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What are Bromeliads? by Plant Biotech

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Bromeliads belong to the plant family Bromeliaceae. They may appear strange and exotic, but humans have been using bromeliads for thousands of years and one of our common fruits, the pineapple, is actually a bromeliad. Bromeliads are one of the most diversified plants with respect to the size, shape, texture, colour and markings that can exist among its fifty or so genera and over two thousand recognized species.

Many bromeliads are epiphyts, (which live on other plants without being parasites), but there is a bromeliad for every occasion and landscape. Theyâ€™re great as pot plants as well as for landscaping, and vary in size from inch long midgets to giants over 10m. Whatâ€™s more, theyâ€™re easy to care for, hardy plants with low water requirements. As more and more stunning varieties are being introduced to the already available mind-boggling range, bromeliads are now coming on their own as living gifts.

Where are they originally from?

Basically natives of South America, the largest number of primitive species are found in Mexico, the Antilles, Costa Rica, eastern and southern Brazil, the Andes of Columbia, Peru and Chile. They thrive in the lowlands of the tropical forests and even in some higher regions (up to 4000 m) of Sierra Madre and the Andes. They were introduced to the world in the 19th century when breeders from Belgium, France and the Netherlands started hybridizing plants for wholesale trade. They regained popularity after World War II which has only increased in recent years.

Where can they grow?

Bromeliads are hardy plants and can be grown indoors as well as outdoors. They can be found braving the salt spray along seashores, and in the extreme heat and drought of deserts. Some thrive on the ground in the filtered, speckled light of the rain forest while others reach high in the tree tops as epiphytes, for plenty of light and air. They can grow at sea level and as high as 16,000 feet. Some are terrestrial and others are saxicolous (growing on rocks), but most of them grow in trees, epiphytically; they do not drain the host tree, but simply attach to the rough bark of the trunk or branches.

How can I cultivate broms?

Bromeliads are very adaptable and most will respond very well to less than ideal conditions. But like most plants, bromeliads, too, need to adjust when moved to new surroundings. Extra care must be provided to a plant during this adjustment period to provide its critical environmental needs. In many cases this means extra water or misting of the plant. It could be a need for extra air movement or cooler temperatures.

If you want to know more about Bromeliads, then visit www.plantbiotech.com.au

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