



Newsletter of the

Hawai'i Bromeliad Society

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MARCH 2017

A RETURN VISIT FROM THE HIDANOS

For our March meeting, program chairs Gail and John Ishihara have arranged a special treat: a return engagement from *Tillandsia* specialists Judy and George Hidano. Well established in local orchid circles for their award-winning hybrids and displays, the Hidanos have been devoting more of their time—and greenhouse space—to cultivating *Tillandsia*. Five years ago, they started to catalog and name their hybrids, and now *Tillandsia* are a central part of their gardening lives.

On their first visit, in August 2016, Judy and George brought in an intriguing variety of *Tillandsia* to “show and tell,” suggesting the depth of their collection. They offered a wide-ranging, educational discussion of their cultivating techniques, and particularly their tips and tricks for best displaying their *Tillandsia*, in a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces, from condos to greenhouses to backyards.

Judy and George also provided members with a very helpful and thorough handout on *Tillandsia* cultivation, summarizing much of what they have learned over the past decade.

This visit the Hidanos will focus on *Tillandsia* fertilization, and on how to separate keiki. They will be bringing in some of their favorite species and cultivars to show and to sell—so don't miss this opportunity to learn more about *Tillandsia* cultivation, and to acquire some beautiful specimens.



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MARCH MEETING

This Saturday, March 25,
we meet at **Lyon Arboretum**
at **12:30.**

Our hospitality hosts are
Dolores and Karen.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 25, 2017

Lyon Arboretum

ATTENDING: Susan Andrade, Francis Arakaki, Nancy Arakaki, Merrill Cutting, Karen Gollero and Ed Arrigori, Marie Gringer, Naty Hopewell, Gail Rabideau Ishihara, John Ishihara, Mischa Kobayashi, Wes Kobayashi, Terese Leber (presiding), Wendie Liu, Larry McGraw, Linda McGraw, Ed Nishiyama, Karen Rohter, Dolores Roldan, Jaime Roldan, Stan Schab, Lynette Wageman, Randy Wong, and Val Wong.

GUESTS: John Kawamoto, and Marianne Sato.

CONVENED: 12:40; ADJOURNED: 2:30.

Terese welcomed everyone to the meeting, and because of the number of new members and guests (something we have not been able to say for a few years!), she asked everyone to introduce themselves. She thanked Lynette and Stan for the hospitality spread. Terese explained the duties of Membership Chair and Librarian, noting that those posts are currently vacant—and a good way for new members to learn about HBS. She also explained the society's connection to the Lyon Arboretum Bromeliad Garden, and invited members to join the group which has been meeting on Friday mornings to work in and improve that area.

TREASURER: Dolores reported that our balance is \$11,063.18. She circulated the Treasurer's report for 2016. Last year our total income was \$2,916.25: \$330 from membership dues, \$1,685.25 from the meeting auctions, \$885 from the East-West Center Holiday craft fair plant sale (with a net profit of \$801.34), and a \$16 donation from Larry McGraw. Expenses amounted to \$2,460.97: post office box rental (\$102), ad in the BSI world bromeliad conference program (\$200), East-West Center craft fair table rental (\$50) and supplies (\$33.66), digital projector (\$753.90), paper goods (\$7.60), BSI conference expenses for Lynette as HBS representative (\$296.98), and Willows Holiday lunch buffet (\$1,016.83). Our net gain for last year was \$455.28.

HOSPITALITY: Our hospitality hosts for March are Dolores (snacks) and Karen Rohter (drinks).

OLD BUSINESS—WINDWARD ORCHID SHOW: Terese reminded members that we have been invited to prepare a display for the 2017 Windward Orchid Society show, which will be held in the King Intermediate School gym, at 46-155 Kamehameha Highway from 9 to 7 on Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25, and 9 to 4 on Sunday, March 26. She asked members to pick out some bromeliads to share, and to help with the set-up on Thursday, March 23, from about 9 to 11, or break down, on Sunday at 4. She reminded everyone to clean and trim their plants (no dirt, leaves, or bugs), and to empty out any standing water. Plants in pots are fine, including plastic pots, but bare root-unpotted plants are OK too, as are mounted or hanging plants. If you have any hinahina (aka *Tillandsia usneoides*), that could be very useful in making the display look nice. Above all, LABEL all your plants with your name or initials, somewhere inconspicuous, such as the bottom of the pot or under a leaf. If you need help getting your plants to the March 23 set-up, please call Terese (542-5766), or Randy (255-2421).

NEW BUSINESS—NURSERY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING: Gail explained that she and John will travel to Hilo to attend the 2017 Big Island Association of Nurserymen Spring Horticultural Show and Plant Sale, which will be held on March 3 and 4 at Edith Kanakaole Stadium. They will also check in with growers David Shiigi and Dennis Heckart, and scout out locations and logistics for an HBS trip to Hilo later this year.

PROGRAMS: Gail reported that the March program will feature *Tillandsia* specialists George and Judy Hidano. In April, she and John will discuss their trip to the Big Island Association of Nurserymen plant sale, and John will share videos of Larry McGraw's garden, and of Dennis Heckart's and David Shiigi's nurseries, taken on the Big Island trip.

AUCTION: Thank you to all who donated plants for the auction—especially Ed for a beautiful *Aechmea* 'Samurai' that Nary scooped up (right), and Larry for an assortment of *Tillandsia* that we don't usually get to see, including *andreaana*, *bourgaei*, *filifolia*, *fuchsii*, *gardneri*, *jonesii*, *magnusiana*, and *polystachia* (and for serving as auctioneer).



VISITING LARRY'S HANGING WALL



Walls have been in the news a lot lately, and after our February meeting at Lyon Arboretum, during which Larry McGraw demonstrated ways of mounting and hanging *Tillandsia* (see page 4), he invited HBS members to his home to see his walls—imaginative plantings of vibrant, colorful bromeliads (some of which even come from Mexico!). Larry has constructed outdoor hanging walls of three-quarter inch hex Everbilt plastic chicken coop wire, a light, UV resistant product that is easy to hang on nails or screws, and easy to move. By connecting several sections of the chicken wire together with UV resistant zip ties, he's created platforms for displaying his plants without any planting media. His walls feature a mixture of *Tillandsia*, *Billbergia*, and mini-*Neoregelia*, arranged for color and three-dimensional impact. To hang plants or tie them to his wall, Larry favors Tilly Hanger wire because it comes in different colors, and

as he demonstrated, is easy to use, which lets him easily swap out plants. One sometimes overlooked feature of *Tillandsia* his wall reveals is that they are ageotropic—that is, they can grow out in any direction, creating unexpected patterns of shapes and colors.

POTTING, HANGING, AND FERTILIZING: TIPS FROM LYNETTE, LARRY, AND ED

At our February meeting, program chairs Gail and John arranged for three great educational presentations by HBS members Larry McGraw, Lynette Wageman, and Ed Nishiyama. Ed shared some of his fertilizing tips; Lynette discussed pots and potting mixes, and Larry conducted a demonstration on mounting and hanging *Tillandsia*, bringing in enough specimens and supplies so that everyone could hang a plant and take it home.

HANGING AND MOUNTING: For mounting glue, Larry prefers Tilly Tacker, a less runny, more viscous variety of E-4000 developed by Rainforest Flora. It's easy to use—just pick off any old leaves, apply the glue, and let it set about five minutes before mounting the plant. The glue stabilizes overnight, and will last for years. Larry's accessory of choice for hanging plants is Tilly Hanger, an aluminum wire sold by Rainforest Flora, available in twelve colors. He demonstrated how to create a simple but sturdy hanging hook for a variety of shapes and sizes of *Tillandsia*, including the 'Curly Slim' cultivar he's holding (right). The trick is to wrap the plant tightly enough to hold and support it, but loosely enough so that it doesn't choke the plant.



POTTING: Before you pick your potting soil, Lynette reminded us, think a bit about your pots. Make sure they have holes in the bottom, and consider what they are made of: clay, porcelain, or ceramic pots dry out faster, and need to be watered more often than plastic. Above all, make sure the pots can drain; take the time to test your pot and soil mixture before you plant. Bromeliads do not like wet feet; they need loose, porous soil that can retain moisture but without getting soggy, so don't use clay soil or ordinary garden or top soil—and no limestone or concrete, as they are too alkaline for bromeliads. Bromeliads planted too deep can easily rot, so fill the bottom of deep pots with something that will drain. If you use potting soil, mix it with something like cinders (as Lynette does) or coir to make it more porous but still able to hold water. Before planting a newly separated keiki, treat the fresh cut with rootone, which can be put on with a small paint brush, and stabilize the plant with something like rocks or chopsticks until it roots. Lynette also recommended adjusting your potting mix to your specific growing conditions. Larry, for example, lives in a very wet and windy area, and doesn't like having to replant frequently, so he uses coarse coir in wide pots weighted down with blue rock. He's found that the coir stabilizes plants quickly, doesn't rot, and lasts for years.

FERTILIZING: If you've ever wondered how Ed cultivates those *Vriesea*, *Guzmania*, and *Neoregelia* that we all look forward to seeing at auction, we now know one secret is the way he fertilizes. He uses a 20-20-20 all purpose fertilizer on the *Vriesea* and *Guzmania*, and a 13-2-13 orchid fertilizer on everything else. He fertilizes on top of the leaves or in the center cup, using a sprayer with differential settings that he can attach to a garden hose. Here are some tips he provided on fertilizing different Bromeliad genera. Remember that the fertilizer numbers refer to nitrogen (for the production of chlorophyll and growth), phosphorous (for root development and flowering), and potassium (which does many things, including increase disease and drought resistance).

Billbergia. Most growers fertilize infrequently and minimally, and some do not feed them at all. The fear is that too much fertilizer will dull the color and markings of *Billbergia*—"natural sculptures"—and elongate the leaves.

Dyckia. No special fertilizing requirements. *Dyckia* respond to fertilizer with more vigorous growth, and the plant form does not suffer as long as there is adequate light.

Guzmania. Despite their preference for moderate to diffuse light, *Guzmania* benefit from a stronger fertilizer regimen than most other bromeliads. They will grow rapidly with a program of up to a teaspoon fertilizer per gallon of water every three to four weeks. Some species and cultivars are oversensitive to phosphorus, and develop brown leaf tips. For those plants, it is best to use a fertilizer formula with reduced phosphorous, such as 20-10-20, or 20-10-30.

Neoregelia. Proper fertilizing is crucial for producing good quality *Neoregelia*. Heavy feeding causes colorful foliage to turn green; it also produces large, elongated rosettes that are less attractive than compact ones. To produce good size, fertilize only for the first several months after separation from the mother plant, and then little or none through flowering. Fertilizing very lightly all year round, or not fertilizing at all, is also acceptable: the plants will be smaller but will have good form and color. The important rule is not to fertilize heavily as the plants near maturity, and not to leaf feed, as that will cause the markings to fade.

Tillandsia. *Tillandsia* will survive with no fertilizer, but will grow more slowly and flower less often. For larger, more vigorous plants, feed them at least once a month. Adding a small amount of fertilizer—one-quarter teaspoon per gallon of water—when soaking the plants will take care of two chores at once.

Vriesea. Like *Guzmania*, *Vriesea* benefit from a higher strength fertilizer than other bromeliads. Use a balanced formula, or 20-20-30, at one teaspoon per gallon of water every three to four weeks.