

Next step in the clone preservation project

Our primary goal at this stage of the clone preservation project is to quickly identify the plants that are most in danger of being lost from cultivation. We are asking every collector to help us in that endeavor by examining their own collections. Rather than asking for comprehensive lists of every collection, we are trying to tackle relatively small groups of plants.

Last month, a preliminary list of bromeliad hybrids produced in the Miami region was provided. Keep this list in mind when working on your collections. Let us know if any of these plants are in your collection. If you suspect you have plants from that list, but are not sure of the identification, the first step is to consult the photo index at the FCBS website. (<http://fcbs.org>) for pictures of many of these plants. If you still have questions after consulting these photos, please bring the plants into the monthly meeting when they bloom. You are also encouraged to bring plants from this list to the meetings to show others what to look for.

In addition to the clones listed last month, we would like members of BSSF to review the *Aechmea chantinii* and *Ae. zebrina* clones in their collections. (Note that this means different clones of the species \_ the only hybrids of interest are those between two *Aechmea chantinii* clones \_ We are not ready to deal with the multiplicity of *Aechmea chantinii* hybrids with other species right now.) There have been many clones of *Ae. chantinii* registered over the years and several names used without benefit of registration. Unfortunately, even among the registered names, there were several listings in the Cultivar Registry that have no description or citation. I have no idea how to do anything with these names unless someone can bring in a corresponding plant (or a picture). Two of the clones in this group were actually developed in Miami, so are also included on last month's list.

The cultivar names I have found attached to *Aechmea chantinii* are:

Albomarginata, Albright Red (photo on FCBS), Amazonense (Lee Moore), Amazonia, Ash Blond, aurantiaca, Black (Bullis, photo on FCBS), Black Ebony, Black Goddess (photo of inflorescence on FCBS), Black Ice (photo on FCBS), Black Magic, Checkmate (Tracy Jones, photo on FCBS), Cinnamon Twist, Dark DeLeon (photo on FCBS), Dark Goddess (Moir), DeLeon, Dwarf (Grant Groves), Early Bird (photo on FCBS), Ebony, El Dorado (Tom Davis), Frosty (J. Carrone), Green Ice (photo on FCBS), Grey Ghost (Lee Moore, photo on FCBS), Harlequin (Gary Hendrix), Hazel Quilhot (Herb Hill, Jr.), John Winston (Herb Hill, Jr.), Mako Santan (Cole), Midnight Special (photo of inflorescence on FCBS), Nigre (Herb Hill, Jr.), Noir, Norway, Olive's Delight (photo on FCBS), Perumazon (Holmes), Pink Banners (Fred Fuchs,

photo on FCBS), Pink Goddess (Bullis), Pink Goddess (Holmes, ?Lee Moore), Red Goddess (Holmes), Samurai (photo on FCBS), Shogun, Silver Goddess (Grace Goode), Ski Track, Snow Flake (photo on FCBS), Solid Green, Solid Silver, Stripes-on-Stripes (Chester Skotak), Sweden, Tarapoto (collected clone from Tropiflora), variegata, Very Black, Vista (Kent)

In addition, there are several taxonomic varieties of *Aechmea chantinii*: *Ae. chantinii* var. *chantinii*, *Ae. chantinii* var. *amazonica*, *Ae. chantinii* var. *fuchsii*. (the clone Pink Banners represents this variety). There are also several wild collected clones in circulation. The Tropiflora collection from Tarapoto is one example. There are also clones collected by Wally Berg, Jack Holmes, Lee Moore and Ed Prince, to name just a few. Finally, there is the old European clone that was the only one commercially available before Jack Holmes and Lee Moore began bringing plants back from the jungles of Peru. Does anyone know whether that plant is still in cultivation?

*Aechmea zebrina* seems to present a simpler case because there has not been so much interest in hybridizing with this species. Still, there are several clones to find. The most important clone to find would be the first live introduction, the plant(s) brought in by Ralph Davis from Colombia. In 1979, Harvey Bullis noted the presence of 3 distinct clones of *Ae. zebrina* in his collection (Journal of the Bromeliad Society 29(5): 225-229), but it is not clear whether he was talking about clones in the strict sense (genetically identical plants) or clones in the more general sense of groups of plants sharing similar leaf banding and leaf forms. I have also seen an unbanded form of *Ae. zebrina* in cultivation.

There is some urgency to the task of sorting out *Aechmea chantinii* clones. Altria Plant Labs in Brazil is marketing seedlings of *Ae. chantinii* to large growers. The range of leaf colors and 'banding' patterns arising from these seedling groups seems to encompass the entire range of reported cultivars. Once these new plants are widespread in collections, it will be much more difficult to recognize the older cultivars. Also, selections from the Altria seedlings will inevitably be separated out as cultivars (many very nice plants arise in these seedling groups). Unless we have a good understanding of the current cultivars, this will be done haphazardly and create even more confusion in the future.