



FUNDAMENTAL BROMELIAD CARE

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WHERE CAN I LEARN ABOUT BROMELIADS?

Books - - *Bromeliads for the Contemporary Garden* by Andrew Steens

(Green cover)- - Available on-line for \$16 to \$20

Blooming Bromeliads by Baensch - - Also available on-line for \$125 used or \$430 new

Clubs - - There are numerous Bromeliad Clubs in the US. There are 12 clubs in the State of Florida, including three in South Florida. All of the clubs have speakers, raffle tables, plant selling tables, libraries, newsletters and members eager to offer advice.

[The Bromeliad Society of Broward County](#) meets the 3rd Monday of the month at Deicke Auditorium

[The Bromeliad Society of South Florida](#) meets the 3rd Tuesday at Fairchild Gardens

[The Bromeliad Society of the Palm Beaches](#) meets the 3rd Thursday at the Mounts Botanical Gardens

Other Sources - - [Flamingo Gardens](#) on Flamingo Road in Davie

[Mounts Botanical Garden](#) in West Palm Beach

[Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden](#) in Miami

[The Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies](#) on-line at FCBS.org, where most bromeliads can be views upon clicking “Photo Index”, the genera desired and the plant desired. ,

WHERE CAN I GET BROMELIADS?

As stated earlier, bromeliads are often made available at meetings of local bromeliad societies. Many club members will have unique plants available for purchase as well.

The following commercial vendors are local to our area:

Flamingo Road Nursery, Davie

Living Color Nursery, Davie

Michael's Bromeliads, Venice, FL - - On-line

Sunshine Bromeliads, SW Ranches

Tropiflora, Sarasota, FL - - On-line

Other local garden shops

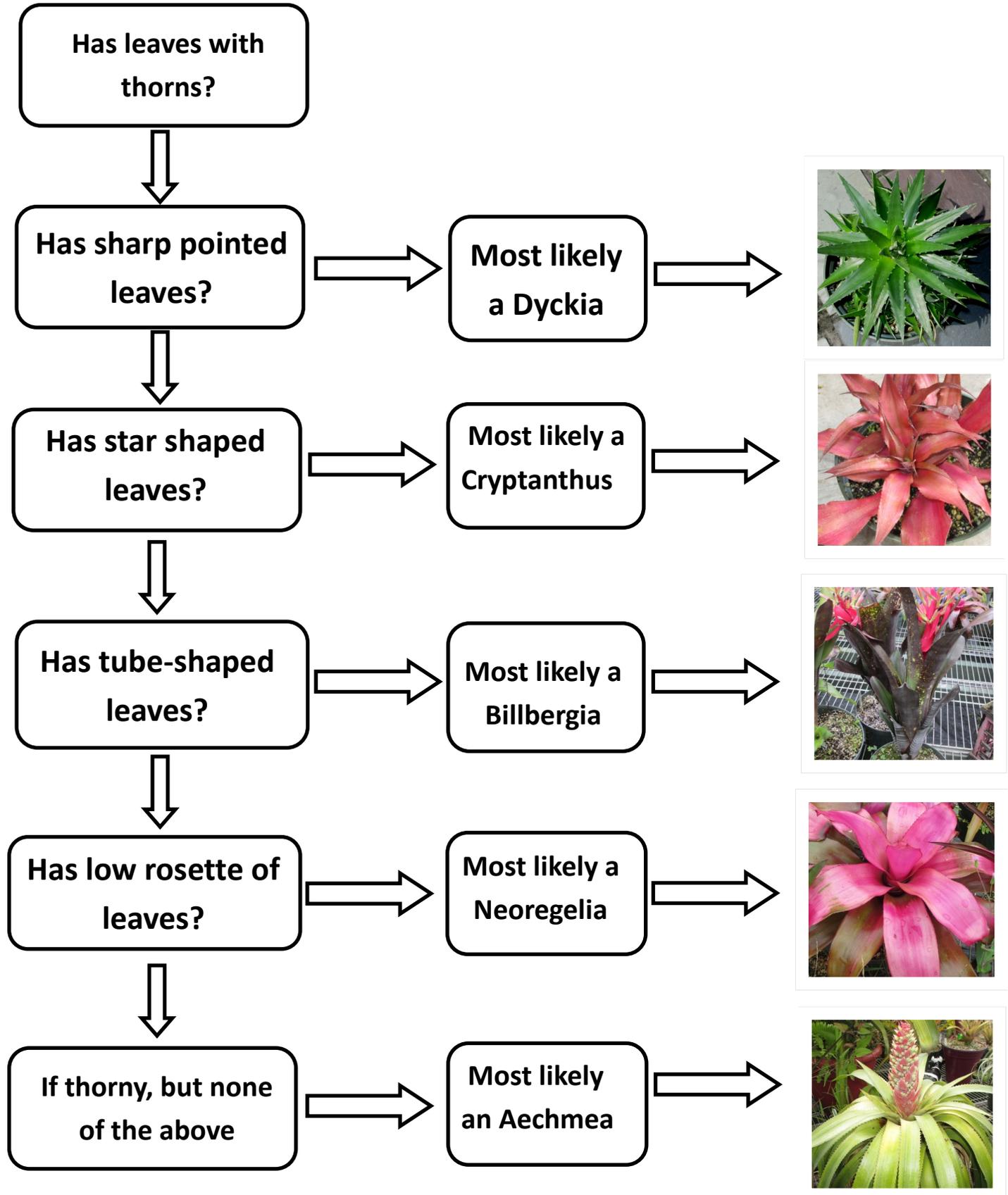
HOW CAN I IDENTIFY A BROMELIAD?

My given name is "Larry Davis." Most of the world would recognize my name as "Davis Larry." This implies that I am a member of the Davis family and Larry is my specific name.

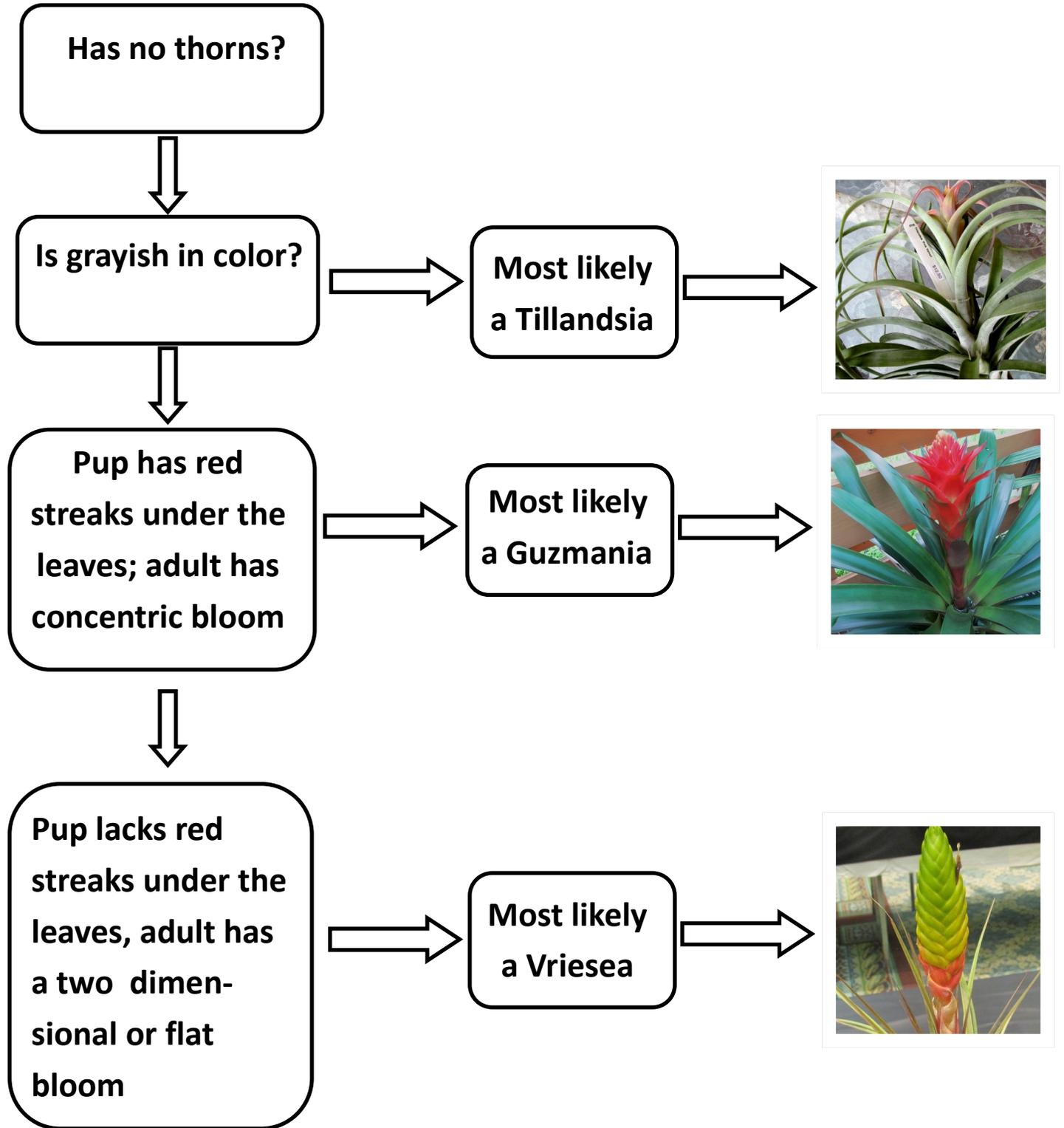
Bromeliad names are formed the same way. The family name is called a genus or generic name. It is always Capitalized. The member name is called a species name. It is usually not capitalized. For instance *Neoregelia compacta* is a common bromeliad.

There are 58 "Genuses" or "Genera" as is the plural. Luckily 90% to 95% of all bromeliads that are available commercially are in 8 of the Genera. The next page will be the KEY to telling them apart.

BROMELIAD IDENTIFICATION KEY



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The following 8 genera can now be recognized:

Dyckia

Cryptanthus

Billbergia

Neoregelia

Aechmea

Tillandsia

Guzmania

Vriesea

As explained previously, each type of plant has two names: the generic name and the species name. The following are 3 specific Bromeliad names.

Tillandsia brachycaulos



Neoregelia Gazpacho



xGuzvriesea Harriet



The Tillandsia has a species name beginning with a small letter. This plant is called a generic plant, meaning that it is an actual plant that can be found in nature.

The Neoregelia has species names beginning with capital letters, meaning that it is not found naturally. It is called a Hybrid, meaning that it was created by pairing two plants of different species.

The letter "x" in front of the Guzvriesea defines this plant as a Bi-generic, meaning it was created by pairing plants of different Genera. The name tells us that this plant is the result of pairing a Guzmania and a Vriesea.

HOW MUCH SUN IS CORRECT FOR EACH OF THE GENERA?

It's hard to control the amount of sun that your plants get in South Florida. Reflected sun is usually best.

Sunburn and freezer burn look much alike; large white splashes on the leaves. If sunburnt, the plant should be given a shadier environment. The burnt leaf will not recover and may die, but it will not affect the plant seriously.

Same comments for freezer burn. The remedy is to cover your plants or bring them inside during spells in the 30's or lower. Most seriously affected will be pups, young plants and those indicated on the following chart.

Note that orchids, often kept with bromeliads, are usually in trouble with cold weather.

Really serious South Florida gardeners prefer shade houses. Shade cloth preferred is 50%. Full sun requires 30%. My preferred supplier is Greenhouse Megastore, On-line. Help is available from several of the members.

The next page is a chart that can be used to generally project the correct sunlight for several genera.

Sun Intensity

Genera

High Direct Sun

Orthophytum

Bromelia

Alcantarea

Hechtia

Tillandsia

Medium Sun

Neoregelia

Achmea

Portia

Medium Sun and Shade

Foliage Vriesea

Dyckia

Cryptanthus

Hohenbergia

Pitcairnia

Quesnelia

Medium Shade

Billbergia

Canistropsis

Vriesea

Canistrum

Guzmania

Low Shade

Nidularium

HOW DO I HANDLE THE WATER NEEDS OF BROMELIADS?

Bromeliads want to be drenched - - and then dried - - and then drenched again.

Watering systems with strategic positioning and correct heights of the heads or misters are the ideal way to water. Watering with hoses or sprinklers is laborious but necessary. Typically, watering should be done twice a week; three times a week during drier Florida winters.

Note that the plant absorbs 90% of its water and other nutrients thru the roots, not from the cup. This fact has been proven at several colleges and large scale bromeliad producers.

Hanging pots lose moisture faster than grounded pots and usually require more watering.

DO I NEED TO FERTILIZE MY PLANTS?

Fertilizer helps pups and generally helps the growth, color, flowering and pupping of most bromeliads. Treat sparingly, using the directions on the product. I use about ½ teaspoon per 6-inch pot. I apply at pupping and every 6 months in March and September. Note that fertilizer claims of lasting 9 months, usually last for only 6 months in South Florida.

Higher amounts result in more pups and greener plants. The coloring, especially red, is diminished with over fertilizing.

Most garden suppliers have Dynamite (Flower & Vegetable, red container), Osmocote or some other form of heat or moisture controlled slow release fertilizer.

HOW DO I HANDLE DISEASE AND PESTS?

Scale, white fly and most bromeliad pests can be handled with Bayer Tree and Shrub, available at most garden suppliers. It is systemic, entering the plant and then killing the pest when he takes his dinner. Spray the roots not the cup. NOTE, this type of product can be absorbed by fruit trees and vegetable plants. It is poisonous to you, me and other family pets.

Snails can be controlled with many different types of bait. The most lethal ingredient is Metaldehyde. However, it is poison to dogs, cats, fish, birds and very dangerous to humans. I use Ortho Bug-Geta carried by Home Depot. Several less nasty products are available, but don't affect snails as quickly. Many people just pick them off, mostly at night. Some have claimed that beer, caffeine, soap or other things can drive off or drown snails. A plastic trap made of 6" by 1.5" pvc with a glued cap on one end and filled with a tablespoon of bait laid on the bench but not on the pot will also work.

Spiders can be killed with Talstar, On-line, 16 oz for prox \$28. It will not affect plants, but will harm butterflies.

Weeds are best controlled with Round-Up, available at most garden supply shops. When spraying, be careful since it will kill any plant that is green, including bromeliads.

Beware of any problem solution containing copper, zinc or arsenic. All will kill bromeliads.

In South Florida, it is almost a requirement to use pressure treated wood when building outside nurseries. Do not use PT-wood overhead. The drippings can be lethal. I use vertical posts after 3 coats of Sherwin Williams Deck Stain and have had zero problems after 15 years of use. I also use this solution with stand legs and runners, being careful that no plants or roots come in contact to the wood.

HOW AND WHEN DO I TAKE THE PUPS FROM MY PLANTS?

Pups are usually removed when the pup reaches 1/3 to 1/2 of the size of the mother plant. Clip, saw or tear off the pup as close as possible to the mother plant. The sooner they are removed, the faster the mother plant will send out another pup. After removing all viable pups, move your mother plant to a darker location and let it sit. In many instances you will be rewarded with more pups.

Remove the pup's bottom leaves that block the emergence of roots. It is critical that at least 6 leaves are retained on the pup.

Rinse off the pup before planting. It will not hurt to leave the pup for a few days if it is watered daily.



HOW DO I PLANT A PUP OR A NEW PLANT?

Prepare a planting mix - - Most any potting mix from a garden shop will do.

My first mix was equal parts Canadian Peat,

Pine bark nuggets and Perlite.

My current mix is 2 parts Pro Mix HP and

1 part Perlite

(SAFETY ALERT: use a surgical mask when working with Perlite !!!)

Parts for the first mix are available at the Bushel Stop or other garden shops.

Pro Mix HP is only available at Universal Enterprises Supply Corp in Pompano Beach. This is a wholesaler and will not sell partial lots. Pro Mix HP comes in a 3.8 cubic foot bag, enough for about 220 pots, \$30. Perlite comes in a 4 cubic foot bag, \$10. The BSBC is considering buying these in bulk to resale smaller quantities to club members.

Add water and mix until result is damp, not soupy. Fill the pot large enough to handle the adult plant to the rim or a tad less. Press down the mix and use your fingers to create a hole in the center large enough to accommodate the pup and any accompanying roots. If no roots are present, add a sprinkling of root stimulator (available from any plant vendor) into the hole. Plant the plant into the hole. It should be covering the white bottom, but not covering the colored portions of the lower leaves. Press the mix down once more.

Wash off the pot if necessary. Place the pot somewhere to allow drainage of the excess water. An hour should be enough. Now put the pup aside in an area that is not sunny and receives no water or rain for at least 2 days. This dries the mix and the plant.

At this time I spray with Bayer Bush and Shrub, remembering that the roots absorb most of the application. I also add a small amount of fertilizer. The next day I add the pup to the garden or shade house. Pups can be used to expand your collection, to donate to a local club, or to sell at local festivals or Farmer's Markets.