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Romantic Bromeliads take Valentine's Day to heart

(SAN DIEGO, CA) --The Valentine season is all about romance, a time to bring out the color of passion—deep, vivid red. Whether it's a counterpoint of color in the living room or a dreamy centerpiece, the Bromeliad brings irresistible beauty to the season of love.

A successful transplant from the rainforest to home and garden, Bromeliads are better suited for indoor decorating than any other plant. They thrive on neglect. Just feed and water them once in a while and they're happy. And the plant's color stays strong, so a red so perfect for Valentine's Day will stay strong and beautiful as winter transitions into spring and summer.

Nationally recognized interior decorator and author of *Centerpieces Through the Year*, Kurt Cyr often works with Bromeliads. "I get a lot of inquiries about Bromeliads. They're so versatile they go with any style, from tropical to traditional," says the Los Angeles based designer and educator.

More than 3,000 species of Bromeliads have been cataloged. The 100 or so varieties that flourish in home and garden can be found at retail stores and garden centers. Despite the availability and popularity of Bromeliads, this exotic plant continues to be an attention-getter and an eye-pleasing surprise in any setting.

Guzmania is one of the most popular Bromeliads, according to Kent's Bromeliads, the largest Bromeliad grower in the United States. The plant is tall with shiny leaves and colorful bracts (leaves) that shoot up from the plant's center. "*Guzmanias* have really caught on with indoor decorating. They have a real presence and come in many vibrant colors," says Michael Kent, who runs the Vista, California business with his brothers Larry and Jeff Kent.

Bromeliads can be tall or short. The leaves can be smooth and shiny, variegated or powdery silver green, spiny or spineless. If you have a room or table that needs to be dressed up, there's a Bromeliad to fill the need—beautifully.

Kurt Cyr's *Centerpieces Through the Year* is a how-to book about creating imaginative and attractive centerpieces with seasonal plants. "For Valentine's Day, I'd do a centerpiece revolving around sweethearts. A heart-shaped Bromeliad centerpiece would be perfect for a dinner party or romantic dinner for two," says Cyr.

Kurt Cyr's Bromeliad Valentine's Centerpiece

1. Pick a pair of perfect Bromeliads - Start by selecting a pair of tall Bromeliads—*Guzmanias* would be ideal.
2. Go with the color of love - For color, Cyr suggests "something obvious like lipstick red."
3. Opposites attract – Place the Bromeliads facing slightly away from each other in a simple, shallow almost flat pot, the perfect counterpoint to the tall plants.
4. Heartfelt arrangements – Now bend each Bromeliad towards the other, arching to meet in the middle. With the flowers of each plant together and pointing down towards the pot, bundle or connect the flowers with twisty ties, being careful to keep the ties hidden.

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