

「自由之森」觀賞鳳梨農場 - 朱冠羽先生

「Freeforest」The Bromeliads Farm -Mr. Zhu

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「自由之森」這座專門生產觀賞鳳梨 (Bromeliads) 的小農場，隱身在南投縣鹿谷鄉半山腰的某處。這裡時而陽光明媚，時而雲霧繚繞，雖談不上鳥語花香，但環境清幽宜人。此處聚集了幾位年輕人，他們喜愛自然，熱衷植物，在這片小小的天地裡，追逐著屬於他們的夢想，而朱冠羽先生就是其中之一。

朱先生在大學畢業後即投入這項工作，十幾年前，他與這些伙伴因同樣喜歡觀賞鳳梨 (Bromeliads) 而相互認識。當時臺灣並不流行種植這類植物，有哪些新的原生種 (species) 及雜交種 (hybrid)，抑或各類種植方式與造景 (landscape) 等資訊，僅能依靠玩家間之相互交流獲得。只是他們心中都有個共同的遺憾—為何這類在國外風行已久的植物卻在臺灣乏人問津，不僅取得不易，且部份品種 (系) 價格高昂。因此他們漸漸萌生出一種想法：不能讓這充滿多變元素的鳳梨科植物，在園藝市場如此發達的臺灣獨缺一席。在朱先生登高一呼下，幾位同好一起到了南投鹿谷，開啟這條讓觀賞鳳梨在臺灣落地生根的道路。

然創業之路並不容易，舉凡資金、經驗、場地及各種資源等，最重要的還需要

家人的支持。頭幾年的跌跌撞撞，到了現在還記憶猶新。除了經營上的考驗，鳳梨科植物因原生於熱帶地區，在臺灣生長速度較慢，相較於其他亞熱帶的植物，更需要時間、人力及物力去培養。不知不覺間好幾年過去了，這群年輕人也在這段時間中，努力地透過網路力量在臺灣進行鳳梨科植物的推廣及教育，讓更多有興趣者能夠認識並接觸相關正確資訊。除了網路推廣，他們偶爾也會到各地花市及學校舉辦講座或展覽，讓民眾能夠親身感受到這類植物的魅力。

隨著多年的市場推廣，各式鳳梨科植物在臺灣各地的能見度越來越高，也有越來越多園藝業者加入推廣及培育的行列。對此，朱先生感謝大家長久以來的共同努力，並期許未來有一日能讓臺灣所培育的鳳梨科植物在世界上發光發熱。



圖 1. 朱冠羽先生與他的觀賞鳳梨
Mr. Zhu and his bromeliads

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「Freeforest」The Bromeliads Farm -Mr. Zhu

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Freeforest, hidden in the mountain of Lugu Township, Nantou County, is a little farm that grows bromeliads. Sometimes the place is filled with bright sunshine, and sometimes it is surrounded by cloud and fog. Even though it could not be considered as a place with singing birds and fragrant flowers, the environment there is indeed silent and pleasant. A group of young lads, loving nature and plants, gathered together here to seeking for their dream of bromeliads, and Mr. Zhu is one of them.

Mr. Zhu goes into the job immediately after graduating from college. More than ten years ago, he and his partners got to know each other because of the hobby of bromeliads. Because the plants are not popular in Taiwan at that time, the information about new species, hybrids, different cultural methods, and landscape images from overseas could only be shared by the collectors. However, there is a common pity to them—why the long popular plants in foreign countries are lack of interest in Taiwan. It's not only difficult to obtain, but the prices of some varieties (lines) are too expensive. Therefore, an idea has taken shape gradually in their mind: "How could we let these colorful bromeliads be absent in the well-developed horticulture industry in Taiwan?" At the call of Mr. Zhu, a few collectors and classmates decided to start their journey in Lugu Township and to make bromeliads officially put down roots in Taiwan. Just like all the other startups, Freeforest also had their ups and downs. Besides from regular funding and other issues, it was the technical problem that troubled them the most. Bromeliads are originally from tropical area, which leads to the tardy growth of the plants in Taiwan. Unlike other subtropical plants, bromeliads need more care and equipment to nurse. Several years have passed unconsciously, and these young lads are still working hard in promoting bromeliads to the community. In addition to internet advertisements, they also hold popup lectures and exhibitions at traditional flower markets and schools around Taiwan, allowing people to have a direct contact to the plants.

Through marketing over the past few years, the visibility of various bromeliads is higher and higher in Taiwan. More and more horticulture dealers are setting foot in planting and promoting the plants alongside with Freeforest. Mr. Zhu appreciates the efforts that have been made by all the collectors and hopes the bromeliads that are 'made in Taiwan' will be seen around the world one day.

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