

Pup Talk

June 2022

THE SADDLEBACK VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY

Volume 29, Number 6

We Will Meet: Thursday, June 2, 2022, 7:00 PM

**At the Norman Murray Community & Senior Center
24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, CA**

May's meeting will feature Andy Siekkinen

Andy will update us on the genus *Hechtia*. Many new species have been recently described and we will get to see some plant details that require lab equipment. Seeing these types of details will hopefully give a better appreciation of the plants we grow and love. Context will be given with other succulent terrestrial bromeliads.

Andy Siekkinen is an independent botanist in San Diego studying the genus *Hechtia* for the past decade. With a recent publication of 7 new species with collaborators, he has been involved with the description of 12 species of *Hechtia* with many more on the way. He is also building up a bromeliad nursery and loves to share information and stories about these plants.



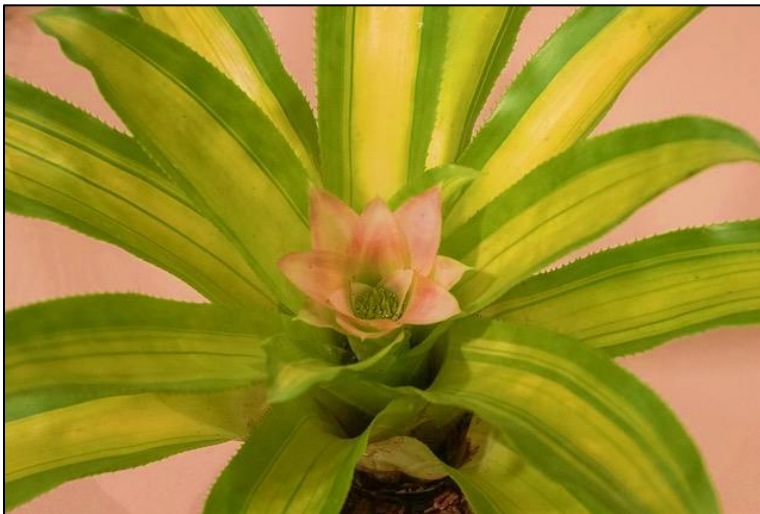
In addition to speaking, he will also bring plants to sell and some for the raffle table. Plan on an interesting and fun evening!

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DIRECTIONS: Meetings are the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Norman Murray Community and Senior Center, 24932 Veterans Way in Mission Viejo. **Visitors Welcome!**

Where is that? Off the I-5 take the La Paz exit. Go east on La Paz past Marguerite Parkway to Veterans' Way. Turn left. The parking lot is at the road's end. We are in the Sycamore B Room.

Our May Show and Tell Featured:

Cristy Brenner	Aechmea kertesziae Billbergia 'Flamenco' B. 'Titan' xNeomea 'Strawberry' Nidularium innocentii
Nada Chatwell	Tillandsia fasciculata (Photo Top Right)
Don DeBok	Tillandsia stricta (Photo Mid Right) T. hybrid
Mary Kermani	Tillandsia ionanthes (Photo Bottom) T. arrangement (mixed) (Photo Page 4 right)
Lailene Leong	Tillandsia tectorum (Photo Page 2)
Michael McGuire	Aechmea nudicaulis (Photo Page 4 left) Tillandsia eltoniana (Photo Page 7)
Carolyn Parsons	Canistrum 'Miranda' (Photo Left)
Jeff Sorensen	Neoregelia 'Wild Rabbit' Easter cactus



Location for your plants and best light. Often this comes down to personal preference. Low light situations are good for Guzmanias, some Nidulariums and Pitcairnias, but not all of these prefer low light so observe your plants characteristics over time. If the leaves become uncharacteristically long, strap like, then maybe your plant is in too low a light situation. Moving it to a brighter location may remedy the issue. This is referred to as cultural conditions. Should I cut the long strap-like leaves? No, the new growth will improve the plants cultural appearance allowing the strap-like leaves to be removed at a later date if one desires to. Shape and color preference of a plant is up to the individual and governed by the amount of light it receives. *Neoregelia kautskyi* grown in bright light turns a brilliant golden yellow, grown in a lower amount of light, one can almost maintain the shape of the plant while the foliage turns to a more apple green color. Either way it is still a spectacular plant and it's your choice. *xNeophytum 'Galactic Warrior'* (now *xSincoregelia 'Galactic Warrior'*) grown in bright light turns red all over hiding much of its 'perfect white margins', back the light off a touch, tone the red down and gain the contrast of the white margins with the red center is my preference. Source: Show, Tell, and Ask, Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group NSW Newsletter, November, 2021



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More Show and Tell Photos:



To clump or not to clump is personal preference, size and variety of plant being grown. Billbergias are definitely more attractive as multiples, being of upright tubular growth habit many individuals will fill a single pot and save space. Many of the smaller growing plants like *Vriesea carinata*, *Vr. delicatula* (photo right), *Vr. flammea*, and others are attractive grown as clumps.



Quesnelia marmorata and its related cultivars, *Aechmea nudicaulis* (Photo Left) and of course the mini Neoregelias all make good clumping plants. To maintain a good clump, old mother plants are best removed to allow good air circulation through the clump to minimize rot. If you're not a clumper and prefer a single specimen plant that's fine, but many single plants use more space. Neoregelias make nice single stand-alone show-stoppers and very colorful clumps in the garden. *Aechmea blanchetiana* is very spectacular when over a dozen spikes appear at once in a mass planting. It's your choice.

Source: Show, Tell, and Ask, Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group NSW *Newsletter*, November, 2021

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Did you know many bromeliad genera have been named to honor famous botanists or horticulturists?

Such as:

Billbergia: Gustave Johannes Billberg, a Swedish botanist;

Cottendorfia: Baron Cotta von Cottendorf, German botanist

Fosterella: Mulford B Foster, United States' bromeliad explorer and horticulturist

Guzmania: A. Guzman, Spanish naturalist

Lymania: Lyman B Smith, United States' bromeliad taxonomist

Neoglaziovia: A. Glasiou, collector of Brazilian bromeliads

Neoregelia: Edouard von Regel, director of the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) Botanic Gardens in Russia

Tillandsia: Elias Tillands, Finnish botanist

Vriesea: Dr. de Vriese, Dutch botanist

Wittrockia: V. Bracher Wittrock, Swedish botanist

The South American Mapuche Indians of Chile language give us Puya (meaning 'point') while Ananas comes from the Guarani tribe of Brazil.

Names of genera derived from classical Latin or Greek include:

Nidularium - nestbearer, referring to the cluster of "leaves" around the flowers.

Canistrum - little basket, referring to the inflorescence in a basket of bracts.

Aechmea - spike or spear, referring to the long spines on the sepals of *Ae. paniculata*, the first species described in the genus.

Source: B. Reilly <http://www.bromeliad.org.au/news/BR01.htm>

The Oldest Brom? - Hechtia Argentea

(sources – Barcay, G. JBSNZ Vol 58 No7, 2018; Kew Gardens Website; Ency of Bromeliads, Botanical Artists Guild of Southern California blog. Found in the *Bromeletter*, the Official Journal of the Bromeliad Society of Australia, Sept./Oct. 2019)

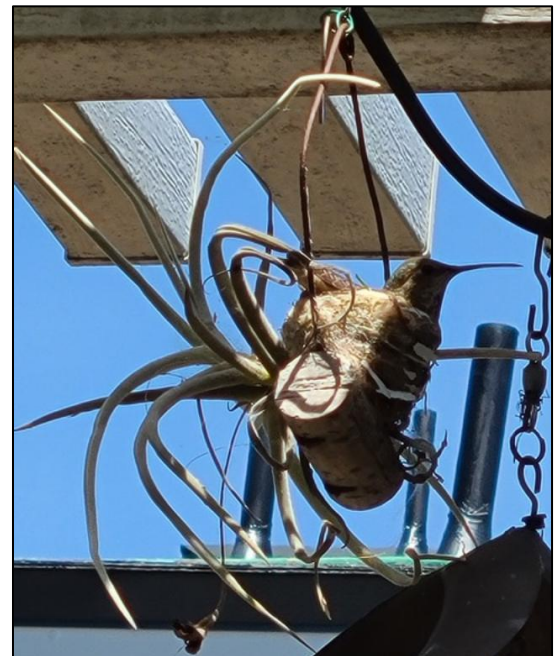
At the 2018 BSI World Conference, a large *Hechtia argentea* was displayed along with a pencil sketch of it and the following note....”this male *Hechtia argentea* was found in 2012, floating down the river in the bottom of a steep canyon in Mexico. It had fallen from a cliff this plant has a trunk which indicates great age.... A *Hechtia argentea* at Kew Gardens... has been in their collection since before 1860, and it still has no trunk, so how old would you think this plant is?” Hechtia expert A. Siekkinen guessed 250 to 500 years.



(Photo in nature by our speaker)

Hechtia argentea was discovered in a Mexican canyon in 1860, but for a long time remained unknown from wild populations and known only from the cultivated plants at Kew Gardens. The Kew Gardens specimen was exhibited in Brussels in 1864, where it was awarded ‘Best in the Show’. Today you can find it in Kew’s Tropical Zone 3 Desert Conservatory. Recently thousands of plants have been found growing in a single canyon system in the Barranca de Tolimán, in southwestern Hidalgo, Mexico.

Hechtia is a lateral blooming species, meaning its central meristem can grow indefinitely and not die after flowering like most other bromeliads.



Hummingbird nesting on a wine cork that houses a *Tillandsia crocata* pictured at right. Thanks Patty Dunn.

Growing Bromeliads By The Bromeliad Society of Australia

A Book Review for the June 2022 edition of the SVBS Pup Talk by Chris Bruce.

This second edition book issued in 2000 is a very easily read volume that carefully describes the Bromeliad family of plants. The writers begin with a description of the three sub-families of Bromeliads. Pitcairnioideae has the least popular genera among hobbyists and collectors. Tillandsioideae is the next subfamily and has about half of the known bromeliads. Three genera are usually the focus of attention: Guzmania, Tillandsia, and Vriesea.

Bromelioideae, the third sub-family of bromeliads, has twenty-eight genera and over 670 species. Hobbyists are usually focused on Aechmea, Billbergia, Cryptanthus, Neoregelia, Nidularium, and Quesnelia. (Note that there has been some recent further splitting of these three sub-families but this classic information is very handy.)

A chapter on the considerations for indoor versus outdoor cultivation includes information on greenhouses, and shade houses. As each genus is described, the cultural requirements are clearly specified. Guidance is provided for planting, care, and offset harvesting. A list of the many existing species and hybrids is presented. In some instances, color photos are included. These photos have been carefully chosen and are very helpful in identifying specific plants.

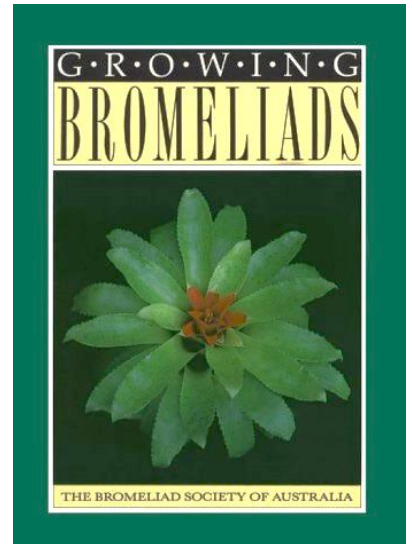
Soon after undertaking the cultivation of these fascinating plants, propagation becomes a matter of importance for most hobbyists. When rewarded with offsets, the grower will want to know what to do with this bounty. Some hobbyists will utilize seed propagation to increase the size of their collection. Clear directions provide the guidelines for such endeavors.

A chapter on biology is written at a level that the hobbyist can understand. The information falls within the boundaries of what is needed to know.

A chapter on variegation is very well written. It clearly explains the different patterns of variegation that are found in the plants. This is especially helpful to know when identifying new hybrids.

Although fortunately these amazing plants seldom fall prey to pests and diseases, there is a chapter that is especially clear about the identification of pests and the treatment that can restore the plants to health.

Though written in Australia, the material in this book is completely useful to us in Southern California. This book is a very good choice for newcomers to bromeliads. Look for it in our library at the next meeting.



Whipkey's Word "Offset"

(From the March 2022 Houston Bromeliad Society Newsletter.)

As my father was fond of saying, "Spring has sprung. It's gardening time!" Spring is the time to propagate, repot, fertilize, and rearrange your plants. Let's make offset our word of the month.

According to Wikipedia, and it is never incorrect, an offset (aka pup) is defined as: a small, virtually complete daughter plant that has been naturally and asexually produced on the mother plant.

In orchid talk an offset is sometimes called a keiki, which is the Hawaiian word for child. Actually, the offset's relationship to the original plant is closer than that of a mother and child; it is a clone. The offset is genetically an identical twin of the mother plant. Depending on the plant, the average person can clone a plant by potting and growing an offset, digging up and replanting a sucker, or taking a cutting. Unless you have lots of money and can afford to build a large lab, let's not even consider reproducing your plant by meristeming.

Just think of it, all of the Red Delicious apple trees that exist are exact copies of the single plant discovered in 1875 on Jesse Hiatt's farm in Peru, Iowa. One hundred and forty-seven years later it is still going strong. I wonder how many *Cryptanthus* 'Frostbite' plants will still be around in 2169.

Now accidents do happen in asexual reproduction. Sometimes the new plant differs slightly from the mother. In this case the new plant is called a sport. But most of the time, an offset is a carbon copy of the mother plant. This is the only way that the average grower can get a new bromeliad that looks just like the original if the original plant is a hybrid or sport. If you plant seeds from a hybrid, you never know how the seedlings are going to look. They can look like the mother, the father, or totally like any plant you have ever seen.

Our last frost in the Houston area usually occurs in late March or early April. This is the time when most plants wake up and start growing after a long winter's rest. The plant starts putting out new roots, the stems and leaves resume rapid growth, and if you are lucky, it starts producing offsets.

This is the time to start moving your plants into their summer home. Make the move gradually. Dennis Cathcart once told me to move a plant to a place where it receives 20% more light and leave it there for a month. If you want it to have more light, repeat the process. After each move to brighter light, give the plant a month or so to get used to the new light intensity. This is the time when your plants might appreciate a little more fertilizer and water than they have been getting.

Repot your plants if they have outgrown their current home. Knock off some of the old soil and repot in a slightly larger pot using fresh potting medium and a little bit of fertilizer. If the plant has offshoots that are about 1/3 to 1/2 as large as the mother you can carefully remove them and put them in their own pot. Watch your newly potted plants carefully. Make sure that they don't dry out. Don't increase the light until they have a chance to resume growth.

(Photo by Ed Voelker)

Tillandsia
(xiphioides x capitata).
John Arden hybrid



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Our June Speaker, Andy Siekkinen in his Hechtia filled greenhouse.

We next meet Thursday, June 2 at 7:00PM.

Festivities include a:

- * **Program** on Hechtia with expert and traveler Andy Siekkinen;
- * **Plant raffle** (Bring a show & tell plant to receive a free raffle ticket!);
- * **Show & tell** with lots of our plants to see and enjoy;
- * **Lending library** for books you need to learn and enjoy;
- * **Friendship**; and **Information**.

Pup Talk is a publication of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society. Any opinion expressed herein is not necessarily that of the Society. Plant photos are courtesy of the FCBS Photo Index and Bromeliad Society of Australia. Deadline is mid-month before month of publication. When credit is given, nonprofit publications may reprint from us.

BSI Affiliate Page:

<http://www.bsi.org/webpages/saddleback.html>



The Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society is an educational organization promoting the study and cultivation of bromeliads and fellowship among those who do. We are an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International.