

TEN TIPS FOR ENTERING A BROMELIAD SHOW

1. Remove unsightly lower leaves by splitting them down the middle and pulling the two halves away at the base.
2. Dusty leaves can be cleaned with a 1" sponge paint applicator or an old, damp wash cloth. Each leaf should be cleaned, but artificial leaf-shine is a no-no.
3. An emerging inflorescence can be supported with balled up newspaper so it won't lean. It can also be staked. Supports must be removed before taking the plant to the show.
4. If the entry is blooming, remove old, spent flowers.
5. If one plant in a clump is the one you want to enter in the show, but it's rootless as a result of removal from the clump, try this neat trick: tie a string tightly around the base, then either run the end of the string out of the center hole in the pot and attach it to the pot bottom with a piece of masking tape, or tie the string to a rock of the appropriate size and shape. Once the potting medium is added and packed tightly around the plant, the anchor, whether string alone or string plus rock, will hold the plant in place. Make sure the string is completely hidden.
6. Fresh top dressing will probably be necessary if you're not repotting the plant. Although you're not allowed to use anything decorative, you may use plain black gravel, the smallest pine bark nuggets you can find, or any clean, fresh potting mix.
7. Trimming brown leaf tips on tillandsias is a challenge since the leaves on many types are brittle and fleshy. If cutting is necessary, try to cut only one edge of the leaf, preferably the edge toward the back of the plant, so the trimmed edge is as inconspicuous as possible. When cleaning and trimming tillandsias (and other genera with scaly leaves) take care not to damage the scurf (trichomes) on the leaves.
8. The cut edges of trimmed leaves can be rubbed with aloe jelly. This retards drying and shriveling.
9. If you have a plant which has become distorted, consider using a decorative container. You may have a container with an opening on the side in which to insert the plant. In the Decorative Container class, you (the exhibitor) may place the entry yourself on the table. Immature plants may be used, and any number of blooming or non-blooming plants.
10. Cut inflorescence. This is a non-standard class (entries won't be judged against standard entries) but is a good way to show off a beautiful inflorescence. Just place it in a plain glass container of water. It should, of course, be as clean as possible.

(Thanks to the contributors for this information: Nat DeLeon, Lynne Fieber, Connie Johnson, and Ed Prince.)