



Newsletter of the

# Hawai'i Bromeliad Society

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## E.R. TREATMENTS FOR BROMELIADS

"Everybody has bad looking plants," Tom "I am not George Clooney" Stuart told a full house of HBS members at our April program on how to recognize and tend sick bromeliads. "A lot of things can happen to plants," he noted, such as the decimation caused to Annetta Kinnicutt's back yard by the recent, but rare—for Hawai'i—hail storms.

So how can you tell when your plants are sick? Like pets, they have various ways of letting us know that they are out of sorts: they can be droopy, for example, and softer leaved varieties can show quilling; leaves or parts of leaves can be brown, or can have holes chewed in them, etc.

Fortunately, bromeliads are not susceptible to many diseases. Occasionally viruses can cause discoloration that can be treated by commercial products. Pests are more common, and include scale, white flies, and mealy bugs. Rather than commercial insecticides, the simplest way to protect your bromeliads from pests without risking harm to pets, people, or the environment is to clean the leaves by hand. Spray the plants with soapy water, put on your cotton gloves—the ones you use only for hand-cleaning your plants—and wipe off the leaves. Between the holes they leave in the leaves and their slime trails, slugs are probably the easiest pests to detect. Although traditional remedies such as leaving out dishes of beer can be effective, and commercial products are available, Tom recommends the "arm and hammer" technique, involving picking off the slugs by hand—and well, you can imagine the rest.

In addition to your cotton gloves, every plant doctor needs scissors that are used just on your bromeliads. The main question to ask in considering whether to trim a leaf is whether photosynthesis is still occurring (is it green?).

If so, leave it on, if not, it isn't doing the plant much good, and can be cut off. Weekly grooming is an ideal to strive for.

Bromeliads need water. Brown leaves on the outside of the plant are normal signals that the plant is dying and giving way to a new plant, but brown leaves on top generally indicate a lack of water.

Besides water, however, bromeliads need air. They don't like to sit in water or dampness; in fact, good drainage and circulation is probably the key element to ensuring good health for your bromeliads. Circulating air helps the plants dry out, which also keeps down the number of insects. This need for circulation helps explain why bromeliads, except for *Anana*, should not be planted deeply, but

continued on page 2, bottom



### 2012 OFFICERS OF THE HAWAII BROMELIAD SOCIETY

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## MAY MEETING

This Saturday, MAY 26, we meet at **Lyon Arboretum at Noon.**

Our hospitality hosts are

Karen (drinks, chips and dip)

& Betty (cookies).

## REPORT OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 28, 2012

Lyon Arboretum

ATTENDING: Susan Andrade (presiding), Marie Ferdun, Raleigh Ferdun, Marie Grininger, Annetta Kinnicutt, Tessie Labra, Terese Leber, Sally Mist, Troy Oden, Stan Schab, Helen Sneider, Sid Sneider, Tom Stuart, Lynette Wageman, Randy Wong, and Val Wong. GUESTS: Leann Matsuda, Nadine, Edwin

CONVENED: 12:15; Adjourned: 2:45

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mary Louise is continuing to recover well from her broken pelvis. She is now walking, and wants to let members know that she has a lot of concrete bricks and blocks that can be used in landscaping and bromeliad display. Members who would like to pick up the blocks should contact her.

Tom reported that he had filed the requisite notice so that the HBS, a 501(c)(3) organization with less than \$25,000 a year in revenue, remains in good standing with the IRS.

Susan announced that the Garden Club of Honolulu will have its show at the newly renamed Honolulu Museum of Art from May 11–13, and that Lyon Arboretum's Spring Sale is set for May 12.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Tessie reported that our current balance is \$1,595.27, which includes recent expenditures of \$26.04 on paper goods, and contributions of \$250 to Lyon Arboretum, which include honoraria for use of the meeting room and for housing the HBS library. The Society moved to

**contribute \$150 to the Bromeliad Society International.**

In addition to the \$35 membership fee, the donation includes \$40 for program enhancement, \$40 for educational outreach, and \$35 to support research activities.

MEMBERSHIP: Raleigh reminded members to contact him if they would like an up-do-date membership list.

PROGRAMS: The planned tour of the succulent gardens at Kapi'olani Community College has tentatively been scheduled for June.

HOSPITALITY: Our hosts for May are Karen Rohter for drinks and chips & dip, and Betty Chang for cookies.

LIBRARY: Lynette displayed copies of *Bromeliads: A Cultural Manual*, published by the Bromeliad Society International. New HBS members receive a free copy, but we have some available for purchase as well, for \$3.50. Lynette also displayed *Blooming Bromeliads* by the late Ulrich Baensch, whose widow still lives in Kāne'ohe. Now out of print, and only rarely—and expensively—available, the copy was destined for a spirited auction. Lynette reminded members that as a chapter affiliate, HBS receives the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society International*. Issues are kept in the HBS library at the arboretum. From Mary Louise and others, Lynette had acquired a box-full of duplicate journals, which were available for 10 cents each. She reminded members that the Friends of the Library sale, where it is often possible to find good books on gardening, will be held at McKinley High School from June 23 to July 1.

OLD BUSINESS: Lynette reported that we have not yet heard from the Bromeliad Society International about hosting their 2014 international conference. As an affiliate, we can display at this year's event in Orlando. Even though we will not be participating as an organization, Troy is planning to attend.

AUCTION: Tessie won the drawing for the pot given to HBS by the Windward Orchid Society for our display at the WOS Spring Show.

### TIPS FOR HEALTHY BROMELIADS

(from page 1) just held in place. Also pay attention to your plants clumping together, as that can lead to lack of circulation and rot, or at least misshapen plants.

The role of sun and fertilizer in the health of bromeliads varies with the species: thornier varieties, such as *Aechmea* and *Portea*, benefit from more sun; softer, green-leaved species like *Guzmania* need shade. And when moving plants around between landscape, lanai, and house, it is important to acclimate the plants to increased sunlight. Fertilizer does help keep plants healthy, but most growers are careful not to overfeed their plants. Tom favors an application of 13/13/13 fertilizer when planting, sometimes adding a little dolomite, but for maintenance he relies on a monthly spraying with a product like Miracle Grow.

Finally, Tom reminded us of the phrase that all bromeliad growers need to remember when confronted by a sick or poor looking plant: "my neighbor gave it to me."

## ECHOES OF RAINBOWS

The Garden Club of Honolulu hosted Echoes of Rainbows at the Honolulu Museum of Art on May 11–13. Held once every three years, the event featured spectacular displays of plants, horticulture, photography, and jewelry made from plant materials. Many of the winning entries featured beautifully grown and displayed bromeliads. Among the lessons HBS visitors took from the show—besides what to look forward to if we are selected to host the BSI 2014 conference—are the importance of matching the right display to the right plant, and the need to keep good cultivation records, as the judges marked down many stunning plants for not having complete “key cards” detailing their origins and histories.



LEFT: HBS'ers Annetta, Terese, and Val getting ideas for the Fall Craft Fairs.

BELOW: Allison Holland's *Vriesea fenestralis* won the Elizabeth Platt Corning Medal.



One category was for lanai garden displays on a 3' X 3' X 4" high raised platform—Troy's tree would have been right at home.

LEFT AND MIDDLE: full-length view and detail of Margie Kielsing and Beverly Grimmer's installation.



Stephanie Hee received a blue ribbon in Class 11: Hue for her Neoregelia 'Cookie,' which she displayed in a striking blue pot.

## HBS MEMBERS: PAST AND PRESENT — *Val & Randy Wong*

Val Wong was born in Honolulu and raised in 'Āina Haina. She has spent summers in Taiwan and Korea, and resided in Japan for a year after high school and another year while in graduate school. She was the East-Asian Outreach Coordinator at the University of Hawai'i for several years, before transferring to the East-West Center, where she worked as a Program Officer and is currently the Visa Officer working with international students, scholars, and staff. Val joined HBS a few years ago after she had purchased a number of bromeliads and needed to find out how to take care of them properly. She and her husband Randy—also a dedicated Arboretum volunteer—are active members and have hosted an HBS meeting at their Pauoa home, where their limited collection of bromeliads surrounds a koi pond fed by a natural fresh-water spring (which also enables them to grow delicious watercress). Thanks to much appreciated advice from fellow HBS members, their bromeliads are doing well and add decorative touches to both home and garden.



## *Helen & Gene Gurga*



Helen and Gene Gurga, who joined HBS in 1977, moved to Kahalu'u from that hotbed of bromeliad cultivation, Brooklyn, New York (where they had actually owned a few Bromeliads). Gene, a goldsmith by trade, and Helen, a legal secretary, got their first Bromeliads here from the old Star Garden Shop: an *Aechmea fulgens* and an *Aechmea fasciata*, but despite pampering and close care, the plants, according to Helen, “didn't do a thing”—until they were abandoned in the back yard, where they started to color, bloom, and thrive. The Gurgas were hooked, and went on to specialize in *Neoregelia*, and to become active members of the HBS, serving variously on the Board of Directors, as HBS Secretary, and as chair of the Christmas Committee.

## Name This Plant

The HBS program theme for this year is Identification—so here's a stumper for all of us to try.

This plant was honored with an award at the recent Garden Club of Honolulu show for plants that have been owned and grown by an exhibitor for at least fifteen years; this one had been growing for twenty.

It really is a Bromeliad—and it's name is not “Curly.”

The answer will be printed in the next newsletter, along with the names of all who correctly identified this rare beauty.

