

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, February 11th, 2018 1:30pm.

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

February, 2018

Let's Hope for an Early Spring!

President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700

**Co-Vice Presidents – Jane Vila-Lobos and Hedy Quirk
386/446-0341 and 386/427-2314**

Secretary – Ruth Gessner 386/767-3499

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

This month's meeting –

This month we thought that we would kick off a series of studies on the bromeliad Genera that we are all most likely to see. Starting us off, we'll take a look at the Aechmeas, a very interesting Genus and ask that you bring in an example from your collection to show us. We'll look it over, describe it for the rest of the group and just maybe give a few suggestions about how to best grow your very own Aechmea!

Aechmea - From the Greek word *Aechme* meaning *spear-point*. Bromeliads in this group have the common characteristics of spiny leaves and fleshy fruits or berries containing seeds. These fruits are often brightly colored and may be the most interesting and colorful portion of the inflorescence. There are several hundred species belonging to this group as well as many hybrid crosses which combine the desirable qualities of each of the parent plants used in the hybrid. Leaves may be soft or stiff and may range in color from plain green to a vibrant red. Patterns of stripes or bars may be seen on one or both sides of the leaves and leaf color may not be the same on the top and bottom surfaces. The overall appearance of plants found in this group is highly variable

and may range from a low spreading rosette of leaves, to a more upright urn or vase shape (capable of holding large amounts of water) or even to a tubular form - more commonly associated with Billbergias. Size of the plants in this group also may vary widely from a few inches to over nine feet in diameter! Although a common and attractive landscape feature in some of the warmer states, no members of this group are indigenous to the continental United States. Aechmeas are found in the wild from Argentina to Mexico and in the Caribbean islands (none of these are native to Florida). In their natural habitat they may be seen growing in trees, on rocks, or on the forest floor at altitudes ranging from sea-level to over 6,500 ft.



Aechmea disticantha var. *schlumbergeri* will soon be blooming in our area.



Aechmeas are berry formers – after these flowers fade, berries may form on the inflorescence.



These berries on *Aechmea gamosepala* have turned color showing that they are ripe for harvesting.

Last month's meeting –



President Rick Ryals introduces the January PowerPoint program.

I was worried that our January program of preparing for cold weather was going to be too late to be of much use to anyone since we had already had a shot of cold weather during the first week of this new

year (3 consecutive days below freezing here in Port Orange!), but I was wrong. I woke up on Thursday morning after our meeting to a frosty 27° F and the sight of ice on our bird bath. This has been an unusual number of sub-freezing days for us and I think we are all getting tired of this. We may still see some cold weather in February, but I'm hoping that I can fold up my frost cloth now and put it away for another year!



Club members came dressed for cold weather at the January meeting.



The refreshment table sported a distinctive French look for January!

Once the threat of a frost or freeze has passed (and I'm not saying that it has yet), what should you do for your bromeliads?

First of all, don't be in a hurry to discard those plants that look as though they were killed by the cold weather. Often those bromeliads that appear to be totally dead will surprise you with a beautiful bloom and, even more often – they will go on to produce at least one offset that with a little bit of

patience will reward you with another great plant!

Secondly, watch you watering practices. The water requirements of bromeliads at this time of the year are much less than they will be after Spring arrives. Very few bromeliads appreciate being cold and wet for prolonged periods of time! Also, you should pay attention to the amount of light your bromeliads are receiving during this month.

Birthdays for February:

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

Donna Denny
Janet Chase

Not very many birthdays this month!

Best wishes...

...to past president and “always-there-to-help” Joan Campbell as she relocates to Nashville, TN and no, she is not moving there to pursue a career in country music despite what you may have heard!



We'll miss you Joan!

Show and Tell

We had a suggestion at last month's meeting that it would be nice to feature each of the plants brought in for show and tell in the

following month's newsletter. This would be a good way for those who may not have heard what was said about each plant or didn't have the opportunity to look at each plant up close to learn more about each one. Good idea – so, here they are from the January meeting:



Jane brought in this beautiful *Tillandsia stricta*. Notice the beautifully colored floral bracts and the pretty tubular purple flowers on each bloom stalk.



Bryan showed his nice clump of *Tillandsia ionantha* (*hondurensis*?). All of the many forms of *T. ionantha* make for great displays. Offsets tend to form at almost 90degree angles from the parent plant so that in a short time you have a nice “ionantha ball” like this one.



And here is Bryan's beautiful little *Tillandsia neglecta*

Thank you once again to P.M. Reddy for these photos taken during the meeting!

FECBS shirts with logo

Those new shirts with the FECBS logo really look nice! If you would like to show your support for our group by wearing your own FECBS shirt, contact our Treasurer Eve about where to purchase your shirt and how to get them embroidered with the logo and (if you wish) your name. The business that puts the logo on the shirts does this work in batches of 6, so if only 5 people want their shirts done, you may have to wait until one more person signs up.

February 3-4

17th Annual Garden Fest
Plants for sale include palms, ferns, orchids, bromeliads, Florida natives, herbs, succulents, bamboo and roses.
Riverside Park, Vero Beach

February 24th, 2018

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies
First meeting of 2018. Hosted by the
Gainesville Bromeliad Society

March 10 – 11, 2018

Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale
Leu Gardens in Orlando – free admission

March 24, 25, 2018 Bromeliad Society of
South Florida annual show and sale at
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables

April 7, 2018 Master Gardener's Plant Fair at
the Volusia County Fairgrounds

May 29 – June 3, 2018 World Conference,
San Diego, Ca.

September 14-16, 2018

SW Bromeliad Guild annual show/sale.
Baton Rouge, La.

