



Pup Talk

March 2026

THE SADDLEBACK VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY

Volume 33, Number 3

We Will Meet: Thursday, March 5, 2026, 7:00 pm.

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

Featured for March: “Northern Ecuador Bromeliad Habitats”

This month one of our favorite speakers, Scott Sandel from San Diego, will present one of his many bromeliad adventures. He sent the following presentation synopsis: “In January 2024, Scott and husband Jim spent two weeks in Ecuador. It was only the second time they visited the small bio-diverse country. Half of the trip was in a mid to lower cloud forest, and the second half was in the lowlands at a property on the famous Napo River. The cloud forest is never a disappointing location to visit for bromeliad and orchid enthusiasts, as the range of bromeliad diversity is astounding, and there are plants seen there that are not in cultivation. For the second part of the trip, Scott and Jim traveled down the Napo River and into an estuary with giant river otters in the lagoon and narrow openings in the wetland to investigate by canoe protected areas surrounded by tall trees and semi-submerged mats of vegetation.”

(See page two for Scott’s bio.)

Please join us for this informative meeting and enjoy all of our other bromeliad activities such as show and tell, raffle, silent auction of unusual plants, and great refreshments.



Aechmea hoppii

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 room Sycamore B.



(Continued from page 1). “Brief Bio: Scott's father's family maintained vegetable and ornamental gardens with subtropicals and azaleas under a canopy of Gulf Coast oaks and pines, which sparked his passion in horticulture. In the middle of the 1970s, when Scott was about 11 or 12, he and his father Joe began going to Houston Bromeliad Society meetings. After graduating from Texas A&M with a degree in landscape architecture, Scott and Jim relocated to San Diego in 1985. Prior to accepting his current role as a parks planner with the City Planning Department in San Diego, Scott had a landscape architecture company in the city. Scott and Jim are driven to travel - having visited South American countries, all of the Central American countries, and most of the Mexican states - all with bromeliads and a range of thought-provoking archaeology sites. Africa, particularly southern Africa, is their most favored travel destination. Scott grows big Alcantareas and foliage Vrieseas alongside other Bromeliaceae. Their small garden is about 2 miles from San Diego Bay at 270' in elevation and doesn't experience frost. Alcantareas and most Neoregelias are grown in open filtered-sun areas, and the foliage Vrieseas thrive under 50% shade cloth.”

Upcoming Events (mark your calendars):



March 1, 2026 — South Bay Bromeliad Associates meeting in Palos Verdes.

March 5 — Our meeting with presentation on Northern Ecuador.

April 12 — UC Master Gardeners of Orange county Expo and Plant Giveaway & Sale. (See page 6)

April 14-18, 2026 — World Bromeliad Conference, Costa Mesa. Please see pg. 8 for printable fliers or go to BromSale.com.

March Refreshment Signups: Zora Lee, Don & Judy DeBok, Marilyn & George Long, Zulema Storf, and Jody Matossian. Thank you.



Society news:

The World Bromeliad Conference (WBC) is rapidly approaching. We have a wonderful team working on this monumental project. Our president, Chris Bruce, has amazing organizational skills and there are so many pieces to this giant puzzle. Our committee is holding Zoom meetings twice a month and we also meet with the BSI officers via Zoom at least once each month. Thank you to everyone who is working so hard to make our conference a great success. If you would like to help at the conference, we will eventually use an online signup system: volunteersignup.org. Please watch for more information in John's online messages. You do not have to pay the conference registration to volunteer, but you will not be able to attend all of the conference activities (see below).

Have you registered for the conference? If you haven't, you can attend the show and sale, but you **will not** be able to attend the opening session and buffet dinner, two days of educational seminars, bus tours to nurseries, the rare plant auction (see page 5), or the banquet and the great keynote speaker from New Zealand. Do you really want to miss all of this? Remember, the last WBC in our area was in 1984—and there may never be another one!

On a sadder note, we have lost another very special longtime member. We were shocked to learn that Barbara Stewart had passed away (see page 6).

February Show and Tell

Cristy Brenner

Aechmea weilbachii forma *pendula*

Neoregelia macwilliamsii #1

Ursulaea macvaughii (see page 7)

Ursulaea tuitensis #4

Chris Bruce

Guzmania sanguinea variegated #2

Neoregelia 'Archie'

Neoregelia 'Harpo' #6

Tillandsias chandelier (assorted) #5

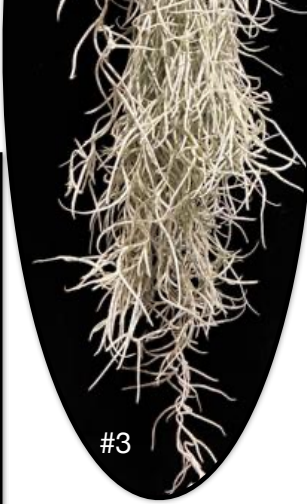
Nada Chatwell

Tillandsia usneoides "Glass Jellyfish" #3

Mike Cowdrey

Pitcairnia 'Vampire'

Tillandsia jalisco-monticola #7



February Show and Tell, continued

Don DeBok

Aechmea caudata 'Blotches' #8

Vriesea 'Christiane' #11

Mary Kermani

Tillandsia latifolia #9

Michael McGuire

Billbergia 'Foster's Striate' #10

Jeff Sorensen

Aechmea caudata seedlings

Quesnelia testudo #12

Kerry Wakely

Tillandsia recurvifolia

v. subsecundifolia #13



All Show and Tell
photos by Hank Bruce

Why you do not want to miss the WBC rare plant auction: I don't know which bromeliad hybrids and species will be available for the live and silent auctions on Friday night. I do know that there will be many exotic bromeliads that you have never seen before and the one shown here will be available because I will be donating one. I am very fortunate to have visited John Arden's garden on a SVBS garden tour in 2012. John was a gifted hybridizer, who created many unusual and exceptional new bromeliads. Upon his passing in 2014, his collection was supposed to go to the San Diego Botanical Garden, but instead it was scattered in many different directions. I don't know how many of his hybrids survived and I believe that the one shown below is fairly rare.

This John Arden hybrid is a bigeneric. It is *xVrieslandsia* 'Arden's Comet', which is a cross between the smaller *Vriesea simplex* (shown at right) and the giant *Tillandsia australis* (shown at left). The single, five-foot long pendulous inflorescence with Nancy Groves in John Arden's greenhouse in 2012, (lower right) produced over one hundred yellow flowers in maroon bracts. It was an amazing sight to see!



Several years ago, I gave one of my offsets of 'Arden's Comet' to Patti Dunn. She recently sent me the photo of her now mature plant that is currently spiking (lower left). She is hoping that it will be blooming for the conference. It takes a long time to produce all of those flowers, but we will keep our hopes up that it will be ready for the conference in all of its glory. Don't forget that you cannot attend the silent auction unless you are registered for the conference.





It is with great sadness that we must report the passing of long-time member Barbara Stewart. Over a year ago, she moved to Nevada to be near her family, so we were unaware that she was ill. Barbara was not an official society officer, but she attended almost every meeting and often offered her house for our board meetings. She founded the idea of having a raffle to reward members who wore their badges to meetings, and each month, she donated several plants from her garden for the raffle. As the mother of five children and with a multitude of grandchildren, she loved the Christmas season. Every year she took charge of elaborately decorating our tables and chairs for our Holiday Party. We are so sad that she cannot ever spend more time with her bromeliad friends and our sincere sympathy goes to her family.



Special Garden Event: The weekend before our WBC event there will be an Expo and Plant Giveaway and Sale at the Norman Murray Center. We will have a booth there and it is the perfect opportunity to advertise and distribute our conference fliers.

UC Master Gardeners of Orange County Expo and Plant Giveaway & Sale

Come to the first annual Master Gardeners of Orange County Expo on Saturday April 12 at the Mission Viejo Norman Murray Center.

The Expo will have free/sale plants, gardening talks, and information tables on a huge number of gardening topics. This will be a fun, informative, and inspirational event that will kick your garden into high gear.

Plant Giveaway & Sale

There will be over 1,500 beautiful plants! Come early for best selection.

- Tomatoes, peppers, herbs, veggies, succulents, houseplants, milkweed, natives, and flowers.
- 1 FREE plant for each family
 - 500 free plant tickets will be available, first come-first serve, while supply lasts
 - Choose from any of the \$2 plants- tomatoes, peppers, herbs, veggies, succulents, flowers (4-inch pots)
- Additional plants for sale at \$2 - \$25 each
- Cash ONLY sales, no bills larger than \$25

April 12
9 am - 1 pm

Norman P. Murray Community & Senior Center
24932 Veterans Way
949-470-3062

UC Master Gardeners of Orange County Expo and Plant Giveaway/Sale

Gardening Talks: Enjoy fun and informative talks from great speakers
9:30 am - 1:00 pm

- 9:30 - 10:00: Terrific Tomatoes, Culinary Herbs
- 10:15 - 10:45: Fire Safe Landscaping, Warm Season Veggies
- 11:00 - 11:30: 10 Easy California Natives, House Made Pickles Demonstration
- 11:45 - 12:15: Terrific Tomatoes, Gardening Mini "Bootcamp"
- 12:30 - 1:00: Mexican Paletas Frozen Treat Demonstration, Fire safe landscaping

Garden Expo - all the gardening info you need for success

- Advice on growing tomatoes, peppers, veggies, herbs, plumeria, and more
- Ask-a-Master-Gardener - get answers to your tough gardening problems
- Succulents- centerpiece demo, free make-and-take succulent-egg creation
- California natives, including milkweed
- Emerging tree pests - learn about new invasive pest threats to trees
- Hydroponic vegetables- create a make-and-take lettuce (\$7 cash)
- Pest Management - take care of those pesky mosquitoes and ants
- Kids/adults coloring fun
- Mission Viejo Library seed library - learn about the free seed program
- Many more: bees and pollinators, composting, worms, Master Food Preservers

Norman P. Murray Community & Senior Center
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949-470-3062

Spotlight on the genus *Ursulaea*:



The entire genus of *Ursulaea* only contains two species: *Ursulaea macvaughii* and *Ursulaea tuitensis*. They were formerly classified as *Aechmeas* before becoming a separate genus named after Ursula Baensch, co-author of *Blooming Bromeliads* (check this book out of our library for some amazing bromeliad information and “eye candy”).

Both of these species are native to the state of Jalisco, Mexico. *U. macvaughii* is quite large (about three feet tall) and is usually epiphytic. The smaller, and more succulent, *U. tuitensis* is saxicolous (growing on rocks). Both of these species may be used as landscape plants. However, I prefer to grow *U. macvaughii* in a pot so that the water in the tank can be easily dumped. If stagnant water remains in the tank it can rot the meristem, which is the central growing area of the plant. The meristem produces new leaves in the center and eventually the inflorescence, so if it dies, you will not have a bloom and you will have to wait for the next generation of pups (offsets). This is why it has been seven years since I

have had a blooming *U. macvaughii*! The one blooming at right in December 2019, is the grandparent of the one that I brought to our February meeting.

U. tuitensis is a great landscape plant because it doesn't require much water since it is succulent. It is great because it will turn bright red in full sun, as shown below left in one of the rock gardens at Sherman Library and Gardens in Corona del Mar. The photo of my plant on page 3 just has a slight blush of color



because it only receives a little morning sun. *tuitensis* does not have a very exciting inflorescence and rarely blooms.



The inflorescence of *U. macvaughii* is spectacular. The photo at upper left was taken last October at Pam Koide-Hyatt's nursery, Bird Rock Tropicals, in Encinitas. The scurf on the stem and flowers (above) is a unique feature of this plant, resembling frost. This is a wonderful plant for any collection with its large inflorescence, pale pink bracts, “snow”-covered floral bracts, and blue flowers.

Below are two different versions of our flier for the WBC event. The first is for people who wish to register for the conference and attend all of the events. The second is for the general public who will only attend the bromeliad show and sale. Please duplicate these (especially the bottom one) to distribute to other garden clubs that you may attend or to friends and neighbors. We need lots of advertising!

BROMELIAD PLANT SHOW & SALE

Don't miss the first World Bromeliad Conference in the greater Los Angeles area since 1984!

When: April 15-18, 2026

Where: Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
3050 Bristol St. Costa Mesa, CA

What: Huge Bromeliad Sale (free, all-day hotel parking \$20)
Judged Bromeliad Show
Seminars by speakers from around the world*
Garden and nursery tours*
Rare plant auction*



*Requires conference registration at
BromSale.com



bromeliadsociety.org



BROMELIAD PLANT SHOW & SALE

Don't miss the first World Bromeliad Conference in the greater Los Angeles area since 1984!

When: April 17-18, 2026

Where: Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
3050 Bristol St. Costa Mesa, CA

What: Huge Bromeliad Sale & Judged Bromeliad Show



See a beautiful display of the best bromeliads in Southern California. The sale will include plants from nurseries in Florida and San Diego County. Choose from hundreds of different species and hybrids, most of which may be grown outdoors in Southern California. The show and sale are free and all-day hotel parking is \$20. For additional conference information and to learn about bromeliads go to BromSale.com:



bromeliadsociety.org



Pup Talk, March, 2026
Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society
1068 Santa Cruz Circle
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

FIRST CLASS PLEASE!

Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society

Pup Talk

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The Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society next meets Thursday, March 5, at 7:00 PM.

Festivities include a:

- * **Program:** “Northern Ecuador Bromeliad Habitats”;
- * **Plant raffle and silent auction** (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;
- * **Friendship; and Information.**

A big thank you goes to all who contributed information, writing, photos, and production of this newsletter including Cristy Brenner (Ed.), John Marzolino, Pete & Patti Dunn, Chris & Hank Bruce (our show and tell photographer), Jeff Sorensen, and Ed Voelker,

Pup Talk is a publication of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society. Any opinion expressed herein is not necessarily that of the Society. Send comments, inquiries, and articles to: cbrenner4@cox.net. Deadline is mid-month before month of publication. When credit is given, nonprofit publications may reprint from us.

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.

