

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, August 10th, 2014 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

August 2014

The Dog Days of Summer

President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804
Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850
Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

I don't really know what "the dog days of Summer" means, but I'm guessing that it's a reference to those hot, humid days when dogs just want to lay around in the shade, when indoor pets don't want to leave the comforts of air conditioning to go for a walk with their owners. It's those "peak of the Summer" times when dog owners secretly wish they had a cat that doesn't require daily walks instead of a dog and cat owners are a little too smug about their pets' ability to be a bit more self-sufficient. This year it's been a bit of an old-time Florida Summer where you can almost set your watch to the afternoon thunderstorms that suddenly appear, quickly drench us with liquid sunshine and just as quickly disappear – leaving us with even higher humidity than before! This is the time of year when it's impossible to quickly take an outdoor photograph because as soon as you go outside, the camera lens fogs over, although for those of us who wear glasses it almost doesn't matter since our glasses fog over just as quickly and we end up taking pictures of what we thought were bromeliads in bloom, but turn out to be photos of st. augustine grass that badly needs mowing...again. If you're beginning to tire of changing your clothes three or more times each day because they quickly become saturated with perspiration, cheer up – it won't be long now before those daytime 90 degree temperature fall off into the 80s again and the humidity drops from

110% to a more tolerable 80%. The frequent rains will disappear and we'll have to turn on our sprinklers once again. The cycle continues.

My bromeliads have been thriving in this humidity and rain and once again I think that I should be able to grow any variety – whether it tolerates cold weather or not. It's just a passing craziness though. I've lost enough plants in past years to realize that our optimum growing conditions won't last and before we know it, we'll be protecting our bromeliads from approaching cold fronts.

This month's meeting –

Dave Johnson of Pinellas Park will be giving us an education on the pattern-leaved Vrieseas. What are they? Where do they come from? How do you grow them? All of your questions will be answered AND Dave will be bringing plants with him for sale, so be sure to bring your wallets and purses because he's an outstanding grower and his plants are absolutely first rate!

Last month's meeting –

I'm sorry that Calandra and I missed it, but all reports indicate that it was an excellent meeting and, not surprisingly, George Aldrich presented a terrific program to our group. Many thanks to Michelle Kelley for taking the photos below from that meeting!



George and Irene Aldrich at July's FECBS meeting. George is holding a beautiful and enormous *Tillandsia ehlersiana*.



That's not a snake – it's a caulescent *Tillandsia*.



George with *Tillandsia xerographica*.



Wait a minute...that's not a bromeliad!

Plant Profile – *Tillandsia flexuosa*

Florida is one of the few places in this country where you can actually see wild bromeliads in their native surroundings. When you say this, most people usually think only of the Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usnioides*), and ball moss (*Tillandsia recurvata*) that are so noticeable in trees around here, but in our area of Northeast Florida we also have *Tillandsia utriculata* (the bromeliad that the Mexican weevil finds so tasty!), *Tillandsia bartramii* (named for William Bartram who travelled Florida in its early days), and *Tillandsia x Florida* (a naturally occurring hybrid). We don't have the variety of native bromeliads that can be found in Central and South America or even a bit farther south in Florida. Our winters are a little bit too severe to suit many of the 16 species and 2 natural hybrids described in

Luther and Benzing's book Native Bromeliads of Florida, but I've always found it exciting to look for some of these other species whenever we are visiting in South Florida. One such Florida native is *Tillandsia flexuosa*.



Tillandsia flexuosa photo by Ken Marks

Photo courtesy of FCBS website.

The silver banded leaves are arranged in a very upright rosette and develop in a spiral, twisted way that is characteristic of this species. Leaves are quite soft and rubbery. It's easy to overlook this small to medium sized plant since it blends in so well with the same branches and tree limbs that it attaches itself to. When it blooms however, the long arching inflorescence generally has pink to red bracts and pink flowers and is much harder to miss.

Unfortunately, this is one of those native bromeliads that the weevil finds tasty and is fast disappearing from areas where it was once quite common.



Florida form of *T. flexuosa* in a display at a bromeliad show.

Another form of this plant that I find much easier to grow in this area is the variety native to Argentina. I have been successfully growing this plant since 1992 and found it to be much more tolerant of brief spells of cold weather than the Florida native form.



Argentine variety of *T. flexuosa* mounted on tree root.

This plant resembles the one shown in the photo by Ken Marks, but has a much more open rosette of leaves, less noticeable banding and after completing its bloom cycle, new plantlets form on the inflorescence! This explains the name that was on the tag when I first received it – *T. flexuosa* var. *vivipara*, however this is not recognized in the 2012 Bromeliad Binomial as a separate variety. My *T. flexuosa* is coming into bloom now and although the flowers have not begun to open on the inflorescence yet, the plant is still quite an eye-catcher with its bloom spike extending nearly one meter from the center of the plant!

Volusia County 2014 Fall Home and Garden Show

I was contacted recently by a representative of Show Technology Productions asking if FECBS would like to participate in their upcoming Volusia County Fall Home and Garden Show and before I had a chance to ask how much booth space would cost, was told that we were being offered a free sales booth! The price was certainly right and a quick pole of our officers showed unanimous interest in participating. I'll pass along more information as I receive it (we'll make final plans at the August meeting but, for now all we need to know is that it will be August 22-24 (that's a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach. This will be a great opportunity to become more visible in the community, have a little fun,... and maybe sell a few of our excess offsets in the process.

Just a gentle reminder...

Sometimes it's tempting to get caught up on all the news since our last meeting by talking with fellow members, but please respect our speakers and refrain from conversations while the program is underway.



QUIET

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Birthdays for August:

Happy Birthday this month to:

Alan Bennett	Margaret Gillen
Marty Borkosky	Sharon Gum

Looking ahead:

August 16-17, 2014

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale at the Garden Club of Sanford on 17-92, one block south of Lake Mary Blvd. Lots of great plants at great prices – in air conditioned comfort!
9:00am -4:00pm

September 8-14, 2014 – BSI World Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Go to www.bsi.org for the latest information.

September 11, 2014

“Gala” at Florida Federation of Garden Clubs headquarters – 90th Anniversary.

October 25, 26, 2014

36th Annual Southwest Bromeliad Guild show and sale in Houston Tx. DoubleTree by Hilton Houston Intercontinental Airport 15747 JFK Blvd. Houston, Texas 77032 For more information, contact Gene Powers (713)-907-7049, powersgw@aol.com, or Allyn Pearlman, (713)-858-3047, deliboys@comcast.net.

March 27-29, 2015

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

September 26, 2015

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. “Bromeliads in the Magic City”. More details to follow as they become available, but mark that date on your calendar!

