



Pup Talk

October 2026

THE SADDLEBACK VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY

Volume 33, Number 10

We Will Meet: Thursday, October 1, 2026, 7:00 pm.

At the Norman Murray Community & Senior Center

24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, CA

Featured for October: A Kelly Griffin Bromeliad Adventure



Kelly Griffin is one of our most popular speakers. In the past, he has shared his bromeliad habitat adventures in Mexico and Peru. He is best known for his hybridization of aloes and agaves and he is the current President of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society. Kelly has searched for unusual plants in Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America. At this time, we are unsure of his exact topic because he is currently on one of his exotic plant adventures, but his presentations are always excellent.

Kelly also usually brings plants to sell at our meeting. Generally there are bromeliads such as Hechtias and many of his beautiful aloe and agave hybrids that are great companion plants in the bromeliad garden.

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.

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.

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.
- * **Silent Auction** – We usually have special plants for you to bid on.
- * **Library & Information** – Want to learn even more? Check out a book and read up!

Or ask our bromeliad experts that question that is bugging you! We love to talk bromeliads!



Upcoming Events (mark your calendars):

September 26 — Field trip to bromeliad garden and Bird Rock Tropicals in Encinitas. (Please see photos and information in last month's *Pup Talk*.)

October 1 — Our meeting in Mission Viejo.

October 4 — South Bay Bromeliad Associates meeting in Palos Verdes.

October Refreshment Signups: Launi Cory, Zulima Storf, Dale Palas, Ramilla Lewis, and Sue Goldberger. Thank you.



Important Announcement: Our web address has changed to: www.svbromeliads.org



Society News: You should receive this newsletter in time to attend the great field trip on September 26. Don't miss this chance to visit a beautiful private bromeliad garden and to also visit Bird Rock Tropicals nursery with a discount and a gift coupon for each SVBS member. We will have photos of this event next month.



On September 21, we will have a board meeting to discuss new ideas and plan next years' activities. Our next special event is our annual Holiday party on December 3. This festive evening includes a potluck dinner and a fun-filled gift exchange.

Now, it is time to start thinking about how to make your yard creepy for Halloween using your *Tillandsia usneoides*. My front yard looks like this all year, but at Halloween I add about fifteen hairy black spiders for the children to find. They really love it!

September Show and Tell

Cristy Brenner

Billbergia Flamenco

Hohenbergia correia-araujoi

Neoregelia Heavy Load #1

Portea Jungles #2

Tillandsia vernicosa #5

Chris Bruce

Aechmea fulgens hybrid #6

Billbergia Bunniss Factor #4

Neoregelia Birdrock

Tillandsia secunda

Tillandsias on wine corks

Billbergia and *Neoregelia* group #7

Don DeBok

Guzmania lingulata hybrid
(variegated) #3

Tillandsia capitata Peach

#1



#2



#5



#4



#3



#6



#7



September Show and Tell, Continued

Patti Dunn

Aechmea Blotches #8

Tillandsia caerulea

Susan Fortune

Tillandsia Curly Slim #9

Tillandsia intermedia

Tillandsia streptophylla #10

Ramilla Lewis

Diorama box with *Tillandsia*
usneoides and African animals

Michael McGuire

Billbergia Beadelman #12

Jeff Sorensen

Vriesea Sunset #11

#8



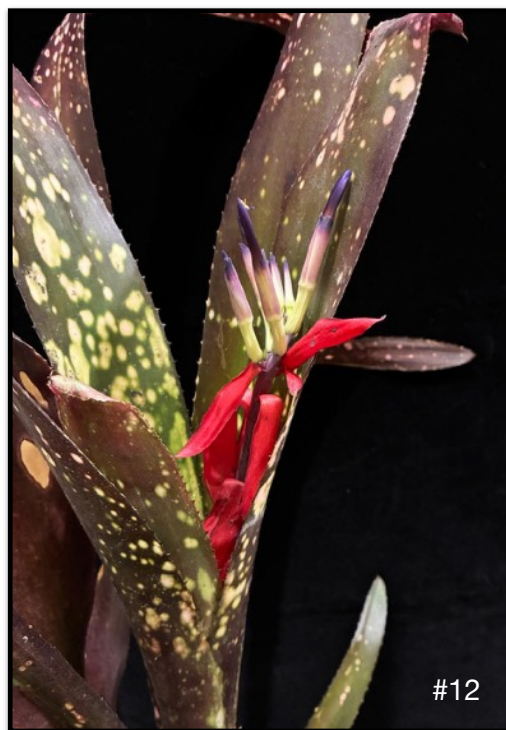
#9



#10



#11



#12



We are very sad to announce the passing of Margo Racca. Margo lived in Louisiana, so she was not a member of our society. However, she was invaluable to us in the planning process of the World Bromeliad Conference that we sponsored in Costa Mesa last April. As the Bromeliad Society International Vice President, she had a great deal of experience relating to the very complicated planning process for a world conference. She was always very helpful to our President, Chris Bruce, who is shown below with Margo, and many of you interacted with Margo at the conference. The photo below was taken at the conference banquet when Margo was asked to cut the cake to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the BSI.

Below is a portion of the BSI tribute to Margo:

In Memoriam - Margo Racca

It is with profound sadness that the Bromeliad Society International announces the passing of Margo Racca, our Vice President and a devoted member and leader of the international bromeliad community.

Margo's service to BS spanned more than three decades. She joined the BS Board in 2016, when she was elected to fill an open position as Regional Director for the Central U.S. Region at the World Bromeliad Conference in Houston. In 2022, she was elected Vice President, a position she held until her passing.

- Margo brought an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and experience to everything she did.
- She was an International Master Bromeliad Judge and a longtime BS member.
- She served as an officer and president of the Acadiana Bromeliad Society and was also involved with other bromeliad societies throughout her region.
- Her personal bromeliad collection numbered in the thousands, reflecting her deep passion for the plants she loved.
- She regularly gave programs and workshops, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm with others.
- She especially enjoyed welcoming homeschooled children to her greenhouse and collections, encouraging curiosity and introducing young people to the fascinating world of plants.



Now may be an appropriate time to bring up a touchy subject. Have you given any thought to the future of your beloved bromeliads when you go to that “great garden in the sky?” Most people don’t give their relatives enough instructions on how to care for, or give away, their plants in a timely manner. Often people find our society online and ask us for help. As a result, we have formed a “bromeliad rescue committee.” When someone contacts us, the committee members spring into action as soon as possible to save the plants. We can then use the bromeliads for our plant table or silent auction. Unfortunately, there is usually a great deal of work involved in cleaning up the plants. Thank you to our committee members for volunteering to save these wonderful bromeliads.

Recently, my husband and I created a trust for our assets and revised our wills. This process included my collection of thousands of bromeliads. The plants are actually included in the trust and they will go to a very special young member of our society. He knows what to do with them, which includes keeping the rare ones, perhaps selling some, but most will probably be part of SVBS plant tables. He will also receive my collection of bromeliad books, which are included in my will. Many bromeliad books are very rare and valuable, and unfortunately, most people probably send their inherited plant books to Goodwill. Putting my bromeliads in my trust may be a bit extreme, but while I’m still here, it gives me a great feeling to know that my plants won’t just dry up and die.

A case in point: Below is a photo of Bob Wright, also known as “Pitcairnia Bob,” enjoying a *Pitcairnia hitchcockiana* in Ecuador in July, 2017. He was well-known in the bromeliad community and regularly attended all of the activities of every Southern California society. He grew bromeliads for over thirty years and maintained an extensive collection of rare plants, and many were his own hybrids. Bob just disappeared and no one knows what happened to him. He was last seen at our January, 2020, meeting. He was brought there by his son, who

lives in Japan! I asked how long he would be visiting, and his son replied “I don’t know how long I will be here.” That was odd and I thought that perhaps Bob was ill. Then COVID shut us all down and there was less communication than usual. Our meeting was the last time that anyone remembers seeing Bob. He may have moved to San Jose to live with his daughter.



I searched on the internet and his house in Vista is currently listed as rented, and he is still listed as the owner. However, the website also listed the owner as deceased. That’s very sad news and a great loss to the bromeliad community. Apparently, when the house was rented, his relatives never contacted SVBS or the San Diego Bromeliad Society to save his incredible collection of bromeliads. So, we not only have lost a man with a wealth of bromeliad knowledge, we have also lost his collection of rare plants, books, and bromeliad art. Does anyone have more information about “Pitcairnia Bob?”



***Aechmea* 'Rambo':**

Finally, after at least twenty years of growing this spectacular bromeliad, I have an answer to what this great landscape plant is called. It was given to me without a tag and I have always considered it as some sort of large form of *Aechmea distichantha* because of its inflorescence. The 'Rambo' at left was originally planted on the other side of the palm tree and it has since migrated around to the front. The smaller plant to the right, also originally planted behind the palm, is *Aechmea distichantha* var. *distichantha*. The two different plants are wrapping around the trunk and will eventually meet in the middle. At the top of page 8 (at left) is a more recent photo of the *Ae. distichantha* in bloom, which is the seed parent of 'Rambo'. The pollen parent (at right on page 8), is *Ae. phanerophlebia*, growing near Diamantina in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Thank you to Ross Little in Australia, and Graeme Barklay in New Zealand, for finally solving this mystery and registering *Aechmea* 'Rambo'.

Article by Ross Little from the Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group, N.S.W., Australia:

***Aechmea* 'Rambo'**

Aechmea 'Rambo' has been in our collections for many years under formula:

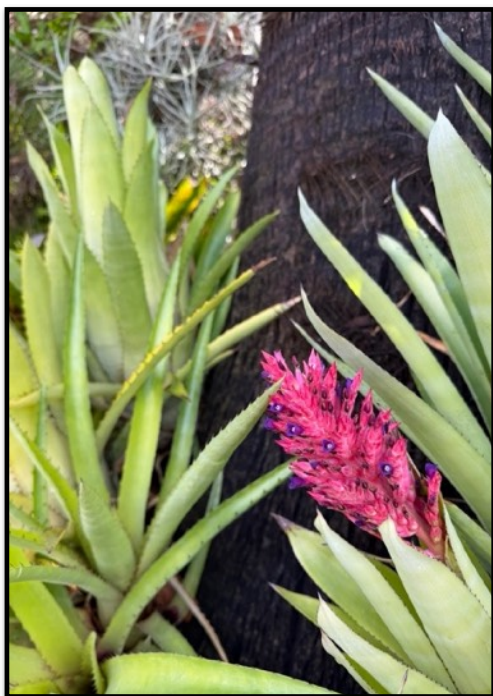
Aechmea distichantha x *Aechmea phanerophlebia*

Described on the BCR as being:

Mature bulbous, bottle-shaped rosette to approx. 40-50cm. wide x 50-60cm. high. Lime-green, heavily spined, outspreading leaves turning golden-yellow in high light with a sharp spine at the tip. Erect inflorescence of clustered, spiny, coral red and pink bracts forming a cylinder shaped head approx. 15-20cm. long with small, purple-petalled flowers. An early Florida hybrid of unknown origin, possibly bred by Mulford Foster? Originally circulated under formula and then sold via Tropiflora Nursery, Sarasota under the cultivar name 'Rambo'. (Continued at bottom of page 8)



Aechmea 'Rambo'
photo Graeme Barclay



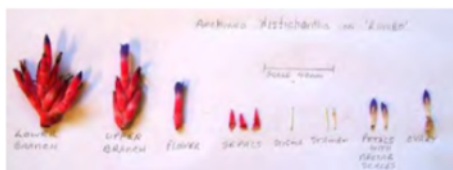
Aechmea 'Rambo'
inflorescence photo Ross Little

From PineGrove this plant had been sold both under formula and as *Aechmea distichantha*. It was acquired by Pinegrove Nursery in 1985 under formula and eventually planted out in the expansive gardens, as we all know tags then get lost. If you have this heavily nasty spined bulbous plant you acquired from PineGrove you may actually have Ae. 'Rambo'.

Why the confusion, because nobody looked at it close enough for many years, tags lost and simply identified as a distichantha or hybrid of.

Geoff Lawn queried it back in 2013 but with no flowering plants at the time to examine, it had been forgotten again until Graeme Barclay queried his acquisition from PineGrove.

Out came the descriptions, flowers dissected, details sent to Graeme, we agreed on 'Rambo'.



Nectar scales

Thank you Graeme for finally putting this one to bed, 'Rambo' registered 5/2026.

2026 Society Officers/Committee Heads

President:	Chris Bruce
Vice President/Programs:	Jeff Sorensen
Secretary:	Open
Treasurer:	Mary Kermani
Fundraising:	Yvonne Wilson
Librarian:	Sue Goldberger
Membership	Nada Chatwell
Plant Table:	Michael McGuire

<i>Pup Talk</i> Editor:	Cristy Brenner
<i>Pup Talk</i> Team:	Pete and Patti Dunn
	John Marzolino
Refreshments:	Launi Cory
	Mary Kermani
Supplies:	Amy Uyemura
Webmaster and Zoom	John Marzolino
New Member Liaison:	Patti Dunn

Where did the phone numbers and email addresses go?

Now that *Pup Talk* is on a website that is accessible to everyone, some board members are concerned about the security of their personal information. If you are a member, be sure to keep your membership roster that has all of the contact information. Rosters are available from Nada at the meetings.

Our New Web Address:
www.svbromeliads.org



Tillandsia crocata Copper Penney
Photo by Ed Voelker.



SVBS 2027 DUES/MEMBERSHIP

Dues are \$15 per membership (for one person or for two or more at the same address). Please send a check & info to: Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society 24891 Camberwell Street, Laguna Hills, CA, 92653

Membership Name(s): _____

Newsletter via: ☐ email (dues \$15/year) or ☐ USPS (Dues \$20/year) or ☐ Both (Dues \$20/year)

Street: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone Number(s): () - () -

Email:

Pup Talk, October, 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, October 1, at 7:00 p.m.

Festivities include:

- * **Program:** Slide presentation by Kelly Griffin;
- * **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.

