



Newsletter of the

Hawai'i Bromeliad Society

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

JUNE 2017

THORNY BROMELIADS TO STAR AT JUNE MEETING

The “stars” of our June meeting will be those prickly bromeliad genera *Aechmea*, *Cryptanthus*, and *Dyckia*—and of course, our education specialist Lynette Wageman, who will lead the program on these varieties.

We all know *Aechmea*, a large genus with over two hundred species and four hundred hybrids, known for long-lasting flowers, showy bracts, and sharp thorns along the leaf edges and tips—in fact, the name comes from the Greek for “point of a spear.”

Cryptanthus, the “earth star” bromeliads, are recognizable by their low-spreading, nearly flat rosettes, and crinkly, cactus-like, tooth-edged leaves, featuring elaborate banding patterns and color variations.

Dyckia, like *Cryptanthus*, do not have a central water reservoir, *Dyckia* too are known for their cactus-like, sharp, thorny leaves, which are usually a grayish to silvery white in color, and for an inflorescence that grows out from the leaves of the plant, and not its center.

Please bring in your own samples, and questions, as we learn more about these intriguing varieties.



TOP LEFT: *Dyckia fosteriana*, photo by Stan Shebs, University of California Botanical Garden. TOP RIGHT: *Cryptanthus zonatus*, photo by Mokkie. BOTTOM: *Aechmea blanchetiana*, Lyon Arboretum bromeliad garden, photo by Terese Leber.

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JUNE MEETING

This Saturday, June 24,
we meet at **Lyon Arboretum**
at **12:30.**

Our hospitality hosts are
Paulette and Ed.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF MAY 27, 2017

Lyon Arboretum

PRESIDING: John Ishihara. Fourteen members in attendance.

John welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked Larry and Tessie for the food and drinks.

TREASURER: Dolores reported that our balance is \$11,181.64, including \$323 from the May auction and member plant sale.

HOSPITALITY: Our hospitality hosts for June are Paulette (snacks) and Ed (drinks).

PROGRAMS: The June program will feature a presentation by Lynette Wageman on *Aechmea*, *Cryptanthus*, and *Dyckia*. For our July meeting, members are asked to bring in their bromeliad “oddities”—strange, unusual, or extraordinary plants—and to explore the impact of environments on bromeliads, specimens of the same species that have been grown in sun and shade. Not to be missed: in August, HBS will meet at Val and Randy’s home.

2017 HOLIDAY PARTY: Members agreed to move our annual party from December to January. Susan agreed to look into possible dates and venues for the get-together.

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MEMBER PLANT SALE A SUCCESS FOR BARGAIN HUNTERS

The May meeting featured both an educational session—thank you, Lynette—and great plant bargains, as members offered their own plants for sale, and donated them to the auction. Thanks especially to Tessie, Karen, Ed, John, and Gail for offering up a great variety of plants, including some keiki of the Sharon Petersen cultivar *Neoregelia* ‘Aloha,’ and specimens of *Aechmea recurvata* grown by Dennis Heckart at his Hilo nursery.

NOT A BROMELIAD . . . BUT, WOW!

This past week Lyon Arboretum was host to the rare blooming of an *Amorphophallus titanum*, sometimes known as the Titan Arum or corpse flower (or Big Stinky!). An endangered species from Sumatra, this plant is known for having the largest unbranched inflorescence in the world—the one at Lyon was over five feet tall. The inflorescence, like those of some bromeliads, is also relatively short-lived; the plant could take three, four, five, or even more years to grow, but it blooms only for a few days. After the flower dies, a single leaf will grow from the underground corm (which can easily weigh one hundred pounds). Chemists (hopefully well paid) have analyzed the smell of the *Amorphophallus titanum* as resulting from, among other ingredients, dimethyl trisulfide (like Limburger cheese), trimethylamine (rotting fish), and isovaleric acid (sweaty socks), resulting in a “rotting corpse” or carcass odor, which is released as the plant opens up. The deep color of the inflorescence, and its temperature (about the same as the human body), combine to make it look like a piece of meat—all designed to attract the carrion-eating beetles and flies that pollinate the plant. The odor increases from early evening until the middle of the night, when the plant’s pollinators are most active.

Many thanks to Liz Huppmann, Lyon Arboretum greenhouse manager, for letting us know about this rare event, and for the photo.

