

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, March 8th, 2015 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

March 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen, Start Your Engines!

President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850
Vice President – Linda Stagnol 386/212-8138
Secretary – Ed Meiser 386/785-4830
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

Statistically, once we get past mid-February the chances of a killing freeze or even a frost in this area are very low. I can never remember the exact date that the Volusia County agricultural agents point to for this, but it's close enough to the Sunday of the Daytona 500 that I use that as the marker for when it's safe to put away the frost cloth and take the more 'wimpy' bromeliads out of the garage. That's not saying that that a blast of cold air couldn't still happen (those weathermen always leave themselves an 'out'!), but it's a pretty safe bet that this season's coldest weather is now behind us.

So, how did your plants fare this past Winter? Other than that one night on Feb. 20th when the temperature fell to 29F at our home in Port Orange, the thermometer showed that we stayed above freezing from November through February. That's not saying that it didn't get cold – I tallied 19 days when the temperature dipped into the 30s this year and surprisingly, some of my yard plants showed cold damage well before February's short excursion below freezing. This is what makes it so difficult to develop an all-inclusive listing of what temperatures can be tolerated by which bromeliads. Through the years I have seen many attempts

at such a list and generally my experience has been that they're *relatively* accurate, but even among the same species of bromeliads there are those specific plants that seem to tolerate cold better than others. So, most of the lists that I've seen can be used as general guidelines for determining which bromeliads are the most cold sensitive and which ones can best handle low temperatures, however there are clearly many other factors that determine which plants are damaged by cold temperatures and which ones can survive unscathed.



Cold damage at its worst – shown here in *Aechmea blanchettiana*

Probably the most important of these is the duration of the low temperature excursion. One or two hours below freezing in our area has a very different impact on plants from the same temperatures north of

us, but persisting for 8 to 10 hours. That only makes sense – it takes a while for water in an ice cube tray to freeze and it takes a while for water filled cells in a bromeliad leaf to do the same.

Equally important in its impact on bromeliads in my opinion would be the weather conditions before a sudden drop in temperature. If we have a sudden cold snap in November after many days of mild weather, the potential for damage to plants is much greater than if those same low temperatures occur later in the year following many days of cool weather. For example, bromeliads in my yard and even mature banana plants were undamaged after this February's recent sub-freezing temperatures – most likely because we had experienced evening temperatures in the mid to upper 30s during the previous three weeks and the plants were becoming somewhat acclimated to this. This same year however, several bromeliads in the landscape and even a large agave in our front yard developed cold damage in several leaves after a stretch of warm weather was followed by an extended period of wet and cold in December. Temperatures did not go below freezing but damage still occurred.



Cold damage in a bromeliad leaf can be seen in these browned areas.

Finally, don't underestimate the effects of microclimates in different parts of your yard. A plant in one portion of a yard may be untouched by a frost or freezing weather while the same plant in another part of that

yard may emerge from that 'arctic clipper' unscathed. If you can learn where these warmer, protected areas are, you may be spared the trouble of spreading frost cloth over all of your plants and then removing it and storing it away after the danger passes. We'll revisit this topic in the Fall, but for now – enjoy this warmer weather and go to work separating and potting up those pups!

Last month's meeting –

Last month was a bit of a 'follow-up' to the previous month's discussion on Tillandsias, but focused on 'The Other Tillandsioidiae'...the Genus Vriesea. Several of our members brought in their Vrieseas for show and tell, which tied into the program very nicely and I was very happy to see Hedy Quirk's Vriesea botafogensis.



Vriesea botafogensis photo by M Asmuss

(Photo about courtesy of FCBS website)

This is one of the more unusual small Vriesea species plants and is often confused with Vriesea saundersii, which may have a more open rosette of gray speckled leaves but a very similar type of bloom.



Vriesea saundersii at recent bromeliad show

They look pretty much alike don't they? I'm told that the difference is in the structure of the flowers. In *V. saundersii*, the stamens don't extend beyond the flower petals while in *V. botafogensis* they do! Come on you taxonomists – that's all you've got to distinguish between the two? Isn't that like saying that a black cat is a different species from a white one?

This month's meeting –

We're going to do something a little different this month for our program as Vice President Linda Stagnol shares with us some of her "Offbeat and Unusual Growing Techniques" for bromeliads. You won't want to miss this learning opportunity!

And don't forget Show and Tell!

President's Message

*My Fellow Bromeliacs -
on Saturday, February 14th, a group of us traveled to Mary McBride's home in hopes of helping her thin out her and Billy's crop of bromeliads. The day started out in the 30's, so I wondered if our club's turnout would be diminished. To my surprise, more people showed up for the fun than originally on the sign up list!! A table was set up to clean and separate some of the plants. Another area was used to tag and identify plants our club could use for the Water Wise Sale (March 7th in New Smyrna). Let me tell you, there was ALOT of work to be done. We moved, cleaned, separated and moved again hundreds of bromeliads! We worked from 9am til 2pm and were able to handle only about half of the collection.....maybe.*

*This leads me to my next point
....there's still more work to be done. I am planning to go back on Saturday, March 14th to finish up and get the rest of the mission accomplished. If we can get a group like the first time, Mary can have her yard back (NOT!) and the club will have more nice and unusual bromeliads for the Master Gardener's Sale.*

Think about joining us... "Many hands make light work" and we can certainly use yours! We all had a wonderful time and got to know one another a little better. I'd personally like to thank Bryan Manion, Jane Villa-Lobo, Rosie Byard, Ann Alberti, Richard Hills, Mark Nelon, Jack Dunlop, Sharon Gum, Rose Vincel and Virginia Dorbach for their time and efforts. It should be warmer March 14th so please consider adding your name to this list! Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour as we "Spring Ahead" on March 8th.

Bill Hazard

March in the bromeliad garden –

Spring is not just around the corner now – it's here...and now is an excellent time to start working in the garden. If your bromeliads are looking anything like mine, they're in dire need of an overall cleaning, removal of dead leaves, repotting, separating and just a general overhaul, so, have at it! Look carefully for signs of scale on the leaves of your plants. Winter, when the plants are often huddled close together and covered for cold protection is the prime time for scale to get started. Treat it now with something containing imidicloprid before it really gets out of control. This can also be a difficult time of the year for bromeliads. Light conditions are changing from the short cold days of winter to more direct sunlight and longer periods of light. The end result? Leaves can develop sun burn spots on them, so keep a close eye on how much light your plants are receiving this month. Gradually acclimate them to the brighter light they'll be receiving for the next 6 months.

Birthdays for March:

Wow! There are a whole lot of FECBS members who decided to be born in March! Happy Birthday to the following:

Francisco Cardosos
Judith Davies
Bill Hazard
Richard Hills
Eve Krauth
Jane Upham

Milton Cohen
Louise Dianto
Tree Hazard
Jim Irvin
Vicki Teel

and once again we have been invited to have a booth.

Looking ahead:

March 6-8th and 13-15th, 2015

Searl Brothers Nursery 17th Annual Spring Plant Extravaganza
6640 SW 172nd Avenue
SW Ranches, FL 33331
Bromeliads, crotons, cordylines, aroids – over 500 species of tropical plants. Free BBQ lunch on first weekend.

March 13-15

Central Florida Koi Show free exposition and vendor fair at the International Palms Resort
6515 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819
Go to <http://koiweb.org/cfks/>

March 14-15, 2015

Spring Plant Sale at Leu Gardens
1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando
Free admission

March 15-15, 2015

Fairchild Tropical Gardens 13th International Orchid Festival
10901 Old Cutler Rd.
Coral Gables, Fl.

March 27-29

Tropiflora's Spring Festival
www.tropiflora.com

March 27-29, 2015

Everybody's Flower Show at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach

April 11th, 2015

Volusia County Master Gardener's Plant Fair (or is it 'Plante Faire'?) at the county fairgrounds in Deland. This is a half day sale

April 11th, 2015

Palm Coast Garden Club's Spring Garden Expo and Plant Sale at the Trinity Presbyterian Church. 156 Florida Park Drive. 9am to 4pm

April 17-19, 2015

Bromeliad Society of South Florida 34th annual show and sale to be held at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. Gardens are open at 7:30am-4:30 Sat., 7:30am - 9pm Sunday. General Admission \$25, \$18 for seniors
10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables, 33196
Chihuly Glass in the Gardens exhibition will be on display until May 31st!

April 18-19, 2015

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Spring Sale at Sanford Garden Center.

May 2nd, 2015

Field trip to Ocala to visit George and Irene Aldrich's 'Plants and Things' bromeliad nursery.

September 26, 2015

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. "Bromeliads in the Magic City".

711 NW 72nd Ave.

Miami, Fl. 33126

Double Tree Hilton Miami Airport and Convention Center

Room rate of \$107/night plus parking

For more information about reservations, go to

<http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/M/MIAMADT-BRO-20150923/index.jhtml>