# Pup Talk

## September 2022


***THE SADDLEBACK VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY***

**Volume 29, Number 9**


## Next Meeting: Thursday, September 1, 2022, 7:00 PM

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

**FEATURED THIS MONTH:** Robert Kopfstein will be our Sept. meeting speaker.

Jeff reports, "He will be speaking about terrestrial bromeliads, which include Dyckias, Ananas, Hechtia, and Bromelia, among other genera. Caring for these bromeliads generally involves some bloodletting due to their spiky defenses.

Hecthia lanata

"Robert Kopfstein is a retired college professor (Rio Hondo College 1970--79; Saddleback College 1980—2005.) He first encountered the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society at the Laguna Hills Mall where the club was doing a display/sale in 1982. After becoming a member, he subsequently became president, and studied to become a judge. Currently he is a master judge with the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) and he is the publications chairperson for the BSI. He also was one of the instructors for the judging school I attended.

"Having moved to Bonsall in north San Diego County in 1996, Robert joined the San Diego Brom Society where he was vice-president and president...twice. Since 1992 he has been a volunteer at the San Diego Botanic Garden. He now is president of the Palomar Cactus and Succulent Society.

"Inspired by Grace Barnes, a former member of the Saddleback Society, Robert's passion is for terrestrial bromeliads, the spinier the better."

**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 Juniper Room!**

# This Meeting Includes:

## Bromeliads and More Wonderful Bromeliads:

* **Show & Tell – A meeting highlight. Bring in your bloomers, show stoppers, interesting plants, questions, even disasters. Help all of us learn and enjoy while you get a free raffle ticket.**
* **Raffle Table – A chance to add to your collection; buy lots of tickets!**
* **Auction – We often have special plants for you to bid on, usually in a silent auction.**

## Refreshments

## Library & Information – Want to learn even more? Check out a book and read up! Or ask our bromeliad experts the questions that have been bugging you! We love to talk Bromeliads!

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## Getting Out and About:

9/1 – Robert on terrestrial bromeliads

10/7 – Our October Meeting

**Space** is an often-encountered problem for those of us in California. In addition to the common tiny yards, we face the fact that many bromeliads can be larger plants. Here is a space solution from San Francisco – a vertical garden!

# August's Show & Tell featured:

| | |
|---|---|
| Chris Bruce | Tillandsia purpurea (Middle Left) |
| Bruce Jeske | Billbergia 'Hallelujah' (Right) |
| Mary Kermani | Tillandsia straminea (Page 9)<br>T. stricta on cholla wood (Mid Right) |
| Lailene Leong | Tillandsia vernicosa (Bottom Right) |
| John Marzolino | Tillandsia x correalei (natural hybrid) (Bottom Left) |
| Carolyn Parsons | Aechmea tillandsioides |
| Jeff Sorensen | Tillandsia concolor 'Cuicatlan'<br>T. pedicellata |

## Tillandsia albida

## Neoregelia 'Kings Ransom'

cv. of 'Foster's Red' X 'Royal Burgundy' - Unlikely parentage for this large heavy many-leafed rosette in deep green which does not bloom and exhibits a scarlet crest similar to 'Medallion'. - This may or may not be the commercially marketed plant of McCrory's, which was marketed after 1995?? (Source BCR)

# BROMELIAD TIPS

1. If you are mounting Tillandsias onto wooden or cork mounts, try to do this activity well before the plant flowers. This will improve the chances of the plant sending out roots onto the mount, as flowering plants often do not do this. Instead, flowering plants are probably using their energy to make flowers, then seeds and pups.
2. Some people prefer to make mounts, to which Tillandsias can be attached, from Leptospermum or Callistemon branches which have dried completely out. This can be achieved by removing all twigs and leaves from the branches and putting them on a shady place for 12 months to dry out. The process can be speeded up by leaving the twigs and leaves attached to the branch for 4 to 6 weeks. The leaves tend to draw all of the sap out of the branch, thus accelerating the drying out.
3. Consider re-potting bromeliads as soon as you obtain them. The mixture they may be growing in could stay either too "wet" or "dry" for your conditions. If it stays too wet or soggy, there is a real risk the plant could rot. If it stays too dry, you will either need to water it more frequently than your other plants, or its growth will be affected adversely.
4. If you can, delay removing pups until they are one-third to half the size of the parent plant. They will tend to grow more quickly, and be less likely to rot (or suffer from other death-inducing problems), than pups removed at a smaller size. The downside of this approach is that the plant may produce fewer pups than if they were removed at an earlier stage of their development.
5. Try to avoid removing pups until winter is definitely over. Pups taken off during this period will usually develop roots and commence active growth more quickly than pups removed during winter. Losses due to rot and other problems are also likely to be less.
6. Before applying liquid fertilizer to bromeliads, thoroughly wet the leaves with water. This helps to ensure the leaves are in the best condition to absorb the nutrients in the liquid fertilizer.
7. If you are trying to decide which potting mix is best for your conditions, it is worth remembering: A potting mixture which stays wet and soggy for any length of time will probably cause you more problems than one which tends to be on the dry side; and you may only experience some adverse weather conditions, e.g. a wet spell of a fort-night's duration in winter, once in several years. However, if your potting mixture isn't designed with these conditions in mind, you can suffer a lot of plant losses when they do occur.
8. If you are thinking of building a shade house, it may be best to build it during winter. Not only will you find it easier to build it then, rather than during hot weather, but the shade house will be ready to house the Spring "explosion" in bromeliad numbers due to the potting of pups, and acquisition of new plants.
9. There is no need to root pups in a special potting mixture. Just plant then in the regular potting mixture you use for that type of bromeliad.
10. Many bromeliad species like high levels of sunlight (but few can tolerate full sun in the middle of summer!) If a plant of a light-loving species has been grown in shady conditions, moving it straight into a well-lit position may result in sun damage, e.g. yellowing of the leaves, bleached "spots" on leaves. Give the plant time to adjust by moving it, over several months, into progressively more sunny locations.
11. Some bromeliads never seem to flower, even though they appear to be mature. Shifting them to a new location, where they receive more (or less) light, or changing the potting mixture in which they are grown, may induce flowering.

Bob Reilly. From the July/August 2002 *Bromeletter*, the official Journal of the Australian Bromeliad society.

# Dyckia

Dyckia is one genus in the family Bromeliaceae, subfamily Pitcairnioideae which also contains the genus Hechtia, Pitcairnia and Puya (Ed: now new bromeliad subfamilies). These are considered to be the most ancient of all bromeliads and are endemic to the arid and high-altitude regions of Brazil and the central part of South America. These are terrestrial bromeliads that do well in pots and in landscape in warm, arid climates.

They are often confused with agaves due to their barbed rosettes and drought tolerance. Most bromeliads are not drought tolerant, but dyckias along with puyas and deuterocohnias are quite well adapted to desert life and are often found in the cactus and succulent sections of botanical gardens. (Photo *Dyckia fosteriana*)

More facts about Dyckias:

- Dyckia is pronounced di-key'a.
- Dyckias typically have stiff, long, thin leaves and sharp spines around the leaf edges.
- Dyckia inflorescences rise between the leaves and not from the center like other bromeliads. Their inflorescences are unbranched.
- Dyckias range in sizes, from a few centimetres to a metre in width and come in shades of red, green, yellow and silver.
- The flowers come in a variety of brilliant orange and yellow colors, whereas hechtias nearly always have white flowers.
- Dyckias are NOT monocarpic, ie they keep on growing year after year and do not die off.
- Dyckias have a natural tendency to clump forming thick, large matts
- Dyckias are fertilised by hummingbirds and insects.
- Dyckias are one of the most cold-tolerant of all the bromeliads, tolerating temps down into the low 20s F.
- Dyckias are tough and require little maintenance.
- Dyckias can survive drought conditions but don't thrive in them. If they become too dry, their growth stops and they wilt, but they will recover when watered.
- A few dyckias are saxicolous (live attached to rocks), although most grow in the ground.

(Continued on page 7)

- Dykias have very extensive root systems and need to be grown in a larger pot than one for a similarly sized other bromeliad. The roots quickly poke through the drain holes so be prepared to repot to a larger size container before the size gets out of hand. It is best to choose pots that have some depth to them as shallow pots are not the best choice for dyckias.
- Although dyckias originate from arid parts of S. America, they benefit from generous watering schedules. The large number of spiny leaves may completely cover the surface of a pot which results in water running off and never finding its way to the potting mix. Also, the roots can completely fill the pot so the water passes through quickly with little or no retention. If either of these is a problem, consider placing the pot on a saucer and keeping water in the saucer. Allow the plant roots to dry out though to prevent brown leaf tips.

- Like any plant that grows quickly, dyckias respond well with good fertilization. These are one of the few bromeliads that don't benefit from foliar feeding. Use a slow-release type fertilizer in the potting mix instead.
- Dyckia pups don't separate easily, as they're very, very spiny, and is why you often see multiples in one pot. (Tip: Wear thick garden gloves when taking on a Dyckia.)

To learn more, see Robert's presentation at this month's meeting!

Source: The Official Journal of the Bromeliad Society of Australia, October 2020

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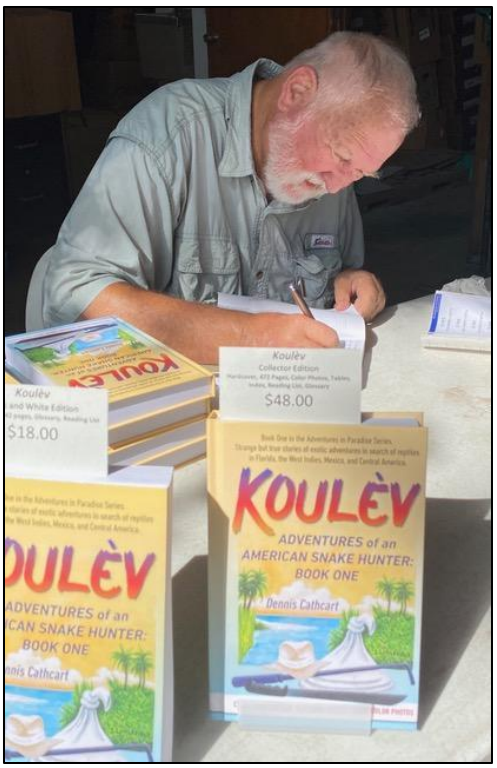
**Billbergia stenopetala**, a pendulous billbergia with a spectacular flower/bract stalk.




**Koulèv** By Dennis Cathcart, A Book Review for the Sept. 2022 issue of SVBS *PupTalk* by Chris Bruce.

Adventures of an American Snakehunter Book One is the subtitle for this new book in our library collection. Prior to this book, Dennis Cathcart was only known to Bromeliad afficionados as the founding owner of the famous Tropiflora Plant Nursery in Sarasota, Florida. But in this book, the author recounts his endless adventures that added to an expansive knowledge of snakes and snake behavior.

From an early age, he sensed adventure growing up in woody, rural Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The home of his youth backed up to 25 acres which he frequently explored. That is where his fascination with snakes began. By the age of six, he convinced his dad to build a cage for his first Red Ratsnake. His knowledge of snakes seemed to grow faster than school earned knowledge. By fourth grade he was allowed to keep a snake cage outside his classroom. Frequent absences were eventually accepted by his teachers since they recognized that he was learning while in the outdoors. Growing up in the 1960's, the world was a simpler place than today. The safe world around him allowed him to explore and discover the ocean, the forest and native fauna. Eventually he found other boys who shared his interests. Their friendship provided a sound base for an outdoor life.

By the age of fifteen, he was collecting snakes and riding with them on his bike to Wild Cargo, an animal store twelve miles from his home. There he was able to trade his snake finds for others he wanted to collect. His membership in the South Florida Herpetological Society introduced him to new relationships with scientists, professors and businessmen. Many of these people became lifelong friends and co-adventurers and advisors.

The school librarian was always on the lookout to find books that would inspire him. His friends were a wholesome group with no smoking, drug taking or alcohol use. They stayed out of trouble and enjoyed an idyllic youth hunting, bagging, trading and selling snakes. At first, snake collecting took him on trips throughout Florida to obtain specimens. Soon he was in business and shipping snakes far away to Japan. By 1965 he began taking trips to Bimini, Mexico, Haiti, the Bahamas. and Costa Rica. He never seemed to refuse an opportunity to join the next adventure. He was saved from disaster and death many times, including being left on an uninhabited island with no food or water. His basic intelligence and life experiences gave him the common sense to solve ongoing challenges.

The author only mentions Bromeliads and orchids in passing descriptions of snake habitats. By the end of the book, the reader does not understand how he changes his focus and becomes a plant expert.
This memory-filled recollection of a life from childhood to young adulthood describes a very unique individual.

Koulèv, the Haitian word for snake, provides a fast-paced, exciting read. It is perfect for a late summer's day. And the reader is left with a thirst for Book Two.

(Photo by Cristy of Dennis signing his book at the recent convention.)

# 2022 Society Officers/ Committee Heads

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|---|---|
| President: | Cristy Brenner |
| Vice President/Programs: | Jeff Sorensen |
| Secretary: | Carolyn Parsons |
| Treasurer: | Mary Kermani |
| Fundraising: | Yvonne Wilson |
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| | Michael McGuire |
| Publicity: | Kathy Jones |
| Pup Talk Team: | Pete and Patti Dunn |
| | John Marzolino |
| | Joe Wujcik |
| Refreshments: | Launi and Tony Cory |
| | Kathy Jones |
| Supplies: | Don DeBok |
| Webmaster and Zoom Coord. | John Marzolino Johnjmm1@gmail.com |

Life Mbrs: Cristy Brenner, Mary Kermani, Dan Kinnard, Norm Nakanishi, Jeff Sorensen, Ed Voelker, Joe Wujcik

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**Our Web Address:** http://www.bsi.org/webpages/saddleback.html

**Join Us** The Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society is an educational organization promoting the study and cultivation of Bromeliads. Meetings include an educational talk, a plant raffle table, a silent auction, refreshments, a lending library, supplies for purchase, shared information, and camaraderie. Dues are $15 per year (for a single person or a family) with email newsletter and $20 with USPS newsletter. Send name, address, email with dues to Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society (SVBS) c/o Nada Chatwell, 24891 Camberwell St., Laguna Hills CA 92653.

***Pup Talk, September, 2022***
**Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society**
**609 East Elder #233**
**Fallbrook, CA 92028**

# *FIRST CLASS PLEASE!*



**The Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society next meets Thursday, September 1, 2022, at 7:00 PM.**

**Festivities include a:**

- *** Program on terrestrial bromeliads by Robert Kopfstein;**
- *** 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;**
- *** Goodies, Friendship, and Information.**

**A big thank you goes to all who contributed information, writing, and production of this newsletter including Cristy Brenner, Chris and Hank Bruce, Pete and Patti Dunn, John Marzolino, and Jeff Sorenson.**

**Pup Talk is a publication of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society. Any opinion expressed herein is not necessarily that of the Society. Send comments, enquiries, and articles to: Joe Wujcik (760) 451-9146 or email joewujcik@sbcglobal.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.**