

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY 1954-2014

Celebrating over 60 Years of Bromeliads



January 2015 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, January 6, 2015
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

Location:

Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

At the January meeting Susan and Larry Sousa assisted by Helga Tarver and other experienced members will conduct a workshop on how to mount bromeliads onto wood. It will be a hands-on workshop where members participate in the mounting process and then take the completed project home. The society will provide bromeliads (Neoregelias, Aechmeas, Vrieseas, and Tillandsias to name a few) and wood for mounting. These will be available for purchase at a nominal fee of \$1 to \$4 each, a bargain and well below the cost to the society. Members can supply their own plants and/or wood if they prefer. Mounting materials such as glue, wire, and cable ties will be also provided. If you plan to participate, please bring additional items you might want to use such as gloves and scissors.

Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the meeting. Sellers are requested to donate at least one plant to the evening's raffle table.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Special 60th Anniversary/Holiday Party

At the start of the evening outgoing President Susan Sousa thanked the officers, trustees, committee chairs, and other members who supported her efforts in the two years she served as our leader. And we thanked her for her service and in particular her herculean efforts as chairman of the Bromeliad Extravaganza that our society hosted in 2013. As a token of our appreciation we presented her with a lovely, large-sized *Vriesea* 'John Hirota' (picture on right, from fcbs.org).



Vriesea 'John Hirota' Shown by Bromeliads Hawaii
14th World Bromeliad Conference, San Francisco, California June 20--July 1, 2006



The rest of the evening was dedicated to celebrating our 60th anniversary as a bromeliad society. The Bromeliad Society International was organized in 1950 and was the first official bromeliad society. Other local bromeliad societies were beginning to spring up around the U.S. about the same time and in 1954 our society was the first to be officially recognized by BSI.

Our society has accomplished a lot over the years and below is a brief summary of our history presented by Helga Tarver at the party.

Why We Have a Great Society

by Helga Tarver

The success of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society is due to the work of a great number of very active members, past and present.

In the 1950s and 1960s numerous articles by the editor of the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) Journal praised the efforts and the enthusiasm of the newly founded FWCBS. Articles by FWC members Erma Dietrich, John Bechner and Ernest Palmer talked about a display of bromeliads together with an orchid show.

In 1964, FWC hosted the very first bromeliads-only show anywhere. The show was organized and chaired by Jinks Watkins and was to be the precursor of what is now the World Bromeliad Conference.

In 1974, Henry Rahmlow started the first FWC newsletter. He was followed over the years by nine newsletter editors, including Judy Lund and Linda Sheetz who has been the editor since March 2009. Thanks to the Internet and e-mail, our editor is now in contact with newsletter editors of numerous societies not only in the US but also in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Besides the members mentioned above, several others have had articles published in the BSI Journal: Dr. Morris Dexter, Dennis Cathcart, Alton Lee, and of course Harry Luther. Harry, who was our president in 1975, became the world-renowned taxonomist at the Selby Botanical Garden Bromeliad Identification Center. Kathy Risley had an article about Steve Littlefield published in the Journal, too. Steve is our resident artist and created several posters for World Bromeliad Conferences, redesigned our logo, and made the podium cover (with our logo) that we use at every meeting.

FWC won first prize for a society display at the World Conference in 1980 and in 1992, designed by Andy Price. FWC also won first prize for a society display named *Orlandiana Jones and the Temple of Bloom* at the Orlando world conference in 1996, which was put up by several members.

In 2000, we all planted the bromeliad area at the Florida Botanical Gardens and returned several times over the following years to clean up the area.

We have a number of hybridizers in our society: Michael Kiehl, Marty Baxley, Dave Johnston, Tropiflora nursery, and the late Andy Price.

Tropiflora, Michael Kiehl, Dave Johnston, and Marty Baxley have nurseries to supply us with plants. Andy Price and David Smith, both of whom passed away this year, also had nurseries.

A great number of members shared their knowledge with us as speakers at our meetings: Dr. Morris Dexter, Harry Luther, Dennis Cathcart, Alton Lee, Dave Johnston, Marty Baxley, Chip Hill, Helga Tarver, Gary Lund, Tommy Crocker, Michael O'Leary, Barrett Bassick and Ashley Graham, to name some of them. Andy Price and Helga Tarver presented numerous workshops.

We hosted three Bromeliad Extravaganzas: in 1994 chaired by Fay O'Rourke, in 2004 chaired by Carol Schultz, and in 2013 chaired by Susan Sousa. In 2002, we hosted a wonderful World Bromeliad Conference co-chaired by Fay O'Rourke and Kathy Risley.

In 2001, Derek Butcher, the new BSI Bromeliad Cultivar Registrar, wrote to all bromeliad societies asking them to inform him of and send him photos of old and new hybrids. Our society was the only one for a decade to provide him with this information.

Judy Lund has organized several interesting field trips and Gary Lund has been our treasurer for many years and is currently one of the BSI directors.

Over all our 60 years a tremendous number of members have served as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, librarian, historian, newsletter editor, raffle and plant sales organizers, delegates to the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, refreshment chairpersons, and trustees.

We can be very proud of our achievements and we are very thankful to the active members who made it all possible.

The Party

As usual for our parties there was a good turnout of about 60 members and five guests. There was abundant food and good camaraderie, and for this special celebration there were gift plants for every member present. Thanks to all who helped make the evening successful -- those who arranged, transported, provided, and bagged the gift plants, made centerpieces, decorated the room, brought food, set up the room and cleaned up afterwards. The teamwork, cooperation and enthusiasm displayed are what have made our society what it is today, as reflected in Helga's historical summary. Below are pictures that show the celebration.

DIAMOND JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY CAKE



THE FOOD



CENTERPIECES



OPENING PACKAGED PLANTS



AND THE PRIZE PLANTS ARE ...



THE PARTY PEOPLE





Member Service Recognition Award

At the December meeting President Susan Sousa announced that **Marion Snowdon** is the recipient of this year's FWCBS Member Service Recognition Award. Her name has been added to a list of past honorees on a plaque located in the bromeliad garden at the Florida Botanical Gardens (pictured on the right, courtesy of Gary Lund). Some of the information about Mrs. Snowdon below is from an article by Alton Lee that appeared in a 2005 issue of the BSI Journal.

Mrs. Snowdon was a 'Florida 'cracker', a descendant of two pioneer Pinellas County families that came to the Florida west coast in the 1860s. (One of these was the Belcher family for which Belcher Road is named.) In order to realize her lifelong dream of owning a plant nursery, she retired early from her job as a high school cafeteria manager in the Pinellas County school system and established Snowdon's Nursery. It was a backyard enterprise located at her home in Tarpon Springs, and she ran it for



20 years. She loved virtually every family of plants and her nursery was jammed with aroids, gesneriads, ferns, begonias, and her two special favorites, orchids and bromeliads.

Mrs. Snowdon was active in FWCBS from the 1960s until the early 1990s, frequently hosted society events, and added to the overall sociable atmosphere of the group. Over the years she generously donated both material and money to help the society. She was instrumental in implementation of the meeting refreshments, the annual holiday party, and the monthly raffle table. She often donated large, beautifully grown, occasionally rare plants to the raffle to enhance ticket sales and raise money for the society. Many patronized her nursery because of the range and reasonable costs of bromeliads and other plants she zealously stocked. The Marie Selby Gardens in Sarasota was remembered, among others, when Mrs. Snowdon dispersed her bromeliad art and book collection.

THIS AND THAT

2015 Dues Payable in January

Society dues are payable in January and will be considered delinquent if not paid by the first of March. They are still a bargain at \$15 per year for an individual and \$25 per year for a household. You may pay dues at the next meeting, or send a check, payable to FWCBS, to the club treasurer Gary Lund at 904 Oakwood Drive, Largo, FL 33770.

New Members

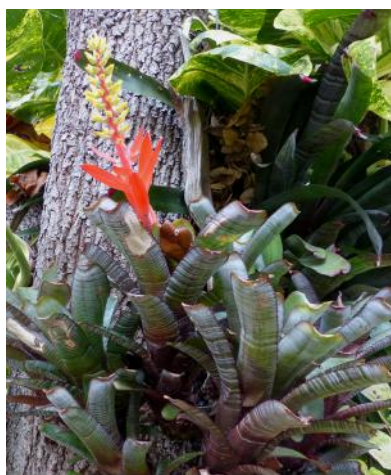
Four new members joined since the November meeting -- Mitch Armstrong, Debbie Castronova, Pauline Ditchkus, and Barry Reese. Introduce yourself to them at the next meeting and make them welcome.

Fred Ried

Member Fred Ried passed away last week at the age of 65. Fred and his wife Mary had been active at FWCBS meetings in the 1980s and renewed their interest in bromeliads and our society in recent years after which Fred continued to expand his collection. Mary tells us his favorite genus was Tillandsia, followed by Hohenbergia and Aechmea, especially the thorny ones. She and Fred particularly liked our meetings and found our group to be the 'best plant group' they had been a part of.

Blooming this Month

Most of my Billbergia are blooming this month, and, oddly, so too is one of my *Aechmea nudicaulis* (picture below), a bromeliad that in my yard has always bloomed in May.



Aechmea nudicaulis



Guzmania hybrid



Ringer! Though not a bromeliad, this Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera* species) is lovely still.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2015

March 14-15, Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL (<http://www.leugardens.org>)

March 27-29, Tropiflora Spring Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 (tropiflora.com)

March 28-29, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL (friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest)

April 11-12, 2014, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

April 16-19, Bromsmatta, 18th Australasian Bromeliad Conference

Parramatta, Australia, hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Australia (www.bromeliad.org.au)

April 25-26, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb)

August 15-16, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (Ben Klugh at Klughka@yahoo.com)

September 26, Bromeliad Extravaganza, Bromeliads in the Magic City

Hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South FL (<http://www.bssf-miami.org>)

2015 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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