

**FLORIDA WEST COAST  
BROMELIAD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**  
March 2012

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**NEXT MEETING**

**Date:** Tuesday, March 6, 2012  
**Location:** Hope Presbyterian Church  
1698 South Belcher Road  
Clearwater, Florida 33764  
**Time:** Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

**NOTICE!!!!!!**

This will be the last newsletter you will receive if you have not renewed your FWCBS membership for 2012.

Membership renewal dues were payable through February. To maintain your membership and newsletters, you should renew at the March meeting, or send a check, payable to FWCBS, to: Brian Corey (Treasurer), 1153 Williams Drive South, St. Petersburg FL 33705.

**March Program**

**Dr. Terrie Bert** will be the speaker for the evening and her presentation, *The Outstandingly Ostentatious and Particularly Picturesque O & P Bromeliad Genera, Part I*, will be about four of the eight bromeliad genera beginning with the letters O or P. For each genus, she will talk about its distribution, habitats, and growing conditions. And she will show examples of various species within each of the four genera as they occur in nature and describe how (or if) they can be cultivated by a collector. As most of you know, Terrie's presentations are well put together, packed with useful information, and not to be missed.

**Plant Sales**

Ms. Bert will be the sole vendor of plants for this meeting and therefore there will be no member plant sales.

**LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

**Program:**

**George Aldrich's** presentation, *Coast to Coast and Border to Border*, chronicled his 2001 three-week trip across Costa Rica. He showed us pictures of bromeliads in their native habitats along with other tropical plants that occur in the same areas. We saw the Pacific coast beaches with their black sands, the Caribbean coast beaches with their white sands, and misty, high altitude rainforests. Sadly, we also saw pictures of active, ongoing destruction of the country's rain forests.



George also showed us pictures of his visit with the well-known hybridizer Chester Skotak at Chester's bromeliad nursery, DuraFlor in Palmares. Chester is a leading expert in the field of bromeliad hybridization and has introduced countless unusual bromeliad hybrids into horticulture. Born and raised in Texas, he became interested in bromeliads when he studied floriculture at Texas A&M University. After a few years spent in Naples, Florida, in 1978 he moved to Costa Rica where he began growing bromeliads commercially. Over the years, he has collected bromeliads extensively throughout Central and

South America. He holds over 23 bromeliad patents and around 250 of his hybrids are officially registered with the Bromeliad Society International. Some of his popular Neoregelia hybrids include: *Neo.* 'Milagro', 'Yin', 'Yang', 'Hannibal Lector', and 'Norman Bates'. Variegated plants are his favorites and he has an extensive collection of rare and one-of-a-kind specimens.

George also visited the Wilson Botanical Gardens founded by Catherine and Robert Wilson in Las Cruces. It is part of the one of three biological stations operated by the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS). The OTS is a non-profit consortium that includes 63 universities and research institutions from the United States, Latin America, and Australia and was founded to provide leadership in education, research, and responsible use of natural resources in the tropics.

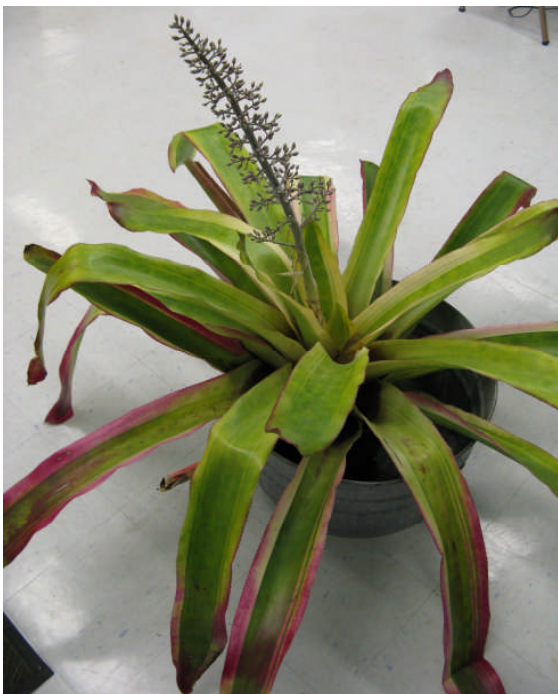
For more on the gardens and the role the Wilsons played in its founding, see the article below by Alton Lee.

### Show and Tell

Reported by Helga Tarver

Barret Bassick	<i>Til. jucunda</i> ; <i>Til. bartramii</i> ; <i>Aec. bromeliifolia</i> ; three cultivars of <i>Aec. recurvata</i>
Susan Bogacki	<i>Til. bulbosa</i> , mounted on grape wood
Tom Crocker	<i>Quesnelia marmorata</i>
Barbara Gardner	<i>Til. fasciculata</i> var. <i>densispica</i>
Chip Hill	<i>Neo.</i> 'Charming DeRolf' (Andy Price hybrid); <i>Neo.</i> 'Bobby Dazzler'; <i>Neo.</i> 'Rosa Morada' (Skotak hybrid #20)
Alton Lee	<i>Aec. nudicaulis</i> ; <i>Vriesea</i> 'Christine'; <i>Vr.</i> 'Robin'; <i>Guzmania</i> 'Insignis'(?)
Steve Littlefield	<i>Til. utriculata</i> ; <i>Til. recurvata</i> (volunteers on fallen branch); <i>Neo. compacta</i> (large form)
Gary Lund	<i>Aec. mexicana albomarginata</i> ; <i>Aec. fendleri</i> (?); <i>Aec. caudata</i> 'Blotches'; <i>Aec. bromeliifolia</i>
Kathy Risley	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Bamboo'
Larry Sousa	<i>Neo.</i> 'Charm'; <i>Neo.</i> 'Purple Star' (with stripes)
Helga Tarver	<i>Til. gardneri</i> var. <i>gardneri</i> ; <i>Vr. espinosae</i> ; <i>Vr. lingulata</i> (Herb Hill hybrid #446)

Below are pictures of some of the plants shown.



*Aec. mexicana albomarginata*



*Til. fasciculata* var. *densispica*



*Aec. recurvata* (three cultivars)



*Vriesea espinosae*



*Til. bartramii*



*Til. jucunda*

#### THIS AND THAT

##### **New Members**

Welcome the seven new members who joined at the February meeting -- Donna Donner, John Edwards, Barbara Gaines, Marilyn and Dan Michalec, Anne Richter, and Gregory Sytch -- and two who renewed their membership after many years of absence -- Mary and Fred Ried.

##### **Catherine and Robert Wilson**

Reported by Alton Lee

Catherine and Robert Wilson were the owners of the legendary Fantastic Gardens in Coral Gables, Florida. Any plant person who ever visited this nursery is very unlikely ever to forget it. The range of tropical plants there, including the rarest of bromeliads, was nothing short of astonishing.

The Wilsons were also the authors of the much-coveted bromeliad book *Bromeliads in Cultivation*, which was one of the very first serious books on the subject. Though planned as a two-volume enterprise, the second volume never happened, but Volume I is a must for any serious bromeliad collector. It can occasionally be found at affordable prices.

The Wilsons sold Fantastic Gardens (no longer in existence today) and retired to Las Cruces, Costa Rica, where they founded Wilson Botanical Gardens in 1963. The famous landscapist and botanist, Roberto Burle

Marx, had a hand in the planning of the garden, which the Wilsons eventually transferred to the Organization for Tropical Studies. There are more than a thousand species of plants on the grounds, and the gardens serve several purposes. They are used as a training ground for scientists and have education programs for the public. Research programs on tropical botany, including conservation, horticulture, sustainable development, agroecology, and reforestation studies are carried out there, and the gardens play a role in preserving endangered species.

The Wilsons' Memorial is in the garden where they are buried.---H. Alton Lee

#### **Addendum**

The two pictures below from the February newsletter are bromeliads Marty Baxley showed us during the January meeting. They are both *Bil.* 'Hallelujah' x 'Stolonifera'. One of them was misidentified in the newsletter.



←← *Bil.* 'Hallelujah' x *stolonifera* .→→



#### **UPCOMING EVENTS, 2012**

March 17-18, Leu Gardens Annual Plant Sale

Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL ([leugardens.org](http://leugardens.org))

March 24-25, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL ([tampagreenfest.com](http://tampagreenfest.com))

March 30-April 1, Tropiflora Spring Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 ([tropiflora.com](http://tropiflora.com))

April 14-15, USF Botanical Gardens 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL ([cas.usf.edu/garden](http://cas.usf.edu/garden))

April 14-15, Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society Sale

Sanford Garden Club, Sanford, FL (407-539-4314)

April 20-22, Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Show and Sale

Tampa Garden Club, Tampa, FL ([bromeliadsociety@juno.com](mailto:bromeliadsociety@juno.com))

April 20-22, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Show and Sale

Manatee Convention Center, Palmetto, FL ([sarasotabromeliadsociety.org](http://sarasotabromeliadsociety.org))

April 28-29, Green Thumb 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Plant Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL ([stpete.org/parks/greenthumb](http://stpete.org/parks/greenthumb))

May 12-13, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Mother's Day Sale

Fashion Square Mall, Orlando, FL ([mybscf.org](http://mybscf.org))

September 24-30, 20<sup>th</sup> World Bromeliad Conference, Orlandiana '12

Orlando, FL, USA ([bsi.org/events/2012/Orlando2012](http://bsi.org/events/2012/Orlando2012))

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