FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2015

Celebrating over 60 Years in Bromeliads

floridabromeliads.org

August 2015 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:	**Location:**
Tuesday, August 4, 2015 Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30	Good Samaritan Church 6085 Park Boulevard Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

Mike Michalski will speak to us about his experiences hybridizing bromeliads, and particularly the genus *Neoregelia*. He will tell us the history of how he developed the method he uses today that took many years of trial and a lot of error and a lot of help from well-known hybridizers such as Michael Kiehl, Grant Groves and Chester Skotak, to name a few. Mike is a longtime member of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida and has been growing bromeliads for over 20 years.

Plant Sales

The speaker will be the sole plant vendor for this meeting and there will be no member plant sales.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

Terrie Bert's presentation *Surveying the Ultimate Wonders—the S through W Uncommon Bromeliad Genera* was the last in her series of talks that she started seven years ago on the 55 bromeliad genera. This talk covered five genera starting with the letters S through W, most of which are not commonly grown in cultivation. These five are *Sequencia* (discovered using bromeliad DNA), *Steyerbromelia* (has just six species), *Ursulaea* (has just two species), *Werauhia* (composed of many species) and *Wittrockia* (with species that seem to have little in common). The first of these have a restricted range of habitats while the last two grow over a wide range of habitats. The following are some points from her talk, along with pictures that show some of the species she discussed. (Pictures are from the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website--fcbs.org.)

<u>Genus *Sequencia* (subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*)</u>

- This is the newest bromeliad genus and was established via DNA sequencing (hence the name 'Sequencia').
- It has only one species, *Sequencia serrata* (picture on right), which was formerly in the genus *Brocchinia* as *Brocchinia serrata*.
- *Sequencia* is closely related to the genus *Hechtia* and the genus *Navia*.
- Its native habitats are found in Venezuela and northwest Brazil, primarily on tepuis at elevations of 3,000 to 5,000 feet above sea level.
- It is saxicolous.

Genus *Steyerbromelia* (subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*)

- This is one of the more recently established genera.
- It has six species—*deflexa, diffusa, discolor, plowmanii, ramosa, and thomasii*—all of which are endemic to southern Venezuela.
- The genus was named for Julian A. Steyermark, an American plant collector, author, and editor (1909-1988).
- They grow within a narrow range of environmental conditions, preferably rocky, cool and moist areas. Their native habitats are found in open vegetated areas and on granite walls, on tepuis and mountain slopes, and they grow at elevations of 1,800 to 9,000 feet above sea level.
- They are lithophytic or terrestrial.
- They are hard to grow in Florida.
- Light: They like high altitude sun and mist.
- Moisture: They like high humidity and should be kept moist.
- Temperature: They grow in cool environments.

Genus *Ursulaea* (subfamily *Bromelioideae*)

- This genus has two species, *macvaughii* and *tuitensis*.
- The genus was named for Ursula Baensch, plant breeder and co-author with her husband of the book *Blooming Bromeliads*.
- This genus and the genus *Hechtia* are the only two bromeliad genera found solely north of the Panama Canal.
- The two species are endemic to the Pacific Coast of Mexico, and specifically in the state of Jalisco.
- They are epiphytic or saxicoulous.
- They grow in restricted, distinct habitats.
- *Ur. tuitensis* (picture below) grows on boulders in open pine-oak forests near the Pacific coast at elevations of 3,100 to 5,000 feet.
- *Ur. macvaughii* (picture on right) is an endangered species that in native habitat grows in full sun at high, dry elevations.

- They have dark purple flowers and white fuzzy sepals.
- They can be hard to grow in Florida (but some of us grow them without any problem).
- Light: They grow in filtered to full to filtered sun.
- Medium: They prefer a porous soil mix, i.e., loose and well-drained, such as 50% soil with 50% perlite. Terry says that instead of a soil mix she uses pieces of volcanic rocks in the pots for this genus.
- Fertilizing: Fertilize cautiously with low amounts of a slow, time-release product.
- Temperature: They are sensitive to temperatures below 40 degrees,

Genus *Werauhia* (subfamily *Tillandsioideae*)

- This is a new genus and has 88 species that were formerly assigned to the genera *Vriesea* and *Tillandsia*.
- The genus was named for Werner Rauh, a German botanist (1913-2000).
- While they are generally not very colorful, a few species are variegated (*W. hygrometrica*), some have discolored leaves (*W. latissima*), and some have mottled leaves (*W. kupperiana*), examples of which are pictured below.

Variegated

Werauhia hygrometrica

Discolored

Werauhia latissima

Mottled

Werauhia kupperiana

- They are night bloomers and are pollinated by bats.
- Their native habitats are in Mexico, Ecuador, western Brazil, and throughout the Caribbean.
- They grow at high altitudes, in mountain cloud forests, in bright, moist and protected areas.
- They can be grown in Florida but with difficulty.
- Light: They prefer moderate sun exposure.
- Moisture: They like a moist environment.
- Medium: They prefer a well-drained mix.
- Fertilizing: Use low amounts of a slow, time-release product.
- Temperature: They are cold sensitive.

Genus *Wittrockia* (subfamily *Bromelioideae*)

- *Wittrockia* was formerly a subgenus of the genus *Canistrum*.

- It has seven species, *cyathiformis, gigantea, paulistana, spiralipetala, superba, smithii,* and *tenuisepala,* two of which are pictured below.

Wittrockia cyathiformis

Wittrockia gigantea

Wittrockia gigantea cultivar 'Leopardinum'

- The genus was named for Veit Bracher Wittrock, a Swedish botanist (1839-1914).

- They typically have shiny leaves with sharp spines.

- These species are primarily pollinated by hummingbird, and they have long flowers to accommodate the birds' long beaks.

- Their native habitats are in southeastern Brazil. They are adaptable to varying climates and light exposure and grow in a wide range of environments from coastal forests at sea level up to elevations of 10,000 feet in mountain cloud forests.

- They are epiphytic or terrestrial.

- They can be hard to grow in Florida.

- Light: They prefer a moderate amount of sun.

- Moisture: They like to be kept moist but can rot at the base. To reduce the likelihood of rotting, remove the lower dead leaves.

- Medium: They prefer a loose, well-drained mix.

- Fertilizing: Use low amounts of a slow, time-release product.

- Temperature: They are cold sensitive.

Terry threw in a few 'factoids' in her talk such as:

- Bromeliads can release lots of methane gas which is generated by the plant and insect debris decomposing in the water in their tanks.

- Bat-pollinates species are typically lowland plants where bats are abundant and diverse.

- Bat-pollinated species in trees typically have long stalks so their flowers can be more easily reached by the bats.

Show and Tell
By Helga Tarver

Alton Lee *Vriesea erythrodactylon* (picture on right)*; Aechmea moorei*

THIS AND THAT

New Members
Please welcome our newest members, Ray Gurgui who joined in June and Karen Trefz who joined in July.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2015

August 1, USF Bromeliad Sale
University of South Florida Botanical Gardens, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

August 14, USF Bromeliad Sale
University of South Florida Botanical Gardens, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

August 15-16, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale
The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (Ben Klugh at Klughka@yahoo.com)

October 10-11, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

September 25-27, **Bromeliad Extravaganza, *Bromeliads in the Magic City***
Hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida, Miami (http://www.bssf-miami.org; bpartagas@bellsouth.net)

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