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Pieters et al.

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- [54] VRIESEA PLANT NAMED APOLLO
- [75] Inventors: Luc Pieters; Caroline Demeyer, both of Laarne, Belgium
- [73] Assignee: Exotic Plant, Laarne, Belgium
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[56] References Cited PUBLICATIONS

GTITM UPOVROM NL PBR BRM0064 Vriesea 'Apollo' Filed Jan. 3, 1996, 1997.

Primary Examiner—James R. Feyrer
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Foley & Lardner

[57] ABSTRACT

A new cultivar of Vriesea named 'Apollo' characterized by its upright branched orange inflorescence, and its medium green, glossy foliage with thin dark green transverse markings.

1 Drawing Sheet

1

2

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Vriesea, a genus within the family bromeliaceae, hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name 'Apollo'. The new cultivar is a hybrid resulting from a cross of parent plants identified below.

Vriesea comprise a genus of over 200 species of herbaceous evergreen perennials suitable for cultivation in the home or under glass. Vriesea are predominantly epiphytic and are native to the tropics. For the most part the species vary in diameter from 7 to 8 inches to 3 or 4 feet and have rosettes of glossy, smooth edged leaves which may be entirely green, variously marked or variegated.

Floral bracts of Vriesea frequently have brilliant colors and may last for many months. The range of bract colors for Vriesea is generally yellow, orange, red and red-purple. Tabular, three petalled flowers may also appear on the scape from under the colorful bracts, but are usually short lived.

Vrieseas may be advantageously grown as pot plants for greenhouse or home use. Desirably the plants are shaded from direct sunlight and the central vase-like part of the leaf rosette is normally filled with water.

Vriesea is native to tropical America. Leaves of the Vriesea are usually arranged in basal rosettes which are stiff and entire in several vertical ranks. Vriesea have terminal spikes which are bracted.

Asexual propagation of Vriesea is frequently done through the use of tissue culture practices. Propagation can also be from off-shoots produced by the plant which may then be rooted. The resulting plantlets are detached from the mother plant and may be potted up in a suitable growing mixture.

The new cultivar 'Apollo' is a product of a planned breeding program and was originated by the inventors Luc Pieters and Caroline DeMeyer from a cross made during such a program Laarne, Belgium Jan. 1, 1991. The male, or pollen parent, was a selection from *Vriesea succri* spec. Pin. The female, or seed parent, was a selection from *Vriesea poelmanii* spec. N 3 Pin. The selection comprising the new variety was chosen after commencement of flowering of the progeny in Laarne, Belgium Jul. 15, 1994 and subsequent asexual propagation by offshoots and tissue culture by the inventors in Laarne, Belgium has demonstrated that the combination of characteristics are herein disclosed for the new cultivar 'Apollo' are firmly fixed and are retained through successive generations of asexual reproduction.

Vriesea 'Apollo' is particularly characterized by its upright branched inflorescence with bright orange bracts, and by its glossy, medium green foliage with thin dark green transverse markings.

Perhaps the closest comparison cultivar is *Vriesea poelmanii* 'Barbara' which is characterized by its red long-lasting blooms, and medium green glossy foliage. 'Apollo' is distinguished from 'Barbara' by its bright orange bracts and the thin dark green transverse markings on its foliage.

'Apollo' has not been tested under all environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary with variations in environmental conditions such as temperature, light intensity, day length and humidity, without, however, any variation in genotype.

The accompanying color photographic drawing shows typical characteristics of 'Apollo' with colors being as nearly true as possible with illustrations of this type. The photograph illustrates a typical 18 month old plant of Vriesea 'Apollo' grown from an offshoot, and finished in a 15 cm pot.

The following description is taken from the plant illustrated in the photograph. The plant was grown in Laarne, Belgium by the inventors under greenhouse conditions which are typical of the industry. Color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart (R.H.S.).

Classification

I. Plant:

A. *General appearance*.—Form: Basal rosette growth habit, comprised of strap-like leaves arranged around a central axis. Height: Approximately 58–50 cm including inflorescence. Diameter: Approximately 66–75 cm.

B. *Foliage*.—Color: The leaves are medium green with thin dark green transverse markings. The upper surface is darker and greener than, but closest to, 137 A with thin dark green markings of 139 A. The lower surface is 137 C with thin dark green markings of 137 A. The leaf base is often tinged with 163 D, 165 C D. Size of leaf: The basal leaves are approximately 53 cm to 58 cm long, and 5.8 cm to 6.0 cm wide (flattened). At their widest point, near the base, the leaves are approximately 8.5 cm. Shape of leaf: The leaf blade is ligulate with an cuspidate tip. The margins are entire. The leaves are curved over their length. The leaf is channeled, and the tip is notably twisted, wavy and curved downward. Surface texture: The leaf blade is thin, coriaceous, smooth and glossy. Average number of leaves: The plant produces approximately 35 leaves before producing an inflorescence.

II. Bracts:

Dimensions and color.—The floral bracts (with underlying sessile flowers of lateral branch spikes) are approximately 3.9 cm to 4.3 cm long, 3.9 cm to 4.3 cm wide (flattened), and orange-red 34 A-B with translucent yellow-orange margins.

General shape.—Individual bracts are broadly ovate, with an acute tip, and are folded at the center. The base of the bract encircles the scape. The tips of the bracts are curved inward toward the scape. The bracts are arranged imbricate, and alternate along the scape giving the inflorescence a flattened appearance. The bracts separate slightly from the scape as the flowers emerge.

Branch spikes.—The inflorescence has approximately 6 branches, each of which is approximately 15 cm to 17 cm long, 4.7 cm to 5.1 wide, and contains approximately 10–12 flowers. Plants of 'Apollo' often have offshoots emerging from the base which produces smaller, frequently branched inflorescence when the plant is chemically induced to flower. The scape bracts are approximately 8.4 cm to 12.5 cm long, and approximately 3.8 cm to 4.1 cm wide and resemble short leaves. The scape bracts are 146 CD in color. The lowermost scape bracts are frequently tipped with purple 79 A. The uppermost scape bracts are streaked with orange red 34 B.

Number.—There are approximately 98 floral bracts in the entire inflorescence, and approximately 18 scape bracts.

Texture.—Smooth and glossy.

Margin.—Entire.

Scape.—The scape is approximately 55–60 cm tall, 10 mm in diameter, and 145 BC in color.

III. Flowers:

Borne.—Lateral, alternate from under floral bracts along the scape.

Shape of inflorescence.—The inflorescence is a terminal branched spike with alternate, overlapping imbricate bracts, and approximately 6 branch spike.

Individual flowers.—Quantity: Approximately 98 flowers/buds present in terminal inflorescence, depending on the size of plant. Branch spikes are present, each containing approximately 12 flowers.

Calyx.—Sepals ovate. Three sepals present, approximately 2.5 cm long and 1.3 cm wide, and translucent yellow 10 B in color.

Corolla.—Petals ligulate, fused at the base around the ovary. There petals present, approximately 3.6 cm in long, and 8 mm wide translucent yellow 12 A at the petal tip, yellow 10 B throughout.

Time of blooming.—In mature plants, flowering begins approximately 16 weeks after induction, at any time of the year.

Duration of blooms.—The inflorescence will hold its color approximately 3 months; individual flowers last 1 day.

IV. Floral organs:

Ovary.—Superior, conical, three locules, approximately 5 mm in length.

Pistil.—Approximately 4.0 cm long, 1 mm wide, 12 C in color. Stigmatic surface 2.2 mm wide, divided into three convoluted lobes, 11 C in color.

Stamens.—Six present, filament 3.2 cm long, 1 mm wide. Anthers 7 mm long, yellow 11 A in color.

Seed characteristics: Typical for *Vriesea poelmanii* cultivar.

We claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Vriesea* plant named 'Apollo', as illustrated and described.

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U.S. Patent

May 12, 1998

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