

TOPIC: "BROMELIADS FOR EVERYONE"

GUEST SPEAKER : STEVE FLOOD

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 28 AUGUST 2018 UNDER THE OLD WITTA SCHOOL

- Steve has been collecting and growing bromeliads for 20 years. Broms grow in desert, rainforest, sand dunes, trees and on rocks. Alcantarea species grows to 1m in diameter. Miniature pineapple genus plant bears fruit 1cm in length and when skinned to eat is the size of a pea and very sweet
- Many broms have beautiful flower clusters. Gazmanias are grown for flowers- others for foliage. Variegated 'Red Star' is shade loving. Neoregelias like v bright light – lose colour if too shady/ strong light not full sun. Post flowering mother plants die, up to 10 pups sprout
- Miniatures keep clumping up and don't need replacing. Dead insects, water, bird droppings etc fall into tanks and provide nutrients for the tank broms
- Not all broms have tanks and need regular watering e.g. Tillandsias are true epiphytes and catch dew moisture and mist – they will grow on a piece of wood. Others get nutrients from dust in the air. Weak liquid fertiliser can be used
- Propagation – from seed. In USA hummingbirds pollinate. Vriesea – night flowering pollinated by bats and moths. As there are no hummingbirds in Australia hand pollination can be employed. Some plants are receptive between 1am and 4am
- Don't propagate pups in winter – pups need to be 1/3 the size of the mother plant before separating. Potting mix - needs to be open and airy almost like cymbidium orchid mix – plus coir chips mixed with jumbo perlite and 6 month controlled release fertiliser. Important not to have too much nitrogen as plants can lose colour
- All plants respond well to organic tonics – SeaSol etc. Terrestrial broms grow in organic soil in rainforests. Orthophyllum broms grow in desert regions and on rock faces – tough
- Plant broms into 150ml deep mulch – do not dig hole into soil. Can leave them in pots and sink into mulch so it is easier to swap over spent plants. Don't plant variegated plants next to each other, intersperse with bold colour and green. Anthocyanin is sun block for plants
- Neoregelia Sheba loves full sun – others can burn. Very few pests and diseases affect broms. Flyspeck scale weakens plants – easy to fix as insect doesn't fly, it walks (Confidor)
- Rule of thumb notion that prickly leaved broms grow better in sun and smooth leaved broms grow better in shade is not so – some of each variety are suited to either area
- Extremely rare for mosquitoes to breed in broms. Research shows that algae digests the mossie eggs and wrigglers. The only time would be if broms are watered with chlorinated water which kills the algae

CONTACT : STEVE FLOOD, HORTICULTURALIST, GARDEN OF DREAMS, 9 RIVERVIEW COURT, MOOLOOLAH VALLEY.

A second speaker GERARD WANI from the Natural Growth Institute promoted the World's Best Fertiliser & Natural Soil Conditioner, based on fish & kelp+ 70 trace elements & crucial ingredients, cool processed and fermented, which enables faster/healthier plant growth, greater resilience, lower costs, less maintenance, richer/livelier soil and up to 33% less water use.

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Garden Club Members can order supplies through HARVEY WESTON- PHONE 5435 2587 or EMAIL betteweston@bigpond.com

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