827 by Lemaire.

Lyman Smith wrote the most comprehensive article I could find in the J of the BSI, Jan-Feb 1963, v.13 #1. He describes 14 species of helicodea known at that time.

Currently there are 29 species listed in The Encyclopedia of Bromeliads, version 4 (2018) from the University Botanic Gardens, Utrecht.

In alphabetical order the species are:

acreana, alfonsi-joannis, brachysiphon, brasiliensis, cardenasii, chiapensis, cylindrostachya, dasilvae, decora, eloiseae, formosa, incarnata, issingiana, jandebrabanderi, macrolepis, magnifica, meyeri, microlepis, oxysepala, pallidiflora, porteana, robert-readii, rosea, rubicunda, rupestris, stenopetala, tessmannii, violacea, zebrina.



B. alfonsi-joannis note the bright pink scape, the curved petals and large ovaries.

Dan and I have over the years had 11 different helicodea in our collection. We now have 5 left, B alfonsi-joannis, brasiliensis, rosea, stenopetala and zebrina. Billbergia eloiseae, macrolepsis, pallidiflora, porteana, tessmannii, violacea are no longer with us.

Helicodea mostly grow in the hot and humid tropical rainforests of Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru, Paraguay and Mexico.

We have difficulty growing them in our hot dry summers and cool wet winters. We grow in a shade house and bring sensitive plants into the house in the winter however the helicodea do not like the dry conditions in the house. It's a real challenge growing them but if you are successful the results are thrilling and rewarding.

There is a delightful article in the May-June 1989 v.39 #3 Journal of the Bromeliad Society in which Racine Foster describes her excitement at the first blooming of her B. magnifica. Her description of the emergence of the bloom spike and watching the flower petals recoil are very descriptive. Her bloom spike was between 3 and 4 feet long. She did say that it is the slowest growing Billbergia, after 40 years she only has 3 plants and 2 offsets.

B. stenopetela with its long inflorescence, helicoid flowers and fuzzy seed pods. The pods are as interesting and beautiful as the flowers.

B. zebrina another breathtaking inflorescence.

FCBS.org

Editor's Note

When Eloise mentioned Billbergia magnifica, this iconic picture came to mind.

The shot of Don Beadle, the pioneer hybridizer who is recognized with popularizing the genus Billbergia and a magnific... magnifica specimen.

The photo is part of an interesting article on Beadle that you can find at the FCBS website

Good Things Come to Those Who Wait

by Dan Kinnard

This puya finally bloomed after many years of waiting. Pam Koide Hyatt brought the seed back from Peru in about 1986 from a collecting trip with Dr. Rauh. Several years ago (15 or so) we were the recipients of several of these plants. They were planted out on our hillside and this is what happened after some time has passed and is still awaiting a name.

The plant is rather large — Eloise is about 5 feet tall.

June Blooms

Bromelia Balansae, Don Kinnard & Eloise Lau:
"This Bromeliad balansae is planted out in the back 40. Quite good color. By the way, if you don't appreciate the grass growing within the plant, feel free to reach in and pull it out. The bloom changes form as it develops over just a few days".

Also from Dan & Eloise: "There have been many Bromeliads in bloom this year that usually either don't or are difficult to bloom. I suspect at least part of the reason was the amount of rain we got this winter that cleansed the soil / pots of built up salts. Or maybe it was the change in the temperature patterns. Whatever it the reason may be … THANKS for the nice blooms this year. Left and center: Billbergia horrida var. tigrina. Right: Billbergia 'Miz Mollie'.

SDBS 2020

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Vriesea 'Lacy' and Aechmea warasii, also by Dan and Eloise.

The wall of Quesnelia marmorata at Dan and Eloise's came alive with about 60 blooms. The question of why so many pots of the same plant doesn't need to be answered on years like this.

From Andrew Wilson:
"Sure, housing is in short supply and prices are sky high but, come on squatter, that's a Tillandsia limbata!"

From Scott Sandel:
Neoregelia "Groucho".

PLANT SALE

SDBS member Shon Glasgow is having a bromeliad sale! *Premium Neoregelia, Tillandsia, Ect.*

When: JULY, 10, 11 & 12
Where: San Marcos, CA

Contact CASSIE for address & directions:
760-889-2631

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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