

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

January, 2017

## It's a Brand New Year!

**President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700**

**Co-Vice Presidents – Hedy Quirk and Jane Vila-Lobos  
386/427-2314 and 386/446-0341**

**Secretary – Rose Vincel 386/453-3229**

**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041**

Once again, I have just become accustomed to correctly writing the current year and someone has gone and changed it on me. I'll probably continue writing 2016 for the next few months until I get the hang of scribbling 2017 for the date and then at random throughout the year I'll back-slide and write 2016 again. It happens every year and I can't seem to break out of this same pattern so please excuse me if 2016 shows up on one or more of your newsletters during the year!

Along with a new year, we have some new names on the letterhead of this month's newsletter and those new officers will take their appropriate places at the head table for January's meeting. Thank you Rick for agreeing once more to take on the challenges of the presidency and thank you Hedy and Jane for volunteering to serve as co-chairs for that very important position of vice president! Rose will be making a record of our activities each month as she takes on the title of secretary. Many thanks to each of our officers for stepping up to the challenges of 2017. I know that it's going to be a great year for FECBS – how can it not be with such a terrific slate of officers to lead us!

### **Don't forget to Renew!!**

It's that time once again to pay up – annual membership dues for FECBS are now due, so if you find that you are no longer receiving your newsletter...there's a reason for that – you didn't renew your membership! See Eve and she will be very happy to welcome you back to the fold, provided of course that you fork over some of that folding stuff. Still one of the great bargains of our time - \$15/single or \$20/family for a full year of entertainment!

### **Last month's meeting –**

Never let it be said that FECBS doesn't know how to have a party! What a great event and we all need to thank Rick and Francisco for pulling everything together and for cooking that wonderful ham and roast turkey! I'm afraid that if word gets out we may find ourselves overwhelmed next year with the entire population of the Halifax area!





This year's winner of the centerpiece competition was Jean Hochdoerfer with this outstanding Billbergia display.

### In the interests of conservation...

I came across this article in one of our newsletters from exactly 15 years ago (January, 2002) and my thoughts were 1. This is really good information for this time of year and 2. Nobody is going to remember that we already ran this article in the newsletter!

Here's a question that I hear nearly every Spring after the threat of cold weather has passed and bromeliad growers are taking stock of their collections:

**“Why is it that after some winters with relatively mild temperatures some of my plants show cold damage, yet after other supposedly colder winters, the same plants show no damage at all?”**

This is one of those questions that can have several possible answers (beside the obvious “Cold, what's cold? Anything lower than 75 degrees is cold to me”) so let's see if any of the following fit your situation:

1. **It's not the cold, it's the frost.** Aren't you tired of that same whiny old Summertime adage “it's not the heat, it's the humidity” - makes you want to just slap somebody, doesn't it? Well, in the wintertime it isn't just the cold temperatures that injure bromeliads. Frost that forms during the early morning hours can severely damage leaves on many plants and frost can form at temperatures well above freezing depending on the relative humidity! The answer to the question, then is that frost may form during cool days – even though overall, it is a mild winter. And, that frost may end up damaging your plants more than an overall cold winter. So, it's not the cold, it's the humidity!

2. **It's not the cold, it's how long the cold lasts.** Many, if not most of the bromeliads that we have in our collections can stand short periods of quite cold weather – and by that, I mean temperatures dipping into the low 30's (keep in mind that 32<sup>0</sup>F is the freezing point for water). It's the number of hours that the plant is subjected to these temperatures that is important though. This means that you could easily have a single “cold” night where temperatures fall into the 20's for a brief time but returning to the upper 30's during the daytime with little or no resultant plant damage. In contrast, several continuous days of temperatures in the low to mid 30's can cause far greater damage to your plants. ...and that's why bromeliads don't grow in the wild in North Carolina!

**3. It's not the cold, it's when the cold weather shows up.** Often, if a cold winter sort of *eases* in - and by that, I mean that the weather becomes steadily cooler over a period of many days or weeks -tropical plants become hardened to the cooler temperatures and are better able to tolerate occasional dips in temperature without damage. In contrast, one of the worst situations for injuring bromeliads occurs when we have a warm Autumn followed by a long spell of balmy Winter weather and then ending in a sharp drop in temperatures. Another worst case scenario occurs when we have frost in the early Spring after we've had a number of days of warm weather. Both of these conditions catch bromeliads at their tenderest and they are most likely to suffer cold damage. So, a single day of cold weather following an otherwise warm Winter can cause more cold damage to your plants than many cold days during a so-called cold Winter.

**4. It's not the cold, it's the wind chill.**  
I've always heard that the "wind chill factor" is something created by Florida's Chamber of Commerce to make snowbirds feel that much more smug when they hear weather forecasts for their home towns back up north. Actually however, the wind chill is intended to give a more realistic picture of what outside temperatures feel like when you combine the actual temperature with the wind speed. Obviously, low temperatures feel that much colder when they are accompanied by gale-force winds. This wind chill factor concept is important also to tropical plants, but for a different reason. Our soils act as reservoirs of heat when sudden blasts of cold air pass through. Plants either in the ground or in pots on the ground benefit from the radiant heat that continues to rise from the soil for quite some time after air temperatures plummet. When cold weather is accompanied by moderate to strong winds, this radiant heat is quickly dissipated before our plants can draw any benefit from it. This can easily result in a situation where cold damage is seen in plants exposed to moderately low temperatures and strong winds. In contrast, plants may be well protected by higher soil

temperatures even during brief periods of very low temperatures as long as they are protected from the wind.

Well, there you have it - four possible situations where plants can suffer more damage during mild winters than colder ones. Feel free to pick any of these that may apply to you and you will have a ready-made excuse for why your bromeliads are not looking so good following our Winter period. Cheer up - Spring can't be far behind and those same ratty looking plants will soon put on a fresh spurt of growth, new leaves, and maybe even a beautiful bloom!

**President's message -**

*Time is just flying by and 2016 certainly brought us many surprises. I hope the holidays brought joy and good memories to you and your family. For me, this was the first time in my 17 years of working for Delta Air Lines that I was NOT working the actual holiday. It's hard to believe that it took 17 years to earn the seniority required to hold these valuable days off. I almost didn't know what to do with myself, but I can assure you I spent nearly every weekend (and holiday) enjoying my friends and family over good food and delicious desserts. My doctor's appointment this past week was proof that I must have been enjoying myself just a little too much, as I seemed to pack on a few extra pounds.*



*Our club capped off another excellent year with our Christmas party on December 11th with wonderful food, desserts and some much deserved recognition to those who have made the past year a wonderful success for the club. Special thanks to Bill Hazard, our past President and his beautiful wife Tree for all they did to promote the club in many ways, in printed media and for bringing incredible attendance to our regular club meetings. Nearly 50 people attend each of our monthly meetings, which is an incredible number, compared to other bromeliad societies around the state.*

*To continue on this success it will be my pleasure to serve as your President for the coming year along with Vice Presidents Jane Villa Lobos and Hedy Quirk. Yes, two Vice Presidents which means two times the activities and two times the fun! Rose Vincel will join us as our club secretary and Eve Krauth will continue her repeat performance as club treasurer. We're already*



*discussing several yard tours in both Palm Coast and New Smyrna Beach. And speaker invitations have already been extended for the coming year, bringing us some new faces and topics along with familiar favorites too.*

*We hope you'll join us each month for some fun and camaraderie as we learn everything we can about bromeliads. In addition to two yard tours this year, highlights include; "Ananas - pineapples, pineapples, pineapples" a presentation of everything pineapple; outfits, hats, desserts and decor. And a club fundraising event, a Hawaiian Lua, just like our spectacular spaghetti dinner this past year, but with a new theme.*

*One of the Christmas parties Francisco and I attended recently was at the beautiful Valkaria Gardens in Palm Bay. While the party was at night, we returned the next morning to snap this photo of some of the wonderful landscape areas they use to host all types of events, including weddings. Bromeliads are a huge part of the color and excitement as seen in this photo.*



*Another holiday highlight included a visit to Montgomery Botanical Gardens in Coral Gables as a field trip of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society. The garden is a scientific research facility with an emphasis on palms and cycads as seen in this photo of Francisco in front of a large clump of palms growing in brackish water. With 120 acres they certainly have a very impressive collection attractively displayed around the original home of the founder Robert and Nell Montgomery. Oddly, we also learned that Nell Montgomery was a founder to Fairchild Gardens just up the road.*



*It's going to be a great year and we wish everyone good fortune and health in the coming year. Thank you so much for being a part of our Florida East Bromeliad Society! - Rick*

#### **Out and about –**

Billbergia blooms are such short-lived beauties that when I noticed Billbergia ‘Ken Allan’ in bloom, I felt that the only way I could share this is with a photo, since it would be faded by the time our meeting rolled around! This plant isn’t often seen-not that it’s necessarily rare, it just isn’t grown by many people. Although the parentage is not known, there is clearly Billbergia amoena in its background and it may even be a form of B. amoena rather than a hybrid. My plant originally came from Bud Martin of Blossom World Bromeliads back in the mid-90s and I didn’t think much about it, but I see from the BSI Cultivar Registry that this is a plant that was exported from Australia to Blossom World Bromeliads in 1992 and is likely no longer grown in Australia!



Another plant that I currently have in bloom is one that I think that I acquired just because of its name: Tillandsia neglecta. I thought “now here’s a plant that I should be able to grow with no care whatsoever” and of course it promptly died. My second attempt with a replacement plant was much more successful (it turns out that some care is required) and I’ve had this plant now since 1998 and it has faithfully bloomed every December since then. This plant is a cliff-dweller from Brazil and seems to do very well mounted and hanging from a tree in my yard. If you don’t already have Tillandsia neglecta, I recommend you pick one up and enjoy it for its interesting growth habit and pretty Christmas flowers!



**Birthdays for January:**

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

Carol Behnken	Virginia Dornbach
Erna Jones	Laura King
Chuck Mamele	Jacque Mamele
Alice Rigdon	Rosemary Roseland

**Looking ahead:**

**February 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

GardenFest! Riverside Park in Vero Beach  
15<sup>th</sup> Annual GardenFest hosted by the Indian River Garden Club. 90 vendors and attended by over 20,000 visitors last year – you should probably be one of them this year!

**April 22-23, 2017**(tentative date)

Bromeliad Society of South Florida annual show and sale

**August 4, 5, 6 2017**

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies’ Extravaganza – hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay

Clarion Hotel

2701 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33612

[www.clariontampa.com](http://www.clariontampa.com) 813-971-4710

Make your Reservation

Ask for Bromeliad Extravaganza Rate  
\$75.00 for single or double.

\$85.00 for triple/quad.

Complimentary hot breakfast included.

Rate guaranteed by hotel until July 13, 2017

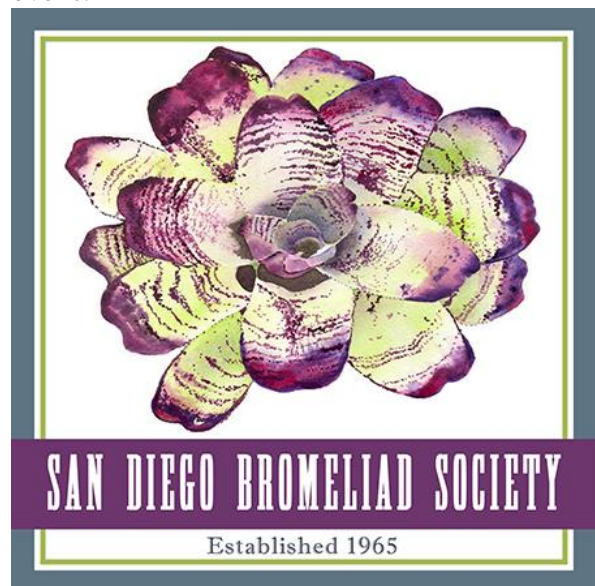
**Registration Form**

Room rate \$75 with free parking Registration fee is \$125, includes a barbecue on Friday night and banquet on Saturday night. You won’t want to miss this one!

**May 29 – June 3, 2018**

BSI World Bromeliad Conference in San Diego, California

Plan now for what is sure to be an exciting event!



Register early ([click here](#)): download the [registration form](#) and [flyer](#).